

“Mixed Blood” Children and their Families in the United States: The Idea of a Racially and Culturally Pluralist Nation at the Beginning of the Cold War

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Introduction

For somewhat more than 300 years white conquerors from the West have been mixing their blood with the conquered people of the East, creating a minority of unhappy misfits belonging neither to the East nor to the West. [...] But neither the Japanese nor the occupation authorities are going to wait 300 years to try to find a solution to the problem of what to do with what is called here the “occupation baby.”¹

In January 1948, the magazine *The Saturday Evening Post* featured a story on “occupation babies”—babies born to American soldiers and Japanese women during the occupation. The article described “occupation babies” as a problem that the Japanese government and the occupation authorities needed to resolve. It indicated that the existence of these children was problematic because of the idea of “mixed blood,” and also because a number of the children who were born to American soldiers and Japanese women during this time became illegitimate children.

This paper examines the notion of the American family and race at the beginning of the Cold War, at a time when the United States was representing itself as a racially and culturally pluralist nation. The pluralistic model of society became popular during WWII with the idea that the United States was fighting for democracy as a universal principle regardless of race. Out of the context of the war, the idea that the United States was “a harmonious nation made up of people from diverse ethnic, racial, national, and religious backgrounds” became the widely accepted ideology of the nation.² Within the subsequent Cold War national

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1. Darrell Berrigan, “Japan’s Occupation Babies,” *The Saturday Evening Post*, January 19, 1948, 24.

2. Christina Klein, *Cold War Orientalism: Asia in the Middlebrow Imagination*,

ideology, cultural explanations came to replace biological theories of race: if racial differences are superficial cultural differences, culturally different people from all over the world could come to the United States and become assimilated and acculturated Americans. Given that Asia became an important site for the United States to secure its geopolitical hegemony in Cold War politics, the concept of cultural pluralism created the space where allegedly “inassimilable” Asians could assimilate and acculturate into the nation.

Indeed, achieving racial integration and becoming a democratic and morally superior nation was a challenge during the Cold War era. By examining the concept of “mixed blood” children, this paper sheds light on the United States as a pluralist nation where the meaning of “mixed blood” children was (re)produced. While “mixed blood” children were at first an undesirable consequence of the occupation, they became visible as national subjects within Cold War politics when the United States attempted to establish an intimate relationship with Asia, specifically Japan, and present itself as a racially and culturally pluralist nation. In this political context, it is significant that the children also became visible as subjects of the American family.

In U.S. academia, social scientists and social workers studying “interracial” and “intercultural” marriages are the primary sources of knowledge on Japanese war brides.³ These scholars cast them within the assimilationist framework as one of the immigrant groups within an American pluralistic society. These studies impose a generalized narrative of immigration on the Japanese war brides, thereby reducing the specificities of their marriages to a conventional story of racial assimilation. They are only concerned with the women’s ability to assimilate into American mainstream culture and family structures as American wives and mothers.

Since the 1980s, when the politics of representation became a popular analytic tool, scholars in Asian American studies have started to demand recognition of their cultures and communities within multiculturalism. For example, feminist sociologist Evelyn Nakano Glenn viewed Japanese war brides as victims of triple oppression: as low-wage workers, facing institutional racism, and being subordinated at home by a patriarchal family system. She then argued that

1945–1961 (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2003), 11.

3. Anselm L. Strauss, “Strain and Harmony in Japanese-American War-Bride Marriages,” *Marriages and Family Living* 16 (1954); John Conner, *A Study of the Marital Stability of Japanese War Brides* (San Francisco: Rand E. Research, Inc., 1976); George DeVos, *Personality Patterns and Problems of Adjustment in American-Japanese Intercultural Marriages* (Taipei: The Oriental Cultural Service, 1973); Bok-Lim Kim, “Asian Wives of U.S. Servicemen: Women in Shadows,” *Amerasia Journal* 4.1 (1977): 91–115; Yukiko Kimura, “Religious Affiliation of War Brides in Hawaii and their Marital Adjustment,” *Social Process in Hawaii* 26 (1963): 88–95; Yukiko Kimura, “War Brides in Hawaii and Their In-Laws,” *The American Journal of Sociology* LXIII (1957).

Japanese war brides were the ones who had the strength and tenacity for survival and highlighted Japanese cultural values for their economic success.⁴ Another scholar, Debbie Storrs, conducted an interview with her “war bride” mother and focused on her mother’s autonomy in the face of racial and gender oppression.⁵ She framed her mother’s life with the Japanese expression *shikata ga nai*, or “it can’t be helped”; this was her cultural strategy for coping with hardships. She indicated that a working-class immigrant woman contributed to white America through her work, demonstrating that she is a “legible” subject within the nation. Storrs also illustrated that a working-class immigrant woman strategically perceived her work as a representation of her new identity by filling the gaps between her lives in two countries. Furthermore, the author corrected inaccurate images of working-class immigrant women as “victims.”

