

Revolution Will Not Be Televised: Music and the Antinuclear Movement in Japan Post-Fukushima Daiichi (Oxford University Press, 2015) and *The Revolution Remixed: A Typology of Intertextuality in Protest Songs* (Oxford University Press, forthcoming).

Poems by Amiri Baraka:

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"The Insidious Dr. Fu Manchu." Originally published as "The Insidious Dr. Fu Manchu" from S.O.S. Poems 1961–2003, copyright © 2014 by The Estate of Amiri Baraka. Used by permission of Grove/Atlantic, Inc. Any third party use of this material, outside of this publication, is prohibited.

By Richard Wright:

Haiku originally from Wright, Richard, Yoshinobu Hakutani, Robert L. Tener, and Julia Wright. *Haiku: The Last Poems of an American Icon*. New York: Arcade Pub., 2012. Reprinted with permission of Skyhorse Publishing, Inc., New York.

By James Weldon Johnson:

Excerpt from "The Creation." Originally published in Johnson, James Weldon. "The Creation." In *God's Trombones: Seven Negro Sermons in Verse*. New York: Viking Press, 1927.

By Stuart Hall:

Excerpt from "What is This 'Black' in Black Popular Culture? (Rethinking Race)." Originally printed in Hall, Stuart. "What is This 'Black' in Black Popular Culture? (Rethinking Race)." *Social Justice*, vol. 20, no. 1–2 (Spring-Summer 1993): 104–15. Printed with permission of *Social Justice*.

Excerpt from "Lift Ev'ry Voice and Sing." Originally published in Johnson, James Weldon. "Lift Ev'ry Voice and Sing." In *God's Trombones: Seven Negro Sermons in Verse*. New York: Viking Press, 1927.

By Darth Reider:

Excerpts from "Safe is Dangerous." Used with permission by Darth Reider and Da.Me.Records.

By Dengaryū:

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Introduction

Work It: Traveling Texts and the Work of Reading Afro-Japanese Cultural Exchange

William H. Bridges IV and Nina Cornyetz

IN RUTH OZEKI'S RECENT NOVEL, *A Tale for the Time Being*, the protagonist Ruth finds a diary written by a girl living in Japan washed up on the beach of Cortes Island near Vancouver in British Columbia—a literal traveling text. Examining her find, Ruth muses:

Print is predictable and impersonal, conveying information in a mechanical transaction with the reader's eye. Handwriting, by contrast, resists the eye, reveals its meaning slowly, and is as intimate as skin. Ruth stared at the page. The purple words were mostly in English, with some Japanese characters scattered here and there, but her eye wasn't really taking in their meaning as much as a *felt* sense, murky and emotional, of the writer's presence.

Ruth glanced up from the page. "Of course it's flotsam," she said. "Or jetsam." The book felt warm in her hands, and she wanted to continue reading but heard herself asking, instead, "What's the difference, anyway?"

Pondering how writing functions not just as communication but also as affect, the question that Ruth pauses to ask is an important one for us: she takes the time to consider not only the contents of her traveling text, but how it got there in the first place.

This book considers the cultural work of texts informed by Afro-Japanese transculturation. Given our interest in traveling texts, it traverses a great deal of cultural terrain: this collection consists of conversations on blackface *ukiyo-e*, Jamaican culture in Japan, "black" robots in Japanese fiction, blackness in the fiction of Nobel laureate Oe Kenzaburō, the Japanese translation of the Negro national anthem, *ganguro* girls, the haiku of Richard Wright

and the “low-coup” of Amiri Baraka, the birth of the Japanese hip-hop scene, post-Fukushima rap, and *enka* sensation Jero, poet Shirashi Kazuko and musician Abbey Lincoln. Even with, however, the eclectic energy that runs throughout this volume, we have—over the course of two conference panels and one symposium—come to a consensus concerning where our intellectual itinerary begins.² First, we take up “texts” in the broadest sense of the term, as that which can be read in a socially significant way; for us, the *mascara* of the *ganguro* is no more or less of a text than the haiku of Wright. Second, the significance of our texts is rooted in the hard cultural work that they perform. It is to be expected that the traveling text is also a traveling text. These texts conduct, among other types of labor, what Lawrence Venuti calls the invisible labor of cultural and linguistic translation, the psychic labor of imagining race otherwise, physical labor—sweating in the dancehall, and intellectual labor—racing to meet the editor’s deadline, et cetera.³ The contributors to this volume attend to the cultural labor conducted by these works with an effort befitting the cultural artifacts we study: this work is composed of close readings and careful interpretations of transpacific translations, dispassionate analysis of the processes and implications of imagining race otherwise, passionate fieldwork, and, yes, races to meet the editor’s deadline. Our work is interested primarily in, to borrow Jane Tompkins’s summation, the “entirely new story [that] begins to unfold” when we attend “to the way a text offers a blueprint for survival under a specific set of political, economic, social, or religious conditions.”⁴

Third, we see our job as the telling of those new stories on their own terms; this is the work of a new wave of scholarship. Stephen Murphy-Shigematsu argues that the 1990s, on the heels of the influx of immigrant workers and globalization of Japanese labor markets in the 1980s, saw an increase in scholarship that “aimed to expose the true multiethnic nature of [Japanese] society and the monoethnic myth that conceals it.”⁵ Works such as John Russell’s *Nihonjin no kokujinkan* (*The Japanese View of Blacks*, 1990), Murphy-Shigematsu continues, are paradigmatic of the “first wave” of scholarship on transcultural Japan, which “greatly expanded our knowledge of minority groups in Japan,” but often ran the risk of “reinforc[ing] a dichotomy of two mutually exclusive categories of Japanese and Blacks.”⁶ In the wake of the first wave, a “new wave” of scholarship on transcultural Japan has emerged that attempts to further the attrition of the myth of monoethnic Japanese culture without reinforcing new myths of its own. “While not denying or belittling the importance of discrimination,” as Murphy-Shigematsu sets the table for the new wave, “this literature illuminates the complexity of the borderlands of race and nation, addressing hybridity and deconstructing the notion of essential minority subject [sic] by focusing

on complexity and diversity among minorities . . . writing in ways that overcome the rigid binary oppositional framework of colonized and colonizer, minority and majority, oppressed and oppressor.”⁷

Conversely, no one has ever claimed ethnic and racial homogeneity for the United States. As we will discuss in some detail later in this introduction, many African Americans celebrated the early modern success of the Japanese nation state, as an example of a non-white culture competing, and winning, on the global political and economic stage. This admiration led some very prominent black leaders to scholarship on and familiarity with a wide variety of Japanese arts, philosophies, and more. Moonlighting black Japanologists such as W. E. B. Du Bois and George Schuyler are seminal figures—one genuine, the other, in characteristic form, more sardonic—of the burgeoning moments of “Afro-Orientalism.”

From an investigation of African American haiku to an analysis of the racial performance of Japanese hip-hopster Zebra, the contributors to *Traveling Texts and the Work of Afro-Japanese Cultural Production: Two Haiku and a Microphone* have put in work. We all agree, however, that overcoming those rigid binaries (read: doing our work) requires that we first take a break, or, rather, that we make several breaks. This collection represents a radical break from business-as-usual disciplinary boundaries. We include contributions from both the Japanese and American academies. We are members of departments of Asian Studies, American Studies, African American Studies, English, Music, Anthropology and Interdisciplinary Studies. We are anthropologists, musicologists, and literary and cultural critics. We know, in short, what Asian Studies and African American Studies have told us for quite some time: that “discipline”—as it sets terms and puts objects and subjects of study in their place—can hinder (rather than facilitate) discussions of our inherently interdisciplinary enterprise. We know that the cross-pollinated energy of black haiku or Japanese rap is best served by interdisciplinary, transpacific dialogue.

We have also vowed to take a break akin to the hiatus proposed by Ruth Ozeki. As Ruth, one of the narrators of *Ozeki’s A Tale for the Time Being* and alter ego of the author herself, reminds us, there are at least three components to any engagement with traveling texts. At the epicenter of the engagement is our interaction with the text: starting at it, feeling its warmth in our hands, getting “as intimate as skin” with the text. Alongside this engagement is our response to the text: the critique, the judgment, the waves of affect, the, in Ruth’s case, desire to “continue reading,” et cetera. It is here, however, at the very moment when the desire of Ozeki’s Ruth reaches its apex, that she takes a break, “asking, instead” for the difference between *flotsam* and *jetsam*. That is to say, before critiquing the content of the traveling text, Ozeki suggests that we let it “reveal its meaning slowly,” that we pause and ponder *how the*

text got to us in the first place; that journey is, after all, both a vital part of the work itself and what makes our work possible.

