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„The Representation of the Cultural Identity of Japanese Americans in Two Works of Life Writing“

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To my Japanese Family

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1. Introduction

Cultural identity is a topic which is close to my heart, being half Japanese and half Italian. I still find myself struggling when having to answer the question of where I come from due to my mixed background and my having been raised in different countries. Because of my Asian features, I am constantly reminded by those around me that I am not a "true" westerner, despite having lived most of my life in Europe. As the world is becoming more globalized with each passing year, the question of cultural identity will gain even more relevance in the future. This can be clearly observed in Asian American literature, which has seen a significant growth of life writing surrounding the topic of cultural identity since the 1970s. Many authors describe their difficulty in having to live between two worlds and striving for a sense of belonging. Their desire to be accepted and seen as Americans led many Japanese Americans to be voluntarily incarcerated during World War II, seeing it as an opportunity to prove their loyalty. Some young men even went a step further by joining the American army after having been imprisoned and by fighting an enemy which looked more like them than their fellow soldiers. What I find incredible is the way Japanese Americans were able to overcome the hatred and discrimination they faced and become one of the most well-educated and successful ethnic groups in the United States.

In my thesis I will analyze the cultural identity of Japanese Americans in two works of life writing, namely: *The Two Worlds of Jim Yoshida* (1972) by Jim Yoshida and Bill Hosokawa and *Turning Japanese: Memoirs of a Sansei* (1991) by David Mura. The first book deals with the fate of Jim Yoshida, who was born in the United States to Japanese parents. Upon the death of his father, Jim's family flew to Japan to bury him. It is exactly during their visit that the relations between Japan and the United States dramatically deteriorated. Jim and his family were prohibited from returning to North America, and he was recruited for the Japanese Royal Army to fight his fellow Americans. As is evident from the title of his autobiography, Jim found himself torn between two worlds and fighting a country he was desperately trying to return to. The second book is the story of David Mura, a third generation Japanese American who had neglected his Japanese roots throughout his life and fully identified as an American. He came to deeply question his identity while spending one year in Tokyo, where he gradually discovered his Japanese heritage.

The choice of these two books is based on the fact that they are both deeply concerned with the theme of cultural identity and the idea of being torn between two worlds: the United States and Japan. Cultural identity has innumerable different aspects and I chose to focus on three features

which are particularly significant in shaping identity. In my analysis, I will examine how cultural identity is represented by focusing on the aspects of language, values and, custom and tradition. In particular, the analysis and interpretation of cultural identity in the two books I chose will attempt to answer the following questions: How do language, values and, custom and tradition contribute to the representation of cultural identity? Furthermore, what differences or similarities emerge when examining the cultural identity of the different generations of Japanese Americans?

The thesis is divided into two main parts: in the first, a theoretical frame will be provided, while in the second, an analysis of the aforementioned books will be offered. The theoretical frame includes the description of the historical background of Japanese Americans, a brief exposition of Japanese American literature, the genre of life writing, and the definition of key concepts surrounding cultural identity. The historical background starts with the pre-war years and focuses on the mass emigration of the Japanese to the United States. It then continues with the internment of Japanese Americans, following the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941. The living conditions and the effects of the camps will be briefly discussed, as well as the question of loyalty the inmates were faced with. Finally, the post-war years will be examined, including the process of mass resettlement, which forced the Japanese Americans to rebuild their life from scratch. To conclude this section, the campaigns of the Redress Movement, which fought for the monetary compensation of Japanese Americans for the injustices they suffered during World War II, will be presented.

The next section includes two main genres of Japanese American literature, namely autobiographies and internment literature. Firstly, a few of the most important Japanese American autobiographies will be disclosed, then the four main periods of Japanese American internment literature will be presented. The following section deals with life writing, a genre which has developed immensely since the 1980s. The main features of life writing will be defined, as well as the questions of historicity and identity. As the books selected for the analysis of this paper are an autobiography and a memoir, these two genres will be briefly discussed. To conclude the first part of this thesis, the key concepts of cultural identity will be considered. Firstly, the term *cultural identity* will be defined from several different viewpoints, then the cultural identity of Japanese Americans will be examined, by focusing on the first three generations, namely the *Issei* (first generation), *Nisei* (second generation) and *Sansei* (third generation). Furthermore, three features which shape cultural identity will be analyzed more closely, namely language, values and, custom and tradition.

The second part of this thesis will focus on the analysis of two books: *The Two Worlds of Jim Yoshida* by Jim Yoshida and Bill Hosokawa and *Turning Japanese: Memoirs of a Sansei* by David Mura. This section will commence with a brief biography of the two authors, a plot summary of the stories and the examination of the narrative techniques. Then, an analysis and interpretation through a close contextual reading of the Japanese American cultural identity of the protagonists will be provided, with the focus on language, values, and custom and tradition. To conclude, the cultural identity of the Nisei Jim Yoshida, and the Sansei David Mura, will be compared and contrasted, in order to find possible differences or similarities. In the conclusion the key points of this thesis will be summarized, and possible limitations of this paper will be presented. Furthermore, new questions which may emerge during the analysis or areas which could not be dealt with, will also be presented for a possible future development of this study.

To conclude, I would like to mention that despite the growing body of Japanese American literature in the past few decades, which includes Japanese American internment literature, short stories, autobiographies, and poetry amongst other genres, I personally did not have the chance to encounter and analyze this literary canon in the course of my studies. Therefore, with my paper, I hope to contribute to the recognition of the importance of Japanese American literature and studies and to raise its stance in academic circles.

2. Historical background of Japanese Americans

When attempting to understand someone's identity it is fundamental to explore his or her history. As this thesis will focus on discovering the cultural identity of Japanese Americans, it appears crucial to at least briefly describe the main historical events concerning this ethnic community. This section will be divided into three main parts, beginning with the years prior to World War II until the period of redress at the end of the twentieth century. In the first part, the main reasons which led to the emigration of the Japanese will be presented, and their early years in the United States will be examined. The second part will focus on the tragic events which followed the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941 and in particular, the internment of the Japanese Americans. The life in the camps, the effects of incarceration, the question of loyalty, as well as the resettlement of the inmates in American society will be analyzed briefly. The last part of this section will concentrate on the postwar years and the rise of the redress movement.

2.1. The pre-war years

After Japan opened its borders to foreign trade and communication in 1854, the process of emigration to the United States gradually took off. Several intertwined reasons led to the decision of innumerable Japanese men, primarily, to abandon their homes in search of success overseas. Despite great hardships, such as the discriminatory climate they had to face, the Japanese managed to advance economically at an incredible speed. Their upward mobility can, in large part, be attributed to several core aspects of Japanese customs and beliefs, such as their strong sense of national identity and their incredible ability to organize their community.

2.1.1. Distinguishing features of the Japanese immigrants

A unique aspect of the Japanese community is their homogeneity as a group both in their physical appearance, as well as their culture. Already from the seventh century onwards they viewed themselves as a collective population belonging to a united country. Furthermore, the members of this nation had spoken the same language for numerous centuries before leaving their homeland to go to America. Therefore, besides sharing a common language, the Japanese felt a strong sense of national identity and were acquainted with formal social structures. This gave them an advantage over other immigrant groups in finding new ways to deal with the particular difficulties they were confronted with in the new world. Their ability to organize themselves cooperatively can be seen, for example, in their advancement of the so called "ethnic economy" in agriculture (O'Brien and Fugita 6), which was an extremely profitable economic system, in which the agricultural production and distribution was mostly in the hands of the

Japanese American community. The main reason for its success, besides the mutual understanding of the individuals belonging to the same ethnic community, was their utmost trust in one another. A crucial aspect of Japanese society was that certain principles which regulated social relations, guaranteeing harmony within the group, were followed very strictly.

The influence of the Japanese heritage on the way the newcomers conformed to life in the United States is also evident when analyzing "cultural relativism" (O'Brien and Fugita 8), which is strongly connected to the Japanese concern for group preservation. The ultimate moral standard in the Japanese tradition is the survival of the group, and therefore one cannot judge something as either good or bad per se, but only in accordance with how it affects the social harmony. As David J. O'Brien and Stephen S. Fugita (8) claim, "cultural relativism in the Japanese case does not mean that there is an absence of ethical principles, but rather that the standard for judging rightness or wrongness is group survival." This aspect is particularly relevant for understanding the disposition of the Japanese to selectively assimilate aspects of other cultures and integrate them in their own, as it is not seen as a danger to the integrity of their social system. As a matter of fact, foreign components can undermine a specific culture only if they replace elements that are perceived as integral for the culture's preservation. As for the Japanese, the survival of the group is the supreme element of their culture, an aspect which is primarily in the inner self. The replacement of cultural elements such as "food, language, or even religion are not seen as essential to the survival of the group" (O'Brien and Fugita 9). As a consequence, although the Japanese at first appeared to be very different from the Americans in comparison to other ethnic groups such as the Europeans, they quickly integrated into American society once the period of discrimination had ended. (O'Brien and Fugita 3-9)

2.1.2. Reasons for emigration

Once having successfully managed to unify Japan after centuries of internal conflict, the Tokugawa shogun, namely the head of government, sealed the nation's borders in the mid-1600s, thereby blocking the immigration of foreigners and the emigration of Japanese. The shogun aimed to eliminate Christianity from Japan and protect its people from the allegedly dangerous influence of the European traders and missionaries. It was only in 1854 that Japan opened its borders once again under the forceful demand of the American Commodore Matthew Perry. Shortly after the end of national isolation, the era of Japanese emigration commenced. Several different reasons, which are often interrelated with one another, led to mass emigration. (Stanlaw 35-36)

In 1868 Yoshinobu, the fifteenth and last Tokugawa shogun, was overthrown by a military alliance of the prefectures of Chōshū and Satsuma. This led to the transformation of the Japanese society which until then had been organized in an old feudal system. As a result of the reorganization and modernization of the country, the Japanese government considerably increased land taxes, moving from the traditional system of calculating the tax rate according to market prices, to a new system of creating a fixed tax rate based on land values. As a consequence, hundreds of thousands of farmers who were unable to pay their taxes in times of bad harvest lost their land. (Stanlaw 37-38)

The inflationary burden caused by the government through its suppression of the Satsuma Rebellion in 1877 and its conduct of the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-95 posed further problems for Japanese farmers. Additionally, Japan's trade agreement with Western nations during a period in which it was under-industrialized and therefore incapable of efficiently competing with foreign markets, led to a considerable trade loss which then caused further inflation. The severe economic conditions obliged many farmers to find other means to financially support their family. Some started working in the silk industry or in mines and factories, yet others decided to migrate temporarily from home and work abroad, with the clear aim of returning after a limited period of time. Such migrants were seen in Japan as "sojourners". (O'Brien and Fugita 11)

Another factor contributing to emigration was connected to the new Japanese conscription law, which became effective in 1873. As there was the possibility for young men to evade the draft if they managed to remain outside Japan until they turned thirty-two, many of them decided to go overseas. In addition, in the case that the first son of the family went abroad, a younger son could become the new chief of the household, thereby also managing to avoid serving in the army.

Finally, once Japan became open to foreign trade and communication, other nations started inviting a great number of workers from Japan. These appeals were declined until 1885, when government officials started supporting the emigration of contract laborers, possibly due to the arduous conditions the farmers were facing. (O'Brien and Fugita 11-13)

As is evident, various social and economic reasons contributed to the emigration of millions of Japanese between the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries. However, as Stanlaw (47) claims: "emigration was often as much [a] personal choice as anything else – depending upon such things as government sponsorship, individual social networks, advertising, and even personal ideologies." Therefore, all these different factors need to be

taken into consideration when trying to understand the mass exodus of the Japanese during this period.

2.1.3. The early years of migration

One of the first colonies of Japanese immigrants in the new world consisted of political refugees, who arrived in California in 1869. Shortly afterwards, approximately 150 Japanese were employed on sugar plantations in Hawaii alongside large groups of Chinese, who had arrived earlier. In 1884 the number of Japanese who worked for plantation owners in Hawaii increased to reach thirty thousand. With the annexation of Hawaii by North America in 1898, a large part of these laborers left for the West Coast of the United States. At the same time, a small group of immigrants from Japan went directly to the American Pacific Coast. (Daniels, *Coming to America* 250)

Between the 1880s and 1890s most of the Japanese laborers in the United States were employed in urban occupations. However, from the 1900s they started focusing on agriculture which they successfully managed to develop in the following years. At the beginning, the majority of Japanese immigrants were agricultural laborers, yet with time they managed to accumulate sufficient savings to buy their own farmland. Due to their capability to organize themselves collectively in order to advance economically, in a short period of time the Japanese remarkably developed the agriculture along the Pacific Coast and eastward as far as Colorado. In Los Angeles, for example, they were successful in the production of certain fruit and vegetables. Besides growing their own products, they were also in charge of the wholesale market for local consumers. (Daniels, *Coming to America* 253-254)

Upon their arrival, the Japanese immigrants had been gladly welcomed due to their hard but cheap labor. Yet, with the enormous increase in immigrants and their remarkable economic success, anti-Japanese sentiments started to grow in the United States. Anti-immigrant activists began reinforcing negative stereotypes in the same way as had been previously done against the Chinese, based on the belief that the Japanese represented a threat. Nativist groups promoted the notion of the "yellow peril" (Robinson, *By order of the president* 15), according to which Japanese immigrants had come to the American Pacific Coast to pave the way for an imminent Japanese invasion. (Robinson, *By order of the president* 14-15)

The American government took several actions in order to restrict the influx of immigrants, amongst which was the Gentlemen's Agreement of 1907-1908, which limited the immigration of male laborers, while at the same time allowing the families of laborers who had previously

come to the United States to join them. As a consequence, thousands of Japanese women started migrating to America, most of whom had got married through a custom known as "picture bride marriage" (Daniels, *Coming to America* 255). This tradition was a form of arranged marriage for immigrant workers in the United States, whose photo would be sent to a matchmaker in charge of finding a suitable bride in Japan. The first Japanese American immigrants who arrived between the 1890s and 1908 were predominantly male, while those who came between 1919 and 1924 were predominantly female. Thus, typically, in the Japanese American families of the early years, the mother was a decade younger than the father. (Daniels, *Coming to America* 255-256)

The arrival of innumerable wives from Japan led to a sharp increase in families, which formed an extremely organized community. The Issei made use of the financial opportunities that emerged through the first World War and went from being laborers to creating family businesses. Furthermore, they worked cooperatively in order to create Buddhist churches, social and business associations, as well as language schools, where the Japanese language and tradition would be passed on to their children. Such schools were fundamental for the preservation of the Japanese customs and community. (O'Brien and Fugita 32-37)

A further attempt to inhibit Japanese immigration occurred with the Immigration Act of 1924, which completely banned the further entrance of immigrants, an action which negatively affected Japanese American diplomatic relations. (Robinson, *By order of the president* 33)

By the end of the 1930s, the Japanese American community was prospering, especially the small family and agricultural businesses. The Issei strongly encouraged their children to get an education, even if they were aware that their children would in the future be excluded from professions in the society at large. However well they excelled academically, the Nisei were prevented from teaching in public schools and were unable to put their expertise to good use. One way in which the Nisei dealt wish such employment discrimination was by creating the Japanese American Citizens League (JACL) in 1930. It consisted of a group of well-educated and cultured second generation Japanese Americans who fought for equality and justice. (O'Brien and Fugita 38-42)

2.2. The internment of Japanese Americans

A decisive event in the history of Japanese Americans was the attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. If the American government was already skeptical of the possible threat posed by this ethnic community, the attack represented a justifiable stimulus for incarcerating

‘enemy aliens’. Two months after the attack, President Roosevelt issued Executive Order 9066, providing an official authorization to force persons of Japanese ancestry into internment camps. The great majority of the individuals evacuated from the American West Coast possessed American citizenship, yet their rights were simply violated. Although the American government was aware that the Japanese American community did not pose any real threat to national security, it surrendered to the political, military, and social pressures it was faced with. While the internment camps were being prepared, the ‘enemy aliens’ were initially brought to assembly centers. They remained there temporarily, before being transferred to the ‘relocation centers’ which were hurriedly constructed similarly to military sites. The life conditions in the different camps varied greatly, but especially at the beginning the food and medical care provided was extremely inadequate. The children in the camps attended school and took part in extracurricular activities, while many adults worked and engaged themselves in leisure activities. It was not long before the shortage of military force and labor made the War Relocation Authority (WRA) aware of the necessity to resettle the inmates. The process of resettlement required the proof of loyalty by answering a series of questions, which were particularly important for screening the young Nisei, who from the beginning of 1943 started being recruited to join the American army. The internment of Japanese Americans undoubtedly left them with a big scar: besides suffering a huge financial loss, their strong family structure was dismantled, which caused great hardship especially for the Issei men.

2.2.1. The attack on Pearl Harbor and the decision to relocate Japanese Americans

Despite the efforts made by the Nisei not to be treated as second class citizens, only a small number of Japanese Americans managed to really assimilate into the larger society in the 1940s. The majority originally lived in areas dominated by their own people, predominantly along the West Coast. Census from that time showed that approximately 125,000 individuals, who were born or had ancestry in Japan, lived in continental America (the majority in California, Washington and Oregon), and 150,000 resided in Hawaii. (Daniels, Taylor, and Kitano 12)

At the beginning of the Japanese expansionism in East Asia, the Issei, whose views were strongly influenced by the pro-Japanese articles they read, felt a great sense of national pride. However, in the months prior to the attack on Pearl Harbor, most Japanese Americans were tormented by the threat of a war between their original homeland and the United States. Although there had been rumors of a possible conflict between the two nations, they were shocked and bewildered by the surprise bombing of Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. (O’Brien and Fugita 43)

In the following days, strong sentiments against the Japanese echoed across the country. Americans voiced their wariness and hatred towards the allegedly disloyal Japanese and spread rumors of the enemy's invasion of the Pacific Coast. The same day the government put the martial law into effect, which led to the Japanese Americans being strictly observed by the military and a curfew was imposed. The FBI received the President's authorization to start rounding up enemy aliens who posed a threat to public safety. On the following days, approximately 2,000 Issei living on the American West Coast were detained. Meanwhile, their funds were impounded and their license to sell was temporarily revoked. (Robinson, *By order of the president* 74-75)

Within a short period of time the Japanese American community was debilitated. The publication of newspapers in Japanese was interrupted, anyone of Japanese ancestry was forbidden from travelling, and a large number of Nisei students quit their studies. Two months after the attack on Pearl Harbor, on February 19, 1942, Executive Order 9066 was issued by the president, an official authorization to evacuate persons of Japanese ancestry from the West Coast and force them into internment camps. (O'Brien and Fugita 44)

112,000 Americans of Japanese ancestry were forced to move to secluded areas due to the presupposed danger of them engaging in treacherous activities in the case Japan would invade the Pacific Coast. In other words, the army was authorized to uproot thousands of people from their homes to undefined areas, based on the possibility of "their individual or collective involvement in espionage or sabotage" (Robinson, *By order of the president* 108). Amongst these "enemy aliens" (108), seventy percent were American-born citizens, most of whom were in the prime of their youth, while the rest were on average above the age of fifty and were long-time residents, who had moved from Japan many decades before. The Japanese American community was the only ethnic group to be detained due to their racial background, yet even more outrageous was the fact that President Roosevelt gave the authorization to violate the fundamental rights of American citizens. (Robinson, *By order of the president* 106-109)

2.2.2. Considerations regarding the internment

According to David J. O'Brien and Stephen S. Fugita four factors played a particularly significant role when analyzing the historical events surrounding the decision to relocate the Japanese American community. Firstly, no evidence could be found linking the community of Japanese ancestry with acts of espionage or sabotage that posed a danger to national security. Furthermore, the American intelligence agency clearly acknowledged that Japan did not intend and had no means to assault the West Coast in the years between 1941 and 1942. As a matter

of fact, most of the military officers responsible for combat operations were not supportive of the decision to relocate American citizens, who they knew posed no real threat. Instead, the push towards internment came from General John L. De Witt, an officer who according to O'Brien and Fugita (46) had never seen "combat during the entire war but did hold the powerful position of Commander of the Western Defence Region" (O'Brien and Fugita 45-46).

A second factor which strongly influenced the acceleration of the relocation was the long-established anti-Japanese sentiment. Many nativists were resentful towards the Japanese due to their economic advancement, especially in agriculture, along the Pacific Coast. The mass media as well as public officials in California and members of the federal government in Washington promoted racism and hatred. Particularly noteworthy for his racist attitude was the lawyer General Earl Warren. (O'Brien and Fugita 46-47)

Thirdly, several influential individuals who were seen as defenders of civil rights strongly favoured the internment of Japanese Americans, the most noteworthy proponent being president Franklin D. Roosevelt himself. His sole concern was America's emergence as the victorious power during a time of global conflict, and so adopted an incredibly hostile stance which led to the neglection of the rights of his own citizens. A big mistake made by President Roosevelt was not appointing a custodian responsible for safeguarding the property of Japanese Americans during their relocation, which led to properties of the detainees worth millions of dollars being burnt or stolen. (Robinson, *By order of the president* 120-124)

Lastly, a major difference emerged between the treatment of Japanese Americans on the mainland and in Hawaii, where, apart from approximately one thousand persons of Japanese ancestry, the Japanese were not incarcerated. This fact disproves the argument of General De Witt, amongst others, that the Japanese American community endangered national security, as it would have been even more so the case in Hawaii, which besides its relative vicinity to Japan, had actually been attacked by the Japanese navy. As it was clear that the Japanese Americans did not pose any real threat and their relocation would have been logistically complicated, and would have gravely affected the local economy, their relocation from Hawaii was more restricted and only distinct individuals perceived to be threatening were incarcerated. (O'Brien and Fugita 48-51)

The different treatment of Japanese Americans in Hawaii is significant for understanding the reasons that led to their internment. As Roger Daniels (*The Decision to Relocate* 28) claims: "In California and elsewhere on the Pacific Coast, […] it was political as well as military pressure that brought about the evacuation, although the justifications for it were always

couched in terms of "stern military necessity"." It can be concluded that the relocation should definitely have been avoided, given that the Japanese American community repeatedly proved their loyalty to the United States and did not in fact pose any real threat.

2.2.3. The internment camps

On February 20, 1942, one day after the signing of Order No. 9066, General De Witt was assigned the responsibility of establishing military areas and excluding all enemy aliens from these territories. He set up two military areas: "Military Area 1, which comprised the western half of the states of Washington, Oregon, and California and the southern half of Arizona; and Military Area 2, which made up the rest of those states" (Robinson, *A Tragedy of Democracy* 104).

After the military areas had been designated, the Japanese were encouraged by officials of the army and Justice Department to evacuate the areas 'voluntarily'. The motive behind this decision was that the army wanted to avoid the financial and logistic strain of relocating them and conduct a faster and more humane movement. However, the process of 'voluntary relocation' turned out to be slow and burdensome, so at the end of March 1942 the government commenced a program of involuntary mass evacuation, which led to over 100,000 Japanese Americans being evacuated from the West Coast. (Robinson, *A Tragedy of Democracy* 121-127)

The Japanese Americans were initially brought to assembly centers, which were temporary facilities under military surveillance. These centers, generally assembled in fairgrounds or parks, offered poor food supplies and crowded and uncomfortable shelters. Their purpose was to secure immediate mass internment until the relocation camps were completed. This process, which was completed by October 30, 1942, progressed rapidly due to the army's efficacy and the evacuees' loyalty and cooperation. (Vickers 169-170)

Once the internment camps were ready, the Japanese Americans started being transferred from the assembly centers. Ten so-called 'relocation centers' were set up by the War Relocation Authority (WRA), namely in: Arkansas, Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Wyoming and Utah. Most of them were constructed in desert territories of the American west, and all were situated in barren and rather uninhabited areas. The camp sites were modelled after military sites and consisted of residential dormitories around a main kitchen area with communal lavatories and laundry and bathing facilities close by. Additional buildings, utilized for schooling or assembly, were also built. The WRA and inmate security monitored the inside of

the camps, while the perimeter of the camps was surrounded by barbed wire, encircled by guard towers with military sentinels. Although the government claimed that the guards were there to keep the evacuees safe, the guns were aimed towards the interior of the camps and the inmates were prohibited from leaving. On at least two recorded instances inmates were shot and killed by the sentry guards. (Robinson, *A Tragedy of Democracy* 155-157)

2.2.4. Life in the camps

The standard of living for the detainees differed depending on the camp and time period. At the beginning, the food provided was of very poor quality and quantity. The meals were not cooked properly and were distasteful and unhealthy. Medical treatment was also initially inadequate; the facilities were rudimentary and there was a lack of qualified medical staff to treat the large number of inmates, which ranged from 8,000 to 20,000 individuals in each camp at the peak of the internment program. Besides ailments caused by the poor nourishment, the doctors often had to treat epidemical diseases.

