Presentation on Chang-rae Lee's The Surrendered Day 2

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Chang-rae Lee, *The Surrendered*
Day 2
Today

• Resonance of moment where Min is injured—how does this scene echo other scenes in the book?
• How to make sense of Hector’s character in comparison to June
• Moment where Hector reflects on literary passage
Scene Min injury

• 117-119
• What seem to be important details of this scene?
• How do these resonate with other scenes in the book?
  – Descriptions of blood, for example
• Why do we think that Lee includes this scene?
In thinking about Hector:

- Lee: The novel is a big, complicated, unknowable thing before it’s written. By definition it uses and plays and delights in time. It delights in the interlacing of chronologies and the consequences of that interlacing. And those have personal and psychological expressions in a character. Aside from other issues of writing, psychological characterization is what narrative can do best.
Characterizing Hector

- Please write down everything we know about Hector so far.
- For example: "he sensed that he was being replaced, cell by cell, with bits of stone" (126)

In groups:
What key terms would you use to describe Hector’s character? How do we know?

How would you compare/contrast him with June?
Memoir of Solfrino

What does the effect of *Memoir of Solfrino* suggest about literature’s role in peace/war?

- Credited with creation of the International Red Cross
- Durant’s ideas inspired the creation of the Geneva convention—which sought to protect noncombatants, including wounded and prisoners of war
- Solfrino—Napoleonic Wars—1864—23,000 wounded, dying and dead on battlefield—little attempt to provide care

Painting: Henry Durant at Solfrino
How would you describe Hector’s reaction to the Durant text on 146?

What does this suggest about the relation between literature and war?

What does it suggest about Lee’s goals in The Surrendered?

“The descriptions matched any number of his memories from the war, and as much as they pained him—an icy clawing at his lungs, puncturing his breath—the feeling soon gave way to a numbing pause. It was a pause not of reflection or reckoning but of a pure self-erasure in which he felt that he had died, or, better, had never existed; that as such he had not had an effect on anything or anyone, going either forward or back; that he had, for a moment, completely disappeared” (147).

“It’s about a battle. Someone who was a soldier doesn’t need to know any more about that” (148)