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**How They Coped with Trauma:
The Story of Japanese Families in Post-War Canada**

Jak se vyrovnali s traumatem:
příběh japonských rodin v poválečné Kanadě

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7. května 2012

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Abstract

In my diploma thesis I focus on the story of Japanese Canadian families in post-war Canada and its reflection in literature. I try to reconstruct a picture of the war and post-war experience of these families who were deprived of their houses and businesses by the Canadian government, women and children interned in relocation camps whereas men were sent to special work camps.

The theoretical part deals with the history of the Japanese in Canada and the changes in Canadian immigration policy. The aim of this thesis is to answer how the Japanese Canadians coped with their wartime trauma. For that reason, an analysis of two fictional books and an autobiography follows.

Anotace

Ve své diplomové práci se zaměřím na příběh japonsko-kanadských rodin v poválečné Kanadě a na jeho literární ztvárnění. Pokusím se zrekonstruovat obraz rodin, kterým kanadská vláda zabavila domy a živnosti; ženy a děti poslala do vzdálených relokačních táborů a muže do speciálních pracovních táborů.

Teoretická část se zabývá historií Japonců v Kanadě a změnami kanadské imigrační politiky. Cílem diplomové práce je zodpovědět otázku, jak se japonští Kanadčané vypořádali s válečným traumatem. Z tohoto důvodu bude následovat rozbor dvou fikčních děl a jedné autobiografie.

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Introduction

Choosing this topic for my diploma thesis had several reasons. Firstly, having had an opportunity to visit Canada, staying there for some time and having a chance to encounter some of its inhabitants, I found a great interest in this country as well as its history, literature and culture. Canada is like the whole world in one country. There can be found diverse cultures and ethnicities from all continents.

Secondly, the Japanese have an interesting history in Canada which is worth dealing with. According to Statistics Canada, the Japanese Canadians nowadays represent the ninth largest non-European ethnic group in Canada. In 2001, their number reached just above 85,000, which makes up 0,3% of the Canadian population.¹ Besides, it is one of the fastest growing communities.

The Japanese community also counts among the most integrated ones (Ayukawa 328 2004). How is it possible in the view of the extreme discrimination and hardship they went through during and after World War II? They were imprisoned in labour and internment camps during the war. Moreover, their properties had been confiscated and never given back. How were they able to overcome all the obstacles they were facing? What made them stay in a country where they were not wanted? How did they cope with their cultural heritage? What was the role of women?

Lastly, I feel that Canada, although being larger, has always been in the shadow of its neighbouring country, the United States. When thinking about this country, many people imagine beautiful landscapes of high rocky mountains, emerald lakes, blue rivers and colourful autumn trees, but only a little is known about this diverse country in the Czech Republic. Therefore, I would like to approach a segment of its history and make it familiar (not only) to Czech readers despite the fact that it is not a period of time one would be particularly proud of. On the contrary, it is rather a “black stain” in Canadian history.

In my diploma thesis I will use factual as well as fictional resources. The first section of this thesis will look at the Japanese in Canada during different periods of time beginning with their arrival to Canada and continuing with their position in the society before, during and after World War II. I will also deal with the history of immigration to

¹ <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/89-621-x/89-621-x2007013-eng.htm>

Canada, the concept of multiculturalism and the changes in Canadian immigration policy introduced by Pierre Elliott Trudeau.

One chapter will be devoted to the subject of trauma as perceived by psychologists. It will consider causes of trauma as well as its consequences. The main goal of my thesis is to answer the question of how the Japanese Canadian community dealt with the trauma of dislocation in the Second World War, notably which coping strategies they used.

The last theoretical part will discuss the revitalization of the Japanese Canadian community and its long and exhausting struggle for redress. Why did the Japanese Canadians fought for redress? What took them so long to reach it? And what were they achievements?

Practical part will focus on the Japanese experience depicted in fictional and non-fictional accounts of recognized Japanese Canadians. I will analyse two novels by Joy Kogawa and Hiromi Goto respectively, in addition to the autobiography of the most recognized Canadian environmentalist, David Suzuki, who witnessed the internment camps himself.

PART I

1 The Japanese Community in Canada

Numerous people around the world eat sushi, drive Toyota, Nissan or Lexus cars, take pictures with Sony cameras, read manga comics or practice martial arts. This is only a fraction of things that Japan has given not only to Canada but the world in general. However, only a handful of the world population realizes that Japanese history in North America used to be very harsh.

The Japanese immigration to Canada started in the late 19th century. Although their history on the American continent is not long, it is unique. Not only did they have to work hard, moreover they had to face racism and injustice. They were denied their rights. During the Second World War they were considered enemies, therefore relocated into interment or labour camps, whereas their property was confiscated and never given back.

1.1 The Beginnings of the Japanese Immigration to Canada

Up to this day, specific Japanese words referring to Japanese generations abroad are used not only in Canada, but also in other countries which became destinations of Japanese immigrants. These contain the Japanese word *sei* meaning *generation* and a numerical prefix signifying *first*, *second* etc. and are explained in the following chart.

<i>Issei</i>	Japanese-born people, first generation in Canada
<i>Nisei</i>	Canadian-born, second generation in Canada
<i>Sansei</i>	Canadian-born, third generation in Canada
<i>Yonsei</i>	Canadian-born, fourth generation in Canada
<i>Nikkei</i>	People of Japanese descent living elsewhere but in Japan
<i>Kibei</i>	Nisei generation sent back to Japan in their childhood to gain proper education

Table 1: Japanese Generations Abroad (According to Goemaere 3 2002)

The first known Japanese in Canada was Manzo Nagano, who arrived in British Columbia in 1877. However, emigration from overpopulated Japan was not legally permitted until eight years later when the Japanese government allowed its inhabitants to go to Hawaii and work there on sugar-cane plantations for a three-year period. Since

then the Japanese immigration to North America had begun. Due to the fact that the United States dramatically restricted and in the end halted Japanese immigration, more immigrants flowed to Canada. By the early 1900s their number counted several thousands. Vanessa Goemaere (16 2002) states that there were about 5,000 people of Japanese ancestry in Canada at the turn of the 19th century. Ann Sunahara writes that most Japanese came from agricultural areas or fishing villages in Japan and settled in Vancouver, Victoria or the surroundings. Others continued to farms in Fraser Valley. They worked in fishing, lumbering, sawmills, pulp mills but basically they were dispersed along the whole Pacific coast except a small number of those who settled in Alberta, mainly Edmonton and close to Lethbridge.²

Until 1907 most immigrants were male. They settled in Canada in order to escape their overpopulated country, its class limitations, and rising militarism. Nevertheless, the large influx of immigrants raised strong animosity and the Japanese were forced to live in separate communities.

Immigrants were usually underpaid; the white population therefore feared that they would be made redundant. Besides they were afraid that the Asians would exceed the white population which by 1901 counted about 125,000 in B.C. Due to the Anglo-Japanese business alliance, Canada as a British colony could not do much about Japanese immigrants. However, it gradually restricted Chinese immigration by imposing a head tax on these immigrants which by 1904 was \$500. As a response to this measure, a wave of riots swept through the city and a crowd of angry white men went through Vancouver's Chinatown and the neighbouring Japanese quarter where they broke windows by throwing bricks into them. This laid the foundations of establishing Asiatic Exclusion League in August 1907 (Roy 49 2004). As a result, the following year, a Lemieux-Hayashi Gentlemen's Agreement was passed whereby Japanese immigration to Canada was restricted to 400 men per year (Ayukawa 328 2004). However, this did not include their wives or family members. The existence of Asiatic Exclusion League lasted a little more than a year, and in 1921, unrelated to its predecessor, another Asiatic Exclusion League was founded. Nonetheless, neither survived long (Roy 49 2004; Ayukawa 328 2004).

Asians living in Canada were not allowed to marry women of other races, as interracial marriages were forbidden, and since wives were not included in the Lemieux

² <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/articles/japanese-canadians>

Agreement, a great number of men brought in *picture brides* – women they knew only from photographs. This replaced Japanese tradition of arranged marriages which were matched on the basis of backgrounds and social compatibility. Males already settled in Canada could not usually afford to go to Japan, therefore photos of the future bride and bridegroom were exchanged, “and the marriages were conducted by proxy, then registered in the village records” (Ayukawa 487 2004). After six months, the brides travelled to Canada to join their husbands. Ayukawa (ibid. 487) adds that:

Although some brides refused to honour their marriage commitment, the majority settled into the ‘arranged’ union, awakening to the reality of a hard life, making extraordinary sacrifices, and helping to create stable homes and communities for the next generation, the Nisei.

Primarily by this method, about 6,000 women arrived and settled in Canada between 1923 and 1926 (ibid. 487). Even though the Japanese immigration had been restricted to 400 males by year, the white population, seeing a persisting influx of Asians, was horrified. Hence the agreement was adjusted and consequently the total Japanese immigration was reduced to 150 per year, and by the 1930s it even dropped to a mere 50 per year (Ayukawa 328 2004).

1.2 The Japanese Community before World War II

As has already been mentioned that due to the white population’s hostility, and due to the “‘boss’ system of hiring where English-speaking Japanese labour contractors negotiated jobs and arranged housing” (Ayukawa 328 2004), the Japanese lived in segregated communities. These were called “Little Tokyo” or *nihon machi* (Japantown) (Goemaere 16 2002). The two main ones were in the fishing village of Steveston near Vancouver, and in downtown Vancouver – along Powell Street neighbouring with Chinatown. Others could have been found in Fraser or Okanagan Valley, in towns along the Pacific coast or on Vancouver Island. Basically, one-third of the Japanese population lived within 60 km (40 miles) of central Vancouver.³

The Japanese were omitted from the mainstream jobs and usually worked in fishing, lumbering, mining or sawmills. Moreover, in the 1920s the federal government

³ <http://www.sedai.ca/news/pre-wwii-communities/>

introduced a limited number of their issued fishing licences and thus prevented them from making a living through traditional occupations. The next restriction came with the Great Depression when the BC government declined to issue them logging licences, and paid them less in social assistance than to white workers.⁴

With the arrival of women, the number of settled men and women became more balanced and hence the community started to grow. The second generation, the *Nisei*, were born. Despite having received higher education and better knowledge in English, they were excluded from common jobs. They continued to be subjected to prejudices, and even university graduates were not offered any better jobs than manual labour.

There were only “a few white-collar jobs” and these were within the community. Moreover, the *Nisei* did not usually have sufficient knowledge of the Japanese language which was essential to perform similar occupations and they had to attend language schools (Ayukawa 328 2004).

The Japanese had arrived in Canada (as well as the United States) with a vision of the New World and a better life. However, their dreams soon dissolved in the harsh reality. Therefore, within their isolated communities, they tried to maintain “ordinary” life and to be self-contained. They established their own community halls, Japanese language schools, Christian churches and Buddhist temples. They opened their own hospitals with Japanese Canadian staff trained in the United States and Japan. Also, they set up unions and co-operative associations to be able to trade with their products and fish. Concerning cultural life, they formed “community and cultural associations for self-help and social events.”⁵ In order to serve their needs, they established their own businesses which helped them to better their lives. Moreover, they created new working positions and could thus employ Japanese newcomers. “By 1941, there were more than 100 clubs and organizations within a tightly knit community of 23 000 individuals, half of whom were children,” according to Ann Sunahara.⁶ In the late 1930s, they also started *The New Canadian*, the first English-language *Nikkei* newspaper.

The relation of the *Issei* and the Whites was primarily based on the economy. On the contrary, the *Nisei* (second generation) was more influenced by the North American

⁴ <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/articles/japanese-canadians>

⁵ <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/articles/japanese-canadians>

⁶ <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/articles/japanese-canadians>

culture and got used to being incorporated into wider community. Nevertheless, they were still denied the right to vote.

Although some attempts to acquire the franchise, the right to vote, were recorded already at the beginning of the 20th century, majority of Japanese Canadians had to wait for it several years after the World War II. Even though enlistment of the *Issei* in the First World War was not pursued by the federal government, 222 Japanese men were eventually accepted. Of these, “54 were killed and 13 men received the Military Medal of Bravery.”⁷ By participating in the First World War they expressed their loyalty to Canada, yet they “had to fight another battle on the home front, to win the right to vote.”⁸ In 1931 only the *Issei* veterans were granted the right to vote. Nevertheless, other Japanese Canadians did not give up and in 1936 another attempt to obtain the franchise was made. A delegation travelled “to Ottawa to speak before the Special Committee on Elections and Franchise Acts”⁹ but did not succeed.

Inspired by their predecessors, the *Nisei* men were willing to serve in the Canadian army during the Second World War. Nonetheless, only 32 of them were accepted in regular service (most of them did not live in BC) and additional 119 *Nisei* were enlisted in 1945 in Canadian Intelligence Corps. Paradoxically, families of those who were serving in the Canadian army and thus demonstrating their loyalty to Canada were treated as others Japanese Canadians – expelled, dispossessed and relocated. Yet the enlisted Japanese Canadians were not given the franchise any earlier than in 1949 together with the rest of Japanese Canadian population.¹⁰

1.3 Canada in War

Having witnessed destruction of the First World War, which cost a great number of lives as well as money and left the country’s unity unstable, neither common population nor Canadian politicians intended to participate in another great war. However, Canada provided to be much appreciated help in the Second World War. All forces of Canadian Army were engaged – mainland divisions, air force and navy.

⁷ <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/articles/japanese-canadians>

⁸ <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/articles/japanese-canadians>

⁹ <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/articles/japanese-canadians>

¹⁰ <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/articles/japanese-canadians>

1.3.1 The Main Theatre of Action

Canada declared war on Germany on 10 September 1939. Initial government intentions did not support overseas conscription. Nevertheless, after the Allies' defeat in Western Europe in the summer of 1940 and the surrender of France scared Canadians so much that in 1940 at first only home defence inscription but later also overseas was introduced. By 1943, after lengthy preparations Canada sent to Europe in total 3 infantry and 2 armoured divisions which were a part of the First Canadian Army.

In August of 1942, the Canadian Second Division took part in the unsuccessful raid on Dieppe, France, when 5,000 got into strong enemy defence and it finished in a disaster. Only a small amount escaped without being wounded, captured or killed. The First Division took part in the invasion of Sicily in July 1943 and progressed to mainland Italy. This division was later joined by the Fifth Canadian Armoured Division and together they played an important role in breaking Hitler and Gothic Lines as the allied forces advanced to the north of Italian mainland. Soon the Canadian troops were required to move to the Northwest Europe, which happened early in 1945 (Granatstein 573 2004).

