
Australian Literary Reflections on the Pacific War since the 1960s

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Introduction

In 2005, to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the end of the war, many articles and documentaries relating to the Pacific War appeared in Australia. Examples include “When War Came to Australia”, an article describing the recent awareness of the countless Japanese incursions on Australia’s northern shore during the war (*The Bulletin*, April 19, 2005); “Road to Tokyo”, a documentary which examined Australia’s struggles during the war aired in August by the ABC; “World War II: 60th Anniversary Magazine series”, a CD-Rom whose cover blurb urges Australians to “remember the war”, published by *The Australian* newspaper. For many Australians, the enemy of World War I, the Germans, was a known entity. During World War II, it was the Japanese rather than the Germans who were seen as the major enemy. This time the enemy, although long expected, was more ‘unknown’. The long feared invasion by the Japanese from the north was almost realised during the Pacific War, and the Australians who were taken as prisoners-of-war by the Japanese army left bitter memories for many Australians. The collective thoughts of the Japanese during the Pacific War held by Australians seem to be stronger and more intense than those held by the Japanese of the Australians, who tend to emphasise the war as being fought against the Americans. Sixty years on, unless they were the part of that generation, many Australians have not had direct experiences of the war. And yet, the efforts to commemorate how the war was fought by their fellow countrymen/women seem to remain strong.

In such an atmosphere, novels, short stories and memoirs about the experiences of the Pacific War continued to be written by Australian authors. Such writings have established themselves as a distinctive sub-genre within the wider war literature. For some writers who had direct experiences of the war, although time has passed and their memories may have become less vivid, their war experiences are too hard to forget. As T. A. G. Hungerford in his foreword to *A Knockabout with a Slouch Hat* (1985) puts it: “I was surprised by the ease with which [the war stories I was

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writing] plunged me back into a world which I thought I'd forgotten". Some other writers needed more time to express their experiences in words. In his foreword to *At the End of His Tether* (1981) Geoffrey Bingham writes that "many years have to pass before people can feel free to read war novels and books which describe prison-camp life" and that "writers have had time to mature in their thinking, to develop rich and useful insights concerning those terrible—and yet wonderful—days".

The shift in time and the changes in society have certainly had an influence on both writers and readers. In 1952 Eric Lambert criticised T. A. G. Hungerford's *The Ridge and the River* for its lack of "anger and hatred against war"¹⁾, but it seems that soon after the war Australian society developed a form of ambivalence about the recent conflicts that was similar to the ambivalence felt before the war. The issue of race, which was often emphasised by the Australian government's propaganda before and during the war, was a strong reason given for Australia's war against Japan. However, in the 1960s when the civil rights movement rose to prominence, and the daily influx of immigrants was increasingly evident, the issue of race became more and more subdued, if not extinct. A change of government in 1972 and the official adoption of multiculturalism further influenced the way Australian society viewed itself and its past.

Perhaps the changes in the political, economic and diplomatic relationships between Australia and Japan were more significant than changes in the ordinary Australian's way of thinking. After the occupation, it was not until 1952, when contact between ordinary people was still limited, that the first Japanese war bride was admitted into Australia. But because of the Korean War (and later wars), and especially because of Japan's rapid industrial recovery and economic boom, Australia and Japan established a partner-like relationship under the United States umbrella. By 1957, Australia and Japan had signed a trade agreement on 'most-favoured-nation' terms, and in 1966 Japan exceeded Britain in terms of the amount of trade conducted with Australia²⁾. Interaction between the citizens of both countries, starting for economic reasons, quickly expanded into social and cultural fields, supported by official agreements like the Cultural Agreement between the Government of Australia and the Government of Japan in 1976 and the Basic Treaty of Friendship and Co-operation in 1977. The Australia-Japan Foundation was established in 1976. Such changes led to Australian writers and readers reassessing their views on Japan and the Japanese held before and soon after the war.

The shift in the nature of the relationship between Australia and Japan and the mood of the times also gave more latitude to the authors of war writing. As Australian war-writing became established as a genre, authors who did not have direct war experiences or who were from younger generations adopted the topic and

retold the stories of the war between Australia and Japan in the form of both fiction and non-fiction. Such writings included more women's stories and stories of 'the other side'—the Japanese. This genre gave writers a setting other than Australia itself or Europe for their stories, especially as it became part of a broader field of literature concerning the relationship between Australia and Asia in general, which had also grown significantly in the post-war years.

In this paper, some authors of the war-writing genre from the 1960s and later will be examined to see what aspects of their writing developed over time and which remained unchanged. Further, we shall look at how the authors had "time to mature in their thinking, to develop rich and useful insights"³⁾ concerning the terrible reality of war. Finally, we will look at some authors new to this field, and examine their work to see how they created a new phase in the cross-cultural theme of the war between Australia and Japan and its consequences.

(1) War memoirs

Memoirs by ex-soldiers, or based on ex-soldiers' accounts, especially those related to prisoner-of-war experiences, continued to be published well into the 1990s. Although the theme of such memoirs remains basically the same as those published earlier years—that is, the physical and mental hardships of the POW camp, strange and harsh environments, atrocities committed by the Japanese, Australian 'mateship' which sustained and enabled prisoners to survive the days of captivity—there are new aspects which emerge, mainly because of changing attitudes and understanding. There are still the one-sided war-diarists who describe the Japanese in collective manner, "either as homicidal maniacs or as simian buffoons"⁴⁾. On the other hand, there are also authors who do not exaggerate the notion of the 'Oriental villain'. The title of Kenneth Harrison's memoir is a good example of this—*The Brave Japanese*. Even in 1966, such a title must have been controversial in Australian society, or as Gerster puts it, "inauspicious in post-war Australia"⁵⁾. In 1983, the book was republished under the new title *Road to Hiroshima*. Despite its original title, this book is far from a simple homage to Australia's old enemy; as the author reveals in his foreword, it is a story without a hero or a heroine, and "to offset this literary lapse", there are as many villains as possible, and "all had yellow skins and slant eyes". That is why some 'good' Japanese stand out "at a time when kindness and gentleness were the rarest of jewels". It is these 'jewels' that are recorded in his story. What Harrison finds in the Japanese as their principal virtue is bravery. Although Harrison could not believe that such "short monkey-like men in their shoddy uniforms" were competent in the jungle battles, he states that "good or bad, kind or sadistic... in the final analysis their Sun God imbued each and every one of them with a courage that I believe to be unequalled in our time". (93, 117)

When good in bad can shine, bad in good can also show. Eric Lambert, when he wrote *The Veterans* (1954) and *The Dark Backward* (1958), concentrated more on the battlefield as the “underworld”, where both enemies and allies turn into killing machines. He describes the Japanese as targets who “look all the same... act the same, like puppets”⁶⁾. Revenge is the proper end of war when Harding kills Colonel Higitura, a man who had tortured him and shattered his wish to be a pianist by breaking his fingers. In his later work, *MacDougal's Farm* (1965), based on stories in Changi Prison, Lambert looked at both good and bad in both Australians and Japanese. His assertion is that true heroes of war are not found in the high ranks but among the privates and NCO's. Such heroes include the protagonist Malcolm MacDougal who was not classified as a fit soldier because of a bullet wound in his leg, but instead helped out his mates during captivity. There were malingerers, collaborators with the Japanese and black marketeers among the Australians in the camp, and both the author and protagonist agree that not all the “Nips were black-hearted to a man” and that it was not always true that the Australians “were all spotless white, and the Nips should be scorned and hated for ever after”. (59) This agreement between Lambert and MacDougal was reached when the author was writing the book (1960-62), and the shift of the times seems to have enabled them to look back at their experience and see it from a more balanced viewpoint.

