

“The country I had thought was my home”:
David Mura’s *Turning Japanese* and
Japanese-American Narrative since World War II

GORDON O. TAYLOR

Unless the stone bursts with telling,
unless the seed flowers with speech . . .
Joy Kogawa, *Obasan* (1981)

The poet David Mura, in *Turning Japanese: Memoirs of a Sansei* (1991), projects in prose a range of issues bearing on contemporary Japanese-American identity, and on the view from within such a sensibility of contemporary American culture. The book is based on Mura’s year-long visit to Japan in the mid 1980s on a U.S./Japan Creative Artist Exchange Fellowship, a sojourn which became, beneath the surface of his grant-related activities, a quest for what he calls a “lost center” of personal history. His childhood in a Jewish neighborhood of Chicago, and his Eurocentrically oriented college years, had hardly been focused on his Japanese-American background, still less on roots traceable all the way to Japan.

On one level the book relates the experiences of that year through the retrospective lens of time passed since his return. On another level it looks back at America from Japan, and yet again at Japan from Minnesota (where he now lives) as he writes, sustaining the chronological narrative of the year abroad but tracing cross-currents of self-inquiry flowing across the Pacific in both directions. These swirls, sometimes storms, of bicultural consciousness deepen and complicate, more than they resolve, the many conflicts involved, as they move toward an open ending in which he feels himself neither “Japanese” nor “American,” nor even necessarily a “Japanese American” in any simple sense of the term. The unhyphenated gap (except in the adjectival form) between these two words—“Japanese” . . . “American”—is more accurately

suggestive of the psychic space out of which he writes than is the conventionally hyphenated phrase. Where that leaves him is ultimately unclear; or rather it *is* clear—in this and subsequent work, such as *Where the Body Meets Memory* (1996)—that this unresolved dilemma continues to be his main subject. Biculturalisms in question are further compounded as Mura and his wife Susan, of English and Hungarian-Jewish extraction, expect at the end of *Turning Japanese* the birth of a daughter, on whose behalf Mura muses as to the questions of identity *she* will eventually face.

Meanwhile, just where, or in what “America,” David Mura resides—literally and literarily—is a question to be posed not only in relation to his own writing, but also in connection with 50 years and more of Japanese-American cultural expression, since Pearl Harbor was bombed in 1941 and Executive Order 9066 was issued in 1942, setting in motion the removal of over 120,000 Americans of Japanese descent from the West Coast to internment camps inland, or since the “white flash [and] black rain”¹ swept over Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945. For the memory of the camps—bracketed by the twin catastrophes of Pearl Harbor and Hiroshima—remains deeply enmeshed in the process through which several generations of Japanese Americans have expressed a shifting sense of being Asian in America, or of being Asian American as well as American “pure and simple” in the wake of war between America and Asia. This is so whether the relocation is recalled from direct experience, or a version of the event and its aftermath is acquired from familial memory or from other social sources or interpretations. It is also true whether those who absorb and later recast such narratives do so in terms of embracing, or resisting, the idea of the internment as in some way central to the formation of their own identities, or—perhaps more often—in terms of both.

The image of concentration-camp wire—like Malcolm X’s “memory of the bars” in slave ships long before his birth—persists in much Japanese-American writing half a century and more after the event. *Issei* (the immigrant generation, denied citizenship and right to own land even before the war), *nisei* (the second generation, American-born and thus U.S. citizens at the time of the relocations), *sanssei* (the next generation, of which Mura is a member), *yonse* (the next, to which his

daughter belongs)—all have by now contributed to a “collective autobiography” of the internment period and its subsequent reverberations, as reimagined in the 1950s and beyond.

Japanese-American consciousness in the wake of the war seems for the parents to have been focused on recovering a basis for their children's education, outwardly reaffirming (*kodomo no tame*, for the sake of the children) their future in America while turning their anger and bitterness within. For the children the postwar period often coincided with teenage years, focused on the immediacies of American life, infused with insecurity and the desire to belong; later on some would come to question more severely both the government, for its Draconian policy, and their parents, for their perceived silence in the face of such action. For the grandparents, perhaps, past and future were blended in a sense of *ukiyo*, the “floating world,” which in old Japan had among its many meanings the intermingled desolations and consolations brought about by inevitable change.

What follows is a characterization—selectively cast in terms of representative texts ranging across the time since the war—of the literary contours, cross-generic and cross-generational, of a composite Japanese-American narrative, suggesting some of the ways in which that narrative reflects the psychic legacies of the internment and creatively redeploys them in acts of imagination. Into that context, then, a fuller discussion of Mura's memoir may be placed, and its refractions of other materials further considered.

* * *

Very little was written, at least in English, by the *issei*, the immigrants most of whom originally intended to return to Japan with money earned in America, some of whom did in fact repatriate during or after the war. Theirs was a silence anchored in loneliness and isolation, linguistic and otherwise, long antedating World War II. The lack of literary self-consciousness on the part of the *issei*, except insofar as others have sought to speak on their behalf (and most of these only recently), is itself a feature of the literary-cultural landscape of this period. An inverse form of self-expression—often powerful in its negativity, almost “posthumous” in its refusal to envision an American future (not that the *issei* were

included in official projections of that future)—it is variously registered in a range of works, a subliminal but persistent undertone in later Japanese-American expression.

Overtly launching Japanese-American postwar writing, although more in terms (in different ways and to different degrees) of personal witness than fully realized art, are two books from the 1950s, Monica Sone's memoir *Nisei Daughter* and John Okada's novel *No-No Boy*. Each stands at the head of a separate strand—which subsequent works will entwine in various ways—even if in the end, despite strong contrasts, they share some common ground.

Nisei Daughter, published in 1953, affirms the American future as if by sheer force of will, dramatizing the drive toward assimilation and acceptance which suffuses much *nisei* writing, and which much *sansei* writing continues to critique. Born in Seattle, given both a Japanese and an American name (Kazuko Monica, the Japanese portion meaning “peace”), Sone was a 22-year-old college student when sent to Camp Harmony in Washington state. Taking her Christian faith and traditional Japanese family structure as sometimes conflictive but generally stabilizing norms, she relates the events of her internment and its impact on her parents in ways suggesting a sensibility more resistant to the upheaval than that of either a much younger or a much older person might have been.

Yet she also conveys a desperation, perhaps most keenly felt by the *nisei*—citizens by birth who felt the fruits of the American dream within their grasp, or at least assured for their children—as the war set in motion the destruction of her world. “In the privacy of our hearts,” Sone writes,

we had raged, we had cried against the injustices, but in the end, we had swallowed our pride and learned to endure.

