Multi-generational Desire-based Design: A Critical Examination of the Bainbridge Island Japanese American Exclusion Memorial

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Abstract

On March 30, 1942, under President Roosevelt's Executive Order 9066, 227 Japanese Americans living in Bainbridge Island, Washington were gathered at the Eagledale Ferry Dock and forcibly sent to the internment camps for "national security" concerns during World War II. In 2011, 69 years after the exclusion order, though with few victims still alive, a memorial at the Eagledale Ferry Dock was dedicated, thanks to the collective effort of local Japanese American community organizations. Yet, after decades of generational identity transformation, how did the development of the historic site fulfill the diverse expectations of multiple generations of Japanese Americans? This paper, drawing on Eve Tuck's desire-based framework and an in-depth analysis of the multi-generational Japanese American identities, provides a critical examination of the memorial's design. From the story of first Japanese immigrants to the recent Asian American movements, this paper first disentangles the complexity of multi-generational Japanese American identities. Then, with ethnographic observation and literature review, this paper examines the capability of key design elements of the memorial to represent the individual and collective desire held by different Japanese American generations. This pilot study challenges the traditional linear approach to historic site development and calls for intentional engagement with diverse identities and desires within the community to promote inclusive urban design.

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Introduction

The topic of inclusive urban design is becoming more and more popular for researchers. As the concept of democratic urban planning and extensive community engagement is put into practice, however, many urban planners and researchers have ignored the significance of engaging with various generations and understanding the nature of controversies among different generations of people within a single community. In this research, the focused group is the Japanese American community, which has distinctive identification for different generations. A series of historical events have shaped the unique Japanese American intergenerational identities, which demonstrate notable diversities in social and economic positions as well as cultural and political perspectives. The mass internment of Japanese Americans during World War II is a dark page of the U.S. history, and the three-year internment in desolate areas drastically changed the position of Japanese Americans in the American society. 227 Japanese Americans living in Bainbridge Island, Washington were the first in the country to be excluded from their home. This research takes the World War II internment memorial in Bainbridge Island as a case to demonstrate a critical examination of the built environment through multi-generational lens.

To conduct a close examination of the memorial, this paper first gives an introduction of the historical background from the first Japanese immigrants to America, to the World War II internment experience, and finally to the redress and more recent Asian American movements. Based on the knowledge of important historical events, this paper then provides an analysis of intergenerational Japanese American identities by generational cohorts. Each generation is analyzed in terms of economic, cultural, political identities, as well as their response to the internment experience. The main literature for the methodology is Eve Tuck's desire-based framework. This paper takes the Bainbridge Island Japanese American Exclusion Memorial and

the local Japanese American community as an example to argue for the adoption of desire-based frameworks in designing community historical sites. Additionally, the examination of the memorial is supported by ethnographic observation and literatures in urban planning and landscape architecture. In total, the examination part discusses five key elements of the memorial, including both concrete forms, like the memorial's name and a story wall which illustrates the actual internment experience, and also more abstract elements, like the overall design concepts and the use of the space.

Historical Background

First Japanese Immigrants to America:

Before significant immigration of Japanese to North America, groups of Japanese pioneers arrived in Hawaii as early as 1869. The initial emigration from Japan to Hawaii not only set an important precedent for the following large-scale emigration across the Pacific to North America but also served as a staging point in the route.[1] In the 1880s, meaningful immigration of Japanese to North America began.

The rapid modernization of Japan in the Meiji era and the following establishment of constitutional monarchy in 1890, which marked the first date of Imperial Japan,[2] produced great social dislocations, particularly of rural Japanese.[3] Rumors of better standards of living in America incentivized rural and working-class populations in Japan,[4] who comprised a large proportion of the trans-Pacific migrants. Though being rejected by the white society, most of them were able to start their new life in America by working in farms.

The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 suspended Chinese immigration for ten years and declared Chinese immigrants ineligible for naturalization. In 1902, the ban was extended, and

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[1] Roger Daniels, *Asian America : Chinese and Japanese in the United States Since 1850* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1988), 100.

[2] "Japan's Modern History: An Outline of the Period," Asia for Educators, Columbia University, accessed August 7, 2021, http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/timelines/japan_modern_timeline.htm.

[3] Daniels, *Asian America*, 102.

[4] David A. Neiwert, *Strawberry Days : How Internment Destroyed a Japanese American Community*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 25.

Chinese immigration was made permanently illegal.[5] As the Chinese population in the United States sharply declined, most Japanese immigrants arrived in the Pacific Northwest as replacement workers for the Chinese. In 1900, 5,617 Japanese resided in Washington State and 2,501 in Oregon, consisting of approximately 44 percent of all Nikkei[6] living along the U.S. Pacific Coast at the time.[7]

As Japanese population on the West Coast continued to grow and anti-Japanese rhetoric and tensions spread, the U.S. government reached an informal agreement with the Empire of Japan, commonly known as the Gentlemen's Agreement of 1907. The agreement required Japan to not issue more passports for Japanese citizens wishing to work in the Continental United States, and, in exchange, the United States agreed to accept the presence of Japanese immigrants already residing there and permit the immigration of their wives, children, and parents. The U.S. government also promised to avoid legal discrimination against Japanese immigrants, particularly segregation in California schools. The Gentlemen's Agreement changed drastically the nature the Japanese American population in the United States. As female immigrants began to predominate, the sex ratio among Japanese Americans changed from overwhelmingly male to an approximate balance,[8] and more families started to form and flourish. The Gentlemen's

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[5] "Chinese Exclusion Act," History.com, last modified September 13, 2019. https://www.history.com/topics/immigration/chinese-exclusion-act-1882.

[6] A term used to refer to Japanese people who emigrated from Japan and their descendants.

[7] Louis Fiset and Gail M. Nomura, *Nikkei in the Pacific Northwest: Japanese Americans and Japanese Canadians in the Twentieth Century,* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2005), 5.

[8] 8 Daniels, *Asian America*, 126.

Agreement was later superseded by the Immigration Act of 1924, which further prevented immigration from Asia.

On the eastside of Bainbridge Island, Washington, the early Japanese immigrants found work at the Port Blakely Mill, the largest mill in the world at that time.[9] But as more Japanese workers became dissatisfied with the low-skilled, low-paid jobs, those who could afford it left the mill and began farming. After a devastating fire that resulted in the mill closing in 1924, most Japanese workers turned to agriculture, and many of them chose to grow strawberries.

With the money they had saved working at the mill, many Japanese immigrants wanted to purchase a piece of land to start agriculture. However, due to laws that prohibited Asians from buying lands, some had to purchase their acreage under someone else's name and clear it. [10] As more women emigrated from Japan and formed families with the bachelors, they were able to develop various forms of family businesses over time, and the town became a thriving community. At the start of WWII, Bainbridge Island was 10% Japanese-American, an ethnic community well integrated into a small-town way of life.[11]

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[9] Lucy Ostrander, *The Red Pines : Japanese-Americans on Bainbridge Island,* (Bainbridge Island, Washington: IslandWood, National Geographic Education Foundation, 2009).

