Journal of Popular Romance Studies
published in partnership with the International Association for the Study of Popular Romance

Courting Tragedy: Romance and the Liberal Redemption of Japanese American Mass Incarceration

Allan W. Austin

Published online: June 2024
http://www.jprstudies.org

Abstract: The efforts of Americans to come to grips with the meanings as well as the consequences of the mass incarceration of Japanese Americans during World War II took a new turn in the 1990s in the pages of popular romances. This new direction was embodied in David Guterson's *Snow Falling on Cedars* and Danielle Steel's *Silent Honor*, which attempted to find white redemption in wartime Japanese American history. Both authors strove for a historical authenticity that helped to disguise the ways in which their novels sought to absolve Americans for their unconstitutional wartime misdeeds. The novels (as well as the film based on Guterson's tale) also functioned to seal off racism in a distant past, allowing liberals to congratulate themselves for both what was done during the war and what had transpired since it. The romance form abetted such efforts, leveraging genre expectations of reconciliation and a coming together that fit neatly with prevailing attitudes about the past and present. In the 1990s, Americans "courted" tragedy under the guidance of Guterson and Steel in ways that let themselves off the hook with allegedly happy endings of both individual and societal redemption.

About the Author: Allan W. Austin is professor of history at Misericordia University. His research is located at the intersections of immigration history and popular culture studies. Austin's work in immigration history has produced books, including *From Concentration to Campus: Japanese American Students and World War II* (2004), *Quaker Brotherhood: Interracial Activism and the American Friends Service Committee, 1917-1950* (2012), and *All New, All Different?: A History of Race and the American Superhero* (2019, with Patrick L. Hamilton). In addition, he has published chapters and articles that investigate the ways in which popular culture has addressed the mass incarceration of Japanese Americans.

Keywords: American romance fiction, Danielle Steel, David Guterson, Japanese Americans, liberalism, World War II

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License.

Takeo (Tak) Tanaka confronts wartime tragedy in Danielle Steel's *Silent Honor*. Franklin Roosevelt has issued Executive Order 9066, resulting in the exile and mass incarceration of all West Coast Japanese Americans, citizens and aliens alike. Caught in the resulting chaos, the political science professor must sell his home at great financial loss, leave his job (and abandon his career), and move his family into an uncertain future in godforsaken locales. As all seems fraught with peril, Tanaka wonders about just how these shameful events will be remembered in the future. "It's going to make great teaching one day," he ruefully observes. "I just wonder who'll be here to teach the class. Probably not me, or anyone like me" (Steel 166). Tanaka's pessimism reflected Steel's bleak view of just where things stood in early 1942 and set the stage for readers to feel the immense injustices that quickly compound in her narrative.

But if Steel captured the tragedies unfolding in 1942, Tanaka's pessimism somewhat misses the mark. He is correct that this history will not be forgotten. The mass incarceration of Japanese Americans has been much considered, and by a variety of people including Japanese Americans (which the political scientist does not foresee in forecasting the future). First-hand accounts written by Japanese Americans, if slow to come immediately after the war, have proliferated (see, for example, Okubo, Houston, Uchida, Takei). Scholarly accounts have, too (see Chan). Pushed along by the Japanese American movement for redress that started in the 1970s, the government remembered and taught, too, through the work of the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians. Its report, *Personal Justice Denied* (1982-1983), resulted in Ronald Reagan issuing an apology for mass incarceration and signing a reparations bill for Japanese American survivors into law in 1988.

In the 1990s, however, the popular conversation turned in a different direction, deploying memories of the wartime tragedy not to critique past transgressions but instead to redeem the white liberals who oversaw them. Two of the biggest romances of the decade demonstrated this reality.[1] David Guterson's *Snow Falling on Cedars* (acclaimed as both a novel in 1994 and a film in 1999) and Danielle Steel's *Silent Honor* (a number one best seller in 1996 (Kennedy)) made honest efforts to address mass incarceration, but each fell victim to a feel-good liberalism, an outcome encouraged by the romance genre and its promise to provide "integration and reconciliation" (Barlow and Krentz 18) as part of a "spirit of optimism" grounded in a selective view of the past (Putney 99-100). The desire for historical authenticity in both tales thus masked efforts grounded in and meant to redeem white liberalism. This style of liberalism, which arose in the aftermath of World War II, assumed that American problems were not structural and thus did not require far-reaching reform. Such liberals understood race as an individual problem of conscience; there was no need for structural change, only a need to "fix" individual racists (Austin and Hamilton 90-91). Building on such understandings of race, both authors offered a good deal of liberal back-patting that assuaged the white conscience by sealing off racism in the past, leaving Americans to celebrate how far they had seemingly come. Americans at the turn of the century "courted" tragedy under the guidance of Guterson and Steel in ways that let themselves off the hook with allegedly happy endings of both individual and societal redemption.

Good Intentions, within Limits

Guterson and Steel wrote with the best of intentions. Guterson remembered writing with a monkish sense of a "religious calling" that left him "indefatigable, filled with the right stuff, and girded by moral striving. In short, I could, and would, save the world" (Guterson, "Looking Back"). Believing it impossible to separate "politics from aesthetics," Guterson wrote with "a will toward moral purpose" in "a decade of American optimism," believing that his stories would inspire readers "to carry on with the work of sustaining what is best in human beings" ("Looking Back"). He trusted that readers needed a hero "who represents a set of values" (Matthews). Guterson later came to understand himself as perhaps too full of idealism, acknowledging the mixed responses his novel received. Some celebrated him "for raising awareness" about the mistreatment of Japanese Americans, and others criticized him "for perpetuating stereotypes, and for being exactly the sort of white guy … who can't write about race without a white hero front and center" (Guterson, "Looking Back").

Whatever the author's shortcomings, reviewers certainly understood and even applauded Guterson's good intentions. The novel, one approvingly wrote, placed "humanity on trial," and another praised its ambitious critique of wartime prejudice and policies (William 4; McKay 651). Other descriptions of the prize-winning novel emphasized its focus on themes of racial injustice ("Teacher Wins"). For this reason, Jenny Brantley urged that students read a "beautifully written" book that taught important lessons. The novel, she argued, might lead to nothing short of "social and moral change." It was a story that, "more than ever, we need to put … into the hands of our high school students" (395-396, 401).

The good intentions and mixed results of Guterson's novel provide the foundation for the eponymous film. Director Scott Hicks understood that the movie addressed controversial history, and he insisted that he was not averse to including politics in it. Wanting somewhat demurely to draw viewers in "without preaching or teaching them a history lesson," Hicks nonetheless believed it important to introduce "bold ideas" to help audiences to see the world in news ways (Goodale). Film could lead to societal change, even if the director preferred to discuss this obliquely. The actor James Cromwell shared such ambitions more directly in presenting the film's moral purpose as part of an extended conversation about pressing issues. The movie, he suggested, "informs an audience and alters its perception. Even though I knew this history, it's still compelling. When you adjust your view, you can see it's still mirrored in the events of today" (*Snow Falling* press kit 9). In both incarnations, *Snow Falling on Cedars* had ambitious social goals.

