Changi: A penal genealogy across the Pacific War

For the generation who came of age during World War II (WWII), the name Changi, associated with both the prison and Prisoner of War (POW) camp in Singapore, evokes a wartime history of incarceration and survival under Japanese Imperial Forces. Histories and memoirs of the allied forces are the dominant sources on this period (from 15 February 1942 –15 August 1945), while the scholarship of R.P.W. Havers, Christina Twomey, and Kevin Blackburn and Karl Hack are significant contributions to a growing body of critical literature on the subject.[1] Social memory and commemoration is the overwhelming focus of Anglophone literature on this topic. Yoji Akashi and Mako Yoshimura offer similar insights on the Japanese perspective as do other Singaporean scholars.[2] Former-POW representations of a haven for recuperation from regional forced-labour camps and a hell-hole towards the end of the war present Changi through a history of extremes. Memoirs such as Russel Braddon's *The Naked Island*, and the war diaries of Thomas Kitching, R.M. Horner, Keith Wilson and Sheila Allen, among many others, augment military records and reports.[3] Changi has also entered popular memory through, in particular, the Australian Broadcasting Corporations television mini-series aired in 2001.[4] In 2004, the imminent demolition of its physical facilities, a significant commemorative landscape for Australian WWII veterans, strained diplomatic relations between Australia and Singapore.[5]

Representation exclusively through wartime captivity reduces Changi's much longer institutional history as a military encampment and location of the last colonial prison in the British colony of Singapore.[6] *The History of Changi* by Henry Probert scarcely mentions the prison while the most comprehensive account of the war by David Nelson, titled, *The Story of Changi Singapore*, is focused on the POW camp.[7] Neglect of its penal institutional significance is further compounded by

Singapore's determined erasure of Japanese occupation histories, and the postcolonial government's single-minded developmental focus.[8] This essay hopes to draw these disparate histories together in a heterogeneous but continuous narrative. In doing so it crosses many boundaries of power, knowledge and empire.

This essay links Changi Prison and its attendant geography of Prisoner of War (POW) and military camps to the history of the prison in Singapore, an institutional model for colonial governance transformed by regional imperial conflict. Designed during the late colonial period to house Asian prisoners, Changi was an extension of a racialised penal ideology for reforming colonial subjects through labour. The colonial penal complex and its associated facilities emulated nineteenth century penal ideologies of environmental determinism realised in models such as the panopticon penitentiary. This strategy, discussed at length by Michel Foucault in his critique of enlightenment institutions, was characterised by penal disciplinary regimes.[9] The punitive dimension of the penal brief – its deprivations and humiliations – was suppressed in the advocacy of its reformative capacity evident in early discussions of the colonial prison.[10] This orientation changed following the Fall of Singapore to Japanese Imperial Forces in February 1942.

The WWII incarceration of European soldiers and civilians saw the transformation and expansion of this penal model as central to a POW camp environment, a punitive city distributed across Singapore. Incarceration was linked to a new labour regime using captive European colonisers – the British and Dutch – and through their military alliance – American and Australian troops. The racist undercurrents of colonial punitive cultures evident in cramped facilities designed for Asiatic prisoners were tested by this changing of the guard. They described and recorded their humiliation as prisoners of the Japanese, highlighting the boundary between humane and inhumane forms of incarceration. We might argue that Japanese imperial forces applied a colonial model intended for 'humanising' Asian criminals for 'dehumanising' captive Euro-American civilians and soldiers. This argument is true for many wartime carceral facilities.

Whilst wartime provocations for unjust incarceration and inhumane treatment seem unrelated to the prison's institutional brief, the military templates used for prison-designs and punitive cultures have been historically over-determined. The military deployment of punitive facilities suggests the criminalisation of military challengers or enemy aliens threatening to those in power. Throughout the Pacific Theatre of WWII, whether in the USA, Australia, or Japan, or in Japanese occupied territories in Asia, civilians and POWs were incarcerated in very similar camps or prisons. The inclusion of civilian internees converted penal facilities into provisional dwelling places organised through military disciplinary regimes.

Using this shifting penal geography as the basis for its historical narrative, this essay poses questions regarding the social aims of incarceration, the adaptation of physical facilities and their use for civilian confinement at the nation's purported border. Whilst wartime conditions may provoke what may be regarded an aberrant practice, they inform the parameters of present day refugee detention. Wartime incarceration of soldiers and civilians, their repatriation or post-war refugee exoduses are episodes in a continuing history of border creation and control. Despite the domestication of carceral facilities for immigrant reception and detention, the morality and physicality of incarceration remains pertinent.

However, the significance of Pacific War border practices for present-day border politics is not this essay's concern. It studies the intersection between the Pacific War and a specific penal genealogy across three types of residential holding facilities: the prison, the camp and the home. Firstly, the institutional program and labour regime of Changi Gaol are presented as constitutive parts of a 'subjugated' history of imperial violence and labour, absent from military representations of Changi's history. This is achieved by commencing a historical genealogy that predates Changi's overwhelmingly wartime representations. Secondly, as the genealogy unfolds, the POW camp, a highly dispersed military facility is introduced as a hybrid of that institutional model, and stage for an equally punitive labour regimen for former colonisers captured by the Japanese. The scope of the

institution expands further with the penal adaptation of military residential areas. In Singapore, during the final year of conflict, civilian internees are moved from the prison to a military estate-turned-prison camp, thus crossing a physical border between carceral and domestic facilities. The prison is then used to incarcerate military personnel. This provides insights for current-day design strategies for humanising carceral institutions through varied adaptations of residential design. Such strategies of domestication potentially link this institutional history to other forms of refugee accommodation and social housing.

The genealogical approach serves another purpose. The histories of imperial and national governments answer to particular constituencies and their narratives of race and class. The exploration of suppressed or under-valued memories (of local knowledges), advocated by Michel Foucault, is a critical means for unmasking conflicting genealogies. He calls for an "insurrection of these subjugated knowledges" arguing that "functionalist and systematising" epistemes obscure those genealogies that might dilute their authority. [11] Foucault suggests that a multiplicity of disordered and fragmentary genealogies may challenge totalising narratives of power. However, our knowledge of wartime penal experience is dominated by British military records necessitating a 'subaltern studies' approach to historiography.[12] Histories of the local environment remain subtexts to imperial ambitions while its materialities are instrumentalised for political ends. This socio-physical marginality is heightened by political pressures that transform Singapore, a colonial free port and mercantile hub, into a geographical border of imperial conflict.

