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On-board 'Train Australia': Some Contexts of the Works of Kanamori and Murakami

This article is concerned with two Japanese Australian photographers: Mayu Kanamori and Yasukichi Murakami. Kanamori has been working as a commercial and editorial photographer and a photographic artist since arriving in Australia at the end of the twentieth century. Nearly one hundred years before then, Yasukichi Murakami began working as a commercial photographer in an inhospitable Australia where Asians were marginalised and discriminated against. Conditions have improved today. However, one aspect of that cultural climate remains: a cultural anxiety about Asians living in Australia (Ang 2003).

The concept of 'Train Australia' is from Ien Ang's article, "Passengers on Train Australia" (2007). She in turn, borrowed it from a first generation 18 years old Indian Australian student who wrote that "Australia is like a train picking up passengers from all these different countries, but it doesn't really have a destination". Speaking in the context of Australia's geo-political location as an island continent in Asia, Ang extends this metaphor to describe typical Asian Australian expressions of a sense of living *in* but not *of* Australia. She points out that the annexation of Australia by the British in 1829 and subsequent "transplanted British homogeneity" that pervaded Australia from its Federation in 1901 to the mid twentieth century

> provided the fledgling settler society with a singular sense of spatial identity. Outside the island continent our Asian neighbours have always been regarded as a threat – particularly by those living outside of Australia's cities. (2003:55)

Not only was there a cultural divide between the British ethos held by Anglo Australian settlers and the geo-politics of their Asian neighbours but city and bush dwellers in Australia were also divided. In this analysis I examine these divisions in relation to the contemporary concepts of cosmoplitanism proposed by Jakubowicz (2011), Szersynski and Urry (2002) and Ang (2003). Jakubowicz triangulates cosmopolitanism with cultural and social capital. The author investigates levels of social connectedness and inclusion of all ethnic groups in relation to what he refers to as the antagonists of cosmo-

politanism: nationalism, prejudice and localism. Szersynski and Urry examine cosmopolitanism in relation to wide ranging aspects of globalisation. Ang extends the concept and uses cosmopolitan multiculturalism to explore the possibilities of a more inclusive disposition towards migrant groups that dispenses with the present position of using the dominant settler population as a frame of reference for desired goals of integration (2003, 2007). To this end Jayasuriya (2003:196-197) argues that Australians should progress to a nation that works towards a political rather than national culture that recognises a "differentiated citizenship" rather than the current "liberal individualist model".

Murakami and Kanamori worked in different geographical locations and in different historical periods. The experience was more severe for Murakami on at least two counts: Firstly, he worked in the sparsely populated north of Australia where the threat of 'Asian invasion' was a recurrent theme in literary and popular discourse. Secondly, while Murakami came to Australia before the Asian Immigration Restriction Act was introduced in 1901, he nevertheless suffered discrimination because of it. After World War II immigration authorities sought to recruit British and/or blonde, blue eyed immigrants. It soon became apparent that this strategy would become unworkable as labour shortages had impelled them to broaden their ambit and accept southern Europeans. Thus, despite their best efforts, national visions of a 'White Australia' (albeit impossible anyway given the persistent presence of Australia's Indigenous population) fell away. Later, the abolition of the Immigration Restriction Act (1973) by the Whitlam Labor Government heralded successive waves of Asian and other migrant groups. However, while racially based discrimination has been legislated against today, a residual fear of Asians in Australia remains (Ang 2003).

Ang (2003:52) reflects that culture is the *longue durée* of history and hence, it is more resilient to change than are politics and law. In mapping the "deep structures of resilience" (Ang 2003:52) it is clear that Kanamori is working in a different cultural context to Murakami. By the 1990s Australia had transformed into a multicultural society that was firmly located in a global economy. However, while its cities – Melbourne and Sydney in particular – could boast an urban cosmopolitanism, the 'bush' (a term that refers to rural or remote Australia) clung resolutely to its "self-righteous, self-protective parochialism,

and a determined commitment to provincialism and anti-cosmopolitanism" (Ang 2003:58). This bush ethos continues to be valorised in Australian cultural mythology, as attested in Olivia Khoo's perceptive article about the "sacrificial Asian" in Australian cinema (2007), discussed later.