While Steel has not addressed her relationship to Japanese American history as self-searchingly as Guterson, she also wanted to critique the wartime mistreatment of Japanese Americans. She would find, however, like Guterson, that goodwill hardly guaranteed good results. Whatever her laudable intentions, the press website unintentionally captures the more complete trajectory of the novel, and Steel's missteps along the way, in describing its portrayal of

> not only the human cost of that terrible time in history, but also the remarkable courage of a people whose honor and dignity transcended the chaos that surrounded them. *Silent Honor* reveals the stark truth about the betrayal of Americans by their own government [as well as] the triumph of a

> woman caught between cultures and determined to survive. (*Silent Honor* Press Website)

Here, the blurb suggests the author's determination to confront past misdeeds, but then insists upon a happy ending that undermines some of Steel's good intentions. As *Kirkus Reviews* put it more directly, "[i]n the one concession to Steelism, in spite of insurmountable odds and considerable tragedy, a sappy end is tacked on with unabashed tugs at the heartstrings" (*Silent Honor Kirkus* Review). In both her intentions and her book's outcomes, Steel, like Guterson, reveals a pronounced unwillingness among Americans to come to a full accounting of the causes, costs, and meanings of mass incarceration.

The Dangers of Historical "Authenticity"

Both authors insisted upon authenticity driving their stories, an approach that brought its own perils. Guterson certainly took history seriously. He compiled, over his ten years of background work, almost 600 pages of oral histories from Japanese Americans (*Snow Falling* press kit 12). Guterson's novel exhibits great care in getting historical details correct. It captures a sense of a prewar community in which social customs, if not the law, maintain segregated lives (in which Ishmael and Hatsue can work and play together outside of school but in school must act like strangers). He also presents an unfair economic system in which Japanese Americans cannot own the land they farm. As the story moves forward, it captures a good deal of nuance, for instance in covering the local aftermath of the bombing of Pearl Harbor, with the community rallying together (even across racial lines) in some instances but splintering, too, as anti-Japanese American agitation arises. Guterson's narrative also includes details of FBI visits and arrests in the ethnic community, as well as the forced removal of Japanese Americans from San Piedro to the real-life locales of, first, the Puyallup fairgrounds and then Manzanar, where newcomers are met by "the barbed wire and the rows of dark barracks blurred by blowing dust" (218). The novel explores living conditions in Manzanar via the somewhat awkward courtship of Hatsue and Kabuo.

The press kit for the filmic version of *Snow Falling on Cedars* reflected Guterson's intent to undertake the serious historical research necessary for telling his story. Publicity materials stress that the movie "is set against a riveting piece of American history: the national crisis which erupted following Japan's bombing of Pearl Harbor" (7). It rightly emphasizes the paranoia that resulted in EO 9066 and its aftermath. The press kit devotes an entire section to "Meeting Up with History," again stressing the utmost importance of the authentic past in the story being shared. Mass incarceration thus becomes "a very dramatic piece of American history" that "required research of exceptional depth and detail." Producer Kathleen Kennedy emphasizes that "accuracy of detail" was imperative to the filmmakers, a sentiment shared by costume designer Renee Erlich Kalfus: "Reality was our point of reference. It was so precisely done it was almost like a reenactment" (12). Authenticity, then, provided a cornerstone for the film.

The filmmakers' quest for authenticity is exemplified in the moving scene of the evacuation of Japanese Americans from their island home, which gets a lot right historically. Emphasizing children and the elderly, clearly not national security threats, being forcibly

removed, this quiet, historically-grounded scene and its somber music generate empathy for Japanese Americans in capturing a truthful snapshot (Creef 116-117). As the press kit notes, hundreds of Japanese Americans participated in this scene, reliving this traumatic moment from their past and heightening the film's empathetic effect. These extras "were almost as important as the stars," the press kit reports, revealing more than intended with the "almost"; as we shall see, Japanese Americans and their history mattered, but not as much the white man upon whom the movie centers (13). The text nonetheless recalls the heavy emotions of the shoot: "Before the cameras even started to roll, an eerie moment of utter silence descended on the street as the enormity of those long ago [sic] events really struck home. 'It was,' [producer Frank] Marshall recalls, 'an amazing, dramatic and emotional moment when people started to relive their past. We understood just how awful it had been. It was an astounding example of art imitating life'" (12-13).

If Guterson's work evinces the desire for authentic scenes of mass incarceration, Steel's *Silent Honor* spends even more time tracing and openly criticizing the drastic and dehumanizing consequences as Executive Order 9066 transforms Japanese American families into numbers for mass processing. In doing so, getting history right mattered to Steel, who did considerable research, and emphasized having done so. In collecting blurbs from reviews for publicity, the publisher chose to highlight the novel's historical authenticity. The "Praise for … *Silent Honor*" page notes that the novel is "well researched" and celebrates it as "a realistic portrayal of Japanese Americans at this period in our turbulent history." The "Praise for … *Silent Honor*" page includes another excerpt commending Steel for sharing "[a] reminder of a shameful episode in American history that should not be forgotten." (Such reviews dissociate contemporary readers from the past; *it* may have been racist, but *they* are not.) In an interview with goodreads.com, Steel emphasized her serious interest in history, in part by distancing herself from the romance genre:

> I write contemporary fiction. I'll write everything from wars to cancer, and about a fifth of my books are historical and they're very thoroughly researched. I work with a wonderful researcher who's worked with me for my whole writing career. Essentially I write about human relationships, not just romantic ones but familial ones. And friendships and all sorts of stuff. The problems of the human condition are kind of the same in every era. ("Interview with Danielle Steel")

Silent Honor, she goes on to explain, was inspired by her daughter, who was studying the wartime Japanese American experience at school. In writing it, Steel emphasizes that it "was a wonderful book to research, and I interviewed a lot of people for that book" (Steel np; "Interview").

Steel's pride in the research results in a novel that sometimes reads like a textbook, a problem noted in other historical romances by Catherine M. Roach (154). For one, Steel populates her story with references to historical events and actors. She also thinks about immigration and generational patterns within the community. In the aftermath of the attack on Pearl Harbor, this historically-centered approach shifts into high gear, drawing the reader into a personal encounter with the past. Steel's attention to detail is formidable. She captures the fear and paranoia that follow the attack as emotions heat up. She also steps outside the fictional plot to make sure readers understand the racist atmosphere: the mistreatment of

Japanese Americans "was completely illogical, but emotions ran high" (132). Such commentaries pepper her novel, making clear where Steel's sympathies lie, creating a trust in the reader that "courage, justice, honor, loyalty, and love" might face challenges but will triumph in a world "free of moral ambiguity" (Barlow and Krentz 16). In focusing mostly on wartime history, Steel's novel might problematically be read to suggest that these "illogical" policies and actions resulted simply as the result of war. In doing so, readers might miss the ways in which mass incarceration, while the short-term result of armed conflict, actually represented a "logical" culmination of long-term anti-Asian attitudes baked into the American historical experience (Daniels, *Concentration Camps*, 1-25; Daniels, *Asian America*, 100-185). In presenting wartime racism this way, Steel echoes the liberal refusal to recognize systemic racism, instead focusing on specific events and individuals as root causes.

Importantly, Steel consciously explores what mass incarceration meant for Japanese Americans, and from their own perspective. Thus, while the narrative is scaffolded by historical "lectures," we watch Japanese Americans experience fear and uncertainty after the bombing. Steel does not flinch from the tragedies that follow, as Japanese Americans lose their businesses, newspapers, boats, and houses, among other things. Amidst a hyperbolic cycle of panic and abuse, Steel reminds readers of a base reality undermining public accusations: "why would [Japanese Americans] be loyal to Japan when most of them had no relatives there and had never been there? … It was impossible to explain rationally" (197). Government policy both grows from such paranoia and stokes it, feeding a vicious cycle that leads inevitably to mass incarceration. Steel traces this trajectory with a thoroughness that, once again, can make *Silent Honor* read like a pseudo-textbook as the author leads the reader through Executive Order 9066 and its consequences. No matter how much they assert their loyalty and assimilation, Japanese Americans watch whatever rights they had, already significantly limited in terms of naturalization and citizenship by legislation and court rulings (Chan 214-220), gradually stripped away, "stunned into a terrified silence" (183). They also grapple with divisions within their community, between immigrant and native-born as well as parents and children in ways that humanize them and thus make their circumstances all the more tragic.

