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Muted Figures:

Reading the Picture Bride Phenomenon in

Julie Otsuka's *The Buddha in the Attic* and Yoshiko Uchida's *Picture Bride*

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Abstract

My purpose in this undergraduate thesis is to explore the Japanese American phenomenon of picture brides focusing on the topic of silence. In order to do this, two narratives have been selected: *Picture Bride* (1997) by Yoshiko Uchida, and *The Buddha in the Attic* (2013) by Julie Otsuka. To pursue this objective, I have examined the role of silence and its connection with race, gender, their interweaving, and the development of a collective memory. After providing a socio-historical account of the events, I present a theoretical framework about silence, highly indebted to King-Kok Cheung's work, a theoretical approach which will later be applied to the chosen texts in the last section. By means of a close reading of the two narratives, I attempt not only to give a detailed literary perspective of the events from the Japanese American point of view, but also to overcome the lack of information about this matter.

Introduction

This paper approaches silence and its forms from the socio-cultural perspective of the women, as well as of men, involved in the picture bride phenomenon, from their arrival until the outbreak of the Second World War. For that purpose, I selected two novels: *Picture Bride* (1997) by Yoshiko Uchida, and *The Buddha in the Attic* (2013) by Julie Otsuka. I considered focusing on just one novel but, upon the possibility of providing a more substantial perspective on the issue, I finally opted for analysing both texts and not just one. As the first one is a novel with a first-person plural narrator, with a collective memory undertone, and the second narrative focuses on the story of a particular marriage, their mixture provides quite a comprehensive exploration of this matter.

I owe the discovery of this captivating historical episode to a suggestion made by Begoña, my supervisor. At first, this issue caught my attention because of the fact that the process involved an exchange of photos from afar, but then, by reviewing the literary portrayals of the characters in the chosen novels, I became more interested in the numerous aspects conjured up by picture brides: the feminist approach—especially the controversy surrounding arranged marriages—, migration and diaspora studies, and the culture of Asian countries such as Japan. Nonetheless, when I went deeper into the subject I discovered that, to my surprise, there was not much information about this topic. This would be a decisive fact for choosing this theme.

For me, one of the most rewarding aspects of this project is having been able to put into practice what I learned from certain subjects of my degree. I reviewed what I had acquired in *Literatura inglesa e xénero* regarding feminist theories and tried to apply this

understanding to women involved in the picture bride episode. Apart from that, *Literatura poscolonial* was of great help when having to examine concepts related to the diasporas, in this case to the Japanese American community. Moreover, *Literatura norteamericana* helped me to analyse the most outstanding textual features of the narratives, digging deeper into some of them, as in the case of silence and its meanings beyond the superficially noticeable.

By dint of an analysis of all the aforementioned aspects, I attempt to present the phenomenon of picture brides as fictionalised in two novels that give the Japanese American version of the events, which on many occasions is largely relegated to Western views. In order to do that, I focus on factors dealing with silence in relation to race, on the one hand, and gender issues, on the other. Furthermore, I also address silence as a means for creating a collective memory—most noticeable in Otsuka's text. By means of reaching my aims, King-Kok Cheung's approach to this matter is helpful, as she explores the deeper significance of silence as a communication method and not just a symptom of weakness or oppression.

For this purpose, the paper is divided into three main sections that will go from the general to the specific. The first part covers the socio-historical context of the Asian society in America and, especially, the challenging situation for Japanese American citizens, since I believe that it is important to account for the harsh reality of migrations and life in the American diaspora. In addition to that, in this section I define and expound on the picture bride phenomenon. The second chapter approaches the theme of silence, setting a theoretical foundation for its contextualisation in Japanese society. Besides this, it aims at scrutinising the relationship of silence with race and gender in order to explain their cause-effect relationship. Finally, in the third section I exemplify, through a textual analysis of the two aforementioned narratives, all the concepts from previous sections.

1. Social and Historical Overview

1.1. The Japanese American Community

This section provides a brief historical context for Asian American migrations, but most of all, for the main social and historical events concerning the Japanese American diaspora, since I am going to use a Japanese American text corpus.

To start with, I must begin by addressing the meaning of the term *Asian American* and its historical variants. The term *Oriental* is one of the oldest ways of naming Asian American immigrants. However, it is highly controversial. In 1978, Edward Said publishes the post-colonial classic *Orientalism*, where he describes the hegemony of the West, the “Occident,” over the “Orient” and its construction by Western discourse. Likewise, Min Hyoung Song affirms in "Asian American Literature within and beyond the Immigrant Narrative" that the term is associated to "The Other," a conceptualization that "was often situated East of Europe, in an Orient full of barbarous Asians trapped in age-old ways of living, customs, and traditions" (7). As a result, the term *Oriental* is identified as a Western invention resulting from colonialist and, on many occasions, racist discourses.

All the same, although Elaine H. Kim accepts that "this term connotes an American identity for Asians" (7), she finds clear similarities between *Asian American* and *Oriental*. Kim coincides with Wong, who affirms that "as Orientals, [*Asian American*] was created in the West from the need to make racial categorizations in a racially divided or at least, a racially diverse society" (24). Other detractors of the term *Asian American* consider that it does not take into account the existence of an ideological heterogeneity, since Asian Americans do not constitute a solid demographic group, and "they are divided along classed, ethnic, linguistic,

geographical, gendered, and sexual lines" (Song 7). Consequently, the term would not capture the immense variety of social realities of Asian people residing in the Americas.

In this regard, David Palumbo-Liu introduces a new approach. In *Asian/American: Historical Crossings of a Racial Frontier*, he says that he considers the "hyphenated" term *Asian-Americans* too focused on those citizens "differentiated by race" (1). This hyphen, which is supposed to connect both Asia and America, is considered as much a symbol of division as of association. In contrast, David Palumbo-Liu considers that the slash he proposes as an alternative serves as a "wall" that signals "their simultaneous and equal status" (1), which removes racist conceptions of Western power. Moreover, the slash would imply simultaneously "both exclusion and inclusion" (1), indicating the historical conflicts in terms of being Asian or American. Even though, in my opinion, Palumbo-Liu's proposal seems the most accurate proposal due to its allusion to the issues of Asian American citizenship, nowadays the controversy continues.

Concerning migrations, throughout history Asia has depicted several movements of people to other nations, but the displacement of Asian people to the American continent in the late 19th century is one of the most representative. Escaping from harsh life conditions in their native lands, Asian men look for a land full of opportunities and travel to America, a country that represents an escape route and that is also a symbol of wealth. As a result, Asian Americans would become one of the largest ethnic minority groups in the United States.

