Internment during WWⅡ Still Matters : Camp Memories Represented in Japanese-American Literature

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Internment during WWII Still Matters: Camp Memories Represented in Japanese-American Literature

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Abstract

Even in the 21st century, Japanese-American authors have written works dealing with the internment during WWII, which can be considered to be connected with the fact that the media described 9/11 as a "second Pearl Harbor," for this phrase makes Japanese-Americans feel a note of caution or fear that they might be segregated again as enemy aliens. The national memories of Pearl Harbor, which can be phrased that Japan's "treacherous" surprise attack on America was avenged with the people's "righteous might," are different from those of Japanese-Americans: imprisonment in concentration camps.

This paper will discuss camp memories as represented by Japanese American writers in relation to Pearl Harbor, taking into consideration the problematic phrase that 9/11 is a "second Pearl Harbor," in order to argue that though Japanese-American internment seems to have been solved by obtaining an official apology and reparations from the government, in fact, it is not over, for racial prejudice against Japanese-Americans, which is the underlying cause of the internment, doesn't disappear from society.

Key Words

Japanese-Americans, Pearl Harbor, internment in concentration camps

強制収容の問題を日系アメリカ文学の表象から考える

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要旨

第２次世界大戦中の日系アメリカ人の強制収容問題は日系アメリカ文学の重要なテーマのひとつであり、21世紀の現在においてもこの問題を扱った作品が書かれている。その背景にはメディアが9/11のテロ攻撃を「第２のパールハーバー」と呼ぶアメリカ社会内部の問題があると考えられる。日本軍によるパールハーバー攻撃後に敵性外国人として強制収容された日系アメリカ人にとって、その表現は再び敵として扱われるのではないかという不安を感じさせるものである。アメリカ国家のパールハーバーの記憶は「日本の背信的な奇襲攻撃に対するアメリカの正義の力の勝利」とまとめられるだろうが、日系アメリカ人にとってのパールハーバーの記憶は強制収容所への収監の記憶（対抗記憶）である。

この論文では、9/11を「第２のパールハーバー」として流布することにはらまれる問題を踏まえつつ、日系アメリカ人作家による強制収容体験の表象を分析する。そして、強制収容問題は国家からの謝罪と補償を得たことで解決したように見えるが、実はそうではなく、アメリカ社会から人種偏見がなくならない限り絶えず提起していかなければならない問題であることを明らかにする。

Introduction

On September 11, 2001, the American TV networks referred to the terrorist attacks as a "second Pearl Harbor," by airing the images of hijacked airplanes slamming into the World Trade Center in parallel with those of Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, while reporting the terrorist incident as an attack on American justice, freedom and democracy. In the following days, numerous incidents of harassment and hate crimes against Arab-and Muslim-Americans occurred, including attacks on mosques and other religious buildings. In response to these developments, one of the representative groups of the Japanese-American community immediately issued a statement supporting Arab- and Muslim-Americans. Japanese-Americans also rallied and demonstrated for protection of civil liberties and rights, together with other minority groups. Witnessing American society treat 9/11 as a Pearl Harbor parallel and move toward the persecution and exclusion of Arab-and Muslim-Americans, Japanese-Americans, who have a collective memory of being designated as enemy aliens and interned in concentration camps during World War II, feared that the same fate might befall Arab-and Muslim-Americans. As for internment, in the 1960s a younger generation of Japanese-Americans started what is known as the "Redress Movement," an effort to obtain an official apology and reparations from the federal government. In 1976, President Gerald Ford proclaimed that the internment was a national mistake, and in 1988, the law, which provides redress of $20,000 for each surviving internee, was signed by President Ronald Reagan. The facts, however, that the media described 9/11 as a "second Pearl Harbor" and that some people acted against Arab-and Muslim-Americans in violent ways, indicates that American society didn't learn anything from the Japanese American internment. Based on differences in ethnicity and religion, American people try to exclude some minorities from society, which is an act of discrimination, and which contradicts the assertion that 9/11 is an attack on American justice, freedom and democracy.

The internment of Japanese-Americans is one of the important themes in Japanese-American literature. The writers who were actually interned have published works depicting their experiences in the concentration camps, and since the 1990s younger generations with no camp experiences have written works dealing with the issue of internment, which would indicate that these writers want to question the internment in the context of contemporary America by reconstructing camp experiences. Why does the issue still matter in the 21st century? This paper, taking into consideration the problematic phrase that 9/11 is a "second Pearl Harbor," will discuss camp memories as represented by Japanese American writers in relation to Pearl Harbor.

The Memories of Pearl Harbor

Before discussing literary works dealing with the internment, I would argue how different the Pearl Harbor memories of the nation of America are from those of Japanese-Americans. Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941 is one of the most symbolic event in the history of America because the territory of the nation itself was invaded, which led it to participation in

WWII. On the other hand, Japanese-Americans associate Pearl Harbor with the internment because it caused war between America and Japan, resulting in their relocation to concentration camps as enemy aliens.

