

Fred Ho and Bill V. Mullen

Introduction

Bill Mullen writes: I first saw Fred Ho perform live in November 1997 at the Brooklyn Academy of Music, where the Monkey Orchestra delivered a revisionist performance of the classic Chinese novel *Journey to the West*. At this time I was preparing to teach African American literature in China, and thus I was beginning my research into the long history of connection between African Americans and Asian Americans. The Monkey Orchestra performance blew me away. The band was hot, the martial arts choreography scintillating, the words and ideas in the text radical. Fred was retooling China's most longstanding and cherished popular story of Monkey, the consummate trickster hero in Asian literature, into a smashing allegory of people's liberation.

Fred and I later talked on the phone about his work. It was out of our discussions that the idea for this anthology was born. It was our shared assessment that no single

book had yet to capture the full range of important historical, political, and cultural connections between Asian Americans and African Americans. Indeed, at the time of our early conversations on the topic, blacks and Asians were typically being pitted against one another in mass media narratives or rolled together in popular films that pretended that one good martial arts scene could stand in for a long and complex process of historical exchange. Fred's own term for this distinctly American process, "chop-sueyism," speaks to the difficulties in producing a book like the one we envisioned: a book that would pay tribute to work by writers, scholars, and cultural workers with long roots in Afro Asian struggle; with deep commitments to forms of cultural and political practice; and with bold and original insights into what we could both see was quickly becoming a fairly trendy area of academic inquiry. In short, we wanted to do a book that would include some of the best new thinking on Afro Asia by people who had paid long and hard dues in the struggle to bring truth, justice, and light to their ancient history of cooperation, sacrifice, and work.

It was this tendency in Fred's own life and work that drew me to him in 1997. Fred's own musical and political education in Afro Asia is an outgrowth of his long-standing cultural and political activity as a leader in Afro Asian unity building. Fred is most well known as the founder and leader of the Afro Asian Music Ensemble, which started in 1982. The ensemble merges traditional "jazz" instrumentations and idioms with classical Asian musical motifs, genres, sounds, and themes.

Fred himself came of age during the late 1960s and early 1970s, and he claims that his identity as Asian/Chinese American was ignited by the upsurge of the Black Power movement in the United States. It was reading Malcolm X's *Autobiography* while being singled out for racial harassment in public school that forged his own sense of mutually shared oppressions. Like many other United States activists of color, Ho first came to an affirmation of ethnic identity from the inspiration and impact of radical and revolutionary African American politics and culture. This discovery brought with it, however, a far larger challenge: namely, a way to enact, analyze, and catalyze a radical and revolutionary political and cultural stance grounded in anti-imperialism and anti-oppression and devoid of Eurocentric and white supremacist reference and ideals. For Ho, and for other authors in this book, Afro Asia is a strategic intersection for thinking through an internationalist, global paradigm that joins the world's two largest continents and

populations, as well as an anti-imperialist, insurgent identity that is no longer majority white in orientation. Afro Asia, that is, is the imperative to imagine a “new world” grounded upon two great ancient worlds as well as a radical and revolutionary anti-imperialist tradition.

It is a tradition with long roots, one that includes and links W. E. B. Du Bois, Ho Chi Minh, Mao Zedong, Malcolm X, Robert F. Williams, the Black Panthers, the Asian Pacific American movement, Yuri Kochiyama, Ishmael Reed, Frank Chin, and Maxine Hong Kingston, to name just a few. These figures give a name and voice to their international counterparts in the black and Asiatic worlds, and they have for two centuries sustained a tradition of collaborative radical political and cultural connections heretofore undocumented in the literature of the West. From the earliest days of the United States, Africans and Asians in the Americas have been linked in a shared tradition of resistance to class and racial exploitation and oppression. With the formal abolition of African slavery arose the Asiatic “coolie” (or contract labor) trade that brought Asian laborers, often on the very same ships that transported captured Africans, to the very same plantation societies in the West. In this common and often overlapping diasporic experience, shared traditions of resistance and struggle have developed for liberation and equality. African Americans and Asian Americans have mutually influenced, borrowed from, and jointly innovated new forms in culture (from music to cuisine to clothing) and politics (from shared movement ideologies to organizations).

