

**AfroAsian Encounters**  
*Culture, History, Politics*

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For a long time, many critics understood W. E. B. Du Bois's famous diagnosis of the twentieth century as plagued by the problem of the color line as a description of white/nonwhite antagonisms. However, in the aftermath of identity movements on the part of a variety of racial and ethnic groups, as well as saddening clashes between them, it has become impossible to construe the twentieth century as riven by a single color line. Instead, we now conceive of the modern world as having been fractured by a network of lines dividing a range of racial and ethnic groups. How else can we comprehend the identity struggles of South Asian visual artists in the Caribbean, the treatment of the Vietnam War by African American novelists, or the absorption of hip-hop by Asian American youth culture?

*AfroAsian Encounters* addresses an important connection that until recently has received only scant attention: the mutual influence of and relationships between members of the African and Asian diasporas in the Americas. Across the Americas, these two groups have often been thought of as occupying radically incommensurable cultural and political positions. In this collection, we examine AfroAsian interconnections across a variety of cultural, political, and historical contexts in order to examine how the two groups have interacted, and have construed one another, as well as how they have been set in opposition to each other by white systems of racial domination. We build here on the burgeoning interest in AfroAsian cultural histories reflected in a number of venues. From the conferences hosted by Boston University's African American studies department (2002, 2003, 2004), to special editions on AfroAsian studies in *Souls: A Critical Journal of Black Politics, Culture, and Society* (2002) and *positions: East Asia cultures critique* (2003), to the numerous essays and

books generated by scholars across a number of disciplines from Gary Okihiro and Vijay Prashad to Claire Jean Kim and Frank Wu, as well as work by contributors we include here, research on black-Asian racial interactions and formations has expanded at a rapid pace during the last decade.<sup>1</sup> We seek to widen the energetic investigations that AfroAsian studies have provided relative to histories of diasporic and racial formations and globalization across a variety of fields, and with this book we hope to offer an important contribution to the ongoing scholarly debate. We have framed our treatment of black-Asian interactions within a neologism—rather, we have altered the typography for the term: AfroAsian. While there have been references to the “Afro-Asian” century and the “Afro-Asian” world, we have decided to drop the hyphen from the term in order to denote a unique, singular set of cultural dynamics that our authors analyze.

This collection constitutes the first interdisciplinary anthology to treat AfroAsian encounters. In keeping with the systems of intellectual inquiry established within African American and Asian American studies, we have gathered here essays that reflect a wide disciplinary range, including literary studies, musicology, history, and performance and visual studies. With this array we follow the recent move in the scholarly academy to allow interdisciplinary analysis to bridge the traditional divides that reflect the specialization of academic knowledge to the detriment of actual cultural and social processes. These essays provide rich, progressive, innovative directions in AfroAsian studies and invigorate the status of current thought on interracial encounters across multiple disciplines. This work does not just present a medley of essays with AfroAsian encounters in the Americas as their only common denominator; rather, we have taken Claire Jean Kim’s discussion of “racial triangulation” in Asian American studies as an invitation to further the discourse of AfroAsian encounters. Moving beyond the traditional black/white binary, the essays claim that to understand historical and contemporary AfroAsian encounters, the third, white, signifier, cannot be separated from a discussion as this signifier has informed or influenced AfroAsian binary encounters in the Americas, often without being visibly or literarily present.

Race in the past century and a half has not functioned within national or ethnic boundaries. The cultural and racial groupings examined by our contributors indicate the ways in which these groups do not exist in isolation but within complicated interactions, and they ask us to reevaluate how we define the category “race” itself. Perhaps the most important con-

tribution of AfroAsian studies lies in its potential ability to disrupt the black/white binary that has so persistently characterized race and ethnic studies. Within the last ten years or so, the stability of the term “race” has come under growing scrutiny. Increasingly, race is considered to be not an ontological, coherent category but a dynamic system of affiliation, exclusion, and disavowal that is constantly being reinvented. This sense of “performing” race, of its contingent, assumed nature, has come to be understood in relation to processes of national self-conception, such that “race” is seen as a category produced by the nation itself. As Paul Gilroy, Lisa Lowe, and Etienne Balibar have pointed out in different ways, national and racial boundaries are concomitant; race subtends dominant nationalist discourses—it extends underneath or functions in opposition to definitions of the nation.<sup>2</sup> While the strategic, tactical fluidity of terms like race and nation in this formula are crucial to our understanding of their unstable, changing processes, the logic of opposition that has underwritten this conception of race has also had the unfortunate effect of reinscribing its terms within binary relations and has somewhat perniciously limited our understanding of “race” to dichotomous models largely cast in terms of black and white. To this point, the great intervention in this binary system has been the assertion by postcolonial theorists of an “interstitial” position that occupies the spaces between these oppositions.<sup>3</sup> But this is not our only option.

