

**RECONTEXTUALIZING THE “SILENCE” OF JAPANESE CANADIANS: ARTISTIC
APPROACHES BY CINDY MOCHIZUKI AND EMMA NISHIMURA**

by

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The following individuals certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies for acceptance, the thesis entitled:

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Abstract

In the context of Japanese Canadian and Japanese American studies, the silence of the Second World War internment survivors is one of the most frequently discussed topics. This thesis explores the significant use of silence by two Japanese Canadian artists, Cindy Mochizuki and Emma Nishimura. With the impactful use of silence, Mochizuki's *Sue Sada Was Here* and Nishimura's *An Archive of Rememory* successfully interrupt the official narrative told in museums, which often silences the histories of ethnocultural minority groups in Canada.

The Japanese Canadian community is not solely responsible for their collective silence. Rather, as Mona Oikawa suggests, social amnesia is actively produced by the nation state and bystanders. Both artists' works successfully resist social amnesia and the erasure of memory enacted through the official discourse on reparation through their effective use of silence in their works. In Mochizuki's site-specific single-channeled video installation *Sue Sada Was Here*, performers' verbal silence strengthens their power of haunting, backed by the heavily layered sound and speeches of a writer Muriel Kitagawa. Building on Avery F. Gordon's discussion on ghosts' haunting, I argue this work successfully haunted the exhibition visitors, who might have felt being questioned their silence as bystanders. Nishimura heeds the silent memories through re-enacting her grandmother's wartime experience in making *An Archive of Rememory*. By folding photo-intaglio prints of family photographs into bundle-shaped sculptures, Nishimura rejects the homogenization of Japanese Canadian history and the reasons for their silence. This representation of silent memories achieves what Janet Wolff and Luc Boltanski's discussed as an adequate emotional proximity, which is required for the represented memory of pain to create a politically productive relationship with its witness.

Although scholars often prioritize speech over silence, silence is also an impactful communication tool. Both artists' own listening to their grandparents' silence, as well as the silence embodied in their works, demonstrates how the withholding of speech can mobilize the observers. It is more the task of observers to practice their listening and determine how they can ethically react to the silence of others.

Lay Summary

Two contemporary artworks, Cindy Mochizuki's *Sue Sada Was Here* and Emma Nishimura's *An Archive of Rememory* show how individuals can heed and ethically respond to silence: both artists examine the unspoken memories of the wartime internment of Japanese Canadians. Although scholars often prioritize speech over silence, the other's silence is an impactful communication tool. By demonstrating how silence can be embodied by the performing bodies, both artists effectively use silence as a vehicle of communication. In museums, both works successfully challenge the collective silence of the history of Japanese Canadian internment while respecting the survivors' silence. Memories can be transmitted through silence without breaking into speech, and it is more the task of observers to determine how they can react to the silence.

Preface

This thesis is original, unpublished, independent work by the author, Asumi Oba.

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Dedication

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Introduction: Whose Silence?

Either explicitly or not, various contemporary Japanese Canadian artists have dealt with the notion of silence, or more specifically, the power of not speaking in their performance and installation works. For instance, Jon Sasaki a Toronto-based Yonsei artist (a fourth-generation descendant of Japanese immigrants) conducted a performance titled *We first need a boat for the rising tide to lift us* in July 2019. Standing in middle of Fraser River delta near Steveston, where Sasaki's grandfather used to fish until the Canadian Navy confiscated his boat in 1941, Sasaki tries to build a wooden boat with traditional Japanese boatbuilding tools, which he had no previous experience working with. Through his improvised actions in the moving body of water, Jon Sasaki symbolically re-enacted his grandfather's wartime experience and performed the lost maritime knowledge in his family due to the government's uprooting of Japanese Canadian population in the Second World War. Watching the video recording of this performance, one notes Sasaki does not speak during this act; his mind is fully occupied by the complex task at hand. There is no room for any verbal information to be added to this video recording: no explanatory subtitles, voice-overs, nor any background music needed. His tense facial expression and the unstable gestures of using unfamiliar tools, convey his physical and emotional experience to his viewers.

Similarly, Vancouver-based multimedia artist Cindy Mochizuki directed an experimental dance film, titled *Sue Sada Was Here* (2018). Exhibited as a single-channel video installation, *Sue Sada Was Here* depicts the performers silence and their intricate gestures. This artwork was commissioned for a site-specific exhibition, *Memories of the Future III*, which was held in a historic house museum, Roedde House in Vancouver's West End neighborhood in Fall 2018.

Wearing period costume and hairstyles that resemble the fashion styles of Japanese Canadian women around the Second World War period, ten Japanese Canadian women, whose ages ranged from eight to 85, performed an experimental dance piece inside Roedde House. At times, the choreography mimicked domestic work that historically was associated with femininity, such as organizing teacups, plates, and books on a dining table. In other sequences, performers formed an intergenerational chain by leaning against each other, while keeping the books interspersed between their bodies. Throughout the film, performers did not speak a single word. Stating that those performers “return to embody Sue Sada” inside the house, the artist notes, “The performers use books as objects of print history that can omit histories of violence and colonialism. The books are also seen as objects on the edge of being ‘ghosted’ out, their significance wavering in comparison to the ubiquitous power of social media and digital technology.”¹ Both unspeaking bodies and books metaphorize silent ghosts, who withhold dense knowledge and are doomed to disappear with the passage of time. However, as Avery Gordon argues in *Ghostly Matters*, ghosts appear at places where they do not belong, to demand people’s attention: their haunting points out something needs to be done.² What is behind this performed silence? What does this silence point to?

As a Sansei, or third-generation descendant of Japanese immigrants, Mochizuki’s practice addresses the history of Japanese Canadians, including the stories of the artist’s own family members. Mochizuki’s paternal grandparents were part of the over 22,000 Japanese

¹ Cindy Mochizuki, “Memories of the Future III Opening September 25 - November 18,” artist website, Cindy Mochizuki, September 21, 2018, <https://www.cindymochizuki.com/cindys-blog/2018/9/21/memories-of-the-future-iii-opening-september-25-november-18>.

² Avery F. Gordon, *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), xvi.

Canadians, whom the government uprooted from the West Coast during the Second World War. They were sent to makeshift camps in inland BC, and the property they left behind, which the government secured the protection of, was sold without consent. “My grandmother never spoke about that history, so I would never get it in a very linear way,” Mochizuki says. “It would be maybe in snippets — it would maybe be in what she didn't say, and maybe what she left behind. For me it's like I'm a bit of a detective trying to figure out or piece together something.”³ Mochizuki's choice of heeding the silence, similarly with Jon Sasaki's performance, is different from breaking the silence of internment survivors, which a number of preexisting publications on Japanese Canadian history have often aimed to.

Joy Kogawa's *Obasan*, the award-winning Japanese Canadian novel, begins with this famous phrase, “There is a silence that cannot speak. There is a silence that will not speak.”⁴ In the context of Japanese Canadian and Japanese American studies, silence is indeed one of the most frequently discussed topics. A large body of literature specifically addresses the silence of the internment survivors, who mainly consists of Issei, the first-generation Japanese immigrants who suffered internment as adults, and their children, the second-generation Nisei, who were interned in their childhood or early adulthood. The impact of these survivors' silence on the current generations' understanding of Nikkei identity—this is to say, as descendants of Japanese immigrants—is incalculable.

³ Cindy Mochizuki, interviewed by Milena Salazar, “This Artist's Haunting Work Tells Her Grandmother's History, from Internment Camp to WWE Fandom,” *CBC Arts*, November 2, 2017, <https://www.cbc.ca/arts/exhibitionists/this-artist-s-haunting-work-tells-her-grandmother-s-history-from-internment-camp-to-wwe-fandom-1.4383994>.

⁴ Joy Kogawa, *Obasan*, Puffin Classics (Toronto: Penguin Random House Canada, 2014), 1.

In this thesis, I will explore the significant use of silence by two Japanese Canadian artists, Cindy Mochizuki and Emma Nishimura. Both Mochizuki's *Sue Sada Was Here* and Nishimura's *An Archive of Rememory* (2016-ongoing), depict people withholding speech. I argue that withholding is a powerful communication tool that draw observers' attention to what is reserved in speech. Although there is a lot of sound and speech used in *Sue Sada Was Here*, Mochizuki herself, as well as her performers, express their messages through what they do not voice. This site-specific film installation also questions the silence of its viewers as they go through the exhibition site. Nishimura's *An Archive of Rememory* rejects homogenization of Japanese Canadian history and the reasons for their collective silence through individualized representation of each wartime story. Nishimura also shows how a story multiplies itself though the process of its transmission, and how the meaning of the same story can vary depending on its receiver. Repetitiveness in making of *An Archive of Rememory* sculptures allows Nishimura to re-enact her paternal grandmother's internment experience, where Japanese Canadian community made and wore tailored outfits as a silent resistance to government injustice. Both artists' aim to draw a cohesive yet diverse picture of Japanese Canadian history, which the nation fragmented through its political violence. Both art installations, with their impactful use of silence, successfully interrupt the official narratives told in museums, which often silences the histories of ethnocultural minority groups in Canada.

In the global history of colonialism, state-led discrimination of its ethnocultural minority populations is not exclusive to Canada. In national museums, colonial countries exhibit objects that they have rooted from the colonized countries without mentioning the history of colonial violence. As Eva Mackey suggests, although Canada has successfully promoted its image of benevolent and ethnically inclusive country through settler and cultural colonialism, it has also

suppressed its various minority populations.⁵ This well-promoted image of Canada as racially inclusive country suppresses critical voices against the nation's history of colonial violence, as well as its ongoing cultural colonialism and injustice to the ethnocultural minority populations. The long-hauling effect of the internment on Japanese Canadian community was tremendous although it is not often discussed in Canadian public discourse.

According to Augie Fleras and John Lock Kunz, the mainstream media often portrait Indigenous populations, racial minorities, refugees, and immigrants as “problem people,” who remain outside the imagined community of Canada.⁶ Many Canadian politicians have also legitimized their race-based discrimination against non-white populations, exemplified by the legislations including the Indian Act, the Chinese head tax, the Chinese Exclusion Act, and the War Measures Act. Imperial Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941 was the excuse Ian Mackenzie, the representative of British Columbia in Canada's wartime cabinet, used to conduct the dispossession of Japanese Canadian population backed by strong public support from BC citizens.⁷ The incarceration of Japanese Canadians was not a random event of collective wartime hysteria. It was the result of the systematic elimination of non-white, non-European “problem people” to achieve the much longed for ideal of a “white man's country.”

Under this widespread exclusionary climate, Japanese immigrants to North America and their children came under a constant pressure to justify their presence in the adoptive countries, while at the same time pledging their loyalty to Imperial Japan. Japanese emigration to United

⁵ Eva Mackey, *House of Difference: Cultural Politics and National Identity in Canada*, Sussex Studies in Culture and Communication (London: Routledge, 1999), 16.

⁶ Augie Fleras and Jean Lock Kunz, *Media and Minorities: Representing Diversity in a Multicultural Canada*, (Toronto: Thompson Educational Publishing, 2001), 145-147.

