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"Animals are really much nicer than people":
Children's Relationship with Dogs in the Topaz Incarceration Camps

In February 1942, three months after the bombing of Pearl Harbor and in the wake of anti-Japanese hysteria (Kamei 27, 57), President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued Executive Order 9066 ("Forced Migration" 72). While Executive Order 9066 did not specifically mention Japanese Americans, it gave the military authority to designate military areas and "exclude" different groups of people from living in this region and issue Public Proclamation No. 1, which allows the military "to prescribe military areas" and "determine, from which any or all persons may be excluded" (Public Proclamation No. 1). In other words, this gave the military authority to remove and imprison the over 110,000 people of Japanese descent who were living along the Pacific coast ("Forced Migration" 72). While the military argued that this "evacuation" of Japanese Americans was for "military necessity" (Press Release 1), in reality, this violation of rights was motivated by anti-Japanese racism (Kamei 45-46, xxiii). For example, although America was also at war with Italy and Germany, no equivalent actions were taken against those of German or Italian ancestry (Arrington 6, Kamei 46). In the press release accompanying Public Proclamation No. 1, General DeWitt stated that "Japanese aliens" and "American-born persons of Japanese lineage" (i.e., American citizens) would be required to be removed from the newly declared military zones on the West coast (Press Release 3).

In total, 110,000 people of Japanese descent were forced into ten major relocation centers across the country (Arrington 9). The Topaz incarceration camp, located in central Utah, housed over 11,000 prisoners in total during its three years of existence, and, at its peak, had over 8,000 residents (43). Almost two-thirds of the prisoners were born American citizens and over 1,400 of

the prisoners were under 13 years old (43). Education was important at Topaz--the two elementary schools averaged 675 students enrolled, and the combined middle school and high school averaged 1,200 students (32).

Since the prison's closure in 1945, Topaz has garnered historical and literary-critical attention. Topaz has been the subject of numerous memoirs (such as Miné Okubo's *Citizen 13660* [1946], Yoshiko Uchida's *Desert Exile* [1982], and Toyo Suyemoto's *I Call to Remembrance* [2007]) and historical fiction novels (such as Uchida's *Journey to Topaz* [1971] and Julie Otsuka's *When the Emperor Was Divine* [2002]). Literary criticism about Topaz has primarily focused on the adult human experience. Criticism that does discuss the children of Topaz often focuses on how to *teach* the incarceration to children in the classroom (McDiffett, Kornfield). While critics may touch on the experience of children in literature about Topaz, many don't specifically dive into how the child's experience differs from the adult experience (Chen and Yu "Reclaiming the Southwest," Sohn). Sources that do discuss the unique children's or adolescent experiences during the incarceration may focus on children's racialized dual-identities as Japanese and American (Tong, Harada) or how children dealt with the trauma of the incarceration (Chen and Yu "Visualizing and Verbalizing the Traumatic *Thing*").

In this paper, I analyze the impacts of the incarceration on Topaz children in the context of the unique relationship between children and dogs. I focus less on the big "the traumatic *Thing*" (as Chen and Yu call it) of the incarceration as a whole, and instead focus on individual smaller stressful or traumatic events within the incarceration at Topaz. To explore these ideas, I examine Yoshiko Uchida's historical fiction novel *Journey to Topaz*, which is often suggested as an effective tool to teach young students about the Japanese incarceration (Crowe, Harada, McDiffett, Kornfield). In my analysis of *Journey to Topaz*, I will draw from Uchida's memoir *Desert Exile*, which recounts Uchida's experience as an adult prisoner at Topaz and on which

many of the scenes from *Journey to Topaz* are based. I also reference historical sources including a daily journal created by a Topaz third-grade class called *Our Daily Diary*, newspapers published at Topaz, and a lithograph from Topaz featuring children and dogs. I draw upon theory from animal studies (particularly about the relationship between children and animals) and child psychology (particularly about the ways that children use animals to cope with stress and trauma). Using these sources, I explore how *Journey to Topaz* represents children's engagement with dogs to process grief, how dogs and children are both subject to euphemism of the camps, and how dogs and children at Topaz symbolize "Americanness." Ultimately, this analysis goes beyond previous critics' analyses that examine interhuman relationships (particularly in regards to race) to examine the interspecies connection between humans and the natural world.