In their efforts to include these women in U.S. national history, these scholars have generally argued that the Japanese war brides’ achievements of leading white middle-class lives, wifehood, and motherhood were successful. Literary critic Laura Hyun Yi Kang points out that some scholars studying Asian American women tend to only contest their misrepresentation and self-identity and protest their identity as “victims” by securing a masculinist subject position as stable and neutral. However, Kang explains that these recent scholars, who hope to make marginalized women the “legible” subjects within the nation, consequently domesticated the figures into the gendered criteria of U.S. citizenship, which emphasizes proper marriage and motherhood.⁶ In order to counter the idea of inassimilable Asian American women, the scholars tend to portray these women as proper American wives and mothers who exemplify white, middle-class womanhood. However, Kang critically suggests that Asian women are not “victims” of misrepresentation but rather are “productive figures” representing white American identity as stable and secure.⁷

In trying to avoid domesticating Japanese war brides, this paper follows Kang’s suggestion: scholars should not assume racial differences are a given, but should critically interrogate how and why we know racial and gender differences as such and ask how differentiated subjects are linked to U.S. global and imperial expansion.⁸ Therefore, instead of celebrating Japanese war brides as American wives and mothers, as well as grassroots ambassadors between two nations, this research situates Japanese war brides as racialized and gendered subjects

4. Evelyn Nakano Glenn, *Issei, Nisei, War Bride: Three Generations of Japanese American Women in Domestic Service* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986), 169.

5. Debbie Storrs, “Like a Bamboo: Representations of a Japanese War Bride,” *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* (2000): 194–224.

6. Laura Hyun Yi Kang, *Compositional Subjects: Enfiguring Asian/American Women* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2002), 154.

7. *Ibid.*

8. *Ibid.*, 17.

constituted within U.S. imperialism invigorated during the Cold War.

This paper also focuses on narratives of Japanese war brides pertaining to their “mixed blood” children. Within the idea of “mixed blood” children in the pluralist nation, Japanese war brides use their children as proof of their acculturation to the United States. According to Anne McClintock, the nation is gendered, constitutive of people’s identities, and women belong to the nation as symbolic reproducers of the members of national collectivities.⁹ She therefore argues that motherhood is a crucial site to define the nation.¹⁰ It is through the trope of white domesticity that colonized women become proper subjects by claiming motherhood of white children. Their narratives reveal how it became possible for women to celebrate their “mixed blood” children to prove the legitimacy of their marriage and acculturation to the United States.

I. Methodology

This research focuses on “knowledge production,” or discourses which sustain the Japanese war brides as legible, visible, and intelligible. It situates the foreign policies, cultural productions, and women’s interviews within a historical context, and examines these materials dialectically.¹¹ Conventionally, policies are considered the primary source of “real” knowledge production, cultural production is merely a representation, and women’s interviews discover “hidden” voices; this, however, is not the approach adopted by this research. Literary critic Melani McAlister explains that both foreign policies and cultural production construct meanings in the same social system. Cultural texts are not outside of reality, nor do they merely reflect society; rather, the cultural field exists in a continuous relationship with other fields in the larger social system and constructs the narratives that elucidate policy within the same time frame.¹² Thus, this research reads both foreign policies and cultural productions as texts which relationally

9. Anne McClintock, “Family Feuds: Gender, Nationalism and the Family,” *Feminist Review* 44 (Summer 1993): 61–62.

10. Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (NY: Routledge, 1995), 267–70.

11. Foucault introduces the idea that the historical *a priori*, which is the “condition of the reality of statements, the positivity of a discourse, that which characterizes its particular unity throughout a particular discursive time” (*Archaeology*, 127). According to Foucault, the archive is “The general system of the formation and transformation of statements,” the “law of what can be said, the system that governs the appearance of statements as unique events” (*Archaeology* 127, 129). Foreign policy, cultural materials, and women’s interviews exist within the same time frame and the same formation of rules; thus, I read all of these sites to examine the paradigm of knowledge constituted in the global historical context.

12. Melani McAlister, *Epic Encounters: Culture, Media, and U.S. Interests in the Middle East since 1945* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2001), 5–6.

produce meaning in a given moment.

Furthermore, this research examines newspaper and magazine articles published from the beginning of the occupation in 1945 to the end of the 1950s to gain an understanding of the depiction of the Japanese war brides. This project also uses documents from SCAP (Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers), which had the ultimate authority in granting permission for marriages between American soldiers and Japanese women during the U.S. occupation of Japan, and to determine how policies also produced the Japanese war brides.

The discursive meaning derived from women's interviews is another important aspect of this research. In particular, this project scrutinizes the topics that emerged from their narratives and became legible within "the given paradigm of historical knowledge" after they became speaking subjects.¹³ It is important to note that the ways in which this project interprets their interviews as discourse does not deny their actual feelings about their marriages; their psychological feelings pertaining to their marriages is not the subject of study. Existing studies have not examined the Japanese war brides' personal narratives because of the ways in which these women were stigmatized and ostracized from postwar Japanese society and the Japanese American community because of their marriages with American GIs. For this research, forty interviews were conducted: thirteen in Seattle, Tacoma, Oak Harbor, Yelm, and Sammamish in Washington State; nine in Denver, Colorado; and eighteen in Honolulu, Hawaii.¹⁴ In addition, three soldier husbands were interviewed whose racial identities were all white. One telephone interview was also conducted in San Diego, California.¹⁵

13. Lisa Yoneyama, "Traveling Memories, Contagious Justice: Americanization of Japanese War Crimes at the End of the Post-Cold War," *Journal of Asian American Studies* 6, no. 1 (2003): 57-93.