⁷ Jordan Stanger-Ross, ed., *Landscapes of Injustice: A New Perspective on the Internment and Dispossession of Japanese Canadians* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2020), 4.

States, especially to Hawaii, started in 1860s. Many Issei worked in the primary industry, as their labour cost was cheaper relative to the European and Chinese workers. The first Japanese immigrant to Canada, Manzo Nagano also worked in the fishing and logging industries after his arrival to the New Westminster in 1877. By 1914, the permanent Japanese settlers in Canada exceeded 10,000. Prewar Japan recognized the oversea descendants of those Japanese emigrants as imperial subjects, who “were under intense pressure to support and defend” the country’s aggressive expansion under the pan-Asian ideology, an imperialist war of aggression carried out under the pretense of bringing peace to Asia.⁸ Meanwhile, Japanese immigrants strived to belong to the adoptive countries. Not only through providing their labour, under the Anti-Asian exclusionary climate, Nikkeijin, or people of Japanese descent, had to prove their cultural assimilability and their worth to the white settler-dominated society. Especially Nisei children, raised in a bicultural environment, were highly conscious about the politics of belonging. For instance, at a Japanese language school in Vancouver in 1921, a grade-six student wrote:

These days, the Japanese suffer from exclusion. How can we prevent this? First of all, we mustn't do things that will aggravate white people. ...When we go to the school grounds, we should play a lot with white children. That's what I always do. This way, the white children will like us, the teachers will like us, and we will learn English better. When we

⁸ Daniel Lachapelle Lemire, “Bittersweet Memories: Narratives of Japanese Canadian Children’s Experiences before the Second World War and the Politics of Redress,” *BC Studies; Vancouver*, no. 192 (Winter 2016/17): 86, 88.

go to school, if we listen to what the teacher says and do everything better than white children, the teacher will like us and so will the white children.⁹

Similarly, being a ten-year old boy in 1939, Alfie Kamitakahama remembers his Issei mother preparing care packages to both Japanese and Canadian armies at requests from both countries.¹⁰ According to Azuma Eiichiro, this in-betweenness, or the dual national identity of Nikkeijin, has often been overlooked by many academics.¹¹ The nations' uprooting of Nikkeijin, therefore, was received as a betrayal, as the communities had been making a constant effort to assimilate to a white dominant culture to prove their worth to belong to the adoptive country.

As a theoretical framework, I will build my argument based on Janet Wolff's analysis on Holocaust aesthetics and Luc Boltanski's human responses to others' suffering. In *The Aesthetics of Uncertainty*, Wolff argues that comparing to the realist presentation of the traumatic event, such as documentary photographs of gas chambers, abstracted figurative paintings such as *Charred Journal* series by Morris Louis and *Buchenwald Pit* by Rico Lebrun are more appropriate to express the memory of traumatic events.¹² Following Saul Friedlander's notion of "allusive realism," Wolff views abstract paintings as having "the drive to indirection and

⁹ *Nippon Kyōritsu Go-Gakkō, Gakkō Katei Tsūshin* [(Vancouver) Japanese Language School, School Newsletter], 1 (December 1921), 12, MS 106, Tsutae and Hanako Sato Fonds, NNM, quoted in Lemire, "Bittersweet Memories," 86.

¹⁰ Alfie Kamitakahama, interview by Susanne Tabata, "Ohanashi The Story of Our Elders," Nikkei National Museum & Cultural Centre, YouTube Video, 42:45, November 10, 2017. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ac7WYsaVQMU&list=PL3wWo2WfQlOfTrlW0BSxv_SroxAUegxkI&index=6.

¹¹ Azuma Eiichiro, *Between Two Empires: Race, History, and Transnationalism in Japanese America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 4-7.

¹² Janet Wolff, *The Aesthetics of Uncertainty* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 53-57.

complexity,” as “a response to the recognition of the inadequacy of art to comprehend (in both senses) the Holocaust.”¹³ At the same time, according to Wolff, allusive realism also has “an insistence on the dialogic participation of the viewer, whose active engagement is thereby guaranteed.”¹⁴ Sparing itself from becoming the source of re-traumatization, or producing a pornography of violence, abstracted figurative painting can be an effective tool for Holocaust survivors to build a constructive relationship with the audience, who may not be familiar with this part of history. This argument overlaps with philosopher Luc Boltanski’s analysis on the artistic representation of pain; a politically productive relationship requires a distance between the represented pain of others and those who witnesses the other’s pain.¹⁵ According to both scholars, artistic representation of traumatic memories would likely to draw a constructive discussion from viewers by setting an adequate emotional distance between the subject and object.

Building on Wolff and Luc Boltanski’s insights, I would like to see how the silence, or a power of withholding, is practiced in Mochizuki and Nishimura’s selected artworks. As Kris Acheson points out, there is a lack of literature on silence in comparison to that of speech.¹⁶ According to Wiesław Oleksy, the concept of performativity, or the power of language to change the world, has been inspirational to the diverse fields of scholars including in linguistics, law,

¹³ Ibid., 64, 68.

¹⁴ Ibid, 68.

¹⁵ Luc Boltanski, *Distant Suffering: Morality, Media, and Politics*, trans. Graham Burchell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 121-123.

¹⁶ Kris Acheson, “Silence as Gesture: Rethinking the Nature of Communicative Silences,” *Communication Theory* 18, no. 4 (November 2008): 536-37.

economics, and gender studies.¹⁷ Distinguishing performative utterances from other constructive utterances which operate mainly as describers of the world, John L. Austin focused on the external function of speech, in terms of “how the speakers use utterances to achieve intended communicative and social goals.”¹⁸ Overshadowed by the literature on utterances, the relative lack of interest in silence may coincide with the conventional view on silence as “simply the void in which speech occurs, the background or field that frames speech” in scholarship.¹⁹ Acheson rejects this view on silence by stating that the silence can also be “produced in reference to something, expressed by someone, and directed toward someone.”²⁰ Deriving from Merleau-Ponty’s idea of language as a gesture, Acheson sees silence as also a gesture: as same as speech, silence can be communicative, as it “produces emotional and physical symptoms in our phenomenal bodies, both when we encounter it and when we ourselves produce it.”²¹ Ultimately, the silence, as a communication tool, also has a power of changing the world, as same as any performative speech does.

Mochizuki’s *Sue Sada Was Here* and Nishimura’s *An Archive of Rememory* attract visitors’ attention to the verbal silence expressed by their subject matter, although they achieve this not through the abstraction of figure. What remains in silence differs in the two artworks; ultimately, however, the performed silence in both works creates what Wolff and Luc Boltanski call a politically meaningful relationship with its observers. Borrowing from Acheson’s idea

¹⁷ Wiesław Oleksy, “Performativity Revisited: J. L. Austin and His Legacy,” in *Memory, Identity and Cognition: Explorations in Culture and Communication*, ed. Jacek Mianowski, Michał Borodo, and Paweł Schreiber, Second Language Learning and Teaching (New York: Springer International Publishing, 2019), 120.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 117.

¹⁹ Acheson, “Silence as Gesture,” 536.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 542.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 547.

discussed above, I see the silence embodied in both of these artworks as communicative. As performance scholar Diana Taylor notes, although linear speech and writing have often been prioritized over other forms of knowledge-making, “We learn and transmit knowledge through embodied action, through cultural agency, and by making choices. Performance, for me, functions as an episteme, a way of knowing, not simply an object of analysis.”²² The speech-silence binary traps colonized subjects from inserting their views into the conventional system of knowledge production, which phenomenon is famously highlighted by Gayatri C. Spivak’s remark that the subalterns cannot speak.²³ Resonating with Taylor and Acheson’s arguments, I see the field of art as a space where the silence of historically underrepresented communities can reclaim their power as knowledge-making, because artworks can be a vehicle of non-verbal communication. As Michel Foucault mentioned, it is up to observers how they address the unspoken memories that were communicated to them: “There is no binary division to be made between what one says and what one does not say; we must try to determine the different ways of not saying things, how those who can and those who cannot speak of them are distributed, which type of discourse is authorized, or which form of discretion is required in either case.”²⁴ Heeding the unspoken memories of internment survivors, Nishimura and Mochizuki, along with many other artists and researchers, have grappled with how to communicate the collective memory of internment without breaking the verbal silence of the survivors.

²² Diana Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003), xvi.

²³ Gayatri Chakravarty Spivak, “Can the Subaltern Speak?,” in *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory*, ed. Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman, 1st ed. (London: Routledge, 2015), 104.

²⁴ Michael Foucault, *The History of sexuality: An Introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage Books, 1990), 27.

In this thesis, I will analyze the role that silence plays in Mochizuki and Nishimura's art installations. The two installations use silence differently. In *Sue Sada Was Here*, contrasted by Mochizuki's voice reciting Kitagawa's writings and other non-diegetic sound, two groups' silence are highlighted; one is a silence of Japanese Canadian women, who have embodied experiences of living in a racialized and gendered discourse, and another is the silence of exhibition visitors as bystanders of others' suffering from cultural colonialism and social injustices. The former group's silence haunts the exhibition location, one of Vancouver's historic sites, Roedde House Museum. In *An Archive of Rememory*, the silence enfolded inside bundle-shaped sculptures, accompanied by the fragmented images of Japanese Canadian family photographs, suggest the inaccessibility of others' memories. Nishimura's repetitive act in her artmaking process, both printing and folding the prints into bundles, similarly with Jon Sasaki's performance, respects the resilience of Japanese Canadian internment survivors, who have adapted themselves to the difficult reality with tremendous efforts to keep their life looking as normal as it could be. Both artists practice their own listening to the silenced past of Japanese Canadians. Looking at their selected artworks as an outcome of the artists' listening to the community's silence, these two artworks convey different messages to the museum visitors through different uses of silence.

Before moving to the discussion of the artworks, I would like to articulate two premises that reinforce the social silence about the history of Japanese Canadian internment. One is the common discourse that Japanese Canadian community is solely responsible for this collective silence, and another is the idea of reparation as the end of the Japanese Canadians' struggle with

racial exclusion.²⁵ Both of these myths discourage the conversation about Japanese Canadian internment to happen in public spaces. Many internment survivors in fact did not speak about their wartime experiences. It was emotionally unbearable for some survivors to narrate their experiences. In other occasions, silencing of their wartime experiences was the deliberate choice of protecting their younger generations from knowing what have happened to their family and their properties that were left behind in BC. Some families even stopped talking in Japanese in home after the internment, so that their children will better assimilate themselves to a white mainstream culture. A Sansei Japanese Canadian scholar, Pamela Sugiman reflects her childhood experience as follows; “Silence took the form of a cryptic past, *unspoken yet not forgotten*. Shared and communicated silences defined my relationship with my surviving grandparents.... These shared silences were among the many indirect consequences of the internment.”²⁶ Although the author acknowledges the language barrier between Japanese-speaking Issei and English-speaking Sansei, which is a typical experience among Japanese Canadian households, this cultural discrepancy between two generations indicates the author’s “complete assimilation, absorbed to the dominant culture and shameful of my Japanese ancestry” in her lived experience.²⁷ Drawing from her lifelong witnessing of Japanese Canadian history, Sugiman also states that the “silence emerges out of powerless and power; it secures authority and in the face of authority offers a tool for the vulnerable and marginalized; it may also serve as a protective

²⁵ Matthew Chin et al., “(Re)Storying Japanese Canadian Histories: Artistic Engagements,” *Cultural Studies ↔ Critical Methodologies* (January 2021): 4-5.