In order to conform to the compulsory school attendance laws, the WRA provided education for the Japanese Americans, starting from nursery all the way to high school. At the beginning the classes were held in vacant barracks and recreation halls which lacked basic school equipment. With time, classrooms with simple desks and blackboards were arranged and the students were granted school books. The schools offered a variety of extracurricular activities such as sports, clubs, and student government associations. The students engaged in patriotic rituals and activities, like saluting the flag, as part of the 'Americanization' program implemented by the WRA. Also in this case there was a shortage of licensed teachers. The majority of the teachers were inmates who hastily received some training and were then certified to teach. Although they were extremely talented and passionate, most of them had not finished college and lacked classroom experience.

The WRA provided jobs for everyone willing to work, partly due to the lack of labor forces from outside the camps. The inmates made up most of the camp's working force and their wages were extremely low. Yet, some Nisei professionals who had suffered the consequences of employment discrimination along the West Coast before the start of the war, had the chance to gain working experience in the camp which would facilitate their future employment. Nonetheless, the meagre working conditions and low wages, as well as the disparities between the Japanese American professionals and the Caucasians, fuelled feelings of resentment.

To fight boredom the inmates organized a series of sports and cultural activities for their community. These included team sports, such as baseball, as well as classes for Japanese arts and crafts. Some inmates dedicated themselves to arts, while others to literature, which was published in camp newspapers or pamphlets. A memorable literary magazine managed by Miné Okubo together with a community of authors and artists in Topaz was called *Trek.* Religion also played an important role in the camp life of the inmates. Christian services were held on a weekly basis by outside ministers, and inmates organized prayer and Bible study circles. At the same time, Buddhist Japanese Americans, who made up the majority of the inmates, held their own services on a regular basis. (Robinson, *A Tragedy of Democracy* 157-161)

2.2.5. The question of loyalty

The term 'resettlement' was first adopted by the WRA in 1942 when it gave selected persons the possibility to exit the internment camps. The first group to be granted the permission to leave were Nisei students who were encouraged to pursue a college education. In May 1942 the National Japanese American Student Relocation Council was established in Chicago and in many cases, it offered financial and administrative support to these students. Another group of inmates who were released after having undergone the tiresome clearance process consisted of laborers who were engaged in temporary agricultural work. At this point, the WRA became increasingly aware that the incarceration was starting to have damaging effects on the Japanese Americans both mentally and physically. (Fugita, Stephen, Fernandez and Marilyn 105-106)

The inmates' unrest started manifesting itself through protests such as the Manzanar riot in California at the end of 1942, which led to the deaths of two inmates and the injury of a few others. Large strikes occurred in several other camps such as in Arizona, Wyoming and Idaho. (Suzuki 1)

Pressures towards the resettlement of the inmates were also connected to the shortage of work force and military power, as well as to the legal challenges and bad propaganda which resulted from the unconstitutional decision of incarcerating innocent civilians. In the end, the decision was made to establish a "leave clearance" (Robinson, *A Tragedy of Democracy* 180) program in the spring of 1943, allowing Japanese Americans to abandon the camps. The tiresome and gradual process of resettlement required the obtainment of a leave permit for all inmates above the age of seventeen, through which they were obliged to prove their loyalty to the United States. The inmates had to pass a loyalty test in the form of a questionnaire or had to be

recommended for release by people, preferably white, outside the camps. (Robinson, *A Tragedy of Democracy* 177-180)

The two most striking questions the Japanese American inmates were asked when applying for leave clearance were numbers 27 and 28, which required a 'yes' or 'no' response:

> "[A]re you willing to serve in the armed forces of the United States on combat duty, wherever ordered?" And, second, "Will you swear unqualified allegiance to the United States of America and faithfully defend the United States from any or all attacks by foreign or domestic forces, and forswear any form of allegiance or obedience to the Japanese Emperor or any other foreign government, power or organization?" (James 82)

Considering how the Japanese Americans had been treated and being unaware of the purpose of the questionnaires, many inmates felt uneasy. Moreover, the question of loyalty was absurd for many Issei, who were unsure if they were expected to volunteer for the army at their age. Furthermore, given that they were unable to become American citizens, by forsaking Japan they would have lost their only possible citizenship. The loyalty inquisition provoked a great deal of individual apprehension and guilt, alongside conflict within families. The answer to the loyalty questionnaire did not only determine the fate of individual people, but also of the rest of the family. Moreover, Issei and Nisei had dissimilar concerns and ambitions regarding their resettlement. While most Issei appeared hesitant to return to life outside the camps, some Nisei believed that by proving their loyalty they could join the army or simply start their life outside of the relocation centers. (O'Brien and Fugita 70-74)

From the beginning of 1943 Japanese Americans could join the army and therefore the questions were a crucial part of the military selection for Nisei men. The act of demanding equal status regarding citizen obligations, as in the case of compulsory military service, may have appeared unlawful, given that the Japanese Americans' rights had been violated when they were incarcerated. However, the possibility of being drafted was essential for the reintegration of the ethnic group into the American community. The administration firmly believed in the fairness of their political system, which provided the Japanese Americans with the opportunity to demonstrate their loyalty to the United States. The government officials were therefore surprised when approximately eleven percent of those qualified for the loyalty examination refused giving a response to the questions or provided a negative or inadequate answer. Even more shocking was that the 'no-no' answers came most frequently from young Nisei, who were suitable for the army and were apparently the most fully Americanized amongst their ethnic group. (James 81-85)

These inmates known as the "no-no boys" (Robinson, *A Tragedy of Democracy* 192) gave their answers based on a variety of different factors, such as feelings of anger and betrayal for how they had been treated in the camps, their possible ignorance and confusion, their loyalty to Japan, their worry of being disconnected from their family or, maybe, their unwillingness to join the army. Also relevant were the diverse conditions within the relocation centers and the attitude of the administrators, who in some cases provided no explanation for the loyalty questionnaires. (Robinson, *A Tragedy of Democracy* 192)

In total, during the time of registration on the mainland the majority of the inmates requested to be expatriated or repatriated, rather than volunteering to be drafted into the American army. The result was extremely different in Hawaii, where no mass internment had taken place, as almost 10,000 Japanese Americans enlisted in the army. They initially fought in the 100th Infantry Battalion and later in the 44th Regimental Combat Team, which was one of the most decorated units in the history of American military. (James 81-85)

2.2.6. Effects of incarceration

Although it appears impossible to determine the exact effects the experience of internment had on the community of Japanese Americans, there were some undeniable consequences. One of the most apparent ones was the incredible financial loss that they sustained, which according to the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians amounted to between $1.2 and $3.1 billion. Furthermore, they also lost the economic infrastructure, particularly in farming, in which the Issei had invested so much. (O'Brien and Fugita 74-75)

On a psychological level the experience in the internment camps had a rather paradoxical impact. Although the inmates underwent incredible hardships, for some life in the camps was less demanding than before. This was particularly the case for Issei women, who were freed from their housework duties and from working on the farm, and could finally dedicate themselves to leisure activities. Similarly, the children could freely play with others of their age and invest in school and sports while creating friendships. At the same time, the injustice of being unfairly incarcerated, and the desolate and senseless camp life agonized the inmates. The internment period changed the family dynamics of the Japanese American community, which prior to the war consisted of strong patriarchal structures. These gradually started breaking down and the Issei father's authority decreased. Having suffered financial loss and been deprived of their position as heads of their community, many Issei men suffered from severe psychological issues. (Robinson, *A Tragedy of Democracy* 161-163)

Although the Japanese American community suffered tremendously during the wartime period, the way they managed to overcome their difficulties is remarkable. In spite of the adverse effects the ethnic community endured, on the grand scale, its members appeared to be psychologically fit and, although the group dynamics might have been transformed, the Japanese community remained intact. O'Brien and Fugita go so far as to state that after the war, the ethnic group appeared to be more powerful in certain aspects than it had been before their relocation. A crucial factor for their incredible resilience stemmed from their culture which, on the one hand, promoted an attitude of individual perseverance ('gaman' in Japanese), while stressing the importance of group survival. Also significant was the maintenance of a sense of community during the whole catastrophe. The inmates worked together to create different organizations and associations which helped create a sense of familiarity and community. (O'Brien and Fugita 78-79)

2.3. The post-war years

Although the process of resettlement had already begun on a small scale with Nisei students in 1942, the mass resettlement only began in 1945. The Japanese Americans were faced with many challenges when rebuilding their lives outside the camps. Without receiving any support from the State, they worked hard, got an education, and gradually resettled in mainstream society. For many years the experience of incarceration went unspoken, and only in 1960, did a group of activists on the West Coast begin the redress movement, which demanded compensations for those incarcerated during World War II. For a variety of reasons not all Japanese Americans supported redress; nonetheless on August 10, 1988 the Civil Liberties Act was officially signed into law. The redress movement affected the Japanese community in different ways, but for many it restored a sense of ethnic pride.

2.3.1. Mass resettlement

The arrangement of mass resettlement to the West Coast began in 1945. The WRA's resolution to close the camps without providing the much-needed support for readjusting to life outside of the camp was absurd for the detainees and their supporters. It was unclear how the inmates, and in particular the older Issei, who had no possessions left after the relocation, were supposed to exit the camps and provide for themselves without any governmental support. Nonetheless, shortly after the decision to close the camps, the detainees started leaving at a fast rate. The capitulation of Japan in August 1945 accelerated the process of departure, and by the end of the

year, the small number of inmates remaining were forcibly encouraged to leave the camps by WRA officials.

Upon leaving, the inmates were confronted with the question of where to restart their life. A large number of Japanese Americans returned to the West Coast, where many had left their farms or business. They felt attached to these familiar areas and many of the older generation hoped to restore their family and community bonds. By the beginning of 1946 around half of the former detainees had returned to areas from which they had been banned. Other former inmates headed towards areas where a large Japanese American community was already present, including family and friends. The prime destination for the new migrants was Chicago, which between 1946-47 welcomed 12,000 Japanese Americans.

The process of resettlement presented enormous challenges. Approximately 75 per cent of those relocated from the West Coast had lost all their possessions, and many of the Japanese Americans who had left their property in safe areas or in the hands of trusted friends, found it damaged, vandalized or simply stolen. Some shameless Caucasians profited from the anti-Japanese atmosphere by claiming their property or refusing to return houses or farms they had been entrusted to look after. Furthermore, the former inmates suffered great economic discrimination, which left many unemployed. Lack of accommodation was also a huge barrier, as many owners denied housing to Japanese Americans. (Robinson, *A Tragedy of Democracy* 254-259)

However, as they began settling down and their working situation improved, their careers started developing. Shortly after they had been released, the Japanese Americans managed to rapidly assimilate into the larger society. They worked hard to gain an education and enter into occupational fields from which they had been previously excluded. Their progresses were seen as "success stories" (Takezawa 115) and were applauded by society. Even more incredible is the rapid growth of interracial marriages between Japanese Americans and Caucasians, which in just a few decades after the internment amounted to half of the new marital unions of Japanese Americans. (O'Brien and Fugita 83-85)

2.3.2. The Redress Movement

The start of the redress movement, initially known as the 'reparations' movement, can be traced back to the late 1960s, when groups of Japanese Americans on the West Coast started protesting in order to receive a compensation for their incarceration during World War II. Starting from

1970, the JACL[1] passed the first resolution (other two would then follow) requesting amends for the injustices throughout the war. Very little resulted from the initial resolutions adopted by the activists, yet a decisive event occurred in 1978 at the convention in Salt Lake City, where the German Jews' experience of the concentration camps during World War II was compared to that of the Japanese Americans. The meeting was concluded with a proposal requesting $25,000 for each person who had been imprisoned or their heir. Not everyone in the Japanese American community supported the redress movement, and one of the most notable opponents was Senator S. I. Hayakawa, who spoke against the request for reparations at the convention. He claimed that the internment was fruitful for some Japanese Americans, particularly for the Nisei, who became remarkably successful after their release. His remark naturally enraged many belonging to his ethnic community, especially because Hayakawa, being a Canadian[2] citizen, had not been incarcerated himself, and had lived in Chicago during the war period. (O'Brien and Fugita 79-80)

Besides Hayakawa, quite a few other members of the Japanese American community initially opposed the redress movement for various reasons. One of these was the belief that no sum of money could make up for the hardship and misery the inmates had experienced. Another reason was connected to the reluctance of reopening past scars. According to Roger Daniels: "about a third favored it, another third opposed it, and the final third was not too much concerned one way or another" (Daniels, Talyor, and Kitano 189).

In 1980 the Commission on the Wartime Relocation and Interment of Civilians (CWRIC) was created and in the following years numerous hearings were held and testimonies of more than 750 individuals were recorded. The findings were then reported in *Personal Justice Denied* in 1983 and the outcome was that the relocation was based on "race prejudice, war hysteria and a failure of political leadership" (O'Brien and Fugita 81). The commission proposed granting compensations amounting to $20,000 for each living inmate. On August 10, 1988 the Civil Liberties Act was made official by President Reagan and a formal apology to the Japanese Americans was offered for their unjust treatment during World War II. Furthermore, all

[1] Japanese American Citizens League

[2] Unlike the Japanese Americans, who were given the option to either be relocated or deported to Japan, the Japanese Canadians were not given that choice. In 1945 the cabinet made the decision to forcefully deport 10, 000 Japanese Canadians. It took several years for this policy to be reviewed, and it was only at the beginning of 1947 that the program was terminated, yet Canadians were allowed to return to British Columbia only from April 1949. (Hirabayashi 139-141)

surviving detainees received a compensation of $20,000, which amounted to a total of $1.2 billion. (O'Brien and Fugita 79-82)

The long road to redress impacted Japanese Americans in different ways. A significant effect was the reestablishment of ethnic pride, which for some Nisei translated into feeling like first-class citizens. The Sansei also experienced a sense of ethnic pride, but rather due to their admiration for the strength that the previous generations demonstrated during their internment and their courage for requesting that the American government amend their acts of injustice. For many the victory brought about by the redress movement renewed trust in the American government. Additionally, it helped develop a stronger intergenerational bond through the dialogue of the Nisei and Sansei about the past events of their family and community. Lastly, the redress movement helped the Japanese American community develop more empathy towards other ethnic minorities, by becoming aware of their shared suffering in the American history of discrimination. The recognition of their common racial prejudice led to stronger ties with these ethnic minorities. (Takezawa 172-191)

3. Japanese American literature

In this section, two main areas of Japanese American literature will be discussed, namely autobiographies and internment literature. As autobiographies play a crucial role in Japanese American writing, the first section will refer to the most significant literary works of this genre. In the second part, the internment literature will be thematized, by dividing it chronologically into four main periods and focusing on the main events and works of each stage.

For a variety of different reasons, the production of Japanese American literature in English has been amongst the most comprehensive in comparison to other Asian American literature. Unlike many other Asians, the Japanese were generally more prone to remain in the USA permanently due to their having fewer familial duties in Japan, as well as their difficulty in repatriating to a rapidly developing country. Furthermore, as Japan represented a major power on the world scale, in 1907 the American government conducted an agreement with Japan, allowing Japanese women to unite with their husbands in the United States[3]. This made it possible for the Issei in America to start having families much sooner than other Asian immigrants, such as the Chinese, who had arrived decades earlier. For this reason, the total

[3] See section 2.1.3 regarding the Gentlemen's Agreement

number of second generation Japanese Americans compared to Chinese Americans was much greater in the first decades of the twentieth century. (Kim, *Asian American Literature* 73)

When contemplating the limited amount of literature produced in English by Issei writers, Gordon O. Taylor (285) points to the fact that their silence was, amongst other reasons, connected to their lack of linguistic fluency. The situation is quite different for the Nisei, who, having mastered the English language, published a great number of texts already in the 1920s and 1930s. Most of their work was printed in Japanese American newspapers and targeted readers belonging to the Asian community. (Kim 73-74)

3.1. Japanese American autobiographies

The autobiography is a dominant genre in Japanese American literature, as the authors felt the need to offer a true account of their life experiences and challenge the stereotypes perpetuated by non-Asians. Two of the most important early works belonging to the Japanese American body of literature are autobiographies, both written by women, namely *A Daughter of the Samurai* (1925) by Etsu Inagaki Sugimoto, who describes her upbringing in Japan, including the values she was taught which represented the samurai spirit. She then recalls her life with her Japanese husband in the U.S., a country which she only implicitly criticizes. This autobiography was followed by Kathleen Tamagawa's *Holy Prayers in a Horse's Ear* (1932), which thematizes her bicultural upbringing, her father being Japanese and her mother Irish, as well as her own interracial marriage to an American. One of the most acknowledged postwar autobiographies, also written by a female author, was *Nisei Daughter* (1953) written by Monica Sone, who sought to express the persecution and mistreatment of Japanese Americans as well as to delineate her experience as a bicultural child in the search of her identity. (Huang 447 - 448)

Several other Japanese American books produced in the 1960s and 1970s were autobiographies such as *Journey to Washington* (1967) cowritten by Daniel Inouye and Lawrence Elliott, *American in Disguise* (1971) by Daniel Okimoto, *The Two Worlds of Jim Yoshida* (1972) by Jim Yoshida and Bill Hosokawa, and *Farewell to Manzanar* (1973) by Wakatsuki Houston and James D. Houston. These writers disclose their path towards self-denial in the attempt to placate their need for belonging. (Kim, *Asian American Literature* 81)

Significant autobiographies published in the following decades include Yoshiko Uchida's *Desert Exile: Uprooting of a Japanese-American Family* (1982) and *The Invisible Thread: An Autobiography* (1991), which both recall the experience of the camps; the Sansei writer David

Mura's: *Turning Japanese: Memoirs of a Sansei* (1991) and *Where the Body Meets Memory: An Odyssey of Race, Sexuality and Identity* (1996), both addressing issues surrounding "cultural identity, racial politics, and sexuality from the viewpoint of a sansei" (Huang 450); Garrett Hongo's *Volcano: A Memoir of Hawaii*, which focuses on the author's search for identity; and lastly George Takei's *To the Stars: The Autobiography of George Takei, Star Trek's Mr. Sulu* (1994), which delineates his professional course, while addressing his identity as a Japanese American. (Huang 449 - 450)

3.2. Japanese American internment literature

The internment experience deeply affected Japanese Americans, which is evident by the mere fact that the many Nisei and Sansei authors extensively wrote about this topic. Greg Robinson (*Writing the Internment* 46) distinguishes four main periods of 'internment literature'.

The first one coincides with the period of war during which Japanese American authors wrote about their experiences while being imprisoned in the internment camps. However, they generally withheld critique of the government administration due to the control by the authorities. During their confinement some inmates created literary magazines which published texts by Toshio Mori, Jim Oki, Ken Tasuda, Taro Katayama, and Toyo Suyemoto amongst others. Furthermore, some inmates such as Yamato Ichihashi, Hatsuye Egami, and Charles Kikuchi wrote diaries which were printed at a later stage, while other Issei writers dedicated themselves to poetry, which was published in anthologies like *May Sky* and *Poets behind Barbed Wires*. Two significant works about the internment experience are Hiroshi Nakamura's *Treadmill*, which recalls the author's experience in the camps in the form of a "documentary novel" (Robinson, *Writing the Internment* 47) (although it was written during the wartime period, it was only printed in 1996, possibly due to its pessimistic tone) and *Citizen 13660* by Miné Okubo, a collection of drawings and writings about life in the camps. (Robinson, *Writing the Internment* 46-49)

During the early postwar years, numerous literary texts about the internment were produced by non-Japanese writers. Not having personally undergone the traumatic experience of the camps, in some ways probably made it easier for them to write about a theme which did not directly affect them. One of the first works was a story on internment produced by the African American writer Chester B. Himes, which was published in 1943 in the magazine *The War Worker*. Not long after, several other literary texts appeared. (Robinson, *Writing the Internment* 49-52)

The internment literature of the second period, which developed in the post-war years, was rather limited due to pressure exerted by former inmates to focus on conforming to society and be silent about their experiences of the camps. Therefore, although Japanese American literature was being produced, it rarely addressed the traumatic wartime experience. Prominent Nisei writers such as Hisaye Yamamoto and Toshio Mori focused on the life on the West Coast before the war in their fictional novels. Only in a few short stories did Yamamoto thematize the trauma of the war, and the only book which was set in the camps was *The Legend of Miss Sasagawara* (1950).

Even so, several postwar literary texts by Japanese American writers addressing the confinement did appear in a variety of different genres. A handful of memoirs about the camp were published, amongst which are the aforementioned *Nisei Daughter* (1953) by Monica Sone; plays were produced such as Hiroshi Kashiwagi's short play *Laughter and False Teeth* (1954); Guyo Tajiri wrote the anthem *The JACL Hymn* (1948); and John Okada published the fictional novel *No-No Boy* (1957), which became a huge success. (Robinson, *Writing the Internment* 48-49)

The following period of internment literature developed against the climate of protest towards the Vietnam War and the growth of the civil rights movement. From the 1970s a new group of scholars, many being Japanese Americans themselves, once again brought to attention the imprisonment of Japanese Americans, and much research was undertaken concerning the official decisions made surrounding the internment and the way the inmates were treated during their imprisonment. Amidst the different activist movements and campaigns, the redress movement emerged, which fought for official reparations for the former inmates. Parallel to this movement, internment literature started flourishing, and it was characterized by major efforts of "breaking the silence" (Robinson, *Writing the Internment* 52) and giving voice to the trauma of the internment experiences. A significant realist novel during this period set in the camps is *Obasan* by Joy Kogawa (1981), which focuses on the internment experience of Japanese Canadians. Also significant is the historical novel *Tule Lake* by Edward Miyakawa, which emphasizes the desolate conditions during the confinement. In actuality, the literature of the redress period is essentially characterized by other genres, such as poetry or drama, for example. In 1971 Lawson Fusao Inada published the collection of poems *Before the War*, Mitsuye Yamada followed with *Camp Notes* in 1976, which comprised a series of poems and sketches. In 1986 Lonny Kaneko published *Coming Home from Camp*, an anthology of poems. He also produced the short story *The Shoyu Kid* in 1976, in which he addresses the topic of

sexual exploitation during the confinement. Significant sansei poets who were active during this time were Janice Mirikitani and James Masao Mitsui. (Robinson, *Writing the Internment* 52-54)

On a formal level, it is evident that many Japanese American poets adopted western conventions and appeared more insecure when making use of "Japanese literary forms and motifs" (Streamas 465). On the thematic level, many addressed topics related to "global culture and politics" (Streamas 465). Although the main focus remained the wartime experience of imprisonment, the authors of this generation often put that experience into a larger context.

