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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Anglica 30/3 2021
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Preface

In the early 1980s, I was invited to produce a number of entries for Mel Hurtig's highly acclaimed 1988 edition of *The Canadian Encyclopedia*. Although delighted to have the opportunity to enhance my knowledge of all-things Canadian, I was utterly disheartened when my research on the Canadian-born novelist and poet Joy Kogawa revealed that her prize-winning novel *Obasan* (1981), the first to trace the expulsion and confinement of 21,000 Japanese Canadians from the West Coast during World War Two, was also the first to inform me about the racial injustices which occurred when the federal government stripped them of their property, exiled them to remote areas of British Columbia, and then pressured them to accept mass deportation after the war. Those who refused could not return to the province until 1949.

In 1988, the federal government officially apologized for its inhumane treatment of Japanese Canadians who had been rendered prisoners in their own country by offering redress payments of $21,000 to each survivor, and allocating more than twelve million to community funds and human rights projects. That apology sparked once again the question concerning how one of the most tragic set of events in Canada's history could possibly have escaped my attention. Nowhere in my education, which included earning a Master's Degree at a university located in southern Alberta, the province within easy reach of British Columbia, which many Japanese Canadians chose as their destination once the "second dispersal" forced them to relocate at the end of the war and begin their lives yet again, did the subject of internment materialize. My shameful ignorance was troubling and led me thereafter not only to question why there was such a paucity of Canadian prisoner-of-war literature, but also to the frequent teaching of *Obasan*, a remarkable novel about a withdrawn school-teacher narrator who was a child when her family was evacuated initially to an interior BC town, and then after the war to the beet fields of southern Alberta. While I acknowledged in my brief account that while the novel was clearly "a harsh indictment of the treatment of the Japanese," I also commented that Kogawa's "lyrical prose" prevented it from becoming more than

mere "bitter recrimination," but remained a "moving, powerful, and truthful story of human rejection and suffering" (1550).

Because the bulk of my research has been on Australian and Canadian women's war fictions, until recently, few prisoners-of-war accounts have captured my attention. Quite suddenly, there has been a veritable "explosion" of prisoner-of-war fictions published in the 21st century – and in the main by Australian women writers, which prompted me to offer a graduate seminar on prisoner-of-war fiction, but with the inclusion of the only Canadian works I am aware of: *Obasan*, as well as Francis Itani's *Requiem* (2011) and Kerri Sakamoto's *The Electrical Field* (1998), both set on the home front. Why so many Australian writers – with Cory Taylor, Christine Piper, Anita Heiss, and Saskia Beudel each producing a novel on the Japanese internments, and Vilma Watkins, Deborah Burrows, Goldie Goldbloom, Joanne Carroll, Susan Temby, and Dale Turner each writing on the Italian imprisonments – should have so clearly been "doing their bit" to point to their country's shocking acts of discrimination when Canadian writers have not, remains a subject for another paper.

Had my academic career not screeched to a halt with the diagnosis of serious health problems, I would have submitted a paper which examined the much-overlooked memoirs by Betty Jeffrey (*White Coolies*, 1954), and Jessie Elizabeth Simons (*While History Passed*, 1954), both of whom spent forty-two months in prisoner-of-war camps, as well as Bruce Bedford's film *Paradise Road* (1997) on the role music played in helping women and their families survive horrendous treatment. My goal in part was to emphasize that, as historian Christian Twomey writes, we need to examine why civilians (particularly women and children) who were themselves directly and adversely affected by war have continued to remain peripheral to a national vision about war which maintains its concentration on military service and its effects on individuals and their families (*Australian's Forgotten Prisoners: Civilians Interned by the Japanese in World War Two*, 2001). Thankfully, this journal continues to emphasize the multi-faced nature of prisoner-of-war writing by incorporating women's voices in fiction (Löschnigg) and film (Melnyk). In each case, these works serve to demonstrate how, through perseverance and solidarity, they manage to triumph over hardship and atrocity.

And finally, I wish to stress how much I appreciate the fine work the general editor Marzena Sokołowska-Paryż has done, none of which should have fallen to her, but when it did, she tackled it with much dedication, grace, and patience. My thanks also go to Professor Dan McKay, who made the mistake of inviting me to read his fabulous introduction to a work on prisoner-of-war writing, which I learned about during a conference on Australian writing in Fairbanks, Alaska (2019). Even before realizing I would not be writing this introduction, I felt that, without question, Daniel would do a far better job of producing it than I ever could. As a result, readers will now benefit tremendously from the efforts of two superb scholars, whose joint devotion to producing a very fine journal is more than evident.

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DONNA COATES teaches in the English Department at the University of Calgary. She has published over thirty articles and book chapters on Australian, Canadian, and New Zealand women's responses to the First and Second World Wars, and to the Vietnam War. She has edited twelve books: three on Canadian war drama, two on Alberta writing, and most recently seven volumes on a historical and literary examination of women and war for Routledge's history of feminism series. Sydney University Press has agreed to publish her book on Australian women's fictional responses to the First and Second World War and the Vietnam War. It is tentatively titled *Shooting Blanks at the Anzac Legend*.

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Introduction

In the Hollywood space opera *Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country* (1991), Captain Kirk and Doctor McCoy stand trial on a charge of assassination in a criminal justice system that is literally alien to them. In short order, they are found guilty and receive the harshest sentence: transportation to an asteroid, with life imprisonment down the underground mines. In the cyberpunk film *The Matrix* (1999), by contrast, captivity is not imposed *de jure*. Rather, human beings are in a condition of *de facto* captivity from cradle to grave. By degrees, the protagonist learns that the society he had assumed to be real is, in truth, a computer construct operated by machines with one purpose in mind: to farm humanity's energy in a mass plantation system. A decade later and the dominant science fiction subgenre involved adaptations of superhero comic books. As part of the Batman franchise, for example, *The Dark Knight Rises* (2012) introduced a burly villain figure who bests the caped crusader in a no-frills fistfight. Having done so, he deposits the vanquished Batman down a cavernous shaft, the inhabitants of which have long since accepted their destiny: as far outside the law as they are outside their home societies, what befalls them will be of no concern to anyone.

Genre conventions dictate that heroes must endure their torments for a set period of time, a painful process that involves an inward as well as an outward journey. As Joseph Campbell put it, "[t]he ordeal is a deepening of the problem of the first threshold and the question is still in the balance: Can the ego put itself to death?" (109). Emerging as it does from a mythopoetic reading tradition, the basis of Campbell's question may appear somewhat elusive or absent altogether in the era of Hollywood 'extravaganzas.' Yet its pertinence looks more overarching if one envisages it as applicable to national, regional, or pancultural audiences as much as the on-screen characters they observe. To take a leaf out of Campbell's book, a full confrontation with the self must necessarily involve a confrontation with the past and the putting to death of self-flattery – egotism, if you will – as an act of evasiveness that distracts from the endeavour. Historian and geographer David Lowenthal raised the same point in a letter to *The New York Review of Books*:

"The psychic cost of repressing traumatic memory can be as crippling for nations as for individuals. History is often hard to digest. But it must be swallowed whole to undeceive the present and inform the future" (n.p.).

While it would be a step too far to suggest that a *Star Trek*, *Matrix*, or *Batman* film has had a disinterring agenda on a par with, say, Claude Lanzmann's documentary *Shoah* (1985), vestigial notions of a penal colony (Australian or Siberian), of a slave economy (American or Caribbean), or a Medieval well (in any European country) emerge in the allusive at least as much as the explicit. Among the contributors to this special themed issue, Nicholas Birns makes a similar point in regard to another form of captivity: "[Japanese American] internment at once lasted for a determinate period but continues to expand in space and dilate in time for as long as the memories of it endure." To this, one might add that the turn of the 21st century reveals – which is to say, continues – stories of captivity as they cross boundaries of genre, language, medium, and nation. In short, while some of the most egregious forms of captivity have come to an end as an institutional practice, writers and artists are revisiting and re-visioning the phenomena as never before (or offering reminders of those forms of captivity that remain in place).

The contributors to this special issue respectively examine autobiography, documentary film, historical texts, and the novel, more 'traditional' primary sources in studies of captivity, one might say, than those that featured in my opening paragraph. But if science fiction films appear circuitous for present purposes, their presence is less a matter of whimsy and more of a preparatory move for introductory content that edges closer to the prescriptive than is customary on such occasions. At the outset, the discerning reader will note that all but one of the articles examine sources that are set during one of the two world wars, while every one of them concerns camp-based forms of captivity. Here as elsewhere, these topics are mutually reinforcing to an extent that the camp appears to emerge *ex nihilo* as a 20th-century phenomenon, leaving unanswered the question of how societies in previous centuries administered – 'disposed of' puts it better – large numbers of captives. If this introduction has any purpose, therefore, it must be to provide some sort of background, however brief and incomplete, as a first order of business. To that end and in reverse order of difficulty, the beginnings of immigration detention are in plain view to the historian. It emerges toward the end of the 19th century amid rising concerns over issues of race and/or bodily health, with the inspection station on New York's Ellis Island remaining, in the anglophone consciousness at least, probably the best-known of its kind to date. Legal studies scholar Daniel Wilsher notes the ideological impetus behind the formation of the stations: "In the rhetoric of international relations, unwanted migration was said to be akin to invasion by foreign powers. The formal state of war, with its enemy/friendly alien divide, was superseded as the important legal and political category" (x).

If warfare as an idea informed the rise of immigration detention, the link is more apparent still in the case of forms of captivity that emerged during war

as an actuality. As far as internment and prisoner-of-war camps are concerned, the necessity is not to prove the point but to isolate which war(s) served as an inaugural moment. Granting that an earlier instance may yet emerge in the historical records, one finds a likely first for internment in 1803, a year when every British male civilian who happened to be in France and aged between eighteen and sixty was interned at Napoleon's command (Lewis 20–23). This was something new, and yet the development could not have shocked every one of them, for in their lifetimes the host country's political structure had reshaped the military structures and vice-versa. *L'Armée révolutionnaire française* now fielded a figure largely unknown to the forces of other European powers: the citizen soldier, conscripted by a government that he or others like him had put in place through revolution and/or elections (or a promise to hold the latter at some future date) and whose motivation to defend that entity was correspondingly high. As far as the French authorities were concerned, if the civilians of their revolutionary state were *ex post facto* citizens who had a stake in supporting their government, the same might hold for foreign nationals who were domiciled in France when hostilities broke out. Hence the need for internment. Hence too a realisation on the part of national governments later in the century that, if conscription of citizen soldiers was the new rule, this legal right came with a governmental responsibility to know who would qualify as citizens and who would not. Identity cards and immigration stations were part of that political imperative.

The obligation that nation states had to their citizens extended to their welfare once they fell into the hands of the enemy. Meeting this obligation meant developing universal standards for the benefit of every soldier, including commoners, along with the passing of international laws that could hold nation states to account. In the Late Middle Ages, to be sure, some progress had been made to end the slaughtering, mutilating, and enslaving of prisoners, practices that had held as a general rule for as long as anyone could recall. Today's historians disagree as to whether a shift toward ransoming as a preferred alternative occurred as a result of Christian doctrines, a desire to accumulate capital (to cover the costs of castle building and upkeep, for example), or through the influence of ransom cultures already present in the Byzantine and Muslim worlds (Ambühl 1–2). What is clear is that individual captivity was seldom the concern of sovereigns or governments because any soldier who fell into captivity had responsibility for resolving it himself. Ransoming was the means of doing so, a culture that lasted through until and, indeed, had some influence upon the successive multilateral Geneva Conventions (MacMillan 229).

The rise of the nation state meant that responsibility for the welfare or hardship of POWs and internees could be laid at the door of a government by default, and yet this did not mean that the physical apparatus of captivity in its optimal form was available from the outset. Before the purpose-built camp was realisable, its constituent features had first to move from conception through to commercial viability. Historian Matthew Stibbe's eponymous study of civilian internment during the First World

War does a fine job of setting out these introductory moments, each of which was individually necessary and yet insufficient on its own. It began with the invention of barbed wire in 1867, the wide placement of which rendered traditional prison designs redundant, at least for captives taken during wartime (it also cut down on the number of guards necessary to prevent prisoners escaping). By the turn-of-the-century, other material component had been developed as well, notably canned goods that could supply prisoners' dietary needs; efficient railway and steamship networks that made long-distance transportation an easier and more cost-effective prospect; automatic firearms, reducing the need for individual guards still further; and searchlights, used by both sides in a military application during the Russo-Japanese War of 1904–1905, but having expediency as a tool for night-time guard duty in the future (Stibbe 8–9). It only remained for the parts to come together in a whole.

The liberties enjoyed by citizens implied loyalty to the state in its role as guarantor and protector. Nonetheless, French officials had been aware that counterrevolutionaries among their own citizenry were hostile to this compact and so, as a precautionary measure, they placed such individuals under surveillance. Precedents such as this meant that internment of one's own citizens as well as those of the enemy was always a possibility, though in the half century leading up to the First World War there was widespread uncertainty on the matter (Kenney 6). When it came, of course, the war did away with noncommittal positions at state level, substituting instead systems of organisation that regularised industrial slaughter on the battlefield, along with the captivity of POWs or internees off it. Not coincidentally, one finds a convergence of these topics in the literary record. Thus the narrator of French author Louis-Ferdinand Céline's novel *Journey to the End of the Night* (1932) [*Voyage au bout de la nuit*], on arriving at the Western Front, states:

> How pleasant it would be in a cosy little cell, I said to myself, where the bullets couldn't get in. Where they never got in! I knew of one that was ready and waiting, all sunny and warm! I saw it in my dreams, the prison of Saint-Germain to be exact, right near the forest. I knew it well, I'd often passed that way. How a man changes! I was a child in those days, and that prison frightened me. (10)

The passage describes a stage through which the mind passes under combat conditions and is not, on any reasonable level of enquiry, a defence of incarceration as a desirable condition in which to find oneself. Its efficacy lies in the obvious: while captive and soldier were separable categories in the modern era, the two world wars would place both figures under such extreme conditions that each could long to be in the Other's shoes with only the barest trace of irony.

The process of a soldier passing in and out of captivity is of signal importance to the first article in this collection, which examines Algerian author Mohammed Bencherif's novel *Ahmed Ben Mostapha, goumier* (1920). Anna Branach-Kallas begins her analysis with the important point that the captivity of colonial soldiers

in the First World War has been neglected as a research topic by American and European scholars, as well as scholars in the postcolonial world, albeit for different reasons. As it emerges in her study, Bencherif's novel takes the captivity experience as an opportunity, of sorts, wherein the French, German, and Ottoman forms of colonialism undergo consideration on the part of the protagonist. At different points, Branach-Kallas uses history to inform Bencherif's narrative, or vice-versa, in a methodology that one might term 'the historical approach.' Martin Löschnigg's article is a neat follow-on insofar as his too examines an underappreciated episode of captivity, specifically the Second World War internment of Austrian, German, and Italian refugees in a camp on the Isle of Man. However, whereas Bencherif's novel envisaged the camp as analogous to a colony, Löschnigg's primary text (Norbert Gstrein's 1999 novel *Die englischen Jahre*) sees it as more of a window into the postwar societies of Germany and Austria. Using a close reading method, Löschnigg asks how novelists simultaneously comment on wartime events even as their narratives suggest that memory is vulnerable to manipulation and falsification.

George Melnyk's article shifts the focus onto filmic material, breathing new life into a familiar question: how have filmmakers homogenised or essentialised the subjectivities of Canadians and/or Japanese Canadians? By focusing on the ways in which the Second World War internment of Japanese Canadians has been (mis)represented in documentaries, Melnyk gives attention to changing media technologies over a period of some seventy years, with particular attention to the development of colour cinematography as well as animation. This article sits well alongside Nicholas Birns' piece, insofar as the latter is likewise concerned with the internment of ethnic Japanese civilians, albeit in the United States rather than Canada. Taking Gene Oishi's novel *Fox Drum Bebop* (2014) as a primary text, Birns focuses on the ways in which the author uses jazz music to metaphorise and/or aestheticise the process of 'thinking through' the internment experience during the postwar years. The article lays out the factors that have brought change to internment literature, of which the ageing process experienced by a single author is an underexplored factor in previous scholarship. Of additional interest are the moments in which Oishi's narrative juxtaposes his protagonist's perspective on minority experiences with those of other minority communities, including 'Okies,' Latinos, and a Native American chief.

The three articles that follow constitute an unintended sequence of studies that switch our focus to Australia: respectively, as a site of German Australian internment during the First World War; as the country in which a Second World War POW experience under the Japanese gets recollected; and as the organising authority behind an island-based form of immigration detention. The first article, by Gerhard Fischer, stands out for being an historical study instead of a literature or film studies piece, one that makes a point of listing the official reasons for interning German Australians and critiquing each in turn. Of these, an imagined future Australia under German rule reveals the extent to which wartime fears had

permeated the upper echelons of power in the Commonwealth Government (the other justification drew upon worries that the ethnic German community would attempt an uprising). As an additional point, Fischer suggests that insecurity of a psychological nature was a factor in itself: "Small country syndrome thus played a role, too: the fear of the insignificant colonial outpost at the periphery of the British Empire to be 'overlooked' in world affairs." Reading Fischer's study, one is reminded of historian Sue Rosen's *Scorched Earth* (2017), a study of the war plans that the Commonwealth Government asked states to draw up in early 1942 to deny prospective Japanese invaders Australian resources. Needless to say, the threat to Australia posed by the Empire of Japan was far greater in proximity and magnitude than that of the German Empire during the First World War. As Rosen remarks, "[g]iven the stunning speed of Japanese advances, failing to prepare for an invasion would have been foolish. That belief was reinforced when Japan seized the British naval bastion of Singapore in February 1942, sinking two British warships and capturing 118,000 British, Indian and Australian troops" (xv).

The subsequent fall of the Dutch East Indies, which added to the number of Australian soldiers in Japanese captivity, forms the initial backdrop of Richard Flanagan's novel *The Narrow Road to the Deep North* (2013), although the forced labour to which POWs were put on the Burma-Siam Railway is the principal locus of captivity. Rūta Šlapkauskaitė's article deploys the critical models of trauma theorist Cathy Caruth and of philosophers Georgio Agamben and Michel Foucault to explore issues of witnessing and the traumatised body in Flanagan's narrative. Latterly, her article also takes in the importance of religious symbolism as another reading strategy (in particular, imagery of the Holy Communion, liturgy more generally, and martyrdom), unwittingly following in the footsteps of Roger Bourke's study of Christian imagery in Far East POW writings (Bourke 30). The final article in the series provides a brief history of Australia's immigration detention system over a twenty-year span, contextualising a reading of Behrouz Boochani's autobiography *No Friend but the Mountains* (2018). As in Šlapkauskaitė's study, Janet M. Wilson has recourse to the biopolitics of Michel Foucault, though she also draws inspiration from Boochani's narrative on its own terms, as well as from the notion of a "Kyriarchal system" (a term coined by Boochani's Iranian translator). Wilson's article differs from the others not only in its focus on immigration detention, but also in the different set of research questions that are embedded therein: how does the content of literary works written in conditions of incarceration differ from those written in conditions of freedom?; how do prison writings come to the attention of academicians?; and how, in turn, might the 'place' of published works within a national conversation affect the view that prisoners or detainees have of themselves (Westall 4)?

The articles that follow this introduction address texts that discuss or portray systems of captivity located in Australia, Burma-Siam, Canada, Germany, Great Britain, Switzerland, the Pacific, and the United States, respectively. While some

readers might be taken aback by the absence of articles on Communist Chinese, Fascist Italian, Nazi German, or Soviet camp narratives, nonetheless the wide geographical and experiential scope of the topics contains an appropriate spirit of research inclusiveness. If there is a missing element among them, it is not, in my judgement, an extermination camp or gulag camp depiction, but rather a primary source authored by a female writer – or, failing that, an extended focus on a female character – whose presence could then join a field of primary sources that, in her absence, tilts toward androcentrism (though George Melnyk's inclusion of documentaries directed by Jeanette Lerman and Jari Osborne, along with Joy Kogawa's augmented-reality narrative, restores a degree of balance). One does not have to look far for candidate authors or for literary material that argues the salience of gender in the data-gathering and analytic process. Memorably, Argentine-Chilean-American playwright Ariel Dorfman's play *Death and the Maiden* (1991) presents the audience with a married couple who discuss the salience of a truth commission for a country that has recently emerged from dictatorship. As a survivor of political imprisonment and torture under that same regime, the wife is interested in her husband's role and, in particular, the administrative boundaries qua gender boundaries of the commission's remit:

> PAULINA. This Commission you're named to. Doesn't it only investigate cases that ended in death?
> GERARDO. It's appointed to investigate human rights violations that ended in death or the presumption of death, yes.
> PAULINA. Only the most serious cases?
> GERARDO. The idea is that if we can throw light on the worst crimes, other abuses will also come to light.
> PAULINA. Only the most serious? (9)

Paulina's repeated question, freighted with implication, alerts the audience – though perhaps not her husband – to the ways in which an institutionalised form of repression that does violence to women's bodies can give way to an institutionalised form of enquiry that has no immediate stake in that history. Studied or not, indifference of this sort continues to find its way into war and/or captivity-themed research, official forms of documentation, and everyday social behaviours.[1] In his memoir *Hitch-22* (2010), Christopher Hitchens recalls a journey he undertook to Buenos Aires in which he learned something of the tortures that had been inflicted on imprisoned women during the military junta. Having reached saturation point, Hitchens then journeyed into the hinterland for some well-earned diversions, only to find that his mind could not match the swift geographical transition of his body: "Yet even this was spoiled for me: my hosts did their own slaughtering and the smell of drying blood from the abattoir became too much for some reason (I actually went "off" steak for a few years after this trip)" (197).[2]

An equally unsuccessful instance of forced evasiveness comes across in my introductory paragraph on science fiction films, which focused on four male characters and then framed the depictions using an equally male-oriented reading method. While I do not regret the selection or the passing observations they occasioned, their limits are as evident as those within Gerardo's truth commission. Having now indicted myself of the same tendencies that Dorfman's dialogue alludes to, it would be impolitic of me to suggest that readers will encounter an impediment in the reading of this current issue of *Anglica*. There is no impediment. All seven articles are complete in themselves and, collectively, they do as good a job as any of showcasing the literary and filmic sources available to researchers today. In point of fact, an introduction to an essay collection published in 2007 noted a shift away from the once common and now all-but-defunct – or perhaps only perfunctory – idea of war and/or captivity as impossible to narrate, toward a situation in which the challenge involves source selection more than acquisition (Hogan and Marín Dòmine 15). Spoiled for choice, as it were, by a formidable book pile already at their elbow, scholars might well ask why they should add to its height merely because a given author happens to be a woman. A cynic might even assert, however unadvisedly, that a fair number of male-authored textual passages inform women's experiences of captivity as well as they do men's or, at any rate, that their acknowledgement of the equality of epistemological value contained within women's testimonies opens up the possibility of fresh conversations to a similar degree. A 'framing moment' for such conversations is perceptible in the climax of African American fiction writer Charles Chesnutt's short story "The Wife of His Youth" (1898), in which the well-to-do protagonist, Mr. Ryder, introduces to African American high society the wife whom he left in the South when he fled slavery as a much younger man. This woman's arrival serves as a debut in more than one sense, requiring of Mr. Ryder the honesty and bravery to bring her back into his world (64–65).

Aside from noting that *Death and the Maiden* and "The Wife of His Youth" show a sensitivity to the (gendered) politics of memory not always found in other male-authored primary texts on captivity, there are a number of objections to the assumption I have advanced. To begin with, there is the issue of which primary texts are 'the most serious' for – which is to say, deserving of – university curricula or scholarly endeavours. As should readily be apparent, the question is not intended as an exercise in (futile) hierarchisation on my part, but rather to acknowledge that a hierarchy already exists, born of the admittedly predominant (but not universal) instances of all-male captivity in the history of the late modern era, and buoyed, in turn, by the male-authored testimonies that derive therefrom. Allowing that classic male-authored captivity narratives in various linguistic or national traditions are of acknowledged literary quality and tell of captivity experiences that repay scholarly attention many times over, enquiries into which identities are included or excluded – either in the narratives or in scholarship or

pedagogical practice – are easily foreclosed. After all, of the six million Jews who perished in the Nazi Holocaust, roughly two-thirds were men, a dimension that is borne out in the literary record of survivors. Yet it is also the case that one of the best-known nonfiction accounts is Anne Frank's *The Diary of a Young Girl* [*Het Achterhuis*], published in the original Dutch in 1947 and in English translation in 1952. To read, research, or teach the Nazi Holocaust as a 'male experience' would therefore be accurate in the statistical sense, but it would also reproduce ideological erasures that, unintended though they may be, are no less disconcerting for all that. A mythopoetic instantiation of the point comes across in the opening of Anna Reading's *The Social Inheritance of the Holocaust* (2002), in which she recalls the Book of Genesis and its description of Lot's wife disobeying God's commandment not to observe the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. Given that God allows Abraham to observe the scene, even as Lot's wife is turned to stone for her infraction, the double-standard in their roles is suggestive of the values that have come to facilitate or prohibit women's witnessing and/or testimony (Reading 1–2). One need not add that the petrification of women who follow in the footsteps of Lot's wife can take place, metaphorically speaking, not only when they dare to testify to what has taken place elsewhere, but also to what has been done to them personally (Agger 7). As trauma theorist Kalí Tal succinctly puts it, "[t]he story of the raped female body is quite literally assumed to be 'unspeakable'" (155), though in the most extreme cases, as when sexual violence is not incidental but constitutes a principal and publicly visible component of a genocide, a complete silencing of the topic may be impossible (Derderian 6–7).

If the prospective erasure of women's narratives has tended to gender the victims of captivity as male more often than not, the corollary also applies in the imagination and depiction of camp guards as necessarily male in turn. This conceit appears to be common across time, space, and national cultures, sowing a general unpreparedness in scholarly and nonscholarly circles for those moments in which female guards or torturers cease being a hypothetical and take on an embodied form. The matter is not helped by characters such as Caravaggio in Michael Ondaatje's novel *The English Patient* (1992), who glosses over the fact that it was a woman nurse who amputated his thumbs as an act of torture, saying simply: "She was an innocent, knew nothing about me, my name or nationality or what I may have done" (59). Then too, there exists a certain subgenre in Holocaust writing that takes the spectre of female guards and torturers as an opportunity for textual pornography (Heinemann 33). A better outcome than either of these is found in the quiet matter-of-factness and unflinching focus American author Susan Jacoby brings to her scholarly book *Wild Justice* (1983), which begins with an account of Hermine Ryan's appearance before a court of the United States Immigration and Naturalization Service in 1972. Up until then, Mrs. Ryan had been a German war bride living in New York City, one of more than twenty thousand who had immigrated to the United States in the postwar years (she had proceeded by way of Canada). Some thirty years previously, however, she

was known to prisoners in the Maidanek concentration and extermination camp as the 'stomping mare' for the physical violence to which she was prone (Jacoby 2). While Ryan's service as an SS camp guard granted her the status of a genuine peculiarity, it would have been a step too far to have called her unique (Kremer 187). In the early 1970s, however, she appeared very much so and it was possible to take the defendant's immigration status and trial in West Germany as evidence of an essential foreignness (extradition slipping all too easily into exculpation of the United States for having sheltered her for almost a decade). The same was not possible when news broke in 2004 of the abuses that had taken place in the Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq. Responding that same year, author Barbara Ehrenreich wrote a piece for the *Los Angeles Times*, subsequently reprinted, in which she drew strong lessons: "What we have learned from Abu Ghraib, once and for all, is that a uterus is not a substitute for a conscience" (4).

Just as a production of Dorfman's play might take a post-dictatorship milieu other than Chile's as a setting, so Ehrenreich's observation transcends the Occupation of Iraq as a spatial and temporal context. At this point, it is necessary to emphasise that both writers have drawn an essentially similar conclusion, namely that women's experiences as guards or prisoners are underrepresented in a field of knowledge formed and curated by patriarchal assumptions. The only caveat to this is that whereas Ehrenreich's dismissal of female anatomy as a nonfactor is effective where discussions of guards like Hermine Ryan (neé Braunsteiner) and Lynndie England are concerned, the same is not the case when it comes to female prisoners. On the contrary, Holocaust testimonies from Jewish women survivors contain significant concerns about amenorrhea, childbirth, pregnancy, and rape (Goldenberg 82; Waxman 673), topics that do not fit easily into the standard male-dominated narratives of the Holocaust (Sinnreich 3–4); and there are accounts of German SS officers in Belarus humiliating Jewish women by inviting local policemen to watch the women undress prior to the latter's execution. As Regina Mühlhäuser notes, "the fact that the Germans brought in local guards particularly to watch women (and not men) being shot suggests that this was a deliberate act of male community-building which was achieved through the humiliation, torture and murder of women" (77).

Relations of power between the sexes make difficult the imagination of a reverse scenario to the one Mühlhäuser describes, and yet one can further extend Ehrenreich's statement to observe that, in certain circumstances, female guards and/or female collaborators can instrumentalise the uterus of female captives as both a justification for and a means to intensify the suffering of captivity. In the world of fiction writing, Margaret Atwood's depiction of the future society of Gilead in her dystopian novel *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985) is arguably the best-known instantiation of this possibility. As one study notes, "the result of the micro-stratification in Gilead is the evolution of a new form of misogyny, not as we usually think of it, as men's hatred of women, but as women's hatred of women" (Callaway 49). Crucially, the site of the handmaids' captivity is not camp or a prison, but

residential houses in which married couples exploit the handmaids' reproductive value. While Atwood's narrative falls under the category of fiction writing, her choice of the home as a place of captivity has real-life parallels (Fludernik 532). Here one might recall the comfort women system set up by the Imperial Japanese Army during the Second World War, although there are significant differences also (the women tended to inhabit 'comfort stations'; religious grounds were not used as justification by the IJA; and the system was not intended to support the eradication of an entire people and their culture). At the present time of writing, the plight of Yazidi girls and women captured by Islamic State in 2014 presents a closer approximation to the Atwood scenario. The administrative and physical infrastructure of the Yazidi enslavement is now a matter of public record: "Sites for the transfer, buying or selling of female victims of slavery have been identified in Syria, and specific buildings were referred to as *souk sabaya*, which translates as female captive or slave market. Considered property once bought, these individuals became part of the estate of their owners" (Al-Dayel, Mumford, and Bales 4).

From Mary Rowlandson through to Emmeline Pankhurst and beyond, literature scholars cannot but be aware of the women authors of the late modern era whose testimonies of captivity deserve and receive dedicated study (and that is merely to speak of nonfiction writers in the anglophone tradition). In these closing remarks, however, I shall name just one writer whose work has yet to receive such attention, at least in humanities research publications. Nadia Murad's memoir *The Last Girl* (2017) does not dwell on the sexual services her successive owners demanded of her, sparing the reader's modesty with a humanity that the men of ISIS never showed. Even so, the episodes of captivity that she does narrate call to mind Elaine Scarry's warning that, if the topic of torture is too extreme for most people to contemplate, the practice of overlooking the topic risks leaving the perpetrators themselves undiscussed and uncriticised (60). But there is more than one way to read this book. If nothing else, it serves as a testimony of the large-scale planning required to maintain an officially sanctioned system of slavery, as well as the ways in which a regime can instrumentalise the female slave's body:

> Yazidi girls were considered infidels, and according to the militants' interpretation of the Koran, raping a slave is not a sin. We would entice new recruits to join the ranks of the militants and be passed around as a reward for loyalty and good behavior. Everyone on the bus was destined for that fate. We were no longer human beings – we were sabaya. (Murad and Krajeski 123)

Despite their desperate circumstances and the hysteria into which many of them fall, enslaved women do not remain uncomprehending of their place within the regime's administrative architecture, nor do they fail to note that those civilians who are not on the caliphate's payroll accommodate the *sabaya* system in their neighbourhoods with no apparent discomfort (Murad and Krajeski 109–110). If

the banality of this individual and organisational behaviour strikes the informed reader as somehow familiar, it is not too difficult to imagine how Murad's text might become part of course syllabi or, indeed, a topic for special journal issues.

Notes

1. The practice of state institutions giving deliberately scant attention to the evidence or testimony of women who have survived sex abuse may have particular salience to those historical periods in which a nation is governed by – or just moving out of – dictatorship, but its presence in the world's oldest democracies reveals that autocracy is by no means a precondition. As a case in point, British political commentator Douglas Murray has noted the phenomenon in regard to the plight of non-Muslim children who came forward in Oxfordshire between 2004 and 2012, seeking help after Muslim gangs had enslaved and trafficked them in that county. As Murray put it, "when these gang-rape cases came to court they did so in spite of local police, councillors and care-workers, many of whom were discovered to have failed to report such crimes involving immigrant gangs for fear of accusations of 'racism.' The media followed suit, filling their reports with euphemisms as though trying to avoid helping the public to draw any conclusions" (29).
2. The 'visceral' reaction Christopher Hitchens underwent when presented with meat by his gaucho hosts is but one example of writing that draws a link between the prevalence of meat in present-day diets and acts of atrocity and/or the Nazi Holocaust. Most recently, American novelist Jonathan Safran Foer has explored the comparison in considerable detail, albeit less from an aesthetic and more from an environmental perspective. Recollecting his Jewish grandmother's decision to leave her life in a Polish village before the Nazis arrived, Safran sees in her decision an act of self-preservation at once inexplicable, hopeful, and yet beyond him when it comes to making life choices that might at least mitigate the destruction of climate change (23).

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From Colony to Camp, From Camp to Colony: First World War Captivity in *Ahmed Ben Mostapha, goumier* by Mohammed Bencherif

Abstract: This article offers an analysis of the representation of captivity in *Ahmed Ben Mostapha, goumier*. The novel, published by Algerian writer Mohammed Bencherif in 1920, was partly inspired by his own experience as a prisoner of war during the First World War. Relying on historical, sociological and anthropological sources, the article focuses on the protagonist's experience as a POW in German camps and in Switzerland. It also proposes a metaphorical interpretation of captivity in the colonial context, reading Ben Mostapha as a "conscript of modernity," conditioned by French republican ideals. Finally, it examines thought-provoking analogies between colony and camp in Bencherif's novel.

Keywords: First World War, Algeria, POW camp, Halbmondlager, conscript of modernity, Mohammed Bencherif, French colonial ideology

1. Introduction

The purpose of this article is to analyse the representation of captivity in *Ahmed Ben Mostapha, goumier*, a novel published by Algerian writer Mohammed Bencherif in 1920 and partly inspired by his experience as a prisoner of war during the First World War. While the contribution of colonial troops to the 1914–1918 conflict has recently attracted much scholarly attention, the ordeal of non-white prisoners of war (POWs) still remains largely unexplored.[1] In contrast to Western servicemen, who left letters and diaries, including accounts of their experience in captivity, many soldiers of colour were illiterate and left few testimonies. Yet captivity was not a negligible facet of the First World War: between 6.6 and 8.4 million men were taken prisoner and 2.5 million prisoners were captured by Germany alone (Kramer

76, 78). As Heather Jones has recently argued, the 1914–1918 conflict "marked the advent of mass industrialised, militarised captivity, a new phenomenon that instigated just as much of a technological leap forward and cultural caesura with the past" (2015, 268). Complex and innovative technologies were applied in the camps to segregate, watch and inspect the prisoners, as well as to make escape impossible (Jones 2015, 279). Hence the POW camp was regarded by contemporaries as the epitome of modernity (Jones 2015, 266). However, it is important to emphasise that dominant commemorative practices in the aftermath of war marginalised the ex-POWs as cowards and deserters.[2] For this and other reasons, 1914–1918 captivity was neglected in Euro-American historical research until the last decade of the 20th century (Jones 2011a, 316; Wilkinson 2017, 3). As to the historians of postcolonial nation states, they have attempted to reconstruct a tradition of anti-colonial struggle rather than focus on the colonials' participation, and internment, in the first global war as members of imperial armies (Liebau et al. 4). Non-white captives have therefore been subjected to a multi-layered process of erasure from historical memory, because of their race and nationality, as well as the silencing of returned POWs in commemorative discourses in Europe and beyond.

2. Algerian Soldiers: Mohammed Bencherif and Ahmed Ben Mostapha

In this respect, the life story of Mohammed Ben Si Ahmed Bencherif (1879–1921) deserves particular attention. A respected physician and an officer in the French army, he also distinguished himself as the first novelist writing in French in North Africa. He was the grandson of the caliph of the Ouled Naïl, a seminomadic people who lived in the Djelfa province in north-central Algeria. Tutored in Arabic and French by private teachers at home, he was raised in accordance with traditional customs to become a leader of the Ouled Si M'hamed. He was then educated at the grand lycée d'Alger and was the first Algerian to receive a *baccalauréat*, a diploma of secondary education. Bencherif studied at the Ecole Spéciale Militaire de Saint-Cyr (ESM), a prestigious institution for the French upper classes, which he left with the rank of *sous-lieutenant* [second lieutenant] in 1899. He therefore occupied an in-between position, as a member of both the traditional nomadic elite and the Francophone establishment of educated *évolués* in Algeria. During his stay in France, he became acquainted with many French aristocratic, political, artistic and literary celebrities of *la Belle Époque* and corresponded with them all his life. Back in Algeria, he served with the second light cavalry regiment of the Algerian Spahis in the West of the Algerian Sahara and became the batman of the Governor General of Algeria, Charles Jonnart. During these years he was confronted with the racism and discrimination of the arrogant French *colons* in Algeria. Disillusioned with the Republican ideals of fraternity, he returned home and assumed the responsibilities of *caïd*. As part of the military reserve force,

Bencherif was mobilised in 1908. Taking command of a *goum* (a squadron in Arabic), he participated in the French conquest of Morocco. During this mission, like his tribesmen, he felt uncomfortable fighting Muslim brothers. At the outbreak of the First World War he was mobilised again and struggled to reconstitute the *goum* of volunteers, who were, however, reluctant to take part in a conflict of *roumis* [Europeans]. In 1914, he departed for France. Having lost three quarters of his squadron during the siege of Lille, he was captured by the Germans on 12 October 1914. He tore off his military insignia to remain with his men and, at the POW camp in Mersbourg, he defended his comrades against violence and exploitation. His health was seriously affected; after sixteen months of captivity, he was transferred by the Red Cross to Switzerland. Repatriated in 1918, he regained his position of *caïd* of the Ouled Si M'hamed. In 1919 he published *Aux villes saintes de l'Islam,* and in 1920 *Ahmed Ben Mostapha, goumier*; neither attracted critical attention. An idealistic humanitarian deeply devoted to his people, Bencherif died in 1921 fighting a typhus epidemic which decimated his community.[3]

Ahmed Ben Mostapha, goumier can be considered a novel or a series of novellas bound by the figure of the eponymous hero (Khireddine 27). As Maria Chiara Gnocchi points out, it is written in an elegant, classic French, although Bencherif also attempts to reproduce the rhythm of ancient Arabic narratives and poems. The text abounds in original Arabic words, sometimes without a translation, which was unusual in colonial times (Gnocchi 44). Ferenc Hardi (105–111) inscribes the novel in the Arabic tradition of *sîra*, a popular literature of chivalry and adventure, with a noble, invincible hero at the centre, who acts as a loyal and honourable defender of the oppressed. We learn little about the personality of the central protagonist; this intentional vagueness suggests, according to Ahmed Khireddine (28), that Ben Mostapha could be any Arab in the French army. Taking into account the illiteracy rate in Algeria in the first decades of the 20th century, the novel was clearly written for a French reader with the intention of representing a Muslim character from an insider's perspective (Hardi 32). The autobiographical aspect is striking, and Ben Mostapha might be considered a pseudonym for the author. Nevertheless, on careful reading, it appears that, contrary to Bencherif, his protagonist fully accepts colonial domination. Moreover, unlike his creator, Ahmed dies in captivity. The narrator presents a factual account of his life, with few longer descriptions of landscape and little psychological insight. Long passages, however, are devoted to discussions of colonial politics and eulogies to the French Republic. The book is dedicated to the Algerians who fell on the fields of glory during the 1914–1918 conflict and those who died a slow death in the German camps, "et sur lesquels pèsera toujours, lourde, la terre ennemie" ['and on whom the enemy soil, heavy, will press forever'; trans A.B-K] (41).[4]

Approximately 125,000 Algerians saw combat in France during the First World War and approximately 25,000 lost their lives (Fogarty 82; Hassett 26). Alongside Tunisians and Moroccans, they served in the *Armée d'Afrique*, as units

of the metropolitan army garrisoned in North Africa (Fogarty 17). They represented almost one third of all French colonial troops, and two thirds of those from North Africa (Frémaux 63). The Algerians also provided civilian manpower; as a result, in 1918 one third of Algerian male population served in France, either in the war zone or on the homefront (Frémaux 78). As Richard S. Fogarty argues in *Race and War in France: Colonial Subjects in the French Army, 1914–1918*, while for Germany the use of soldiers of colour in Europe was an attack on white prestige, and Britain and the US showed caution in this matter, the French employed West and North Africans to stop the German invasion from the onset of the war (Fogarty 9). Due to the enormous disproportion in population – 40 million French compared to 67 million Germans in 1914 – the use of *troupes indigènes* [colonial troops] was regarded as the only way to save the French from extinction (Olusoga 150). Precisely because of the sacrifices involved in the colonising mission, the French believed that they had the "moral right" but also the "moral obligation" to recruit their colonial subjects (Olusoga 161). Participating in the defence of the metropole was *an impôt de sang* [a blood tax]: the men from the colonies had to pay "for the privilege of living under enlightened French rule" (Fogarty 16).

The eleven chapters of Bencherif's novel focus on the protagonist's adventures during the Moroccan campaign (Chapters I–V), his return to Algeria (VI–VII), his subsequent departure for Europe and his experience of captivity (VIII–XI). Ahmed Ben Mostapha does not hesitate to defend France in times of need. His encounter with *le lieutenant* Marcin, a particularly open-minded and charismatic French officer, who mentors the young *goumier* during the Morocco campaign, inspires his love for his adopted country. The friendship between the two characters, as Gnocchi (42) suggests, represents an ideal of hybrid exchanges between Arab and French cultures, strongly advocated in the novel. Marcin speaks fluent Arabic, admires Arab poets, and respects Ben Mostapha's noble nomadic heritage. When Ahmed's *caïd* decides to depart for France and is willing to leave the tribe under his command, the young man refuses to remain behind and joins the army, with the rank of lieutenant, at the head of a *goum*. Upon his arrival in Marseille, his squadron is enthusiastically welcomed by the French. The *goumiers* are also warmly greeted at Arras and Douai; the civilians perceive them as defenders against Prussian theft and abuse. The stereotypes of savagery are thus reversed, the non-white soldiers being constructed as defenders of European civilisation, which is threatened by the Germans. Ahmed Ben Mostapha's courage and gallantry are admirable. When his platoon is directed into combat in the surroundings of Lille and finds itself under heavy artillery attack, he orders his men to shoot the German gunners and saves their lives. In Lille, he is active in organising the defence of the city and wins the admiration of Frenchwomen. His war exploits, however, are short-lived, as, after the siege of Lille, together with his men, he is taken prisoner.

In the interpretation that follows, relying on historical, sociological and anthropological sources, I explore the protagonist's experience as a POW in

German camps and in Switzerland. Subsequently, I propose a more metaphorical application of the concept of captivity, approaching Ahmed as a "conscript of modernity," unable to renounce republican ideals. Finally, I trace fascinating analogies between colony and camp, showing how they morph into each other in the experience of Ahmed Ben Mostapha, and thus illuminate the construction of encampment, control, and subjugation in Bencherif's novel.

3. Captivity in Germany

After Lille is seized by the Germans and the *goumiers* are faced with the prospect of imprisonment, Ahmed proves his outstanding loyalty and devotion to his men. Abandoned by their French commander, the Algerian soldiers gather around Ben Mostapha, who struggles to keep up morale and insists on the glory of dying for France. When he hears the contempt in the voice of the German who orders the "Arabs" to be incarcerated, Ben Mostapha defends the honour of his men by stressing that they are French soldiers: "Ces Arabes sont des soldats français" (232). The word "Arab" in the German's mouth, uttered in a tone of disdain, is an example of what Laura Ann Stoler refers to as an "imperial disposition of disregard" (2016, 9), which echoes the racist hierarchies prevalent at the turn of the 20th century in Europe. What is more, during the First World War, the soldiers of colour in the French and British armies were the source of profound anxiety, particularly in Germany (Jones 2011b, 180). Importantly, Ben Mostapha thus defends the honour of his men as members of the imperial army, but he also attempts to protect them, seeking to guarantee that these non-white POWs would be treated as French soldiers rather than colonial inferiors. The incident therefore illustrates anxieties caused by the colonial encounter on both sides.

