Notes

Chapter 1  How *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* Killed the King of Siam


3. For readings of the constructions of race in the other Rodgers and Hammerstein orientalist musicals, see Andrea Most, “’You’ve Got to be Carefully Taught’: The Politics of Race in *South Pacific*,” *Theatre Journal* 52.3 (2000), 307–37; and David Palumbo-Liu’s discussion of *The Flower Drum Song* in *Asian/American: Historical Crossings of a Racial Frontier* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999), 156–70.


The controversy over the construction of race in *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* is due in no small part to the novel’s close kin to blackface minstrelsy – both in Stowe’s direct importing of minstrel dialogue for the black characters, and in its extra-literary performance life as a blackface show – no small matter
given that, as Thomas Gossett has argued, for every person that actually read Stowe's novel, roughly fifty saw the stage version. Robbins's version does rely on the minstrelsy versions of Stowe's novel in ways other than in the retention of Topsy's line: the addition of bloodhounds who pursue Eliza across the Ohio river, and the concentration of the novel into her escape call to mind the draconian and mercurial editorial practices that characterized nineteenth-century minstrel adaptations of Uncle Tom's Cabin. Significantly, Uncle Tom is barely present in The King and I, in which his story of martyrdom is rewritten as the reunion with Eliza after she escapes Simon Legree's clutches. For a more detailed explanation of the adaptation of Uncle Tom's Cabin to the minstrelsy stage, see David Grimstead, “Uncle Tom from Page to Stage,” Quarterly Journal of Speech 56.3 (1976); Barnard Hewitt's red-baiting, “Uncle Tom and Uncle Sam,” Quarterly Journal of Speech 37.1 (1951); Bruce McConachie, “H. J. Conway's Dramatization of Uncle Tom's Cabin,” Theatre Journal 34.2 (1982); Thomas F. Gossett, “Uncle Tom's Cabin as a Play in the 1850’s,” in Uncle Tom's Cabin and American Culture (Dallas, TX: Southern Methodist University Press, 1985), 260–84. For an example of one of the minstrelsy adaptations, see George Aiken, Uncle Tom's Cabin, in Representative Plays by American Dramatists, Vol. 2, 1815–1858, ed. Montrose J. Moses (New York: Benjamin Blom, 1964). Aiken's version is the major surviving textual version of minstrelsy adaptation from the nineteenth century, the version that Stowe herself saw in 1853 (of which Lott and Gossett give accounts), and also from which the tradition of isolating Topsy's line from her various misadventures with Miss Ophelia is drawn.

5. Hortense Spillers has argued that the proliferation of the Uncle Tom story has created an analogy for the use and trade value of the black body within American symbolic and financial economies: “if we could recuperate the material and symbolic wealth that has accrued [...] from the purported repetitions of this work's narrative and iconic treasures, we would have considerable wealth ourselves and, with it, a fairly precise analogy to the exchange and use value of the captured African body” (Spillers, “Changing the Letters,” 546).

6. As one example of the ways in which domestic racial politics created international ones, we might consider the boycotts of US-manufactured goods in China at the turn of the century in the wake of immigration restrictions against her people and US rivalries with European powers for control of China's seemingly limitless markets. Here was a moment in which domestic racial categories were not merely a result of international relations, but actually propelled policies between nations.


9. Kim’s notion of racial triangulation is based on the idea that Asians and Asian Americans are compared to white Americans on different criteria than African Americans. While African Americans are structured within racist discourse as inferior on the basis of economic competitiveness, intelligence, or impulse control, but are nevertheless considered to be nationally American, Asian Americans are cast outside of national identities, but considered equal to (if not surpassing) white Americans with respect to the first set of criteria. She argues that given these distinctive criteria, we should see race not as a spectrum made up of a single plane, but instead as formed through a matrix, with national identity running along a horizontal axis and characteristics such as intelligence and so forth forming a vertical axis. Were we to plot Asian American, African American, and white American on such a grid, we would see the racial dynamics of the three groups structured by a triangle, and not a single line. Claire Jean Kim, “Racial Formation.”


14. See McKee, Chinese Exclusion and the Open Door Policy.


The oil boats were particular targets of anti-foreign attack for both strategic and symbolic reasons, as companies like Standard Oil had been one of the
first American companies to attempt commercial penetration of China. Its head had been the first chair of the American Asiatic Society, a group established specifically to engineer US economic dominance in China, and an influential proponent of the “Five-Hundred Million Market” theory. See Crow (1937) and Schaller (1990).


19. Ibid., 24.

20. E. Franklin Frazier had been commissioned by New York mayor Fiorello LaGuardia to investigate the causes of the riot. He found that while the unrest had been sparked most immediately by the arrest of a young black man who had shoplifted a dime-store pocketknife, the more entrenched and latent causes included anger over discriminatory rental practices by Harlem landlords, in which black tenants were charged as much as twice what white tenants were charged for the same units; community dissatisfaction with the deplorable condition and administration of the Harlem hospital and schools; and regular police brutality, which included an event two weeks before the riot in which a young black man had been beaten to death by an officer when he was pushed out of his place in one of the ubiquitous breadlines. See *The Complete Report of Mayor LaGuardia’s Commission on the Harlem Riot of March 19, 1935* (New York: Arno Press, 1963).


