

Tokyo Rodeo:
Transnational Country Music and the Crisis of Japanese Masculinities

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Abstract

This dissertation is a case study about the Japanese encounter with American culture by dealing with Japanese men and American country music. I investigate why Japanese men consumed American country music and cowboy images that served as the music's main symbol. To answer this question, I do not rely on an examination of how Americans defined and exported the cowboy. Instead, I use representations and narrations about cowboys and American country music that Japanese men constructed in major newspapers, magazines, music repertoires and advertisement from the 1920s to the mid 1960s in Japan. I use Japanese men's experiences of listening to, consuming and playing American country music, which I obtained through their biographies, photographs and oral interviews. Those Japanese men's encounter with American country music shows us that Japanese men received this music from the US in multifaceted ways, rather than simply as a way to understand US-Japan relations. I argue that these Japanese men used American country music and cowboy images to debate about Japanese masculinity, which was intrinsic to Japanese nation-building, aims and identities. Their passionate appreciation, defense, attack and adaptations of a "quintessentially" American icon shows us their desire to define a respectable Japanese man.

I deal with four decades from the 1920s to the early 1960s when country music and cowboy images intersected with a series of crises about manhood and national identity. I begin during the 1920s to the late 1930s when Japan's empire grew amidst an influx of American lifestyle and consumer goods. The second period is Japan's defeat in World War II and the immediate postwar period when the country searched for a "new" identity and aim different from the prewar-era. The third period is

during Japan's acute economic growth since the mid 1950s that allowed the state to declare an end to Japan as a "postwar" nation. These crises enabled men to rethink hegemonic masculinity because the image of Japanese men as those responsible for steering the nation was threatened as the nation faced its crisis and drastic political, economic and cultural changes.

In chapter one I narrate Japanese men's prewar encounter with American country music and cowboy images. This chapter, "Empty Saddles," begins in the 1920s with the earliest discussion in Japan about cowboys. Starting with the rise of consumer culture and ending in the early phase of the Fifteen Year War, the state, the mainstream media and the recording industry used cowboys to support the total war regime. Yet that support was often ambiguous and conflicted. As this chapter's title, "Empty Saddles" suggests, the Japanese Empire allowed Japanese men to embody multiple masculinities to support total war. To investigate how multiple masculinities fought to uphold ideas of Japanese racial purity and courageous wartime manhood, I particularly focus on the rendition of the American cowboy song "Empty Saddles" performed by the singer Katsuhiko Haida.

Katsuhiko Haida's rendition of "Empty Saddles" released in the first year of the Second Sino-Japan War is one of the best examples to understand how Japanese men used songs now defined as American country music and the low-class cowboy image to shape their ideas about respectable wartime manhood. This particular recording helps explain how by 1937 a gender-deviated modern boy, such as Haida, and a low-class image of the cowboy were incorporated into the total war regime as a Japanese man.

Chapter 2, "Après-guerre Cowboys," deals with the period from occupied Japan to the mid 1950s, when the Japanese government proclaimed economic recovery from the war in 1956. The war defeat had a huge impact on Japanese men, but it

provided another moment for men to debate ideas about respectable manhood through cowboy images. If Japanese businessmen embodied diligent and perseverant cowboys and dreamed at the movie theater of their freedom in the Western prairie, Japanese musicians who played American country music in cowboy outfits mocked the hardworking, serious and taciturn profile of American cowboys that offered Japanese hegemonic middle-class masculinity. As in Chapter 1, these musicians mocked the larger society through cowboys. If Haida, as a feminine man, implied his resistance against Japan's imperial violence, postwar Japanese musicians of American country music as *Après-guerre* cowboys, too, followed Haida in talking back to middle-class norms by playing music associated with cowboys.

At the same time, non-country musicians and music critics criticized these musicians in cowboy outfits for lacking musical education and sophistication. By doing so, they legitimized their versions of hegemonic masculinity embodied in men like them who played music through apprenticeships with prestigious music teachers and appreciated modern jazz music that they thought had more complex code progressions and melodies. But Japanese musicians of American country music in the early 1950s did not stop playing this music that had simpler codes, melodies, or stop wearing cowboy outfits. Despite, or perhaps because of, their upper and upper-middle class family backgrounds, they attempted to perform "low-brow." By doing so, they claimed their versions of hegemonic masculinity as anti-establishment musicians.

Chapter 3, "Country Gentleman," examines cowboy representations from the late 1950s to the mid 1960s. This is a period when representations of cowboys performed by Japanese men increasingly appeared in mainstream media. Cowboys became gentleman, a female target of hetero-normative, healthy, romantic love. Partly because of the popularity of TV westerns and Japan's economic growth, men from various backgrounds debated why cowboys could be a male role model. In this

chapter, Japanese men, including communists and country music traditionalists, both stressed the cowboy's diligent and humble disposition, though from different political viewpoints. Despite their political views, they were both concerned about social decadence and a popular music industry immersed in commercial greed. For some communists, after their defeat in the US-Japan Security Treaty negotiations of 1960, cowboys in the westerns displayed the ways in which men fought for justice for the people. For country traditionalists, performing cowboys enabled them to conform to hetero-normative gender relations that differed from the new type of rockabilly singers who displayed promiscuous bodies on the stage. Amidst a growing economy, men were concerned that Japanese society was sinking into commercial greed, through capitalism and sexual sensation. By performing cowboys, they attempted to display an "alternative" masculinity that could speak out against decadence.

The debate between traditionalists and rockabilly singers reveals Japanese men's ongoing desire to create a popular music sphere with a more rebellious aura. The traditionalists who performed cowboys could not appeal to the larger popular music audience with their masculinity. Rockabilly singers who threw away cowboy outfits and possessed an anti-establishment aura were considered to be trailblazers of the Japanese rock scene even today. The importance in the mainstream media of rockabilly singers in creating the Japanese popular music scene helps us understand the dynamics between male popular musicking and the larger Japanese society.

In short, this dissertation demonstrates that Japanese men used American country music and cowboy images to debate changes in hegemonic masculinity. Their debates show us that many Japanese men constructed their masculinities through images that came from the US. It also helps us understand that Japanese men encountered American country music as just another popular music form and through which they discussed their own domestic concerns. American country music in Japan

therefore shows us how Japanese men used popular music as a battlefield to define masculinity and nation.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	i
Acknowledgements	viii
A Note on Japanese Names	xi
 Introduction	 1
American Country Music and its Transnational Journeys	7
Transnational Making of Japanese Masculinities	10
Country Music in Japanese Popular Music History	18
Timeframe	19
Chapters	20
 Chapter 1 -- Empty Saddles: Modern Boys and Cowboys in the Japanese Empire	 24
Modern Boys, Jazz Culture and Gender in the Japanese Empire	28
Jazz Culture as Threat to Gender Norms	33
Jazz and Modern Boys	36
Modern Boy Performing A Cowboy	39
Low-Class Cowboys	40
Low-Class Cowboys and Japan's Growing Imperial Ambitions	50
Empty Saddles	59
Conclusion	60
 Chapter 2 -- Après-guerre Cowboys	 64
American Cowboys in Early Postwar Japan	66
American Country Music in Japan by the Late 1950	74
American Country Musicians' Postwar Japan	85
Conclusion	98
 Chapter 3 -- Country Gentlemen: Japanese Men Becoming Cowboys	 101
Japanese Cowboy	103
Japanese Proletariats Encountering Cowboys	110
Fear of Violence and "the People"	112
Cowboy Debates: The Death of Merchants and the Past-time Hero	116

Cowboy Debates: The Popular	120
The Rockabilly Craze and Country Music Traditionalists	123
Increasing Popularity of “the Western” Music	124
Tokyo Grand Ole Opry	127
Conclusion	136
 Conclusion	 138
Productivity and Respectability of the Nation	142
Country Music as Harbinger of Rock Normalcy in Japanese Popular Music	150
Tokyo Rodeo as a Myth of Americanization?	151
 Bibliography	 153

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A note on Japanese names

Throughout the text, I have followed the Western convention in which the given or personal name precedes the family name or surname.

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Introduction

On November 11, 1945, Armistice Day, an American Lieutenant named Dick Ryan produced a rodeo in Meiji Shrine Stadium. Seventy thousand Allied “khaki-colored soldiers”¹ from all around Tokyo filled the stadium. The highlight of this event, the *Tokyo Rodeo*, included Ryan riding on First Frost (*Hatsushimo*), one of the white horses said to have belonged to the Japanese Emperor Hirohito.² The audience, including children from the Japanese royal family, observed Ryan in a black cowboy hat on this white horse, calmly striding with dignity. This image quickly spread all across the US. *The New York Times* contrasted the victor and the defeated, with its headline, “Occupation Troops Celebrate[,] Japanese Are Silent.”³ With a picture of Ryan on the defeated emperor’s white horse, *The Atlanta Constitution* was elated that Ryan was “astride Hatsushimo, or First Frost,” confirming US victory for its American readers, “to you and you and you!”⁴

Ryan riding First Frost marked not only the masculine victory of US soldiers. The rodeo also featured Japanese beauties who increased the contrast between the masculinized US and the feminized, defeated Japan. At the Opening Ceremony, a stagecoach entered the stadium carrying a Japanese beauty (*nihonbijin*) in kimono, or the “Dinah Shore of Japan,” as Ryan put it. The view emphasized the impression that

¹ “Omatsuri sawagi de nyūjōshiki: Rodeo taikai ni shinchūgunshohei ōyorokobi,” *Asahi shimbun*, November 12, 1945.

² According to several sources, this horse was a stock horse, White Snow, which Emperor had ridden, not Hatsushimo. When Ryan left for the US to produce International Rodeo Show, the US banned the law that prohibited for Americans to transport the animals to the US from Japan. See Judy Daly, “The Story of Hirohito's Horse,” *Horses and Dressage*, accessed November 11, 2018, <http://horsesanddressage.blogspot.jp/2009/08/the-story-of-hirohito-horse.html>;

Daly, “Equestrian Deception: The Mythical Capture of Emperor Hirohito’s Horse,” *The Long Riders Guild Academic Foundation*, accessed November 11, 2018, <http://www.lrgaf.org/military/hirohito.htm>.

³ “Tokyo Rodeo Staged: Occupation Troops Celebrate Japanese Are Silent” *New York Times*, November 12, 1945; “A Lieutenant Astride on Hirohito’s Horse” *New York Times*, November 23, 1945.

⁴ “See Bull, It Can be Done,” *Atlanta Constitution*, November 23, 1945.

the US cowboy was “rescuing” the oppressed Japan.⁵ In the pamphlet of the event for American soldiers, a geisha girl occupied one page, sitting in a traditional Japanese house, leaning against a bamboo window, wearing a black kimono and a traditional Japanese hairstyle, and holding a glass of beer, toasting, “To your health cowboys!”⁶ On the opposite page was a portrait of General MacArthur. *Tokyo Rodeo* emphasized the cowboy as a preeminent symbol of America. Americans represented themselves as masculine but friendly, who, like Ryan riding Hirohito’s First Frost, would playfully tame Japan. As a result, the defeated Japanese were expected to become obedient but also appreciative of American efforts and sincerity, welcoming the US like the Japanese geisha in kimono toasting the cowboys’ health.

Tokyo Rodeo and the contrast between the “American cowboy” and the “Japanese geisha” seems to confirm a longstanding scholarly narrative about the postwar encounter between a “masculine” US and a “feminine” Japan. It seems to confirm the cowboy as a uniquely American icon that symbolized US-Japan relations after WWII. Likewise, scholars describe postwar Japanese receptions of American country music, of which the cowboy served as a main symbol, as defeated Japanese admiration for the US victor.⁷ In fact, the imagery delivered through *Tokyo Rodeo* – the US as masculine and the Japanese as feminine – match the views of previous scholars who study cultural encounters between the US and the non-US. Using frameworks of Americanization and cultural imperialism, they often assume both the

⁵ “Omatsuri,” *Asahi shimbun*; “Mōjū to ikkiuchi: Gaien ni shinchūgun imon kābōi no kyokunori,” *Mainichi shimbun*, November 12, 1945; MTSU Charlie Walker collection; Dick Ryan’s International Rodeo, personal collection.

⁶ Charlie Walker collection, the Center for Popular Music at the Middle Tennessee State University.

⁷ Michael Furmanovsky, “American Country Music in Japan: Lost Piece in the Popular Music History Puzzle,” *Popular Music and Society* 31 no.3 (2008): 357-372; Stephen I. Thompson, “American Country Music in Japan,” *Popular Music and Society* 16 no.3 (1992): 31-38; Tōru Mitsui, “The Reception of the Music of American Southern Whites in Japan” in *Transforming Tradition: Folk Music Revivals Examined* ed. Neil Rosenberg (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993).

US and the non-US had unchanging cultures and stress America's dominant cultural, economic and political power.

But *Tokyo Rodeo* failed to illustrate long history of Japanese complex relationship to American culture, from appreciation to interpretation and rejection since the prewar era. This long debate about cowboys within Japan leads us to doubt if the Japanese audience for cowboys always negotiated their ideas about US-Japan relations through cowboy imagery and if postwar receptions of American country music in Japan merely reflected their admiration of US culture. New transnational perspectives, however, allows us view American country music and cowboy images more than as inherently American. By using transnational as a framework of analysis, this dissertation addresses how the Japanese used American country music to debate domestic concerns about masculinity and national identity, rather than only their relations with the US.

A transnational framework of analysis allows us to provide more nuanced narratives in cultural encounters. Rather than assuming the nation-state as an unchanging and concrete unit, it enables us interrogate how and why domestic and foreign contestations and opportunities helps actors manipulate nation-states borders. It is because, as David Thelen and other transnational historians claim, transnational approaches require us to focus more on actors, who challenged, reinforced and debated the constructions and unmaking of nation-states.⁸ Thus, these actors offer us

⁸ David Thelen, "The Nation and Beyond: Transnational Perspectives on United States History," *Journal of American History* 86, no. 3 (December, 1999): 966-967. Thelen was one of the pioneers to address the importance of writing history outside fixed nation state boundaries. Numerous scholars have published books using this transnational framework, including, Pierre Yves-Saunier, *Transnational History* (New York: Palgrave, 2013); among the studies on transnational histories, see Ian Tyrrell, *Transnational Nation: United States History in Global Perspective since 1789* (New York: Palgrave, 2007); for transpacific histories, see David Armitage and Alison Bashford eds., *Pacific Histories: Ocean, Land, People* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013); Janet Hoskins and Viet Thanh Nguyen eds., *Transpacific Studies: Framing an Emerging Field* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2014).

multifaceted views and receptions in cultural encounters, rather than consistent power relations between the powerful nations and the rest, if not colonizers and the colonized.⁹ By highlighting individual experiences, as Lynn Hunt argues, we can grasp more clearly about how actors' interactions not only with foreign actors, but domestic actors help impede and spread circulations of products across national boundaries -- globalization.¹⁰ Centering individual agency in transnational encounters enables us to illustrate more complex views of transnational cultural encounter.

While these scholars emphasize highlighting actors in writing transnational histories, transnational American historians and American study scholars have just begun to illuminate non-US actors. Along studies on American missionaries overseas, historians of Cold War cultural history have helped pioneer a transnational framework, emphasizing the role of culture in US attempts to exercise hegemonic power.¹¹ These prominent transnational studies reveal the unfinished and ambiguous mission of cultural imperialism conducted by the US and Americans in the twentieth century. However, these studies, narrated through US actors and images circulated in the US, only provide us partial stories of US cultural encounter with the world.

Among the studies recognizing non-Americans' agencies, Yusuke Torii shows the ways in which Japanese adopted and negotiated an idea about jazz and American democracy supported by the Popular Front in the US in the 1930s. Although Torii framed his study in jazz history, intellectual histories of racial liberalism, and Americanization, he shows the reciprocal nature of cultural and ideological exchanges

⁹ Ryan Dunch, "Beyond Cultural Imperialism: Cultural Theory, Christian Missions, and Global Modernity," *History and Theory* 41, no.3 (October 2002): 301-325.

¹⁰ Lynn Hunt, *Writing History in the Global Era* (New York: W W Norton & Co Inc., 2015).

¹¹ Among the studies about Cold War culture in the US in relations with Asian countries and cultures, see Christina Kline, *Cold War Orientalism: Asia in the Middlebrow Imagination, 1945-1961* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003); Naoko Shibusawa, *America's Geisha Ally: Reimagining the Japanese Enemy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010); for transnational understandings of American jazz music during the Cold War, see Penny M. Von Eschen, *Satchmo Blows Up the World: Jazz Ambassadors Play the Cold War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004).

between the US and Japan during the first two decades of the Cold War.¹² More recently, Denise Cruz follows Torii's views and shows non-US actors were not simply defiant of or obedient to cultural hegemony of the US. Cruz shows Filipina and Filipino writers in the 1950s and 1960s constructed a transnational community and identity in Cold War settings by adopting and revising a gendered rhetoric of male-coded West and feminized East. She criticizes the traditional views on transnational connections during the Cold War that stress division between US as a cultural hegemony and Asians as submissive actors.¹³

Borrowing the ideas from these studies and incorporating non-US actors, this dissertation serves as a case study about the Japanese encounter with American culture by dealing with Japanese men and American country music. I investigate why Japanese men consumed American country music and cowboy images that served as the music's main symbol. To answer this question, I do not rely on an examination of how Americans defined and exported the cowboy. Instead, I use representations and narrations about cowboys and American country music that Japanese men constructed in major newspaper, magazines, music magazines, music repertoires and advertisement from the 1920s to the mid 1960s in Japan. I use Japanese men's experiences of listening to, consuming and playing American country music, which I obtained through their biographies, photographs and oral interviews. Those Japanese men's encounter with American country music shows us that Japanese men received this music from the US in multifaceted ways, rather than simply as a way to understand US-Japan relations. I argue that these Japanese men used American

¹² Yusuke Torii, "Swing Ideology and Its Cold War Discontents in U.S.-Japan Relations, 1944-1968" (PhD diss., George Washington University, 2007).

¹³ Denise Cruz, "'Pointing to the Heart': Transpacific Filipinas and the Question of Cold-War Philippine-U.S. Relations," *American Quarterly* 63 no.1 (2011): 1-32; Cruz, *Transpacific Femininities: The Making of the Modern Filipina* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012). For non-white Americans during the Cold War, see Chiou-Lin Yhe, "'A Saga of Democracy': Toy Len Goon, American Mother of the Year, and the Cultural Cold War," *Pacific Historical Review* 81 no.3 (2012): 432-461.

country music and cowboy images to debate about Japanese masculinity, which was intrinsic to Japanese nation-building, aims and identities. Their passionate appreciation, defense, attack and adaptations of a “quintessentially” American icon shows us their desire to define a respectable Japanese man.

While I suggest throughout that men’s cultural encounter with cowboys in Japan was more nuanced than we might initially expect, I do not conclude that “Americanization,” by which I mean the enormous impact of US culture on Japan, was a total myth. Japanese scholars and journalists have already written extensively about the influence of American popular music on Japanese popular music. Yet they have rarely written about music scenes in Asian countries and their impact on Japanese musicians. The term “*yōgaku*” still signifies popular music from Western countries, usually meaning England and the US, but does not cover music from other Asian countries.¹⁴ Michael Bourdaghs argues that when the “J-Pop” genre emerged in the late 1980s it encouraged listeners to chart a new musical map with East Asia at its center.¹⁵ Tōru Mitsui, in his latest book, argues that the 1970s marked “the independence” of the Japanese music scene.¹⁶ As those examples suggest, popular music listeners, writers and musicians in and about Japan have been preoccupied with the tremendous power of American popular music and culture. Therefore, Americanization, if not cultural imperialism of the West, is not a false belief.

¹⁴ At the 6th Inter Asia Popular Music Studies Group Conference in Beijing, China, 2018, several panels demonstrated popular music’s circulation among Asian countries outside Japan. Many of those scholars illustrated how non-Japanese East Asians consumed and manipulated Japanese popular music. Liew Kai Khiun has addressed how Japanese popular music impacted East Asian countries, even when the Japanese popular music industry did not acknowledge these inter-Asian connections. Liew Kai Khiun, “Inter-Asia Pop Culture Diffusions and Convergences: J-Pop and K-Pop”(paper presented at the Popurā ongakubunka wo meguru kan’ajiateki taiwa: Dr. Liew Kai Khiun kōen to wākushoppu, Osaka University, Osaka, July 11, 2018); for inter-Asia circulations of popular culture, see Liew Kai Khiun, *Transnational Memory and Popular Culture in East and Southeast Asia: Amnesia, Nostalgia and Heritage* (London: Rowman & Littlefield International, 2016).

¹⁵ Michael K. Bourdaghs, *Sayonara Amerika, Sayonara Nippon: A Geopolitical Prehistory of J-Pop* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 221-222.

¹⁶ Tōru Mitsui, *Sengo yōgaku popurā shi 1945-1975: Shiryō ga kataru juyō netsu* (Tokyo: NTT shuppan, 2018), 6, 415-416.

As a result, in this dissertation I take as a normative framework the tremendous impacts of the US on Japanese culture, demonstrating it as a fundamental context within which Japanese men explored their masculinities. Yet I reject the common perception that the US controls the ideological content of culture created there. Japanese men enjoyed American popular music not simply because it was American, but precisely because they could make it their own. I therefore ask different questions that the intellectual framework of “Americanization” and “cultural imperialism” cannot ask. How did these men search for Japanese masculinities with symbols originated in the US? Rather than addressing how these men “domesticated” US culture and symbols, moreover, this dissertation illustrates how within their own domestic contexts these men negotiated with American, if not Western, cultural presence for over a century.

American Country Music and its Transnational Journeys

In the past two decades scholars have begun investigating how people experience the transnational circulation of country music. But scholars and journalists on both sides of the Pacific tend to overlook transnational circulations of American country music because they assume that country’s particularly strong identification with “Americanness,” or/and whiteness makes it less able to cross borders. At the same time, Japanese appreciation of American country music does not match with the stereotypical image of Japan as “an anachronistic space” that simply preserves ancient traditions.¹⁷ As a result, I believe, observers on both sides of the Pacific, have

¹⁷ Mettler states that even while US fans appreciate Japanese culture, stereotypical understandings about Japanese culture persist. Meghan Warner Mettler, *How to Reach Japan by Subway: America’s Fascination with Japanese Culture, 1945-1965* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2018), 15. Numerous stars of American country music came originally from Australia and Canada, such as Keith Urban, Olivia Newton John, Terri Clark and Hank Snow. While these white singers and musicians tend to become “normal” features of American country music, a handful of articles and movies done by Americans in the US featured Japanese appreciation for the music emphasize its “uniqueness” and

struggled to comprehend country music's circulation to Japan, and have simply treated the scene as a curiosity or as another example of Americanization.

The few scholars who have deconstructed the genre's presumed "Americanness" have helped push the field towards transnational approaches. Beginning with Richard Peterson's *Creating Country Music* in 1997, which pointed to the manufacture of standard country music stereotypes, country music scholars began challenging country's "Americanness." New scholarship addresses how the music industry, fans and musicians alike created the genre's "rural" and "working-class" image, including cowboy symbols. They describe people who actively created and shaped country in a variety of historical and ideological contexts. For example, Diane Pecknold shows how the country music business and its fans used the genre to raise their cultural status in mainstream America by boosting their commercial power. Patrick Huber shows country musicians between the world wars played music that articulated their ambivalent participation in industrialization.¹⁸ My dissertation follows these scholars, arguing that singers, musicians, the industry and fans control

"difference" from American counterparts, stimulating the American audience's curiosity. We need more detailed analysis on American views on representations and narratives of Japanese practicing American country music. See *Far Western*. Directed by James Payne. Tulsa, OK: This Land Press, 2016; *Made in Japan*. Directed by Josh Bishop. The Hidden Fortress, 2015. While the movie *Made in Japan* deals with a female country singer Tomi Fujiyama, *Far Western* tends to focus on several male country and bluegrass musicians. We can interpret this difference, beside their production budget and process, that an individual male country musician from Japan would be too threatening to country music norms in the US. Even an individual male country musician is featured, a writer deal with a retired musician and describes him who indulges himself in the forgotten past. See Dave Hoekstra, "Country and Eastern What Does Japanese Hank Williams Do for an Encore?" *Chicago Reader*, accessed November 11, 2018. <https://www.chicagoreader.com/chicago/country-and-eastern/Content?oid=902464>.

¹⁸ Richard A. Peterson, *Creating Country Music: Fabricating Authenticity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997); Diane Pecknold, *Selling Sound: The Rise of the Country Music Industry* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007); Patrick Huber, *Linthead Stomp: The Creation of Country Music in the Piedmont South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008); for a ways in which working-class men used country music, see Barbara Ching, *Wrong's What I Do Best: Hard Country Music and Contemporary Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003); for how the music industry and scholars invented hillbilly and race records by color-line in US South, see Karl Hugstrom Miller, *Segregating Sound: Folk and Pop Music in the Age of Jim Crow* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010); for how US mainstream media classed country music to uphold middle-class gender ideology after the 1970s, see Nadine Hubbs, *Rednecks, Queers and Country Music* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2014).

and manufacture the images of American country music, rather than assuming that those images pre-determines the socio-cultural background of those involved.

These pioneers of country music studies also help advance studies on “unexpected” groups’ participation in country music, such as women, African Americans, Native Americans, and people outside the US.¹⁹ To complicate the borders of one of the most “American,” if not “white” forms of popular music, other scholars began chronicling and introducing country musicians outside the US and how they play country music in different countries. Overall, these studies on country music outside the US expand views on the creators of American country music. But they merely introduce “foreign” country musicians and do not examine how they construct “Americanness” and play music within their domestic contexts.²⁰

More recently, scholars have begun asking how non-US actors manipulate the borders between their countries and the US by playing and consuming American country music. They demonstrate more fluid and ambiguous borders of transnational space of American country music and describe what those musicians do to blur and reinforce their nation-states boundaries. Kristin Solli’s dissertation about country music in Norway demonstrates country musicians in Norway both create transnational

¹⁹ For American country music created by and associated with “marginalized” groups, see David W. Samuels, *Putting a Song on Top of It: Expression and Identity on the San Carlos Apache Reservation* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2004); Diane Pecknold eds., *Hidden in the Mix: The African American Presence in Country Music* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2013); Diane Pecknold and Kris McCusker eds., *A Boy Named Sue: Gender and Country Music* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2004) and *Country Boys and Redneck Women: New Essays in Gender and Country Music* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2016).

²⁰ Furmanovsky, “American Country Music in Japan,” 357-372; Thompson, “American Country Music in Japan,” 31-38; Mel van Elteran, “Country Music in Netherlands: Why Is It Still Marginal?” *Popular Music and Society* 20 no.3 (1996): 53-93; Elteran, “Dutch Country Music: Between Creative Appropriation and Mere Epigonism,” *Popular Music and Society* 22 no.1 (1998): 91-113; Jonathan Zilberg, “Yes, It’s True: Zimbabweans Love Dolly Parton,” *The Journal of Popular Culture* 29 no.1 (1995): 111-125; Jane Ferguson, “Another Country is the Past: Western Cowboys, Lanna Nostalgia, and Bluegrass Aesthetics as Performed by Professional Musicians in Northern Thailand,” *American Ethnologist* 37 no.2 (2010): 227-240; Jimmy Balud Fong, “Batawa: Constructing Identity through Country Music in the Philippine Cordillera” (paper presented at INTER: A European Cultural Studies Conference, Sweden, June 11-13, 2007), 109-119, accessed November 13, 2018, <http://www.ep.liu.se/ecp/025/ecp07025.pdf>.

links and reinforce national borders in the globalizing world. By looking at how people play country music, rather than treating musical compositions as texts, Solli argues that American country music's reception in Norway was not mere Americanization. By introducing how Norwegians play American country music, Solli argues that Norwegians continue to explore their national identities and their own ideas about class associations, even when they play American country music similarly to country artists in the US. Overall, Solli shows the complex constructions country music's borders, nation-states and social class.²¹ Similarly, Lee Bidgood's study of bluegrass musicians in the Czech Republic concludes that Czech musicians are "in-between" the Czech Republic and the US because they construct their identities as musicians by recreating the Americanness of bluegrass music. Bidgood and Solli address the ambiguous and complex boundaries of country music and nation-states articulated through music playing by people outside the US.²²

I follow Solli and Bidgood's studies that show country music's transnational spread is not mere Americanization. And I further their studies by paying more attention to the symbolic constructions of American country music in Japan. Rather than mainly focusing on fans and musicians of American country music, my dissertation illuminates conversations about American country music as a symbol among musicians, fans and writers who appreciated American country music as well as those who attacked their music and music making.

Transnational Making of Japanese Masculinities

In my dissertation, I only deal with Japanese men's conversations about

²¹ Kristin Solli, "North of Nashville: Country Music, National Identity, and Class in Norway" (PhD diss., University of Iowa, 2006).

²² Lee Butler Bidgood, "'America Is All Around Here': An Ethnography of Bluegrass Music in the Contemporary Czech Republic" (PhD diss., University of Virginia, 2011).

American country music and cowboy images, despite Japanese women, including a handful of female recording artists who also appreciated, criticized American country music in Japan. I believe female voices and experiences would help us understand more clearly about the transnational circulation of American country music, but I leave the analysis on these female actors for future research. I believe it is critical to understand how and why Japanese men made popular music discourse in Japan male-centered. As the Japanese popular music scholar Michael Molasky claims, only a few studies have critiqued Japanese popular music using a gender analysis, let alone studies critiquing male-centered popular music in Japan.²³ In fact, male actors dominated the ranks of musicians and fans of American country music in Japan as well as critics, writers and the state officials who wrote and discussed the music publicly. I believe this disproportionate amount of male voices should be examined critically, because men in Japan have more freedom to talk about popular music regardless of the genres.

Another reason why I deal with Japanese men is that I aim to elaborate the ways in which Japanese men constructed their masculinities through popular music and symbols that originated in the US. But by this, I do not mean that Japanese men became masculine because of masculine stereotypes of American country music, cowboy images and the powerful US. Rather, I describe American country music and cowboy images in Japan as a battlefield where Japanese men fought over their masculinity that would represent their ideal nation.

The historian George Mosse states that modern nation-building required an “authentic” image of men. The sociologist R.W. Connell agrees and addresses what

²³ Michael S. Molasky, *Sengo nihon no jazu bunka: Eiga, bungaku, angura* (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 2005), 11-12; among few studies on gender and popular music in Japan, the literary scholar Zettsu particularly focused on romantic relations in song lyrics, see Tomoyuki Zettsu, *Dōnimo tomaranai kayōkyoku: nanajū nendai no jendā* (Tokyo: Shōbunsha, 2002).

she calls “hegemonic masculinity,” which has been an indispensable ideology for men to help manufacture and preserve modern nation-states.²⁴ Both Mosse and Connell agree with that hegemonic masculinity emerges most clearly in the presence of other “subordinated” men, such as homosexuals, boys, and men who belong to marginalized racial and class groups.²⁵ Therefore, the ideal image of man necessary for the maintenance of the modern nation (hegemonic masculinity) exists only when it has alternative masculinities to dominate and with which to contrast.

Following these theories, Japanese historians and anthropologists of masculinity examine predominant male symbols that convey physical strength, economic productivity and service to the state, if not Empire. These have included studies on the *samurai*, the *sararīman*, *Kamikaze* soldiers and the Self Defense Forces (*jieitai*).²⁶ More recent studies on Japanese masculinities focus more on “subordinated men” such as the *otaku*, part-time workers (*furītā*) and homeless men. They tend to deal with symbols and occupations strongly connected with domestic culture and society, because a man’s productivity was directed at serving the state, from the feudal to the imperial governments. These contexts played the main roles in constructing and justifying the hegemonic masculinities of each era. As a result, they tend to suggest that masculinities in Japan are singularly unique and starkly different from other countries. For example, Connell finds “a particular kind of argument about the future of masculinity and love” in the discussions around the Japanese obsessive fans,

²⁴ R. W. Connell, *Masculinities* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1995), 76; George L. Mosse, *The Images of Man: The Creation of Modern Masculinity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 6.

²⁵ Connell, *Masculinities*, 78-80.

²⁶ Sabine Frühstück and Anne Walthall eds., *Recreating Japanese Men* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2011); Kimiko Kimoto and Yoshiyuki Kidō eds., *Jendā to shakai: danseishi, guntai, sekushuaritī* (Tokyo: Shunpōsha, 2010); James E. Robertson and Nobue Suzuki eds., *Men and Masculinities in Contemporary Japan: Dislocating the Salaryman Doxa* (New York: Routledge, 2002); Tsunehisa Abe, Masako Amano and Sumio Ōhikata eds., *Danseishi* (Tokyo: Nihon keizai shimbun sha, 2006).

otaku.²⁷

Indeed, modern nation-building required a hegemonic masculinity to construct a particular national identity.²⁸ But, as transnational historians argue, this national identity is not fixed and constantly negotiated and contested with foreign nations, and the flow of commodities, people, ideas and cultural symbols. Moreover, men do not negotiate their masculinities only through male images representing the state's ambitions and interests. They constructed their masculinities with other male symbols, often found in popular culture and media. If cultural media has been an arena where transnational encounter occurred, we can imagine men searched for their own masculinities by conversing with symbols of masculinity that came from outside Japan. Where scholars usually assume masculinity is constructed by actors within state institutions and ideologies, I believe dealing with American country music and cowboy images, cultural objects, and iconographies considered "outside" Japan, expands our understanding of the rich range of potential Japanese masculinities.

Illuminating this transnational construct of Japanese masculinities is particularly important to intervene in male-centered Japanese culture and society. The historian of Japan Ayako Kano helps us clarify this point. According to Kano, several prominent Japanese public intellectuals in the 1980s and 1990s, too, internalized the paradigm of masculine US/West and feminine Japan and claimed Japan's "unique difference from the West."²⁹ Kano argues this internalization of "reverse Orientalism" permitted them and their supporters to deny Japan's masculine violence to its neighbors and to the world. This paradigm enabled them to neglect to interrogate male-

²⁷ Ian Condry, "Love Revolution: Anime, Masculinity, and the Future," in *Recreating Japanese Men* ed., Sabene Frühstück and Anne Walthall (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2011), 262.

²⁸ Mosse, *The Image*.