14. I conducted interviews in Washington and Colorado with another researcher, Yasutomi Shigeyoshi, for the Japanese Overseas Migration Museum. Yasutomi is a professor in the field of Japanese American history and anthropology at Kaetsu Women's Junior College. Most of the women we interviewed in Washington belong to the Nikkei International Marriage Society, which Kazuko Umezu Stout established in 1989 as a means for sharing the experiences of Japanese war brides; most of the women interviewed in Colorado belong to Shirakaba no Kai or White Birch Association, and the majority of women we interviewed in Hawaii are members of Kanagawa Kenjin kai or the Association of People from Kanagawa Prefecture. The subjects married American men and immigrated to the United States prior to 1960; however, their identity as "Japanese war brides" is diverse. Each woman talked about her life history for an hour, and this was videotaped as well as tape-recorded.

15. This research was sponsored by the Japanese Overseas Migration Museum, which is owned by the Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA). All of the women provided consent for the use of the interview records. I have known a number of the interviewees since attending the Nikkei International Marriage Society's world convention held in Hawaii in 2004; Yasutomi Shigeyoshi has known some of the interviewees for over ten years. Yasutomi and I asked to meet women who could tell their life stories in public. Most of these women

II. Situated out of the American Family: “Mixed Blood” Children as a Problem “Over There” in Japan

“Mixed blood” children could not legally become American citizens for five years after the start of the occupation.¹⁶ Within this legal and ideological sphere, the “mixed blood” babies were initially depicted as a Japanese problem, not an American problem. For example, as early as 1948, *The Saturday Evening Post* featured “occupation babies” as an issue that resulted from the U.S. occupation of Japan. Just as its title presented them as “Japan’s Occupation Babies,” the article described the “mixed blood” babies as Japan’s subjects and thus a problem to be dealt with “over there in Japan.” Additionally, it revealed the debate between Colonel Crawford F. Sams, chief of the Public Health and Welfare Section, and Sawada Miki, a founder of the Elizabeth Sanders Home, about whether these “mixed babies” should be separated from “pure” Japanese children. The article remarked, “The dilemma that faces Americans wishing to relieve themselves of some of their responsibility is how to help the children without hurting their position in *Japanese society, where, undoubtedly they will have to live.*”¹⁷

Charitable acts performed by Americans for the abandoned mothers and children also appeared in the U.S. postwar media. For example, *Reader’s Digest* published an article in 1954 detailing American acts of kindness and reported that various American agencies collected monetary donations and supported the orphanages that cared for the “mixed blood” children. These actions had astonishing results, reuniting families and arranging hospital care. The same article also introduced “a grandfatherly white-haired businessman” from New York named Herbert B. Gallop. He had “amazed himself by becoming a local counselor for any Japanese girl with a GI baby” in Japan and helped them by “tracking down addresses, finding adoptive parents, paying hospital bills with his own funds and arranging for men in America to acknowledge a child so it can have a name.”¹⁸ The American man became a “grandfatherly” figure, a rescuer who helped Japanese mothers and children. In this sense, he became a rescuer within patriarchal and gendered notions; the American men’s recognition and protection made otherwise illegitimate children legitimate.

were therefore living middle- to upper-class lives and remained in their first marriages, although some husbands had already passed away. Their husbands’ racial identities were diverse.

16. It was not until mid-1950 that “mixed blood” children could legally become American citizens.

17. Darrell Berrigan, “Japan’s Occupation Babies,” 118 (emphasis mine).

18. James Michener, “The Facts about the GI Babies,” *Reader’s Digest*, March 1954, 9. The article even noted that he could become America’s ambassador to these children.

It is ironic, however, that American men became “grandfatherly” figures despite the fact that these children did not have their fathers. SCAP freed American soldiers of any responsibility to their child and the child’s mother, and sent the soldiers who completed their assigned duty to their next station without any special consideration.¹⁹ Within the pervasive idea of miscegenation, children conceived by American soldiers and Japanese women were a crucial factor that made these marriages between American soldiers and Japanese women problematic in the United States.²⁰ In 1949, the manner in which SCAP was to deal with marriages between American soldiers and Japanese women was discussed in response to many soldiers’ requests. They identified the existence of children as the fundamental problem with these marriages, saying “frequently illegitimate children are present or expected.”²¹ Thus, as these children were being considered as potential American citizens, they were simultaneously being viewed as a problem for the nation.

Several significant discussions occurred pertaining to this crucial matter. In

19. The usual overseas tour of duty was three years. RG 200 Box 1279, May 16, 1947, National Social Welfare Assembly Inc. U.S. National Archives II. College Park, MD.

