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Exploring Masculinities in the United States and Japan

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**EXPLORING MASCULINITIES
IN THE UNITED STATES AND JAPAN**

By

Susan Sims Cochran

A capstone project submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements

For the degree of Master of Arts in Professional Writing in the Department of English

In the College of Humanities and Social Sciences of Kennesaw State University

Kennesaw, Georgia

2009

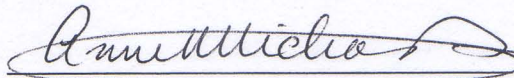
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Kennesaw State University
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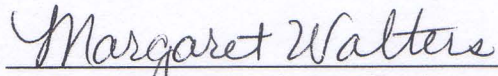
Susan Sims Cochran

Has been approved by the committee
For the capstone requirement for the Master of Arts in
Professional Writing in the Department of English
At the December 2009 graduation

Capstone committee:

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Anne Richards", written over a horizontal line.

Dr. Anne Richards, Member

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Margaret Walters", written over a horizontal line.

Dr. Margaret Walters, Member

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my God for giving me the strength to persevere through this topic, despite the opposition.

I would like to thank my husband, who was ever encouraging despite the sleepless nights (and many, many discussions) for this paper.

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CONTENTS

Personal Narrative	1
How I Became Involved in Masculinities Studies: Personal Perspective	1
My Thoughts on Men in Current American Society	5
The MAPW Program at KSU and My Capstone	9
Introduction to the Study	11
An Intersection of Gender, Crosscultural Studies, and Film.....	12
Media as Environment	14
What is Masculinity?	17
A Very Short History of Masculinity in General	17
Conceptions of Masculinity	20
Why American and Japanese Masculinity?	22
Historical Context of American and Japanese Masculinity	23
Masculinity and Its Study	28
The Development of Masculinities Studies	28
American Masculinities.....	29
Japanese Masculinities	32
Japanese and American Masculinity in Cinema.....	35
<i>The Last Samurai</i>	35
<i>Shall We Dansu?</i> vs. <i>Shall We Dance?</i>	44
Conclusion	54
Prospects for Future Research.....	56
Works Cited.....	58
Résumé: Sue Cochran.....	61

CONTENTS

Table 1: Pertinent Characters in “The Last Samurai”	36
Table 2: Pertinent Characters in “Shall We Dance?” and “Shall We Dansu?”	44

PERSONAL NARRATIVE

“Gender does make a difference and I think it probably should...[A] person’s sex is a part of them. So you have to be aware of it as a person and as an individual.”

(As quoted in Haswell and Haswell, 1995, p. 246)

How I Became Involved in Masculinities Studies: Personal Perspective

I never believed in Prince Charming—at least, not that he would gallop in to save me in the nick of time. I didn’t need saving, and I certainly wasn’t about to magically fall in love with some stranger on a horse. But more than that, I didn’t need a Prince Charming. I had my daddy. He saved me from The Burglar and the child-eating Baba Jaga that plagued my dreams, he squashed the terrifying spiders that crept into my room, he taught me how to throw a baseball and how to drive (at eight years old). Needless to say, my ideas of men (and, thereby, masculinities) have been greatly influenced by my father’s role in my life.

And they say a girl falls in love and marries a man just like her father. But I am just like my father and, apparently, I didn’t want to marry someone like myself. Instead, I married someone completely different from both of us. My husband is a good man who, like my dad, squashes my spiders and holds my hand when the adult version of Baba Jaga finds her way into my dreams. As a father, he will indubitably teach our children to throw baseballs and how to drive (at eight years old). But that’s about where the similarities end. My father is ambitious and goal-oriented; my husband is laid-back and content. My father is a handyman who can fix anything from a light socket to the transmission in my eleven-year-old car; my husband will sketch out how to fix something, noting details,

then move onto another project before finishing—or starting—the first project. And every day, my poor husband lives in the shadow of my perfect father.

Now I'm six months pregnant with my first child, and we found out recently that we're having a son. Our son is an unexpected addition to our little family, and I know my life will unalterably change. My husband and I have been living fairly peaceably as two individuals under the same roof, but henceforth, in every decision we make, we will consider the effects our personal choices will have on our son—including the way I treat my husband. The karmic circle will continue to spin as I attempt to distill the good qualities from both my father and my husband in order to instill these qualities into my son. As the most prominent men in my life, these three male beings can't help but influence my view of, and man's place in, the world.

My journey with masculinities studies, however, began several months before this more recent development. For me, the study of masculinities was a surprise. Before January 2009, I didn't know there was such a thing as masculinities studies, and I probably wouldn't have recognized a need for it even if I had heard of it. But in that fateful January, I was hired as a graduate research assistant for a professor at Kennesaw State University who wanted to write an article on gender and caring. I was thrilled to participate in such an undertaking, but I really felt out of my element: I barely knew the professor I was assisting and I had little knowledge of the subject matter. I delved into the subject, however, reading (what felt like) hundreds of articles related to research methods, gender studies, and caring. Even on vacation, I carried a wicker bag with ten to twelve unread articles with me at all times.

As I read the articles and books, I was surprised by the attacks on men and masculinity by both women and men, and I was shocked at what seemed to me to be a recurring denigration and occasional disdain of men. For instance, Imms (2000) references an article that suggests boys should be studied to understand “men’s aggressive oppression of women,” since masculinities are learned through culturally structured groups (p. 157). While some men may certainly aggressively oppress women, I was surprised by the implication that all men are socialized to aggressively oppress women, because that scenario had not been my experience.

Because I had a very visceral reaction to these writings, I had to determine exactly where I stood on the issue of feminism and how it fit into my worldview and belief system. After the initial shock from reading the views of these authors and scholars, I became defensive and angry, believing men in general to have been unjustly attacked. I found myself stereotyping these authors as feminist man-haters—even the male authors. Obviously, my response was not a reasoned, objective response, merely my first reactions to these readings. My first step was very basic and was merely to look up the definition of terms in the Merriam-Webster (2009) dictionary. I thought the definitions very telling.

Feminism: the theory of political, economic, and social equality of the sexes; organized activity on behalf of women’s rights and interests.

Masculist: an advocate of male superiority or dominance.¹

The definition of feminism seems to be written very objectively, without a bias for or against women, since it is essentially explaining a theory and not a person or type

¹ The dictionary did not list correspondent forms of the two words (i.e. *feminism* and *masculism* or *feminist* and *masculist*), so the words are quoted as I found them listed.

of person. The definition of masculist, however, did not appear to be objective at all, presumably because it describes a person or type of person. I interpreted the definition of masculist to insinuate that anyone who is an advocate for men promotes male dominance and is against the interests of women. I wasn't satisfied with these definitions, however, so I consulted a more authoritative dictionary: the *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* (OED). The Shorter OED (2002) defines the terms as follows:

Feminist: an advocate of feminism or women's equality or rights.

Feminism: advocacy of equality of the sexes and the establishment of the political, social, and economic rights of women; the movement associated with this.

Masculist: an advocate of the rights of men; of or pertaining to the advocacy of the rights of men; characterized by or designating attitudes, values, etc. held to be typical of men.

Masculism: advocacy of the rights of men (rare).

Although these definitions seem much more objective than the Merriam-Webster definitions, I was still surprised by the definitions, specifically by the lack of parallelism between the terms. For instance, a feminist is an advocate for women's rights whereas a masculist is an advocate for men's rights **and/or** typical character traits, etc. Similarly, feminism advocates for the equality of the sexes and women's rights, whereas masculism only advocates the rights of men (according to the definition). The Shorter OED's definition of masculism, although more objective, still implies by omission that masculism (and, therefore, masculists) do not advocate for equality of the sexes.

Since my worldview shapes the way I view the world and develop opinions, especially regarding gender studies, I think it is important to mention that I am a

Christian. As such, I don't believe feminism and masculism are obversive theories, but ideologies that can work hand in hand for the advancement and mutual equality of both men and women. Although men and women were created differently, with different anatomy and, perhaps, different functions, in my interpretation, men and women are equal creations in the eyes of God, as described in Galatians 3:28, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, *male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.*"² Based on this tenet, I support the equality of the sexes.

My Thoughts on Men³ in Current U.S. Society

Connell (2000), who is a male proponent of feminism, stated in lecture at the University of Kansas, "The rise of the women's liberation movement, and the many feminisms that have followed on from it, produced a massive disturbance in the gender system and people's assumptions about gender...What affects the social position of women and girls must also affect the social position of men and boys."

In a section titled "Encounters with Feminism," Connell (1995) describes men who, after being introduced to feminism (through personal contact, at school, in books or journals, etc.), had feelings of guilt for being male (p. 129). After an encounter with feminism, these men felt that there was something inherently wrong themselves as men in their acculturated performance of masculinity.

The motivation for this paper originated from personal experience. From my observations in general, more women are prepared to face the world with all its

² New International Version, italics added.

³ For clarification, in my personal narrative, I differentiate between "man," meaning the biological attributes of being a full-grown, adult male, and "masculinity," meaning the concepts, qualities, ideas, etc. used by men use to determine their ascension from boyhood to manhood.

difficulties than men are. I personally know (and I'm related to) several men who display one or several examples of a lack of motivation or ambition to better themselves, let alone their surrounding community. They are still dependent on their parents (living at home with few to no bills), stuck in a dead-end job, and generally unable or unwilling to accept responsibility. Certainly each of these men is choosing his state of existence, but I hope for a better future for my son.

I did not embark on this journey because of my (forthcoming) son, but he is making it very relevant for me. Like any mother, I want to raise my child to be a confident, self-sufficient man and a productive member of society. But his view of himself and the development of his own masculinity will be largely constructed on the playground, in school, with friends, and in other relational situations. My son will not be born with a preset notion of masculinity, but he will learn it through repetition and performance based on what his peer group deems "good" and "normal" (Renold, 2001, p. 373). If the culture in which my son is raised dictates his values and his concept of masculinity, then I want to understand the values and concepts of masculinity promoted by the culture. I don't know what values U.S. culture will endorse in twenty years, but I can examine the current standard of values and masculinity.

A culture expresses its values in many ways, predominantly through media: television, movies, newspapers, etc. How society reacts to these stimuli reveals its approval or disapproval of the values. The terms "culture" and "society" are used so interchangeably that it is important to differentiate between the two.