²⁹ Kano particularly points to Kojin Karatani, Estuko Yamashita and Hidemi Suga. Ayako Kano, "Toward a Critique of Transhistorical Femininity," in *Gendering Modern Japanese History*, ed. Barbara Molony and Kathleen Uno (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008), 520-554.

centered gender relations within Japan both in the past and present. In short, I conceive this “reverse Orientalism” also hinders scholars and Japanese general audience from knowing how Japan continuously creates “Japanese-ness” and Japanese identities through ideas, values and images originated outside of Japan. Borrowing Kano’s argument, I illuminate the transnational construction of Japanese masculinities to intervene in male-centered Japanese histories and culture.

Indeed, numerous academic publications in Japanese on Japanese popular music have adopted this “reverse Orientalism.” They have been trapped by the prominent power of the US in popular music landscape in Japan. One prominent example is several works done by Hiroshi Minami, a prominent Japanese sociologist. Minami’s works pioneered to connect popular music with issues in Japanese society. Minami often expressed concern about Japan’s “colonized” status and sought to find a uniquely “Japanese” popular music culture.³⁰ *Nihon ryūkoka shi* (A History of Japanese Popular Music), one of the most prominent historical narratives about Japanese popular music, edited by Nobuo Komota, is another example. As the beginning of his narration of the history with Commodore Perry’s arrival in Japan imply, Komota often stresses Westernization and Americanization brought about the changes in popular music landscape.³¹ These scholars emphasized the historically enormous impact of American and Western music and reinforced the cultural hierarchy of a feminine Japan and a masculine US. While their arguments and intellectual interests were important to understand popular music in Japan, their strong attachment to prominent power of the West and America prevents us from inquiring into other

³⁰ Hiroshi Minami, “Nihon no ryūkōka,” in *Yume to omokage: Taishū goraku no kenkyū*, ed. Shisō no kagaku kenkyū kai (Tokyo: Chūō kōron sha, 1950); Minami, “Ryūkōka no mondai,” *Bungaku*, November, 1953, 1168 – 1172.

³¹ Nobuo Komota, Yoshifumi Shimada, Hiroshi Yazawa and Chiaki Yokozawa eds., *Shimban nihon ryūkōka shi* (Tokyo: Shakai shisōsha, 1994).

critical questions about how Japanese popular music practices and cultures has been gendered, racialized and classed.

Among studies in English on Japanese popular music, which remain few compared to other popular culture forms like movies and the performing arts,³² scholars often illuminate transnational aspects of “Japaneseness” in popular musicking. For example, the historian E. Taylor Atkins highlights how Japanese jazz musicians constructed and spread nationalistic ideologies through jazz music originated in the US. The literary scholar Michael Bourdagh examines how Japanese people created Japanese popular songs according to Japan’s geopolitical situations during the Cold War era, and how they also conceived and shaped those “imagined” geopolitical maps through their musical activities.³³ These studies take a transnational approach, yet they assume that Japanese exclusively encounter the US through popular music forms originating outside Japan.

On the other hand, *Tokyo Boogie Woogie* by the historian of Japan Hiromu Nagahara interrogates roles of popular music within Japanese domestic contexts. By calling jazz as popular music (*ryūkōka*) to underplay the impact of the West on Japanese popular music, Nagahara shows how intellectuals and state officials from the 1920s to the late 1960s controlled and criticized domestic social problems through popular music. Nagahara’s study is one of the first attempts in English language publications on Japanese popular music that addresses the role of Japanese popular music in discussing domestic debates about class, race, gender and national identity within domestic contexts.³⁴ Another example that I borrow for my dissertation is the study done by the musicologist Yusuke Wajima. Wajima reveals how Enka became an

³² E. Taylor Atkins, *Blue Nippon: Authenticating Jazz in Japan* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001).

³³ Bourdagh, *Sayonara*, 3-4.

³⁴ Hiromu Nagahara, *Tokyo Boogie Woogie: Japan’s Pop Era and its Discontents* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2017).

ethos of Japanese spirit, by highlighting the ways in which Japanese constructed various ideas about Japan at different times. Instead of criticizing and searching Japanese “unique” creativity, Wajima shows how Japanese constructed this “uniqueness,” by delineating various ideas about Japanese culture and society.³⁵ I borrow the ideas of Wajima and Nagahara and use American country music as one popular music form in Japan to understand how popular music intersects with gender.

For these reasons, I believe country music and cowboy images, in particular, help us understand more clearly how men claimed their own masculinity. In the three decades covered in this dissertation, Japanese men constructed their masculinities by making class identities through cowboy images and American country music. From the mid 1920s to the mid 1960s, Japanese men showed a remarkable preoccupation with the class associations of cowboys and American country music. By this, I do not mean Japanese men understood cowboys and country music as simply the culture of humble working-class Americans, which were common images in the US. Rather, Japanese men manipulated these class associations to claim a respectable masculinity. If some men criticized cowboy images as violent and thus “low-class,” they legitimized their ideal male image as benign and middle-class. If some men praised cowboys as diligent and thus respectable, they legitimized their male image as appropriate for the nation by creating “decadent” and sexually deviant both “upper and lower-class” men.³⁶

³⁵ Yusuke Wajima, *Tsukurareta nihon no kokoro shinwa: Enka wo meguru sengo taishū ongakushi* (Tokyo: Kōbunsha shinsho, 2010).

³⁶ In my dissertation, I view class not as people’s economic locations in society determined by actual income, occupations and family background. The sociologist Beverly Skeggs and the anthropologist Sherry Ortner state that class is something to admire, fear and defend, through a symbolic economy, such as including and excluding what is appropriate for certain classes. Thus, they claim that people shape, experience and reflect “class” in their daily lives, not exclusively in the relations between the owner and the worker. See Beverley Skeggs, *Class, Self, Culture* (London: Routledge, 2004), 3-5; Sherry Ortner, *New Jersey Dreaming: Capital, Class and the Class of '58* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 11-12.

Despite their preoccupation with the class associations of cowboys and American country music, by the early 1970s, Japanese men rarely problematized racial violence in the Jim Crow South and the American West. I contend this “absence” of race in Japanese men’s discussions about cowboys and American country music shows us their racial ideology, partly due to their internalization of whiteness. However, I do not investigate how these Japanese men claimed their masculinities by making racial others and using their racial ideologies in my dissertation because Japanese ideas about race are far more complex than internalizing whiteness. In encountering cowboys and American country music, we must understand that Japanese men’s ideas about race in the face of Asian countries and the West, as well as racial dynamics among cowboys in the West and American country music. Secondly, Japanese men’s discourse about cowboys and American country music changed drastically after the 1970s. Music critics racialized and essentialized American country music as white, racist and violent and this view became dominant among male popular music fans in Japan to this day.³⁷ To understand Japanese men’s debating hegemonic masculinities through cowboys and American country music in terms of race requires further understanding of the historical context in which this change emerged and the complex construction of ideas about race among Japanese men.

I have also chosen not to include an analysis of race because I want to stress that cowboys do not always represent the US, or white Americans. In a transnational cultural encounter, especially between the US, often considered to be (unfortunately) a “white nation,” and Japan, a “non-white nation,” racial analysis alone could lead us to

³⁷ Tōyō Nakamura, “Naze boku wa ‘uesutan’ ga kirai ka,” in *Nakamura Tōyō ansorojī*, ed. Jun Asano (Tokyo: Music Magazine, 2011), 38-43. Nakamura remains to be one of the most influential music critics in Japanese popular music. He introduced blues and “indigenous” music from other parts of the world to Japanese audiences. As this particular article was re-published in 2011, his views on popular music in the world, in which he essentializes black and white music, still has an impact on Japanese music aficionados.

conclude American cultural supremacy, Japanese worshipping whiteness and/or brutal US cultural imperialism to non-white nations. Therefore, it masks difference in class associations, too, that affect the transnational flow of American culture, such as cowboys and American country music, which represent certain nations. As a result, I leave an examination of race for future research.

Country Music in Japanese Popular Music History

By dealing with Japanese men who appreciated, criticized and manipulated country music and its cowboy images from the mid 1930s to the mid 1960s, this dissertation, furthermore, attempts to place American country music in Japan within the broader historical narrative of Japanese popular music. As the title of Michael Furmanovsky's study "American Country Music in Japan: Lost Piece in the Popular Music History Puzzle" shows, journalists and scholars narrate Japanese popular music often by bypassing country's postwar reception. Certainly, country music fans and practitioners were relatively small compared to other musical genres, even at the height of its popularity in the mid 1950s. And Furmanovsky and other scholars who "excavated" country music practitioners in Japan did demonstrate how to integrate country into the Japanese popular music history. But I believe my dissertation can further show why country music needs to have its proper historical place restored.

Popular music history in Japan written for a general audience has celebrated "rock," for its rebellious attitude and because critics assume that it became a genre independent from its Euro-American cultural home. For example, scholars and journalists describe the early 1970s as the period when Japanese popular music became independent, referencing Japanese popular music, rather than recording artists from the US and UK. They claim that during this period rock music became a normal form of

popular music making in Japan.³⁸ Of course these narratives are important to show the various traces of popular music taste and lineage in Japan. However, the absence of country music have made me wonder the reasons for its omission. In this research, I conclude that male recording artists like Katsuhiko Haida, the Western Ramblers, and rockabilly artists all expressed a defiant attitude against mainstream society by playing cowboys songs and American country music within their own historical and ideological contexts. I hope these men's rebellious gestures help us understand the wide varieties of music making not yet written into Japanese popular music history. And I hope those men help us ask who can judge what is political, and therefore "rebellious," and can also encourage us to historicize "the history" of Japanese popular music.

Timeframe

I deal with four decades from the 1920s to the early 1960s when country music and cowboy images intersected with a series of crises about manhood and national identity. I begin during the 1920s to the late 1930s when Japan's empire grew its imperial appetite amidst an influx of American lifestyle and consumer goods. The second period is Japan's defeat in World War II and the immediate postwar period when the country searched for a "new" and an identity different from the prewar-era, one carrying a legacy to build a modern country with productivity and respectability. The third period is during Japan became more productive with its acute economic growth since the mid 1950s that allowed the state to declare an end to Japan as a "postwar" nation, yet worried about this economic progress would make Japan a mere prey to commercialism. In short, men in each period faced similar dynamics between

³⁸ Mitsui, *Sengo*, 6, 414-416; Bourdagh, *Sayonara*, 159-195.

concerns and aspirations about the nation's productivity – militarism, economic and technological progress, and cultural respectability -- which would mark Japan as culturally independent from other countries yet at an equivalent cultural level with other developed countries in a global stage. Those dynamics, as Mosse argues, enabled men to rethink hegemonic masculinity because the image of Japanese men as responsible for steering the nation was threatened as the nation faced various crises and drastic political, economic and cultural changes.³⁹

Chapters

In chapter one I narrate Japanese men's prewar encounter with American country music and cowboy images. This chapter, "Empty Saddles," begins in the 1920s with the earliest discussion in Japan about cowboys. Starting with the rise of consumer culture and ending in the early phase of the fifteen-year war, the state, the mainstream media and the recording industry used cowboys to support the total war regime. Yet that support was often ambiguous and conflicted. As this chapter's title, "Empty Saddles" suggests, the Japanese Empire allowed Japanese men to embody multiple masculinities to support total war. To investigate how multiple masculinities fought to uphold ideas of Japanese racial purity and courageous wartime manhood, I particularly focus on the rendition of the American cowboy song "Empty Saddles" performed by the singer Katsuhiko Haida.

Katsuhiko Haida's rendition of "Empty Saddles" released in the first year of the Second Sino-Japan War is one of the best examples to understand how Japanese men used songs now defined as American country music and the low-class cowboy image to shape their ideas about respectable wartime manhood. This particular

³⁹ Mosse, *the Image*, 79.

recording helps explain how by 1937 a gender-deviated modern boy, such as Haida, and a low-classed image of the cowboy were incorporated into the total war regime as a Japanese man.

Chapter 2, “Après-guerre Cowboys,” deals with the period from occupied Japan to the mid 1950s, when the Japanese government proclaimed economic recovery from the war in 1956. The war defeat had a huge impact on Japanese men, but it provided another moment for men to debate ideas about respectable manhood through cowboy images. If Japanese businessmen embodied diligent and perseverant cowboys and dreamed at the movie theater of their freedom in the Western prairie, Japanese musicians who played American country music in cowboy outfits mocked the hardworking, serious and taciturn profile of American cowboys that offered Japanese hegemonic middle-class masculinity. As in Chapter 1, these musicians mocked the larger society through cowboys. If Haida, as a feminine man, implied his resistance against Japan’s imperial violence, postwar Japanese musicians of American country music as Après-guerre cowboys, too, followed Haida in talking back to middle-class norms by playing music associated with cowboys.

At the same time, non-country musicians and music critics criticized these musicians in cowboy outfits for lacking musical education and sophistication. By doing so, they legitimized their versions of hegemonic masculinity embodied in men like them who played music through apprenticeships with prestigious music teachers and appreciated modern jazz music that they thought had more complex code progressions and melodies. But Japanese musicians of American country music in the early 1950s did not stop playing this music that had simpler codes, melodies, or stop wearing cowboy outfits. Despite, or perhaps because of, their upper and upper-middle class family backgrounds, they attempted to perform “low-brow.” By doing so, they claimed their versions of hegemonic masculinity as anti-establishment musicians.

Chapter 3, “Country Gentleman,” examines cowboy representations from the late 1950s to the mid 1960s. This is a period when representations of cowboys performed by Japanese men increasingly appeared in mainstream media. Cowboys became gentleman, a female target of hetero-normative, healthy, romantic love. Partly because of the popularity of TV westerns and Japan’s economic growth, men from various backgrounds debated why cowboys could be a male role model. In this chapter, Japanese men, including communists and country music traditionalists, both stressed the cowboy’s diligent and humble disposition, though from different political viewpoints. Despite their political views, they were both concerned about social decadence and a popular music industry immersed in commercial greed. For some communists, after their defeat in the US-Japan Security Treaty negotiations of 1960, cowboys in the westerns displayed the ways in which men fought for justice for the people. For country traditionalists, performing cowboys enabled them to conform to hetero-normative gender relations that differed from the new type of rockabilly singers who displayed promiscuous bodies on the stage. Amidst a growing economy, men were concerned that Japanese society was sinking into commercial greed, through capitalism and sexual sensation. By performing cowboys, they attempted to display an “alternative” masculinity that could speak out against decadence.

The debate between traditionalists and rockabilly singers reveals Japanese men’s ongoing desire to create a popular music sphere with a more rebellious aura. The traditionalists who performed cowboys could not appeal to the larger popular music audience with their masculinity. Rockabilly singers who threw away cowboy outfits and possessed an anti-establishment aura were considered to be trailblazers of the Japanese rock scene even today. The importance in the mainstream media of rockabilly singers in creating the Japanese popular music scene helps us understand the dynamics between male popular music making and the larger Japanese society.

In short, this dissertation demonstrates that Japanese men used American country music and cowboy images to debate changes in hegemonic masculinity. Their debates show us that many Japanese men constructed their masculinities through images that came from the US. It also helps us understand that Japanese men encountered American country music as just another popular music form and through which they discussed their own domestic concerns. American country music in Japan therefore shows us how Japanese men used popular music as a battlefield to define masculinity and nation.

Chapter 1

Empty Saddles: Modern Boys and Cowboys in the Japanese Empire

In January 1938, the Japanese Victor record company released the song "Lovely Black Horse (*itoshino ao yo*)."¹ In this song, the singer lamented a dead horse in Northern China, asking the horse for forgiveness because its "death was for the sake of the country." Japanese Victor released the song a few months after they began the "Patriotic Record Campaign" in August 1937, immediately after the Second Sino-Japan War began.² But as a part of the war-mobilization campaign, "Lovely Black Horse" was not quite masculine to rouse fighting spirit. Rather than choosing a traditional Japanese singer, Japanese Victor featured one of their new talents, a Hawaiian-born Japanese, Katushiko Haida, who had huge followers among female fans and urbanites who preferred American-influenced culture. Moreover, Japanese Victor used the melody and the prairie theme of an American cowboy song, "Empty Saddles," now often considered a classic American country song. In the lyrics, the narrator, instead of emphasizing courageous death in war, did not hesitate to cry for the death of his chivalrous horse in a snowstorm in Japan's new Northern China frontier. Moreover, the singer Haida sang the song with his signature crooning voice and a falsetto that sounded like a "female voice" for the listeners in the period.³ If the Japanese Empire sought to consolidate its imperial, if not fascist, identity out of "pure" and "superior" Japanese masculinity, Haida's "Lovely Black Horse" failed that

¹ J. Keirn Brennan, Billy Hill, Shigeru Umemoto and Seiichi Suzuki, "*Itoshino Aoyo*," Katushiko Haida. Nihon Victor, J-54197, 1938, 78rpm; Various Artists, *The Victor Recordings: 1938~1947*, Victor Entertainment, VICL-62905~6, 2008, 2CDs, disc 1.

² "Gun'yōki no un'yō ni: Aikoku rekōdo undō," *Asahi shimbun*, August 11, 1937.

³ Haida said to his biographer Toshihiko Hayatsu that when he sang with his falsetto, the audience got brushed and looked down. Toshihiko Hayatsu, *Haida Yukihiro/Katsuhiko suzukake no michi* (Tokyo: San kurieito, 1983), 160-161.

mission.

Haida's rendition of an American cowboy song, "Empty Saddles," released in 1938, complicates our previous views on masculinities in wartime Japan. Until recently, historians of wartime Japan emphasized how the Japanese Empire, beginning in 1937, suppressed "hybrid" cultural products, names, and people. When the state launched the National Spiritual Mobilization Movement, which lasted until the end of the war in 1945, it marked an abrupt change in Japanese society from one celebrating consumer culture. Narrated this way, men in wartime Japan, who were required to fight for the "sacred" cause of Japan as soldiers, have been described as pure-race, courageous and self-sacrificial figures, such as Kamikaze pilots. But Haida's rendition of "Empty Saddles" implies us that the Japanese Empire might have lost control of the image of the man who would consolidate the state's visions. At the same time, it suggests that the state might have permitted multiple masculinities for men in mobilizing the war. In short, Haida's "Empty Saddles" released in the wake of the Second Sino-Japanese War displays crisis of Japanese masculinity during the war.

This chapter investigates how and why Haida's "Empty Saddles" helped mobilize listeners for Japan's invasion into Northern China. "Empty Saddles" is one of the best examples to understand how men used songs now defined as American country music repertoire and cowboy images to shape their own ideas about respectable wartime manhood. Moreover, answering this central question helps us reveal Japanese men's long debate on hegemonic masculinity with American country music and cowboy images in the prewar era. I begin this chapter explaining how the "modern boy," who served as an icon of consumer culture celebrating the American "jazz" culture lifestyle expanded and deviated the gender norm intrinsic to Japanese

nation building. Then, to explain my two readings of “My Lovely Black Horse” in relationship with wartime masculinity, I first illustrate how the Japanese state and journalists described the class image of cowboys. Then I also demonstrate how others took advantage of the cowboy’s class status to mobilize youth for the war. Finally, I demonstrate my two readings of Haida’s “Empty Saddles,” and how they upheld and sustained wartime gender ideology.

In this chapter, I follow recent scholarly views on wartime Japan. These scholars began describing the Japanese total war regime in a more nuanced and complex ways than simply that the Japanese Empire subjugated the Japanese to make their nation stronger with its nationalistic propaganda of the “superiority” of a “pure Japanese race.” For example, Takashi Fujitani claims both Japan and the US conducted racial atrocities despite condemning racial segregation. In fact, each nation during the war conducted the war to achieve Greater-Asia Co-Prosperity and the Atlantic Charter, which emphasized self-determination and racial equality.⁴ In his study on wartime Japanese culture from 1937 to 1945, Uchiyama follows Fujitani’s view and addresses the “hybrid” consumer culture that emerged and was popularized in the Taisho era maintained its influence in the total war regime. He argues the Japanese were not oppressed to mindlessly support the war. Rather, they constructed their ideas about the war through this consumer culture sustained by the wartime economy and invigorated by the munitions industry.⁵ Nagahara elaborates the proximity of the wartime state and consumers by taking up the censorship of popular music during the wartime. The censor, the record labels and the artists held meetings

⁴ Takashi Fujitani, *Race for Empire: Koreans as Japanese and Japanese as Americans during World War II* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2011), 8.

⁵ Benjamin Tsubokura Uchiyama, “Carnival War: a Cultural History of Wartime Japan, 1937-1945”(PhD diss, University of Southern California), 71-124.

to produce recordings that would not be banned. Moreover, the censor formed the censorship regulation partly by adopting the listeners' taste in the market. Nagahara claims the censor did not oppress the wartime popular music by their power, but rather, he functioned as a music critic and as one of the consumers.⁶ This chapter borrows these scholarly views on wartime Japan, which blur the boundaries of consumer culture and the state previously described as opposite entities.

To examine the transnational construct of Japanese masculinities, I also borrow how Japanese used “hybrid” culture in the prewar era to construct “Japaneseness.” In the past two decades, scholars of interwar and wartime Japanese culture and history show how the Japanese attempted to construct a distinctive Japaneseness with “hybrid” culture where “Japan” and “the West” are “mixed.” These scholars challenge previous narratives of Japanese modernity, in which the Japanese merely assimilated themselves into Western culture. For example, Deborah Shamoon, by taking up a Jun'ichirō Tanizaki novel, addresses how the Japanese made sense of themselves as Japanese by making Westerners and Asians racial, class and gender “others” in a hybrid culture. Shamoon asserts that Tanizaki did not merely “adopt” stylistic elements of the West, in his novels such as in *Naomi*. Shamoon argues Tanizaki constructed Japanese-ness by finding certain dispositions in “hybrid” female figures and cultural products, such as movie making, rather than totally denying and abandoning them. I borrow this line of thinking in which the Japanese used a “hybrid” culture to find “otherness” with which to construct hegemonic “Japaneseness” to consolidate the imperial identity. This process helps us understand how Japanese men used “American” cowboy images to

⁶ Hiromu Nagahara, *Tokyo Boogie Woogie: Japan's Pop Era and Its Discontents* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2017), 89-90.

debate about Japanese masculinities.⁷

Modern Boys, Jazz Culture and Gender in the Japanese Empire

To understand the ambiguous roles Haida's "Lovely Black Horse" served for the Empire, we must understand how jazz culture and the emergence of "modern boys" (*mobo*) like Haida symbolized "modern-ness" in the 1920s and deviated from wartime gender norms. Jazz culture marked the modern on a global scale⁸ because of commercialism, the influx of foreign culture and the technological development of discs and radio.⁹ In their everyday life these recipients traversed national, regional, and racial boundaries through these commodities.¹⁰ As elsewhere in the world, jazz culture flourished in Japan and its recipients and supporters saw this consumer culture and lifestyle as a manifestation of "progress."

For example, the composer Takashi Iba in 1929 stated that "jazz will rescue the people (*taishu*) from the domineering bad taste of Japanese folk music."¹¹ Iba claimed that "jazz brought Japanese people rhythm" that "delivered a miraculous impact on

⁷ Deborah Shamoan, "The Modern Girl and the Vamp: Hollywood Film in Tanizaki Jun'ichirō's Early Novels." *positions* 20-4 (2012): 1067-1093. Scholars have closely studied about "hybridity" of Japanese culture in the 1920s to the early 1930s; for literature, see Seiji M. Lippit, *Topographies of Japanese Modernism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002); Mark Silver, *Purloined Letters: Cultural Borrowing and Japanese Crime Literature 1868-1937* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2008); for prewar Japanese films, see Hideaki Fujiki, *Making Personas: Transnational Film Stardom in Modern Japan* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013); on popular music, see E. Taylor Atkins, *Blue Nippon: Authenticating Japanese Jazz*. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001).

⁸ About international spread of American jazz in the 1920s, see Jeffrey H. Jackson, *Making Jazz French: Music and Modern Life in Interwar Paris* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006); Johnathan O. Wipplinger, *Jazz Republic: Music, Race, and American Culture in Weimer Germany* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2017).

⁹ Michael Denning emphasizes these technological advances helped the "popular," who previously could not play, listen and talk about music in the mainstream media, to raise their voices through popular music. See Michael Denning, *Noise Uprising: The Audiopolitics of a World Musical Revolution* (New York: Verso, 2015).

¹⁰ Denning, *Noise*, 4-6.

¹¹ Kamesuke Shioiri, *Jazu ongaku* (Tokyo: Keibunkan, 1929), 4.

their lives.”¹² The composer Keizo Horiuchi called jazz “music for the contemporary folk” and asserted that “to deny jazz is to refuse our own times (*gendai*).” “Even if jazz was not highbrow,” Horiuchi continued, “it would save the people from recent low-quality Japanese popular music.”¹³ Both Iba and Horiuchi believed jazz could advance the nation’s cultural taste and rescue it from folk music and other kinds of popular music. Moreover, Horiuchi also defended jazz from fans of western classical music, arguing that jazz addresses “progress,” while classical music was stuck in the past.¹⁴

It was not only different type of sound of jazz music that brought “progress” for the listeners. Those jazz music recipients, modern girls and modern boys, embodied novel lifestyle, largely affected by American consumer products and culture. Particularly, modern girls (*moga*) symbolized jazz culture because of their unconventional behavior and looks. One drawing by Shūhō Yamakawa in 1933, *Relaxing in the Shade*, shows how images of jazz music and modern girls served as a powerful symbol of modernist culture in Japan. In this Japanese-style drawing (*nihonga*), Yamakawa captured two modern girls relaxing under a parasol on the beach. Both women had their hair cut short in a bob style, the signature *moga* style and displayed an outgoing, maverick, and sexually active profile.¹⁵ One woman wore khaki trousers and the other a red-striped jumpsuit with a red hat with a wide brim. One woman has a blue-striped handbag shaped like a volleyball and a red-striped hat with a wide brim thrown casually on the sand. The woman on the left seemed to just have

¹² Ibid., 3.

¹³ Ibid., 5,7.

¹⁴ Ibid., 6-7.

¹⁵ Before a modern girl emerged and demonstrated their active sexual appeal, having short hair marked women’s retreat from secular and sexual activities. See Jennifer Robertson, *Takarazuka: Sexual Politics and Popular Culture in Modern Japan* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1998), 13.

stopped playing ukulele and placed it beside her.¹⁶ While showing two modern girls with their trend-setting and Western-influenced consumer items, traditional pigments and brush technique authenticated these girls as Japanese.

In elaborating jazz culture, it is important to note that Yamakawa did not depict these Japanese women in kimono with ukulele. Nor he did choose these modern women with other traditional Japanese instruments such as a *shamisen* or classical music instruments such as a violin. Yamakawa did not depict men with ukulele under the parasol either. The combination of modern girls and jazz music was a perfect symbol of cosmopolitan modernist lifestyle, even though men dominated professional musical labor as being musicians and singers. These women in Yamakawa's painting addressed female images of "progress" who did not follow the "Good Wife Wise Mother" female roles that the Japanese conventionally imagined. Working outside the home, they obtained money to buy things to enjoy their leisure time and no longer had to be obedient to their husbands (to be). Their mannish western clothes and hybrid lifestyle figuratively addressed female progress, at the same time, crisis of traditional Japanese gender roles.¹⁷

A *Jiji shimpō* round-table talk among modern girls in 1935 elaborates how modern girls would "rescue" Japanese listeners bad taste with their preference of jazz. Aversion," one lady said, "is all I have to say about *naniwabushi*, *manzai* and *rakugo*." According to the article, the entertainment that these modern girls preferred was

¹⁶ Shūhō Yamakawa, *Relaxing in the Shade*, 1933, ink and color on silk, the Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, accessed November 20, 2018, <https://www.artic.edu/artworks/156474/relaxing-in-the-shade>; John W. Dower, Anne Nishimura Morse, Jacqueline M. Atkins, and Frederic A. Sharf eds., *The Brittle Decade: Visualizing Japan in the 1930s* (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts Boston, 2012), 61.

¹⁷ Silverberg elaborates symbolic power of modern girls as well as their actual lives in this period, see Miriam Silverberg, *Erotic Grotesque Nonsense: The Mass Culture of Japanese Modern Times* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2006), 51-107.

movies, revues and dance. Another discussant agreed, claiming “I would never marry to a guy who says he likes *naniwabushi* the best!”¹⁸ If a man preferred *naniwabushi*, Japanese narrative singing, he did not possess the masculinity that modern girls found attractive and fit, while jazz culture man that encompassed revues, movies and dance did.¹⁹ Unlike *naniwabushi* artists groaning loudly without microphones to an audience sitting quiet in front of him, jazz singers, like Haida, used modern technologies of amplifiers and microphones, delivered a smooth sound to a dancing audience of men and women, enjoying liquor together. For these modern girls, jazz music helped them become a “progressive” being.

Thus, modern boys such as Haida who played jazz music attracted those modern girls. Born in Hawaii and came back to Japan in 1923, Haida embodied jazz culture because of his “foreign,” if not “American,” background. His cosmopolitan background authenticated his “hybrid” style in clothes and behavior. “*Ginbura*,” in which youngsters strolled around the most upscale shopping district, Ginza in Tokyo, was Haida’s ritual after school since his college year in Dokkyō University. “Walking around Ginza to overcome lack of exercise is fine,” one of his band members teased and speculated that Haida would be hang around dance halls, drinking alcohol and romancing with the dancers, one of the quintessential images of modern girls.²⁰

Haida and his brother’s band, the Moana Glee Club, made music only by having a danger of promiscuity. They included female choruses and musicians in their band. The Moana member Murakami recalled that the concert in November in 1931

¹⁸ Yoshihiro Kurata, *Nihon rekōdo bunka shi* (Tokyo: Tokyo Shoseki, 1979), 194. *Jiji shimpō* August 3, 1935.

¹⁹ Hyōdō elaborates how *naniwabushi* constructed the “modern” Japanese nation during the sixty years from the late 1880s to 1945 when the genre earned highest popularity. See Hiromi Hyōdō, *Koe no kokuminkokka nihon* (Tokyo: NHK books, 2000).

²⁰ Hayatsu, *Suzukake*, 146.

was conducted “with ladies and gentlemen.”²¹ These female musicians did not hesitate to go out nightly to play music. For example, another member Fumio Hirose reported that on New Years Eve of 1934, he was woken up by a call from the senior member of the band, “come out to the *Teito* dancehall with your instruments tonight at ten!” They were to play all night at Kawaguchi dancehall until New Year’s Day. At *Teito*, female members of Suzuko Simizu, who was a soprano vocalist, and Sachiko Hiraiwa also showed up. In the next several hours at Kawaguchi dancehall, they played thirty songs in their three stage sets. The dancehall bought them alcohol and male members danced with female dancers. When “sparrows started singing,” they went back home by train.²² At their annual camps that they held from 1929 to 1935, female members and male members mingled more closely.²³ “At two and three in the morning, some practiced guitars and ukuleles on the balcony,” Hirose, one of the male members, reported, “at the hall, some practiced dance with the music from the phonograph. Others got drunk with whisky and beer.” Hirose was excited to imagine “if romance would be born among the members.”²⁴

This romantic ambience excited the fans and musicians around the Moana Glee Club. One male fan of Haida’s music, Toshirō Okamoto was elated “because of the strong romantic feeling” and defined “the Moana’s concert became increasingly modern.” Okamoto was startled by “many beautiful ladies” and he was even jealous of the bands when these female audiences uttered sighs of enjoyment.²⁵ As Okamoto’s account of Haida’s music shows, not only Haida’s music itself, but modern girls’

²¹ Ibid., 77-78.

²² Ibid., 122-124.

²³ Ibid., 138.

²⁴ Ibid., 134-136.

²⁵ Hayatsu, *Suzukake*, 88.

presence, helped him define their music as modern. Like a lady who conceived the possibilities of romance with jazz music by repudiating *naniwabushi* as unromantic, male fans like Okamoto also embraced the possibilities of having romance with modern girls through jazz music. Jazz music allowed both modern girls and modern boys to experience more egalitarian male-female relationships. It allowed not only women but men to redefine their gender roles.²⁶

All in all, Haida's jazz did not allow its recipients and practitioners to embody and experience traditional gender roles that the state encouraged to create the strong nation. On the contrary, it allowed both modern girls and modern boys to dance and interact intimately together. Although actual musical labor and decision-making was conducted dominantly by men, Haida's jazz allowed women to play on stage, practice together with other male students, and participate in the camp to elaborate their musical skills. It even allowed women to go outside the house at night and play music together with men.

Jazz Culture as Threat to Gender Norms

While modern boys and girls would find jazz as cultural advancement, others considered it a retreat from respectable culture. In fact, Kamesuke Shioiri had published *Jazz Music* to demonstrate jazz's "normality (*seijōsei*).” He readily acknowledged the wide-spread criticism of jazz, pointing out that “it is becoming common to use the word ‘jazz’ to signify the society’s frivolous aspects.” That is why, Shioiri continued, “jazz music has been considered the lowest and most unhealthy

²⁶ For how female writers embraced more egalitarian relationships even in marriage, see Michiko Suzuki, *Becoming Modern Women: Love and Female Identity in Prewar Japanese Literature and Culture* (Redwood City: Stanford University Press, 2010), 65-106.

music.”²⁷ According to Shioiri, journalists described jazz as “disorderly and aimless” and the jazz would “harm sacred and good music.”²⁸

Perhaps those critics felt the jazz sounded “disorder and aimless” because jazz culture encouraged men and women mingle more closely together and helped especially women to deviate from the gender norm at the time. In fact, the state and cultural conservatives in the late 1920s were concerned that jazz music would lead to cultural and moral decline. Some cultural conservatives, such as a teacher in Haida’s brother’s school, considered jazz, regardless of the lyrics, a moral decay. In Dokkyō chūgaku, in 1928, Yukihiro was “scolded severely” by his teacher who found Haida teaching ukulele to his classmates at school. “I heard you are teaching music for your classmates,” this teacher shouted at him. Haida asked, “Am I a delinquent if I teach music?” The teacher nodded, “Yes. Playing such music is the first step to decadence. You should never teach music!” Even after quitting teaching ukulele at school, Yukihiro’s musical activities even at his and his friends house could not escape the school’s jazz surveillance.²⁹ Indeed, the next year in 1929, the *Tokyo nichichi* newspaper reported that the Ministry of Education decided to send “the Song Prosecutors (*uta no kensatsukan*)” to public elementary schools from April 1929 to watch over teachers not to teach students songs with lyrics without the state authorization.³⁰

The discussion about the legitimacy of jazz music in public culminated in 1929 with the tremendous hit of “Tokyo March” (*Tokyo kōshinkyoku*). In this controversy, we can see how the state and cultural conservatives worried about jazz because it

²⁷ Shioiri, *Jazu*, 9.

