

Absent Images of Memory: Remembering and Reenacting the Japanese Internment

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What would the construction of history be without the occasion of the anniversary? Time is marked in increments, each signaling a collective and institutional desire to fix history in place and declare it stable, coherent, and resolved. Some anniversaries speak louder than others, and the fiftieth anniversary of an event speaks perhaps most dramatically of all: Fifty years, representing half a century, a time when, unlike the hundredth anniversary, many participants are still alive, reflecting on the meaning of their lives. In the context of the historical anniversary, the conflict between the desire for history as a means of closure and memory as a means for personal and cultural catharsis is revealed.

In the years 1994 and 1995, the unfolding of history was heavily marked, and memories were called upon, retold, and dramatically reenacted. The fiftieth anniversaries of the end of World War II in Europe, the end of the Asia Pacific War, and the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki occasioned

a broad array of memory rituals and acts of remembrance — of atonements for war activities and defiant reiterations of wartime rhetoric, each with conflicting agendas. In the reconsideration of the war's meaning, memories were conjured to justify arguments both for and against the war's actions; they were both subsumed within and entangled with official narratives of history.

The tension between memory and history is an active process that moves both ways— from memory to history as well as from history to memory. Thus, while the memories of survivors can become part of the texts of history, historical narratives can often reshape personal memories. The process of history making is highly complex; it takes place in the United States through a variety of cultural arenas, including the media, Hollywood narrative films, and museums, in addition to the academy. This means that memories, artifacts, images, and events often get marked as *historical* without the aid of historians. Rather than positing memory and history as oppositional, as they are often described, I consider them to be entangled, each pulling forms from the other. However, it is often politically important to mark when distinctions can be made between them.

When personal memories are deployed in the context of marking the anniversary of historical events, they are presented either as the embodied evidence of history or as evidence of history's failures. Survivors return to the sites of their war experience; they place their bodies within the discourse of remembering either to affirm history's narratives or to declare them incomplete, incapable of conjuring their experience. They represent a very particular form of embodied memory. While history functions much more smoothly in the absence of survivors, and survivors are often dissenting voices to history's narratives, history making also accords to them a very particular authority as the embodiment of authentic experience.

At the same time, the tension of history and memory problematizes this very question of experience. The original experiences of memory are irretrievable; we cannot ever "know" them except through memory. Memories are narratives that are told and retold, reenacted and reimaged. Memory is ontologically fluid, and memories are constantly subject to rescripting and fantasy. This does not mean that we cannot address issues of authenticity and accuracy in memory but that we must foreground its relationship to

desire and its political nature. Indeed, what memories tell us, more than anything, is about the stakes held by individuals and institutions in what the past means.

In this essay, I would like to address the issues of personal memory, history, and cultural memory in the context of the anniversary of the Asia Pacific War by examining a historical event that has spoken its presence through its absent representation: the internment of mainland Japanese Americans in camps during the war. I have chosen to write this as a form of dialogue with the videotape *History and Memory* (1991), by the American videomaker Rea Tajiri.¹ Tajiri's reconstruction of her family's memories of the internment camps speaks in compelling ways about the role of the camera image in the production of history and memory and about remembering in the absence of memory. Through Tajiri's work, I would like to examine what it means in the tangle of history and memory to render the internment visible. (All of the figures in this essay are taken from *History and Memory*.)

The Image as History

In the intersecting arenas of personal memory, cultural memory, and history, in which shared memories and memory objects can move from one realm to another, shifting meaning and context, the camera image—photograph, film, and video/television—plays a very particular role. Images have profound capacities to create, trouble, and interfere with our memories, as individuals and as a nation. Hollywood narrative-film images often reenact and subsume documentary images, which can in turn subsume personal memories and images. For instance, for many World War II veterans, Hollywood World War II movies have *become* their memories, subsuming their personal images into a general script. The relationship of the camera image to memory and history, moreover, is one of contradiction. On the one hand, camera images can embody and create memories; on the other hand, they have the capacity through the power of their presence to obliterate other, unphotographed memories. As technologies of memory, they actively produce both memory and forgetting.