In Northwest Europe, the Canadians, commanded by Harry Crerar, were engaged in the Normandy Campaign. There, as Granatstein (573 2004) mentions: "the Canadians played their part in closing the Falaise Gap, clearing the Channel ports, and in opening the Scheldt Estuary, the latter desperate struggle in autumn 1944 fought in mud and cold." With fierce fights the troops were in need of reinforcements, but Canada did not have any more trained men except the 60,000 conscripts for home defence. Even though Quebec had voted against overseas conscription, and despite difficulties within his government, the then Canadian Prime Minister Mackenzie King decided to send 10,000 of these conscripts to Europe.

Next to the previously mentioned battles in Northwest Europe, the Canadian Army successfully fought in 1945 in the Battle of Rhineland, where they helped to push back the Germans. Another considerable act was in April and May 1945, the liberation of the Netherlands and asylum of their monarchy which guaranteed that country's eternal gratitude.

1.3.2 Air Force

The Royal Canadian Force participated in managing the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan which turned out to be a huge operation. Out of 131,000 aircrew almost 73,000 were Canadian, and out of total expenditures of \$2.2 billion Canada paid \$1.6 billion (Granatstein 572 2004).

About 250,000 men and women formed 77 squadrons, of which 48 squadrons were overseas, and thus created a quarter of the Royal Air Force's aircrew. A significant role was played by the group of No 6 Bombers which participated in the campaign against Germany and its night bombing.¹¹ (et ibid. 573)

Canadian airmen operated from Europe to North Africa or Southeast Asia. Together with US air forces they fought against the Japanese off the Pacific coast - in the Aleutian Islands.

1.3.3 Navy

The Canadian Royal Navy was small at the onset but by 1945 expanded into the world's third largest fleet. It employed about 100,000 men and women. Stacey states that "its primary task was convoy, protecting the troop and supply ships across the Atlantic."¹² And Granatstein (573 2004) adds that it "escorted half of all ships to Britain." Besides, Canadian corvettes were in charge of fighting against the U-boats.

1.3.4 Other Canadians Serving

The Canadian war engagement implied the mobilization of the whole society. Those women who did not join the armed forces worked in industry and thousands of them had to move from rural areas in order to be able to work in factories. Next to industry, an increase in the production by the nation's farms was needed. By 1942 Britain could no more afford to pay for goods, therefore at that time richer Canada introduced a Mutual Aid programme and "gave away billions in armaments and food to the UK and other allies" (Granatstein 572 2004).

¹¹ <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/articles/second-world-war-wwii>

¹² <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/articles/second-world-war-wwii>

1.3.5 Balance in Figures

However smaller than in the First World War, the cost of the victory was still huge. Canadian population at that time counted 11 million people. Out of 1.1 million Canadians serving, 42,042 were fatal casualties and 54,414 wounded (Granatstein 573 2004). War expenditures did not stop with the end of the war but continued until 1950. On the war itself Canada spent almost \$22 billion. Nevertheless, with other expenditures included the amount reached over \$33 billion.¹³

1.4 Japanese during the World War II

If the Japanese were a target of racial discrimination already during the immigration period, then what came during the Second World War was much worse. Even the potentially greater enemies, the German-born Germans, were not treated in such manners as the Canadian-born Japanese.

1.4.1 Japan in War

In the 1930s, Japan was fighting against China as the Japanese were eager to expand. In order to enlarge their land, they intended to annex the economically prosperous Australia and New Zealand. Since Germany seemed to be winning in the WWII, Japan assumed that an alliance with Germany would facilitate their expansion, and signed a pact with Germany and Italy. This step raised the disapproval of the United States which acted in the same way as Britain and the Netherlands and introduced an embargo on goods exported to Japan. “These exports being crucial to the country, Japan had to rapidly decide whether to accept American demands to abandon their colonial possessions or to make a military breakthrough” (Goemaere 23 2002). In order to defend its imperial growth, on 7 December 1941 Japan attacked the American naval base Pearl Harbour, Hawaii. This unexpected assault killed about 2,300 American servicemen and civilians, and had in fact started the Pacific War, for the Japanese North Americans most probably the worst period of their lives.

Japan also besieged Hong Kong and Singapore, which surrendered in 1942. Moreover, Japan was proceeding in a fast manner in Southeast Asia, therefore the

¹³ <http://www.canadaatwar.ca/content-7/world-war-ii/facts-and-information/>

United States and Canada feared that it could also attack Hawaii or the West Coast. Mass hysteria, strengthened by the media, broke out among the white population.

1.4.2 Japanese Canadians during the Second World War

Even though the majority of them were Canadian citizens, the Japanese were commonly called the “Yellow Peril”. They were viewed as enemy aliens, and it was feared that they may expand even within the North American continent. Because of this and the fact that they were suspected of converting their fishing boats into a war fleet, their fishing vessels were confiscated and the Japanese fishermen were prevented from fishing, their way of making a living. 2,000 of them lost their jobs.

As the other three Japanese-language newspapers were banned, *The New Canadian* remained the only permitted newspaper. It converted into a bilingual publication and became the major source of “community news, and government policy directives.”¹⁴

At first, the federal government was quite reluctant, however, with increasing pressure from racist BC politicians it introduced the War Measures Act and ordered to remove all the Japanese living within the “protected area” – area of 160 kilometres (100 miles) of the Pacific coast. In her article Ann Sunahara continues:

At the time the government claimed that Japanese Canadians were being removed for reasons of ‘national security’, despite the fact that the removal order was opposed by Canada’s senior military and RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] officers who stated that Japanese Canadians posed no threat to Canada’s security.¹⁵

Some politicians allegedly opposed that the removal was necessary as to protect the Japanese Canadians from white violence. Others profited from this issue in their political careers (Goemaere 30 2002).

¹⁴ <http://www.canadiannikkei.ca/blog/japanese-canadan-timeline/>

¹⁵ <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/articles/japanese-canadians>

1.4.3 Expulsion

During the Second World War, there were about 24,000 Japanese in the whole of Canada.¹⁶ In 1942, about 21,000 citizens of Japanese ancestry, of whom 75 per cent were Canadian-born or naturalized, were forced to abandon their homes and were temporarily kept in livestock enclosures in Hastings Park at Vancouver's Pacific Exhibition Grounds. When leaving their homes, Japanese Canadians were sometimes given no more than 24 hours to pack "while only Japanese nationals were incarcerated" (Goemaere 30 2002). Afterwards, some of them were sent to "ghost towns" or hastily built camps such as Lemon Creek, Slocan City, New Denver, Greenwood, Kaslo, Tashme etc. in BC's interior. These detention camps were usually destined for children, women and aged persons while men were often sent to work in railroad camps. Others, in order to keep the families together, moved to sugar-beet farms in Alberta or Manitoba, places with labour shortages. About 700 men who rejected to abandon the restricted area and to leave their families were interned in prisoner-of-war camps in Ontario, first in Petawawa, then in Angler.¹⁷

The property and belongings of expelled Japanese were confiscated by Custodian of Enemy Alien Property. Later, in mid 1942 and beginning of 1943, their property including houses, farms, fishing boats etc. was sold for a fraction of real value, moreover, without the owners' consent who received only a part of the proceeds. Unlike the prisoners of war protected by Geneva Convention, the Japanese internees were charged for their internment. "Their movements were restricted and their mail censored."¹⁸

1.4.4 Internment and Relocation Camps

Generally, the living conditions were very poor. Only the fact that they were kept in livestock enclosures in Hastings Park implies enough. They lived in stables and barnyards. Enormous amount of people lived in one place with almost no privacy, very little heating in winter time, and on the top of that in unsanitary environment. The situation was so bad that the internees were given provisions sent from war-torn Japan (Goemaere 2002 30).

¹⁶ <http://www.sedai.ca/news/internment/>

¹⁷ <http://www.sedai.ca/news/internment/>

¹⁸ http://www.japanesecanadianhistory.net/the_war_years.htm

Over 12,000 women, children and aged persons resided in the already mentioned inland towns. Once settled by miners or other labourers but subsequently abandoned, these towns were hastily renovated and used for the expelled. There the detainees tried to carry on living. Nevertheless, again many people lived on a small area and their lives were very restricted. In New Denver (and similarly in other towns) two families shared one-room houses with only one stove. Hideo Kukubo remembers:

I was in that camp for four years. When it got cold the temperature went down to as much as 60 below [-51.1°C]. The buildings stood on flat land beside a lake. We lived in huts with no insulation. Even if we had the stove burning the inside of the windows would all be frosted up and white, really white. I had to lie in bed with everything on that I had... at one time there were 720 people there, all men, and a lot of them were old men.¹⁹

Some time later, they succeeded with a petition and gained more “freedom”. They obtained more stoves, were allowed to grow vegetables, enlarge their houses and establish schools. They also tried to maintain the cultural side of life – they played sports, arranged concerts and performances. Some of them were quite self-contained camps.

¹⁹ <http://timeinmoments.wordpress.com/2007/11/06/the-internment-camps-of-japanese-canadians-in-canada-during-world-war-ii/>

2 Trauma from the Psychological Point of View

The already mentioned harsh experiences of mass uprooting, dispossession, relocation and dispersal that the Japanese Canadians went through during and right after the Second World War were likely to lead to trauma. What is a trauma and how can it be coped with?

2.1 Trauma and Coping Strategies

Mental trauma is explained as an injury to the psyche or a nervous shock. It is a life-threatening accident which somebody experienced in person or as a witness. Trauma invokes uncomfortable feelings and emotions such as fear, horror, helplessness, despair, uncertainty etc. Trauma can be divided into single-shot trauma (e. g., death of a close person, rape) and repetitious trauma (e.g., family quarrels or an arrogant boss) (Hartl, Hartlova 622 2010).

Events causing trauma can be of different origins. These can be divided into two groups. The first group are natural disasters, for example, tsunami, volcanic eruptions, fires, earthquakes, floods etc. The second group are “man-made disasters, technological disasters, industrial disasters” (Vizinova, Preiss 15 1999), such as, accidents and all types of violations including assault, harassment, political terror, torture, incarceration or concentration camps. Events caused by human factor are more traumatizing than those of natural character. The tragedy was not caused by impersonal natural elements but by human intention which harmed the individual concerned. Encountering human brutality affects the perception of the world as good and meaningful, and inclines to the opposite perception. Experienced helplessness and disrupted personal integrity also influence the psyche (Vizinova, Preiss 15 1999).

Responses to traumatic events can include changes in emotional, physical, cognitive as well as interpersonal reactions. Victims of trauma can feel hopeless, helpless, numb or empty. They may lose interest in things they used to do or in pleasure of living.²⁰

²⁰ <http://condor.depaul.edu/counsel/CopingTrauma.html>

Another form is denial which means that the person cannot accept what has happened and behaves as if it has not, while others may think that the person is strong.²¹ Concerning their physical situation, they may suffer from insomnia, fatigue or racing heartbeat. They may feel dizzy or tense. Trauma also influences the ability to think. The person can have difficulties to concentrate, be unable to solve problems, can even be disoriented or haunted by recurring images or nightmares. Regarding their interpersonal reactions, they may, for instance, withdraw from social life, avoid crowds and prefer to stay in isolation. Besides, work problems can occur.²² Sometimes they can even neglect their personal hygiene.

The ability to cope with the traumatic experience and recover from it is called resiliency. However, if the person is overwhelmed and cannot find the way back to normal life, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) can develop. It is estimated that about 60 to 90 per cent of us are exposed to traumatic events but the PTSD occurs only with 8 to 9 per cent.²³

When going through a traumatic or a post-traumatic situation, relationships with our family, friends and colleagues play a significant role. All of them can help to cope with the trauma. It is important to develop trustful relations. To some people afflicted with trauma, diary recording may ease the situation. Some can resort to religion. For others sharing may be the way. Another form of help are professional counsellors.²⁴

2.2 Trauma and the Japanese Canadians

Taking into account the above named causes of trauma, it is evident that the harsh treatment the Japanese Canadians had been exposed to must have stigmatized their lives. They were deprived of their property, moved out of their houses and farms, kept in livestock barns and later in relocation camps not knowing what would happen next. The men, husbands and fathers were forced to leave their families behind and were sent to work camps. They did not know what was going to happen with their children and wives.

²¹ <http://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/mentalhealthinfo/problems/ptsd/copingaftertraumaticevent.aspx>

²² <http://condor.depaul.edu/counsel/CopingTrauma.html>

²³ http://focusonthefamily.co.nz/article_files/Counseling%20General%20Crisis.pdf (p. 9)

²⁴ http://focusonthefamily.co.nz/article_files/Counseling%20General%20Crisis.pdf (p.13-15)

The uncertainty was omnipresent for many years. Their experience was even intensified by the fact that they had been victims of human violence and hatred. The third generation of Canadians of Japanese descent, the *Sansei*, did not know much about the history of their community. Why? Did their parents and grandparents feel ashamed? Did they find themselves in denial? Or did they recover so quickly?

Miki (2005) describes the Japanese Canadian war experience as traumatic. He mentions that a great number of horrifying stories was disclosed decades after the war. He explains trauma by using the concept of the trauma theorist Cathy Caruth and says that trauma is not only a mental distortion experienced through an overwhelming event, but in addition can be identified as “the symptom of a failure to contain, comprehend or otherwise assimilate the event through existing avenues of knowledge and perception” (Miki 256 2005). According to this theory, the failure to mediate the event leads to PTSD. In the practical part, I shall research whether the characters from the analysed books suffered from trauma and, if so, what their coping strategies were.

3 Canada as a Multicultural Society

Canada is a very diverse country not only when considering nature but also its inhabitants. It is regarded as a mosaic of various cultures and ethnics presently living harmoniously within one country. It is like pieces of the whole world and its varieties in one place. However, such a broad cultural diversity is not easily sustainable unless certain rules are followed. Even Canada, today considered as a model of multicultural and tolerant country, still faces its period of “dark history” especially in the treatment of new immigrant communities. Firstly, the situation of the Japanese Canadian community after the war will be described. Consequently, the history of immigration to Canada will be mentioned because it is how the majority of Canadians got to this country. The history of Canada will be omitted as it is not relevant to this topic. Nevertheless, multiculturalism will be dealt with as it has been a significant change in Canadian policy. Likewise, the Charter of Rights and Freedoms will be referred to because it is the most important document considering rights and freedoms of all Canadians. In addition, it is closely connected to multiculturalism – it is where multiculturalism is enshrined – and also connected to Japanese Canadians who by replacing the War Measures Act succeeded to limit the powers of the government embedded in the Charter.