The first large-scale wave starts by 1884, when new laws come into force that put an end to the restrictions of Asian immigration coming into the United States.¹ In addition to this fact, the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, which prohibited Chinese migrations to America, brings about an increasing demand of Japanese labourers. Essentialist connotations of the

¹ According to Kim, "[t]housands of Japanese were brought to Hawaii between 1885 and 1894 through Robert Irwin, who had arranged for the passage fares to be paid by the Hawaiian government and sugar planters" (124).

Japanese population such as their introvert personality and a subsequent fear against the exterior influences do not prevent the massive emigration of Japanese people, who for the first time are able to travel abroad. This first generation of men, and later women, migrating to the Americas will be known as *Issei*.²

This initial Japanese wave is composed mostly of single young men settling mainly in California and in sugar plantations in Hawaii. Apart from this, other urban ethnic enclaves become Japanese communities where Japanese Americans are able to reside and open small stores. In any case, the main sustenance is agricultural productivity from the plantations. In fact, since many of these Japanese now installed in America were farmers in Japan, this field starts to be taken over by the Japanese agricultural workers, who become the main agricultural producers in the Pacific Coast states, especially in California.³ This fact is one of the main triggers of an Anti-Japanese sentiment beginning to appear among American citizens.

Unfortunately, the idyllic expectations that Japanese American people had in terms of their new life in America differ considerably from their actual experiences. The Japanese American population face not only physical dislocation, but also the imposition of another culture instigated by a clear inferior treatment by the American citizens among whom they live. Even so, many Japanese Americans show high levels of interest in emulating and adopting customs and appearances which are typically American. As a matter of fact, some even try to learn English and convert from Buddhism to Christianity as an attempt to fight racism and isolation.

² It literally means "first generation" (*is* first and *sei* generation).

³ Tataka argues that "[a]s early as 1910, they produced 70 percent of California's strawberries, and by 1940 they grew 95 percent of the state's fresh snap beans, 67 percent of its fresh tomatoes, 95 percent of its spring and summer celery, 44 percent of its onions, and 40 percent of its fresh green peas . . . In California, the Japanese owned or leased twenty-nine farms with a total of 4,698 acres in 1900" (189-190).

Even though these Japanese men are now relatively successful in the jobs they have in America, they still struggle with forming a family. Fortunately, in 1907 Theodore Roosevelt, the president of the United States at the time, signs the Gentlemen's agreement. Thanks to this agreement, Japanese men are allowed not only to stay in America, but also to bring their wives from their native land. Nonetheless, this resolution also restricts emigration of more labourers from Japan to the US.

The term *picture brides* refers to the thousands of women from Japan moving to the United States between 1907, when the Gentlemen's Agreement comes into force, and 1924, when the U.S. Immigration Act bans immigration from Japan. These women get married, by proxy, to a man residing in America that they had seen through photographs but never met. The main purpose of the phenomenon of picture brides is to bring stability and to provide a family for the single young men who had travelled to the USA alone, at the same time that these women benefit from moving to America. However, what they actually find differs tremendously from their expectations. Usually, the husband they were supposed to marry is approximately fifteen years older than in the pictures they had received; in fact, the photographs sent to the prospective "brides" reflect the men's looks when they were younger or the image of a younger Japanese American friend. In addition, life conditions in America are on many occasions worse than in Japan. In many instances, these women are forced by their husbands to work in the plantations, and objectified not only by society—many working as prostitutes as an escape route of the marriage they did not want to accept—but also by their own husbands. These women, notwithstanding the lack of sexual desire for their husbands, feel the pressure to provide their husbands with, at least, one descendant. This subsequent second generation, called *Nisei*, are the descendants of the first generation of Japanese Americans, and as a result, American-born citizens.

This second generation seems to be in a limbo between feeling American and Japanese American.⁴ Because of this, they often depict the rejection of their cultural heritage because of their own desire to become American. Frustration shows up because of the difficulties they face at being treated as outsiders no matter their American-born origin, only because of their Japanese ancestry. Whereas the Issei generation was greatly influenced by their own past in Japan and its cultural features, the Nisei find problems regarding how to balance their ancestry, being at the same time accepted by a society that usually applied racist connotations. According to Wong, "the desire to reclaim a distinctive ethnic tradition seems forever at odds with the desire to be recognized as fully 'American' " (5). Nevertheless, it is important to highlight that the Nisei have more benefits than the Issei generation in terms of property. Due to the California laws from 1913, the Issei were originally banned from buying and owning any kind of land. Only the Nisei, being born in America, are the ones able to buy a piece of land and other properties. In 1920, a change of legislation brings the Alien Land Law along, which enables the Issei to rent lands, although not buying them. By this time, the Japanese American community has become a defined group with a collective conscience of ethnic association through, for example, the cooperation among their agricultural businesses.

Later, with the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour on December 7, 1941, and the subsequent participation of the United States in the Second World War, the Anti-Japanese sentiment achieves its highest peak. As a result, not only the Issei, but also the American-born Nisei are relocated in internment camps on February 19, 1942, after the Executive Order 9066 from the USA government. The harsh communal living conditions and the frustration because

⁴ In "Diasporas in Modern Societies: Myths of Homeland and Return" (1991), William Safran provides several features which, as illustrated by the Issei and the Nisei generations, define the concept of *diaspora*. Even though, undoubtedly, both generations remain dislocated from a "specific original 'center' " (83) to a foreign region and alienated from "their host society" (83), the Issei generation retains most of the features stated by Safran. Japanese Americans from this first generation "regard their ancestral homeland as their true, ideal home" (83), believe in the collective "maintenance or restoration of their original homeland" (84), and "continue to relate, personally or vicariously, to that homeland" (84), often to a greater extent than the Nisei generation.

of the loss of everything they had worked for in America will mark this tragic period in history. But that is another story.

1.2. The Phenomenon of Picture Brides

The term *picture bride* is often associated to the notion of *mail-order bride*, although they differ in some aspects. As *picture bride*, it is true that "[the term *mail-order bride*] suggests that women in these arrangements are agentless objects to be selected from a catalogue like an appliance or sweater" (Kuo 62). However, the picture bride practice is not a counterpart of the mail-order bride system, but its predecessor. The difference is that, "unlike the traditional picture bride system, where individual families arranged marriages to ensure the continuation of their lineage overseas, the current industry creates and maintains a profit-making commercial market" (Chun 1160). In other words; what before was a "family" issue has become nowadays a business based on monetary interest through the Mail-Order Bride system.