In the aftermath of 9/11, the Pearl Harbor analogy was widely used, and even in cabinet-level discussions, officials and politicians alluded to it.[1] A historian, Emily S. Rosenberg, in *A Date Which Will Live: Pearl Harbor in American Memory*, explores how Pearl Harbor has been constructed and circulated as an icon that stirs up emotions in American people since WWII. President Franklin D. Roosevelt, in his speech on war against Japan, referred to the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor as "infamy," "treachery," and called on Americans to avenge the insulting attack. According to Rosenberg, he explained the attack by adopting the framework of popular frontier legends, "Custer's Last Stand" and "the Alamo," battles with American Indians and Mexicans, respectively. Since they were legends circulating widely in society, the infamy framework for Pearl Harbor was effective enough to incite revenge among Americans. During WWII, the phrase "Remember Pearl Harbor" was coined and caught on, and through this phrase, Pearl Harbor was taken into people's mind across the nation. The war ended with America's crushing victory over Japan, and so "the words Pearl Harbor gradually became the common descriptor of what was to be remembered. They became the rhetorical shorthand for the "infamy" that would be remembered and then avenged through "righteous might" (Rosenberg 16). This rhetoric of Pearl Harbor could be paraphrased as follows: Sleeping Americans suffered a surprise attack from treacherous Japan, but they fought against Japan with one mind in revenge. In the end they won the war. Triumph and justice are alwayson the side of America, and an act of "infamy" is avenged by the people with "righteous might." This Pearl Harbor narrative can be considered the national memories of Pearl Harbor. When the TV networks and some politicians referred to 9/11 as a "second Pearl Harbor," they used the national memories of Pearl Harbor in order to make American people understand what was happening to the nation and how to address the problem, for the national memories of Pearl Harbor were such a familiar narrative and "culturally legible to almost everyone" (Rosenberg 174).

Concerning the Pearl Harbor attack, Japanese-Americans have different memories from those of the nation mentioned above, for after Pearl Harbor America designated Japanese-Americans as enemy aliens, following the declaration of war on Japan, and segregated them as such. The Japanese-Americans' memories of Pearl Harbor, therefore, are connected with its impact on them, especially the internment which was administered by the nation. John Okada starts his novel, *No-No-Boy*, with the Japanese-Americans' memories of Pearl Harbor:

> December the seventh of the year 1941 was the day when the Japanese bombs fell on Pearl Harbor. As of that moment, the Japanese in the United States became, by virtue of their ineradicable brownness and the slant eyes which, upon close inspection, will seldom appear slanty, animals of a different breed. The moment the impact of

> the words solemnly being transmitted over the several million radios of the nation struck home, everything Japanese and everyone Japanese became despicable. (vii)

On February 19, 1942, President Roosevelt issued Executive Order 9066, and forced over 110,000 Japanese-Americans residing along the West Coast into 10 internment camps, fearing that they would sabotage the American war effort.[2] Of those interned, 62% were U.S. citizens. It was the event that turned the lives of Japanese-Americans upside down. They had to leave their homes, not knowing where they were heading, for how long they would be away, or whether or not they would survive. They suffered deep, lasting psychological wounds, along with financial devastation. For the Japanese-American community, therefore, Pearl Harbor is a reminder of imprisonment in camps encircled by barbed wire, shame they felt at being labeled enemy aliens, and devastating life during and after the war.[3]

In an interview, for example, about the movie "Pearl Harbor" that was released in May, 2001, Stephen Sumida, American Ethnic Studies chairman at the University of Washington, said that "A lot of people [were] worried and waiting to see what it might do in terms of a backlash against Japanese-Americans. … All the interest [was] in … that old, old issue of Japanese-Americans being confused with the enemy."[4] His comment indicates that even though about 60 years have passed, Pearl Harbor makes Japanese-Americans feel a note of caution or fear that they might be segregated as enemy again. This fear is shared by not only the people who were actual inmates in camps, but the whole Japanese-American community. Gary Maehara, a postwar-born-attorney, says, "We start thinking about the date probably right after Thanksgiving, [and] I think my feelings remain that I just want to get through Dec. 7 as quickly and quietly as possible."[5] The Japanese-American internment is just an extension of anti-Japanese racism that goes back to the late-19th-century restrictions on immigration, citizenship, and landowning, and Japanese-Americans realize in their daily lives that prejudices die hard. Ichiro, a star player of Seattle Mariners, seems to have made his version of the American Dream come true, but he is no exception to racial prejudice. John Pai, a Chinese American filmmaker, says that some people shout racial taunts to Ichiro, or wear "Remember Pearl Harbor" caps in the ballpark.[6]