This intersecting ground of cultural borrowing and exchange has been partly documented by classicists engaged by questions of the relationship between Greek and Rome on the one hand, and the larger realm of the contemporary Middle East, from North Africa to the Mediterranean, on the other. Among the early pioneers in this work was the African American classicist Frank Snowden. His books, *Before Color Prejudice: The Ancient View of Blacks and Blacks in Antiquity* and *Ethiopians in the Greco-Roman Experience*, describe the influences on Western art, literature, and design of North African societies in particular. Snowden’s work sits squarely in the tradition of the Classics. Martin Bernal’s influential multivolume book *Black Athena* provides a polemical cultural studies framework for understanding the influence of North African and Mediterranean influence on Greco-Roman culture as a story of racist historiography extending to eighteenth- and nineteenth-century European scholars’ efforts to downplay

or eradicate the Afro Asian role in the production of Western culture. Wilson Moses, in his book *Afrotopia*, provides his own historiography for this debate, noting that nineteenth-century Afrocentrists and Egyptocentrists in the United States likewise struggled to make visible the influences of African thought and culture on antiquity debates. Later, G. M. James's *Stolen Legacy* gave a name to the accusations of cultural "pirating" described by Bernal, an argument that W. E. B. Du Bois also made vigorously in his chapter "Asia in Africa" in the expanded edition of his book *The World and Africa*, first published in 1946. Du Bois's own large body of writing on Asian politics and history is perhaps the most overlooked legacy of his capacious intellectual career and a sign of the ethnocentrism that has constrained the analysis of Afro Asian exchange. Indeed, the publication of Vijay Prashad's two important books *The Karma of Brown Folk* and *Everybody Was Kung-Fu Fighting* helped to reanimate attention to Afro Asian intersections. Prashad used the term "polyculturalism" to characterize the long, repressed but vital tradition of Afro Asian encounter and exchange, particularly among the working classes.¹

While the focus of this anthology is likewise on shared and common struggles as well as the linkages, connections, cross-cultural borrowing, and mutual solidarity, it is important to recognize the complexities, contradictions, and conflicts between black and Asian peoples in the United States. It is also important to provide a proper framework and analysis of the systemic causes for such complexities as well as the political function served by the manipulation of race, the promotion of nationalist divisions and rivalries, and the inculcation of mutually pervasive stereotypes and racial jealousies. Indeed, Du Bois himself was perhaps the first to recognize the nefariousness of these divisions and misunderstandings. For example, in his 1935 essay "Indians and American Negroes" Du Bois complained that black Americans were provided almost no information on Asia, especially India, and thus had no context for seeing their own racial struggles in the necessary context of anticolonialism. Likewise, South Asians, fed a steady Western diet of imperialist rhetoric, were absent a positive understanding of African Americans and Africans. Du Bois's ability to recognize this dual orientalism capable of dismantling and forestalling Afro Asian unity also illuminates the work done by the scholars Reginald Kearney and Mark Gallichio.² They note that during the 1930s and 1940s subgroups of black Americans, primarily from the working classes, were drawn to Afro Asian

solidarity and even infatuation with Japanese imperialism as an imaginative means of cross-racial alliance. Gerald Horne, in his impressive book *Race War! White Supremacy and the Japanese Attack on the British Empire*, situates these desires and at times misunderstandings within the broad context of white supremacy.³ Horne argues that the importation of British and U.S. forms of racial supremacy across the Pan-Pacific region came home to roost both in the racial supremacist rhetoric undergirding Japanese imperialism during the 1930s as well as in the various nationalist, cross-nationalist, and otherwise anti-racist Afro Asian dreams of alliance. Put simply, race, racism, and capitalism have conspired, according to Horne, to both produce and manipulate the black world's understanding of Asia and the Asian world's understanding of the black "West."

And yet the dominant form of black-Asian alliance across the twentieth century is a carefully considered strategic anti-essentialism rooted in analysis of political, economic, and racial conditions across the colored world produced under white supremacy. This is the clear legacy of the so-called Bandung era of 1955 to 1973 that arguably countered and corrected many of the advances made in the Afro Asian solidarity movements of the 1930s by linking them to emergent anticolonial struggles around the world. Richard Wright understood this movement well when he traveled from Paris to Bandung, Indonesia, in 1955 to attend the Afro Asian meeting of twenty-nine decolonizing heads of state. His book on the event, *The Color Curtain*, is itself a contradictory example of Afro Asia's themes: a vigorous support for anticolonial solidarity, an indictment of white supremacy, a cry to the wretched of the earth, and yet an oddly anti-Communist and at times orientalist rendering of his own dislocation from both the "Eastern" and "Western" worlds during his American exile. Bandung informs and haunts any and all efforts to theorize Afro Asia. It is both the watershed and high-water mark of black-Asian affiliation and the unfinished and imperfect dream of a road still being pursued and paved by the authors represented in this book.