Even with all the mental anguish and struggle, an elemental instinct bound us to this soil. Here we were born; here we wanted to live. We had tasted of its freedom and learned its brave hopes for democracy. It was too late, much too late for us to turn back. (124)

She records in her last chapters—“Eastward, *Nisei*” and “Deeper into the Land”—her “desperate struggle to be just myself” in an America which would “inject strength into my hyphenated Americanism instead

of pulling it apart" (216). Inverting the primal American trope of westward movement as an exploration of internal frontiers, Sone finds that by pushing east (immediate return to the West Coast was forbidden) she had "discovered a deeper, stronger pulse in the American scene." In her closing lines she states,

I was going back into [America's] main stream, still with my Oriental eyes, but with an entirely different outlook, for now I felt more like a whole person instead of a sadly split personality. The Japanese and American parts of me were now blended into one. (238)

This is a satisfying outcome in terms of narrative resolution, although 1953, when the book appeared, is early on in the period of post-war adjustment, and for many the 1950s and well beyond would be a period still fraught with the same ambiguities and anxieties as existed before the war, massively exacerbated by the relocations.

Not surprisingly, the problem of literary portrayal—in whatever proportions the authors in question weigh out their "artistic" in relation to their "testimonial" or "witness-bearing" purposes, and mount their representational strategies accordingly—remains comparably complex. That Sone, for her part, tends in *Nisei Daughter* to avoid self-consciously literary effects in favor of a more "simply" sequential account of her experience in no way lessens the importance and interest of her text. And not for readers alone, but also for writers to come, more than one of whom (knowingly or not) define themselves, in more avowedly "literary" performances, in relation to some of the primal images of *nisei* awareness she has produced, to whatever extent they reject or revise her perspectives.

In John Okada's novel *No-No Boy*, which was published in 1957 but then seemingly disappeared without a trace until reissued in the 1970s, Ichiro Yamada, *nisei*, returns to Seattle after two years in prison for refusing to serve in the American army during the war. (Okada was a U.S. Army translator and interpreter in the Pacific.) The book's title refers to the questions 27 and 28 on the questionnaire to which all relocated Japanese Americans over the age of 17 were subjected, although the questions were aimed at *nisei* men of military age. Question 27 asked, "Are you willing to serve in the armed forces of the United States, on

combat duty, wherever ordered?" Question 28 inquired, "Will you swear unqualified allegiance to the United States of America and faithfully defend the United States from any or all attack by foreign or domestic sources, and forswear any form of allegiance or obedience to the Japanese emperor, or any foreign government, power or organization?"² To say "no" to both, for whatever reasons—chief among them anger at the very fact of the camps, let alone conditions within them—was effectively to isolate oneself from any national affiliation at all (especially for the *issei* denied American citizenship, whose Japanese citizenship was placed at risk by "yes-yes"), except for those requesting repatriation to Japan.

Ichiro's re-encounters with family and former friends, and an ongoing struggle within himself as to whether or not he should have resisted, frame a plot through which Okada dramatizes with ironic economy a range of perspectives on "no-no" and its consequences. Isolated by his act, just as he has been alienated before and since by racial intolerance, Ichiro finds in his friendship with Kenji Kanno—a veteran whose gangrenous wound eventually proves fatal—a point of reconnection to his own future, however problematic it remains. Ichiro regrets his refusal of army induction, a "mistake" he feels has cut him off from his birthright as an American. But in his remorse, recalling the "madness" of the evacuation, is an incompletely articulated persistence in a belief that precisely *as* an American he had no other choice.

If he longs for acceptance and forgiveness, Ichiro also yearns for an America truer to its own professed ideals of equality and respect for individual conscience. He and Kenji, casually yet in bitter earnest, play a cat-and-mouse conversational game of who would trade with whom—the honored war hero with time running out, and the despised draft resister with 50 years of leftover life to kill. Kenji knows that for him it is an endgame, but to some degree he invests himself in the idea of a future he helps Ichiro regain. For each there is a sense of something gained, but it stems from the recognition that *each* did what he did, in some measure, for nothing.

At the end, as with many another American literary protagonist during different eras and in different genres (Richard Wright, for example, in *Black Boy* or *American Hunger*), the country and the inclusiveness of its culture are precariously at issue, as much as Ichiro's personal fate:

A glimmer of hope—was that it? It was there, someplace. He couldn't see it to put it into words, but the feeling was pretty strong.

He walked along, thinking, searching, thinking and probing, and, in the darkness of the alley of the community that was a tiny bit of America, he chased that faint and elusive insinuation of promise as it continued to take shape in mind and in heart. (250-51)

He is walking away from a closing scene of violence and death summing up the futility of lives consumed by rage and guilt over the war, the camps and the agonies of emergence into an adverse post-war social environment. The novel holds its acerbic edge to the last; unlike the expansiveness of eastward "space" into which Monica Sone proclaims her liberation in *Nisei Daughter*, the "alley" of Okada's America is too narrow and dark to allow for more than a "faint and elusive insinuation" of faith in the prospects for change in American hearts and minds, or for such affirmation to break "into words." Ichiro hardly experiences the "blending" Sone claims for her Japanese and American selves. But his surviving "glimmer of hope"—as he is released from imprisoning despair into an enabling compassion for others—informs the ending with a sense of renewed possibility, however provisional.

In the painful course of his re-engagement with America and himself, Ichiro's "no-no" becomes a self-contained "text," coherent and complete on its own hard-won, still-embattled terms, or perhaps still straining toward a kind of completion in personal terms that only a national transformation might ensure. Packed in on itself, it resists conventional narrative elaboration because it is incompatible with conventional affirmation. In some respects like the silence of the *issei* (or the demented denial of Ichiro's *issei* mother that Japan lost the war), this *nisei*'s "no-no" is one form, paradigmatic in its extreme compression, of Japanese-American "narrative" of the legacy of the camps. As such it relates in irreducibly negative terms what was felt by some to be the only available means of making a positive statement of what it actually meant (or should have meant) to be an American in 1942. It is also latent *within*, a shadow *to*, other narratives predicated in one way or another, like Sone's, on "yes-yes," which in turn (one flowing into another like a Möbius strip) can be shadowed by a counterpart sense of "no-no."