What this means for us is eschewing the rush to judgment and instead giving primacy to considerations of the paths into and out—the “roots and routes”—of Afro-Japanese cultural exchange. We focus on how traveling texts become meaningful and the social lives and afterlives that these meanings take on. We understand that this is a risky proposition; if our texts are conducting cultural work in the sense proposed by Tompkins, then we always run the risk of an “embrace of the conventional”—an intellectual complicity with the stereotyping, reification, appropriation and misrepresentation that haunts any cross-cultural exchange.⁸ We run this risk, however, because the journeys made by traveling texts, both their actual travels as well as the cultural, intellectual and sociopolitical travels that they inspire in those who engage with them, are all too often decimated by the salvos of judgment.

Along with our decision to read slowly, we have also agreed to break away, as much as possible, from questions of representation. Or, to translate our agreement into the terms of this introduction: previous studies on Afro-Japanese cultural exchange, particularly those in literary studies, often focus on the racialized body itself as a kind of traveling text. The objective becomes, then, to take the racialized body as a fraught, overwritten text and determine how it is translated (read: represented) into other, “foreign” discursive modes. (And when our endgame is the analysis of how the Other is represented, judgment is never too far behind.) To be clear, questioning the place of representation in cross-cultural exchange can be productive. One might even argue that we have a kind of ethical obligation to pose such inquiries; indeed, there are moments in this collection that consider representation.

The *overrepresentation*, however, of representation in studies of Afro-Japanese exchange speaks to what we see as the counterproductive logic that underpins our subfield. There is a tripartite rationale to the abundance of representation-driven Afro-Japanese studies. A brief overview of the history of Japanese-black cultural exchange, however, should make this rationale apparent; we promise to return to an articulation of that rationale after the historical interlude.

A Brief Overview of Afro-Japanese Cultural Exchange

The seminal moment in Afro-Japanese cultural exchange coincides with the very opening of Japan. In 1853, Commodore Perry’s black ships brought a combination of epistolary and gunboat diplomacy to the shores of Japan. Almost as if to ensure that the message of the warships wasn’t overly adulter-

ated by the cordiality of the letter, Perry—who was known to choreograph and rehearse his audiences with foreign officials—presented the Japanese with a cipher for interpreting the parallel modes of diplomacy: black bodies. As John Dower writes, “From the moment he first stepped on Japanese soil in 1853 to present the letter from President Fillmore, Perry also sought to impress the Japanese with authentic black men.”⁹ As Perry delivered the letter, he was flanked by two “negro[es], armed to the teeth . . . blacks, selected for the occasion . . . [and] two of the best-looking fellows of their color that the squadron could furnish.”¹⁰ The “authentic negroes furnished” by Perry served as a kind of hermeneutic aid to the Japanese as they navigated the two modes of diplomacy. On the one hand, the stalwart black soldiers couped an ostentatious advertisement of American might with an invitation for Japan to open its doors to the allures of modernization. On the other hand, the black soldiers, insofar as they were subject to the rule of the Commodore, were less of an advertisement and more of a prognostication of what would come of Japan if it refused the invitation.

If the eve of the Second Opium War didn’t make the prognostication clear, the “Plantation ‘Niggas’ of the South” in the minstrel show Perry produced for the Japanese upon his return in 1854 did. Some four days before the signing of the Treaty of Kanagawa, Commodore Perry invited Japanese commissioners aboard the USSF *Powhatan* for dinner and entertainment. Among the festivities: the “Japanese Olio Minstrels,” musically inclined members of Perry’s crew who put on “Ethiopian entertainment” in blackface.¹¹ Again, the message here is clear. The variety of black performances put on by Perry for the Japanese—from being flanked by towering black soldiers to minstrel shows—are representative of something greater. By sharing in this performance of blackness, the Japanese are both invited to walk with (but always a step behind) the Commodore into the new world order. They are also reminded of black subjugation, living proof of what would happen if those black ships were to return in force.¹² It didn’t take long for such politically charged social encounters to give birth to cultural artifacts. Japanese artists’ depictions of the black servants and servicemen who accompanied Perry include marginalia such as “darkie” (*kuronbō*) and “a hired darkie crewman” that guide the viewer in this first encounter. We also find references to “countries of sun-kissed darkies (*kuronbō*)” and “darkies from the African states hired on the cheap” as early as Kanagaki Robun’s (1829–1894) *Agurunabe* (*The Beekeeper*, 1871) and *Seiyō dōchin hizakurige* (*Shank’s Mare Round the West*, 1870–1876).¹³

On the other side of the Pacific, the modern period’s inaugural contact between African Americans and the Japanese was facilitated by a series of Japanese missions. The first such mission was the 1860 *Man’en gannen*

Ken-Bei shisetsu (literally the "embassy to the United States in the first year of the Man'en era," typically translated as the "Japanese Embassy to the United States"). Charged with the ratification of the 1858 Harris Treaty, the itinerary of the 1860 mission included stops in Hawaii, San Francisco, Washington, D.C., and New York. Approximately a decade after the first embassy, the Meiji government commissioned the Iwakura Mission (*Iwakura shisetsudan*), a twenty-one-month circumnavigation of the modern world that included stops in Chicago, Washington, D.C., and Philadelphia. Given that both of these missions included stops in cities with a significant population of African Americans, the historians and diarists among the envoys provide us with documentation of these early Afro-Japanese encounters on American soil.

In concert, these documents paint an ambivalent picture of the Japanese view of African Americans. "The members of the 1860 Embassy," Masao Miyoshi tells us, "are nearly unanimous in rejecting all races except for themselves and the whites."¹⁴ Take, for example, the assessment of Morita Kiyoyuki, the fourth in command of the 1860 envoys: "It seems that the whites are beautiful and shrewd and intelligent; and the blacks are ugly and stupid. So the whites always despise the blacks."¹⁵ Morita's assessment is clearly one that has been filtered through the opinions of his white escorts. As such, it represents the Japanese ambassador's attempt to identify with white America, to show the world that the *Kanrin Maru* was no less than the USSF *Powhatan*. The mission documents also show, however, assessments that are less interested in identification with whiteness and more interested in the possibility of black modernization. After a tour of Washington, D.C., Kume Kunitake, the resident historian of the Iwakura Mission, recapitulated his thoughts on African Americans:

Some black people achieved freedom early on, other outstanding black people were elected to the House of Representatives and still others have accumulated great wealth. Clearly, the colour of one's skin has nothing to do with intelligence It is not inconceivable that, within a decade or two, talented black people will rise and white people who do not study and work hard will fall by the wayside.¹⁶

Reminiscent of the process that John Russell deemed "race and reflexivity," Kume superimposes the mission of D.C. blacks onto the Iwakura mission to "catch up and surpass" the West; when Kume writes of heaven helping those who help themselves irrespective of "the colour of one's skin," he is speaking to the Japanese condition through the proxy of the black condition.

In lauding and identifying with industrious African Americans, Kume's summary effectively turns Morita's assessment on its head: African Americans have gone from "ugly and stupid" to "outstanding," "intelligent," and "talented." To be sure, a part of what is at work here is the shift in cultural

currents between 1860 and 1871. It should also be clear, however, that the ambivalent position vis-à-vis blackness we read across these missions is indicative of the ambivalence *within* the missions from the very start, making itself manifest in both the internal contradictions of single commentaries as well as the differing opinions of the various envoys. The desire to identify with white America as the standard of modernity is just as present as the desire to identify with black America as an embodiment of the possibility of a non-white alternative to that standard. This is why, alongside his derision, Morita also struggles to contain his burgeoning empathy for those whom "Nature [has] given a black exterior."¹⁷

The next major moment in Afro-Japanese exchange came on the heels of the Iwakura Mission. The Mission's primary objective was twofold: to renegotiate the unequal treaties promulgated in the preceding decades and to catalyze the modernization of Japan by learning from the models set by other nations. With the undeniable unattainability of the first objective, post-Iwakura Japan devoted even more of its attention and energy to the actualization of the second; more and more, mid-Meiji Japan opened itself to the modern world. In 1885, the Meiji government lifted its ban on emigration, sending workers first to the sugar plantations of Hawaii and subsequently to San Francisco and the American West. As the number of Japanese migrants swelled from the hundreds to the tens of thousands, the African American community began to take notice. Pre-1905 African American attention to Japanese immigration shared a certain affinity with the American response to the *issei* (first generation) Japanese. On the one hand, we have the germ of what Bill Mullen calls Afro-Orientalism: an exoticized interest in Japanese culture. "In black communities about the country," Reginald Kearney tells us, "the popularity of the 'Asian Negroes' seemed to shape and encourage Japanese themes in a whole range of activities, gift giving, and entertainment"—*fin de siècle* cultural experiments of the kind to be explored in this volume.¹⁸ On the other hand, we also have the germ of what would become organizations such as the 1905 Asiatic Exclusion League, policies such as the "Gentleman's Agreement" of 1907 and treaties such as the 1915 *The Japanese Problem in the United States*. Most first-generation Japanese émigrés were unskilled laborers. The competition they brought to the American labor market evoked bombastic, nativist responses from the black (as well as the white) press. The September 1, 1900, edition of *The Broad Ax* warned of "a phenomenal migration of Japanese . . . pouring into Washington and Oregon—some five thousand a month—the mere beginning of an endless tide. . . . This threatened invasion is a serious thing to all our people but especially so to the Negro. At least ninety percent of the colored labor of the country is unskilled . . . and it is precisely there [unskilled labor] that the Asiatic will commence."¹⁹