20. Industrialization and imperialism changed the racial demographics of immigrants in the late nineteenth century. Different from Western Europeans, so-called “new immigrants” mostly came from Eastern Europe and Asia and increased fear for the American future in terms of the degrading of whiteness. Historian Matthew Frye Jacobson argued that the racial conception of immigrant “differences” changed in this period. Immigrants were discussed “not as a source of cheap or competitive labor, nor as one seeking asylum from foreign oppression, not as a migrant hunting a less strenuous life, but as a parent of future-born American citizens so must have ‘heredity stuff’ that would have to be compatible with ‘American ideals’”; see Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and Alchemy of Race* (Harvard University Press, 1998), 69. Within this changing political and economic context, scientific knowledge about race proliferated and whiteness became a subject that the nation needed to protect from inferior races. The idea of white supremacy and protection was consolidated based on social Darwinism and eugenics. The Darwinist argument endorsed the idea of race as different stages of the evolutionary scale with the white race at the top, and explained racial evolution from savagery to civilization. Eugenics was rooted in the belief that geniuses tended to come from superior human stock, and that feeble-mindedness, criminality, and pauperism are strongly influenced by heredity factors. The eugenicists’ theory that racial differences were rooted in heredity explained and legitimized the separation of “Negros” from the white race. Discussions of racial differences and heredity were also entangled with the permeating idea of “keeping America white” and protecting civilization from savagery: white was the most civilized race while “Negro” was savage. See Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color*. With this miscegenetic idea, the subject of interracial marriages between Orientals and whites was captured as too radical and extreme. Historian Henry Yu explains that the subject of intermarriage between Orientals and whites was a taboo which “only pornographic novels or pulp fiction dared to explore.” See Henry Yu, *Thinking Orientals: Migration, Contact, and Exoticism in Modern America* (NY: Oxford University Press, 2001), 58.

21. “Marriage Policy,” RG 319 Box 570, January 3, 1949. USAF (US Air Force).

May 1947, a representative from the army and navy held a conference with voluntary agencies and the national social welfare assembly regarding “families and children who need case work assistance for problems arising out of the presence of American troops in foreign lands.”²² During the conference, a chairman of the national social welfare assembly, Robert E. Bondy, articulated that the agencies had received a great number of requests for services for women and children who were dependents of, or who claimed dependency upon, U.S. servicemen and veterans. However, he finally concluded, “If the man denies the paternity, nothing further can be done.” This irresponsible policy caused Japanese women’s paternity claims to become a significant issue during the Occupation. In August 1949, the vice president of the Red Cross, Dewitt Smith, and directors from overseas commands held a conference in Washington discussing how the United States should deal with these children. The Department of the Army confirmed that the Department of State would not support unmarried mothers and children: “I am informed that the Department of State decided not to recommend to Congress that benefits be paid by the United States government on behalf of these mothers and children.”²³ Thus, the United States government did not consider these mothers and children to be potential American citizens.

The discussions held during these two conferences by military authorities and voluntary agencies concluded that in any union created by American soldiers, Japanese women and their children were not to be recognized as a potential part of an American family. Conversations revealed that what they believed needed to be protected was the American family that the soldiers had in their home country. This point was emphasized repeatedly during both conferences. For instance, the discussions held in 1947 revealed that voluntary agencies had made every effort to protect the soldiers’ family relations in the United States. Due to their “destructive effect,” the agencies did not send allegation letters from Japanese women to the soldiers’ American families.²⁴ The 1949 conference also stated, “The potential damage in contact with veterans who are living with their families or have since married are of course well known to you.” All of these statements indicated that paternity for these children was merely a nuisance factor that destroyed the soldiers’ formal American families in the United States.²⁵

Thus, it is important to note that the actual number of children born to

22. RG 200, Box 1279, May 16, 1947, National Social Welfare Assembly, Inc. U.S. National Archives II. College Park, MD.

23. Special handling “Personnel: Personnel Affairs,” RG24 Box 487, files 6-1 to 7, Department of Defense directive routing sheet. U.S. National Archives II. College Park, MD.

24. RG 200, Box 1279, May 16, 1947, National Social Welfare Assembly, Inc. U.S. National Archives II. College Park, MD.

25. Based on the discussions, the office of the secretary of defense formulated a policy regarding paternity claims by non-nationals against members or former members of the armed forces so that it was left up to the Red Cross to handle this subject.

American soldiers and Japanese women will never be known for various reasons. First, since SCAP did not want to deal with this issue or reveal the actual situation, it prohibited an official census of the “mixed blood” children. For example, in 1947, the Institute of Population Problems of the Japanese Ministry of Welfare proposed gathering statistics for the babies born between American fathers and Japanese women. However, Col. Crawford Sams, the chief of the Public Health and Welfare of SCAP, prohibited this. A second reason that an accurate number may never be known is that such “mixed blood” children were stigmatized subjects and therefore tended to be kept hidden. It is thought that the number ranged from thousands to hundreds of thousands, as estimated by newspapers, magazines, some offices of the Japanese government, and non-profit organizations.²⁶ Lastly, more than a million abortions took place in 1952, and it is said that a considerable number of the babies were fathered by American GIs.²⁷ These babies were undesired and thus considered abortable subjects in the postwar period.

III. American Adoption of the Postwar “Mixed Blood” Children

The Immigration Act of 1924, also known as the Johnson-Reed Act, stipulated that any person who was at least one-half Japanese was not eligible for admission to the United States for permanent residence; thus, mixed-race children from Japan could not initially immigrate into the United States until five years after the start of the occupation. However, beginning in 1950, Congress began to occasionally issue private bills that allowed mixed-race children adopted by American parents to immigrate to the United States. One such instance occurred that year when Congress provided a private bill authorizing the entry of Sugiura Seiichi, who was initially known as Valarianus Sugiura and later known as David Lee Harrigan. He was noted as “a minor half Japanese under the care of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Y. Harrigan, both citizens of the United States temporarily residing in Japan.”²⁸ In September, a half-Japanese orphan named Takagi Megumi, also known as Senda Daily, was considered the alien natural-born child of Master Sergeant and Mrs. Thomas V. Daily. At the same time, another orphan named Hoshi Kazuo was also considered a natural-born child of Sergeant and Mrs. Thelma Humberd and was allowed to enter the United States for permanent

26. The estimated number of children varies: an article written in 1948 reports that by mid-1948, the estimated number of babies ranged from 1,000 to 4,000. Takada Masami, chief of the Children’s Bureau of the Welfare Ministry, estimated the figure at around 150,000. In 1952, the Children’s Bureau finally conducted the first official census on the number of “mixed blood” children, with 5,002 children, far below earlier estimates. In the same year, the Ministry of Welfare also conducted their own census and concluded there were 5,013 children.

