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Japan as the Axe to American Supremacy: A Relationship Built on the Idea of Containment By Willa Marshall

The U.S.-Japanese relationship started in 1853 when Commodore Matthew Perry's fleet landed in Tokyo Bay, demanding that the Shogunate leaders open Japan or they would meet the might of the U.S. military. The Shogunate had eight months to decide. While the U.S. did not use military force as Japan accepted the United States' demands, and the two countries established their first treaty the following year, this was the first taste of their relationship.¹ The U.S. showed military force — imperialism — to get what it wanted in world affairs. Despite their previous animosity toward one another, the two domains of Choshu and Satsuma formed a crucial and powerful military alliance. In opposition to the opening of Japan, the alliance worked to overthrow the Shogunate and restore the imperial rule of the Meiji leadership. Groups like these called Perry's arrival "an American rape of Japan."²

Under the Meiji government, Japan began to westernize technologically and ideologically. These advancements saw Japan gain power in the eyes of the Western world, allowing Japanese submission to end. America had a hard time restraining and controlling Japanese expansion as Japan's victory over Russia was pivotal, and Meiji began focusing on "imperial power politics" internationally.³ While the United States began to attempt to limit Japan's power with the Washington Naval Conference, many Japanese viewed this agreement as "an Anglo-American device to contain Japan" and felt that "the United States [was] beginning to weaken Japan again now that Japan's power [seemed] to be rising."⁴ The U.S.-Japanese relationship would mirror this statement in its fundamental foundation after the Second World War and the United States' occupation of Japan. After the Occupation, America viewed Japan in the subordinate role of a child that needed to be mentored.⁵ While the relationship was relatively peaceful throughout the Cold War, it was pretty one-sided in favor of the United States. However, as Japan's status on the world stage, especially economically, began to rise, their simple compliance with the needs and wants of the U.S. stopped. By delving into the evolution of U.S.-Japanese perceptions of each other and the inner workings of the alliance under American presidents, this paper will look at the evolution and eventual decline of the relations between the countries. Focusing specifically on the role of the Cold War in the persistence of this relationship reveals that the fight against communism was the driving force in keeping relations alive. It will also discuss relations after the Cold War to show the strengthening of the Japanese economy and the decreased confidence in American superiority.

After the Japanese surrender, which signaled the end of the Second World War, tensions between the two countries were at an apparent high, with the Japanese people thinking of their role in the War as justifiable. While the U.S. saw the Pacific War as fighting against an

¹ Tadashi Aruga, "Reflections on the History of U.S.-Japanese Relations," *American Studies International* 32, no. 1 (April 1994): 8, JSTOR.

² Aruga, "Reflections on the History," 9.

³ Aruga, "Reflections on the History," 10.

⁴ Aruga, "Reflections on the History," 10.

⁵ Naoko Shibusawa, *America's Geisha Ally: Reimagining the Japanese Enemy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), 5, EBSCOhost.

aggressive nation that had invaded much of Southeast Asia, the Japanese saw the War differently. Tadashi Aruga, a professor of international relations at Hitotsubashi University, when looking at these different views, stated, “Japanese tend to look at the Pacific War with the victim complex... Japan was obviously the weaker party in this relationship with the United States. It is difficult for the Japanese to regard a weaker country as an aggressor against a stronger country even when the former made military attack first.”⁶ The Japanese people looked at their attack on Pearl Harbor as relative in the greater scheme of the world when it came to imperialism. Western nations like the United States, Britain, and France continually conquered and invaded countries before World War I and held these territories into World War II. Japan saw these countries, specifically America and Britain, as their own rivals in terms of imperialism. During the Occupation, which occurred from the end of World War II until 1952, Japanese people saw opposition to American policies as nationalistic.⁷ During the Occupation and after, when U.S. bases were still in the country, the Japanese public’s rebellion against American ideals and policies was more in line with the desire to be seen as a sovereign nation and not under the control of the American military.⁸ The sentiment of the Japanese people pertains mostly to riots against American policies and not a general hate of Americans. This first view of the Japanese side of the relations shows their desperate desire to be a sovereign nation in name *and* practice, which will echo throughout the rest of the century until the end of the Cold War.

Much like Japan, America had a challenging turnaround after World War II but centered it around a push to fight against communism. The attack on Pearl Harbor shocked the U.S., and during the war, the American public’s sentiment toward Japan was vengeance with a hint of racism (or perhaps the other way around).⁹ Americans saw the Japanese as “unassimilable people,” and the American people “were influenced by pre-existing fears of the ‘yellow peril.’”¹⁰ Henry Luce, a publisher for Time-Life, when looking into the perceptions of Germany and Japan as enemies, stated, “Americans had to learn to hate Germans, but hating Japs comes natural—as natural as fighting Indians once was.”¹¹ Even after the war, the sentiment was much the same as the Japanese were still viewed as enemies and savages when stories from former prisoners of war began to surface. However, America needed to change this perspective quickly as Japan became a vital ally for America in Asia in its fight against communism. For this to occur, American and SCAP policymakers (the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers) had to be more lenient when holding Japan accountable. Both had to roll back their previously ambitious ideas in favor of building up the infrastructure and economy of Japan.¹² Because of this, “Japan, the predominant Asian aggressor of World War II, became the region’s greatest beneficiary of the Cold War.”¹³ A leniency that the American government and SCAP were willing to give to fight communism.

⁶ Aruga, “Reflections on the History,” 13.

⁷ Aruga, “Reflections on the History,” 14.

⁸ Jennifer M. Miller, “Fractured Alliance: Anti-Base Protests and Postwar U.S.–Japanese Relations,” *Diplomatic History* 38, no. 5 (November 2014): 954, JSTOR.

⁹ Shibusawa, *America's Geisha*, 1.

¹⁰ Shibusawa, *America's Geisha*, 2.

¹¹ Shibusawa, *America's Geisha*, 2.

¹² Shibusawa, *America's Geisha*, 3.

¹³ Shibusawa, *America's Geisha*, 3.

In order to get the American people behind their government's efforts in Japan, a complete overhaul of the rhetoric needed to occur. America knew of two natural hierarchical relationships: man/woman and adult/child. The relationship needed to be put in the context of these hierarchies to change the American public's feelings toward Japan. Naoko Shibusawa, a professor of history at Brown University, looked at this parallel, explaining, "Portraying Japan as a woman made its political subjugation appear as natural as a geisha's subservience to a male client, while picturing Japan as a child emphasized its potential to 'grow up' into a democracy."¹⁴ This idea of Japan as a child also showed that dependence and immaturity were not permanent states but something they could grow out of. This idea also played on America's new sense of its role in the world as a global leader and helped to reduce racial animosity.¹⁵ This change of rhetoric and their newfound place on the world stage increased the public's confidence in their government as the American public became more tolerant of the Japanese people but also realized their superiority over the country.

While Eisenhower was a strong supporter of Japanese-centered policies, the superiority and idealized strength of the United States over Japan leaked into the alliance between the two nations and made the relationship heavily favor America. Eisenhower centered his foreign policy on the "domino theory." In his mind, Japan was the biggest domino in East Asia. After the loss of China to communism, Eisenhower believed that should Japan turn Marxist, it "would turn the Pacific into a 'communist lake.'"¹⁶ He continually fought against his political party to further Japanese interests. This included ensuring Japanese entry into the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, an international trade agreement that allowed more open trade borders and fewer barriers, as well as supporting revisions of the Security Treaty in 1960. However, despite these key pushes to favor particular Japanese interests, much of the alliance was unilateral. Because of this, "many Japanese felt increasingly bullied by American policies and alienated from their own leaders, who continued to support the American line."¹⁷

Eisenhower's use of John Foster Dulles, the writer of the unequal Security Treaty of 1952, caused many of the problems that the U.S. faced in the relationship. Dulles was brutal regarding how he saw Japan — which was "little more than a 'floating aircraft carrier' to be used in the war against international communism."¹⁸ He pressured Japan into spending more on defense while refusing to meet with Japanese Foreign Minister Shigemitsu Mamoru regarding renegotiating the Security Treaty. After denying a meeting the first time, Dulles, when asked about making revisions, countered with, "Is the Japan of today powerful enough [to make such a request]?"¹⁹ Dulles greatly demeaned Japan's status on the world stage and dismissed them outright regarding the treaty showing off the U.S.'s superiority and power in the relationship, which he kept one-sided for as long as he was in power.

¹⁴ Shibusawa, *America's Geisha*, 5.

¹⁵ Shibusawa, *America's Geisha*, 6.

¹⁶ Nick Kapur, "Mending the 'Broken Dialogue': U.S.-Japan Alliance Diplomacy in the Aftermath of the 1960 Security Treaty Crisis," *Diplomatic History* 41, no. 3 (2017): 491, Oxford Academic.

¹⁷ Kapur, "Mending the 'Broken,'" 492.

¹⁸ Kapur, "Mending the 'Broken,'" 492.

¹⁹ Kapur, "Mending the 'Broken,'" 492.

It also did not help balance out this relationship when Japan's high-level government officials succumbed to pressure from the Eisenhower administration after the Security Treaty riots from the Japanese public. In anger over negotiations regarding the older Security Treaty created by Dulles, riots broke out all over Japan to protest the pact and how Eisenhower's administration handled the situation. These protestors tended to be intellectuals and college students. However, many Japanese feared this would put their whole country in a bad light, and the U.S. would see them as anti-American. Japanese leaders feared this "would negatively impact Japan's economic interests in the United States, which in 1960 was Japan's single largest trading partner by a large margin."²⁰ When Prime Minister, Hayato Ikeda, came into power following the riots, Zentaro Kosaka, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, stated, "repairing U.S.-Japan relations was our single biggest concern."²¹ Essentially, the Ikeda administration bowed down to the U.S. ensuring complete cooperation. In the end, because of this, the Eisenhower administration made no changes to U.S.-Japanese relations and altered no policies.²²

While Ikeda did not work well with Eisenhower, the relationship between the United States and Japan completely changed when Kennedy took office — a change that would start with gaining the support of the Japanese people. The leaders of Japan and the United States desperately needed to reassess their relationship at the beginning of the Kennedy administration. The U.S. needed a healthy relationship with Japan as the country was crucial for America to win the Cold War. The new administration's first change was to appeal to the Japanese people to win their hearts and minds.²³ Kennedy submitted to interviews with Japanese newspapers on two separate occasions and created a scholarship for Japanese students in the United States. However, the most important event to reach out to the Japanese people was the appointment of Edwin O. Reischauer as the Ambassador to Japan. Reischauer was born in Japan, grew up in Tokyo, spoke Japanese, married a woman from a prominent Japanese family, and "had a deep love of Japanese culture and people."²⁴ The Japanese people saw the Ambassador as someone who understood them. Reischauer and Kennedy also changed the role of the Ambassador to Japan as the two continued to have one-on-one meetings after each of Reischauer's visits to Japan. It was Reischauer's dream to make the relationship with Japan an "equal partnership," and this would become more and more the case as Kennedy's presidency continued.²⁵

The turning point in the relationship between Japan and the U.S. came in June of 1961 with the Kennedy-Ikeda Summit. During this meeting in the United States, both countries realized that revisions to the Security Treaty would not fix the fractured relationship between the two. The United States leadership noticed that they needed to build trust in Japan and see them in a more consultative manner. At the same time, the Japanese understood that they had to stop the anti-American rhetoric and the use of this resentment to force the United States' hand. With the spirit of this cooperation in mind, Kennedy and Ikeda created three committees to improve their countries' relationship. These committees were on "Cultural and Educational Exchange,"

²⁰ Kapur, "Mending the 'Broken,'" 495.

²¹ Kapur, "Mending the 'Broken,'" 496.

²² Kapur, "Mending the 'Broken,'" 497.

²³ Kapur, "Mending the 'Broken,'" 500.

²⁴ Kapur, "Mending the 'Broken,'" 501.

²⁵ Kapur, "Mending the 'Broken,'" 502.

“Scientific Cooperation,” and “Trade and Economic Affairs.”²⁶ While these committees were successful, the Committee on Trade and Economic Affairs was the most significant. Before this, Japan had asked the U.S. for a committee on this all-important economic issue for ten years. The committee created exceeded Japan’s expectations in the best way possible. It was a chance for the leaders of both countries to talk about economic issues in a relaxed environment. Ikeda’s closest advisor, Ohira Masayoshi, elaborated on the meaning of this committee, explaining, “[the creation of the committee] is a meaningful development not just for the United States and Japan, but for the whole world. Japan has to think about the United States 24 hours a day... so it is extremely significant if, even for just two or three days out of the year, the Americans think only about Japan.”²⁷ These committees were only the first step in equaling the partnership between the two countries.

Another major step in U.S.-Japan relations during the Kennedy administration involved trading and bolstering the Japanese economy, all to keep the country from turning to communism. In administrations before Ikeda’s, Japan desperately wanted to resume trade with China. However, China’s communist government limited Japan to being unable to trade with them officially. However, during the summit, Ikeda firmly told Kennedy that he had no intentions of trading with China. He said, “Japan does not wish to disturb her economic relations with the United States merely for trade with Peiping, for such a move would lead to Japanese economic collapse.”²⁸ Ikeda began a compromising trend rather than using pressure to force the United States. Japan would encourage the U.S. to open its markets to their imports by supporting America’s battle against communism. The United States accepted this, as the growth of Japan’s economy was “the surest way to keep Japan out of the communist orbit.”²⁹ To do this, Kennedy began to push forward a “‘unilateral’ trade liberalization policy toward Japan,” connecting Japan to Western capitalist societies, like the United States, to further them from communist influence.³⁰ This compromise and cooperation between the two countries was a stark change from the Eisenhower administration but allowed for a better relationship between the two governments.

However, the most important outcome of the summit, which was the real forwarding factor in ensuring a true partnership and connection between the two countries, began on the presidential yacht. When Kennedy took Ikeda out to spend the day on the water, the Japanese Prime Minister made a daring request of the President. Ikeda asked that Japan be treated like France or Britain regarding international affairs and consulting. Kennedy, realizing the need to ask Japan about affairs outside of just Asia-Pacific issues, agreed with Ikeda. The Japanese public saw this as a resounding success, calling themselves the “Britain of Asia” as they moved closer and closer to true equality.³¹ From here, Kennedy and Ikeda set a precedent and began exchanging personal letters. Prior to this, American leadership never thought to consider notifying Japan on matters of national security. However, this change ensured that Japan stayed

²⁶ Kapur, “Mending the ‘Broken,” 503.

²⁷ Kapur, “Mending the ‘Broken,” 504.

²⁸ Kapur, “Mending the ‘Broken,” 504.

²⁹ Kapur, “Mending the ‘Broken,” 505.

³⁰ Kapur, “Mending the ‘Broken,” 506.

³¹ Kapur, “Mending the ‘Broken,” 507.

informed and in the loop on issues of international importance.³² Two notable instances of this communication between the two world leaders were Kennedy telling Ikeda about the US's plan to resume nuclear tests in response to the USSR and Kennedy informing Ikeda about the Cuban Missile Crisis.³³ ³⁴ Both allowed Ikeda to draft statements that denounced the Soviet Union and placed Japan firmly on the side of the United States in the Cold War. These changes significantly bettered the relationship between Japan and the United States. Reishauer saw it as “the transformation to a child growing up” as an equal partnership that the Kennedy administration created, allowing the two countries to fight communism as allies.³⁵

The sudden decline of this stable relationship and open communication, a precedent set by Kennedy, occurred during the Nixon administration. During the Nixon administration, Prime Minister Eisaku Sato was in power. At the beginning of Nixon's time in office, the cooperation and communication between the two countries established under Kennedy continued. However, in the early 1970s, this changed when Nixon declared that he would visit China, and U.S. officials “revealed a new economic policy designed to defend the dollar.”³⁶ These two reports were considered the “Nixon Shocks,” and they were exactly that — shocking. Because of the pattern of prior communication between the two countries, Sato looked “impotent and uninformed,” and Nixon's betrayal “dealt a major blow to a system of secret communication that [Sato] labored so hard to bring to existence.”³⁷ This lack of communication from Nixon caused the partnership created by Kennedy in the 1960s to vanish for good as strains began to surface.³⁸ The Japanese people saw these policies put forth by Nixon “as a blatant attempt to force Japan to reassess the importance of her ties with the U.S.... by playing on Japanese fears of being isolated.”³⁹ These shocks began the restart of Japan's dissatisfaction with American policies and ultimately declined the once strong and personal relationship between the two countries.

By the end of the Cold War, which was around 1989 with the fall of the Berlin Wall or 1991 with the dismantling of the Soviet Union, Japan's economic status had been solidified as the world's leading creditor while the US's had dramatically declined.⁴⁰ Japan's economic power started from America wanting to build up Japan's economy so they would not fall into communism.⁴¹ Moreover, since the 1960s, Japanese economic growth rates had skyrocketed.⁴² This switch of “superiority” turned the relationship on its head, something that did not sit well with America as a different kind of Cold War began, one of the trade sanctions and barriers. As the threat of the USSR eased, a new fear of Japan as the world's dominant economic country surfaced, along with a change of feeling toward their ally. American media and U.S. officials

³² Kapur, “Mending the ‘Broken,’” 509.

