



Tamiko Thiel's virtual reality installations as sites of learning in and beyond the museum

Ingrid Gessner

To cite this article: Ingrid Gessner (2016) Tamiko Thiel's virtual reality installations as sites of learning in and beyond the museum, *Studies in the Education of Adults*, 48:2, 155-176, DOI: [10.1080/02660830.2016.1229849](https://doi.org/10.1080/02660830.2016.1229849)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/02660830.2016.1229849>



Published online: 24 Sep 2016.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 182



View related articles [↗](#)



View Crossmark data [↗](#)



ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Tamiko Thiel's virtual reality installations as sites of learning in and beyond the museum

Ingrid Gessner

Regensburg University, Germany

ABSTRACT

The incorporation of cultural productions and virtual experiences in museum spaces adds to the objects' significance and also turns them into important contributions to adult education. Yet, how far do they trouble, decolonise, revisualise, tell alternative stories, interrogate intolerance and privilege or stimulate critical literacies? This article examines 3D virtual reality (VR) installations by the artist Tamiko Thiel as technologies of critical cultural public pedagogy that not only recreate politically charged locations but place them in transnational perspective. *Beyond Manzanar* conveys a feeling of imprisonment beyond Japanese American experiences; the *Virtuelle Mauer* provides an immersive experience of living 'in the shadow of the Wall' that applies to other contexts. Thiel's *The Travels of Mariko Hörō* revolves around the question of potential agency of the Other and can be understood as a form of 'Oriental' cultural production that returns the exoticising gaze. In general, VR installations as Thiel has created them for museal contexts seem ideal in initiating learning processes that in turn need to be translated into social practice.

KEYWORDS

Berlin Wall; Japanese American internment; Manzanar; free-choice learning; public pedagogy; transnationalism

Introduction

Over 10,000 Japanese Americans were incarcerated in a Relocation Center in Manzanar, California, during World War II. When this was officially closed in 1946, the internment camp was completely dismantled and the barracks hauled away. Similarly, the Berlin Wall was almost entirely eradicated after its fall in 1989. The Venice lagoon is neither fully destroyed nor does it share the political or social significance of the places just described. Yet, its existence is ecologically threatened. What connects the three sites is the fact that they are tourist destinations as well as sites of interactive learning, at which visitors study and experience the places' history. Since April 2004, the United States (US) National Park Service has maintained an interpretive centre and museum of the former internment camp Manzanar.¹ In Berlin, the 'Mauermuseum' at Checkpoint Charlie opened in 1963 remains one of the most visited museums. Since 1998, the Gedenkstätte Berliner Mauer has commemorated Berlin's division and the 136 victims who were shot or died at the Berlin Wall.

Venice is visited by 60,000 people on average daily. The museums and art galleries at all three locations are first and foremost educational institutions.

Especially Manzanar and the Berlin Wall emanate the ephemerality of human-made structures and of a past that does not easily lend itself to a simple, unified narrative, but rather one of complications and tensions. Due to their destruction, removal, and – in the case of the Venice lagoon – threat of flood tides and erosion, their translatability into figurative forms of tourism and education become all the more important. How can the educational potential be enhanced and the narratives of the sites be told in a way that allows visitors to experience a past that is not necessarily their own? The artist Tamiko Thiel not only recovered the sites in her 3D virtual reality (VR) installations *Beyond Manzanar* and *Virtuelle Mauer: Re-Constructing the Wall* but also put them in a critical transnational perspective (Czaplicka 2008). *Beyond Manzanar* manages to convey a feeling of imprisonment that is not only connected to Japanese American experiences; the *Virtuelle Mauer* provides an immersive experience of living ‘in the shadow of the Wall’ that can be applied to other contexts, such as the border condition (and often physical walls) between Palestine and Israel, Mexico and the USA, North and South Korea, Pakistan and India. Lastly, Thiel’s installation *The Travels of Mariko Hōrō* moves the question of potential agency of the Other to the forefront. I draw my understandings of this from Yu (2001), Nagai (2005) and Park (2008), situating it as a form of ‘Oriental’ cultural production that is returning the exoticising gaze. I argue that Thiel has created works of cultural translation and negotiation; they are virtually localised sites where varied backgrounds, knowledge, practices and theories come together and serve as instances of what Clover (2015) calls ‘critical cultural pedagogy’. In general, I show in this article that sophisticated artistic expressions as Thiel has created them initiate such cultural learning processes, which then need to be translated into cultural pedagogical practice.

Theoretical considerations

The incorporation of cultural productions and virtual experiences in a physical museum space, which Tisdell (2007) describes as ‘harnessing [the] educational potential’ (p. 83) of popular culture, serves as point of departure for my three case studies. Concurrently, Biggs (2012, p. 42) defines learning as

not imposed or transmitted by direct instruction, but [...] created by [...] learning activities, well summarized in the term “approaches to learning”. [...] Learning is thus a way of interacting with the world. As we learn, our conceptions of phenomena change, and we see the world differently. The acquisition of information in itself does not bring about such change, but the way we structure that information and think with it does.

Tamiko Thiel’s interactive VR installations engage museum visitors and learners in a personal emotional experience of their choice, a central notion to John Falk’s concept of ‘free-choice environmental learning’. Falk explains that people utilise free-choice learning at settings, such as museums of all kinds, national parks, zoos and aquariums ‘to satisfy their intellectual curiosity and to fulfil their needs for relaxation, enjoyment, intellectual stimulation and even spiritual fulfilment’ (Falk 2005, p. 265; see also

Brody *et al.* 2002, Heimlich *et al.* 2004). At all of these sites the visitor-learner ‘exercises a large degree of choice and control over the what, when and why of learning’ (p. 265). Murray (1997) points out that computers allow explanatory narration to be moved to a realm structured by games. She writes: ‘Just as Art Spiegelman used the format of the comic book to tell the story of his father’s experiences, a digital artist might use the structure of the adventure maze to embody a moral individual’s confrontation with state-sanctioned violence’ (p. 131). Some cyber-culture critics go even further in their visions of how interactive technologies can revolutionise social memory and learning. Flavia Sparacino, Glorianna Davenport, and Alex Pentland, for example, believe the museum can become ‘a living memory theatre’ by incorporating wearable computers to create immersive museum environments. New technologies could be used to clad us in memory devices in order ‘to imprint us with the memories of the past and project them indelibly into our future’ (Sparacino *et al.* 2002, p. 81).