24. The “Tom Show” refers to the century-long tradition of wildly popular minstrelsy-melodrama stage adaptations of Uncle Tom’s Cabin that began before the novel’s serialization was even completed. Various scholars contend that in the decade between the novel’s publication and the outbreak of the Civil War in 1861, for every person who read the novel, another 50 came to know it through its onstage life, of which there were several competing versions. These adaptations continued to be popular well into the 1920s, by which time the entire novel had been compressed almost entirely to the depiction of Eliza’s flight across the Ohio River and George’s Freeman’s Defense, with the titular Uncle Tom disappearing almost entirely. Not coincidentally, a variety of other US cultural icons became institutionalized through the Tom Shows, including P. T. Barnum’s American Museum (which became sanitized and legitimated for family entertainment through the staging of one of the first and most popular adaptations) and the songs of Stephen Foster, whose early songs “Old Folks at Home” (better known today as “Swanee River”) and “My Old Kentucky Home” were showcased in the adaptations and quickly became standard features of them.

25. Omi and Winant, Racial Formation, 53–76.


27. There is, of course, much debate over this definition of performance within performance studies. Ever since Peggy Phelan’s famous declaration
in *Unmarked* that “the ontology of performance is its disappearance,” there has been some debate over the assumptions of her argument. Philip Auslander, for example, has asked compelling questions about what forms of performance we exclude when we take her claims about the ephemeral nature of performance as axiomatic, arguing that several popular culture forms (for example early film, television, pop music) are dependent on the conventions of live performance for their own legibility. Moreover, the circulation of these forms through what Walter Benjamin called “mechanical reproduction” and what we now experience as “digital reproduction” in no way diminishes the experience of these forms as performance by the audiences that view them. For that reason, although I focus primarily on live performances in this project, I also include film in some examples, although film is not my primary focus. See Peggy Phelan, *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance* (New York: Routledge, 1992), and Philip Auslander, *Liveness: Performance in Mediatized Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1999).


31. See both versions of this story, revolving around the Lady Sonn Klean, who is an early favorite of the King, but who has fallen into disregard. Her story becomes conflated with Tuptim’s in the Rodgers and Hammerstein musical,
although the episode in which she frees her slaves under the influence of Stowe’s novel is left out of the 1946 film version with Irene Dunn and Rex Harrison altogether. See Anna Leonowens, *The English Governess at the Siamese Court* (London: The Folio Society, 1980), 248–9; and the Margaret Landon adaptation which formed the basis for the Rodgers and Hammerstein musical, in which Lady Klean doesn’t release her slaves, but does take on Stowe’s name in her correspondence with Anna: *Anna and the King of Siam* (New York: John Day, 1944), 229.

32. “The Wonderful Leaping Fish” was Henry James’s irritated moniker for Stowe’s novel, based on its ubiquitous cultural presence. Eric Lott argues that the stage adaptations wedded two already popular performance genres – minstrelsy and melodrama – to produce a new cultural institution so wildly popular that it confounded writers (such as James) and politicians (Abraham Lincoln, who apocryphally attributed the US Civil War to *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*) alike. See Lott, “Uncle Tomitudes: Racial Melodrama and Modes of Production” in *Love and Theft: Blackface Minstrelsy and the American Working Class* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 211–33.


37. Admittedly, the equation between slavery and the parallel dehumanizing effects of intolerance is made in a rather confused and ham-fisted way in *The King and I*, but had appeared earlier in more pointed form in the first of Rodgers and Hammerstein’s Asian musicals, *South Pacific* (1949). In this rendition, Lt. Joe Cable throws away his one chance at true love with a young, beautiful native girl because he can’t overcome his own “carefully taught” racism. His aching, self-searching, but ultimately futile attempt to come to terms with his own intolerance leads to what is in effect his own suicide, as he works through his self-disgust by volunteering for a risky intelligence mission from which he does not return. Hammerstein casts intolerance in *South Pacific* not only as dehumanizing towards its object, but as suicidal for the practitioner as well.

38. Berlant, “Poor Eliza,” *passim*.

39. Most, “‘You’ve Got to be Carefully Taught’,” 309.


45. Liu, dissertation, see his character lists and act breakdowns, 55–7.


48. Mackerras notes that the first proscenium theatre was built in Beijing in 1914, and that once the Communist Party came to power in 1949 all new theatres were constructed in that style (“Tradition, Change,” 9).

Chapter 2   Passing Between Nations: Racial Impersonation and Transnational Affiliation


3. “Jim Crow” is a general term in US parlance for the practices of racial segregation that functioned throughout the country from the end of Reconstruction until the civil rights struggles of the 1950s and 1960s. Legally sanctioned through the 1896 Supreme Court decision *Plessy v. Ferguson* that upheld the right to create and enforce “separate but equal” facilities for public transportation, water fountains, bathrooms, schools, and so forth (facilities that were notoriously unequal), Jim Crow laws began to be repealed with the 1954 decision *Brown v. Board of Education*, which desegregated public schools, and were finally demolished with the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and *Loving v. Virginia* (1968), which ensured black suffrage and struck down anti-miscegenation statutes.