"As though to console her": Children Using Dogs to Cope with Grief

The innate connection between children and animals is something that has existed for millenia. More than 26,000 years ago a young boy and a canid (evolutionarily between a wolf and a dog) walked side-by-side together through a cave, leaving footprints behind that are now one of our earliest records of the dog-human relationship (Harvey 34, Frydenborg ix). More recently, in his 1913 book *Totem and Taboo*, Sigmund Freud claims that children "unhesitatingly attribut[e] full equality to animals" and "probably feel . . . more closely related to the animal than to the undoubtedly mysterious adult" (109). Unlike "the adult civilized man," children "[do] not yet show any trace of the pride . . . to set a sharp dividing line between [their] own nature and that of all other animals" (109). Similarly, Paul Waldeau mentions this connection between child and animal in his book *Animal Studies: An Introduction* (2013). Waldeau explains that he discusses the connection between children and animals so frequently "because children so easily and naturally connect with other animals" (140). He says that children are "astonishingly fascinated . . . with living animals" and have "demonstrable interest in, and often special

relationships with, other animals" (267). Like Freud, Waldeau observes that many adults put away this interest in animals as they grow up, something that Waldeau thinks is unfortunate, saying "the abilities of children to relate to other animals . . . is one way in which a focus on children teaches adults" (140). In a similar vein, Gail Melson (2005) claims that children interact with pets much like they interact with other children and that "[t]he ties that children forge with their pets are often among the most significant bonds of childhood" (11, 16).

Children's fascination with animals is clearly seen in the third-grade Topaz students who wrote and illustrated *Our Daily Diary* (made available digitally by the University of Utah). This classroom journal was kept by the children of the Mountain View School at Topaz from March 8, 1943, through August 12, 1943 (Tunnell and Chilcoat 14). Each morning, teachers and students of the elementary schools at Topaz held "informal talks" to "help the children broaden their interests and learn to express their feelings about their surroundings," and the words recorded in *Our Daily Diary* likely came from these talks (14). The teacher, Miss Yamauchi, wrote the words for the diary while the children took turns illustrating each page (14). Of the seventy-three entries recorded over a period of five months, forty-eight of them mention animals. The students were fascinated both by the native animals around Topaz (like lizards, scorpions, snakes, badgers, and toads) as well as the animals brought to the area by humans (like horses, dogs, cats, and pigs). For example, many of the children loved to see a pet badger that one of the residents kept and walked on a leash (March 8, 1943, June 3, 1943). Dogs are mentioned in six entries, including a bloodhound that entered a child's barracks and wouldn't leave (March 23, 1943), a child's dog that got in a fight with a coyote (April 7, 1943), a dog balancing on a car (April 14, 1943), a child who received a dog as a pet (April 20, 1943), a dog that got quills stuck in it after fighting a porcupine (May 24, 1943), and a dog that got out but found its way home (June 9, 1943). But

more than providing mere entertainment or distraction, dogs help children (including those at Topaz) work through trauma and grief.

We see these historical questions of animals as mediators of trauma reflected in Uchida's novel *Journey to Topaz*, which follows eleven-year-old Yuki Sakane as she and her family are forced to leave their home in California to go first to the Tanforan detention facility, then to the Topaz incarceration camp. After Yuki's father (along with other Japanese men) is arrested by FBI agents on suspicions of being a Japanese agent, a close family friend, Mr. Toda, repeats a rumor that the arrested Japanese men are being held as hostages and "may be harmed if Japan kills any more Americans" (29). Upset at what she hears, Yuki calls her dog Pepper, goes outside, and sits by the fishpond (29). This idea of a child turning to a beloved dog for comfort during a difficult time is explored by Mary-Ann Bowman who explains that, for children, "relationships with dogs offer a particular emotional safety not always found in human-human interactions" (188). Similarly, in this example, Yuki feels that the people in her life are unable to comfort her in the same way Pepper can, and she finds more comfort in the dog-human interaction than in the human-human interactions with her family friend. Yuki thinks, "Animals [are] really much nicer than people" because "they never [say] things that could make you sad" (29). Unlike Mr. Toda's presence and words, which only upset Yuki, the presence and silence of her dog and fish comfort her. Although Yuki likes Mr. Toda and considers him her friend, as a human he is unable to offer comfort in the same way her animals can.

