

Crossing Oceans

Reconfiguring American Literary Studies in the Pacific Rim

Edited by

Noelle Brada-Williams and Karen Chow



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The image shows the Chinese characters for '香港大學' (Hong Kong University) written in a highly stylized, square format. Each character is contained within a square frame, and the strokes are thick and expressive, characteristic of Square Word Calligraphy. The characters are arranged vertically from top to bottom: 香, 港, 大, 學.

Hong Kong University Press is honoured that Xu Bing, whose art explores the complex themes of language across cultures, has written the Press's name in his Square Word Calligraphy. This signals our commitment to cross-cultural thinking and the distinctive nature of our English-language books published in China.

“At first glance, Square Word Calligraphy appears to be nothing more unusual than Chinese characters, but in fact it is a new way of rendering English words in the format of a square so they resemble Chinese characters. Chinese viewers expect to be able to read Square Word Calligraphy but cannot. Western viewers, however are surprised to find they can read it. Delight erupts when meaning is unexpectedly revealed.”

— Britta Erickson, *The Art of Xu Bing*

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Between Places: American Literature and Language in the Pacific Rim

Karen Chow and Noelle Brada-Williams

The increasing presence of American Studies in Asia can be witnessed by the establishment of centers such as the American Studies Research Centre in Hyderabad, India, the American Studies Center at the University of Hong Kong, and the Hong Kong-America Center at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. In 1995, three scholars affiliated with the American Studies Research Center, Amritjit Singh, Max J. Skidmore, and Isaac Sequeira, produced an edited volume entitled *American Studies Today: An Introduction to Methods and Perspectives* (Creative Books, New Delhi, India). In the introduction, titled 'Of American Studies Today: At Home and Abroad', Singh explains that the volume came out of the 'strong need to forge a mutually stimulating alliance among competing approaches to American Studies, both in the U.S. and abroad' (3). Its collection of essays identifies parameters of the field of American Studies, largely as shaped through interdisciplinary and international scholars focusing on American cultural productions and interpretations *in* the United States. In the twenty-first century, the increasing interest in American Studies in Asian colleges and universities turns to looking at the presence and influence of American culture in Asia as well.¹

Our volume aims to add these considerations to intellectual and pedagogical dialogues about the international development of American literary studies in the Pacific Rim. We seek specifically to speak to scholars interested in the transformations, processes and tensions of seeing, teaching,

and studying America's multiethnic literature and culture on both the western and eastern sides of the Pacific Rim. The scenes of reading, teaching, and interpreting American literature include locations in Korea, Japan, Singapore, Malaysia, Cambodia, Thailand, Myanmar (Burma), Hong Kong, Taiwan, and the US. The scope of this volume overlaps with portions of — but does not encompass — Asia. Our title, 'Crossing Oceans', is largely metaphorical, reflective of the cultural and linguistic leaps and crossings made by texts, authors, students and teachers in producing and interpreting American narratives.

A significant part of the intellectual expansion of American Studies in the Pacific Rim is taking place in the field of literature, as colleges and universities in the region have long established English and American literature departments. As in the US, theoretical approaches such as cultural studies and feminist methodologies have influenced literary research and pedagogy in recent years. As our contributors indicate, interest in voices from and about marginalized positionalities of gender, ethnicity, and race are reflective of the profound economic and social shifts that have taken place in North America, Asia, and the Pacific Rim in the twentieth century.

Although the American Studies Research Centre in Hyderabad has existed for over 35 years, the founding of the Hong Kong-America Center in 1994 marked a change in the role of American Studies in the Pacific Rim from treating American culture as something wholly outside and foreign, to acknowledging Asian countries' own participation in the evolution of America and how these two regions continue to affect each other. The Pacific Rim is frequently the meeting ground and tumultuous site of change. As the mission statement of the Hong Kong-America Center makes clear: 'Hong Kong's relationship to the U.S. is important to its economic base, its political future and its cultural vitality. As America's best bridge to Asia, especially to China, Hong Kong is a unique "between-place" that helps to interpret Asian and American cultures to one another.'² Economics are clearly one of the major forces behind the increasing desire for Asian students to acquire English language skills. Interest in American culture and language in Hong Kong lies in the economic, political, and cultural changes that have taken place in both Asia and the United States in the last few decades. As the Mission Statement of the Hong Kong-America Center goes on to state:

As Hong Kong integrates more deeply with the rest of China and redefines its relationship with Britain after 150 years as a colony, Hong Kong's connections with America will also grow in importance. The forces of

economic globalization and technological integration will continue to draw the citizens of Hong Kong and America closer together, making mutual understanding ever more vital. Building and extending the bridges of commerce and culture with the United States is part of Hong Kong's destiny as one of the world's truly global cities.³

The United States' unusual — but not unique — status as a nation founded on both acts of colonization and independence from a colonizing power provides it with not only a common ocean but a shared linguistic heritage with many peoples of the Asian Pacific.

The last century has marked perhaps the zenith of the United States' complex legacy of both liberation and colonization in Asia. Since the takeover of the Philippines, American military forces have participated in the Second World War, and in wars in Korea, Southeast Asia, and, now at the beginning of the twenty-first century, Southwest Asia. From one perspective or another, each of these actions on the part of the United States has been simultaneously interpreted by opposing political forces as an act of heroic liberation or of ruthless neo-colonial control. In more subtle ways, the United States continues the often paradoxical legacy of its own founding as both a revolutionary state and a colonial power in its political and economic policies, often calling for the recognition of human rights and liberties, even as it has found allies among repressive political regimes. Given this complicated history, why would Asians, especially those who have recently gained independence from English-speaking colonial forces, seek their own self-empowerment in an understanding of American language and culture? A brief discussion of the example of the Philippines helps to outline some issues that our contributors address in discussing the challenges and usefulness of interpreting American literature within a Pacific Rim milieu.