The cruelty and atrocities committed by the Japanese on the prisoners is presented no less graphically than in former memoirs. Harrison, despite admitting that “as a soldier, they were always — the brave Japanese”, confirms that “[the prisoners] could loathe everything [the Japanese] stood for, be disgusted at their cruelty, shake [their] heads incredulously at their stupidity, be scornful of their duplicity, laugh [themselves] sick at the thought of such men believing they descended from the Sun God”⁷⁾.

Non-fiction writer Cornel Lumiere's *Kura!* (1966), which is based on the author's research and the memoirs of those “who were all ‘there’,” seems to have a more single-minded and biased approach toward the Japanese, partly because the author himself was not there. The title, “kura”, is a Japanese interjection, which is spelled more phonetically than the real phrase “kora”. It indicates strong anger and reprimand, thus characterising the impression of the Japanese presented in the book. Some of the descriptions about the Japanese seem sweepingly collective; “[Lieutenant Naito takes] revenge as only an Oriental could”, (134) or “[i]n the Oriental mind... anything might be turned into an offence”. (143) Harrison reveals that some prisoners, as the result of their loathing for their captors, secretly unhooked the coupling of the rear van of the train in which one of the most hated guards at their camp in Thailand was travelling, allowing it to roll back down the slope, thus killing several Japanese and Koreans⁸⁾.

The incomprehensibility and unpredictability of the Japanese is still stressed in many memoirs. Harrison's first-hand accounts of these problems are repeated throughout his memoir. During the three years of slave labour, his constant efforts were aimed at outwitting the Japanese. Some Japanese are as evil as ever, while others are soft enough to let the prisoners carry their guns while they are asleep, or have prisoners catch insects for the officer's pet canary, giving them rest as a reward. To Harrison, it becomes "painfully apparent" that the Australians had little in common with their captors and that time was not bringing understanding and mutual respect". (142) Japanese cruelty, in Lambert's *MacDougal's Farm*, is shown on one occasion when the Japanese pluck a pigeon alive before they cook it for their meal. MacDougal then resigns himself to the Japanese way of life, thinking "[he] could not concern [himself] too often with their cruelty to animals when Changi itself was one enormous exposition of man's inhumanity to man". (99-101)

Hugh Clarke describes how he was punished and beaten with a piece of timber across his back for damaging a circular saw by making it "look like an egg" at one of the POW camps in Nagasaki; he further wonders: "...you never could explain their actions: after a terrible thumping [the Japanese who owned the saw] gave me a bowl of rice and a drink of sake and showed me how to do the job—I was 'number one' with him after that"⁹). In *The Tub* (1963), fiction that was based on his POW experience, Clarke also notes the groundless Japanese presumption that "anyone with red hair or freckles was not considered healthy and therefore excluded from the party" to be sent to Japan, thus showing such stereotypes and misapprehensions based on appearance exist on both sides of the racial divide during the war.

(2) Change in attitudes of some authors

Time and the forces of social transition brought about certain changes in the attitudes of some authors. In later memoirs and novels, these authors not only retrace their own 'passage of thorns' but try to show the perspective of the 'Other' as well. After his prisoner-of-war experiences in Changi, on the Burma-Thai Railway and finally in Japan, Hugh Clarke admits that the cause of the constant clash between Australians and the Japanese may be of "differing cultures as much as natural antagonism between captor and captive", and "[the captives'] attitude to [their] captors had, at all times, been defiant and arrogant.... [They] must surely have been an infuriating embarrassment to [their] captors.... [The Japanese] on their part had been indoctrinated from childhood to regard the white nations as oppressors and themselves as descendants from the sons of heaven"¹⁰). As Braddon explains in his production note to *Naked Island: A Play* (1981), Anglo-Saxon prisoners may have learnt early "to understand the mentality, habits and language of their Japanese captors very well indeed" if only for the purpose of survival, while

their captors were successfully defied because “they never understood the Anglo-Saxon mentality and therefore never looked for the low and outrageous kind of animal cunning exercised against them by their prisoners”. The prisoners’ behaviour was aimed at day-to-day survival, and so the fundamental gap in understanding between the two groups was not really thought about before and during the actual contact between the two groups, but only after the war was over.

Stan Arneil, who kept a diary of his captivity in Changi, Thailand and Johore from 15 February 1942 to 9 October 1945, published it in 1981 (with little editing) as *One Man’s War*. Arneil’s contemporary observations of his surroundings as well as his own state of mind, together with explanatory notes (added later), is balanced and restrained. The book was honoured with a PEN award in 1981 for “a non-fiction book of literary excellence best dispelling racial, religious and cultural class bigotry”. Such an example suggests that both ‘time and tide’ are needed in order for the portrayal of a more comprehensive and tolerant perspective on the type of violent, cross-cultural clash that occurred between Australia and Japan. Arneil does not flatter or idealise the Japanese. Rather, he is honest in describing the captors and captives as incompatible and reveals that he could never fraternise with them. It is easier for the author and other prisoners in Changi than in other POW camps because they saw less of the Japanese. As Manning Clark comments in the preface to the book, the importance of *One Man’s War* perhaps lies not only in its objectivity in describing the cross-cultural contact, but in its integrated observation of “what war does to human beings”. Captivity and slave labour in Thailand is “a time when all artificiality disappeared and men saw themselves and others as they really were”, captor and captive alike. (93) The environment surrounding them also becomes a test for each: “[t]he dense bamboo jungle with its cruel thorns crowded [them] into the narrow strips on which [they] were working. The sun rarely ever shone during that wet season; [and he] never heard a bird sing”. (93)

A greater effort to try and understand the differences between Australians and Japanese by Australian writers seems to be a major characteristic of some later memoirs and novels. In *The Brave Japanese*, Kenneth Harrison recognises several characteristics in the Japanese, which helps him to understand, maybe not completely, but at least partly, his captors’ behaviour. He discovers that the Japanese despise their captives for surrendering, and have mentally relegated them “to the status of work animals”, and yet the prisoners themselves, to the captors’ surprise and anger, are never humble. (142)

Few of them have understood the Japanese obsession with ‘face,’ thus causing needless friction. As is described in Harrison’s *The Brave Japanese*, they cannot understand why the Japanese can break promises without shame, where loss of face means more to the Japanese than not telling the truth. (143) They have to learn

Japanese customs and superstitions through trial and error, by getting hit and by other forms of punishment. An example is the need to remember to pronounce the numeral “four” as “yon”, not “shi” (an alternative pronunciation which also means “death”), an impolite ‘faux pas’. (143) However strange the prisoners considered the Japanese way of life, it was also true that those ways of doing things were the “right” ones at that time and place, and the author realises the importance of learning those ways for their own survival.

In *The Tub*, Clarke lets one of his characters use the Japanese as a way of reflecting on his own behaviour and conduct. When appalled at the sight of brutality committed by one of the Japanese towards his lower ranks, the protagonist Steve wonders if the British were “much more humane a hundred years ago, when the British army spreadeagled its own men on gun wheels and flogged them; when keel-hauling British sailors was standard discipline? You want to read about our own convict days, especially Norfolk Island”. (103)

MacDougal, in Lambert’s *MacDougal’s Farm*, also reveals that the surrender to the Japanese and enslavement by its army disclosed the weak side of Australians: “too many officers sought only to retain their status as officers... never has the absurd snobbery and class distinction of the army been so clearly demonstrated”; and “[d]uring the war there was a widespread myth in the British Army that the Australian Army was a democratic army... On the Death Railway that myth died once and for all.” (63) Such self-reflective observations may also have needed time to be voiced.