The nebulous allures and tensions of Afro-Japanese cultural contact, however, would come into sharp focus with Admiral Tōgō Heihachirō's 1905 defeat of the Russian Baltic Squadron. With Japan's victory in the Russo-Japanese War came the onset of what might be called the "Dark Princess" period of Afro-Japanese relations. W. E. B. Du Bois's 1903 *The Souls of Black Folk* begins with a bold proclamation: "The problem of the Twentieth Century is the problem of the color-line,—the relation of the darker to the lighter races of men in Asia and Africa, in America and the islands of the sea."²⁰ Du Bois's writing from 1906, however, evinces his belief that Japan's victory shifted the power dynamic of that problematic:

For the first time in a thousand years a great white nation has measured arms with a colored nation and has been found wanting. The Russo-Japanese War has marked an epoch. The magic of the word "white" is already broken, and the Color Line in civilization has been crossed in modern times as it was in the great past. The awakening of the yellow races is certain. That the awakening of the brown and black races will follow in time, no unprejudiced student of history can doubt.²¹

The burst of cultural energy released in Japan by its successes in the Russo-Japanese War is well documented; Du Bois's 1906 commentary exemplifies the reverberations of that energy throughout black America. These reverberations shook the very foundation of the racial identity of the Japanese. If, as Michael Weiner suggests, "'racialised' identities are historically specific, and can only be understood in relation to other factors—economic and political—and the international environment within which they emerged and have since been transformed," then the Russo-Japanese War solidified Japanese "yellowness" as in opposition to "whiteness," and thus—so the thinking of Du Bois goes—in proximity to "blackness," a kind of racial calculus that certainly was not axiomatic in 1906.²² Moreover, Japan's stunning series of victories, which included precedent-setting tactics that influenced the course of modern warfare, implied that "yellow" opposition might challenge the framework of the modern world order. When paired with the Japanese prowess with the (modern) masters' tools, the putative affinity between the black and yellow races was inspirational for many black intellectuals; as Marcus Garvey quipped: "The next war will be between the Negroes and the whites unless our demands for justice are recognized. . . . With Japan to fight with us, we can win such a war."²³

Alongside the burgeoning rhetoric of Afro-Japanese racial solidarity, however, ran the very real possibility that Japan was not a champion of the "darker races," but another exploiter of them. Thinking through the possibility of Japan, Nahum Chandler writes: "It was this possibility that within and from the West ignited, on the one side, the spirit of hope and belief in a Japan

of the future among many African Americans at the turn of the twentieth century, above all one W. E. B. Du Bois, and on the other, a sense of fear, threat, and peril—a possible challenge to existing forms of global-level hierarchy and dominance (if not always hegemony)."²⁴ The fear of a Japan that would challenge global hierarchy via the processes of hegemony became particularly acute during Japan's warring 1920s, 1930s and 1940s, as more and more members of Japan's putative Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere fell under its war machine and imperial project. Japan's aggressions against the "darker races" complicated its relationship with black intellectuals. Some, like Du Bois, continued to advocate on behalf of Japan even as they called for it to "stop aping the West and North and throw her lot definitely with the East and South."²⁵ Others, like Langston Hughes, were vocal and adamant in highlighting the potential contradictions of being both pro-Japanese imperialism and anti-racism. On his way home from a stint in Russia and Central Asia in 1933, Hughes's return trip included stops in China and Japan. His activities there (such as visiting Tsukiji Little Theater *before* going to the *kabuki* theater, meeting with Madame Sun Yat Sen) aroused the suspicion of the Tokyo Metropolitan Police Department. During their interrogation of Hughes, Japanese police officials asked Hughes what the American Negro thought of the Japanese. Hughes's reply: "Some do not think anything at all. Some think Japan might be the savior of the darker peoples of the world. And others who have had some contacts with the Japanese in the United States think quite otherwise."²⁶ Hughes's assessment of Japan was clear-eyed: he admired the Japanese as "the only noncolonial nation in the Far East," but also "hoped, however, that they [the Japanese] would not make the old mistakes of the West and, like England, France, Italy, and Germany, attempt to take over other people's lands or make colonials of others."²⁷

The Japanese interrogation (and subsequent deportation) of Hughes highlights two aspects of interwar Afro-Japanese relations. First, Hughes reminds us of the nuances of black America's response to the rise of Japan: from the sardonic, at times hyperbolic pro-Japanese sentiment of George Schuyler and his *Black Internationale* to the strident debunking of Japan as champion of the colored races posed by Cyril Briggs and the CPUSA, a vast spectrum of stances vis-à-vis Japan incubated during the interwar period. Second, Hughes makes it clear that Japan's interwar maneuvering—e.g., the Anti-Comintern Pact of 1936, the 1937 onset of the Second Sino-Japanese War—placed a considerable strain, an intellectual burden of proof, on pro-Japanese African Americans, who had to account for Japan conducting a "race war" on the behalf of non-whites even as it waged war with nonwhites. The bombing of Pearl Harbor further exacerbated this intellectual dilemma. Now, in the words of Marc Gallicchio, "African American leaders needed to find some

way to fend off charges of sedition without abandoning their quest for equality.²⁸ One solution to this dilemma was the Double V campaign, which urged black Americans to fight for both victory over the Axis powers abroad (the first "V") as well as victory over Jim Crow at home (the second).

The culmination of the Pacific War and the onset of the Allied Occupation of Japan made for heady times between the African Americans and the Japanese. The Double V campaign ended in partial victory: African Americans' contributions to the war effort did not translate into immediate civil rights or economic opportunity. Postwar African Americans enlisted in droves in search of a better life on the other side of the Pacific. The Allied Occupation was less than a week old when the 24th Infantry Regiment, one of the army's largest and oldest African American commands, was assigned garrison duty in Japan. Throughout the Allied Occupation, the number of black servicemen stationed in Japan "generally fluctuat[ed] between ten and fifteen thousand," a number that was bolstered by black military families in Japan.²⁹ Add to this the vertiginous inversion of the power dynamic that came with the Allied Occupation; Japan, revered as the big brother of the colored races since its defeat of Russia, was now occupied by a white nation. This shift in the power dynamic significantly altered the tenor of black-Japanese racial solidarity. Until this point, Afro-Japanese affinities had been buoyed primarily by black quixotism and Japanese propagandism and opportunism. The Occupation saw both the genuine empathy and the messy disillusionment that comes with the lived experience of cross-cultural exchange. For the Japanese, African Americans were both powerful occupationalaires and (fellow) second-class citizens "beneath" white soldiers in the racial world order; African Americans couldn't help but notice the irony of enforcing a color line—the "SCAP Personnel Only" signs, the elections monitored by black soldiers—that they themselves hadn't crossed fully. Add to this the fact that African Americans served as the stewards of the occupation, filling positions (such as service battalions, guarding cargo) that often put them in close contact with the Japanese. This rich contact extended beyond the drudgery of duty and into the soldiers' rest and relaxation: "Black GIs experienced discrimination both on base and off. But in the off-base establishments where they felt at home, a vital Creolised counter-culture grew up. Many of Japan's leading postwar jazz artists and popular entertainers got their start in this marginalized *demi-monde* of drugs, booze and black-marketeering where the creative juices could flow freely, undisturbed by convention and the prying eyes of whites."³⁰ And add to this the fact that the occupying forces were almost entirely men, which engendered a sexed dimension that complicated an already complex power dynamics.