²⁸ Ibid., 19.

²⁹ Hayatsu, *Suzukake*, 58-59.

³⁰ “Ryūō koutano kōzui ni mon wo tōjiru shōgakkō,” *Tokyo nichichi shinbun*, August 29, 1929.

threatened their gender norm. “Tokyo March” began with a line “dancing to jazz, the liqueur deepens the night, the dawn brings dancers’ tears like rain,” and captured the transient urban lives through unrequited cosmopolitans’ heterosexual romance. The state-sponsored radio station, JOAK, decided not to air this song in June in 1929.

Tokyo nichichi reported that the station claimed that,

Jazz is fine but we decided not to air because the lyrics were inappropriate.

It is no problem in the movie that people chose to see. But we the radio station is concerned about the phrase that a hard-working girl who knew nothing about the world meets a man in Asakusa and escapes with him to get married, riding on the Odakyu train.³¹

JOAK feared that this song would travel nationwide within a few minutes to listeners who “did not choose to listen” to this song. Particularly, the station worried how the song depicted a girl, rather than a man who picks her up and takes her on the train to get married. A girl in the song deviated from a conventional young woman, who the state believed should become a “Good Wife Wise Mother” to support a family for the nation.

For the state and cultural conservatives, the girl illustrated in “Tokyo March” did not produce a healthy family unit for the nation. The state upheld the ideas that women were physical and moral producers of good soldiers and citizens. They encouraged women to be in the domestic sphere, not playing around Asakusa, and getting picked up by a strange man. Therefore, the state and cultural conservatives feared when elementary students hummed a phrase of “Tokyo March.” Such female students might find the lyrics exciting when they found out the meaning of the song

³¹ “Tokyo kōshinkyoku no hōsō sasidome,” *Tokyo nichichi shimbun*, June 15, 1929; Kurata, *Nihon rekōdo*, 180-184.

and its refrain discourage them from becoming “Good Wife Wise Mother.” Even if they were male students, they would not become the “master” of the household to protect their “obedient” wives and teaching her the “appropriate” world.³²

Jazz and Modern Boys

JOAK appeared to denounce romantic relationships between modern girls and modern boys, but they only criticized the song’s female protagonist. They said nothing about the man who danced and drank with the girl in the song. In the 1920s and the early 1930s, modern boys like Haida did not typify cultural deviation as modern girls conspicuously demonstrated. Although the anecdote of Yukihiro Haida scolded by his teacher suggests concerns over jazz male musicians and fans, yet when we consider how JOAK abandoned airing “Tokyo March,” we cannot conclude that modern boys menaced conventional masculinities. I contend men were afforded to the ability to “move from male-only space to heterosocial space more easily than women.”³³

For example, how female actresses emerged in the 1920s helps us understand how men had broader opportunities than women. Ayako Kano analyzes the debates over whether male actors performing women in Kabuki (*on ’nagata*) and female actresses performing women on stage from the 1890s to the 1910s. *On ’nagata* supporters argued that female physical inferiority would not allow them to perform themselves on stage. Male actors’ elaborated skills would demonstrate more authentic women’s femininity on stage than female actresses. Though female actors would win

³² Uno demonstrates how “good wife, wise mother” ideology developed to serve as a central concept of the womanhood defined by the state from the late nineteenth century to the beginning of the Pacific War. See Kathleen Uno, “Womanhood, War, and Empire” in *Gendering Modern Japanese History*, ed. Barbara Molony and Kathleen Uno (Cambridge: Harvard, 2005), 493-519.

³³ Sabine Frühstück and Anne Walthall eds., *Recreating Japanese Men* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2011), 1.

in the discussion, how *on'nagata* supporters defended male performing women suggests Japanese actors' broader roles to perform on stage would not be condemned.³⁴

The celebration of the airplane *Kamikaze*'s flight to London on May 22, 1937, further allows us to glimpse into how the state, the newspaper and the music industry tolerated "mixed-race" cosmopolitan masculinity for Japanese men. *Asahi* conducted this project by purchasing an airplane from Japanese military made in Japan in aiming to win technological competition among world powers. *Kamikaze* took the routes that other foreign-produced airplanes could not accomplish. Fédération Aéronautique Internationale (The World Air Sports Federation) registered this flight as the fastest flight record with that route. *Kamikaze*'s landing in London demonstrated to the world that airplanes made in Japan were technologically reliable and of superb quality. On May 22, when the pilots Kenji Horikoshi and Masaaki Inuma made their triumphant return, the state, military and *Asahi* held a celebration event on the radio from three in the afternoon to late at night.

Followed by the live report of their visit to the ceremony, JOAK, aired programs for children and family. From nine at night, Japanese popular singers, including Haida, sang celebratory songs. In this Japanese accomplishment for the world, Haida's cosmopolitan fit perfectly with the event. Like *Kamikaze*, which gained Japan international recognition, Haida's jazz songs could deliver a "cosmopolitan profile" of the Japanese Empire. Unlike *naniwabushi* singers in kimono, Haida, as a Japanese man born in Hawaii and whose music had "mixed-race" elements of Japan and the West, rightly fit with the international success of two Japanese pilots. In fact,

³⁴ Ayako Kano, *Acting Like a Woman: Theater, Gender and Nationalism* (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 15-38.

the song Haida sang, “Because of Kamikaze (*Kamikaze dakara*),” included lyrics that celebrated “mixed-race” looking Japanese. “Look at our suntanned face,” Haida sang, on the second stanza “which shows Japanese manhood.” Haida was a perfect Japanese man who could celebrate this event, delivering superior and advanced race to other white nations because of his “mixed-race” cultural background.³⁵

But Haida as a modern boy alone could not complete Japanese cultural identity that the event aimed to address. In this radio program, the state and *Asahi* featured the *uguisu* singer, who used to be a geisha, Ichimaru together with Haida. Ichimaru, a traditional female figure, who sang songs in kimono and traditional hair style, authenticated Haida, untraditional and more feminine man, as a Japanese man.³⁶ Ichimaru, as a nation’s mother and a wife, possessed a Japanese cultural essence and Haida, as a husband, a son and a soldier, could become a great Japanese man in the international arena because of his wife and mother’s presence who could teach him Japanese cultural essence. At the same time, Haida completed Ichimaru’s Japanese womanhood with his cosmopolitan outlook. Because of Haida, Ichimaru could be accepted as a unique Japanese woman who could be accepted in the larger world.

The ways in which *Asahi graph* represented the two pilots who accomplished this flight, helps us elaborate how the Japanese state in 1937 allowed a broader set of masculinities to men to address the nation’s “superior” identity. *Asahi graph*, a photo magazine, featured the event in their regular issues along with special issues that

³⁵ “Hikōhōkokukai jikkō” *Asahi shimbun*, May 22, 1937.

³⁶ According to Morita, prewar *uguisu* singers, such as Ichimaru, played important roles in spreading the New Folk Music Movement (*Shin min’yō undō*) emerged in the 1920s for general audience in Japan. The movement appreciated songs that delivered the ancient “Japanese soul.” How the movement and other actors used *uguisu* singers to spread this “nationalistic” movement needs to be investigated more closely. See Tetsuji Morita, “Shin min’yō undō to *uguisu* geisha ni yoru “shōwa kayō” no seiritsu to hatten—nihonbashi yohi cho nado no geisha tachi ga nokoshita nihon ongaku jō no igi,” *Nihonbashigaku kenkyū*, no.4 (2011): 5-32.

featured only the event. One of the pages in the special issue featured a photograph that dominated one third of the page of the pilot Iinuma kissed on his cheek by a white female French pilot.³⁷ On the pages that featured foreign newspaper coverage of these two Japanese men, they featured the British *Daily Mirror*, captured a smiling British white woman who had broken through the police guard and walked to the pilot Horikoshi to obtain his signature.³⁸ In short, *Asahi graph* featured these pairs of Japanese pilots with white women as possible heterosexual unit. This addressed an identity of the Japanese Empire that achieved scientific and technological advancement. These couples also show how a masculine Japan could feminize the West. But for our purpose to understand various masculinities assigned to men to complete Japanese imperial identity, it is important to note that these cosmopolitan Japanese pilots, who dressed in western clothes with their hair pomaded, were celebrated by the state, even as they showed the possibility of romance with white women, who Japanese modern girls admired. Men, such as Haida, Horikoshi and Iinuma, who had a cosmopolitan background and achievements complemented, rather than disturbed, the manhood that the Japanese Empire needed for its imperial project.

Modern Boy Performing A Cowboy

The Empire addressed its global advancement by taking advantage of a man with an international, if not cosmopolitan, image. Within six months of starting the Second Sino-Japan War in 1938, Japanese Victor released “Lovely Black Horse” (*Itoshino ao yo*), sung by Haida. It was a rendition of the cowboy song “Empty Saddles” that the Tin Pan Alley writer Billy Hill had written for the movie *Rhythm on*

³⁷ *Asahi graph*, Special issue, May 27, 1937, 18-19.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 32-33.

the Range, also released in Japan in 1937. The Japanese Victor recording followed the ambience of the original song but rewrote the lyrics into Japanese. “Lovely Black Horse” was one of the jazz songs that earned popularity after the Manchurian Incident that incorporated the themes and symbols that would appear in the movie westerns. “Lovely Black Horse” told of a soldier begging forgiveness from his dying horse. The protagonist spoke to the dead horse shot “under the sky of Northern China” in “the snowstorm all day.” He sympathizes with the horse saying “alas, how freezing you must be,” and prays “rest in peace.” With the slow four-beat rhythm and a melody consisting of long stretched notes, the song illustrated the aspirations for and the sympathetic dream of colonial expansion for the wide-open prairie, following the ambience of cowboy songs popularized through B-Western movies in the US.³⁹ Haida sang this song with his signature voice, crooning and sometimes trembling in ways that imparted romance and sympathy for colonial expansion.

To answer why this song was released and gained popularity at the beginning of the Fifteen Year War, I read this song in two ways. But to contextualize those readings, we must turn first to how the state, corporations and Japanese consumer subjects received cowboy images beginning in the early 1920s.

Low-Class Cowboys

“Is that way of strolling called ‘*Ginbura* (strolling around Ginza)’? ‘Modern’

³⁹ For cowboy songs in the US, see Jim Bob Tinsley, *For a Cowboy Has to Sing* (Orlando: University of Central Florida, 1991); Douglas B. Green, *Singing in the Saddle: The History of the Singing Cowboy* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2005); Bill C. Malone, *Country Music, U.S.A.*, 2nd ed. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002), 137-151; Jocelyn R. Neal, *Country Music: A Cultural and Stylistic History* (London: Oxford University Press, 2013), 83-92; for gender and singing cowboys, such as Gene Autry, during the Depression, see Stephanie Vander Wel, “The Lavender Cowboy and ‘The She Buckaroo’: Gene Autry, Patsy Montana, and Depression-Era Gender Roles,” *The Musical Quarterly* 95, no.2-3 (December 2012): 207–251, accessed November 21, 2016, <https://doi.org/10.1093/musqtl/gds026>.

or something?” one of the characters, a villager, said in the short story *The Western Film Correspondence* (*Seibugeki tsūshin*) written by Shin’ichi Makino in 1930. This short novel helps us glimpse into how the movie western, the theme of westerns and “jazz” music including Stephen Foster’s songs thrived together in urban areas. One of the sub-characters was stunned when he found a fellow urban protagonist in the costume of an American Indian wandering around his rural village. But no villagers laughed at him. Instead, they “had their eyes sparkling with passion.” The protagonist thought the villager must have thought, “this is the latest fashion popular in the city,” such as Ginza, where the protagonist sarcastically described “people sing the songs like ‘Ring Ring De Banjo’ with their nasal voice.”⁴⁰ It also suggests that both urbanites and rural villagers as well admired this consumer culture. At the same time, Makino’s sarcastic tone over the protagonist’s imitating Indians and cowboys riding horses in the western implies that Japanese men who supported jazz culture thrived in urban cities placed these American icons in a peculiar position within it.

By the time Makino published this piece in the 1930s, the movie western and their themes and images, including cowboys, American Indians, covered wagons, and open prairies, thrived in urban consumer culture – jazz culture. As Makino’s short story illustrates, if urbanites could afford to watch those movies and consumer goods and services, such as record discs and dance halls and cafes, youngsters in rural areas, too, aspired to participate in this consumer culture through publications.⁴¹ Jazz culture symbolized middle-class consumer culture that the nation aspired to actualize. Things

⁴⁰ Shin’ichi Makino, *Seibugeki tsūshin*, reprinted in *Gendai nihon bungakukan* 25 (Tokyo: Bungei shunjū, 1969), 252-257.

⁴¹ Uchiyama, “Carnival,” 112. By borrowing the sociologist Hiroshi Mainami’s view, Silverberg states the spread of print media helped Japanese living in the countryside to admire urban consumer culture. See Silverberg, *Erotic*, 17, 20.

from the US, such as dance, clothes, music and movies, helped authenticate Japanese pursuits of jazz culture. Our current understanding of jazz would not allow us to encompass “Ring Ring De Banjo,” the Charleston dance and the movie Western in one category of “jazz.” But they were all jazz because they all arrived from the US. Therefore, cowboy songs used in the Hollywood movies and other songs such as the recordings of Jimmie Rogers and Japanese singers singing about cowboys were also considered jazz⁴². It was because they came from the US or included an “American” theme.

When the Japanese Empire allowed Japanese men to embody multiple masculinities even in the wake of the Fifteen Year War, how did Japanese men understand masculinities that they found in cowboy images? After the World War I ended in 1918, cowboys and the western films (*seibugeki*) began appearing in newspapers and magazines in Japan.⁴³ With the growing emergence of the US in the world order after WWI, cowboys indeed displayed political and cultural power of the US in Japan. But Japanese men were not solely sold on this “American-aura” of

⁴² *Keiongaku to sono rekōdo* categorized “hill billy [sic] song” as a version of “swing music,” and included Jimmie Rodgers. See Masaru Karabata, Yoshifumi Nogawa and Tadashi Aoki eds., *Keiongaku to sono rekōdo* (Tokyo: Sanshōdō, 1938), 261-263.

⁴³ This is not to say that the images of men and women with horses and a few films now categorized as the western did not exist in Japan before the 1920s. For example, the entertainment performance called *Kyokuma* (rumbling horses), a precursor of the circus, began dominating a part of show business since the early eighteenth century in *Edo* period. Later in the early Meiji period, the western circus, which they called *Seiyō* [western] *kyokuma*, earned popularity. Particularly, Italian circus group led by Giuseppe Chiarini became a synonym for *seiyō kyokuma*. As for the films, several films from the US with the western theme, were shown in Japan as Adventure Films (*bōken katsugeki*) by the late 1910s. The name cowboys and the western films (*seibugeki*) launched in Japan in ways closely associated with the US. In fact, as early as in 1902, the new US president, Theodore Roosevelt was described as “a good character, talker and decision maker,” and “powerful man,” because he “trained himself to be a person called a “cowboy” who knew how to herd and raise cattle.” *Asahi shimbun*, “Beikoku no shindaitōryō Rūzuberuto shi,” February 28, 1902. In 1917, when the US entered World War I with Germany which attempted to bring the territory back to the Mexico, *Asahi shimbun* reported, “Mexican military and US cowboys clashed.” As this description shows, cowboys were powerful and violent arm of the US military. *Asahi shimbun*, “Kābōi sugata no bei daitōryō,” August 9, 1917. For *Kyokuma*, see Miki Furukawa, *Misemono no rekishi* (Tokyo: Yuzankaku shuppan, 1970), 85-92; Ono Takeo, *Misemono fūzoku zushi* (Tokyo: Tenbōsha, 1977), 215-218; Zaidan hōjin baji bunka zaidan uma no hakubutsukan eds., *Kikakuten: Uma no sākasu daikyokuma* (Tokyo: Zaidan hōjin baji bunka zaidan), 2009, 23-24.

cowboys. The ubiquitous presence of cowboys from the late 1910s to the late 1930s in entertainment outlet in Japan – theaters, amusement parks, the state-sponsored exhibitions, popular songs and movies--⁴⁴ seems to confirm their strong admiration of American culture. But a closer look at these representations and discourses around cowboys reveals they were not concerned about their relations with the US through cowboy images.

On February 6, 1918, the theater Yūrokuza, built with one of the first Western-influenced architectural designs, announced the show "Cowboys and Girls' Opera" that ran for seven days. Yūrokuza was famous for featuring new styles of theaters influenced by the West, called *Shingeki*, compared to *Kabuki* and other traditional theaters. In this figuratively and symbolically modern theater, Captain George Ash on Cowboy Acts performed rope spinning, gun spinning and rope throwing followed by a comedy opera by female singers. The postcard of the performance read "Captain George Ash in Cowboy Outfits," and the caption below had the translation in Japanese of it. Captain Ash wore cowboy hats, fur chaps around his trousers, a jacket with studs and embroidery and he had a rope in his hand.⁴⁵ *Asahi* later reported Sakamoto, the prominent professional story teller who explained the stage acts and show's story, made so many jokes about cows by using the words that described beef.⁴⁶ *Asahi* told about Captain George Ash, not as a male model that Japanese men could emulate, but in a way to describe him as a target of laughter, not as an admirable figure.

⁴⁴ In the same year in October, the opera company run by Nobuko Hara, who had classical music training in Italy and became a well-known Asakusa Opera star, featured a dance called "Courageous Cowboys." "Yūrokuza" *Asahi shimbun*, February 6, 1918. "Asakusa komagata gekijō," *Asahi shimbun*, April 28, 1925. Cowboys appeared outside the theater as well. On April 28, 1925, Mikasaen, an amusement park in Tsurumi, a suburb of Yokohama, where "urbanites purified their daily life" with its natural beauty, announced in an ad that they would feature American cowboys. The ad showed a cowboy throwing a rope. Five days later, Mikasaen's ad expresses thanks for an enormous turnout.

⁴⁵ Captain Cowboy Ash postcard, personal collection.

⁴⁶ *Asahi shimbun*, "Engei husairoku" February 15, 1918.

Cowboys in the 1920s also gained popularity among children. Mikasa-en amusement park outside Yokohama-city had an outdoor performance of cowboy groups from the US in 1925. *Asahi* reported, “the real cowboys and cowgirls familiar through the movie screen” had arrived in Japan. The group consisted of sixty “real” cowboys and fifty “rowdy cows and horses.” They came to present “superhuman” techniques of taming these animals. The show was filled with an ambience of “adventure.” Those cowboys showed “unique skills like the ones in the film.” They rode on “rowdy horses and shot the beer bottle thrown high in the air,” and “they tamed wild cows by throwing a rope from their running horses.”⁴⁷ A few days later Mikasa-en published an advertisement to thank the audience that had packed the cowboy performances.⁴⁸ It shows the tremendous popularity of cowboys in Japan, while at the same time showing that cowboy entertainment for children meant that cowboy masculinity was only fit for boys, not adult males. And *Asahi*’s description of “superhuman” technique of cowboy suggests their “otherizing” cowboys as incompatible figures with their ideas about “human.”

The Tokyo Peace Exhibition (*Tokyo heiwa hakurankai*) in Ueno Park sponsored by Tokyo prefecture in 1922, also featured cowboys and also upheld cowboys as a mere “curiosity” from a foreign country.⁴⁹ Upon the opening of the Exhibition, *Asahi* reported “black people and red-haired dancers” had arrived to join the performance held at the All-Nations Town (*bankokukangai*). Cowboys were one of

⁴⁷ *Asahi shimbun*, “Mane no dekinu geitō wo miseni: Honba no kāmōi rokujū mei otomowa gojuttō no abareuma,” April 12, 1925.

⁴⁸ Later in the late May 1925, other theaters featured American cowboy groups in Shinagawa. *Asahi shimbun*, May 23, 1925.

⁴⁹ Tokyo fuchō, *Heiwa kinen Tokyo hakurankai jimu hōukoku jōkan*, (Tokyo: Tokyo fuchō, 1924), 1, 81; For Japanese exposition and its relations with imperialism, see Shun’ya Yoshimi, *Hakurankai no seijigaku* (Tokyo: Kōdansha gakujustu bunko, 2010).

the performers in this entertainment area. *Asahi* described “Mr. Walker, a cowboy with a wide-brimmed hat, wore unrefined clothes with his tie tied carelessly around his neck like in the movies.” This cowboy “introduced his wife, the cowgirl Walker, as if he grabbed the throwing rope.” Then his wife “with her hair like a ball of red wool” answered that their lives were “interesting and adventurous” even though they were professionally hired movie actors.⁵⁰ This description shows us this writer’s conflicting desire to celebrate cowboys’ popularity through movies and make them inferior, if not unmodern, than modern Japanese. The other performers in this Town confirmed the “otherness” of the cowboys and cowgirls in this Exhibition. One of the most popular acts was “The Mokira parents and children,” whom *Asahi* called “black people” in the heading. They were “hula hula (sic) dancer” whose “black forehead delivered full of charm.” They danced “shaking their waist and made the audience laugh.” Another performer, an Egyptian female dancer told the reporter “I will perform an interesting dance. I have clothes from each era in my trunk.”⁵¹ Compared to other pavilions that celebrated the advancement of Japan’s technology, these foreign entertainers engaged in frivolous culture, such as dance with shaking waist and clothes from different eras. Cowboys and cowgirls, along with “black people” and “hula hula dancers,” were through this exhibition deemed racially and culturally inferior to the Japanese.

Among these 1920s cowboys, those in silent western films, despite their tremendous popularity, played a significant role for Japanese male cosmopolitans to define their own “civilized” masculinity within jazz culture. The descriptions of cowboys in the silent westerns in Japanese newspapers further allows us to understand

⁵⁰ “Kurombō ya akage no odoriko: bankokugai shutsuen no jūrokumei,” *Asahi shimbun*, March 10, 1922.

⁵¹ Ibid.

how men projected their “lower-classed” ideas onto cowboy images in the silent movies and legitimized their own masculinity that they conceived as hegemonics.

For example, one *Asahi* writer was concerned cowboy’s hyper masculine persona and his primitiveness in western films. On April 20, 1920, the writer of a movie column "Rumors on Films (*Katsudō uwasa banashi*)" implied those who liked western movies could be lowbrow and hyper-masculine. First, he listed six kinds of movies from the Western countries -- romantic, family, western, dancehall, elite society and historical. Then he criticized the western and dance hall type. "Vulgarity," the writer claimed, "is the characteristic" of the western. According to him, the western featured a story similar to Japanese chivalry (*nagawakizashi*) in *Edo* period. He stated that dancehall type was the same, featuring violent scenes such as Indian cowboys jumping out by shooting a gun and bleeding. The western genre and dancehall type was unmodern and uncivilized because it was violent. Reminding his Japanese readers of those styles of violence during the feudal period, this writer implied that Japanese movie fans who preferred western and dancehall films could not be modern. The writer projected his own “low-class” ideas of violence, and things from the Japanese feudal era onto cowboy figures in these silent westerns. By doing so, he legitimized his image of a respectable Japanese man.⁵²

The following year on November 28, 1921, the writer of this movie column further elaborated why western fans were problematic. This article shows us how Japanese cosmopolitans, such as newspaper writers, policed the boundaries of jazz culture. This time, the writer attempted to convince his readers by citing a criticism made by a great white man about western films. The writer reported that the British

⁵² "Katsudō uwasa banashi," *Asahi shimbun*, April 20, 1920.

writer George Bernard Shaw recently wrote in the daily newspaper published in Los Angeles that he was fond of American movies but so fed up with the western. The *Asahi* writer wondered why “a certain class of Japanese” favored western genre in Japan when Shaw did not like these films. For this *Asahi* writer, a leading figure in British literature and an American newspaper served as cultural gatekeepers of cosmopolitan jazz culture in Japan. This writer now could claim with confidence that western films were overrepresented in Japan and Japanese who would appreciate western did not meet with Japanese cultural standards that they modeled on white men such as Shaw and those the American media set up. By looking up the great British white man and US newspaper, this *Asahi* writer reinforced unequal power relations between Japan and the West. But at the same time, we can interpret that his criticism against American western films and classing Japanese western film fans suggests us that Japanese cosmopolitans should be at the same cultural level as the middle-class white culture in the US and other European powers. This writer created “others” to save Japanese authority in “civilization” made by refined and respectable white men. By doing so, he legitimized his views on Japanese men.

One medicine advertisement in the newspaper, which dominated one sixth of a page, further helps us understand not only newspaper writers but why Japanese corporations and their imagined broader Japanese consumers accepted white American cowboys as “lower-classed.” On April 6 and May 14 in 1922, the medicine company *Yamazaki teikoku dō* featured their major product that cures gonorrhea and syphilis, *Dokusōgan* (毒掃丸), with the illustration of two cowboys. "Oh this is it!" the caption of the advertisement read. At the center, an English letter "O," which was shaped like rope lassoes that cowboys throw, circles around three *kanji* characters of Doku(毒),

sō(掃), and gan(丸), and "h" and an exclamation mark on the right. On the top, a cowboy with concerned look and at the bottom of the circle another cowboy with a contended face were featured. On the left of this advertisement, another caption read, "take this medicine and let devilish poison out."

In this advertisement, cowboys played two roles. One is, as the caption read, a hero to combat "devilish poison." Like cowboys combatting villains to protect the weak in western films, this drug could eradicate bad viruses and help patients struggling with disease. The other role could be a patient who was struggling with the disease, especially venereal disease. As the two cowboys' facial expressions showed, they were patients themselves who were taking this drug for a cure. A grim-looking cowboy at the top was ill and the other at the bottom showed his relieved face after he took the drug. Then, their struggle with these diseases suggests that cowboys were easily inflicted with sexual disease associated with prostitution. And the readers, some of who were possible consumers of this drug, were like cowboys, who got these diseases and were struggling with them.

The fact that *Yamazaki teikokudō* used cowboys for their advertisement shows that they took advantage of the popularity of cowboy images to sell their products. But the appeal of these cowboys was double-edged. They could be heroes to protect the weaker but they were distasteful playing around bars and red-light districts. In this advertisement, the company chose cowboys, rather than, "refined" white men in suits. Cowboys played roles for Japanese in otherizing Japanese, who were hyper-masculine and frequently suffering from venereal disease and going to see western films. By using American cowboys, this advertisement policed class boundaries of Japanese respectable manhood.

Dokusōgan cowboys were one of a handful of male characters in the advertisement of this drug in 1922. Others included a Japanese male doctor and a Jesus Christ looking western man. Female characters dominated in their advertisements, for example, a Japanese woman in kimono reminiscent of a prostitute in a traditional bath house, naked Japanese looking modern girls and a naked Western woman. While female characters in the advertisement appeared to be either patients who struggled from disease and/or prostitutes that would disseminate the disease, male characters, except cowboys, served as saviors, a moralist who provided medicine for the patients to be physically strong and a scientist who confirms that the medicine had been safely made through modern science. Cowboys were the only male character who served as patients. Even if they served as a soldier to combat VD, they beat the disease with their violence and his virility – physical strength, rather than through his mystical power (like Jesus Christ)⁵³ and modern scientific knowledge (like Japanese male scientists). Finally, it is important to note that no Japanese men served “feminized” and “classed” roles in *Dokusōgan* advertisement. While Japanese women could be a prostitute like the naked Western female character in the advertisement, no Japanese male character served as the VD patients. If Japanese women could become several characters in this “lower-class” sphere of sexual disease, Japanese men would afford only absence. As *Dokusōgan* cowboys looked like Western men, Japanese men could not become or perform “hyper-masculine” cowboys who were easily infected by venereal disease, yet could be cured with the drugs. By projecting “immoral” predispositions onto cowboys, the drug company and its imagined Japanese male consumers defended their image of

⁵³ Before the invention of penicillin in the 1940s, there was not direct cure for venereal disease. *Dokusōgan* company frequently described its drug’s “mystical power.” Perhaps they knew this would not cure venereal disease. In fact, the same drug is now sold to cure stomachaches.

respectable men.

Low-Class Cowboys and Japan's Growing Imperial Ambitions

However, others took advantage of this “under-class” dispositions of cowboys. By the end of 1920s, some magazines and later the state described cowboys as laborers and courageous frontiersmen. Cowboys began to function as an icon that allowed people to legitimize imperial expansion. In the late 1920s, the idea of expanding Japanese physical and commercial territory would solve the economic recession, ease the growing population in the metropole, end the lack of food due to the financial panic among agricultural villages, and counteract the US Immigration Act of 1924 that impeded Japanese migration to America. And the “acquisition” of Manchuria offered Japanese hopes and aspirations to advance their country.⁵⁴

The magazine, *The Colonial Review* (*Shokumin*) shows us how cowboy images played a role for people to legitimize this new expansion. *The Colonial Review* was a monthly magazine published by the Japanese Colonial News Service (*Nihon shokumin tsūshinsha*) launched by Hideo Naitō, who served as the Dean of the Colonial Department at the Foreign Language Special Training School in Jōchi University. According to the Publication Almanac in 1933, the magazine featured “the research, guidance and the experiences of colonization abroad” and circulated from 1922 to 1935. Naitō featured professional illustrators who had also contributed works to Mitsukoshi department store catalogues. The magazine created attractive covers to

⁵⁴ According to Kazuya Satō who studied colonization education in Japan, schools that had a colonization department had already emerged after the Sino-Japan War when Japan acquired Taiwan. See Kazuya Satō, *Mōhitotsu no gakkōshi: nihon no shokutaku kyōiku* (Tokyo: Kōyō shuppan, 2004), 117.

entice youth to migrate abroad.⁵⁵

In the opening remarks of each issue, Naitō explained the ideal male youth suited for advancing colonization. In encouraging those who went overseas full of ambition, Naitō claimed that “every great person in history was a youth.”⁵⁶ But he did not claim that just any youth would be appropriate. He labeled “an unfaithful girl in Ginza,” “modern boys,” “the rigid and stubborn literary critics” and “the delinquent who sounded harsh with their intellect” as “unhealthy people choked by the difficult situations of contemporary Japan.” Thus, Naitō claimed that “it is only the healthy young colonists and the second generations of colonists who can guide to building a better world.”⁵⁷ Naitō claimed, moreover, that those youth he encouraged to emigrate abroad, moreover, had the “courage to move forward” and yet were “romantic with the warmth of those who dreamed of Rome.”⁵⁸ The colonial man, Naitō stated, had strong will and would guide the Empire’s development through lives led by sturdy willpower.⁵⁹

Cowboys frequently used on the cover of *the Colonial Review* represented this colonial man, the courageous romantic whom Naitō described. For example, a sun-tanned man in a cowboy hat on a horse was featured on the cover in June 1927.⁶⁰ In the same year in November, a cowboy on a horse running down the mountain was

⁵⁵ *Jiji shimpō* reports in 1934 that the Metropolitan Police Department arrested Naito for swindling money from farmers who aspired to immigrate. See “Shokumin netsu wo aori nōsonsitei no koketsu wo shiboru,” *Jiji Shinpō*, February 6, 1934. The artists, such as Hisashi Morita, Nakakichi Mizutani and Mansuke Hara, who drew illustrations for Mitsukoshi department catalogue contributed to the magazine’s cover. These networks also show us how Naito attempted to use commercial culture to encourage colonization.

⁵⁶ *Shokumin*, January, 1929.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, November, 1929.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, September, 1929.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, March, 1929.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, June, 1927.

displayed.⁶¹ On several issues in 1929 Naitō used the shadow of a cowboy with his arms raised above on the excited horse, reminiscent of a rodeo scene.⁶² In the following year, Naitō used another image of cowboys wearing leggings on horses posed in front of a red sun, similar to the Rising-Sun flag.⁶³ The next year, he featured a cowboy without eyes on his face smoking a cigarette.⁶⁴ Finally in 1933, Naitō made a poster of the magazine featuring a cowboy on a horse.⁶⁵ Naitō's frequent use of cowboy images in his magazine, *the Colonial Review*, suggests that he took advantage of popular interest in cowboys to mobilize youth, if not low-class youngsters. At the same time, he attempted to help readers legitimize imperial violence, colonization and emigration by emphasizing that emigrant youth were courageously cultivating the frontier like cowboys. In encouraging migration and colonization, cowboys were no longer vulgar. Their low-class associations were translated into a humble figure who dreamed about, struggled and cultivated the "new" land of the Japanese Empire.⁶⁶

The Colonial Review was not the only example of using cowboys to legitimize imperial expansion. From 1934 the Japanese music industry and the state frequently used the theme of the prairie and the covered wagon to support military invasions and "migration" (colonization) to the newly established Manchukuo and later to Northern China. A 1934 issue *Asahi graph*, celebrating the establishment of Manchukuo, helps

⁶¹ Ibid., November, 1927.

⁶² Ibid., January, 1929.

⁶³ Ibid., March, 1930.

⁶⁴ Ibid., September, 1931.

⁶⁵ Ibid., August, 1933.

⁶⁶ According to Schneider, *the Colonial Review* is one of the best examples that shows the imperial colonization mission was legitimized by individuals, not by the state directly. Through public lectures and events that featured entertaining movies, the magazine helped the urban and rural middle-class to understand the individual benefits would lead to the progress of the Empire. See Michael A. Schneider, "The Limits of Cultural Rule: Internationalism and Identity in Japanese Responses to Korean Rice," in *Colonial Modernity in Korea*, ed. Gi-Wook Shin and Michael Robinson (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), 113-114.

us glimpse into how the image of the open prairie and the covered wagon romanticized this new frontier. Two colored pictures featured one man in a hat like a cowboy hat working in the field with two horses. The view in the distance showed the Great Wall of China. What he harvested was a particular grain, *gaoliang*, not found in Japan. While the cowboy working on the open prairie helped the readers to imagine the American West, the walls of the castle afar and the caption of *gaoliang* reminds that this was China, Japan's "new frontier."⁶⁷ The magazine also featured other images of the prairie. For example, it shot "the sheep grazing in the Mongolian plains." The picture captured hundreds of sheep on a wide prairie with grass under the open sky.⁶⁸ Another captured a wagon led by cattle. It also encompassed the open prairie and the lines of these wagons. Finally, another picture showed the covered wagon unique to the region, led by black "China horses."⁶⁹

It was the same year of 1934, when Japanese Columbia and the singer Akira Matsudaira produced the hit song "The Covered Wagon, Hurry!" (*Isoge horobasha*). Japanese Columbia produced the instrumental version of this song and labeled it "dance music." The song described the covered wagon led by black horses running in the vast prairie in the twilight. The protagonist thought of his home and his endless journey ahead. He wept thinking of how he said good bye (probably to his family and loved ones at home). The song was played with a fast tempo in minor key. The tempo might have allowed listeners to dance to it, the lyrics and the melody maintained melancholic tone.⁷⁰ If the protagonist was an immigrant to Manchukuo, this song was

⁶⁷ *Asahi graph*, Special Issue, November, 1934, 5.