Afro Asia and Black Power

Fred Ho writes: The Black Power era in U.S. social history (circa the late 1960s) included many other social movements—queer liberation, the Asian movement, the Chicano movement, and the women's liberation movement, among others—that asserted the principles, so powerfully articulated and ad-

vocated by Malcolm X, of self-respect, self-defense, and self-determination. While these movements asserted particularistic demands and self-aware pride and the assertion of autonomous identities, the dominant leaders of these groups were radical and revolutionary and, therefore, targeted “the system” and promoted unity and alliances among oppressed peoples rather than isolationism, protectionism, and narrow chauvinism. While efforts to unite and develop a concerted revolutionary Left united front were many and sincere, they were short-lived, limited, and fraught with conflicts, contradictions, and failures. This was especially true in the case of the New Communist movement when organizations that came out of the black, Asian, Puerto Rican, Chicano, and white Left merged and united into “multinational” organizations, with many either falling apart due to internecine splits or fading away due to their inability to sink roots and expand.⁴ While it is neither the focus nor role of this anthology to analyze the rise and fall of the United States New Left, it is important to recognize that by the Reagan-Bush years of the 1980s and early 1990s, many of the radical and revolutionary initiatives had imploded, disappeared, and become marginalized due to a combination of internal errors and failures as well as the overall right-wing onslaught to retake the political, social, and cultural initiative that the Left had briefly seized. The U.S. elites, perhaps in learning more from the sixties and early-seventies experience than did the U.S. Left, quickly deployed an array of strategies and tactics that combined the “stick” and the “carrot” to repress, crush, and co-opt the energies that had erupted.

The documentation of the violent repression, military assault, and incarceration of radicals is well assembled in accounts about the FBI’s COINTELPRO (Counter-Intelligence Program) as well as in the counter-insurgency and destabilization programs of the CIA in other countries.⁵ Less documented and analyzed are how the various movements and their leaders were co-opted, tempted, and seduced by reformism, careerism, and a host of distractions, eviscerations, and compromises and dilutions. The tactics of co-optation and containment employed domestically have included divide and conquer, the promotion of neoconservative ideologues, and the general discrediting and disappearing of social consciousness for a cultural conditioning that promotes hyperindividualism, consumerism, and instant gratification.

The African American radical and revolutionary movement has, since its explosion, suffered assassination, incarceration, and calumny. The expansion of the black middle class has been one of the most significant gains

won from the hard-fought civil rights and Black Power struggles. As concessions and response to revolutionary demands for full equality and empowerment, federal government–instituted policies and programs such as affirmative action recruitment and hiring were instituted. The expansion of a black elite beholden to government and corporate admittance has spawned a reformist and neoconservative black leadership, often in direct consequence and designed to supplant the black Left. The appointment of Clarence Thomas to the U.S. Supreme Court, and the rise of neoconservative black ideologues such as Thomas Sowell, Shelby Steele, Clarence Pendleton, Stanley Crouch, Alan Keyes, and others, reflect a new generation of media pundits who support the neoconservative agenda of minimizing or erasing racism and the saliency of race by attacking special programs and supporting the overall drumbeat of U.S. imperialism. Along with the rise of black neoconservatives, which is the direct political and intellectual wing of black franchise capitalism, is the rise of an essentialist black fundamentalism, articulated in part as Afrocentrism and represented by Louis Farrakhan and Molefi Asante. Another very influential sector, based primarily in academia and in intellectual power, is an integrationist celebrity strata with well-known and well-paid intellectuals. Many of the neoconservatives, along with their counterparts in the Afrocentrist sphere, have promoted an attitude of black protectionism for the small gains secured by these middle classes. A “black versus other minorities” endgame has been constructed in the competition for status, resources, and token power, reflected in debates and divisions between Afrocentrism versus multiculturalism and between the black community as consumer versus the Korean or Asian merchant as outside parasites. What is also noteworthy is that within the African American community, cleavages, fault lines, contradictions, and conflicts are also promulgated and fanned by both neoconservatives and black essentialist-fundamentalists—namely, black men versus black feminism and self-responsibility versus blaming the system and racism, as well as the rise of variants of black masculinist capitalism.

