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# Conflict as Occasion for Uncovering Assumptions: What Incarcerating Japanese Persons Reveals About United States Habits of Domination Toward Those Deemed “Other”

PETER SMITH AND ARIEL SWAN

Human conflict is not always thought of as an opportunity. Indeed, many find the other party in a conflict threatening or, even, conflict itself as threatening. Without dismissing the element of threat and danger that often accompanies experiences of conflict, there is much promise in viewing conflict as an opportunity. In particular, conflict invites a critical examination of the assumptions that are held by the parties. After all, without honest examination, assumptions influence in hidden ways that can be destructive. Thus, any given conflict becomes an occasion for exposing assumptions, deepening learning, and, possibly, taking corrective action. Most conceptions of conflict involve some kind of triggering event that makes explicit the opposition of the parties. As a conflict evolves, the parties involved narrate the situation and their histories as part of their engagement in conflict. Such narration always entails subtle, yet powerful, assumptions that drive the ways that the other is viewed and treated. In the scope of this essay, we seek to seize an opportunity in U.S. socio-cultural conflicts to highlight important assumptions that frequently persist, using Japanese Internment during World War II as a representative case and occasion for understanding present-day realities.

Following a brief review of the case of Japanese descendants residing in the United States during WWII, we examine latent assumptions—around hierarchies, control, and threat—that are pervasive in the racialized, colonial worldview that animated particular responses in this time of conflict. Then, we explore assumptions and impacts around this socio-cultural conflict with respect to the Japanese experience as a dominated group, questioned in loyalty and navigating exclusion. Finally, the essay demonstrates the continuing presence of domination-infused assumptions—as they manifest with fresh expressions of enemy creation and mass incarceration along the southern U.S. border—with hopes that it is never too late to learn new habits when conflict is understood as an opportunity.

## **A Representative Case**

The well-documented events during WWII that involved the forced rounding up and holding of persons of Japanese descent living on the U.S. West Coast has been called by different names: internment, detention, imprisonment, etc. Mira Shimabukuro argues persuasively that “mass incarceration” is the best terminology for what happened to 120,000 Japanese descendants in the U.S.<sup>1</sup> Following the December, 1941, military attack on Pearl Harbor—which many would identify as the triggering event for an escalation of animosity between Japan and the United States—President Roosevelt’s Executive Order 9066 was issued in February, 1942. The order did not specifically name Japanese people in its authorization to establish exclusion zones, curfews, and asset seizures as civilian control mechanisms. Nonetheless, the intent was clear and, in March 1942, the War Relocation Authority was created to operationalize the custody and relocation of persons of Japanese descent who lived in the exclusion zones of the U.S. West Coast. This action claimed “military necessity” as its justification for mass incarceration of this segment of the population.<sup>2</sup> Japanese persons, many of whom were U.S. citizens, reported to local government venues for registration and then were relocated to destinations unknown to them.<sup>3</sup> They were detained at temporary assembly centers, like stadiums and racetracks, for several weeks before being moved by train to ten concentration camps in remote areas scattered across mostly non-coastal states. The militarized mass incarceration of persons of Japanese descent in the camps lasted from 1942 until 1945.

## **Assumptions and Context of a Dominating Community**

A significant factor that orients and informs the assumptions of those in conflict has to do with worldview. The category of “worldview” points toward that which is perceived as normative or common sense, the logics by which people learn to operate, and functions as both somewhat visible and hidden simultaneously.<sup>4</sup> Though not monolithic, worldviews have a shape to them, a history, and staying power of significant influence. Many assumptions grow in the soil of a worldview. For example, persons raised in a Japanese worldview, characterized by strong tones of honor/shame, would likely have assumptions that look like this: if one behaves honorably (morally, loyally, hard-working) then one can expect to be treated with honor. With some empathy, one can begin to

imagine the bewildering experience of shame (dishonor) for Japanese descendants to be explicitly identified as suspicious/threatening persons who needed to be incarcerated in a concentration camp, without any formal charges of their acting criminally or dishonorably. Not only were their assumptions radically unmet, the worldview that nourished those assumptions came under assault by another worldview that wielded the military and social power to enforce its pre-eminence.

