

“THE SPIRIT OF THE AGE”: BRITISH WAR CORRESPONDENTS  
AND INTERPRETATIONS OF WAR AND CULTURE  
IN THE RUSSO-JAPANESE WAR, 1904-1905

By

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(Under the Direction of John H. Morrow, Jr.)

ABSTRACT

The study of the Russo-Japanese War has fallen heavily into the shadow of the First World War, resulting in a distorted understanding of the conflict, particularly regarding the European observation and analysis of it at the time. This study proposes to take this event out of such a context, drawing attention to military and cultural influences that Europeans, particularly British war correspondents, carried with them into the war, such as Mahanism, Orientalism, and anxieties regarding modernity. It argues that these correspondents entered the conflict influenced by prominent, preexisting discourses on naval warfare, the Orient, and modernity, which generally advocated for a conscious link in the future development of society and the military. These and other discourses, not those stemming from the memory of the First World War, ought to be emphasized in the study of war, society, and culture before 1914.

INDEX WORDS: Russo-Japanese War, 1904-1905; History – Britain 20<sup>th</sup> Century; War Correspondent; Alexander Nordlund; M.A.; The University of Georgia; Orientalism; Alfred Thayer Mahan

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## PREFACE

Between the end of the Franco-Prussian War (1870-1871) and the outbreak of the First World War (1914-1918), the British popular press often wrote on the subject of warfare. Like British society itself, warfare underwent a rapid and sweeping evolution sparked by industrialization and imperialism during this period, sparking considerable debate within and without the military sphere on the nature of future warfare, particularly the “Next Great War.” Despite several colonial wars throughout this period, writers had to content themselves with simply imagining the nature of future war until the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905) provided them with the first concrete example of warfare between two modern militaries. With their own preexisting discourses on naval warfare, the Orient, and Edwardian politics, gender norms, and education, British war correspondents conveyed an image of modern warfare in their postwar writings that depicted war and military development as inseparable from social and cultural development, arguing that the increased destructiveness and stresses of modern warfare required a society culturally conditioned to fight and succeed in such an environment.

Following Britain’s military embarrassment in the Second Boer War (1899-1902), British writers saw an opportunity to learn of the nature of the “next war” in the Russo-Japanese War as it featured the two modern militaries of Russia and Japan or, in the words of *Times* correspondent Charles à Court Repington, “an island Empire at grips with a first-rate continental Power.”<sup>1</sup> Additionally, this war would ultimately be the final case

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<sup>1</sup> The Military Correspondent of *The Times* (Charles à Court Repington), *The War in the Far East, 1904-1905* (E.P. Dutton and Co.: New York 1905), p. 1

study for the Western powers of conventional war before 1914. Given the general public enthusiasm and willingness of millions to voluntarily enlist for military service in Britain at the outbreak of the First World War, it is important to understand how these millions understood the nature of warfare before 1914. As the British press commissioned several correspondents to cover the Russo-Japanese War, there was a demand amongst its readers for news of the war – or, more broadly, a general interest in war amongst British readers.<sup>2</sup> This study hopes to support the recent “World War Zero” scholarship on the Russo-Japanese War, which argues in favor of the global impact of the war, which became overshadowed by the historical significance of the First World War.<sup>3</sup> While many studies on the background of the First World War allude to the Russo-Japanese War, the latter war has not been significantly studied as an important historical event in its own right. Additionally, this particular emphasis on the Russo-Japanese War risks potential problems with teleology as it sometimes results in a “lessons not learned” approach to the war that began in the post-1918 scholarship of military historians such as B.H. Liddell Hart and J.F.C. Fuller.<sup>4</sup> The observations of correspondents in this war can help inform the historian how and possibly why these writers, as products of what Repington called “the spirit of the age,” viewed a subject like war the way they did leading into a future

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<sup>2</sup> See I.F. Clarke, *Voices Prophecy War: Future Wars 1763-3749* (Oxford University Press: Oxford 1992); Antulio Echevarria, *Imagining Future War: The West's Technological Revolution and Visions of Wars to Come, 1880-1914* (Praeger: London 2007); A.J.A. Morris, *The Scaremongers: The Advocacy of War and Rearmament, 1896-1914* (Routledge and Kegan Paul: London 1984); Cecil D. Eby, *The Road to Armageddon: The Martial Spirit in English Popular Literature, 1870-1914* (Duke University Press: Durham 1987)

<sup>3</sup> See John Steinberg, David Wolff, et al., ed., *The Russo-Japanese War in Global Perspective: World War Zero*, 2 vols. (Brill: Leiden, Boston 2005); John Chapman, Inaba Chiharu, Rotem Kowner, ed., *Rethinking the Russo-Japanese War, 1904-5*, 2 vols. (Global Oriental: Kent 2007)

<sup>4</sup> For example, see J.F.C. Fuller, *A Military History of the Western World*, vol. III (Da Capo: New York 1956) p. 168; T.H.E. Travers, “Technology, Tactics, and Morale: Jean de Bloch, the Boer War, and British Military Theory, 1900-1914,” *Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 51, No. 2, Technology and War (June 1979) pp. 264-286; David Schimmelpenninck van der Oye, “Rewriting the Russo-Japanese War: A Centenary Retrospective,” *The Russian Review* (January 2008) 78-87



war rather than merely what they failed to learn, why what they learned was wrong, or the actual reality of the war seen through historical hindsight.<sup>5</sup>

For sources, this project will primarily utilize the postwar monographs of British war correspondents on the Russo-Japanese War. These will consist primarily of correspondents from a civilian background, with the exceptions of Charles à Court Repington of the *Times* (who actually wrote on the war in London) and military attaché Sir Ian Hamilton, both of whom were widely read by British readers. Such an approach requires emphasis on national and London-based newspapers as many, if not all, of the British war correspondents wrote for them. Historian Glenn R. Wilkinson has criticized this approach as it overemphasizes the “personalities of the image-makers” of war by targeting the “post-battle monographs rather than the text of the newspaper reports written at the time.”<sup>6</sup> While conscious of this shortcoming, this study attempts to consider both sources as both products and perpetrators of a larger discourse of war and culture rather than original “image-makers” themselves. Additionally, in consideration of the strict censorship placed on correspondents and their newspaper dispatches during the Russo-Japanese War, “post-battle monographs” allowed correspondents greater freedom to articulate their observations on war and culture. Also, these expanded monographs following the war on the observations made by correspondents may also give further insight into the brief reports they made during the war. Furthermore, aside from the use

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<sup>5</sup> Repington, p. 606. See S.P. MacKenzie, “Willpower or Firepower? The Unlearned Military Lessons of the Russo-Japanese War,” in David Wells and Sandra Wilson, ed., *The Russo-Japanese War in Cultural Perspective, 1904-05* (Macmillan: London 1999) pp. 30-40; Yigal Sheffy, “A Model not to Follow: The European Armies and the Lessons of the War,” in Rotem Kowner, ed., *The Impact of the Russo-Japanese War* (Routledge: London and New York 2007) pp. 253-268; Bruce W. Menning, “Neither Mahan nor Moltke: Strategy in the War,” in Steinberg, Wolff, et al., ed., *Russo-Japanese War in Global Perspective*, vol. I, pp. 129-156

<sup>6</sup> Glenn R. Wilkinson, *Depictions and Images of War in Edwardian Newspapers, 1899-1914* (Palgrave MacMillan: New York 2003) p. 4

of identifying titles such as “Our Military Correspondent” (Repington) in newspapers, it is relatively difficult to identify the writer of newspaper dispatches – especially for papers employing multiple correspondents – as they tend to cite authorship to a “correspondent” rather than the author himself. As for imagery, despite having their own correspondents in the field, the *Illustrated London News* often used photographs originating from other news sources, such as the American magazine *Collier’s Weekly*.

Additionally, in analyzing the writings of war correspondents on the Russo-Japanese War, this study does not attempt to analyze “Britain” or “British society” as a monolith. Rather, it attempts to follow trends in historical scholarship on the dominant intellectual and cultural views of war in Britain before the First World War. For Michael C.C. Adams, this included the views of the “older established classes of gentlemen farmers, lawyers, professors, and military officers” that influenced Victorian and Edwardian culture.<sup>7</sup> Cecil Eby approached British popular fiction of the time as symptoms of a “contagion” that infected British society with a “martial spirit” up to 1914.<sup>8</sup> Others, such as Antulio Echevarria and I.F. Clarke, attempted to analyze the broader intellectual trends (military and civilian) of the time regarding imaginings of the future of warfare and society.<sup>9</sup> Additionally, while such imaginings may fall within the realm of conservative, nationalistic “scaremongers,” Hew Strachan argued that the diverse societies of the First World War ultimately transformed into monoliths in 1914:

Immediately the war broke out [in 1914], previously polymorphous societies were overtaken by uniformity in thought and deed. Ideas which the other side had also entertained before the war became the monopoly of one. Germany could now see no

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<sup>7</sup> Michael C.C. Adams, *The Great Adventure: Male Desire and the Coming of World War I* (Indiana University Press: Bloomington 1990) p. xiv

<sup>8</sup> See Eby, *The Road to Armageddon*

<sup>9</sup> See Clarke, *Voices Prophesying War*; Echevarria, *Imagining Future War*

good in capitalism or liberalism, Britain none in collectivism or militarism. Thus the war became the stuff of ‘low’ politics as well as ‘high.’<sup>10</sup>

While perhaps representative of many intellectual and societal views of war analyzed by Adams, Clarke, Echevarria, and Eby, British war correspondents had very few (if any) fundamentally different views of war and society in their postwar works on the Russo-Japanese War, views that essentially perpetuated up to 1914.

As the focus of this study is more on discourses of war and culture rather than actual warfare, it does not provide a deep analysis of the events of the Russo-Japanese War, with the sole exception being the naval war. To broadly analyze the writing of correspondents on the naval campaign, the theories of Alfred Thayer Mahan, perhaps best known as “Mahanism,” are emphasized. While Mahanism represented a much wider context of naval discourse, the focus on the public presentation of naval warfare requires an analysis of a source known at least implicitly within a popular audience. With a fairly strong public following in Britain leading up to 1904, Mahanism provided both a direct and indirect context into understanding the naval discourse utilized by correspondents during the war.<sup>11</sup> Interestingly, historiography has placed Mahanism predominantly within the context of the First World War rather than the Russo-Japanese War. Mahan and his work are often cited as a major spark to the naval arms race between Britain and Germany starting in the 1890s and whose theoretical approach was disproven by the First World War (and yet perpetuated to some extent into the Second World War). Such an

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<sup>10</sup> Hew Strachan, *The Outbreak of the First World War* (Oxford University Press: Oxford 2004) p. viii; There is also a new work that asserts militarism was indeed a phenomenon within the British left as well. See Matthew Johnson, *Militarism and the British Left, 1902-1914* (Palgrave MacMillan: New York 2013)

<sup>11</sup> For studies of Mahan, see Philip A. Crowl, “Alfred Thayer Mahan: The Naval Historian,” in Peter Paret, ed., *Makers of Modern Strategy: From Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age* (Princeton University Press: Princeton 1986); Sadao Asada, *From Mahan to Pearl Harbor: The Imperial Japanese Navy and the United States* (Naval Institute Press: Annapolis 2006); Strachan, *The First World War, Vol. I: To Arms* (Oxford University Press: Oxford 2001) pp.815-817

approach, however, fails to highlight the importance of the Russo-Japanese War in this acceptance of Mahanism. By placing Mahanism within the context of the Russo-Japanese War, this study attempts to explain how it perpetuated through 1914.

For cultural discourse, the study attempts to analyze the social observations of correspondents regarding Japan and Russia, or, more broadly, Orientals and Occidentals. This approach utilizes the theoretical concept of Orientalism approached by Edward Said, Richard Minear, and Patrick Porter in addition to other secondary studies on the Russo-Japanese War.<sup>12</sup> Using the concept of “Military Orientalism,” Porter defines Orientalism as “the dialogic relationship between ‘Self’ and ‘Other’, and how perceptions of the East are bound up with Western debates about the West.” From this perspective, Porter claims to deviate from Said’s view of Orientalism, arguing that it is “not a monolith, but it is a plural and shifting set of epistemological ideas, attitudes, and practices.”<sup>13</sup> While Porter did allude to the British analysis of the Russo-Japanese War as part of his study, he focused primarily on the views from the military and policymakers in British.<sup>14</sup> This study attempts to both expand upon and, to an extent, challenge Porter’s analysis by focusing on the writings of press correspondents, which offered a more popular analysis of the war for the British reading public. This approach aims at explaining how war correspondents related Japanese and Russian society to their British readers and what features of these societies led to either victory or defeat in the war. Additionally, it argues that prewar cultural discourses helped produce their analyses, as according to Porter, “British officers and war correspondents projected onto the war their own

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<sup>12</sup> Patrick Porter, *Military Orientalism: Eastern War through Western Eyes* (Columbia University Press: New York 2009); Porter, “Military Orientalism? British Observers of the Japanese Way of War, 1904-1910,” *War & Society*, vol. 26, no. 1 (May 2006)

<sup>13</sup> Porter, *Military Orientalism*, p. 14

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 85-109

preconceived ideas.”<sup>15</sup> Similarly, this cultural analysis attempts to show how the British saw themselves as a society compared to the warring nations of Japan and Russia in the Russo-Japanese War.

Chapter I covers the naval theatre of the Russo-Japanese War. It utilizes the best known work of Alfred Thayer Mahan, *The Influence of Sea Power upon History, 1660-1783* (1890), and the writings of *Times* correspondents Repington and Lionel James and the *Daily Telegraph*'s Bennet Burleigh. These correspondents were some of the only ones to have written extensively on the naval theatre of the war. The chapter attempts to analyze the extent to which Mahanism had come to define naval warfare in Britain. It argues that these correspondents entered the war heavily influenced by Mahanism and constantly presented the naval war to their readers in terms of its discourse, despite encountering some inconsistencies. Chapter II interprets how British war correspondents culturally explained Japanese success and Russian failure in the war. Incorporating Said's, Minear's, and Porter's views of Orientalism, it offers a possible cultural explanation as to why Europeans ultimately did not accept many of the military lessons from the war. Although British correspondents praised Japan's social transformation, they perceived that the war essentially contained too many "Others" to apply to European military needs and circumstances. Chapter III considers the ways that British correspondents portrayed Japanese society and politics. Considering the cultural anxieties regarding modernity circulating in Edwardian Britain, it asserts that correspondents projected these fears into their works in the ways they idealized Japan in terms of politics, gender norms, and education.

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 109

Lastly, it is not an objective of this study to analyze (or criticize) the ways in which war correspondents provided inaccurate or “glorified” depictions of the Russo-Japanese War. While British correspondents often pointed to acts of heroism in the war, they also reflected quite directly on the carnage and horrible fighting conditions they witnessed, especially at Port Arthur. What is perhaps most interesting is that despite such depictions of warfare, correspondents advocated that society adapt itself so that it could sustain such carnage rather than avoiding future war altogether. Such a rationale seems the product of a society that had become increasingly resigned to the “inevitability” of its own future war.

## CHAPTER I

### *THE INFLUENCE OF SEA POWER UPON WAR CORRESPONDENTS, 1904-1905*

#### Introduction

In 1890, Alfred Thayer Mahan (1840-1914), an American naval officer and lecturer at the U.S. Naval War College, published his first major treatise on naval warfare, *The Influence of Sea Power upon History, 1660-1783*. It became an international bestseller and provided navalists with a case for a significant increase in the size of navies, especially those of the United States, Great Britain, Germany, and Japan. Additionally, many of these navies adopted several of the naval principles advocated by Mahan, most notably the emphasis on the capital ship and concentration of battle fleets in home waters, by the start of the First World War. Despite this popularity and influence, the relatively peaceful global situation would not allow for a major test of Mahan's theories until the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905). Along with military attachés from several countries, a sizeable number of British press correspondents went to East Asia to report to the public on the nature of warfare between Russia and Japan, a traditional imperial power and an aspiring one. This chapter shows that many of these correspondents often revealed a tendency to observe naval operations in terms of the discourse and theories presented by Mahan in 1890, perhaps better known as Mahanism. Furthermore, Mahanism, and its perceived success in the Russo-Japanese War, reveals a public presentation of naval warfare in British society as a phenomenon with unchanging

principles that transcended technological change before its first experience of industrialized warfare in 1914.

While Mahan certainly influenced views of naval warfare amongst British military and government circles, his popular theories began to permeate into the public sphere as well after 1890. They appeared in several articles in the *Times* (some written by Mahan himself) and influenced the immensely popular espionage story *The Riddle of the Sands* (1903) by Erskine Childers. As the British had not experienced any major naval wars since the Napoleonic Wars (1803-1815), the Russo-Japanese War offered them one of their few case studies of modern naval warfare. Only three book-length works, however, by Lionel James and Charles à Court Repington of the *Times* and Bennet Burleigh of the *Daily Telegraph*, offer extended studies of the naval war. While these authors did not regularly or directly allude to military theorists like Mahan and his ideas, they provided readers with descriptions of warfare that were influenced to an extent by the popular military theory of the time.