As previously stated, plays were a popular genre for this period, since they could skillfully portray the difficult conditions and constricted climate in which the Japanese American inmates lived. Some of the most prominent plays include *Gold Watch* by Momoko Iko (1972), *A Question of Loyalty* by Hiroshi Kashiwagi (1978, it was later expanded), *A Song for a Nisei Fisherman* by Philip Kan Gotanda (1980), and *12-I-A* by Wakako Yamauchi (1982). Also well-known are the detective dramas *Yellow Fever* (1982) written by Rick Shiomi, and *Farewell to Manzanar* by Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston and James Houston, which was later adapted into a movie. The genre which Greg Robinson considers to be the most significant for this period is children's literature, which includes many prominent works such as *Journey to Topaz* (1971) by Yoshiko Uchida. (Robinson, *Writing the Internment* 52-54)

The last period of internment literature deals with the years at the turn of the twenty-first century, after the success of the redress movement, which brought much attention to the theme of confinement. During this time the generations who descended from previously detained Japanese Americans expanded on the theme of internment in their writing, which was characterized by several approaches and forms of literature. One of the most successful works of this period is the memoir *Looking Like the Enemy* (2011) by Mary Matsuda Greenwald. Other novels include *A Time of Innocence* (2007) by Sanae Kawaguchi, *The Issei Prisoners of the San Pedro Center* (2009) by Stanley Kanzaki, and *Fox Drum Bebop* (2014) by Gene Oishi. Simultaneously, several Sansei and Yonsei writers produced novels originating in the family histories of the novelists. A few of these works include *A Bridge Between Us* (1995) by Julie Shikeguni, *Why She Left Us* (1999) by Rahna Reiko Rizzuto, *What the Scarecrow Said* (1997) by Stewart David Ikeda, *When the Emperor Was Divine* (2003) by Julie Otsuka, and *The Red Kimono* (2013) by Jan Morrill. The post-redress internment literature also includes mystery novels, such as *Death in Little Toyko* (1996) by Dale Furutani, the *Mas Arai* novels of Naomi Hirahara, as well as *Southland* by Nina Revoyr. (Robinson, *Writing the Internment* 54-56)

What Galyle K. Sato claims to be characteristic of the literature of this period is the exploration of "transnational and multicultural dimensions of internment history" (455), which in several works results in the juxtaposition of the history of Japanese and Native Americans. Significant also for this period are the various theatrical works produced, which highlighted the more concealed and alarming facets of the imprisonment. These works include *The Sisters Matsumoto* (1999) and *After the War* (2007) by Philip Kan Gotanda, the play by Tim Toyama, which was made into the short film *Day of Independence* (2003), the play *Hold These Truths* by Jeanne Sakata, and the polemical but notable musical *Allegiance* (2012) by Jay Kuo and Marc Acito.

As the redress movement helped transform the wartime trauma into a more palpable reality for the public, during this time many non-Japanese writers also wrote novels about the internment, such as *Snow Falling on Cedars* (1994) by David Guterson or *Perfidia* (2014) by James Ellroy. (Robinson, *Writing the Internment* 54-56)

4. The genre of life writing

As the two texts which will be analyzed in this paper belong to the genre of life writing (one being a memoir and the other an autobiography), this literary form will be briefly discussed. The past few decades have witnessed a boom in the production and research of life writing. This form of writing, however, is characterized by conflicting views surrounding several issues such as its suitability as a historical source, its representation of ethnic identity, or the boundaries between non-fiction and fiction. In this section, the term 'life writing' will be defined and its key characteristics, as well as its shortcomings presented. Thereafter the question of historicity and identity will be discussed in connection with life writing, and to conclude the genres of autobiography and memoir will be examined briefly.

4.1. Defining *life writing*

Clarifying the notion of 'life writing' is a more complex endeavor than one might initially anticipate, as there is no universally accepted interpretation of the term. Some scholars continue to interpret life writing in conformity with its original meaning, which was developed in the eighteenth century. During this time the term was used to refer to 'biography', which encompassed different forms of autobiographic writing, including the 'autobiography'. The usage of life writing is often preferred in the academic context as it presupposes a more inclusive genre than the categorical genre of 'auto/biography'. (Kadar 3-4)

Other scholars refuse to view life writing as a genre of its own. According to them life writing can be understood as a "continuum that spreads unevenly and in combined forms from the so-called least fictive narration to the most fictive" (Kadar 10). Following this view, the focus is not on whether a particular text can be seen as life writing or not, but to what extent it corresponds to life writing. Paul De Man (921) is a strong proponent of this view, as a matter of fact, when talking about autobiographies he claims that any text can be viewed as autobiographical to a certain extent, and therefore it appears impossible to define it as a separate genre with delimited literary features.

Since the 1980s life writing has gained much interest in academia and many scholars such as Lucia Boldrini and Julia Novak (2017) tend to prefer its original interpretation. The definition, which will be used as the basis for analysis in this paper, is the one provided by Zachary Leader, who views life writing as the depiction of lives or segments of lives which encompasses:

> not only memoir, autobiography, biography, diaries, autobiographical fiction, and biographical fiction, but also letters, writs, wills, written anecdotes, depositions, court proceedings, […] marginalia, nonce writings, lyric poems, scientific and historical writings and, digital forms. (1)

According to Leader's definition, life writing can be seen as a rather broad umbrella term which contains overlaps between different genres, for instance between biography and fiction. The vastness of this genre is one of the main causes for the difficultly in identifying precise characteristics which belong solely to life writing.

When talking about autobiographies from the perspective of literary studies, James Olney points out a paradox: while autobiographies may appear to be the simplest and most frequent type of literature, they are also the most illusory. This is because, on the one hand, this literary genre lacks clear rules or formal conventions; accordingly, Olney (3) emphasizes that there are "no restraints, no necessary models, no obligatory observances gradually shaped out of a long developing tradition" for autobiographers. Consequently, they are completely free in how they choose to depict their life. On the other hand, these apparently uncomplicated texts present a great challenge to critics, who do not have a strict set of rules or guidelines in order to grasp and interpret autobiographical writing. The absence of clear generic boundaries often makes it difficult to distinguish an autobiography from a novel or a critical essay, for example. As a matter of fact, when trying to delineate the history of autobiographies, Olney claims that scholars share contrasting opinions concerning which autobiography was the first to have been written. While some believe it was Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *Confessions* (1760s), others would propose St. Augustine's *Confessions,* written between the end of the fourth and the beginning

of the fifth centuries A.D.; alternatively Plato's seventh epistle written in the fourth century B.C. is also one of the works considered to be the oldest autobiography. (Olney 3-8)

4.2. Features of life writing

Although it may appear challenging to find features that typically characterize life writing, scholars such as Phillip Lejeune or Hubert Zapf have succeeded in this endeavor. A key notion which Phillip Lejeune promotes when analyzing autobiographies is known as "The Autobiographical Pact" (Smith and Watson 8). This pact means the author signs a virtual contract with the readership, assuring them of the truthfulness of his or her writing. Accordingly, the readers can trust that the author and the narrator are one and the same person and the events being told are not fictitious and did in fact take place. Although such a pact is meant to certify the veracity of the experiences reported by the author, Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson emphasize that it is not sufficient to be able to view life writing as a historical record, as the experiences described "offer subjective "truth" rather than "fact"" (10). The authors of life writing offer a biased view which protects their reputation and is based on their personal interpretation of events. Furthermore, the narrated events derive from the author's memory, but they do not represent a duplication of the actual experiences, and those memories may change over time. (Smith and Watson 10-16)

When focusing on the broader notion of life writing, Hubert Zapf (3-4) defined three premises which characterize the broad genre of life writing: "the realist premise", "the individual premise" and "the anthropocentric premise". The first proposition emphasizes the connection of life writing with genuine life experiences; in the second case, the focus is on the multifaceted role of the author who is the narrator and, at the same time, the main agent, and represents a trustworthy authority of the stories depicted; the last premise focuses on the main topic of life writing, which is usually "the life of human beings in their psychological and sociocultural existence". Similarly to Phillip Lejeune's conception of "The Autobiographical Pact", also in this case a concordance can be found between the persona of the narrator and the author, who recounts truthful life experiences, which represent the main focus of the book. (Zapf 4)

4.3. The questions of historicity and identity

After having analyzed the concept of life writing, it is evident that it is a very broad genre, which encompasses numerous forms of writing. Yet, one characteristic feature for all life writing is what Clare Brant and Alison Wood define as its "work of recovery" (157), namely its aim to retrieve the experiences especially of those who faced oppression or neglect during

their lifetime. From this perspective life writing is very much connected to cultural memory, which is challenged and reestablished through its works. (Brant and Wood 157)

Whether or not life writing can be considered suitable for historical discourse is an issue still debated in academic circles. More recent views such as those of Rocìo Davis et al. support the notion of life writing as "historically valid documents" (10), which allow individuals' stories of the self to be representative of a larger community, thereby contributing to the existing body of "knowledge and memory" (Davis et al. 17-18).

Such a view is in contrast with that of many historians, who may perceive the genre of life writing as intriguing, yet nonetheless would consider it rather dubious as a means for historical analysis. Furthermore, critics condemn the focus on the life of individuals, as the historian's duty is rather to portray the life history of a societal group. Tanya Evans and Robert Reynolds acknowledge that the individuals who write their life stories may not be "representative of society as a whole" but it is clear that we can learn much about the world through their eyes and minds. (2)

Hans Renders strongly opposes the use of life writing as a credible source, which promotes the so called "exceptional typical" (132), namely an average individual who is regarded as representative for a particular group of people discriminated against. He emphasizes the need to critically analyze such sources, by taking its historical context into consideration and being aware of the underlying "ideological agenda" (133), such as the depiction of racial or gender discrimination. Admitting that authors of life writing present a very personal and subjective view of the experiences they write about, which is evident by the decision of which events to narrate and which to exclude, a similar argument could be made when examining historical writing, as this too is very much contingent on the origin of the author as well as his/her motives. When talking about the infallible truth contained in official records, Rocìo Davis et al. underline the necessity to read such documents critically, as they may very well be prone to providing bias or incomplete views. It can therefore be concluded that when reading any given text, be it a historical document or an autobiography, it is fundamental to be aware of the context in which the text was written, as well as the background and possible intention of the author. In this regard, Max Saunders (323) claims: "[w]hen we study life-writing as a source for cultural memory, that is, our conclusions will also be literary-critical ones: interpretations of the ways in which memory was produced, constructed, written, and circulated." In other words, it would be erroneous to detach life writing from its literary context, and therefore when viewing it from a historical perspective, a literary analysis of the texts must also be made.

Other than representing a historical source that helps rebuild the past, life writing also plays a crucial role for negotiating questions of identity. In this regard, Mark Freeman (4) talks about the "autobiographical consciousness", which has to do with the discovery of one's identity through personal historical research. He emphasizes that the telling of a story is strongly linked to one's cultural background, as it plays an important role in defining and expressing the personal self. Therefore, when interpreting life writing, it is important to consider the cultural models which condition a given text. (Freeman 1-5)

In postmodern and postcolonial writing, the idea of ethnic life narratives is rapidly spreading. According to Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson (194) this narrative negotiates the question of the ethnic identity of people who left their original homeland. Such literature plays an important role in understanding ethnic identity, as it places the text within a historical and social framework, and by so doing enhances the creation of the collective memory of ethnic communities. (Davis 9-28)

4.4. Autobiographies and memoirs

As previously stated, the two texts which will be analyzed in this paper are the autobiography "The Two Worlds of Jim Yoshida", written by Jim Yoshida and Bill Hosokawa, and the memoir "Turning Japanese: Memoirs of a Sansei" by David Mura. In this section these two genres will be addressed in more detail.

When tracing the etymology of the term autobiography, it can be observed that it stems from the Greek notions of: *autos*, signifying "self", *bios*, which refers to "life", and lastly, *graphe* meaning "writing". (Watson 1) An 'autobiography' can thus be interpreted as the writing of one's life, where the subject of the narrative is life itself. It is not clear when the term was first coined, as some believe it was first used in the preface to a collection of poems published in the eighteenth century and written by the English writer Ann Yearsley. However, a large number of critics believe that the term 'autobiography' was used for the first time in 1809 by Robert Southey, who translated the three Greek words into English. (Watson 1)

As the genre of autobiographies is very diversified, it appears impossible to find a limited number of features which characterize all, if not most of the variants of that genre. Yet Robert Folkenflik attempted to do so by enumerating a series of norms which autobiographies typically share: they are written in the first person (although third person autobiographies also exist); they are generally written in prose but also in verse; they may be truthful and fact-based, yet at other times they are fictious, a fruit of the author's imagination; they are generally written

towards the end of someone's life, but some autobiographies are also written at a young age; in most cases, they comprise a single book, although series of autobiographies have been published (for instance the autobiographies of Beverly Nichols or Maya Angelou); the author and the protagonist are usually the same person, but some autobiographies have been written in cooperation with other authors or by ghostwriters; finally autobiographies usually recall past events. (13-14)

For a long time, memoirs were seen as an inferior or marginal form compared to autobiographies. However, in recent times, the two terms have been revisited, and interestingly the previously "minor" term gained prestige and is often preferred to that of the autobiography. (Couser 18) While memoirs represented a minor literary form on the market for over a century, nowadays many more memoirs are being published than autobiographies. Thomas Larson (21) maintains that: "we may be living in the age of memoir". He supports his claim by stating that among the top one hundred best-selling life writing books, memoirs represent eighty per cent of the total. The increased interest in memoirs by the general readership is also confirmed by Julie Rak (8), who claims that in the past few years over 150,000 new memoirs have been published in the United States alone. The term 'memoir' originates from the French word *memoire,* meaning memory. It is therefore only natural for memoirs to be fundamentally based on the author's memory, which is certainly more subjective than if they were fact-based. (Couser 19). While in both memoirs and autobiographies, the narrator and author are the same person, the main difference between the two literary forms is that the former focuses on a specific life experience. Therefore, a memoir essentially represents a segment of the life of the author, rather than the entire lifetime. (Larson 14)

5. Key concepts of cultural identity

Cultural identity is a complex notion which encompasses many different aspects. In this section the term will be defined from different viewpoints and the cultural identity of Japanese Americans will be discussed with a particular focus on the Issei, Nisei and Sansei. After that, the three crucial aspects that constitute cultural identity will be presented, namely language, values, and custom and tradition. Particular attention will be devoted to these three features, as they will be the focus of the analysis of the cultural identity in the two works of life writing in this thesis.

5.1. Defining *cultural identity*

In one sense, the notion of 'identity' incorporates the idea of the individuality of each person. At the same time, everyone plays a role within a larger community, be it within the family in the role of a parent, child or sibling, in the professional field in the role of a manager or employee, or within the national sphere as a citizen. The desire to find one's identity appears to be one of the primary pursuits of human beings. However, beyond having a personal identity, it is natural to want to belong to a larger community, in which one feels accepted and included. (Bauman xxxi)

In the past decades, the idea of 'identity' as an intrinsic and unified concept has been criticized in many disciplines. Gary Taylor and Steve Spencer, for example, emphasize the continuous evolvement of identity, which is strongly connected to its "circulation of cultural meanings in a society" (9). As this concept is linked to the historical period and ideology in which it emerges, it is naturally influenced by the cultural discourse of its time. When talking about identities, Stuart Hall (*Who Needs 'Identity' 10*) claims that "they emerge within the play of specific modalities of power, and thus are more the product of the marking of difference and exclusion, than they are the sign of an identical, naturally-constituted unity – an 'identity' in its traditional meaning". Like Taylor and Spencer, Hall (*Cultural Identity and Diaspora* 222) also stresses the need to view identity as an incomplete and continuously evolving product rather than a final one which embodies the new cultural discourse.

The notion of identity can be examined from different perspectives. In psychology, for example, the focus is on the stages of identity development over a longer period of time. Similarly, sociology also focuses on how people develop meanings about themselves by relating to those around them. Thus, one's identity is discovered through interactions with other people. This process of identity formation applies to identities in a broad sense, but there are naturally different types of identity, such as cultural identity, ethnic identity or gender identity, just to name a few. (Dhingra and Rodriguez 156-160)

In the same way that different opinions exist with regards to identity, several definitions can be found when analyzing 'cultural identity'. Paul Gilbert, for example, distinguishes between two types of cultural identity: an "individual cultural identity" and a "collective cultural identity". (3) In the first case, identity is connected to the cultural features of a person, which include those one is exposed to during his or her upbringing such as language, religion, moral standards, manners and etiquette, amongst many others. The *individual* cultural identity is unique to each person and can encompass a combination of different cultural aspects. In the second case,

cultural identity is not exclusive to one individual, but is "shared by other members of the group" (3). Such a cultural group is characterized by certain features which distinguish it from other groups. This second view is similar to Hall's notion, which is based on the understanding that cultural identity is primarily a collective identity, hidden among other "superficial or artificially imposed "selves" which people with a shared history and ancestry hold in common" (*Who Needs 'Identity'* 9). Thus, it encompasses decisive past events and cultural norms which shape a group of people. Hall also views cultural identity from a second angle, which underlines its constant mutation. It goes beyond the idea that identities lie simply in the rediscovery of a shared history, but are defined as "transcending place, time, history and culture" (*Cultural Identity and Diaspora* 225). Rather than being a fixed notion rooted in rigid beliefs and past events, cultural identity is defined as one's "positioning" (*Cultural Identity and Diaspora* 226) or stance within a historical and cultural frame.

This positioning is influenced by a series of factors, which determine whether a Japanese American, for example, feels more attached to Japanese or to American culture. According to Pawan Dhingra and Robyn Magalit Rodriguez, the strength of such attachments is influenced by the contact with four main elements: "culture, institutions, interests, and categorization" (160). The exposure to these factors is crucial to how people's identity is shaped, as well as which aspects of their identity they choose to exhibit. When analyzing the first major aspect, culture, Dhingra and Rodriguez refer to "a group's language, religion, traditions, food, values, family, norms, and the like" (160). The more one discovers his or her culture, the more likely one is to be connected to their ethnic community. Institutions are understood as organized groups which cooperate in order to realize a shared goal. Being connected to such institutions, which may include religious groups or family ties, supports the development of firmer identities. Additionally, possessing common interests also helps to strengthen one's ethnic identity. Furthermore, in many cases the cooperation with members of the same ethnic community leads to financial or political benefits, as well as the creation of a further sense of belonging to that community. Finally, the way a person is associated with a group from an outside perspective, greatly influences ethnic identities. Such a categorization supports the distinction between the self and the other. (Dhingra and Rodriguez 160-161)

Identities do not exist by simply maintaining the same exact attributes over a longer period of time, but instead undergo continuous processes of "selecting/recycling/rearranging the cultural matter which is common to all" (Bauman xlv). The persistence of cultural identities is only

possible through the process of change and development of cultural traits, rather than its immobility.

5.2. Japanese American cultural identity

Stuart Hall's definition of cultural identity in the sense of positioning oneself within a historical and cultural context is particularly helpful when trying to understand the identity of Japanese Americans. Interestingly, they appear to be the only community of Asian Americans who have distinct terms for identifying members belonging to different generations, namely: *Issei* for the first generation, *Nisei* for the second generation, *Sansei* for the third generation and so forth. Although they belong to the same cultural group, the identity of each generation has undergone a visible transformation. When examining their cultural identity, a clear tension can be observed between the desire to be assimilated into the mainstream American culture, while at the same time remaining connected to their ethnic community. Often, they are torn between wanting to be part of their ethnic groups, while being distinct from them. Just as with for Japanese Americans, the same identity conflict also characterizes other Asian American communities. (Gudykunst 92)

A notion which is often utilized when analyzing the process of identification of Asian Americans is 'pan-ethnic identity', which is "based on a shared sense of culture […] and/or shared sense of racialization" (Dhingra and Rodriguez 160). Some aspects of the shared culture include respect for the elderly, strong family ties, a strict upbringing, and the awareness of being seen as a foreigner. The degree to which Asian Americans identify with pan-ethnicity varies, as a matter of fact East Asian Americans demonstrate greater pan-ethnicity compared to South or Southeast Asian Americans. A major contributing factor is the class difference between the ethnic groups and their arrival in the United States as refugee immigrants rather than sojourners in the pursuit of the American dream. (Dhingra and Rodriguez 160-169)

5.2.1. The Issei

According to Minako K. Maykovich (25), "[t]he first generation Issei are frequently identified with the "bamboo" – strong, straight, resilient, though bent by the wind." The Issei deeply embodied the values promoted during the Tokugawa era, which, due to its lengthy duration, managed to successfully reinforce certain cultural aspects, such as a clear hierarchical social structure and strong Buddhist and Confucian ethical and religious beliefs. The Issei were raised in traditional patriarchal family units, in which the father represented the head of the household while the mother lacked any real status. Each member of the family fulfilled a distinct role

within the hierarchical structure, which determined the ethical duties and regulated the form of conduct. The children were expected to fulfill their filial duty and to behave modestly. The Tokugawa era was characterized by a complex social system, in which each person lived in a state of interdependence. The society was regulated by the concept of "bushido", namely "*noblesse oblige*, or the code of decorum, dignity, and self-control for the ruling class" (Maykovich 31-32). The restriction of personal expression was promoted, as opposed to the impulsive emotions which would upset the whole societal structure. The insistence on control and conforming strongly contradistinguishes the Japanese mentality from the western belief of initiative and improvisation. The push for achievement in the Japanese culture was very much influenced by Confucian teachings, which stressed the importance of "loyalty over self, national goals over personal ones, and personal improvement" (Maykovich 34). In order to avoid bringing shame onto the family and the nation, each person strived for excellence. If the Japanese failed to meet certain expectations, they would feel a tremendous sense of guilt, which was instilled in them from a young age. The unification of the Japanese empire under the Tokugawa shogunate propagated a strong sense of national pride. The Japanese viewed themselves as the superior race and were proud of their nation and culture. (Maykovich 25-37)

At the beginning, the majority of the Japanese immigrants who emigrated had the intention of returning to their homeland after having earned enough money in America. Upon their arrival, the Issei were confronted with great difficulties such as linguistic barriers and dissimilar customs, which made it challenging to assimilate into the American society. The Japanese suffered discrimination from the white dominant group and stereotypes were promulgated by the mass media. (Maykovich 42-43)

As a result, most of the Issei and their family lived in their own ethnic communities along the West Coast, where they could preserve many characteristics of the Japanese culture. As it was their intention to eventually return to their homeland, they strived to maintain the model of the *ie*, the typically Japanese household. In his study *on Acculturation and Family Continuities in Three Generations of Japanese Americans* (1974), John W. Connor emphasizes that due to the Issei's habitation in predominantly Japanese neighbourhoods and the anti-Japanese discrimination they experienced, many of them were scarcely acculturated. This is evident from their poor English fluency, as well as their self-evaluation regarding their level of acculturation. As a matter of fact, according to Connor's study, on a scale from one (fully identifying as Japanese) to ten (fully identifying as American), Issei men on average scored 3.8, while Issei women 2.7. (Connor 159-161)

Although, it may appear that the Issei are defined as a unified group with a clear set of features, these are simply generalizations based on what has been recorded about them. In reality, they are an extremely heterogeneous group, with numerous differences. Furthermore, the identities of the Issei have greatly evolved from their first years of migration to the present time. (Maykovich 41)

5.2.2. The Nisei

When analyzing the Nisei, Maykovich claims that they are often represented as the "quiet Americans" (50), (a notion also discussed in Bill Hosokawa's *Nisei: The Quiet Americans*, 1969), whose history is characterized by accommodation. As a matter of fact, they learned to embrace the values and lifestyle promoted by American society, but were nonetheless not fully welcomed in the social circles of the dominant group. Despite the discrimination they experienced, which for many other ethnic minorities led to troublesome consequences such as: "poor health, poor education, low incomes, high crime rates, and unstable family relations" (Maykovich 51), the Nisei worked extremely hard to become successful and understood the importance of education. Although their parents hardly spoke any English and they were not raised in a culturally rich home filled with books or art, they were constantly applauded by their teachers for their grades and behaviour.