Picture brides are fundamental for Issei men to finally settle in America. According to Kim, "the arrival of the picture brides helped encourage Japanese men to set down roots in American society, and the presence of women and, later, children allowed them to consider family-operated farms and small enterprises" (124). The reasons for their arrival are diverse: many of these women share a poor background, others are the oldest daughters and are not married yet, and some of them, simply put, do not have suitors at home.

In America, the majority of these women are objectified by being considered an "investment." Husbands make use of their wives mainly to provide children for the family, but sometimes picture brides also have to search for employment outside their home.

Nonetheless, those who find jobs as domestic servants of wealthy American families act as an often needed source of income. Susan Seymour affirms that these jobs also allow Japanese women to experience a sense of freedom and worthiness, which they usually lack at home:

The employment of Japanese immigrant women provided them with some semblance of independence. Unlike their middle-class Japanese counterparts, they had to leave the home regularly to work and, accordingly, had to make child-care arrangements. Contributing to the family income and providing for improved opportunities for their children became a major source of personal satisfaction despite the demeaning work undertaken. (396)

In this new country, picture brides also lose friend and family support. In consequence of the distance that separates America from Japan, they feel isolated and unappreciated, not only because they do not love the man they are supposed to love, but due to many other aspects of this new land that are unfamiliar for them: language, food or religion are some of the elements they are forced to assimilate right from the start. As a matter of fact, as Ronald Tataka claims in *Strangers from a Different Shore*, by the time they arrive in the United States, "still wearing Kimonos and sandals" (73; see appendix B, figures 1 and 2), Japanese picture brides are usually forced to wear Western types of clothing. Because of this, many of them want to return home (to Japan), but the high cost of the tickets prevents them from doing so.

Apart from the tremendous effort of accepting imposed Americanized features, picture brides also have to deal with a patriarchal system which already existed in their country of origin, and which they also encounter in America. As Malve Von Hassell asserts in "Issei' Women: Silences and Fields of Power," in the new country "the image of the proper wife and proper marriage relationship which the Issei women had been taught in Japan was maintained.

Submissiveness in demeanour, speech, and silences was carefully staged" (557). That silence, which actually reveals many things, pervades not only the picture bride phenomenon, but also the husbands, their Nisei descendants, and the whole Japanese American community. As will be addressed later on, the selected narratives will be analysed in terms of this topic.

This essay will revolve around the phenomenon known as "picture brides" as textualised in two novels: *Picture Bride* (1997) by Yoshiko Uchida, and *The Buddha in the Attic* (2013) by Julie Otsuka. Although one narrative takes a more collective approach and the other covers the more specific story of Hana Omiya and her husband Taro Okeda, both texts focus on the use of language and, accordingly, will be analysed from the aforementioned perspective dealing with the motif of silence.

2. Approaching Silence in the Japanese American Community

Silence may be inflicted under the authority of external forces to deny freedom of speech, but in many cases it grows as an intentional response to the influence of these forces. First of all, I consider it important to highlight that my analysis is indebted to King-Kok Cheung's approach to this matter. In *Articulate Silences* Cheung claims that she considers the association of silence with a vacuum or emptiness erroneous because it seems a "Eurocentric premise" (1), and, consequently, "such a logocentric tendency obscures the fact that silence, too, can speak many tongues, varying from culture to culture" (1). Thus, silence can be conceived as much more than passive acquiescence. In such a way, its existence signifies a deeper meaning than just the absence of speech; it can even act as a communication method.

The negative categorization of silence results from the preconceptions of Westernized opinions, which clearly reference white racist and prejudiced attitudes towards the Japanese American society. As Cheung affirms, these judgements rely upon stereotyped conceptions towards "many women and members of racial minorities, growing up in America where voice is tantamount to power" (2). In this manner, the development of Japanese American identity is determined by submissiveness associated to having Japanese ancestry, which often implies a passive role and, thereby, a silenced racial identity. Moreover, sexism is also considered as one of the main causes of silence. However, as Cheung explains, voicelessness "is induced not only by gender but also by culture and race" (5). Women are not the only ones experiencing silence and its triggering factors, as the dichotomy of the oppressive masculine role and the submissive female figure suggests; it is worth mentioning that also men deal with the pressure of imposed masculine characteristics and dictated social performances, as will be addressed further on.

2.1. Silence and Race

The dislocation of the Japanese American community in this foreign country, as anticipated in chapter one, is the main historical trigger for the development of silence among the population. With the appearance of transnational migrations and the hegemony of the native people over Japanese citizens, concepts such as the figure of the *subaltern* or *the other* emerge. This causes an increasing separation between American-born citizens and, thereby, the consequent segregation of Japanese population in this country.

Stereotypical ideas about their personality are influenced by the conceptions of the American population surrounding them: "The quiet Asians are seen either as devious, timid, shrewd, and, above all, 'inscrutable' " (Cheung 2). This last attribute defines a conclusive distance between the American-born citizens and the foreign Japanese, who often experience racist remarks. Kim affirms that "as a permanent inferior, the 'good' Asian can be assimilated into American life. [He must] accept his assigned status cheerfully and reject whatever aspects of his racial and cultural background prove offensive to the dominant white society. And of course he must never speak for himself" (18-19). As a result, they usually tend to appropriate typical American qualities, which originates the liminality and at the same time hybridity of their status.

On the other hand, this fact contrasts with the intensification of a collective sense of group belonging as a displaced community, whose isolation is reinforced through the rejection by American society. As a result, as Cheung explains in *An Interethnic Companion to Asian American Literature* "[m]any people of Asian descent feel, to this day, the need to prove their Americanness by shedding their original culture and by setting themselves apart from new Asian immigrants" (6). Thus, their silence acts as a response to a direct historical

invisibility that relates to the categorization of *racial minority*, associated to the Asian American community.