³³ Kapur, “Mending the ‘Broken,’” 508.

³⁴ Kapur, “Mending the ‘Broken,’” 510.

³⁵ Kapur, “Mending the ‘Broken,’” 513.

³⁶ Fuji Kamiya, “Japanese-U.S. Relations and the Security Treaty: A Japanese Perspective,” *Asian Survey* 12, no. 9 (September 1972): 718, JSTOR.

³⁷ Kapur, “Mending the ‘Broken,’” 511.

³⁸ Kamiya, “Japanese-U.S. Relations,” 718.

³⁹ Kamiya, “Japanese-U.S. Relations,” 719.

⁴⁰ Yoshi Tsurumi, “U.S.-Japanese Relations: From Brinkmanship to Statesmanship,” *World Policy Journal* 7, no. 1 (Winter 1989/1990): 3, JSTOR.

⁴¹ Kapur, “Mending the ‘Broken,’” 505.

⁴² Kamiya, “Japanese-U.S. Relations,” 722.

began referencing images of Japan's determination to dominate the United States. This hostility toward Japan caused anti-American sentiments in Japan as a new generation of neo-nationalists emerged.⁴³ Japan was powerful and could use "its financial power to teach the United States a lesson and, if necessary, to bring the U.S. economy to its knees."⁴⁴ The old certainties that came with post-WWII policies and relationships had dissipated.⁴⁵ Furthermore, the central motivator of the alliance, a fight against communism, had disappeared. The Security Treaty and the alliance and relationship as a whole were born of containment.⁴⁶ America long had the upper hand in the relationship; however, Japan's continually growing economic power allowed the U.S. to not push them around as they once had. When the relationship flipped, with Japan financially in control, the U.S. refused to submit, as Japan had done, still believing in their American superiority, causing the alliance between the two countries to decline into a different kind of Cold War.

Relations between the U.S. and Japan have always been affected by the Cold War and the perceived need for America to contain communism. However, as Nixon's policy forwarded detente, forming relations with China during the Cold War, and the eventual complete dismantling of the USSR, this factor that created the bond has since disappeared. What was left was Japan's strong economy and the unwillingness to play the victim. Japan became powerful, bolstered by the U.S.'s ideas of containment. However, this became the United States's worst nightmare, as Japan challenged its economic superiority, and diminished the need for America as a necessity on the international market.

⁴³ Tsurumi, "U.S.-Japanese Relations," 1.

⁴⁴ Tsurumi, "U.S.-Japanese Relations," 2.

⁴⁵ Tsurumi, "U.S.-Japanese Relations," 3.

⁴⁶ Nathaniel B. Thayer, "Beyond Security: U.S.-Japanese Relations in the 1990s," *Journal of International Affairs* 43, no. 1 (Summer/Fall 1989): 68, JSTOR.

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Japanese Propaganda Postcards, 1931-1945

By Michael Arsenault

Introduction

Between 1931 and 1945, Japanese propaganda took on many forms. In addition to posters, films, and radio broadcasts, postcards were another common form of propaganda in Japan during this period. Japanese postcards became a less formal form of propaganda, with no direct control over messaging and no central agency dispersing the postcards. The images presented by these postcards promoted the messages often displayed in other more official and straightforward propaganda media. Postcards were another form of social management and control and displayed a variety of themes common in Japanese wartime propaganda, such as sacrifice and nationalism. These postcards, while less agitating than film and radio, provided another avenue for Japanese propaganda to be seen and consumed by the Japanese public.

Japanese wartime postcards were not limited to overt propaganda but included many more mundane images, such as landscapes and people farming, which did not appear to propagandize for the state explicitly. However, propaganda postcards provide another area of study in Japanese propaganda and further our understanding of how a society can become so devoted to its state and its war. The presentation of propaganda images on postcards is another essential part of understanding how Japan justified its militarism and extolled the value of sacrifice in its people. The production of these postcards reflects the public-private partnership that dictated other forms of propaganda. Japanese propaganda postcards cultivated an image of a harmonious future for Asia under Japanese leadership. Japanese militarists used these images to justify the total mobilization of society. They also exhibited encouragement for children to prepare themselves to become future soldiers.

Studies of WWII Japanese propaganda have mainly focused on film, radio, news media, and posters.

¹ There are few scholarly articles explicitly about Japanese propaganda postcards. Studying these postcards will provide another perspective on the themes seen in other forms of propaganda. In addition, understanding the creation and distribution of these postcards will enhance the understanding of how and why the Japanese people collaborated to create propaganda images and how widely propaganda permeated Japanese culture and society. Postcards gained extreme popularity in Japan at the turn of the 20th century and remained popular in the 1940s. They were cheap and bought by all classes making them a widely consumed media product. The postal delivery service guaranteed the usefulness of postcards. For the middle class, postcards were

¹ David Desser, "From the Opium War to the Pacific War: Japanese Propaganda Films of World War II," *Film History* 7, no. 1 (1995): 32–48.

Benjamin Uchiyama, *Japan's Carnival War: Mass Culture on the Home Front, 1937-1945* (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2019).

Jane M.J. Robbins, *Tokyo Calling: Japanese Overseas Radio Broadcasting 1937-1945* (Fucecchio, Italy: European Press, 2001).

Paul M. Holsinger and Mary Anne Schofield, *Visions of War: World War II in Popular Literature and Culture*, (Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1992).

collectibles with high-quality ones put in albums.² The Japanese army gave propaganda postcards to soldiers, which they then used to send messages home.³ Thus, imperial postcards had various target audiences and content, making postcards helpful in examining the themes and tactics used across all Japanese wartime propaganda. Studying Japanese propaganda postcards will help contribute to a more complete picture of Japanese wartime propaganda.

Public-Private Partnerships

Japanese state leaders and business people were essential in creating and distributing propaganda between 1931 and 1945. Japanese propaganda theorists "Kanda Kōichi, Yoneyama Keizō, [and] Koyama Eizō, to name a few," wrote that "that propaganda created by the masses, which emanated from the bottom of society, would prove successful in the long run..."⁴ From above, the propaganda theorists of Japan sought to create a more robust and far-reaching propaganda effort by making Japanese citizens active participants in the creation of state propaganda. From below, in the case of postcards, Japanese businessmen sought to "display their patriotic credentials" by "keenly anticipating the requirements of the State."⁵ The relationship between the state and private postcard publishers was mutually beneficial. Both propaganda theorists and private citizens producing media sought each other out for different reasons. This mutual interest in disseminating state propaganda created a strong partnership that shaped the propaganda images that appeared in postcards.

The relationship between the state and private postcard publishers was strong throughout the war. The public-private relationship had evolved since the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905), and the popularity of postcards made them a standard part of everyday life. These postcards began to become an integral part of government propaganda as well. By "the 1930s, most of the cards [were] packed in *imonbukuro* (relief bag sent to men on active service)," and though printed by private firms, postcards served official state policies.⁶ Thus in the arena of postcards, propaganda was solely a creation of the private sector. With this private domination of the propaganda postcard market, the goal of Japanese propaganda theorists to have propaganda created "by the masses" and "emanate from the bottom of society" came closer to realization. The postcard publishers also benefited from this partnership as they became the sole producers of Japanese state propaganda on postcards. The relationship between the state and private citizens made propaganda postcards, and more broadly propaganda, an act of involvement in the war.

This private involvement in creating propaganda postcards also reflected a more extensive theory encompassing Japanese propaganda and society. Japan's fundamental goal in creating propaganda was "unifying the battlefield with the home front."⁷ In this context, private

² John Fraiser, "Propaganda on the Picture Postcard," *Oxford Art Journal* 3, no. 2 (1980): 39.

³ Aaron William Moore, *Writing War: Soldiers Record the Japanese Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013), 146.

⁴ Barak Kushner, "Propaganda for Everyone," in *The Thought War: Japanese Imperial Propaganda* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2006), 9.

⁵ Peter O'Connor and Aaron M. Cohen, "Thoughts on the Precipice: Japanese postcards, c. 1903–39," in *Japan Forum*, vol. 13, no. 1 (2001): 55.

⁶ O'Connor and Cohen, "Thoughts on the Precipice," 56.

⁷ Kushner, "Propaganda for Everyone," 6.

citizens were encouraged to become personally involved in the state's war-making. The private postcard publishers responded to this goal by creating postcards that “encouraged military and naval service to the State, elevated local heroes and minor military and naval figures, and enshrined local sacrifice.”⁸ By dictating these values, private postcard publishers fulfilled the primary goal of Japanese propaganda. These publishers became active participants in the war, just like the soldiers fighting at the front. Through this public-private partnership, Japanese postcard propaganda reflected a broader effort by the Japanese state to mobilize every aspect of Japanese life for war.

Japan to Lead a Harmonious Future in Asia

Throughout the 1930s, a sense of crisis permeated Japanese society. Following the Stock Market Crash of 1929, Japan no longer looked to the West as a society to emulate and began to form different ideologies about society.⁹ In a 1938 propaganda symposium, Japanese leaders articulated the doctrine of a ‘thought war.’ These Japanese theorists’ ‘thought war’ “inflected the acute sense of crisis following the [Japanese Invasion of China in 1937] and was used to formulate a radical vision of social, political and intellectual renovation of Japan and East Asia.”¹⁰ As historian Max Ward has argued, this state ideology of a ‘thought war’ “resonated with other expressions of cultural-intellectual crisis and calls for the renovation of Japan and East Asia.”¹¹ Japanese leaders saw the use of propaganda as another battle in the war to determine the future of Asia. The sense of crisis in the 1930s led many Japanese to call for a radical transformation of society and the use of propaganda to resolve the crisis.

Regarding Japan’s role in Asia, Japanese propagandists sought to use propaganda and other tools to unify thought across its colonial empire and military conquests. Andō Yoshirō, a strategist in the Foreign Ministry, stated in 1938: “At this time we must grasp the true Japanese spirit, to display the diligence of the ethical state [dotoku-kokka] ruled under the spirit of the imperial way, a spirit charged with the task of constructing an East Asian peace and one that [will] contribute to world peace.”¹² Japanese leaders’ ideology was that Japan would create a harmonious and peaceful future in Asia under Japanese leadership, and Japanese propaganda and propaganda postcards reflected this ideological desire.

In 1931, Japan’s Kwantung Army in Manchuria committed a false flag attack, leading to Japan’s seizure of Manchuria, known as the Manchurian or Mukden Incident. The Japanese colonization of Manchuria prompted efforts to create propaganda showcasing the peace and harmony of Japanese rule. The 1933 postcard “September 18th: 2nd Anniversary of the Manchurian Incident Outbreak” (Image One) displays these efforts. The postcard depicts a Japanese soldier holding the hand of a Manchurian child, with another Manchurian child

⁸ O’Connor and Cohen, “Thoughts on the Precipice,” 56.

⁹ Andrew Gordon, “Chapter 11: The Depression Crisis and Responses,” in *A Modern History of Japan: From Tokugawa Times to the Present*, 4th ed., (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020), 187-208.

¹⁰ Max Ward, “Crisis Ideology and the Articulation of Fascism in Interwar Japan: The 1938 Thought-War Symposium,” *Japan Forum* 26 (2014): 466-467.

¹¹ Ward, 464.

¹² Ward, 467-468.

following, holding the Manchukuo (puppet regime of Japan in Manchuria) flag.¹³ The postcard displays the ideology that Japan would lead Asian people into a harmonious future. The Japanese soldier is literally leading one of the children, and they all are seemingly having a good time as smiles are on their faces. This happy image also suggests Japan is not interested in being cruel or brutal towards those they conquer. Instead, Japan hopes to display unity among Asian peoples through the leadership and efforts of Japanese soldiers and the state.

To fund these efforts of conquest and occupation, Japanese propaganda postcards advocated the purchase of war bonds. A postcard issued by the Post Office Bureau titled “Chinese Incident War Bonds” (Image Two) encouraged the purchase of war bonds to support the war effort. The postcard depicts a Chinese child holding a Japanese flag and the flag of Japan's puppet regime in China.¹⁴ While the title suggests that its primary purpose was to encourage the purchase of war bonds, the image of the child with the flags reminds its audience that Japan sought to create unity in Asia. In addition, the child also looks chubby, possibly suggesting that China is healthier under Japanese leadership. This postcard hoped to help fund the Japanese conquest of China by displaying an image of the conquered as being happy and better off under the supervision of their conqueror, the Japanese.

These postcards display how Japanese propagandists argued that war was the only way to achieve a harmonious future in Asia with Japan as its leader. In both postcards, Japan is depicted as a compassionate ally of other Asian peoples. The flags of Japan’s puppet regimes and the smiles of children convey this image. These postcards also justified war to the Japanese as the only way to realize the harmonious images displayed. Japan’s goal to create “an East Asia peace” required that all Asian nations were under its benevolent leadership. The postcard celebrating the anniversary of the Manchurian Incident is an example of this justification in action. By displaying Japan as a benevolent father-like figure in the form of a Japanese soldier, Japanese propaganda justified a moral crusade to unify Asia under Japanese leadership. The postcard advertising war bonds legitimated the war by showing that Chinese children were happy under Japanese occupation, justifying Japan's fight against the Chinese. Despite these positive depictions of Japanese goals, the reality was that Japan was a brutal and cruel occupier and combatant.¹⁵ These propaganda postcards exemplify the Japanese effort to justify a righteous war by portraying their conquests in a romanticized setting. These postcards’ appeals reflected Japanese leaders’ ideology to create a new Asian order of harmony and peace between everyone. However, the reality of the Japanese empire, conquest, and occupation far removed this ideology from the romanticized and idealized propaganda.

Total Mobilization and its Cost

The Japanese military needed the Japanese public to be willing to give everything to the war effort to achieve these material and ideological goals. In 1927, Colonel Nagata Tesuzan described this concept:

¹³ Imperial Postcards, East Asia Image Collection, Lafayette Digital Repository.

¹⁴ Imperial Postcards, East Asia Image Collection, Lafayette Digital Repository.

¹⁵ Andrew Gordon, “Chapter 12: Japan in Wartime,” in *A Modern History of Japan: From Tokugawa Times to the Present*, 4th ed., (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020), 215-216.

National mobilization [kokka soddin] is the task of marshaling the entire society of the state in times of need, moving from a peacetime footing to a wartime footing. The state must then organize, unify and utilize all available resources, material and human, producing a maximum national strength as military power.¹⁶

In the fourteen years following the 1931 Manchurian Incident, Japan's military found itself in increasingly costly campaigns. To fulfill these needs, military leaders began to gain influence within the Japanese political system advocating for the total mobilization of Japanese society. By 1936, worsening economic crises and diplomatic isolation pushed the military leadership in the government to call for sweeping reforms to allow for total mobilization. After a political struggle between military and civilian leaders, in June 1937, Prime Minister Konoe began to create legislation for preliminary mobilization. After the unexpected outbreak of total war with China in July 1937, the government began to develop further legislation to mobilize Japanese society.¹⁷ Japanese leaders needed to get the public on board with these demanding changes to daily life. In the 1930s and 1940s, Japanese propaganda promoted sacrifice for the state and acceptance of the costs associated with war, a message also promoted on propaganda postcards.

Japanese wartime propaganda portrayed warfare and sacrifice in service of the state as beautiful and honorable. The postcard "Ode to a Japanese Sword" (Image Three) displays these common themes of Japanese wartime propaganda. It depicts a Japanese army helmet and sword with a branch of a cherry blossom tree lying with it.¹⁸ The image associates the Japanese military with beautiful cherry blossoms, suggesting that joining the military is not degrading or dangerous but an attractive pursuit. Japan's cherry blossom tradition dates back to the ninth century. However, following the Meiji restoration, the cherry blossom aestheticized "[the state's] military operations and the deaths of soldiers on the battlefield." After the military took control of the government in the 1930s, this practice intensified as Japanese propagandists used every propaganda mode to promote sacrifice through cherry blossom symbolism.¹⁹ "Ode to a Japanese Sword" is an example of this widely used symbolism that permeated Japanese propaganda and society. This postcard helped the Japanese military fulfill its goal of national mobilization through cherry blossom symbolism. By co-opting cherry blossom symbolism, "Ode to a Japanese Sword" encouraged sacrifice for the state among the Japanese public and soldiers.

The extolling of sacrifice also encouraged the Japanese public on the homefront to accept the costs of total mobilization and war. A postcard titled "Sacrifice and Gratitude on the Homefront" (Image Four) displays the public acceptance of the costs of mobilization. The postcard depicts a child praying in front of a small book with a red circle, reminiscent of the Japanese flag. According to the caption, the image won first prize at a contest. The National Spiritual Mobilization Central Federation published the postcard, which "coordinated national, regional and local efforts to rally support for the war."²⁰ By showing a child praying to a book

¹⁶ Gordon M. Berger, "Politics and mobilization in Japan, 1931-1945," in *Cambridge History of Japan, Vol. 6, The Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 112.