Seventeen year old Murakami arrived in Cossack, a small pearling fishing town in the remote north-west of Western Australia, in 1897, prior to the introduction of the 1901 Asian Immigration Restriction Act. He began work as a labourer but was soon employed in the photography studio of Tomasi and Eki Nishioka.[1] Thus began his life-long interest in photography. During this time he also learnt to speak English and he taught himself bookkeeping and aspects of maritime law (Kilgariff, cited in Carment et al. 1990: 217).

After 1901, the majority of the Japanese and other Asians living in the north, including Chinese, Indonesians, Malays, Kupangers and Filipinos, worked on the pearling luggers under a system of indenture in which their contracts were renewed every two or three years. The pearling masters paid a bond of 250 pounds for ten men, to be reimbursed when the men returned to their home country. Indentured labourers could be jailed or repatriated for breach of condition or insubordination (Martinez 2005:125). Having arrived in Australia before the 1901 Immigration Act was promulgated, Murakami's status as a non-indentured worker enabled him to instigate some entrepreneurial ventures, but not to gain Australian citizenship. His application for this was rejected in 1939.

Murakami and the Nishiokas moved further north to Broome in the early twentieth century. By this time the Japanese, who in 1901 comprised twenty four per cent of the Asians working in Broome (Statistics re. Pearl Shell Fisheries, 1901-1912) had established themselves as the principal divers and tenders on the pearling luggers because of their ability to work hard under often hazardous conditions (Sissons 1974:17) and to work as a collective: an essential attribute for pearl divers whose lives, when diving 25 or more fathoms deep, depended upon the support of the tenders, who were

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1 Murakami sometimes signed his photographs as Y. Nishioka. This is because he was informally adopted by Tomasi and Eki Nishioka on arriving in Australia.

responsible for administering the lifeline of oxygen to them (Kaino 2009:41).

When Murakami established his photography studio in Japtown, where Chinatown, now a tourist precinct, is currently located, there were 303 Japanese men in Broome, the majority working in the pearling industry (Statistics re. Pearl Shell Fisheries). Murakami soon became a leader in a community that supported several boarding houses, gambling houses, billiard halls, brothels, Asian eating houses, market gardens, opium dens, tennis courts, Japanese language newspapers, Japanese hot baths, Chinese laundries, six pubs, a soy sauce factory, a racecourse and two outdoor 'picture domes' (Jones 2002: 93-108; Sickert 2003: 119-121). Murakami and other businessmen in this community established themselves as bankers for the growing population of Japanese (Bain 1982:302) whose numbers swelled to 1,166 in 1933, when they comprised 51 per cent of the Asian indentured labour force (Sissons 1974:9-16).

Drinking and gambling were popular pastimes in the 'Asian Quarter'. However, Jones and Sickert describe other forms of entertainment, such as the gala performances of traditional Japanese theatre, picnics and races for the children and sumo wrestling competitions. The annual Obon Matsuri, which commemorated the dead, continued to be organised by the Japanese community until 1970 when a more commercial festival titled Shinju Matsuri relegated this significant commemoration to a more private celebration organised by the few remaining Japanese at that time (Kaino 2005: 165-175). The Japanese community were also generous donors to public causes. For instance, Jones records that in 1924 they contributed fifty pounds to an x-ray fund, a sizable contribution compared to the thirty-two pounds donated by the rest of Broome's population (2002:131).