In *MacDougal’s Farm*, MacDougal and the author try to find the answer to the very basic question: why did the Japanese behave as they did? On the one hand they talk about the Japanese having the “hugest inferiority complex in all human history” towards the Western world. But they conclude that the monkey-like inclination towards imitation of the Japanese is not because the Japanese are less human than Europeans, but rather it is because of their doctrine, the most pernicious force in human history. This may show the protagonists’ shift of viewpoint as well as the notion of their indoctrination about war. (59-61)

The author of *MacDougal’s Farm*, also recognises the Japanese obsession with ritual and ceremony, “with an inherited *mystique* a thousand years old”, which is typical in their “ridiculous ceremonials in the arrangements of flowers and the serving of tea”. When the Australians come to realise such obsessions, for example the insistence on saluting by the Japanese as “not an attempt to degrade but merely an instance of their obsession with ceremonial”, they understand and take it in as part of the system, rightly or wrongly. (86) Understanding, if not necessarily justifying the reasons for Japanese behaviour in terms of their background, seems to be a significant characteristic of Australian writing about the Japanese some two decades or more after the war.

(3) Language of the 'Other'

One of the remarkable features of the memoirs and non-fiction of later war-writing is the perceived importance for Australians of understanding the enemy's language as a first priority for survival, followed by a better cultural understanding of their strange captors. When communication is successful, even with a few simple words, it leads to a quite different outcome for the prisoners and in turn influences their impression of the Japanese. In one of Ray Parkin's episodes in his memoir, he and the supervising Japanese guard share a little Malay, English and Japanese, as well as "arms to wave in international semaphore", and lastly, Bing Crosby songs. Their communication is not sophisticated, but it is enough to invite a degree of harmonious interaction¹¹⁾. In another episode, Parkin observes the Australian prisoners cursing the Tamils as "obscene boongs", "only because they were talking a tongue the men did not understand and it jangled their nerves"¹²⁾. Thus the potential role of language is emphasised either as a bond or a barrier between different groups.

Cornel Lumiere's protagonist in *Kura!*, which is based on a true story, is an interpreter between the captors and captives: the interpreter himself thus represents the function of language in interactive behaviour. Erik Leeuwenburg, the protagonist, is a Dutch private, who because of his multi-racial background and ability to speak several languages including Japanese, is appointed as the interpreter for the A. I. F. 8th Division under the administration of Australian senior officers on the Burma-Thai Railway. Although his immediate senior, a Dutch officer, does not like Erik to "fraternise" with the enemy by speaking Japanese, he is inevitably drawn to the task of go-between for both sides. Being only a civilian turned private second class, Erik becomes the representative of the whole group of the oppressed. Initially it was only his "personal load—the load every prisoner carried, the burden of hunger and hardship, disease and fear, the nearness of death [before]....Now he must carry the burden of the entire group with him. Whatever their rank, their nationality, their number, he, with his absurdly small vocabulary of Japanese words, had become their spokesman". (7) In the beginning, Erik knows only about two hundred Japanese words, but "with a beating for every mistake", he has to master the language quickly.

By making his protagonist an interpreter, Lumiere shows how communication itself, and the will and patience to master it, are necessary for different groups to co-exist. Erik "sadly lacked" patience and tact, not only for communication between captor and captive but also between Australians and Dutch, higher ranks and other ranks, the punisher and the victim. Erik has to struggle to establish a form of communication for the whole camp, for Australian, American and Dutch prisoners.

The bare necessity of understanding the oppressor's language for survival is well emphasised in Erik's chronicle. When he is accused by other prisoners of higher ranks of "fraternising" with the Japanese when learning the language at the time of surrender to the Japanese, he retorts that he is trying to learn the Japanese language so that he can prevent them from being hit when "a number of [them] are beaten up badly by the Japanese because [they] do not understand their orders". (63) Despite his senior officers' warning, Erik continues to learn the language, even on the ship from Sumatra to the camp in Burma, by befriending four Japanese fishermen-turned-soldiers as his instructors of the language. He later wonders who could throw the first stone at him regarding fraternising with the Japanese. (64)

An interpreter is a middleperson, a mediator, and he (or she) has to please both parties, especially when it is a matter of life or death as during the war. The task of being an interpreter takes a heavy toll on Erik's health, and "on several occasions, it very nearly [takes] his life". (8) His job demands him "to learn to be punished, beaten, insulted for the sake of a cause, for the sake of others". (8) A Japanese colonel nick-named "Butcher" and known for his brutality, spares Erik and lets him undergo surgery for appendicitis, but it is only because he does not want to lose this useful prisoner. Erik always has to "barter and bargain" in dealing with the Japanese when the prisoners wish to make proposals, often risking losing his own life. (76)

Erik's attempts to save the prisoners' lives whenever he can are not always successful. When the notorious paper prepared by the captors in which the prisoners have to agree not to escape under the threat of death is signed by the prisoners, some prisoners still attempt to break free. When they are captured, Erik tries his hardest, with as much power as his limited language allows, to persuade the camp commander to spare their lives. Although he tries to explain, plead and appeal to the vanity of the commander, he is faced with the limit of his capacity in the language, and the cost is their lives. In this case, however, it is doubtful if even the most fluent translator could have prevented the execution of these men.

Erik's position as the interpreter is an ambivalent one. Being technically under Dutch command, Erik is also under the command of an Australian brigadier who is responsible for the whole camp, and so he often faces a conflict between these two allied groups. The gap between captor and captive, however, is immense. Erik learns quickly that it is important "seemingly first to agree with the Japs, to reduce their antagonism. One could then try to make the captors see matters from the prisoners' point of view". (42) However, the interpreter's role is not to make any statements but only to translate them from left to right or vice versa, and he has to "[fight] his lonely battle of wits, often [has] to take chances and hope for the best". (43)

As a non-fiction writer, the author did his research for the book and interpolated many episodes from the prisoner-of-war camp days. These episodes again reveal the

author's sense of the incomprehensible Japanese with their strange carrot-and-stick policy, or their harsh and often brutal behaviour directed towards prisoners and their own lower ranks. The author makes some rather generalised and biased statements about the enemy that highlight what Edward Said in a different context called 'Orientalist' prejudice: "[the Japanese and Koreans] hated as only the oriental can hate, with pathological strength of feeling, combined with the brutality of the primitive" (28); and the camp commandant, who "hated with intensity all that was Western and white," is weirdly a "mixture of an inherent Oriental inferiority complex and a powerful victor's superiority complex". (68)

Throughout Lumiere's narrative, readers are led to realise that to overcome the serious cross-cultural gaps faced in the prison camp, one must understand the workings of the mind of the interpreter and those around him, and not just continuously be reminded of the atrocities and danger caused by the Japanese. By nature, Erik was an "individualist" and for him there was "no enemy, basically, all races, colours, creeds were the same". (3) Thanks to his natural disposition and his own cosmopolitan background, he may originally have found it easier than other prisoners to interact with the 'Other.' He learns, through the three and a half years of the extraordinary situation in which he found himself as a prisoner on the Burma-Thailand railway, how to deal with the ultimate 'Other'—the enemy on whom he depends.

In Lumiere's story, some Australian senior ranks in the camp eventually come to realise the importance and advantage of knowing the Japanese language, despite their pride and prejudice. Subsequently their own bias against Erik as a fraterniser with the enemy dissipates. However, such a change of heart in the Australian officers, in turn, invites criticism by some of the Dutch and British senior officers who are less conscious of the importance of language, thereby causing friction within the same interest group. (185)

(4) Observations of the Japanese as individuals

A phrase learned from the Japanese becomes a key for Russell Braddon to speculate further on the Japanese. In *The Naked Island* (1952), Braddon recounts an episode in which a Japanese interpreter called Terai stubbornly insists "the war will last for a hundred years", which was a Japanese slogan used often during the war, indicating Japan's determination to win. This fanatically one-sided conviction seems to stay in the author's mind as a key phrase for understanding the Japanese mind. Braddon again mentions the phrase in *End of a Hate* (1958), which was written as a "factual" account of his POW days when he was held by "justly hated captors", and its aftermath. When Braddon finished *The Naked Island*, for him and other prisoners-of-war, the war had 'only stopped', it had 'not ended'. Then in *End of a*

Hate, he reveals that having published *The Naked Island*, he was able to 'end' the war and his 'prisonerhood', and to look at the former enemy in terms of their own background. He further suggests that in order to understand and predict how the Japanese may act, one must look at their background and culture. By the end of the book, Braddon eventually reaches a stage where he could write "not from hatred but from fact...not forget and forgive but remember and understand". (179)

In a later version, *The Naked Island: A Play* (1961), Braddon lets a Japanese guard use the phrase, "the war will last for a hundred years", to the Australian prisoners, and during a rather comical conversation, presents the notion that Japanese soldiers believe they are destined to fight against the enemy until they die, even if it takes a hundred years. In his production note to the play, Braddon explains that the Japanese character should not be taken as a "half-wit," however silly and fanatical his interpretation of the slogan might sound.