¹⁷ Berger, 118-126.

¹⁸ Imperial Postcards, East Asia Image Collection, Lafayette Digital Repository.

¹⁹ Emiko Ohnukitierney, "Betrayal by Idealism and Aesthetics: Special Attack Force (Kamikaze) Pilots and Their Intellectual Trajectories (Part 1)," *Anthropology Today* 20, no. 2 (2004): 18-19.

²⁰ Imperial Postcards, East Asia Image Collection, Lafayette Digital Repository.

reminiscent of the Japanese flag, the postcard promotes a sense of patriotism and nationalism. The title also suggests that those on the home front are grateful and willing to sacrifice for the state. In addition, the image was also created by a private individual and not a state official or institution. The promotion of sacrifice and nationalism must have been popular for a contest in which people attempted to mobilize each other for war. This postcard's creation indicates that the Japanese public received the propaganda of mobilization and sacrifice on the home front. This postcard displays a widespread acceptance of the sacrifice demanded through the willingness to participate in propaganda creation.

These postcards promoted mobilization for war by reminding subjects of their duty and honor to fight on behalf of Japan. It also prepared people for the costs of total war by beautifying and softening the realities of war. In “Ode to a Japanese Sword,” the Japanese practice of co-opting the cherry blossom is displayed. By associating Japan’s beloved cherry blossoms with sacrifice for the state, the Japanese beautified sacrifice and warfare. In “Sacrifice and Gratitude on the Homefront,” the public acceptance of these demands by the state is displayed. The postcard was created by individuals instead of the state, suggesting a widespread acceptance of the demands of national mobilization. Propaganda postcards that promoted sacrifice for the state referenced traditional culture to increase its effectiveness. In addition, the public’s participation in the effort to mobilize the nation for war also made mobilization more acceptable. Propaganda postcards were part of a widespread effort from above and below in Japanese society to transform Japan by convincing everyone to sacrifice to strengthen the state.

A Child’s Preparation for War

As part of the campaign to mobilize all of Japanese society, state and privately produced propaganda also prepared children for war. During wartime, propaganda to prepare children for military service was common in Japan. Children in Japanese propaganda also became potent symbols of the righteousness of Japan's cause, as seen in the section on Japan's creation of an image of harmony and peace in Asia. However, propaganda was also explicitly made to target children as well. While Japanese propaganda targeting children did outline a child's role in wartime, propaganda also promoted the expression of certain emotions such as “gratitude, friendship, pity, empathy, and pride.”²¹ Changing how children saw themselves and interacted with the world was essential to Japanese propaganda targeting children. In 1941, Fröbel Hall, a Japanese organization “devoted to children’s education and play,” published an issue of their popular book series *Children’s Book: Getting Along with Neighbors*. In the book, “[y]oung readers were repeatedly reminded that, just as they might grow up to become soldiers, soldiers had once been children like them.”²² Japanese propagandists attempted to connect children and soldiers in many different ways. The effort to target children with propaganda also reflects the desire of military leaders to fully mobilize Japanese society for war. By preparing children for war with propaganda, the violence and danger associated with war became less of an issue when children were drafted later in life.

²¹ Sabine Frühstück, “. . . And My Heart Screams’: Children and the War of Emotions,” in *Child’s Play: Multi-Sensory Histories of Children and Childhood in Japan*, edited by Sabine Frühstück and Anne Walthall, 1st ed. (University of California Press, 2017), 181-182.

²² Frühstück, 191-193.

Like propaganda, Japan's education system targeted children with pro-military messages and values. Writing about the Army's involvement in youth education, Drea argues that “extending the army’s influence in the education in anticipation that the nation's schools would indoctrinate youth with accepted military values and patriotism to facilitate their transition as conscripts into the army barracks.”²³ These efforts in educational settings mirror the targeting of children with military and government propaganda. Japanese mobilization efforts, such as in education and propaganda, encompassed all segments of society, including children. The Army’s demands on the population also made military service a near-universal experience among young men. In 1938, the Japanese Army doubled draft calls, effectively increasing the number of young men forced into the military.²⁴ In 1943, the Japanese Army “lowered the age for conscription to 19 years old and ended deferment for university students.”²⁵ These increasing demands explain why propaganda targeted children with militarist and nationalist values. Since military service was expected of almost everyone, propaganda targeting children was meant to prepare them for future service.

With this expectation in mind, Japanese wartime propaganda targeted children to instill gratitude for Japan’s war and a sense of duty. In the postcard, “I can go to school because the soldiers are fighting a war,” (Image Five) the effort to alter children's emotions is displayed. This postcard depicts a mother and child with two warplanes in combat in the background. In addition, sheet music and song lyrics are on the right side of the postcard.²⁶ The title and lyrics display gratitude towards the sacrifices made by Japanese soldiers at the front. However, the title also suggests to its child audience that war allows them to attend school. Additionally, this message suggests that it is a child's duty to attend school because of the war. The propaganda justifies war to its child audience by making war a requirement for school attendance. “I can go to school because the soldiers are fighting a war” is a propaganda postcard that seeks to manipulate children’s emotions to make them feel grateful for the military and excited to be drafted in the future.

Propaganda drove the idea that military service was fun or exciting into the minds of Japanese children. Propaganda featuring cartoonish children in military attire was typical. In the postcard “Cartoon Boy with Mortar and a Japanese Flag New Year’s card,” (Image Six) the image depicted targeted children to prepare them for future military service. The postcard is an image of a young boy preparing to fire a mortar while holding a Japanese flag. The image is also in the style of a cartoon.²⁷ This image of a cartoon soldier would have been appealing to children, preparing male children for the possibility of being drafted later in life. The postcard also promoted nationalism by including the Japanese flag. Children would be inclined to become that boy, fire a mortar, and fight for their country. Reducing military service to a cartoonish image also negates the dangerous aspects of war, promoting a sense that warfare is a fun endeavor. This targeting of children is a blatant example of how Japanese propaganda sought to create future soldiers among children.

²³ Edward J. Drea, *Japan's Imperial Army: Its Rise and Fall, 1853-1945* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2009), 154.

²⁴ Drea, 198.

²⁵ Drea, 232.

²⁶ Imperial Postcards, East Asia Image Collection, Lafayette Digital Repository.

²⁷ Imperial Postcards, East Asia Image Collection, Lafayette Digital Repository.

Propaganda targeting children displayed the lengths and willingness of Japanese leaders and society to encourage sacrifice for Japan. Children were seen as another group to mobilize for war, which these postcards display. The emotional appeals made by the “I can go to school because the soldiers are fighting a war” demonstrate how the effort to mobilize society for war also impacted children. The desire to create future soldiers out of children shows this mobilization effort and how militarism and nationalism permeated almost every aspect of Japanese wartime society. This propaganda also reduced warfare's violence and danger, making propaganda appeals palatable to children and their parents. Through this targeting of children, Japan fulfilled its goal of pursuing the unity of the battlefield and homefront by subjecting children to militarist and nationalist propaganda.

Conclusion

Between 1931 and 1945, propaganda postcards were part of a propaganda effort from all segments of Japanese society that also encompassed Japanese culture. Japanese leaders, such as Andō Yoshirō, Colonel Nagata, and Prime Minister Konoe, sought to remake Japanese society in pursuit of their ideological goals. Propaganda realized ideological goals in the minds of the Japanese. To create this propaganda, these Japanese leaders and many others sought out private individuals to develop propaganda media. By doing this, Japanese leaders won acceptance for widespread propaganda campaigns, including campaigns like the postcard contest discussed above, that inspired Japanese public participation. The active participation of private Japanese firms and citizens in the state's propaganda contributed to the many different forms used for propaganda. Private publishers of postcards, beginning in the 1930s, sought to display their patriotism and respond to the market's demands, leading to their domination of state propaganda postcard production. This public-private partnership explains how Japanese citizens created propaganda and why forms and messaging were diverse.

Propaganda postcards used common themes present in many other forms of propaganda. Private publishers created these postcards all to mobilize Japanese society around the utopian dream of creating a new Asian order of peace and harmony. While the goal was extraordinarily idealistic and nowhere near the reality of Japanese military domination and brutal oppression, this goal informed Japanese propaganda. This ideological goal showed itself in propaganda when Japanese soldiers appeared as benevolent father figures with happy children from Manchuria and China. To achieve this goal, Japan needed to fully mobilize society for war. The need to mobilize society informed propaganda that beautified war and sacrifice on the battlefield and homefront. To fully mobilize, Japanese propaganda also targeted children to emotionally manipulate them into supporting the war effort and preparing them for future military service. Japanese propaganda postcards display Japanese propagandists and society's efforts to remake Japanese culture. These propaganda postcards showed a harmonious future, the honor and beauty of sacrifice, pride in the nation, and the desire to totally mobilize society. While the impact of these propaganda postcards is hard to gauge, they hold a mirror to the ideologies and practices that lead Japan into a disastrous war and another remaking of society. While these postcards envisioned a utopian Japan, reality was bleak and daily life was desperate.

Looking back, Japan's experience with wide-spread propaganda between 1931 and 1945 can be a lesson to modern societies. This page in Japan's history showcases the importance of questioning media sources and understanding the motives behind them. Japan's eventual downfall in 1945, along with their experiences with propaganda, serve as a warning for all modern communities to be critical of media sources. Today, in the digital age, it is almost impossible to escape media consumption, making this lesson in Japanese history relevant for all generations of today and tomorrow.

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Image One

"September 18th: 2nd Anniversary of the Manchurian Incident." Postcard. 1933-1945. Lafayette Digital Repository.

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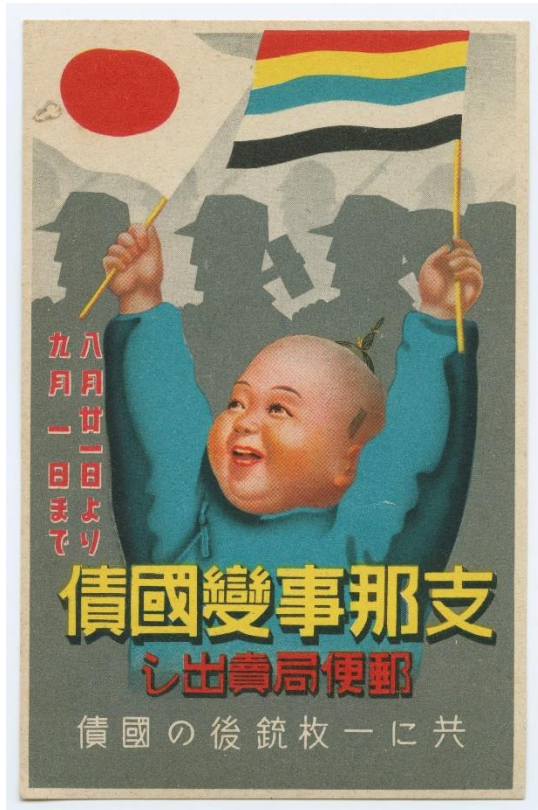


Image Two

Post Office Bureau. "Chinese Incident War Bond." Postcard. 1933-1945. Lafayette Digital Repository. <http://hdl.handle.net/10385/gh93h0704>.



Image Three

"Ode to Japanese Sword." Postcard. 1931-1945. Imperial Postcards, East Asia Image Collection, Lafayette Digital Repository. <http://hdl.handle.net/10385/z316q267h>.



Image Four

National Spiritual Mobilization Central Federation. "Sacrifice and Gratitude on the Homefront." Postcard. 1937-1945. Imperial Postcards, East Asia Image Collection, Lafayette Digital Repository. <http://hdl.handle.net/10385/th83m026b>.



Image Five

"I can go to school because the soldiers are fighting a war." Postcard. 1933-1945. Imperial Postcards, East Asia Image Collection, Lafayette Digital Repository. <http://hdl.handle.net/10385/gb19f6905>.

Image Six



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Communicating Culture: The Relationship Between Literacy and State Culture in Pre-Modern Seoul

By Mason Yang

1. Introduction

1.1 Thesis

In the year 1439, Johannes Gutenberg invented his printing press, revolutionizing the Western world with its effects on the accessibility to knowledge and literacy. Just a short four years later, Hangeul, the Korean alphabet, was finalized in its creation, bringing with it similarly significant effects for the Korean people. Hangeul was invented by the fourth king of the Joseon Dynasty (1392-1910), King Sejong (r. 1419-1450). The widely accepted understanding of Hangeul's creation was as benevolent language reform intended to improve literacy rates among the lower classes. However, what are the underlying effects of a new script beyond this? Why is a literate population significant to a ruling class in pre-modern society?

Answering such questions about Hangeul is important as it can reveal valuable insights at the intersection of communication and cultural identity. Hanyang (modern day Seoul), the capital city of the Joseon Dynasty, will be the primary focus of this paper since “almost all Late Middle Korean [Hangeul] texts were published in the Seoul capital”.¹ In this paper, I assert royal motivations for Hangeul beyond just benevolence; these motivations being the greater control of the people through more fluid, direct communication and the proliferation of state-influenced media. In examining the primary sources, I find how the state captured and controlled culture through literacy and modified the morals, beliefs, and martial ability of the common people.

1.2 Context

To understand Hangeul's creation, vernacular Korean and the Korean language must first be contextualized. Though the proto-Korean ancestry of the language and its relationship to other East Asian languages is still widely debated, it is beyond the scope of this paper and will not be discussed. For the purposes of this paper, only a brief history of Korean's written history will be provided to serve as the foundation for the arguments to come. The first documented written form of vernacular Korean is Old Korean during the linguistic unification of the Silla dynasty (57 BCE-668 CE) and the Unified Silla dynasty (668-935 CE), the capital city of which being in the south-east.² Few sources exist of Old Korean, but from their analysis, it is clear that it had many Chinese influences in grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciations. This is apparent because they relied on the Hanja writing system, a system of writing the vernacular Korean in Chinese characters.³ The way people wrote the language affected the way in which people spoke the language since each script has its own set of rules and limitations that influence pronunciations.

¹ Ki-Moon Yi and S. Robert Ramsey, *A History of the Korean Language* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 100.

² Yi and Ramsey, *A History of the Korean Language*, 50.

³ Yi and Ramsey, *A History of the Korean Language*, 50.

This is a trend that would still be prevalent in the Goryeo Dynasty (918-1392) and the start of Early Middle Korean.

Early Middle Korean derives from Old Korean and does not differ much. It simply marked a dynastic shift and a consequent move of the nation's capital city to central-west Korea, an area with a different dialect.⁴ Still, the Hanja system prevailed and other outside influences would affect vernacular Korean such as the contact with the Mongols which introduced new vocabulary and changed certain Korean vowel pronunciations.⁵ In both Early Middle Korean and Old Korean, literate Koreans found issues with expressing the fundamental differences in grammar and structure of the vernacular Korean in Hanja. Chinese had an ideographic script where each character had a specific meaning, a system that works well for monosyllabic languages⁶ like Classical Chinese but an extraordinarily difficult system for transcribing a polysyllabic languages⁷ like Korean.⁸ Furthermore, vernacular Korean continued to face tremendous influence and changes based on surrounding languages, an issue for a nation trying to form a strong national identity. One final key issue was the poor literacy rates with the ideographic Hanja. Each unique character for every word needed to be memorized to be literate, a difficult task for any pre-modern person let alone Korea's lower classes.

1.3 Hangeul

1392 marks both the beginning of Late Middle Korean along with the advent of the Joseon Dynasty (1392-1910), leading to another shift of the nation's capital to *Hanyang* (modern day Seoul).⁹ These issues regarding language would come to the forefront when King Sejong made language reform a personal priority soon after becoming king. In 1443, he created the blueprint for Hangeul in the *Hunminjeongeum* ("The Proper Sounds for the Instruction of the People"), and through revisionary processes with the Hall of Worthies, Joseon's royal research institute, he proclaimed it the new script for Korean.¹⁰ King Sejong gives his reasons for Hangeul in the preface of the *Hunminjeongeum*:

The speech sounds of our nation are different from those of China and are not confluent in writing. Thus, there are many among the ignorant peasants who, when they have something they wish to say, are ultimately unable to express their meanings. Taking pity on this, I have newly created twenty-eight letters, and simply wish for any and all to learn them with ease and use them at their convenience in daily life.¹¹

⁴ Yi and Ramsey, *A History of the Korean Language*, 78.

⁵ Yi and Ramsey, *A History of the Korean Language*, 94.

⁶ Languages in which each word is a singular syllable.

⁷ Languages in which each word can contain multiple syllables.

⁸ Jeongsu Kim, *The History and Future of Hangeul: Korea's Indigenous Script*, trans. Ross King (1990; repr., Global Oriental, 2005), 10.

⁹ Yi and Ramsey, *A History of the Korean Language*, 78.

¹⁰ Kim, *The History and Future of Hangeul: Korea's Indigenous Script*, 16.

¹¹ Kim, *The History and Future of Hangeul: Korea's Indigenous Script*, 17.