No less than Okada, for instance, and despite her claim to have

transcended her internment, Sone felt in *Nisei Daughter* the frustration of sudden, inexplicable incarceration:

I remembered the wire fence encircling us, and a knot of anger tightened in my breast. What was I doing behind a fence like a criminal? If there were accusations to be made, why hadn't I been given a fair trial? Maybe I wasn't considered an American anymore. My citizenship wasn't real, after all. Then what was I? (177)

Whereas *No-No Boy* spirals inward, steadily increasing ironic tensions which are relaxed only partially at the end, *Nisei Daughter* progressively uncoils the encircling wire, loosens the grip of acknowledged anger, moves further toward the future, in effect saying "yes" and "yes" less in answer to imposed questions than in enactment of new confidence—the product of earlier struggle—"to be just myself." Still, Sone's book, while it seems to resolve her "sadly split" sense of self, projects beyond its conclusion an awareness that post-war America can remain unreceptive to that forthright self-assertion. The question "Then what was I?" and a sense that "My citizenship wasn't real, after all" link Sone's version with Okada's, even as they appear to fall on either side of a literary watershed marked in part by the polemics of "no-no," and in part by Okada's relatively greater concern with atmospheric intensity and literary technique in what amounts to the emergence with his novel of a Japanese-American literary tradition.

A more symbolic form, less conscious or direct, in which many *nisei* families expressed their resistance without actually answering "no" to official questions was by fashioning small rock gardens before their shacks or barracks in the camps, repossessing some bit of beauty in the chaos which has swallowed them up. Remaking a miniature fragment of a world in which one could continue to believe, they were at the same time rejecting the world as it was, walling it out with a few chosen stones, shaping an inner space in which to embrace and *thus* overcome the insult, to "speak" in a way through silence of such constructed designs. The "language" of these stones, even if found in the dry desert stream-beds of the hostile terrain on which most camps were established, could also suggest in its Buddhist aspect the flow of water along paths of least resistance, or a phrase in Japanese lying somewhere between

"yes" and "no," *shikata ga nai*. Loosely translated "It can't be helped," this conveyed for some a passive resistance sometimes criticized by others as a kind of capitulation. Thus in the rocks is an ambiguity as well as an assertion. Both aspects inhere in the symbol-system of such arrangements, as literally created at the time and as metaphorically recast in literary art.

Farewell to Manzanar, coauthored in 1973 by Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston and her husband James D. Houston, depicts life in the California camp Jeanne Wakatsuki entered at the age of seven, but also her sense of herself and her world through the years since the war. This book was for some time popularly regarded as *the* representative Japanese-American text, although not by some Japanese Americans themselves, especially of late. In finding her way and coming to terms by revisiting Manzanar 30 years after she had arrived there, Wakatsuki provides an eloquent image of reconciliation laced with unassuageable hurt. Her family was one of those who built a rock garden, a place of their own in a place of dispossession. Returning now with her own young children, she finds traces of the stones in the sand, unable to tell if from "her" garden or another family's. Remnants of the collective as much as the personal past, each stone is "a mouth, speaking" (137), speaking of pain as well as of survival, saying perhaps at this distance in time both "no-no" and *shikata ga nai*, as if in a language she at first cannot recall. Scattered now, yet bedrock of a sort, ideographically written into the world, the rocks she finds are expressive of, in a way a repository for, the conflicted Japanese-American sense of self she has elsewhere in the telling of her tale both sought and sought to avoid. Seeing the "veined or polished stones"—turning them gently in the writing just as she turned them in her hands that day—she is free to leave the camp forever, and freer to tell her children a story she has tried to keep from herself. She finally says "farewell" to Manzanar by reinhabiting the broken design, within the larger landscape of exile in—as well as from—her own country.

Into the 1950s and for long thereafter, she had never wanted to be anywhere near the camp, seeking to merge in American life, running for carnival queen in high school, for example, her happiness at winning shot through with the same loneliness that had led her to compete.

Monica Sone, caught between two worlds, had nevertheless felt that she knew her destination, her dream untarnished by dint of her desire: "It was too late, much too late for us to turn back," she had said. For Wakatsuki (writing of a time close to that when Sone was writing her book), it was also "too late," as she tasted the bitter joy of being crowned carnival queen and then being left out of the private parties later on. Angry and hurt yet uncertain in the face of her father's objections to her low-cut gown—indeed to the whole affair since he thinks she has damaged if not destroyed her marriageability within Japanese custom, and clings to an image of her in traditional kimono—she reflects on her coronation, seemingly a confirmation of acceptance, but on another level a moment suddenly filled with emptiness:

It was too late. Too late to be an *odori* dancer for Papa, too late to be this kind of heroine. . . . It was too late now not to follow this make-believe carpet to its plywood finale, and I did not yet know of any truer destination. (130)

Her dream devalued, her sense of self still more sadly split, her future (for the moment) as an American foreclosed, she is as driven as Sone had been, but toward a different, more deeply alienated (dis)connection to the land of her birth.

Hiroshima and Nagasaki, marking for Wakatsuki the end of the internment even as Pearl Harbor had ushered it in, leave her as well with a split relation to the event, as if in a way there were (as in a way there was) a ground zero on each shore of the Pacific from which to see the mushroom cloud. She reports the bombings laconically enough: "At least we were no longer *the enemy*," she says, anticipating Paul Fussell's later phrase—in the context of American deliverance from the Pacific war—"Thank God for the atom bomb."³ Yet in the next chapter she tells of her brother's journey the following year to Ka-Ke, near Hiroshima, to see surviving relatives and join in the mourning for one who died, graveless in the firestorm. Questions of friend and foe for the moment aside, focus is on the indrawn family circle, more than on the outflung circumference of death and destruction. Elsewhere in the book—released from camp and referring to the lingering Manzanar mentality rather than to the bomb, but choosing an interesting image even so—she says, "the shape of that great dark cloud in my imagination

gradually receded, soothed away by a sky the same blue it had always been, lawns the same green. . . . That dread was gone," (112) but her "premonitions" of an altered American reality "proved correct," for how could things ever be the same in the mind of a girl so lately a prisoner of war, or in a world in which the "unthinkable" had actually occurred, even before it came to be so termed. The note of disillusionment persists into her adult perceptions and into her book, linking it more closely to materials appearing since 1973 than to Sone's account of 1953.