Although America's history in Asia is certainly not limited to relations with the Philippines, US intervention in and administration of that one-time colony is one of the most sustained examples of the paradoxical relationship between acquiring a colonizer's language and self-empowerment. In *The Philippine Educational System*, Antonio Isidro notes that under each of the successive occupying forces in over 400 years of colonialism, including Spain, the United States, and Japan (during the Second World War), Philippine 'schools were used for the propagation and development of the ideals and culture of the sovereign nation [. . .] If Spain zealously spread the Catholic faith, America, with no less zeal, inculcated democratic principles and ways of life among the Filipinos' (2–3). Writing

for the 1903 US Census of the Philippines, Prescott Jernegan made American motives explicit:

The primary reason for the rapid introduction, on a large scale, of the American public school system in the Philippines was the conviction of the military leaders that no measure would so quickly promote the pacification of the islands. General Arthur McArthur, in recommending a large appropriation for school purposes, said: "This appropriation is recommended primarily and exclusively as an adjunct to military operations calculated to pacify the people and to procure and expedite the restoration of tranquility throughout the archipelago." (640)

The irony of democratic ideals being used to pacify and control a populace gets to the heart of America's colonial venture in the Philippines. Educating the local populace in English and in the ideology and values represented in texts such as *The Declaration of Independence* and in men like Abraham Lincoln, was seen as both part of an imperative to raise up one's fellow man and a necessary aspect of colonial pacification. Military personnel who themselves became the first teachers knew that teaching classes in English rather than the traditional Spanish would be key to interpellating Filipinos into a long-lasting American sphere of influence.⁴

This interpellation was in part so effective because Philippine and American desires momentarily met at the juncture of education. In her study, 'The Pursuit of Modernity: Trinidad H. Pardo de Tavera and the Educational Legacy of the Philippine Revolution', Barbara Gaerlan notes three major desires at work in the Philippine Revolution and later in the resistance to United States rule: nationalism, egalitarianism, and 'enthusiasm for modernity' (89). Pardo de Tavera and other *Ilustrados*, an élite group who had worked to reform the previous Spanish regime, saw English as a way to achieve their goals of 'modernization and social mobility through education which had been a goal ... which permeated the Philippine Revolution' (Gaerlan 91).⁵ Thus, like contemporary residents of Hong Kong and Singapore, Filipinos found the potential for economic and political advancement in English and its ability to communicate between peoples.

Like sites such as Hong Kong and Singapore, the United States has found itself to be a culturally 'between-place'. Bringing together cultures and peoples from across the world, the United States is a model, in both its achievements and its mistakes, for the multicultural societies that are a fact of life in the rapidly globalizing spaces of Asia. Since the post-Second World

War changes to US immigration and naturalization policies, America has become increasingly influenced by Asian diasporas, so that parts of Pacific Rim locales such as the San Francisco Bay area, Seattle, and Los Angeles and Orange Counties in southern California share similar demographics with multicultural cities in Asia. The use of English language and literature to assert one's identity and rights by marginalized populations within the United States reveals how powerful claiming what has become a common language as one's own can be. Although English has become an international language as well as the national language of the United States through various histories of colonization, migration, rupture, and even loss of indigenous and native languages, English can be reclaimed as a link between peoples and as a medium of self-expression. This reclaiming of a colonial language as a means of self- and community empowerment is particularly vivid within the work of writers of color in the United States. This collection of essays on American literature focuses predominantly on the ethnic or minority literatures of the United States, particularly works by African American, Asian American, and Native American authors, because our contributors have found such works important to teach and discuss in the Pacific Rim, for various reasons. In essence, the discussion of such works is what they and we believe are at the forefront of American Studies in the Pacific Rim.

That there is also a growing recognition of the need for more scholarship specifically focused on pedagogy, especially as applicable to ethnic American literature, is witnessed by the fact that the 2002 conference of the Society for the Study of Multi-Ethnic Literature of the United States focused specifically on pedagogy and by the founding of journals such as *Pedagogy*. However, despite this growing interest, very little has yet been published on trans-Pacific pedagogical strategies for teaching American literature. Many students who plan on teaching American literature on the Pacific Rim, as well as current faculty who may be seeking advice for retooling or reinventing their own pedagogy and criticism, should find this collection useful.

Our volume is meant to be a space for dialoging and framing issues that one might raise in teaching American literature classes in Asia. Our contributors frequently use perspectives dealing with race, feminism, cultural geography, and structures of power, as lenses through which to teach and engage students' critical thinking. We are 'crossing oceans' through the transnational perspectives of the contributors who come from and/or teach at colleges and universities across the Pacific Rim. American literary studies engages in a lively redefining of America, questioning myopic hegemonic

discourses and constructions. Narratives of and about ethnic Americans are being read and discussed as texts through which students might not only learn about various American experiences and histories but also better understand themselves. In a world where much popular American culture is globalized and familiar to Asian students, our contributors are dialoguing literary and other cultural texts in ways that challenge both their constructions of Americans and themselves. Such approaches are fresh and ripe for sharing and discussion amongst scholars across the Pacific Rim. Our volume looks more closely at these issues in the study of American literature in Asia, a pedagogical situation in which Asian and American identities and perceptions of each other come into contact.