Scholars in Asian American studies have mounted energetic campaigns to move beyond the conceptual limitations of the racial binary in the last decade or so—we might think here of Claire Jean Kim’s above-mentioned discussion of “racial triangulation,” Gary Okihiro’s question “Is Yellow Black or White?,” and Frank Wu’s assertion that Asian American identities constitute something “beyond” either. For the most part, this work has demanded that we begin to understand race in terms of a polymorphous, multifaceted, multiply-raced immigration diaspora in combination with the histories of the African slave diaspora. However, race scholars still struggle to produce a flexible model that answers calls to move “beyond the binary.” In *AfroAsian Encounters* we contribute to this dialogue around racial formation by moving away from the focus on black-white interactions; moreover, we do so by examining the interactions of two racial groups now set up in opposition to one another within, for example, contemporary U.S. racial systems. We hope that the essays gathered here can intervene in these binary systems—methodologically, in terms of expanding the objects of race studies and, conceptually, through the expansion of

the reigning paradigm of race studies away from blackness/antiblackness and whiteness/antiwhiteness schemas.

To understand contemporary U.S. racial systems, we must step more boldly into Europe's past, as Paul Gilroy urges us. He writes:

We must be prepared to make detours into the imperial and colonial zones where the catastrophic power of race-thinking was first institutionalized and its distinctive anthropologies put to the test, above all, in the civilizing storms of colonial war. . . . That redemptive movement must be able to pass beyond a compensatory acknowledgement of Europe's imperial crimes and the significance of its colonies as places of governmental innovation and experiment. The empires were not simply out there—distant terminal points for trading activity where race consciousness could grow—in the torrid zones of the world at the other end of the colonial chain. Imperial mentalities were brought back home . . . and altered economic, social, and cultural relations. . . . Europe's openness to the colonial worlds it helped to make, might then be employed to challenge fantasies of the newly embattled European region as a culturally bleached or politically fortified space, closed off to further immigration.<sup>4</sup>

With this mindset, Europeans “created” their “New World,” and the Americas became their dream, their geographically locatable paradise. That their creation contained problematic cross-cultural and cross-racial encounters from the start was not problematic for white ideology and imagination; the European colonial color hierarchy was designed to regulate such problems.<sup>5</sup> Racial divisions were arranged according to the white/nonwhite binary. In his *Letters from an American Farmer* (1782, 1793) John de Crèvecoeur provided a definition of the only true American “race”:

What, then, is the American, this new man? He is neither a European nor the descendant of a European; hence that strange mixture of blood, which you will find in no other country. I could point out to you a family whose grandfather was an Englishman, whose wife was Dutch, whose son married a French woman, and whose present four sons have now four wives of different nations. *He* is an American, who, leaving behind him all his ancient prejudices and manners, receives new ones from the new mode of life he has embraced . . . and the new rank he holds. . . . Here individuals of all nations are melted into a new race of men. . . . The Americans were once

scattered all over Europe; here they are incorporated into one of the finest systems of population which has ever appeared.<sup>6</sup>

As is quickly apparent, Crèvecoeur's notion of "all nations" includes only all European countries—a generally accepted ideology that is also expressed in the Declaration of Independence's "all men are equal," thus all having the right to pursue happiness. Such a mindset saw no discrepancy between "all men" and African American slavery and Native American genocide. The entrance of the Asian migratory laborer, however, disrupted this ideology. As Ronald Takaki emphasizes, while Asian immigrants "were brought here to serve as an 'internal colony'—nonwhites allowed to enter as 'cheap' migratory laborers and members of a racially subordinated group, not future citizens of American society,"<sup>7</sup> they came as dreamers, too. Asians perceived themselves as eligible for participation in the "New World" if only through hard work. Takaki argues:

The context of the "modern world-system" and its economic forces only partly explains the Asian migrations to America. While the Asian immigrants did not choose the material circumstances of their times, most of them still made choices regarding the future of their lives. . . . Though driven by "necessity," they were also stirred . . . by "dreams" . . . [and] "hopes."<sup>8</sup>

Not only were they forced to experience racism and discrimination immediately, but also they faced a "triangulated" racial reality: in white perception, they were on the other side of the white/nonwhite spectrum; in their own perception, they did not view themselves as being in "coalition" with black people because they entered the United States as free migrant laborers, not slaves; in black perception, there was indeed no coalition because Asians had opportunities they did not have. This white triangulation forced them to interact—literally and theoretically.

