

Book reviews

Anthropologies of creativity

BRIDGES (IV), WILLIAM H. & NINA CORNYETZ
(eds). *Traveling texts and the work of
Afro-Japanese cultural production: two haiku
and a microphone*. viii, 294 pp., illus., bibliogr.
Lanham, Md: Lexington Books, 2015. £65.00
(cloth)

Over the last quarter-century, a growing body of scholarship has emerged that examines the historical and cultural intersection of Black and Japanese lives. These Afro-Japanese encounters, as the title of this volume suggests, constitute a discursive metaphor of transnational movement, discovery, and engagement. In their introduction, William H. Bridges IV and Nina Cornyetz describe their work as constituting a 'new wave' of scholarship on cultural, intellectual, and artistic 'transracial exchange[s]' (p. 13) between Japan and diasporic Black culture and communities, noting that texts produced by such encounters tell 'new stories' which, in the case of the volume at hand, include those heretofore untold in part because traditional disciplinary boundaries have impeded their production.

Traveling texts and the work of Afro-Japanese cultural production successfully transgresses these disciplinary boundaries, covering a range of topics as eclectic and syncretic as the encounters themselves. It is divided into three sections: 'Art and performance', 'Poetry and literature', and 'Sound, song, music', with chapters covering such topics as *ganguro* subculture (Cornyetz, chap. 2); the African American blackface *ukiyo-e* portraits of conceptual artist iROZEALb (Crystal S.

Anderson); representations of 'black' robots in Japanese popular culture (McKnight); Japanese Rastafarianism (Marvin Sterling); the sociopolitical context behind the Japanese translation of James Weldon Johnson's 'Negro national anthem' (Shana Redmond, chap. 9); the haiku of Richard Wright and Amari Baraka (Yoshinobu Hakutani and Michio Arimitsu's chapters); Japanese rap (Dexter Thomas Jr. and Noriko Manabe's chapters); and Black *enka* performer Jero (Kevin Fellezs).

While the topography traversed in these chapters is diverse, a common thread emerging from them is the Japanese association of blackness with resistance and rebellion as a means to critique the status quo and to forge resistive identities. However, as historian Reginald Kearney points out in his pioneering *African American views of the Japanese* (1998), Japan has historically occupied a similarly reflexive space in the African American imagination, despite occupying, as Sterling puts it in his chapter 12, an 'extra-diasporic space . . . largely untouched by the Atlantic slave trade' (pp. 239-40). Perhaps because of this placement, both sides have seen qualities in the Other that have led them to question, resist, and reinscribe essentialist racial tropes as they seek both affinities and differences with that Other. The theme is explored in Anne McKnight's chapter 7 on 'black' robots in the Japanese translation of Czech writer Karel Čapek's 1921 play *R.U.R.* (Rossum's Universal Robots) and other Japanese cultural products in which the multivalent meaning of blackness that these entities embody is presented as a catalytic force for social change, anti-colonial insurrection and liberation, as well as serving as a critique of

delivered in Vienna on 1-3 December 2004 at the Institut für die Wissenschaften vom Menschen; 'My Other', which was given at the International Writers' Symposium in Graz on 12 October 1990; 'The Other in the global village', which was delivered at the Father Józef Tischner Senior European School in Kraków on 30 September 2003; and 'Encountering the Other as the challenge of the twenty-first century', which was delivered on 1 October 2004, when Kapuściński was awarded an honorary doctorate at the Jagiellonian University in Kraków. The lectures pursue interlinked trajectories of reflection on Europe and its relations with Africa, the Americas, Asia, and the Middle East, as well as the question of the Other and the direction of social and cultural change. Over the course of the lectures, Kapuściński engages substantially with anthropology, particularly through the figure of Bronislaw Malinowski, and continental philosophy, through that of Emmanuel Lévinas. In this brief review, I will address these elements, before concluding with some short remarks about Kapuściński's representation of anthropology and Malinowski.

For Kapuściński, Enlightenment humanism – expressed initially through literature and travel writing – opened up new spaces in which the Other emerged not as an object of conquest or conversion, but as a human being. According to Kapuściński, anthropology and the 'philosophy of dialogue' (p. 68) as practised by the likes of Lévinas, emerged from this Enlightenment space (p. 27). His summary of the development of anthropology from the debates of evolutionists, diffusionists, and functionalists into a discipline defined by ethnography, with Malinowski as 'the creator of anthropological reportage' (p. 32), segues neatly into a discussion of Lévinas, and his foregrounding of the ethics of the encounter with the Other, a move which Kapuściński sees as building upon the fieldwork pioneered by Malinowski. Kapuściński adds that fieldwork 'is not only recommended for anthropologists, but is also a fundamental condition for the job of a reporter' (p. 31), a point which highlights potential points of contact between the two professions.

Kapuściński provides two perspectives on European history and experience: one, as we have seen, begins with the Enlightenment and moves on via the novel to anthropology and the philosophy of dialogue. The other focuses on social and cultural change, and the transition, as Kapuściński sees it, from mass to global society, a transition precipitated by decolonization and the end of the Cold War, as well as the advance and

spread of new communication technologies. According to Kapuściński, mass society, particularly in its totalitarian forms, negated the individual: the subject was a member of a class, a race, or a nation. As such, our new multicultural-global society must embrace the spirit of dialogue found not just in the writings of Lévinas but also in those of the Polish Catholic theologian Józef Tischner, for whom the idea of dialogue was precisely conceived in opposition to mass and totalitarian social forms and in the recognition of the individual human being.

