

NOTES

In a slightly different version, my essay is also part of the collection *Afro/Asia: Revolutionary Political and Cultural Connections between African- and Asian-Americans*, ed. Fred Ho and Bill V. Mullen (Durham: Duke University Press, forthcoming).

1. Bruce Lee explained to his mother his explicit intentions toward the white opponents in making the film, *The Return of the Dragon*: "Mom, I'm an Oriental person; therefore, I have to defeat all the whites in the film." Cited in Bruce Thomas, *Bruce Lee: Fighting Spirit* (Berkeley, CA: Frong, 1994), 146.
2. Fred Houn, Interview of Max Roach, *Unity* [a newspaper; the political organ of the defunct League of Revolutionary Struggle, Marxist-Leninist], 12 September 1980, 12.
3. The film has to date grossed over \$150 million worldwide, and at the time of its initial release in 1973 set the box office gross of any film from Asia. Available at <http://www.jadedragon.com/archives/mafilms> (retrieved 10 July 2005).
4. Scholar Vijay Prashad was one among many South Asians during that time who was affected by Lee and *Enter the Dragon*. Vijay Prashad, *Everybody Was Kung Fu Fighting: Afro-Asian Connections and the Myth of Cultural Purity* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 2001), 126.
5. Hafez Modirzadeh, "Spiraling Chinese Cyclic Theory and Modal Jazz Practice across Millennia: Proposed Sources and New Perceptions for John Coltrane's Late Musical Conceptions," *Journal of Music in China* 2.2 (Fall 2000): 235-264.
6. Ron Wheeler and David Kaufman, "Is Kung Fu Racist?" in *Afro/Asia: Revolutionary Political and Cultural Connections between African- and Asian-Americans*, ed. Fred Ho and Bill V. Mullen (Durham: Duke University Press, forthcoming).
7. See Robin D. G. Kelley and Betsy Esch, "Black Like Mao: Red China and Black Revolution," *Souls* 1.4 (Fall 1999): 6-41.
8. A sector of the Asian American left during the 1970s did take up martial arts as part of their preparation for revolutionary struggle, as accounted to me by Alex Hing, a former founding member of the Red Guard Party in San Francisco's Chinatown, and as told to me by veteran activist-dancer/choreographer Peggy Choy (whose family has a long history of activism in Hawaii) in her accounts about Asian American left activists in Hawaii.

Afterword

Toward a Black Pacific

Gary Y. Okihiro

"AfroAsian" articulations, as shown in this anthology, undermine the prevailing black/white binary of racializations in the United States. The racial formation necessitates that intervention. But there are other binaries at work in the United States' social, not racial, formation. These include the diasporic binaries of Europe and America,¹ Africa and America, Asia and America; the bipolar gendering and sexualizing of geographies as in Orientalism; and the distinctions of "native" and "alien." Further, frequently overlooked in considerations of "Asians" and "Asia" is the Pacific, which often and mistakenly stands in place of or in reference to Asia, especially East Asia. Even as Latina/os and Native Americans must be included in any consideration of the United States' racial formation because of their distinctions and hence imperative (in truth, "racial triangulation" is a partial rendition of the United States' racial formation), examinations of U.S. history and Asian or African America must include the Atlantic and the Pacific and America and the world. I find gestures in all of those directions in the chapters of this path-breaking collection and propose that they, in their fullness, constitute the promising future of "AfroAsian studies" as styled by this book's editors.

Atlantic/Pacific

The American species, a long-standing and persistent idea holds, was grafted in the "new world" from European ("old") stock. A version of that Eurocentrism maintains that America was the western terminus of an Atlantic civilization that embraced Europe's "cultural hearths" and their

diasporas. Columbus's first landing in 1492 in his search for Asia constitutes the beginning of this Atlantic civilization as conceived. His "discovery," although unclear to him to his death, fixed America onto European maps that located its islands and eastern shores by binding grids of longitude and latitude. Eventually, with the global spread of Europeans and their disciplines, those coordinates would delineate and encompass the entire world.