[10] Ostrander, *The Red Pines*.

[11] Mary Woodward, *In Defense of Our Neighbors: The Walt and Milly Woodward Story,* 1st ed, (Bainbridge Island, Wash.: Fenwick, 2008).

The World War II Era:

In the morning of December 7, 1941, the Imperial Japanese Navy surprisingly attacked the U.S. naval base at Pearl Harbor in Honolulu, Territory of Hawaii, causing over 4,500 casualties. The next day, U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt declared war on Japan. The war that began at Pearl Harbor eventually transformed the legal, social, and political positions in American society. Despite the contradictory influences on Japanese Americans and Chinese Americans, the war dramatically changed how Asian communities were governed, how they regarded themselves, and, most profoundly, the racial ideology of the larger society that was inherent in the long evolution from slavery, segregation, and ostracism.[12]

After the bombing of Pearl Harbor, Roosevelt was advised by military and political leaders about the nation's fears of further Japanese attack, particularly on the West Coast, where naval ports, commercial shipping and agriculture were the most vulnerable.[13] As a combining result of long-time racism and the Japanese Americans' proximity to vital war assets on the West Coast, on February 19, 1942, President Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066, which provided designated officers the authority to exclude all persons, both citizens and aliens, from designated areas in order to provide security against sabotage or espionage.[14] The army implemented the order by excluding all Japanese Americans from the West Coast, placing them first into

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[12] Daniels, *Asian America*, 187.

[13] "FDR orders Japanese Americans into internment camps," History.com Editors, accessed August 16, 2021, https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/fdr-signs-executive-order-9066.

[14] Donna K. Nagata, *Legacy of Injustice: Exploring the Cross-generational Impact of the Japanese American Internment*, (New York: Plenum Press, 1993), 1.

temporary "assembly centers"[15] and later into internment camps[16] located in desolate areas of the country.[17] In total, about 120,000 people of Japanese ancestry, most living on the Pacific Coast, were incarcerated through the end of World War II.

The Internment of Japanese Americans in Bainbridge Island:

Japanese Americans on Bainbridge Island were the first in the country to be excluded. The government used the island's small population as a test case to see whether it could carry out a mass relocation, and the Bainbridge Island experiment became the model for evacuations up and down the West Coast.[18] Only six days prior to their day of departure were Islanders informed. Unable to predict their day of return, most sold their homes, farms, businesses, and belongings, for free or at a very low price.

In the morning of the day of departure, as soldiers carrying rifles with fixed bayonets watching, 227 Bainbridge Islanders of Japanese ancestry, two-thirds of whom were U.S. citizens, boarded the ferry at the Eagledale Ferry Dock to Seattle, and then took the train down to the California desert. The Bainbridge Islanders were the first to arrive at the Manzana Assembly

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[15] Refer to Japanese American Memorial Pilgrimages, www.jampilgrimages.com/assembly-centers, for more information about the "assembly centers."

[16] Densho.org, an influential website devoting to documenting histories of the Japanese American incarceration during World War II, argues: "The commonly used term 'internment' fails to accurately describe what happened to Japanese Americans during WWII. 'Internment' refers to the legally permissible, though morally questionable, detention of 'enemy aliens' in time of war." While using the term "internment camp" in this essay, I acknowledge the inability of this term to fully exhibit the illegality and inhumanity of the Japanese American incarceration.

[17] Nagata, *Legacy of Injustice*, 1.

[18] Katherine Q. Seelye, "A Wall to Remember an Era's First Exiles," *The New York Times*, August 5, 2011, https://www.nytimes.com/2011/08/06/us/06internment.html?_r=1&pagewanted=all?src=tp.

Center, while the facilities were still under construction. For weeks they had no sewer system, and the facilities were very crude.[19]

Many of the Bainbridge Island internees were transferred to the new Minidoka Camp from the Manzanar on February 24, 1943. The Bainbridge Island Japanese Americans spent 10 months at Manzanar before being transferred to Minidoka in southern Idaho. The first days and months in Minidoka were generally peaceful, with no major incidents or unrest. Despite this, construction commenced on a five-foot high barbed wire fence and eight watchtowers three months after their arrival.[20] The facilities at Minidoka were in the same condition as Manzanar. With the lack of a sewer system in the first months, the internees had to use outdoor pit latrines, which even caused an epidemic in summer.[21] The climate at Minidoka was also not inhabitable, with a low of 21 degrees below zero and a high of 104 degrees in 1942 on record.[22] Cheated by the guards with prevailing wages and the opportunity to leave the camp, many internees, including high school students, chose to work in nearby farms.[23] Excessive laboring limited their capacity to hold cultural and recreational activities, and they did not get their promised compensation at the end.

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[19] "Evacuation," BIJAC (Bainbridge Island Japanese American Community), accessed August 16, 2021, https://bijac.org/history/exclusion-and-internment/evacuation/.

[20] "10 Little Known Facts of Life at Minidoka," Densho.org, August 6, 2019, https://densho.org/10-little-known-facts-of-life-at-minidoka/.

[21] "10 Little Known Facts."

[22] Hanako Wakatsuki, "Minidoka," *Densho Encyclopedia,* Accessed August 14, 2021, https://encyclopedia.densho.org/Minidoka.

[23] "10 Little Known Facts."

In response to all the indignity in Minidoka, the internees did take their own actions. Some attempted to make the facilities and the landscape more livable by building furniture, recreational fields, planting trees, and constructing elaborate gardens with the wisdom of Japanese traditional gardening culture.[24] Several organizations run by internees started to function for community cohesiveness within the internment camp as well as to keep in touch with their families interned elsewhere and other Bainbridge Islanders. The continuous violation of fundamental human rights of the internees provoked outrage and a series of labor unrest. In January of 1944, for instance, a strike was organized by some 160 boilermen and janitors who were forced to work longer hours during a labor shortage. But the inaction of the administration left internees without hot water for a week in the dead of winter.[25] Tensions between the internees and the administration continued escalating until the last day of the war. At the close of the World War II, the group of 276 Bainbridge Islanders of Japanese ancestry who were forced to leave the island were scattered across the country and world. 123 were in Minidoka, 26 were in Manzanar, 44 were serving in the armed forces in the states and abroad, and still others had left the camps to seek employment or education in areas outside of the exclusion zone."[26]

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[24] Seelye, "A Wall to Remember an Era's First Exiles."

[25] "10 Little Known Facts."

[26] "End of War," BIJAC (Bainbridge Island Japanese American Community), accessed August 9, 2021, https://bijac.org/history/exclusion-and-internment/end-of-war/.

