



Article

Carceral Ambivalence: Japanese Canadian 'Internment' and the Sugar Beet Programme during WWII

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Abstract

This paper begins with Foucault's definition of the 'carceral' as an incorporation of "institutions of supervision or constraint, of discreet surveillance and insistent coercion" (1995, 299) to examine how the invocation of the *War Measures Act* during World War II translated into virtual incarceration for Japanese Canadians. Using newspaper articles from a one-year period, I apply this definition to Japanese Canadians sent to Alberta and Manitoba as part of the government sponsored Sugar Beet Programme. This program offers a unique perspective, as it was framed as a 'self-support' program, thus implying a greater range of freedoms. However, despite illusions of freedom, I argue that what made these sites carceral was a combination of state, media and civic mediations. Moving beyond the carceral institution to interrogate less formal spaces of carcerality, this paper strives to build on Foucault's definition through the inclusion of broader, less bounded and less definitive spaces.

Problematic

In *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, Michel Foucault describes the carceral as an incorporation of "institutions of supervision or constraint, of discreet surveillance and insistent coercion" (1995, 299). While the prison as an institution of discipline and punishment certainly provides a plethora of examples of each of these technologies of power and control, moving beyond the institution to interrogate less formal spaces of carcerality is less straightforward. This paper strives to build on Foucault's definition of carcerality through the inclusion of broader, less bounded, and less definitive carceral spaces. Further, this paper attempts to deepen the discussions around surveillance, in particular, by problematizing not only Foucault's use of the panopticon, but engaging with newer models of surveillance such as the synopticon as well.

In Canada, the invocation of the *War Measures Act* resulted in varying experiences of displacement, and I argue, incarceration, for Japanese Canadians. In all, some 23,000 Japanese Canadians were forced to leave their homes in coastal areas of British Columbia (B.C.). While many were forcibly detained in prisoner of war camps, others were moved to so-called Self-Support sites, 'ghost' towns in the B.C. Interior, sugar beet farms in Ontario, Alberta and Manitoba, and road camps in B.C. and Ontario (Oikawa 2002, 73; Miki 2004, 3). Here, I focus my analysis on the sugar beet farms in Alberta and Manitoba in order to highlight and expose the carceral aspects of what was often deemed a voluntary program. What I argue is that Japanese Canadians who participated in the Sugar Beet Programme were subjected to "institutions of supervision or constraint, of discreet surveillance and insistent coercion" (Foucault 1995,

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299) and thus inhabited carceral spaces, despite the popular perception that they were, for the most part, free. While I contend that Japanese Canadians were subjected to all of these institutions, the focus of this paper is on the use of supervision and surveillance, as coercion was an obvious component; given that the *War Measures Act* demanded that Japanese Canadians leave their homes, work programs such as the Sugar Beet Programme were not a choice, but a necessity. I begin with a brief introductory, contextual section; outline my method; and then move on to the analysis, where I attend specifically to questions of supervision and surveillance.

It must be noted here that although I am cognizant of the considerable overlap between the concepts of supervision and surveillance, I have chosen to address these two concepts separately. The reasons are as follows. The act of surveillance is often tied to a desire for control and/or discipline, which are also aspects of supervision. However, the distinction being made here is necessary in order to capture the diverse and many technologies of incarceration associated with Japanese Canadian internment. The invoking of the *War Measures Act*, altered the ways in which incarceration could be carried out. The lack of criminality associated with Japanese Canadian populations meant that formal imprisonment was not a viable option for most of this population. Therefore, surveillance and supervision could not be carried out centrally and simultaneously as they might have been in a prison or prisoner of war camp.

My argument here is that because the physical boundaries were less fixed and rigid than in conventional prisons, although supervision necessarily remained officially sanctioned and carried out, surveillance was carried out both officially and less formally, at both the state and civic levels. The lack of fixed or rigid boundaries cannot be mistaken for a total lack of boundaries, however. Indeed, it was because of the weakness and invisibility of these boundaries that it became necessary for the state to take an active role in the supervision of and responsibility for Japanese Canadians. Conversely, surveillance was not manageable at the state level given the lack of fixed boundaries and the dispersion of Japanese Canadians over a large geographic area. This necessitated more varied and diverse techniques of surveillance. For instance, surveillance became the occupation of both the state and civil society.

For the purpose of this paper, therefore, I use supervision to refer to the formalized or official responsibility and accountability of the governments and the British Columbia Security Commission (B.C.S.C.) for Japanese Canadians during this period of time. This includes, but is not limited to, economic responsibility. Surveillance, on the other hand, refers to both the synoptic and panoptic gaze, which took many forms, including civic and government participation in surveillance. Further, surveillance unlike supervision, was more closely tied to disciplinary power than to notions of responsibility and accountability.

Introduction

During World War II, for Japanese Canadians in prisoner-of-war camps the stripping of their liberty was obvious. However, for others the distinction between liberty and freedom was not as clear. Despite the fact that many Japanese Canadians enjoyed the *appearance* of relative freedom during World War II, for most liberty was tenuous at best. Mona Oikawa and others have successfully argued that using language such as relocation, evacuation, and resettlement to refer to the treatment of Japanese Canadians during World War II minimizes the violence that they experienced (2002, 88). The shift to stronger language such as incarceration, while highly political, is more than a decision of semantics. That this shift in language is a necessary and appropriate one has been well established by others. My goal, therefore, is to work forward from this linguistic shift to uncover and highlight the multiple and diverse *processes* of incarceration that took place.

In British Columbia, news of the December 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor exacerbated already existing racial fear and hostility directed at Japanese Canadians and fears that the Japanese populations were a threat to both the community and the nation resulted in the almost immediate internment of thirty eight Japanese nationals (Adachi 1991, 201; Ward 1990, 148). Then, on January 14, 1942, a policy was

announced which dictated the removal from coastal areas of all Japanese male nationals, aged 18 to 45 years by April 1 (Adachi 1991, 208) and in late February mass evacuation was publicly announced. This evacuation resulted in the forced incarceration of all Japanese Canadians who resided within the protected zone which was designated as one hundred miles inland from the coast of B.C.