4. Harlan, the son of Kentucky slaveholders, was the sole dissenting voice against the majority decision in *Plessy*, writing:

> Our constitution is color-blind, and neither knows nor tolerates classes among citizens. In respect of civil rights, all citizens are equal before the law. [...] The law regards man as man, and takes no account of his
surroundings or of his color when his civil rights as guaranteed by the supreme law of the land are involved.

While the Plessy dissent remains Harlan’s best-known legacy, he also wrote against the disenfranchisement of inhabitants of the island possessions taken by the United States at the conclusion of the Spanish American War in 1898 (see Chapter 5), and is now seen as an early legal crusader for civil rights generally, although as his next quotation from Plessy reveals, only for African Americans, and upheld the exclusion of other racial groups in the United States (Plessy v. Ferguson, 163 US at 559).

5. Plessy v. Ferguson, 163 US at 561.

7. See Rogin, Blackface, White Noise.
10. Ibid., 30.
11. Quoted in Rogin, Blackface, White Noise, 102.
21. Roseanne program insert, Roseanne “Clippings” file, NYPL.
22. Alan Dale (review of The Rose of China), The American, 26 November 1919; Fay Bainter scrapbook NYPL.
24. Samuel Shipman, *East is West* promptbook, Act 2 6–7, NYPL.
30. These riots, the worst of which occurred in Charleston, NC, Washington D.C., Chicago, Knoxville, and Omaha, inaugurated the most intense period of mass interracial violence the United States had ever seen. During this summer, hundreds of African Americans were murdered (although the white Omaha mayor, contra Tow’s claim, was saved), thousands more wounded, and tens of thousands rendered homeless or without employment as white mobs swarmed and destroyed black neighborhoods in city after city. For a broad overview of these events, see the opening pages in William Tuttle, Jr., *Race Riot: Chicago in the Red Summer of 1919* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1996).
31. Ibid.
38. Ibid., 206.
41. Set elevations for *The Good Earth*, Billy Rose Theater Collection, NYPL.
42. Robert Garland, undated item, NYPL.
43. Unmarked review, *NYPL*.
47. Ibid.
50. Souvenir Program, *The Good Earth*, Billy Rose Theater Collection, NYPL.
54. Quoted in ibid., 196.
57. Ibid., 19.
58. Leong, *The China Mystique*, 76. Wong was so humiliated over the failure that she started a rumor that she actually pulled out of the casting process when she learned that even though she was the only Asian actor under consideration for a lead, she was being considered for the only unsympathetic character in the film.
61. Ibid., 196. Buck's irritation with the Americanizing of the romantic ties between Wang Lung and O-Lan may have been somewhat disingenuous, given the “self-made man” aspect of Wang's trajectory, the Protestant moralization of labor, and the romanticization of the land. Even Buck knew the last to be possible only in an American context. Although she loved China, she expressed sadness at its exhausted agricultural landscape, the land stripped of its nurturing capacity by centuries of overfarming. See ibid., 160.
63. *Crisis* and *Opportunity* were two of the leading African American publications of the early twentieth century, *Crisis* the official publication of the NAACP, and *Opportunity* one of the literary and political journals of the Harlem Renaissance.
64. Pearl Buck, “I am Degraded,” *Crisis*, January 1935, 23.
68. Ibid., 257–63.
70. It should be noted that Buck loathed the manner in which yellowface short-circuited the intentions of her novel, and that her own political work made her the enemy of other Sinophiles like Henry Luce. Luce, another child of missionaries stationed in China, was Buck's biographical twin but political opposite. The two would campaign vigorously for the importance of China and its welfare within the global sphere, but they would come to radically different positions on the career of Chiang Kai-Shek, for which Luce would later attack her career. He considered her “wrong on Chiang, soft on Communism, sentimental about equality, and unreliable on the use of American power.” The two would pillory one another in print for the better part of the 1940s and 1950s (Leong, *The China Mystique*, 49).
Chapter 3  Melancholy Bodies: Eugene O’Neill, Imperial Critique, and Irish Assimilation