Paul Gilroy takes on that Eurocentrism in his *The Black Atlantic*. In truth, Gilroy tells us, the book arose from his experience trying to persuade students that history and the life of the mind held significance for their circumscribed interests and pursuits. "I worked hard to punctuate the flow of the Europe-centered material with observations from the dissonant contributions of black writers to the Enlightenment and counter-Enlightenment concerns," he remembered of those early morning sociology lectures and his attempts to find readings that would expand his students' horizons:

The Black Atlantic developed from my uneven attempts to show these students that the experience of black people were part of the abstract modernity they found so puzzling and to produce as evidence some of the things that black intellectuals had said—sometimes as defenders of the West, sometimes as its sharpest critics—about their sense of embeddedness in the modern world.²

In his influential intervention, Gilroy describes a Black Atlantic that was not specifically African, American, Caribbean, or British but was all of those simultaneously, transcendent of nation, race, and ethnicity and emphatically and mutably mixed and hybrid.

Gilroy's unit of study, in truth, is the old Atlantic world and its pedigree of the American system, Atlantic civilization, and Eurocentrism.³ Africans within that universe become "embedded" within European modernity, and racialization is more complicated by hybridity, but its constituent parts remain in essence black and white. Slighted are Native Americans who preceded and were overwritten by Atlantic civilization, Latinas/os who embodied hybridity, and Asians who, like Africans, were transported to America and became thereby "embedded" in the "Black Atlantic."⁴

America is surely a part of the Atlantic world and the Black Atlantic, but it is also a "cultural hearth" of a Pacific civilization that, like its Atlantic counterpart, was a system of flows of capital, labor, and culture that

produced transnational and hybrid identities, as well as their counter-claims for homogeneity, nationalism, and racial purity. In that sense, I'd like to suggest that the United States is an island surrounded by lands north and south, but also oceans, east and west. And as an island, unlike the imagined, hegemonic insularity of American exceptionalism and continentalism, the United States must be viewed properly as a center with its own integrity but also as a periphery and a fluid space of movements and engagements that resist closure and inevitable or final outcomes.

All of the essays in this book embark on a liberating crossing "beyond the traditional black/white binary," as pointed out by the editors. Additionally, racial formations, although grounded in space and time, have never been fully constrained by national boundaries and have always found outlets across borders, geographic and social fences notwithstanding. Those structures, we know, of binary relations whether of race or nation or gender, sexuality, and class, for that matter, form hierarchies of the self and other, the empowered and those separated from power. And hence the consequential intervention of ideas such as those contained in this collection of interstitial identities and even inscriptions that rupture the hegemonic binaries that privilege and impoverish.

In my contribution to this book, I'd like to venture into territory referenced but not detailed by several of the contributors to this volume on "AfroAsian" encounters, the Black Pacific. This detour into "the imperial and colonial zones," in Paul Gilroy's words, away from the centers and toward the margins, reveals the workings of empire not only on colonial subjects but also and reciprocally on the colonizers in the return, like spiders in the bananas, of the empire. In my consideration of the Black Pacific, I reflect on Oceania's islands, not the Pacific's continental rim, and its inhabitants, Pacific Islanders and Hawaiians, not the "Asians" who are a subject of this collection's study. The quest to widen the purview of our scholarship across racializations, nations, and fields as articulated by *AfroAsian Encounters* inspires and animates this move toward a Black Pacific.

The temptation is to think about the Pacific like the Atlantic, as a wattery crossing between solid, continental landmasses. Apt is the metaphor of a ship, as pointed out by Paul Gilroy, "a living, micro-cultural, micro-political system in motion." Ships, Gilroy explained, shift attention from the shore to the middle passage and the circulation of peoples, ideas, and cultures.⁴ In the Pacific, images come to mind of Filipino and Chinese seamen on board Spanish galleons beginning in 1565 plying the trade between Manila and Acapulco, and of Hawaiian sailors who, during the

1830s, comprised the majority of the crews on U.S. ships that carried animal furs from the Pacific Northwest to Canton, China.⁵

But the Pacific is not a negative space between Asia and the United States or the hole in a doughnut, the breakfast food of champions and a tasty trope for the Pacific's rim. Writing of that absence, Samoan novelist and university professor Albert Wendt rejected the "fatal impact theory" of colonial literature that pronounced the death of native cultures with the arrival of the Europeans. "We and our cultures have survived and adapted when we were expected to die, vanish, under the influence of supposedly stronger superior cultures and their technologies," he wrote:

Our story of the Pacific is that of marvelous endurance, survival and dynamic adaptation, despite enormous suffering under colonialism in some of our countries. We have survived through our own efforts and ingenuity. We have indigenised much that was colonial or foreign to suit ourselves, creating new blends and forms.⁶

Imagine the Pacific as Oceania or the "sea of islands" as reconceived by Wendt and the Tongan writer Epeli Hau'ofa. Instead of a vast and empty ocean dotted by tiny bits of land and reefs as represented by European maps, a sea of islands conjures "a large world in which peoples and cultures moved and mingled, unhindered by boundaries of the kind erected much later by imperial powers," wrote Hau'ofa of Oceania's peoples:⁷

Oceania is vast, Oceania is expanding, Oceania is hospitable and generous, Oceania is humanity rising from the depths of brine and regions of fire deeper still, Oceania is us. We are the sea, we are the ocean, we must wake up to this ancient truth and together use it to overturn all hegemonic views that aim ultimately to confine us again, physically and psychologically, in the tiny spaces that we have resisted accepting as our sole appointed places, and from which we have recently liberated ourselves. We must not allow anyone to belittle us again, and take away our freedom.⁸

Having left the bounded Atlantic for the expansive Pacific, and with the focus on the sea of islands and not on the crossing, in this, my brief rendition of a "Black Pacific," I expand on three intersections between Pacific Islanders and African Americans. The first involves labor; the second, education; and the third, popular culture. Like the encounter of African and Asian bodies in the Atlantic systems of labor and exchange, European set-

ters in America "recruited" Pacific Islanders for their plantations in the "New World." The laborers augmented the workforce of Indians and Africans, and their procurement shared features of the African slave trade. In a return of empire, an education designed to colonize Hawaiians in the torrid zone was transplanted in the soil of the temperate zone to choke the aspirations of African Americans following the end of slavery. Hawaiian music constituted another kind of return that initially captured and then was assimilated by "American" music. Those matrices of empire, involving capital and labor, ideology and culture, map the locations and relations of power and therewith the possibilities for creating, within the interstices, liberating solidarities.

Labor

Agricultural production was the foundation of Peru's economy, and its exports were mainly grown on large plantations of sugar, cotton, olives, grapes, and grains along the country's coastal valleys. After 1854 when slavery was abolished, Peru faced a labor crisis that the formerly enslaved Africans and American Indians could not ease. Between 1849 and 1856, Chinese coolies, or bonded labor, were imported on overcrowded ships, often modeled on African slave ships and called "floating hells," and were sold in Callao to the highest bidder. At least one-third of the coolies died during the transpacific passage because of overcrowding and insufficient food,⁹ and once in Peru, a historian noted, the Chinese status was "essentially that of slaves."¹⁰ Despite the odious nature of the traffic, Peru's Congress authorized in 1861 the importation of "Asiatic colonists," a thinly disguised euphemism for "coolies," to cultivate the country's coastal estates. It was under this law that Pacific Islanders came to labor and perish in Peru.

The first ship, the *Adelante*, sailed from Callao in 1862 and returned about three months later with a cargo of 253 Polynesian (Tongarevan) recruits. The sponsors reaped a profit of \$40,000 (or a 400 percent return) after selling the men for \$200, women for \$150, and boys for \$100. The ship's design set the standard for others that followed: a hold of three compartments separated by iron bars; hatches with iron gratings over them to prevent escapes; two swivel guns to sweep the deck; muskets, revolvers, and knives in abundance; and extra crew members to guard the hatches day and night. The *Adelante's* success prompted speculation and

a rush on Polynesian labor recruitment, and ships fitted out for the African slave and Chinese coolie trades joined the Peruvian recruiting fleet.