Upon the decision to relocate the Japanese Americans during World War II, most of the Nisei, like their parents followed the orders of the WRA and sought to convince themselves that the internment was a wartime necessity. Once released, the Japanese Americans had to rebuild their life from nothing and initially lived in slums, which were stricken by poverty and had high crime rates. Despite the extremely difficult circumstances, the Nisei focused on getting an education, which was the decisive factor for their success. The level of education amongst the Nisei was very high, as matter of fact:

> [a]ccording to the Chicago study by Caudill, the average level of education for the Nisei was, as it had been on the Pacific Coast, above the high school level. Almost everyone who did not go on to college took vocational training in order to become secretaries, laboratory technicians, beauty operators, automobile mechanics, or skilled workers in radio and refrigeration. (Maykovich 52)

Just a few years after the camp experience, the Nisei had managed to adapt incredibly well to the American society. Many had white-collar jobs, while others were employed in skilled trade. Caucasian employers and co-workers welcomed the Nisei and praised them for their hard work. Once they had the financial means necessary, they transferred from the slums to "predominantly white, lower middle class neighborhoods" (53). In many ways the Japanese Americans were

comparable to the American middle class. As a matter of fact, both groups shared values such as: “politeness, respect for parental wishes, duty to the community, diligence, cleanliness, personal achievement, shame for non-sanctioned behavior, and the importance of keeping up appearances” (54). Both conformed to the expectations placed on them by society regarding how they should behave. Furthermore, they accommodated themselves to the circumstances they were in by inhibiting their personal feelings.

Although some compatible aspects can be found in the value system of the Japanese Americans and the white middle class, many others were dissimilar and therefore the Nisei felt the need to conform as much as possible to American society. Despite their strong desire to be assimilated, Maykovich states that the Nisei demonstrated great pride in their identity and believed to possess the ideal harmony of Japanese and American features. (Maykovich 50-58)

This belief is confirmed by John W. Connor’s study, which in addition to confirming the Nisei’s conviction in their embodiment of the two cultures’ best aspects, also shows that they viewed their generation as halfway between the first and the third generations. Having been raised predominantly in Japanese communities and in many cases having attended Japanese language schools, where Japanese values were constantly reinforced, the Nisei very much retained a Japanese identity. (Connor 162-163)

At the same time, they also were exposed to American values, such as independence and critical thinking, in school and through people outside of their ethnic group. In the attempt to be accepted as Americans, many Nisei strived hard to demonstrate their cultural assimilation, for example, by renouncing their Japanese background and by proudly declaring their lack of knowledge of the Japanese language and culture. Despite their eagerness to be recognized as full-fletched Americans, very few made a collective effort to start a legal battle against the State when discriminated against. Nonetheless, their industrious work and assimilation within the American mainstream society led the majority of the Nisei to rise to a middle-class level by the 1960s. (Maykovich 58-61)

5.2.3. The Sansei

Generational differences can be found in any society, however, with Japanese Americans this gap includes issues surrounding racial identity. The view of the Nisei as a model minority, which despite all hardships managed to advance at incredible speed, has often been criticized by the Sansei. According to Maykovich, they accuse the Nisei of having tried too hard to assimilate to American society, at the cost of abandoning “the admirable qualities of the Issei,

namely self-respect, hard work and dignity". (74) Having been raised with the ideals of freedom and equal opportunity, many Sansei showed their disapproval towards the discrimination of the Japanese Americans and condemned their parents and grandparents for silently submitting to their incarceration during World War II. In most cases, the Sansei share the western mentality of individuality rather than the notion of collectivism promoted by Asian cultures. (Maykovich 74-75)

In Connor's study (163), both the Issei and Nisei believe that the Sansei have been fully 'Americanized'. However, this is only partially true, since compared to Caucasians, for example, the Sansei clearly demonstrate typically Japanese characteristics. Connor (164) claims that they "are significantly more deferent, more abasive, less dominant, more affiliative, less aggressive, have a greater need for succorance and order, and a markedly lesser need for heterosexuality than do the Caucasians." Their retention of Japanese customs can also be observed in their style of child care, which is clearly influenced by the Japanese culture. According to Maykovich (67), "[a]lthough it is the last thing they would admit, the majority of Sansei are still quiet, hard working and anxious for assimilation into the white group".

As racial dissimilarity is one of the biggest obstacles to integration, physical appearance plays a big role in the postponement of assimilation. Physical appearance is generally linked to value judgement, in other words, the wish to possess particular physical traits which are typically enforced by the main stream society. In Japanese culture, the whiteness of the skin is highly idealized for historical reasons. The difficulty for the Sansei was to acknowledge that whiteness was recognized as superior for both Americans and Japanese Americans. Even though the standard of physical attraction was determined by Caucasians, having yellow skin was equally unappealing for Japanese Americans. In order to disregard their own colour, many Sansei surrounded themselves with or dated Caucasians. (Maykovich 67-79)

5.3. Cultural identity shaped by language

When analyzing the factors which shape one's cultural identity, language clearly appears to be one of the most relevant. It is not simply a means of communication, consisting of a system of signs and regulations on how to combine words in order to create meaning. As a matter of fact, each language contains a unique perception of reality, as well as essential values for shaping a cultural identity.

In regard to group identity, Philippe Chassy emphasizes the importance of the language adopted in interactions: "[l]anguage, conceived as a functional inheritance of a civilization's history, not

only reflects the identity of the individual but also constrains the perception of social realities" (36). The way individuals understand the reality of a situation is strongly determined by the filters of perception created by language. The notion of language shaping the speaker's perception of the world has been termed "linguistic relativity" (Chassy 37) and was first examined by the linguists Edward Sapir and Benjamin Lee Whorf.

Upon reflecting on the relationship between language and culture, Ismael Silva-Fuenzalida also believed that "since experience is communicated by means of language, a person speaking any language participates to some degree in the ways of life represented by that language" (446). In other words, each culture offers a unique world view, which can only be truly understood by learning the respective language. This view was strongly criticized by Charles F. Hockett, who emphasized the need to make a distinction when talking about "language in culture" and "language and the rest of culture" (113). Despite Hockett's belief of dividing language from culture, other scholars, such as Stuart Hall, emphasized the importance of language as part of culture. In his book *The Silent language* (1966), Edward Hall reaches the conclusion that "culture is communication" and claims that each language is different and encompasses a unique image of reality. (93) In a similar manner, Edward Sapir stressed the importance of language as a means of communication for the fostering of culture. Not only is language crucial for the expression of one's thoughts and ideas, but it also encompasses the "references and meanings" (Mandelbaum 10) of a given culture. Therefore, the emergence of new cultural material creates the necessity to expand the linguistic expressions of a language. Knowing a language does not simply create the possibility to communicate with speakers of that language, but allows individuals to "join in a larger common understanding" (Mandelbaum 10), which forms culture.

In many cases, immigrants who start their life in a new country attempt to learn the majority language, while maintaining their native language. Generally, the maintenance of the native language decreases with each new generation and thus leads to the weakening of the bonds with their ethnic community and culture. As a matter of fact, Sayaka Kawamura and Franklin Goza (153) stress that "[n]ative language maintenance has especially important implications for immigrant youth in terms of nurturing their ethnic identity and retaining the cultural values of their country of origin." On the other hand, the acquisition of a new language also includes the adoption of new ways of thinking, values and norms. Therefore, by acquiring the majority language, immigrants are not solely learning a new linguistic code but a new culture, which

they start belonging to. Having mastered the majority language is an important indicator of positive acculturation into society. (Kmiotek and Boski 193)

5.3.1. Importance of language for acculturation

Although different definitions exist for the concept of 'acculturation', the most common one is offered by Robert Redfield, Linton Ralph and Melville J. Herskovits (149), who claim that "[a]cculturation comprehends those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original cultural patterns of either or both groups." In other words, it can be defined as the cultural change deriving from the interaction between people belonging to dissimilar cultures. Redfield et. al caution against the synonymous usage of 'assimilation', which is to be defined as a possible stage in the process of acculturation.

As previously stated, the language ability of immigrants when integrating into a new country is essential for their acculturation. As a matter of fact, when talking about Asian immigrants in the United States, Kawamura and Goza (149) claim: "[p]erhaps the most important form of immigrant cultural adaptation is English acquisition, since language usually serves as the key means of communication, not only within families, but also in social realms outside the home, such as school and work." In order for Asian Americans to survive outside of their ethnic enclaves, it was indispensable for them to become competent at speaking English. However, many of the early Asian American immigrants lived and worked within their ethnic community and therefore had no urgent need or motivation to learn English. This was the case for most of the Issei, whose level of English was very limited. (Gudykunst 9-10)

In social science, the process of language acquisition for immigrants is generally known as the "social shift" (Takamori 219), and is an important indicator used to measure the level of acculturation. The social shift generally occurs in three stages: in the first stage, the newcomers are often faced with the social push to adopt the "majority language in formal settings" (Kawamura and Goza 151), for example at work or at school. Despite these pressures, they mainly use their ethnic language for daily interactions. In the next stage, the ethnic and majority language are adopted together, however, in most cases only the latter is spoken fluently. In the final stage, the ethnic language is almost completely lost, thus the immigrants generally become monolingual and speak exclusively the majority language. (Kawamura and Goza 151)

When analzying the role of communication in the process of acculturation three main aspects need to be considered. The first is personal communication, namely factors which support the

development of the abilities required for effective communication. Secondly, social communication, which includes the interpersonal communication with speakers of the target language or the exposure to the language through mass media. Thirdly, the adaptive predisposition which is influenced by one's cultural background, personality traits, as well as open-mindedness. Lastly, the "host environmental conditions" (Gudykunst 183) which, for example, depend on the strength of the institutions of the ethnic communities, the openness and attitudes of the host country towards immigrants, as well as the policies adopted to integrate the new comers. (Gudykunst 174-187)

5.3.2. Japanese language maintenance in the United States

As previously stated, when the Issei first arrived in the United States, they planned to return to Japan once they had gained sufficient financial resources. Due to the possibility of having to reintegrate into the Japanese society, they found it important for their children to be accustomed to the Japanese language and culture. Thus, most of the Nisei were forced to attend Japanese language school by their parents in addition to their daily school hours. In this way, their possible transition to life in Japan would be facilitated. (Endo 281)

However, compared to other Asian American communities, the Japanese Americans appear to have been less successful at maintaining their native language. Possible reasons for this phenomenon are their unique historical background, as well as their difficult economic conditions in the United States. Prior to World War II, the racial discrimination and legislation pressured many Japanese Americans into assimilating into American society by eliminating their cultural ties to Japan. Furthermore, the experience of internment, which obliged them to prove their loyalty to America, as well as the post-war period, pressured the Japanese Americans to renounce their Japanese heritage. (Takamori 220)

In the past decades, due to the accelerating mobility of Japanese immigrants, the maintenance of the native language has become more and more difficult. Large numbers of Japanese American families no longer live in ethnic enclaves and thus have limited contact to their ethnic group. That distance from the ethnic community in addition to the societal expectation to become fluent in English, has made the maintenance of the native language increasingly difficult. (Hashimoto and Lee 161-162)

5.4. Cultural identity shaped by values

Other than language, another key feature of cultural identity is values. It can be assumed that some form of universally shared values exists, and it may include, for example, the pursuit of honesty and intolerance towards theft, violence or incest. These universal values are connected to the core nature of human beings and are essential for one's social life. At the same time, certain values are clearly culture-specific. (Kluckhohn 286-300) This can be observed in the United States, for example, where numerous different ethnic groups coexist and the cultural values of these groups tend to differ from those of American society. (Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck 25-26)

According to Clyde Kluckhohn values are "abstract standards that transcend the impulses of the moment and ephemeral situations" (289). They have to do with principles which are seen as correct and proper and are perceived as desirable. The key values of a group are a crucial part of its identity, as according to Jerzy Smolicz (75), "[t]hey generally represent the heartland of the ideological system and act as identifying values which are symbolic of the group and its membership." Therefore, if one were to reject such values, it could lead to his or her segregation from the community. It is through key values that members of a community are able to identify themselves with certain cultural groups, which are distinct from others. The identification with a specific group helps create a sense of belonging, connecting people to one another. Through the shared values of the members of a community, a collective consciousness is created, which creates similar patterns of behaviour and desires. (Smolicz 75-85)

When focusing more specifically on cultural values, Florence Rockwood Kluckohn and Fred L. Strodtbeck present characteristics which are considered to be significant and appealing for a particular community. "What a group considers important and desirable guides the behaviour of its individuals, forms the basis for group norms, and dictates life-styles that are deemed appropriate for group members" (R.T. Carter 164). In other words, cultural values are the fundamental principles, which influence the members of a community.

As previously stated, when comparing different cultures, it is possible to identify natural aggregations of cultures based on an internal homogeneity which would not be present in random cultural groupings. Cultural groups, which share basic key values, form a civilisation. For example, it is possible to talk about a European civilisation, based on common values which are at the base of all European countries. One key value when considering "European science and technology is the view of the man-nature relationship that takes it for granted that nature exists merely to serve man" (Smolicz 82). It appears that such a theory stems from Christianity,

as it started evolving in the Middle Ages. The idea was that man was superior to all other living beings and the owner of the spiritual and physical realms of the universe. In the same way that it is possible to find values, which belong to the European civilisation, it is possible to find key values which characterize the Asian American community. Although several differences can be found when comparing the various ethnic groups, studies have shown that the common ancestral roots and the shared process of socializing, have contributed to the unique cultural values Asian Americans share. It is assumed that these shared cultural values sustain many "psychological processes, behaviours, and attitudes of both Asians and Asian Americans" (Yeh, Carter, and Pieterse 82-83).

According to a study conducted by Catherine B. Silver on Japanese and American social identities, similarities in values could be found when comparing the two nations. Despite the economic affinities between the two countries, a visible cultural difference could also be found. Beyond their superficial similarities, the two countries demonstrate great disparity in meaning when one analyzes their social identities. For example, while family values prove to be significant in both societies, differences could be found with regard to familial identities. Although both cultures are rooted in strong family ethos, their divergent history leads to great differences in familial orientation. On the one hand, most Americans descend from a line of immigrants and thus are more prone to migrate in the pursuit of a better life. On the other hand, the Japanese are strongly connected to their ancestral ties and their family and national history are central to their identity. "To be Japanese meant not only to share a national heritage and cultural traditions, but also to share bloodlines with other Japanese, all of whom are defined in relationship to the imperial line" (Silver 209).

Values are a crucial aspect of the Japanese culture, as was mentioned when talking about the incredible speed with which Japanese immigrants managed to establish themselves financially in the United States. As values are strongly linked to one's cultural identity, the analysis and interpretation of the two works of life writing will focus on values, in order to better understand the cultural identity of the first three generations of Japanese Americans.

5.5. Cultural identity shaped by custom and tradition

Having analyzed the role of language and values in the shaping of identity, this final section will focus on the importance of custom and tradition. Both are fundamental to the construction of cultural identity as they are representative cultural markers for a specific culture. Although

the terms custom and tradition may at times be used synonymously, clear distinctions between the two notions can be found.

5.5.1. Custom

When reflecting on the features connected to the construction of culture, Edward Sapir stressed the importance of custom, which he defined as: "the totality of behavior patterns which are carried by tradition and lodged in the group, as contrasted with the more random personal activities of the individual" (Mandelbaum 365). All customs derive from the communal practices of an individual and are spread to an increasing number of people through social interactions. These diffused customs survive as a result of the continuous dissemination process from one generation to the next. With time these isolated habits become part of a greater societal structure and independent patterns of behaviour slowly merge together to create a more elaborate system. (Mandelbaum 365-367)

When comparing the term 'custom' to that of 'tradition', Sapir claims that the difference is mainly subjective and essentially consists of the fact that "[t]radition emphasizes the historic background of custom" (Mandelbaum 365). In other words, the characteristic aspect of traditions is their antiquity. In a similar manner, Eric Hobsbawm stresses the invariant nature of tradition, unlike customs. As a matter of fact, customs are perceived as flexible and combine innovation with antiquity. (Hobsbawm 2-3)

The impermanent nature of custom can be linked to several factors. One of these is the rise of disharmony as a consequence of new mediums, ways of thinking, or values which have caused a major change in society. Another factor can be traced to the diffusion of new customs brought by foreigners, such as food or new types of government. The customs which last the longest are either connected to a fundamental human necessity or their function can be adapted easily. Furthermore, custom is more enduring in primordial societies, which, due to their restricted size, have a greater psychological push for compliance. The opposite case occurs in modern societies, which are much larger in size and therefore the rejection of a custom by a few individuals would not be as crucial for the consensus of the group, and instead, it could possibly lead to a gradual cultural change. In a similar manner, custom in modern societies appears to be more progressive in the cities rather than rural areas, where there is greater pressure to conform to the existing customs. The "symbolism of custom" (Mandelbaum 370) plays an important role for the persistence of custom in the modern world. As a matter of fact, several customs represent a symbol of status and are thus more sustained in wealthier communities.

The development of more complex communities has a crippling effect on customs. As a matter of fact, the more heterogeneous a society, the weaker the customs become. Further factors, which contribute to this tendency, include the emergence of a more rationalistic mindset, which opposes the reasons for following customs, the increasing desire to reject provincial traditions, and the longing for individualism. (Mandelbaum 369-372)

5.5.2. Tradition

As previously stated, the term 'tradition' is not identical to 'custom'. Edward Shils defines 'tradition' as the repeated occurrence of the same "structures of conduct and patterns of belief over several generations of membership or over a long time within single societies […] and within corporate bodies as well as over regions", which share certain cultural features, such as "common traditions". (123) In other words, tradition can be seen as the transmission of certain behaviour and belief patterns from one generation to the next within a society. In the 1980s the notion of tradition was further developed by Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger in their book *The Invention of Tradition* (1983). They support the idea that traditions are generally newer than they might appear or claim to be, and in some cases they may even be invented. They utilize the term 'invented tradition', which indicates "a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past" (Hobsbawm 1). Simply put, they can be seen as a series of customs which persistently attempt to instill certain beliefs and principles that naturally have a connection to a past time. There is a tendency to create an illusory continuity with convenient historic periods and the adoption of antique forms is thus contrasted with the continuous modernization of society.

When talking about tradition from a cultural perspective, Lauri O. Honko emphasizes that tradition can be seen as a series of cultural features belonging to a certain social community under different circumstances and periods of history. In this sense, tradition can be seen as a collective entity, which is formed by the people who are part of it. "Tradition is thus defined at the level of availability of cultural elements, not at the level of their use and function" (Honko and Hakamies 327). Therefore, rather than characterizing the proper group culture, tradition represents the "cultural potential or resource". (Honko and Hakamies 327) However, tradition can become part of the culture and be assimilated into a cultural lifestyle through a process of selection. In other words, certain aspects of a tradition are chosen to represent the culture of a community. These traditions can include notions such as: "language, geographical location,

music, dance, costume, architecture, history, myth or ritual" (Honko and Hakamies 327). They develop into emblematic symbols and become identifying features of the cultural group.

The role of traditions varies greatly amongst different cultures. For example, in many Asian countries, such as Japan, tradition plays a crucial role in the construction of culture. In his observations about traditional Japanese families, Lafcadio Hearn mentioned that no matter how big or small, each family unit "preserves its ancient constitution and character; it is still a religious society, exacting obedience, on the part of all its members, to traditional custom" (72). He was surprised by how strongly the Japanese traditional customs regulated the relationships between the different family members. Much has certainly changed since the publication of his book *Japan: an attempt at interpretation* (1935), yet despite Japan's rapid modernization and adoption of western cultural markers, the role of tradition is still very present in its modern culture. This can be seen in traditional cultural activities, such as pottery, calligraphy or the Japanese art of flower arrangement called *ikebana*; the traditional *noh* and *kabuki* drama and the numerous types of martial arts, such as judo or karate or the sport of *sumo* wrestling. (Norbury 39)

6. *The Two Worlds* of *Jim Yoshida* by Jim Yoshida and Bill Hosokawa

The three essential features of cultural identity, which were defined in the theoretical part of this thesis, will now be analyzed in the autobiography written by Jim Yoshida and Bill Hosokawa: *The Two Worlds of Jim Yoshida*. More specifically, this section strives to answer the following questions: How do language, values, and custom and tradition contribute to the representation of cultural identity? Furthermore, what differences emerge when examining the cultural identity of the Issei and the Nisei?

Firstly, a brief biography of the two authors, Jim Yoshida and Bill Hosokawa, will be presented, then a plot summary and the narrative techniques utilized in the book will be provided. Finally, the autobiography will be analyzed and interpreted, with the focus on the representation of cultural identity, by considering the aspects of language, values and customs and traditions. To conclude, the cultural identity of the first and second generation Japanese Americans will be examined, and possible differences will be explored.

6.1. Biography of Jim Yoshida and Bill Hosokawa

The autobiography *The Two Worlds of Jim Yoshida* is the fruit of a collaboration between Jim Yoshida and Bill Hosokawa. Other than both being second generation Japanese Americans, the two men's lives coincide in various ways: they were both born and raised in Seattle, although at different times, both spent time in China, where Jim Yoshida fought in the Japanese army, and both were in Korea at the same time, while Bill Hosokawa was working as a war correspondent. Their paths finally met in Honolulu, where the first discussion about the book took place. (Yoshida and Hosokawa blurb)

6.1.1. Jim Yoshida

Jim Katsumi Yoshida was born in Seattle in 1921 to Japanese parents who immigrated to the United States in search for a better life. Yoshida was a very athletic student and played football in high school, alongside judo. In order for Jim to gain his father's permission to play football, he was forced to also learn a Japanese martial art. Yoshida's skills in football granted him a full scholarship at Oregon Willamette University, which he, however, did not manage to attend. As a matter of fact, in the summer of 1940, Yoshida and his family travelled to Japan, after his father's death, who had expressed the wish to have his ashes taken to his homeland. Precisely during this time, Pearl Harbor was bombed by Japan, and all shipping between Japan and the United States was interrupted. In 1943 Yoshida was enrolled in the Japanese army, which caused the loss of his American citizenship. Only ten years later, was his return to the United States made possible when he reobtained his citizenship. In the meantime, Yoshida had married Ethel Isobe, a Nisei from Honolulu who had moved to Japan shortly after the beginning of the war between Japan and the United States, with whom he had his first son Kenny. Soon after having regained his citizenship, his family joined Yoshida in Hawaii, where he began working as a carpenter's helper. Not long after he got divorced and later married Helen Vincent, who bore him one daughter, Aileen. In 1972, with the collaboration of Bill Hosokawa, he published his autobiography *The Two Worlds of Jim Yoshida*, which has remained his only publication. (O'Brien, *Jim Yoshida* 409-411)

6.1.2. Bill Hosokawa

Like Yoshida, Bill Kumpei Hosokawa was born in Seattle in 1915. His parents were Japanese born immigrants from Hiroshima. Hosokawa graduated from the University of Washington in 1937 and was very active and known in the literary world as one of the top Japanese American journalists. In 1941 he, together with his wife and new-born son, were detained in Heart

Mountain internment camp in Wyoming. There he helped in the founding of the newspaper *Heart Mountain Sentinel*, which was only produced for the detainees. Upon his release in 1943, Hosokawa started working as a copyeditor for the *Register* in Iowa. He worked there for three years and then began working for the *Denver Post*, where he was employed in different positions. In 1983, after seven years of working as the editor of the editorial page, he resigned from his position. He continued writing weekly columns for the JACL[4] newspaper *Pacific Citizen*, while teaching journalism at the University of Wyoming. In 1985 he began working as one of the readers' representatives for the *Rocky Mountain View*. Hosokawa has worked as the honorary consul general of Japan for Colorado since 1974, and has been engaged in the state's affairs. He won many awards and recognitions, additionally to having written nine books. Having experienced the trauma of internment, he strongly expresses his views regarding the mistreatment of Japanese Americans. Some of his most famous columns in which he expresses his frustration are contained in *Thirty-five Years in the Frying Pan* and *Out of the Frying Pan*. (O'Brien, *Bill Hosokawa* 121-124)

6.2. Plot summary

After the sudden death of his father, Jim Yoshida, his mother and two sisters leave Seattle for Japan, to spread his ashes in his homeland. During their stay, all shipping between Japan and the United States is temporarily suspended as a consequence of the degeneration of the relations between the two nations. Not long after, they receive the news of the attack on Pearl Harbor and thus their possibility of returning home becomes even less hopeful. Due to his dual citizenship, being legally Japanese and American, Jim is drafted into the Imperial Japanese Army. To his relief, he is not sent to the Pacific Coast, but to China, and is therefore never confronted with his fellow American soldiers in battle. Yet, the harsh discipline and inhumane treatment of the soldiers is extremely difficult to bear, particularly for someone like Jim, who is repeatedly punished due to his poor knowledge of the Japanese language and customs. The deterioration of his health lands him in the Shanghai Army hospital, where he fights for his life. After his recovery, thanks to his English fluency, he is offered a job as the liaison of a Captain working at the hospital. Not long after the news of the dropping of atomic bombs at Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and the surrender of Japan, the Americans start arriving in Shanghai, amongst whom an old football team member from his high school. From him he learns for the first time, about the mass internment of the Japanese Americans on the West Coast. In July 1946, Jim finally manages to return to Japan after years of not seeing his family. On his trip back, he

[4] Japanese American Citizens League, see section 2.1.3.

observes the devastation of Tokyo, as well as many other Japanese cities, and the defeat of Japan becomes reality. Through the help of his sister Betty, and his knowledge of both Japanese and English, he starts working at the Hirao police department, which has relations with the New Zealand troops. At that time, he comes to know his future wife Ethel Sugako Isobe, a Nisei who was born in Honolulu, but had moved to Japan after the break out of the war. At the beginning of 1949 Ethel and Jim get married and in the following year, their son Kenny is born. Throughout this time, Jim is preoccupied with the desire to regain his American citizenship and return to the United States.