⁶⁸ "Mōkoheigen men'yō no hōboku," *Asahi graph*, Special Issue, November, 1934, 17.

⁶⁹ *Asahi graph* Special Issue, November, 1934, 24-25.

⁷⁰ I am trying to find more reliable sources that wrote about Frontier Popular Songs (*Tairiku kayō*). The musicologist who specializes in Japanese popular music, Yusuke Wajima, states that the name Frontier Popular Songs had loose definitions. Through my research at the National Diet Library, I have found

about anxiety being in the new frontier. By the early 1940s, these songs with the covered wagon and open prairie, which incorporated unique weather, language and customs in China, circulated in Japan and the Japanese colonies.

While current journalists claim these songs were mere popular songs, not military songs (*gunka*),⁷¹ I argue that these songs show us the corroboration of the state, the Japanese music industry and consumer culture, which together justified their military and colonial expansions in China. By obscuring any direct articulation of Japanese soldiers and military and using popular images from the American western films, they aimed to nurture popular support of their imperial desire. The recent study done by Nagahara shows us the clear collaboration of the state, bureaucrats, Japanese music industry, music critics and musicians in producing wartime songs.⁷² Nagahara elaborated since the 1934 with the new inception of the Publication Law, the state censors of popular music began having consultation meetings called '*kondan*.' In fact, after the break of the Second Sino-Japanese War, the state increasingly put importance on consultation that they conducted with the record companies, music critics, journalists, bureaucrats, musicians and Criminal Affairs Bureau, in aiming to produce songs that would not be censored and banned. According to Nagahara, the state's emphasis on consultation meetings in 1937 show "the state's growing determination to

numerous popular songs that featured these themes on titles published in the mid 1930s. A few were marches, which roused morale, while some songs even featured the Chinese traditional musical scale and sang about romance between a Japanese man and Chinese woman.

⁷¹ There is yet no solid definition of Military Songs (*gunka*). There were popular songs that Japanese military ordered Japanese record labels to produce. But other songs, even outside "official" military songs, too featured obvious themes and lyrics about fighting soldiers and aims to rouse morale.

⁷² Hiromu Nagahara, "Censor as Critic: Ogawa Chikagoro and Popular Music Censorship in Imperial Japan," in *Negotiating Censorship in Modern Japan*, ed. Rachael Hutchinson (Oxford: Routledge, 2015), 58-73. Nagahara, *Tokyo*, 66-108; for the consultation system in the late imperial Japan, see Gregory J. Kasza, *State and Mass Media in Japan, 1918-1945* (Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1988), 172-175.

mold and manage mass culture in the context of wartime mobilization.”⁷³ The censor of the state, Chikagoro Ogawa, who Nagahara studies in his piece, stated in 1936 in *Music World* magazine that popular music should be accessible for the masses and “maintain ‘softness’ and common sensibility.”⁷⁴ Ogawa, further stated that “it would be unavoidable to have some amount of sensuality in it, like jazz.”⁷⁵ These examples studied by Nagahara help us reconsider the boundaries of patriotic songs for the total war. Not only military-produced songs, but other popular songs were the collaboration of the state, business and musicians. Their styles also had blurred boundaries between songs that rouse morale and secular popular songs.

But cowboy images in this period were not quite hegemonic in wartime Japan although they were used to legitimize the imperial expansion. The Grand Yokohama Exhibition (*Yokohama fukkō kinenhaku*) in May 1935 allows us to see how the state manipulated representations of American cowboys to maintain Japanese respectable masculinity, often represented by the Emperor or a Japanese soldier on the horse. Organized by the city of Yokohama, this exhibition was held as a celebration and appreciation for the reconstruction of the city of Yokohama after the Great Kanto Earthquake of 1923. With this event, the organizer expected to "further accelerate Japan's rapid progress of her heavy industry, trade and science."⁷⁶ Along with exhibitions of Japanese corporations (such as Kirin Beer, etc.), exhibitions of Japanese imperial army and navy and Japanese colonies, including Korea and Manchuria filled the Yamashita Park in Yokohama. As "foreign entertainment," cowboys, American

⁷³ Nagahara, “Censor,” 64.

⁷⁴ Chikagorō Ogawa et. al, “Ryūkōka no keikō to ken’etsu no mondai,” *Ongaku sekai*, August 1936, 11-34, quoted in Nagahara, *Tokyo*, 94-95.

⁷⁵ Ogawa “Ryūkōka,” 21; Nagahara, *Tokyo*, 95.

⁷⁶ “Jo,” in *Fukkō kinen yokohama daihakurankai yoran*, ed. Fukkō kinen yokohama daihakurankai kyōsankai (Yokohama: Yokohama: Yokohama kyōdoshi kenkyūkai, 1935).

Indians, and cowgirls participated in the exhibition from the US. Their stage included a theatrical performance during which American Indians invaded the dancing cowboys and cowgirl and fought each other, throwing ropes, shooting guns and doing rodeo.

In the exhibition, the organizers made an effort to otherize cowboys by describing the American Rodeo entertainment group as vulgar, and racially primitive. Although they featured cowboys in the opening ceremony, riding horses in front of Japanese respectable men, they did not allow cowboys to stand out in their press materials. First, *Asahi* did not include cowboys in the pictures when the American Rodeo group landed in Japan. The caption of the article read “Including Two Cowgirls” in the bigger and bold font, “Cowboys came,” in a smaller font. Only two cowgirls and five American Indians appeared in the picture. The article noted that these cowgirls were “recently more popular than cowboys. They do just as a good job as cowboys do.”⁷⁷ In the Exhibition pamphlet, they captured cowboys on horses at the opening ceremony from afar and created a picture in which Japanese spectators dominated the frame.⁷⁸ By minimizing cowboy figures and emphasizing cowgirls and Indians, the organizers maintained the masculine profile of Japanese identity.

The organizers of the Exhibition did not miss presenting the American Rodeo group with the animals in the postcard, magazine articles and official pamphlet. With this, they reinforced American’s racial primitiveness and inability to prosper because they believed that human beings were developed from monkeys not from God. Although the Japanese Empire did teach Darwin’s evolution and most of Japanese believed in evolution, in the mid 1930s, the state did promote that Japanese race were

⁷⁷ “Yokohamahaku no yobimono,” *Asahi*, March 22, 1935.

⁷⁸ “Fukkōhaku yokyō no gōka jin,” in *Fukkōkinen yokohama daihakurankai yōran* ed. Fukkōkinen yokohama daihakurankai kyōsankai (Yokohama: Yokohama kyōdoshi kenkyūkai, 1935).

descendant from the Emperor, who was God.⁷⁹ For instance, the American Rodeo group was always displayed with a chimpanzee in the press picture. at the center of the official Exhibition postcard, they placed a cowgirl doing rodeo on a jumping horse. On the top left, a picture of Indians, cowboys, cowgirls and a horse were placed and on the right motorcycle entertainment with a white couple. A chimpanzee wearing a hat and the clothes taming a dog was placed on the left. Similarly, the business magazine *Daiyokohama* featured pictures of the entertainment groups over two pages. On the first page, Japanese geisha is featured at the top, while below featured cowboys, group pictures of American Rodeo, North American Indians, and again, the chimpanzee on the center left. By placing the chimpanzee with American Rodeo group, the organizers attempted to show cowboys were inferior to Japanese men on horses.

The popular songs in this period that featured cowboys and other western themes, too, differed from popular songs that roused spirits more directly. Those songs, especially the renditions of cowboy songs originally composed in the US, did not rouse the fighting spirit compared to other popular songs that saw off soldiers leaving for the battlefield.⁸⁰ For example, in “*Kābōi no uta*,” the narrator said goodbye to the ranch. Cows and young horses cried as he left his ranch for the “roaming journey.” In “*Saigo no rambu*,” the narrator asked his friends not to cry when he leaves his “lovely ranch” for “the ranch far away in the blue sky.” In these renditions of “Last Round-Up,” written by Billy Hill, the narrators sang about a soldier, yet did not

⁷⁹ For the theory of evolution and the Emperor system of Japan in the wartime, see Hiroki Migita, *Tennōsei to shinkaron* (Tokyo: Seikyūsha, 2009).

⁸⁰ Japanese renditions of “Last Round-Up” became so popular that the different record labels produced their own versions of the song. In 1935, Polydor released “Last Round-Up” as “Cowboy’s Song” (*Kābōi no uta*) with a singer Tarō Shōji. Its coupling song was Haida’s “Blue Hawaii,” except his name was Minoru Fujita. Independent labels released this song with slightly different lyrics and musical arrangements. Augon “The Last Song of the Cowboy” (*Kābōi saigo no uta*), and Orion “The Last Dance” (*Saigo no rambu*). See Masahisa Segawa, liner notes to *Nippon jazz suikoden: hitono maki*, Various artists, Kachūsha, OK-5, 2016, 4CDs, 7.

hesitate to lament a fellow soldier's departure. For instance, the narrator of "*Kābōi no uta*" encourages his own young horse to leave while lamenting leaving the other horses, while the narrator of "*Saigo no rambu*" states "let's forget everything, ah, this is the last departure," implying a willingness to fight in the new Chinese frontier.

This ambiguous posture of the narrators in these songs sharply contrasted with other songs designed to rouse morale. For example, in "The Pacific March" (*Taiheiyō kōshinkyoku*), released in 1939, the song's male narrator "admires" the Pacific and is elated by his leaving for the battlefield. This narrator has no hesitation to "build a bright peace on the continent." In another song, "Wheat and Soldier" (*Mugi to heitai*) released in 1938, the narrator, again a male soldier, did not cry like those in the cowboy songs. Instead of asking friends not to cry, as in "*Saigo no rambu*," the narrator appreciated his friends for their encouragement. Hearing his friends' voices, the narrator said to himself "what a dependable man we soldiers are!" He did not lament or hesitate about going to the battlefield like the cowboy narrators. All in all, masculinity represented in Japanese renditions of American cowboy songs were less "masculine" than other wartime songs more directly aimed to rouse the wartime fighting spirit.

The state, music industry, composers and musicians decided to feature modern boy singers such as Haida to sing these cowboy songs. In these songs, they featured soldiers represented as horses and the narrator who lamented about his fellow soldiers' departure, sometime, performing their mothers and sister. Moreover, these singers sang these songs by using a microphone closer to their mouth. They crooned these songs with smooth and intimate voices, sometimes using falsetto. The literary scholar

Tomoyuki Zettsu,⁸¹ who has studied Haida's wartime musical career, analyzed Haida's falsetto as resistance against the war. But when we follow Nagahara's study, it is more appropriate to interpret Haida's feminine voice as a product of collaboration with the state, business and musicians, rather than Haida's individual rebellion against the imperial violence. At the same time, we cannot conclude that the state permitted more "feminine" masculinity demonstrated by Haida's singing on cowboy songs that featured a crying male narrator, for hegemonic masculinity in wartime Japan. I read Haida's "Empty Saddles" as the result of the most common opinions among interests of the state, industry and musicians in the era. It would secure benefits for the business because of Haida's popularity in jazz culture and would stimulate, but not demolish the state's gender order, because of Haida's cosmopolitan background. In these complex and ambiguous ways, I read this song as supporting the total war.

Empty Saddles

I read Haida's "Empty Saddles" as compatible with the total war regime because the state successfully contained cowboy songs in female sentimental sphere. They featured the modern boy singer Katsuhiko Haida and let him sob in the song. Despite and because of cowboys' popularity and American imperial expansion that they delivered, Japanese rendition of American cowboy songs could not serve to support the imperial war by directly borrowing the original theme of cowboys' violence in the open prairie. By featuring "effeminate" modern boy singers and minimizing the images of the violent cowboy, and disabling Japanese men to wear American cowboy costumes, the state and record companies managed to produce these

⁸¹ Tomoyuki Zettsu, "Gunkoku no jendā: Haida Katsuyuki to danseisei no kakuran," in *Jendā kenkyū no genzai: sei to iu tamentai*, ed. Keiko Nitta (Tokyo: Yūikaku, 2013), 123-140.

Japanese renditions of American cowboy songs to mobilize cosmopolitans and under-classed Japanese men, whom the intellectuals and the state imagined fans of cowboys, in the war.

However, the state, I argue, had aims for using these “effeminate” cowboy songs sung by modern boys. Here, I use Haida’s lamentation for his dead horse in Northern China in “Empty Saddles” as an example to address this point. In this scene, Haida, as a cosmopolitan modern boy, who represented the benign identity of Japan to the world, performs cowboys, now represented migrants and soldiers at the frontier. Weeping cowboys in the song sung by cosmopolitan Japanese men addressed a sympathetic and benevolent human spirit. Then, the masculine image of soldiers overseas would also deliver the listeners feminine images of empathetic and friendly protectors of the peace. By transforming Japanese masculinity into more benign form, the state attempted to legitimize as justice their imperial violence.

I also read this scene as Haida and cowboy images helped uphold the hegemonic image of man in wartime Japan. By featuring Haida and cowboys, both masculinities marginalized from hegemonic ones, the state, I read, attempted to sustain their hegemonic masculinity – racial purity, chivalry and courage. Although “Empty Saddles” supported the total war regime, the state did not necessarily prove Haida and cowboy as a man who embodied wartime hegemonic masculinity. They let Haida perform “low-class” figure of the cowboy and contained him within a feminine sphere of sentiments. By constructing alternative masculinities with Haida and cowboys, the state used “Empty Saddles” to uphold their hegemonic masculinity, which they considered intrinsic to their total war regime.

Conclusion

When we locate Haida's "Empty Saddles" within the context of American influence on Japan's consumer culture and Japan's growing imperial ambitions, we could read this song as a culmination of debates on masculinity in this period. Haida performs a cowboy, one the state used to mobilize men from a wide range of cultural backgrounds who would uphold a hegemonic masculinity of racially pure and chivalrous men.

A modern boy, who had an international, if not cosmopolitan, ambience and family background, emerged with the growing popularity of jazz music. As I noted in the beginning of this chapter, it was not the modern boy, but the modern girl who most broadly symbolized this emerging jazz culture. Modern girls threatened the state and cultural conservatives with their commercial power and gender ambiguity that would shake the gender norms necessary for Japanese nation building. Modern boys, on the other hand, were also a part of jazz culture but were not seen as dangerous. They agitated but did not cross the conventional boundaries of male gender roles. Their hybrid image was double-edged. The mixed-race image of modern boys threatened to betray the image of racial purity. But at the same time, it could demonstrate Japan's level of modernity on the international stage. As Haida's appearance in the *Kamikaze* event in 1937 demonstrated, the modern boy's international background helped reinforce the Empire's willingness to cooperate with the world and the achieve imperial technological progress like the pilots on the *Kamikaze* plane.

Cowboy images too became popular with the growing consumer culture, if not jazz culture. They generated anxiety and excitement among jazz fans who desired to embody "refined" and "hybrid" middle-class culture. Despite and because of the

cowboy's popularity, jazz consumers feared endangering their middle-class virtue they emulated from Western culture. They described the American cowboy as violent and hyper-masculine. Moreover, they projected "immoral" values onto cowboys and made them "low-class" and hyper-masculine. By doing so, these Japanese men legitimized their ideas about hegemonic masculinity.

At the same time, others took advantage of this under-class image of cowboys. By the end of 1920s, as the state's imperial desires in Manchuria and other parts of the world increased, the state used cowboy images to legitimize imperial expansion. Educators at the colonial department at the university, such as Naitō, emphasized that Japanese colonists should be courageous, willful and warm-hearted and used cowboys to represent the image of the ideal colonist. The state manipulated cowboy images in this way to uphold the militaristic male image, the Emperor, if not the Japanese soldier, on a horse. The music industry and the state in the same period used cowboy images and the themes in western movies to celebrate the hardships and adventure of immigrants in the colonies. Particularly with the renditions of cowboy songs composed in the US, the state and the music industry allowed male protagonists in the songs to get sentimental – crying for loss on the battlefield, and sentimental remembrances of home and mother. All in all, cowboys were used to encourage imperial missions, yet, they could not embody hegemonic masculinity.

Thus, I read Haida's "Empty Saddles" in two ways. Haida's cosmopolitan identity, in which the state allowed Japanese men to embody the Empire's identity, and "under-class" cowboy images allowed Haida to cry and lament about the war, instead of displaying a fearless and strong masculine fighting spirit. His cowboy song helped to balance out the more chivalrous masculine image of Japanese soldiers. The

sentimental theme of cowboy songs matched perfectly with Haida's gender ambiguity. The state could take advantage of this encounter in cowboy songs to fend off Japanese male violence in its frontier. As a result, Haida, rather than completely rebelling against the war regime, helped the state to legitimize its imperial violence as an empathetic project for world peace. Secondly, Haida's cowboy songs further confirms Haida's marginalized masculinity. By performing "under-class" cowboys, the state contained Haida within the supposedly feminine sphere of emotions. By doing so, they sustained an image of Japanese men filled with fighting spirit by projecting their "alternative" masculinities on to Haida. As a result, Haida's cowboy songs helped uphold Japanese hegemonic masculinity and its imperial project.

Haida's "Empty Saddles" was released and earned popularity because the song did not allow any of the state, the music industry and the consumers to lose their benefits. By featuring under-class male images of modern boys and cowboys, the state could uphold their racially pure Japanese courageous masculinity. It also helped mobilize the lower-classes now celebrating consumer culture. Thus, it did not allow the industry to lose any benefit. It continued to entertain listeners with sentimental sounds and messages. But as this song implies, the state could not regulate various masculinities in mobilizing the war. As the title of the song "Empty Saddles" suggests, their imperial project was advanced without any particular actors on a horse.

Chapter 2

Après-guerre Cowboys

“These days, it becomes a trend to use adjective après-guerre or postwar phenomenon for everything we perceive bad and ugly.” ----- Hiroshi Minami¹

“I have a peculiar habit to sense America in things purely Japanese,” Kazuya Kosaka, one of the most popular singers of American country music in Japan, asserted in his biography. Kosaka began singing American country music in high school at the music clubs for the GIs around the occupation camps. Those clubs were decorated with lanterns hung in a row, *wagasa* oil-paper Japanese umbrella, artificial cherry blossoms, and framed *ukiyo-e* picture on the wall. In the mess hall, miniature shinto-shrine gateways (*torii*) were placed on each table. As he entered one Officers Club, which only higher-ranked soldiers could enter, he found a little pond edged with artificial irises, with an arched bridge, whose parapets were painted red, crossed over. Each of the railings even had ornamental tops with real gold. These luxurious decorations irritated Kosaka who only managed to buy jeans and western shirts through the Sears Catalog and who used felt to create an imitation ten-gallon hat. For the rest of his life, Japanese folding screens, Japanese traditional dancing fans, and Kyoto dolls possessed an American aura.²

Kosaka rejected the “feminized” geisha Japan that the US constructed. By dissociating the orientalized Japan, Kosaka had strong desire to make sense of himself as Japanese. Kosaka feared of losing his Japanese masculinity in the face of American

¹ Hiroshi Minami, “Maegaki,” in *‘Sengoha (Apuregēru)’ no Kenkyū*, ed. Shisō no kagaku kenkyū sha (1951; repr., Tokyo: Nihon tosho center, 2012), 5.

² Kazuya Kosaka, *Meido in okyupaido japan* (Tokyo: Kawade shobō shinsha, 1990), 106.

political, cultural and economic hegemony. Despite all of his resentment, Kosaka sang American country music in American cowboy outfits for GIs stationed in Japan and later became the first Japanese star of American country music. Kosaka's trajectory is one example that demonstrates men's encountering crisis of their masculinity in the immediate postwar period when men remained to build their nation modern and productive yet searched for a "new" and different identity from the prewar-era.

Kosaka's complex feelings about playing American country music in the off-limits music clubs does not fit with previous scholarly views on the postwar Japanese encounter with American country music. By narrating the immediate postwar Japan as the inception of American country music in Japan, scholars stress American country music is power for these musicians to symbolize "new" Japan. Further, these scholarly views imply that Japanese musicians merely performed as American white men who attempted to conquer the world with their "democratic" values. As a result, these scholars narrate the postwar American country music scene in Japan as mere Americanization. But as Kosaka's anecdote shows, Japanese musicians of American country music could not accept how Americans understood them. It is true that Kosaka admired American country music stars and cowboy images. Yet, he rejected the image of Japan that the US imposed. Kosaka's encountering American country music in the immediate postwar period shows us an example of Japanese men's struggle with identifying their masculinities, rather than their admiration for and worshipping of the US.

This chapter examines how Japanese men continued debating their masculinities through American country music and cowboys as Japan recovered from the war defeat — poverty, boredom, confusion and anxiety — between 1945 to the mid 1950s, when the Japanese government proclaimed recovery from the war. In this chapter, I deal with two interpretations of cowboy images. One is cowboy images

represented by white Americans who demonstrated a male model for Japanese men: hard-working, benevolent and free. This dominant image of cowboys was accepted in mainstream Japanese culture in the immediate postwar. The other was performed by Japanese musicians of American country music, such as Kosaka. These musicians played American country music in cowboy costumes in aiming to mock the image of the polite, diligent man. While general audience called these youth *après-guerre* (*apure*), their rebellious music making became a precursor of the rock scene. Through their conversations between these two images of cowboys, this chapter illustrates how they explored their own masculinities that would fit with their ideas about the postwar direction of their nation.

American Cowboys in Early Postwar Japan

Images of American cowboys reached a wider audience than during the prewar period. But unlike before, newspapers and magazines showed no hesitation in featuring courageous images of American cowboys. The western movies played significant roles in spreading the images of cowboys. They were popular among Japanese children, and even when they could not often go to movie theater, they encountered these American “heroes” through cartoons and picture stories (*emonogatari*), produced by Japanese cartoonists.³ Japanese boys and girls borrowed these comics at book lenders (*kashihon'ya*) which were cheaper than buying them. At

³ Osamu Tezuka, in 1948, wrote *Gun Angel* (*kenjū tenshi*). Tezuka later featured his work with western theme in the magazine for boys, such as *Boy's Graphics* (*Shōnen gahō*). There he contributed two serials, *Cactus Kid* (*Saboten kun*) and *Lemon Kid*. See Picture Stories (*emonogatari*) had its target readers for older boys in mid to high schools. They featured drawings and stories separately. The Picture Story writer Sōji Yamakawa featured his *Ghost Corral* and *Boy on the Desert* in boys' magazine *Boys* (*shōnen*). For analysis of the works by Yamakawa in terms of Japanese in the postwar period, see Noriko Suzuki, “Kōya no samurai hīrō: Yamakawa Sōji seibugeki manga to sengo nihon no kokumin teki jīshiki hyōshō,” *Otsuna Women's University Annual Report. Humanities and Social Sciences* 47 (March, 2015): 286-275.

Christmas time in 1951, one of the most popular gifts was a card game that had pictures of cowboys in the westerns.⁴ Not only through the movies, the theme of western films and cowboys were more approachable in the postwar period.

Although western movies and images of cowboys were popular among people of all ages, their popularity among children perplexed some parents, newspaper writers and the state. They projected their “new” Japan onto their children, wishing these “innocent” children would bring about a peaceful and prosperous future. They were afraid that these children would absorb “old” Japanese values that had presumably led to wartime atrocities. According to the historian of Japan Hiromu Nagahara, the Japanese government passed numerous laws regarding child welfare and education, following the order of the Allied authorities.⁵ In the immediate postwar, children were significant symbols for discussing how to build the nation anew.

Thus, children who suffered from postwar poverty symbolized “national suffering and economic hardship,” and when they committed violence and crimes, they conveyed “chaos and threats to order.”⁶ For some, cowboys played significant roles for children to represent a new Japan led into disarray. Between 1951 and 1954, writers assumed western movies instigated juvenile delinquency. In 1952, *Asahi* reported youths of seventeen and eighteen to twenty-two to twenty three, were stealing cars, “motivated by American western films that feature protagonists attacking stagecoaches while shooting guns.”⁷ Other boys tore off the roof of a Confucian temple, the

⁴ “Nenmatsu nenshi no omocha rui,” *Mainichi shimbun*, December 4, 1951.

⁵ Hiromu Nagahara, *Tokyo Boogie Woogie: Japanese Pop Era and its Discontents* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2016), 163-164. The War Department film *Our Job in Japan* demonstrates how the US placed an importance on instilling “good ideas” in children. Focusing on students or, in another case, babies, the narrator says that every kid “starts life with the same brain as any other kid. None of them was ever born with a dangerous idea.” What this US movie aimed to convey was the innocence of Japanese children and the importance of what ideas they would consume. See *Our Job in Japan*, United States Army Service Forces, 1945.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 163.

⁷ “Jidōshagōtō mo kiroku yaburi,” *Asahi shimbun*, May 15, 1952.

Yushima seidō, and sold the pieces to buy short knives to play make-believe cowboys (*seibugeki gokko*).⁸ Other boys set fire to their house while they played make-believe Indians.⁹ Another boy, a son of a policeman, pretended to be in a western with his father's gun and shot his friend in the face.¹⁰ Others robbed a gun from police and shot him from the building.¹¹ To one writer's surprise, some of these crimes were conducted by "sons in middle to upper-middle class" not working-class children.¹² The Metropolitan Police Department reported that the westerns "impeded the healthy growth" of Japanese boys.¹³

Some parents further articulated their fears in public about the western's "bad" influence. In August 1952, the Ministry of Culture, state bureaucrats from the police, law, labor and welfare departments, and various children's organizations, and PTA members held the Children's Culture Conference (*Jidō bunka kaigi*) to discuss appropriate publications for children. "The influence of the western movies" was one of their biggest concerns.¹⁴ Those boys, who were injured, killed and conducted robberies due to imitating American cowboys and Indians represented "chaos and a threat to order" that must be eradicated to recover from the war defeat and build a "New Japan."

The discussants at the Conference criticized the westerns not because they had strong association with US culture. They were disgusted by the "unmodern" feature of

⁸ "Yushima seidō no yane hagasu," *Asahi shimbun*, December 16, 1953.

⁹ "Seibugeki gokko de yōji ga hōka," *Mainichi shimbun*, July 31, 1953.

¹⁰ "Seibugeki no mane de bōhatsu," *Mainichi shimbun*, March 9, 1953.

¹¹ "Kenjū nusumi keikan utsu: seibugeki kyō no kōkōsei," *Mainichi shimbun*, June 26, 1953.

¹² "Kōkōseira jūichinin kenkyō: seibugeki manete gōdatsu," *Asahi shimbun*, January 30, 1954.

¹³ "Jidaigeki, seibugeki no eikyō," *Nihon eiga rengōkai rinri kitei kanribu chōsa siryō*, March 1952, 18-20; Other magazines, such as *Shūkan Yomiuri*, reported the tremendous influence westerns had on youth, and that several prefectures regulated the toys, movies and publications that the Eiga rinri kitei inkai thought had a bad influence on children, see "Sesō haiken: Kenjū bayari," *Shūkan Yomiuri*, July 1955, 14-15.

¹⁴ "Jidō bunka kaigi kara," *Asahi shimbun*, August 27, 1952.

violence, which, in their opinions, also dominated Japanese samurai films. In 1951, a *Mainichi* writer shared this sentiment, if not aspiration, to create a modern postwar Japan and he criticized violence in both the western and samurai movies. “Western films flooded in the movie theaters,” he lamented, “had already shown” the trend to understand movies as mere commodity rather than an art form. He predicted this would result in a revival of samurai movies. “The society would be chivalrous,” the writer bewailed, “filled with guns and sword fighting.”¹⁵ These critics of the westerns assumed that cultural media that incorporated violent aspects, such as the westerns and Japanese samurai movies, would directly convince Japanese children and the broader audience to return to their prewar state of mind.

Japanese Children’s Culture (Nihon jidō bunka) instructed mothers “not to scold their boys,” who were “crazed by imitating the westerns and samurai movies.” Instead, the writers insisted mothers should “make sure their children not to have secrets,” because “small secrets would cause a fatal cause” to destroy a child’s future. The writer offered detailed examples for how mothers could distract their boys from bad games, such as letting their children speak about their day and listening to them carefully, playing jump rope together, and, finally, taking action to eradicate dangerous toys, such as fake guns, and “evil companies who produced useless movies and picture story show (*kamishibai*),” which the writer assumed encouraged samurai stories and the westerns.¹⁶ This article shows us these writers and mothers projected their fear of “immorality” – violence conducted in pre-modern era – onto cowboy images. By doing so, they constructed the respectable image of a man their boys would become. Japanese boys should not be violent like in the prewar period, or the feudal era, such as

¹⁵ “Herikoputā: Seibugeki to chambara,” *Mainichi shimbun*, November 8, 1951.

¹⁶ Ibid.; “Okāsan no nayami ni kotaete: Seibugeki ya chambara asobi wo dōshitara yoi ka,” *Nihon jidō bunka* May 1954, 2.

samurais, and cowboys in the western movies. By “otherizing” cowboys and Japanese boys who loved performing cowboys in their play, they defended respectable, peaceful and empathetic Japanese masculinity.

However, the supporters of the westerns saw “modern” traits in the American western movies, which the samurai movie lacked but could follow to obtain universal popularity as the westerns. For example, one article titled “Western Films and Samurai Movies,” in *Asahi* in 1952 claimed both genres exhibited vitality resulted from energetic actions among the protagonists and emphasized courageous masculinity demonstrated in both genres. “Western films were appreciated wherever they travel,” this writer claimed, “because the actions in the westerns attracted a wide audience.” “If we sought an equivalent action movie in Japan,” the writer continued, “we can conclude that they are samurai movies.” For this writer, Japanese samurai movies, too, was a genre that could reach universal popularity. But the writer found more “enthusiasm” in the westerns, whose moviemakers had lifted the genre “from vulgarity.” According to him, they often elaborated the protagonists’ character and emotions. They even described Indians as humans with heart. “These attempts (of the filmmakers of the western),” the writer attested, “will allow filmmakers of samurai genre to reflect themselves,” who only featured meaningless sword fighting. This writer interpreted cowboys in the western films as adventurous yet humane, and wished that moviemakers in Japan would create similar heroes in samurai movies.¹⁷

If the critics attempted to conceive a “better” postwar Japan by repudiating inappropriate examples in the westerns and samurai movies, this *Asahi* writer did so by upholding images of male heroes being adventurous. But as this *Asahi* writer claimed the westerns as “more advanced” examples for Japanese filmmakers, he articulated his

¹⁷ “Seibugeki to jidaigeki,” *Asahi shimbun*, January 20, 1952.

ideas about hegemonic masculinity in Japan through cowboys in the western movies. According to him, Japanese samurai movies that failed to represent respectable male heroes, like cowboys, could not reach a “universal standard” because while samurai were adventurous, they were not humane like cowboys.¹⁸

Other supporters of the western further elaborated how Japanese men could learn to become a man from the western and cowboys. They argued cowboys and the protagonists in the movies could serve as model for Japanese boys and young men. For example, in 1949, *Fifth Grade (Shōgaku gonensei)*, magazine targeting student readers in the fifth grade, featured “The Secret Story of Life of the Cowboys” that disclosed the human spirit of “real” cowboys by demystifying them in the western movies. The author Shigeru Shiraki described how the cowboys tamed wild horses with a lariat and branded cattle. Featuring the drawings of Shigeru Komatsuzaki, who wrote a series of western picture-stories, the article captured the moment when the cowboy stood still in a cowboy hat and plaid shirt and lassoed a horse. Depicted with numerous lines and dust around it, it conveyed swiftness of the cowboy taming a wild animal, running toward him. Shiraki, the writer, also explained how the cowboys brand their cattle. Komatsuzaki’s drawing featured a cowboy with a rope on the running horse cornering cattle. Again, a cowboy sits calmly in contrast to running cows and horses. With these “masculine” active behaviors, Shiraki also emphasized cowboys’ taciturn and lonely life, stating “they are only accompanied by horses and lead their life in the lonely

¹⁸ The western movies underwent stylistic changes in the 1950s. Richard Slotkin claims that in the years between 1947 to roughly the 1970s filmmakers created a product that appealed to a wide audience. These works incorporated contemporary social and political issues. Some, which Slotkin calls “cult of Indian” styles, portrayed Indians more sympathetically. Others depicted the hero’s agony in the complex society in which he lived. One filmmaker intended to “make the mature genre” of the westerns and attempted to create it with an aura of “literary” and “seriousness.” Daryl F. Zanuck, the head of Twentieth Century Fox, sought to make the genre prestigious by encouraging “serious” works. See Richard Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation: The Myth of the Frontier in Twentieth-Century America* (Norman: OH, University of Oklahoma Press, 1998), 380, 383.

prairie.” The contrast between wild nature and cowboys’ composed attitude offered the readers a model of a civilized character in a chaotic world. Their courageous attitude to encounter a fierce environment and their perseverance in their loneliness both reinforced their advanced nature as humans and contrasted to wild nature and animals. As Tompkins puts it, those natural landscapes challenged their male bodies to master it and allow men to learn it was their nature to become heroes.¹⁹

Another series of articles, “American Cowboy,” in a teen magazine for English learners in 1952, reinforced cowboys’ modern persona. The article featured the picture of three cowboys giving vaccine shots to a cow and stated this was one of their indispensable tasks. The writer explained how these shots prevented their livestock from infections from mosquitos and flies. Overall, the writer described cowboys’ work on a “contemporary modern ranch,” equipped with hot and cold water and electricity.²⁰ This article contrasted “real” cowboys on a ranch from cowboys in the western movies who kill people. By doing so, he underlined the diligence of “real” cowboys and the contributions they make to the world modern. In his description, “real” cowboys mastered modern technologies. Ultimately, the writer concluded cowboys’ work on the ranch was “men’s work,” suggesting an ability to overcome nature, not out of their natural instincts, such as violence, but with his skills in mastering modern technologies, such as vaccines and electricity.²¹

These articles provided Japanese boys a model image of a postwar “modern” man. By featuring “real” cowboys, not those in the westerns, these writers legitimized

¹⁹ Jane Tompkins, *West of Everything: The Inner Life of Western* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 71. Tompkins is one of the pioneers to analyze the western popularity in relations with gender relations in the US; Lamont, for example, deals with female writers of the western and challenges Tompkins’ view of the western essentialized as a male sphere, see Victoria Lamont, *Westerns: A Women’s History* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2016).