In a later essay titled "Beyond Manzanar: Views of Asian-American Womanhood" (1985), however, Wakatsuki refers with more confidence and self-(re)possession to the "space" from which she too has now spoken, in the earlier book but also separately from it, like Ichiro in the solitary confinement of "no-no," like Sone in the typographically small yet vast gulf between her Japanese and American names. Wakatsuki first associates this "space" with her mother's ability to separate the maternal role, in which she invested her identity, from the menial work she took to replace the family's income, abruptly reduced to nothing by the evacuation. Then she attributes the need for the psychological privacy of such a space to "a people who for centuries have had to create their own internal 'space' in an overpopulated island," a reference to Japan. Perhaps finally for Wakatsuki, returning by way of such musings to her own situation, it is a matter of placing polished words—"only the smoothest / pebbles, pure black ovals" (26), as the *sansei* poet Amy Uyematsu puts it in a poem about Manzanar called "Rock," like carefully selected stones against the open white space of the page, a space "beyond Manzanar" in which to find that one's true self lies in the seeking.

A novel whose author, the Japanese-Canadian writer Joy Kogawa, seems always to have known this, and whose *sansei* protagonist, Naomi Nakane, comes to discover it, is *Obasan* (1981). Set at the start in the western provinces of Canada in the 1970s, it consists as well of Naomi's ventures into the past, as she reinscribes herself in relation to what she learns about her family's imprisonment by the Canadian government in 1942, and about their earlier lives in both Japan and North America. Of her *issei* grandparents she has only photographic images and fragmentary memories, but of her *nisei* mother she has even less. Caught in Nagasaki and disfigured by the bombing while back in Japan, the

trip itself a reflection of the complex human ties underlying more abstract political affiliations, Naomi's mother is powerfully present in the narrative through her absence and the silence of others regarding her. In the oblique communications of an aunt Ayako (the "Obasan" of the title)—in effect both grandmother and mother to the girl who is now a woman in her forties—Naomi finds a precarious passage not only to her forebears but also to her mother's fate, so long withheld like the bitterness of the internment (*kodomo no tame*, for the sake of the children), and hence to her own North American future.

The death of her uncle, Ayako's husband Isamu, and her effort to comfort and assist her aunt, precipitate Naomi's interior quest, a process blending reminiscence over the past as she has up to now understood it and more solitary confrontation with questions she has never chosen or been forced to face. If the story is about the space in her life left empty by her missing mother, it is in equal measure about the partial refilling of that space by Naomi herself, as she achieves wider knowledge and deeper understanding of what her family endured. Although this entails a recognition that she too is marked forever by the internment—of which she has only moments of submerged memory, the accuracy of which she cannot know, so little will others tell her of the event—it more importantly results in a sense of her own power to create herself, less weighed down than lifted by a history she has learned to inhabit.

In a passage from an early chapter, Naomi accompanies Obasan into the attic in which Obasan has suddenly, after midnight and without warning or explanation, decided she must search for something. "It was in the attic, surely," mutters Obasan, ascending a narrow stairway and entering the musty space, occasionally murmuring "Lost," Naomi's first-person narration informing the reader that in Japanese as in English "lost" can also mean "dead." Rummaging through piled cardboard boxes, Obasan's hands make Naomi think of the "wings of a wounded bird, battering the ground in an attempt at balance," yet also of "hands that toil but do not embrace" (23-24), the hands of "every old woman in every hamlet in the world," less nurturer than archetypal keeper of domestic keys, "possessor of life's infinite personal details" in a house the contents of which are "like parts of her body, . . . specks of memory, . . . in her blood and bones" (15-16). Obasan locates and examines a bundle of

papers, looking for a long time at a yellowed card—"Isamu Nakane #00556," signed "McGibbons, Inspector, RCMP," her husband's ID from the relocation—but this is "not what she is looking for" (24), although it marks for the reader the internment's reduction of "identity" to a scrap of paper.

Whether or not fully awake, whether or not with a particular object in mind beyond the spasm of grief which has brought her here, Obasan turns from box to box more in darkness than with the aid of Naomi's flashlight. Kogawa simultaneously expands the sequence, through Naomi's interior voice, to focus on an intricate maze of spider webs, long undisturbed, a "cloudy scene of carnage" which repels Naomi as spiders dart in and out of the dark, but which also prompts reflections, as dust-motes swirl and the webwork trembles in the flashlight's beam, on reductions inevitably wrought by time, and on comminglings of the living and the dead:

All our ordinary stories are changed in time, altered as much by the present as the present is shaped by the past. Potent and pervasive as a prairie dust storm, memories and dreams seep and mingle through cracks, settling on furniture and into upholstery. Our attics and living-rooms encroach on each other, deep into their invisible spaces. (25)

A trunk opened by Obasan reveals a patchwork quilt, made by Naomi's mother when her daughter was four years old, so moth-eaten and frayed as to seem another piece of "evil laundry" hanging in the dust-laden webs, a "graveyard and feasting-ground combined." But the quilt also stirs a memory of watching by the sewing machine as her mother's hands, "quick as birds, matched and arranged the small triangles of coloured cloth" (25-26), then bright and new.

Unable to help Obasan because Obasan will not say what she seeks, Naomi wants only to go back to bed,

But we're trapped, Obasan and I, by our memories of the dead—all our dead—those who refuse to bury themselves. Like threads of old spider webs, still sticky and hovering, the past waits for us to submit, or depart. When I least expect it, a memory comes skittering out of the dark, spinning and netting the air, ready to snap me up and ensnare me in old and complex puzzles. Just a glimpse of a worn-out patchwork quilt and the old question comes

thudding out of the night again like a giant moth. Why did my mother not return? (26)

The past “hungers for” Obasan, “feasts on her,” filling Naomi’s mind with an image of her aunt caught in the web, “dangl[ing] in the dark, like small insect bones, a fearful calligraphy” of the word “lost.” So too Naomi feels herself threatened, if also tranquilly resigned in her present fatigue. As a child she had asked Obasan, “Please tell me about my mother,” was “consumed by the question. Devoured alive.” Descending from the attic to the “living” rooms below, she feels less imperiled by the question’s return than newly moved to pursue the links, at once tenuous and binding like spider’s silk, between that question and many others, including if not limited to the family’s wartime experience.