The Sugar Beet Programme was subsequently announced on March 28, 1942 and was seen as both a solution to the problem of relocating such a large population and a resolution to the severe wartime farm labour shortages in Alberta and Manitoba. Initiated by the British Columbia Security Commission (B.C.S.C.), this program was considered to be a voluntary program that matched farmers in need of workers with Japanese families in need of a place to go. The program, although initiated by the B.C.S.C., meant negotiations between federal governments, provincial governments, and municipal councils. While the program sounded fairly benign and perhaps even helpful to Japanese Canadians, once families had volunteered, they had very few choices and almost no freedom of movement. An under-examined site, the sugar beet farms can reveal how supervision and surveillance were used as technologies of incarceration for the 3,600 Japanese Canadian men, women and children who were dislocated to Alberta and Manitoba.

Methodology

Focusing on the period of February 1942 to January 1943, I examined three hundred articles from the two newspapers, the *Calgary Herald* and the *Winnipeg Free Press* in order to trace the ways in which supervision and surveillance took place for Japanese Canadians in the Sugar Beet Programme. Sugar Beet farms as analytic sites, offer a unique perspective, as they were considered ‘self-support’ sites, thus implying autonomy and a greater range of freedoms. Drawing on Foucault’s definition of power as both diffuse and productive, I argue that what made these sites carceral was a combination of state, media, and civic mediation. The two newspapers in question represent the two largest cities in the areas that were involved in the Sugar Beet Programme. Of the three hundred articles, fifty seven percent or one hundred and seventy two of the articles came from the *Calgary Herald*: nearly ninety percent of these were news articles, eight percent were editorials, and two percent were letters to the editor. The *Winnipeg Free Press* articles were similarly comprised; of the one hundred and twenty eight articles, eighty eight percent were news articles, eight percent were editorials and four percent were letters to the editor.

This project adopts the use of discourse analysis as a tool for understanding historical discourses, not only from a theoretical (abstract) perspective, but also from one that understands the importance of the practical (material) ‘effects’ of such discourses. Valverde explains that “insofar as the ultimate and often forgotten interest of critical social theory is to change the world being interpreted, the discourse analysis of critical social theory has to give pride of place to the relations between discursive practices and the *practical* subjectivities of those who produce and/or consume discourses” (1991, 177). Drawing on the work of Jorgenson and Phillips, I adopt discourse analysis as a “critical approach to taken-for-granted knowledge” which takes into account the “historical and cultural specificity” (2002, 5) of discourse and acknowledges the “link between knowledge and social process” and “between knowledge and social action” (6). Critical discourse analysis understands discourse as forming a dialectical relationship with the social world. The model of critical discourse analysis that Jorgenson and Phillips describe is based largely on a model created by Norman Fairclough. This model is distinct in its three-dimensional approach to discourse analysis in which discourse is understood as contributing to the construction of social identity, social relations and to epistemology (Jorgenson and Phillips 2002, 65).

Understanding the reproduction of discourse in newspapers or other media forms is especially important given their widespread distribution. According to van Dijk, “media discourse is the main source of people’s knowledge, attitudes and ideologies, both of other elites and of ordinary citizens” (2000, 36). In my own work, examining how the reproduction of unequal power relations takes place is of primary importance. I have chosen to examine newspapers, as I believe that they have the ability to not only transmit nationalist ideals, but also to reflect commonly held ideals within a society. In this way, these

texts are viewed as active. As Smith explains, the active text “might be thought of as more like a crystal which bends the light as it passes through. The text itself is to be seen as organizing a course of concerted social action” (1990, 121). This is a point I underscore in my analysis of the media’s role in the surveillance of Japanese Canadians.

Each newspaper was read in its complete form, though only newspaper content that referred explicitly to either Japanese Canadians, sugar beet farming or the *War Measures Act* was included in the analysis. Each article was read and key words were pulled from each article. These key words were organized into thematic categories. In this way, analysis was grounded in the data, rather than framed by predetermined themes. Importantly, the analysis arose not only from the content of the data analyzed, but also from the placement of the various articles in the newspapers and the frequency not only of common themes but of the reporting itself. Thus, the analysis moved beyond what was reported to also interrogate the ways in which it was reported and the degree to which reporting took place.

Analysis

An analysis of these articles shows that the forced evacuation of Japanese Canadians from coastal areas was often represented in terms of ‘relocation’, rather than incarceration. In fact, as Oikawa contends, the “very name given to these sites by government – sugar beet projects – masked their function as carceral sites” (2002, 86). However, within these sites, Japanese Canadians were subjected to treatment most often associated with incarceration, for instance, supervision and surveillance. Yet, these sites were also marked by ambivalence. At the same time that Japanese Canadians were being framed as national security threats, they had to be accommodated within national borders. This meant that two different and sometimes competing types of discourses were applied, often simultaneously. First, it was imperative that populations in areas where Japanese Canadians were moved be reassured that there was no threat to them, either physically or economically. At the same time, however, ridding the coast of Japanese Canadians meant that their ‘relocation’ was also being explained and justified as a national security measure. Thus, conflicting and often contradictory discourses were called upon in order to accomplish the twin goals of reassurance and legitimization.

To begin with, populations had to be reassured that adequate supervision and surveillance were undertaken to ensure their safety. Additionally, punitive measures needed to be taken to ensure that control (through coercion and constraint) was maintained over Japanese Canadians. However, imprisoning Japanese Canadian populations was not possible for a number of reasons, including fear of retaliation from Japan on Canadian prisoners of war held there.¹ Therefore, these measures needed to be achieved without official or formal incarceration, except in cases where a punishable offense could be referenced. To be clear, although incarceration was not *legally* sanctioned here, Japanese Canadians remained prisoners of the state through their subjection to surveillance, supervision, coercion and constraint. However, the language of voluntarism and freedom was often intertwined in incommensurable ways with the language of threat, danger, and menace. One way to, at least partially, reconcile this ambivalence was to frame the treatment of Japanese Canadians as preventative. Therefore, their treatment was framed as what Bashford and Strange call “confinement-as-prevention” (2003, 7). In this way, the Canadian population was protected through the incarceration of the “*potentially* criminal” (7) Japanese Canadians.