Key to the history of interaction between the two groups is the process by which their intermixing was made possible. The first AfroAsian contact can be traced back to antiquity through the great spice routes that we normally think of as a characteristic of the Greco-Roman cultural world. These routes also provided the conditions for cultural and economic exchange between what we now refer to as Tanzania, Somalia, Egypt, Persia, India, and China, as these empires traded precious commodities such as cinnamon and myrrh (in fact, the archeological record is unclear as to

whether the AfroAsian routes preceded the Greco-Roman involvement in the spice trade). Two millennia later, the early- to mid-nineteenth-century abolition of the slave trade produced the context of AfroAsian encounters of modernity. In the wake of the British abolition of the trade in African lives, cheap labor sources were needed to fuel British colonial industries around the globe. Indians were transplanted to southern Africa to build railroads, and Chinese were taken to the Caribbean to work the sugar plantations. A similar economic necessity drove the importation of Asian labor to the United States. As the national debate over slavery grew over the course of the early nineteenth century, and more states (especially western states) were added to the “free soil” roster, the need for cheap labor did not abate. The early development of new states like California happened to coincide with the massive displacement of peoples in Guangdong province in the wake of the Opium Wars. As John Kuo Wei Tchen has pointed out, prior to the construction of the transcontinental railroad in 1869 it took two to three months to travel overland to San Francisco from Boston or New York, but only two weeks to travel from Canton by clipper ship, creating circumstances that made Chinese immigrants the perfect candidates to step into the labor shortage caused by booming industries in mining, shipping, transportation, and agriculture in California.<sup>9</sup> AfroAsian relations, then, are the issue and, potentially, the subversion of the European dream of “the new world.” Given the extraordinary richness of AfroAsian interactions of modernity, particularly those created within the shadow and against the force of this colonialist history, we have chosen to focus the volume within the period beyond emancipation. The colonial processes that created the Americas made possible the very connections our authors investigate.

For these AfroAsian encounters in the Americas, the twentieth century invented another problematic triangulated concept—the “model minority” myth. This construct enabled white society to pit Asian Americans against many other groups, not just African Americans. Yet, for the AfroAsian mutual perspective of each other and for their encounters, the concept has carried additional problems: while Asian Americans have been constructed as model minorities, their economic success heralded as proof of the availability of the American Dream to all, African Americans have continued to be plagued by negative associations and to be systematically excluded from the American political economy.

It would be a mistake to ignore the ways in which racial antagonisms have frequently been aligned along a black-white axis or to elide the histo-

ries of African slavery that produced the modern Euro-American economy. So, too, would it be a mistake to ignore the influence of East and South Asia on the making of the modern economic and cultural world. To do so would disregard how South and East Asian labor were key to the maintenance of U.S. and British economies in the wake of abolition, it would overlook the way Asian and African populations were played against one another to produce white supremacy, it would erase the distinct absorption of African versus Asian cultures in a range of national contexts, and it would obliterate the possibility of cross-racial political coalitions, as well as naïvely ignore the conflicts between racial groups. These examples, sketched briefly here, form the basis for several of the essays in this volume.

Regarding Takaki's modern-world system of capitalism and the migrant laborer movement, one might ask why we did not expand our discussion to a more global level and include south Asian labor migration to southern Africa, for example. However, as our focus is the triangulation of AfroAsian encounters in the construction of the Americas, we did not see an inclusion of such otherwise geopolitically highly important discussions necessary for this particular collection. This weight reflects the historical significance of the United States as a primary site of AfroAsian interactions. The North American continent, situated between the geopolitical units of the Black Atlantic and the Asian/Pacific, has seen a uniquely high concentration of AfroAsian cultural interactions.