²⁶ Pamela Sugiman, “The Power of Silence: Personal Memories and Historical Consciousness in Experiences of Racism in Canada,” in *Oral History, Education, and Justice: Possibilities and Limitations for Redress and Reconciliation*, ed. Kristina R. Llewellyn and Nicholas Ng-A-Fook, 1st ed. (New York: Routledge, 2020), 72.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

shield and at the same time be a powerful defense. Just as people convey marginality and fear through silence so too it can be a function of privilege and power.”²⁸

This embodied history of Japanese Canadian internment, which Sugiman experienced as “unspoken yet not forgotten” is, however, often described as a “forgotten” history by the writers and journalists outside Nikkei community.²⁹ The Sansei scholar of critical race and gender studies, Mona Oikawa argues that this collective amnesia was not solemnly responsible to the silence of the internment survivors. Rather, in various sites, “this forgetting is actively produced,” because, Oikawa states, “in order to promote an image of Canada as a benevolent country, national violence must be forgotten.”³⁰ Behind the decision makers in governmental authorities, there were citizens who benefitted from the elimination of Japanese Canadian population. As the director of the Landscape of Injustice research project, Jordan Stanger-Ross writes, “Citizens wrote to their representatives urging the complete and permanent erasure of the Japanese Canadian community from the province. Once Japanese Canadians were uprooted – and even sometimes before – neighbours rushed into their homes, stealing everything of value and often destroying much of the rest.”³¹ Oikawa also mentions a story told by a white woman at her lecture, whose mother was in BC during the Second World War. Even as a young child, this mother remembers being told that she should never talk about her Japanese Canadian friend, who

²⁸ Ibid., 85.

²⁹ Lucius Dechausay, “Emma Nishimura Embeds History in Paper to Uncover Her Family's Lives In B.C. Internment Camps,” *CBC Arts*, August 5, 2020. <https://www.cbc.ca/arts/emma-nishimura-embeds-history-in-paper-to-uncover-her-family-s-lives-in-b-c-internment-camps-1.5675126>.

³⁰ Mona Oikawa, *Cartographies of Violence* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012), xiii

³¹ Stanger-Ross, *Landscapes of Injustice*, 4.

suddenly moved out from her neighborhood.³² This experience shows that BC residents at the time, even those who were less supportive to the government's segregation of Japanese Canadians, might have been feeling unable to speak against the wartime government. If they overtly spoke up to defend the civil rights of Japanese Canadians, who the wartime government labeled as enemy aliens, it would have been taken as a sign of betrayal to the nation. The propagated images of Japanese spies were falsely imposed onto Japanese Canadians, although the majority of them were naturalized citizens or Canadians since birth. Ultimately, the politics of belonging played on all Canadian residents during the Pacific War: Japanese Canadians followed the evacuation order to show their loyalty to Canada, and their trust was shattered by the dispossession of their home and properties. At the same time, many of the non-Japanese Canadian citizens were under social pressure to stay silent while witnessing this injustice, otherwise they could have been the next target of persecution. Ultimately, the collective silence, or collective amnesia surrounding the erasure of Japanese Canadian bodies from BC, has at least five layers. The first layer is the government's silence about their colonial violence against Japanese Canadians, which was partially amended by the official apology made in 1988. The second layer is the socially constructed image of Japanese descendants as unspeakable foreign subjects. The third is the actual silence of Japanese Canadian internment survivors. The fourth is the silence of Vancouver residents, who took advantage of the Japanese Canadian community by stealing and purchasing their confiscated properties. Lastly, the fifth layer is the guilt felt by the bystanders, who have chosen to stay silent about the systematic erasure of Japanese Canadian population in the wartime BC. In sum, the silence of Japanese Canadians is never solely

³² Oikawa, *Cartographies of Violence*, 78.

responsibility of the community. Rather, there are multiple players contributing to this collective silence.

Throughout my research, I have learned that multiple Japanese Canadian history researchers have experienced receiving the word of discouragement by the other cultural workers and scholars before. These observed comments share the similar undertone that, as Japanese Canadians have already received the apology and reparation from the government in 1988, it is expected of the community to let go of this past. For people outside the community, there might be an assumption that there would be not much left to research after the reparation. I argue that this assumption, based on the politics of utterance, also contributes to suppressing Japanese Canadian voices in public space. As mentioned above, J. L. Austin categorized performative utterances as speech acts, which themselves bring about change to the world. Based on this social function of speech, one's utterance of apology effects a tangible change that is actualized within reality—the act of saying it *is* the apology. In this specific case, the Prime Minister at the time, Brian Mulroney acknowledged the wartime government's injustice on Japanese Canadians and promised them monetary compensation for their lost properties. And yet the question remains: what social change did this utterance bring to Canadian citizens, overall? In *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, Sara Ahmed points out that the nation's shame “becomes not only a mode of recognition of injustices committed against others, but also a form of nation building. It is shame that allows us ‘to assert our identity as a nation.’”³³ Ahmed argues that a nation's history of ethnic persecution is felt as a shame by its citizens, so that the citizens demand their government to cancel its shame, often for the sake of fixing their own feelings, rather than to

³³ Sara Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, 2nd ed. (Edinburgh, Scotland: Edinburgh University Press, 2014), 102.

console the feeling of persecuted communities. Similarly, a scholar of critical race theory, David Theo Goldberg shows that modernist rationality expects the nation state's "commitment to racelessness...[that] grows out of the modern state's self-promotion in the name of rationality and the recognition of ethno-racially heterogeneous states."³⁴ This desired self-image of a state as an ethnoculturally inclusive country resonates with Oikawa's argument discussed above, that the Canadian state is actively promoting the nation's forgetting of the subjects of internment.³⁵ Ultimately, Ahmed, Goldberg, and Oikawa share this notion that the national apology may not necessarily be made for the suppressed communities; formal recognitions of shame can be made to benefit the nation and the majority citizens outside this suppressed community. By recognizing the past, *we* make apologies, to transform our collective shame to a "narrative of national recovery" of national pride.³⁶ This form of reconciliation expects the apologized community not to revisit this past. In this political discourse, the community's reception of apology automatically means the reaching of reconciliation, thus the nation's wrongdoing becomes the stories of the past to be left behind. This politics of apology fails to recognize the decades-long damages which the Japanese Canadian population has been suffering from the wartime uprooting, incarceration, and dispossession. Although many stories have been salvaged since the redress movement, there are still many lacunae in Japanese Canadian history. In the following chapters, I analyze how the artists, Cindy Mochizuki and Emma Nishimura

³⁴ David Theo Goldberg, "Raceless States," in *Race, Racialization, and Antiracism in Canada and Beyond*, ed. Genevieve Fuji Johnson and Randy Enomoto (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), 208.

³⁵ Oikawa, *Cartographies of Violence*, xii-xiii

³⁶ Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, 109.

recontextualize the silence of Japanese Canadians in museums, and how their installations evade the nation's active forgetting of its history of colonial violence.

Chapter 1: Questions About Who Speaks and Who Eradicates Speech

Cindy Mochizuki's *Sue Sada Was Here* was a piece commissioned for the third iteration of a site-specific exhibition, *Memories of the Future*. Developed by Toronto-based curator Noa Bronstein and Vancouver-based curator Katherine Dennis, the exhibition series *Memories of the Future* has asked various contemporary artists to install artworks in historic house museums across Canada in response to the traditional narratives told in those spaces.³⁷ By traditional narrative, Dennis means the already-known stories told in house museums, on which Canada's official history is constructed.³⁸ According to Dennis, *Memories of the Future* aimed to critically examine "which stories we tell and why."³⁹ The first iteration of this series took place at Gibson House Museum in North York, Toronto, and the second was at Campbell House Museum in downtown Toronto. The third exhibition, curated solely by Dennis, was held in Roedde House located in Vancouver's West End neighborhood. Back in 1893, this house was built for a middle-class German immigrant family of Gustav Roedde, who built his wealth as one of the city's first bookbinders.⁴⁰ In terms of architectural style, the city of Vancouver recognized this house as a noteworthy example of Queen Anne Revival Style, which "has very little connection to the English architecture popular during the actual Queen Anne's rule (1702–14)," Dennis says, "and

³⁷ "Memories of the Future III, Diyan Achjadi and Cindy Mochizuki, Curated by Katherine Dennis, September 25 – November 18, 2018," Roedde House Museum, The Roedde House Preservation Society, Accessed March 28, 2021, <https://www.roeddehouse.org/website/index.php/en/past-exhibit/memories>.

³⁸ Katherine Dennis, "Practices/Pratiques – Reflections on One Story Among Many: Memories of the Future III (2018)," *UAAC-AAUC (University Art Association of Canada | Association d'art Des Universités Du Canada)* 45, no. 2 (2020): 112.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ "Memories of the Future III, Diyan Achjadi and Cindy Mochizuki, Curated by Katherine Dennis, September 25 – November 18, 2018."

instead intermixes vague historical features, such as bay windows, balustrades, and turrets, into an asymmetrical and picturesque aesthetics.”⁴¹ This late Victorian period house museum also offers an unique experience to its visitors as rooms are not roped off.⁴² Like the previous two exhibition locations, Roedde House Museum also tells “a middle- or upper-middle class patriarch and his family” regardless that the house has been used as a boarding house for years, although the stories of those outside Roedde family members have not been documented.⁴³ The numerous books used in the filming of *Sue Sada Was Here*, therefore suggests not only the history of Gustav Roedde as a bookbinder, but also how certain historic records have been written down and kept in this house. Books, as a vehicle of authoritative knowledge, also indicate the social function of this historic house museum. While focusing on the history of a specific group of immigrants, Roedde House extends its history as an embodiment of the city’s ethnic inclusivity and tolerance primarily through the life of this German immigrant family.⁴⁴ In response to this history told in Roedde House, Mochizuki and her team recorded an experimental dance work. Vancouver-based dancer, Lisa Gelley Martin choreographed a performance inspired by a Nisei Japanese Canadian writer, Muriel Kitagawa. Ten Japanese Canadian women performed inside Roedde House, which was video recorded. Mochizuki assembled the video cuts into a nine-minute film, and then added non-diegetic sound, designed by Joelysa Pankanea to complete the film. During the exhibition, a TV monitor installed in the parlour played this film

⁴¹ Dennis, “Practices/Pratiques – Reflections on One Story Among Many: Memories of the Future III (2018),” 111.

⁴² Ibid., 114.

⁴³ Ibid., 111, 114.

⁴⁴ Randy Rotheisler, *A Window to the Past*, Katherine Reeder and Roedde House Preservation Society, video, 19:35, Accessed April 9, 2020.