Perry Miyake, one of the Japanese American writers born in the postwar, deals with the issue of Japanese American internment in *21st Century Manzanar* (2002). In this novel, the Third World War, which is an imaginary war caused by economic disputes between Japan and America, brings re-evacuation to Japanese-Americans. Lillian—represented as an embodiment of white middle class values—is in charge of an internment camp and tries to eliminate all the ethnic elements from the Japanese-American internees, including their memories of being Japanese-Americans. She says that "Japan [would] forever remain America's number-one enemy"(243), "no one would ever forget Pearl Harbor and no one could ever forgive Japan"(242). This is because, she explains, "Pearl Harbor was perfection [a]s a unifying catastrophe and public relations event" and "set the standard" for America taking actions (242). In the days

following 9/11, the American media referred to the terrorist attack as a "second Pearl Harbor," President George Bush wrote in his daily diary that "the Pearl Harbor of the 21st century took place"(Rosenberg 174), and incidents of harassment and hate crimes against Arab-and Muslim-Americans occurred frequently. Given that *21st Century Manzanar* was published one year after 9/11, I would argue that Miyake reflects in this literary work Japanese-Americans' anxiety that they could be segregated again if an incident stirring up anti-Japanese-American sentiment happens. As long as Japanese-Americans are addressed as hyphenated Americans, they could not escape from such anxiety.

Yet, Japanese-Americans don't remain silent. They try to fight back against the social and political movements that could lead them to segregation. National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day, for example, is designated as a national holiday to remember and honor those who died in the Pearl Harbor attack. Through annual observance of the day on December 7, the national memories of Pearl Harbor circulate in American society. On the other hand, Japanese-American community established Day of Remembrance in 1969, to commemorate the date February 19, when Executive Order 9066 was issued. In order never to forget the WWII internment and to protect civil liberties and rights, the Japanese-American community sponsors special events, including memorial ceremonies, workshops, lectures, and symposia, across the country every year.

Japanese-Americans' demand for guarantees of civil rights is not limited to their own community, but reaches out to include all Americans. Immediately after 9/11 they spoke out, rallied, and demonstrated against anti-Arab- and Muslim-American movement/sentiment. Tony Osumi, for example, a representative of NCRR, Nikkei for Civil Rights and Redress, issued a statement:

> America knows about Pearl Harbor, but less know about its affects on Japanese Americans. Following the bombing of Pearl Harbor in 1941, racism, economic greed, misplaced fear and anger led to the imprisonment of 110,000 Japanese Americans. … [F]ew Americans spoke up in support of Japanese Americans. The newspapers, radio and newsreels of the times demonized us and made no attempt to separate the nation of Japan from Japanese Americans. Today, we see similar stereotyping and scapegoating. … If we believe in justice, then we must defend the rights of all Americans. We must speak out against the violence towards Islamic community centers and mosques. … On behalf of NCRR, we express our solidarity with Arab and Muslim Americans because injustice to one community is an injustice to all our communities. ("NCRR Statement of Solidarity at the Stop all Violence Press Conference")

The TV networks talked about 9/11 in the light of the rhetorical memory of Pearl Harbor, the memory that though sleeping Americans suffered a surprise attack from treacherous people, America fought against them with one mind for revenge, and in the end they achieved victory and justice. On the other hand, Osumi starts this statement with the Pearl Harbor memories of Japanese-Americans, that is, the memories of incarcer-

ation in concentration camps. Based on the lessons they learned from the experience, he expresses his support for Arab-and Muslim-American communities and calls for protest against the violence toward them.

Actually, in San Francisco, Japanese-Americans folded two thousand paper cranes to symbolize solidarity with Arab-and Muslim-Americans who might experience persecution. In Washington, JACL, Japanese American Citizens League, and other organizations rallied to call for unity and tolerance of differences.[7] President George W. Bush's call for international support in the fight against terrorism was phrased as "either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists" (Rosenberg, 178). In other words, he tried to divide the international world between friend and enemy. This worked well at home too, as clearly shown in the incidents of harassment and hate crimes against Arab-and Muslim-Americans after 9/11. In a critical and nationalistic situation such as war and terrorist attack, the whole nation is expected to unite against the enemy, and the question of who is imagined to constitute "the nation" and "enemy" is raised, resulting in the persecution and exclusion of ethnic minorities, as you can see in the example of WWII Japanese-American internment. As the anti-terrorism movement and patriotic feelings were growing, Japanese-Americans worked with Arab-and Muslim-Americans and other minorities for protection of their birth rights as American citizens.

Representation of the internment in the 1950s' Japanese-American Literature

During WWII Japanese-Americans who spoke out against the internment were very few, and most people followed government orders. In Japanese-American literature you can find people living in camps, saying, "It cannot be helped," or "Shi-ka-ta-ga-nai." One of the reasons for their compliance would be that JACL, whose leader was Mike Masaoka at that time, decided to cooperate with the Japanese-American internment during the war, seeing that resistance would be counterproductive, and so instructed the Japanese-American community to comply with the government policies, which they thought was the best way to express their loyalty. In Monica Sone's *Nisei Daughter*, it is Nisei, second-generation Japanese-Americans, who watch, control, and give orders to their fellow internees in the camp under government surveillance.