It seems a logical conclusion that this trend should be taken up in the fields of public history and critical adult education to re-orient efforts of these disciplines in furthering public engagement at museums and other such institutions. Clover (2015) contends, that we ‘live in one of the most contradictory times of the history of the world. There is a desperate need for new and alternative ideas, visions and experiences to respond to these times’ (p. 301). She suggests we look to museums and their exhibitions not as altogether unproblematic but rather important alternative spaces for critical cultural pedagogy that have been mostly ignored in adult education. Sanchez (2002) adds that we need to speak out for a value of difference to ensure a continued diversity of experiences shaping history, society and culture in times of global interconnectedness. His demands were expanded by literary scholar Fishkin (2005), who urged practitioners to focus ‘more on the nation as a participant in a global flow of people, ideas, texts, and products’ (p. 24). This transnational way of thinking and learning requires, according to Duncan and Juncker (2004), ‘a loosening of boundaries, a de-territorialisation of the nation-state, and higher degrees of interconnectedness among cultures and peoples across the globe’ (p. 8). This dimension not only affects individual identity when such contact zones merge in one person, as is the case with Tamiko Thiel, but also affects the interaction or crossroads of peoples and cultures – as they become apparent in Thiel’s works.

Human experiences achieve cultural meaning through technologies of memory and learning (Sturken 1997). The translation of experiences into media of memory and learning needs time, a location, and a form. Temporalisation and spatialisation have also been described as key categories in the definition of identity. In a probably unconscious response to Sanchez’s (2002, p. 22) call to work at the ‘crossroads of time, place, and memory’ and Fishkin’s agenda to transnationalise, I would argue Thiel has created important works of cultural translation and negotiation. Her personal and artistic identity was shaped on three continents (Asia, America, Europe) and – like her fictional character Mariko Hōrō (Mariko, the wanderer) – she remains a traveller between them. Invested with the power of an outsider – who is at the same time an insider – Thiel lays bare and questions the experiences, memories and failures of cultures.

Navigating the 'absent presence' of Manzanar

The commemoration of Japanese American internment experiences was characterised by a long period of silence (Gessner 2007). Public statements as well as published fictional and artistic renditions of the forced removal and incarceration were rare in the period directly following the war.² The representational silence was furthered by a spatial erasure of the internment camps, such as Manzanar, after the war. After the camp was officially closed in 1946, the former barrack buildings, utility systems, administration buildings and other structures were dismantled, hauled away, many of them sold to returning soldiers and their young families (Finch 1946). Since the 1990s Japanese American internment experiences are finally getting attention through what Shelley Fisher Fishkin calls 'cultural forms' (2005, p. 24) and Marita Sturken referred to as 'technologies of memory' (1997, p. 10). Considering the 'absent presence' of Japanese American internment camps, Sturken argues for memorials and museums at the former sites, which 'demand forms of re-enactment in the sense that they force viewers to participate rather than to find a comfortable distance' (Sturken 2001, p. 46). Unknowingly heeding Sturken's suggestion, the artists Tamiko Thiel and her collaborator Zara Houshmand, who were struck by Manzanar's significance in exemplifying the treatment of 'an Other,' virtually recovered the site, also widening its scope and perspective by working across cultural boundaries (Figure 1).

For *Beyond Manzanar*, a realistic reconstruction of the internment campsite, with guard towers and barracks, became the framework. Yet, being *virtual* reality, it also provides 'an experience that is impossible to get from visiting the real site' (Thiel 2001, n/p). Inside the virtual camp, the artists inserted a Japanese and an Iranian garden as 'magical healing spaces like those the mind builds when reality fails' (Houshmand 2000). They 'combined techniques of computer games and theatre design to create a highly symbolic, often surreal environment with a poetic reality stronger than photorealism' (Thiel and Houshmand 1998b, n/p). Compared to theatrical performance, however, the range of interaction possible between the art installation and its users then allows for a greater degree of free-choice learning.



Figure 1. Cemetery monument with offerings, Manzanar, 2002. Photo by the author.

Four contexts seem relevant when exploring *Beyond Manzanar*. Firstly, it widens the scope of the topic of Japanese American experiences by including the Iranian American community; its message is universal. Secondly, it was created in response to attacks on people of Middle Eastern origin after the Oklahoma City bombing in 1995, during which the media had erroneously linked the attack to the Middle East. Thirdly, it refers to attacks on Iranian Americans and calls for their internment during the 1979–1980 Iranian Hostage Crisis. During the crisis, the Carter administration took preliminary steps against Iranian college students living in the United States (Daniels 2002). Behdad (2008) calls attention to this mostly forgotten, inhospitable treatment of Iranian students in the US during the hostage crisis both as a way to challenge the now-familiar privileging of 11 September 2001 as threshold moment for the reconfiguration of racial, ethnic and religious dynamics in the US, and also as a way to make a broader claim about the underlying structures of disavowal which led to the depictions of official responses to 9/11 as historically unprecedented.

Finally, the installation parallels current instances of xenophobia and criticizes assaults on Arab Americans and Muslim Americans in the aftermath of 9/11.³ Visitors slip into the role of the internee; they are confronted with their own confinement despite the apparent freedom of movement within the virtual space. The provocative juxtaposition make *Beyond Manzanar* an artistic achievement that may trigger profound empathy in visitors who have neither experienced the Japanese American internment, nor suffered under exclusionary sentiments and discrimination.

Using a joystick mounted in front of the life-sized projected image, users/learners can freely move within the virtual space. Thiel created a non-linear narrative, which every user/learner constructs anew. Each visitor-learner embarks on an individual journey of discovery and learning, controlled by cognitive choices as well as the tactile stirring of a joystick. While only one user/learner may control the actual movements and decide which course or road to take, other visitors may watch and share the experience (Figure 2).

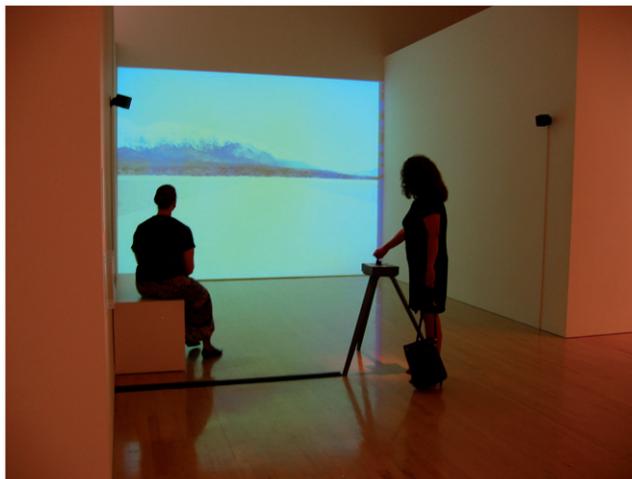


Figure 2. Two visitors explore *Beyond Manzanar*. Tamiko Thiel and Zara Housmand, San Jose Museum of Art, 2003. Photo by the author.



Figure 3. Barracks seem inhabited by ghosts from the past. Tamiko Thiel and Zara Houshmand, *Beyond Manzanar*, 2000.

The visual experience is augmented by the sound of a howling desert wind and the rustling of footsteps in the desert sand. When users/learners follow the open road trying to leave the camp a barbed-wire fence fades in, which underscores ‘the emotional impact of confinement’ (Thiel and Houshmand 1998a, n/p). The fence represents more than a physical object that cannot be overcome; it also entails poems about exile and internment in Farsi, Japanese, and English that are interwoven within the barbed wire.⁴ Users/learners navigating *Beyond Manzanar* have become prisoners like the Japanese American internees. Users/learners encounter ‘shadows’ of Japanese Americans or – to be precise – black and white photographs or cut out silhouettes of other internees (Figure 3).