While the initial shipment of Polynesians was accomplished with the cooperation of the British missionaries who labored among them, subsequent recruitments were carried out as armed raids that killed and captured islanders and marched them bound hand and foot to the waiting ships. The devastation was as enormous as the profits were high. Population losses on the islands from raids, deaths, and disease introduced by the invaders ranged from 24 percent on Pukapuka to 79 percent on Nukunuae-lae. Easter Island, with an estimated population of 4,126 in 1862, lost 1,386 to labor raids and about 1,000 to disease, and thus suffered a 58 percent population decrease. Meanwhile, the brig *Bella Margarita* realized the sum of \$46,000 on a single, two-month voyage.¹¹

One of the captives, Niuean Taole, described the process called "black-birding":

The people of Tokelau were captured in great numbers, more than those that were taken from Niue, and there were some women amongst them. Many of the unsuspecting islanders were made captives on board, when they came expecting to trade. Some of them broke loose in the struggle and leaped overboard. . . . The armed boat crews pursued them, and they were seized and hauled inboard; those that resisted were shot or were killed with cutlasses. . . . As the men and women were brought on board they were thrust down the ladder into the hold to join the Niue people, and then the ships sailed away eastward with the hundreds of captives.¹²

Peru's involvement in the Polynesian traffic ended by 1864, but the effects of that trade transformed many island communities. Perhaps most dramatic was the effect on Easter Island. According to a study:

The old social order of Easter Island was entirely destroyed in 1862 when Peruvian slave traders kidnapped a large part of the population. They took to the guano islands on the Peruvian coast, not only the king with many members of his family, but a considerable number of learned men (*maori*). This catastrophe, disrupting the traditional mode of living, created a state of anarchy and confusion. But the events of the years that followed were even more disastrous. Epidemics of smallpox, introduced by a few kid-

napped men who returned to their island, decimated the population and struck the last blow to native culture.¹³

One of those who managed to escape Peru was the Niuean, Taole, son of a chief. He was found working at the Callao wharves by Hawaiian seamen on a U.S. whaling ship that had docked there. The Hawaiians convinced the American captain to help Taole, and they dressed him in sailor's clothes and smuggled him on board under the watchful eye of his guards. The ship immediately set sail and managed to escape despite pursuit by a Peruvian government vessel. Taole stayed in Hawai'i for several years before eventually returning home to Niue.¹⁴

In truth, the Atlantic is never far from the Pacific. That whaling ship, manned by Hawaiian sailors that saved Taole on Peru's coast surely must have originated from the U.S. Northeast. Yankee ships from home ports like Boston and Salem, New Haven and New York, wintered in Hawaiian waters, took on provisions and goods, and enticed Hawaiians to work as sailors on the highways that took them from the islands to British Columbia and Peru back to Hawai'i and on to Canton. From China, they sailed westward into the Indian Ocean, around South Africa's Cape, and across the Atlantic to the U.S. Northeast. Hawaiians, marooned in New York City and Boston and New Haven, were found by religious societies who conceived of the idea of a Hawaiian mission for the glory of god and manna.

So westward those missionaries went to save the "savage" and benighted race. On October 15, 1819, at the Park Street Church in Boston, the first company of seven missionaries and their wives and children, along with three "natives" of Hawai'i, were formed into a "Church of Christ" and commissioned to go forth to convert the heathens of the Sandwich Islands. "So great was the interest in this missionary enterprise of the Orthodox New England Church," wrote the historian Samuel Eliot Morison, "that over five hundred persons received Holy Communion at a farewell service the following Sabbath."¹⁵ On Saturday morning, October 23, the final farewell took place at Boston's Long Wharf, and after a prayer, speech, and song, the "Church of Christ" took their leave and boarded the brig *Thaddeus*, which weighed anchor and headed out for the open sea.

