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# History and Trauma: Fictional Representations of Japanese-Canadian Children in Internment during World War II

Lei, Min

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UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

History and Trauma: Fictional Representations  
of Japanese-Canadian Children in Internment during World War II

by

Min Lei

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES  
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## Abstract

This thesis investigates the traumatic internment experiences of Japanese-Canadian children during World War II in Canadian fictional writings. Undoubtedly, during this war, fascist Japan caused unforgivable and unforgettable harm to people all over the world, especially nations in the Asia-Pacific region. At the same time harm was also done to residents of Japanese descent who lived in the allied countries such as the U.S., Canada, Australia, and Britain—the internment of Japanese Canadians and Japanese Americans is an example. After Japan attacked Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941, many Canadian-born children of Japanese origin, together with their families, began to endure deeper racial prejudice and discrimination than what they had suffered in the past in Canada. Concentrating on the treatment of these children during World War II, this thesis examines the trauma these children have suffered as represented in three adults' novels, Joy Kogawa's *Obasan* (1981), Kerri Sakamoto's *The Electrical Field* (1998), and Frances Itani's *Requiem* (2011), and two children's books, Shizuye Takashima's *A Child in Prison Camp* (1971) and Kogawa's *Naomi's Road* (2005). These five texts give a fictional representation of personal as well as family histories during World War II with their focus on children's traumatic experiences. The nature of these texts is a combination of fiction and facts. These fictional documents, so to speak, complement or even revise the one-dimensional official record of this segment of history by telling the stories that had been ignored for so long in the official history of Canada. In fact, this kind of fictional representation broke the long quietness of Asian-Canadian writings in Canadian literature and brought an important aspect of Asian-Canadian literature to the reading public. This has undoubtedly boosted the progress of justice and democracy in Canadian society. The publication of *Obasan* in 1981, for instance, which gives a moving account of the four-year internment experiences of some Japanese-Canadian children during World War II,

galvanized the general Canadian readership and helped to bring about the Japanese Canadian Redress Agreement in 1988.

This research considers both the content and the form through which Japanese Canadian children's traumatic internment experiences are represented in the five texts aforementioned. The analysis and discussion in this thesis focus on children's psychological trauma during the internment and their cultural trauma after the internment, as well as their coping mechanisms, that is, how they deal with racism, psychological trauma, and cultural trauma at different life stages. Meanwhile, this thesis also examines the narrative form that holds the content, and identifies and analyzes the skilful use of narrative techniques in presenting children's psychological and cultural trauma in both adults' and children's books.

This thesis consists of six chapters. Chapter One is the Introduction, which gives a review of studies on POW experiences, as well as a review of scholarship on children's internment experiences. It also gives a brief synopsis of the five texts, the relevancy of the theories of psychological and cultural trauma, as well as the narrative theory to be used. Chapter Two introduces the historical background and fictional representation of Japanese-Canadian internment during World War II. Chapter Three discusses children's psychological trauma caused by their loss of home, loss of caregivers, and loss of innocence as a result of the imposed internment. Chapter Four examines the cultural trauma of grown-up children, such as internalized racism, identity crisis, and intergenerational transmission caused by legacies of the four-year internment experiences. Chapter Five explores the narrative techniques employed by the authors in their respective children's and adults' books in representing psychological and cultural trauma attributable to the internment. Drawing on Gérard Genette's narrative theory, this chapter discusses how adults' and children's books differ in displaying children's psychological and cultural trauma

in terms of narrative time, point of view, and narrative frequency. The analysis focuses on how these narrative techniques coincide with the theme of trauma. Chapter Six is the Conclusion, which summarizes the main points of the thesis and clarifies once again the political significance of this research.

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To my beloved parents

## Contents

Abstract .....	ii
Acknowledgements .....	v
Contents .....	viii
Abbreviations .....	ix
Chapter One Introduction .....	1
Chapter Two The Japanese-Canadian Internment History and Its Fictional Representation.....	32
Chapter Three Thematic Representation of Psychological Trauma of Children in Internment....	69
Chapter Four Thematic Representation of Cultural Trauma of Child Survivors in Internment .	112
Chapter Five Narrative Representation of Psychological and Cultural Trauma of Children in Internment.....	157
Chapter Six Conclusion .....	192
Bibliography .....	198
Appendix 1 .....	220
Appendix 2.....	222
Appendix 3.....	223
Appendix 4.....	224
Appendix 5.....	225

## Abbreviations

*CCP* *A Child in Prison Camp*. Tundra Books, 1971.

*EF* *The Electrical Field*. Vintage, 1998.

*EK* *Emily Kato*. Penguin, 2005.

*NR* *Naomi's Road*. Fitzhenry and Whiteside, 2005.

*TTP* *The Three Pleasures*. Anvil P, 2017.

## Chapter One Introduction

In Fall 2018, I registered in ENGLISH 605, titled “Topics in National or Transnational Literature: Enemy Aliens or Captive Allies?” in the Department of English at the University of Calgary. In this course we read novels about Ukrainian internees in Canada during World War I, and of Italian and Japanese internees in both Canada and Australia during World War II. Starting here, I learned, as a foreigner to Canada, the fictional representation of a dark history of Canada. What startled me later is that several graduate students who were born and educated in Alberta also did not know about the internment of Japanese Canadians during World War II. My professor Dr. Donna Coates noted that when she was teaching in the 1990s in Lethbridge, where many Japanese evacuees were relocated to after the war, most undergraduate students did not know about the events either. As an Asian to Canada, this aroused my interest in the study of internment of Japanese Canadians.

On the second week of this semester, the graduate students enrolled in this course made a class trip to ghost towns in B.C. under the organization of Dr. Coates. We visited several historical sites of the internment, including the Castle Mountain in Banff where Ukrainians worked during World War I; the Nikkei Internment Memorial Center in New Denver, where Shichan Takashima’s family lived in *A Child in Prison Camp* (1971); where Naomi Nakane’s father in *Obasan* (1981) and *Naomi’s Road* (1986, 2005) were interned; and the Langham Museum Theatre Art Gallery at Kaslo, where the only English-language newspaper, *The New Canadian*, was moved during the mass evacuation. On 15 September 2018, when we entered the museum of the Nikkei Internment Memorial Center, the first thing that came to our sight was a picture (see below). In this picture, a little girl stands in the crowd and her puzzling eyes look far away. I was astonished to see that children who should be staying comfortable in their Vancouver homes, were also among the mass

uprooting. Thereafter, I decided to focus my research on the experiences of Japanese-Canadian children who were interned in British Columbia during World War II and would utilize the genre of historical fiction.



Picture at the Nikkei Internment Memorial Center.

Canadian historical writing is not without complications, historian A. B. McKillop points out in his discussion of J. L. Granatstein's book *Who Killed Canadian History*, that Granatstein has accused "Canadian academic historians of having abandoned the writing of a national past in favor of overspecialized and ideologically driven forms of history" (269). Literary critic Herb Wyile also notes that many historians such as J. L. Granatstein have "committed to a more traditional political and military history," and they are "anxious about Canadians' declining historical knowledge and declining adherence to a unifying historical narrative" (1). However, Wyile questions Granatstein's disappointment of the "atomizing effect" of the "shift to personal and social history" and his lamentation that "the erosion of the unifying traditional narratives of Canada's past" is "built on the suppression of women's, native and other voices" (9). Consequently, representations

of Canadian history such as “the genre of historical fiction” have “become of increasing concern to Canadian literary critics and scholars” (2) who have committed themselves to an understanding of the diverse experiences and history of Canada.

Writers of historical fiction in Canada, as Wylie asserts, “have invested a great deal of time and effort in studying Canada’s past and, through their writing, have raised Canadians’ consciousness of the importance of that past” (3). They not only “focus on public history” such as key episodes in Canadian history whose “representation involves engagement with historical documents and sources,” but also “elements such as class, race, ethnicity, gender, and postcolonial considerations” (4). In the past, the historical record, usually dominated by writers of European heritage, tended to exclude women, children, and minorities, but the contemporary Canadian historical fiction has begun to employ diverse historical narratives. Among these writings are those about the Japanese-Canadian internment experiences during WWII.

My research studies representations in Canadian fiction of one segment of Canadian history—Japanese-Canadian children’s traumatic prisoner-of-war (POW) experiences during World War II. Children are usually assumed to be less affected than adults in dire situations because they are young when things happen. But it is not the case in reality as depicted in the historically based fictional representation under study (both adults’ and children’s fictions). Child survivors of the internment not only had painful memories during childhood, but also participated in the construction of the cultural memory of Japanese Canadians during their adulthood by either retrieving their own childhood memories or reviewing the recollections of their parents, aunts and uncles, or grandparents through letters and documents. Some have decided to write about the internment experiences in fiction based on their family history. There is no question that these

child survivors remember what happened to them and they are deeply traumatized by the internment at the time and its consequences later in their lives.

As they endured physical hardship similar to adults during the incarceration, child survivors also suffered psychologically with their loss of parents or siblings and, in some cases, experienced sexual abuse. Culturally, they encountered racism during and after the internment and suffered cultural trauma during the process of their coming-of-age. Nevertheless, child survivors found their age-appropriate ways of neutralizing their psychological trauma during their childhood by reading children's stories, playing music, or drawing pictures. Some, imposed upon by their own culture, chose to stay silent until they were adults to cope with what they had had to endure. Still others broke their long-time silence and turned to telling or writing stories of the internment to deal with their cultural trauma. Accordingly, this thesis investigates these phenomena and answers the following questions: How did these children remember, react to, and treat their psychological trauma caused by the internment during their childhood? How did child survivors participate in and respond to the cultural memory of Japanese Canadians, and how did they deal with their cultural trauma as adults? In addition, what are the narrative techniques that the authors under study use to articulate the trauma of internees in both children's and adults' fictional representations?

The study of POW literature is a relatively new field in literary criticism. There have been only a few book-length studies of the fictional representations of internment experiences in North America so far. The studies that I have found include Machiko Inagawa's thesis "Japanese American Experiences in Internment Camps during World War II as Represented by Children's and Adolescent Literature" (2007), Emily Hiramatsu Morishima's thesis "Remembering the Internment in Post-World War II Japanese American Fiction" (2010), Thomas Girst's book *Art*,

*Literature, and the Japanese American Internment: On John Okada's No-no Boy* (2015), Tomas Jirout's dissertation "Estrangement in the Wake of Japanese Internment in *Obasan* by Joy Kogawa and *No-No Boy* by John Okada" (2016), Lara Okihiro's dissertation "'We've Only Lost Things': Lost Objects and Dispossession in Novels about the Japanese Canadian Internment" (2017), and Mika Kennedy's dissertation "Crossed Wires: Japanese American Incarceration and the Environmental Frontier" (2020). Among these studies, to my knowledge, only one dissertation is dedicated to the study of Japanese Canadian internment. Meanwhile, since the pandemic of Covid-19 from the beginning of 2019, racial prejudice against Asians in Canada is still prevalent.<sup>1</sup> In my view, it is important to examine what happened to Japanese-Canadians, especially their children, who suffered injustice during World War II so that we may take this dark history as a lesson and learn to avoid making such mistakes in future. It is necessary to expose thoroughly the traumatic effects of past POW experiences of minorities such as Asian Canadians in Canada so that no other minorities may suffer the same fate in future. This is also my main reason for initiating this research of Japanese-Canadian children's internment experiences in Canada.

I have limited the fictional narratives in this study to Canadian literature, including two children's books, Shizuye Takashima's *A Child in Prison Camp* (1971), and Joy Kogawa's *Naomi's Road* (2005)<sup>2</sup>, and three adults' novels, Kogawa's *Obasan* (1981), Kerri Sakamoto's *The Electrical Field* (1998), and Frances Itani's *Requiem* (2011). These five texts offer children's

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<sup>1</sup> Since the first case of Covid-19 was confirmed in China at the beginning of 2019, overt racist incidents and expressions against Chinese people and Asian peoples at large increased in most provinces of Canada. In Calgary, Alberta, which has the third largest Chinese population in Canada, a racist scribbling "Fuck China" was spray-painted near the University of Calgary C-Train station in the summer of 2020. David Wright, a well-known history professor at the University of Calgary, and whose areas of specialization is China as well as military/diplomatic history, published his article "Opinion: Racism in a Time of Pandemic Has Raised Its Ugly Head in Calgary" in *Calgary Herald* on May 29, 2020. In this article, he conveys his disappointment that such overt racism "bestirs among Chinese communities in Calgary, who collectively constitute almost ten per cent of [Calgary's] population." See <https://calgaryherald.com/opinion/columnists/opinion-racism-in-a-time-of-pandemic-has-raised-its-ugly-head-in-calgary>.

<sup>2</sup> There are two versions of *Naomi's Road*; in this dissertation, I focus on the 2005 version, which is revised by Joy Kogawa after the Japanese Canadian Redress Agreement in 1988.



psychological traumatization from their POW experiences during the World War II, as well as their cultural traumatization from legacies of the internment after the war. These books, which Linda Hutcheon points out belong to the genre of historiographic metafiction, “[ask] us to recall that history and fiction are themselves historical terms and that their definitions and interrelations are historically determined and vary with time” (105). As they are either based on the writers’ own internment experiences or on those of their family members, these books play upon “the truth and lies of the historical record,” use “historical data,” but rarely “assimilate such data” (114). In other words, they try to “make sense of the historical facts they have collected,” but instruct readers to see “both the collecting and the attempts to make narrative order” (114). They attempt to make readers aware of the need to “question received versions of history” (115) and thus help to complement to or even revise the one-dimensional official history of the internment.

These five books incorporate both fact and fiction. They manifest the authors’ desire “to close the gap between the past and present of the reader” and “to rewrite the past in a new context” (118). For instance, *A Child in Prison Camp* is a semiautobiographical book of Shizuye Takashima’s own girlhood internment experiences. Here, eleven-year-old Shichan Takashima, her parents, and older sister Yuki Takashima are interned in the New Denver camp, but her older brother David Takashima is sent away to a road camp. The novel *Obasan* and its children’s version *Naomi’s Road* are based partly on Kogawa’s childhood internment experiences. In both books, five-year-old Naomi Nakane is detained, together with her seven-year-old brother Stephen Nakane and Obasan (which translates as Aunt) Ayako Nakane in the Slocan camp, whereas the girl’s father is incarcerated in the New Denver camp and her mother is forced to stay in Japan during the internment. When the war is over, Naomi’s fractured family relocates to Granton in southern

Alberta. However, her father stays in the New Denver camp and soon dies of pneumonia there; her mother has been attacked by bombs and significantly, she never returns to Canada.

In *The Electrical Field*, twelve- to thirteen-year-old Asako Saito and her family are interned in an unnamed camp in the ghost towns of the western province of British Columbia (B.C.), but her older brother Eiji Saito—prototype of Sakamoto’s uncle—dies of pneumonia in the camp. After the war, Asako’s family moves to Ontario. Itani’s husband and mother-in-law were detained in the Fraser River camp during World War II. In her novel *Requiem*, four-year-old Binosuke Oda (later Binosuke Okuma and hereafter referred to as Bin) is temporarily detained with his family in Hastings Park at the beginning of 1942, but is soon sent to the Fraser River camp. During their internment, his father gives him to an older, educated man Okuma-san in the same camp in 1944. After the war, Bin’s parents, siblings, and adoptive Father Okuma-san are scattered between towns and cities such as Kamloops, Edmonton, Montreal, and Ottawa. In their fictional representation of the psychological and cultural trauma caused by the childhood internment of themselves or of their family members, the literary writers aforementioned tend to use artistic techniques, such as disrupted narrative order, shifting points of view, and repetitions, to cater to different target readers in their writings. Meanwhile, they have convinced readers that the story of Japanese-Canadians “needs to be rewritten to include some very harsh realities” (Basen)<sup>3</sup> through either their own internment experiences or those of their predecessors.

After Japan attacked Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941, the federal government of Canada took immediate action toward Japanese Canadians, including the arrest and internment of “dangerous” Japanese; the confiscation of fishing boats of Japanese Canadians; the closure of Japanese-language newspapers and schools; the impoundment of all cameras and short-wave

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<sup>3</sup> See the link below: <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/opinion/article-the-past-is-present-what-role-should-canadas-historians-play-in/>

radios of Japanese families; and the implementation of curfews on all persons of Japanese ancestry. According to Roy Miki, in January 1942, the Canadian government under Mackenzie King passed an order calling for the mass evacuation of all people of Japanese ancestry living in the “protected zone”—an area that extended along the west coast of British Columbia and 100 miles inland (*Redress* 2). By March 1942, the government incarcerated approximately 23,000 men, women, and children who had been categorized as “enemy aliens,” and more than seventy-five percent of these people were either Canadian-born or naturalized citizens (2). More than half of the 23,000 Japanese Canadians chose to stay in remote areas of British Columbia, among whom, according to Nisei journalist Frank Moritsugu, were about 3,000 schoolchildren (3). At first, most of the women and children were sent to makeshift housings at the exhibition grounds of Hastings Park in Vancouver, while some men were sent to POW camps in Ontario and others to road camps, thereby separated from their families. Later, some families struggled to stay together and were sent to remote areas of eastern British Columbia or to sugar beet farms in southern Alberta and Manitoba. To ensure the uprooting, the federal government carried out the *War Measures Act* to suspend the basic rights and freedoms of Japanese Canadians, which, as Takashima’s text mentions, meant Japanese Canadians had “no right to vote” (*CPC* n.p.) during the internment. When the war ended in 1945, Japanese Canadians were not allowed to return to their homes in British Columbia. Some were exiled to Japan—a country most Nisei had never been to, but the government insists that they go—some were ordered to stay longer in the detention camps, and some were relocated to Alberta, Ontario, or other provinces in Canada. Not until they had the right to vote in 1949 were they allowed to move freely across Canada.

## 1. Literature Review of POW Experiences

There are two types of prisoners of war: the military captives and the interned civilians such as enemy aliens. This research is limited to the study of internment experiences of civilians in Canada. In research of internment experiences, critical attention related to the POW experiences during World War II is particularly paid to the following three aspects: books on the history of the internment, journal articles on the overall POW literature internationally, and books and dissertations on specific POW fictions. Extensive research has been conducted in the U.S., Australia, and Canada on the history of the internment of Japanese descendants in those countries. These studies provide background information for understanding the fictional representation of internment experiences during World War II. For instance, in Charles J. McClain's *The Mass Internment of Japanese Americans and the Quest for Legal Redress* (1994), he writes from various perspectives of the internment by utilizing vast amounts of the U.S. government documents. In Wendy L. Ng's *Japanese American Internment during World War II: A History and Reference Guide* (2002), she introduces the history of Japanese residents in America before World War II, the mass evacuation from the west coast, the internment in barbed-wire camps, and the postwar resettlement and redress movements of Japanese Americans. In Eric L. Muller's *American Inquisition: The Hunt for Japanese American Disloyalty in World War II* (2007), he recounts the untold story about how military and civilian bureaucrats judged many Japanese-American citizens during wartime internment. In Yasuko Takezawa's *Breaking the Silence: Redress and Japanese American Ethnicity* (2019), she interprets how wartime internment and the movement for redress affected Japanese Americans. Yuriko Nagata's *Unwanted Aliens: Japanese Internment in Australia* (1996) records the common experiences of both overseas and local internees of Japanese Australians, from background to migration, arrest, and to internment and repatriation. John

Beaumont's *Under Suspicion: Citizenship and Internment in Australia during the Second World War* (2000) examines the history and citizenship of internment of Japanese, Italians, Germans in Australia from 1939 to 1945. Christina Twomey's *Australia's Forgotten Prisoners: Civilians Interned by the Japanese in World War Two* (2007) tells the stories of Australian civilians interned by the Japanese and explores how captivity posed different dilemmas for men, women, and children.

In Canada, Ken Adachi's *The Enemy That Never Was: A History of the Japanese Canadians* (1976) documents the history of Japanese Canadian's first contacts with Canada, the riot of 1907, the "Yellow Peril," and the exile of Japanese Canadians during World War II. Ann Gomer Sunahara's *The Politics of Racism: The Uprooting of Japanese Canadians during the Second World War* (1981) shows how officials deprived Japanese Canadians of their civil rights by employing the governments' own historical documents of Japanese-Canadian internment from the uprooting in 1941, to the evacuation in 1942, to the deportation and relocation in 1945, and to the fighting back of Japanese Canadians after the war. Frank Moritsugu's *Teaching in Canadian Exile* (2001) introduces the history of the schools for Japanese-Canadian children in British Columbia detention camps during World War II. Roy Miki's *Redress: Inside the Japanese Canadians Call for Justice* (2004) reviews struggles and efforts of Japanese Canadians within the redress movement in 1988. Mona Oikawa's *Cartographies of Violence: Japanese Canadian Women, Memory, and the Subjects of Internment* (2011) exposes the expulsion of Japanese Canadians from the Canadian west coast as well as the incarceration and dispossession in the inland mountains of British Columbia in the 1940s, arguing that these are critical acts in the nation-building of Canada. Pamela Hickman and Masako Fukawa's *Japanese Canadian internment in the Second World War* (2012) illustrates the wartime internment of Japanese-Canadian residents of British Columbia by

using historical documents, photographs, and images of museum artefacts. Jordan Stanger-Ross's *Landscapes of Injustice: A New Perspective on the Internment and Dispossession of Japanese Canadians* (2020) talks about the displacement of Japanese Canadians during World War II by incorporating opinions of individuals from various professionals such as community leaders, academic professors, museum staff, as well as students. Rhonda L. Hinthner and Jim Mochoruk's *Civilian Internment in Canada: Histories and Legacies* (2020) brings together multiple perspectives on the varied internment experiences of Canadians during the two world wars.

In terms of research on the overall discussion of the POW experiences, Donna Coates, whose research examines war literature, organized a series of scholarly papers on fictional representations of POW internment experiences for the 2021 special issue of *Anglica—An International Journal of English Studies*, published by the University of Warsaw—under the title of “Enemy Aliens or Captive Allies.” In this issue, essays focus on the internment experiences all over the world. Coates wrote the preface for this collection in which she provides a brief introduction to the overall situation of the Japanese-Canadian internment during World War II. Anna Branach-Kallas offers an analysis of the representation of captivity during World War I in Algerian writer Mohamed Bencherif's novel *Ahmed Ben Mostapha, Goumier*. Martin Loschnigg centers on the incarceration experience of Gabriel Hirschfelder, who is a writer and refugee from Nazi-occupied Austria, in a camp on the Isle of Man during World War II. George Melnyk examines how the National Film Board of Canada dealt with the internment of Japanese Canadians during World War II. Nicholas Birns explores how the internment of Japanese Americans “lasted for a determinate period but continues to extend in space and dilate in time for as long as the memories of it endure” (“At Peace” 89). Ruta Slapkauskaite talks about the Australian prisoner of war during World War II in Richard

Flanagan's *The Narrow Road to the Deep North* by focusing on "the body as a site of both wounding and witnessing" (141).

Others concentrate on several POW literary works by discussing the overall internment experiences. Floyd Cheung's article "Reclaiming Mobility: Japanese American Travel Writing after the Internment" (2008) concentrates on movement, which is central to every aspect of the internment from evacuation to incarceration, and to relocation and resettlement. Anthony Sze-Fai Shiu's "Exception(al): Apprehending the Unexpected in Japanese American Internment Literature" (2019) talks about how POW works like Toshio Mori, Hisaye Yamamoto, and John Okada "inhabit a foundational space for a renewed thinking of the American democratic project" (204). Petra Fachinger's article "Repositioning the Narrative of the Japanese Canadian internment through Multidirectional Memory" (2019) explores how Canadian POW works of Kerri Sakamoto, Kyo Maclear, and Ruth Ozeki engage in the kind of "multidirectional memory that Michael Rothberg promotes" by making connections "between the Japanese Canadian internment and other collective and individual traumas" (175). Emily Hiramatsu Morishima's dissertation "Remembering the Internment in Post-World War II Japanese American Fiction" (2010) examines the role of fictional representation of the detention of Japanese Americans during World War II and the effects of these memories in texts of several POW literary works. Mika Kennedy's dissertation "Crossed Wires: Japanese American Incarceration and the Environmental Frontier" (2020) exposes how the incarceration becomes both "an act of racial exclusion and war hysteria" and "a conscious reiteration of the settler colonial frontier" by examining a series of Japanese-American POW fictions (viii).

In addition, scholarship on specific POW novels usually involves literary critics' exploration of various themes related to the internment in their books or dissertations. In North America,

Arnold Davidson's book *Speaking Against the Silence: Joy Kogawa's Obasan* (1993), Carlotta Lady Izumi Abrams's dissertation "Speaking through the Silence: Uncovering the Buddhist Tradition in Joy Kogawa's *Obasan*" (1997), Julie Tharp's book chapter "'In the Center of My Body is a Rift': Trauma and Recovery in Joy Kogawa's *Obasan* and *Itsuka*" in 1998 have all explored the theme of silence during and after the internment of Japanese Canadians. Tomas Jirout's dissertation "Estrangement in the Wake of Japanese Internment in *Obasan* by Joy Kogawa and *No-No Boy* by John Okada" (2016) deals with the depiction of the consequences related to the internment of Japanese Americans and Japanese Canadians in John Okada's *No-No Boy* and Joy Kogawa's *Obasan*. Many articles that examine the specific POW novels appear in recent years in Canada. Among them, articles on Kogawa's *Obasan* and *Naomi's Road* and Sakamoto's *The Electrical Field* will be discussed later in this chapter.

## 2. Literature Review of Children's Internment Experiences

Canadian POW literature has not drawn much critical attention so far. As seen from the above three categories of worldwide studies on this literature, scholarship on Japanese-Canadian internment is either in the form of journal articles about novels or books on one specific novel. To date, no literary criticism has appeared on the overall fictional narratives about Japanese-Canadian children's incarceration experiences during World War II. Therefore, systematic research on this topic is meaningful. It serves to fill in the blank of scholarship on Canadian POW literature both in China and abroad. Meanwhile, as a valuable source for the study of trauma, children in fiction, who undergo a process of change in perspectives and criticism when they come of age, present a unique opportunity to learn the long-term impact and legacies of psychological trauma and cultural trauma on children in internment in general.



Scholarship on children's POW experiences after Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor has concentrated on real-life experiences of Japanese Americans during World War II. For example, Karen Lea Riley's *Schools Behind Barbed Wire: The Untold Story of Wartime Internment and the Children of Arrested Enemy Aliens* (2002) has documented "the establishment of the Family Internment Camp at Crystal City, Texas" (x) with the focus on "the schooling of the children and youth in the camp" (xv). Relying on historical documents and interviews, Riley discusses how school children of Japanese ancestry struggled in the camp, how they developed relationships with the incarcerated German children, what kind of curriculum they had at school, and what kinds of extracurricular activities as well as cultural activities they engaged in during the detention. Brittany Alicia Daniloff's thesis "Through Innocent Eyes: Childhood and the Japanese-American Incarceration Experience" (2016) uncovers how child survivors have lived with their experiences of childhood internment "against their will," how they "internalized the inflicted racism" they experienced during and after the incarceration, and how these events during the detention "shaped their development" (v) into adulthood by focusing "experiences of Nisei girls and women" as well as "letters, diaries, and journals" written by interned children (19). While Riley centers on effects of the internment on children through schooling without generalizing their experiences to be the same as those of their parents and Daniloff concentrates on Nisei women and girl's deviation from traditional pre-war cultural norms through state of liminality in the camps, I explore in fictional narratives how education in the camp triggers children's psychological trauma of loss of home, how children's memories of the same incident differ from their parents, and how children contribute to the construction of the cultural memory of Japanese Canadians. Furthermore, I expand the discussion of cases that led to children's psychological trauma during the internment, such as their involvement with sexual abuse, analyze further reasons for children's internalized

racism, and consider their coping mechanisms against trauma during both childhood and adulthood in fictional representation.

In the field of literary studies of children's POW experiences, one dissertation and three journal articles have discussed children's internment experiences and trauma in the context of North America. Machiko Inagawa's dissertation "Japanese American Experiences in Internment Camps during World War II as Represented by Children's and Adolescent Literature" in 2007 examines fourteen literary writers' criticism of Japanese American's experiences in various internment camps and how the books portray Japanese American children as creating lives of significance in the difficult conditions of incarceration camps. Inagawa further explores the voices and perspectives that are highlighted in the fourteen books and concludes that "the majority of Japanese American girls, boys and adults are camp members in all the books" (155). In picture books and historical fiction, there are "many Japanese American children's, non-Japanese American children's, and their family members' perspectives and voices," and in information books, there are "many voices and perspectives of public figures and public documents" (155). In conversation with this dissertation, I will discuss the significance of the changing voices of children in childhood and adulthood and various perspectives in narrating the same internment in one novel by utilizing Gérard Genette's narrative theory in Chapter Five.

In addition, journal articles include Fu-jen Chen and Su-lin Yu's "Asian North-American Children's Literature about the Internment: Visualizing and Verbalizing the Traumatic *Thing*" in 2006 *Children's Literature in Education*, Térésa Gibert's "Representing War Trauma in Children's Fiction: *A Child in Prison Camp* and *Naomi's Road*" in 2007 *Stories for Children, Histories of Childhood*, and Rachel Endo's article "Reading Civil Disobedience, Disaffection, and Racialized Trauma in John Okada's *No-No Boy*" in 2018 *Children's Literature in Education*. Chen

and Yu have examined six literary texts about children's traumatic experiences of the internment in North America during World War II, among which are *Obasan*, *Naomi's Road*, and *A Child in Prison Camp* that I will examine in this dissertation. They interpret these texts in the light of a Lacanian reading by focusing not only on the "stylistic shift from visualization to verbalization as targeted ages of readers increase, but also on the effects, both historical and personal, social and domestic, on children of their perception of the traumatic *Thing*" (Chen and Yu 111). As well, Gilbert contends that the two girl protagonists in *Naomi's Road* and *A Child in Prison Camp* "find comfort and delight" in the beautiful scenery of the inland mountains of British Columbia, "evade reality through imaginary voyages" to their former homes on the west coast or "exotic countries," and "discover that musical enjoyments" render them "the peace of mind they need in a world of violence" (267). Endo discusses the educational and literary value of John Okada's *No-No Boy* by focusing on implications for children. She argues that Okada "offers a somber critique" of how the incarceration life during World War II "destroyed the Japanese American community and families" (413). She also highlights "multiple avenues" for students and teachers to "critically explore the connections between America's racially contested past and present around the themes of civil disobedience, disaffection, and racialized trauma" (413).

Chen and Yu's argument on the effects of both historical and personal, social and domestic, on children of their perception of the trauma is the basis from which I build my analysis about children's psychological and cultural traumas. I discuss in separate chapters of children's psychological trauma during childhood and cultural trauma during adulthood, though some individual psychological suffering becomes cultural trauma when children came of age. Gilbert's contention that the two girls' evasion of violence will be the foundation for part of my argument of children's coping mechanisms of individual psychological trauma. In addition to the

imaginative journey and musical enjoyment, which are superficial coping mechanisms for pains and suffering, I will analyze how children's reading of fairy tales, folk tales, and other real-life stories and their participation in creative art, such as playing music and drawing their own stories, serve to balancing their psychological trauma. Endo's exploration of the connection and interplay between America's racial past and present as well as the racialized trauma converses with my discussion on child survivors' cultural memory of racism and cultural trauma caused by internalized racism. But I add children's identity crises and the adults' intergenerational transmission of these memory and trauma to the child survivors, and their coping strategies of cultural trauma during adulthood in Chapter Four.

Literary studies on Canadian POW literature have devoted little space to children's internment experiences and traumas. To my knowledge, the only systematic literary scholarship on Japanese Canadian internment so far occurred in 2017 dissertation "'We've Only Lost Things': Lost Objects and Dispossession in Novels about the Japanese Canadian Internment" by Lara Okihiro at the University of Toronto. Her research focuses on Jessie L. Beattie's *Strength for the Bridge* (1966), Kogawa's *Obasan*, Sakamoto's *The Electrical Field*, and Itani's *Requiem*. Here, Okihiro argues that the novels' "preoccupation with things" indicates "how integral things are to subjectivity, as well as how painful and traumatic losing one's belongings can be" (ii). Although three of the five fictional texts in my research are the same as Okihiro's, I will discuss these texts from an important different angle—children's perspectives. In addition, I incorporate two children's books in this research: Takashima's *A Child in Prison Camp* and Kogawa's *Naomi's Road*. In accord with Okihiro's study, I will also discuss personal losses in Chapter Three. Departing from Okihiro's focus of "dispossession" and the "loss of property," I concentrate on young protagonists' personal losses of their homes and caregivers, as well as their loss of innocence caused by sexual abuse,

and equally important, the psychological impact of these losses on children and their corresponding coping mechanism during childhood.

In terms of research on these five texts, there is a paucity of materials, with the exception of *Obasan*. Little scholarship has been produced on the systematic research of these texts, let alone from the perspective of children. Since its first publication in 1971, Takashima's *A Child in Prison Camp* has received little critical attention. Only two articles and one book review on this book has appeared during the past fifty years.<sup>4</sup> Itani's *Requiem* (2011) faces a similar situation. After eleven years of its first publication, only several book reviews can be found in the literary academic journals and one dissertation mentioned this novel.<sup>5</sup> Sakamoto's *The Electrical Field* (1998) is much better reviewed, but still, only several articles on children's internment experiences can be found. In contrast, scholarship on Joy Kogawa is plentiful. In terms of literary criticism on children's internment camps in Canada during World War II, analysis of the following three studies serves as my starting point in examining children's internment experiences.

Marlene Goldman's "A Dangerous Circuit: Loss and the Boundaries of Racialized Subjectivity in Joy Kogawa's *Obasan* and Kerri Sakamoto's *The Electrical Field*" (2002) facilitates an understanding of how the description of "loss, grief, and victimization" in fictional narratives "played and continues to play a role in structuring the boundaries of identity formation at the century's end" (363). Goldman argues that together with Kerri Sakamoto's novel *The Electrical Field* (1998), *Obasan* stages a dialogue to illustrate "how the discourses of loss,

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<sup>4</sup> The two articles are Fu-jen Chen and Su-lin Yu's "Asian North-American Children's Literature about the Internment: Visualizing and Verbalizing the Traumatic *Thing*" in 2006 in *Children's Literature in Education* and Térésa Gibert's article "Representing War Trauma in Children's Fiction: *A Child in Prison Camp* and *Naomi's Road*" in 2007 *Stories for Children, Histories of Childhood*, and the book review refers to Adrienne Kertzer's 1990 publication in *Canadian Ethnic Studies*.

<sup>5</sup> Book reviews include Anne Chudobiak's review in September 2011 *Postmedia News*, Beth E Andersen's review in June 2012 *Library Journal*, Ingrid Johnston's review in October 2012 *Pouch Cove*, and Julie Trevelyan's review in July 2017 *Booklist*. The dissertation is Lara Okihiro's "'We've Only Lost Things': Lost Objects and Dispossession in Novels about the Japanese Canadian Internment," University of Toronto.

mourning, and the role of the victim have been mobilized and reshaped” by Japanese Canadians (363). I will expand Goldman’s research to argue further how the discourse of children’s loss is connected to the cultural trauma of their dispersal and how children deal with their childhood psychological trauma and adulthood cultural trauma in different ways.

Irene Sywenky remarks in her “Displacement, Trauma, and the Use of Fairy Tale Motifs in Joy Kogawa’s Poetry and Prose” (2011) that the discourse of fairy-tale constitutes a “distinct language,” functions as a “coping mechanism,” and serves as “interpretative tool” used to articulate individual and collective trauma of Japanese Canadians (159). In her discussion of *Obasan*, Sywenky asserts that through the “alternative world of magic” that Naomi, as a child, expresses her anguish and distress and “conceptualize her fears” about her loss of home both in terms of the physical environment and her cultural identity (170). To converse with Sywenky’s argument that fairy tales are children’s ways in dealing with individual trauma, I will further examine the therapeutic role of fairy tales in the repetitive narrative nature in the healing of children’s trauma as well as other therapeutic ways like drawing pictures and playing music as children’s coping methods.

Rocio G. Davis’s “Joy Kogawa’s Versions of *Naomi’s Road*: Rewriting the Autobiographical Story of the Japanese Canadian Uprooting for Children” (2011) explores Kogawa’s two versions of *Naomi’s Road* published in 1986 and 2005. Davis has examined why Kogawa “rewrote *Obasan*” and “how the translations of the novel into children’s literature were enacted” (208-09). He asserts that “specific political events—particularly the Japanese Canadian redress movement—made a text like *Naomi’s Road* valuable as a didactic tool for children and a cultural artifact” (209). I will expand on Davis’s argument the difference of children’s version and adults’ version in articulating

trauma. In particular, I will illustrate the narrative interplay of narrative strategies such as narrative structure and narrative point of view in the two books.

My work complements the above-mentioned studies of children's internment experiences and those of the five fictional texts in many ways. However, my dissertation distinguishes itself from these studies by examining the evolving perspectives of girl and boy survivors displayed in two contrasting kinds of trauma in different stages and exploring narrative strategies in representing children's trauma. This study will discuss the psychological trauma and the cultural trauma caused by the internment of Japanese Canadians during World War II from the perspective of children, as well as the artistic techniques of children's and adults' literary writings on trauma. Drawing on psychological trauma theories represented by Cathy Caruth, cultural trauma theories by Ron Eyerman, and narrative theory by Gérard Genette, I argue that young internees in the fictional narratives are not only disturbed psychologically during childhood by their individual losses of home and parents and siblings, and sexual abuse, but also traumatized culturally during adulthood by the legacies of the internment. Nevertheless, though children lack the preparedness in dealing with trauma, they try to manage the childhood sufferings by reading fairy tales, drawing pictures, or playing music. In contrast, child survivors resist their cultural trauma during adulthood by either keeping silent or resorting to speech. Meanwhile, children's literature differs from adult literature in narrative techniques, but as effective in displaying psychological trauma and cultural trauma to targeted readers. While in adult novels, disrupted narrative structure accords with the fragmented experience of trauma and shifting points of view and narrative frequency of child survivors coincide with their meaning-making process of trauma, children's books convey explicitly young protagonists' trauma through simple narrative structure and perspective and employ narrative frequency to align young protagonists' traumatic symptoms and coping mechanisms.

### 3. Brief Analysis of Theories and Texts

In Greek, the word “trauma,” Cathy Caruth notes, “originally refer[s] to an injury inflicted on a body” (*Unclaimed Experience* 3). Yet “in its later usage, particularly in the medical and psychiatric literature, and most centrally in Freud’s text,” the term trauma signifies “a wound inflicted [...] upon the mind” (3). In *A Companion to Literary Theory* in 2018, Michelle Balaev notes that the concept of trauma is “generally understood as a severely disruptive experience that profoundly impacts the self’s emotional organization and perception of the external world” (360). Simply put, trauma is an emotional response to a terrible event like sudden death and violence, persecution, rape, or natural disaster. In recent years, trauma studies have been broadened from Freud’s psychoanalysis to areas such as cultural studies, historical studies, and social studies. In order to distinguish different types of trauma studies, I will limit my study in Chapter Three to individual’s psychological trauma, and in Chapter Four, cultural trauma.

In terms of psychological trauma, I rely on critics such as Cathy Caruth (*Unclaimed Experience* 1996), Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub (*Testimony* 1992), Judith Herman (*Trauma and Recovery* 1992), Bassel Van der Kolk (“The Intrusive Past” 1995 and *The Body* 2014), and Kali Tal (*Worlds of Hurt* 1996) who have rooted their work on Sigmund Freud’s psychoanalysis. Psychological trauma, trauma scholar Elin Hordvik argues, “is caused by an extreme event that occurs unexpectedly and suddenly, is life-threatening or is perceived to be so, and has an intense impact on the senses of the person involved” (23). This argument is echoed by sociologist Neil J. Smelser’s summary of Lisa I. McCann and Laurie Anne Pearlman’s idea of psychological trauma. According to them, it “(1) is sudden, unexpected, or non-normative, (2) exceeds the individual’s perceived ability to meet its demands, and (3) disrupts the individual’s frame of reference and other central psychological needs and related schemas” (qtd. in Smelser 44). The American



Psychological Association, the largest scientific and professional organization of psychologists in North America, also gives a definition for psychological trauma. It refers to “any disturbing experience that results in significant fear, helplessness, dissociation, confusion, or other disruptive feelings intense enough to have a long-lasting negative impact on a person’s attitudes, behavior, and other aspects of functioning” (VandenBos 597). Children’s losses of their caregivers and home in both reality and fiction during childhood are unexceptionally unexpected. As they lack the preparedness to deal with these overwhelming and disturbing experiences which go beyond their perceived ability and disrupt their central psychological needs, they are psychologically traumatized by the internment that has enduring impact on them. They either display the traumatic symptoms during childhood or show visible traumatic responses “belatedly” (*Unclaimed Experience* 3).

In contrast to psychological trauma which aims at the individuals, culture trauma is intended for the collective. Sociologist Kai Erikson is the first scholar to distinguish trauma of individuals and trauma of communities. Individual Trauma, according to Erikson, is generally “a blow to the tissues of the body—or more frequently now, to the tissues of the mind—that results in injury or some other disturbance” (“Notes” 455). Collective trauma, in contrast, is “a blow to the basic tissues of social life that damages the bonds attaching people together and impairs the prevailing sense of community” (*Everything* 154). American sociologist Jeffrey C. Alexander concurs with Erikson’s idea and points out that cultural trauma “occurs when members of a collectivity feel they have been subjected to a horrendous event that leaves indelible marks upon their group consciousness, marking their memories forever and changing their future identity in fundamental and irrevocable ways” (1). Another sociologist Ron Eyerman also notes that there is a difference between trauma “as it affects individuals” and “as a cultural process” (“Cultural Trauma” 60). As

cultural process, trauma is “linked to the formation of collective identity and the construction of collective memory” (60). For Japanese Canadians, cultural trauma refers to their unexpected internment during World War II. This internment is their collective memory, “a form of remembrance that grounded the collective identity-formation” of Japanese Canadians “as a people” (60). The cultural trauma of forced uprooting and internment and of nearly complete deprivation of human rights and property are not only something directly experienced by all the child survivors but also are “central to their attempts to forge a collective identity out of its remembrance” (60) during adulthood. Child survivors in the five texts reconstruct their cultural identity through memories and postmemories of the cultural trauma caused by the internment. They encounter racism and identity crises during and after the internment by themselves, and experience intergenerational transmission of cultural trauma from their parents or aunts and uncles.