Due to the imminent communist danger from North Korea, American forces are called to support the South Korean troops. Upon this news, Jim immediately volunteers to fight with the American army, seeing it as a way of vindicating himself for having fought for Japan. In July 1950 Jim arrives in Korea with his troops and has the mission to hold off the communists in Taejon until reinforcements arrive. After almost 200 days of fighting alongside the American soldiers in the Korean combat zone, Jim receives a letter from the American consul concerning his application for clarification of his citizenship status. It requires him to return to Japan and procure the necessary documents for his case to be reviewed. Relieved to be liberated of his self-imposed duty to fight in Korea, he is happy to finish his mission after having served his country. With the help of a distinguished Nisei lawyer in Honolulu, at the end of 1953 Jim's citizenship status is cleared, and he can finally return to his homeland. Soon after Ethel and Kenny join him in Honolulu and Jim starts working as a carpenter's helper. A few years later, he and Ethel get a divorce, agreeing that they are not meant for each other. Jim remarries a Hawaiian woman of Korean ancestry, Helen Vincent, with whom he has a daughter. After working in different jobs, Jim becomes a property developer and importer. In order to support the democracy of the United States, he takes some time to engage himself in politics with the conviction that: "[n]ot many Americans, I would say, have more reason to love the United States, or greater desire to keep its principles strong" (Yoshida and Hosokawa 256).

6.3. Narrative techniques

The Two Worlds of Jim Yoshida begins with a reoccurring dream of Jim, in which he is in a football stadium with his team and is scoring a touchdown. The plot immediately takes an unexpected turn, when Jim wakes up and is brought to his miserable reality. Following the first chapter, where the fate of Jim Yoshida, a Nisei forced to fight for the country of his ancestors, is presented, the second chapter takes the reader back to the beginning of his journey to Japan. After the introduction of Jim Yoshida's family and friends, the plot follows a chronological

order starting from the time his father passed away on December 21, 1939. The actual trip to Japan takes place around a year and a half later, in April 1941 and on February 1, 1943, he joins the Imperial Japanese Army. It is only in July 1946 that he finally returns back to his family in Japan. Exactly 4 years later, Jim joins the army again, but this time on the side of the Americans. After having lost his citizenship, only in 1954 he finally manages to regain it once again. Although the main plot follows a lineal order, a few instances of analepsis are present in the book, when Jim Yoshida recalls past events. This is the case when he is fighting in the Imperial Japanese Army and in order to remain sane, he tries to think of happy memories, like when he went salmon fishing with his father. (Yoshida and Hosokawa 99)

As it was previously mentioned, the book begins in medias res in central China and then moves to Seattle, where Jim grew up. Upon the death of his father, Jim's family goes to Japan, arriving first in Yokohama, and then goes to his uncle's home in Honshu. After visiting his father's hometown in Hirao, Jim goes to his mother's hometown in Kaminoseki, which is part of the Yamaguchi prefecture. When Jim joins the Imperial Japanese Army, he is stationed in Yoyang, in central China. During this time, he becomes sick and is brought to the Japanese army hospital in Hangchow. As his condition worsens, he is taken to Shanghai, where he stays in one of the main Japanese army hospitals. Once the war ends, he finally returns to Kaminoseki. He starts working at the police department in Hirao and is then transferred to Kokura in the prefecture of Fukuoka. When he volunteers to join the American army in Korea, he is stationed mainly in South Korea, in Taegu and Teagon. After almost 200 days in Korean combat zones he returns to Japan, and soon after leaves for Hawaii. While he waits for his court hearing, he stays with his sister Betty and her husband in Honolulu, where his family later join him.

A typical feature of autobiographies, which can be found in *The Two Worlds of Jim Yoshida* is the presence of a first-person narrator, who in this case corresponds to Jim Yoshida himself. He tells his life story in retrospect and although references to his childhood are provided, he mainly focuses on the years spent in Japan. Interestingly, he addresses the reader only on one occasion by stating, "I've been telling you about the beating I suffered in the Japanese Army, and you may wonder why I continued to endure them" (Yoshida and Hosokawa 109). He then continues by explaining that he did not have any choice. The decision to address the reader at this point, may be linked to the desire to defend himself for the apparent cowardice in his resolution not to fight back. At the same time, it may be a strategy utilized to engage the readers by addressing them directly using the personal pronoun "you".

The book is divided into a total of eighteen chapters and at the end of the last chapter situated on April 16, 1954 when Jim finds out the verdict of his sentence, there is a lapse of time, which is indicated through the title "Since 1954…" (Yoshida and Hosokawa 255). In the last two pages, the narrator recounts what had happened since that year.

Especially when referring to typically Japanese concepts or expressions, the authors include the terms in Japanese such as "*Bakatare*" (Yoshida and Hosokawa 23), which is translated as "fool, or imbecile" (Yoshida and Hosokawa 23), "*tatami* (straw mat)" (Yoshida and Hosokawa 50), or "*mompei* – baggy work pantaloons" (Yoshida and Hosokawa 150).

Regarding the question of historicity of life writing discussed in section 4.3., it appears that this autobiography offers a unique insight into the reality of many Japanese Americans, who like Jim Yoshida had to fight to regain their citizenship by proving their unwavering loyalty to the United States. However, some scholars, such as Elaine Kim, question the historical accuracy of this autobiography as it is not considered "a reliable account of events" (O'Brien, *Jim Yoshida* 411).

6.4. Analysis and interpretation: Japanese American cultural identity

The title of Jim Yoshida's autobiography already anticipates the constant struggle he will be faced with throughout his life. Being Japanese American, he is torn between two nations, one which he views as his true homeland, and the other which he only partially feels connected to through his parents. The worst nightmare for Jim becomes reality when he is drafted into the Japanese army to fight against his beloved America:

> I was on the wrong side in a war between the land of my birth and loyalty, and the land of my ancestry. And because my heart was American and my face Japanese, because my uniform was Japanese and my dreams American, I went through a personal hell whose fires could be extinguished only by a special kind of atonement. (Yoshida and Hosokawa 13)

Being born to a Japanese family, Jim is naturally exposed to the Japanese language, values, and custom and tradition of his Japanese ancestry. At the same time, he grows up in Seattle and learns the American values of freedom and equality, he is passionate about football and happily celebrates Christmas, Thanksgiving and other American holidays. Like his fellow Nisei friends, he lives what he defines as "an oddly mixed but pleasant life" (Yoshida and Hosokawa 20). According to John W. Connor's study mentioned in section 5.2.2., many Nisei believed that being in a midway position between the Issei and the Sansei, they incorporated the best aspects of both American and Japanese cultures. Jim appears to be fully aware of his dual identity as a Japanese American, but to those around him, it is often very difficult to grasp. On several

occasions, Jim tries to explain his mixed identity, but in return only receives incredulous stares. This is the case with the Mother Superior at the Aurora Girls' College, who simply cannot comprehend the concept of a person being both Japanese and American:

> I tried to explain to her that I really wasn't Japanese, but an American whose parents had happened to be Japanese. This didn't make much sense to her. Americans were Americans and Japanese were Japanese and she could not understand how a person could be both, particularly when the two countries were at war. (Yoshida and Hosokawa 129)

Jim receives a similar response from a young Korean woman, to whom he tries to explain his Japanese American identity. Jim's oriental features make it impossible for her to comprehend how he can be American. "Americans have white skins and blue eyes and red hair. You are an Oriental. You are Japanese" (Yoshida and Hosokawa 201).

Due to his visual aspect, Jim is constantly reminded by those around him of his Japanese ancestry. No matter how American he feels inside, how well he speaks English and how well he has managed to adopt American customs and traditions, his physical appearance immediately gives the perception that he is Japanese. The lack of understanding of the Japanese American identity leads to disastrous consequences in the United States. Following the attack on Pearl Harbor, anyone who looks Japanese is immediately perceived as the enemy, and thus thousands of Japanese Americans, loyal to the United States, are locked in internment camps.[5] Despite such unjust treatment, many of Jim's friends volunteer to fight for the American army in order to prove their loyalty to their homeland. (Yoshida and Hosokawa 140) In a similar manner, Jim also volunteers to fight with the American troops in Korea, in order to vindicate himself for fighting with the 'enemy' and to prove his loyalty to the United States. (Yoshida and Hosokawa 177)

The longing to return home to Seattle is a feeling Jim has from the very beginning of his journey to Japan. Despite the warmth with which his family has received him, Jim "wanted nothing more than to go home to Seattle" (Yoshida and Hosokawa 37). When he arrives in Japan, for the first time he realizes that he has come to his mother's native land, which is not the same as his own:

> She had come home to *her* native land. She had status here, while back in Seattle, *my* native land, she was just the immigrant woman who cut people's hair and ran a hotel that was only a notch or two above a flophouse. Here in Japan, she belonged. (Yoshida and Hosokawa 35)

[5] See section 2.2. on the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II

As he acknowledges his mother's true homeland, he also becomes aware of how differently she is perceived in Seattle compared to Japan. While in his homeland, she is seen as just another Asian immigrant, in Japan she is part of a family and community who knows her and cares for her. Despite this fact, she chooses to live in America and raise her children there. While reflecting on the idea of the native land, Jim uses different possessive adjectives, on the one hand, to disassociate himself from Japan, which is perceived as "*her* native land" (Yoshida and Hosokawa 35), and on the other hand with the possessive adjective "*my*" he associates himself with the United States, his homeland. (Yoshida and Hosokawa 35)

6.4.1. Language

In Jim's family, as is the case for many other Japanese American families, there is a mix of both Japanese and English. His father, like his mother, does not speak any English and thus while Jim's parents speak in Japanese, the children respond in English. "This is the way most Japanese American families communicated, and we got along quite well" (Yoshida and Hosokawa 17). Although Jim is accustomed to hearing Japanese while growing up and is obliged to attend a Japanese language school, his ability to speak the language is limited. Communication does not appear to be an issue when the topics discussed regard daily, ordinary matters which require simple language, but for more complex or deeper thoughts, language does become a barrier. This is apparent when Jim recalls the time his mother tried to emphasize the importance of not only being physically strong, but also developing a strong mind and spirit: "I sensed rather than understood the precise import of what she said that day" (Yoshida and Hosokawa 62).

The difficulty to express deeper thoughts is also evident through the letters Jim and his mother send each other. At the Kodokwan Judo College, where Jim trains, he keeps in touch with his mother by sending letters which he writes in basic Japanese characters: "I had so much to tell her about my progress, so much to ask about things in Kaminoseki, and my inability to express myself was maddening" (Yoshida and Hosokawa 43).

Upon his joining the Japanese army, Jim's mother regularly writes to him reassuring him of her and the family's well-being. Jim can feel his mother's desire to express more than she is writing, yet she knows her son would not be able to understand. Despite this fact, his mother's simple letters are enough for Jim, who is reassured that his family is doing fine in Japan. (Yoshida and Hosokawa 115) Besides the difficulty of communicating more profound thoughts and ideas, the lack of competency of the Japanese language proves to be an even greater obstacle for Jim when he joins the Japanese army. "I could learn their customs. I could adjust to the food and the daily

routine. But without a strong working knowledge of the language and the culture and folkways, it was inevitable that I should bungle, and be punished for it" (Yoshida and Hosokawa 110). Jim is regularly punished by his superiors, and one of the reasons is his failure to recite the Military Handbook, which every soldier is required to memorize off by heart. Sergeant Kido tests him regularly and each time he fails to recite the Military Handbook, he is punished mercilessly. Sometimes he is slapped across the face, but more often he undergoes the rifle punishment, which requires him to hold an extremely heavy rifle in firing position for a long period of time. (Yoshida and Hosokawa 88)

As Japan was at war with the United States, English naturally became the enemy language. However, with the triumph of the United States and the arrival of American soldiers in Japan, English soon regains popularity, making Jim an important asset: "For months I had lived in fear that I might talk in English in my sleep and be punished for it. Now I was paid to speak English!" (Yoshida and Hosokawa 127). Teaching English to the army personnel in Shanghai makes Jim aware of the different mentality expressed through the Japanese and English language. As a matter of fact, while Americans speak in a much more "frank and honest" (Yoshida and Hosokawa 142) way, the Japanese speak in a way which transmits a rather "false modesty" (Yoshida and Hosokawa 142). The difference in the perception of reality is clear when considering that language is not merely a means of communication, but contains unique cultural facets which influence one's worldview, as mentioned in section 5.3.

The desperate need for Jim to communicate in English is evident in various situations. For example, amongst all his relatives, the one who immediately becomes his favourite is uncle Denmatsu's wife, as she can speak English. Jim does not mention anything about her personality or character, but the sole fact that he can communicate with her in English appears to be a sufficient reason to feel more connected to her. In a similar manner, when his younger sister Betty has to leave Yamaguchi to start school, he mentions the sadness he feels upon her departure: "I missed her terribly; she was the only one I could speak English with" (Yoshida and Hosokawa 51). When Betty visits Jim at the barracks, she attempts to speak Japanese due to the fear of getting into trouble, but for Jim "it didn't seem right" (Yoshida and Hosokawa 73). As Jim and Betty are accustomed to speaking English with one another, using any other language probably makes the communication feel unnatural.

The importance of language in shaping the identity of Jim Yoshida is apparent already from the very beginning of the novel, when he provides a description of himself, based on the identity he desires for himself. "Jim K. Yoshida, American of Japanese descent, high school football

hero, proud winner of a football scholarship that would enable me to get a college education" (Yoshida and Hosokawa 13). Although his name of birth is Katsumi Yoshida, he appears to identify with the American name "Jim", given to him by his football coach, who regards his Japanese name "Katsumi" unsuitable for someone who wants to play an American sport such as football. (Yoshida and Hosokawa 21) Rather than feeling insulted by his coach's comment, Jim gladly accepts his new name. Similarly, his sister Betty, originally called Hideko, starts adopting a western name once she starts school. (Yoshida and Hosokawa 16) The use of the name "Betty" could be motivated by the desire to fit in with her white classmates, at the same time, when talking about his sister, Jim continues addressing her as Betty, her Americanized name. Therefore, it can be assumed that just like for Jim, also for Betty, her new name becomes part of her identity. This is, however, not the case with their older sister, who is addressed with her Japanese name 'Aiko'. (Yoshida and Hosokawa 15)

When recalling his childhood memories, Jim talks about his best buddies, most of whom are also Nisei. Like Jim, they also have English nicknames, often inspired by their original names. Some of his best friends include: Pete Fujino, Joe Nakatsu, Kay Nakamura, Mud Tsuchikawa, George Tatsumi, Eugene Amabe, Tak Shibuya, Junelow (Junks) Kurose. (Yoshida and Hosokawa 18-20)

According to a study conducted by Kevin Heffernan on *English name use by East Asians in Canada* (2010), the factors which influence the adoption of English personal names are connected to linguistic pragmatics and cultural identity. Although the difficulty in pronouncing certain Asian names, particularly Chinese and Korean names, strongly influences the decision to appropriate English names, it would be wrong to assume that pragmatics is the sole decisive factor. As a matter of fact, in Heffernan's study also those who did not possess a name, which was difficult to pronounce often appropriated English personal names; in some cases, these were already given to them at birth. Heffernan emphasizes the influence of cultural identity and states that "most likely English personal names are used even among friends of the same ethnicity because this is one way the respondents are signaling their affiliation with western culture." (32) As names form an important part of people's identity, the choice of adopting an English name, often provides some information about how one identifies with a particular culture. This is clear in Jim Yoshida's case, who proudly appropriates his new English name. Although Jim and his friends' birth names are Japanese, which is likely connected to the Japanese naming culture of adopting only one personal name, the Nisei address each other with

their English names as they associate more with American than Japanese culture. (Heffernan 32)

6.4.2. Values

Having been raised in a Japanese household, Jim is transmitted Japanese values by his parents such as "industry, honesty, and respect for others, particularly one's elders" (Yoshida and Hosokawa 16). Already from a young age Jim helps his parents by cleaning the barbershop and the hotel, and like his other Nisei peers, he also works as a cannery worker during the two to three months of summer vacation. (Yoshida and Hosokawa 28) When addressing his father Ryunosuke, he always shows respect and addresses him by using the word "sir". (Yoshida and Hosokawa 23) Jim's father is described as a "strict and stern" (Yoshida and Hosokawa 17) man, who aimed to raise his children in the same way he had been educated by his own parents. He never praises his son or tells him how proud he is of him, even when Jim manages to prove himself by lifting a hundred-pound sack of rice and placing it over his head, which in Japanese culture is seen as a sign of reaching adulthood. It is only through his mother that Jim finds out how happy his father had been on that occasion. As a matter of fact, the two rarely express their emotions or thoughts to one another, presumably mirroring Ryunosuke's own upbringing. (Yoshida and Hosokawa 17)

Discipline is a central value in Japanese culture, which Jim is repeatedly reminded of by his parents. When he confesses his decision to join the school football team, his father encourages him to also start practicing a Japanese sport such as judo or kendo: "[e]ither one will give you the discipline you need because they are Japanese sports. American life is too soft. You must learn to grow tougher, physically, mentally and morally" (Yoshida and Hosokawa 24). For Ryunosuke it was important that his son learned to become mentally resilient and not just to develop physical strength. He emphasizes the need to practice a Japanese sport, because he does not believe that Jim can learn such discipline through an American sport such as football. Jim is also taught the importance of strengthening his spirit by his mother, when he is drafted into the Japanese army. Aware of her son's physical strength, Jim's mother is more concerned for his mental state and reminds him: "[y]our body will serve you well if you will only toughen your mind and spirit in the same manner" (Yoshida and Hosokawa 62).

The concept of inner spiritual strength is expressed in Japanese through the term "seishin". (Wierzbicka 376) Many scholars, such as Thomas P. Rohlen, Brian Morean, and Lewis Austin have attempted to find an appropriate definition for the term, however, as it is a purely Japanese

notion, it does not appear simple to find a corresponding conception. Lewis Austin defined *seishin* as a "the complex of loyalty, discipline, spirit de corps, and indomitable perseverance that is central to so many of the historical accomplishments of Japanese civilization, from art to economic growth" (Wierzbicka 378). Such internal strength was certainly an important factor for the upward mobility of the Japanese immigrants, who despite the many obstacles they faced, managed to successfully establish themselves in the United States. Other scholars such as Brian Moeran and Helmut Morsbach presumed that only two of the four features claimed by Austin were essential to *seishin*, namely "discipline and perseverance". (Wierzbicka 378) As a matter of fact, they believed that "[l]oyalty and esprit de corps may be among the fruits of a well-developed *seishin*, but they do not seem to be implied by the term as such" (Wierzbicka 378). *Seishin* can thus be understood as an inner strength which is obtained through a long period of arduous training.

While Jim's stern father strives to raise his children in a Japanese manner, his easy-going mother Suye is described as "wise enough to know that American children could not be reared like Japanese children, that we were products of the new world and we required freedom" (Yoshida and Hosokawa 18). Her awareness of the differences in culture is once again apparent when Jim is drafted into the Japanese army. Knowing that her son has been raised to believe in the American values of freedom and justice, she is concerned about the possible clashes which such beliefs could bring in the army, especially due to his stubbornness. Thus, she reminds him: "this is Japan, not America, and you are powerless. You must do what you are told to do" (Yoshida and Hosokawa 62). She emphasizes the importance of honouring their family name: "[t]o die in battle is one thing, but it is another matter to bring shame to the Yoshida name" (Yoshida and Hosokawa 62). The idea of bringing shame onto the family is strongly connected to the concept of "giri", namely "social obligation" (Carter 376). In Japanese culture, each individual is expected to conform to society and the failure to do so bestows "dishonor and shame [onto] all members of a family or group, and even [onto] the entire country under certain circumstances" (Carter 376). The will to go against the familial or societal expectations is defined as "ninjo" (Carter 376). If a collision occurs between one's personal will and the social obligation, the common practice is to put one's emotions aside and surrender to the *giri.* Lack of obedience and egoism often lead to the loss of social harmony, which is one of the core values in the Japanese culture. (Carter 376)

The importance of obedience is also emphasized in the Japanese Military Handbook the soldiers are obliged to memorize. It consists of a personal message from the Emperor to the soldiers, in

which he commands them to be “brave, loyal and obedient”. (Yoshida and Hosokawa 72) Jim’s stubbornness and belief in justice and equality is apparent when he chooses the captain for the Judo team. Despite the principal’s reluctance of choosing Nakamura, a Korean, as the captain of the judo team rather than Hamada, the son of a very distinguished businessman in Yanai, Yoshida insists that the choice be made based on skill. Although he learned about freedom and liberty back in the United States, he is aware that prejudices existed as he witnessed the discrimination of Japanese Americans. However, he is shocked and infuriated to discover similar racial discrimination in Japan. (Yoshida and Hosokawa 56-57)

Other than obedience, another value which is transmitted to Jim is humility. When talking with his mother about the humility Nakamura demonstrated, Suye enlightens him with a wise Japanese aphorism: ““A good man is like a stalk of rice,” she said. “The heavier the load of grain it bears, the lower the stalk bends as though in humility. It is only the useless weed that stands arrogantly erect”” (Yoshida and Hosokawa 57). The importance of humility is also apparent when Jim manages to defeat the eight Navy Seamen at Kodokwan Judo College, whom Professor Fujizawa asks him to challenge. Although Jim is thrilled by his victory, he simply “bowed with dignity” (Yoshida and Hosokawa 45), attempting not to show any emotion. Comparing the attitude expected in Japan to that of the United States, Jim thinks to himself “[b]ack home, the cheers for such a feat would have rocked the hall. At Kodokwan there was only silence” (Yoshida and Hosokawa 45). In Japan it was important to behave in a dignified manner, thus boasting was to be avoided.