²⁰ “America no k    ,” *Ch  gaku eigo san’nen* November 1952, 22-24; “America no k     II,” *Ch  gaku eigo san’nen*, December 1952, 22-24.

²¹ “America no k    ,” 24.

the genre's "good" influence. Taming wild animals, working all night long with a few friends, and bringing modern agriculture to their workplace all defined the work of men. Here, cowboys' physical power to master nature, their diligence, and taciturn characteristics obscured violent profile of the cowboys. It suggested men should be strong enough to control the "chaos and a threat to order" by working hard without complaining. Moreover, cowboys' handling of modern technology also confirmed their hero status in the world. As a result, these descriptions of American cowboys helped provide Japanese boys models for how to overcome postwar confusions and poverty and to aspire to rebuild a prosperous modern nation.

While these male writers demonstrated their ideas about hegemonic masculinity as hard-working, taciturn and empathetic, some Japanese men were attracted to cowboys because they knew they could not embody certain masculinity. In 1955, one business man in Osaka explained how he enjoyed going to see western movies. It was because he admired "the protagonists in the westerns who were like supermen." He was physically tired and easily upset because he was often scolded at in his company. "A low-paid salary-man like me," he said, "could not speak up our complaints in the company." Therefore, he was "relieved when grand landscape emerged with cinemascope." Until he came home, he "felt like the hero in the movie."²² This man's answer in the interview suggests two points. One is this young business man embodied the taciturn and hardworking men like cowboy in the western. It is because this man responded to the social expectations of men who would not complain in his company. Frequent reprimands from his boss did not stop him from working at the company. The other point is that he could not embody cowboy masculinity centered on freedom in a grandeur landscape and fighting for "justice."

²² "Sesō haiken: Kenjū bayari," *Shūkan Yomiuri*, July 1955, 5-6.

Cowboys also helped this Japanese businessman to fantasize about a self he would never become. This man was living like cowboys, working hard without complaining, but at the same time daydreaming about cowboys, who achieved liberty and independence. While he was watching the western movies, he, after working like cowboys at his company, could feel like he was a hero, between the company and the home, somewhere on the free “range” between his boss and his wife.

American Country Music in Japan by the Late 1950

It was Japanese male musicians who played American country music in Japan in the same era embodied certain masculinities of cowboys, which this business man wished to embody. Performing American country music in cowboy outfits, they rightly mocked the middle-class society modeled on white American cowboys as hard-working and understanding.

When cowboy images dominated Japanese popular culture in the early 1950s as a model of male diligence (despite criticism), one of the first recording bands, whose members were Japanese, specialized playing American country music, the Western Ramblers, debuted on Japanese Victor in 1951. Right after that, Victor issued their recordings, including “Stagecoach” (*Ekibasha*), an instrumental cover of “Bury Me Not on the Lone Prairie,” the theme song of the western movie *Stagecoach* directed by John Ford, from its Purple Label (*murasaki-ban*) specialized in foreign artists (*yōgaku*).²³ At first, Japanese Victor did not disclose much about the band. As a result, some listeners thought the Ramblers were Americans. “Everybody originally thought the band consisted of foreigners (*gaijin*),” the writer of the leaflet *Jōdan* (Joke)

²³ Traditional, arranged by Yoshihiro Kobayashi, “Ekibasha,” by the Western Ramblers, recorded March, 1951, Nihon Victor, A1323, 78rpm; this song is also available on Various Artists, *The History of Japanese Country & Western: Ōru sutā kyōen*, Teichiku Records TFC-1461~6, 2002. 6CDs, disc 4.

which featured the Ramblers for their popular radio program, *Sunday Entertainment* (*Nichiyō gorakuban*) led by Torirō Miki, stated in the issue in August 1951.²⁴ “I thought they were Americans,” the country music critic Kōtarō Yui remembered when he obtained a copy of the Ramblers’ record, which “did not have any information about the band.”²⁵

At the beginning of the Ramblers’ career, Japanese Victor suggested that the Ramblers were foreigners, if not Americans.²⁶ When they featured Japanese singers, they let these singers sing in English.²⁷ Sometimes, Japanese Victor even featured American singers, such as Clark Johnston who was stationed in Japan as an Air Force Lieutenant Colonel, and Lee Lash, a lance corporal, in their recordings during the early 1950s.²⁸ Playing mainly instrumental tunes and singing in English, the Western Ramblers had plenty of American aura to convince Japanese audiences that they were Americans. In this way, Japanese Victor succeeded in selling the Western Ramblers as white American cowboys who were one male model for Japanese listeners in the postwar period.

Other singers who sang western-themed songs in Japanese helps us elaborate why Japanese Victor disguised the Ramblers as Americans. In the early 1950s, several recording companies took advantage of the tremendous popularity of the westerns to

²⁴ Torirō Miki, *Jōdan* 9, 1951, 7.

²⁵ Kōtarō Yui, interviewed by the author, Tokyo, May 31, 2014.

²⁶ Hiroshi Sogabe, “Jimbutsu flash,” *Music Life*, November 1951, 29. Japanese Victor also marketed their recordings to movie theaters and Pachinko parlors for their background music.

²⁷ An early example is “I Love You Because” released in March 1951.

²⁸ Japanese Victor, for example, released the recording of “I’m Movin’ On” by the Western Ramblers featuring the singer Clark Johnston in June 1951. For Lee Lash and Clark Johnston, see Kazuya Deguchi, “Okypaido Japan to shinchūgun song,” liner notes to *Occupied Japan: The Legendary Recordings by the Shinchūgun Soldiers 1950-1953*, Various Artists, Victor Entertainment, VICJ-60716~7, compact discs; Aoki also includes episodes about those singers in his prominent study about US soldiers and their musical experiences in occupied Japan. See Shin Aoki, *Meguriau monotachino gunzo: sengo nihon no beigunkichi to ongaku 1945-1958* (Tokyo: Ōtsuki Shoten, 2013), 521-522.

produce new songs that contained the theme of the westerns and movie cover songs.²⁹ These western songs (*seibumono*) were a trend, as the *Yomiuri* reported in 1951, and female singers mainly sang these songs in Japanese turning them into bestsellers. For example, Japanese Columbia released the cover of “Button and Bow” with a female singer Mariko Ike, which became a hit when paired with the western movie, *The Paleface*, in December 1949. The phrase “Button and Bow” in the chorus became a vogue phrase “*Battembō*.” With the same movie, Japanese Victor released “The Coward’s Two Guns,” a song composed by a Japanese composer and lyricist and sung by a female singer Yukiko Todoroki, who achieved national fame with this song at the 1952 Red and White Song Contest on NHK. Perhaps inspired by the movie *The Paleface*, in which the heroine Calamity Jane, an undercover worker for the US, played a woman who captured the gang in the West with help from a timid dentist named Peter Potter, New Movie Company (*Shin’eiga gaisha*) in Japan also produced *Crimson’s Two Guns* (*Kurenai nichō kenjū*). The Japanese record company Polydor released the theme song of the movie called “Texan Naughty Girl” (*Texas no yancha musume*) with, again, a female singer Mariko Miyagi.³⁰

I read the dominance of female *seibumono* singers and the Ramblers’ “foreign” status as the impossibility of Japanese men in the early 1950s behaving like diligent, perseverant and forward-looking men like American cowboys. A few male Japanese singers who sang these *seibumono* in Japanese gives us a hint to elaborate this point. They were either too violent or too feminine. Takashi Nakajima sang “Western Yakuza” (*Seibu yakuza*), whose title implied the violent nature of both the westerns

²⁹ Bumon Kofuji, “Uestan ramburāzu: Ekibasha,” in *America wo tsukutta hyakuikyoku* ed. Yomiuri Shinbun henshūbu (Tokyo: Yamaha shuppan, 1988), 212-213; Nihon Victor kabushiki gaisha, *Victor gojūnen shi* (Tokyo: Japanese Victor, 1977), 79-80.

³⁰ The songs not tied with the movies’ release included Hibari Misora’s “Kenjū Boogie,” Teruko Akatsuki’s “Mississippi no koiuta.” See “Seibu mono no ryukoka,” *Yomiuri shimbun*, November 9, 1951.

and Japanese gangs. Haruo Oka sang “A Shepherd Who Liked Banjo” (*Banjō no sukina hitsujikai*) and Ichiro Wakahara sang “Merry Cowboy” (*Yōki na kābōi*).

Perhaps because both of these songs delivered a more benign and feminized images of the cowboys, they disappeared into obscurity. In contrast, female singers could use westerns to address more effectively new postwar Japan. For example, in “The Coward’s Two Guns” (*Koshinuke nichō kenju*), the singer Todoroki sang about Calamity Jane in the movie who could handle guns neatly, robbed the bank easily and could party casually, but could not “shoot” the heart of the man she fell in love with. This song reinforced traditional femininity by stressing her unskilful nature in dealing with romantic love. But it also suggested women were not so submissive. In this song about a Texas woman who herded cattle, had guns and robbed banks, she was masculine deviant woman. When Japanese women obtained more legal protections, including suffrage, in the postwar period, female singers could address their expanded gender identity more easily than Japanese male singers. In contrast, when Japanese male singers sang about the western and cowboys, they were considered either too violent, and too reminiscent of Japanese “feudal” and wartime values. They were also considered too “happy,” as “Merry Cowboy” song suggested, to handle the wartime devastation and their attempt to construct the new nation. The Ramblers’ success was that they belied their Japanese identity. As a foreign, if not American, band, their “Stagecoach” was successful, suggesting an “authentic” aura of a male model to admire.

But when Japanese Victor revealed that the Western Ramblers were Japanese, some music critics began critiquing them as a mere curiosity. To understand this, we should understand first what kind of male singers in the early postwar Japan obtained national popularity. From the late 1940s to the early 1950s, male singers who sang grievous songs with a melody that evoked a traditional Japanese mood were very

popular. A 1949 article about popular music trends of the year *Asahi* reported that five songs sold over thirty thousand copies.³¹ Except “Coal Mine Song” (*Tankōbushi*), all the other four songs were tearjerker ballads with Japanese-sounding minor-pentatonic scale (*tan yonanuki onkai*) sung by male singers. In the song “Three Hundred Sixty Five Nights” (*Sanbyaku rokujū goya*), the male protagonist finally saw the morning with his mate after he “cried three-hundred-sixty-five nights.” In “Foreign Hill” (*Ikokuno oka*), the protagonist, a Japanese soldier in the detention camp in Siberia, convinces himself to wait for the morning by enduring hardship with “crying, laughing and singing.” A male protagonist in “Remora’s Song” (*Kobanzame no uta*) cries for a woman he fell in love with. “Spa Town Elegy” (*Yunomachi eregī*) described a man visiting the town where lives his first love whom he cannot forget. Unable to meet his woman, he cries, instead of forgetting her and moving on, by playing his guitar and indulging himself in a dream that will never come true. These songs implied that men in the postwar mourned for the soldiers. The protagonists in these songs roamed and tried to reconnect themselves with familiar people and views. And they also endured hardship in detention camps and never could come back home. Instead of envisioning new ways of life, these men mourned for what they had lost, regretted what happened in the war and dreamed about what could have happened if the war had not happened.

The next year in 1950, *Asahi graph*, admitted that these Japanese sentimental songs were not so modern and hoped these popular male singers could produce a new type of popular music and achieve the “advancement of culture.” All the eight male singers, featured in the article’s photographs, wore suits and jackets with ties, with their hair clean-cut with pomade or with fedora hats. Each photograph captured each singer in some shop. All of them, except two, were deciding to purchase something —

³¹ “Rekōdo kayōkyoku jidai” *Asahi shimbun*, May 22, 1949.

a foreign hat, tie, glasses, leather shoes, or a travel suitcase. One of the other two was at the barber shop tidying up his hairstyle, and the other at his house with a lipstick box in his hand with a woman looking at herself. These men looked like modern boys from the 1920s but what they sang was not whimsical and light-hearted jazz. For example, Toshiro Ohmi, the singer of “Spa Town Elegy,” told a reporter that he wanted to sing songs “filled with sorrow.” Rikurō Tsuruta claimed that it was easier for him to express himself “with heavier songs,” although he did not identify himself as “a gloomy guy.” Itsurō Takeyama, the singer of “Foreign Hill,” consciously emphasized his signature “dark and heavy tone.”³² These male singers delivered sounds filled with “heaviness” “darkness” and “sadness.”

This *Asahi graph*’s article shows that these male singers who sang heavy, gloomy, dark and sorrowful songs in Japanese were closely associated with larger consumer culture, as their photographs aptly addressed. Moreover, their association with consumer culture and serious songs suggests us that men in the late 1940s and the early 1950s were expected to deliver heavy and sad aura, and not be light-hearted and cheerful. This kind of man could be a breadwinner to support his wife or lover, by buying her consumer goods for them. In short, men who sang sad songs with serious tone possessed hegemonic masculinity in early postwar Japan.

However, according to the influential comedian at the time Torirō Miki, the Western Ramblers launched their career and “dispelled tearjerker Japanese popular songs.”³³ Miki, the writer and the host of one of the most popular radio programs in the late 1940s to the early 1950s, and Hiroshi Toyama, the leader of the Western Ramblers both experienced the war as a soldier, and as a protagonist in the tearjerker popular song industry. But music journalists described Toyama and Miki in the way to

³² “Sengo dansei ryūkōkashu kokuchiban,” *Asahi graph*, November 1950, 16-17.

³³ Miki, *Jōdan* 9, 1951, 7.

address an alternative masculinity from “serious” Japanese male singers. In Miki’s program, the Ramblers played background music for his radio drama called “*Joke Western (jōdan uestan)*.” Miki, famous for his parody and sarcasm on political and social issues, used the theme of the westerns to criticize the Japanese government as it negotiated the San Francisco treaty. Instead of featuring singers who sang about the western-themed songs, Miki featured the Ramblers, previously assumed to be American musicians. Regardless of whether the Ramblers supported Miki’s political views or not,³⁴ the combination of the Ramblers music and Miki’s parody suggests that a new type of American popular music, the western, could produce an ambience in which Japanese could laugh, instead of cry, for the confusions after the war and speak out about contemporary issues, rather than being quiet and lamenting what they had lost during the war. As a result, the Ramblers helped demonstrate a more light-hearted, forward looking and rebellious masculinity – often called *après* (*après-guerre*).³⁵

It was a trend to call the youth or any phenomenon that seemed a threat to morality and conventional values, *après-guerre* (*apure* or *sengoha*). A group of leading left-leaning scholars, who called themselves the Science of Thought group (*Shisō no kagaku kenkyūkai*), for example, published a book *The Study on Après-Guerre (Sengo ha no kenkyū)* in which they attempted to understand how the defeat and the occupation helped produce these chaotic situations. They featured newspaper and

³⁴ I did not investigate the political views of the Ramblers’ members. But one of Hiroshi Toyama’s sons told me in an interview that the Ramblers’ leader was elated and cried when Nobusuke Kishi, an important member of the Cabinet during the wartime Tōjō administration, was inaugurated as Prime Minister. Interview with Sonoda (pseudonym) by the author, February 21 2015.

³⁵ Torirō Miki’s radio show, “Joke Music (*Jōdan ongaku*)” was a comedy that included criticism and satire of the occupation and the Japanese government. In 1946, GHQ ordered an end to Miki’s show because Miki’s script was “too stimulating for Japanese society that had just undergone the end of the war.” Later in June 1952, right after the Miki began the series of “Joke Westerns,” the state-sponsored broadcasting company, NHK, changed the name of the show to restrict Miki’s political satire. In 1954, then the Minister of the Post Office, Tsukada, encouraged NHK to become an institution to broadcast state policy for Japanese citizens, rather than airing contents that mocked the Diet and the government. Finally, Miki was ordered to explain his intention in the Diet. See Torirō Miki, *Jōdan jūnen* (Tokyo: Ōzora sha, 1998), 1-29.

magazine coverage on street children, crimes, gambling, alternative religion, sex workers, black markets, youth suicide and other things that these intellectuals judged peculiar to the postwar period. Through these examples, they believed that *après-guerre* could address the postwar chaos. But, when one of Miki's female fans sent a letter to him worrying if he was one of the *après*, he answered "*apure* is absolutely perfect for me." As Miki himself, the Ramblers embodied *apure* as well.

As a result, the Ramblers' masculinity in the early 1950 did not exercise its hegemonic power. They were rarely associated with consumer culture in major magazines, like the tearjerker male singers or other more prominent jazz and popular male singers, such as Katsuhiko Haida. Instead, they became popular, satisfying the audience's "curiosity." "Every night the show was packed," the Japanese Victor producer Bumon Kofuji recollected of the Ramblers' show, *Singing Stagecoach* (*Utau ekibasha*) at the Lion beer hall in Ginza in 1951. The audience came out to see their cowboy outfits out of curiosity. On some nights, the police came out to regulate the excited and overflowing audience.³⁶ There, all the members of the band wore hats that looked like ten-gallon hats, western boots and western shirts (some plaid, some plain and some western) and with a neckerchief.³⁷ When jazz musicians, who played non-classical music with strong influence of American popular music, played their songs, wearing a suit or dress, the Ramblers looked more casual than these conventional jazz musicians. While jazz bands attracted the audience with their elaborate musical skills and exquisite lead singers, the Ramblers captured the audience with their acrobatic play on the stage and their western-themed costumes. They included one song that they played lying down on the floor. The Ramblers moved their bodies more freely

³⁶ Kofuji, *America*, 1988, 212-213; Private collection, obtained from Makoto Satō, a son of the steel guitar player in the Ramblers Shin Satō; Kōtarō Yui, liner notes to *The History of Japanese Country & Western*.

³⁷ Private collection, obtained from Makoto Satō.

than other jazz bands. The fiddler of the Ramblers sat leaning his back against the chair with his legs open, while the instrumentalists of the jazz band up straight. The Ramblers were also more closely grouped on stage. Overall, compared to other jazz musicians, the Ramblers delivered a carefree impression, which differed from diligent and perseverant cowboy images that pervaded Japanese newspaper and magazines.³⁸

“Ramblers means a person idling about,” the leader of the band Hiroshi Toyama explained in 1951 in *Music Life*, one of the most prominent music magazines. Their fans acknowledged Toyama as “the men rambling around the West,” one of their fans described in their show in 1954.³⁹ Japanese Victor and the Ramblers implied a violent image but underscored this was just a show. “We do not represent that name,” Toyama claimed in 1951, despite the fact that “ramblers” “also meant violent gangs.”⁴⁰ The music writer Hakase Sogabe remembered Toyama was scolded at the police station because he was carrying a “gun” that he made himself from molding. With this episode, Sogabe reinforced the bold and wild masculine image of Toyama. But the fact that the gun was fake created an impression that Toyama’s gesture was comical. This also implied Japanese men’s impossibilities to become American cowboys and Toyama’s foolish attempt to do so anyway. By minimizing themes of violence and diligence, Japanese Victor constructed the Western Ramblers as a subculture that mocked middle-class respectable men who worked hard for their families and for their nation-building.

Music journalists, moreover, maintained a critical tone for the Ramblers’ musicking and kept them in marginalized within the popular music landscape. “I wish they played more solid rhythm and the fiddler could play precise notes,” the music

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ “Akino Uestan kânivaru,” *Music Life*, December, 1954, 42-43.

⁴⁰ Hiroshi Toyama, “Watahino koremade,” *Music Life*, December 1951, 22-23.

journalist Hiroshi Sogabe wrote, “and go beyond their emphasis on costumes.”⁴¹ In this article that featured four contemporary Japanese “jazz” musicians, Toyama’s photo was captioned as a “Western Man with a Mustache.” In the picture, he wore western shirt and cowboy hat with his fingers playing his upright bass in a dance hall (probably the Lion). On the left page of Toyama, Kōtaro Hara, a Tango violinist that the writer would call “Japanese Barnabas von Géczy,” posed with his fiddle wearing a suit, jacket and Lloyd glasses. While Hara’s picture was squarely placed, delivering a tidy impression, Toyama’s picture was slanted, producing a chaotic effect. While the writer enumerated famous music teachers that Hara consulted with, he implied Toyama played music by reading the music score at the first sight. The music writer in *Music Life*, Akira Eto, claimed that the western was popular music that “anybody could play easily,” different from contemporary modern jazz. He defined the western with its “simplicity and unsophistication.”⁴²

Another writer in the *Asahi* newspaper agreed with Eto. “With simple western song,” the writer hoped that Miharū Kuroda, another early recording artist of American country music in Japan, “did not expose his defects” when Kuroda changed his career from western to modern jazz. The writer concerned Kuroda’s popularity might disappoint his audience because he lacked musical sophistication due to his previous career as a singer of western songs.⁴³ *Music Life* also featured Kuroda when he shifted his career to singing modern jazz. In this interview, the interviewer, a jazz music collector, Yoshio Maki, articulated the difference between western songs and jazz. “I could not find,” Maki began the article, “any shadow of western when I met Miharū.” For Maki, Kuroda looked as if he came from Bond Street in London or Fifth Avenue

⁴¹ Sogabe, “Jimbutsu,” *Music Life*, November, 1951, 28-29.

⁴² Akira Eto, “Hompō gakudan shōkai (10): Uestan ramburāzu,” *Music Life*, March 1953, 28.

⁴³ “Jazu jin: Josei ni sawagareru Kuroda Miharū,” *Asahi Shimbun*, May 16, 1953.

in New York. For Maki's eyes, Kuroda did not have an "unrefined aura, like somebody came from Texas or Oklahoma." Kuroda claimed that he began playing western because he wanted to go out with the western outfit. Maki said, "your main attraction was costume and music was the second?" and Kuroda agreed, even admitting that he could not play well at concerts in the past. Further, Maki articulated his view on the western as low-class and outdated music. He understood the western as Japanese narrative singing (*naniwabushi*) because the western songs had story lines. And he added, "Back in the days, when we did not know well about jazz, we jumped to love the melodies of the western," because it was familiar and friendly. Kuroda echoed Maki's view that jazz was more modern than western cowboy music. "I chose jazz, wanting to move my career from easy music to more elaborate music."⁴⁴

The interview between Kuroda and Maki reveals that some music journalists at the time conceived the western as unmodern and jazz as more modern music. As Kuroda claimed, the western music was "easy music," which Maki understood its popularity with its "friendly and familiar melody" that did not require any music education. In other words, Maki assumed people liked the western music out of their natural instinct, not out of their "cultured" intellect. The western, according to them, was music so simple that mere costume play could obscure their unsophisticated musical talent. Kuroda's aspiration to become a recording artist who could play "more elaborate music," to make progress in his career, rightly fit with Japan's larger aspiration to recuperate from the war. In short, these music journalists and the conversations between Kuroda and Maki shows us how they articulated their ideas about hegemonic masculinity by "otherizing" the Ramblers and American country music in the early postwar era. For them, simple notes and chords, ostentatious

⁴⁴ Yoshio Maki, "Hōdan rokuon ban: Bijī Kuroda," *Music Life*, March 1953, 41-42.

costumes and musical performances without formal musical education should not represent postwar modern Japan. They projected their “unwanted” dispositions of their ideas about music making onto the country artists like the Ramblers and American country music in Japan in the early 1950s. By making an alternative image of male musicians, they made sense of their ideas about hegemonic masculinity.

American Country Musicians’ Postwar Japan

When media described Japanese musicians like Toyama who played American country music in the early postwar era as mere costume play and unmodern, Toyama himself played country music to embody “new Japan.” Toyama and other musicians began their careers as American country musicians, showing us their music making did not simply mean they acted out “uneducated” and “unmodern” music for their self-indulgence and the audience curiosity. It reveals alternative ways for men to articulate their version of hegemonic masculinity in the postwar “new Japan.”

Toyama’s trajectory until he played country in the postwar Japan helps us understand this point. Born in 1919, Hiroshi Toyama was twenty-six years old when he heard the war was over. He left Japan in 1943 for the Philippines and served in the war as a music teacher in schools that taught Filipinos the Japanese language. In Manila, the first city that Toyama stayed, Toyama was, as he recollected in 1951, “no different than Americans now in occupied Japan.” Toyama could use trains for free to go wherever he wanted to go, as GIs had specialized cars on several trains in occupied Japan. Filipinas followed Toyama by his winks, as GIs were surrounded by *panpans*. Every night Toyama strolled around the town, hanging out in one nightclub after another. But Toyama’s status quickly fell when the US captured him and made him a prisoner. After the US landing, Toyama and his group hid in jungle in Cebu for the next five months. He knew Japan’s defeat on August 30, 1945 and surrendered on the

next day. When he surrendered, Toyama was shocked by his appearance, thinking he looked like “disposable wooden chopsticks.” He had beriberi, heart disease, and malaria. Deteriorated and detained in a US POW camp in Leyte, Toyama’s only wish was to survive.⁴⁵

His physical breakdown did not allow him to reflect on the imperial violence the Japanese Empire, which Toyama served conducted in Asian countries. Instead, fear and despair exhausted Toyama in the US POW camps in Leyte. US soldiers’ voice that called the Japanese prisoners’ names broke the silence in the prison. While he worked on tedious tasks, those voices brought a chill down his spine. These calls might have told the last day of Toyama and his fellows as war criminals. Pressures came from Japanese gangsters in the prison as well. A group of Japanese used violence to steal food from other prisoners.⁴⁶ But eventually, music would allow Toyama to escape from confusion, trepidation and boredom. Like other POW camps in Leyte, US lieutenant in Toyama’s labor camp encouraged detainees to engage in entertainment activities. In front of US’s abundant musical instruments, Toyama, first, had to confirm Japan’s defeat. The gap of resources between the US and Japan was huge. But, music freed Toyama and his fellows. They formed a music band, *Fuji Gakudan*.⁴⁷ In exchange of playing music for US soldiers in the nightclubs in Leyte, they were exempted from hard labor, and allowed to practice music in the daytime. Although they were still prisoners, these musicians won the opportunity to play for US soldiers,

⁴⁵ Hiroshi Toyama, “Watashi no koremade,” *Music Life*, December, 1951, 22-23.

⁴⁶ Saburō Kageyama eds, *Reite tō horyo shinbun: Zetsubō kara bunkasōzō e* (Tokyo: Rippū Shobō, 1975), 112. Kageyama narrated these detainees’ despair in the prison and their cultural creations in the camp. They did not deal with how they viewed Japanese imperial violence. This is not a singular example of how wartime experiences of Japanese soldiers were narrated without mentioning Japanese colonial violence.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 192; “#3 Fujigakudan ga kimasu,” poster, 1946; *Shōkō Shimbun*, September 14 and September 21, 1946; Also see Saburō Kageyama eds., *Reite tō no shōkō shimbun: tezukuri shimbun ni miru horyo seikatsu* (Tokyo: Saikōsha, 1980), 86.

replacing the Filipino bands so as to save the US recreation budget. Not only could they use their creativity in arranging songs, they also obtained extra food, drink and cigarettes. In spite of being held in a US-operated detention camp, music allowed Toyama to discharge himself from the worst aspects of a prisoner's life.⁴⁸

Likewise, Toyama's playing popular music, not as a music teacher but as a bass player of American popular music, opened doors for him when he came back to Japan. Coming back from Leyte in 1946. Toyama continued playing "jazz" or American popular music for US soldiers stationed in Japan, while keeping his daytime job as a music teacher. With the high demand away US soldiers stationed in Japan for musicians, this part-time job provided Toyama a lucrative extra income. Especially, the western music for lower ranked soldiers allowed Toyama to quit his daytime job. One day, Toyama found particular songs thrilled white soldiers in a club. "When we played a song like 'San Antonio Rose,'" Toyama remembered, "they got very excited and began hitting the floor with beer bottles." Toyama, for the first time, knew that a genre called hillbilly and western was popular in the US. The band could get 1,000 yen (approximately 8,000 yen or \$70 in contemporary money) for each request from these soldiers. Toyama quit his daytime job in 1947 and formed his band, the Western Ramblers.⁴⁹

This "newly discovered" music allowed Toyama to enjoy a more egalitarian relationship with the Americans. This music called "western" in Japan was particularly popular among young whites in the lower ranks of the military. These soldiers were only permitted to enjoy nightlife in Non Commissioned Officer's Clubs (NCO) or Enlisted Men's clubs (EM). The ambience of these clubs contrasted sharply with the Officer's Clubs (OC). In the OC, audiences preferred big band jazz or pop music and

⁴⁸ Toyama, "Watashino," 23.

⁴⁹ Etō "Hompō," 28-29.

listened to music quietly while sipping classy cocktails. But the audience at NCO and EM preferred alcohol mixed with soda, talked and applauded louder, danced harder and sometimes fistfights added to the night's spectacle.⁵⁰ In these lower-ranked music clubs, Toyama and his fellow Japanese musicians did not play music for mere passive audience of Americans.

The experience of Kazuya Kosaka, who became one of the most famous American country music singers in Japan, further elaborates this point. Kosaka often chose to play "Dixie (I Wish I was in Dixieland)," because it would electrify Kosaka's white American audience. "The Southerners stood up," when Kosaka played the song and "sang along out loud with their fists raised up." They lifted the spirit by "stamping the floor and whistling." Then, soldiers from the North chanted "Yankee Doodle!" as soon as Kosaka and his band finished playing "Dixie." Kosaka remembered these soldiers seemingly from the North "were in an uproar as if they did not want to be defeated" by their Southern counterparts.⁵¹ Kosaka loved to play in the clubs with these "chaotic and loud" audiences because their response made him want to "play music more passionately."⁵²

Other fellow Japanese musicians defined western music because of this ambience. The fiddler Seiichi Fujimoto, who eventually joined Kosaka's band, chose to play western because of this intimacy between Japanese musicians and their American audience. Originally, Fujimoto played in a jazz combo in small cabarets in Yokohama. One day, his friend asked him to join the other band to play what this friend called "western." Having no ideas what the "western" was, Fujimoto visited the

⁵⁰ Mamoru Tōya, *Shinchūgun kurabu kara kayōkyoku e: Sengo nihon popurā ongaku no reimeiki* (Tokyo: Misuzu Shobō, 2006), 117-118.

⁵¹ Kosaka, *Meido*, 104-105.

⁵² Ibid.

band playing in one of the NCOs, the Zebra Club in Yokohama in 1947. “The band members and American soldiers were like friends,” Fujimoto recalled, “partying together.” This rare view excited Fujimoto because “Japanese always would bow in front of Americans.”⁵³ In an interview, the singer Willie Okiyama, who began his career as a singer of western, too, remembered that he sometimes taught how to play songs to these American soldiers. “When I was playing Hank Williams’ ‘Jambalaya,’ the newest hit song I learned from FEN (Far East Network),” Okiyama recalled, American soldiers “asked me what that song was.”⁵⁴

This egalitarian mood could have been Americans’ conscious strategy to exercise their cultural hegemony in occupied Japan. But the ways in which Charlie Walker, who was stationed in Japan from 1945 to 1946 and began playing American country music on Armed Forces Radio in 1945, shows us that the US did not necessarily intend to use American country music to instill their “good ideas” to the Japanese from the start. In August 1945, Walker, a Technician Fourth Grade (T/4) sergeant, arrived in Japan with the 304th Signal Operation Battalion.⁵⁵ When he arrived, Walker, who had worked as a member of a country music band, Bill Boyd and his Cowboy Ramblers, and a disc jockey in Dallas, Texas, felt uneasy that he could not hear the music that he played and aired on his program in the US. “They were playing Glenn Miller and Tommy Dorsey,” Walker complained in the later years, remembering what he heard on the Armed Forces Radio in Japan in 1945. Walker pleaded with the man in charge of the radio programs. With his permission, Walker began a hillbilly and western music program with a band he created among his fellow

⁵³ Seiichi Fujimoto, “Bokuto uestan,” *Tokyo uestan kojiki*. Accessed on September 15, 2015, <http://www.happon.com/fujimoto/novel01.html>.

⁵⁴ Interviewed by the author with Willie Okiyama, May 30, 2014.

⁵⁵ Charlie Walker collection, the Center for Popular Music at Middle Tennessee State University.

soldiers stationed in Japan, the Texas Ramblers.⁵⁶ This episode suggests that the arrival of US soldiers did not mean the import of American country music to Japan.

The style of music that Walker and other general American audiences understood as hillbilly, was not readily available to these soldiers stationed abroad, although US record companies included some western swing tunes and cowboy songs performed by Gene Autry and Bob Wills on records called V-discs, produced together with the US State Department.⁵⁷ Those were available to US soldiers stationed outside the US. It was perhaps because country music, then called hillbilly music in the US, did not achieve a cultural status nationwide in the US.⁵⁸ Despite national popularity of country music programs such as the National Barn Dance of Chicago, the Grand Ole Opry of Nashville and the Renfro Valley Dance of Louisville Kentucky, larger music industry did not yet approve fully its cultural importance and economic impact of country music in the larger American music business.⁵⁹ All in all, Walker attempted to create his sonic nation of America in Japan.

But Walker might have thought creating a friendly environment in Japan would allow him to complete one of his missions in Japan because “simply to be themselves” was the GI’s job in occupied Japan, as stated in a movie *Our Job in Japan*. To show the Japanese the “American way, or a democracy, or a just plain old Golden Rule of common sense is pretty good way to live,”⁶⁰ country, Walker thought, could play a role. Songs performed by Glen Miller and Tommy Dorsey did not help

⁵⁶ Charlie Walker, interviewed by Chris Skinker. Liner notes to *Charlie Walker, Pick Me Up On Your Way Down*. Bear Family Records, BCD15852, 2002, 4CDs.