As the bastion of British interests and defences in the Southeast Asian region and the site of heightened imperial competition with the Japanese, Singapore is likewise an intellectual border-space for multiple colliding histories. Its Pacific War histories are continuously territorialised by competing revisionist historians, enunciating British, Australian, Japanese or Singaporean national positions. A historical genealogy draws these intellectual boundary-making practices into a common narrative context. Meanwhile, the selective memory of the postcolonial government

further colours our understanding of this period in Singapore's history. The historical cleavage caused by the Japanese occupation leached the power of imperial authority and fed nascent nationalism, undermining colonial racial hierarchies. The Indian National Army and the Malayan Communist Party (each aligned to opposing groups of imperialists) were strengthened in response. Post-war reparation treaties, the construction of postcolonial racial dignity and the need to heal deep social wounds modified this history further. A degree of socio-political ambivalence towards the colonial project, belated claims for independence and perspectives of an ethnically Chinese-dominated government further obfuscates this conflict genealogy. The wartime dissolution of the institutional model and its consolidation towards the end of and after the war echoes the political turbulence of the era. Comprehensive analyses on community perspectives by Singaporean and Singapore-based scholars engage retroactively with this history.[13]

Literature on Singapore's Pacific War thus straddles competing national and therefore political claims. Decolonisation, economic recovery and postcolonial national consciousness have diverted the paths, respectively, of the various citizens of the allied nations, Japanese or Singaporeans towards frequently incommensurate goals. History is consequently de-territorialised, producing fragmented rather than multiple genealogies where colonial, wartime or national violence is selectively suppressed. Changi re-enters this body of literature as a complex and critical nucleus for unravelling these narratives.

In summary, the many boundaries encountered in this essay include ethical boundaries on humane treatment of internees (poised between incarceration and citizenship); the geographical boundaries of competing imperial powers realised spatially and architecturally across carceral facilities; and the intellectual boundaries that reinscribe this history. But, the geo-political border under scrutiny is the Japanese interregnum as a period critical for the eventual decolonisation and postcolonial development of Singapore.

The genealogy of the prison

The history of the prison in Singapore is coeval with that of the colonial Straits Settlements of Melaka, Penang and Singapore, established as penal settlements for transported Indian convicts.[14] Transportation and regional settlement instituted the pattern of maritime border-crossings, reproducing Singapore as a nodal point in a broader penal geography connecting various colonies of the British Empire. The desire to reinvent these sites for colonial occupation produced a different model of punishment that maximised the labour force and enabled prisoner mobility, even appointing prisoners as their own warders.[15] Transported prisoners from the Indian presidencies, from Ceylon, and to a lesser extent Hong Kong and Burma became extra-territorial agents of Singapore's urban transformation clearing jungles, cutting roads and ditches, and laying out the property grid.[16] They were employed and trained in building construction by the Public Works Department with the prison as their factory and base. Transportees were organised hierarchically into six classes with harsh penalties for insubordination, recidivism or thieving.[17] The daily routine, the monthly muster, the rations, clothing and supervision of labour was strictly enforced. However, their labour mobility gave transportees spatial autonomy compared with regional settlers and European prisoners who were incarcerated in separate institutions. Their movement to and from the prison converted the entire island into a penal camp.

The prison for transportees was consequently distinct from those for the other two groups, evolving very quickly from military lines and informal village into a penal complex at Bras Basah by the 1860s.[18] In contrast, its punitive counterpart, the Civil Gaol for European and political prisoners, was a fortified institution that confined inmates in private apartments. A separate institution with dormitories and work yards was developed for regional settlers, who lived in association without spatial autonomy. These racialised models, evolving in tandem, framed the plural citizenship envisioned for the colony.[19] Interior spatial arrangements, ethnically coded messing and bathing habits, gender and caste divisions, health, mental health and sentences reflected racial priorities.

The ubiquity of transportees caused tensions in the colonial community, precipitating the end of transportation in 1873. With increases in local offender numbers the cellular, separate system triumphed and the Civil Gaol [later known as Pearls Hill Prison or Outram Road Gaol] was expanded from 1879-82.[20] Racist prejudices regarding penal health and hygiene along with the vilification of and efforts at controlling the tropical climate would be prioritised.[21] In Singapore, this preoccupation prompted a pavilion system designed by prison superintendent J.F.A. McNair comprising linear military barrack style buildings around the cruciform figure of the original Civil Gaol. The porosity of the penal environment was now limited to ventilation devices.

In a study of the Outram Road Gaol, Ho Pei Ying describes the shift of the racialised discourse from the labouring body of the prisoner to the sanitised body and environment alongside colonial urban policies on public health and sanitation.[22] Penal routines, diets, clothing, mental health and skill development were designed to exemplify this model, she argues, suppressing other failures in penal reform. The resultant divisive environment comprised European and Native wards, female criminal and civil prisons, native and European hospitals, alongside warders' and superintendent's quarters, industrial workshops, laundry, kitchen, store and department of photography.[23] The segregation of the European residential block, workshop and hospital maintained colonial racial superiority and spatial privilege.

Changi Prison, a new maximum security complex for the reform and rehabilitation of prisoners, emerges in 1936 as the final example in this century-long institutional genealogy (fig.1 &2).[24] Built by the British Royal Engineers (overseen by engineer, John Farewell), the new facility was designed to accommodate 600 Asian prisoners, replacing Outram Road Gaol.[25] Plans of the prison published on 27 October 1945 in *The Illustrated London News* show a cruciform structure with its two-storey transverse component at the centre, arranged behind the administrative block containing the general store, kitchen block, bakery, boiler room, laundry and forty first-floor cells.[26] The linear component of the crucifix accommodated two five-storey Asiatic blocks with three levels of cells

atop two floors of workshops and a dining hall and exercise yard. The 3x8 foot two-person cells contained a raised concrete platform at the centre, squatting pan at the corner and two small ventilation openings with metal bars and mesh on the wall above and furthest from the door.[27]

Whereas Outram Road Gaol had been focused on hygiene, Changi was a medicalised prison, with hospital, hospital annexe, dispensary, operating theatre, observation ward, mortuary and contagious disease ward dominating its southeastern quadrant. A vegetable garden and football ground included in the premises extended these concerns to penal routines and diets, but the bodies concerned continued to be racialised. The European block with basement store, 24 ground floor cells, first floor workrooms and its own exercise yard occupied the Southwest quadrant, its cells larger than those designed for Asiatics. Security was tightened through the doubling of perimeter walls, 15ft high inner walls, 20ft high outer walls and dividing walls between various sections. Courtroom, refractory and punishment cells indicated the colony's increasingly punitive legislative culture. Health, justice and punishment were the new foci.