Silent Honor closely chronicles the wartime experiences of Japanese Americans during and after their mass removal from the West Coast. Financial losses accrue. Beloved pets are given away. Families leave their homes, never to return. Steel follows Hiroko and the Tanaka family with whom she lives to the incarceration camps at Tanforan and Tule Lake, describing their surroundings in detail. The family first moves into a horse stall at the Tanforan racetrack and shovels out manure with salvaged coffee cans. They wait in interminable lines for unappealing food and information. Illnesses sweep through the camp. They do what they can to create community, but news from the outside is hard come by, and rumors circulate. Things are no better at Tule Lake, one of the more notorious wartime facilities, where the toll on the family grows. They argue about the draft and what it means to be an American. Generations butt heads. Martial law is declared as the camp radicalizes. Finally, Steel devotes some time to resettlement from the camps, an issue often given short shrift by scholars. She is clearly serious about doing the history justice in all of this, which is drastically truncated in my retelling. Throughout all of this, the promise of freedom seems limited, and Steel even goes out of her way to criticize the Supreme Court's *Endo* decision which made it illegal for the government to detain admittedly loyal citizens. "But," Steel

remonstrates, "the government already had, for two and a half years now. It was hard to take that back and say they were sorry" (361).

The intense interest of Guterson and Steel in getting history right is admirable in some ways but sets up potential problems in others. Both use history to humanize Japanese Americans, heightening the tragedy that comes crashing down upon them after December 7, 1941, and both present exile and mass incarceration as truly tragic. Watching a movie that focuses, at least briefly, on a small group being rounded up heightens the sense of unfairness. Moviegoers feel it, and this matters in building empathy that might challenge broadly held misunderstandings or ignorance of the mistreatment of Japanese Americans. Steel's historical lectures can distract at times from the human element in her story, but she nonetheless focuses on Japanese Americans as real people caught in real catastrophes beyond their control, building sympathy for them along the way. So far, so good.

But both stories also run the risk of locating their subject matter *only* in the past, and furthermore in a past focused narrowly on the war. While such an emphasis certainly makes sense, Steel's focus on the post-Pearl Harbor United States—Hiroko arrives just before hostilities start, after all—overwhelms any references to the structural racism that confronted Japanese Americans upon their arrival to the United States, many decades prior to the war (Daniels, *Concentration Camps*, 1-25; Daniels, *Asian America*, 100-185). In giving short shrift to the ways in which the war was not "new" in generating racial inequalities, Steel further diminishes her audience's responsibility for this sordid history. The ending of the war (especially in the context of the government's 1988 apology and reparations) can thus stand in for the ending of racism, further insulating readers from past misdeeds. Guterson at least thinks about the ways in which land ownership laws shaped and complicated community relations on San Piedro Island, but he likewise situates the bulk of his story in the 1940s and 1950s, to the same effect as Steel. In the process, both authors further obscure the deep racist roots of incarceration as well as the real property and financial costs borne by Japanese Americans (Chan 220; Daniels, *Concentration Camps*, 15-16; Daniels, *Asian America*, 138-145, 147, 298-299; Wald 46, 77, 104, 113-115, 124, 99). Readers and moviegoers can thus feel better about themselves because both authors locate racist abuse in the past (often quite narrowly defined as World War II) and not the present (of the 1990s). The sins of the past are sealed off from the present. This is a problem exacerbated by the treatment of both ethnic and white characters by Guterson and Steel.

Limits as Exposed by Japanese American Characters

Steel and Guterson deploy Japanese American characters meant to build sympathy, but often fall short. The press kit for the filmic version of *Snow Falling on Cedars* suggests that, whatever the good intentions of creators, a subtle racism in the film produced less good outcomes than intended, revealing racial hierarchies that prevailed into the 1990s. The film's casting, in this way, began a process of distancing white Americans and their institutions from the injustices of exile and incarceration. The press kit praises "the strong ensemble cast [featuring] so many, many strong character actors"—all white— as well as "a wonderful Japanese cast" (8-9). This implied hierarchy of importance and whiteness subtly reinforces wartime understandings of the differences between whites and "Japanese." The press kit

goes on to focus on the white leads, spotlighting Ethan Hawke and thus revealing a fundamental truth about the film: *Snow Falling on Cedars* may be set against Japanese American history, but it is a movie for and about white folks (8-9).

Whites are yet further distanced from the manifest unfairness of mass incarceration in the film via the relative absence of well-developed Japanese American characters; even those that appear on the screen are hardly actually there (Creef 95-98; Aoki 691-694). This is a reality concretely demonstrated by Hatsue, played by the Japanese actress Youki Kudoh. Although ostensibly the second lead, Kudoh is marginalized in the press kit, where any number of white actors are discussed before her. Her participation also drew criticism from the Media Action Network for Asian Americans, which argued that the decision to employ a Japanese actor instead of a Japanese American one reinforced notions of Asians as perpetual foreigners in the United States (Creef 214-215n). Furthermore, in both the novel and the film, the "very attractive" Hatsue is only an object (Obayashi 151-154; Creef 105, 111-112). The novel grounds her in Japanese culture via her childhood lessons in calligraphy, painting, dancing, and serving tea. Furthermore, the white Ishmael tells Hatsue's story for her, making it seem as if she, and, more broadly, Japanese Americans, cannot "independently exist" (Obayashi 153-154). She is little more than a stock type, pigeonholed first into the lotus blossom stereotype: "demure, obedient, and sexually available to Ishmael" (Aoki 689). Furthermore, when she breaks up with Ishmael, she transforms into the dragon lady type. A "mute, uncommunicative" character, Hatsue is nothing more than a "cipher" or a "vacuum, an empty vessel waiting to be filled with stereotypical content" (Aoki 690). Hatsue's romance with Ishmael might have raised her to be his equal, but instead the "spectacle of interracial romance" reduces her to something considerably less (Creef 10). In this way, Hatsue might claim her Americanness in the novel—"I'm part of *here* … I'm from this place," she asserts (201)—but neither wartime American culture or Guterson's later work allow her to experience anything more than a liminal state that leaves her always trapped in-between.

Similarly, Rick Yune's Kazuo fails to overcome stereotypes, much as Kabuo does in the novel, resulting in a character who also is something less than fully human.[2] Yune took the role, he told *Newsweek*, to challenge stereotypical views of Asians in the media as "either nerds or gangsters" (Chang). While Kazuo does not fall into either category, he finds himself trapped, and thus erased, in other Asian American types. He is "expressionless and impassive" (Aoki 685), little more than another stock ethnic character from the start (Obayashi 154). He first emerges ominously from the fog on his boat and then sits stoically in the courtroom as the film unfolds. In all these ways, he falls into stereotyped views of inscrutable Asians that the novel adopts, if unintentionally. For instance, the novel presents Kabuo's "rigid grace" and sense of detachment. At his own trial, he "showed nothing—not even a flicker of the eyes" (*Snow Falling* 3, 92, 154). Such erasure via stereotyping should hardly be surprising, given Guterson's honestly admitted struggles to write the character. He has acknowledged the ways in which Kazuo's "detachment" can be read as little more than a demeaning stereotype ("Looking Back"). His first appearance in Ronald Bass's film script doubles down on this, describing his "impassive" and "Asian" eyes as the defendant sits, "ramrod straight, utterly motionless, expressionless" (3). Guterson understands the ways in which this potentially makes his novel little more than another example of "injurious white male literature." ("Looking Back"). He hopes that he will be given "the benefit of the doubt" ("Looking Back"), but the author's own admissions as well as the film's resultant

shortcomings showcase yet another way in which the movie served to distance white Americans from exile and incarceration by diminishing its ethnic victims.