⁵⁷ For how the US used music during the WWII, especially classical music and musicians, see Annegret Fauser, *Sounds of War: Music in the United States During World War II* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013); for v-discs, see 116-117.

⁵⁸ How the country music industry emerged in aiming to gain national recognition, see Diane Pecknold, *Selling Sounds: The Rise of Country Music Industry* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007).

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ John W. Dower, *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1999), 216; *Our Job*.

Walker to become himself. The broke out of poverty by being a musician and a radio disk jockey, doing better economically than his father who sharecropped cotton on a farm in Copeville TX, Walker might have thought his music would bring benefits for Japanese as it allowed him to climb the social ladder (to become himself) within the US. Quickly, his hillbilly music helped quench the thirst of other lower ranked soldiers who longed for their connection with home. Morris M. Snow, a private in the 493rd Military Police in Yokohama collected over one hundred petitions to ask Walker and his band to play in person for them. Harry McCKinney, Jr., a Technician Fourth Grade sergeant in Camp McGill, regretted the ending of Walker's program in a letter sent to *Stars & Stripes* newspaper on September 10, 1946. McCKinney would miss "western and Hill Billy [sic] music," because it was "about the only enjoyment," that he got from the radio. Another private, George W. Hall on September 17, would "hate to see Charlie Walker's band leave," because next five months in Japan without hillbilly music was unbearable.⁶¹ Walker's program, at the beginning of the occupation, offered a window through which those lower-ranked soldiers could become themselves to show the Japanese a "pretty good way to live."⁶²

Showing Americans' "pretty good way to live" to the Japanese was important because, outside the off-limits, a vast gulf lay between Americans stationed in Japan and the defeated Japanese. The photographs that Walker took show us sharp differences between Japanese and American lower-ranked soldiers. In them, Americans were clean, healthy and resourceful in food, goods and equipment, unlike the Japanese in dirty clothes and with unclean faces. The pictures of Walker's friends showing their muscles showed stark contrast to Japanese male bodies, thin, leaning with heads down, such as Toyama described himself in the Leyte POW camp.

⁶¹ Charlie Walker collection.

⁶² *Our Job*.

Japanese men in military uniform ate their food on the streets, but Americans even had a swimming pool to spare money to maintain their bodies. Walker and other fellow lower-ranked American soldiers felt an obligation to protect Japanese that they encountered.⁶³

One picture shows that Walker's fellows directly handed over something to a smiling Japanese old lady. Another shows Japanese children gathered around cheerfully Walker and other American white soldiers. Unlike Japanese in other pictures in poverty, Walker captured the moment that Americans brought smiles to Japanese with abundant food and compassion that Americans had for them. Moreover, one Japanese man, Fujikawa, who washed Walker's clothes and swept the floors of the building where he stayed, begged Walker to take him to the US. Wearing a hat from his service as a soldier of the Imperial Army, Fujikawa made a living by serving his former enemy.⁶⁴ Fujikawa's plea helped reinforce Walker's superior status as the protector of the Japanese.

One of the best examples of how Walker used American country music to confirm their "rescuer" status was the "Musical Hay Wagon" event that he and his Texas Ramblers joined. They stood and drove the wagon whose floor was filled with hay led by two horses. The picture shows that they carried several boxes on the carts led by the wagon and stopped in some rural areas near Atsugi city. Each of men, wearing white shirts, cowboy hats and neckerchiefs, had an instrument — upright bass, mandolin, dobro and guitar. As representatives of the 304th Signal Operation Battalion, they apparently played music before distributing food and items to Japanese living around the area. One picture captured the guy with black hair standing on a chair to take a glance at Walker's Musical Hay Wagon. Passion through the street, another, a

⁶³ Dower, *Embracing*, 204-224.

⁶⁴ Charlie Walker collection.

man who looks Japanese, pretends to be like nonchalant, moving his jacket on the back. It is not so clear how the Japanese reacted to Walker's Musical Hay Wagon, but this event shows us an example that Walker as military personnel used American country music to spread a good impression of the US and completed their "rescuer" status.⁶⁵

While Walker achieved his mission with hillbilly music, most Japanese suffered from hunger. Although many Japanese musicians of American country music were from upper-class families, they were no exception. Born to a son of Kunihiko Toyama, one of the most prestigious classical vocalists who contributed prewar musical education in Japan, Hiroshi Toyama, the leader of the Western Ramblers, was from an upper-class family. However, Toyama and his brothers and sisters could not escape from poverty in the postwar. "It was hunger and famine," Toyama's younger brother Yūzō Toyama recalled, "that were the most intense memories during a few years after the defeat."⁶⁶ The singer and music producer Mickey Curtis, who was born to a Japanese mother and a British father and began his career singing American country music in the off-limits, claimed "starvation was the synonym with my postwar (*sengo*),"⁶⁷ "Even in a rural area in Nagoya city," where he evacuated, Kazuya Kosaka remembered his childhood "lacked food to eat."⁶⁸ Takeo Hori, who played American country music in occupation camps and became the founder of one of the most famous artist management companies in the entertainment business in Japan, looked like a second or third grade when he was in the seventh grader because he did not have

⁶⁵ One of the pictures captured the Texas Ramblers on the Musical Hay Wagon had a caption, which was added later, which read, "Charlie and his bank [sic] performed in both urban and rural areas in order to create positive relations with Japanese people." Charlie Walker collection.

⁶⁶ Yūzō Toyama, *Ongaku no fūkei* (Tokyo: Shinjūsha, 1985), 66.

⁶⁷ Mickey Curtis, *Ore to sensō to ongaku to* (Tokyo: Aki shobō, 2012), 52.

⁶⁸ Kosaka, *Maido*, 1.

enough to eat.⁶⁹ These hungry youngsters of American country music in Japan led strikingly different lives than the lower-ranked American soldiers in the off-limits areas in Japan.⁷⁰

It was this hunger and stark difference between GIs and Japanese young boys that forced these Japanese boys to approach the GIs. “It would not take so much time,” Hori remembered, “for me to approach a soldier,” breaking a promise that he made with his mother that he would not eat food given from American soldiers.⁷¹ Kosaka approached the GIs out of boredom. While roaming on the road, trying to find something to do, Kosaka found a group of people, who looked calm and cheerful. Ten American soldiers were sitting and chatting with a group of Japanese. Immediately, Kosaka joined the crowd, but felt “like standing in front of wild animals in a zoo for the first time.”⁷² Eventually, these Japanese youngsters worked in the off-limits to support and enhance their way of living by playing music. Not only could they get a performance guarantee, their American audience bought them American beer and cigarettes. In the off-limits, as Mouseiur Kamayatsu, another singer who began his musician career by playing country music in the occupation music clubs, remembered, “Americans had a life like a dream.” Off-limits was the America, Kamayatsu claimed, “we admired.”⁷³

Their admiration for the US seems that they accepted their “colonized” status to embody a postwar “new Japan,” but working in the off-limits was somewhat rebellious to society’s norms and expectations for these upper middle-class youngsters. “‘Band men’ delivered an impression,” one musician who played jazz in the nightclubs

⁶⁹ Takeo Hori, *Itsudatte seishun: waga jinsei no hori puro* (Tokyo: Shōgakkan, 2005), 12.

⁷⁰ Dower illustrates this hunger lasted from the wartime. See Dower, *Embracing*, 83-103.

⁷¹ Hori, *Itsudatte*, 12.

⁷² Kosaka, *Meido*, 11-12.

⁷³ Mouseiur Kamayatsu, *Musshu!* (Tokyo: Bungei shunjū, 2009), 37.

in the US bases remembered because “they worked in a morally questionable place.” This man's father told him, “don't you dare engage in a job like *kawara kojiki* (beggars living on riverbanks)!”⁷⁴ The general public approved of classical musicians but non-classical musicians, if not jazz musicians including country, were not socially acceptable. One of Toyama's sons tells that his family, whose members except Toyama worked in classical music, disrespected Toyama's musical career as an American country musician which impacted his drinking and spending habits, and his close contact with Japanese gangs.⁷⁵

Indeed, Japanese musicians of American country music in Japan working in the off-limits had close contact with “outcast” communities. For example, Mickey Curtis remembers that he and his fellow musicians met at warehouses that stored their musical instruments as well as belongings to the day workers who were homeless.⁷⁶ These barracks were poorly but skillfully built with pieces of rusted tin or steel patched together.⁷⁷ Kamayatsu described himself as “a complete day worker.”⁷⁸ Kamayatsu often contracted with booking agents for one-day jobs. These booking agents called *Tachinbo* (standing boys) stood on a wooden mandarin orange box around these warehouses and sought musicians, shouting, “At Atsugi! Guitars? Bass? Drums?”⁷⁹ As soon as musicians and agents reached an agreement, a US military truck, Weapon Carriers, carried them “to totally strange and mysterious nightclubs for GIs” and they played music.⁸⁰

⁷⁴ Mamoru Tōya interviewed Miyazawa. Tōya, *Shinchūgun*, 36-37. *Kawara kojiki*, is a term often used to disdain entertainers, and was originally a term used for outcast communities in the feudal era. These entertainers, not merely on a symbolic level, did build networks among these marginalized communities. Entertainers had to rely on gangs, also the members of outcast community, to manage their itinerant shows. See Rōkusuke Ei, *Geinin tachi no geinōshi: kawara kojiki kara ningen kokuho made* (Tokyo: Banchō shobō, 1969), 24-26.

⁷⁵ Interview with Satoru Sonoda (pseudonyms) February 23, 2013.

⁷⁶ Curtis, *Ore*, 97.

⁷⁷ Kosaka, *Meido*, 99

⁷⁸ Kamayatsu, *Musshu!*, 36-37.

⁷⁹ Curtis, *Ore*, 96; Kosaka, *Meido*, 100; Kamayatsu, *Musshu!*, 36-37.

⁸⁰ Kamayatsu, *Musshu!* 36-37.

Items and people not easily found in Japanese "polite society" surrounded music labor in the nightclubs. Sometimes, military buses carried GIs together with these musicians and prostitutes. Kosaka's description in the bus helps elaborate the unruly but colorful ambience of their commuting. Japanese women who drank with GIs in front of their music squeezed to get on the bus, complaining, "What is this instrument? Why don't you organize them? They are getting in our way!" Once the bus started, GIs and these Japanese women passed whisky bottles around. Sometimes a GI borrowed a guitar from Kosaka's band and sang. Drinking liquor, GIs would stop the bus to get more booze. Kosaka remembers black soldiers liked *Akadama* Port Wine. When empty bottles with the brand logo of a red round mark scattered on the bus floor, black soldiers would shout "Akadaama Akadaama."⁸¹ Laughter, coquettish voices, loud singing of Japanese prostitutes, African American soldiers and other GIs filled the bus. These young Japanese musicians of American country music rebelled against Japanese polite society just by commuting to a place to perform the music.

Not only the place of performing their music, but also the style of American country music in 1950s helped Japanese musicians rebel within the popular music community. While the Western Ramblers succeeded a legacy of western swing, which was heavily influenced by big-band style jazz, the Ramblers and other succeeding musicians of American country music in Japan played renditions of honky-tonk style American country music. Honky-tonk style songs often consisted of three chords (1, 4, and 5) played by three to four members in the band. Having a jazz singer and teacher, Tiv Kamayatsu, Kamayatsu grew up listening to big-band style of jazz.⁸² But for young Kamayatsu, "jazz was too upscale for a music apprentice like me."⁸³ Compared

⁸¹ Kosaka, *Meido*, 102-103.

⁸² Kamayatsu, *Musshu!*, 28-30.

⁸³ Kamayatsu, *Musshu!*, 34.

to jazz, honky-tonk country was more accessible for youngsters to start playing music. To play it, they did not have to play complex chords and the progressions that jazz musicians had to learn to play big-band, swing and bebop styles. Kamayatsu and other young fellow musicians could learn songs just by listening to the radio, especially the Far East Network. If they learned three chords, they could pick up their guitars and join the band. English lyrics were simpler than jazz standard numbers. Japanese musicians took advantage of the honky-tonk country style to articulate their alternative Japanese masculinity and talked back against other popular music communities and middle-class polite society.

As a result, “country and western was like rock music in contemporary terms,” as Kamayatsu claims, “for us young boys back then.” These off-limits gigs offered these musicians to experience something that they would never get in their high schools. In fact, Kosaka and Curtis skipped many classes at schools.⁸⁴ Keiichi Teramoto, another singer of American country music in Japan, even dropped out. These Japanese country musicians wore cowboy outfits and played American country music to rebel against their privileged family background. No doubt that their upper and middle economic status allowed them to own musical instruments, drop out of high schools but still later attend in universities. Due to their background, they could enjoy the adventure by playing American country music, being surrounded by people and ambience that they would not encounter in their socio-cultural environment. As the disc jockey Akinobu Kamebuchi recalls that he felt country was “the music for a new era,”⁸⁵ these young Japanese men attempted to embody “new” Japan by playing country in cowboy outfits.

⁸⁴ Kosaka, *Meido*, 115; Curtis, *Ore*, 90-92; Keiichi Teramoto, *Kantorī myūjikku hitosuzji: Teramoto Keiichi ga kataru ongaku to jinsei* (Kamakura: Kamakura shuppan, 2010), 32-47.

⁸⁵ Akinobu Kamebuchi, *Kamebuchi Akinobu no rokkunrōru den: Bītoruzu izen jūroku sai no boku wa dōnatsu ban ni koi wo shita* (Tokyo: Yamaha Music Media, 2011), 93.

Conclusion

This chapter illustrates the ongoing discussions among Japanese men about what kind of masculine images should represent Japan. Although the defeat of the war marked the US as masculine, like cowboys, and Japanese as feminine like smiling geisha girls, the Japanese did not embody and represent the symbolic representations that the US offered to Japanese. Japanese men admired and felt excited by cowboys in the western movies and American country music. But they used them to define how to become a Japanese man that would represent the postwar “new Japan,” rather than to confirm their feminized status in the face of the US. In the context of postwar Japan eager to find a different identity from the prewar-era, yet remained to have desire to build the country more modern with its productivity and consumer culture, men faced their crisis to define their new masculinities.

As in the prewar, left-leaning intellectuals, PTA mothers and the state were concerned that violence in the westerns would affect Japanese audience to put into practice brutal conduct such as seen in Japanese samurai movies. These critics saw in the westerns Japanese “feudal” values that they wanted to avoid for new nation-building. They stressed the importance of universal values of “non-violence” by repudiating both the westerns and the samurai movies. In the process, they maintained their version of an image of the Japanese man, who could work for peace. However, other postwar intellectuals and journalists maintained somewhat more favorable views on American cowboys and the westerns. These supporters also found “universal” values in the westerns in modern nation-building. Rather than highlighting violence, they found diligence, perseverance and universal human nature in all the protagonists in the westerns. They claimed Japanese could learn from the westerns and the protagonists about how to recuperate from the war devastation. For them, the westerns and American cowboys were male models necessary for modern nation building.

But Japanese journalists who supported the westerns did not attempt to teach their readers to carry out imperialist conquest of the kind conducted during the war. By stressing humanity, diligence and perseverance, they did not allow the readers to reflect and criticize Japan's imperial past or the US Cold War imperialism. They rather helped the readers to connect with their postwar struggle in remaking Japan. As a result, cowboy images in the postwar period largely addressed Japanese hegemonic masculinity, a breadwinner working outside the home and not complaining about long hours of work at the company.

On the contrary, Japanese music journalists described Japanese musicians who played American country music in Japan wearing cowboy outfits and hats could not embody respectable male musicianship in the 1950s. The journalists described them as hoboes, ramblers and "others" who cultivated audience only with curiosity. They were concerned about these musicians' lack of formal musical education. They described country musicians' songs as too simple and casual, even unmodern. Compared to Japanese male singers who sang about loss and teary unrequited dreams, these country musicians sounded comical. They did not deliver seriousness and heaviness, which journalists implied that real men who underwent the miseries and loss of the war should possess. Japanese men who played American popular music in American outfits could not address Japanese cultural advancement. It was because, as Ortner claims, men tended to address culture and progress and women nature and the essence of the nation.⁸⁶ All in all, music writers and journalists described these male recording artists of American country music as failing to address hegemonic masculinity. By doing so, they maintained their version of hegemonic masculinity in male musicians. In their mind, male musicians with formal musical education, the ability to play

⁸⁶ Sherry B. Ortner, "Is Female to Male as Nature is to Culture?" *Making Gender: The Politics and Erotics of Culture* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1996).

sophisticated songs, and wearing clean and modern clothes marked the image of a respectable Japanese man.

Although these critics described country musicians failure to represent hegemonic masculinity in the postwar Japan, these country musicians themselves embodied their version of hegemonic masculinity by mocking polite society. It was not only the image of the cowboys that they used to scoff at respectable ways of nation-building. They took advantage of their “low-classed” music making — the place of their performance, the ways they interacted with their American audience, the ways they played their music, the clothes they wore and their musical styles. When the Japanese were eager to recover from the war, these musicians who played American country music chose not to work hard. They did choose not to be silent for their struggles. They chose to show the freedom that cowboys embraced in the vast prairie and fighting spirit for justice to articulate their confusions, boredom and anxiety. *Après-guerre Cowboys* was a cultural space where Japanese men debated about crisis of masculinity amidst postwar confusions.

Chapter 3

Country Gentlemen: Japanese Men Becoming Cowboys

In 1958, *Sun graph*, a picture magazine, featured Chūsaku Sugiyama in an article titled “A Lonely Cowboy Living in the Wilderness of Mt. Fuji,” and the children’s magazine *Sixth grade* with the title “A Cowboy of the Mt. Fuji.” These articles featured one of the first representations of a Japanese man who embodied the life of American cowboys. The thirty-year-old Japanese man Sugiyama bought the “futile land,” previously one of the training centers of Japanese Imperial army later requisitioned by the US. “Withered glass dominated our sights and the cold wind from the Mt. Houei rattled the barrack,” the writer of *Sun graph* described Sugiyama’s frontier, where he settled with one horse and eight dairy cattle. The writer stressed this land “provided toils for the man who developed the land he had moved into,” implying the hardships Sugiyama encountered. In the largest picture on the page, Sugiyama, who did not see anybody in winter, was captured with “his family” — a dog, a horse and eight cattle — in the field mingling together. Sugiyama studied until late at night to build a ranch equipped with cutting-edge technology, such as scientific cattle breeding and helicopters.¹

Two years earlier in 1956, the Economic Planning Agency said in the Economic White Paper that “Japan was no longer postwar (*mohaya sengo dewa nai*),” which became the year’s buzz word. In the paper, the Agency stressed that Japanese achieved the recuperation from the war so that they had to find a new way of nation

¹ “Fuji no kōya ni sumu kodoku no kāmōi,” *Sun graph*, March 1958, 20-23; “Fujisan no kāmōi,” *Shōgaku rokunensei*, June 1958, 17-19. According to my brief conversation on the phone with the employee at Sugiyama’s farm, Sugiyama did not have an interest in western movies or cowboy images at all. He traveled to the US as a trainee on the government program that encouraged Japanese farmers to conduct modern agriculture. When he came back, one of the local agricultural groups in Susono lent this local land to him. It needs more study why and how this image of cowboy intersected with Sugiyama’s actual experiences. Interviewed by the author, September 20, 2017.

building. “The progress through recovery had its dead end,” the Agency stated valuing Japanese “diligent effort.” “From now on,” they continued, “the progress will be supported by modernization.” By modernization, the Agency meant technological development and peaceful competition, in which each nation strived against each other with their economic growth, rather than the development of nuclear weapons. And this “modernization,” the Agency stated, was “transmutation,” a process which Japanese remodeled themselves. To do that, the Agency emphasized, one could not escape from hardship. In this document, the state celebrated Japanese diligence in postwar economic “recovery,” but at the same time assiduousness was required to remodel Japan and bring about further progress. In other words, the Agency encouraged Japanese to continue persevering against hardships but at the same time approved that Japanese had become a nation that could pursue progress with modernization — with technological and economic growth.²

Sugiyama as a cowboy, a diligent, lonely, taciturn, yet modern farmer in the open field in 1958 fit perfectly with the image of Japanese man in that the state conceived in their proclamation of the end of Japan’s postwar. On the one hand, he represented a Japanese man, who would bring modernization through personal perseverance and remodeling. On the other hand, he represented a Japanese man of the past, who made an effort to bring about recovery from the ruins of the war. Thus, Sugiyama conveyed to the readers an image both futuristic and nostalgic. Sugiyama’s becoming an American cowboy, not a Japanese *bokudō* that tended cowherds in worn-out kimono, suggests that the Japanese, or perhaps Japan itself, had become masculine enough like American cowboys and/or the US. Yet, Sugiyama as a cowboy delivered strong impression that he was a hard-working laborer. From the late 1950s to the mid

² “Ketsugo,” *Keizai kikaku chō*, Nenji keizai hōkokusho, 1956.

1960s, Japanese men praised, attacked and adopted this “humbleness” of cowboys to debate their ideas about hegemonic masculinity.

This chapter examines how the Japanese mainstream media, Japanese communists and musicians and fans of American country music in Japan used American country music and cowboy images to debate about hegemonic masculinity in the late 1950s and the first half of the 1960s. In this era of a growing economy, men projected various hopes and fears onto cowboy images. When the mainstream media featured Japanese performing cowboys as dominant symbol and TV westerns further spread the popularity of cowboy images, some saw the popularity of the western TV dramas as Japan’s close connection with capitalistic corporate power including US political and cultural “dominance” over Japan. For others, they were proletarian and humble folks, the representative of a man who could bring about proletarian revolution. Others performed hard-working cowboys to spread authentic ways of appreciating country music when newer style of country, rockabilly, swept the national audience with sensation. Their interpretations of cowboys differed, but they all projected their anxiety about economic growth. Some embodied the nation’s masculine profile with increased productivity while others worried that the nation would descend into mere materialism. Men, in this period, too, remained perplexed by their desire to create a productive, respectable and modern nation in this “post-postwar” period.

Japanese Cowboys

In 1955, economic growth exceeded its prewar levels³ and it continued between 1956 to 1957 and 1958 to 1961, with the name *Jimmu keiki* and *Iwato keiki* respectably. The phrase, “already, the postwar is over (*Mohaya sengo dewa nai*),” used

³ John W. Dower, “Peace and Democracy in Two Systems: External Policy and Internal Conflict,” in Andrew Gordon ed., *Postwar Japan as History* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993), 14; Nagahara, *Tokyo*, 189.

in the state's White Paper, became a vogue in 1956, although most of Japan still struggled to recuperate from the war. On the other hand, concerns about this economic growth flourished nation-wide. The Miike Mine strike in 1960 typified the dissenting voices under this economic growth. Revisions of the US-Japan Security Treaty marked Japan's strong ties with the capitalistic regime and the clashes between the activists and the state and the police in the demonstrations frightened many. When concerns and excitement about economic growth, if not Japan's post-postwar, pervaded the public debate, men projected anxiety and enthusiasm for their future onto cowboys.⁴

As if mirroring the growth and maturity of Japan during the post-postwar period, the number of Japanese men performing on cowboys in mainstream media also increased. One article in the popular weekly magazine *Shūkan gendai* allows us to glimpse into how the mainstream media articulated heterosexual gender norms through images of cowboys. This article featured a community of youngsters who loved westerns, the Western Club, which had over a thousand members all over Japan in 1962.⁵ Featuring men in cowboy outfits shooting guns, the first page described them as “Japanese ‘noble’ men (*wasei ‘hokoritakaki’ otoko*).” Between the legs of a man in the jeans, whose image was out of focus, a Japanese man in a cowboy hat and jeans with gun belts around his waist was standing with his gun at the ready. The camera's focus was on this man whose face looked un-mistakingly Japanese. On the next two pages, the article featured a running horse up-front, unfocused, a group of three Japanese men as well as the Japanese man featured in the first page preparing to shoot in front of a fence on an open field.⁶ The writer of the article stated, “it is our human nature to want

⁴ Koguma claims that Japanese completed this project of making Japan's second postwar by the early 1970s. See Eiji Koguma, “*Minshū*” to “*Aikoku*”: *Sengo nihon no nationalism to kōkyōsei* (Tokyo: Shinyōsha, 2002), 18.

⁵ “Seibu” no miryoku: Nesshin na nihon no fan tachi, *Asahi shimbun*, June 17, 1962.

⁶ “Seibugeki mo kokomade kureba: ‘Uestan kurabu’ toiu mania tachi,” *Shūkan gendai*, September, 1960, 89-93.

to gunfight.” But he assured the readers that these men contained their masculine “nature” of gun fighting within their leisure time and were middle-class men who could afford to engage themselves with such hobby. In this article, Japanese cowboys created the image of a middle-class breadwinner who could “entertain” themselves with their masculine nature, such as gun-fighting. They were proof of the control of their “uncivilized” nature, similar to how Japan was ushered into the post-postwar era by overcoming its brutal prewar violence and defeat.

Japanese cowboys in this article further stressed that they could nurture healthy and heteronormative relationships with women. The article featured female members of the Western Club to prove this point. The women featured in the last two pages of the article sat around a working desk with one woman sewing a dress in the foreground and a mannequin in the background. Among them, the dressmaker Keiko Mori, was “practicing western music during her work.”⁷ This picture shows us these women who hang around with Japanese cowboys engaged in sewing, a traditionally female occupation. And Mori as an amateur singer practicing her work further reinforces that these women’s interactions with Japanese cowboys does not reduce their conventional femininity. Mori’s playing music emphasized that women played roles that were mainly emotional. Juxtaposed with this picture was one of males discussing guns, a more technical topic. Those representations of men and women follow what Sherry Ortner argues, that the female represents nature and human emotion and the male culture and progress.⁸ The picture of these Japanese women listening to Mori’s singing juxtaposed with the male cowboys discussing guns

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Sherry B. Ortner, *Making Gender: The Politics and the Erotics of Culture* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1997), 21-42.

reinforced the impression that Japanese cowboys could maintain gender norms in the early 1960s.

The writer of this article further legitimized that Japanese cowboys embodied hegemonic masculinity by making alternative masculinities of the men in the movie *La Dolce Vita* and other Beatnik movies. He claimed that these youngsters in the Western Club were “much healthier” than those who admire promiscuous wild parties and played the “knee-opening game,” in which men tried opening women’s legs by their hand while women sat on the floor grabbing their knees, as was featured in those films. By associating promiscuity with the more affluent group of people depicted in the movie *La Dolce Vita* and among Beatniks, the writer legitimized these Japanese cowboys “were not sons and daughters of the bourgeoisies and very common students and working-class youth,” even though they appeared to enjoy expensive hobbies like wearing cowboy costumes and riding horses. When youth violence from the right-wing group as well as rebellious leftist students and growing economic growth brought concerns and hopes, this article emphasized the “humble” origins of these Japanese cowboys and claimed that their activities did not promote any political ideology and address their indulgence in commercialism in this economic growth. As a result, this article shows readers Japanese cowboys could now embody hegemonic masculinity.

The article in *Mainichi* in 1958 helps us understand more clearly about how Japanese cowboys were a symbol of how Japan became more civilized in the post-war era. In “the Western Film a la carte,” the movie critic Hisamitsu Noguchi claimed that the western was a “folk tale of the human race,” which evoked “romanticism in the preceding centuries and nostalgia of barbarism deteriorating with civilization for people living in the twentieth century.” By introducing an example of

an African American western production released for African American viewers, the writer stated, “this proves that that the westerns are adventure folklore and dream stories for contemporary human beyond racial and nation-states boundaries.”⁹ He emphasized that the western was a universal language that addressed the cultural advancement of nations and races. According to him, the westerns delivered “unrealistic” events that would not happen among “advanced” races and countries, giving examples such as intense conflicts between conquerors and the conquered, and fights over land and livestock between the authorities and the gangs. And these “unrealistic events” were the result of, according to him, the human predisposition masked by the “civilized” present.

By imagining civilizing conquest in the preceding centuries as universal human nature or a process indispensable for “civilization,” the writer of this article Noguchi lost his ability to discern that it was achieved through the legitimization of racial superiority of whites over non-whites. Being impressed by the popularity and production of the western movies by African Americans for African Americans, Noguchi suggested that the production of westerns indicated that certain racial and/or national groups had achieved “civilization,” which allowed them to control the natural instincts of barbarism.

Following Noguchi’s view, the entertainment magazine *Shūkan myōjo* celebrated the release of the movie *Dokuritsu gurentai* as “the Birth of the Japanese Western Movie (*nipponsei seibugeki*).”¹⁰ And the other movie series called “the Wanderer (*wataridori*) Series” produced by the Nikkatsu movie company also addressed men’s cultural advancement. The actors Jō Shishido and Akira Kobayashi

⁹ Hisamitsu Noguchi, “Seibugeki Arekore (1),” *Mainichi shimbun*, October 24, 1958.

¹⁰ “Nipponsei ‘seibugeki’ tanjō,” *Shūkan myōjō*, August, 1959, 54.

played outlaw cowboys and became popular among both young men and women.¹¹ Shihido and Kobayashi played physically robust, strong, and sexy outlaws who mastered precision shooting. They were heroes in the movies helping the underprivileged, fighting against the enemy. While they win the heroin's affection, they did not stay in the place after they beat the villains.¹² The movie critic Kyōichirō Nambu called these heroes “in Japanese Westerns (*Nihonban seibugeki*)” with guns “the man of the men,” who could make sure their “fans got something off their chest.”¹³

The Nikkatsu Westerns Textbook (*Nikkatsu seibugeki tokuhon*) further addresses those cowboys' respectability. Shishido in black cowboy hat, leather black vest and red handkerchief around his neck, stood on the unpaved street where the buildings looked like saloons and bars from western movies. Under the blue sky, he posed with a gun in his hand, turning around, as if he would shoot an enemy behind him. The wrinkles of his leather vest and the black trousers showed his muscles and reinforced his virility. Another section of that same textbook, “Jō's Western Style Book,” featured Shishido facing forward in the same outfit and pictures the Colt that Nikkatsu used in their films. It even had gun belts, ten-gallon hats, and boots on the left page. The writer claims “Jō's quick draw (*hayauchi*) filled with masculine appeal made us cry with his elegance.”¹⁴

In this magazine, the Japanese cowboys with guns were not portrayed as violent and hyper masculine. Instead, their control of their violent natures and “frontier spirit” to bring about progress and justice exemplified their respectability. For

¹¹ Hiroshi Kitamura, “Shoot-Out in Hokkaido: The ‘Wanderer’ (*wataridori*) Series and the Politics of Transnationality” in *Transnational Asian Identities in Pan-Pacific Cinemas: The Reel Asian Exchange* ed., Philippa Gates and Lisa Funnell (New York: Routledge, 2014), 31-45.

¹² Kitamura, “Shoot-Out,” 31.

¹³ “Nikkatsu Seibugeki Tokuhon: Akira to Jō to gan,” special issue, *Kindai eiga*, June 1961, 28.

¹⁴ Ibid.

example, the movie critic Yūkichi Shinada in this magazine emphasized that Japanese cowboys lived in the “men’s world” and put an importance on the “frontier spirit.” This “frontier spirit” is based on the spirit of the Puritans, who came from England by the Mayflower to build the United States. Shinada claimed this spirit was extraordinarily masculine and filled with virility and strength. Thus, Shinada asserted that “the character that Akira Kobayashi performs” in the western was “the man of men,” who were “active, simple and straightforward.” Such a man, Shinada stated, was always a friend of “justice” and “put importance on obligation for others and sympathetic for people.”¹⁵ Shishido and Kobayashi as Japanese cowboys in the Nikkatsu westerns delivered their strength and compassion to bring about justice, prosperity and progress, not chaos because of their use of guns.

Thus, Nikkatsu cowboys were the target of hetero-sexual monogamic romantic relationship between men and women. The poem “Lovely Pistol” written by Naoki Bessho shows us the attraction that the Nikkatsu cowboys had for women. Narrated by a female protagonist, the poem describes a women’s desire to be mated with a man. In the middle of the poetry, Bessho wrote, “Please shoot me, my chest, You are a knight, and I am a princess” to emphasize that cowboys with guns were targeted by female for their romantic relations. Using a gun as a metaphor of a man’s affection, if not his sexual desire, to a woman, Bessho stressed that cowboys had a masculine predisposition that Bessho imagined would be a complement to the female disposition. In this poetry, the woman desired to get shot “not with a plastic bullet” but “by the silver pistol with elegant engravings,” implying that she would like to become a mate with a man like Napoleon, who had “a duel gun made of gold and silver

¹⁵ Ibid., 38-39.

ornaments.”¹⁶ As this poetry suggests us, Japanese cowboys were elegant, brave, yet respectable, who could pursue heterosexual monogamic relationship.

Japanese Proletariats Encountering Cowboys

When the mainstream media celebrated Japan’s cultural and political maturity through the image of cowboys, left-leaning intellectuals and PTA mothers remained skeptical about the popularity of the TV westerns. Mothers and left-leaning intellectuals, including socialists and communists, continually worrying that the violence seen in westerns would cause their children to become violent. Right after the war, they warned that the violence in westerns would help Japanese glorify the previous imperial violence. Now they associated the violence in westerns with the right-wing youth who attacked the leader of the Japanese Socialist Party and the radical leftists who did not hesitate to use force in their demonstration to oppose the revisions of the US-Japan Security Treaty.

Perhaps reflecting these concerns from the left-leaning groups, mainstream media, such as more liberal leaning newspapers like *Asahi* and *Mainichi*, circulated cautious tones toward the popularity of TV westerns,¹⁷ while at the same time featuring advertisements for these same westerns. Their reports of deadly incidents by boys pretending to be cowboys from 1960 to roughly 1965 suggests to us their ambiguous reception of westerns. For example, in 1961, Tsuyoshi Noda, a boy who lived in a municipal apartment in the city of Matsuyama in Ehime prefecture died by jumping from a high location with a rope around his neck. The *Asahi* reported the

¹⁶ Ibid., 25.