Culture: the arts and other manifestations of human intellectual achievement regarded collectively (Oxford Dictionary of English, 2005).

Society: the aggregate of people living together in a more or less ordered community; the community of people living in a particular county or region and having shared customs, laws, and organizations (Oxford Dictionary of English, 2005).

A society can develop a culture; culture is a product of society, but a culture can also affect society. Modern U.S. culture has produced such movies as “Failure to Launch” and such television shows as “Family Guy,” in which men are characterized as lazy, incompetent, and inferior to women. Not all movies and television shows openly endorse this view of men, but a surprising number encourage it for the sake of ratings and humor. The television shows “Everybody Loves Raymond,” “Everybody Hates Chris,” “Home Improvement,” and “The Simpsons” were all enormously popular when they aired—and they all, to varying degrees, characterized men as being in some way inferior to their female counterparts. For instance, in an episode of “Everybody Loves Raymond” titled “Debra’s Sick,” Ray is portrayed as inept and incompetent when his wife is sick and he tries to juggle his responsibilities at work and home—to the point of taking the wrong child (also sick) to the doctor’s office. In addition, in an episode of “The Simpson’s” titled “Secrets of a Successful Marriage,” after offending Marge, Homer begs her forgiveness by asserting that he is completely and utterly dependent on her. These portrayals are usually found in comedy films and televisions as comic relief, but the implications can be dangerous to the healthy construction of both masculinity and femininity. While I am glad that the feminist movement has been diligently working to deconstruct Hollywood and the media’s stereotyped portrayal of women, I think a similar

movement needs to be addressed for men, as well—a movement that encourages a respectful attitude toward both men and women.⁴

Books and scholarly articles/journals also express the issues with which a society is concerned. Although masculinities and feminism are discussed in academic and political circles, in my own readings, I've found few true proponents of masculinities studies—a fact which perplexes me. Feminism (being a feminist and/or supporting feminism) has been more socially acceptable than being a proponent for masculinities in the last few decades. With the rise of feminism, men have come under close scrutiny. Despite this fact, many men and men's associations (such as the National Organization for Men Against Sexism as well as the U.S. Men's Studies Association) are proponents of feminism and proponents for changing the traditional, patriarchal roles of men to more caring, self-aware roles. Men's behaviors, actions, and motivations have been questioned and analyzed, and rightly so. I have to admit that a current television show opened my eyes to the oppression of women as recently as the 1960s. AMC's show "Mad Men" portrays a traditional patriarchal society. I was surprised at the blatant sexism in the workplace, the psychological games played by both men and women—and the state of a society that allowed women power only through her body.

But 1960 was nearly fifty years ago, and the generations that followed have been much more likely to be taught to treat women as equals. But as the decades have passed, I wonder if these younger males aren't feeling a bit displaced in society—not because they

⁴ This paragraph reflects only my amateur responses to select aspects of the media. In a later section of the capstone project, I make reference to a study conducted by Kivel and Johnson (2009) that focuses on the ways in which hegemonic masculinity is reinforced through movies and media. Their study focuses mostly on movies usually considered to be more "masculine" (such as action films). My observations are not meant to contradict their study; merely to add another dimension of the portrayal of masculinities in media.

no longer have cultural “power” or “dominance” but because they seem to be uncertain about what is acceptable for them as men, and how to achieve it. As these boys and young men grow into manhood, they need role models from whom to learn about masculinity and respect, for themselves and for others. But these young men are learning about masculinity largely from television, movies, video games, and their peers.

I hope for a world in which each sex will treat the other with mutual respect, not for his or her own sake, but for the sake of future generations. Are masculinities studies relevant in today’s liberated world? I think so, yes. Not only for my son and his generation, but for my son’s sons, and their sons’ sons. I hope the sexes can coexist equally and in harmony together. Because each person makes his or her own choice regarding ambitions, goals, and success, I feel that it is up to each person to make his or her choices and follow through.

The MAPW Program at KSU and My Capstone

When I first applied to the Master of Arts in Professional Writing (MAPW) program at Kennesaw State University, I was working as an executive assistant for a financial advisor. I knew I didn’t want to follow the career path as an executive assistant—it paid well, but I wanted to get back into literary arts. As a student in the MAPW program, I had the opportunity to work as an editorial assistant for a small community magazine publisher and subsequently as the senior technical editor for a national financial services firm in Atlanta.

Originally, I had intended my capstone to explore the facets of the publishing industry. My current capstone project was inspired by Robert Connors’ article titled

“Teaching and Learning as a Man,” which I read while researching masculinities and writing as the graduate research assistant to Dr. Anne Richards. Connors’ article focuses on the interaction of male professors and their male students; he only briefly mentions feminism by stating that despite contending for feminism, it (obviously) could not direct him to be a better mentor to male students or to be a better man (p. 139). He continues by remarking that he found “an emotional connection in the ways that men’s movement writers explored gender issues” because of his perspective and experience as a man (p. 143). The GRA and Dr. Connors’ article in particular opened my eyes to masculinities studies.

Along with the influence from the GRA, the international (specifically Japanese) aspects of this capstone originated from the Intercultural Communications in Context class I took from Dr. Margaret Walters in my first semester as an MAPW student. In the class, we investigated and discussed interactions between differing cultures and researched a specific culture to understand its cultural values and business practices. We also watched selections from a few movies to view the communication (and, often, miscommunication) that occurs in intercultural situations.

My capstone combines the topic of masculinities derived from the GRA and the intercultural relations from Dr. Walters’ class to incorporate what I hope is an interesting discussion of the differences and similarities in masculinity in U.S. and Japanese cultures.

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

“Acquiring masculinity and personal identification, however, is a process and an achievement that takes place over a long period of time.”

(Puls, 1998, p. 56)

While working as a graduate research assistant at Kennesaw State University, I read and researched many articles on gender and caring. Throughout my research, I noticed that while many articles critiqued concepts of masculinity, few articles talked about men or masculinity in a positive way (that is, many articles had suggestions for change, but few mentioned any redeeming qualities in masculinity in general). Over the last forty years, men’s groups and the area of men’s studies have diligently worked to redefine the concepts of masculinity and remake men (Boon, 2005). Groups have sponsored workshops and seminars, geared specifically toward men, to teach men how to “balance psychological functions such as feeling, thinking, and intuition within the context of being a man” (Puls, 1998, p. 50). Modern research, however, has indicated that the social construction of masculinity is rife with uncertainty, contradictions, and difficulties (Connell, 2000). Studies have shown that while gender identity is largely constructed within the first three years of life (Puls, 1998, p. 50), boys continue to struggle to construct masculinity, which is usually portrayed as “rather fragile, provisional, something to be won and then defended, something under constant threat of loss” (White, 1997, p. 16).

Society’s roles for both men and women are impossible to fulfill: women are expected to maintain a Barbie Doll figure while working full-time and being a loving, competent mother and vibrant sexual partner. Similarly, men are expected to have a

wrestler's physique while maintaining the role of breadwinner, being good fathers to their children, and superb lovers to their wives. Men and women are increasingly reproached if they lack in any of these areas (Carrigan, Connell, and Lee, 2002, p. 104). Conflicts tend to arise when people attempt to fulfill all the roles set before them by society (Carrigan et al., 2002, p. 106), and many men suffer as they attempt to redefine themselves and their senses of masculinity with society's requirements (White, 1997, p. 18). Some researchers speculate that this gap between society's determination of ideal masculine roles and a man's personal expression of masculinity "produces an identity crisis that men have tried to resolve through consumption," including material possessions (cars, motorcycles, TVs, gaming systems, etc.) and media (movies, video games, etc.) (Holt and Thompson, 2004, p. 426).

An Intersection of Crosscultural Studies, Gender, and Film

The ongoing discussion of gender studies is actually very similar to discussions of crosscultural studies; in fact, it could be argued that men and women have separate cultures, and the interactions between men and women are a type of intercultural relations (Boylan, 2001). Crosscultural relations require a certain amount of accommodation from both (or all) parties involved in order to communicate effectively and successfully understand the other side(s). According to linguist Patrick Boylan (2001), accommodation is described as "adjusting one's expressive habits in order to facilitate communicating with other people, specifically...with people of a different culture." But Boylan (2001) cautions against accommodating another culture too formally, because while formal accommodation is usually interpreted as "a token of good will but which

may, in certain cases, seem patronizing to one's interlocutors. For no one likes to feel simply 'tolerated.'" Ideally, the communicating parties will develop an appreciation for the cultural motivations and conventions behind the other party's communication style in order to communicate more fully (McDaniel, 2006, p. 266). These principles of crosscultural communication can be applied to communication between genders as well as communication between differing cultures.

This paradigm of accommodation is found within media as well; specifically, the media of film since this paper is primarily interested in the portrayal of masculinity in U.S. and Japanese films. This paper will discuss "The Last Samurai," which displays the intercultural relations between a Japanese samurai and an U.S. soldier, as well as a comparison of "Shall We Dansu?" and "Shall We Dance?" to contrast the portrayals of masculinity in the Japanese and U.S. releases of the same film. In all three films, a type of accommodation is implemented in order for the characters to interact and communicate with each other. For instance, in "The Last Samurai," the samurai chief, Katsumoto, accommodates the American soldier, Captain Algren, by seeking out his conversation and sincerely attempting to understand Algren's culture and motivations. Once Algren understands Katsumoto's accommodation, Algren reciprocates the accommodation by participating in the conversations and learning (and coming to prefer) the samurai culture.

In addition, in "Shall We Dance?" and "Shall We Dansu?" the most obvious representations of accommodation are portrayed through the respective main characters of Shohei Sugiyama and John Clark as they learn to accept and like the culture of

ballroom dancing, specifically through the acceptance of their unusual colleagues of Aoki and Link.