After leaving the concentration camps, Japanese-Americans single-mindedly tried to assimilate into the American mainstream, without questioning the legitimacy of the internment. One of the reasons for their silence is that it was the era of the Cold War, and America strengthened "Anglo-conformity,"[8] that is, assimilation into the values of the white middle class, in order to win the ideological conflict with the Soviet Union. Japanese-Americans, while in camps, were strongly encouraged to imitate the lifestyle of the mainstream by the authorities.

They felt shame and stigma about being treated as enemy aliens, or second-rate citizens, and therefore they tried hard to be accepted by the mainstream, resulting in being called a "model minority."[9] It is often said that they tried to be 120% American, being silent about discrimination and prejudice against them.

There are some problems with Japanese-Americans' internalization of mainstream values. Through assimilation they come to embrace the ideology of liberty, equality, and democracy that America is supposed to be founded on, and to seek for the ideal of the American Dream, but at the same time they internalize the discriminatory views that racially and culturally place white Americans higher, while degrading the people and culture of Japan to which their ancestors belonged. Consequently, they see the internment not as a crime committed by the nation of America but as a necessary action for national security, and therefore, they put all the blame on themselves, believing that the problem lies in the fact that they have Japanese blood, and try to repress memories of internment and forget them. In *Farewell to Manzanar* (1973), which describes the Wakatsuki family's experiences during their imprisonment at Manzanar, one of the internment camps, Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston writes, as follows:

> [A]s I sought for ways to live agreeably in Anglo-American society, my memories of Manzanar, for many years, lived far below the surface. ... I half-suspected that the place did not exist. … sometimes I imagined I had made the whole thing up, dreamed it. Even among my brothers and sisters, we seldom discussed the internment. (168)

The more they want to be assimilated into the mainstream, the more they try to repress the memories of bitter experiences in the camps. Yasuko Takezawa states that "most Nisei rarely talked about the concentration camps among them, [and] those Nisei who deeply suffered psychologically and spiritually tried to bury their memories of internment in the past" (138, translation is mine).

In the 1950s, when America was in the Cold War, two novels dealing with the Japanese American internment — Monica Sone's *Nisei Daughter* (1953), and John Okada's *No-No-Boy* (1957) — were published. Both of them seem to say that if you want to survive in American society, the best way is to believe in American way of life and values, and try hard to be accepted by the mainstream. Sone's *Nisei Daughter*, for example, which was commercially successful because white Americans appreciated it, portrays vividly the daily lives and experiences of Japanese-Americans living in Seattle before WWII. It gives the pleasure of knowing an exotic culture and traditions to white readers, and also Kazuko, the narrator/protagonist, tries to reject Japanese tradition and values, while admiring the American way of life. After she leaves the camp, she stays with a white family and attends a college. At the end of the work, she states that "the Japanese and the American parts of me were now blended into one," which could be read that she feels she resolved the identity problem by assimilating into the mainstream (238). In Okada's *No-No-Boy*, Ichiro, the protagonist, is a "no-no-boy" who refused loyalty to the nation of America and was put in jail. The novel starts with the scene of his returning home, and he is ashamed of himself because of his status of being a "no-no-boy," and wonders how he can redeem his error and find his place in American society, suffering from a feeling of guilt and self-hate. Yet, this novel seems to end in an optimistic way, saying that "he chased that faint and elusive insinuation of promise as it

continued to take shape in mind and in heart" (251). It could be interpreted that he has found a "glimmer of hope" in the assimilated life, supported by his girl friend, Emi, who tries to look at the bright side of race relations (250).

Yet, since the Asian- American civil rights movement started to develop in the 1970s, both novels have been regarded as works of resistance, even though they seem to appreciate American values and way of life on the surface. *No-No-Boy* was out of print in the mid-1970s, when Frank Chin, a Chinese-American author and playwright, happened to find it in a bookstore and included it in the first Asian-American writers' anthology, *Aiiieeeee: An Anthology of Asian American Writers*. Chin esteemed *No-No-Boy* highly because he found in it a critical eye toward assimilation and a desire for multicultural society. Since the 1990s, some critics have read it in relation to American society under the Cold War. Jinqi Ling, for example, argues that the significance of the publication of *No-No-Boy* in 1957 lies in portraying a no-no-boy who refuses to serve in the U.S. Army, expressing disloyalty to America, and that "Ichiro's muffled voice resonates with the ethnic dissent of the 1950s and implicitly challenges the social power that suppressed the construction of the Japanese American subject" (Ling 34). In those days, Japanese-Americans were under pressure to be assimilated into the American mainstream to prove themselves American citizens, which meant to abandon their connection with Japan, their traditions, and even their own parents. Ling sees Ichiro as an anti-hero, or dissident, who resists against the American government controlling the lives of Japanese-Americans through assimilation.