27. Michener, “The facts,” 6.

28. “House Passes Four Bills on Japan Aliens,” *Pacific Citizen*, August 18, 1951.

residence. Kazuo was the son of an unidentified American soldier who was being reared by Catholic sisters in Japan.

The U.S. media framed the American parents' adoption of "mixed blood" children as celebratory and heartwarming. This is exemplified in the 1954 article from *Reader's Digest*, "The Facts about GI Babies." The article described the stories of three hundred American couples who had adopted orphans into their own homes as "moving," and praised these actions as instances that redound to America's credit.²⁹ Moreover, a *Los Angeles Times* article reported the arrival of three-year-old Pascal M. Yutaka, a child adopted by American Air Force Captain James R. Evans and his wife. The article noted that they gave him the American name Jimmy and took him to his grandparents' house for Thanksgiving. The attached picture of Jimmy held between Mr. and Mrs. Evans was captioned: "Give Thanks—Air Force Captain, James R. Evans and Mrs. Evans are giving their foster son, Jimmy, 3, his first Thanksgiving in the United States at Imperial Beach. Jimmy, who is half American by parentage, was adopted from a Japan orphanage by Evans."³⁰ By expounding a story of American parents who gave Jimmy a Thanksgiving experience, which symbolizes a happy American family event, the article implied that Jimmy, who was unhappy and despairing in Japan's orphanage, finally received happiness. In this story, the American parents became a benevolent couple who rescued Jimmy and brought him happiness.

In addition to the private bills passed by Congress, the Refugee Relief Act of 1953 instigated more adoption.³¹ A *New York Times* article published in 1955 reported that five "half-Japanese" orphans were adopted and arrived in the United States; they had immigrated through the Refugee Relief Act and were united with their foster parents when they arrived. The article expounded a moment when the abandoned mixed-race children were welcomed and embraced by the American family:

Teruko Muto, 8-year-old adopted daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Philip Pedley of Glen Ellen, Calif., cried, "I'm going home!" Eight-year-old Diane and 3-year-old Barbara Pedley, the couple's own children, welcomed their new sister with an armful of

29. Michener, "The Facts," 9.

30. "Couple Return with Adopted Japanese Boy," *Los Angeles Times*, November 22, 1951.

31. The McCarran-Walter Act was enacted in 1952 and allowed Japanese women who married American citizens and their children to enter the United States for permanent residence without an immigration quota. With the Refugee Relief Act of 1953, some "mixed blood" children entered the United States and received permanent residence. The act itself was aimed at refugees from Eastern Europe, but some Japanese citizens who had endured natural disasters such as floods and earthquakes, as well as poverty, entered the United States and worked as farmhands. See Yukiko Koshiro, *Trans-Pacific Racism and the U.S. Occupation of Japan* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 210.

dolls.³²

A parentless and family-less Teruko gained not only parents but also siblings, and finally belonged to a family and had arrived “home.” By indicating the United States as their “home,” it credited American tolerance with providing “home” to these abandoned children. The adoption of “mixed blood” children became visible within the U.S. Cold War effort to show the world its moral superiority against communism. Historian Arrisa Oh has captured the trend of the American adoption of Korean mixed-race children that has occurred since the mid-1950s within the construction of U.S. Cold War ideology.³³ While she focuses on the adoption of Korean babies, her argument is relevant to understand the relationship between an American family’s adoption of mixed-race children in Asia and U.S. Cold War politics. She argues that adopting mixed-race children became a U.S. moral activity when the United States attempted to show the world its moral leadership to provide freedom and democracy during the Cold War. The idea that the United States could become a “home” for the abandoned “mixed blood” children, providing them with a family and refuge, emerged in the early 1950s as the United States strived to demonstrate its moral superiority to the world against communism.

In addition, an ideological picture of the American adoption of Asian “mixed blood” children suggested the U.S. Cold War relationship with Asia: the American relationship with Asia was through familial love, but not force and blood.³⁴ In order to portray the adoption event as a moment of rescue, a 1951 *Los Angeles Times* article vigorously described the instant when Mrs. Evans chose Jimmy:

Mrs. Evans recalled they had been unable to decide which child they wanted at the orphanage, until as they were ready to leave, Jimmy stood at the top of a staircase, waving a home-made toy at them, and shouting a farewell. “That did it,” Mrs. Evans declared. “He took hold of our hearts.”³⁵

By stating that Jimmy “took hold of our hearts,” the article expounded the connection between an American parent and a half-Japanese child as familial love. According to cultural theorist Christina Klein, by comparing the U.S. relationship with Asia to parental love, the occurrence of the multiracial family, which in this

32. “5 Orphans From Japan Getting Homes in U.S.,” *New York Times*, January 10, 1955.

33. Arrisa Oh, “A New Kind of Missionary Work: Christians, Christian Americanists, and the Adoption of Korean GI babies, 1955–1961,” *Women’s Studies Quarterly* 33, nos. 3, 4 (fall/winter 2005): 165.