Land warfare has served as the primary focus of historians in their critique of military doctrine leading up to 1914. Naval warfare, perhaps due its inconclusive results in the First World War, has received only some attention, dwelling mostly on technological advances – submarines in particular – and the diplomatic tensions caused by the naval arms race between Britain and Germany. In consideration of Mahan, the *Influence of Sea Power* is often considered the intellectual spark that caused the naval arms race between Britain and Germany leading up to the First World War. As the work connected imperial power with naval power, historians argue that Germany decided to build a navy to rival Britain in an effort to elevate its global status, which created tensions



that ultimately resulted in Britain siding against Germany in 1914. In connection with the Russo-Japanese War, historians argue that the results of the naval battle at Tsushima in 1905 essentially confirmed the validity of Mahan's theories to Western observers. These theories, which carried a heavy emphasis on historical study, essentially argue that the history of naval warfare pointed to the existence of unchanging strategic principles that remain relevant beyond technological change. It is also important to note that Mahan's methodology was not entirely unique. Mahan's own influence can be attributed to British naval historian Sir John Knox Laughton.<sup>16</sup> Thus, a key observation to note is that Mahan's work resulted from a trans-Atlantic exchange of naval theory between Britain and the United States. From this perspective, Mahanism becomes part of an international discourse favoring imperialism and naval spending.<sup>17</sup>

To approach this subject, this chapter primarily utilizes two types of sources: Mahan's *Influence of Sea Power* and the postwar accounts of Repington (which is a collection of his *Times* articles written during the war), Burleigh, and James on the naval war. Mahan's work provides background and context for the conceptions of naval warfare by British writers during the Russo-Japanese War, especially their perspectives on new technologies like the torpedo, *guerre de course*, the primacy of firepower, the logistical importance of navies and colonial bases, and the role of battle fleet engagements in deciding the outcome of a war. This chapter will attempt to illustrate that the Russo-Japanese War confirmed to several observers that while technology had changed the face of warfare, it had not changed the fundamental principles of warfare, a

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<sup>16</sup> Andrew Lambert, *The Foundations of Naval History: John Knox Laughton, the Royal Navy and the Historical Profession* (Chatham Publishing: London 1998) p. 12

<sup>17</sup> See Jon Tetsuro Sumida, *Inventing Grand Strategy and Teaching Command: The Classic Works of Alfred Thayer Mahan Reconsidered* (Johns Hopkins University Press: Baltimore 1997) p. 28

major theme in Mahanism. While not necessarily unique, Mahan argued that technological change affected only the tactical precedents of warfare, which was not nearly as important as the unchanging, underlying principles of warfare:

But a precedent is different from and less valuable than a principle. The former may be originally faulty, or may cease to apply through change of circumstances; the latter has its root in the essential nature of things, and...remains a standard to which action must conform to attain success.<sup>18</sup>

Looking at history, Mahan argued that this notion especially applied to naval warfare. He insisted that past changes in weapons and military conditions only attained success when they adhered to the unchanging tactical, operational, and strategic principles of war, especially the concentration rather than dispersal of navies with the ultimate aim of decisive fleet battle to decide control of trade and overseas communications. By analyzing the particular language Mahan used in approaching aspects of strategy, weapons, and the particular operations of war, this study aims to emphasize what correspondents saw as important in naval operations and how or if their observations directly related to Mahan's theories, or, how they were part of the discourse of "Mahanism." This will not rely simply on outright mentions of Mahan and allusions to his theories, but also on how what they observed during the war did or did not relate, whether by choice or unconsciously, to Mahanism. It cannot be assumed that these war correspondents all read and agreed with Mahan's theories. However, like Carl von Clausewitz's *Vom Kriege*, Mahan's influence most certainly spread implicitly – and, like Clausewitz, perhaps fairly crudely – into the general discourse on naval warfare outside

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<sup>18</sup> Alfred Thayer Mahan, *The Influence of Sea Power upon History, 1660-1783* (Little, Brown, and Company: Boston 1894) p. 7

of the military establishment, thus indirectly influencing both military and public observations of war.

### The Direct Background of the War

When the Russo-Japanese War broke out at the beginning of 1904, large numbers of Western correspondents – mainly British and American – and military attachés rushed to East Asia to observe and report on both the land and naval war. While many British correspondents did not stay for the entire war due to heavy censorship by Japan, or they simply did not go at all, they continued to write for their newspapers on their insights into the events and background of the war. Through these reports, British readers could have gained an increased knowledge of the origins, early engagements, and predicted results of the naval war, which often contained some influence from Mahan’s theories of naval warfare. With this emphasis on Mahanism, correspondents helped spread a particular knowledge of naval warfare before it had even been tested in 1904.

The writings of the Military Correspondent for the *Times*, Charles Court à Repington, offered civilian readers the most obvious allusions to elements of Mahanism, especially regarding perspectives on battle fleet engagements.<sup>19</sup> A former army colonel, the British Army forced him to resign his commission in 1902 after the discovery of an affair he had with the wife of a British official in Egypt. Soon after, he became the official military correspondent to the *Morning Post* in 1902 and then the *Times* in 1904. At the outbreak of the war, Repington resorted to acting as an “arm-chair” correspondent, using mainly secondary information from military and diplomatic contacts that he gained

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<sup>19</sup> For more on Repington, see W. Michael Ryan, *Lieutenant-Colonel Charles à Court Repington: A Study in the Interaction of Personality, the Press, and Power* (Garland: New York 1987)

as a fairly high-ranking officer while in the army and other news sources. With this approach, Repington became, in Trevor Royle's words, "a new kind of military commentator, a journalist who relied on contacts and his professional instincts instead of strength and stamina to take him round the battlefields."<sup>20</sup> Thus, it is highly likely that Repington's writings on the war relied heavily on his own military experience (or theoretical biases) and a more direct knowledge of the leading military theories of the time in comparison to civilian journalists.

In his articles, Repington almost immediately alluded to Antoine-Henry Jomini's military theory, telling his readers that "war is not an exact science, but an art."<sup>21</sup> He continued along this vein by stating that "the principles of strategy are eternal and of universal application." In this context, it is important to realize that Mahan had one particularly heavy influence for his theories to whom he alludes occasionally in his work: Jomini. A contemporary – and competitor – of Carl von Clausewitz, Jomini wrote extensively on military theory and is perhaps best known for his work entitled *The Art of War* (1838). Generally, Jomini – as the title would suggest – argued that "war in its *ensemble* is not a science, but an art."<sup>22</sup> Rather than being dictated by "scientific combinations," he argued in favor of several other "controlling elements":

The passions which agitate the masses...the warlike qualities of these masses, the energy and talent of their commanders, the spirit, more or less martial, of nations and epochs, – in a word, everything that can be called the poetry and metaphysics of war, – will have a permanent influence on its results.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Trevor Royle, *War Report: The War Correspondent's View of Battle from the Crimea to the Falklands* (Grafton Books: London 1989) pp. 110-114

<sup>21</sup> Repington, p. 15

<sup>22</sup> Antoine-Henri Jomini (Baron de), *The Art of War*, trans. Capt. G.H. Mendell and Lieut. W.P. Craighill (J.B. Lippincott & Co.: Philadelphia 1862) p. 321

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid*, p. 321

Jomini also acknowledged the existence of inherent rules in war. He argues that while they are not mathematically precise, these rules can help one point out errors to be avoided and attain success in war. Additionally, Jomini asserts that “Correct theories, founded upon right principles, sustained by actual events of wars, and added to accurate military history, will form a true school of instruction for generals.”<sup>24</sup> Mahan’s theories of sea power bore a heavy resemblance to Jomini on the art of war. Mahan argued that there are six general conditions that affect the sea power of nations: geographical position, physical conformation (including “natural productions and climate”), extent of territory, size of population, character of the people, and the character of the government and its national institutions.<sup>25</sup> This first section of Mahan’s work is unique in that the extent and strength of a nation’s sea power are directly determined by geography and the social and political makeup of a particular nation. It also relates to Jomini’s notion of the “poetry and metaphysics of war.”

In viewing the situation of Japan in January 1904, Repington quickly transitions into Mahanian theory. The language used by Repington was also meant to relate Japan’s strategic situation to that of Britain, which shared the same insular geography:

If there is one principle of national strategy more pregnant with meaning than another for an insular state, it is that which affirms and reiterates the danger of the dispatch of military forces across waters not thoroughly cleared of hostile ships...until the Russian ships are sunk, captured, or shut up in their ports...there can be no security for the sea communications of an expeditionary force.<sup>26</sup>

This relates directly to one of Mahan’s primary strategic objectives in a sea war: to maintain secure communications between the secondary and home bases. According to

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p. 325

<sup>25</sup> Mahan, *Influence of Sea Power*, pp. 28-29

<sup>26</sup> Ibid, p. 17

Mahan, when the principal theatre of operations sits overseas, the navy must maintain communications between these two strong points by enforcing “military control of the intervening sea” so that troop transports and supply-ships can move in safety. He states that this can be done by “clearing the sea in all directions of hostile cruisers” or “by accompanying in force (convoying).”<sup>27</sup>

What is especially interesting about this section of Repington’s work is that it is compiled from a *Times* article he wrote from January 19, 1904, over two weeks before war was declared on February 8.<sup>28</sup> Although it is highly likely that war between Russia and Japan was considered inevitable by the end of January, since both countries had broken off diplomatic ties, Repington had begun making predictions of how the war would take shape in Mahanian terms. As noted in the previous quote on his allusion to the essential strategic principles to be followed by an “insular state,” Repington made his objective quite clear to his reader:

Our [Repington’s] object is rather to stir the pulse of the British people, and to make them channel the engrossing problems which may soon be solved under their eyes...no campaign that has ever been waged since the close of the Great War promises such intensely dramatic interest for England and her Empire ...<sup>29</sup>

In this context, Repington hoped to stress to his readers that the military lessons of this war would offer insight into the correctness of military theory and the defense policies utilized by Britain. He believed that this was especially important in terms of the Royal Navy, as “the whole theory and practice of modern naval war will be on its first great

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<sup>27</sup> Mahan, *Influence of Sea Power*, p. 514

<sup>28</sup> See Repington, *War in the Far East*, 15n1

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 23-24; It is important to note immediately that the term “Great War,” which is today most commonly associated with the First World War, refers here to the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars (1792-1815).

trial.”<sup>30</sup> This theory of modern naval warfare would include both Mahan and other contemporary theorists, perhaps most notably the British civilian theorist Julian Corbett.

In observing the initial disposition of the Russian Pacific Fleet and its base, Port Arthur, before the war, Repington noted several deficiencies that were consistent with Mahan’s view of the mutual dependency of fleets and strategic bases along lines of communication. Repington told his readers that “docks, arsenals, skilled mechanics, and all the vast paraphernalia of naval yards are so many component and inseparable parts of sea supremacy.”<sup>31</sup> Since Vladivostok iced-up in the winter, Port Arthur was Russia’s only year-round warm-water port in the Pacific Ocean – and acted as a strategic position for the Russian Navy. Repington, however, noted that Russia had not developed Port Arthur for this purpose, which deprived the Pacific Fleet of an immediate base for resupply and repairs. Additionally, Russia had not sufficiently fortified it for coastal defense, thus leaving its defense mainly to the Pacific Fleet. Mahan perceived these elements as strategic issues throughout his work, arguing that a government must develop its sea power by providing “resting places,” or seaports, for its navy to repair and refuel (or “coal”). Furthermore, Mahan also insists that “seaports should defend themselves,” as a navy’s sole purpose is to engage the enemy in open waters.<sup>32</sup> From Repington’s perspective, Russia had prepared for neither of these considerations.

In viewing the outbreak of the war, Lionel James of the *Times* shared a less obvious recognition of Mahan’s theory of naval warfare. In covering the war, James is especially known for his unique coverage of the early naval war aboard the Chinese steamship *SS Haimun*, where he reported the war using wireless telegraphy, which

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid., pp. 23-24

<sup>31</sup> Repington, p. 29

<sup>32</sup> Mahan, *Influence of Sea Power*, pp. 83, 453

allowed James more constant coverage of the action as he did not have to return to land to relay his reports. This style of reporting, however, created Japanese and Russian suspicion, as it allowed James the ability to report outside of official surveillance and censorship. The Russians especially protested this reporting, fearing that the Japanese would intercept his wireless messages to track Russian positions. By the summer of 1904, James abandoned reporting aboard the *Haimun* in favor of moving inland into Manchuria when the Russians threatened him with charges of espionage.<sup>33</sup> At the end of the war, James wrote a book-length work entitled *A Study of the Russo-Japanese War* in response to what he believed were “partisan” studies of the war heavily favoring either Japan or Russia.<sup>34</sup>

The earliest acknowledgement of a least some kind of knowledge of Mahan’s theories in James’ work occurs in his study of the military situation in the Far East leading up to the war. Like Repington, James recognized Japan’s concern of controlling the sea during a land campaign in Manchuria. As Japan’s home base rested much closer to the main theatre of operations compared to Russia (the Trans-Siberian railway was its quickest route to the Far East), control of the sea would allow Japan to “place between four and five hundred thousand men in the field, long before the Siberian railway could reinforce the existing strength of the Russian garrisons in the Far East.”<sup>35</sup> Additionally, James also attributes Russian optimism towards their naval position in the Far East to Mahan’s influence on naval thought at the time:

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<sup>33</sup> Peter Slattery, *Reporting the Russo-Japanese War: Lionel James’s First Wireless Transmissions to “The Times”* (Global Oriental: Kent 2004), pp. xi-xvi, 125-126

<sup>34</sup> I had initial skepticism for the authorship of this work due to the pseudonym used, although it is catalogued under his name in Google Books. I decided that James did indeed write it after finding it within the Cornell University Library catalogue.

<sup>35</sup> “Chasseur” (Lionel James), *A Study of the Russo-Japanese War* (William Blackwood and Sons: Edinburgh 1905) p. 11



...the prevailing impression in Western naval schools was that the battleship would be the decisive factor in modern naval warfare, and as on paper the Japanese were considerably inferior to the Russians in this class of vessel, the Russian officers were satisfied that their Pacific fleet would be able to carry the war to the coasts of Japan until the time was ripe to engage upon a land campaign.<sup>36</sup>

The idea of the battleship, or “capital ship,” as the most important weapon of any navy has influential roots in the works of Mahan. While the *Influence of Sea Power* never directly advocates favoring battleship navies, its treatment of torpedo cruisers indirectly advocates an emphasis on large, heavily-gunned ships within navies.<sup>37</sup> Comparing torpedo cruisers to fire-ships of the imperial wars of Early Modern Europe in tactics, Mahan argues that both types of ships were incapable of acting outside the artillery support of their fleet’s larger ships, particularly the ships-of-the-line, which Mahan seems to subtly equate to the battleship, especially in his view of Cromwell’s use of such ships against the Dutch in 1652.<sup>38</sup> Thus, it can be inferred that Mahan believes a large artillery ship like the battleship ought to be the main focus of any navy as it is capable of carrying the largest caliber and quantity of artillery of any other class of ship in a fleet, thus making it the predominant ship in any major naval engagement.<sup>39</sup>

With this allusion to “the prevailing impression in Western naval schools,” James reveals the extent to which Mahan had influenced naval thought outside the United States leading up to the First World War. With superiority in battleships, the Russians believed that they were capable of defeating Japan through naval power alone. When the Russian

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid, p. 16

<sup>37</sup> Mahan’s theories on naval architecture did not receive the same positive acceptance as did his theories on strategy and military principles. Nevertheless, he did in essence favor capital ships as the primary weapon of a fleet. See Sumida, *Inventing Grand Strategy and Teaching Command*, pp. 63-64

<sup>38</sup> Mahan, *Influence of Sea Power*, pp. 109-115, 132-133

<sup>39</sup> Philip A. Crowl, “Alfred Thayer Mahan: The Naval Historian,” in Paret, ed., *Makers of Modern Strategy*, p. 458

fleet sailed from Port Arthur on February 4, 1904, James noted the concern within Japanese naval circles, which feared that the Russian naval commander, Admiral Stark, was “bringing his fleet to force matters in Japanese waters.”<sup>40</sup> Believing that the Russians would use their fleet for offensive operations to force fleet engagement, it also appears that the Imperial Japanese Navy (IJN) anticipated that the naval war would take on a Mahanian character – or, in more British terms, they expected the Russians to “Copenhagen” their fleet in port.<sup>41</sup> This appears highly likely as the IJN – which had received its training from the Royal Navy – was also heavily influenced by Mahan’s theories. This consideration is confirmed by Japanese historian Sadao Asada, who noted that Mahan’s work became a textbook in the Japanese Army and Naval Staff Colleges and that more of Mahan’s works were translated into Japanese than any other language.<sup>42</sup>

Unlike Repington, James does not speak as authoritatively on military matters, as he does not have a military background. However, as previously mentioned, James does acknowledge that he is aware of what was widely accepted and discussed within the military community regarding the perceived superiority of battleships. In order to discuss actual military events and their significance, James had to rely on actually being close to the action, as his authority to his readers rested in his observations and the necessity of communicating with a wide variety of people with more intimate knowledge of happenings in the Far East. Repington, by contrast, had previous experience in the British Army and had risen to the rank of Colonel before resigning his commission,

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<sup>40</sup> James, p. 18

<sup>41</sup> To “Copenhagen” an enemy fleet refers to Admiral Horatio Nelson’s preemptive strike against the Danish fleet in 1807 to eliminate a potential future strategic threat to Britain against Napoleon. It became a relatively common term to advocate the preemptive destruction or confiscation of potentially hostile fleets. The destruction of the neutral Vichy French Fleet by the Royal Navy in 1940 accorded with this principle.

<sup>42</sup> Asada, p. 4

giving him access to more privileged military circles. This higher rank allowed him to comment from a cozy office in London, perceived as credible by his readers due to his residual prestige.

When the Japanese fleet left port on February 6, James noted that “in the existence of that fleet was vested the whole of the scheme of expansion which had inspired all of their labours and ambitions of the last twenty years.”<sup>43</sup> This statement marks an important distinction regarding Mahan’s notion of sea power. To Mahan, sea power was not the ultimate instrument of simply national power, but *imperial* power. A nation’s sea power was directly related to the extent of its commerce and control of colonies, both as military bases and markets. To expand sea power, colonial and commercial expansion had to ensue at the same pace, or vice versa. In a way, Mahan’s view of naval history was a reaction to the rapid European imperial expansion into Africa and the Far East occurring during his own lifetime, which may explain the instant global popularity of his theories.<sup>44</sup> Thus, to James, Japanese imperial expansion relied absolutely upon its fleet in a time “ripe for her to commence expansion” into China and Korea, the latter where James claimed that Japan intended to utilize “as the best source from which the defect in the home produce of rice was to be supplied” and as an outlet of employment for Japan, thus increasing its overall commercial and imperial power.<sup>45</sup> As dictated by Mahanism, a capital ship-based fleet and imperialism were the “natural” by-products of one another, as one could not be feasibly attained without the other.

Like James, the reports of veteran Scottish war correspondent Bennet Burleigh of the *Daily Telegraph* also contain fewer overt allusions to Mahanism on sea power in his

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<sup>43</sup> James, p. 19

<sup>44</sup> Crowl, in Paret, ed. *Makers of Modern Strategy*, pp. 462-9

<sup>45</sup> James, pp. 5-6

work entitled *Empire of the East*. With previous reporting experience from the British colonial wars in Sudan and South Africa and even military experience as a Confederate soldier in the U.S. Civil War, Burleigh had already become fairly well-known in his field. Like Mahan, Burleigh shares the same view of the seas as “the great highways of the world.”<sup>46</sup> Additionally, he noted the Russian’s intended projection of sea power into the Far East, making Port Arthur its “great naval arsenal” and Dalny (Dalian) “the commercial haven of Manchuria.”<sup>47</sup> Compared to Repington and James, Burleigh’s most unique comments relating to Mahan involve his speculation on the stationing of Russian cruisers in Vladivostok before the war:

I know not if the Russians had raiding designs, in the event of war, upon northern Japanese ports, such as Hakodate, or intended rushing through the channels and putting in an appearance off Yokohama. But if so it would matter little, and would not sensibly affect the main struggle, which must take place elsewhere.<sup>48</sup>

Burleigh’s view is practically identical to Mahan’s view of *guerre de course*, or “commerce-destroying.” Mahan views this strategy as an inferior form of naval warfare, arguing that it cannot act without support from a home base, outposts abroad, or a powerful fleet. Additionally, he also views the results of such a strategy as minimal, arguing that it can never obtain control of the seas and does nothing more than cause needless suffering. Furthermore, it never seeks to do what Mahan advocates is the ultimate objective of a navy: to destroy the enemy fleet.<sup>49</sup> Burleigh here takes on a similar attitude, arguing that such a strategy would “matter little” in comparison to what he believed was more important: the “main struggle” involving the fleets.