<https://www.roeddehouse.org/website/index.php/en/watch-video/a-window-to-the-past>.

for the audience. Wearing period costume and hairstyles that resembled Japanese Canadian women's fashion in 1930s and 1940s, ten Japanese Canadian women, whose ages ranged from eight to 85, performed this experimental dance.⁴⁵ The history told in this museum house, which is of middle-class white European settler family, does not intersect with the history of Japanese Canadians in Vancouver. Similarly, compared to the well-documented history of the former, which often excludes the history of colonial violence experienced by other immigrant groups and Indigenous populations on this land, the latter's pre-war historic record is scarce.⁴⁶ Ultimately, stories of Japanese Canadian population, who were uprooted from the west coast BC during the Second World War, is completely absent. Installing this film in this historic house museum, therefore, served as a means of challenging the official history of Vancouver and Canada, which consists of stories from highly selective populations.

After the exhibition, this film has been shown at various sites both online and offline. After this exhibition closed in November 2018, the film was shown in the Nikkei National Museum in Burnaby for the exhibition, *Nikkei 日裔* which spanned from July 2019 to the spring of 2020. The film was also installed in the Vancouver Art Gallery during the BIPOC artists-focused exhibition, *Where do we go from here?* between December 2020 and May 2021. Outside the museum space, this film was also screened online by Northwest Film Forum multiple times, including in April and September 2020. As the nature of the film as a digital art medium, this work has allowed audience to experience it in various times, locations, and spaces. At the same time, being outside the original exhibition site, viewers' experience of this film stays different

⁴⁵ Mochizuki, "Memories of the Future III Opening September 25 - November 18."

⁴⁶ Andrea Geiger, "Shashin: Japanese Canadian Photography to 1942," *BC Studies* no. 153 (Spring, 2007): 124-125.

from the initial audiences' experience of this film installed in Roedde House. Therefore, when analyzing *Sue Sada Was Here*, one should keep in mind that the artist created this film specifically in response to the history of Roedde House, and it was originally a site-specific video installation for the visitors of *Memories of the Future III*.

Installing *Sue Sada Was Here* in Roedde House, Mochizuki highlighted the untold history in this house museum to the visitors' eye. With the help of their verbal silence, it could be argued that ten Japanese Canadian women performers, acted as ghosts embodying Muriel Kitagawa's spirit in the house, haunting a museum space that reinforces Canada's official history, where the state's history of colonial violence is effectively hidden from view. The silence of performers is highlighted by the multi-layered sound used in this film, including Mochizuki's voice reciting selected writings of Kitagawa. By foregrounding Kitagawa's criticism to the wartime government and her impact on the following generations of Japanese Canadian women, Mochizuki spares the film from eradicating Kitagawa's speech. The speech and non-diegetic sounds also highlighted the visitors' silence to social injustices, which is pointed out by the performers' haunting of this house museum.

A key historic figure featured in this film, Tsukiye Muriel Kitagawa, née Fujiwara, was a prolific writer, who defended Japanese Canadian civil rights through her words. Born in Vancouver in 1912 as a second-generation Japanese immigrant, Kitagawa was born into a relatively wealthy family in the Japanese Canadian community: she graduated high school and briefly attended UBC. In 1932, She helped found the Japanese Canadian newspaper, *The New Age*, which was "the first newspaper to express the Nisei perspective and provide an outlet for

that generation's expressive thought and literary writing."⁴⁷ During the 1930s and 40s, Kitagawa contributed to both *The New Age* and *The New Canadians* newspapers through her poetry, short stories, and articles, through which she depicted topical events and views of Nisei Canadians. A collection of letters written to her younger brother, Wes, who was a medical student in Toronto, became a valuable primary source about the first uprooting of Japanese Canadians. In the wartime, Japanese Canadians went through the uprooting twice: they were first uprooted from their homes in the west coast BC, and a second uprooting happened in 1946 upon the closure of the camps. As the BC government did not allow Japanese Canadians to resettle until April in 1949, after the camps were closed, Japanese Canadians were given only two choices: either to move to the east of the Rockies or be deported to Japan. Kitagawa had to pack her belongings and left her home for Hastings Park, where over 8,000 Nikkeijin were detained before they were sent to the internment sites. Japanese Canadian women and children were housed in the livestock building, separated by their male family members. Due to the makeshift living conditions, as well as bearing all responsibility to look after four young children, including her twin born during the first uprooting of the entire Japanese Canadian population, Kitagawa's health condition deteriorated. Therefore, she was given an exception to move to Toronto to join her brother instead of being sent to an internment site. From Toronto, Kitagawa kept fighting for her community's civil rights through her writing and speeches. A decade after Kitagawa's passing in 1974, selected writings of her were compiled into the book, titled *This Is My Own* edited by a historian, Roy Miki. The book was published in 1985, to push forward the Redress movement.

⁴⁷ "Muriel Kitagawa," Canadian Race Relations Foundation, August 10, 2016, <https://www.crrf-fcrr.ca/en/clearinghouse-search/author/156-k646>.

The collection of Kitagawa's letters is one of the rare primary sources that tells the community's first-hand experience of the first uprooting.⁴⁸

Throughout this film, Mochizuki's voice recites Kitagawa's selected writings, including her letters, poems, and appeals to the wartime government. When I first saw *Sue Sada Was Here*, the direct criticism voiced by Kitagawa against the government struck me, as this harsh tone of criticism is very uncommon in Mochizuki's artwork. For instance, other video installations of Mochizuki such as *Cave to Dream*, a multi-channeled video installation, and *Amabie*, a video installation, share a warm undertone of melancholy regarding past tragedies, including the loss of lives and belongings. In contrast, in *Sue Sada Was Here*, Mochizuki speaks out Kitagawa's frustration with the government. In the film, the first-hand experiences of the wartime government's racism are told in Kitagawa's words. Kitagawa gives examples such as an imposed curfew, Anti-Japanese signs on the highway, and not being allowed to visit her father in hospital. Her letter to the Prime Minister, William Lyon Mackenzie King shows her role as a spokeswoman, who worked for the rights and dignity of Japanese Canadians. Mochizuki's re-enactment of past speech is also in stark contrasts with the earlier mentioned performance by Jon Sasaki: through submitting himself to the provisional boat building in Fraser River, Sasaki surrenders himself to the violent power of a moving body of water. Just as Sasaki's grandfather had to get through the political violence by surrendering to the War Measures Act which the nation imposed onto him, Sasaki submits himself to the unmerciful nature. In contrast, in *Sue Sada Was Here*, Mochizuki did not cast herself in the silent performers. Instead, by speaking out

⁴⁸ Muriel Kitagawa, *This Is My Own: Letters to Wes and Other Writings on Japanese Canadians, 1941–1948*, ed. Roy Miki (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1985), vii-viii.

Kitagawa's writings, Mochizuki embodies Kitagawa's spirit of resistance and activism to protect civil rights of Japanese Canadians.

At the same time, this film does not depict Kitagawa as a mere activist. The film deploys two ways of embodying Kitagawa's multiple roles in society. First, the voice recites various writings of Kitagawa, including poems, speech manuscripts, unpublished drafts, and letter correspondences to her family members. Second, the voices reading her texts are multi-layered: some are whispering fragmented phrases, and others recite whole sentences clearly. The above choices capture the diverse roles that Kitagawa played in her life. Besides working as a senior editor of the *New Age*, Kitagawa wrote for *The New Canadian* newspaper under several pennames, including TMK, Dana, and Sue Sada. Kitagawa took this penname, Sue Sada from the name of her maternal grandmother. The film's title, *Sue Sada Was Here*, indicates Kitagawa's multiple roles in both public and domestic spheres; as much as she was an outspoken character in public space through newspapers, she was also a mother, elder sister, daughter, and a granddaughter in her family line. The maternal bonds are also visualized by the bodies of diverse generations of performers, whose age varied from eight to 85. Ultimately, Kitagawa's spirit through her writings leads the performance inside Roedde House, a quintessentially domestic space.

Besides Mochizuki's voice reciting Kitagawa, the music played in the background sets the uneasy ambience of the film. Composed by Joelysa Pankanea, this electronic score consists of the sounds of piano, xylophone, howling from the microphone, and deep bass sound. All these sounds reverberate for long time, making the lingering of new sound overlap to the ones previously dropped. Without any clear melody line, this music occupies a viewer's listening capacity. I experienced this music as pressure inside my skull, pushing all surfaces of my brain.

This heavily layered sound might symbolize the uncertainty that Kitagawa, as well as other Japanese Canadians, expressed during the wartime. This music draws audience's attention to the film, as well as affect their emotional state. Ultimately, the music, in tandem with the writings of Kitagawa, overshadows the visual narrative of the film.

Also, the frequent use of sound effects at the end of this film highlights Kitagawa's legacy being passed onto later generations. There are three kinds of sounds used: the sound of typewriter's keys, the rustling sound of paper pieces being flipped and rubbed against each other, and the sound of opened books being closed vigorously. Most of these sound effects are inserted in the last third of the film, to match with the performance, which becomes more active and collective toward the end of the story. These sounds become the voice of Japanese Canadian women, which used to be silenced. The harder the performers try to intervene in the traditional narrative, the more frequently these sounds linger. Therefore, these sound effects set a hopeful sense of futurity at the end of this film, where the collective acts of women started to dismantle the official history told by the nation state.

Assisted by these non-diegetic sounds, the performance in this film draws a hopeful narrative in which Kitagawa's legacy is carried on by the current generations of Japanese Canadian women. This visual story can be divided into three parts. The film starts with a scene where a girl enters Roedde House. A girl passes by multiple performers in different rooms, each handling books in various ways. As if they are caught up by the task at hand, many of the performers act individually, and they seem indifferent to, or even unaware of, the presence of other performers. Along with the growing anxiety expressed by the discordant music in the background, this first part of the narrative frequently captures the performers' bodies being disciplined by the books, for instance, balancing books on top of the head. In one scene, a

performer is lying on a bed to keep piling up opened books over her face. These books block her vision both physically and symbolically. The choreography shows how books, as purveyors of conventional knowledge, limit both the physical and cognitive ability of living bodies. This symbolizes how authoritative knowledge may trouble readers to envision alternative ways of seeing the world.

In the second part of the film, the girl sees an elder woman, sitting in front of a typewriter on the second floor. Showing her back to the girl, the woman continuously copies Kitagawa's written drafts. A woman in a dark blue dress starts to collect these paper drafts scattered on the floor. This woman brings the collected drafts down to the parlour on the ground floor. There, performers gradually begin to coordinate their movements: three women, using books as props, follows the same choreographed sequence in rounds. The most powerful scene of the narrative begins after this sequence. The camera captures seven performers standing in line, leaning against one another in various sculpture-like poses. Books are interspersed between their bodies, preventing their skins from touching. Some performers place their side of the head on the book, as if they try to listen to the somatic memories transferred through books.⁴⁹ Or, the books, as symbols of institutionalized knowledge, may limit one's ability to recognize the pain embodied by others. Performers change their posture one by one, uncomfortably, while keeping the books interspersed between the bodies. I could not overlook the tense atmosphere in this choreography. As the bodies are too closely aligned, the performers cannot make eye contact nor speak to each other. Bearing discomfort, they stay forming an intergenerational chain. They seem to be focused on grasping the hidden memories through listening to silence.