34. Klein, *Cold War Orientalism*, 146.

35. “Couple Return with Adopted Japanese Boy,” *Los Angeles Times*, November 22, 1951.

case included white parents with Asian babies, suggested that Americans were neither racists nor imperialists.³⁶

IV. “Mixed blood” Children as Innocent Victims of Japan’s Racism: “Objects of Rescue” within Cold War Politics

Why was it possible for the adoption of “mixed blood” children to be represented as a benevolent act that allowed the United States to consolidate its status as a morally superior world leader? If one considers that it was a SCAP policy and U.S. immigration laws that originally excluded these “mixed blood” children from the nation and made them illegitimate outsiders of the American family, then these American adoptions should be considered obligatory acts that the United States should have been responsible for earlier. Thus, this paper argues that “mixed blood” children were represented as innocent victims of Japan’s racism and became visible as “objects of rescue” within Cold War politics.

Ignoring the SCAP policy that created the illegitimate status of “mixed blood” children, postwar U.S. media explained that the children’s suffering was rooted in Japan’s racism. For example, an article in *Reader’s Digest*, “The Facts about the GI Babies,” featured a story about George-san as one of the first GI babies born in Japan. The article indicated that he would have a hard life because he would face racism in Japan. It noted, “Things are going to get very tough for George-san. [...] Japanese believe that their race is unique and pure, unsullied by outside blood for at least 6000 years.”³⁷ It is true that Japanese held strong beliefs that their race was a unique Yamato race, but blaming only Japan’s racial prejudice masked the fact that the occupation system and American military policy were responsible for the fundamental problems; rather, these children were seen as “victims of Japan’s race prejudice.”

In addition to the belief of a “pure Japanese race,” the U.S. media framed the “mixed blood” children as a problematic existence in Japan because they were a “living symbol of Japan’s defeat.” A *Saturday Evening Post* article reported the story of Akiko, who gave birth to a “mixed blood” girl named Lily. It noted that these “mixed blood” babies faced prejudices because they were “a living symbol of Japan’s shame—of her defeat and her humiliation at being an occupied nation.”³⁸ The article added the remarks of another abandoned mother, Koko: “If we were not a defeated nation, [...] the eyes of the neighbors would not be so cold.”³⁹ Because these children symbolized the defeat of Japan, the article explained that they would face difficulty being accepted into Japanese society.

36. Klein, *Cold War Orientalism*, 65.

37. Michener, “The Facts,” 6.

38. Berrigan, “Occupation Babies,” 25.

39. *Ibid.*

The “mixed blood” children, then, were also portrayed as subjects who Japan wanted to abort because they were a symbol of defeat. The media highlighted the Japanese mother’s desire to abandon her children as a metaphor for Japan as a whole. The article, entitled “Madame Butterfly’s Children,” reported that the mother of Hisae, an orphan, told the reporter that she wanted to start a new life without her child. The magazine remarked, “The child was a living reminder of something she wanted to forget. ‘She looks so *foreign*,’ Hisae’s mother said, ‘everybody knows.’”⁴⁰ The constructed visibility of Japanese mothers who wanted to abandon these children helped to move the discussion away from American soldiers’ responsibilities as their fathers. Moreover, the U.S. media denigrated Japan’s family structure, as illustrated in a *Reader’s Digest* article:

What it means for a child to lack family status in Japan is an experience unknown in the Western world. Every aspect of life there is governed by the family unit. Not to belong to a family who will find you a job, secure you a wife, care for you in illness and protect you against a hostile world is to invite despair.⁴¹

The article narrates that these illegitimate children who did not belong to a family would be in despair because of the rigid family structure present in Japan.

In sum, while the occupation policy produced illegitimate children and situated them outside of a formal family unit, there was a distinct void in the U.S. media’s discussion of their illegitimate status. The media portrayed them as naturally illegitimate; in addition, the “mixed blood” children who were made illegitimate by U.S. immigration policy and occupation policy were considered victims solely of Japan’s racism. The discourses about mixed-race children offered the idea that the United States rescued them by providing them with clothes, food, homes, and families.

V. American Fathers with Japanese Wives and Children as New National Subjects at the Beginning of the Cold War

The second War Bride Act, enacted on August 18, 1950, finally allowed “mixed blood” children born to American soldiers and Japanese women to enter the United States as permanent residents. In this case, the children of American citizen fathers and Japanese alien mothers were made legitimate with the American military’s permission. Furthermore, this law finally allowed children of American soldiers and Japanese women to become American citizens.⁴² This act

40. Peter Kalischer, “Madame Butterfly’s Children,” *Collier’s Weekly*, September 1952, 15.

41. Michener, “The Facts,” 7.

42. During the American occupation, two U.S. policies affected the immigration of

was significant in that Japanese women could now legally enter the United States not only as wives of American citizens, but also as mothers of their children.⁴³

Along with this changing legal sphere, the multiracial family also experienced exposure in the U.S. media from the mid-1950s. A 1954 article in *Life* magazine, "Pursuit of Happiness by a GI and a Japanese," carried the story of a white American husband, Frank Pfeiffer, and his Japanese wife, Sachiko, who searched for acceptance in their white middle-class suburban neighborhood. The article interestingly showcased the moment when "she became an American" after the baby was born. The article recounted that American white neighbors celebrated Sachiko's new family by having a baby shower for her.