Forgetting can be produced through the absence of images. Many hor-

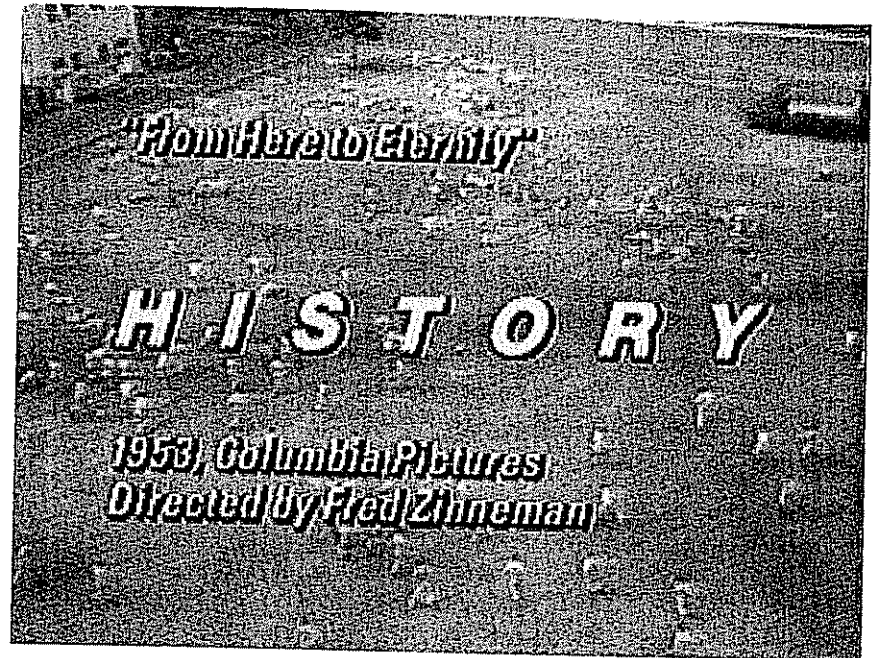
rific events of twentieth-century history, such as the Holocaust, were relentlessly and copiously documented in camera images. Yet other traumatic events, such as the genocide of Cambodians under the Pol Pot regime in the late 1970s or the more recent mass murders in Rwanda, have gone relatively undocumented, producing few photographic images to capture the global public's attention. Yet forgetting can also be produced through the presence of images. A single image-icon can screen out other images of a historical event. For instance, the iconic image of the mushroom cloud of the atom bomb obliterates the less well-known images of the bomb's destruction.

Hence, memory acquires cultural and historical meaning when it is articulated through the processes of representation. Andreas Huyssen writes:

Rather than leading us to some authentic origin or giving us verifiable access to the real, memory, even and especially in its belatedness, is itself based on representation. The past is not simply there in memory, but it must be articulated to become memory. The fissure that opens up between experiencing an event and remembering it in representation is unavoidable. Rather than lamenting or ignoring it, this split should be understood as a powerful stimulant for cultural and artistic creativity.²

Huyssen suggests that the tension that arises in the cultural mediation of memory is the source of artistic engagement with the past. I would push his point further to argue that it is precisely the instability of memory that provides for its importance in pointing to the meaning of the past. Camera images are a major factor in this traversing of memories between the realms of personal memory, cultural memory, and history.

For Americans, the Asia Pacific War produced several image-icons, most notably the raising by U.S. soldiers of the American flag at Iwo Jima (its iconic status as a photographic image was further established by its rendering in the Marine Corps Memorial in Arlington, Virginia)³ and the image of the mushroom cloud from the atomic blast rising over Hiroshima. Other images are generic: men running as boats smoke and sink at Pearl Harbor, American soldiers in the trenches in tropical locations, and Japanese planes crashing into the sea. The sources of these images of history are many and are as likely to be the screen images of Hollywood films such as *Thirty Seconds over Tokyo* (1944), *Guadalcanal Diary* (1943), *Sands of Iwo Jima* (1949),



or *From Here to Eternity* (1953) as documentary footage. These images are components of the national narrative of the war, in which the United States is a triumphant and moral nation; as such, they screen out more disruptive images. Other images, such as the photographs and film footage of Hiroshima immediately after the bomb, were held in government archives until their cultural meanings were considerably muted.⁴

Absent Images of Memory

Yet there are also events of World War II that did not produce image-icons. The forced internment of mainland Japanese American citizens after the bombing of Pearl Harbor in 1941 is an event for which history provides images primarily through their absence. Indeed, the government attempted through censorship to control the representation of the internment: It produced propaganda films depicting the camps as a benevolent exercise in

civil obedience. The federal government prohibited cameras in the camps, thus attempting to prevent any significant production of counterimages. This limited cultural representation of the camps was compounded by the protracted silence of many of the former internees.

In many ways, the historical narrative of the internment remains relatively intact. Despite the payment of reparations and despite the semblance of a national atonement, the internment continues to be narrativized as a regrettable step that appeared necessary in its time—but not as bad as what other countries did. Even though the term *concentration camps* was used by government officials and by Presidents Roosevelt and Truman, the image of so-called relocation camps where people were peaceably assembled screens out the image of prison camps where people became ill and died and where resisters were shot. The historical claim of the internment as benevolent remains fixed through its alliance with the claim that use of the atomic bomb was inevitable, an act that was appropriate for its time. To question one of these narratives would be to question them all, hence they remain fundamentally unexamined.

As a historical event marked by silences and strategic forgetting, the internment of Japanese Americans produces memory in several ways: in its survivors, in the artifacts to which they imbue their memories, and in its “absent presence.” Objects of memory haunt the remembering of the internment. It was an event for which the creation and destruction of memory objects was very particular. Although Japanese families in the American territory of Hawaii were not interned en masse because of their importance to the local war economy, they were harassed and detained. Many destroyed their memory objects—photographs, letters, Japanese books and clothing—in an attempt to obliterate their ethnic status through destroying its evidence.⁵ On the mainland, Japanese Americans were able to take very few possessions with them to the internment camps.⁶ At the exhibition *America's Concentration Camps*, shown at the Japanese American National Museum in Los Angeles in 1995, maps, letters, and photographs were used to conjure the experience of the camps. There, amid the vitrines, sat a group of trunks and suitcases that had been neatly packed and left at the Panama Hotel in Seattle but had never been claimed after the war—these were objects that had become, for many reasons, irretrievable.