Incarceration was achieved through a variety of tools of discipline, wielded by both state and extra-state institutions. In the case of the sugar beet projects, these tools included the coercive elements of the *War Measures Act*, state supervision and state, media and civic surveillance. Although Japanese Canadians were, in fact, hired by private farmers or companies, their employment was arranged by the state, controlled by the state, and subject to termination by the state. Unlike conventional prison populations, Japanese Canadians were allowed to have direct, albeit limited, interaction with the general population.

¹ See *Mutual Hostages: Canadians and Japanese during the Second World War*, by Roy, Granatstein, Iino and Takamura (1990) for a detailed comparison of the treatment of Canadians in Japan and the treatment of Japanese in Canada.

This interaction is significant, as it allowed for the participation of ordinary citizens in the disciplining and surveillance of Japanese Canadian ‘inmates’.

For Japanese Canadians, their loss of liberty was evidenced by discourses of supervision and surveillance. As suggested earlier, in prisons, surveillance and supervision often merge with one another. However, because Japanese Canadians could not be officially incarcerated, the distinction between supervision and surveillance was more pronounced. Therefore, the following sections will discuss these concepts separately, with supervision of Japanese Canadians referring to economic responsibility and accountability for public safety by governments and government agencies such as the British Columbia Security Commission (B.C.S.C.). Surveillance, on the other hand, is not as straightforward, as for Japanese Canadians, the physical boundaries were necessarily less fixed and rigid thereby complicating attempts at surveillance.² Therefore, surveillance will be defined more broadly through reference to both the panopticon and the synopticon, to both official and formalized types of surveillance as well as less formal ones.

Supervision

Supervision is an important component of carceral spaces, as it marks the lack of autonomy held by those who are subject to it. Foucault contends that the prison “must be an exhaustive disciplinary apparatus: it must assume *responsibility* for all aspects of the individual” (1995, 236, emphasis added). While many have termed sites such as sugar beet farms as ‘self-support’ sites (Miki 2004, 5; Oikawa 2002, 85-88), there were numerous references that indicate that while Japanese Canadians in these locations were required to provide for their own families financially through their labour, the federal government continued to hold a level of responsibility for them, a requirement often demanded by the provinces that were to house them.

The terms of their ‘imprisonment’ demanded that Japanese Canadian families labour in the sugar beet fields. Despite their employment, however, the B.C.S.C. and the Dominion government were expected to act as guarantors of Japanese Canadians. Although they were required to pay for their own incarceration,³ a requirement that was unparalleled even among inmates in prisons, the government was still expected to take responsibility should they fail to support themselves. Here too, it is clear that there was ambivalence between discourses of liberty and those of incarceration. Despite their being hired by farmers, newspaper accounts show that provincial and municipal governments did not view Japanese Canadians in the same way that other potential workers were viewed. This was especially true in regards to the allocation of provincial resources, such as medical services and education. While these benefits were usually the responsibility of provincial governments, newspapers yielded numerous accounts of pressure applied to the federal government or the B.C.S.C. to act as financial guarantors of Japanese Canadians. For instance, a report on March 14th, 1942, described reassurances made by the B.C.S.C. to Lethbridge city council that “[s]hould hospitalization and medical care be required, it will be paid for by the Japanese, or if not, by the commission.”⁴ However, despite these reassurances, and past evidence that showed that Japanese Canadians were considered hard-working, resourceful people,⁵ newspaper accounts indicated a considerable degree of concern regarding who would be financially responsible for Japanese Canadians, should they be unable to care for themselves.

Clearly, were Japanese Canadians seen simply as workers or residents in the province, this discussion would not have taken place. Further, even after the federal government provided an “outright grant to the Alberta Board of Education”, Japanese Canadian families were forced to pay an additional \$70 per

² In conventional prisons, for instance, prisoners are confined in locked cells and patrolled by armed guards. None of these conventional markers were present for those who worked in sugar beet fields.

³ For more on this point, see Miki (2004: 42).

⁴ “Commission Will Check Movement Of Japs in South: Provide Extra Police Protection If Necessary”, *Calgary Herald*, March 14, 1942, p. 17.

⁵ Although often framed negatively, many newspaper accounts did refer to the resourcefulness of Japanese Canadians, a fact, it was argued, that made them an even greater threat to the white population.

child, per year, to local high schools (Adachi 1991, 282). It is clear that Japanese Canadians were not afforded the same rights to education as ‘free’ citizens. Demands that the federal government take financial responsibility for this population were an indication of a desire for (federal) state supervision.

Although their day-to-day living costs were ultimately the responsibility of Japanese Canadians, the B.C.S.C. did take on the responsibility of caring for Japanese Canadians should they be unable to care for themselves. This responsibility was a marker of their incarceration. Further, as the following quote indicates, the negotiations between the federal and provincial governments were framed in terms of supervision:

[U]rging the Dominion government to assure adequate supervision of Japanese brought into Alberta under wartime conditions and demanding that government pay all costs in connection with these Japanese. ... The motion adds the legislature demand the Dominion government pay any educational, medical, supervisory and other costs which would be imposed upon local authorities by the gathering of Japanese into Alberta communities.⁶

In Manitoba, similar demands were made, “Premier Bracken wired Mr. Mitchell ‘the Manitoba government will not oppose the present proposal providing that the dominion government assumes full financial and other responsibility [for the Japanese].’”⁷ The B.C.S.C. assured the province that “[e]ducation ... will be the responsibility of the commission. It will also take full charge of medical services, medicine, hospitalization and relief.”⁸ As Canadian workers, Japanese Canadians had every right to expect that the Manitoba and Alberta governments would cover these costs, as they were not simply to be housed in the province, but were, instead benefiting the local economy, as well as a vital war effort, the production of sugar. However, it was evident in governments’ responses, that Japanese Canadians were not considered by them to be entitled to these rights as Canadian citizens. It is important to recognize the contradictions here. Japanese Canadians were expected to be contributing ‘self-supporting’ citizens, but it remained clear that, in fact, they were also to be closely supervised by the state. They were viewed as the *responsibility* of the federal government. In addition to financial responsibility, the federal government, through the B.C.S.C., was also expected to take responsibility for the supervision, through surveillance, of Japanese Canadians.