The catalyst for *Crossing Oceans: Reconfiguring American Literary Studies in the Pacific Rim* was the conference, 'American Literary Studies in Asia: Transnational Teaching & Research', organized by Shirley Geok-lin Lim and Paul Lauter and held at the University of Hong Kong in January 2001. This volume is not, however, a conference proceedings but represents a selection of essays that cross the Pacific in their focus on both American and Asian contexts and on teaching in locations across the Asia Pacific. The contributors are both senior and junior faculty from a wide range of universities in a number of countries, including Korea, Singapore, the United States, and China, and focus on discursive and teaching practices for the study of American literature within the Asia Pacific region. We have included chapters by well-known international scholars, such as King-Kok Cheung, Kenneth Roemer, and Sau-ling Wong, in addition to the voices of newer scholars.

The first section of our own book defines the relationship between American literary studies and Asian pedagogical contexts. Specifically, it begins with King-Kok Cheung's chapter, 'Pedagogies of Resonance: Teaching African American and Asian American Literature and Culture in Asia'. Cheung describes not only the unique pedagogical situations she encountered when teaching African and Asian American texts in a variety of distinct Asian locals but offers practical advice for presenting different literary traditions both within the context of their own history in the United States and when juxtaposed to other forms of minority discourse, advice which should be applicable to many classrooms on both sides of the Pacific. What is perhaps most striking about Cheung's piece are the surprising continuities between the historical and political contexts of marginalized peoples in America and that of marginalized groups in Asia and the pedagogical use Cheung makes out of these links. Sau-ling Wong's 'When

Asian American Literature Leaves “Home”’ examines the possible effect of the process of internationalizing Asian American Literary Studies on the field itself. Wong’s piece explores ‘home’ as both a geopolitical space and a discursive construct. She notes that Asian American literature is often taught in Asian foreign languages classrooms, and cultural similarities are sometimes taken for granted when, in reality, Asian American cultural signifiers can often be read as ‘false cognates’ by non-Asian American audiences. Sheila Honess, an English woman teaching American literature at the University of Tokyo, closes this section by using recent thinking by cultural geographers to explore the teaching of American discourse in her chapter, ‘Reading a Foreign Place: Geography and American Literature’. Noting the conception of the American canon as akin to the geography of the nation space — bordered, preexisting, and already constructed — Honess offers the conception of folding the canon like a map to emphasize its flexibility and fluidity as well as its connections to a variety of locales both domestic and foreign to the United States.

The second section, ‘Teaching Texts, Teaching Contexts that Cross National Boundaries’, focuses on the various pedagogical issues related to teaching American texts in a variety of specific locations and national spaces on both sides of the Pacific. Paul Lauter, the US-based editor of *The Heath Anthology of American Literature*, along with colleagues from across Asia, has recently completed an anthology of American literature for teachers in Asia with the University of Hong Kong Press. In fact, work on that anthology provided impetus for the conference, which has in turn served as the origin of this book. In ‘Teaching with Anthologies’, Lauter asserts the benefits of pedagogical uses of anthologies, offering advice that should be useful for teachers in any nation. His chapter emphasizes the necessity of anthologies in the processes of placing texts in social and cultural contexts, in dialogue with other texts, and in exploring various conditions of textual production. It is followed by another chapter from the American side of the Pacific, by Noelle Williams. ‘Institutional Imperatives Affecting the Teaching of Asian American Literature Inside and Outside the Pacific Rim’ discusses teaching in several locales in the United States, especially California, a state which shares a good deal with the teaching contexts in other parts of the Pacific Rim, both culturally and in the institutional imperative for many literature classrooms to focus on English-language acquisition. It also examines the dynamics of race within American universities and how institutional and pedagogical imperatives sometimes contradict themselves. Kenneth Roemer’s chapter reveals the ingenious way he was able to make direct

connections between his Native American subject matter and his Japanese students' ability to articulate their own cultural identities in English. He discusses teaching N. Scott Momaday's *Way to Rainy Mountain* to Japanese students, who were then asked to write about their own sense of place, using Momaday's strategies of retelling myth and personal story. Momaday's Native American text is then the catalyst for understanding what it means to be native to a place (and not necessarily a minority, or an American). Patrick Sharp's chapter 'The Great White "Race Adventure": Jack London and the Yellow Peril', shows how even a mainstream writer such as Jack London, who is very popular in Asia, must be analyzed in relation to the geopolitical dynamics of race and class that students in Asia will find resonant. Sharp shows how London's anti-Asian writings are useful pedagogical texts for understanding social Darwinist sentiments behind perceptions of Asians as 'Yellow Peril' alien threats. In ' "Stories to Pass On": Pedagogically Dialoguing Maxine Hong Kingston and Toni Morrison', Karen Chow identifies in the works of both authors tropes and themes that can be productively compared in the classroom. These writers have come to be regarded as invaluable contributors to American literature, yet obvious comparative perspectives of their works have rarely been addressed. This section also includes a chapter by Ryan Bishop that analyzes not only representations of Asia in American popular literature and culture but the effect of American and Western aesthetics on contemporary Asian popular culture. The second section concludes with So-Hee Lee's analysis of gendered classroom dynamics regarding views on female sexuality and feminist subjectivities amongst Korean university students studying Toni Morrison's novel *Sula*.