Even though Japanese Americans tend to be marginalized by being subjected to the American hegemony due to their classification as an ethnic minority, they are also associated with the apparently positive concept of *model minority*. Tataki claims that "today Asian Americans are celebrated as America's "model minority" [because of their] stunning achievements in the academy" (474). However, Kasinitz, Mollenkopf and Waters add that, even though the seeming purpose of depicting the Japanese American population as a "model minority" is to praise their accomplishments, "the ways [it] is used and the consequences of its use suggest that there are pernicious effects of classifying [them] as a model minority" (173). In this way, the concept ends up discriminating the ones whom it is supposed to praise. Furthermore, usually their achievements are not indicators of Japanese citizens getting high positions. While this image has led many teachers and employers to view Asian American people as intelligent and hardworking and has opened some opportunities for them, it has also been harmful.⁵ Asian Americans find their diversity as individuals denied: many feel forced to conform the "model minority" mould and want more freedom to be their individual selves. (Tataki 477)

Because of all the factors mentioned above, silence constitutes the response to a suffered marginalization that acts as a form of collective speech to create a form of collective memory. According to Vinitzky-Seroussi and Teeger in "Unpacking the Unspoken: Silence in Collective Memory and Forgetting," not only speech can serve as a method to recall a memorial past: "silence can also be used to facilitate recollection, while talk can be used to enhance amnesia" (1104). As a matter of fact, since the most widespread version of events

⁵ See more in "Racist Love" (1972), in which "Chan and Chin assert that the stereotype of Asians as docile and compliant 'good minorities' is the product of 'racist love'. Stereotypes based on 'racist hate' are masculine, and include Black studs, bellicose Indians, and Mexican bandits" (Kim 178).

usually corresponds to a Westernized interpretation, "the narration of certain memories and the silencing of others can oftentimes be conceptualized as the attempts of those with power to set the limits on what is speakable or unspeakable about the past" (Vinitzky-Seroussi and Teeger 1107). Because of this, stereotypical opinions about the timid or compliant character of Japanese American community, and Asian American people in general, must be addressed carefully, since they may prove to be biased opinions distorted by the prejudiced hegemonic discourse.

Moreover, silence can also serve as a strategy to forget what one does not wish to remember. Vinitzky-Seroussi and Teeger ratify that "complete silence about the past is one way through which collectives may try to forget the past" (1114). On the contrary, it may function as a way to highlight what cannot or is not wanted to be said: "When nations, societies, agents of memory or other individuals wish to remember and make others remember, they often turn to total silence. That silence, however, is not unbounded, nor does it rest in a vacuum. On the contrary, the silence is intentional, purposive and planned in advanced" (1108). Be that as it may, the intention of forgetting or remembering the past through the absence of speech demonstrates that disguised silences can actually reveal many truths.

2.2. Silence and Gender

From the time that picture brides arrive in the Americas, heteronormative structures set their path of life⁶; Von Hassel points out that the "pressure on *Issei* women to act as culture bearers and to live up to the requirements of the normative roles to which they had

⁶ Heteronormativity assumes the existence of a compulsive heterosexual system with a patriarchal gender binary that establishes certain roles for males and females. See more in "The Reaches of Heteronormativity: An Introduction," by Ward and Shneider (433-439).

been socialized" (560). Guided by a patriarchal family structure with a husband they do not even know, women face, not only the aforementioned racist attitudes displayed by American people surrounding them, but also sexist standards already exhibited in Japan. The stereotype dictates that "women are thought to be mysterious and unknowable—or as docile, submissive, and obedient, worthy of the label 'model minority' " (Cheung 2). Moreover, they "had double duty – field work and housework" (Tataki 190) in their homes or as domestic servants for American families. Despite this, these duties are sometimes replaced by jobs as prostitutes. Many of these Japanese women are brought as prostitutes or sold later to men who fool them into believing in a better life than the one they have with their husbands (Tataki 51).

Many consider home a safe place where they do not have to feel ashamed of Japanese cultural features such as food or language, but at the same time this place becomes a prison for those who suffer their husbands' violent behaviours. This is why many Japanese women who have jobs outside home gain a freedom they do not have in the family setting. Seymour says that "as wage earners, immigrant women had a semi-independent status from their husbands, who might not approve of their work outside the home but had to acquiesce. Husbands even helped at times with child care, although most were expected to do little or no work in the house" (397-398). Apart from these jobs, which should not disparage the image of the male husband as the wage earner, women's appropriate place to be is at home or working in the fields (Von Hassel 557). Nevertheless, Kim points out "the growing earnings gap between American men and women" (251), which evidences the extended patriarchal constructions affecting womanhood.

According to Von Hassel, "*Issei* women generally did not talk about their fears, loneliness, doubts, sadness, or anger experienced in the years since leaving Japan" (563). This fact, together with the significant differences of much more Americanised cultural values of their sons and daughters, causes a communicative barrier between the *Issei* and the *Nisei*

generation. As a result, on many occasions a lack of communication such as the one in *Picture Bride* between Hana and her daughter appears. Unfortunately, this causes "for some Nisei women an inability to understand their mothers turned into a helpless and alienated acceptance of statements at face value and the interpretation of silences as emptiness" (562).

Thus, as in the case of men, female silence arises, on the one hand, from the Japanese American alienation by American society and, on the other, from a patriarchal structure which oppresses women. They are forced to shut their feelings down—emotions often including an aversion towards their own husbands—, assume predefined roles attributed to femininity and satisfy their husbands, who are portrayed as the leading figure and provider of the family unit. In the next chapter, I will exemplify the obliged acceptance of this new life of women of the picture bride phenomenon through several female testimonies in *The Buddha in the Attic* and, more specifically, through Hana's character in *Picture Bride*, who, despite this, has quite an understanding husband.

Stereotypically, relationships between men and women symbolize a dichotomy between the controlling, and sometimes even violent, male and the passive woman. However, it is important to note that, as Cheung affirms, "patriarchy chokes both sexes, though to different degrees and in different ways" (53). As will be detailed in the third chapter, Japanese males also experience a silenced suffering when trying to live up to the ideals required to be a good husband and proper masculinised man, a standard of norms already present in the Japanese cultural tradition. Cheung also highlights the importance of remembering that "the hyperfeminization of Asian women in popular American culture, for instance, is no less demeaning than the emasculation of Asian American men and is in as much need of refutation" (11). In the same way, as happens to women, "male silence also manifests itself as the suppression of an Asian past" (Cheung 9), a fact that, together with feelings of inferiority when being compared to other American men, jealousy, and shame, generates a "sense of

injured manhood" (Cheung 51), which causes men to behave "increasingly irritable and despotic toward his household" (51). Nevertheless, as I shall try to prove in my analysis, this violence, which "can be diagnosed as stemming from his need to reassert male dominance" (Cheung 51), is much more generalised in *The Buddha in the Attic*, contrasting with the character of Taro in *Picture Bride*, who does not show an aggressive physical behaviour towards his wife Hana.