Similar to the Japanese Americans in the 1940s, Iranian Americans were framed as enemies in the late 1970s. This context is established by photographs that depict Iranians as enemies: gun-toting women wearing headscarves and blindfolded men being herded together (i.e. the U.S. hostages are being shown off by their Iranian student captors (Figure 4). The particular arrangement links the events around the Iranian hostage crisis with the Japanese American incarceration.

If users/learners happen to approach the gate to an Iranian landscape garden (Figure 5), the control over the invisible avatar they have been steering so far is suddenly taken away. Agency is lost, and users/learners are pulled out of the camp, which is then visible through the crosshairs of an F-15 fighter jet (Figure 6). The images are reminiscent of the pictures of the so-called surgical attacks – pictures as they were provided to the public during the first Iraq War. Within *Beyond Manzanar* this constitutes a moment of disempowerment since users/learners have lost control over the joystick. Thrust upwards in the F-15 fighter users/learners sweep over the mountains of Manzanar, unable to determine which position they hold in this war, whether they are the attackers or whether they are being attacked.⁵

When the F-15 finally passes on the screen, a poem – referred to as ‘Mandala for Manzanar’ – written by Houshmand appears against the mountain backdrop. It



Figure 4. The Iranian American nightmare. Tamiko Thiel and Zara Houshmand, *Beyond Manzanar*, 2000.



Figure 5. The Iranian paradise garden. Tamiko Thiel and Zara Houshmand, *Beyond Manzanar*, 2000.

counters the violence of the previous scene and pleads for a perceptive exercise, expressing the hope that the story may never be repeated. After wavering between emotional highs and lows in the different VR environments, Houshmand's poem provides a cathartic resolution for users/learners. What Berlant (2004) would represent through the lens of affect, Brady (2011) sums up with regard to the function of such a multisensory experience, as it is provided in Thiel's *Beyond Manzanar*; he references Foucault's explanation of subject formation to point to the emotional response inevitably felt by visitors: 'The affective reaction allows visitor to confirm their role in particular social relations, and their participation has served as a technique of the self' (p. 452).

Beyond Manzanar found a permanent home in the San Jose Museum of Art. The museum, founded in 1969, is dedicated to visual culture in Silicon Valley, presenting twentieth and twenty-first century art to the diverse audiences of the Bay Area.

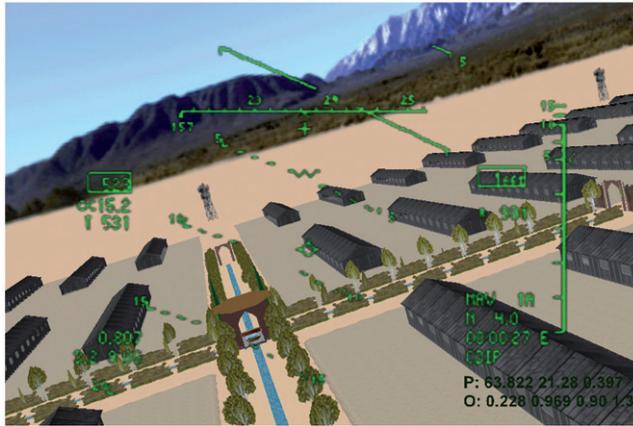


Figure 6. Video/Game/War – the only way out of the garden. Tamiko Thiel and Zara Houshmand, *Beyond Manzanar*, 2000.

Contrary to other such institutions, the museum does not have a large tourist base but understands itself rather as a ‘community anchor’: people from the community coming in for only twenty minutes to see an exhibition is pretty common. Furthermore, 25% of the population in Santa Clara County, where San Jose is located, are Asian Americans. During World War II, most of the county’s then 3,000 Japanese Americans were sent to the Heart Mountain internment camp in Wyoming (Kato 1994), and many returned after the war. Upon the opening of the exhibit, the museum organized a public symposium in November 2002 to explore the significance of the installation especially after the 9/11 terrorist attacks a year earlier. The event, in which the artists and three other panellists from the Japanese and Iranian American communities participated, embedded the installation in its various transnational contexts, from Japanese American internment and the Iranian Hostage crisis to 11 September 2001. *Beyond Manzanar* has also been shown in New York and Seattle. In spring 2005 *Beyond Manzanar* was part of a museum exhibition called *Xenopolis: On the Fascination with and Marginalisation of the Other* in Munich, Germany. An exhibition in Wolfsburg, Germany, on the occasion of the sixtieth anniversary of the end of World War II, also featured the installation in 2005 with an agenda to discuss the nature of war, its motivations and command structure and to interrogate the constant presence of war in our media age.

Virtuelle Mauer: experiencing life ‘in the shadow of the wall’

In a similar vein, the constant presence of the East-West conflict of the Cold War defined the lives of many for more than four decades. Yet, ‘where was the Wall? Are we in East Berlin or West Berlin?’ Taking these frequently asked questions of the twenty-first-century Berlin visitor serious enough to provide an immersive answer, Thiel and her architect collaborator Teresa Reuter set out to reconstruct a vanished demarcation line that shaped Berlin as a political-militaristic, social and cultural space for almost three decades. Built in 1961, the Wall became the concrete symbol of Berlin and Germany’s division, as well as that of the ideological and political systems

facing each other during the Cold War. In their exhibition concept, the artists Thiel and Reuter explain: ‘For the East German government, that built the Wall to prevent its own citizens from fleeing to the West, it was the anti-fascist protective barrier (Thiel and Reuter 2012, n/p). For the West German government, which refused to officially recognize its existence, it was an unlawful consequence of the East-West conflicts of the Cold War. When it came down in November 1989, the wish was for getting rid of the hated Wall as quickly as possible. While larger pieces were officially given to institutions around the world, souvenir hunters did their share and hammered pieces off the wall.

In the 2000s young people came of age with neither experience of the Wall nor the political threat and the ideological divisions it had engendered. In this respect, John Czaplicka very convincingly explains that the Wall ‘was constructed in the collective experiences of those who encountered it’ (n/p). With this defining space gone how could one convey why the wall in people’s heads was such a constant presence and what living in the shadow of the wall meant in everyday life? Czaplicka relays his personal experience of uneasiness and temporary imprisonment when crossing the border and passing from one side of the Wall to the other and concludes: ‘The complexity, variability, and duration of the Wall’s experience cannot be conjured up by mere images in a museum’ (2008, n/p). For those who still remember it, the experience of border crossing was different each time: you never knew what to expect. Consequently, any artistic or museal piece trying to take on the complexity of the Wall would have to be equally unpredictable, variable, and multi-directional, allowing for different paths, views, and experiences. The answer may thus not lie in touring the few slabs of the Wall still standing upright (such as at Niederkirchnerstraße close to the *Topography of Terror* exhibition, at Liesenstraße, or at the East Side Gallery of the hinterland wall⁶) but in a spatial experience of enclosure and exclusion that effective memorial architecture or experiential digital art in museums and art galleries might provide. Thiel and Reuter’s impressive solution to these questions is their VR artwork installation *Virtuelle Mauer: Re-Constructing the Wall* that reconstructs life during the period defined by the Berlin Wall and allows users/learners to experience a segment of it in its former complexity.