As Stephen H. Sumida argues, it would be considered wrong to read Sone's *Nisei Daughter*, only in the framework of assimilation. He analyses that at times when the ethnicity of Japanese-Americans is denied, Sone takes her ethnicity positively, and advocates not a white-dominated-society but a multicultural one.[10] Elaine H. Kim argues that *Nisei Daughter* is "an account of the gradual suffocation by racial discrimination of everything that is creative, spirited, or pugnacious in one *nisei* woman" and that it describes how much sacrifice America's racial discrimination inflicted on Japanese-Americans (Kim 74). Kim thus sees Sone's autobiographical work as a book of resistance against America's racism.

Working as a librarian and a clinical psychologist, respectively, Okada and Sone must have lived ostensibly as "model minority" following the policy of Anglo-conformity obediently, in order to survive in postwar American society where suspicion of and aversion to Japanese-Americans still existed. Yet, as motivation behind their writing the works regarding the internment, there would be a strong sense of resistance against their imprisonment in camps, and an intention to record the Japanese-American memories of Pearl Harbor, not the ones constituted by the nation of America.

John Okada's *No-No-Boy*, 1957

The government incarcerated Japanese-Americans as enemy aliens, while the army developed a plan for forming combat teams of all second-generation Japanese Americans. President Roosevelt, ignoring the evacuation order he issued a year ago, authorized the

enlistment of Nisei, and in order to register Nisei for the draft the government required all internees to answer 33 questions in 1943, out of which questions 27 and 28 are called "loyalty questions."[11] The title "No-No-Boy" refers to Nisei boys who answered 'no' to the two questions and were thrown into federal prison. In *Nisei Daughter*, a Japanese-American boy, when he was told that the army wanted Nisei to volunteer for a special combat team, retorted: "First, they change my army status to 4-C because of my ancestry, run me out of town, and now they want me to volunteer for a suicide squad so I could get killed for this damn democracy" (198).[12] In fact, however, 33,000 Nisei joined the U.S. Armed Forces, believing that "participation in the defense of their country was the best way to express their loyalty and to fulfill their obligation as citizens" (Takaki 400). All-Nisei combat teams were sent to the most dangerous battlefronts in Europe. Especially, the 442nd Combat Regiment is well-known as the most decorated unit in the history of America. In *Farewell to Manzanar*, Wakatsuki Houston, whose brother joined the army, states: "Full of heroes, fighting in Europe the Allies win the war, showing that Niseis too could be patriots"(111). Yet, the sacrifice they made was great: "9,486 casualties, including six hundred killed "(Takaki 401-402). This high casualty count demonstrates that Japanese-Americans tried to prove their loyalty at the cost of their lives.[13]

The internment of Japanese-Americans and the loyalty questions administered to them in camp were unjust, based on racial discrimination against them. This is what *No-No-Boy* deals with in a postwar Japanese-American community in Seattle. Most of the characters are deeply hurt because of the internment and loyalty questions, which divided Nisei boys into two categories: "yes-yes-boy" and "no-no-boy." As Ichiro, a no-no-boy, suffers from a sense of guilt and regrets having answered "no" to loyal questions, so Freddie, another no-no-boy and a friend of Ichiro, is psychologically and spiritually wounded, and cannot vent frustration coming from self-hate and anger except through violent acts. In fact, the veterans, who answered "yes, yes" to loyalty questions and served in the army, suffer trauma as well. For example, a "yes-yes-boy," Eto Minato, who wears green army fatigues and an Eisenhower jacket even though the war is over in order to prove himself a loyal American, is initially happy to meet Ichiro, but upon realizing that Ichiro is a "no-no-boy," he spits on Ichiro. He looks down on "no-no-boys" as a people who should be abandoned. Differentiating himself from them seems to be the only way to identify who he is and keep his self-esteem. After being released from the camps, Japanese-Americans had to remain silent about the discriminative treatment they received from the government, repress the bitter memories, and try to be assimilated into the American mainstream just for survival in America. In *No-No-Boy*, Okada describes the dilemma they had to undergo in postwar American society through the deeply-wounded-characters. He himself was a veteran, or a "yes-yes-boy," but he makes the protagonist a "no-no-boy" and puts it to the title. A "no-no-boy" was an outcast in the Japanese-American community, but at the same time, it was a sign of disobedience and resistance against the white-dominated society. I would argue that Okada

tries to record the internment memories from an anti-hero's point of view.

Okada, through the representations of characters, implies that the internment and loyalty questions provided Japanese-Americans with traumatic memories. Ichiro's mother, for example, is depicted as a fanatic patriot of Japan, who doesn't believe its defeat even after the war, and is very proud of her son having said "no" to the questions and returned to Seattle alive, while one of her friends' sons said "yes" and was killed in the war. On the other hand, Ichiro feels indignant at her because he thinks she is to blame for his actions and the status of being a "no-no-boy": "It was she who opened my mouth and made my lips move to sound the words which got me two years in prison" (12). On seeing her for the first time in two years, he describes her as "a small, flat-chested, shapeless woman who wore her hair pulled back into a tight bun" (10), and goes so far as to say that "Hers was the awkward, skinny body of a thirteen-year-old which had dried and toughened through the many years following but which had developed no further" (10-11). He describes his own mother, who gave birth to and raised him, as if she were a child with barren, dead sexuality. Eventually, she recognizes Japan's defeat from her sister's letter asking her for money and food, and kills herself. In this sense, she would be considered as an embodiment of Japan. It is Ichiro who comes home and finds that she has committed suicide. She is dead, half in the bathtub from which water is running out. In this suicide scene, the bathtub could be interpreted as imagery of a womb, and water as amniotic fluid. The death of his mother is again represented in association with barren, dead sexuality.