Media as Environment

While media (including movies, television, video games, books, magazines, etc.) are a result of a culture, they can also have an effect on culture. Movies in theaters are still thriving, according to box office sales, but especially in this economic downturn, many people choose to gather in front of the television at home to watch movies and television programs. In situations such as this, the television becomes “a nucleus around which ideas, values, and shared experiences are constructed (a center of meaning)” (Adams, 1992, p. 118). The television is a prominent aspect of U.S. culture, with the average U.S. family consuming approximately six hours of media through the television per day (Adams, 1992, p. 118). Since most countries worldwide have at least limited exposure to television, many cultures throughout the world have access to movies and television programs from diverse cultures in diverse languages, allowing knowledge to be globally available on a scale previously not encountered (a similar argument could be made for the Internet) (Adams, 1992, p. 129). If media can be considered as a type of environment, then physical location is rendered less important in the construction of culture, social life, and “meaningful human experiences” (Adams, 1992, p. 122).

In light of this idea of media as environment and its potential effects on culture, media can also have an effect on the development of identity and boys’ budding masculinity. Although some studies are inconclusive regarding the actual effects on or correlation to media and the development of masculinities, several researchers have

found that media (especially violent media, such as violent movies and video games) can have a negative effect on identity construction and even reinforce some aspects of hegemonic masculinity (Kivel and Johnson, 2009, p. 113). Because of boys' active consumption of media (such as movies, the Internet, video games, music, etc.), some researchers speculate that media may be one of the most influential factors in boys' lives, especially in their adolescent years (Kivel and Johnson, 2009, p. 112). When personal role models are limited or lacking, media can provide a source of role models (providing a basis for morals and behavior) for some adolescent boys, which can influence boys' behavior, social construction, and gender identity (Kivel and Johnson, 2009, p. 123). Through collective memory work on a sample group of men, Kivel and Johnson (2009) concluded that in general, media in the United States tends to convey the following ideas about masculinity (p. 128):

1. Movies encourage and continue the idea (and ideals) of heroism.
2. Heroes can use violence when necessary.
3. Boys are taught to be resourceful and knowledgeable.
4. Fighting well is important to the ideal of men.
5. Dealing with grief and overcoming adversity is necessary to be a mature man.

Kivel and Johnson's (2009) study provides an interesting look at the ways in which the dominant (hegemonic) masculinity in U.S. society is reinforced through media. Neither the researchers nor the author of this paper endorse these traits as "ideal" masculine traits to which men should necessarily aspire.

In this paper, I will be looking at and discussing the differences and similarities between Japanese and U.S. masculinities (and their underlying values). In the review that follows, I will contrast the findings detailed in the books and articles I have read on U.S. and Japanese masculinities, based on their conclusions, as well as discuss the portrayal of masculinities in the films “The Last Samurai,” “Shall We Dansu?” and “Shall We Dance?” The paper begins with a discussion of masculinity in general, including a brief historical context for U.S. and Japanese masculinity, followed by an overview of masculinities studies in the United States and Japan, finishing with an exploration of the similarities and differences of masculinities in the United States and Japan as portrayed through the movies “The Last Samurai,” “Shall We Dansu?” and “Shall We Dance?”

WHAT IS MASCULINITY?

“We cannot understand manhood without understanding American history. But I believe we also cannot fully understand American history without understanding masculinity.”

(Kimmel, 2006, p. 2)

A Very Short History of Masculinity in General

The social differentiation between male and female (typified through the use of “masculinity” and “femininity”) is a relational concept: masculinity exists and has meaning only as it contrasts with femininity, and vice versa (Connell, 1995, pg. 43). Western culture, especially, prides itself on the successful integration of feminism into modern society—though some still question how successfully integrated feminism truly is while others ponder whether or not cultural power in society has been reversed (such as Robert Bly of the mythopoetic movement).

Many cultures embrace a tradition of rites of passage symbolizing an ascension from boyhood into manhood (Puls, 1998, p. 51). According to Walter Ong (as cited in Connors, 1996), the development of masculinity was an agonistic process, a process “concerned with contest” (p. 139). The rites of passage into manhood encompassed some form of confrontation or struggle, such as the aboriginal walkabout and the Plains Indians’ sun dances. America, however, has few rites of passage (Puls, 1998, p. 51). According to Puls (1998), “a formal ritual or rite of passage may provide a psychological reference point or critical moment for a man to establish a new plateau of understanding his masculinity and self identification as a male” (p. 51). Since U.S. culture has generally lacked any such rite of passage for men, one way in which masculinity was constructed

was in an academic setting (not so much in current society, but to a degree before academia became co-educational), among peers and professors, which has traditionally been the realm of men from ancient Greece to the medieval period through the mid-nineteenth century. However, a form of these rites of passage seeped into the educational sphere, primarily in the form of debates and oral defense. The current practice of oral defense at the conclusion of a doctoral program mimics the original practice of debate and defense, in which students defended their theses against the verbal attacks of their professors (and, of course, both the students and the professors during those times were male) (Connors, 1996, p. 140).

In the mid-nineteenth century, however, this practice changed for one unique reason: as schools and universities were becoming co-educational, the practice of rhetorical attack and defense seemed absurd in the presence of women and contemptible to enforce upon women. This agonistic practice that had worked well in all-male schools declined in proportion to the admittance of females to higher education (Ong, as cited in Connors, 1996, p. 141).

While the effect of co-educational schools on men was unintentional, it was certainly profound. The desire for an agonistic outlet did not disappear in men, and was instead channeled to other avenues, such as fraternities, secret societies, male organizations, etc. But over the years, many of these societies and organizations decreased in membership or died out altogether. While many young men still harbor a desire to prove themselves worthy of being called a man, there are few, if any, outlets available to them to fulfill this desire (Connors, 1996, p. 144). Because of this lack, young men are increasingly left to construct their masculinity by themselves or in peer

groups (which can have mindless if not dangerous consequences, and can be confusing for the young men themselves). Connors (1996) relates an experience in the classroom during a course discussing male gender construction. As an exercise, he divided the students in the room, females on one side and males on the other. Gesturing to the female side, he asked whether they felt comfortable “thinking of themselves and calling themselves women” (p. 147). A little confused, all sixteen female students raised their hands in agreement that yes, they were, indeed, women. Connors gestured to the male side of the room and asked whether the males were comfortable “thinking of themselves and calling themselves men” (p. 147). The male students hesitated, and after several long moments, only three of the fourteen male students raised their hands (Connors, 1996, p. 147). Roy Raphael, in his book *The Men from the Boys: Rites of Passage in Male America*, attributes similar behavior in young men to an underlying urge to “prove themselves as men” before feeling comfortable with using the title of “man” (as cited in Connors, 1996, p. 144). Young men still want to look to older men as mentors and examples on their journey to manhood, but except for sports or movie stars, there is a deficiency in honorable mentors (Connors, 1996, p. 146). Connors (1996) posits that writing teachers, especially male writing teachers, are in a unique position to help or hinder male students’ search for self and identity (manhood) within the classroom. According to Connors (1996), “Male intellectuals have been listening to the feminist critique of patriarchy for a long time now, and the result is that we distrust ourselves and our own worth as men; we distrust our own abilities to mentor younger men” (p. 144).

Conceptions of Masculinity

So, what is masculinity? Most likely, each person has his or her own view of what masculinity is or should be—and, most likely, these views were developed based on social interaction and behaviors learned to be acceptable. For the purposes of this paper, I refer to men in the biological sense of being male while masculinity refers to the concepts, ideas, and ideals implemented by men to ascend from boyhood into manhood. In many cultures, masculinity is linked to the levels of testosterone found in a person: higher levels of testosterone tend to encourage behaviors that are traditionally attributed to men (Boon, 2005). Boon (2005) asserts that since both males and females contain some level of testosterone, both males and females contain some masculine traits: “People with high levels of testosterone are more aggressive and more concerned with sex and power than people with low levels of testosterone. How these manifest is socially culturally and socially influenced, but the force behind these drives is not culturally or socially constructed” (Boon, 2005). While Boon’s ideas are not commonly accepted, many sociological researchers have, in fact, discovered that socially constructed ideas of “maleness” and “femaleness” tend to repress natural human behavior (Cerulo, 1997, p. 388). In the field of sociology, researchers have examined the biological differences between men and women, specifically the body and reproductive system, to infer the “social rituals, symbols, and practices that transform such differences into social facts” (Cerulo, 1997, p. 388). More recently, postmodern theorists have approached the topic differently, taking into consideration the intricate and often contradictory aspects of human nature (Cerulo, 1997, p. 392).

Similarly, the field of anthropology has taken a different approach to the study of men in recent years, focusing on the idea of men as “engendered and engendering subjects” (Gutmann, 1997, p. 385). According to anthropologist Matthew Gutmann (1997), anthropology employs four distinct concepts of masculinity within the field of study, which can be used individually or concurrently to describe the masculinity of any group of people, described as follows (p. 386):

1. Masculinity involves anything that men think or do.
2. Masculinity includes anything men think or do to be men.
3. Masculinity is determined based on the idea that some men are more “manly” than others.
4. Masculinity is qualified by the interaction between males and females, and is ascribed as anything that women are not.

In their studies, anthropologists have noted that many cultures regard men as being “artificially made,” compared to the idea that women are naturally born (Gutmann, 1997, p. 397). Gutmann (1997) states, “An important contribution of anthropological studies of masculinity has been to explore the subjective perceptions of men being men, including the relation of being men to claiming, seeking, and exercising various forms of power over other men and over women...One difficult task for the study of masculinity has been to document the variety of forms and guises of engendered power relations (a la Foucault) without losing sight of fundamental inequalities between men and women” (p. 398).

An epistemological view of masculinities, however, reveals contradictory ideas and theories. One view holds that the study of masculinity allows researchers to

understand the “web of social-cultural factors” that shapes a man’s conception of himself (Roussell and Downs, 2007, p. 181), while another view posits that masculinity is inconsistent because the concept of gender is inconsistent and, therefore, both concepts should be abandoned (Roussell and Downs, 2007, p. 180).

So, which view is the “correct” view of masculinity? Unfortunately, like many things, there is no right or wrong perspective of masculinity. The differing views contribute to and provide additional insight into the conversation of masculinity. Personally, I prefer R.W. Connell’s (1995) description that masculinity is “a place in gender relations, the practices through which men and women engage that place in gender, and the effects of these practices in bodily experience, personality, and culture” (p. 71).

Why U.S. and Japanese Masculinity?