Return, Redress, and Memorialization:

Following the U.S. atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in Japan, Imperial Japanese commanders surrendered to the Allies on August 15, 1945. Since that time, most exiled Nikkei had been released and allowed to return to the West Coast. For the incarcerated Bainbridge Islanders, many families did not choose to return because they had rented or sold their homes and land, and they stayed in Idaho or went to California instead. Though overt racism and anti-Japanese sentiment was still prevalent, with the help from their non-Japanese neighbors to create a welcoming and peaceful atmosphere, 150 residents eventually returned to the island and started their new lives.[27]

As many returned Islanders recalled, the overall environment was pleasant, as they were able to go back to the school and greeted by teachers and classmates. However, the salvage of farms and businesses were much more demanding, and the consequent financial loss was overwhelming to some families. Additionally, public services and economic opportunities still placed restrictions to Japanese Americans, and the federal government took no action to help them reclaim their property losses.[28] The future of returned Japanese Americans was still uncertain.

Most returned Japanese Americans believed education and job development was the most effective approach to re-enter the American society. Many were able to utilize their professional skills developed before the war, such as gardening. As returned Japanese American families

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[27] Christine Clarridge, "Wall honors Bainbridge Japanese Americans sent to internment camps," *The Seattle Times*, August 7, 2011.

[28] Jere Takahashi, *Nisei/Sansei: Shifting Japanese American Identities and Politics*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1997), 114.

strenuously redeveloped their social and economic status with new input from their well-educated children, from the late 1960s, many started to unite and seek compensation for the wrongs done to the Japanese American community.[29] The national Japanese American Citizens League (JACL) took the lead of the nationwide redress movement. Since 1970, the JACL convention was biennially introduced a redress resolution, with the level of priority increased over time. In 1976, at the Sacramento convention, this issue was adopted as the priority issue.[30]

Meanwhile, the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians was established in 1980 to call for a congressional committee to investigate the detention program and the constitutionality of Executive Order 9066.[31] In 1983, the Commission issued its official report[32], calling for a presidential apology, a $20,000 payment to each surviving internee, and public education fund, all of which were later signed into law as the Civil Liberties Act of 1988 by President Ronald Reagan.

Following the success of the redress movement, in 1992, public law established the Manzanar Historic Site, making Manzanar the first former Japanese American concentration camp to become a National Park Service Unit.[33] Subsequently, the Minidoka, where most

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[29] "Sometimes they used the word 'reparations,' but the softer term, 'redress', eventually prevailed," in Daniels et al., *From Relocation to Redress*, 188.

[30] John Tateishi, "The Japanese American Citizens League and the Struggle for Redress," in Daniels et al., *From Relocation to Redress*, 191.

[31] "Important Moments in Japanese American History: Before, During, and After WWII Mass Incarceration," Densho.org, accessed August 9, 2021, https://densho.org/timeline/.

[32] Commission on Wartime Relocation Internment of Civilians, *Personal Justice Denied: Report of the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians*, (Washington, D.C.: Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians, 1982).

[33] Densho.org, "Important Moments."

Bainbridge Islanders were incarcerated, became a NPS Unit in 2001. Six years later, an Act decided to include the Nidoto Nai Yoni Memorial, namely the Bainbridge Island Japanese American Exclusion Memorial in Bainbridge Island, Washington in the boundary of Minidoka Internment National Monument.[34] The memorial is then able to receive NPS staff and funding for future development and maintenance of its natural and cultural resources.

Intergenerational Identity and Response to the Internment

Introduction to Intergenerational Japanese American Identities:

The word "Nikkei" refers to Japanese people who emigrated from Japan and their descendants.

"Issei" refers to first-generation Japanese Americans. The Issei are foreign-born, most without U.S. citizenship. Many of them experienced the internment.

"Nisei" refers to second-generation Japanese Americans. The Nisei are U.S. born with U.S. citizenship. Most of them experienced the internment.

"Sansei" refers to third-generation Japanese Americans. Some Sansei experienced the internment at an early age, including those born in internment camps.

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[34] "S. Rept. 110-101 - BAINBRIDGE ISLAND JAPANESE AMERICAN MONUMENT ACT OF 2007," Congress.gov, accessed August 9, 2021, https://www.congress.gov/congressional-report/110th-congress/senate-report/101.

"Yonsei" refers to fourth-generation Japanese Americans, and "Gosei" refers to fifth-generation Japanese Americans. This paper will discuss the Yonsei and the Gosei collectively, considering their similarities.

Issei:

Most Issei arrived in the United States around the turn of the 20th century, with the heaviest immigration occurring during 1907. Thus, A typical Issei man in the pre-WWII period was approximately 35 years old, whereas Issei women were frequently 10 years younger, as a consequence of the Gentlemen's Agreement.[35]

The major economic concentration of Issei Japanese was agriculture, as they, mostly grew up in rural Japan, tried to recreate a world similar to the one they remembered, a Japanese society in America.[36] For some who had purchased pieces of property, the Issei also looked for business ventures, such as in Bainbridge Island, some Issei pioneers operated grocery stores, barbershops, or hotels.[37] Through years of hardworking and economic development, many Issei had established themselves as members of the lower middle class.[38]

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[35] Nagata, *Legacy of Injustice*, 29.

[36] Daniels, *Asian America*, 164.

[37] "Pre WWII – Lives of Bainbridge Island Nikkei Before the War," BIJAC (Bainbridge Island Japanese American Community), accessed August 9, 2021. https://bijac.org/history/bainbridge-island-before-wwii/pre-wwii-lives-of-bainbridge-island-nikkei-before-the-war/.

[38] Daniels, *Asian America*, 163.

Issei's hardworking was not well compensated by the mainstream white society. Rather, they were not ever granted the right to apply for citizenship and always felt like the "man without a country."[39] In response, many Issei turned to each other for support. Many practiced group solidarity and mutual aid to combat the white expulsion.[40] Besides, rather than merely passive victims of the widespread anti-Japanese exclusion movement, the Issei were in fact proactive in asserting their rights and perspectives and "naturalizing" themselves into the local community.[41]

The Issei encourage acculturation among Japanese Americans while simultaneously maintaining their Japanese cultural heritage. It was hypothesized that acceptance by the dominant society was due to the congruence of Japanese traditional values, attitudes, and beliefs with those of white, middle-class society.[42] While partly assimilated in culture, due to the Supreme Court's decision which denied naturalization to Japanese in 1922[43], the disfranchised Issei were virtually powerless in politics. Those with political aspirations were compelled to limit their activities to their own communities.[44] They relied heavily on the social and economic organizations in their ethnic enclave to seek culturally responsive activities and opportunities.

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[39] Take Uchida, "An Issei Internee's Experiences," in Daniels et al., *From Relocation to Redress*, 31-32.

[40] Nagata, *Legacy of Injustice*, 29.

[41] Fiset and Nomura, *Nikkei in the Pacific Northwest*, 45.

[42] Minoru Masuda, Gary H. Matsumoto, and Gerald M. Meredith. "Ethnic Identity in Three Generations of Japanese Americans." *Journal of Social Psychology* 81, no. 2 (August 01, 1970): 199.

[43] Yuji Ichioka, "The Early Japanese Immigrant Quest for Citizenship: The Back-ground of the 1922 Ozawa Case," *Amerasia Journal* 1977; 4: 1-22.

[44] Takahashi, *Nisei/Sansei*, 23.