In her relationship with Ichiro, his mother, who symbolizes Japan, is represented as barrenness or death. American racism requires that Japanese-Americans prove that they are not "Japanese" but "Americans." In order for Ichiro to do this and be accepted by the American mainstream, his mother should be rejected and abandoned. The ideology of Anglo-conformity forces Japanese-Americans to repudiate any Japanese physical, cultural affiliation and assimilate unquestioningly to America's dominant culture and values. In other words, they should abandon the word/label "Japanese," which is a symbol of Japanese affiliation, out of "Japanese-American" in order to be accepted as "American."[14] Okada, however, at the same time, writes Ichiro's happy childhood memories with his mother:

> There was a time when I was your son. There was a time that I no longer remember when you used to smile a mother's smile and tell me stories about gallant and fierce warriors … [W]e were Japanese with Japanese feelings and Japanese pride and Japanese thoughts because it was all right then to be Japanese and feel and think all the things that Japanese do even if we lived in America. (15)

By contrasting Ichiro's distorted description of his mother after the war with his prewar childhood memories indicating a stable and happy relationship with his mother and his pride in Japanese heritage, Okada illustrates how badly Ichiro suffers trauma of the internment and loyalty questions that forced him

to repudiate any Japanese cultural affiliation and assimilate to the American mainstream. Through Ichiro, in this way, the memories of the Japanese-American internment are embodied as his rejection and abandonment of his own mother, who symbolizes Japan.

Ichiro describes himself as "an empty half" (16), or "an empty shell" (60), and these images of a lack or a loss of his substance, reappear in the death scene of his friend and another "no-no-boy," Freddie. He fights against Bull, a "yes-yes-boy," and kills himself in a car accident which "cut him in two" (249). These expressions indicate their feelings of guilt and self-hate for being a "no-no-boy," but the same images of "empty" and "death" are applied to "yes-yes-boy" as well. Kenji, Ichiro's friend, has to sacrifice more and more of his body because of a wartime injury, and is thus approaching death. In the scene in which Ichiro and Kenji sit side by side at the bar counter, Ichiro is depicted as "already dead but still alive and contemplating fifty or sixty years more of dead aliveness," and Kenji as "living and dying slowly" (73). They are described as "two extremes" (73), but it could be read that Ichiro represents "spiritual death" and Kenji "physical death," which indicates that they are two parts of the same coin and both of them represent death. The problem lies not in the distinction between "yes-yes-boy" and "no-no-boy," but in America's racial discrimination that segregated Japanese-Americans in the concentration camps, and forced them to answer whether or not they are loyal to America.

Most of Japanese-American characters in this novel are incomplete and fragmented. Especially, Nisei boys are badly hurt and suffer the dilemma between the internment memories and the prewar assimilation policy. The images of "emptiness," "incompleteness," or "death" covering the whole story would embody the state of mind of the postwar Japanese-Americans who had to live in white-dominated American society, suffering the trauma of being interned, while trying to put Japanese heritage behind and assimilate to the mainstream. Through the dilemmas the characters face, Okada writes about resistance against America, covertly insisting that the Japanese-Americans' way of living, in other words, the life of "model minority," which was imposed on them by the nation, is empty and more dead than alive.

Monica Sone's *Nisei Daughter*, 1953

Kazuko, the narrator/protagonist of *Nisei Daughter*, in the same way as Ichiro, tries to reject "Japanese" part of "Japanese-American" in order to prove that she is an American. Her mother symbolizes Japan in this autobiographical work, too. It is she who announces to Kazuko that she has Japanese blood, and teaches her Japanese culture, tradition, food, and literature, and apologizes to her for "being [her] Japanese parent" (236). As Shirley Geok-lin Lim states, Kazuko finds a way to live in the American mainstream by abandoning her mother who is identified with the Japanese element. After the Pearl Harbor attack, the conflict between Kazuko and her mother becomes obvious. On hearing of the attack, Kazuko feels hurt and humiliated because of her Japanese blood, and her rage is directed at her mother. They differ from one another regarding the war because Kazuko resents Pearl Harbor and her mother defends Japan: "Discussion of politics, espe-

cially Japan versus America, had become taboo in our family for it sent tempers sky-rocketing" (148). Kazuko feels as if her mother were a "stranger" (148), and keeps distance from her. And then, about one year after the internment, when she is permitted to escape imprisonment, she lives with Mrs. Ashford, a white woman, and attends a college in the Midwest, with her mother left in the camp. She chooses to abandon her Japanese birth mother and to live with a surrogate white mother who provides her with "a wealth of enchanting memories" (227).