The artists chose a closely built-up residential area for their project to convey the contradictory closeness and separateness the Wall created: from the former border crossing at Heinrich-Heine-Straße and Sebastianstraße, over the ‘Engelbecken’ to Bethaniendamm/Engeldamm. The approximately one kilometre (about half a mile) long stretch of former Wall and death strip separated the district (*Kiez*) of Mitte in the East and bohemian Kreuzberg in the West (Figure 7).

Conceived and developed together with the Cultural Department of Berlin, further renowned partners indicate the (felt) political, social and cultural relevance of the project that is also part of the Berlin Wall Memorial Concept of the Berlin Senate Chancellery for Cultural Affairs.⁷ The work premiered on 13 August 2008 (the 47th anniversary of the building of the Wall) at the Museum for Communication, Berlin. *Virtuelle Mauer* was also shown in the 911 Media Arts Center in Seattle (2008), and the Goethe-Institut presented the work at its Boston institution, where it was awarded the IBM Innovation Award of the Boston Cyberarts Festival (Smee 2009). Since then,

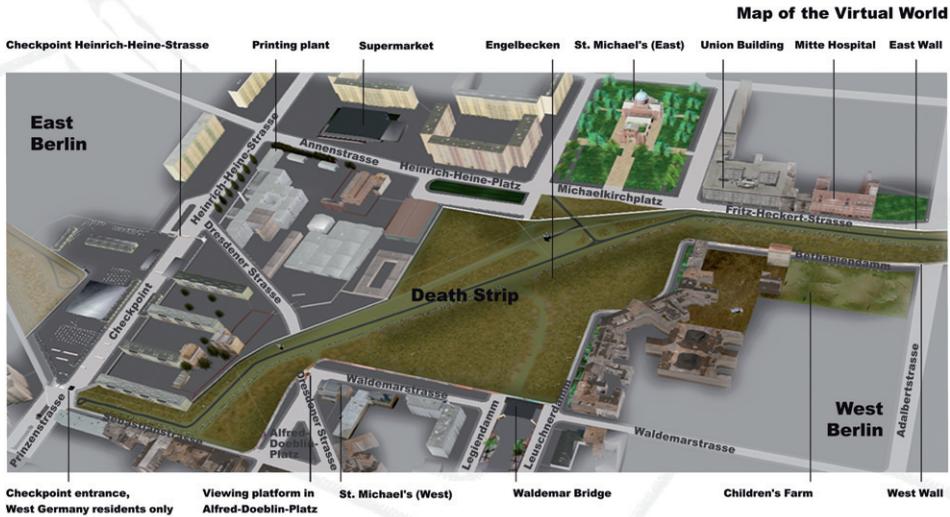


Figure 7. Map of the Virtual World. T + T (Tamiko Thiel and Teresa Reuter), *Virtuelle Mauer*, 2008.

Virtuelle Mauer has travelled to various places in Europe, North America and Asia, also proving the universal applicability of the artwork.

As with the VR installation on *Beyond Manzanar*, the virtual wall provides an interactive, kinaesthetic and immersive encounter before a nine-by-twelve foot screen space users/learners navigate with a simple joystick. In the darkened and enclosed room in front of the life-size projection, users/learners become average Berlin residents experiencing how it was to live 'in the shadow of the Wall' along three time axes: the 1960s, the mid-1980s and the present time. Sounds as diverse as screeching tires from a truck crashing through the crude 1960s wall, or St. Michael's church bells, or the bleating of the goats from a children's farm add a sonic dimension to the experience.

At Checkpoint Heinrich-Heine-Straße users learn that at this border crossing the only people allowed to cross were residents of West Germany, diplomats, and vehicles with special permission for commerce and transport.⁸ In the 1980s reality of the installation, users/learners are turned back by the stoic border guard (Figure 8) and may continue to walk along the sidewalk of western Sebastianstraße, which was, paradoxically, East German territory.⁹ The houses of the street, however, stood in the West, and open doors invite users/learners to take a look inside, where they get a view back onto the Heinrich-Heine-Straße border crossing, as well as a view of the Wall, the death strip (*Todesstreifen*) and East Berlin houses in the exclusion zone.

At Alfred-Döblin Platz, users/learners may approach a couple on a sightseeing tour, a woman in a tiger-print leggings and short bright green hair (a style that clearly situates her in the 1980s) and her rather indistinctly clad American travel companion (Figure 9). In a thick Berlin accent the woman tells the man about former stretches of the Wall being made up of buildings with boarded-up facades back in the 1960s. Her companion translates what she says into English or endorses her statements with short remarks in English. When the woman tells the story of the family in the corner house that was able to break open a boarded-up window one night and managed to



Figure 8. Border guard at the Heinrich-Heine-Strasse Border Crossing. T+T (Tamiko Thiel and Teresa Reuter), *Virtuelle Mauer*, 2008.



Figure 9. A West Berlin resident and her American visitor on a 'Wall tour' in the 1980s. T+T (Tamiko Thiel and Teresa Reuter), *Virtuelle Mauer*, 2008.

escape, the Wall of the 1980s transforms into that of the 1960s and a rope is left dangling from a window. In the world of the installation the linearity of historical discourse is deconstructed as users hover between times and spaces. Users/learners then witness the official consequence of the rope flight: the upper levels of the houses are demolished and the ground floor windows and doors are filled with bricks; stumps of houses become an insurmountable barrier. They were left standing until the 1970s, when they were replaced by a much stronger wall.

Apart from the sightseeing couple the square and streets seem deserted, 'as they would have been near the wall', Annette Klein recalls (cited in Hadge 2009, n/p). If one continues to move down the street, the virtual world transforms back to the 1980s and users/learners pass along a colourful stretch of graffiti on the western Wall; it is almost like moving along an open gallery. A bit further down the street, an older German woman informs her Turkish neighbour about the Studio am Stacheldraht (SaS), a mobile barbed-wire radio studio in a VW bus that began broadcasting news and information to East Berliners in August 1961. Supported by the West Berlin Senate and RIAS (Broadcasting in the American Sector), the programmes served to counter the public address systems that transmitted propaganda from the East. While the two women talk to each other, the border houses of the 1960s reappear and the Studio am Stacheldraht VW bus begins a broadcast (Figure 10).



Figure 10. The VW bus from ‘Studio am Stacheldraht’ appears and begins a broadcast. T+T (Tamiko Thiel and Teresa Reuter), *Virtuelle Mauer*, 2008.