Having transported them in cattle wagons to Cologne, the Germans separate the Algerian officers from the *goumiers* and order them to be sent to the camps at Krefeld and Mersbourg respectively. This was common practice during the First World War: officers were held in separate camps, were exempt from labour, and received better treatment than their men (Jones 2015, 286; Kramer 77–78). However, discerning a profound discouragement in his brothers' eyes, Ben Mostapha decides to conceal his identity and to travel to Mersbourg with the other ranks. He consciously rejects the benefits of the privileged treatment provided to interned officers and accepts the unknown: "N'importe […] Beaucoup de ses hommes sont venus derrière lui, il partagera leur sort jusqu'au bout" ['It doesn't matter [...]. Many of his men followed him and he will share their lot to the end'; trans. A.B-K.] (234).

In Mersbourg the Algerian prisoners share the privations experienced by real-life POWs in German camps: the poor housing facilities and sanitation conditions, as well as the insufficient nourishment. Although Germany was a signatory of

the Geneva Conventions of 1864 and 1906, as well as the Hague Conventions of 1898 and 1907, the aim of which was to protect POWs from mistreatment by the enemy, in 1914 it was not ready to receive thousands of captives, who suffered from various forms of neglect and abuse (Kramer 76). The Algerian POWs, "les fils du soleil" ['the sons of the sun'; trans. A.B-K.] (234), are particularly sensitive to the cold weather and the snow. In his novel Bencherif draws intriguing comparisons: for instance, in Ahmed's eyes, the meagre meal, consisting of vile bread with a few beetroots and potatoes in dirty water, is poorer than any meal consumed by the humblest of shepherds in Algeria (235). Such comparisons serve to deny the apparent civilizational superiority of the Germans and facilitate what Ravi Ahuja (156) refers to as the process of the "cultural appropriation of Europe" by colonial captives. By means of comparison, Ben Mostapha renders an extraordinary and distressing situation more familiar. Moreover, captivity thus makes it possible for Ahmed to assess the relative power of the Germans, to confirm their unquestionable inferiority to France, as well as their barbarity and lack of ethical values. The *goumiers* are searched and humiliated when their private possessions are taken away. Fortunately, after a few weeks, all the Muslim POWs are sent to the Camp du Croissant (Half-Moon or Crescent Camp) in Wünsdorf, where they are treated in radically different ways.

By December 1914, colonial captives in Germany had been centralised in POW camps at Wünsdorf, near Zossen, forty kilometres from Berlin. The Halbmondlager (Half-Moon or Crescent Camp) housed approximately 4,000 inmates, mainly from India and the French North African colonies. Most of them were Muslims, but there were also some Hindus, Sikhs, and Christians. 12,000 Muslim POWs from the Russian Army lived at the nearby Weinberger Camp. The captives were billeted according to their faith, nationality, caste, and military rank. Halbmondlager was a show camp, essential in pro-Muslim propaganda. Its administration attempted to accommodate the inmates' cultural, religious, and dietary needs. The men were encouraged to practice their religion and to celebrate their religious festivals. A mosque was even erected at the camp, a triumphant proof of the Germans' respect for the rights of the Muslim peoples (Jones 2011b, 176; Olusoga 250–252). As David Olusoga contends in *The World's War*, "[t]he Halbmondlager was built to demonstrate to both the prisoners and the wider Muslim world that Germany was a friend of Islam, a nation that was generous and respectful towards the Muslim soldiers who had fallen into its hands" (251).

However, Halbmondlager also served as "a recruiting station, a place of indoctrination and part of Germany's strategy of *Jihad* and global revolution" (Olusoga 255). On the 14th of November 1914 in Istanbul, Ali Haydar Efendi, Custodian of the Fatwa, proclaimed a series of fatwas approved by the sultan that in fact legitimized the *Jihad* against France, England, Russia and all the countries supporting them. Importantly, the final fatwa condemned the Muslims who had already been recruited by the Allies (Olusoga 212–213). Although there were two

million Muslims in German East Africa, according to Olusoga, "Germany was able to portray itself as a nation innocent of subjugating Muslims – indeed, even as an enemy of imperialism and defender of the 'slandered peoples' of the European empires" (218).[5] The Germans sought to stir discontent and insubordination in the British and French armies, and the Muslim POWs in German camps were cast "as an avant-garde of insurrection: converts to the cause, they would spread hatred of the Allies among their countrymen and march alongside German and Ottoman soldiers on secret missions to spread the word of *Jihad*" (Olusoga 223).[6] At Wünsdorf, the prisoners were educated in their own languages and huge efforts were made to turn them into Jihadists and then send them to Constantinople to fight the armies of the Entente (Olusoga 255). Those who volunteered received substantial material rewards, whereas recalcitrant prisoners, loyal to France or Britain, were sent to reprisal camps (Jones 2011b, 177). In total, 1,084 Arabs and 49 Indian soldiers were dispatched to Ottoman Turkey. Nevertheless, they were generally mistrusted and mistreated by the Ottoman Army, and many of them deserted back to the Allies' lines. Consequently, in 1917, the German authorities deemed Wünsdorf a failure (Jones 2011b, 177; Olusoga 256).

In Bencherif's novel, when the captives arrive in Halbmondlager, they are treated more as guests of his Majesty the Emperor of Germany than prisoners. They are provided with clean and comfortable shelters, proper nourishment prepared in compliance with their religious beliefs, a mosque and even Turkish baths. However, rather than dwell on the satisfying conditions available at the camp, Bencherif describes at length the ideological manipulation and the efforts made by propaganda officers to encourage the colonial captives to change sides. Upon arrival at the camp, they are greeted effusively by Algerian deserters, who suggest that the Germans have saved them from France, a nation that oppresses Islam. They also inform them of the sacred war that has been declared by the Ottoman sultan, and express the hope that Algeria, a "pays meurtri" ['a bruised country'; trans. A.B-K.] (236), will be soon liberated from its enemies. The most notorious among these traitors is Boukabouya Rahab, a real-life figure, who was the only indigenous officer to desert from the French Army and become actively involved in German and Ottoman propaganda (Fogarty 96). For days, Ben Mostapha and his companions are visited by Boukabouya and other "frères vendus" ['sold brothers'; trans A.B-K.] (245), who try to take advantage of their physical and moral exhaustion to convince them to embrace the *Jihad*. Ahmed applies himself to help his comrades resist the temptations of betrayal.

With much irony, the novel depicts the Feast of the Sacrifice, on the occasion of which a great number of eminent officials visit the camp, among others a representative of the Imperial court, the Ambassador of Turkey, a few German generals and military attaches, as well as a pseudo-Mufti. Bencherif presents in detail the *Jihad* propaganda in the speech of the Islamic jurist at the service of the Germans. The Mufti stresses the significance of fighting for Islam under the

leadership of the Turkish Empire, an "international" Empire, indifferent to the origins of its followers as long as they pray to Allah. He condemns the ethnic conflicts that have divided Muslims in Turkey in the past, and the manipulations of the British, eager to create in Turkey "un empire anglo-arabe" ['an Anglo-Arab Empire'; trans A.B-K.] (241). According to him, the future of Islam and the Arabs depends on the captives' unconditional support for Turkey: "La Turquie, entourée d'ennemis, ne peut plus exister que dans une union étroite avec l'Allemagne et vous tous, opprimés, ne pouvez être délivrés de vos chaînes que par l'épée turque" ['Turkey, surrounded by enemies, can survive only in a close union with Germany, and all of you, the oppressed, can be liberated from your chains only by the Turkish sword'; trans. A.B-K.] (243). Bencherif's POWs are not duped by these appeals to religious loyalty. The Russians, Cossacks, Tatars, Algerians, Moroccans, Tunisians and Indian Muslims imprisoned at the camp only pretend to participate in the prayers led by the false Mufti. In fact, they are well aware of the political goals hidden behind the call to sacred war and of the irony of a Christian Emperor supporting *Jihad*. In their view, those who have shifted their loyalties to the German side have been corrupted by the promise of power, status, and financial profits.

It is important to emphasise that the political purposes of assembling colonial captives at Wünsdorf concealed a less obvious racist intention. As Olusoga suggests, "[t]he camps constructed to house the non-European prisoners were a wholly new phenomenon, because never before had so many men from so many nations, and of so many different races, been gathered together" (258). The Germans therefore took scientific advantage of the fact that thousands of colonials were hoarded in barracks near Berlin. Soon, "the camps at Wünsdorf became a vast field laboratory" (Olusoga 261). The captives were subjected to the scrutiny of German anthropologists, who measured, interviewed, recorded and classified them, depicting the Allied non-white troops as backward savages (Olusoga 263). In Bencherif's novel, Ben Mostapha and his companions feel angered and humiliated at being treated as objects of curiosity by the Germans: "Pauvres déracinés! Leurs fêtes, leurs danses, leurs prières même, imposées par l'autorité, servent de pâture à la curiosité allemande" ['Poor uprooted ones! Their festivals, their dances, even their prayers, imposed by the authorities, being staked out for vultures'; trans. A.B-K.] (244). Olusoga compares the camps to human zoos, the *Völkerschauen* of the 19th century (258), and Bencherif's protagonists are clearly aware of being puppets in a racist spectacle. Significantly, the multi-racial POWs behind barbed wire became a dominant image of the war in Germany, reinforcing the paranoia of encirclement by global enemies. This cliché also opposed the purity of the German soldiers to the corrupt and barbaric hordes from the colonies (Olusoga 245–246). The scientific findings of the German anthropologists at Wünsdorf thus served a hyper-nationalist agenda and foreshadowed the obsession with racial difference fully normalised in the concentration camps of the Second World War.

While some captives in Bencherif's novel express a certain degree of

satisfaction with the preferential treatment they are offered at Wünsdorf, for Ahmed the objectification of the colonial POWs and the constant attempts made by the Germans, supported by the Muslim traitors, to force or cajole the inmates to change sides and travel to Istanbul, are a source of moral torture ['torture morale'; trans. A.B-K.] (246). The propaganda officers spy on the prisoners, and use every opportunity to further their cause. Ben Mostapha is one of the first captives to be subjected to a long questioning. His interrogator realises that Ahmed is not a simple *goumier*, but an exceptionally intelligent and educated man of good family. He therefore suggests that Ben Mostapha must be aware of the evil France has done to the indigenous population in Algeria. He claims that the Algerians are recruited by force, and all the Maghrebi soldiers are treated as canon-fodder and refused due recompense and advancement in the French army; any signs of protest are thwarted and the rebels are imprisoned without any possibility of self-defence. To support these statements, Ahmed's captor cites a book by Lieutenant Boukabouya. Bencherif refers there to a pamphlet published in 1915 by Boukaboya, entitled *L'Islam dans l'armée française* [Islam in the French Army], where the famous deserter complained about the racial hatred and discrimination against the North Africans in the French Army. Having been humiliated and refused promotion himself, Boukabouya claimed that desertion was the only way for him to preserve dignity and self-respect (Fogarty 111–112). In his brochure, he argued that the Germans showed much more respect for Islam than the French, who clearly mistrusted Muslim soldiers (Fogarty189).[7] Ahmed's interrogator emphasises that Boukabouya is befriended by the Emperor himself and his services will not be forgotten. If he agrees to support the Germans and the *Jihad*, like Boukabouya, Ben Mostapha will partake of special privileges. Otherwise, however, he might be submitted to a more severe regime.

Nevertheless, instead of intimidating him, the incident only reinforces the protagonist's loyalty to France. Having returned to his men, Ahmed shares his indignation with them and agitates against their captors. He warns them that the Germans see them as a docile mass to be manipulated and bribed so that they will renounce their oath of allegiance to France and will sell their honour. To illustrate the depths of the treachery, Bencherif refers to the antagonism between the Arabs and the Turks (see Frémaux 274). Ahmed asks his companions how it is possible that the legacy of Mahomet, a pure Arab, has been overtaken by the Turks. The Arabian Empire of the past, ruled in a spirit of tolerance and equity, was replaced by the Ottoman Empire, the fanaticism of which has led to shameful acts of intolerance and massacres. He sees the Turks as responsible for the disorganisation of the North African societies, the stagnation in education and science, as well as their cultural inferiority. He emphasises that there are as many ethnic differences between the Turks and the Algerians as between the French and the Germans. Inspired by Ahmed's attitude, the *goumiers* swear on the Koran that they will not help their ancient oppressors (252–253).

Yet Ahmed's refusal to cooperate is followed by severe punishment. He is not even allowed to say goodbye to his comrades and is transferred to an unidentified German POW camp near the Masurian Lakes. This experience of captivity is summarised succinctly in the novel; the reader learns that the conditions at the camp are deplorable and that the Russian inmates, who form the majority of the prisoners, are treated like beasts (253). Ahmed feels completely alienated among unknown men, languages and cultures, unable to talk to anybody at the camp, cut off from any communication with the outside. He is also forced to do hard labour, clearing land in a pestilential swamp. Under the Hague Convention, the prisoners were not to be forced to contribute directly to the enemy's war effort, yet by 1916, 90% of the men captured by Germany supplied working parties (Jones 2015, 271, 281). Gradually, Ahmed loses his stamina and moral strength: "Le temps, morne, lourds [sic], bourreau, rongeur d'espérance, le temps qui dissèque les corps, laissant seul vibrer l'affolement des nerfs douloureux, déprime, amaigrit d'heure en heure la fine silhouette d'Ahmed Ben Mostapha Ben Djalloub, le lion des oulads-Nayls" ['Dreary, heavy, time, like an executioner, gnawing at hope, time that dissects the body, leaving only a panicky vibration of painful nerves, depresses and emaciates, hour by hour, the thin figure of Ahmed Mostapha Ben Djalloub, the lion of the oulad-Nayls'; trans. A.B-K.] (256). Ahmed finds refuge in daydreams about his friends from Algeria and France. Eventually, however, as a result of German reprisals following the French decision to send German POWs to Algeria, French officers are relocated to the same camp. In this noble company, Ahmed regains his mental balance and is happy to perform the most exhausting physical tasks. Yet he soon succumbs to a serious infection and his physical condition deteriorates. Bencherif clearly approaches "prisoner sickness as a form of *violence* perpetrated upon captives by the enemy," rather than an inevitable element of war (Jones 2011a, 110; original emphasis). Skeletal, starved, and diseased, Ahmed is eventually qualified for internment in Switzerland.

4. Internment in Switzerland

Throughout the First World War Switzerland managed to maintain armed neutrality. However, as Anja Huber argues, following a series of international agreements, in 1916 the Swiss government committed itself to intern some civilians and foreign POWs from France and Germany in neutral Swiss territory. The 1899 Hague Convention and Article 2 of the 1906 Geneva Convention provided the legal foundations for the internment of sick and wounded POWs. Internment was supervised by the army, and the person in charge was a military doctor, Colonel Hauser. This decision was seen as a humanitarian gesture, but it also served Switzerland's economic interests. Because of the restrictions on international trade imposed by the Allies as part of its strategy of blockading the Central Powers, the

Swiss population was increasingly impoverished by the war. As the economic crisis affected the tourist industry in particular, internment became an important source of income for the local population. The Swiss cantons made huge efforts to accommodate as many internees as possible in the vacant hotels, pensions, and sanatoria (Huber 252–266). Candidates for internment in Switzerland were carefully examined by a commission of doctors in the camps where they were incarcerated. To avoid the possibility that they might return to the front, most POWs were forced to stay in Switzerland till the cessation of hostilities (Huber 255). In total, 67,700 injured military POWs and civilian internees benefited from neutral internment in Switzerland during the First World War (Manz, Panayi, and Stibbe 10).

The protagonist of Bencherif's novel is expedited to Switzerland with the first convoy of captives, who are received enthusiastically by the Swiss. Upon arriving in Glion, wearied and prostrated, Ahmed is raised from his semi-conscious state by the words of the Marseillaise and joins the crowd shouting *Vive la France*. He is profoundly moved when he sees the French town of Evian in the distance from the train's window. Ahmed is delighted to be provided with a clean room, care, calm, and proper nourishment. Not only is his health ruined after forced labour in the German camp, but he appears to be profoundly traumatised by his experience of captivity, too. Thus, after fifteen months of incarceration, "Au moindre bruit, [Ben Mostapha] sursaute comme pour obéir aux ordres impérieux, tant de fois reçus" ['At the slightest noise, Ben Mostapha jumps as if to obey the imperious orders, which he has received so many times'; trans. A.B-K.] (260). He therefore hopes to regain his strength and composure in the quiet of the Swiss resort and the privacy of his room.

Ironically, however, the respite in Switzerland proves another kind of prison. Ahmed, pale but still attractive in his uniform of *goumier*, immediately becomes the object of interest of wealthy women, both French and Swiss. This fascination with colonial internees corresponds with historical facts. According to Huber, the POWs interned in Switzerland enjoyed good conditions and relative freedom. Soon, intense contacts (including sexual ones) developed between the local inhabitants, the tourists, and the foreign internees (259). In Bencherif's novel, worldly coquettes compete for Ahmed's attention and admire the heroism and the pure French accent of the handsome lieutenant, "un prince arabe venu volontairement servir la France" ['an Arab prince who has volunteered to serve France'; trans. A.B-K.] (265). In an atmosphere of flirtation and jealousy, they question him about the exotic customs of the Arabs, the confinement of the Muslim women, and the understanding of love in Arab cultures. Surrounded by gossip and erotic scandals, Ahmed is himself suspected of dissipation and love-affairs with several women. The bobsleigh event he is invited to join only weakens his health. Eventually, he is deeply fatigued by his worldly company and the role of exotic conquest he is expected to play. He realises that all these social events, entertainments and pleasures have not really improved his nervous condition either. He feels more lonely and misunderstood than ever:

> Au milieu de tant de sourires, il est plus seul que jamais!
> Seul!
> Là-bas, aux lacs Mazuriques, prisonnier du silence; ici dans le tourbillon mondain, prisonnier du bruit. (286).
>
> Surrounded by so many smiles, he is more lonely than ever!
> Lonely!
> There, at the Masurian lakes, he was a prisoner of silence; here, in the socialite whirlwind, he is a prisoner of noise. (Trans. A.B-K.)

In fact, the protagonist exhibits several symptoms of captivity-induced disorder, such as irritability, insomnia, introversion, apathy, emotional withdrawal and recurring flashbacks (see Shephard 313–323; Wilkinson 2017, 68–70). While the correspondence with his beloved French friends, who manage to locate him after a long search, provides Ahmed with profound joy and happiness, he quickly deteriorates. His correspondents admire his patriotism and devotion to France; they respect his intelligence and the breadth of his culture. They also hope to be reunited with him before he is allowed to return to his beloved Algeria. Nevertheless, Ahmed complains of an overwhelming sadness; his deepening sense of alienation and confinement is rendered metaphorically by the oppressive Swiss landscape: "Je porte sur mes épaules la Suisse tout entière, avec ses montagnes que ne finissent pas, trop longues, trop larges, trop hautes […]. Oh! ces escarpements infranchissables, ces murailles qui ferment de toute part mon horizon […] qui me séparent de vous" ['I carry on my shoulders the whole of Switzerland, with its mountains which never end, too long, too large, too high […]. Oh, these impassable cliffs, these walls which limit my horizon on every side […] which separate me from you'; trans. A.B-K.] (292). The identity of the "you" remains unclear; since at no point in the novel does the protagonist entertain any relationships with the Algerian *colons*, Hardi (36) argues that Ben Mostapha can only desire a rapprochement with the French of the metropole. The cold and the snow become synonyms of his internal isolation. The last letters sent to him remain without a response as Ahmed passes away, asking that his military medal be sent to his friends from France.

5. Metaphorical Captivity

Ben Mostapha is also a victim of a more metaphorical form of captivity, as he entirely accepts colonial domination and uncritically embraces France's republican ideals. Already during the Morocco campaign, about which, as noted in the introduction, Bencherif himself felt much ambivalence, the protagonist of his novel gives a eulogy to France's colonial mission. In a confrontation with a Moroccan nomad, Ahmed explains in detail why he fights against his Maghrebi brothers. Contrary

to the Moroccan's suggestions that the *goumiers* are mercenaries or slaves forced by the French to fight on their side, Ben Mostapha asserts that he has travelled to Morocco willingly. He declares that France has not interfered with the Algerians' religion and customs. The bonds between the two countries are indissoluble, and therefore, by acting in the interest of France, he also defends his own country. Ahmed tries to convince his interlocutor that France is willing to protect and instruct the Moroccans, who, with time, will be granted the same rights and duties as the French themselves. The taxes they will be asked to pay will be used to build roads, schools, and watering places. In exchange, the French demand only peace, for they are not really interested in territorial conquests. Trust and devotion – these are the weapons of France (114–116).

Consequently, Bencherif's protagonist seems to support the ideology of *La République coloniale*, the French colonial Republic. At the turn of the 20th century, the French idea of the nation appeared more inclusive than others, since "the republican conception of the nation limited membership, not by race or ethnicity, but by willingness to embrace the nation's culture and its revolutionary heritage" (Fogarty 2). French Republicans claimed that, with time, and provided with the advantages of French culture, language, history and law, imperial subjects would assimilate and enjoy the full benefits of citizenship. However, according to Nicolas Bancel, Pascal Blanchard and Françoise Vergès, the notions of racial and ethnic difference complicated this vision of unity: to become French became a goal forever evasive and inaccessible (33). The colonial Republic, a political concept that has become the epitome of universal values and has shaped the French national community, is a profound paradox itself; born out of the French Revolution, the aim of which was to abolish tyranny and inequality, this Republic built a colonial empire, based on violence, the denial of freedom, and the servitude of non-white populations (Bancel et al. 16, 147, 157). The idea of the civilising mission, conceived in terms of a duty to spread the ideas of an enlightened modernity, thus acquired a much more powerful dimension in France than in other imperial contexts, transforming the French into an exceptional nation (Bancel et al. 74). Although the violence inherent in the colonial empire could hardly be reconciled with republican ideals, education, medical care and infrastructure were represented as the benefits of French presence in the colonies that would accelerate the process of assimilation (Bancel et al. 105, 125). Military service in particular would bring the *troupes indigènes* closer to the French nation (Fogarty 11).

The case of Algeria was extreme since it had a special position among French colonies. As Philip C. Naylor explains, "[s]ince the conquest of Algiers on 5 July 1830, France often identified its power and potential, its grandeur and independence, in relation to Algeria" (12). As a settlement colony, it was to be exemplary. Like continental France, in 1848 Algerian territory was divided into *départements* [departments], which were to be smoothly incorporated into the national body. This, however, would entail the application of all the laws of the Republic, and therefore

the French government implemented immediately a political and jurisdictional segregation between the white *colons* and the Muslim population (Bancel et al. 31, 109). The European settlers objected to all reforms of the colonial system and were hostile to the idea of assimilation; unless the Muslims renounced their *statut musulman* [legal status as Muslims] and rejected Koranic law, naturalization was in practice impossible (Fogarty 242–252; Hardi 75). In spite of the enormous contribution of Algerians to the war effort, French citizenship was not granted to the indigenous population in the immediate aftermath of war (see Hassett 43–76). If Algerians were "perfectible whites," cultural and religious differences rendered the process of assimilation particularly problematic (Fogarty 253).

In Bencherif's novel, Ben Mostapha's admiration for French republican ideas knows no limits. He declares that "La France [...] a de tout temps semé, comme des étoiles dans une nuit profonde, la clarté des pensées généreuses, guides et flambeaux de l'humanité en marche vers l'Idéal [...]" ['France has forever sown, like stars in a deep night, the clarity of generous thoughts, torches guiding humanity on the move towards the Ideal'; trans. A.B-K.] (127). As a product of "the emotional economy of empire" (Stoler 2009, 68), he serenely accepts the idea that the Algerians will be granted citizenship rights in an indeterminate future, when they prove they have reached maturity. In no way is he irritated by the colonial Republic's discourse of infantilisation, in which his countrymen are represented as children who need to be guided and protected by their (French) elders. On the contrary, he condemns the actions of *Jeunes Algériens* [Young Algerians], a group of educated and politically conscious Algerians who saw in the war an opportunity for evolution from subjects to partners. In their view, the duty of military service, imposed in Algeria in 1912, should have been followed by expanded political rights (Frémaux 48). Ahmed criticises their vociferous demands for independence. He believes that equality is a question of merit, and the defence of France in times of need, as well as death on the battlefield, are the greatest possible proofs of loyalty to the French nation.

Nonetheless, dismissing the protagonist as a caricature of colonial mimicry might be a risky anachronism. According to Khireddine (29–30), it is possible that the writer chose a protagonist loyal to the French to avoid censorship and potential repercussions. Dónal Hassett suggests that Bencherif's idealised vision of French colonization might have been related to his exceptionally elevated position as head of his tribe, which was partly due to his wartime service. While the writer's "membership of both the traditional Algerian nobility and the Francophone educated elite set him apart from the mass of colonial subjects who served in the French army during the Great War" (16), it also rendered his location in post-war Algeria particularly delicate. For the Indigenous veterans the evocation of their war effort in the aftermath of 1918 was an important strategy of negotiating advancement within the constraints of the colonial apparatus. However, in this way, Algerian elites also attempted "to expand their rights and, thus, reshape the imperial policy"

(Hassett 17). In the same vein, Christian Koller argues that Bencherif idealised "the Muslims' valour and loyalty towards France in order to back post-war claims for political reform in the North African colonies" (136).

Notwithstanding Bencherif's intentions, I propose to approach Ben Mostapha as a "conscript of modernity," a term employed by Talal Asad and David Scott to describe the non-Europeans who "were conscripted to modernity's project – were, that is, coercively obliged to render themselves its objects and its agents" (9). The choices offered to them were not so much dependent on their volition as they were conditioned by the modern world and the conceptual horizons imposed on them in the process of colonisation (Scott 115). For conscripts of Western civilisation, the modernising reforms of the colonial power therefore put in place certain new political, economic, and cultural desires (Asad 345). Thus, Bencherif's protagonist has accepted the radical reorganisation of his culture by the violence of the colonial regime, which has forced him and his people into a system of dependence and subjugation. And it is only within the ideological apparatuses offered by the very system of power that has subordinated him that he can express his hopes for change and imagine a better future. His encounter with "catastrophic modernity" (Gilroy 284) during the First World War does not affect his views. Even his experience of militarised captivity in the German POW camps cannot shake his faith in France. If we assume after Scott (163) that to be a conscript of modernity was the predicament of the first modern colonial intellectuals, Ahmed appears to have no other choice but to be modern. In this light, he appears a tragic figure, an ideological captive who cannot disown the world of republican ideals, although it excludes and alienates him.

The only, though still subtle, critique of the French can be found at the end of the novel. In his letters to his French friends, Ben Mostapha confesses that he is deeply gratified by the fact that he helped his Algerian brothers realise the benefits of the French colonising mission. He admits that he and his people are ready to sacrifice themselves for the French, who show them little sympathy (297), thus signalling the racial attitudes of some segments of the French population. Importantly, Bencherif responds here to the contemporary debate about the incompatibilities of Islam and French citizenship. Ahmed's friends mention the hostility of those who claim that the Koran orders Muslims to be enemies of the French people. These prejudiced Frenchmen believe in the enormous gap between Arab and Christian culture, epitomised by the controversial practice of polygamy (296).[8] Yet, when Ahmed's correspondents show his letters to these narrow-minded persons, they win their hearts for the Muslim cause. Consequently, Ben Mostapha becomes an agent of change, contributing to a progressive republican cause and the potential naturalisation of his people. Ultimately, in his last letter, the protagonist confesses that he dreams of returning to his native country to live "la vie de ceux qui savent regarder et comprendre la nature dans ses moindres frissons, qui savent prier et mourir simplement, loin de l'agitation et du bruit que les hommes inventent sous prétexte de civilisation" (300) ['the life of those who know how to look and understand nature

and its slightest thrills, who know how to pray and die in a simple manner, away from the agitation and the noise that men invent under the pretext of civilisation'; trans. A. B-K.]. It remains unclear whether this statement should be treated as an expression of nostalgia and longing, or as an indirect critique of European civilisation.[9]

6. Conclusion: Colony/Camp

It is interesting in conclusion to refer to the connectivity between colony and camp, explored by Stoler, who approaches them as "substitutable, adjacent, and interdependent forms of containment" (2016, 21). In *Duress: Imperial Durabilities in Our Times* Stoler presents a historical overview of the morphings of colony and camp (penal colony, agricultural colony, resettlement camp, rehabilitation camp, punitive camp for insubordinate soldiers, detention centre, etc.) in the imperial context, suggesting that "[a]s historical formations, they feed off each other, are porous components of a political matrix that seep into each other" (77). If we approach the colony as a transitory, precarious political project (Stoler 2016, 72, 78), a place of "unsettledness" (Stoler 2016, 117) that has produced various relations of dependence and forms of dispossession, the analogy with camp becomes more striking. Both colony and camp are ruled by arbitrary technologies that "unevenly suspend rights, sustain privation, and diminish capacities for political life" (Stoler 2016, 116); they both implement population segregation, coerced labour, and systematic brutality.

In this light, it might be suggested that the protagonist of Bencherif's novel moves from one form of encampment to another, experiencing "varied degrees of unfreedom" (Stoler 2016, 102): for him the state of exception is the norm. Examining the colony – camp matrix in *Ahmed Ben Mostapha, goumier*, it becomes perhaps easier to understand why Bencherif does not dwell on the material details of the carceral reality. For the writer and his protagonist, the suspension of political rights, as defined by law, is fundamental to the regulations of intimate lives in Algeria; both are used to terror, force and alienation as disciplinary mechanisms of everyday existence in the colony. This perspective also sheds light on the ease with which Ben Mostapha decodes the mechanisms of control and manipulation in German POW camps, as well as on the colonial inmates' capacity for duplicitous mimicry. Looking back from camp to colony, the dichotomies between captive and captor, based on violent enclosures, confinements, and demarcations, show disturbing similarities with the racially inflected binary oppositions hidden behind the French civilizing mission. Ahmed's role as a conscript, rather than a volunteer, within the ideological network of the colonial Republic, becomes more understandable when we redefine the colony as a camp-like militarising and oppressive structure. His compulsive admiration for the French empire reveals perhaps that, similarly to the camp, the colony is based on a complex system of punishments that instils fear and conformism,

and serves to contain dissidence. Furthermore, both colony and camp rely on an arbitrary distribution of difference to exploit the subjugated people, the French in Algeria and the Germans at Halbmondlager making efforts, under the veneer of respect and gratitude, to (ab)use the colonials/the POWs for their own purposes. Ahmed's captivity at the Crescent Camp in particular, and the hidden political and racial agenda of this project, highlights the complex liaison between colony and camp during the First World War. On the existential and ideological level, the protagonist's camp experience is therefore both similar to, and entirely different from, that of European soldiers. While scholars have recently started to explore the connection between the colony and Nazi concentration camps in the context of the Second World War,[10] Bencherif's novel inspires reflection on the dynamic transfers of oppressive isolation, discipline, and security techniques already during the first global conflict, which situates the colony and the POW camp as products of entangled histories.

Commenting on the centenary of the First World War, Santanu Das expresses the reservation that colonial war commemoration often involves an oversimplification of colonial histories. While it is important to "challenge the colour of memory" (Das 2015, 149) and recognise the contribution of colonial troops to the war effort, it is also significant to pay attention to the subtleties of colonial history (Das and McLoughlin 2020). Revisiting *Ahmed Ben Mostapha, goumier* a hundred years after its publication is therefore a risky endeavour. The interpretation of Bencherif's novel could be easily flattened as an ode of loyalty to the French empire, and the protagonist's experience of captivity reduced to a eulogy to France. Although he becomes a "witness to European barbarity" (Gilroy 93), Ahmed obstinately attributes corruption, wickedness, and systematic abuse to Germany alone. To the end, he refuses to recognise the racist, violent and coercive foundations of *la République coloniale*. In this sense, Bencherif's novel can be regarded as a counter-attack on Boukabouya's propaganda activity (Koller 136): the Germans are demonised, whereas the French remain paragons of perfection, who support and protect their colonial subjects. However, as I tried to demonstrate above, while the novel certainly illustrates Ahmed's semi-caricatural admiration of the French Republic, Ben Mostapha can also be seen as a conscript of modernity, both enlightened and limited by republican universalism. This points to Bencherif's own conundrum as an educated Muslim in post-war Algeria, forced to adopt the language and concepts shaped by the colonial Republic to subtly challenge the dominant system from within. In spite of his fascination with French civilisation, his defence of Islam and Algerian mores in *Ahmed Ben Mostapha, goumier* marks him as unequivocally not French, seeking for reconciliation and a perfect harmony between the cultures of the coloniser and the colonised. Yet, although Bencherif alters substantially the metropolitan interpretation of assimilation, proposing a vision of a multicultural Algeria, whose peoples respect mutual religious differences and enjoy the same political rights, Ahmed's lonely death in a space that belongs neither to the Same nor to the Other puts into question these progressive ideas (Hardi 35, 79).

Captivity in the novel refers to real camps as institutions of misery and political control, but also functions as a metaphor for ideological entrapment. The portrait of the protagonist is complex and shifts between the figures of outstanding hero, imperial loyalist, and colonial victim. In the German POW camps Ahmed adamantly refuses to change sides; if this might appear pathetic with postcolonial hindsight, it also proves that the protagonist is not a passive political subject, but an agent wary of German and Ottoman ideological manipulations. Moreover, in both Mersbourg and Wünsdorf Ahmed sacrifices heroically for his men and makes huge efforts to reinforce the esprit de corps in the camp community. Depicting his experience of physical and psychological deterioration at the Masurian Lakes, by contrast, Bencherif portrays him as a victim of forced labour, abject conditions, neglect, and abuse. The psychological effects of captivity, including apathy, PTSD, and a profound sense of alienation, become more pronounced during Ben Mostapha's internment in Switzerland. Importantly, his varied adventures as a POW in German camps and in Switzerland define captivity as a multi-dimensional experience, too. Finally, the analogy between colony and camp illustrates the depths of colonial subjugation, but also a disturbing continuity of population control, suspension of rights, and surveillance techniques, which renders the story of Bencherif's *goumier* even more unsettling and intriguing. Significantly, such an approach undermines a Eurocentric understanding of captivity during the 1914–1918 conflict by signalling unknown facets of ontological and epistemological camp experience.

Notes

1. Das argues that "the non-European aspects, like the non-European sites of battle, remain 'sideshows'" (2011, 2) of the Great War; Liebau et al. note the dominant Eurocentric frameworks applied to the study of non-white troops of the 1914–1918 conflict. Research on colonial soldiers intensified at the centenary of the war, when colonial subjects began to be increasingly seen as politically conscious historical actors, and not only as passive contributors to the imperial war effort (Liebau et al. 1).
2. In his analysis of First World War POWs in the British context, Wilkinson (2014, 37) argues that the mythologisation of the dead in Great Britain after the war left no space for the commemoration of the returned captives. In the French context, Annette Becker speaks of the ex-POWs as "les oubliés de la Grande Guerre" ['the forgotten of the Great War'; trans. A.B-K.].
3 The biography of the writer was reconstructed on the basis of the following sources: Khireddine; Hardi; http://djelfa.info/fr/culture/76.html; https://www.edilivre.com/ahmed-ben-mostapha-goumier-mohammed-bencherif.html/. Like several other literary texts created in Algeria by Francophone Muslims between the two wars, for a long time the novel was excluded from

the Algerian canon because of its political agenda incompatible with Algerian nationalism (Hardi 4–5). Both the author and his work were rediscovered at the beginning of the 21st century. So far, critics (Hardi, Gnocchi; Khireddine) have mostly focused on the form and the ideological message of the novel. To my knowledge, captivity, as represented by Bencherif, has not yet attracted serious scholarly attention.

4 Citations from the novel are all translated by the author of the article.

5 This "reflected a larger struggle for legitimacy in the Muslim world." Both the Germans and the French pretended to act as protectors of the interests of Muslim people: the former because of their alliance with Ottoman Turkey, and the latter "as guarantors of the integrity of an Islam that a selfish minority party in Turkey had hijacked, betrayed, and sold to serve Germany's international ambitions" (Fogarty 190).

6 These plans, for the most part, did not succeed, yet the Ottoman summons to *Jihad*, and the local conflicts that they inspired, managed to spread chaos, violence, and death among communities in North Africa and parts of Asia that could have been spared the sufferings of the global conflict (Olusoga 241).

7 According to Fogarty, "Boukabouya's charges of French racism toward *indigènes*, even those who became officers, nonetheless had substance. Both entrenched attitudes among white French officers and official army policy allowed notions of racial hierarchy to interfere with and sometimes undermine the purely military hierarchy based upon rank" (113).

8 Polygamy was the most important argument used during the war by those reluctant to grant French citizenship to the Muslims in Algeria (see Fogarty 242–260).

9 In this respect, it interesting to compare *Ahmed Ben Mostapha, goumier* with *Force Bonté*, an autobiographical novel published in 1926 by Bakary Diallo, a former *tirailleur sénégalais*. Although it is much less complex than Bencherif's novel, it also depicts the African protagonist's admiration for French civilization and his enthusiastic readiness to emulate European models throughout the Moroccan campaign and the First World War. Both novels were ignored for a long time as tasteless panegyrics of French civilisation. However, under an apparently unconditional support of French imperialism, both conceal a subtle critique of colonial subjugation and a defence of African cultural distinctiveness. The comparison confirms that, although both Bencherif and Diallo used their wartime service in an effort to reform imperial policies, it was impossible for African writers in the aftermath of the 1914–1918 conflict to challenge colonial authority in more radical ways. For a critical reassessment of *Force Bonté,* see Riesz; Murphy. For a comparative reading of the two novels, see Gnocchi.

10 See, for instance, Gilroy; Moses; Rothberg; Silverman.

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Who Was He? Internment, Exile and Ambiguity in Norbert Gstrein's Novel *Die englischen Jahre* (*The English Years*) (1999)

Abstract: Winner of the Alfred Döblin Preis in 1999, the novel *Die englischen Jahre* by the Austrian novelist Norbert Gstrein deals with internment and exile in Britain during and after the Second World War. It centres on the (fictitious) character of Gabriel Hirschfelder, a writer and refugee from Nazi-occupied Austria who is detained, with other 'enemy aliens,' in a camp on the Isle of Man. There, Nazi sympathisers are interned together with Jewish and political refugees, and the central chapters in the novel depict the conditions and resulting conflicts in the internment camp. Hirschfelder dies in exile at Southend-on-Sea, having confessed shortly before his death that he killed a fellow inmate. This confession as well as reports of a transport of internees sunk off the coast of Scotland in 1940 incite a young Austrian woman to try to solve the mystery surrounding Hirschfelder and his allegedly lost autobiography *The English Years*. The paper discusses how Gstrein combines different genres like the historical novel/historiographic metafiction and the whodunit as well as using multiple narrative perspectives and refractions to pinpoint questions of shifting identities and allegiances, and of belonging and alienation in the wake of internment and exile.

Keywords: Austrian literature, World War II, 'enemy alien' internment Britain, Jewishness, fictional biography

1. Introduction

At the beginning of World War II, some 75,000 refugees from Nazi Germany were living in Britain, mostly Jews, but also political opponents of the regime. In 1940/41, after the Nazi occupation of France and with fears of sabotage, espionage and invasion haunting the British, about 27,000 'enemy aliens' (Germans, Austrians, Italians) were interned upon Winston Churchill's decision to "Collar

the lot!" (Gillman/Gillman) These were mostly refugees, of whom two thirds were Jewish, yet the "lot" also included Austrian, German and Italian nationals who were resident in Britain. This is a part of the history of World War II that is still relatively little known, yet which anticipates social circumstances in Germany and Austria after the war: those of the interned who supported the Nazi regime often declared themselves as refugees, resistance fighters, or veterans of the Republican forces in the Spanish Civil War. In the British internment camps, exiled Jews and the politically persecuted lost out a second time, as they had to arrange themselves with those who were justly interned. By the end of 1940, 10,000 internees had been freed again, yet a further 6,000 had been deported to Canada and Australia. On 2 July 1940, the *Arandora Star*, one such transport bound for St. John's, Newfoundland, was sunk by a German U-boat northwest of the Outer Hebrides. Of the 1,200 people on board (mostly Italian internees) some 800, including a hundred of the crew, were killed.

These events form the historical background to the novel *Die englischen Jahre* (*The English Years*) by the Austrian novelist Norbert Gstrein, which received the pre-publication Alfred Döblin prize for one of its chapters and has since been translated into twelve other languages. *Die englischen Jahre* deals with internment and exile in Britain during and after the Second World War. It centres on the (fictitious) character of Gabriel Hirschfelder, a writer and refugee from Nazi-occupied Austria, who is detained, with other 'enemy aliens,' in a camp on the Isle of Man. There, Nazi sympathisers are interned together with Jewish and political refugees, and the central, prize-winning chapter in the novel depicts the conditions and resulting conflicts in the internment camp. Hirschfelder dies in exile at Southend-on-Sea, having confessed shortly before his death that he killed a fellow inmate. This confession as well as reports of a transport of internees sunk off the coast of Ireland in 1940 incite a young Austrian woman to try to solve the mystery surrounding Hirschfelder and his allegedly lost autobiography, *The English Years*.

Gstrein blends genres like the historical novel (or, to be precise, the kind of historiographic metafiction that reflects on the relationship between fiction and historical facts as well as on its own ambivalent status), (meta-)fictional biography and the whodunit, using multiple narrative perspectives to pinpoint questions of shifting identities and allegiances, and of belonging and alienation in the wake of internment and exile. In this essay, I shall analyse how Gstrein's novel employs the themes of internment and exile in order to deal with the memory of the persecution of Jews in Nazi Germany (including Austria) on the one hand, and with the "biographical illusion" that a life represents a unified and structured whole ("le fait que 'la vie' constitue un tout, un ensemble cohérent et orienté"; Bourdieu 69) that underlies the attempt at defining individual identity on the other. As I will show, the novel's complex narrative technique becomes functional with regard to both these aspects. It creates a discourse in which 'internment' and 'exile'

acquire an emblematic function, signifying a nexus of containment and fluidity that embeds the narrator-biographer's subject and object, enabling and undermining her attempts at grasping hold of that object's identity at the same time.

2. The Isle of Man Camp

According to J.M. Ritchie, Gstrein's depiction of life in the camp where Hirschfelder is interned from June 1940 to August 1941, after a short spell in a transition camp on the outskirts of Liverpool, "is very selective and perhaps not quite accurate" (199). The camp is modelled on Hutchinson camp in Douglas on the Isle of Man, where the British government had requisitioned hotels and B&Bs along the seaside.[1]

The author had been to London and the Isle of Man to do research, but had avoided meeting former internees for fear of becoming too documentary or didactic (Nüchtern). Indeed, the details about the camp which the novel provides are mainly inserted to recreate the atmosphere of this enclosed world, a world which is remote from the war but also vulnerable to its imponderability. Its events, like the occupation of Paris, must appear "unreal" to that world's inhabitants, as the narrator surmises with regard to Hirschfelder: "es kam dir unwirklich vor, als könnte es außerhalb der Lagergrenzen nichts mehr geben, was für dich Bedeutung hatte, nicht einmal die Tatsache, daß Krieg war" (195) ["it seemed so unreal, as if nothing of any importance could still exist for you outside the camp, not even the fact that there was a war on"; trans. Anthea Bell, 148].[2] At times, however, the feeling of seclusion and safety from persecution and also from the air raids hitting London and other urban centres is superseded by the uncertainty and anxiety about the future that result from lack of information, and by the fear of a German invasion. There are rumours about deportations and there is mutual suspicion fanned by interrogations and the division of internees into categories according to the danger they may represent (see also Francis). The relative safety of the 'enemy aliens' as compared to much of the English population creates antagonistic feelings whipped up by the popular press. Above all, however, there are conflicts between the mostly Jewish refugees and those internees who express their anti-Semitic attitudes more or less openly. In the Douglas camp, Nazi sympathisers are concentrated in a 'Braunes Haus.' The episode quoted below crystallises the tensions between the different groups of internees, as well as the (tacit) anti-Semitism that is also frequent among the guards:

> Als wenig später in einem der Fenster ein Pappschild mit der Aufschrift Zutritt für Juden verboten erschien, genügte es, daß ein paar von den Capos hineingingen und sie aufforderten, es augenblicklich verschwinden zu lassen, und was dich aufbrachte, war das unentschiedene Verhalten der Wachen, die dastanden und zuschauten und sie aus einer zynisch kalten Sportlichkeit, die für dich so englisch war, daß du nichts davon verstehen wolltest, oder aus bloßer Dummheit auch noch bevorzugten. (190)

> When a little later a cardboard notice appeared in one of their windows saying no jews here, a couple of NCOs only had to go in and tell them to take it down at once, but what did annoy you was the irresolute attitude of the guards who stood by and watched, giving them preferential treatment out of either sheer stupidity or a cold and cynical sense of sportsmanship, something you considered so English as to be incomprehensible. (Trans. Anthea Bell, 144–145)

The fact that among the internees there are also some that managed to escape from a German concentration camp sharpens the conflicts between Nazi sympathisers and others. As the narrator/researcher learns from her landlord during a trip to Douglas: "Es sind von Anfang an Leute aller Schattierungen gewesen […]. Verhaftet werden konnte jeder, der eine Verbindung zu Deutschland hatte, und in London ist man in der Aufregung, als fast tagtäglich die Invasion erwartet wurde, nicht gerade zimperlich verfahren, wer dann mit wem das Vergnügen hatte" (263) ["Right from the start there were people of various shades of opinion there […]. Anyone who had German connections at all could be arrested and, what with the panic in London when the invasion was expected daily, they weren't taking too much trouble about who shared quarters with whom"; trans. Anthea Bell, 201]. With some cynicism, however, the same landlord also points to what may indeed have been a major problem in the camps, namely boredom: "Die größte Schwierigkeit für die Gefangenen bestand darin, ihre Zeit totzuschlagen" (281) ["The prisoners' main problem was killing time"; trans. Anthea Bell, 214]. Gstrein's novel assembles the fragments of information obtained by the narrator into a memorable portrayal of the camps. The focus in this portrayal, however, is clearly not on detailed and accurate descriptions, but on the evocation of a place which is ruled by contradictions and indeterminacy, and where the boundaries between friend and enemy as well as individual identities are blurred. As the narrator comes to realise on her research trip, it is impossible for those who did not share the experience to comprehend what life in the camps was really like: "ich hatte tatsächlich immer noch nur eine vage Vorstellung vom Alltag in den Lagern, wusste nicht, was sich hinter den unveränderlichen Eckdaten wirklich verbarg" (282) ["I still had only a vague idea of everyday life in the camps, I didn't know what really lay behind the basic timetable"; trans. Anthea Bell, 215].