Formal techniques are another crucial aspect in representing trauma in the five texts. Drawing on narratology theories such as Gérard Genette’s *Narrative Discourse*, this research will discuss in detail how narrative structure or “narrative time” (Genette 35), “perspective” or “point of view” (185-86), and narrative frequency (113) serve to accord with the representation of trauma in POW fiction. In “Order” Genette suggests that we should study “relations between the time of the story and the (pseudo-) time of the narrative” in terms of “the temporal order of succession of the events in the story and the pseudo-temporal order of their arrangement in the narrative” (35). He terms “anachrony” as the various “discordance between the two orderings of story and narrative” (36). As for point of view, Genette uses the term “focalization” to replace it.<sup>6</sup> He categorizes it into three types: zero focalization, internal focalization, and external focalization (191). Narrative

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<sup>6</sup> “To avoid the too specifically visual connotations of the terms *vision*, *field*, and *point of view*,” Genette takes up the slightly more abstract term “focalization” which corresponds, besides, to Brooks and Warren’s expression, “focus of narration” (Genette 189).

frequency, according to Genette, refers to “the relations of frequency” or “of repetition” between “the narrative and the diegesis” (113). He distinguishes narrative frequency into four categories based on the capacity for “repetition” on both the “narrated events” of the story and the “narrative statements” of the text (114). They are “singulative narrative” which refers to the event that occurs once and is narrated once, “iterative narrative,” which means the event that occurs many times and is narrated once, “repetitive narrative,” which applies to the event that occurs once and is narrated many times, and “multiple narrative” that relates to the event that occurs many times and narrated many times (114-16).

As Canadian POW literature emerges in recent years, readers may not be familiar with the five texts: the three adults’ books—Joy Kogawa’s *Obasan*, Kerri Sakamoto’s *The Electrical Field*, and Frances Itani’s *Requiem*—and the two children’s books—Shizuye Takashima’s *A Child in Prison Camp* and Kogawa’s *Naomi’s Road*. Thus, it is necessary to give a brief introduction of the books:

Kogawa’s *Obasan* recounts a story of Naomi’s childhood internment experiences during World War II. Unfolded in achronological order, this novel begins with Naomi’s visit to the coulee with her uncle in 1972. It moves back and forth between Naomi’s childhood and adulthood experiences by traversing among Cecil, Granton, and Slocan. In other words, Naomi shifts among her memories and dreams, old family photographs, Aunt Emily’s letters and diaries about the evacuation, historical documents of the internment, as well as Naomi’s childhood loss of parents and sexual abuse, to revisit the painful past of her family’s evacuation. This young girl suffers psychological trauma resulting from her mother’s disappearance and Old Man Gower’s sexual abuse, and cultural trauma during adulthood caused by legacies of the Japanese-Canadian dispersal during World War II. While Naomi evades traumatic scenes and moments by turning to fairy tales

and folk tales during childhood, thirty-six-year-old Naomi begins a journey of healing necessitated by revisiting the traumatic internment experiences through memories and postmemories.

Sakamoto's *The Electrical Field* (1998) is another story of trauma caused by the girlhood internment of Japanese Canadians during World War II. However, Asako never really recollects the whole story of her childhood internment, which is embedded in the main frame of this novel—the murdering case about Asako's neighbor Chisako. The only things she remembers about the internment are fragmented pieces of memories of her older brother Eiji. When Eiji dies of pneumonia during the internment, she is traumatized psychologically. When she becomes an adult, Asako is still haunted by the death of Eiji. She not only blames herself for the loss of Eiji, but also internalizes cultural racism against Japanese Canadians. Thanks to her neighbor, a girl named Sachi, Asako gradually reaches a process of mastering her psychological trauma through telling repeatedly the internment stories.

Itani's *Requiem* documents the boyhood internment experiences of an artist Bin during World War II. Like Kogawa's and Sakamoto's stories, Itani's story is also narrated achronologically through intrusive flashbacks. Bin's narration shifts back and forth between 1997 and the 1940s in Fraser River, Montreal, and Ottawa. During the internment years, Bin, like Naomi and Asako, is traumatized by his loss of home and loss of parents. He is abandoned by his father in the camp in the same way as Japanese Canadians were abandoned by the federal government. Even many years later, he barely speaks about his past, even to his wife Lena who always encourages him in revisiting the internment experiences. After the death of Lena, he begins to recall the camp's life because he cannot separate the memories of his wife with those of the internment years. Consequently, Bin begins to reconstruct a systematic review of the internment of Japanese Canadians on his way to his father's place in Kamloops in British Columbia. At the end of the

story, he reconciles with his father, which means he forgives the past and recovers from both individual psychological and collective cultural trauma.

In contrast to the depiction of trauma in adults' novels, the representation of trauma in children's literature suggests a process from refusal to acceptance. According to children's literature specialist Kenneth B. Kidd, "children's literature has traditionally been resistant to open acknowledgement of trauma" (183). To read or study trauma, as Judith Herman asserts, is "to come face to face both with human vulnerability in the natural world and with the capacity for evil in human nature" (7). Worse, "when the traumatic events are of human design, those who bear witness are caught in the conflict between victim and perpetrator" (7). As children are too young to take sides of this conflict, an "ongoing conviction" that children's literature should be "happy and uplifting, or at least not too disturbing" (Kidd 183) has been prevalent for many years. Nevertheless, since the "late 1980s and early 1990s, children's texts about trauma [...] have proliferated," and since then, "there seems to be consensus now that children's literature is the most rather than the least appropriate forum for trauma work" (Kidd 181). Around (or even before) the era of proliferation of trauma texts worldwide, Canadian writers for children have displayed strong interest in trauma writing. Takashima's *A Child in Prison Camp* (1971) and Kogawa's *Naomi's Road*—first published in 1986 and then revised and republished in 2005—are two cases in point.

As children are born innocent, the contents of the two children's books tend to be short, simple, and optimistic. Taboos such as sexual abuse and sibling incest are omitted from the two texts in displaying children's psychological trauma. Meanwhile, cultural trauma, which is formed during the process of children's making sense of their internment past when they come of age, is hard to recognize in young protagonists themselves as a process. Readers know nothing about what

happened to these young protagonists until twenty or more years later in the final chapter or in the Epilogue. However, the two children's books are as effective as the three adults' novels of Kogawa, Sakamoto, and Itani mentioned above in representing children's traumatic internment experiences during World War II. As protagonists of the two children's books represent Takashima and Kogawa themselves, they are both the narrator of the childhood story and the child survivor of their internment experiences. They use more straightforward words and expressions as well as less complicated narrative strategies in showing cultural trauma of child protagonists to young readers.

Compared to adults' retrospective narration of their childhood internment experiences in nonlinear order, the two children's books record children's POW experiences in chronological order. *Naomi's Road* is a version of *Obasan* for children. In addressing a younger readership, *Naomi's Road* does more than just simplifying the content and vocabulary of *Obasan*. The central part of the story is set in the Slocan camp which simplifies the storyline, limits the narrative voice to a third-person omniscient narrator, ignores the sexual abuses from Old Man Gower in Vancouver and Percy in Slocan, and adds Naomi's friendship with a white girl named Mitzi. Focusing on the friendship with Mitzi, the story gives readers a more positive angle to deal with Naomi's psychological trauma caused by her loss of mother and cultural trauma resulted from individual racism. During the traumatic narration of Naomi's loss of mother and internment of Japanese Canadians, readers are frequently drawn to Naomi's fairy tales and adventurous stories like *Gulliver's Travel* (NR 34), "Snow White" (46), and the Bible stories about angels (101). Each time young Naomi undergoes psychological suffering, she turns to these childhood stories for comfort. *Naomi's Road* also gives a larger proportion of Stephen's love for music than that in *Obasan*. By concentrating on music, Stephen becomes detached from individual racism and

prejudice inflicted on them. Thus, both Naomi's fairy tales and Stephen's concentration on art become mechanisms for children to cope with trauma.

Shizuye Takashima's *A Child in Prison Camp* is set in the New Denver camp during World War II. The story unfolds the internment memory through a young girl Shichan (Shizuye) in chronological order. This book constitutes ten chapters—beginning with the first chapter on March 1942 and going through the last chapter in September 1945—an epilogue dated June 7, 1964, and an afterword dated 1971. During the narration of her loss of home in Vancouver and personal losses of older brother David and old school friends, young Shichan deviates herself to cheerful imaginations as well as real-life stories like Marco Polo and ancient Chinese emperor. When the repatriation and relocation order—manifestation of institutional racism against Japanese Canadians—comes to their camp, her father and sister Yuki argue on whether they should go to Japan or stay in Canada after the war. Shichan is confused, helpless, and tired of their argument, breaking this tense atmosphere by thinking to herself that “maybe children should rule the world!” (*CPC* n.p.). Shichan's imaginations, fantasies, and adventurous stories are subversive in their ability to disrupt the narration of both psychological trauma and cultural trauma and provide alternative coping strategies for children.

#### 4. Organization of the Thesis

This research concentrates on representations of trauma associated of children's internment experiences. I will discuss trauma in the following three aspects: children's psychological trauma, child survivors' cultural trauma, and authors' artistic techniques in narrating the traumas caused by children's internment experiences. This dissertation consists of six chapters. Chapter One is the introduction, which provides a literature review of studies on POW experiences internationally, a literary review of scholarship on children's internment experiences in North America, a brief

introduction to the five texts and theories used in this research, and the organization of this dissertation. Here, I have introduced psychological trauma theories originated in Freud, cultural trauma theories rooted in the book *Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity* by Alexander et al. in 2004, and narrative theory by Genette. Chapter Two provides a historical background overview of the internment of Japanese Canadians, exposing how literary writers' representations of the internment differ from historical statistics, and illustrate how children in these literary writings were stripped of their typical childhood life during the internment. The two chapters offer the historical background, the theoretical basis, and foundational framework for the detailed analyses of the representations of children's internment trauma that follows in subsequent chapters.

Chapter Three discusses representations of children's psychological trauma resulted from the POW experiences. Though interned children are too young to fully understand the implications of internment, they are nevertheless traumatized by their loss of physical homes on the West Coast, the separation from their parents or siblings, and abuse issues such as sexual abuse or sibling incest. For instance, in *Obasan*, Naomi is traumatized by the physical suffering in their relocated farm in the province of Alberta as she "never got used to" the hard work there and she "cannot bear the memory" of the hardships even in her adulthood (*Obasan* 173). Nevertheless, the interned children in the five texts have their own age-appropriate ways in dealing with their overwhelming experiences. Reading childhood stories, drawing pictures, and playing music are the most effective coping mechanisms. In *Naomi's Road*, when Naomi's family arrives at the Slocan camp, Naomi regards the low-ceiling hut as "the house of Snow White and the seven dwarves" (*NR* 76). Just as Snow White endures hardships for months in the forest before she arrives at a happy ending, Naomi believes living in the huts in the forests is the inevitable process of her own happy ending.



Chapter Four examines representations of the cultural trauma caused by legacies of the four-year internment experiences. As children are not conscious of the cultural implications of institutional racism and individual racism against Japanese Canadians, they do not show their traumatic responses during childhood. However, after storing the painful childhood POW experiences for years, they begin to be aware of the unfairness and racial prejudices against them when they come of age. As a result, these child survivors internalize racism against them through memories and postmemories, and encounter identity crises after the internment, and experience intergenerational transmission of trauma from their parents or aunts and uncles. For instance, in *The Electrical Field*, Asako's younger brother Stum, who was born in the camp, has internalized racism against their own people. He not only deems their Japanese-Canadian neighbor Mr. Yano as a "weirdo" and "kamikaze Jap" (*EF* 21), but also assumes instantly the latter as a murderer of his wife without evidence by saying to Asako that "I told you it was him" (61). However, these survivors have their unique ways in dealing with the cultural trauma caused by their childhood internment and its legacies. In the first twenty to thirty years after the internment, most representations of child survivors use silence such as verbal silence, amniotic silence, and artistic silence in confronting their cultural trauma, and some turn to speech by telling or writing their internment stories to claim their Japanese-Canadian identity. For instance, in *Obasan*, Naomi remains silent verbally and in amniotic space before she reviews both her own memories and the postmemories acquired from her aunts and uncle. By revisiting the traumatic past, she finally breaks her former silence and bursts into speech.

Chapter Five explores the narrative techniques of both children's and adults' books in representing psychological and cultural trauma as a result of the internment. Relying on Genette's narrative theory, this chapter attempts to find out how the writers handle anachronies, focalizations,

and frequency in displaying trauma resulting from the internment and its legacies. In terms of the narrative structure, the two children's books—*A Child in Prison Camp* and *Naomi's Road*—are narrated in chronological order, while the three adults' novels all use non-linear narrative order. For example, there are two story lines in *Obasan*: Naomi as an adult in 1972 and Naomi as a child in 1942. Meanwhile, while some focalizations bring about limitations, some others achieve the traumatic effect of the texts. In *The Electrical Field*, Asako's fixed external focalization makes her stories of Eiji unreliable, whereas in *Obasan*, the multiple internal focalization brings faithfulness to the internment: Aunt Emily's letters reinforce Naomi's narration of the cultural trauma caused by the POW experiences. In addition, narrative frequency in the fictions serves either to complement to symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) or to mitigate children's guilt or shame attributable to cultural trauma. For instance, Itani uses "multiple narrative" (Genette 114) in *Requiem*, Bin's fate, which is told by his father for many times, is narrated several times in the novel. This narration accords with Bin's psychological trauma caused by his enforced separation from his parents as a result of his fate—the superior son in the family.

Chapter Six is the conclusion of this research. This chapter recapitulates how the five fictional works represent psychological trauma and cultural trauma, and how they conduct narrative interplay of trauma.

## **Chapter Two The Japanese-Canadian**

### **Internment History and Its Fictional Representation**

This chapter offers a survey of the historical facts and fictional representations of the internment of Japanese Canadians during World War II. Although a brief introduction of the internment is mentioned in the previous chapter, the historical facts and contemporary fictional representation of these facts, as well as untold stories of the internment, are necessary before the discussion of psychological, cultural, and artistic effects of the incarceration in the next three chapters. Owing to the silence of Japanese Canadians and the inaccessibility of documents to the public, the internment of Japanese Canadians is not known to many people in Canada, even students of today. Just because this historical event took place does not mean that it had to happen. Thus, contemporary literary writers managed to incorporate this event in their fictional imagination to gain insight into history. In narrating these stories, they do not follow exactly what appears in historical records. Instead, they rely on examples of true individual internment experiences. Some have concentrated on the internment process from either the children's or the adults' perspective, and some others have taken into account the afterwar life of the adults who were interned as children. This chapter will provide a historical background overview of the internment of Japanese Canadians, expose how literary writers' representations of the internment differ from historical statistics, and illustrate how children in these literary writings were stripped of their typical childhood life during the internment.

#### **1. Historical Facts**

World War II had a strong, if not overwhelming, impact on the development of our civilization, politically, socially, culturally, and economically. The world changed even more drastically than it did after the First World War because World War II was more destructive physically and

psychologically. An estimated total of seventy to eighty-five million people died, and numerous cities and towns were destroyed. During World War II, both the Allied and Axis countries detained prisoners of war. Apart from military captives, many “enemy aliens” were interned in the name of “national security” (*Unwanted Aliens* xi). For instance, after Japan attacked Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941, the U.S., Canada, and Australia all held residents of Japanese descent in internment camps. In the U.S., approximately 120,000 Japanese Americans living on the west coast, 80,000 of whom were “full citizens,” were put into detention camps with barbed wire (“Japanese American Incarceration”). In Canada, about 23,000 Japanese Canadians living in the coastal areas of British Columbia (a province in the west of Canada), three quarters of whom were Canadian citizens, were removed to ghost towns (*Redress* 2) in the interior of the province. In Australia, about 4,300 Japanese Australians were held in internment camps. According to a study by Yuriko Nagata, the Japanese internees in Australia include “1,141 locals and 3,160 from overseas” (xi). Though the three countries all labeled people of Japanese ancestry enemy aliens, they treated them differently in the internment camps. This research deals with the experiences of people of Japanese origin who were incarcerated in Canada during the war. As Ukrainian-Canadian scholar Bohdan S. Kordan points out, “although the war was just as distant and the security ramifications just as remote, Canada, unlike the United States, pursued a policy that interned resident enemy aliens and, more importantly, treated them as captive military prisoners” (56). Under Canada’s policy of internment, Japanese Canadian during World War II are prisoners of war, not distinguished from military captives. The Japanese Canadians who were labeled “enemy aliens” during World War II were also referred to as prisoners of war. To illustrate the harsh treatment they received, I will compare some aspects of the treatment with their counterparts in America and Australia.

Before the internment of Japanese Canadians, the prejudice against them dated back to the twentieth century, when the first wave of Japanese immigrants flooded into Canada. The first known Japanese, Manzo Nagano, arrived in Canada in May 1877 and became wealthy. His fellow Japanese followed suit, which resulted in the influx of Japanese around 1900. According to historian Barry Broadfoot, “by 1900 it was estimated that there were about 4,700 Japanese in Canada, and most were living on the West Coast and a great many were in fishing” (6). Most Issei, the first-generation Japanese immigrants, arrived “during the first decade” of the twentieth century (Fukawa 20). Many of them settled in cities like Vancouver and Victoria, some lived on “farms in the Fraser Valley,” and others in “the fishing villages, mining, sawmill and pulp towns scattered along the Pacific coast” (20). They were so hardworking that they soon achieved success in British Columbia, and thus became “competitors” of the local people in fishing, farming, logging and lumbering, and trade as well (67).

The success of these Issei threatened the livelihood of the local people in B.C. In 1907, an anti-Asian riot, aimed at the cessation of immigration from Asia, occurred in Vancouver (Broadfoot 6). During the riot, “thousands of whites joined, led on by rabble rousers including one minister” (6). They encountered resistance from Japanese Canadians when they arrived at Powell Street. Though the riot was broken up by the Vancouver police, the prejudice against people of Japanese ancestry was “institutionalized into law” (Fukawa 20). In 1908, the federal government negotiated the “gentlemen’s agreement” (Adachi 81) with Japan. This agreement restricted Japanese immigration to “an annual maximum of 400” male laborers and domestic servants (81). In addition, all Asians were denied the right to vote and excluded from most professions like “civil service and teaching” until the end of the 1940s (Fukawa 20). Even for the same job, they were “paid less than their white counterparts” for many years (20).

The Nisei, the second-generation Japanese, were born in Canada. They were “fluent in English” and “well educated” in various professions (20-21). Yet, as most B.C. politicians “catered to the white supremacists” of the province and “fueled the flames of racism to win elections” (20) in the first four decades of twentieth century, these Nisei’s demand for “the franchise” as Canadian-born citizens in 1936 was denied (21). At the beginning of 1941, the government turned them down for volunteering in the armed services on the grounds that there was “strong public opinion against them” (30). After Japan attacked Pearl Harbor, prejudice against Japanese Canadians culminated in the removal of all people of Japanese origin from the West Coast.

On the same day of the attack, the federal government invoked the *War Measures Act*, which declared that “all Japanese nationals and those naturalized after 1922” (30) must register with the Registrar of Enemy Aliens.<sup>7</sup> In terms of this mandatory registration, historian Ken Adachi maintains that all Japanese Canadians had to “sign an undertaking guaranteeing their ‘good behaviour’ and requiring them to obtain permission for any movement from one locality to another” (200). Similar to the way Ukrainians in Canada were threatened during World War I<sup>8</sup>, Japanese Canadians were ordered to carry registration cards and report to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) to prove they were good citizens.

Right after the attack, the federal government highlighted fears of a Japanese invasion of Canada. On December 8, they impounded the fishing boats in the Japanese communities, closed Japanese language newspapers and schools, and canceled their insurance policies. According to Adachi, the specific measures taken by the government included:

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<sup>7</sup> Also see Order-in-Council P.C. 9591 on 7 December 1941, in Adachi’s *The Enemy That Never Was*, on page 200.

<sup>8</sup> During WWI, the Ukrainians in Canada must also report monthly their behaviors and motives to the government. The *War Measures Act* of 1914 stipulates, “censorship on all forms of communication and the arrest, detention and deportation of dangerous enemy aliens. Subsequent orders-in-council in October 1914 and September 1916 prohibited enemy aliens from possessing firearms and instituted a system of police and military registration” (qtd. in Avery 276).

the arrest and subsequent internment of 38 Japanese allegedly dangerous to national security, all of whom were on dossiers previously compiled by the RCMP. Some 1,200 fishing boats, all owned or operated by naturalized citizens or Nisei, were impounded. The 59 Japanese-language schools in the province and the three vernacular newspapers published in Vancouver were closed, on the advice of the RCMP, as ‘precautionary measures’ though the English-language weekly, *The New Canadian*, was allowed to continue publishing. (199-200)

Despite the RCMP’s proposal that the Japanese population posed no threat, the government claimed their actions were protective measures. These actions were detrimental to Japanese Canadians, as many of them lost their jobs thereafter.

Shortly after December 1941, the government required mandatory registration of all persons of Japanese origin, regardless of citizenship.<sup>9</sup> But this time, the registration extended to every Japanese resident in B.C., including those with Canadian citizenship. Adachi maintains that “the status of Nisei and naturalized immigrants as Canadian citizens was already being clearly eroded in favour of their status as descendants of the Japanese enemy” (200). Because of their connection with Japan, those Japanese residents who had changed their nationality to Canadian or were born in Canada were still regarded as enemy aliens. This designation not only violated the rights of Japanese Canadians as Canadian citizens, but also led to public fear and hatred toward people of Japanese ancestry, especially after the Battle of Hong Kong which “resulted in the in-battle deaths of 290 Canadian soldiers and 267 deaths from Japanese POW camps” (“Japanese Canadians”). On January 16, 1942, the Minister of National Defence designated a “protected area”<sup>10</sup> from which all Japanese Canadians could be excluded. This area was “some 100 miles wide extending from

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<sup>9</sup> See Order-in-Council P.C. 9760 on 16 December 1941, in Adachi’s *The Enemy That Never Was*, pp. 200.

<sup>10</sup> See Order-in-Council P.C. 365, in Adachi’s *The Enemy That Never Was*, pp. 208-09.

the Pacific Ocean to the Cascade Mountains, including all the islands off the coast, and bound by the Yukon on the north and the Canada-United States border on the south” (Adachi 209).

All the men of Japanese ancestry between the ages of eighteen and forty-five were removed from this protected area, where approximately ninety percent of the Japanese population lived (“Japanese Canadian Internment”). Most of them were sent to road camps in the Rockies, and some others to POW camps in Angler, Ontario (“Japanese Canadian History”). This removal not only targeted Japanese-Canadian men who were at the best age for military service but also decreased those capable of competing with the local workers. The removal was a political oppression and an economic sanction of Japanese Canadians. As Adachi observes, “In a private conversation, one member from British Columbia admitted that war with Japan had been a ‘heaven-sent opportunity’ to rid the province of the Japanese economic menace forever; nothing was mentioned of ‘national security’” (204). The order of this protected area not only rendered the political leaders an opportunity to remove Japanese Canadians from the coastal settlement, but also gave support for the local fishermen, farmers, and merchants who wished their Japanese competitors to be eliminated from the West Coast (Fukawa 35).

However, the partial evacuation did not satisfy the B.C. politicians and the public, so a mass evacuation of Japanese Canadians began a month later. On 24 February 1942, Prime Minister Mackenzie King issued an order to remove and detain all persons of Japanese racial origin from the protected zone.<sup>11</sup> Some families were given only twenty-four hours to leave the province (“Timeline”). This order gave the RCMP the power to search homes of Japanese Canadians without warrant, to enforce a “dusk-to-dawn curfew” upon them, and to confiscate cars, cameras, and radios from their houses (“Japanese Canadians History”). From March 1942, Japanese

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<sup>11</sup> See Order-in-Council P.C. 1486, in Adachi’s *The Enemy That Never Was*, on page 216-17.



Canadians were ordered to turn over their property and belongings to the Custodian of Enemy Alien Property.<sup>12</sup> Shortly after, all Japanese Canadian mail was censored. To supervise and direct this mass uprooting, the government established the B.C. Security Commission, which initiated a program of assigning men to road camps and women and children to ghost town detention camps (“Japanese Canadian History”).

Compared with the previous evacuation, the mass evacuation measures were fiercer and more devastating because they violated the basic rights of human beings, even though “no danger to national defences could exist from [Japanese Canadians’] presence” (Adachi 202). This dispersal was broad enough to apply to anyone of Japanese origin, including defenceless women and children. The processing of their property and belongings occurred though none of them were found to have traded or exchanged information with the Japanese army. The censorship of their mail and the curfew that ordered all Japanese Canadians in Vancouver to be restricted to their homes within the protected zone on the coast of B.C. violated their personal freedom as Canadian citizens. They could not communicate easily with their friends and families in letters, nor could they move about freely after ten p.m. Many lost their jobs in Vancouver and became homeless over the next four or more years.

By October 1942, approximately 21,000 persons of Japanese ancestry had been removed from their homes on the West Coast. Among them, 75% were Canadian citizens (“Japanese Canadian History”). Many Japanese-Canadian men were forced to separate from their families. Those healthy and strong were ordered to report for transportation to road camps. Some were ordered to live temporarily in the pooling center of Vancouver’s Hastings Park before they were sent either to road camps or sugar beet farms. The rest of them, who were targeted as troublemakers because

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<sup>12</sup> See Order-in-Council P.C. 1665, in Adachi’s *The Enemy That Never Was*, on page 217-18.

they had resisted and challenged the orders of the evacuation,<sup>13</sup> were rounded up by the RCMP and sent to barbed-wire POW camps in Ontario. Women, children, and the ailing men were either detained in Hastings Park or allowed to stay longer in their Vancouver home before they were transported to ghost towns in the interior B.C. But in the latter case, they had to obey curfews and carry IDs in Vancouver.

In terms of the detention in Hastings Park, Japanese Canadians endured inhuman conditions there. At first, approximately 2,500 men were placed temporarily in the center, but shortly after, “more than 8,000 detainees were processed through Hastings Park,” where men and women were segregated in different buildings (“Japanese Canadian Internment”). The men were confined to cots in one building with barbed wire and guards, whereas women and children were housed in the Livestock Building, which all dignity destroyed: “Blankets and sheets were draped around the former horse stalls to establish some measure of privacy but they could not block out the stench of the former occupants” (“Japanese Canadian History”). The environments of both buildings were horrible, but so was the order that their movements be restricted, which meant that men and women could not visit each others’ buildings freely. In contrast, their counterparts in Australia “lived a communal life” and the treatment was “in accordance with the provisions of the Prisoner of War Convention signed at Geneva in 1929” (*Unwanted Aliens* 139).

After the temporary detention in Hastings Park, about 12,000 people were exiled to the eastern Kootenay region of inland B.C. (“Internment of Japanese Canadians”). Whereas around 2,150 single men were sent to road camps, another 3,500 men chose to work on sugar beet farms outside

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<sup>13</sup> During the mass evacuation, part of the Nisei resisted the order in fear that they would be separated from their families. To demand the removal in family groups, they formed the Nisei Mass Evacuation Group and held a series of public speeches and petitions at Powell Street and in fishing villages of Steveston. Some of them refused to show up to the transportation to road camps, some chose to cooperate with the government by surrendering themselves as enemy aliens, and others agreed to pay for the internment expense themselves. “Around 700 Japanese Canadian men were targeted as troublemakers” because they resisted and challenged the orders of the evacuation (“Internment of Japanese Canadians”).

B.C., and some 3,000, who intended to stay together with their families, were permitted to settle in the “self-supporting projects” at their own expense (“Internment of Japanese Canadians”). The ghost towns<sup>14</sup> in this region were mainly abandoned mining towns, with either “internment quarters mainly for women, children, and the aged,” or government-built camps “near the town of Hope in the Fraser Canyon” (Fukawa 21); the road camps were mainly distributed in Ontario or on the border of B.C. and Alberta;<sup>15</sup> and the self-supporting camps included Lillooet, Bridge River, Minto City, McGillivray Falls, and Christian Lake (21). Some men were allowed to join their families in the ghost towns after several months or years of work in the road camps, and the women and children had been incarcerated in ghost towns until 1945 to 1946. The exclusion from the West Coast of all the men, women, and children did not end until 1949, four years after the war ended.

Over the course of internment, the government not only forced the Japanese Canadians to pay the costs of the confinement and custodian services, but also granted the Custodian of Enemy Aliens “the right to dispose of Japanese Canadian properties” in their care “without the owners’ consent”<sup>16</sup> (“Japanese Canadian History”). Thus, when the incarceration was over in 1945, Japanese Canadians received little money for their custodian property. In contrast, the internment costs of their counterparts in America were supported by their governments and their property was not processed until the end of the war. Roy Miki argues that Japanese Americans’ “properties and belongings were not liquidated without the owners’ consent” and they were “not forced to pay for their own incarceration” (*Redress* 42).

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<sup>14</sup> The ten “interior settlement centres” in British Columbia include Tashme, Greenwood, Slocan, Slocan City, Lemon Creek, Popoff, Bay Farm, Rosebery, New Denver, Sandon, and Kaslo.

<sup>15</sup> Road camps on the board of B.C. and Alberta include Hope—Princeton, Rivelstoke—Sicamous, and Blue River—Yellowhead.

<sup>16</sup> See Order-in-Council P.C. 5523, in Adachi’s *The Enemy That Never Was*, on page 320.

As the war was drawing to close, Prime Minister King stated in 1944 that it was desirable that Japanese Canadians be dispersed outside of B.C. (Fukawa 31). These internees were strongly encouraged to apply for “voluntary repatriation” to Japan, and those who did not have to prove their loyalty to Canada by moving east of the Rockies immediately (31). All the internment camps were closed between 1945 and 1946, except New Denver, which was later used to deal with internees, who had contracted pneumonia or tuberculosis, and most of whom were sent from other closed camps. As the repatriation for the Nisei meant exile to a foreign country that they had never been to before, only 4,000 or so chose to go to Japan in 1946, most internees moved to the Prairie provinces, and the rest moved to Ontario and Quebec (“Japanese Canadian History”). In contrast, as Miki maintains, the Japanese Americans “did not face the prospect of a ‘quasi-judicial’ loyalty commission to deport those deemed ‘not fit persons’” (*Redress* 42).

After the internment was over, the government used the National Emergency Transitional Powers Act from 1946 to keep the measures against Japanese Canadians in place (“Japanese Canadian History”). This Act forbid Japanese Canadians from returning to the West Coast without a permit until four years after the internment. In contrast, Japanese Americans, Miki maintains, “could return to the coast in January 1945 and were not subject to deportation and dispersal” (*Redress* 42). On April 1, 1949, all restrictions were lifted and Japanese Canadians were given the “full citizenship rights” (Fukawa 22). Nevertheless, their homes in Vancouver were essentially occupied by local strangers and the Japanese Canadian community in B.C. was “virtually destroyed” (22). Many of them refused to return and remained in provinces east of the Rockies, while some of them rebuilt their homes scattered across B.C.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> The population of Japanese Canadians in B.C. decreased from 22,096 in 1941 to 7,169 in 1951; in Ontario, increased from 234 in 1941 to 8,581 in 1951; in Alberta, increased from 578 in 1941 to 3,336; in Manitoba, increased from 42 in 1941 to 1,161 in 1951; in Quebec, increased from 48 in 1941 to 1,137 in 1951; and in Saskatchewan, increased from 105 in 1941 to 225 in 1951 (qtd. in Fukawa 27).

In the next few decades, many Japanese Canadians, especially the Issei and some Nisei, remained silent because they feared incarceration again. Some elderly Issei had lost everything during the incarceration, including their livelihoods and ways of life, and they were too old to restart their business after internment. Thus, Nisei became their breadwinners. But many Nisei “had their education disrupted and could no longer afford to go to college or university” (Fukawa 23). Most of them lost their self-esteem and pride in the Japanese heritage and worked silently in lowly paid jobs. Their children, the Sansei, who were mostly born after the internment, “grew up speaking English, but little or no Japanese” (23). Most Sansei did not know their Japanese cultural heritage either because their parents never told them about the past or because they had no contact with their fellow Japanese Canadians outside of their family. Therefore, the intermarriage rate was very high: “almost 90% according to the 1996 census” (23).

Nevertheless, a small part of the Nisei and Sansei participated in the redress movement for Japanese Canadians. The injustices they or their parents endured were finally acknowledged. They obtained “a review and amendment of the *War Measures Act* and relevant sections of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, so that no Canadian would ever again be subjected to such wrongs” (24). The then Prime Minister Brian Mulroney apologized for past wrongs to Japanese Canadians, signed the Japanese Canadian Redress Agreement on 22 September 1988, and promised \$21,000 to each of the surviving internees (*Redress* 320, 238). As Kordan argues, the Japanese-Canadian redress served “as a useful reference in promoting awareness of both tolerance and acceptance as political goals in the face of ongoing change and challenge” and reintroduced “direction into the discussion on public policy by emphasizing principle and justice in policy choices” (50). The success of the redress movement is an example of the minority’s struggle to overcome prejudice and racism and reaffirm the rights and citizenship of every individual in a democratic country

(Fukawa 24). It also encouraged other minorities to fight for redress. For instance, Ukrainian Canadians managed to get the Internment of Persons of Ukrainian Origin Recognition Act in 2005, seven years after Japanese Canadian Redress Agreement.

## 2. Fictional Representation

This dark history of Canada regarding Japanese Canadians, however, is not remembered or known by many Canadians, even after the redress for Japanese Canadians in 1988.<sup>18</sup> Nevertheless, Canadian literature serves as a “forum in which there is undeniable evidence of a renewed interest in and revitalization of Canadian history” (Wyile 2). Herb Wyile argues that current Canadian readers are “increasingly eager to delve into the country’s past,” and contemporary Canadian writers “have played a huge role in cultivating and feeding that interest” (2). Among the country’s past, the internment of Japanese Canadians stands out as a stunning preoccupation. Yet, historical novels by Japanese-Canadian writers were relatively scarce in the past, resulting from either the exclusion of this event from the “Canadian literature scene” or “the writers’ exclusion” from the dominant narratives about Canadian history (4). In recent years, this event has been embraced by Canadian literature. Contemporary writers begin to reconstruct the events of Japanese-Canadian prisoners of war from a temporal distance, which usually in some ways engages “the public historical record” to inform readers of this internment (4). In other words, they utilize their “imaginings and fictional techniques in order to fill in gaps left by official histories” (Laurie 167). In an interview, Itani says, “I was purposeful in creating Lena as historian. I wanted her approach to history to offset Bin’s” (“Meet Frances Itani” 6). Although the historical sources present “more

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<sup>18</sup> The well-known war literature scholar, Dr. Donna Coates, comments in the 2021 *Special Issue of Anglica* that “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 relocated at the end of the war and began their lives yet again, did the subject of internment materialize” (5).

fabrication” than the novels, these literary studies of POWs tell “the truth about the truth that was a fiction that did not hide the truth” (Davidson 20).

These fictional representations share one commonality in telling the truth of individual internment experiences: they boldly unveil the stories of Japanese Canadians that have been forgotten by the majority, or never revealed in the official history of Canada. However, before the turn of twenty-first century, the few Japanese-Canadian literary writers have not drawn enough attention to this piece of history. Shizuye Takashima’s 1971 *A Child in Prison Camp* is the first book to narrate the darkness of the internment of Japanese Canadians more than two decades after the war ended. However, this children’s book has enjoyed little critical attention since its publication. Joy Kogawa’s 1981 *Obasan* exposes the forced uprooting, cruel internment, and involuntary relocation of Naomi Nakane’s family living in Vancouver when the Japanese invaded Pearl Harbor. It came by way of a shock to most readers because they either did not know or had forgotten about the event. Thus, it was essentially the first and most fundamental work that has drawn public’s attention to the internment of Japanese Canadians. But after its appearance, there was a long silence in writings on this internment, with the exception of Kogawa’s poetry *Woman in the Woods* (1985) and the children’s version of *Obasan—Naomi’s Road* (1986).

One crucial reason for the neglect of Takashima’s book and silence of the POW writing was the inaccessibility of this history to the public. In *Requiem*, for instance, when talking about official documents of the internment, the protagonist Bin maintains that the “long-forbidden documents [have] kept secrets for more than half a century” (R 37), and the “embargo on information about the internment was quietly lifted a decade ago [in 1997]” (37). Even after the embargo was lifted, non-Japanese Canadians still had limited access to this dark history. Bin’s wife Lena, a professor of history, is not allowed to go to the National Archives to do research on the internment by herself

because, as Bin says, “As a Caucasian, she was required to present my signature as proof that she was a member of my family—hence, permitted access to the files” (37). Owing in part to this difficulty of approaching the dark history of the internment, many Canadians have no idea of what happened to Japanese Canadians during WWII and writing on this history has not surfaced for decades.

Not until the turn of the twenty-first century, when the literary writers “feel secure enough about their place in Canadian society to write about their histories” (Wyile 4), did they begin to shed light on the dark history of the internment again. The body of Japanese Canadian POW literature has grown thereafter.<sup>19</sup> These writers are either second-generation Japanese Canadians (Nisei) who were interned in the camps as young children, or third- or fourth-generation Canadians (Sansei or Yonsei) who were not yet born when the internment began, or white writers who married into a Japanese-Canadian family. They have either revealed the untold stories in official history through their own childhood experiences, or revised the official history through research on their own family history, or recreated the internment story through their own observations of the historical past.

Takashima and Kogawa document the internment process based on their own experiences of incarceration. In *A Child in Prison Camp*, Takashima notes in “An Afterword” that “This story is based on what actually happened to me and other people of Japanese origin living in Canada”

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<sup>19</sup> Key works include Anne Wheeler’s film *The War Between Us* (1994), Joy Kogawa’s children book *Naomi’s Road* (2005), novel *Itsuka* (rewritten as *Emily Kato*—2005), and film *East of the Rockies* (2019), Francis Itani’s novel *Requiem* (2011), Mark Sakamoto’s memoir *Forgiveness: A Gift from My Grandparents* (2014), Terry Watada’s novel *The Three Pleasures* (2017). Yet, the number of literary works on POW literature is small compared to that in Australia. For example, there are twelve POW novels and other fictional representations so far. They document the POWs of Japanese, Germans, and Italians in Australia, which are very good ones: “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” (Coates 6). In addition, Thomas Kenneally recorded the POWs of Japanese, Italian and German captives in *Shame and the Captives*, and Richard Flanagan, the POWs of Japanese and Australian captives in *The Narrow Road to the Deep North*.



(CPC n.p.). Beginning with the first chapter on March 1942, going through to the last chapter dated September 1945, Takashima focuses on the mass evacuation and ghost-town experiences of Shichan's family. Life before the mass evacuation and that after the relocation are only mentioned in several paragraphs. In contrast, Kogawa records the whole process of the internment in *Obasan* and *Naomi's Road* through Naomi's childhood recollections and in Aunt Emily's letters and documents. While she creates through her own experiences and imagination Naomi's recollections in *Obasan* and *Naomi's Road*, she reconstructs Aunt Emily's letters by referring to documents of Kitagawa. In the acknowledgement page of *Obasan*, Kogawa says, "I wish to thank [...] in particular, Muriel Kitagawa, whose material was used freely, especially throughout the writings of Chapter Fourteen" (O n.p.).

Kerri Sakamoto, Frances Itani, and Terry Watada have each re-written the internment according to their family history or their investigations of Japanese Canadians' pasts. In *The Electrical Field*, Sakamoto focuses on the postwar life of Asako Saito's family and only devotes a few sentences to the detention in Hastings Park and the internment experiences in an unnamed camp in the mountains of B.C. During an interview, Sakamoto explained that "the death of Asako's brother was based on the actual death of one of her own uncles in the internment camp" (Goldman 373). Itani examines in *Requiem* the whole uprooting process of Bin's family in a fishing village as well as the afterwar life of Bin until the 1990s. Yet, she created this novel not based on her husband who was incarcerated in one ghost town at the age of four, but on her research of the internment and a trip to the Fraser Valley. In one interview, Itani says that she wanted her character "Bin Okuma to be unique—entirely different from" her family members and friends ("Meet Frances Itani" 6). Watada, whose "parents and older brother" were uprooted from the B.C. coast and "wound up in Ontario as a result of the government-enforced expulsion," says that he was

“fascinated by the whole sense of community that was [in B.C] before World War II, and even during the war, and how it became diffused throughout Canada afterwards” (Chau). He thus recounts the internment process by recording the government’s politics and responses of Japanese Canadian communities to the evacuation through his main character Daniel Sugiura’s journey and newspaper clippings.

Commenting on Kogawa’s *Obasan*, literary scholar David Palumbo-Liu notes that the “ethnic narrative presents an occasion for a subversive revision of the dominant version of history; it gives voice to a text muted by dominant historical referents; and it makes possible an imaginative invention of a self beyond the limits of the historical representations available to the ethnic subject” (211). Not only Kogawa but also the other writers mentioned above have engaged in dialogues with or even helped correct the official versions of history by “breaking silence about events from 1942 to 1945 and its aftermath for the community, reviv[ing] an important part of Canadian heritage, and generally set[ting] the record straight” (Davis 213-14). They represent diverse aspects of individual internment experiences in their fictive writings, which are different from historical statistics. In *A Child in Prison Camp*, *Obasan*, *Naomi’s Road*, *The Electrical Field*, *Requiem*, and *The Three Pleasures*, these writers depict how Japanese Canadians’ basic rights as Canadian citizen are violated, showed how their social welfare is taken away, and portrayed how they react to the government orders during the internment.

Different from the statistics of Japanese-Canadian internment placed in chronological order, Takashima, Kogawa, Sakamoto, Itani, and Watada have documented the violation of basic rights of Japanese Canadians in B.C. during the internment. The government’s immediate measures toward people of Japanese ancestry after Japan’s attack on Pearl Harbor and subsequent dispersal policies were “a gross violation of civil rights” of Japanese Canadians (“Japanese Canadian

History”). In the fictional narratives, the government arrested Japanese residents without due process, labeled the Japanese-Canadian citizens enemy aliens without justifiable grounds, and removed them from the West Coast of B.C. without valid reasons. In addition, they deprived Japanese Canadians of the right to equality by confiscating Japanese Canadians’ property and belongings; the right to freedoms by restricting Japanese Canadians’ free speech, mail communication, and movements; and the right to privacy by ravaging Japanese Canadians’ human dignity. <sup>20</sup>

In documenting the government’s infringement on Japanese Canadians’ right to due process, the writers rely on true individual experiences right after Japan’s attack. In *The Three Pleasures*, the government arrested some Japanese residents in B.C. in the name of national security. Though these residents were regarded dangerous by the RCMP, they received no charges nor trials before or after the arrest. For example, Daniel’s friend’s father, who lived in Powell Street while Japan attacked Pearl Harbor, was arrested by the Mounties because he was once the Mitsubayashi (Minister) in the Japanese Army. He was told by the RCMP that “No phone calls, no lawyers, no visitors” (*TTP* 42) were allowed. Together with Dicky’s father, “[t]hirty-eight others were caught in the net of the manhunt that night” (43). Yet, this arrest was neither made for a thoroughly justified reason nor accorded to the time a person can be detained in custody. These Japanese Canadians were considered dangerous to national security because they were of Japanese origin and were sent to road camps without a definite releasing date.