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<sup>46</sup> Bennet Burleigh, *Empire of the East, or, Japan and Russia at War, 1904-5* (Chapman & Hall: London 1905) p. 3

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 39

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 49

<sup>49</sup> Mahan, *Influence of Sea Power*, pp. 132-6

In looking at the strategic situation in the Far East leading up to the Russo-Japanese War, the observations of Repington, James, and Burleigh contain several elements of Mahan's doctrine of sea power, perhaps most notably the anticipation of a decisive fleet engagement. Repington's work is especially of interest as it reveals a more conscious attempt to disseminate popular ideas within military circles to his more public audience within the *Times*. Although James and Burleigh wrote their analyses following the war in 1905, their allusions to elements present in Mahan's theories of naval war indicate that they survived what Repington argued would be the first test for the theory and practice of modern naval warfare. From these analyses, it appears that Mahanian doctrine of naval warfare had begun to make its way into the mainstream of public knowledge through major news outlets like the *Times* and *Daily Telegraph* before the Russo-Japanese War even put it to the test. But some questions remained: would this war reveal evidence that contradicted Mahan's naval doctrine? If so, would correspondents acknowledge this evidence and reject it, or would Mahan's doctrine be too prevalent of an influence over their observations?

#### The Outbreak of War: From Port Arthur to the End of 1904

On the night of February 8, 1904, the IJN launched a surprise attack with torpedo boats against the Russian Pacific Fleet, which was at anchor in Port Arthur. Although neither side had formally declared war, this act signaled the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese War. Several fleet engagements ensued over the course of the year, the largest being the Japanese victory at the Battle of the Yellow Sea on August 10. After sustaining crippling losses, the Russian fleet retreated back to port, only to be destroyed by joint

attacks from the IJN and Imperial Japanese Army (IJA) at the end of the year during the Siege of Port Arthur.

The successful torpedo attack by the Japanese resulted in the damage to important Russian capital ships, the battleships *Retvisan* and *Tsarevitch* and the heavy cruiser *Pallada*. To readers at first glance, the Japanese success implied the invalidity of Mahan's theory of the superiority of capital ships over torpedo boats, or the strategy of battle fleet engagements over *guerre de course*. Nevertheless, Repington was quick to discourage his readers from making such a hasty conclusion in the wake of this engagement. Repington, perhaps out of duty of being British, blamed the French and the *jeune école*, a French naval school which advocated the strategy of *guerre de course* using small craft such as torpedo boats and destroyers against battleships, for this misguided approach to naval warfare. Repington argued for a "balance between the claims of torpedo fanatics and the counter-claims of their opponents," borrowing some of the language used previously by Mahan on the subject. He acknowledged that "torpedo warfare offers limitless opportunities for the display...of nerve and audacity."<sup>50</sup> These are similar to the sentiments of Mahan, who acknowledged the "large demands upon the nerve of the assailant" in comparing torpedo boats to fire-ships.<sup>51</sup>

The outbreak of the naval war in East Asia provided a contradiction for proponents of Mahan's naval doctrine. The small, inexpensive, and supposedly inferior torpedo boats of the IJN had inflicted a serious material blow to the expensive and "superior" capital ships of the Russian fleet. These small craft did so with minimal losses using a weapon considered inferior to that of the battleship. Additionally, the

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<sup>50</sup> Repington, p. 56

<sup>51</sup> Mahan, *Influence of Sea Power*, p. 109

engagement offered a major refutation of the role that Mahan gave them in a fleet engagement, arguing that the “rôle [*sic*] of the latter [torpedo boat]...is to be found in the *mêlée* which is always to succeed a couple of headlong passes between the opposing fleets.”<sup>52</sup> Here, Mahan argues that torpedo boats play a secondary role after the main ships of the fleet have engaged the enemy in a gunnery engagement in “headlong passes,” with torpedo boats essentially conducting “mopping-up” operations against crippled and unsupported larger ships. This proved not to be the case at Port Arthur, where torpedo boats acted as the primary attacker with little support from the larger ships of the fleet, yet another prerequisite in Mahan’s argument for torpedo boat tactics.<sup>53</sup>

With so much apparently contradictory evidence put before them by the naval phase of the Russo-Japanese War, one could expect that the correspondents would drop or at least make proposed revisions to the Mahan’s naval doctrine. Instead, these correspondents showed no inclination of abandoning Mahanian discourse – or were perhaps imprisoned by it – in their analyses of the naval war in East Asia. In an effort to debunk claims of the superiority of torpedo warfare in the wake of the Port Arthur attack, Repington argued that the attack did not offer any new lessons for naval strategists. He took note of the “comparative slightness of the Russian losses,” and stated that “battleships, as engines of war, stand precisely now where they stood before.” To explain the success of the attack, Repington pointed to the strategic situation as to why the Russian fleet remained in port:

Because they [the Russians] were, strategically speaking, afraid of the Japanese navy.

And why? Because of the assumed superiority of the enemy’s battleships; therefore, one

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<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 113

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 114

might claim with perfect justice that it was the direct threat of the superior battleships that caused the Russians to suffer the disaster we know.<sup>54</sup>

Repington refuses to acknowledge that the events at Port Arthur invalidated Mahan's naval doctrine. He defends his position by essentially accusing the Russians of strategic cowardice. The torpedo craft of the IJN had achieved success because the Russians had not adhered to the correct strategy: the Mahanian strategy. While the Russian fleet remained in a defensive position at Port Arthur, this was not the correct defensive strategy for a fleet in Mahanian terms, which called for the fleet strategy of the offensive defense.<sup>55</sup> Thus, because the Russian fleet did not seek to defend itself in the open waters outside of Port Arthur – or, in other words, follow the doctrine of Mahan, it suffered the humiliating loss at Port Arthur. As for the success of the torpedo boats, he stated “in the art of war there is a place for everything.”<sup>56</sup> This notion once again resembles the sentiments of Mahan towards the fire-ship, which, he noted, despite being no longer appropriate for fleet engagements had been useful in attacking enemy fleets at anchor up to the U.S. Civil War. Like the fire-ship, Mahan believed that the torpedo boat would find a similar role, albeit within a short range outside of its port. Additionally, Mahan did not oppose the use of the torpedo itself in fleet engagements on the open sea. His reservations were directed towards the smallness of the torpedo boat, as it could not sustain high speeds in heavy seas, which would hinder the overall speed of the rest of the fleet.<sup>57</sup>

Compared to Repington, James and Burleigh did not show overt recognition that the events at Port Arthur potentially put Mahan's theories of sea power – or, more

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<sup>54</sup> Repington, p. 56

<sup>55</sup> Mahan, *Influence of Sea Power*, p. 87n1

<sup>56</sup> Repington, pp. 56-57

<sup>57</sup> Mahan, *Influence of Sea Power*, pp. 109-111



broadly, the superiority of fleet action over *jeune école* strategy – into question. Rather, both journalists treat this and other smaller actions in the naval campaign as mere set-up for the eventual fleet action they anticipated. While Repington claimed that the Russian fleet lay at anchor due to the perceived superiority of the Japanese fleet, James observed that the Japanese had similar apprehensions that prompted their torpedo attack. Noting the “paper superiority” of the Russian fleet in battleships, the Japanese Admiral Heihachiro Togo used his torpedo boats as a secondary part of his strategy: “to reduce this superiority by any means that would still keep the power of his own battleships intact.” Thus, in the context of Port Arthur, James still saw a future fleet engagement as the primary strategic objective. Togo’s use of torpedo boats sought to improve the chances of success for the IJN in the intended future fleet engagement as before the attack, James argued that “unless it were forced upon him, he would not have been justified in engaging in a fleet action.”<sup>58</sup>

Burleigh also took a similar stance to that of James with respect to the Russian concerns of the superiority of the IJN. Before the outbreak of war, he made a claim that “everybody realized...the fleet must first secure the supremacy of the seas for Japan, and that the Russians would try and fight under the guns of their batteries.”<sup>59</sup> While this strategic necessity for Japan – which apparently “everybody realized” before the war – is a part of Mahanism, the second part of Burleigh’s statement regarding Russian intentions reveals that it was apparently predicted that the Russians would not follow the strategy advocated by Mahan, despite noting that “they [the Russians] professed...to be ready to risk a naval engagement” and thus follow Mahanian strategy. Burleigh, however,

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<sup>58</sup> James, p. 25

<sup>59</sup> Burleigh, p. 61

declares that this profession by the Russians was “buncombe.” Like Repington, Burleigh appears to have little faith in the Russians doing anything the “correct,” or “Mahanian,” way in the naval war.

In January, he claimed to have argued that “the Russians would have to be ‘smoked out’ in some fashion, or risk being shut up altogether.”<sup>60</sup> At Port Arthur, the Japanese torpedo boats provided the means to smoke the Russian fleet out of the protection of their coastal defenses, although they never fully accomplished this aim. However, Burleigh’s idea of “smoking out” the Russians was consistent with Repington remarks on the Russian fleet’s fear of Japanese superiority. As for the attack itself, he, like James, gave only a brief overview, blaming torpedo losses mainly on Russian complacency. Additionally, his later observations of failed Japanese torpedo boat attacks at Port Arthur confirmed to himself Mahan’s notion that guns could offer a superior defense against such attacks. This is most noticeable when he concluded that a torpedo attack on February 24 failed due to the fire from shore batteries and “quick-firers upon the *Retevezan*.”<sup>61</sup>

Several naval engagements ensued in the wake of the surprise attack at Port Arthur. As recently mentioned, the Japanese attempted a few more torpedo attacks, but none attained the success of the first. An attempted blockade followed these attacks, with mines damaging ships from both fleets. In other areas, a cruiser engagement – and a Japanese victory – at Chemulpo Bay (now part of Inchon, Korea) on February 9 preceded the Japanese troop landings in Korea. The Russians would not attempt a sortie from Port Arthur until August 10, but the resulting Battle of the Yellow Sea – which witnessed the

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid., p. 62

<sup>61</sup> Ibid, p. 130

longest-range naval gunnery ever experienced in battle to that date – compelled the remains of the Russian fleet to retreat back to Port Arthur, where it would stay until the fall of Port Arthur itself to the IJA at the end of 1904.

In the months leading up to the Battle of the Yellow Sea, Repington noted potential concerns regarding the Japanese “becoming intoxicated by the naval successes,” which might compel them to become overambitious with their armies in Manchuria. However, he is confident that this will not be the case on account of one important assertion:

But the Japanese have read their Mahan; they must know the pregnant words with which he advises a maritime Power to “grasp firmly some vital chord of the enemy’s communications and so force him to fight there,” and they will surely perceive that if the fortune of war places Korea, the Liautung Peninsula, and Vladivostok in their hands, the vital chord of Russian East Asia is severed, and that Russia must fight on the ground of Japanese choosing or not at all.<sup>62</sup>

Repington argues that as long as the Japanese continue to follow the strategic advice of Mahan, they will achieve success. What is especially interesting about this segment is that Repington only says “Mahan” rather than “Alfred Thayer Mahan.” He does not feel the need to get into a lengthy background description of Mahan and directly alludes to one of his theories. This seems to imply a public familiarity with Mahan and his work, as the expert (Repington) does not need to explain the significance of Mahan or his theories. *Times* publications before the Russo-Japanese War contained plenty of discussion of Mahan’s theories in various articles and Letters to the Editor dating back to the early 1890’s, following the publication of the *Influence of Sea Power*. Thus, it appears that the wider reading public shared some familiarity with Mahanian naval theory. By the Russo-

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<sup>62</sup> Repington, pp. 96-97

Japanese War, it appears that this familiarity translated into a prevalent way of “knowing” naval warfare.

The accounts of the Battle of the Yellow Sea on August 10 reveal evidence of Mahanism at work. In observing the “first fleet-action of modern warships in the world’s history,” James notes that the Japanese superiority in marksmanship dominated the action, causing the death of the Russian Admiral Wilgelm Vitgeft (1847-1904) that resulted in the loss of cohesion within the Russian fleet.<sup>63</sup> Burleigh also asserts that artillery dominated the action, while “the torpedo flotillas, while observant, were unable to take part in the action.” When the Japanese torpedo boats entered the action to attack the crippled battleship Tsarevitch, Burleigh notes that they were unsuccessful, in a way confirming Mahan’s theory of the minimal role of torpedo craft in fleet action due to their lack of long-range weaponry.<sup>64</sup> Repington also shares this observation of torpedo boats in the battle, noting that “the freshening wind and rising sea militated against the success of the torpedo.” This is a direct allusion to Mahan, who states that a torpedo boat experiences significant losses in speed during moderate to heavy seas, thus putting it and the speed of the fleet as a whole at a disadvantage.<sup>65</sup>

The destruction of the Russian fleet after the fall of Port Arthur, however, offers another challenge to Mahan’s doctrine. While the Russian fleet had been shut into Port Arthur following the Battle of the Yellow Sea, it was not actually destroyed. Its destruction at the end of 1904 resulted not from a naval engagement, but from a land bombardment by the IJA just off the coast near Port Arthur. Once again, Repington denies that this is a result of the failure of Mahan’s naval doctrine in modern naval

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<sup>63</sup> James, pp. 56-59

<sup>64</sup> Burleigh, pp. 261-264

<sup>65</sup> Repington, p. 261

warfare. Rather, he blames the Russians for once again refusing to adhere to Mahanian doctrine, stating that the incident provides a “solemn warning for nations and navies that are blind to the teachings of history and presume to improve upon the principles and the practice of the great masters of the art of war.”<sup>66</sup>

In the context of Port Arthur, each correspondent sought to explain that the Japanese victory was due more to naval than land strategy. Aside from mere description, Burleigh has little more to offer in terms of analysis of the naval war after 1904. Perhaps his last most significant remarks on the naval war revolved around the fall of Port Arthur to the IJA:

When Admiral Togo succeeded in securing the sea-power for Japan, and could assure its retention, Port Arthur was doomed. The capture of Nanshan [Hill] and the seizing of the neck of the promontory but put the seal on the matter.<sup>67</sup>

This perspective provides reinforcement to Mahan’s belief in the greater strategic importance of a navy in deciding the outcome of a military campaign and the higher costs of land strategy. Rather than credit the IJA for the victory at Port Arthur, Burleigh argues that its efforts were pointless as the IJN had already won the battle by securing control of the seas. The IJA could have averted the human and material costs of this siege, Burleigh argued, had they realized the “worthlessness of the Russian Navy shut up in Port Arthur.” Rather than simply “starve out” the Russian garrison, the Japanese resorted to storming the fortress as they “feared the chance of the Russian fleet putting to sea from Port Arthur and working them incredible injury.”<sup>68</sup> Such a statement reveals the predominance of naval strategy in Japanese land operations.

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid., p. 430

<sup>67</sup> Burleigh, p. 388

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., pp. 390-1

Despite being blocked in by the IJN, the mere existence of the Russian fleet remained a priority consideration in the overall strategic thought of Japan, as it could potentially threaten Japanese communications in Manchuria if it broke out. Although not mentioned, the existence of the fleet was even more threatening considering that the Russian Baltic Fleet had started its redeployment to reinforce the Pacific Fleet in the fall of 1904. The fear of this combination most certainly affected Japanese strategy at Port Arthur, as the combination of both fleets would alter the control of the sea in the war. Thus, an assault rather than a mere investment of the fortress by the IJA proved necessary to seize the Russian base of naval operations and force the inferior Russian fleet out to sea for an engagement before it could concentrate with the Baltic Fleet. While Burleigh may not have agreed with such a strategy, it revealed that he was relatively familiar with the prevalence of Mahan's naval theories on overall military strategy.

Repington also argued that the IJN played a greater role in the siege of Port Arthur than had the besieging IJA, as the latter heavily relied on the former for "effectual and local assistance" and protecting lines of communication. However, Repington condemned this strategy as it did not adhere to his conception of the correct objectives of a navy, or, in other words, to Mahan's theory of the objective of a navy. With the loss of the battleships *Hatsuse* and *Yashima* to Russian mines, Repington insisted that "great battleships are built and intended to fight with their peers in blue water: they are not meant for in-shore duties."<sup>69</sup> The issue that he observed was that the evolution in naval weaponry was incomplete:

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<sup>69</sup> Repington, p. 186

If the torpedo boat...replaced the fire-ship, and with a far more formidable weapon, the bombketch and kindred craft...have not yet advanced a similar stage on the path of naval progress.<sup>70</sup>

In what seems a conscious attempt to mimic Mahan, Repington recognized the evolution of the fire-ship to the torpedo boat. He argued that another ship, the bombketch, ought to evolve into a new class of ship as well so that the battleship can remain in its intended role at sea.<sup>71</sup>

In the engagements surrounding Port Arthur, James continued to view Japanese naval action as a precursor to its inevitable fleet engagement with the Russian fleet. By mining the entrance to Port Arthur, James claimed that Admiral Togo intended to “entice the Russian squadron out to sea” for fleet action and drive the remnants of the enemy fleet through the previously lain minefield.<sup>72</sup> While this strategy proved successful, James highlighted that the Japanese did not fully control the seas, noting that the Russian cruiser squadron in Vladivostok still managed to attack Japanese transports headed to Manchuria. Despite this setback, James still emphasized the importance of seizing Port Arthur for Japanese naval strategy. Acknowledging Japanese fear of Russian fleet reinforcements, James argued that “if they [the Japanese] could succeed in gaining possession of the stronghold [Port Arthur], they at once quadrupled the difficulties of any attempt on Russia’s part to regain her lost sea supremacy.”<sup>73</sup> Reiterating Mahan’s claim for the mutual dependency of seaports and fleets, James noted that without a major seaport like Port Arthur to fall back on, Russian sea power would essentially collapse.

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<sup>70</sup> Ibid., p. 187

<sup>71</sup> The “bombketch” refers to a ship introduced at the time of Mahan’s historical study of sea power. Using the mortar as its primary weapon, the ship was intended for supporting land operations by bombarding fixed enemy positions. Interestingly, this ship is not encountered in Mahan’s study.

<sup>72</sup> James, p. 38

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., pp. 42, 45

After the fall of Port Arthur to the Japanese in January 1905, the naval war quieted down for a time. Japan had gained control of the sea, but its method was not entirely consistent with Mahanian theory, especially with the torpedo attack at Port Arthur in February 1904 and the destruction of the Russian fleet by the IJA. Nevertheless, Repington, James, and Burleigh persisted in reinterpreting contradictions into Mahanian terms, thus maintaining its perceived relevance in naval warfare. If uncertainty remained amongst correspondents and their readers at this point, their concerns over the validity of Mahanism would be dispelled in the summer of 1905.