¹⁷ These concerns over TV western also came from their anxiety about the influence of TV on children. See Jayson Makoto Chun, ‘*A Nation of a Hundred Million Idiots? : A Social History of Japanese Television, 1953-1973*’ (New York: Routledge, 2006), 177-202.

incident happened even when Tsuyoshi's mother was warning him to quit playing like the Rangers and cowboys whom he had seen in the current TV programs.¹⁸ In December, two sons in Niigata, played cowboys while using a gun that their policeman father owned. When the older brother said "I shoot you," pointing the gun to his younger brother, the younger said "Shoot me if you can." Then the older pulled the trigger, killing his younger brother.¹⁹ A few months later in March 1962, a fifth-grade elementary school boy in Gunma prefecture killed himself playing cowboys by wrapping a rope around his neck and strangling himself. According to the writer, the boy's neighbor recently cautioned him not to do "dangerous play, such as the western and Tarzan, which he was inspired by watching on a TV."²⁰

Responding to these violent incidents, a prominent children's literature scholar and a communist, Shin Torigoe, published an article titled "the Merits and Demerits of the Westerns" in *Asahi* in 1962. In this piece, Torigoe, a fan of the westerns, defended the nation-wide popularity of the genre while addressing its secular nature. Torigoe understood that "shallow ideas about justice and a secular cultural archetype" helped the popularity of westerns and recognized the "deadly merchants behind the boom of the westerns," typified by "the occasions where Robert Fuller of 'Laramie' met with Prime Minister Ikeda." Yet, Torigoe praised the western because it portrayed the "sensitivity of the common man toward equality (*jinmin no byōdō kankaku*)."

According to him, this "justice" served a role as a spokesperson who conveyed to viewers "the simple request of common men (*minshū*)" to defend against men who "constantly oppressed" them. According to Torigoe, the people (or common men) cultivated the American West. Then a lawless land emerged. The people (or common

¹⁸ "Shi no seibugeki gokko bōya, nawa de kubi wo shimeru," *Asahi shimbun*, January 29, 1961.

¹⁹ "Otōto no mune ni sandan 78 patsu: Nīgata de shi no 'seibugeki gokko,'" *Mainichi shimbun*, December 4, 1961.

²⁰ "Shibari kubi no ki: Gakudō ga seibugeki asobi no higeki," *Mainichi shimbun*, March 19, 1962.

men) needed social order. Thus, they elected officers and civil servants. Torigoe interpreted these officers and civil servants as unmistakably the workers. Moreover, cowboys' individualism and "attitudes toward women and children," for Torigoe, were better than that in Japanese popular novels.²¹

Fear of Violence and "the People"

Torigoe's ambiguous statements toward the popularity of the western and his writing in a mainstream newspaper mirrored the Japanese Communist Party's anxiety over their party identity in the late 1950s and the early 1960s. First, they became eager to define their party and their revolutionary ideas as non-violent. When they fought against the revisions of the US-Japan Security Treaty, they viewed the state's strengthening of economic, militaristic, and cultural ties with the US as an aggressive act against the people. They found the capitalistic violence that oppressed farmers in rural areas, coal miners, and other factory workers across Japan. The labor conflict in Miike coal mine typified the violence by the corporations and the state that aimed to change their energy policy, replacing domestic coal with oil from overseas.

But violence was not a mere symbol of their capitalistic enemy. It also meant physical violence that harmed the proletariat. For example, the right-wing youth Otoyama Yamaguchi stabbed and killed the then Japan Socialist Party Leader Inejiro Asanuma in October 1960. Several months later, a right-wing male teenager attacked the house of the *Chūō kōron* president, Hōji Shimanaka, who permitted the publishing of a novel that featured a scene involving the killing of members of the Imperial Family. These violent actions by the right-wing youth threatened the proletariat, and at the same time,

²¹ Shin Torigoe, "Seibugeki no kōzai," *Asahi shimbun*, November 28, 1962.

helped the communists to reinforce their enemy as something dangerous and their party image as something non-violent and benign.

To maintain their peaceful party image, the communists could not only criticize right-wing violence. They needed to tackle the emerging violent groups within the party. The ways in which the Japanese Communist Party responded to the death of previous communist member Michiko Kanba in the demonstration to the Diet helps us understand their ambiguous ideas about violence. By June 1960, Japanese Communist Party, Japanese Socialist Party, and the radical student groups had marched on the streets and to the national Diet to prevent the revision of US-Japan Security Treaty. Just a week before the ratification of the Treaty, Kanba, a twenty-two-year-old former member of the Japanese Communist Party, died from colliding with the police during the demonstrations at the national Diet on June 15, 1960. For those who fought against the Treaty, her death confirmed the Japanese state's cruel disregard of the people's voice. The Japanese Communist Party understood that "the oppression by the Kishi administration" killed her and asked their fellows to call for "severe punishment for the police killing of the people."²²

However, the Japanese Communist Party also blamed those who opposed the state by conducting violence. *Akahata*, the daily newspaper by the Japanese Communist Party that circulated nationwide, announced that "the Japan Revolutionary Communist League (Trotskyist group) and students of the All-Japan Federation of Students' Self-Governing Associations (*Zengakuren*) that spearheaded a storm into the diet," and "the students and professors who did not know those tactics" and joined the march, too, conducted the barbarous and brutal violence on the night of June 15th when

²² *Akahata*, June 22, 1960.

Kanba died.²³ When *Zengakuren* organized a “national funeral” for Kanba, the party did not join. To respond to this party’s reaction, two-hundred and fifty *Zengakuren* members attacked the party headquarters by force on June 23, 1960.²⁴ This incident exposed the party’s internal schism to the mainstream audience. The violence by their fellow communists hindered the party from maintaining their non-violent identity.²⁵

Having a different party identity from these violent student groups was urgent to the agenda for communist party members in the early 1960s. As early as in 1959, *Akahata* published a series of articles that explained the dangerous development of the Trotskyist group.²⁶ In his series of articles, the communist member Kaoru Tsushima stated that “it is important mission for us” to do away with these violent tactics within the party. He declared the party must strive “to crush those sects conducting counter actions against human and the party.”²⁷ The party also expelled those who did not hesitate to use violence for their revolution, whom they called “the extreme left opportunists (*kyokusa hiyorimi shugi*).”²⁸

The party headquarter wanted to destroy these violent developments within the party because they had deep anxiety over earning more supporters for their non-violent revolutionary idea. It was because the economic growth increased the income of middle-class families and new media, such as TV, helped form “the masses” imbued with commercialism. Torigoe’s contribution to the mainstream newspaper reflect this

²³ *Akahata*, June 22, 1960.

²⁴ “Nikkyō honbu he demo,” *Asahi shimbun*, June 24, 1960.

²⁵ The death of Kanba and the demonstration that she was killed was widely broadcasted on TV, which began to spread nation-wide. Violence and the spread of new media made a huge impact on the Japanese Communist’s fear for their non-violent and proletariat party identity. See Chu, ‘*A Nation Of*,’ 203-226.

²⁶ “Torotsukisuto shūdan no hakaikōsaku wo hunsai siyō (1)” *Akahata*, December 22, 1958;

“Torotsukisuto shūdan no hakaikōsaku wo hunsai siyō (2)” *Akahata*, December 24, 1958;

“Torotsukisuto shūdan no hakaikōsaku wo hunsai siyō (3)” *Akahata*, December 25, 1958.

²⁷ Kaoru Tsushima, “Zengakuren no dōkō to kyokusateki hantō bumpa no eikyō no kokufuku no tame ni: jo” *Akahata* January 14, 1959. He published the series of this article on January 15th and 16th in 1959.

²⁸ “Kyokusa hiyorimi shugi hantō bumpa,” *Akahata*, December 29, 1958.

party's anxiety and aspiration to reach out to the wider supporters. In fact, the Japanese Communist Party member Kōichirō Ueda claimed in 1958 that "today's avant-garde party should have policies that not only organize and mobilize working-class and farmers but also independent self-employed workers and middle and small bourgeois." ²⁹ Therefore, the party required the invention of policies that would attract people from the small bourgeois to the working-class. One of the tactics that Ueda demonstrated was to stop the violent development among their fellows.³⁰ "Without these policies," Ueda concluded that the party "would not move forward with the Japanese people (*nihon no taishū*) for the revolution."³¹ As Ueda's statements show us, the party was ready to take advantage of the mass media, dominated by the corporations and imbued with commercialism, to bring about their revolution.

One of the efforts that the Japan Communist Party made to negotiate with the growing middle-class and the development of mass culture to earn more supporters was their launch on Sunday Edition of *Akahata* newspaper in March 1959. The Secretariat in the Japanese Communist Party Central Committee in the party resolution statement in January 1959 stated that "Sunday edition is to broaden *Akahata* readers to those who have not read it."³² They featured more entertainment articles than articles on the party's internal debates and political ideologies. One communist elated, "yes, this will work" because he could "recommend it to his colleagues by patting their shoulder and saying 'oi dōdai?'"³³ The wife of this member said "it is very soft and fun with lots of pictures." *Akahata* celebrated the Sunday edition launch, by reporting that

²⁹ Kōichirō Ueda, *1958 nen – 1960 nendai*, (Tokyo: Shin'nihon shuppansha, 2012), 28-29.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid., 29.

³² "Akahata 'Nichiyōban' no hakkan nisaishite," *Nihon kyōsantō ketsugi shū* 5 (Tokyo: Nihon kyōsantō chūō iinkai shuppanyoku, 1959), 127.

³³ "Akahata nichiyō ban ga deta," *Akahata*, March 3, 1959.

it was “in great demand at work place.”³⁴ The party also had a ceremony for the Sunday edition by featuring Czech movies and animated movies for children. The *Akahata* Sunday edition seemed to succeed in disseminating the new communist identity for the mainstream media and the readers.³⁵ “It is hard to imagine,” the mainstream *Shūkan Sankei* reported in 1965 that “this is a newspaper of the avant-garde party organ” in their article titled “the Secret of Seven Hundred Thousand Circulations of *Akahata* Sunday Edition.” It was because the Sunday edition featured comics, articles on radio, tv, and movies, along with covering sports and even games such as *igo* and *shōgi*.³⁶ The launch of the *Akahata* Sunday Edition shows us the communist negotiation with the growing consumer culture and newly emerging middle class during this period of economic growth.

Cowboy Debates: The Death of Merchants and the Past-time Hero

It was in this Sunday edition that the communist writers warned about the popularity of the western. A few months after Robert Fuller visited Japan in 1961, the *Akahata* Sunday edition covered the popularity of the program “Laramie” and the gun boom flourishing among children due to TV western. By featuring popular articles on cowboys, such as the ones played by Fuller, these communists attempted to guide the readers on how to receive the popularity of TV westerns.

The scholar of children’s literature Shigerō Kaneda stated that the capitalists, in an attempt to make money by lighting a fire under the gun boom, invited the hero of the western drama “Laramie,” Robert Fuller, to Japan. Kaneda saw a US-Japan capitalist conspiracy, which he called “the merchants of death,” behind the gun boom

³⁴ “Shokuba de hippari dako” *Akahata*, March 6, 1959.

³⁵ *Akahata*, March 6, 1959.

³⁶ “Akahata nichiyō ban nanajūmambu no himitsu,” *Shūkan Sankei*, May 1965, 18-19.

and the popularity of the western in the early 1960s. “When people say ‘Japan is the toy kingdom compared to the world standard,’” Kaneda claimed that they meant “there are many capitalists who wants to make money targeting children.” Featuring a picture of boys wearing school hats looking at pistol toys, Kaneda suspected that children were not satisfied with the toy guns made of paper and eventually would want “to own ones similar to the real guns that could shoot bullets.” Kaneda was concerned that about “two thirds of boys own toy pistols” and feared boys would be armed with guns and conduct violence.³⁷

Kaneda further stated that the capitalists behind the gun boom buttressed the system that supported a war. In fact, according to Kaneda, the increasing numbers of comics featured “the western-like-justice boys.” Kaneda suspected that these trends “should have relations of the terrorism by the seven-teen-year-old boys” who attempted to kill the Chūō Kōronsha president. Thus, Kaneda concluded that “children are targeted by the war maker.” “In the shadows of gun and pistol toy boom and the commercialism of toys,” he argued, “the black hands of war regime are working.” In short, Kaneda cautioned the capitalistic development that promoted commercialism represented in the popularity of gun and pistol toys. Kaneda worried the impact that these “war-makers” on Japanese boys, who now consumed these violent toys, might seek the “justice” shown in the westerns, and act like “the *tero*-boys.”³⁸

The children’s literature author Akira Nagai agreed with Kaneda and was concerned that “some kind of authorities” — the state and mainstream media — fabricated the western boom. In his article in *Japanese Children’s Literature* in 1962, he stated that behind the spread of “healthy sports,” Nagai claimed, “the bureaucrats in

³⁷ Shigerō Kaneda, “Atama motageru shi no shōnin: kokonimo gan būmu ga,” *Akahata nichiyō ban*, July 16, 1961.

³⁸ Ibid.

the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science manufactured the boom to regulate radical ideologies flourishing among the students.” For Nagai, those facts “should not be something we would say later that we did not know” because the western boom reminded Nagai of “growing fascism before the war.” Nagai worried that “people would fall into the old dark valley while they were crazed by the western.” For Nagai, the western boom produced teenager groups such as the Thunder Tribe (*kaminarizoku*) who drove motorbikes recklessly and irritated adults. Nagai interpreted the violence of the western as an attack from the state, the mainstream media, and major corporations against their communist revolutionary projects and would produce violent youth who would follow capitalists’ brutal way.³⁹

Keisaku Nakazawa, who served in the Cultural Department of the Central Committee of the Japanese Communist Party, repudiated the western along similar lines as the argument presented by Kaneda and Nagai. Yet he addressed his empathy for his fellow youth who needed to have a male model for their revolution. Agreeing with Kaneda, Nakazawa, in *Akahata* Sunday edition on July 16, 1960, stated that he also “could smell of political consideration linked with the corporations.” Introducing the movies by the director John Ford, Nakazawa admitted that Ford’s movies “depicted the Irish frontier men who devoted their bodies and souls in cultivating the American West.” But Nakazawa criticized his film because Native Americans in his movies “lost their humanities and conducted murders without reason.” Thus, Nakazawa claimed that the movie makers of the westerns “without having any criticism and regrets, shot the period when young America oppressed and drove away

³⁹ Akira Nagai, “Seibugeki būmu ni tsuite: Torigoe shi ni hanron,” *Nihon jidō bungaku*, February 1962, 110-111.

the foreign races.” As a result, Nakagawa concluded the cowboys in the westerns were “heroes in the pastime” and fans had no reason to admire them.⁴⁰

However, Nakazawa did not deny the youth yearned to have a male hero that the proletariats could look up to for their revolution. “It is self-evident,” Nakazawa claimed that the youngsters “wanted to fight courageously like Robert Fuller against evils.” Nakazawa praises that “youngsters’ forward-looking ideas, which lie in their combative (*sentōteki*) disposition.” Thus, “it is pleasant,” for Nakazawa, “to think they fight against (the Prime Minister) Ikeda and (the previous Prime Minister) Kishi as gangs” and asserted “the young boys need heroism.” Nakagawa did not deny people’s admiration for violent cowboys. Instead, he translated it into masculine courage. He argued that the proletariats needed to portray alternative “authentic brave men” to the cowboys in TV westerns.⁴¹

For Nakazawa, the brave men (*yūja*) should not live in the past, such as the time illustrated in the westerns. Instead, they should be “heroes who had authentic frontier spirits.” They could be those who “would travel riding on satellites to the unknown world” or those who would “cultivate Siberia and the Gobi and flutter the red flag to build a new society that human beings will reach.” Linking these heroes with those who fought against the revisions of the US-Japan Security Treaty a couple of years earlier, Nakazawa concluded that “it is artists’ mission to describe authentic brave men for boys and girls to connect realities and dreams, as long as the people wants this kind of romanticism.”⁴²

⁴⁰ Keisaku Nakazawa, “‘Raramī bokujo’ no miryoku: Robāto Furā no ninki wo chūshin’ni,” *Akahata nichiyō ban*, July 16, 1961.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

Cowboy Debates: The Popular

Despite those criticisms against cowboys, a communist party member Shin Torigoe had alternative views. Nagai criticized Torigoe's favorable views on the western in *Asahi* and his numerous writings in the mainstream media and stated that he "carried himself away too far by mass media (*masukomi*).” To respond to such criticism, Torigoe published a series of articles in the *Japanese Children's Literature* followed by his *Asahi* article from 1961 to 1962. In his first piece, "About the Boom of the Westerns," published in 1961, Torigoe explained that he loved the western because "gunplay is exciting," and he emphasized it was a sport. He suspected that "PTA mothers would criticize" his views saying that the gun shooting was "only for killing people." But he defended against this by saying "those who would say such a thing do not know real gunplay." According to him, lack of discipline in gunplay would result in death. "For example," Torigoe explained, "people, who engage in sport and circus die if they neglect their training." Therefore, Torigoe concluded, "men who live by guns with austerities led more meaningful lives than the one who died in climbing mountains recklessly." In short, Torigoe interpreted that cowboys would address a manhood constructed through discipline, not impulse. For him, cowboys were not mere a gun-shooting mob who favored violence. They were "real" men who through discipline mastered how and when to use weapons.

Furthermore, Torigoe claimed this image of a "disciplined men" allowed Japanese young men to control their violent nature. By using examples of the right-wing young men whom Kaneda and Nagai mentioned in repudiating the cowboys in the westerns, Torigoe believed that the cowboys in the western could help alleviate those crimes. "If Yamaguchi," the seventeen-year-old youth who shot the Japanese Socialist Party leader Inajirō Asanuma, "and Komori," who killed the house-sitter of

the president of Chūō Kōron Sha, “saw the westerns, they would not have committed that kind of violence” because they would learn how to control their violent nature.⁴³ For Torigoe, the cowboys in the westerns could offer male models for Japanese boys and young men to control their violent nature.

Moreover, Torigoe understood that the mass media could help prevent those youths conducting violence. According to Torigoe, the right-wing youth pulled the triggers because they “lived in a world completely divorced from the media (*masukomi*).”⁴⁴ As this comment suggests to us, Torigoe understood that the mass media could function as a deterrence against physical violence and help youth to be familiar with how *taishū*, “the people” and/or “the mass,” live their lives. For Torigoe, the mass media and other institutions were not exactly their capitalistic enemy. It was because “the people” used mass media and other apparatus to lead their lives even though “the merchants of death” operated them. Thus, Torigoe posed a question to his fellow communists as to why they suddenly jumped only onto the western to criticize this capitalistic conspiracy. Torigoe stated that he and his fellow communists “rarely have” their “own institutions” because “from the newspapers, radios, movies and TVs to schools, textbooks and educational institutions, corporations, factories, public parks, transportation, not to mention, to the police and civic services — the facilities and institutions that surround us all belong to the Establishment.” Torigoe continued, “we do not deny going to school and using the textbooks just because those institutions are in the hands of the Establishment.” That’s why Torigoe saw the importance in the conventional mainstream mass media. By using those facilities and institutions by the Establishment, Torigoe claimed that his fellow communists should “steal the enemy’s

⁴³ Shin Torigoe, “Seibugeki būmu ni tsuite,” *Nihon jidō bungaku*, July, 1961, 15.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

arms to create arms for themselves,” like “the victory of Chinese Communist Party led by Mao Zedong who adopted Sun Tzu’s *Art of War*.” In short, Torigoe’s ultimate intention was to articulate his favorable views of westerns to take facilities and institutions created and controlled by the Establishments and put them into communist hands.

Torigoe argued that his fellow communists, eventually, could produce westerns that depicted men with discipline without relying on capitalistic institutions. It was because, for Torigoe, the westerns illustrated how the revolution emerged from “the people.” For example, Torigoe highly praised the TV western called “The Outlaw” because it described why good citizens became outlaws and fought against society’s evil. Torigoe also applauded “The Rawhide” because it featured authentic aspects of people “fighting against nature around their labor, dealings and tricks around the profits earned by this labor, and the psychological struggle of the leader.” Ultimately, Torigoe celebrated the western because “the masculine styles that cut through the works” and described “the human relationships founded by various emotions of cowboys covered with sweat from their labor.” In short, rather than interpreting the westerns as glorifying a hero from a time long past as Nakazawa claimed, Torigoe saw these cowboys as a modern hero for their communist revolution because they were courageous and humble proletariats who fought against how the capitalistic society handled the profits earned by “the people.”⁴⁵

Makoto Matsui, who used to create picture-story shows for children in the 1950s, had a sympathetic view on the popularity of cowboys as well. Although Matsui warned “the American war makers and Japanese war makers” that attempted “to rob human emotions” and transform Japanese children “into animals who would obey

⁴⁵ Shin Torigoe, “Seibugeki wo meguru hyōka ni tsuite,” *Nihon jidō bungaku*, August, 1962, 100.

them,” he doubted whether he had to be “vigilant, speculating about dark recesses of the rulers’ hearts” all the time. Matsui disagreed that all the westerns conveyed the war-makers’ ideologies because “the recipients are the ruled and the people, and the authors and actors of the stories are one of the people” as well. Thus, in Matsui’s word, these people did not necessarily help actualize the war-makers’ intentions. Surrounded by housewives and husbands of his neighbors who “consoled themselves after their daily labor” by watching westerns, baseball, and *sumō*-wrestling, Matsui could not picture these people would have time to criticize “the merchants of death” or “the war-makers” behind the western. Ultimately, Matsui claimed, agreeing with Torigoe, “we should seize the weapons for our side,” if “the western was the weapon of the Establishments.”⁴⁶

The Rockabilly Craze and Country Music Traditionalists

When some communists, such as Shin Torigoe, emphasized that cowboys were proletarian workers who epitomized the sort of man who could bring about proletariat revolution, enthusiasts of American country music also strengthened the narrative of country as the voice of the American folk. Following the lead of Nashville’s Country Music Association (CMA), they began telling a history that emphasized how cowboys were assiduous laborers. The CMA invented this narrative from its inception in 1958 to keep an audience flocking to new forms of music, most particularly rock ‘n’ roll.⁴⁷ Japanese country enthusiasts, whom I call traditionalists, also started authenticating their genre because of the popularity of a newer country & western style, later known as rockabilly. These schisms within American country music in Japan should be

⁴⁶ Makoto Mastui, “Seibugeki hyōka no ronsō ni tsuite,” *Nihon jidō bungaku*, November, 1962, 85-89.

⁴⁷ About the launch of the Country Music Association and its politics, see Diane Pecknold, *Selling Sounds: The Rise of Country Music Industry* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008), 133-167.

understood in the context of a fear of violence and a desire to define “the people” in the growing economy. This allowed even the communists to debate their image of masculinity through cowboys. Thus, we can read this schism as reflecting men’s anxiety over masculinity in the “post-postwar” period.

Increasing Popularity of “the Western” Music

By the early 1960s country & western stars in Japan had already taken off their cowboy outfits. There was a brief period from the mid to late 1950s when Japanese men could become a star by wearing a cowboy outfit and singing country-sounding music. Stars such as Kazuya Kosaka was one such artist. Following mainstream dominant male image of Japanese cowboys, Kosaka’s 1954 debut single, “Wagon Master,” suggested that now Japanese cowboys were sexually available to Japanese women. Sang first in English and in Japanese in the second stanza, the male protagonist in this song tells the master of the covered wagon to hurry. “Hurry,” the protagonist said, “this slow movin’ wagon home” because he was “bringin’” his “sweet gal a bridal veil.” In the second stanza in Japanese, the protagonist went to “the town of that sweet gal,” running on the “continuing road to the edge of the sky.” Calling the wagon master, the protagonist saw another “dusk and starry sky.” Unlike the Western Ramblers, which featured only songs sung in English, Kosaka sang songs in Japanese about romantic love. Kosaka earned his popularity particularly from young female students, who would describe him “cute! cute!” (*kawaii kawaii*).⁴⁸ As a result, Kosaka “firmly established his position” in popularity among country & western music fans.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ Takatada Ihara, “Uestan kashu shindan (sono ni)” *Music Life*, June 1956, 44.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

As Kosaka and other young country musicians earned wider popularity, they learned that new country and western artists in the US, like Elvis Presley, were sweeping away American audiences. In the series “the Legacy of Western Singer” (*Uestan kashu den*) in *Music Life* in 1956, the music writer Takatada Ihara introduced “the one-of-a-kind singer Elvis Presley who has emerged like a comet out of the blue.” While Ihara wondered whether it was appropriate for him to include Presley in the country & western genre, he nevertheless introduced Presley’s SP in the country & western category in this issue because “in the US,” Ihara wrote, “Presley was given the same category.” Presley’s look and sound were novel among country musicians in Japan. Kosaka and fellow country artists began recording Presley’s repertoires with Japanese lyrics as new style of country & western. Taking off his cowboy outfits and changing into Presley-type suits and jackets, Kosaka released “Heartbreak Hotel” in Japanese from Japanese Columbia. Previously known as the “Japanese Lefty (Frizzell),” Kosaka now became known as the “Japanese Presley.” Other young singers who played country & western, who had sung renditions of Hank Williams, Hank Snow, Lefty Frizzell, and Carl Smith, followed Kosaka. They began replacing their honky-tonk repertoire with the more rhythm-driven songs of Elvis Presley and Paul Anka.⁵⁰ By the late 1950s, the country & western in the mainstream Japanese popular music sounded like Elvis Presley, if not rock ‘n’ roll.

The Western Carnival, a weekly concert that featured these newer country & western artists helped the name “the western” music flourish nationwide. The Carnival began prior to Presley’s popularity in Yūrakuchō Video Hall. The management and booking agent Misa Watanabe found the growing fans of the new style of the western

⁵⁰ Mouseiur Kamayatsu, *Musshu!* (Tokyo: Bungei Shunjū, 2009), 33

lucrative and moved the event to the larger Nippon Gekijō (Nichigeki) in 1958.⁵¹ According to *Mainichi*, 9,500 fans flocked to the first Nichigeki Western Carnival. They had a total of 45,000 in the audience throughout the week. *Music Life* celebrated this popularity as an example of the progress of western music in Japan. From 1958, they began publishing special issues called “Western’s Friends” that featured these rockabilly singers and stars. For music writers and fans, the Nichigeki Western Carnival was not the beginning of western or rockabilly craze. Since the emergence of Elvis Presley, these writers and fans celebrated country & western musicians in Japan began playing a “new style” of music more driven by the rhythm and some sung in Japanese. Some writers called this recent western music as “western with youthfulness and taste.”⁵²

Fans wild responses to these new western singers helped spread the name “western” nationwide. In 1958, *Asahi* reported the “disgraceful behavior” of “rockabilly” music played in the Carnival. “Young men and women in their teens,” the author described, “performed having a wild party” at the theater. The writer “could not recognize whether it is singing or dancing.” Observing those in the news movies, the author continued, “young ladies climbed up on the stage and held the singers like Elvis Presley in her arms.” Some of them “knocked down the microphone and threw their coats, handbags and even their brassieres.”⁵³ *Mainichi* reported that the rockabilly “stunned the adults.” It was because young fans “uttered coquettish calls to the band, rather than listening to the music and even jumped up to the performers on the stage.”⁵⁴ Upon the popularity of the Carnival, the police in Shinjuku-ward caught and

⁵¹ For how Watanabe launched the Carnival, see Sadanori Gunji, *Nabe puro teikoku no kōbō* (Tokyo: Bunshun bunko, 1995), 80-90.

⁵² “Gakudan shōkai: Crazy West,” *Music Life*, July 1957, 49.

⁵³ “Rokabirī no kyotai: Takumini shikumareta ‘enshutsu,’ *Asahi shimbun*, March 14, 1958.

⁵⁴ “Ima dairyūkō no rokabirī towa: Setsuna teki kōfun no rizumu,” *Mainichi shimbun*, March 14, 1958.

admonished two hundred youth. The *Asahi*'s caption read some youth "partied with rockabilly." According to the police, the music cafes (jazz cafes) were these youths' headquarters. They skipped class and caroused in these cafes that "specialized in rockabilly," which were increasing in numbers.⁵⁵ During the second Western Carnival in August 1958, one of the performers, Keiichiro Yamashita was injured by male fans who felt jealous about Yamashita's popularity and stubbed him in his right lower back.⁵⁶ *Asahi* also reported in 1959 that a group of thieves had broken into a house with "rockabilly style" in Setagaya-ward. They tied up all the family members and threatened them for money. The report said these young criminals in their twenties "wore rockabilly style clothes like the short-length duster coat and black trousers."⁵⁷ While the mainstream media was concerned that the Carnival and its music, rockabilly, would increase the number of these promiscuous, violent, uneducated, and criminal youth, these newer country & western musicians, by succeeding their previous generation country musicians, *après-guerre* cowboys, mocked middle-class society with their somewhat rebellious aura.

Tokyo Grand Ole Opry

But the whole country & western music community in Japan did not necessarily praise this emerging style. Some country & western musicians, writers and fans lamented the way Kosaka and other fellow musicians played "new" kinds of country & western music. They began questioning whether the national popularity of Kosaka and later rockabilly craze that the Nichigeki Western Carnival would maintain authenticity of American country music in Japan. As early as in 1956, a strong

⁵⁵ "Shinjuku de niyakunin wo hodō: Rokabirī de sawagumonomo," *Asahi shimbun*, March 16, 1958.

⁵⁶ "Yamashita kijirō kun sasarū," *Asahi shimbun*, August 18, 1958.

⁵⁷ "On'na mo majieta yoningumi: rokabirī sutairu de oshiiru," *Asahi shimbun*, February 27, 1959.

supporter of Kosaka, Takadata Ihara, a former musician in Kosaka's band and then the producer and the director at the Yomiuri Television company, recognized those criticism against Kosaka within the community of American country music in Japan. "Recently," Ihara stated, "we have harsh criticism against" Kosaka's "Japanese (*wasei*) hillbilly and the recordings that imitated Japanese popular songs (*kayōkyoku*).” Ihara stated those who criticized Kosaka's country & western “were the lower-graded,” who “misunderstood that authentic country & western was imitations of Webb (Pierce) and Faron (Young).”⁵⁸ Kosaka himself acknowledged this controversy. In 1957, Kosaka answered the interviewer who asked him about “real western and fake western.” “I deeply regret about other western bands who played songs in English is real western and our songs in Japanese are not real.”⁵⁹ In the same year, the country & western critic Kōtarō Yui felt disappointed about Kosaka, who “reduced his songs to be Japanese popular music style, erasing his western aura.”⁶⁰ “Not so many real western fans showed up,” one of the female fans of country & western music sadly noted about the audience at the Nichigeki Western Carnival, “because of the current trends,” of playing rockabilly songs.⁶¹

These critics also felt awkward about new western fans, following the larger mainstream criticism against them. “Country (&western) should not be,” Hiroko Itō, a female fan of country & western music since the early 1950s, told me in an interview, “for those bad mannered.” According to her, the Nichigeki Western Carnival did not provide “the appropriate condition for people to listen to the music.” It was because Itō saw “the women throwing tapes, climbing up on the stage without hesitation and even a woman who exposed her butt!” By then, Itō served as a member of the PTA at her

⁵⁸ Takatada Ihara, “Uestan kashu shin dan sono2” *Music Life*, May 1956, 44-45.

⁵⁹ “Uestan hōdankai (2),” *Music Life*, May 1957, 37.

⁶⁰ Kōtarō Yui, “Shijō: Uestan kōnibaru,” *Music Life*, June 1957, 18, 37.

⁶¹ Eiko Ōya, “Uestan kōnibaru sijō chūkei,” *Music Life*, December 1958, 28.

son's elementary school. Itō said, even though she liked a few of the stars at the Nichigeki Western, she could not say she liked the western because of the ill-mannered female audience. Itō also felt the rockabilly scene at the Nichigeki was pretentious. When she went to the Carnival, she saw "the staff reached out to the fans and distributed tapes," at the entrance. According to her, these staffs "asked them to throw them toward the stage." Those scenes helped Itō to conclude that the Nichigeki Western was "so much imbued with commercialism."⁶²

The other fans of country & western echoed Itō's opinions. "I felt," Yoshiaki Konma, who organized a fun club of the radio show *Sunday Western* on Bunka Hōsō radio station, called the Nichigeki Western, said in an interview, "that kind of thing should not be misunderstood as country & western." When Konma went to see the Nichigeki Western, he found the whole scene at the show bizarre. "I saw a young woman jumped on the stage," Konma remembered, "but the audience in the back seats of the auditorium were quiet." Konma claimed that the crazy images of young female fans distributed through the newsreels "were fabricated." After he saw the show, Konma felt "it would be wrong to consider that kind of music country (& western) music!"⁶³ Konma, too, thought that the Nichigeki Western was "fake" because the organizer of the show staged the audience excitement. Most of the audience was quiet and the larger image of the Nichigeki Western did not deliver those voices who tried appreciating the music without expressing their sexual desires onto the male singers on the stage.

To propagate "authentic country & western music in Japan," Konma, whose nickname was "Big Bill," and other fans of country & western music who criticized

⁶² Hiroko Itō, interviewed by the author, November 26, 2017.

⁶³ Yoshiaki Konma, interviewed by the author, November 28, 2017.

the Nichigeki Western, launched a monthly event called the Tokyo Grand Ole Opry from 1958.⁶⁴ Konma, the music critic Seiji Wada, and the enthusiasts of country & western Tamotsu Hoshino, began this event as the fan club members of the Friends of Sunday Western (*Sandē uestan tomonokai*). This was the fan club of the radio show the *Sunday Western* on the Nippon Cultural Broadcasting (*Bunka hōsō*). This show, according to Konma, was the first radio show that specialized in country & western music on the Japanese broadcasting company. In aiming to fund themselves, Konma, Wada and Hoshino and other supporting members from the Friends of Sunday Western had a radio producer Tetsuya Shimamura from the Nippon Cultural Broadcasting (*Nippon hōsō*) as the Executive of the Tokyo Grand Ole Opry. The booking agencies who brought American entertainers and musicians to Japan, such as Victor Entertainment (*Bikutā geinō*) supported the event. They used the Yūrakuchō Video Hall, where the Western Carnival was held before it moved to the Nichigeki. Compared to Nichigeki, which could hold two thousand, the Video Hall held four to five hundred. This size allowed them to provide a more “respectable” environment than the Nichigeki Western. As Itō, who was actively involved with the Tokyo Opry and the members of the Friends of Sunday Western, elaborated, now they could talk about “which band was musically advanced or not.”⁶⁵

One of the most striking differences at the Tokyo Grand Opry was that these musicians at the Opry continued wearing cowboy outfits. At the Nichigeki Western in 1958, the reporter described the singers on the stage “farewelled” the ten-gallon hats of cowboys, replacing them with Presley’s costumes.⁶⁶ If Kosaka without cowboy outfits addressed the progress of western music in Japan, these traditionalists continued

⁶⁴ Ibid.; Yoshiaki Konma, “Tokyo Grand Ole Opry no jidai,” accessed on May 23, 2018, <http://jtkanehira.com/konma.html>.