[Figs 1& 2 near here]

The prison that evolved in the early twentieth century epitomised the carceral institution far more so than the facilities that preceded it. However, as with any subaltern history of illiterate colonised peoples, there is no record of its impact on the penal population. Enemies of the colonial state or social discards, incarcerated and concealed from public view, they remain historically mute. The same can be said for Changi Gaol before World War II. Its interior psychogeography would be unexpectedly animated by incarceration of Europeans, following the capitulation Singapore to the Japanese. After a period of confusion and social disarray, an estimated 45,000 captive soldiers and civilians made their way to Changi in February 1942.[28] The prison was used to accommodate 3000 civilian internees (408 women and 2598 men) until May 1944. Their paintings and sketches would portray the penal environment as the setting for their everyday life documenting their enforced subalterneity as prisoners of the Japanese.[29] Official War Artist, Murray Griffin's illustrated

representations, George Aspinall's clandestine photography, sketches by amateurs like Australian internees Greig Allister and Richard Cochran or cartoons of George Sprod offer affective evidence of harsh wartime conditions.[30] Several-hundred everyday artefacts collected from Australian POWs in the Australian War Memorial (AWM) archive provide visceral material evidence. In addition to Australian memorabilia, well-known contributions by Britishers include the murals drawn on the prison chapel walls by Bombadier Stanley Warren (between 1942-3), and the sketches of Ronald Searle.[31] They invoke the broader penal geography of the Changi Prisoner of War Camp.

Fortress Changi

Built in 1938 in anticipation of a Japanese attack on the new naval base at Sembawang, the Changi defensive battery strengthened the geographical dispersal of military facilities, part of the Singapore Strategy to increase military power and personnel. The Changi area was developed following recommendations of the 1927 Gillman Commission and expanded during the 1930s with Chinese contractors and Chinese and Indian labour, introducing new road and rail connections, plumbing, sewerage and electrical services, gun batteries and buildings.[32] An integrated military cantonment of bungalows, married soldiers' quarters, messes, coolie lines and four barracks complexes – the Kitchener Barracks (The Royal Engineers), Roberts Barracks (the Royal Artillery), Selarang Barracks (the Gordon Highlanders) and India Barracks (Hong Kong and Singapore regiments) – gave rise to substantial constructions comprising brick-panelled walls inside reinforced concrete frames built with granite and sand quarried from within Changi area.[33] They were raised on Bakau timber pile foundations and topped with sloping Marseille tile roofs or flat roofs. Along with other purpose-built military estates dispersed throughout the island in civilian areas, these residential facilities exemplified colonial civility domesticating military rigour with picturesque landscaping and period aesthetics.[34] Whereas the mid-nineteenth-century barracks had been modelled on sprawling Anglo-Malay plantation houses, their twentieth century antecedents were refined into compact two-storey black and white (mock Tudor) bungalows introduced by the colonial Public

Works Department. Military estates at Tanglin, Alexandra Park, Ridout Road, Adam Park (fig. 3) and Ridley Park, for example, date from the first three decades of the twentieth century. At the Sembawang, Seletar and Changi air bases, residential quarters serviced expansive military facilities; their scale and character mirroring the military hierarchy. By the early 1940s their designs had shifted stylistically from a stripped down classicism to an art deco aesthetic. These estates turned punitive for only a limited duration, under the Japanese occupation, gathering penal institutions into their spatial network.

[Fig 3 near here]

February 1942 saw protracted battles in the path of the advancing Japanese army, with fighting dispersed across many of these estates.[35] Civilian mobilisation is well articulated by New Zealander, Captain David Nelson, an official of the Singapore Improvement Trust (town improvement and housing authority) who maintained the secret Bureau of Record and Enquiry (BRE) during his captivity at Changi POW camp.[36] His account of the bombing of Singapore, plight of civilians, mobilisation of hospital staff and facilities, exodus and captivity conjures up a landscape of physical devastation sensitively rendered due to his intimate knowledge of Singapore. His own home in a government compound at the frontline of trenches had been damaged and looted.[37] As military facilities were targets, the attached residential estates were converted into battle fields. They would later be commissioned for work parties as temporary camps. They were used as military headquarters for Japanese army officials who also commandeered barracks, hospitals and military facilities.

POW mobilities

We might imagine a centripetal movement towards Changi across Singapore during the last two weeks of February 1942 as injured soldiers, stragglers, and civilian internees found their way to the designated penal camp. The 50,000 POWs who made their way to Changi on 16 February 1942

were distributed across several barracks, formerly part of Fortress Changi. Some 15,000 prisoners were housed at Selarang Barracks, and the remaining 35,000 (British and Dutch prisoners) in the other three.[38] Seven POW camps were demarcated covering a 25 km expanse, with Selarang Barracks maintained as the Australian Imperial Forces (AIF) camp until 1944 (fig. 4). Quarters were appropriated, stores were consolidated, damaged buildings were repaired, amenities reconnected and there was uninhibited movement to and from the camp. Prisoners were forced to sign a "non-escape declaration" form in September 1942, following what is known as the Selarang Barrack Square incident, a move that omitted the need for substantial physical barriers.[39]

[Fig. 4 near here]

POW memoirs detail the everyday routine, rations on food and clothing, poor accommodation, restricted space and manual labour already rehearsed in the penal system. Although patterned along military lines, incarceration, scarcity of supplies, poor health, oppression, coercion and labour rendered this disciplinary culture punitive. POWs responded with a counter culture, determined to maintain civility, through societies and clubs, theatres and sporting activities that humanised this environment.[40] A university established in the early years at Changi educated the soldiers in various vocations projecting their hopes towards repatriation after the war.[41] Festivals like Christmas or ANZAC day were celebrated, with prisoners saving up rations for a special feast. The civilian women (527 women and 116 children in 1943) housed in Changi Gaol "discovered hidden abilities", argues Nakahara Michiko, – they "elected their own leaders, organised committees, planned projects, improved their living environment, opened hospitals and schools, taught children, conducted lectures, organised exhibitions and contests and put on various forms of entertainment."[42] The labour of soldiers was diverted to repairing and maintaining camp facilities, making or recycling functional objects in the prison workshops or growing nutritious crops. The island was,

once again, a penal camp for a different group of colonial labourers. Unfortunately, the dispersal of POWs further afield disrupted these activities.