Figure 11. View from Hospital Mitte: Death strip and children’s farm in Kreuzberg at the corner of Adalbertstrasse and Bethaniendamm. T+T (Tamiko Thiel and Teresa Reuter), *Virtuelle Mauer*, 2008.

The virtual wall also includes portals that allow for switching sides. For example, from Waldemar Bridge the trompe l’oeil wall painting of St. Michael’s Church catches the user’s eye. When users/learners approach the image on the western Wall, they are transported into the time of the reunified twenty-first century city with the Wall gone. Users/learners are able to freely cross into former East Berlin. Yet, only as long as they remain in the confines of the former death strip they stay in the present. As soon as they cross the unseen border into the former East, the scenery transforms and the Berlin Wall of the 1980s fades back in. The hinterland wall of the East blocks the view and conveys the feeling of confinement and uneasiness. An open door on the East Berlin side leads users/learners into the old Hospital Mitte, which was one of the few places where average East Berliners who did not live close to the Wall could visually overcome the hinterland wall and see what the death strip looks like (Figure 11). They could also peek into the West and would see that there was plenty of unused and run-down space in the so-called ‘golden’ West: a children’s farm occupied the corner of Adalbertstraße and Bethaniendamm.



Figure 12. Catholic church of St. Michael, built in 1851. T+T (Tamiko Thiel and Teresa Reuter), *Virtuelle Mauer*, 2008.

In contrast, the residential quarter around Heinrich-Heine-Platz in the East was a thriving area that had undergone urban renewal as one of the first after the war, including the building of high-rise *Plattenbauten* and a HO Kaufhalle department store. Yet, moving just around the Kaufhalle, users/learners are back at Heinrich-Heine-Straße border crossing – this time facing it from the East, again with no means to overcome it – powerless and helpless. In a flashback vignette seen from the East, users/learners witness a truck trying to break through the barriers from East to West only to be violently stopped by gunfire.¹⁰ Literally, forced to turn back, users/learners are likely to find their way to the Catholic church of St. Michael (Figure 12) – this time the real and not the painted one – and for the users/learners the main portal of what might be read as a sanctuary opens. They are taken on what Thiel calls a ‘surreal journey high over the roofs of East Berlin’ and back into the twenty-first century. Landing in the Engelbecken Park, the former death strip, users/learners are free to choose their path to the West or the East – if they remember where the border was.

By providing an immersive, kinaesthetic experience in the spaces divided and created by the Berlin Wall, especially the feeling of confinement is convincingly conveyed, for example by navigating the narrow space between the Wall and a block of West Berlin houses. Barbed wire and guard towers within the death strip, the presence of armed border guards at Checkpoint Heinrich-Heine-Straße furthermore reinforce the feeling of living under a permanent threat, both in the East and the West. Through the visual potency of the images, the affective quality is retained even if one does not speak English or German (the two languages used). Yet, many questions also emerge in the virtual environment: How many people succeeded in their flight attempts through boarded-up windows before the houses were torn down? Or, how propagandistic was the Studio am Stacheldraht? Only some of the questions are answered in a brochure (in English and German) that provides explanatory background information on the political context, the social differences between East and West Berlin and the urban situation in the densely populated area of Kreuzberg and Mitte. Besides a chronology of events, the brochure provides a visual record and spatial understanding of the Wall that was also used for the creation/realization of the installation: historic and recent photos, panoramas, aerial photos and maps.

In this respect, other media forms, particularly novels and films, come to mind that have conveyed life behind the iron curtain and may complement the visitor's/learner's experience of the virtual wall.¹¹ The Berlin Wall Trail (*Berliner Mauerweg*) seems another promising complementary development. Begun in 2002 and completed in 2006, it features markers with short texts and photographs put up across the city and encircling West Berlin along a total of 160 kilometres around West Berlin. At 29 sites people who died at the Wall are commemorated.¹² The special achievement of *Virtuelle Mauer*, however, is that it allows for a double perspective from the East and the West onto the Wall in a three-dimensional space as well as the possibility of a fourth – chronological – dimension of experiencing the historical Wall and subsequent spatial developments at different points in time.

The Travels of Mariko Hōrō

A place on the map is also a place in history.

Rich 1986: 212

For many Westerners a map determines one's location and identity. Similar to the creation of *Beyond Manzanar* and *Virtuelle Mauer*, the VR installation *The Travels of Mariko Hōrō* began with two maps, this time not depicting the layout of an internment camp, or a map of divided Berlin, but a map of Venice, Italy, and a Japanese *bankoku jinbutsu zue*, a panoramic map of the world (Figures 13 and 14). However, quite unlike her approach in *Beyond Manzanar* and *Virtuelle Mauer*, Thiel in *Mariko Hōrō* does not build upon other people's experiences. Instead, she uses the conceit of a fictitious female variant of Marco Polo and places her in the Venice lagoon. Venice represents the geographical meeting point between Asia and Europe, a contact zone where the perceived sensuality and exoticism of the East blends with the more restrained, and supposedly civilised West. The blueprint for the virtual Venice is

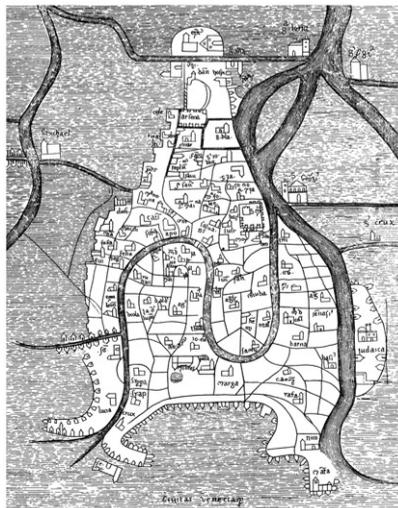


Figure 13. Map of Venice, c. 1150 A.D. In: Giocondo Cassini, *Piante e Vedute Prospettiche di Venezia* (1479–1855). Venice: La Stamperia di Venezia Editrice, 1971, 162–63.

provided by a 1346 woodblock print, or more precisely of its churches (Figure 13). ‘What would Mariko think, if this is her only map of the West?’, asks Thiel and answers her own question: to Mariko the ‘West must be composed of islands, some with buildings, some without, some buildings standing in the water’ (Thiel 2007, p. 15). Coming from an island nation herself, Hōrō’s world is conceptualized around the assumption that all nations must exist on/as islands (Figure 15).

Thiel deliberately chooses Venice and the Mediterranean Sea as fictional locations of her installation. The Mediterranean – from classical antiquity to the Renaissance – had been the centre of the (known) world for Europeans – ‘a body of water to gather around, a known space to travel over’ (Clifford 1989: n/p). In the thirteenth century the Venetian explorer Marco Polo traveled East, while Thiel’s protagonist travels West



Figure 14. Japanese board game depicting entire world composed of islands, late 1800s.



Figure 15. Large islands floating in the western seas. Tamiko Thiel, *Travels of Mariko Hōrō*, 2006.



Figure 16. Mariko's home in the lagoon. Tamiko Thiel, *Travels of Mariko Hōrō*, 2006.