In the maintenance of ruling power, the tactic of divide and conquer has been very effective especially in conditions of limited and narrow political consciousness on the part of the oppressed. Between Africans and Asians in the United States, divisions are accentuated through competition over resources and positioning vis-à-vis the institutional funding troughs in vastly dissimilar terrains ranging from colleges and universities to inner-city ghet-

tos. The concessions such as ethnic studies programs or minority affairs offices or student cultural centers are increasingly embracing isolationism and protectionism in a defensive circle-the-wagons mentality for the small, hard-won gains on college campuses. The dramatic increases in the Latino and Asian/Pacific student presence has intensified competition over limited student government and administration funds and support for these programs. Pressure to reallocate funds, once perceived as black entitlements and preserves, to be shared with “other” minorities has fueled resentment and suspicion on the part of African Americans. The history of collaboration and common struggle that brought about these concessions in the first place is often “lost” or “forgotten” as demagogues from both black and other minorities vie for most-favored minority status with the dominant administration.

In inner-city ghettos, as skyrocketing real estate pressures force newer immigrants into cheaper real estate markets within black and Latino neighborhoods, the presence of seemingly prosperous Asian small businesses has instilled bitterness and resentment on the part of black communities in the context of widening black inequality and increasing black poverty. Combined with these new immigrants’ own racism, ignorance of American race relations, and petty capitalist greed, misunderstandings and indignities have ignited bitter and violent clashes between Asian merchants and black consumers.

During the early 1990s, headlines and television news stories focused on conflicts that erupted in predominantly black inner-city communities toward Korean greengrocers. On Church Avenue in Brooklyn, New York, two Korean convenience stores became the target of a major boycott for disrespecting African American customers. In Los Angeles, Korean merchants were also the target of boycotts for disrespectful treatment of their black customers as well as for the case of the Korean store owner Soon Ja Du’s killing of a black girl, Latasha Harlins, for shoplifting. Furthermore, during the 1992 riots following the aftermath of the first verdict that exonerated the police officers in the beating of Rodney King, Koreatown businesses were especially targeted for vandalism and looting, with entire buildings destroyed and set aflame. Other such incidents and eruptions that had African Americans in conflict with Asian merchants included a boycott called by black businesses and community members against the competition of faux-African textiles manufactured in Taiwan and sold by Asian merchants.

In part, the mass media has exploited and sensationalized these conflicts. Some critics would argue that the corporate mass media has actually created a conflict when there really is none. The so-called “black-Korean” or “black-Asian” conflict seems no more or no less a phenomenon than the ongoing, historical “black-white” conflict or the “black-brown” conflict. The special attention given to the black-Asian conflict seems to serve the purpose of victims blaming victims and letting white supremacy off the hook. The issues of bank redlining, the maldistribution of social services and resources, police brutality, narcotics trafficking, and impoverished education are conveniently deferred for sensationalistic headlines about black-Asian violence and altercations.

However, the social context for such conflicts are a result of the greater inequality and impoverishment contributed by federal and state government policies that have ushered in a major withdrawal and abandonment of support services and funding to the inner city, the elimination and rescinding of welfare benefits, and the shrinking investments into urban improvement—all of which are born most unduly and harshly by African Americans as well as Latinos. Beginning with the withdrawal of U.S. forces in Southeast Asia, U.S. government policies favored the repatriation of powerful and wealthy anti-Communist allies in Asia. Additionally, Pacific Rim overseas capital investments drastically increased in inner-city areas along with the particular phenomenon of newer Asian immigrants investing their entire family savings into small businesses, most commonly liquor stores, greengrocers, cleaners, and other mercantile enterprises. The long-standing obstacles and difficulties to African American capital expansion are well documented, ranging from practices and policies of bank redlining (i.e., not granting capital loans), to corporate franchise monopolization (e.g., a big corporate chain muscling out smaller local businesses), and lack of adequate financial and managerial services. Certain African Americans resent and are angry at perceived Asian economic success. “They just come in, start up their businesses, take our money, and give nothing back except disrespect” is the all-too-common attitude in the black community toward the Asian “outsiders.” The Asian new immigrant entrepreneurs sometimes have an attitude of indifference and harshness toward their low-income black clientele, along with a limited English-language ability and a lack of historical understanding of U.S. racism. To their credit, certain black nationalist protestors (such as those in the December 12th movement) have

distinguished between specifically criticizing Korean capitalists and have opposed a general anti-Asian position. And there is no doubt that some newer Asian immigrants (not just the merchants) hold racist attitudes that are greatly influenced by overall U.S. white racism and stereotypes toward black people.