Australian signalman Keith Wilson's account of captivity describes a number of spaces and labour regimes following initial accommodation at the British Barracks at Changi. While at the military housing estate at Adam Park he lived under the floor of a bungalow raised off the ground on stub foundations.[43] He worked burying corpses and cutting sod at the nearby golf course – preparing the ground for a shrine. [44] At Sime Road, Wilson lived in huts built for the RAF and was trucked into the city daily to work at warehouses on the wharves. Back at the Changi cantonment he was accommodated at Selarang Barracks, in house no. 208, and in temporary timber huts built in an area termed Garden and Wood (G&W). He spent the last years of captivity in a cell inside Changi Gaol and in a long wooden *attap* (woven palm fronds) -roofed hut outside it, working on the aerodrome and finally in a cookhouse at the camp.[45]

Alternatively, this movement of POWs could be spatialised across a single peripheral site as recounted by battlefield archaeologist, Jon Cooper, who has excavated remnants of regimental heraldry and technology at Adam Park (since 2009). A 3-day battle between the 1st Battalion Cambridgeshire Regiment and the Japanese 41st Fukuyama Regiment in mid-February 1942 substantially damaged the 1928 estate. It would be converted two months later into a temporary camp for 10,000 Australian POWs ordered to build the above mentioned Shinto Shrine on the Singapore Island Country Club golf course on the shores of MacRitchie Reservoir.[46] POWs converted the damaged bungalows into a barracks with amenities – surgery, dentistry, canteen, orderly room, administration building, theatre and camp chapel – writes Cooper. When the shrine was completed in October 1942, the POWs were sent off to build the Thai-Burma Railway. The centrifugal dispersal of battalions and individuals overseas broke the POW spirit.

Havers documents the upheaval caused by various groups of soldiers departing the camp.[47] The peak strength in March 1942 was 45,562 persons and it was 12,032 in August 1945 at the end of the

war.[48] The removal to Formosa (Taiwan) and subsequent appointment of Japanese staff created the climate for punitive labour coercion. Labour was needed to build transportation infrastructure across new Japanese territories and to replace manpower in the industrial factories of Japan. From May 1942 to August 1943 working parties were despatched to Burma, Borneo, Japan and Thailand, with those who survived returning to Changi with stories of Japanese atrocities and POW illness and death. High casualties experienced during this period and the burial of corpses at remote sites in Japanese territory produced a new geography of interment. At the periphery of this circulation network and along its deathly routes, such as the Thai Burma Railroad, around 12,000 military POWs and 90,000 Asian labourers' lives were lost.[49]

The geography of the labour network deviates from the genealogical project by tracking human biographies passing across punitive institutional spaces to the outer extremities of the penal system. Their circulation networks linked prisons in Borneo, Johor, Kuala Lumpur, Penang, Rangoon, and Taiping to those in Singapore.[50] They extended across Southeast Asia to several hundred POW forced labour camps in Japan and its imperial territories – Taiwan, Korea and China.

Haver's list of mail on 6 June 1944 captures the scale of this network.[51] Letters for distribution within Singapore included 90 to transitional Java Parties in River Valley Road, some 1,235 to civilian internees and 1,268 to local inhabitants. Venturing further afield, there were 365 letters to Hong Kong, 50 to Indian camps, 31 to the Philippines; in Sumatra, Indonesia – 3600 to Palembang, 1,596 to Medan and 500 to Padang; 3,350 to Java, Indonesia; 1,400 to Taiwan; 82,080 to different forces in Thailand; 1,991 to Kuching, Sarawak; 4,570 to Saigon; 756 to Japan; 196 to Seijo, Korea; 41 to Shanghai; 61 to Moulmein, Burma; and undeliverable mail to 19,122 dead and 4,676 missing persons.

In May 1944, 4,510 civilian internees were relocated from Changi Gaol to the Sime Road internment camp, the details of which have been mapped by Jane Brooker Nielsen.[52] In 1944, 3000 military prisoners were transferred there. Meanwhile, 11,700 allied POWs, including Australians,

were concentrated in the Changi prison and its immediate vicinity in an area less than one quarter of a square kilometre (figs 5 & 6).[53] Restrictions to mobility, scarcity of rations and revocation of the authority of Allied Senior Officials produced hellish memories of this final year of captivity. Photographs taken in 1945 showing the main thoroughfare through a cell-block and cell-interiors, illustrate extremely congested conditions.[54] Wilson describes sleeping three to a cell, and on landings between cell rows, commenting that conditions were made bearable because doors were never closed and the Japanese rarely ventured inside.[55]

[Figs 5 & 6 near here]

Towards the final oppressive years of internment, all capable men were set to work on an air-field with a 400 metre runway for the Japanese. Initially the Ground Levelling Party comprised 900 men, but soon increased to include every "so-called fit" man.[56] Russel Braddon describes "Digging out the white, gritty, glaring face of that hill, shovelling it into skips, pushing the skips into the other side of the strip and emptying them onto the swampy fringe ─ gradually filling in and levelling."[57] He notes that heat-exposure, deficiency diseases, sores and fatigue accompanied this work.