#### The Decisive Clash: Tsushima

On May 27-28, 1905, the IJN and the newly-arrived Russian Baltic Fleet clashed at Tsushima. The result was an overwhelming victory for the Japanese fleet that would ultimately result in the elimination of a second Russian fleet and the Japanese occupation of Sakhalin Island, compelling the Russians to sue for peace. With the Treaty of Portsmouth signed on September 5, 1905, Japan won a favorable settlement in the war. In the eyes of Repington and James (Burleigh's account ends before the Battle of Mukden in early 1905), this victory confirmed the validity of several elements within Mahan's theories of naval warfare, especially the superiority of artillery over torpedoes in fleet engagements.

As the Russian Baltic Fleet slowly made its way to the Far East, Repington commented on the potential impact that its arrival would have on the war. According to his reports, Mahan's theories heavily influenced the naval strategy of both sides. He claimed that Russian authorities had the impression "that a successful naval action with



Admiral Togo will at once bring the whole military edifice of the Japanese to the ground with a crash, and that the Russian army will then have nothing to do but pick up the pieces.”<sup>74</sup> However, Repington argued that this Russian assumption only selectively utilized Mahan’s theory of naval strategy. He insisted that a Russian naval victory would be costly and indecisive, as the remnants of the Baltic Fleet would not be able to disrupt communications in the seas between Manchuria and Japan due to the large number of secondary Japanese bases, whose “avenues [of communications], being unlimited and not shown on any chart, cannot be commanded by a limited force.”<sup>75</sup>

In comparing the two fleets, Repington noted the Russian fleet’s superiority in capital ships, while the IJN had superiority in cruisers and torpedo boats. With this in mind, he attempted to predict the appropriate tactics that Admiral Togo would utilize, reiterating the very Mahanian theory that “the object in war is to smash the enemy’s main force and have done with it”:

He is in this position, that he has a dangerously small number of first-class battleships which he cannot afford to see overwhelmed...His problem is to utilise his superiority in secondary ships for the benefit of his primary elements, and for the re-establishment of the balance between these latter and the battleships of the enemy.<sup>76</sup>

Repington here notes that the IJN was at a major disadvantage in Mahanian terms due to its inferiority in capital ships. Although he notes that it had a superiority in inferior ships, his suggestions to use them to the benefit of the IJN’s capital ships reflects a fairly Mahanian sentiment towards the usefulness of second-rate ships in a naval engagement. With this in mind, he alluded to the theory recently presented by a Captain Bacon of the

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<sup>74</sup> Repington, p. 563

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., pp. 564

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., p. 571-2

Royal Navy. This British officer advocated that small, fast craft like torpedo boats ought to be sacrificed against the enemy's capital ships before a major fleet engagement to the advantage of their fleet's own capital ships, which Repington equated to "an exhilarating naval cavalry charge."<sup>77</sup> While Mahan does not consider this in his own work – he steered clear of tactical theories, stating that "theories about the naval warfare of the future are almost wholly presumptive," the strategy of concentration against capital ships in a fleet engagement remained the overall principle in this obscure work by Bacon.<sup>78</sup> In a later note on this article from April 15, Repington reminded readers of his compiled work that the Japanese actually reversed Bacon's tactics, although he believed that "the spirit of Captain Bacon's advice was adhered to."<sup>79</sup> How Repington reached this odd conclusion in consideration of the actual events at Tsushima is unclear, considering he was essentially expecting the Japanese torpedo craft and destroyers to take part in an intentional "Charge of the Light Brigade" at sea.

On July 7, Repington exclaimed that the Japanese victory at Tsushima "must inevitably exercise a predominant influence upon naval policy, construction, armament, tactics, and training for many years to come."<sup>80</sup> With this result, Repington told his readers that the war ought to end. Interestingly, he concluded that the Japanese could not have won without the agency of "British seamen and British constructors," who had trained and equipped the IJN:

The tactics of the battle bear the impress of the Nelson traditions, the battle-worthiness of the ships is a tribute to the efficiency of British yards, while the havoc wrought by guns

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<sup>77</sup> Ibid., p. 573

<sup>78</sup> Mahan, *Influence of Sea Power*, p. 2

<sup>79</sup> Repington, p. 574n1

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., pp. 576-7

made in England appears to justify us in the belief that we can hold our own with the best.<sup>81</sup>

Repington's praise for Lord Horatio Nelson (1758-1805) reflects similar sentiments of Mahan, who wrote a biography of Nelson in the 1890's, believing that the "great naval hero should be developed as the basis for naval education."<sup>82</sup> Additionally, he argues that the course of British naval doctrine, with the influence of Mahan, proved to be the correct course given the results at Tsushima. This attitude also reflects Wilkinson's argument that British newspaper presentations of Japanese victories "were seen as the crucial indicators of the successful adoption of 'our' civilization by the Japanese."<sup>83</sup> Repington, however, did not attempt to analyze the battle itself, choosing to present Admiral Togo's own official account, which offers its own allusions to naval strategy advocated by Mahan. He stated that the fleet "adopted the strategy of awaiting him [Russian Admiral Zinovy Rozhdestvensky] and striking at him in home waters," concluding that "the fate of the Empire depends upon this event." Within an hour of engaging the Russian main squadron with gunfire, Togo claimed that "the result of the battle had been decided in this interval."<sup>84</sup> The following engagements of Togo's destroyers and torpedo boats, then, had little decisive effect on the outcome.

Unlike Repington, James attempted to offer his own detailed account of the battle. Despite the Russian superiority in battleships, James noted that the IJN had superiority in other areas, particularly cruisers. Additionally, he claimed that naval opinion favored the chances of the IJN:

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid., p. 579

<sup>82</sup> Lambert, p. 173

<sup>83</sup> Wilkinson, p. 40

<sup>84</sup> Repington, pp. 580, 582, 583

To sum up, naval opinion placed great faith in the swift Japanese armored cruisers.

Collectively, Togo's fleet was superior in homogeneity, pace, total gun-power, *morale*, and, most importantly, strategical position.<sup>85</sup>

While he does acknowledge the Japanese superiority in torpedo boats, James chose to emphasize the “total gun-power” of the IJN compared to the Russian Baltic Fleet. Like Mahan, James does not seem entirely won over to the decisiveness of the torpedo in naval war. Additionally, while historians have incessantly noted Mahan's favoritism towards battleships, he approaches the subject of fleet engagements more broadly in *Influence of Sea Power*. In constructing a navy for the strategic purpose of seeking out fleet engagements, Mahan simply argued that “it requires a navy equal in number and superior in efficiency,” not necessarily implying that it be constructed mainly of large battleships.<sup>86</sup> Additionally, in describing the battle, James confirmed the report made by Togo of the decisive effect of the first hour of battle, noting that “gunnery won the victory, the torpedo simply completed it.” Once again, James reiterated the superiority of guns over torpedoes.

### Conclusion

If the past events of the Russo-Japanese War had left doubts in the minds of Repington or James, the Battle of Tsushima erased them. With this battle came the decisive fleet engagement called for by Mahan that gave Japan the uncontested control of the seas in East Asia and helped lead to a relatively favorable peace at Portsmouth. Interestingly, both authors had essentially embraced Mahan's theories before the battle had even started. With Burleigh finishing his account beforehand and the decreased level

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<sup>85</sup> Ibid., p. 211

<sup>86</sup> Mahan, *Influence of Sea Power*, p. 534

of analysis of the battle by Repington and James compared to previous engagements, it appears that Mahanism had prevailed before Tsushima, or perhaps the Russo-Japanese War itself, had even begun.

In the naval war, British war correspondents entered East Asia with a preexisting discourse of naval warfare that they projected onto their analyses of the conflict, a discourse that seemed to have trapped them. The Japanese or the Russians themselves did not figure prominently into their writing on the naval war. Rather, the naval doctrine of Mahanism and their insistence on its validity overrode a deeper analysis of the Japanese and the Russians in the naval war, which they viewed as a test of British naval doctrine rather than a test of Russian and Japanese capabilities. However, as Chapter II will discuss, the results of the Russo-Japanese War threatened other prewar discourses of these correspondents, particularly regarding cultural conceptions of the Orient as a realm of inferior power. While these correspondents sought to reconcile Orientalist discourse through somewhat contradictory revisions, the Russo-Japanese War seems to have become a historical event that not only allowed Europeans to project their preexisting ideas upon the East but also marked the declining validity of the very discourse of Orientalism.

## CHAPTER II

### A WAR FULL OF OTHERS

#### Introduction

Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978) has had a profound influence on the historical study of Western representations of the East. Focusing on the Middle East, Said asserted that Orientalism is the "Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient" in terms of academic, political, and imaginative discourse.<sup>87</sup> As a discourse, Orientalism served to justify and reinforce European imperialism as it situated the Occident in a self-imposed hegemonic position over the Orient. Since its publication, *Orientalism* has received criticism by historians and its methodology and arguments have evolved in various studies. In the Russo-Japanese War, the Orientalism adopted by British war correspondents to culturally justify a nation's victory or defeat contained considerable fluidity to it. Influenced by Social Darwinism, European conceptions of nationalism, and anxieties towards modernity, these correspondents did not see the status of "Oriental" and "Occidental" as concrete states of being. Rather, they perceived that mutually-reinforcing social, military, and political development served as the keys to a nation's emergence, regeneration, and survival, as an uneven balance amongst these factors would ultimately result in disaster.

Compared to other regions, Japan has a unique place within the discourse of Orientalism. East Asianist Richard Minear pointed out that Japan did not figure into the imagination of Europe until the time of Marco Polo and intensive contact did not exist

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<sup>87</sup> Edward Said, *Orientalism* (Vintage: New York 1994) p. 3

between the two cultures until Matthew Perry's expedition in 1854. Thus, "Japanese studies never experienced the naked 'authority over the Orient' which Said sees as an integral part of Orientalism." Minear's consideration of Orientalism in Japan takes note of two caveats: Japan did not "wait for the West to discover its own past, its history, its identity," and the link of "imperial military power" to Japanese Orientalism did not exist.<sup>88</sup> While this is true, Said did not argue that the discourse and imperialist activity occurred simultaneously, but rather the discourse predated imperialism, which created a loop through which both Orientalist discourse and imperialism provided feedback to one another. Upon opening contacts with Japan in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, the West already had its own discourse for the non-West that they could recreate and impose upon Japan. Furthermore, considering imperial politics surrounding the Russo-Japanese War, Western imperialism did indeed begin encroaching on Japan, particularly with the West denying it the gains it had made in the Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895), President Theodore Roosevelt's arbitration of the Treaty of Portsmouth (1905) ending the Russo-Japanese War, and the rejection of Japan's request for a clause acknowledging racial equality in the Covenant of the League of Nations following the First World War. While such actions did not result in an actual imperial project as Japan, unlike China and India, developed the capability to defend itself against such ambitions, Western imperial and racial politics had begun encroaching on Japan.

Perhaps most unique to Japan's place within Orientalism is the military discourse associated with it. Despite any assumptions of Oriental "inferiority," Westerners did not entirely have a negative picture of the "martial traits" of non-Western cultures. In fact,

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<sup>88</sup> Richard Minear, "Orientalism and the Study of Japan," *The Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 39, No. 3 (May, 1980), pp. 514-515

Western powers often employed non-Western troops – under the command of Western officers – as part of their imperial projects, such as the French *tirailleurs* (or Charles Mangin's *La Force Noire*) and the British employment of “primitive” Orientals like Gurkhas and Sikhs in the Indian Army. In many ways, the Orientalist characterization of martial traits helped serve the interests of the Western imperialist project. When observing Japan, Western observers seem to have identified the Japanese as a martial race, particularly with the fascination they had for the samurai class and *Bushido*. The British, however, did not show a particular interest in directly incorporating Japan into its empire like other Eastern regions. Rather, by allying with Japan in 1902, it used Japan to ease the costs of imperial defense in the Pacific and create a buffer against Russian expansion.

In his recent work entitled *Military Orientalism* (2009), defense studies expert Patrick Porter applied Orientalism to the study of war and culture, particularly when considering Western military conceptions of the East in the contexts of “tactics to strategy, morale to morality, casualty tolerance to authority” in Western military studies, from Ancient Persia to present-day struggles with the Taliban.<sup>89</sup> From this perspective, it is important to consider the ways in which war correspondents culturally conceived and represented the combatants of the Russo-Japanese War. Porter defines Orientalism as “the dynamics of cultural perception within a complex set of relationships, as opposed to a coherent, single ideology, or as opposed to the approach of Edward Said, who defined it as a continuous ‘system of ideas and ‘imaginative geography.’” Essentially, Orientalism becomes a means through which Westerners debate “about themselves, their own societies and policies, through visions of the Orient” and often entails “a history of

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<sup>89</sup> Patrick Porter, *Military Orientalism*, p. 2



Western anxieties, ranging from fear to envy to self-criticism.”<sup>90</sup> In the Russo-Japanese War, Porter argues that military Orientalism treated the “foreign ‘Other’ ... as a superior model to inform self-examination.” With regards to the colonial or racial context of military Orientalism, Porter notes that military defeat at the hands of the Other – such as at Italy’s defeat to Ethiopia at Adowa in 1896 or Russia’s defeat in the Russo-Japanese War – threatened to challenge Western identity. When such threats arose, Porter states that the West adapted often by presenting such enemies as “kindred Westerners.”<sup>91</sup> Interestingly, this was not entirely the case with British perceptions of Japan in the Russo-Japanese War. Perhaps the closest these correspondents came to acknowledging some kind of kinship with the Japanese comes from Burleigh, who speculated that they were “of belated Malay origin” and “kin to the race...that spread over North Europe, until cleared off by the white branches of the Aryan family.”<sup>92</sup> Despite Japan’s victory in the war, Burleigh only went as far as to link Japanese kinship to a branch of Northern European peoples wiped out by his own “white” race.

In his analysis of Orientalist discourse during the Russo-Japanese War, Porter argued that negative British perceptions of their own society – particularly their perceived inability to endure a future war – led observers to idealize their East Asian ally, Japan, whose example they believed “held out the promise of regeneration and change.”<sup>93</sup> As his work focuses mainly on the Orientalist views of intellectuals, military professionals, and policymakers, Porter focused primarily on the military observers of the conflict (including Hamilton), with a limited number of press correspondents (Repington, B.W.

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<sup>90</sup> Porter, pp. 14, 18

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., pp. 37, 108

<sup>92</sup> Burleigh, p. 10

<sup>93</sup> Porter, pp. 85-109

Norregaard of the *Daily Mail*, and Francis McCullagh of the *New York Herald* and *Manchester Guardian*). Additionally, Porter's analysis focused primarily on Japan. Given the European racial views of Eastern inferiority and stagnation prevalent in this era of imperialism, it is necessary to understand how observers of the war interpreted the defeat of Russia, an empire ambiguously defined as Occidental (much like the geography of the Occident itself), and the place of Japan amongst other Oriental peoples. While quite possibly observers embraced the Japanese as "kindred Westerners" in the war, they still perceived Japanese Otherness.

This chapter proposes to consider the British war correspondents of the Russo-Japanese War as agents of Orientalist discourse. In this context, correspondents shaped Orientalist discourse to adhere to their own non-Orientalist conceptions on the interrelation of military and social development linked with Social Darwinism and nationalistic sentiments. While such an approach did not necessarily entail perceptions of Oriental inferiority or overt imperialist ambitions, it did perceive Otherness. Within the context of Said's *Orientalism*, war correspondents perhaps fall best into the category of amateur enthusiasts and travel writers in the Orient – or "generically determined writing" as defined by Said, such as Gustave Flaubert, Richard Burton, Gérard de Nerval, T.E. Lawrence, and others.<sup>94</sup> While these correspondents did not necessarily create their own Orientalist discourse while in East Asia, they were products and perpetuators of the tradition which influenced the way in which they wrote on the war and the peoples they encountered, particularly the belligerents from Japan and Russia. When they encountered the defeat of Russia to Japan, they attempted to reconcile such a contradiction to the Orientalist tradition by framing the Russo-Japanese War through contemporary European

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<sup>94</sup> Said, p. 202

conceptions of nationalism and Social Darwinism, thus maintaining the intellectual hegemony of Orientalism.

#### Japan: A “Nation’s Soul” Modernized

According to Said, “Orientals were rarely seen or looked at; they were seen through not as citizens, or even people, but as problems to be solved or confined or...taken over.” In the era surrounding the Russo-Japanese War, the Orient to the European imagination was “a place isolated from the mainstream of European progress in the sciences, arts, and commerce.”<sup>95</sup> To British war correspondents, Japan presented an enigma: an Oriental nation that had successfully molded Western progress to fit into its own culture, thus allowing it to succeed in its war against Russia. Although they praised Japan for the way in which it modernized, correspondents still predominantly saw the country from a place of superiority, highlighting Japan’s backwardness, superficial modernity, cultural peculiarities, and, in essence, Otherness. Nevertheless, these same correspondents almost universally argued that Japan’s superficial modernization, which allowed it to maintain its “primitive” and “warlike” abilities, was the key to its success in the war.