Importantly, Kapuściński understands that a defining feature of the new global and multicultural society is its emergence from 'various contradictory worlds, a composite creature of fluid, impermanent contours and features' (p. 33), and that it is 'hybrid and heterogeneous' (p. 89). This new society will, according to Kapuściński, require something of the spirit of Malinowski, Lévinas, and Tischner if it is not to succumb to the many enmities and challenges that beset it from all sides.

One reason to read this beautifully composed book is for its representation of anthropology and one of the discipline's most controversial figures, Malinowski. Kapuściński sees in anthropology, and fieldwork in particular, a deliberative methodology for dialogue and understanding the Other. Perhaps this is a rose-tinted view of the fieldwork encounter that does not adequately grasp its ongoing implication in asymmetries of power, race, and gender, but Kapuściński offers some useful points of departure for pursuing related questions about ethnography and literary craft, and for exploring anthropology and journalism as entangled professions. Finally, given the links made by Robert J. Thornton ('Imagine yourself set down . . .', *Anthropology Today* 1: 5, 1985) between Malinowski and one of Conrad's more disturbing creations, Kurtz, there is perhaps some irony in the fact that Kapuściński's final lecture closes with a quotation from Joseph Conrad (p. 92) that points to a common humanity binding together the dead, the living, and the unborn.

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LEAN, GARTH, RUSSELL STAFF & EMMA WATERTON (eds). *Travel and representation*. x, 239 pp., illus., bibliogr. Oxford, New York: Berghahn Books, 2017. £99.00 (cloth)

Travel and representation is the third volume in a 'loose' series (by the same editors) that analyses travel through a particular lens. While the

previous books tackled how travel is connected to the imagination and to ideas of transformation, this one scrutinizes the coupling of travel and representation. Garth Lean, Russell Staiff, and Emma Waterton purposely leave the definition of both key concepts open, but this makes it more difficult for the reader to discover the connecting threads (if any) between the various contributions. In the introduction, however, the editors do identify six overarching themes that are recurrent in the ten chapters: the visual, the poetic, imagination, the post-representational, travel, and self/world making. Some contributors interpret travel as a mere proxy for tourism; others consider virtual and imaginative travel. Representation is taken mostly in the semiotic sense, although the political meaning is not entirely absent. As the editors acknowledge, '[T]ravel representations make worlds not on their own, but through becoming entwined in broader social and cultural process and phenomenon' (p. 13).

Etymologically, a representation is a presentation of something, not by depicting it as-it-is, but by re-presenting or constructing it in a new form and/or context. Importantly, 'the conversion of perceptions of reality into systems of representation is subject to the governing structures that underpin the mode of mimesis, whether music, painting, written language, film or statistical measurement; in other words, the structuring of the way we represent' (Staiff, p. 102). The volume covers the following travel representations: film tourism (visits to film locations) and music tourism (visits to locations linked to the history of music); artistic travel photography and tourism snapshots; historical and contemporary travel writing; imaginative travel; diasporic or homeland tourism; and television advertisements using the trope of a road trip.

While most of the chapters entail quite detailed case studies of rather specific representations, the authors offer general insights that tell us something about the importance of representation for travel, broadly defined. For one, we should realize that 'there are now many new forms of travel, and each form holds its own poetics (and politics)' (Denise Doyle, p. 78). With the burgeoning of information and communication technologies across the globe, few will contest that 'the real and imagined are no longer strangers (or opposites)' and that 'the physical and the virtual have become more firmly entangled' (Doyle, p. 79). Some contributors propose novel conceptual tools. For instance, in

trying to answer the question 'why certain journeys and geographies are seen as significant enough to record and convey difference, while others are not' (p. 136), Peter Day proposes the distinction between the 'disembodied journey', routine, automatic, and divested of significance, and the 'embodied journey', which creates narrative, in a spontaneous reaction to the environment.

Whereas *Travel and representation* is clearly interdisciplinary in nature, Benoît Dillet's chapter 4 on the reconstructed dialogue between traveller-explorer Louis Antoine Bougainville and philosophers Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Denis Diderot is worth singling out for an audience of anthropologists. As Dillet (a political scientist) writes in his conclusion, these three authors 'reflected on the finitude of knowledge and the modes of existence, anticipating modern forms of anthropological problematization' (p. 97). However, in contrast with other Enlightenment philosopher-travellers (e.g. Alexander von Humboldt), 'they lacked the empirical methods to gather data' (p. 96).

Anthropologists reading this edited volume will most likely miss a more critical approach that pays attention to politics and power and, thus, to inequality in travel representations. This point of view is present in some chapters, such as chapter 9 on diasporic tourism by Jillian Powers, but could have been more pronounced throughout the book. After all, no representational forms are neutral, because it is impossible to divorce them from the culture or society that produces them. Awareness of the constructed nature of representations, however, does not mean that we can do without them. This is particularly true in the context of travel, where representations of 'the Other' and 'the elsewhere' play a crucial role, as do processes of social or cultural (mis)translation.

In sum, *Travel and representation* is a well-written book that disentangles, through sound interdisciplinary scholarship, the multiple workings of travel representations, their effects on people, and their limits. While undergraduate students may get lost in the multitude of representations covered and the lack of a comprehensive frame or concluding chapter that nicely summarizes and discusses the various findings, this edited volume is definitely recommended reading for graduate students and scholars with an interest in how travel, including tourism, is represented and how both travel and its representations mutually influence each other.

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