Figure 17. In the court of final judgment. Tamiko Thiel, *Travels of Mariko Hōrō*, 2006.

sometime between the twelfth and the twenty-second centuries. The phonetic and phonemic similarity with the name of the Italian explorer seems no coincidence. Her name is made up of the Japanised form of Mary, the mother of God in the Christian worldview, and the Japanese word *hōrō*, meaning 'to wander'. The latter reference explicitly points toward her position as traveller, migrant or even exile in a strange and foreign world. The timelessness of the piece, which was created between 2003 and 2006, becomes evident in the context of the European refugee crisis that has escalated since 2015. Contrary to the other two installations *Mariko Hōrō* has not found a permanent home in a specific museum but continues to benefit from its applicability and significance in various environments. It has been shown in Kyoto, Boston, San Jose, Munich, Wolfsburg, Ghent, San Diego, Seattle, Berlin, Venice, Regensburg, and Florence.



Figure 18. The limbo of lost souls. Tamiko Thiel, *Travels of Mariko Hōrō*, 2006.

Hōrō's travels and her experiences are encapsulated in what Thiel calls 'Hōrōgrams' or 3D virtual spaces, which are accessible by learners/users through church portals. The transformation felt upon entering might indeed not be limited to the virtual world, as many Orthodox and Catholic church interiors are built to present a form of other or virtual reality: once inside you leave the profane world behind and enter a symbolic heaven. Learners/users always embark on their journey from Mariko's 'home base', a Japanese-style house floating above the water of the lagoon, where they board and then steer a gondola drawn by seahorses (Figure 16). Each time their journey ends in death, learners/users are reborn on this island to explore Mariko Hōrō's world anew. A pavilion on one island takes learners/users inside an underwater realm resembling the Piazza San Marco fraught with Christian symbolism. The fact that Hōrō understands Christian iconography only in terms of Buddhist imagery is conveyed in the blending of the two styles: the Stairs of the Giants in the Palazzo Ducale resemble the Western Guardian Kings of Buddhist cosmology; Asian-faced *avogadori* (Venetian judges in red robes) lead the way to a Court of Final Judgment. The mosaic of Christos Pantocrator, the primary icon of the Basilica San Marco, is placed at the centre of a mandala surrounded by Christian saints (Figure 17). Various Byzantine gestures of benedictions are fused in one multi-armed image – a foreign technique perceived as heathen in Christian iconography. Furthermore, the face of Christos Pantocrator is red and hairy with large blue eyes, thus echoing classic Japanese depictions of Westerners.¹³ The effect is the creation of an experience of Otherness for users/learners, disregarding which culture they identify with. Upon approaching Christ's right or left hand, learners/users will rise to heaven or fall to hell. Although predetermined paths connect certain scenes, in any one scene there can be more than one 'portal' which takes learners/users into a different following scene, thus creating a play between determinism and free will.

For example, a plain white clapboard chapel situated on an island with the shape of the mainland United States turned upside down leads learners/users into a limbo state and exposes them to images of torment accompanied by shrieks: KuKluxKlan

members worship a burning cross; countless Kim Phúc figures running from the Napalm attack of Trang Bang, and equally countless – by now iconic – hooded figures from Abu Ghraib prison approach the learners/users (Figure 18). According to Thiel, the visual comprehension of the Abu Ghraib image proved to be among the most difficult in the piece, especially for American learners/users. The limbo scene exudes images of abuse and torture, but also prompts users/learners to critically assess American hegemonic practices (such as the ones carried out at Vietnam, Abu Ghraib, and Guantánamo).

Thiel's American national identity could result in a reading of *Mariko Hōrō* as hegemonic, albeit critical, projection of alterity, the fabrication of an Other by a member of Western society. However, Thiel's unique position as an American of mixed Japanese and German ancestry speaks against such a hegemonic or colonial stance. Thiel's Buddhist grandparents became Christian ministers and missionaries in the US where they and other Japanese Christians were confronted with the conflict between the American promise of 'one nation under God, with liberty and justice for all' and the reality of Japanese American internment during World War II. In an attempt at reconciliation Thiel fuses the cyclical, non-Western structure of Buddhism with the linear, determinate structure of Christian thought in her installation.

Mariko only sees what she expects to see, or, in other words, she is only able to describe the unfamiliar in terms of the familiar, a practice echoing that of Marco Polo: his gaze into the depths of Asia earned him fame as a Western Man exploring and categorising the foreign cultures of the East; the practice turned the Venetian into a pioneer in the attempt to understand the Other. On the other hand, the exoticising gaze 'is a view through a half-silvered mirror' explains Thiel and continues: 'The viewer means to describe new lands, new peoples, new cultures, but in reality he sees images of his own culture superimposed over a vague and exotic background' (2007, p. 17). In the reversal of this common practice, that is the inversion of the gaze and the reversal of the gender of the explorer, Thiel's installation critically explores processes of cultural construction and transmission. Koshy (2008) believes 'the intersections of gender and feminism with Orientalism and Islamophobia [to be] among the trickiest analytics to negotiate in the last two decades' (p. 302). Yet, with the creation of *Mariko Hōrō*, Thiel takes on this challenge. This is why I would like to reiterate and thus call to mind the agenda of transnational feminism:

It may now be time to think carefully about whether feminism travels well across borders, not because distances are as great as they were in the past, but precisely because they are alleged to have shrunk. ... Transnational feminism, at the best of times a precarious project that negotiates neoliberal universalism, cultural relativism, asymmetrical knowledge flows, the demand for authenticity, and its own commodification, may be short-circuited by its mediatization. These shifts invite us to reflect on the possibility or impossibility of transnational feminism in our time (2008, pp. 302–303).

In her installations, yet especially with the figure of the traveller or migrant who could also be an émigré or exile, Thiel includes her own biography. Like her protagonist she remains an Other between the spheres and between different cultural forms.¹⁴ Learners/users will never actually see *Hōrō*; a one-way white gaze on an exotic Other is, it seems, deliberately disabled.¹⁵ From *Hōrō*'s perspective (which

learners/users are invited to share by *becoming* Hōrō), everything that should otherwise be familiar seems strange, odd, and exotic. It is this particular position of the learner/user that facilitates an experience that provides a decentralising, deconstructivist view on the interconnection of imperialism and culture. The Other in Thiel's installation 'is not a passive body appropriated by hegemonic discourse, but a social actor [...] in pursuit of his or her own agenda' (Ngai 2005, p. 61). *Travels* does not only ask how the Other is depicted, but what the role of the Other is in cultural translation, negotiation and knowledge production. In this sense, Thiel's installation allows for transcultural and transnational experiences of human existence.

Discussion and conclusions

The installations discussed in this essay translate issues of vision, memory, exclusion, violence and identity into a universal language. In them, memory does not designate a storage medium but becomes an experience of the learner/user and museum visitor. As experiential digital artworks, the installations provide both individual, free-choice and site-specific learning experiences that cannot simply be reproduced in a classroom environment. To the contrary, it takes advantage of the unique pedagogical opportunities museums offer (Clover 2015).