As was common for many small rural communities, family was a top priority for most Bainbridge Islanders. The hierarchical family status with greater emphases on role differentiation and collective harmony among Japanese Americans was more prevalent than their white counterparts.[45] The model of family membership, which is inherited from the Japanese traditional values, consists of three sets of attitudes: submission and recognition of authority and prestige of the parents, acceptance of family responsibilities, and maintenance of inviolate integrity of family status within the community.[46] The effects of family hierarchy to the cross-generational relationships remains strong through the first and second generations and perhaps the third generation, too.

The WWII internment disrupted Issei's decades of struggle for their economic development and socio-political position. Financially and psychologically damaged, most Issei had never recovered. They lost the ambition to restart their lives, and many remained dependent on their Nisei children for the rest of their lives.[47] Moreover, despite their long-term fight for political status, the internment perpetuated the existing alienation of Japanese Americans and even challenged the Issei's own assurance of their "loyalty" to the United States. Under these conditions, many Issei learned to internalize a "second-class citizen" sense of self,[48] which de

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[45] June W.J. Ching, John F. McDermott, Chantis Fukunaga, Evelyn Yanagida, Eberhard Mann, and Jane A. Waldron, "Perceptions of Family Values and Roles Among Japanese," *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry* 65, no. 2 (1995): 216-24.

[46] Forrest Emmanuel LaViolette, *Americans of Japanese Ancestry; a Study of Assimilation in the American Community*, (Toronto: University of Chicago, 1946), 175.

[47] Nagata, *Legacy of Injustice*, 30.

[48] Nagata, *Legacy of Injustice*, 26.

facto rationalized the government's rejection to grant citizenship and legal rights to the Japanese immigrants.

Nisei:

Born and educated in the United States, the Nisei were more fluent in English and more accustomed to the Western culture and lifestyle. Although some quite reluctantly, the Nisei followed their parents into agriculture and agriculturally related enterprises[49], but they generally played a special role in their family-operated farms and businesses as the bridge between their Issei parents and the white society. In Bainbridge Island, the oldest Nisei in the family were sometimes translators for their Issei immigrant parents, and soon they became almost like heads of household.[50]

Although many Nisei associated with their white American peers in grade school, high school, and college, these relationships did not necessary lead to what sociologists call "structural integration."[51] Rather than activism or protested-oriented response to discrimination, many Nisei adopted a softer approach of "defensive politics,"[52] which aimed to promote mutual understanding between the Japanese and white Americans and avoid escalating the conflicts. While some Nisei were somewhat slow to become fully conscious about the race issue, they all

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[49] Daniels, *Asian America*, 163.

[50] BIJAC, "Lives of Bainbridge Island Nikkei Before the War."

[51] Takahashi, *Nisei/Sansei*, 42.

[52] Takahashi, *Nisei/Sansei*, 40.

eventually felt the impact. A group commonly known as Nisei Progressives from the Bay Area was among the first Japanese Americans to embrace a more radical approach. They joined Henry Wallace's presidential campaign for the Progressive Party in 1947 and advocate for reparations for the incarcerated, citizenship and naturalization rights, and repeal of a series of discriminatory laws and regulations.[53] Ever since the failure of the Progressive Party, however, the Nisei Progressives continued to lead political activisms with the younger generation during the civil rights and anti-war movements of the 1960s, and the redress movement of the 1970s and 1980s.

Instead of the linear narrative of the Nisei as self-identified Americans wishing to abandon their Japanese identity, the assimilation process of the Nisei was in fact complicated. It is important to first recognize the nature of marginalism, which refers to the marginalization of the Americans of Japanese ancestry by the main body of Japanese culture.[54] Considering the effects of marginalism as well as their parents' pressure to maintain their Japanese identity and lifestyle, the Nisei had no wish to avoid the identification as Japanese. However, the Nisei's English background and their association with outside white organizations sometimes led to both family and community instability, a consequence of confusion in family and community roles.[55] Such an instability resulted in the desires of certain individuals to reject their group identification and seek recognition in cross-ethnic organizations. Overall, the assimilation process of the Nisei was an outcome of mixed effects from both the Japanese community itself and the outside influence.

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[53] Martha Nakagawa, "Nisei Progressives," *Densho Encyclopedia*, accessed August 17, 2021, https://encyclopedia.densho.org/Nisei%20Progressives.

[54] LaViolette, *Americans of Japanese Ancestry*, 175.

[55] LaViolette, *Americans of Japanese Ancestry*, 176.

The most notable impact of the WWII internment on the Nisei generation was the assault on self-esteem and their identity as Americans. The order of exclusion caused the Nisei to experience a dissociation between reality and their perceptions that they were Americans just like everyone else.[56] Even worse, some Nisei tended to internalize feelings of self-blame for their victimization by attributing their situation to not being "American enough."[57] Many continued to excessively display their assimilation to the American society by rejecting any association with the Japanese American culture and community,[58] which eventually caused cultural destruction in some families and communities. Psychologically, as studies find traumatized groups tend to exhibit "denial" as a coping process following severe negative events,[59] the interned Japanese Americans exhibited the same pattern by minimizing the trauma and not retaining lingering emotional response to it.[60] The refusal to recall the traumatic memories was found most prominent in family conversations, which left profound effects on the intergenerational transmission of stories and memories.

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[56] Toaru Ishiyama, "Impact upon Nisei Identity," Paper presented to the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians (Chicago: 1981).

[57] Nagata, *Legacy of Injustice*, 31.

[58] Daniels, *Asian America*, 48.

[59] Ronnie Janoff-Bulman and Christine Timko, "Coping with Traumatic Events: the Role of Denial in Light of People's Assumptive Worlds," in *Coping with Negative Life Events: Clinical and Social Psychological Perspectives*, ed. C.R. Snyder and Carol R. Ford (New York: Plenum Press, 1987).

[60] Commission on Wartime Relocation Internment of Civilians, *Personal Justice Denied*.

Sansei:

The majority of Sansei were born during the Baby Boom, while some born earlier were incarcerated with their parents. The Sansei formed an extremely well-educated group. Built on the success of Nisei economic development, the education that the Nisei could not afford for themselves had been made available to their children.[61] In addition, the American economy experienced a period of prolonged prosperity and rapid industrial growth following the end of WWII and the Korean War.[62] By 1970, Japanese Americans had become overrepresented in technical and clerical occupations and were relying on them as economic vehicles to secure social and economic mobility.[63]

While most ethnic-based studies have approached the political style of Japanese Americans by posing such binary alternatives as assimilation or pluralism, a recent study suggests that the Sansei are moving along the dual trajectory of structural assimilation and ethnic solidarity.[64] First, the strong push of education by their Nisei parents resulted in the loss of focus on the Japanese language and religious practices.[65] As the Nisei had taken the advantage of actively assimilating into the mainstream white society, they expected their children to follow the same route. Therefore, many Sansei who were born after the war were largely raised without

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[61] Tomoko Makabe, *The Canadian Sansei*, (Toronto; Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1998), 39.

[62] Takahashi, *Nisei/Sansei*, 118.