As Jim fights both in the Japanese and the American armies he observes great differences in the values upheld in each army. While on the ship to Pusan, Jim expresses his amazement with the freedom he experiences in the American army: “[w]e were treated as human beings. In the Japanese Army we had been herded below decks like animals” (Yoshida and Hosokawa 182). When thinking of the system of the American army, Jim concludes “[t]he American system appeared undisciplined, and yet I knew that at a moment’s notice they could swing into action” (201). In a similar manner, Jim is amazed by how well the recruits are taken care of when the winter season arrives. The soldiers are provided with warm clothing and sleeping bags, as well as a stove. He claims, “[s]urely the United States does more to look after the creature comforts of its servicemen than any other country” (Yoshida and Hosokawa 217). The concern for the comfort of the American soldiers is understandable when considering that their army is “among the best paid in the world” (United States 210) and works hard to assure the well-being of its soldiers. It strives to fulfill the needs of the soldiers and their families, so as to improve the

performance of the team by creating a climate of trust between the commander and his subordinates. In this sense, well-being can be defined as: "the personal-physical, material, mental, and spiritual-state of soldiers, civilians, and their families that contributes to their preparedness to perform the Army's mission" (United States 211).

The well-being of the American citizens is also evident in a completely different setting. While impatiently waiting in Hawaii to receive his citizenship status cleared by the judge, Jim is astonished when noticing a nicely painted sign which communicated: "THIS IS A PUBLIC PARK--HAVE FUN" (Yoshida and Hosokawa 244). He is deeply touched by the State's consideration for the common people. According to John Gillin, one of the most dominant values in American culture includes recreation which is seen as one's "right". (109) Unlike work, recreation is an activity which should be beneficial for a person. At the same time, it is not to be seen synonymously as pleasure, as only some activities are considered recreational. (Gillin 109)

Contrary to the caring and humane treatment Jim experiences in the American army, he is constantly faced with harsh training in the Japanese army. This can be seen on several occasions, for example when the soldiers are cramped together in a filthy boxcar of a freight train to Shimonoseki. Rather than being transported like dignified soldiers, the forty-two men are squeezed into the boxcar like beasts. (Yoshida and Hosokawa 74-75) With time Jim discovers that the soldiers are in effect considered inferior to animals: "[t]hat was the order of importance-first our weapons, second the horses, and last our personal comfort and cleanliness" (Yoshida and Hosokawa 105). On another occasion, the soldiers are forced to travel on foot from Hankow to Yoyang, covering a distance of ninety miles, although the army has trucks at their disposal, which they could use for the soldiers: "we had to march under full pack, and the only conclusion I could draw was that this was part of our toughening-up process" (Yoshida and Hosokawa 80). The walk is particularly difficult for Jim, who is forced to wear overly large boots, which gives him blisters on his feet, making it very strenuous to walk. Despite showing his blisters to the Sergeant, he does not get any compassion and is not driven into Yoyang as he hoped. (Yoshida and Hosokawa 81)

6.4.3. Custom and tradition

Jim Yoshida describes his family as a "close-knit family" (Yoshida and Hosokawa 16) which is founded on the traditional Japanese family structure, with the father being the head of the

household[6]. When Ryunosuke passes away, Jim assumes the role of head of the household and supports his mother with the family business, as well as other tasks. (Yoshida and Hosokawa 31) The importance of the family hierarchy is evident also at his mother's home in Kaminoseki, when Jim as head of the household is pushed to take a bath first, while the water is still "both hot and clean" (Yoshida and Hosokawa 40). Like many Issei who emigrated to the United States, Jim's father returned to Japan to find a bride. Ryunosuke and Suye were introduced to each other by a mediator and had an arranged marriage, following the tradition of the time.[7] Jim's parents' love for one another is never openly affectionate, but rather reserved and founded on "mutual respect, understanding and appreciation" (Yoshida and Hosokawa 15).

The decision to return to Japan after Ryunosuke's death is motivated by Suye's decision to fulfill his wish to have his ashes taken back to his homeland. Jim soon learns about the strict family customs when his father's ashes are laid to rest in a temple near his mother's home. According to the Japanese tradition, the oldest surviving son becomes the heir of the family's estate and has to carry on the family name. As Jim's father was a younger son, he "had no real claim to the Yoshida family line" (Yoshida and Hosokawa 39).

Before bringing Ryunosuke's urn to Kaminoseki, Jim's family attends a special ceremony at the Nishi Hongwanji Temple, the main temple of the Buddhist group to which his father had belonged. Chants and prayers are offered by monks and at the end some ashes are placed into a smaller urn and kept in the temple. Jim had been in the Buddhist church in Seattle but never managed to understand the religion. (Yoshida and Hosokawa 37) Yet during his time in Japan, he gradually starts practicing the Buddhist custom of kneeling in front of an altar and lighting incense for one's ancestors. (Yoshida and Hosokawa 155, 162) After having laid his father's spirit to rest, Jim reflects about Buddhism and expresses how his view of the religion has evolved:

> I felt closer to Buddhism than ever before. It was more than chanting and listening to sermons and trying to do good. It was a religion that provided a link between me and the distant past, gave me roots that helped me to feel a kinship to ancestors beyond anyone's recall. (Yoshida and Hosokawa 39)

Although Ryunosuke's funeral is held in a Buddhist temple, Jim and Ethel's marriage, as well as Betty and Kido's, are celebrated in Shinto shrines. The mixing of religious rituals may appear unusual from a western perspective, where there is the prevalence of a monotheistic religious tradition. However, Japan is characterized by a combination of different religious cultures,

[6] See section 5.2.1. on the traditional Japanese patriarchal family units
[7] See section 2.1.3. on the custom of arranged marriage through the help of a matchmaker

which does not create any sense of religious discord. Different religious customs are followed by the Japanese without paying much attention to the core religious principles. This may be due to the tendency to consider religious practices as "mere rituals or habits but not as beliefs" (Sagara-Rosemeyer and Davies 225). The mixture of such religious practices is particularly evident in ceremonies celebrating birth, weddings or for funerals.

Being raised in the United State by Japanese parents, Jim is not only exposed to a mixture of values, but also to a variety of customs and traditions. Jim fondly recalls the times when his family gathered for dinner and ate a combination of Asian and western food. (Yoshida and Hosokawa 16) Also mixed are the traditions his family celebrated. "We celebrated the Fourth of July, Thanksgiving and Christmas as well as the Japanese festivals like Boys' Day and Girls' Day and the Festival of the Dead in late summer" (Yoshida and Hosokawa 20). When Jim is in the Japanese army, he yearns to celebrate the American traditional holidays such as Christmas. But to his dismay, Christmas is "just another day in the field--cold, wet, mud-caked, weary, dirty, stinking with filth" (Yoshida and Hosokawa 115). However, New Year's Day is a big celebration in Japan too, and he can finally enjoy special supplies, as well as the delivery of his mother's letters. (Yoshida and Hosokawa 115)

As a Nisei child, Jim attends an American public school, where he learns about the values of "liberty and freedom" (Yoshida and Hosokawa 20). Afterwards he attends Japanese language school, where he learns the Japanese language and culture. As mentioned in section 2.1.3., these schools were vital for the preservation of the Japanese culture in the Japanese American communities. However, Jim stops attending Japanese school when he is fifteen, as he joins the high school football team. Soon after he is forced to practice judo by his father. Growing up in Seattle, the mixture of the two cultures appears to be normal for him, also because he is surrounded by other ethnic groups who shared similar experiences. (Yoshida and Hosokawa 21)

When going to Japan, Jim is exposed to other customs and traditions than he was accustomed to. Some of these customs include sleeping on a *futon*, namely a quilt-like mattress placed on straw mat floor or taking a bath in an *ofuro*, a deep bathtub with extremely hot water. (Yoshida and Hosokawa 38, 40) At first, he seems to struggle to adapt to these new customs, yet with time he chooses to assimilate some of them, such as paying respect to one's ancestors (Yoshida and Hosokawa 229), while others he deliberately rejects. This can be seen, for example, when several sergeants and senior privates of the Japanese army decide to have a party. They drink and sing, and at one-point Jim is offered a drink by Sergeant Kido out of his own sake cup. Due

to his low tolerance of alcohol, Jim refuses Sergeant Kido's offer, which in the Japanese tradition is received as a great insult. After the second rejection, Sergeant Kido and Sergeant Nakamura punish Jim by whipping him across the face with a belt and beating him up, until he becomes unconscious. When he wakes up, Sergeant Nakamura scolds the recruits and reminds them: "[y]ou men must remember your place. When you are told to drink, we expect you to drink" (Yoshida and Hosokawa 113). On another occasion Jim once again goes against the traditional custom as he does not feel it is appropriate for him. Upon returning to Japan from China with Captain Iwata, all Japanese soldiers are directed to face the Imperial Palace and offer a deep bow as a symbol of informing the Emperor of having fulfilled their duty to the best of their capabilities. In the Japanese tradition the Emperor incorporates the role of "father, ruler and high priest" (Taylor and Brady 52). However, this notion is probably quite distant for Jim, who does not submit himself to the Japanese custom and refuses to bow. (Yoshida and Hosokawa 151) On the other hand, what appears to be much more natural for him, is to render honor to the American flag. Upon the arrival of an American ship on the Whangpoo River, he observes the American flag flapping against the sky. It is a very emotional moment for Jim, who compares the American flag to a former girlfriend, with whom he has lost touch. He asks forgiveness for having saluted another flag and expresses how he had longed for his beloved flag. Not knowing how to properly salute the flag, he simply bows his head in its direction with tears in his eyes. (Yoshida and Hosokawa 137-138) Showing honor to the flag is an important custom in the American army as it represents the symbol of the United States. (United States 153)

The way in which the soldiers in the Japanese and American armies are treated differs immensely. From the very beginning, the Japanese soldiers are treated without any respect as they are simply recruits, who would only become true soldiers upon the arrival of replacements at the garrison. Furthermore, the noncomissioned officers are empowered with much more authority compared to American officers, which they make explicit by harshly disciplining the recruits. (Yoshida and Hosokawa 82-84) The soldiers are expected to show unquestionable obedience to their superiors and "in all branches of the Japanese armed forces, iron discipline was enforced by the noncommissioned officers" (Yoshida and Hosokawa 109).

An episode of brutal discipline Jim undergoes is when his unit is sent into action with their cannon. Upon the poor performance of his unit, as punishment the soldiers are forced to punch each other in the face as hard as they can. "I could hear the men weeping, not so much in pain but in anger at the stupidity of all this, the inhumanity of punishing a friend for nothing, the

utter nightmarish bestiality of this exercise in sadism" (Yoshida and Hosokawa 94). The tough training in the Japanese army is too much to bear for some soldiers, who thus choose to end their life. This is the case with the recruit Shimoda, who commits suicide by blowing himself up with a grenade. He was a skilled technician, who was able to recite the Military Handbook with ease; however, he could not endure the inhumane physical punishment of the army. Although Jim is desolated by his death, he experiences a strange feeling of content: "I, a soft, pampered, American-born, American-reared Nisei had not been the first to crack up" (Yoshida and Hosokawa 95). He feels encouraged by the fact that he has managed to withstand the disciplinary measures of the Japanese army despite being an American. Rather than the physical hardship, the mental torture Jim is constantly faced with is much more difficult to bear.

> My fatigue was more mental than physical. Not knowing when I would be kicked or slapped, not being able to hit back, afraid that I would say the wrong thing at the wrong time, afraid I would be called on to recite a code that I could not understand, my nerves were on edge. (Yoshida and Hosokawa 95)

The hard training of the soldiers in the Japanese army is connected to the concept of *seishin,* which was previously mentioned. Although the Japanese were aware of the greater strength in numbers of the American army, they were convinced that through their *seishin,* they could defeat their enemy. This mentality led to the "Special Attack Corps", also known as the "Kamikaze units". (Wierzbicka 379)

The extreme discipline expected from the soldiers in the Japanese army is entirely different from that of the American army. On one occasion, as his troop is leaving Chirwon in Korea, Jim foolishly exposes himself during combat, putting his own life at risk. Thanks to Sergeant Wells, Jim is saved from a possibly life-threatening situation. Rather than exercising physical punishment, Sergeant Wells "simply reminded me of his responsibility for my welfare and told me to be careful" (Yoshida and Hosokawa 211). Such a difference in the way the soldiers are treated may be due to the belief in respect in the American army. According to General Bruce C. Clarke: "Regardless of age or grade, soldiers should be treated as mature individuals. They are engaged in an honorable profession and deserve to be treated as such" (United States 23).

6.4.4. Comparing the cultural identity of the Issei and Nisei

The cultural identity of the Japanese Americans in this autobiography differs greatly according to whether they are Issei or Nisei. At the same time, even when analyzing Jim's Issei parents it is possible to discover some differences between them. Ryunosuke Yoshida emigrates to the United States with his older brother Saisuke in 1911 in order "to seek their fortune", like many

other Issei of that time.[8] (Yoshida and Hosokawa 14). They start off with very humble jobs, such as working in a lumber camp in Oregon and then running a hog farm. Finally, Ryunosuke decides to move to Seattle, where he begins working as a barber. When Suye joins him in Seattle, they lease a small hotel at the center of the Japanese community. As they live within their own ethnic community, there is no urgent need to learn English and thus Ryunosuke and Suye do not speak it well and communicate with their family only in Japanese.[9] Jim's father is described as a person with a "gruff exterior" (Yoshida and Hosokawa 17), who appears to embody very much of the traditional Japanese values and customs. He does not openly show affection to his children, and neither to his wife. However, from his mother, Jim realizes that in reality Ryunosuke is proud of him. Despite his initial opposition to Jim playing football, Ryunosuke and his wife with time become great football fans. In some ways Jim's mother also appears very strongly connected to her ancestral roots. Yet despite transmitting Japanese values to Jim, such as humility (Yoshida and Hosokawa 57) and inner strength (Yoshida and Hosokawa 62), she is aware of the cultural differences between Japan and the United States and gives her children more freedom. In this regard Jim expresses his conviction that "[m]other had an understanding of young people that was extremely unusual in the Japanese immigrant generation" (Yoshida and Hosokawa 17). As he grows older, Jim realizes the effect of his mother's permissive nature on his father, who also becomes mellower with his children. (Yoshida and Hosokawa 14-30)

Despite being raised with two cultures, Jim appears to feel much more connected to the United States, his true homeland, to which he desperately longs to return. (Yoshida and Hosokawa 114) Although externally he appears Japanese, he repeatedly mentions that his heart is in effect American. (Yoshida and Hosokawa 13, 244) While in the American army, he expresses his struggle in wanting to be accepted in the group of his fellow Americans, and not be seen as an outsider:

> These are my people, I thought to myself, this is where I belong. Yet I knew I was an outsider, a guest, present by sufferance, a stranger temporarily in their midst. Would I ever become one of them again? I did not know. To these young Americans, I was no different from the Japanese diligently learning to speak English from me. (Yoshida and Hosokawa 141)

With time, Jim gradually starts feeling acknowledged not merely as a foreigner, but as part of the group of Americans. A decisive moment for his acceptance is when he proves his strength by beating Sergeant Metzger in arm wrestling: "[w]hat really counted was that I was now one

[8] See section 2.1.2. on the reasons for emigration of the Japanese
[9] See section 5.2.1. on the difficulty of acculturation of the Issei

of the gang. I felt wanted. I was no longer merely an outsider who had been permitted to tag along on the whim of the commanding officer" (Yoshida and Hosokawa 194).

After Jim's return from Shanghai to Japan, his only wish is to have his citizenship status clarified and be able to return to the United States. With his knowledge of both Japanese and English, Jim appears to easily find a well-payed job in Japan, yet despite this fact, he never expresses the desire to remain in Japan. (Yoshida and Hosokawa 173) On the contrary, shortly before Jim's departure for Hawaii, his aunt in Kaminoseki tries to encourage Jim by telling him how similar Hawaii is to Japan. Jim thinks to himself: "[s]he just couldn't understand that I was trying to get away from Japan" (Yoshida and Hosokawa 234). Despite not having been able to attend college, although he had gained a scholarship at Willamette University in Salem, despite the long process of regaining his citizenship and despite the humble working conditions he finds himself in once in Hawaii, Jim never expresses any sort of bitterness towards the United States. Even when hearing about the incarceration of his fellow Japanese Americans in Washington, Oregon and California, the only feeling he expresses is shock at the violation of the rights of American citizens. (Yoshida and Hosokawa 140-141)

His strong identification with the United States can be observed through his appropriation of an English name, his need to communicate in English, his firm belief in values such as justice and equality, his desire to be acknowledged as a full-fledged American by the other American soldiers and also by his decision to marry a Nisei. Although Jim has intimate relations with multiple Japanese women during his stay in Shanghai, he shows no intention to start a serious relationship with any of them. (Yoshida and Hosokawa 145) However, the relationship with Ethel, which starts off more as a friendship, is very different. Ethel was born in Honolulu and had just started attending Farrington High School when the war began. Soon after, her father, a Shinto priest who was seen as a potential threat by the American authorities, decided to return to Japan. (Yoshida and Hosokawa 167) Because she is a Nisei, she can much more easily understand Jim's true identity as a Japanese American. As they have a strong common base and Ethel is very beautiful, it feels natural for Jim to get married to her. However, once they move to Hawaii, the two separate, agreeing that they are not meant for one another. (Yoshida and Hosokawa 255)

Although very little is mentioned about Betty, her decision to marry a Nisei and to return to the United States similarly reflects a strong identification with her original homeland. When Betty is informed about the approval for her reinstatement as an American citizen, Jim describes the news as "the best gift anyone could give her" (Yoshida and Hosokawa 165). Unlike her younger

siblings, it appears that Aiko chooses to remain in Japan, settling in Wakamatsu City. Her decision not to return to the United States, as well as the reference to her with the Japanese name 'Aiko', hint to the fact that she may feel more connected to her parent's homeland than her younger siblings.

Jim's Nisei friends also grow up with a mixed cultural heritage. They too go to a Japanese language school and work in the summer months to support their families. Besides American sports such as football or baseball, many of them also practice judo. They call each other with their Americanized names and spend time together like any average American teenager, however they are perfectly aware of their dual identity: "[w]e did all the things white kids our age did for fun, but we never forgot we were Japanese Americans" (Yoshida and Hosokawa 20). When the opportunity arises, many of them volunteer to fight for the American army, despite having been previously forced into internment camps. At least fourteen of Jim's friends and acquaintances from Seattle lose their life in battle, in order to prove their loyalty. (Yoshida and Hosokawa 173-4)

Clear differences can be observed when comparing the cultural identity of the Issei and the Nisei in the book. The Issei are naturally more connected to their Japanese heritage than their children, who are much more assimilated into the dominant American society. However, although a great intergenerational diversity emerges when analyzing the Issei and Nisei, it is also possible to observe some intragenerational differences. As a matter of fact, the heterogeneity of the different generations of Japanese Americans was previously mentioned when talking about the Issei in section 5.2.1. When comparing Jim's parents, Suye appears to be more lenient in raising her children, which she did not according to the strict Japanese standard, unlike his father Ryunosuke. Furthermore, while Jim and Betty seem to be much more connected to the United States and eager to return 'home', their older sister Aiko decides to remain in Japan.

7. ***Turning Japanese: Memoirs of a Sansei*** **by David Mura**

Similarly to the previous section, this one will analyze the representation of the cultural identity in the autobiographical text of David Mura *Turning Japanese: Memoirs of a Sansei*. In the first part, a brief biography of David Mura will be provided, alongside a plot summary of his book and a description of the narrative techniques utilized. Subsequently, the analysis and interpretation of this piece of life writing will be provided, focusing on the Japanese American

identity of David Mura. Like in *The Two Worlds of Jim Yoshida*, three main aspects will be examined in greater detail namely: language, values, and customs and traditions. In the last section, the Issei, Nisei and Sansei generations will be compared and contrasted by analyzing the cultural identity of David Mura and his family members.

7.1. Biography of David Mura

David Mura was born in 1952 in the Naval Station Great Lakes, Illinois, during the time his father was in the American army. Mura is a Sansei, whose parents had been interned during World War II. He spent his childhood in Chicago and his family then moved to Morton Grove, on the outskirts of the city. In his high school years, he began struggling with his identity, experiencing a sense of exclusion from his white, predominately Jewish, peers; this feeling of estrangement accompanied him during his college period. Mura gained a bachelor's degree in political science and English at Grinnell College in Iowa, where he met Susan Sencer, his wife to be. The interracial relation with his wife is frequently expressed in his literary works as it brought him to reflect about aspects of "race, gender and sexuality". (Xiaojing 273) Although his father wanted him to aim for a profession in the law field, at Grinnell College Mura discovered his calling for literature after having attended a course in creative writing. Following his graduation from Grinnell College, Mura enrolled at the University of Minnesota to study English but did not finish his studies because the prescriptive scholarly methods did fit with his poetic writing. In 1991 he finally obtained a Master of Fine Arts at Vermont College. (Xiaojing 273-278)

Additionally to teaching at St. Olaf College, he has worked as a visiting lecturer at the University of Oregon. Mura published several works amongst which, there were three collections of poems, namely: *After We Lost Our Way* (1989), *The Colors of Desire* (1995) and *Angels for the Burning (*2004). His works are, on the one hand, influenced by confessional poetry, while on the other hand, reflect a postmodern consciousness. Also significant are his three prose works: *Turning Japanese: Memoirs of a Sansei* (1991), *Where Body Meets Memory: An Odyssey of Race, Sexuality and Identity* (1996), and *Songs for Uncle Tom, Tonto, and Mr. Moto: Poetry and Identity* (2002). Both his poetry and prose focus on topics concerning identity, race and sexuality and often have autobiographical references. (Shitabata 732-738)

7.2. Plot summary

The Sansei poet David Mura goes to Japan with his wife Susie for one year in 1984 after having won a fellowship funded by a U.S./Japan Creative Artist Exchange. Despite initially seeming

unenthusiastic about returning to his ancestors' homeland, upon arriving in Tokyo he is overwhelmed by the energy and wealth of the city. Not expecting to fit in Japan, for the first time in his life he is surrounded by people who resemble him, and he feels a great sense of happiness. Through Mrs. Hayashi, a teacher hired by the Japanese sponsor of David's grant, he and Susie learn Japanese and are educated in Japanese manners and etiquette. Thanks to her David comes to realize many particularities about the Japanese, which help him better understand himself as a Japanese American. David also takes Butoh classes, an avant-garde dance which challenges him to break free from his conceptualizations and self-consciousness. He also practices the Noh theatrical performance, which is deeply rooted in the Japanese tradition. With his friends, he goes drinking and to parties and has long political debates as well as discussions regarding the views of different concepts such as sexuality and marriage held by the Japanese. He takes notes of all his experiences and impressions, so as not forget them once back in America. He slowly begins to fall in love with a country he had shunned throughout his youth, due to his desire to be assimilated into the American culture. During his stay in Japan, he also visits his grandparents' home in Shingu, and David tries to fill the gaps of his family history, which his parents had concealed from him. He slowly starts realizing how distant America feels to him and how his world view is changing. Towards the end of the trip during spring, his parents agree to come visit him, and they are equally amazed by the prosperity of Japan. Despite having harboured much anger and resentment towards his parents for his strict upbringing, as well as their silence about their experiences in the internment camps and their family history, David starts to realize how much pressure they must have experienced to assimilate into American society. Reflecting on his year in Japan after having returned to the United States, he realizes how his year abroad allowed him to develop a broader worldview and made him feel less bound by his American identity. David Mura's memoir concludes with his reflections about the future of his daughter and his concern about whether she too will face a similar identity struggle.

7.3. Narrative techniques

In the same way as in *The Two Worlds of Jim Yoshida*, the narrative voice in *Turning Japanese* is that of a first-person narrator, who is one and the same person as the author since the book is autobiographical. The plot begins slightly over a week after David's return to the United States and then goes back in time to the autumn of 1984 when he and his wife Susie arrive at the airport of Narita. From there the storyline follows a generally chronological order, often referring to the change of the seasons, although frequent occurrences of analepsis can be found,

in which David recalls past memories from his youth, for example, in the summers of his early twenties when he visited his aunt Ruth (Mura 194) or his second year of graduate school when he tried to prove his superior command of the English language to his teaching assistant. (Mura 74) The last chapter takes place three years after his trip to Japan and ends with the news of Susie's pregnancy.