When Sachiko tried to pay for the food, Carm would not take the money, but it was only after the baby was born that the little Japanese girl fully compensated the love in which her neighbors held her. It was then, one might say, that she became an American. She [Sachiko] explains it: "Frank come hospital bring me home. When our car stop at house I feel good but Carm and Frances run up and cry, 'No got in, Sachiko. Not ready yet.' There all people our block waiting. A shower." Frank Pfeiffer, whose Japanese wife had been kicked out of one American home, chokes up when he remembers this shower. "I never saw so many presents. Our boy is a year old now and we haven't had to buy him any clothes yet. What a shower!"

Frances Rawlings, says, "When Carm and I planned the shower not a person we approached gave anything because Sachiko was a Japanese. We all gave because

Japanese women who married American soldiers to the United States: the 1947 and 1950 War Bride Acts. Since mid-1950, some private bills authorizing the immigration of minor children born between American fathers and Japanese mothers were passed and the second War Bride Act was finally enacted on August 18, 1950. Ideologically, both the 1947 and 1950 War Bride Acts assumed that Japanese American servicemen and veterans married "girls of their own race." However, there were not only Japanese American soldiers and veterans who married Japanese women through these. Through the 1947 War Bride Act, 823 Americans married Japanese women during the thirty-day period between July 22 and August 21. Of these, 597 were Nisei GIs and veterans, 211 were Caucasians, and 15 "Negro." Republican Frank Fellow's comment nicely presents the ideology embedded in the Act and the social and material condition caused by the Act. He said, "The bill is designed to correct an injustice to Americans of oriental ancestry ... but it also permits American soldiers of Japanese brides to bring them into" the United States. The 1950 War Bride Act even changed the ratio of racial demographics of American soldiers who married Japanese women. In September 1952, the American Consulate reported that 8,381 marriages had occurred since the occupation started in August 1945. The ratio of the racial demographic was now "73 per cent were white, 15 per cent Nisei and 12 per cent Negro." The majority of people who married Japanese women were white soldiers through the 1950 War Bride Act. See "Truman Signing Alien Marriages Law Verified," *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, July 27, 1947.

43. The McCarran-Walter Act enacted in 1952 also allowed not only Japanese women but their children to enter the United States for permanent residence.

she was such a good human being.”⁴⁴

In this story, it was Frank Pfeiffer’s mother who forced her Japanese daughter-in-law, Sachiko, from a similar white suburban home. However, this excerpt revealed a moment when white suburban neighbors accepted and celebrated not only this “interracial” couple, but also their unborn child. It is significant that their “mixed blood” boy became the subject of celebration through the shower, as this is a symbolic event for an American family; on the contrary, “mixed blood” children had not been viewed as celebratory subjects, but rather subjects to be aborted in the postwar period.

This was also a significant moment in which an American man became visible as the father of his “mixed blood” baby, given that military policy during the occupation prohibited American men from assuming the role of father to their “mixed blood” children. In this moment, the multiracial family offered a way to imagine the United States overcoming “racism” and becoming a multiracial nation.⁴⁵ In doing so, American fathers with Japanese wives and children were interpellated as new national subjects at the beginning of the Cold War.

A 1955 *Los Angeles Times* article, entitled “Homesick for Mississippi, Says Japanese War Bride,” reported that a Japanese war bride named Kimiko Dargel became homesick not for Japan, but for Mississippi, where she lived with her husband’s parents when she first arrived in the United States. The article presented the Japanese bride as an American who missed Mississippi as her hometown after she moved to Los Angeles, California. In doing so, the article made Kimiko visible as an American mother through her children.

She [Kimiko] says that although the American diet is very cosmopolitan, she misses Japanese food and likes to prepare it often. Principal objectors to this, she explains, smiling at her daughters who “would much rather have hamburgers than sukiyaki.”⁴⁶

By describing her children as “the dark-eyed, happy youngsters,” the article presented them as Americans who “would much rather have hamburgers than sukiyaki.” With this, a Japanese woman became visible as a mother of American children.

Japanese war brides, introduced as mothers raising American children, became the perfect subjects to give the United States credit for being a racially and

44. James Michener, “Pursuit of Happiness by a GI and a Japanese: Marriage Surmounts Barriers of Language and Intolerance,” *Life*, 1954, 138.

45. Klein, *Cold War Orientalism*, 146.

46. Bob Will, “Homesick for Mississippi, Says Japanese War Bride,” *Los Angeles Times*, June 14, 1955.

culturally pluralist nation. Caroline Chung Simpson explains, “As white Americans tried to negotiate the threat of black integration, and government programs tried in vain to resettle interned Japanese Americans, Japanese war brides provided at least one ‘unofficial or obscure place’ out of which the redemption of cultural pluralism, was a distinct possibility.”⁴⁷ While Simpson focuses more on the domestic racial issue, this paper argues that it was also foreign policy considerations, as Klein claims, which propelled the United States to imagine itself welcoming and accommodating Asian people as part of the American family. With this political background, Simpson argues that Japanese war brides became a postwar prototype of the American model minority acculturating into white suburban lives as American wives and mothers.⁴⁸