Surveillance

In his seminal work, *Discipline and Punish*, Michel Foucault adopts Jeremy Bentham’s concept of the panopticon to illustrate how discipline moved its focus away from concerns surrounding the body, to what Mathiesen calls “transformation of the soul” (1997, 216). The panopticon, with its central positioning negates the need to confine prisoners in one discrete group, and thus allows for a separation of the “compact, swarming, howling masses” (Foucault 1995, 200). Although the prisoner could never fully identify or view those who watched, the mere possibility of being observed had the effect that the prisoner “who is subjected to a field of visibility, and who knows it, assumes responsibility for the constraints of power; he makes them play spontaneously on himself; he inscribes in himself the power relation to which he simultaneously plays both roles; he becomes the principle of his own subjection” (203). Although for Japanese Canadians, mandatory registration and police escorts were certainly rooted in panoptical motives, there was no central tower from which guards could watch their every move. However, once in Alberta and Manitoba this did not negate the possibility that surveillance was both continuous and powerful in its ‘transformations of the soul.’

The word ‘panopticon’, according to Mathiesen, comes “from the Greek word *pan*, meaning ‘all’, and *opticon*, which represents the visual” (1997, 217, emphasis in original). The ability for such an all

⁶ “Urges Dominion Foot Jap Costs”, *Calgary Herald*, March 19, 1942, p. 3.

⁷ “Japs to Help With Sugar Beets” *Winnipeg Free Press*, March 26, 1942, p. 5.

⁸ “Farming Japs Help Province, Graham Says”, *Winnipeg Free Press*, April 23, 1942, p. 3.

encompassing view came from the central positioning of the viewer, or potential viewer. The panopticon, then, represented “a fundamental movement or transformation *from the situation where many see the few to the situation where the few see the many*” (Mathiesen 1997, 217). Further, a distinctive feature of the panopticon was that it was, in effect, a top-down model through which state agents or agencies had the power to see and thus control those deemed criminal or otherwise in need of social control. While this model certainly has usefulness for understanding the effects of such technologies of surveillance, it is not sufficient for understanding how in the case of Japanese Canadians, surveillance was not always centralized, but was also diffuse, subtle and constant. Mathiesen posits the synopticon as an alternative model, which acts as a “system enabling *the many to see and contemplate the few*” (1997, 219, emphasis in original). He explains that this concept “is composed of the Greek word *syn* which stands for ‘together’ or ‘at the same time’” (219, emphasis in original). Here, he extends surveillance to include the mass media and its allowance for the simultaneous watching of a few by many. This model is also useful for understanding Japanese Canadian incarceration, as it helps explain the media’s role in surveillance, but it is not entirely sufficient for the following reasons. Surveillance here, was not limited to reporting by newspapers or other media, which capture and transmit images or series of images across space so that millions can watch simultaneously, although this was certainly also the case. However, an important feature is overlooked by both the synopticon and the panopticon, that of the ever watchful eye of ordinary citizens.

While an audience is certainly implied in the synopticon model, this model focuses on the audience only to the degree that it is interacting with the media itself. Here, I want to highlight how ordinary citizens took media surveillance further, not only watching the media’s representations of Japanese Canadians, but also shifting their gazes outside of the media and onto the actual targets of media surveillance. In this sense, surveillance that was enacted by ordinary citizens was not always simultaneous, as the viewers here were not viewing media captured events together, but watching Japanese Canadians in different ways, places and at different times. Southern Alberta and Manitoba populations watched not simultaneously but continuously. Each moment, therefore, had the *potential* to be viewed as individual citizens each took a shift as watcher. Therefore, together, their viewing had the potential of encompassing all moments. In this sense, surveillance was much more rhizomatic in character, taking on aspects of what Hier references as the ‘surveillant assemblage’ (2003, 400).⁹

What I would like to propose here, is not that a new form of surveillance must be theorized, but instead suggest an engagement with previous models in a more active and functional way. What I would like to focus on, then, is a rhizomatic model of surveillance activity. Rather than a single network of surveillance, surveillance is viewed as an interconnected and interdependent series of networks. Here, I would like to utilize the metaphor of the rhizome as theorized by Haggerty and Ericson (as cited by Hier 2003) and Hier (2003). Drawing on Haggerty and Ericson, Hier explains that “rhizomes are plants which grow in surface extensions through interconnected roots oriented in a vertical fashion” (2003, 402). The metaphor of the rhizome here is meant to capture the dense and interconnected relationship of surveillance as it exists within contemporary surveillance, the result of which is supposed democratization of surveillance. Surveillance is not simply pervasive, in a sense all around us, but the many forms and origins of surveillance result in a levelling of surveillance. No longer is surveillance a top-down endeavour enacted by state agencies; instead it is a mixture of technological undertakings, some seemingly benign in character, which seek information rather than control.

While my argument is much in line with a rooted system, such as the ‘surveillant assemblage’ which Hier (2003) references in his discussion, what I argue here is that we must consider the many and diverse roots that form the infrastructure of surveillance. We must also draw connections between this rooted system, the shoots that erupt from it and the state sanctioned or state implemented forms of surveillance such as

⁹ To be clear, while I think the notion of the ‘surveillant assemblage’ is useful here, I am in agreement with Hier (2003) who argues that this model “places an exaggerated degree of importance, however implicitly, on the social and cultural *effects* of the technological capabilities of contemporary surveillance practices” (400). My usage of the term, therefore, is based solely on its explanatory power in terms of its explication of the diffuseness and diversity of this type of surveillance.

those proposed by Foucault. What I would like to propose here is a reconsideration of the relationship between the panopticon and the synopticon that Hier (2003) and Mathiesen (1997) suggest, and an analytic of the workings of such a relationship as well as the relationship between these two forms of surveillance and less formal but no less deliberative derivatives, such as civil surveillance. As Hier successfully argues, what “has hitherto been ignored is the role that surveillance practices in terms of mutual conditioning of synoptical forces and panoptical desires have to play in the formation of processes of social control” (2003, 406). Further, he elaborates that “the fusion of synoptical forces and panoptic desires contribute to the reinforcement of already existing social fractures” (409). One must ask, however, how it is that ‘synoptical forces and panoptic desires’ come together in what often appears to be a seamless way. Hier (2003) shows the effects of such intersections in his discussion of welfare monitoring. What I would like to do, is suggest some slight modifications to Hier’s discussion in order to uncover some of the intricacies of such a relationship.