Among feelings freshly aroused, as the book proceeds to map her inward journey, are hate for war and war hysteria, anger at those (like “McGibbons”) who become their enforcing embodiments, along with sadness at the loss of her brother Stephen—and his loss to himself—through his refusal to acknowledge the “Japanese” in “Japanese Canadian,” thus drifting away from her as she opens and airs the attic of her history. But there are other, self-renewing urges as well, tending to merge with larger cycles: of generational fulfillment, as the “child” assumes adult responsibility for Obasan, now ancient to the point of “translucence”; of natural communion, as the prairie landscape of western Canada comes to be for Naomi, as it had been for her uncle yearning for his shipbuilding youth in Japan, *umi no yo*, like the sea; of more cosmic scale, as from a place where she used to play she sees the moon, “a pure white stone” (echoing Wakatsuki’s “pure black ovals”), as bound by more-than-physical gravity in a “dance” with waters running free within the earth, cradling her ancestors:

My loved ones, rest in your world of stone. Around you flows the underground stream. How bright in the darkness the brooding light. How gentle the colours of rain. (246-47)

One senses here the significance, for literary art, of Naomi’s brief meditation in the attic on the tools she finds there, brought by Obasan’s father to Canada, one of which she somehow knows he used by pulling

it towards him, not pushing away: "There is a fundamental difference in Japanese workmanship—to pull with control rather than push with force" (24). And in this "brooding light," the remains of Wakatsuki's family's rock garden and others like it contain the calligraphy, now far from "fearful," in which may be read not only "lost" but "found."

In Cynthia Kadohata's *The Floating World* (1989), set in the western American states during the 1950s, Olivia Ann Fujitano would appear to have absorbed, at an earlier age compared to Kogawa's Naomi and more intuitively than consciously, a similar self-knowledge. Twelve years old as the story begins, Olivia Ann lives on the road with her *nisei* mother and stepfather and her *issei* grandmother, as her strangely functional dysfunctional family roams in search of seasonal work. Among themselves they encompass the tyrannical rigidities of old-world Japanese tradition, the enigmas of arrival and *survival* in America, and the baffling mixtures of freedom and fate confronting the young in their efforts (as Sone said) "to be just myself."

In this first-person version of *ukiyo*, the floating world, about which Olivia Ann's grandmother often tells stories,

The floating world was the gas station attendants, restaurants, and jobs we depended on, the motel towns floating in the middle of fields and mountains. In old Japan, *ukiyo* meant the districts full of brothels, teahouses, and public baths, but it also referred to change and the pleasures and loneliness change brings. For a long time, I never exactly thought of us as part of any of that, though. We were stable, traveling through an unstable world . . . , (3)

a post-World War II, post-relocation camp America which offers them no settled place. It is at once as if the war had never been and as if its residual force had randomly dispersed them, like pebbles strewn by time in *Farewell to Manzanar*.

A latter-day Huck Finn of sorts ("It was high time I left" are her novel-ending words), a Kerouac kid always on the move—a "no-no girl" if only she knew it—Olivia Ann is awash in the signs and symbols of American roadside culture and the blur of shifting landscapes, her sense of the past as yet unprecipitated from the flow and fragmentation of the present. She is shaping herself from the overlaps of her life with those of her makeshift yet oddly steadfast family, piecing herself together

on both sides of what Sone called her “hyphenated Americanism,” inarticulate in Olivia Ann’s case but deeply felt. Fluent in English, her “native” tongue, she tries after her grandmother’s death to translate with her mother’s help portions of the grandmother’s diaries, written in Japanese. “I liked the *two* languages,” she says, “how each contained thoughts you couldn’t express exactly in the other” (109). Intuitively rather than ideologically, she tries to keep from losing either side of the Japanese-American equation (the “equivalency” of which, however, remains at issue), as she seeks to leave behind, yet also to cling to, a sense of herself as a stranger in a strange land.

The war and the camps—of which Kadohata as author had no direct experience yet which permeate her prose between the lines—figure only obliquely, dark-on-dark shadows like those on the highway at night, pulses in the blood, unspoken. Still, they are part of what molds and moves the narrative, from within and without, informing Olivia Ann’s soundness of heart and voice, if not her unformed historical understanding:

My parents taught me many things they hadn’t meant to teach me and I hadn’t meant to learn. One of those things was fear: their first big fear, during the war; and when my father was arrested; . . . concern that I would be all right in the future; and a hundred other interwoven fears. That was what I wanted to leave. (147)

Even her name, as she tries to shake free of a past she is also in the process of re-embracing, is unfixed. Her given names, Olivia Ann, are shadowed by her parents’ original Japanese names, which her grandparents had to change to American names in order to enroll their children for school in Honolulu after Pearl Harbor. Her surname, Fujitano, was itself created when her grandparents first arrived in the United States, from names her great-grandfather associated with “rich” and “happy,” the dream of an American “Gold Mountain” not yet dimmed. Mostly, however, she needs no name, only a voice in a world where, as in the roadside rushing by, “No idea had definite form; every fact could dissolve into fiction” (35).

No less than for survivors of concentration camps in Europe or elsewhere (however crucial the differences may be), the American

relocation camps are part of what has cut Olivia Ann, perhaps in some measure Kadohata as well, loose from a world of fixed reference points, seemingly secure, the security and fixedness of which are illusions to which Americans are particularly susceptible, mistaking them for structures on which we may always rely. The camps are therefore also part of what links Olivia Ann—like other American protagonists before and since—to the fluid, floating world in which she darts and drifts, both toward and away from assimilations which would erase the past.

This past is a force-field of memory and forgetfulness (“Everything is forgetfulness,” Obasan had said at the end of the scene in the attic), invisibly scattered and held together like a cloud of stars seen by light violently emitted eons ago. Or like a small heap of rocks sinking deeper into the sand at Manzanar, in which can be read the record of violence and its brief transcendence thirty, now more than fifty, years before. Or, yet again, like Olivia Ann’s sense of her grandmother’s diary entries, early on “vigorous and certain, full of answers and proclamations,” then tending toward a balance of

both questions and answers, and finally, toward the end of her life, only questions

The wind was blowing hard—birds, clouds, cars, all going in the same direction. A sudden gust of wind made a dandelion field explode. (181)

Here—for Kadohata as literary artist, as in a sense for Olivia Ann as the artist of herself—are Naomi’s self-submission to “questions,” and “the seed flower[ing] with speech” in the epigraph from Kogawa’s *Obasan* at the start. A Japanese-American canon continues to crystallize, in the sense of constant crystalline formation rather than of final fixity or stasis. But the energy in this image of a field of windblown seeds, each a floating world unto itself, may return us to discussion of David Mura’s *Turning Japanese*, against the background of an arc (or an “underground stream”) selectively traced from Sone to Kadohata.

* * *

At times in *Turning Japanese*, Mura can sound like Nabokov in *Speak, Memory*, or Naipaul in *A Turn in the South*, or indeed like Henry James

in *The American Scene*, at once displaced and self-displaced, more at home on the page, in a “world elsewhere” of the act of writing, than in either an adoptive or an ancestral “home.” “America” seems in this vein more like a holographic projection of the artist’s preoccupations than an actual terrain currently inhabited or observed. Or Mura can speak as the Midwesterner he is, “from Chicago, that inland city beside that inland sea,” seeing in the mirror of the island nation of Japan “how much I am not reflected in American culture, how much it is not my culture” (369), whatever else he sees in the Westernized commercial surfaces or the Eastern spiritual or psychological depths, only partially accessible to him, of the land of his forebears.