Furthermore, Yuki interprets her animals' actions as deliberate efforts to comfort her. While Yuki sits by the fishpond, Pepper "lick[s] Yuki's face" and "whimper[s] softly as though to console her" and the carp in the pond "open[s] his mouth wide to make Yuki laugh" (*Journey to Topaz* 29). Yuki thinks the animals "[know] the sadness and fear that troubl[e] her" and are "trying to give her some cheer" (29). Yuki believes her animals understand her emotions and

have a desire to help her feel better, a belief which may not just be wishful thinking on Yuki's part. Donna Haraway, in her article "The Companion Species Manifesto: Dogs, People, and Significant Otherness," points that the two-way connection between humans and dogs, saying, "There cannot be just one companion species; there have to be at least two to make one" (12). So just as dogs are a companion species for humans, humans are a companion species for dogs. She further claims that dogs' survival as a species and as individuals "depends on their reading humans well" (50). Even for (or perhaps especially for) pet dogs, who require "canine emotional and cognitive skills" to get along with humans (38). Similarly, Marian Carter explains that when children deal with grief, "[h]aving a pet can be significant" in helping the child cope "since touch is highly important" (52). Just like how Yuki feels comfort when Pepper licks her, children can feel comfort from interacting physically with pets. During her time of grief, Yuki feels comforted from her interactions with Pepper and their communication transcends species boundaries.

However, the incarceration takes away Yuki's ability to use her relationships with animals to cope with grief. When Yuki and her family leave for Topaz, they are unable to bring Pepper with them because pets are not allowed, so Yuki's brother, Ken, puts out an ad in his university's newspaper to find a new home for Pepper (41). After rejecting two applicants, Yuki and Ken give Pepper to a sophomore "who had just lost his own dog" and who promises to send Yuki frequent updates on how Pepper is doing (42). The night after she has to give Pepper away, Yuki runs outside again searching for comfort by the fishpond, "forgetting that there would be no Pepper to come bounding up the steps to greet her" (42). She tries to find comfort from watching the carp, but "he [doesn't] amuse her at all" and Yuki has to fight "to keep back tears" (42). In this scene, the importance of the child-dog connection becomes readily apparent; Yuki's connection with the carp, while still present, does not bring the same peace and comfort that her connection with Pepper did. Pepper is the second family member that Yuki has lost because of the incarceration.

While she had Pepper to comfort her during her separation from her father, now that her dog is gone, Yuki has no one to turn to for comfort. While the loss of a dog (even a beloved one), may seem less serious than the loss of a parent, for Yuki it is still the loss of a very important relationship. As Bowman points out, "to many children (and adults) the distinction between a dog and a human is less important than the nature of the relationship" (198). Along these same lines, Melson argues that children's bonds with pets can be "as deeply as affecting as those with parents, siblings, and friends" because pets can "reassure them in times of stress" and be "confidants" (16). For Yuki, Pepper filled the role of friend, comforter, and confidant, meeting relationship needs that the humans around Yuki are unable to. The contrast between grieving with Pepper and without Pepper is readily apparent: With Pepper available to provide support and comfort, Yuki ends up laughing (29). With Pepper gone, Yuki ends up crying (42).

While at Tanforan, Yuki finds it even harder to cope with grief as the strategies she used at home are no longer available. When Yuki receives news that Pepper has passed away, she struggles to find a place to grieve for her beloved pet. Unlike at her home, where she could be alone with her animals to cope with grief, Tanforan offers little privacy and people are everywhere. Wherever she goes, "people press[] close" and there is "nowhere she could go to be all alone" (79). This lack of privacy means there is "nowhere she could go to grieve for [Pepper]" (79). When Yuki grieves for her father, she has Pepper and her carp to comfort her. When she grieves for Pepper being taken away, she has her carp. However, the incarceration has completely robbed Yuki of her animal-based coping mechanisms. When grieving Pepper's death, Yuki "turn[s] her back to the barracks and the stables and all the people" (79), but unlike at the beginning of the story where Yuki turns to her animals now Yuki has nothing to turn to. When Yuki grieves for Pepper, she grieves alone. As we've seen in *Our Daily Diary*, children did keep dogs and other pets at Topaz, but Yuki never mentions any of these animals in her narration. The

fact that Yuki doesn't seek out another animal for comfort shows how deeply she grieves her bond with Pepper. She can't replace him with another dog the same way she can't replace her lost human friends. Pepper's death has deeply impacted Yuki in a way that cannot be healed easily.