While the dominant worldview in the U.S. during WWII was not monolithic—nor is it today—there are significant patterns to trace that have been and continue to be stubbornly persistent. The worldview that is predominantly influential in the U.S. has been shaped historically by racialization and colonization and it is this “settler-colonial worldview” that undergirded key assumptions that surfaced in relation to the mass incarceration of Japanese descendants during WWII.<sup>5</sup> We seek to explicate key linkages between assumptions about “a threatening other” and the settler-colonial worldview that makes those assumptions tenable. Such a worldview nurtures assumptions regarding hierarchies, control, and perceived threat that surface in the turmoil of explicit socio-cultural conflict.

## **Hierarchies**

Racialization is interwoven with the drive to categorize and dominate, whether it be identifying genus and species or, more sinisterly, assigning fundamental categories like who is human or less human. The Christendom consensus, as Europeans set out to “discover” and conquer new territories in the late Middle Ages, was that the people groups they were encountering on foreign shores were other and infidels, therefore, they were sub-human.<sup>6</sup> This consensus developed in conjunction with scientific categorization to describe and reify a great hierarchy of life on the planet, with Europeans at its apex.<sup>7</sup> And, since exploration was not undertaken neutrally, but with financial motivations in play, the drive to exploit natural resources found in foreign lands could be most expeditiously carried out if the Europeans need not respect the rights of nor negotiate with fellow humans in those foreign lands. Instead, if the other could be classified as “savage,” “primitive,” or “less-developed,” then a relationship of superior to inferior could justify the dispossession of those living on the land and drawing of boundaries for their exclusion from the moral community.<sup>8</sup>

Within this emerging, racialized, colonial way of structuring the world, Europeans encountered the people of Japan in the mid-16th century. The important thing to highlight, here, is the European racialized quest to fit the Japanese into a hierarchy of life. It was difficult to apply terms like “savage” or “primitive” to this highly complex island culture, yet there were distinct differences that needed to be named and ordered, according to the European worldview—which was committed to Europeans as superior.<sup>9</sup> Morgan Brigg offers helpful insight into ways that European modes of knowledge tended to cast differences solely in substantialist terms: “Difference can be known as a thing, and this is a basis for judging it.”<sup>10</sup> When difference is reified into substantialist terms alone (without reference to relational terms), it places the sovereign knower (Europeans) as above and hubristically superior to what/whom is being categorized.

Transposing this insight into 20th century U.S.A., the inherited, settler-colonial worldview structured how the predominantly European-descended population interacted with Japanese immigrants. For instance, prior to Executive Order 9066, Japanese descendants were regularly discriminated against in immigration policy,<sup>11</sup> in land ownership,<sup>12</sup> and in valuation as trustworthy citizens.<sup>13</sup> The hierarchy of being and substantialist orientation to difference infused in his worldview would lead General DeWitt—military commander of the western U.S.—to explicitly manifest derogatory, settler-colonial assumptions in exclamations like: “A J\*\* is a J\*\*!”<sup>14</sup> Thus, the narrative DeWitt invoked was one whereby cultural origins became fixed coordinates, where Japanese descendants fit into the hierarchy of life, and this substantialist orientation of difference dictated expectations and treatment of such (purportedly) lesser beings.<sup>15</sup>

## Control

Racialized assumptions—including an outsized need for control of the inferior “other”—permeate the settler-colonial worldview under examination. Kelly Brown Douglas has explicated the twisted logic of white supremacy laced into the European colonial project when it comes to the persistent treatment of black bodies as threatening and needing to be controlled.<sup>16</sup> Though Japanese descendants on the U.S. West Coast were never defined as “black”, there are strong parallels when it comes to identifying the dominant culture disposition to control a population deemed as alien and other. Indeed, the fact that Japa-

nese descendants were targeted for control when no parallel order was given to “keep tabs on Americans of German or Italian ancestry during this period”<sup>17</sup> reveals, in part, an outworking of racialization logic.<sup>18</sup> Despite protestations by Japanese Americans that they were loyal and committed to the U.S.A., and in the face of explicit investigations by the federal government to assess the Japanese domestic threat (and find it nonexistent), the need for control of a potential enemy was justified in the language of “military necessity.”<sup>19</sup> Thus, Japanese descendants were identified, ordered to report for detainment, and imprisoned in remote concentration camps: all mechanisms of social control.