Connecting and disconnecting each, however—the citizen of the world of his artist’s imagination, and the sojourner bound not least by alienation into the culture *from* which he feels apart yet *of* which he *is* a part—is Mura’s still-developing sense of Japanese-American heritage, rooted in both its solidarities and its fragmentations in the relocation-camp experience, for all that the first major wave of Japanese immigration to the United States took place closer to the turn of the century than to the 1940s. Mura had not yet been born in 1942, but on the eve of departure for Japan in 1986, reflecting on his prior “insistence on my Americanness,” he notes (as if seeing it for the first time) that “my Japanese ancestry was there in my poems—my grandfather, the relocation camps, the *hibakusha* (victims of the atomic bomb) . . . it was obvious my imagination had been traveling there for years, unconsciously swimming the Pacific, against the tide of my family’s emigration, my parents’ desire after the internment camps, to forget the past” (9).

As a boy, he recalls, “Japan had never seemed that important to me.” With relatives at holiday gatherings, for example, “I didn’t notice that the faces around me looked different from most of the faces at school. . . . We were American. . . . Japan was . . . Godzilla, . . . [and] the endless hordes storming GIs in war movies, . . . tiny Asians with squinty eyes mowed down in row after row by the steady shots of John Wayne or Richard Widmark.” By the 1980s he was aware of Japan’s new image as an economic power, Godzilla and the Yellow Peril now become “a monster of industrialization” made up of “robot people” (8). “But none of this had much to do with me,” he says. “After all, I was a poet.”

So, when I did win the fellowship, I felt I was going not as an ardent pilgrim, longing to return to the land of his grandparents, but more like a contestant on a quiz show winning a trip to Bali or the Bahamas. . . . Of course I was pleased about the stipend, but part of me wished the prize was Paris, not Tokyo. I would have preferred French bread and Brie over *sashimi* and rice, Baudelaire and Proust over Bashō and Kawabata, structuralism and Barthes over Zen and D. T. Suzuki. At least I had studied French in high school. (9)

Just as before leaving for Japan, however, he had suddenly sensed himself already immersed in the imagery of a defining Japanese-American experience ostensibly "over with" before he was born yet insistently welling up from within, so too throughout *Turning Japanese*, as in his poetry, the shape and the shaping power of that experience is evident, whether or not always directly in view.

Mura's chapter headings in *Turning Japanese*, in fact, are studded with quotations from earlier Japanese-American writers, often paired with passages from established European or Japanese authors, much as W. E. B. DuBois jointly punctuated each chapter in *The Souls of Black Folk* with a wordless bar of slave-song music and a "standard" (usually a 19th-century British) literary citation. As he works his way into and among these blocks of quotation from other Japanese-American writers—which are nevertheless, as epigraphs, typographically separated from his own narrative line—he is still finding his place within, even as he continues to contribute to, the orbits of the larger narrative, while at the same time resisting or rejecting certain of its paradigms. Mura's book is idiosyncratically personal to the point of resisting submergence in the collective interpretation (or in what often amounts to a collectively *unconscious* memory of the camps in which much is suppressed). But in his voice is also the flow of just such an autobiographical tributary, confluent with a collective story as well as identifiably—however conflictively—his own.

At the end of his memoir, David Mura speaks of how "turning Japanese," as he understands it, has led him to see that he is "not Japanese," but rather either "American or . . . one of the homeless, one of the searchers for . . . a world culture" (370). In truth he is both, now more comfortably inhabiting the space between (a floating world not totally unlike Olivia Ann's). Like Henry James observing America from

Europe, or writing of return in *The American Scene* (the comparison is far from fatuous, without in the least bending Mura's vision or style to a Jamesian model in order to define it), Mura—seeing America from Asia and reflecting on return—has come closer to being able at once to “balance” and to cut loose from the need to balance “a conversation which had been taking place before I was born, a conversation in my grandparents' heads, in my parents' heads” (370) about how and whether to be Japanese in America, a conversation including if not limited to the internment.

Throughout his account of time spent in Japan, Mura is less interested on the surface, or indeed at the heart of that matter, in replicating himself as “the American Adam” or some other archetypal American protagonist (French bread and Brie *and* rice and *sashimi*, rather than, say, Thoreau's simpler rations; Barthes *and* D. T. Suzuki, rather than, say, James's Spencer Brydon in “The Jolly Corner,” confronting the specter of an alternative self who chose a different relation to the country of his birth, although a ghostly self-encounter of sorts does occur in *Turning Japanese*). But he thinks nevertheless while in Japan of nothing more than he thinks of “home,” or the problem of a sense of “home,” no matter how intensively he tries to engage Japanese language and culture, more through its *avant garde* forms than through classical Japanese tradition. And the problem of “home” is often enough posed in terms of the transgenerational consciousness of the relocation camps, and focused finally for himself more in terms of race than in terms of American national identity, “hyphenated” or otherwise.

In feeling himself merge in crowded Tokyo streets into a sea of faces looking like his own (unlike his wife, instantly apparent as a *hakujin*, or white foreign person, for all that in some ways she was more open to the actualities of Japan than he), Mura also feels himself immersed in a ghostly flow of Asian faces from the American past, matters of mutual “recognition” insistent in their expressions. With greater clarity from this distance than he had found possible in the U.S., even in the distillations of his poems, he sees in generational array both his own family history and that of the Japanese in “the country I had thought was my home” (6), an America which now both is and is not. As the

speaker says to his correspondent in a poem called "Letters from Poston Relocation Camp (1942-45)," from Mura's *After We Lost Our Way*,

When you write back, please
tell me what country I'm in.

I feel so poor now.
These words are all I own. (9)

Mura explains his closer identification as a *sansei* with his *issei* grandparents than with his *nisei* parents, putting it however in a collective *sansei* voice: "We love the Issei more unequivocally because they were defeated. They never recovered from the camps. They verify that the camps were horrible," not only in their physical conditions but in their arbitrary assertion of "overwhelming power and authority." "I, and many other Sansei, are more angry at the Nisei than at the Issei. Despite the obstacles in their path, the Nisei, our parents, were in some sense able to succeed in America, to enter the middle class" (226). In this view their compliance with Executive Order 9066 in 1942 was somehow more culpable than that of *their* parents, not only because they were younger and stronger but also because their success softened their view of their own violation, made it easier for them to forgive and forget. And yet, of course, the *sansei* were the beneficiaries of the *nisei*'s ascent into the middle class, making it harder for Mura—insofar as he feels himself an inheritor of a legacy of victimization—to link his own sense of powerlessness with what his parents endured, connecting it instead to the fate of his grandparents. This despite his hearing from a Japanese friend, a professor specializing in Japanese-American literature, "There are passages in *No-No Boy* that have so much passion. . . . There's no Sansei who writes like that" (305).