To conclude, I want to underscore another aspect of silence: the deployment of silence not only as a theme but also as a method through the use of especial textual styles and structures of the narrative "to tell the forbidden and name the unspeakable" (Cheung 4). As we shall see in the next chapter, a clear exemplification can be found in *The Buddha in the Attic*, which is written using a collective perspective of the picture bride phenomenon through a first person plural narrator who is always female. In fact, there are no identified characters and all of the women who talk are nameless entities. This strategy allows the "we" to become whatever it wants to be; they are all picture brides, but their stories are very different. As Mako Yoshikawa says in her review "The Things They Left Behind," "Otsuka achieves a rare and paradoxical double feat: she gives these oppressed and silenced women voice and at the same time illuminates how their voices have been lost to history" (18). As a result, the author makes sense out of the multiple experiences of picture brides and at the same time portrays the individual speech of each of these silenced women.

3. *Picture Bride* and *The Buddha in the Attic*: A Literary Analysis

In this section, I am going to analyse both novels, Uchida's *Picture Bride*, and Otsuka's *The Buddha in the Attic*, focusing on the picture bride phenomenon. While the first one presents the specific story of Hana, a picture bride, and her husband Taro, the second one introduces a series of pieces from different memoirs, so that a more detailed and multi-dimensional overview of the matter may be obtained.⁷ In any case, this analysis is going to focus on the first part of the narratives covering the years until the outbreak of the armed conflict of the Second World War, and the relocation of the characters into Japanese internment camps. In so doing, I intend to aim the attention at the phenomenon of picture brides and, most of all, at the main factors influencing the silence of the characters in these novels.

Apart from this, the lifestyle of the women involved in the picture bride phenomenon is decisively influenced by the place they reside in. Thus, it is important to highlight that the story of *Picture Bride* is set in a Japanese community in Oakland—as Otsuka calls it, a "J-Town." For its part, *The Buddha in the Attic* conceives the picture bride experience from both the point of view of the countryside and the one from the city, although it focuses mostly on the former. This fact, along with its direct and concise style, which I will address later, may be the reason why Otsuka's novel seems harsh, just like living and working in the fields.

As explained in the second, theoretical chapter, we proceed on the basis that women who arrive in America as picture brides become part of the silenced Japanese American community; therefore, from the moment they get there they are greatly influenced by the

⁷ The short story "The Cariboo Café," by Viramontes, is another example of a multi-dimensional narrative: "In 'The Cariboo Café' each of the three sections depicts a different gaze, which in the end overlap as laser beams do in a holographic experiment, with the result of a close resemblance simulacrum of the multidimensional and hybrid border reality" (Simal 81).

situation of racial segregation experienced by Japanese Americans. Because of this, as has been mentioned in previous sections, these women come to be alienated by American society and, as a result, discriminated on a daily basis on account of “racial” stereotypes. Before arrival, however, they are unaware of the reality of this discrimination. In "Come, Japanese!", the first chapter of *The Buddha in the Attic*, Otsuka relates the long, tiring boat journey of numerous picture brides with very diverse stories. Full of doubts, they discuss the stereotypes about American people that they also display, such as "[t]he people there [are] said to eat nothing but meat and their bodies [are] covered with hair" (Otsuka 7) or "[t]he language [is] ten times as difficult as our own and the customs [are] unfathomably strange" (7). These statements portray the existence of stereotypes of American people among Japanese citizens, but given that it is the Japanese immigrants that become the "intruders" or "aliens" in America, the pernicious stereotypes of Asians are the ones that prevail. Yet, the appearance of critiques of American stereotypes in postcolonial, diasporic and ethnic literatures stresses the importance of emphasising "reversal strategies" opposing the hegemonic discourses.

It is necessary to consider that, already in Japan, the freedom of speech of picture brides is silenced by their family, from the very moment that they choose a future husband for them. In *The Buddha in the Attic*, the youngest picture bride, who is twelve years old, asserts that her parents married her off "for the betrothal money" (Otsuka 8). In other cases, such as Hana in *Picture Bride*, there are women who are lucky enough to be allowed to decide if they want to marry the proposed man. The reasons for accepting this marriage are diverse. In Hana's case, she was the only unmarried daughter and "finding a proper husband for her had taken on . . . urgency" (Uchida 2). Be that as it may, the majority of these women come to think that it is "better to marry a stranger in America than grow old with a farmer from the village" (Otsuka 7).

However, those who arrive in the new land and find their husbands waiting for them in the harbour realise that their new husbands have already been lying to them even before meeting them. As Otsuka claims, they are deceived by "professional people with beautiful handwriting whose job it was to tell lies and win hearts" (18). Uchida describes how "Hana was further startled to see that [Taro] was already turning bald" (7) and one of Otsuka's picture brides says that "[t]hey looked like [their] brothers and fathers back home, only better dressed, in gray frock coats and fine Western three piece suits" (4). Thus, since their arrival picture brides associate their husbands with a hybrid figure: a traditional Japanese man displaying American features. Nevertheless, they do not consider this fact relevant until they discover the actual alienation of the Japanese American population in the Americas. From the outset, these women are also asked to assimilate features of American culture such as food, religion or language; in *Picture Bride*, for instance, Taro requests Hana, just after meeting her, to "get some American clothing" (Uchida 8). Despite this, the most prominent silence literally occurs when the aforementioned meeting takes place, described in Uchida's novel as "awkward gaps of silence" (17). The initial shock of the picture bride regarding her new husband soon becomes an aversion towards him, as happens in one of the first scenes of *Picture Bride*: "Hana, holding the umbrella so Taro could carry her bags, had found it difficult to share one umbrella and still not walk too close to him" (Uchida 9).

Their first sexual encounter confirms the initial dislike for their husbands. In fact, I consider it is important because it marks the beginning of a patriarchal and heteronormative family structure that drags on the entire marriage. The often-violent behaviour of the husbands when having the first sexual relationship confirms the sexist model already existing in Japan: "They took us the way our fathers had taken our mothers every night in the one-room hut back home in the village: suddenly, and without warning, just as we were drifting off into sleep" (Otsuka 21). In *The Buddha in the Attic*, picture brides—who are mainly

virgins—report that, even though some husbands are more polite, shy or compassionate, the majority take them violently: some say that they are taken "before [they] are ready and the bleeding [does] not stop for three days" (19), others affirm that these men tell them things such as "[y]ou are worth less than the little finger of your mother" (19), and as a result some of the picture brides just stay muted, waiting "for it to be over, not realizing that it would not be over for years" (20).