Notably, the mass incarceration of Japanese descendants was not a police action. It was a military action, undertaken by the War Relocation Authority and carried out by U.S. soldiers. Thus, the assumption that surfaces is not control as some kind of benign limitation of wayward community members but control as conquering domination, which requires objectification of the enemy—including thousands of U.S. citizens! Thus, a rationality in this socio-cultural conflict was at work, but not one that relied on critical logic, so unexamined assumptions drove behavior. “After the tide of war turned with the American victory at Midway in June 1942, the possibility of serious Japanese attack was no longer credible; detention and exclusion became increasingly difficult to defend. Total control of these civilians [Japanese descendants on the west coast] in the presumed interest of state security was rapidly becoming the accepted norm.”<sup>20</sup> The norm of relating to the other in conflict as an object to be controlled was on full display as an expression of the dominant, settler-colonial worldview.

### **Perceived threat**

A final, albeit complicated, assumption embedded in the settler-colonial worldview that surfaces in the mass incarceration of Japanese descendants during WWII, has to do with the perception of threat and its curious inversion. The settler-colonial worldview is steeped in fear, superiority, and self-righteousness, so the approach to the other is one that assumes the other as a threat to be quashed. This worldview propelled the forcible dispossession of indigenous peoples throughout North America. The dissonant mix of fearfulness and superiority tends toward creating a victim status for the colonizer coupled with the colonizer’s military might (and God-blessed mission?) to wage preemptive warfare on any threatening other. While it is observable that the sheer numbers

of indigenous peoples in North America would have been a source of fear and threat for fledgling, European, settler-colonial communities, this could validate a colonizer narrative of being threatened early on. However, the victim mentality and narration of threatening others seems to have never departed, even when settler-colonizers came to numerically and militarily dominate much of the U.S.A. This is where the curious inversion of threat comes into view because of the misperception and misrepresentation of the minority other as a potentially fatal threat when, in fact, it is the domination of settler-colonialism that represented the more pressing existential threat to Japanese descendants in WWII U.S.A.

Externally, Japanese imperialism in Asia was of notable concern for the U.S.A. and many east Asian countries in the early decades of the 20th century.<sup>21</sup> Undoubtedly, Japanese imperial expansion into Russia, China, Korea, and other territories factored into the sense of threat the U.S. attached to Japan. Yet, was it realistic that such a small percentage of the population on the U.S. west coast could become such a formidable, internal threat to the body politic that Japanese immigrants, mostly U.S. citizens, required mass incarceration? Speaking to this distorted perception, basic conflict theory reminds us that when parties are involved in disputes, their perceptions of threat and power are almost always skewed—each party feels weaker than the other.<sup>22</sup> Most notable, here, is how the perception of threat was deeply influenced by the racialized thinking embedded in settler-colonialism:

Adapting and distorting the work of Charles Darwin and his followers, some social scientists asserted that human life was governed by the evolutionary competition for resources between opposing “races” and that therefore the Japanese were innately hostile to people of European descent. Prominent Americans, drawing on elements from all these sources, warned that Japanese expansionism represented a “yellow peril,” an Asian challenge to “Anglo-Saxon” and Christian civilization.<sup>23</sup>

The imagined hostility of Japanese descendants living on the U.S. west coast was predicated upon a significant racialized assumption held by the dominant culture. Laying the blame for perceived threat on persons of Japanese descent—ostensibly because they would not/could not assimilate satisfactorily—was a way to obfuscate the injustices that settler-colonialism had inflicted historically upon Japanese immigrants. As noted above, the federal government and local

citizens had actively worked to prevent Japanese from immigrating, buying land, and enjoying full rights in the U.S.A., often in the name of economic protectionism and under threat of “racial dilution.”<sup>24</sup> Tellingly, the attitudes and injustices toward Japanese immigrants were not unique to the U.S.A.; they manifest in other settler-colonial societies.<sup>25</sup> Indeed, Day argues that the WWII government actions—in settler-colonial societies—of mass incarceration “and dispossession involved merely an intensifying of a trajectory already in place.”<sup>26</sup> The habits of domination that have come to light in this examination of settler-colonial assumptions so far have corresponding resonances in the experiences of the dominated community.