I begin by considering the rhizomatic metaphor as an active and deliberate cyb/organic mechanism of surveillance. This entails an understanding of surveillance as technological, as it incorporates media, but also as living, invested and productive. Here, I argue that the state’s panoptic desire for control acts as kernels which become implanted in what Hier calls ‘social fractures,’ (2003, 409) so that social inequalities become the rich soil in which these kernels take root. This often takes the form of the rhizome, a dense network of media reporting, framing and reframing of this panoptical desire. The rhizome both spreads these kernels through its rooted system and acts as a synopticon which actively takes up the call to surveillance and then reports on it, thus engaging in re-seeding or re-planting. It is these dense networks or roots that then produce the ‘shoots’ of civic surveillance. Understanding these different forms of surveillance as both interconnected and symbiotic allows us to see how these connections produce a cyb/organic mechanism of surveillance which is made up of surveyors or potential surveyors, including state agents, newspapers, service groups and concerned citizens. I am not, of course, suggesting a top-down model or the inverse, but rather a model where all parts are always already invested in and productive of each other. Using this model to probe the surveillance of Japanese Canadians in Alberta and Manitoba, I hope to show how the synopticon played an important role in the panoptical desires of surveillance with regards to Japanese Canadians.

Kernels of Surveillance

Surveillance is not simply about the power to see, but also the power to *act* upon what one sees. Therefore, surveillance acted to regulate Japanese Canadians through constant monitoring of their actions and movements. As alluded to earlier, differences in how Japanese Canadians were treated with regard to government responsibility for education, health care and welfare meant that this population, like other ‘prisoners’, were considered the responsibility of the state. However, never is this governmental involvement seen more clearly than in the panoptic desire of the state. In fact, much of the negotiations that took place between federal government agencies and provincial and local governments in March of 1942 revolved around notions of official forms of surveillance, especially in regards to public safety. For instance, in Alberta, the legislature urged the Dominion government to accept not only financial responsibility for Japanese Canadians, but also urged “that any Japanese brought from British Columbia be effectively and constantly supervised to prevent any possible acts of sabotage and espionage.”¹⁰

In Manitoba, similar demands were made, asking that the government assume responsibility for “protection against possible sabotage.”¹¹ In late April of the same year, both provinces were subsequently assured that the commission (B.C.S.C.) would provide “extra police protection, where required.”¹² Although there were no indications that these types of measures were necessary, or indeed implemented, when Japanese Canadians began to show any spirit of independence or resistance, calls for state surveillance increased dramatically. For instance, numerous calls for increased surveillance came

¹⁰ “Urges Dominion Foot Jap Costs”, *Calgary Herald*, March 19, 1942, p. 3.

¹¹ “Japs to Help With Sugar Beets” *Winnipeg Free Press*, March 26, 1942, p. 5.

¹² “Farming Japs Help Province, Graham Says”, *Winnipeg Free Press*, April 23, 1942, p. 3.

three days following a highly reported protest by Japanese Canadians who refused to accept employment because it meant separation from their families.¹³ The following month there were even more demands for increased security. The *Calgary Herald* reported that in the House of Commons, both Conservatives and Liberals called for the following measures to be taken:

1. Handling of the Japanese be taken from the British Columbia Securities Commission and undertaken directly by the government
2. Turning further control and moving of Japanese over to the military authorities.
3. Adoption of a policy by the government which would aim at post-war repatriation of all Japanese in Canada, including Canadian-born.
4. Adoption of the U.S. policy of concentrating Japanese in one or two settlements – Wainwright, Alberta, park suggested.
5. Keeping Japanese out of the northern interior of British Columbia, where they are now being moved from coastal area, because this may become a battle area in event of Japanese attack.
6. Treatment of Japanese exactly as Canadians are treated in Japan, virtual internment.¹⁴

A similar report was also published in the *Winnipeg Free Press*, on the same day.¹⁵ As is clear, both provincial and federal governments were invested in maintaining high levels of surveillance. What is also clear is that these discussions did not exist in a vacuum, but instead were actively taken up by the media.

Surveillance Taking Root

While the importance of provincial and federal governments' calls for increased surveillance and supervision are certainly of central importance, the role of the media in transmitting news of these calls must also be critically examined. The media here played a dual role. First, the media acted as a rhizomatic mechanism (Hier 2003) through which the panoptical desires of the state were to be transmitted to the public, thus alerting citizens to the threat posed by Japanese Canadians and effectually calling them to action as surveillant. Second, the media itself also became part of the surveillant apparatus as it singled out, watched and reported on Japanese Canadian movement. Thus, even when there was no direct police surveillance, Japanese Canadians were always subject to other forms of surveillance. In the media, language, for instance, was a tool of surveillance, making Japanese Canadians hyper-visible through constant reporting and the use of racist epithets such as 'Japs'. In fact, of the three hundred articles analyzed, one third used the term 'Jap' in the headline. Using 'Japs' to refer to Japanese Canadians served to both dehumanize and demonize Japanese Canadians, especially as this term was also used to refer to the 'enemy' overseas. The use of this language acted to both marginalize and call attention to Japanese Canadians. First of all, by linguistically conflating them with the 'enemy', Japanese Canadians were not only denied citizenship, but placed in opposition to it. Second, this type of language associated Japanese Canadians with threat and danger, thereby ensuring not only their marginalization, but their surveillance as well. Thus, the racialized language used by the media, combined with state mandates such as the *War Measures Act*, ensured that Japanese Canadians were seen as threats to national security.

Rhizomatic 'Shoots'

Canadian citizens, thus, had a stake in the surveillance of Japanese Canadians, as they were continuously framed as a potential threat by virtue of both government mandate and in media representations. So, surveillance did not always take on formal or institutional forms. In fact, every citizen in the nation was a potential watcher of this 'enemy within'. As the synoptic rooted system of information gathering and dissemination produced Japanese Canadians as targets of surveillance, these roots also produced 'shoots' of surveillance in the form of their readers. Thus, all who read or were otherwise informed by this rooted system of knowledge production became potential watchers, sometimes actively, at other times only

¹³ "Japs Interned", *Calgary Herald*, June, 17, 1942, p. 17.