⁴⁹ Joni Low, "Diyan Achjadi and Cindy Mochizuki," *Canadian Art*, November 14, 2018, <https://canadianart.ca/reviews/diyan-achjadi-and-cindy-mochizuki/>.

As books are placed between their closely aligned bodies, this scene of intergenerational chain reminds me of a specific section in *Obasan*. When the protagonist prayed for her deceased family members with a pastor, Sensei [teacher]:

The sound of Sensei's voice grows as indistinct as the hum of silent traffic. Gradually, the room grows still and it is as if I am back with Uncle again, listening and listening to the silent earth and the silent sky as I have done all my life. I close my eyes. Mother. I am listening. Assist me to hear you...

From the extremity of much dying, the only sound that reaches me now is the sign of your remembered breath, a wordless word. How shall I attend that speech, Mother, how shall I trace that wave?⁵⁰

The above monologues appear in the scene after the protagonist, Naomi is finally told about her mother's death, which had happened almost two decades ago in the atomic bombing of Nagasaki. Naomi attempts to remember her past annual visits to a large grassland in Alberta with her uncle, who every year tried, but stopped himself from informing Naomi of the death of her mother. Tracing the limited memories of her mother in her early childhood, Naomi tries to understand her mother's thoughts and lived experiences, although they would never be fully attainable. Such an engagement, which attempts to trace un verbalized memories of others through intensive listening, is highlighted in the performance's scene, which creates an intergenerational chain. One could also see the interspersed books that link the performers as

⁵⁰ Kogawa, *Obasan*, 344-45.

published records of the internment memories, such as Joy Kogawa's *Obasan*, Ann Gomer Sunahara's *The Politics of Racism*, and Kitagawa's *This Is My Own*. Some memories will be written and handed down to the following generations, and the rest will stay in silence, unrecorded. Even a fragment of such unspoken memories, however, may still be attainable if one can commit oneself to listen in to the embodied memories of others.

In this scene of intergenerational chain, in tandem with the anxiety-provoking music in the background, Mochizuki's voice recites Kitagawa's speech made in 1945, "Time heals the details, but time cannot heal the fundamental wrong. My children will not remember the first violence of feeling, the intense bitterness I felt. But they know that our house was lost through injustice."⁵¹ Compared to Kitagawa's original manuscript, the next sentence, directly following the above line, is slightly adjusted in the recited version. The original line goes; "As long as restitution is not made, that knowledge will last throughout the generations to come . . . that a house, a home, was lost through injustice."⁵² In the recording, the word "not" is inaudible. It sounds as, "As long as restitution is made... that knowledge will last throughout the generations to come...that a house, was lost through injustice."⁵³ Although this might have not been an intended choice made by the artist, this unspoken "not" suggests that the restitution indeed was not the end of Japanese Canadian struggle. Reparation can never bring back their lost home, thus their children will not forget what has happened to their family: nothing will compensate the prolonged impact of internment on the community. Although it could be an unintended effect,

⁵¹ Kitagawa, "I Stand Here Tonight," in *This Is My Own*, 229, Quoted in *Sue Sada Was Here*, Directed by Cindy Mochizuki, Vancouver: Mochizuki Studios, 2018, Digital file from VIVO Media Arts Centre, 9:08.

⁵² Kitagawa, *This Is My Own*, 229.

⁵³ Mochizuki, *Sue Sada Was Here*.

the artist's unspoken word makes this film resist the nationalist understanding that a persecuted community should silence their experiences after reparation has been made.

After this scene of intensive listening, collective action begins in the final part of the film, which depicts the women's challenge to the official history told in this house. Passing around Kitagawa's drafts, performers insert paper slips on which Kitagawa's drafts were typed into the books. The camera shows the performers' hands making noise as they open and close the books to interrupt the silence inside the house. The camera quickly cuts between different moments of the women's collective act. The crescendo of the sound of rustling paper, typewriter, and books being closed highlights the climax of the film.

This film contrasts two histories of Canada; a history of Canada told through Roedde House and another history of Canada told through the embodied memories of Japanese Canadians. Roedde House tells a history of a middle-class European settler's family, on which Canada constructs its official history. On the other hand, the story of Japanese Canadians, especially the nation's systematic theft from this community, is often effaced from this official history, as well as from the narratives told in this historic house museum. The presence of Japanese Canadians, whose family went through dispossession, in this house, make a contrast between the wartime experiences of German immigrant families and Nikkei families in the Second World War: the wartime government conducted structural theft of properties only of Japanese nationals and Japanese Canadians in BC, but not from the people of German or Italian heritage.⁵⁴ Again, this decision reflected the wartime politicians' intentions to keep Canada as a "white man's country," as exemplified by writings and political activities by the wartime Prime

⁵⁴ Stanger-Ross, *Landscapes of Injustice*, 14-15.

Minister of Canada, W. L. Mackenzie King.⁵⁵ One could see this late Victorian period house museum, which aims to tell an official history to the public, as a symbol of Canada as primarily a home for British and European settlers, in which the people of non-European origins receive less protections and recognitions of their civil rights. Inside Roedde House, a home originally built for a German family, ten Japanese Canadian performers, who embody their family history of dispossession and relocation, points to the white supremacist ideology practiced in Canada during the Second World War.

By installing *Sue Sada Was Here* in this period house museum, Mochizuki made visitors aware of this dark page of Canadian history, where Japanese Canadian population were altogether forced to leave the West Coast of BC. Also, to Vancouver residents, a long-haul effect of the internment is still visible in the form of absence of Japanese Canadian community, which used to be on Powell Street in today's Downtown East Side. In responses to the loss of their home, many internment survivors decided not to resettle the West Coast BC, so that they would not be constantly reminded of their lost properties and neighborhoods. Going back would also mean to confront the BC public, who favored the government's deportation of Japanese Canadians, and some of those neighbors who looted their houses, or purchased their properties. In response to this political violence of expropriation, post-war Japanese Canadians kept their community fragmented by geologically dispersing across the nation. Many families who moved to Toronto after the closure of the camps in 1946 settled blocks away from other Japanese

⁵⁵ Kirt Niergarth, "'This Continent Must Belong to the White Races': William Lyon Mackenzie King, Canadian Diplomacy and Immigration Law, 1908," *The International History Review* 32, no. 4 (2010): 611.

Patricia E. Roy, *The Oriental Question: Consolidating a White Man's Province, 1914-41*, Revised ed. (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2014), 2-5.

Canadian households, so that they did not reform the Japanese speaking neighborhood. One could argue that the assimilation was not the voluntary process. Rather, it was an outcome of the systematic violence against Nikkei community. Assimilation to white mainstream culture might also have been a strategy for Japanese Canadians. Like Sugiman experienced, many Nikkeijin felt ashamed of their Japanese heritage because of this racial violence, and many stopped speaking Japanese to their children, so that the traumatic memories of racial persecution and Japanese cultural knowledge would not altogether be passed down to the future generations. This history resonates with Cindy' Mochizuki's artist statement, in which she explains that performing women in Roedde House "return" to embody Muriel Kitagawa in this house.⁵⁶ Their return to this location, in this iconic house in Vancouver, direct audience's attention to 1942, when Nikkeijin's presence was coldly denied.

Contrary to those unspeaking performing bodies, the only speaking figure, Kitagawa, is absent in this film. Even the performer working on the typewriter does not resemble Kitagawa in her most famous photograph, other than both wearing glasses. The film's relationship to the speech-silence binary amongst Japanese Canadian women is crucial, especially as the representation of Kitagawa in public space has its own history and controversies.

In her research on Japanese Canadian women's wartime experiences, Mona Oikawa argues that the representation of Kitagawa as the sole spokesperson from the community reinforces the myth of the silence of internment survivors. Historically, racialized discourse on East Asian population was disseminated through journalism, media, education, and other public

⁵⁶ Mochizuki, *Memories of the Future III* Opening September 25 - November 18."

authorities in addition to legislations.⁵⁷ Especially before the Second World War, Asian Canadians were repeatedly framed as foreign subjects through the depiction of “slanted eyes and exaggerated accent” in the mainstream media. In this racist discourse, East Asian women were repeatedly stereotyped as exotic, objects of conquest, and sexual desire, or as mail-order brides.⁵⁸ This constructed image of Nikkei women as being quiet, submissive to both husbands and imperial Japan, still endures, according to Oikawa. Analyzing scholars including Deborah L. Begoray and Rocio G. Davis’ interpretation of Linda Ohama’s documentary film, *Obāchan’s Garden*, Oikawa points out how the outspoken Japanese women figures are exceptionalized and used to reinforce the homogenized image of silent Japanese Canadians.⁵⁹ Oikawa also observes this problematic representation of Japanese Canadians in an exhibition section entitled *Forced Relocation* at the Canadian War Museum in Ottawa. The author states:

Kitagawa once again appears as a spokesperson for all Japanese Canadians in the text that accompanies a photograph of her at a typewriter. Part of the text in the accompanying signature reads, “Journalist Tsukiye Muriel Kitagawa vividly evoke the despair and bitterness experienced by the Japanese-Canadian community in a series of wartime letters to her brother in Toronto.” The choice of nouns is interesting: “despair” and “bitterness” suggest resignation and even pathology, nouns that mask the sheer outrage and sharp critique articulated in her letters and essays. Clearly this portrait also serves to

⁵⁷ Frances Henry and Carol Tator, “Critical Discourse Analysis: A Powerful but Flawed Tool?,” in *Race, Racialization, and Antiracism in Canada and Beyond*, ed. Genevieve Fuji Johnson and Randy Enomoto (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), 118.

⁵⁸ Naoko Hawkins, “Becoming a Model Minority: The Depiction of Japanese Canadians in the *Globe and Mail*, 1946–2000,” *Canadian Ethnic Studies* 41, no. 1 (2009): 141.

⁵⁹ Oikawa, *Cartographies of Violence*, 71-72.

homogenize the different political and emotive reactions of those who comprised the “Japanese-Canadian community.”⁶⁰

Regardless the fact that there were various Japanese Canadians who spoke and fought against the government, such as Nisei Mass Evacuation Group and a group that organized a fight against the sale of their property from internment sites, they did not receive as much recognitions as Kitagawa does in many of the public institutions.⁶¹ Oikawa argues that this government-funded museum’s representation of Kitagawa as an only speaking figure from Japanese Canadian population symbolizes the state’s power that determines who can and cannot speak in public. Institutional representation of Kitagawa as heroic, loyal-to-Canada, and exceptional spokesperson homogenizes the rest of Japanese Canadian internment survivors as unspeakable foreign subjects, while extracting Kitagawa’s harsh criticism towards the government from her speech and writing.⁶² Kitagawa had passed in 1974, years before the discussion of the redress movement started among the Japanese Canadian community. Her physical absence made it easier for many different groups to borrow her words and images to convey their messages to the target audience. Ironically, those target audience have often been the people outside Japanese Canadian community.