### **Assumptions and Context of a Dominated Community**

The triggering event of military warfare (the apex of destructive human conflict) brings to the surface latent hostilities between communities. While relationships between European descendants and Japanese descendants in the U.S.A. were strained prior to the outbreak of war, assumptions of the dominant community (traced above) increasingly impacted the daily life of the dominated once war commenced. We turn our attention to the manifestations of assumptions for Japanese descendants in the U.S., in part, to de-objectify those whom the settler-colonial worldview so easily dehumanized.

### **Loyalty**

Arguably, a fairly simplistic moral calculus was operating in 1942 in wartime U.S.A.: when I look at you, can you be trusted or assumed to be “on my side”? Essentially, the question had to do with loyalty. Assumptions were made by the U.S. government (and wide swaths of the European-descended public) that ethnicity of a certain kind determines loyalty (so, persons of Japanese descent can only, truly be loyal to Japan) and that persons of Japanese descent cannot help but be disposed to engage in sabotage of the U.S. war efforts against Japan.<sup>27</sup>

For their part, Japanese descendants—particularly U.S. citizens by birth-right, the Nisei—assumed both before and after Pearl Harbor that they were some of the most loyal citizens in U.S. society.

In spite of the complete blending of Japanese qualities and values into our lives, neither my sister nor I, as children, ever considered ourselves anything

other than Americans. At school we saluted the American flag and learned to become good citizens. All our teachers were white, as were many of our friends. Everything we read was in English, which was, of course, our native tongue. We tried to go on living as normally as possible, behaving as other American citizens. Most Nisei had never been to Japan. The United States of America was our only country and we were totally loyal to it. Wondering how we could make other Americans understand this, we bought defense bonds, signed up for civilian defense, and cooperated fully with every wartime regulation. Still the doubts existed.<sup>28</sup>

Bound up with assumptions regarding loyalty, parties in conflict make assumptions regarding the moral standing of the other, leading to stances of inclusion and exclusion. Those who are excluded from one's moral community do not deserve justice to the same extent that those "on the inside" do. A typical assumption in times of explicit conflict is that "my side" or "my people" deserve respectful treatment and those on the other side, the enemy, deserve very little consideration in how they are treated because their loyalty is questionable.

Negative racial stereotypes portraying the Japanese as subhuman, untrustworthy, and inferior to Caucasian Americans existed from before the war but became exaggerated after Pearl Harbor. Differences between Japanese Americans and Caucasian Americans overrode any commonality of citizenship, and Caucasian Americans saw little reason to include Japanese Americans within their social or moral communities.<sup>29</sup>

### **Experience of Exclusion**

Making assumptions regarding the disloyalty of Japanese descendants justified their harsh treatment as persons outside the bounds of the moral community. It is one thing to describe, from the safety of historical distance, exclusion from the dominant moral community of the U.S. However, the anguish of such exclusion—the weight pressing down from assumptions made about Japanese persons—comes through most powerfully in their own narrative of lived experience.

Executive Order 9066 confirmed our worst fears. The psychological impact of the forced evacuation and detention was deep and devastating. For the honor-conscious Issei [first-generation immigrants], it was the repudiation of many years of effort and hard work in this country. For the Nisei [second-generation

immigrants], it was a rejection by the nation we loved, the nation to which we had pledged our allegiance. As one Nisei who was fifteen at the time he went to Manzanar stated, ‘Suddenly, I became an explicit J\*\*, a beast, a lecherous threat to white womanhood, a person without ethics, totally devious and sneaky, ugly and hated.... It was J\*\*, J\*\*, J\*\*, and it permeated popular radio shows, newspapers, government pronouncements....’<sup>30</sup>

Lurking under the surface in decisions about whom to include and exclude in the social/moral community is the operation of power to both define and enforce those moral judgments. “Power determines not only the boundaries of the moral community but also the range of responses that will be tolerated.”<sup>31</sup> Thus, the Japanese community’s sense of not being fully included and living under domination on the U.S. west coast became more pronounced in the context of explicit socio-cultural conflict during WWII.

The enduring settler-colonial worldview that has been surfaced here—reaching back to earliest colonial days and nurturing racialized assumptions about the “other”, as seen in the mass incarceration of Japanese descendants during WWII—continues to animate assumptions in contemporary instances of socio-cultural conflict. This is the case for both those sharing the worldview from a dominant position and those who tend to occupy dominated status. It is to more current manifestations of assumptions in socio-cultural conflict that we now turn.