¹⁴ "Wainwright May Be Jap Colony", *Calgary Herald*, July 30, 1942, p. 3.

¹⁵ "House Told B.C. Japs Defiant", *Winnipeg Free Press*, July 30, 1942, p. 7.

symbolically though the reading of newspapers or by watching televised news reports. This constant surveillance had the effect that it was “possible to see constantly and to recognize immediately” (Foucault 1995, 200). This is important, as therefore, like the panopticon, constant visibility and constant surveillance had the power to induce “in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power” (Foucault 1995, 201).

Further, to be recognized immediately did not necessitate prison uniforms, as Japanese Canadians always carried their markings with them. Their race, in fact, marked and identified them in ways that a prison jumpsuit could not, for their race could never be shed. However, race was also complicated by discourses of loyalty. The following article is a case in point:

To avoid being mistaken for Japanese, the Chinese people in Winnipeg and other parts of Manitoba are now wearing little victory buttons. Announcing the wearing of buttons by the Chinese, Charlie Foo, chairman of the Chinese Patriotic league, said: ‘So many people have mistaken us Chinese for Japanese that we decided it would be better if we wore some distinguishing mark.’...The word Chinese is plainly seen on the button.¹⁶

While race certainly marked off ‘Asian’ populations for surveillance, resistance to this revolved around assertions of patriotism and loyalty. That the buttons were meant to be indications of Chinese loyalty is also testament to the contrary view of Japanese Canadian (dis)loyalty. What is remarkable here is not the desire by Chinese Canadians for disassociation from Japanese populations, but that the ever-vigilant surveillance of Japanese Canadians made this a necessity. Thus, newspapers acted not only as a form of surveillance, but they also relayed other acts of civic surveillance to the general population. Although there seems to be nothing extraordinary about the ‘prison’ that contained Japanese Canadians - no rifles, no chains and no locks or keys - civic surveillance acted at the level of the everyday. Organized group protests undertaken by ‘concerned citizen’ groups, labour councils, and service groups, as well as editorials and letters to the editor are evidence that watching (and acting) had become a civic duty. It is evident that it was not only the state that surveyed Japanese Canadians, but also private interest groups and individual citizens alike.

Group protests in Alberta were often organized and led by service groups with ties to military service, such as the Canadian Legion. These service groups strongly opposed the movement of Japanese Canadians into the province. In fact, the Canadian Legion organized or sponsored protests in various Alberta towns, such as Raymond,¹⁷ Taber,¹⁸ and Jasper.¹⁹ It is important to note that although these protests took place at the local level, their reach extended beyond the local. Thus, the news media acted to disseminate the views and actions of the public, which were then taken up in various ways by the state. News of protests in Raymond, was, for instance, “forwarded to the federal government by the Alberta Legislature” on April 11, 1942.²⁰ In Manitoba civic surveillance in the form of protest came much later than it did in Alberta. While much of the protest in Alberta happened during the months of March and April, 1942, in Manitoba, there were no reports of protests until May and they continued only until early June. There are no reports of protest prior to the movement of Japanese Canadians into the province. Some scholars have attributed the lack of protest to the smaller numbers of Japanese Canadians sent to this province,²¹ or to the *Winnipeg Free Press*’ “vigorous stand against racism” (Adachi 1991, 283). In Manitoba all but one of the protests was framed around “proximity to war industries, particularly where a German colony [was] already established”.²²

¹⁶ “Buttons to Show Manitoba Chinese Not Japanese”, *Winnipeg Free Press*, May 28, 1942, p. 10.

¹⁷ “Raymond Objects To Jap Influx”, *Calgary Herald*, March 10, 1942, p. 16.

¹⁸ “Meetings Protest Influx of Japs Into South”, *Calgary Herald*, March 17, 1942 p. 11.

¹⁹ “Jasper Resents Presence of Japs”, *Calgary Herald*, April 8, 1942, p. 7.

²⁰ “Protest Settling Japs in Alberta”, *Calgary Herald*, April 11, 1942, p. 1

²¹ See Takata (1983) and Roy, Granatstein, Iino and Takamura (1990).

²² “St. Clements Asks For Jap Removal”, *Winnipeg Free Press*, May 13, 1942, p. 3.

These protests were all confined to the Lockport district, surrounding Selkirk, Manitoba, the location of the Manitoba Steel Foundry, which was considered a vital war industry. Newspaper reports regarding these communities indicated that citizens were concerned about threats to national security, not only from the Japanese population, but also from German colonies and communities.²³ Thus surveillance in this area took on a less racialized quality, instead focusing on issues of loyalty as Germans also became subjects of suspicion. For instance, one article published on May 8, 1942, cites that objections to Japanese presence “were raised on the grounds that they would be employed by German farmers of allegedly pro-Nazi sympathies.”²⁴ Like the protests in Alberta, these protests were taken very seriously and the Japanese were ordered removed from the Lockport area. Despite suspicion that was being directed at Germans, at this time only Japanese Canadians were moved, another indication that whatever freedom they had was extremely precarious. Here, surveillance was buttressed up against other technologies of incarceration such as the control of movement. Additionally, we can see the interactive and interconnected nature of surveillance. Citizens’ protests were reported by the media, which were acted on by government agencies producing new kernels which fell once more into the deep fissures in the social ‘soil’ only to take root once more.