The story that Rea Tajiri tells in *History and Memory* is marked by meanings found in objects of memory and the presence and absence of camera images. Tajiri is compelled by the gaps in her mother's memory, by her own sense of incompleteness, and by the absent presence of the camps in the national memory to counter the historical images of her parents' families' internment. While her father served in the 442nd Regiment, their house was literally moved away, never to be seen again. She re-creates an image of her mother filling a canteen at a faucet in the desert, an image she has always carried, for which she wants to find a story. She states:

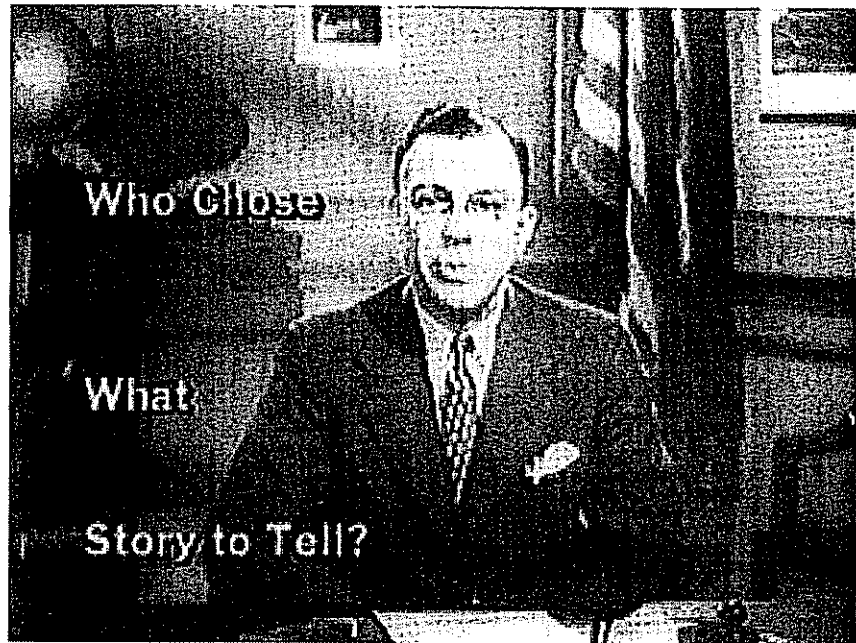
There are things which have happened in the world while there were cameras watching, things we have images for. There are other things which have happened while there were no cameras watching, which we restage in front of cameras to have images of.

There are things which have happened for which the only images that exist are in the minds of observers, present at the time, while there are things which have happened for which there have been no observers, except the spirits of the dead.

What are the traces of events for which there have been no camera images? Tajiri imagines the spirit of her grandfather watching an argument between her parents about the "unexplained nightmares that their daughter has been having on the twentieth anniversary of the bombing of Pearl Harbor." He is the witness of the absent image, one that she then re-creates.

Counterimages and Absent Presence

Despite government attempts to control all representation of the camps, counterimages were nevertheless produced. Artwork by camp internees such as Estelle Ishigo, Henry Sugimoto, George Matsusaburo Hibi, and Chiura Obata, among others, has been widely exhibited, and photographers such as Ansel Adams and Toyo Miyatake photographed Manzanar.⁷ The photographs taken by photographers hired by the War Relocation Authority (WRA), who included the well-known photographer Dorothea Lange, were, like the famous Farm Security Administration photographs of the Depression era, government-sponsored images that transcended their original



intent. These are moving images of internees being evacuated, of children with large identification tags staring in disbelief at the camera, of families assembled in cramped quarters. Yet these images are, for the most part, absent from the litany of World War II images that comprise its iconic history.

That the internment produced no singular image-icons cannot simply be attributed to the prohibition on cameras and the government's desire to render the event invisible. The more relevant question is why photographs by photographers such as Adams, Lange, and Miyatake are absent from the image-history canon of the war. It could be argued that the internment produced an image both too disruptive and too domestic to conform to the war's narratives. These were not aggressive enemies who were easily demonized. They were profoundly ordinary and too close to the ideal of hard-working Americans for comfort. These were people who responded for the most part without resistance, who turned the desert into gardens. They also

served in the army in terms that can be read as a determination both to prove national loyalty and to counter racist stereotypes. As Tak Fujitani writes, the military feats of the Nisei soldiers were subsumed into narratives of American nationalism.⁸ This did not allow for their relatives to be easily demonized in simple terms.