### **Domination Patterns in a Contemporary Context**

When highlighting various conflict assumptions that occur while constructing an “other” through the lens of Japanese mass incarceration during WWII, there is potential for connections to be made on a contemporary scale.<sup>32</sup> While some would like to think that the manner in which Japanese descendants were treated during WWII was an anomaly or could never happen again, the examination of this case study, in terms of the assumptions and worldview that reside in the dominant culture vis a vis socio-cultural conflict, invites a more sober assessment. Indeed, it is troubling that the encounter of conflict associated with migrants coming to the U.S. southern border brings to light many of the same assumptions traced above. A significant difference that may be noted between the two groups is the fact that the response to the Japanese American citizens was due to a war, while current refugees and migrants are seeking citizenship.<sup>33</sup>

Thus, while the contexts have important differences, parallels of constructing the “other” can be found. The habits of domination are deeply ingrained in the settler-colonial worldview.

### **Constructing the Enemy**

Currently, the U.S. immigration policies and detainment systems in place have entered into a national conversation about the ethics and accountability of institutions such as the Immigrations and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and border patrol agents.<sup>34</sup> Officially, border patrol agents are not permitted to detain anyone “without a reasonable doubt.”<sup>35</sup> It leaves one to wonder, then, how over 850,000 migrants<sup>36</sup> were detained at the U.S.-Mexico border in the fiscal year of 2019; over 500,000 of these were families fleeing as refugees, and 76,000 of this number were unaccompanied children.<sup>37</sup> What, then, justifies such detainment?

Just as the perceived threat by Japanese descendants in the U.S. created justification for mass incarceration, there can be parallels drawn to the perceived threats built around southern border migrant refugees as they become carelessly stereotyped by some as a group as criminals. A narrative proffered is that migrants are criminals when they cross borders (a misdemeanor offense in U.S. law) and will introduce more criminality into U.S. society. However, studies have shown that in a ten-year data pool, crimes have not increased alongside the increase of migrant refugees entering the U.S.A.; not even a slight correlation.<sup>38</sup> Thus, it is through the construction of the migrant refugee community as the “threatening other” that mass incarceration along the border becomes justified for those deemed “potentially criminal”, not just for convicted criminals. (Note a similarity to the Japanese immigrant experience: being identified as potentially dangerous was enough to justify mass incarceration.) Politically, utilizing some communities’ fears in order to receive votes seems to be an effective strategy for many leaders. In the early 2000s, “Rising concern about crime was manifested in policies requiring deportation of most foreigners convicted of even relatively minor offenses.”<sup>39</sup> Wilsher explains that these legislative norms evolved to be increasingly more broad and absolutist to the point where deportees were officially allowed to be indefinitely detained until their case allowed them to stay or be deported. The perceived threat of migrants as crimi-

nals and perceived unfair economic advantages given to these migrant refugees creates an enemy that the U.S. seeks to control, with military support.<sup>40</sup>

With the fear of the constructed enemy in place, the dominant culture then feels justified to treat the migrant refugee community (categorized as minority and inferior) in unjust ways, using rhetoric and actions that victimize and harm this group. Japanese descendants were routinely jeered at or harassed in public, and there are contemporary reports of comparable behavior in the dominant (white) culture's treatment of the migrant refugee community. Hispanic migrants, regardless of their legal status, have experienced similar victimization that includes slurs, being spat upon, or exploitation.<sup>41</sup>

### **The Persistence of a Settler-Colonial Worldview**

From World War Two, the attitude of “If I look at you, I can tell immediately if I can trust you” continues to manifest from within the settler-colonial worldview today in terms of the migrant refugee detainment. Amidst the commonplace racism toward refugees living within the United States,<sup>42</sup> the perceived enemy of a people group with Central and Southern-American heritage has been constructed as the other. In the discourse about deporting migrants, the language dehumanizes in order to increase the perceived need for institutional control.<sup>43</sup> Wong explains that the more refugees are seen as “objects of control,” they do not need to be viewed as “subjects of rights.” Or, in terminology utilized above, migrant refugees are seen as outside the moral community and their welfare need not be of much concern to those enforcing the social hierarchy, with its racialized privileges and exclusions. Thus, the trajectory of fear, constructing the enemy, and continued dehumanization leads to a place where many migrants are seen as the enemy, including 500,000 family units and 76,000 children, who must be preemptively incarcerated, much like Japanese descendants during WWII.