Similarly to how the panoptic desires of the state were disseminated by the media, individual surveillance was also refracted back into the media for dissemination. Much like other organic plant life, these rhizomatic ‘shoots’ effectually re-seeded the root-like structure of the media in the form of letters to the editors or through the reporting by media on public protests. All of the editorials in the Winnipeg paper encouraged the settlement of Japanese Canadians in Manitoba and/or condemned the “irrational attitude of many people” in Ontario when faced with the transfer of Japanese Canadians to that province. However, there was much more variation in the Alberta articles. The first editorial, written by Richard J. Needham on March 30, 1942, for instance, discouraged protests against the influx of Japanese Canadian labour, calling it “a lot of hysterical nonsense” and claiming that “The Japanese ought to be settled anywhere in Canada that the government wants to put them, or that they themselves want to go, so long as they are under R.C.M.P. supervision.”²⁵ Again, there is ambivalence between the rights to liberty on the one hand and the need for supervision on the other. The same author also championed the importing of Japanese labour in a June 8, 1942 editorial: “Walking down the main street of Lethbridge last week we saw many B.C. Japanese on hand, looking tolerably cheerful, and apparently causing no undue alarm, distress or fainting fits to the citizens of the airmen from No. 8 Bombing and Gunnery.”²⁶ The article goes on to condemn the “fol-de-rols of Ontario and Idaho” who rejected Japanese labour, which then resulted in them “facing a labor crisis.”²⁷ This editorial must be understood as evidence that civic surveillance was not only taking place on the streets, but that it was also newsworthy enough to be printed in newspapers. It is also one of the few indications that there was, in Alberta, some resistance to hegemonic and mainstream attitudes which called for even greater constraints or more extreme forms of incarceration, such as placing Japanese Canadians in prisoner of war camps.

Other than these two editorials, all of the other editorials, as well as letters to the editor, take on a much more sinister tenor, calling for increased surveillance, use of concentration camps,²⁸ and repatriation.²⁹ In Alberta, citizens demanded increased limitations be placed on Japanese Canadians who were being allowed to “roam where ever they please.”³⁰ These demands indicate that the movements of Japanese Canadians were being carefully scrutinized. Additionally, the larger number of editorials that appeared in the Alberta newspaper indicates an increased level of civic surveillance in the area compared to that

²³ “Japs Removed From Lockport After Protests”, *Winnipeg Free Press*, May 8, 1942, p. 4.

²⁴ “Japs Removed From Lockport After Protests”, *Winnipeg Free Press*, May 8, 1942, p. 4.

²⁵ “One Man’s Opinion”, *Calgary Herald*, March 30, 1942, p. 4.

²⁶ “One Man’s Opinion: The Japanese At Lethbridge”, *Calgary Herald*, June 8, 1942, p. 4.

²⁷ “One Man’s Opinion: The Japanese At Lethbridge”, *Calgary Herald*, June 8, 1942, p. 4.

²⁸ “Japs Should be Interned”, *Calgary Herald*, May 13, 1942, p. 4.

²⁹ “Must be Sent Home After the War”, *Calgary Herald*, July 10, 1942, p. 4.

³⁰ “Japs Are Potential Danger”, *Calgary Herald*, April 8, 1942, p. 4.

found in Manitoba, despite the fact that a few editorials were fairly positive in nature. No matter what the opinion of the watchful writer, that Japanese Canadians were being watched is obvious.

The Synopticon and Panoptical Desires

In the previous section, I have outlined numerous differences in the ways in which citizens and media responded to Japanese Canadian presence in Manitoba and Alberta. Here, I have shown the denseness and diffuseness of surveillance, but also how it was that surveillance of similar populations differed in significant ways. By understanding, for instance, the panoptic desires of government as producing different types of ‘kernels’ of knowledge, we can see how the roots would necessarily produce new and different ‘strains’ of surveillance in both the synopticon and the shoots that it produces. Thus, while the mechanisms stay the same, the effects produced may vary substantially. The following is a case in point.

Newspapers in both provinces acted as a form of civic surveillance by tracking the movements of Japanese Canadians and subsequently reporting these movements to all of their readers. This constant reporting often implied an associated danger. In fact, newspapers reported on all movements of Japanese Canadians, whether this was their arrival in farming areas or their movement through these areas to other more Eastern locales. However, in Alberta, attention focused on the impending arrivals or actual arrivals of Japanese Canadians into various districts, while despite similar numbers of articles of this nature in Winnipeg, half of the articles in Winnipeg also reported on Japanese Canadians who were passing through the province. While this could be explained by the fact that Alberta saw the arrival of more Japanese Canadians into their province,³¹ it is important to note that the types of discourses that were employed in the provinces differed in other ways as well.

In Alberta, the primary focus of reporting revolved around the *number* of Japanese Canadians arriving. In most cases, the articles provided the number of families as well as the total numbers of persons, but provided no other information about these newcomers.³² Earlier articles also provided details regarding police supervision, although this type of reporting ceased as the numbers grew. Much like present day sex offender registries, the forced registration and subsequent tracking of Japanese Canadians was used to alert communities about new threats to their safety. In Winnipeg, the focus of the articles was much more humanizing. There were indications, for instance, that on at least two instances, April 1st and April 18th, 1942, reporters took the time to interview members of Japanese Canadian parties who were passing through the city.³³ There also seemed to be much more interest in moving beyond mere numbers when reporting on the arrival of Japanese Canadian families in Winnipeg. For instance, one article, dated April 11th that dealt specifically with the arrival of Japanese Canadian families explained that those arriving were, “mostly Canadian citizens who have been educated in Canadian schools and in some cases have attended Canadian universities ... They know no other country but Canada and have a Canadian outlook.”³⁴ Unlike the Alberta articles, the articles in the *Winnipeg Free Press* were much less objectifying and focused to a far lesser degree on issues of surveillance and security. This is certainly an indication that those Japanese Canadians who settled in Manitoba may have enjoyed a *relatively* greater degree of freedom than those who settled in Alberta.

While surveillance was certainly evident in both provinces, the degree and intensity of the surveillance certainly varied. Incorporating analyses of both panoptic and synoptic forms of surveillance can help us to understand why this is. Here, attention to historical specificity is imperative. The existing social and economic contexts in Alberta and Manitoba certainly played a role in determining how surveillance

³¹ By April, 1942, 2664 Japanese Canadians had arrived in Alberta and only 1053 in Manitoba (Sunahara, 1981: 80).

³² “Japanese For Alberta” *Calgary Herald*, March 6, 1942, Sec. 2 p. 1; “First Japanese Due This Week”, *Calgary Herald*, April 6, 1942, p. 3; “No Japanese Have Taken Land Near City Damn”, *Calgary Herald*, April 9, 1942, p. 1; “B.C. Jap Families reach Lethbridge”, *Calgary Herald*, April 13, 1942, p. 18; “More Japanese Coming Here”, *Calgary Herald*, April 17, 1942, p. 2; “B.C. Japs Reach Alberta Steadily”, *Calgary Herald*, April 22, 1942, p. 8; “Thousand Japs Now in South”, *Calgary Herald*, May 1, 1942, p. 10; “Jap Beet Worker Exodus Near End”, *Calgary Herald*, June 10, 1942, p. 8

³³ “132 Japs From B.C. Go Through Winnipeg”, *Winnipeg Free Press*, April 1, 1942, p. 3; “Third Group of Japs Passes Through City”, *Winnipeg Free Press*, April 18, 1942, p. 2.