Here, the intentions for the new script are strikingly clear. The Korean language/vernacular fundamentally differs from the Chinese language/vernacular in syllable usage, intonation, and grammar. As such, continuing to use the Chinese ideographic script to transcribe Korean is illogical because of its difficulty. To put these difficulties into perspective, it would be as if one tried to spell an English sentence using only foreign single-syllable symbols that are unique to every oral sound (even the sounds that are not used in the English language), and then memorizing them all to write more sentences. To do so would take tremendous amounts of education on top of continuous, painstaking efforts to ensure one's work is properly transcribed. Such a task would be near impossible for the lower classes of pre-modern Korean society, ultimately rendering them unable to participate in literate culture. King Sejong recognized and responded to these difficulties to Korean identity and culture, thus Hangeul was born and was made the nation's official script in 1446.¹²

Hangeul in its original form was 28 letters, later further simplifying to the 24 letters it exists as today.¹³ The consonants derive from 5 basic symbols that are modeled on the position/shape of vocal organs (tongue, throat, teeth, and lips) when annunciating that sound.¹⁴ As for vowels, it started with three symbols for Heaven (a dot), Earth (a straight horizontal line), and Man (a straight vertical line) which were then combined and configured to create unique vowel sounds.¹⁵ In both the use of an alphabet rather than ideographs and the very shape of the letters themselves, it is clear that Hangeul was deliberately created to be easy for all to learn. Because of such simplicity, many of the elite Korean social classes opposed Hangeul because Chinese civilization was a greatly venerated and sophisticated society. In the words of the critical Hall of Worthies, "to create a new script is to be barbarians" and would "alienate [them] from high Chinese culture" and "downgrade [their] cultural level."¹⁶ Yet, as the common folk of Korea further distinguished themselves from China with greater literacy, the state was able to diffuse desired cultural identity through Hangeul.

2. Literacy as Benevolence

The words of King Sejong himself indicate that Hangeul's creation was out of benevolence with the goal to facilitate literacy and create a more communicative society. With a literate society, the will of the court could more accurately and effectively be transcribed to the people. Previously, with only the Hanja system, notices and decrees sent out by the royal court and scholars would not be understood by most commoners. Examples of facilitating pertinent information to a more literate society can be seen in times of crisis.

2.1 *Famine*

One instance of such can be found in the famine relief and agricultural instructions sent out in Seoul. In 1660, civil official and agriculturalist Sin Sok (1600-1661) wrote the *Singan guhwang chwaryo* ("New Edition of Concise References for Famine Relief"), a collection of

¹² Yi and Ramsey, *A History of the Korean Language*, 241.

¹³ Yi and Ramsey, *A History of the Korean Language*, 241.

¹⁴ Kim, *The History and Future of Hangeul: Korea's Indigenous Script*, 17-22.

¹⁵ Kim, *The History and Future of Hangeul: Korea's Indigenous Script*, 23-26.

¹⁶ Kim, *The History and Future of Hangeul: Korea's Indigenous Script*, 15.

proposed solutions to starvation risks in years of famine.¹⁷ Along with this, Sin Sok also compiled other sources on agricultural development for the Korean farmers. He edited and republished several older works that helped develop new farming methods and agricultural productivity.¹⁸ Here, a way in which the state was able to use Hangeul to benefit their people is evident. Through literacy, the farmers are more informed on proper famine management and more effective methods for crop production.

2.2 Disease

Another instance in which literacy played a crucial role can be found in the relay of medical information regarding disease outbreaks. The *Eonhae duchang jibyoo* (“Vernacular Explanation of the Collected Essentials on Smallpox”) is a medical text published in 1608 by Heo Jun (1546-1614) and the Office of Royal Physicians under the direct order of the 14th king of Joseon, King Seonjo (r. 1567-1608).¹⁹ Like many of his other writings, Heo Jun brings the well-being of the common people to the forefront in this text by teaching about the causes, prevention measures, and treatments to smallpox.²⁰ Furthermore, footnotes within the book explain that the information was widely used and shared among the public, indicating the effectiveness of Hangeul literacy.²¹

Under a previous system of Hanja, information regarding smallpox outbreak or famine management would not have been able to be effectively acquired by the common people. However, now with a population literate in Hangeul, such information can be created, printed, and distributed for their well-being. In the examples of both agricultural and medical emergencies, literacy played a crucial and beneficial role in facilitating the communication between state and subject.

3. Literacy as State Culture

Though these instances are certainly concrete examples of the importance of literacy in pre-modern society, there are other implicit motivations that would lead a ruling class to desire a literate society. By publishing and distributing moderated content for the people to read, the ruling class could influence the way that the people think and the values that they hold. Essentially, literacy lends to the development of state propaganda; the ruling class could teach the commoners what to believe.

3.1 Confucianism

¹⁷ Sin Sok, *Singan guhwang chwaryo - New Edition of Concise References for Famine Relief*, trans. Academy of Korean Studies, 1660.

¹⁸ National Museum of Korea, “Nonggajipseong (Compilation for Farmers) | Collection Database,” NATIONAL MUSEUM OF KOREA, 1660, <https://www.museum.go.kr/site/eng/relic/search/view?relicId=2810>.

¹⁹ Heo Jun, *Eonhae duchang jibyoo - Vernacular Explanation of the Collected Essentials on Smallpox*, trans. Academy of Korean Studies, 1608.

²⁰ Hyuk Joon Kwon, “Heo Jun: Physician of the People,” *Journal of Community Hospital Internal Medicine Perspectives* 11, no. 1 (January 2, 2021): 53–55, <https://doi.org/10.1080/20009666.2020.1853316>.

²¹ Jun, *Eonhae Duchang Jibyoo - Vernacular Explanation of the Collected Essentials on Smallpox*.

The ruling class desire to influence the belief of commoners can be seen clearly in the state-distributed works on Confucian values, particularly the *Samgang haengsil-to*. For context, the *Samgang haengsil-to* (“The Illustrated Conduct of the Three Bonds”) is a source that dictates Confucian values through three of the five fundamental hierarchical bonds: filial sons, loyal subjects, and devoted women.²² It does so through a collection of folk stories and illustrations that ultimately celebrate and praise people who observe these bonds in society and conduct proper moral behavior.²³ This source was created by the Hall of Worthies in Seoul, mandated by King Sejong following an incident in 1428 of patricide in the city of Chinju by the nation’s southern coast.²⁴ Essentially, King Sejong saw the need to “transform [his people] through moral education” and decided to do so through books.²⁵ Through literacy, the royal court and scholars worked to reform the morals of their subjects by producing, editing, reprinting, and distributing state media.

The *Samgang haengsil-to* is clearly a political source, and the fact that it continued to be edited as sociopolitical issues shifted in Korea is indicative of such. Though this source was originally produced in Classical Chinese in 1434 before the creation of Hangeul, its effects on working-class Korean morals would become evident through the reprints and edits. For example, the next version of the *Samgang haengsil-to* would be produced in 1481, now including translations in Hangeul.²⁶ This effectively generated state influence by increasing the accessibility to the newly literate commoners. Through literacy, the state could now teach a wider audience through the development of neo-Confucianist texts and work to construct firm moral values among the commoners.

The intended cultural influence of the *Samgang haengsil-to* is evident in the decrees and texts about the edits. Along with the new Korean annotations in Hangeul, the 1481 version emphasized printing and distributing the *Samgang haengsil yollyo-do*, the “Devoted Women” section.²⁷ In a new decree to print sets of this section specifically, King Songjong (r. 1469-1494) stated:

[We] should print several cased copies of the vernacular texts of the *Samgang haengsil yollyo-do* and distribute them to the five districts of the capital and all provinces, so that all womenfolk of villages and alleyways could have access to hearing lectures on them and put them into practice.²⁸

Additionally, a 1484 revised copy of the *Great Compendium of Statecraft*, Joseon’s code of law, added the following entry:

²² Sol Sun, *Samgang haengsildo - Illustrated Conduct of the Three Bonds*, trans. Academy of Korean Studies, 1434.

²³ Sun, *Samgang haengsildo - Illustrated Conduct of the Three Bonds*.

²⁴ Young Kyun Oh, “Printing the Samgang Haengsil-to (Illustrated Guide to the Three Relationships), a Premodern Korean Moral Primer,” *East Asian Publishing and Society* 1, no. 1 (2011): 1–2, <https://doi.org/10.1163/221062811x577495>.

²⁵ Oh, “Printing the Samgang Haengsil-to,” 2.

²⁶ Oh, “Printing the Samgang Haengsil-to,” 16.

²⁷ Oh, “Printing the Samgang Haengsil-to,” 16.

²⁸ Oh, “Printing the Samgang Haengsil-to,” 16.

The *Samgang haengsil-to* shall be translated into the vernacular language, with which the patriarchs and elders of gentry families inside and outside the capital, or their teachers and instructors, can instruct women and children, so that they be apprised of and clearly understand it.²⁹

This specific reprint with the included Hangeul translations had the deliberate goal of teaching women and children the state-sponsored Confucian values of the hierarchical bonds. Furthermore, it is clear this pre-modern state went great lengths in properly distributing these books as well, ensuring that all districts of Seoul received the new education along with those outside of the capital and in other provinces. Presumably, these women and children of rural and urban cities both near and far to the capital were to be educated in these beliefs and values and carry on the teachings in future generations. Ultimately, the state wanted to instill these beliefs in the newly literate population and create a more collectively neo-Confucianist commoner society in the years to come.

This goal of maximizing state-sponsored education is further demonstrated in future reprints beyond 1481. The 1490 version reduced the amount of stories which refined the material to only the most relevant stories and made it easier to store and read regularly.³⁰ The 1514 version reduced the amount of stories of Chinese origin and replaced them with those of Korean origin which further distinguished a Korean national identity.³¹ Finally, the 1617 version included many more stories to honor the dead following the recent Japanese invasions (1592-1598), ultimately tempering greater nationalism and support for Joseon.³² Through editing, reprinting, and distributing moral texts, Joseon was able to utilize the new increased literacy rates to spread state-sponsored beliefs and serve a political agenda.

3.2 Buddhism

Another example of literacy as a tool of influencing belief is the prevalence of Buddhist sources. Though the ideals of neo-Confucianism and Buddhism come in direct conflict with one another, King Sejong still made great efforts to protect Buddhism as he was privately a staunch believer in the religion by 1446.³³ As such, just as many of the first books printed with the Gutenberg press were Bibles and other religious texts, many of the first sources published in Hangeul were both translated and original Buddhist texts. For example, in 1447, King Sejong himself wrote and compiled the *Worin cheongang jigok* (“The Song of the Moon’s Reflection on a Thousand Rivers”) in memory of Queen Soheon (1395-1446). This source is an epic poem that celebrates and venerates the life of Shakyamuni Buddha (~480-400 BCE), the founder of Buddhism.³⁴ Ultimately, it teaches the tenets of Buddhism and sets the Buddha as an example of fulfillment of life. Along with this source, King Sejong allowed the translation, publication, and

²⁹ Oh, “Printing the Samgang Haengsil-to,” 16.

³⁰ Oh, “Printing the Samgang Haengsil-to,” 20.

³¹ Oh, “Printing the Samgang Haengsil-to,” 25.

³² Oh, “Printing the Samgang Haengsil-to,” 30-31.

³³ Jongmyung Kim, “King Sejong’s Buddhist Faith and the Invention of the Korean Alphabet: A Historical Perspective,” *Korea Journal* 47, no. 3 (September 2007): 143, <https://doi.org/10.25024/kj.2007.47.3.134>.

³⁴ Sejong Yi, *Worin cheongang jigok - The Song of the Moon’s Reflection on a Thousand Rivers*, trans. Academy of Korean Studies, 1447.

distribution of several Buddhist sutras during his reign. Out of the forty books translated into Korean in the 15th century, twenty-nine of them (72.5%) were Buddhist texts.³⁵

The Hall of Worthies and elite who firmly supported neo-Confucianism saw Buddhism as heresy, ultimately leading to attempts to restrict Buddhism. According to the *Sejong sillok* (“Annals of King Sejong”), Sejong refused many restrictions, but did agree to prohibit monks from entering the capital area, interrogate Buddhist religious orders, reduce the number of Buddhist orders from seven to two, and prohibit minors from entering monkhood.³⁶ Here, the ways in which King Sejong worked to balance the scholarly insistence of neo-Confucianism with tolerance for Buddhism is evident. Though King Sejong privately believed in Buddhism, he could not publicly be Buddhist and appeased certain tensions to avoid the backlash he would receive from the scholars and elite of Joseon.

Regardless, the efforts made by King Sejong were clear; he wanted to preserve and promulgate Buddhist belief to the common people through Hangeul. If these sources were only intended for the monks, then they would have retained their classical Chinese form and not be translated at all. Monks were one of the few groups in Korea that had the time and resources to learn classical Chinese for their religious practices. The fact that they were brought into Hangeul indicates the intent to spread Buddhist belief to the newly literate common people. Accordingly, in the prefaces for the Hangeul-translated *Worin seokbo* (“A Biography of the Buddha Shakyamuni on the Moon’s Reflection”) and *A Detailed Account of the Buddha*, King Sejong writes that the purpose for the translation was to enable people to more easily understand the content.³⁷

There is even an argument to be made that the creation of Hangeul and the promulgation of Buddhism are related. According to Dr. Jongmyun Kim:

When the Festival of Water and Land (Suryukhoe), a Buddhist ritual of offering food to water spirits and hungry ghosts, was held at the edge of the Hangang river in 1432, numerous Seoulites, regardless of their social status, gathered together, providing an opportunity for the revival of Buddhism in society (14/2/15; 21/4/19). The plan to create the Korean alphabet was established around that time.³⁸

Taking this into consideration along with the fact that King Sejong continued to grow deeper in his faith as the creation of Hangeul finalized suggests such a connection between the two. Dr. Kim goes on to write that, “after the invention of the Korean alphabet, King Sejong’s faith in Buddhism became even deeper than before and its result was the translation of Buddhist texts into the vernacular script”.³⁹ Here, we see how King Sejong continued to use Hangeul as a tool to deepen his own understanding of Buddhism by translating texts. This could likewise be

³⁵ Kim, “King Sejong’s Buddhist Faith,” 146.

³⁶ Kim, “King Sejong’s Buddhist Faith,” 142.

³⁷ Kim, “King Sejong’s Buddhist Faith,” 148.

³⁸ Kim, “King Sejong’s Buddhist Faith,” 143.

³⁹ Kim, “King Sejong’s Buddhist Faith,” 145.

seen among the people of Seoul as “the general public also maintained a strong belief in Buddhism during King Sejong’s reign.”⁴⁰

3.3 Militarism

One final example of state influence on the people via literacy can be seen in the military expansion. Like Buddhism, Joseon’s neo-Confucianist beliefs did not support military build up, but the threat of war and invasion necessitated it. During and after the Imjin War (1592-1598) against Japan, Joseon’s lack of close quarter combat was exposed. Korean forces relied heavily on their tactical success with firearms and bows; mastery of the sword was dismissed as supplementary and eventually the sword was replaced with standard issues short knives – a weapon inadequate to manage the reach and power of Japanese sword techniques.⁴¹ As such, Korean officials felt the need to develop new training methodology in swordsmanship along with other weapons and skills in order to meet the superior military ability of the Japanese. To form this stronger military state, they needed a way to efficiently instruct combat techniques to a wide audience and efficiently train a substantial number of troops. Since martial arts was historically an oral tradition in Korea, they turned to the new literacy to instead create a scholarly approach to martial arts.

By the end of the Imjin War in 1598, the *Muyejebo* (“Illustrated Manual of Martial Art”) was compiled under the command of King Seonjo and written with the knowledge of Qi Jiguang (1528-1588), a successful general of the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) with vast tactical and technical knowledge of combat and weaponry.⁴² Qi Jiguang’s knowledge was significant as the Joseon Army specifically needed a way to challenge the close quarters combat ability of Japanese swordsmanship. Jiguang himself had adopted Japanese swordsmanship firsthand through seized scrolls of the *kage-ryu* (“School of the Shadow”) from the Taizhou Battle in 1561.⁴³ As such, his knowledge of the techniques of the *kage-ryu* now given to the Joseon Army in the *Muyejebo* better equipped the army to challenge the Japanese. The *Muyejebo* was the first manual of close combat fighting systems produced in Korea; it contained illustrated guides for the shield, thorn spear, long spear, trident, staff, and *jangdo* (long sabre).⁴⁴ With illustrated guides of forms and techniques for weaponry as detailed to the precise hand placements, postures, and footwork, the *Muyejebo* was certainly capable as a tool for learning martial arts through literacy.⁴⁵

Furthermore, similar to the *Samgang haengsil-to*, the *Muyejebo* was further expanded upon in future sources to better instruct martial arts. The *Muyejebo Beonyeoksokjip* (“Sequel to Illustrated Manual of Martial Art”) compiled in 1610 instructed in *gwonbeop* (“fist method”), blue dragon moon sabre, the hook spear, and *waeggeom* (“sword combat”).⁴⁶ With the new

⁴⁰ Kim, “King Sejong’s Buddhist Faith,” 143.