While Japanese and U.S. cultures have some overlap (such as the former policies of isolationism as well as an affinity for modern technology), Japan and the United States traditionally have very little in common—even the basic value systems have antipodal foundations. According to Hayashi and Kuroda (1997), the most significant differences between U.S. and Japanese cultures are “the definition of self and the definition of the world” (p. 148). U.S. culture values directness and personal success while the Japanese culture values indirectness and harmony, portrayed through the concepts of *wa* (harmony) and *giri-ninjo* (the conflict between human emotions and social obligation) (Hayashi and Kuroda, 1997, p. 48).

Despite their different foundations, however, both the United States and Japan have shown evidence reinforcing a “long-term trend of growing support for change, that is, a movement away from traditional gender roles, especially among members of the younger generation” (Connell, 2005, 1810). Because of their overwhelming dissimilarities and limited similarities, as well as the growing trend toward changing gender roles, I wanted to compare the two cultures in light of their view of masculinities.

Historical Context of U.S. and Japanese Masculinity

In the same way that an individual’s identity can be fused with a group’s identity, the events in a nation’s history can affect a culture’s view and construction of its social identity (Gergen, 1995). Under this premise, this section provides an overview of select historical events in both the United States and Japan, and the intersection of events between both countries, that I believe may have affected the construction and ideals of masculinity in both cultures.

America

Before the United States ever became a nation, Americans (then British subjects) had asserted their independence. As every schoolchild knows, the Pilgrims emigrated to the New World in 1620 to escape the religious persecution in England. Before the New World, however, these settlers first traveled to the Netherlands; concerned with losing their cultural identity in the Netherlands, they traveled across the ocean to found a new colony based on their religious beliefs. In the first year, approximately half of these settlers died due to winter and sickness. But the survivors persevered.

One hundred fifty-five years later, in 1775, these colonists again asserted their independence, after being deemed “traitors” by their king and country, by attempting to break free from British rule, which they made official by signing the Declaration of Independence in 1776. Despite bleak odds, ill-trained soldiers, and resistance from some of their own settlers, General George Washington led the American troops (technically still British subjects, largely consisting of militia) against the British soldiers, and in 1783, the Treaty of Paris recognized America’s independence from Britain (World Encyclopedia).

Less than one hundred years later, the United States was again embroiled in another war, pitting neighbor against neighbor as the Civil War commenced after several southern states seceded from the Union. The war concluded in 1865.

Less than 50 years later, the United States found itself in the midst of World War I (1914-1918), which was followed by the stock market crash of 1929, the Great Depression of the 1930s, and World War II (1941–1945). After World War II, a sense of prosperity eked into middle class life, and for a time, a sense of much-needed stability (World Encyclopedia).

According to Kimmel (2006), a man’s masculinity contributes to his exploits in the fields of military, science, literature, etc. (p. 2). From the very beginning, Americans have been engaged in conflict, with relatively few periods of peace in between. Historically, the United States was protected largely by its men during these conflicts, and lauded men with character traits such as independence (in order to break free from British tyranny), assertiveness, self-confidence, honor, courage, bravery, and perseverance, especially since many of these traits were necessary in a soldier.

In light of Ong's view of agonism as a rite of passage into masculinity, I think the many wars in which the United States have been engaged have encouraged and further reinforced a traditional, patriarchal view of masculinity. It should be noted, however, that soldiers need and often excel at many qualities that are often considered "feminine," such as an ability to collaborate, communicate, and display love and self-sacrifice.

Japan

In contrast to many countries in the world, Japan prides itself engaging in fewer wars than most nations. Most changes in the Japanese government occurred politically with little or no bloodshed among the changing politicians (Hayashi and Kuroda, 1997, p. 135). In the view of Hayashi and Kuroda (1997), the Prince Regent Shotoku (574-622 A.D.) is the father of Japanese culture, since he was mainly responsible for developing a centralized political administration, creating a Confucian-based constitution, and instituting a merit-based bureaucracy as well as adopting the Chinese calendar and inviting Chinese artisans and craftsmen to Japan (p. 134). After Prince Regent Shotoku's death, some efforts at centralization continued for awhile before Japan again was ruled by the local *daimyo* (regional family) and shogunates. An emperor still ruled, and although he had little actual political power, the Japanese continued to serve him faithfully because they believed him to be a god (World Encyclopedia).

For nearly 800 years, which is considered to be the feudal era of Japan, the *daimyo* and the shogunates continued to rule. During this time, the *samurai* (a class of military nobility) gained prestige in Japan. The *samurai* considered it an honor and a privilege to faithfully serve a local lord or shogunate; in some instances, however, a

samurai would be rendered masterless (usually through the death of the lord, but occasionally through a samurai's offense). Traditionally, the masterless *samurai* (*ronin*) were supposed to commit *seppuku* (ritual suicide); those who refused to honor this tradition were forced to wander Japan in disgrace ("Ronin," n.d.). In 1586, the power of the *samurai* reached its zenith when an edict was passed declaring that the title of *samurai* could only be passed through heredity and the samurai were the only force allowed to bear weapons.

In 1868, a little less than three hundred years after the edict, the Meiji Restoration removed the power of the *samurai* altogether. With the goal of restoring imperial rule in Japan, Emperor Mutsuhito dismantled the institutions of the *daimyo* and the *samurai* in favor of a more Western-style constitution and policies (World Encyclopedia).

In the late 19th century, Japan began building an overseas empire, including Taiwan and Korea. During the Great War, Japan supported the Allies and became a founding member of the League of Nations; their membership was rescinded, however, after Japan invaded Manchuria in 1931. During the 1930s, Japan attempted to bring East Asia under its control and, in 1941, attacked Pearl Harbor, which prompted America's direct involvement in World War II (World Encyclopedia).

According to Hayashi and Kuroda (1997), the mental proclivity of the Japanese is toward adjusting to new situations and dealing with new challenges, partially due to the Confucian influence and a propensity for non-absolutist beliefs (p. 134). This overriding predisposition affects nearly all their actions in all facets of their lives. Society and etiquette in Japan, unlike America, is ruled by *wa* (Hayashi and Kuroda, 1997, p. 133). The Japanese value community consensus and societal context above their own thoughts,

feelings, and opinions, and will often agree with the consensus, keeping personal feelings to themselves, to achieve *wa* in any given situation (Hayashi and Kuroda, 1997, p. 17). The cultural homogeneity in Japan creates an intuitive, “interpersonal familiarity” among Japanese people, which facilitates a standard of nonverbal communication and mutual obligation (McDaniel, 2006, p. 267). Because of this mutual obligation to one another (friendships, work relationships, and family relationships are all based on this idea of mutual obligation—if all obligations are fulfilled, there is no reason to continue the relationship), they employ the concepts of *wa* and *giri-ninjo*, the “struggle between emotional attachment and rationality,” to balance “what one is socially expected to do and what one feels inside (Hayashi and Kuroda, 1997, p. 41). In general, one’s personal feeling is to be disregarded in favor of “social obligation, communitarianism” (Hayashi and Kuroda, 1997, p. 48). In addition to *wa* and *giri-ninjo*, Japanese culture also highly values performance and group status, since an individual’s performance (academically and occupationally) reflects the family’s or group’s status as a whole (Roland, 1988, p. 138).

MASCULINITY AND ITS STUDY

“We need, for the first time, to confront gender issues wholly.”

(Connors, 1996, p. 156)

The Development of Masculinities Studies

Masculinities studies is a little known area of gender studies. While working on this project, I’ve had several people question me about the topic of masculinities studies. “What is it? Is it new? How did it come about? Scholars actually study this? Why?” While I was questioned by predominantly laypeople and students, I was struck by the fact that, like me, they had never heard the phrase “masculinities” or “masculinities studies,” not in high school, not in college classes—not until I inadvertently brought it to their attentions.

Despite its apparent underground status in society, masculinities studies have been in existence since the 1970s, in response to the second wave of U.S. feminism in the 1960s. In 1975, male University of Tennessee students enrolled in a women’s studies class held the First National Conference on Men and Masculinity in Knoxville. Thereafter, the Men and Masculinity conference was held annually at various colleges throughout the country. Over the years, the Men and Masculinity ideology developed into a pro-feminist philosophy that also stressed restricting (and eventually eliminating) patriarchal male sex roles and encouraging the development of men’s personal and emotional lives. One of the organizations formed around this time was the National Organization of Changing Men, currently named the National Organization for Men Against Sexism (NOMAS), which embodies a “pro-feminist, gay-affirmative, anti-racist

philosophy” for the enhancement of men (NOMAS, 2008). Other similar groups, including the U.S. Men’s Studies Association (<http://mensstudies.org>) and The Mankind Project of Chicago (<http://www.mkpchicago.org>), were also developed in recent years to encourage the development and education of masculinities in America.

Although these men’s associations consider themselves pro-feminist and pro-humanity, the participants in the men’s studies associations become involved through personal motivation and, in some instances, as a direct result of the women’s movement (Doyle and Femiano, 1999). Masculinities and men’s studies should not be considered a threat to women’s studies, however, because both distinctions work together to educate people about gender studies and issues in gender studies (Doyle and Femiano, 1999).

U.S. Masculinities

As masculinities studies developed, so too did the concept of multiple masculinities, i.e., the idea that men respond to and embrace masculinity in a variety of ways. In addition, the expression of masculinity can “change according to time, the event, and the perspectives” of a group or community (Imms, 2000, p. 156). Multiple masculinities are commonly segregated into the following categories: hegemonic masculinity, complicit masculinity, and subordinated/marginalized masculinity.

Hegemonic Masculinity

Hegemonic masculinity seems to be the standard for defining and describing the other types of masculinities; without the standard of hegemonic masculinity, the other types of masculinities would not exist. The term “hegemonic masculinity” is rooted in

Gramsci's sociological idea of cultural hegemony, in which one group (or social class or, in this case, gender) dominates the other groups (or social classes or gender) in society; however, the dominated groups allow themselves to be dominated through compliance or inaction. Hegemonic masculinity as a concept was introduced in the 1980s and usually refers to the domination of heterosexual white males over females and other groups of males (such as black males and homosexual males). As Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) point out, Gramsci's idea of hegemony focuses more on "the mobilization and demobilization of whole classes" rather than the social construction of male and female roles (p. 831). By the 1980s, when the term was popularized, hegemonic masculinity expanded to include the conventional behaviors that allowed the continued dominance of men over women (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005, p. 832), which constitute the concept of patriarchy. Connell (2000) notes, however, that hegemonic masculinity does not constitute complete dominance, but reflects a position of cultural authority.