*AfroAsian Encounters* addresses a phenomenon that has been culturally active for well over a century. While much contemporary cultural influence between the African and Asian diasporas might be categorized as a result of globalization, our contributors suggest that the mutual imbrication of these two groups constitutes a longer historical phenomenon, with important roots and foundations that warrant examination. This collection traces this history across multiple locations and attempts to trace these interactions, to "catch up," as it were, with the racial dynamics of various national contexts that have been active for over a century now.

*AfroAsian Encounters* is comprised of a foreword, an afterword, and sixteen essays arranged within four thematic subtopics. Vijay Prashad launches the volume with "Bandung Is Done." His essay frames the volume as a whole with a discussion of "AfroAsian Epistemology," which, he argues, reached its apotheosis in the landmark Bandung Conference of 1955. Sweeping back to the League against Imperialism meeting in Brussels in 1928 and forward to the present, Prashad traces the spirit of cooperation

and mutual support around anticolonialist struggles in both Asia and Africa, but he also acknowledges the ways in which the political projects of liberation animated by that spirit have been undermined in the period since Bandung. From the International Monetary Fund's attempt to render newly independent nations dependent on their former colonial masters through the necessity of capital investment, to the commodification and aestheticization of AfroAsian relations in the Hollywood film and American music industries, the political possibilities forged in Bandung have been severely compromised. As a result, Prashad warns, the knowledge project of AfroAsian studies is similarly imperiled. He argues that area studies in U.S. universities were a direct outgrowth of Cold War politics and cautions us that while AfroAsian studies might mimic the form of Bandung, its content runs the risk of simply mirroring the corporate globalization and Cold War exploitation of newly independent countries that the leaders of the Bandung conference wished to inhibit. His essay demands that we reinvest our own epistemological projects with the spirit of independence and expressly anticolonial politics that energized Bandung, a spirit that we hope grounds this volume as well.

With Prashad's caution in mind, we have organized the volume around thematic units that encompass Bandung's sense of struggle. The subsections we describe below capture Bandung's attempt to forge cross-racial political alliances, analyze the tensions that can make those coalitions difficult, and trace the way those alliances are co-opted with monotonous regularity within mainstream cultural venues. We have arranged our subsections to lay out the context of AfroAsian racial positioning within dominant racial regimes throughout North America and the Caribbean in Part I. Investigating the legacy of those racial structures on contemporary AfroAsian connections, the essays of Part II examine the reasons for sometimes conflicted encounters. Part III examines how performance has been used repeatedly as a central medium through which that legacy has been either reinforced or contested. With Part IV, we conclude the volume on a celebratory note; the essays of this section trace how AfroAsian encounters have productively challenged the racial hierarchies dictated by white Euro-American political economies.

The essays in Part I: "Positioning AfroAsian Racial Identities" contextualize the ways in which members of the African and Asian diasporas have been set up against each other within different national ideologies to solidify white privilege. Sanda Mayzaw Lwin begins with an examination of the distinctions between immigration exclusion and internal segregation

in the United States at the end of the nineteenth century. In “A Race So Different from Our Own,” she analyzes the dissenting opinion of *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896), in which Chinese immigrants were produced as the eternally-foreign foil to African Americans as part of the argument against segregation in the late nineteenth century. Cynthia Tolentino turns our attention to how early mainstream sociological accounts of African Americans and Asian Americans as blueprint models of “race” were adopted and transformed by Asian American intellectuals. Using the writing of Jade Snow Wong as an example, in “Crossings in Prose” Tolentino argues that Asian American writers “encountered sociological theories that compared ‘Negroes’ and ‘Orientals’ as a sanctioned discourse that they could draw on to negotiate racialized and gendered notions of agency and expertise.” Following on Tolentino’s analysis of sociological accounts of race, Eleanor Ty moves us to Canadian racial discourses and examines the language of “visible minorities” used to categorize different racial groups. She illustrates in “Complicating Racial Binaries” how Canada’s official language of race is less dependent on binary systems than that of the United States and as a result “is predicated not only on skin color but on a variety of factors, including accent and linguistic competence, dress, class, and religious affiliation.” In doing so, she urges us to consider how AfroAsian racial interactions function outside of an American context. Lourdes López Roperero returns us to the realm of fiction. In her essay “One People, One Nation?” López Roperero analyzes the conception of creolization in Indian Caribbean fiction through the work of Samuel Selvon and Fred D’Aguar and argues that these writers “refuse to romanticize the Caribbean as a site of unproblematic creolization and foreground the ethnic conflict endemic to creole societies.” Samir Dayal closes this section with his “Black-and-Tan Fantasies,” in which he traces black and South Asian interracial contact in film to examine racial triangulation in a new way. He argues that “it is not *exclusively* a question of tracking the ‘master signifier’ of whiteness but of attending to the complexities of the ways in which brownness or blackness or yellowness can also function as the *tertium quid*—the obscured referent or object of desire, the signifier that stitches the triangulation together.” Dayal’s essay provides a new theoretical framework through which we can read the following chapters on AfroAsian identities.