It is the evening of 29 June 1940, and the scene is a room in the camp. Four young men from among the internees are engaged in a card game. The four are "der Blasse" ["the pale man"], "der mit der Narbe" ["the man with the scar"], "der Neue" ["the newcomer"], and Gabriel Hirschfelder, a young Jew from Vienna. Their game is not an ordinary one: in the morning, as they lined up for roll call, internees were counted off for transportation to camps overseas. There had been hardly any volunteers, since the prospect of leaving the safety of the Isle of Man, where there was no danger of air raids, only to be exposed to submarine attacks at sea was daunting. The "newcomer" is one of those who are to leave the camp on the

next day and is looking for a way to stay on. The four agree that whoever loses in the game will assume the identity of the 'newcomer,' should it be one of the three others, and step forward to be transported in his stead. Marked cards decide against Hirschfelder, who will be among the drowned in the sinking of the *Arandora Star*.

The other man lives on under Hirschfelder's name,[3] a fact that emerges only decades later. The real Hirschfelder was eighteen when he went into exile. He had lived in Vienna with his Jewish mother and stepfather, who committed suicide together soon after the Nazi takeover. His biological father, a shady person and party member from the beginning, effected his son's escape to England, where Gabriel lived with the family of a judge in London and fell in love with their maidservant Clara, also a Jewish refugee. On 17 May 1940, he was rounded up as an undesired alien.

The new Hirschfelder, whose real name is Harrasser, comes from the Salzkammergut, an Austrian provincial area, where his parents kept an inn. There, a Jewish professor and his daughter, regular guests during better times, were seeking shelter while the father tried to obtain emigration papers. One may imagine what happened when he does not return one day. In the internment camp, Harrasser, who was enamoured of the daughter, claims that she was then arrested, showing her picture. However, it emerges that she had fallen seriously ill and their hosts had not dared to fetch a doctor. Upon her death, they had dragged her body secretly down to the lakeside and then urged their son to leave for England and forget.

After his release, the new Hirschfelder comes to live in Southend-on-Sea, where he works as a librarian and spends several hours every day in a room in the run-down Palace Hotel, writing, it seems. He is made famous by a book of stories of Jewish exile, with the rather trite title *Die Lebenden leben und die Toten sind tot* (*The Living Live, and the Dead are Dead*). The manuscript of his autobiography *The English Years*, if it has ever existed, is not among his literary remains. The search by the anonymous first-person narrator, a young Viennese doctor, is incited by her ex-partner Max, a writer and admirer of Hirschfelder's, and a chance meeting, at an exhibition in the London Austrian Institute, with Hirschfelder's third wife, Margaret.

3. Imagining a Life

The novel is divided into eight chapters, four of which bear the names of the women connected with Hirschfelder, his three wives and Clara; in these chapters, the first-person narrator meets and interviews these women. Clara has fallen victim to dementia and can thus not contribute to revealing the true story, which is known only to Hirschfelder's second wife, Madeleine, whose chapter is therefore strategically placed at the end of the book. The other four chapters render in detail Hirschfelder's pre-internment days in London, his life in the internment camp

and his death in the wreckage of the transport ship. They do so in the form of second-person narratives, the narrator addressing Hirschfelder in her imagination.[4] There is thus a sequence of chapters in which the female first-person narrator researches a story, and chapters in which she imagines it. In the 'you'-chapters, the reader becomes so familiar with Hirschfelder's situation that the question of who can actually know all this is relegated to the background. It is the narrator's imagination which projects close-ups of the story of an internee that she only knows vaguely, and the conflict between the empathic intimacy of these chapters and their 'improbability' is only resolved when one considers that here a life is reconstructed from the bare fragments yielded by the narrator's interviews and research. In the end, and with the knowledge of Hirschfelder/Harrasser's true nominal identity, the contents of the interview/research chapters and the imaginative 'you'-chapters, however, will prove fundamentally incongruent in that the two versions are in fact about different persons. Finally, there is a further twist in that the narrator hands the story to her former partner Max. Max, so we must assume, writes the novel *Die englischen Jahre*, which we are reading; he thus becomes the superordinate implied author who installs his ex-partner as the narrator.

Gstrein's novel unfolds a gripping narrative of war, persecution, love, internment, betrayal, and death, bringing to life the historical and personal entanglements of its characters. In the last resort, however, the effect of the novel relies on narrative technique, as the act of narration rather than the events as such comes to stand in the centre. In the reader, the intricate structure and complex narrative framing employed by Gstrein (implied author – first-person narration – you-narration) create distance rather than emotional engagement with the fate of the characters. The first-person narrator is dependent on the report of others and is confronted with a haze of memories. Can we thus be sure that the trading of identities was really done like this – the only witnesses, after all, are the Kafkaesque figures of Lomnitz ("the pale man") and Ossovsky ("the man with the scar")? *Die englischen Jahre* is a complex, multiply refracted novel that moves between different layers of time, probing the oscillating boundaries between fact and fiction, guilt and innocence, integrity and living a lie. Apparently about a life (and a missing autobiography), its narrative technique is in fact designed to avoid the pitfalls of the (auto-)biographical, undermining accepted notions of 'telling from one's own subjective point of view' as well as 'trying to imagine the other.'[5]

The author's rejection of conventional (auto-)biographical narration is most memorably illustrated by the novel's 'you'-chapters. On a first level, these chapters – as already mentioned – render the narrator's imaginative reconstruction of Hirschfelder's life in the camp and death by seeming to address him, thus making the 'you' appear as a substitute for the third person. However, the implications of this technique are rather more complex, since the characteristics of second person narration always "include ambiguity over the identity and status of the 'you'" (Richardson 2), being also expressive of an identification of the narrator with the

character thus addressed. In addition, the second person "threatens the ontological stability of the fictional world insofar as it seems it could be addressing the reader as well as the central character" (Richardson 2). Second-person narration of the kind used by Gstrein establishes a triangle, as it were, with the narrator engaging in a dialogue with the character and the reader at the same time. The narrative thus enables the reader to share, on an implied level, the many uncertainties that are explicitly emphasised in the 'research' chapters:

> Augenblicklich setzten sich mir dann aus dem wenigen, das sie von ihm erzählt hatte, die konkretesten Szenen zusammen, und es erstaunt mich nach wie vor, wie leicht ich in meiner Phantasie die Leerstellen überbrückte, die trotz allem, was ich später über ihn erfuhr, bestehen geblieben sind. Meine Gewissheit, daß es so und nicht anders gewesen sein mußte, wie ich es mir ausmalte, wurde umso stärker erschüttert, je weiter ich meine Nachforschungen trieb, bis ich mir nicht mehr sicher sein konnte, daß es wirklich so war, aber immer noch sicher, daß es zumindest so hätte sein können. (50)

> Instantly, from the little she had told me of him, the most concrete scenes appeared before me, and I'm still surprised to find how easily my imagination bridged the gaps that remain in the story, in spite of all I discovered about him later. My certainty that it must have happened as I saw it, in that way and no other, was shaken again and again the further I pursued my researches, until I could no longer be sure that it had really been like that, but I was still certain that at least it might have been so. (Trans. Anthea Bell, 33)

As the 'research' and 'internment' chapters intersect, the necessity of separating fact from fiction is maintained ("der Punkt ist einmal mehr, wo genau die Trennungslinie zwischen Fiktion und Wirklichkeit verläuft," 120; ["yet again the difficulty lies in discovering exactly where the line runs separating fact from fiction"; trans. Anthea Bell, 91]), yet the boundaries between the two become blurred, the more so as the accounts of Hirschfelder/Harrasser's three wives relativise one another, too.

In the last resort, what remains are fragments and a "multiple disappearance" ("ein mehrfaches Verschwinden") of the central subject:

> Es war gleich ein mehrfaches Verschwinden, sein Verschwinden vor der irischen Küste, sein Verschwinden in Claras Erinnerung und sein Verschwinden in der mutmaßlichen Autobiographie, sofern sie überhaupt einmal existiert hatte, und darum rankten sich Geschichten, die umso mehr Eigenleben bekamen, je bekannter Hirschfelder wurde. (371)

> It was like a multiple disappearance – his death off the Irish coast, his extinction from Clara's memory, and the loss of the supposed autobiography if it had ever existed – with stories proliferating around it and acquiring a more independent life of their own the better known Hirschfelder became. (Trans. Anthea Bell, 283)

As is indicated by the last sentence here, the more 'Hirschfelder' became a public figure, the more he became a site of projections ("Jeder hat sich das über ihn zusammengereimt, was ihm am besten in den Kram paßt," 377; ["[e]veryone picked and chose from the material available to make him into whatever suited them"; trans. Anthea Bell, 287]); in consequence, his true identity receded into the background:

> […] die Berichte, die dann in rascher Folge über ihn erschienen, die Porträts, deckten das Zentrum nur immer mehr zu, schmierten ihre Druckerschwärze darüber, ihren Hochglanzlack, über den Mittelpunkt, der ein Loch war, eine Leerstelle, die Biographie eines verschwundenen Mannes. (372)

> […] the articles and interviews which then followed each other in rapid succession only covered up the nub of the matter even further, smearing printer's ink and high-gloss lacquer over the gap in the centre where there was a hole, an empty space, the story of a man who disappeared. (Trans. Anthea Bell, 283)

4. Appropriating Jewishness

Besides raising questions about (auto-)biographical 'truth,' Gstrein's narrative aims at preventing an aestheticising of the story of Jewish persecution. In post-war England, Harrasser, the fake Hirschfelder, shamelessly styles himself as an exiled Jewish writer, and the novel thus obliquely comments on the way the memory of Jewish persecution can be falsified. The switched identity, of course, has a real (and ironic) background in the fact that after the war, ever so many war criminals were living under false identities. However, Harrasser's assumption of a Jewish identity and his investing himself with a history of persecution recall in particular the case of 'Binjamin Wilkomirski' (Bruno Grosjean/Dössekker), whose purported memoir of a childhood in the death-camps (*Bruchstücke. Aus einer Kindheit 1939–1948*, 1995; Engl. *Fragments: Memories of a Wartime Childhood*, 1996) was finally and decisively revealed as a fraud in 1999. Whether 'Wilkomirski' had acted from the intention of drawing for profit on a collective readiness to mourn, or from a strong identification with the tribulations of the Jewish people that really made him believe in the fictionalising of his own life, has not been entirely clarified until this day, yet Gstrein was greatly 'dismayed' by the debate (Helbig 17). Also, there had been the case of GDR writer Stefan Hermlin, convicted by Karl Corino in 1996 of having mythologised his own and his family history in his memoir *Abendlicht* (1979), giving it out that he himself had been in Sachsenhausen, and that his father had died in a death camp. And there was another important context and possible motif for Gstrein's raising questions on the policies of collective memory, namely Martin Walser's much-criticised speech upon his receiving the Friedenspreis des

Deutschen Buchhandels, one of the most prestigious literary awards in Germany, on 11 October 1998. Walser warned of the ritualising and commodifying of the memory of the Holocaust, going so far as to suggest that one should therefore refrain from public commemoration altogether. In the ensuing debate with Ignatz Bubis, Chairman of the Central Council of Jews in Germany, he and others were severely criticised for trying to play down the danger that lies in not keeping the memory alive.

Much less controversially, Gstrein's novel deals with the perception of (Jewish) exiles by later-born Austrians and Germans, speaking out against simplifications and the all-too-easy, dutifully correct expression of compassion and horror. It is in this respect that he expressed a mistrust in any unreflected narrative that does not question its own conditions ("kein Vertrauen in ein unreflektiertes Erzählen, das nicht seine eigenen Bedingungen hinterfragt," Gstrein; qtd. in Blaha 25). *Die englischen Jahre* consistently rejects an aestheticising rendering and possible exploitation of the horror, as the author expressed his conviction that often, fictional narratives by the later born are too smoothly executed and may be consumed without any consequences: "Es muß aber mehr geben als das Erzählen von noch und noch einer solchen Geschichte, das die Schreckensgeschichte dahinter immer konsumierbarer macht" ["However, there must be more than the telling of yet another such story, which makes the horror story behind it more and more consumable," Gstrein; qtd. in Helbig 15; trans. M.L.]. With topics like the Holocaust, the aesthetic problem automatically also entails an ethical one (Gstrein; qtd. in Helbig, 17). Turning against a mimetic understanding of literature, Gstrein is intent on emphasising the rifts between reality and fiction ("die Risse zwischen Fiktion und Wirklichkeit sichtbar zu machen," Gstrein 2003, 11; see also Gstrein 2004), marking his way of writing as that of a later born who is critically aware of the implications of writing about vicarious experience. By creating distance in dealing with the memory of the Nazi era, the experience of internment and exile, and the stealing of an identity, he avoids what he regards as a glib literary philo-Semitism that may in fact be nothing else than anti-Semitism under different auspices ("ein […] Philosemitimus, der letztlich nichts anderes ist als ein Antisemitismus mit anderen Vorzeichen," Gstrein; qtd. in Nüchtern).

Thematically, this avoidance is based on the question "warum Hirschfelder mitgespielt hatte, warum er nicht einfühlsamer gewesen ist, das Unappetitliche daran zu erkennen, zu einer Symbolfigur stilisiert zu werden, die er nicht war" (372) ["why Hirschfelder went along with this, why he was not sensitive enough to recognise the unacceptable aspect of being made into the symbol of something he was not"; trans. Anthea Bell, 283]. After all, he himself spoke of his newly won attention derogatively, possibly from his very own feelings of survivor's guilt. To the journalists who visit him, 'Hirschfelder' has become a representative figure, almost symbolic of the exiled Jew. Their sympathetic response can hardly deflect from the fact

> dass sie Judenschauen gingen, dass sie alles wieder auf die gleiche Frage reduzierten, auf die es schon ihre Väter und Großväter reduziert hatten, nur dass sie jetzt nicht mehr direkt gestellt wurde, im Kasernenhofton, und dass auf die falsche Antwort zumindest nicht mehr der Tod stand, sondern ihre schwülstige Wärme, ihr Gesäusel und ihr Rotz und ihr Wasser, das sie nichts kostete. (373)

> [that they were] going to "view the Jewish raree-show" as it seems he put it, coming to his house and reducing everything to the same question as their fathers and grandfathers did, except that they no longer asked it straight, not in the tones of a sergeant-major, and at least now the wrong answer did not mean death but their fulsome enthusiasm, their awe-stricken murmurs, the snot and urine that cost them nothing. (Trans. Anthea Bell, 284)

Indicating the role of present concerns and prejudices in recollections of the past, *Die englischen Jahre* emphasises the dynamics of individual and collective memory. Memory emerges not as a spontaneous act or reconstruction based on documents, but as a process directed by many factors, producing unreliable, blurred, and unstable images. This, as well as the fluidity of identities, is of course a frequent theme in contemporary literature, yet rarely can it have been executed with such mathematical precision as in this novel by an author who, after all, did study mathematics before fully concentrating on his literary career. Gstrein's foregrounding of epistemological uncertainty hinges on an austere structural symmetry, the four days in May and June 1940 functioning as nodal points in a web of lives that in themselves become inroads into a reality full of historical momentum.

5. Constructing (Auto-)Biographical 'Truth'

If historical and (auto-)biographical truth is a construct, then we need to know the rules of construction. There is thus no alternative, it seems, to the self-reflexive, multi-perspectival scepticism of Gstrein's narrative, nor to narrative perspective becoming an instrument in the search for truth. This is highlighted when the narrator comes to talk to a historian of the camps, whose academic self-assurance is not affected by the fact that he has never been to the Isle of Man himself, a stark contrast to her own autoptic research and her self-conscious attempts at capturing the spirit of the place. The episode, incidentally, sheds oblique light on Gstrein's refraining from meeting former internees in order not to be swayed by the documentary and thus to lose sight of his method of making visible the gaps between fact and fiction. As it is, these gaps remain, and with them the underlying assumption that in theory, at least, the boundaries between fact and fiction must be upheld – the latter being illustrated by the fact that the cleft between the narrator's re-imagining of Hirschfelder's story and the facts she is confronted with remains.

Re-constructing a life-story from witness' reports, she always remains conscious of the imaginative process involved:

> Das Bild, das ich von Hirschfelder hatte, schien umso unschärfer zu werden, je mehr Catherine mir von ihm erzählte, verschwommen wie das Photo, das sie wie zufällig aus ihrer Mappe hervorgeholt hatte, eine Aufnahme, die ihn in einer Drillichuniform vor einem nicht erkennbaren Hintergrund zeigt, und ich erinnere mich, wie ich es angeschaut habe, ohne Ähnlichkeiten mit meinem Photo zu entdecken, dem Photo, das jetzt über meinem Schreibtisch hängt. (140)

> The picture I had of Hirschfelder seemed to be getting less and less clear the more Catherine told me about him, as blurred as the photograph she had taken casually out of her file, which showed him in a uniform made of cotton drill in front of some unrecognisable background, and I remember looking at it and seeing no similarity with my own picture of him, the one which now hangs over my desk. (Trans. Anthea Bell, 105–106)

The novel features a complex correlation (and partial contradiction) of detective story elements (a true nominal identity revealed), and a biographical project that is for a long time undermined by mistaken identities. Even when the riddle has been solved, however, the nature of narrated memories and the imaginative element in biography prevent the kind of closure that the mystery genre suggests and which, in his own way, the fake Hirschfelder vainly desired: "Ich entsann mich, daß sie es eine versiegelte Erinnerung genannt hatte," is what the narrator remembers about Catherine, the first wife's account, "eine eingefrorene Version, die er ihr von seiner Vergangenheit darbot" (346) ["I remembered that she had spoken of his sealing up his memory, saying he had offered her a frozen version of his past"; trans. Anthea Bell, 265].

The novel's theme of the search for a man whose identity blurs and dissolves the closer one approaches it links it to other such novels, like for instance Conrad's *Lord Jim* or, more immediately relevant in the context of contemporary German-language literature, Uwe Johnson's *Mutmassungen über Jakob* (1959). In both novels, Johnson's and Gstrein's, the situational and political context (that of Stasi surveillance in the former GDR in the case of Johnson) is conducive to mistrust and uncertainty, yet in contrast to Johnson, the mystery of Hirschfelder/Harrasser's nominal identity is solved. There are further parallels to W.G. Sebald's *Austerlitz* (2001), the fictional biography of a Jewish-German refugee in Britain as assembled by the narrator from conversations with the protagonist and other fragmentary information.[6] Evoking Johnson and Sebald, Gstrein referred to his form of narrative as "mutmaßend" ("conjectural") (Helbig 12); biography, this implies, is inevitably also a "fiction of the other" (Helbig 13), yet this fictional dimension may well be instrumental in arriving at a 'deeper' truth.

Generically, *Die englischen Jahre* represents an "implicit biographical metafiction" ["implizite biographische Metafiktion"] as defined by Ansgar Nünning (29), a type of narrative which highlights problems of biography not through argumentative discourse, but through the "staging of metafictional themes" ["Inszenierung metafiktionaler Themen," 29], no matter whether the biographee is a real or fictitious person. The emphasis on the 'quest' of the biographer (Schabert) rather than on the life of his/her subject is typical of postmodern biographical fiction:

> Mich hat beim Schreiben des Romans der Erkenntnisgewinn interessiert, wenn ich den Spalt zwischen Realität und Fiktion größer mache, weil ein Zukleistern dieses immer existierenden Spalts zwischen dem, was tatsächlich geschehen ist, und dem, was man erzählt, in der Regel eine Verharmlosung bedeutet. (Gstrein; qtd. in Helbig 17)

> Writing the novel, I was interested in the knowledge gained by widening the rift between reality and fiction, because patching up the ever existing rift between that which really happened and that which one narrates usually amounts to a belittling of matters. (Trans. M.L.)

Gstrein's sceptical attitude towards the potential of narratives to gloss over the rift between reality and fiction is expressed by the way his novel unsparingly reveals the constructedness of biographical narratives. The problem of identity is played out on two levels, that of the 'detective story' (the swapped identities and partly contradictory versions of the three wives), and the level of narration, where attempts at reconstructing a coherent image fail. Trying to apprehend a person biographically is like sounding a range of possibilities, where distance as conveyed by the narrator's frustrating efforts to get at the truth in the 'research' chapters alternates with imaginative closeness. The protagonists' (failed) attempts at reconstructing their own or others' life stories, and to create meaning from fragments of information, is a theme that runs through Gstrein's work, most conspicuously so in *Die englischen Jahre*, but also for instance in *Das Handwerk des Tötens* (2005), a novel whose narrative unfolds before the background of the war in the former Yugoslavia in the early 1990s, and the NATO intervention in Kosovo.

Liminality and fluidity, defining elements in the experience of internment and exile, are also characteristic of the novel's doubly refracted narrative discourse. In the 'you'-chapters, the first-person narrator of the other chapters becomes an internal focaliser, as her imaginative exploration of Hirschfelder's experience is rendered in the form of a stream of consciousness. Addressing Gabriel as 'you,' however, makes him such a focaliser, too, allowing the reader to identify with him while the narrator as the originator of the discourse recedes to the background. Her imaginative recreation of the camps and transport ship is still based on research,

including a diary by 'Hirschfelder' which she receives from Catherine, yet the interpretation of the diary entries depends on the consciousness of the narrator, which in turn participates in a collective consciousness related to the historical facts. In this sense, the imagined figure of the fiction can be 'known' more fully than the real person, whose contours will inevitably remain blurred. Thus, for example, a diary entry on the passage from Liverpool to the Isle of Man sets in motion an imaginative act of reconstruction:

> […] als ich es las, genügte es, dass ich am selben Ort war wie er damals, ich stand an Deck, schaute auf die stillgelegten Docks und versuchte, mir vorzustellen, wie anders wohl der Blick gewesen war, den Hirschfelder gehabt hatte […] wenn ich mich bemühte, sah ich ihn […] an der Reling lehnen […]. (159–160)

> […] when I read those words it was enough to know that I was just where he had been at the time, standing on deck looking at the disused docks and trying to imagine how different they had probably appeared to Hirschfelder […] if I tried, I could see Hirschfelder himself leaning on the rail […]. (Trans. Anthea Bell, 119–120)

However, this image is later relativised as the attempt at capturing the 'reality' of Hirschfelder's figure causes the picture to blur: "und wenn ich mir vorzustellen versuche, wie er dastand […] verschwimmt mir sein Bild einmal mehr vor Augen" (266–267) ["when I try to imagine him standing there […] his picture blurs before my eyes yet again"; trans. Anthea Bell, 204]. Moreover, during her stay on the Isle of Man the narrator had come to reflect on the impossibility of really understanding the situation of the interned: "ich war mir fehl am Platz vorgekommen, allein weil ich jederzeit abreisen konnte, weil es schon deswegen eine Anbiederung sein musste, wenn ich glaubte, ich könnte mir auch nur annähernd ausmalen, was er empfunden hatte" (254) ["it seemed wrong for me to be here, if only because I could leave at any time, which made it presumptuous of me to believe I could even begin to imagine what it was like for him"; trans. Anthea Bell, 194–195).

6. Conclusion

Internment involves acts of definition (in the case of World War II Britain, of 'undesired' or 'enemy aliens') and containment. By way of analogy, this also applies to the biographical act and the biographer's desire to define and confer fixity upon the image of the other. In its most rigidly compartmentalised form, identity is reduced to numbers ("die Nummer […] zu der deine Identität von einem Augenblick auf den anderen zusammengeschrumpft war," 108; ["the number […] to which your identity had suddenly shrunk"; trans. Anthea Bell, 80]), or to the bare names of internees on their gravestones. However, the camps are a liminal

space of transition and transformation, where identities change, although of course not normally in the nominal manner and with the dramatic results described in the novel. Regarding the Douglas camp, the notion of liminality and the impossibility of firmly delineating the contours of an identity is further enhanced by the island setting: "Die Isle of Man selbst wird der Ort, der durch seine Brüchigkeit die Unmöglichkeit der biographischen Erfassung einer Person versinnbildlicht" (Leiner 118). The island and its camps become an in-between space in a topographical, temporal and figurative sense, where the fluidity of identities gives rise to the myth of the Jewish exile, in itself the epitome of a state of not belonging. Indeed, such a sense of not belonging pervades Gstrein's work even before *The English Years*, as his characters may be defined, if at all, by their not belonging ("weil auch die Figuren meiner früheren Bücher sich am ehesten durch ihre Nichtzugehörigkeit definieren ließen"). In its extreme form, Gstrein adds, not belonging is nothing else but exile ("Nichtzugehörigkeit, ins äußerste Extrem getrieben, sei nichts anderes als Exil"; Gstrein 2003, 9; see also Bobinac; Wallas).

In Gstrein's novel, the figure of the interned and exiled author becomes the absent centre which dominates and structures the book. The narrator's desire to fill this void by reconstructing Hirschfelder's experience and revealing his true identity was initially instigated by the myths that surrounded his person: "Am Anfang stand für mich der Mythos, Hirschfelder, die Schriftsteller-Ikone, der große Einsame […], der seit dem Krieg in England ausharrte und an seinem Meisterwerk schrieb" (9) ["At first he was a myth to me: Hirschfelder, the literary icon, the great loner […], who stayed on in England after the war, working on his masterpiece"; trans. Anthea Bell, 3]. Myths, in the sense of Roland Barthes, are simplified projections of historical realities that appeal to the imagination, and the transformation of historical complexity into the "evident" of uncontested narratives (Barthes 143). In contrast, Gstrein's novel remains profoundly anti-mythical, as the progression of its narrative does not contribute to clarity, but instead creates obscurity and doubt. In this context, internment and exile also appear as parts of a dialectic of (precarious) certainties on the one hand, and the inevitability of multiplicity and flux on the other.

Notes

1. On the Isle of Man camps see Chappell.
2. Page references are to the original German and the English edition of the novel (trans. Anthea Bell) respectively, as listed under Gstrein 1999 in "References." The English edition was reviewed in *The Independent*, 30 Dec. 2002 (Schüler).
3. One is reminded of the veteran soldier living under the identity of his fallen comrade in *Le retour de Martin Guerre*, the 1984 French film based on a true occurrence in 16th-century France, and its remake, *Sommersby* (1993), set in the American Civil War.

4. The narrator is not speaking to herself, as Hinck (267) claims. See also Pichler (81), who considers what is surely the case here (the narrator imagining Hirschfelder's experience) as just one possibility among others.
5. On the epistemological and ideological parameters of a "Lagerliteratur" (a literature of the internment camps) see the profound study of testimonies from the Gulags by Lachmann; on questions of the autobiographical in this context see esp. chapter V: "Zwischen Autobiographie und Autofiktion" [Between Autobiography and Autofiction], 309–434.
6. Winkels points out that 'Max,' the name of the narrator's ex-partner and the novel's implied author, was also a nickname of Sebald's. The depiction of Southend-on-Sea and the hotel may well have been inspired by Sebald's description of Lowestoft and its Victoria Hotel in *Die Ringe des Saturn. Eine englische Wallfahrt* (1997). For further points of connection with Sebald see Long.

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A History of Contested Narratives: The National Film Board of Canada's Evolving Cinematic Treatment (1945–2018) of the Internment of Japanese Canadians during World War Two

Abstract: The National Film Board of Canada (NFB) is world-renown for its documentaries and animations. This article examines how the NFB dealt with one specific topic – the internment of Japanese Canadians during World War Two. By analyzing the films produced by the NFB between 1945 and 2018, this study seeks to understand how and why its narratives of the internment changed dramatically over three-quarters of a century. The study deals with six NFB films: *Of Japanese Descent* (1945), *Enemy Alien* (1975), *Minoru: Memory of Exile* (1992), *Freedom Has a Price* (1994), *Sleeping Tigers: The Asahi Baseball Story* (2003), and *East of the Rockies* (2018). Drawing on the postcolonial concepts of the colonizing gaze and hegemony, as well as poststructuralist concepts of the trace and discourses of power, it probes the evolution of the NFB's cinematic culture and concludes that the NFB's film legacy parallels a changing public discourse in Canada on this traumatic historical violation of human rights.

Keywords: Japanese Canadian internment, redress, historic memory, state apologies for past wrongdoing, racism and race-related trauma, discrimination, human rights, social justice

1. Introduction

Controversial historical events portrayed in cinema reflect the socio-political attitudes of the time in which they were made. This study covers the seventy-three-year history of the cinematic treatment of the internment of Japanese Canadians during the Second World War. There is not an extensive literature on the films dealing with this specific topic, but there are some scholarly treatments

of the overall topic of internment that set the stage for this current discussion. Christopher E. Gittings' *Canadian National Cinema: Ideology, Difference and Representation* (2002) introduces concepts such as the "colonizing gaze" and focuses on the racist dimensions of settler ideology in cinema. What he terms "a white, Anglo-Protestant or Anglo-Saxon, male camera eye that projects itself as the normative 'we' of the imagined community Canada" installed itself in the early treatment of the internment, which was subverted and replaced later by a counter-narrative developed by Japanese Canadians (8). Another valuable concept is "film as utterance" which creates a bridge between ideology, narrative voice, and constructed identities in cinema (Druick 12). Who speaks, who speaks for whom, and who speaks with an authoritative voice are all part of utterance, especially in the documentary mode. This study also makes use of general rhetorical concepts such as Derrida's "the trace," which involves both elements of presence and absence and of continuity and discontinuity, as well as Foucault's emphasis on the relationship between discourse and power. Together – the colonizing gaze, utterance, trace and the discourses of power – are key tools in dissecting the evolution of cinematic narratives of this internment.

Since most of the films about the internment were made after the internment ended, memory and memorialization play a vital role, especially when Japanese Canadians finally were able to tell their stories directly. Because cinema of the internment can be considered "the public performance of acceptable memory," what the films remember, what they forget, and the silences left by the unsaid are crucial to our understanding of these narratives (Oikawa xi). Mona Oikawa argues that the public memory of the internment has resulted in "the homogenization of the subjectivities" of the survivors, which, in turn, reproduce "hegemonic notions" of what meaning was ascribed to being Japanese Canadian (xii). How the films in this study contribute to homogenization and hegemonic notions of who is a Canadian constitutes the key question.

The issue of memory and its narration of past traumas has both public and personal dimensions. In the documentary mode the intermingling of editorial narrative, personal narrative, and visual documentation engenders a public discourse woven out of diverse experiences in front of and behind the screen. According to Pamela Sugiman memories of the internment reflect "what we need to remember, what is safe to remember" (364). The acceptability/safety of the message arises from the narrator's perception of the audience. When memories of trauma are offered to the public they are politicized (Sugiman 364). While a public remembering may empower a narrator's sense of agency, that remembering is constrained by various parameters internalized by the storyteller. Japanese Canadian memories of internment cover a lengthy post-internment context in which the survivors sought to promote cultural assimilation for their children as a defense against racism (Sugiman 361). As a counterpoint to this assimilationist strategy, their narratives can contain a certain nostalgia for the pre-internment era,

which is idealized because it was free of the community disruption, dispossession, transportation, and post-incarceration dispersal caused by the internment.

Finally, this study takes into account the scholarship on trauma and its narration. Among the key concepts that characterize this internment trauma are racialization, dispossession, removal from home and the familiar, family separation, incarceration and movement control, post-internment injustice in the search for reparation, and the continuance of the trauma in an inter-generational history.

2. The National Film Board of Canada and the Internment

The focus of this study is the National Film Board of Canada's contribution to the topic over seventy years. The Film Board was launched in 1939 by the Scottish filmmaker John Grierson, who quickly turned the agency's focus to war propaganda. In a 1970 television interview Grierson stated that "the Film Board […] was there to bring Canada alive to itself and to the rest of the world […]. It was there to invoke the strengths of Canadians, the imagination of Canadians in respect of creating their present and future" (Evans 4). What Grierson was unaware of when he offered this definition of the NFB was that what constituted "the imagination of Canadians" would change.

The NFB made much of the sacrifice and nobility of Canadians during the war but it preferred to leave unstoried the less noble side of wartime events, such as the internment of Japanese Canadians, at least until the matter could be approached in a positive light. While the term "internment" is defined in international law as the detention of prisoners of war, it has been widely applied to non-military personnel. Since the majority of the civilians "interned" were either Canadian citizens or Canadian-born, terms such as "incarceration, expulsion, detention and dispersal" could be more appropriate but also unwieldy (Robinson). However, I will continue to use the term because of its common usage in regard to this event and its strong association with the concept of prison camps, both military and civilian, and their historical role in 20th century conflicts.

3. *Of Japanese Descent* (1945): The Cinema of Propaganda

The removal and internment of Japanese Canadians was authorized by the Liberal government of Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King in February 1942. The following month Japanese Canadians living in British Columbia were brought to Hastings Park in Vancouver, housed in the Livestock Building, and then forcibly relocated away from the coast with nothing but a few personal possessions they could carry. Most were either Canadian citizens or held immigrant status. Eventually over 20,000 were taken from their homes and their property confiscated

and later sold. The Canadian public was told that this was being done in the name of national security and that Japanese Canadians now constituted a threat in a time of war. What was not referenced was the long history of anti-Asian racism that had characterized British Columbia beginning with its days as a colony and ending with riots in the early 20th century that targeted both Chinese and Japanese Canadians. While a small minority of those interned were imprisoned and some of the men were used in construction in central Canada, the vast majority were moved to the interior of British Columbia to live in isolated camps for the duration of the war. There was a precedent from the First World War when the Canadian government interned over 8,000 "enemy aliens" who were immigrants from what had been the territory of Germany and Austro-Hungary. What was new this time around was that whole families and communities were moved and interned. The earlier internment included only men. The reasons for the removal of Japanese Canadians should be sought in the motivations of various political players, and these have been debated for some time. One historian even claims that "the federal government ordered the evacuation […] to prevent a greater evil, hysterical attacks on Japanese residents" (Roy 17). Whatever the reason, this forcible relocation of thousands of men, women and children to camps in the mountainous interior of British Columbia or even further afield was traumatic for those involved.

In 1945 the NFB released a film titled *Of Japanese Descent* (dir. D.C. Burritt 1945) that it made for the Canadian Department of Labour. The film had been originally commissioned by the British Columbia Security Commission, an entity that oversaw the round-up and forcible removal of Japanese Canadians. This twenty-two-minute color documentary portrayed the process of internment, the lives of the internees, and the actions of the authorities, followed by a post-war solution. Rob Aitken has termed the film "a project of erasure" (4). By erasure he means that "much of the violence unleashed during the process of forcible removal, detention and dispersal" was made invisible to the film's audience (12). In its place there is a narrative of social integration and humane treatment which should be considered nothing less than propaganda.

The film project was initiated in late 1943 and involved various bureaucracies in the federal government negotiating its terms and conditions. In the end the NFB decided on a vocabulary of "social security and social integration" for the film, rather than one that demonized the internees as a security risk (Aitken 4). Opposition politicians of the day and church-based human rights organizations had condemned the policy of internment, so NFB officials viewed the film as an "insurance against criticism when this is all over" (Aitken 11). The film's final message was the need for the internees to remain east of the Rockies after the war ended in order to foster their assimilation. There were to be no more ethnic enclaves like the fishing village of Steveston, south of Vancouver. No doubt this proposal appealed to the white racists in British Columbia, who were glad not to have Japanese Canadians return home. By spreading out across the country and

surrendering their former livelihoods and residences, the film claimed Japanese Canadians would experience an improved integration and social cohesion within the dominant society. The subtext of this claim was the elimination of a threat to white dominance through dispersal into geographically separated small family units.

Stylistically, the film itself is highly reminiscent of *socialist realism* films of the Soviet era because of the way it portrays industrious workers building homes and happy children going to school. The film shows traditional costumes and celebrations in a faux ethnographic tone. The film is subtitled as "An Interim Report," which harks back to its government origins, the concept of a report card, and the idea of reporting (the way a journalist might) to the public. So what does the film convey? It shows that the accommodations the internees had to build are better than their previous housing, that they are receiving better medical treatment for tuberculosis than they had before, and that the children are receiving a proper Canadian education. The film consciously benefitted from the use of color to build its message by offering two aesthetic values – color's innate projection of itself as 'true to life' and its association with a vibrant present. Black and white films were typical of the documentary mode of the day and associated with news clips in cinemas and educational shorts. The NFB did not want an 'issues' orientation for this film. Instead it used the more expensive color mode to facilitate its positive narrative.

The authoritative voice-over of the white male narrator describes the internees as having "left the west coast" when it "was decided" to relocate them. The narrator tells viewers that the camps "supply wartime needs" such as "30,000 cords of wood" for Vancouver. The narrator specifically claims that the internees are "not living in internment camps" with barbed wire and armed guards – they can travel freely within the settlements, and they do need permits to go outside the area. The innocuous term "relocation" is presented as an ordinary move that anyone might make. That this "relocation" constituted a deportation is never mentioned. The film concludes that "the problem they [Japanese Canadians] represent has been solved only temporarily by the war." The film implies that, simply by being of Japanese descent, one was a "problem" for Canada and that this "problem" was historical and not just contemporary. Hence, the message is that Canada did nothing wrong by imposing the internment. Why the presence of Japanese Canadians should be considered controversial is not discussed. The only option Japanese Canadians were given when the war ended was dispersal across the country or removal to Japan after the war.[1] Of course, since their livelihoods and homes had been confiscated there was little to return to. A minority reluctantly went to Japan, while the majority spread across the country.

Since internment was viewed by the authorities as a preventative measure, the internees were not categorized as criminals. The film built on this lack of criminality to create a narrative of eventual peace and hope for assimilation. The

human rights violations involved in the deportation that we now would consider a form of *ethnic cleansing* were ignored, as was the dire economic penalty imposed on the internees when their homes and enterprises were taken away from them and sold.[2] Even as the film began circulating among the public, Japanese Canadians began speaking out over what had happened to them. In 1945 Muriel Kitagawa delivered a speech calling for reparations in which she said that "through bitterness we learned cynicism, and through frustration we gained new strength to fight for our rights" (286). The fight for these rights would continue for decades and part of that struggle was the cinematic reframing of the deportation as an unjust act.

This 1945 narrative used Gittings' "white, Anglo-Protestant or Anglo-Saxon, male camera eye that projects itself as the normative 'we' of the imagined community Canada" in its voice-over, whose 'utterance' was completely silent about the transgressions and violations the internment involved. This silence constituted an integral part of the film's visual content in which the internees are shown but not heard. They are literally a silent movie. Finally, the intended audience for the film is a white nation with the power to accept or reject the former internees, whether as families or individuals. The film affirms the dominant society's power through its discourse. It casts the Japanese Canadians as 'Others,' thereby Canadians thereby affirming the grand narrative of Canadian identity as Caucasian and Anglo-European. The film should be considered as complicit in the long history of racism in Canada.

When *Of Japanese Descent* was released for Canadian audiences, the NFB was deeply into its war-propaganda phase. The war had served as an accelerant of its institutional growth. By 1945, the six-year old NFB was producing 300 films per year, making it "the largest and best co-ordinated government film operation in the world" (Ellis 126). With a staff of over 700, the NFB was producing films that reached four million Canadian viewers or one-third of the population (Ellis 126). Thirty years later, when the next film on the internment, *Enemy Alien*, was released, the NFB was in a completely different phase. Television was now the prime mode of visual communication in Canada. A new norm of social criticism had invaded the agency, reflecting a new radicalism, driven in part by the anti-Vietnam War and Civil Rights movements in the United States, a new left-wing nationalism in Canada, the rise of second-wave feminism, which made women filmmakers more prominent, and the recognition of the independence movement in Québec. The NFB now began producing provocative series such as the 200-film *Challenge for Change* series, which would become a platform for activist documentary-making.

Corporately, the links between the government and its film arm had lengthened considerably by the 1970s. The National Film Act of 1950 gave the organization a freer mandate (no direct government administration), which led to its office moving to Montréal, and eventual regionalization and decentralization. In terms of media and communication policy, the federal government's focus moved to the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation and its public television arm. The NFB's public

profile was diminished, which added yet another dimension of independence. And documentary films themselves had evolved. Rather than use the traditional voice-over narrator in its documentaries, the NFB embraced new documentary styles like *cinema verité* and *cinema direct* (The Candid Eye series) and engaged independent filmmakers. In the late 1960s it even began making feature films. The audiences for NFB films were no longer in movie theatres or traveling exhibitions as it had been in the 1940s. The NFB produced educationally-oriented material by adopting the new technology of videotape. Videotapes revolutionized film distribution in the 1970s and 1980s because they could be played on a home television set via a videotape player. *Enemy Alien* (1975) by Jeanette Lerman was typical of this new phase of engaged filmmaking intended to provoke discussion and debate.

4. *Enemy Alien* (1975) and Revisionist History

By the time that *Enemy Alien* (Jeannette Lerman, 1975) was made, the newsreel-style editorial voice-over, that was the essential driver of meaning for *Of Japanese Descent*, had been replaced with the narrative voices of the film's participants. The subjects of the documentary got to tell their stories, instead of having the authoritative broadcaster speak for them. The move to having ordinary people narrate their experiences was a fundamental break from the Griersonian approach, which tended to be top-down, telling people what to do or think. Unfortunately, this change did not happen in *Enemy Alien*. The film interpreted the personal trauma of detention, dispossession, dispersal, deportation, and finally internment, through the traditional voice-over of Stanley Jackson, a non-Japanese Canadian. This is a film made by a non-Japanese filmmaker using a non-Japanese narrator. However, the fact that the filmmaker is a woman is not insignificant. During this period, women were in the process of articulating their disadvantages, objecting to the discrimination they faced, and voicing the need for legal equality. This social reality translated into a new narrative about the internment. The story is told visually through archival newsreel footage, newspaper clippings from that time, and film footage of the remnants of the camps thirty years later. But the highlight of the visual narrative is the inclusion of the scrapbooks of the internees. In this way the film provides a silent testimonial to the lives of the internees. The film gives the Japanese Canadians a human face but not yet a human voice.

To be fair to the filmmaker, the film credits include Michiko Sakata, Roy Shin, and David Suzuki as consultants. However, the absence of Japanese Canadian voices in the film itself suggests that in the 1970s the NFB felt that a revisionist history of the internment had to be told by members of the dominant society in order for the audience to accept what the film was saying. Why Japanese Canadians were not interviewed for the film on camera is a subject itself worthy exploring. Was it a decision of the filmmaker? Did Japanese Canadians not want to be on

camera and for the record at this stage? And if so, why? While these questions are regrettably beyond the scope of this paper, they raise an issue around the status of this particular film in the NFB's oeuvre on the subject. For example, why does an important history of the NFB by Zoë Druick, which discusses films in the *Challenge for Change* series and the rise of women filmmakers in the Studio D program, not mention or discuss this film, nor did an earlier book that covered the period from 1949 to 1989 in great detail?[3] Nor has it been mentioned in personal memoirs by Japanese Canadians or works on the redress movement authored by them, such as David Suzuki in his autobiography or Roy Miki in his lauded history of the redress movement.[4] Clearly the film's historic role of initiating a new narrative about the internment has not received full recognition, perhaps because of the issues mentioned above. However, at the time of the film's making, former internees were already reaching out to the Canadian public. Ken Adachi's groundbreaking book, *The Enemy That Never Was: A History of Japanese Canadians* (1976) created an emerging new narrative.