Census data records that the majority the 63 Japanese women who lived in Broome in 1901 would have been *karayuki*, a term that initially applied to anyone who worked overseas but was later used to refer to prostitutes (Jones 2002:53). However, this data may be incorrect. Ganter (1999) proposes that it was moral anxiety that caused authorities in Queensland to cast all single Japanese women as prostitutes. This was probably also the case in Western Australia. Jones' research supports this proposition: she cites a table composed by the Consulate General in Sydney (1901) that shows a total of 84 known prostitutes in Western Australia out of a total of 166

Japanese women living there. Others worked in domestic service industries, dress-making and laundries. Many married or formed defacto relations with businessmen and pearling crew. Some formed business partnerships with their husbands in running stores and boarding houses (Jones 2002:62; Sickert 2003:124). Nagata observes that the prostitutes in Thursday Island who started domestic service businesses played a "uniquely maternal role for the Japanese community". This was presumably also the case in Broome. Sone (2009:37) records twenty Japanese prostitutes living in Broome in 1916. In a climate where prostitution was prohibited under the Western Australian Police Act of 1897 (2009:32), but generally tolerated, she notes that the Japanese prostitutes, renowned for their "genteel manner and invisibility", received minimal harassment from the police (2009:31).

In 1908 Murakami lent about twenty pounds to Captain Ancil Gregory, whose schooner had been marooned in a cyclone. Although it was illegal for Japanese to own luggers, Murakami later assisted Gregory and his brother to buy four luggers. Asians were prohibited from establishing businesses in Broome and these luggers would have been worked under a system called dummying, whereby the vessel was owned by a white person but financed by an Asian. The unlikely partnership between Murakami and Gregory developed into a lifelong friendship that "calmly flout[ed] every racial barrier of Broome society" (Lance 2004:30). After all, Broome was a town marked by spatial, racial and cultural divisions. Sickert (2003:1612) describes the "Asiatic Quarter" as such:

> Hand in hand with the social hierarchy of Broome was a hierarchy of comfort in living conditions. At the bottom were the impoverished fringe camp dwellers subsisting in humpies. Then came the cramped foreshore camps which provided shelter for many of the indentured lugger crews. The mixed-race and other poorly paid workers lived at the edge of town, in small, basic cottages. Next were the modest buildings of Japtown where the predominantly Asian population lived and worked. And finally were the comfortable and spacious bungalows of the white bosses.

Asian labourers worked in these bungalows as cooks, servants, cleaners and gardeners. As with Indigenous Australians they were routinely excluded from the places of formal entertainment enjoyed by the dominant white hegemony, such as horse racing and the

formal tea parties favoured by the pearling masters' wives (Schaper 1995:18).

The context of ethnic division in Broome is historically symbolised in the seating arrangements of the Sun Picture Theatre, which, originally a Japanese playhouse owned by a Japanese merchant, became a theatre in 1916. Until 1975 Sun Pictures maintained a strict regime of hierarchical segregation: Whites were seated at the back, 'coloured' and whites who associated with them around the middle, and Aborigines in the front, with hierarchies within these broad categories (Kaino 2005:170; Sickert 2003: 108-111).

Undeterred by these discriminatory practices, Murakami took his bold incursion into Broome's closed society one step further: not only did he stay in Gregory's home when his friend and business partner went overseas, but he later bought a bungalow in the white quarter. Not even professional and affluent Japanese, such as the Japanese doctor and Japanese businessmen, would have contemplated such a move.

Murakami and Gregory later entered a secret agreement in which they jointly owned a hotel. At first this venture was successful, not only for the hotel trade, but because Murakami was able to solicit from its Japanese clientele the best divers for Gregory's luggers (Bain 1982: 306). However, Murakami withdrew after he was bankrupted in 1918 (ibid.). The following letter from Sergeant Spry to the Official Receiver reflects the racial division described above:

> If Murakami persists in his present attitude, you should not have any difficulty in pulling him to pieces. I would suggest that Gregory be not allowed to be present when Murakami is under cross examination. (National Australian Archives, Item 1918/10)