Often, the death of an animal can be the first experience a child has with grief and death. In Charles A. Corr's essay "Pet Loss in Death-Related Literature for Children," he points out that "pets often teach children important lessons about loss, death, grief, and coping" (399). *Journey to Topaz* is filled with examples of Yuki understanding grief through her relationship with her pets. Bowman explores how the death of a beloved dog can give children practice "supporting others [who grieve], and feel comfortable in accepting support for themselves" (209), and we see this pattern of Yuki using the death of a pet to empathize with a friend. When Yuki meets her friend Emiko, Emiko introduces herself by saying, "My parents are dead" (Uchida 60). Yuki isn't sure how to respond to this statement because her experience with death has been limited (this is before she learns Pepper has passed away); she "ha[s] not met death or even brushed close to it, except for the time her first dog [not Pepper] had died" (60). Yuki uses a relationship with a past pet to try to connect to the emotion that her new friend is feeling. Yuki recognizes that the grief she feels for her pet is not as severe as her friend's grief at losing her parents, thinking that "she couldn't even begin to conceive of the sadness of living without her mother and father" (60). However, she uses this experience with death as a starting point to connect with her friend. Finally, Yuki tells her friend that her father was taken to Montana, sharing her own parental loss (61). It is interesting that Yuki thinks of the death of her dog before she thinks about her father being taken away; this shows the lasting impact that pet grief can have on a child's understanding of death.

Another example of how Yuki uses the death of an animal to understand the death of a human can be seen when she uses Pepper's death to comfort herself after the death of a close family friend. When Yuki receives news from her friend Mrs. Jameison, that Pepper has died, Mrs. Jameison attempts to comfort Yuki by telling her that perhaps Pepper is being looked after by Mrs. Jameison's late husband (79). Mrs. Jameison's reassurance creates a bond between animal and human that endures beyond the grave. Her letter both validates Yuki's grief (by creating a parallel between the death of a human and the death of a dog) and provides Yuki with a comforting framework to use to deal with future grief. Yuki has the opportunity to apply these comforting strategies that Mrs. Jameison has taught her when Emi's grandfather, Mr. Kurihara, is shot and killed by a guard while looking for rocks. (The fictional death of Mr. Kurihara is based on a real event that occurred at the camp. On April 11, 1943, an old Japanese man, James Wakasa, was walking his dog along the fence when he was shot and killed by a soldier [Hill 110]. The soldier claimed Mr. Wakasa was trying to exit the compound through the barbed wire fence, and that he fired a warning shot after the man didn't react to his verbal warnings [Tunnell and Chilcoat 27-28]. The "warning shot" pierced Mr. Wakasa through the chest and he died instantly [28].) When she attends Mr. Kurihara's funeral, Yuki realizes she has "never been so close to death before" and it "fill[s] her with a chilling fear" (108). But Yuki "[feels] a little better" when she thinks that maybe Mr. Kurihara "could somehow link up with [Pepper and Mr. Jameison's husband] . . . even though he never knew them in life" (108). Pepper offered comfort and protection to Yuki when he was alive, and Yuki believes that Pepper can do the same for Mr. Kurihara now that he is also dead. This creates a spiritual connection between human and dog, and this connection comforts Yuki. Ultimately, Yuki's experience dealing with grief through the loss of her first dog and Pepper prepare her to comfort others and deal with the loss of humans she is close to.

"In accordance with health regulations": Dogs, Children, and Euphemism

While using pets to learn about how to deal with grief has numerous benefits for children, some parents may decide that avoiding the topic of a pet's death is easier than addressing it directly. For example, when telling children a dog has died, some parents may rely on euphemism instead of being more honest and direct. The Oxford English Dictionary defines euphemism as "the substitution of a word or expression of comparatively favourable implication or less unpleasant associations, instead of the harsher or more offensive one that would more precisely designate what is intended" ("Euphemism"). Parents can often use euphemism to try and comfort children or to protect them from harsh or painful realities, but often "speak[ing] in euphemisms" may risk "planting some disturbing images in young minds" (Bowman 195). For example, telling a child that a "dog is being 'put to sleep'" instead of euthanized could lead to the child developing fears of falling asleep because the child does not understand the phrase "put to sleep" is a euphemism for being euthanized (195). Some parents may choose to lie about the pet's death, instead attempting to comfort a young child by saying that their "beloved dog" has been "sent to live on a farm" (199). While this lie may comfort a young child at the time, the child will "continue to process events surrounding a loss for many years" as they grow older (199). Eventually, the child (now a teenager or an adult) will "realize the truth" and come to the conclusion that "trusted adults are not-so-trustworthy after all" (199). Ultimately for children, euphemism is much less effective than a direct statement of the truth.