5. It has been debated whether Smith’s failure to defeat Herbert Hoover in 1928 was due to his background as Irish Catholic or his opposition to Prohibition.
7. At the premiere of *Desire Under the Elms*, O’Neill complained, “the Freudian brethren and sistern seem quite set up about *Desire* and, after reading quite astonishing complexes between the lines of my simplicities, claim it for their own. Well, so some of them did with *The Emperor Jones*. They are hard to shake!” Arthur and Barbara Gelb, *O’Neill* (New York: Harper & Row, 1960), 577.
12. Ibid., 246.
13. Ibid., 247.
15. Ibid., 249.
16. Ibid.
18. Ibid., 135.
20. Ibid., 10.
21. Ibid.
25. See, for example, Jean Walton, “Nightmare of the Uncoordinated White-Folk: Race, Psychoanalysis, and H.D.’s Borderline,” in Lane, The Psychoanalysis of Race, 395–416.
29. Recently, scholars have struggled to make sense of the racial construction of the title character, of the relationship between that construction and formal modernist themes, and of the play’s relationship to the history of colonization. However, many of these critics have either completely rejected the play for its racist qualities, or have unaccountably attempted to redeem it from those very qualities. While Gabriele Poole identifies “the metatextual relationship between black discourse and the play’s expressionistic form,” she also erases the racist implications of the play: “Although Jones’s ostentatious apparel and the grandeur with which he plays his Emperor role may doubtless appear ridiculous, I do not feel that this reflects of the character [...] in many ways, Jones is less a primitive at heart [...] than a successful embodiment of that contemporary civilization’s ideology.” In contextualizing the play within the American invasion of Haiti following the downfall of dictator Guillaume Vilbrun Sam – acknowledged by O’Neill as one of the sources for Jones – Phillip Hanson treats the play as O’Neill’s criticism of contemporary American racism (and as itself standing apart from such problematic ideology): “Ironically, Jones, a product of Jim Crow and circumscribed
opportunity, practices the methods of his own oppressors upon his fellow blacks on the island […] But the play argues his crimes cannot be separated from his racially based experience – and his race’s history – in America.” Both scholars demonstrate an unwillingness to confront the possibility that O’Neill may have deliberately created a character that paradoxically participates in the very practices he putatively wished to decry.

33. The European tour of Jones produced other famous opportunities for Robeson: his stint as Othello, for example (1930), or his appearance in the European avant-garde films Borderline (1929) by H.D. and the POOL group and Body and Soul (1924) by Oscar Micheaux.
39. The strained and inconsistent quality of the relationship between O’Neill and Charles Gilpin did nothing to ease the play’s reception among African Americans. Gilpin, perhaps fairly given his place as the talk of the town, claimed that he drove the phenomenal success that prompted the eventual transfer of the play from the Provincetown Players’ small Greenwich Village house to Broadway. O’Neill, however, perhaps out of irritation with sharing the limelight with the actor, characterized him as a ham-fisted drunk ruining the nuances of the role, to whom he nonetheless had to defer for the sake of racial harmony: “Gilpin is all ‘ham’ and a yard wide! Honestly, I’ve stood for more from him than from all the white actors I’ve ever known – simply because he was colored! He played Emperor with author, play & everyone concerned” (Travis Bogard and Jackson R. Bryer, eds, Selected Letters of Eugene O’Neill (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1988), 177). In contrast, however, when the Drama League rescinded an invitation to Gilpin on the basis of his race to an awards ceremony at which he was to be honored for the performance that was the talk of the town and the hit of the season, O’Neill personally visited all the members of the League that he could contact and urged them to threaten a boycott of the ceremony unless Gilpin’s invitation was renewed. Gilpin was eventually reinvited, and he attended the banquet with O’Neill. However, the writer also had terrific fights with Gilpin over the scripted requirement of the word “nigger.” After the successful transfer of the play to Broadway, Gilpin began to change the epithet to less racially charged phrases such as “black baby.” O’Neill, furious over the substitution, went to Gilpin backstage after a performance and threatened the actor, “if I ever catch
you rewriting my lines again, you black bastard, I'm going to beat you up” (Arthur and Barbara Gelb, O'Neill, 449).
42. Eugene O'Neill, The Emperor Jones, dir. Theodore Mann, starring James Earl Jones, Zakes Mokae, Stefan Gierasch (Caedmon Productions, LP, 1970). Jones, somewhat paradoxically, went on to argue that this description was absolutely required by the audience for whom O'Neill wrote the play and that the character depicted a study of black power. He claimed that objections to Brutus Jones were raised by middle-class African Americans who objected to the “crudeness” of the character. For the actor Jones, the character Jones instead constituted a “full-out” figure of black masculinity to be celebrated for his complex power.
45. Quoted in Stephens, Black Empire, 97.
47. O'Neill, The Emperor Jones, 298.
50. For a discussion of O'Neill's simultaneous respect and contempt for his father's love of his Irish roots, see Stephen A. Black, Eugene O'Neill: Beyond Mourning and Tragedy (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999), 78.
51. In his 1918–20 notebook, O'Neill wrote of “the idea for a drama of reincarnation contrasting the oldest civilization of china and that of modern times – same crises offering definite choice of either material (that is worldly) success or a step toward higher spiritual order.” Virginia Floyd, Eugene O'Neill at Work (New York: Frederick Ungar, 1981), 58.
53. Ibid., 169. Robinson points out Edmund's preference for fog-shrouded days: “Everything looked and sounded unreal, nothing was what it is. That's what I wanted – to be alone with myself where truth is untrue and life can hide from itself.” The derelicts of Harry Hope's bar in the Iceman Cometh similarly embody the abandoning of ambition, of the “perfect enjoyment obtained by doing nothing” enjoined by the Tao Te Ching. Robinson plays down the fact that these sentiments are expressed by characters whose withdrawal is undertaken through the use of alcohol and narcotics, but O'Neill's choice to do so is perfectly in keeping with his depiction of the failure of Eastern spiritual forms to provide an effective corrective to Western capitalism.
54. Gelbs, O'Neill, 825.
55. Ibid., 61.