If the essays of Part I lay out the historical and theoretical context of AfroAsian racial formations, Part II: “Confronting the Color Hierarchy” addresses the contemporary impact of these formations. The essays of this

section illustrate the frustrating divisions that often prevent effective Afro-Asian coalitions yet also envision opportune windows for change. In “It Takes Some Time to Learn the Right Words,” Heike Raphael-Hernandez discusses possible reasons for the “phenomenon of the missing Vietnam War” in the tremendous explosion of African American novels since the 1970s. In addition, she observes a recently growing interest in Vietnam War–related protagonists in novels published since the late 1990s; with these patterns in mind, she asks why and how these African American writers correct the absence of that conflict from the preceding generation of fiction. Gita Rajan offers *chutney* as a metaphor for the work of black and Indian visual artists in the Caribbean. In her “*Chutney, Métissage, and Other Mixed Metaphors*,” she argues that “Asian influences in Caribbean art remained, consciously or unconsciously, on the sidelines” and examines how Indian artists have reinserted that presence into the Afro Caribbean visual arts. Combining the metaphor of *chutney*, or the incorporation of visual symbols both from Indian and African cultural contexts, with Edouard Glissant’s notion of *métissage*, Rajan analyzes “a gendered, racialized, and sexualized space that allows for staging identity for . . . Indo Caribbean artists.” In “These Are the Breaks,” Oliver Wang scrutinizes hip-hop as a site that exposes continuing tensions between black and Asian Americans. Following the career (and recent retirement) of the rising Chinese American hip-hop star Jin, Wang traces the discrimination that Asian American hip-hop musicians face from audiences, critics, and music industry executives. He argues that while “it has become commonplace wisdom and belief that hip-hop culture represents an idealized space for multicultural cooperation and community building,” it is also “becoming increasingly clear that the participation of Asian Americans in hip-hop happens within a contested terrain that is inextricably linked to long-standing tensions between Asian and African Americans.”

It is striking that so many AfroAsian encounters have been engaged and negotiated through systems of performance. This phenomenon is the focus of Part III, “Performing AfroAsian Identities.” These essays do not just address performance in the AfroAsian world but also analyze the different functions of cross-racial impersonation in different contexts. Shannon Steen provides the earliest example of the performative dimensions of AfroAsia in her essay on the swing adaptations of Gilbert and Sullivan’s *The Mikado* staged with black casts in the late 1930s. In “Racing American Modernity,” she scrutinizes the cultural resonances of black actors’ on-stage claims to *be* Japanese and argues that these performances helped

white Americans shrug off their anxieties about a Japanese neoimperial threat to U.S. dominance of the Pacific by satirizing Japanese power through minstrelsy tropes. Arguing that the shows deployed “a series of incomplete racial displacements,” she illustrates how “conceptions of ‘race’ are formulated within the relationship between domestic and international racial mappings.” In “Black Bodies/Yellow Masks,” Deborah Whaley analyzes the use of Asian signifiers by contemporary African American hip-hop artists. “The tactical performance of the ‘Oriental,’” she argues, “not only poses a representational dilemma replete with contradictory racial, ethnic, and national signifiers but also opens up questions about the multiple meanings of its precarious usage by black Americans who perform these images.” She examines a range of examples, from mainstream music videos, to the 2004 visual arts exhibit *Black Belt* in which artists tried to problematize the use of Asian signifiers, to the 2000 film *Romeo Must Die*. Focusing on the contemporary cinematic world, Mita Banerjee examines in her “The *Rush Hour* of Black/Asian Coalitions” the black/Asian “buddy film,” which she dubs the “Hollywood simulacrum of black/Asian coalitions.” Locating the roots of the American film industry’s fascination with black/Asian dyads in such precedents as Charlie Chan and his black sidekick, Banerjee traces the historical contexts that these films attempt to elide. She moves on to an analysis of the Jackie Chan/Chris Tucker hit *Rush Hour* to investigate what kinds of racial identities are being “mainstreamed” through movies that feature black/Asian “buddies.” Cathy Covell Waegner examines the process of racial impersonation by both black and Asian artists in her essay “Performing Postmodernist Passing.” Like Whaley, she takes in a range of objects from mainstream hip-hop videos and parodies of them by contemporary visual artists, to Paul Beatty’s novel *Tuff*, which features a black protagonist who takes on an Asian cinematic persona, to Jim Jarmusch’s 1999 hit *Ghost Dog*. She uses these artifacts to theorize a new kind of “passing” that carries the potential for “personal empowerment of the cultural self and provides the impulse for new polycultural art forms of the twenty-first century.”