Kazuko seems to cope with trauma of the internment by abandoning the Japanese part of the "Japanese-American" identity, by assimilating to the dominant culture, and living with a white mother. She believes in Christianity and attends a college, supported by her white surrogate mother and friends. However hard she tries to identify herself as American, however, she is treated as Japanese by the American mainstream, and cannot live without racial discrimination; she is not admitted to a sorority, a female students' social club, because of "national restrictions based on our membership" (227). This is an important example demonstrating the contradiction between America's social reality and its democratic ideals, and at the same time, it exposes the hypocrisy of assimilation policy in the Cold War era. In this autobiographical work Sone talks about her life, which testifies how much Nisei suffered from America's racial discrimination before, during, and after the war. As Elaine H. Kim argues, this is a work describing discrimination against Japanese-Americans, and therefore, the last passage stating that "the Japanese and the American parts of me were now blended into one" could be ironically interpreted that, from the eyes of the dominating white people, Kazuko's two parts will never be blended into one, and she will always be identified as Japanese.

Compared with Okada's *No-No-Boy*, Sone's *Nisei Daughter* doesn't seem to express so strongly the dilemma between the internment experience and the enforcement of assimilation to America's dominant culture, which was directed toward Japanese-Americans in their after-internment-lives. This would have some thing to do with the fact that Nisei boys were treated differently according to the classification of "yes" and "no" by loyalty questions, which after the war developed into the opposition between them inside the Japanese-American community. Also, many Nisei boys who expressed loyalty to the nation and served in the army, were killed and wounded. From the representation of Nisei boys in *No-No-Boy*, it would be assumed that Nisei boys would have stronger traumatic memories about the internment than Nisei girls.

Julie Otsuka's *When the Emperor Was Divine*, 2002

Okada and Sone, in their literary works, don't squarely criticize America's racial discrimination against Japanese-Americans which caused the internment during WWII, because Nisei knew that they had to repress their anger and humiliation in order to survive in the white-dominated society. Yet, some of the works, which were published after the "Redress Movement" had made considerable achieve ments, depict the internment as a crime committed by the nation, as a violation of civil rights. When *the Emperor Was Divine*, written by

Julie Otsuka, a third-generation Japanese-American, is one of them.

Though Otsuka's grandmother and mother didn't tell her much about their internment experiences, one day she found a bundle of letters and postcards that her grandfather had written to his wife and children who were interned in a different camp. He was arrested by the FBI the day after Pearl Harbor as a suspicious enemy alien and incarcerated in various camps. She says that "the letters were censored, so [she] knew that there was a lot that wasn't being said." They were like "a story with many gaps and holes."[15] What she intended to do in this novel would be to reconstruct a story of Japanese-Americans during WWII by filling in the gaps and holes caused by censorship, and revealing their internment memories contained in the darkness of silence.

This novel begins with the scene in which the mother sees the posters of "INSTRUCTIONS FOR ALL PERSONS OF JAPANESE ANCESTRY" put up everywhere in the town. As her preparation for relocation, the first thing she does is to buy a hammer and beat her family's pet dog to death with it. His death foregrounds the dreadful life of her family caused by the relocation order issued by the government. Mother, daughter, and son, who are incarcerated in a different camp from their father, are forced to live in a state of anxiety, and especially, mother gets worn out because of excessive worry about her husband. After three years and five months in camp they are home, and later their father returns, but he is "somebody else" (132), not the father who they remember as "handsome and strong" (132). He looks frightened and threatened all the time by the memories of the camp, doesn't go to work, and has no presence at home. He never talks about his experience in camp and his family never asks him about it. His son says that "All we wanted to do, now that we were back in the world, was forget" (133).

Father's internment experience is described as one shared by other Japanese-Americans in the last chapter of "Confession." The father's story that he was taken away to the station with a bathrobe and slippers on for questioning, is overlapped with that of a Japanese-American "florist," "grocer,"or "peach picker," who was interrogated under suspicion of sabotage or other criminal acts, and then forced to make false confessions(142). The characters of this novel have no names, and in this stylistic choice, I would argue that Otsuka wants to record, not an internment story of one family, but that of the Japanese-Americans as a whole.