Ironically, while the government and the media attempted at the time to depict the Japanese as sinister and untrustworthy, it also went to great lengths to distinguish other Asians and Asian Americans, such as the Chinese, in positive terms.⁹ This allowed for the generic notion of the Asian American to be troubled. At the same time, government propaganda films aimed to show how well the Japanese were being treated and depicted the camps as a kind of summer camp, with craft classes and group activities. This image of hyperdomesticity served to feminize the camps and emasculate the Japanese men within them, which may account in part for the hypermasculine discourse of the Nisei soldiers. The government films erased the elements of political activity and resistance that existed within the camps. Hence, the government's production of images of its "benevolent" treatment of the Nisei and Issei in these films was in part contingent on it producing images of them as model and obedient citizens. The home movies taken from cameras smuggled into the camps contrast to the evenly lit, clean images of government propaganda films. Yet, in their jerky movements and recordings of moments of shyness, daily routines, and snow-covered landscapes, they show not resistance and barbed wire but a profound ordinariness, an unexpected everydayness.¹⁰ Indeed, their primary focus appears to be snow, since many internees were from the West Coast and had never seen it before.

While the image of Iwo Jima achieved iconic status through its depiction of standard tropes of heroism and sacrifice, and the image of the atomic blast succeeds as pure spectacle, the internment of the Japanese Americans ultimately can find no such traditional narrative—of either conflict, resistance, or brutal injustice. Its images are overwhelmed by their sense of the ordinary and the domestic, outside of the discourse of war.

While the history of the Asia Pacific War exists now in cultural memory more through the images of films such as *Bataan* (1943), *Sands of Iwo Jima*, and *Gung Hol* (1944), the internment for the most part has not been sub-



jected to the codes of jingoistic cinematic revisionism. It was recently retold in the 1990 film *Come See the Paradise*, in which the camps function primarily as a backdrop for an interracial romance. This film's more radical elements (for example, its depiction of racism) are undercut by its privileging of the story of its white male protagonist, played by Dennis Quaid, whose character allows white viewers to gain atonement through their identification with his apparent transcendence of racism. Unlike the battles of the war or the struggles at home of white, middle-class American families, which could be narrativized in the traditional clichés of nationalism, the internment has resisted certain kinds of direct cultural representation.

In *History and Memory*, Tajiri notes that the 1954 film *Bad Day at Black Rock*, directed by John Sturges, perhaps most powerfully reenacts the absent presence of the Japanese American internment. In this film, John Macreedy (Spencer Tracy) comes to Black Rock, a desolate desert town east of the

Sierra Mountains, in a place that looks strikingly like the locale of the Manzanar camp. He is searching for Komoko, a Japanese farmer, whose son died while saving Macreedy's life during the war in Italy. Confronted by hostile and ultimately murderous cowboys, Macreedy learns that before the war, Komoko had discovered water in the dry desert and, like the internees, made it blossom. Brutally murdered the day after Pearl Harbor, Komoko is a figure whose death secretly haunts the town.¹¹

Bad Day at Black Rock tells its story through presenting absence. Komoko is never seen in the film, but his death exposes the brutal reality of the all-American western town: lawless, self-loathing, fearful in its core. Macreedy, as the emblem of American justice, must stand in for him. Indeed, the film is less about Komoko than about the discovery by the jaded and cynical veteran that his life still has purpose — in this case, to uphold the law in a lawless town.

Bad Day at Black Rock is also a film about postwar masculinity and the end of the American West. This end is signaled by the capacity of a Japanese American to be better both at farming the land (Komoko finds water where Reno Smith, his murderer, could not) and at being a war hero (Komoko's son is awarded a medal by the government). The cowboys in Black Rock, former icons of the American West (and played, not incidentally, by several major Hollywood stars, including Robert Ryan, Ernest Borgnine, Lee Marvin, and Walter Brennan), never went to war. Indeed, Smith's anger at being turned away by the draft the day after Pearl Harbor is presented in the film as instigating his rage to kill Komoko. The film thus portrays the cowboys as emblems of masculine hypocrisy and hollow bravado. This image of a morally bankrupt America is redeemed only by Macreedy, the wounded veteran with a sense of justice, the man who went to war and who suffered. (In a strange plot twist, though he has lost the use of one arm, he defends himself through the martial arts of judo and karate!) There is only one female in this town, the ill-fated sister of one of the men, played by Ann Francis; otherwise, it is populated by men with nothing to do. They represent the end of the myth of the American West as the province of the white male cowboy. Smith says to Macreedy, "Somebody's always looking for something in this part of the West. To the historians, it's the Old West. To the book writers, it's the Wild West. To the businessman,

it's the undeveloped West. . . . But, to us, this place is our West, and I wish they would leave us alone."

When the cowboys plot to kill Macreeby after he discovers too much, it is cowardice that compels them. He represents memory; they think they can obliterate it, but it is already haunting them and festering within them. Indeed, when, in concession to standard Hollywood narrative form, law and order is restored at the end of the film, it remains unconvincing precisely because of the film's radical and effective portrayal of Black Rock as emblematic of the worst of America—racist, misogynist, brutal, and unrepentant.

Ironically, *Bad Day at Black Rock* succeeds in evoking the cultural implications of the Japanese internment and American racial conflict through its absence. The internment camps haunt national memory the way that Komoko's death haunts Black Rock, speaking in their absence. It indicates precisely the underlying issue raised by the internment—how this demonstration of racial hatred demands an investigation of the nature of the myth of what it means to be an American. In their attempt to murder the Other, the cowboys of Black Rock expose the fragility of the myth of the American West that provides them with meaning. In the end, they have nothing.