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<sup>20</sup> According to the Canadian Civil Liberties Association, the five core beliefs of Canadian citizens include equality, fundamental freedoms, liberty and due process, privacy, and education. In this section, the first four core beliefs will be discussed, while the belief of “education” will be discussed in the next section. [https://ccla.org/?gclid=Cj0KCQiAnaenBhCUARIsABEec8Xtv3zK58HzX8vwpm2WZ5p55RDSZEAbY56m2vK1zV9VBNSQkLVqxL0aAqcbEALw\\_wcB](https://ccla.org/?gclid=Cj0KCQiAnaenBhCUARIsABEec8Xtv3zK58HzX8vwpm2WZ5p55RDSZEAbY56m2vK1zV9VBNSQkLVqxL0aAqcbEALw_wcB). Accessed 3 Oct. 2021.

Following the arrest, the writers record the government's unfairness in labeling all Japanese Canadians, who had nothing to do with the Japanese army, enemy aliens. In *Obasan*, Kogawa depicts in personal documents and letters that the Japanese Canadians had to carry their ID card wherever they went. For instance, in *Obasan's* attic, together with Uncle Isamu's ID card, Naomi found "a mimeographed sheet" signed by "an RCMP superintendent," authorizing Uncle to "leave a Registered Area by truck for Vernon where he was required to report to the local Registrar of Enemy Aliens, not later than the following day" (35). Although the RCMP knew "how blameless" Japanese Canadians were and suggested that they did not deserve "such harsh treatment" (O 73), the government required all people of Japanese origin to register with the Registrar of Enemy Aliens every day because, as Aunt Emily points out in her letters, they were suspected "spies and saboteurs" (73-74). Nevertheless, none of the Japanese Canadians were enemies of Canada in the end of the war. In 1944, Prime Minister Mackenzie King stated in the House of Commons that "It is a fact that no person of Japanese race born in Canada has been charged with any act of sabotage or disloyalty during the years of war" (Fukawa 22). They were unfairly claimed enemies of Canada on racial grounds alone.

The detention of Japanese Canadians without due process and justifiable reasons is further revealed in the two dispersals in the novels: the removal from the West Coast during the partial and mass evacuations and the repatriation after the war ended. The removals, which targeted healthy men between eighteen and forty-five years old during the partial evacuation, and all people of Japanese origin during the mass evacuation, is on unjustifiable grounds. In the partial evacuation, the men were all rounded up and sent away to road camps without charges or trials. For instance, though "[i]t was hard to think Uncle [Isamu] as anyone's enemy" (O 35), he was taken away by the RCMP during the partial evacuation with "no provisions" and no idea of "where the gunboats

were herding him” (20). Naomi later learned that Uncle Isamu had been “sent far away with hundreds of other men” and they were “in the mountains and the snow, making roads” (*NR* 33). Though the government assumed these men, who “were born in Japan and haven’t been able to get their citizenship yet” (*O* 75) and were at the best ages for military sabotage, were a potential threat to national security, no evidence was found showing that they had ever performed any espionage activities.

About a month after the partial evacuation, the removal order extended to every Japanese Canadian, regardless of age, gender, and citizenship. The writers describe this mass evacuation of men, defenceless women, and innocent Canadian-born children depending on real individual and family experiences. In their narratives, many healthy men, including Shichan’s father and older brother, Naomi’s uncles, and Bin’s uncles, were forced to different road camps. Many of the elderly in Vancouver, such as Naomi’s Grandpa and Grandma Nakane, and Japanese residents of Vancouver Island, like Bin’s family and Asako’s family, were detained temporarily in Hastings Park for months before they were sent to ghost towns. The rest—mostly women, children, and ailing men—were allowed to stay in their Vancouver houses in the first few months of the mass evacuation. In the end, all of them were transported to the inland B.C. from the coastal area. This removal was groundless because most of the internees were born in Canada and had never been to Japan. For instance, Shichan’s Canadian-born brother David is suspected to be a spy or saboteur of Japan. David was “so gentle” that Shichan has difficulty understanding that he is “considered an enemy of his own country” (*CPC* n.p.).

The writers further portray the government’s infringement upon Japanese Canadians’ rights as Canadian citizens during the second dispersal in 1945. After the internment was over all the internees were forced to choose either to stay in east of the Rockies or to go to Japan under the

policy of repatriation and relocation. In either case, they were not allowed to return to the West Coast without a permit from the government. For instance, after the internment, both Shichan's family and Asako's family chose to stay in Ontario, while Bin's parents moved to the outskirts of Kamloops near their Fraser River camp, his siblings settled to Alberta, and Bin and his adopted father Okuma-san went to a farm in B.C. first, and later to Québec. As for Naomi's family, Naomi's Obasan and uncle, together with Naomi and Stephen, relocated to a sugar beet farm in the Southern Alberta after the incarceration in Slocan, while her father remained in the New Denver camp which dealt with the internees with pneumonia or T.B after the war ended. Their Slocan neighbor Kenji's grandfather, who was "a veteran in the Princess Pats in World War I," chose to cooperate with "the will of the country by taking all his family and grandchildren to hunger, poverty, and ostracism in Japan" (O 165). This dispersal was groundless as the internees were proved innocent for Japan's attack after four years' internment. Nevertheless, the politicians wanted them to be scattered across Canada so that their communities were thoroughly destroyed.

The government also breached Japanese Canadians' right to equality in the fictions. This is done through the confiscation of the latter's property and belongings. Right after Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor, the government immediately impounded the fishing boats and suspended the Japanese-Canadian fishermen's licenses. For instance, in *Requiem*, Bin's father and his fellow "eight fishermen from [their] tiny bay" (R 43) in Vancouver Island, have lost everything, including "his boat and licence" (245). In *Obasan*, the boat of Naomi's father and uncle, which was praised as "a beauty" (O 17) and a "work of art" (20), was confiscated by the RCMP. According to Aunt Emily, this boat "was seized along with all the fishing boats from up and down the coasts", and the fishermen's licences "were suspended" (73). In *The Three Pleasures*, "1,200 Japanese fishing boats" on Vancouver Island were "impounded, gathered, and lashed together all along the various

harbour fronts” (*TTP* 44). These measures were unfair to Japanese-Canadian fishermen, who lost their livelihood thereafter, though they had never committed any crimes against Canada.

The confiscation continued during the mass evacuation. Different from the previous one, aimed at fishermen, this impounding extended to every Japanese-Canadian family with short-wave radios, cameras, and automobiles. The writers have different priorities in depicting the government’s confiscation of Japanese Canadians’ property and belongings during the mass evacuation, but they have all conveyed the cruelty and unfairness to Japanese residents on the west coast. In *A Child in Prison Camp*, when Shichan talks about the mass evacuation in 1942, she says, “Now our house is empty. What we can sell, we do for very little money. Our radio, the police came and took away. Our cousins who have acres of berry farm had to leave everything. Trucks, tractors, land, it was all taken from them” (*CPC* n.p.). The impounding of the radio, the forced selling of belongings, and the robbery of their farm equipment and land in Shichan’s family are against the right to equality that each Canadian should have.

In *Obasan*, Kogawa documents the confiscation of Japanese Canadians’ property in Aunt Emily’s letters. Like the unfair treatment that Shichan’s family received, Naomi’s family had to sell their belongings that they could not carry at bargaining prices and turn in everything left in their house to the Custodian of Enemy Alien Property. According to Emily, the RCMP confiscated their radios and cameras, “even Stephen’s toy one,” and could search their homes “without warrant” (*O* 76). Naomi’s family could only take their “clothes, bedding, pots and pans, and dishes” (91). They had to sell their “dining-room suite and piano” (91) and hand over other belongings to the government. In particular, the confiscation destroyed the Japanese community including piano artists like Naomi’s father. After the confiscation and sale, Naomi’s Obasan’s “house was looted” (91). They got little money from the sale. Thus, “the cost of the transportation and freight” (91)

that they were required to pay themselves bothered her Obasan considerably before their departure to the internment camp.

Itani records not only the government's confiscation of Japanese Canadians' property but also the local villagers' looting of their belongings, which manifests that no equality was entitled to Japanese Canadians in Bin's community. While the government's confiscation accords with the historical statistics, the villagers' robbery, to my knowledge, was not documented in history. Bin recalls that "[c]ars and trucks, cameras, radio transmitters, radio receivers, firearms and ammunition were confiscated" (R 81) in his community, whereas in their house, "[a]lmost everything left behind is dragged" by the "looters from the village" immediately upon their departure (51). These looters get inside the houses of Japanese Canadians so quickly that they "cannot wait until the boat is out of sight" (51). The government did not stop these villagers because they wanted to move the Japanese Canadians out of B.C. forever.

The government's exploitation of Japanese Canadians' property sustained to the end of the war. They paid Japanese Canadians little money because they deducted the custodian and handling fees of the latter's property after the internment was over. For instance, in *Requiem*, Lena's historical file shows that the supervision costs of "\$41.50" has been charged to Bin's family, and an "additional \$68.9 has also been withheld to cover possible repairs, and has been deducted from the sale price" (R 312). As a consequence, as Lena highlights, "The items found on the property were declared to be of no value" (312). It is unfair that they had little money to restart their life in relocated places after the war. In contrast, the U.S. government returned the property of the Japanese Americans to them. In *Obasan*, Emily comments that "The American Japanese were interned as we were in Canada, and sent off to concentration camps, but their property wasn't liquidated as ours was" (O 30). In terms of the reason for the difference, as Emily speaks, "The



Americans have a Bill of rights, right? We don't" (31). Owing to the constitutional differences, the American Japanese were treated more equally than the Japanese Canadians after the internment was over.

The government also deprived Japanese Canadians of their right to freedom—freedom of language, thoughts, and movement—during the internment. To restrict Japanese Canadians' freedom of language, the government closed the Japanese-language schools, newspapers, and churches. In *The Three Pleasures*, the government shut down "fifty-nine Japanese language schools" (*TTP* 44) on the same day of Japan's attack. When the news of this attack spread around Powell Street, Daniel warned his mother that they "can't speak Japanese anymore" (39) and "[n]o one spoke Nihongo except in whispers" (40). In *Obasan*, Aunt Emily writes in her letter that "All three Japanese newspapers have been closed down" (72) except for *The New Canadian*—the only English-speaking newspaper of Japanese Canadians.

As for freedom of thought, the government censored all letters and mail of Japanese Canadians. They were unable to obtain or exchange information easily. In *Obasan*, Emily says in her letter that "There's so much veiling and soft pedaling because everything is censored by the RCMP" and Japanese Canadians "can only get information verbally" (82). In *Requiem*, Bin recalls that right after the order of mass evacuation was issued, "no one could have predicted exactly how or when the removal would take place" because their "letters [were] intercepted, newspapers [were] stifled" (42). With restricted information and communication, Japanese Canadians could not express their thoughts freely, nor could they exchange ideas freely.

The writers also depict the government's restrictions on the movements of Japanese Canadians. The government issued orders of curfew, forbid public gathering, and detained Japanese Canadians in barbed wire. In terms of curfew, Aunt Emily writes in her letter that it "applies only to us" and

“If we’re caught out after sundown, we’re thrown in jail” (*O* 76). Shichan specifies that “All Japanese Canadians have to be indoors by ten P.M.” (*CPC* n.p.). If any Japanese Canadian breaks the curfew, they will be punished by the police. As for public gathering, Daniel says in *The Three Pleasures* that right after Japan’s attack, the government “forbid most public gatherings” (*TTP* 44) in B.C. Thus, on the New Year Eve of 1942, “No one visited” Daniel’s house which “stood in stark contrast to other years” (48). Without public gathering, the Japanese Canadians would have difficulty in resisting the government. In addition, during the temporary detention in Hastings Park, Japanese Canadians could not visit each other freely because the guards were watching the two buildings at the gates all the time. Aunt Emily says in her letter that men were “forbidden to step outside the barbed wire gates and fence” (*O* 80). As for women, the guards would not let “any ‘Jap females’ into the men’s building” (86).

Moreover, they make a contrast of the freedom of movement in their novels between Japanese Canadians and Japanese Americans after the war. Though the two countries carried out the internment policy almost at the same time, the internees of Japanese Canadians had worse treatments than their counterparts in the U.S. after the internment was over. While all people of Japanese ancestry were prohibited from returning to the coastal B.C. without a permit from the RCMP, the Japanese Americans could return their homes freely. In *Obasan*, Aunt Emily says to Naomi that “look how quickly the communities reestablished themselves in Los Angeles and San Francisco. We weren’t allowed to return to the West Coast” (30-31). The U.S. government permitted Japanese Americans to return to the West Coast. In contrast, the then Canadian government kept the movement of Japanese Canadians under control by keeping them isolated so that the latter had no opportunity to protest as a community.

In addition, the writers depict how Japanese Canadians' privacy and dignity is stripped away during the detention in Hastings Park and internment in ghost towns. The government demeaned Japanese Canadians by cramming them in the two buildings of Hastings Park where "cows and horses are kept once a year for the fair" (*NR* 33). In the Livestock Building, which housed at its peak "more than three thousand" women and children, no partition was provided for different families (*R* 82). With such crowds, privacy was an issue until the women began to hang their sheets as dividers between stalls. When Bin's mother undressed or changed, she "climbed up onto her bunk behind army blankets or had Keiko hold two pieces of towel together in front of her, for privacy" (83). In addition, the bathroom had "ten open showers, no divisions between," and the toilets, with "no seats, no partitions, no privacy," were "sheet-metal troughs" along one side of the room (83). As privacy is a crucial element in Canadian culture, the deprivation of it is a dehumanizing action against Japanese Canadians.

Apart from privacy, the internees had to endure the smells of animals in the holding center of Hastings Park. For instance, Bin describes this place was filled with "stench of animal urine and manure" (82). Shichan believes the odor in this Exhibition grounds was "the unmistakable foul smell of cattle, a mixture from their waste and sweat" (*CPC* n.p.). During Aunt Emily's visit to Grandma Nakane, Emily says that the whole Livestock Building was "impregnated with the smell of ancient manure" (*O* 85). Plus, the detainees "didn't have partitions or seats" (85) in the toilets there. Grandma Nakane, who was once an elegant old woman, broke down and "cried and cried and said she'd rather have died than have come to such a place" (86). The detention in this place is too great a shock for her because the detainees are treated like animals. Grandma Nakane's dignity is destroyed in this detention center.

In the novels, Japanese Canadians' dignity is further ravaged by the sanitary and food supply in Hastings Park. For instance, though the stench and privacy disturbed Bin's mother a lot, "it was the maggots that disgusted her the most" (R 84). According to Bin, he could see the maggots "swarming" and "they stayed in memory" (84). Bin's mother asked for disinfectant at first and she was given some, but "even after more scrubbing, the maggots stayed on" (84). They had to drag their straw ticks outside the building so that stuffing could be removed, and new straw put in, but the maggots stayed on. As for food supplies, they ate "porridge" in the morning, "macaroni" for lunch, and "chunks of tough stewing beef or fish poached in a tasteless white sauce" for dinner (84). They also had to collect food in line in the poultry building. Thus, Bin's mother, together with many other women who had children, always went hungry because she "had to spend so much time standing in line to collect food" for Bin and his siblings that nothing was left for her (84). In contrast, their counterparts in Australia had "enough food" in the camps (*Unwanted Aliens* 139). As a Japanese-Australian internee Shigeru Nakabayashi recalled, "We had eggs, bacon, meat—so much food! If you ate more, they gave you more." (139). Nevertheless, the newspapers and other official records failed to capture these vivid descriptions of inhuman conditions in Hastings Park. The then government had demeaned the Japanese Canadians, but they, according to a major historian, "like to describe their country as 'a peaceable kingdom,'" and "cherish the notion that immigrants to Canada flourish in a tolerant 'multicultural mosaic'" (qtd. in Davidson 13).

In addition to detention in Hastings Park, Japanese Canadians' right to privacy was also invaded during their incarceration in ghost towns. They not only had to share a small hut with another family, which I will illustrate later in this chapter, but also were forced to share one bathroom with all the other women or men in the same camp. There were only two bathrooms in each internment camp, one for women, and the other for men. In *A Child in Prison Camp*, the bath-

house was made of wood. There was only “a thin wall” (CCP n.p.) that separated the two sections of women’s and men’s. All the internees of the same gender had to share one section. Eleven-year-old Shichan happened to stare at their neighbor Mrs. Nishimura washing her body in the community bath. Shichan says, “I see her flat, empty breasts. They float in the water as two squashed balloons” (n.p.). After Yuki stopped Shichan from staring, Shichan stifled a laugh and told Yuki that their mother’s breasts were different. Having been stared at naked and commented on about her breasts by a young girl, Mrs. Nishimura’s human dignity was ruined.

Moreover, the writers depict the government’s robbery of Japanese Canadians’ social welfare such as the internment costs, medical care, and jobs. While Japanese Canadians endured hardships and poverty during the internment, the internees of Japanese Australians regarded the camp “as a benign institution” which “meant to promote” their general welfare (Taylor 6). Most Japanese-Canadian internees, those in self-supporting projects in particular, must pay for everything by themselves. According to Daniel, Japanese Canadians must pay “\$4,000” (TTP 141) as the arrangement fee to move to the self-supporting camps. In addition, they were required to buy food, water, clothing, as well as materials used to build the camps at their own expense (188, 162). In contrast, Japanese Australians received good welfare in the camps. Ralph Endo’s mother tells this Japanese-Australian boy that “it’s better to be a prisoner” because they “get food and clothes for free” (Taylor 110).

Along with the costs of the internment, Japanese Canadians received poor medical care in the detention camps. Owing to the insufficient medical care, many internees suffered from frost-bitten hands in winter. In *Requiem*, Keiko’s hands were swollen from coldness, but “there was no doctor in camp to examine her” (R 107). Some internees contracted diseases triggered by poor sanitary conditions. As the government provided no filtering facilities for Japanese Canadians, many

people “had diarrhea after drinking [water]” in the Fraser River camp (140). Some others even died of T.B. or pneumonia resulting from insufficient medical services. For example, Naomi’s father Mark, Asako’s older brother Eiji, and many other elderly men in Bin’s camp died of pneumonia. In contrast, Japanese-Australian internees had better medical treatment in the camps. Ralph Endo says that they, as prisoners, “even get a doctor” when they are sick or having a baby (Taylor 110).

In addition, the government disgraced Japanese Canadians by taking away their jobs. Right before the mass uprooting, many Japanese Canadians, including Shichan’s brother David and sister Yuki, lost their jobs in Vancouver with no reason. Even after the internment was over, they still had difficulty getting decent jobs with their professional backgrounds. In the novels, most of them had to work as domestic servants or on lowly paid farms after the relocation, which was different from their peers in the U.S. For example, when Shichan’s family arrives in Ontario, “there are no jobs” for Shichan’s parents and they have to work as “domestic servants” for a family (*CPC* n.p.). Similarly, Bin’s well-educated adopted father Okuma-san, who specializes in music, must engage in farming work after the relocation. However, Japanese Americans were able to find jobs using their background after the internment was over. In *Requiem*, Sachi says in the letter to her parents that her husband Tom “had applied for a job in Nebraska, using his engineering background” (*R* 229) after they left the internment camp.

The authors portray reactions of the public and Japanese Canadians during the evacuation. In their narratives, the public hostility against Japanese Canadians was fueled by the government’s propaganda. In *Obasan*, Aunt Emily writes in her letter that “There was a picture of a young Nisei boy with a metal lunch box and it said he was a spy with a radio transmitter” (75). This picture aimed at creating enemies for Canada because the government wanted the local people to join the

army. To ferment the public hatred toward Japanese Canadians, the government unfairly caricatured the physical characteristics of Japanese. For instance, in the children's war comics, "All the Japs have mustard-coloured faces and buck teeth" (O 88). Consequently, the local people, Emily argues, were "much more vehement about Canadian-born Japanese than they are about German-born Germans" (73). Some protesters even said that they did not want their children to go to school with Japanese kids.

As for Japanese Canadians' responses to the dispersal, the authors engage the silent ones, progressive ones, and radical ones in their fiction. Many Japanese Canadians, especially women, are silent during the mass evacuation. As men are the center and main labor force of a family in Japanese culture, these women faced challenges that greatly affected their way of life. Having been separated from their husbands, wives and mothers had to deal with pressure in the household and raise their young children all by themselves. These women suffered a lot because they had difficulty surviving without their husbands, with no money. They either had no income to support the family or dared not to walk alone in the street at night. For instance, in *A Child in Prison Camp*, Shichan's mother, like many other women seeing off their husbands and sons at the train station, is silent, but her tears were "slowly falling" and remained "on her cheeks" (CPC n.p.). In *The Three Pleasures*, a fisherman's wife begs the RCMP to go with her husband to the unknown camp because she believes that she "can't survive by [herself]" (TTP 89).

The authors also document the progressive responses of Japanese Canadians, Nisei in particular, in their narratives. Although the government treated Japanese Canadians as enemies, the Nisei believed they were Canadians, no different from any other white citizens. In *The Three Pleasures*, Tommy Shoyama, representative of the Nisei and a chief editor of *The New Canadians* and, argues that the government are "itching for" the Japanese Canadians to "act like the enemy"

(*TTP* 78), but Japanese Canadians were not going to give the former the satisfaction. Instead, Tommy says, “We’ve got to show them we’re as Canadian as any of them” (78). Consequently, the Nisei not only cooperated with the dispersal policy but also contributed to the war effort. As Emily writes in her letter, all the Nisei were “intent on keeping faith and standing by” (*O* 72). Even though they were “turned down for the Home Defense training plan,” they were “doing Red Cross work, buying War Savings bonds, logging for the war industries and shipyards, benefit concerts—the regular stuff” (72). Though they were prohibited from participating in the war with Japan, they still served in other ways to fight for Canada.

In addition, these writers record the radical responses of Japanese Canadians to the uprooting. These responses include resistance to the impounding of their boats and the severance of their families. To avoid the confiscation of their fishing boats, some fishermen destroyed their boats themselves. For instance, a fisherman named Onizuka in the Steveston community “scuttled his boat on purpose” so that the “sailor boys wouldn’t have an easy time of it” (*TTP* 54), and several Japanese fishermen in Bin’s community on Vancouver Island “sank their boats instead of giving them up” (*R* 45). To keep their families together, the Issei men protested the upcoming separation in Powell Street. In *The Three Pleasures*, “eighty Issei men” who were “the first to be sent to the work gangs” conducted a sit-down in the auditorium of the Japanese Hall (*TTP* 67).

### 3. Children’s Internment Experience

Children were a prominent population during the dispersal of Japanese Canadians. More than 3,000 schoolchildren were incarcerated in remote areas of B.C. (Moritsugu 3). These Japanese-Canadian children, like child survivors of the Holocaust, underwent possibly “the greatest attack on every aspect of their existence” (Valent 109) during the internment. This internment stripped the children of the opportunity to have homes, recreation facilities, and normal education.



Takashima, Kogawa, Sakamoto, Itani, and Watada incorporate the situation of schoolchildren in their fictional writings. The young protagonists, usually four to eleven years old, must endure hardships and poor education in the camps, as well as on relocated farms. While they usually have comfortable living conditions in Vancouver or on Vancouver Island before the mass evacuation, they are forced to stand harsh living environments, including poor housing, deficient food, and no recreation infrastructure, in the ghost towns. Meanwhile, some children are deprived of the right to education because the government provided no schooling above the elementary level in the camps. In contrast, both the United States and Australia provided basic food, clothing, and education for their Japanese internees in the camps.

The children in the fiction endure poor housing in the internment camps. They live in shared bedrooms of either the abandoned houses or newly built shacks. In these houses or shacks, the government provided no heating facilities nor tap water for Japanese-Canadian internees. Most children in the narratives are not accustomed to the low-ceiling huts and shacks, which are far worse than their houses on the West Coast. Though these children are still too young to protest for their living places, they are unhappy about the dim light, sharp smells, and shabby structure of shacks in their camps, which fail to protect them from the cold of inland B.C. For instance, Shichan says that their shack “still smells sharp from the wood” when her family arrives in the New Denver camp, and she “winkle[s]” her nose every time she goes inside (*CPC* n.p.). Naomi believes “everything is gray” in the low-ceiling hut, which “feels underground,” when her family arrives at the Slocan camp (*O* 105). Thus, “[m]ore than anything in the world,” she wishes she could go back “once more in their real house in Vancouver” (*NR* 51). When thinking back to their huts in the Fraser River camp, Bin recalls that his sister Keiko’s hands became “frostbitten and swollen” from

the cold, and “the puffiness” lasted until summer (*R* 107). As for himself, Bin says, “I was freezing all the time, both in and out of the tent” (107).

Apart from the shabby structure and lack of heating facilities, the government failed to equip the Japanese Canadians with tap water or electricity in the camps of inland B.C. Thus, children had to contribute to their family chores at the expense of their extracurricular activities after school. In *Requiem*, Bin complains that they have no “running water,” “electricity,” or “refrigeration” in the Fraser River camp (*R* 140). After school, Bin’s older brother Hiroshi is assigned to carry drinking water in “covered barrels” (140), brought in by truck from outside their camp, Keiko has to “set the table and help with the cooking” (187), and Bin often works “for hours stacking wood into tidy rows” (174) behind their shack. Once Bin returns to their hut with pictures on cardboard or wood, his father reminds him that everyone in the family “must contribute” to the domestic work, “no matter how young,” and activities like drawing “will not put rice in the pot” nor “buy food from the back of Ying’s truck” (175-76). In contrast, Ji and Ba’s daughter Sachi, a Japanese-American internee, writes to the couple that they “have electricity” and “running water” in the U.S. (192).

Even when the internment was over, children still endure poor housing and work for their family in east of the Rockies. Young protagonists enumerate the things they minded, which is pretty much everything in the relocated places. For instance, Naomi hates the “chicken coop” house of her family in the Barker Farm in Southern Alberta (*O* 174), which “is even smaller than the one in Slocan” (*NR* 93). In summer, this house is “a heat trap” and “a dry sauna from which there is no relief” (*O* 174). Worse still, the bedbugs sometimes force her to “sleep on the table” and flies “curtain the windows” (174). These flies are so nauseous that they even “walk on [Naomi’s] head” and “land in her food” (*NR* 94). In winter, “the icicles drip down the inside of the

windows” and the ice is “thicker than bricks at the ledge” (*O* 174). Since they have no bathroom in the hut, Naomi has to get water for bath by lifting the “heavy pails,” and her feet get itchy and red when water “spills down her boots” (*NR* 94). In spring, Naomi has to work with her Obasan and Uncle in the sugar beets field “hoe[ing] the weeds” during the daytime and do her homework at night (95). In contrast, the children in the Granton school, most of whom are not Japanese Canadians like Naomi, “don’t have to stay at home to work in the fields” (95).

In addition, Japanese Canadian children were deprived of privacy in the camps. They not only had to share beds and rooms with their siblings and parents, but also with strangers from another family. In *Obasan* and *Naomi’s Road*, Naomi’s family of four has to crowd in a small hut with a stranger that Naomi dislikes, a long-faced woman named Nomura-obasan, in the Slocan camp. In *A Child in Prison Camp*, Shichan’s family of four has to share the small bedroom and a kitchen with the Konos—a family of three. Shichan is disturbed by the noise of the Konos from the other side of the house at first, especially their young child Kay-ko who talks a lot. Shichan says, “I can hear the Konos talking quietly. It took us several days to get used to living with them” (*CPC* n.p.).

Food is another aspect that the federal government failed to provide for the Japanese Canadians. In the POW camps of the U.S. and Australia, the internees were treated better than their counterparts in Canada because the former had plenty of food in their camps. As diet and nutrition are key factors in the health and growth of children, the lack of food greatly affects children’s life in the ghost towns of B.C. In fact, the interned Japanese-Canadian children were starving and suffering in the camps. In *The Three Pleasures*, Daniel observes that the internment is “hardest on the kids” as “families took to eating only twice a day to preserve rations” (*TTP* 189). Some children are “getting to be skin and bones” (192). They are sometimes forced by their mothers to “take a noon-day nap” so these children would not whimper “I wanna go home... please

mama, take me home ...” (189). In contrast, the farm inside the barbed wire of their camp in the U.S., Sachi says, is “so productive” that they “ship a surplus of food to other prison camps” (*R* 193). In Australia, the Japanese internees “seemed content to be well fed” (Taylor 11-12). Plus, the quantity of food for children “was calculated on the basis of an approved national scale” (*Unwanted Aliens* 140).

The government provided no normal recreation infrastructure for the interned children. Therefore, playing with water and swimming in the river became these children’s main method of having fun. Asako and her older brother Eiji, together with many other children from their camp, often go to the Fraser River swimming. However, it was dangerous for these children to play in a river without the company of caregivers, who were usually too busy working in the camp. For instance, Naomi nearly drowns in the Slocan camp when she plays with her playmates in water. Older children in Bin’s camp are assigned to “watch over the young” (*R* 110), but Bin still discovers a small boy drowned at the bottom of a trail (241).

In addition, the government deprived many Japanese-Canadian children of the opportunity to education in the camps. Once the mass evacuation began, they were “taken out of school with no provision for future education” (*O* 80). Their education was interrupted or even stopped upon the uprooting. Most of them did not have the chance to attend elementary school until 1943, and those who had finished primary school had no further education until the war ended. The writers depict children’s education in the camps from the following three aspects: lack of teachers, poorly equipped classrooms, and children’s responses to the education during the internment.

The young protagonists did not have education in the first few months or even years during their internment because of a lack of teachers. Though later the government offered elementary schools in the camps, they provided nearly no registered teachers for these children. Instead, the

teachers were usually older students who have finished high school. For instance, as no teachers were assigned to their camps, Naomi and Stephen did not have “formal studies except for Sunday-school and handicraft classes” until May 1943 in the Slocan camp (*O* 120); and in Bin’s camp, the children’s school year has “not resumed after being interrupted the past winter” since their removal from the coast (*R* 132). Later from 1943, Bin says that in their Fraser River camp, “older girls in the camp who had recently completed high school and any young women who had studied at university” were approached by a school committee to see “if they would be interested in being teachers” (132). In contrast, the education of the Japanese-Australian children is not interrupted because they “could be let out of the camp to go to school, just as if they were normal kids” (Taylor 6).

As for high students like Bin’s sister Keiko, most of them do not have a chance to continue and only a few get a chance to take the high-school entrance exam during the last two years of the internment. In *Requiem*, there are “three teachers” and “fifty-two children” (*R* 187) in the Fraser River camp, and one of the teachers, who has a university degree, volunteers to work with the boys and girls of high-school age. The students who would be graduating at the end of school year in 1944 “were going to be permitted, for the first time, to write their final exams at the town high school” (188) across the river. Though they would have to write exams “by correspondence,” they are luckier than many of the interned children in other camps.

Although most children can return to elementary schools after several months’ interruption, the classrooms and school facilities are far worse than their former schools in Vancouver or on Vancouver Island. In most camps, the classrooms are newly built ones, and one classroom is used for the teaching of several grades at once. According to Naomi, “The school and the kindergarten are in the same place as the rows and rows of tiny houses” (*NR* 65). In Bin’s camp, the teachers

teach both “grade two and grade three” at the same time (*R* 207) because the classroom is divided in two sections. Meanwhile, the students at Shichan’s school are given “correspondence sheets” that they “must follow” (*CPC* n.p.). Though Shichan and her classmates have books, “nothing else” (n.p.) is provided for them. The facilities in the Fraser River camp are no better. According to Bin, he had seen “few books” since their arrival at the Fraser River camp, except for “the ones lined up on a shelf at the back of their classroom” (*R* 189). When they learned songs, “there was no instrument to accompany [their] voices” (207).

The children express various responses toward their education during the internment. Some children are dissatisfied about their educational situation caused by the sudden changes, some are happy after a long holiday, and some others are concerned about the interruption of schools because they long to be back in the classroom. In *A Child in Prison Camp*, Shichan dislikes her classroom because the teachers are not real teachers, the desks are not real desks for class, and the classroom is noisy: everything is “very un-school-like” (*CPC* n.p.). Thus, Shichan “misses the familiar desks” and her “school friends” in Vancouver (n.p.). In *Obasan*, while “some of the children attend Japanese language classes” in the Slocan camp, Naomi’s Obasan and Uncle decide “it is unwise to have [Stephen and Naomi] go” because the RCMP “are always looking for signs of disloyalty to Canada” (*O* 120). Stephen and Naomi feel secretly happy because life for them is “a quiet and pleasant holiday” (120). In *Requiem*, Bin’s sister Keiko is “missing school more and more” (*R* 110) after they arrive at the Fraser River camp, and she is always “playing school” and “going over old lessons” (110). She often “haul[s]” Bin in as her “pupil” when she has “any time left over from helping her mother or after doing her share of weeding in the garden plot” (133).

The children in fiction do not understand the implications of hardships they endured during the internment nor the importance of education. Some small children even miss the days in the

camp after the relocation. For instance, Naomi hates their farm in Southern Alberta. She asks her uncle, “Why can’t we go back? [...] Even if we can’t go home to Vancouver, can’t we go back to Slocan” (NR 94-95)? Despite the hardships during the internment, Naomi wants to return to Slocan. Apparently, she does not know the difference between the internment camp at Slocan and the new home in Granton. Nevertheless, children’s attitudes toward the internment are represented as changing when they grow up. The children who survived underwent major traumas in their post-war life.<sup>21</sup> They suppressed their carefree moments and repetitively recalled the painful memories of the internment. These painful memories, mostly related to the loss of their homes on the West Coast, the loss of their parents and siblings, and the loss of their innocence, will be discussed from the perspective of psychological trauma in Chapter Three. Meanwhile, these child survivors became silent and avoided social contact with other Japanese Canadians who would remind them of the incarceration. Their silence and avoidance of the past is due to the cultural trauma they have developed themselves or is passed on to them from their parents, aunts and uncles, or grandparents. I will discuss child survivors’ cultural trauma in detail in Chapter Four.

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<sup>21</sup> Some Japanese-Canadian children such as Asako’s brother Eiji and Bin’s cousin Taro died during the internment. Meanwhile, to my knowledge, the death toll of Japanese Americans during the internment is 1,862 from all causes in camps, while the death toll of Japanese Canadians is not recorded in the official history. Thus, the total number of the deaths of Japanese Canadian children is not known.

## **Chapter Three Thematic Representation of Psychological Trauma of Children in Internment**

As explained in Chapter Two, children in both fiction and reality detained in various internment camps were deprived of their basic rights as Canadian citizens and suffered together with adults. Some even died in the camps, while others survived but underwent major psychological trauma. Children may seem less hurt than the adults by the incarceration experiences for the fact that they were only children. They might not remember what had happened to them during the detention years owing to what traumatologist Paul Valent terms as a “perceived lack of impact” (110) of the internment. But according to the representations of recalled evidence of young protagonists in internment in both adults’ and children’s fictions, this is not the case. The texts suggest that children not only endure general hardships in internment but also suffer personal losses of parents or siblings or both, and some even experience sexual abuse or sibling incest. They remember clearly what has happened to them, and sometimes, children may have suffered more. As psychotherapist Charlotte Kahn points out, children “lack the benefit of ‘inoculation’ against stress and the preparedness that may reduce some adults’ vulnerability to trauma” (103). However, my reading and analysis suggest that though children are not prepared to confront trauma, they are portrayed as having their own age-appropriate ways and means, such as childhood stories and creative art, to deal with or to neutralize the traumatic internment experiences. This chapter will discuss how children in internment remember and react to the incarceration, how the internment caused their psychological trauma, and how they deal with such psychological sufferings during and after their detention in the camps.

### 1. Children’s Memories of and Reactions to the Internment



As the interned children were either too young or not yet born when the uprooting began in 1942, questions such as “do they remember the internment,” or “are their memories of the incarceration valid,” or “what are the memories that exclusively bother children during the detention” are raised. Children in internment do remember and react to harsh impact of internment albeit in different ways from adults. A child’s world is a small one, and children do not understand the nature of the internment as adults do. In the fictional narratives, while the adults are deeply concerned about the racial, political, and economic implications of the loss of their homes, children seem to be less troubled by these issues. As Perry Nodelman and Mavis Reimer, specialists in children’s literature, argue, children have “limited understanding and short attention spans,” and they are “capable of understanding only a certain amount” (86) during childhood. It is true that uprooted children might not comprehend a series of implications of the event, but the uprooting from a familiar home environment to a strange place creates a vivid impression on them. They tend to remember the exciting journey to ghost towns, but soon the disappearance of their parents or siblings as well as troubling sexual relationship encroaches on their childhood recollections of the internment.

Children may not remember the internment as their parents do, but this does not mean that they do not have memories of the POW experiences. This is true of children both in reality who actually suffered in internment and in fiction who appear as characters. According to psychologists Qi Wang and Qingfang Song’s clinical research on children’s and adults’ memories of the same events by the Culture and Social Cognition Lab at Cornell University, what events and what aspects of the events people remember are “deeply conditioned by their goals, motivations, and perspectives” (2216). Owing to the differences of their “subjective elements,” such as the “idiosyncratic thoughts, emotions, and evaluations” (Wang and Song 2216), Japanese-Canadian

children and adults are inclined to remember the same events differently as a result of their various interpretations of what happened to them. Children tend to draw simplistic “causal connections” between elements of the internment and integrate different “semantic knowledge and other general details”<sup>22</sup> (2216) to provide background information of their memories. Consequently, children’s perspectives and presentations of the internment, their thoughts, and their feelings differ from those of the adults.

Children in internment literature are depicted as remembering insignificant details of the dispersal which are closely related to themselves due to their limited understanding and distinctive innocent perspectives. In *Requiem*, even though Bin is only four years old when the internment begins, he can “clearly recall some events from that time” (36). But he draws different causal connections of the sea travel with the unpleasant memories from those of his mother. For instance, in recalling the terrible uprooting in 1942, Bin says that his nerves and body “still remember the jarring and clanging of the pot” and “the cruel curve of the lid” in his bundle, which everyone is responsible for carrying during the mass evacuation (*R* 45). In keeping pace with his mother, four-year-old Bin, weak and tired, has to switch ceaselessly “the bundle back and forth” to adjust his gait and sometimes had to break into “a half run” (45). The bundle is so heavy that Bin has difficulty carrying it and then catching up with his mother. She will disappear in the crowd if he was not careful. Consequently, in contrast to his mother’s sorrow and bitterness about the pending dispersal before they boarded the mail boat to Hastings Park, Bin is preoccupied with the threatening feeling of losing his mother in the crowd due to his small stature and the heavy bundle he has to carry. Clearly, as a child, he does not recognize the connection between the journey and the loss of their home in Vancouver Island, though he is removed from the relatively comfortable

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<sup>22</sup> Semantic knowledge refers to the general knowledge and features that make up concepts that people have acquired and abstracted from their experiences.

and friendly environment that he is familiar with. What matters to Bin are the immediate objects of sound and shape and the physical proximity.

Similarly, Shichan in *A Child in Prison Camp* shows different “patterns of consistency” (Wang and Song 2216) in remembering the same past events from her mother. The mother and the daughter integrate the semantic knowledge and other details of Hastings Park differently after they have paid a visit to Mrs. Abe—a friend of Shichan’s mother. Mrs. Abe, who is new to Canada from Japan, is interned in Hastings Park, while her husband Mr. Abe is sent to a road camp in B.C. Thus, she has to take care of her new-born baby all by herself in the detention center. Shichan’s mother, along with the adults in their community, is worried about the evacuation into Hastings Park, which means Japanese Canadians’ loss of freedom and human dignity. However, Shichan is completely unaware of the significance of the confinement of the Japanese Canadians in this location. The girl is not sorry or sad; she is not concerned about Mrs. Abe as her mother is after witnessing Japanese Canadians “treated like animals” (*CPC* n.p.). Notwithstanding her uncomfortable feelings toward the “hell-hole” shack, Shichan believes she is “still a child” and thus “not responsible for” Mrs. Abe’s “unhappiness” (n.p.). Consequently, when the visit is over, Shichan feels quite “happy to leave the smelly, unhappy grounds” (n.p.). Needless to say, Shichan’s view is one-dimensional, and her feelings are childlike. She is unable to integrate the treatment of Japanese Canadians like Mrs. Abe in the exhibition grounds with the upcoming internment of her own family in the ghost towns in B.C. Although Shichan and her mother remember the same unpleasant visit to Hastings Park, their understandings are vastly different. Shichan’s emotions and thoughts toward Mrs. Abe and her misfortune are at variance with those of her mother’s.

In addition to their lack of deep understanding of the traumatic action of the uprooting, some children even recall happy moments during the internment. In *Obasan*, *Naomi's Road*, and *A Child in Prison Camp*, Naomi and Shichan are all happy and carefree children during the dispersal. In the Preface to *Children in the Second World War*, Amanda Herbert-Davies points out, "Protected by the optimism of youth which believes tragedy is a lifetime away and dying is for the old, young children were free to find excitement and thrills in war" (viii). Like young white children on the home front during World War II, Japanese-Canadian children in internment fictions are also protected by the optimism of youth. When the evacuation began in 1942, while the adults are upset and frightened as they are waiting for their turn to be removed to different camps in remote areas at the train station, children are excited about their journey to the interior of B.C. It seems like an extended field trip to them. For instance, in both *Naomi's Road* and *Obasan*, when Naomi's family arrives at the train station, Naomi's Obasan, who is distressed and preoccupied about the journey, tells a white lie to Naomi, saying that they are on a holiday. Although Naomi is puzzled to find herself surrounded by many Japanese-Canadian children like herself, but no white children, she cheerfully exclaims: "'We're going on a holiday!'" (NR 37). In *Obasan*, even Naomi's doll is imagined to be "quite happy and secretly excited about the train trip" (100). Five-year-old Naomi had no idea of the fateful journey. She believes they are truly going on a holiday to the mountains, not unlike similar trips she and her family have made in the past.

In *A Child in Prison Camp*, the protagonist Shichan likewise "[feels] secretly happy" when she first learns that her family is moving to a camp that stood "1,800 feet above sea level" (CPC n.p.). At the train station, while the "older people were very frightened" and adults like Shichan's mother are anxiously waiting for their turn to board the train, eleven-year-old Shichan, who "seemed to be on the outside" (n.p.), talks to her sister delightedly because she loves the

mountains—the destination of the train journey. Though her mother warns her that they are not going on a vacation but were being evacuated, Shichan, prompted by her youthful optimism, remains “excited” about this trip because this is her “first train ride” (n.p.). The girl is too young to fully comprehend the implications of their pending harsh treatment in the mountains or realize that the train journey signified the loss of their home in Vancouver and the beginning of the internment life. As a matter of fact, many Japanese-Canadian children are unable to connect the underlying meaning of the evacuation with the train journey. They believe the trip, fateful as it is, is not different from any other trips they have embarked on before with their family. It never dawns upon them that this is the last time they will see Vancouver in the next seven years.