Enemy Alien is a work of revisionism, highly critical of the government's deeds, but it lacks the authenticity of internee voices. When the film came out, it was reviewed in *Cinema Canada*. Ronald Blumer termed the internment "a black stain on the Canadian psyche, a record of cruel injustice" (47). His review reflected a new era in public consciousness about the internment and how it would come to be taught in Canadian schools. Likewise, the film broached themes that would ultimately become central to the redress movement that sought acknowledgement, apology, and compensation for what the government had done. For example, Roy Miki describes the violation of the citizenship rights of Japanese Canadians as composed of forced removal, dispossession, confiscation, dispersal (forced movement), loss of *habeas corpus*, and the inability to seek redress (2). While not every one of these facets of the internment experience is raised by the film, they clearly align with how the redress movement wanted to be acknowledged.

Enemy Alien begins with a somber-voiced narrator telling the viewer that the film was made in the summer of 1974 by crossing the country to collect the stories of the internees. The credits at the end list a large number of Japanese Canadians whom the filmmakers thank. The narrator uses archival footage from the 1940s to explain the perceived threat that Japanese Canadians held for the Canadian authorities, which is heightened by an intense and dramatic music score. Practically all the images are of Japanese Canadians but the narrator is not. This visual-oral dissonance reflects its 1945 predecessor in seeking to explain the internment to non-Japanese Canadians, who were conceived to be the prime audience. The film provides a brief history of Japanese migration to Canada and the discrimination and racism the Japanese faced along with the Chinese. However, the word 'racism' is never used. The tone of the narrator is ironic when he says, "they felt unwelcome except by their exploiters [those Canadians who hired them at half wages]." The

audience is informed about the Japanese Canadians who served in World War One on behalf of Canada but were denied the right to vote until there were only a few veterans left. The film's narrative is very much about an ongoing denial of citizenship. It is sympathetic to the internees, posing the question: "ask why are they doing this to us?" The film states that internment meant "humiliation, the dream had been shattered. They were displaced people in their own country." While thirty years earlier the NFB had lauded the "benefits" of internment, this film concludes with the narrator saying that "it is important that this story of frustration and injustice, mistrust and hate be remembered." Clearly, it was now safe to remember in a way that better reflected what had really happened.

The film was not made by a Japanese Canadian director and it lacks narratives by survivors. Another drawback is the film's disembodied narrator who turns the film into a history lesson, an effort to educate the audience 'about' a topic. The archival material, both public and personal, which dominates the visual experience, is primarily monochromatic, signifying its 'historical' nature. Talking about history is a way of objectivizing the subject – Japanese Canadian internees, who continue to be under the hegemonic practice of having others seemingly more qualified to speak for them. The film occupies a space that is half-way between the propaganda of 1945 and the films to come. It should be read as a partial step that could not fully satisfy the desire of the Japanese Canadian community to tell their story in their own voices. Since the voice of the film is that of the dominant white society, its utterance is both accusatory of the state and confessional, acknowledging Canadian society's sin and guilt for the injustice.

In *Cartographies of Violence*, Mona Oikawa has a whole chapter titled "The Silencing Continues: 'Speaking For' Japanese Canadian Subjects of the Internment" in which she condemns the binary construction of "the silent Internment survivor and the speaking Canadianized subject" (58). This binary is exemplified in the film, which continues to present Japanese Canadians as 'the Other' and not fully Canadian. In this way it retains traces of the narrative of its 1945 forerunner. Despite naming the injustices that were perpetrated, its revisionary character is unsatisfactory. It was not until the publication of several key books on the internment in the early 1980s, and the adoption of Canada's Charter of Rights and Freedoms in 1982, that Japanese Canadians began a concerted campaign for redress of the wrongs that had been imposed on them. Among the most influential works were Joy Kogawa's moving novel, *Obasan* (1981), Takeo Ujo Nakano's memoir *Within the Barbed Wire Fence* (1980), and Ann Sunahara's study *The Politics of Racism: The Uprooting of Japanese Canadians in the Second World War* (1981). In September 1988 (a month after the Americans provided their own redress), Prime Minister Brian Mulroney acknowledged the wrongdoing and offered compensation. Once this occurred, the Japanese Canadians could finally tell their stories within the cinematic mode.

5. *Minoru: Memory of Exile* (1992) and the Re-appropriation of Voice

The first Japanese Canadian-controlled NFB film was an eighteen-minute animated documentary titled *Minoru: Memory of Exile* by Michael Fukushima. The use of a Japanese name in the title is indicative of the new post-redress era. The most important intellectual and cultural context for the making of *Minoru* was post-colonialism, an ideology that rejected cultural appropriation by cultural workers from the dominant society and insisted on the validity of the formerly silenced voices of subjected minorities. For example, Roy Miki, a leader in the redress movement and a prominent writer, organized the "Writing Thru Race" conference in 1994 at which non-minority writers were not allowed.[5] Of course, such public discourse had an impact on the NFB. In *Projecting Canada,* Druick argues that at the NFB in the 1980s and 1990s "the emphasis on aboriginal, queer, and minority filmmakers" promoted "a cultural diversity mandate" (178). *Minoru* was clearly a product of this new trend.

Michael Fukushima was in his late twenties when he joined the NFB to work on *Minoru*, which went on to win the Toronto International Film Festival's Hot Docs Best Short Documentary award. He stayed with the NFB, eventually becoming executive producer of the NFB's Animation Studio in 2013. He himself had not experienced internment or exile, but his father, who had been born in Canada, had been repatriated to Japan after internment. *Minoru* is his father's name and story. Fukushima's film established a new baseline at the National Film Board that continues to be the Japanese Canadian narrative of the internment. The film is structured with a voice-over narrative, but rather than presenting what Monika Kin Gagnon terms "the so-called objective narrator's voice" of the two earlier films, Fukushima created a refreshing and much needed "first-person oral testimony" (2007, 280).

He also added animation to his telling of the story. In the previous two films the white-male voice-over was authoritative and hegemonic. In both cases the visual record was subordinated to oral power. The voice-over served as a directive discourse that suggested its interpretation. In *Minoru,* the voice-over remains powerful, but it is fused more closely with the visual, which is no longer simply illustrative. And more importantly, the voice is that of Fukushima himself. The film's animation sequences move the film beyond simply a historical record. Since animation is associated with children's cinema, its use in this biographical/autobiographical short film signifies the innocence of childhood perceptions. There is also a fable-like quality which animation imparts to the documentary mode, lifting it into a psycho-mythical realm of heroes, villains, and monsters. In the documentaries prior to *Minoru*, the audience was watching a documented moment in time involving a collectivity, while in *Minoru* the historical record is personally experienced by the filmmaker's father, first as a child in Canada, and then as a teenager in Japan. In an academic study of *Minoru*, Kirsten McAllister provides a

thoughtful critique of its discursive techniques. Her article identifies the limitations of the "realist" (legal-political) representations of the past that depend on historical data, which is what *Of Japanese Descent* and *Enemy Alien* represent, and she welcomes Fukushima's use of animation and biography in presenting the impact of the internment on one person (79–103).

Simultaneously, another Japanese Canadian, Linda Ohama, made an independent documentary titled *The Last Harvest* about her family's struggle to turn themselves into farmers after relocation east of the Rockies (1992). Since the film is not a NFB production it is not discussed in this article. However, a decade later she did go on to make a full-length NFB documentary with a significant internment component. *Obāchan's Garden* (2001) is a tribute to her centenarian grandmother's epic life journey from Japan to Canada. It is discussed later in this article. I mention her earlier film, released in the same year as Fukushima's, because it confirms the shift from objectification to subjectification right after the apology and the redress settlement. *Minoru* was made with the financial participation of the Japanese Canadian Redress Secretariat, which serves as the film's seal of approval.

Michael Fukushima, like his father Canadian-born, begins the narration in his own voice: "In the fall of 1987 I asked my father about his childhood." Michael would have been twenty-six at that time. He then moves to an imitation of his late father's voice so that the two voices are distinct. Technically, the film uses archival footage colorized by the author, and short animation clips, either superimposed over archival images or free-standing presentations of situations. The animated images and drawings are childlike in keeping with the spirit of the narration.

The message of the film is complex. It refers to the "hatred and oppression" of "long-standing anti-Japanese sentiments" [read: racism] that his father had to face and overcome. His father was one of those internees who went to Japan after the war. He only returned to Canada after serving in the Canadian army during the Korean War (1950–1953). In short he had to risk his life in order to return to Canada from what he terms his "exile" in Japan. The racism faced by Japanese Canadians in Canada forced on them an identity of 'Otherness,' of not belonging. Minoru says in the film that "Canada saw me as Japanese. I saw myself as a Canadian." The labelling based on race gave Minoru a non-Canadian nationality, which becomes the basis of his internment narrative of how Canada took from him his Canadian nationality and identity. His son Michael, who was born in Canada, states at the end of the film that "my Canadianness is complete, totally natural, immutable," which his father's was not. At the end of the film Fukushima states that his grandparents, whose property was confiscated and lost to them, died before the redress settlement of 1988 and so never received compensation. This becomes one of the lingering resentments that form an integral part of "[his] other heritage."

The issue of conflicted identity in the face of racial bias and discrimination is fundamental to the film's narrative. However, McAllister argues that "*Minoru* is still stricken by the linear narrative that inserts Japanese Canadians into the linear

narrative of the modern Canadian nation" (101). By this she means that a story centering on the progress toward becoming fully Canadian ends up undermining the specificity of their racial oppression or the systemic racism that permeated and continues to permeate Canadian society. Because the stories of Minoru and Michael Fukushima focus on overcoming and creating a successful life for themselves in Canada, their narrative of eventual inclusivity shaping Canadian national identity is one that McAllister questions.

Something that has not been mentioned in previous studies of either the individual documentaries or the body of work on the internment as a whole are the curious similarities between the 1945 propaganda film *Of Japanese Descent* and the 1992 redemptive film *Minoru.* Three points of convergence need to be considered. First, the theme of erasure can be applied to both. In the earlier propaganda film the erasure is the whitewashing of the internment experience and its emphasis on the 'benefits' of internment to the internees. In the 1992 film the erasure is more subtle because it involves the eventual removal of the stigma of 'Otherness' through the heroic struggle of individuals and the collective. Second, the earlier film was a "public relations" film made for the Department of Labour. It was commissioned by a body outside the NFB. Likewise *Minoru* had the financial support and blessing of the Japanese Canadian Redress Secretariat, which made the film 'official' in the same sense that *Of Japanese Descent* was 'official.' Both films were directly or indirectly state-funded and they ended up as "legal-political" narratives, to use McAllister's term. They are opposed to each other, yet they serve similar purposes by offering official interpretations. This brings up the third aspect – the role of history and the authoritative voice-over technique. Not just these two, but all three films discussed thus far, use the voice-over method to convey their message, which is both a hallmark and a limitation of the documentary genre. Yet in each case the voice-over is different. Fukushima's is the first Japanese Canadian voice to narrate a personal Japanese Canadian story so it has the quality of a first-person narrative. This re-appropriation of voice is central to its validity, but equally important is the tone of that voice and its delivery. It is a slow, measured, non-combative voice filled with lengthy pauses, especially in the case of Michael Fukushima's voice. One does not feel driven or rushed from one point to another. The voice calls for reflection and its tone is one of elegiac sadness, not accusation. The voice-over of *Of Japanese Descent* lacks any personal dimension, losing itself in a false socio-historical 'objectivity.' The revelatory voice-over of *Enemy Alien* continues the silencing of its subject even as it confesses the wrongs perpetrated on innocent Japanese Canadians. It is only with the affirmative overcoming voiced by a third-generation Japanese Canadian in *Minoru* that Canadian cinema received a subjective and personal narrative. There are several aspects of the film that herald it as a turning-point as a "film of utterance." First, it is an auteur work that signals the re-appropriation of the Japanese Canadian voice. Second, it establishes a role for multi-genres in internment cinema story-telling. The combination of

the documentary and animation genres signals this new duality, which itself suggests that only by mixing modes of discourse can the story be told with a fuller authenticity. Third, it announces the central role that the third-generation Japanese Canadians came to have in articulating the internment. From this point forward there emerged new ground rules for any future films beginning with Linda Ohama's full-length (94 min) documentary/docu-drama titled *Obāchan's Garden*. which has a section on the internment. This film offered the original use of a female voice and a move away from the political-legal approach influenced earlier by the redress movement.

6. *Obāchan's Garden* (2001) and the Female Voice

*Minoru'*s narrative is tied closely to the political narrative as viewed by the redress movement. One can summarize this approach as emphasizing abuses of citizenship, human rights, and social justice.[6] In contrast, *Obāchan's Garden* tells her grandmother's story of migration to and life in Canada in which political-legal arguments are less important. The story is much more holistic in that it discusses a whole life – pre-internment, internment, and post-internment. The introduction of a female voice and a female protagonist moves the narrative to a new arena and to a new interpretative orientation. The subject of the film, Asayo Murakami (1898–2002) was a "picture bride" who came to Canada in 1924. She rejected her sponsoring Canadian Japanese fiancé and had to work in a cannery to repay the cost of her travel. She married another Japanese Canadian man and lived in Steveston, a Japanese Canadian fishing enclave. She and her family ended up working on a sugar beet farm in Manitoba during the war and, after the war, settled on a farm in Alberta. This part of her story was documented in Ohama's 1992 documentary *The Last Harvest*.

Apparently Ohama's grandmother was an avid flower gardener, and the garden becomes a metaphor for her resilience and her values. Monika Kin Gagnon cites the garden as an example of "tending, tender gestures" (2006, 216). She considers the flower garden as a "refuge" and a place of caring from which gifts of seeds can and were made to other women (2006, 222). It is the feminism of the film that disrupts the political-legal stance and orients the audience toward a life story rather than a socio-political event. Sheena Wilson claims that "the telling of mother stories […] [can be] an act of resistance" (25). In fact, she interprets the film as an act of reclaiming, resisting, and retracing the herstory of a racialized woman (25). This makes the film a "subversive act" by giving its female protagonist agency and making the mother figure the center of the story (Wilson 34, 45). Her determination to live by her own life choices undermines 'the good mother' stereotypes of patriarchal-constructed femininity. She is presented as a feminist hero.

Ohama's representation of the internment episode in the film and the language used to describe it is the main concern of this essay. How much does it deviate from that the political-legal language of *Enemy Alien* and *Minoru*? Instead of focusing on citizenship, human rights, and social justice, the film expresses the experience of internment in much more personal tones – of childhood memories, separation from friends, family needs and relations, and all the day-to-day worries that the expulsion and the work on the sugar beet farm forced the family to endure. There is no condemnation of the government's actions, simply the acceptance of the situation. The film highlights stories and scenes told by surviving family members. It dramatizes certain episodes including actors in period costumes and it uses the family home in Steveston, the only surviving Japanese Canadian home, as a focal point of the tragedy. It is also the first film on the internment to use archival footage of the bombing of Hiroshima, in the district where Murakami was born. The news of the bombing brings about Murakami's dramatic lamentation because of her concern for two daughters from a first marriage that she left behind, a fact unbeknownst to anyone in Canada.

There is a great deal of sorrow and sadness in the film, but it does not center on compensation for confiscated property or other abuses. In short, it deals with historical issues in a deeply personalized and an emotionally evocative way. The filmmaker is able to elevate these feelings and memories to a universal level that surpasses the political-legal language and concerns of the previous films. By universal I mean that anyone could have the same feelings in a similar situation. The metaphor of a garden, the role of flowers, and the final reconciliation of an aged mother with her long lost daughter makes filial and maternal love the centerpiece of the story.

While *Minoru* and *Obāchan's Garden* were both made by *Sansei* (third-generation) Japanese Canadians, the personalization in Ohama's film goes far beyond Fukushima's, and results in a more impactful statement. Murakami's life is told in a fuller, more multi-dimensional manner than Minoru's life in the short film by Fukushima. In *Minoru* the audience is made aware of the injustices in Canadian history, but this awareness potentially allows for an affective distancing for the viewers through a sense of 'Otherness' imposed by the framing historical narrative. Past events normally communicate something that happened to a 'them' and not to 'us.' This is not the case in Ohama's film. Her film touches a raw nerve in the viewer and does not allow for any distance from the protagonist. The intimacy of the story creates an impact on the viewer that effectively erases differences between 'us' and the cinematic subject. This is evidenced by the film's winning numerous "audience favourite" awards at film festivals. The filmmaker shows an exceptional ability to blend dramatization, family members' first-person narratives, archival footage, and her own voice-over narration in a way that captures the fullness of a human life at an emotional level. Ohama's film raises the story of internment to a different level than the historical political-legal dimension by questioning the

idea of 'Otherness.' Two years later another film about the internment appeared. It moved away from the intensely personal narrative of Ohama's film, avoiding also the legal-historical focus of Fukushima's film.

7. *Sleeping Tigers: The Asahi Baseball Story* (2003) and the Symbolic Power of Sports

While not as generously awarded as *Obāchan's Garden*, *Sleeping Tigers* represents a novel way of representing the internment because it deals with a small-group identity rather than that of an individual or the larger collectivity. The Japanese Canadian Asahi baseball team of Vancouver was formed in 1914, became well-known, and won various baseball championships before being disbanded due to the the expulsion in 1942. Some sixty years after it was disbanded, the team was inducted into the Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame and a historic plaque was installed in Vancouver to commemorate its achievements. A Japanese-made feature film about the team set in the 1930s titled *The Vancouver Asahi* (*Bankūbā no Asahi*) premiered at the 2014 Vancouver International Film Festival, where it won the People's Choice award, mirroring the popular response to *Obāchan's Garden*.[7]

The curator of a 2006 exhibit about the team spoke of its role as an "example" and an "important symbol" for the Japanese Canadian community (Johnston n.p.) during its decades-long struggle for respect and equality. The Asahi baseball team was one of the community's pre-war public relations triumphs and a source of immense pride. This film explores the impact that achieving sports prominence can have on a racialized community. The director Jari Osborne, being of Chinese Canadian background, was only too well aware of the historic anti-Asian racism in British Columbia that had been also aimed at her forbearers. In 1999 she made a film titled *Unwanted Soldiers* about her Chinese Canadian father, a war veteran, which revealed the military contribution of Chinese Canadians that had been hidden from public view.

The interviewees talk about the team as "great heroes" who proved that Japanese Canadians were equals in sports. The film is presented as a "Davids versus Goliaths" story of how a minority won over a majority (Osborne). It deals with the impact of internment on the disbanded team and its members, who were all part of the "mass explusion" (a term used in the film by one of the former members). Eventually four baseball teams were formed in the camps, which included former team members. These teams participated in competitions, including the Slocan Valley championship on Canada Day, July 1, 1943 with thousands of internees and area residents in attendance. Clearly baseball was a morale booster in the camps, as well as having been a point of pride before the war.

The team came to symbolize achievement and a measure of acceptance for the Japanese Canadian community. The North American cultural discourse

around sports usually deals with either team pride or individual prowess. The film deals specifically with the former because of the team's role in representing a specific community. Osborne's strategies of dramatization, the use of archival footage, and first person on-camera accounts is compelling. The pain and tragedy of the disbanding is mitigated to a degree by the positive role of baseball in the camps – a sign of community resilience and the heritage of achievement the team represented.

Osborne is clearly sensitive to making the Japanese Canadians the prime movers of the film. She handles the story well, but the film, as such, does not have the deep emotional impact of *Obāchan's Garden*, because it is about a social entity and its role as a symbol of community pride rather than the suffering and resilience of a single person. While *Sleeping Tigers* has its painful moments, it is ultimately a story about pre-war heroic success. It is more of a sociological study and it does not offer a psychological insight comparable to *Obāchan's Garden*. The numerous references to various team members and their roles, as well as the historical chronology of the team's progress, altogether result in diffusing the story among too many participants and voices. The heroine of Ohama's film is a grand dame, weighed down by the world whose agency rejects victimhood, while the heroes of Osborne's film are victims of internment. It is very much a film 'about' the team made by a non-Japanese Canadian, which gives it an external quality and identifies it as a deflection from the subjective narration trajectory established by *Minoru* a decade earlier, and then enhanced by *Obāchan's Garden*.

8. *East of the Rockies* (2018) and the New Digital Media

East of the Rockies is an experimental augmented-reality (AR) narrative based on Joy Kogawa's famed *Obasan* novel from 1981. Its sequel titled *Itsuka*, in which the now-adult protagonist gets involved in the redress movement, came out in 1993. The technology of the AR animation, designed by the firm Jam3, allows viewers to see and explore various physical aspects of a re-creation of the Slocan Internment Camp, where Joy was interned as a child. When viewers tap and zoom, they activate a narrative spoken by Yuki, the fictional 17-year old internee, who is voiced by Kogawa's 21-year old granddaughter Anne Canute. *East of the Rockies is* a downloadable app that can be viewed on a cellphone or a tablet. The film mirrors *Minoru* from 25 years earlier in its use of animation and it mirrors *Obāchan's Garden* with its personal female voice. While being considered an animated film, it takes its structure from interactive video games.

This forty-five minute project began when Kogawa was approached to allow her original story to be used to create a new animated version as a way of bringing the darker sides of Canadian history to light in time for the country's 150th anniversary in 2017. An original script was developed and then re-done by

Kogawa. An article in a Canada Media Fund online publication explained: "For the project to gain popularity […] it was essential that the *game* be available in the App Store" (Archambault 2019; emphasis mine). Devised for digital platforms, the project evaluated its success via the number of downloads the AR film got. In the first three weeks, there were almost 100,000 downloads (Archambault). This level of viewership far surpasses numbers typical of conventional distribution channels for short cinematic media. In its media release the NFB quotes Jam3's creative director claiming that, "using immersive storytelling [...] can educate a brand-new audience with a learn-through-gameplay experience leveraging the power of AR on iPhone and iPad" (NFB 2019). The NFB described itself as "one of the world's leading digital content hubs, creating groundbreaking interactive documentaries and animation, mobile content, installations and participatory experiences. NFB interactive productions and digital platforms have won 100 awards, including 18 Webbys" (NFB 2019). The App testifies to the NFB's long history of adopting technological innovations to further its visual storytelling.

East of the Rockies effectively renders the Japanese Canadian experience of Second World War internment as integral to the understanding of Canada's history of racism. A review of the video project in the *Japan Times* adds that the tone of reconciliation that Kogawa brings to the film reflects a "love of Canada by both first and second generation Japanese Canadians" (Bird 2019). What this study shows is that first-person narratives, whether as voice-over or directly articulated to the camera, tend to create a closer identification response in an audience than films that tend toward the legal-historical aspect. Ohama's *Obāchan's Garden* and Kogawa's *East of the Rockies* are prime examples of this form of storytelling. It is a matter of audience engagement, empathy, and identification. An AR experience is a contemporary mode of achieving that level of psychological participation. *East of the Rockies* connects to a highly-regarded voice, builds on past narratives like her novels, and offers a discourse that empowers the subjective stance and its personal dimension. That Japanese Canadian women have captured that dimension suggests that their form of storytelling is powerful enough to move beyond a legal-historical discourse about injustice to a statement that embraces reconciliation on a very human level. In fact, it can be argued that their contribution to the cinema of the internment not only gives the story greater longevity though personal relevance for viewers, but actually contributes to the reconciliatory/forgiveness aspects of its message. It offers a kind of closure by giving them the last word.

9. Conclusion

The removal, internment, deportation, and dispersal of Japanese Canadians during and after World War Two changed the community and started a whole new phase of assimilation in the sociology of Japanese Canadian life. That phase ended with

the watershed redress agreement of 1988. The films analysed in this study represent three phases: the early or pre-redress phase reflected in the two films produced in 1945 and 1975; the middle or redress phase with the three films made between 1992 and 2003; and the late or post-redress phase with the AR film of 2018. Altogether, these six films provide a valuable insight into the public discourse about a contested topic. Though these film productions cannot be considered a totally accurate gauge of public awareness of the issue, one may consider this legacy of evolving narratives as a reflection of public attitudes toward the internment. The evolution of the narrative from early propaganda to acknowledgement of injustice, and then to a focus on political-legal dimensions of the event and its flagrant violation of human rights, to personal narratives of psychological distress and family suffering, serves as a reminder of how the past is officially constructed, remembered in counter-narratives, and re-invented for future generations.

Regarding the four concepts used in the analysis of this cinematic history – the colonizing racist gaze, utterance, trace/memory, and the discourses of power – each film strongly reflects at least one of these terms. *Of Japanese Descent* can be viewed as propaganda serving to underscore the primacy of the white Anglo-European in defining Canadian identity. Its discourse testifies to the power of the state and the dominant society's ability to render minorities like the Japanese Canadians unwelcome 'Others.' *Enemy Alien* revises this grand narrative by exposing the crimes and injustice involved in the internment. It is the first cinematic revisionist history in which Canada was depicted as a perpertrator nation. However, what reversed the story completely were the first personal narratives by Japanese Canadians – *Minoru*, *Obāchan's Garden,* and *East of the Rockies* – all of which empowered the voices and the viewpoints of Japanese Canadians of the *Nisei* (second) and *Sansei* (third) generations. Their memories and their willingness to speak about what had happened to them or their parents provide a human face to the historical event of the internment and its legacy of trauma. The theme of reconciliation and forgiveness that emerges in the post-redress period films is an important addition to this history.

However, silences are as signficant as the trace memories offered in these personal films. Because internment affected thousands of people of all ages, one needs to reflect on how traumatic events are represented in film. None of the films that the NFB produced convey the intense emotional trauma that sudden dispossession, deportation, internment, forced labor on beet farms, and eventual dispersal across Canada and to Japan had on the internees. There are numerous reasons why this is the case. One is the reluctance of the victims to publicly (and perhaps privately) relate what happened to them. Another is the pain of the psychological impact they experienced (as compared to the political and economic impacts). Trauma theory recognizes that all kinds of trauma (war, physical and sexual abuse, violence to the person or loved ones, incarceration, racism, and denial of basic rights) involve denial, repressed memories, and the avoidance of articulating to others the impact of the trauma.

While telling the story may be liberating for some, the majority of victims prefer to remain silent. Shame is one factor in encouraging forgetting or ignoring the past. It may be that the victim (in this case an internee) may wish to spare the descendants the burden of their own trauma. The impulse to remain silent is widely recognized as a defense mechanism against the hurt one has experienced. I believe this response to trauma has had an impact on the cinema of this internment. It has turned it into a deliberately constrained documentation of the full range of impacts on the internees. While advocates and activists feel obliged to raise issue, the majority of victims prefer anonymity. This means the film record needs augmentation. The legal-historical discourse tends toward a collective statement about suffering and restitution, while the personal discourse tends to be more of a glimpse than a full airing. So much has been unsaid to date. The potential in this subject will keep it alive because much as been omitted.

The long historical period over which these films were produced suggests strongly that cinematic treatments about the internment will not cease. While every film in this study is intertwined with the socio-political and ideological discourse of its day, the severity of the consequences of internment will continue to attract attention. While the more recent interpretation of the internment experience reflects the opening up of Canada toward a more multi-cultural and multi-racial identity, especially post-1980, the real change has been driven by the Japanese Canadian community which was most affected and now owns the narrative and propagates it for all Canadians.

Since the NFB is a state-supported entity, it tends to reflect official discourse about Canada's history of systemic racism. What the NFB has contributed is the enshrining of the internment as a seminal event in this country's legacy of systemic racism. The NFB is part of the "institutionalized cultural process in the public sphere" (Thompson 597), and so has served as a vital link in the presentation of revisionist narratives. By changing the dominant narrative, the NFB has displayed malleability and attunement to the direction of the wider public discourse. If nothing else these films warn of what could happen if Canada goes to war with a country or countries from which minorities in Canada may have originated. There is no guarantee of a non-repetition of history.

Notes

1. The government of Canada deported 4,000 Japanese Canadian internees to Japan in 1946.
2. A 1986 study evaluated the economic cost to the internees of $443 million in 1986 dollars. https://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/immigration/history-ethnic-cultural/Pages/Japanese-redress-campaign.aspx.
3. Druick, Zoë, *Projecting Canada: Government Policy and Documentary Film at the National Film Board*, Montreal: McGill–Queen's University Press,

2007; Gary Evans, *In the National Interest: A Chronicle of the National Film Board of Canada from 1949 to 1989*, University of Toronto Press, 1991.

4. Suzuki, David, *David Suzuki: An Autobiography*. Vancouver: Greystone, 2006; Roy Miki. *Redress: Inside the Japanese Canadian Call for Justice*, Vancouver: Raincoast, 2004.
5. One scholar of CanLit described the conference as exposing, "how racial politics is embedded in the state apparatus and in Canadian writing – its funding and production, its teaching and study; because it compelled many of us to recognize that we can no longer afford to 'profess' by practising sedative politics, that is, continue with what we do as scholars and teachers by upholding the various mythologies of Canadian 'civility,'" Kamboureli, Smaro, "Writing Thru Race – Vancouver, 1994." *ESC: English Studies in Canada* 41.4 (2015), 17, *Project MUSE*. https://muse.jhu.edu/article/619150.
6. See Timmons, D.J. "Citizenship, Human Rights, and Social Justice: Addressing Core Concepts Through an Examination of Japanese Canadian Internment and Deportation During World War II," *One World in Dialogue* 4.1 (2016): 28–39. https://ssc.teachers.ab.ca/publications/Pages/OneWorldInDialogue.aspx.
7 For a discussion of literary trauma theory see Michelle Balaev's "Trends in Literary Trauma Theory" in *Mosaic: An Interdisciplinary Critical Journal* 41.2 (June 2008): 149–166. https://www.jstor.org/stable/44029500. In regard to the concept of "racial trauma" see Comas-Díaz, L., G.N. Hall, and H.A. Neville, "Racial Trauma: Theory, Research, and Healing: Introduction to the Special Issue," *American Psychologist* 74.1 (2019): 1–5. http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/amp0000442
For a discussion of inter-generational trauma transmission I found the following article, while dealing specifically with Indigenous populations of Canada, relevant to the transmission of internment trauma, "Historicizing historical trauma theory: Troubling the trans-generational transmission paradigm" by Krista Maxwell in *Transcultural Psychiatry* 51.3 (2014): 407–435.

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Cinema of Alejandro Jodorowsky: From Surrealism to Psycho-magic is forthcoming from Bloomsbury in 2022. Professor Melnyk, who is the former director of the Consortium for Peace Studies at the University of Calgary, has also published articles in the field of Peace Studies, and he has co-edited two volumes on Alberta Literature with his colleague Donna Coates. This article on the cinema of Japanese Canadian internment is inspired by all the three areas of his scholarly research.

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At Peace Finally? Gene Oishi's *Fox Drum Bebop* and the Last Memories of Japanese American Internment Camps

Abstract: Gene Oishi's autobiographical and episodic novel *Fox Drum Bebop* (2014) will likely be one of the final novels published by someone who was an internee in the detention camps in which the US government imprisoned Japanese Americans during the Second World War. As such, it presents complicated questions about temporality, representation, and the processes of trauma. Through focusing on the protagonist Hiroshi Kono (largely, though not restrictively, based on Oishi's own life experience) and his siblings who have distinct ideological reactions to their ethnic identity and their wartime experience, Oishi explores how internment at once lasted for a determinate period but continues to extend in space and dilate in time for as long as the memories of it endure. The novel uses the musical aesthetics of jazz as a correlate for this discontinuous processing of experience. Oishi's narrative asks if those who suffer oppression and trauma can ever find peace, and how, if at all, having a long life and reflecting upon the past can alter one's sense of what happened.

Keywords: Gene Oishi, trauma, Japanese American internment, *Nisei*, aesthetics of jazz, temporality

1. Introduction: Gene Oishi and the Literature of Japanese American Internment

Today, the possibilities for the literature of the direct witness to Japanese American internment in the US during the Second World War are very close to vanishing. Gene Oishi, who was in the camps as a boy, published *Fox Drum Bebop* in 2014 at the age of eighty-one. This is a fictionalized memoir that also experiments with multiple narrations. Though Oishi's alter-ego, Hiroshi Kono, tells most of the

story, the initial chapters are narrated by his parents and other older people who have had a mature-age experience of internment. While this narration foregrounds a subjective view of history, it also indicates the particular pathos of the youngest internee who will be the last to tell the tale. This figure is close to being too young to understand the injustice at the time; at the same time, the other characters may be too old for a definitive framing of the trauma within the whole sweep of 20th-century American culture. Oishi uses the aesthetics of jazz music to evoke the discontinuous nature of processing this experience. I intend to link the particular narrative dilemmas in Oishi's text with the US internment of Japanese Americans in the 1940s. This article will also explore how internment is reflected in what Oishi knows will be the final testimony about it. My focus will be on the book in time, in form, in space, and in the condition of its rhetorical expression within trauma.

Gene Oishi was born in 1933 and had a long and successful career as a reporter for *The Baltimore Sun* as well as for many other large, general-circulation American magazines and newspapers. Like the hero of *Fox Drum Bebop*, Hiroshi Kono, Oishi was interned when young in the Japanese American internment camps established in the western United States by President Franklin D. Roosevelt's Executive Order 9066 in 1942. Oishi survived the experience of these camps, the largest-scale attempt by US authorities to intern elements of the country's own population in the 20th century, and went on to a successful journalistic career. But he always aspired to be a creative writer as well, and in the 1980s he took graduate writing classes and composed a fictionalized memoir, *In Search of Hiroshi*. *Fox Drum Bebop*, his first full-fledged work of fiction, is episodic and impressionistic in nature, almost a short-story sequence, albeit with every episode told in chronological sequence. The tale of the protagonist, Hiroshi, offers the reader a journey from his childhood to the internment, to adult relationships within and outside his family of origin, and, finally, including a reflection on his life experience from the vantage-point of an older man. The novel is narrated from a third-person point of view which, despite being centered on Hiroshi's own response to events, also includes his siblings' and parents' experiences.

Oishi's book appeared very late in a testimonial literature that began in the 1950s and 1960s. Like Elie Wiese's *Night* (1960) or Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* (1962) which made, respectively, the Holocaust and the Soviet Gulag visible in the literary sphere, the US government's internment of Japanese Americans during the Second World War soon found expression in literary works. An early example is John Okada's 1960 *No No Boy*. Okada's is a foundational book which is, however, rendered very differently from Oishi's near-to-memoir approach by Okada having the protagonist, Ichiro Yamada, try to evade fighting in World War II. This is the diametrical opposite position from Okada, who served with the US Air Force on the Pacific front. Okada, who was already an adult when he was in the Minidoka camp in Idaho, was a decade older than Oishi, even though both were *Nisei* (second-generation Japanese Americans). An even

earlier book, Monica Sone's *Nisei Daughter* (1953), was likely the first memoir of internment experience, although Sone emphasized more the Americanization process than the trauma of internment.

The typical experience of what Greg Robinson has called the "mass confinement" (5) of Japanese Americans was for parents to be *Issei* (Japanese immigrants) and the children to be *Nisei*. Yet those generational definitions have to do with temporal distance from a birth in Japan and not with the year in which a child was born. Thus, there were undoubtedly some families in the camps whose the parents were *Nisei* and the children, as in the case of the poet Janice Mirikitani, were *Sansei* (of the third generation in America). Different lives go through the same experience, processing it differently through generation and lifespan. The poetry of Mirikitani, who was interned as a baby at the camp in Rohwer, Arkansas, and of Lawson Fusao Inada, who as a child was in internment camps in California, Colorado, and Arkansas, testified to the event in subversive lyrical terms. The 1973 account by Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston (co-written with James D. Houston) *Farewell to Manzanar* has been widely taught in secondary schools. While Houston is similar in age to Oishi and both were in the camps when they were preteen children, Inada and Mirikitani were younger in the camps. These age differences affect the way the writer responds, and so does, necessarily, the time of publication. When Okada wrote, knowledge of the camps among the general American public was not widespread. The works of Mirikitani, Inada, and Houston emerged into a climate where there was widespread acknowledgment of the crimes committed by the US government against Japanese Americans. They helped foster the US government's formal apology in 1987 and the ensuing financial reparations than began in the late 1980s.

Many other books relating to the wartime internment have been written by children of internees, spouses or in-laws, or non-internees who find the subject compelling, in a moral and ethical sense, for literary fiction. Though the writing by actual internees should not be elevated in a strictly literary sense over other accounts, there is a quality of lived experience that makes it impossible to reproduce elsewhere. There are, in addition, archives of testimonial memoirs and information about the internment experience, such as the online *Densho Encyclopedia*. Yet the writers who use literary forms, genres and modes of address are combining a testimonial responsibility with a sense of craft, shape, and formal address. This sense of the literary is something that has particularly concerned Oishi. He has gone over his experience twice, first in a quasi-fictional memoir and then in an autobiographical novel. Just as genre inflected Oishi's experience, so did time and growing old. In Oishi's case, temporality is both extended and made poignant by his publication of this novel very late in his long life.

When a writer bears personal witness to an atrocity, there is an inevitable temporariness. The event will, and should always be, open to historical inquiry and imagination. But there is no replacing the writing of people who were actually

in that historical situation. Gene Oishi's book may be the last such record of the wartime internment experience. His work is not just merely of documentary or archival interest; he offers the perspective of someone who has lived through a majority of the 20th century and into the 21st. He can thus evaluate how the internment experience shaped him over the arc of his entire life. He can also register the gamut of the 20th and early 21st-century historical experience. Oishi's narrative not only traces the changes in the Japanese American community through wartime internment and postwar assimilation, but also analyzes changes in lifestyle, gender roles, sexuality, and personal identity that are meaningful with respect to broad swaths of contemporary global society.

This temporal span has the effect of releasing internment experience from any conceptual enclosure. *Fox Drum Bebop* possesses an elasticity of implication, including experiences from the 1950s through to the 1980s. It also allows the reader to observe family dynamics, and how subsequent generations react, without limiting this experience to a reception-history or an account of intergenerational trauma. This is because the witnessing generation, in the person of Hiro, is our narrative lens throughout the entire novel.

2. Hiroshi in Time

Oishi's account starts movingly with the meeting of a young Japanese-American boy and a white boy named Tex. He and his mother have come to California from West Texas, but they are called "Okies" because the locals see them as part of the Dust Bowl migrants who were devalued as poor and undesirable, and made memorable in John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath*. Hiroshi Kono, the young Japanese American boy who is Oishi's surrogate in the book, befriends Tex, only to see Tex and his mother evicted by police who claim they are squatting on railroad property. Tex's mother supports her son's friendship with Hiroshi. In fact, here this minor character serves as a surrogate for the author, hinting to the reader how we should evaluate the main character. Tex's mother calls Hiroshi a "good boy," echoing language used by Hiroshi's own mother, Otsui Kono, pages before. That Tex had defended Hiroshi against other white boys, and that he felt accepted by Hiroshi after the other white boys had rejected him because of his family's poverty, makes it all the more upsetting that it is Tex's family that is called out by the police, as Hiroshi watched in pain, unable to do anything about it. As a sort of mirror image, this sets up the way that, now Hiroshi's family is interned, no merely personal action can change anything.

The idea of the systemic, which lies behind the logistical possibility of internment, structurally parallels the racism and xenophobia that led to the internment of well over a hundred thousand Japanese Americans who posed no threat to the United States government. This systemic aspect of oppression comes

up later in Oishi's novel. After the war, Hiroshi returns to school. Here, he is befriended by a Latino boy, Ramón, who at first hurls racial insults at him but later befriends him. Hiroshi realizes that Ramón is misunderstood and branded as a criminal by the school system. But Ramón soon departs without a trace, leaving Hiroshi to remember him as an index of the possibility of recognition of the excluded. This is the same recognition he feels he himself has been denied. Thus the problem is systemic, which means that the solution, or the treatment, should also be such. The novel embeds its narrative arc in lived situations. But, metaphorically, it moves to the conceptualization of the systemic.

Hiroshi has three brothers, Yukio, Isamu (Sammy), and Mikio (Mickey), all of whom embody different ideological responses to the family's traumatic wartime experience. The Kono family faces prejudice even before the war. Yet some whites such as Hiroshi's elementary school teacher Mrs. Abernethy, stand up for the rights of Japanese Americans. After Pearl Harbor the family is interned, including Hiro's father, Seiji, his mother, Otsui, his sister, Sachiko (Sachi), and his brothers Yukio, Sammy and Mickey. As Jenny Xie puts it, "the family forms a microcosm of complex Japanese-American loyalties during World War II" (384). They are already facing the obstacle of not being white in a nation where definitions of what 'white' is are at once capacious and firmly fixed. Aside from creative writing, Oishi is most famous for being a reporter for the major daily newspaper published in the state of Maryland, *The Baltimore Sun*. In this capacity, Oishi was the object of an ethnic slur by the future Vice-President Spiro Agnew. Although Agnew was himself, as a Greek American, a member of an ethnic minority, he was white and thus, notwithstanding his Southern European, Mediterranean ancestry, a member of the mainstream. From the beginning, the Kono family knows that they are not of the mainstream. That the experience of internment is added on to this inherent exclusion leaves them further wounded, and each member of the family has his or her own strategy for dealing with these wounds.

Yukio sees himself as the most "Japanese" of the brothers and the closest in psychology to his father. Unlike his brothers Mickey or Sammy, Yukio never adopts an American nickname. He falls into the category of "Kibei" (Oishi 2014, 52), whom Robinson describes as "*Nisei* who were sent back to be educated in Japan" (304). Yukio has gone to school in Japan and feels a sense of cultural if not political loyalty to Japan that makes him suspect to the authorities. This becomes ironic when Yukio goes to Japan, as there he is treated like a foreigner and deemed too American. Hiroshi's brother, Sammy, is disabled and uses a wheelchair. When Sammy meets the elderly radical activist Mr. Nakashima, he is attracted not only to Nakashima's iconoclastic views but also to his sense of personal freedom. When Nakashima vanishes into the desert, Sammy takes his wheelchair into that rogue space and dies there. It is found, near his decomposed body, weeks later. His brother Mickey had been traumatized when, after finding success as a high school football star, his father had pulled him from the team because he felt football

was too dangerous and that Mickey's participation dishonored the family. Mickey joins the pro-American Loyalty League and tries to demonstrate that, despite the US Government's unjust treatment, he is a patriotic American. In a small grace note, Mickey, appalled by the food in the internment camp, becomes a cook and later in life operates a successful restaurant. Hiroshi, on the other hand, just tries to get through the internment experience in one psychological piece. After the war, Hiroshi stays in touch with his family, but also goes his own way, working in Baltimore as a newspaper reporter and marrying a French woman. The novel takes Hiroshi through to the age of fifty and the passing of his father.

Although Oishi's book was published by a small though prestigious firm, Kaya Press, it was not extensively reviewed by the mainstream media. Nor, despite winning the 2016 Award from the Association of Asian American Studies for best book of the year in prose, has it attracted so far special attention from scholars in the field. But Oishi is not an untrained or outsider writer. He studied with John Barth and Stephen Dixon – two highly self-conscious writers – at the Writing Seminar at Johns Hopkins University, one of the United States' most prestigious creative writing programs. Oishi, as previously noted, has treated this material before in memoir form in his book *In Search of Hiroshi* (1988). He brings not only extensive life experience but also extended literary reflection to bear upon *Fox Drum Bebop*. Oishi has genuinely thought about his material and, in cognitive and imaginative terms, has allowed it to simmer. He unfolds the narrative episodically and through images. This is done without losing any sense of force or urgency. That Oishi's account comes so late in the literature of testimony to the event enables his approach to wriggle out of certain stereotypical approaches. For instance, Oishi complains that, in the correct and justified effort to show *Nisei* as victims of American race prejudice and stereotyping, mainstream representations portrayed his generation of Japanese Americans as "comic book people" (278). The *Nisei* internees were put on such a "delicate perch" (278) that they fail to be interesting literary characters. He is able to make these critiques while expressing outrage at the internment experience and frustration at its belated acknowledgment by mainstream American culture.

Oishi did not intend his account to be so late. Besides the memoir, he wrote newspaper accounts of his experience as early as 1960. The long gestation period of *Fox Drum Bebop* was most likely frustrating to its author. But that he was still wrestling with the right shape for this material in the 2010s shows that he found not just the form of fiction congenial but that the long perspective honed and liberated his voice. By the 2010s, the genres of fictionalized memoir and autofiction were also flourishing. Oishi's narrative transpired differently within those genres than would have occurred earlier when the split between fiction and nonfiction was still rigidly defined. One could also describe the long perspective of old age as a kind of witnessing, as opposed to the fixed gaze of retrospection when one is still in the midstream of life. Oishi's narrative intertwines testimony

and detachment, historical accounting and perspectival reflection, in a manner not entirely attributable to age, but certainly informed by it.