[63] Takahashi, *Nisei/Sansei*, 120.

[64] Takahashi, *Nisei/Sansei*, 205.

[65] Makabe, *The Canadian Sansei*, 42.

reference to their ethnicity, but that did not block their path to revive their ethnicity when reaching college and joining organizations that supported equality and civil rights.[66]

The Asian American Movement began from with the political activism that was missing from the previous generations. Behind the social and Civil Rights Movements of the 1960s were college organizations which developed many anti-war, ethnic studies, and institutional change agenda. The widespread Asian Americans Movement, which reached its peak in the late 1960s to mid-1970s, not only promoted a re-examination of the Sansei's ethnic identity and their assimilation practices, but also established the concept of Pan-Asianism solidarity, which laid a foundation for subsequent more structured and influential activisms.

The Sansei Research Project[67], conducted in 1987, is the first large-scale study to explore the impact of the internment on third-generation Japanese Americans. The Project first finds that internment effects did not emerge in all areas of the Sansei's lives, including their level of knowledge about the internment experience.[68] And, rather than severe psychopathological effects, many Sansei showed positive internment effects such as the recognition of their parents as role models of perseverance and stoic courage and the responsibility to educate others about the internment.[69] It is also worth noting that some 40% of the surveyed Sansei whose parents were in camp indicated that their primary source of information did not come directly from their

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[66] Lorine Erika Saito, "*Fourth & Fifth Generation Japanese American Adults: Examining the Persistence of Ethnic Identity & Educational Experiences*" (PhD diss., The Claremont Graduate University, 2018), 38.

[67] The Project details are thoroughly discussed in Nagata, *Legacy of Injustice.*

[68] Nagata, *Legacy of Injustice,* 207.

[69] Nagata, *Legacy of Injustice,* 209.

parents but rather through overhearing conversations, reading books, or watching films about the internment.[70]

Yonsei and Gosei:

Starting from the 1960s, Japan achieved one of the highest economic growth rates in the world. Subsequently, the number of Japanese immigrants who were seeking better living conditions in the United States has declined. Meanwhile, intermarriage with non-Japanese became common among Japanese Americans, with intermarriage rate approximately 50% by the 1970s and 70% in the 1990s.[71] Therefore, from the 1960s to the present, the Yonsei and Gosei generations represent a period in which the Japanese American community embraces more diverse identities and less ethnic distinctiveness.

However, the common characterization of the later-generations as culturally "less engaged" with their Japanese American heritage does not ring true.[72] With lower rates of immigration, higher rates of outmarriage, and lack of a traditional ethnic enclave, later-generation Japanese Americans choose to intentionally seek social spaces with other co-

[70] Nagata, *Legacy of Injustice,* 208.

[71] Pyong Gap Min and Chigon Kim, "Patterns of Intermarriages and Cross-Generational In-Marriages among Native-Born Asian Americans," *International Migration Review* 43, no.3 (2009): 447-470.

[72] Lisa Hirai Tsuchtani, "Millennial Understandings of Nikkei Seishin in San Jose Japantown," in Michael Omi, Dana Y. Nakano, and Jeffrey Yamashita, *Japanese American Millennials: Rethinking Generation, Community, and Diversity,* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2019), 41-61.

ethnics[73], finding a sense of ethnic "connectedness."[74] Contrary to existing models that predict a continuous and irreversible "straight-line" path of assimilation, the collective community building among later-generation Japanese Americans is an alternative model that allows long-term maintenance and promotion of ethnic culture. In addition to co-ethnic community building that is horizontal (i.e., within the same generation), later-generation Japanese Americans also value the vertical (i.e., cross-generational) approach to fostering cultural awareness. The strong family orientation and profound respect for their grandparents and great grandparents is found prevalent among the Yonsei and Gosei,[75] who recognize their family's wartime experiences and some dedicate to promoting social justice and helping the Japanese American community moving forward.

Many Japanese American millennials[76] define themselves by their political consciousness. They knew about the anti-Asian racism that their ancestors had to endure and they still endure today, as well as the solidarity with pan-Asian ethnicities to navigate a white supremacist society. The Yonsei and Gosei generations have embraced more diverse spectrums of identities, actively engaging in feminist and LGBTQ movements.[77] The Afro-Asian solidarity

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[73] People of the same ethnicity.

[74] Christina B. Chin, "We've Got Team Spirit! Ethnic Community Building and Japanese American Youth Basketball Leagues," in Omi, Nakano, and Yamashita, *Japanese American Millennials*, 23-40.

[75] Tsuchtani, "Millennial Understandings of Nikkei Seishin in San Jose Japantown," in Omi, Nakano, and Yamashita, *Japanese American Millennials*, 50.

[76] Denoting people reaching young adulthood in the early 21st century.

[77] For example, the Asian and Pacific Islander Queer Women and Transgender Community (APIQWTC). Discussed in Amy Sueyoshi, "Techie, Gender Queer, and Lesbian," in Omi et al., *Japanese American Millennials*, 213-228.

that began from the early 20th century[78] continues to flourish, and since the 1980s they together have set the agenda of anti-colorblind racism, anti-war, and anti-neoliberalism.[79] Recently, the election of Donald Trump and his anti-Muslim government policies provoked demonstrations to express the solidarity of Japanese Americans and American Muslims, who have embraced a growing relationship since Muslims started to face increasing hate crimes during the post-911 years.[80]

Similar to the Sansei generation, the Yonsei and Gosei generations exhibit deeper sense of pride, strength, gratitude, and a pre-existing capacity for resilience, instead of the mere transmission of pathologic symptoms and intergenerational trauma.[81] The Yonsei and Gosei continue to remain cognizant of the impact of the internment on their family and appear to be working on creating their own identity through the positive feelings that resulted from their family's internment experiences, as a continuous healing process that began with the Sansei generation.[82]

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[78] Yuichiro Onishi, *Transpacific Antiracism: Afro-Asian Solidarity in Twentieth-century Black America, Japan, and Okinawa*, (New York: New York University Press, 2013).

[79] "1980-present," aatimeline.com (A Different Asian American Timeline), Accessed August 18, 2021, https://aatimeline.com/1980-present.

[80] Massoud Hayoun, "Muslim ban: Japanese and Muslim Americans join forces," *Al Jazeera*, February 1, 2017, https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2017/2/1/muslim-ban-japanese-and-muslim-americans-join-forces.

[81] Scott Gen Arai, "*Intergenerational Experience of Japanese American Internment: The Grandchildren of the Camps*," (PhD diss., John F. Kennedy University, 2012).

[82] Arai, "*Intergenerational Experience*," 66.