Part IV, “Celebrating Unity” begins with Bill Mullen’s “Persisting Solidarities,” which highlights the history of mutual borrowing between members of the African and Asian diasporas in U.S. literature. Beginning with the outrage expressed by African American literary figures over U.S. post-war foreign policy in Asia, Mullen examines how AfroAsian literary borrowings “present a dialectical and synthetic model of transraciality that abolishes comfortable and discreet categories of ‘racial,’ ‘ethnic,’ or even

‘disciplinary’ modeling.” Mullen illuminates the history of AfroAsian writing from W. E. B. Du Bois’s engagement with Asian politics to the initiation of Ishmael Reed’s *Yardbird* anthologies of the 1970s. Similarly, in his essay “Internationalism and Justice,” Greg Robinson examines Paul Robeson’s relationship to Asian and Asian American struggle. Robinson traces Robeson’s much-vaunted “internationalism”—his attempt to forge cultural links between oppressed peoples across a variety of national, racial, and political contexts—in his performances, beginning with Robeson’s 1950 concert at Harlem’s AME (African Methodist Episcopal) Zion Church. Starting with Robeson’s call to the audience to learn Chinese greetings by way of comparing them to the intonations of African ones, Robinson goes on to point out Robeson’s study of China as a site of struggle that could shed light on African struggle, and he illustrates how Robeson modeled these cultural and political links for his audiences throughout his performances. David Stowe moves us to Japan, in “Jazz That Eats Rice,” to examine the “unstable ethnic triad” in the career of Japanese jazz artist Toshiko Akiyoshi and the moment in her work in which she “decided to repay jazz by bringing her Japanese heritage to her music.” Stowe analyzes two works by Akiyoshi and examines how the composer used classical Japanese instrumentation to integrate into jazz a musical analogy to the blues in order to render it a Japanese form. Fred Ho concludes this section with his essay “Kickin’ the White Man’s Ass” and returns us to the spirit of Bandung by illustrating how the increasing popularity of Asian martial arts for black and Latino youth in the United States from the late 1960s on was not just a historical accident but part of “the upsurges of the Third World national liberation movements across the planet and in the U.S. oppressed-nationality communities.”

We end our volume with a challenging, yet appropriate, invitation to further explorations of AfroAsian encounters. In his afterword, “Toward a Black Pacific,” Gary Y. Okihiro returns the volume to the Pacific of Bandung, and he ventures into territory referred to but so far not detailed by AfroAsian scholarship. Claiming that the Pacific is frequently overlooked in considerations of “Asians” and “Asia,” and reminding us of its distinctive history, culture, and politics, he reflects on Oceania’s islands and inhabitants. He expands on three intersections between Pacific Islanders and African Americans that have created the “Black Pacific”: labor, education, and popular culture. It is his wish and ours that the recognition of divergences and intersections that *AfroAsian Encounters* reveals continues to inform our scholarship and our politics.

We recognize that through this organizational principle we have created a narrative for AfroAsian encounters that may be construed by some readers as naïve. We are well aware of and have consciously included essays that analyze the sometimes-contentious character of AfroAsian relationships. However, working in Prashad's vein, we also situate those very real antagonisms within the context of larger systems of racial formation that, while perhaps did not make those conflicts inevitable, unquestionably contributed to them and made them difficult to avoid. We end the volume with the essays "Celebrating Unity" because we believe, moreover, that these conflicts should not delimit the possibility for coalition. The cultural examples gathered in this section provide us with models for how AfroAsian interactions might function *despite* the history of conflict between these groups and commemorate the courage and vision embodied in these examples.