### **Conclusion**

It is important to note that the disturbing pattern of assumptions connected to worldview that has been traced here with respect to the “other” in a socio-cultural conflict—whether historical or current—cannot be reduced to a malady of the non-progressive or uneducated. This is often tempting to do when a more liberal critique of history and current practice are brought to bear. Indeed,

it is instructive to be reminded that “New Deal liberals were the architects and proponents of the [WWII mass incarceration] camps.”<sup>44</sup> Simply having a more left-leaning political orientation does not automatically free one from settler-colonial worldview assumptions about the “other”. Indeed, just as current government policies and practices toward refugees at the U.S. southern border make claims of being justified and reasonable, the same rationale was operating in the mass incarceration of Japanese descendants during WWII.<sup>45</sup>

Nonetheless, for those under the sway of settler-colonialism, there is still opportunity today for learning more constructive conflict engagement with the “other”. Further research on the difference between racism, non-racism, and anti-racism may be a good foundation to build for those who are willing to introspectively address how the settler-colonial worldview shapes assumptions when one encounters socio-cultural conflicts. As the patterns throughout U.S. history and contemporary events have shown, it will take more than passive patience or personal disagreement to dismantle harmful, habitual assumptions about any community that has been designated as a “threatening other”. Understanding these assumptions that recur and how they contribute to social conflict can be a helpful step as communities and individuals address the ways that harmful assumptions need to be named and then re-oriented away from domination and toward humanization of the other.

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Mira Shimabukuro, *Relocating Authority: Japanese Americans Writing to Redress Mass Incarceration*, (Boulder: University of Colorado Press, 2015), 11. She recognizes that mass incarceration is often used for naming African American treatment in the criminal justice system but suggests that a better term for that phenomenon is hyper-incarceration, since mass incarceration does not take time to make distinctions regarding things like the rights of citizens vs. non-citizens. All Japanese in west coast states’ “exclusion zones” were systematically rounded up and held without due process of any kind.
- <sup>2</sup> United States Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians, *Personal Justice Denied: Report of the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians*, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2012), 6.
- <sup>3</sup> Yoshiko Uchida tells a representative story of personal experience, noting the shock and trauma of suddenly needing to wrap up life in the only house she had ever known, selling possessions for a pittance, and packing only what one could personally carry for a trip with unknown destination and duration. Yoshiko Uchida, *Desert Exile: The Uprooting of a Japanese American Family*, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2015).
- <sup>4</sup> Glenn Sunshine, *Why You Think the Way You Do: The Story of Western Worldviews from Rome to Home*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009), 13-16.