Complicit Masculinity

Most men do not consider themselves to be actively dominating any other group. According to Connell (1995), however, men who benefit from the advantages of hegemonic masculinity, even if they are not directly contributing to hegemonic masculinity or patriarchal society, are in agreement with the basic tenets of hegemonic masculinity and are therefore complicit.

Subordinated/Marginalized Masculinity

As mentioned previously, the concept of hegemonic masculinity connotes the domination of other groups, social classes, and gender. Subordinated masculinity refers to the men who are dominated by the principles of hegemonic masculinity, most commonly homosexual males but it can also refer to minority group males.

Example: *Dude, You're a Fag*

During the research for her ethnographic book, *Dude, You're a Fag*, Pascoe (2007) noticed that high school boys acted differently by themselves than in group situations: when a group of boys were together, each boy felt that he had to subscribe to a certain type of masculinity (talking about sex, insulting other boys as being gay, etc.). But individually, the boys were more comfortable expressing their feelings and did not engage in gender-dominant conversations. In a sense, their masculinity (or the accepted masculinity for the boys at this high school) was socially constructed in a group atmosphere.

While at the school, Pascoe heard a lot about Ricky, the most well-known gay student on campus. It took her nearly a year to interview him, because he had heard of Pascoe's research and was wary of being interviewed. When Ricky finally spoke with Pascoe, Ricky related his experiences in previous high schools compared to his current high school, which was far worse and more violent than the others since he was insulted, threatened, and beaten up by other high school boys. Adults, including teachers and parents/adult chaperones, witnessed the violence against Ricky, but did nothing. In some

instances, the teachers encouraged Ricky's mistreatment. When Ricky requested help from teachers and school authorities, he was largely ignored.

In this case, the high school boys acting violently against Ricky are following the principles of hegemonic masculinity, the parents and teachers allowing the violence to occur are engaging in complicit masculinity, and Ricky is forced into compliance through subordinated masculinity.

Japanese Masculinities

I certainly cannot claim to be an expert on Japanese masculinities; therefore, I would like to present a variety of views of Japanese masculinities as described by both American and Japanese scholars as a foundation for discussion and comparison.

Although masculinities in Japan are not as widely studied as in America, a gender movement has begun within the past twenty years (Roberson and Suzuki, 2003, p. 2). There is, however, much discussion regarding a man's role (and changing role) in Japanese society. In general, Japanese masculinities are typified by the salaryman in Japan, the middleclass man who "toils long hours for Mitsubishi or Sony or some other large corporation, goes out drinking with his fellow workers or clients after work and plays golf with them on weekends, and rarely spends much time at home" (Roberson and Suzuki, 2003, p. 1). Traditionally, Japanese men have been acculturated to be strong and dominant (Sugihara and Katsurada, 1999, p. 636). Although gender roles in Japan are shifting, men are still expected to be the strong head of the household, described as *daikokubashira*, which literally translated means "the large black pillar of traditional Japanese houses" (Roberson and Suzuki, 2003, p. 8). According to Roberson and Suzuki

(2003), the “ideologically dominant masculine ‘inclinations’ imply that unless a man is successful in terms of power, authority, and possession...he cannot be considered to be a ‘real man’” (p. 8). While much of the traditionally Japanese male-dominant power structure was vilified and dissolved during the U.S. occupation of Japan after World War II, male patriarchy in Japan was not eradicated (Roland, 1988, p. 144). According to Sumiko Iwao, a female Japanese author who wrote about the plight of women in Japan, the formal superiority of men in modern Japanese society is matched by women’s informal dominance at home (as mothers and wives) and in the workplace (since the businessmen are dependent on women to complete certain tasks, which many women use to their advantage) (as cited in Ogasawara, 1998, p. 5).

Japan has experienced some pressure to address gender issues, specifically by Western culture (Sugihara and Katsurada, 1999, p. 637; Connell, 2005, p. 1804; Ogasawara, 1998, p. 3). The majority of literature discussing gender roles in Japanese society originate from studies performed in the United States (Sugihara and Katsurada, 1999, p. 637). According to Connell (2005), these Western influences have “destabilized gender arrangements, and models of masculinity, in Japan” (p. 1804). To encourage gender awareness in the Japanese people (specifically men), a Men’s Center was established in Osaka, Japan, in 1995. The Men’s Center publishes a bimonthly newsletter, titled “Men’s Network,” and provides workshops, lectures, and seminars to educate men regarding “gender problems” (Roberson and Suzuki, 2003, p. 178). While few (if any) studies have been conducted to determine the effectiveness, thus far, of the Men’s Center, a study conducted by Sugihara and Katsurada (1999) examined 265 native Japanese college students, both male and female. The students were administered a Japanese

version of the Bem Sex Role Inventory, which was translated into Japanese by native Japanese speakers, double-checked by other native speakers, and re-translated back into English to ensure the accuracy of the translation. All of the test subjects were ethnic Japanese students, born and raised in Japan (Sugihara and Katsurada, 1999, p. 638-639). The researchers expected female students to score higher on feminine traits and the male students to score higher on masculine traits; however, the study concluded that both male and female students scored higher on feminine traits than masculine traits (Sugihara and Katsurada, 1999, p. 640), which is understandable since Japanese culture advocates a communal society living in harmony with each other (which Westerners would consider to be a more “feminine” trait).

While this study provides another view of masculine roles in Japanese society, it may also point to other cultural changes. Since Japanese youth are exposed to a variety of perspectives through media, student groups, and intellectual movements, they are less likely to follow the strict Japanese social etiquette in preference of a more autonomous, self-directed lifestyle, which is frequently encouraged by Japanese parents (Roland, 1988, p. 136). Because of Western influence, Japanese youth are more inclined to follow the ideals of individualization, which can (and has) caused a generation gap in Japanese society (Roland, 1988, p. 136).

JAPANESE AND U.S. MASCULINITIES IN CINEMA

“Media are really environments, with all the effects geographers [and] biologists associate with environments. We live inside our media.”

(As quoted in Adams, 1992, p. 120)

It warrants repeating that Kivel and Johnson’s (2009) study, as previously discussed, determined that media tends to convey the following ideas about masculinity (p. 128):

1. Movies encourage and continue the idea (and ideals) of heroism.
2. Heroes can use violence when necessary.
3. Boys are taught to be resourceful and knowledgeable.
4. Fighting well is important to the ideal of men.

These themes, among others, are portrayed in “The Last Samurai,” which is discussed in detail in the following section. In addition, the divergent cultural values and representations of the United States and Japan will be discussed through the comparison of both the U.S. and Japanese releases of the film “Shall We Dance?”

*The Last Samurai*⁵

Synopsis

“The Last Samurai” tells the story of Captain Nathan Algren’s experiences in Japan. Set in 1867 (during the Meiji Restoration in Japan), the movie opens with Algren

⁵ It should be noted that the portrayal of masculinities, specifically Japanese masculinities, in this film is limited due to Hollywood’s influence on the construction and production of the movie.

Table 1: Pertinent Characters in “The Last Samurai”

Character Name	Description
Captain Algren	American soldier hired to train Japanese soldiers; captured by the samurai and grew to prefer the samurai lifestyle to his own Western culture
Katsumoto	The samurai leader
Mr. Omura	An advisor to the Japanese emperor who advocated for the Westernization of Japan; he hired Capt. Algren to train the Japanese soldiers
Colonel Bagley	Capt. Algren’s superior officer, who is despised by Capt. Algren
Taka	The wife of the samurai killed by Capt. Algren in battle; Capt. Algren is housed by Taka at Katsumoto’s orders

relating his experiences in battles against Indians to promote the sale of Smith and Wesson guns. A friend and fellow soldier sees him and invites him to a meeting with several Japanese diplomats, headed by Mr. Omura, who offer Capt. Algren a position teaching new Japanese soldiers how to use modern guns (for the purpose of quelling a samurai rebellion against newly instituted Western policies). After negotiating a mutually acceptable fee, Capt. Algren agrees.

Using an interpreter, Capt. Algren begins to train the inexperienced Japanese soldiers. After only a few weeks of training, Capt. Algren is ordered to march the soldiers against the samurai. Despite Algren’s protests that the army isn’t ready yet, Algren and the Japanese soldiers are sent to battle. Nervous and frightened, the soldiers disregard Algren’s military orders and many are killed by the samurai. Algren himself fights valiantly, at the end using only a wooden pole to combat the encroaching samurai. After being knocked down by one samurai, Algren perseveres and kills the samurai while lying flat on his back. Other samurai surround him to finish him off, but they are ordered to keep him alive by Katsumoto, the leading samurai warrior. Amid protests that the

American is dishonored and must commit *seppuku* (ritual suicide), Katsumoto replies that *seppuku* is “not their custom,” and instead retains Algren as their captive (Cruise and Zwick, 2003).

As winter approaches, the samurai head toward Katsumoto’s son’s village in the mountains, bringing Algren with them. Algren is housed with Taka, the wife of the samurai he killed, and her two young sons. Algren is plagued by recurring nightmares of innocent Indian women and children he killed in battle (under orders), and he begs Taka for *sake* to relieve the dreams. Eventually, Taka refuses to give him any more *sake*.

Almost immediately, Algren is invited to meet with Katsumoto, who mentions that he is interested in practicing his English with Algren. Although wary of each other, Algren and Katsumoto continue their conversations frequently, allowing each a glimpse into the mind of their enemy. Over time, they develop a mutual respect and friendship. Throughout the winter with the village, Algren admires the discipline and hard work of the samurai as he learns the customs and culture of the Japanese. He learns to remove his shoes before entering houses, how to eat with chopsticks, and eventually how to speak Japanese and use a sword. His friendship with the samurai is proven when ninjas, commissioned by Mr. Omura, sneak up on the village to assassinate Katsumoto. Algren alerts the villagers and fights side-by-side with Katsumoto to protect Katsumoto as well as Taka and her sons.