Whatever the racist incident, by an Asian committed upon Africans or by an African committed upon Asians, media attention never focuses on collaborative attempts to protest and condemn the racism. Given the “low and narrow” consciousness between blacks and Asians as a reflection of the weakness and ebb of the black liberation movement and the Asian movement respectively, increasing incidents, conflicts, and flare-ups will occur.

In such a climate, it is no surprise that a patently racist and offensive game such as Ghettopoly could be introduced. Created by the Taiwanese American David Chang, Urban Outfitters and other distributors and marketers of the game were forced to pull it due to massive protests and outrage from both mainstream black organizations such as the NAACP as well as mainstream Asian American civil rights groups such as the Organization of Chinese Americans. While Chang tried to defend his creation as simply “a game” (echoing justifications of racist films as simply “entertainment” or “only a movie”) as well as draping his intentions as wanting to “bring people together,” his contribution to the litany of American racist popular cultural projects deserved widespread condemnation, and certainly it was heartening to see black and Asian collaboration in the protests and objections. Ghettopoly mimics Monopoly, except that the game pieces include a machine gun, marijuana leaf, crack rock, and a forty-ounce bottle of malt liquor. Properties are crack houses and housing projects instead of houses and hotels. Players draw “Hustle” and “Ghetto Stash” cards reading “Police Shake-down!!! Pay \$150” or “Carjacked!!! Pay \$80.” Ghettopoly joins the ranks of popular cultural projections of buck-toothed, fortune-cookie-spouting, pig-tailed “heathen Chinees” as well as pimp-strutting hustlers and booty-shakin’ hos. The fact that Asian and African individuals perpetuate racist, demeaning, and degrading stereotypes doesn’t lessen or mitigate or excuse them. Rather, it simply spreads the shame and blame and confirms that oppressed people often ape and mimic their oppressors and the stereotypes foisted upon them.

While Ghettopoly was met with combined black and Asian protest and denunciation, the recent racist mutterings by the basketball superstar Sha-

quille O'Neal toward rival NBA center Yao Ming—poking “fun” at the Chinese center’s name in an infantile “ching-chong” style of name calling—was met with a firestorm of protests by Asian Americans nationwide. Although O'Neal quickly apologized, what was conspicuously absent was the protest and condemnation from African Americans. Chinese names are considered “foreign” and “strange” while African American adoptions of Islamic or Swahili sobriquets are not. Anti-racism and anti-oppression needs common solidarity and support by all “people of color” and justice-minded whites.

African Americans through their hard-fought struggles have earned a somewhat central focus in the mainstream of American “racial sensitivity” quotients. Successful athletes and entertainers may be granted status as media darlings and celebrities. Colin Powell and Condoleeza Rice have been prominently featured in the Bush cabinet media and photo ops. It is unthinkable in Hollywood sensibilities to offend blacks by the once-common practice of blackfacing. However, “yellowfacing” (as well as “redfacing” and “brownfacing”) are still common practices in Hollywood. One need only point to the implausibly ludicrous example of the return of David Carradine in an updated remake of the 1970s “Kung Fu” television series to see the odious continuation of yellowfacing. Or, as in the case of the pop camp and highly racist *Kill Bill* films by Quentin Tarantino, the “covering” of Asian martial artists by white actors who defeat hordes of Asian martial artists including Gordon Liu, one of the martial arts film cult stars from the 1970s. Asians have not had the patronizing racist good fortune of being classified as “hip” or “cool” while blackness and Latinness conjure sexual potency and trendiness. Blackness has in turn been partially commodified in mass market advertising and in popular culture promotion globally and has become manipulated as the biggest billboard for American consumerism and prosperity.