Much like a child realizing years later that their family dog did not get sent to live on a farm, language about the Japanese incarceration has over time shifted from euphemism to honesty. At the time the incarceration took place (the 1940s), the government used words such as "evacuate" and "relocate" to imply that this measure was for the safety and protection of the Japanese people themselves (Hathaway 3, "A Quantitative Note" 72). Uchida points out that

even the Japanese-Americans who were imprisoned used the euphemistic language of the government at the time (*Desert Exile* 67). In reality, euphemistic language like this was inaccurate and "diminish[ed] the magnitude of what took place" (Hathaway 2); rather than being a "protective measure," the "forced expulsion of Japanese Americans from their homes" was in reality "a wholesale eviction" (3). Later terminology shifted from *relocation* to the slightly more accurate *internment*, but this word was still inaccurate and euphemistic since *internment* "is a well-defined legal process by which enemy nationals are placed in confinement in time of war" and most of the prisoners were civilians ("A Historical Appraisal" 6). For example, the so-called "Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians" created in 1980 should have instead used the phrase "'incarceration' of civilians" to be accurate instead of euphemistic (6). However, over time language surrounding the incarceration has evolved from euphemistic to more direct. First, from *evacuation* to *internment* and now finally to the more accurate, if more direct, *incarceration*.

At the camps themselves, euphemism was in full force. An article published September 17, 1942, in the very first issue of *Topaz Times* (a resident-sponsored newspaper) explains the euphemistic words that should be used in the place of more accurate ones: "You are now in Topaz, Utah. Here we say Dining Hall and not Mess Hall; Safety Council, not Internal Police; Residents, not Evacuees; and last but not least, Mental Climate, not Morale." In *Journey to Topaz*, this same euphemistic command appears in a welcome packet that Yuki and her family receive upon arrival at Topaz (89). Yuki (despite her young age) and her family recognize these demands for what they are--poorly veiled euphemism designed to disguise the poor conditions of camp. Yuki's brother calls the euphemisms "junk" and tells Yuki to stop reading (90). Still, as Yuki reads on to her mother, she reads about the plans for the bathroom facilities at Topaz and she "grin[s]" and feels "cheered" because the conditions sound much better than those the family

had been subjected to at Tanforan (90). But as Yuki investigates, she finds that the promised facilities are "still far from complete" with no hot water and no lights (90). She returns home "bleakly," disappointed that the facilities did not live up to the promises of the welcome packet (90). Although Yuki is able to recognize the obvious euphemism from the vocabulary sheet, she still falls prey to the more subtle euphemistic descriptions of the Topaz facilities. Yu and Chen argue that both "consciously and unconsciously" even Japanese internees "lulled themselves into believing the propaganda of the 1940s in order to sustain an idealized image of a benevolent and protective nation" ("Visualizing and Verbalizing the Traumatic *Thing*" 111). We see a similar example of believing euphemistic language in Yuki's reading of the welcome packet: she may logically recognize the deceptive euphemistic language, but she still believes the information about the facilities because she hopes so hard that they are an improvement from those at Tanforan.

In Topaz, not only were the humans subject to euphemism, but the dogs were as well. On August 31, 1943, the *Topaz Times* printed a list of rules and regulations the Topaz city council passed regarding pets (primarily dogs) (2). These regulations required that all dogs be registered with the city council, and that dogs who were not registered would be impounded and after three days without being claimed by an owner, would be "disposed of in accordance with health regulations" (2). The phrase *disposed of* doesn't necessarily denote killing, although that is certainly what is meant by the warning; the OED defines *dispose of* as "[t]o put or get (anything) off one's hands; to put away, stow away, put into a settled state or position; to deal with (a thing) definitely; to get rid of; to get done with, settle, finish" ("to dispose of"). The realistic, non-euphemistic phrase would be that dogs would be *killed*, and the replacement of this word with one more opaque and less direct shows the feeling that killing dogs might be considered

taboo. The phrase “in accordance with health regulations” is particularly deceptive--it makes the killing of these dogs seem both medical and sanitary.

After an outbreak of rabies among animals at the camp, on September 16, 1944, *Topaz Times* issued another warning for owners to register their dogs because stray dogs would “be destroyed” (3). Similar to the shift from *relocation* to *internment* in regards to the human world, the word *destroyed* is more direct than *disposed of*, but it is still softer than directly saying the word *killed*. Perhaps the fact that dogs with rabies are more dangerous and less friendly than stray dogs allows the use of a more direct verb. This may show the greater reluctance or shame to kill a stray dog--a nuisance, but a mostly harmless one--as opposed to a dog with rabies that poses an active threat to society. Much like *relocation* and *internment* are both euphemisms for *incarceration*, both *disposed of* and *destroyed* are euphemisms for *killed* to avoid bringing up the final fate of the stray dogs who had the misfortune of being ownerless.