Introduction to the Multi-generational Desire-based Framework

In Eve Tuck's piece "Suspending Damage: A Letter to Communities", she calls on community, researchers, and educators for a moratorium on "damage-centered" research and to reformulate research to capture "desire" instead of "damage."[83] Tuck describes damage-centered research as to document pain or loss in an individual, community, or tribe, and it is a pathologizing approach in which the oppression singularly defines a community.[84] In contrast, desire-based frameworks account not only for the loss and despair but also the hope, the visions, the wisdom of lived lives and communities.[85]

While Tuck's research is not specifically intended to the practice of urban design and planning, the power of urban public spaces to actualize the community's desire can never be underestimated. The development of historical sites of marginalized communities has for a long time centered on "repercussions" of failure or deficit. The excessive use of public spaces to reiterate the historical trauma of the community that is already experiencing geographical marginalization and exclusion further disables the community to seek long-term healing and recovery.

Therefore, this paper takes the Bainbridge Island Japanese American Exclusion Memorial and the local Japanese American community as an example to argue for the adoption of desire-based frameworks in designing community historical sites. Such a practice, as Tuck states, makes room for the contradictions, for the mis/re/cognitions, usually in an effort to sustain a

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[83] Eve Tuck, "Suspending Damage: A Letter to Communities," Harvard Educational Review 79, no. 3 (2009): 409-28.

[84] Tuck, "Suspending Damage," 413.

[85] Tuck, "Suspending Damage," 417.

sense of collective balance.[86] In this paper, the application of desire-based frameworks further intersects with the diverse and complex intergenerational identities and values within the Japanese American community. The "desire" of the community is anatomized by intergenerational differences and reintegrated to achieve an optimal synthesis to mediate potential cross-generational controversies and ensure long-term intergenerational solidarity.

In the next section, I will provide a close examination of multiple design elements of the Bainbridge Island Japanese American Exclusion Memorial. Based on Tuck's framework, I will critically assess the effectiveness of key elements in representing the individual and collective desire held by different Japanese American generations and propose some alternatives. The analyses presented in the next section will serve as a showcase for the broader re-imagination of community spaces through desire-based and multi-generational frameworks.

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[86] Tuck, "Suspending Damage," 421.

A Close Examination of the Memorial

Historical Background:

The concept of building a memorial at the site of exclusion started in 1998. In that year, the Bainbridge Island Japanese American Community (BIJAC), with a state grant, bought the site where the first Japanese Americans left for the internment camps, and an ad hoc committee was formed by several local Japanese American organizations and governmental agencies. The committee which focused particularly on developing a memorial at the site of exclusion started to function as a subcommittee under the BIJAC's non-profit 501(c)(3) status.[87] In 2002, the Bainbridge Island Japanese American Memorial Study Act was approved unanimously by the U.S. Congress and was signed into law by President Bush. The Act required the Secretary of the Interior to study the national significance, suitability, and feasibility of designating the Eagledale Ferry Dock as a unit of the National Park System. Five years later, the Bainbridge Island Japanese American Monument Act of 2007 approved by the U.S. Congress made the memorial site a satellite unit of the Minidoka Internment National Monument. In 2014, another Act inserted the word "Exclusion" to the original name "Bainbridge Island Japanese American Memorial" to stress the internment order which the site memorializes.[88]

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[87] "Appendix D: Update on the Bainbridge Island Japanese American Memorial," Bainbridge Island Metro Park & Recreation District, April 2016, https://biparks.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Pritcahrd_Park_Apdx_D_Japanese_Am_Mem_1218.pdf.

[88] "Bainbridge Island Japanese American Exclusion Memorial Technical Corrections," Pub. L. No. 113-171. 128 Stat. 1895 (2014).

Meanwhile, the efforts to design and construct the memorial were steadily carried out. The committee received multiple million dollars in total from the National Park Service[89], State of Washington, City of Bainbridge Island, as well as private donations.[90] In 2006, the first phase of construction that included ground clearing and the building of roads, parking, pathways, and a pavilion started. The extent of construction took up a parcel within the Prichard Park on the east side of Bainbridge Island, as Figure 1 and Figure 2 show. In 2008, the memorial committee partnered with Johnpaul Jones, a Native American architect in a famous Seattle-based architecture firm Jones & Jones, to initiate the second project phase – a 272-foot long "Story Wall" of stone and wood containing interpretive and historic materials to document the internment experience, as Figure 3 shows.

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[89] Susan Gilmore, "Bainbridge Island Japanese American Memorial project gets nearly $183,000," *The Seattle Times*, May 20, 2010, https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/bainbridge-island-japanese-american-memorial-project-gets-nearly-183000/.

[90] Refer to "Appendix D" for details of project costs and fundraising.

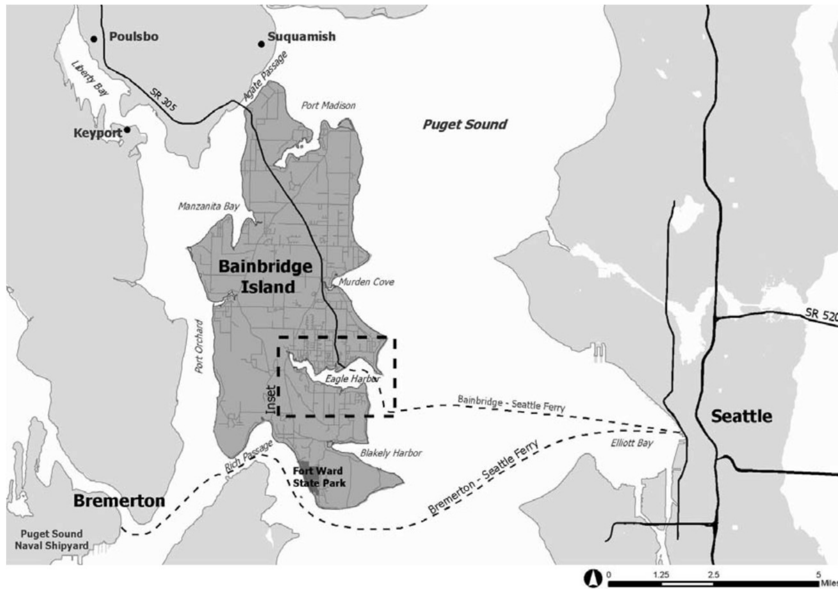

Figure 1, location of the memorial, from "Bainbridge Island Japanese American Memorial Study of Alternatives/Environmental Assessment," Jones & Jones Architects and Landscape Architects, Ltd., Spring 2005, 41, http://npshistory.com/publications/miin/bainbridge-island-sa-ea.pdf.

Figure 2, location of the memorial, from "Bainbridge Island Japanese American Memorial Study of Alternatives/Environmental Assessment," Jones & Jones Architects and Landscape Architects, Ltd., Spring 2005, 41, http://npshistory.com/publications/miin/bainbridge-island-sa-ea.pdf.

Figure 3, the Story Wall.

The ribbon-cutting ceremony was held on August 6, 2011, with more than 300 Island residents of Japanese descent attended. It marked the completion of the first two phases of the memorial. The committee then started the third and fourth phase of the project, which involved a small cluster of buildings including an interpretive center, meeting room, and restrooms, and a 150-foot-long pier at the end of the story wall, respectively. As of the date of my visit on July 20, 2021, construction of the pier was almost completed, and the buildings were still in site clearing stage. Currently, maintenance and development of the memorial is managed collectively by BIJAC and Bainbridge Island Japanese American Exclusion Memorial Association.