A complication to blackfacing is now rampant in Japan with the *ganguro* subculture of Japanese teenage girls wearing cornrows, adorning themselves in bling-bling ostentatious jewelry, and mimicking black hip hop stars such as Missy Elliott and Lil' Kim.⁶ The exportation of hip hop is the Yankeeification of black American culture as commodity spectacle, a case of race without the resistance, a fashion, a posture of hipness and coolness without the substance of struggle and self-respect—it is blackfacing not done by whites but by Asians. Though, in the analysis of the money trail, certainly white-dominated corporations (from merchandisers to Madison

Avenue marketers), with residuals paid to certain black individual celebrities, are the primary profiteers. Individual black success stories who pimp and push stereotyped portrayals are rarely condemned but more commonly lauded and promoted by mainstream African American media (from *Jet* to *Ebony* to *Vibe*, BET, etc.). Rarely are such celebrities criticized for their low social consciousness or lack of it, for their subservience to corporate interests, and for their nauseous superpatriotism. The era of a superstar black athlete such as Muhammad Ali refusing to join the U.S. military for both personal religious beliefs as well as political principle (“No Vietcong ever called me nigger”) is passé. Individual black superstar athletes at times lucratively benefit from endorsement deals with athletic shoe companies with sweatshops in the Pacific Rim.

During the 1968 student strike at San Francisco State University led by the Third World coalition—the longest campus student strike in U.S. history, which eventually led to the creation of the first Ethnic Studies Department in the United States—then-president of San Francisco State, the Japanese Canadian S. I. Hayakawa, in an effort to divide the Third World students and pit them against each other, pointed to the Asian students as an example of a “model minority” that the blacks and Latinos needed to emulate. Hiyakawa became infamous for employing this divide-and-conquer ploy by promoting Asians as an example of quiet, passive, and hard-working minority members who had pulled themselves up by the bootstraps and thus served as examples that the loud and protesting blacks and Latinos should follow. Given the heightened political consciousness of the student leadership of the Third World coalition, many of whom had associations with the new revolutionary organizations in the Bay Area (such as the Black Panther Party and the Red Guards of San Francisco’s Chinatown-Manilatown), Hiyakawa was denounced by Asians, along with others, as a “banana” (the metaphor for being yellow on the outside and white on the inside). As tokenism and the co-optation of individual Third World leaders were employed by policymakers and institutions, such terms as “coconut” (brown on the outside, white on the inside), “apple” (red on the outside, white on the inside), and “oreo” (black on the outside, white on the inside) became popular political signifiers for Latino, Native American, and black sellouts, respectively. The “model minority” stereotype affixed to Asian and Pacific Islander Americans (API), while challenged strongly by the Asian movement, nonetheless continues today with efficacy and cur-

rency. Some special programs for minorities have omitted APIS, deeming them too “successful” or “overrepresented.” Statistical deception has been used to reduce oppression to a matter of numerical representation rather than degree of political, economic, and social power, as well as quality and control of representation (media and academic inclusion as well as image type). The main site of struggle over API “overrepresentation” has been in college and university admissions. At many elite schools, APIS are present in greater percentages than their proportion in the U.S. population as a whole. While on the surface this appears to be true, critics point out that qualified Asians apply in greater proportion to their admissions; that the concentration of elite schools tends to be in major urban centers where API population percentages are far greater than in the overall U.S. population; and that API income analyzed on a per capita basis instead of as a family unit reveals a disturbing trend of larger numbers of income earners and therefore a lesser per capita income.

The urgency for greater Afro Asia solidarity and the general elevation of radical, anti-imperialist leadership and political consciousness has become dire with the escalating tragedy of sensationalized racist violence between Asians and blacks. In recent years in New York City, there has been a series of killings of Chinese restaurant takeout-delivery workers—all with alleged and arrested black perpetrators. Four Chinese delivery workers in the last five years have been brutally murdered, all in predominantly black areas. The killings include Jian Lin Chun, killed in the lobby of a Bedford-Stuyvesant building on October 15, 2002; Golden Wok restaurant owner Jin-Sheng Liu, killed on Sept. 1, 2000, in St. Albans while making a delivery; Ng Cheung Cheung, beaten to death by a baseball bat in Jamaica on June 23, 1999; Li-Rong Lin, repeatedly stabbed to death on December 10, 1998, in Hollis while delivering from the China Buffet restaurant; and, most recently, Huang Chen, killed in South Jamaica on April 30, 2004, where an investigation resulted in the arrest of two African American teens. In the last example, the *New York Post* reported the incident as an example of “Chink-bashing” and characterized such violence as a new “urban sport” of premeditated assaults committed largely by black youth upon Chinese delivery “boys” (though in typical *New York Post* racism the majority of these “boys” are men over the age of forty, as Chinese men are still desexualized and belittled as perpetual adolescents incapable of being “real men” as compared to white men).⁷