Reading Kafka's *The Trial* while working his way through this generational maze, he had seen that in "the light of Kafka, the story of the camps becomes a parable, whose meaning I must somehow solve."

One day K. steps out of his door to find a notice: he must report to the authorities. Who are the authorities? He does not know, only that he must report to them. When he reports to them, they give him a number, tell him to come back tomorrow. When he comes back the next day, he is taken by

bus to a train and then by train to a place with others who have been given numbers and notices [each of these events closely resembling those befalling Japanese-American evacuees]. He realizes he has been imprisoned. He is no longer singular, no longer private. . . . What is his crime? He is K. That is his crime.

My father's name was originally Katsuji Uyemura. Then Thomas Katsuji Uyemura. Then Tom Katsuji Mura. Then Tom K. Mura.

What is the job of the son of K.? To forgive his crime? To try him again?
(227)

These alternatives then give way—as through this “parable” Mura “translates” them at once into more personal and more culturally familiar Western literary terms—to a greater sympathy for the position of his parents, for “how far they had to travel in their childhood, from the Japanese world of their Issei parents to the America of their schools, the streets of L.A. and Seattle” (370). It is less an issue of compromise verdict—somewhere between forgiveness and reindictment of the father—and more one of entering his own increased “space” on a continuum containing both, as each generation has sought to re-enact, while discovering the need instead to move beyond, the experience of the generation before.

The conversation in his grandparents’ and parents’ heads, over whether and how to be Japanese in America, had for Mura’s generation become an argument which was “very one-sided, so that the Japanese side was virtually silenced. My stay [in Japan] helped me realize that a balance, which probably never existed in the first place [between cultures so fundamentally different, as he has discovered], could no longer be maintained” (370), even if part of his purpose in going to Japan was to find a missing part of himself, on which “side” of the “conversation” he finds it difficult to be sure.

*What is it to write a “history” of a people? Is it to gather up individual stories and fit them together into a logical, coherent structural whole? But what if the stories are all lost [recall the resonance of the word in *Obasan*], if those who tell them have been silenced [“Unless the stone bursts with telling” as in *Obasan*]? And no one actually lives a story; a story is a sequence of events which can be arranged as a romance, a tragedy, a comedy, depending upon the viewpoint of the teller, who is constricted and guided by a number of biases.*

Is the story of the Japanese Americans a comedy? A triumph? Does the reconciliation of the Nisei with America represent a romance? Or is it a tragedy, followed by a satire, where each identity is tinged with irony, the false fit? (294)

A sense of ironic disjunction from *both* the "Japanese" and the "American" in "Japanese American" (with or without the hyphen) informs much of Mura's work in poetry, a mood which significantly shifts, without disappearing, in *Turning Japanese*.

A student of Japanese language during his stay; an ardent amateur of modern Japanese painting, dance and performance art; a tireless conversant with contemporary Japanese writers, even including in a way the dead Yukio Mishima, an idol of the young American long before he ever went to Japan; an adopter of current Japanese fashion in clothes; an endless walker of the cities, rider of subways and interurban trains, and hanger-out in restaurants and bars—Mura acknowledges in the end despite all this his greater affinity for the surfaces of Japanese life than for the depths those surfaces so effectively conceal. Unlike Kyoto, more closely tied to traditional culture, Tokyo, where he spent more time, is a "wacky, Japanese *Doppelgänger* to New York" (294), a similarity at once disappointing and reassuring to him.

He comes across a poem by Derek Walcott, the Nobel Prize-winning West Indian poet whose technique, he says, rivals that of anyone now writing in English. "Walcott pictures himself in Westminster Abbey, among the graves and gravestones of the great English poets, wondering, What am I doing here? A black man from the islands?" (76). Without presumption—and he is not necessarily a modest man in this book—Mura asks the same question of himself with respect to the monuments of traditional Japanese culture, just as he says that in order to "understand who I was and who I would become, I would have to listen to voices that my father, or T. S. Eliot or Robert Lowell did not dream of. . . . In the world of the tradition [meaning the American as much as the Asian], I was unimagined. I would have to imagine myself" (77). The very notion of "turning Japanese" is just a precipitant—one of many—to that process.

The sense of racial invisibility in Japan sharpens his sense of racial difference on return to the States. Reclaiming Japanese-American identity

meant (as he said in an article in *Mother Jones*, reflecting on the book the following year) "coming to terms with how the dominant culture had formed me; it meant realizing my identity would always be partially occluded. Finally, it meant that issues of race were central to me, that I would see myself as a person of color" (19). Yet he also says in *Turning Japanese*, "I do not feel bound now by my national identity, do not feel that being an American somehow separates me from the rest of the world" (368), as he had, for example, in certain poems about the war in Vietnam. It seems to follow, as he pursues the thought, that being Japanese American need not separate him now—at least not as much or in the same ways—from the white American world with which as a child, he said at the start, he felt more or less at one, and by which now he feels less closely confined, despite his heightened conviction that (in Cornel West's phrase) "race matters."⁴

Two images are twinned at the close of *Turning Japanese*, one "from Japan," Mura says, and one, as he puts it (not insignificantly) "from my life."

The first is a photo of an old man, in tears, on his knees, rising from a bow, getting set to bow again. . . . He looks vaguely like my grandfather, the same fine silver hair, the long, sad face, not quite stern, but more resigned. . . . The man is praying for and mourning Emperor Hirohito, who, as I write this, is slowly dying. Hirohito's death will bring the end of the Showa era and is for this man and for all of Japan a symbol of enormous complexity, enormous change. What we see on the man's face is an image of Japan we will not see again. (371-72)

One recalls from Kogawa's *Obasan*, at the end of the scene discussed above, Naomi's sense of her aunt as an archetypal ancestor with "hair . . . so fine" and a face both filled with and beyond grief, only "half alive" (27). Mura predicts that the mourning for Hirohito's son, when he dies, "will not be as desperate, as filled with regret, will not be tinged with the same sort of imperial worship . . . which helped fuel a war that ravaged a continent and killed millions" (372), will reflect the completion of the post-war era, will be different due to generational change, whatever else the future may hold.