⁶⁵ Hiroko Itō, interview by the author Nov 26, 2017.

⁶⁶ “Saikin no amerika jazu kai no wadai wo hirou,” *Music life*, February, 1958, 10.

wearing cowboy hats, boots and shirt and emphasized rustic image and delivered the “essence” of country and western music. For example, the leaflets of their seventh, eighth and ninth events in 1961, featured the house that looked like the house at the Grand Ole Opry in Nashville. The house was depicted as a henhouse in a rural ranch on a hill. Two hens were about to enter the building at the bottom. A part of the roof was clucking next to the title the Tokyo Grand Ole Opry. From the window of the front wall of the house, straws were spilling out. With these “rustic” or perhaps “nostalgic” illustrations amidst a growing economy, they stated their clear purpose to “have the name of ‘western’ to settle back in the original and right place.”⁶⁷

Each event’s theme maintained the “folk” elements of country & western. For example, the ninth event in March 1961 was “the songs of the pioneers in the American West” (*Seibu kaitakumin no uta*). In the greeting section “Howdy!” on the first page of the pamphlet, Testuya Shimamura stated that “having the theme of this month’s event, the songs of the pioneers in the American West, is meaningful,” because those songs “built the foundation of (country &) western music.” Shimamura concluded that this month’s event would allow the audience “to understand the origin of western music.” And it would educate audiences to acknowledge that “calling rock ‘n’ roll rockabilly and popular music ‘western’” was an “embarrassing mistake.”⁶⁸

The traditionalists who supported the Tokyo Grand Ole Opry authenticated country & western music in Japan by “normalizing” the images of the “western.” They viewed the rockabilly scene emerging with the Nichigeki Western promiscuous due to male-female interactions between the stage and the seats. They interpreted this as a fabricated spectacle merely to feed commercial greed. As a result, these traditionalists

⁶⁷ Testuya Shimamura, “Howdy!” in the pamphlet of the 7th Tokyo Grand Ole Opry, personal collection obtained from Yoshiaki Konma.

⁶⁸ Testuya Shimamura, “Howdy!” the pamphlet of the 9th Tokyo Grand Ole Opry, March 26, 1961, personal collection obtained from Yoshiaki Konma.

argued that the modernists lacked morality. They illustrated that they did not draw a clear division between men and women and could not “appreciate” music because they placed importance on mere excitement. Further, they conceived that the modernists did not respect the center of country & western music – now defined as Nashville with the 1958 launch there of the Country Music Association.

To “normalize” country and western, these traditionalists who held the Tokyo Grand Ole Opry put importance on the audience’s appreciation for the singers on the stage. The audience listened carefully as if they listened to the records. While pictures of the Nichigeki Western often captured male stars singing with big actions and staying close together with other singers, the pictures taken at the Tokyo Opry, the musicians and singers in the band stood still and maintained a distance between each other. If young female fans reached their hands out to the male stars on stage at the Nichigeki, no female fans extended their arms or hands to the performers on the stage at the Tokyo Opry. Rather than unbuttoning their shirt, the traditionalists buttoned up their country shirts on stage. The traditionalists did not open their legs and raise their arms or hands to make some gestures. They did not put on make-ups like the rockabilly singers did. These traditionalists made the postures of US stars of mountain music, such as the Louvin Brothers, and honky-tonk country singers, like Hank Williams.⁶⁹ They maintained a masculine cowboy image -- taciturn, individualist and lonely, which served a dominant male image in the larger cultural landscape in the late 1950s and the early 1960s.

The traditionalists, moreover, began narrating the “history” of country & western to challenge the Nichigeki Western of rockabilly, which they dismissed as

⁶⁹ Pictures taken at the Tokyo Grand Ole Opry, personal collection; “Nichigeki uestan k̄anibaru hyō,” *Music Life*, April, 1958, 20.

overrun with commercialism. For example, in *Music Life* magazine, they began series of articles “History of the Western Music” in 1958, featuring the cover picture of four Caucasian cowboys in hats, neckties and with guns around their waist talking together on the open prairie where a buffalo stood in the distance.⁷⁰ In this series, the music writer Sakuo Suzuki claimed that “the origin” of country & western rested in Western expansion, “roughly from the 1850s to the 1870s when ‘the power ruled the West instead of laws.’”⁷¹ In this way, the traditionalists attempted to “educate” the readers with “authentic” country & western music when Kazuya Kosaka served a cover of the same issue of the magazine in a black shirt and recent hair style, holding the model of a Cadillac in his hands as if a man without cowboy suit like Kosaka could dream about buying a Cadillac with his commercial power.⁷² If Kosaka addressed western’s commercial power, the traditionalists emphasized country & western had its own history since the time of when the cowboys “cultivated” the American West. Instead of showing of their power with a Cadillac, those traditionalists emphasized that their diligence through four cowboys appeared in the picture.

Moreover, the pamphlet of the Tokyo Opry functioned as an educational text for the audience to learn what was “real” country & western. First, they put authority on and featured the Grand Ole Opry in Nashville in each of the pamphlets. In each pamphlet, the music critic Seiji Wada described how the Grand Ole Opry had begun in 1925 and replaced a popular radio show around Chicago with a picture of the packed audience at the Ryman Auditorium in Nashville. “Approximately ten thousand people,” Wada claimed, “come to see the show every day from all over the States,” even though the Ryman could only hold five thousand. “To become a guest of the

⁷⁰ Sakuo Suzuki, “Uestan ongaku no rekishi,” *Music Life*, May 1958, 32.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² *Music Life*, February, 1958.

Grand Ole Opry,” Wada claimed, “is to have a promising career in the future as singers. And to become the regular member meant a top-class prestigious singer.” By doing so, Wada confirmed the huge popularity and cultural authority of the Grand Ole Opry had within the community of country & western in the US. Wada’s description of the Grand Ole Opry played a role for his peers and readers to learn about the traditions and histories of the music that they so loved.

More specifically, those traditionalists emphasized that sacred songs and folk songs defined country & western music. By doing so, they understood country & western was the music produced from the daily lives of white Americans who struggled to “cultivate” the American West and Appalachian regions. “The flock of pioneers,” Shimamura wrote in the introduction of the pamphlet of the Tokyo Grand Opry, “carried folk and sacred songs of European countries to the prairie and mountain areas and elsewhere.” And these songs, according to Shimamura, became one musical genre, the (country &) western music.⁷³ For Shimamura, country & western was a singular musical form that put importance on sacred songs. “We cannot talk about western,” Shimamura wrote in the pamphlet for the fourteenth Tokyo Opry, “without separating ourselves from sacred songs!” Shimamura stated sacred songs were not the repertoire only sung in the pews in churches. “Sacred songs provide,” Shimamura claimed, “people with power, joy, and consolation, constructing foundations of their lives and emotions imbued in the daily lives of the people of the American West outside churches.”⁷⁴ For Shimamura, sacred songs for the people who dreamed about “the New World” from Europe and cultivated “the Smoky Mountains and the American West where cactuses flourished served as their strength to get through their

⁷³ Shimamura, “Howdy!,” the pamphlet of the 9th Tokyo Grand Ole Opry, 1.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

toils in obtaining their lands.” “Alas, we need bread and water,” Shimamura described the pioneers, “was their slogan. But without discarding sacred songs, they moved forward.” “In this way,” Shimamura concluded, “country & western music became a unique form among the folk music styles.”⁷⁵

In the ninth Tokyo Opry event, they explained further about folk songs in the article “the Spread of American folk songs.” For them, “most American folk songs came from European countries, except the songs of the blacks in the US South.” They defined mountain songs, which they included in the country & western genre, were handed down by generations of “people who cultivated the forests of the Central Appalachia.” Since many were from Scotland and England, “they sang these songs of their mother countries and consoled their monotonous lives.” “They sang,” the traditionalists continued, “daily events, joys and sadness and handed down these songs from father to children and sometime they transformed them and became the current form of mountain songs.” These traditionalists also understood cowboy songs as folk songs sung by the cowboys in the American West, such as the songs about Jessie James and Billy the Kid.⁷⁶

All in all, these traditionalists interpreted cowboys struggling on the prairie in the American West and the Appalachian mountains were common people, the laborers and the folk. By reinforcing this element, they challenged the modernist interpretation of the country & western in Japan. The ways in which these traditionalists described the folk revival scene in the US mainly led by Pete Seeger and his appearance in the Tokyo Grand Ole Opry typifies the traditionalists’ interpretations of country & western as American folk music. In 1961, on the twelfth Tokyo Opry, Masuta Wagon wrote

⁷⁵ Ibid., 12.

⁷⁶ “Amerikan fōku songu no bumpu,” the pamphlet, the 9th Tokyo Grand Ole Opry, 1961, 2.

about the New Port Folk Festival in the US. “New Port Folk Festival is,” Wagon wrote, “the biggest event in the year in the world of country & western music.” Although Wagon did not express any ideological difference of these left-leaning American folk artists featured in the Festival, he acknowledged “all the participants of this show do not appear in the general western show.” At the same time, Wagon highlighted the featured mountain musicians at the festival, such as Lester Flatt and Earl Scruggs.⁷⁷ Moreover, in October 1963, Seeger appeared in the Tokyo Grand Ole Opry.⁷⁸ As these examples show, the country & western traditionalists in Japan had blurred boundaries between country & western and folk music launched through the US folk revival with its left-leaning ideology. For them, country & western music was American folk music passed down by Caucasians.

Conclusion

As I illustrated in this chapter, men reflected the hopes and fears in the growing post-postwar economy. The mainstream media began featuring Japanese cowboys as a dominant male symbol. Japanese cowboys were now a breadwinner who pursued heterosexual monogamic romantic love and family life. They were not a target of curiosity or laughter as they had been in the previous period, but were instead sexually virile and productive. They were one of the male symbols that addressed economic and cultural maturity after the occupation. At the same time, hard-working cowboy images helped them to image themselves as a respectable man in this growing economy that could possibly turn people blind with greed and prodigality.

⁷⁷ Masuta Wagon, “Nyū pōto fōku festibaru ni tsuite,” the 9th Tokyo Grand Ole Opry, 1961.

⁷⁸ Toshiyuki Tsuda, “1960 nendai no nihon ni okeru burūgurasu ongaku aikōsha no kōryū to hatten,” *Kyoto Tachibana Daigaku Bunka Seisaku Kenkyūka Kenkyū Ronshū* no.5(2011): 63-85.

It was this capitalistic greed that some communists associated with cowboys. TV westerns and Robert Fuller's visit to Japan marked the cowboy as their enemy, the capitalistic Establishment that produced this growing economy and oppressed "the people" and defeated them in the revisions of US-Japan Security Treaty and the labor movement. But in the period when they feared violence from inside and outside the party and their party identity began to falter, other communists interpreted cowboys as their male embodiment of "the popular," able to turn over the capitalistic regime. It was because cowboys were popular and would help the communists to extend their base into middle-class and small business bourgeoisie.

Despite the ideological difference, country & western traditionalists also followed some of the communist views on cowboys and emphasized cowboys as representing the hard-working, simple and taciturn manly "folk." These traditionalists followed mainstream interpretations of cowboys but their music-making with cowboys were too conforming for a mainstream popular music landscape that was fascinated with the rebellious and somewhat salacious new style of country & western. Even so, they continued to perform and celebrate "authentic" country music because they feared that the new country and western community would fall prey to commercialism. The traditionalists insisted that music was not a mere sensation but appreciation.

As all these men showed, Japanese men in this period did not only use American country music and cowboy images to understand, embrace or criticize US-Japan relations. Through these quintessentially American icons, men from various political and cultural backgrounds fiercely debated about the best masculine image for their mission.

Conclusion

In 1972, Mickey Curtis, who launched his musical career by playing country music in occupied Japan, produced the album *Country Pumpkin*. Released from Mushroom label, which Curtis founded with his fellows, the album featured four country traditionalist singers, Keiichi Teramoto, Yoshio Ōno, Takahiro Saitō and Jimmie Tokita with the members of the influential rock band Happy End. Curtis featured these traditionalists singing country sounding songs in Japanese with backup by cutting-edge rock musicians. In so doing, Curtis seems to have attempted to link country & western traditionalists with emerging rock bands and suggested that rock music in Japan, which had by then become a rather conventional genre for male fans and amateur musicians, had musical and cultural links with country & western music in Japan. But the album cover did not feature cowboys. Instead, it showed a small rural town in the US in front of a snow-covered mountain. And as the name “pumpkin” suggests, it did not specifically address a masculine image, delivering instead an impression that country music is the home, if not the roots, of our rock music age, but no longer had the power to lead the current scene. Curtis’s attempt did not match trends in the early 1970s and the album faded into obscurity.¹

Country Pumpkin’s failure to lead listeners to connect rock with country & western suggests that in the period from the late 1960s onward, American country music and cowboys would retreat from their role as a major source of Japanese masculinity. As the Japanese mainstream media increasingly suggested that all Japanese were middle-class citizens,² men no longer projected their aspirations and

¹ Mickey Curtis, *Kantorī pampukin*, Various Artists, Denon/Mushroom, CD-7026-Z, 1972, 33^{1/3}rpm. This album is now auctioned with the price, 178,000 yen because the Happy End members played the instruments.

² By the early 1970s, 90 percent of respondents for Overview of the Public Opinion Survey on the Life of the People published by Cabinet Office answered they belonged to middle-class. The term *Ichoku sō chūryū* (one hundred million of middle-class) addressed Japanese consciousness in the early 1970s. See

concerns for material progress and the nation's respectability onto country music and cowboy images. For example, in 1972 the actor Akira Kobayashi, who had performed a Japanese cowboy with sex appeal in Nikkatsu Wanderer Series, removed his cowboy costume and began performing as *yakuza* Japanese gangster. Kobayashi's transformation from cowboy to *yakuza* hints that the Japanese no longer needed cowboys to demonstrate maleness. Instead, men in this period seemed to conceive that cowboys and American country music were a culture owned by "others," not a "universal" language of modernity. Having already made themselves modern, men had made masculinity and its symbols their own. In mainstream culture, cowboys and American country music became relics of a Japanese past and began to function as nostalgia.

Moreover, in this period, Japanese music critics, musicians and fans began interpreting American country music and cowboy images as a symbol of white racism. In 1972, the influential music critic Tōyō Nakamura argued that country music was a white pseudo-folk music that promoted racial violence against blacks and Native Americans. Nakamura blasted American country music, and singer Hank Snow in particular, for his support of the segregationist presidential candidate George Wallace. Nakamura linked country to pseudo-folk, calling it racist, and violent, and thus, painting Japanese country and western fans as rough and dangerous. By racializing American country music and cowboy images, Nakamura argued that cultural ownership of those icons rested in the hands of American WASPs, who, in his view,

Britannica Online Japan, s.v. "Ichoku sō churyū," accessed November 10, 2018, <http://japan.eb.com/rg/article-20376800>. Dower states that the period from 1966 to 1971 was when Japan's economy became mature while US hegemony in global capitalism began to dwindle. See John W. Dower, "Peace and Democracy in Two Systems: External Policy and Internal Conflict," in *Postwar Japan as History*, ed. Andrew Gordon (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993), 3-33. Nagahara states that the critics of mass culture no longer had their power in this period because most of the population had access to mass culture with growing economy and the emerging media, TVs. Hiromu Nagahara, *Tokyo Boogie Woogie: Japan's Pop Era and Its Discontents* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2017), 213-214.

celebrated westward expansion and the Jim Crow regime that oppressed non-white populations. He dismissed as American imperialist “colonial subjects” those Japanese who appreciated country music, and in so doing not only declared American country music and cowboy images “other,” but also defined himself and his followers as authentic Japanese independent from US hegemony. Nakamura’s claim convinced many male music fans and musicians to push country music from mainstream popular music, a situation that continues to this day.³

The demise of country music and cowboy images, I believe, closely connected with how men in this period authenticated popular music making. In one sense, men increasingly thought it important to make rock music “Japanese.” For instance, Happy End won critical acclaim in 1971 when its members, who had played backup on *Country Pumpkin*, released their album *Kazemachi roman*, which featured Japanese lyrics set to rock music. Happy End launched their style when rock still had an aura and musical heritage from American popular music in the 1970s. In subsequent debates featured in Nakamura’s *New Music Magazine* about the role of Japanese in rock music, a majority of the critics and musicians praised Happy End because they had created an indigenous rock, rather than just singing Japanese lyrics on American-influenced music. By linking, in Michael Bourdaghs’s words, “rock music melodies to the rhythms of spoken Japanese,”⁴ Happy End was praised for undermining previous narratives in Japanese popular music “centered on a Japan versus American opposition.”⁵ Music critics, musicians and fans thought it critical and now possible for Japanese men to create indigenous popular music. When all the citizens shared their

³ “Naze boku wa ‘uesutan’ ga kirai ka,” in *Nakamura Tōyō ansorōjī*, ed. Jun Asano (Tokyo: Music Magazine, 2011), 38-43.

⁴ Michael K. Bourdaghs, *Sayonara Amerika, Sayonara Nippon: A Geopolitical Prehistory of J-Pop* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 164,

⁵ *Ibid.*, 163.

“middle-classness,” “Japanese” popular -- particularly rock – music was inevitable soundtrack of “the people.” Thus, they had an outlaw and rebellious aura.

In fact, to create Japanese masculine music “independent” from the US was closely related with ideas about race. Thus, Nakamura’s argument with country music was powerful. Although the dynamics that lead Nakamura to repudiate American country music and cowboys were similar to previous periods, he opened up a new attack in the mainstream media, disparaging those American icons as racially violent and as inconsistent with Japanese culture and identity. Now, men could no longer see American country music and cowboys in Japan as equally Japanese. Perhaps more important, they also believed that they did not share culture with white people who, in Nakamura’s view, represented country and cowboys.

When we compare Nakamura’s statement with how critics and fans interpreted those icons in the previous decades, we can understand more clearly about how men in this dissertation concerned themselves more with class than with racial images of country music and cowboys. By the mid 1960s, both critics and fans of country music in Japan had expressed little concern about legal racial segregation and violence against blacks in the Jim Crow South where the country music industry mainly developed. Nor did they take much interest in the racial violence of America’s westward expansion that popular cowboy symbols veiled. Thus, while this dissertation has not closely examined links between masculinity and race in the context of Japanese country music, their willingness to turn a blind eye to the very themes of racial violence and subjugation Nakamura highlighted demonstrates the ways in which race played little role in how Japanese men of the pre- and immediate post-war period defined their masculinities.

Yet clearly race played an important, if not quiet role, and in my future research, I look forward to investigating the links between these American icons and

men's racial ideologies and masculinities. I will ask, for example, why did men refrain talking about the links between country music and American racial violence until the 1960s? What kinds of ideas about race hindered men from doing so? I also wish to explore why in the early 1970s Nakamura claimed that country was racist and why many fans today continue to find that a compelling claim. Nakamura's claim helped raise awareness among Japanese music fans about racial inequalities at home and abroad, but it did not change the way in which race and masculinity operated within Japanese popular music discourse. As Nadine Hubbs has shown, the US media cast country as working-class culture in order to legitimize middle-class gender ideologies.⁶ I wish to examine how this dynamic worked in country music's transpacific journey after the early 1970s. How did Japanese critics legitimize their masculinity by using US racial tensions between blacks and whites portrayed through a genre marked as "white" and "low-class"? How did Japanese male critics form their American popular music connoisseurship, in part, by distinguishing themselves from what they saw as country music's inherent racism and classism? Finally, I wish to address how country musicians and fans responded to these criticisms. How did they seek to redeem their music from claims of racism? Through these investigations, in my future research I wish to show the complex racial discourses around country and cowboy images through which men navigated from the mid-1920s to the present.

Productivity and Respectability of the Nation

Thus, this dissertation only explains part of the ways men explored masculinities through "quintessential" American icons like the cowboy. However, it suggests an important re-thinking about how to address cultural flow by removing it

⁶ Nadine Hubbs, *Rednecks, Queers and Country Music* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2014).

from a strictly nationalist perspective. By looking at how men used icons initially deemed “American” to form their “Japanese” masculinities, we can see that US-Japan diplomatic relations is not a sufficient context. This dissertation has argued that Japanese men, from the 1920s to the mid 1960s, used American country music and its main symbol cowboy images to construct their own masculinities within a transnational context. These men decontextualized this iconography from its original US cultural and political landscape. They defined their particular forms of masculinities in aiming to fit their multifaceted ideas that changed over time about what sort of men could represent the Japanese nation. Men in the state, mainstream media and male musicians who played American country music rejected, manipulated and celebrated country music and cowboys. They used these icons to find particular masculine dispositions that matched their concerns about the aims and identity of Japan. As a result, US political and cultural power failed to control even the most “quintessential” American images when they traveled across borders.

In the wartime, men constructed their own masculinities by using cowboy images in the context of American influence on Japan’s consumer culture and Japan’s growing imperial ambitions. Katsuhiko Haida’s cowboy song “Empty Saddles” released from Japanese Victor in 1938, allows Haida to perform a modern boy cowboy, demonstrating one way to express wartime masculinity in crisis. The popularity of the song and the “low-class” status of these male figures implies us that the Empire achieved its aim to mobilize men from a wide range of cultural backgrounds. At the same time, they used these marginalized male figures to defend racially pure and chivalrous Japanese men as wartime hegemony.

While modern girls deviated from feminine identities assigned by the state, modern boys, who had an international, if not a cosmopolitan, aura, somewhat conformed to male identities within the wartime gender norm. These men with a

“mixed-race” ambience could betray the pure-raced Japanese male image. But this “hybrid” aura could address “modern-ness” that the Japanese Empire strove to achieve for its audience both at home and abroad. In this context, the state, if not the total-war regime, increasingly used Haida, as a modern boy singer, to celebrate Japan’s advanced culture and productivity. Those modern boys were not “pure-raced,” thus “marginalized” male figure within wartime gender norm. Yet, they supplemented the Empire’s masculine identity with their “mixed-race” public persona.

If modern boys emerged in the growing consumer culture, on which American cultural products made a huge impact, cowboy images arrived in Japan with this jazz lifestyle. They, too, generated anxiety but in a different way from modern boys. The state marginalized cowboy images of white American men on horses to defend “pure-raced” Japanese men on the horse, including the emperor and the soldiers who served him. At the same time, jazz recipients who celebrated modern boys, too, rejected cowboys. Despite and because of the cowboy’s popularity, jazz consumers feared cowboys. To defend the middle-class virtue they emulated from Western culture, they projected their “immoral” values onto cowboys and classed them. As a result, cowboys were often described as a hyper-masculine figure. By marginalizing cowboy images, those men legitimized their own ideas about hegemonic masculinity.

However, others took advantage of this low-class cowboy image. By the end of the 1920s, when the empire grew to include Manchuria and other parts of the world, educators who encouraged colonization abroad, the state, and the music business used cowboy images to legitimize their imperial expansion. The educator at the colonial department at the university emphasized that Japanese colonists should be courageous, willful and warm-hearted by using cowboys to represent the ideal colonial man. The music industry and the state in the same period used cowboy images and the themes in the western movies to celebrate hardships and the adventures of immigrants in the

colonies. Particularly with the renditions of cowboy songs composed in the US, the state and music industry allowed male protagonists in the songs to become sentimental – crying for loss on the battlefield, remembering home from the frontier, if not mothers. All in all, although cowboys could not embody the wartime Japanese warrior, men used these icons for Japanese consumer subjects to legitimize their imperial missions.

Therefore, when the modern boy Haida performed as a cowboy in “Empty Saddles,” he and cowboys accomplished duties assigned by the nation during the total war regime. It was because Haida as a “modern boy” instigated imperial gender norms yet maintained the “modern” profile of the Japanese Empire. The cowboy therefore served as a symbol of Japanese imperial expansion, if not progress, even as it was recognized as low-class. As a result, Haida’s “modern boy” cowboy helped mobilize male consumer subjects within jazz culture and the working-class who now had increasing access to consumer goods because of the wartime economy. At the same time, to uphold wartime gender norms with a racially pure, chivalrous man at the top, they contained jazz and working-class consumer subjects within a marginalized male sphere.

The defeat marked the US as masculine, like cowboys, and the Japanese as feminine, like smiling geisha girls. Although men and boys were attracted to cowboy images in magazines, comics and the western movies of white men on horses, they did not embody and represent the symbolic representations that the US offered to the Japanese. Rather, like the prewar era, they continued to search for masculinities that would fit the nation’s directions with American country music and cowboy images.

Left leaning intellectuals, PTA mothers and the state were concerned about the impact of violence in the cowboy westerns. They interpreted this violence as similar to the brutal conduct of samurai in old Japanese movies. As a result, they believed

cowboys carried a burden of Japanese “feudal” values, which they wanted to avoid for new nation-building. In the process, they stressed the importance of universal values like “non-violence” and repudiated both the westerns and the samurai movies. By doing so, they maintained their version of an image of the Japanese man who could work for peace.

Those who admired cowboys, such as journalists and intellectuals, also found in cowboys a common value among all humans. Rather than highlighting violence, they found masculine dispositions – diligence and perseverance -- necessary to recuperate Japan from the defeat. They commended cowboys because they could offer an image of a man that the Japanese needed to recuperate from the devastation of war. But they did not attempt to praise cowboys as a way to encourage imperialist conquest of the kind conducted during the war. By stressing humanity, diligence and perseverance, they hindered readers from reflecting on and criticizing Japan’s imperial past or US Cold War imperialism. Instead, they encouraged readers to connect cowboys with their postwar struggle in remaking Japan. As a result, cowboy images in mainstream media represented hegemonic masculinity that men required to embody for building a new Japan, a breadwinner working outside the home and not complaining about long hours of work at the company.

In the popular music landscape in the immediate postwar era, Japanese music journalists followed left-leaning intellectuals and PTA mothers and believed that Japanese musicians who played American country music in Japan in cowboy outfits could not embody respectable male musicianship. They described those musicians as lacking in musical education and capable of playing only songs with a simple melody and chord progression. Thus, they called them unmodern, for example, by comparing them with jazz musicians whom they thought played more sophisticated repertoires. Critics implied that country musicians went against the flow when Japanese mourned

their loss in the war. They differed from mainstream popular male singers who sang about teary unrequited dreams and delivered instead seriousness and heaviness about the war defeat. For these critics, Japanese men who played American popular music in cowboy outfits could not address Japanese cultural advancement. Country musicians, in their view, did not mourn for the defeat as seriously as they should. By classing country musicians, these music critics defended their ideal male music making in the immediate postwar era. For them, male musicians who learned music without formal education, played simple songs, and wore country shirts and hats did not symbolize a respectable Japanese man.

But these country musicians themselves believed that they embodied masculinity required for new Japan. They made music in ways that critics described as low-class and that mocked the polite society that marginalized them. When the Japanese modeled white American cowboys and pursued recovery from the war, country musicians performed cowboys to articulate their confusions, boredom and anxiety, and to embody the freedom that cowboys embraced in the vast prairie and their fighting spirit for justice. Those various interpretations of cowboys show us that Japanese men struggled to define their masculinity amidst postwar confusions. Their use of cowboys did not simply reflect an unthinking admiration for the masculine victor US.

As the mainstream media and the Japanese government began emphasizing that Japan's postwar era ended in the mid-1950s, cowboy images performed by Japanese men began appearing in mainstream media as a dominant male symbol. Japanese cowboys were now a breadwinner who pursued heterosexual monogamous family life. They were not a target of curiosity or laughter as had been true earlier, but now embodied sexual virility and economic productivity. As a result, cowboy images in this period served as a male symbol indicating that the Japanese postwar economy and its

culture reached maturity, allowing men to further pursue progress and modernization. At the same time, they helped minimize the masculine productivity of the nation with their industrious character. Men used cowboys to emphasize Japan's pursuit of economic progress without the blinders of greed and prodigality.

Communists, however, equated the cowboy precisely with capitalistic greed. They viewed cowboys as part of the capitalistic Establishment that produced not only a growing economy but oppression of "the people" and that defeated them in the negotiations over the US-Japan Security Treaty revisions and in the labor movement. But not all the Japanese communists agreed with this view. In the period when they feared not only violence from the capitalistic Establishment and right-wing students, they also were concerned about fellow communists who adopted violent revolutionary tactics. These communists found the ideal revolutionary man in the cowboy. They interpreted cowboys as a member of "the people," someone who worked hard and fought for justice. Moreover, to extend their base of support into the middle-class and small business bourgeoisie, these communists took advantage of the cowboy's popularity.

Despite ideological differences, country & western traditionalists who disagreed with their genre's rockabilly turn, worked with communist to further develop the cowboy's image. They performed diligent, simple and taciturn cowboys and emphasized that they were "the folk." In this way, they exhibited the authentic way to appreciate country & western. As a result, these traditionalists also agreed with the mainstream interpretations on cowboys. Yet, the music industry no longer had a place for cowboys, which in the postwar period eagerly promoted rebellious and salacious male recording artists. Even so, traditionalists committed themselves to spreading "authentic" country music and combatting the influence of commercial rockabilly.

In this dissertation, I have argued that men from the 1920s to the mid 1960s did not only use American country music and cowboy images to understand, embrace and criticize US-Japan relations. Instead, through a quintessentially American icon men from various political and cultural backgrounds fiercely debated which masculine image would be appropriate for their nation. For example, wartime economic growth instigated an influx of American cultural products and encouraged consumers to enjoy consumer culture. At the same time, the nation's imperial ambitions expanded. In occupied Japan, however, defeat destroyed the nation's economic, cultural and militaristic power. But in recuperating a masculine profile of the nation, men did not mindlessly accept American hegemony. In the post- "postwar," economic growth, the nation's productivity revealed that the nation had regained its strength. Yet this sharp growth concerned men that the nation might become filled with a race of materialists. In short, during these three decades, I contend that men were preoccupied with a desire for national economic and military power while, at the same time, achieving these goals in nonviolent and respectable ways.

Thus, those men searched for masculinities they believed would fit these goals. For the men highlighted in this dissertation, American country music and the cowboy exhibited a maleness both ideal and incongruous with their imagined nation's identities and aims. Despite the differences of interpretations, men were strung between two rival interpretations of both the cowboys and American country music. On the one hand, these products of American culture represented hard-working men who would bring about progress of the nation, while for others they represented the uneducated, violent mob who would destroy the nation's virtue. All in all, men used American country music and cowboy images in these three decades to express their concern and excited about the nation's productivity and respectability.

Country Music as Harbinger of Rock Normalcy in Japanese Popular Music

Moreover, I contend that the Japanese popular music scene underwent changes in styles and trends whenever men encountered a crisis of masculinities. As my dissertation implies, it seemed necessary for popular male artists to have a rebellious aura and to gesture against middle-class polite society. As I have demonstrated, male artists like Katsuhiko Haida, the Western Ramblers, and rockabilly singers did not conform to respectable manhood. Whether articulating sentimental feelings, as in Haida's case, celebrating freedom and a refreshing lack of formal musical education, like the Western Ramblers, or sexualizing their bodies for female fans, in the case of rockabilly, none were conventionally "manly" in mainstream society. Thus, stylistic trends in Japanese popular music, I argue, have occurred when men feared to lose their own masculinities that they thought would fit with their ideas about the nation.

By arguing this, I hope to incorporate American country music in Japan back into the narratives of Japanese popular music, where rock too often tends to authenticate male music making and writing. By stating this, I of course do not support some of the racist representations and musicians that are still part of country music in the US. Rather, I wish for us to understand country music as a genre with a history that has evolved over time. The demography of fans, shared political ideologies, the socio-cultural background of musicians and their political inclinations, music styles and narratives around the genre have changed over time and are still changing. By viewing country as inherently conservative and thus "unmodern," country music in Japan has been a "lost piece in the popular music history puzzle," as Furmanovsky notes, and neglected in the larger narratives about Japanese popular music.⁷

⁷ Michael Furmanovsky, "American Country Music in Japan: Lost Piece in the Popular Music History Puzzle," *Popular Music and Society* 31, no.3 (July 2008): 357-372.

I contend this absence of country music in the conventional histories of Japanese popular music hinders us from critically assessing the impact of popular music on identity, as well as on class, race and gender. I believe that by incorporating the popularity of American country music in Japan within a larger history of popular music, we can ask who has the power to judge styles and values appropriate for the current time and for what purposes. As this dissertation has shown, I believe examining how men fought out their masculinities through popular music is one effective way to intervene in conventional popular music narratives in Japan.

Tokyo Rodeo as a Myth of Americanization?

As I have demonstrated, men explored their masculinities, rather than US-Japan relations, if not power relations, through American country music and cowboy images. However, Tokyo Rodeo, a cultural space where men fiercely talked about cowboys, shows that “Americanization” or cultural imperialism has played some role in the cowboy icon’s reception in Japan. During these decades from the mid 1920s to the mid 1960s, America’s cultural presence made an enormous impact on men in Japan. Their passionate celebration and repudiation of these “American” icons show us that America’s cultural presence offered men a framework within which they could discuss domestic concerns. The ubiquitous presence of American political, economic and cultural influences during these decades helped men to internalize this power relations and “feminized” them. Tokyo Rodeo was a complex cultural space for men to explore their masculinities in the context of Americanization and their desires to masculinize and modernize their nation.

Yet, highlighting how men explored their masculinities through American country music and cowboy images, rather than reducing this interaction to an exploration of the US-Japan relationship in all its dimensions, helps us understand

more clearly about transnational cultural encounter. With “Americanization” as an intellectual framework, we would miss the ways that US political and cultural contexts could not control the cowboy’s transpacific journey. By focusing on Japanese men and domestic contexts, my dissertation has revealed that flows of cultural products and values traverse nation-states boundaries and find new meanings. Japanese men may have taken advantage of two “quintessential icons” of America -- country music and the cowboy – but they made these icons their own, exploring masculinities that would fit with their visions of the Japanese nation.

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