We see similar euphemisms involving dogs in the *Our Daily Diary* written by the students of Mountain View Elementary School. Our Daily Diary mentions Mr. Wakasa’s death but does not go into any details about how he died, saying only, “On Sunday evening, an old man, Mr. James Wakasa passed away” (April 14, 1943). The phrase *pass away* is generally used as a euphemism for *die* (“to pass away”), but in this case it serves as a euphemism for *killed*. Rather than dying peacefully, like the phrase *passed away* seems to imply, Mr. Wakasa was shot through the heart by a soldier. However, at Mountain View Elementary School, euphemism was firmly in place, both because of the euphemistic censorship on the residents’ words (as seen in the first issue of *Topaz Times*) and because of the natural censorship that comes from explaining graphic events to children. So while the children of Mrs. Yamamuchi’s class were unable to fully process the event of Mr. Wakasa’s death together, they were able to talk about something else: dogs. The line immediately following the euphemistic mention of Wakasa’s death is “This

morning some of our boys saw a dog balancing on a car as it drove by on the road" (April 14, 1943). In this situation, the discussion of the dog offers a freedom from the restrictive euphemism surrounding Wakasa's death and allows the children to talk about an event that interests them. While the traumatic event was taboo, the dog was an acceptable subject of conversation. This line may show another example of how children look to dogs following traumatic events; the dog allowed them an outlet to respond to a tense moment at camp.

Images of dogs produced in the camp may also have euphemistic undertones that ignore the poor conditions of camp in favor of more traditionally and idealistically American images. For example, a linoleum block created by an industrial arts class at the Topaz high school shows a blond girl and a dark-haired girl pointing at a small dog (see fig. 1). The print made from this block is done in green, which makes it appear though the girls are standing in a grassy field. There are several things about this image that may make it seem euphemistic: First, there were no green grassy fields at Topaz. Instead, the entire camp was surrounded by desert. Second, the dog (or perhaps the puppy) in this image is not wearing a visible collar, and pet dogs living in Topaz were required to wear collars with registration numbers (see *Topaz Times* September 16, 1944)--if this dog were caught wandering around camp unregistered, it would likely be "disposed of." Finally, there were no blond students imprisoned at Topaz--only those of Japanese descent were targeted for imprisonment. (In fact, the *Topaz Times* jokingly refers to a cocker spaniel as "the first blonde to relocate from Gila River [a different incarceration camp]" [October 30, 1943].) This print highlights the discrepancies between the *ideal* conditions of traditional American society and the *real* conditions. Returning to the definition of *euphemism* from the OED, this print could be considered a form of euphemism as it is "the substitution" of something with a "comparatively favourable implication" (a peaceful, green scene with children of different races) for something "harsher or more offensive" (a dry desert with enforced racial segregation).

Of course, this print is not intentionally trying to mislead anyone about the conditions of Topaz (it was simply a project students completed as part of a class), but this print still captures an ideal absent from Topaz.

"See Spot Run": Dogs as a Representation of "Americanness" and the Nuclear Family

Topaz High isn't the only school that taught students using a perceived ideal rather than reality. Developed and written by William Gray, the 1940 edition of *Fun With Dick and Jane*, a children's reader primer, illustrates what the ideal vision of the family was at the time: a working father; a stay-at-home mother, an older brother, Dick; a younger sister, Jane; a baby sister, Sally; a cat, Puff; and a black-and-white dog, Spot (Gray). The *Dick and Jane* books were based on what Gray and his colleagues "considered typical and shared childhood experiences in a nonspecific locale" (Luke 257). Their underlying philosophy was that books for children who were learning to read should show familiar, everyday situations; only when children became more advanced readers would they move on to books with unfamiliar settings (256). Although the "setting and construction" of *Dick and Jane* was not intended to be "'biased' or overtly ideological" (257), the "white-washed world of Dick and Jane" as representation of "the simplified nuclear family" became a "dominant cultural mythology of inter- and postwar generations of schoolchildren" (241). Although Gray's intention likely wasn't to promote the nuclear family structure as the *ideal*, his creation of the *Dick and Jane* family shows that he at least viewed the nuclear family as the *average* American family.