As mentioned above, Japanese guards are defied by the prisoners only because "they never understood the Anglo-Saxon mentality and therefore never looked for the low and outrageous kind of animal cunning exercised against them by their prisoners". Because the Japanese are captors, they do not have to make the effort to understand. It is the captive prisoners who have to understand the 'Other's' mentality, something which may have some similarity to the experience of Jesuits and traders from Portugal and Spain in Japan in the 16th century, who, as the first white men in Japan, had contact with the Japanese only at the risk of their own lives.

Braddon further uses the phrase, "the war will last for a hundred years", as the title of his book *The Other Hundred Years War: Japan's Bid for Supremacy 1942-2041* (1983)¹³⁾. After his memoirs and play, Braddon now tries to understand Japan in a different light, lamenting the scant knowledge about the Japanese that his seniors—especially their Intelligence Officer—had provided them. Based on his own experiences with the Japanese during the war and his later research from various economic, industrial, diplomatic, political and cultural sources, Braddon gives a warning to "beware of the Japanese". The purpose of this book seems to be to "let us know them", even if we cannot "tolerate or accept them", thus suggesting the importance of the very first step of cross-cultural contact. McQueen also observes apparent changes in the author's attitude, as he shows in his comments that Braddon's 1952 book *The Naked Island* is hatred-filled, while the 1961 play version shows more careful observation of the Japanese, thus reinforcing the observation that some time and detachment is necessary for objective descriptions of the former enemy¹⁴⁾.

Kenneth Harrison also admits that his hatred dissipated as time passed, and that he started to see the Japanese in more measured terms. He notes surprisingly, in *The*

Brave Japanese, that "... try as I might, I could find no hatred whatever for them. Instead I remembered more and more their basic virtues of loyalty, cleanliness, and courage, and the more I read, the more I became convinced that they were soldiers of tremendous bravery". (279) When some criticised his portrayal of the Japanese as mere fanatics, the author replied by saying that "the Japanese soldiers were men of flesh and blood—human beings with very human emotions of fear and foreboding... I had no doubt a Japanese in a position where he was fighting for his country and his Emperor would fight till he died". (279) Compared to other Australian memoirists, his conclusion is perhaps one of the most favourable towards the Japanese. A much later visitor to Japan, Humphrey McQueen, admits that his ideas were similar to those of millions of other Australians; however, with his random reading about the country starting with Harrison's *The Brave Japanese*, he moved to a clearer recognition of Japan and the Japanese¹⁵). This is an example of how writings can influence the formation of ideas about the 'Other'. As in Harrison's case, time for further reflection and contemplation seems to be needed to reach a stage where one can present experiences in a more considered and balanced manner.

Descriptions of individual Japanese in later memoirs and stories by Australian writers published in the 1960s and after also tend to present a calmer and clearer approach to the Japanese seen as a collective. In Eric Lambert's *MacDougal's Farm* (1965), a very young Japanese soldier called Ono, a character with few characteristics of the hated enemy, shows how close individuals of both sides can become in war. Ono has admiration for "the English-speaking peoples", influenced by his communist father who taught him Western ideas and was later killed because of his beliefs. MacDougal becomes a mentor figure to young Ono, and teaches him about the Australian way of life as well as Christianity at Changi. Ono tries to absorb everything he is told with the eagerness of the young who have missed the chance to learn by joining the army. Almost like a premonition, MacDougal wonders if Ono's seriousness is a form of obsession. When the war is over, Ono kills himself, following the Japanese tradition or code for the defeated, thus showing another tragic example of those caught 'in-between' cultures. By forcing people into oppositional roles, war destroys the normal complexity of human interactions, which even in the aftermath of war can have terrible consequences.

In some of his short stories, Geoffrey Bingham portrays not only the Japanese but also his own people in a vivid and frank way. Bingham himself was taken prisoner at Changi and this experience of prisoner-of-war life and his observation of the Japanese becomes the main topic of his short stories. As one of the titles of his collected stories shows, a person begins to discover his 'true self' and "become[s] genuine in living" when "at the end of his tether"¹⁶). The characters of Bingham's short stories seem to re-define themselves through their POW experiences. In "Three

Rice Cakes”, for example, the protagonist tests himself by picking up the smallest of rice cakes offered to him not out of desire for approval or fear of disapproval, but more as a test to prove his own courage. One prisoner in “The Power Within” trains his mind to get through captivity, believing that the captives are fighting for the best, the British way of life, and never inwardly surrendering to the Japanese. He survives with his strong “self-righteousness”, stoicism, pride and self-evaluation until the very day Japan capitulates, and then he cannot sustain himself any longer and dies. Here the Japanese as captors are presented as a means for some prisoners to discover their true selves. Ironically, however, the strain of this kind of stoicism and self-revelation is too great.

In his short stories, Bingham tries to look at the Japanese, even those who seem evil, not simply as ‘captor-figures’ but more as individuals, with unique characteristics. One such story is “Killa t’Pig, George” from *To Command the Cats and Other Stories* (1981), where three captives and a Javanese native are punished psychologically by a Japanese guard. Out of sheer hunger, they kill a pig to make a stew and are found by Takahashi, one of the camp guards. Discovering their cooking, Takahashi squats and takes his share from the pot as if enjoying the feast, and then leaves them wondering what will happen next. Their fear of being punished, the unpredictability of their near future, and the inscrutability of Takahashi gives readers, tragi-comically, an idea of the tense living conditions experienced by prisoners.

Another example is “The Mind of Matsuoko” from *To Command the Cats and Other Stories*. Matsuoko, responsible for mass murder during the war, pretends to be somebody else, thus trying to avoid being judged as guilty by his enemy but to die an honourable death with his own hand. For Matsuoko, it is shameful to admit that what he did was a crime. It is “too personal” for him to admit why he killed. An Australian soldier, Conn Webster, has to hunt Matsuoko till the end, motivated in part by his own incapability of being a “real soldier”: having run away when the Japanese landed, and again later being taunted by other fellow Australians as lacking the instinct of a “born-soldier”. Besides the crime Matsuoko actually committed, Conn also regards Matsuoko as representing the Japanese as a whole and being responsible “for those little Japs who made him run”. (53) In this episode of a defeated Japanese and his war crime, Bingham has raised more complicated issues resulting from the war than those usually found, including those of idealism, pride, belief and conviction.

Some authors of this period have tried to examine a more humane side of the Japanese, perhaps with greater clarity and interest than in memoirs and stories written during the 1940s and 50s. Time seems to have allowed both writers and readers to focus not only on suffering and hatred but also on other facets, such as

the nature of their enemy. Kenneth Harrison is one such writer, as we have seen earlier. In *The Brave Japanese*, he describes acts of kindness and consideration by the Japanese, however subtle and small, like the giving of extra water or protection from the more brutal soldiers, both acts that were precious during those hard days. It occurs to Harrison that “kindness, like wildflowers, blooms in the most unlikely places, even in the heart of a pock-marked, bullet-headed Japanese guard.” (130) As mentioned, among the Japanese described in Harrison’s memoir, although most of them were “villains... [who] came in all sizes and shapes and most were barbaric and sadistic; all had yellow skins and slant eyes”; and there are “others who were kind at a time when kindness and gentleness were the rarest of jewels”.