Sue Sada Was Here approaches Kitagawa’s texts from a different direction. Mochizuki recovers Kitagawa’s investment in Japanese Canadian community rather than her significance in national history. Although it is often overshadowed by the civil rights activist aspect of her

⁶⁰ Ibid, 68-69.

⁶¹ Ibid, 69-70.

⁶² Ibid, 75-77.

biography, Kitagawa represented Nisei's, or more specifically, Nisei women's view through her creative and informative writings on Nikkei newspapers. The publication of Kitagawa's wartime writings doubtlessly contributed to the movement for Japanese Canadian's civil rights.

Ironically, however, this political use of Kitagawa's texts undermined Kitagawa's impact as it relates specifically to Japanese Canadian women, whose lived experiences may allow them to relate most closely as her readers. By not representing Kitagawa's figure, whose public image is politicized in multiple ways, Mochizuki foregrounds the living bodies of Japanese Canadian women. The iconic image of Kitagawa, sitting in front of the typewriter, circulates in public, but is also ghosted out from Kitagawa's lived experiences. Ten performers and Mochizuki therefore embody Kitagawa as a Nisei woman, who has survived and fought against race-based violence. The film depicts how the life of Kitagawa lingers to the life of past, present, and future generations' Japanese Canadian women, and how these women may lead their own lives carrying Kitagawa's words along with themselves; there are always those who walk before us, as well as who walk besides us.

The film was installed in the parlour, the room on the left side of the entrance hall. A thin digital monitor, placed on a small work desk, played *Sue Sada Was Here* in a loop for visitors. Because of the exhibition location and the film's audio, *Sue Sada Was Here* was the first installation that the visitors were greeted by.⁶³ Walking inside the house after watching this film, the absence of those performers' bodies must have remained as an afterimage in the visitor's eye. This point lingers in Katherine Dennis' curatorial statement, "buildings, just like objects or works of art in museums and galleries, reveal much about current values, systems and power

⁶³ Katherine Dennis, "Practices/Pratiques – Reflections on One Story Among Many," 115.

structures, what is present—and, more importantly, what is missing—speaks volumes.”⁶⁴ The absence of Japanese Canadian women, as well as their embodied memories of political violence, enhances the contrast between whose memories belong, and do not belong, to this historic house museum. Each invisible figure of performers can be understood as a ghost, described by Avery Gordon as a social figure that “has real presence and demands its due, your attention.” According to Gordon, haunting “is one way in which abusive systems of power make themselves known and their impacts felt in everyday life... haunting, unlike trauma, is distinctive for producing a something-to-be-done.”⁶⁵ Gordon states that a ghost is a social figure that demands society or individuals fix a specific injustice. Walking through the exhibition venue, looking for the ghosts of performers and being aware of those people, whose pasts were not recorded in this historic house, visitors may have felt questioned for their silence as bystanders. Did your ancestors benefit from the uprooting of Japanese Canadians? Did your grandparents stay silent when your Japanese Canadian neighbors disappeared? Do you feel that Japanese Canadians are expected to silence their collective memory after the government’s apology is made? Are there any past facts that you actively try to forget? Visualizing underrepresented histories, through this film installation, wartime memories of Japanese Canadian women are represented anew, so that the audience may recontextualize their wartime experiences as an unforgettable part of Canadian history. At the same time, this film suggests a possibility future, where the embodied history of Japanese Canadian women, as well as the reasons for their silence, will be reexamined in public discourse.

⁶⁴ Katherine Dennis, “Reflections on One Story among Many,” in *Memories of the Future III*, exhibition pamphlet, 30.

⁶⁵ Gordon, *Ghostly Matter*, xvi.

Chapter 2: Heeding the Ripples of Silence

In *An Archive of Rememory* (2016-ongoing), Emma Nishimura creates photo intaglio prints of Nikkei family photographs and folds them into bundle-shaped sculptures. Viewers can see the snippets of black and white photographed images on the surface of bundles, but the whole pictures are unattainable. Nishimura explains this fragmentation of images as her way of recognizing the incomprehensibility of others' memories. Nishimura says, "It's a way of commenting on how inaccessible those stories have been. Sometimes what gets passed down is a lack of knowledge."⁶⁶ Similarly, the unattainable space enfolded by those photo-intaglio prints suggests that one's memories of war incarceration and dispossession are irreproducible nor fully comprehensible to others.

As discussed earlier, both Janet Wolff and Luc Boltanski suggest that an adequate emotional proximity is required for the represented memory of pain to create politically productive relationship with its witness. Although Wolff took her case studies from abstracted figurative paintings, in the context of art installation about Japanese Canadians silence of wartime memories, similarly to John Sasaki's performance, *We first need a boat for the rising tide to lift us*, Nishimura's representation of photographed Nikkei Canadians withholding their speech arguably creates a distance between the subject matter and its observers.

In this chapter, I analyze how Nishimura deals with the silenced memories of Japanese Canadians in her *An Archive of Rememory* series. By folding her photo-intaglio prints, Nishimura fragments photographed images to create an unattainable space inside her sculptures.

⁶⁶ Emma Nishimura, quoted in "Etching the Language of History." *Border Crossings* 38, no.1 (March 2019): 18.

This image manipulation spares the subject matter from becoming the object of viewers' feelings. Also, by referring to these bundles as imaginary gifts, Nishimura is aware that a story can multiply itself through its process of transmission. Simultaneously, through individualizing each bundle, Nishimura rejects the viewers' homogenization of Japanese Canadian wartime memories and silence. The repetitive work in Nishimura's art practice also suggests a way of listening in to the silence of others, which is to immerse oneself in the silent act of resilience, as Nishimura's grandmother did by sewing clothes. Nishimura's art creation process, as a re-enactment of her grandmother's wartime experience, makes the artist listen in to the memories of Japanese Canadians, which were told not only through a verbal silence, but also through their everyday effort to adapt to the unpredictable circumstances.

Born as a Yonsei in Toronto, Ontario, Emma Nishimura learned about Japanese Canadian history primarily through her family. Nishimura's paternal grandfather was a forced labourer on Revelstoke-Sicamous Road Camp to build a part of Trans-Canada Highway. Nishimura's paternal grandmother was sent to an internment camp in Slocan with her family. Nishimura does not recall her grandfather talking about his past, however, showing family photo albums, Nishimura's grandmother shared her early life including her internment experience with Nishimura. "But looking back and trying to separate out what I know now, from what I knew then—it's all become a blur," Nishimura recalled in 2015. "Back then—I'd say her stories were just that, a narrative that provided a framework of her life, small details and snippets. But I don't ever remember having a bigger discussion about how these events impacted her life."⁶⁷ It was

⁶⁷ Emma Nishimura, interviewed by Masaji Ibuki Norm, "Toronto Artist Emma Nishimura: Mapping Out Nikkei Identity," *Discover Nikkei*, April 7, 2015. <http://www.discovernikkei.org/ja/journal/2015/4/7/emma-nishimura/>.

after Nishimura found a box full of over 200 flat small paper garments that she started to incorporate Japanese Canadian history into her works. These paper garments were the mock-ups that Nishimura's grandmother made before sewing clothes for her fellow Japanese Canadians in Slocan.⁶⁸ Nishimura says, "It is hard to make 'sense' of the internment and I'm not sure that I ever will. I know that it had a profoundly deep impact on my grandparent's lives. ...The impact of the internment continues to mark what it is to be a Japanese Canadian, with the reverberations being felt by each subsequent generation, who struggle in their own way to locate this narrative within both individual and collective identities."⁶⁹ Similar to Cindy Mochizuki, Emma Nishimura aims to piece together the fragmented stories of her own grandparents and many other Japanese Canadians, who went through uprooting, internment, and dispossession.

In *An Archive of Rememory*, Nishimura creates hand-sized sculptures from prints of Japanese Canadian family photographs. The idea for this series developed from another etching series by Nishimura, titled *Collected Stories*, in which Nishimura transcribes the interviews of various Japanese Canadian individuals narrating their internment memories. So far, for *An Archive of Rememory*, Nishimura has used well-preserved images from her family photo albums. Taken between the 1930s and 40s in various locations, many of these photographs are portraits and snaps of families and friends. After the photographs are selected, Nishimura creates photo-intaglio of these photographed images. Photo-intaglio is one type of chemical etching; an image of a black and white photograph is printed on a translucent sheet placed on a metal sheet coated

⁶⁸ "Japanese-Canadian Artist Emma Nishimura Breaks Her Family's Silence about Being Interned during WWII," *CBC Radio Specials*, June 30, 2018, <https://www.cbc.ca/radio/japanese-canadian-artist-emma-nishimura-breaks-her-family-s-silence-about-being-interned-during-wwii-1.4725174>.

⁶⁹ Nishimura, interviewed by Norm, "Toronto Artist Emma Nishimura."

by a photosensitive film. After being exposed to the intensive UV light, corrosive solution applied to the surface develops the negative on the metal sheet. On this photo-intaglio plate, she applies black ink to print the image on a dump sheet of flax and abaca paper. While the paper is still wet, Nishimura wraps the print over the round-shaped mold of a small plastic bag containing sand. The print will enfold this mold, and the remained edges of the print will be tied on the top of the sculpture to enclose the bundle. After the paper became completely dry, Nishimura pokes a small hole in the bottom of the sculpture to drain out the sand. In this way, Nishimura creates a bundle-shaped sculpture with an illusionary weight inside.⁷⁰

Nishimura's treatment of Nikkei family photographs spares *An Archive or Rememory* sculptures from becoming the objects of viewers' feeling. As often discussed in the studies on family photography, for instance by Gillian Rose and Marianne Hirsch, family photography is a tool used across households to construct their family memories of happy, stable, and unified moments.⁷¹ The ordinary nature of their subject matter makes family photographs relatable to viewers outside the family circles. When these family photographs enter the public sphere, such as the news articles and memorial museums, family photographs of victims convey to audiences that these tragedies could have happened to anyone, while blurring the cultural and local differences between the domestic experiences of the viewers and the victims.⁷² In sum, family photographs draw viewers' empathy toward the depicted subjects. This representation of social victims, however, does not consider the power inequality between the subject and object of

⁷⁰ Lucius Dechausay, *Emma Nishimura Embeds History in Paper to Uncover Her Family's Lives in B.C. Internment Camps*, CBC Arts, video, 6:33, August 5, 2020, <https://www.cbc.ca/player/play/1773013059929/>.

⁷¹ Marianne Hirsch ed., *The Familial Gaze*, (Hanover, NH: Dartmouth College, 1999), xvi.