While the last chapter describes the Japanese-Americans who were forced into false confessions by the authorities, simultaneously it expresses their voices of resistance against the government—it is the rage that Nisei such as Okada and Sone had to repress to get along in the mainstream. To the nation of America —it is addressed as "you" in this chapter—which "[is] always right" (140), the Japanese-Americans— as "we" here—ironically define themselves in a stereotypical way, saying that we are Japs with "slant-eye[s]" and so small that "you don't see at all", but we are "your nightmare" and "your worst fear" because we are "taking over the neighborhood" (143). It also mentions that we are "treacherous and cunning," "ruthless" and "cruel," so it is forgivable that you "lock

[us] up," "freeze [our] assets," "auction off [our] business," and "hand over [our] lease," because we're "sorry" (143-144). Thus, this chapter is written in such a way that the Japanese-Americans make a self-definition according to the mainstream's stereotypical views of them, and admit the crimes the authorities blamed on them, which paradoxically exposes the violence, irrationality, and illegality of the internment, and criticizes the government. In an interview, Otsuka says how she felt when she had finished the last chapter: "I was surprised that that anger was in me. I feel like the reason I could write the book was because I'm two generations removed from it. I don't consciously feel that much rage. I was surprised that that came from me."[16] She tries to bring to the surface the Japanese-Americans' rage against the internment that was sealed deep in their minds, and add it to the Pearl Harbor memories of the Japanese-American community. In other words, I would argue that she intends to transform the memory of the internment as a shame or stigma of being enemy aliens, into one of resistance against unreasonable racial discrimination, and pass it down to the next generations. Also, it could be said that in the background of a third-generation writer trying to reconstruct a story of internment, there is a fear shared by minorities that they might be segregated if they don't insist on their birth rights as American citizens.

Conclusion

When 9/11 was paralleled with Pearl Harbor and the violence towards Arab-and Muslim-Americans took place, Japanese-Americans who had been treated as enemy aliens and put into the concentration camps came forward and raised their voices against that violence. They feared that the minorities might be re-excluded from American society under the national emergency of terrorist attacks. America calls itself a nation of liberty, equality, and democracy, but actually it is run by hegemonic Anglo-American men, while minorities are marginalized in society, and therefore, they always have to demand their own rights as citizens. Though the issue of the Japanese-American internment seems to have been solved by obtaining an official apology and reparations from the government, in fact, it is not over, for racial prejudice against Japanese-Americans, which is the underlying cause of the internment, doesn't disappear from society. This is the reason why Japanese-American writers still publish works dealing with the internment even in the 21st century.

Notes

1 According to Emily S. Rosenberg, Republican Senator Charles Hagel said, "This is the second Pearl Harbor. I don't think that I overstate it." He is only one of dozens of Congress members who made similar remarks (175). For more information about Pearl Harbor allusions in political and media commentary, see Rosenberg, 174-179.

2 I refer to both Japanese nationals and Japanese-Americans who settle down in America at that time as Japanese-Americans.

3 For the historical facts and background of the Japanese-American internment during WWII, see Takaki, 179-229.

4 Jack Broom, *The Seattle Times*, May 23, 2001.

5 Florangela Davila, *The Seattle Times*, December 7, 2001.

6 Jack Broom, *The Seattle Times*, May 23, 2001.

7 For Japanese-Americans protests against the violence towards Arab-and Muslim-Americans after 9/11, see Rosenberg, 256.

8 Milton M. Gordon defines "Anglo-conformity" as the theory demanding "the complete renunciation of the immigrant's ancestral culture in favor of the behavior and values of the Anglo-Saxon core group" (85).

9 Stan Yogi explains that "[t]he "model minority" image first appeared in William Peterson's New York Times Magazine article "Success Story: Japanese American Style" (74). Elaine H. Kim remarks that "[a]s a "model minority," Asians are supposed to be restrained, humble, and well-mannered, a people who respect law, love education, work hard, and have close-knit, well-disciplined families" (177). She also mentions that "they are praised for not complaining about or protesting against difficulties: … they "take care of their own" instead of burdening "Americans" with their needs by seeking government aid and welfare assistance" (177). For more information about "model minority," see Kim, 177-180.

10 Stephen H.Sumida, "Protest and Accommodation, Self-Satire and Self-Effacement and Monica Sone's *Nisei Daughter*."

11 Question 27 asked draft-age males: Are you willing to serve in the armed forces of the United States on combat duty, wherever ordered?" Question 28 asked all internees: "Will you swear unqualified allegiance to the United States of America and faithfully defend the United States from any or all attack by foreign or domestic forces, and forswear any form of allegiance or obedience to the Japanese emperor, or any other foreign government, power or organization?" (Takaki 397).

12 4-c means enemy aliens. Takaki explains that "in September 1942, the Selective Service had classified all young Japanese men as IV-c, or enemy aliens" (396).

13 For loyal questionnaire and the historical details about Nisei enlistment or participation in the U.S. army, see Takaki. 396-405.

14 The discussion of binary demand of Japan or America to Japanese-Americans is explained in *Immigrant Acts: On Asian American Cultural Politics*, Lisa Lowe (Durham: Duke UP, 1996).

15 Interview with Julie Otsuka by Knopf, a publisher, "A Conversation with Julie Otsuka, Author of *When the Emperor Was Divine*" in BookBrowse: <http://www.bookbrowse.com/author_interviews/full/index.cfm?author_number=807>. Accessed March 30, 2010.

16 William Nakayama's interview with Julie Otsuka.

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