Harrison also observes the Japanese eagerness for polite behaviour; examples include their hatred of the use of swear words among prisoners or the Japanese usage of courtesy titles when addressing others. (143) The author also finds that some Japanese, despite their savagery and indifference to human life, have a “sincere love of family life”. Discovering that the Japanese are “much more lenient towards family men”, Harrison takes a photo of a three year old boy from a dead man’s possession and adopts him as his “son”. Over the years he shows “the photo of Teddy Harrison to hundreds of Japanese, and invariably gained their attention and hisses of admiration. Many replied by producing photos of little black-eyed, round-faced solemn Japanese children who were quite delightful”. (144-5)

Sharing the same feelings for certain things like family and sport seems to lift the antipathy between captor and captive. In one episode in Ray Parkin’s diary, when prisoners are bathing in the river in the jungle of Thailand on a rest afternoon, they are found by the Japanese and believe they are about to be punished. Instead, to their surprise, the Japanese bring some tools and make them a springboard¹⁷⁾. This is a similar situation with the roles reversed to such an episode in T. A. G. Hungerford’s novel *The Ridge and the River*, where Australian soldiers find the Japanese bathing in the river and observe their human side for the first time. (92)

Stan Arneil’s diary of his captivity is, as Russel Ward mentions in his Foreword to the book *One Man’s War*, free from racism and gives a fair description of the Japanese. He notices the Japanese respect for hierarchy in the army and in particular for the higher ranks, probably more so than most Australians. Perhaps, unfortunately for the author and other ORs, this respect for hierarchy is also evidenced in the Japanese dealings with the prisoners. Beatings are a usual means to enforce discipline, from the highest to the lowest rank, as Harrison also mentions¹⁸⁾. When some prisoners, including the author, are assigned to dig tunnels in Johore, with a constant fear that they may be for their own graves, the Japanese in charge, both officers, soldiers and engineers, turn out to be fair. Apparently, small humane acts by the Japanese, such as knowing the prisoners’ names, promises of building

chairs and desks for them, and treating them as ordinary human beings, enable the prisoners to look at the 'Other' from a different perspective¹⁹⁾.

Ray Parkin, who is cited by critics as one of the more balanced, and objective memoirists²⁰⁾, not only describes the Japanese as individuals but also reflects upon Australians, and further, on human beings in general. The first book of his war-trilogy on World War II, *Out of the Smoke* (1960), is memoir-based 'faction', in which the author tells how his protagonist, John, fights the war at sea on the Australian cruiser *Perth* in the Sunda Strait, survives after the boat goes down, and eventually falls into the enemy's hands. *Into the Smother* (1963), the second book, depicts his prisoner-of-war experiences on the Burma-Thailand Railway, based on the diary the author secretly kept during his captivity. In the third and final book, *The Sword and the Blossom* (1968), the protagonist, John, appears again and talks about his captivity in Japan until the end of the war.

What is remarkable about Parkin's memoirs is a certain detachment in observing both the Japanese as captors and the Australians as captives. The author thinks he should be at a "stage when [he] can observe things outside [himself]" with interest, and without "self-preservative selfishness"²¹⁾. Parkin is also an artist, and his drawings of his surroundings decorate the diary as shown in *Into the Smother*. Although he has to refrain from publicising his artistic ability in the prison camps to avoid being asked for "dirty pictures for purpose of sex", (55) he seems to continue to exercise an observer's eyes not only on the tangible natural surroundings but also on the intangible aspects of human nature. One of his mottos for survival during captivity is to try not to hate—" [*i*]t is no good hating at all. That could kill you." (31) The author tries hard to be consistent in his attitudes, however difficult this may be, and to observe the enemy with stability and objectivity.

In Parkin's diary, nevertheless, the Japanese are portrayed as cruel and incomprehensible oppressors. One time, as he watches a Japanese troop of about two hundred men pass by, their silence and uniformity makes him think of "mass-thinking (or unthinking) Martians, or Gammas from Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*". (88) The prisoners do not care about knowing the proper names of any of the Japanese, they just give them various nicknames based on the individual's temper, as well as the degree of their cruelty.

And yet the author's unbiased observations are still brought to bear on the Japanese, and this attitude is extended to his fellow prisoners, too. Some of his own mates are condemned because of their low morale and "laziness with an affected patriotism that they will do as little as possible for the enemy". (79) They are people who do not care what will happen to their mates. Parkin once compares the physical condition of prisoners to that of the unfortunates who were living in 'Happy Valley' in Australia during the depression in the 1930s. He then concludes that it is the

consequence of the prisoners' decision to fight and be captured by "an enemy with no cause to love [them]", whereas those who were in poverty in Happy Valley in the depression were put into that situation by their own "country", for which they are now fighting. (144-5) Parkin also criticises some of the officers and the better conditions they received compared to some of their subordinates; however, his diary is written from the "point of view of the men" and so "it is bound to be partial". There are some prisoners in the higher ranks who "are thoroughly organised for their own preservation, who are as heartless as the Japs about the fate of the ordinary man here....At least the Japs have the excuse that they are our enemies, and they come into the open with their cruelty". (187-8) This remark perhaps underlies later comments made about senior officer-prisoners by McQueen: "there was more than one value system at work in determining Japanese behaviour". Within the prisoners too, there were differences in looking at the 'Other' according to their own positions, circumstances and environments²²⁾.

It may be Parkin's ability to observe, draw and write that enabled him to be more balanced and composed than many others in such adverse circumstances. He even seems to have a gentle regard for the difficult conditions provided by nature in the tropics when he expresses "a sensuous pleasure walking in the rain", or manages to retain a sense of humour by regarding himself and his fellow prisoners as being in a zoo of baboons. To possess such an ability, even in the presence of an enemy shows an extraordinary degree of tolerance and freedom of mind, untainted by bitterness, which is probably much appreciated by readers in later decades.

(5) Australian prisoners-of-war in Japan

Some memoirists were also held in Japan in the latter years of their captivity, thus becoming the first Australians who had direct contact with the Japanese in Japan, both military and civilians, before official contact by the occupation forces. Some of their experiences were published in the 1960s and after. These memoirs and memoir-based novels, some of which have already been referred to, include Ray Parkin's *The Sword and the Blossom* (1968), Kenneth Harrison's *The Brave Japanese* (1966), and Hugh Clarke's *The Tub* (1961), *Last Stop Nagasaki!* (1984) and *Twilight Liberation: Australian Prisoners of War between Hiroshima and Home* (1985). Although these men were in the enemy's hands in the enemy's land, as the war drew closer to an end, the destiny of these prisoners became more uncertain. It was these prisoners who had the first, if somewhat limited, opportunity to witness what it was like at the end of the war in Japan.

Clarke's *The Tub* is a novel based on the author's experiences, which tells a story of two prisoners from Changi, who are sent to the Burma-Thai Railway, and finally to Fukuoka, Japan. One of them, Tony, carries a large iron tub, which symbolises the

burden of POW life as well as being a reminder of civilised life. Tony becomes attached to this object as if it were his charm for survival. When the war is over, the tub is smashed and flattened by a drum container filled with relief goods airdropped from an American plane, and Tony is finally set free, from both the tub and from 'prisonerhood'.

The memoirs mentioned above contain episodes of direct contact between the authors and the Japanese, and the prisoners realise that they encounter less hostility than they expected when they arrive in Japan. When Clarke arrives in Nagasaki, people there seem to show more astonishment than animosity towards the prisoners²³). Prisoners also witness that the status of Japanese civilians is no better than theirs. In *The Tub*, Clarke says that only after losing it, do people come to know what freedom means, as Australian prisoners-of-war do under the Japanese. However, he learns the Japanese themselves are "little better than slaves". (165) Those Japanese civilians working at the dockyard in Nagasaki, women and children alike, are given as hard a task as the prisoners, with no better clothes and food, and it seems to Clarke that "captors and captives [are] in the same boat"²⁴). It was a time when Japan had very little strength left to continue the war, something evidenced in the prisoners' encounters with the local Japanese.