In *Journey to Topaz*, Uchida uses this nuclear family archetype to emphasize how *American* Yuki's family is. As Yu and Chen point out, before the incarceration Yuki's family is "a picture of an ideal--and idealized--American family" that could have come directly "from the classic reader *Dick and Jane*" ("Reclaiming the Southwest" 556): Papa provides for the family, Mama takes care of the family, Ken (Yuki's older brother) is a dutiful son, Yuki is a loving

daughter, and Pepper is a loyal dog. However, this American identity is not the only one Yuki's family possesses; Harada examines how Uchida shows the duality between Japanese and American culture for American-born Japanese-American children, who "held a unique view that combined both cultures" ("Caught Between Two Worlds" 22). We see this tension between Japanese and American culture in *Journey to Topaz*, but Yuki seems to identify more strongly with American culture than Japanese culture. While Yuki is proud of her Japanese heritage (often remembering her samurai ancestor [27]), she considers herself fully American. When a classmate calls her a "dirty Jap," Yuki yells back, "I'm not a Jap! I'm an American!" (29), a sentence that implies that in Yuki's mind being a "Jap" (a derogatory slur for Japanese people) and being an "American" are mutually exclusive identities. When an old Japanese man at Topaz says that Japan might win the war, Yuki replies, "She is *not* going to win [. . .] America will win because we're fighting for what's right" (63). The use of the third-person when referring to Japan and the first-person when referring to America illustrates how Yuki identifies more with her country of birth instead of the country of her heritage. Through Yuki's feelings of nationalism and her family's nuclear structure, Uchida makes it clear that Yuki's family is American.

However, with the incarceration, this "All-American Family" starts to fall apart, first with Yuki's father being taken away, then with Pepper being given away. As Uchida explains it in her memoir *Desert Exile*, at Topaz "[t]he concept of the family was rapidly breaking down" as "many children drifted away from their parents" by not spending time in their family barracks and eating with friends instead of family in the mess hall (124). Uchida saw children play house by eating at "make-believe mess halls rather than cooking and setting tables as they would have done at home" (88). The incarceration was a major disruption, and even euphemistic demands to call "mess halls" "dining halls" and "barracks" "apartments" could not cover up the disruption of family life or change the reality of it.

Yu and Chen argue that *Journey to Topaz* begins with "an immigrant family's fulfillment of the 'American dream'" and ends with a journey to "recaptur[e] that idealized American life" and "return[] to that harmonious existence in an original pre-internment time" ("Reclaiming the Southwest" 556). According to Yu and Chen, Uchida's narrative is "essentially misleading" because she ends on a note of the future where "a predictable as well as stable life" is ahead instead of focusing on the lasting trauma of the incarceration (556). It's true that the end of *Journey to Topaz* does contain what could be considered a happy ending, with the return of Yuki's father and the entire family leaving the camp together (130-131). However in their analysis, Yu and Chen ignore the lasting disruptions the incarceration leaves on Yuki's life as seen in *Journey Home* as well the impossibility to return to the nuclear family because of the absence of an essential member: the family dog. While mostly ignored by Yu and Chen, the family dog is an essential piece of this nuclear family, and the connection children feel with the family dog ties in strongly with the idea of "Americanness." Marjorie Garber claims the dog is a key component of the ideal American family, saying, "The very same school reader that instructed mid-twentieth-century Americans in the shape of the ideal family also told us that no nuclear family was complete without its Spot" (34-35).

Although at the end of *Journey to Topaz*, the human members of the family may be reunited, the canine member has been permanently separated and this means that the family will never be the same. For Yuki, dogs represent safety, family, and a return to normalcy. Although there were many pet dogs at Topaz (as seen in the many entries about them in *Topaz Times*), neither Yuki nor Uchida makes any mention of these dogs in their narratives. For them, dogs are a representation of normal life, a life that cannot exist in Topaz. Instead, both use sights of dogs *outside* of camp as a representation of a return to civilization. When Uchida and her family leave Tanforan for Topaz by train, they stare out the window, "seeing all the things we had missed for

five months--houses, gardens, stores, cars, traffic lights, dogs, white children" (*Desert Exile* 104). Along with miscellaneous objects that represent civilization, Uchida notes only two living things--dogs and white children. Significantly, these two beings are listed next to each other, illustrating the interconnected relationship that children and dogs have. Together, children and dogs represent peaceful, American civilization. Yuki has an almost identical experience to Uchida on the trip from Tanforan to Topaz: as she looks out the train window, she sees "houses and gardens and stores and cars and dogs and cats and children with blond and brown hair playing" (*Journey to Topaz* 82). This description of "dogs [. . .] and children with blond and brown hair playing" is strikingly similar to the lithograph and print created by the Topaz High students, which also shows a dark-haired child and a light-haired child playing with a dog (fig. 1). Perhaps this lithograph is an example of students at Topaz attempting to reclaim or rediscover the sense of normal American life that was lost at Topaz, the same normal American life that Yuki sees from the train. Both on the train and in Topaz, Yuki can only look from afar at these evidences of American civilization: she is restricted from being fully American, a constant reminder that at Topaz she is considered a "non-alien" instead of a citizen.