Racial barriers towards Asians were a dominant theme in popular culture at this time. People living in the bush were particularly apprehensive about Australia's official status under the 1902 alliance between Japan and Britain (Meaney 2006:104). Popular literature and magazines, and the cartoons of the acclaimed artists, Norman and Lionel Lindsay, fuelled these apprehensions. Wotherspoon (2010) cites an example here of the "racist, isolationist, protectionist and masculine" ethos popularised through *The Bulletin* magazine, which was circulated to 80,000 people in 1900, when Australia's population was 3.7 million. Widely read in the bush, *The Bulletin* retained its masthead "Australia for the White Man" until 1961. Such

literature typically set up dichotomies whereby the masculine bush-men derided their city cousins' proclivities toward feminism and "suspect modernism", as well as "equivocating politicians" and "intellectual males" in the cities (Walker 2009:5). The men of the bush did not equivocate, and they feared that city men were far too comfortable with the "femininity" of Asian men (Walker 2009:3). Moreover, they feared that city men and politicians were complacent about the omnipresent threat of an Asian incursion. After all, in 1876-77 the South Australian government, which administered the Northern Territory, had unsuccessfully negotiated with the Japanese government to establish a Japanese colony in the Territory (Kilgariff, cited in Carment et al 1990:217) and by 1907 it was rumoured that Japanese settlers had illegally landed in there and established a colony (Meaney 2006:252).

This scenario was the theme of Randolph Bedford's play *White Australia and the Empty North*, staged in Melbourne in 1909 (106). Kirmess's popular novel, *The Australian Crisis* (1909) warns its readers that it was not war that the Japanese contemplated. Rather, he suggests that they would leverage their relationship with Britain to persuade Australians that "the new citizens of their empire were not standard bearers of militant conquest, but of patient civilisation" (1909:40). Thus, warns Kirmess, the Australian government

> might soon see its way to open schools, in which [the Japanese] could be taught the language and the customs of their adopted country, so that they might quickly become Australian citizens. (1909:53)

His warning represented a catastrophic corruption to Australia's much vaunted ambition for racial purity.

This masculine bush ethos was at the core of Broome's social fabric in the early part of the twentieth century where, as stated earlier, gambling and drinking were popular pastimes. 2,000 kilometres north of Perth, Broome was a remote, oppressively hot outpost in an already isolated state. In this social climate, it is conceivable that popular literature had significant sway on people's ideas. Here, as Kato (2003:47) observes, Japanese were rarely depicted as individuals but rather, "as a group or mass which forms a threatening and uncanny figure that harasses the Australians".

Murakami stood out in the Broome community as an individual. A leader in the Japanese community and at times president of both the Japanese and Malay Clubs (Drewry 1920) he was generally

called upon by the white hegemony to mediate between Japanese and Australian men in Broome, including in the 1907 and 1920 riots between Japanese and Kupang workers. However, this group of pearlers, businessmen and members of local and state government consistently blocked his entrepreneurial ventures. For example, his attempt to set up a pearl farm with Gregory in 1922 was vehement-ly opposed. The editor of the *Nor-West Echo* contends that "the temper of the people won't tolerate armed Japanese guarding the beds". Subsequently, prominent businessmen from the Pearlers' As-sociation, supported by the Returned Soldiers' League, persuaded the Minister of Fisheries to legislate against culture pearling (Kaino 2009:42). Undeterred, and fuelled by his desire to reduce the high fatality rate of divers, Murakami designed and then attempted to patent an improved diving dress. His efforts were thwarted when he was falsely accused of spying (Kilgariff cited in Carment et al 1990: 217; Bain 1982:310-311; Jones 2002:138-140). In 1943 Emile Gagnan and Jacques Cousteau patented scuba gear of a similar de-sign.

Yasukichi Murakami, A self portrait
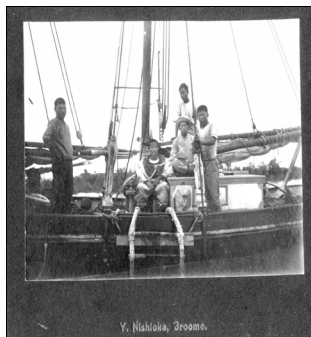
Workers on a lugger by Y. Nishioka alias Y. Murakami

Unidentified portrait by Y. Murakami (Mise Collection as part of Noreen Jones collection)