3.1 The Japanese Canadian Community after the War

With the Second World War drawing towards its end, the Canadian government did not approve Japanese resettlement of the West Coast. Japanese Canadians had to choose between two options. Either to “repatriate” to Japan with their travel expenses paid, or to settle east of the Rocky Mountains. Many of them chose the latter and moved to Ontario, Quebec or the Prairie provinces. In 1946, the government intended to deport 10,000 persons of Japanese origin. Due to public protests across Canada, the number was reduced to a final 4,000, of whom half were Canadian citizens.

Unlike the Japanese Americans, who were released from the camps and given the right to vote in 1946, the Japanese Canadians had to wait three years longer. They

obtained the franchise on 1 April 1949, and in the same year they acquired mobility freedom.²⁵

Even though they could have returned to British Columbia and the Pacific coast, many chose not to because of the hardship and injustices they had experienced there. Besides, their former community centres and houses were usually occupied by other citizens and businesses, so only a few “Little Tokyos” could have been repopulated. Only about one third of Japanese Canadians went back to BC.

At that time, most of the *Issei* were already aged. Since they had lived all their lives in isolated Japanese communities, they spoke almost no English. Thus when the war finished, they moved to, for majority of them, an alien world. Next to that, Ayukawa (328 2004) points out: “The Nisei worked hard and cared for their elders. Struggling with their identity, many rejected their heritage, ashamed of the havoc their ancestral land had caused on the world scene.”

At the beginning of the 1950s, about one half of the Japanese-Canadian population lived in central Canada. Victims of war expulsion and internment, the Japanese Canadians were on the way to restoring their lives. Dispersed all across the country, they no longer lived in big communities. Between 1940s and 1960s, *Sansei*, the third generation, was born. Surrounded predominantly by white-population, especially during their youth, this generation did not have much contact with the culture of their ancestors. Therefore, they speak English or French, but hardly any Japanese. Similarly, they do not have much “knowledge of Japanese culture, past or present.”²⁶ Evidence of the different environment they have grown up in, and their integration can be seen in the rate of marriages of which 95% are with people of non-Japanese ancestry.

The Japanese population in Canada increased after the immigration colour-blind point system was introduced in 1967. However, the influx has been rather small, primarily due to the fact that Japanese economy had recovered by that time. Besides, the new wave of immigrants did not resemble that of their predecessors who were fishermen or farmers, whereas the newcomers have been usually “well-educated, self-confident middle-class Japanese immigrants” (Ayukawa 328 2004).

Aykawa (ibid. 328) continues and states that over the years, the severe ache has diminished and in 1977 the Japanese Canadians from all corners of the country gathered

²⁵ <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/articles/japanese-canadians>

²⁶ <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/articles/japanese-canadians>

in order to celebrate “the centenary of Japanese immigration.” With *Sansei* who learned about their ancestral experience and the *Nikei* activists, the long battle for redress of past injustices has begun.

3.2 History of Immigration to Canada

Canada is often called “a country of immigrants”. And truly, more than hundred-year immigration to Canada has shaped its population which counts about 200 ethnic groups. Once a colony of Great Britain, Canada itself and its newcomers, the British Canadians, became colonists of the First Nations and conquered the original inhabitants. Immigration has been instrumental to shaping Canada’s history, the growth of its population, its social and economic development. It started in the early beginnings of colonization, however, at the very beginning many people used Canada as “a changing station” – a place they passed through on their way to the more prosperous United States. (Whitaker 303 2004)

In accordance with the 1870-1871 census, Canadian total population counted 3.6 inhabitants. Besides the First Nations (approximately 136 000 in 1851), the British (2.1 million) and the French (1 million) created the two largest groups. Excepting the Germans, other groups such as the Dutch, the Swiss, the Spanish or the Portuguese, were less numerous.²⁷ The estimates at Statistics Canada effective in October 2010 mention a number slightly over 34 million inhabitants.²⁸

According to the British North America Act 1867 (BNA 1867), the federal and provincial governments shared concurrent jurisdiction in the field of immigration. However, as Whitaker points out, the provinces soon lost their interest to be involved in this function and the federal government was left with the responsibilities. However, colonies were again involved in the immigration process by the first federal Immigration Act issued in 1869 which engaged them in “controls over entry and conditions on immigrant vessels” (Whitaker 304 2004).

In 1879 National Policy was introduced by the Canada’s first Prime Minister, Sir John A. Macdonald, who saw an important positive role for immigrants, both as farmers

²⁷ <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/articles/immigration-policy>

²⁸ <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/101222/dq101222a-eng.htm>

for the western agricultural frontier and workers for the protected industries of central Canada. Yet western expansion was largely a failure for the first three decades of Confederation with emigration to the United States continuing to outdistance immigration.

Sir Wilfrid Laurier's Liberal government (1896-1911) witnessed a turning point in immigration of the West which was in particular stimulated by better agricultural conditions. Farmers from central and eastern Europe were encouraged to come, thus by the early 20th century enormous amount of immigrants settled in the Prairies. However, high immigration soon brought its consequences in the form of backlash against "the foreigner", therefore Ottawa withdrew from its "open door policy" (ibid. 304). Especially non-white population was regarded with obvious disfavour (ibid. 304).

Canada has accepted refugees as well as skilled labourers or businessmen from all corners of the world, however, its policy has not always been observed as racially correct. Racism was largely extensive particularly on the West Coast where at the beginning of the 20th century, a quarter of British Columbia's population was made by labour force of Asian descent. These fears were even reinforced during the First World War "by xenophobia about enemy aliens, thousands of whom were interned during the war. Immigrant groups became subject to sometimes intensive surveillance, and foreign born labour 'agitators' were subject to deportation" (ibid. 304).

The 1920s returned to high pre-war immigration quotas, nevertheless only the selected ones could enter. While the Empire Settlement Act (1922) accommodated 100,000 immigrants from Britain, the Chinese Immigration Act (1923) literally stopped the Chinese immigration. On the contrary, in 1925 185,000 eastern and southern Europeans were allowed to settle in Canada after the Railways Agreement was issued (ibid. 304).

Due to the growing racism, immigration to Canada in the 1930s would have been reduced had it not been for the Great Depression which brought the immigration to a stop. Nevertheless, the 1930s and the period of the Second World War proved Canada as a racist country. No more than 5,000 Jews escaping the Holocaust were admitted. This ranks Canada of all the immigration countries as a country with "the worst record in providing sanctuary to European Jewry" (Abella 331 2004). Besides, the West Coast was labelled as a prohibited area to all Japanese Canadians who were forced to move into interior camps and all were intended to be deported after the war's end, which never happened.

After the war, “a new era of mass immigration” started (Whitaker 304 2004). Firstly, 100,000 displaced persons from Europe arrived in the late 1940s. Next, high European immigration to Canada continued through the 1950s, supported not only by public but also by groups, e.g. trade unions.

Besides determining stringent rules of Canadian immigration policy, the 1952 Immigration Act also contained acceptability preferences, where immigrants from the United Kingdom were prioritized, followed by white Commonwealth, United States, France and then other Europeans. Asians were restricted. As Whitaker (304 2004) writes: “the minister described the act as a ‘prohibition act with exemptions’”.

After the Hungarian rebellion, 37,000 refugees were accepted to Canada in 1956-57. Later, in 1968, after ‘Prague Spring’ a minor group from Czechoslovakia arrived. Beside these also refugees from Communist countries were admitted, however, control was imposed on those with “Communist past or left-wing associations” (Whitaker 304 2004).

A turnabout in Canada’s immigration came with a colour-blind point system, when racist immigration policy was replaced by quite tolerant system. Europe had recovered from war, started to prosper again, but Canada was still in need of skilled labourers, who would come more than ever before from Asia. The 1970s were carried in the spirit of multiculturalism, proclaimed in 1971, and a new more liberal and less discriminating Immigration Act issued in 1978. Yet anti-immigration and anti-multicultural sentiments emerged again in the 1980s and early 1990s, therefore the Immigration Act was amended in 1987 and thus made asylum harder to obtain. Moreover, due to the terrorist attacks on 11 September 2001, more careful controls on refugees were introduced, which is by some observed as being restrictive. (ibid. 305)

3.3 Multicultural Society

Throughout the years of settlement and immigration, Canadian population became very diverse. Yet it experienced many racist attacks and disapprovals towards its minorities.

In order to prevent Canadian society from persisting racism, changes in the policy were required. The situation started to change in the 1960s and came to its climax with the government of Pierre Elliott Trudeau who is inherently associated with multiculturalism and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

3.3.1 Pierre Elliott Trudeau

For some a controversial, however popular politician, Pierre Elliott Trudeau (1919-2000) was one of the longest serving Canadian prime ministers. He served in the years 1968-79 and 1980-1984. He was born in Montreal, nonetheless thanks to his father's wealth he had opportunity do study at prestigious educational institutions around the world (English 623 2004).

He entered politics after his return to Canada in 1949 and actively participated against Québec nationalism. In 1965 he “decided to stand for election as a federal Liberal” (ibid. 623). However, he did not joint the cabinet immediately. He took over the function of Minister of Justice in 1967. At that time, he became well-known especially because of his changes in laws concerning abortion, divorce, gambling and homosexuality. Year 1968, when Trudeau led the Liberal Party, was first of following 16 years of him being a prime minister (ibid. 623).

Trudeau possessed a strong sense for equality and presented his perception of Canada as ‘the Just Society’ (ibid. 623). In 1971, he announced Canada's policy of multiculturalism.

Although he lost in the 1979 election, his successor, Joe Clark, who proved as maladroit, was defeated in December 1979 and Trudeau returned as leader. In 1982 Trudeau introduced a new bill of rights – the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which may be still observed as controversial, however, it is supported by the majority of Canadians. It is considered “Trudeau's major legacy” (English 623 2004).

When leaving politics, Trudeau was not very popular, mainly in the West due to his National Energy Program. Nonetheless, after his death on 28 September 2000 public opinion polls showed that “he had become the most popular and respected Canadian political leader” (ibid. 623).

3.3.2 Charter of Rights and Freedoms

The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms is a relatively recent document and since Confederation it is the most significant change in the constitution. It was proclaimed on 17 April 1982. It is partially based on the 1960 Canadian Bill of Rights. However, unlikely the latter it is applicable to both federal as well as provincial governments (Cairns 123 2004).

After intense negotiation, the Charter was approved by all provinces but Quebec. It is a document encouraging consciousness of the nation rather than of provinces. Next to that, it can be considered as a counterattack to Quebec's separatist tendencies (ibid. 124).

The Charter's primary purpose is to protect individual rights and freedoms against the state. As professor of political science at the University of Toronto, Hugh Forbes, writes, it is

a barrier to any violation of equal individual rights by government. It puts the power of defining which individual rights are inviolable in the hands of appointed judges, taking it away from elected politicians. This makes government as a whole less responsive to majority sentiment, and (assuming that judges and the law professors who review their decisions are sympathetic to multiculturalism) it tends to protect minority cultural groups as well as eccentric individuals.²⁹

Notwithstanding some criticism, the Charter has been generally publicly supported.

3.3.3 Multiculturalism

Multiculturalism is an inseparable part and a distinguishing feature of Canadian society (and its policy). It has been enshrined in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (1982) and also in a 1988 Multiculturalism Act (Troper 417 2004).

It was announced by Trudeau on 8 October 1971, who claimed that: "There is no official [Canadian] culture, nor does any ethnic group take precedence over any other. No citizen or group of citizens is other than Canadian, and all should be treated fairly" (ibid. 417).

Although Canadian Citizenship Act (1946) proclaimed "Canadian citizenship as distinct from status as a British subject" (Whitaker 304 2004), still in the 1960s many Canadians considered themselves as British Empire citizens. However, Trudeau wanted to make Canadians multicultural.

Before multiculturalism was introduced, becoming Canadian in English Canada expected that the immigrants and their children would give up on their culture and

²⁹ http://www.booksincanada.com/article_view.asp?id=639

would assimilate into Anglo-Canadian one. Nevertheless, ethnicity did not diminish, but blossomed. Therefore in order to answer the requests for recognition of Canadian cultural diversity “as a true reflection of Canadian identity”, was issued (Troper 417 2004).

By this document the federal government engages itself to not only passively acknowledge the cultural plurality but also to support its development and sharing its richness among Canadians (ibid. 417).

Trudeau as the promoter of Canadian multiculturalism did not see the ethnic boundaries as parallel to the state boundaries. In his point of view, this evokes hate and racism. On the contrary, he maintained the idea of a multicultural country treating all its citizens equally regardless of their ethnicity.³⁰ Moreover, he encouraged Canadians to profit from the diversity of their country. In his book *The Essential Trudeau* (145-146 1998) one of his quotes reads:

Every single person in Canada is now a member of a minority group. Linguistically our origins are one-third English, one-third French, and one-third neither. We have no alternative but to be tolerant of one another's differences. Beyond the threshold of tolerance, however, we have countless opportunities to benefit from the richness and variety of a Canadian life which is the result of this broad mix. The fabric of Canadian society is as resilient as it is colourful. It is a multicultural society; it offers to every Canadian the opportunity to fulfil his or her own cultural instincts and to share those from other sources. This mosaic pattern, and the moderation which it includes and encourages, makes Canada a very special place.

Until now, multiculturalism seems to be working quite well. Yet many worry about its future. Can multiculturalism survive? What would happen if Quebec separated? Would other nationalities demand their independence as well? Does the whole multiculturalism make sense?

³⁰ http://www.booksincanada.com/article_view.asp?id=639

4 Redress

Even though signing of the acknowledgement of injustices was a question of one day or only several minutes, the struggle for redress lasted several years, required a lot of strength and mobilization of the Japanese Canadian community. For that reason the revival of Vancouver Japantown, which later became the seat of the National Association of Japanese Canadians engaged in the redress, will be described in the first place, to be followed by the attempts for compensations, and finally the launch of redress movement itself.