One of the first things these women are taught—especially if they live in a Japanese community where they have to interact with American citizens on many occasions—is how to behave around their American neighbours. In Uchida's novel, *Kiku*, a friend of Taro and later of Hana who also arrived as a picture bride five years before, is the one who first warns her about the proper behaviour she must display. She essentially tells her to stay away from American people by reminding Hana that Japanese American citizens are "aliens" in this country and they "don't really belong" (Uchida 15). Conversely, if staying away is not an option, Hana is advised to avoid looking at them so that her presence may go as unnoticed as possible. However, if an interaction is needed, in *The Buddha in the Attic* a picture bride herself recommends being "humble," "polite" and saying "nothing at all" if possible, because they "belong to the invisible world" (Otsuka 26). As a matter of fact, also their past life in Japan is made invisible. For instance, even though Hana had been the daughter of an important samurai in Japan, we perceive later, in a scene with a woman she meets as her neighbour, that this previous reputation does not matter in the United States; this lady leaves the conversation she was having with Hana because she starts feeling "uncomprehending and puzzled, for she had never heard of a samurai" (Uchida 80).

Japanese Americans, because of their silence when having to interact with the American population, are stereotyped by American citizens as patient, submissive, and compliant people. This description, which certainly lacks individuality, is assumed on purpose

by Japanese Americans themselves in order to keep a low profile and, in this way, avoid discrimination. Nevertheless, the attribution of this kind of flattering characteristics usually relates to the concept of "model minority", which—as I have clarified in the previous section—often ends up being racist. In the third chapter of *The Buddha in the Attic*, "Whites," a picture bride states that if they had known the truth, they "never would have come to America to do the work that no self respecting American would do" (Otsuka 29), which confirms the belief of American people about the Japanese American community being the "subaltern", or an inferior class. In this regard, we shall consider what is said in Otsuka's work: "They admired us for our strong backs and nimble hands. Our stamina. Our discipline. Our docile dispositions. Our unusual ability to tolerate the heat" (29). Given that the concept of "model minority" revolves around good qualities that end up increasing the marginalization of a group, this quote confirms that "model minority" is closely related to the Japanese American community; such qualities deal with the work in the fields, which is thought by Americans to be a demeaning type of job.

Besides such efforts to behave adequately in front of American people, I want to highlight the many examples of discrimination that appear in both novels. On the one hand, in *The Buddha in the Attic* several picture brides declare that "[t]heir children [throw] stones at us," "[t]heir waiters always [serve] us last", or "[t]heir barbers [refuse] to cut our hair" (Otsuka 52). Furthermore, picture brides consider the American jealousy of Japanese supremacy in the industrial field, a contributing reason for the contempt felt by American population:⁸ "[w]e were taking over their cauliflower industry. We had taken over their spinach industry. We had a monopoly on their strawberry industry and had cornered their

⁸ Kawai affirms in "Stereotyping Asian Americans: The Dialectic of the Model Minority and the Yellow Peril" that the "yellow peril" stereotype "describes Asian Americans as 'foreigner foreigners' who divert from U.S. dominant cultural norms, are economic competitors, and thereby undermine the White nation" (110). Nowadays, this prejudiced discourse is still used by the current president of the United States when he blames Asian Americans for the loss of jobs. Inevitably, this brings back echoes of the "yellow peril" discourse.

market on beans "We were an unbeatable, unstoppable economic machine" (Otsuka 55). On the other hand, the discriminatory episode that stands out in *Picture Bride* addresses the move of Hana and Taro to a new home after having a daughter. Hana recalls that moment, visualising "four enormous white men towering over Taro, suggesting that he move his family out simply because they [have] Japanese faces" (Uchida 67). This experience leads Hana to a continuous sense of helplessness and mistrust of her new neighbours.

As previously stated, the appropriation of "Americanness" represents the main strategy of Japanese people to prevent humiliating and abusing treatment. Nonetheless, for many picture brides it is often difficult to put aside and forget their Japanese cultural features. Hana is, in fact, a clear exemplification of the struggle to maintain a Japanese identity and culture whilst trying to adopt American habits. I must mention three essential cultural traits that, on account of their relevance, keep on appearing in both novels: language, food and religion.

Language plays a major role in the communicative process, since it provides a structure for the power of speech. Due to its role as a communication channel, the ignorance of the other's language represents an obstacle for a reciprocal communication between Japanese and American citizens. This is why, on many occasions, picture brides get frustrated because of their ignorance of the English language. In *The Buddha in the Attic*, it is particularly disheartening to read that one of the first words that women from the countryside learnt was "water," which they beg for when they "begin to feel faint in the fields" (Otsuka 23). Hana's case, by contrast, is a little bit different; she is lucky to have studied some English when she was in Japan, which allows her to understand a little of this language. Yet, she also has problems of communication. When these problems arise, their husbands are the ones who assume the leading role and talk to that American person. The husbands' greater knowledge of American language and customs, which comes from the larger amount of time they have been residing in the United States, fosters their sense of superiority. This fact is addressed in *The*

Buddha in the Attic, specifically in the moment that picture brides state that their husbands tell them things such as "please leave the talking to me" (Otsuka 27), because of the men's superior understanding of the English language and, thus, "the American ways" (27).

Secondly, food symbolises a very important social and cultural element in Japanese culture, as portrayed in *Picture Bride*. On New Year's day, Hana spends three days passionately preparing Japanese dishes to feel at home: "Surrounded by the array of delicious food, Hana couldn't wait" (Uchida 43). Such a relevant cultural trait confirms the Japanese immigrants longing for Japanese tradition and also evidences the culinary differences between the conservative Issei generation and the Americanised Nisei tastes.⁹ Lastly, in terms of religious features, Christianity and Buddhism are opposed in many aspects. Despite this, Kiku, an old picture bride in *Picture Bride*, affirms that she guesses that she is "part-Buddhist, part-Christian and part nothing at all" (Uchida 13). Even though Hana goes to a Christian church as requested by her husband, she admits that she still has a "small Buddhist shrine" (Uchida 13), which resembles the ones built by the women who work in the fields, in *The Buddha in the Attic*, "Buddhist altars out of overturned tomato crates . . . covered with cloth" (Otsuka 34).