Oishi is not primarily motivated by ethnic pride, personal ego, or, beyond the facts, any animus against the United States government. His perspective is an inclusive, optimistic (though not facile) one, open to reconciliation and recovery (though not to any sort of cheap absolution). This is not to say that he sloughs off his experiences in the camps or that he in any way wishes to exculpate those responsible for the atrocities. In an interview in 2015 with *Baltimore* magazine, Oishi did not shy away from using the term "concentration camps" (Lewis, n.p.). He argued that even "internment camps," generally the prevalent nomenclature, suggests that the people in the camps might have done something to deserve this form of incarceration. While not directly comparing the experience of the Japanese American camps to the Holocaust's extermination camps, Oishi is aware that his internment experience has a place in the genealogy of modern biopower theorized in such works as Hannah Arendt's *The Origins of Totalitarianism*.

3. Hiroshi in Form

Fox Drum Bebop does not announce itself as formally innovative, and its narrative techniques are not obtrusively self-conscious nor do they call attention to themselves in a manner that would divert the reader's attention from the book's content. But the novel's syncopation of various life experiences and episodes has an improvisatory feel to it, something that mirrors the significant role that jazz plays in the narrative. Moreover, the novel's intermittent unwillingness to reveal all in a cathartic sense is also analogous to what *Fox Drum Bebop* itself says about jazz. Hiro befriends a jazz trombonist named Munsey who, though loquacious to the point of being a raconteur, has capacity for "ellipsis" (150) in the midst of his "seductively outlandish tales" (150). Art can express, but it can also conceal, and sometimes what it conceals is more important. Munsey is actually mediocre at playing the trombone, but he gets by through his canny knowledge of what notes to leave out in order to sound better than he actually is. This makes the reader wonder if the internment experience is at its most present at this point in the narrative where the action seems overtly to bend away from it.

Jazz enlivens the narrative and lends it formal orientation. Though Lawson Inada has incorporated jazz influences in some of his 1990s poetry about the camps, Oishi is the first internee novelist to fully integrate jazz aesthetics in his work. Whereas his father's melody is that of the traditional Japanese fox drum, his son's is the African American inflected form of bebop. But Oishi romanticizes jazz (which he sees as potentially destructive and amoral) as little as he does his own ethnicity. There is a lack of romanticism about both. The fox drum itself is the product of violence towards animals. In the story, a baby fox witnesses his mother's skin being

made into a drum. The fox's baby is thereby transformed into the samurai drummer to be close to her spirit. While Oishi's narrative acknowledges Japanese traditions, it also understands their limited valence in modernity. Indeed, somewhat in the spirit of James Baldwin's short story "Sonny's Blues" (1957), Oishi acknowledges the danger, anarchy, and potential social anomie in jazz and "beatnik bohemianism" (279). He does not see Hiroshi's experience with these social and artistic forms as representing personal fulfillment. Hiroshi's seeking out of voids or anomic spaces might be a perverse reaction to the closed space of the internment camp.

A conventional immigrant experience might posit a trajectory towards greater assimilation into the dominant culture. Yet here not just *Issei*, but *Nisei* like Hiroshi, were interned. Both generations had their experience of American civil society interrupted by this denial of their rights. This reminded *Nisei* of their alterity just at the point when, conventionally, they would have been gravitating away from their parents' traditions. As Reed Ueda has pointed out, because of this, the model of Hansen's Law – by which the third generation seeks to rediscover what the first generation had left in literal terms and the second had left behind psychologically – works imperfectly with Japanese Americans (483–484).

The second generation, the *Nisei*, were hindered from becoming Americans, having been told by the US government that they were suspect as enemies of the society. Thus the third generation did not identify with Japan in the same way as Norwegian Americans or Italian Americans. In *Fox Drum Bebop*, Hiroshi's nephew, Seiji, who follows his father Yukio in being skeptical of the American Dream, is not curious about Japan itself. He is, though, inquisitive about the internment camps, which have come to occupy the place of 'homeland' in the conventional ethnic narrative. Similarly, Hiroshi's niece, Susan, wants to, in the words of her mother Sachi (who has renamed herself with the Anglo name Alice), "interview everyone about their camp experiences" (268). His brother-in-law Harry has a somewhat nostalgic memory of internment, treating it as if it were just a chance to experience the splendors and miseries of youth in a memorable setting.

Nonetheless, Hiroshi sees the camps as sites of trauma where virtuous, life-affirming people such as his father "lost everything" (269). Despite, and in a way because of, having "honest convictions" (269), Hiroshi is reluctant to talk about his experience on tape. Yet, paradoxically, he says he is thinking about writing a book on the subject – a version, necessarily, of the *Fox Drum Bebop* that we are reading. Why would he find it easier to write a book than talk? What does it mean for the reader that the very text we are reading is, according to this interchange among the family, a byproduct of the protagonist's silence, a silence that extends even to those whom he loves and those who can claim the legacy of the camps as part of their cognitive and affective inheritance? Why do we, as readers, receive what the family does not? What does it mean that, if the family does end up reading Hiroshi's book, they will be doing so, in theory, contemporaneous with an at least partially *hakujin* (white) readership?

The action here is in the early 1980s, in other words, a full generation before Oishi actually published the book, although perhaps near the time when he began to conceive it (and the time, 1987, in which he published his memoir *In Search of Hiroshi*). In temporal terms, there is a considerable difference between publishing a book in one's late forties or early fifties and publishing it in one's eighties. In the former instance, it could well be that the author is around to comment on or to direct or at least influence the reception of her or his book. In the latter, the author must concede that most of those who read the book will not be doing so within the author's lifetime. The book thus becomes a way of speaking *to* as much as *about* the dead. The novel is not sententious in proclaiming absolute truths about the historical experience it chronicles, but tries to embed every political or social point it is making in the instanced actuality of the characters. The narrative assumes the freedom of presenting its subject in scenes but tends to shy away away from either polemics or exuberance in speculating on the meaning of its subject. As Jenny Xie puts it, the book is constituted by "radically different points in Hiroshi's life with little allusion to the connective tissue between them" (184). This might, as Xie seems to suggest, run the risk of fragmenting the narrative too much, but it certainly defrays any sense of an overly aggressive or histrionic central ego. That the narrative is told in the third person contributes to this unobtrusive craftsmanship. There is certainly a protagonist with a life-trajectory. But the story does not revolve around a declarative ego or even a limited set of experiences. Some chapters, such as Hiroshi's affair with the older woman, Samantha Chatham, who is his piano teacher, his visits to France and his courtship of his French wife Simone, and his time as a Baltimore crime reporter, have little to do with internment or even Japanese American identity as strictly defined.

Notably, in his earlier memoir, *In Search of Hiroshi*, which traces much the same material as *Fox Drum Bebop* but in a more referential and less literary way, Oishi not only refers to himself in the third person but also calls himself "Hiroshi." Oishi stated that it was easier for him to talk about himself in a work of fiction that was "bigger than [him]self" (277). Jeanne Sokolowski has, in analyzing earlier works of the internment experience, seen in them the potential for "a renovated relationship between the state and the (wronged) citizen," one in which "reconciliation and forgiveness might occur" (69). Oishi's canny narrative semi-disguise is a formal mechanism that operates in affectively meaningful ways. It attempts a more powerful coming to terms than could be achieved by mere reliance on the egotistical sublime.

4. Hiroshi in Space

The experience of internment in *Fox Drum Bebop* is spatial as well as temporal. As a result of Executive Order 9066, over twenty internment camps were set up.

These were mostly in the inland areas of the Pacific Coast states and in the desert and Rocky Mountain states. Yet two were as far east as Arkansas. The camps were the product of longstanding anti-Japanese racism, paranoia, and xenophobia. Yet a broad swath of American whites, including liberals like Roosevelt and Governor Earl Warren (who later presided over the Brown versus Board of Education decision that desegregated schools) were the political forces behind the internment. It was a local and immediate expression of anti-Japanese paranoia but, in another sense, it was the latest stage of long-time processes of colonization and white-supremacist power. As Inada's poem "Healing Gila" demonstrates, the camps were on land that belonged to indigenous Americans (110). This is brought home in one of Oishi's most powerful scenes, an encounter with a Native American chief and his people. An old man with "a high, sharp nose and withered brown skin" seemed to "enjoy talking to the Japanese children" (113). The child internees had known of American Indians from stereotypes disseminated to them by the white-run media, but now they sense that they share a kinship as fellow victims of racism and state power. Hiroshi realizes they are the "rightful inhabitants" (113) of lands that do not truly belong to the United States government or its internees. The relocation of the internees to seemingly empty spaces of desert and mountain evoked earlier acts of biopower and dispossession. Hiroshi says that he realizes that the land belonged to the native people, and that he did not belong there: a statement both of acknowledgement of precedence and an affirmation that his destiny is not to be where the US government has arbitrarily mandated him to be. This concentration of the Japanese diaspora into designated spaces extended even outside US territorial jurisdiction. As Mary Jo McConohay points out, the United States, by interning Japanese Americans, positioned them as totally and uncomplicatedly Japanese (40). The US Peruvian and other Latin American citizens of Japanese background were also moved to US-based internment camps, as if to deny that there could be any middle term between Japanese in the Americas and the general population.

By sending Japanese Americans to internment camps, the US government not only denigrated them but ontologized them as a certain kind of people. Indeed, the US government went so far as to say not just that its own citizens were 'Japanese,' but that citizens of several Latin American countries were, in fact, 'Japanese.' This foreshadowed the tactics of the 21st century when the US government interned prisoners captured in Afghanistan and Iraq in the extraterritorial site of Guantanamo Bay and in 'black sites' run by third countries. These operations of what Natsu Taylor Saito calls "plenary power" determined who was imprisoned and who was free (3). It also regulated the space in which they were imprisoned from legal definitions of nation and identity. As Ignacio López-Calvo makes clear, this identification was not just ethnic but topographic: the United States "did not pressure" (107) Brazil to intern its Japanese Brazilian citizens in a third country because Brazil has no pacific coastline and because the *Nikkei* population in Peru was simply too large. As Ronald Takaki points out, "the 159,000 Japanese Americans living

in Hawaii did not become victims of mass internment" (343) even though it was there that the actual Japanese military attack had occurred in 1941. The lack of Japanese Hawaiian internment was primarily because there were so many Japanese Americans in Hawaii that were essential for labor and the islands' economy. In other words, they were too close to a majority to be treated like a minority. But the Japanese Americans, even those *Nisei* and *Sansei* who had become "Americanized" (Takaki 344), were judged to be of "undiluted" (Takaki 344) racial background. Thus, paradoxically, they were considered as much more Japanese than they in fact were, and more of the Pacific than their accidental, rather than essential, habitation near that ocean indicated. The United States government was fetishizing its own space to correspond with its own racial fears. Just as their stereotype of the Japanese American was that they were dangerous because they were near the Pacific, so did the deportation policies keep them nearer, psychologically, to the Pacific.

This Pacific orientation is noticeable when Canadian policy is examined. Canada similarly interned Japanese Canadians. Greg Robinson uses the umbrella term "Japanese confinement" for both countries. However, some of the internment camps were as far east as Ontario. Both the US and Canada removed their citizens of Japanese extraction from the Pacific Coast and interned them against their will and in defiance of the democratic norms the nations claimed to protect. But Canada, though mostly interning them in the inland valleys of British Columbia, did undertake what Roy Miki calls a "scattering" policy (105), with Japanese Canadians moved as far east as Ontario and Québec. Yet the curious American essentialization of the Japanese Americans as "Japanese" led the US to keep them in areas closer, in American terms, to Japan. Thus when Hiroshi leaves California as an adult for Baltimore and, for a time, Paris, he is declaring his own independence from the confining identities externally imposed on him.

But another reason for the US keeping Japanese Americans west of the Mississippi was that doing otherwise would call attention to the fact that German American and Italian American communities, many of which saw as much support for the enemies of the United states as among Japanese Americans, were (unlike their equivalents in Latin America, Canada, Britain or Australia), for the most part not interned. Hiroshi, as an adult, makes his home in Baltimore, near the Atlantic, and marries a French woman. Hiroshi was not doing this to reject his family and heritage. He was demanding a more mobile idea of space than the definitions of internment permit. Hiroshi's residence and marriage thus parallel his brother Isamu's quest for freedom in the desert.

Japanese confinement was an act of governmentally ordained persecution. But it also imposed an identity more rigid than that of the community itself. That *Nisei* identity was thus different from typical second-generation American identity (including second-generation Chinese American) had an impact on Asian American identity. *Nisei* like Yuji Ichioka (see Kim) were crucial in defining the term "Asian American." The term "Asian American" speaks to the way people

of Asian descent had a common "interethnic" bond to use King-Kok Cheung's phrase (27). This interethnic bond arose because Americans of Chinese, Japanese, and Korean descent, whose countries of origin were often at odds could all be the object of racially-based paranoia. Yet the *Nisei* internment experience also speaks to a sense of internal difference among Asian Americans. The term was produced by a conjunction of similarity and difference that would not have been the same had Japanese Americans been marked out by internment.

Oishi makes clear the difference in attitude between generations. Seiji, the *Issei* father, still identifies with Japan during wartime, although it is an identification more cultural and political. On the other hand, *Nisei* children who have grown up in America have very different, but in all cases, marked relationships with the country. But even when Seiji tries, as an old man, to reconnect with Japan, he finds his old country only "a burden on his heart and mind" (225). Without necessarily being at home in America, he is no longer at home in Japan. The experience of internment, meant both to solidify and to condemn the family's Japanese identity, has in fact estranged them from Japan, without simply subjecting them to a naïve and unexamined process of Americanization.

Fox Drum Bebop shows that attachment and detachment can be culturally complicated. Hiroshi has a serious relationship with a Japanese American woman, Michiko. Like Hiroshi, Michiko is a talented young person open to the possibilities of American postwar life. But Hiroshi's attitude towards her becomes atavistic, recidivist. He begins to be, like his father, "domineering and imperious, brooking no contradictions" (196). Hiroshi's relationship with Michiko is burdened by what the political theorist Wendy Brown calls "wounded attachment" (390), an emotional bond that constricts his identity rather than expand it. Michiko finally realizes that she and Hiroshi cannot move forward because the identity of "Japanese American woman" will always stand in the way of Hiroshi's apprehension of her as a person. Hiroshi himself is not misogynistic nor patriarchal in mien. His subtle and empathetic mode of masculinity stands as much in contrast to norms of American masculinity as it does to the conduct of Hiroshi's own father. Either way, the contours of Hiroshi's attitude towards Michiko – whom he truly loves – remain within patriarchal models. This is precisely because Hiroshi projects Michiko as a kind of home – of the sort that internment had taken from him. He subjects her to an identity-constraint – much as the US government had insisted that the internees were, first, potential enemy agents, secondly, 'Japanese.'

Hiroshi ends up marrying a French woman, Simone. This reflects his need for a very wide cultural and topographic space, which in itself is a move made in rejoinder to the confines in which he had been immured in youth. But Hiroshi's marriage is not simply an escape from his own identity or experience. Indeed, as his relationship with Michiko shows, marrying a woman of a different background is probably the only way he can escape from relations of domination. What might seem like a continuation of his father's male chauvinist attitudes is on another level

a symptom of trauma or developmental arrest from his time in the camps. Simone brings with her Europe's own history of warfare and suffering. In addition, the juxtaposition of French and Japanese conjures the most direct interaction between those countries in modern times. This is the wartime Japanese occupation of French Indochina – and thus the Vietnam War that is defiling Hiroshi's generation. One might in fact see the chapters dealing with the 1960s as the hinge portions of the book, and those years as the time when the historical shocks of the Second World War fully reveal themselves in cultural terms. Hiroshi is not an activist. He chooses the career of newspaper reporter because he is seeking objectivity and to register rather than prescribe experience. Hiroshi gravitates to crime reportage because it is there that the questions raised by psychology – in particular the racism shown towards African Americans by the Baltimore police department – are most evident. Yet, as mentioned previously with respect to Yuji Ichioka, this generation of *Nisei* men were crucial (Kim n.p.) in raising Asian American political consciousness.

The bebop element in the title *Fox Drum Bebop* thus exists not just to contrast Western music to traditional Japanese music, but also to reference the postwar proliferation of avant-garde styles and the way they reflected the racial pluralism of America. As Juliana Chang says of the role of jazz aesthetics in Lawson Fusao Inada's work, "in Oishi's fiction Asian American experience is mediated through an African American musical form" (135). The African American experience underlies bebop as a musical form. Hiroshi finds bebop both fascinating and rebarbative. He values the music precisely because he does not totally understand or sympathize with it. To acknowledge and come to terms with his own pain requires exploring the pain of others. His spatial odysseys – from San Francisco to Baltimore to Paris – express his quest for freedom and mobility. As Chang also indicates with respect to Inada, jazz also embodies a "disjunctive racial temporality" (134) that gains another level in Oishi's work by the delayed temporality of his own narrative response to the experience of internment. Chang mentions trauma as a possible description of how this disjunctive temporality registers in relation to past events. Thus bebop can be seen as both a riffing on, an avoidance of, and a commentary upon the internment experience. Expressive even if verbally non-articulate, demonstrating even as it conceals, bebop figures the ultimate delusion of Oishi's work: how it at once testifies to injustice, but that its protagonist, fundamentally, does not want to talk about it. Hiroshi's reticence will be the focus of this essay's final section.

5. Conclusion: Why Hiroshi Does Not Want to Talk About It

What Donna K. Nagata, Jacqueline H.J. Kim, and Laidi Wu call "race-based historical trauma" (96) is the condition for Oishi's orchestration of Hiroshi's utterance. Seiji Kono, the father of the family, never ceased to identify as Japanese, but at the end of his life actually being in Japan or having anything to do with

contemporary Japan had become irrelevant. The Japan he had known has passed away, and he would be at home no more there than in America. This does not mean, however, that Seiji is rootless or uprooted. He is very rooted in his family and his own life experience. What might otherwise be a drive in the *Nisei* generation towards assimilation and a kind of rootlessness is transformed by internment into an involutory inorganic rootedness.

The first generation is often undertheorized in accounts of immigrant narratives, and that Oichi gives Seiji his own chapter and allows him to speak outside of his son's focalizing prism contributes to the narrative's complexity and integrity. Oishi himself was the youngest child of eight born to his parents, and his alter ego Hiroshi is portrayed as a younger child of an *Issei* father. Oishi's long life and the late writing of his book also extend the life of his *Issei* father. Yuji Ichioka, the activist who is often credited with coining the term Asian American, has seen the *Issei* generation of Japanese Americans as extending from the 1880s to the 1920s in their beginning in the US, which means that Seiji and his sons are late in the sequence of the *Issei Nisei* generational dialogue in a way that allows their familial experience to dilate creatively through time. The interview proposed by the sister, Susan, seems the ideal conclusion of the book, indeed a form of supreme cathartic closure. How better to tie the end to the beginning than to have Hiroshi unfold himself to the next generation, and, through Susan's recording, to even further generations, to history and to the archive?

Yet Hiroshi does not want to talk about it. Or, rather than talking about 'it' directly, he prefers to talk about it in the mode of autobiographical fiction that we are reading. Why does Hiroshi squander what would seem to be the best opportunity for transmitting the urgent message of his life experience? Why does he make recourse to an indirect form with an unknown and indefinite audience instead? Here the title's reference to musical forms becomes pertinent. Both the fox drum and bebop jazz are expressive without being obvious. In addition, giving this title to Hiroshi's story defines the character's role in his family. Yukio is the 'Japanese' one, Mickey is the assimilated one, Sammy is the radical (and the disabled, and the prematurely dead). Sachi is the one who maintains the continuity of the family the most and mediates between all her brothers. In turn, Hiroshi's identity is an aesthetic one. Notably, his first sexual relationship is with his piano teacher, Samantha Chatham, whose first name echoes that of Hiroshi's dead brother, Isamu (Sammy).

This episode is actually jarring and discordant. Not simply a stage in an assured process of maturation, it shows how Hiroshi's aesthetic persona is both self-conscious and disjunctive. In other words, Hiroshi is very aware of art's capacity to address his pain but does not rely upon art to conclusively heal that pain. His aesthetic and musical sensibility enables him to take the long view without 'forgetting' or totally 'forgiving.' Not talking about 'it' in so direct a way lets Hiroshi attend to the experience of others close to him, their trauma, their pain. Moreover, Hiroshi realizes that the *Nisei* "couldn't talk about the camps" because

it undercut their "self-image as Americans" and signified a "fear too deep to probe" (271).

By the early 1980s, Hiroshi and his brothers Sammy and Mickey are well into midlife. However, their thoughts still turn to the brother who did not make it nearly that far, who died in the desert. The novel's end speaks eloquently of the wish for healing and closure. The last words of the book unfold as Isamu's ashes are finally buried in the Arizona desert: "Isamu was at peace finally. He was where he wanted to be. He was home" (275). The ending is an affirmation of the freedom that Isamu had sought. Paradoxically the very desert in which he was interned gave Isamu, topographically and attitudinally, a sense of freedom. Nevertheless, it is the dead Isamu who is at peace, not the living Hiroshi. There is no determinate closure for Hiroshi unless it is in the writing of the book and the Afterword that Oishi writes in his own authorial voice. If Hiroshi had permitted himself to be interviewed by his niece Susan and to unburden himself to Seiji, he would have unfolded his experience within the narrated confines of the book and to those closest to him. This would have been a revelation of the heart. As it is, Oishi, using the persona of Hiroshi as an at least partial surrogate, unfolds Hiroshi to the reader through the necessarily incomplete mechanism of a novel.

Fox Drum Bebop pivots around the internment experience. It sounds it, dilates it, extends it, gains its resonance from it. Nonetheless, it does not really talk about it, not in a direct way. There is no summary conclusion or takeaway point. Indeed, such a takeaway point would be confining and would work against Hiroshi's entire trajectory, which is to evade the constraining effects of confinement imposed upon him during the war. There is also no imperative to reconcile matters within the family. The Konos, despite their respect for each other, remain divided at the end. When Hiroshi and Simone, who experienced the Nazi ruin of Europe, agree that her experience of the war is more direct, but his, more complicated, it speaks to a paradox emerging from the wounds of traumatic experience. This highly personal novel, fastidious in its sense of testimonial possibility, evades any generalizations that might arise from its subject. The demonization of the Japanese was propagandistic, reductive, dehumanizing. Then it ended, yet, leaving the internees not with a sense of closure but simply an insensate feeling of "shame" (272). After dehumanization, there was respite, but no room for a discernible sense of re-humanization. Thus Hiroshi, as his sister Sachi (who now renamed herself "Alice") says, is "never satisfied" (260). The straightforward refusal of *Fox Drum Bebop* to be silenced by the oppression of internment coexists with a haunting evasiveness. If Sammy, once his ashes are belatedly buried in the desert, is "at peace finally," for Hiroshi the matter is more complicated. Hiroshi can never be at peace finally – after the experience of internment, there cannot be finality, even as the thread of life shortens.

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Enemy Aliens: Internment and the Homefront War in Australia, 1914–1920

Abstract: During the First World War, the German Australian community, the largest non-Anglo-Celtic group, became the target of a relentless campaign of persecution, internment and deportation that resulted in its dismemberment and the destruction of its socio-cultural infrastructure. Under the country's belligerent Prime Minister, W.M. Hughes, the machinery of government was used to suspend basic civil rights and the rule of law, while Australian civilians were called upon to participate in the "homefront war" against an imagined internal enemy. The government's aim was to serve the cause of Imperial Britain and its commercial supremacy, and to secure the future of White Australia as the home of an imaginary, exclusive "British race."

Keywords: White Australia, race fear, law in war, German Australian community, Australian citizenship, internment, multiculturalism, ethnic cleansing

1. Introduction

If the literature about Australia's military involvement in World War I amounts to a mountain of printed pages, the work historians have devoted to the Australian homefront can only be described as a molehill. For decades, Ernest Scott's *Australia during the War* of 1936 was the only scholarly work with a focus on the wartime experience of Australians at home, and, tellingly, it is the only one of the twelve-volume *Official History*. In recent decades, the ratio has shifted somewhat in favour of a greater degree of socio-political and socio-cultural interest in the study of WWI, as opposed to a purely military concern, and the telling example here would be the four-volume *Centenary History of Australia and the Great War*, which devotes one of its four volumes to *The War at Home* (jointly written by John Connor, Peter Stanley and Peter Yule). This paradigm

shift began in the late 1970s and 1980s with the work of a younger generation of historians. Important works by Marilyn Lake, Michael McKernan and Raymond Evans laid the groundwork for a more balanced and critical appreciation of the homefront experience, and their findings are now usually referred to and further developed in more general accounts of Australia's role in WWI, for instance in Joan Beaumont's comprehensive *Broken Nation*.

My own *Enemy Aliens: Internment and the Homefront Experience in Australia, 1914–1920* has remained the only study so far (excepting Richard Morton's unpublished Ph.D. thesis) to provide a detailed account of the campaign against a perceived internal enemy. Specialized studies have contributed new details on individual internment camps (Monteath, Ludewig, Simons), but there is as yet no significant new material on the campaign against enemy aliens and what I have described as "the destruction of the German Australian community." *Enemy Aliens* was also the first comprehensive work on this topic that appeared internationally; it was followed a few years later by similar studies on the wartime treatment of minorities in the UK (Panayi) and the US (Nagler); these studies by and large confirmed my own findings. In the following article, I mainly rely on the argument first developed in *Enemy Aliens*, while also drawing on the work of other historians mentioned above.

While Australian homefront historians usually include references to the campaign against "the enemy at home," to practices such as legal discrimination, internment and deportation, they tend to cover these phenomena more or less as isolated events, as something that happened during and because of the special circumstances of the war and that has no connection to wider questions regarding the nature of the country and its historical development. I think the reason for this lies in what Tony Kushner has identified with regard to British historiography as "the marginalised nature of minority studies" (119). Similarly, another British historian, Colin Holmes, speaks of "the study of aliens, whether immigrants or refugees" as a "fringe activity" that is "far removed" from what might be called *mainstream history*, defined by Holmes as "the 'inside track' where 'real history' is studied and written." The problem, according to Holmes, is that the "history of internment […] cannot be considered in isolation," that "its study leads to a range of important interlocking questions" and "significant issues." As examples, he mentions "process[es] of social control" or "the history of the role and function of the state in the extreme circumstances of war" (165).

These observations are equally relevant with regard to Australian historiography. My aim in the present essay is precisely to present an account of the homefront war in World War I that is linked to important trajectories in Australian history generally, to the history of White Australia for example, or to the issue of civil rights and the rule of law in wartime. The history of the German Australian community is not only part of a separate *ethnic history*; it asks important questions about the history of Australian multiculturalism, both in its optimistic aspect with a proud

commitment to an independent republicanism, and in its dystopian aspect as shown in the disintegration and destruction of the cultural autonomy of an important ethnic group in the name of an imagined racial exclusivity.

2. 'Hell-bent' on Taking up Arms

In 1901, the Commonwealth of Australia, a federation of six former British colonies, constituted itself as a self-governing British dominion with limited sovereignty. It could neither declare war nor opt out if the British Empire declared war. It was, however, free to determine the nature of its involvement in the European crisis of 1914, and a prudent policy would have perhaps suggested a cautious approach of 'wait and see.' Instead, the Commonwealth Government 'jumped the gun,' as it were; desperately eager to get involved, it offered the British government an expeditionary force of 20,000 troops. All costs were to be borne by Australia, and the British military command was free to determine where and how the men were to be deployed. The telegram was sent to London at 6pm on 3 August, 40 hours before Great Britain declared war on Germany (Newton 2018, 17).[1]

Similarly, the Commonwealth government wasted no time importing the emergency legislation passed by the British Parliament to create the legal basis for its campaign against the "enemy in our midst." The *War Precautions Acts* of October 1914, amended several times throughout the war, and bills such as the *Trading with the Enemy Acts* or the *Unlawful Associations Act*, all based on the *Defense of the Realm Act* and associated other pieces of British wartime legislation, were rushed through the Australian Parliament with precious little debate. They gave the government "complete control over the press and the economy and enabled it to establish a centralized and militarist administration" (Crowley 1973, 224).

3. War and the Rule of Law

After William Morris Hughes became Prime Minister in October 1915, the war business of the government was conducted principally by three men: Hughes, also Attorney-General, Robert Garran, Solicitor-General, and George Pearce, Minister of Defence. Hughes boasted that "the best way to govern Australia was to have Sir Robert Garran at his elbow, with a fountain pen and a blank sheet of paper, and the War Precautions Act" (Parker). Garran's job was to formulate the *War Precautions Regulations* dictated by the Prime Minister into law, while Pearce's office had to administer the regulations made under the *Act.* Regulations became law when they were published in the daily *Commonwealth Gazette*. When the High Court upheld the government's power to fix the price of bread (*Farey v. Burvett*; Garran 1958, 173, 222), the autocratic triumvirate found that they were given "plenty of scope"

and took to ruling by regulation, by-passing Parliament altogether. As Garran wrote in his memoir:

> Under the *War Precautions Regulations* […] the powers of the Attorney-General were almost unlimited. To all intents and purposes Magna Carta was suspended and he [Hughes] and I had full and unquestionable power over the liberties of every subject. [Regulations] dealt largely with the enemy within the gates, and with persons of enemy origin – most of whom were good citizens, but a few of whom were bad and all of whom were under observation. […] The ordinary citizen was also controlled in many ways to secure maximum efforts in the general defence programme. (1958, 221, 222)[2]

The "regulations factory" (Garran 1958, 222; Bond 17) run by the Solicitor-General soon churned out a bewildering collection of rules, orders and prohibitions that could be applied to enemy aliens. By the end of the war, the *Manual of War Precautions* was printed in its seventh edition, a veritable bestseller of war-time publishing; it listed no less than eighty-one separate offences (Scott 144–147). Enemy aliens were not, for example, allowed to possess motor cars, telephones, cameras or homing pigeons. Internment was only one of the many restrictions imposed upon German Australians, albeit the most severe one.

The question to be asked is whether the wide-ranging measures taken to counter the perceived threat of an internal enemy, the suspension of the rule of law and the widespread erosion of civil liberties and human rights, were appropriate or necessary. Cicero's time-honoured dictum *enim silent leges inter arma* is often cited to legitimize the suspension of the rule of law in wartime. "The laws fall silent in times of war" is said to imply that the duty of national self-defence overrides constitutional guarantees to civil liberty, that the safety of the people becomes paramount. But was the security and integrity of Australia in any way threatened by the war? In other words: was there "an "imperative reason of security" (Geneva IV, Article 78) that would have legitimized the internment of Australian residents?[3] The Australian government of the day – and generations of historians afterwards – answered in the affirmative: the safety of Australians was said to be dependent on the protection by the British navy, and if Britain lost the war, Australia would come under German rule. As Newton put it, "Hughes shouted it out" during the conscription campaign of 1916: "When the British Empire goes down White Australia goes with it" (2018, 22).[4]

The strategic and geo-political realities present a different scenario. The war was fought 17,000 km away on the other side of the world. It was soon clear that the German navy was no match for the British, and the stranglehold blockade of the German ports was proving increasingly efficient. In the North Pacific, it was Japan, reliable ally of Great Britain since 1902, and its navy that ruled the waves, and in the South Pacific, the small contingent of security forces in German New

Guinea surrendered after a minor skirmish to the Australian Expeditionary Corps, while New Zealand similarly took control of German Samoa.

In any case: the notion that Australia, a continent twice the size of Europe, with a population of 5 million hostile inhabitants of Anglo-Celtic origin, could simply be taken over by Germany as a colony, was a fallacious fantasy that revealed more about the existential insecurity of its Australian authors than about actual power relations in Europe. Furthermore, the real threat to Australian security was perceived by an overwhelming majority of Australians as coming from the North: the enemy they feared was Japan. But Japan was an ally of Great Britain, an arrangement on which the Australian government was not consulted.

What about the risk of an attack by the 'enemy at home'? Despite all efforts by Australian authorities and civilian amateur detectives to uncover plans or acts of spying, sabotage or other hostile activities, no such discoveries were made. Ernest Scott, the author of *Australia during the War*, volume 11 of the *Official History*, frankly concedes "no ships, wharves, or buildings were blown up, burnt or destroyed within the Commonwealth during the war in circumstances indicating enemy activity." To the official historian, this "striking fact" only proved "that any enemy subjects in Australia who may have wished to further the war aims of the fatherland were too carefully shepherded to enable them to create serious harm […]. The efficiency of the Intelligence Section of the Defence Department, aided by the vigilance of the censorship, saved the country from such activities by the enemy within the gates" (143–144). Scott's language, of course, gives the story away as propaganda: the experience of being arrested and interned as an enemy alien was certainly nothing like being "carefully shepherded."

Later historians have come to a different conclusion. Legal scholar Catherine Bond, who analysed the emergency legislation enacted by the Commonwealth Government, judged that the "war-focused legislation […] arguably went beyond what was necessary for success in wartime," and the "law perpetuated a form of tyranny in the name of victory in war" (5–6, 6). Michael McKernan, in his *The Australian People and the Great War*, found "no evidence of any real German interest in undermining Australian society or penetrating her defense secrets," and "no evidence of German disloyalty or treachery […] during the war years" (157, 174). It was patently obvious that the number of German Australians and their widespread settlement over the south-eastern states offered very little, if any "potential for disruption," as McKernan concluded: "In no real sense could the German Australians be seen as a threat to Australia's national security" (151). McKernan's assessment of life in the internment camps also corrects the view presented by Scott: there was "overcrowding, oppressive boredom, primitive conditions," and, because of "the tensions and frustrations of confinement, brawls, riots even, were frequent and serious" (175).

4. From "Brothers in Adoption" to "Enemy Aliens"

The history of German immigration to Australia goes back to the very beginning of the penal colony at Port Jackson.[5] During the 19th century, there were flourishing German Australian communities in all the major cities as well as in rural areas of Victoria, New South Wales, and especially in South Australia and Queensland. Since the first group migrations in the 1830s, immigrants from Germany had always constituted the largest non-Anglo-Celtic ethnic group. In 1861, around the end of the Victorian gold rush, people of German origin comprised 4.32% of the total Australian population. The Chinese, as the second largest group, came to 3.28% by comparison, the Italians as the third largest made up only 0.21%, while the total migrant population of 48 other ethnic communities combined amounted to 3.25%. By 1981, the Chinese had dwindled to 1.65% while the population of Germans had remained steady. From 1890 onward, the number of German Australians continued to decline in relation to the total population. Nevertheless, they still constituted by far the largest non-British ethnic group prior to the war, and they formed a very visible, prosperous and generally sophisticated community (Fischer 1989a, 19).

The history of the German Australian community is a history of assimilation and "Anglicization" (Lodewyckx 243), although *Australianisation* is perhaps the better term. Overwhelmingly, the descendants of immigrants from Germany saw themselves as Australians. They were proud of their cultural heritage but equally conscious of their political status as citizens or permanent residents of the Commonwealth. There was no conflict of loyalty. The Lutheran pastors had instilled into their parishioners a strong sense of duty towards their secular authorities: not the Kaiser, but the Queen or King of England, respectively, was their head of state.

After news was received of the breakout of war between Germany and Great Britain on 4 August 1914, Pastor Theodore Nickel, head of the Lutheran congregation at Eudunda, South Australia, sent a telegram to the Governor-General, Sir Ronald Munro-Ferguson, to assure the Australian government and people of the allegiance of the German Australian community. Nickel was not only speaking on behalf of his own parishioners but for "all the members of our church." As the elected president of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Australia he was the spiritual leader of the largest group of German-speaking immigrants in the country. The cable read, in part:

> Although we deeply deplore that Great Britain has been involved in the European conflict and has been compelled to declare war against Germany, the land of our fathers, we are well aware of our duty as British subjects and shall always be willing to defend the honour of our beloved King and of our dear country with good and chattels, and body and life.

In reply, the Australian representative of the British Crown sent the following telegram:

> [D]eeply gratified and touched by your message of loyal devotion to King and country in the hour of trial which finds you standing in his Majesty's words: united, calm, resolute, trusting in God. Ferguson, Gov. Gen.

Both cables were published on 20 August 1914 in *Der Lutherische Kirchenbote für Australien,* the official organ of the synod, which was then in its forty-first year of publication, clearly a sign of the firm place the church held in Australian society (cf. Fischer 1989a, 14–15). The pledge of loyalty, acknowledged by the Governor-General, described the political self-understanding of an integrated community: the reference to the duties of British subjects, based on the constitutional guarantees of the Australian Commonwealth, recalled also the democratic rights of German Australians as citizens and naturalized residents.

The existence of a conflict was not denied; Australians of German descent regretted that there was a war with the land of their fathers. However, there was no room at all for doubt or misinterpretation concerning the possible suspicion of dual loyalty. The decision was unequivocal: German Australians would fight for the new country against the old. It was a decision that was legitimated both politically and in accordance with Lutheran theology: as Australians, they owed a civic duty to their government, and as Lutheran Christians they owed allegiance to their temporal, God-given authority (Fischer 1989a, 20–21).

Even though the exchange of telegrams confirmed there was no question about the loyalty of members of the German Australian community, the issue of their identity, nevertheless, constituted something of a conundrum. While the republican model of the United States allowed for a "double identity" (Walzer), as immigrant and American, the situation in Australia was more complicated: it demanded the negotiation of triple identities – German immigrant, subject of the British Crown in the Commonwealth of Australia, Australian citizen. A cultural identity, firstly, bound the German Australians to the language and culture of their homeland; it was a link most strongly felt by the more recent immigrants and one that tended to wane along with progressive assimilation. Secondly, their political loyalty was to be extended to the reigning monarch of Great Britain as the constitutional head of the Commonwealth of Australia. The countless declarations of allegiance made by spokesmen of the German Australian community to the King or Queen of England were certainly genuine; they were often coupled with expressions of gratitude by immigrants who realized that it was the political stability guaranteed by the Westminster constitutional system that had provided the conditions for their success in their new country. And thirdly, there was a national identity and loyalty felt towards Australia – the land, its people and its history of which the German immigrants had become part, as Australians (Fischer 1989b).

In theory, this conundrum of a triple identity as characteristic of the psycho-social and cultural-ideological make-up of members of the German Australian community could be easily resolved: Australia *only* had to become an independent republic, like the United States. The question of "German rights," i.e. civil rights for non-British immigrants, had been discussed in South Australia as early as the mid 1850s, in the context of the introduction of responsible government. There was considerable opposition to the proposal to give German residents passive as well as active voting rights to the first South Australian Parliament in Adelaide, but the Germans eventually won the day (Fischer 1989a, 26–27). Thirty years later, the *Australische Zeitung*, flagship of the 19th century German-language press in Australia, ran a series of editorials, published between December 1884 and February 1885, highlighting the advantages of U.S. citizenship compared to the Australian system:

> The acquisition of citizenship in the U.S. affords full equality and protection. This is not so in British colonies where the German immigrant gives up his German citizenship for a thing of little significance. Through naturalization in a colony, he only becomes a citizen of that colony […] but not a citizen of Great Britain, although he has sworn an oath of allegiance to the Queen of England. If a naturalized German leaves his own colony, he is completely homeless, a pariah, a member of no nation, whereas the British colonist remains a Briton. […] Should we Germans not strive to regain full civic rights in place of those which we have given up? We can only do so, if Australia declares itself independent, because in that case we shall become politically that which in our hearts we have been for a long time: Australians. (Borrie 204, 205)[6]

U.S. citizenship as a model for Australia was by no means a new idea. It had been formulated as early as 1787 by Georg Forster in his essay "New Holland and the British Penal Colony at Botany Bay" (225–248).[7] Forster, a celebrated European author who had accompanied Cook on his second journey as a 16-year-old, had already directed the attention of his readers to the attractions of – what was then – New Holland in his international best-seller, *Journey around the World*.

In his essay on the Botany Bay project, Forster suggested that out of difficult origins – a penal colony to be settled by convicts under military rule – a new society would arise, free from the shackles of the feudal traditions of Europe, in which the convicts would be rehabilitated through their practical work in opening up the country, building cities and industries, and by becoming "future lawmakers" in a new state on the basis of democratic self-determination. The United States, which in less than 150 years had grown from similarly modest beginnings to a secure and powerful republic, was the model to follow (cf. Fischer 2010).

Forster's was an optimistic vision born out of the belief in progress and the perfectibility of human society that was an integral part of the heritage of the European enlightenment. The "48ers," a small group of highly educated,

liberal-democratic intellectuals and professionals, who had emigrated to Australia from Germany in the wake of the failed revolution of 1848, had enthusiastically taken up Forster's vision. As journalists and publishers of German-language journals and newspapers, they played an important role in formulating the public opinion of the German Australian community. The "48ers" saw Australia as a nation *in statu nascendi*; they had become early nationalists and proponents of an independent Australian state organized as a liberal-democratic republic (Fischer 1989b, 85–100).[8]

German Australians were generally regarded by their Anglo-Celtic neighbours as model immigrants whose contributions to the development of the Commonwealth, in politics and education, business and agriculture, industry and the arts, were widely recognized and appreciated. Thus, it is not surprising that the first public reactions after the outbreak of the war were characterized by expressions of goodwill, friendship and a recognition of a history of trouble-free relations. The Adelaide *Advertiser* reminded its readers of Australia's "long experience of the estimable qualities of her German citizens," asking that "every instinct of chivalry and good feeling [...] be invoked to secure the tenderest consideration for the lacerated feelings of these respected fellow citizens." Other papers described the German Australians as "our fellow-colonists" or "our brothers in adoption" (McKernan 152). The farmers' journal *The Land* concluded its editorial on "The Great War" by asking its readers to "remember those who are amongst us whose nationality is not ours: Deal fairly and honourably by them, ever remembering that in the time of war, as in the time of peace, they are our neighbours" (*The Land*, 7 August 1914).

However, the idealistic rhetoric of the early war editorials concealed that there were very real, if latent tensions and differences at least since the defeat of France in the Franco-Prussian War and the rise of the German Empire after 1871. Very quickly, the war produced a political atmosphere that brought these issues out into the open and into sharp public focus. A wave of xenophobia swept through the country, and the noble and lofty sentiments of the editorial writers were soon forgotten. Towards the end of 1914, the first "jingoistic concoctions of the British Northcliffe press" (Evans 1988, 6), stories of German atrocities, propaganda pamphlets, posters and caricatures had arrived from London, eagerly snapped up and converted into a local product. Images in Australian newspapers of the German soldier as the "Hun," racialized to resemble the stereotypical caricatures of blood-thirsty "Asian invaders," began to take hold in the consciousness of readers who were now being bombarded with accounts of brutality and "German infamy" in Belgium and France.[9] After reports of the Anzacs dying and being wounded at Gallipoli were received at home, many Australians became "heavily committed to the war emotionally" and felt a need for a greater, psychological involvement (McKernan 177).

5. Fighting the War at Home

The homefront experience in Australia can only be properly understood if one considers the peculiar situation of a combatant country sending troops to the theatres of war some 12,000 nautical miles away, a month's journey by ship, over a period of four and a half years, suffering ever increasing casualties – while life at home, after the initial shock and some adjustment due to new economic and socio-political circumstances, tended to go on pretty much as usual. The dichotomy between "proximity and distance" (Jeffery; qtd. in Connor 114–115) was an important factor that contributed to shaping individuals' emotional attitude to the war, notably with regard to the divisive issue of conscription.[10]

The concept of a homefront, usually invoked metaphorically to describe the special efforts of civilians at home to support the soldiers involved in combat, needs to be taken literally here. The war was also a "civilians' war" (Stanley 151). While Australian soldiers were bogged down in the trenches in Turkey and France, Australian civilians began to fight the war at home. The *Daily Post* in Tasmania invited its readers to participate in "the delightful task of hunting up unnaturalized Germans and Austrians" (Lake 19). Spurred on by the federal government that issued "circulars to all local police stations warning of the suspected spying activities of resident Germans" (Lake 20), patriotic Australians penned "a myriad of letters […] dobbing in" a German neighbour down the road as supposedly disloyal and a potential threat (Bond 78). Ordinary Australians organized populist Anti-German leagues that bombarded the government with chain letters calling for the internment of enemy aliens.[11] Local councils followed suit, sacking employees of enemy descent who happened to be on their payrolls. British Australian workers refused to work with German immigrants and went on strike if the 'aliens' – regarded as 'mates' only recently – were not dismissed. Unions began campaigning against the use of "enemy labour."[12]

Possession of Australia was what the war was all about, or so the Commonwealth Government firmly believed. The freedom of Australia, according to Hughes, was being defended on the killing fields of Europe, and if the Allies were to be defeated, Australia would come under German rule. Hughes was certain that Australia was No. 1 on the catalogue of German war aims: "Germany had long coveted this grand and rich continent" (Horne 79). The official war historian, Charles Bean, dutifully complied: "If the allies lost, Australia would be a spoil to the conqueror" (19).