4.1 The Revitalization of Vancouver Community

The fact that local *Sansei* became interested in Asian community can be credited to Ron Tanaka, a university teacher from the United States who worked at the University of British Columbia in the late 1960s. He encouraged his Japanese students to join the Chinese and to study the Asian history in Canada. Tanaka was very inspirational for these students, who under his guidance went through a formation of identity. He suggested that they get rid of “shame for being Asian, and emphasize the importance of combining cultural and artistic creativity with political and community activism” (Leong 59 2007). His other contribution to Vancouver fellowship was the leadership of several community projects.

The pre-war Japanese community, which was to be reconstructed in the 1970s, used to be in Powell Street as a part of Japantown. Prior to being involved in the community, some *Sansei* went back to Japan “to search for their roots” (Leong 59 2007). Due to the fact that, in the country of their ancestors they had been treated as foreigners, they understood that it was not where they were supposed to be, so they returned back to Vancouver and became part of the community (Leong 59-60 2007).

Not only local *Sansei* participated in building this community, but also artists from Eastern Canada. One of their activities was the organization of the Powell Street Festival whose initiator, Rick Shiomi, later became a popular Japanese-Canadian playwright, a founder a *taiko* (drum) group within Vancouver community and of an Asian American theatre company in the United States (Leong 59-60 2007).

In the post-war period, many *Issei* were poor and lived in bad living conditions, usually shabby apartments. Due to their insufficient language competencies, they were

not able to gain “social services and healthcare otherwise available to senior citizens” (Leong 60 2007). Fortunately, Tonari Gumi (Japanese Community Volunteers Association) and Language Aid were established (Leong 60 2007). Whereas the Language Act provided the *Issei* with language assistance, Tonari Gumi provided them with social services and amusement. Soon Tonari Gumi became also a meeting place for *Sansei* looking for and dealing with issues of their identity.

Despite the redress movement not being formed yet, revitalization and increasing visibility of Japanese community was an important step towards the call for justice. Another instrumental point was the interaction of the two generations, *Issei* and *Sansei*, with *Sansei* thus learning about the history of their community at first hand, and creating a bilingual community in downtown Vancouver.

4.2 The Request for Compensation

When expelled from their homes in British Columbia, many of the Japanese Canadians did not have a chance to dispose of their property, which was subsequently confiscated and later sold off without their consent by the Custodian of Enemy Property. Some of the lucrative farms in Fraser Valley were sold to war veterans, others to private buyers. The vast majority of their property was sold for a lower price than the fair market value. Ann Sunahara declares that “their farms, homes and businesses [were] often sold by the Custodian for less than the owners had been offered by neighbouring farmers when they were uprooted in 1942” (Sunahara 136 2000). The final sum the owners gained was even lower due to deductions of relief payments. Moreover, the Japanese Canadians had to pay for the costs of their incarceration. Having no decent jobs, many of them spent their lifetime savings in order to survive.

Being aware of the losses, they logged a request for compensation after the war’s end. The federal government, conscious of the property losses, was not willing to acknowledge them as it would mean that its wartime policy and the Japanese Canadian treatment were not just. The Japanese Canadian Committee for Democracy (JCCD) in Toronto made a survey among 198 families in its area and found out that their pre-war property whose value was estimated to be over \$1.6 million had been sold by the end of the war for \$ 1.3 million, and only \$500,000 reaching the owners (Sunahara 136 2000).

The following chart indicates that the losses of those 198 families in Toronto area in the period from 1942 to 1946 reached almost \$4 million.

Losses: Amount \$ Estimated losses from sold property	787,330
Value of property lost, stolen or unaccounted for	322,722
Lost revenue and wages	2,596,344
Other losses	144,693
Fees retained by the Custodian of Enemy and Evacuee Property	76,592
Total:	3,928,181

Table 2: Economic Losses Survey, Toronto, 1946: Summary of Losses (Source: Sunahara 162 2000)

4.3 Bird's Commission

Although the Canadian government denied any injustices, it was obvious that certain losses had been caused and that they should be compensated. In order to deal with the Japanese Canadian claimants' inquiries, a special Royal Commission was established two years after the war's end. It was generally known as the Bird's Commission called after its chair Justice Bird.

The Japanese Canadians could claim a great number of losses, such as losses from property sold by the Custodian, losses caused by forced sale, losses of businesses, income, bank interests, stolen belongings, losses from insurance or from disrupted education (Sunahara 137 2000, Miki 113 2005). At the beginning, only those cases where the claimants could prove the Custodian failure would be taken in concern, which was impossible because the documents needed were not available. Fortunately, this condition was soon changed. Nevertheless, from the whole number of losses only those claims where the property was seized by the Custodian who did not "exercise reasonable care" (Miki 113 2005) and sold it under the market value could have been compensated.

The newly established National Japanese Canadian Citizens' Association (NJCCA) together with their Caucasian allied organization Co-operative Committee on Japanese Canadians and their lawyers started a long term negotiation on the Japanese Canadians claims. Regarding the number of claimants and the peculiarity of their situation, a similar case was unprecedented in Canadian history. After initial problems, in order to speed the whole process considering the number of claimants and the aging *Issei* generation, an agreement to divide the cases and examine them within their categories was made.

After three years of negotiations the process was close to its end. Even though the Japanese Canadians originally claimed \$7 million, they were acknowledged \$1,222,829 in award (Miki 125-126 2005), with the individual compensation ranging from 125 per

cent for the farms in Fraser Valley to 5 per cent refunds for Vancouver properties (Sunahara 141 2000). Besides, on Bird's recommendation, a part of next \$150,000 was paid to the Co-operative Committee "for expenses exclusive of legal fees" and the other part was used for "claims outside the terms of references" (Sunahara 142 2000). Nevertheless, before having received the compensation, the claimants had to sign a form in which they waived their rights to ever claim any losses from the Canadian government. "Why had this regulation never been mentioned before?," asks Roy Miki (125 2005). The Japanese Canadians tried to oppose this, however, their arguments were not heard. With faint public interest, the federal government considered this case closed.

4.4 The Struggle for Redress

The claims made in the 1940s were the first and so far the last claims of Japanese Canadians who had not committed any crimes but whose rights were fully stripped during the Second World War. Even though their losses have not been adequately compensated, the unpleasant experience with Bird's Commission and the awareness of denouncing their rights for any further compensations, might have discouraged them so much, that they never tried that again. The post-war policy was clear – *assimilation*. The harsh treatment of Japanese Canadians was often explained by the government as their inability to assimilate. They had failed to assimilate, to become like other citizens, therefore the government - in order to protect them from the remaining population - uprooted them, dispossessed, expelled and dispersed them. Having fixed in their minds the need for assimilation and feeling ashamed for their failure, the *Nisei* "sought refuge from the trauma of their experience in the safety of middle-class Canadian culture" (Sunahara 149 2000). And with their national community organization – the National Japanese Canadian Citizens' Association – in slumber for several years, the Japanese Canadians tried not to draw too much public attention.

4.4.1 The Beginnings of the Redress Movement

The beginnings of the redress movement were rather slow and did not come at once. The Japanese Canadian community became more visible in the late 1970s during the organization of national events to celebrate the centennial of the arrival of the first Japanese to the Canadian coast. These happenings probably also "provided the impetus

for a renewal of the NJCCA” (Miki 218 2005). Since then Japanese Canadians started to gather and arrange community meetings and social events at a greater extent, this way have produced the impulse for the redress movement. However, when a small group of Japanese Canadians came up with the idea of redress a few years later, the vast majority of their fellow countrymen were reluctant and indifferent. Many of them were afraid. Having had experienced the cruel treatment in the previous years, they feared that asking for another compensation could invoke a new wave of backlash. “They fear[ed] it may renew resentment against them. They believed no amount of money is worth renewing the prejudices and the traumatic experience of years ago,” writes Miki citing Imai (175 2005). To justify their wartime experience many resorted to:

‘blessing in disguise’ (that is, the uprooting forced them to leave the limited sphere of their west coast communities and made it possible for them to assimilate) and ‘shikata ga nai’ (translated as ‘it can’t be helped’ – the uprooting was an event that simply had to be endured as an aspect of wartime hysteria (Miki 260 2005).

In order to succeed, the fighters for redress needed attention and support of Japanese Canadians as well as other fellow citizens. Public knowledge about the Japanese Canadian community and their peculiar situation in Canadian history was, in general, very low. A stimulus was a movie called *A Call for Justice* released by CBC in the early 1980s, which depicted their wartime experience. Beside Japanese Canadians who experienced the World War II, some Sansei and politicians were interviewed. Even though some issues had been distorted, this movie had an enormous effect on the Canadian public and media which desired to know more about this issue (Miki 142-148 2005). To raise public consciousness, they also published booklets, and held seminars, conferences and house meetings.

4.4.2 Community Crisis and the First Offer

The goal underlying the success of the redress movement was not only to gain public attention. A secondary goal was to elicit strength and cooperation of the whole community. Nevertheless, with a crisis within the Japanese Canadian community itself, a good result could have hardly been reached. The leaders of the Japanese-Canadian community organizations could not come to terms of redress requirements, and fought against each other. Imai, the then chair of the National Redress Committee seated in

Toronto, acted on behalf of the whole Japanese Canadian community, however, behind their back.

When the Mulroney government offered “a group settlement of \$6 million” (Sunahara 154 2000) in 1984, the Toronto group wanted to accept it. They were afraid that the government could withdraw its proposal or that resentment towards their community would emerge again.

On the other hand, the group of the National Association of Japanese Canadians (NAJC) – which transformed from the former NJCCA – led by its President Art Miki, did not agree on such terms (Sunahara 154 2000). Neither were they satisfied with the government’s proposal to express its “regret”, which meant that the Canadian government would not “acknowledge” its injustices but only regret its deeds (Miki 185 2005). Similarly, the NAJC did not inquire about group compensations even though that during the Second World War they were treated as a whole group. It was the individuals who suffered, so they demanded that those individuals be compensated (Miki 176-177 2005). At the same time, they recognized that by the dispersal policy the whole Japanese Canadian community suffered. The community’s “social, economical, and cultural infrastructures had been destroyed (...) so much so that Japanese Canadians had never been able to reconstitute themselves as a geographical collective” (Miki 229 2005).

4.4.3 The Final Struggle for Justice

Even though they had been rejected by the government so many times, the Japanese Canadians did not give up. All the above stated reasons including small sums of money offered for such racist treatment “intensified the desire for justice” (Miki 133 2005). To have more precise estimation of their economic losses after 1941, the NAJC paid a respected accounting firm to conduct a study. The Price Waterhouse study revealed that the Japanese Canadian community suffered a total economic loss of \$443 million in 1986 dollars (Miki 238 2005).

Having been inspired by their fellow countrymen in the United States – Japanese Americans – who suffered similar injustices during the Second World War, Japanese Canadians continued their struggle. After so many years of meetings, conferences, campaigns, and negotiations within their own community, as well as with the Canadian government, they succeeded.

Finally, on 22 September 1988 the Canadian government formally apologized in the House of Commons and the Prime Minister Brian Mulroney signed the redress agreement and the acknowledgment of the wartime injustices experienced by Japanese Canadians. Although the amounts of monetary compensations were not as high as they had required, they were not as low as those offered earlier.

The negotiated agreement contained:

- \$21,000 individual compensation to everybody who suffered the wartime wrongs
- \$12 million for the Japanese Canadian community, received by NAJC, in order to “undertake educational, social and cultural activities” (Miki 9 2005)
- \$12 million “on behalf of Japanese Canadians” (Miki 9 2005) and further \$12 million for the Canadian Race Relation Foundation
- pardons for those condemned of disobeying orders under the War Measures Act
- Canadian citizenship for those deported to Japan, and for their descendants
- up to \$3 million to the NAJC for redress expenses

(Source: Miki 9 2005)

The results the Japanese Canadians achieved did not contribute only to their community but also to the whole Canadian society. They had also fought that the War Measures Act, under which all the injustices were conducted, be rescinded. Earlier in the 1988 the War Measures Act was replaced by the Emergencies Act which was amended in cooperation with Japanese Canadians representatives in order to reduce the powers of the Canadian government enshrined in the 1982 Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and to better protect rights of Canadian citizens.

PART II

5 Literary Representations

Until recently, Japanese Canadian history has been narrated mainly by the white population, therefore it lacked authenticity, and was likely biased. According to Goemaere (2002), Japanese Canadians have been writing since the late 19th century. However, their work had been little known because the writings of the *Issei* generation were in Japanese. It was the second and third generation which started using English as their mother tongue. Unlike the Japanese Americans, who started to publish their works right after the war, Japanese Canadians waited until the 1960s. And “it was not until the mid-1990s that literary and cultural critics addressed Japanese Canadian literature” (Goemaere 2002).

Literature has always acted as a way of expressing feelings, emotions, or different opinions. In a sense, it has also been a means of fighting or coping with unpleasant experiences and situations. Similarly, Japanese Canadian literature is a way of coping with their experience as Canadians. Their wartime experience should not be left unnoticed.

In this part, two literary works and one autobiography will be examined:

Obasan by Joy Kogawa

Chorus of Mushrooms by Hiromi Goto

The Autobiography by David Suzuki

In order to get a more accurate picture, basic information about the authors and short plot summaries of the two novels are included.

5.1 Joy Kogawa

Joy Nozonie Nakayama, born in 1935 in Vancouver, British Columbia, represents a third generation of Canadians of Japanese descent. She had lived in Vancouver until the age of six, when she and her family were deported and interned. When the war was finished, Kogawa went studying to gain a degree in education from the University of Alberta as well as in music from the University of Toronto. She also became part of the redress movement.

As a poet and novelist, her work comprises three novels: *Obasan* (1981), *Itsuka* (1992) and *The Rain Ascends* (1995), as well as several poetry collections. Some of the

more notable poetry collections include: *The Splintered Moon* (1967), *A Choice of Dreams* (1974) or *Women in the Woods* (1985). She also adopted the character of Obasan into a book for children called *Naomi's Road* (1986).

5.2 Obasan

The award-winning *Obasan* is a “pioneer” among Japanese Canadian novels as it was the very first novel by a Japanese Canadian telling the story of Canadian internment. After the death of her uncle in 1972, the main narrator Naomi Nakane, a 36 year old teacher, visits her aunt in rural Alberta. Her present story interweaves with thoughts and memories which are complemented by a bundle of correspondence and newspaper clippings from her Aunt Emily.