As Asian American literature has become one of the most common ways to build bridges between Asian and American cultures, the last section, 'Transnational Readings of Asian American Literature and Culture', focuses on interpretations of some of the most significant Asian American texts. This section provides examples of applications of a range of methodological approaches, including close reading, feminism, cultural studies, psychoanalytic and Marxist critiques, which readers may in turn apply in their own teaching and research. Section three begins with Wang Jianping's analysis in 'Memory and Narration in Maxine Hong Kingston's *China Men* and *The Woman Warrior*'. Wang looks at Amy Tan and Maxine Hong Kingston's 'China narratives' and focuses on reading Kingston's intersection of memory and language to construct China as a semiotic space that contributes to defining a rhetorical context for Chinese American

identity construction. Chih-ming Wang's chapter, 'An Identity Switch: Ethnic Identity and Multiculturalism in Gish Jen's *Mona In The Promised Land*', examines identity switching as acts of commodity fetishism in Gish Jen's *Mona in the Promised Land*. Ultimately, Wang argues, such commodity fetishism acts to reinscribe racial and ethnic stereotypes rather than breaking them down and challenging them. Finally, in 'Ghosts and Cultural Haunting in Maxine Hong Kingston's *The Woman Warrior* and *China Men*', Walter Lim explores Maxine Hong Kingston's use of culturally familiar and unfamiliar representations of ghosts to challenge binaristic 'othering' of Chinese and Americans.

In conclusion, we hope that the volume opens a space for transgression in teaching American literatures, to borrow the phrase 'teaching to transgress' from scholar/writer bell hooks. That is, hooks sees challenging students to think critically about social hierarchies and expectations as a core objective in her work as a teacher. Our contributors suggest that attempting to read, interpret, and bridge US ethnic literatures with local Pacific Rim contexts may lead to critically transgressive thinking about social constructions of race, identity, gender, class, and inequities of power, not just in relation to American culture but also to other Pacific Rim cultures. As international political, economic, and cultural relations become simultaneously more globalized and nationalistic, literary analysis provides rich, complex places of engagement in which questioning culturally hegemonic assumptions, especially those established by histories of colonialism and imperialism, may occur.

Notes

Chapter 1

- 1 In 1996, historian Stacilee Ford and economist Clyde Haulman wrote for *American Studies International* about trends and needed institutional changes in the discipline of American Studies from the perspective of Hong Kong on the eve of its return to China.
- 2 This mission statement is available at <http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/hkac/about/who_mission.html>.
- 3 Ibid.
- 4 Carlos Bulosan's classic novel/memoir, *America Is In The Heart*, is a rich text for examining this process of interpellation as well as the mixed results of empowerment and confusion Filipinos found in American education. Bulosan's 'The Story of A Letter' is a particularly interesting story for the complex forces behind the costs and benefits of English language acquisition and social mobility. See Williams (2003) for more on American education in the Philippines and its effect on Filipino American literature.
- 5 Gaerlan goes on to note that although spaces in the new American bureaucracy were open, English provided a great deal of social mobility. Once these spaces were filled, mobility slowed, and English education eventually became yet another marker of social stratification in the Philippines.

Chapter 2

- 1 A shorter version of this chapter was published in *The Women's Review of Books* (February 2002): 17. The Burma section was published separately as a postscript in *The Women's Review of Books* (April 2002): 4.
- 2 Although the name of the country has been changed to Myanmar, most people in the US Embassy, in their reluctance to acknowledge the legitimacy of the existing government, continue to refer to the country as Burma.
- 3 For example, the translator tells the reader in a footnote that 'traveling without business' is 'a euphemism for being a political prisoner' and therefore a friend to the narrator, and being 'away on business' means that 'the man is a soldier at the frontier' and therefore her enemy.

Chapter 3

- 1 Clustered a few years on each side of the millennial mark, one finds Li (1998), Ling (1998), Ma (1998), Lee (1999), Palumbo-Liu (1999), Cheng (2000), Chu (2000), Bow (2001), Eng (2001), Nguyen (2002), and Chuh (2003). This list is limited to works in English.
- 2 LiteraturWERKstatt: Asian American Writer's Festival, was held 6–12 May 1996 in Berlin, attended by writers Wendy Law-Yone, Chang-Rae Lee, R. Zamora Linmark, David Wong Louie, Fae Myenne Ng, Hisaye Yamamoto, and critic David Eng. I am indebted to David Eng for this information.
- 3 I am aware that 'Asian' and 'Asian American' are both umbrella terms superordinate to 'Chinese' and 'Chinese American'. In raising questions about the superordinate category based on mostly Chinese-related examples, I have no intention of making them paradigmatic or imperializing. (I suspect, for instance, that when an Indian American work is read in India, quite different factors might come into play because of the widespread use of English as a public language there.) Rather, the Chinese examples serve as focusing lenses for issues that could be compared and contrasted with other cases. In addition, 'Asian American' as a term denoting panethnic coalition has a historical depth that must be taken into account in the following discussion, and I find it necessary to shuttle between that broader term and the narrower 'Chinese American'.
- 4 For a panethnic account of 'home' in contemporary Asian American writing, see Francia (1999).
- 5 As the most recent panethnic survey of Asian American literary studies, Cheung (1997) might be regarded as a useful snapshot of the field — one that is, however, already under interrogation, containing essays arguing for alternative perspectives (e.g., Gonzalez and Campomanes 1997; Lim 1997).