Steel likewise sometimes treats Japanese American characters, despite her clear sympathy for them, in stereotyped ways that diminish the antiracist power of her novel. Much more so than Hatsue in Guterson's tale, Hiroko Takashimaya is the lead in *Silent Honor*. However, the focus that follows sometimes treats her more like an object than a subject. Steel's use of Japanese words throughout the tale (see, for example, 1-17), clearly meant to bring a cultural authenticity to her novel, associates Hiroko with a variety of phrases, often grounded in exotic and stereotyped Japanese cultural values: *Shikata ga nai* ("this cannot be helped. It must simply be") (213), *gambare* ("to endure quietly and bravely") (94), *Genki de gambatte* ("Stay well with all your might") (238), *chizoku* (shame) (143), and whatnot. Here, the quest for authenticity runs the risk of a distancing commodification.

Hiroko is also presented in terms that often diminish and even dehumanize her, revealing Steel's struggle to escape stereotypic tropes. This begins at her birth, when Steel describes the protagonist as looking "as though she had been carved out of ivory, like the tiniest of statues" (15). She, unlike her white love interest, is often described via animal metaphors as well: she is "like a bird in a cage, too frightened to even sing" (66), or a frightened doe (79), or as fragile as "butterfly wings" (116). Fragility becomes a common theme, as Hiroko seems constantly in need of protection. The white Peter understands this immediately. While he certainly sees her as "an interesting girl, and apparently a bright one," he emphasizes her "exquisite delicacy and gentleness"—which he associates with her culture—as he falls almost immediately for her "as she stood trembling before him" (64). He just wants to "protect her" (65). He sees her as a "rare flower" (78) or "so like a doll" (82). The toll of such descriptions is significant, even as Hiroko develops some level of self-confidence. As a result, the sympathetic Steel ends up presenting Hiroko as rather like a "child" (99) or at best a "girl-woman" (99) who is not quite grown up or adult. For Peter and the reader, Hiroko appears "like a little girl, and yet very much a woman" (64). Here, the physical characteristics of Hiroko blend innocence and a sexually alluring exoticism, unable to escape fetishized views of Asian women long dominant in American culture. She thus remains, as David Mura has written about Asian women in popular culture, "exotically sexual" (608).

Reflecting such limits, Hiroko perhaps unsurprisingly struggles to assimilate, especially after Pearl Harbor. Peter, emphasizing how "special" Hiroko is, locates her uniqueness in the fact that she is "from a totally different world" (98). Hiroko will try to overcome the barriers between her new and old worlds, but it is worth noting, she ends the novel back in Japan. Upon her arrival in the U.S., Hiroko's commitment to Japanese tradition is made evident when she argues with Ken Tanaka about using a go-between to find a spouse. When she develops feelings for Peter, she worries that building a life with him will betray her parents and Japanese tradition. In the frightening period after December 7, Hiroko strives to be as American as she can. No matter what progress she might have made—and who is to blame Hiroko for not fitting in better as she is incarcerated?—she is determined as the war ends to return to Japan. (That Peter has gone missing fighting in Italy and is presumed dead does not help.) While she can smile in appreciating how American she had become, even if it had been a most painful process over three-and-a-half years, Hiroko ultimately chooses Japan.

Hiroko's struggle to fit in is not unique. Romance novels, Erin S. Young argues, have often presented the East and the West as incompatible, the former tied inextricably to the past, the latter to the modern present (206, 215). Such differences present challenges to writing a happily-ever-after ending for Steel. (Guterson's work, never aimed at being a romance, anyway, confronts the dichotomy directly: the novel has a happy ending for white liberalism, but not for his protagonists as they cannot rekindle their past relationship.) Steel struggles to overcome the combined power of genre expectations and white liberalism by having the couple get together, but in Japan, which hardly seems like home, especially given the deaths of Hiroko's parents and their now-empty house. While the genre's ability to make the reader *feel* something for Japanese Americans in their moment of crisis might count for something, it is at best a first step (in encouraging the reader to learn more) towards learning and fuller understanding. And that does little to solve Hiroko's ultimate dilemma.

Hiroko is also tragically caught between what Hsu-Ming Teo describes as two prevailing kinds of multiculturalism in East Asian romance novels. The first type, "weak" (or "boutique") multiculturalism, associates Asian characters "with objects, food, fashion, and festivals" that make their identity "fungible, residing in customs, things or experiences that can be consumed" (6-7, 15). The language noted above serves the same role, and Steel certainly spends a fair amount of time listing various foods at Japanese feasts early in the novel. The second, "strong multiculturalism," often focuses on Asian family values, which often conflict with the heroine's desire for liberty and independence, distancing her from American society (Teo 6-7, 14). Hiroko's internal debates about building a relationship with Peter despite what she assumes would be her parents' objections repeat this motif. Caught in-between competing notions of multiculturalism, Hiroko finds herself in a liminal state, and one that Steel cannot solve. What might she become? The novel never fully answers this question.

Steel's treatment of Ken explores how mass incarceration shaped teenagers but does so in ways that reduce Ken to representing, awkwardly, *every* possible position, which results in an ultimately unbelievable character. The thoroughly assimilated young man experiences whiplash in the aftermath of December 7. The native-born Ken is angered by government policy after Pearl Harbor, asserting his Americanness and disparaging the government and its policies. He later gets caught up in discussions about renouncing citizenship and arguments about military service in the aftermath of the Loyalty Oath controversy. He feels caught between the United States and Japan, with no good options to choose. Ken then, jarringly, joins the Army. It is this last shift that seems one too many, despite some important complexity leading to it. Here, Steel seemingly wants to cram *all* the youth experience into one character, but it overwhelms her presentation, making Ken feel unreal. While this sudden shift allows Steel to include more history, it undermines her novel's effectiveness, leaving the reader unconvinced of Ken's character arc. In using Ken to represent so much history, he becomes a confusing and unconvincing stand-in for it.

Limits as Exposed by White Characters

The problems introduced by such treatment of Japanese American characters are compounded by the portrayal of white characters in both *Snow Falling on Cedars* and *Silent*

Honor. The good intentions remain, of course, but can be overrun by problems that develop across the telling of both stories. The result is something less than what Guterson and Steel set out to achieve with their well-intentioned fiction. This is not to say that either fails totally; they can present villainous whites who serve to highlight the plight of Japanese Americans. However, as narrative arcs come to focus on white characters, especially in the work of Guterson, and to present redemptive liberal white heroes, both tales end up distorting the "lessons" that they clearly intend to teach.