When Naomi was a little girl, her family were expelled from their beloved house in Vancouver and sent to a ghost town in BC interior. Due to the fact that their mother had left for Japan, and their father had been sent to a work camp, Naomi and her brother were confined to the care of her childless Aunt Aya, who she calls Obasan (meaning “Aunt” in Japanese). They lived in Slocan, a former mining town, and shared their house, or rather a hut, with an elderly woman, Nomura-obasan. Obasan’s husband later joins them. When thinking about Slocan, Naomi remembers days spent with other children as well as the death of her father’s mother Grandma Nakane. In 1945, they were relocated to a beet farm in Granton, Alberta, where neither working nor living conditions were great.

Even though Naomi had asked several times, she never learned what had happened to her mother. She only finds out at a family gathering before her Uncle’s funeral that her mother was a victim of bombing in Nagasaki. Some of Naomi’s last thoughts in the book are about her mother.

By referring to real places and by using authentic documents, such as personal correspondence, letters to and from governmental institutions, diary entries, and journal clippings, this novel invokes a very realistic picture of the wartime experience so many Japanese Canadians were forced to undergo.

5.3 Hiromi Goto

Born in 1966 in Chiba-ken, Japan, Goto represents the new wave of Japanese immigrants. After her family moved to Canada in 1969, they lived first in Vancouver, BC, and then in a small town in Alberta. Goto studied English at the University of Calgary. Besides being a writer, she also works as an editor, critic, and teacher.

Her first novel *Chorus of Mushrooms* (1994) won her several awards. Her work also includes *The Kappa Child* (2001) or *Hopeful Monsters* (2004).

5.4 Chorus of Mushrooms

This novel is actually a frame story. It is a story within a story. Or rather a cluster of stories within a story, told by a girl to her lover. Murasaki, the narrator, is at the same time the narrator of some of the inner stories her grandmother and she had told each other.

By following these stories, the reader learns about the fortunes of the Tonkatsu family. Murasaki lives together with her parents and grandmother at a mushroom farm, which her father runs and where he employs Vietnamese workers. Murasaki's grandmother Naoe (also referred to as Obāchan – Japanese for grandmother) is rather an eccentric woman who usually sits in an armchair at the door and mutters to herself. Naoe loves Japanese food and sometimes shares her delicacies with her granddaughter. They have to do so in secret as Murasaki's mother Keiko does not approve of anything Japanese as she is trying to assimilate as much as possible with the mainstream. However, at one time she falls very ill and only gets well by eating Japanese food. During the time, Naoe, who is in her 80s, escapes the house and goes hitchhiking.

Chorus of Mushrooms should be read as a rather symbolic story regarding the grandmother and her odd acts in her advanced age, such as the already named hitchhiking, having sex with a cowboy or riding a bull. Keiko and Sam's sudden amnesty of the Japanese language is another mystery.³¹

³¹ http://rua.ua.es/dspace/bitstream/10045/1273/1/RAEI_16_5.pdf

5.5 Language of the Writers

Obasan and *Chorus of Mushrooms* are so similar, yet at the same time very different. Both authors use Japanese expressions. Whereas Kagawa offers an English translation right next to the Japanese phrases, Goto challenges the reader and does not always translate them. Moreover, she does not use only Roman transcription of the Japanese words but also Japanese characters. She refuses to hand readers, who are mainly English speaking, everything on a plate. She explains her acts by these words: “Text is also a place of colonization. And I wanted to highlight that difference exists, all cannot be understood, language could and can be a barrier.”³²

5.6 David Suzuki

Suzuki was born in 1936 in Vancouver. Similarly to Kogawa, also Suzuki belongs to the *Sansei* generation. During the Second World War, his family was evicted and interned in a relocation camp. When the war had ended, they had to move east of the Rockies. They therefore resettled in Ontario. While his family still lived in Canada, Suzuki studied in the United States and in 1961 earned a Ph.D. in Zoology from the University of Chicago.

Most of his life, he has worked as a genetics professor at the University of British Columbia, where he presently functions as Professor Emeritus. Suzuki is a respected scientist, environmentalist and broadcaster. He is an advocate of sustainable ecology and a spokesperson on global climate change. He has written 52 books, out of which 19 are for children. Besides many academic awards, he holds 25 honorary degrees.³³

³² <http://www2.athabascau.ca/cll/writers/english/writers/hgoto/essay.php>

³³ <http://www.davidsuzuki.org/david/>

6 Common Themes

All of the above mentioned books depict the Japanese Canadian experience during and after the Second World War. In my literary analysis, I will deal with several themes and compare how they are handled. I will look at how reality is reflected in these books and how some of the main characters cope with it.

6.1 The Physical Surroundings and the Fishing Tradition

The physical surroundings in which the Japanese Canadians live change as they move - deliberately or not. Japan, where the *Issei* generation had originally come from, is an island country, mainly mountainous but surrounded by water. Having arrived in Canada, they settled on the West Coast. There may have been several reasons for that. Primarily, the Pacific Coast was the closest place on the American continent to their home country. Secondly, many of them had been fishermen already in Japan. Therefore to be able to continue in this form of making a living they needed to be close to the ocean. Thirdly, despite hard work, the coast is a pleasant place to live.

British Columbia is a very diverse province which boasts natural beauty in abundance. The mountainous coastal terrain continues inland, encompassing vast forests and valleys hemming the Fraser River, up to the Rocky Mountains in the east of the province. Unlike the inland part - the Rocky Mountains and their foothills - where the winter temperatures can get extremely low, the coastal area is mild, the soil and air feel fresh. There is a gentle breeze coming from the ocean and this is where the vast majority of them lived - close to the ocean. The Canadian authorities sent them to the dry and flatter of interior of B.C. or Alberta. It must have been a substantial difference to what they had been used to: "We have come to the moon" (Kogawa 210 1983).

Naomi's family in *Obasan* were deprived of their spacious house in Vancouver and sent to Slocan, one of the "ghost towns" in B.C. Even though they lived in the middle of woods and not too far from a lake, it was not the same as living at the sea. Obasan and Uncle Isamu used to live "on Lulu Island, near Annacis Islands where Uncle worked as a boatbuilder" (Kogawa 22 1994). Living on an island indicates that they were never far from water. Already Naomi's grandfather and his ancestors were in contact with the sea. "Grandpa Nakane, 'number one boatbuilder' Uncle used to say, was a son of the sea that tossed and coddled the Nakanes for centuries" (Kogawa 21

1994). Imaginably, a person who had spent his whole life at the sea, whose veins circled water instead of blood, must have enormously suffered when forced to live so far from it. We the readers can feel his pain. Even many years after he had left the West Coast and lived in Alberta, Naomi's Uncle imagined the sea when the grass rippled:

'Umi no yo,' Uncle says, pointing to the grass. 'It's like the sea.' The hill surface, as if responding to a command from Uncle's outstretched hand, undulates suddenly in a breeze, with ripple after ripple of grass shadows, rhythmical as ocean waves (Kogawa 2 1994).

However, what is left is a parched prairie: "We wade through the dry surf" (Kogawa 2 1994). Uncle Isamu was firmly connected to his nostalgic longing for the sea and that is why after his death Naomi wonders: "Uncle was a child of the waves. Was he rocked to sleep again by the lap-lap of the sea?" (Kogawa 17 1994).

On the contrary, David Suzuki and his father were luckier. Suzuki's father was also bound to water - he was a lover of fishing and used to take his son on fishing trips which left Suzuki with nice memories: "We would make trips past Haney, then very rural but now on the eastern outskirts of Greater Vancouver, to fish in Loon Lake (....) That's where I caught my first trout" (Suzuki 13 2006). For the Suzukis therefore fishing was a pleasant hobby, but not a necessity in order to survive like it was for thousands of those who were dependant on it. Moreover, they did not fish in the sea but in a lake. And being lucky, they could go fishing even after they had moved to Ontario. Whether a way of living or a leisure time activity, fishing and the sea were an important part of Japanese Canadians' lives. It was for many a lifelong love and an essential part of life.

In contrast, Goto in her *Chorus of Mushrooms* does not refer to the sea at all. The story is set in dry prairie of Alberta and she often refers to the dust which the inhabitants cannot get rid of: "Keiko is dusting. Scattering dust so it settles everywhere else (....) There is nothing as silly as dusting when you live in a desert" (Goto 13 1994). The powder is everywhere and they cannot avoid it no matter how hard they try. We do not know how the Tonkatsu family got to Alberta. We learn about Naoe, Murasaki's grandmother, who was born in Japan and later lived in China. After that the thread of her life story is cut and the next time we hear about her, she is already in Canada an old woman. Likewise, we are not sure how she or her family got to Alberta. Were they

uprooted like many others? Were they new immigrants who settled in Alberta? We are not sure. The Japanese resided usually in B.C., only a handful of them would have chosen such dry and dusty land.

6.2 Food

Japanese food differs considerably from Canadian food. There is no need to introduce it at length. Japanese cuisine is not only about sushi. However, rice and fish are its main ingredients.

In *Chorus of Mushrooms*, Murasaki's mother Keiko desires to be like other Canadian women and to behave like regular Western families, which is also reflected in the meals she prepares – no fish and rice but pasta, chicken or beef. She has “converted from rice and *daikon* to weiners and beans” (Goto 13 1994). Naoe continues and describes the situation as follows: “Endless evenings of tedious roast chicken and honey smoked ham and overdone rump roast” (Goto 13 1994). She cannot reconcile that her own daughter has given up on her Japanese legacy including food and that her pursuit of assimilation has changed even her character: “My daughter, you were raised on fish cakes and pickled plums. This Western food has changed you and you've grown more opaque even as your heart has brittle” (Goto 13 1994).

They “never had a single Japanese food item in our [their] house, aside from Obāchan's packages from Japan” (Goto 134 1994). Naoe secretly receives packages of Japanese food from her brother but she has to hide them away from Keiko who does not support the idea of anything Japanese. However, the grandmother shares her delicacies with Murasaki, who likes them and is grateful for the little opportunity to taste the food of her ancestors. Naoe is Keiko's complete opposite. She loves Japanese food and avoids the non-Japanese food. Naoe gets even sick when she smells Canadian cooking: “she went upstairs to get away from the smell of boiled beef” (Goto 99 1994).

Whenever she has an opportunity to get a little piece of the food she is so much keen on, she does not hesitate. After she escapes from the farm, together with a cowboy she visits Chinatown. Even though the food is not Japanese, it is at least Oriental and she cannot get enough of it: “I eat, I drink. What more could a body ask for when there is shrimp, squid, scallops, and lobster heaped on plates before you?” (Goto 147-148 1994). She relishes the instant: “If I measured my happiness at this given moment, no

one could be richer than me” (Goto 148 1994). She is at the top of her happiest when she can enjoy this piece of her culture.

Keiko has to relinquish her principles against Japanese food when she falls ill and Naoe suggests that Keiko will not be able to recover if she continues eating non-Japanese food. Naoe even teaches her granddaughter how to cook some Japanese dishes. Murasaki, who has not yet come across the Japanese food except what her grandmother secretly gave her, discovers the magic of Japanese cuisine and that their house was not as untouched by Japanese specialties as she has always thought. Murasaki is rather shocked when she finds out that her father has been buying salted seaweed paste. Keiko eventually agrees and when being ill her diet consists mainly of Japanese dishes thanks to which she recovers again. Keiko has to be seriously ill if she consents to eat Japanese food. Keiko gets better again, she returns to “her lasagna and roasted chicken, her blocks of beef” (Goto 191 1994), but she ceases to be so narrow-minded and lets sometimes Murasaki cook some Japanese food.

We do not have much information about the kind of food they eat in *Obasan*. Taking into account that their family comes from a line of boat builders or fishermen, fish probably was the main component of their recipes when they were close to the ocean. While in B.C. interior or later in Alberta they do not have an access to the sea but they still try to prepare some food related to Japanese deriving from miso soup and chopsticks they use while still interned, or “a soy sauce bottle” and “rice puffs” which are on the table many years after the war was finished (Kogawa 14 1994). On the contrary, there is also a loaf of bread which suggests that, in a way, they had accepted the “continental” food. Uncle Sam, who had baked this bread never really succeeded to do it well. This may be explained by the fact that bread is not a Japanese staple food. However, he never gave up. He even tried to improve it by adding carrots and potatoes – neither of which is Japanese indeed. “But no matter what he put in it, it always ended up like a lump of granite on the counter” (Kogawa 15 1994). Uncle Sam seems to be satisfied with what he has even though he had suffered and his life is not what he had expected.

On the other hand, Stephen despises his Japanese identity from early childhood. On their way to Slocan, Obasan offers Stephen a rice ball. “Not that kind of food,” he says (Kogawa 136 1994). He avoids Japanese food at a young age as well as when he is a grown up. When he comes back to Granton after he has spent some time playing the

piano abroad, Obasan “sets the table with food, which he often does not eat” (Kogawa 259 1994).

Suzuki does not mention much about food. We learn about his fishing trips, therefore we can assume that they prepared the fish they had caught. However, what all three writers refer to are mushrooms – an important item to the Japanese. Suzuki remembers picking pine mushrooms in the Kootenay region. He learned how to recognize and where to find the *mutsutake*. “We filled potato sacks with them and my mother bottled the fragrant mushrooms” (Suzuki 22 2006). They probably ate them throughout the year.

Also Naomi with her brother Stephen, Uncle and Obasan go to the surrounding woods to pick mushrooms. “Dog-eared mushrooms are here and there like hidden treasures, scattered over the spongy earth” (Kogawa 164 1994).

Goto even used the word *mushroom* in the title of her novel. Most of the story is set at a mushroom farm which the Tonkatsu family own, but since Keiko refuses anything Japanese, we can anticipate that they hardly ever use the mushrooms they grow. They probably sell them all. However, despite Keiko’s persistent endeavour to assimilate, the smell of the mushrooms will always reveal their true identity even if they try to hide it: “For all that Mom had done to cover up our Oriental tracks, she’d overlooked the one thing that people always unconsciously register in any encounter. We had been betrayed by what we smelled like. We had been betrayed by what we grew” (Goto 62 1994). They could have been perfectly assimilated – look like white Canadians, eat what other Canadians eat, speak like them, behave like them - but the smell of mushrooms would always betray them.