Australia was the prize target, "specially coveted by Germany," as the Melbourne *Argus* put it, echoing the Prime Minister. Referring to British propaganda reports about German residents in England who were allegedly commanding "strategic positions" and working "from within" in preparation of a "German invasion," the *Argus* was adamant that the enemy's "preparations here were no less perfect" and that "this country is not likely to have been overlooked any more than England or South Africa" (*Argus*, 3 March 1916). Small country syndrome thus played a role,

too: the fear of the insignificant colonial outpost at the periphery of the British Empire to be "overlooked" in world affairs. Thus, by the power of imagination and by wishful thinking, Australians had managed to transport themselves into the centre of the war. Sadly, the fantasy entailed a wish to be recognized, if only as an enemy (Fischer 1989a, 4).

6. The Theatre of War: Fighting an Imaginary Enemy

On Christmas Eve 1914, the officers in command of the Second Military District of Australia (NSW) expected an uprising of Germans in Sydney, combined with a mass breakout of internees being held in the Holsworthy internment camp, near Liverpool, on the western outskirts of the city. According to undercover agents, plans for the alleged operation had been in place since the beginning of the war, a sum of £50,000 had supposedly been raised by local German residents and 120 motor cars had been made available. In a secret memorandum to Defence Headquarters in Melbourne, the Sydney officers provided details of the sinister plot:

> The plan was to seize the forts, destroy various magazines and Garden Island [naval base in Sydney Harbour] and to liberate all prisoners. Transports or ocean going ships would be seized and all would escape to sea. The insurgents would be dressed in Commonwealth uniforms which would facilitate their work and cause confusion to our people. Ferry boats were to be seized for the work on the Harbour. (AA. Vic. B 197, 2021/1/64)

Once at sea, or so the top brass believed, the Germans planned to establish contact with units of the Imperial German Navy, and the convoy was to proceed to retake the lost German colony at New Guinea, which would be used as a base for naval operations in the Pacific, threatening the Australian supply routes to Europe and the Commonwealth itself.

On 24 December, the Sydney commandant was ready to meet the imagined insurgents. Elaborate preparations had been made to quell the expected uprising:

> Armed police, mounted and dismounted, were available; the Infantry Reserve was handy and special trams were ready to move them anywhere. The 'MINER' and the 'OHM' were ready for any harbour work that might be required. The Commandant and Staff were with the Inspector General of Police at his office in town. Close touch was kept with the Forts and [the Holsworthy Camp at] Liverpool by telephone. (AA. Vic. B 197, 2021/1/64)[13]

At Holsworthy, the suspected leaders of the conspiracy were under surveillance, and the guards were placed on special alert.

The secret memorandum, sketching an event that failed to materialize, conjures up visions of a war fought in the streets and on the waterways of Sydney, complete with trams shuttling to and fro to take the soldiers to the front, and with ferries and ships seized by the enemy engaged in naval actions on Sydney Harbour. It was a fantastic, fanciful vision: war as theatre, self-illusion and make believe, stage-managed by the government and the military authorities who were eagerly awaiting their cue to play their part in this exciting drama. The soldiers and police officers who waited on Christmas Eve for the action to start would have been shocked by the suggestion that they might have wasted a perfectly peaceful Australian public holiday. But the fear that lay behind their readiness to believe in such fantasy schemes of war and of conspiracies was real enough. And real enough, too, was the preparedness and keenness of Australians – officials, soldiers and civilians alike – who were eager to do battle, to take up arms to confront and defeat an enemy who existed only in their imagination (Fischer 1989a, 1–2).

7. Defining the Enemy

Soon after the outbreak of war, all Germans and Austrians living in Australia were required to report to the nearest police station and register as aliens by completing a form that included their personal particulars: name, address, date and place of birth, trade or occupation, marital status, property, length of residence in Australia, nationality, naturalization details. The local police then imposed any restrictions they thought fit; usually the aliens had to notify the police of any change of address or report to the station at daily or weekly intervals. The registrants were forced to comply, but inevitably resented the procedure as a blemish on their reputation. The officers also had to fill out a second form entitled *Report on Person reputed to be an Enemy Subject* – "secret and confidential" – noting their own impressions about the aliens they interviewed. The officers were asked whether they thought the aliens were "reputed to be anti-British" or consorted "with persons believed to be of enemy origin," and finally had to give an opinion as to whether they believed their clients' statements "to be frank and truthful" or whether the "aliens" ought to be examined more closely by the military authorities (AA. WA. PP14/1. 1/10/34).[14]

By the end of 1914, the commandants of the military districts had been given the authority to intern "enemy subjects with whose conduct they were not satisfied" while the Minister of Defence had reserved for himself the right to order the detention of naturalized subjects he thought were "disaffected or disloyal." In 1915, the minister's power was extended "to cover the internment of disloyal natural born subjects of enemy descent, and of persons of hostile origin or association."[15] Natural born subjects meant persons born in Australia. Once a military intelligence officer had decided an individual was disloyal or constituted a "possible danger," that person was arrested and placed in a camp behind barbed wire from where

there was no access to the ordinary processes of judicial appeal. The government routinely refused to submit the complaints of internees to legal arbitration (Fischer 1989a, 65–66).

In October 1916, the registration regulations were extended to apply to "all aliens, whether enemy or otherwise" (Scott 109). The *Unlawful Associations Act* of 1916 and 1917 "further expanded" the Federal Government's powers, including "the powers of deportation" (Evans 1987, 30). The enemy now included potentially everyone who opposed the government's war policies, notably regarding conscription.[16] In the end, the machinery of registration, censorship, surveillance, internment and deportation set up to control the resident "enemy" population in Australia was also being used to investigate and prosecute a wide variety of Anglo-Celtic "Britishers": pacifists, unionists, radical socialists, Irish nationalists, anti-conscriptionists of all ideological persuasion, including sections of the Labor party, practically anybody who dared to speak out against the government's total commitment to the war. After the war, the files collected by military intelligence were passed on to subsequent internal security organizations (Stanley 171). A precedent was established, involving the use of the state apparatus for the purpose of suppressing political opposition, that constitutes one of the most ominous features of the political culture that developed in Australia during World War I.

8. Selecting Candidates for Detention

In 1914, there were some 33,000 persons born in Germany living in Australia. The overall number of German Australians, including second and later generation migrants, had been estimated at approximately 100,000. With the total population of Australia approaching five million, it was hardly a significant number statistically (Fischer 1989a, 18). In May 1915, Defence Minister Pearce proudly announced that "we have at present a large number of enemy subjects interned in the Commonwealth, and, judging from the statements appearing in the cable messages we seem to have interned far more in proportion to our population than they have in Great Britain." Un-interned enemy aliens were under surveillance, Pearce added, to emphasize his message: the military authorities were in "full control of the Alien Enemy Population" (*Argus*, 20 May 1915; Fischer 1989a, 126). As it was logistically impossible to imprison all German Australians, the government had early on decided on a policy of selective internment. Nevertheless, there were continuous demands by ultra-patriotic groups, often supported by jingoistic tabloids, to intern all enemy aliens. "Intern the lot!" was the popular slogan.

6,890 persons were interned in Australia during the First World War. The blanket designation 'prisoners of war' given them by the Australian authorities does not correspond to the modern understanding of POW, i.e. combatant soldiers captured in battle. The internees included a small number of genuine prisoners of

war, notably the surviving crew of the *Emden* and some soldiers of the Qingdao garrison, but most internees were civilian residents of Australia and other British possessions. Among the prisoners, just over 1,000 had come from dominions such as Fiji, Singapore, Ceylon or Hong Kong; their status was mostly that of naturalized British subjects in their respective colonies where they had been arrested at the outbreak of war. The local authorities routinely asked the Colonial Office in London "that arrangements be made […] for the removal to Australia of all German and Austrian civil prisoners" for internment during the duration of the war.[17] The Australian government was happy to oblige, provided a few weeks' notice was given and the costs (3s.6d per person per day) were defrayed by the respective dominions. The transportation to Australia of these prisoners, which included Australian-born wives and their children, in some cases recalled the circumstances of convict transports during the early days of Australia as a penal colony (Fischer 1984).

The internees included approximately 700 "Naturalized British Subjects," whose naturalization certificates were subsequently cancelled (to make sure they would never return), and some 70 "Native Born British Subjects" who were Australian by birth. At the end of the war, a total of 6,150 persons were "repatriated," i.e. summarily shipped to Germany: a mass deportation unparalleled in Australian history. Of these, 5,414 had been interned, the remainders were family members or non-interned "ex-enemy aliens" who either had accepted the government's offer to be repatriated or were ordered to leave the country. The total number of compulsory deportations came to 699 (Fischer 1989a, 77, 301–302, 348n).

A statistical summary – based on a roll call of 3,135 internees – prepared by the director of the office of military intelligence, gives the reasons for internment. Nearly half the total, 1,559 persons, were regarded as a "possible danger to the community." 751 destitute migrants who had lost their jobs due to the war were interned "at own request," while the detention of 457 persons had been ordered for violations of some of the War Precautions Regulations, mostly "failing to report." Another "score or so," including "several of the most important residents of the Commonwealth" had been interned on the ground of "possible interference with commercial interests." In twelve percent of cases, no reason at all had been recorded (Fischer1989a, 80). Although they were required to do so, many arresting officers obviously thought it unnecessary to document why a particular individual had come to be interned. If the prisoner, after all, was an alien and of enemy origin, what other reason was needed?

9. Setting up Camp

Initially, internees were imprisoned in camps set up locally in each of the five military districts. At Torrens Island in South Australia, previously used as a quarantine

station, prisoners were housed in military tents that frequently leaked; there was insufficient bedding, no facilities for cooking or bathing. Relations between inmates and guards were tense. After an attempted escape, two prisoners were subjected to a mock execution and then flogged: they were stripped naked, handcuffed to a tree and given thirty lashes with a "cat-o-nine-tails" (Monteath 2018, 83–89). This happened in June 1915, after a similar incident in Rabaul where four former German residents had been publicly whipped. When news of the "Scandal at Rabaul" made it past the censor to appear in the Australian press, and when a report on the Torrens Island flogging was smuggled out of the camp and eventually reached Germany, alarm bells must have rung at Defence Headquarters.[18] The Berlin Foreign Office asked London for an explanation, via the U.S. Embassy, and the Australian government was told to supply an official report. An inquiry by senior military staff into the Torrens Island incident found "harsh and unjustifiable conduct," including "wholesale arrest and imprisonment," "promiscuous shooting" into tents, and "indiscriminate bayoneting indulged in apparently with freedom by the junior N.C.O.s and privates." The camp commandant was stripped of his commission (Fischer 1989a, 194–198). Such incidents remained isolated cases, however, restricted to early operations when camp commandants were not always fully familiar with the rules and regulations that governed the administration of the camps.

The Defence Department, clearly worried about possible repercussions and concerned about Australia's international reputation, eventually decided to close the state camps and transfer the prisoners to New South Wales. The "German Concentration Camp" – so its official name – in Holsworthy near Liverpool, southwest of Sydney, with some 6,000 internees, was by far the largest Australian internment camp. Two smaller facilities were set up in disused prisons to house prisoners of "higher" social standing: at Berrima Gaol, for naval officers and their crews, and the "elite camp" at Trial Bay Gaol, reserved for wealthy inmates, business men and so-called community leaders. A much smaller "family camp" set up in Bourke in outback New South Wales housed some eighty inmates, including wives and children, who had been residents in other British dominions and transported to Australia for internment following requests from London. On its own, the Commonwealth Government did not intern women and children (Fischer 1989a, 271).

In 1918, the prisoners from overseas were transferred to a camp in the newly-designated Australian Capital Territory. It was a brand-new facility specially constructed to accommodate some 5,000 prisoners expected to be shipped from Africa and China. As it happened, they never arrived. The British government cancelled the planned transfer at the last minute, after the German government threatened reprisals, and then the war was over. The huge camp, located in what is today the Canberra suburb of Fyshwick near the Molonglo River, was the first substantial construction project in what was to become the nation's capital (Fischer 1989a, 154).

The military authorities soon discovered that giving the inmates more freedom and responsibility in the administration of the camps was remarkably efficient in reducing disciplinary tensions and improving the morale of the internees. Thus, a degree of internal self-government was established. An elected Camp Committee functioned as a kind of executive authority in charge of all aspects of life in the camps; it also represented the interests of the inmates in dealings with the Commandant. The Committee controlled the camps' well-stocked canteens; the profits made were used to subsidize activities in need of public support, such as orchestras and theatres. Various sub-committees were elected to overlook essential services (sanitation, food, public works, business activities, sports and education, cultural affairs, etc.).

The internees were given permission to operate businesses and to construct the required facilities. Thus, a rich social and cultural life developed within the boundaries of the barbed-wire enclosures. Like in internment camps in other countries, the internees – once given the chance to run their own affairs – managed to build a diverse communal life that was, in many ways, quite attractive in comparison with small towns anywhere. There were numerous cultural activities, theatres, orchestras and choirs, sporting clubs, educational opportunities, internal print media, and the like.[19]

This does not mean, of course, that life was easy. The official visitors, consular representatives from Switzerland, Norway and the U.S. who were invited to inspect the camps from time to time, found that the internees had much to complain about: theft of their property while on route to the camp, poor and overcrowded facilities, lack of proper sanitation and protection from the weather (dust storms in the searing heat of the Liverpool plains during summer, and heavy winter rains that turned the whole camp into a sea of mud). The main concern was mental health. After years of close confinement with no privacy, separated from their families and with a bleak future to look forward to, many internees developed feelings of irritation, anxiety and depression – the well-known symptoms of Barbed Wire Disease (McKernan 174–176; Fischer 1989a, 205–206).

10. Internment and War Aims

While internment was, in many instances, arbitrary and capricious, there were nevertheless clear policy objectives linked to the government's war aims. Destitute immigrants, for example, were systematically singled out for internment. Early in the war, the Defence Department had introduced a policy of voluntary internment. Aliens who had lost their jobs because of the war could turn themselves in, and their families would be paid a modest allowance. Once interned, however, these "voluntary" prisoners were not allowed to leave the camp. Later in the war, the military officials were given the power to detain persons considered to be without

a regular income even if they did not volunteer. If the intelligence officers found that such individuals had no ties in the Commonwealth and were likely to become a financial burden on the government, it was routinely recommended that they should be deported after the conclusion of the war. Internees with a history of mental health issues were similarly earmarked for deportation. The internment system thus developed into a tool of social control (Fischer 1989a, 81–86).

The government's main objective in its campaign against enemy aliens was the destruction of the German Australian community as an autonomous, socio-cultural entity within Australian society. This aim was pursued through different avenues: the internment of prominent businessmen, the honorary German consuls, and the Lutheran pastors who were all regarded leaders of the community; the pastors were widely believed to be receiving orders directly from the German government (Fischer 1989a, 303–314). The use of the German language was banned; German schools, newspapers and clubs were closed. German place names which testified to the pioneering work of early migrant settlers were struck off Australian maps; they were changed by the *Nomenclature Act 1917* passed by the South Australian state legislature, or by local councils following petitions by patriotic "Britishers" in other states. Australians of German descent, although naturalized and often born in Australia, were disenfranchised and prevented from voting and from standing as candidates for public office. A "directed program of internment and commercial ruin" resulted in "community dismemberment in every state" and "culminated in mass deportations at the end of the war" (Cochrane 179). Before 1914, the German Australian community was actively involved in Australian public and political life, proud of its achievements and its heritage. By the end of 1918, its remaining members had gone into assimilationist hiding; its cultural infrastructure lay in ruins.

The overriding aim of the government was to serve the cause of Imperial Britain and to "future-proof" White Australia (Cochrane 182; Newton 2018, 22). The integrity of the Empire was to be maintained, its predominant role as a colonial power to be increased by further territorial acquisitions. Australia's particular interests in the South Pacific were seen as part of a grand imperial plan, although the military occupation of German Papua New Guinea and other islands did not lead, as Hughes had hoped, to outright annexation. Australia's sub-imperial ambition was more of an embarrassment to the British Government which was acutely aware of the opposition of the U.S. Government as well as the existence of Japanese interests that London could not afford to disregard. Hughes' declaration of an "Australian Monroe Doctrine" ("Hands off the Australian Pacific") was not much more than rhetorical grand-standing; it left President Wilson singularly unimpressed and hostile (McQueen 67).

Such differences, however, and London's lukewarm support did not diminish Hughes' unreserved commitment to British imperialism, even though he remained distrustful of the intentions of London in relation to safeguarding Australia's security. For Hughes, the British Empire was synonymous with civilization itself:

"the greatest confederation of free men and women that the world has ever seen" (1916, 191). His policy was meant to forge a closer link between Dominion and Home Country which then, it was hoped, would give Australia a greater voice within the Empire. To Hughes, there was no difference between Empire Loyalty and Australian Nationalism: "Australia was a nation only by the grace of God and the power of the British Empire" (Horne 110). In this nation, there was no place for a German Australian community.

11. Empire Products for Empire Markets

The economic policy of Prime Minister Hughes is central to an understanding of the internment policy of his government and its anti-German campaign. When war broke out, it provided an opportunity of realizing a long-held aim, namely "the eradication of German influences from the trade of all parts of the Empire" (Fitzhardinge 73). It was an objective that the Prime Minister was to pursue throughout the war years, and even after, with incomparable zeal. Already in 1907, at the London Navigation Conference devoted to co-ordinate Imperial policies regarding merchant shipping, he had warned about "the extent of the penetration of German shipping interests into the Pacific" (Booker 241).

Hughes' vision of international relations was dominated by neo-mercantilist notions of trade and commerce. He saw the affairs between nations as a kind of perpetual economic warfare over the control of markets and resources, with open war as only a different form of struggle that had its basis in the competitive nature and self-interest of human beings, as individuals and countries alike. True to his vision of himself as a *Realpolitiker* he liked "to cut through the moralistic humbug," i.e. the ideological smoke screen used to legitimize war (Booker 258). Hughes was not afraid to point out that the war was being fought for economic supremacy; this was an argument to support Australia's unrestricted commitment rather than to oppose it (Horne 73).

The elimination of German commercial interests, both in Australia and in the South Pacific, proceeded on the basis of comprehensive legislation. *The Enemy Contracts Annulment Act* and various *Trading with the Enemy Acts,* passed between 1914 and 1918, imposed restrictions that ranged from the prohibition to buy or sell land to owning or managing a business. Australian subsidiaries or agencies representing German firms were liquidated. Aliens were ordered to disclose holdings in shares, securities or bank accounts. German Australian businessmen were arrested, interned and deported; their assets and businesses confiscated, wound up or placed under public trusteeship (Scott 137–140).

The government designed legislation not only as a wartime measure to prevent Australian products from reaching Germany, and vice versa, but also to put an end to what were considered German firms operating in Australia, regardless of whether

they were branches of foreign companies or businesses founded in Australia. Trade was to be diverted "from enemy to empire," as the Prime Minister put it: all "German influences" were to be eradicated "root, branch and seed" (Fitzhardinge 73).[20] In one of his speeches while on his lecture tour in the UK in 1916, Hughes boasted about his "earnestness in tearing out the cancer of German influence […] There is only one way in which you can do this thing. Do it with such thoroughness that the German will avoid this country as if it were the plague itself" (Hughes 1916, 66; qtd. in Cochrane 179).

The Prime Minister's dream of a post-war economic order envisioned a closed bloc, largely autarchic: "Empire Products for Empire Markets" (Fischer 1989a, 50). It was to include the UK along with its allies and the various colonies and dominions around the world that made up the "grab-bag" (Anderson, 218) of territories that was the British Empire. The ultimate goal was to force Germany to give up all hope that it would ever be in a position where it would be tempted to try to compete with Britain for "industrial and commercial supremacy." The Centre Powers were to be excluded from international trade; the markets of the British Empire and its allies were to be permanently closed to German products. The "pre-war natural channels of commerce," as Hughes put it (i.e. neighbours trading with neighbours), were not to be re-opened. There was no reason why British consumers should not choose Australian cane sugar over the cheaper German beet sugar. The war, he confidently asserted in a speech given in the UK entitled "On Britain's Past Follies," has "rung the death knell of a policy of cheapness," it had mistaken "mere wealth for greatness. No matter whether the wealth was in our hands or those of German Jews" (Hughes 1916, 40, 44)

Hughes even tried to enlist the help of British housewives to use a weapon at their ready disposal: boycott. If English housewives were committed to this war, he declared to delegates of the Women's Imperial Defence Council in London (June 1916), "no British shopkeeper would dare to expose goods that have been made by the enemy […]. I hope the women of England will insist that our shops are purged as clean of German trade as heaven is of emissaries of hell" (Hughes 1916, 171).

In the post-war scenario that Hughes imagined, Germany was to be permanently excluded from international trade. It was a fantastic vision, and hopelessly unrealistic of course. Once the war was over, the European powers almost immediately resumed trade amongst each other.

12. Race Fear, Abandonment Anxiety, White Australia

White Australia had always been a cornerstone of the identity of the European settlers on the continent, enshrined in the first piece of legislation passed by the Commonwealth Parliament, the *Immigration Restriction Act* of 1901 with its infamous "dictation test." Unsurprisingly, the question of race played a decisive

role in the debates concerning Australia's role in the First World War. There was hardly any disagreement in this matter: the war was being fought to keep Asian and non-white immigrants out of the country.

The racist dimension in the history of white settlement of Australia thus offers another key to understanding the nature of Australians' involvement in the war. White Australia was a complicated construct. The racism of the European settlers was directed against the indigenous owners of the country as much as against their neighbours, the people of Asia and the Pacific islands. It was a racism born out of the aggressive belief of the colonizers in their cultural and technological superiority that gave legitimacy to their supposed destiny to assume the imperialistic control over the allegedly uncivilized parts of the world. But racism in Australia had also a defensive component: it was the result of a concern over security, born out of fear of an invasion by the peoples to the north. The "yellow hordes" of Asia could easily overrun the sparsely populated continent and do to the European invaders what they, the colonists and settlers, had done previously to the indigenous owners of the land.[21]

The definition of White Australia had always been in flux and open to debate. In the mid-19th century, the focus had been largely on the growing number of Chinese immigrants arriving during the Victorian goldrush. In the 20th century, the direction of the policy had shifted against the "Japanese race" which, as Hughes imagined, was driven "by an active spirit of ambition and enterprise," similar to his view of the Germans.[22] The supposed dynamic competitiveness of the Japanese people was imagined by Hughes to make them want to leave their native islands to come to Australia where they would be soon "supplemented by hordes of Chinese, Kanakas and Javanese" (Booker 62).

Correlative to race fear was abandonment anxiety: what if the British Empire and the Royal Navy was to withdraw protection?[23] In 1894, Britain and Japan had signed a commercial treaty that acknowledged reciprocal rights of trade and residence. This was followed by the Anglo-Japanese Alliance of 1902 (renewed 1905 and 1911) to contain the imperialist designs of Tsarist Russia. To many Australians, with Hughes foremost among them, it was an "embarrassing alliance" (Cochrane 82). Australians' fear of Japanese expansionism grew following the victory of Japan over Russia in 1905, as did Australians' distrust of the British government when it relocated its battleships in the Pacific to Europe and left Japan in charge of defending British interests in South East Asia and the South Pacific. When the British admiralty reneged on its commitment made in 1909 to co-operatively build and maintain a Pacific Fleet that would incorporate "fleet units" provided by Australia and New Zealand and even asked the Australian government to send its battleships to the North Sea, Australian military and political authorities were greatly worried, and resentful (Briggs 317).[24] Why, Australians asked themselves, were they told to trust their fate to a people they refused to admit to their country? The British government insisted that the navy of its ally, Japan, was sufficient to

secure the safety of its dominions in the Pacific. Japan was, indeed, a loyal ally of Great Britain, and, in 1914, Australians' fears of a Japanese invasion were completely irrational: "Anxiety about the 'yellow peril,' particularly from Japan after 1905, which underpinned the costly, long-range, expeditionary nature of our [Australia's] war, had no strategic foundation" (Lockhart 2018, 5).

The uneasiness felt by Australians who thought they could no longer trust the rulers of the British Empire to defend their colonies on the other side of the world was not easily assuaged. Hughes' commitment to White Australia was the one area in his political vision where particular Australian interests would override loyalty and voluntary submission to the policies of the Empire. He was quite aware that the White Australia policy constituted a serious problem for the *home government*, due its strategic dependence on and economic alliance with Japan. Characteristically, in all the many speeches he delivered in 1916 during his tour of the UK, White Australia was not mentioned a single time. It was – pun intended – the white elephant in the room.

Previously in 1907, while in London to represent Australia at the Imperial Shipping Conference, Hughes had been quite blunt about White Australia. At a public meeting organized by the Independent Labour Party and the Women's Labour League, the Australian Labor Party leader unequivocally stated that Australians were unanimously opposed to "coloured immigration," notwithstanding the position of Great Britain and notwithstanding the lofty ideals of the international labour movement. As reported in the *Times*, Hughes said:

> Australians would have nothing to do with the coloured races, whether they called themselves British subjects or not. When he was told that a coolie was a British subject, he for one declined to admit it. That was an attitude which the Australians would not abandon. (qtd. in Fitzhardinge 193)

At the conference, he had already advocated a policy that favoured British trade on British ships manned by British crews, in other words a "White Ocean Policy" (Crowley 1960, 190).

At the Peace Treaty negotiations in Versailles, Hughes fought tooth and nail against the Racial Equality Clause that was to be part of the League of Nations compact, because he believed it would open a back door to immigrants from Asia. His opposition alienated the Japanese, caused embarrassment to the Allies and concern even among some of his supporters at home. However, he refused to compromise and came back to Australia claiming victory (Beaumont 2013, 539–542). The C-class mandate over Papua New Guinea did, in fact, give the Australian government the power to control trade and immigration policies.

Hughes was a "race fanatic" and a man of "dark premonitions" (Cochrane 78, 77). He knew that the White Australia policy was considered a "severe insult" by the Japanese, but he could not have cared less (Cochrane 44). If the Japanese were

allowed to come to Australia, he fantasized, "hundreds of thousands" would "flock" into the country, all "trained soldiers" sent by their government, and "they would have acted as Fifth Columnists, spies, saboteurs" (Hughes 1950, 248–249). It was the same bleak fantasy born out of a profoundly pessimistic view of human affairs, driven by an irrational belief in world-wide conspiracies and a deep fear, a feeling of existential insecurity regarding Australia's supposedly vulnerable position as a distant colonial outpost of the British Empire. It was this fantastic, obsessive, Hobbesian delusion that had motivated the Australian Prime Minister in World War I to wage war the way he did: a relentless and unforgiving, no-holds-barred campaign against an enemy, imagined or real, both at home and overseas. It was a fantasy that made him, arguably, the most belligerent statesman of World War I.

13. Ethnic Cleansing[25]

If Japan was the real enemy, why did the German Australians had to be demonized and the "German menace" presented, against all material evidence, as the ultimate threat to Australia's racial identity? The crisis brought about by the war offered an opportunity to pursue a strategy of what in today's terms could be called 'ethnic cleansing' and it led to a tightening of the definition of White Australia. Thus, the family tree of the peoples of the United Kingdom had to be "modified" to exclude any Germanic relations: '"Teutonic cousins' hurriedly became 'barbarous Huns'" (Cochrane 216). White Australia was now seen through a more narrowly focused lens: it was to be the exclusive home, not of the White but of the "British Race." To Hughes, to be White Australian was synonymous with being of Anglo-Celtic ethnicity, a "Britisher." "Our race" was the "British race" that Hughes romantically imagined as having come about by way of an organic historical fusion, a growing together of "Saxon, Norman and Celt" on the British Isles, who had then sallied forth to the four corners of the world to build the British Empire (Hughes 1916, 60).

Referring to the perceived Anglo-Celtic homogeneity of Australia's population, claimed by Hughes to be even more exclusive than that of Britain itself, he time and again stressed the idea of White Australia as a bastion of Britishers whose 'manifest destiny' it was to keep the continent for themselves. It was a position beyond rational scrutiny. As Hughes declared in Federal Parliament, in September 1919:

> We are more British than the people of Great Britain, and we hold firmly to the great principle of the White Australia, because we know what we know. We have these liberties, and we believe in our race and in ourselves, and in our capacity to achieve our great destiny, which is to hold this vast continent in trust for those of our race who come after us. (CPD, Vol. 89, 12163–12179)[26]

"We know what we know": according to Hughes' credo, White Australia was an article of faith that needed no reasoning or argument in support.

The real issue, then, that was at stake in the campaign against enemy aliens was the composition of Australian society. The German presence in Australia stood in the way of an Australia that was called upon to stress a claimed ethnic homogeneity that linked the continent to the homeland of a fictitious British race. The different components that constituted the complex of the war aims of the Hughes government converged under the overriding vision of racial exclusivity. German Australian commercial interests had to be removed from within the Empire to ensure that British trade could develop free of competition by other trading nations – representing other races – perceived as a potential threat to the economic hegemony of the Empire as well as to the imaginary racial purity of its dominion in the South Pacific, 12,000 nautical miles away from "home" on the other side of the world.

If there was consensus about the aim of the White Australia policy, confusion and arguments grew about how best to defend it. The longer the war lasted, the more unsettled the domestic political situation turned out to be. Deteriorating living standards leading to bitter and drawn-out strikes, a wide-spread feeling that the costs of the war were not evenly distributed, a radicalization of Irish opposition against Britain in the wake of the Dublin Easter uprising, all contributed to a climate of increased insecurity, exploited by Hughes and his fear-mongering propagandists to conjure up the spectre of the "mighty Niagara" of Asian immigration (Booker 62).

The conflicting emotions came to the fore during the two campaigns over conscription; the race issue was extensively used by both camps to win the argument. The anti-conscriptionists, of whom only a minority was in opposition to the war in principle, saw the country being depopulated; their inevitable conclusion was the warning that 'coloured labour' was going to be imported to take the place of white Australians fighting and dying in Europe. The reasoning of the pro-conscriptionists was more complicated. To keep Australia safe from Japan, Hughes argued, it was necessary "to support Britain to the hilt in the hope that while Britain remained undefeated in Europe, Japan would not dare advance in the Pacific" (qtd. in McQueen 74). Conscription in Australia was thus presented as a *quid pro quo*: a strategy to prevent a possibly weakened Britain from seeking the aid of Japan "in return for post-war concessions" which might endanger Australia's "Whites Only" stand (McQueen 74). On the eve of the 1916 referendum, Hughes exhorted the men of Australia to vote "Yes" for compulsory military service overseas: "I bid you go and fight for White Australia in France" (*SMH*, 27 October 1916).

German Australians were disenfranchised from voting in the two referenda. To their consternation and horror, they had to find out that their whole existence, individually as well as collectively, had been built on an illusion: they were denied their identity as Australians, even if they were naturalized and even if they and their

parents had been born in this country. It was a rude and painful awakening. German Australians were deprived of their civil and constitutional rights, of their property and professions; they were persecuted and attacked by enraged street mobs, sacked from their jobs, interned without trial and deported without a chance to protest or to state their case in court and prove their loyalty. "The hatred of the enemy which characterized the home front during World War I was unprecedented," writes Marilyn Lake: "Nationalism soon expressed itself as racialism" (190). Raymond Evans concurs: "Antagonism against all Germans attained fully racist proportions," and "[t]his racism was embodied within a pervasive institutional framework" (1988, 11).

14. Conclusion: The Governor-General's Apology

On 26 September 1999, the then Governor-General delivered the opening address at the inaugural Australian Conference on Lutheran Education at a Gold Coast resort in Queensland.[27] In his speech, Sir William Deane offered an apology to members of the German Australian community present at the meeting:

> The tragic, and often shameful, discrimination against Australians of German origin fostered during the World Wars had many consequences. No doubt, some of you carry the emotional scars of injustice during those times as part of your backgrounds or family histories. Let me as Governor-General, say to all who do how profoundly sorry I am that such things happened in our country. (*The Lutheran,* 25 October 1999; Fischer 2012)

The little-known apology invites reflection on a number of issues, especially in the context of the current dominance of the ANZAC story as Australia's foundation narrative, a quasi-official historical discourse, strongly supported by Sir William Deane, that has elevated the commemoration of ANZAC Day to a de-facto National Holiday.[28] While the Governor-General, in his apology, refers to "scars of injustice" and family histories, and thus to individual grief and loss, it might be appropriate also to recall the experience of a collective loss the nation incurred when a significant community within its ranks was destroyed during the First World War. The story of the German Australian community in WWI offers an alternative view of Australia's history as a nation.

The First World War confirmed the British destiny of the Australian people; it was to be a home for white Australian "Britishers," monocultural and monolingual. The war interrupted an experiment in pluralistic and multicultural democracy that had begun around the middle of the 19th century and that had received a strong boost in the 1890s, as John Docker has shown, with the emergence of a nativist Australian national identity. This was not a monolithic, simplistic identity but one

that could well be defined as "modern," characterized by a "unified spirit" that was nevertheless open to or curious about cultural diversity and sensitive towards alternative cultural traditions, in opposition to Anglo-Celtic mainstream orthodoxy which only perpetuated the "cultural cringe" of a society transplanted from Europe to the Antipodes.[29]

Whereas the ANZAC narrative proclaims a breakthrough towards a new period in Australian history, the Australian home front experience during World War I suggests a return to the old, pre-1890s attitudes and values, resulting in a strengthening of previously dominant patterns characterized as "imperial sentiment, censorious Anglo-conformity" and insistence on immigration from the British Isles (Curthoys and Muecke 179). These patterns were reinforced during the war years and became the dominant mode of cultural identity in the decades following both world wars.

By the end of WWI, the once proud and prominent German Australian community had disintegrated. German immigrants, if they had not been deported, had gone into assimilationist hiding. It was the end of a process towards a multicultural society that would eventually lead to an independent Australian nation – that at least had been the hope of the spokesmen of the German Australian community who had publicly proposed the notion of a republican Australian citizenship nearly half a century earlier. As a civil, pluralistic, liberal and democratic society, Australia did not pass the test of the crisis brought about by the war in Europe. The country suffered a setback in its political culture from which it did not recover until long after the next war which, in some ways, meant a repetition of the experiences of 1914–1918. It is only a few decades ago that Australian society has begun to resume the multicultural experiment that was abandoned in the early days of August 1914.

Notes

1. Newton 2018. Cf. also Connor 85–86. For more details on the outbreak of WWI, and an exhaustive account of simultaneous events in Melbourne and London leading to the declaration of war, see the comprehensive study of Douglas Newton 2014.
2. The unrestrained casualness with which the government could make use of its powers is at times difficult to observe. One example may suffice. In November 1917, during a campaign stop at the railway station in Warwick, Qld., the PM's hat was knocked off by an egg thrown by somebody in the crowd. The enraged Hughes demanded that the culprit be arrested, but the local police refused to intervene. Back in Sydney, Hughes immediately called his Solicitor-General. "He wanted," recalls Garran, "at once, three sets of regulations, which he hurriedly outlined, and he gave me 15 minutes. I dictated at top speed and within 15 minutes had established a Commonwealth Police Force, disfranchised

persons of enemy origin, and created some third fortification which I have forgotten. All these matters became law in the next morning's *Gazette*. That was the highest speed record" (1932). See also Bond 42–43.

3 Before World War I, the notion of international human rights in relation to prisoners of war was not an issue in multinational agreements. The Geneva Convention of 1929 first laid down rules for their treatment as a consequence of experiences in World War I. Article 9 states that prisoners of war "shall not be confined or imprisoned except as a measure indispensable for safety" and "only so long as circumstances exist which necessitate such a measure" (IHL-GC-1929-2). The convention of 1949 added articles dealing with the internment of civilian internees. In language similar to 1929, it allowed internment only if "justified by imperative reasons of security" and only for as long as the "reasons which necessitated […] internment" no longer existed (Geneva IV, Art. 78 and 132, https://ihl-databases.icrc.org). However, there was a precedent that was relevant during World War I, namely the Convention of The Hague of 1907 (Laws and Customs of War on Land) that also used very similar language. It prohibited the confinement of prisoners of war "except as in indispensable measure of safety and only while the circumstances which necessitate the measure continue to exist," while simultaneously recognizing the "right [of non-combatants] to be treated as prisoners of war" (avalon.yale.law.edu; cf. also Schindler and Toman). In Australia, internment continued until July 1920, well after the cessation of hostilities and the signing of the Peace Treaty. It could thus be argued that on both counts, "imperative reason of security" and length of internment, Australia was in breach of international humanitarian law.

4 The quote is from a speech by Hughes during the campaign for the first Conscription Referendum in 1916 (SMH, 27 October 1916).

5 On the history of the German presence in Australia see Johannes Voigt 1988, and Ian Harmstorf and M. Cigler 1985. See also Fischer 1989a, 14–38: "The German Australian Community on the Eve of War."

6 I am indebted to Borrie for translations from the German-language press, although my conclusions are substantially different from the argument advanced in his book about assimilation.

7 Forster's article was written and published before the First Fleet had even left port, i.e. when the concept of a colonial settlement in Australia was not much more than a nebulous idea in the minds of some London administrators.

8 On the 48ers see also Fischer 2010. It is perhaps superfluous to point out that in 2021, 233 years after the arrival of the First Fleet and 120 years after Federation, the goal of an independent Australian republic seems as elusive as ever.

9 Norman Lindsay's controversial "gorilla man" (with only a question mark as caption) is perhaps the most drastic image. Cf. the reproduction of the image and comment in Beaumont 2013, 98. See also Imperial War Memorial website: "The Question Mark" (iwm.org.uk).

10 See also Lake 64: "That Tasmanians spent so much time and energy in 1916 fighting moral, sectarian, political and sectional battles is a reflection of the very real distance which separated them from the battlefields of Europe."

11 See also Stanley 157: 'Branches of the National Archives of Australia in all states contain records of denunciations and investigations that demonstrate the paranoia that soon spread, and the authorities' readiness to take seriously even the most ludicrous or unlikely report."

12 On anti-German strikes by unions and local councils retrenching German employees, see Evans 1988, 11–13. On the union campaign against "enemy labour" on the West Australian goldfields, the transportation of Yugoslav mine workers across the continent to New South Wales for internment in Holsworthy, and their eventual deportation, see Fischer 1988, 1–15.

13 The reference is to Australian Archives, Victoria Branch. See also Fischer 1989a, 1–2.

14 The reference is to Australian Archives, Western Australia Branch. See also Fischer 1989a, 73–74.

15 Cf. Australian War Memorial (AWM), Department of Defence: Internment Camps, Internees, etc. Information for Historian. Bean Papers.

16 The *Defence Act* of 1903 precluded conscription for overseas service, thus necessitating the holding of a referendum to introduce compulsory service outside Australia's borders. The Hughes government could have legislated for conscription in parliament; it was doubtful, however, whether it had the numbers to pass the legislation. Cf. Beaumont 2015.

17 Australian Archives (ACT branch), CRS A458, item F 152/1.

18 Initially, news of the flogging at Rabaul was "greeted […] with general approval" in Australia, and Defence Minister Pearce even sent a "message of congratulations" to the commanding officer, Colonel William Holmes, who had ordered the flogging. When the Governor-General intervened, concerned about the possibility of international repercussions, Pearce ordered Holmes not to repeat his action and admitted in parliament that the punishment had been ordered without a trial. The Governor-General subsequently sent a report to London, "stating that the men had been tried before their punishment, despite the fact that he knew this to be untrue" (Connor 87–88).

19 For a comparative analysis of internment in the USA, Canada and Australia see the contributions in Saunders and Daniels. For internment in the UK, see Panayi 1991. For an account of the "cultural life" in the Australian camps (Holsworthy, Trial Bay and Berrima), see also Helmi and Fischer, and Fischer 1983.

20 Cf. also W.M. Hughes, *The Day – And After*, 41; and Fischer, 1989a, 47.

21 On race fear, see Greg Lockhart, 2011 ("Race fear, dangerous denial"), and Lockhart, 2012 ("Absenting Asia").

22 Quote from a speech by Hughes in the N.S.W. State Parliament, 21 March 1899, denoting the long-term consistency of Hughes's racism. Qtd. in Booker 62.

23 Peter Cochrane's *Best We Forget* presents a comprehensive account of what he calls the "Australian predicament," i.e. "distrust of Britain and fear of Japan," in the context of a critique of Australian historiography that has largely ignored the racial dimensions of the country's defence policies, both prior to and after the war, and in relation to the ANZAC legend. On Australians' attitudes to Asia and Japan, see also Walker 1999 and Walker and Sobocinska.

24 On Australia's defence strategies, see Mordike and Lockhart 2011.

25 "Ethnic cleansing" is a contested term that came to prominence during the Yugoslav Wars of the 1990s. While there is no definition of the term in international law, it has been recognized by the United Nations with regard to practices that can "constitute crimes against humanity and can be assimilated to specific war crimes. Furthermore, such acts could also fall within the meaning of the Genocide Convention" (https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/ethnic-cleansing.shtml). Panayi uses the same term with regard to Britain in WWI: "Britain essentially carried out ethnic cleansing during the First World War" (Panayi 2012, 303; see also 3–4 and 264).

26 Hughes in a speech outlining his "Monroe Doctrine for Australia and the South Pacific," qtd. in Hudson 127–128.

27 I am indebted to my friend Peter Rechner, Melbourne, for making me aware of the apology and for tracking down the source of Deane's speech in the Lutheran Archives, Adelaide, and I am grateful to Sir William Deane for having provided me with a copy of the full text of his speech.

28 While Deane's admirable apology to the German Lutheran community is to be unreservedly applauded, I nevertheless take a critical view of his affirmation of the so-called "spirit of ANZAC" as the foundation of Australia's nationhood. For details, see Fischer 2012, 220–239.

29 See John Docker 1992, which builds on his earlier and groundbreaking *The Nervous Nineties: Australian Cultural Life in the 1890s*.

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The He(A)rt of the Witness: Remembering Australian Prisoners of War in Richard Flanagan's *The Narrow Road to the Deep North*

Abstract: This paper engages Cathy Caruth's thinking about trauma, Marianne Hirsch's notion of postmemory, and Giorgio Agamben's theorising of bearing witness to examine the affective performance of remembering in Richard Flanagan's novel *The Narrow Road to the Deep North*. Reading the narrative as a postmemorial account of Japan's internment of Australian POWs in Burma during the Second World War, I focus on the body as a site of both wounding and witnessing to show how the affective relays between pleasure and pain reanimate the epistemological drama of lived experience and highlight the ambivalence of passion as a trope for both suffering and love. Framed by its intertextual homage to Matsuo Bashō's poetic masterpiece of the same name, the Australian narrative of survival is shown to emerge from the collapse of the referential certainties underlying the binaries of victim/victimiser, witness/perpetrator, human/inhuman, and remembering/forgetting. In Flanagan's ethical imagination, bearing witness calls for a visceral rethinking of historical subjectivity that binds the world to consciousness as a source of both brutality and beauty.

Keywords: Australia, Richard Flanagan, POWs, trauma, postmemory, haiku, affective remembering

1. Framing Postmemory: Trauma, Witness, Language

No matter where I fall
On the road,
Fall will I to be buried
Among flowering bush-clovers.
(Matsuo Bashō, *The Narrow Road to the Deep North and Other Travel Sketches*)

Japan's internment of thousands of Allied troops for the construction of the Thai-Burma Railway, also known as the Death Railway, during the Second World War was one of the most traumatic episodes in the history of modern Australia: "As a result of their sweeping early victories, Japanese forces captured roughly 320,000 prisoners, of whom 140,000 were Allied soldiers. The rest were civilians in areas that Japanese forces occupied. Of the Allied soldiers, about 22,000 were Australian" (Aszkielowicz 1). As Brian MacArthur writes in *Surviving the Sword. Prisoners of the Japanese 1942–1945*, "[w]ith one set of prisoners working in Burma and another much larger group in Thailand, the railway was to be driven 258 miles through some of the most hostile territory on earth, irrespective of the cost in human lives" (54). Set to be finished by December 1943, the railway bore immense significance: it had to open a secure supply line for the Japanese troops to escape the attacks of Allied aircraft and submarines, to which they were exposed when sailing across the East China and Andaman seas. In the end, the two parts of the railway "were united at Konkuita on 25 October 1943 in deep forest about 25 miles south-west of the border and 163 miles from Nong Pladuk" (MacArthur 161). As a consequence, of the 22,000 Australians captured by the Japanese, only 14,000 made it back to Australia in 1945: "Some were executed, but most died of malnutrition and disease" (Macintyre 195). Bound to the events of the Second World War, the railway became a material site for the memory of how the war appropriates technologies of discipline and punishment to transform the injured bodies of POWs into tools and weapons of war. What remains of the railway today bears the sign of the wound that recalls philosopher Dylan Trigg's reading of ruins as uncanny: "having outlived their death, the ruins occupy the spectral trace of an event left behind, serving to testify to the past through a logic of voids, disruptions, and hauntings" (xxvii). This is to say that in so far as the Thai-Burma railway contains the past through absence, it remains a vessel of traumatic memory, whose hermeneutics of belatedness unlocks new avenues of thought and affect, where alliance between the epistemic and the imaginary becomes not only a possibility, but a necessity in the ethical recognition of truth through "an asymmetrical emergence of the past" (Trigg 232).