The Reenactment of Memory

The remembering of the internment camps and the demand for reparations have come primarily through the interventions of Sansei, the children of the Nisei who were imprisoned. Unlike their parents, they are a generation that grew up outside of the camps, with a conviction of their rights to redress and memory. In *History and Memory*, Tajiri represents those Sansei who, haunted by both the silence of their parents and the sense of a memory they cannot quite narrativize, choose to tell their own stories. She states:

I began searching for a history, my own history, because I had known all along that the stories I had heard were not true and parts had been left out. I remember having this feeling growing up that I was haunted by something, that I was living within a family full of ghosts. There was this place that they knew about. I had never been there, yet I had a memory

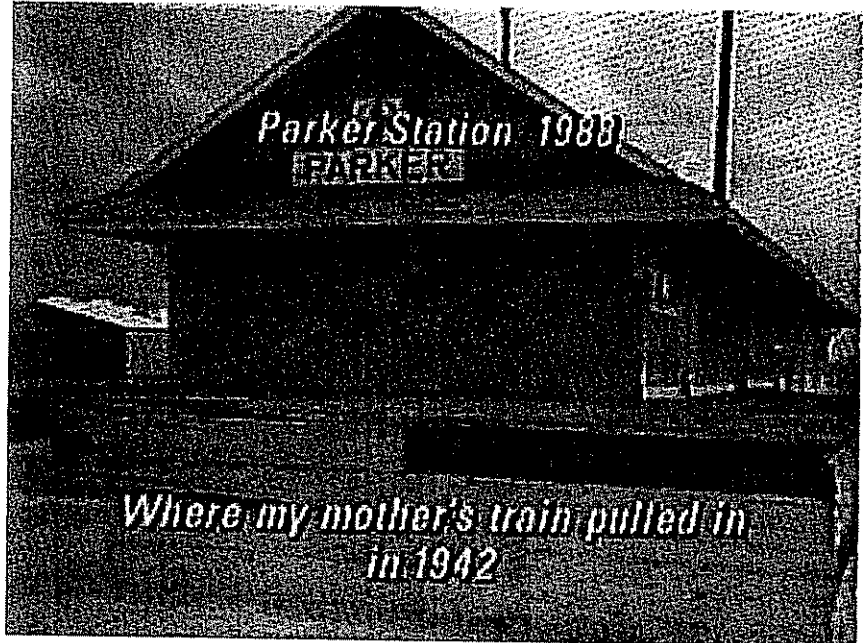
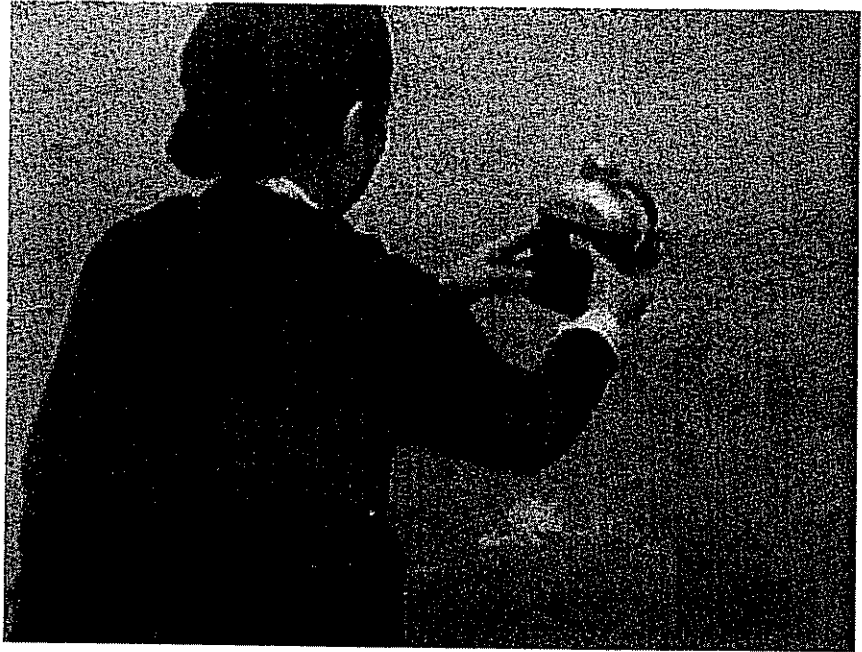
of it. I could remember a time of great sadness before I was born. We had been moved, uprooted. We had lived with a lot of pain. I had no idea where these memories came from, yet I knew the place.