Beyond Manzanar represents a 'powerful kind of memorial' as Marita Sturken has called successful forms of historical re-enactment (2001, p.46). It not only conveys visualised memories of the Japanese and Iranian American past and present, but manages to project their wider transnational significance 'indelibly into our future'. With her 2008 installation *Virtuelle Mauer*, Thiel provides an immersive experience of living 'in the shadows of the Wall' that brings up transnational connotations, such as the border condition (and often physical walls) between Palestine and Israel, Mexico and the USA, North and South Korea, Pakistan and India. *The Travels of Mariko Hōrō* moves the question of agency to the forefront by constructing the Other as an agent able to control and convey his or her own experiences and agenda. In this sense, Thiel's VR installations fulfil the requirements of critical public pedagogy formulated by Clover (2015, p. 301); they are the artworks that 'trouble the identity, decolonise, mock, revisualise, tell alternative stories, reorient authoritative practice, interrogate intolerance and privilege and stimulate critical literacies'.

I would like to conclude with Seyla Benhabib (2002), who has pointed out that while jurisdiction may frame the limits of our actions, 'cross-cultural understanding is furthered primarily by processes of understanding and communication within civil society' (2002, p. 81). All three installations may serve as learning technologies to start such processes of cultural communication and re-signification. In general, artistic expressions as they exist in many museums and art galleries seem ideal in initiating such processes that in turn need to be translated into social practice. And it is our task as scholars and educators, 'trained in analysing cultures, exploring cultural contacts and examining intercultural relations' (Hornung 2005, p. 70) to take stock of positive developments in museums as well their utilisation of existing educational technologies to establish a fertile ground for lifelong education without borders.

Notes

1. In 2014 Manzanar National Historic Site counted close to 80,000 visitors and ranks at 241 for this park type (National Park, National Monument, National Historic Site, National Historic Park, etc.) (U.S. National Park Service 2014).
2. Among the few examples are Mine Okubo's *Citizen 13660* (1983) and Monica Sone's personal narrative *Nisei Daughter* (1979). John Okada's *No-No Boy* (1957) is not only the first Japanese American novel of the internment, but it is also often regarded as the first Japanese American novel.
3. Two weeks after the terrorist attacks a third of the respondents in a poll said they would favor the detainment of Arab American citizens until their loyalty could be proven (Bai 2001, p. 21). Also, the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) responded to numerous incidents of violence and harassment against Muslim Americans and other individuals or groups that are perceived to be of Middle Eastern descent (Anti-Defamation League 2001).
4. The fence poems are accessible at <http://www.mission-base.com/manzanar/poetry/poetry.html>.
5. In reality the occasional sonic boom or high drone of fighter planes from nearby Edwards Air Force Base is the only sound that disturbs the silence at Manzanar today. The fighter plane sequence thus also has a concrete relationship to the particular landscape and may offer yet another layer of meaning to *Beyond Manzanar*.
6. In March 2013 protests erupted against the partial relocation of 1.3 kilometres of hinterland wall on Mühlenstraße in Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg that have become a tourist attraction known as East Side Gallery (Leopold and Horeld 2013, Küpper 2013).
7. Partners include the Hauptstadt Kulturfonds (Capital City Cultural Fund of Berlin), which also served as the primary financial sponsor (with 110,000 Euro); the support was complemented by the Berlin Wall Documentation Center, the Museum for Communication in Berlin, the State Department of the Federal Republic of Germany, the Goethe-Institut Boston, Dr. John Czaplicka (Harvard University Center for European Studies), Massachusetts Institute of Technology – Center for Advanced Visual Studies, metroGap e.V., Bitmanagement Systems.
8. In my description of the installation, I am indebted to Tamiko Thiel and Teresa Reuter and their excellent website at <http://www.virtuelle-mauer-berlin.de>.
9. 'The Berlin Wall was usually built slightly inside the East German borders, so that West German authorities were not allowed to approach the Wall' Thiel and Reuter explain (Thiel and Reuter 2008).
10. The virtual escape attempt is based on a real event in 1962 when three men tried to escape to the West. The driver Klaus Brüske died, his friends survived seriously injured (Jekosch 2008, p. 12).
11. Ingo Schulze's *Neue Leben* (transl. *New Lives*, 2005); Uwe Tellkamp's *Der Turm: Geschichte aus einem versunkenen Land* (2008); the Oscar-winning *The Lives of Others* (orig. *Das Leben der Anderen*, Dir. Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck, 2006); or the comedy *Good Bye Lenin!* (Dir. Wolfgang Becker, 2003).
12. The practice reminds one of the successful *Stolpersteine* (literally 'stumbling blocks') which, in many countries and cities, mark the last residences of Jewish Holocaust victims and other persecuted minorities deported and killed during the Third Reich.
13. Thiel (2007) explains that 'red is the symbolic colour of the West in Buddhism, and the Westerners who made it to Japan after long sea voyages were also burnt red by the sun' (p. 12). In this scene Thiel also borrows the vibrant palette and energetic imagery of Tibetan Buddhism—for Japanese artists, the 'Far West' of ancient times.
14. Cf. the descriptions of Edward Said in *Culture and Imperialism* that could be read in much the same vein (1994, p. 437).
15. Thiel explains that while 'users will never actually see Mariko, except perhaps in a mirror [...] they will be Mariko, seeing the exotic and mysterious Occident through her eyes and her experiences' (2007, p. 1).