⁷² Gillian Rose, *Doing Family Photography: The Domestic, The Public and The Politics of Sentiment. Re-Materialising Cultural Geography*, (London: Routledge, 2010), 76-87, 92.

empathy. As Sara Ahmed argues, stories about others' suffering can be neutralized and appropriated by the receivers as the objects of their own feelings.⁷³ For instance, Christian Boltanski's photo installation series is often offered as an example of an artist's appropriation of the photographed subjects. Born in 1944, the artist has a Jewish father who survived persecution during the Second World War. Although the artist himself does not have the direct memory of the Holocaust, his childhood was shaped by the fear that his parents have experienced during the war. Thus, the artist is in the generation of postmemory, which in Marianne Hirsch's description, "characterises the experience of those who grow up dominated by narratives that preceded their birth, whose own belated stories are evacuated by the stories of the previous generation, shaped by traumatic events that can neither be fully understood nor re-created."⁷⁴ The artist began incorporating photographic images of both pre-war Jewish school children and his own school pictures into his installations in the 1980s. The cropped and enlarged photographs of the students' faces are exhibited on top of the empty tin biscuit boxes, while a desk lamp casts a light at the center of each picture. Hirsch analyzes this composition as follows; "The biscuit boxes empty containers of a life story of and of individual memory, are stripped of their possessions, just as the faces themselves are stripped of individuality."⁷⁵ Hirsch also mentions, "If we look at the original image of the Chajes school graduating class, we recognize an historical moment, with its distinctive clothing, body language, and representational styles. Boltanski's recreations leave only eerily empty faces and enormous eye sockets waiting to be filled with their viewer's

⁷³ Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, 20-22.

⁷⁴ Marianne Hirsch, "Hows: Postmemories in Exile." *Poetics Today* 17, no. 4 (Winter 1996): 659.

⁷⁵ Marianne Hirsch, *Family Frames: Photography, Narrative, and Postmemory* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), 260.

own affective responses.”⁷⁶ As historical specificities are effaced from these photographs of pre-war Jewish children, the audience’s reaction to these photographs may be limited to what Luc Boltanski called sentiment; the attachment to other’s pain. Here, the subject’s experience is taken up by the audience’s imagination based on crude empathy, which Bertolt Brecht described as “a feeling for another based on the assimilation of the other’s experience to the self.”⁷⁷ In contrast, Nishimura does not efface historical specificity from each photograph. Photographs used for this sculpture series are diverse in terms of their location settings, image qualities, and the subjects taken. In addition to the different shades of gray and sand colors of the paper used for the prints, each bundle also has slightly different sizes and uniquely tied by Nishimura. These highlight the uniqueness of the individual stories represented by each sculpture. This diverse representation of Japanese Canadians’ wartime memories work against the homogenic understanding of the history of Japanese internment. At the same time, the space inside each individualized sculpture suggests that their collective silence was not only sourced by the trauma. Just as each Japanese Canadian individual had a unique wartime experience, there was no single reason for Japanese Canadians’ silence. Ultimately, Nishimura’s individualization of each bundle negates the viewers’ homogenization of both Japanese Canadian wartime memories and the reasons for their silence.

An Archive of Rememory further suggests how a story can multiply itself. In her research on her grandparents’ wartime experiences, Nishimura found that the same story often has different variations depending on which relatives Nishimura heard this story from. Along the

⁷⁶ Ibid., 264.

⁷⁷ Bertolt Brecht quoted in Jill Bennett, *Empathic Vision: Affect, Trauma, and Contemporary Art* (Redwood City, CA: Stanford University Press, 2005), 10.

way of memory transmission and time's passing, a story is re-memorized in a unique way in relevance to each narrator. In *An Archive of Rememory*, it is not just that each bundle contains a wartime story, which was re-memorized by Nishimura; the viewers also re-memorize this concealed story through looking at the sculpture, which only hints at snippets of this story through the fragmented image of the original photograph. In addition, Nishimura mentions these bundles as memories wrapped in *furoshiki*. *Furoshiki* is a multi-purpose piece of cloth that has been used in Japan for both casual and formal occasions. It may wrap treasures to keep them from the dusts in a storage, it can be used to carry personal belongings, and it can also be used as a gift wrapping. Although the contained memories will never become fully available, memories of one's interaction with these bundles may impact the viewer's life that continues outside the museum space.

Building on the aforementioned *furoshiki*, Nishimura's practice helps maintain these family photographs in the domestic space of material exchange. As Gillian Rose argued, photographs are in fact "material object[s] with specific qualities," that can be exchanged, held, or disposed of in a domestic sphere.⁷⁸ Photographs' three-dimensional quality becomes concealed once they are framed and hanged on the gallery walls. As Hirsch analyzes, the flat surface of a family photograph can turn into a reflective surface to its viewers, which mirrors the viewers' emotional desires to relate to the photographed subject.⁷⁹ For the family photographs to retain such specific three-dimensional qualities in a museum space, I find that Nishimura's folding of photographed images into three-dimensional bundles in *An Archive of Rememory* is effective. Although museum visitors are still not allowed to touch the installed sculptures, the

⁷⁸ Rose, *Doing Family Photography*, 17, 23.

⁷⁹ Hirsch, *Family Frames*, 264.

viewers' attention will be directed toward what could possibly be inside these visually heavy bundles that were passed on to Nishimura and folded by this artist as imaginary gifts to others including the viewers. In this way, *An Archive of Rememory* successfully highlights the notion of family photographs as exchangeable object materials and spares family photographs from becoming a reflective surface of the viewers' own feelings.

Repetition is also an important aspect of Nishimura's artwork. In an exhibition review, art historian Regina Haggio wrote that "Nishimura's pieces, because they are similar in composition, draw attention to being created in a repetitive way."⁸⁰ In the exhibition *Pattern and Form* held at the Print Studio in Hamilton, Ontario in 2010, Nishimura exhibited a print series titled *Baachan's Patterns*, a soft ground etching of her grandmother's paper patterns. Although at the time Nishimura has not begun making the *An Archive of Rememory* series yet, Haggio's comment made in 2010 is also relevant to the viewers' experience with the gallery installation of *An Archive of Rememory*. For an exhibition of this series, Nishimura often installs more than a hundred bundles on the rows of narrow and long shelves attached to a gallery wall. Some bundles are closely placed together, and some are placed apart from the others, so that the installation of this sculpture series create an inviting visual rhythm within a unity created by the similar-shaped bundles. As the viewer walks closer to the installation, they see the different images printed on each of the bundles: there are no bundles that are identically the same. This practice of making subtle individuality in repeated forms resonates with her grandmothers' small paper garments that varied from adults' dresses and jackets to children's jumpers and shirts. Just

⁸⁰ Regina Haggio, "Tiny Patterns Inspired Exquisite Images Need to Know," *The Spectator*, March 29, 2010, sec. G, 13.

as Nishimura's grandmother tailored each item of clothing for each person, Nishimura creates individualized bundles for each remembered story.

During the internment, staying well-dressed was an important part of their resistance. As a wide range of Sansei researchers and writers, including Carla Ayukawa, Namiko Kunimoto, and Laura Saimoto note, in family photographs taken in the internment camps, everyone was well dressed and smiling to the camera.⁸¹ In some photographs, wearing city outfits and posing for the camera with smiles, subjects' appearance contrasts with their background of tar paper covered shacks. Comparing to the official documentary photographs of internment camps, which depicted Japanese Canadians as anonymous and powerless, Kunimoto points out that this contradictory self-representation in these personal photographs was a means of defending the community ties and the life stability that the wartime government was actively trying to destroy.⁸² Regardless the job scarcity and no freedom of movement, in internment sites, wearing clean and well-made outfits every day, and even wearing dresses for celebrating graduations and weddings, was a silent resistance against the government-aimed attack on the dignity of each Japanese Canadian. As many pre-war Japanese Canadian women, including Nishimura's grandmother, were trained as seamstresses, they allowed Japanese Canadians' silent resilience

⁸¹ Laura Saimoto, "Mom, you lived through the internment of Japanese Canadians. We'll get through this pandemic, too," *CBC News*, sec. Opinion, May 10, 2020, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/point-of-view-mothers-day-laura-saimoto-japanese-canadians-internment-covid-19-1.5560516>.

Terri Theodore, "Snapshots Give Rare Glimpse of Daily Life at Canadian WWII Internment Camp for Japanese," *The Star*, June 7, 2016, <https://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2016/06/07/snapshots-give-rare-glimpse-of-daily-life-at-canadian-wwii-internment-camp-for-japanese.html>.

⁸² Namiko Kunimoto, "Intimate Archives: Japanese-Canadian Family Photography, 1939–1949," *Art History* 27, no. 1 (2004): 142, 152.

through the power of self-representation, performing every day as if their mental and economic life are not under threat.

Considering this family background, there is a ritualistic aspect in Nishimura's repetitive work to multiply bundles with photo-intaglio prints. As Haggio pointed out, printmaking and sewing are both repetitive activities.⁸³ As containers of wartime memories, Nishimura's creation of bundles, each of which stands for a specific story, parallels Nishimura's activity with that of the artist's grandmother during the internment. Deriving from earlier mentioned *Baachan's Patterns*, which Nishimura explains as the work made in combination with her grandmother and herself, *An Archive of Rememory* let Nishimura reiterate her grandmother's wartime experience, when she made hundreds of clothes to serve her fellow community members.⁸⁴ Similar to Jon Sasaki's *We first need a boat for the rising tide to lift us*, grandparent's wartime experience was heeded by the artist. *An Archive of Rememory* allows memories to be passed on while maintaining and respecting the survivors' silence.

This respect to the silence is also important when one think of the politics of utterance, which was important for the Japanese Canadian community during the Redress Movement in the 1980s. In the context of writing a counter history to the official history, to help the community to archive the Redress agreement, many silent internment survivors were criticized for not speaking their experiences. For instance, in Canada's first Nikkei history book, published in 1976, *The Enemy that Never Was: A History of the Japanese Canadians*, Ken Adachi criticizes the silence of Issei without considering the moral education that the Japanese Meiji government provided to

⁸³ Haggio, "Tiny Patterns Inspired Exquisite Images Need to Know."

⁸⁴ Emma Nishimura, "Baachan's Patterns," artist website, Emma Nishimura, Accessed April 7, 2021, <https://www.emmanishimura.com/baachans-patterns>.

Issei. In this education, restraint and forbearance were embraced, and these ethical values were not fully understood by many Nisei, including Adachi, who grew up in the society where speech is prioritized over silence.⁸⁵ Although this is only one of many possible reasons for the survivors' silence, at least as Sugiman observes, "the spoken memories of the Nisei suggest that the disruption of silence does not necessarily result in empowerment" either.⁸⁶ In this historic background, *An Archive of Rememory* allows memories to stay silent. This work suggest that the process of social remembrance does not have to be always conducted through breaking the silence. Through individualizing each bundle to represent individual survivor's experience of war incarceration and the state's race-based violence, Nishimura folds these unattainable memories into bundles, gifts that were passed onto Nishimura, and then to the viewers to be re-memorized. Although the initial shock and bitterness of the uprooting, incarceration, and dispossession will never be fully communicable to others, it is up to these observers how to respond to this silence.

⁸⁵ Hisako Omori, "Collective Experience of Political Violence as Identity: Conversion, Citizenship, and Religious Identities among Second Generation Japanese Canadians," *Studies in Religion / Sciences Religieuses* 45, no. 2 Spring 2016): 190.