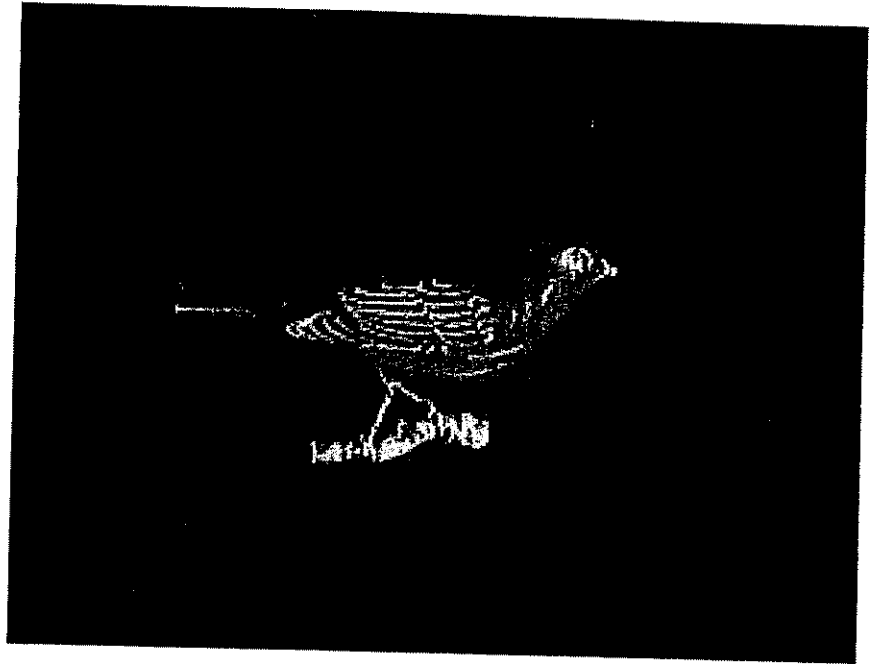
Tajiri offers testimony of her mother's embodied memory, yet she feels that this memory was born within her. She recounts these events using a collective "we." It is *already* her memory, demanding representation. This is an image that disrupts the concept of memory dying with the survivors, a different kind of embodied memory.

What is this kind of memory that is passed through generations, that is already within the child? Marianne Hirsch has used the term *post-memory* to describe the memories of the children of survivors, whose lives are dominated by the memories of events that preceded their birth. She writes: "Post-memory . . . is distinguished from memory by generational distance and from history by deep personal connection. Post-memory should reflect back on memory, revealing it as equally constructed, equally mediated by the processes of narration and imagination. . . . Photography is precisely the medium connecting memory and post-memory."¹²

Tajiri uses images to reenact the experience of the camps as a means to reconcile her memory of an event that she did not experience and to counter her mother's strategic forgetting. She wants to fill in the memory gaps with new images and to rework the images of the past in order to re-remember for her mother. Imagining her mother filling a canteen in the desert, she recreates that image. "For years," she states, "I have been living with this picture without the story. . . . Now I could forgive my mother for her loss of memory and could make this image for her." When her mother cannot remember how her family was transported to the camps, only that at the end they took a train in which the windows were closed, Tajiri goes back to film the landscape for her.

She is thus deliberately reconstructing and reenacting memories and their absence, showing her mother what she could not see and actively participating in shifting personal memory into the realm of cultural memory. It ultimately matters little how close her reconstructions are to her mother's originary experience. This is her memory; she has claimed it. Indeed, her reinterpretation of her mother's experience and her intervention into the





fragile text of memory allows for its resurgence and provides for a kind of closure. Like many other children of survivors of the internment camps, Tajiri's experience of history has been one of untold stories. She knows that her mother kept a small carved wooden bird on her dresser that she was not allowed to touch, but she doesn't know why. Later, she finds an image of her grandmother in the National Archives with the notation "Bird Carving Class." A memory object reinscribed, the bird's cryptic meaning is found, ironically, amidst the images of government propaganda. These carved and painted birds are primary memory artifacts of the camps, where crafts classes were clearly perceived as a means of keeping internees busy. They speak to the incongruities of the camps, the attempts to produce a camplike atmosphere in a prison, the production of paradoxical artifacts of memory.

The reenactment of Tajiri's videotape can be seen in the larger context of historical reenactment that has emerged in this fiftieth anniversary. While

history has been consistently reenacted in rituals such as the replaying of Civil War battles in the South and is redramatized in docudramas and narrative films, anniversaries form particular occasions for reenactment. On the fiftieth anniversary of the end of World War II, seventy-year-old veterans parachuted into the fields of Normandy and were allowed through the marking of history to replay their experiences; these, perhaps, were the moments in which their lives had held the most meaning. In Asia, peace marches crossed bridges once fought over, and in Japan, contradictory statements about the war reenacted its rhetoric. Endless documentary films replayed the war on television, and television movies and Hollywood films reenacted and rescripted its destruction in narratives of heroism and individual sacrifice.

It would be easy to dismiss these kinds of popular rituals as superficial, as forms of atonement that let the guilty feel cleansed or as inaccurate attempts to rewrite history as a smooth and untroubled text. However, this is too simple a dismissal. In fact, cultural memory is always being rescripted, just as personal memories are constantly recrafted and rethought. Renarratization is essential to memory. The reenactment of docudramas and anniversary rituals can be read not simply as history and memory's reinscription but rather as indicators of the fluid realm of memory itself.