⁴¹ Bok Kyu Choi, “Dissemination of Japanese Swordsmanship to Korea,” *Martial Arts Studies* 1, no. 6 (2018): 28, https://www.academia.edu/en/76835647/Dissemination_of_Japanese_Swordsmanship_to_Korea.

⁴² Choi, “Dissemination of Japanese Swordsmanship to Korea,” 28.

⁴³ Choi, “Dissemination of Japanese Swordsmanship to Korea,” 29.

⁴⁴ Choi, “Dissemination of Japanese Swordsmanship to Korea,” 29.

⁴⁵ Choi, “Dissemination of Japanese Swordsmanship to Korea,” 31.

⁴⁶ Choi, “Dissemination of Japanese Swordsmanship to Korea,” 29.

teachings in gwonbeop, one could be taught more practical techniques such as unarmed combat in the circumstance that one loses their weapon amid combat. Additionally, the sequel went further in depth on the practical use of the sword in combat and refined the *kage-ryu* technique by adding new postures and forms.⁴⁷ In the *Seonjo Sillok* (“Annals of King Seonjo”), it is found that the people organized children’s troops and used these manuals to teach them swordsmanship.⁴⁸ Here, the intent of printing and distributing these sources is fulfilled: the literate society was now able to widely access and learn/teach martial arts techniques in schools. The *Muyejebo Beonyeoksokjip* would continue to be used until the *Muyesinbo* (“New Illustrated Manual of Martial Arts”) in 1759, which added instructions for more weapons, and the *Muyedobotongji* (“Comprehensive Illustrated Manual of Martial Arts”) in 1790, which added equestrian arts and through greater cultural exchange, compiled techniques from different Japanese schools of swordsmanship other than the *kage-ryu*.⁴⁹

5. Conclusions

In analyzing the materials created and distributed by the state following the advent of Hangeul, the ways in which the state controlled and influenced the culture of their people becomes vastly apparent. Neo-Confucianist values, particularly the three hierarchical bonds of filial sons, loyal subjects, and devoted women can be seen in the creation of the *Samgang haengsil-to* and its several reprints. Buddhist belief was perhaps a major influence in the creation of Hangeul and ultimately was promoted with the mass proliferation of translations and original works that teach its tenets. Finally, martial arts techniques were recorded and distributed in order to efficiently shape a stronger military state to meet the threat of foreign invasion. All of these motivations were made possible through a newly literate society. By facilitating literacy, the Joseon Dynasty was able to promulgate certain morals, beliefs, and lifestyles to their people through the production and distribution of sources. If these texts were ineffective in achieving the desired diffusion of the state values, the translations and edits made for convenience, more precise instruction, and new material would not have been created, printed, and redistributed.

With such relevant findings on the influence and control of culture from the state, new questions develop from this interstice of literacy and culture. How might we instead see the people use literacy to develop a culture that is independent from the state? How might a literate population backfire for the state with the people learning “undesirable” materials? Such questions are not bound to the geographic or temporal restrictions of my paper in pre-modern Seoul, and I hope to invite and galvanize further research into the relationship between communication, literacy, and culture.

⁴⁷ Choi, “Dissemination of Japanese Swordsmanship to Korea,” 31-32.

⁴⁸ Choi, “Dissemination of Japanese Swordsmanship to Korea,” 32.

⁴⁹ Choi, “Dissemination of Japanese Swordsmanship to Korea,” 33-34.

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The Revolution of the *Rose of Versailles*: Identity, Gender & Sexuality in 1970s Shoujo Manga and Beyond
By Stacy Torres

The Rose of Versailles,¹ a historical romance and girl's comic, became an utter sensation in Japan upon its 1972 serialization. Set in 18th century France and culminating in revolution, the tale of Marie Antoinette and the fictional Oscar Francois de Jarjayes was eagerly read by teen girls. The craze led to a host of multimedia adaptations,² and the death of the most popular character brought teens (and their classes) to a standstill.³ Its hold on young Japanese readers was unprecedented. So too was its mark on shoujo manga (comics aimed at young girls). The 21st-century English reprints declare that the *Rose of Versailles*, the “queen” of shoujo manga, utterly changed the genre.⁴ Critics and shoujo manga scholars concur on its importance, acknowledging it as part of a body of work⁵ that expanded shoujo manga⁶ in the 1970s. Furthermore, its politics of gender identity have offered academics diverse analyses. The *Rose of Versailles* has cemented itself as a pioneer within shoujo manga history. But the scope of its groundbreaking nature (in and out of the genre) has yet to be assessed.

Within the realms of gender, sexuality, and shoujo manga and how they intersect with Japanese society in the 1970s, I seek to consider how the *Rose of Versailles* was simultaneously exceptional and not for its genre. I propose that the golden age of 1970s shoujo manga was symbolized but not wholly begun by the *Rose of Versailles* and its peers, lightly acquiescing to those who de-emphasize this body of manga. While attending to its place within shoujo manga history, the series will be scrutinized through a thematic dichotomy of gender and sexuality. Rather than its literary techniques, the *Rose of Versailles* was truly unconventional in its depiction of gender identity and agency, while at the same time partly conformist in notions of gender relations and sexual identity. In this manner, the *Rose of Versailles* was revolutionary for its genre, and a product of its time.

There is a scholarly consensus that the *Rose of Versailles* was transformative for its time, with studies focusing on its gender and sexuality-related content while situating it within a broader transformation of the 1970s. Riyoko Ikeda, the author, is cited as a member of the “Year 24 Group.”⁷ This term⁸ was coined for the authors whose pioneering works reshaped the genre, leading to the so-called “golden age” for shoujo manga of the 1970s. Publications discussing the *Rose of Versailles* mention its essential role in a wave of groundbreaking manga. Informing this

¹ Also known as *Berusaiyu no Bara* in Japanese, or *Berubara* for short.

² Riyoko Ikeda, *Rose of Versailles*, 5 vols (Ontario: Udon Entertainment, 2021).

³ Deborah Shamoan, “Revolutionary Romance: ‘the Rose of Versailles’ and the Transformation of Shoujo Manga,” *Mechademia 2* (2007): 3–17, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41503726>, 3.

⁴ Ikeda, *Rose of Versailles*, 5 vols.

⁵ Shamoan, “Revolutionary Romance,” 3.

⁶ Frederik L Schodt, *Manga! Manga!: The World of Japanese Comics* (Tokyo, New York: Kodansha International, 1988), 98, 100.

⁷ Kayo Takeuchi, “The Genealogy of Japanese ‘Shōjo Manga’ (Girls’ Comics) Studies,” *U.S.-Japan Women’s Journal*, no. 38 (2010): 81–112, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/42772011>, 82.

⁸ The Year 24 Group is also known by the name “Showa 24” or the “Magnificent 49ers.” The number corresponds to the year these authors were born in or around: 1949 (or Showa 24 in the Japanese era system).

discourse is how Year 24 manga, and *Versailles* in particular, brought critical attention to shoujo manga for the first time.⁹ The comics of the Year 24 group led to critical analysis of the genre as a whole, and their innovative storytelling distinguished the 1970s as the golden age of shoujo manga. Yet the hyper-focus on the works of the Year 24 group has been critiqued,¹⁰ and some have argued that the 1960s was when shoujo manga saw changes in their tone, content, or audience. Such trends likely *culminated* in, rather than started in, the 1970s. As the voices noting this are relatively quiet, the *Rose of Versailles* is mostly seen as revolutionary for its part in the shoujo generic shift.

Beyond its contributions to the genre, much more can be said about how *Versailles* portrays gender. *Berubara* discourse in particular emphasizes subversive themes of gender — and to a lesser extent sexuality — within the manga. This is embodied in Oscar, the “most iconic”¹¹ female-to-male cross-dressing manga character and a source of inspiration and discussion for readers and academics alike. Some academics have focused on *Versailles*’s queer potential. Owing to the presence of non-heterosexual attraction or gender nonconformity, the English reprints are marked as LGBTQ. Others have remarked on its attempts, whether successful or not, to escape gender roles and heterosexual inequality in a world infused with them. The *Rose of Versailles*’s portrayal of gender identity garners most of the attention and praise of scholars; very few have challenged its depiction of sexuality from a non-heterosexual standpoint. In passing, Abbit has compared the series to another work which, unlike *Versailles*, breaks not only the bounds of gender but also that of sexuality.¹² The *Rose of Versailles* may have been innovative in the context of critical attention and shifting genre conventions in the 1970s. However, it must be stressed that the truly innovative aspects of *Versailles* lie within the text itself and its relationship to Japanese society, rather than as a part of Year 24 titles. It is through gender and sexuality that I will primarily appreciate the *Rose of Versailles*’s (un)conventionality.

For this purpose, attention will be paid to studies of shoujo manga history, the Western discourse on *Versailles*, and select shoujo manga. Areas centered on shoujo manga history will rely upon select readings of manga from the 1950s to 1970s, and papers discussing shoujo manga trends. The primary study of early shoujo manga in this paper will be limited to the translation of *Princess Knight* and the untranslated *Fuichin-San*. This small sample supports the notion that 1970s shoujo manga were particularly ascendant regarding generic conventions. It will be supplemented by papers on these eras, as the physical decay and expendable nature of shoujo manga in its infancy has left many early titles unavailable or untranslated. A lack of access and a language barrier account for the limits of my study of early manga and Japanese academic discourse on the *Rose of Versailles*. A work of the 1970s, namely *The Poe Clan*, will be analyzed to complement *Versailles* in the changing state of shoujo manga.

⁹ Ibid, 83.

¹⁰ Ibid, 84.

¹¹ Marta Fanasca, “Tales of Lilies and Girls’ Love. The Depiction of Female/Female Relationships in Yuri Manga,” *Studi E Saggi* (2020), <https://doi.org/10.36253/978-88-5518-260-7.03>, 52.

¹² Erica Stevens Abbitt, “Androgyny and Otherness: Exploring the West through the Japanese Performative Body,” *Asian Theatre Journal* 18, no. 2 (2001): 249–56, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1124155>, 253.

Fundamentally, the *Rose of Versailles* and its cohort were lauded because previous iterations of shoujo manga were viewed as childish. Upon examining two of the more popular shoujo manga series in the 1950s and 60s, *Princess Knight* and *Fuichin-San*, this judgment seems fitting. Serialized from 1957 to 1962, *Fuichin-San* was a popular shoujo comedy manga for children. It follows the titular Fuichin, a silly girl living in Japanese-occupied Manchuria sometime in the early 20th century. It is filled with gags and humorous illustrations suited to its audience,¹³ reflecting shoujo manga demographics prior to the 1970s. It is not that these shoujo manga had an audience of children in particular. Rather, shoujo manga in the 1950s and early 60s were simply *only* for younger audiences. It maintains a similar lighthearted nature as did *Princess Knight*, serialized in the 1950s and reprinted in the 60s. It is one of the earliest (if not the first) shoujo manga, and even influenced Riyoko Ikeda when creating the *Rose of Versailles*.¹⁴ *Princess Knight* concerns the fantasy escapades of the sword-fighting Princess Sapphire. Possessing both a boy's heart and a girl's heart,¹⁵ she must reconcile the desire to live as a girl full-time while juggling the demands of princehood. Each chapter has a cartoonish cast of witches, pirates, and cherubs. Like the other shoujo manga of its time, it had no deeper themes. It aligns with the general “simple entertainment”¹⁶ of girls comics that were generally present before the 1970s. The text is also a product of its time, being rooted in dated gender essentialism by equating sex with gender. Such handling, alongside its early shoujo simplicity, signifies a vast difference in narrative complexity when placed next to works such as the *Rose of Versailles*.

Critics and scholars of 1970s shoujo manga were correct to praise their substance, especially in contrast to earlier titles. Indeed, prior shoujo manga are stereotyped as simple melodramas and comedies aimed towards younger audiences,¹⁷ while their counterparts of the 1970s pivoted toward more mature¹⁸ and multifaceted storytelling for older audiences.¹⁹ That the genre rose to new heights is indisputable. The timing of this, however, is a point of contention to a minority. Having studied the output of the Weekly Margaret magazine from the 1960s (in which the *Rose of Versailles* was serialized), Kálovics has proposed that the feats attributed to works of the 1970s in fact started in the prior decade.²⁰ Her study is notably difficult to replicate due to the rarity of remaining copies of 1960s shoujo manga printings, especially as most have gone untranslated. A specific example of a 1968 manga being a prelude to later trends may be found in the exceedingly popular *Attaku No. 1*. It is not particularly complicated as it centers around a school volleyball team. Yet it is remarkable in how it celebrates a “psychologically independent” heroine who seizes happiness on her own terms, rather than being defined by her

¹³ Toshiko Ueda, *Fuichin-San* [Miss Fuichin], vol. 1 (Japan: Shogakukan, 2015).

¹⁴ Bart Beaty and Stephen Weiner, eds., *Critical Survey of Graphic Novels: Manga* (Ipswich: Salem Press, 2013), 266.

¹⁵ Osamu Tezuka, *Princess Knight. Part 1*, trans. Maya Rosewood, vol. 1 (New York: Vertical, 2011).

¹⁶ Deborah Shamoan, “Revolutionary Romance: ‘the Rose of Versailles’ and the Transformation of Shojo Manga,” *Mechademia 2* (2007): 3–17, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41503726>, 5.

¹⁷ Shamoan, “Revolutionary Romance,” 3.

¹⁸ Takeuchi, 82.

¹⁹ Deborah Shamoan, *Passionate Friendship* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2012), 120–121.

²⁰ Dalma Kálovics, “The Missing Link of Shōjo Manga History: The Changes in 60s Shōjo Manga as Seen through the Magazine Shūkan Margaret,” *Academia.edu*, 2016, https://www.academia.edu/36310321/The_missing_link_of_sh%C5%8Djo_manga_history_the_changes_in_60s_sh%C5%8Djo_manga_as_seen_through_the_magazine_Sh%C5%ABkan_Margaret.

male lover following his death.²¹ This contrasts an ever-present trope of female identities depending on affirmation from male love interests.²² Firmly entrenched in shoujo manga history even before the 1970s, the works of the Year 24 Group (*Versailles* included) had to struggle to subvert it. The *Rose of Versailles* and its peers are credited as pioneers within the shoujo genre. It should be noted, however, that the lack of academic attention for pre-1970s shoujo manga has given the “golden age” such depth in praise and analysis.

While the shoujo manga of the 1970s receive a great deal of notice from intellectuals and shoujo manga historians, this critical and academic spotlight is nonetheless warranted. A brief look at Moto Hagio’s famous 1972 series, *The Poe Clan* reflects how Year 24 manga authors distinguished the 1970s from prior years. It is credited alongside the *Rose of Versailles* with drawing critics and mass attention to the shoujo manga genre for the first time. A historical epic akin to the *Rose of Versailles*, the two series practically encapsulate the golden age of shoujo manga. Unlike the aforementioned series, *The Poe Clan* is targeted toward an older female audience, with dramatic and nonlinear storytelling. It details the life of the vampire Edgar and his family throughout the centuries, with themes of what it means to be human, loss, love, and immortality.²³ *The Poe Clan* marks a dramatic change in the genre. Just as the *Rose of Versailles* does, it concerns itself with the psychological turmoil and personal desires of its characters amidst a foreign backdrop. Both diverge from the relatively carefree, comedic, and child-aimed works of the 1950s and 1960s, reflecting the contemporary demographic shift for shoujo manga. *The Poe Clan* reaffirms how the *Rose of Versailles* was innovative in its time due to the timing of their Year 24 authors, and the refreshing depth of their narratives.

While thus far this paper has considered how the *Rose of Versailles* may be seen through its place in shoujo manga history, by no means is that its defining achievement. Beyond its gilded setting and dramatism, what scholars and readers point to most is how it handles gender identity. The cross-dressing, androgynous noblewoman Oscar is at the forefront of this subject. She proves remarkable by traversing the boundaries of gender, openly cross-dressing and living as a man with general acceptance despite the 18th-century setting. With “masculine strength and agency” and “feminine beauty and empathy,” she asserts her own sense of identity which is neither fully masculine nor feminine.²⁴ From the very beginning of the story, Oscar represents a liberated self-identity by avoiding prescribed roles. By blurring the lines of gender, she cemented herself as a queer icon of early shoujo manga. For this reason she proved exceedingly popular, enough to eventually surpass Marie Antoinette and become the main character of the series.

Oscar’s gender identity conflict, alongside rising commoner dissatisfaction and class struggle, later becomes the focal point of the story. Through the fermentation of revolution, *Versailles* posits the insignificance of class and the equality of man. Out of many, one example of this is Oscar’s remark that human beings are free, possessed and enslaved by no one.²⁵ This follows her assertion that she should be viewed in her own terms, rather than simply the child of

²¹ Kazuko Suzuki, “Pornography or Therapy?: Japanese Girls Creating the Yaoi Phenomenon,” in *Millennium Girls: Today’s Girls around the World*, edited by Sherrie A. Inness (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 1998), 246-247.

²² Ibid, 249-250.