<u>"Nidoto Nai Yoni":</u>

This section of discussion on the memorial starts with its very name – "Nidoto Nai Yoni", or "Let it not happen again" in English. As one walks through the story wall, three versions of "Nidoto Nai Yoni" are at the starting point of the tour – one written in Japanese characters, one in Japanese romanization, and one in English, as Figure 4 shows.

Instead of the lengthy toponymic name Bainbridge Island Japanese American Exclusion Memorial, the adoption of the romanization form of the Japanese phrase as the common name is no doubt the optimal choice. The sense of linguistic unfamiliarity brought by this phrase reminds visitors of the trauma and injustice done on the very ethnic minority group, and the phrase as an imperative sentence establishes the overarching theme and mission of the memorial.

Figure 4, the Memorial's name.

The retaining of the Japanese language in naming ethnic community institutions is critical to the Japanese American community, as the appreciation and adherence to the Japanese language and culture naturally diminishes over time and generations. In addition to its cultural significance, the motto "let it not happen again" conveys the pursuit of solidarity that is cross-generational and cross-racial. This phrase synthesizes the demand of the older generations, who are seeking acknowledgement of the historical injustice and healing, and the responsibility of the younger generations, who want to broaden the significance of the memorial to call for solidarity of all individuals and communities experiencing injustice.

<u>"Loyal and Patriotic Americans":</u>

In telling the story of Japanese Americans on the island and their internment experience, the arguments of "citizenship", "patriotism", and "constitutional rights" are often raised to counter the order of exclusion. For example, a woodblock printed quote of Bill Clinton in his Presidential Letter of Apology in 1993 is as followed:

"I offer a sincere apology to you for the actions that unfairly denied Japanese Americans and their families fundamental liberties during WWII."

Figure 5, the woodblock with the Presidential Apology.

While the original letter signed by Bill Clinton had no variation of font size to emphasize any word[91], the woodblock at the memorial highlights the word “Americans” by using an outstanding font size, as shown by Figure 5. It is also worth noting that even though “Japanese Americans” is grammatically viewed as a single term, only “Americans” is highlighted whereas “Japanese” remains in a smaller font.

Besides the manipulation of the quotation, the interpretation of the motto “Nidoto Nai Yoni” on another woodblock also makes a similar claim:

“Nidoto Nai Yoni. Let it not happen again that a group of people are singled out, that their loyalty and patriotism be questioned because their race or ancestry. Nidoto Nai Yoni.”

Not only the term “singled out” is relatively neutral and does not acknowledge the racist ground on which the exclusion order was based, but it attributed the order to the doubt about their “loyalty and patriotism” as a racial minority. The overemphasis on the Nikkei’s

Figure 6

“Americanness” and their gesture of assimilation and patriotism deviates from the memorial’s intention to document the government’s discriminatory order and the violation of human rights. To some extent it acquiesces in and even perpetuates white hegemony and dominancy, placing racial minority groups in a position where they need to actively exhibit their “loyalty and patriotism” to the white-dominated state power to avoid future exclusion.

Admittedly, the government’s continuous rejection to grant citizenship to the Issei was a lingering grievance to the older generation, and their self-blame was no doubt a result of systemic oppression from the white society. The use of the memorial to re-claim their validity to

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[91] “Presidential Letter of Apology,” PBS, 1999, https://www.pbs.org/childofcamp/history/clinton.html.

secure citizenship and be equally treated as patriotic Americans is reasonable. However, as the younger generations, influenced by the series of pan-Asian and cross-racial movements, tend to treat the memorial as a place to develop broader cross-racial solidarity. The emphasis on "Americanness" weakens the ability of the younger generations to take more radical approaches, as it may result in the continuous alienation of undocumented immigrants and refugees, who should have their inviolable legal rights in this country.

Place in Retrospect:

Monuments and memorials do not always have the opportunity to be built at a site with historical significance, but the Bainbridge Island one takes great advantage of the stories and memories linked with the site – Eagledale Ferry Dock. Physically and interpretively, not only is the Eagledale Ferry Dock nationally significant for its role as the first location where Japanese Americans were forcibly removed from their homes, but it also provides a link of “where it began and where it concluded,”[92] which is, the way that the Japanese American community coped with the historical trauma and sought healing, recovery, and justice after their return.

The overall physical form of the memorial evokes the day of departure in 1942. The memorial’s centerpiece is a sinuous, 276-foot-long wall—one foot for every exiled island resident.[93] Constructed out of old-growth red cedar, granite, and basalt, the wall traces the path

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[92] “Bainbridge Island Japanese American Memorial Study of Alternatives/Environmental Assessment,” Jones & Jones Architects and Landscape Architects, Ltd., Spring 2005, 41, http://npshistory.com/publications/miin/bainbridge-island-sa-ea.pdf.

[93] According to records, 276 is the *total* number of people of Japanese ancestry exiled from Bainbridge Island during WWII, and among them, 227 is the number of people departed on the day of March 30, 1942.

that 227 residents followed as they walked from a holding area on the south side of Eagle Harbor down to a ferry dock. The granite represents Washington's geology as well as the Japanese American community's deep local roots, and the crushed gravel paths echo the granite while also making visitors' footsteps more audible as they walk to the dock.[94]

The passive design of the gravel paths and the commemorative ferry dock speaks in both silence and power. It discards the common practice of erecting compelling statues but rather emphasizes the individual bodily feeling as one walks along the historical path. Such a design leaves ample "empty space" for individuals with various intentions approaching this site to develop their own interpretation of the design. For instance, the Issei and Nisei who experienced the internment would value this site as a safe and quiet space for healing while themselves, who practice "denial" and refusal, are not treated as the "living memorial" for visitors. And for the later generations, this site allows them to recognize the contribution of their ancestors and the trauma and injustice they experienced. Figure 6 is an advertising picture posted on the welcome page of the Bainbridge Island Japanese American Exclusion Memorial. This well-crafted picture reveals the implications of the story wall and the gravel path by juxtaposing the history with the present.

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[94] Seelye, "A Wall to Remember an Era's First Exiles."

Figure 6, the picture in the welcome page, from http://bijaema.org/.

In 2003, a 100-year-old Western Red Cedar tree that stood near the Eagledale Ferry Dock when Bainbridge Islanders were forced to leave their homes in 1942 – and still stands on the site of the memorial – was named to the National Registry of Historic Trees, the second West Coast tree to earn this distinction.[95] The tree can be seen in several wartime photographs taken the day of Nikkei departure from their homes on Bainbridge Island. Before the memorial was built, the cedar tree has already played a significant role in symbolizing the day of exclusion and providing a safe space for healing and self-care, according to a number of interviews of the former

[95] "Memorial Milestone Events," BIJAC (Bainbridge Island Japanese American Community), Accessed August 13, 2021, https://bijac.org/exclusion-memorial/memorial-milestone-events/.

internees conducted by Densho.org.[96] The natural, non-verbal landmark ties the promise of immortal memory with the eternity of nature.