According to British war correspondents of the Russo-Japanese War, progress had brought Britain its dominant position in the world, yet they also feared it would ultimately be its undoing. Hamilton perhaps best articulated this anxiety, stating that “up-to-date civilisation is becoming less and less capable of conforming to the antique standards of military virtue.” He believed that Britain had to adapt itself, or “prepare to go down before some more natural, less complex and less nervous type.” His analysis

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<sup>95</sup> Ibid., p. 207

relied on a belief that societies underwent a linear process of development. Japan represented to Hamilton “the overlapping of two stages of civilisation.” As an officer in the Indian Army, Hamilton believed the Japanese soldier took the shape of a “civilized” Gurkha, an identification that carried with it both pros and cons:

These [IJA soldiers] were surely Gurkhas; better educated, more civilised: on the other hand, not quite so powerful or hardy.<sup>96</sup>

Hamilton here cast the Japanese in the status between the warlike primitive (Gurkha) and the educated European. They have gained some intelligence, but by doing so have lost the positive traits of the primitive (power and hardiness). Several correspondents shared Hamilton’s racial view of Japan as inherently warlike. W. Richmond Smith of the *Daily Telegraph* asserted that “what the West has not given the Japanese is their conception of military duty and service.” Stemming from the “Spartan spirit of the old Samurai,” Japan had “transferred bodily to the national army” its own indigenous martial culture, which was once only the privilege of the Samurai.<sup>97</sup> Douglas Story of the *Daily Express* shared views similar to Hamilton towards the Japanese, whom he characterized as barbarians with the “fanatical patriotism” of the Zulu and Dervishes under the “scientific intelligence” of its government and generals.<sup>98</sup> Additionally, B.W. Norregaard of the *Daily Mail* went as far as to speculate that the military spirit exhibited by Japan would not last:

With the greater prosperity which will follow after the war there is the possibility of the disease spreading. So far no alien people has come under the influence of Western

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<sup>96</sup> Sir Ian Hamilton, *A Staff Officer’s Scrap-Book during the Russo-Japanese War*, vol. I (Edward Arnold: London 1907) pp. 9-10

<sup>97</sup> W. Richmond Smith, *The Siege and Fall of Port Arthur* (Eveleigh Nash: London 1905) p. 26

<sup>98</sup> Douglas Story, *The Campaign with Kuropatkin* (T. Werner Laurie: London 1905) pp. 248, 253

civilization without losing more than it has gained. Japan is the only exception. Will it remain so?<sup>99</sup>

As correspondents perceived that Japan still remained in a “semi-barbaric” state, it remained possible that Japanese society would fall victim to the effects of prosperity and urbanization that came with modernity, just as the West had already experienced. Therefore, as the West strove to cure its “disease” over time, the Japanese had yet to catch or feel the symptoms of it. Norregaard and other correspondents cited this possibility at Port Arthur, noting that one particular regiment (2<sup>nd</sup> Reserve) recruited from a wealthy area of Japan refused to advance at one point in the siege.<sup>100</sup>

The perception that Japan had only modernized superficially presented itself throughout the works of correspondents. In considering this aspect of Japanese culture, correspondents showed a tendency to present it “*like* some aspect of the West.”<sup>101</sup> To Hamilton and many correspondents, Japan represented medieval civilization modernized. Hamilton asserted that “the Japanese are just as civilised as would be the Black Prince and his army” with the advantage of a “thorough good German education grafted on their unformed mediaeval minds.” William Maxwell of the *Standard* shared similar sentiments, arguing that the Japanese still lived under the codes of its former feudal society. Thus, the Japanese would become like the West, but a past version of the West rather than equivalent to it.<sup>102</sup> He claimed that this “short-cut” to modernity allowed Japan to maintain its medieval culture in a modern context, thus avoiding the Oriental

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<sup>99</sup> B.W. Norregaard, *The Great Siege: The Investment and Fall of Port Arthur* (Methuen and Co.: London 1906) p. 308

<sup>100</sup> See Norregaard, p. 135, 307-308, and accounts from other correspondents at Port Arthur regarding the IJA 2<sup>nd</sup> Reserve Regiment. See also Ellis Ashmead-Bartlett, *Port Arthur: The Siege and Capitulation* (William Blackwood and Sons: London 1906) pp. 497-498

<sup>101</sup> Said, p. 67

<sup>102</sup> William Maxwell, *From the Yalu to Port Arthur* (Hutchinson and Co.: London 1906) p. 17

qualities of “luxury, sensuality and nerves” affecting European modernity.<sup>103</sup> Repington, by contrast, focused almost exclusively on *Bushido*, which incorporated “ideals of knightly chivalry and of Spartan simplicity.”<sup>104</sup> The correspondents’ infatuation with *Bushido* presented it (in addition to its deification of the Mikado, or Emperor) as the defining characteristic of modern Japanese society. According to Burleigh, “the modern Japanese has no religion, no system of rewards or punishments, but is only taught to revere the past and admire the deeds of the Samurai, the fighting-men.” There is no other driving force or complexity to Japanese society, which is merely developed and driven by what Burleigh called its “feudal nursery system.” Aside from *Bushido*, Burleigh asserted that Japan had created nothing uniquely Japanese. Rather, it owed its arts and religion, although Burleigh stated that “exact creeds do not thrive in Japan,” to China, Korea, and India.<sup>105</sup> For any other aspect of culture aside from *Bushido*, Japan looked elsewhere rather than create something of its own, as it did with the West and modernization.

Despite the advantages of Japan perceived by Hamilton and correspondents, they did not go as far as to conclude that Japan as a nation was inherently superior to Britain. Rather, they identified Otherness and potential disadvantages of the Japanese character that would deem them inferior in other circumstances. Story believed that Japanese success stemmed from their “intense absorption in the affair of the moment,” a quality that he saw as indicative of the “better” humanity of the Russians, who revealed to him a “breadth of view” that allowed them to think beyond their military occupations.<sup>106</sup>

Hamilton concluded that the Japanese were collectively “slow thinkers,” incapable of

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<sup>103</sup> Hamilton, vol. I, p. 16

<sup>104</sup> Repington, p. 381

<sup>105</sup> Burleigh, p. 10

<sup>106</sup> Story, pp. 90-91

genius, but still capable of accurate thinking. Nevertheless, his nationalist pride led him to insist that “the Japanese army...surpasses any European army, excepting only the British army at its best.”<sup>107</sup> Some correspondents even claimed to have found biological evidence to explain Japan’s success in modern warfare. According to Smith, there was one principle reason why Japanese soldiers proved capable of enduring battlefield wounds:

The principal reason for this is that they have an entirely different nervous system from Western peoples. In fact, what one saw during every visit to the field and stationary hospitals was convincing proof that in all cases the wounded had few nerves and in some none at all.

Along with Norregaard and Ellis Ashmead-Bartlett of the *Times*, Smith attributed this biological Otherness to Japan’s diet of fish and rice, which “is not a diet calculated to produce great vitality,” and its cultural stoicism, which allowed (or required, according to Smith) Japanese surgeons to operate without anesthetics.<sup>108</sup> Additionally, this diet also led to the contraction of an ‘Other’ disease in the war referred to as “Beri-beri.”<sup>109</sup> Thus, the almost superhuman ability of the Japanese at Port Arthur to sustain enormous casualties was a testament to both biological and cultural Otherness. Francis McCullagh of the *Guardian*, who spent the war with the Russians until captured by the IJA at Mukden, wrote with Orientalist terror of the Japanese “banzai,” or what he referred to as the cry “for the blood of white men”:

It is like the cry of wild, invulnerable tribes! It is like the defiant shrieks of Dervishes! It swells on the air like a fierce Oriental Marseillaise. In this abrupt, staccato roar is

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<sup>107</sup> Hamilton, vol. I, pp. 4-5. 16

<sup>108</sup> Smith, p. 270, 275; See also Norregaard, pp. 118-119; Bartlett, pp. 484-486

<sup>109</sup> See Norregaard, p. 120; Smith, p. 280; Bartlett, pp. 105-106; David H. James, *The Siege of Port Arthur: Records of an Eye-Witness* (T. Fisher Unwin: London 1905) pp. 22, 100

something foreign, repugnant, disquieting. It does not belong to the European brotherhood. It does not come from Christian lips. It does not even seem to come from human beings.<sup>110</sup>

McCullagh perhaps represented the most outward Orientalist depiction of the Japanese amongst correspondents. While some looked upon the “banzai” with fascination, he interpreted it as disturbing evidence of Japanese Otherness, reminding him of the cries of the Dervishes in Sudan and, perhaps even more terrifying to British memory, the French Revolution Orientalized. With Yellow Peril sentiments, he feared the “terrible fellows” that called themselves Japanese, believing their “fanatical patriotism” and “superhuman perseverance” would one day challenge Western supremacy as it made them “demons for warfare.”<sup>111</sup>

Even with Japan’s success in the war and the admiration they shared regarding its transformation, correspondents continually denied the equality of the Japanese to Europeans in various ways, focusing particularly on intelligence, rationality, and Japanese peculiarity – especially its poor cavalry force, which correspondents universally found abhorrent – that could not translate into a European context. Smith often wrote of the Japanese in terms that almost questioned their humanity, particularly emphasizing what he perceived their “lower vitality.” Despite having German-trained doctors, the Japanese to Smith were better surgeons than doctors, best suited for the mechanical work with a knife rather than the intelligence required of a diagnostician. Essentially, Japanese doctors to Smith were mechanical, yet lacking in creative capabilities. Additionally, Smith and others perceived several cultural contradictions in Japan. According to Smith,

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<sup>110</sup> Francis McCullagh, *With the Cossacks, Being the Story of an Irishman who Rode with the Cossacks throughout the Russo-Japanese War* (Eveleigh Nash: London 1906) p. 110

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 234



the “Japanese as a nation know little or nothing about even the elementary principles of sanitation,” despite having high standards of personal and domestic cleanliness.<sup>112</sup> Norregaard also attributed to Japanese culture the irrational decision-making resulting in the high casualty rates at Port Arthur. As the battle required European-style siege tactics involving entrenchment and sapping, Norregaard claimed that such a system opposed the natural tenacity and fortitude of the Japanese, who preferred open assaults and close-quarter fighting. As a result, Japanese troops did not sufficiently complete sapping operations, compelling them to advance in the open over greater distances against Russian fortifications.<sup>113</sup> Additionally, the second general assault on Port Arthur on October 30, 1904, which Norregaard, Smith, and others estimated resulted in 10,000 Japanese casualties, was the product of Japanese sentimentality – General Nogi sought to present the Emperor with the gift of Port Arthur for his birthday on November 3 – rather than rational calculation.<sup>114</sup> Story criticized the continued “barbarism” of Japan, citing in particular its lack of a free press (stemming from his experience with strict censorship) or freedom of speech. Additionally, he claimed that Japan had obstructed the British and other powers from mediating a peaceful solution to the problems that had sparked the war, declaring that it “sooner or later, must depend upon the great English-speaking nations for protection from the glacier of Russia.” Since it ignored Britain and the United States in 1904, Japan would “marvel at their unresponsiveness” in the future, thus making its gains in the war only temporary.<sup>115</sup>

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<sup>112</sup> Smith, p. 275, 277

<sup>113</sup> Norregaard, p. 166

<sup>114</sup> See the accounts of Smith, Norregaard, Bartlett, and James and their corresponding chapters on the second general assault on Port Arthur.

<sup>115</sup> Story, *The Campaign with Kuropatkin*, p. 43

Correspondents also observed what they saw as uniquely Japanese traits that translated into military success, such as the ability to work in the cramped positions of trenches and mines and its espionage system. Smith and others claimed that “no other soldiers in the world” could work in such positions, “but it was the position the Japanese always take even when sitting in their own houses.” Additionally, he cited that the philosophical nature of the Japanese allowed them an “immovability and patience which would be impossible to Western troops.”<sup>116</sup> Ernest Brindle of the *Daily Mail* pointed to the “few needs of the Japanese soldiers” that simplified logistics and organization “to a point without parallel in modern times.”<sup>117</sup> Correspondents also almost universally pointed to the Japanese as the “poorest horsemen, the word ‘horsemen’ being taken in its widest significance.”<sup>118</sup> Story concluded that the IJA’s lack of effective cavalry resulted in their inability to “secure the fruits of their victory, to clear the ground of their demoralised enemy.”<sup>119</sup> Thus, its lack of cavalry denied Japan any decisive victory in the course of the war. Correspondents also highlighted what they perceived as a Japanese disregard for life on the battlefield exhibited in the war. Story condemned the “barbarism” of the Japanese that resulted in looting, “the absence of quarter,” and an attack on a Western missionary at Liaoyang.<sup>120</sup> James at Port Arthur claimed to have witnessed Japanese soldiers impale themselves on Russian bayonets at the orders of their officer (“Throw yourselves on their bayonets, honourable comrades!” he [the officer] shouted; “those who come behind will do the rest.”) to capture a trench. As eight men

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<sup>116</sup> Smith, pp. 313, 392

<sup>117</sup> Ernest Brindle, *With Russian, Japanese and Chunchuse: The Experiences of an Englishman during the Russo-Japanese War* (John Murray: London 1905) p. 110

<sup>118</sup> Norregaard, p. 133

<sup>119</sup> Story, p. 143

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 237

followed these orders, James described an almost animalistic frenzy of a pack of Japanese “war-dogs” inflicting a massacre on the Russian defenders who could not free their bayonets from the bodies.<sup>121</sup> Lord Brooke of *Reuter’s*, alluding to the IJA casualties at Liaoyang, informed his readers that “eye-witnesses assure me that it is impossible to exaggerate the utter disregard of death exhibited by the Japanese.”<sup>122</sup> Maurice Baring of the *Morning Post* recalled the horror of Russian officers, who depicted a scene where “line after line of Japanese came smiling up to the trenches to be mown down with bullets, until the trenches were full of bodies, and then more came on over the bodies of the dead.”<sup>123</sup> Where the primitive Japanese “smiled” at death, the “civilized” Russians looked upon it with horror.

One perceived peculiarity most cited by correspondents was the massive Japanese espionage system and its “fog of secrecy,” which Maxwell claimed made them “the most Oriental of people,” in the war.<sup>124</sup> However, correspondents saw this system as a product of the Oriental mind that Occidentals would never have considered under different circumstances. James asserted that the Japanese went beyond lengths ever contemplated by Europeans to gather intelligence, claiming that high-ranking Japanese officers accepted “menial posts in all quarters of the globe in the service of those from whom they have something to learn.”<sup>125</sup> Correspondents also insisted that espionage was not a system culturally compatible in the West. Story declared that “the closer one sees it, the less one esteems it as a profession for the man of Western birth.” Noting the omnipresence of Japanese spies behind Russian lines – disguised often as Chinese

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<sup>121</sup> “O” (James), *The Yellow War* (McClure, Phillips and Co.: New York 1905) pp. 299-300

<sup>122</sup> Lord Brooke, *An Eye-Witness in Manchuria* (Eveleigh Nash: London 1905) p. 145

<sup>123</sup> Maurice Baring, *With the Russians in Manchuria* (Methuen and Co.: London 1905) p. 132

<sup>124</sup> Maxwell, p. 134

<sup>125</sup> James, *A Study of the Russo-Japanese War*, pp. 13-14

coolies, peasants, and even in one instance as a hairdresser to Russian officers, he declared that Japanese espionage “cost the Russians more lives in this war than Japanese strategy or Japanese leadership.”<sup>126</sup> Thus, the peculiarities of ‘Eastern’ war, found distasteful by the West, rather than military capabilities on the battlefield, resulted in Japanese success in the war.

In viewing Japanese society and its “way of war,” British correspondents sought to understand how a society withstood the strains of modern war. While many did attempt to advocate or highlight many military and social observations made of Japan during the war, they also contradicted their efforts in their presentation of Otherness. Highlighting various Japanese peculiarities, correspondents in a way presented a society very distinct from that of Britain and other Western nations. Thus, while correspondents attempted to draw particular lessons from Japan in the war, it seems that their own notions of Orientalism hindered such efforts.

### Russia: The Decline into Oriental Despotism

With Russia’s defeat by Japan, the West faced an intellectual dilemma: how did Russia, the nation that defeated Napoleon and a major force in European diplomacy, lose to Japan, an Oriental nation? The fluid nature of Orientalism and notions of Social Darwinism influenced the response of British correspondents. Although some correspondents characterized Russia as Western despite its declining status following the Crimean War (1854-1856), many isolated it into the category of “Slav” or “partially

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<sup>126</sup> Story, pp. 173-174, 181, 186-187. The story of the Japanese hairdresser is also in James, *The Yellow War* pp. 95-97. These accounts of a spy disguised as a hairdresser is intriguing as it made its way into William Le Queux’s bestseller, *The Invasion of 1910* (1906), with German soldiers disguised as hairdressers in London preparing for a German invasion. For other accounts of Japanese spies in the war, see Brooke p. 55.

Western.” Additionally, they also presented Russia as a society that had once attained the status of “Western,” but had declined to the status of “Oriental” due to the corruption and negligence of the Tsarist government to vigilantly improve the country as a whole.

In *Orientalizing Russia*, correspondents did not characterize it with significant hostility. In fact, many correspondents advocated creating closer ties with Russia (perhaps due to fears of the “Yellow Peril”) and sympathized with the Russian people. Some correspondents hoped that the Russo-Japanese War would spark Russian regeneration. The best example of this was in the allusions of correspondents to the Russian Revolution of 1905 caused by the war. Repington hoped that “Russian history may trace the earliest dawn of real emancipation from this useless, bloody, and disastrous war,” believing that without the war, “Russia might have borne her chains, without hope of redemption, for another fifty years.”<sup>127</sup> Leaving East Asia to following the uprisings in Warsaw and Tiflis (Tbilisi) during the Revolution, F.A. McKenzie of the *Daily Mail* insisted that the Tsarist government had to reform itself or face its downfall, noting that “in far too many cases officialism is rotten” and “once the army is weakened the autocracy has gone.”<sup>128</sup> While Repington saw hope in the Revolution, McKenzie was somewhat alarmed at the prospect of it, hoping that the Russian government would reform itself under the threat of a general uprising.

With the believed potential for Russian regeneration, some British correspondents advocated for improving Britain’s diplomatic relationship with Russia, despite the Dogger Bank Incident (1904) during the Russo-Japanese War that almost led to war between Britain and Russia. Baring criticized British diplomacy towards Russia,

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<sup>127</sup> Repington, p. 611

<sup>128</sup> Frederick Arthur McKenzie, *From Tokyo to Tiflis: Uncensored Letters from the War* (Hurst and Blackett: London 1905) pp. 327-328

believing that like with France, “the relations of nations [Britain and France] shift and change as quickly as those of individuals, and out of the bitterness came the *entente*.”<sup>129</sup> In September 1904, Repington argued in the *National Review* that “England and Russia have need of each other in order to allow the full and peaceful development of their respective people and subject races,” indirectly alluding to the imperial agitation caused by The Great Game.<sup>130</sup> Despite its alliance with Japan, Russian defeat alarmed some British correspondents perhaps due to Yellow Peril sentiments. In his view of Japan, McCullagh shared “clash of civilizations” sentiments in his writings:

It [the banzai] is the cry of that strange and monstrous Asia with which Europe has been at feud for thrice a thousand years. It demands vengeance not only for Port Arthur but for Kagoshima and Shimonoseki, nay, more, for Salamis...for Plassey, for Kandahar, for Mindanao.

Oh, England! Oh, my country! What deed is this thou hast done?<sup>131</sup>

McCullagh saw Japanese victory as a foreboding for the Western powers, lamenting Britain’s alliance with Japan. At Mukden, he told his readers that he and the correspondents from Britain, Germany, France, and the United States (“the only White Powers now left on the face of the earth”) envisioned the “Yellow Wave toppling over us, it almost seemed to us as if old Europe were undone.”<sup>132</sup> Hamilton also shared Yellow Peril warnings with his readers, insisting that “Japan is our ally, and not one, if I may presume to judge so early, who will prove ungrateful.”<sup>133</sup> Much to his indignation, Maxwell had to admit the “dangerous argument by analogy” of a Japanese cavalry

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<sup>129</sup> Baring, p. 196

<sup>130</sup> Repington, p. 2

<sup>131</sup> McCullagh, p. 110

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 286

<sup>133</sup> Hamilton, vol. I, p. 12; Some correspondents feared the Yellow Peril from an economic perspective, believing that modernity in East Asia would result in more competing industries and Eastern intellectual influences on Western society. See Story, p. 46

officer, who asserted to him that despite their cavalry and infantry being “darker and smaller” than their European counterparts, they achieved resounding success in warfare.<sup>134</sup> In the war, Westerners had to acknowledge the martial abilities of an Oriental nation, a prospect they viewed with fascination, fear, and distaste.