²³ Moto Hagio, *The Poe Clan*, ed. Kristi Valenti, trans. Rachel Thorn, vol. 1 (Seattle: Fantagraphics Books, 2019).

²⁴ Shamoan, “Revolutionary Romance,” 11-12.

²⁵ Ryoko Ikeda, *Rose of Versailles*, trans. Jocelyne Allen, vol. 3 (Ontario: Udon Entertainment Corp, 2020), 76.

her father. By insisting on living in a male role, irrespective of others, Oscar fully asserts her own personhood where it would otherwise be denied. Simultaneously, the underclass within the story incites the French Revolution with ideals of human equality and agency. These themes parallel Oscar's grappling with how to live her life and her ultimate choice. After facing the prospect of marriage and questioning whether it is the ultimate "happiness" for women, Oscar chooses to live as she always had. She asserts her humanity to her father and declares that she will live like "the child of the god of war, Mars."²⁶ Alongside the background of underclass agitation and declarations of common humanity, Oscar's choice to continue living like a man is similarly radical. Through the interwoven nature of these two plot points, the text presents the idea that people are equal at heart while breaking down gender essentialism.

The social-historical context behind shoujo manga in the 1970s provides much-needed nuance to the *Rose of Versailles* and its discourse on gender. While the rise of the women's liberation movement prominently marked the 1970s, Japan still held rigid divisions along economic, social, and cultural lines. The postwar years of Japan saw continuities in the gendered roles of workplace labor of the years prior. In the 1960s, young women in factories were constrained by "paternalistic management policies," while in offices women had little prospects for advancement in low-level clerical jobs and were required to quit upon marriage.²⁷ Though lawsuits and collective bargaining paved the way for a "right to work" for married women starting in the 60s, corporate spaces still avoided embracing women as fully-fledged employees.²⁸ The dividing lines of gender could be found in and out of the workplace, backed by administrative action. State and business institutions in the postwar period outlined and managed "'proper' gender roles"²⁹ through school curricula, and economic or corporate policies. Bureaucratic and company programs sought to "elevate" the role of housewives in women³⁰ due to the persisting conception of the "good wife, wise mother." The efforts of these postwar authorities signal the limited scope of gender identity in 1970s Japan. Such prescribed roles fueled the rise of the second-wave feminist movement in the 1970s.

The 1970s were a turning point not only for shoujo manga but for women in terms of politics and self-identity. The second-wave feminist movement in Japan came to the foreground amid changes in women's working patterns. Female employment critically increased in the 1970s,³¹ expanding women's participation in roles outside the home. The developing feminist movement emerged to "liberate women" while stressing awareness of the barriers that they lived with.³² In tandem with their efforts to combat sexism, the movement stressed identity consciousness. With shoujo manga as a potential medium for women to "express" themselves,³³ efforts to participate in the identity of "womanhood" followed by authors and readers alike. As

²⁶ Ibid, 98.

²⁷ Andrew Gordon, *A Modern History of Japan: From Tokugawa Times to the Present*, 4th ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020), 268-269.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid, 271.

³⁰ Ibid, 271-272.

³¹ Fusami Ogi, "Gender Insubordination in Japanese Comics (Manga) for Girls," in *Illustrating Asia: Comics, Humor Magazines, and Picture Books*, ed. John A Lent (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2001), 173.

³² Suzuki, "Pornography or Therapy?," in *Millennium Girls*, 247.

³³ Ogi, "Gender Insubordination in Japanese Comics (Manga) for Girls," 176.

part of this, shoujo manga in the 1970s explored the struggle inherent to life and womanhood as an identity.³⁴ Shoujo manga became a space to create and interact with a discourse on (what authors and readers perceived as) the shared interests and experiences of women. Though such rhetoric was based on essentialist and subjective notions of gender, it reflected attempts to use the “shoujo” voice to “challenge both generic and social conventions.”³⁵ Through this identification, shoujo manga became a place to confront and diverge from imposed gender expectations.

This context of identity consciousness and liberation is entrenched within the *Rose of Versailles*. Ikeda herself “consciously” produced the series under the influence of the Women’s Liberation Movement, aiming to have the French Revolution in the story represent the “inner revolution of the Japanese women” who struggled to choose their own lives.³⁶ Within *Versailles*, the gender conflict and Oscar’s determination on how to live her life reflects awareness and choice. The *Rose of Versailles* thus can be read as an empowering product of second-wave feminism. Beyond consciousness, Oscar’s ambiguous gender presentation signals a freedom that would have appealed to young readers at the time. This escape from typecasted gender roles explains her popularity with readers decades afterward.

Also explaining the staying power of the *Rose of Versailles* with female readers in the 1970s was the presence of an equal heterosexual relationship within the story. The contemporary readership of the *Rose of Versailles* found the pairing of Oscar and Andre to be aspirational. Their relationship and volume 4 sex scene (with a gender-ambiguous rendering lacking definite “roles”) had a “profound impact on girl readers.”³⁷ The reasoning behind this impact, according to Shamoon, is that Oscar and Andre avoid the trappings of heterosexual relationships of the era. The *Rose of Versailles* avoids the presumption of dominance and subordination along gendered lines by leveling the dynamics. Part of this is through the visual gender ambiguity of both characters, with Oscar’s cross-dressing³⁸ and noble status, alongside the “feminization” and subordination of Andre³⁹ as her man-servant. Stereotypes are subverted visually and otherwise, creating a sense of similarity and equality between the two. Andre is described as Oscar’s “shadow”,⁴⁰ and the two are likened to the twins Castor and Pollux.⁴¹ In this manner, Ikeda strikingly avoids the “love trap” prevalent within shoujo manga heterosexual relationships. The so-called “love trap” trope is essentially the female protagonist subsuming her identity, for the sake of affirmation and love, into that of the male love interest. Because Oscar does not need to sacrifice her identity for Andre, who pines for her unrequited,⁴² the love trap is avoided. This leads to the conception of an equal relationship between the two, unmarred by inequality

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Fusamai Ogi, “Beyond Borders: Shōjo Manga and Gender,” trans. Lucy Fraser, Isabelle Bettridge, and Liisa Kuru, *S Journal*, no. 54 (2018): 75–97, <https://doi.org/10.2307/27159867>, 76.

³⁶ Nobuko Anan, “The Rose of Versailles: Women and Revolution in Girls’ Manga and the Socialist Movement in Japan,” *The Journal of Popular Culture* 47, no. 1 (February 2014): 41–63, <https://doi.org/10.1111/jpcu.12107>, 11.

³⁷ Shamoon, *Passionate Friendship*, 131.

³⁸ Shamoon, “Revolutionary Romance,” 4.

³⁹ Ibid, 12.

⁴⁰ Ikeda, vol. 3, 441.

⁴¹ Riyoko Ikeda, *The Rose of Versailles*, trans. Jocelyne Allen, vol. 4 (Ontario: Udon Entertainment, 2021), 38.

⁴² Shamoon, *Passionate Friendship*, 125.

between the sexes. Thus, the series offered something new to female readers in terms of this equal relationship.

In spite of the thematic gender innovations, present within the *Rose of Versailles* are moments that undermine the gender equality argument. This can be argued with the literal text and in a theoretical sense. Within the narrative, tropes of love interest infringement are used without a critical eye. The most egregious example is when Andre forces himself upon Oscar in volume 2. Declaring his love for her, he grabs and kisses her after telling her to “cry out” and scream.⁴³ He tears off her shirt upon a bed while she cries.⁴⁴ He nearly assaults her but comes to his senses. The connotations of this scene are disturbing, to say the least. Afterwards, it is never discussed again. What consequence it does have on the narrative seems to be the message that Oscar does not want to accept Andre’s love for her. Shamoan argues that Oscar does not acknowledge her feelings for Andre until later on.⁴⁵ Nevertheless, her resistance to Andre and the lack of consent in this early moment muddles that argument. In another scene, Andre kisses the presumably unconscious Oscar after a bar fight, causing her to cry silently.⁴⁶ Unrealized feelings of love aside, such scenes undermine the argument of complete equality between them that Shamoan presents. That assault seems a gendered threat within the story, too, does not bode well for the equality of their heterosexual relationship. Ikeda’s failure to consider these plot points as problematic or potentially sexist constrains the sentiments of equality and agency inherent to the series.

Another argument, on a theoretical basis, presumes the undermining of gender equality through the entrenchment of heterosexuality and gender roles within manga and society. Suzuki argues the cross-dressing present within the *Rose of Versailles*, while freeing for the character Oscar, suggests that “feminism had not yet deeply penetrated into the minds of Japanese girls.”⁴⁷ She notes that the assumption of a male role to avoid inequality plausibly feeds back into conceptions of male dominance in the first place. In that sense, *Versailles* deconstructs gender assignment with the switch to an opposite role, yet continues the presence of gender roles by not breaking them entirely. Considering the identity-based politics of the 1970s and more strict divisions between gender roles, the latter idea seems unfeasible for a manga of that era. Suzuki also proposes that the end state of heterosexuality further confounds the issue of inequality. As she puts it, “equality gained while the protagonist is disguised as a man is lost once she falls in love, affirming her womanness and contentedness within the safety of her lover’s arms.”⁴⁸ That womanness is tied to heterosexuality, and gender to sex is nothing new within the *Rose of Versailles* and shoujo manga conventions as a whole (which will be touched upon later). Generally, the relationship between Andre and Oscar did escape much of the overt trappings and restrictive gender expectations of heterosexual relationships in reality. Yet in this theoretical sense, it can be said that the *Rose of Versailles* somehow conforms to societal constraints while escaping them.

⁴³ Riyoko Ikeda, *The Rose of Versailles*, trans. Mari Morimoto and Jocelyne Allen, vol. 2 (Ontario: Udon Entertainment, 2021), 424-425.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 432-431.

⁴⁵ Shamoan, 11.

⁴⁶ Ikeda, vol. 2, 137.

⁴⁷ Suzuki, 250.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

In the realm of queer sexuality, particularly themes of female same-sex love and desire within the series, the *Rose of Versailles* is at its most conforming. Its portrayals of such love and desire fall into shoujo tropes and cultural expectations that could not envision actualized, positive sapphic relationships. Rosalie is one of the few sympathetic characters in the series whose same-sex attraction is a plot point. A commoner who becomes a member of the Jarjayes household, she falls in love with Oscar. In a scene where Rosalie is sobbing from jealousy and despair, she is discovered by Andre. Pitying her, he tells her she is fortunate because she can “resign [herself], cry” and “then really fall in love” with a man someday.⁴⁹ Andre describes his own pain as “even greater”⁵⁰ as his love for Oscar is already “real” and unrequited. Rosalie’s feelings are thus dismissed as ingenuine relative to Andre’s love. Rather than valuing her unrequited love and that of Andre’s as the same, the story presumes her love is fleeting. Indeed, Rosalie falls into the exact line of thinking outlined by Andre by later marrying a man⁵¹ and thereby finding happiness. Rosalie is also rejected by Oscar, who tells her to “never forget” that she is female.⁵² Her assertion rebuffs the very notion of a relationship with a girl. Such language invalidates same-sex desire while overwhelmingly connoting gender with sexual orientation. In the *Rose of Versailles*, heterosexuality is the default and the status quo. Oscar reinforces this by saying that, were she born a man, she would have married Rosalie.⁵³ The *Rose of Versailles* cannot comprehend a lesbian or a lesbian relationship as an end state.

The progression of Rosalie’s romance aligns with fixed assumptions of obligatory heterosexuality in 20th-century Japanese culture. The contemporary female readership of *Versailles* was a notable example of this, with their influence suggesting greater socio-historical attitudes devaluing female same-sex intimacy. Though Andre was originally a background character, Ikeda followed fan sentiment through letters to develop both him and Oscar as characters.⁵⁴ Likewise, fans “rejected” Rosalie as a point of identification, preferring Andre⁵⁵ and his heterosexual pining. Shamoan conveys this as the fans having rejected a “childish” same-sex relationship between Rosalie and Oscar for the “adult” heterosexual relationship between Oscar and Andre.⁵⁶ Equating same-sex female desire with youth has its roots in Japanese culture. In the earlier 20th century, all-girls schools provided a sanctuary for same-sex intimacy (whether platonic, romantic, or otherwise). However, it was believed that such relations were a transitory “phase” for girls before entering adulthood and marriage with men.⁵⁷ In this light, the multitude of young girls holding crushes on Oscar are cast in an invalidating tone. Ikeda does not seriously weigh the pining of these girls; they will presumably grow from their “childish” crushes to marry men. This wouldn’t have been surprising in late 20th century Japan, when ending up with a man seemed inevitable (“you just haven’t met the right man yet”) or essential (“don’t you think you’d

⁴⁹ Ikeda vol. 2, 71.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid, 462-463.

⁵² Ibid, 58.

⁵³ Ibid, 143.

⁵⁴ Shamoan, “Revolutionary Romance,” 11.

⁵⁵ Ibid, 12.

⁵⁶ Ibid, 10.

⁵⁷ Ibid, 5.

be better off with a man?”).⁵⁸ Such conceptions mirror Rosalie’s arc, and explain the lack of a positive sapphic relationship in the story. Within the pages of the *Rose of Versailles*, the propriety of a lesbian relationship is impossible.

Though the English publications are marked as “LGBTQ,” any positive queer representation seems limited to Oscar’s cross-dressing. There is the potential for queer sexuality within *Versailles*. Oscar is continuously fancied by young women throughout the story. Though she dons male garb, the open knowledge that she is cross-dressing does not deter these women.⁵⁹ This, in effect, demonstrates a frequent “queer desire” for Oscar within the story, which is simultaneously homosexual and heterosexual while neither at the same time.⁶⁰ Whether these women fancy Oscar’s womanhood, manhood, or both is unspecified. This subversive gender ambiguity and its appeal is not subtext. At one point, Oscar flouts male suitors at a ball by dancing with and kissing eager women.⁶¹ But Oscar, despite her allure to men and women alike, is strictly heterosexual. And lesbian desire, when confronted directly within the story, is a topic of scandal. Volume 2 includes accusations of lesbianism toward Marie Antoinette (reflecting reality), as a part of a trial implicating her with the historical diamond necklace affair. In a moment where she is accused of being a paramour to the queen, Oscar declares to cut her accuser down. In uproar she states “What a joke! I, Lord Oscar, lesbian?! I’m breaking out in hives!”⁶² This confounds Duggan’s argument that the gender ambiguity in *Versailles* frees up queer forms of sexuality.⁶³ Queer sexuality in *Versailles* is easily censured when not cloaked in ambiguity. Even with Oscar’s androgyny and the potential of queer love directed at her character, this moment dashes a true reading of *Versailles* as a work of queer sexuality.

One of the more egregious depictions of a woman with same-sex desires occurs in a 1974 side story that succeeded the original run. It follows Oscar and other characters as they meet Marquise Elizabeth, based on the real-life serial killer Elizabeth Bathory.⁶⁴ The Marquise explicitly seeks out younger women for their beauty and blood. At one moment she kisses Rosalie, stating her love and desire to become “one”⁶⁵ by bathing in her blood. As Oscar hangs off a ledge during the climax, Elizabeth asks for her blood and tells her to “be mine.” Spurned, she proposes to charm her with her “skills,” remove her fingers and embrace her with her “supple” whip.⁶⁶ While threatening, her language and actions double as sultry innuendo. More explicit, however, is the moment where a hostage warns Oscar and Andre of how she will “have” her victims “in bed” before dismembering them.⁶⁷ Going beyond bloodlust, Elizabeth is decidedly a lesbian, and sexually predatory at that. Through this overtly gay female villain, the *Rose of Versailles* arguably paints female same-sex desire as pathological when it is not fleeting.

⁵⁸ Barbara Summerhawk, Darren McDonald, and Cheiron McMahon, *Queer Japan: Personal Stories of Japanese Lesbians, Gays, Transsexuals, and Bisexuals* (Norwich: New Victoria Publishers, 1998).

⁵⁹ Riyoko Ikeda, *The Rose of Versailles*, trans. Mari Morimoto, vol. 1 (Ontario: Udon Entertainment, 2021).

⁶⁰ Anne E Duggan, *Queer Enchantments: Gender, Sexuality, and Class in the Fairy-Tale Cinema of Jacques Demy* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2013), 118.

⁶¹ Ikeda, vol. 3, 120-127.

⁶² Ikeda, vol. 2, 188-89.

⁶³ Duggan, *Queer Enchantments*, 114.

⁶⁴ Ikeda, vol. 4, 487.

⁶⁵ *Ibid*, 455-456.

⁶⁶ *Ibid*, 472, 474.

⁶⁷ *Ibid*, 459.

This is unfortunate considering an old stereotype within Japanese society that lesbians are “disturbed individuals.”⁶⁸ The side story repeats this notion through Elizabeth; the rejected Marquise even commits suicide at the end.⁶⁹ *Versailles* connotes lesbianism with pathology, in tandem with naivete and scandal, to render the sapphic as flawed.