When spring arrives, Algren is delivered to Tokyo by Katsumoto and a handful of samurai. Algren is reluctant to leave the village and even more reluctant to resume his duties with the Japanese soldiers, knowing full well that the tactics he teaches will be used against people he now considers his friends. When Algren hears that Katsumoto has

been imprisoned, he organizes Katsumoto's escape (to prevent Katsumoto from committing *seppuku* to preserve his honor) and rides back to the village with the samurai to prepare for battle.

Algren is fully aware that the samurai have limited chances in a battle against the now-trained Japanese soldiers, so he and Katsumoto devise a plan (loosely based on the battle of Thermopylae) to use the terrain to their advantage, for the purpose of killing as many soldiers as they can before succumbing to their own imminent deaths. While the samurai are successful in the implementation of their plan, they are aware that another battle will destroy them. Instead of waiting for the soldiers to gather more resources, they attack the soldiers and are almost immediately cut down by the brand-new Howitzer machine guns. Badly injured by the guns, Katsumoto prepares for *seppuku*. When Algren protests, Katsumoto replies, "You have your honor. Let me die with mine" (Cruise and Zwick, 2003). Algren assists Katsumoto so it will be a quick death. After watching Katsumoto commit *seppuku*, the soldiers cease firing and, removing their hats, kneel to the ground to honor the last samurai.

After the battle, Algren personally delivers Katsumoto's sword to the emperor, believing that would have been Katsumoto's wish; in everything he did, Katsumoto desired only to serve his emperor and country. Algren's entry interrupted the proceedings of a contract between Japan and the U.S. After listening to Algren's story, the emperor (who has been noticeably indecisive throughout the movie) changes his mind and refuses to sign the contract with the U.S., to the American ambassador's outrage. The movie concludes with the narrator's admission that no one knows what happened to Algren after

that, but the viewer can see Algren's journey back to the mountain village to spend the rest of his days with Taka and her sons.

Analysis

In addition to displaying hegemonic masculinity through the initial characterization of Captain Algren as well as his superior officer (Lieutenant Colonel Bagley), "The Last Samurai" also portrays two types of Japanese men: the traditional Japanese man (Katsumoto and the samurai) and the Westernized Japanese man (Mr. Omura and, to some degree, the emperor). I chose "The Last Samurai" for its side-by-side portrayal of strong masculine characters in both Japanese and U.S. cultures as well as its correlation to Kivel and Johnson's (2009) list of masculinities derived from the collective memory work of their sample of men.

Portrayal of Masculinity in "The Last Samurai"

At the beginning of the movie, Capt. Algren personifies all the negative traits usually associated with hegemonic masculinity: drunkenness, insolence, and arrogance, among others. Combined with his status as a soldier and his murderous exploits in battles against the Indians, few would consider him a decent man, but none could consider him an honorable man. Contrasted with his superior officer, Lt. Col. Bagley, who appears respectful and clean, Algren's unwashed and unshaven appearance makes him seem even more undesirable. If not for his reputation as an excellent soldier, it is unlikely the Japanese politicians would tolerate his rude behavior, typified through his drunken question of "How many other genu-ine heroes have you got lined up?" implying that his

record as a soldier excuses his behavior as a man (Cruise and Zwick, 2003). The viewer learns later, however, that not everything is as it seems. While Capt. Algren carries significant guilt and regret for the murdered Indian women and children, Lt. Col. Bagley carried out the order gladly and felt no guilt at all. Similarly, in the current battle (and preparations for battle) against the samurai, Lt. Col. Bagley will do his duty (by killing the samurai and, previously, the Indians) in the name of progress.

While Lt. Col. Bagley is apathetic toward the culture he is destroying, the Westernized Japanese men (led by Mr. Omura) are well aware of the culture and the people being destroyed with the help of the U.S. soldiers (who are commissioned, after all, by these very Japanese men). While the pursuit of progress and technology is not a bad thing itself, these Westernized Japanese are willing to destroy their own cultural history, replacing it with a culture from across the ocean, for the sake of power and progress.

Although the samurai are aware that their fight against Westernization is useless and their way of life is destined to die, they continue to fight for the sake of their honor and their culture. As he observes the samurai ways, Algren is repeatedly impressed at their discipline and devotion, noting in his journal that “from the moment they wake, they devote themselves to the perfection of whatever they do. I have never seen such discipline...What does it mean to be samurai, to devote yourself utterly to a set of moral principles?” (Cruise and Zwick, 2003). Although the samurai are labeled “barbarians” by both the Americans and the Westernized Japanese in the movie, Algren recognizes that the samurai are more civilized and honorable than any other group of men he has known before. When Katsumoto, the chief of the samurai, accedes, “The way of the samurai is

not necessary anymore,” Algren counters, “Necessary? What could be more necessary?” because Algren has experienced firsthand the respect bestowed upon him by the samurai when he was little more than an enemy captive in their village (Cruise and Zwick, 2003). The samurai way of life introduces a peace into Algren’s life that he had never before experienced.

Kivel and Johnson’s List of Media-Related Masculinities

Throughout “The Last Samurai,” the viewer can find examples of masculinity as described in Kivel and Johnson’s (2009) list. First: *movies encourage and continue the idea (and ideals) of heroism*. “The Last Samurai” certainly encourages an ideal of honor (in living and dying well), if not an ideal of heroism. The samurai accept their fate in the traditional Japanese way; they can only fight against it for so long before they either die or submit. But rather than submit to a set of cultural expectations contrary to their value system, they preferred to die with their sense of honor intact. As the dying Katsumoto expresses to Algren, “You have your honor. Let me die with mine” (Cruise and Zwick, 2003). Related to the first principle is the second: *heroes can use violence when necessary*. Especially on the battlefield, it is either kill or be killed. But as Katsumoto exemplifies when he spares Algren’s life, violence is not always necessary. Being able to differentiate between when violence is or is not necessary is a sign of wisdom and perhaps mercy, at least in the movies.

Third: *boys are taught to be resourceful and knowledgeable*. This tenet is implied more than directly expressed in “The Last Samurai.” The viewer learns that Katsumoto had once been one of the emperor’s instructors when the emperor was a child, and the

emperor valued Katsumoto's opinion and advice, even if his opinion was contrary to the emperor's current policies. Since his former pupil is now an adult and a god-like emperor, Katsumoto refrained from giving the emperor direct advice by implying that the emperor should call on his past lessons (and perhaps the wisdom of his ancestors) to derive the knowledge and direction he seeks. Essentially, Katsumoto insinuates that the emperor already has all the information he needs, and it is up to the emperor to recall and apply the relevant lessons.

Fourth: *fighting well is important to the ideal of men*. As far as "The Last Samurai" is concerned, this tenet is very true. The samurai teach their boys to fight well and die honorably from a very young age, as evidenced in an exchange between Algren and Taka's older son (who is approximately ten years old). The boy remarks, "My father taught me it is glorious to die in battle," before admitting his own fear (Cruise and Zwick, 2003). Algren responds that despite the many battles he has fought, he is still afraid of battle himself. Algren continued to do his duty as a soldier despite his own fear of death. In the samurai culture, however, death itself is not to be feared—only a dishonorable death should be feared.

Fifth: *dealing with grief and overcoming adversity is necessary to be a mature man*. This tenet is most clearly portrayed through Algren himself. While overcome with guilt, he hid from himself and the world through alcohol. When alcohol was refused him in the samurai village, he was forced to deal with his guilt, shame, and grief through other means. Algren found peace through the discipline of the samurai lifestyle. When he fought alongside the samurai in the final battle, his fellow soldiers were shocked at Algren's uncharacteristic display. Lt. Col. Bagley warned him, "Captain Algren, we will

show you no quarter. You ride against us and you're the same as they are" (Cruise and Zwick, 2003). But Algren stood by his newfound friends, fought by their side, assisted Katsumoto with his *seppuku*, despite Algren's initial objections. Because of these experiences, he finally matured as a man and "found the peace we all seek, but few of us ever find" (Cruise and Zwick, 2003).

Discussion

"The Last Samurai" portrays three types of masculinity: Western hegemonic masculinity in the U.S. soldiers, the traditional samurai hegemonic masculinity (which became subordinate or nonexistent, depending on whether a man chose to submit to the new authority or die as a samurai), and a new Japanese hegemonic masculinity embodied in Westernizing Japanese men. While "The Last Samurai" clearly advocated the masculinity portrayed by the samurai culture, it also advocated a sense of right and wrong, honor, and respect for people who have different cultural values. Of course, the different cultural values tend to mirror U.S. values since "The Last Samurai" is, after all, a U.S.-made movie. Analyzed through the lens of Kivel and Johnson's (2009) list of common masculine ideas in movies, "The Last Samurai" is shown to have displayed examples of each of the traits, reinforcing Kivel and Johnson's (2009) conclusions regarding the media's dissemination of masculinity.

*Shall We Dansu? vs. Shall We Dance?*⁶

Synopsis

Both the American and Japanese versions of “Shall We Dance?” relate the same basic story line, with only a few minor details changed according to the culture. In these movies, a successful but dissatisfied businessman (“John Clark,” an estate lawyer, in the American version; “Shohei Sugiyama,” an accountant, in the Japanese version) sign up for dance lessons, more or less on a whim, after observing a beautiful, if not melancholy, woman gaze out from the dance school window (which can be seen from the train on which both men ride after work) on several occasions. The businessman takes a group beginning ballroom dance class, taught by the school’s owner, an older, matronly woman.

Table 2: List of Characters in “Shall We Dance?” and “Shall We Dansu?”

	“Shall We Dance?”	“Shall We Dansu?”
Main Character	John Clark	Shohei Sugiyama
Main Character’s Wife	Beverly Clark	Masako Sugiyama
Beautiful Dance Instructor	Paulina	Mai
Unusual Colleague	Link	Aoki

When the school’s owner is unable to make it to class one evening, the businessman finally has a chance to dance with the beautiful woman (“Paulina” in the American version, “Mai” in the Japanese version), who teaches the class on that evening. Afterward, the businessman waits for the beautiful woman to leave the studio to thank her for her assistance and invite her to dinner. The beautiful woman remarks that she does not prefer to socialize with students and informs him that if his interest in dance lessons

⁶ It should be noted that “Shall We Dance?” is a remake of the original Japanese film “Shall We Dansu?” and, due to this fact, some cultural values that are presented in “Shall We Dansu” seem to be inaccurately translated into “Shall We Dance?”

was merely a façade to gain her attention, he should quit the lessons. The beautiful woman walks away, leaving the businessman alone with his thoughts. The entire exchange is witnessed by a private detective hired by the businessman's wife who, although happy that her husband has been happier lately, is worried he might be having an affair. At their next meeting, the private detective shows the businessman's wife photos of the dance class and advises her not to worry, most likely her husband will give up dance in the near future anyway.