The imposition of all the American customs previously mentioned, or their voluntary adoption to prevent racist aggressions, turns out not to take into account women's feelings at all. Separated from their families, their only communication method are letters they send to Japan, but on many occasions these letters do not even arrive. Besides that, their situation as picture brides forces them to suppress the feelings they may have for men other than their husbands. In Otsuka's narrative, some women confess that "[p]erhaps [they] had fallen in love with a man on the boat who came from the same island as [they] did . . . and [they] could not

⁹ See more in Paula Torreiro's *Diasporic Tastescapes: Intersections of Food and Identity in Asian American Literature*.

get him out of [their] mind" (31), but when their husbands ask why, they just cry and "shake their heads no" (32) or, worse, they are hit with belts: a "good woman" is not expected to act that way. Beyond that, Otsuka addresses in her novel how well these women are instructed to do housework for their new husbands: they know "how to cook and sew . . . how to serve tea and arrange flowers and sit quietly on [her] flat wide feet for hours, saying absolutely nothing of substance at all" (Otsuka 6) and they also "spread [their] legs for them every evening" (37). A picture bride from *The Buddha in the Attic* further explains that they do not even help them take care of the kids: "no matter how tired we were when we came in from the fields, they sat down and read the paper while we cooked dinner for the children" (63). Thus, the impotence of attending a—sometimes violent—man, whom they do not even love, seems even harder due to the lack of communication and support from their families.

Apart from this, these women are objectified by being treated as commodities that have been purchased. Taro, for example, tells Hana that she belongs to "[him] and no one else" (Uchida 31). In addition, they are used as a source of income; Hana, for instance, provides money for the household, even though only one dollar and twenty-five cents. At the same time, this job allows her to meet her employer, Mrs. Davis.¹⁰ Besides their jobs as maids or in the fields, some picture brides choose or are chosen to become prostitutes. In a sense, as happens in Japan, prostitution becomes a profitable business in which many women are sold to clubs—just think of geisha houses in Japan. Occasionally, those women who are unhappy with their husbands end up going into prostitution, but sometimes they regret this decision: "[s]ometimes, while we were lying with them, we found ourselves longing for our husbands, from whom we had run away" (Otsuka 48).

¹⁰ Ellen Davis represents the friendly American citizens that tend to be scarce in this novel. She is a kind American woman from a wealthy family who employs Hana as a maid. She even drives Hana and Taro to the internment camp when the war breaks out.

One of the most important tasks expected of picture brides in America is to provide their husbands with progeny, which will enable the family unit to own land through their son's American citizenship.¹¹ For that reason, Hana considers her miscarriage not only what she deserves, after feeling attracted to a Japanese American friend of Taro, but also an embarrassing event, given that her inability to provide his husband with descendants is, as said in *The Buddha in the Attic*, "the worst fate of all" (Otsuka 70). The Nisei generation, however, is different from the Issei generation, because the former are raised in America and experience discrimination from the beginning of their lives. For this reason, they begin assimilating and imitating American manners since they are children. As stated in Otsuka's novel, "[b]eyond the farm, [the Nisei had] heard, there were fancy white houses with gold-framed mirror and crystal doorknobs" (66) and, as a result, some of them start rejecting Japanese customs: "They refused to use chopsticks. They drank gallons of milk. They poured ketchup all over their rice" (75). As Taro and Hana's daughter in *Picture Bride*, some seem to be ashamed of their parents' Japanese cultural features.¹²

Certainly, one of the most meaningful characters in these novels is Taro. Uchida introduces a character of a husband who could be expected to behave as harshly as the male figures that Otsuka portrays, mostly violent and cruel. Nevertheless, Kiku thinks of him as an "honourable and trustworthy" man (Uchida 22), and it is further said that he does not intend to hurt his new wife¹³: "[h]e felt anxious and fearful for them both, but was determined to not disappoint Hana" (28). Besides that, Taro also empathises with Hana's difficulties to assimilate American customs, and he even helps her when she needs it; as Hana herself

¹¹ According to Tataka, "[w]hile the law did not specifically refer to the Japanese, it was aimed at them, declaring unlawful the ownership of 'real property' by 'aliens ineligible to citizenship'" (203). However, "Japanese farmers found loopholes in the 1913 law. They were able to own and lease land under the names of their American-born children" (205).

¹² The struggle of the Nisei generation for their split identity also appears in the celebrated book written by Maxine Hong Kingston, *The Woman Warrior: Memoirs of a Girlhood Among Ghosts*, which deals with the Chinese American case.

¹³ In some respects, he may resemble Kayo Hatta's husband character in his film *Picture Bride*.

affirms, "in Japan a man never did a woman's work in the kitchen, but Taro's years in America had made him more understanding" (Uchida 85). This fact is very significant, because we should remember that, unlike picture brides, men had gone through the assimilation process by themselves, with no one by their side helping them, for example, to communicate with American people. One can argue that violent behaviours are largely derived from that silenced suffering and frustration since they were alone in the Americas. In addition, they are required to follow characteristics associated to the "strong man," who must be responsible for ensuring the well-being for his family. Due to their marginalised status in the country and the age difference between them and their wives, on many occasions Japanese American males are left feeling inferior to other men. This fact, for example, makes Taro get jealous of other men such as Nishima, whom Hana considers a son. Furthermore, when at one point Hana proposes to ask Mrs Davis for money to overcome their debts, Taro answers violently "I have some pride" (Uchida 102).

Finally, I would want to underline the power of language in *The Buddha in the Attic*. The special significance of language in this novel results from its being used to shape the lost-in-time and silenced voices of picture brides through a common ground made out of their own testimonies. In spite of the diversity of their experiences, the shared suffering establishes a collective bond that helps the creation of a joint memorial past.

Otsuka's narrative technique consists in very short and direct sentences full of repetitions for the purpose of emphasising the most important idea: a plural perspective of the narrative voice represented by the continuous use of a first person plural narrator and formulas such as "some of us", "all of us" or "one of us", which, paradoxically, also helps the individualisation of some of the testimonies by distinguishing and placing value on each of them. Contrastingly, the utilisation of "we," which gives a sensation of cohesion among the picture bride speeches, opposes to the usage of "they," often referred to American people, the

Nisei generation, and the husbands. Since it is ordered through chronological chapters that follow the stories of each one of the portrayed picture brides, the whole novel gives voice to the individual experiences of the picture bride phenomenon through a collective memory method: the autobiographical speech of these nameless tellers help the creation of a memorial of a joint collective past¹⁴. In addition, its poetic language contrasts with the harsh and realistic tone that the author deploys, making of the novel a really verisimilar telling of a bitter story that is told, as a poem, to generate images and sensations. Thus, it is surprising to realise that, even though Otsuka's novel employs a more poetic and metaphorical style than Uchida's, it ends up being more realistic than *Picture Bride*.

Otsuka uses the discourses of several picture bride voices to create a heterogeneous but plural speech that represents the voice of the picture bride community. In this way, the author displays a balance between individuality and collectivity which is not acquired in *Picture Bride* with the only story of Hana. Also, I may highlight its similitude with *The Woman Warrior* in relation to the female's storytelling strategy which intends to transmit collective memories: the nameless characters in *The Buddha in the Attic*, whose identity seems to be lost in history over the years, resemble the "No Name Woman" in the first chapter of Kingston's narrative.