The second image, "not of death but of birth," occurs in a private "space" both intimately small and cosmically large. Back in St. Paul,

Minnesota—like Mura's (and Kadohata's) hometown Chicago an "inland city beside [an] inland sea," in turn like Kogawa's a sea "of field and prairie" (370)—he feels the movements of his unborn daughter (to be named Samantha) kicking in his wife's belly:

Only one pound, she kicks with a sound that has come from nothing, from everything in our past, from my Japanese genes to the genes of my wife, English and Hungarian Jew. . . . Our daughter has made me feel much older than I was in Japan, much more tied to my grandparents, my parents, and to the future. This split I have felt between America and Japan, this fusion of two histories, will reside in her, in a different, more visible way. I would like to think she is a part of a movement taking place everywhere throughout the globe, our small planet spinning along in blue-black space. I would like to think that the questions of identity she faces will be easier than mine, less fierce, less filled with self-neglect and rage. That she will love herself more and be more eager for the world, for moving beyond herself, (372)

as she seeks—like her father and others but in new time and space—"to be just myself." Mura admits his lack of control over the outcome of such wishes. Having himself said "no" and "no" again to arbitrary categorizations of consciousness he knows he will continue to encounter, he knows nonetheless that while neither ethnicity nor race is yet part of the future on which his daughter has yet to embark (again from the retrospective piece in *Mother Jones*), "they are already there, with our hopes, gathering shape" (22).

Yet in the poetics of his concluding prose in *Turning Japanese*, "in the darkness" of the universe and the Minnesota night, "a tiny thump" of an unborn child asserts its claim to a world large enough for Samantha Sencer-Mura (her mother's and father's surnames conjoined) and all from whom she springs. No less like a field of potential force somewhere in the galaxy than a wind-burst dandelion field or a small star-burst of scattered stones, this "thump" of imminent arrival—like the "thudding" return for Naomi in *Obasan* of the question from which all her others derive—perpetuates for those who feel it (now including the reader) faith in the power of self-creations in the future, supported more than subverted by the past.

“Inland”—like the camps—in America, then, as much as on the Pacific Rim, Japanese-American images of the wartime internment and its consequences have been dispersed, flowing through 50 years of subsequent war and peace, the 50 years (we might imagine) that Ichiro felt he faced in *No-No Boy* with no release from his inner conflicts in view. What Mura calls “a welter of images, the clear outlines of certain moments that possess an irreducible resonance” (370-71)—in context his recollected images of Japan—may also be seen as the images of America all-too-selectively gathered and considered here, in the confusions from which they come, and in the clarities of outline imparted to them.

Such images are still being produced and projected—in their passionate intensity and meditative reflection, in their impetus toward resolution and acceptance of irresolution—“deeper into the land,” to call again on Sone’s evocation of her thrust into the future upon her release from a concentration camp in Puyallup, a town in the state of Washington, a region of the United States of America. Indeed, what Wakatsuki Houston calls in her foreword to *Farewell to Manzanar* a “web” of interrelated stories, personal and communal, is widening still in recent writing and other cultural expression, branching and converging like the veinings in stone.

It “keeps gathering inside us,” in words from Uyematsu’s poem “Rock,” having long been “hidden / in the silence of fathers” (27), or “underground” as in Kogawa’s *Obasan*. Now, increasingly, it flows forth. It illuminates places of heart and mind from Manzanar to Minnesota, “where [again from ‘Rock’] dark / collects light” (26), as boulders first store and then radiate the desert sun, as night erases but also outlines day, as the future both absorbs and annihilates the past, as art reflects yet refigures life.⁵

University of Tulsa
Oklahoma

NOTES

¹The phrase is appropriated from *White Flash, Black Rain: Women of Japan Relive the Bomb*.

²Takaki, *Strangers from a Different Shore* 397.

³The phrase is appropriated from Fussell's *Thank God for the Atom Bomb*.

⁴The phrase is appropriated from West's *Race Matters*.

⁵I wish to thank King-Kok Cheung and Don T. Nakanishi for an opportunity to present portions of an earlier version at a conference organized by the Asian-American Studies Center at UCLA in 1992, marking the 50th anniversary of the internment. I wish also to express my gratitude to John Tateishi for interest, information and encouragement.

WORKS CITED

- Du Bois, W. E. B. *The Souls of Black Folk*. New York: New American Library, 1969.
- Houston, Jeanne Wakatsuki. *Beyond Manzanar: Views of Asian-American Womanhood*. Santa Barbara, CA: Capra Press, 1985.
- . *Farewell to Manzanar*. New York: Bantam (Starfire), 1974.
- James, Henry. *The American Scene*, ed. Leon Edel. Bloomington: Indiana U Press, 1968.
- . "The Jolly Corner," in *The Jolly Corner and Other Tales*, ed. Roger Gard. New York: Penguin, 1990.
- Kadohata, Cynthia. *The Floating World*. New York: Viking, 1989.
- Kafka, Franz. *The Trial*. New York: Modern Library, 1956.
- Kogawa, Joy. *Obasan*. Boston: David R. Godine, 1982.
- Mura, David. *After We Lost Our Way*. New York: E. P. Dutton, 1989.
- . "Secrets and Anger." *Mother Jones* (September/October, 1992): 18-22.
- . *Turning Japanese: Memoirs of a Sansei*. New York: Doubleday (Anchor), 1992.
- . *Where the Body Meets Memory*. New York: Doubleday (Anchor), 1996.
- Nabokov, Vladimir. *Speak, Memory: An Autobiography Revisited*. New York: Putnam, 1966.
- Naipaul, V. S. *A Turn in the South*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1989.
- Okada, John. *No-No Boy*. Seattle: U of Washington Press, 1976.
- Sone, Monica. *Nisei Daughter*. Boston: Little, Brown (Atlantic Monthly Press), 1953.
- Takaki, Ronald. *Strangers from a Different Shore: A History of Asian Americans*. New York: Penguin, 1990.
- Uyematsu, Amy. "Rock." *30 Miles from J-Town*. Brownsville, OR: Story Line Press, 1992 [uncorrected proof].
- West, Cornel. *Race Matters*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1993.
- White Flash, Black Rain: Women of Japan Relive the Bomb*. Minneapolis, MN: Milkweed Press, 1995.
- Wright, Richard. *American Hunger*. New York: Harper and Row, 1977.
- . *Black Boy*. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1945.