Apart from the happy-mood recollections of the train station, children in the fictional narratives manage to find merry moments during the internment. Fueled by their youthful optimism and naivete, they quickly take advantage of the new environment once they arrive at the ghost towns. In contrast to the adults’ sadness and pessimism about their future, young protagonists have some good time in the camps. While Naomi’s father and uncle, along with many other adult internees in the Slocan camp, are worrying about the new life when the relocation order is on its way in 1945, Naomi, sheltered by her optimism, happily indulges herself in the “tea party” at her white friend Mitzi’s “playhouse” each day (*NR* 81). When she sees the Slocan town is full of people, suitcases, and trucks, she says to herself, “What would it be like if all the people at the station could be rolled up into one huge person” (*O* 161). Naomi is imagining these dispersed people piling up as a giant who “could cross the mountain in one leap” (161). Instead of connecting the pending tough life in east of the Rockies or in Japan with these people on the dispersal, Naomi is applying her knowledge of the giants in Brobdingnag acquired from reading *Gulliver’s Travels*. Apparently, Naomi’s thoughts and evaluation of these internees gathering in the town are limited

and superficial. Significantly, even when the terrible life is about to end, the young protagonist still has no proper thoughts about the hardships and unfair treatment in their relocated place in southern Alberta.

How should we reconcile children's happy memories with their suffering in reality as a result of the deprivation of their opportunity to have homes, recreation facilities, and normal education during the internment? Where are the signs of this traumatic experience in the mind and feeling of the children? In assessing children's memory of early vulnerable experiences of the Holocaust, Valent argues that children were commanded by their parents that they "could not remember, should not remember, and what they remembered was invalid" (115). Similar to the way Jewish children recalled the Holocaust experience in the concentration camps, the interned children in the ghost towns of British Columbia in fiction tend to suppress their memories of the painful incarceration. For one thing, they are inclined to "arrange their psyches according to environmental demands" (115). As their parents tell them that they are "only a child" and their recollections of the camps do not "mean anything" (115), they are prone to follow their parents' words and demands. For another, since the "East Asian cultures," the Japanese culture included, "embrace interdependence and relatedness, where the primary self-goals are to find one's right place in the family and community, and to relate, belong, and fit in," children in the fictional narratives are motivated to focus on "details that inform regularities, social roles, and rules" (Wang and Song 2217). In other words, their dreadful memories of the internment may not come to consciousness "if either the parents" or their own "superego"<sup>23</sup> or both oppose "their emergence" (Valent 115). The recalled evidence by young protagonists shows that they have awful memories of the

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<sup>23</sup> Superego is one of the three agencies (with the id and ego) of the human personality in the psychoanalytic theory of Sigmund Freud. "The superego is the ethical component of the personality and provides the moral standards by which the ego operates. The superego's criticisms, prohibitions, and inhibitions form a person's conscience, and its positive aspirations and ideals represent one's idealized self-image, or 'ego ideal.'" ("Superego Psychology").

internment, but they tend to follow the example of their parents and deem these overwhelming recollections shameful and not worthy of being talked about.

Children of the interned Japanese-Canadian families often try to meet their parents' expectations by frequently referring to themselves as small children. Their personal experiences are viewed to be "of little importance" for their "sense of self" (Wang and Song 2217). As Shichan, both as the writer and the protagonist, notes in the "Afterword" of *A Child in Prison Camp*, "I was really two years older than I picture myself" (*CPC* n.p.). Shichan feels "younger than" her "actual age" of thirteen in the book because her parents regarded her as a small child who was not responsible for remembering the suffering and shameful experiences during the internment (n.p.). Many interned children in the camps are already either at the end of their preschool years or even middle childhood<sup>24</sup> when the internment began in 1942. They become "fairly independent in recounting" their past internment experiences, including "structuring" their memories "in clear causal sequences," and "evaluating and expressing" their "thoughts and feelings about" the painful incarceration (Wang and Song 2216). However, the parents intend to protect their children from the dreadful things in the camps, and the children themselves want to find their place in the family to fit in. As a result, even when children's painful memories during the internment emerge, they tend to be silenced by their parents and their own sense of belonging to a closed and distinct community.

There are cases both in reality and fiction, however, children themselves refuse to revisit their terrible memories of the dispersal themselves, because their superego tells them to guard against the pain of vulnerable experiences. When talking about the anonymity of characters in the novel, Shichan the writer notes, "Names of individuals, and certain incidents have been altered in some

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<sup>24</sup> Middle childhood is usually defined as ages six to twelve in Canada.

cases to give anonymity to those involved” because “not all of us care to be reminded or questioned about those painful years” (*CPC* n.p.). True enough, not only in reality, but also in fiction, not every child survivor of the internment is willing to recall the depressing years. When Aunt Emily asks adult Naomi to fight for the redress for Japanese Canadians, Naomi replies, “Life is so short, [...] the past so long. Shouldn’t we turn the page and move on?” (*O* 38). As a child survivor, Naomi does not want to speak out about her shameful incarceration experiences. She feels uncomfortable when people frequently talk about their victimization because she believes these people are using “their suffering as weapons or badges of some kind” (31). She thinks they should keep silent and let the past go. By staying in silence, Naomi evades reliving the intolerable suffering of the camp days.

Similarly, in the postwar years, Asako, Bin, and his two siblings do not talk about their upsetting evacuation experiences. In Asako’s account of the internment years, she seldom mentions details of the camp life. She avoids repeated questions on the internment from her neighbor Mr. Yano, who asked her for the “tenth time, [...] How long were you there, Saito-san?” (*EF* 5). Asako never speaks about what happened during their incarceration in the ghost towns, not even the name of the camp. Bin, too, almost never talks about his camp days with his son and his wife Lena, notwithstanding Lena’s research on their family history. Even when Bin is with his two siblings who are old enough when in internment to remember the detention experiences, they “rarely discuss the war years or the 21,000 people of Japanese ancestry forcibly removed from their homes on the West Coast and moved inland” (*R* 36). In terms of silence, Naomi as a schoolteacher in *Obasan*, when she talks about her students, explains, “it’s [those] who say nothing who are in trouble more than the ones who complain” (*O* 31). She believes those silent students in the back of the classroom have more problems than those in the front rows who speak often.



Likewise, these silent child survivors of the internment are disturbed by their dreadful memories even if they do not speak out their unbearable suffering. Yet, those children, suppressed by their superego, avoid recounting their painful memories of the loss of their homes in Vancouver or on Vancouver Island.

Earlier I pointed out that children's memories of the two dispersals, the removal to ghost towns and the relocation to east of the Rockies, are inconsistent with those of the adults. As most of the children are surrounded and protected by their parents or other caregivers, they do not seem to feel much pain toward the loss of their homes at all times. However, this contradicts the silence they show during childhood and adulthood. One cannot help wondering what kind of dreadful recollections dominate children's internment years and what compels them to resist talking about these memories? In the internment narratives, children's perspectives toward the internment vary and adults routinely fail to notice or even ignore their unique suffering during the detention. For example, children in internment, loss of caregivers and loss of innocence are most terrifying. Moreover, compared to the physical loss of their homes, the loss of their psychological home, which is associated with safety and security, disturbs them more deeply during the internment. "Homely" or "*heimlich*," according to Sigmund Freud, means "arousing a pleasant feeling" of "quiet contentment," "comfortable repose," and "secure protection", which is "like the enclosed, comfortable house" (*Uncanny* 126-27). When caregivers, who provide children with security and protection disappear, children lose the sense of home and *heimlich* (homely) feelings. Without the caregivers' protection, children are sometimes exposed to the danger of sexual abuse and sibling incest. This is exactly what happens to Naomi in *Obasan* and Asako in *The Electrical Field*.

In contrast to the loss of their physical homes in the objective world for which children have limited understanding, the loss of *heimlich* feelings is more unbearable. This happens when

children are forcibly separated from their caregivers or are involuntarily involved in sexual issues. In the former case, the adults are either forced to stay in a different place during the internment from where their children are, or they are too busy with their work in the camp to be with their children. Naomi's mother is her primary caregiver, who provides Naomi with *heimlich* feelings and a sense of safety. Naomi believes "Everything is safe where Mama is" (NR 23). When her mother departs for Japan without her and cannot return to Canada because of the internment, Naomi no longer feels safe, even in the presence of her father. During the curfew of 1942 in Vancouver, even though her father is sitting in the living room, Naomi is frightened by the blackouts. She thinks, "Father is as if he is not here. If my mother were back, [...] we would be safe and at home in our home" (O 62). Regarding Naomi's search for mother in *Obasan*, Kogawa says in an interview with Cherry Clayton that "the longing we all have for home, for a primary bond, is almost a metaphor for a human longing to be at home in the universe, [...] or simply to have an at-homeness" ("Interview with Joy Kogawa" 107). Without her mother, Naomi has no sense of safety. Naomi is trapped in the issue of loss of psychological home.

Similarly, Bin experiences feelings of not being at home after he loses his mother during the incarceration. Bin is given away by his father to an old but well-educated man Okuma-san in the Fraser River camp in *Requiem*. As Bin is taken away from his parents regardless of his willingness, this separation is "an imposed" one (Thill 89). In discussing children's separation, trauma scholar Regis Thill points out that for the child, "Nothing is routine, habits are disrupted, the regularity the child has known is no longer there" (89). When Bin arrives at Okuma-san's shack, everything seems strange. Different from Bin's First Father who has always requested Bin to work for his first family,<sup>25</sup> Okuma-san gives Bin a book to read and snacks to eat on the first evening together.

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<sup>25</sup> After Bin is given away to Okuma-san, Bin calls his father "First Father," and his family "first family."

Though it seems easier to eat snacks and read a book than to work, Bin's routine is disrupted. The regularity Bin has known with his first family is no longer there. Worse still, Bin is turned down by his mother when he attempts to go back to their old shack for reunion. Indeed, Bin loses his psychological home and feels unsafe in Okuma-son's shack.

Asako in *The Electrical Field* also experiences the loss of her primary caregiver during the internment. However, different from the cases of Naomi and Bin who are taken away from their mothers, Asako loses her older brother Eiji, who dies of pneumonia in the camp. During the internment, Asako's mother is alienated from her daughter because she is occupied with her younger son Stum who was born in the camp and Asako's father is always busy with his work in the mills. As a result, Asako's older brother Eiji shoulders the responsibility of caring for her. When thinking of her mother, Asako says, "Mama barely came near me. She pushed me away with the repulsion you can only have for one you are obligated to love and care for" (*EF* 150-51). Even when Asako's mother is physically present at home, she is emotionally absent. In contrast, Eiji found "rags and pins" for Asako when "a trickle of blood" came from her "chin chin" (150-51). Asako "[feels] safe then, with the dark cloth blotting [her] up like diapers" (151). Consequently, Eiji, who provides *heimlich* feelings to Asako, becomes her primary caregiver. Unfortunately, Asako's sense of security in the internment camp disappears when Eiji dies in the camp. Children in internment, such as Naomi, Bin, and Shichan, suffer severely the forcible separation from their parents or siblings, but their reactions usually go unnoticed or even are ignored by the adults. As a consequence, these painful memories, keeping up to their adulthood, remain a scar on their psyche. This will be discussed in detail in the next section.

The other form of children's loss of *heimlich* feelings that the adults fail to notice during the internment is the disappearance of their innocence. As children are "innocent by nature, blissfully

naïve and inherently good,” they cannot really understand “what sexuality is” (Nodelman and Reimer 86). Nevertheless, they lose their innocence when they get caught in sexual situations. In *Obasan*, Naomi’s innocence vanishes when she is abused in both Vancouver and Slocan.<sup>26</sup> Mr. Gower, a white neighbor of Naomi’s family while they live in Vancouver, repeatedly molests this young girl by caressing her head, putting his mouth on her face, and taking off her clothes. Naomi is “not permitted to move, to dress, or to cry out” (O 57), nor allowed to tell her mother or anyone else about the game they play. Whenever the molestation occurs, Naomi is helpless and “transfixed in horror” (58). She says, “In the center of my body is a rift” (58). This bodily rift, as Arnold Davidson notes, “hints at rape” (44). Naomi is overwhelmed by the physical pain of being sexually abused. But she endures it silently because, for one thing, she does not want her parents or older brother to “see [her] shame” (58); and for another, she believes she will be “whole and safe” (57) if she keeps the secret.

Worse still, Mr. Gower’s sexual abuse is not an isolated incident. In reflecting on her childhood molestation, Naomi says, “Over and over again, not just Old Man Gower—but years later there is Percy in Slocan” (55). Naomi is sexually molested by a big white boy Percy Bower in Slocan where Naomi’s family is interned. He frequently presses Naomi “against the cave wall during hide-and-go-seek” game and warns her “against crying out” (55). While the “sharp stone cuts into” Naomi’s shoulder, he will “hold her harder” if she tries to move (55). In Freud’s *The Interpretation of Dreams*, he points out that “[a]ll elongated objects” as well as “all long, sharp weapons” may stand for “the male organ,” (367). In that sense, the sharp stone cuts into Naomi’s body and causes her injury may be seen as Percy’s penis. In other words, Percy is abusing Naomi

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<sup>26</sup> Naomi is sexually abused by both Gower and Percy in the novel. Sexual abuse, according to the United Kingdom by the Development of Health, is “the involvement of dependent developmentally immature children in sexual activities that they do not truly comprehend and to which they are unable to give informed consent” (Schechter and Roberge 129).

by entering her body violently and forcibly, regardless of her unwillingness or feelings. The uprooting of the family from their normal life in Vancouver not only disrupts the children's routine and dissipates their *heimlich* feelings, but also puts them in a state of insecurity and danger. Further separation and deprivation of care from their primary caregivers owing to the cold rules at the camps makes young protagonists vulnerable to the danger of sexual molestation.

Another form of children's involvement with sexuality is sibling incest. During the internment at the camp, Asako develops an incestuous relationship with her older brother Eiji. Concerning this abnormal pathological relationship, Nicholas Birns observes that "the quasi-incestuous overtones [...] linger" between Miss Saito and Eiji ("Review" 161). Susan Knutson concurs in her review of *The Electrical Field* that "the middle-aged, never-married woman Asako" has "obsessive and emotionally incestuous relationship with her older brother, Eiji" (1-2). However, neither Birns nor Knutson points out the specific way that the incestuous relationship is developed and what it seems to mean to Asako. In the novel, the incestuous relationship begins as sibling love when Asako is twelve to thirteen and Eiji is fifteen to sixteen. This teenage period is when children start to acquire sexual awareness and sexual feelings. For children in internment the likelihood of such abnormal relationship is greater as they are physically and emotionally neglected by their parents or other caregivers owing to various circumstances.<sup>27</sup> Asako's incestuous behavior with Eiji involves hugging in a sexual way and touching and fondling private areas of the body.<sup>28</sup>

However, it is worth noting that Asako does not have sexual intercourse with Eiji, nor is she sexually abused by him. When recalling the intimacy with Eiji in the detention camp, Asako, now

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<sup>27</sup> Psychotherapist Prophecy Coles points out that "sibling incest is linked to a deep loneliness within the children involved, which may stem from parental neglect" (63).

<sup>28</sup> Irene Bevc and Irwin Silverman argue that "Nonconsummatory acts included: kissing or hugging 'in a sexual way': showing, touching, or fondling sex organs or other 'private areas of the body'; and 'pretend intercourse' (*Ethology and Sociobiology* 174).

a grown-up, says that she “crept into Eiji’s room” and “inched” her hand “under his pyjama bottom” (*EF* 168). She fondles Eiji’s private parts of the body in a sexual way. In addition, the “seahorse” game they played both in bed and in water (149), hints at their “pretend intercourse” (Bevc and Silverman 174). As child trauma scholars Margaret Ballantine and Lynne Soine point out, “Many children fail to identify themselves as victims of sibling incest” when sexual behaviors are “couched in the context of play” or games (18). Whereas Naomi’s games with Gower and Percy have a pernicious nature, for the men use force, make threats, and take advantage of Naomi who is too young to give consent, Asako’s games with Eiji are mostly sexually innocent. That is why neither of them feel hurt by playing sexual games. Instead, Asako enjoys intimate touch of Eiji and feels “safe and still” when she is “clamped between Eiji’s bony legs” (*EF* 166). Compared to the typical incestuous sibling acts which include “forms of male penetration or attempted penetration and usually culminated in ejaculation” such as “genital intercourse or ‘attempted’ genital intercourse, and oral and anal intercourse” (Bevc and Silverman 174), the incestuous behavior between Asako and Eiji is non-destructive. It was merely a sexually ambiguous form of sibling love. She is unconsciously trying to counterbalance her mother’s negligence of her by seeking companionship or love from Eiji. Nevertheless, there are bad consequences from even such innocent incestual relationships as children are deprived of their opportunity to start a normal romantic or sexual relationship with the normal opposite sex. The harmful consequences will be discussed in the subsequent section.

## 2. Psychological Impact of the Internment on Children

Influenced by the optimism of youth, children in internment in the narratives may find amusement and pleasure during the internment. Yet their happy and exciting moments are fleeting and scattered. Like “being on a rollercoaster ride,” they belonged “to the moment” and then were

over until the next time (Herbert-Davies iii). By contrast, fear, insecurity, and self-blame dominate children's psyche during the incarceration years. In his study of the effects of childhood experiences from the Holocaust over the life cycle of the same person, Valent notes that "child survivors' traumas had marked effects on them throughout their lives" (118). Like child survivors of the Holocaust, Japanese-Canadian children who survived the POW camp, are haunted by effects of the traumatic internment experiences throughout their lives. Although these children are unsure of the nature of the internment or their traumatic symptoms are invisible during childhood, they are victims to the catastrophic events that are likely to happen during the incarceration, which create psychological problems for them, and sustained throughout their adulthood years. As for the loss of their parents or siblings, as well as their loss of innocence owing to sexual abuse or sibling incest, these children are immediately traumatized because they no longer feel safe in their small world and suffer from long-term injurious effects.

Children in internment fiction usually fail to show any identifiable traumatic responses toward the loss of their homes in Vancouver or on Vancouver Island as they are still quite young. However, dreadful events, such as deaths or hardships caused by this loss, leave scars on their psyche. While some children display traumatic symptoms to death during childhood, others hibernate their early experiences till they become adults. Kahn argues in her discussion of children's responses to persecution that "infant traumatic experiences" are stored in "sensory-motor form," and they are unavailable to "conscious recall," but they nonetheless "influence behavior," even in adulthood (104). For instance, while Bin shows fear toward death at a very young age in the camp, Naomi and Bin's sister Keiko do not reveal any traumatic symptoms until many years after the internment.

In *Requiem*, Bin is traumatized by several deaths he has witnessed in the camp. This traumatization is partly caused by the child's idiosyncratic thoughts on death. Of all the terrible

incidents, the most terrifying experience has to do with Taro's death in 1944. Taro is born a few weeks before his due date and died soon owing to the harsh conditions of the camp. After Taro's cremation, Bin is given a pair of chopsticks and is asked to sift through Taro's ashes and pick out any tiny bones that remain. Bin is only six and is naturally "very much afraid" (R 161). But he manages to "pick out" every tiny fragment he can find in the cooling ashes (161). Taro's death is not the single case that Bin witnesses. Other deaths occur in their camp from time to time: "a man had died of pneumonia" (229), "a small boy had drowned three weeks earlier," and "several old people had been cremated" (241). All these deaths frighten Bin. One manifestation of his fear is seeing footless ghosts. Of these ghosts, Bin says, "When someone died, I became worried about the footless ghosts that were said to gather in the woods behind the building" (229). Consequently, Bin hates to use the outdoor toilets because he believes these ghosts may suddenly appear at any time. Frightened as he is, Bin is unaware that Taro's death is closely related to Taro's afterbirth condition at their camp, that the deaths from pneumonia are caused by the camp's poor sanitation and medical services, and that the boy's drowning has to do with the destitute infrastructure in the camp. Though Bin does not know the underlying causes of these deaths, his constant worry and such disturbing and frightening feelings from the footless ghosts are attributable to the physical loss of home and deprivation of life's convenience.

Different from Bin's traumatic symptoms during the internment, other children's traumatic experiences, originating from the uprooting, tend to be stored away during their time in internment. However, the young mind is scared, and the painful memories could be aroused and retrieved at a later age. As both Freud and Kahn suggest, traumatic events are characterized by "permanent disturbances" ("Lecture XVIII" 275) and "indelibility" (Kahn 104). The children may not immediately exhibit traumatic responses due to their unawareness of the implications of the



detention, but these ineradicable memories of traumatic events remain with them and can come to the forefront in adulthood. Keiko, for example, has always “hated the mountains” where they were interned, even many years after the war (*R* 7). Whenever she drove to B.C., she felt “squeezed” between the mountains, which “press[ed] in on her lungs until she’s short of breath” (7). Shortness of breath is a symptom of an after-effect of Keiko’s psychological trauma as a result of the hardships she had endured during the internment in the mountains.

Similarly, Naomi, who has been psychologically traumatized during the internment, is haunted by intrusive memories of the detention experiences in her adulthood. According to trauma scholar Cathy Caruth, psychological trauma is “the wound of the mind [that] is experienced too soon, too unexpectedly, to be fully known and is therefore not available to consciousness until it imposes itself again, repeatedly, in the nightmares and repetitive actions of the survivors” (*Unclaimed Experience* 3-4). Naomi’s psychological trauma resulting from the loss of their Vancouver home has remained in her unconsciousness until it imposes itself on her consciousness belatedly. Just as “the present is shaped by the past” (*O* 23), Naomi is trapped in her recollections of the past hardships and deaths. In 1972, when Naomi read facts about the Japanese evacuees in Alberta in the old newspaper clippings from Aunt Emily’s package, she says, “The fact is I never got used to it and I cannot, I cannot bear the memory” (173). The terrible experience is “so pervasive, so inescapable, so thorough” that “it’s a noose” around her chest and she “cannot move any more” (173). Meanwhile, her “memories of the dead,” like “treads of old spider webs, still sticky and hovering,” refuse to “bury themselves” (23). Naomi does not understand death when she is young, but as an adult, she is unable to escape from the memories of deaths, especially the deaths of her father and her grandparents Nakane.

Compared to the belated traumatization caused by a harsh life and by a series of deaths, missing their parents or siblings is immediately traumatic for the children as manifested in the fictional narratives. Unlike ordinary childhood experiences that may be easily forgotten, overwhelming experiences from the loss of caregivers are “unbearable and intolerable” (*The Body* 13) and are likely remembered for life. The young protagonists either instantly fall into a state of what Freud calls “melancholia,” a psychological state that is triggered by the loss of a love object or human (“Mourning and Melancholia” 244) or display physiological responses during their childhood. Sadly, these children blame themselves for the separation from their parents or siblings, for they interpret this loss as a punishment for their own personal failing, rather than see it as a consequence of the internment. This self-blame and misinterpretation sustain in their adulthood, resulting in intrusive flashbacks and nightmares.

Naomi falls into the traumatic state of melancholia upon the loss of her mother and immediately shows two distinct mental characteristics of this state: “cessation of interest in the outside world” and “a lowering of the self-regarding feelings” (244). After her mother’s departure, Naomi almost “never talks or smiles” (*O* 88), and the only words she frequently utters are “Why did my mother not return?” and “Please tell me about Mother” (23-24). Naomi is no longer interested in the world around her, except for things associated with her mother. She is “always carrying the doll” and sleeps with it “every night” (88), because her mother gives the doll to her and it becomes her sole connection to her mother. In addition, as melancholia usually “finds utterance in self-reproaches” and “culminates in a delusional expectation of punishment” (“Mourning and Melancholia” 244), Naomi blames herself for the disappearance of her mother. She believes the loss is a punishment for the secret of sexual abuse hidden from her mother. Since Naomi is only four years old, she does not yet understand what literary scholar Marlene Goldman

calls the “historical and political context” of the internment during childhood (369).<sup>29</sup> As separation from parents is a “life-threatening crisis” for children, it “affects in a special way the child’s self-image and the way he or she sees the world” (Hrdina 59). When her mother departs for Japan right after Mr. Gower’s sexual molestation of her, Naomi feels unsafe and views herself and the world at large in a negative way. She used to believe she and her mother are a whole, just as “the shaft” of her mother’s leg is “the shaft” of Naomi’s “body” (*O* 58). But now, the whole breaks into two and she immediately connects the misfortune with her molestation.

In *Requiem*, Bin is traumatized by his loss of caregiver in the Fraser River camp. He also displays psychological characteristics of melancholia as Naomi does right after he is given to Okuma-san by his father. When Bin arrives at Okuma-san’s shack, his interest in the outside world ceases. All he wants on the first night of his arrival is to “return home” (*R* 189) and stays with his mother to whom he has been close. Therefore, he makes several attempts at drawing near to his mother and pretends he is “part of [his] first family again” (218). He runs back to his first family’s shack—the shack with his parents and two siblings—and inches his chair “closer to Mother” in the crowd at the winter play *Shibai* in the camp. In contrast, he “drag[s] feet toward Okuma-san” (219) when he is asked by his mother to go back. His mother repeatedly pushes him away and tells him to “Go now” and “Don’t get into trouble” (191). This disturbs Bin for he regards it as abandonment. His mother’s refusal to accept him as a family member is devastating. Like most interned children in melancholia who attempt to find an explanation for their separation from parents, Bin also tries to understand the separation. Childhood trauma scholar Regis Thill argues that “[t]he child has only itself” (90). When the child faces the problem alone, one tends to search for an answer “within oneself” (90). Even though Bin, a mere six-year-old boy, does nothing wrong,

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<sup>29</sup> When Naomi grows up, she becomes gradually aware of the cultural implications of this sexual abuse, which will be discussed in Chapter Four.

he still blames himself for this enforced separation. He believes this separation is the result of his inferiority to his older brother Hiroshi by fate as he was “less important, being number two,” and was “shorter, smaller, scrawnier” (*R* 76). Nevertheless, the real reason for the separation is the family’s poverty in the camp. Bin’s father has difficulty supporting all his three children during the internment. Since he loves Bin best and has the “biggest hopes” for him (290), he gives Bin to the well-educated Okuma-san who has no child of his own. This separation creates an ironic situation whereby the child develops low self-esteem after the abandonment, and the parents are planning for their children’s future in times of difficulty.

Different from Naomi’s and Bin’s melancholia state, Asako’s immediate traumatic response to her loss of primary caregiver during childhood is physiological. When Asako talks about her menstruation many years after the internment, she says, “The last time I bled was just after [Eiji] died” (*EF* 151). At the time, she is only fourteen. Nevertheless, Asako is not surprised by or worried about the cessation of her menstruation because she thinks she deserves this punishment after Eiji’s death. For one thing, Eiji provides Asako the feelings of safety when she first bleeds. Thus, her menstruation, a secret that “Eiji kept for” her forever (151), becomes the symbol of the establishment of their relationship as caregiver and care receiver. When Eiji dies unexpectedly, this relationship vanishes accordingly. As a result, Asako’s body echoes through the closure of her menstrual cycles. For another, Asako feels guilty for having survived Eiji who dies of pneumonia after she tricks him to the cool water. Survivor guilt, according to William G. Niederland, is a term coined to encapsulate the “ever present feeling of guilt accompanied by conscious or unconscious dread of punishment for having survived the very calamity to which their loved ones succumbed” (Niederland 238). Eiji’s death is due to the insanitary conditions and limited medical services of the internment camps, but Asako believes she “could blame no one but [her]self” (*EF* 301). Even

though she “had never meant for Eiji to come after [her] that night to the river,” she “knew he would, as he always did” (*EF* 301). Therefore, she attributes her physiological abnormality to the punishment of her in the wake of Eiji’s death.

The interned children’s immediate melancholic reactions and physiological responses toward their loss of caregivers in the camp and their pathetic and futile attempt to find a logic between the loss and their own self are only the initial traumatic effects. More damaging still and perhaps more hurtful is the fact that this mental burden is carried to their adulthood years. Child survivors tend to re-experience constantly this old trauma through what trauma scholar Roger Luckhurst points out at the “later situations that repeat or echo the original” in “intrusive flashbacks” and “recurring dreams,” which are typical Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) symptoms (1). Some even show “persistent avoidance of stimuli associated with trauma” (1). This can range from avoidance “of thoughts or feelings related to the event” to “a general sense of emotional numbing to the total absence of recall of the significant event” (1). In *Requiem*, for instance, as Bin is given away after a picnic by the Fraser River, the river becomes the locale that reminds him of the original trauma from enforced separation. Bin always recalls this river in flashbacks and dreams as, psychologically speaking, “the last looks” of children’s core traumatic moments are “remembered forever” (Valent 112). Bin is able to “call up at any moment its steep banks, the steady rush of fast and muddy water, the ribbon of blue-green coming in from the side” (*R* 11). In his dreams too, Bin has “been moving from one place to another,” “searching for the Fraser River below the camp” (11) while he is “wet and miserable and fatigued” (11). The misery and fatigue are what Bin experienced during the mass evacuation in 1942 and from the abandonment by his parents during the internment. The movement from one location to another in the dream echoes the actual removal of his family from Vancouver Island to the Fraser River camp and the shifting from his first

family's shack to Okuma-san's hut. Bin re-experiences the trauma of the loss of their Vancouver Island home and the separation from his parents many years after the internment.

In *The Electrical Field*, Asako displays her PTSD symptoms from the death of Eiji during her adulthood years. She is frequently disturbed by fragmented memories of Eiji. Regarding this kind of recollection, trauma theorist Bessel Van der Kolk remarks that “[i]t was common for traumatized people to lose all memories of the event in question, only to regain access to them in bits and pieces at a much later date” (*The Body* 193). Asako's fragmented memories include flashbacks, old pictures, and stories of Eiji. Even though Eiji has been dead for many years, flashbacks of Eiji come to the front of Asako irregularly. When she is alone sitting by the window in the living room of their relocated home in Ontario, she sees Eiji very often in the electrical field. She confesses that she is not sure “[h]ow many times in the summer” had she seen Eiji “in the grasses, treading them like a current” (271). These unpredictable and unintentional flashbacks have taken Asako back to the scene of Eiji's swimming in the river current during the internment. She is unable to live a normal life as feelings of sadness and grief always haunted her in these fragmented memories.

As trauma scholar Dominick LaCapra suggests, the “most poignant and disarming kind of traumatropism” is “performed” by trauma victims as “bonds or memorial practices” that link them to “the haunting presence of dead intimates” (xv). This is precisely the kind of trauma which Asako goes through. To connect herself to Eiji who is dead forever during the internment, she treats Eiji's old pictures not as dead objects, but as what visual art scholar W. J. T. Mitchell calls “physical and virtual bodies” (30). They personify the living presence of her deceased brother and lover. Consequently, she speaks to these pictures “sometimes literally, sometimes figuratively” (30) because she lives both in the past and in the present. After she refuses to reveal Sachi and Tam's

secrets to her younger brother Stum, he asks, “Did you talk to your pictures today, ne-san? [...] Ne-san, do they answer you back” (*EF* 86-87)? It would seem that Eiji is still with Asako, not merely as a memory but as a living person that communicates with her and relives a common past. However, this communication makes Asako unsociable by isolating herself in the house.

Asako’s memorial practices also take the form of telling stories of Eiji. This is yet another way to connect herself with Eiji. By telling these stories, Asako re-experiences the guilt of having survived Eiji during the internment.<sup>30</sup> Among Eiji’s stories she tells to her neighbor, a girl named Sachi, Asako’s favorite one is about Eiji’s swimming in the river near their POW camp. Asako has narrated this story to Sachi several times, but she insists that “it didn’t hurt to tell her again, to remind her” (271). This repetition is not reminding Sachi of this old story but also bringing her own mind to Eiji. As Van der Kolk asserts, “It was common for traumatized people to lose all memories of the event in question, only to regain access to them in bits and pieces at a much later date” (*The Body* 193). Asako is only able to collect bits or pieces of memories of Eiji each time she tells the story. By repeated telling, Asako is trying to regain an integral memory of Eiji and relieve her guilt as a survivor. Survivor guilt, according to William G. Niederland, encapsulates the “ever present feeling of guilt accompanied by conscious or unconscious dread of punishment for having survived the very calamity to which their loved ones succumbed” (238). Asako still feels guilty for having survived the cold water after Eiji died of pneumonia as a result of their swimming together in the river. She thinks she “could blame no one but [herself]” (*EF* 301) for his death. Paradoxically she concludes that she “did not deserve to die with Eiji” or “to survive without him” (220). After the death of Eiji, all Asako wants is to be “numb,” to be “closed over,” and to be “alive to [her] own misery” (220). Consequently, if she had died with Eiji, the misery would have been

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<sup>30</sup> The cultural implications of Asako’s guilt will be discussed in Chapter Four.

gone, which would be against her will. On the other side, even though the real cause of Eiji's death is the insanitary living conditions and limited medical services in the internment camp, she believes she is responsible for the death. Eiji would not have contracted fever which led to the deadly pneumonia if she had not vied for Eiji's attention with other girls in the camp by tricking Eiji to the cold water. Thus, she deems that she is the one who should be dead with or without Eiji.

Another traumatic effect on children caused by their loss of caregivers is their avoidance of the traumatic stimuli altogether when they become adults. They do not wish to have anything to do with their terrible past or psychological wounds. For example, Bin attempts to bury memories of his mother and denies connections with her father. Though Bin misses his mother after the relocation, he always forces himself not to think of her. Bin says, "The memories of her were the ones buried deepest" (R 278). For one thing, most Japanese Canadians like Bin's family have little money for traveling after four years of internment; for another, Bin is unconsciously evading recollections of his mother for fear that they would stimulate his painful memories of the abandonment. Meanwhile, Bin withholds his real feelings toward his father. Many years after the relocation, when he has the money for traveling, Bin refuses to go and see his father. His wife Lena and his son Greg never have a chance to meet his father because Bin does not consider him a family member. Bin still rages against his father who failed to protect him during the internment when Bin needed him most. In refuting Keiko's conclusion that the father loves Bin the most, Bin says, "If he'd wanted me, he wouldn't have given me away in the first place" (290). However, the natural connection cannot be cut. Lena points out that Bin's angry moods always "trace[s] back to [his] First Father" (276). Bin's psychological reaction to his parents is a paradox. On the one hand, he is still fuming with the abandonment. On the other, he cannot wipe out the moments of his father, just as he cannot close the memory of what the internment means to him and his family.



Apart from the traumatization from children's loss of home and primary caregivers, some children also suffer psychological trauma from their loss of innocence due to sexual abuse and sibling incest. As discussed in the previous section, Naomi's innocence vanishes after she is sexually abused by Mr. Gower and Percy in *Obasan*, and Asako's innocence is lost due to her incestuous relationship with her brother Eiji in *The Electrical Field*. Stories of trauma, as "the narrative[s] of a belated experience," always manifest an "endless impact on a life" (*Unclaimed Experience* 7). The two stories also demonstrate endless psychological effects on child survivors of the internment. After their loss of innocence, Naomi and Asako are traumatized during both their childhood and adulthood, as attested through a variety of traumatic responses: deformed personality, recurring nightmares, and emotional disturbances.

In terms of "sexual exploration" depicted in *Obasan*, literary scholar Jodi Lundgren notes that critics have tended to interpret it "as a metaphor for the racially motivated oppression suffered by Japanese Canadians during and after World War II, yet this critical move elides the specificity of sexual abuse as a traumatic experience" (117-18). In other words, these critics have focused on the racial implications of sexual abuse and failed to address sexual abuse as childhood trauma in its own right. This section will explore sexual abuse and its relation to the psychological trauma of children. In the case of Naomi's sexual abuse by Mr. Gower and Percy, both men demand that Naomi stay silent. So it is doubly hurting, just as psychiatrist Judith Trowell remarks: "[v]iolation of the actual body, and the accompanying threats to ensure silence and secrecy, are damaging" (3). The molestation of Naomi and the enforced silence and secrecy have created double damaging impacts on the four-year-old girl. She suffers not only physical pain, but also mental humiliation as well as fear. Based on Naomi's responses, the traumatic effects of the sexual abuse include

Naomi's skewed personality during childhood and adulthood, constant nightmares, and social withdrawal in the adulthood years.

According to trauma critic Judith Herman, the "repeated trauma in childhood forms and deforms the personality" (96). The recurrent violation of Naomi by Mr. Gower and Percy disfigures her personality during her childhood: she not only feels guilty for the abuse but also shameful about her involuntary reactions to the molestation. As discussed earlier, Naomi blames herself for her mother's disappearance which she thinks is caused by the sexual secret she has kept with Mr. Gower. But she still "invite[s] attack" (Rose 222) by "clamber[ing] unbidden onto [Gower's] lap" (*O* 58). The effects of Naomi's sexual molestation from Percy are no better. She senses "this fascination and danger that rockets through [her] body" and is filled with "a strange terror and exhilaration" from Percy's violation (*O* 55). As Van der Kolk observes, victims of childhood sexual abuse "may anesthetize their sexuality and then feel intensely ashamed if they become excited by sensations or images that recall their molestation, even when those sensations are the natural pleasures associated with particular body parts" (*The Body* 59). Though the exhilaration is an involuntary response, which does not mean the molestation is enjoyable or she is asking for it, Naomi is still ashamed of this kind of bodily excitement or pleasure after Percy sexually molested her.

Naomi's recurring nightmares in adulthood years are manifestations of the traumatic impact from her childhood sexual abuse. As most traumatized child survivors are "possessed by the past" and tend to "repeat it compulsively" as if "it were fully present," they usually link their past trauma to the present through representations and imagination" (*Representing the Holocaust* 12). In Naomi's case, frequent sexual nightmares during her adulthood years become the latent representations of her childhood sexual molestation. For instance, Naomi repeatedly dreams about

a “naked, youthful, voluptuous” woman and a “taller, thinner and precise” man (O 25). In recalling this dream, Naomi says, “I am the woman” and the man is a “British martinet” (25). This dream tends to re-enact Mr. Gower’s sexual offence compulsively, because the dream mirrors the experience she has during her childhood. In the dream, the only way for this woman to be saved from harm is “to become seductive” (55), just as Naomi complies with Mr. Gower’s sexual abuse by climbing onto his laps.

Another effect of Naomi’s childhood traumatic experience of sexual molestation is her social withdrawal. Naomi, an unmarried and dissociated schoolteacher, is called a “spinster” and an “old maid” (O 8) by her students. At the age of thirty-six, she has had no romantic relationships with anyone. She does not have friends in Cecil where she has lived for years, let alone friends from somewhere else. When Aunt Emily asks her, “Are you in touch with any of the friends you made in Slocan?” Naomi replies, “No, not one” (164). Herman explains this kind of behavior thus: “As survivors attempt to negotiate adult relationships, the psychological defenses formed in childhood become increasingly maladaptive. [...] They prevent the development of mutual, intimate relationships” (114). As a survivor of child abuse, Naomi is ashamed of the bad experience, and continues to keep the secret to herself all the time. Her psychological defence prevents her from developing intimate relationships with others. Therefore, she has no friendship or romantic relationships with others in Cecil. She has alienated herself from feelings of romantic and sexual love.

Different from Naomi’s distressing experiences of sexual abuse in *Obasan*, Asako in *The Electrical Field* develops a complex view toward her incestuous sibling relationships with her two brothers. At the time Asako thought her relationship with Eiji gave her a sense of security and protection which helps to mitigate her mother’s negligence during the internment. Sibling incest,

as child psychoanalyst Melanie Klein argues, is counterbalance of “Oedipus conflict” (135). Psychotherapist Prophecy Coles concurs, “Children need to love and it is through the companionship of their sibling and peers that the envy and jealousy of the maternal breast can be repaired and the unbearable exclusion from the paternal bed can be mitigated” (53-54). In this sense, incestuous sibling relationship is non-destructive. In Asako’s case, this sibling incest do not seem devastating. However, the traumatic effects are still there haunting her both during and after the internment. The most apparent effects of Asako’s incestuous attachment to Eiji are emotional disturbances. Asako watches Eiji “change in a way” that makes her “lonely” (*EF* 55). At first, she attributes the loneliness to their loss of home in Vancouver. However, she feels the pain which is “like summer turning to fall, a sudden creeping chill” (56) when Eiji turns to other girls. Asako’s obsessive feelings toward Eiji have surpassed the normal sibling relationship: “the happier [she] was with Eiji, the more [she] trusted in him, and the greater [her] fear of losing him was” (148-49). As such, Asako views Eiji’s distancing from her as emotional abuse. This kind of perceived abuse, Van der Kolk argues, “can be just as devastating as physical abuse and sexual molestation” and “it is particularly destructive for young children, who are still trying to find their place in the world” (*The Body* 103). Struggling to find her place in the camp, Asako obtains safety in their incestuous relationship. While this brings certain benefits, it also causes anguish. Even in relative security, Asako feels lonely and insecure.

Asako’s emotional abuse persists to adulthood. Without Eiji around, Asako is reticent and isolated. In her Ontario home, she feels lonely and longs for the company of Eiji who has been dead for over twenty years. She often sits by the window and waits for a visitor to come: “Sachi, Chisako, Eiji, I don’t know who” (*EF* 143). Though Asako claims she is not sure whom she is longing for, she finds herself “humming an old tune” from camp days—“I’ll Be Seeing You” (143).

This tune, published in 1938, was a popular song about nostalgia for lovers. It was a huge emotional hit during World War II for many loved ones who were serving far away overseas. This detail, the tune unconsciously coming to her lips, suggests that Asako is yearning for Eiji who has literally served as her incestuous lover in the camp days.

Another harmful effect of Asako's loss of innocence is manifested in her incestuous feelings toward her younger brother Stum. As Birns comments, "Eiji dies, [...] Stum and Miss Saito herself, are unable to form exogenous relationships with the opposite sex" ("Review" 161). Sure enough, Asako has difficulty forming romantic relationships with others, and Stum has "never brought a girl home" (*EF* 6). After they move to Ontario, Asako transfers her incestuous sibling love with Eiji to the obsessive addiction of keeping Stum around. She is always afraid that Stum will leave their home and "soon enough [she]'d be deserted by everyone around [her]" (47). Even the thought of "Stum being gone even for a night" makes her "queasy with panic" (39). Similar to the fear caused by Eiji's distancing from her in the camp, Asako's fear now of losing Stum have surpassed the normal sibling relationships. The panic comes not from a surrogate mother's concern for the safety of a son but from her incestuous desires for a brother. When Stum tells Asako about her wonderful girlfriend Angel, Asako's emotions are roused. She admits, "I could not bring myself to look at him" (60). She feels that their house becomes a suffocating "cage with its unbearable loneliness" (43). This suffocating loneliness is one of the symptoms of PTSD. Though Asako is aware of the weird sibling relationships between Stum and herself, she does not want to "release [them] both" (195). She is grabbing Stum "too tight" (195), just as she had done to Eiji when he was alive.