57. In early drafts of the play, O’Neill opened and closed the drama with Marco jailed in the war between Genoa and Venice, pacing his cell and dictating his travelogue to a scribe. Floyd, *Eugene O’Neill at Work*, 62.

58. *Babbitt*, Sinclair Lewis’s 1922 novel, satirized the habits and emotional life of the American middle class, with special emphasis on the social conformity, intellectual narrowness, and emotional vacuousness of the title character and his family and friends.


61. Ibid., 265.

62. Ibid.

63. Ibid., 248.

64. Floyd, *Eugene O’Neill at Work*, 64.


66. Ibid., 253.

67. Ibid., 225.

68. Ibid., 289.

69. Ibid., 296–7.


72. Ibid., 24.

73. Ibid., 18.


**Chapter 4  American Progress: The Paradox of Internationalism**


2. The Dreyfus Affair was one of the major scandals that rocked France at the turn of the century, involving a Jewish Army officer wrongly convicted of treason. Even after evidence was brought forward that incriminated another
officer and proved Alfred Dreyfus innocent, the evidence was ignored, the true criminal acquitted, and Dreyfus remained in solitary confinement, for reasons widely believed to be part of anti-Semitism in the French military and judicial systems. Gohier, along with more famous figures like Émile Zola, endlessly petitioned the French Republic to reopen the case, exonerate Dreyfus, and convict the actual offender. Dreyfus was eventually retried in 1899, reconvicted, pardoned by President Émile Loubet, and then reinstated to full rank in 1906.


4. See, for example, Cosmopolitanism, ed. Carol A. Breckenridge, Sheldon Pollock, Homi K. Bhabha, and Dipesh Chakrabarty (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002); Andrew Ross, Fast Boat to China: Corporate Flight and the Consequences of Free Trade (New York: Pantheon Books, 2006).

5. Iriye, Cultural Internationalism and World Order, 27.

6. Ibid., 1.

7. Ibid., 5. For an example of the ways “race” and “culture” were used interchangeably, see Robert Park, Race and Culture (Boston, MA: Little, Brown, 1940).

8. Frank Guridy, “Enacting Diaspora: Gender, Performance, and Garveyism in the US-Caribbean World,” unpublished manuscript presented at the American Studies Association meeting, October 2006. Guridy notes how the non-linguistic elements of Garveyite gatherings – costumes, songs, and so forth – helped create a sense of unity between Anglophone and Spanish-speaking members of the organization even when translation between the two languages was unavailable. The UNIA anthem “This Flag of Mine,” which was sung at the beginning of every meeting, provides one example of how race was used as the basis for political mobilization:

Here’s to this flag of mine  
The Red, Black and Green  
Hopes in its future bright  
Africa has seen.

Here’s to the Red of it,  
Great nations shall know of it  
In time to come.

Red blood shall flow of it,  
Historians shall write of it,  
Great flag of mine.

Here’s to the Black of it  
Four hundred millions back of it,  
Whose destiny depends on it.

The parallel between the Garveyite and Nazi embrace of folk cultures is my own observation (and not Guridy's). Many of the objections to Garveyism from the NAACP rested on what they saw as a kind of racial isolationism that uncomfortably echoed for them that of white supremacism, even though the ultimate political goal of one group included the wholesale oppression of non-white peoples, and the other was founded on the racial uplift of black people the world over.

9. Garvey, McKay, and James were all African Caribbean figures who were seminal advocates of black Internationalism. Garvey was far less influenced by Marxism than McKay and James, but all three were strong proponents of an anti-colonialism that included the possibility for mass armed revolt, and all three spent significant amounts of time honing their arguments and movements in London and New York after they had left the Caribbean. In doing so they were important to the assertion of Black Atlantic political movements that focused on black autonomy and power regardless of national boundaries, and were far less invested in systematic integration into white social systems or national citizenship favored by organizations such as the NAACP. Michelle Stephens, Black Empire: The Masculine Global Imaginary of Caribbean Intellectuals in the United States, 1914-1962 (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005), 3.


13. For an elaboration on the national and racial ironies of Wong’s career, see the chapter on her in Karen Leong, The China Mystique.


20. Ibid., 624, fn. 38.

21. Ibid., 175.

22. Ibid., 202.

23. Ibid., 178; Duberman speculates that this disparaging of Robeson’s changes may well have reflected discomfort with a repertoire that defied easy categorization. Repeatedly, critics complained that these offerings pressed him beyond the vocal mechanics a black singer could muster; the *Evening Express*, for example, complained that “his inimitable genius” was exhausted by material outside of the spirituals. *The Evening Express*, 21 March 1935; quoted in Duberman, 632, fn.19.