In sum, the postwar period gave birth to a vast body of cultural artifacts that Mary Louise Pratt calls arts of the contact zone. "Autoethnography, transculturation, critique, collaboration, bilingualism, mediation, parody, denunciation, imaginary dialogue, vernacular expression—these are some of the literate arts of the contact zone. Miscomprehension, incomprehension, dead letters, unread masterpieces, absolute heterogeneity of meaning—these are some of the perils of writing in the contact zone."³¹ The photography of Tokiwa Toyoko and Tōmatsu Shōmei is a case in point. Tokiwa's photographic expose of the Yokohama red light district captured this vexed contact zone in arresting gelatin-silver snapshots. As Pratt suggests, Tokiwa's photography presents the mingling of languages and bodies in a way that is part critique, part imaginary dialogue. Tōmatsu, one of the leading figures of the *Vivo* group, focused on—among other projects—life in and on the periphery of American's military installations. Tōmatsu's work, which put photorealism into the service of symbolic storytelling, is predicated on a central irony: Japanese photographers working in postwar Japan, their "home" country, are also always *out* of it—just beyond the perimeter of the military base, just beyond the frame occupied by military personnel. His photographs, which often force viewers to literally look up to threatening embodiments of racial difference, are haunting reminders of the psychological dangers of life in the contact zone.³²

In 1959, Nobel Prize laureate Ōe Kenzaburō wrote an essay that paired his musing on the Japanese mothers of African American-Japanese children with his thoughts on American race relations. On race relations, Ōe wrote: "When it comes to the American Negro problem, the Japanese stand on the side of the Negro. I imagine that there isn't a single Japanese person who prefers the whites who do the beating over the Negroes who receive them."³³ On the mothers of biracial children, Ōe wrote: "For mixed-blood children and their mothers, the race problem is not an issue that can be solved without getting their hands dirty. . . . When it comes to this new race problem, the mothers who—whatever their reasons may have been—had the courage to give birth to the children of Negro soldiers in the immediate postwar period have shown us a remarkably humane solution."³⁴ Ōe's dependent clause—"whatever their reasons may have been"—certainly speaks to the ever-lingering possibility of dependency; "the reasons" these mothers hold here are shot through with a gendered power dynamic that oscillates between empowerment and powerlessness.

Ōe's words and voice set the tone for Afro-Japanese exchange during the tumultuous times of the 1960s and 1970s. If Afro-Japanese exchange was characterized by vicarious wish fulfillment and proxy politics in the first

half of the twentieth century, the second half saw a shift to a kind of affinity politics—with “affinity” here resonating both as the force that bonds us together and kinship based on something other than consanguinity. The contemporaneity of the Civil Rights, *Arpo*, and *Zengakuren* movements sparked an era of rich, authentic, transpacific synergy that we can call the golden age of Afro-Japanese exchange.³⁵ The view from Japan would include the hosting of the Asian-African Writers Conference in 1961, the rise of the Japanese Association for Negro Studies and the intellectual coming of age of Furuoka Hiroshi—a seminal figure in the Association for Negro Studies and co-author of the epochal *Nihonjin to Afurika-kei Amerikajin: Nichi-Bei kankeishi ni okeru sono shosō* (*The Japanese and African Americans: Facets of Afro-Japanese Interaction in the History of Japanese-American Relations*)—the travels through black America documented by artists and intellectuals ranging from Fulbright recipient Yoshida Ruiko to translator of *Roots* Yasuoka Shōtarō, and the swinging jazz riffs of Akiyoshi Toshiko. The view from the other side of the Pacific would include the some four thousand haiku penned by Richard Wright, the rise and fall of Amiri Baraka’s *Yugen*, Yuri Kochiyama on the cover of *Life* magazine cradling the dying body of her colleague and friend, Malcolm X, and the heavyweight champion of the world—Muhammad Ali—declaring: “I am not a Negro. . . . I am an Asiatic black man.”³⁶ The era was characterized by black language from Japanese mouths and Japanese forms in black ink. And, as if to embody the spirit of the times, the significant number of African American-Japanese children born during the Occupation came of age in the 1960s, a fact that received a great deal of press from both Japanese and black media outlets.

Lest we romanticize this golden age, we should remember that transracial engagement is easily tarnished, that watershed moments rarely come without bloodshed. Afro-Japanese relations in Okinawa are a case in point. Given its amicable atmosphere for African Americans relative to other Asian stations, the US military, as previously mentioned, sent waves of black soldiers to Japan. Many of these soldiers were shipped in turn to Okinawa: the aforementioned 24th, for example, was stationed in Okinawa until its 1947 transfer to Camp Gifu. The history and legacy of America’s administration of Okinawa (1945–1972), then, holds within it a history of Afro-Japanese cultural exchange. To be sure, some of this contact takes the shape of the golden era exchange outlined above. Take, for example, Arakawa Akira’s “The Colored Race,” a series of poems published in *Ryūdai bungaku*, a student literary magazine housed by The University of the Ryukyus. The series includes “A Poem for the Black Troops,” which begins: “Your skin, like ours, is not white. / A rugged dark brown, it is / The color of iron. / Covering ineradicable welts / from the whip, / Your brown skin is / Strong, like stone.”³⁷ There is also,

however, a history of racial tension and strife in Okinawa, both of which have been exacerbated by extraterritoriality and crimes perpetrated by US servicemen. In the words of Inamine Susumu, mayor of Nago, Okinawa: “since we survived the end of the war, the San Francisco Treaty, [and] the ‘return’ to Japan, we . . . have to live with 74 percent of US military bases on Okinawa. . . . We will have to live not only with the bases, but with the accidents and the crimes that they cause, so that after we die we will leave our children and grandchildren a legacy of misery.”³⁸ It is true that Okinawans have suffered at the hands of servicemen of all colors; the accusations of rape of Okinawan girls by US soldiers is yet another scar on the history of US-Okinawan relations. It is also true, however, that the myth of black criminality has planted firm roots in Okinawan soil.

This reminder of both the potential and perils of transracial exchange is a prime juncture to transfer to a discussion of what might be called the hip-hop era of Afro-Japanese relations. The mid-1980s saw “booms” on both sides of the Pacific. In Japan, journalists coined the term “black boom” (*kokujin būmu*) to describe the Japanese fascination with all things African Americana. In black America, a fascination with Asian culture that had a decidedly Chinese inflection—this is the age of Bruce Leroy and Wu Tang—grew to include black-Japanese “collabos.” At the heart of these twin booms was the global rise of hip-hop, a cultural phenomenon that, as Ian Condry (channeling Cornel West) argues in his *Hip-Hop Japan: Rap and the Paths of Cultural Globalization*, has the potential to establish “a new cultural politics of affiliation.”³⁹ Afro-Japanese cultural production of the age of hip-hop is both prodigious and problematic. Building on the foundation laid during the golden era, its prodigy resides in the incredible velocity at which Afro-Japanese exchange takes place—a speed which only increases with the ever-increasing sophistication of digital technologies, the mastery that black and Japanese artists wield over their localized versions of global culture. Lenard Moore is a case in point, and the power such non-essentialist, transnational borrowings have in helping us navigate political and cultural spaces.⁴⁰ Or perhaps we should substitute “borrowings” with “purchases.” Decidedly estranged from the foundation established by the golden era, the difficulty of exchange during this period stems from its tendency toward commodification, fetishization, and (racial) reification. This tendency, moreover, is often coupled with a borrowing akin to that of Azuma Hiroki’s database animal.⁴¹ Whereas the artists and intellectuals of the 1960s and 1970s rooted racial affinity in what they saw as a common critique of a suffocating master narrative, most hip-hop era exchange is obsessed with borrowing solely styles and surfaces, many of which are divorced from any narrative whatsoever. This explains, in part, the odd coexistences of the Afro-Japanese cultural

production of this period: for every innocuous, "superflat" collaboration between black rappers and Murakami Takashi, we can think of an equal number of disparaging remarks toward African Americans from the likes of Nakasone Yasuhiro, Watanabe Michio, and Kajiyama Seiroku.⁴²

New Readings of Texts, A New Reading of Race

We would like to—as promised—return to our discussion of the three reasons for the abundance of representation-focused Afro-Japanese studies. We hope to make good on that implicit promise as well: the previous history should make the logic behind representation-driven studies apparent. First, Gayatri Spivak tells us that "representation" is always (literally) duplicitous: it is both "representation as 'speaking for,' as in politics, and representations as 're-presentation,' as in art or philosophy."⁴³ If this is the case, then the push toward studies of representation is due in part to the fact that Afro-Japanese relations have long been a representative affair in both senses of the term. From the black soldiers flanking Perry to rapper Lupe Fiasco's journey from Paris to Tokyo, Afro-Japanese signification, in both art and life, typically represents an attempt to imagine race otherwise, to view one's racial position from a new vantage point undetermined by the white gaze. The stakes are high: Afro-Japanese artists are both speaking for these new visions and re-presenting them. It is to be expected, then, that scholarly attention would be attracted to work with such gravitas. Second, and here too our brief history should be informative, every Afro-Japanese exchange is haunted by the possibility of misrepresentation—with (mis)representation here too resonating on two valences. These misrepresentations should give the cross-cultural interlocutor, to borrow the words of Judith Butler, the "sense of standing under a sign to which one does and does not belong."⁴⁴ The burgeoning Japanese empire of the post-Russo-Japanese War, for example, both was and was not a champion of the colored races; black occupiers, for a second example, both were and were not in a position to empathize with the postwar Japanese. The identitarian messaging required for Afro-Japanese exchange always holds within it the risk of misrepresentation. Providing correctives to such misrepresentations, especially when the stakes are high, are part and parcel to the scholarly enterprise. The urge to address misrepresentation, moreover, is particularly acute when what is being represented supposedly speaks for the scholar herself.