Memorializing the Internment

I would argue that, despite the occasional public mention of the camps, they remained largely absent in the national events marking the anniversary of the war. This raises the question of the meaning of national atonement. What does it mean for a nation to apologize? In Japan, the initial refusal to apologize for the war spoke much more loudly than the belated apology itself. Can we really say that, in the case of the United States, an apology and the payment of twenty thousand dollars to survivors was a gesture that absolved the act? Doesn't this allow for the placement of a very small price on the losses generated by the camps? In addition, if the mere mention of the camps by an American president or former president constitutes atonement, as is often noted in the media, then the price to assuage guilt is small indeed.

History and Memory raises the question of how the camps should be remembered in the national discourse. Tajiri's videotape is one of several works made by Sansei and children of survivors and, as such, it constitutes a deliberate effort to move personal memory into cultural memory and to deploy memory through post-memory. It speaks both to the continuity of memories and the crucial role of survivors in speaking within history.

Yet what is the appropriate memory here? What kind of memorial is demanded? Can a memorial properly memorialize the event? Each of the campsites has a variety of memorial elements, and Manzanar was declared a historic site in 1992. Yet these are deliberately isolated places. Since 1995, a barracks from the Heart Mountain internment camp has sat on an empty lot in downtown Los Angeles, next to the Japanese American National Museum. Spare, incongruous, surrounded by barbed wire, it demands attention precisely because it has been moved from its site in a desolate part of Wyoming where it was designed not to be seen. The museum has organized reunions of camp survivors, gathered information on the stories of survivors, and will incorporate the barracks into its permanent home when it is built on the site. However, given its location in Little Tokyo in Los Angeles, the extent of its intervention into the national discourse remains limited.

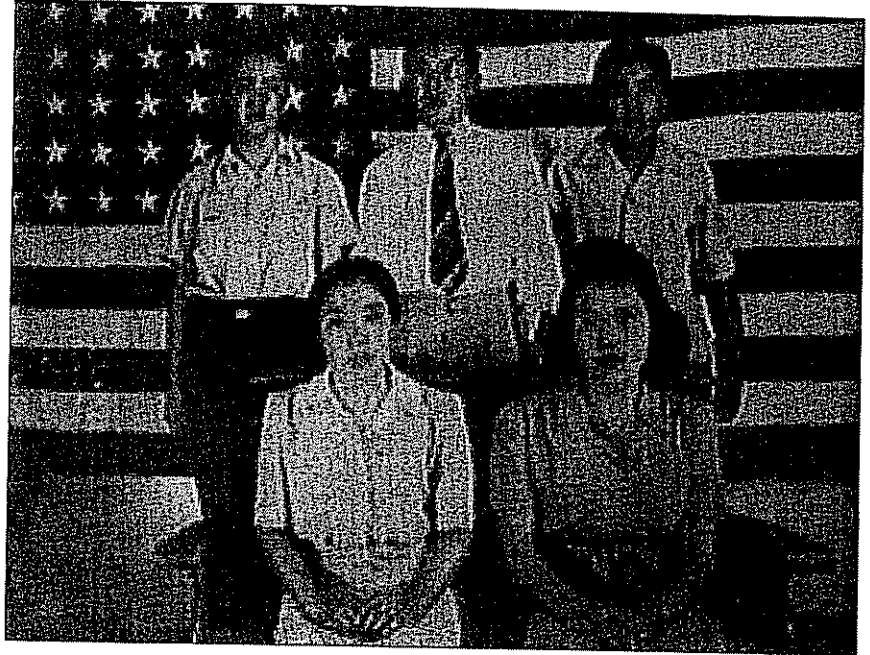
The most powerful kinds of memorials demand forms of reenactment in the sense that they force viewers to participate rather than to find a comfortable distance. The Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C., entices viewers to touch the names engraved on the wall and read the letters left by its base. The Holocaust Museum gives viewers an identity card in an attempt to have them follow the exhibit as participants. In Berlin, artists Renata Stih and Frieder Schnock created a series of signs that they posted in a former Jewish neighborhood. The signs catalogue, calmly and relentlessly, the orders created by the German government to gradually curtail the lives of German Jews—"Jews Are Forbidden to Grow Vegetables," "Jews Are Forbidden to Buy Milk," "Jews Are Forbidden to Go Swimming"—until, as Jane Kramer writes, Jews were forbidden to do anything but die.¹³ The signs function as an ongoing memorial, a daily reminder of the normalization of death, of cultural memory as the everyday.

What then does the internment demand as a memory representation?

What challenge does it pose to the complicity of memory and forgetting? What would it mean for Americans to remember the names Manzanar, Poston, Tule Lake, Topaz, Minidoka, Heart Mountain, Jerome, Gila River, Amache, and Rohwer in the way that they know the names Auschwitz, Dachau, and Buchenwald? To begin to memorialize the camps would mean to open up the question of what constitutes American nationalism and identity. To properly memorialize the camps and their survivors would mean to rethink the myth of America's actions in World War II, a myth that even now remains resolutely intact.