In the early twentieth century, Broome's Japanese shared the en-thusiasm for the burgeoning commercial photography industry in Japan. These photos, and the postcards of Broome that the Japa-nese produced, record working life on the luggers, business partner-

ships, cultural and sporting events, the Japanese school and hospital, and portraiture. Murakami was one of about seven photographers in Broome (Jones 2002:135). His portraiture is typical of the formal 'master narratives' of the period. They are what Zemal (2000:196) terms self-formulations of an identity. Taken in Murakami's studio, the women and children are dressed in traditional Japanese kimonos, and the men in three-piece suits. These portraits could well have been taken in Japan and one imagines that they were sent home to assure relatives of prosperous and stable lifestyles in Broome.

Murakami's self portrait in his three-piece suit with fob-watch gold chain, his hand resting on an ornate chair and his gaze directly ahead, clearly identifies him as a respectable and prosperous businessman. Any doubts about his status are dispelled in another self image of a white suited Murakami in front of his beautifully maintained car, a clear status symbol when few owned cars, and in the dusty outpost of Broome, conceivably few kept them in such imamculate condition.

Unidentified couple by Y. Nishioka alias Y. Murakami, Yamamoto Collection (Donated to Noreen Jones, by N. Yamamoto in 1999)

Barbara and Bella Linnet by Y. Murakami (Donated by Pearl Hamaguchi)

Mayu Kanamori

Murakami's photos also document working lives in the Broome community: the lugger crews, celebrations by large gatherings of Japanese men in formal elaborately decorated settings, smaller formal portraits of Japanese men in white suits and family portraits. Whether

or not Murakami took photographs of the Japanese prostitutes is not known. As mentioned above, these women were a discreet presence in the town. Moreover, Joe Murakami has related, only a few of his father's photographs survived, and many of these are family photos held by his descendants.

The photograph of Pearl Hamaguchi's Scottish-Aboriginal mother and aunt is different. Formally dressed, the close profile of their direct gaze into the camera suggests empathy between photographer and subject. Hamaguchi recalls her mother claiming that she was "one of Murakami's favourite subjects" (personal communication 2009). Here, as in his other portraits, Murakami's works reflect a dignity that is contrary to images evoked in the popular Australian literature.

Unlike his other entrepreneurial ventures, Murakami's petit-bourgeoisie status as a photographer appears to pose no threats to similar enterprises in Australia's north. Upon moving to Darwin in 1934 he and his family socialised in the wider Darwin society (Kilgariff 1984:10). His clientele included troops stationed in Darwin and he gave Japanese language lessons to some soldiers. As well as social events, Murakami photographed specimens for visiting scientists and forensic evidence for police (Kilgariff cited in Carment et al 1990: 218). However, after the bombing of Pearl Harbour in 1941 he and fifteen of his extended family members were interned (Jones 2002: 177). Murakami died of pleurisy at Tatura Camp 1944. He was 64 years old. Conceivably, if he had been able to continue his career, cultural historians would have acknowledged him as an important ethnographer in Australia's north.

Mayu Kanamori lives and works in cosmopolitan Sydney, which has the highest percentage of Asian immigrants of all Australian cities (Ang 2003:66).[2] In 2013 Kanamori is facilitating youth workshops concerning civilian internment that will culminate in a performance at the Cowra Festival of International Understanding in 2014. Kanamori is also working on a new performance titled *Murakami* with Annette Shun Wah from Performance 4A, which is a not-for-profit performance group devoted to exploring contexts of Asian Australian

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2   In 2012 Kanamori and I presented a joint performance/paper at the German Australian Studies conference in Stuttgart on the subject of this paper.

experiences. Kanamori is among a growing number of Japanese researchers who are keen to find out more about their forbearers, and who are cognizant of certain sensitivities about conducting this research.