This condition of narrowed and lowered consciousness has allowed for the rise of narrow nationalism and ethnic economic protectionism, paralleling the rise of religious fundamentalism and extreme protonationalism from the destruction and subversion by the United States of independent democratic and leftist movements and governments globally. The rise of black neoconservatism, masculinist black capitalism, black petty-bourgeois protectionism, etc. could only occur with the suppression and dismantling of the radical and revolutionary forces that emerged and held dominance during the late 1960s and early 1970s as well as U.S. governmental, corporate, and academic promotion of a reformist and reactionary elite. Gone are mass slogans and popular cultural concepts such as anti-imperialist Third World unity. Instead, pro-blackness has increasingly taken on a form of essentialist, narrow, reformist black capitalism that reflects the general nihilism, cynicism, self-gratification, and solipsism of the pro-Yankee imperialist New World Order and Mass Consumer Plantation culture and society.

This anthology seeks to fight, counter, resist, and attack this condition by illuminating a tradition of creative political and cultural resistance grounded in Afro-Asian collaboration and connectivity. We, the editors of this anthology, have created a hybrid collection of scholarly and testimonial essays along with creative writings, and we hope to bridge academic and scholarly interest with a popular readership—in other words, to provide a tool that can be useful for and supportive of building Afro Asian unity, solidarity, and common struggle. In doing so we extend the work of scholars whose writing has focused important attention to the dynamics of Afro Asian exchange. This work includes the aforementioned important books *The Karma of Brown Folk* and *Everybody Was Kung Fu Fighting* by Vijay Prashad; Mark Gallichio's *The African American Encounter with Japan and China: Black Internationalism in Asia, 1895–1945*; Martin Bernal's *Black Athena*; Gerald Horne's *Race War!*; and Viet Thanh Nguyen's *Race and Resistance: Literature and Politics in Asian America* as well as essays and articles by a number of scholars, some of which are included in this book.⁸

The area of African American and Asian American intersections is wide and expanding and we welcome contributions to the topic. There remain certain topics that have not been explored or need further investigation and discussion, including black and Asian intersections in cuisine, clothing, lifestyle (child rearing, marriage), social life (dating, friendships, daily inter-

actions), and more. There are also a number of social and historical interactions that need further research and analysis, including common experiences and interactions among the plantation societies throughout the nineteenth-century Americas; black American responses to the anti-Asian movements that pervaded from the anti-Chinese agitation of the nineteenth century to the modern civil rights movement; Asian American responses to black American oppression prior to the 1960s; and African American response to U.S. imperialism in Asia.

On the latter issue, a strong, militant, anti-imperialist tradition of African American opposition to U.S. imperialism in Asia has existed since the Spanish-American War of 1898, beginning with African American newspapers' opposition to American colonization of the Philippines.⁹ W. E. B. Du Bois and Paul Robeson fiercely denounced U.S. intervention in Korea. And the U.S. anti-Vietnam War movement included a broad African American involvement, including not only radical anti-imperialist leaders and organizations of the black Left but also mainstream civil rights leaders and organizations such as Ralph Abernathy, Dick Gregory, and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., who in April of 1967 declared his total opposition to the war in Southeast Asia, supported draft resistance, and targeted the U.S. government as "the greatest purveyor of violence in the world today."

African American opposition to the U.S. war in Southeast Asia moved the "peace" movement to a position of anti-imperialism as the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) was led by Stokely Carmichael in a chant of "Hell no, we won't go!" at a United Nations demonstration in 1967. African Americans were at the forefront of the early antiwar movement. The activist-attorney Conrad Lynn was the leading advisor and counsel to youth fighting induction into the U.S. army. "In 1965, the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party issued the first organizational opposition to President Johnson's escalation of the war, rejecting 'fighting in Vietnam for the White Man's Freedom' and urging black men 'to not honor the draft here in Mississippi.'" In 1966, SNCC became the first national U.S. organization to come out against the war. "For endorsing this stand, Julian Bond, duly elected to the Georgia legislature, was denied his seat (later restored by the Supreme Court). Also in 1965, *Freedomways*, the first national magazine to denounce the war, editorially labeling it 'racist' in origin and intent, became the fountainhead of a black anti-war position."¹⁰