- 6 A well-known example is race-evasive, Orientalist, or universalistic feminist readings of Asian American women's writing, which contrast with readings within the Asian American critical tradition sensitive to racialization and cultural location. Numerous sources exist on this long-standing debate. For some recent studies by younger scholars, see Hattori (1998) and Shimakawa (1999).
- 7 For other purposes, I could avoid the term altogether to underscore other issues, such as in the aforementioned paper presented at the ETA symposium, which was primarily about classroom teaching.
- 8 Whether Chinese Americans, as minority subjects of the US, should be studied as part of a global Chinese diaspora is an unsettled question in the field. Although the term 'diaspora' is ubiquitous nowadays, there is scant discussion and no consensus on when diasporic status ends — with the second generation born on non-Chinese soil? Third generation? Never? This vast and complex topic must be left to a separate discussion.
- 9 A side note: As a subscriber to the influential North American edition of the Chinese-language newspaper, *World Journal*, I have come across numerous articles reporting the publication activities of Chinese American writers as 'pride' — 'bringing glory to the Chinese'.
- 10 For an example of resistance to Chinese nationalist recuperation, see Zhang (1996) on Kingston's *The Woman Warrior*; note, however, that the author studied the book not in a Chinese FL classroom but as a foreign student in a US university.
- 11 Without such a conviction I would not have undertaken the project of co-editing *A Resource Guide to Asian American Literature* (Wong and Sumida). My conviction, however, is not shared by some of my colleagues, who are concerned that the 'resourcing mode' merely encourages an uncritical, liberal pluralist variety of multiculturalism, leaving institutional structures little changed.
- 12 Certain an Asian Americanist in the US studying an Asian American text could also be culturalist, Seiwoong Oh's generally thoughtful comparison of contextualized vs. uncontextualized readings of Kim Ronyoung's *Clay Walls* is an example of culturalism: subsuming all difference under the sign of culture, even when class is named (Oh 1991–92). However, the political dimension might become more striking when national borders are crossed.
- 13 I thank Guy Beauregard for familiarizing me with Goellnicht's not yet published work on a comparison between Asian American and Asian Canadian literary studies.
- 14 My framing of the issues in the Asian Canadian section draws heavily on the work of Guy Beauregard and Marie Lo.
- 15 Some of the intricacies of multiple positioning and uneven institutionalization can be glimpsed in nomenclature. A British Americanist is an American studies scholar based in Britain, and a German Americanist is an American studies scholar based in Germany, but an Asian Americanist is not, in the usage I am

accustomed to, an American studies scholar based in Asia but a student of a minority literature in the US.

- 16 On this point Banerjee differs from Davis (1996, 3).
- 17 See Grice (1993) on situatedness.
- 18 Here Banerjee is alluding to an anthology of black German women's writing entitled *Showing Our Colors: Farbe bekennen*. On comparative European-US studies of minorities, see also Davis (1996, 5). David Eng, who attended the aforementioned Asian American Writers' Festival in Berlin in 1996, notes that parallels between Asian American racialization and Turkish and Vietnamese in Germany were discussed (personal communication 12 Dec. 2000).
- 19 On this point I am indebted to Guy Beaugrand for his application of the 'obscene supplement' concept (1999) and to Susette Min and Mita Banerjee for drawing my attention to Hal Foster (1996, 191–6), who points out the mutual complicity of art institutions that commission artists to conduct critiques of institutional practices (such as museum displays).

Chapter 4

- 1 As the appropriate use of regional terms such as 'Asia,' the 'Asia Pacific,' and 'the Pacific Rim' is the subject of considerable and ongoing debate, I have decided to use the term 'Asia' throughout this chapter with intentional vagueness.
- 2 I would like to acknowledge here with gratitude the support I have received in preparing this chapter from colleagues and students in Japan, particularly Yasuo Endo and Yujin Yaguchi (both at the University of Tokyo) and Julia Leyda (Chiba University).
- 3 See, for example, Francis H. Underwood's geographically metaphorical discussion of literature in his 'Ward's English Poets'.
- 4 See Lawrence Berg, 'Narrating Masculine Identity and Space'.

Chapter 6

- 1 The 'Shakespeare for Non-Majors' and 'Science Fiction' courses were both taught by the late Frank McConnell.
- 2 When I asked the student more about his own criteria for literary art, he replied that Kingston was not Walt Whitman or Robert Service. Thinking of that comment has always made me chuckle in light of both Service's own rather depleted cultural capital and Kingston's use of both of these authors in *Tripmaster Monkey: his fake book*, in which she cuts across conceptions of 'high' and 'low' art to more fully render an American artistic conscience.