Among the fifth company of missionaries were the Reverend Richard Armstrong and his wife, Clarissa Chapman, who arrived in Honolulu on May 17, 1832, after an ocean voyage of 173 days.¹⁶ Decades later, on

the occasion of her eightieth birthday, Clarissa Chapman Armstrong would recall her early mission days in Hawai'i and the Marquesas as "a life amongst the heathens with the privilege of uplifting dark, degraded humanity," or the "children of nature, with no knowledge of civilization whatever and given over to animal lusts and selfish degradation."¹⁷ A mature Samuel Chapman praised his mother: "It is wonderful how much you have gone through; you have taught a noble lesson to your children. You have helped me and have been in my work in a marvelous way."¹⁸

Growing up in Hawai'i, young Samuel played and went to school with his fellow mission children, and he readily distinguished himself and his white friends from the "darkies" like the Hawaiians to whom his parents ministered and his family's Chinese servant, Ah-Kam, "a typical Chinaman" with a habit for stealing, he wrote.¹⁹ And less charitably, Samuel be-moaned the Chinese as "rat-eaters" and "these sly 'pigtails'" who come to "our Paradise" to despoil it, seeing Hawai'i as merely a place "to grind out money for their gambling . . . and their aged parents. Is the Chinaman capable of piety?" he pondered.²⁰ His father, the Reverend Richard Armstrong, described the Hawaiian objects of his affection:

The females are in great need of improvement. Their habits, conversation and mode of living are filthy. They are ignorant and lazy, lack everything like modesty, and hardly know how to do anything. Of course, the mothers being such creatures, you may judge what the children are. In multitudes of cases the pigs are as well taken care of as the children and are nearly as decent and cleanly.²¹

Years later and laboring to uplift another dark and benighted race in the U.S. South, Samuel Chapman Armstrong would fondly recollect his mission days in Hawai'i and conflate in his mind Hawaiians with African Americans and his life's work with that of his parents:

Sometimes, when I stand outside a Negro church, I get precisely the effect of a Hawaiian congregation, the same fullness and heartiness and occasional exquisite voices, and am instantly transplanted ten thousand miles away, to the great Kawaiahae church where Father used to preach to 2500 people, who swarmed in on foot and horseback, from shore, and valley and mountain, for miles around. Outside, it was like an encampment, inside it was a sea of dusky faces.²²

Armstrong was not alone in that coupling of Hawaiians with African Americans. As members of a darker race, they served in the same military units during the Civil War. Armstrong wrote about Kealoha, a private in the 41st Regiment U.S. colored troops, and Kaiwi, a private in the 28th Regiment U.S. colored troops. "Yesterday, as my orderly was holding my horse," he wrote in 1865, "I asked him where he was from. He said he was from Hawai'i! He proved to be a full-blood Hawaiian, by the name of Kealoha, who came from the Islands last year."²³ Kealoha and Kaiwi were unexceptional. Armstrong, writing of Hawaiians serving in the Union Army, remarked:

I found several of them among the Negro regiments. During the bombardment of Fort Harrison, north of the James River, while commanding a support brigade, I heard my Hawaiian name, Kamuela, called from a color-guard, and looking down saw a grinning Kanaka, a corporal, who had recognized me—as cool as a cucumber. Another turned up as a headquarter orderly—holding my horse. I read, in an account of the naval land attack on Fort Fisher, that among the first seamen to volunteer for the deadly work were two Hawaiian sailors. They are all good soldiers; like the Negro, they are noble under leadership, often wonderful in emergencies.²⁴

Both Hawai'i and the military figured prominently in the founding of the Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute by Samuel Chapman Armstrong in 1868. "These schools over which my father as Minister of Education [of the Hawaiian kingdom] had for fifteen years a general oversight, suggested the plan of the Hampton School," he testified. And, "The negro and the Polynesian have many striking similarities. Of both it is true that not mere ignorance, but deficiency of character is the chief difficulty, and that to build up character is the true objective point in education." Further, "morality and industry generally go together. Especially in the weak tropical races, idleness, like ignorance, breeds vice."²⁵ Labor corrects those character deficiencies that disable the "weak tropical races," and the instilling of correct habits, sired by military regimentation, were the form and object of education. "The average Negro student needs a regime which shall control the twenty-four hours of each day; thus only can the old ideas and ways be pushed out and new ones take their place," Armstrong stated. "The formation of good habits is fundamental in our work. . . . the Negro pupil, like the Negro soldier, is readily transformed under wise control into remarkable tidiness and good conduct generally."²⁶