Both of these rationales are perfectly workable. It is with the third rationale, however, that this volume makes a break and presents new readings of texts and new readings of race. Third, representation-driven studies of Afro-Japanese cultural exchange often cross apply some of our sins from

reading race to the reading of racialized texts: we approach the text with a predetermined hypothesis, speak for the text rather than letting it speak for itself, and judge the text according to what we have said on its behalf rather than on what it has actually said. The text merely represents what we already knew to be true about it in the first place (and if it doesn't, confirmation bias will police away any messy actualities). In the micro-moments of racial judgment, we rarely have time to regard the text with what Giorgio Agamben calls the purity of the example, to regard it as a singular instantiation that we must work to connect to larger discourses, to ask it where it came from, how it got here, and where it is going.⁴⁵ The danger of representative studies is the same danger inherent to our reading of race in general: we don't go through the trouble of allowing the text to travel. The representations that float to the surface, and the study anchored by representation, are static. This volume is interested primarily in texts in motion—the contradictory motion within texts, the traveling of texts, and the action that such kinetic energy inspires in readers, viewers, listeners and travelers.

The careful, slow reading of Ozeki's Ruth—her work—does indeed pay off. Ruth's question about "the difference" between flotsam and jetsam is answered: "Flotsam is accidental, stuff found floating at sea. Jetsam's been jettisoned. It's a matter of intent."⁴⁶ And the answer she receives is but a tributary to a larger body of transpacific knowledge. She learns in turn that the Kuroshio brings "warm tropical water up from Asia and over to the Pacific Northwest coast."⁴⁷ She learns that "gyres are bigger. Like a string of currents. Imagine a ring of snakes, each biting the tail of the one ahead of it."⁴⁸ She learns that "each gyre orbits at its own speed," and that "the flotsam that rides the gyres is called drift."⁴⁹ She learns that drift "that stays in the orbit of the gyre is considered to be part of the gyre memory."⁵⁰ If this volume makes a difference, it is in no small part because of the schooling intimated by Ozeki. Allowing each cultural artifact cast (some accidentally, others intentionally) to move at its own speed, the contributions to this volume follow the currents that flow across the Pacific, even when those currents mimic the serpentine patterns of the Ouroboros. In so doing, we hope to unpack the gyre memories held within our traveling texts.

Previewing the Volume

The very notion of cross-cultural only makes sense on the borders of coherent and identifiable cultures replete with reference points to particular origins and significations, and perhaps even meaning itself. This same is true of "representations" of one culture within another cultural context. As a text travels

across cultures, inevitably, such anchoring "nodal points" begin to loosen, and perhaps, eventually, disintegrate. Or, if not disintegrate, to transform, transmigrate, or be transfigured in ways that may not be predictable or foreseeable. In a sense, such a loosening is essential for the text to do the work of reanchoring in a new and different context, as a polycultural or transcultural phenomenon. Sometimes, however, such nodal points "stick" to their texts, but again, in ways that may not be obvious, or faithful, to how they adhered in their originary configurations. For a text to retain an exoticism, which is also to retain its site as one of inciting desire, or as what is lacking in the desiring subject, it must continue to be perceived as somehow exterior to the familiar, to the self, to the cultural references and nodal points of what is perceived as the "home" texts. Finally, how does a material practice, an ideology, or even a musical genre, borrowed from another originating culture, change or transform the very bodies and subjectivities that perform that text under new or different contexts and anchor it differently to its nodal points, or to new nodal points entirely?

The chapters gathered here vary in their analyses of how such nodal points are transformed, erased, retained, and reimagined, and how the bodies and subjectivities of those working to re-text the text moderate, accommodate, or transfigure both the texts and themselves. But for all the examples explored in this volume, there are a set of complex conversations unfolding between cultures, cultural work, and text that takes us far afield of more conventional studies of "representations."

The work of this volume is loosely grouped by topic into three sections, beginning with a series of chapters on art and performance. The second section comprises studies of literature and poetics. The final section, also the longest, addresses music, song and sound, from Japanese *enka* to hip-hop and rap. We begin with Crystal Anderson's study of transculturation in the artworks of iROZEALB, "Urban Geishas: Reading Race and Gender in iROZEALB's Paintings," an artist whose *a³* . . . *Blackface* 31, 2002, is also the cover art for this volume. Richard A. Rogers defines transculturation as follows:

Transculturation questions whether the conception of culture as singular, bounded essence has ever had empirical validity or conceptual coherence. Transculturation, as conceived here, calls not only for an updating of the understanding of contemporary cultural dynamics but also for a radical reconceptualization of culture itself: as conjunctural, relational, or dialogic; as constituted by, not merely engaged in, appropriative relations; and as an ongoing process of absorption and transformation rather than static configurations of practices. . . . Transculturation identifies forces of cultural homogenization and highlights the influential role of economic, political, military, and other

forms of power while also recognizing how cultural appropriation can be constitutive of cultural particularity and agency.⁵¹

iROZEALB is a contemporary American artist who has produced artworks blending elements from Japanese *ukiyo-e* woodblock prints of the Edo Period (1603–1868) with images of contemporary African American women. Focusing on iROZEALB's *a³* . . . *black on both sides* (2004) exhibition catalog, Anderson finds an ambivalence of cultural appropriation critique and practices. She writes, "Instead of simply accepting the binary critical impulse of iROZEALB's use of blackface, what does her appropriation of a Japanese art form heavily populated by images of Japanese women say about the potential for what Thompson calls 'workable interracial tropes?'"⁵² iROZEALB's figures in blackface are Japanese women, not white men, thereby raising questions about femininity and racial performance, as well as offering new, transcultural ways to "read" racial performances. By incorporating signifiers of African American youth consumerism, Edo-Period figural patterns, textures and aesthetics, and American minstrelsy blackface, Anderson argues that iROZEALB's artworks speak across cultures to reference and comment on gender stereotypes, female agency, and historical to contemporary representations of blackness and Japanese-ness in both the United States and Japan.

The second chapter in our collection is "The Theatrics of Japanese Blackface: Body as Mannequin," by Nina Cornyetz. The chapter takes up the 1990s Japanese phenomenon of the *ganguro*, or girls in blackface, to ask: how do the apparent origins of the style in American minstrelsy blackface affect what it signifies for the girls themselves? First, Cornyetz points out the inaugural association of *gyaru* style, of which *ganguro* is a subset, with consumerism and the goods for sale at the department store, Shibuya 109. Second, borrowing from Azuma Hiroki's notion of cultural databases replacing narrative, Cornyetz describes the minuita of *ganguro* style as a cultural catalog of modular elements that can be combined in endlessly different "looks" by each *gyaru*.⁵³ In the process, any deep narratives those modular elements might have had in originary contexts are lost, or transfigured. Ultimately, Cornyetz argues, using the distinction made by Richard Sennett in his *The Fall of Public Man*, the *ganguro* and her sub-styles of *yamamba* and *mamba* should be read as signs, not symbols—that is, at face value without need, or benefit from, interpretation. The style intends to inform the spectator that the girl is "independent, tough, and cool," and has no relationship for the style practitioners themselves, to "real" black people, or to American minstrelsy, or even to any reality whatsoever. That Americans cannot but read *ganguro* in relation to the historical debasement of blacks in their own minstrelsy legacy is another issue altogether.