Turning Japanese is divided into two main parts: the first one consists of eight chapters and focuses on the earlier months of his stay in Japan, while the second part consists of nine chapters and begins at the end of February, almost halfway through his stay. Each chapter is divided once again into subchapters, which generally contain one main narrative situation. Although the plot begins in Minnesota, it soon moves to Tokyo, where David and Susie live in a small apartment for a year. During his stay in Japan, David also visits other places, such as the city of Kyoto, Mount Osorezan on the Shimokita Peninsula his grandfather's hometown in Shingu in the prefecture of Wakayama and he makes a short trip to the Philippines to visit the rice fields of Banaue.

A particularity of David Mura's memoir is the presence of short poems or excerpts from books, or headlines of articles by different authors at the beginning of each chapter. For example, preceding the first chapter, the following poem by Matsuo Bashō, who is considered one of the greatest haiku poets, can be found:

> *Coming home at last*
> *At the end of the year*
> *I wept to find*
> *My old umbilical cord.* (5)

This poem neatly encompasses part of David's sentiment when returning home to the United States, after rediscovering part of his identity in Japan. The texts he includes in his book are always connected to the topic which is dealt with in the respective chapter. In his memoir, David Mura often makes references to other authors, philosophers, political activists or scholars, such as Matsuo Bashō (Mura 9, 352), Yukio Mishima (Mura 18, 26), Ronald Barthes (Mura 9, 340) or Franz Kafka (Mura 226), just to name a few. During his stay in Japan, David regularly makes diary entries in order to retain all the impressions and experiences of his trip. He includes some of these diary entries in his memoir, which often reflect on the question of his cultural identity. (Mura 41, 56, 354) He also includes some of his own poems, inspired by his stay in Japan or written at an earlier time. (Mura 279, 253) David Mura frequently introduces Japanese terms in his memoir, with the corresponding English translation in brackets such as "*hibakusha* (victims of the atomic bomb" (Mura 9), "*Irasshaimase* (welcome)" (Mura 15), or "*hakujin* (white

people)" (Mura 22). The insertion of Japanese terms may serve the dual function of providing more authenticity to the author's experiences in Japan, as well as bringing the reader closer to the Japanese culture by exposing them to its language.

Also unique to David Mura's writing, is his confessional style. This is evident, for example, when he admits that his relationship with his wife Susie is not only based on love, but on his underlying need to feel assimilated into the dominant white culture. While his candor and openness are seen positively by some critics who claim that his confessional style gives vigor and strength to his work, others criticize it for appearing narcissistic. Mura's confessional mode may be partly self-indulgent, however it is also true that he voices deeper concerns and issues surrounding identity that others may not feel comfortable addressing, such as his inferiority complex as an Asian male or the feeling of shame for his parents' quiet submission when they were incarcerated during World War II. (Xiaojing 278)

Also in this case, it is possible to view David Mura's memoir as a means to better understand the reality of the Sansei. Furthermore, the autobiographical consciousness defined in section 4.3., can be observed in Mura's literary work, as his trip to Japan represents a time of self-discovery also through the historical research he carries out in Japan. "In Japan, as my interest in my family background awakened, I began to read more about the first Japanese immigrants" (Mura 50). It is through his experiences in Japan, as well as his personal historical research that David Mura comes to better understand his identity as a third generation Japanese American.

7.4. Analysis and interpretation: Japanese American cultural identity

David Mura is a third-generation Japanese American who from a young age struggles with his cultural identity and the notion of home. His identity crisis and feeling of not knowing where he belongs has to do with the stereotypes of Japanese Americans prevalent in the United States. (Mura 33) David's grandfather had a clear concept of home, of where he came from, while his father was convinced that the United States could become that place for him. Yet David feels he has no true home:

> The man who emigrated- my grandfather- carried within him the memory of home, the former world, the place where he was once "real". It tore at him, that memory, and yet it kept him anchored: he knew where his home was, knew that he had lost it. The son of that man - my father - believed he could make the new place his home. The task was probably impossible, but it kept him occupied. The son of that man – myself - realizes what? That the new home - in my case, a Jewish suburb - is no home; is, in fact, for me, an absurdity, a sham, and that the old home is lost in unreality. (Mura 32-33)

Before his trip to Japan, David always insisted on his Americanness and shunned his Japanese heritage, proudly claiming not to know any Japanese. For him Japan meant "cheap baseballs, Godzilla, weird sci-fi movies" (Mura 8). He admits that he would have preferred his fellowship being for Paris, rather than Tokyo. Despite claiming to want to distance himself from his Japanese culture to assimilate into the dominant society, his ancestry is very present in his poetry, as he focuses on topics such as Japanese Americans, the internment camps and his family. (Mura 133) As a child, David has a skin problem called eczema which causes him to scratch himself, creating big scabs on his arms. Reflecting on how his parents tied his wrists to prevent him from scratching himself at night, David wonders whether his skin problem was subconsciously connected to the wish to change his skin-color: "I sometimes wonder whether this scratching, this seeming desire to scrape away my skin, might somehow have been connected with what the world around us was telling me, silently, about my race" (Mura 122).

David's year in Japan helps him revaluate his identity under a completely new light. For the first time in his life, he feels a sense of home and belonging, which he had never experienced in the United States. (Mura 371) Due to his Asian features, in Japan he never sticks out from the crowd, as long as he remains silent. The feeling of being part of the majority group brings him an unexpected sense of joy: "I saw my face reflected in the glare of the window. Small tears fell over my face. I blended in with the crowd" (Mura 22). During his lessons with Mrs. Hayashi he comes to discover many unique aspects of Japanese people, which help him better understand himself: "[l]istening to Mrs. Hayashi I realized I wasn't a freak; I was simply Japanese" (Mura 47). David starts developing such a deep love for Japan that he feels uncomfortable criticizing his ancestors' homeland. He admits feeling much more at ease with bashing America rather than Japan. (Mura 236) As a matter of fact, when going to the cinema in the United States, he often resented the way Asians were portrayed in the movies. Yet, in Japan, when he sees the reversal of the Asian stereotypes, he feels a sense of "revengeful delight". (Mura 179)

Apart from identity, another aspect that David struggles with throughout his life is his sexuality. Because of his Japanese features, he feels an inferiority complex, which he partly tries to overcome by dating Caucasian women. As previously stated in section 5.2.3, when talking about the Sansei, physical appearance is often connected to value judgement and therefore David's attitude towards race and sexuality corresponds to the common views and attitudes of many of his fellow Sansei, who frequently dated white women and spent time with white Americans rather than Asian Americans. During his stay in Japan, for the first time, David is

very much attracted towards Japanese women. In his youth, his inferiority complex leads him to shun Asian women and only date white women. (Mura 148) Susie often seems like a prize he proudly displays to assert his manliness and provoke jealousy in other men. (Mura 149) In the same way, in Japan rather than feeling protective of his wife when men show interest in her, he feels flattered. On one occasion, when some men offer to buy Susie a drink, David claims: "I thought I recognized in their glances my American privilege, possessing what they could not" (Mura 38).

After reconnecting to his Japanese ancestry and culture, David starts questioning his American identity. The conviction he had previously demonstrated regarding his Americanness slowly starts to drift away. (Mura 115) Halfway through his stay in Japan, he starts experiencing a "loss of balance" (Mura 180) and feeling that the connection to his old life is beginning to sever: "I had started the year thinking I would return at its end to the comforts of America. Now America seems distant, distasteful, no longer my home. And yet I cannot stay here in Japan, or can I?" (Mura 180).

David's new sense of identity consists of a greater awareness of himself as a non-white person and the ability to view the world from a new perspective. Not belonging to either America or Japan appears to be a possible advantage for him. (Mura 332) Reflecting on his trip, David concludes: "Japan allowed me to see myself, America, and the world from a perspective that was not white American. I do not feel as bound now by my national identity, do not feel that being an American somehow separates me from the rest of the world" (Mura 368). Although the title of his memoir assumes that David becomes Japanese by the end of his trip, it is more accurate to claim that his year in Japan gives him the possibility to better understand the land of his ancestors and his relation to it. Although, he may not have fully found his identity as a Japanese American, David gains a new understanding of his cultural identity and his position in the world.

7.4.1. Language

Due to his desire to assimilate into American culture, David claims to have been proud of his inability to speak Japanese. Having been brought up in a Jewish community, he claims to have known more Yiddish than Japanese. (Mura 9) As previously mentioned in section 5.3.1. when reflecting on the importance of language for the shaping of cultural identity, the ability to speak English fluently is a crucial indicator for successful acculturation into American society. Thus, it is understandable why in graduate school David feels the need to prove his "superior

command of English" (Mura 75) to his teaching assistant, who appears unenthusiastic when seeing an Asian looking teacher. Out of spite, he points out her grammatical mistakes in the attempt to demonstrate that he "had the same rights to the language that she had" (Mura 75).

Before going to Japan, David decides to start taking Japanese classes at university, but finds the language very difficult. (Mura 44) His parents had always spoken to him in English and the only place where he was exposed to Japanese was at his aunt's house on Long Island, who lived with a Japanese roommate called Baye. (Mura 195) His Nisei parents grew up speaking Japanese to their own parents but switched to English when talking to one another. (Mura 322) David's family situation is comparable to that of Jim Yoshida and to many other Japanese immigrant families who decided to settle in America. The three stages of the social shift of the Japanese immigrants described by Sayaka Kawamura and Franklin Goza[10] can clearly be seen in the first three generations of Japanese Americans. While a great number of Issei, including David's grandparents, lived in Japanese communities and thus did not need English to survive, the Nisei, started attending American schools and universities and quickly became proficient in the English language, while only partially speaking Japanese, mostly with their parents. The Sansei, like David, almost completely lost their ancestors' language and were raised monolingual, exclusively speaking English.

Similarly to the Nisei in Jim Yoshida's life, the members of David's family also adopt English names. His father changes his name from Katsuji to Tom, after having explored different names, such as Roy or Bob. His mother also changes her name, from Teruko to Terry. In other cases, rather than changing their Japanese names, these are simply shortened to words which sound more similar to English. Some of the members of his mother's family, for example, shorten their names from Miwako to Miwa or Mimi, from Tadao to Tad or from Yoshiko to Yo. Other than altering his first name, David's father also changes his surname from Uyemura to Mura, making it easier to pronounce. (Mura 48-49) As was mentioned in Kevin Heffernan's study on *English name use by East Asians in Canada* (2010), the appropriation of English names is influenced both by the speaker's cultural identity or the degree with which one identifies with a certain culture, and by linguistic pragmatics, such as the difficulty in pronouncing Asian names.

David's attitude towards his lack of Japanese knowledge quickly changes once he moves to Japan. He often feels a sense of shame for not being able to use the language fluently and feels

[10] See section 5.3.1. on the stages of the social shift

a certain societal expectation to know Japanese due to his ancestry. (Mura 25) When faced with communication barriers, Susie is much more apt in making herself understood than David, who feels simply embarrassed: "I felt I should somehow know things intuitively, through blood" (Mura 34). Some misunderstandings prompted by the barriers of communication lead to very humorous situations, such as when a Japanese saleswoman knocks on David's door and tries to explain that she is selling condoms. (Mura 38) However, in most situations, the language barriers bring David into a state of panic and cause a feeling of inadequacy. This is the case when David goes to his first Butoh training and does not understand what his instructor is telling him: "I keep hoping the sensei will not look at me, not see I don't understand" (Mura 62). Although both David and Susie's Japanese improve thanks to the lessons with Mrs. Hayashi, misunderstandings and difficulties continue occurring until the very end of their stay. (Mura 180)

As David can easily blend in with the other Japanese due to his physical appearance, he feels self-conscious when speaking English in public, as it creates a barrier, which divides him from those around him. This can be seen, for example, when he is on the train with Susie and he chooses to whisper so that other passengers do not hear him speaking English. (Mura 22) Another occasion in which language makes him feel self-conscious is at Ono's studio for Butoh training, where he takes notes in English, exposing his foreignness. (Mura 61) He has a similar feeling of embarrassment when he speaks in English with Gisela and Lisl, while waiting for the train to go home. (Mura 133) Interestingly, this feeling vanishes when he is with Yuri Kageyama, a young lady of Japanese ancestry who had spent most of her childhood in the United States. "I didn't feel self-conscious as I sometimes did with Susie. Yuri and I both belonged, and did not; we shared a dual privilege" (Mura 152). David is very aware of how those around him view him and often feels more pressure than his foreign friends or Susie to assimilate to the Japanese culture.

Despite being grateful and relieved whenever he encounters someone who can speak English as it facilitates communication, while visiting Gion in Kyoto, David feels very irritated when encountering American tourists:

> They reminded me of the America I wanted to leave behind, even the Nisei and Sansei. I winced at the nasal tone of their voices, the calls of "Herb, come here, look at this," the loud laughter, and the cornball jokes […] I remained silent, provided no hint that I understood their words, and pretended I was Japanese. (Mura 299)

David uses language, or rather does not use it, as a means of distancing himself from the American tourists, whom he does not want to identify with. On several occasions it is evident

how language allows one to associate with or disassociate oneself from a certain cultural identity. While in the United States, he uses his English competency as a way of demonstrating his Americanness, in Japan, he often avoids using English, so as to not be identified as an American. Aware that by speaking English, his true identity as a Japanese American would be revealed, he often chooses to remain silent and blend in with the crowd.

7.4.2. Values

Despite having been raised in an American environment by parents who ardently tried to assimilate into the mainstream society, David learned a few values from Japanese culture. When recalling his high school years, David mentions that like many other Asian American students, he too felt the pressure from his demanding parents to excel above all the other students. His dad would point out to him all the passes he had missed in football and scold him whenever he got a B at school: "There were never enough excellents, enough hundreds on tests; there were always errors I'd made on the field, tackles I missed" (Mura 142). When talking about Japanese Americans to Saito, David's father describes them as "quiet, hard-working people who never made any trouble" (Mura 325). They can be seen as the model Nisei who through their hard work managed to rise from a lower-class status to an upper-middle- class status[11]. It is probably through his parents' lifestyle that David becomes aware of certain Japanese cultural values, such as endurance and the reinforcement of the collective group rather than the individual. David points out that "[p]aradoxically, Japanese beliefs helped the nisei assimilate." (Mura 218) Despite their desire to adopt American values and customs, it was the Japanese values that helped the Nisei assimilate.

In his youth David strived to distinguish himself from the stereotypical studious and quiet Japanese American, however, in Japan he feels pressured to conform to the other Japanese. Much emphasis lays on collectivism[12], namely the abandoning of one's individuality in order to become a member of the group. David emphasizes that the loss of individuality is a western perspective of Japanese society, which reveals an underlying criticism of the concept of collectivism. Motivated by his desire to become part of Japanese society, David strives to conform to it to the best of his ability, by supressing his American desire to protest and diligently obeying the Japanese etiquette. (Mura 19) His attempts are not always successful and despite knowing what is expected of him, he does not always perform accordingly. This is the case during Noh practice, when Okinaka instructs David and his friend Daniel to remain in a

[11] See section 5.2.2. on the second-generation Japanese Americans and their rise to a middle-class status
[12] See section 2.1.1. on the distinguishing features of the Japanese and their view of collectivism

standing, meditative position for fifteen minutes. Unable to withstand the physical strain, David sits down before the time is up: “it was clear I lacked Japanese discipline, the desire for precision” (Mura 136).

David’s cultural awareness helps him easily adapt to Japanese society, unlike some of his foreign friends, who seem to lack his cultural sense. When dealing with Okinaka, his Noh teacher, David adopts the principles of *taemae* and *honne*. He explains that the former represents “the face you show the world, the social self that gives the expected and appropriate answers” (Mura 137), while the latter “is the private self, the feelings and thoughts you keep in abeyance and let out only on certain carefully chosen occasions” (Mura 137). In Japan David generally abides to the cultural norms and values of society. Yet, when talking to his Japanese friends, he confronts them with questions about their beliefs and views of life. When talking about marriage with the Japanese barber Oiga, for example, David emphasizes that his relationship with Susie is based on love and equality. Oiga criticizes Americans for being too logical and emphasizes the difference in the attitude of Japanese women towards family. Rather than being based on love, Japanese marriage focuses on obligation, and as long as the man successfully fulfills his social obligations and his duties as a husband, the wife has little reason to protest. (Mura 114) Due to Japanese mothers’ dedication to their children and the merely secondary focus on love, most Japanese women choose not to divorce even upon discovering infidelities of their husbands (Mura 108-109). David starts to understand the Japanese view of marriage although it clashes with his own understanding of marriage, which puts love at the forefront.

Also troublesome for David is the difference in the understanding of friendship. On the one hand, he feels happy that he has a circle of friends who accepts him, on the other hand, he struggles with the lack of depth and intimacy of Japanese friendships. Despite spending hours talking to his friend Matsuo, for example, it is only after several months that David discovers that he has a daughter: “I began to feel frustrated with Matsuo. We never seemed to move toward the type of intimacy I associated with friendships back in the States” (Mura 231).

Although his values sometimes appear to clash with the ones he encounters in Japan, he abstains from criticizing Japanese culture, a fact that often angers Susie. One critical aspect in the Japanese mentality for them is its extreme ethnocentrism. The Japanese belief that they are racially superior can be seen, for example, in the mistreatment of people of Korean origin in Japan, as well as their refusal to recognize the barbarity of their actions in Asia during the 20th century. Despite David’s awareness of the darker side of Japan, he does not develop the same

type of anger he feels towards America. (Mura 201-202) On one occasion, while talking to Daniel about Japanese discipline and hierarchical relationships[13], David finds himself defending the American belief of freedom and independence. Although, he has the tendency to defend Japanese culture, he grew up with American values and admits to himself: "[s]ome part of me knew I could never live with the Japanese sense of hierarchy" (Mura 100).

The values which David identifies with are not instantly apparent in his memoir, possibly because they are re-examined during his stay to Japan. However, the fact that he criticizes his parents and their generation for quietly enduring their persecution, demonstrates that he firmly believes in the concept of justice and standing up for one's rights. This view clashes with the Japanese belief of submission and endurance, which his parents believed in and which he learned to adopt while in Japan. He also struggles with the view of relationships in Japan, such as friendship and marriage. He is frustrated that he is not able to create deeper bonds with his Japanese friends, despite spending much time with them, and he longs for the type of friendships he is accustomed to in the United States. Furthermore, the Japanese view of marriage and family appears very foreign to him, as it does not seem to be based on love, but on a sense of obligation. Although David's parents had passed on some Japanese values to him, such as hard work and perseverance, it appears that his cultural identity is very much rooted in the American system of values.

7.4.3. Custom and tradition

Growing up, David and his family celebrated all the American national and religious holidays such as "the Fourth of July, Labor Day and Christmas" (Mura 8). Like many Japanese families, his also generally ate rice three times a day, although his mother also sometimes prepared American food like roast beef and meat loaf. (Mura 308) Despite being accustomed to the Japanese cuisine, David prefers American food, such as burgers, hot-dogs and fried chicken. Like Jim Yoshida, David also played football, as well as basketball.

His relationship to his parents appears to have been influenced by Japanese culture. Like many other Asian parents, his too are very strict with him and expect him to always strive for excellence both in sports and in his studies. When David is seven years old, his father attempts to teach him how to ride a bike but quickly shows his disgust when David falls off his bike. Similarly, when teaching David how to drive, he yells and scolds him for not performing well. (Mura 142) This pressure puts him under much stress, which also manifests itself in the

[13] See section 5.2.1. on the hierarchical social structure reinforced during the Tokugawa era

deterioration of his skin problem in high school. (Mura 122) David's father appears to have unquestionable authority, which can be seen, for example, when David is forced to cut his hair before going to college: "I can't speak, I know there is nothing I can do" (Mura 165). Rather than running away or putting up a fight, David angrily obeys and lets his father cut his hair. His family does not show affection through physical touch, and even his mother never touches him. (Mura 124) The personal distance which David describes as comfortable between him and his mother is ten feet (approximately three metres), which goes far beyond the average personal distance of North Americans, according to a study by Edward Hall on personal space. As a matter of fact, the distance between two people who have a close relationship, such as friends or family members, is between 50 cm and 1.30m. (Beaulieu 795)

David's struggle with his identity, as well as his difficult relationship with his parents may possibly have led to his depression in his youth, which he tried to overcome by going to therapy. When he is in college, David has a heated argument with his father, during which he expresses that he does not want to be depressed as he had been in high school. Surprised by this statement, his father claims he had been unaware of his son's depression, while his mother accuses her husband of having known all along. This scene encapsulates David's view of his parents: "[f]or years this incident epitomized my parents for me: my father blind to anything emotionally difficult; my mother seeing everything, saying nothing" (Mura 311).

In addition to habitually eating Japanese food and being raised with strict Japanese discipline, David is also acquainted with some Japanese customs and traditions such as removing his shoes before entering someone's home. (Mura 308) Yet his parents, despite adopting certain Japanese customs, "did not call attention to themselves as Japanese" (Mura 308), and enjoyed golf and tennis, like the average middle-class American.

Nonetheless, it appears that David is aware of Japanese etiquette, and this is probably the reason for his fast assimilation into Japanese society. While in the United States, it is he who insisted on public displays of affection, in Japan he considers such displays inappropriate. On one occasion, upon Susie's request to have a kiss, David refuses, explaining to her that it is not well accepted in Japan. (Mura 22)

In Japan, David quickly adopts the common customs and traditions. He bows when greeting people, takes off his shoes before entering a house, and hands out his business card when meeting someone new. It is unclear which Japanese traditions his own family passed on to him and which he learns while in Japan, however, he strives earnestly to follow the appropriate etiquette and conform to society. Although he often disagrees with what he is being told in

Japan, rather than arguing, he learns to keep his thoughts to himself. This is the case when he meets Shimon Miura, the head of the Cultural Affairs Department of the Japanese Government. When learning that David wants to visit Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Shimon Miura discourages him from going, saying that it is better to leave the memory of the atomic bombs in the past. Rather than protesting, David simply nods. "It was a posture I was to take often in Japan: the smiling, simple, and assenting American, polite and silent, without protest" (Mura 19).

David feels great pressure to assimilate into Japanese society and behave accordingly, due to his Japanese ancestry, of which he is often reminded by those around him. This is the case with his Noh instructor Okinaka, who always expects David to perform better than his American friend Daniel, simply because of his Japanese genes. (Mura 137) Similarly, on one occasion in Tokyo, while Daniel and Susie cross the street at a red light, David decides to wait until it turns green. He feels that due to his Asian appearance, he is expected to abide by the law, unlike other foreigners, who according to the Japanese may not have known the rules. "It didn't matter that I too was a foreigner. I didn't look like one, and I sensed the Japanese would silently chastise me if I crossed in brazen American freedom. It shouldn't have mattered to me what they, the Japanese, thought, but it did" (Mura 83). While David's grandparents grew up practicing Buddhism and Shintoism, his father converted to Christianity at a young age. During his childhood, David is also brought up with Christian beliefs, but later becomes an atheist. (Mura 141) However, in Japan, he starts following the custom of praying for his ancestors. He confesses that praying in a shrine feels more natural for him than being in a church. (Mura 173-174) On his way to his grandparents' village, he stops at a shrine to offer a prayer for them: "I clapped my hands twice and thanked, as I had done so many times in this country, my ojii-san and obaa-san, from my father's and from my mother's side" (Mura 355). Despite claiming to be an atheist, David quite naturally appears to adopt the Japanese tradition of offering prayers for his ancestors. As previously mentioned when talking about Japanese religion, David's rather natural assimilation of this custom may be connected to the fact that Buddhism and Shintoism are seen more as religious practices, and therefore the focus lays not on some central principles, like in western religions, but more on the various rituals.