- <sup>5</sup> The ways that racialization and colonization are intertwined as mutually reinforcing discourses (indeed, often in a religious matrix) has been demonstrated in more detail elsewhere. See, for instance, Ibram Kendi, *Stamped from the Beginning: The Definitive History of Racist Ideas in America* (New York: Nation Books, 2016); Willie Jennings, *The Christian Imagination: Theology and the Origins of Race* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010); Joel E. Garza, *America's Unholy Ghosts: The Racist Roots of Our Faith and Politics* (Eugene: Cascade Books, 2019); Luis Rivera, *A Violent Evangelism: The Political and Religious Conquest of the Americas* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992).
- <sup>6</sup> Mark Charles and Soong-Chan Rah, *Unsettling Truths: The Ongoing, Dehumanizing Legacy of the Doctrine of Discovery* (Downer's Grove: Intervarsity Press, 2019), 1-81.
- <sup>7</sup> One of the earliest hierarchies imagined by colonizing Europeans in North America asserted the superiority of western civilization and Christianity over against all indigenous societies, which were by default deemed inferior. The most notorious example of this is the Trail of Tears relocations of 60,000+ indigenous peoples in the 1830s, yet significant aspects of a similar logic were in play with Japanese descendants in the U.S. during WWII.
- <sup>8</sup> This colonial pattern across territories—and applicability to the current essay—is traced convincingly in Iyko Day's "Alien Intimacies: The Coloniality of Japanese Internment in Australia, Canada, and the U.S.," *Amerasia* 36, no.2 (2010): 107-124.
- <sup>9</sup> See Jennings's Figure 1 which attempts to visualize salvific possibilities, one organizing element of the hierarchical, settler-colonial worldview, 36.
- <sup>10</sup> Morgan Brigg, "From Substantialist to Relational Difference in Peace and Conflict Studies," in *Rethinking Peace: Discourse, Memory, Translation, and Dialogue*, eds. Alexander Laban Hinton, Georgio Shani, and Jeremiah Alberg (London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2019), 193.
- <sup>11</sup> See Lon Kurashige, *Two Faces of Exclusion: The Untold History of Anti-Asian Racism in the United States* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2016).
- <sup>12</sup> "Ignoring the fact that Japanese farmers owned barely 10,000 of California's 500,000,000 acres of farmland, white agitators charged that the Japanese were seizing control of the state's food supply." Greg Robinson, *By Order of the President: FDR and the Internment of Japanese Americans* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), 15.
- <sup>13</sup> Munson, an investigator assigned to gather intelligence on Japanese descendants in the western USA before the war, concluded that they would be very quiet if war broke out. *Ibid.*, 66. Contra this opinion and exerting more influence overall, California's Attorney General, Earl Warren "warned of the danger to security posed by the propinquity of Japanese American enclaves to dams, bridges, harbors," etc. Geoffrey Smith, "Racial Nativism and the Origins of Japanese American Relocation," in *Japanese Americans: From Relocation to Redress*, eds. Sandra C. Taylor, Roger Daniels, and Harry H. L. Kitano, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2013), 81.
- <sup>14</sup> DeWitt's racialized gaze remains on display as "he distinguished between 'loyal' and 'disloyal' Japanese Americans, an idea consistent with his Western cavalry family tradition of recognizing 'good injuns' from 'bad' ones." Brian Masaru Hayashi, *Democratizing the Enemy: The Japanese American Internment* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 79.
- <sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 107.
- <sup>16</sup> Kelly Brown Douglas, *Stand Your Ground: Black Bodies and the Justice of God* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2015).
- <sup>17</sup> Robinson, 59.

- <sup>18</sup> This logic was inconsistent at best. In one respect, there was contextual precedent: “Pseudoscientific literature began to discuss the inferiority of Eastern and Southern European stock as well as the ‘yellow people.’ Madison Grant’s 1917 work *The Passing of the Great Race* argued that immigration was ‘mongrelizing’ America...” United States Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians, 38. In another respect, action was curiously uneven. Beyond seeming to ignore German and Italian descendants as threats, Japanese communities living in the U.S. Midwest and Hawaii were largely left to carry on during the war without being subject to mass incarceration.
- <sup>19</sup> Robinson, 66.
- <sup>20</sup> United States Commission, 12.
- <sup>21</sup> Teddy Roosevelt and Franklin Roosevelt both had notable admiration for Japan and personal relationships with Japanese, yet both remained (surprisingly?) wary of Japanese power, especially naval power, as an expression of imperial ambitions in the Pacific Rim. Robinson, 11-29.
- <sup>22</sup> Joyce Hocker and William Wilmot, *Interpersonal Conflict* (New York: McGraw Hill, 2018), 62-65, 127-130.
- <sup>23</sup> Robinson, 9. Emphasis added.
- <sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 29.
- <sup>25</sup> Iyko Day, “Alien Intimacies: The Coloniality of Japanese Internment in Australia, Canada, and the U.S.,” *Amerasia* 36, no. 2 (2010): 115-116. She demonstrates the pervasiveness of the settler-colonial worldview’s assumptions in regard to threat when she maps a “transcolonial framework of internment” that connects settler-colonial ways of dominating both indigenous and other “alien” people groups—specifically Japanese—across nation-states.
- <sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 117.
- <sup>27</sup> These two assumptions were used to justify the President’s Executive Order 9066 and, eventually, came to be seen as faulty in the work of the commission set up to investigate what happened during this time period. United States Commission, 6-7.
- <sup>28</sup> Uchida, 37, 52.
- <sup>29</sup> Donna Nagata, “The Japanese-American Internment: Perceptions of Moral Community, Fairness, and Redress,” *Journal of Social Issues* 46, No. 1, (1990): 135.
- <sup>30</sup> Amy Iwasaki Mass “Psychological Effects of the Camps on Japanese Americans,” in *Japanese Americans: From Relocation to Redress*, eds. Sandra C. Taylor, Roger Daniels, and Harry H. L. Kitano, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2013), 160.
- <sup>31</sup> Nagata, 141.
- <sup>32</sup> Tellingly, Japanese Americans have been some of the most vocal opponents regarding the use of contemporary concentration camps. See, for instance, Molly Hennessy-Fiske, “Japanese Internment Camp Survivors Protest Ft. Sill Migrant Detention Center,” *Los Angeles Times*, June 22, 2019, sec. World & Nation, <https://www.latimes.com/nation/la-na-japanese-internment-fort-sill-2019-story.html>; Meagan Flynn, “For Japanese Americans, the Debate over What Counts as a ‘concentration Camp’ Is Familiar,” *The Washington Post*, June 20, 2019, sec. Morning Mix, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2019/06/20/concentration-camps-alexandria-ocasio-cortez-japanese-americans/>; and David Horowitz, “Camp Survivors Call on Japanese Americans to Oppose Immigrant Detainment,” *San Francisco Examiner*, February 7, 2020, sec. The City, <https://www.sfoxaminer.com/news/camp-survivors-call-on-japanese-americans-to-oppose-immigrant-detainment/>.