### 3. Children's Dealing with Psychological Suffering during the Internment

As discussed earlier in this chapter, children have not completely developed "personality

structures” (Kahn 103) to cope with unexpected stress and trauma. Nevertheless, facing loss of home, primary caregivers, and innocence, children have not “lost their creativeness and age-appropriate fantasies” (Valent 113). In the fictional narratives, many children try to balance the overwhelming experiences of the internment by turning to childhood stories and creative art. Childhood stories, such as fairy tales, folk tales, and real-life stories, and creative art, such as music and drawing, are represented as psychologically supportive. For instance, Naomi uses fairy tales such as “Peter Rabbit,” “Gulliver’s Travels,” “Goldilocks and the Three Bears,” and “Snow White”<sup>31</sup> to rationalize the hardships caused by her loss of home and innocence; both Naomi and Bin employ the folk tale of “Momotaro” to tackle their loss of caregivers; Shichan turns to real-life story of Marco Polo to manage her psychological suffering in the camp. In addition, some children use art as their coping mechanism. For example, music becomes Stephen’s safe space for resisting pains resulting from their dispersal, and drawing provides Bin with a comfortable arena for mitigating his anger and trauma from the enforced separation from his parents. These tales and art not only disrupt and dislocate children’s suffering and traumatization temporarily, but also enable them to construct an alternative selfhood to resist helplessness and hardships during their detention.

Fairy tales are not only a crucial form of literature for children to learn about the world, but also a therapeutic way for them to tackle the daily obstacles. Fairy tales are regarded as “the first form of children’s literature” (Fiedler xi), the “primal form of children’s literature” (Kerrigan x), and are understood “not simply as a genre of children’s literature but indeed as its foundational

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<sup>31</sup> These children’s tales are regarded as fairy tales in some cases because they have several elements of a fairy tale. “Peter Rabbit” is a fictional animal character in various children’s stories by Beatrix Potter, “Gulliver’s Travels” is a story of adventure and has fairy-elements for children, “Goldilocks and the Three Bears” (originally titled “The Story of the Three Bears”) is a 19th-century British fairy tale, and “Snow White” is originally taken from a 19th-century German fairy tale written by the Brothers Grimm.

and thus most important genre” (Kidd 1). Bruno Bettelheim, a leading psychologist in fairy tale studies, argues that fairy tale “motifs are experienced as wondrous because the child feels understood and appreciated deep down in his feelings, hopes, and anxieties, without these all having to be dragged up and investigated in the harsh light of a rationality that is still beyond him” (19). In other words, fairy tales are able to meet children’s deep psychological needs. They even help children, as Kidd asserts, “manage their fears” in real life (23). In *A Psychiatric Study of Fairy Tales*, Julius E. Heuscher remarks that “fairy tales have an educational and therapeutic value” (186). Children’s literature scholar Lillian H. Smith agrees by saying that “Against the limitless terrors of a child’s own imaginations are set the limits opposed by the conventions of the fairy tale” (50). In other words, fairy tales encourage children to work through “various unconscious dilemmas” (Kidd 1) by creating an alternative space of resistance. Within this space, children in fiction are free to fantasize themselves as part of the story or even protagonists of the tales in dealing with their suffering during the evacuation and in the POW camps, and their loss of innocence during the uprooting.

In *Obasan*, Naomi reduces her vulnerability to horror during the evacuation by entering the world of fairy tale. When the mass evacuation began in 1942, a curfew was imposed upon every Canadian of Japanese ancestry in the city of Vancouver. Therefore, Aunt Emily’s visit to Naomi’s house in the evening is a violation of the curfew. If Emily is caught by the police, she will be sent into jail. Thus, Stephen warns her against the darkness and police outside by shouting ““The curfew, Auntie!”” (O 68). At this panicky and frightening moment of Emily’s hasty elusion from the police, Naomi thinks of “Peter Rabbit hopping through the lettuce patch” (68). As the world of fairy tale is one “where real time is suspended,” “where we are invited to enter,” and “where, in fantasy, we can work out our problems and anxieties” (Baker and Martin 8), because it suits the psyche of

panic-stricken children. After Naomi enters the world of Peter Rabbit, the nervous moment of the police's chasing after Aunt Emily is suspended. As a result, Naomi successfully initiates a path of blocked space with her fictional friend Peter. Like Peter who is chased about the garden of Mr. McGregor, Aunt Emily is run after by the police. In the end, Peter manages to escape, but not before losing his jacket and shoes. Aunt Emily also tries to run away from the police, but she has to "go down the back alleys" (O 68) in a flurry. In this childish but imaginative way, Naomi works out the problem of panic caused by the troubles of evacuation.

In *Naomi's Road*, the young heroine Naomi utilizes the fairy tale of Gulliver to naturalize the journey to Slocan during the evacuation. On the day Naomi's family leaves the city of Vancouver, Naomi is "scared" (NR 37). She wonders "she might never find the way home" (40) after the journey. Nevertheless, she sees "a giant man" out of the train window: "higher than the trees, one hand holding a plumed hat against his hip, one hand shielding his eyes" (41). She exclaims, "It's Gulliver!" (41). Naomi is imagining their dispersal to inland B.C. as an adventurous journey, like Gulliver's stay in the island country of Lilliput. In *Gulliver's Travels*, the hero has to face many difficulties to manage his existence on the island of Lilliput. Fortunately, like the world of many fairy tales where "there is always consolation in the happy ending" (Baker and Martin 8), Gulliver is able to come back to England in the end.<sup>32</sup> Similarly, Naomi is reassured by the end of Gulliver's adventurous travel. The "good feelings" she experiences from this tale "compensate for the sadness and perplexity" (8) she has had before she envisions Gulliver's fanciful world.

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<sup>32</sup> Though *Gulliver's Travels* is not a typical fairy tale, it is a classic for young readers as an adventure story. As it has several elements of a fairy tale, which greatly appeal to the young mind, it is sometimes regarded as a fairy tale. Of course, this story is an allegorical satire for adults, but for young readers, it is a classic story for entertainment. In this research, I take it as a tale of adventure which is full of fanciful and entertaining elements in the analysis of its influence on young minds.



In addition, children rationalize their loss of home by imagining themselves protagonists in fairy tales. For instance, Naomi imagines herself to be associated with the two protagonists of “Goldilocks and the Three Bears.”<sup>33</sup> When her family arrives at the Slocan Camp, Naomi says, “Clearly, we are that bear family in this strange house in the middle of the woods. I am Baby Bear” (*O* 109). Like the bear family who lives in the forest, Naomi’s family settles in the middle of the woods. In the tale, Baby Bear’s chair, porridge, and bed are taken over by the intruder Goldilocks, and Naomi’s Vancouver home is also invaded and occupied by strangers after their exile to the internment camp. But soon she identifies herself as the Goldilocks. She says, “Or perhaps this is not true and I am really Goldilocks after all” (109). Like Goldilocks, Naomi is also an outsider to the forest and she wants to go home. But she has no place to go but the hut in the woods where she does not feel at home. Her “inner world of half-comprehended thoughts” (Baker and Martin 5) about the dispersal is thus revealed through fairy-tale characters who suffer alone in the forest. Bettelheim notes that fairy tales usually “begin with the child’s life in some manner” and then the hero has reached “an impasse” and in some cases “the hero” has to “search, travel, and suffer” through “years of a lonely existence” (201). By substituting herself for Baby Bear and Goldilocks in turn, Naomi has tried to rationalize the impasse that she does not quite understand yet. This impasse, which almost every hero must confront, dispels her fears about the huts in the forest and her feeling of loneliness.

Children of internment also try to tackle their loss of innocence by retreating to the world of fairy tales. In *Obasan*, Naomi filters her vulnerable experiences of sexual abuse through the tale

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<sup>33</sup> “Goldilocks and the Three Bears” is a 19th-century British fairy tale. There are three versions of this tale: in the first one, Goldilocks is an old woman who enters the forest home of three bears when they are away, and she runs away and disappears after the bears return home; in the second version, Goldilocks is a little girl who is lost in the forest; in the third version, the three bears are replaced by Papa Bear, Mama Bear, and Baby Bear. In this thesis, I rely on the third version of this fairy tale.

of “Snow White.”<sup>34</sup> Steven Swann Jones, a specialist in folk tales and fairy tales, acknowledges that it is difficult for modern readers to accept the theme of “sexuality” in children’s stories because children are “thought to be sexually innocent, or at least naïve” (22). To alleviate this difficulty, Jones points out that fairy tales can be further categorized into “tales for young children, tales for developing adolescents, and tales for relatively mature adults” (22). “Snow White” in *Obasan* belongs to the category for mature adults. In Mr. Gower’s bathroom where this old man pretends to fix Naomi’s scratch on her knee, Naomi imagines herself as “Snow White in the forest, unable to run” (O 58). Like the poor child Snow White who is desperately alone in the forest, Naomi feels helplessly alone in Gower’s bathroom. Just like the Queen who cunningly tricks Snow White to danger in the forest while Snow White’s mother is absent, Gower repeatedly molests Naomi in his house when Naomi’s mother is not present. Naomi is unable to run away because Gower has the power of the Queen who is omnipresent in the forest: Gower is “the forest full of eyes and arms” and “the tree root that trips Snow White” (58). Nevertheless, as Baker and Martin note, some fairy tales “undoubtedly include terrifying elements which, paradoxically, are also potentially therapeutic” (5). By turning to the story of “Snow White,” Naomi finds solace in the tale that she has company in dealing with this kind of helpless and terrifying plight. She believes this troubling sexual molestation is an evitable process to the happy ending, just as Snow White’s suffering in the forest leads to her eventual triumph.

Different from fairy tales, folk tales “represent the collective experience of any identifiable group of people with common roots, beliefs and language” (Baker and Martin 12). The story of “Momotaro, or A Son of a Peach” in *Obasan* and *Requiem* is a typical folk tale, which includes “a problem to solve, tasks to perform, and a journey to be undertaken” (7). In this tale, Momotaro,

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<sup>34</sup> “Snow White” is an 18th-century German fairy tale which features the characters of the evil Queen and the seven dwarfs.

with his magic power, became a Japanese national hero after he left his parents and fought a band of demons who invaded their land by taking on a journey to a distant island. As folk tales offer children “the rites of passage in forms of fantasy,” both Naomi and Bin “experience and rejoice” in “Escape, Recovery and Consolation” (15). In fantasizing the connection of the tale and their own life, the children obtain relief from Momotaro’s departure and suffering, “regain a clear view” (15) of their separation from the parents and find unexpected joy in Momotaro’s happy ending. In other words, the tale of Momotaro not only rationalizes Naomi’s and Bin’s loss of caregivers but also meets their psychological needs of either reunifying with their parents or actively governing their own life.

Regarding the Momotaro story in *Obasan*, critics have offered various interpretations. Gurleen Grewal, for example, comments on Momotaro’s talent for problem solving: “Momotaro’s role of redressing the wrongs” are shared by Naomi and “her brave aunt Emily” (144). In contrast, Christina Tourino, who has a different direction in explaining Momotaro’s function, remarks that “‘Momotaro’ provides a magical solution to the problem of childlessness: miraculous procreation” (136). As for the relationship between Naomi and Momotaro, King-Kok Cheung asserts that “Momotaro, Naomi’s favorite tale, speaks more truly to her life” (157). This is echoed by Helena Grice who argues that “the Momotaro story is cyclically connected with Naomi’s own tale, both histories of parental loss and separation” (99). Following Cheung’s and Grice’s argument that the story of Momotaro foreshadows Naomi’s life experience, I believe this tale provides Naomi a solution to her traumatic experience of losing her parents during the internment.

As a “serious baby” who is “fed on milk and Momotaro” (O 51), Naomi identifies herself as Momotaro to mitigate the pain of separation from her parents during the internment. Like Momotaro who emerges from a big peach and is adopted by an old childless couple, Naomi is

taken care of by her Obasan and Uncle, who have no child of their own. In fighting the obstacles, Naomi must leave her parents when “The time comes” (50), just as Momotaro does in conquering the demons. Momotaro’s conduct of “behav[ing] with honour” and “act[ing] with a fine intent” (51) is convincing to Naomi. After her mother’s disappearance, Naomi is creating an ideal version of herself by behaving well like the Japanese national hero Momotaro. She deems that “To do otherwise is shameful and brings dishonour to all” (51). Just as Momotaro finally returns home, Naomi believes she will eventually reunify with her parents, especially after she meets her father in the Slocan camp right before the relocation. When Naomi sees him, she says, “I am Momotaro returning” (151). Though Naomi never gets a chance to meet her mother again, the ending of Momotaro is encouraging. The tale gives Naomi a “sense of security by distancing the problem in a narrative set in a fantasy world where happy endings encourage hope for the future” (Baker and Martin 6). Naomi thinks her suffering represents the rites that she must undergo before her mother’s return. As a result, she gains a sense of security and recovery.

According to Baker and Martin, “Folk tales evolved to meet various psychological needs” (3). In *Requiem*, Bin also employs the “Momotaro” story to survive his traumatization from the loss of his first family. Nevertheless, the tale in Bin’s learning differs from Naomi’s. Bin “extract[s] different meanings” from the same “Momotaro” story because as a boy, he has “different interests and needs” from Naomi (Bettelheim 12). Concerning this folk tale, Bin especially likes the part about the treasure Momotaro wins after defeating the demons. Unlike Naomi who wants merely reunification, Bin intends to gain the capability of arranging his life by himself. When talking about the treasure, Bin says, “I would start by wearing the hat and coat to make myself invisible. I would slip into the home of my real family and I would stay there” (R 197). Supposedly, Bin would be able to do whatever he intends to without being noticed or discovered by others,

especially his First Father who gives Bin away. This tale, like many other folk tales that “depict magical or marvelous events or phenomena as a valid part of human experience” and “employ ordinary protagonists to address issues of everyday life” (*The Fairy Tale* 9), externalizes Bin’s “interior anxieties” (Baker and Martin 11) over the separation from his parents. As Momotaro, an ordinary hero, is beset by real problems that anyone may confront in everyday life, Bin is able to mirror his inner thoughts and psychological needs in this tale. The folk tale helps Bin “to confront and ideally to solve the emotional problems” (6) caused by his being taken away from his parents. By imagining possessing the superpower himself, Bin mitigates his helplessness and desperation of the abandonment.

Real-life stories are another form that the interned children use in alleviating their pains and suffering during the internment. In *A Child in Prison Camp*, Shichan uses traveling stories of Marco Polo to reduce her emotional disturbances caused by the dispersal. In her first school class at the New Denver camp, Shichan introduces herself as “Marco Polo’s daughter” who “just came from China” (*CPC* n.p.). Lacking rationality, Shichan allows her imagination to take over: “producing and subsequently projecting onto and into various objects” her own “griefs and joys” (Baker and Martin 11). She excitedly says to the boy next to her in the class, ““Can you imagine if I came down the streets with all my camels and servants, with jewels and bells”” (n.p.). Unsatisfied about the teacher, the classroom, and the school in the camp, Shichan is imagining herself as Marco Polo’s daughter who is free to travel all around the world. As Marco Polo served Emperor Kublai Khan in China, Shichan further fantasizes “a handsome prince will come and carry them away in a shining, gold carriage with the white horses” (n.p.). She feels happy as long as she does not “think about leaving [Vancouver]” (n.p.). By immersing herself in a better world that not only

provides her with joy and freedom but also secludes her from griefs and confinement, Shichan's psychological suffering from the loss of their Vancouver home is mitigated.

In addition to childhood stories like fairy tales, folk tales, and real-life stories, creative art also plays a role in psychological therapy in regard to traumatized children in internment. Art therapist Judith Rubin asserts that art is "a particular form of secondary prevention" (231). It is particularly helpful to children who are "in the throes of responding to overwhelming events" because creative art may "well prevent more serious and prolonged emotional damage" (231). This is echoed by child psychiatrist Judith S. Kestenberg who believes that "Creativity is one of the self-healing processes" (64). As an alternative language for children to express feelings and emotions, creative art like paintings, drawings, poetry, and music is another effective coping mechanism for children to reduce their vulnerability to overwhelming events or emotional disturbances. In the fictional narratives, music and drawing provide Stephen and Bin a safe space to escape from the overwhelming experiences and the resilience to mend the disturbed feelings, thoughts, and painful recollections of the internment.

In discussing the idea that "music could be used to heal," music therapy scholar Andrew Watson traces back to the ancient Greeks by pointing out that "Aristotle believed the flute music could arouse strong emotions and thus often lead to a state of cathartic release" (16). Suzanne B. Hanser echoes that the "tension is released through musically induced vibrations that support and sustain healing" (159). In *Obasan* and *Naomi's Road*, music provides Stephen a safe place for the much-needed channel to release his anger and distress caused by the mass evacuation. Facing verbal violence from white children at school, Stephen reduces this tension by immersing himself in music. For instance, after arguing with a white girl in his Vancouver class over their issue of identity during the evacuation, Stephen "picks up his violin" (O 30) and plays for hours in his

room. Another time, Stephen plays “[a]ll the songs he can remember,” and even “when it’s time to sleep he keeps playing” (*NR* 71) after quarreling with the white girl Mitzi over the Union Jack flag in Slocan. In both cases, music serves to calm and soothe Stephen in moments of anger, anxiety, and distress after the uprooting of Japanese Canadians.

In addition, music gives Stephen the resilience to suffering and hope for freedom. During their confinement in ghost towns, Stephen is able to adjust to the cruel and harsh environment of the Slocan camp and alleviate his stress and trauma caused by their loss of home through music. Bin finds freedom in music too, which is “a storehouse of images, symbols, words, narratives and ideas that we are free to use” (Armah 262). He believes when he “play[s] music,” he is “free” (*O* 72). As a result, their Slocan hut is always filled with Stephen’s flutes that Uncle gets for him. Although they are in incarceration, by practicing on “a folding cardboard piano” (52) his father made for him, Stephen feels that they are still at home in Vancouver. Even when Stephen is deprived of his musical instrument—the flute—in Granton due to the dry weather there, he slips into the United Church at night to play the piano driven by his love for music and freedom. Though he is afraid that he might get caught, he conquers his fear and plays “Daddy’s music until the flashlight batteries die” (98).

When talking about the healing effect of drawing, psychologist Kende Hanna maintains that the “emotions, traumas, tensions, and preverbal, preconscious or unconscious content are expressed earlier in graphic activity rather than verbalization” (40). In *Requiem*, drawing helps Bin not only release his disturbed emotions of the forced uprooting but also resist his traumatization from the enforced separation from his first family. After Bin falls into the state of melancholia, “verbalization is not the proper avenue of expression” (Hordvik 27) for him. Consequently, Okuma-san encourages Bin to express himself in drawings by saying that “If you draw the river,

you want to transfer what you know you have inside yourself to a single sheet of paper” (R 236). As drawings are “efficient screening devices for potential psychiatric problems” (Rubin 125), Bin is able to transfer his vulnerable feelings and repressed emotions during the internment through drawing rivers. Being the “most private part” (R 269) of oneself, drawing has the effect of catharsis for Bin. By drawing rivers which “hold stories” (96), Bin is releasing his own problematic stories in an artistic way. In thinking about the tale of Momotaro, which is also “the story of the river,” Bin says, “I decided that I would draw a story of my own. [...] I was going to give it an ending of my own choosing” (197). Like Momotaro’s magic hat and coat, drawing rivers becomes Bin’s superpower to deal with his traumatic loss of home and caregivers effectively. Consequently, Bin gains the magic of deciding his own life through drawing.

As seen in the discussion above, children in both adults’ and children’s fiction endured psychological suffering attributable to the internment, but differences exist between the adults’ and children’s books. Take *Obasan* and its children’s version *Naomi’s Road* for example: Naomi’s loss of home and loss of parents are depicted in both books, but her loss of innocence as a result of Mr. Gower’s and Percy Bower’s sexual abuses is missing in the children’s book. Similar to what happened in *Obasan*, despite Naomi’s excitement about the train trip, the young heroine in *Naomi’s Road* is depressed about the forced removal of her family from their Vancouver home to the Slocan camp and about the imposed relocation to a farm in Southern Alberta. As for Naomi’s traumatization from the loss of her primary caregiver, *Naomi’s Road* not only displays Naomi’s sadness and melancholia state but also provides an explanation for her mother’s disappearance. In relaying to Naomi’s frequently asked question “why Mama is taking so long to come home,” her father says, “She can’t come till the war is over. [...] We’re at war with Japan” (28). In contrast to what happened in *Obasan*, where Naomi never gets an answer from her Obasan or father as to why



her mother cannot come back, in *Naomi's Road*, the father's answer is explicit and straightforward. Accordingly, while Naomi's melancholia state is exhibited in Naomi's silence and self-blame after her mother's departure for Japan in the adults' book, Naomi in the children's version expresses her disturbed emotions through her interaction with her doll. When Naomi hears that there is "a war" and that's why "Stephen [gets] hurt," the doll cries and says to Naomi, "I wish Mama was here, [...] Then we would be as safe as bunnies" (31). Naomi hugs the doll and replies, "Go to sleep, Dolly, [...] I'll take care of you" (31). Here, the young girl is behaving like an adult who wants to protect a baby doll. In reality, Naomi's protection of the doll after her mother's disappearance serves as "a way of inoculating children [readers] against material traumas or the painful exigencies of everyday life" (Tribunella 104). It makes Naomi's story resonate effectively with young readers, especially those who endure loss in daily life.

In sum, the Japanese-Canadian children, both in adults' and children's books and in reality, have valid memories of the painful incarceration, notwithstanding their capability of finding amusement and pleasure during the detention. Although they do not understand the implications of the internment during childhood, evidence suggests that they all suffer with or without their parents from being interned. In other words, they are psychologically traumatized by their loss of homes, loss of caregivers, as well as loss of innocence as a result of sexual abuse and sibling incest. At a young age, they have not completely developed personality structures to cope with unexpected stress and trauma, but they do have their own ways of resisting trauma through childhood stories and creative art. One other aspect of children's trauma attributable to the internment has to do with culture. In the following chapter, I will discuss how child survivors are culturally traumatized in the postwar years, and how both silence and speech serve as their coping mechanism of cultural trauma.



## **Chapter Four Thematic Representation of Cultural Trauma of Child Survivors in Internment**

The previous chapter has discussed the psychological trauma from the perspective of children in internment. This chapter will consider the cultural trauma from the perspective of the same group of children in both fiction and reality, who have grown up into adults and who are also named as child survivors. Sociologist Ron Eyerman points out in his essay “Cultural Trauma: Slavery and the Formation of African American Identity” that there is “a difference between trauma as it affects individuals and as a cultural process” (60). He explains, “As opposed to psychological or physical trauma, which involves a wound and the experience of great emotional anguish by an individual, cultural trauma refers to a dramatic loss of identity and meaning, a tear in the social fabric, affecting a group of people that has achieved some degree of cohesion” (61). Cultural trauma occurs, as another sociologist Jeffrey C. Alexander states, “when members of a collective feel they have been subjected to a horrendous event that leaves indelible marks upon their group consciousness, marking their memories for ever, and changing their future identity in fundamental and irrevocable ways” (1). In Canada, the internment experiences during World War II as well as the legacies of the internment raise the issue of the cultural trauma suffered by Japanese Canadians during and after the war. This chapter will discuss what constitutes child survivors’ cultural memories, what cultural impact the internment has on them, and how they deal with the cultural trauma resulting from the dispersal.

Unlike psychological trauma which children suffer during the internment, cultural trauma is felt during their meaning-making process over the course of their growing up. When they become older and more conscious of the injustice against them after the dispersal, child survivors begin to realize what internment has meant to them as a collective group, as a race, and as a culturally

distinct entity. This awareness and awakening of their cultural suffering leads to their participation in Japanese Canadians' construction of collective cultural memory. This is manifested in the review of their own childhood and adulthood memories of institutional racism and individual racism, as well as the postmemories they learned from previous generations of Japanese Canadians, either from oral accounts by their parents and other relatives or from written materials such as family letters and documents. During this process of cultural investigation by the child survivors, three things happen that add to their already terrible suffering relating to cultural trauma—some child survivors unwittingly internalize the racism against Japanese Canadians, others encounter cultural identity crisis, and still others display culturally traumatic responses caused by intergenerational transmission by the parents.

Although the sudden and unexpected uprooting ruined the lives of Japanese Canadians, they often remained silent, owing to the Japanese culture, and resorted to few violent protests during and after the internment. In fiction, the families of Shichan, Naomi, Asako, and Bin all cooperate with the government's dispersal policy quietly, except for sporadic non-violent resistance when their human dignity in the detention camps is threatened and when their basic rights of Canadian citizens are ignored. For instance, in *A Child in Prison Camp*, Shichan's father initiates a complaint to the B.C. Security Commission for tap water in the New Denver camp; in *Obasan*, Naomi's Aunt Emily attends conferences and publishes papers to fight against the injustices done to Japanese Canadians; in *The Electrical Field*, Asako's neighbour Mr. Yano participates in the redress movement after the war. As for child survivors, Japanese cultural values such as collectivism and stoicism which they acquired from both the philosophy and behaviors of their parents or predecessors have the most important influence on their silence as a coping mechanism. I suggest that the silence of child survivors, as a traumatic response to cultural racism, is also their way of

resistance to traumatization caused by the internment and its legacies. According to Asian American scholars Donna K. Nagata and Yuzuru J. Takeshita, Japanese concepts such as “*oya koko* (filial piety), *gaman* (perseverance), *giri* (a sense of obligation), and *enryo* (self-restraint/reserve),” as well as “*haji* (shame), obedience, honesty, and diligence” (596), all strictly upheld Japanese values, are instilled in child survivors before, during, and after their uprooting. Consequently, even though child survivors are frustrated by their treatment during and after the war, the cultural emphasis on acceptance, adaptation, and resiliency tends to guide them to silence. However, that does not mean that they forgive and forget. Their multilayered silences—non-verbal silence, amniotic silence, and artistic silence—are means to deal with cultural trauma. Moreover, more than thirty years after the war, child survivors finally break silence by telling their stories, which becomes yet another way to cope with their cultural trauma.

### 1. Cultural Memory and Postmemory of the Internment

Memory specialist Astrid Erll defines cultural memory as “the interplay of present and past in socio-cultural contexts” (“Cultural Memory Studies” 2). It involves “an ongoing process of remembrance and forgetting in which individuals and groups continue to reconfigure their relationship to the past and hence reposition themselves in relation to established and emergent memory sites” (“Introduction” 2). According to “[a]dult general perception,” memory scholars Lora Hutchison and Heather Snell point out, child survivors are usually assumed to lack the dreadful experiences, which “may enable them to challenge popular or dominant interpretations of the past and present” (1). However, as discussed in the previous chapter, children, despite their young age during the internment, have valid memories of the painful detention experiences, but these memories are stored away temporarily. When they become adults, they begin to make sense of their childhood or postwar recollections about what they have suffered earlier in terms of

cultural racism. These recollections are either their own real-life experiences or those of their parents, aunts and uncles, or grandparents as documented through family letters, documents, or private stories. In other words, child survivors in the five books as well as the authors of these texts are able to consolidate memories of both past and present in their adulthood. During the process of reviewing their memories and postmemories, they not only re-experience the terrible events during the uprooting, but also adjust their present relationship to the past events and think about their future. They have participated in the ongoing process of cultural memory construction.

Cultural racism, according to cultural diversity scholar James M. Jones, may be defined as “individual and institutional expression of the superiority of one race’s cultural heritage over that of another race” (6). It is a matter of cultural racism as long as “the expression of cultural differences is unrewarded or is interpreted negatively” (6). As a matter of fact, cultural racism contains elements of two other types of racism: institutional and individual. Institutional racism, or what anti-racism activist Camara Phyllis Jones terms as institutionalized racism, is “normative, sometimes legalized, and often manifested as inherited disadvantages” (1212). There need not be an “identifiable perpetrator” because it is “structural, having been codified in our institutions of custom, practice, and law” (1212). In contrast, individual racism, or “personal mediated racism” is close to “prejudice and discrimination” (1212). It suggests “a belief in the superiority of one’s own race over another, and the behavioral enactments that maintain those superior and inferior positions” (*Prejudice and Racism* 5). In the fictional narratives, child survivors’ memories and postmemories are filled with cultural racism that does not make much sense to them during childhood, but later in adulthood these recollections serve as a medium through which child survivors are able to make meaning of the past. The narration of these recollections in the postwar years showcases their participation in the formation of cultural memory.

Child survivors of the internment in fiction, like their counterparts in real life, possess a living memory of cultural racism. Even though the cultural overtones of the events may not have been understood by them when they were young, feelings such as shame, fear, and puzzlement caused by witnessing violence and suffering from abuse during the dispersal remain frozen in their psyche. In *Obasan*, Naomi's childhood recollections of the yellow chickens and "Yellow Peril" game are representations of institutional racism against Japanese Canadians. Her encounter with the violence toward the yellow chickens takes place in Vancouver when the forced mass evacuation has not yet begun. She accidentally witnesses a white hen "[jab] down" with its "sharp beak" on one of the yellow chickens in the cage, "deliberate as the needle on the sewing-machine" (O 52). In the end, "the chick" being attacked suffers and dies, lying "on its side on the floor, its neck twisted back, its wings, outstretched fingers" (53). On the cultural level, yellow is used as a racial slur against Asians including Japanese Canadians since the beginning of the twentieth century. The polarity of the yellow chickens and the white hen here is a metaphor of the racial tension between yellow-skinned Japanese Canadians and white-skinned locals in B.C. before the uprooting. Naomi does not understand the cultural implication of either the white hen or the yellow chickens. But she is alarmed and frightened at the violence, but she does not hate the white hen. Although her mother tells her that she is not responsible for this incident, she feels guilty about this yellow chicken's death. This guilt, nevertheless, is rooted in Japanese culture. According to Japanese anthropologist Takie Sugiyama Lebra, the "Japanese sense of guilt ties in with the allocentric concern in that one's awareness of another as a victim of one's action or inaction is essential" (203). Naomi believes her action of putting the yellow chickens in the cage near the white hen and her inaction of preventing the violence leads directly to the chicken's death.

Apart from witnessing the white hen's violent attack at the yellow chickens in the backyard in Vancouver, Naomi also comes across the suffering of chickens in Slocan from violence among victims themselves and unfair policies of the government. For example, after school in the camp, Naomi sees several big Japanese-Canadian boys killing and torturing a chicken by dripping its blood into "the hole" they "cooped out of the ground" (137). While the chicken's body "quivers and jerks" and its feet "clutch[es] and trembl[es]," a boy named Sho cruelly "cuts into the neck wound" of the chicken with a knife. He says to the rest of the boys, "'Got to make it suffer'" (137). Although Naomi is unaware of the cultural implications of the violence, she is "paralysed" (137) by the whole process of killing. Metaphorically, the chicken again hints at Japanese Canadians. Just as the boys torture the chicken before its death, the Canadian government intentionally makes Japanese Canadians suffer in the ghost towns of B.C. before they force them to move to east of the Rockies or to go to Japan. Moreover, the violence of these Japanese-Canadian boys is an ironic comment on the policies of Canadian government. They not only make the victims suffer but also encourage victims inflict sufferings among themselves. These boys have essentially assimilated racism against Japanese Canadians themselves. They behave in a similar way to Mr. Mori in *A Child in Prison Camp*. As a Japanese-Canadian veteran of World War I, Mr. Mori watches over his fellow internees "like a spy for the RCMP" (*CPC* n.p.). Symbolically, these boys who are victims of the dispersal policy are big, strong, and powerful compared to a chicken. They apply the logic of the government by bullying other victims who are small, weak, and powerless in the camp.

Further, suffering of Naomi's fellow Japanese Canadians in the Slocan camp does not end with the internment. After the war, they face another forced dispersal. As Canadian historian Ken Adachi observes, the government announced in 1945 that "all persons of Japanese race 16 years



or over must report to the RCMP to signify their intention concerning ‘repatriation’ to Japan” (277) according to Order-in-Council PC 7335 (308). This announcement, “posted in all the camps”, also “indicated that those who did not opt for repatriation must ‘co-operate’ with the government, [...] by moving east of the Rockies” (277). Naomi interprets this piece of reality in a metaphor: Near the end of their internment in the Slocan camp, “an order-in-council that sails like a giant hawk across a chicken yard, and after the first shock there’s a flapping squawking lunge for disaster” (168). Here, chickens still stand for Japanese Canadians, while the giant hawk, in comparison with the white hen which represents the local white people in Vancouver, symbolizes the federal government with their policy from the *War Measures Act*. Both in fiction and reality, the tension between the “yellow” Japanese Canadians and the “white” Canadian residents escalates to the level of institutional racism.

Another example of institutional racism against Japanese Canadians appears in Chapter Twenty-two when Naomi connects with the Yellow Peril game that her brother Stephen receives from their Obasan at Christmas. This game, “[m]ade in Canada,” is a form of government propaganda showing how a few “brave defenders” of Canada can “withstand a very great number of enemies” from Japan (134). The “small yellow pawns” are the Japanese while the “three big blue checker kings” stand for Canadian defenders. This game displays racism in three respects: the physical characteristics of Japanese, the number of Japanese immigrants to Canada, and the name of the game. In terms of physical features, the game implies that Japanese people have yellow skin and physical disadvantages compared to white Canadians. In explaining the game, young Naomi says, “Yellow is to be chicken” and to be yellow is “to be weak and small” (134). This ties the bodily features of Japanese with those of the victimized chickens—yellow, weak, small, and helpless—as opposed to the strong violent perpetrators in the form of the white hen, the hawks, or

boys. As literary critic Scott McFarlane remarks, the Japanese-Canadian community is described as “lacking any agency” and its members appearing as “naive pawns in the Canadian government’s ‘Yellow Peril’ game” (403-04). Owing to their biological features, meagre and fragile, Japanese Canadians are consequently “racialized” during World War II, which Miki describes as “the imposition of race constructs and hierarchies on marked and demarked ‘groups’ whose members come to signify divergence from the normative body inscribed by whiteness” (*Broken Entries* 127). Metaphorically, disapproving the physical features of Japanese as well as Japanese Canadians embodies the demonization of them as an “other.”

The large number of yellow pawns alludes to the historical background of the rapid increase of Asian immigrants as well as political measures taken against them in the twentieth century experienced in many countries, especially in the U.S. and Canada. Because of the diligence of Asian immigrants, most of whom are shrewd and hard-working business people, farmers, fishermen, or gardeners, the economic competition between white and non-white workers come to be a problem. Japanese Canadians in Vancouver who showed expertise in the fishing industry and agriculture became a threat to the local workers and farmers on the West Coast. As Canadian literary scholar Smaro Kamboureli points out, “what had been seen as the virtue of Chinese and Japanese immigrants, the hard labour that initially made them welcome in North America, was almost instantly construed as their vice” (186). This echoes Adachi’s argument that “according to the fevered imagination of the daily press,” the yellow peril “stood poised, ready to engulf into its maw, if it was not already devouring, the livelihood and security of the white population” (65). Though past laws that discriminate against Asian immigrants, such as the Gentleman’s Agreement of 1908 which aims at limiting the numbers of Japanese immigrants and the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1923 that bans Chinese immigration to Canada, were introduced by the government to

further restrict Asian population in Canada, the institutional racism against Japanese Canadians culminated in the government's decision to remove Japanese Canadians out of the coastal B.C. after Japan attacked Pearl Harbor in December 1941. This situation supports Miki and Kobayashi's statement that "the uprooting of Japanese Canadians in 1942 was not an isolated act of racism, but the culmination of discriminatory attitudes directed towards them from the early days of settlement" (*Justice* 17).

In addition, the name of this game—Yellow Peril—is an example of inherent racism against Asian peoples in North America. It inculcates fear, anxiety, and misperceptions about Japanese as well as Japanese Canadians for young players. As Vikki Visvis points out, "racist language is seemingly used throughout historical documents as a means of promoting wartime nationalism" ("Beyond the 'Talking Cure'" 176), and war propaganda among children is destructive. As children do not understand the cultural implications of Yellow Peril, they tend to take what is fed to them at its face value. The construction of Japanese as "yellow" in the game instills into children that the Japanese are bad. For children, "yellow" is the peril and enemy that brings danger to them. For example, even though the dichotomy between white (Canadians) and yellow (Japanese) in terms of culture and values makes no sense to Naomi, she claims that "I am not yellow" (134). Although she has yellow skin, she does not want to be "yellow." Apparently, the negative images of Japanese and prejudices against Japanese Canadians have been successfully engraved as a culture in children's mind. Many years later, Naomi, as an adult, becomes fully aware of the racial, economic, and cultural implications of the yellow chickens in both real life and in the "Yellow Peril" game. By narrating these childhood events about yellow chickens, Naomi begins to participate in and make meaning of the cultural memory of Japanese Canadians.

Typically, child survivors not only remember events filled with racism during the internment caused by the war situation that worsened by its cultural implications, but also remember institutional racism that became prevalent after the war. Before, during, and after the internment, none of the Japanese Canadians have been found to be a threat to national security. But they are still not allowed to return to their homes on the West Coast. As Miki and Kobayashi point out, by the end of the internment in 1944, Prime Minister Mackenzie King blamed the congregations of Japanese Canadians in coastal B.C. for “creat[ing] feelings of racial hostility” (*Justice* 50). As a consequence, to prevent them from rebuilding their community the government carried out the postwar dispersal policy in 1945, which meant that Japanese Canadians were forced to choose either to go to provinces in east of the Rockies or go to Japan, a foreign country that many of them have never been to before. The geographic scattering of the Japanese Canadians was an act of institutional racism. The dispersal after the war was not merely a physical act of scattering, but also an attempt of the government to “[shrivel] up and [blow] away” (*Emily Kato* 9) the Japanese culture and to constrain, even destroy the formation of their collective consciousness, the very heart of their experience. In *Requiem*, for example, Bin’s family members are “scattered forever” after the internment: “uncles, aunts, cousins, brother, sister, nieces, nephews, anywhere and everywhere in the country, unseen and no longer really known” (276). As a consequence, the former Japanese-Canadian community that Bin’s family belongs to in Vancouver disappears. The loss of community, as Aunt Emily comments, “[t]o a people for whom community was the essence of life, destruction of community was the destruction of life” (*O* 166). As anthropologist Roy D’Andrade observes, community and “groups” are important “in Japanese society,” and they “display observably strong solidarity” (106) through community. The disappearance of Japanese-

Canadian communities means their loss of the “structure of mutual dependence” (Tsuda 152), which spurs their silence after the war.

Moreover, even after Japanese Canadians are forcibly spread all over Canada, they are still marginalized and prejudiced against in the relocated places. In *The Electrical Field*, Asako’s family is relocated to an unnamed community in Ontario. The three Japanese-Canadian homes in this community are clustered around a compound of an electrical field whereas white families are far from this compound. As shown on the cover page of this novel, transmission towers and power lines stand lonely in this compound. They produce an electromagnetic field when high-voltage electrical current move through the wires. The electromagnetic field further creates electromagnetic radiation that can penetrate a human body if people come close to the field, and the penetration is believed by some researchers to cause health problems such as cancer.<sup>35</sup> According to the National Cancer Institute of the U.S., “The strength of a magnetic field decreases rapidly with increasing distance from its source.” Thus, the closer the homes are to the compound, the higher the chances of getting health problems are. The electrical field which used to be “the old vet’s farmhouse [until 1965]” (*EF* 131) is located in the south, the most marginalized place in Asako’s community. The “Italian blocks” and “bungalows” are in the north part of the community, where well-to-do “elderly women in black dresses” frequently sit “on kitchen chairs on their porches or sidewalks” (131). As the three Japanese-Canadian families are impoverished due to the four-year internment, they cannot afford to live in the north part of the community. The physical location of the three families is on the margin of the town’s mainstream community that

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<sup>35</sup> “Although a study in 1979 pointed to a possible association between living near electric power lines and childhood leukemia (15), more recent studies have had mixed findings (16–24). Most of these studies did not find an association or found one only for those children who lived in homes with very high levels of magnetic fields, which are present in few residences” (“Electromagnetic Fields and Cancer”).

is the white-dominant community. In geographical terms, the three Japanese-Canadian homes and the electrical field are part of the community, but in reality, they do not belong to this community. Both enter what Mari Peepre interprets as “a border zone” (53). The electrical field is “a deathlike space” and “an empty wasteland between cultures” (54), and Asako, a diasporic figure, stands in the in-between space of both the white and Japanese cultures.

Besides their resemblance as double locations in the community, Japanese Canadians and the electrical field share similar misunderstandings for many years. According to the report of Robert F. Cleveland and Jr. Jerry L. Ulcek on biological health and electromagnetic fields, the power lines produce far less radiation energy than ordinary radios and televisions do.<sup>36</sup> However, they are always seen as more dangerous and threatening than the latter. Misunderstandings also apply to Japanese Canadians. As discussed in Chapter Two, although Japanese Canadians have never been a threat to Canada, they have been regarded as potential saboteurs and enemies and removed to ghost towns first and scattered across Canada later. Just as the power lines carry current and create both energy and communication in the form of the electromagnetic field when they are connected to the grid, the Japanese Canadians form a cultural “field” when they encounter cultural racism against them. The communication among Japanese Canadians is helpful for the rebuilding of a collective consciousness, but it is deemed as dangerous by politicians who are prejudiced and would not allow a different culture to exist.

As Japanese-Canadian writer Muriel Kitagawa writes in “Racialism is a Disease” (1946), “it isn’t against the law to discriminate against race” (209) in Canada. Influenced by overt institutional racism against Japanese Canadians, blatant individual racism against Japanese Canadians prevailed during and after World War II. This is reflected in fictions in which child survivors

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<sup>36</sup> In Canada the standard frequency of power lines is 60 Hz, while the frequency of radio and television usually exceeds  $10^6$  Hz (Cleveland and Ulcek 3).

frequently come across prejudice and discrimination before, during, and after the dispersals. In *Requiem*, in recalling the internment, Bin recalls that he is accused of having stolen the wallet of one his classmates in their relocated town in southern B.C. His teacher Mr. Abbott takes him to the principal's office forcibly and asserts to the principal, "I've dealt with these Japs before, [...] I'll get it out of him yet" (R 263). Mr. Abbott makes false assumptions about Bin merely because he is the only Japanese Canadian in his class. In the end, the wallet is found in another boy's locker and Bin turns out to be innocent. However, Mr. Abbott does not apologize to Bin, and other students still call Bin a "stealer" (263) in the schoolyard for several days. Meanwhile, Bin's desk drawers are filled by his classmates with "covers of war comics" where there is always "a Japanese soldier" with "an ugly yellow face, large buck teeth, eyes squinting behind thick glasses" (263). The war comics, like Stephen's "Yellow Peril" game, are propaganda that aims at degrading enemies of Canada. This is an understandable practice in that Canadian soldiers were killed in the enemy countries during the war, and the government needed to boost the public morale after the war. But targeting a small child with humiliation and hatred simply because he is of Japanese descent is wrong and unjust. Influenced by political propaganda, Mr. Abbott and Bin's schoolmates are prejudiced against Bin as they see the innocent child as despicable and racially inferior to them.