29. The AME, or African Methodist Episcopal, Church was the first denomination founded by African Americans, who created it in the early nineteenth century when faced with discrimination from within the broader Methodist Church, despite its generally abolitionist politics. Although the AME is Methodist in theology, it uses an Episcopal system of organization (hence its potentially confusing name). At the time Robeson performed for the Harlem congregation, his brother was its minister.


33. Among scholars of Chinese theatre, there has been some debate as to how and when Beijing Opera (jingju) became National Drama (guoju). *Guoju* was one of several terms coined during the Republican period that denoted “national” cultural forms, such as *guoqi* (national flag), or *guoge* (national anthem). The reasons why Beijing Opera became elevated to national dramatic form are complicated. Traditionally, scholars have argued that (1) Beijing Opera was itself a composite form that included several regional
variations; and (2) that it was performed in Mandarin, the official language. Joshua Goldstein, however, claims that at the turn of the twentieth century, there was a broad array of dramatic forms available to the theatre-going public in China, and that “it was by no means obvious that Peking Opera should be honored by the title national drama.” Instead, guoju’s status was the result of a concerted effort by theatre professionals and scholars (who had only been allowed to mix socially since the demise of the Manchu dynasty in 1911, at which point the marginalization of actors was relaxed) to raise Beijing Opera to the status of national form. According to Goldstein, Mei Lanfang and the drama scholar Qi Rushan were at the center of this movement, and largely responsible for its success. See Joshua Goldstein, “Mei Lanfang and the Nationalization of Peking Opera, 1912–1930,” positions: East Asia Cultures Critique 7 (Spring 1999), 377–420; 379–81. See also his chapter on Mei in Drama Kings: Players and Publics in the Re-Creation of Peking Opera, 1870–1937 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007).

36. For Mei’s influence on Meyerhold, see Min Tian, “Meyerhold Meets Mei Lanfang: Staging the Grotesque and the Beautiful,” Comparative Drama 33.2 (Summer 1999), 234–69.
37. Daphne Lei has noted that the US tours of Chinese opera actors were often used to promote them back in China, as actors took on names like “Gam Saan” or “Gold Mountain” Actor in reference to their supposed fame in California. See Daphne Lei, Operatic China: Staging Chinese Identity across the Pacific (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006); and Krystyn Moon, Yellowface: Creating the Chinese in American Popular Music and Performance 1850–1920 (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2005). My thanks to Daphne Lei for sharing early drafts of articles from this project with me.
44. Anonymous, “Chinese Actor Welcomed by City Officials.”
45. For example, the act of crossing Broadway, the street dividing Chinatown from the Italian community of North Beach in San Francisco, usually resulted in a beating for Chinese daring to risk the transgression of racial borders through to the mid-twentieth century. See Michel Laguerre,

46. See Carter, “Mei Lan-fang in America.”
48. A new understanding of the metropole as a loosely organized series of these diasporic ethnopolises has forced a reconceptualization of classic Weberian Worlds systems analysis. James Clifford and Arjun Appadurai, in particular, have recently rearticulated the relationship between the “core” and “periphery” that has been assumed to structure global industrial dynamics. In their schema, the core is not only dependent on the periphery for raw materials, labor, and industrial development inside its own sphere, but also as the basis for the cultural imaginary of itself. The periphery, in other words, is central (in both the conceptual and spatial senses of the term) to the process of culturation and to the making of social practices within what is known as the core. The clear polarization of these terms becomes troubled by both imaginary and material interpolation of the cultural products and practices of Africa, South America, and Asia into the everyday practices of the core, and by the processes of global industrialization that produce the migration, forced and voluntary (although these categories themselves are muddy), from these continents to North America, Australia, and Europe either temporarily or for permanent settlement. See Etienne Balibar and Immanuel Wallerstein, Race, Nation, and Class: Ambiguous Identities (London: Verso, 1991); Arjun Appadurai, Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996); and James Clifford, Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000); Carol A. Breckenridge, Sheldon Pollack, Homi K. Bhabha and Dipesh Chakrabarty, eds, Cosmopolitanism (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005).
52. The notion of modernity as a particularly and spectacularly dynamic phenomenon was central to definitions of America by Robert Park and the other Chicago School sociologists. Park, who argued that Asian immigrant experience to the US should be seen as the foundational model for building theories of American racial dynamics, claimed that Far Eastern nations like China were highly static and hierarchical, making the assimilation of Asian immigrants very difficult, if not downright impossible. These insights formed the basis for Park’s famous concept of modern man as mobile and migratory, and hence “the marginal man,” which was published just two years before Mei’s

53. Roach argues that “New Orleans is the only inhabited city that exists simultaneously as a national historical park. Unlike Colonial Williamsburg or Disney World, each of which it resembles in certain respects, the Crescent City’s picturesque inhabitants do not change clothes and go home at the end of their working day to what they erroneously have come to regard as the real world” (Roach, Cities of the Dead, 180.