Whilst Changi's deteriorating conditions were the main cause for concern, the treatment of prisoners at Outram Road Gaol proved more insidious. It was used by the Japanese *Kempeitai* (military police) as a prison for civilian and military prisoners suspected of treason, connecting the history of the colonial forces to the wider civilian experience.[58] There were reports of excessive abuse, torture and starvation at this facility. Similarly, the Sook-Ching (purging) massacres which occurred soon after capitulation in 1942 saw executions of an estimated 25,000 Chinese civilians suspected of anti–Japanese activities – at Siglap and on remote beaches at Punggol, Sentosa and Changi.[59] The insulation of prisoners due to incarceration meant that captive's memoirs and reports gave no indication of the extremities of violence faced by their colonial subjects. These gaps and silences were as much a product of war time restrictions to information as the inherent racism of the colonial mindset that gave preference to military experiences of the war. Each of Singapore's ethnic

communities struggled in isolation with its particular narratives of collaboration, resistance and victimhood, and with the contradictory loyalties caused by anti –Japanese or anti-colonial resistance and nationalist sympathies. The ethnocentric perspectives of Singapore's multi-ethnic communities were gradually consolidated, first by shared fears, losses and hardships and later by their postcolonial nationalist reinvention.

Post-war reconstruction

The dissolution of the military penal environment during the post-war period coincided with the war crime trials and the Malayan Emergency (1948-60) – the political upheavals of anti-colonial nationalism that followed on the heels of WWII. Japanese convicted of wartime atrocities were held and executed at Outram Road and Changi Gaols in 1948.[60] Japanese POWs now laboured in the city and at Changi in full view.[61] They were incarcerated in the prisons they had once guarded throughout Southeast Asia.[62] Outram Road Gaol would maintain its dark reputation housing anti-colonial political dissidents and left-wing political activists during the early 1960s before its demolition in 1968.[63] Meanwhile the decommissioning of POW camps produced parallel "deathscapes", a term used to describe Kranji cemetery, the repository of exhumed remains from various sites across the island, and from overseas.[64] This nascent commemorative culture serviced external visitors – veterans and families connected to the war. The experiences of local communities were not commemorated until after independence.

Singapore became part of the Federated Malay States in 1963 and seceded in 1965 to form an independent nation. At the time, as argued by Blackburn and Hack, the immediate political focus was on the Sook-Ching massacres and negotiating a blood debt treaty with Japan.[65] It initiated competition for a national monument, which was built in 1967, representing the majoritarian Chinese narrative. Commemorative tourism would take a further two decades to enter the national

agenda and be recognised for its heritage capacity, beginning with a replica Changi Gaol chapel next to the prison in 1988.[66]

The demilitarising of colonial estates followed the withdrawal of the British military between1968 and 1971.[67] According to historian Loh Kah Seng, the pull-out dismantled the country's largest industry (56 sites occupying one-tenth of the land area and contributing to a fifth of the Gross Domestic Product) and the livelihoods of one-sixth of the island's labour force.[68] It proved catalytic for national development involving re-education of labour through vocational training, institution of national military service and the acceleration of industrialisation, infrastructure and urban renewal strategies to fill the economic shortfall.[69]

Disciplining dwelling

The penal genealogy introduced in this essay transformed across three types of residential spaces, adapting and accommodating attributes of the prison, the camp and the home. The uprooting of colonial authority during the Japanese interregnum produced an equivalent spatial turbulence that disrupted the city and its institutions, disassembling their constitutive materialities. The post-war period and Malayan Emergency saw the renegotiation of this unsettled spatial terrain, relinquished by departing colonials to competing nationalist factions. These prolonged decades of post-disaster upheaval produced the ideal scenario for national development via a new postcolonial tabula rasa.

The physical remnants of the second stage of the genealogy when the colonial penal geography expanded beyond the prison to housing estates throughout the island brought focus to a different type of architecture, of institutionalised dwellings. It also alerted us to the degree of physical destruction, displacement and social dysfunction caused by war. As in Europe, post-war Singapore planned for urban renewal during the 1950s. The associated trend towards social housing provision, which would effectively transform Singapore, was initiated by Singapore Improvement Trust (SIT, the town improvement and housing authority 1927-1959) in which Captain David Nelson of the Bureau of Record and Enquiry (BRE) had been employed.[70] Estimating that there were as many as

400,000 squatters in 1954, the SIT formed a New Towns Working Party to develop town planning principles after the British new towns being developed post-war initiating several public housing projects.[71] The earliest satellite town was Queenstown, so-named after the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II in 1953, who, as the colony's head of state reasserted the Empire's authority after the war.[72] Built in an area formerly occupied by the Hakka village, Yin Fo Lut, and Hokkien village, Boh Beh Kang, the estate occupied the site of the decommissioned British military camp, Buller Camp, along Alexandra Road.[73] This camp had housed Indian National Army POWs under the Japanese.[74]

Queenstown was designed for five planned neighbourhoods, namely, Princess Estate, Duchess Estate and Commonwealth Estate, Tanglin Halt and Queens Close, with Princess Estate completed in 1956.[75] The project was completed by Singapore's Housing Development Board, which replaced SIT in 1960.[76] By 1968 Queenstown had 19,372 dwelling units, an early success story in the provision of multi-storey apartment complexes, but a marked departure from the salubrious military estates of a previous era (fig. 7).[77] This was a "Total Environment" with infrastructure, amenities and many iconic landmarks including the Queenstown Remand Prison, built to replace Outram Gaol in 1966.[78] Land made available from decommissioned military bases created opportunities for commercial and industrial development, critical to the newly independent nation.

[Fig. 7 near here]

"Formerly 'servants of the British Empire', residents in these housing neighbourhoods were being socialised as worker-citizens of the post-pull-out state", writes Loh.[79] This was the final stage of the modernising process initiated with British and Singaporean collaboration post-war. It extracted residents from the easy sociality and unregimented work-day of *kampung* (village) lives and inserted them into a global industrial economy and an alienating domestic grid. The population ratios extant at independence would be reproduced in each new apartment neighbourhood as an affirmation of the plural polity.[80] This grand project of social engineering, much valorised, critiqued

and debated in academia, would discipline and re-educate the local population, [81]while national service introduced in 1967 would militarise the male members of the postcolonial polity. The city was being reproduced as an urban cantonment regimented by public housing and defensively prepared for a regional threat.