The good intentions of Guterson and the filmmakers result in work that critiques racism. The film does so by making villains of a series of white folks who are railroading Kazuo as part of a rush to judgment for the murder of Carl Heine. Among them, and others in the larger white community, stereotypes are blithely accepted. A local fisherman uses the racial epithet "Japs." A virulently racist bus driver warns his student passengers in the aftermath of the attack on Pearl Harbor about "Jap traitors, spies, and everything." The prejudiced coroner malevolently spits out "Jap" and draws conclusions based on racist presuppositions about Japanese culture (Hicks). When he sees Carl's skull wound, his first response is to "look for a Jap," whose childhood Kendo training has taught him "to kill with sticks" (Hicks). The prosecutor focuses his closing argument on Kazuo's ethnicity, asking the jury to consider the defendant's appearance, eyes, and face. He also argues that Kazuo's impassiveness suggests his guilt, relying on long-held prejudice against allegedly "inscrutable" Asians. From the lawyer's perspective, these proceedings have little to do with a real individual; a racialized minority is instead on trial. In the novel, Kabuo understands this reality. He withholds the truth of the night of the murder initially because he assumes that racist views will lead the police and the locals "to want to see me hang no matter what the truth is" (Guterson 391). The defense attorneys might hope that the jurors will look past the racist conclusions put forth by the prosecutor, but Kabuo can hardly trust such noble sentiments (Aoki 681-684).[3]

While a variety of "bad" white characters populate the novel and film, the heart of evil lies within Etta Heine, the German American who embodies the American racism that Guterson and the filmmakers want to discredit. A "stout, grave woman with a slight Teutonic edge to her speech" in the novel (14-15), Etta is repeatedly described as a German immigrant, and her racism is so blatant that even her husband is taken aback by her hatred for Japanese Americans (119-120, 124-126). Readers are not surprised when she cheats Kabuo's family of their land after their forced removal (133-135). The novel uses Etta to displace racism from white Americans to a small ethnic community, allowing white readers to dodge any kind of social criticism (McKay 659).

The film pushes further, and to greater effect. As the press kit describes, "[t]he narrowness and prejudice of the story's general populace is honed to crystalline perfection in the character of Etta Heine, portrayed by Celia Weston" (9). Identifying with Ishmael, the white male lead played by Hawke, viewers see the individual Etta, and not whites more generally, as the villain. While director Hicks wanted to portray her as a human and grieving mother, the movie plays to a much different effect: Etta embodies little more than the stock German (American) enemy that viewers have long been conditioned to see and understand in WWII films. Weston, for instance, bluntly describes the racism of her character in the film's press kit: "It's like mother's milk coursing through her veins … natural." This inherent racism, typed all too easily to Nazis and not Americans, is emphasized in the foreign persona of Etta. The press kit praises her accent, noting that "she sounds like a native-born Bavarian," an

aural reminder of the foreign nature of the racism at the center of this story (9). The obviously foreign quality of Etta allows viewers to displace her racism—embodied in her thickly accented voice deploying racial slurs and suggesting that Japanese Americans don't understand how things are done "in America"— on to a "foreign" group of people. The film thereby absolves "real" (and white) Americans from any guilt for mass incarceration.

Steel likewise critiques a range of white characters. In the aftermath of Pearl Harbor, formerly friendly white neighbors now treat Japanese Americans with unwarranted attention, spying on them from behind close blinds and treating them with a newfound chilliness and suspicion. To personalize such racism, Steel introduces Peter's soon-to-be-dumped girlfriend, Carole. She is a blonde and beautiful and intensely racist model. She wants Tak Tanaka, Peter's mentor at Stanford, fired and maybe even deported because he is Japanese; she suggests that anyone who sympathizes with Japanese Americans is the enemy. Failing to convince Carole that she is overreacting "to all that hysterical garbage they put in the papers" (145), the noble Peter breaks up with her. Such attitudes, both Carole's and the wider society's, combine to create, in Steel's words, a Japanese American "nightmare" (183).

Hiroko's story demonstrates that Carole's racism is not unique. When Hiroko heads off to study at St. Andrew's College, her fellow students are cold towards her, and things get substantially worse after December 7. She tries to return for the spring semester, but struggles. "She was," Steel declares, "more than an enemy alien now, she was a pariah" (168). Before being sent home by school administrators who sympathize with her but feel they cannot keep her safe, Hiroko finds herself trapped between vandals and those who shun her. Racism pursues Hiroko back home as well. A party that she and Peter attend goes badly after an air raid siren traps the partygoers in a crowded cellar. Underground, tempers boil over, one partygoer complaining, "Christ, you'd think they'd leave us alone on New Year's Eve, damn Japs." Another, clearly drunk, turns on Hiroko, exclaiming, "It's goddamn little Japs like you that spoil it for the rest of us … I'll be in the army next week, thanks to you. And by the way, thanks a lot for Pearl Harbor." Peter tries to intervene, only to be labeled a "Jap lover" who the FBI will get "one of these days … Maybe they'll even grab your girlfriend" (160-161). As the entire family confronts such racism, Peter knows that Japanese Americans are in fact Americans, but he also realizes that no matter how hard they try to prove that they are "good guys" (147), they will be unfairly labeled as a threat. The result, Steel insists in highlighting the prevailing wartime racism, is distrust unfairly transforming American-born citizens into aliens.

Steel puts the final touches on her exploration of American racism via historical examples that reinforce her critique of wartime prejudice and discrimination, emphasizing the historical authenticity of her work. In this way, General John L. DeWitt, a chief architect of mass incarceration in his position in charge of the Western Defense Command, is a villain. After noting the ways in which the military leader fed newspapers "an absolute tidal wave of [unfounded] terror," she acidly reports that he "proudly" proclaimed that 100,000 Japanese Americans were removed (141, 236). And Steel's criticism goes all the way to the top of the chain of command, reporting that some government officials had told Franklin Roosevelt that the camps were "scandalous," but that the president ignored them (330).

While *Snow Falling on Cedars* and *Silent Honor* work assiduously to attack racism, their white protagonists undermine their success. In *Snow Falling on Cedars*, Hawke's character, Ishmael Chambers, functions to distance whites from the wartime injustices perpetrated against Japanese Americans, as he does in the novel as well. Ishmael is the center

of the film, serving as the classic "white liberal American" hero in a story that is really about, Elena Tajima Creef argues, "embattled white American masculinity" (115, 94; Robinson). Critics see the same thing in charting, in both novel and film, the "unselfish" heroism of Ishmael. Despite his emasculation as Hatsue breaks up with him and he later loses his arm in the war, Ishmael reclaims his manliness as a journalist. His sense of justice, though tested, wins out in the end, and he lives up to his idealistic father, who was dedicated to the truth, always, as both journalist and fair-minded citizen (Snodgrass 167; Obayashi 158-161; Aoki 683-684; *Snow Falling* 34-35). Critics note that the real winner is Ishmael, who "saves himself" (Brantley 396; Meredith 95) and finds "a measure of peace for himself" (McKay 659). White viewers experience the film through Ishmael—he is the lead, played by the white star with whom they identify—and it presents Ishmael as open-minded about race (via his childhood romance with Hatsue) and dedicated to justice (with his last-minute rescue of Hatsue's husband from unjust conviction) (*Snow Falling* press kit 6, photocard). When Ishmael saves Kazuo in court, Japanese Americans express their appreciation by obsequiously bowing to him; unable to help themselves, they remain diminished and in need of benevolent white intervention and a fair-minded American system. Viewers surely see such positive qualities in themselves and their society.