When Yuki and her family finally leave Topaz permanently, Yuki looks outside the bus window and again sees "children with dogs and bicycles" (131). In this situation Yuki is closer to these representations of American civilization than she was on the train, but she is still separated from it. Yuki does not experience this sense of "Americanness" by playing outside with her own dog--instead she has to watch this civilization through a window. Unlike Yuki, who had to go through a painful and permanent separation from her dog, thus breaking her nuclear family, the children playing with their dogs have had no such rupture. For them (at least as they are represented in Yuki's mind), their lives have continued to be peaceful and American throughout the war. While Yu and Chen may argue that the narrative *Journey to Topaz* ultimately ends how it

began (with the restoration of the ideal American nuclear family), in examining Yuki's relationship with dogs both during and after Topaz, we see how this traumatic rupture continues despite the "happy ending."

In examining the sequel to *Journey to Topaz* (*Journey Home*), we see further evidence that the nuclear family is far from restored in perfect condition for Yuki. Although the family has left Topaz, there are still lingering effects that make it impossible to return to exactly how life was before the incarceration occurred. For example, Yuki's mother has to begin working as a landress to support their family, a fact which Yuki's father is very disheartened by (*Journey Home* 18-19, 21). The American dream of having a stay-at-home mother and a working father is no longer possible for Yuki's family. But perhaps most tellingly, the family does not get a dog to fill the space that Pepper left. Instead, Yuki has to learn to adapt to a cat owned by a family friend who lives with them. When the cat jumps on Yuki's stomach while she sleeps, she wakes up and "[throws] her pillow at the cat" (53). When the owner of the cat tells her off for throwing the pillow, Yuki responds by saying, "I don't like cats . . . But I love dogs" (53). While arguably the presence of a cat is an improvement on not having any pets at Topaz, for Yuki it doesn't represent the same sense of safety and civilization that dogs do, and she doesn't feel the same interspecies connection that she felt with Pepper. This substitution of a cat for a dog in Yuki's home is another way to illustrate how for the formerly incarcerated Japanese Americans, life hasn't returned to the perfect American ideal that it was before incarceration; instead, there is a lingering wrongness to this new life. Far from having a perfect restoration of all that was lost to them, the Japanese Americans have to adapt to lost jobs, lost homes, and lost family members.

Conclusion

Among many others, the Japanese incarceration hurt two of the world's most innocent denizens: children and dogs, two groups that had no influence on world politics or government.

Neither children nor dogs could fully understand the true implications of the incarceration. While the children who grew up would one day come to understand the multifaceted elements that led to the incarceration, the dogs never would. But at least for a time, children and dogs were united in their two-way companionship of simplistic understanding.

When finishing his analysis of pet loss in children's literature, Corr concludes with this question considering the statistics of animals whose deaths are included in these books: "Is there any significance in the fact that just over half of these animals are dogs?" (412). I would argue that not only is that fact significant, it is essential. Children and dogs share a unique bond of friendship, camaraderie, and mutual understanding. This significance has led me to analyze the inner-connective bond between children and dogs during the Japanese incarceration, and how this event connects children and dogs through grief, euphemism, and Americanness.

Although the topics of trauma, euphemism, and Americanness have been explored fairly frequently in regards to the Japanese incarceration, applying the theoretical framework of animal studies to these concepts allows us to make connections between the animal experience and the human experience. We often think of humans as separate from the natural world, but animal studies theorists such as Waldeau and Haraway have encouraged us to reconsider our relationship with our animal neighbors. Although we may think ourselves separate beings, in truth we are just as much a part of the natural world as dogs are. While from a close view dogs and humans may seem like different creatures entirely, from far away we all look the same. In making our primary lens through which we view literature and history the adult human perspective, we ignore the valuable insights that our interspecies relationships can grant us. In searching for dogs, we really find ourselves. Although in the grand scheme of things dog lives might be short, in the grander scheme of things so are ours.

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