At home in the prison

The nature of that progressive tabula rasa which enabled Singapore's meteoric rise, but remains frequently inhospitable to heritage conservation, is aptly invoked at Changi prison, torn down amidst much controversy to be redeveloped into a much larger complex. An insipid memorial to its WWII history was granted through the retention of a gate and boundary segment. The chapel and museum, built in 1988, were relocated at its periphery in 2001, a concession to British and Australian Pacific War veterans and their families.[82]

The final example in our genealogy, the partially redeveloped Changi Prison Complex (in 2015), is described by designer, CPG Consultants, a corporatised entity of the former Public Works Department, as "an expandable, state-of-the-art and secure facility, which is well-placed to meet Singapore's rehabilitative needs".[83] Its objective is to consolidate all 13 existing medium and maximum security prisons onto its 47.9 hectare site. The prison is designed as four, 700,000 square metre high-rise clusters with prison headquarters and supporting facilities. Each cluster contains administrative, housing, recreation and workshop facilities organised around a central control. The award winning, SGD 1,095,000,000.00 building is designed to accommodate 23,000 prisoners – the bulk of the country's penal population – since only 3 penal institutions are located elsewhere in Singapore. The Changi women's prison and drug rehabilitation centre is adjacent.

In his account of Cluster B, which opened in January 2010, Andy Goh notes its resemblance to a typical Housing Development Board residential block, the mainstay of Singapore's societal reinvention after independence.[84] He describes the similarities in the "brightly painted exterior walls, disciplined composition of the building elevations, height of the building and the spacing

between blocks." However, an obstacle course of security measures, and high levels of centralised surveillance and physical transparency establish its penal credentials. Moreover, despite its organisation around centralised courtyards, flanked by covered walkways, these are not accessible community spaces. The high level horizontal windows with climate-sensitive concrete sunshades don't permit views out. The affective associations evoked could instead be attributed to an ingenious strategy for providing the trappings of a familiar home environment estranged by its punitive brief. The Prison Service, operating under the Ministry of Home Affairs and focused on rehabilitation, manages that fragile boundary between citizenship and punishment.

Meanwhile the military estates that had been used as encampments have reverted to leasehold government properties and are typically rented by wealthy expatriate firms, even today. The last of the early twentieth century black and white bungalows, now recognised for their heritage value, artfully commodify their former tropical colonial lifestyle as an escape from the regimented public housing grid. They are cosmopolitan rental properties for transnational elites and expatriates, the coveted "foreign talent" of Singapore's "knowledge-based" economy, latter day colonists of neo-liberal empires.[85] Changi's military associations have been similarly globalised following the 1990 "United States-Singapore Memorandum of Understanding", anticipating the 1991 closure of the American base at Subic Bay.[86] Changi Naval Base, established in 2004 is being used by the US Navy for logistics and resupply,[87] while Changi Airbase, the former post-war Royal Air Force station, houses squadrons of the republic's air force co-sharing runway facilities with the civilian airport. They are critical nodes in a US-led network for regional securitisation. Vestiges of an earlier history that pre-empted political decolonisation, these are the newest symbols of geo-political border crossing.

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[1] R.P.W. Havers, *Reassessing the Japanese prisoner of war experience: the Changi POW camp, Singapore, 1942-45* (London; New York: Routledge Curzon, 2003); Christina Twomey, *Australia's forgotten prisoners: civilians interned by the Japanese in World War Two* (Cambridge; Port Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Karl Hack and Kevin Blackburn eds., *Forgotten*

captives in Japanese-occupied Asia (London; New York: Routledge 2008). See also, Malcolm Murfett, John Miksic, Brian Farrell, and Ming Shu Chiang, *Between two oceans: a military history of Singapore from first settlement to final British withdrawal* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

[2] Yoji Akashi and Mako Yoshimura eds., *New perspectives on the Japanese occupation in Malaya and Singapore, 1941-45* (Singapore: NUS Press, 2008). See also Geok Boi Lee, *The Syonan years: Singapore under Japanese rule*, 1942-45 (Singapore: National Archives of Singapore, 2005).

[3] Russell Braddon, *The naked island* (London: Werner Lauries, 1952); Thomas Kitching, *Life and death in Changi: the war and internment diary of Tom Kitching* (Singapore: Landmark Books, 2002); Keith Wilson, *You'll never get off the island: prisoner of war, Changi, Singapore, February 1942-August 1945* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1989); Sally Moore McQuaid ed., *Singapore Diary: the hidden Journal of R.M. Horner* (Gloucestershire: Spellmount, 2006); Sheila Allan, *Diary of a girl in Changi: 1941-45* (East Roseville, N.S.W.: Kangaroo Press, 1999).

[4] The television mini-series *Changi* was created by John Doyle and produced by Bill Hughes and Tim Pye for the Australian Broadcasting Corporation in 2001.

[5] Singapore-Redevelopment of Changi Prison, FA34 (6 March, 2004), media release of statement by Alexander Downer, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Australia. Accessed 28 July 2004. http://www.foreignminister.gov.au/releases/2004/fa034_04.html.

[6] The British colonial period in Singapore dates from 1819 to 1965.

[7] Henry Probert, *The history of Changi* (Singapore: Changi Prison Press, 1965; reprinted Singapore: Changi University Press 2006); David Nelson, *The story of Changi Singapore*, 3rd edition (Singapore: Changi Museum 2012).

[8] C.J.W.L. Wee, "Contending with Primordialism: The 'Modern' Construction of Postcolonial Singapore," *positions* 1, no.3 (1993): 715-744, 736-7.

[9] Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage Books, 1979).

[10] Herbert Spencer, "Prison-Ethics," *The British Quarterly Review* (July 1860), in Herbert Spencer, *Essays: Scientific, Political, and Speculative,* vol. 3 (London: Williams and Norgate, 1891); F.J. Mouat, "On Prison Ethics and Prison Labour," *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society* 54, no. 2 (June 1891).

[11] Michel Foucault, *Power/knowledge: selected interviews and other writings, 1972-1977*, trans. Colin Gordon (Brighton, Sussex: Harvester Press, 1980), 81-3.

[12] The subaltern studies approach involves "deconstructing" colonial and nationalist historiography to include the histories of nonelites and minorities. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Subaltern Studies: Deconstructing Historiography,"

in Ranajit Guha and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, eds., *Selected Subaltern Studies* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 3–32.

[13] Kevin Blackburn and Karl Hack, *War memory and the making of modern Malaysia and Singapore* (Singapore: NUS Press, 2012); P. Lim Pui Huen & Diana Wong, *War and Memory in Malaysia and Singapore* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies Press, 2000).