The following week, the businessman is a bit indecisive whether he'll attend class or not, but at the last minute decides to go to class anyway. He discovers that a co-worker at his firm ("Link" in the American version, "Aoki" in the Japanese version) also takes dance classes at the studio. Although his co-worker is seen as a little odd at work (and at the dance studio, too, since he wears a long wig and pretends to be a famous Latin dancer), the two men develop a friendship based on their love for dance and their desire to keep their hobby secret.

The school's owner talks both the businessman and his co-worker into signing up for the upcoming dance competition. Working with the businessman and his partner for the upcoming competition, the beautiful woman realizes she misjudged the businessman and apologizes to him. She tells him that at Blackpool (England's largest dance competition) the previous year, she and her partner did not win the competition, resulting in a break-up between her and her partner. Devastated, she returned home to teach dance and decide what to do next. After working with the businessman and his partner, the beautiful woman regained her own love for dance. The businessman also opens up to the beautiful woman and admits that her initial accusation was entirely correct, but if he

stopped coming to the dance classes, he would have proved her right. After continuing with the classes, however, he realized he truly did love to dance.

At the dance competition, the businessman and his partner execute all the practiced steps in their first routine perfectly, to the joy of the beautiful woman and the school's owner. The businessman's wife and daughter attend the competition (unbeknownst to the businessman) and, after watching his first dance, they shout encouragement to him. The businessman's partner asks if his wife and daughter are in attendance. When he answers in the negative, his partner remarks that she thought she heard his daughter, but she could be mistaken. However, the damage is done and the businessman cannot concentrate on the second dance. The businessman and his partner bump into another dancing couple and, in an attempt to catch his partner from falling, the businessman steps on his partner's skirt, ripping it from the bodice. Humiliated, his partner runs off the dance floor, while his wife and daughter leave the spectacle.

At home, the businessman admits that he was ashamed to tell his wife about his hobby. Although hurt that he kept the hobby secret, his wife encourages him to continue dancing and asks if he will teach her how to dance as well. The businessman refuses both suggestions. The businessman's daughter is upset at his refusal. To appease his daughter, the businessman dances with his wife, apologizing for the way he made her feel.

At work, someone finds a magazine story about the dance competition that highlights the co-worker, which provokes laughter and derision against the co-worker (who can hear everything being said about him although he is in another room). The businessman also hears the ridicule and very loudly declares that there is nothing wrong with ballroom dancing.

A few days later, the businessman receives an invitation to attend a farewell party for the beautiful woman—having regained her love for dance, she is signing up for the next Blackpool competition. He is reluctant to return, but on the train home, he sees a banner in the window of the dance school that reads, “Shall We Dance, Mr. Clark (Sugiyama)?” Although significantly late, the businessman attends the farewell party and dances the final dance with the beautiful woman to the song, “Shall We Dance?”

Analysis

I chose the two versions of “Shall We Dance?” to compare and contrast the cultural values and portrayals of masculinity within Japan and America, since each version was filmed in its respective country for its respective culture (and there are few movies in circulation that allow such a comparison to be made). While the characters of John Clark and Shohei Sugiyama are similarly constructed, their actions and reasons are motivated by a completely different set of cultural values. Similarly, the construction of the co-worker character, Link and Aoki, both portray unusual, somewhat flamboyant traits; while both are ridiculed by society, each character reacts differently to the ridicule based on the respective cultural values.

Similarities in “Shall We Dansu?” and “Shall We Dance?”

As their titles suggest, “The King and I” is referenced in both “Shall We Dansu?” and “Shall We Dance?” by the dance school’s owner, and the song “Shall We Dance” is heard on more than one occasion. This reference to the 1956 Yul Brynner movie parallels certain aspects of “Shall We Dansu?” and “Shall We Dance?” such as the forbidden love

between Anna and the King of Siam as well as the cultural expectations and nuances to which both Anna and the King are respectively bound.

The basic storyline and plot construction of “Shall We Dansu?” and “Shall We Dance?” are nearly identical. In both U.S. and Japanese cultures, ballroom dancing isn’t a common hobby for middle-aged men to take up (although dancing carries a stigma in Japan, while it is merely uncommon in America), so both John Clark and Shohei Sugiyama prefer to keep their new hobby secret, even from their wives. After their husbands are inexplicably happier, both wives suspect an extramarital affair, and both are surprised (and relieved) to discover that dancing is the cause of their husbands’ somewhat furtive behavior.

Since the United States and Japan have very different cultures, little of the humor can be literally translated from one into the other. A few of the jokes, however, successfully made it into both versions of the film. For instance, while Clark/Sugiyama is preparing for the dance competition, Link/Aoki helps him practice his form in the restroom of their workplace (the men are clasping hands, in the stance of traditional ballroom dancing). When another employee unexpectedly walks into the restroom, Link/Aoki pretends to faint, while Clark/Sugiyama pretends to support his unconscious body while urgently asking the newcomer to find help. In addition, at the dance competition, a competing dancer intentionally twists Link/Aoki’s wig askew. When the competing dancer is subsequently disqualified, an observer remarks, “‘Ungentlemanly behavior.’ It is a British sport, after all” (Fields and Chelsom, 2004; Ikeda and Suo, 1996).

Differences between “Shall We Dansu?” and “Shall We Dance?”

The cultural differences between “Shall We Dansu?” and “Shall We Dance?” are noticed almost immediately, directly expressed in both Clark’s and Sugiyama’s responses toward their occupations. When a colleague of Sugiyama’s mentions that Sugiyama must love his job to have achieved so much success, Sugiyama replies, “It’s my job. It doesn’t matter if I like it” (Ikeda and Suo, 1996), referencing the Japanese cultural trait to place the community’s needs above the individual’s. It is unlikely that such a remark would ever escape the lips of a modern American. In “Shall We Dance?” Clark’s wife remarks that Clark must be enjoying his work to be so noticeably happier, reflecting the U.S. belief that an individual can and should have a career that is both enjoyable and fulfilling to the individual.

Interpersonal relationships are referenced at length in both versions of the films. In the opening scene of “Shall We Dansu?” the narrator explains, “In Japan, ballroom dance is regarded with much suspicion. In a country where married couples don’t go out arm in arm, much less say ‘I love you’ out loud, intuitive understanding is everything” (Ikeda and Suo, 1996). As the narrator continues, the viewer begins to understand that while dance schools exist in Japan, men who attend them are considered “perverts” or woman-chasers. It would be embarrassing, if not shameful, to dance in public at all, let alone with one’s spouse (Ikeda and Suo, 1996). It is for this reason that Sugiyama (as well as Aoki) hides his interest in dancing from his family and co-workers.

In America, however, no such stigma toward dancing, ballroom or otherwise, exists. While it is certainly an uncommon hobby for a man to undertake by himself, many U.S. couples take dancing lessons for a variety of reasons, most commonly for an

upcoming wedding. Near the end of “Shall We Dance?” Clark explains to his wife his reasons for hiding his interest in dance: “I was ashamed of wanting to be happier—when we have so much...The one thing I am proudest of in my whole life is that you’re happy with me. If I couldn’t, if I couldn’t tell you I was unhappy sometimes, it was because I didn’t want to risk hurting the one person I treasure most” (Fields and Chelsom, 2004). While a valid reason, a U.S. audience may still find his reasons slightly less than credible—especially when the audience remembers Clark’s initial attraction to Paulina, a beautiful dance instructor (although Clark does show an interest in and a love for his wife throughout the movie). It doesn’t help Clark’s case to note that “Shall We Dance?” includes an extra scene not found in “Shall We Dansu?” in which Paulina dances with Clark, alone in the dance studio after hours, to give him confidence to dance in the competition the following day (Fields and Chelsom, 2004). Replete with sexual tension, the dance concludes when both are sweaty, satisfied, and a bit tired. Both Clark and Paulina leave the dance studio and return to their respective homes, but the inclusion of this scene weakens Clark’s reason for keeping his dancing secret from his wife. The added scene between Clark and Paulina implies more than it states, which is a typical characteristic of Japanese culture and makes the scene much more emphatic, since it was included in the U.S. version of the film.

Since the Japanese rely on implications rather than direct communication, their humor is more subtle than U.S. humor. For example, in “Shall We Dansu?” Aoki is considered to be a “pervert” for his interest in ballroom dancing, implying that the only reason a single man would be interested in dancing is to chase women for personal pleasure. In contrast, in “Shall We Dance?” one of Clark’s male classmates repeatedly

assumes Clark is homosexual, presumably because Clark is the quieter, more reserved member of the dance class. The joke, however, is revealed when the viewer suspects and then discovers the accusing classmate to be homosexual. This type of bait-and-switch humor works for U.S. audiences because sexuality is openly discussed in many forums, including movies; in Japanese culture, however, such sexual discussions have been strictly taboo. In addition, Link's heterosexuality is questioned because of his love for ballroom dancing. As Link states, "I mean, a straight man who likes to dance around in sequins walks a very lonely road" (Fields and Chelsom, 2004). To compensate for his typically un-masculine hobby, Link presents an accentuated masculine persona at work in the form of the sports guy who loves football. Near the end of the movie, after his co-workers learned of his hobby from a magazine article, Link admits to his hobby by taking the hand of a snickering receptionist, smoothly turning and dipping her and returning her to her swivel chair. As he walks away, Link says, "And football sucks" (Fields and Chelsom, 2004).

In both versions of the film, when the Link/Aoki character is ridiculed for his involvement in ballroom dancing, Clark/Sugiyama defends his friend, in an uncharacteristic display, by loudly declaring that nothing is wrong with ballroom dancing (Fields and Chelsom, 2004; Ikeda and Suo, 1996). Contrary to Link's open admittance of his hobby, Aoki also hears the ridicule and Sugiyama's defense, but he remains hidden outside the room, ashamed to enter.