When Kanamori began working for the *Sydney Morning Herald* in 1992, the Keating Labor Government was doing its best to shed Australia of its "dull, conformist Anglo-Celtic parochialism" (cited in G. Jones 2003:116). It wanted Australia to become a republic that embraced the ethnic diversity of its Asian geographical region As Myers (1993:10) points out, this was not "the result of a sudden flash of moral vision" but to advance Australia's economic interests. Nevertheless, Keating's vision was countered by the conservative historian Geoffrey Blainey and the soon to be incumbent Howard Liberal Government which expressed concerns about Asian immigration, a position emphatically endorsed in the populist manifestation of Pauline Hanson's One Nation Party (Jones 2003:117). Like her racist counterparts in popular literature one hundred years earlier, Hanson (1998), who warned her support base in the bush that Australia's Asian population would increase to 27 per cent by 2023, claimed that her bush constituents were the most threatened by the different cultures and ethnicities of the largely Asian cities on the coast. While not formally endorsed by the Liberal-National Coalition, Hanson's jingoism resonated with their 1990 campaign for flag raising ceremonies in schools and the singing of the new national anthem which, *inter alia*, is derived from a late 19th century patriotic song celebrating Australia's 'British soul' (Meaney 2007:60). Meaney notes a similar campaign for flag raising in Japanese schools in the 1990s and argues that

> Reminiscent of the Japanese case this search for an Australian identity was also given a military dimension centred on the mateship of digger tradition of Australia's wars. (2007:60-61)

The neo-nationalism of the period finds no reference in Kanamori's work. Rather, she is concerned with Japanese identity as expressed in a wider body of Australian photography, art and literature. Along with cultural historians such as Yuriko Nagata (1996) in Australia, Stanley Fukuwa (2010) in Canada and Patricia Afable (2004) in the Philippines, Kanamori seeks to restore the identity of World War II

internees; in her case, Murakami.[3] However, she has less documentary evidence than her counterparts to work with. Kanamori believes that a kind of "national amnesia" has contributed to the paucity of cultural production concerning Japanese working lives in Australia. She explains the situation as follows:

> Despite Japanese people having lived and worked in Australia since the 1880s and despite their significant contribution to northern Australia, because of the violence of war, it is as if our memory of the Japanese prior to the Pacific War has been wiped out. It is as if the news of the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbour is where the Australian popular memory of Japan begins, and deteriorates rapidly hereon after – the bombing raids on Darwin, Broome, Townsville, the attack on Sydney Harbour, followed by the horrific memories of the POWs who suffered greatly. (email communication 2013)

Nagata asserts that historical research has recorded little of the Japanese in Australia (1996). Unlike those in the USA and Canada, Japanese in Australia had fewer opportunities for residency. As stated earlier, Murakami was among a minority of Japanese in Australia with longer term residency who was able to establish a family here. The majority were indentured labourers whose wives were prevented from joining them under the 1901 Australian Immigration Restriction Act. Further, it is difficult for contemporary researchers to establish Japanese perspectives on the context of their lives in Australia prior to World War II. For example, while there are copious archival records written by White Australians, there are a bare handful extant in Australia that have been written by Japanese involved in Broome's early pearling industry (Kaino 2009:44).

Japanese in Australia and America lost all or most of their possessions after the war. Many recovered financially, but all suffered a loss of identity. Herley (1988:4) recounts the stories of Japanese Americans:

> My husband came home with twenty tags, all numbered 10710, tags to be attached to each piece of baggage, and one to hang from our coat lapels. From then on, we were known as family #10710.
> I lost my identity… I lost my identity and my privacy.

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3   See Kanamori's blog titled About Murakami on http://aboutmurakami. wordpress.com for more information about her role as a researcher/ photographer in this project.

In Australia, Murakami would have been identified as NJ, indicating that he was a Japanese previously residing in the Northern Territory (Nagata 1996:129).

Upon release from their respective internment camps American Japanese who had previously regarded themselves as citizens of their countries were considered to be aliens, including second and third generation people who had never been to Japan (Wakatsuki-Houston & Houston 1973; Fukuwa, Afable 2004, Nagata 1996). Most suffered social isolation. The same was the case in Australia. By 1954 only 966 Japanese born in Japan remained in Australia (Nagata 1996: 239). As Nagata records of Murakami's son, Joe, who was eighteen when he returned to Darwin after internment:

> Being subjected to such mental trauma in the formative years of our lives, in constant fear of being about our ancestry, having no others around us for mutual consolation, have left us socially incapacitated and unfulfilled to this day (229).