6.3 Religion

Keiko tries to assimilate also regarding religion. She goes to a Christian church because other Canadians do so. However, we can doubt that she really believes in God. When talking about her daughter, Naoe says: “Keiko. My daughter who has forsaken identity. Forsaken! So biblical, but it suits her, my little convert” (Goto 13 1994). Naoe rather mocks the Bible and Christians: “Nothing like a good folk legend to warm up one’s belly and fill the emptiness inside you. Why a good folk tale can keep you going for at least a month, none of this manna talk and birds falling out of the sky” (Goto 203 1994). She does not believe that the Bible has more power and sense than folk tales. She

avoids Christianity as much as she avoids assimilation. “Forget the Greeks! And don’t quote Bible verses to me, child. There were stories long before Eve tasted fruit fit for women” (Goto 18 1994).

Naomi’s family in *Obasan* are Christians. But in their case their Christian tradition seems to be longer and more sincere. In fact, Grandpa Nakane is Buddhist but all the others claim to be Christians. When still a child, Naomi already has certain knowledge of Bible stories. The faith of Naomi’s family seems to be more genuine than Keiko’s faith. They gather with a priest when they arrive in Slocan and before they leave. “For our life and that we are together again, thank you. For protection thus far, thank you. . . .” Nakayama-sensei is praying (Kogawa 144 1994). When something happens, they pray together. For instance, when Obasan, Uncle and Aunt Emily learn about Naomi’s mother, they sit together and pray. “Aunt Emily leans back in her chair and breathes deeply. She covers her face with both hands and drops her head forward. Uncle, his hands clasped between his knees, nods his head rhythmically. I know Obasan is praying. I’ve seen her before,” Naomi explains (Kogawa 264 1994).

Aunt Emily refers to the Bible when talking about her participation in the struggle for public consciousness about their wartime experience: “Write the vision and make it plain. Habakkuk 2:2,” she says (Kogawa 38 1994). She uses the Bible to help her with her determination. It gives her more strength to endure in this struggle and supports her belief that what she does is right.

6.4 Language

The acquisition of either the Japanese or English language was a natural process. The *Issei* generation lived mainly in separate communities and did not have much chance to learn English. Besides, Japanese was their mother tongue. The subsequent generation, the *Nisei*, were usually bilingual, whereas the third generation only spoke English. Suzuki describes the situation as follows:

As a Sansei (third generation) born of Canadian-born parents, I did have grandparents living in Vancouver and saw them regularly, but, being unilingual, I was almost as cut off from them as I would have been had they lived on the other side of the Pacific (Suzuki 16 2006).

It was almost as if he did not have any grandparents, or as if he lived at a great distance from them. He could not talk with them. Even though they were one community or one family, the language was a barrier.

In Suzuki's story language was also a means of discrimination. When they lived in a relocation camp, he was an outsider. As a *Sansei* he did not speak any Japanese whereas the other children in the camp were the *Nisei* and their Japanese was fluent.

Language as a barrier appears in *Chorus of Mushrooms*. Keiko and her husband mysteriously forget their native language and speak only English. On the contrary, Naoe speaks only Japanese. At least she pretends she does and that she does not understand English. Again, she rather "fools around" with her surroundings and the readers:

"*Ohairi kudasai! Dōzo ohairi kudasai.* Talk loudly and e-n-u-n-c-i-a-t-e. I might be stupid as well as deaf. How can they think a body can live in this country for twenty years and not learn the language? But let them think this. Let them think what they will, for they will. Solly, Obāchan no speeku Eeenglishu" (Goto 4 1994).

She rejects speaking English, although she understands it. Maybe this is because she is Keiko's very opposite and does not want to give in. Or she wants to challenge her daughter and her changed identity.

Murasaki is somewhere between her mother and her grandmother. According to the model of her mother, she does not speak any Japanese but she can still somehow communicate with her grandmother and appears to be curious about her Japanese culture. After her grandmother leaves, Murasaki learns Japanese. She can manage both languages and when she does not know a word in one language, she can switch to the other:

I learned that there's no way to say I love you in Japanese except to a spouse or lover (....) When there isn't one word in English, it will be there in Japanese and if there's something lacking in your tongue, I'll reach for it in English. So I say to you in English. I love you, Obāchan (Goto 54 1994).

Concerning language certain assimilation to the mainstream occurs in all three books – in the usage of English first names. Murasaki is called Murasaki only by her grandmother who supports the idea of her Japanese roots, whereas her mother calls her Muriel. Her mother herself prefers to be called by her English equivalent: "My name is Keiko, but please call me Kay" (Goto 189 1994). She tries to tear all the possible

connections to the country of her origin. Murasaki's father is called Sam instead of Shinji. Keiko together with Murasaki even rename the Vietnamese workers at their farm as their original names are too hard to remember.

Whether they like it or not, the characters in *Obasan* use English names as well. Naomi's first name is Megumi, but she is only referred to as Naomi. We do not know if Stephen also has a Japanese name or not as he is only called Stephen. Similarly, Aunt Emily does not use her Japanese part of name. Even Naomi's Uncle who is an *Issei* is called Uncle Sam instead of Isamu. On the other hand, Sam's wife is mainly referred to as Obasan which is a Japanese expression.

The Suzuki family approached this issue in a similar way. All the children had both Canadian as well as Japanese names. Most of them adhered to their Canadian name, except for Suzuki's sister who, in order to emphasize her artistic way of life, used her Japanese name. "We all had Japanese middle names, and in later life when she had assumed a more bohemian, artistic life, Gerry dropped her first name for Aiko, her second" (Suzuki 8 2006). However, she would not (and maybe could not) do so too early. "In later life" appears to be an important part of the sentence. She probably stuck to her Japanese name when it was not regarded as a stigma but rather a part of her identity and artistic career.

6.5 Denial

Denial is a coping strategy used when a person faced with an unpleasant fact rejects it, or behaves as if it has not occurred, instead of accepting it. The character of Obasan appears to be a classic example of such a situation.

"It is better to forget," Obasan articulates, and this phrase can be considered as her life motto (Kogawa 54 1994). She does not want to remember her wartime experience, the time when she was uprooted from her home and left alone with children in insecurity, or when she lost several members of her family. She wants to displace all these memories from her consciousness.

Naomi follows Obasan in this coping strategy and remembers well the above mentioned words: "It is better to forget" (Kogawa 54 1994). She is a young girl when the war breaks out and does not remember much. At least, she does not understand what is happening because she is too young. As an adult, she still feels rather reluctant. Obviously the wartime period has not left her with nice memories, therefore she does

not search for the past. Had it not been Aunt Emily who gives her all the material documenting the past of their family, Naomi herself would hardly plunge into it. “Life is so short (...) the past so long. Shouldn’t we turn the page and move on?,” asks Naomi her Aunt Emily (Kogawa 51 1994). Aunt Emily does not hesitate and replies: “The past is the future” (Kogawa 51 1994).

Aunt Emily’s stance is in contrast to Obasan’s and, at this moment, to Naomi’s as well. Aunt Emily urges them to remember, to face the past. If it was not for her, Naomi and Stephen would never learn the truth about their mother. In order to cope with the past which had brought trauma, it is important to talk about it, speak it out, not to deny it. She appeals to them:

You have to remember (....) You are your history. If you cut any of it off you’re an amputee. Don’t deny the past. Remember everything. If you’re bitter, be bitter. Cry it out! Scream it! Denial is gangrene (Kogawa 60 1994).

Obasan’s denial is intensified by her silence. As already mentioned, she is not very talkative. In fact she almost never speaks. She is closed in her silence which is made stronger by her deafness. “‘Is it raining?’ she asks. Then she chuckles. ‘Even if there is rain or thunder, these ears cannot hear’” (Kogawa 276 1994).

Obasan appears as a very strong and stable person but we do not know what is happening inside her. What makes the reader puzzled is her gratitude: “Arigatai. Gratitude only” (Kogawa 50 1994). She accepts the situation without protesting. On the other hand, she may use the silence only to cover her thoughts, feelings, or even fears, but she does not express them by words. She may even cry or scream inside herself. She knows about the letters from Naomi’s mother and about her terrible fate. However, she cannot tell the truth as she had promised not to. She keeps this secret almost until her death, which must be a torture.

Besides that, her denial is also mixed with social withdrawal. In the “ghost town”, they live in a hut in the middle of woods and thus she does not meet many people. Similarly, after the war, she does not move back to British Columbia but stays in Granton, a small town in dry windy Alberta to which they had been relocated. Since the death of Uncle Sam, the only inhabitant of their house is Obasan and her silent thoughts.

6.6 Togetherness, Closeness

Another coping strategy is family support, which can be understood as togetherness or closeness. Do the families keep together? Can they stay together?

The Suzuki's family seems to be, within the three analysed books, the only family who can and do stay together as a whole. The traditional Japanese value of large families including the elders, had already been altered due to the fact that only a few members, or even only one person, immigrated abroad and the rest stayed in Japan. However, the war resulted in an even bigger disruption of Japanese Canadian families.

Luckily for the Suzukis, after the war they move to Ontario where there already are Suzuki's uncles. The restart was hard, but together with the help of their relatives they manage it in the end. Suzuki's uncles are a great help to them. When the Suzukis build a new house for the family, they (except David who was studying in Leamington) move into the uncle's family's house. Besides providing their house, Suzuki's uncle helps them financially. However, with two families staying in one house inevitable tension emerge. Nevertheless, the family get over these obstacles, continues with their work. With the effort of each member they are soon able to move in their new place (Suzuki 27 2006).

Both of Suzuki's parents are very encouraging and express their love to their children. His mother's persistent hard work together with kindness and gentleness are a great support to her family. His father is not of a lesser importance. Taking into account numerous fishing and camping trips, which Suzuki loves so much, and the fact that it is his father who cultivates Suzuki's interest in nature, we can estimate that they are close to each other. Besides, his father encourages Suzuki to "run for school president" which he at last wins (Suzuki 31 2006).

In Naomi's family, togetherness plays a significant role. Before the war, her family was firmly bound together. She compares her parents to two needles who "knit the families carefully into one blanket" (Kogawa 21 1983). When problems emerged, they discussed them. The time drew them closer. They spent a lot of time together – they went for picnics, concerts and other social events. Naomi says that they "were the original 'togetherness' people" (Kogawa 21 1983). However, these pleasant moments went away, never to return. Not only did the war destroy their pleasant time together, but it also deteriorated their togetherness. After the death of her Uncle Sam, the only remaining members of her family are her brother Stephen, Aunt Emily and Obasan.

Stephen, utterly estranged from the Japanese Canadian community, is a talented pianist and performs all around the world therefore he hardly ever meets with his sister and aunts. Aunt Emily lives in Toronto but also travels a lot in order to attend conferences. Thus the only two who are relatively close to each other are Naomi and Obasan. Close when considering distance as well as relationship. They both live in Alberta and Naomi sometimes visits her aunt. Nevertheless, Obasan still lives in her world of silence. Although Naomi's family had suffered great losses within the family during the war, we can assume that it was the previously knit blanket of togetherness that helped them through their hardship: "At times like this, all we have is our trust in one another" (Kogawa 112 1994).

Togetherness in *Chorus of Mushrooms* is rather fractured. Naoe and Keiko do not understand each other since their view of their Japanese cultural heritage is very different. Naoe advocates the tradition of her ancestors whereas Keiko tries to avoid it as much as possible. Naoe is rather an outcast. She usually sits in her armchair at the entrance. She does not even eat with Keiko's family as she does not like the non-Japanese food Keiko prepares. "She never sat at the table with us, we never ate together," Murasaki remembers (Goto 178 1994). The only moment Keiko and Naoe come together is when Naoe cleans Keiko's ears. This is the only moment they touch. They "love each other in noisy silence" (Goto 48 1994). On the contrary, Naoe is closer with her granddaughter Murasaki with whom she shares pleasure in Japanese food as well as narrating stories. As a young girl Murasaki frequently sits on her grandmother's lap and puts her arms around Naoe's neck.

Neither Murasaki appears to be very close to her mother. In their family they hardly ever speak. Even her father who manages their mushroom farm does not speak much. They stay rather quiet until Keiko falls ill. At that moment circumstances start to change. Among the Japanese dishes Murasaki is preparing, she prepares a dish called *tonkatsu* which also happens to be their family name. When eating *tonkatsu* and sitting at the table, they are unusually talkative. Beautell suggests that through eating a dish which, at the same time, happens to be their name, they "come to a rebirth by symbolically eating themselves."³⁴ Thus we can assume that through their initially fragmented relationships they reconcile and become united.

³⁴ http://rua.ua.es/dspace/bitstream/10045/1273/1/RAEI_16_5.pdf (p.34)

6.7 Racism and Discrimination

In *Chorus of Mushrooms* racism is not directly dealt with very much. Considering Keiko's behaviour and effort to integrate into the Canadian community, we can suppose that she tries to avoid racial prejudices. However, we do not know if she has encountered any racial discrimination or not. At the end of the novel, Naoe takes part in a bull riding competition wearing a mask. Beautell suggests that she wants to conceal her true identity.³⁵ Why? Is it because she looks too Japanese? We find out.

On the contrary, racism appears quite frequently in *Obsan* as it is something Aunt Emily has been fighting against. We learn about the treatment of Japanese Canadians during their relocation from her correspondence as well as from her narrations. She illustrates the harsh way they were dealt with, and all the hateful offences against them. Surprisingly, even a priest, who is a spiritual authority and should thus demonstrate love, recommends to “kick all the Japs out” (Kogawa 120 1994). Aunt Emily says: “None of us (...) escaped the naming. We were defined and identified by the way we were seen. A newspaper in B.C. headlined: ‘They are a stench in the nostrils of the people of Canada’” (Kogawa 139-140 1994). They were treated in such a bad manner because they were of a different race than the mainstream population. She compares the situation of Japanese Canadians, who were Canadian-born and had not committed any crimes within their native land, with the situation of German-born Germans who may have been a greater danger to the security of Canada: “Why in a time of war with Germany and Japan would our government seize the property and homes of Canadian-born Canadians but not the homes of German-born Germans? (...) Racism,” she resolved her own question (Kogawa 40 1983).