[14] Transportation commenced to Penang in 1790, to Singapore in 1825 and Melaka in 1805. See Anoma Pieris, *Hidden Hands and Divided Landscapes: a penal history of Singapore's plural society* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2009) for a detailed study of this system.

[15] J.F.A. McNair, *Prisoners Their Own Warders* (London: Archibald Constable and Co., 1899).

[16] Pieris, *Hidden Hands*, 66, 98-101.

[17] Butterworth Rules of 1845–1846, British Library, India Office Records, IOR F/4/2520, 144695, India Judicial: Col. W. Butterworth, Governor PWI, Singapore and Melaka to J.P. Grant, Secretary to the Govt. of India, Fort William, 23 August 1851.

[18] Pieris, *Hidden Hands*, 70-73, 93.

[19] Pieris, *Hidden Hands*, 104-116.

[20] Pieris, *Hidden Hands*, 199-207; Walter Makepeace, Gilbert Brooke, and Roland Braddell eds., *One Hundred Years of Singapore*, vols. 1 & 2 (reprint, Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1991; orig. pub., London: John Murray, 1921), 289.

[21] David Arnold, "India: The Contested Prison," in *Cultures of Confinement: A History of the Prison in Africa, Asia and Latin America*, eds. Frank Dikotter and Ian Brown (London: Hurst & Co. Ltd, 2007), 147-184, 166.

[22] Ho Pei Ying, "The Outram Prison: A Colonial Invasion through Sanitation and Health, 1882 – 1936", Independent Study Module (ISM): HY4660 (History), National University of Singapore, 2013, unpublished paper. Thanks to Jiat-Hwee Chang for introducing me to this material.

[23] Criminal Prison, Singapore 1881, CO 700/SS, National Archives, Kew, UK.

[24] Singapore Prison Service. Accessed 29 January 2015. http://www.sps.gov.sg/about-us/prison-story.

[25] Nakahara Michiko, "The civilian women's internment camp in Singapore: the world of POWWOW", in Akashi and Yoshimura eds., *New perspectives on the Japanese occupation in Malaya* 186-216, 196.

[26] H.E. McKenzie, "A Japanese Internment Hell in Singapore: Changi Criminal Jail", *The Illustrated London News* (27 October 1945), 450.

[27] Dimensions of jail cell recreated at Changi Museum.

[28] David Nelson, *The Story of Changi Singapore* (Singapore: Changi Publication, 1974; reprint Changi Museum, 2001), 18.

[29] See, Anoma Pieris and Andrew Saniga, "Temporal Occupations: the material traces of internment," in *Fabulation: Myth, Nature, Heritage -Proceedings of 29th Annual Conference*, *SAHANZ,* eds. S. King, A. Chatterjee, and S. Loo, 2012, 862-874.

[30] Michelle McDonald ed., *Changi* (Sydney: Edmund & Alexander, 1992) [Official war artist Murray Griffin's illustrated personal account of his time in Changi]; Tim Bowden, *Changi photographer: George Aspinall's record of captivity* (Sydney: ABC Enterprises and W. Collins for the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, 1984); Artwork from the AWM image archive, ART26749 Allister and ART28907 Cochran; Changi Cartoonist, George Sprod, *Bamboo round my shoulder: Changi the lighter side* (Kenthurst, N.S.W.: Kangaroo Press, 1981).

[31] Ronald Searle, *To the Kwai and back: war drawings 1939-1945* (London: Collins in association with the Imperial War Museum, 1986); Peter W. Stubbs, *The Changi Murals: The Story of Stanley Warren's War* (Singapore: Landmark Books 2014).

[32] Report of the Gillman Commission in Construction and defence of Singapore naval base, 1927, CO273/538 PRO, The National Archives, Kew; L.N. Malan, "Singapore: The Founding of the New Defences", *Royal Engineers Journal*, 52 (1938): 213-35.

[33] Probert, *The History of Changi*, 18, 23; J.F.F., "Changi cantonment 1933-37", *Royal Engineers Journal*, 51(1937): 355-62, 357-362.

[34] Julian Davidson and Luca Invernizzi, *Black and White: The Singapore House, 1898-1941* (Singapore: Talisman, 2006), 109-131.

[35] Justin Corfield and Robin Corfield, *The fall of Singapore: 90 days: November 1941 - February 1942* (Melbourne; London: Hardie Grant, 2012).

[36] Nelson, *The Story of Changi*, vi.

[37] Nelson, *The Story of Changi*, 6.

[38] Probert, *The History of Changi*, 28.

[39] Havers, *Reassessing the Japanese Prisoner of War Experience*, 65-80. Following the execution of four men who attempted to escape in August 1942, around 15,000 men were confined in the barracks square until they signed the declaration.

[40] Kevin Blackburn, *The Sportsmen of Changi* (Sydney: New South Books, University of New South Wales), 2012. The POW Artwork of Des Bettany, a British POW, is particularly illustrative of the range of activities. See "The Changi POW Artwork of Des Bettany," http://changipowart.com/ (accessed 17 May 2015); Havers, *Reassessing the Japanese Prisoner of War Experience*, 60-61.

[41] The memoirs of Brigadier H.B. Taylor (22nd Infantry Brigade, 8th Division) outline the creation and running of Changi University, AWM archive, PR 85/42 Papers of Brigadier H.B. Taylor, 22nd Bde AIF, AWM 419/49/34.

[42] Michiko, "The civilian women's internment camp," 187.

[43] Wilson, *You'll Never Get off the Island*, 18.

[44] Wilson, *You'll Never Get off the Island*, 18-19.

[45] Wilson, *You'll Never Get off the Island.* The 8 chapters of his book are named after these different locations.

[46] Jon Cooper, "Tigers in the Park, POWs by the Pool, WWII history is uncovered at Adam Park", *Passage*, (March/April 2011), 6. Accessed 23 January 2015. http://www.fom.sg/Passage/2011/03tigers.pdf.

[47] Havers, *Reassessing the Japanese Prisoner of War Experience*, 61-2, 82-88.

[48] Nelson, *The Story of Changi*, 18, 182.

[49] The Thai-Burma Railway and Hell-fire Pass, Department of Veteran's Affairs, http://hellfire-pass.commemoration.gov.au/ (accessed 29 January 2015). Paul H. Kratoska ed., *Asian Labor in the Wartime Japanese Empire: Unknown histories* (New York, East Gate, 2005).