In addition to their childhood confrontation, child survivors also come across prejudice against them during adulthood. In *The Electrical Field*, Asako runs into cultural racism from their local neighbours. During the investigation of the death of Chisako—Asako's Japanese neighbour—in 1976, Detective Rossi, a white man living in the same community, asks about Chisako's husband Mr. Yano in a presumptive tone by saying that "[Mr. Yano] was involved in some political activities, wasn't he?" (128). Because of Yano's participation in the redress activities for Japanese

Canadians, the detective unconsciously assumes him to be “angry or violent” (129). He even speculates that Yano was a “crazy” (282) man. Facing the detective’s interrogation, Asako answers, “I’ve never seen Mr. Yano violent” (129). The detective’s prejudice-laden questions make her think of Yano’s words: “They thought we’d all commit *hara-kiri* [a form of Japanese ritual suicide by disembowelment]” (282). Thus, she adds, “You might not understand” (282). The detective replies, “Why? Because I’m not Japanese?” (282). Apparently, the invisible cultural wall between white residents and Japanese Canadians in the same community divides them. In the past, Asako dislikes Mr. Yano because of his Japanese identity. But now she defends him in front of a white detective. It is not so much that Asako’s attitude toward Yano has changed from aversion to fondness, but that the detective’s words have reminded her of the same shameful past. Instead of continuing her alienation from the past, she identifies herself with Japanese-Canadian culture.

Connected with prejudices are systematic discriminations which child survivors have to face in their daily life during the evacuation in their invariable recollections. In *A Child in Prison Camp*, Shichan recounts the process of the uprooting many years after the internment. When reflecting on events in September 1942, Shichan remembers that while the “war with Japan is fierce,” people in the streets of Vancouver “look at” Japanese Canadians “with anger” (*CPC* n.p.). One night during the curfew, an old man shouts at Shichan and her sister Yuki, “Hey, you! Get off our streets!” He even threatens them by saying that “I’ll have the police after you” (n.p.). The two girls were born in Vancouver and are Canadian citizens like many other white citizens, but they are treated differently from white Vancouver residents. The old man’s angry words show both his hatred against the Japanese race because of the Pearl Harbor attack and his sense of superiority of his own race over Japanese Canadians. Similarly, in *Obasan*, Stephen’s white classmates verbally abuse him in the primary school by saying that “all the Jap Kids” are “bad” (62) because Canada is at



war with Japan. Stephen is born in Vancouver, but he is discriminated against in his own city and homeland. As a result, he is hurt by the cultural identity puzzlement after his father confirms that “We’re Canadian” (63). The public hatred toward crimes committed by the Japanese army in the Pacific war is transferred to Canadian-born citizens who share the same ancestry. Although the war is distant from Vancouver and the security violations are yet remote, Japanese-Canadian children like Shichan and Stephen are treated as if they were real enemies. From the old man to young primary school students, local residents in Vancouver in general show their hatred toward residents of Japanese origin, regardless of their innocent status, ignoring the fact that they are virtually the same people.

Although many child survivors have memories of the internment, their childhood recollections and postwar experiences cannot always bring them the whole picture of the shameful internment. Nevertheless, they attempt to reposition themselves either by probing the memories of the previous generation or telling what they do remember to the next generation. However, during the process of delving into the shameful past, child survivors always encounter discouragement from their parents or their aunts and uncles because, as mentioned in Chapter Three, the adults always “want to protect children from painful experiences and emotions” (Hordvik 24). For example, when Naomi asks her Obasan in 1972 about the letters in Aunt Emily’s package, Obasan replies, “It is better to forget” (O 41). The older person intends to protect the younger from the past pains and suffering because Obasan believes “What is past recall is past pain” (41). Consequently, the greater Naomi’s “urgency to know” the past is, “the thicker” Obasan’s silences are (41). As an Issei, Naomi’s Obasan displays her Japanese value “*shikata ga nai* [It cannot be helped]” (Nagata and Takeshita 595) toward the incarceration. She believes “the fate of a man was tied to forces beyond his control” (Adachi 225) and they can do nothing to change the past pains.

According to Adachi, the status of “immigrant Issei was similar to the roles and positions they had left in Meiji Japan, so that the status their superiors held in Japan was now transferred to the white officialdom” (225). As an Issei like Naomi’s Obasan, Asako’s father also adopts the Japanese values of “conformity and obedience” (225) in the postwar years. Having never talked about the internment experience himself, Asako’s father becomes angry when he sees the redress flyer that Asako brings home. “You, baka, ne! [You, idiot!]” (*EF* 112), he shouts to Asako. Asako’s nonconforming behavior of excavating the past detention is unthinkable for him. Not to conform, Adachi notes, means “cutting oneself off from the emotional security of identification” (225). Thus, he does not want Asako and Stum to get involved in any activities related to redressing the incarceration. However, he underrates their determination to find out the truth about the internment. The more he wants them to stay away from the redress activities, the deeper their interests are in the internment. Both Asako and Stum secretly attend redress meetings held by their neighbour Mr. Yano. These child survivors are more conscious of the injustice many years after the internment than when they were young. Even though at the time of internment their sufferings were submerged by their parents or other caregivers, they will not now be persuaded by the same people who attempt to discourage them from accessing bitter memories. Now that they are adults, they see themselves historically and want to seek justice for their fellow Japanese Canadians. In some cases, they narrate their own stories to the next generation in an effort to remember the shameful past.

In terms of child survivors’ digging into memories of the previous generation, memory scholar Marianne Hirsch uses the word “postmemory” to describe the relationship. Postmemory, Hirsch argues, “describes the relationship that the ‘generation after’ bears to the personal, collective, and cultural trauma of those who came before” (5). In addition to their own memories mentioned above, child survivors of the incarceration in the fictional narratives also remember the internment

experiences of their parents, aunts and uncles, or any other previous generation, especially those that “preceded” their “birth or consciousness,” “by means of stories, images, and behaviors” (5). Their exploration of postmemories of the internment, as memory scholar Aleida Assmann notes, reflects child survivors’ desire “to reclaim the past as an indispensable part of the present,” and “to reconsider, to revalue and to reassess it” as an “important dimension of historical consciousness” (39). Child survivors of Japanese Canadians, by overcoming the protective hindrance by their parents or their aunts and uncles, participate in the construction of cultural memory of Japanese Canadians.

As child survivors are too young to make sense of the pre-camp policies against Japanese Canadians, they reconstruct the experiences that they lack through postmemories. In *Obasan*, Naomi acquires the knowledge of the harsh treatment of Japanese Canadians during the internment in old documents or Aunt Emily’s stories that do not appear in her own childhood recollections. Among Aunt Emily’s pamphlets entitled “Racial Discrimination by Orders-in-Council,” Naomi finds articles on government’s seizure and sale of fishing boats, suspension of fishing licences, liquidation of property, deportation of Japanese Canadians, and revocation of nationality (O 30). These measures taken by the government are restrictions that target racialized Japanese residents in Canada. They are overt institutional racism against Japanese Canadians.

In addition to discovering the overall measures against all Japanese Canadians, Naomi also revisits Emily’s memories of the confiscation of their property by reading her letters. According to Emily, the RCMP confiscated their radios and cameras, “even Stephen’s toy one,” and they searched their homes “without warrant” (76). Naomi’s family had to sell their “piano” which was significant for Naomi’s father who was a musician and her brother Stephen who later became a musician (91) in their life career. After the confiscation and sale, *Obasan*’s “house was looted”

(91). What is worse, the government offered to pay Japanese Canadians little at the end of the war—they insisted on deducting the custodian and handling fees from the monetary value of the latter's property. Aunt Emily tells Naomi that Grandpa Kato's Cadillac was "sold by the government for \$33.00," but the "handling charges came to \$30.00" (34). Thus, the amount Grandpa finally received was \$3.00. The deduction was detrimental to Japanese Canadians because they not only lost their livelihood in the camps but also paid for the internment themselves. It is unfair that they were given so little money to restart their life in relocated places. By reviewing these documents, letters, and stories, Naomi returns to what Hirsch calls "traumatic knowledge and embodied experience" (5). Aunt Emily's memories of the institutional racism during the internment do not follow the statistics in historical record. The transmission of these memories to Naomi serves as a way to vocalize the silenced past of Japanese Canadians and to enable Naomi to reconfigure her relationship to the past. By either listening to or leafing through Emily's stories, the institutional racism is transmitted to Naomi "so deeply and affectively as to seem to constitute memories in their own right" (Hirsch 5). Postmemories become part and parcel of Naomi's participation in the formation of Japanese-Canadian cultural memory.

In *The Electrical Field*, child survivor Asako delivers her memories of cultural racism to a member of the younger generation—a thirteen-year-old girl called Sachi Nakamura. Sachi is Asako's Japanese-Canadian neighbour who was born in Canada in the 1960s. But her father Tom and mother Keiko never say anything to her about the incarceration. As a consequence, Asako's stories become the main source of postmemories to which Sachi can gain access. According to Asako's account, Eiji brings her with him when he delivers papers to the white women on collection days in Port Dover. However, sometimes these women do not pay Eiji money, even "for weeks," by "hiding away in their big, rich houses" when he knocks at their doors (*EF* 165). If Eiji

cannot get the money, the employer will take it out of his own pay. Thus, Eiji and Asako have to sit there “holding [their] breath” and staying “quiet as could be” (166) for hours, waiting for the door to open. The reason for their irregular unpaid for the papers is that the Japanese Canadians are labeled enemy aliens. Asako gets angry when she recalls this story because Eiji is treated unfairly. Even though he is only a young boy who poses no threat or does no harm to anyone else, he is prejudiced against because of his Japanese ancestry. Asako’s act of telling stories not only passes her memories of individual racism to Sachi, but also offers herself some sort of healing of the cultural trauma which will be discussed in the last section of this chapter. Visvis remarks that storytelling “can give representation to an incomprehensible event and engender cure, while it simultaneously threatens to collapse under the strain of a traumatic episode” (“Traumatic Representation” 90). As Sachi knows little about the internment, Asako’s transmission of the memories to her serves to break the past silence by way of oral participation in their own history. Asako is in effect contributing to the cultural memory of Japanese Canadians.

## 2. Cultural Impact of the Internment on Child Survivors

As opposed to the psychological impact on children, the cultural impact on grown-up children is more destructive. Cultural trauma, emerging in the process of child survivors’ meaning-making of past events, is the direct cultural impact of the internment on them. Based on my reading of the traumatic responses of child survivors in the fictional texts, the cultural trauma, which is lasting and damaging, can be divided roughly into three categories: internalized racism, identity crisis, and intergenerational transmission. Reviewing their childhood memories of cultural racism, encountering cultural racism in their postwar life experiences, and acquiring from the previous generation or passing to the next generation cultural racism in the form of postmemories: they inevitably make child survivors suffer a second time. Yet this time, the relived traumatic events

may cause them to internalize negative cultural beliefs, to vacillate their cultural identity, and to be traumatized by the transmission of intergenerational cultural trauma. In other words, institutional racism against child survivors is likely to be internalized by themselves, individual racism against them tend to disturb their identity crisis, and memories of and reactions to cultural racism in the postwar years from the previous generation may lead to their intergenerational trauma.

According to sociologists David R. Williams and Ruth Williams-Morris, internalized racism refers to “the acceptance, by marginalized racial populations, of the negative societal beliefs and stereotypes about themselves” (255). After the exposure to sustained systematic racism against Japanese Canadians before, during, and after the internment, child survivors are prone to accept the “dominant society’s ideology of their inferiority” (255). As a result, they are culturally traumatized by internalizing negative attitudes and beliefs or even oppressive actions and behaviors against Japanese Canadians. For some Japanese Canadians, the “normative cultural characterization of the superiority of whiteness” and the “devaluing” of Japanese culture, combined with the “marginality” of Japanese Canadians, lead to “the perception of self” as guilty, shameful, and even hateful (255). It leads to cultural identity crisis. This kind of internalized racism against Japanese Canadians within their own community is more traumatic and devastating than cultural racism against Japanese Canadians from outside.

In fiction, during the process of child survivors’ meaning-making of past events, the incidents that once bothered them during their childhood are filled with cultural implications. As discussed in the previous chapter, on psychological level, children’s self-blame results from their state of melancholia. On the cultural level, however, their self-blame is attributed to their Japanese values such as “*haji* [shame]” and “obedience” (Nagata and Takeshita 595). They have unwittingly internalized racism against themselves. At the end of the war, Prime Minister King justifies by

“[a]dopting the language of racism” his government’s dispersal policy that Japanese Canadians provoke “racial hostility” and become victims because of their “visible racial ancestry” and congregation in communities (*Justice* 50-52). Influenced by their cultural values of shame and conformity, Japanese Canadians blame themselves for the catastrophic internment. Children receive this type of cultural concept from their parents unconsciously. Thus, they are coated to believe that they are responsible for the injuries they receive from white perpetrators as well as the disappearance of their parents or siblings during the internment.

According to Asian American scholar Benson Tong, most Nisei children at home “were taught to put their family ahead of personal needs or ambitions” (7). They learn from an early age that “the loss of honor for the family was abhorrent” (7). Consequently, when suffering from the external world is inflicted upon them, they tend to find reasons within themselves. In *Obasan*, for instance, Naomi blames herself for her mother’s departure for Japan without her. She believes it is her secret of Mr. Gower’s sexual abuse that separates her from her mother. When she sees Stephen come home from school in silence, with “his glasses broken, black tear stains on his face,” she cannot help wondering, “Is he ashamed, as I was in Old Man Gower’s bathroom?” (*O* 62). Naomi believes her shame from the sexual abuse might be the same as that of Stephen’s after he is verbally abused at school because of his Japanese ancestry. Regarding her secret, Naomi confesses, “If I tell my mother about Mr. Gower, the alarm will send a tremor through our bodies and I will be torn from her” (58). She dares not tell her mother about the molestation because she does not want to lose face and bring dishonor to her family. Consequently, Naomi blames herself for suffering from sexual molestation and the disappearance of her mother.

Naomi feels, inappropriately, shameful and guilty for the loss of her mother. However, the real reason for the long-time stay or even death of her mother in Japan during the internment years

is not clear in the novel. At the end of the novel, Naomi imagines that her mother may be “trapped in Japan by government regulations or by an ailing grandmother” (212) or may have moved from Tokyo to Nagasaki where the U.S. air force dropped a nuclear bomb in August 1945. It might be that her mother simply did not want to return to Canada where the anti-Japanese feelings had been surging and cultural racism against all Japanese Canadians had become unbearable, or it might be that she had already divorced Naomi’s father and started her new family in Japan. In either case, Naomi assumes that it is her fault that her mother never returns to Canada. Nevertheless, Tong notes, to “explain their misfortune,” children blame “themselves so as to avoid seeing the world as threatening” (26). Thus, Naomi takes it as her own failing, which is again the result of her internalized racism.

In *The Electrical Field*, Asako is shamed by her cultural traits to a consequence of internalized racism against Japanese Canadians. She is humiliated by the connection with her Japanese culture: she hates the Japanese physical appearance and detests odours of Japanese Canadians. She even loathes her body that has Japanese characteristics. “As a young girl,” she used to stare “in the mirror for hours” and pinches her “short nose” across her face to stop it “growing wide,” and knots “strips of rags” around her knees at night to “make them grow straight” instead of “bowed” like her mother’s (*EF* 55). Apparently, Asako is not satisfied with her nose and legs. Multicultural psychologist Peony Fhagen explains that “physical appearance is related to self-esteem and social acceptance” (49). Asako’s dissatisfaction with her physical appearance shows that she has a low self-esteem, possibly caused by the negative social acceptance of her Japanese characteristics by a white-dominant society. She dislikes her “hidden and small” eyes and “pinched and drooped” mouth (25). She even feels that her body is apart from her “growing ugly and growing old” (25). Asako despises her Japanese body and wants to shake off the physical features that are what



Fhagen calls “markers” (49) of Japanese Canadians as a race. In a society filled with cultural racism against Japanese Canadians during and after World War II, bodily features become the “basis of individual and systematic oppression” (49). Asako’s negation of the markers of her Japanese physical appearance manifests her acceptance of the negative, and often dominant white beliefs regarding Japanese Canadians.

Another instance of manifestation of Asako’s internalization of discrimination against Japanese Canadians lies in her disgust of their smell. According to cultural journalist Cecilia Bembibre, smells are not just a sensory perception but “viewed as an aspect of cultural significance” (2). They can be fundamental “in shaping who we are, where we belong and how we experience encounters with different cultures” (2). In other words, smells, like other intangible cultural representations such as food and language, are an indication of cultural identity. In the novel, Asako repeatedly mentions Mr. Yano’s pungent smell which makes her disturbed. When Yano comes close to her, she says that she has to “breathe” through her “mouth” even “in the open air” because “he smell[s]” (*EF* 5). Like the white girl Mitzi in *Slocan*, who widens her “nostrils” and “turns her head away, as if she has suddenly smelled something bad” upon seeing Naomi (*O* 139), Asako responds to Yano’s smell with the same kind of antipathy. As odours are “powerful triggers for emotions via the limbic system of the brain, which deals with emotions and memory,” smells of Yano serve as “an effective way to evoke recollections” (Bembibre 2) of Asako’s painful internment experiences. The odour reminds her of smells in the live-stock building that “almost hurt to smell, a sharp but burning sweet” that makes her “press” her nose and “sniff” until her head aches (*EF* 79). Yano’s smells are shared by all Japanese Canadians because of their “half-known shared habits”—the “smell of fried fish and daikon” (114). In terms of this “half-know thing,” she confesses, it not only “disconcert[s] me” but also “make[s] me flush with shame at our shared

habits, our odours” (114). Asako’s aversion to Yano’s odours displays, practically, her shame about the Japanese culture. Her reaction to both Japanese physical characteristics and odours, in the words of Asian-American scholars Donna K. Nagata and Jackie H. J. Kim, is “psychological identification with the aggressor” (361). This shows that Asako has developed a “cognitive-emotional” strategy to reduce her “dissonance” (Tong 27) with the mainstream society in Canada. She has already internalized racism against Japanese Canadians and is siding with those who display disgust or even hatred toward them.

One of the harmful consequences of child survivors’ internalization of cultural racism against Japanese Canadians is a state of “acute discomforting,” as Alexander notes, that “enter[s] into the core” of their sense of “identity” (10). They have to both admit that they are different from the dominant Canadian identity and prove that they deserve to be accepted by the mainstream society. However, this effort is “hard and challenging” (Cheung 142). Child survivors are likely to encounter disturbing identity crises from intangible cultural markers such as food, language, name, and skin colour. In both *Naomi’s Road* and *Obasan*, young Stephen who is featured in both, is hurt by the riddle that they are “both the enemy and not the enemy” (*NR* 30, *O* 63). He fights in school with his classmates who call him “a Jap” (*NR* 30) in Vancouver before the internment and quarrels with Mitzi in Slocan who challenges his possession of the Union Jack flag by saying “It is [my flag] too” (71). Although Stephen cannot change his physical appearance, he feels he is Canadian within and identifies himself with Canada. He refuses Aya Obasan’s “rice ball”—a typical kind of Japanese food—by saying that he does not want “that kind of food” while on their train to the Slocan camp (*O* 100). By the end of the war, he exclaims “We won we won we won!” by raising his fingers in the “V-for-Victory” sign (*NR* 80). Stephen’s contempt for Japanese culture and engagement in symbolic display of Canadian identity shows that he is a real Canadian who is loyal

to Canada like “white Canadians” (*O* 83). By reducing the distance between himself and the non-Japanese Canadians, Stephen tries to win admission into the mainstream Canadian society. Therefore, as a boy of Japanese descent, he refuses to identify with the culture of his surrogate parents.

When he comes of age after the war, Stephen constructs what he considers to be a correct cultural identity by alienating his Obasan and staying close to Aunt Emily. Aya Obasan is an Issei, first-generation Japanese to Canada, who always speaks Japanese at home and cannot speak English well. The speech of the Issei is characterized by, in Asako’s words, “halting rhythm,” “awkwardness of speech,” and “lumpiness of tongue” (*EF* 67). There is hardly any verbal communication between Stephen and Obasan, let alone any cultural interaction. As Naomi points out, Stephen is “almost completely non-communicative with Obasan” (*O* 193). Each time she comes close to Stephen with her Japanese accent, she reminds him of his Japanese identity that he tries hard to escape from. In contrast, Aunt Emily, born in Canada, speaks fluent English. After his success, “both as a choir leader and as a pianist” in the “Southern Alberta festival at Lethbridge,” Stephen fills his “new address book” with “only Aunt Emily’s address” (192). Many years later, Stephen manages to integrate himself into the dominant white society through his mastery of classical music at the expense of alienating himself from the Japanese community, including his Japanese family. He even becomes “altogether unfamiliar with speaking Japanese” (207). Anything “too Japanese” will make him uncomfortable (195). Here, Stephen takes pains to distinguish himself from his Issei family members so as to claim his Canadian identity through the primal cultural marker—language. By distancing himself from his Japanese family and Japanese language, Stephen rejects and denies his Japanese culture. Paradoxically, although Stephen wants

desperately to be identified with the mainstream culture, he is unable to get rid of his physical characteristics—he has difficulty meeting the mainstream expectations of his outward appearance.

According to anthropologist Keir Martin, names are “markers and makers of contested identity” (162). As child survivors of the internment embody two contested identities—the Japanese identity and Canadian identity—their shifting use of names becomes an issue in cultural identity. In *Requiem*, Bin lives through changes of names during and after the incarceration. In the Fraser River camp, Bin’s Caucasian school teacher Mr. Blackwell assigns Japanese-Canadian children English names because he thinks it is “difficult for ‘white’ people to pronounce Japanese names” (R 209). Consequently, Bin is called Benjamin thereafter when he is at school, and his siblings Hiroshi and Keiko are called Henry and Kay. Bin does not like being called Benjamin at school and sometimes he “forget[s] to look up when Mr. Blackwell call[s] out the English name he give[s]” Bin (209). Teachers, as multicultural education scholar AnneMarie Alberton Gunn notes, “have opportunities to positively or negatively impact their students’ perceptions and cultural identities” (175). Mr. Blackwell’s act of changing children’s Japanese names, which are clearly associated with their Japanese cultural heritage, discounts their culture and ignores their cultural identity. He displays his cultural racism against Japanese Canadians and as he tries to assimilate their children into whiteness.

Bin’s Japanese identity is further erased by his teacher Miss Paxton at their relocated place in southern British Columbia. On his first day at school, Miss Paxton insists on having Bin called “Ben” so that teachers and students “can remember” (260). Ironically, “Bin,” consisting of only three letters, is quite easy to remember. However, the point is not about remembering the name. As Miss Paxton explains, in this country, people say “bin for dustbin or garbage bin” (259-60). Seemingly, she is for the good of the little boy, for his name might be easily twisted by naughty

boys in the class. Nevertheless, she not only negates Bin's Japanese heritage by drawing a "bigger X" through the letters "B-I-N" (259) on the blackboard, but also mocks Japanese names to make the class laugh. After Bin introduces his parents' names, she says to the class in an ironic tone, "What kind of names are those?" (259). Worse, every morning for the rest of the week, she makes him stand and say the name of his mother aloud so that "the class [can] start off the day with a good laugh" (260). Apparently, she is degrading Japanese culture by making fun of Japanese names. As names is part of one's cultural identity, the struggle for names indicates the instability and destruction of Bin's cultural identity. Mr. Blackwell and Miss Paxton show no respect for Japanese culture. They even discriminate against the Japanese culture by trying to instill in children the notion that English culture is superior to Japanese culture. Bin is disturbed by the dual identities highlighted by his having two culturally significant names.

Admiration for whiteness poses another marker of child survivors' identity crisis. Child survivors caught between two cultural identities tend to internalize predominant white ideology. This is seen before, during, and after the war. In *The Electrical Field*, while Asako is disgusted with her own Asian physical appearance, she admires the whiteness displayed in Chisako. In contrast to her own "dark and rough" (*EF* 26) skin, Chisako's white skin—"pale as snow" with "no blemish, no scar, no bruise or discoloration" on it—takes her "breath away" (23). In discussing skin colour, Frantz Fanon notes, "I am white" means "I possess beauty and virtue" (31), which other skin colours cannot boast of. In Asako's eyes, Chisako's white skin is synonymous of beautiful and virtuous while her dark skin stands for being ugly and inferior. As Visvis comments, "Asako links beauty with a sign of 'whiteness'" ("Trauma Remembered" 69). As a consequence, Chisako's beauty attracts "hakujin [white] men" who "slow down on the street just to watch her" (*EF* 21-22), but no man "might touch [Asako's] skin" (26). Worse, Asako's admiration for

whiteness signifies something beyond beauty. It extends to doubts about her cultural identity. In recalling Yano's introduction of Chisako, Asako says, Chisako is "not like the rest of homegrown nisei; not like [Yano] and [Asako], neither here-nor-there stock" (92-93). Unlike Chisako who is a real Japanese woman coming from Japan, Asako is neither wholly Canadian nor completely Japanese. Her internalized racism about whiteness results in disturbances of her Japanese-Canadian identity.

One of the cultural phenomena that fictions depict is the fact that the cultural impact of the internment extends beyond cultural trauma itself, such as internalized racism and identity crisis, in one generation. As psychiatrist Charles Portney notes, cultural trauma "may be transmitted from parents to children" (346). That is, when "the effects" of a traumatic event are not resolved in one generation, "intergenerational" or "multi-generational" trauma occurs (346). In the fictional narratives, culturally traumatized parents or surrogate parents display silence, rooted in Japanese cultural values of *enryo* (self-restraint/reserve), *haji* (shame), and conformity as their response to the traumatic internment experiences. Silence, as Ramsay Liem mentions, is both the response to "traumatic historical events" and the "medium through which the intergenerational effects of catastrophic experiences are transmitted" (153). Lynne McCormack concurs that "[s]ilence regarding parent trauma can be a source of problematic emotions within families and a mechanism of trauma transmission" (285). Silence of Naomi's Obasan in *Obasan* and silence of Asako's father in *The Electrical Field* also serve as a medium and mechanism through which their cultural trauma is passed to their children.

In *Obasan*, Naomi's silence as a traumatic symptom is complicated. It is not only caused, as discussed earlier, by her own internment experiences and her internalization of cultural racism against Japanese Canadians, but also is passed to her by the emotional numbing as a consequence

of her Obasan's cultural traumatic response. In the novel, even in times of distress and grief, Obasan never talks about the past internment with Naomi. Naomi notices that the "language of her grief is silence," and she "has learned it well, its idioms, its nuances" (14). Over the years, silence within Obasan's "small body has grown large and powerful" (14) that when Naomi asks her about the letters about the internment in the attic, her face is "expressionless" (41). Obasan's silence is the result of her internalization of institutional racism against Japanese Canadians. As an Issei who adopts Japanese cultural values of *enryo* (self-restraint) and *haji* (shame), Obasan thinks it is shameful to discuss this heavy subject. For all these years, she has restrained her painful emotions and gradually accepted the blame for their own victimization in an effort to "socialize their children to blend into the dominant society" (Nagata and Cheng 268). Therefore, she tells Naomi that "Everyone someday dies" (40) and "It is better to forget" (41). Naomi, who is taken care of by her Obasan since 1941 at the age of four, is very close to this surrogate mother. Consequently, she unwittingly internalizes Obasan's silence. As Naomi confesses, "From both Obasan and Uncle I have learned that speech often hides like an animal in a storm" (O 5). Obasan's philosophy as a result of her internalized racism that they should follow the government's policies to fit into "whatever social setting they are in" (Nagata and Takeshita 597) is thus transmitted to Naomi in the form of silence. This is evidenced by Naomi's rejection of Aunt Emily's request for this young woman's participation in the redress movement for Japanese Canadians. Naomi says, "Life is short, [...] the past so long. Shouldn't we turn the page and move on" (38). Clearly, she is adopting her Obasan's philosophy of internalized racism.

In *The Electrical Field*, the behavior of Asako's younger brother Stum, who was born in the later years of their internment camp, is negatively influenced by his father, who, as discussed earlier, has internalized cultural racism against Japanese Canadians through his adoption of

Japanese cultural values of conformity, obedience, and shame. Disabled in bed during all those postwar years, this father has never talked about the internment experiences with Stum or Asako. Worse, like Mr. Yano's brother who "can't stand the sight of an Oriental" (*EF* 100) after the internment, the father does not like any connection with his fellow Japanese Canadians and does not allow his children to be friends with them. He gets angry and "slap[s] his palm on the table" (112) when he learns Asako goes to Yano's meetings for redress. Asako says, "he took Yano's flyer from my hand and crumpled it up again. He started to laugh as he wheeled himself away from me" (113). He believes it is unthinkable and shameful to receive apology and get compensation from the government. Like Naomi's Obasan, he not only conforms to but also acknowledges the government's blame for their own victimization. In other words, he has internalized the oppressive ideas that it is stupid, impossible, and even ridiculous to participate in the redress movement. Influenced by their father and his cultural value of conformity, Stum also choose to stay away from Mr. Yano. The collective burden of being a Japanese descendent is transmitted to Stum. As a consequence, Stum, who never talks to Yano, deems Yano as a "weirdo" and "kamikaze Jap [crazy Japanese]" (21). When they get the news of Chisako's death, Stum immediately expresses his suspect of Yano. He tells Asako, "I told you it was him" (61). Clearly, he has also internalized his father's anger and the public prejudice against Japanese Canadians. He even feels shameful to be of the same ancestry with Yano.

### 3. Child Survivors' Dealing with Cultural Trauma

The preceding discussion suggests child survivors' traumatization by the cultural impact of the wartime incarceration: this section discusses child survivors' methods of resilience to these



postwar cultural suffering. Encountering internalized racism, identity crisis, and intergenerational transmission of cultural trauma, child survivors in fiction display changing coping mechanisms over time after the war. Over the first twenty to thirty years after the internment, most child survivors remain verbally silent. However, some of them are “influenced by the social and human rights movements in the U.S. during the 1960s—movements born in the new visibility of racialized minorities speaking back to social injustices and inequities—” and “sympathized with the push for community empowerment advocated by Asian American community workers and artists on the west coast in the early 1970s” (*Redress* 145-46). They begin to utilize speech as their way of resistance. In works of Takashima, Kogawa, Sakamoto, and Itani, child survivors use silence, such as verbal silence, amniotic silence, and artistic silence before the 1970s to confront their cultural trauma. However, as they all grow up in Canada where, as Asian American scholar King-Kok Cheung asserts, “voice is tantamount to power” (2) and where an embargo on information about the internment has lasted to 1988, they turn to words such as oral or written storytelling of the internment.

Silence, as discussed earlier, is a symptom of psychological trauma and cultural trauma. Nevertheless, silence does not necessarily mean that child survivors’ response to their cultural trauma is entirely negative in a binary opposition to verbal expressions. Asian American scholar Brett J. Esaki remarks in his *Enfolding Silence: The Transformation of Japanese American Religion and Art under Oppression*:

Most Western theories conceive of silence as the binary opposite of sound; in this respect, silence typically represents absence, nothingness, and obfuscation. These connotations extend to those who practice silence, such as ethnic minorities who are often seen as unintelligent or unprepared when they are silent in a classroom, or defendants who are

often seen as guilty when they exercise their right to remain silent. Consequently, there is a misrepresentation of people raised in cultures of silence— including those of ethnic minorities and of religions with silent rituals— as well as those who are not as talkative or who are taught not to press their ideas onto others. (18)

In essence, Esaki continues, “the binary of silence and speech, even when in the service of liberation, can flatten and neglect those uses of silence that are not necessarily related to powerlessness” (19). This assertion echoes Cheung’s argument that “While the importance of voice is indisputable, pronouncing silence as the converse of speech or as its subordinate can also be oppressively univocal” (6). In fact, silence “can speak many tongues, varying from culture to culture” (1). For instance, silence in Asian culture such as Chinese and Japanese cultures can mean peaceful, insightful, powerful, and full of meanings. There is an old saying in China, “Silence is gold” (沉默是金). In the context of Canadian culture, silence is generally looked upon as passive reactions toward oppression, racism, or trauma. However, according to Esaki, “Japanese Americans have developed dynamic and complex silence in response to a history of oppression within the United States and Japan; as a result, silence has become a strategy of resistance and a symbol of survival” (3). As the history and survival for Japanese immigrants to U.S. and Canada are highly similar, the silence of Japanese Canadians plays out the same as Japanese Americans during and after the internment. Instead of passive acceptance of injustice and prejudices, silence, like speech, is child survivors’ resistance to the cultural trauma caused by the internment of Japanese Canadians as well as its legacies.

Verbal silence is a manifestation of collectivism and stoicism rooted in Japanese culture. In *Obasan*, Naomi deals with her cultural trauma in the postwar years by resorting to verbal silence. In terms of their suffering during the internment, Naomi says, “The very last thing in the world I

was interested in talking about was our experiences during and after World War II” (O 30). Thus, she is “curiously numb” and “lack of enthusiasm” about the conference Aunt Emily introduces to her (31). When Aunt Emily criticizes the man who “quite openly applauded” the imprisonment of civilians of Japanese origin in Canada and U.S. at the conference, Naomi replies, “maybe he believes the welfare of the whole is more important than the welfare of the part and the fears of the collective can only be calmed by the sacrifice of a minority” (32). As a victim herself, Naomi tries to accept the internment as it is by rationalizing this male speaker’s point. Her explanation for the relationship between “the whole” and “the part” originates from collectivism that Japanese culture advocates. D’Andrade remarks that in collectivism, “[a] high degree of conformity to group norms is expected and typically deviants are strongly sanctioned” (106). In other words, one is required to prepare to do things for the group at the expense of one’s own interests. Consequently, Naomi restrains her emotional disturbances by regarding the internment as a result of a balancing act between the collective and the minority.

Stoicism that Naomi inherits from her uncle and Obasan is another coping method of Naomi. Though the philosophy of stoicism is usually regarded as a wrong response in dealing with pains and suffering in Canada, it is an effective coping mechanism for child survivors in tackling their cultural trauma from the internment. In responding to Aunt Emily’s insistence on Naomi’s learning about the painful internment history, Naomi says, “Why not leave the dead to bury the dead?” (O 38). She believes past wrongs can stay in history because speeches could not bring contentment to Aunt Emily and her committees. This echoes her uncle and Obasan’s stoicism about the dreadful past. They both repress their terrible feelings of the incarceration and express gratitude for what they own today. Uncle Isamu states that Canada is the best place in the world because “There is food. There is medicine. There is pension money. Gratitude. Gratitude” (38). Naomi, Obasan, and

Uncle's stoicism displays a typical Japanese concept "*Shikata ga nai* [It cannot be helped]" which encourages emotional restraint and discourages focalization on past recollections. Though it is painful, they want to let the past be the past and move on with their new life.

In addition to verbal silence, child survivors' resistance to the traumatic internment experiences is also displayed in their amniotic silence. For instance, Naomi and Aunt Emily in *Obasan* and Asako in *The Electrical Field* are childless and would not get married even in their thirties, forties, and fifties. In discussing reproduction in *Obasan*, Christina Tourino argues in her "Ethnic reproduction and the Amniotic Deep" that Japanese Canadian women's statue of childlessness "complies with Canada's intention to prevent the propagation of the Japanese species" (137). However, childlessness may be seen as a form of resistance by child survivors. Instead of surrendering, they are fighting against the government's cultural racism against them through amniotic silence. They are protecting either themselves or their next generation. Even though part of the reason for child survivors' not getting involved in a romantic relationship, such as the case of like Naomi and Asako, is due to the geographical scattering of Japanese Canadians after the relocation as well as their individual childhood psychological trauma from sexual abuse, their childless status is also a result of the protective method for themselves and their refusal of the intergenerational transmission of their painful internment experiences. After witnessing sufferings and death of young pregnant women in their detention camps, child survivors want to protect themselves from bearing children. In *A Child in Prison Camp*, Shichan learns that in their camp a young girl, who suffers from malnutrition and does "not look pregnant" (*CPC* n.p.), is attacked by a man named Mr. Yoko after she gives birth to a child in the bath house. Thereafter, this young mother's "eyes are dead" and she "ignores the baby" (n.p.). In *The Electrical Field*, Asako's mother also gives birth to Stum in the camp, but she endures both physical and psychological

suffering during the internment and dies early soon after the war. In *Requiem*, because of the poor condition of the Fraser River camp, Bin's aunt Aya has ill health for many years after giving birth to Taro who dies prematurely during the internment. Wartime internment creates an impression that women put themselves in danger by having children. Consequently, child survivors, especially female ones, choose to stay unmarried and childless for their own safety and survival.

Meanwhile, child survivors want to protect their next generation from suffering what they have endured during and after the internment. Like Sethe in Toni Morrison's *Beloved* (1987) who kills her daughter to avoid the subjection to the trauma of slavery, child survivors do not want their children to be oppressed by the cultural trauma caused by the internment. In replying to Uncle Isamu's comments on "marriage," Aunt Emily says, "We have to deal with all this while we remember it. If we don't we'll pass our anger down in our genes. It's the children who'll suffer" (O 33). Similar to Aunt Emily, child survivors such as Naomi and Asako try to avoid the equation of their suffering to the next generation by staying silent in the amniotic space. On the other hand, in Japanese culture, *oya koko* [filial piety] is an important cultural value. For Issei in Canada, while fertility means filial piety in a family or even country, childlessness is regarded as unfilial. Regarding their strong ties with Japan, Issei parents usually ask their Nisei children to contribute to the new country Canada with cultural values such as loyalty, conformity, obedience, and filial piety. Since giving birth to a child may be regarded as filial piety to the government, childlessness may be seen as resistance to the government.

Artistic silence is an alternative space that child survivors utilize in dealing with their cultural trauma. Gardening, as an "art form" of Japanese represented in an epoch of Japanese immigrants in North America since their first immigration, "provides opportunities" (Esaki 37) for them to resist cycles of racism during and after the internment. In fictional narratives, gardening refers to

both planting vegetables and flowers in a garden as well as the arrangement of flowers. In Canada, gardening genuinely supports families of child survivors in a time of hunger and poverty during the internment. For instance, “in the wilderness,” Shichan’s father “has cleared most of the land” around their shack with hard work and harvested “corns and potatoes and lettuce” which help them with vegetables and food (*CPC* n.p.). Consequently, gardening becomes a survival strategy for Japanese Canadians during the incarceration. In reality, gardening is “a window into the community’s past” and provides “spiritual sustenance during times of struggle” (Esaki 25). In *The Electrical Field*, Asako copes with her traumatic past by creating spatial silence through trimming flowers in her garden. The process of gardening is not only reminiscence of her internment experiences but also a way of resistance because it provides Asako a safe space to manage her cultural marginalization after the war. The flowers in Asako’s garden are “coming up nicely, in spite of the frost” they have “just had” (*EF* 4). The garden itself reminds Asako of the experiences and survival strategy of Japanese Canadians during incarceration. Just as flowers in Asako’s garden blossom silently after the frost, Japanese Canadians persevere and survive without verbal protests in an adverse environment during the internment.

Gardening provides both a safe space and a way of resistance for Asako in dealing with her marginalized place in the community. Like Japanese Canadians who are deprived of their space and lands on the West Coast, Asako is forced to isolate and confine herself to her house and garden in a postwar society full of cultural racism. In the same way Japanese Canadians find spaces that they can claim as their own through gardening in the camps, Asako gains freedom and tranquility while trimming flowers in her own space—the garden. The process of guiding her “tulips and daffodils in the far corner,” “peonies and irises” on both sides, and “narcissus” (*EF* 4) to burgeon needs her judgement of the flowers. She must decide which branches and stems to cut to keep the

spatial silence of the garden. For instance, one day, Asako finds herself in the garden “poking about at” irises, flowers that “Chisako might have found too Japanese” (217). While her “tulips and daffodils” are “fading” and her “tired peonies” start to “brown at the edges” (217), the “sashes of deep violet” these irises brought to her garden gives her “pleasure” and makes her “mysteriously renewed” (217). Acting on her judgment, she begins “snipping a few blooms to put in a vase in my living-room” (217) to balance the spatial silence of the garden. This process resembles that of the dynamic judgments that she makes when she confronts cultural racism in her community. By indulging herself in gardening, Asako gains peacefulness and survival philosophy in resisting her cultural trauma resulting from legacies of the internment.

Apart from gardening of flowers, ikebana (flower arrangement) is another manifestation of Asako’s way of resistance to cultural trauma through artistic silence. Esaki notes that Japanese “culture classes” of Issei, including “ikebana” which “teaches plant care, pruning skills, and long-term predictions of plant growth,” are “based on their training in Buddhist schools in Japan” (41). Literally, Asako’s philosophy of the spatial silence for arranging follows a Japanese aesthetic for the balance rooted in Buddhism. When Chisako first learns flower arrangement in Asako’s house, she asks, “Saito-san, you know all this, don’t you? Heaven, earth, man?” (*EF* 117). Heaven, earth, and man are the three principles in Japanese school which pursues spatial silence and overall balance. While Chisako prefers “the Western way of flowers in a vase, all together” which “are natural” because she thinks the Japanese school of flower arrangement is “a little silly,” Asako replies with a firm “No” and says the three principles in Japanese school “is much more beautiful” with “[e]verything in its place” (117). Asako even surprises herself with these ideas of flower arrangement. She confesses that she does not know “where these ideas” come from, but she is “convinced of their truth” (117) as she pronounces them. These ideas come from her Japanese

cultural heritage. Thus, flower arrangements become a vehicle to pass on Buddhism philosophy to child survivors. Although Asako encounters identity crisis evoked by Chisako's physical appearance earlier, she reclaims her cultural identity by denying the superiority of the western school of flower arrangement to that of Japanese.

In addition to different forms of silences, child survivors also utilize speech as their coping mechanisms for cultural trauma. As speech symbolizes power in the context of Canada, child survivors begin to speak the unspeakable in the wave of social and human rights movements took place in North America around the 1970s. Through speaking about their painful incarceration experiences, child survivors break the past silence and combat the guilt and shame they had felt at being discriminated or prejudiced by. According to Herman, "Remembering and telling the truth about terrible events are prerequisites both for the restoration of the social order and for the healing of individual victims" (1). Consequently, the healing process of traumatized child survivors includes, "reconstructing the trauma story" and "restoring the connection between survivors and their community" (3). During this process, verbal language or "the action of telling a story" serves as a talking cure<sup>37</sup> that offers "relief of many of the major symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder" (183). In the fictional narratives, Kogawa, Sakamoto, and Itani all show their "verbal assertion" (Cheung 3) for child survivors and reconnects with their Japanese-Canadian community through reconstructing their internment stories and claiming their cultural identity.