56. Lin, Reconstructing Chinatown, 183.

57. See, especially, Laguerre, Ethnopoles; and Nayan Shah, Contagious Divides: Race and the Cultural Politics of Public Health in San Francisco’s Chinatown, 1854–1952 (Chicago: University of Chicago Pres, 2000), on control exerted over tourist and public health practices, respectively.


59. David Palumbo-Liu has described how sociologists and anthropologists of the 1920s and 1930s attempted to ascribe cultural and behavioral changes on the part of East Asian immigrants and their American-born descendents to a process through which the nation physically inscribed itself onto the body – from Franz Boas to Robert Park, social scientists conceptualized Asian Americans as growing longer-limbed, more open of countenance, less “inscrutable” with every passing generation, and produced complicated charts and graphs to prove it. Palumbo-Liu, Asian/American, 85.

60. Light, “Vice District,” 394.


64. Palumbo-Liu, Asian/American, 82.


67. Jingju was essentially created as an amalgamation of other regional dramatic forms throughout the first half of the nineteenth century. By the 1850s, most of the generic characteristics of the form – its melodies, character conventions, acrobatic sequences, and narratives – had been set.

69. Ibid.
70. Ibid.
71. Ibid.
73. Samuel Gompers, head of the AFL in 1903, had told the Mexican American secretary of the Japanese-Mexican Labor Association J. M. Lizarras that “Your union will under no circumstance accept membership of any Chinese or Japanese” if it wanted to be made part of the larger, more powerful national union, a racial bar still in effect in 1930. Ronald Takaki, Strangers from a Different Shore: A History of Asian Americans (Boston, MA: Little, Brown, 1998), 199.
75. Ibid., 392.
79. Mei’s PR campaign did not entirely “straighten” his reputation, however; one of the society critics in China coined the term Mei du to describe an addiction to Mei’s seductive effect on the stage, a term which also punned on the term for syphilis. Goldstein notes that Mei’s success as a dan could not have occurred had the public role of women in China (including the fact that they were finally allowed into theatres as spectators in the new Republic, making “the erotic gaze of the audience more polyvalent”) not also changed at the same time. In the late eighteenth century, Wei Changsheng had attempted similar changes in the dan characters and costumes, and was banned from the stage and later from Beijing altogether along with the style of theatre he performed for its supposed obscenity. Goldstein, Drama Kings, argues for changing roles for women in China in combination with Goldstein, “Mei Lanfang.”
80. Matthews, “China’s Stage Idol.”
81. Thomas Talbott, “Mei Lan-Fang,” Origin unknown, Mei Lanfang Scrapbook, NYPL.
83. Homi Bhabha, The Location of Culture (London: Routledge), 140.
84. Ibid., 6; original emphasis.
86. Bhabha, Location, 86.
Chapter 5  Geometries of Swing: The Black Pacific and the Swing Mikados

2. For my reconstruction of *The Hot Mikado*, I have relied largely on newspaper accounts from the scrapbook and clippings files on the show in the Billy Rose Theatre Collection at the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts (NYPL), container MWEZ x n.c. 15,554 and “*The Hot Mikado* ‘Clippings’ File.” For the Federal Theatre Project’s *Swing Mikado*, I used the Production Bulletin file for the show located in the Federal Theatre Project Archive at the Library of Congress (LCFTP).
4. LCFTP, Gail Borden, “Negro Unit Jazzes up Opera ‘Mikado.’”
7. The first and only attempt to create an American national theatre, the Federal Theatre Project (FTP) was beset by controversy from its inception. A branch of the Works Progress Administration, the FTP was designed to ameliorate the plight of unemployed professional theatre artists across the country. Significantly, the FTP was divided into “leagues” organized by region and by ethnic grouping. Consequently, the FTP produced “negro” plays (of which *The Swing Mikado* was one effort), Yiddish plays, plays in the American southwest, and so forth. As with the WPA generally, the FTP came under national scrutiny and was eventually dismembered for its supposed “interference” in the operation of fair marketplace competition. For more information on the FTP, see Hallie Flanagan, *Arena: The History of the Federal Theatre* (New York: Arno Press, 1980); Rena Fraden, *Blueprints for a Black Federal Theatre, 1935–1939* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Glenda Gill, *White Greasepaint on Black Performers: A Study of the Federal Theatre, 1935–1939* (New York: Peter Lang, 1988); Barry Witham, *The Federal Theatre Project: A Case Study* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003).
19. Ibid., 104.
22. Ibid., 127–63.
23. LCFTP, Production Bulletin: *Swing It*.
26. The *Hot Mikado*, on the other hand, altered the original more substantially. While none of the chord progressions were changed, Sullivan’s entire score was put into swing time, and some of the major songs had entirely new lyrics, topically adapted for the *Hot Mikado* by Dave Gregory and William Tracy. For the most part, while altered lyrics included predictable references to current politics and celebrities (for example, the revamped “Let the Punishment Fit the Crime” in which Bill Robinson sang, “Joe Louis is gotta / Be Vice Mikado / If I go for a third term”), the new words also attacked the class-conscious, the vain, and the snobbish. See NYPL, Souvenir Program: *Hot Mikado*, “Topical Lyrics;” and LCFTP, W. S. Gilbert, script for *The Mikado*.
28. Ibid.
32. Ibid., 133. Lutz and Collins locate these tropes in distinct geographic locations in the Pacific: the inhabitants of Papua New Guinea were more likely to be written as primitive savages, while Polynesian and Micronesian cultures were linked to a “gentle nobility.”