VI. Achieving the American Dream: Ambassadors between the United States and Japan

Women who identified themselves as “Japanese war brides” also highlighted their role as mothers who raised “American children.” Through observing the activities of the Nikkei International Marriage Society, one of the statements that Japanese war brides emphatically stressed to the public was that they were successful mothers of American children. For example, the president, Kazuko Umezu Stout, emphasized that most Japanese war brides raised American children and acculturated into American society, having decent jobs and even grandchildren. In the Nikkei International Marriage Society’s newsletter, many women mentioned raising their children as their achievement. For example, Kuni, who was disowned by her parents as a result of her marriage to an American soldier, and whose husband died a few years earlier, wrote, “Please do not judge me, but look at my children.”⁴⁹ Her statement implies that she tried to recuperate from the stigma and suffering attached to her marriage by showcasing her “honorable” children. Another woman, Kotomi, details the severe hardship brought on by her husband’s disease. Since he could not work and earn money in the United States, she became depressed, thinking that she should commit suicide with her three children. After surviving these dark moments, she writes, “Now, my sons became independent and live honorably. This should be my reward for my sufferings.”⁵⁰ These two women viewed their children as proof of their recovery from past struggles brought on by their marriages.

47. Caroline Chung Simpson, *An Absent Presence: Japanese Americans in Postwar American Culture, 1945–1960* (London: Duke University Press, 2001), 165.

48. Simpson, *An Absent Presence*, 151.

49. Kazuko Umezu Stout, “Where are the Japanese War Brides? How are they doing?” *Nisqually Valley News*, September 29, 1988.

50. Katsu Hole, “Letters,” September 5, 2001, no. 39.

Along the same lines, the Japanese war brides pointed to their motherhood to maintain the legitimacy, as well as happiness, of their marriages. For instance, Chitose emphasized her children's successful acculturation into American society. She was proud of raising their children who adapted to American values and customs. She said, "I raised my children as Americans. I did not let them eat Japanese foods. They had to live here in the United States and marry American women. If they had Japanese values and customs, it would be difficult to survive here and have American family."⁵¹ It is clear that the Japanese war brides emphasized their role as mothers who raised American children to further substantiate their legitimacy as proper subjects in the United States.

In their illustration of their roles as "American mothers," war brides described their successful children as figures of the "American dream." Their quality of American motherhood is valorized by underscoring how well their children are doing in the United States. For example, Satoe said, "My oldest child got in Brown University. I was very happy and proud of my child entering Ivy League."⁵² Then, she continued, "America gives you a second chance for anybody. It is an American dream. Immigrants came to the United States and got in good schools like Ivy League. It does not discriminate people depending on where they are from and their nature. Immigrants and their children can climb the social ladder and eventually succeed." Satoe captured their children's success within an idea of the American dream and the U.S. as a nation of immigrants.

One of the most significant findings in this research is that women attempted to make themselves intelligible subjects within the nation using their "mixed blood" children as evidence of their successful marriages. This paper argues that the alleged success of their marriages as proven by their "mixed blood" children highlights the U.S. "multiracial" nation that emerged at the beginning of the Cold War. Multiracialism, whereby "mixed blood" children became positive subjects of the American dream, discursively allowed Japanese war brides to identify themselves as successful American mothers. It is significant that while their "mixed blood" children were a source of fear to the nation and subjects to be aborted in the postwar period, they became subjects of the nation's American dream during the Cold War.

Conclusion

A summary of the significant aims and findings of this research are as follows. First, this paper analyzed the discourses around the "mixed blood" children at the beginning of the occupation and found that they were initially viewed as a

51. Chitose (pseudonym), interview with author, Oak Harbor, Washington, 27 August, 2006.

52. Satoe (pseudonym), interview with author, Denver, Colorado, 23 March, 2007.

problem for Japan to resolve, and not the United States; thus, any American help was considered a benevolent rescue rather than an obligatory action due to the fact that the American occupation was responsible for the initial issue. However, this paper reveals the existence of a SCAP policy that freed American soldiers of any responsibility to their child and the child's mother and sent the soldiers who completed their assigned duty to their next station without any special consideration. While the occupation policy produced illegitimate children and situated them outside of a formal family unit, there was a void in the U.S. media's discussion of their illegitimate status. The discourses about mixed-race children offered the idea that the United States rescued them by providing clothes, food, homes, and families.

While "mixed blood" children were initially referred to as problems subject to abortion or later considered illegitimate, a significant shift occurred in which their birth was celebrated and they were recognized as part of an American family. Additionally, this was concurrent to the time when the American man became visible as the father to his "mixed blood" baby. Given that the military policy during the occupation prohibited American men from assuming the roles of fathers of "mixed blood" children, it was remarkable for this visibility to occur. In this moment, the multiracial family offered a glimpse of the United States overcoming "racism" and becoming a multiracial nation.⁵³ In doing so, American fathers with Japanese wives and children were interpellated as new national subjects at the beginning of the Cold War.

Finally, this paper examined how Japanese war brides viewed their own children. Interestingly, women attempted to portray themselves as intelligible subjects within the nation using their "mixed blood" children as evidence of their successful marriages. This paper argues that their allegedly successful marriages, proven by their "mixed blood" children, highlight the significance of the U.S. "multiracial" nation that emerged at the beginning of the Cold War. While their "mixed blood" children were a source of fear to the nation and subjects to be aborted in the postwar period, they became symbols of the American dream to the nation during the Cold War.

53. Klein, *Cold War Orientalism*, 146.