The stance of white population towards the Japanese Canadian community is, according to Willis, allegorically expressed by the relation of yellow chickens to a larger white hen. As a child, Naomi places some little yellow chickens into a cage where her parents keep a white hen which “starts pecking them to death.”³⁶ The white hen symbolizes Canada and its white population whereas the yellow chickens represent the Japanese who are referred to as “Yellow Peril” (Kogawa 165 1983).

³⁵ http://rua.ua.es/dspace/bitstream/10045/1273/1/RAEI_16_5.pdf (p.26)

³⁶ http://www.lib.unb.ca/Texts/SCL/bin/get.cgi?directory=vol12_2/&filename=Willis.htm

Aunt Emily has been fighting for general recognition of Japanese Canadians as rightful citizens, and that the wartime wrongs and past injustices be confronted. Thus she also fights against racism. However, Naomi's family has been excluded only from the white population but also from the Japanese community. They were discriminated against because of her father's tuberculosis and Stephen's limp.

Similarly, Suzuki encounters discrimination within his community. As previously mentioned he is a *Sansei* and does not speak any Japanese, whereas all the other children in the relocation camp are the *Nisei*, generally fluent in the language of their ancestors. He thus becomes and an outsider and finds a playmate with the same problem. His friend is a girl who is a descendent of a Japanese mother and a Caucasian father, paradoxically serving in the army. Being a half-breed she is also excluded from the fellowship of other children.

Discrimination within the community does not happen only among children but also adults. When Suzuki's mother claims her intention to stay in Canada after the war, she is shunned and subsequently excluded. Feeling already alienated from the Japanese Canadian community, Suzuki claims that this makes him feel estranged from it even more.

After the war when they live in Ontario which, in contrast to British Columbia, seems to be less racial, Suzuki becomes a victim of rather harsh treatment from his teacher, who sends him out of the classroom even though he sits quietly. We are not sure what makes teacher to treat him badly without a reason, but we can assume that the reason is his different appearance. Racial prejudices embedded in Suzuki's head follow him even as a teenager for he does not dare to ask a white girl out on a date. We can also suppose that racial prejudice is a reason that he has achieved such good results in his work. As he adds: "All my life as an adult, my drive to do well has been motivated by the desire to demonstrate to my fellow Canadians that my family and I had not deserved to be treated as we were" (Suzuki 16 2006).

7 Women

Women are key characters in both novels. Three generations of women occur in each of them. The readers learn about the relationships between these women and about the generation gaps that accompany their lives. In *Obasan*, Naomi's mother is present only in her early childhood. In *Chorus of Mushrooms*, Murasaki's mother is rather silent. Therefore the role of mothers is to a certain degree substituted by someone else. On the other hand, Suzuki's mother had a good influence on his life. I have chosen the characters of:

- Obasan
- Aunt Emily from *Obasan*
- Keiko from *Chorus of Mushrooms*
- Suzuki's mother

7.1 Obasan

When Naomi's mother leaves for Japan so that she can take care of her own grandmother, Naomi and Stephen are put in the care their aunt whom they call Obasan. At that point, Obasan replaces somebody who is, in fact, irreplaceable. She takes her new role responsibly and tries to do her best. She is kind and makes every effort to provide Naomi and Stephen with everything they need and what she can provide them with. However, having no children herself – she had two stillborn children – she has no direct experience of mother love. She does not express her affection, or other feelings and emotions. Not even many years after the war's end when Naomi visits her after she learns about the death of her uncle: “‘Oba,’ I say loudly, and take her hands. My aunt is not one for hugs and kisses,” Naomi explains (Kogawa 14 1994). Obasan's feelings are reserved even toward her husband. Their marriage was an arranged one: “She married Uncle (...) to please Grandma Nakane” (Kogawa 22 1994). Obasan is faithful and loyal to her husband. They respect each other but they hardly ever touch: “I've never once seen them caressing,” states Naomi (Kogawa 7 1994).

Obasan proves to be a woman of strength. When being expelled, she is left on her own with the two children, Stephen using crutches, and sent to an unpleasant hut in Slocan. There she lives in the wilderness reliant on her own abilities until she is joined by her husband.

Obasan does not speak much, she is rather silent. The reason may be to protect the children. “Kodomo no tame. For the sake of the children...,” is a sentence the children frequently hear but do not understand (Kogawa 26 1994). Obasan does not talk to them much and when they ask her, “her answers are always oblique and the full story never emerges” (Kogawa 22 1994). She wants to protect them especially from bad events, with the adults trying to hide the truth from the children. Therefore Naomi and Stephen learn about bad news only from the body language of the adults – through their “whispers and frowns”³⁷ - but never the full truth until they are adults.

Naomi indicates: “In all this time I’ve never seen her cry” (Kogawa 14 1994). We see Obasan as a strong and devoted woman who has sacrificed herself in order to protect the children. She is bound by the request of Naomi’s mother who asked her not to tell the children the truth about her fate. “Kodomo no tame – for the sake of the children – gaman shi masho – let us endure” (Kogawa 294-295 1994). Obasan endures, she bravely carries the burden on her shoulders and remains this way until she is much older.

7.2 Aunt Emily

Aunt Emily is Obasan’s very opposite. She is well educated: “Obasan’s language remains deeply underground but Aunt Emily, BA, MA, is a word warrior” (Kogawa 39 1994). Aunt Emily experienced the war as a young woman. She is a *Nissei*, and since then has been fighting for recognition and public awareness of injustices committed against Japanese Canadians. Aunt Emily is a very energetic and determined woman.

After the war, she lives in Toronto, takes part in conferences and campaigns, and continues her struggle to be accepted as a Canadian. As mentioned in the previous quotation, she is a “word warrior”. Unlike Obasan, who remains silent for all her life, Aunt Emily wants to speak out. “She’s a crusader, a little old gray-haired Mighty Mouse, a Bachelor of Advanced Activists and General Practitioner of Just Causes,” Naomi recounts (Kogawa 39 1994).

Aunt Emily is an activist and may sometimes leave an impression of being rather aggressive. The persistence of her struggle can be felt from Naomi’s following explanation: “The entire manuscript was sixty pages long. I skimmed over the pages till

³⁷ http://www.lib.unb.ca/Texts/SCL/bin/get.cgi?directory=vol12_2/&filename=Willis.htm

I came across a statement underlined and circled in red: *I am Canadian*. The circle was drawn so hard the paper was torn” (Kogawa 47 1994).

Aunt Emily is highly concerned about her citizenship and desires that other members of her family and the Japanese Canadian community feel the same way. “‘Nisei, not very Japanese-like,’ he [Uncle Sam] said. ‘Why should we be?’ Aunt Emily said. ‘We’re Canadian’” (Kogawa 48-49 1994). To Uncle Sam Aunt Emily’s struggle is incomprehensible and unlike Japanese tradition. He neither considers Aunt Emily to be very feminine.³⁸ “‘Not like woman,’ Uncle said as he sat at the table and watched her working. ‘Like that there can be no marriage’” (Kogawa 43 1994). Indeed, Aunt Emily lives alone. She does not have any children, or a husband. She has devoted her life as well, but to a different thing than Obasan – to her work and activism.

7.3 Keiko

Keiko as Murasaki’s mother is rather authoritative but silent at the same time. She is highly aware of her Asian origin, but would rather erase it from her consciousness. As she is fighting with her cultural heritage, she fights with her mother and daughter as well. As already mentioned, she wants her family to be like other Canadian families, not to stand out at all. She wants to be viewed as regular Canadians and explains that through the following words: “You can’t be everything at once. It is too confusing for a child to juggle two cultures” (Goto 189 1994). She is stubborn and does not let her daughter choose.

Murasaki is supposed to play a part in a school performance of Alice in Wonderland. With her Japanese roots she does not look like a typical English girl, therefore her teacher suggests that she wears a wig so that her hair is blonde. But Keiko goes to even a greater extreme and wants to dye her daughter’s hair. Similarly, she scrubs Murasaki’s hands after her daughter had eaten too many Japanese oranges because she felt that her daughter had turned even more yellow than what she was.

Keiko as a mother as well as a wife appears to be rather cold. We do not learn about any intimacies between her and her husband or moments of tenderness toward her daughter. Only at the end of the novel does the situation change, with Keiko leaving an impression of becoming a changed and milder woman.

³⁸ http://www.lib.unb.ca/Texts/SCL/bin/get.cgi?directory=vol12_2/&filename=Willis.htm

7.4 Suzuki's Mother

In his autobiography, Suzuki recalls numerous memories of his mother and remembers her as a warm-hearted woman. She is a great support to her husband as well as to her children. Although a *Nissei*, Suzuki's mother is "a traditional Japanese wife, never arguing with or contradicting Dad in front of us [Suzuki and his sisters] or company" (Suzuki 11 2006). Suzuki is shocked when he later experiences a host family discussion concerning politics where the woman opposes her husband and openly presents her ideas. In Suzuki's family, this was unimaginable.

Suzuki's mother is presented as very hard-working. She is "the first up in the morning and the last to go to bed at night" (Suzuki 11 2006). However, she accepts her role and does not complain. When the Suzuki family lives in Ontario and David goes to Leamington High School, his mother is, of all the mothers of his classmates, the only working mother. "All the other students' mothers were full-time parents" (Suzuki 29 2006). Besides working she takes care of the whole family. She may be strict in a way – she does not let her children buy their clothes or books, and they have to contribute to the family budget by having part-time jobs – but at the same time, she is kind and gives them little treats. Most importantly, she proves her love toward children by being interested in what they do and encouraging them. Suzuki (11 2006) recalls his memories as a youth:

My sanctuary as a teenager when we lived in London [Ontario] was a swamp, and I would go home soaking wet, often covered in mud, but triumphantly brandishing jars of insects, salamander eggs, or baby turtles. She never scolded me but would ooh and aah over each she helped me take off my clothes so that she could launder them.

Like Obasan, Suzuki's mother wants to protect her children from bad things – understandably also from the war. His parents "were able to shield my sisters and me from the pain, anger and fear that must have threaten to overwhelm them," Suzuki narrates. When the war breaks out his mother is left with a load of responsibility. She stays alone with their three children and has to deal with the family property and then the move to the relocation camp. Nevertheless, she overcomes the obstacles and, when in Ontario, she continues working and being an essential pier for her family.

8 Conclusion

In this chapter some facts which the author finds interesting or surprising will be included. Besides, she will try to answer two main questions - first question considering the role of women within the Japanese Canadian community, second trying to resolve whether the Japanese Canadian wartime experience led to trauma and how was it coped with.

8.1 Connection to the Czech Republic

One of the reasons I had chosen this topic was to raise public awareness of Czech readers about Canada and its history, despite the fact that the Japanese Canadian wartime experience is not one Canadians would be very proud of. As the title of this thesis reads: *How They Coped with Trauma: the Story of Japanese Families in Post-War Canada*, I did not expect that it could be, by any means, related to the Czech Republic. Surprisingly, there is a certain link.

Otto Jelinek worked as Canadian Secretary of State for Multiculturalism between 1985 and 1986, and was one in a row of Canadian politicians negotiating with the National Association of Japanese Canadians about the redress of Japanese Canadian community for past injustices (Miki 283 2005). Jelinek's last name, to whom Miki (284 2005) refers to as a Hungarian refugee and subsequently also as a former figure skater (297 2005), seemed to me to be rather of Czech or Czechoslovakian origin. Therefore I went to do further research and found out that Otto Jelinek was born in Prague in 1940. When he was eight years old, his family emigrated through Switzerland to Canada, where he became first a successful figure skater, later a politician. He quit politics in 1993 and a year later returned to the Czech Republic.³⁹

³⁹ <http://www.ceskatelevize.cz/ct24/kalendarium/90381-otto-jelinek-krasobruslarem-podnikatelem-politikem-ministrem/>

8.2 The Chief Promoter of Multiculturalism and His Attitude to Redress

Pierre Elliott Trudeau was generally known as a champion of multiculturalism and equality of Canadian citizens. I was rather shocked when I learnt that he had dismissed to deal with redress for Japanese Canadians. By apologizing for the wartime wrongs to the Japanese government in 1976, five years after the multiculturalism was announced, he practically denied the existence of Japanese Canadians (Miki 183 2005).

Similarly astonishing was the finding that the War Measures Act under which the Japanese Canadians had been deprived of their rights remained still legal for several decades after the war, and that Trudeau used it in the 1970 Quebec crisis and thus suspended civil rights of Canadian citizens (Miki 184 2005).

8.3 The Role of Women

In all the three discussed books, women played an important part, usually the pivotal one. The picture of a traditional Japanese woman who is loyal and respects her husband appears in the characters of Obasan and Suzuki's mother. Both of them were of great support to their families. We can say that Obasan, who had not had any children herself, sacrificed most of her life to her husband's brother's two children, Stephen and Naomi. On the other hand, she might have done it in order to replace her two still-born children. Nevertheless, she took on her role with responsibility and took care of the two adopted children as if they were her own. She only did not cuddle them. Similarly, Suzuki's mother provided a lot of great care, love and encouragement. She was a pillar of strength to her family. However, in contrast to Obasan, she expressed a close emotional contact with her children.

The model of a traditional Japanese woman was, however, disrupted by other characters, including the activist Aunt Emily. As an unmarried and childless woman, she centred her strength onto struggle for public awareness of past injustices. With her approach of a warrior and an outspoken person, Aunt Emily was the opposite to Obasan who struggled in her silence.

All these above mentioned women had to deal with war and its consequences. In the relocation camps, they were frequently left on their own, only with children, or the elderly. Keiko was an exception to this, as we never learn whether she had experienced

the wartime treatment or not. On all accounts, the fact that she has lived in Canada, a country which had not been the home country of her ancestors, has been a fundamental interference to her life. Most time she appeared to be struggling with her identity and thus forgetting what is really important, her family.

The character of Keiko is contrasted with that of her mother Naoe who, although living in a foreign country, did not mind the cultural differences and functioned as a mediator between the Japanese cultural heritage and her granddaughter Murasaki.

Whether they were activists, mothers, grandmothers or aunts, all of them had a leading part in the lives of their children, grandchildren, nieces or nephews. Each of them, however, lived in different circumstances, and handled them in specific ways. However, through their acts they participated in the evolution of the Canadian society.