³⁴ “Vanguard of Jap Farm Workers To Arrive in Manitoba Monday”, *Winnipeg Free Press*, April 11, 1942, p. 5.

transpired during this dark period of Canadian history. In Alberta, the period between the depression of the early 1930s and the beginning of World War II was marked by both economic instability and ethnic tensions (Palmer 1982, 123). Agricultural droughts exacerbated the already bleak economic circumstances resulting in increased ethnic hostility. Recent immigrants were blamed for unemployment problems as well as for being burdens on an already strained social welfare system (Palmer 1982, 129). Blatant discrimination toward the Chinese was especially evident. Given the perception of their low standards of living, Chinese who were also suffering financial hardship were offered less than half of the social assistance that was offered to ‘whites’ (Palmer 1982, 146). This particular era was also marked by an increase in anti-Semitism, especially in rural areas, such as the ones that are the concern of this project. In fact, in the few years previous to the proposed implementation of the Sugar Beet Programme, rural areas sent “resolutions opposing immigration of any kind and some opposed Jewish immigrants in particular” (Palmer 1982, 151). While Manitoba also felt the effects of the Great Depression, the response of both the state and the media were decidedly different.

Prominent Winnipeg politician, John Queen, was an outspoken man, who publicly opposed any form of racism. He also had strong ties to labour, having been arrested for his part in the Winnipeg General Strike in 1919.³⁵ In 1934, when also faced with an increase in anti-Semitism in Manitoba, Queen “demanded in the Manitoba legislature that the attorney-general lay charges of sedition against the local Nazis” (Gutkin and Gutkin 1997, 367) and later went on to instigate a bill being presented to the House, providing for an injunction against any publication defaming a racial or religious group or inciting hatred against a group; and with a further amendment making the printer’s and the publisher’s names mandatory on every kind of printed material, the bill passed into law as the Manitoba Defamation Act, the first group libel law in Canada (Gutkin and Gutkin 1997, 367). This outspoken man, John Queen, was also mayor at the time that the Sugar Beet Programme was implemented in early 1942. We also know that the *Winnipeg Free Press* had also taken a “vigorous stand against racism” (Adachi 1991, 283). Thus, the type of seeds that were planted in Manitoba differed from those that were sown in Alberta. Further, the reception that these received in the media and therefore how this knowledge was disseminated would have varied as well and this could certainly account for differences in how surveillance played out in each province.

Conclusion

The terms of state and civic surveillance were flexible and under constant negotiation, meaning that at all times, Japanese Canadians had the potential to be monitored simultaneously by both state and civic sources such as newspapers, service groups, labour organizations and concerned citizens. The social, economic, geographical and ideological dislocation of Japanese Canadians served to both constrain and coerce this population. The efforts of both state and extra-state groups combined to make Japanese Canadians into virtual prisoners. The economic constraints placed on Japanese Canadians as a result of government regulations meant that the only work available to them was the work that tied them physically to the sugar beet farms to which they were sent. Further, municipal governments disallowed both Japanese Canadian men and women from working in surrounding communities, making them even more vulnerable to exploitation in their work on the farms. The Lethbridge city council, for instance, was “‘positively’ opposed to employment of Japanese evacuees in any capacity whatsoever.”³⁶ Barriers which limited movement of Japanese Canadians in surrounding towns and cities also made civic surveillance much more probable. The B.C.S.C., for instance, required that Japanese Canadians have a permit to travel more than ten miles from where they lived, making social surveillance unproblematic, thus guaranteeing that Japanese Canadians were never outside of this civic gaze.

³⁵ The Winnipeg General Strike “began as an attempt to achieve trade union rights, making only two basic demands: a living wage and recognition of the principle of collective bargaining. Six weeks of upheaval ensued, involving as many as 35,000 workers, both unionized and non-unionized, in a city whose population then totaled only 175,000” (Gutkin and Gutkin 1997, 1). This strike is credited by Gutkin and Gutkin as having defining “a distinctively western sense of identity, nonconforming and generally left of centre” (1997, 2).

³⁶ “Refuse to Employ Japanese Evacuees”, *Calgary Herald*, August 19, 1942, p. 5.

Here, I have highlighted the complex interaction of diverse, although not always distinct, types of surveillance. For instance, surveillance took the form of formal state practices, newspaper reporting, civic group protests, and individual ‘concerned citizen’ letters. While each of these forms of surveillance took place at different levels and with different degrees of formality, they must be understood as connected and powerful mechanisms of a rhizomatic model of surveillance (Hier 2003). Using this model complicates more bounded understandings of carcerality, as surveillance can be seen as a function of control even outside of the prison. Unlike a prison, sugar beet projects as carceral sites, were unique in that there were no physical cells, nor guards to patrol the boundaries. Although this meant the appearance of relative freedom for Japanese Canadians, it is also clear that this freedom was an illusion and escape was impossible. Despite the absence of visible boundaries, no matter where Japanese Canadians went, their prisons went with them. Further, the lack of visible boundaries also erased the carceral nature of these sites of internment, making protest and resistance much more difficult.

To this day, many continue to discuss the internment of Japanese Canadians in terms of ‘relocation’. Oikawa (2002) explains that “the social processes of expulsion, incarceration, forced displacement, and deportation were euphemistically named *evacuation, relocation, resettlement, and repatriation*. These descriptors connote a sense of voluntary movement on the part of Japanese Canadians or benevolence on the part of the government and mask the violence and the force producing these processes and the force produced through them” (88). Despite this euphemistic language, invisible boundaries marked the sugar beet farms off as carceral sites for Japanese Canadians who dwelled within them. The boundaries were made invisible through the constant blurring of and ambivalence around discourses of liberty and security. Framed as both free and un-free, Japanese Canadians were held captive by uncertainty and never free from the watchful eyes that surveyed them.

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