Shoujo manga in the 1970s was not a haven for female same-sex love. This is best exemplified in yuri, a subgenre of shoujo depicting lesbian characters or relationships.⁷⁰ Such relationships were depicted with inescapable stigma in this era. Yuri texts commonly portrayed characters with mental and emotional instability,⁷¹ often ending in the “death/suicide of one of the main characters.”⁷² The *Rose of Versailles*, portraying a deranged lesbian who commits suicide, was therefore nothing out of the ordinary for shoujo manga. In the 1970s all yuri manga shared themes of ridicule, separation, or tragedy.⁷³ A happy and validating ending for sapphic lovers was impossible to find in the genre. Within the cultural climate of manga (a reflection of Japanese society), female homosexuality signified erotica, abnormality, and death. Unlike yaoi (a shoujo manga subgenre concerning male homosexuality), yuri manga in the 1970s could not avoid the “reality” of society’s gaze.⁷⁴ Yuri lacked elements of escapism and did not appeal to female readers, potentially explaining fan disinterest in Rosalie. Steeped in taboo and misfortune, yuri did not help readers evade inequality the way yaoi manga or equal heterosexual relationships did. Lesbianism was anathema to the genre. According to Fujimoto, most shoujo manga have fundamental themes of women needing a man’s love to affirm their existence and their sexualities.⁷⁵ Generic understandings of lesbians combined with societal ones to showcase lesbianism as a pathology and tragedy. Contemporary yuri manga mirrored social expectations of the ideal end state: being paired with a man. Within this framing, Rosalie’s unhappiness with her unrequited love for Oscar, her resolution through marriage, and the villainy of Elizabeth is all the more regressive.

One may argue the homophobia within *Rose of Versailles* is period accurate. This ignores the plot point where a cross-dresser lives openly in the late 18th century. As historical fiction, the *Rose of Versailles* was (and still is) transformative because it broke with the past to challenge contemporary gender expectations. By depicting one of the most “iconic” female-to-male crossdressers in shoujo manga,⁷⁶ the *Rose of Versailles* warrants LGBTQ branding. But the same subversion could have been done with sexual orientation. The portrayal of sexuality in *Versailles* does bear weight in reality, as sapphic women have found the series appealing. Oscar’s popularity with readers, heterosexual or otherwise, is not lost upon Ikeda. This is referenced in Oscar’s ball scene with the “Lady Oscar fan club” and the countless girls nursing crushes on

⁶⁸ Summerhawk, McDonald and McMahon, 192-193.

⁶⁹ Ikeda, vol. 4, 483-484.

⁷⁰ Erica Friedman, *By Your Side: The First 100 Years of Yuri Anime & Manga* (Vista: Journey Press, 2022), 11.

⁷¹ *Ibid*, 75-76.

⁷² Fanasca, 56.

⁷³ Yukari Fujimoto, “Where Is My Place in the World? Early Shōjo Manga Portrayals of Lesbianism,” trans. Lucy Fraser, *Mechademia* 9 (2014): 25, <https://doi.org/10.5749/mech.9.2014.0025>, 27-33.

⁷⁴ *Ibid*, 33.

⁷⁵ *Ibid*, 35.

⁷⁶ Fanasca, 52.

her.⁷⁷ And the fan adoration for Lady Oscar in the Takarazuka stage version⁷⁸ has been linked by Jennifer Robertson to a “lesbian subtext” implicit in such performances.⁷⁹ Beyond attracting them, *Versailles* has left its mark on sapphic readers. People in the Japanese lesbian community have named “gender-bending manga” like the *Rose of Versailles* to be influential on their formation,⁸⁰ and queer studies scholar Akiko Mizoguchi professed that Oscar and Andre’s relationship helped “form her lesbian identity.”⁸¹ Genderbending Year 24 manga (like the *Rose of Versailles*) even inspired early lesbian doujinshi⁸² artists who created stories “explicitly lesbian for lesbians.”⁸³ In spite of its limits in portraying same-sex attraction, *Versailles* propelled these readers to express and develop their sexual orientations and identities. The potential *Versailles* has for validating queer experiences cannot be overstated due to its themes of gender expression and equality. And the limited queer desire manifested in the story must still be credited. Yet I propose that same-sex female desire had the chance to be impactfully expressed within the *Rose of Versailles*, had it subverted the trends of similar works. Despite the assertions of humanity, agency, and identity within the series that serve to validate sapphic readers, the *Rose of Versailles* could do better to represent their sexualities.

The intent of this paper was to elucidate how the *Rose of Versailles* was novel from a historical standpoint. In terms of popularity and novelty, the series arguably made its biggest mark through its use of agency in gender identity. Transgressing gender expectations present in contemporary Japan and its predecessors, the *Rose of Versailles* endeared itself to critics and readers who envisioned a break from gender constraints and unequal heterosexual relationships. These themes were enhanced by its psychologically complex narrative, which was not wholly unique to the series nor to Year 24 manga but merits mention nonetheless. And yet, with the faulty portrayal of same-sex attraction in the *Rose of Versailles*, the manga reflected and repeated the aspects of its society that were hostile to sapphic relationships. The 1970s social context of Japan lent both to its subversive and conformist elements. The series was simultaneously queer and heterosexual, feminist for the most part, and transgressive overall. The impact that the *Rose of Versailles* had on shoujo manga, popular culture, and on the hearts and minds of its readers

⁷⁷ Ikeda, vol. 3, 120.

⁷⁸ The Takarazuka Revue, an all-women’s theater troupe, employs women trained to perform both “male” and “female” roles. The male roles necessarily involve cross-dressing. On the stage these “*otokoyaku*” are to be understood as men. They simultaneously uphold and subvert the heterosexual and patriarchal notions inherent in their creation. The Revue has a long history of influencing a lesbian subculture and having lesbian/bi fans, likely a result of their technically “same-sex” romances and gender-crossing. It is precisely this environment that lends itself so well to the *Rose of Versailles* stage version, which combines the “girl prince” Lady Oscar with these other elements. They easily share an audience by complementing each other. The Takarazuka Revue and the *Rose of Versailles* are deeply intertwined due to the immensely successful nature of the Takarazuka run, their shared themes of cross-dressing, dubious gender identity and sexuality, and their shared obligations to the history of “shoujo” culture.

⁷⁹ Jennifer Robertson, *Takarazuka: Sexual Politics and Popular Culture in Modern Japan* (Berkeley: University Of California Press, 2001), 73; Erica Stevens Abbitt, “Androgyny and Otherness,” 252.

⁸⁰ James Welker, “Beautiful, Borrowed, and Bent: ‘Boys’ Love’ as Girls’ Love in Shoujo Manga,” *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 31, no. 3 (March 2006): 841–70, <https://doi.org/10.1086/498987>, 843.

⁸¹ Anan, 10.

⁸² Doujinshi is self-published print material typically in the form of manga, magazines or novels. It is associated with Japanese fandom, as they can be fan-made derivatives of other works.

⁸³ Friedman, 18-19.

cannot be overstated for these reasons. *Versailles* emboldened its readers, even if every revolution has its limits.

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The Southern Plains Macroeconomy and Colonization at Pecos Pueblo

By Adele Pasturel

Introduction

The Pueblo people of modern day New Mexico left traces of agricultural activity and small-scale hunting as early as 600 CE, long before erecting their trademark stone citadels. However, bison and elk remains unearthed after the eponymous pueblos¹ were abandoned contradict notions of an isolated society only connected to the wider world by the arrival of Spanish colonizers. In fact, the Pueblo sustained significant contact with various nomadic tribes of the Great Plains, notably the Plains Caddoans and Apaches, who hunted bison for meat, pelts, and bones. In particular, Pecos Pueblo, 25 miles east of Santa Fe, stands out for its military dominance, agricultural bounty, and centrality to the Plains-Pueblo interactive system. Coalescing around 1350 CE, Pecos Pueblo became a central point of exchange, making it a regional leader and a prime target for Spanish colonists in the mid-16th century.

Information about the Pecos derives mainly from archaeological and ethnographic sources. Despite their limitations, written sources penned by Spanish chroniclers attached to military missions in the late 1500s CE supplement the physical evidence of Pecos life in the protohistoric period (1450-1700 CE). Initial excavations of the site under Alfred Vincent Kidder in the 1920s represented the first scientific examination of the ruins and the first instances of archaeological support for Spanish accounts of regional trade activity. Subsequent excavations by more modern archaeologists led scholars like Baugh and Spielmann to develop economic and nutritional models to elucidate that exchange.

All of these accounts, records, and models account in a limited capacity for the effects of Spanish arrival in 1540. Imposing a now-familiar colonial model which combined political control with economic, ecological, linguistic, and cultural imperialism, the Spanish integrated the Pueblo people into their empire under the sovereignty of the newly established province of Nuevo Mexico. At Pecos Pueblo in particular, the regional trade centered in the city represented both the motivation for outright control as well as the tool wielded to secure it. The Spanish colonial model, in many instances, employed a self-reinforcing combination of economic control and cultural hegemony to establish authority. This paper argues that, to this end, the colonists subverted the regional economic systems already in place to spread their influence and replace native cultures with European frameworks. Rather than destroy and rebuild, the colonists appropriated the existing regional trade network, which was already adapted to spreading goods and information across desert landscapes, and replaced Pecos Pueblo as the central nexus. This process allowed European influence to spread much more effectively than it otherwise would have, reflecting the sophistication and importance of the exchange network built by the Pecos.

Pecos Pueblo

¹ 'Pueblo,' the Spanish word for town, came to designate both the people and their settlements. Here, 'Pueblo' refers to the people while 'pueblo' refers to any town inhabited by its members. Similarly, 'the Pecos' refers to a specific group inhabiting Pecos Pueblo (also just called Pecos), the city.

Long-term, sedentary habitation of the Upper Pecos River Valley grew steadily from 600-1200 CE but took off in 1325 CE due to a significant influx of migrating populations. While Pecos settlements usually consisted of six to twelve small villages of a few hundred people, Pecos Pueblo quickly developed into the local population center as residents of other villages converged there around 1450 CE. Population estimates vary among historians, but Spanish invaders recorded 2,000 residents upon their arrival in 1540.² Primarily horticulturalists, the Pecos' complex irrigation systems, religious rituals, and architecture all expressed the centrality of corn to their existence. A yearly surplus of corn, as well as beans, squash, and local vegetables, ensured survival in years of poor harvest and allowed for the population to flourish into the surrounding countryside. To supplement their diet, the Pecos hunted local game including mule deer, antelope, rabbit, and even bison.³

The combination of a strategic, defensible location, a consistent yearly corn surplus, and considerable manpower provided Pecos Pueblo with a relative power advantage over its neighbors. According to Pedro de Castañeda, who chronicled the first Spanish expedition to encounter the Pecos, that people “boast that no one has been able to subjugate them and that they subjugate [whichever] pueblos they want to.”⁴ Despite living on an arid plateau, irrigation and manpower generated an abundant corn supply to store for lean years, allowing a stable and healthy population to dominate the surrounding region. Alternately peaceful and domineering, the Pecos played on their city's natural advantages to prevail over other local pueblos. A regional powerhouse, Pecos Pueblo stood out to the Spanish invaders, whose arrival in 1540 shifted the local power balance. Suddenly, local dominance, surplus corn, and plentiful resources positioned Pecos Pueblo as a coveted prize rather than a regional juggernaut.

The Plains-Pueblo Interactive System

Perhaps even more important to the colonists than the pueblo itself, in terms of tangible incentives for conquest, was the flourishing trade relationship between the Pecos and their Plains neighbors. In 1450, an exploratory mission dispatched by the imperial viceroy in Mexico City wound its way to the walls of Pecos Pueblo. Setting down his impressions of the fortified city, soldier-diarist Pedro de Castañeda noted the wintertime presence of Plains Caddoan nomads camped outside the pueblo. The culmination of a journey from modern day Kansas, the annual exchange of “bison meat, fat, and hides for corn, cotton blankets, and ceramics”⁵ was recorded by subsequent Spanish expeditions at a variety of Pueblos, including Pecos, Taos, Galisteo, and Gran Quivira, expressions of a regional trade network dubbed the Southern Plains Macroeconomy by Timothy Baugh.⁶ Central to the whole system, the exchange of corn for bison

² Cori Ann Knudten and Maren Bzdek, *Crossroads of Change*, vol. 4 (University of Oklahoma Press, 2020), 7.

³ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁴ De Castañeda, Pedro, Francisco Vásquez de Coronado, and Juan Camilo Jaramillo, *The Journey of Coronado, 1540-1542, from the City of Mexico to the Grand Canon of the Colorado and the Buffalo Plains of Texas, Kansas, and Nebraska*, ed. George Parker Winship (New York, A.S. Barnes & Company, 1904), 103.

⁵ Katherine Spielmann, “Interaction Among Nonhierarchical Societies,” in *Farmers, Hunters, and Colonists: Interaction Between the Southwest and the Southern Plains*, ed. Katherine Spielmann. (Tucson: University of Arizona Press), 7.

⁶ Timothy, Baugh, “Ecology and Exchange: The Dynamics of Plains-Pueblo Interaction,” in *Farmers, Hunters, and Colonists: Interaction Between the Southwest and the Southern Plains*, ed. Katherine Spielmann. (Tucson: University of Arizona Press), 122.

meat not only supplemented local diets, but expanded to include the exchange of regionally specialized goods between the Panhandle to the Southwest.

Archaeological data supports various models to explain the Plains-Pecos interaction. To date, Katherine Spielmann's ecological-political model, which suggests equal interdependence between the trading partners as a result of ecological constraints, remains predominant. Her model focuses on nutritional requirements: exchange is predicated on the relative costs and benefits of obtaining calories through hunting, farming, and trade.⁷ The catalyst for interaction, and even contact at all, was the Pecos corn surplus. Archaeological excavations reveal central, defensible granaries at Pecos Pueblo to store the precious supply, whose extent led later Spanish chroniclers to measure the strength of Pecos Pueblo in terms of its corn reserves.⁸ Consequently, the existence of mutualistic meat-corn exchange depended on whether supplementing a nomadic, bison-based diet with traded corn cost less than obtaining those calories through foraging, and vice-versa for the corn-based Pueblo diet.⁹ For Plains hunter-gatherers, obtaining a reliable supply of corn through largely low-risk trading cost less, in terms of death risk and time investment, than year-round hunting. Meanwhile, the well-positioned Pecos could not survive solely on corn without protein from meat, but steady depletion of local mule deer and antelope through population growth increased the costs of hunted protein. Investing more time, traveling longer distances, and encroaching on neighboring peoples, all for poorer quality prey, decreased the efficiency of hunting and heightened the desirability of traded bison meat.¹⁰

Spielmann's explanatory model is borne out by archaeological and ethnographic evidence, which demonstrates increasing interdependence between Plains and Pueblo societies as exchange grew from sporadic to mutualistic and regionally specialized trade. The strongest attestation of the Southern Plains Macroeconomy comes from fragments of "bison bone [found] in strata of Pueblo middens that also contain durable traded items from the Plains," like tools and jewelry, which suggests that bison products could have arrived at Pecos through trade with Plains peoples.¹¹ This conjunction could be reasonably dismissed as circumstantial: Knudten notes that the proportion of bison bones relative to deer, rabbit, antelope, sheep, and elk bones increased in Pueblo middens after 1470, which could indicate that the Pueblo hunted the bison themselves after population-driven expansion depleted local game.¹² However, ethnographic evidence fills gaps in the archaeological record. Spanish chroniclers noted that Puebloans refrained from venturing onto other nations' hunting territories for fear of reprisals.¹³ In the context of a trade relationship, such territorialism was logical for both parties. The Plains Caddoans survived by controlling access to bison herds to monopolize bison products, and the Pueblo derived greater benefit from trade than from abandoning their fields to mount dangerous hunting expeditions.

⁷ Katherine Spielmann, "Coercion or Cooperation?: Plains-Pueblo Interaction in the Protohistoric Period" in *Farmers, Hunters, and Colonists: Interaction Between the Southwest and the Southern Plains*, ed. Katherine Spielmann. (Tucson: University of Arizona Press), 48.

⁸ Alfred Vincent Kidder, *Pecos, New Mexico: Archaeological Notes*, vol. 5 (Andover, Massachusetts: Robert S. Peabody Foundation for Archaeology, 1958), 137.

⁹ Spielmann, "Interaction Among Nonhierarchical Societies," 11.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ Katherine Spielmann, "Coercion or Cooperation?" 42.

¹² Knudten, *Crossroads of Change*, 9.

¹³ Baugh, "Ecology and Exchange," 36.

Specialization benefitted both. Such “interference competition”¹⁴ also rectified the imbalance of power between those with corn and those without by manufacturing interdependence. Monopolizing the supply of large animal protein maintained the artificial scarcity which ensured continued Pueblo participation in food exchange. In this sense, unofficial dietary supplementing developed into a regionally specialized system characterized by interdependence between partners.