If we accept Judith Herman's claim that recovering history begins with the understanding of the dialectic of trauma (2), then we need to acknowledge the epistemic disquiet created by the incongruity of the body's wearing of the wound and its bearing of witness, which calls for an articulation in words of the lived experience of suffering. While, as philosopher Edward Casey maintains, "in body memories we allow the past to enter actively into the very present in which our remembering is taking place" (168), in trauma, "a cohesive internal bonding in which past and present accomplish unique and lasting forms of intimacy with each other" (169) dissolves, leaving the body unable to reconcile its memory with the mind's need to interpret the events. It is for this reason that Trigg avers that "the body memory of trauma occupies a liminal realm, both revealing and

concealing itself simultaneously" (236). Building his arguments on Cathy Caruth's conceptualisation of trauma, he rethinks Casey's claim that "there is no memory without body memory" (172), alerting us to how the significance of language in the structure of traumatic remembering derives from the logic of delay that marks both the perception of the traumatic event, whose truth remains unavailable to consciousness other than through "repetitive actions of the survivor" (Caruth 4), and the "intergenerational acts of transfer" (Hirsch 2), which Marianne Hirsch attributes to the "oscillation between continuity and rupture" (6) in the "return of traumatic knowledge and embodied experience" (6). Like Hirsch and Caruth, Trigg insists that in trauma, "the symptomatic reappearance of the past is possible only in a deferred interval between past and present," wherein "latency acts as a defensive shield, protecting the subject from the traumatic event as it is experienced" (237) and underscoring the non-coincidence of bodily absorption and cognitive awareness. As Caruth pointedly argues in *Unclaimed Experience*, by hijacking the embodied subject, trauma conveys itself through a referential drift in language, highlighting "the oscillation between *a crisis of death* and the correlative *crisis of life*: between the story of the unbearable nature of an event and the story of the unbearable nature of its survival" (Caruth 7; original emphasis). At the core of this "double telling" (7) lies the history of trauma as the voice of the wound, manifesting itself through a "textual itinerary of insistently recurring words or figures" (5).

Arguably, for the veterans and the post-war generation in the English-speaking world, the narrative iconography of Japan's prisoner-of-war camps came freighted with ambivalence that measured the moral endurance of the Allies against the material legacy of the atom bomb dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945. While novels like the Australian Nevil Shute's *A Town Like Alice* and Pierre Boulle's *The Bridge Over the River Kwai*, together with the film adaptations, reanimated the past by taking bold representational ownership of the physical plight, Alain Resnais' cinematic rendition of Marguerite Duras' *Hiroshima mon amour*, for example, offered a far more nuanced view of the war trauma, one where history emerges "where *immediate understanding* may not" (Caruth 11; original emphasis). The film *The Bridge on the River Kwai*, in particular, reordered the scales of the factual in favour of affective rewiring, which ran against the prisoners' actual survival tactics in Japanese camps, so that the men's attempts "to sabotage the bridges by bad workmanship, even though they were under constant surveillance by the guards" (MacArthur 78), became erased in the narrative of British pluck and stiff upper lip. By contrast, both Shute's "unforgiving novel" (Macintyre 195) and Duras' screenplay explore the relation between history and the body as its phenomenological epicentre. But where Shute thinks in terms of moral and epistemological coherence, binding the survivor to catastrophic events, Duras opens "a deeply ethical dilemma" (Caruth 27), which presents trauma as a modality of being that coalesces the inability to know with the imperative "not to betray the past" (27). Caruth's reading of *Hiroshima mon amour* diagnoses most aptly the

incompatibility of the "bodily referent" and "the reality of the event" (29), which accounts for the collapse of knowledge in the morphology of trauma. Organised around the trope of sight, the narrative juxtaposes the French woman's insistent "seeing" of Hiroshima to her "blindness" at the site of her German lover's death, suggesting, as Caruth argues, that the loss of sight, both literally and figuratively, is the body's mandate to remember the singularity of the traumatic event: "It is thus utterly deprived of sight and understanding, and only as a fragment, that the body can become, for the woman, the faithful monument to a death" (31). Witnessing, in this perspective, must by default include an ethical awakening to what it means *not to see*, recalibrating thereby the subject's aptitude for a sensual, if belated, recollection of the past.

The *aporia* of seeing in trauma also provides a conceptual anchor to philosopher Giorgio Agamben's theorising about witnessing and testimony as measures of the impasse of survival. Conceding in *Remnants of Auschwitz* that the Holocaust destroyed witnesses because "the 'complete witnesses' are those who did not bear witness and could not bear witness" (2002, 34) as they perished in the extermination camps, he calls our attention to the double bind that holds the surviving subject in relation to body memory, language, and being human. For Agamben, the human capacity for destruction and suffering suggests that "humans bear within themselves the mark of the inhuman, that their spirit contains at its very center the wound of non-spirit, non-human chaos atrociously consigned to its own being capable of everything" (2002, 77). This means that subjectivity is always in excess of itself and it is this paradox of the inhuman within the human which constitutes the *aporia* of bearing witness as an agency of both sight and language. If we accept Agamben's contention that testimony brings together the impossibility of seeing, "the Gorgon, whose vision transforms the human being into a non-human" (2002, 54), and the impossibility of speech, then it produces the subjectivity of the survivor-witness as someone who recognises in the feelings of shame and guilt his or her inability to distinguish between speech and silence. As Agamben puts it:

> Testimony takes place where the speechless one makes the speaking one speak and where the one who speaks bears the impossibility of speaking in his own speech, such that the silent and the speaking, the inhuman and the human enter into a zone of indistinction in which it is impossible to establish the position of the subject, to identify the "imagined substance" of the "I" and, along with it, the true witness. (2002, 120)

As a traumatised body, whose experience is "of a radical bifurcation in the self" (Trigg 250), the surviving witness is always divided from within, assuming the agency of that which exceeds by virtue of his or her silence and thereby consigning testimony to a conceptual abyss of shared lack and excess.

At the same time, however, the *aporia* of testimony, "a potentiality that

becomes actual through an impotentiality of speech" (Agamben 2002, 146), ensures by means of bearing witness to the inhuman that "it is not truly possible to destroy the human, that something always *remains*. *The witness is this remnant*" (2002, 133–134; original emphasis). In this, Agamben's theorising of the non-identity of subject and language links up with the enigma of survival conceived as "an endless testimony to the impossibility of living" (Caruth 62). The paradox of this relation works in alliance with the motility of affect, which exceeds individual bounds and makes it possible for traumatic memory to find a receptacle beyond the original perimeter of lived experience. Embedded in such conception of the transmission of memory is an ethical aperture, which reactivates the channels of intersubjective transactions so that witnessing and remembering may be re-embodied in the cognitive and affective frames of what Hirsch calls "postmemory": "In these ways, less directly affected participants can become engaged in the generation of postmemory that can persist even after all participants and even their familial descendants are gone" (33). In this reasoning, the affiliative knots in the memorial fabric have the capacity to reconfigure acts of witness by "imaginative investment, projection, and creation" (Hirsch 5), promoting the figural passages of time to an order of memory where trauma becomes the origin of historical consciousness and an object of visceral interchange, as acknowledged in Lauren Berlant's observation that an "aesthetic or formal rendition of affective experience provides evidence of historical processes" (17).

"For postmemorial artists," Hirsch argues, "the challenge is to define an aesthetic based on a form of identification and projection that can include the transmission of the bodily memory of trauma without leading to the self-wounding and retraumatization that is rememory" (86). Keeping in mind the emphasis on "a language that preserves connections" (Herman 4), I read Richard Flanagan's novel *The Narrow Road to the Deep North* as a narrative attempt to reexamine the history of Australian POWs in Burma. By focusing on how the novel enfolds into each other the phenomenologies of bliss and bruise, injury and imagination, I cast in relief the affective connections between the novel's ethics of remembering and the aesthetics of haiku, from which it derives by alluding to the work of Japanese poet Matsuo Bashō. Conceived as "a remnant" that can "bear witness" (Agamben 2002, 161), the poetic frame of Flanagan's novel enables a "heteropathic memory" (Hirsch 86), where the history of violence and pain solicits a renewed attentiveness to the complexity of the ethical and epistemic bonds of the present to the past.

2. Affective Remembering: Desire and Pain

The visceral performance of remembering runs through all of the novel's five sections, with each drawing on the memories of its fictional protagonist, Tasmanian surgeon Dorrigo Evans, and his troops as Japan's prisoners of war in Burma during

the Second World War. From the outset, *The Narrow Road to the Deep North* brings to surface the somatic premise of historical experience and, by conflating the perceptual frames of the past and present, calls into question the referential ties between body, memory, and language. Opening with Dorrigo's childhood memories of "sun flooding a church hall in which he sat with his mother and grandmother" (Flanagan 1) and their neighbour Jackie Maguire's emotional breakdown over his wife's leaving him, the novel cross-hatches these memorial threads with the intensely sensual recollections of, on the one hand, Dorrigo's love affair with his uncle's wife Amy, and on the other, the horrors of battle and internment in a POW camp. The conflation of these different referential contexts appears to have been occasioned as much by the postmemorial gestures of the Australian media, which casts Dorrigo in the role of "a war hero […] the public image of a time and a tragedy" (16), as his own apprehension of the fragility of memory and the uncertainty of truth: "A happy man has no past, while an unhappy man has nothing else. In his old age Dorrigo Evans never knew if he had read this or had himself made it up" (3). His "relentless womanising and the deceit that went with it" (17) are of a piece with the referential crisis, outlining the limits of a living memory, which Dorrigo is asked to transmit into a book about the Australian prisoners of war. In the reproduction of his preface, we trace the novel's metadiscursive motion of narrative self-awareness:

> The suffering, the deaths, the sorrow, the abject, pathetic pointlessness of such immense suffering by so many; maybe it all exists only within these pages and the pages of a few other books. Horror can be contained within a book, given form and meaning. But in life horror has no more form than it does meaning. Horror just is. And while it reigns, it is as if there is nothing in the universe that it is not. (23)

The distinction the narrative makes between storied and embodied life reinforces the novel's concern for the ethical work of memory and the struggle of language to contain the past in the form of lived events. Concurrent with the epistemic links between third-person narration and multiple focalisation in *The Narrow Road to the Deep North* is the dispersal of sensory perception orienting the material record of the wounded body and the shared concern for survival. Conveying thereby the logic of fragmentation and cognitive delay, through which trauma presents itself, Flanagan amplifies the figural and tropological capacity of the body, as "a place of meeting and transfer" (Casey 180), to reenact, rather than merely represent, the past "by an internal osmotic intertwining with it" (Casey 178). By making Dorrigo's war experience coterminous with his passion for Amy especially, *The Narrow Road to the Deep North* heaves into view the affective labour of remembering, which gives access to the material intimacy unavailable to the vernacular of institutional history.

In Dorrigo's life, the metonymic thrust of the grammar of love, which ties the amatory to the atrocious as modalities of being, unfolds in relation to his

love of reading. A particular significance is attributed to Alfred Tennyson's poem "Ulysses," which connects his past relationship with Amy to his present affair with Lynette Maison, "the wife of a close colleague, Rick Maison, a fellow council member of the College of Surgeons" (Flanagan 18). Dorrigo, who had grown up with the idea that life may be conceived in "the shadow of a single poem" (77), recites from Tennyson to both women, turning it into a connective tissue between the promise of life before the war and the failures after: for while with Amy he could discuss the Trojan conflict, to Lynette he can only admit that he has forgotten the faces of his dead comrades, especially Darky Gardiner. Lynette's wondering at Dorrigo's ability to remember Tennyson's poem but not a man's face is suggestive of the extent to which his consciousness has been affected by trauma, replacing memories of suffering with literary pleasures as a form of self-protection. In Dorrigo's recitation, the poem acquires metaphorical resonance, aligning both his valour and womanising with the Greek hero's need for adventure and his staunch loyalty to his family, while metonymically tethering Dorrigo to Amy and his unspent grief: "He read and reread 'Ulysses.' He looked back at Amy" (13).

In so far as all of Dorrigo's philanderings echo his romantic past with Amy, his memories of this passion partake of the history of war, whose meaning is postponed in the cycles of his serial womanising. Tied to his love of "the Victorian poets and the writers of antiquity" (62), Amy is also a sign in the language of trauma, emerging as much in contrast to its destructive agency as in complicity with it. The bookstore where they meet for the first time is filled with "second-hand books jammed and leaning at contrary angles like ill-disciplined militia on floor-to-ceiling shelves that ran the length of the side wall" (62). The military simile, while anticipating Dorrigo's life in the army and the image of "a straight line of surveyors' pegs hammered into the ground by Japanese Army engineers to mark the route of a railway" (22), also prepares the ground for the material assault on his senses brought on by the sudden appearance of a young woman with a red camellia in her hair, who interrupts his bookish meditation by engaging him in a conversation about literature. Presented in concrete terms, his perception of her speaks of the magnitude of sensual attraction, which Dorrigo himself finds "dizzying" and "bewildering" (66): "Her eyes burnt like the blue in a gas flame. They were ferocious things" (65). Dorrigo's appraisal of Amy as "a series of slight flaws best expressed in a beauty spot above her right lip" (66) culminates in a recognition of her power "at once conscious and unconscious" (66), which he fails to understand as his own falling in love, but which comes to haunt him in his relationship with his fiancée Ella. The emotional rift this encounter opens up estranges Dorrigo from the Melbourne world of social security that Ella embodies: "Ella's world – which had until then looked so comforting in its security and certainty that he had wished to belong to it – Dorrigo suddenly found pallid and bloodless" (80). Their consequent lovemaking rides on a wave of affect that blends "her kindness and his pity" (81), allowing Dorrigo to suspend Amy's incomprehensible intrusion in the margins of lived experience: he

"immersed himself in life, the furious work and frenetic partying, and let everything else wash ever further away" (83).

The physical and emotional impact of Dorrigo's eventual discovery that Amy is his uncle Keith's wife defines his passion as a dialectic of pleasure and pain. The narrative calls our attention to desire's peristaltic motions, which disperse suffering throughout his pulsating body: "His pounding head, the pain in every movement and act and thought, seemed to have as its cause and remedy her, and only her and only her and only her" (86). His determination to overcome his yearning is similarly based in the body: we learn that he "ate little, lost weight and seemed so oddly preoccupied that the company commander, both impressed and slightly concerned by Dorrigo's extraordinary zeal, gave him a special twenty-four-hour furlough" (87). Predictably, it is the body that takes centre stage when Dorrigo and Amy meet again and go out dancing: "Her touch electrified him, paralysed him, and amidst the noise and smoke and bustle that touch was the only thing he knew. The universe and the world, his life and his body, all reduced to that one electric point of contact" (103). The sensual exchange here may remind us of philosopher Michel Serres' observation in *The Five Senses* of how the epidermal surface intermingles the senses: "Touching is situated between, the skin is the place where exchanges are made, the body traces the knotted, bound, folded, complex path, between the things to be known" (80). On the novel's figural plane, this intermingling of pain and pleasure manifests itself most explicitly in the episode where Dorrigo applies his mouth to a wound on Amy's thigh: "Very slowly, the tips of his lips just touching her skin, he kissed the blood ball away, leaving a crimson smear on her thigh" (Flanagan 132). Beyond words, as Serres points out, the "skin, multisensorial, can pass for our common sense" (81), producing a recognition of shared desire: "A wild, almost violent intensity took hold of their lovemaking and turned the strangeness of their bodies into a single thing" (Flanagan 135). The emphasis on carnal entanglement magnifies the sensual reciprocity that holds the characters together, all the time preparing their inevitable separation and its dramatic consequences. When Keith tells Amy that he knows of her affair with Dorrigo, the narrative catalyses the body as a trope for both individual self and marital union, refiguring blood as a testimony to the wound opened up by the "shards of broken glass" (158) in Amy's stomach and in her marriage: "They bled and bled and would not stop bleeding" (159). In the novel's tropological network, her body's visceral depths produce a catachrestic effect, subsuming into its ambit the memory of Amy's abortion, her affair with Dorrigo, and the future bloodshed of the war.

The affective structure of Dorrigo's relationship with Amy also yields its ambivalence to the visceral imprint of memories he associates with his war experience, which haunt him in his dreams: "The old man was dreaming he was a young man sleeping in a prisoner-of-war camp" (75). For Amy herself, love "was annihilation, the destroyer of worlds" (158). Unsurprisingly, then, by amplifying

the dialectic of desire, *The Narrow Road to the Deep North* unfolds the landscape of war through a conflation of perceptual frames that bring sensation into conceptual affinity with violence. The operation in the Middle East, where Dorrigo and his troops fight before being sent to Java, is a good case in point:

> They walked on through the dead, the dead in the half-moon sangars of rocks pointlessly piled up as a defence against death, the dead bloating in a durra field turned to a hideous bog by water spilt from an ancient stone water channel broken by a shell, the fifteen dead in the village of seven houses in which they had tried to escape death, the dead woman in front of the broken minaret, her small rag bundle of possessions scattered in the dust of the street, her teeth on top of a pumpkin, the blasted bits of the dead stinking in a burnt-out truck. (32)

The visual record of this contracted world collides with the senses of smell and taste to bring to the fore the material operations of war as force, something that Simone Weil has defined as that which "turns anybody who is subjected to it into a thing" (3). Turned into stones, the dead bodies, which orient the soldiers' seeing and walking, become of a piece with the "the dust of the street," with the memory of life clinging to a pumpkin as a tragic substitute for a head. The ubiquity of death, which "had transformed the Australian defenders into things not human, drying dark-red meat and fly-blown viscera" (Flanagan 33), we understand, absorbs Dorrigo's own body, gradually desensitising him to the morphology of violence, wherein he forgets "the sharp taste of stone dust that hung around the broken village houses, the dead skinny donkey's smell and the dead wretched goats' smell, […] the heavy odour of spilled olive oil, all melding into a single smell he came to associate with human beings in trouble" (32).

The use of animal imagery in alliance with the human sensorium retains its moral significance in the narrative's shift to Dorrigo and his troops' transportation to a POW camp. A thousand of them, we learn, are "sardined in the greasy hull of a rustbucket boat to Singapore then marched out to Changi Gaol" (39) and later jammed into trucks "like cattle" (40–41), where they hang on to each other "like monkeys" (41) and sleep "like logs in their swags" (41) before arriving at the site where they have to build their own shelters in preparation for the work on the railway, toiling "like cockroaches" (117) and dying "like stick insects" (266). Notably, the camp guards, too, find a place within the novel's remit of animal imagery: while the Australians live "like ants" (49), Major Nakamura's face is likened to "the snout of a wild pig" (217), a Korean guard goes by the nickname "the Goanna," and an old Japanese guard models himself on the mountain lion: "[…] Kenji Mogami. He thumped his chest. It meana mountain lion, he told them, and smiled" (42), crooning in comic ungainliness a Bing Crosby song: "You go-AAA-assenuate-a-positive / Eliminanay a negative / Lash on a affirmawive / Don't mess with a Misser In-Beween" (43). The grotesque inadequacy of the lyrics

here puts us on notice to how the poetic lines find a place in the regiment of the Line, which is what the Australians call their work on the railway and their "slow descent into madness" (26).

In the postmemorial frame of *The Narrow Road to the Deep North*, the life of the POWs is reduced to the "scabies-ridden bodies and groggy guts," "fevered heads and foul, ulcerated legs," and "perennially shitting arses" (48). Divested of nourishment, medicine, and human dignity, they operate as no more than a set of fungible resources, whose being seems consonant with Agamben's notion of "bare life," which is to say, "the life of *homo sacer* (sacred man), who may be killed and yet not sacrificed" (1998, 8; original emphasis). Specifically, as "a living pledge to his subjection to a power of death" (Agamben 1998, 99), the notion of *homo sacer* calls our attention to how the body of the prisoner of war is transformed into a machine "in service of the Emperor" (Flanagan 95) to be exploited in the making of "the railway, like the teak sleepers and steel rails and dog spikes" (Flanagan 114). The "[i]njured bodies," as Elaine Scarry points out in *The Body in Pain*, "are the material out of which the road is built" (74). Likewise, in a syntactic slope of repeated similes, the novel's railway emerges as an engine of death fuelled by the material substance of Dorrigo's men, who bring the metaphor of war as a road, or the Line, to a physical embodiment:

> As naked slaves to their section of the Line, with nothing more than ropes and poles, hammers and bars, straw hands, they began to clear the jungle for the Line and break the rock for the Line and move the dirt for the Line and carry the sleepers and the iron rails to build the Line. As naked slaves, they were starved and beaten and worked beyond exhaustion on the Line. And as naked slaves they began to die for the Line. (49)

The ethical appeal of "bare life" here, as indeed throughout the narrative of *The Narrow Road to the Deep North*, recalls Scarry's and Hannah Arendt's observations about violence and pain, correlating the prisoners' suffering and survival to the technologies of torture employed by the Japanese in their attempts to defeat the Allies and demonstrate the superiority of the Japanese spirit of Bushido. Like Arendt and Scarry, Flanagan inclines us to see how violence operates as a language of war, which applies the logic of instrumentalisation "to create conditions under which men are dehumanized" (Arendt 63) through a world-destroying use of coercion in the production of pain (Scarry 29). Some of the techniques used by the Japanese captors, we learn, included subjecting the prisoners to starvation, which "hid in each man's every act and every thought" (Flanagan 50), and the Speedo, an intensified period of labour both during the day and night. Underlined in the description of the Australian prisoners' plight is the merging of the human body with the material tools, ushering in an understanding of how the building of the railway functioned as a spectacle of power: "Lit by fires of bamboo and

crude torches made of rags stuffed in bamboo and fed with kerosene, the naked, filthy slaves now worked in a strange, hellish world of dancing flames and sliding shadows. For the hammer men it required greater concentration than ever, as the steel bar disappeared into the darkness of shadow as the hammer fell" (183). The men's succumbing to cholera and other diseases, which turn their bodies into "shrivelled husks" with "barked skin, mud-toned and black-shadowed, clutching twisted bones" comparable to "mangrove roots" (236), speaks back to the mechanism of torture by "bestow[ing] visibility on the structure and enormity of what is usually private and incommunicable, contained within the boundaries of the sufferer's body" (Scarry 27). In this way, every death in the camp becomes a shared act of lethal precariousness, with the body abandoning its cognitive agency and shutting down on itself altogether. We recognise this in the passing of Tiny Middleton, whose "magnificent body" (Flanagan 186), used to absorbing "blows and kicks in a manner that bordered on insolent" (184), signals the approaching end before the man himself becomes aware of it: "The lice knew it […] And Tiny seemed not to care that his body was overrun with them, no longer worried about washing or where he shat. Then came the ringworm. As if even fungi knew it, sensing the moment a man gave up on himself and was already as good as a corpse rotting back into the earth" (186). A site of parasitic invasion, Tiny's body becomes metaphorical of the scale of dehumanisation practiced as the camp ethos, highlighting the sadism of the Japanese guards in their attitude to the Australians, as voiced by the camp translator: "Nippon prepared to work, Major Nakamura say, Australian must work. Nippon eat less, Australian eat less. Nippon very sorry, Major Nakamura say. Many men must die" (217).

The affective knot of cynicism and nihilism in the Japanese insistence that "health follows will" (217) unleashes its ethical weight in the depiction of the torture of Darky Gardiner, a young Australian of Aboriginal descent, who is punished for overlooking the absence of nine men from his squad. His beating, which is synchronised in the narrative with Dorrigo's operating on Jack Rainbow's gangrened leg, recalls Caruth's and Agamben's reasoning about the *aporia* of sight in the structure of the traumatic event. All the men who are made to witness the punishment find themselves unable to sustain their looking, their mind blocking out both the sight and sounds of the wounded man: "So they saw, but they did not see; so they heard, but they did not hear; and they knew, they knew it all, but still they tried not to know" (285). For Nakamura, "the punishment of a prisoner offered a way for the guards to reassert their authority and for all the prisoners to be reminded of their sacred duty" (Flanagan 288), bringing back to us Arendt's remark about how "violence is neither beastly nor irrational" (63). But the empathy for which the novel calls in its description of Darky's torture alerts us to the inadequacy of language to contain and convey pain, which has colonised the human body, turning it into the savage attacker's double: "Blow after blow – on the monster's face, a monster's mask" (285). This "liturgy of punishment" (Foucault 34), which marks

Darky out for destruction, breaks his body into mechanical parts that can no longer support life: "His head snapped sideways, he gasped and reeled backwards, trying not to fall, but his body had grown clumsy. He tripped and fell to the ground" (Flanagan 291). His ultimate drowning in a pit of excrement, to which he stumbles during the night, epitomises the lived experience of immersion retrieved through the meshwork of narrative imagination: "There was a world and there was him and the thread joining the two was stretching and stretching, he was trying to pull himself up that thread, he was desperately trying to haul himself back home to where his mother was calling" (297). In giving us access to the dying Darky's consciousness, the narrative also awakens us to the power of the literary imagination to preserve the man's humanity in a postmemorial account of moral, if not material, endurance. Far from its emphasis on the unsharability of pain highlighted by Scarry (4), *The Narrow Road to the Deep North* affords us, through a visceral re-enactment of the past, moments of revelation, where memory takes stock of itself as affective intensity as well as epistemic perplexity, giving rise to new modes of readerly responsibility in the ethics of remembering.

3. The Impasse of Survival and the Art of Witnessing

If we accept Scarry's claim that imagination is as anomalous a state as pain is, both constituting the "'framing events' within whose boundaries all other perceptual, somatic, and emotional events occur" (165), then it is reasonable to consider the ways in which the domain of art, which in *The Narrow Road to the Deep North* encompasses poetry, music, and painting, links up with the postmemorial imperative to do justice to the past. Music and visual art, in particular, are keyed to the acts of witnessing, reinforcing the novel's abiding concern to translate the body of trauma into the voice of memory. The ambivalence of poetry, in turn, unfolds alongside the oscillating narrative point of view, which expands the interiority of perception, yoking the Japanese guards to the Australian prisoners of war and rescaling the measure of survival in the record of moral and material atrocity. By acknowledging Matsuo Bashō's *haibun, The Narrow Road to the Deep North* as a structuring model for blending prose and poetry in an attempt to create what Bashō's translator calls "a monument […] against the flow of time" (Yuasa; qtd. in Bashō 37), Flanagan re-cuts the affective ties between the victims and perpetrators, which organise the shared space of historical experience, and gives poetry a latitude of ethics to reanimate the voice of the wound and produce a more nuanced understanding of history.

The power of art to convey testimony in Flanagan's novel takes its heart from the idea of mateship as a mode of survival shared by the Australian POWs. Darky Gardiner thinks about this when he looks at the dying Tiny Middleton: "Because courage, survival, love – all these things didn't live in one man. They lived in them

all or they died and every man with them; they had come to believe that to abandon one man was to abandon themselves" (186). MacArthur has observed in *Surviving the Sword* that "[a]mong the Australians there was also a closer bond between officers and men – and the tougher the conditions, the tighter that bond became" (154). This is certainly true of Dorrigo's actions when despite his own hunger, he gives away a steak to be shared by his men: "It's yours, not mine! Take it! Share it! Share it!" (Flanagan 52). Inasmuch as Dorrigo hates "the people who pretended he had virtue or pretended to virtue themselves" (53), he interprets the offering of the grilled meat as "a test that demanded witnesses, a test he had to pass" (51) to not only provide his men with a story, but also organise them "into surviving" (439). A similar emphasis on shared survival is brought to relief in the episode of Darky's feeding a stolen egg to Tiny: "Tiny grunted, and Darky halved the egg with his spoon. Tiny held out his hands in a cup, as if it were a sacrament he was receiving, to make sure no crumbling yolk was lost. And into Tiny's cupped hands Darky now added half a small fried rice ball he had saved beneath his blanket from a previous meal" (187). The metaphor of the Holy Communion, while magnifying the scale of the men's suffering and foreshadowing their deaths, also lends itself to Serres' conceptual association, *pace* Leibniz, of "the French *blesser*, to wound, with the English *bless*," which in both cases means "to mark with a sign, defamatory and painful, or fortunate and salutary two values for whomever receives it, marked with a beneficial or deadly seal, and sometimes both at once" (72; original emphasis). Read in this light, *The Narrow Road to the Deep North* subverts the logic of *homo sacer*, refiguring Darky's death as martyrdom. What is more, given that in Greek "martyr" means witness, Darky's ordeal becomes symbolic of a conceptual impasse, in which he constitutes both trauma and its transcendence, calling to mind Agamben's quip that "human beings are human insofar as they bear witness to the inhuman" (2002, 121). An agent of agony as well as moral dignity, Darky's butchered flesh exceeds the act of ontological erasure, to which he is subjected by Major Nakamura, soliciting the reader's affective reciprocity as a shared form of a postmemorial recognition of the truth of suffering.

Inasmuch as *The Narrow Road to the Deep North* gives us access to the economy of torture as a field of power relations, it recalls Michel Foucault's observation in *Discipline and Punish* about how "torture forms part of a ritual" (34), whose material inscription on the victim's body carries the weight of the perpetrator's triumph. For the novel's Japanese commanders, the ceremonial nature of violence stems from its conceptual link to the ethical code of Bushido, which organises their actions into a structure of honour. Thus, for example, Major Nakamura "cared about the railway, honour, the Emperor, Japan, and he had a sense of himself as a good and honourable officer" (116). Central to the tenets of this structure is, we understand, the figure of the Emperor, who, by embodying the spirit of the nation, orients the Japanese war effort. As Dean Aszkielowicz argues in *The Australian Pursuit of Japanese Criminals, 1943–1957*, "[b]eyond

the question of his culpability as a leader of Japan, an emperor cult was said to have driven Japanese soldiers to behave fanatically and according to what was assumed to be the style of the warrior code of bushido […]. In this system, soldiers supposedly showed no mercy, compassion, or regard for a surrendered soldier" (24). Colonel Kato's actions also adhere to this logic, measuring human worth in violently synecdochic terms: "I meet someone new, I look at his neck, I size it up – easy to cut or hard to cut. And that's all I want of people, their necks, that blow, this life, those colours, the red, the white, the yellow" (Flanagan 124). As a form of ritual performance, decapitation invites an analogy to the writing of haiku, whose poetics, though not necessarily evocative of death, depends on "the 'cutting word' (*kireji*), which splits the poem in two and allows the two halves to reverberate" (Shirane 461; original emphasis). By literalising this metaphor in Kato's actions, Flanagan's novel amplifies the grotesque horror and perversity of ritual torture. Nowhere is it more evident than in the scene where Kato attempts to behead Darky, but has to give up because in "his mind, he kept muddling the poem" (258).

The scene also needs to be thought in conjunction to the cultural significance of haiku poetry, which is keyed to both the Japanese spirit and individual destiny, it being a poem one traditionally writes at the end of life. Nakamura's death haiku encapsulates his unwavering belief in the morality of his actions during the war: "Winter ice / melts into clean water – / clear is my heart" (395). Similarly, by quoting Bashō, Colonel Kato subsumes his poetry into the railway project, in which Bashō's work becomes part of the catachresis that erases distinctions between the Emperor, the railway, and haiku poetry. Nakamura's thinking that "the Japanese spirit is now itself the railway, and the railway the Japanese spirit, our narrow road to the deep north, helping to take the beauty and wisdom of Bashō to the larger world" (126) is in line with the same ethos that celebrates the discipline of body and soul to the extent where human life is bound to the Emperor, as "a poem of one word […] – a poem that encompassed the universe and transcended all morality and all suffering" (392).

Nakamura's using of haiku to reinforce the idea that he is "a good man" (378) goes together with his notion of memory as an obstacle to survival: "You survive if you forget, he said angrily" (316). By contrast, to Dorrigo and his fellow POWs, poetry reminds of the ethical imperative to remember, binding their own acts of witnessing to memory as "the true justice" (243). But remembering here, too, bears the threat of forgetting, as suggested in the lines from Rudyard Kipling's poem "Recessional" quoted by Dorrigo: "Judge of the Nations, spare us yet, / Lest we forget – lest we forget!" (243). His reading of Kipling's hymn as "a poem about how everything gets forgotten" (243) links up with the failure of his own memory of Amy, of whose "face he could remember nothing" (206), but whose sensual imprint haunts him in Burma: "His world beyond here has shrunk to her. Not Ella. Her voice, her smile, her throaty laugh, the smell of her asleep" (203). A hymn composed for Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee, "Recessional," in *The Narrow Road to the*

Deep North has wider implications still. The poem's use of the language of liturgy correlates with the novel's acts of ritual torture, consecrating the dying Australian prisoners of war as martyrs, while also lending its power to claim witness beyond the material conditions of survival. We may recall here Agamben's observation that "the poetic is the one that is always situated in the position of a remnant and that can, therefore, bear witness. Poets – witnesses – found language as what remains, as what actually survives the possibility, or impossibility, of speaking" (2002, 161). Coupled with Rabbit Hendricks' drawings of the camp life and the bugle music Jimmy Bigelow plays at Rabbit's funeral, Kipling's poem performs the ethical work of memory by lending its voice to the camp witnesses locked in suffering. The fact that Rabbit's sketchbook, with drawings of "the hideous labour, the beatings, the torture" (Flanagan 179) as well as "Darky Gardiner sitting in an opulent armchair covered in little fish, drinking coffee in a ruined street of a Syrian village" (251) survives his funeral pyre is a further testimony to the capacity of art to endure human destruction. Likewise, Jimmy's bugle call gathers a force of temporary sustenance that "spiralled out towards a shared dream of human transcendence that perished in the same sound, that was just out of reach, until the next note, the next phrase, the next time –" (248).

Despite its emphasis on the affective powers of art, however, *The Narrow Road to the Deep North* is far from melodramatic in its engagement with the traumatic history of the Second World War. Nor does it draw on the logic of binary oppositions, where the Japanese captors and Australian POWs operate as distinct agents of evil versus good. On the Australian side, next to the moral fortitude of the characters like Darky Gardiner, for example, we find the cynicism of Rooster MacNeice, who begins every morning "by reciting under his breath the page of *Mein Kampf* he had memorised the night before" (191). Unsurprisingly, he "hated chinks, nips and slopes, and, being a fair-minded man, he also hated poms and yanks" (193), channelling his racism into his relationship with Darky, whom he saw as "a common and dirty man, and like most half-castes not to be trusted" (192–193). The responsibility the narrative attributes to Rooster for not stepping up to save Darky from punishment is part of the self-serving behaviour that post-war investigations uncovered among some Australian POWs. Thinking that Gardiner stole his breakfast egg, Rooster decides that "he would not help such a man" (299). This recalls Aszkielowicz's observation that "Australian POWs were alleged to have stolen from each other or otherwise to have taken advantage of each other. The details in the trial records thus reveal that not everyone was able to cope with the intense pressure on Australian POWs as stoically as the popular stereotype suggests" (41). Calling into question his moral integrity, the novel ties Rooster's conscience to that of Major Nakamura, who, when working in a hospital after the war, dismisses the American accusations of the Japanese "vivisection of live American airmen, without the use of anaesthetics" (Flanagan 354). When his *go* partner, Dr. Kameya Sato, explains that he was there and helped

perform the vivisection, so the doctors could "prove themselves worthy servants of the Emperor," Nakamura agrees that they were "acting correctly and ethically" (355). Yet, when Sato asks him why the American airman trusted him, we hear the doctor's recognition of his betrayal of the Hippocratic oath: "Because he thought my white coat meant I would help him" (358).

Flanagan inquires into the reasons for the cruelty of Japanese soldiers in the POW camps, drawing parallels between the indoctrination to which soldiers were subject in the Japanese army and the failures of conscience among the Australians imprisoned in Burma. Corporeal and psychological violence, we learn, was part of the Japanese military training, reducing human life to its instrumental worth. This works towards explaining why after the war, when recalling his training in Japan, where he was regularly beaten for any misdemeanour, the Goanna, now a war criminal, cannot understand why it was wrong to punish the Australian POWs: "He was vaguely aware that some had died because of his beatings. They probably would have died anyway. It was that sort of place and that sort of time, and no amount of thinking made any more or less sense of what had happened" (322–323). The Goanna's lack of empathy echoes in Major Nakamura's memories of his own army training, which points back to the injured body:

> He had been beaten with a baseball bat on his buttocks for showing 'insufficient enthusiasm' when washing his superior's underwear. He had been beaten senseless by three officers when, as a recruit, he had misheard an order. He had been made to stand-to all day on the parade ground, and when he had collapsed they had fallen on him for disobeying the order and beaten him unconscious. (317)

Without suggesting that the old code of warrior culture should offer a moral justification for the war atrocities, *The Narrow Road to the Deep North* problematises any simplified reading of the historical conflict, showing how, by annihilating human bodies, the violence of war institutes a "fluidity of referential direction" (Scarry 115), which blurs the lines of ethical distinctions. For example, when Dorrigo sees the Japanese troops marching to the Burmese front, he is struck by their resemblance to the Australian POWs: "But these Japanese soldiers, who had clearly been marching all day and long into the night on their way to the horror of another front, looked as much the wretched of war as the POWs themselves, broken, bedraggled, exhausted" (Flanagan 437). The shared vulnerability of the soldiers and POWs looms especially large when a Japanese sergeant assaults a young soldier with a bamboo cane for looking at Dorrigo, who finds himself thinking that "this soldier no more understood his beating or purpose than the POWs did their miserable fate" (438).

4. Haiku as a Language of Trauma

The delay in understanding is intrinsic to the narrative structure of *The Narrow Road to the Deep North*, as both a thematic thread and a formal principle of text organisation. Thematically, cognitive deferral figures as a consequence of war trauma, wherein the impasse of survival makes living unbearable for the former POWs: "They died off quickly, strangely, in car smashes and suicides and creeping diseases" (327). Similarly, Jimmy Bigelow feels "some nameless terror that was beyond him to explain" (300) and develops an obsession about folding clothes "ever outwards" (300), like he was made to do in the Japanese camp. Discouraged by "the army quacks" (328) from sharing their experience because "that talk was no good" and it "was hardly a hero's tale in the first place" (328), many former POWs, we learn, took to alcohol as a means of gaining emotional relief: "They drank to make themselves feel as they should feel when they didn't drink, that way they had felt when they hadn't drunk before the war" (329). Carrying within himself "a great slumbering turbulence he could neither understand nor reach" (385), Dorrigo also drinks "sometimes a whiskey in his morning tea, a negroni or two before dinner […] and wine with it, brandy and whiskey after and some more whiskey after that and after that again" (385). Like Jimmy Bigelow, who finds it "hard to believe that all the things that had happened to him had ever really happened, that he had seen all the things he had seen" (249), after the war Dorrigo accepts "unreality as the greatest force in life" (383), staying the course in marriage with Ella, whom he nevertheless ceaselessly betrays as a way of "honouring Amy" (401).

Consigned to "the most complete and unassailable loneliness, so loud a solitude that he sought to crack its ringing silence again and again with yet another woman" (401), he cannot escape "the fatality of memory" (400), wherein "pursuing the past inevitably only leads to greater loss" (400). This is especially true of his memories of selecting a hundred men for a death "march to a camp near Three Pagoda Pass" (436) in Siam, which haunt him on his own deathbed. Enhanced through its emphasis on the morphology of the broken body, with its "[s]loughing tendons and [exposed] fasciae" alongside the tunnelled muscles and "a raw tibial bone that looked as if a dog had gnawed it" (440), the description of the scene of selection exposes the extent of Dorrigo's sense of shame and guilt in not being able to save his men. In Agamben's terms, Dorrigo's shameful self-perception as "a carrion monster" and a "Charon" reigning over "a feast of death" (Flanagan 440) partakes of the *aporia* of survival, where he "becomes witness to [his] own disorder, [his] own oblivion as a subject" (Agamben 2002, 106), lost in the double bind of victim and victimiser. All the more poignant, then, is Jimmy Bigelow's and the rest of the hundred men's expression of gratitude "for everything" (Flanagan 441), for it recaptures the ethical power of testimony, which emerges in the abyss of Dorrigo's moral dilemma, endowing "the non-place of articulation" (Agamben 2002, 130) with the capacity to turn shame into postmemory. In other words, if

we accept Agamben's reading of shame as a relation of desubjectification that translates body into voice and gives speech to the unspeakable, then Dorrigo's observation that "to share life is to share guilt" (Flanagan 398) paves a way for a reciprocity of historical understanding that binds the present to the past in an infinite loop of ethical responsibility.

The sharp end of this understanding, however, coincides with the cognitive delay as a structural principle, which works in unison with the intertextual frame of Bashō's 18th-century poetic masterpiece, *The Narrow Road to the Deep North*, lending its title to Flanagan's novel. As the Japanese poet's metaphor for life (Yuasa; qtd. in Bashō 37), the 18th-century text calls our attention to what literary critic Ian Marshall describes as haiku's capacity to "attune us to the present moment, reinforce seasonal awareness, promote social bonding, and provide practice in cognitive play, especially in terms of filling the gaps inherent in the haiku form" (92). The significance Marshall locates in haiku's appeal to the senses, overriding the call of the past in order to "place us bodily and sensuously in the world" (93), conflicts with Flanagan's concern for the body as an ethical agent of postmemory. It summons up Major Nakamura's self-image as "a blessed and lucky man who had led a good life" (Flanagan 395) and Jimmy Bigelow's gradual descent into dementia, where "he could recall no acts of violence" (433) in the POW camp. Yet as a poetic form keyed to the agency of the reader, who "must enter into the 'cut,' the open space, and connect the two parts in her head" (Shirane 461), Flanagan's use of haiku in his novel makes it imperative for us to recognise the historical dimension of the visceral truth of trauma, reminding us of the tangible links between haiku's "communal setting" (Shirane 461) and its seasonal world, which make this poetic form amenable to the work of remembering.

Opening the first section with a Bashō haiku and following up with four Issa haikus in the subsequent sections of *The Narrow Road to the Deep North*, Flanagan stages an act of reading that works against the idea of the line as a narrative principle of life. Informed as it is by the lived experience of war, the novel's textual itinerary unfolds as a recursive loop of passion associated with both love and suffering, memory and forgetting, life and death. In connecting the five haikus, which give the novel its formal backbone, we share in the testimony of trauma that signifies through anamnesis, which "both fulfils and lacerates" us (Barthes 217), awakening into a tragically delayed truth. Structurally, the two crucial points of this truth concern the significance of Amy and Darky Gardiner in Dorrigo's life, something that the narrative conveys as part of its hermeneutics of trauma. Towards the end of the novel's second section Keith tells Amy that "Dorrigo's dead" (Flanagan 173), basing his conclusion on the testimony of an escapee from a camp: "He died six months ago" (173). As it zooms in on Amy's body crouching, in shock, "on the floor, like a child" (174), the chapter ends with a reference to the explosion that reduces Keith's "gracious four-storey stone hotel to smouldering rubble" (174), allowing us to believe that Amy died in it. This,

in fact, is what Ella writes to Dorrigo, when sharing her news from home: "Poor Mrs Keith Mulvaney is now among the confirmed dead" (446). The scene, where Dorrigo, many years after the war, sees Amy on a bridge in Sydney like "a ghost walking in the sunlight" (410), magnifies the tragedy of delayed knowledge, whose affective residue solidifies into an "abyss of years" (411), from which he cannot escape: "He had thought her dead. But now he finally understood: it was she who had lived and he who had died" (413). A gap in the "texture of memory," which Roland Barthes compares to the Japanese haiku's ability "to articulate [the past], without recuperating it in any destiny" (216), Dorrigo's seeing Amy alive only exacerbates his sense of loss, deepening his emotional solitude in an understanding that they cannot be together.