- <sup>33</sup> Indeed, a notable difference between the Japanese descendants during WWII and Latin American migrants more recently at the southern US border has to do entirely with citizenship status. That is, 70% of Japanese descendants who were mass incarcerated were document-holding citizens of the USA. Migrants at the border are seeking entry and, often, citizenship. If the US government was willing to disregard the rights of citizens for mass incarceration, it is unsurprising, but no less troubling on a human rights level, to see mass incarceration of those seeking to cross the border.
- <sup>34</sup> Tom Wong, *Rights, Deportation, and Detention in the Age of Immigration Control* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2015), 121.
- <sup>35</sup> Eileen Truax, *How Does it Feel to be Unwanted? Stories of Resistance and Resilience from Mexicans Living in the United States*, trans. Diane Stockwell (Boston: Beacon Press, 2018), 91.
- <sup>36</sup> “Southwest Border Migration FY 2019,” U.S. Customs and Border Protection, November 14, 2019, <https://www.cbp.gov/newsroom/stats/sw-border-migration/fy-2019>.
- <sup>37</sup> “Behind the Record Number of Children Detained at the US-Mexico Border This Year,” PBS News Hour, October 30, 2019, <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/behind-the-record-number-of-children-detained-at-the-u-s-mexico-border-this-year>.
- <sup>38</sup> Anna Flagg, “Is there a Connection Between Undocumented Immigrants and Crime?” The Marshall Project, May 13, 2019, <https://www.themarshallproject.org/2019/05/13/is-there-a-connection-between-undocumented-immigrants-and-crime>.
- <sup>39</sup> Daniel Wilsher, *Immigration Detention: Law, History, Politics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 59. Truax also notes that many of the misdemeanors committed were nothing more than one’s illegal immigration status itself, 34.
- <sup>40</sup> Though the language of “military necessity” has not been used directly (as it was for Japanese American mass incarceration), the increasing deployment of U.S. military forces (under Democrat and Republican administrations) in supporting roles to the Border Patrol indicates an implicit belief or assumption that a similar logic is at work. See Jim Garamone, “DOD Officials Testify on Military Support to Southwest Border,” US Department of Defense, January 29, 2019, <https://www.defense.gov/Explore/News/Article/Article/1743120/dod-officials-testify-on-military-support-to-southwest-border/> and “Border Militarization Policy,” National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights, accessed February 24, 2020, <https://nnirr.org/drupal/border-militarization>.
- <sup>41</sup> Truax, 10-16.
- <sup>42</sup> Truax, all.
- <sup>43</sup> Wong, 29.
- <sup>44</sup> Jessie Kindig, “The Ghost of Japanese Internment,” Jacobin, December 30, 2016, <https://www.jacobinmag.com/2016/12/trump-muslim-registry-japanese-internment-wwii-concentration-camps/>.
- <sup>45</sup> *Ibid.* “Aided by decades of anti-Asian fears, government and military officials believed wartime imprisonment to be normal, routine, prudent, and humane. America’s concentration camps were no such thing.” It is reasonable, unfortunately, to draw similar conclusions about today’s detention practices.