8.4 How Did They Cope with Trauma?

To be able to answer this question, it is necessary to decide whether what the analysed characters had suffered from was trauma or only a bad experience. Looking at the novel *Chorus of Mushrooms*, we cannot unambiguously tell if the main characters had ever been relocated, or how they got to Alberta. We learn a little bit about Naoe's life before she had arrived to Canada. We do not know much, though. She was born in Japan, got married, lived in China and got divorced. But that is where her story stops for many years to re-emerge many decades later when she is already in her 80s.

We have no idea how the Tonkatsu family got to Canada, or when did they come. Was it before the war? After? We have no indications, therefore it is hard to declare whether they suffered from relocation trauma or not. Evidently, they struggled with their identity. They did not know whether they were more Japanese or Canadian and how to handle these two cultures. Keiko had an impression that they were regarded as the Japanese, not the Canadians, therefore she did all things possible to stand out of the Canadian crowd as little as possible, whereas her mother was the very opposite to her.

Considering the character of Obasan, it is very probable that she had suffered from trauma. She had been a victim of harsh treatment, she had lost her property; moreover, she had lost several members of her family due to the war. These situations do not count among the pleasant ones, rather more to the contrary. It is surprising how calm she stayed - what had happened to her and her family, she accepted with stoicism and gratitude for staying alive.

However, several times throughout the book she repeated that it was better to forget. Therefore we can assume that she was in denial and wanted to forget her past experience. Beside denial, in order to cope with the trauma, she resorted to the Bible and faith that God would help them through. She had probably attended services even before the war broke out, therefore we can suppose that little services and prayers were not new to her. However, praying helped her to go through what she had experienced.

Family togetherness might have helped them to overcome the obstacles during the war, as they tried to stay together as much as possible, but it is rather doubtful that togetherness helped them afterwards as all their family had been dispersed.

In her coping strategies, Naomi resembles Obasan for she refused to deal with the past. On the contrary, Aunt Emily recommended facing the past. We can reach the reconciliation only if we accept the past. Her remedy is activism. If she has not yet reached the resiliency, she will do soon, as according to Miki, we have to integrate our past into our lives, to mediate it (Miki 256 2005).

Yet another story is the one of Stephen. He was very young during the war, but not that young not to understand what was happening. If his experience had not led to trauma, then it must have led into resentment toward anything Japanese. He rejected anything too Japanese and alienated himself from the Japanese Canadian community. Due to the fact that he was a successful pianist, we can anticipate that for him the music was a certain way to heal.

Suzuki does not call his experience as traumatic, but uses expressions, such as fears, insecurity or hurt, which are some of the effects of trauma. Certainly, the war relocation left an impact on his life. As a child, he was protected from the bad world by his parents. Family togetherness and support was of great help to get over the obstacles. However, having had experienced discrimination within his community already as a boy he, similarly to Stephen, also became alienated from his community. And it has been the experience of being viewed as a foreigner in his native land which challenged him to prove that he can be as good and successful as other Canadians and has driven him to where he is now.

The bad wartime experience was certainly a terrible experience which left its victims with an indelible mark and frequently led to trauma. Each character coped with the trauma in a different way. Some tried to forget it, others stood up to face it, whereas for some others it has been a drive.

Resumé

Tato diplomová práce se zabývá historií japonské komunity v Kanadě a jejím ztvárněním v literatuře. Teoretická část mapuje vývoj japonské komunity a související témata jako je např. historie imigrace nebo změna imigrační politiky. Hlavním cílem pak bylo zodpovědět otázku, jak se tato komunita vyrovnala s válečným traumatem zobrazeným ve vybrané literatuře, kterou tvoří dvě fikční a jedno autobiografické dílo.

Japonská komunita v Kanadě má více než 100letou historii. První imigranti začali přicházet na konci 19. století, kdy důvodem odchodu z rodné země byla její chudoba a přelidněnost. Na počátku 20. století čítal počet japonských imigrantů, kteří osidlovali především Britskou Kolumbii, několik tisíc. Místem jejich hlavního působení byl Vancouver a rybářská vesnice Steveston. Žili v oddělených komunitách a většinou pracovali jako rybáři, dřevorubci, v těžebním průmyslu či zakládali farmy kolem řeky Fraser.

Zvyšující se počet členů japonské komunity zvyšoval nelibost bílé populace, která se snažila příliv Japonců omezit. Zásadním obratem/ bodem, který japonským Kanadčanům změnil život, byl útok japonské armády na americkou základnu Pearl Harbour, po němž Kanada vyhlásila Japonsku válku. V průběhu druhé světové války bylo více než 20 000 Japonců žijících v Kanadě, z nichž tři čtvrtiny byli rodilí nebo naturalizovaní Kanadčané, zbaveno občanských práv.

Všichni Kanadčané japonského původu byli vyhoštěni z tzv. ochranné zóny, která představovala pásmo široké 160 km podél Pacifického oceánu. Byl jim zabaven majetek i živosti, obojí bylo bez jejich svolení prodáno. Matky, děti a starší občané byli přesunuti do tzv. relokačních táborů ve vnitrozemí Britské Kolumbie, muži pak posláni do speciálních pracovních táborů v Ontariu, čímž byly rodiny nuceny se rozdělit. Jen některým rodinám se podařilo zůstat spolu, ty byly pak poslány pracovat na farmy do Albery.

Podmínky v táborech byly velmi špatné, japonsští Kanadčané neměli ve většině případech ani slušnou práci, navíc si za svůj pobyt v táborech museli platit. Ztráty na prodaném majetku pod cenou i na zmařených příjmech se vyšplhaly do řádů stamilionů kanadských dolarů. Původní plán vykázat po válce všechny Kanadčany japonského původu se nakonec neuskutečnil, ale i tak byly ze země vyhoštěny 4 000 japonských Kanadčanů.

Ti, kteří zůstali, se museli ještě několik let po válce držet mimo Britskou Kolumbii. Volnost pohybu znovu nabyli až v roce 1949, kdy zároveň získali i volební právo. Rozprodejem majetku kanadská vláda zamýšlela rozptýlit japonskou komunitu, v čemž pokračovala i nadále. Důsledkem toho se japonská komunita rozptýlila po celé Kanadě, největší část se usadila v Ontariu.

Následující léta po válce se japonská komunita snažila splynout se zbytkem kanadské společnosti a nijak nevynikala. Až v 80. letech minulého století se začala formovat myšlenka odškodnění za válečné křivdy. Po letech dlouhého boje se japonští Kanadčané dohodli s vládou Briana Mulroney, který 22. září 1988 podepsal dohodu o odškodnění.

V praktické části jsem se snažila zjistit, jak se japonští Kanadčané vypořádali s traumatem a jaká byla role žen. K literárnímu rozboru jsem si vybrala knihu *Obasan* od Joy Kogawy, *Chorus of Mushrooms* od Hiromi Goto a autobiografii předního kanadského ochránce životního prostředí Davida Suzukiho. V nich jsem se snažila najít společná témata, která jsem posléze porovnávala.

Prvním tématem bylo prostředí, ve kterém japonská komunita žila, a rybářská tradice. Vzhledem k tomu, že poměrná část Japonců žijících v Kanadě byli rybáři, jejich živobytí byly závislé na moři. Tento vztah je znatelně cítit v knize *Obasan*, ve které rodina hlavních představitelů pocházela z řady stavitelů člunů.

Dalším tématem bylo jídlo. Tradiční japonská kuchyně je velmi rozdílná od té kanadské, proto jsem se snažila zjistit, jaké jídlo se ve zmíněných knihách objevuje, a kterému dávali hlavní představitelé přednost.

Následující část se zabývala otázkou náboženství, resp. křesťanství, které Keiko z knihy *Chorus of Mushrooms* používala spíše k tomu, aby se zařadila do kanadského prostředí, zatímco u *Obasan* a její rodiny má křesťanství delší tradici a slouží spíše jako prostředek útěchy a odhodlání.

Co se jazyka týče, potvrdilo tvrzení z teoretické části, a sice že třetí generace Japonců v Kanadě neovládala japonštinu, ale ve většině případů pouze angličtinu. Proto se jazyk stal nejen diskriminací v rámci komunity, ale i bariérou v rámci rodin, kdy vnoučata nebyla schopna komunikovat se svými prarodiči.

Jeden ze způsobů vyrovnání se s traumatem je jeho popření, kterým se zabývám v další části. Domnívám se, že postava, která k tomuto způsobu přilnula je postava *Obasan* a do jisté míry i její neteř Naomi, které se snaží vytěsnit minulost z vědomí.

Blízkost a společenství jsou dalším důležitým prvkem v překonávání překážek. I přesto, že byly japonské rodiny ve většině případů během války roztrženy, dokázaly se jako rodina v těžkých chvílích semknout.

Z historické dokumentace vyplývá, že zacházení s japonskou komunitou v Kanadě mělo silný rasistický podtext. O tom se často zmiňuje teta Emily v knize *Obasan*. Diskriminaci se ale nevyhnuli Japonci ani v rámci své komunity. I o tom se můžeme dočíst v knize Joy Kogawy i Davida Suzukiho.

Role žen byla velmi důležitá. V mnoha případech na nich ležela obrovská zodpovědnost za celou rodinu. Obzvláště, když byli muži posláni do pracovních táborů, ony se musely postarat o všechny děti a vypořádat s majetkem a zařídit jeho případný prodej ještě před tím, než byl zkonfiskován. Obasan, ačkoliv sama žádné děti neměla, nahrazovala matku své neteři a synovci. Starala se o ně s veškerou péčí, ale nedokázala jim nahradit matčin dotek. Obasan nebyla žena vyjadřující emoce slovy, a tak děti mohly jen tušit z výrazů v její tváři, co se děje. Obrovskou rodinnou podporu představovala i Suzukiho matka, která se o své děti nejen zajímala a pečlivě starala, ale i povzbuzovala a na rozdíl od Obasan byla dětem emočně blíže. Ženy v roli matky se snažily uchránit děti před válkou a špatnostmi okolního světa.

V tomto směru jim částečným protikladem může být teta Emily, která chce, aby Naomi a Stephen poznali pravdu o osudu své matky. Emily jako aktivistka za uznání japonských Kanadčanů a za uznání špatného zacházení s jejich komunitou během druhé světové války, se tradičnímu pojetí japonských žen vymyká.

Keiko, matka Murasaki z *Chorus of Mushrooms*, je ke své rodině spíše chladná. Snaží se přizpůsobit kanadské společnosti a totéž chce i po své dceři, která si pak mezi svou matkou a babičkou může připadat jako „mezi mlýnskými kameny“. Její babička je totiž naprostým opakem Keiko a velkým zastáncem hodnot japonského kulturního dědictví.

Zodpovědět otázku jak se vyrovnali s válečným traumatem je především u rodiny Tonkatsu z knihy *Chorus of Mushrooms* těžké. Nevíme totiž, zda se jedná o rodinu, která do Kanady přišla ještě před válkou nebo až po ní. Víme však, že bojuje se svou identitou a neví, pro kterou kulturu se vlastně rozhodnout.

Obasan je postava, která se snaží na minulost zapomenout, využívá tedy způsobu jejího popření. Podobně je tomu i u Naomi, která má pocit, že je potřeba otočit list a jít dál. Zatímco její odbojná teta zastává názor, že minulosti je třeba čelit a přijmout ji.

Zato Naomin bratr Stephen se jako hudebník, který působí po celém světě, od japonské komunity naprosto vzdaluje a odcizuje.

Odcizení se projevuje i u Suzukiho, který již jako dítě byl diskriminován v rámci své komunity, což se ještě více prohloubilo ve věku dospívání. Jak sám vyjádřil, to, že se cítil cizincem ve své rodné zemi pro něj bylo „hnacím motorem“ a díky tomu se dostal tam, kde nyní je.

Špatné zkušenosti z války byly rozhodně otřesnou zkušeností, která ve svých obětech zanechala nesmazatelnou stopu a dost často vyústila v trauma, se kterým se každá postava vyrovnávala po svém. Jedni se na to snažili zapomenout, jiní minulosti čelit, zatímco pro další byla hnací silou.

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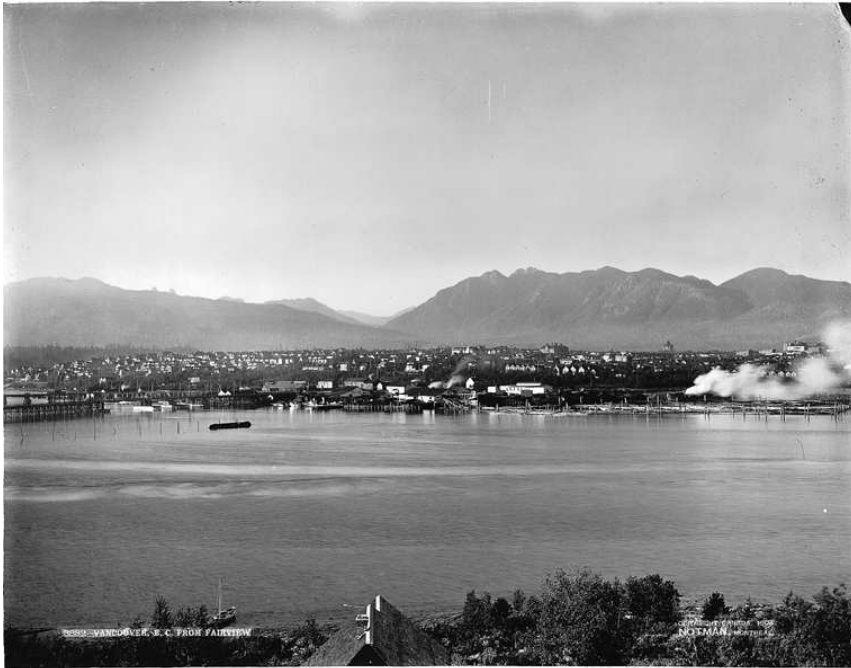
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Picture 6: Men's dormitory at Hastings Park, Vancouver, B.C.



Picture 7: Relocation to internment camps in the interior B.C.



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Picture 9: Internment camp.



Picture 10: Winter at Tashme internment camp, B.C.



Picture 11: Pine Creek School, Slocan City. Seated far right – Joy Kogawa, far left – David Suzuki.



Picture 12: Boys playing baseball at Lemon Creek internment camp, B.C.



Picture 13: The Miki family at a sugar beet farm, Alberta.



Picture 14: Redress movement.



Picture 15: Prime Minister Brian Mulroney and NAJC President Miki Art signing the redress agreement.

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