Like the atomic-bomb destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the internment of American citizens because of their race is an event that disrupts the compelling narrative of the United States as the triumphant country of World War II. This narrative of a moral nation forms the central image of American nationalism in the second half of the twentieth century—it is the primary element of what Lauren Berlant has termed the “national symbolic,” the process by which individuals are transformed into “subjects of a collectively-held history.”¹⁴ Full acknowledgment of the memory of the camps would require a refiguring of the definition of the national meaning of “America” and an acknowledgment that winning the war has for decades profoundly hampered any discourse on the question of the national myth, a question that was actively debated prior to the war. In rethinking this history, it is therefore necessary for us to consider the weight of this myth of American war morality on subsequent historical events, not simply the cold war and United States imperialism but the postwar ideology of what constitutes an American.

When internees left the camps, they were often provided with instructions on how to integrate back into America—ways to “successfully relocate.” These guides read like instructions for status as model minorities—don't stand out, don't congregate with other Japanese in public, speak English, be reliable and hardworking, remember the fate of others is in your hands. Ironically, one could argue that the internment succeeded in further Americanizing the Japanese Americans precisely because, as the Issei lost their economic power through the loss of businesses and property, they lost familial power over their offspring, and tightly knit communities were broken apart and dispersed after the war. At the same time, new com-



munities were formed as internees from different regions were placed together. In punishing the Japanese Americans as aliens, the camps ultimately worked to assimilate them.

This is the question that memorializing the camps poses. Perhaps only by understanding what kind of Americanness Japanese Americans constitute rather than problematize can we begin to trouble the image of America produced by the war.

Notes

All figures in this article are stills from Rea Tajiri's *History and Memory* and are reprinted courtesy of Electronic Arts Intermix. This essay is an extended version of a paper that was presented at the conference "The Politics of Remembering the Asia/Pacific War," East-West Center, Honolulu, September 1995. Thanks to Lisa Yoneyama, Tak Fujitani, and Geoff White for inviting me to the conference and for feedback on an earlier version of this article.

- 1 *History and Memory*, prod. and dir. Rea Tajiri, 33 min., 1991, videocassette. Distributed by Electronic Arts Intermix, New York.
- 2 Andreas Huyssen, *Twilight Memories* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 2-3.
- 3 A Pulitzer Prize-winning photograph taken by photojournalist Joe Rosenthal was the model for the Marine Corps Memorial. Of the six men in the photograph, three survived the war and posed for sculptor Felix W. de Weldon. Ironically, the famous Rosenthal photograph was, in fact, not a photograph of the actual event of the initial flag raising but of the replacement of the small original flag with a larger one. See Marvin Heiferman, "One Nation, Chiseled in Pictures," in "Lee Frielander: American Monuments" (special issue), *The Archive* 25 (1989), 10; U.S. National Park Service brochure "The United States Marine Corps War Memorial," 1987; and Karal Ann Marling and John Wetenhall, *Iwo Jima* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1991).
- 4 See Eric Barnouw, "Hiroshima-Nagasaki, August 1945," in *Transmission*, ed. Peter D'Agostino and David Tafler (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Press, 1995).
- 5 Gary Okihiko, *Cane Fires: The Anti-Japanese Movement in Hawaii, 1865-1945* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1991), 229-230.
- 6 Ronald Takaki, *Strangers from a Different Shore: A History of Asian Americans* (New York: Penguin, 1989), 393.
- 7 See, for instance, Peter Wright and John Armor, *Manzanar* (New York: Times Books, 1988); Ansel Adams, *Born Free and Equal* (New York: U.S. Camera, 1944); and Karin M. Higa, ed., *The View From Within: Japanese American Art from the Internment Camps, 1942-1945* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1992).
- 8 Tak Fujitani, "Nisei Soldiers As Citizens" (paper presented at the conference "The Politics of Remembering the Asia/Pacific War," East-West Center, Honolulu, September 1995).
- 9 For instance, *Time* magazine explained how to distinguish Chinese from Japanese in an array of racist stereotypes: "The Chinese expression is likely to be more placid, kindly, open; the Japanese more positive, dogmatic, arrogant. Japanese are hesitant, nervous in conversation, laugh loudly at the wrong time. Japanese walk stiffly erect, hard heeled. Chinese, more relaxed, have an easy gait, sometimes shuffle" (Takaki, *Strangers from a Different Shore*, 370).
- 10 These are compiled in Robert Nakamura's film *Something Strong Within* (Los Angeles: Japanese American National Museum, 1994). Some cameras were smuggled in with the help of sympathetic camp employees such as Dave Tatsuno, who made *Topaz, 1942-1945*. Toward the end of the camps, restrictions on cameras were enforced less and some of the home movies were taken more openly.
- 11 The film here probably refers to several incidents in which Asian Americans were murdered the day after Pearl Harbor. In one still unsolved case, a Chinese American man was decapitated in Tacoma, Washington, on 8 December 1941. See *Unfinished Business: The Japanese American Internment Cases*, prod. and dir. Steven Okazaki, 58 min. San Francisco: Mouchette Films, 1984.

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- 12 Marianne Hirsch, "Family Pictures: *Maus*, Mourning, and Post-Memory," *Discourse* 15, no. 2 (winter 1992-1993): 8
- 13 Jane Kramer, "Letter From Germany: The Politics of Memory," *New Yorker*, 14 August 1995, 65
- 14 Lauren Berlant, *The Anatomy of National Fantasy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 20