- 3 Vincent Chin was a Chinese American who was beaten to death by two Euro American autoworkers because they were angry with the Japanese for taking away their jobs. Christine Choy and Renée Tajima created the documentary film, *Who Killed Vincent Chin?*, which has been frequently used in Multicultural and Asian American Studies classrooms.
- 4 The 1969 ‘Third World Student Strike’ at San Francisco State University led directly to the creation of ethnic studies programs. Student protests in the late 1980s at universities such as UC Berkeley (in 1987) led to the creation of ethnicity or ‘diversity’ requirements for all graduates.
- 5 Anti-Asian anxiety at the UC campuses is well documented. The *San Jose Mercury News* published a series of articles on perceptions surrounding Asian American students at the nine University of California campuses in February 1998.
- 6 See Paul Lauter’s chapter in this book for ways in which anthologies can be used in the struggle to achieve some of these goals.
- 7 Realizing the predominantly Euro and African American demographics of Michigan, when I moved I had packed some Asian foods that I was used to eating and cooking with in California. Ironically, the nearest market to my apartment in Michigan was a Korean market that caters to the substantial Korean population attending the university.
- 8 Many of my former students stopped by to thank me for teaching Fitzgerald and Kingston, because now they did not have to read many new texts in the ‘United States and the World’ course. At the time I left MSU, institutional imperatives prevented the departments from sorting out their various objectives and they pushed blithely onward in the same academic path.
- 9 One area that San José State students and faculty need to work on in particular is our own provincialism, which often takes one of two extremes in thinking about ethnicity in America: either (1) all of the United States has the same level of diversity and integration as San José, and thus specific courses on ethnic literature or even courses on America’s history of racial tensions are no longer necessary (We are over racism. Things are all better now.) or (2) racism and discrimination is still an issue in America but it exists elsewhere, outside the boundaries of a regionally defined home that is presumed to be innocent or free of racial tensions. These views are most common with Caucasians, but I have heard such views expressed by Californians of a variety of racial backgrounds. News coverage of events involving US Senate majority leader Trent Lott’s resignation over his statements relating to post-Second World War integration and Civil Rights went a long way to combating the first viewpoint among my Fall 2002 students. The frequently incurious response to the rest of the nation evoked by Californians of both opinions can be compared to national manifestations of a lack of curiosity about the world. The connection between arrogance and incuriousness can be summed up in this response: California is

- where people want to go to, not leave. Why should I learn about some place I never plan to move to?
- 10 Trying for ‘coverage’ while simultaneously admitting the inability of any one text to ‘represent’ ethnic identity or experience reminds me a bit of the courtroom scenario in which a lawyer brings up evidence that is inadmissible and the judge then asks the jury to disregard what they have just heard. The logic of representation implicit in the concept of coverage — the idea that texts should be *representative* of the variety of authors producing texts — cannot be eliminated from people’s minds simply with a lecture on anti-foundational conceptions of identity.
 - 11 See King-Kok Cheung’s chapter in this book for five pedagogical strategies that explore the possibilities inherent in the teaching of ethnic literature in many different locales.

Chapter 7

- 1 My colleagues and I assumed that none of the students who enrolled in my first semester English composition course would enroll in the second semester and that I could simply teach the first semester course again to new students. It wasn’t until the first day of class that I discovered that more than half of my former students had enrolled; I had to create a new course as I walked to the lectern.
- 2 In 1988, I taught at International Christian University in Mitaka near Tokyo. My other writing on inventive modeling listed in the Works Cited section (see pp. 184–5) includes ‘Inventive Modeling’, ‘Returning the Gift’, and relevant comments in Part One and Part Two of *Approaches to Teaching Momaday’s The Way to Rainy Mountain* (e.g., 22–23).
- 3 See p. 185 for titles by Schubnell, Woodard, and Roemer. Although Susan Scarberry-Garcia’s *Landmarks of Healing* (1990) is not a biographical study, it does contain important biographical information. Martha Scott Trimble’s booklet *N. Scott Momaday* (1973) is outdated but still offers important information. Many of the critical articles listed in Schubnell’s bibliographies in his book and his essay in *Native American Writers of the United States* (1997) discuss particular aspects of Momaday’s life. Momaday’s essay ‘The Man Made of Words’ is now readily available in John L. Purdy and James Ruppert’s anthology *Nothing But the Truth* (2000, 82–93). An interesting Web site on Momaday’s role as a poet is <www.english.uiuc.edu/maps/poets/m-r/momaday.htm/>.
- 4 See Momaday’s *New York Times Book Review* essay ‘The Story of the Arrowmaker’ (2).

- 5 When Richard M. Dorson was researching *Folk Legends of Japan* (1962), he obtained stories from a Tokyo University student, Kayoko Saito. Her grandmother's stories were still meaningful and relevant to her.
- 6 The Tai-me was a sacred Sun Dance figure for the Kiowa. See Lincoln's article for a discussion of the transformation of *Journey* into *Rainy Mountain*.
- 7 See Clyde Moneyhun and Jeff Huffman's *The Rains of the Dragon* (1988).

Chapter 8

- 1 Here London argues that the Russo-Japanese war of 1904–05 could be the beginning of the Mongol 'race adventure', a colonial expansion that would rival that of the Anglo-Saxons.
- 2 I use the term 'Anglo-Saxon' only when the texts involved specify English racial origins. Otherwise, I use the terms 'white' or 'Caucasian'.
- 3 Gould demonstrates how this was an unconscious assumption that guided Morton's research. This shows how deeply entrenched the ideology of Anglo-Saxon superiority was in the United States: Even the most objective of empiricist scientists of the nineteenth century had an *a priori* commitment to a specific racial hierarchy.
- 4 This passage is quoting Louis Agassiz, the renowned Swiss naturalist who immigrated to the United States and helped found the 'American' school of natural history.
- 5 Roosevelt argues that the Spanish and the French were the descendents of Roman colonization, which had a tendency to intermix with rather than destroy the native inhabitants. He argues that this was in contrast to the Germanic tribes that colonized England.

Chapter 9

- 1 'Interview with Maxine Hong Kingston', in *Conversations with Maxine Hong Kingston*, Paul Skenazy and Tera Martin, eds. University Press of Mississippi, Jackson, 1998, p. 25. Originally published in *Women Writers of the West Coast: Speaking of Their Lives and Careers*, ed. Marilyn Yalom (Santa Barbara: Capra Press, 1983).
- 2 A listing of some major awards: Morrison was awarded the 1988 Pulitzer Prize for *Beloved*, and the Nobel Prize for literature in 1993. In 1976, Kingston was awarded a National Book Critics Circle Award in non-fiction and an American Book Award for *China Men* in 1981 (it was a runner-up for the Pulitzer Prize that year). In 1997, Kingston was also awarded a National Humanities Medal.