In South-East Asia and Papua New Guinea, living conditions were as abnormal and difficult for the Japanese as they were for their Australian prisoners. In Japan, prisoners were given the basic living standards of the time, even if it was a kind of living that was unfamiliar to them. Prisoners recall with astonishment sharing a tiny sized room, sleeping on a tatami floor with a bedspread, eating with chopsticks all the time and drinking from cups without handles.

When the war finishes, their status among the Japanese becomes ambivalent. Clarke describes the situation in *Twilight Liberation* as "those tense, bewildering days between slavery and liberation." The men are uncertain of their fate should the U. S. Army invade the major islands after Okinawa, for they know the "lack of choice" faced by the Japanese. The prisoners themselves know that there is no 'surrender' for the Japanese, but only 'death'. (54) It is an uneasy peace "which could be blown away at any time by a mad resurgence of Japanese patriotism". (61) Harrison also reveals that "they [are] neither freemen nor captives", and the balance of power between prisoners and the Japanese remains delicate²⁵). He further states that most prisoners do not want revenge or retribution after the war, although some individual cases of vengeance are described.

When news of the end of war reaches the camp, there are different reactions between each national group of allied prisoners—"Americans cheered, Dutch sang their national anthem, and Australians and English just stood silent". (80) Such differences in mood and behaviour among the nationalities made it difficult to

command the prisoners after the war, because the majority of officers had been sent to Manchuria. Prisoners only wanted to obey officers of the same nationality. Even in the same interest group integration was difficult. (93)

Having had direct contact with the Japanese and seen their ways, each author has a certain insight into their cross-cultural encounters. Clarke, with hindsight, starts to think that their “constant clash with the Japanese might be one of differing cultures as much as the natural antagonism between captor and captive”. He admits his generation had been raised under the influence of the White Australia Policy, thus growing up considering themselves superior. He further admits that their attitude to the Japanese is at all times “defiant and arrogant”, while the Japanese thought of themselves as the “descendants from the sons of heaven”. In such a situation it was difficult to find common ground²⁶⁾. This recognition of the lack of common ground seems to be easier for later generations to recognise, an important change from the generations before and during the war. Clarke confesses that he weeps like a baby to see a white nurse on the ship back home, and that although his hatred towards the Japanese starts to ebb away, after three and a half years captivity he does not want to see another “Nip” as long as he lives. However, as his writings show, he continues to go back to Japan, not only in his head but by actually revisiting there, to resurrect the past and to inquire into Australia’s relationship with the Japanese. This is another form of Braddon’s comment (see above), of “not forgive and forget but remember and understand”, something which in turn will eventually foster cross-cultural understanding with the ‘Other’.

The tragedies in Hiroshima and Nagasaki caused by the atomic bombs were witnessed by many prisoners-of-war, and this seems to have had a huge impact on their perception of their captors. When the Japanese are thrust into such a devastating state, the prisoners’ sympathy for their enemy-captor, seen for the first time as suffering people, seems to emerge. After being liberated, Harrison goes to Hiroshima and witnesses the aftermath, unable to believe that “one bomb had been responsible for this holocaust”. (265) He mourns that it is:

easy, painfully easy, to visualize the fate that had overtaken them as the countless fires joined hands with glee and danced high in the air, almost as if seeking to touch the evil mushroom cloud above. / But that was imagination. / The reality was the girl with scarred features who passed with averted face. And the listless people who went by so dully; the scarred people; the burnt people; the apathetic people. And the people who even now showed not the slightest sign of hostility or resentment²⁷⁾.

They are there to witness a major part, if not the whole of the event from the insider's point of view, and their utterance, "poor, poor, bastards", expresses their feelings for their enemy. They had "an odd pity for this strange race", and "their hatred of the Japanese was swept away by the enormity of what [they] had seen". (267) Wilfred Burchett went to Hiroshima as a journalist, saw the immediate aftermath of the bomb and reported it to the world. The tone of Burchett's report is said to have been "totally against everything else being written from Japan at that time, the 'they-had-it-coming-to-them' and 'I-saw-the-arrogant-Japs-humbled' type of story", thus revealing how different people observed and interpreted the events around them²⁸).

Harrison may also be one of the few writers, like Burchett, who "felt no sense of either history or triumph...Our brother Man went by crippled and burned and we knew only shame and guilt"²⁹). Many prisoners believed that the bomb was inevitable as a means to end the war, otherwise they felt there would be more victims on both sides. Clarke was one such person. He had left Nagasaki before the bomb was dropped and did not know about the disaster until the end of war. On his way back home on a U.S. plane, he sees from the air the remains of the city. He feels that "no matter how much [they have] suffered no people on earth could have deserved such a fate...at the same time, ...without the atomic bomb halting the war as it did the loss of Japanese and Allied lives which would have resulted from an invasion would have been incalculable"³⁰). In his recollection, cited by Clarke, Bert Donaldson also mentions the "inevitability" of the atomic bomb which "probably saved many lives, including service personnel, POWs and Japanese, because it prevented the expected landing on Japan with all its consequences", but he can only hope it will never happen again³¹).

Soon after the Allied prisoners-of-war in Japan were liberated, more direct contact with the Japanese started, though the positions of both sides were still ambivalent and transitional. Before the occupation forces came, some prisoners started to enjoy their new status as captors in a lawless and undisciplined way, and memoirists have recorded episodes of some prisoners ransacking premises and the soaring venereal disease rate³²). Then the occupation forces arrived and took over. These newly arrived Australians were thrown into Japanese society, developing a unique relationship with its people from a very different background to that of the former prisoners-of-war, thus forming very different notions of the Japanese.

T. A. G. Hungerford's early publication of this occupation force experience, *Sowers of the Wind*, revealed many crude aspects of the relationship between the two groups. Despite the fact it won a literary prize in 1949, this novel's publication was postponed until 1954. Later still, Hungerford returned to this experience in his

memoir-short story in *A Knockabout with a Slouch Hat* (1985), one of his three autobiographical volumes. After the initial dismay experienced on their arrival in Kure, a place not very different from Fremantle, Hungerford and others set out to explore Japan. The author recalls his outrage at local wharf labourers who assumed “cheerful, un-conquered attitudes” and who bustled around “shouting and smiling and spitting as if they had never heard of the Coral Sea or ... the Kokoda Trail...”³³). He had expected Japan to be “a bit more exotic” and is shocked “almost to resentment by the rosy peaches-and-cream complexions of the Japanese when [they have been] led to expected the leathery yellow hides of reptiles”³⁴).

Although the non-fraternisation policy had been introduced, what the town Kure was able to offer to the occupation forces most was “women”. This aspect of the relationship between the conquerors and the conquered, is one that Hungerford tackles candidly and unsentimentally in his memoirs.

His observation of the local Japanese leads him to understand how ordinary people live. The scarcity of food, hard labour, and the struggle for post-war recovery are thus recorded. He meets by chance a Japanese civilian, an ex-English teacher, and his wife. They lost their four sons in the war, but do not show any hostility toward their ex-enemy. This Japanese man shows Hungerford the Japanese ways of life, by inviting him to his house, taking him to the public bath-house, and introducing him to his ‘favourite’ brothel, where Hungerford wonders whether he should offer a “shout” of a girl to his Japanese friend or not. In the lounge of the brothel Hungerford talks with the madam and the local customers, with the help of his “phrase-book”. It is a “pleasant, somewhat fractured, gossip”, and the people there are “ordinary, respectable-seeming folk, rather like any Australian group you’d join at the local pub after tea, for a few noggins and whatever scandal might be knocking around”. He then ponders that these are “the sort of people the brass [has] forbidden [them] to meet or even talk to”. Such occasions with the civilian ‘Other’ thus make the author realise the importance of sharing common ground, and putting aside the moral question of right or wrong concerning the circumstances that have brought them together³⁵).