Conversely, the use of perishable materials in the Story Wall embeds the deterioration of matter to express the passage of time to occupants.[97] On the one hand, inevitable decay of matter explores possibilities for materials that can heal themselves, at the molecular level, from damage caused by ageing, rainwater, or other environmental factors.[98] The decay and self-healing of the material implies the long-lasting effects of the historical trauma and the gradual recovery of individuals. On the other hand, the resistance of the gravel path to deterioration forms contrast with the story wall, suggesting the fate of accessional architecture yet permanency of the instinctive form of the environment.

Place for Solidarity:

Historic site planning has an obligation and role to participate in social activism for sites with complex stories.[99] Besides the memorial's capacity to recount memories and offer healing, it is also designed as a site to build solidarity among races, ethnicities, and generations. Frank

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[96] Densho: The Japanese American Legacy Project is a digital archive of videotaped interviews, photographs, documents, and other materials relating to the Japanese American experience. Additional information on the project is available at www.densho.org.

[97] Karen A. Franck, *Architecture Timed: Designing with Time in Mind. Architectural Design Profile* (West Sussex, England: John Wiley & Sons, 2016), 15.

[98] Franck, *Architecture Timed*, 15.

[99] Tracy Ellen Schwartz, "*Shaping Whiteclay: Agency and Desire in the Preservation of American Indian Sites"* (PhD diss., University of Oregon, 2014), 39.

Kitamoto, an interned Bainbridge Islander, expressed his fears of another recurrence of the history:

"What is happening to the Muslims is very similar to what happened to us. That will continue until we decide not to let fear dictate our response to events."[100]

Remembering the past and raising vigilance in the present is believed of particular importance to some in the Japanese American community.[101] Having inherited the memory of a former internment, the younger generation Japanese Americans are braver to speak up. In December 2015, in response to Donald Trump's use of the internment of Japanese Americans during WWII as a "justification" to call for banning refugees from Syria, some Bainbridge Island residents held a candlelight vigil at the Bainbridge Island Japanese American Exclusion Memorial.[102] Bainbridge Islander of various ages with various ethnic and cultural backgrounds were involved. Marsha Cutting, though not a member of BIJAC nor involved in creating the memorial, organized and promoted the vigil "in hopes of reminding people why the Japanese American internment camps, and the fear behind them, should not be repeated."[103]

Besides the candlelight vigil, the design and actualization of the memorial was also a cross-racial effort. Not only does the invitation of Indigenous architect Johnpaul Jones to design the memorial state the Japanese American community's acknowledgement of the Indigenous

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[100] Seelye, "A Wall to Remember an Era's First Exiles."

[101] Hayoun, "Muslim ban."

[102] Rachel Anne Seymour, "Islanders object to politicians' statements about internment camps," *Bainbridge Islander*, December 15, 2015, http://archive.kitsapsun.com/news/local/islanders-object-to-politicians-statements-about-internment-camps-26e34ee9-4009-5de1-e053-0100007f10-362436021.html/.

[103] Seymour, "Islanders object to politicians' statements."

land, but also the memorial committee consists of about three-quarters people who are not of Japanese descent, as Lilly Komoda, who is on the Exclusion Memorial board, states,

"The whole community has had a role in making it happen. There are some who did do a lot to get it going, but it really is a community project that will have the support of the whole Bainbridge Island. It's not just a Japanese American project."[104]

In addition, the plan for a future interpretive center at the site will create a space to collect and exhibit memories, knowledge, and culture. Like the intellectual house[105] to the Indigenous people, the interpretive center to the Bainbridge Islanders was an ideal place to build bridges between the older and the younger generations, between the Nikkei and non-Japanese residents, and between the Islanders and visitors. Collectively, the space of the memorial and the events and activities held there can be seen as healing rituals for the older generations and opportunities to build interracial and intergenerational solidarities for the younger generations.

Fusion and non-Fusion:

As one walks down the Taylor Avenue NE in Bainbridge Island to enter the memorial from the south end (Figure 7), it is very hard to define the scene as a "memorial." The overall style of the memorial is a superb showcase of the traditional Japanese gardening concepts, which perfectly fuses into the existing environment of the nearby Prichard Park.

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[104] Vivian Luu, "Japanese American Memorial Project Draws Supporters for Remembrance," *International Examiner*, June 16, 2010, https://iexaminer.org/japanese-american-memorial-project-draws-supporters-for-remembrance/.

[105] "wəɬəbʔaltxʷ – Intellectual House," University of Washington, Accessed August 18, 2021, https://www.washington.edu/diversity/tribal-relations/intellectual-house/.

Figure 7

Though newly created, the memorial adopts very few elements that are commonly viewed as a "modern memorial", such as a huge wall with a portrait or graffiti. Rather, the non-intrusive design of the memorial that complies with the traditional Japanese gardening values demonstrates the community's intention to seek healing, hope, and inspiration, instead of blame, guilt, or shame.[106]

Gardening is no doubt a treasure of the Japanese culture. The architectural form of the memorial not only reminds the younger generations of the rich ethnic culture and values they

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[106] Seymour, "Islanders object to politicians' statements."

have inherited but also signifies the Japanese American community's non-fusion into the white-dominated architectural practices. Historically, racism played a powerful role in persuading Japanese Americans to abandon or mask outwards sign of ethnicity in the architectural design.[107] In Western cities with large Japanese American population, the design and construction of key community institutions was usually an exhibit of how much the Japanese immigrants have blended in as Americans. For example, Seattle's Japanese community adopted a strategy of "invisibility" of the ethnic architectural concepts and implemented more architectural assimilation in building the language school and community hall, in order to "counter racist perceptions of them as inassimilable aliens and ward off exclusionary policy initiatives."[108] Therefore, the ethnic signs in the built environment are critical to express community responses to radical discrimination, particular strategies of resistance to assimilation and recall of ethnic identities, as the later generations desire to practice.

[107] Fiset and Nomura, *Nikkei in the Pacific Northwest*, 120.

[108] Fiset and Nomura, *Nikkei in the Pacific Northwest*, 122.

Conclusion

The Bainbridge Island Japanese American Exclusion Memorial is a gift to the local Japanese American community, who has suffered the historical injustice and continues experiencing the systemic power of racism. The memorial fosters the long-lasting solidarity among races, ethnicities, generations, and so on. Through the multi-generational desire-based framework, this paper interprets the significance of key elements of the memorial and reveals insufficiency, as well.

The linear approach to storytelling is always dangerous. The Japanese American community, as other ethnic minorities in the United States, has been long time overgeneralized by the society. This paper, with the Bainbridge Island Japanese American Exclusion Memorial as a showcase, argues for more recognition of diversity and desires within the community in urban design and planning practices.

Here this paper raises a final question: as conflicting desires held by different generations of Japanese Americans emerge, how should the community resolve it? Taking the implications of this paper, this project plans to further explore the process of community participatory planning in designing the memorial, with a focus on the controversies and conversations among generations.

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