Like their American counterparts, many Japanese in Australia anglicised their names. Some, such as Evelyn Suzuki, who shortened her family name to Yama, gained work because their employees mistook them for Chinese (Nagata 1996:231).

Unlike their Australian compatriots, documenters of the internment experience in the USA such as Armor and Wright and Herley were able to research the photography of Ansel Adams, one of America's most famous photographers, and photos of the interned photographer, Toyo Miyatake. They were also able to access works by some of the Japanese internees, such as the *Manzanar Free Press* and the Manzanar High School Year book (Herley 1988; Wakatsuki-Houston & Houston 1973). In Australia, internees were not allowed to write about camp matters, and they were restricted to writing two letters a week, to be delivered within Australia (Nagata 1996:147). As with the USA internees, their cameras were confiscated and descendants of the internees have only been able to access photographs, local histories and artefacts donated by former workers or exhibited in regional museums, such as the Tatura Museum (Piper 2012). Thus Murakami could not photograph his daughter's wedding at Tatura Internment Camp; nor could he record the birth of his three grandchildren (Jones 2002, 177). Some fellow internees in America were more fortunate when exceptions were granted to the 'no camera' rule. For example, photographer Toyo Miyatake actually

built a camera while interned at Manzanar, and was eventually able to bring his camera equipment out of storage and use it at the camp (Armor & Wright 1988: xviii).

Although Kanamori is working in a social climate where many Asian Australians are being encouraged to document the heritage of their forbearers, archival material on the Japanese is scarce. For example, Kanamori has worked assiduously to locate Murakami's photos in Australian archives, during research in Perth and Darwin and trips to Japan to visit the two surviving Murakami siblings. She has un-covered and digitised many family photos but also believes that Australian archives hold many unattributed photos of Murakami that the conventional name-based search engine will not reveal (email communication 2013).

Finally, and most critical to the ethos of Kanamori's work is Nagata's assessment that the experience of war with Japan has made it difficult for Japanese Australians in the post-war years to be positive about their ancestry because of the trauma of internment (1996: 278). In 1989 Joe Murakami wrote:

> […] we tend to withdraw instinctively when such a subject is brought up. This withdrawal is sort of a conditioned reflex attributable to our experience in the early post-war era. (cited in Nagata 1996:236)

Noting Nagata's assessment, Tseen Khoo argues that

> Until these groups in Australia have the confidence to deliberate openly about these issues, they remain trapped in self-effacement and without the full quota of their civic entitlements. (2003:179)

Her argument resonates with the experiences of contemporary re-searchers such as Kanamori, Jones and Nagata who record reluctant engagement from older Japanese who still harbour sensitivities about the war experiences (personal communication, Kanamori, Jones, Nagata). After all, there was no reparation of land and properties confiscated by the government during World War II, as occurred in the USA and Canada. Nor have the Japanese internees been ex-tended a formal government apology, while German and Italian in-ternees have.

This social climate resonates with examples of contemporary popular culture. For instance, Khoo (2006:45) argues convincingly that in Australian film there is a "reluctance, or an inability, to make space for Asians within […] a seemingly levelling discourse or marginality".

Khoo argues that the trope of "sacrificial Asians" in contemporary Australian film is tied to discourses of Australian national identity based on residual myths of Anglo-Celtic settler masculinity. For example, *Japanese Story* (2003) set in Australia's remote northwest, almost completely elides a Japanese perspective. Here, Sandy (Toni Collette) is a tertiary educated female white geologist who is accompanying Hiro (Gotaro Tsunashima) on a visit to a mine site. Sandy espouses racial stereotypes and 'feminises' the male Japanese protagonist (reprising the 'suspect feminism' of Asians in 1900s Australia). When Hiro (the 'sacrificial Asian') dies in an accident, this incident is objectified in terms of her colleague's Freudian slip (he refers to the corpse as "it") and Hiro's wife's stereotypical "inscrutable and self sacrificing" role in which she responds to Sandy's faltering apology with the only line in the film accorded her: "Thank you".