¹⁴ This type of narrative technique can also be seen in other "choral narratives" such as Kingston's *The Woman Warrior*, or *The Women of Brewster Place*, by Gloria Naylor. However, in contrast with the identifiable narrators of these two novels, *The Buddha in the Attic* is told from the perspective of women who do not even have a name until, paradoxically, they leave the community and go to internment camps.

Conclusions

In the first chapter I have touched upon the most relevant social and historical events concerning the studied phenomenon. Consequently, the section presents the circumstances of Japanese society from the implementation of laws that allowed the migrations of Japanese Issei men to the USA until the Pearl Harbour attack, going through the massive migration of picture brides as a result of the Gentlemen's Agreement. By presenting this detailed examination of the circumstances, it is possible to understand the situation of discrimination suffered by the dislocated Japanese American community, composed first by men and later also by women. The exploration of this demeaning treatment given to Japanese Americans, along with the traumatic misogynist experiences of picture brides, is necessary to understand the second section of my paper.

The second chapter provides a theoretical framework in relation to silence. Relying upon theories of several authors such as King-Kok Cheung or Vinitzky-Seroussi and Teeger regarding the theme and narratological value of silence, its function as a communication method is unveiled. On the one hand, silence is associated with race, as it often becomes the foundation and point of departure of—paradoxically—collective speech. In addition to this, I have addressed damaging concepts based on stereotypical preconceptions, often associated with the Japanese American community such as "the other", "subaltern" or "model minority", which buttresses the increasing collective sense of group belonging. I also point out the function of silence as a strategy to forget what is not wished to be remembered, and as a stylistic feature in Otsuka's *The Buddha in the Attic*. The second and final section of this chapter attempts to portray the suffering that women as well as men had to confront because of gender issues. By exposing the patriarchal structures that women have to stick to, as well as

the stereotyped standards that men have to live up to, this subsection prioritises the reversal of the dichotomy of suppressive and submissive silence.

In the third chapter, I approach the matter through an analysis of both chosen novels providing a thorough exemplification of the social, cultural and theoretical aspects that have been explored in previous chapters: silence, race, gender and their interweaving. Through the characters of Hana and Taro, from *Picture Bride*, I pay close attention to individual experiences and events, while *The Buddha in the Attic* is shown to offer the testimonies of numerous picture brides from a collective memory point of view, so that a more verisimilar version of the facts may be acquired.

To conclude, the analysis of Uchida's and Otsuka's narratives has allowed me to understand the picture bride phenomenon from the Japanese American point of view. Thus, I am satisfied with having tackled a motif had been not been sufficiently examined, in spite of its similarities with the better-known system of mail-order brides. In my opinion, we should undoubtedly give a voice to those muted figures like Japanese American picture brides and those women involved in similar contemporary phenomena, such as mail-order brides, as contentious as these topics may seem.

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Appendix A – Plot Summaries

I. Otsuka's *The Buddha in the Attic*

Chronologically, the narrative presents the testimonies of numerous picture brides from their arrival in the United States until their relocation in internment camps. The first section, "Come, Japanese!," narrates the boat journey of a diversity of women who compare the photographs of the man they are going to marry—but have never met—,talk about the expectations of their new life, and the disappointing encounter with their husband when they arrive. In the second chapter, "First Night," they describe the first violent sexual encounter with their new husbands. "Whites," the next and longest episode, deals with the new life of picture brides in the new country and with the relationship, on the one hand, with their sexist husbands and with American neighbours who often display racist attitudes, on the other. Moreover, the testimonies describe the life in the farming fields and in Japanese communities, The next chapters, "Babies" and "Children," allude to the terrible conditions when giving birth and the subsequent upbringing of their Nisei children, who also are discriminated and start assimilating American customs very quickly. The last three chapters, "Traitors," "Last Day," and "A Disappearance," deal with the consequences of the Pearl Harbour attack and the Japanese American relocation in internment camps.

II. Uchida's *Picture Bride*

Hana Omiya, a reputable twenty-one-year-old Japanese girl, travels to America to marry Taro Takeda, a Japanese American man that she has seen in photographs but never met, to avoid marrying a Japanese farmer. Upon her arrival, she discovers that Taro is much older than he seemed in his picture and Hana is disappointed. When she arrives, she meets Mr. Toda and his wife Kiku, an older picture bride who soon becomes her friend. The next day she goes for the first time to a Christian church, where Hana meets Yamaka, who she feels

attracted to from the start. Later that day, Hana discovers that Taro's shop is not very successful, which causes her another deception. Yet, Kiku keeps telling her that Taro is actually a good man. After their official wedding and a first awkward sexual encounter, Hana starts helping Taro in the shop, as he wants her to. One day, when Taro is out, Yamaka visits Hana in the shop and they kiss, but she stops him. A month later, Yamaka becomes ill, and he dies shortly after Hana's visit. Three days later, Hana contracts influenza and loses the baby she was expecting.

Some time later, Hana and Taro have had a baby girl, Mary, and they decide to move to a new home. When they arrive, four men complain about their arrival, but they decide to go on living in the new neighbourhood with their baby. Meanwhile, Hana finds out that Mr. Toda has lost his job and they will have to move to the countryside. When Kiku leaves, Hana becomes the new treasurer of the Women's Society but she gets tricked out of the society's money. Hana starts doing housework in Mrs Davis' white home to refund the cash to the Women's Society. Surprisingly, Ellen Davis turns out to be a very kind woman. Attempting to do a good deed, Hana invites Nishima, a poor student, to start living with them, and he helps Hana take care of Mary. Unfortunately, Hana discovers that Taro does not have enough money to pay the rent of the shop, so she asks Mrs Davis for a job for Taro, and everything seems to start getting better.

When Mary is ten years old, the family goes to the Todas' house in the fields. When they return home, Hana reflects upon the cultural differences with her daughter, who already speaks English. When Mary turns sixteen, she already feels ashamed of her parents' Japanese customs and, one day, she leaves with Joseph, her white boyfriend. After a while, Hana and discover that she is pregnant. The last part of the novel addresses life in the internment camp where they are sent to.

Appendix B – Figures



Figure 1: Cover of Yoshiko Uchida's *Picture Bride*.



Figure 2. Newly arrived picture brides in the registry room at Angel Island, 1916. Source: *California State Parks*.