We, of course, know the influence of this brand of education that deferred dreams of full freedom and equality for the life of the hand and not the life of the mind.²⁷ As Armstrong put it, "The temporal salvation of the colored race for some time to come is to be won out of the ground. Skillful agriculturists and mechanics are needed rather than poets and orators." And, "Too much is expected of mere book-knowledge; too much is expected of one generation. The real upward movement, the leveling up, not of persons but of people, will be, as in all history, almost imperceptible, to be measured only by long periods."²⁸ A grateful Hampton graduate, Booker T. Washington, eulogized his great teacher: "My race in this country can never cease to be grateful to General Armstrong for all that he did for my people and for American civilization. We always felt that many of the ideas and much of the inspiration he used to such good effect in this country, he got in Hawaii."²⁹

Ideology

Pacific Islander and African American relations in music are as deep as they remain largely unexplored. I am thinking in particular about the resistances posed by Hawaiians and African Americans in popular culture to the crude caricatures of them as "weak tropical races"—idle, ignorant, but happy and given to dance and song. Both African Americans and Hawaiians appropriated those representations to advance their interests and musical careers. Of course, one's repossession is another's betrayal, and mimicry can support even as it can erode the "original." But Hawaiian and African American musicians worked within tight spaces of race, gender, sexuality, and nation and their labors can be multiply construed.

The most popular music in the United States before 1925, as indicated by record and sheet music sales, was apparently "Hawaiian" music. The foundation of that music was laid by missionaries who taught Hawaiians to sing Christian hymns and by Mexican cowboys who introduced the guitar. During the 1830s, the Hawaiian King Kamehameha III recruited Mexican vaqueros to teach Hawaiians to ride horses and rope and herd the European-introduced wild cattle that threatened to overwhelm the islands of Hawai'i and Maui. Joseph Kekuku, in 1885, experimented with the guitar by playing it on his lap, raising the frets, and using a steel slide to produce the glissando sound that mimicked Hawaiian falsetto singing.³⁰ The sound he produced soon became a staple of Hawaiian steel guitar playing.

The 1912 hit show on Broadway, *Bird of Paradise*, and the 1915 Panama-Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco led to a boom in Hawaiian music on the landed continent, and nightclubs, theatres, and orchestras hired musicians and dancers to perform "Hawaiian" music. Tin Pan Alley joined in the craze, churning out cartoons like "Wicki Wacki Woo" and "Yaaka Hula Hickey Dula," sang by the many-faced minstrel Al Jolson in 1916 in the Broadway musical comedy, *Robinson Crusoe, Jr.* In fact, some of the earliest Hawaiian music was marketed as "coon songs" and "oriental coon songs" in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.³¹

Hawaiian and African American musics bore resemblances. As pointed out by the well-known Hawaiian musician and composer, Johnny Noble, both musics drew from Christian hymns and their harmonies. Before the arrival of Europeans, Hawaiian music was limited to chants consisting of two or three pitches composed by the priests in praise of gods and kings and in remembrance of historical events. The hula originally referred to the chant and the facial and hand gestures that accompanied it. Similarly, Noble observed, jazz was essentially dance music, and in the blues, singers used their bodies and facial expressions to convey the song's message. And common to both Hawaiian music and the blues or "true jazz," Noble wrote, were

the use of the slur (glissando or vibrato); the constant moving of the melodic line in and out of microtones; a tendency to mingle major and minor modes; and a regular beat, usually depending on drums, with stressed off-beat accents. Also, both jazz and early Hawaiian music were natural and spontaneous; both were personal and vocalized; and both affected the senses and feelings with a certain haunting quality.³²

Noble's first hit was, appropriately, "Hula Blues."

Hawaiian and African American musics differed and diverged through innovation and commercialization, but there were also instances of convergences when Hawaiian and African American musicians made cross-over appearances. Jazz's influence on Sol Hoopii, perhaps the greatest slide guitarist of his time, was profound and evident in many of his recordings, and Ben Nawahi played with greats like the New Orleans singer and stride pianist Walter "Fats" Pichon and recorded "California Blues" and "Black Boy Blues" in the 1920s and 1930s. Louis Armstrong, among others, played with Hawaiian bands and in the Hawaiian music vein, and the influential blues guitarist Sylvester Weaver merged Hawaiian with African American