Hungerford’s new Japanese friend introduces him to ‘haiku’, which turns out to be an important factor for him in understanding the cultural side of Japan. He first becomes amazed at this traditional poetry form—seventeen syllables in three lines of five, seven and five—and thinks it sounds “so bloody Japanese”. However, when his friend recites one of Matsuo Basho’s poems—*The stillness of a summer day... it pierces the very rocks... the locust cry*, written about three hundred years before, he instantly feels as if he is immersed in the natural environment of the Darling Range in Perth. Beyond the differences of time and place, nationality and cultural background, the words in their Japanese form gives them a moment of shared understanding.

Through 'haiku', he is reminded of what his poetry teacher had once taught him—"a poem always had to be a *statement of fact*". He also discovers that what is important is not the words one uses but the picture one paints with them.

(6) Civilian writers and their stories of the war

Besides the memoirists who write about their war experiences, other writers have emerged who have dealt with various aspects of the war between Australia and Japan. The themes of war-writing, which were dominated by masculine and often highly partial, biased views based on wartime experiences or propaganda, started to develop new dimensions with the emergence of the perspectives of women, most of whom had remained in Australia during the war, and of younger generations who did not have a direct experience of the war. This literature in turn eventually expanded to become part of a more multicultural pattern of writing on Asia in Australian literature in the 1970s and 1980s.

The experience of female prisoners-of-war, of nurses and civilians, continues to be the subject of research and publication by non-fiction writers, including Shirley Fenton Huie's *The Forgotten Ones: Women and Children under Nippon* (1992), Alice Bowman's *Not Now Tomorrow—ima nai ashita—: Australian Civilian and Army Nurses—Prisoners of the Japanese in New Guinea and Japan 1942-1945* (1996), Norman Manners' *The True Story of Vivian Bullwinkel, a Young Army Nursing Sister Who Was the Sole Survivor of a World War Two Massacre by the Japanese* (1999). The hardship encountered by those who were waiting back home for captured family members has also been written about in Margaret Reeson's *Whereabouts Unknown* (1993).

Stories about Japanese war brides, one of the consequences of the Australian occupation forces in Japan, have so far not received much attention, although they were a major factor in the breaking of the White Australia policy. The story of the first Japanese bride, Cherry Parker, has been written about in "faction" by Isobel Carter, and published as *Alien Blossom: A Japanese-Australian Love Story* (1965). This book reveals the hardship encountered by the first officially admitted couple—Don Parker, a sapper of the Regimental Aid Post, and Nobuko Sakuramoto, his house girl in Kure. It traces how Don, who was prepared to see the Japanese as "inhuman", especially after his training in Cowra when he heard about the "fanatic and lunatic courage of the breakout" (10-11) of the Japanese prisoners, meets Nobuko in Hiroshima, and decides to bring her back to Australia against tremendous odds. With his family's strong support and encouragement, and after six years' struggle, the family—they already have two children—are reunited in Australia. Carter's story is not only about the fulfilment of the love of two people, it is about the changes in feelings for the Japanese held by Don, his family, and finally Australia.

Because a certain stigma still attached to their status, both in Japan and Australia, some Japanese brides did not wish to discuss their personal histories. However, in later years they have reached a stage where they can look back over their own journey and tell their stories. Recently, researches by writers and memoirs of the participants themselves have started to be published. Two such authors, Julie Easton and Keiko Tamura, saw the 40th anniversary of the first arrival of a Japanese war-bride, which was held in 1993, as the beginning of this change³⁶). The number of these brides may be small — altogether about 650; however, as one of them commented at the 1993 anniversary event, they have helped to play a major role in breaking the stereotype of the Japanese held by Australians and have been able to play a role in promoting mutual understanding between the two countries³⁷).

Some novelists who had war experience started to use their experience as the background for their own fictional works. Two of Jon Cleary's popular novels, *A Very Private War* (1980) and *The Phoenix Tree* (1983), are examples of this. Both employ Japanese characters, and the latter book is set mainly in Japan and most of the characters are Japanese. In *A Very Private War*, the protagonist is an American coast-watcher in New Britain called Mullane, who with the help of a young Australian, uncovers the camouflage of the airstrip of a Japanese base. Mullane had once stayed in Japan and was married to a Japanese, who was killed because of her relationship with him, a suspicious foreigner in pre-war Japan. It is thus his "private war" to avenge his dead wife, as well as to complete their mission. During the course of their undercover mission, they pick up a wounded Japanese lieutenant-general called Nara. This character is a rather simplified embodiment of Japanese militarism; however, he is depicted more as a 'human' villain, thus creating both the readers' enmity towards a fanatical enemy and at the same time inviting their sympathy for the defeated. Japan is not a total enemy in Cleary's novel, and the image of vice-ridden characters seen in pre-war novels on Japan is not evident.

The Phoenix Tree, according to the author himself, is "not a spy novel but a novel about spies", who are American-born Japanese. It is set in Japan during the closing months of World War II, and the two young spies are Minato and Okada. Minato is for traditional Japan and Okada against it, and both are assigned to identify the members of the "Peace Faction" in Japan. It is a story of these young men's self-discovery while at the same time being torn between two cultures. Through them one sees the war both won and lost: with the pro-American spy surviving while the pro-traditional Japan supporter dies.

Eric Lambert also employs Japanese characters to describe a more personal war between West and East in *Hiroshima Reef* (1968). Like Cleary, Lambert employs as his character an American medical missionary, called M'Glennon, who once worked

in Japan and learnt the language. M'Glennon has organized a leper colony for the native people on one of the Gilbert and Ellice Islands in Polynesia, which a Japanese contingent invades. M'Glennon assumes, against his wish, the role of a spy for the Australian military forces. Among the Japanese is Colonel Hakanate, an aloof, cold and harsh officer, who forbids his subordinates to fraternise with the villagers. Eventually, Hakanate himself becomes attached to a half-caste local girl Taluni, thus himself falling into a dilemma. Despite his arrogance and violence, Hakanate is depicted as a lonely man, not understood by either side. Having Taluni as the only one who knows his human side, he eventually decides to hide and remain deep in the jungle with her after the American Forces invade the island. The Japanese figure is again depicted not as a complete villain but rather as a helpless figure who tries to find his own role in a situation beyond his control.

These novels by Cleary and Lambert may indicate the authors' uncertainty about how to include Japanese characters in their fiction, for both fall back on allegorical national types. But they also tackle some complex issues of race—for example, the close relationship of the American M'Glennon and the Japanese language and people; Polynesians and Japanese; Polynesians and American; and the different Polynesian groups. The standpoint of the 'Other' seems to become important in these novels. These authors seem to feel freer than many of their predecessors to employ Japanese characters and settings in their adventure novels. Although there continues to be a degree of simplification and fixed character definition, these novels continued to push some of the boundaries of Australian writing.

Despite these new approaches, old archetypes remained. Invasion scare novels, which were written from the end of the nineteenth century, were still being written in the 1970s and 1980s, with realistic plots of Australia being invaded by the Japanese. One example is John Vader's *Battle of Sydney* (1971). In this novel the main characters are fictitious, while real military figures are interpolated here and there in the story, thus giving it a sense of credibility. Like previous invasion novels, Vader's story fails to give any clear description of individual Japanese. Admirals and Generals are mentioned, but the main Japanese character is 'the army' as a group. Their advance into Australia proves its vulnerability, and without the victory of the Americans in the Midway or natural disasters such as heavy rain and floods which hamper the Japanese movement southward, the author insists Australia could have been conquered.