Despite such sympathy, the descriptions of Russia by correspondents presented a society in decline. In the people of Russia, Repington saw a “patient, silent mass of inarticulate humanity” deserving of the Britain’s sympathy.<sup>135</sup> Correspondents often portrayed the Russian soldiers in an almost child-like, irrational state incapable of controlling their passions and inhibitions. Following the surrender of Port Arthur, Smith claimed that the Russian commander, General Stoessel, had to request Japanese assistance in restoring order to the city after his troops “broke open bonded warehouses and liquor-stores and drank vodka until the streets were full of drunken soldiers,” a direct result of what Maxwell saw as the Russian garrison’s concern to ensuring an “inexhaustible store” of alcohol in the siege.<sup>136</sup> Norregaard concluded that “Russian soldiers are children of the moment, impressionable and easily moved by changing circumstances.” Rather than strive to persevere in the wake of defeat, Russian soldiers fell sway to their childlike, violently-changing mood that hindered their warlike abilities. Lord Brooke also criticized the Russians’ “kind-hearted,” gentle, and sympathetic attitudes to the Chinese – with the exceptions of being in battle or intoxicated, insisting that no other European soldier would have behaved in such a way.<sup>137</sup> While he

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<sup>134</sup> Maxwell, p. 371

<sup>135</sup> Repington, p. 3

<sup>136</sup> Smith, pp. 472-473; Maxwell, p. 364

<sup>137</sup> Brooke, p. 45; Brooke came to this conclusion after observing a “Chinaman” chasing off six Russian soldiers that tried stealing his property. Apparently, Brooke thought it was acceptable for a European to steal from Orientals, or meet resistance from an Oriental with violence. See also Baring, p. 45

acknowledged the European identity of the Russians, Brooke still denied their kinship to the rest of Europe by characterizing their behavior as ‘Other’ to the rest of Europe. Moreover, he speculated that the “rapid recovery of *morale*” amongst Russian soldiers in the war came from “a dulness of imagination...or a simple child-like nature,” which allowed them to soon forget the “memory of a reverse” and return to “his [the Russians’] careless self.”<sup>138</sup> At the Battle of the Shaho, Maxwell remarked that the Russian army, “fought with the courage and fatalism of their race” indicative of their declining “aptitude for war.”<sup>139</sup> A once-feared military force in the West had fallen into a decrepit state as reflected in its defeat to an Oriental army.

Militarily, perhaps most shocking to correspondents was the poor performance of the once-formidable Cossacks in the war, especially considering the poor quality of cavalry units employed by the IJA recognized by nearly every correspondent and attaché. Brindle lamented that “the Cossacks, have in measure lost the fame which at one time fascinated the attention of the world,” insisting that the “force of the conditions of warfare imposed upon him in Manchuria” resulted in its decline.<sup>140</sup> Maxwell insisted that the theatre of the Russo-Japanese War was “not a country for cavalry, as the Cossacks have found.”<sup>141</sup> By these statements, like other conclusions made by Western military attachés following the war, the Russo-Japanese War became Orientalized itself, where conditions of Otherness applied to the failure of cavalry such as the Cossack on the Eastern battlefield.<sup>142</sup> Story asserted that cavalry became a burden to Russian tactical

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<sup>138</sup> Ibid., pp. 172-173

<sup>139</sup> Maxwell, p. 266

<sup>140</sup> Brindle, pp. 118-119

<sup>141</sup> Maxwell, p. 371

<sup>142</sup> See Echevarria, *After Clausewitz*, pp. 121-156; Howard, “Men against Fire,” in Paret, ed., pp. 519-522



circumstances in the war as they lacked the artillery to support them.<sup>143</sup> Others, however, insisted that the Cossacks had declined like the rest of Russian society. Hamilton quoted the opinion of an IJA Staff officer (General Fukushima), who found the Cossacks had “lost all of his former Boer attributes, except that of horsemanship, and is now simply a yokel who is living on the Napoleonic legend.”<sup>144</sup>

To correspondents, the root cause of Russia’s decay came from the Tsar and his government, which produced the culture that could not prevail over Japan in the war. Noting the antagonism between Russia and Britain, Repington places the blame entirely on the Russian government, whose “diplomacy is calculated to tire out the patience of its best friends” and whose leaders blunder “due to the absence of all serious knowledge of statecraft.”<sup>145</sup> Additionally, he argued that the Tsarist government failed to socially engineer the Russian people for the demands of modern warfare:

...the fault lay not with the army itself, but with an effete and pernicious system of government resting on the twin pillars of force and superstition, which had left the mass of a great people in the slough of ignorance, and when the day of trial came demanded the attributes of freemen from the son of serfs.<sup>146</sup>

Like other correspondents, Repington shows a belief in the positive influences of state-driven social engineering, particularly through the medium of education. While Japan became a successful model of modernization from above, Russia became a model for utter backwardness and stagnation created from above, admired for the achievements of its past and despised for the state of its present. Additionally, some correspondents perceived that the policies of the Tsarist government socially engineered the Russian

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<sup>143</sup> Story, p. 143

<sup>144</sup> Hamilton, vol. I, p. 33

<sup>145</sup> Repington, pp. 2-3

<sup>146</sup> Ibid., p. 611

people in an improper direction. Brindle saw the Russian soldier as “splendid but spoiled...a slave to a conservatism as fatal to the development of individual qualities as that of the Chinese mandarin.”<sup>147</sup> The Russian people thus became the victims of Oriental despotism. The Tsarist regime represented the source of Russian stagnation apparent in the Russo-Japanese War. While correspondents never went as far as to express any imperial ambitions towards Russia, they believed that Russia required a new force or influence that would spark progressive change. Hamilton asserted that this state of affairs had resulted in the decline of its once-powerful military under modern conditions, claiming that it had peasant soldiers lacking in the “habitude of war,” the “martial ardour” outside of home defense, and the intelligence to act independently on the battlefield.<sup>148</sup> Thus, Russians only fought well for their own individual self-interests as the Russian government had not sought to instill the education, training, or patriotic ardor that would improve their abilities in modern warfare. In his historical study of Russia, Sir Donald Mackenzie Wallace, a *Times* correspondent at the Portsmouth peace negotiations, asserted in his historical study of Russia that unlike the nobility, the peasantry was never compelled to abandon its “primitive moral habitat” by the Tsarist government in Russian history. Thus, for a time, the greatest successes of the Tsarist regime came under the leadership of Tsars like Peter the Great, who attempted to socially engineer a portion of Russian society to accept modern reforms. As the Tsars began to abandon such policies, Wallace claimed that the new noble culture lost control of itself, with the Russian nobility constantly adopting “foreign manners, customs, and institutions” without any governing force to control or direct such influences into

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<sup>147</sup> Brindle, p. 114

<sup>148</sup> Hamilton, vol. I, p. 10

something uniquely Russian.<sup>149</sup> Essentially, Wallace depicted Russian society as a product of a chaotic system of government, which neither encourages the development of its peasantry nor controls the development of its nobility.

Correspondents often remarked on what they saw as the backwards, superstitious religious beliefs of Russians. Story saw Russian religious devotion as “strangely pathetic,” driving Russian soldiers to “sing their hymns with a manly conviction that is given to no western nation.”<sup>150</sup> Brindle believed that Russian Orthodoxy left the Russians “children in knowledge,” forced to remain in such a state “by a feudal system of government which permits no revolt against the ways of orthodoxy.” While he wondered if Russia would benefit from the eradication of such a religion, he concluded that “his [the Russian soldier’s] simple faith alone saved him from a dark and pitiable life.”<sup>151</sup> Wallace saw Russian conceptions of religion, especially amongst the peasantry, as a result of stagnation in the “Eastern Church,” and its Otherness to that of Western Protestantism:

Primitive mankind is everywhere and always disposed to regard religion as simply a mass of mysterious rites, which have a secret and magical power of averting evil in this world and securing felicity in the next...the Russian Church has not done all it might have done to eradicate this conception and to bring religion into closer association with ordinary morality.

Influenced by Russian religion, the Russian people remained in a primitive state and outside of Wallace’s perceptions of “ordinary morality,” which influenced such acts as a robber that “commends his undertaking to the protection of the saints.” Additionally, he

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<sup>149</sup> Sir Donald Mackenzie Wallace, *Russia* (Cassell and Company, Limited: London 1912) pp. 248-249; The first edition was written in 1877 and based on Wallace’s six years of residence in Russia. He began revising and expanding the book in 1905.

<sup>150</sup> Story, p. 197

<sup>151</sup> Brindle, pp. 115-116

asserted that the influence of Russian Orthodoxy discouraged the development of primary education as it did not emphasize the reading of scripture as did Protestantism. Wallace also noted that Orthodoxy did not develop any conceptions of Protestant “inner religious life” or theology, which resulted in the “unbounded, childlike confidence in the saving efficacy of the rites which he practices.”<sup>152</sup> Thus, the peasantry, content with adhering to religious ceremonies rather than developing a Western, or Protestant, sense of self-improvement, remained in a childlike and fatalistic religious state.

Correspondents also applied their own racial explanations to the defeat of Russia in the war. Influenced perhaps by European trends of highlighting racial or national identity in this period, they alluded to the “Slavic” or “multi-racial” character of the Russians. Story regarded the racial diversity of the Russian officer corps as both the strength and weakness of the Russian army. He admired their linguistic abilities and cultural adaptability, but criticized their tendency to be “nervous” fighters.<sup>153</sup> On his train ride from Moscow to Manchuria, Baring noted that “there is a Teutonic mass of rules and regulations, but the Slav temperament is not equal to the task of insisting on their literal execution.” The Slavic character of the Russians – which Baring found akin to the Irish character of the Irish – was incapable of comprehending or effectively running a complex bureaucracy, an emerging part of the machinery of modern warfare and society. While Baring placed much of the blame on the Russian system, he believed that “its most crying faults are inherent in the Russian national character,” citing particularly a lack of discipline from both officers and enlisted.<sup>154</sup> Brooke also insisted that Europeans could not expect the same “European” behaviors from a Russian as they

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<sup>152</sup> Wallace, pp. 63-66

<sup>153</sup> Story, pp. 84-88

<sup>154</sup> Baring, pp. 19, 189

were a “race of soldiers both ‘old fashioned’ and half-Oriental.”<sup>155</sup> The closest he came to attributing “European” characteristics to Russians was to compare their martial abilities to the Spaniards:

The Russian character appears to me unmethodical, a lack of forethought is manifest...the *manana* of the Spaniards. This state of mind leads in a battle...to many orders and counter-orders, inevitably causing much confusion.<sup>156</sup>

Story also perceived a similar characteristic of the Russian officers, although he found it to be a positive trait. He referred to it as their fatalism indicative of their common exclamation of “Nichevo” (“It does not matter”), which Story claimed allowed the Russians to overcome a potential reverse in *morale* following a defeat.<sup>157</sup> Positive or negative, Brooke, Baring, and Story observed evidence of a sort of “indifference” amongst Russians inherently “Other” to Europeans.

While British correspondents of the Russo-Japanese War consciously acknowledged the defeat of a European nation, Russia, to Japan, they did not view Russia as a European equal to themselves and the rest of the Western powers. Although its defeat sparked some alarm amongst correspondents, many attempted to rationalize that Russia was inherently “Other” to the rest of Europe and therefore backwards and inferior. Although once revered by Europe as a formidable power, the war suggested to them that the Tsarist government had caused Russian society to stagnate, which resulted in its inability to succeed in the conditions of modern warfare.

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<sup>155</sup> Brooke, p. 168

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 229

<sup>157</sup> Story, pp. 89-90

## Conclusion

As stated by Said, the different views of the Orient and the Russo-Japanese War shared by British war correspondents “can be characterized as exclusively manifest differences, differences in form and personal style, rarely in basic content.”<sup>158</sup> To Hamilton and correspondents, success and failure in war resulted from a society’s inherent warlike nature and its ability to nurture such a nature over time, an anxiety held by many in Britain at the time. In interpreting an inherent warlike nature in societies, conceptions of nationalism – of self and other – dictated the cultural explanations of correspondents, in addition to beliefs in Social Darwinism, which called for constant social and political intervention in culture to maintain a “martial spirit” lest it weaken from a lack of vigilance. Japan’s victory proved to correspondents the warlike nature of the Japanese, while the defeat of Russia stirred observations of societal indifference that resulted in military and cultural decline.

However, with the influence of Orientalist discourse looming in the minds of British correspondents, it seems that while they praised Japan’s societal ability to fight a war and become a power in its own right, they applied a heavy Otherness to the conditions of the war and Japan’s victory. In essence, they saw the Russo-Japanese War as a war between Others. They perceived the Japanese as culturally, intellectually, and even biologically Other. They saw their opponent, Russia, as an Other. The environment the war took place in resulted in a war with Other conditions. When historians lament the “lessons not learned” from the Russo-Japanese War, it is perhaps important to realize

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<sup>158</sup> Said, p. 206

how cultural perceptions of Otherness on the part of British correspondents affected the conclusions they made.<sup>159</sup>

Nevertheless, the perceptions of Russia and Japan shown at times by these correspondents resulted in some deep contradictions. Japan, an Oriental and “barbaric” nation, yet still a cultural and political model for success in modern warfare, had defeated Russia, an Occidental and “civilized” nation. In their observation of the Russo-Japanese War, British correspondents seemed to attempt to reconcile preexisting notions of the Orient from the Orientalist tradition with prevailing conceptions of Social Darwinism, social engineering, and nationalism. Essentially, Russia and Japan appeared as cases of an Other within the realm of the Occident and Orient, respectively. While Japan was indeed Oriental, it was an exceptional Oriental nation endowed with martial traits nurtured by the policies of the Meiji government, but was only artificially Occidental and thus remained an Other. Citing Russia’s Slavic nature and the corruption of the Tsarist government, correspondents maintained Russia as an Occidental nation, culturally and politically explained its defeat to an Oriental nation, and declared it Other from the rest of the Occident. Thus, Russia remained an Occidental, Japan an Oriental, and the Occident maintained its hegemonic position over the Orient. In a sense, with regards to Japan and Russia, the analyses of British correspondents perhaps showed a “Western ignorance which becomes more refined and complex.”<sup>160</sup> Indeed, such contradictions may have potentially threatened the hegemonic potential of this discourse, as “orientalist

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<sup>159</sup> See Porter, “Military Orientalism? British Observers of the Japanese War of War, 1904-1910,” *War & Society*, Vol. 26, No. 1 (May 2007) p. 12; European and American military theorists, according to Echevarria, did indeed resolve the “military crisis” on a theoretical level, but had problems putting these theories into widespread practice by 1914, thus resulting in the “surprise” of the lethality of the First World War. See Echevarria, *After Clausewitz*, pp. 224-228; See also Michael Howard, “Men against Fire: Expectations of War in 1914,” *International Security*, Vol. 9, No. 1 (Summer, 1984), pp. 41-57, particularly pp. 52-57

<sup>160</sup> Said, p. 62

constructions are profoundly vulnerable to war's contingencies, which perhaps explains why war is such an incitement to orientalist discourse."<sup>161</sup> By turning to European perceptions of Social Darwinism and nationalism, correspondents sought to maintain the way in which they knew the Orient as both a source of Otherness and Occidental anxiety. However, as will be discussed in Chapter III, the roots of these contradictions arose not from the Orient, but rather from Edwardian cultural fears of modernity in Britain developing before the Russo-Japanese War.

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<sup>161</sup> Tarak Barkawi and Keith Stanski, ed., *Orientalism and War* (Columbia University Press: New York 2013) p. 10



## CHAPTER III

### EDWARDIAN JAPAN

#### Introduction

Despite their marked Orientalist discourse, British war correspondents did write admiringly of particular aspects of Japanese society. However, the particular aspects of Japanese society that they focused their admiration on were quite specifically linked to social concerns arising in Edwardian Britain. While they did find Japan's successful modernization along Western lines laudable – although not equal to that of the West itself – correspondents constantly expressed their fascination with what they perceived were inherent traditions within Japanese society that allowed it not only survive but also thrive in the modern world. Through this lens, British war correspondents thought more of themselves and their own society, projecting their own Edwardian discourse on politics, gender norms, and education sparked by Britain's own modernization. Thus, Japan provided British correspondents at times throughout their narratives an image of how they idealized their own society.

In the Russo-Japanese War, the corrupting influences perceived in Western progress influenced the observations of British war correspondents. To them – as well as many others in Britain, progress brought increased comfort and leisure to society through technology and wealth. In warfare, this technology and wealth translated into more lethal weaponry and greater resources to expand the scope of the battlefield. This situation, however, resulted in a perceived major dilemma, as modern society, having acclimated

itself to an “improved” lifestyle, lost its “martial spirit” and the austerity to win a war under such increasingly demanding conditions. Hamilton and Repington perhaps best articulated these anxieties in their writings on the war. Hamilton concluded that “up-to-date civilisation is becoming less and less capable of conforming to the antique standards of military virtue.”<sup>162</sup> Additionally, Repington believed that progress and modernity had created a culture that could not produce effective armies:

It is not possible to raise, from among a people abandoned to luxury, materialism, and the cult of undisciplined individualism, armed forces endowed with all the Spartan simplicity of life, the moral strength, and the sentiment of collective self-sacrifice which distinguish the warriors of Japan.<sup>163</sup>

Developments such as feminism, increasing political suffrage, and socialism were found alarming by many Edwardians in the older established classes, who saw these changes as symptoms of the “disease” of modernity, which threatened to undermine both their future status and also British society’s will to defend its world status in a war. Japan had acquired technology and wealth, but its performance in the Russo-Japanese War showed correspondents that it had not lost its military abilities or societal resolve. Thus, in studying the “problem” of Japanese modernity, British correspondents sought to resolve their own problem: uncontrolled progress.<sup>164</sup>

Porter included this particular aspect of British observation of the war within his definition of Military Orientalism, arguing that Japan served as a “rhetorical device” for promoting “state-driven social engineering” to prepare British society for a future war. Thus, British observers of the Russo-Japanese War shaped their conclusions around this

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<sup>162</sup> Hamilton, vol. I, p. 5

<sup>163</sup> Repington, pp. 606-607

<sup>164</sup> Adams, *The Great Adventure*, p. 5

agenda, resulting in several misperceptions of Japan.<sup>165</sup> However, while Porter argued that British observers attempted to draw political and cultural lessons exclusively from a monolithic Japanese society, it is important to realize that the political and social discourse projected onto Japan by correspondents had begun circulating within Britain outside of the influence of Japan.<sup>166</sup> Viewing Japanese society, British correspondents often saw uniformity: a nation void of individuality, extravagance, and all the other perceived vices of modern culture. Rarely, if at all, did the Japanese stray from this perceptive mold of British correspondents. If deviation did appear, it had negative connotations. Noting calls by new Japanese intellectuals to abandon *bushido*, Hamilton denounced their “unpatriotic” desires, supposedly acquired from the corrupting influences of their education at American universities.<sup>167</sup> In addition to creating a better society, homogeneity, according to Norregaard’s view of the IJA, resulted in “the most perfect engine of war”:

Look at a company of Japanese infantry marching past...They all resemble each other in face and figure, one sees that they belong to one race which has developed certain features...The sight, therefore, gives one an impression of compactness, solidity, and regularity, as if one were looking at well-constructed machinery, where all the many small parts are perfectly homogenous, and fit well into each other.<sup>168</sup>

Rather than focus on the perceived “ills” of modern society seen by British war correspondents, the chapter will analyze the social discourse prominent in the writings of British correspondents. As Said argued, “cultures have always been inclined to impose complete transformations on other cultures, receiving these cultures not as they are but

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<sup>165</sup> Porter, p. 86

<sup>166</sup> Porter, “Military Orientalism? British Observers of the Japanese War of War, 1904-1910,” *War & Society*, Vol. 26, No. 1 (May 2007) pp. 12-15

<sup>167</sup> Hamilton, vol. II, pp. 31-32

<sup>168</sup> Norregaard, p. 302

as, for the benefit of the receiver, they ought to be.”<sup>169</sup> In their positive observations of Japanese society, British correspondents revealed a greater interest in their own society, projecting Edwardian discourse on politics, gender norms, and education on Japanese society. Rather than imposing a prejudiced Otherness on Japanese society or attempting to dominate Japan by defining it through discourse, they portrayed a society capable of sustaining modern war and the corrupting influences of modernization, something that many in Britain desired. This does not go as far as to conclude that the British correspondents absolutely misrepresented Japanese society and culture within their discourse.<sup>170</sup> Rather, like Porter’s study, it points out that their writing at times perhaps created an oversimplified or distorted image of Japanese society by imposing upon it a desire for uniformity.<sup>171</sup> British correspondents brought to the war their own preexisting discourse on progress and political and social ideology originating outside of the direct Orientalist context of Japan. In other words, Britain, not Japan, was the target of this exercise in discourse.<sup>172</sup>

### The Driving Force of the Mikado

British correspondents highlighted one particular moral force that drove Japanese soldiers to commit to unimaginable acts of heroism and sacrifice in the Russo-Japanese

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<sup>169</sup> Said, p. 67

<sup>170</sup> The problem of presenting Japan as a monolith is reflected on by Lionel James in *The Yellow War*, particularly in the chapter entitled “The Path in the East is Strange,” which cover his experiences with a Japanese officer named Kamimoto, the spy disguised as a hairdresser. I have yet to find any similar instances in other British monographs.