As evidenced through both Clark and Sugiyama's interaction with their wives, gender roles in "Shall We Dansu?" and "Shall We Dance?" are divergent, reflecting the cultures of the respective country. In "Shall We Dansu?" Sugiyama's wife is a

homemaker who is grateful for the benefits her husband provides to her (a home, food, clothing, etc.). She engages the services of a private detective because she fears Sugiyama might leave her for another woman—she has no intention of using the services of the private detective to gather evidence for divorce proceedings. In comparison, Clark's wife in "Shall We Dance?" is an independent, successful career woman who loves her husband but doesn't need him for financial support in the event of a divorce. She also prefers not to gather evidence for divorce proceedings until she knows for certain her husband is having an affair—but the viewer can assume that if Clark was having an affair, his wife would have no qualms about divorcing him for his infidelity. When asked by the private detective why people get married, Clark's wife replied, "We need a witness to our lives. There's a billion people on the planet... I mean, what does any one life really mean? But in a marriage, you're promising to care about everything. The good things, the bad things, the terrible things, the mundane things—all of it, all of the time, every day. You're saying 'Your life will not go unnoticed because I will notice it. Your life will not go unwitnessed because I will be your witness'" (Fields and Chelsom, 2004). While Sugiyama's wife was not asked a similar question in "Shall We Dansu?" the viewer can reasonably assume her answer would be very different.

In addition, when Clark/Sugiyama is invited to Paulina/Mai's farewell party, both delay but ultimately attend. Clark's response is much different from Sugiyama's, however, in that Clark's U.S. culture directs him to first honor his wife by bringing her a single red rose and including her in the farewell party. Clark's wife is perfectly fine with Clark dancing the last dance with Paulina because Clark has demonstrated that he loves his wife and not Paulina. In contrast, Sugiyama's wife urges Sugiyama to attend the

farewell party, but makes plans to go shopping with her daughter during that time to prevent Sugiyama from feeling torn between his duty to his wife (by staying home) or enjoying time with his friends (by going out).

Discussion

In both “Shall We Dansu?” and “Shall We Dance?” cultural expectations of masculinity are portrayed and discussed. The Clark/Sugiyama character expresses a version of complicit masculinity since, while neither of them directly contribute to the culture’s expression of hegemonic masculinity, both accept and act in accordance with its tenets—until they take up ballroom dancing.

In contrast, the Link/Aoki character displays subordinated masculinity as both are ridiculed for their interest in ballroom dancing. Link tries to counterbalance the unmasculine aspects of dancing by accentuating his sports knowledge in the workplace. When the ridicule becomes personal, Link rebuffs his co-workers while Aoki quietly accepts the ridicule. Both Clark and Sugiyama openly reject their cultural hegemonic concepts of masculinity, as well, by defending Link and Aoki, evincing their character’s development and changed perspective through the experiences and relationships cultivated through ballroom dancing.

CONCLUSION

“I think a man does what he can until his destiny is revealed.”

(Cruise and Zwick, 2003)

Both the United States and Japan are fairly isolated geographically. America, although bounded by Canada to the north and Mexico to the south, is large enough in size to isolate various U.S. communities (i.e., Americans in the South have traditionally had different values and lifestyles from Americans in New England and California). The archipelago that comprises Japan isolates the Japanese from each other as well, a fact most commonly exhibited through the divergent cultures in northern and southern Japan; however, because Japan is significantly smaller in size (occupying space slightly smaller than the state of California) with a large population, the Japanese grow up learning how to cope with other people, fostering the sense of community and *wa* prevalent there (Hayashi and Kuroda, 1997).

As mentioned by Connell (1995), Roland (1988), and Roberson and Suzuki (2003), Western culture has influenced modern conceptions of masculinity and gender roles in Japan. Historically, the Japanese have been open to Western and U.S. ideas of politics and technology (as attested during the Meiji Restoration and after World War II). Historically, Americans have often set cultural standards rather than incorporate aspects of other cultures into mainstream U.S. culture, as evidenced by such policies as the Monroe Doctrine and the idea of “Manifest Destiny.” And, historically, both cultures have tended toward a “strength and honor” type of masculinities (most likely due to the warrior classes in Japan and the frequent wars in America). While the younger

generations in Japan are moving toward a more gender-equal culture, older generations continue to adhere to a more patriarchal society in Japanese culture (Sugihara and Katsurada, 1999, p. 636; Connell, 2005, p. 1810).

Japan's community-focused culture is very different from America's culture of individuality; because of its focus on the community, however, Japanese culture encourages respect and consideration for others, which would likely improve America's state of affairs, at home as well as internationally and interculturally. In addition, Hayashi and Kuroda (1997) mention the Japanese tendency toward adaptation and change. The Japanese have repeatedly incorporated aspects of other cultures into their own culture, presumably to better the Japanese culture. It would be in the interests of Americans to take the Japanese perspective—to live in harmony with men and women and to better U.S. culture by incorporating intercultural awareness and certain intercultural values.

With the accessibility of technology, media now affects all countries and cultures in one way or another. In some cases, when male role models are severely lacking, media can also affect a boy's construction of masculinity through portrayals of masculinity in film, television, video games, etc. Kivel and Johnson's (2009) study of media's effects on masculinity concluded that several tenets of masculinity are reinforced through the ideas, concepts, and characters portrayed through media.

This paper focused on the portrayal of masculinity in the films "The Last Samurai," "Shall We Dansu?" and "Shall We Dance?" While the three movies discussed offer only a mere sliver of each culture's view of masculinity, they are able to display examples of masculinity in action. "The Last Samurai" demonstrated three types of

masculinity: American hegemonic masculinity, a former hegemonic masculinity, and a newly dominant Japanese masculinity. Similarly, both “Shall We Dansu?” and “Shall We Dance?” reveal hegemonic masculinity in the expectations set for John Clark and Shohei Sugiyama; however, the characters in both movies perform complicit as well as subordinated masculinity in Japanese and U.S. cultures. As exhibited in “The Last Samurai,” “Shall We Dansu?” and “Shall We Dance?” the lead male characters at some point reject their culture’s hegemonic masculinity (Capt. Algren fights with the samurai instead of against them; John Clark and Shohei Sugiyama defend their unpopular co-workers by asserting positive opinions of ballroom dancing) without compromising or impairing their masculinity. Examples such as these gives one hope that changing masculinities can incorporate a respect for others (all representations of masculinity as well as both genders) without forsaking one’s own value system.

Prospects for Future Research

Masculinities studies is a developing field under the umbrella of gender studies, and the prospects for future research are wide open, especially in terms of crosscultural masculinities, which has been explored in this paper. A few of the many questions left unanswered in terms of U.S. and Japanese masculinities are the following:

1. How much direct influence has the United States (or Western culture) had on the gender revolution in Japan?
2. Is there a correlation between a mother’s relationship with her son and the development of masculinities in both the United States and Japan?
3. How do U.S. men define/explain masculinity compared to Japanese men?

4. How do U.S. men attain masculinity in modern culture (in light of Ong's theory of agonism and Connor's assertion of inadequate mentors)?

The possibilities are endless, but answering these questions will likely take a significant amount of time and effort. I hope to tackle at least one of the above-mentioned questions in the future, possibly starting with the definitions of masculinities according to U.S. men. Ideally, I would like to interview a few respected men in the realm of masculinities, but I would also like to develop a general (anonymous) survey, directed predominantly at male college students, to elicit their opinions of masculinity, mentors, and attaining manhood in U.S. culture.

Regardless of the specific next steps that I or others may undertake in this field, the preceding paper has attempted to depict some ways in which this area of gender studies can be appear profitable for further academic exploration. Hopefully, future scholars—myself, perhaps, included—will be able to more deeply mine the subject and contribute to the overall edification of this fascinating corpus of knowledge.

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RÉSUMÉ: SUE COCHRAN

SUE COCHRAN

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QUALIFICATIONS:

M.A. in Professional Writing, Kennesaw State University

B.A. in English, Kennesaw State University

Proficiency with Microsoft Office Suite, Adobe CS3

Proficiency with Chicago style, AP style, and APA style

PUBLICATIONS:

Red Clay Review

Exhaust Fumes, poem (published Spring 2009)

B-Side Track, poem (published Spring 2009)

SHARE Art and Literary Magazine

Good Tequila, poem (published Fall 2008)

A Solitary Tulip, poem (published Fall 2008)

Around Town Magazines

National Adoption Month, article (published November 2007)

A School Where Students Can Truly Blossom, article (published November 2007)

A Swingin' Life: Swing Dancing with Dwight and Kristy Alcala, article (published 2008)

Remembering the Past with Then and Now Auto Restorations, article (published 2008)

A SELECTION OF WORKSHOPS ATTENDED:

Georgia Writers SpringFest Conference 2008

“To Get an Agent,” presented by Blythe Daniel

“To Use the Internet Efficiently,” presented by Ellen Springer

Red Clay Writers' Conference 2009

“Power Openings for Fiction,” presented by Dianna Love

“Operation: Media Exposure,” presented by Stephanie Richards

“Spark Your Creativity,” presented by Kelly Stone

EMPLOYMENT:**Senior Editor, *CBIZ Valuation Group***

Responsibilities include the following:

- providing editing, formatting, and technical writing services for financial reports
- updating and revising internal and external Web site content
- reviewing reports, proposals, presentations, etc. for client support services
- maintaining consistency of current house style standards

Editorial Assistant, *Around Town Publishing*

Responsibilities include the following:

- acting as liaison between contributing writers and editorial staff
- collaborating with the editor for magazine and article planning
- editing copy for community magazines
- writing articles and editorials for community-related issues
- writing copy for ads purchased by local businesses
- researching and collecting data for current events, articles, and other projects

Editorial Assistant/Board Member, *Georgia Writers Association*

Responsibilities include the following:

- establishing and organizing monthly critique groups
- critiquing and recommending books for the Georgia Author of the Year Awards
- assisting with events and event planning
- proofreading event programs
- writing and revising online content

Graduate Research Assistant, *Kennesaw State University, Dr. Anne Richards*

Responsibilities include the following:

- researching articles, research methods, and sources for a scholarly article
- writing select sections and supplemental information for a scholarly article
- providing assistance to Dr. Richards in any additional capacity needed