"Abbey Lincoln and Kazuko Shiraiishi's Art-Making as Spiritual Labor" takes up the concept of art as spiritual labor shared by Lincoln, the musician, and Shiraiishi, the poet. As part of Lincoln's quest for self-realization, and the answer to "how does one come into being as a woman of color?" she turned to a concept of "Africinity." This involved her journey away from American heteronormative cultural models towards an embrace of other forms of heterosexual relations, such as the specifically African polygamist paradigm, in which the husband visits the huts of his wives. In her music, which reached an apex of originality during her performances in Japan in the 1970s, she found inspiration in African performative rituals such as the "Ring Shout." Yutichiro Onishi and Tia-Simone Gardner write of her 1973 performance: "Lincoln howled, shrieked, screamed, chirped, and groaned, like a bird, transforming her voice into a pacemaker, complementing the polyrhythmic sounds delivered at 3/4 time signature that amplified the dialectic between freedom and captivity." (66)

Attending this performance in Japan in 1973 was the avant-garde artist and poet Shiraiishi, who had previously—in 1963—found instant alliance with Lincoln. Among other influences on Shiraiishi's work, such as the "dissonance" she found in a poem called "Saikai" ["Reunion"], written by Ryuichi Tamura, was jazz. In Lincoln's music, in particular, Shiraiishi discovered a lesson in "how to live." (72) According to Onishi and Gardner, "Shiraiishi, in essence, then, through Afro-Asian aesthetic correspondence, turned to the form of devotion to spiritual labor that was central to Lincoln's art making." The texts traveling between the two women thus cross continents: Lincoln, a black American woman, finds alliance with African cultural forms; in turn a Japanese woman, Shiraiishi, finds alliance with this black woman's cultural production—i.e. music—to generate her own anti-normative and trans-cultural work in the form of poetry.

Onishi and Gardner's chapter, which straddles music performance and poetry, is the bridge to our second section on literature. Michio Arimitsu's chapter on the American poet Amiri Baraka takes up his lifelong fascination with Asia. As early as the 1950s, when Baraka still went by the name LeRoi Jones, he became interested in Buddhism, reports Arimitsu. In the 1950s, Baraka and then wife, Hettie Jones, co-edited a poetry journal, which they named *Yugen: A New Consciousness in Arts and Letters*. *Yugen*, Japanese for "mysterious depth," is a Buddhist aesthetic, and the primary aesthetic of the *nô*-drama.⁵⁴ In the 1970s Baraka paid homage to the Chinese author Lu Hsun with his *Daggers and Javelins: Essays, 1974–1979*. Meticulously tracing the influences of Asian arts, philosophy, politics and religion, from Buddhism to haiku to Maoism, throughout Baraka's career as a poet and activist, Arimitsu finds that Baraka's 1990s invention of a poetic form he called "low-coup" bor-

rowed and adapted elements from haiku, such as puns and brevity, to form its own, distinct hybrid genre.

While Arimitsu "uncovers" the role of Asian influence in Baraka's corpus, "Richard Wright's Haiku and Modernist Poetics" by Yoshinobu Hakutani gives as four thousand the number of haiku written by Wright, and offers close, interpretive readings of a selection of those haiku, obviously prominent as a genre within Wright's other works of fiction. Hakutani summarizes for us the role of a set of key Japanese aesthetics at play in haiku, among other Japanese arts: *yûgen* (see above), *sabi* (lonely and old), and *wabi* (poverty), alongside the classical preference for an absence of authorial subjectivity central to the haiku tradition in Japan. Nature, the classicists insisted, must take primacy over humanity, and they shunned "emotion and intellect entirely." (104)

With modernism, the Japanese poet Shiki Masaoka challenged this convention by writing poems that brought human emotions, concepts and presence into the haiku form. In keeping with the importance of humanity to the modernists, argues Hakutani, many of Wright's haiku likewise combined traditional aesthetics with a discernable subject who has moved forward and center. Hakutani has recourse to the psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan to describe classical haiku as therefore a gesture towards the real that rejects symbolism, a description that holds when discussing the imagistic haiku by Wright. However, in those haiku in which a subject can be discerned, desire is thereby constitutively introduced into the poem, and it moves towards a symbolic, or metaphorical, use of language, and away from the models of early modern Japan.

Oe Kenzaburô's representations of black men in his fictional writings have met with some degree of controversy.⁵⁵ William Bridges's chapter, "In the Beginning: Blackness and the 1960s Creative Nonfiction of Oe Kenzaburô," shifts the focus from an evaluative model of such so-called representation to a generative analysis that seeks to show how representations may emerge and what role they may play in empowering or disempowering the subjects of representation, as well as in forming the identity of the writing-subject him or herself. In the 1960s Oe discovered, holds Bridges, an affinity with African American writers and their existential conditions that enabled him to generate (in his writings) problematics and indeed their potential solutions analogous between postwar Japanese and American blacks. This analogy originates in a shared terror of the violence embodied in the white gaze on non-white bodies.

Deeply influenced by Jean Paul Sartre's existentialism, Oe—as did Frantz Fanon before him—rejected Sartre's relegation of race to a particular moment under the larger rubric of class, and his vision of a "raceless" future.⁵⁶ In its place, Oe followed Ralph Ellison and saw celebration of human

diversity instead as the ideal future vision. For Ōe, black literature was a minor literature with the potential to radically challenge the majority discourse of mainstream literature, and he modeled much of his writing on black literature. At the same time, notes Bridges, inevitably, such an identification based on analogy must fail to parse out the ways in which black and Japanese existential conditions and writings are *not the same*. Ending his chapter with a close read of Ōe's *Sakebigoe* (*The Cry*, 1963), Bridges teases out the ambivalences in Ōe's quest for authenticity as a man of color, and *authentique* as good faith, in the Sartrean sense.

"Future-Oriented Blackness in Shōwa Robot Culture—1924 to 1963" takes up the trope of blackness in "future-oriented" proletarian literature alongside tales of robots. The chapter argues that these robots are symbolically rendered as black, a rendering which then functions metonymically as a circuit inter-looping solidarity with ethnically Japanese readerships in stories of liberation or cautionary tales about the perils of ignoring white privilege. Anne McKnight points out that "robots play a catalytic role in social movements in a time of empire, traversing genres because of their modular nature and scalability. Their blackness in Japanese narratives is poised in ambivalence: inviting solidarity in some futures but dominated and controlled in others." (142)

The chapter opens with the 1920s Japanese translation of the drama, R.U.R. *Rossum's Universal Robots*, by the Czech playwright Karel Čapek, in which the robots are allegorical signifiers for exploited workers, turns to a discussion of an actual robot, Gakutensoku, as a metonym for Imperial Japan's colonial project, addresses a killer black robot in a work of science fiction by Urno Jūza, and concludes with a discussion of Tezuka Osamu's 1963 inaugural episode of *Astro Boy*, "that celebrates the use of jazz for liberatory purposes, coding concern for solidarity and liberation into its robot main character's coming of age as an aspiring human." (143)

Anne McKnight argues that these robot tales and proletarian fiction can be understood both within the purview of Afro-futurism and as speculative fiction, or literary forms that pose open-ended questions about future transformations, allowing for a complex inter-relation between machine and human contexts. The robots, variously troped as black, then generate future vitalist imaginaries of liberation and revolution, in which the robots shift from objects to subjects, overthrow their subordination to a creator, and become capable of autonomous action and self-determination. "It is precisely the biological turn away from mechanical features that makes the black robot different—and full of potential in terms of the directions its life might take." (143) The metonymic blackness of the robot combines in these narratives with a Marxist-inflected vitalism that transcends mechanistic with generativity in a movement towards an organicity, which asked in part: "How can

robots acquire and manifest life or explore its potentials in ways that are not subject to a creator or owner, but in which robots control their own means of production?" (146) As such these robots signify ambivalently, sometimes towards a terrifying future, and sometimes towards a hopeful one.

Chapter 8 brings the volume to its final section on music as traveling text. As is Bridges, Kevin Fellezs is concerned with the generative function of what he calls, following Vijay Prashad, "polyculturalism."⁵⁷ Analyzing the case of Jero, a phenotypically African American young man with a Japanese grandmother, raised in the United States, who has become Japan's first black *enka* singer, Fellezs asks, how does taking on Japanese *enka* conventions as a performer generate a sort of hybrid identity for Jero, and by extension, his fans? Arguing that his very existence as a black American *enka* singer contests the imaginary construct of *enka* as a uniquely Japanese musical genre, and one that expresses a premodern sensibility to boot (an imaginary already in denial of the genre's use of Western instrumentation and in fact modern origins), Fellezs claims that Jero challenges *Nihonjinron* (theories on the Japanese people) essentialisms. Concurrently, the criticism of Jero from African American communities (or more commonly, simply lack of interest) suggests that Jero also defies essentialist black racialism, which would dictate that blackness must be lived according to a set of existing standards. Against these and other essentialisms of both Japanese and African Americans, Jero stands as a decidedly polycultural symbol of difference. Indeed, his very body might be thought of as one kind of "traveling text."