In *Obasan*, Kogawa undergoes a process of healing of cultural trauma through the voice of Naomi who narrates her internment story and its legacies from 1941 to 1972. Kogawa notes in the epilogue that "There is a silence that cannot speak. There is a silence that will not speak" (*O n.p.*).

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<sup>37</sup> The term "talking cure" is coined in Anna O.'s case in *Studies on Hysteria* (Breuer 30). It involves "recollecting, relating, and reliving traumatic memories in the presence of an attentive listener, and does not include any form of analysis" ("Beyond the 'Talking Cure'" 8).



However, in the context of Canada, Kogawa has to discredit silence and turn to speech to make her voice heard. Thus, she continues, “I hate stillness. I hate stone. [...] Unless the stone bursts with telling, unless the seed flowers with speech” (n.p.). Like Kogawa, Naomi also foregoes silence after she revisits her traumatic internment experiences through her memories and postmemories, as well as her postwar experiences. At the end of the story, Naomi breaks her silence and bursts into speech, while for Kogawa, Naomi’s story is her storytelling of the internment.

The change of Naomi’s resistance to cultural traumatization from silence to speech is influenced by Aunt Emily. Emily’s participation in political activities as well as her documents and letters provide the necessary conditions for Naomi to face the past and break the verbal silence. Aunt Emily is an activist who will be easily enraged at any injustice: “whether she’s dealing with the Japanese-Canadian issue or women’s rights or poverty, she’s one of the world’s white blood cells” (31). She insists that Naomi be part of the effort to remember injustices of the past internment and speak for them. She tells Naomi that “You have to remember. You are your history. If you cut any of it off you’re an amputee. Don’t deny the past. Remember everything. If you’re bitter, be bitter. Cry it out! Scream! Denial is gangrene” (45). Undoubtedly, the incarceration of Japanese Canadians in the past is “still a live issue” (31) for Aunt Emily. This echoes literary critic Shoshana Felman and psychoanalyst Dori Laub’s remark in their “Introduction” of *Testimony* that the “historic trauma of the Second World War” is not “an event encapsulated in the past, but a history which is essentially not over” (xiv). However, Naomi at first ignores her victimization and stays silent in face of institutional racism. She tells Emily that “But you can’t fight the whole country” (38). Emily replies by ensuring Naomi that “We are the country” (38). With Emily’s constant

encouragement, Naomi gradually accepts her situation as a victim and begins to cope with her cultural trauma by delving into memories of the past internment.

Remembering, as Herman notes, “begins with a review of the patient’s life before the trauma and the circumstances that led up to the event,” and “includes a systematic review of the meaning of the event” (176-77). Naomi’s remembrance of the internment, as discussed earlier, involves her own memories of the dispersal, her postwar experiences of cultural racism caused by the internment, and postmemories she obtains from Aunt Emily. After the review of these events, she begins to realize various phenomena of cultural racism against Japanese Canadians in everyday life. For instance, during Mr. Barker’s visit to Naomi’s family after her uncle’s death, he says to Naomi, “It was a terrible business what we did to our Japanese” (*O* 202). Apparently, Naomi is excluded from the category of “we” in this sentence. Even many years after the internment, Naomi is still regarded as an outsider in Mr. Barker’s eyes. This evokes other cases of racism Naomi encounters after the war: “Our Indians,” “Our Japanese,” “How long have you been in this country?” “Do you like our country?” “Have you ever been back to Japan?” (202). Naomi is interrogated about her cultural identity just because of her physical character and skin colour. As she utters later in the story, “Where do any of us come from in this cold country? Oh Canada, whether it is admitted or not, we come from you we come from you” (202). Whether the public or the government admits it or not, Japanese Canadians are part of the whole nation. Naomi’s voice of claiming her Japanese-Canadian identity represents her transformation from silence to verbal resistance to cultural racism.

Itani, whose husband was incarcerated in the camps during the dispersal, recreates the internment story and achieves the effect of the talking cure through her protagonist Bin’s systematic review of the past. In *Requiem*, Bin pastes together his own memories of the uprooting,

the mass evacuation, the camps, and the relocated place on his visit to the old Fraser River camp site. He confesses that “I can clearly recall some events from that time. Other events have been pieced together from a jumble of images, fragments of conversations overheard, body memories, sensations. Give the intervening years, it’s impossible to separate one way of remembering from another” (R 36). In addition to his own sporadic memories, he begins for the first time to review the historical documents Lena gathered and compiled in the “manila folder with printing along the top edge: FRASER RIVER CAMP/REMOVAL FROM PACIFIC COAST” (20). When he arrives at the old camp which is now gone, he lets the folder and papers “scatter on the waves and bob and swirl” of the Fraser River (313). This symbolizes that Bin has overcome his past painful memories of internment and let go of the past.

Nevertheless, instead of “drowning” his “history” in the river, Bin reconstructs the stories of his own in the drawings of rivers. In answering Greg’s question about whether the river has voices and tries to tell people something, Bin replies, “I do hear the the river, [...] I listen because it has a story to tell. Sometimes many stories” (167). For all these years, Lena suggests that Bin keeps “river” as his focus (20). After the internment, Bin has drawn his “own story” of the Fraser (197), and his most recent paintings of rivers are “[t]otally recognizable as an Okuma abstract” (16). Near the end of his journey, after reviewing his memories of the camps and documents of the removal, he decides to name his exhibition of the river paintings as “REQUIEM” (313) to mourn the deaths resulting from the internment. “Requiem,” a well-known orchestral work of French Romantic composer and conductor Hector Berlioz, involves “a solo tenor voice” (8). This vocal voice, different from the non-verbal music of Beethoven that Bin frequently listens to, evokes his resolution to utter his own voice about the past through paintings. Consequently, the signature of his “real name” (270)—“BIN OKUMA” (18)—signifies his claiming for Japanese-Canadian

cultural identity, and the name of the painting series manifests his action of memorializing the deaths and his voice in telling the internment story. At the end of the story, he forgives and reconciles with his First Father, which symbolizes his forgiveness of the past and recovery from the cultural traumatization from the internment.

Sakamoto's reconstruction of the internment story, which relies on her family's experiences during World War II, is also a talking cure for her. Different from child survivors in *Obasan* and *Requiem*, Asako in Sakamoto's *The Electrical Field* has a young listener Sachi, whose parents have been interned in the same way as Asako is. Thanks to this young girl who consistently asks Asako about Eiji's story, Asako gradually reaches a process of what trauma scholar Susan J. Brison suggests as "mastering the trauma" (46) through telling stories of the incarceration. For instance, Asako has talked about Eiji's swimming story during their internment to Sachi several times, but she frequently alters the ending related to Eiji's death. His death from pneumonia is due to the poor health care system and lack of recreation facilities in the camp. However, similar to the logic of the government's blaming of the congregation of Japanese Canadians, who are the victims of racism, on the West Coast, child survivors are invited to blame themselves for the disastrous results of the internment. As a result, Asako blames herself for the death of Eiji. But now, the woman is no longer in that frame of mind.

According to Brison, "one can control certain aspects of the narrative and that control, repeatedly exercised, leads to greater control over the memories themselves, making them less intrusive and giving them the kind of meaning that enables them to be integrated into the rest of life" (47). Asako transforms her memory of Eiji's death into a traumatic narrative, which has a therapeutic effect on her cultural shame. She mitigates her guilty feeling by recreating Eiji's swimming story. In her reconstruction, she enables herself to save Eiji from drowning in the river.

Asako tells Sachi that she has saved Eiji who “could have drowned” (*EF* 274). However, when she notices Sachi’s detached and emotionless response to the savior story, she doubts herself, “Hadn’t I told the right story” (275). Indeed, this story comes from Asako’s own imagination. Eiji never drowned in the river and Asako does not have the chance to save him from drowning. The various versions of the same story about Eiji’s swimming in the camp renders Asako greater control over narrating her traumatic memories. As her guilt comes from the death of Eiji, she alleviates her cultural shame as a survivor of the camp by resisting the catastrophic results of the internment.

As shown in the discussion above, the three adults’ books display the whole process of child survivors’ meaning-making of cultural trauma caused by their internment experiences as well as their postwar life, but the two children’s books do not dwell on the young protagonists’ reflection on the interplay of the past and the present. Both *A Child in Prison Camp* and *Naomi’s Road* exhibit the cultural trauma of Japanese Canadians through the authors’ awareness in constructing meanings of racial differences and cultural identity for young readers. According to children’s literary specialist Carole H. Carpenter, children’s books should not assume that “children are merely receivers of culture,” but should present them as “creative manipulators of a dynamic network of concepts, actions, feelings and products that mirror and mould their experience as children” (57). Davis states that “children’s texts are culturally formative” and “[e]thnic children’s literature highlights the meaning or value that society attributes to ethnic differences and intercultural relationships” (“Joy Kogawa’s Versions” 205). By making the internment of Japanese Canadians the subtext for child readers, Kogawa, in *Naomi’s Road*, is “decoding past collective experiences and reimagining possibilities for the future” (215), which highlights the sense of

Japanese Canadian identity that Naomi and Stephen share. Thus, this children's book needs young readers' manipulation of Kogawa's emphasis on cultural racism and cultural identity.

Though *Naomi's Road* omits children's responses and symptoms of cultural trauma when they grow up, the book itself, as "a didactic tool for children and a cultural artifact" ("Joy Kogawa's Versions" 209), manifests cultural trauma of Japanese Canadians. From the beginning to the end, the child protagonist serves as what Davis asserts a "persuasive tool that allows the child readers to identify with the character, making the process of cultural explanation more effective" (211). Significantly, compared to *Obasan*, *Naomi's Road* is more explicit about the nature of the war and Naomi's cultural identity of Japanese Canadian. It also has more in-depth engagement with Japanese cultural heritage and appears more positive about interracial relationships.

*Naomi's Road* differs from *Obasan* in that it is more straightforward in exposing the cruelty of war and is clearer in affirming the Japanese Canadian identity. For instance, in the adults' book, Kogawa does not explain the logical connection between the war and Naomi's mother's not returning home, nor does she talk about the negative or even destructive effect of war on Japanese residents in general in Canada. But in the children's version, Naomi's father tells the young girl that "war is the worst and saddest thing in the world" and that "[p]eople get hurt and learn to be afraid" (NR 29). Worse, "[the war] turns friends into enemies" and "[i]n Canada some people think Japanese Canadians are enemies" (29). Here, the phrase "Japanese Canadians" is rhetorically significant. Though Naomi does not understand the significance of the war, the phrase conveys her cultural identity to young readers. Consequently, although Naomi is puzzled about Stephen's fighting against the abusive language of "Jap" (30) with his classmates at school, she still connects with this incident with the war. In *Obasan*, Naomi attributes Stephen's cry to the shame she has after Gower's sexual abuse. In the children's book, Stephen's crying is due to his physical

appearance of Japanese Canadians, which reminds readers that the characters are placed between the cultural identity of Japanese and Canadian. In other words, the children's book is more explicit about Naomi and Stephen's in-between status of cultural identity.

To sum up, the internment experience, horrendous for all Japanese Canadians, means moreover a dramatic loss of cultural identity for child survivors. Most of the interned children were unaware of the implications of cultural destruction at the time. However, when they come of age and become conscious of the injustice against them and their culture, they begin to make meanings from their memories, postmemories, and accumulated life experiences. During this process, while they are culturally traumatized, which is manifested in the forms of internalized racism and cultural identity crisis, they take advantage of these memories and experiences and step forward and participate in the reconstruction of their cultural memory. Their childhood resistance in the form of fairy tales and drawings is taken over for a time by their adulthood resistance in the form of various kinds of silence, but ultimately, living in a society where speech means power, these child survivors have turned to storytelling to convey their traumatic internment experiences.

## **Chapter Five Narrative Representation of Psychological and Cultural Trauma of Children in Internment**

In the previous two chapters, children's traumatic internment experiences have been discussed with a focus on the content of the five texts. This chapter will consider the narrative form of those books. Narrative form is one of the distinctive characteristics that distinguish literary works from historical documents, journal reports, and sociological studies in terms of their ways of representing children's internment experiences. The authors of fiction under study all try to find a fitting form, employing various narrative strategies and linguistic tactics for their contents of children's psychological and cultural trauma. They are in general successful. Here I will discuss three notable narrative aspects found in both adults' and children's books, namely, narrative structure, point of view, and narrative frequency. As prior discussions show, children's books are as effective as the adults' books in displaying children's psychological and cultural trauma caused by the internment. Owing to the difference in targeted audience, adults' novels utilize disrupted narrative structure, shifting point of view, and repetitions in emphasizing trauma itself, whereas the children's books employ simplified narrative time and single narrative perspective to cater to the need of young readers, and use repetitions to highlight the growth of children. In the following sections, I will try to illustrate how trauma is expressed in both adults' and children's fictions in terms of the three narrative aspects aforementioned and how effective the narrative strategies and tactics adopted by the authors have worked in their respective texts that depict psychological and cultural trauma in the internment experience of Japanese-Canadian children.

Narrative order in the three adults' novels, *Obasan*, *The Electrical Field*, and *Requiem*, is nonchronological with multiple narrative voices, whereas in the two children's books, *A Child in Prison Camp* and *Naomi's Road*, narrative order is chronological with a single narrative voice.



The disrupted narrative structure in adults' novels accords with the fragmented experience of trauma and the shifting points of view are aligned with the evolving process of child survivors' perspectives toward cultural trauma whereas the linear narrative structure and single narrative perspective convey young protagonists' trauma straightforwardly and explicitly. In addition, narrative frequency such as repetition occurs in both adults' and children's books, but there is a subtle difference in the nature of the repetitions in the two types of writings. In the former, narrative frequency not only coincides with the adults' meaning-making process of trauma but also mitigates these child survivors' postwar trauma; in the latter, it helps to deepen the children's understanding of trauma and their slow recovery from it. This chapter will discuss how children's books differ in narrative representation from adults' novels in presenting children's traumatic experiences, especially how narrative structure mimics subtly in form the themes of children's psychological and cultural trauma, how narrative voices complement the theme of cultural trauma in child survivors' meaning-making process of their past, and how narrative frequency works to both deepen and heal the children's trauma.

Regarding narrative strategies of novels, E. M. Forster identifies in his *Aspects of the Novel* (1927) several essential aspects such as "the story," "the plot," "people," and "pattern and rhythm" through which both readers and writers may look at a novel (24). In distinguishing "the story" from "the plot," he explains that while a story is defined as "a narrative of events arranged in their time-sequence," a plot refers to "a narrative of events" that emphasizes "falling on causality" (86). The plot, he continues, "is the novel in its logical intellectual aspect: it requires mystery, but the mysteries are solved later on" (96). Consequently, to achieve the most effect, a novelist must continually negotiate within him/herself the cause and effect in terms of narrative sequence. In other words, it is crucial for a novelist to find the right narrative arrangement for his or her content.

In 1972, Gérard Genette published his *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method*, which was translated into English from French in 1980. This work advances Forster's theory by defining and illustrating scientifically, so to speak, a range of narrative devices and their functions with well-known literary examples. Genette defines "narrative" in terms of three distinct notions: "narrative statement," i.e., the "discourse that undertakes to tell of an event or a series of events" (25), "the succession of events," i.e., "the subjects of this discourse, and to their several relations of linking, opposition, repetition" (25), and "narrative enunciating," i.e., "the act of narrating taken in itself" (26). By focusing on the relationship between the narrator and the narrating circumstances, Genette closely studies how the narrator conveys the narrative content through narrative statement. In a work of fiction, the author manages the sequence of actions through one or more narrators to achieve specific literary effects. In my study of the theme of trauma, I find that narrative strategies such as narrative time, narrative points of view, and narrative frequency perform particularly well in both adults' and children's books, and they help to convey effectively children's traumatic internment experiences.

### 1. Narrative Structure

Time is the essential element in shaping the narrative structure of various narratives. Some fictional works follow a chronological order while others do not. Forster, as a literary writer and critic, points out that "in a novel there is always a clock," but "[t]he author may dislike his clock" (29-30). Commenting on French writer Marcel Proust's long novel *In Search of Lost Time (A la Recherche du temps perdu)* (1913-27), he says, "The book is chaotic, ill-constructed, it has and will have no external shape; and yet it hangs together because it is stitched internally" (165). Clearly, Forster notices the chaotic narrative structure as a result of Proust's intention in not following the clock in his novel. Genette suggests that we should study "relations between the time of the story and the (pseudo-) time of the narrative" in terms of "the temporal order of succession of the events in the story and the pseudo-temporal order of their arrangement in the narrative" (35).

When “discordance between the two orderings of story and narrative” (36) occurs in a novel, certain literary effects are created. Genette calls this discordance as “anachrony” (36). Later narratologists such as Mieke Bal claim that most narrative texts “tend to fall back on Genette’s classical theory [...] in so far as it was helpful” (xvii). For differences “between the arrangement in the story and the chronology of the fabula,” Bal calls them “chronological deviations or anachronies” (70).

The discordances of story and narrative (fabula) may be further divided into two categories, according to Genette. There are two types of anachronies: analepsis and prolepsis. To avoid “the psychological connotations” of such terms as “anticipation” or “retrospection,” Genette names the “narrative maneuver that consists of narrating or evoking in advance an event that will take place later” as “prolepsis,” and “any evocation after the fact of an event that took place earlier than the point in the story” as “analepsis” (39-40). Similarly, Bal uses “retroversion” to describe “the event presented in the anachrony” that “lies in the past,” and refers to what lies “in the future” as “anticipation” (71). However, the narrative discordances are not limited to the two categories. Flashback, for instance, is one that stands out. Nonetheless, analepsis or retroversion is not to be confused with flashback, which also involves narration of a past event in the middle of the first narrative—the primary narrative discourse or the frame of the narrative structure—and creates discordance and suspense. To avoid vagueness of implications of “retroversion,” which is interchangeable with “flashback” (Bal 71), I rely on Genette’s terms of analepsis and prolepsis in the discussion of narrative structure in this chapter.

Flashback refers to a quick involuntary recall of a past event that is closely related to the narrator’s emotional or psychological status. Nevertheless, in an analepsis, the event also happens in the past and earlier than the “first narrative” (Genette 49), but no recalling of a past event occurs.

It happens naturally and does not immediately tie itself with the events in the first narrative. In addition, while flashback usually aims at providing instantly background information or relating immediately to the current situation, analepsis may stay distant from the current event in the first narrative or may even seem small and insignificant to the current event. For example, at the very beginning of Chapter Eight in *Requiem*, Bin is unable to find a comfortable place in his car to sleep on his trip to the west. He immediately recalls good times of earlier trips with Lega. He says, “In the fall of last year, just before Thanksgiving weekend, [Lena and I] rent a cabin on the Gatineau River in Quebec” (R 71-72). The recollection of an uncomfortable sleep on one trip to a comfortable one on another trip is an example of flashback. In Chapter Nine, Bin shifts from the current trip in 1997 to the exhibition grounds of Hastings Park in Vancouver in 1942. In this example, Bin’s shift from 1997 to 1942 is an instance of analepsis. Though both flashback and analepsis create disruption for Bin’s narration of his boyhood internment experiences, Bin’s flashback is not an integral part of his internment story, while the analepsis can be seen as an organic part. In other words, analepsis of Bin’s narration carries more useful information than his flashback. However, even though flashback usually appears in a flash to fill in a gap in the first narrative, it can also convey traumatic childhood internment experiences where analepsis is absent in a novel. A case in point is Asako’s flashbacks of her internment story in *The Electrical Field*, where the internment experiences are not often depicted when compared to those in *Obasan* and *Requiem*. As a result, I will focus on analepsis in the discussion of traumatic detention experiences in *Obasan* and *Requiem*, and flashback in *The Electrical Field*.

To facilitate the investigation of anachronies in literary texts, Genette introduces three main types of temporal situations: “external,” “internal,” and “mixed” (48-49). An external analepsis is “an action” that occurs “earlier than the temporal point of departure of the ‘first narrative’” (49),

an internal analepsis refers to the one “whose temporal field is contained within the temporal field of the first narrative” (50), and a mixed analepsis is one “whose reach goes back to a point earlier and whose extent arrives at a point later than the beginning of the first narrative” (49). The three subcategories of analepsis appear to be distinguished by their relations to the first narrative. For instance, in *Obasan*, Naomi’s narration of her present life in the 1970s is the first narrative, and the narration of the internment experiences in Slocan camp from 1942 to 1945 is external analepsis. Similar to analepses, prolepses can also be distinguished as internal and external ones, but they appear much less frequently in literary narratives. In *Requiem*, the presence of an “internment camp” in the Prologue is an instance of external prolepsis. It creates suspense and evokes readers’ interest in finding out what will occur in the story.

Discordances in narrative structure such as analepsis, prolepsis, and flashback, usually creating a non-linear or even chaotic narrative structure, play an important role in conveying themes of the traumatic internment stories. As trauma scholar Roger Luckhurst argues, “no narrative of trauma can be told in a linear way: it has a time signature that must fracture conventional causality” (9). Another trauma scholar Anne Whitehead agrees, “If trauma is at all susceptible to narrative formulation, then it requires a literary form which departs from conventional linear sequence” (6). As Laurie Vickroy also points out, “[t]rauma narratives go beyond presenting trauma as a subject matter or in characterization; they also incorporate the rhythms, processes, and uncertainties of trauma within the consciousness and structures of these works” (xiv). As discussed earlier, psychological trauma is usually subject to belatedness, which manifests that the past is open to a retrospective representation, and cultural trauma is grounded in the process of making sense of the past internment experiences. These types of trauma in fiction require narrative forms with different kinds of temporal order. Subverting or suspending the

traditional narrative conceptions of chronology and closure conform to the disrupted order. In this sense, the novels, narrated nonlinearly and ending without closure, are particularly suitable to reflect the traumatic experiences. The narrative structure in *Obasan*, *Requiem*, and *The Electrical Field* complements the theme of trauma, and the open-ended closure of *Obasan* and *The Electrical Field* may create a traumatic reading experience.

Joy Kogawa's *Obasan* is usually known for its political power and protest against the harsh treatment of Japanese Canadians. Yet, the book is also a work of art with its poetic language and skillful narrative techniques. Arnold Davidson comments that "[*Obasan*] is subtly structured through recurrent scenes, actions, images, dreams, and verbal echoes that also serve to involve the reader, to entangle him or her in the web (one of the recurring metaphors) of the writer's art" (15). In the novel, structure is not simply a skeleton that provides the basic frame for Kogawa's internment story, but also an organic nerve system that reacts to the traumatic effects of the internment experiences. However, Kogawa does not seem to agree that she has paid particular attention to the well-organized structure of this novel. In a 1999 interview, Kogawa explains that she wrote *Obasan* mainly in the same way as she wrote poems. She says, "The way I used to write poetry was that I would have these images that would come at me and I would write them down and figure them out later. I wrote the novel that way, without any direction, without any particular structure in mind" ("On Writing and Multiculturalism" 99). Kogawa seems to invite a reading of the formal styles of this novel as an aesthetic philosophy of a poet rather than an intentional construction of a novelist. Indeed, Kogawa may have written this novel "without any direction, without any structure in mind" (99), but this might be true only at the initial point when she conceives the novel. As the creative process continues, Kogawa could not help but employ the necessary narrative strategies to complete the novel.

Commenting on narrative styles, Anton Chekhov writes in a letter to A. S. Souvorin, “if an artist boasted to me of having written a story without a previously settled design, but by inspiration, I should call him a lunatic” (Allott 108). Chekhov’s comment is supported by A. Lynne Magnusson’s observation of stylistics in *Obasan*. Magnusson points out, “variations in style” within *Obasan* such as the “colloquial style in the dairy of Aunt Emily” as opposed to the overall poetic language are “motivated by the desire to achieve particular rhetorical effects” (59). She adds that Kogawa is performing the stylistic principle that “the style acts out the content” (59). Donald C. Goellnicht also remarks that “in her use of multiple discursive modes, tenses, and narrative points-of-view [...] Kogawa disrupts and contests the dominant culture’s totalizing, omniscient voice of history” (qtd. in Davidson 19-20). Davidson concurs that Kogawa’s *Obasan* belongs to the “Canadian novelistic tradition” which contests “conventional Canadian historical narrative in order to reclaim a Japanese-Canadian past” (19). These comments show that Kogawa’s *Obasan* encourages structural analysis to fully appreciate her artistic accomplishment.

There are two story lines in *Obasan*. Naomi’s narration shifts between events of the 1970s to those of 1942-1945, which span from Naomi’s present life in the town of Cecil to her visit to her *Obasan*’s house in Granton, then to her childhood internment experiences, and to letters and documents from Aunt Emily. The first narrative occurs between a month before Uncle’s death and several days after Uncle’s death in 1972, and the second recounts the internment of Japanese Canadians through Naomi’s childhood recollections as well as Aunt Emily’s letters and documents. At first glance, the first two chapters, which are dated “9:05 p.m. August 9, 1972” (O 3) and “September 13, 1972” (6) respectively, seem to follow a chronological order. However, references to time in the following thirty-seven chapters thwart the attempt to conclude the narrative as a chronological telling. Further examination of the beginning of each chapters show that external analepses appear in the text. Although Kogawa gives no exact dates under the title from Chapter Three, dates appear

in the beginning paragraphs of some chapters or in letters and documents show that the structure of the narration of the internment in the 1940s is fragmented. For instance, in the second paragraph of Chapter Fifteen, the date “1942” (96) ushers in Naomi’s depressed memory of the train trip to Slocan at the beginning of the uprooting, while Chapter Sixteen brings readers to Naomi’s recollections to “1962,” some “[t]wenty years later” when Naomi’s family is able to take a trip “through the interior of British Columbia” (101). If the two chapters are connected with trips, other abrupt shifts from one chapter to the next may surely be seen as an example of analepsis. In Chapter Twenty-seven, Naomi reviews Aunt Emily’s package of papers and documents in the present, while Chapter Twenty-eight brings readers to the past relocation with its first paragraph beginning with “1945. Lethbridge, Alberta” (170). This kind of abrupt transition also occurs in other chapters, thus creating disruption and bringing disorder to the linear telling of the internment story. Nevertheless, the disorders are in accordance with the rendering of Naomi’s depressed and fragmented memoirs.

Letters and documents represent other instances of analepsis in this novel. Chapter Fourteen begins with Naomi’s detection in 1972 of a ball under the cot which “still bounces a little” (69). The ball, set in the present of the novel, cuts to previous facts of the “Sick Bay,” “Hastings Park,” and “[g]host towns such as Slocan” (69) that she did not understand during childhood. Then Naomi comes back to the present by picking up Aunt Emily’s call “from the airport in Calgary where she’s waiting for Stephen’s flight from Montreal” (70), which leads to Naomi’s review of Aunt Emily’s “journal of letters” (71). These twenty-two letters are addressed to Naomi’s mother, dated from “December 25, 1941” (71), to “May 21,” 1942 (95), and take up twenty-five pages of the text. They document the sudden imposition of the disenfranchisement, dispossession, uprooting, and internment of Japanese Canadians immediately after Japan’s attack on Pearl Harbor. They not



only expose the overt institutional racism and prejudices against Japanese Canadians from individual experiences during the mass evacuation, which evokes Naomi's cultural traumatization from the internment experiences, but also breach the linearity of the narrative structure through anachrony which "can also be used to realize specific literary effects" (Bal 70). In other words, these letters not only transmit Emily's cultural trauma to Naomi by breaking Naomi's postwar life routine, but also create fractured narrative structure in the physical text to accord with the fragmented memories of cultural trauma.

Similar to Kogawa, Itani utilizes a fractured narrative structure to portray Japanese Canadians being forcibly disposed and displaced from their homes on the West Coast. Two story lines likewise appear in *Requiem*: the narrator shifts from Bin's trip in 1997 to events that happened from 1942 to 1946. The first narrative focuses on Bin's trip across Canada from Ontario to Manitoba, to Saskatchewan, to Alberta, and finally to British Columbia, and the second consists of Bin's childhood recollections of the internment of Japanese Canadians. After his sister Kay (or Keiko) calls to tell him that his First Father (biological father) needs to see him, Bin, though still angry at the abandonment of his First Father, decides to visit him in Kamloops in British Columbia, not far from the internment camp where his family was interned during World War II. The trip lasts about a week, and during this time span, Bin gives an account of the traumatic recollections of his internment experiences from 1941 to 1946 and memories of his wife Lena and son Greg from 1960s to 1997. On his way to the former camp site, Bin tries to sort out memories of the internment camp and recollections of the afterwar life with his wife Lena, who has always encouraged him to explore his past. He tries to make sense of the traumatic past and reposition himself in the present through revisiting these memories. All these activities and events of Bin, psychological or physical,

shape the fragmented narrative structure of the novel, and the structure shares fittingly Bin's fragmented memories of his childhood internment experiences.

According to Bal, *in medias res* "immerses the reader in the middle of the fabula" (70). *Requiem* begins thus: "Black outside. A solid blur of black. A wall of mountain behind. [...] Inside, lumps and shadows cast by the kerosene lamp. [...] The drone of First Father's voice from his chair in a corner of the shack. I had heard the fates many times before ..." (R 1). In this Prologue, Bin describes a boyhood scene of his family crowding in a shack in winter without specifying the exact place or date. But the date is indicated shortly after the father's telling fates in authoritative intrusion: "Did this moment take place during the first winter of our internment, 1942? No, it had to be later, when I was older—the third year, perhaps. We were in the camp five winters in all" (2). This intrusion gives the specifics of the essential elements of the internment story: time—1945, setting—the internment camp, character—Bin's family, and action—telling fates of Bin and his siblings. From this intrusion on, Bin refers back to the past dispersal from 1941 to 1946, while the first narrative carries on more or less from the first day to the last day of the trip at his destination place—British Columbia. The significance of this arrangement is to foreshadow the description of Bin's psychosocial trauma of loss of parents and loss of home.

This Prologue gives more than the essential elements of a novel. Itani employs external prolepses, which hint at Bin's childhood traumatization from the loss of his family members and loss of home on Vancouver Island as a consequence of the internment. Why Bin calls his father "First Father," what the effect of the father's story of fates is, and why they are in the internment camps, these are the questions that raise suspense. The explanation for these questions does not appear until several chapters later. For instance, Bin has not mentioned that he calls his father "First Father" after the father abandons him until Chapter Seventeen. After an end-summer picnic

of Bin's family near the Fraser River, they find Okuma-san is waiting in their shack to take Bin away. Bin explains upon their return to the shack, "My father, who had two sons, had made the decision to give me away. I was to be given to Okuma-san, the man from the end of row, who lived alone and had never been fortunate enough to have a son of his own to carry on his family name" (183). After that, Bin calls his father First Father. This enforced separation from his mother makes Bin fall into the state of melancholia. Owing to his First Father's repeated telling of their fates, which he has taken seriously, Bin blames himself for this separation.

In addition, Bin does not explain the reasons for the loss of their home on the west coast of Vancouver Island immediately after this Prologue. Though he mentions sporadically in Chapters One, Two, and Four in several sentences or paragraphs of the past incarceration, he does not explain the process of the internment until Chapter Five. For instance, in Chapter One, there is only one sentence about the internment camp. Bin says to his sister Keiko, "I've decided to travel—west—to British Columbia. As far as the Fraser, to the camp" (6). In Chapter Two, he finds his wife's folder of "Fraser River Camp/Removal from Pacific Coast" (20) in his studio, but he did not it. In Chapter Four, Bin mentions that about fifty-five years ago in 1942, his "first journey began" (36). In this very year, "21,000 people of Japanese ancestry forcibly removed from their homes on the West Coast and moved inland" (36). These sentences in the three chapters, all dated 1997, are flashbacks of Bin's trip to British Columbia. Together with the memories of his boyhood internment experiences in Fraser River camp about fifty-five years ago, he frequently recalls moments of listening to music with his wife Lena and of traveling with her and their son Greg. He has not provided details of the internment through analepsis in Chapters Five, Nine, Eleven, Thirteen, Eighteen, and Twenty-one. The effects of these flashbacks and analepsis lie in the traumatic effect the text produces. As Bin says about his disruptive memories, "Given the

intervening years, it's impossible to separate one way of remembering from another" (36). Consequently, his memories of events from the internment mingle with those from his wife and son, thus creating a chaotic narrative structure, which mimics the fragmented trauma representations.

The analepses are further exhibited through the overall narrative structure of the novel. The chapters from the first narrative are usually dated 1997, with the exception of Chapter Twenty-eight, 1996. The chapters from the other narrative are frequently dated 1941 to 1946. From Chapter One to Chapter Twenty-nine, the novel does not move forward neatly from past to present. Should we insist on tracing the chapters in this chronological order, we could see a new sequence: 5, 9, 11, 13, 15, 17, 18, 19, 20, 22, 23, 24, 25, 28, 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 10, 12, 14, 16, 21, 26, 27, 29. Clearly, the narrative structure is broken. Chapter Five discusses tensions and concerns in Bin's fishing community shortly before the Christmas 1941, the confiscation of fishing boats of Japanese Canadians and the removal of Bin's family from the village in the "early winter of 1942" (45). But these earliest events in the story are not narrated until four chapters later, and the dispersal story ends until Chapter Twenty-five, near the end of the whole story in Chapter Twenty-nine. The events on the pages appear in such an order that they disrupt the temporal sequence and disfigure the narrative coherence. The disorders compel readers to configure a meaningful sequence as shown above and decode the significance of the fragmented contents and structure. Thus, Itani achieves vivid traumatic effect through a fractured narrative structure by using the device of what Luckhurst terms as "delayed decoding" (92).

Sakamoto's *The Electrical Field* is another example of the author's management of narrative strategies. Unlike Kogawa's denial of her manipulation of the structure in *Obasan*, Sakamoto acknowledges that she wants to offer an alternative narrative structure to access the internment of

Japanese Canadians. In an interview, Sakamoto explains, “I wanted to write about internment, [...] but in a kind of decentred way, where the story of internment was not like a chronicle of that experience” (Cuder-Dominguez 139). As Luckhurst remarks, “[d]isorders of emplotment are read as mimicking the traumatic effect” (88). By decentering Asako’s childhood internment experiences, the text creates both disorder and a fractured structure which not only imitates but also produces the traumatic effect that Sakamoto intends to achieve. In other words, the unchronological narrative order not only is in accordance with fragmented traumatic memories of Asako’s internment experiences, but also creates a reading experience not unlike the experience of traumatic memory.

Like *Obasan* and *Requiem*, *The Electrical Field* also consists of two story lines. However, different from the former two works, Sakamoto gives no clear dates for either the detective story which involves the investigation of the murdering case of Mr. Yano’s wife Chisako or the embedded internment story of Asako’s family. The narrative “now” of the novel occupies the several days between the death of Chisako and moves forward in pseudo chronological order: the disappearance of Yano and his two children, and investigation of Detective Rossi on the murder case. The embedded internment story spans over thirty years with no beginning or end, intercut between past and present. During the present investigation, Asako inserts two pasts in the present first narrative: events that lead up to the deaths of the Yano family and accounts that expose the death of her older brother Eiji in the internment camp. The two mysteries spread out simultaneously within the present of the text. For instance, in the first chapter, after her discussion with Sachi about Yano’s two children, Tam and Kimi, who are missing after Yano takes them “out of class” (2), Asako moves her narration to the internment. Asako says that Sachi makes her “think of a scraggly urchin [they have] passed on the road leaving the internment camp after the war” (2). “I was unhappy that day as I recall, because we were not going to the sea, I would not see Japan; we were staying in Canada” (3), Asako continues. But shortly, Asako is drawn back to present by Sachi

who is saying, “I have to see if Tam’s back” (3). The shift in time from the present in the 1970s to the internment in the 1940s and then back to the present—a flashback, which serves to create a temporal space where the traumatic internment experiences may emerge and submerge incoherently or in disorders. As a consequence, the flashback accords with the nonlinearity of trauma narration, as the past of the novel comes to coincide with its present, marking a “synchronous narrative move across time within the same space” (Zwicker 152).

However, Asako’s memories do not follow exactly the pattern of flashback that surfaces from the present to the past and back to the present again. Instead, memories arise and imbue the present with the past in concessive association: one memory brings a past moment to the present, which may then cause another to emerge. For instance, Chapter Four starts with Asako’s search for newspapers about the death of Mr. Spear who is Chisako’s lover and murdered with her. Then she flashes back to Yano’s greeting to her and his invitation to his redress meetings. This invitation evokes her memories of her father’s silence and lack of resistance toward the past internment. After that, her memories turn to her discussion with Chisako over cultural identity, which leads further to Yano’s anger at the unfairness of the internment. Then she is brought back to present by Detective Rossi’s interrogation of the murder case, followed by her conversation with Stum over Yano. The next section is about Stum’s girlfriend Angel, which leads to Asako’s memories of Eiji. The chaotic movements in narrative structure suggest that Asako’s memories of the two pasts are mixed and fractured. This structure, nevertheless, is what Forster points out “a closely woven fabric from which nothing can be removed” (71). It serves to accord with the fragmented nature of trauma and may even create what Dominick LaCapra terms “empathic unsettlement” (78) in readers.

In addition to the incoherent narrative structure, the authors’ choice of not giving a closure to readers in the endings also produce lingering traumatic effects. In *Obasan*, Naomi ends her

narration with the postscript “Excerpt from the Memorandum sent by the Co-operative Committee in Japanese Canadians to the House and the Senate of Canada, April 1946” (223). As discussed in Chapter Three, Naomi starts to document her past under the encouragement of Aunt Emily, but no Japanese-Canadian voice appears in this ending. Instead, three white men have signed this document and protested the government’s “Orders for deportation” (224) of Japanese Canadians. This document suggests that, as Miki points out, “nothing has happened to change the social and political background of Naomi’s experiences” (*Broken Entries* 116). Though these white men are on the side of Japanese Canadians, they still assume in a subtle way a higher position than the latter in terms of racial power structure. Nevertheless, following Naomi’s resolution to participate in the redress, readers expect to hear voices from Japanese Canadians, not white activists. The failure to disrupt, in the slightest sense, the racial power structure in the ending may be a disappointment to readers, but it also gives them food for thought.

Similarly, *The Electrical Field* also deliberately stays away from a closure for readers in the end. As Vikki Visvis remarks, this novel, “[p]ublished in 1998, almost twenty years after the internment was recuperated by *Obasan* and ten years after the redress settlement seemingly resolved the political and ethical implications associated with the event, the very appearance of *The Electrical Field* suggests the need to re-evaluate our current responses” (“Trauma Remembered and Forgotten” 68). In other words, readers may expect a closure of the redress movement that Yano, as a victim of the past internment and of the consistent cultural racism in the postwar years, advocates, as well as the possible murderer of his family and Mr. Spear. The open ending is a disappointment to readers. Commenting on Peter Brooks’s discussion of the sense of ending and beginning, Eric L. Tribunella says that “[b]ecause the end is effectively a precondition of the beginning, we might consider that the ending is assumed and hence present at the outset, and that the subsequent failure of the expected ending actually to appear represents a loss” (82). Sakamoto’s method is to trigger readers’

“own melancholia development” (83), thus rendering readers immersed in the traumatic experiences through physical texts.

In contrast to the chaotic and fragmented narrative structure and the open-ended ending of adults’ novels, the narrative structure of children’s books is neat and coherent, and the ending is always hopeful, if not always happy. Both Takashima’s *A Child in Prison Camp* and Kogawa’s *Naomi’s Road* are narrated in linear sequence. In the former, Takashima records the internment process chronologically: from March 1942 when Naomi’s father and older brother are taken away, to Shichan and her mother’s visit to the Exhibition grounds, to their train journey in September 1942 to the New Denver camp, to the relocation in September 1945, and finally to the establishment of the Japanese Canadian Cultural Center in 1964. In Kogawa’s book, the story begins with a happy family in their Vancouver house before the internment, following the departure of Naomi’s mother to Japan in 1941, the partial evacuation when Naomi’s father is taken away in the beginning of 1942, the mass evacuation when Naomi’s family is removed to the Slocan camp in the middle of 1942, the relocation of Naomi’s family to a farm in southern Alberta in 1945, and Naomi’s return to their Vancouver home many years later (in 2003) when Naomi becomes an old woman alongside her white friend Mitzi. Kogawa uses chronological order to cater to the needs of her young readers in her display of psychological and cultural trauma of Japanese Canadians. As children are usually too young to fully comprehend complicated implications of trauma or re-organize the narrative structure by themselves, the simplicity and neatness of narrative structure in the two children’s books make the internment experiences more accessible and easily and friendly reading.

In addition, at the ending of the two children’s books, young protagonists are always able to find hopeful solutions to their trauma. In Takashima’s Epilogue, Shichan and her fellow Japanese Canadians are celebrating the set-up of “Japanese Canadian Cultural Center” in Ottawa and her parents are happy to hear the apology from Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson. The Minister says



on the radio that “what Canada did [to Japanese Canadians] was wrong” (CPC n.p.). Similarly, in *Naomi’s Road*, Naomi at last returns to her home in Vancouver more than half a century after the internment. Different from Shichan’s hopeful vision for Japanese Canadians in the 1960s, Naomi has healed her childhood trauma through both her friendship with Mitzi and her regaining of the lost home. After the painful internment experiences, both Shichan and Naomi have experienced psychological growth from childhood to adulthood, and both arrive at hopefulness in the end. Thus, different from adults’ books on trauma, the two children’s books might be called bildungsroman.

## 2. Point of View

Point of view is another important aspect to study and analyze the formal representation of trauma in novels under investigation. “To avoid the too specifically visual connotations of the terms *vision*, *field*, and *point of view*,” Genette takes up the slightly more abstract term “focalization” (189) to describe the phenomena. He categorizes it into three types: zero focalization, internal focalization, and external focalization (191). A “nonfocalized narrative” or a “narrative with zero focalization” is one where “the narrator knows more than the character, or exactly says more than any of the characters knows” (189). An internal focalization occurs in a narrative where “the narrator says only what a given character knows” (Genette 189). It can be further divided into fixed internal focalization, variable internal focalizations, and multiple internal focalizations (189-90). Fixed internal focalization refers to a narration where we “almost never leave the point of view” of the narrator. Variable internal focalizations occur where the focal character moves from one character to another, but does not apply to the three novels in this research. Multiple internal focalizations refer to a narration where “the same event may be evoked several times according to the point of view of several characters” (190). An external focalization takes place in a narrative where “the narrator says less than the character knows” (189).

In addition to focalization, Genette distinguishes between the narrated-I (or experiencing-I) and the narrating-I in his study on Proust. According to Genette, readers should differentiate “between the question who is the character whose point of view orients the narrative perspective and the very different question who is the narrator—or, more simply, the question who sees and the question who speaks” (186). Narratologist Jonathan Culler concurs in the “Foreword” of Genette’s *Narrative* that “in what is traditionally called a first-person narrative the point of view can vary, depending on whether events are focalized through the consciousness of the narrator at the moment of narration or through his consciousness at a time in the past when the events took place” (10). When an event is focalized through the consciousness of the first-person narrator at the moment of narration, the narrator is deemed as the narrating-I, and when an event is focalized through the first-person narrator’s consciousness at a time in the past, the narrator is regarded as the narrated-I. This research will focus on the shifting points of view in the three adults’ novels and analyze the significance of these narrative strategies in representing trauma.