⁸⁶ Sugiman, "The Power of Silence," 71.

Conclusion: On the Power of Silence, and How We Listen to It

Japanese Canadian theatre actors Kunji Mark Ikeda and Julie Tamiko Manning discussed the power of reserve in a podcast *Sounds Japanese Canadian To Me*. By power of reserve, in my understanding, they mean the effectiveness of not saying everything out loud. On stage, they note, actors can burst into tears or extend their arms as far as possible, but that full extension may not affect the audience. On the contrary, when an actor is holding back an emotional expression, this tension draws the viewers' attention; it creates a room for audience to project their emotions onto the character on the stage.⁸⁷ I see a similar power of reserve, or of withholding, at work in the installations by the two Japanese Canadian artists discussed in this thesis.

Cindy Mochizuki's *Sue Sada Was Here* and Emma Nishimura's *An Archive of Rememory*, suggest different ways of recontextualizing the silence of Japanese Canadian internment survivors. In *Sue Sada Was Here*, through the heavy use of sound and speech of the writer Muriel Kitagawa, Mochizuki highlighted the silence of two groups: on one side are Japanese Canadian women who survived internment and their children, who do not speak about the memories of internment. There is also the silence of those who were bystanders at the time of internment, and that of their children, who may feel haunted by the performers in Roedde House. The first group creates intergenerational chain as a way of listening to the community's embodied memories of Japanese Canadian internment. This intensive listening leads Japanese Canadian women to organize a collective act that challenges the way national history is written

⁸⁷ Kunji Mark Ikeda and Julie Tamiko Manning, "Stories from the Stage 7: Julie Tamiko Manning," February 17, 2021, in *Sounds Japanese Canadian To Me* Season 2, podcast, 51:04, <https://centre.nikkeiplace.org/podcasts/sfts-7-julie-tamiko/>.

and told. But this site-specific film installation also succeeded in pointing out the silence of the second group--the bystanders, who contribute to the collective amnesia of the history of internment. By visually “haunting” the space, performers embody Kitagawa’s spirit in Roedde House, suggesting individual viewers’ need to reexamine their own silence about the social injustices perpetrated on ethnocultural minority populations, both in the past and the present. Emma Nishimura’s *An Archive of Rememory* resists the homogenization of Japanese Canadian’s silence through the artist’s individualization of each sculpture. Each story enfolded by intaglio prints of family photographs, Nishimura suggests that no silent memories are identical, nor are the reasons for their silence. Inside these *furoshiki* bundles, the once unattainable memories of those who experienced internment during the Second World War become imaginary gifts to their children, the artist, and the viewers. This process of re-memorization allows the memories to multiply and stay active in many individuals’ memories. Through her artmaking, which contains many repetitive works, Nishimura herself similarly reenacts her grandmother’s wartime experience: by making and wearing tailored clothes in the internment camps, Japanese Canadians performed their silent resistance to the government’s political violence. *An Archive of Rememory* therefore suggests that the memories can be transmitted through silence without breaking into speech. Both artworks, with their different emphases on the silence of whom, draw audiences’ attention and help them reexamine their relationship to the underrepresented history of Japanese Canadian internment.

As Wolff and Luc Boltanski suggest, memories of pain need an adequate emotional distance from their viewers to create a politically meaningful relationship. In the power of withholding, the tension between the heaviness of the memory, and one’s decision of not speaking this specific memory, draws audience’s attention. In Mochizuki and Nishimura’s

works, the silence becomes an effective communication tool. In contrast to artworks by Christian Boltanski, Mochizuki and Nishimura's artworks rejects the viewers' crude empathy toward the silence of the subject matters. In *Sue Sada Was Here*, performers haunt Roedde House, a history house museum, to insert their embodied memories that are omitted from the normative history of Canada, which is based heavily on the stories of white European immigrants. Backed by the layered sound and speech, the performers' verbal silence strengthens the power of haunting. As Mochizuki said, they are Muriel Kitagawa's "ghosts for the future," who try to challenge the silence of their observers on colonial violence of the state.⁸⁸ Nishimura's *An Archive of Rememory*, like Jon Sasaki's performance, *We first need a boat for the rising tide to lift us*, shows how one's reenactment of the silence of others may allow the humble listening of such unspoken memories. Although the initial memory will never be fully attainable, a respect of silence, by immersing oneself to the experience of others will help the silent memory to be passed on. At the same time, when witnessing the artists' silent commitment to their grandparents' silence, such as creating hundreds of containers for different stories, there is no room for the viewers to over-identify their experience and feeling with the artists'. Most importantly, through the fragmentation of the image of family photographs, Nishimura rejects the representation of wartime experience as something comprehensible to anyone who did not actually go through uprooting, incarceration, and dispossession. Both Mochizuki and Nishimura's use of silence in their art installations suggests that the withheld speech is not the invitation for the observers' appropriation. Their silence is aimed to create politically meaningful

⁸⁸ Mochizuki, "Sue Sada Was Here."

relationships between the work and its observers, and as a conclusion, I argue that both installations succeed in this difficult task.

In *The Human Condition*, Hannah Arendt argued that a person needs to both speak and act concurrently to disclose one's identity. "Through [speech and action]," according to Arendt, "men distinguish themselves instead of Being merely distinct; they are the models in which human beings appear to each other, not indeed as physical objects, but *qua* men."⁸⁹ In other words, in a space where the listeners eradicate or appropriate others' speech, it is impossible for the speaker to reveal "'who' in contradistinction to 'what' someone is."⁹⁰ However, counter to the privileging of speech in Arendt's account of politics, I have shown how withholding of speech can become "a protective shield and at the same time be a powerful defense."⁹¹ For a community, that has been historically deprived of its own agency of self-representation, silence is a strategic refusal used to resist being defined by the culturally dominant others. Withholding therefore enforces the community's own power of self-identification by rejecting the culturally dominant others' speech and action as it attempts to define what this community is.

Patience is required when one heeds the silence of others. Although in the speech-silence binary, silence can be interpreted as a background to be filled by speech, as I have discussed in this thesis, withheld speech can mobilize the observers. It is more the task of observers to determine how they can react to the silence. A better listener requires multiple practices and knowledge, and I saw both Cindy Mochizuki and Emma Nishimura's art practices suggest how one could become a good listener of the other's silence. Through *Sue Sada Was Here*, Mochizuki

⁸⁹ Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 2nd ed. (Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 176.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 179.

⁹¹ Sugiman, "The Power of Silence," 85.

suggested how a viewer can focus on what is missing in public discourse. Through *An Archive of Rememory*, Nishimura indicates how the observer of silence may recognize the incomprehensibility of others' memories, and how to commit to listening through reenacting the past experience of those who stayed silent. Their experiences will not be identical, but it is one way of practicing ethical empathy. To have a close understanding of others' silence, one cannot just sit in one place and absorb the silence. Silence of others requires us to think, move, and hold this memory of witnessing silence, so that after some days and years, a sudden realization of what was behind that silence may come.

Figures

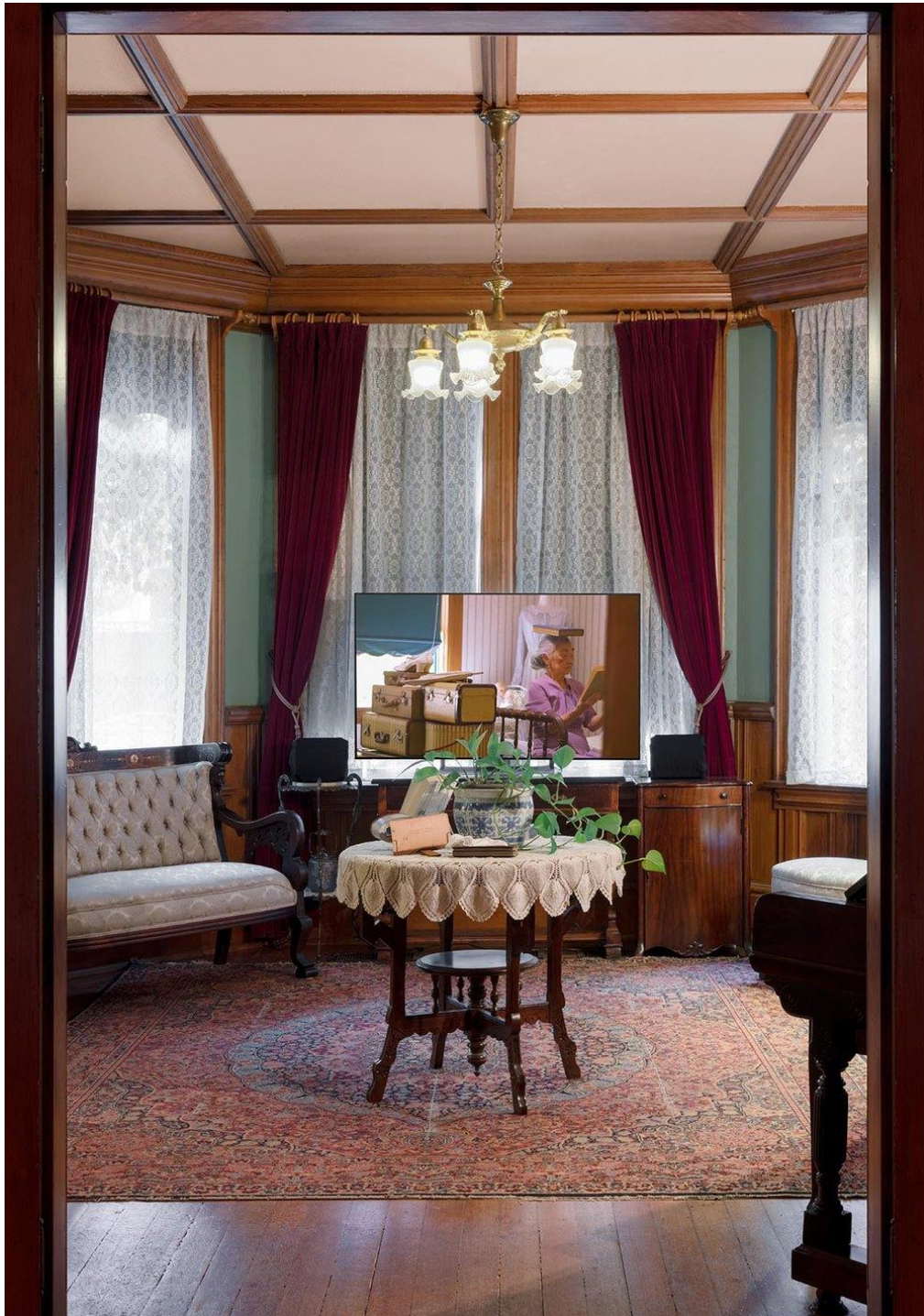


Figure 1. *Sue Sada Was Here*, Cindy Mochizuki. Installation view from *Memories of the Future III* curated by Katherine Dennis, Roedde House, Vancouver, B.C. (2018) Photo: Rachel Topham Photography.

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