The first part of Shana Redmond's "Extending Diaspora: The NAACP and Up-'Lift' Cultures in the Interwar Black Pacific," focuses on the important role of the Negro National Anthem, "Lift Ev'ry Voice and Sing," written by brothers James Weldon and J. Rosamond Johnson, in the interwar period as a mechanism for uniting black intellectuals, activists, and communities in their struggle for civil rights, as well as in the ascendancy of the NAACP itself. Borrowing musical structure from, and referential to Negro spirituals and black gospel traditions, "the anthem excelled in areas that the formal NAACP did not; it embodied the organization, camaraderie, and political vision that one might expect of an NAACP chapter while also presenting the added advantages of easy transport and the dynamism of performance." (197)

In 1933, James Weldon Johnson received a letter from Yasuichi Hikida, a Japanese national living in the United States who already had strong ties to the NAACP, requesting permission to translate "Lift Ev'ry Voice and Sing" into Japanese. He believed that the song could be as significant to the Japanese as it was to black communities in the United States. When the song was finally published in translation, Redmond notes, it was accompanied, rather puzzlingly, by an illustration composed of a caricature of a minstrel

in blackface. The introduction, written by Hikida, was also surprisingly filled with stereotyping and generalizations about American blacks. In spite of these disappointing facts, the project of translating and importing the song into Japanese nonetheless stands as a testament to the interwar Afro-Nippon solidarity, based in part on black communities' positive assessment of Japan as a non-white nation in ascendancy, and the Japanese sense of affinity with African Americans from the perspective of another colored race.

Of course hip-hop and rap are a set of traveling texts, and have made their way to Japan as well as the rest of the world. Despite the very earliest origins of rap as social commentary, rap soon became dominated, as are most musical genres, by non-political entertainment functions. The same can be said for hip-hop. It is no surprise then that the majority of hip-hop and rap artists in Japan continue to perform purely for entertainment value. That being said, The Secrets Protection Law, the reinterpretation of the Japanese constitution in favor of "collective self defense," and the order to restart nuclear reactors after the meltdown of 2011 comprise a series of events with powerful political repercussions. In response, a handful of what Noriko Manabe calls "brave" (211) artists in Japan have used these genres for performances of political protest in the 2010s.

"Hip-Hop and Reggae in Recent Japanese Social Movements" looks at the aspects of some so-called black musics that make them particularly well suited for political protest, such as "the sampling ethos of hip-hop and dancehall reggae [which] encourages the referencing and appropriation of such tracks for the creation of new political songs." (210) Moreover, "the call-and-response associated with black musics enables rappers to engage protesters in shouting slogans themselves." (211) Manabe describes how, despite attempted censorship by record labels and the economic concerns of musicians dependent on media and other commercial support, these musicians performing rap, hip-hop, and reggae have made their opposition to government policies loud and clear.

"Can the Japanese Rap?" asks what does it mean that Japanese rap and hip-hop artists overwhelmingly see themselves as performing a racially black musical genre? Earlier, Japanese artists who played rock and other "Western" musics had also grappled with the fact that their music had originated elsewhere, but that "elsewhere" was not exclusively marked as black. Today, such musicians understand well that there is no conflict between being Japanese and playing rock music, or that a Japanese national is no less "suited" to perform rock music than an American, for example. But for some reason, this has not happened (at least yet) with rap and hip-hop, which continue to be linked with blackness in Japan, in spite of the fact that today hip-hop has traveled throughout the globe and is performed everywhere by multiple races

and ethnicities. Dexter Thomas takes up what he calls the "race problem" at the core of Japanese hip-hop, and focuses our attention on a manga written by Yutsuko Chūsonji, *Wild Q*, which was serialized in the mid-1990s in the popular men's magazine *Popeye*. Chūsonji apparently wrote *Wild Q* while she was living in New York City, as an educational tool for her fellow Japanese lovers of hip-hop, a guide to hip-hop culture, if you will. The manga tells the tale of two decidedly un-cool Japanese young men who travel to Brooklyn and learn the ropes of hip-hop while sojourning there. Assuming that Japanese hip-hoppers were clueless dolls when it came to the "real thing," she set out to correct and inform them; the manga is replete with directives on style and behavior and includes vocabulary lists.

Upon her return to Japan, much to Chūsonji's surprise, was the fact that those very hip-hop artists she had tried to educate actually despised her. They were furious at the negative portrayals of Japanese in her manga, who were pathetic and hapless idiots when it came to hip-hop. Chūsonji had not realized that there was then a much more sophisticated hip-hop scene in Japan than when she had left. She proceeded to make amends to that scene by changing her portrayals of Japanese B-boys, and more importantly, by financing and using her celebrity to support *Hip-Hop Night Flight*, Japan's first successful hip-hop radio show, and she was deeply influential in popularizing the genre.

But something is missing here, Thomas points out. What was not addressed in the controversy aroused by Chūsonji's essentialist treatment of Japanese B-boys was the even more essentialist, indeed racist, portrayals of African Americans in *Wild Q*. Black men are routinely stereotyped as gun-toting criminals and women as promiscuous sluts. The vocabulary lists are often wrong and the advice is often simply incorrect. How is it possible that Chūsonji got it so wrong, she who, because she lived in Brooklyn, *should* have known better? And how could her readers, many of whom had also been to New York, not bother to critique this essentialism? Thomas's chapter, as does Redmond's, ends up with a question mark in place of a conclusion: How is it that some traveling texts fail to dislodge existing models of representation, or nodal points of signification, which continue to co-exist alongside decidedly polycultural and transcultural forms of these very same texts?

Our volume closes with "Race, Ethnicity and Affective Community in Japanese Rastafari," Marvin Sterling's analysis of a loosely centralized Rastafarian identified Japanese community, that is, ethnic Japanese for whom Rastafari ideology constitutes the primary way they represent their emotional, sociopolitical and other lived experiences to themselves. Sterling calls this an "affective community," as defined by Leela Gandhi, that is, a subculture sharing values, ideology and material practices, including a love of reggae, the smoking of marijuana, and a sociopolitical stance oppositional to mainstream

society and culture.⁵⁸ Sterling writes, "The continued productiveness of affect as a concept resides precisely in its attentiveness to social behavior and relationships—individual and collective, past and present, small scale and large, successful and not (judged according to whatever measure)—whose unconscious significances remain unavailable to more 'reasoned,' or more familiar modes of analysis." (240–41)

But why, one might ponder, given that Rasta is an Afrocentric culture and Japan an extra-diasporic space, has Rastafari made its home as a transcultural text there? Sterling suggests that the answer lies precisely in the affective aspect of the identification: "Blackness in Japan is, if nothing else, a highly recognizable metaphor for intense feeling and emotionality that Japanese circumstantially imagine themselves as lacking. In this way, blackness, such as it is ideologically and symbolically encoded in a whole panoply of African Diaspora subcultural forms that have found themselves in the country, can be used as a resource in creating a deep sense of affect that links those who view themselves, in whatever degree of permanence, as belonging to these communities." (244) Unlike younger Japanese enamored of dance hall Jamaican culture, the Japanese Rastas have their roots in the 1960s counter culture movement, and embrace a communalism that privileges extended families and friends living together in "naturalistic" settings, and they reject fundamentalisms of all kinds. Hence, as does Jero's black body, or iROZREALB's paintings, or any number of our other traveling texts, these Rasta communities also challenge the essentialisms lurking behind *Nihonjimin* discourses, as well as those that might attend notions of Rasta—and other "black texts" as (exclusively) the province of racially black bodies.

As noted in the opening paragraphs to this section of the introduction, we will find that sometimes traveling texts indeed transcend and transfigure their relation to existing nodal points, or affix themselves to new ones, in the transition from cultural context to cultural context. Sometimes, however, our traveling, transcultural, and polycultural texts find themselves side by side with earlier "representations" of otherness and exoticism; moreover, some of which may be, frankly, starkly racialized and racist. Even in the last few years, not infrequently, non-Asian Americans have been chided for shockingly racist mimicry of Chinese or Japanese English-speaking accents or behavior, and some Japanese stores still sell Little Black Sambo dolls, two examples of "nodal points" affixed to much earlier representations that continue to co-exist alongside transcultural ones. This may be why, for example, in this volume we find hip-hop still anchored to blatantly stereotyped black bodies, and yet a community of Japanese Rastafari, or that of Hikida's translation of "Lift Ev'ry Voice and Sing" was accompanied by an illustration of a minstrel in blackface, and the Japanese *ganguro* girl in blackface signals nothing of min-

strelsy to the practitioners of the style while the American onlooker cannot see it as *not* linked to their history of whites performing caricatures of blacks. Like the diary Ruth finds washed up on the shores of Cortes Island in *A Tale for the Time Being*, our traveling texts bring with them complex and inspiring conversations, sometimes beautiful, sometimes vapid, and sometimes violent. Appropriation of whatever sort must be born from such conflicting and antagonistic discussions (and work) between cultures, and sometimes these then proceed, circuitously, to transculturation.