- 3 From Morrison's 'Afterword' to the 1993 edition of *The Beloved Eye* (Alfred A. Knopf, New York, p. 211).
- 4 In the Fall 2000 semester, I assembled an upper-division undergraduate course to do just that. It was an ambitious course, and I anticipated that the reading list in the syllabus would encourage only the most enthusiastic students to stay in the course. This syllabus included all of Kingston's published books, including *The Woman Warrior*, *China Men*, *Tripmaster Monkey: His Fake Book*, and *Hawai'i One Summer*, her collection of personal essays. Representing Morrison were *Beloved*, *Song of Solomon*, *Sula*, *Jazz*, *The Bluest Eye*, *Paradise*, and *Playing In the Dark*. My predictions were more or less accurate. We ended up with 25 juniors and seniors; all but two of them were women, nearly all were English majors and about half of them had previously read at least one of these writers' works. In general, I would not recommend covering this many works in anything less than an upper-division undergraduate level course. However, I do feel that dialoging a few of these works, in particular *The Bluest Eye* and *The Woman Warrior*, could be successfully attempted at a lower-division undergraduate level.
- 5 This book was published in 1998 by Peter Lang Publishing, Inc., New York, as part of the Modern American Literature series.
- 6 Feng takes her notion of intertextuality from Julia Kristeva and defines it as 'transposition and redistribution of one or several sign systems into another signifying system' (*A Revolution of Poetic Language* 59–60).
- 7 I am referring here to Donna Haraway's theorization of cyborg identity in 'A Manifesto for Cyborgs' and Judith Butler's unraveling of gender as cultural construction in *Gender Trouble*. Both of these concepts have been prominent in critiques of essentialism in identity politics but have also been criticized for making the notion of hybridization an empty free-for-all identity, wrested away from any anchors of social locations. For a more specific critique of Haraway and Butler, see Paula M. L. Moya, 'Postmodernism, "Realism," and the Politics of Identity: Cherrie Moraga and Chicana Feminism', in *Reclaiming Identity: Realist theory and the Predicament of Postmodernism* (University of California Press, 2000).
- 8 Morrison explores this extensively in her monograph *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination*.
- 9 Kingston drew attention to this in her chapter 'The Laws' in *China Men*. The chapter is simply a listing of dates and the laws passed in those years that directly affected Asian Americans. Read together, the descriptions of the legislations provide a sobering account of how the participation of Asians in multiple aspects of American society was legally restricted and curtailed. Outside of her literary works, Morrison has also drawn attention to cultural narrative and barriers to African American legal subjectivity in the play she wrote about Emmett Till ('Dreaming Emmett') and in volumes of essays she has edited about the Anita Hill/Clarence Thomas case (*Race-ing Justice, En-Gendering Power: Essays on Anita*

Hill, *Clarence Thomas and the Construction of Social Reality*) and the O.J. Simpson case (*Birth of a Nation' hood: Gaze, Script and Spectacle in the O.J. Simpson Case*, co-edited with Claudia Broodsky Lacour). For a more extensive exploration of Morrison and legal critique, see Richard Schur's 'The Subject of Law: Toni Morrison, Critical Race Theory, and the Narration of Cultural Criticism' in the online journal *49th Parallel. An Interdisciplinary Journal of North American Studies*, Issue 6 (<<http://artsweb.bham.ac.uk/49thparallel/currentissue/schurmorrison.htm>>).

- 10 I acknowledge and thank Jerry Phillips, my colleague at the University of Connecticut, for very productive insights in his guest lecture to my class and in our own conversations about *Paradise*.

Chapter 11

- 1 The Los Angeles racial disturbance produced numerous scholarly books and articles by Korean American intellectuals. These publications examine the interracial conflict's media coverage, its social structural bases, and various aspects of its overt activities. They suggest numerous ways to reduce the conflict and to promote interracial cooperation, beginning with understanding African American culture.
- 2 For the relationship between the national economic development and an individual's consciousness on sexuality in the Korean context, please see *Under Construction: The Gendering of Modernity, Class, and Consumption in the Republic of Korea*, edited by Laurel Kendall, University of Hawaii Press, 2002.

Chapter 12

- 1 Goellnicht (1997) considers Kingston's dialogic text a 'pastiche of genres', in which she breaks the autobiographical mold and subverts the conventional expectations of a white audience. See also S. C. Wong (1991 and 1992) on Kingston's adaptation, revision, and expansion of traditional Chinese sources and autobiographical tradition.

Chapter 13

- 1 An earlier version of this chapter was presented at the international conference on American literary studies in Asia held in the University of Hong Kong in January 2001, in which I received valuable comments for later revision. I want

to thank the reviewers for pointing out the errors and insufficiency of the chapter, the editors — Professor Noelle Brada-Williams in particular — for their careful editing and helpful suggestions, as well as Professor Hsiao-hung Chang and Professor Te-hsing Shan, who read various versions of this chapter and gave me the most generous support.