In addition to embracing Japanese religious practices, David also shows much interest in the avant-garde dance of Butoh and the traditional dance of Noh. He explains that Butoh originated in the "peasant culture of Japan" (Mura 65), and contrary to most modern dance in Japan, it did not simply result in a pastiche of the modern dance from the western world. In Butoh the dancers remain near the ground and the movements are seldom choreographed. Often the faces and at

times the whole body of the dancers are white. They sometimes wear cloths, rags or other materials. The movements are ungraceful, irregular and almost convulsive. (Mura 65-66) David's decision to study Butoh with Ono is motivated by the fact that Ono represents "a challenge to present-day Japan and to the increasing commercialization and trivialization of Japanese culture" (Mura 67). Furthermore, David is also attracted by Ono's non-western representation and exploration of sexuality. Due to his Japanese features, David had always struggled with his sexuality: "[a]s an Asian male, I was placed in a category of neutered sexuality, where beauty, power and admiration were out of the question, where normalcy and acceptance were forbidden" (Mura 149). Lastly, he is also fascinated by the way Ono speaks about the dead, and claims that Ono is the only person he knew who spoke so much about this topic. (Mura 69) David's interest in death and spirituality may have been influenced by the stories of his grandmother, who was supposedly quite psychic. Furthermore, he sees in Ono the possibility to reconnect to his deceased grandparents. (Mura 69)

Besides practicing Butoh, David also takes Noh lessons, a traditional Japanese theatrical performance combining dance and music. The ritual movements in Noh are slow and the chants are hypnotic. In Noh the main actors generally wear a mask, carefully carved and painted. (Mura 135) As part of his training, David's Noh instructor makes him meditate to strengthen his *ki*: "It's here - pointing to his solar plexus – it's where your spirit resides" (Mura 260).

Being raised by Nisei parents in an American environment, David is exposed to the customs and traditions of both Japan and the United States, despite his parents' insistence on their Americanness. David's interest in the Japanese tradition and customs such as Butoh and Noh and his adoption of Japanese religious practices demonstrates a willingness to connect to his Japanese heritage, which he had been deprived of. After his parents' talk with Saito, David's mother admits that they could have passed on more Japanese culture to their children. However, the experience of the camps and growing up with the pressure of becoming fully Americanized probably influenced their decision to raise their children in an American culture.

7.4.4. Comparing the cultural identity of the Issei, Nisei and Sansei

During his lifetime, David does not have the chance to get to know his grandparents; one of his grandmothers dies before he is even born and the other one when he is four. After their deaths, his grandfathers return to Japan, where they remarry and then later die. Despite not having a personal connection to his grandfather on his father's side, David feels close to him. As a matter of fact, he only has rather vague memories of his grandfather, and what he knows is through

his aunt Ruth, who is the only family member ready to talk about him. Thanks to her stories David develops a sense of closeness to his grandfather, about whom he also writes several poems. His grandfather emigrates to the United States at the beginning of the twentieth century and manages to escape the draft, as well as the war between the Russian and the Japanese Empires[14]. Thanks to his good looks, his grandfather is able to personally go back to Japan to find his bride[15]. He loves clothes, smoking cigars and gambling, which sometimes cost him quite some money. (Mura 51) His wife is described as a ghostly figure, a kind of oracle who has "an eye for the future and the other world" (Mura 196). On one occasion she wakes David's grandfather from his sleep and warns him not to leave the house. Ignoring her admonition, he leaves anyways and shortly before midnight, returns home with bandages around his head. He had been involved in a car accident. His grandparents live in a Japanese neighbourhood and never travel far from its confines. Like many other Issei, described in section 5.2.1., David's grandparents do not seem to make much effort to assimilate into American society as they live in their own ethnic communities and do not learn English. (Mura 196)

David's father never talks about his own parents and is described as a much more serious and rigid person than his relaxed and carefree grandfather. During World War II his father is imprisoned in the internment camps, and before being let free, one of his teachers encourages him and the other students to strive to become true Americans: "for your own sakes, try to be not one, but two hundred percent American…" (Mura 124). Motivated by his desire to feel part of the mainstream society and become successful, his father shuns his Japanese heritage and adopts American values and traditions. At the end of the war, he attends college while taking different jobs as a reporter at the International News Service with the American Medical Association. In order to become successful in his professional field, he often works many more hours than his colleagues. He meets his wife at twenty-three during a Nisei dance in Chicago. David's mother is described as quiet and distant. She never speaks about the past and seems to care more about the cleanliness of her house than the psychological well-being of her son. (310-311) It appears that David's parents resemble the quiet Nisei, who were described in the section 5.2.2. Like many other Nisei, they renounce their Japanese background and work laboriously to be accepted in American society and climb the social ladder.

> Theirs was an American storybook rise – from the lower-class neighbourhood on the South Side of Chicago to the working-class area near Wringley Field to the middle-class suburb of Morton Grove and then to the upper-middle-class suburbs of Northbrook and

[14] See section 2.1.2. on the reasons for the mass emigration of the Japanese to the United States
[15] See section 2.1.3. on the early years of migration of the Japanese and the custom of arranged marriage

> Vernon Hills. Looking back, I don't see how our being Japanese fit in with all this; perhaps it never did. (Mura 311)

Like the majority of the Nisei, they too remain silent about the past and their experiences in the internment camps. While a few protest against the injustice of American citizens having been locked up, most of them quietly accept their incarceration. Many Nisei join the American army in order to prove their loyalty[16], like David's uncle who fights for the 442nd division in Europe. Yet, despite his courage and sacrifice, after returning from the war, he finds it impossible to rent an apartment, due to his ancestry, and once again, the attitude of passiveness and submission prevails. Like many other Nisei, David's father, aunt and uncle work tirelessly, keep silent and emulate the American middle-class. (Mura 216-218) When questioned about the camps, David's father claims to not be resentful towards the United States for the Japanese Americans' incarceration. Although his own father had suffered financial losses, he acknowledges that the internment camps had offered some of the Nisei new opportunities. (Mura 326) When David tries to talk to his parents about life in the camps, his mother responds that she was too young to remember and that it did not matter much, while his father simply says that he had had fun as he could play baseball there. Before the internment, his father had to work after school, therefore he was glad that in the camps he could finally spend time playing[17]. (Mura 195)

Like many other Sansei, David is very critical towards his parents' view of the internment camps and their unwillingness to talk about the past. As previously stated in section 5.2.3, most Sansei saw the depiction of the Nisei as a model minority negatively, since they considered their parents to have been too Americanized. David too feels a sense of shame for his parents' passivity in regard to their unjust internment and rejects that history as part of his own past.

> Despite my awareness of the powers arrayed against them, some part of me believes they could have and should have fought back. What this indicates is hard for me to admit: I am ashamed of their weakness. I do not want to claim any of it as part of my heritage. It is the part of the past I would disown. (Mura 226)

When reflecting about the difficulty his uncle faced when trying to rent an apartment after he returned from the war, David is angered by his attitude of resignation. He feels embarrassed by the eagerness with which the Nisei implored to be accepted by American society. Yet he confesses that this feeling of embarrassment originates from his same need to be accepted as an American. (Mura 244)

[16] See section 2.2.5. on the question of loyalty of Japanese Americans during World War II
[17] See section 2.2.6. on the effects of the internment camps on the Japanese Americans

Like most Sansei, David feels more resentful towards the generation of his parents than his grandparents, as a large part of the Nisei are able to become successful in America, including his parents, who manage to ascend to an upper-middle-class status. On the other hand, the Issei represent the defeated, those who were unable to get back on their feet after their internment. The Issei recognized how horrific the camps were, and to some degree that broke their spirit. (Mura 226) In contrast to the attitude of resignation of the Japanese Americans, David admires the Japanese protestors of the left who demonstrated against the expansion of the new airport in Narita, as it would have taken away even more land from the farmers. (Mura 209)

As a child David grows up in a mixed neighbourhood with Jewish and Japanese Americans. At a later stage, after his family moves, he starts associating with a Caucasian group of friends, and it is then that he starts rejecting the "stereotype of the quiet, unobtrusive, studious Asian student" (Mura 317), by appearing extroverted and striving to stand out. He wants to be seen simply as an American and not as a Japanese American. He shows no interest in Japan and is proud of only being able to speak English. (Mura 317)

As it can be seen, however, his attitude radically changes during his year in Japan and he starts to redefine his cultural identity. Surrounded by people who look like him, unexpectedly, for the first time in his life he feels as if he belongs.

> I was beginning to see my situation as a Japanese-American in a new light. In America, I had been told that I could be American, and yet I had never quite felt a hundred percent American; too many of the images on the TV and movie screens of my childhood had only white faces, too much of the history I had learned never mentioned us. On the other hand, I had come to Japan not expecting to fit in. Any time I felt I did, it seemed a pleasant surprise, an unexpected bonus. (Mura 36)

Upon arriving in Japan, he is overwhelmed by the feeling of belonging to the majority group and he comes to realize how excluded he had felt in American culture. From completely rejecting Japan, he learns to love it to the extent that he does not want to hear any criticism about his ancestors' homeland. (Mura 190) On the other hand, he criticizes America, for the way it portrays Asian Americans and for the internment of his people. When going to the American club with Susie, surrounded by other Caucasians, he surprisingly feels alienated and uprooted. (Mura 200)

Especially in his early years, David feels a sense of emptiness due to his parents' silence about the past. This void creates a sense of insecurity making him constantly question his cultural identity:

> I was constantly sinking into the foam of formlessness, a dissolving identity – What God do I believe in? Who are my people? What language do I speak? What are my customs?

> How shall I raise my children? Where will I be a year from now, ten years, on my deathbed? What is my history, the stories of my family, the myths of my people? (Mura 32)

The silence of his parents leaves David with a sense of incompleteness, which stimulates his fascination with the past in his works. (Mura 314) As his parents did not provide a connection to this past, he takes the opportunity to find it himself by visiting his grandparents' homeland in Shingu. (Mura 35) Due to his strong desire to communicate with his grandparents, he also decides to visit a shaman who can supposedly speak to the dead. (Mura 348) In one of his Butoh trainings he manages to overcome his self-consciousness and free his imagination. He finds himself visualizing his grandparents, to whom he offers an artificial lily: "I present them with the flower, a greeting bearing some part of me that has wandered through the world, unwhole, lost, bewildered, alien, fading in and out of the sense of playacting, of pleasing the sensei. I get a glimpse of what my self-consciousness misses" (Mura 65). Through this act of expressing himself through dance, David realizes how much he missed his grandparents.

In his poems, David often thematizes his parents and grandparents, yet for him they represent not just themselves as individuals but their entire generation. He comes to realize that his frustration towards his parents is a substitute for the greater political frustration he feels: "I think sometimes it's easier to get angry at my parents than to get angry at anything political. At least I think I have some connection to them, some control. But so many feelings I have about them are colored by political issues" (Mura 332).

When David's parents visit Japan, for the first time, David sees them in a completely Japanese environment. It is then that David realizes how difficult it must have been for them to grow up split between two worlds. The trip to Japan appears to be a time of recollecting memories his parents had kept buried for a long time. By the end of the trip, his mother claims to have been very proud of their Japanese heritage. (Mura 329-330)

For David too, the time in Japan is a period of gradual transformation and rediscovery. He learns to view the world from a wholly new perspective, and can finally reconnect to his ancestry. David comes to realize that the root of America's racism towards Asian countries is based on their resentment towards their economic success. Yet for David, his fascination with Japan and his willingness to identify with it is also connected to Japan's economic success. He admits that his attitude towards his Japanese ancestry would have been more negative had Japan been a less flourishing nation. In this regard David underlines the role of politics and economy in the question of identity: "identity is a political and economic matter, not just a personal matter" (Mura 370).

Reflecting on his year in Japan, while at the same time pondering the identity struggles his daughter would face in the future, it appears that David has not found a clear answer to his questions of identity in Japan. Yet, he develops a greater awareness of his Japanese background. At the same time, he realizes that he could never truly identify as a Japanese person: "I did not speak the language well enough; I did not have enough attraction to the culture. In the end, the society felt to my American psyche too cramped, too well defined, too rule-oriented, too polite, too circumscribed" (Mura 370).

As his friend Akiko tells him, no matter how much David loves Japan, he could never manage to live there forever, because he is simply not like the other Japanese. (Mura 366) David too comes to the same realization and admits that despite his fascination with Japan, it could never become his home. (Mura 370)

In a way, this attitude is similar to Jim Yoshida, who due to his identification with America does not want to remain in Japan, despite being able to speak Japanese fluently enough to obtain a good job. The difference between the two men, however, lays in the fact that the possibility to return to the United States had temporarily been revoked from Jim, increasing his desperate desire to return, while for David it is simply a matter of choice. When comparing the two authors' views on their identity as Japanese Americans, it is possible to observe the generational gap, which characterizes most Nisei and Sansei. Jim's view of his cultural identity resembles more David's parents' view of themselves than that of David. Despite the revocation of his citizenship and the internment of his fellow Japanese Americans, Jim does not appear resentful towards the United States, as is the case with David. The Sansei author is very critical towards the Nisei generation for their attitude of quiet submission and their extreme longing to be accepted by the dominant society. However, he admits that part of his shame lays in his own need for that same identification with America.

8. Conclusion

In this paper, the representation of the Japanese American cultural identity is examined in two works of life writing, namely: *The Two Worlds of Jim Yoshida* by Jim Yoshida and Bill Hosokawa and *Turning Japanese: Memoirs of a Sansei* by David Mura. More specifically, the analysis and interpretation of these books addresses the question: How do language, values, and custom and tradition contribute to the shaping of cultural identity? Furthermore, it seeks to identify possible differences or similarities of the cultural identity of the Issei, Nisei and Sansei.

The thesis is divided into two main parts, a theoretical frame and an analysis and interpretation of the two works of life writing. The beginning of the theoretical frame provides a historical background of the Japanese Americans in order to better understand the context in which the two books were written. Firstly, the years prior to World War II are presented, with the focus on the first Japanese immigrants who settled in the United States. This section is followed by the description of the internment of the Japanese Americans. More specifically it deals with the historical context which led to the decision to relocate them, as well as the life of the inmates in the camps, the question of loyalty, and the effects of incarceration. The last part of the historical background deals with the post-war years, focusing on the mass resettlement and the redress movement. In the next section of the theoretical frame, a brief overview of the Japanese American literature is provided, as the two books analyzed in this thesis are written by Japanese American authors. Two fundamental genres of this body of literature are focused on, namely Japanese American autobiographies and the internment literature. The subsequent section presents life writing by defining this genre and its most salient features. It also discusses the questions of historicity and identity, which represent important aspects of life writing. The genres of autobiographies and memoirs are then examined as the two books in question are examples of these genres. In the final part of the theoretical framework the key concept of cultural identity is presented by firstly defining the term and then focusing more specifically on the cultural identity of the Issei, Nisei and Sansei. Furthermore, language, values, and custom and tradition are analyzed in connection with how they shape cultural identity.

The second part of this paper consists of the presentation of a close contextual reading of the two books: *The Two Worlds of Jim Yoshida* and *Turning Japanese: Memoirs of a Sansei*. Firstly, a brief biography of the authors is provided, as well as a plot of the books and the narrative techniques utilized. To continue, the analysis and interpretation of the two books is presented, with the focus on how language, values, and custom and tradition shape cultural

identity. In the final section, the cultural identity of the different generations of Japanese Americans is compared.

When analyzing the cultural identity of Jim Yoshida and David Mura, it is evident that in both cases, the authors' search for identity plays a major role in their lives. Although Jim was very much exposed to the Japanese culture through his Issei parents, he completely identifies as an American and shows deep love for the United States, which he considers to be his true homeland. On the other hand, David, who initially seemed self-assured of his identity as an American, or rather, expressed his desire to be recognized as one, slowly starts changing his perception of his cultural identity during his one year stay in Japan.

For both protagonists, language represents an important aspect in shaping their cultural identity. For Jim, the identification with America is apparent already from the use of his English name 'Jim', instead of his birthname 'Katsumi'. This is also the case for David's parents who change their names to more English-sounding names. Furthermore, in both books it is apparent how language becomes a means for associating with or disassociating from a specific culture. Jim's lack of Japanese fluency is particularly problematic when he joins the Imperial Japanese army, as it clearly reveals his true identity as a non-Japanese. David, on the other hand, uses his English language competency to prove his Americanness when he is in the United States. However, in Japan, he often chooses not to speak English, to avoid being identified as an American.

In Japan, both Jim and David are confronted with different values than those they grew up with in the USA. Many of these are not completely new to Jim, as he was raised by Issei parents, who passed on Japanese values to him, such as hard-work, honesty, and respect for other people, especially the elderly; however, other values seem very foreign to his American self. Despite his effort to conform to the Japanese culture, it is very difficult for him to grasp the notion of unquestionable obedience, demanded of him by the Japanese army. Having been raised with the belief in the American notions of freedom, justice, and equality, it is difficult for him to identify with the Japanese hierarchical belief system and the seemingly irrational treatment of the soldiers in the Japanese army. Although probably to a lesser extent than Jim, David also was exposed to some Japanese values by his parents, such as hard-work and the pursuit of excellence. However, having been raised in an American environment by parents who ardently strived to assimilate into the dominant society, it can be assumed that his value system is more American than Japanese. Therefore, in Japan he is confronted with numerous values and beliefs which appear very foreign to him. One such difference is the way relationships are viewed in

Japanese culture. His American view of friendships, for example, often clashes with the one he finds in Japan, which appears to lack the intimacy and depth he was accustomed to back at home.

Although Jim and David seem to share some common cultural customs and traditions, such as the habit of eating a mixture of Japanese and American food and the strict discipline enforced by their fathers, it is evident that Jim, being a Nisei, grew up closer to the Japanese tradition. Unlike David, he attended Japanese language school, celebrated not only American holidays, but also Japanese festivals, such as Boys' or Girls' Day, and grew up in a traditional Japanese family structure, where the man fulfills the role of the head of the household. On the other hand, although David also grew up with some Japanese customs, he was exposed to a much more American environment, also considering that his parents did not focus on the fact that they were Japanese. When in Japan, both Jim and David decide to adopt certain customs and traditions, while rejecting others, which they do not identify with. Interestingly, both adopt the tradition of praying for their ancestors in a seemingly very natural manner.

Despite Jim's greater exposure to Japanese customs and traditions, it is unclear whether he identifies more with Japanese or American culture. Yet, it is evident that those around him view Jim as more Japanese or American according to how well he adopts certain customs and traditions. This is also the case for David, who due to his Asian appearance, feels more pressure to follow the Japanese etiquette than his white friends, who unlike him, are not expected to know the appropriate Japanese customs and traditions.

When analyzing the cultural identity of the Nisei Jim Yoshida and the Sansei David Mura, many overlaps can be found between them, their family members, and friends, who belong to different generations of Japanese Americans. Jim's Issei parents and David's Issei grandparents went to the United States in search of fortune. Both lived in Japanese ethnic communities and thus did not really need English to survive. Thus, neither of them assimilated into the dominant American society. They spoke Japanese to their Nisei children, who also went to Japanese language school and were raised according to strict Japanese values and traditions. When David's grandmothers died, his grandfathers left the United States and returned to Japan.

Comparing Jim Yoshida to David Mura, there is a clear generational gap, typical for the Nisei and Sansei, between them. Jim's love and loyalty to the United States is unwavering, despite the internment of his fellow Japanese Americans and the long process of regaining his citizenship. In this sense, he very much resembles David's Nisei parents, who do not appear to be resentful towards the United States for their internment, and simply worked tirelessly to

become successful and earn an upper-middle-class status. On the other hand, David is very critical towards the USA for the mistreatment and discrimination of the Japanese Americans. He also criticizes his parents for their passivity during the time of their incarceration and their later attitude to keep the past buried in silence. While Jim fondly recalls the past and his being raised with two cultures, David looks at the past with distress, emphasizing his struggle in being recognized as an American. If at the beginning of his trip to Japan, the United States was clearly his home, by the end of it, his worldview and identification with America drastically changes.

When discussing the question of historicity in the theoretical frame of this paper, different views were presented regarding on whether or not it is possible to consider life writing as a historical source. The analysis of the two works of life writing clearly show much similarity between the history and identity of the community of Japanese Americans and the personal experiences of Jim Yoshida and David Mura. For example, the question of loyalty many Nisei were faced with when joining the American army after having been incarcerated comes up in both books. In Jim Yoshida's case, it is his Nisei peers who volunteer to join the Americans in combat, while for David Mura, it is his uncle. Being a Nisei, Jim Yoshida sheds light on the life of the first Japanese immigrants belonging to his parents' generation, who went to America in search of a better life, as well as their children, the Nisei, who were raised in a Japanese household, while living in an American society. David Mura provides a different insight, namely that of a Sansei, who grows up with little connection to his Japanese ancestry and who constantly struggles to be recognized as a full-fletched American.

Due to the scope of this paper, it was not possible to focus on the question of historicity in more detail. However, it is an interesting field of research for a future paper, which could shed light on the contribution of Japanese American life writing to the existing historical knowledge of this ethnic group. Another possible area which could be researched in connection with the cultural identity of Japanese Americans is the female perspective. As this thesis only focused on male authors, the cultural identity of female Japanese Americans is unfortunately very much lacking, as only a few references are made to the Japanese American women in Jim Yoshida and David Mura's lives.

To conclude, this paper offers a unique insight into the cultural identity of an important ethnic group of the American society, which despite the hardships and discrimination they suffered, managed to become one of the most successful groups in the United States. The story of the Japanese Americans is one of strength, endurance, and loyalty, as well as a testimony of how enriching cultural diversity truly is, and should therefore be embraced rather than feared.

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10. Appendix: summary in German

In dieser Diplomarbeit analysiere ich die Darstellung der kulturellen Identität von japanischen AmerikanerInnen in zwei literarischen Werken, nämlich: *The Two Worlds of Jim Yoshida* (1972) von Jim Yoshida und Bill Hosokawa, und *Turning Japanese: Memoirs of a Sansei* (1991) von David Mura. Die Forschungsfragen, die diese Arbeit durch die Analyse und Interpretation dieser zwei Bücher beantworten soll, sind: (i) Welchen Einfluss haben Sprache, Werte, und Gebräuche und Traditionen auf die kulturelle Identität der japanischen AmerikanerInnen? (ii) Welche allfälligen Unterschiede oder Ähnlichkeiten gibt es bei der kulturellen Identität der verschiedenen Generationen von japanischen AmerikanerInnen?

Diese Diplomarbeit ist in zwei Teile gegliedert; im ersten Teil wird der theoretische Kontext dargestellt und im zweiten Teil werden die zwei Bücher analysiert und interpretiert. Der theoretische Kontext umfasst den historischen Hintergrund der japanischen AmerikanerInnen, einen kurzen Überblick über die Literatur der japanischen AmerikanerInnen, die Beschreibung der literarischen Gattung 'Life Writing' und schließlich die Darstellung der Schlüsselkonzepte von kultureller Identität. Der zweite Teil besteht aus der Analyse und Interpretation der zwei Bücher *The Two Worlds of Jim Yoshida* und *Turning Japanese: Memoirs of a Sansei*. Zuerst werden eine Biographie der Autoren, eine Zusammenfassung der Handlung der Bücher und die Erzähltechnik präsentiert. Danach folgt die Analyse und Interpretation der Bücher mit dem Fokus auf die Darstellung der kulturellen Identität der japanischen AmerikanerInnen anhand von Sprache, Werte, und Gebräuche und Traditionen. Die kulturelle Identität der *Issei* (erste Generation japanischer AmerikanerInnen) *Nisei* (zweite Generation japanischer AmerikanerInnen) und *Sansei* (dritte Generation japanischer AmerikanerInnen) in den zwei Büchern werden dann verglichen und einander gegenübergestellt, um allfällige Unterschiede oder Ähnlichkeiten zu erforschen. Zum Schluss werden die Hauptpunkte dieser Arbeit zusammengefasst, eventuelle Beschränkungen dargelegt und weitere Forschungsrichtungen für diese Arbeit vorgeschlagen.