Notes

1. Ruth Ozeki, *A Tale for the Time Being*, 12–13.
2. This project began as a panel at the 2012 Association for Asian Studies (AAS) Annual Conference, "Reading Between the (Color) Lines: Translation, Traveling Texts and African American-Japanese Cultural Exchange." This panel was organized by William Bridges and chaired by Nina Cornyeetz, the co-editors of this volume. In 2013, William Bridges and Noriko Manabe co-organized "Straight Outta Nippon: Appropriation, Identification, Class Consciousness and Political Resistance in Japanese Hip-Hop and Reggae" for the AAS Annual Conference. A symposium convened at New York University, "Between African American and Japanese: Traveling Texts," brought the two panels together and added a few new voices. The symposium participants put together a prototype for the current volume.
3. See Lawrence Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation*.
4. Tompkins, *Sensational Designs: The Cultural Work of American Fiction, 1790–1860*, xvii.
5. Murphy-Shigematsu, "'The Invisible Man' and Other Narratives of Living in the Borderlands of Race and Nation," in Willis and Murphy-Shigematsu, eds. *Transcultural Japan: At the Borderlands of Race, Gender, and Identity*, 285.
6. *Ibid.*, 286.
7. *Ibid.*
8. Tompkins, *Sensational Designs: The Cultural Work of American Fiction, 1790–1860*, xvi.
9. Dower, *Black Ships and Samurai: Commodore Perry and the Opening of Japan (1853–1854)*.
10. Perry, *Narrative of the Expedition of an American Squadron to the China Seas and Japan Performed in the Years 1852, 1853 and 1854 under the Command of Commodore M. C. Perry, United States Navy*, 295.
11. As quoted in a program printed for the 1894 performance by the Japan Expedition Press. This program can be found in the aforementioned *Black Ships and Samurai*.
12. Perry, *Narrative of the Expedition of an American Squadron to the China Seas and Japan Performed in the Years 1852, 1853 and 1854 under the Command of Commodore M. C. Perry, United States Navy*, 300.

13. Kanagaki, *The Beefeater*, 273; Shank's *Mare Round the West*, 254.
14. Miyoshi, *As We Saw Them: The First Japanese Embassy to the United States*, 59.
15. As quoted in *As We Saw Them*, 63.
16. Kunitake, *Japan Rising: The Iwakura Embassy to the USA and Europe*, 63.
17. Miyoshi, *As We Saw Them: The First Japanese Embassy to the United States*, 63.
18. Kearney, *African American Views of the Japanese: Solidarity or Sedition?*, 14.
19. Taylor, "The Political Interests [sic] of the Negro."
20. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, 9.
21. Du Bois and Burghardt, "Color Line Belts the World," 20.
22. Weiner, "The Invention of Identity: Race and Nation in Pre-War Japan," from *The Construction of Racial Identity in China and Japan*, 97. In *Becoming Yellow: A Short History of Racial Thinking*, Michael Keevak explains that sixteenth-century European documents often referred to the "whiteness" of Japanese. This "whiteness," argues Keevak, signified the civilization, and amenability to Christian proselytization, of the Japanese. With the 1630s Tokugawa proscription of Christianity, the Japanese became less white. Kaempfer's 1727 *History of Japan*, which Keevak calls "Europe's standard account until well into the nineteenth century," deemed the Japanese "braune," which was translated into English as "tawny," two of "the most common terms for describing native peoples who were not exactly black but not white either." (For more on this, see the first chapter of *Becoming Yellow*.) Du Bois's positioning of "yellowness" as closer to "blackness" than "whiteness," then, is indicative of an early twentieth-century addendum to Japan's "becoming yellow."
23. As cited in Deutsch, "'The Asiatic Black Man': An African American Orientalism?," 195.
24. Chandler, "Introduction: On the Virtues of Seeing—At Least, But Never Only—Double," *CR: The New Centennial Review* 26, no. 1 (Spring 2012): 3. The approach taken by this volume is informed by and indebted to the groundwork laid by Chandler in his 2012 special issue of *CR: Toward a New Parallax: Or, Japan—in Another Traversal of the Transpacific*.
25. Du Bois and Burghardt, *Dark Princess*, 257.
26. Hughes, *I Wonder as I Wander*, 264.
27. *Ibid.*, 242.
28. Gallicchio, *The African American Encounter with Japan and China*, 116.
29. Green, *Black Yanks in the Pacific: Race in the Making of American Military Empire after World War II*, 45.
30. Eiji, *Inside GHQ: The Allied Occupation of Japan and Its Legacy*, 130–31.
31. Pratt, "Arts of the Contact Zone," 37.
32. The Tokiwa images described here can be found in *The History of Japanese Photography* (Museum of Fine Arts Houston, 2003); the Tōmatsu images can be found in *Tōmatsu Shomei: Chewing Gum and Chocolate* (Aperture, 2014).
33. Ōe, "Sengo sedai no imēji," 17.
34. *Ibid.*, 19.
35. Originally signed in 1952, the Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security between the United States and Japan (often abbreviated in Japanese as "ANPO"—security) effectively wed Japanese security to American interests in Asia. Prime Minister

- Kishi Nobusuke's initiation of the revision and reratification of ANPO in 1958 was the sparkplug for a series of protests that would rock Japan in the 1960s. The ranks of protestors included the All-Japan Federation of Students' Self-Governing Associations, often abbreviated as the *Zengakuren*, a conglomerate of (at times violent) student revolutionaries, radicals, communists and anarchists.
36. For more on Ali and "Asiatic blackness," see Deutsch, "'The Asiatic Black Man': An African American Orientalism?"
 37. The translation here is Molasky's, from *The American Occupation of Japan and Okinawa: Literature and Memory*, 97.
 38. As cited in Hamaker, "Nago Mayor Says US Bases 'A Legacy of Misery' in Okinawa."
 39. Condry, *Hip-Hop Japan: Rap and the Paths of Cultural Globalization*, 29.
 40. A decorated haiku poet, Lenard Moore is, among the other accolades he has received on both sides of the Pacific, the first African American to be elected to the post of president of the Haiku Society of America.
 41. In *Otaaku: Japan's Database Animals*, Azuma suggests that postmodern consumption as it is witnessed in otaku culture is characterized by a disregard for a producer's place vis-à-vis some grand narrative and a fascination with selecting whatever catches our eye/I. This mode of consumption, for Azuma, is akin to a primal dive into and out of databases.
 42. Murakami Takashi's self-styled "superflat" artwork—which Cornyetz's "Murakami Takashi and the Hell of Others" describes as the culmination "of traditional planar Japanese art forms and contemporary, globally circulating, non-realist, non-humanist anime-manga chimerical life forms" (p. 182)—found two of its many global homes in sartorial collaborations with rapper/fashionista Pharrell Williams and the cover art of the 2007 Kanye West album *Graduation*. Although such transracial collaboration is super-generative, perhaps the "flatness" of such exchanges is crystallized by the lingering memory of a battery of unfortunate comments made by Japanese politicians. In 1986, Prime Minister Nakasone Yasuhiro told some one thousand young members of his Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) that the average intelligence of the United States was lowered by the inclusion of blacks, Puerto Ricans and Mexicans; in 1988 Watanabe Michio, then chief of the LDP Policy Affairs Research Council, claimed that, whereas bankruptcy would besmirch the honor of any upright Japanese citizen, blacks would revel in the levity of having no financial responsibilities; in 1990, Kajiyama Seiroku, Justice Minister and member of the LDP, compared foreign prostitutes in Tokyo to African Americans crossing the red line into white neighborhoods.
 43. Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?," 275.
 44. Butler, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex."* 219.
 45. For more on Agamben's notion of the example as "pure singularity," see "Example," from Giorgio Agamben's *The Coming Community*.
 46. Ruth Ozeki, *A Tale for the Time Being*, 13.
 47. *Ibid.*
 48. *Ibid.*
 49. *Ibid.*
 50. *Ibid.*

51. Rogers, "From Cultural Exchange to Transculturation," 495.
52. Thompson, "Blackface, Rape and Beyond," 124.
53. Azuma, *Otaku*.
54. See Yoshinobu Hakutani's chapter in this volume, "Richard Wright's Haiku and Modernist Poetics," 99-118 for a discussion of the subtleties of the *yūgen* aesthetic.
55. See, for example, Tachibana, "Structures of Power."
56. Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*.
57. Prashad, *Everybody Was Kung-Fu Fighting*.
58. Gandhi, *Affective Communities*.

I

ART AND PERFORMANCE