Another example, John Hooker's *The Bush Soldiers* (1984), is about a group of Australians who are assigned to destroy the infrastructure of each town to "delay and deny the enemy" who has already landed in Australia. They are convinced that the Japanese cannot handle the bush, whereas they can, and so they try to outwit

them. However, their march into the outback turns out to be like that of the explorers of the past against whom nature has turned its back. Here the Japanese are just heard and talked about, and hardly seen. They are like an imaginary enemy, and the group is forced to chase that image. Their fatal enemy, besides nature, turns out to be not the Japanese but the “Australian blackfellows”, about whom they have shown little concern, and in fact have killed some along the way. Similar to the march of Patrick White’s *Voss*, the white Australians perish surrounded by hostile nature, natives and their supposed enemy. These invasion novels again provide little description of the Japanese, the ‘Other’ who generates so much fear in the Australians, but they do provide Australians with an opportunity to reflect on themselves.

Conclusion

Since the 1960s, as we have seen, there have been many different themes in a variety of novels which reflect on the Pacific War and examine the relationship between Australians and the Japanese. Many ex-soldier-writers continue to write about their experiences, while others with no war experience have found the theme important enough to adopt in their own works. As mentioned at the beginning of this paper, time and circumstances have allowed certain changes in thinking and expression for both authors and readers, and as a result, many works in the 1960s and later show multicultural and cosmopolitan aspects. In particular, the use by some authors of Japanese culture — language, proverbs, poetry, and so on — to describe ‘the enemy’ in their stories seems to be innovative, when compared with pre-war writing in Australia.

In examining John Romeril’s play *The Floating World*, Brisbane comments that the protagonist Les Harding, who suffers from his traumatic memories of having been a Japanese prisoner-of-war, has not learned anything from the war. Brisbane argues that the war “only reconsecrated the myth of mateship, confirmed a century’s conditioning in fear and gave us fuel for another fifty years of anti-Japanese prejudice”³⁸). Les, who may represent Australian ex-servicemen in general who experienced and suffered from the war against the Japanese, is depicted as being obsessed by notions of his own identity as white, Australian, and male. When his identity is under crisis he goes insane, only to find his happiness in a solitary state in the asylum showing, as Webby puts it, the “human tendency to escape into dream worlds and hide behind facades”³⁹). Romeril seems to show in his play how some people’s notions hardly change, especially where one’s own identity and prejudice against the ‘Other’ are concerned.

And yet, such notions can change, too. As mentioned above, in his memoir *Last Stop Nagasaki !*, Clarke recalls that, during his flight back to Australia from Japan

after his captivity, he sensed that while his hatred for the Japanese seemed to ebb away, he strongly hoped never to see “another Nip” as long as he lived. (124) However, as years passed, his ideas and attitudes changed and he went back to Japan to trace his own path and become reconciled, however partially, with the Japanese. If this very difficult part of Australian history, the battle against Japan and the prisoner-of-war experience of Australians, becomes the beginning of an understanding of the ‘Other’ instead of a period of shame and anger, it can be regarded as an important step towards the tolerance of Australians toward different members of its increasingly multicultural society. If this is the case, then Japan may have unwittingly provided a ‘test match’ for this step. As Stan Arneil’s title, *One Man’s War*, shows, a war is fought and experienced by each soldier on an individual level. However, using literature as a means, these individual experiences can be recreated, reflected upon and shared widely among those who were not there or who came later, and this will help Australians to gain deeper speculations and understanding of the relationship of the two countries.

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Notes

- 1) Eric Lambert, from the book review of T. A. G. Hungerford's *The Ridge and the River, Meanjin*, no.51 v.11 no. 4 (1952) : 415-6. Lambert's criticism does not seem to apply to Hungerford's stance as a writer, for Hungerford also wrote the more anti-war oriented stories such as "Last Entry in Red" or "Letter" early in 1950s.
- 2) Anthony Barker, *What Happened When* (St. Leonards : Allen & Unwin, 1996) 300.
- 3) Geoffrey Bingham, foreword to *At the End of His Tether* (Blackwood : New Creation Publications, 1985).
- 4) Examples include Henry 'Jo' Gullett and his *Not As A Duty Only* (1976). Robin Gerster, *Big-Noting* (Carlton : Melbourne University Press, 1987, pbk ed. 1992) 233.
- 5) Gerster, 238.
- 6) Eric Lambert, *Dark Backward*, (London : Shakespeare Head Press, 1958) 29.
- 7) Kenneth Harrison, *The Brave Japanese* (Adelaide : Rigby, 1966) 117.
- 8) Harrison, *The Brave Japanese*, 197.
- 9) Hugh Clarke, *Twilight Liberation* (Sydney : George Allen & Unwin, 1985) 48.
- 10) Hugh Clarke, *Last Stop Nagasaki !* (Sydney : George Allen & Unwin, 1984) 65.
- 11) Ray Parkin, *Into the Smother* (London : Hogarth, 1963 ; Ringwood : Penguin Books, 1993) 120.
- 12) Parkin, 169-170.
- 13) Russell Braddon, *The Other Hundred Years War*, (London : Collins, 1983) ; this was also published in the same year under another title *Japan Against the World 1941-2041 : The 100-Year War for Supremacy* (New York : Stein and Day).
- 14) Humphrey McQueen, *Japan to the Rescue* (Port Melbourne : William Heinemann Australia, 1991) 299.
- 15) McQueen, 268.
- 16) Geoffrey Bingham, *At the End of His Tether*, xii.
- 17) Ray Parkin, *Into the Smother*, 256.
- 18) Harrison, *The Brave Japanese*, 144.
- 19) Stan Arneil, *One Man's War*, (Sydney : Alternative Publishing Co-operative, 1980) 228.
- 20) Examples include Gerster, *Big-Noting*, 230-233 ; W. Wilde, J. Hooton, B. Andrews eds., *The Oxford Companion to Australian Literature*, 606.
- 21) Parkin, *Into the Smother*, 250.
- 22) McQueen, *Japan to the Rescue*, 332.
- 23) Clarke, *Last Stop Nagasaki !*, 2.
- 24) Clarke, *Last Stop Nagasaki !*, 30.
- 25) Harrison, *The Brave Japanese*, 253.
- 26) Clarke, *Last Stop Nagasaki !*, 65.
- 27) Harrison, *The Brave Japanese*, 265-6.
- 28) Phillip Knightley, "Cracking the Jap : Burchett on World War Two", *Burchett Reporting the Other Side of the World 1939-1983*, ed. Ben Kiernan (London : Quartet Books, 1986) 10.
- 29) Harrison, *The Brave Japanese*, 15.
- 30) Clarke, *Last Stop Nagasaki !*, 123-4.
- 31) Clarke, *Twilight Liberation*, 144.
- 32) Examples include Harrison, *The Brave Japanese*, Ch. 25.
- 33) T. A. G. Hungerford, "Tourist with Haiku", *A Knockabout with a Slouch Hat* (Fremantle : Fremantle Arts Centre Press, 1985) 64.
- 34) Hungerford, 64.
- 35) Hungerford, 75-6.
- 36) Julie Easton, "Japanese War Brides in Western Australia", ed. Jan Gothard, *Asian Orientations* (Nedlands : University of Western Australia, 1995) ; Keiko Tamura, *Michi's Memories : The Story of a Japanese War Bride* (Canberra : The Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies, 2001).

- 37) Easton, 31.
- 38) Katherine Brisbane, "The Play in the Theatre" from *The Floating World* (play script, 1975 ; revised and reprinted, Paddington : Currency Press, 1994) xxxii.
- 39) Elizabeth Webby, *Modern Australian Plays* (1990, revised and enlarged edition, Cambridge ; Cambridge University Press, 1993) 43.

Acknowledgements :

This paper is based on a chapter from the author's ph.D thesis, *Representations of Japan and the Japanese in Australian Literature*, submitted to the University of New South Wales at the Australian Defence Force Academy in July 2005.

I would like to acknowledge the following grants which supported this project :

Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research, Japan Society for the Promotion of Science, 2004-2005

Risona Asia-Oceania Foundation Research Grant, 2004-2005

I wish to express my sincere gratitude to Dr. Mark Radford for helping to polish this paper.