In 2010 a highly acclaimed box-office hit titled *Tomorrow When the War Began* was adapted from John Marsden's series of novels for teenage readers written in the 1990s. Set in the Australian bush this popular fiction valorises the racist bush myths of the early twentieth century through the guerrilla exploits of a group of teenagers from ethnically diverse backgrounds, including an Asian-Australian whose sexuality, inscrutability and exoticism reprise earlier stereotypes. These teenagers band together in the bush to fight an unnamed but clearly Asian threat of invasion from Australia's north. Disturbingly, as Caesar (1999:49) notes, the majority of reviewers of this series seem unaware that it draws from an implicitly racist and militaristic tradition of early twentieth century literature. Ross shares his concerns, particularly given the fact that *Tomorrow When the War Began* has been printed 33 times and the Australian Broadcasting Corporation *Australia Talks Books* radio programme has deemed it "a classic for a generation of Australians" (Ross 2006).

In light of what Ross (2006) has termed "the pervasive racial ambivalence" and Asian anxiety in representations of Asians in Australian narratives, it is not surprising that many Asian Australians still regard themselves as *in* Australia but not *of* Australia. In effect they are still 'passengers on train Australia' who exist outside an already defined Australia (T. Khoo 2003:156). In the face of this perception, contemporary Asian Australian Studies strives for a more accurate representation of Asians in Australia; towards which the critical works of Asian Australian cultural producers have made significant

contributions (T. Khoo 2006: 6). Olivia Khoo cites examples of con-temporary Asian Australian filmmakers who are "attending more to the specificities of what it means to be Asian and the constituencies that comprise it" (2006:10-11). Ross (2006) contends that with cur-rent anxieties about border protection and mandatory detention of asylum seekers, it is

> imperative to examine what is repressed by these narratives of dis-avowal, and bring to the fore the underlying configurations of white settler anxieties so as to better understand and facilitate the move beyond them.

Ross's assertion segues into Ang's vision of a multicultural cosmopo-litanism where Ang contends that Australia's national conversation is not meant to work towards shared values, but to learn more about each other (2007). Kanamori (2011) reflects that listening is an im-portant part of this process. In her view, in order to give humility to photography, "listening is perhaps the most respectful act we do". Jakubowicz's research on Chinese and Muslim migrant youth reflects the ethnic, social and cultural diversity of these groups who never-theless share an awareness of how marginalising processes have impacted on their lives. He also notes some optimistic developments of awareness among some Chinese immigrants who have articulated the benefits of building inter-ethnic social and cultural capital (88). Fensham's analysis of contemporary Asian Australian performances deals with how Kha's performance uses the metaphor of sport to subvert dominant cultural representations, but also to demonstrate how cultural difference can be transformed into "gift[s] of reconcilia-tion" (2000:178). Finally, Ang (2007) proposes that Asian-Austra-lians' continued participation and intervention in Australian public culture should contribute to the transformation of Australian culture.

To return to Murakami, at first glance his photography appears to elide the 'deep structures of Australian society'. However, this obser-vation should be contextualised within the cultural constraints in which he worked. As noted earlier only a few of Murakami's photo-graphs that survived his internment at Tatura Camp in 1941 are able to be located in Australian archives. If it were not for them, little if any visual history of Japanese pioneers in Northern Australia would be extant. Thus Murakami's photography remains a very valu-able resource.

Today there are 51,000 Japanese living in Australia (joshuaproject 2013)– a vastly increased population from the 966 who remained after World War II. Within this context, Kanamori's work on Mura-kami invites critical insights into the role of the Japanese in Austra-lian cultural history; in particular it refers to the 'national amnesia' of the working lives of Japanese Australians and associated 'cultural anxieties'.

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