In the novel's economy of pain Amy's survival is tethered to Darky Gardiner's death in the POW camp, both being events that sustain Dorrigo's sense of guilt. Recalling the novel's opening scene, where as a child, he saw their neighbour, Jackie Maguire, cry over the disappearance of his wife, the narrative links this memory to Dorrigo's witnessing of his brother's kissing of Mrs Maguire: "his brother with his hand reaching up inside her skirt, as she – a small, intense woman of exotic darkness – leaned up against the chicken shed behind the coaching house" (7). The story comes full circle when, while visiting his brother Tom in hospital after his heart attack, Dorrigo learns the meaning of his witnessing. Revealing that he had had an affair with Mrs Maguire, Tom explains that Dorrigo saw her telling him about her baby: "That day I, sort of, well, broke down about the war, she held me like I said. And she told me about the baby. She had just found out what had happened to it" (408–409). What emerges as another belated effect of trauma is that the baby was Tom's son, adopted by a family called the Gardiners. In contrast to Darky's own thinking that his life "would ultimately be forgotten and mean no more than a fallen bamboo" (259), our learning of his being Dorrigo's nephew amplifies the novel's ambit of grief, whereby it folds the hidden lines of descent into the historical events on the Line and makes possible a postmemorial conception of a genealogy of trauma, where the experience of loss, like witnessing, is never complete and therefore remains infinitely ambiguous and open to reinterpretation.

5. Conclusion

Beyond any illusion of recuperation, the postmemorial allegiance to the past in Flanagan's *The Narrow Road to the Deep North* ultimately rests on the figure of the loop, rather than the line, visually conveyed through the image of a circle painted by the haiku poet Shisui. Evoking the confluence of life and death, this image, which is visually reproduced twice in the novel, binds its beginning to its end, troping Dorrigo's body memory into "an endless mystery, lengthless breadth, the great wheel, eternal return" (28). A staggering "antithesis to the line" (28), it

honours the historical experience of the Australian POWs, by acknowledging the recursive nature of traumatic memory, whose affective labour catalyses our ethical engagement with the material history of the Second World War and the visceral imagination that pays heed to it. By highlighting the tropological weight of the body as a historical agent, Flanagan brings to relief the material conditions of bearing witness that organised the affective relays between thought and action in the POW camps. In this respect, the narrative's postmemorial imperatives coordinate the effort to bring its readers into a shared space of heteropathic understanding, where addressing questions of witnessing and survival includes an acknowledgment of the ethically entangled structures of violence and their collapse of referential certainty. Affective remembering in the novel extends across the boundaries and bodies of time as well as space to elicit a hermeneutics of reciprocity that constitutes the postmemorial subjectivity of Flanagan's readership. The catachrestic effect of using haiku poetry as an epistemological frame insists on revising the ethical dichotomies of victim/victimiser and human/inhuman in order to restore attention to the shared vulnerabilities of historical subjects and their place in the hierarchies of mourning. Out of the depths of the narrative structures in *The Narrow Road to the Deep North* emerges an exegesis of passion, which, by intertwining love, violence, and suffering as modes of historicity, turns the lived events of the Second World War into a narrative scene of making sense that is simultaneously sensuously imaginative and historically truthful.

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Offshore Detention in Australia: Behrouz Boochani's *No Friend but the Mountains: Writing from Manus Prison* (2018)

Abstract: This article focuses on the "Pacific Solution," the Australian national policy of controlling illegal migration by detaining refugees in Immigrant Detention Centres in offshore Pacific islands of Manus and Nauru, and the human rights issues it raises. It refers to Behrouz Boochani's prize-winning refugee memoir, *No Friend but the Mountains: Writing from Manus Prison* (2018) as both a prison narrative of resilience and a politically resistant text, and it discusses Boochani's representation of Manus Detention camp as "The Kyriarchal System" in terms of Foucault's "monstrous heterotopia." The article emphasises the issues of accountability and responsibility in the bilateral governance arrangements of the Manus Detention Centre between Australia and Papua New Guinea, and considers the possibility of more humane detention practices in the future.

Keywords: Manus Island, Behrouz Boochani, Pacific Solution, Immigration Detention Centres, Australia, deterrence systems, offshore regional processing

1. Offshore Processing Centres and the Pacific Solution

> What they have created is a system of deterrences, and indeed a spectacle of deterrence. It says: *This is the purgatory to which you will be subjected if you arrive in Australia without papers*. In this respect Baxter Detention Centre out in the South Australian Desert is not dissimilar to Guantanamo Bay. *Behold: this is what happens to those who cross the line we have drawn. Be warned.* (Coetzee 112–113; original emphasis)

The high profile exposure of the unprecedented influx of illegal refugees from the Global South, often represented politically as a "crisis,"[1] confirms migration as "one of the most controversial areas of policy and practice facing virtually all

countries" (Crawley 25). Attitudes have hardened in most receiving countries into a preoccupation with national security and border controls; detention has become the key component of border enforcement, and Immigration Detention Centres (IDCs), where asylum processing can take place, have multiplied: e.g. throughout the middle east, on Greek islands, and along the US-Mexican border. Small islands are increasingly used as convenient sites for offshore detention practices because their distance from sovereign territory allows for the implementation of often questionable activities. They also provide opportunity for mutually beneficial arrangements whereby the smaller or island country does the dirty work of the rich country in return for a cash injection and the promise of benefits. As Alison Mountz comments, the "partial forms of sovereignty, citizenship and protection on offshore islands […] provide conditions for exploitation and the undermining of responsibilities of signatory states" (122); furthermore

> Islands provide bounded space for the emergence of ingenious new species of asymmetrical economies and governance […] [as] typically large states make creative use of their small, far-flung and remote island jurisdictions to facilitate activities that would be simply anathema on home ground. (Baldacchino and Milne 488; qtd. in Mountz 122)

Such practices include detaining refugees on these liminal sites to stop them reaching sovereign territory, concealing them from media scrutiny, investing massive resources in deterrence and detention, and privatising detention.

Australia's hegemony in the Pacific has enabled it to pay the governments of Papua New Guinea and the island of Nauru to manage IDCs on their territory (Fitzgerald 219, 237), and to develop a remote system of control. This does little more than 'modernise' their histories of colonisation, Nauru as previously a phosphate mining colony governed by Britain, and Manus, a US naval base. Called the "Pacific Solution," the nation's remote detention network as extended to these and other offshore island territories from 2001 – Christmas Island, an Australian territory in the Indian Ocean, and Indonesian islands – has shown little respect for the international law of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR). In the Scottish Hebrides, the Isle of Wight and the Isle of Mann are processing sites for refugees arriving by sea from France, and migration management centres exist on Lampadeusa, Malta and the Canary Islands (see Mountz 121–122). All aim to exclude migrants from access to sovereign territory, legal advocacy, information and translation services, media and citizenship support. These modern immigration practices and the globalisation of a system of remote control represent new configurations of sovereign power and neocolonialism in response to heightened concerns with securitisation and border controls.

In the epigraph above, J.M. Coetzee's character in his novel *Diary of a Bad Year* links the Baxter Detention Centre in the South Australian Desert with Guantanamo Bay in providing a "spectacle of deterrence." Deterrence justifies the

official attitude in Australia towards maritime refugees implied in the "scapegoating discourse" (van Berlo 3) that frames them as illegals, border threats, criminals or queue jumpers because of arriving by sea without a visa rather than legally by air. Under Operation Sovereign Borders inaugurated by Tony Abbott's government in 2013, this was also claimed as a humanitarian practice of saving lives at sea by intercepting refugee boats, with tow-back to Indonesia and take-back to Sri Lanka and Vietnam, so allegedly combating the practices of human smugglers (van Berlo 3). The policy of mandatory and indefinite detention of illegal arrivals in offshore islands, first initiated in 1992, has been shared by both political parties because of a successful electioneering tactic: for those on the left an asylum policy assuages fear of foreigners, for the right it provides opportunity to foster and draw on those fears (Moses 2020). The Pacific Solution was first implemented by Prime Minister John Howard in 2001 with a detention camp on Nauru Island, which was closed down in 2007 after reports of sexual and child abuse. Offshore processing continued, however, with the reopening of the Nauru camp in 2012 under Julia Gillard's government, and a new camp on Manus Island, over which Australia ceded management responsibility to Papua New Guinea (PNG) through a Regional Resettlement Agreement (RRA). Strategies of concealment and silencing included a ban on media, humanitarian groups and researchers from 2012, and from July 2015, a two-year prison sentence for release of unauthorised information by employees or workers imposed by an Australian Border Force Act (Fleay 2016, 83).

These coercive containment strategies for negotiating displacement have been marked by disputes over access, legality, sovereignty, and management, as reports of violence, abuse, and human rights infringements outraged sectors of the public as well as human rights groups. Vigilant civil society watchdog groups in Australia devoted to investigating and publicising the hidden conditions in Manus and Nauru IDCs (Immigration Detention Centres) exposed in numerous leaks to the Australian media cases of self-harm, attempted suicide, death of detainees, and child and sex abuse. The most renowned of these revelations is the award-winning memoir, *No Friend but the Mountains: Writing from Manus Prison* (2018), by Iranian Kurdish film-maker, investigative journalist and writer, Behrouz Boochani. Boochani's first-hand account of psychological survival testifies to the collective experience of detainees on Manus Island (McDonald 239–240), and is recognised as a significant part of Australia's hidden history.

Boochani fled persecution in his homeland in Iran caused by his outspokenness as a freelance reporter for Iranian newspapers, notably the Kurdish-language magazine *Werya*, which was raided by Sepah, the paramilitary intelligence agency of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps in early 2013, and his support for Kurdish Rights through membership of the National Union of Kurdish Students and the outlawed Kurdish Democratic Party (McDonald 240). After first going underground following the raid on Werya, he survived a harrowing sea voyage from Indonesia to arrive at Christmas Island on 23 July 2013 where he asked

for asylum in Australia according to the 1951 Refugee Convention; but as Prime Minister Kevin Rudd had passed a law forbidding access of illegal migrants to Australia on 19 July, he and other refugees were transferred either to Nauru or to the newly reopened detention centre in the Lombrum naval base on Manus Island.

Boochani's account attests to the systematic mistreatment of refugees and its psychological consequences in the secretive, claustrophobic "malarial hell-hole" (Kenny n.p.) on Manus island where he lived for 2,269 days in an overcrowded and under-resourced camp, originally designed to house 500 men but by February 2014, expanding to accommodate 1338 (Wallis and Dalsgaard 303). There were suicide attempts, acts of self-harm, and up to seven deaths caused by violence, suicide and medical negligence. The real life – and narrative – climax was a four-day riot in February 2014, in which one detainee, the Iranian Rezi Barati, was killed. The book ends with the camp's closure in October 2017 after the Supreme Court of PNG declared it unlawful, although complaints from workers that they could no longer tolerate working there, were undoubtedly influential. In Manus, as in the Nauru camp which closed in 2018, detainees resisted the offer of release into the local island community because there was no promise of access to Australia. Most remained in camp detention for two more years before being evicted to detention centres in Australia, or deported to countries like USA, Cambodia, PNG, Nauru or New Zealand (FitzGerald 240–243).

Boochani was already known while in detention on Manus for his feature writing in the international media, notably his "Diary of Disaster" (25 October to November 2017) in *The Guardian online* (Whitlock 2018, 179–180). *No Friend but the Mountains* was published to critical acclaim because of its resistant, courageous stance against the state in challenging "the master narrative in Australia political and media rhetoric" about refugees (McDonald 239). In his preface, Australian novelist Richard Flanagan sees parallels with prison narratives like those of Gramsci, Martin Luther King and Oscar Wilde,[2] and reviewers affirmed its national importance: Robert Manne, for example, insisted that "every Australian beginning with the Prime Minister should read Behrouz Boochani's intense, lyrical, and psychologically perceptive prose-poetry masterpiece" (2). The memoir gained national renown after being awarded the prestigious Australian literary prize, the Victoria Premiere's Award for Literature and simultaneously the prize for Non-Fiction in February (Walhquist 2019). Critics have also focused on its distinguishing features as migrant writing, Chandani Lokuge sees it as an example of the non-citizen genre, by or about asylum seekers concerning the impossibility of belonging to a country (16), while for Willa MacDonald it is the product of the digital age: Boochani, that is, uses contemporary technologies (mobile phones, social media) as a tool for his various creations, including his journalism, and co-directed film *Chauka: Please Tell Us the Time,* shot on a smartphone on Manus and sent to the Netherlands (244, 250). Rita Sakr argues that Boochani's "horrific surrealism" gestures towards a reconceptualisation of sanctuary in terms of relational imaginaries that resist and disrupt the biopolitical border-detention complex (231).

This article will read *No Friend but the Mountains* as a text of political resistance and personal resilience, which challenges the official narrative of victimhood and scapegoating of refugees by which the Australian government justified offshore Regional Processing. Boochani bears witness to the detention facility as a site of psychological torture while simultaneously showing how solace and writing enabled him to reconstruct his identity and establish his sense of self and inner agency. Metatextual features such as the polyvocal introduction, footnotes and afterword also identify it as a new type of mediated refugee writing in which the voices of western supporters reaffirm him as speaking on behalf of other detainees and in order to engage mainstream Australian culture. The article examines briefly the management arrangements of Manus IDC shared between PNG and Australia, referring to Boochani's representation of the fluctuating relations and unstable dynamics between the Australian Security Guards, the PNG security and maintenance forces, and his fellow inmates – minority groups from Iran, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, Iran, Pakistan, Somalia, Rohingya, Bangladesh, the Sudan and Turkey – and finally it discusses the system of IDCs in relation to humanitarian expectations.

2. Manus as Heterotopic Space: Beyond 'Enemy Alien or Captive Ally'

> As in Guantanamo Bay, the Baxter detention camp […] has among its targets masculine honour, masculine dignity […]. [I]t is intended that when prisoners at last emerge from incarceration they will be mere shells of men, physically wrecked. (Coetzee 112–113)

No Friend but the Mountains' account of incarceration in Manus is one of many witness testimonies of the IDCs on Manus and Nauru islands published by journalists, humanitarian researchers, or citizen activists who overcame the severe constraints on access to provide first hand evidence of cruelty and other abuses, or by employees and whistle-blowers of the contracting companies, testifying to the difficulties of working there.[3] It can be read in relation to Judith Butler's argument that "[i]n the politics of immigration some lives are perceived as lives while others […] fail to assume perceptual form as such" (24) and the question about why asylum seekers subjected to enforcement practices should be seen as less grievable, more inauthentic and their lives more disposable. Boochani reshapes the shadowy and silenced figure of the detained non-citizen into one of resilience and defiance, overturning media stereotypes of the refugee as either a deviant illegal, an agentless victim, or 'enemy alien or captive ally,' with his political poetics and defamiliarising tactics. His account is also a remarkable story of narrative transmission. Written on his mobile phone under conditions of strict surveillance, it was smuggled out as WhatsApp messages to an Iranian translator and refugee advocate in Australia, Moones Mansoubi.

Boochani's representation of the Manus camp and of refugees contained in an "interstitial legal space without citizenship status" (Mountz 121), can be read in relation to Foucault's definition of "heterotopias of deviation" (1984, 5), in which the absolute, finite place of internment dissolves into a range of multiple and disparate spaces, juxtaposed in incompatible ways that fragment the experience of incarceration. Such a perception frames Boochani's testimony to the claustrophobic micromanagement and meaninglessness of camp life. His account also illustrates Mason McWatters' claim, in examining different spatial genres (topic, heterotopic and atopic) in prison, that experience is always in flux "within and between incarcerated subjectivities," and in this "unresolved heterogeneous sense of space" (201) the boundaries between inside and outside blur and invert. That is, Boochani's carceral imaginary presents a dualistic subjective positioning of immersion yet distancing; it includes both the different spaces and buildings that comprise the camp, and exterior locations at its edges – on the roof, over the wall, or on the beach – and it involves cognitive transgression by which "to leave the prison, and imagine the coolness under the shade of a bunch of trees on the other side of the fences" (127). Further beyond is the homeland in Iran to which he returns in moments of solitary reflection.

By contrast is the real life 'return,' which the Australian Immigration Minister urges on the Manus IDC refugees: "either you go back to your countries or you will remain on Manus Island forever" (Boochani 313). The threat of repatriation or refoulement is key to the Australian government's decision to undertake refugee processing in countries like Manus and Nauru which have either not signed up to the UNCHR Refugee Convention or whose limited sovereignty allows this to be overlooked, so enabling Australia to meet its non-refoulement obligation according to the Convention's Article 33. By determining that the Convention does not apply to activities outside its national territory or in international waters, successive Australian governments continued with initiatives like the Pacific Solution and Operation Sovereign Borders to defy the principle that persecuted people should not be repatriated (Fitzgerald 231). The Immigration Minister's alternatives in denying access to Australia – either camp or repatriation – make the spaces of internment on Manus "monstrous" heterotopias that "bring paradoxical arrangements into being, in ways that seem *un*real" (McWatters 204; original emphasis): "monstrous" appears in the frenzy of violence and self-mutilation that culminated in the four-day riot of February 2014, which is also the narrative climax. Yet Boochani's narrative elsewhere exemplifies the dynamic aspect of heterotopias in its capture of alternative perspectives and reorderings of assigned spaces by his moving out of and back into the official prison places. As McWatters comments, heterotopias have "a diachronic motion" with "a temporal movement of digressions, rearrangements and unsettling (un)becomings" (205), and Boochani rearranges his experiences by finding private spaces, usually at night, on the edges of the compound where he develops through meditation, reflection and writing

the alternative, resilient self-identity by which to contest his powerlessness. This appears in his perception that by exercising creativity he can recover "outlines of hope using the melodic humming and visions from beyond the prison fences and the beehives we live in" (128).

In the epigraph to this section, Coetzee's character wonders about people who create a dehumanising detention system that aims to strip subjects of dignity in order to make examples of them. Boochani introduces this Kafkaesque world as a grotesque environment of brutality and confinement by labelling the camp as carceral and punitive in its modes of regimentation and use of coercion and surveillance. He defies the terminology of the detention centre arguing, "I […] do not succumb to the language of oppressive power. I create my own language for critically analysing the phenomenon of Manus Prison" (367): i.e. his name for the bureaucratic label, Manus Regional Processing Centre (MRPC), where inmates are prisoners, and whose modus operandi is "The Kyriarchal System." This term, adapted from the feminist thought of Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza (1992), and introduced by Omid Tofighian, Boochani's Iranian translator (a philosopher based at the University of Sydney), epitomises the operational part of this biopolitical regime: it signifies "interconnected social systems, established for the purposes of domination, oppression and submission" (Boochani 124 n. 6). By exploiting the power of names and labels to unsettle fixed representations of political and official behaviours that help naturalise forms of abuse, Boochani presents his text as the performance of an imaginary of incarceration. Retaliation to the System's oppressive cruelty is affectively and powerfully conveyed through the imagery and metaphor of poetic sequences: "*The prison is in the middle of a clenched fist/ Now loosening now tightening/on the verge of exploding*" (175; original emphasis). Both mirroring and critiquing the System, he consistently condemns the mentality that uses "systematic torture" (xxviii, 362) and treats refugees as criminals. National and institutional constructions of power and authority implied in nomenclature such as the Australian Border Force or the Regional Processing Centre, are challenged by the label Kyriarchal System that highlights the single aim of the border-detention complex: to force refugees to capitulate to refoulement by making their lives intolerable and providing no alternatives. Official coercion adds a monstrous dimension to the men's bodies by reinscribing them back into the nations from which they have fled, implying a Sisyphus-like motion of always leaving and always being returned that traps them into the abject.

In "A Translator's Tale: A Preface to the Mountain," Tofighian challenges the official stereotyping of refugees that prevents knowledge and understanding of the sort that individual refugees offer either through interview or telling their 'official' narrative when undertaking adjudication for asylum status.[4] He condemns the offshore detention system as a "neo-colonial experiment" (Boochani xxvi) to prevent asylum seekers from entering Australia and as yet more evidence of the nation's record of indigenous subjugation as found in terra nullius and restrictions

on non-white migration through the White Australian Policy. This underlines the irony that refugees recall the Australian myth of origin and the importance of migration to its settlement and nation-building, most recently European migrants and refugees after World War II and the Vietnam War. As Rosie Scott says, "the terrible journeys of an escape from death, starvation, poverty and terror to an imagined paradise – are […] deeply embedded in our culture" (Scott). Tofighian labels *No Friend but the Mountains* a "decolonial text" (Boochani xxv), committed to deconstructing the Pacific Solution and the practice of indefinite detention with an "empowering knowledge ecology" (Boochani 362) of prison theory. Metatextual features encourage a resistant counter-discursive reading: chapter titles, footnotes, and in the introduction, the outspoken preface by Richard Flanagan, the voices of Boochani's Australian supporters, and the translators' political explanations. *No Friend but the Mountains* differs in its philosophical-political orientation from most other refugee narratives of detention, yet it also bears the marks of a distinctively Pacific, 21st-century neo-Gothic regime of horror that demanded all of Boochani's mental and creative resources to survive.

Boochani charts the tensions and suffering that caused his mental and emotional distress and led him to find a mode of "socio-ecological resilience" (Welsh 15; qtd. in Fraile-Marcos 3) through becoming more rooted in the natural world, turning to memory and to writing.[5] For, as Michael Basseler argues, "narrative is perhaps the major cultural and cognitive scheme through which notions of resilience are currently generated" (25; qtd. in Fraile-Marcos 10). He dissects the System's insidious violations aimed at driving the prisoners to extreme distrust and hatred of each other in order to break their spirit. The men become obsessed, frustrated and debilitated by lengthy queues for finite amounts of food, to obtain razors or medication (mainly for malaria, but often causing addiction), to use the toilets, or access the one telephone. In a System dominated by the single goal of deterrence – expulsion from Australian borders and return to their own countries, in defiance of the Refugee Convention and customary international law – hostility, animosity, and hatred (Boochani 165) are strategically fostered: the men become "wretched and contemptible" (358), and develop "perverse habits and sordid and barbaric behaviours" (166). When forms of psychological abuse penetrate the culture and the prisoners descend to the same level as the System by reduplicating its divisive methods, it is most successful. The detainee known as the Prime Minister, because he is "an honourable person and a true leader" (180), openly embarrassed at being seen defecating, is mocked by the Iranian, Maysam the Whore, to entertain the others. Suffering profound humiliation and demoralisation, he asks to be repatriated. 'Refoulement' becomes associated with 'fouling' by excretion, but at a deeper level with degradation and dehumanisation; as Boochani points out when "ridiculing and joking coincide with humiliation and shame" (185), and when the Prime Minister chooses repatriation rather than to suffer the assault on his dignity, all perpetrators are demeaned, thus confirming a victory for the System.

In "Manus Prison Logic" (Chapter 8), Boochani confirms Manus IDC as a centre of psychological torture by using the discourse of mental disturbance and Kafkaesque perversity. It is a "deranged logic that confines the mind of the prisoner" (208), making them "develop fragmented and disrupted identities and a warped sense of self" (264). Operations are marked by incomprehensibility. No one who works for or is part of the system has any idea of what is going on: "neither the officers nor the other employees working in the prison" (209); in other words, the unequal relations between guards or security forces and the inmates are experienced by the latter as alternative, inexplicable constructions of reality.[6] As Foucault (2005, xix) says, "Heterotopias: they shatter or tangle common names, because they destroy 'syntax' in advance"; the essential illogic of the Kyriarchal System is beyond words: "*A nightmare turned into a reality / A nightmare within the prison /* […] *The Kyriarchy produces terror*" (Boochani 168; original emphasis).

In their ongoing mental distress, the men "exhale a raw horror and hopelessness; they hold onto their nightmares, hold the nightmares in their arms, deep inside" (Boochani 146–147). Such states of psychic despair are evidence of prisoner dependency developed through control mechanisms that ultimately offer only one possibility: submission to "the power of rules and regulations" (210). The lack of choice is terrifying for the individual who is left "simply trying to cope" (208) with an extremely oppressive form of governance, for "the harder [he] struggle[s] the more entangled [he] become[s]" (209). Identity fragmentation also comes from diminished agency due to the numerous prohibitions – e.g. all games are forbidden – and hopelessness, despair and disempowerment make the prisoners create "a smaller emotional jail within themselves" (125). The System's physical restrictions and deficiencies – 400 men crammed into a space no larger than a football pitch, suffocating sleeping arrangements for 130 people in the narrow dark tunnel "P" (in Fox Prison), the frequent breakdown of the generator, the filth of the toilets – normalise suffering and create perversity, "a twisted satisfaction in chaos and destruction" (173). Boochani conveys pointlessness and anger in bestial images and metaphors: the camp is like "a hive of killer bees" being disturbed by a stick (174); when the water fails, or the Oldman generator switches off leaving the men suffocating from heat and plunged into darkness, "it is as if a hot iron hammer has smashed down into the centre": the prison becomes a "dangerous beast" (177), like a war zone or "a frontline in war" (173–174), with men all over the place, constantly moving around in frustration.[7] Such menace becomes more ominous where transgression can occur unchecked: the pseudo-private cubicles of the men's toilets where men mutilate themselves with blue backed razors. Instead of being a sanctuary from "the daily psychological struggles and turmoils of prison life" they "are places for screaming out," and as "warm blood flows on the cement floor" they emanate an "uncanny sense of awe, an eerie spirit" (170–171).

In official internment the men are known to both Australian security guards and the PNG wardens (referred to in the text as "Papus") by their case numbers,

but Boochani's alternative naming strategy reflects the interactions that occur in cramped, confined conditions. Personality types emerge and the acting out of roles inspires nicknames based on the men's behaviour. As well as the Prime Minister and his tormentor, Maysam the Whore, the prison "superstar" who performs with his troupe on stage, are the Cow (always at the front of the food queue), the Gentle Giant (Rezi Barati, killed in the four-day riot), the Hero, the Cunning Young Man, The Prophet, The Smiling Youth (Hamid Khazaei who died from sepsis [Robertson]), and the Joker.[8] This prison culture and community spirit emerge from the men's performance of new subjectivities, which, as their nick-names suggest, aim to contest their powerlessness. Yet for Boochani, the high spirited, ad hoc festivities orchestrated by Maysam the Whore are futile as a "form of resistance" (136): the inmates' riotous, volatile behaviour may appear as a Bakhtinian carnivalesque reversal of the order embodied in the panoptic model of institutional power, but "the pretend celebration and partying" are "no match for the oppression of prison" (147) and the prisoners' condition begins to deteriorate after a few months.[9] Strategically, he now develops his own method for coping with the System and building psychological resilience.

Dominating *No Friend but the Mountains*' observations of claustrophobia, aimlessness and distress is Boochani's volatile changing subjectivity. His surroundings are experienced as either surreal: "I feel like I am being taken over by multiple personalities – blue thoughts parade through my head, and sometimes grey thoughts. Other times, my thoughts are colour blind" (130), or absurd: he asks, "Does the human mind also deceive so much that it overrides the function of the eyes and nose?" (252). He ensures his psychic survival and access to creative resources by becoming an onlooker, saying that "[i]solation and silence are the greatest gifts I could ask for." He follows his instinct "to create […] that which is poetic and visionary" (127), and finds a voice in which to articulate processes of dream and memory. This repositioning beyond the chaos into which prison life constantly collapses with its illogic and hysteria enables him to reconfigure reality independently with his Kurdish identity. The present is animated by memories of the past: "here" is interwoven with "there," his homeland in Iran. These disparate states of mind, locations and intersubjective responses are represented through an aesthetic of prose punctuated by italicised, declamatory verse.

Boochani's nurturing of his inner life by changing his surroundings within the zone of incarceration and trauma is crucial to his survival. He undertakes a form of "spatial practice," so-called by Michel de Certeau, out of recognition that space is needed in order to constitute oneself as a subject or to recognise another (1985). Physical spaces of solitude where he can dream, reflect and restore a feeling of harmony enable him to develop meaningful relations with the surrounding island environment. In private refuge, he reinscribes his situated identity as a writer rather than a prisoner by reconnecting to the energies underlying his earlier work as a filmmaker, story teller, journalist. He also overcomes momentarily the sense of

fragmented and disintegrated identity by reconnecting with natural life-forces: flowers, trees, birds and creatures like crabs, crickets and cats; and he draws on memories of his previous life in Iran, recalling sights, scents and sounds as sources of well-being. Fluctuations between his conscious perception and buried memories occur when he climbs up onto the roof of the solitary confinement cell one night, and finds a "refreshing / Sense of calm and the grand feeling of a new self" (255) due to an interaction, "profound in my unconsciousness and the totality of the landscape" (257). Spiritual renewal also comes through sensual perception as when he sits on a piece of a coconut tree, and absorbs the fragrance of "flowers resembling chamomile" away from "the breathing […], the smell of other people" (294–295). He begins to reconstruct his identity around the texture and taste of freedom, the world beyond, jumping over the prison fence, to enter the jungle and then feels "the softness of sand" on his feet as he approaches the beach (301). After traumatic witnessing of men self-harming in the bathrooms, he retreats "to the space […] of the coconut tree, to the heavy emptiness of that spot […] with all the flowers" (319), from where he can taste these moments of freedom again. Other trees, one that "spreads its branches across the whole area" (152), and a thick-trunked mango whose branches "challenge the prison fences" (236), are images of protective shelter and contribute to the "symbolic embodiment of resilience" by which Boochani overturns perceptions of the prisoners' abjection and precarity, as Sakr notes (241).

These solitary reflections, involving an intense perception of elements like sand, wind, palm and coconut trees, can be compared with accounts by other asylum sufferers of trauma: Boochani's inner psychic space of creativity, opening up to these nature-scapes, holds at bay traumatic experiences such as his recurring nightmares of drowning on the perilous journey from Indonesia to Christmas Island, and provides a counter to suppressed memory and pain.[10] This confirms research by Bernardt, von Hoven, and Huigan (214) on the impact of memory practices on asylum seekers in border spaces, that many do not describe trauma, or do so only in general terms. Although his is a discursive identity since he is in a border space, and is reconstructed as a site "between past and present, Self and Other, nation and foreign" (Da Silva 239), he by-passes the conflict caused by unconscious repression of traumatic memories. He begins to renarrativise his life based on the sense of originary loss and fragmentation as a subject whose birthright and Iranian heritage are marked by the dislocations of diaspora and exile: this involves a process of remembering that helps him to embrace his Iranian otherness in ways often associated with displaced subjects of diaspora: in this outsider space he finds a site from which to recover his cultural and ethnic alterity.

The recall of images and memories that Boochani identifies with his Kurdish upbringing and the Farsi language not only distances him from camp life, but also encourages him to acknowledge that dislocation in his case is primordial by asking: "Where have I come from?" and answering "a faraway homeland"

in Kurdistan (258). Displacement and internal dissonance, he recognises, are the essence of his being, because as "a child of war" (257, 258, 264), he was "disintegrated and dismembered, my decrepit past, fragmented and scattered, no longer integral, unable to become whole once again" (265): even his memories are like disconnected islands. His reflections range from the Kurds' long-term struggle against oppression and they focus on the chestnut oak forest that surrounds his village, which he interprets as a symbol of salvation and sacrifice. A chestnut grove is where Kurdish civilians in the Iran-Iraq war of 1980–1988, caught between the opposing forces of Iraqui Ba'athists (Arab nationalists), Iranian zealots and Peshmerga (Kurdish militia), found asylum, but with the deaths of many "chestnuts became the solace for buried dreams" (259). On one occasion when shocked into mental blankness by witnessing a prisoner being beaten unconscious by guards, he is restored to equilibrium by the swelling sound of the crickets and recall of the chestnut oak forests. These and other cultural images such as the sounds of Kurdish music and memory of folk ballads take him back to "the cold mountains of Kurdistan" (130), with a healing effect. They inspire more encompassing images of the human: the shape of a gigantic, all-embracing female, "a terrifying awe-inspiring woman from the East shrouds the prison compound with her hair" (129), by contrast to the prisoner, imaged as "like a blind mouse with only its sense of smell," who registers the tiniest change as "bats in a cave that react to the slightest vibration. Every day we repeat, overcome with fatigue an aimless walk of 100 metres" (125). As outsider to the tightly controlled yet explosive community of Fox Prison he imagines himself otherwise, organically, analogous to the chestnut trees and dream of freedom, "like a coconut tree with roots deep in the ground and my hair taken by the wind" (128).

3. The Regional Resettlement Agreement: PNG Guards and Australian Security Forces

Today, as Immigration Detention Centres are increasingly used in managing migration policies and asserting sovereign power, and as their management is outsourced to private companies who compete for lucrative contracts, more attention is paid to the roles and responsibilities of the actors involved in the provision of services (whether private, government employees, voluntary, profit or not for profit). Boochani's account emphasises the unequal power relations between the different ethnic groups (the Australian service company and contractors and Manusian security guards) who provide goods and services for yet other ethnicities (persecuted groups from Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, Irani, Pakistan, Somalia, Rohingya, the Sudan and Turkey), with whose language and culture they are unfamiliar. The completely different backgrounds and experience in management of the PNG wardens (referred to in the text as "Papus") and the Australian guards, many of

whom were returned soldiers from Afghanistan and Iraq or ex-prison wardens and security officers, defines a hierarchy of authority. Boochani notes that the monthly wage of the PNG contractors is equivalent to five days' payment of the Australian officers, whose orders they are expected to follow "without thought or question" (145), commenting that the "papus are basically stripped of autonomy or power" (270). An enquiry into the 2014 riot revealed that many PNG officers were ill equipped for such duties, and not given any training (Wallis and Dalsgaard 304). Boochani confirms that "these people are free spirits. [...] [They] have little care for maintaining order by following prison rules and militarised logic" (144). He sees them as alienated from the corporate culture of the Australian guards: "They wear the scent of the jungle and remind me of fish swimming in the ocean" (145) .

Within the prison milieu newly forged stereotypes replace the deceptive, misleading images of the islanders as savages and "cannibals" (Boochani 83), embodying "primitivism, barbarism and cannibalism" (168). Revising and recreating stereotypes constitutes the renaming process that critiques the illogical Kyriarchal System, and inevitably involves polarisation. The Papus evidently overcame Australian stereotyping of the prisoners as "dangerous criminals or terrorists" (167) for "the local people form alliances with us" and "offer us some kindness and sympathy" (145). The Australian guards, from whom the Papus take their orders, by contrast, are "like hostile animals" (142), "watch dogs or attack dogs" (141). Boochani renames G4S as the "Bastards Security Company" because "[y]ou need to be a total bastard to work in a place where you detest everyone" (141). Unlike many other prisoners, Boochani is forgiving towards the Papus for killing his Iranian friend Reza Barati (the Gentle Giant), seeing them as under "the total control of The Kyriarchal System" (332), as showing regret and attempting reconciliation.[11]

Boochani also stresses the enormous cultural and ideological gap between vulnerable, disempowered migrants and the service officers and guards employed to monitor and control them. His terminology of war and imprisonment indicates how privatisation of services operates globally: similarities exist between the Australian detention system and the US "'immigration industrial complex' which functions with a similar logic and dynamic to the prison and military industrial complexes" (Conlon and Hiemstra 3); that is, with slippages between forms of civil detention and criminal incarceration. As Dora Schriro points out, civil detention, a blend of civil law and criminal law enforcement policy and practice, means holding people only as long as needed to process their applications for asylum, with release into the community as the desired norm. However, Australia's remote control policy is designed to evade the principles of the Refugee Convention and the UNHCR, and practice criminal law enforcement policies. She notes the violation of imposing "correctional policies and practices" (237) on refugees fleeing danger and seeking asylum, most of whom had no previous criminal history, by subjecting them to deterrence-based policies in penal institutions.

In keeping with the upswing in migration, and the rapid expansion of the immigration detention industry globally, Australia outsources operations and responsibilities for a range of services to multiple private contractors. But arrangements for remote control by island countries has led to problems in determining derived responsibility and accountability in official enquiries into management and riots. The RRA with PNG for the governance of Manus was subject to constant change and "fluctuating power structures," as also happened in Nauru, according to Patrick van Berlo (20).[12] Management was at first in the hands of Serco (Australia) who have had control over all facilities since 2009, and then of the PNG branch of Securitor G4S Australia (a subsidiary of the British multinational private security company G4S), while the Australian government contracted international Health and Medical Services from non-government organisations (NGOs), and humanitarian support by the Salvation Army and the Save the Children Fund until the end of March 2014 (Fleay 2016, 72). The Royal PNG Constabulary provided a mobile squad funded by the Australian government and in 2014, the private corporation, Transfield Services, later renamed as Broadspectrum, became responsible for support and welfare services, replacing G4S while other contractors and sub-contractors were made responsible for health, catering, cleaning and security services.[13] As van Berlo points out, "power and control are everywhere, not with a particular actor," and he found that the limitations of a "weak monitoring system and non-transparent processing facilities" (20) means international human rights law is neither the most appropriate nor best mechanism by which to hold actors and agents responsible and accountable.

Subsequent enquiries revealed numerous gaps, coverups and failures in the management system (in the 18 months between March 2014 and September 2015 there were 14 sexual assaults, 213 physical assaults, 740 occurrences of abusive or aggressive behaviour), and it was determined that Manus became a hotbed of violence, physical abuse and rioting due to racial tensions between the different groups, in particular the Iranians and the Afghans, mainly due to ancient feuds (Boochani 124). But undoubtedly a major cause of the anger and dissension that sparked the February 2014 riot, was the revelation that the men's applications for asylum were not being considered, and that entry into Australia was not an option. The failure to roll out a resettlement plan at that point exposes the lapses in understanding between the main signatories to the agreement, and later it was speculated that Manus governor, Peter O'Neill, may not have understood the long-term implications of resettlement (Wallis and Daalsgard 323). Privatisation and remote control mean that the Australian government is not legally responsible for offshore private contractors, although it bears the management costs; but this became contentious, as Wallis and Daalsgard point out in their analysis of the 2014 riot:

> The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees regards Australia as responsible for ensuring that the treatment of asylum seekers accords with its human rights

> obligations. However, the Australian government claims that "once individuals are transferred from Australia to PNG under RRA the RSD [Refugee Status Determination] processes and the outcome of these processes are solely the responsibility of the PNG Government." (302)

4. Conclusion: A "Humane Detention" Practice?

No Friend but the Mountains shows how refugee writing can become a focus for the call for social justice: "engage a witnessing public and engender compassion, mobilise shame, and inspire campaigns" (Whitlock 176–177). As a witness account of continued human abuse and survival, it represents in Flanagan's words, a "profound victory" in showing the value of words in overcoming the system (Boochani ix). The memoir's publication, with the help of international human rights circles, Australian charities, and refugee support groups, parallels the work of other citizen activists whose resistance to official policies on refugees and asylum seekers has led to protest movements in France, Germany and elsewhere in Europe. The references in the hybrid introduction to Janet Galbraith, who ran the Refugee Writing group, (Writing Through Fences) that received Bochaani's smuggled texts, and who introduced him to the human rights watchdog Amnesty International, to the publishers, agents and editors, and his Iranian translators and interpreters, align *No Friend but the Mountains* with other texts in which refugee voices are constructed or amplified by intermediaries. This new narrative type that delivers a Western political response to policies of detention and deterrence also defines *Refugee Tales* I, II and III, three volumes of stories co-written by refugees with artists, activists and supporters, whose introductions contain editorial demands for an immediate end to indefinite detention (Herd and Pincus 2017–2019).

Boochani, now a celebrity as the "voice of Manus Island" (Roy 30), is a frequent speaker via livestream at writers festivals and to refugee and human rights groups. He moved to New Zealand on a tourist visa in November 2019, overstayed and was granted refugee status in July 2020 (Moses). Today based in Christchurch, he is affiliated with the University of Canterbury's Ngai Tahu's Research Centre, which specialises in Indigenous studies and Maori.[14] Narrating his stay on Manus Island, writing poetry and retelling Kurdish folk tales, enabled him to preserve his sanity in an oppressive toxic regime, while the clandestine textual transmission, translating and coediting of his witness testimony, added another dimension to his psychic resilience. This project, as with all his creative work on Manus Island, his journalism as well as his film, *Chauka: Please Tell Us the Time,* confirms that mobile technologies and social media networks can be used to overcome attempts to silence the victims of offshore detention. They contribute to the acts of bearing witness that are needed in an era of privatisation when groups and actors involved in the detention system – NGOs, other third sector entities, and private

contractors – cannot be held responsible under human rights law because they do not carry human rights duties, and are subjected to government practices and codes of secrecy (Fleay 2016, 83). The impact of Boochani's smuggled story on receptive audiences and first readers and translators in Australia, whose collaboration ensured its publication, reinforces the symbolic relationship of creativity to survival and identity. Its prize-winning success vindicated the demands that asylum detention policies of these pitiless regimes be revised or revoked. In this context Judith Butler's observations in *Frames of War* are relevant: although "literature never got anyone out of prison or reversed the course of a war," it can "provide the conditions for breaking out of the quotidian acceptance of war and for a more generalized horror and outrage that will support and impel calls for justice and an end to violence" (9–11).

As detention networks and systems around the world expand and proliferate as a primary response to human mobility, the practice of remote control offshore or detention in transit countries will continue as an effective political solution to illegal migration: as a way to control borders, enforce security measures, and assuage xenophobia. Current research, as outlined by anthropologist Julia Morris (51–54), focusing on detention reform to improve restrictive policies, mobilised by a detention rights movement and informed by international human rights policy and practice, acknowledges that such neoliberal endeavours function to sustain rather than question detention. The advocation of "humane detention" by recommending improvements to facilities and, strengthening governance, as Morris points out, remains intricated in the expansion of the system. Furthermore, if processes like those developed in Australia through the Pacific Solution and Operation Sovereign Borders retain secrecy and concealment measures such as the clauses signed by workers (NGOs), block public access, and use bilateral agreements that blur the ownership of responsibility and accountability, then how much detention reform will be considered acceptable is uncertain.

Coincidentally, due to the global pandemic of COVID-19 the types of policy and practice used in management of detainees are in the public eye more than ever. As temporary quarantine and managed isolation processes at the border have been introduced in many countries as strategies of containment, control or elimination, the skills and training of security forces and border guards with responsibility to manage them come under intense scrutiny as the crucial force holding back the spread of the virus. They provide a powerful contrast to those of the IDCs; unlike the ambiguous, hostile rhetoric surrounding refugees, citizens who arrive at borders for testing for COVID-19, are seen as crucial to epidemiological measures being taken to prevent community transmission, and effective detention for two weeks in these cases is widely accepted as a necessary and essential to ensure community safety and public health.

Notes

1 On this term, used to frame people fleeing persecution and seeking asylum in sovereign territory, see Simoes da Silva 248–249, and Fleay 2019, 319–320, 531, arguing that detention is advanced as the resolution to the 'crisis.'

2 Boochani read modernist writing such as Kafka's *The Trial*, Camus' *The Stranger*, Beckett's *Molloy, Malone Dies* and *The Unnameable* (Boochani xxiii), while Iranian and Kurdish literary heritages were also influences.

3 See accounts by security guard, Michael Coates, *Manus Days: The Untold Story of Manus Island* (Connor Court Policy, 2018); and Salvation Army worker, Mark Isaacs, *The Undesirables: Inside Manus* (Melbourne: Hardie Grant, 2014).

4 On the context of the refugees' situation see Ganguly-Scrase and Sheridan 252–254.

5 Of current thinking on resilience, Boris Cyrulnik argues that it is found half way between the individual and their environment; Marc Welsh contrasts the socio-ecological approach to resilience, based on the biophysical environment-community, to the person-community conception of psycho-social resilience that focuses on the resources of individuals and communities to adapt to change (Cyrulnik, 284; Welsh 15; both qtd. in Fraile-Marcos 3)

6 For further evidence of the IDCs presenting illogical parallel universes, see Gleeson 412.

7 In interview he says, "We were in a war zone […] it was like being engaged in a war for six years non stop" (Roy 30).

8 Only the names of the deceased are recorded in the account as a mark of memorialisation and respect.

9 The well-being of refugees in managed detention declines on average within six months; among already vulnerable people who have survived persecution in their own countries and perilous journeys, forms of self-harm, extreme psychological distress and attempted suicide occur (Fitzgerald 239); on the atrocities on Manus see McDonald 242–244, citing Docherty and Marr 2016.

10 In interview Boochanni confesses to still having nightmares and unsociable behaviour as repercussions of this incarceration: see Roy 2020, 30

11 On the problematic relations between the Manusians, the Australians, and asylum seekers, see Wallis and Daalsgard 307, 309–310.

12 PM Kevin Rudd signed the RRA in July 2013, and stipulated that 50% of security forces and 75% of cleaning and gardening be undertaken by residents of Manus province (in fact 68% of contract staff was from PNG).

13 On security breaches caused by the RPNGC mobile squad see Wallis and Daalsgard 309.

14 In 2021, he is Ursula Bethell Writer in Residence at the University of Canterbury; https://www.canterbury.ac.nz/news/2020/uc-writers-in-residence-2021-vana-manasiadis-and-behrouz-boochani.html.

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