34. Musicologist Michael Beckerman has argued that even Yum Yum’s “The Sun, Whose Rays” (a song considered the apex of English, melodic loveliness) contains elements of the Miya Sama riff in the oboe line. See Michael Beckerman, “The Sword on the Wall: Japanese Elements and their Significance in *The Mikado,*” *Musical Quarterly* 3 (1989), 303–19.

35. Ibid., 318–19.


37. See Beckerman, “The Sword on the Wall,” 315–16. I am indebted to his work in cataloguing the violence in *The Mikado.*


39. Ibid., 74.

40. Ibid., 74.

41. Ibid., 53–4.

42. Ibid., 52–3.

43. See Beckerman, “The Sword on the Wall,” 305, for a similar suggestion that “the general fascination for the Oriental which prevailed during the nineteenth century [...] remains a lively but largely underexplored facet of the Romantic Movement.”

44. For a more detailed analysis of the Savoy Ballroom as a site at which black and white racial tensions were mediated, see Brenda Dixon Gottschild, *Waltzing in the Dark: African American Vaudeville and Race Politics in the Swing Era* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2000), 71–5.

45. LCFTP, Gail Borden, “Negro Unit Jazzes up Opera ‘Mikado.’”


47. Dorinne Kondo has noted the idea of “face” as “the stereotypic ‘Oriental’ trope, signifying a presumed Asian preoccupation with social reputation.” See Dorinne Kondo, *About Face: Performing Race in Fashion and Theater* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 24–6.


49. LCFTP, Lewis, “Mikado Malayed.”

50. Ibid.


**Coda: The Black Face of US Imperialism**


4. Ibid.

5. For an account of how images of African American military personnel were used to create a narrative of racial liberation during the First Iraq War, see Melanie McAlister’s “Military Multiculturalism in the Gulf War and After” in her magnificent *Epic Encounters: Culture, Interests, and US Interests in the Middle East, 1945–2000* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).

6. For example, see Paul Krugman, “The Trust Problem,” in which he proffers an image of Powell during his 2003 UN speech as an example of why the American public should not trust US Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson’s $700 billion financial bailout plan in the September 2008 economic meltdown on faith: “the whole premise of the bailout push has been ‘We’re the grownups, we know what we’re doing, just trust us.’ Sorry, but that’s how Colin Powell sold the Iraq war. Fool me once, shame on you, fool me twice […] you shouldn’t get fooled.” Krugman prefaced these remarks with a photo of Powell giving his UN address. Paul Krugman, “The Trust Problem,” *The New York Times*, http://krugman.blogs.nytimes.com/ (posted and accessed 24 September 2008).


8. Powell’s speech played on images familiar from the Jewish Holocaust of World War II when describing Hussein’s possession and use of chemical weapons: “since the 1980s, Saddam’s regime has been experimenting on human beings to perfect its biological or chemical weapons. [...] An eye witness saw prisoners tied down to beds, experiments conducted on them, blood oozing around the victim’s mouths and autopsies performed to confirm the effects on the prisoners. Saddam Hussein’s humanity–inhumanity has no limits.” The capstone of Powell’s speech, however, was his assertion of Hussein’s genocidal campaign against the Kurdish population of Iraq and neighboring countries: “His campaign against the Kurds from 1987–89 included mass summary executions, disappearances, arbitrary jailing, ethnic cleansing and the destruction of some 2,000 villages. He has also conducted ethnic cleansing against the Shi’a Iraqis and the Marsh Arabs whose culture has flourished for more than a millennium. Saddam Hussein’s police state
ruthlessly eliminates anyone who dares to dissent. Iraq has more forced
disappearance cases than any other country, tens of thousands of people
reported missing in the past decade.” Colin Powell, address to the United
news/releases/2003/02/20030205-1.html (posted 5 February 2003, accessed
18 September 2008).
edu/d/6440/ (accessed 20 September 2008).
11. For a critique of the black-Asian buddy film, see Mita Banerjee, “The Rush
Hour of Black/Asian Coalitions? Jackie Chan and Blackface Minstrelsy,” in
Raphael-Hernandez and Steen, AfroAsian Encounters. For one on how Wesley
Snipes becomes the wily American figure fighting Japanese cunning and
deception in Rising Sun, see David Palumbo-Liu, Asian/American.
12. See the essays of The Vinyl Ain’t Final: Hip Hop and the Globalization of Black
Popular Culture, Dipannita Basu and Sidney J. Lemelle, eds (London: Pluto
Press, 2006).
13. Vijay Prashad, “‘Bandung is Dead’: Passages in AfroAsian Epistemology,” in
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