By 1969, massive African American opposition to the war was reflected

in the pronouncement by every major civil rights organization of the time (with the notable exception of the NAACP) that American policy in Asia was a reflection and continuation of American racism at home. African American opposition to U.S. Asian policy was highly dramatized by the slogan “No Vietnamese ever called me nigger,” with its most dramatic adoption by world heavyweight boxing champion Muhammad Ali in his refusal to be drafted. Ali announced his refusal to be drafted into the army of a country that “continue[s] the domination of white slavemasters over the dark people the world over.” A 1967 film produced/directed by David Loeb Weiss, entitled *No Vietnamese Ever Called Me Nigger*, documented growing black urban community opposition toward the U.S. war in Southeast Asia.

Clearly, in all social struggles in the United States, African American leaders and organizations have played a vanguard role and have provided a radical and anti-imperialist influence and impact. Less recognized and examined has been the influence and impact of Asian cultural and political traditions, forms, and experiences upon African American developments.

In our focus upon interconnectivity, collaboration, mutual influences, and inspirations, we assert and establish an alternative tradition of cross-cultural unity among oppressed peoples in the United States (and in the Western Hemisphere). We consider our anthology to be a beginning contribution to survey the political and cultural connections developed by peoples in the African and Asian diasporas in confronting white supremacy and national oppression.

Notes

- 1 See Frank Snowden, *Before Color Prejudice: The Ancient View of Blacks* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1983); Martin Bernal, *Black Athena: The Afroasiatic Roots of Classical Civilization*, vols. 1 and 2 (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1987); Wilson Moses, *Afrotopia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); G. M. James, *Stolen Legacy: The Greeks Were Not the Authors of Greek Philosophy, but the People of North Africa Commonly Called the Egyptians* (New York: Philosophical Society, 1954); W. E. B. Du Bois, *The World and Africa* (New York: International Publishers, 1965); Vijay Prashad, *The Karma of Brown Folk* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), and *Everybody Was Kung Fu Fighting: Afro-Asia and the Myth of Cultural Purity* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2001).
- 2 See Reginald Kearney, *African Americans Views of the Japanese: Solidarity or*

- Sedition* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998); and Marc Gallicchio, *The African American Encounter with Japan and China: Black Internationalism in Asia, 1895–1945* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000).
- 3 Gerald Horne, *Race War! White Supremacy and the Japanese Attack on the British Empire* (New York: New York University Press, 2004).
 - 4 It is only recently that testimonial and scholarly books have begun to be published on the New Communist movement that emerged in the late 1960s and early 1970s in the United States; two recommended works are Ho et al., *Legacy to Liberation: Politics and Culture of Revolutionary Asian Pacific America* (Oakland, Calif.: AK Press, 2000); and Max Elbaum, *Revolution in the Air: Sixties Radicals Turn to Lenin, Mao, Che* (London: Verso, 2002).
 - 5 See Samuel Yette, *The Choice* (Silver Spring, MD: Cottage Books, 1982); and Ward Churchill and Jim Vander Wall, *Agents of Repression: The FBI's Secret Wars against the Black Panther Party and the American Indian Movement* (Boston: South End Press, 1980).
 - 6 Clark Buckner, "Bling BLAsian Bling," *San Francisco Bay Guardian*, April 28, 2004, 72.
 - 7 For reports on the murders of Chinese delivery workers, see Andrew Popper, "P.C. Media Ignores Racist Murder," *FrontPageMagazine.com*, March 1, 2004: www.frontpagemag.com/Articles/ReadArticle.asp?ID=12392; Alex Ginsburg, "'Monster' Jailed for 'Too Chinese' Slaying," *New York Post*, November 25, 2005, p. 30; and Bryan Virasami, "Leaders Decry Deliveryman Murder," *New York Newsday*, February 16, 2004.
 - 8 Viet Thanh Nguyen, *Race and Resistance: Literature and Politics in Asian America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).
 - 9 See George P. Marks III, "Opposition of Negro Newspapers to American Philippine Policy, 1899–1900," *Midwest Journal* 4 (winter 1951–1952): 1–25. This essay was later published as *The Black Press Views American Imperialism* (New York: Arno Press, 1971).
 - 10 William Loren Katz, "The Afro-American's Response to U.S. Imperialism," *Freedomways* 11, no. 3 (1971): 285–90.