[50] War Office records, WO 357/5, 1946-48, The National Archives, UK.

[51] Nelson, *The Story of Changi*, 139.

[52] Based on drawing by Harold MacKenzie, Changi Museum collection.

[53] Havers, *Reassessing the Japanese Prisoner of War Experience*, 137-65.

[54] AWM, image archive, Changi, AWM 043131and 116463.

[55] Wilson, *You'll Never Get off the Island*, 93.

[56] Probert, *The History of Changi*, 45.

[57] Braddon, *The Naked Island*, 233.

[58] See, National Heritage Board, Singapore, *The Japanese occupation 1942-1945: a pictorial record of Singapore during the war* (Singapore: Times Editions), 99, 171.

[59] Blackburn and Hack, *War Memory*, 139.

[60] Vernon Cornelius-Takahama, Pearls Hill Prison, Singapore infopedia, Singapore Government. Accessed 22 January 2015. http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/infopedia/articles/SIP_129_2005-01-25.html

[61] Probert, *The History of Changi*, 49.

[62] The National Archives, Kew, UK, WO 357/5, 1946 -1948.

[63] Faizah bte Zakaria, Outram Prison. Accessed 22 January 2015. http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/infopedia/articles/SIP_1742_2010-12-17.html.

[64] Blackburn and Hack, *War Memory*, 64-70.

[65] Blackburn and Hack, *War Memory*, 135-173.

[66] See Pieris and Saniga, "Temporal Occupations".

[67] Probert, *The History of Changi*, 97-8

[68] Loh Kah Seng, "The British Military Withdrawal from Singapore and the anatomy of a catalyst", in *Singapore in Global History*, eds. Derek Heng and S.M.K. Aljunied (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2011), 195-213, 197.

[69] Approximately 50 camps and bases are maintained throughout the island (25 have been closed down to date). See "Camps and bases of the Singapore Armed Forces". Accessed 17 May 2015. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Camps_and_bases_of_the_Singapore_Armed_Forces. I have been unable to verify these figures.

[70] The Trust was established in 1927 by the Singapore Improvement Ordinance originally under deputy chairman Captain Edwin Percy Richards, who conducted an ordnance survey of the island and proposed housing provision. But the Trust's efforts at implementing Richard's recommendations were inadequately supported by the pre-war colonial government. The Tiong Bahru Estate established in the 1930s was one of few examples built before the war. Obituary, Captain Edwin Percy Richards, 1873-1961, Institution of Civil Engineers, UK. (ICE) Proceedings, 23, Issue 3 (1 November 1962): 540 –541. Accessed 06 May 2015. http://www.icevirtuallibrary.com/content/article/10.1680/iicep.1962.10888.

[71] Calvin Low, *10-Stories: Queenstown through the years* (Singapore: Education and Outreach Division, National Heritage Board in collaboration with Central Singapore Community Development Council and Queenstown Citizens' Consultative Committee, 2007), 41, in reference to Housing and Development Board Annual Report (Singapore: 1960).

[72] Calvin Low, *10-Stories*, 9-23.

[73] "New homes for hundreds," *The Straits Times*, 27 May 1953, 5, Micrifilm Reel No. NL3304, National Library Board Libraries, Singapore; see also Proposed Development at Alexandra Rd –

Buller Camp – Princess Margaret Estate, 1952, Singapore improvement Trust, HDB 1080, National Archives of Singapore.

[74] Roger Smith, "Dawson Road, Then and Now, Singapore Sojourn," (1 June 2010). Accessed 06 May 2015. http://singaporesojourn.blogspot.com.au/2010/06/dawson-road-now-and-then.html. Smith describes a description by an Indian POW, John Baptist Crasta, who was evacuated on 12 February ahead of the Japanese advance and returned on 12 June under the Japanese.

[75] Low, *10-Stories,* 99-105.

[76] Aline K.Wong, & Stephen H. K.Yeh, eds. *Housing a nation: 25 years of public housing in Singapore* (Singapore: Maruzen Asia for Housing & Development Board, 1985).

[77] *First Decade in Public Housing 1960-69* (Singapore: Singapore Housing Development Board, 1970).

[78] Low, *10-Stories,* 99. The prison was demolished in 2010.

[79] Loh Kah Seng, "The British Military Withdrawal from Singapore", 212.

[80] Chua Beng Huat, *Communitarian Ideology and Democracy in Singapore* (London: Routledge, 1995), 109.

[81] Chua Beng Huat, *Political Legitimacy and Housing: Stakeholding in Singapore* (London: Routledge, 1997).

[82] Blackburn and Hack, *War Memory*, 89-95; The Changi Museum Website. Accessed 2 March 2012. http://www.changimuseum.com/exhibition/chapel.htm.

[83] CPG Consultants, "Redevelopment of Changi Prison Complex." Accessed 23 January 2015. http://www.cpgcorp.com.sg/CPGC/Project/Project_Details?ProjectID=1265.

[84] Andy Goh Koo Joon, "Super-Utilitarian High-Rise Prison Living Singapore Prison Service, Changi Prison Complex, Cluster B," *Singapore Architect* 184 (2010): 84-89.

[85] Linda Low, "The Political Economy of Migrant Worker Policy in Singapore," *Asia Pacific Business Review*, 8, vol.4 (2002), 95-118, 95. This is the terminology used by the government to describe elite expatriate workers in Singapore.

[86] "Singapore and US: Security Partners, Not Allies,' The International Relations and Security Network, ETH Zurich (27 August 2013). Accessed 17 May 2015. http://www.isn.ethz.ch/Digital-Library/Articles/Detail/?id=168339; "Singapore Changi naval base," Global Security.org., military. Accessed 17 May 2015. http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/facility/singapore.htm.

[87] "Changi Naval Base, Changi East, Singapore, Naval-technology.com. Accessed 17 May 2015. http://www.naval-technology.com/projects/changi-naval-base/; "NDR 2013: Leonard Lim, "Paya Lebar Airbase to be moved to Changi, area freed up for homes and industry", *The Straits Times* (18

August 2013). Accessed 17 May 2015. http://www.straitstimes.com/breaking-news/singapore/story/ndr-2013-paya-lebar-airbase-be-moved-changi-area-freed-homes-and-indus;