<sup>171</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 96-97

<sup>172</sup> This approach by correspondents to Japan might be considered in the context of David Cannadine’s work on “Ornamentalism,” which argued that Britain sought to transplant its idealized system of social hierarchy, perceived as under threat by “urban democracy” within Britain, in its Empire. Japan, of course, was not a part of the British Empire, but had become associated with it through the Anglo-Japanese Alliance formed in 1902. See David Cannadine, *Ornamentalism: How the British Saw their Empire* (Oxford University Press: New York 2002)

War: the Mikado, or Emperor of Japan. Revered as a god-like leader, the Mikado represented to correspondents the driving force behind Japanese modernization and military success. Essentially, correspondents saw in the Mikado an example of the benefits of societal reform from above and the power of a unifying ideology to drive a society towards a particular goal.

Surrounded by urban democracy in Britain, correspondents saw in the Mikado, or Emperor, a concrete example of the notion that a nation's change or regeneration had to first start from the top. Repington commented that "the Emperor is the first of his people...because he is entirely devoted to the continual study of the interest of his country...and attentive to the destinies of his people to the exclusion of all else." Through this selfless figurehead, Japan attained stability "from the keystone to the foundations of the arch of government" and "the moral and the patriotic basis of government and people."<sup>173</sup> He also compared the regeneration of Japan to the emergence of Prussia (whose military system Japan had adopted), arguing that "it was that system of rigid economy, and of unity of direction maintained in the hands of the [Prussian] Emperor, that best suited the political atmosphere of Japan."<sup>174</sup> Like Prussia, it was the guidance of an all-powerful leader, the Emperor, which sparked the regeneration of Japan. He created a Japanese political and social order collectively driven by no other interest than morality and patriotism. Thus, a unity of purpose resulted from the Emperor in Japanese society, which, according to Repington, ought to deal a "mortal blow to Western egoism":

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<sup>173</sup> Repington, pp. 607-608

<sup>174</sup> Ibid., p. 226

As for the highest, so down through all the intervening grades to the humblest private soldier or seaman, there runs one single thought of devotion to the Emperor, victory at all costs, death if need be, but even the victory of death better than no victory at all.<sup>175</sup>

The role of the Emperor in Japanese society also impressed Hamilton, who observed that “the overshadowing power and divinity of the Emperor...tends to obliterate all minor, merely worldly differences between subjects,” allowing the Japanese to become “genuinely casual and democratic in their social relations.”<sup>176</sup> With an all-powerful ruler, a society could eradicate dysfunctional social differences:

I think I prefer that [government] of the Japanese. An autocratic government with a genuinely democratic society is better than a democratic society divided into strata, each autocratic to its inferiors and servile to its superiors, as in England, or servile to its inferiors and autocratic to its superiors, as in America.<sup>177</sup>

In an increasingly democratic world sparked by modernity, Hamilton perceived that an autocracy would create uniformity and order out of the chaos of the complex and unequal social order of representative government in the West. Noting the events of the Meiji Restoration, Smith claimed that “the closer relations between the Emperor and his people...made his expressed wishes a potent factor in fusing warring interests and overcoming traditional prejudices.”<sup>178</sup> Thus, an energetic, ambitious and omnipotent ruler had the capacity to eradicate societal divisions and resistance to needed reform.

In characterizing the Japanese perceptions of the Mikado, correspondents stressed that the Mikado was an all-powerful deity in Japanese society. He did not represent a personality, but rather an ideology that had driven the IJA and IJN to victory in the

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<sup>175</sup> Ibid., pp. 605-606

<sup>176</sup> Hamilton, vol. I, pp. 36-37

<sup>177</sup> Ibid., p. 38

<sup>178</sup> Smith, p. 21

Russo-Japanese War. Norregaard stated that “they [the Japanese] regard their Emperor as a god, and their officers as his lieutenants, and willingly give their lives at a word from them.”<sup>179</sup> The devotion to the Mikado allowed Japanese society to withstand the strains of modern warfare, as “death was commonly spoken of as the desirable and anticipated thing in the service of the Emperor.”<sup>180</sup> Japanese soldiers and the home front avoided the moral collapse associated with modern war, as death was the preferable outcome in war. Bartlett insisted that “soldiers fight their best either for some great personality at their head, appealing to the imagination; or for some great national cause.” Listing historical examples from Alexander the Great to the “national issues” involved in the American Civil War (1861-1865), he asserted that the Japanese had both a national issue and “a great personality in the Mikado”:

This concentration of the mind on one man, a living image, who bestows praise or blame from the steps of a throne which represents in the popular imagination the summit of all earthly and celestial power, is a high incentive for the soldier in the hour of battle.

To Bartlett, one of the greatest driving forces that a nation at war could have was an all-powerful personality. Without the Mikado, he believed that Japan would follow the rapid courses to collapse of Macedon and Carthage after the deaths of Alexander and Hannibal.<sup>181</sup>

In writing on the Mikado in Japanese society, British correspondents indirectly critiqued the political direction of Britain towards a more democratic system of government. In the Mikado, correspondents perceived the positive influence of an all-powerful ruler linked to a universally-accepted ideology (the Mikado as a deity) in

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<sup>179</sup> Norregaard, p. 303; see also Maxwell, p. 106

<sup>180</sup> McKenzie p. 5

<sup>181</sup> Bartlett, pp. 482-483

directing the development of a society into modernity. However, in order for a society to acquiesce to its role under an ideologically-reinforced ruler wielding absolute political power, future generations had to receive indoctrination at home and in school to maintain such a political system over time.

### Gender and the Family

The entrance of women into the British public sphere – particularly Suffragettes, had challenged prevailing Edwardian notions of proper gender roles aimed at combating the “excess” associated with modernity.<sup>182</sup> In an effort to combat this “sex war,” Edwardians sought to frantically reinforce tradition by highlighting the perceived positive influences of the “male sphere” of war and the military. Stressing the importance of the separation of the sexes, the maternal role of women and the nation, and the utility of war in instilling accepted manly virtues, British war correspondents of the Russo-Japanese War imposed Edwardian gender values on Japanese society, emphasizing their utility for success in warfare and the continued survival of Britain in a competitive, hostile world.

In their accounts of Japan in the Russo-Japanese War, British correspondents centered their analysis on Japanese men. Although they did not figure directly into accounts of the war, Japanese women often appeared as models for depicting the “proper role” of women for British readers. As their subject was directly of war or closely associated with it, men had to be the focus, as war was an integral part of the male sphere of society. Nevertheless, correspondents saw women as an important factor in shaping men for this sphere. Hamilton, a man who Adams depicted as obsessed with “Mother-need” stemming from his own mother’s death when he was young, shared overt fears of

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<sup>182</sup> Adams, *The Great Adventure*, p. 13



the “sex war” in Britain in his writings on the war.<sup>183</sup> In Japan, he saw the “un-  
emancipated” position of women as beneficial to its society as opposed to the “appalling  
danger...in the shape of the American selfish woman and her imitators in Europe”:

In Japan the sphere of the sexes is still totally distinct; and although this may shock  
foreign feminine opinion, in practice it certainly seems to tend to...not only the general  
happiness, but also to the general military efficiency. Women occupied in passing  
examinations, struggling through society, sport, plays, travel, with interludes of flirtation,  
can scarcely find the time the Japanese mother does to stir the young imaginations of her  
children with tales of derring-do.<sup>184</sup>

Japanese women represented to Hamilton the societal advantages of the separation of the  
sexes on grounds of female “happiness” and military efficiency. Female indulgence  
(depicted as a “struggle”) in pursuit of education, leisure, and promiscuity deviated from  
the source of a woman’s “natural” happiness in the private sphere, where they must  
devote themselves to inspiring their children to seek heroism on future battlefields. The  
male realm of war fulfilled the separation of the sexes, but Hamilton insisted that women  
threatened even that sphere as they sought to physically distract the soldier by their mere  
presence. Again, Japan represented the ideal of gender separation to Hamilton, as “not a  
single soul feminine is allowed even at the base.”<sup>185</sup> When women sought to break from  
their traditional maternal role into the realms of seduction and promiscuity, they  
threatened to corrupt both men in society and at war. Even when Hamilton awkwardly  
attempted to enter into the world of “flirtation” with Japanese geishas, he wrote of his  
embarrassment when Japanese men brought it up in conversation. In attempting to  
compliment a geisha, he told her that “I wish...that I had a beautiful golden cage into

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<sup>183</sup> Ibid., p. 22

<sup>184</sup> Hamilton, vol. I, p. 17

<sup>185</sup> Ibid., p. 171

which I might put you and carry you off home.”<sup>186</sup> Embarrassed of his flirtations with women, Hamilton’s only attempt at complimenting a woman alluded not to a sexual desire, but rather a desire to shelter her in the appropriate realm of “domestic bliss.”

British correspondents saw that the proper adoption of the role of women in Japanese society benefitted Japanese soldiers fighting in Manchuria. To Repington, this originated from the Japanese parental “conservation of the ancient tenets of *bushido*.”<sup>187</sup> According to Baring, war represented man’s equivalent to the motherhood of women, contemplating in the wake of the Battle of Liaoyang that “I thought that war is perhaps to man what motherhood is to a woman, a burden, a source of untold suffering, and yet a glory.”<sup>188</sup> As men experienced the suffering and glory associated with war, women must equally burden themselves with the glories and pains of being mothers. With this perception of the complimentary gender roles of motherhood and war, women must strive, as mothers, to prepare men for their assigned gender role as warriors. Women, therefore, become the primary agents of developing the “warrior spirit” in boys and husbands, and teaching “maternal duties” to girls, or future mothers. Any attempt of a woman to emancipate herself or deviate from this role, such as the Suffragettes in Britain, would disrupt the continuation of the warrior spirit and threaten the security of the nation. In Japan, Smith asserted that Japanese devotion to the Mikado present in the soldiers of the IJA first came from home as part of its indigenous gender roles:

...the women of Japan channel the first lesson. The child is taught that he is born to serve the Emperor, and that every boy must become a soldier; therefore he must at all times be prepared to die.

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<sup>186</sup> Ibid., pp. 39-42

<sup>187</sup> Repington, p. 383

<sup>188</sup> Baring, p. 133

Thus, the continuation of the symbolism of the Mikado in Japan relied on the perpetuation of the maternal role of Japanese women. Smith insisted that “to properly channel this fundamental idea in the minds of their offspring is as much the duty of the women as to meet death is the duty of the men of the country.” Any deviation from this maternal duty in Japan brought disgrace to the mother, “because in so failing she brings disgrace upon the houses of both her husband and her father, and is known as the mother of a son who is afraid to perform his first duty as citizen.”<sup>189</sup> McKenzie wrote of a story of a Japanese grandmother telling her grandson of his soldierly duty:

“My boy,” she said, “I shall never see you alive again. Don’t be satisfied with killing one Russian before you die. Kill six, and then you will have proved yourself worthy of our stock...”

...A friend asked her if she did not feel sorrowful. “Why should I?” she demanded, proudly. “My grandson goes to die for his Emperor. What nobler death could our family wish than that?”<sup>190</sup>

It is the role of Japanese mothers, grandmothers, and women in general, as part of their own duty to the Mikado, to produce soldiers for Japan that would fulfill their ultimate civil duty of dying on the battlefield. They must not content themselves with producing soldiers willing to “fight,” but rather those willing to “die” for Japan. When that day arrived, these same women had to control any weak, feminine emotions to send their husbands or sons off to war.<sup>191</sup>

It seems that the role of mothers transforming children into soldiers was more broadly interpreted by some correspondents as developing boys into men, as it was the

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<sup>189</sup> Smith, pp. 382-383

<sup>190</sup> McKenzie, p. 3

<sup>191</sup> Several correspondents remarked on the stoicism of Japanese women in sending off their sons and husbands to war. See James, *Yellow War*, pp. 277-278; Burleigh, pp. 256-257.

natural progression for boys to become men and men to become soldiers under the guidance of mothers and wives. As women must become mothers, men must become soldiers. A man not instructed at home by a mother in the importance of his duty as a soldier did not become a man at all and essentially remained in a child-like state. The comparison of Russian and Japanese soldiers by British correspondents reflected these sentiments. To Norregaard, the individual Japanese soldier at Port Arthur following the failure of first general assault of August 1904 represented “a *man* in the full significance of the word.”<sup>192</sup> Despite being beaten, they continued to persevere in their manly duty as soldiers. The Russians, by contrast, represented “children of the moment, easily impressionable and easily moved by changing circumstances.”<sup>193</sup> The Russian soldier, perhaps having missed the maternal or spousal reinforcement of his duty, remained in a childlike, impressionable state incapable of committing to the “manly” duty required of him.

Like women, essentially, the “nation” itself became a maternal figure to its citizens. As the woman at home must prepare her children and husband for their national duties, the nation must act in like manner towards its citizens. Such subtleties arose in the works of many correspondents, who referred to the nation as a feminine entity and a nation’s citizens its children. Comparing the “births” of the nations of East Asia, Maxwell stated that “the fairy who watched over the birth of Japan was of a dainty form; Korea had a slut for godmother, and China an opulent dame.”<sup>194</sup> Sexuality and greed mark the origins of the “decadent” nations of Korea and China, while Japan’s “fairy” was “dainty,” feminine, but non-sexual in nature. McKenzie concluded his account predicting

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<sup>192</sup> Norregaard, p. 102

<sup>193</sup> Ibid., p. 92

<sup>194</sup> Maxwell, p. 103

the future of the Japanese nation and “her power,” “her statesmen,” and “her younger men and the might of her armies.”<sup>195</sup> In criticizing the state of Britain in comparison to that of Japan, Bartlett remarked that “the one nation [Japan]...claims her soldiers as her due, and sends them home when she has finished with them,” whereas “The other [Britain]...she sends them to the front, and removes any general who sacrifices one of these national darlings unnecessarily.”<sup>196</sup> Hamilton stated that the Japanese nation would prove its new status to the Western powers “by the mouth of her cannon.”<sup>197</sup> David Henry James of the *Daily Telegraph* saw the Japanese victory at Port Arthur as a testament to Japan’s “devouring spirit of revenge, which, carefully nurtured in the succeeding years, grew into a national sentiment” towards the goal of recapturing Port Arthur after the IJA’s expulsion by the Russians following the Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895).<sup>198</sup> Like a mother, the nation needed to nurture the spirit of its citizens towards its desired goals.

In a society that sought to strictly enforce the “separation of the sexes,” Edwardian men ultimately drew to each other for “intellectual and emotional closeness.” Distanced from women, men also placed an intense admiration upon accepted traits and physical features of masculinity.<sup>199</sup> As a distinct male sphere, the military provided a profession through which to protect masculinity by its reinforcement in soldierly camaraderie and male companionship. As modernity had essentially “feminized” men, war and the military (and, to be discussed, the public school) became the institutions through which masculinity could regenerate itself in the presence of other men and

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<sup>195</sup> McKenzie, p. 334

<sup>196</sup> Bartlett, p. 495

<sup>197</sup> Hamilton, vol. I, p. 12

<sup>198</sup> David James, p. 2

<sup>199</sup> Adams, pp. 24-25

opportunities to test one's manliness. Baring concluded his monograph with the sentiments that "war seemed...like the palace of truth, to act as a touchstone on men's characters," revealing both their weaknesses but, more importantly, their inner strengths through the "beautiful" acts of war:

...among these ["beautiful" acts] perhaps the most precious are the unexpected surprises in men, the "self sacrifice of the indifferent, the unworldliness of the worldly, the unselfishness of the selfish."