The importance of Plains-Pueblo exchange cannot be overstated with regards to Spanish conquest. On the first hand, the surplus of corn in itself gave Pecos Pueblo value to the tired, hungry, and fundamentally rapacious conquistadors. Castañeda flippantly describes the army requisitioning food from every town it encountered, depleting stores even beyond the colonists’ survival needs.¹⁵ More than its nutritional value, however, the corn’s pecuniary value as a catalyst for trade transformed Pecos Pueblo from important to pivotal. The thriving trade engendered by this surplus was of great interest to conquerors motivated primarily by wealth and cultural control. Correctly assuming that controlling the gateway to the Plains would provide a regional advantage, Spanish conquerors focused significant empire-building activity there after initial contact in 1540, spreading their economic and cultural agendas along well-worn paths of exchange.¹⁶

Spanish Arrival: Participation or Control?

Divergent Governance

For the Pecos, the autumn of 1540 brought the fall harvest and a dispatch from the Coronado expedition. Captain Hernando de Alvaro, in imperious Spanish, informed them that they were subjects of the Spanish king, that all the precious metals in the city belonged to imperial authorities, and that any resistance would be met with force.¹⁷ A brief battle convinced Coronado that the Pecos had no gold, and he departed in 1542.¹⁸ While an ominous first encounter with the Old World, membership in the Spanish empire carried little tangible significance for the Pecos even after Juan de Oñate established the province of Santa Fe de Nuevo México in 1598.¹⁹ After nearly sixty years punctuated by only four exploratory expeditions, Oñate’s colonial contract called for a central government at Santa Fe to oversee 87,000 square miles and seven alcaldes, each assigned to a missionary district.²⁰ However, neither military nor governmental agents occupied their new territory, reducing direct interaction between settlers and settled to the sustained contact with Franciscan missionaries newly established at the pueblo.²¹ Harsh physical and administrative conditions under Oñate’s leadership led many of his initial colonizing party to defect back to Mexico. Only the intervention of Franciscan friars loath to abandon unsaved native souls kept the colony among

¹⁴ Spielmann, “Coercion or Cooperation?,” 48.

¹⁵ De Castañeda, *The Journey of Coronado*, 78.

¹⁶ Knudten, *Crossroads of Change*, 37.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 14.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 15.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 18.

²⁰ Edward Holland Spicer, *Cycles of Conquest: The Impact of Spain, Mexico, and the United States on the Indians of the Southwest, 1533-1960*. (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1962), 390.

²¹ Knudten, *Crossroads of Change*, 19.

Spanish possessions, under new governorship. This dichotomy of secular and religious authority established at the colony's inception set up colonial dynamics throughout the Spanish administration of New Mexico.

Differing goals led the administrations to adopt opposite colonial models. Favoring an extractive system, secular imperial officials established their presence, listed their demands, and retreated to the provincial capital, contacting the Pecos only to collect tribute.²² Frustrated in their quest for gold, the colonists could expect no profit from mining or farming in the arid territory. Furthermore, fears of miscegenation engendered laws that preserved the cultural distance that enabled Spanish domination by barring non-natives from marrying Puebloans, adopting their customs, or even "spending more than three days at a pueblo."²³ Consequently, by 1680, nearly a century after the colony's founding, the whole province was home to only around 2,500 non-Puebloans.²⁴ Contrastingly, the Franciscan friars, largely responsible for the formal establishment of the province, needed direct intervention to maximize salvation, equated with the adoption of 'civilization.'²⁵ The spiritual and cultural conversion of the "heathens" took place in the church of Nuestra Señora de los Ángeles de Porciúncula, a hulking structure erected next to the pueblo by native hands, where friars could directly oversee the reeducation of Puebloans drafted to tend gardens, dig canals, and attend mass.²⁶ The difference in approach underlined the ambiguous relationship between the two nodes of imperial power. Despite forming the legitimizing backbone of Spain's colonial enterprise, Franciscans stood outside of the political hierarchy. Their entrenchment in day-to-day Puebloan life allowed them to support the overarching colonial agenda while remaining a potentially destabilizing element to the distant secular establishment.²⁷

Shared Agendas

The apparently contrasting goals of both powers, however, remained subordinate to the primary driver of Spanish colonial enterprise in the region: economic gain. The political establishment never disguised its true intent. Conceived to plunder the mythically wealthy seven cities of Cibola, the provincial government was organized to maximize the extraction of resources rather than settle, convert, or win over locals.²⁸ Frustrated in the gold department, provincial officials shifted their focus to Pecos Pueblo's most profitable resources: tribute and slaves. Coerced native labor was traded as a commodity throughout Latin American colonies to build the structures of colonial power. The 1,500 Puebloans conscripted to dig irrigation canals for Oñate's capital city were the first of thousands impressed to build cities, tend fields, and run households for colonial agents.²⁹ Moreover, a 1672 imperial decree of emancipation did little to prevent traffickers from enslaving Puebloans in Mexican silver mines, directly enriching wealthy governors like Oñate.³⁰

²² Knudten, *Crossroads of Change*, 22.

²³ *Ibid.*, 24

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 25.

²⁵ Spicer, *Cycles of Conquest*, 281.

²⁶ Knudten, *Crossroads of Change*, 26.

²⁷ Knudten, *Crossroads of Change*, 30.

²⁸ Spicer, *Cycles of Conquest*, 287.

²⁹ Knudten, *Crossroads of Change*, 22.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 25.

The centers of colonial power built using unpaid labor extracted even more wealth from the subject populations in the form of tribute. Though loath to dilute their culture, hunger and cold led initial colonists to requisition food and shelter while they established their colonies. Piñon nuts, bison meat, and especially corn kept the Spanish alive in the desert environment while they waited for orchards of European plants to flourish under native care.³¹ Colonial governance in the 1600s turned these requisitions into systematic tribute payments. Santa Fe seized 1.6 bushels of corn from each household every year, enough to sustain one Puebloan for six months,³² and commodities like bison hides rounded out Spanish stores, making the fortunes of colonial landowners and common Spaniards alike.

Religious authorities obfuscated their motivations to a greater extent than their secular counterparts, but still focused colonial activities on economic gain. Despite nominally seeking only to save heathen souls, the Franciscan brand of Christian conversion demanded the imposition of Spanish culture, a process inextricable from the personal enrichment of the friars who oversaw the operation.³³ The Franciscan friars established at the Pecos mission equated Christianity with “civilized” life, characterized by European-style farming, herding, and praying, and speaking Spanish.³⁴ To that end, the friars employed economic tools to achieve social goals. Using native labor to operate the mission, from building the forty-five-foot-tall church to cultivating the European gardens, encouraged a Christian lifestyle among its unpaid laborers,³⁵ especially as such operations necessarily weakened traditional customs. Diverting labor from Pecos fields prevented the transference of traditional farming knowledge, weakening bonds between generations as young Pecos men increasingly turned to the friars for social and spiritual mentorship rather than to their traditional elders.³⁶

Crucially, however, Europeanization did not entail equality between Europeans and their converts. The Pecos herded livestock, reaped crops, and erected buildings on behalf of the friars rather than themselves. Forced to work church plots rather than their own fields, villagers raised grain and cattle owned exclusively by the friars, while at the same time being barred from starting their own herds or working their own fields.³⁷ This system exceeded the detrimental effects of outright tribute or impressed labor. In addition to stealing native labor and its fruits, the friars prevented already unpaid workers from growing a personal surplus, rendering them dependent on the church for food.³⁸ This dependency enriched and empowered the friars at the expense of their converts, which in turn reinforced their power and control over the pueblo.³⁹ The inextricability of social and economic agendas only reinforces the importance of personal enrichment in driving the Catholic colonial project.

³¹ Knudten, *Crossroads of Change*, 35

³² *Ibid.*, 31.

³³ Spicer, *Cycles of Conquest*, 284.

³⁴ Knudten, *Crossroads of Change*, 18.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 26.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 27

³⁷ Knudten, *Crossroads of Change*, 20.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 34.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 26.

The supremacy of personal gain in both religious and secular agendas can be seen in conflicts between secular and religious authorities. Beset by conflict since their inception, the parallel governing systems clashed frequently over issues of authority, primarily when economic issues were at stake. Colonial governors wrestled with their commitment to remain distant as church officials developed a monopoly over arable land, labor, and harvests.⁴⁰ Decrying the friars' strict control over their sheep herds, officials accused the Franciscans of seeking an undue share of profit from the colony.⁴¹ Because both sought to maximize earnings from the province, conflicts between religious and secular centered around gaining unilateral authority over the Pecos economy.⁴²

Participation in Trade

Controlling the Pecos economy really meant participating in, adjusting, dominating, and sometimes destroying the regional trade network underpinning the city's success. Significant historical attention has been devoted to the ways in which colonists participated in the Southern Plains Macroeconomy.⁴³ Because their main interaction with the Pueblo centered around economic activity, priests and governors by their very presence exerted an effect on the trade network. Commodities like corn, piñon nuts, and bison hides were sequestered as tribute for the Spanish, European animals became integrated into local diets and farming practices, and finished goods like iron tools and woolen cloth spread new customs along old trade routes.⁴⁴ What remains uncertain is not the degree of interaction, but its nature: did the Spanish enter existing markets as equal participants, or did their participation fundamentally rewrite the rules of interaction?

For decades after 1598, everyday economic operations continued seemingly as before. Many religious figures based at Pecos attested to the continuance of traditional trade fairs, in which Spanish agents participated to obtain bison hides and enslaved workers.⁴⁵ Contrary to widespread belief, the presence of violence within the economic system predates Spanish involvement. Despite their boasts of regional military dominance, Pecos residents warned the Coronado expedition of frequent raids and sieges by Plains peoples.⁴⁶ Concurrently, Pueblo bison hunting on the Plains often led to skirmishes and reprisals.⁴⁷ In both cases, violence accompanied the violation of usual trading terms, like the maintenance of peace during trade fairs and respect for territorial boundaries, but the frequent violation of those terms made small-scale violence endemic to the exchange system.⁴⁸ The prevalence of raiding is reflected in the city's very architecture. Kidder's archaeological notes ascribe the pueblo's quadrangular shape, enclosed by sturdy walls and located on a high mesilla, to a need for defensibility.⁴⁹ Moreover, Spielmann notes that raiding was incorporated into the subsistence patterns of the Apache, Navajo, Ute, and

⁴⁰ Ibid., 28.

⁴¹ Ibid., 29.

⁴² Ibid., 30.

⁴³ Baugh, "Ecology and Exchange," 122.

⁴⁴ Knudten, *Crossroads of Change*, 27.

⁴⁵ Baugh, "Ecology and Exchange," 123.

⁴⁶ De Castañeda, *The Journey of Coronado*, 105.

⁴⁷ Spielmann, "Ecology and Exchange," 36.

⁴⁸ Spielmann, "Ecology and Exchange," 49.

⁴⁹ Kidder, *Pecos, New Mexico: Archaeological Notes*, 63.

Comanche, despite their often peaceful trading relations with the Pueblo.⁵⁰ Though Spanish participation in exchange left these patterns relatively unchanged, the introduction of foreign elements necessarily adjusted the network in other ways.

Most conspicuously, Spanish influence changed the nature of goods traded. With regards to the introduction of European goods, Schroeder echoes Spielmann's neutral evaluation of their effect. He characterizes the substitution of glass and metal for traditional stone and bone ornamentation as a "substitution in, not alteration of, a basic culture pattern."⁵¹ Similarly, Knudten emphasizes Puebloan agency in preserving traditional culture, arguing that European goods were adopted to increase efficiency without sacrificing cultural practices.⁵² Both see cultural sharing during the early period as natural and reciprocal.

Rather than changing the inputs, the Spaniards effected change most significantly by making new demands on the exchange system. In particular, constant demand for enslaved labor took a toll on a network ill-equipped to trade in human lives.⁵³ While slavery existed in Pueblo and Plains societies as a social category, it generally resulted from warfare and occurred on a limited scale.⁵⁴ The market pressure generated by ceaseless Spanish demand for enslaved workers in Mexican silver mines and wealthy colonial households increased the instances of trade-related violence.⁵⁵ Apache nomads⁵⁶ exploited a relative military advantage derived from early adoption of dogs and horses to raid both Plains and Pueblo settlements for enslaved workers to sell to the Spanish.⁵⁷ Significantly disrupting existing trading patterns, they still failed to meet ever-growing demand and eventually suffered enslavement themselves.⁵⁸

Economic strain also occurred as a byproduct of the colonial enterprise in itself, as requisitioning, diversion of labor, and cultural attacks reduced the amount of commodities available for trade. In the three years succeeding Nuevo Mexico's establishment, even before a formal tribute system was established, colonists requisitioned and consumed six years' worth of stored Puebloan corn.⁵⁹ With their labor diverted to Franciscan projects, the Pecos went hungry and their surplus stores went unreplenished.⁶⁰ In other words, the loss of their primary food source and paramount trade good simultaneously made the Pecos more reliant on trade for subsistence and less able to engage in that trade. Concurrently, suppression of Pecos culture led to the decline of the lifestyle, including trade, it generated.⁶¹ In an effort to dampen the practice of Pueblo religious customs, the friars banned the use of ritual items traditionally acquired through trade, underestimating the role those items played in facilitating the exchange of

⁵⁰ Spielmann, "Interaction Among Nonhierarchical Societies," 37.

⁵¹ Albert H. Schroeder, "Shifting for Survival in the Spanish Southwest," (New Mexico Historical Review, 1968), 292.

⁵² Knudten, *Crossroads of Change*, 19.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 43.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 14.

⁵⁵ Baugh, "Ecology and Exchange," 122.

⁵⁶ Also known as Athapaskans, these nomadic Plains hunters were distinct from the Plains Caddoans.

⁵⁷ Baugh, "Ecology and Exchange," 122.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 123.

⁵⁹ Knudten, *Crossroads of Change*, 22.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 29.

⁶¹ Baugh, "Ecology and Exchange," 122.

essential commodities like hides, tallow, and blankets.⁶² By slowly circumscribing Pecos independence, Spanish authorities compounded the damage of outright commodity theft, further chipping away at the city's ancient trade ties.

These changes were quickly concretized into official Spanish control over the Pecos regional economy, setting the groundwork for systematic and fundamentally damaging dominance into the 17th and 18th centuries. While the old regional exchange persisted, political supremacy gave colonists tacit rights to the best trade goods at trade fairs.⁶³ However, cultural imperialism directed at the Pecos quickly reshaped ancient trade routes into a Spanish-dominated exchange system centered at Santa Fe.⁶⁴ Linguistic hegemony imposed by the Franciscans in the interest of conversion slowly impeded trade as native languages became mutually unintelligible. Reinforced by an active campaign to pit neighboring societies against each other, increasingly isolated towns gave way to Hispanic centers as nodes of interaction.⁶⁵ Officialized in the 17th and 18th centuries, the old Southern Plains Macroeconomy became a network administrated and monopolized by a now entrenched Spanish government.⁶⁶ Trade fairs, the only legal form of exchange after bans on independent travel to trade, occurred by authorization only. Schroeder notes that "by the early 1640's the governor of New Mexico traded directly with Apaches of the plains, rather than through frontier pueblos, bartering horses and various items in exchange for hides, slaves, and other articles."⁶⁷ Because the colonizers dictated the terms of trade rather than engaging in it as equal players, their involvement reshaped the system to the detriment of the Pecos. Because the Spanish sought economic dominance by enriching themselves and degrading Pecos culture, subverting the mainstay of the Pecos economy served both goals in tandem.

Conclusion

Unfortunately for the Pecos, the very system that brought them prosperity and regional dominance both motivated and enabled their subjugation. A self-reinforcing cycle of economic control and cultural degradation placed Spanish officials at the top of an unequal system of governance predicated on resource extraction. In addition to subjugating the Pecos by removing the foundation of their lifestyle, the Spanish colonizers replaced them at the center of the Southern Plains Macroeconomy. Employing ancient webs of connection allowed a small and concentrated European population to spread its culture, goods, and faith far beyond the areas it physically controlled.

This is not to say that the Pecos acted as passive victims of subjugation. Rather, an active strategy of political and cultural resistance defended Pecos freedom and traditions. Playing secular and religious authorities off of each other, practicing religious rites in secret, and sometimes directly waging war against the occupiers all contributed to the preservation of Pecos culture. In fact, Shroeder argues that Spanish control failed to significantly affect "settlement

⁶² Ibid., 123.

⁶³ Knudten, *Crossroads of Change*, 33.

⁶⁴ Baugh, "Ecology and Exchange," 124.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 123.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 124.

⁶⁷ Schroeder, "Shifting for Survival in the Spanish Southwest," 297.

patterns, warfare practices, means of subsistence, or social or ceremonial activities”⁶⁸ at the pueblo. The considerable acculturation that took place integrated European practices into the Pecos framework, affecting the lifestyles of assimilating colonists and conquered locals equally. This continuity expresses the significance of the Southern Plains Macroeconomy’s evolution under Spanish association. The network’s suitability and versatility with reference to its environment allowed a simple subsistence exchange to develop into a regionally significant means of cultural exchange. That Spanish influence could spread along trade routes while Pecos culture remained vibrant speaks to how sophisticated and resilient native institutions remained, even under colonial rule.

⁶⁸ Schroeder, “Shifting for Survival in the Spanish Southwest,” 292.

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