In *Obasan*, Kogawa utilizes multiple internal focalizations in narrating the internment of Japanese Canadians. Narrative voices, Cheung notes that “Kogawa mingles the journalistic with the poetic and admits contesting voices into her novel” (153). Indeed, from Naomi’s individual narrative of her memories and experiences to reportage of Aunt Emily’s letters, to the authoritative government documents, and to the third-person newspaper articles and reports, Kogawa is juxtaposing multiple voices. They are either the official or the individual, and either the public or the private that represent the internment of Japanese Canadians. These “interconnected voices,” as Cheung argues, “make for multiple layers of perception in her novel” (153). Literally, these voices have displayed the cultural trauma of Japanese Canadians from various aspects. Owing to the long-time silence of Japanese Canadians, some aspects uttered through these multiple voices are never

revealed to the public in official history, and some others serve to revise the official history. As a consequence, cultural trauma such as institutional racism against Japanese Canadians is revealed through both official record and personal experiences.

In terms of institutional racism during the internment, both Naomi and Aunt Emily recount the confiscation of Japanese-Canadian boats on the West Coast after Japan attacked Pearl Harbor. When Naomi sees one snapshot of her father Mark and Uncle Isamu (or Sam) in her Obasan's living room in 1972, she recalls that after Japan's attack, the same RCMP officer, who once exclaimed in 1941 that her father and uncle's boat is "a beauty" (O 17), confiscated this "work of art" that her father "made over many years and many winter evenings" (20). This memory aligns with Aunt Emily's description of the fishing boats. Emily writes in her letter to Naomi's mother that "Sam and Mark finish[ed] last winter with all the hand carvings [...] was seized along with all the fishing boats from up and down the coasts, and the whole lot are tied up in New Westminster" (73). Meanwhile, the fishermen's licences "were suspended," but "the white fishermen are confident that they can make up the lack in the next season, if they can use the Japanese fishing boats" (73). Since Naomi is only five years old when the RCMP confiscates her father's boat, she can only recall details of her father's boats. In contrast, Aunt Emily is an adult activist when the impounding begins. She is able to describe the overall situation of the fishing boats in New Westminster community in her reportage letters. The two voices trace institutional racism to both individual experiences evoked by visual memory (the picture) and written reflection (Aunt Emily's letters). They serve to complement to one another in representing the whole picture of confiscation of Japanese boats during the uprooting.

Another example of multiple narrative voices for the same event appears in Chapter Twenty-nine. Naomi reclaims her past of the relocation by refuting to the official report of "Facts about

evacuees in Alberta” (173). In Aunt Emily’s package, Naomi finds a newspaper clipping about Japanese evacuees in Lethbridge, Alberta where Naomi’s family is relocated to after the war. According to this newspaper, Japanese evacuees from British Columbia after the war supplied more than half the labour of Alberta’s sugar beet fields in 1945. As shown in the photo of a family in this clipping— “all smiles, standing around a pile of beets”—the newspaper presents them as model citizens working on the farm through the caption ““Grinning and Happy”” (173). This report, “drawn from files in the Public Archives of Canada” (Cheung 153), represents the official voice about evacuees after their relocation to farms in Alberta.

However, the “happy” and smiling scene is not real. Naomi, whose family is among one of the relocated families to Alberta, offers a different voice about facts of Japanese Canadians working in the beet field. Naomi states:

Facts about evacuees in Alberta? The fact is I never got used to it and I cannot, I cannot bear the memory. There is a word for it. Hardship. The hardship is so pervasive, so inescapable, so thorough it’s a noose around my chest and I cannot move any more. All the oil in my joints has drained out and I have been invaded by dust and grit from the fields and mud is in my bone marrow. I can’t move any more. My fingernails are black from scratching the scorching day and there is no escape. (173-74)

Clearly, Naomi’s memories do not accord with the official record as the latter conceals the hardships of the Japanese evacuees in Alberta. By employing Naomi’s individual voice, as Davidson points out, “Kogawa disrupts and contests the dominant culture’s totalizing, omniscient voice of history” (19-20). Meanwhile, the smiling faces in the picture do not necessarily represent happiness, as influenced by Japanese culture, Japanese Canadians always remain their dignity and

being polite wherever and whenever they are. By reclaiming her past through voice, Naomi is accepting her cultural identity of Japanese Canadian.

Apart from multiple voices from different characters, the shifting points of view in the novel are seen in Naomi as an adult and as a child. In Naomi's narration, the narrating-I comes through the adult Naomi's retrospective analysis of the incarceration experiences, while the narrated-I is the voice of young Naomi's childhood being encountered with the internment. In his observation of the shifting tenses in *Obasan*, Davidson remarks that much of the novel is narrated "in an odd tense," a kind of "past-present and present-past," and in this "interplay" of the "merged" perspectives, "the adult narrator too well knows that the child's formulation of perfect union and trust proved radically untrue and was, furthermore, untrue for the child too" (42). Naomi uses present tense when she narrates the internment story through the perspective of the narrated-I (as a child) and utilizes past tense when the internment story is recounted through the narrating-I (as an adult). Though some of this young girl's formulation of perfect union might be radical and untrue, the shift of her understanding from the narrated-I to the narrating-I shows her meaning-making process of the cultural trauma of Japanese Canadians.

In the novel, Naomi's narration of the internment experiences moves between the double perspectives. This doubleness—the narrated-I and the narrating-I—reflects a contested narration by the younger, less well-informed Naomi and by the older, more culturally conscious Naomi. For instance, Naomi's account of Grandpa Nakane's incarceration in Hastings Park displays the shift from her limited and naïve point of view, which is her past consciousness re-enacted, to her mature and political perspective, which is distanced from Grandpa Nakane's detention experiences. When she overhears her father and Aunt Emily's conversation that Grandpa Nakane "won't last in the Sick Bay," Naomi wonders where the Sick Bay is and why it causes distress in her family. She

thinks to herself, “Is Sick Bay near English Bay or Horseshoe Bay? When we go to Stanley Park we sometimes drive by English Bay. [...] If Grandpa Nakane is at the beach now, could he be lost the way I was?” (O 67). Here, the narrated-I displays Naomi’s childlike understanding of the prison where Grandpa Nakane is detained. Nevertheless, this perspective is juxtaposed with view of the narrating-I. Naomi, as an adult, explains the Sick Bay later in the text:

Sick Bay, I learned eventually, was not a beach at all. And the place they called the Pool was not a pool of water, but a prison at the exhibition grounds called Hastings Park in Vancouver. Men, women, and children outside Vancouver, from the “protected area”—a hundred-mile strip along the coast—were herded into the grounds and kept there like animals until they were shipped off to road-work camps and concentration camps in the interior of the province. From our family, it was only Grandma and Grandpa Nakane who were imprisoned at the Pool. (69)

The narrating-I, with her meticulousness to understand the temporary holding center for evacuated Japanese Canadians, is reflecting on the cultural racism against them. The transferal from the understanding of Sick Bay as a vacation location to that of an unsanitary prison where Japanese Canadians were incarcerated before the internment shows that Naomi is making meanings of her recollections about Hastings Park by reviewing the past and repositioning herself through the interplay of past and present. Right after her explanation of the Sick Bay, Naomi mentions that the omnipresent tension “was not clear” to her then and “is not much clearer today” because time “has solved few mysteries” (69). Racial prejudice and hatred are still prevalent in the postwar years. The connection of the past cultural racism with the present “racial hatreds and fears” (69) manifests Naomi’s re-experiencing of cultural trauma.

Itani also employs shifting points of view in Bin's account of the cultural trauma attributable to his boyhood camp experience in her novel. Similar to Kogawa's employment of double voices of Naomi in *Obasan*, Itani also uses the double voices of Bin. In *Requiem*, the narrated-I refers to the narrative voice of young Bin who encounters cultural racism during the dispersal, and the narrating-I is the voice of adult Bin who analyzes his internment experience in retrospection. Bin's shift from the narrated-I to the narrating-I depicts his changing attitudes toward his cultural identity. For instance, though he is unhappy about the alteration of his name from Bin to Benjamin or Ben by Caucasian teachers Mr. Blackwell and Miss Paxton respectively, the young boy accepts the changes silently in either the Fraser River camp or the relocated place in southern British Columbia. As shown in the limited and childlike perspective of the narrated-I, Bin believes he "[has] to show respect and do what [Miss Paxton tells him] to do" (R 260) because she is his teacher. Later, Bin displays his awareness of the cultural racism behind the change of their Japanese names through the narrating-I. Bin's siblings Hiroshi and Keiko, whose names are changed to English ones as Henry and Kay during the internment, have encountered trouble when they apply for passports because their English names are believed to create confusion by the government agency. Ironically, Bin comments, "[t]he same agencies that had taken their names away now demanded that the originals be pulled out of storage" (37). This narrating-I has expressed Bin's indignation about cultural racism of the government. The gap between the narrated-I and narrating-I creates a space that Bin needs from childhood to adulthood in making meanings of his past.

Unlike both Kogawa and Itani, Sakamoto employs both internal and external focalization in *The Electrical Field*. In telling the internment of Asako's family, Sakamoto uses external focalization as Asako knows more about the internment than she recounts, while Asako's narration of the detective story is an example of internal focalization, for that Asako narrates what she knows

about the Yano family. Owing to the external focalization, Asako is able to manipulate what to tell to Sachi about her internment story, and thus create unreliability. In terms of Asako's unreliability, Sakamoto says in an interview, "[m]any people said that Asako was not a likeable character" and "this was very deliberate" (Cuder-Dominguez 140). Sakamoto "wanted to challenge the reader into feeling some compassion, because people who go through difficult circumstances are not necessarily likeable" (140). For instance, Asako often not only "[leaves] parts out again" (*EF* 165) about her retelling of the same stories to Sachi, but also makes up stories of Eiji. Once Sachi accuses Asako of not telling the true story by saying "'If you saved him, how did he die?' [...] 'You keep telling that story when you know it isn't true'" (275). Facing Sachi's questioning, Asako thinks to herself, "I know what's true, I know what's a lie, I meant to tell her. [...] I didn't save him. I longed to say this" (279). Thus, Asako is an unreliable narrator. As Jade Tsui-yu Lee points out, "memory is always mediated and the past is never stable" (198). Asako's unreliability accords to this instability of memory and disrupts the dominant one-dimensional historical record of the internment story. Meanwhile, the unreliable narration renders Asako a space to create her own story. Consequently, by deviating from the truth, Asako manages to repeatedly articulate various versions of the internment story, which serves to mitigate her guilt from her loss of brother and shame from the incarceration experiences.

According to Perry Nodelman, "many writers of fictional texts intended for children [...] focalize the action through those child protagonists and ask readers to think of themselves in terms of what happens to the child protagonists" (18). In contrast to adults' novels, the points of view in children's books are relatively simple. Takashima uses fixed internal focalization in *A Child in Prison Camp* and Kogawa utilizes zero focalization in *Naomi's Road*. In the former, readers almost never leave the perspective of eleven-year-old Shichan whose restriction of field is particularly dramatic. For instance, when the repatriation order comes, Shichan gets tired of the concessive arguments between her father and her older sister Yuki over whether they will be staying in Canada



or going to Japan. She feels helpless and thinks, “[r]eally, maybe children should rule the world” (*CPC* n.p.). The child protagonist, from the beginning to the end, serves as what Davis asserts a “persuasive tool that allows the child readers to identify with the character, making the process of cultural explanation more effective” (211). With the first-person narration, young readers may easily identify themselves with Shichan who wants to escape the quarrels over the relocation. Meanwhile, the significance of this limited and childlike perception goes beyond children’s ruling the world, rather, it brings the subtle overriding over the power structure between adults and children, which extends to the racial power structure between the white and Japanese Canadians. In this case, the quarreling in the family unveils the cultural trauma of racial oppression during the internment of Japanese Canadians.

Kogawa employs zero focalization in *Naomi’s Road*. Different from the first-person narrator in *A Child in Prison Camp*, the book is narrated by the omnipresent third-person narrator. *Naomi’s Road*, Davis remarks that “the third person narrative [in *Naomi’s Road*] gives the author a critical distance that permits her to include details that might prove problematic in a first-person children’s story” (“Joy Kogawa’s Versions” 224). In fact, this narrator is, what Luisa Banki’s calls in her observation of W. G. Sebald’s narrator, “a literary figure and a narrative means” (40). For the literary figure, the authoritative narrator “acts like a therapist allowing for and encouraging” (40) Naomi’s telling of the internment story. But this narrator has interpretative power over this young girl’s limited perception of the internment. As a narrative means, this omnipresent narrator “creates distance” since the narrator “emphasizes a mediating agency or level” (40) in the reconstruction of Naomi’s internment past. For example, in Chapter Four, the authoritative narrator comments on Naomi’s understanding of darkness in their Vancouver house by saying, “She understands later what it is about. The darkness is everywhere [...] It covers the whole city when all the lights are

turned out” (NR 32). This authoritative intrusion offers readers more information about the darkness that Naomi’s feels inside their Vancouver house. Naomi is not alone, but like all Japanese Canadians in this city, they must stay inside after sunset to follow the curfew order. This is literally institutional racism against Japanese Canadians.

### 3. Narrative Frequency

Narrative frequency, according to Genette, refers to “the relations of frequency” or “of repetition” between “the narrative and the diegesis” (113). He explains that an event is not only “capable of happening” but also “may happen again,” and a narrative statement is not only “produced,” but also can be “produced again” and “repeated one or more times in the same text” (113-14). Based on the capacity for “repetition” on both the “narrated events” of the story and the “narrative statements” of the text, Genette divides narrative frequency into four types: singulative, iterative, repetitive, and multiple (114-16). Singulative narrative refers to the event that happens once and is narrated once; iterative narrative means the event that happens many times and is narrated once; repetitive narrative applies to the event that happens once and is narrated many times; and multiple narrative relates to the event that happens many times and narrated many times (114-16). In the fictional texts of this research, the authors mainly employ the repetitive narrative and multiple narrative in representing their protagonists’ psychological trauma and cultural trauma attributable to their childhood internment experiences. The rationale is that these repetitions accord with child survivors’ making-meaning process of cultural trauma in adults’ novels and achieve the trauma healing process in both adults’ books and children’s ones.

In *Obasan*, Kogawa uses both repeating narrative and multiple narrative. In terms of repeating narrative, Genette suggests that “the same event can be told several times not only with stylistic variations, [...] but also with variations in ‘point of view’” (115). In the novel, the narration of

Grandma Nakane's detention in the Livestock Building of Hastings Park which happened once but is recounted twice with variations in points of view belongs to repeating narrative. Aunt Emily's writes in her letter of 1942 that the incarceration of innocent people of Japanese ancestry in the detention center is "too great a shock" for Grandma Nakane who whispers to her that "she should leave right away before they caught [Emily] too" (86). Later in 1972, Obasan's comments on herself as "[t]oo old" reminds Naomi of the internment at the Vancouver Hastings Park prison of Grandma Nakane who "was too old then" to understand the institutional racism such as "political expediency, race riots, [and] the yellow peril" (16). Naomi imagines Grandma Nakane "said much the same thing those dark days in 1942" (16) as Obasan does. The repeating narrative of Hastings Park hints at the government's deprivation of Japanese Canadians' basic human right and ravaging of their human dignity. Here, Kogawa emphasizes institutional racism during the internment as well as Japanese Canadians' responses to their cultural trauma during and after the internment. As Issei, both Obasan and Grandma Nakane, influenced by their Japanese culture of conformity, do not want to confront the government, even in circumstances where their human dignity is ravaged by institutional racism.

Kogawa also utilizes multiple narrative in the narration of Naomi's sexual dreams. According to Naomi, the same sexual dream repeatedly haunts her but with slight variations. She narrates in her account of the internment story twice the dream which occurs many times. One version of this recurring dream features a British man and a voluptuous woman. According to Naomi, compared to the earlier versions, this woman "appears as she once was, naked, youthful, voluptuous," and this man "is taller, thinner and precise—a British martinet" (O 25). As discussed in Chapter Two from the psychological perspective, "[Naomi] is the woman" (25), whereas the British commander mirrors Mr. Gower. In the latest version of this dream, the naked woman is replaced by "three

beautiful oriental women” and the British commander is substituted for “several soldiers” (55). While the women “lay naked in the muddy road, flat on their backs, their faces turned to the sky,” the soldiers “stood or shuffled in front of them in the foreground” (55). These soldiers are guarding these women who are “probably prisoners captured from a nearby village” (55). Here, the three oriental women epitomize the interned Japanese-Canadian women in general, and the soldiers that guard these women symbolize Canadian government who keeps Japanese Canadians in imprisonment during the war.

As the dream continues, the soldiers begin to shoot and torture these oriental women. Naomi says that the first shots are aimed at “the toes of the women,” and “the second at their feet” (55). There is “no hope” for these women as “[d]read and a deathly loathing cut through” them (55-56). Immediately after relating this nightmare, Naomi reverts to her memories of Mr. Gower’s molestation: “Does Old Man Gower still walk through the hedges between our houses in Vancouver, in Slocan, in Granton and Cecil?” (56). As a result, this dream becomes a reference to Naomi’s childhood sexual abuse again. In this dream, one woman is replaced by three oriental women, and one British martinet to several soldiers. Just as these women are, literary scholar Julie Tharp suggests, “suppressed in the dream as in waking life and replaced with the dangerous presence of white men” (218), Naomi is also abused by Gower. While these women are hopeless in front of the soldiers’ torturing, Naomi is helpless about Gower’s molestation. Naomi’s sexual abuse is thus connected to the government’s abuse of Japanese Canadians during World War II. Through multiple narratives of this symbolic sexual dream, instead of simply implying the sexual abuse incident on the psychological level, Kogawa traces the source of Naomi’s suffering during adulthood to her childhood internment and racial oppression.

In a similar way, Itani employs both repeating narratives and multiple narratives in *Requiem*. For instance, Bin recounts three times about Beethoven's piece of Minuet in G. Notes that Missisu (a childish word Bin and other Japanese Canadians used for Mrs., but omitting the surname)—a former neighbor of Bin's family before the uprooting—plays on the day they leave their home on the West Coast. The repeated narration with variations of Missisu's play belongs to repeating narrative. Bin remembers Missisu plays Beethoven's Minuet in G. among the chaotic sounds of Bin's father's shouts with orders while his family is packing for the removal. Bin says that he was then "well acquainted with" this piece, though he did not then know its name, nor did he know it was "a minuet" (R 46). Later in the camp, when his adoptive father Okuma-san asks Bin whether he has heard anyone play the piano, he replies, "'Missisu'" (199). But Bin thinks to himself, "I did not tell Okuma-san about the morning we left our home by the sea, [...] I did not tell him about the tears that had rolled down my cheeks while I'd listened to Missisu play" (199). Clearly, Bin is traumatized by the uprooting scene. The mention of Missisu's playing of Minuet in G. makes him sad and disturbed. Many years after the internment, when his wife Lena talks about silence and sound in music, Bin tells Lena that for him Beethoven is learned in silence with "[h]ands, fingers, tapping, rapping," long before he knows what the actual music sounds like, with the exception of "Minuet in G. Grandfather Minuet" (280). When Bin confesses that he has "never told Lena about the music," they are "uprooted from the coast" (280). Beethoven's Minuet in G. signifies the music for dispossession, dislocation, and dispersal, which is a result of the institutional racism against Japanese Canadians. The repetitive narration of this music piece represents Bin's re-experiencing of the traumatic loss of home.

Multiple narrative also appears in *Requiem* in displaying Bin's psychological trauma of loss of caregivers. As shown in the Prologue of this novel, the narrator describes the scene where Bin's

father repeatedly reads the fates of his three children through his “palm-size book with the red cover” (1). The telling of the three siblings’ fates, nevertheless, has great impact on the development of Bin’s psychological traumatization from the forced separation from his parents. Bin’s narration of his fate traces the changes of Bin’s attitude toward his father: from happiness to helplessness, to anger, and to reconciliation. When Bin recounts for the first time his fate as the “number-two son” (2) in the Prologue, every family member, though is removed to the shack in the Fraser River camp and huddle around a wood stove, is happy. However, Bin’s psychology as a second son of the family changes when his father gives him to the widow Okuma-san, who is a childless, well-educated man. Bin is helpless about his status as the inferior son in the family and blames himself for being abandoned by his parents.

Even many years after the internment, Bin is still haunted by his father’s fate telling. He tells Lena that Hiroshi was number-one son—“[s]tronger,” “skilled,” and “was given responsibilities as a child”—in contrast, Bin was less important for being number two—“shorter, smaller, scrawnier—then” (R 76). Though Lena tells Bin to “use the fates” because “a fate allows us to chase away our ghosts” (77), influenced by Japanese cultural value “*shikata ga nai* [It cannot be helped], Bin believes he cannot change his fate. Therefore, Bin thinks, “I was always trying to protect everyone. It was part of the fate. There could be sudden losses—every Japanese Canadian knew that” (276). He not only deems the abandonment as part of his fate, but also the dispersal of Japanese Canadians as their fate. Consequently, although he is angry at both his father and institutional racism, he is always silent about his past. More than fifty years later, Bin learns from Keiko that it was not that their father did not want him, but the father wanted him to get better education with Okuma-san. It is at this time that Bin realizes he can discredit his inferiority as the number-two son of the family. Thus, Bin undertakes a journey to visit his father and the old camp

upon dispelling the misunderstanding of the fate of himself. In the end, “Again. A father, a son” represents the reconciliation of Bin and his father as well as Japanese Canadians and the white dominant society.

Sakamoto makes use of multiple narrative in *The Electrical Field*. The novel depicts several times that Asako cleans the dust in her house almost every day. For instance, at the very beginning of this novel, Asako says, “I happened to be dusting the front window-ledge when I saw her running across the grassy strip of the electrical field” (1). In Chapter Three, Asako mentions the dust again: “After I cleaned up the stray bits of glass [...]” (55). The dust echoes her memory of the past internment. By dusting the window and cleaning the stains, Asako is trying to get rid of the debris of the internment, represented in her involuntary flashbacks. However, as the dust never goes away, she devotes herself to dusting consistently. After she has dusted her house the day before, she notices that “a lawn of silvery fine dust had already appeared on the ledge” (11). Similarly, her traumatic recollections of the internment do not go away, no matter how hard she tries to clean them.

These authors also frequently use multiple narrative in children’s books. As Susan R. Gannon remarks, “Repetition is one of the most familiar features of children’s literature. It clarifies the structure of narrative for young readers, and helps them to remember what they have read. It adds rhythm and the mysterious charm of ritual to the simplest of verbal formulas. It offers the pleasure of extended suspense and delayed gratification to even the youngest audience” (2). Genette also mentions that “children love to be told the same story several times—indeed, several times in a row—or to reread the same book, and that this predilection is not entirely the prerogative of childhood” (115). In *Naomi’s Road*, Kogawa repeatedly mentions the road for children: the road of learning and the road of friendship. In Chapter One, Naomi’s father introduces Naomi and

Stephen the statue of a young man who endures hardships before he becomes Japan's greatest teacher. According to the father, this young man has "a baby brother and a mother," but they have "no food" (12). To support his family, he "used to get up early every morning in the dark" and goes into "the mountains to gather wood to sell" (12). Nonetheless, he loves book and always has a book in his hand. He reads them "all by himself" as he walks, and finally becomes "the greatest teacher in all Japan" (12). The father's explanation of this statue is significant because he instills in Naomi and Stephen's heads their Japanese culture that in times of hardships, they can still have their own special road—"[t]he road of learning" (12). The life and philosophy of this statue foreshadows the upcoming uprooting of Japanese Canadians: Naomi's family is removed to the Slocan camp in the mountains where they do not have sufficient food to support themselves, and then relocated to the farm where Naomi and Stephen must work in the sugar beet field. However, the statue also provides a way of coping with their sufferings during the dispersal. By modelling this diligent Japanese teacher, Stephen practices his music and Naomi reads books all by themselves during the internment. In the end, Stephen becomes a well-known musician and Naomi becomes a schoolteacher.

In terms of the road to achieve friendship, Davis says, "rather than a novel about memory and motherhood, *Naomi's Road* is the story of a girl's journey of discovery and of friendship during wartime" ("Joy Kogawa's Versions" 217). This journey, "by focusing on a specific child's 'road' or experience," nevertheless, is more than what Davis puts as to "educate all Canadian children about history of the Japanese in Canada" (217). It also serves as a journey of discovering both the child protagonist's psychological trauma and the author's cultural trauma attributable to the internment, as well as the healing of their trauma by turning to interracial friendship. Naomi's road to friendship deals with her psychological traumatization from her losses of parents and home. In



*Obasan*, Naomi falls in silence after the disappearance of her mother and stays muted in Slocan camp and the relocated farm, whereas in *Naomi's Road*, she mitigates her suffering from the loss of her mother by turning to her new friendship in Slocan. According to Naomi, the two girls are “[b]lood sisters” (NR 103) and “friends for life” (105). Even when Naomi’s family is relocated the Barker farm in Granton, letters from Mitzi make Naomi happy in times of hardship. In an interview with Davis, Kogawa explains that in the children’s version “the focus of the story would change to friendship as a resolution” (“On Writing and Multiculturalism” 99). Indeed, Naomi loses her mother and Vancouver home, but she gains a friend to counterbalance these losses. As a result, this friendship becomes a method she utilizes to her psychological suffering during the dispersal.

Naomi’s road to friendship also provides Naomi a coping mechanism to counterbalance the cultural trauma of Japanese Canadians. As Davis asserts, “Kogawa’s added emphasis on Mitzi highlights the other side of the story: Canada’s process of facing its actions against its own citizens” (“Joy Kogawa’s Versions” 229). Naomi and Mitzi’s friendship starts when Mitzi’s mother brings this young white girl to apologize to Stephen and Naomi for saying Canada is not Stephen’s country and the Union Jack is not his flag. The mother says to Stephen and Naomi, “Of course it is your flag. And it is our flag too. We have come over to say we are sorry for being unkind, haven’t we, Mitzi?” (NR 74). As this children’s version was published in 2005, this white mother’s apology not only resonates with the redress movement in 1988 and the government’s public apology for what they had done to Japanese Canadians, but also hints at the reconciliation of the two races, which culminates in the lifelong friendship of Naomi and Mitzi. This road to friendship compensates for the past prejudices of the white residents against Japanese Canadians and is a way of healing the cultural trauma of Japanese Canadians. In the final chapter, Naomi and Mitzi comes back to Naomi’s former house in Vancouver. Naomi hears her mother says that “I have come to

you on Friendship Road. Welcome home, my special N” (113). Naomi’s regaining of her home in Vancouver with the accompanier of Mitzi, and Naomi’s mother’s words on friendship road indicates that by reconciliation and interracial friendship, Japanese Canadians can return to their original home and regain their stolen past.

In sum, I have discussed several aspects of the narrative representation of children’s traumatic internment experiences in the five fictional texts. In terms of narrative techniques, children’s books are not simply the abridged version of adults’ books. They differ from the adults’ ones in narrative structure and point of view, but they also share a commonality in narrative frequency. While the two children’s books are narrated in linear sequence with a single third-person or first-person narrator, the three adults’ novels adopt a multiple-voice mode that involves multiple narrators and do not follow a chronological order. Yet both children’s and adults’ books utilize narrative frequency such as repetition in representing children’s trauma. Narrative structure and point of view in the three adults’ novels play an important role in illustrating child survivors’ psychological and cultural trauma whereas children’s books utilize a linear narrative structure and a single narrative voice illustrate the traumatic theme to young readers who are less sophisticated to comprehend complicated structure or plot. As for narrative frequency, in adults’ novels, it serves to both align with child survivors’ meaning-making process of trauma but also mitigate child survivors’ postwar trauma, while in children’s books, it helps to deepen their understanding of trauma and contributes to children’s healing of trauma.

## Chapter Six Conclusion

At the turn of the twenty-first century, historical fiction such as POW literature begins to be examined by historians and fictional writers. In Canada, the internment of Japanese Canadians during World War II becomes a familiar topic. In Wylie's analysis of reasons for many Canadian writers' gravitation toward historical fiction, he points out that this phenomenon is "itself arguably the product of historical circumstances" which includes "the overthrow of a colonial mentality in which Canadian history was dismissed as negligible, even oxymoronic" and "an increasing desire to interrogate and challenge a narrowly defined nation past and to venture beyond its boundaries" (5). These Canadian writers of internment are subversive in challenging the traditional historical past of Canada. In the past, historical writing was dominated by male writers of European heritage. Canadian POW writing is significant in that they not only involve episodes of historical documents and sources, but also touch upon issues of race, ethnicity, culture, gender, and to date underrepresented children. But Wylie also suggests that the genre of historical fiction itself "poses difficulties to non-dominant groups because of the very exclusiveness of the historical record, which tends to be preoccupied with the activities of white, upper-class English males" (5). My work attempts to foreground women's internment writing, so that the five texts under study are all written by women who are of or related to Japanese heritage. It is especially important not only because of the ignored group of child internees during WWII, but also because of the fact that, with the exception of Joy Kogawa, they have enjoyed little sustained critical attention in academia.

From the nineteenth century to the twenty-first century, war narratives often involve stories about men fighting in battlefields, trenches, and bunkers, praising men's fighting prowess, glorifying men's participation in war, and equating manhood with toughness under fire. In conventional war stories, women are usually depicted as lovers, wives, sisters, coward-shamers,

and moral boosters. However, some Canadian women writers did try to subvert these passive male-identified female images through reconstructing women figures. They have broadened the traditional writings of war and shifted from the narrow focus on battles and power struggles to include narratives of the homefront, and in particular, the POW camps which are regarded as shameful in the past. Among these writers are Shizuye Takashima, Joy Kogawa, Kerri Sakamoto, and Frances Itani. They rely on either their own or their family's history to engage a dialogue with the official history of Canada through women's role of probing the past and transmitting cultural heritage of Japanese Canadians to the next generation.

My interest in the topic of children's internment as both psychological trauma and cultural trauma developed while reading fiction and non-fiction of Japanese Canadian internment. Living in Calgary, Southern Alberta where Japanese-Canadian internees worked on the sugar beets farm during World War II and relocated after the war ended, I was struck at the fact that many local undergraduate and graduate students did not know this event in the new century. While reading Kogawa's *Obasan* and *Naomi's Road*, Takashima's *A Child in Prison Camp*, Sakamoto's *The Electrical Field*, and Itani's *Requiem*, I wondered how these writers framed the internment experiences of children as both individual and collective, and both psychological and cultural. They negotiate truths and lies of the historical record of the internment as well as the untold stories of individual and familial experiences to make sense of the historical facts to readers today. Their engagement with the history has essentially questioned the traditional historical novels.

As child internees were a distinctive group during the internment of Japanese Canadians, they have drawn special attention as early as the 1970s. Nisei journalist Frank Moritsugu points out that about 3,000 schoolchildren were incarcerated in remote areas of British Columbia (3). These Japanese-Canadian children underwent possibly "the greatest attack on every aspect of their

existence” (Valent 109) during the internment. Literally, this internment deprived these children of the opportunity to have homes, recreation facilities, regular education, and a normal life. Canadian writers such as Takashima, Kogawa, Sakamoto, and Itani have incorporated the situation of schoolchildren in their POW fictional writings. The young protagonists in their works, usually four to eleven years old, have endured hardship and trauma in the camps as well as on relocated farms. Even many years after the war, legacies of the internment represented through PTSD symptoms and cultural racism still haunt them. Building on previous scholarship on the history of Japanese-Canadian internment during World War II and literary criticism on works by the authors previously mentioned, I have utilized my research to discuss psychological trauma from the perspective of interned children, cultural trauma from the perspective of child survivors of the internment, and narrative representations of children’s traumatic internment experiences. In the process, I have taken advantage of psychological trauma theories by Cathy Caruth, Dori Laub, Judith Herman, and Bassel Van der Kolk, cultural trauma theories by Ron Eyerman, Jeffrey C. Alexander, and Neil J. Smelser, and narrative theory by Gérard Genette respectively.

These women writers have explored children’s memories of the internment, which has been ignored in the past. The work I present demonstrates that there is a Japanese legacy which surfaces from these children’s lives and their beliefs. I have shown that even though children are too young to remember exactly the internment as their parents do, they have indelible memories of the internment. In fact, they not only underwent physical suffering in the camps but also endured psychological suffering caused by their loss of parents or siblings or both, and some even suffered sexual abuse or sibling incest. Clearly, children in reality as represented in fiction were traumatized during the internment. However, they dealt with trauma in their age-appropriate ways: some draw pictures, others play music, and still others imagine themselves part of a fairy tale to escape the

harsh reality of the internment.

When these children grow up, they become conscious of the injustice in the past as well as cultural racism at present against them as a collective group. This awareness and awakening encourages them to participate in the construction of a collective cultural memory. During this process, some child survivors unwittingly internalize cultural racism, others encounter identity crisis, and still others display traumatic responses attributable to intergenerational transmission from their parents or aunts and uncles. Literally, influenced by their Japanese cultural concepts such as *gaman* (perseverance), *enryo* (self-restraint), *haji* (shame) and *Shikata ga nai* (It cannot be helped), most child survivors in fiction stay silent in the postwar years. Until the 1970s they did not dare to voice their unhappiness and misfortunes, even though their verbal silence, amniotic silence, and artistic silence in their earlier years also serve as resistance to unfairness and cultural racism. After that point of time, they began to make meanings of their memories of cultural suffering and postwar racism. In the discussion above, I have tried to show how they have waged their struggle.

In addition, this historical fiction addresses “rather than suppresses the multiplicity of viewpoints and the interpretive and narrative strategies involved in constructing a plausible story about historical events, rather than unilaterally conveying an authoritative historical account to be passively consumed” (Wyile 18). Such “perspectival multiplicity and polyphony” helps to subvert “the tyranny of the singular, authoritative view of the past” and to make it “as an experience more approximate to a view of the past and to render it as an experience more approximate to an encounter with the archive” (18). In other words, the multiple, varying, contrasting, and even conflicting perspectives of the individuals and the official records of the internment of Japanese Canadians tend to be left to the readers. For instance, in representing children’s psychological

trauma and cultural trauma displayed in their evolving perspectives of the internment in different life stages, the authors of the five fictional texts also turn to the narrative interplay of children's internment experiences. In the two children's books, *A Child in Prison Camp* and *Naomi's Road*, Takashima and Kogawa have utilized chronological order and fixed points of view in recounting children's internment story, whereas in the three adults' novels, *Obasan*, *The Electrical Field*, and *Requiem*, Kogawa, Sakamoto, and Itani have relied upon anachronies and shifting points of view to create incoherent and disrupted narrative structure in their documentation of the internment. While in the former, the linear structure and single narrative voice render child protagonists' psychological trauma and cultural trauma easily readable and decipherable for young readers, in the latter, the fractured narrative structure complements the fragmented traumatic experience and the shifting points of view coincide with child survivors' meaning-making process of cultural trauma. Meanwhile, narrative frequency in both types of narration aligns children's PTSD symptoms resulting from their loss of home, caregivers, and innocence and coping mechanisms of cultural trauma. This kind of "self-reflexiveness about the writing of history that characterizes what Hutcheon has termed 'historiographical metafiction,'" which "does not deny that reality is or was, it just questions how we know that and how it is or was" (Wyile 17).

Studying and analyzing works of POW literature, especially works that relate to children in internment during World War II, is significant. It contributes to the current state of Canadian literary studies in that there is no systematic literary study of Canadian POW literature, especially with the focus of children's and women's perspectives. Meanwhile, these Japanese-Canadian children, together with their parents, are Canadian citizens, not Japanese soldiers. However, the aggression of the Japanese army caused them harm. They were victims of both Fascist Japan and racial discrimination and prejudice in Canada during World War II. As well, the past wrongs of

political governments need to be corrected. These five works remind us of the immense human tragedy that occurs from time to time, as well as the lack of humanity that various elected governments have shown in times of moral challenge. Even today, while the world is dealing with the pandemic, overt racism against visible minorities in North America and elsewhere, especially Asian minorities such as Chinese Canadians or Chinese Americans, is apparent. This political phenomenon has once again demonstrated the need to expose and resist injustice against Asian Canadians or other ethnic minorities in North America, and in other parts of the world. There is no place for such injustice in any civilized society striving for equality and prosperity.



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## Appendix 1

### Chronology of Japanese Canadian Internment

- 1877 Manzo Nagano, the first known Japanese settles in Victoria, B.C., Canada
- 1902 The Privy Council of British supports the B.C. laws that deny Asians the right to vote.
- 1907 The Anti-Asiatic League organized a protest rally which turns into a riot in Chinese and Japanese sections of Vancouver
- 1908 The Hayashi-Lemieux “Gentlemen’s Agreement” restricts Japanese immigration to Canada
- 1914 Outbreak of World War I
- 1939 Outbreak of World War II
- 1941 a. January 7—a Special Committee of the Cabinet War Committee recommends that Japanese Canadians not allowed to volunteer for the armed services
- b. March to August—Compulsory registration of all Japanese Canadians over 16 years is carried out by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP)
- c. December 7—Japan attacks Pearl Harbor
- d. December 8—1,200 fishing boats of Japanese Canadians are confiscated, Japanese language newspapers and schools close, Japanese-Canadian insurance policies are cancelled
- e. December 16—mandatory registration of all persons of Japanese origin to register as enemy aliens, regardless of their citizenship
- 1942 a. January 16—a 100-mile area inland from the West Coast is designated as “protected zone”
- b. February 24—all men labeled “enemy aliens” aged 18 and over are forced to leave the

- “protected zone” before April 1
- c. February 26—all persons of Japanese race are required to leave the coastal areas of B.C.
  - d. March 4—Japanese-Canadian property and belongings are entrusted to the Custodian of Enemy Alien Property
- 1942 October—22,000 persons of Japanese race have been uprooted forcibly from the coast and sent to inland ghost towns of B.C., 75% are Canadian citizens (60% Canadian born and 15% naturalized)
- 1944 August 4—Prime Minister King states it is desirable that Japanese Canadians are dispersed across Canada
- 1945 September 2—Japan surrenders; the U.S. drops atom bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki; all internment camps are ordered to close; Japanese Canadians are not allowed to return to their homes in Vancouver, and they are ordered to either go to provinces in east of the Rockies or go to Japan
- 1946 January 1—The *War Measures Act* expires; the *National Emergency Transitional Powers Act* is used to keep Japanese Canadian in place
- 1947 April—The *Citizenship Act* extends the franchise to Canadians of Chinese and South Asian origin, but excludes Japanese Canadians and Aboriginal peoples
- 1949 March 31—Restrictions imposed under the *War Measures Act* are lifted and franchise is granted to Japanese Canadians. They are free to move in Canada
- 1988 September 22—The Japanese Canadian Redress Agreement is signed, Prime Minister Brian Mulroney apologizes to Japanese Canadians on radio, a compensation of \$21,000 is issued



## Appendix 2

### Gentlemen's Agreement

In 1908, the federal government of Canada negotiated the Gentlemen's Agreement with Japan in the Lemieux mission during which expediency was the guiding rule of conduct. While the existing trade treaty in Canada in 1908 "guaranteed the Japanese full liberty to enter, travel or reside in any part of the Dominion as well as protection for their persons and property," the Japanese government said they do not want the "complete enjoyment of those rights" (Adachi 81). Consequently, both Japan and Canada agreed to solve the problem by signing a provisional agreement. In this agreement, Japan voluntarily restricted its immigration to Canada to "an annual maximum of 400" male labourers and domestic servants per year (81). In fact, only four kinds of people of Japanese race were allowed to enter Canada: first, returning immigrants and their immediate families; two, emigrants "specially engaged" by residents of Japanese ancestry in Canada for "personal or domestic service"; third, laborers under "specifically-worded contracts" approved by Canadian government; four, "agricultural laborers contracted by Japanese resident agricultural holders" in Canada, "limited to ten for each one hundred acres of land owned" (81). As a consequence, "picture brides" become widespread (Fukawa 29).

### Appendix 3

#### *War Measures Act*

The *War Measures Act* was a federal law first carried out in 1914. It gives broad powers to Canadian government the “censorship on all forms of communication and the arrest, detention and deportation of dangerous enemy aliens. Subsequent orders-in-council in October 1914 and September 1916 prohibited enemy aliens from possessing firearms and instituted a system of police and military registration” (qtd. in Avery 276). Thus, during World War I between 1914 to 1919, the racialized Ukrainian individuals and communities in Canada were deemed loyal or disloyal, law-abiding or revolutionary, according to how their behaviour conformed to the values and norms of the Anglo-Saxon Canadians. most Ukrainian communities face during World War I.

In contrast to racial hostility and capitalism executed on Ukrainian communities during the Great War, Japanese Canadians encounter even worse situation during World War II. In fact, the same *War Measures Act* that interned Ukrainian Canadians during the First World War was taken into effect on Japanese Canadians right after Japan’s attack on Pearl Harbour on 7 December 1941. Evoking the *War Measures Act* on February 24, 1942, Alexandra L. Wood states, “King created a 100-mile exclusion zone along the provincial coast and authorized the removal of approximately 22,000 persons of Japanese ancestry living in BC—nearly 95 percent of the Nikkei population in Canada” (350). Worse still, the property and belongings of Japanese Canadians are confiscated by the government.

## Appendix 4

### Protected Zone

According to Order-in-Council P.C. 1486 in the *War Measures Act*, all persons of Japanese origin should be removed within 100 miles (160 kilometers) of the Pacific Ocean—they were forced to leave, prohibited from entering or returning to the 100-mile-wide coastal areas. In Adachi's words, this area was "some 100 miles wide extending from the Pacific Ocean to the Cascade Mountains, including all the islands off the coast, and bound by the Yukon on the north and the Canada-United States border on the south" (Adachi 209).

## Appendix 5

### Redress Agreement

The Japanese Canadian Redress Agreement was approved in 1988. In this agreement, the Canadian government admitted its wrong doings to Japanese Canadians. In August President Ronald Reagan approved the Civil Liberties' Act which provided compensation to Japanese Americans who were interned in camps and suffered rights violations in the U.S. Following this Act, the then Prime Minister Brian Mulroney stood in the House of Commons on September 22, 1988, and formally acknowledged the injustices and inequality that Japanese Canadians received during World War II. He also pledged to ensure that such events would not happen again. In addition, the federal government offered \$21,000 to each individual Japanese Canadian who are directly affected by the internment and \$12 million to the Japanese Canadian community, through "the National Association of Japanese Canadians, to undertake educational, social, and cultural activities or programs that contribute to the well-being of the community or that promote human rights" (Fukawa 130).