Snow Falling on Cedars completed its exoneration of whites and their government by blaming Japan for the policies of exile and incarceration, a move that set up a story of democracy triumphing. The press kit made the point indirectly, but clearly, in describing the tranquil village on San Piedro, a peacefulness reinforced by the film's repeated focus on pastoral landscapes and soft music, where "the Anglo and Japanese-American populations have long lived in relative harmony." (7) While the creators acknowledge "a tacit caste system," they add, in the very same sentence, even, that the seemingly smooth relations are shattered by "Japan's shocking action [that] electrifies, and divides, the community" (7). Here on the island a kind of interracial peace apparently existed before Pearl Harbor, even if the naming of a Japanese American as queen of the annual Strawberry Festival represented a "virginal" sacrifice (*Snow Falling* 78) of sorts to ensure interracial harmony. The ensuing "crisis," the kit continues, generated "a developing climate of paranoia and suspicion toward Japanese-Americans" (7). To emphasize what *Japan* had destroyed, the filmmakers sadly note that Hatsue and Ishmael "might have [had] a lifetime commitment" if not for Japan's attack. Instead, Japanese treachery, not American racism, "summarily destroyed" their relationship (10).

In the face of Japan's destruction of such interracial peace and possibility, the filmmakers emphasize that American democracy worked, nonetheless. Guterson has written about the ways in which he was raised in the "morality of the liberal American variety" ("Looking Back"). This grounding leads, in the novel, to Hatsue talking about the "spirit of democracy" as well as the ways in which fairness wins out over hatred and the temptation to rush to judgment (Brantley 398). The film doubles down on such optimism, with Keith Aoki observing that it "dismisses racism as essentially an aberration or irrationality in a system that otherwise works well and fairly" (684). The system, indeed, works, and this is key. Ishmael's heroism is the heroism of a free press, functioning properly, as it long had, what with his father's principled wartime defense of Japanese Americans. While he might have acted sooner, Ishmael painstakingly seeks out the truth when others cannot or will not and then saves the day. The legal system works, too. The defense attorney provides a stirring speech about American ideals, which do indeed triumph in the end. The judge reminds the

jury that this trial is not about Pearl Harbor, even when the prosecutor wants it to be. The judge is sympathetic to Hatsue when she testifies, acknowledging her anger even when she is not allowed to express it. Finally, when Ishmael's last-minute evidence arrives, the judge exonerates Kazuo. The heroism of the press and the legal system allow viewers to evade uglier realities of American life (Obayashi 152-153; Pryce). The film thus ignores the overwhelming power of systemic racism (Srikanth 134). The town might have racists, but the heroic white antiracists represent the "true" America, journalism and the legal system are crucibles in which the truth inexorably wins out, and their racist opponents represent an America that the filmmakers too optimistically present as antiquated.

In *Silent Honor*, Peter, like Ishmael, provides readers with the ultimate dodge: seeing themselves in the selfless and heroic Peter allows them to imagine an emerging antiracism that clears them of wrongdoing. Peter is a classically handsome romantic lead. Whereas Hiroko's beauty requires metaphorical comparisons, Peter is, simply, "by Western standards … very handsome." (63) Steel's description is literal as she depicts Peter as "very long and lean, with soft brown hair, blue eyes, and an air of solidity about him." (63) As assistant professor who has visited and admires Japan, he represents open-mindedness for Steel and her readers. His warm smile at Hiroko when they first meet suggests an American receptiveness to cross-cultural understanding (63). Their budding relationship cements what Peter's good looks and solid character imply: he can be trusted, even if not all Americans can. There is an accepting and loving America, even during the war.

Even when Peter's whiteness can no longer protect the family, he selflessly devotes himself to Hiroko and the Tanakas. The family's stall at Tanforan is filled with manure, forcing them to empty it slowly with two old coffee cans. When Peter arrives, he digs in, rolling up his sleeves and ruining his favorite shoes to help clean out the Tanaka's new home, such as it was. Conjuring up excuses about needing to work with Tak on political science departmental business, Peter then continues to visit, his increasingly long stays with Hiroko not crushing but seemingly emboldening his optimism that "[o]ne day there would be no boundaries, no limits for them, no place where they would have to stop" (222). Here Peter's optimism lets the reader off the hook; the war has produced racism, but when it is gone, racism will disappear along with it.

Seeming tragedy ensues as Peter goes missing in battle and Hiroko is discovered to be pregnant, but even this development hints at interracial amity. When the baby arrives, Steel describes "a bright red face, and soft brown hair, and dark blue almond-shaped eyes, and except for a hint of something faintly Japanese, he looked exactly like his father" (301). The baby, Toyo, represents a coming together of not just Peter and Hiroko, but of white Americans and Japanese Americans. As Jayne Ann Krentz has noted, childbirth in romance novels celebrates life and provides a happy ending (7). Toyo stands as a symbol of hope for a better future. Peter's surprise return at novel's end reinforces such interracial optimism. He catches up with Hiroko after she has returned to Japan but found herself alone and without prospects. When Peter apologizes for Hiroko's suffering, she replies, "*Shikata ga nai*" – it cannot be helped. Steel writes, in response, "Perhaps not. But it had been so difficult for everyone and it had cost them so dearly." (404) Still, a happy ending has been achieved: "They had come through so much, and so far, and at last the days of shame and sorrow were over" (404).

The story ends in Japan, however, as Steel confronts the insuperable problem that she hoped to solve. Her tale wants its happy ending, but the racism still prevalent in the U.S.

makes it impossible there. Readers can strain to imagine Hiroko, Peter, and Toyo happy together, but where, exactly? Perhaps Steel is suggesting that the mid-century United States could hardly offer a happily-ever-after ending; such a reading is consonant with much of her critique of the wartime United States in her novel. Still, readers get a fairy tale ending only by letting American racism off the hook: they don't have to try to imagine the family in the US, and thus don't have to leave the story thinking about American shortcomings, then as well as now. As much as Steel may want to address and critique American racism, she allows readers to avoid confronting postwar racism with this ending.

"History on the Light Side": Unrealistic Escapes in Fiction and Reality

Unable to deliver expected happy endings, both novels resort instead to imagined spaces for interracial romance. In this way, Guterson and Steel are forced to create fictional utopian places that exist outside of the "real" societies that constrain their characters. For Guterson, the forest of towering cedar trees outside of town allows Hatsue and Ishmael clandestine escape from social limits as they pursue their forbidden relationship. Their cedar tree allows respite from their parents and society: "This place, this tree, was safe" (*Snow Falling* 212). For Hiroko and Peter, the long grass behind the Tanforan horse stall/family home allows the couple to escape government surveillance and social strictures. In both stories, the impossibility of real-world reconciliation forces the authors to create imagined spaces that allow readers to escape reality for make-believe possibilities that permit happier endings than reality allows.

These fictional excursions might satisfy reader expectations in some way or another, but also reveal the shortcomings of the genre to confront Japanese American incarceration. Thinking of the novels' failures in this regard might be highlighted in comparison to the work of Jane Tompkins on sentimental fiction, an antecedent of U.S. popular romance. In building the case that writers of sentimental fiction matter, Tompkins urges us to think of sentimental fiction "as a political enterprise, halfway between sermon and social theory, that both codifies and attempts to mold the values of its time" (126). The genre helped society to think about itself and, in so doing, advocated for social reform. If Guterson and Steel seek any such revolutionary power, the romance genre serves largely to subvert it. They write tales not aimed at changing anything in their contemporary society, of course, but instead at allowing Americans escape by situating and sermonizing about racism in the past, not the present.