- 2 However, Jen herself repeatedly refuses ethnic labels. In her interview with Yuko Matsukawa, Jen forthrightly expresses her antagonism against such labeling: ‘You know it’s this knee-jerk reaction on their part: you’re an ethnic writer, so you must be writing about “people striving to preserve their heritage” ’ (114). She believes that she ‘was writing against the public’s expectation’ (115). Such an anti-ethnic-label attitude is very common among Asian American writers.
- 3 Having overcome the financial and personal difficulties that endangered the stability of Chang’s family at the end of *Typical American*, the Chang family sets out anew in *Mona in the Promised Land* by moving into Scarshill, a multi-ethnic community in the suburbs of New York. Growing up there, Mona makes friends with people of various ethnic backgrounds — Jewish, Japanese, and African. The story evolves around Mona’s romantic association with Sherman Matsumoto and Seth Mandel, intercrossed and highlighted by Mona’s conversion to Judaism and her quarrels with her mother. In becoming Jewish, Mona experiences cultural, racial, and class conflicts; her wish of ‘being her own person’ is seen as familial disobedience and cultural disloyalty by her parents, which inevitably lead to a love-hate tension in the mother-daughter relationship. In addition, the episode in which Mona accuses her parents of being racist to the black chef in their family restaurant adds critical flavor to Mona’s passage of initiation. The novel ends with a marriage scene that not only reunites the family but also affirms the validity of identity switch that is substantiated by the interethnic marriage of Mona and Seth.
- 4 Chi-wen Liu, for instance, points out that Jen’s strategy of identification is ‘neither assimilationist nor separatist, but participatory — to participate in and redefine the US body politic’ (106; my translation).
- 5 In ‘White Terror and Oppositional Agency: Towards a Critical Multiculturalism’, McLaren delineates different streams of multiculturalism that range from conservative, to liberal and left-liberal, and finally to critical and resistant multiculturalism. See Goldberg 46–59.
- 6 See Priscilla Wald, ‘Terms of Assimilation: Legislating Subjectivity in the Emerging Nation’, Kaplan and Pease 59–84.
- 7 With the rise of multiculturalism, commodities of ethnic features become fashionable. For example, tattooing is fashionable among teenagers and African Americans. In addition, tattooing now incorporates Asian elements; teenagers (following Allen Iverson and other NBA stars) now wear tattoos of Chinese

characters and Japanese painting patterns. Interestingly, it is not merely a local phenomenon but has a global effect through the circulation of media culture. However, in the term ‘rice rocket’ — the phrase itself being an explicit ethnic marker — race is a strictly local, yet highly racialized, phenomenon. The activity and the term not only refracts the history of Japanese triumphant competition in the US automobile industry but also sustains the national antagonism against Japanese — and by implication other Asians as well — as national others.

- 8 K. Anthony Appiah, in ‘Identity, Authenticity, Survival: Multicultural Societies and Social Reproduction’, offers some insights into the dialectic relationship between self-identity and collective identity. He regards collective identities, such as gender, ethnicity, nationality, race, and sexuality, as ‘script: narratives that people can use in shaping their life plans and in telling their life stories’ (160). Nonetheless, these scripts also constrain the development of the individual, who would ‘want to treat their skin and their sexual body as personal dimensions of the self ... [that is] not too tightly scripted’ (163). Fetishization, in this sense, is a means to de-script and re-script collective identities.
- 9 Giddens contrasts life politics with emancipatory politics, and emphasizes that it is ‘a politics of choice’. He argues, ‘While emancipatory politics is a politics of life chances, life politics is a politics of lifestyle. Life politics is the politics of a reflexively mobilised order. [...] It is a politics of self-actualisation in a reflexively ordered environment’ (214). In this chapter, I consider identity switch to be a tactic of life-politics that while opening up an identity wardrobe for self-fashioning is strictly conditioned in what I call fetishistic multiculturalism.
- 10 See Amariglio and Callari in Apter and Pietz 208–15.
- 11 Professor Chi-wen Liu told me that the novel probably also parodies Lewis Carroll’s *Alice in Wonderland*. This quoted paragraph seems to corroborate her observation.
- 12 This term was originally suggested by Professor Chang Hsiao-hung (張小虹) in our discussion of fashion and multiculturalism. This section on identity wardrobe is much indebted to her inspiration.
- 13 In ‘The Structure of Dual Domination’, Ling-chi Wang argues that assimilationism and national loyalty are two oppressive paradigms that condition the articulation of Chinese diaspora in the United States. He urges reconceptualizing assimilation ‘as racial exclusion or oppression’ and ‘the demand for loyalty to homeland as extraterritorial domination’ (159). The cultural subjectivity of Asian America (via the diasporic route of Chinese in the US), Wang believes, would require an attention to transnationality, ‘but only to the extent they affect Asian American experiences’ (166). In short, what Wang proposes is a claim of diaspora for Asian America while resisting to be claimed by it.

Chapter 14

- 1 Maxine Hong Kingston, *The Woman Warrior: Memoirs of a Girlhood Among Ghosts*, New York: Vintage, 1976, p. 15. All subsequent references of the text are to this edition.
- 2 I thank Gilbert Adair, a former colleague at the National University of Singapore, for alerting me to the ways in which the presence of ghostly haunting in *The Woman Warrior* helps focus Kingston's preoccupation with the issues of revenge and unfinished business.
- 3 In Asian American narratives, the absent Asian mother is sometimes idealized. Her counterpart is the controlling and ever-present immigrant mother, whose narrative function is to hamper the American socialization of her children. See Patricia P. Chu, *Assimilating Asians: Gendered Strategies of Authorship in Asian America*, Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2000, p. 54.

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