#### NOTES

1. For a partial bibliography of AfroAsian studies see the following: Fred Ho and Bill V. Mullen, eds., *Afro/Asia: Revolutionary Political and Cultural Connections between African-Americans and Asian-Americans* (Durham: Duke University Press, forthcoming); Bill V. Mullen, *Afro-Orientalism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004); Andrew F. Jones and Nikhil Pal Singh, eds., *The Afro-Asian Century*, special issue of *positions: East Asia cultures critique* 11.1 (2003); *Souls: A Critical Journal of Black Politics, Culture, and Society* 4 (2002); Frank H. Wu, *Yellow: Race in America beyond Black and White* (New York: Basic Books, 2002); Claire Jean Kim, "The Racial Triangulation of Asian Americans," in *Asian Americans and Politics: Perspectives, Experiences, Prospects*, ed. Gordon H. Chang (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001); Vijay Prashad, *Everybody Was Kung Fu Fighting: Afro-Asian Connections and the Myth of Cultural Purity* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2001); Claire Jean Kim and Taeku Lee, "Interracial Politics: Asian Americans and Other Communities of Color," *Political Science and Politics* 34.3 (September 2001): 631–637; Claire Jean Kim, *Bitter Fruit: The Politics of Black-Korean Conflict in New York City* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000); Marc Gallichio, *The African American Encounter with China and Japan: Black Internationalism in Asia, 1895–1945* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000); Kwang Chung Kim, ed., *Koreans in the Hood: Conflict with African Americans* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1999); Robin D. G. Kelly and Betsy Esch, "Black Like Mao: Red China and Black Revolution," *Souls* 1.4 (Fall 1999): 6–41; Reginald Kearney, *African American Views of the Japanese: Solidarity or Sedition?* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998); Gary Okihiro, *Margins and Mainstreams:*

*Asians in American History and Culture* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1994); Yuri Kochiyama, "The Impact of Malcolm X on Asian-American Politics and Activism," in *Blacks, Latinos, and Asians in Urban America: Status and Prospect for Politics and Activism*, ed. James Jennings (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1994); Sumi Cho, "Korean Americans vs. African Americans: Conflict and Construction," in *Reading Rodney King/Reading Urban Uprising*, ed. Robert Gooding-Williams (New York: Routledge, 1993); Lisa Ikemoto, "Traces of the Master Narrative in the Story of African American/Korean American Conflict: How We Constructed 'Los Angeles,'" *Southern California Law Review* 66 (1993): 1581–1598; Sudarshan Kapur, *Raising up a Prophet: The African-American Encounter with Gandhi* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1992).

2. See Paul Gilroy, *Ain't No Black in the Union Jack* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991); Lisa Lowe, *Immigrant Acts: On Asian American Cultural Politics* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996); Etienne Balibar and Emmanuel Wallerstein, *Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities* (London: Verso, 1991). As Michael Omi and Howard Winant have argued, however, race should not be seen as epiphenomenal to nation, as merely the external, superficial manifestation of nationhood, but, rather, as a fundamental process through which nations (especially the United States) attempt to render their identities coherent. Michael Omi and Howard Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States: From the 1960s to the 1990s* (New York: Routledge, 1994).

3. See, for example, Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1994).

4. Paul Gilroy, "Migrancy, Culture, and a New Map of Europe," in *Blackening Europe: The African American Presence*, ed. Heike Raphael-Hernandez (New York: Routledge, 2004), xx, xii.

5. Frank Shuffelton offers excellent scholarship regarding the establishment of the racial order in the early United States. See, for example, Frank Shuffelton, ed., *A Mixed Race: Ethnicity in Early America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993); Frank Shuffelton, "The American Enlightenment and Endless Emancipation," in *Teaching the Literatures of Early America*, ed. Carla Mulford (New York: Modern Language Association of America, 1999), 155–169. We would like to thank Dietmar Schloss for bringing Shuffelton to our attention.

6. J. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur, *Letters from an American Farmer* (1782, 1793), in *The Heath Anthology of American Literature*, Vol. 1, ed. Paul Lauter et al. (Lexington, MA: D. C. Heath, 1990), 897.

7. Ronald Takaki, *Strangers from a Different Shore: A History of Asian Americans* (New York: Penguin Books, 1989), 31.

8. *Ibid.*

9. John Kuo Wei Tchen, *New York before Chinatown: Orientalism and the Shaping of American Culture, 1776–1882* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999).