Guterson explained that his novel "reflects my own personal searching. At the time, I was asking myself the same philosophical questions that are asked in the book: Given that we live in an indifferent universe, where horrible things happen every day to innocent people, how should we conduct ourselves, how do we go on?" (*Snow Falling* press kit 8). Fair enough; authors ought to write the books they want to write. Still, as Guterson has written elsewhere, "[i]conic novels written by white Americans in the arena of race, fairness, and prejudice are appropriately subject to close scrutiny." He even admits that he is "guilty … of pursuing good intentions while wearing weak glasses," of wanting to explore issues of race but sometimes suffering "from insufficiencies of perception of the sort that white Americans, if they struggle with them at all, must struggle with lifelong" ("Looking Back"). Such struggles carry into the film, making it, along with most movies about Asian Americans, "generally …

unsatisfying, at least from the perspective of an Asian American viewer" (Aoki 679). This makes sense. *Snow Falling on Cedars* might include Japanese American history and characters, but the film is not, in the end, about either.

Steel does a better job of centering her story on Japanese Americans. Hiroko is the axis around which the story revolves. Still, Peter plays an undeniably central role, too, and it is his presence in the narrative that moves Hiroko to grow and change over time. Peter's miraculous return at the end, too, suggests that Steel also would benefit from swapping her "weak glasses," much like Guterson, for something stronger. She wants to make amends for the past, but still renders a story too willing to see racism as an individual issue historically isolated in the distant past. American society has since solved such wartime problems, after all; she can write this book and readers can celebrate along with her as they consider just how far Americans have allegedly come. Readers approaching romance as Anne K. Kaler describes—in search of a "salvation myth that repeats the good news that, if I am faithful and try my best, there is a better world somewhere" (4)—will appreciate what Steel offers but miss out on more complex understandings of both the past and present.

Despite their grounding in purported historical authenticity, Guterson and Steel have ultimately limited things to teach us as secondary documents about exile and incarceration. Beyond the evacuation scene, some shots of life in Manzanar, and a wrenching depiction of an FBI raid on Hatsue's family and home, the film struggles to teach us much about the history of mass incarceration. Guterson's novel is a bit more sweeping and integrates its history more smoothly than does Steel, through her not-infrequent historical asides. She also stumbles in the ways in which her romance is so far removed from reality. If, as Mura correctly argues, the prevailing white culture "constructs and defines U.S. history" (614), then we must push past such oversimplified and valorized retellings to deeper, more nuanced understandings of our past.

Both stories are, however, rich and important primary documents of the late twentieth century. They struggle to present idealized endings, trapped as they are by long-established and racialized understandings of mass incarceration, as well as its connections to contemporary racism, that left them limited room to maneuver, captive as they were to the time in which they wrote. Unwittingly, their accountings were constrained by long internalized cultural narratives in which white innocence required that whites forget the concentration camps, or at least remember them safely (Srikanth 128). It might do to recall Guterson's observation that the "past is imagined and multiplied in memory to the point of a receding zero" ("Looking Back"). Perhaps so, but does it have to be that way? Only by coming to grips with past narratives and approaching them with the aspiration of talking about more than creators' (white) selves can we hope to escape the ways in which they hem us in yet today.

Steel, like Guterson, also aspires to escape the past. The title page to the 2018 edition of *Silent Honor*, reads above the title "A story of a different America." From the start, then, Steel contrasts yesterday with today, or more precisely, the 1940s from the 1990s. (Guterson does as well, even if he says so a bit less directly.) Their serious critiques of racism and its wartime consequences serve, in the end, to absolve contemporary readers of their historical sins. Such absolution, it is worth noting, derives primarily from the work of Peter and Ishmael—heroic, white, antiracist males—who, in knowing better in the 1940s and 1950s, allow white readers to celebrate what has been gained as the result of such nobility, which is after all their own nobility as well. Are they not reading the novels and nodding in

approbation at the critiques leveled by Guterson and Steel? In rising above the prevailing racism of their time, Peter and Ishmael demonstrate who Americans *really* are. Indeed, for all the intended critique, both Guterson and Steel end by pulling their punches, noting how the camps were not, after all, all that bad. After German concentration camps were "opened," Steel writes about how Hiroko "was embarrassed to have ever complained about whatever minor miseries they had suffered. Compared to the people who had suffered at the Nazi's hands, the Japanese had been extremely lucky in Tule Lake, and elsewhere" (380). Note here the use of "Japanese," a flattening descriptor, and "extremely lucky," which is hardly a staunch critique on which to end.

The desire of both Steel and Guterson to entertain and educate simultaneously produces revealing outcomes. Steel certainly manages to share a great deal of the historical Japanese American experience, although in ways that transform a fictional story of love and loss into, at times, a history textbook. *Kirkus Reviews* noted as much, wondering if readers would be upset by the lack of "glitz" and "glamour" in what it described as a "color-by-the-numbers historical tract set mostly in the 40s." The review went on to describe the novel as "[h]istory on the light side in the telling, though well researched and solid in its basis. If prosaic and simple, a glimpse nonetheless into a shameful episode in American history" (*Silent Honor Kirkus Review*). The end result is clear enough in both of these 1990s romances centered on Japanese Americans and their past: good intentions that cannot escape, despite their best efforts, the history of race in America.

Acknowledgements

With thanks to Erin S. Young, Patrick L. Hamilton, Patrick Danner, Vicki Austin, and an anonymous reviewer for their comments and suggestions on various drafts of this essay as well as to the Misericordia University Faculty Research Grants program and the Popular Culture Association's Bowling Green State University Summer Research Institute for their support.

---

[1] Regis suggests eight necessary elements for romance novels: a corrupted society, the meeting of heroine and hero, some obstacle to their relationship, attraction, declaration of love, a moment at which the union seems impossible, solving that problem, and betrothal (30). Regis also presents a more concise definition: "a work of prose fiction that tells the story of the courtship and betrothal of one or more heroines" (22). Both definitions seem to rule out Guterson's novel, which lacks the problem-solving and betrothal criteria. Still, Regis suggests that the betrothal leads to a happy ending, which Guterson's work clearly has, even if tragically presented within such structures.

[2] The character's name changes from novel (Kabuo) to film (Kazuo). Throughout, the name in the source under discussion will be used.

[3] The novel further reflects the film. Early census takers care so little for Japanese Americans that they do not even list their names, just numbering or derogatorily nicknaming them. Most of the islanders support mass incarceration after the attack on Pearl Harbor. After the war, fishermen complain that Japanese Americans "all look alike" (43) while racist townspeople use racial slurs (43, 119). Like the town coroner, they understand all Japanese

people, including Americans, to be trained in violence. During the trial, Hatsue worries that the jurors will fear her husband, seeing him as a stereotypical Japanese soldier.

Works Cited

Aoki, Keith. "Is Chan Still Missing? An Essay about the Film *Snow Falling on Cedars* (1999) and Representations of Asian Americans in U.S. Films." *Significant Films of Law, Order and Social Justice*, edited by Rennard Strickland, Teree E. Foster, and Taunya Lovell Banks, William S. Hein & Company, 2006, pp. 679-699.

Austin, Allan W. and Patrick L. Hamilton. *All New, All Different?: A History of Race and the American Superhero*. University of Texas Press, 2019.

Barlow, Linda and Jayne Ann Krentz. "Beneath the Surface: The Hidden Codes of Romance." *Dangerous Men & Adventurous Women: Romance Writers on the Appeal of Romance*, edited by Jayne Ann Krentz, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1992, pp. 15-29.