Despite Baring calling it an "insensate abomination," war redeemed itself with its cleansing properties that provided a cure to (or escape from) modernity and its collapsing gender distinctions that had made men "indifferent, worldly, and selfish."<sup>200</sup> With war, men could rediscover their masculine "beauty." It liberated men from the corrupting influences of the modern world and provided them with a Social-Darwinist haven where a man could prove himself above the vices of prosperity. David Fraser of the *Times* asserted that "the howitzers, and the pontoons, and the flaunting cavalry...they represent the manliness of a nation, the manliness that is humanity."<sup>201</sup> In a modern world, war itself became an outlying expression of masculinity and the weapons of war the nation's most outward, masculine, physical appendages. Correspondents expressed considerable admiration for the manly, physical and personal qualities of the Japanese exhibited in the war. Many of them admired the "great respect, and sometimes a remarkable affection" of the enlisted for their officers, a bond which they believed reinforced the warlike abilities of the IJA.<sup>202</sup> Maxwell asserted that warfare allowed a soldier to "develop...manly qualities – patience, self-restraint, ingenuity and courage," all of which presented

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<sup>200</sup> Baring, pp. 204-205

<sup>201</sup> David Fraser, *A Modern Campaign, or, War and Wireless Telegraphy in the Far East* (Methuen & Co.: London 1905) p. 92

<sup>202</sup> Smith, p. 390

themselves in Japanese soldiers.<sup>203</sup> Ashmead-Bartlett exclaimed that “the Japanese are undoubtedly the finest race physically that exists...they are very thick-set and well-made, especially about the legs, and are a perfect height for soldiers.” As their women did not shed tears for men departing for the war, “the Japanese soldier also displayed no unmanly regrets.”<sup>204</sup> Considering the manliness of the Japanese, he turned to critique the modern and “hysterical” (or feminine) state of Britain perceived in the aftermath of the Boer War:

John Bull still appears in popular caricature as a solid, red-faced, substantial person, incapable of being aroused by even an explosion under his house. What a farce is such a portrait! He should be represented thin, neurotic, idle, conceited...alternating between excessive optimism and excessive despair.<sup>205</sup>

Correspondents saw war and the nation’s constant preparation for it as a liberating force from modernity and a bastion for the development of manly traits and separation from negative feminine influences encroaching upon the male-dominated public sphere. Essentially, these Edwardian men saw positives as indicative of masculinity and negatives as indicative of femininity. John Bull, the personification of Britain, had become feminine and therefore a symbol of weakness, shame, and an object of derision.

Thus, war and a nation’s preparation towards it offered Edwardian Britain a means through which to reignite traditional views of gender and family life threatened by modernity. As mothers, women served as the primary agents of instilling patriotic values in their children and husbands. Additionally, the nation itself had to adopt a maternal role towards its citizens by further nurturing sentiments of nationalism that boost societal morale in warfare. Lastly, with the successful nurturing of their biological and national

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<sup>203</sup> Maxwell, p. 16

<sup>204</sup> Bartlett, pp. 484-487

<sup>205</sup> Ibid., p. 494

mothers, men would lean towards their ultimate calling in the military, where they would develop manliness in the absence of women and the corrupting influences of the modern world.

### Education

Another feature of Japanese society heavily emphasized by British correspondents was the education system of Japan, which they believed, along with the Mikado and Japanese women, attributed heavily to the overwhelming willpower of Japanese soldiers in the Russo-Japanese War. Indeed, the established classes of Edwardian Britain found the utility of using education as a “tool of conservatism and moral control.”<sup>206</sup> By reinforcing their own social values, instilling patriotic sentiments, and developing a perceptive link between war and sports, Edwardians aimed at reproducing, maintaining, and perhaps improving their traditions in British society. Naturally, British war correspondents often showed themselves to be products of Edwardian (or Victorian) education, which influenced how they both analyzed the Japanese education system and observed the Russo-Japanese War in their works.

According to Maxwell, “children are true hero-worshippers, and it is their nature to set up their high altar on the gory battlefield – the gorier the better.” As children are “naturally-inclined” to admire the feats of soldiers on the battlefield, it was the duty of a nation’s education system to reinforce such sentiments, as war and the military would ultimately become the duty of these future citizens. While Maxwell recalled British children writing letters to Lord Roberts during the Boer War, he believed that Japanese teachers had developed a superior system for disseminating the “hero-worship” of

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<sup>206</sup> Adams, p. 3



children by having their students send letters to the soldiers at the front. Of these letters, Maxwell emphasized that “the girls are better letter-writers than the boys,” citing several examples of Japanese schoolgirls writing encouraging letters to IJA soldiers.<sup>207</sup> Even the education system played a prominent role in instilling the national duties of female citizens and sentiments of nationalism at a young age. Hamilton also asserted the importance of the role of education in creating both patriotic citizens and soldiers that began at home:

...upon the patriotism, which they [the Japanese] have absorbed with their mother’s milk, their government has been careful to graft initiative, quickness, and intelligence. This is accomplished in the schools, which keep the soldierly virtues in the forefront of their curriculum.<sup>208</sup>

Believing that modernity resulted in the decline of a nation’s “warrior spirit,” Hamilton asserted that “from the nursery and its toys to the Sunday school and its cadet company, every influence of affection, loyalty, tradition, and education should be brought to bear on the next generation of British boys and girls.” Although “moral character” started its development at home, the Japanese “do not...trust entirely to heredity to produce them an army.”<sup>209</sup> According to Thomas Cowen of the *Times* and *Daily Chronicle*, education was part of the nation’s duty to its citizens, warning that “a nation failing in its duty is liable to pay the penalty in having the duty performed by others.”<sup>210</sup> In the classroom, hero-

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<sup>207</sup> Maxwell, pp. 377-384

<sup>208</sup> Hamilton, vol. I, pp. 10-11

<sup>209</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11-15

<sup>210</sup> Thomas Cowen, *The Russo-Japanese War: From the Outbreak of Hostilities to the Battle of Liaoyang* (Edward Arnold: London 1905) p. 43; It is important to note that James claimed to “have found Mr. Cowen so inaccurate that he is often ludicrous.” He also questionably claimed that Frederick Palmer (Collier’s) to had the “least partisan” work on the war. Analysis of content, not accuracy, is the objective of this study, however. See James, *Study of the Russo-Japanese War*, pp. 1, 77; See also Frederick Palmer, *With Kuroki in Manchuria* (Charles Scribner’s Sons: New York 1904)

worship of the military and patriotic indoctrination would create a citizenry willing to fight on the modern battlefield and sustain the economic costs of war at home.

In addition to instilling nationalism, correspondents saw education as a means to both perpetuating and improving upon an established political and social order. In Japan, Smith observed that “with the dissemination of education and the influences of Western civilization, the devotion of the nation to the Emperor is increasing rather than diminishing.”<sup>211</sup> Cowen compared Japanese education to “prison life in England,” noting, like Hamilton, that “boys do not spend nine-tenths of their time in sports, and study casually for a change.”<sup>212</sup> Recalling a conversation with an IJA colonel, Hamilton remarked that education would ultimately create a society amenable to introducing conscription, as “conscription is only applicable to an educated, intensely patriotic nation like Japan.”<sup>213</sup> With a nationalist education directed towards instilling martial abilities in its youth, a nation could create an efficient short-term conscript army. Within this framework, Britain, like Russia, was not capable of creating an effective mass conscript army as its draft-age population had not received a nationalist, military-oriented education.

Indeed, the education of boys in Victorian and Edwardian Britain, particularly in the public school system, sought to achieve such nationalistic and militaristic objectives. According to English literary scholar Cecil Eby, the desired final product was “neither Christian nor gentleman, but rather a hybrid creature trained for no particular purpose, yet expected to hold the reins of power because he had undergone, and survived, the rigorous social Darwinist environment” created within the British public school system – an

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<sup>211</sup> Smith, p. 14

<sup>212</sup> Cowen, p. 66; see also Hamilton, vol. I, pp. 17-18

<sup>213</sup> Hamilton, vol. II, p. 10

experience recalled with horror by Hamilton.<sup>214</sup> Rather than emphasizing a scientific curriculum, British headmasters demanded discipline by means of corporal punishment and uniformity, discouraging any sort of intellectual curiosity and individuality. Thus, in such a warlike environment, individual “success matters less than mere survival,” which depended upon submission to authority and assimilation into the culture of the student body.<sup>215</sup> Thus, violence became a primary instrument in British school culture for pushing boys towards manhood. Whether through the violence of the headmaster, student intimidation and bullying, or vicious competition on the rugby or football field, boys would ultimately become men. Like the violence of school, the violence of war also provided boys the opportunity to enter the realm of manhood.

Interestingly, Hamilton and Cowen critiqued Britain’s education system, alluding to its overemphasis on sports and games rather than actual study. Nevertheless, many correspondents often wrote of war in terms of sport and games, revealing the extent to which perceptions of sport, games, and war had merged in British culture. This had become a phenomenon in the British press in the 19<sup>th</sup> century as, like warfare itself, “participation in sport was seen as one way to increase fitness and defeat the ravages of increased urbanization.” Rather than being a merely useful analogy, depicting war as a sport or game had considerable meaning throughout the ranks of Edwardian society, as it believed both war and sport “inculcated desirable attitudes and values,” with team sport providing British youth with a means to develop martial qualities.<sup>216</sup> With such a high regard for martial values, “British headmasters increasingly valued sports so that by the

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<sup>214</sup> Eby, pp. 86-87; for more on British public school culture, see Eby, pp. 86-127

<sup>215</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 94

<sup>216</sup> Wilkinson, p. 69; for more, see pp. 68-90; see also Adams, pp. 36-45, 121-122; Eby, 109-127

1860s they were prominent in the curriculum.”<sup>217</sup> Indeed, British society carried such attitudes into the First World War, where British soldiers quite literally “kicked off” the Battle of the Somme (1916) with footballs punted into the German trenches.<sup>218</sup>

Correspondents often treated their experience in observing the Russo-Japanese War as spectators to a dramatic game or sporting match or using sport and games as a means of comparison to war. Norregaard and Smith continuously referred to the events of the siege at Port Arthur as part of the “game” of war.<sup>219</sup> Additionally, like organized sports, Smith noted the rules of the “awful game of war” created “by common consent of all civilized nations.” Like sports, violation of the rules of war required censure as it threatened to overshadow the positive benefits drawn from it. Recalling the extensive use of hand grenades by the Japanese and Russians at Port Arthur, he lamented the “most awful price for their [the Japanese] breach of the usages of civilized warfare.”<sup>220</sup> McKenzie recalled an instance in Manchuria where correspondents “knew that another move had been made in the great game where men are pawns and kingdoms are the prize.”<sup>221</sup> Justifying Japanese censorship of the press, Cowen asserted that “a man playing a game of chess or cards cannot bear to have people standing round discussing his play aloud, commenting on what he does, or what he might have done or may yet do.” Additionally, he compared the foresight of the Japanese Intelligence Department to the boxer “watching the eye” of his opponent.<sup>222</sup>

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<sup>217</sup> Adams, p. 37

<sup>218</sup> Wilkinson, pp. 89-90

<sup>219</sup> Norregaard, pp. 83, 92, 190, 231; Smith, pp. 128, 215-216, 219, 283, 357,

<sup>220</sup> Smith, pp. 215-216

<sup>221</sup> McKenzie, p. 199

<sup>222</sup> Cowen, pp. 203-204

In addition to comparing the elements of war to games, correspondents saw the act of war itself as a game. At Mukden, McCullagh equated an artillery duel to “watching a football match at such a distance that you could only see the dust raised by the players.” Burleigh wrote that the “special charge of the Second Army was to force the Russian game into a trap” at Liaoyang.<sup>223</sup> Interestingly, Story also denounced the creation of rules in war at that time:

War has been refined to an affectation. In the old days when war was still claimed some effect as a political argument, it gained its efficiency from the stern rigour with which it was pursued. Since then it had degenerated to the level of a game, it had become hedged about with rules, and the combatant who infringed those was tabooed as he would be on the polo-ground or on the football field.<sup>224</sup>

With somewhat pacifist sentiments, Story remarked that war no longer simply resembled a game, but rather war itself had become a game. The utilization of terminology of games for war was not simply simile, as the two activities had become inseparable from one another. Thus, when one trained for the rigors of sports and games, one also prepared for the trials of war. While Hamilton and Cowen condemned the emphasis on sports in education, they themselves had fallen victim to such an emphasis in their approach to warfare. At the Battle of the Yalu, Hamilton noted a Japanese officer had become dismayed that a particular unit of Russian defenders had fought to the last man. In this instance, Hamilton remarked that “every good sportsman would disdain to kill game under such conditions; and yet, where fellow creatures are concerned, there is no alternative but to take prisoners or to kill.”<sup>225</sup> Interestingly, like Story, Hamilton did not see such an instance as a simile for war and sport, but rather war and sport as an

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<sup>223</sup> Burleigh, p. 297

<sup>224</sup> Story, p. 249

<sup>225</sup> Hamilton, vol. I, p. 126

inseparable reality. The IJA and the Russians themselves were not simply *like* a “sportsman” and “game,” respectively. Rather, the IJA and Russians *were* the “sportsman” and “game.”

The writings of British war correspondents of the Russo-Japanese War in many ways reinforced Edwardian perceptions of education. Channeled towards warfare, education became a device to shape British youth into capable citizens and soldiers by further developing patriotism outside of the home, improving the social order by preparing future citizens for the demands of conscription, and reinforcing the utility of sport as a means of training for war. Like the role of women at home with their children and husbands, the nation had the mutual role of preparing its children and adolescents for the demands they would face as citizens.

### Conclusion

Edwardian cultural anxieties exhibited by British correspondents took on a very militaristic character in their writings on the Russo-Japanese War. Believing that individuality, feminism, commercial success, and several other “vices” had corrupted British society, correspondents imposed to some extent their own idealized society upon Japan, citing the utility of using war and the military as a means of cultural regeneration. However, this does not mean that correspondents shared a culturally deterministic approach to warfare, a historiographical subject in the history of war and culture debated by several military historians, including John Keegan, Victor Davis Hanson, John Lynn, and Jeremy Black.<sup>226</sup> Rather, British correspondents of the Russo-Japanese War saw war

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<sup>226</sup> See John Keegan, *A History of Warfare* (Vintage Books: New York 1994); Victor Davis Hanson, *Carnage and Culture: Landmark Battles in the Rise of Western Power* (Anchor Books: New York 2002),

and the military as a means to positive societal and cultural change. While war itself still maintained its Clausewitzian model as “*eine bloße Fortsetzung der Politik mit anderen Mitteln*” at the level of government and diplomacy, it also appeared to correspondents as a tool for driving social and cultural improvement on the domestic level by encouraging increased government intervention in society, reinforcing gender spheres, and directing education towards the goal of producing not just citizens, but soldiers as well.<sup>227</sup>

Essentially, correspondents perceived that British society faced its own war from within against the degenerative culture of modernity, a war that could only be won through political direction from above and channeling gender roles and education towards militaristic aims.

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John A. Lynn, *Battle: A History of Combat and Culture* (Westview: Oxford 2003), Jeremy Black, “Military Cultures, Military Histories and the Current Emergency,” in Michael S. Neiberg, ed., *Arms and the Man: Military History Essays in Honor of Dennis Showalter* (Brill: Boston 2011) pp. 63-82

<sup>227</sup> Carl von Clausewitz, *Vom Kriege: Hinterlassenes Werk* (Dümmmlers: Berlin 1905), p. 19

## CONCLUSION

In his final *Times* article on the “War in the Far East,” Repington concluded that “national armies and fleets reflect, and always must reflect, the spirit of the age among the populations from whom they are recruited.”<sup>228</sup> If the military reflected the cultural sentiments of its people, the ways in which people interpreted war and the military fell heavily under such cultural influences. British war correspondents in the Russo-Japanese War showed themselves to be products of the “spirit of the age,” defining naval war in terms of Mahanism, Orientalizing Russia, Japan, and the war itself, and imposing Edwardian political, gender, and educational values upon Japan.

Witnessing the Japanese reaction to the imminence of war with Russia in 1904, McKenzie sought to depict a modern society capable of winning a modern war, a feat many believed Britain could not achieve. Walking through the streets of Tokyo just before the war, McKenzie recalled children enthusiastically singing “*Kill! Kill! Kill! Kill! Kill until the sword breaks. Kill! Kill! Kill! Kill!*” He interpreted this song and other observations as representative of a “great, grim, determined people, on the eve of what all knew would be a long, hard, life-and-death struggle.”<sup>229</sup> He noted the “Japanese national spirit” on the eve of war, which contained xenophobic denunciations against Russians, Americans, and essentially anyone foreign, calls to assassinate unpatriotic Japanese officials, “spy mania,” and mass civil austerity.<sup>230</sup> McKenzie and other correspondents emphasized that a moral force contributed to this Japanese spirit, a force powerful enough

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<sup>228</sup> Repington, p. 606

<sup>229</sup> McKenzie, pp. 1-2

<sup>230</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 4-10



to push a modern society to victory in the increasingly unforgiving environment of the modern battlefield. If correspondents left East Asia with any lessons, perhaps the most important to their minds was the centrality of nationalism to creating both an ideal society and an effective army. However, as with Mahanism and Orientalism, it is quite possible to assert that correspondents travelled to East Asia with this discourse already in their minds, with the results of the conflict essentially confirming what they had already known. Thus, it was the “spirit of the age” in Britain that saw naval warfare as Mahanism, the Orient in a continued state of Otherness, and the dissemination of nationalism at home, in politics, and within the classroom as the keys to the betterment of modern society.

If the Russo-Japanese War has become historically linked to the First World War, the same could be said for the correspondents themselves. For some of those that covered the events in the Far East from 1904-05, the experience would not be their last. Interestingly, a few British correspondents from the Russo-Japanese War would become prominent for their actions in the First World War as well. Repington, would go on to expose the Shell Crisis of 1915, which ultimately led to the fall of the Liberal government and the dismissal of the British Commander-in-Chief, General Sir John French. That same year, at Gallipoli, *Times* correspondent Bartlett struggled against the Chief Field Censor Maxwell and former *Standard* and *Daily Mail* correspondent to report on the brutally-mismanaged campaign led by General Hamilton, the Indian Army attaché to the IJA from 1904-05. Even those that covered the Russo-Japanese War continued to have some connection to each other during the next war. Additionally, several others left the press corps to fight in the First World War. Lionel James left the *Times* in 1913 and

fought in the British Army in France and Italy with some distinction. Baring served in the Royal Air Force (RAF) as an assistant to David Henderson and Hugh Trenchard, two of the most prominent figures in the early history of the RAF. Lord Brooke served with the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) and rose to the rank of Brigadier General by 1915, commanding the 4<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> Canadian Infantry Brigades to the end of the war. Like the study of the Russo-Japanese War itself, the legacies of these men as correspondents in 1904-1905 became overshadowed by their own exploits in the First World War. Nevertheless, like the war itself, their writings on the Russo-Japanese War should not fall into obscurity.

In the context of Britain and the First World War, the Russo-Japanese War was important not in that it produced lessons to British observers, but rather it confirmed preexisting notions shared by many of these observers on the interrelation between war, society, and culture. Observers and participants experience war in different ways. In this case, observers were more prone to adhere to what they already knew about warfare. Throughout their postwar works, British war correspondents essentially projected prewar discourses of war and culture onto the Russo-Japanese War. Looking at the naval war, they overwhelmingly defined it within the discourse of Mahanism, thus confirming its validity to British naval policy. When Japan's victory challenged prewar Orientalist discourse, these same writers sought a means to maintain the prewar intellectual hegemony of Orientalism by integrating Social Darwinism and conceptions of nationalism. Lastly, they idealized Japanese society within the framework of Edwardian discourse on politics, gender, and education. Britain entered the First World War with a

similar if not identical “spirit” to its correspondents in the Russo-Japanese War, a “spirit” that the experiences of 1914-1918 would transform.

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