References

- Anti-Defamation League, 2001. Terrorism Strikes America: ADL responds to violence and harassment against Arab Americans and Muslim Americans. *Anti-Defamation League*. Available from: http://www.adl.org/terrorism_america/adl_responds.asp [Accessed 12 September 2016].
- Bai, M., 2001. *Hyphenated Americans*. *New York Times Magazine*, 28 Oct, p. 21.
- Behdad, A., 2008. Critical historicism. *American Literary history*, 20 (1-2), 286–299.
- Benhabib, S., 2002. *The claims of culture: equality and diversity in the global era*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Berlant, L., 2004. Critical inquiry, affirmative culture. *Critical inquiry*, 30 (2), 445–451.
- Biggs, J., 2012. What the student does: teaching for enhanced learning. *Higher education research & development*, 31 (3), 39–55.
- Brady, M.J., 2011. Subjectivity through self-education: media and the multicultural citizen at the national museum of the American Indian. *Television & new media*, 12 (5), 441–459.
- Brody, M., Tomkiewicz, W., and Graves, J, 2002. Park visitors' understandings, values and beliefs related to their experience at Midway Geyser Basin, Yellowstone National Park, USA'. *International journal of science education*, 24 (11), 1119–1141.
- Clifford, J., 1989. Notes on travel and theory. *Inscriptions*, 5. Available from: http://humwww.ucsc.edu/CultStudies/PUBS/Inscriptions/vol_5/clifford.html. [Accessed 29 June 2010].
- Clover, D.E., 2015. Adult education for social and environmental change in contemporary public art galleries and museums in Canada, Scotland and England'. *International journal of life-long education*, 34 (3), 300–315.
- Czaplicka, J., 2008. The Wall in View; the Wall Itself. *Virtuelle Mauer/ReConstructing the Wall*. Available from: <http://www.virtuelle-mauer-berlin.de/english/czaplickaEssay1.htm> [Accessed 30 January 2016].
- Daniels, R., 2002. Incarceration of the Japanese-Americans: A Sixty-Year perspective. *History teacher*, 35 (3), 297–310.
- Duncan, R. and Juncker, C., eds. (2004) *Transnational America: contours of modern US culture*. Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Press.
- Falk, J.H., 2005. Free-choice environmental learning: framing the discussion. *Environmental education research*, 11, 265–280.
- Finch, F., 1946. Manzanar, War-Born Jap Town, Dismantled. *Los Angeles Times*, p. 2.
- Fishkin, S.F., 2005. Crossroads of cultures: the transnational turn in American studies—Presidential Address to the American Studies Association, November 12, 2004. *American quarterly*, 57 (1), 17–57.
- Gessner, I., 2007. *From sites of memory to cybersights: (re)framing Japanese American experiences*. Heidelberg: Winter.
- Hadge, K., 2009. Virtual Berlin – in Two Parts: Museum and Gallery. *Providence Phoenix*. Available from: <http://providence.thephoenix.com/arts/80736-virtual-berlin-in-two-parts/authors/kara-hadge/> [Accessed 15 March 2013].
- Heimlich, J.E., et al. 2004. *Measuring the learning outcomes of adult visitors to zoos and aquariums: phase I technical report*. Annapolis, MD: Institute for Learning Innovation.
- Hornung, A., 2005. Transnational American Studies: response to the presidential address. *American quarterly*, 57 (1), 67–73.
- Houshmand, Z., 2000. *Never to repeat, hopefully: art inspired by prejudice*. Available from: <http://www.iranian.com/Arts/2000/December/Manzanar/index.html>. [Accessed 12 September 2016]
- Jekosch, M., 2008. Mauer-Ausstellung: Mit dem Joystick durch düstere Zeiten. *Der Tagesspiegel*, 12, 14 Aug.
- Kato, D., 1994. American prisoners of ... America. *San Jose Mercury News*, 3, 20 Nov.
- Koshy, S., 2008. Postcolonial studies after 9/11: a response to Ali Behdad. *American literary history*, 20 (1-2), 300–303.
- Küpper, M., 2013. Streit um East Side Gallery: Grundrecht auf Unsachlichkeit. *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*. Available from: <http://www.faz.net/aktuell/politik/inland/>

- streit-um-east-side-gallery-grundrecht-auf-unsachlichkeit-12102962.html [Accessed 30 January 2016].
- Leopold, J. and Horeld, M., 2013. East Side Gallery: Berlins legitimer Mauer-Protest oder Scheinheiligkeit?. *Die Zeit*. Available from: <http://www.zeit.de/gesellschaft/zeitgeschehen/2013-03/east-side-gallery-protest> [Accessed 20 January 2016].
- Murray, J.H., 1997. *Hamlet on the Holodeck: the future of narrative in cyberspace*. New York: Free Press.
- Ngai, M.M. 2005. Transnationalism and the transformation of the 'Other': response to the presidential address. *American quarterly*, 57 (1), 59–65.
- Okada, J., 1957. *No-No Boy*, Seattle: University of Washington Press.
- Okubo, M., 1983. *Citizen*. Seattle: University of Washington Press.
- Park, J.N.H., 2008. *Apparitions of Asia: modernist form and Asian American poetics*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Rich, A.C., 1986. *Blood, bread, and poetry: selected prose, 1979–1985*. New York: Norton.
- Said, E.W., 1994. *Kultur und Imperialismus: Einbildungskraft und Politik im Zeitalter der Macht*. Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer.
- Sanchez, G., 2002. Working at the crossroads: American studies for the 21st century presidential address to the American Studies Association 9 November 2001. *American quarterly*, 54 (1), 1–23.
- Smee, S., 2009. Critic's picks – visual arts. *Boston Globe*. Available from: http://www.boston.com/ae/theater_arts/articles/2009/05/03/critics_picks___visual_arts/ [Accessed 30 January 2016].
- Sone, M.I., 1979. *Nisei daughter*. Seattle: University of Washington Press.
- Sparacino, F., Davenport, G., and Pentland, A., 2002. *MCN spectra millennial digest*. Available from: [http://www.artsconnected.org/millennialmuseum/displayitem.cfm?item=\(61\)](http://www.artsconnected.org/millennialmuseum/displayitem.cfm?item=(61)) [Accessed 29 June 2010].
- Sturken, M., 1997. *Tangled memories: the Vietnam War, the AIDS epidemic, and the politics of remembering*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Sturken, M., 2001. Absent images of memory: remembering and reenacting the Japanese internment. In: T. Fujitani, G. M. White, and L. Yoneyama, eds. *Perilous Memories: the Asia-Pacific war(s)*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 33–49.
- Thiel, T., 2001. Beyond Manzanar: Constructing Meaning in Interactive Virtual Reality. In: *COSIGN conference*. Amsterdam, Holland. Available from: <http://www.mission-base.com/manzanar/articles/cosign/cosign.html> [Accessed 12 September 2016].
- Thiel, T., 2007. The travels of Mariko Hōrō: conceptual background, München.
- Thiel, T. and Houshmand, Z., 1998a. History and project origins. *Beyond Manzanar*. Available from: <http://www.mission-base.com/manzanar/history/origins.html> [Accessed 12 September 2016].
- Thiel, T. and Houshmand, Z., 1998b. Virtual reality installation. *Beyond Manzanar*. Available from: <http://www.mission-base.com/manzanar/description.html> [Accessed 12 September 2016].
- Thiel, T. and Reuter, T., 2012. Exhibition Concept. *Virtuelle Mauer: re-constructing the wall*. Available from: <http://www.virtuelle-mauer-berlin.de/assets/download/VirtuelleMauerExhibitionConcept.pdf> [Accessed 30 January 2016].
- Thiel, T. and Reuter, T., 2008. Screenshots walkthrough of Virtuelle Mauer/Reconstructing the Wall. *Virtuelle Mauer/reconstructing the wall*. Available from: <http://www.virtuelle-mauer-berlin.de/english/devFiles/screenshots.htm> [Accessed 30 January 2016].
- Tisdell, E.J., 2007. Popular culture and critical media literacy in adult education: theory and practice. *New directions for adult and continuing education*, 115, 5–13.
- U.S. National Park Service. 2014. Manzanar National Historic Site Visitors. *Blue Marble Citizen*. Available from: <http://www.bluemarblecitizen.com/national-park-visitors/Manzanar%20National%20Historic%20Site> [Accessed 30 January 2016].
- Yu, H., 2001. *Thinking orientals: migration, contact, and exoticism in modern America*. New York: Oxford University Press.