Bass, Ronald. *Snow Falling on Cedars*, First Draft Screenplay, 3 Mar 1997. Courtesy of the Ray & Pat Browne Library for Popular Culture Studies, Bowling Green State University.

Brantley, Jenny. "Clorox the Dishes and Hide the Books: A Defense of *Snow Falling on Cedars*." *Censored Books II: Critical Viewpoints, 1985-2000*, edited by Nicholas Karolides, Scarecrow Press, 2002, pp. 395-402.

Chan, Sucheng. "Asian American Struggles for Civil, Political, Economic, and Social Rights." *Asian American Studies Now: A Critical Reader*, edited by Jean Yu-wen Shen Wu and Thomas Cheng, Rutgers, 2010, pp. 213-238.

Chang, Yahlin. "Snow Falling, Star Rising." *Newsweek*, 25 Jan. 1999, **https://www.newsweek.com/snow-falling-star-rising-165238**. Accessed 14 Nov. 2023.

Creef, Elena Tajima. *Imaging Japanese America: The Visual Construction of Citizenship, Nation, and the Body*. NYU Press, 2004.

Daniels, Roger. *Asian America: Chinese and Japanese in the United States since 1850*. University of Washington Press, 1988.

—. *Concentration Camps: North America*. Revised edition, Robert E. Krieger Publishing Company, 1989.

Goodale, Gloria. "*Snow* Director Digs into a Historical Controversy." *Christian Science Monitor*, 7 Jan. 2000, **https://www.csmonitor.com/2000/0107/p15s1.html**. Accessed 14 Nov. 2023.

Guterson, David. *Snow Falling on Cedars*. Vintage Books, 1995.

—. "Looking Back, Warily, but with Affection." *The American Scholar*, 11 Mar. 2014. **https://theamericanscholar.org/looking-back-warily-but-with-affection/**. Accessed 14 Nov. 2023.

Hicks, Scott, et. al. *Snow Falling on Cedars*. USA, 1999.

Houston, Jeanne Wakatsuki. *Farewell to Manzanar*. Houghton Mifflin, 1973.

Hubbard, Kim and Lisa Kay Greissinger. "Out of the Woods." *People*, 3 Mar 1996.

"Interview with Danielle Steel." *goodreads*, 2 Aug. 2011, **https://www.goodreads.com/interviews/show/608.Danielle_Steel**. Accessed 14 Nov. 2023.

Kaler, Anne K. "Introduction: Conventions of the Romance Genre." *Romantic Conventions*, edited by Anne K. Kaler and Rosemary E. Johnson-Kurek, Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1999, pp. 1-9.

Kennedy, Dana. "Danielle Steel shares her story." *Entertainment Weekly*, 20 Dec 1996, **https://ew.com/article/1996/12/20/danielle-steel-shares-her-story/**. Accessed 14 Nov. 2023.

Krentz, Jayne Ann. "Introduction." *Dangerous Men and Adventurous Women: Romance Writers on the Appeal of Romance*, edited by Jayne Ann Krentz, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1992, pp. 1-9.

Mathews, Linda. "At Home with David Guterson: Amid the Cedars, Serenity and Success." *New York Times*, 29 Feb 1996, **https://www.nytimes.com/1996/02/29/garden/at-home-with-david-guterson-amid-the-cedars-serenity-and-success.html**. Accessed 14 Nov. 2023.

McKay, Daniel. "Captive Memories: Articulate vs. Disarticulated Silences in David Guterson's *Snow Falling on Cedars* and Wendy Catran's *The Swap*." *Comparative Literature Studies*, vol. 50, no. 4, 2013, pp. 643–69.

Meredith, James H. *Understanding the Literature of World War II: A Student Casebook to Issues, Sources, and Historical Documents*. Greenwood Press, 1999.

Mura, David. "Asia and Japanese Americans in the Postwar Era: The White Gaze and the Silenced Sexual Subject." *American Literary History*, vol. 17, no. 3, 2005, pp. 604-620.

Obayashi, Yuki. "The Gendered Remembrance of Japanese-American Internment: *Come See the Paradise* and *Snow Falling on Cedars*." *A Companion to the War Film*, edited by Douglas A. Cunningham and John Nelson, Wiley, 2016, pp. 150-62.

Okubo, Miné. *Citizen 13660*. Columbia University Press, 1946.

Pryce, Vinette K. "Justice Prevails in *Snow Falling on Cedars*." *New York Amsterdam News* 1 Jan 2000.

Putney, Mary Jo. "Welcome to the Dark Side." *Dangerous Men & Adventurous Women: Romance Writers on the Appeal of Romance*, edited by Jayne Ann Krentz, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1992, pp. 99-105.

Regis, Pamela. *A Natural History of the Romance Novel*. University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007.

Roach, Catherine M. *Happily Ever After: The Romance Story in Popular Culture*. Indiana University Press, 2016.

Robinson, Greg. "Parallel Wars: Japanese American and Japanese Canadian Internment Films." *Discover Nikkei*, 26 Jan 2010, **http://www.discovernikkei.org/en/journal/2010/01/26/parallel-wars/**. Accessed 14 Nov. 2023.

Silent Honor Kirkus Review. *Kirkus Reviews*, 1 Oct. 1996, **https://www.kirkusreviews.com/book-reviews/danielle-steel/silent-honor/**. Accessed 14 Nov. 2023.

Silent Honor Press Website. *Penguin Random,* 3 Sept. 1997, **https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/172385/silent-honor-by-danielle-steel/**. Accessed 14 Nov. 2023.

Snodgrass, Mary Ellen. *Literary Treks: Characters on the Move*. Libraries Unlimited, 2003.

Snow Falling on Cedars Press Kit, Courtesy of the Ray & Pat Browne Library for Popular Culture Studies, Bowling Green State University.

Srikanth, Rajini. *Constructing the Enemy: Empathy/Antipathy in U.S. Literature and Law*. Temple University Press, 2011.

Steel, Danielle. *Silent Honor*. 2018 edition, Dall Mass Market Edition, 2018.

Takei, George, et al. *They Called Us Enemy*. Top Shelf Productions, 2019.

"Teacher Wins Literary Prize." *Teacher Magazine*, vol. 6, no. 9, Aug 1995.

Teo, Hsu-Ming. "Cultural Authenticity, the Family, and East Asian Romance Novels." *Journal of Popular Romance Studies*, vol. 9, 2020, pp. 1-28.

Tompkins, Jane. *Sensational Designs: The Cultural Work of American Fiction, 1790-1860*. Oxford University Press, 1985.

Uchida, Yoshiko. *Desert Exile: The Uprooting of a Japanese American Family*. University of Washington Press, 1982.

United States. *Personal Justice Denied: Report of the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians*. The Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians, 1983.

Wald, Sarah D. *The Nature of California: Race, Citizenship, and Farming since the Dust Bowl*. University of Washington Press, 2016.

Williams, Peter. "It's the Body that Matters: Reticence and Desire in *Snow Falling on Cedars*." *Sydney Studies in English*, vol. 26, 2000, pp. 3-16.

Young, Erin S. "Saving China: The Transformative Power of Whiteness in Elizabeth Lowell's *Jade Island* and Katherine Stone's *Pearl Moon.*" *Romance Fiction and American Culture: Love as the Practice of Freedom?*, edited by William A. Gleason and Eric Murphy Selinger, Routledge, 2016, pp. 205-221.