Journal of American Studies, **39** (2005), 2, 297–304 © 2005 Cambridge University Press
doi:10.1017/S0021875805009722 Printed in the United Kingdom

Review Essay
US Multicultural Pathways

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Emily S. Rosenberg, *A Date Which Will Live: Pearl Harbor in American Memory* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003, £18.95). Pp. 248. ISBN 0 8223 3206.

Greg Robinson, *By Order of the President: FDR and the Internment of Japanese Americans* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003, £12.95). Pp. 322. ISBN 0 674 01118 X.

Tetsuden Kashima, *Judgment without Trial: Japanese American Imprisonment during World War II* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2003, $35.00). Pp. 336. ISBN 0 295 98299 3.

Gerald Early, *This Is Where I Came in: Black America in the 1960s* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, Abraham Lincoln Lecture Series, 2003, £11. 50). Pp. 144. ISBN 0 80302 1823 0.

Deborah Davis Jackson, *Our Elders Lived It: American Indian Identity in the City* (DeKalb, IL: University of Northern Illinois Press, 2002, $20.00). Pp. 191. ISBN 0 87580 591 4.

Yen Le Espiritu, *Home Bound: Filipino American Lives across Cultures, Communities, and Countries* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 2003, $21.95). Pp. 271. ISBN 0 520 23527 4.

Elizabeth Boosahda, *Arab-American Faces and Voices: The Origins of an Immigrant Community* (Austin: The University of Texas Press, 2003, £18.95). Pp. 288. ISBN 0 292 70919 6.

John Kerry, patrician Massachusetts liberal, war hero, and yet dissident from the Vietnam era, vies for the 2004 presidency against George Bush, White House dynastic Republican, self-nominated caring conservative, and yet hard-edged ideologue. Notwithstanding Kerry's Catholicism, or his Jewish family line, both candidates hold sway as heirs to WASP cultural style bolstered by considerable personal fortunes. Howard Dean, New York MD and former Vermont governor, and like Kerry and Bush a Yale graduate, storms the early polls by his activist left-liberal agenda and Internet fundraising. John Edwards, North Carolina senator, personal injuries lawyer, and up-from-the-ranks millionaire, his father a textile factory worker and his

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https://doi.org/10.1017/S0021875805009722 Published online by Cambridge University Press

mother a postal office employee, conducts a widely agreed good race for the Democratic Party nomination before joining the ticket as would-be Vice President. Had multiculturalism led to any shift of paradigm in connection with canonical whiteness? Or, to put matters more plainly, were not the front-runners once again executive white men, whatever their respective merits or social origins?

With necessary recognition of Al Sharpton, Brooklyn-born pentecostal minister and one-time road manager for James Brown ("godfather of soul," whose music helped pioneer 1960s Black Pride), or Carole Mosely Braun, Chicagoan, America's first-ever black woman senator and a former ambassador to New Zealand, one might be forgiven for thinking it was business as usual. It would be easy to miss, too, that Ralph Nader, spoiler or otherwise in the 2000 Gore–Bush contest and a return contender in the 2004 presidential stakes as the nation's best-known public citizen and consumer advocate, bears a Lebanese heritage within his New England upbringing. Nor should one overlook Winona LaDuke, enrolled White Earth Chippewa-Ojibway or Anishinaabe, Native Rights advocate, environmentalist, novelist, and Nader's Green Party running-mate in 2000 (both she and Nader, incidentally, hold Harvard degrees). Yet whatever seeming impressions to the contrary the working political seams of diversity have not gone away.

Issues of ethnicity, gender, region, and religion in every way persist and overlap along with evolving changes of demography as borne out in the assiduous courting of the Latino vote. Certainly, and as the contrasting studies to hand give witness, academic analysis continues apace. Each takes on a key strand in America's cultural formation: the Japan constructed in iconography and memory from Pearl Harbor, Japanese American internment during World War II, Afro-America as 1960s Civil Rights jousting ground and after, Native America and the city, and America's Filipino and Arab dispensations. These books also offer a timely reminder that America as multicultural web or ancestry, as against the usual mainstream–minority formulation, has been written into the nation from the very outset.

Few way-stations can more have assumed iconic status than December 7 1941, Pearl Harbor as Roosevelt's "date which will live in infamy." The assumed writ quickly enough became that of America as victim of Pacific sneak attack and Japanese perfidy, Yellow Peril *redivivus*. In *A Date Which Will Live: Pearl Harbor in American Memory* Emily S. Rosenberg not only complicates standard versions of its place in the national narrative, America either caught unawares or somehow conspiratorially finagled into war by Roosevelt, but also looks to Pearl Harbor as "memory product," a "figurative site of contested meanings." Her span runs from FDR's White House radio address to the nation of 8 December 1941 to George W. Bush's pronouncement "the Pearl Harbor of the 21st century took place today" as his response to the Bin Laden orchestrated attack of 9–11 2001 on the World Trade Center. Drawing from a rich weave of supporting detail, "Pearl Harbor," she suggests, has become "commemoration, spectacle," just as Ground Zero Manhattan has become "sacred space." Fact overlaps with myth, substance with silhouette.

Familiar lines of interpretation anything but go missing: Japan's incursions into China and Korea, the Showa-era politics of oil and expansion, the rise of General Hideki Tojo and the military government, America's own Pacific provocations and imperialism, and Admiral Isoruku Yamamoto's apprehensive "we have wakened a sleeping giant" observation. The account likewise acknowledges the different

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versions of Pearl Harbor as backdoor Pacific conspiracy, the alleged asleep-on-the-job culpability of commanders like Admiral Kimmel or General Short, and the complacency and miscues in Washington. But Rosenberg's concern lies less with another retelling of events than with how Pearl Harbor has entered, and shaped, modern American consciousness or, as she invokes the French historian Pierre Nora, how it "embed[s] history in history." In unravelling the circlings of memory which connect the notorious sinking of the battleship *Arizona* to the destruction of the World Trade Center towers, she brings into play a rich consortium of bearings.

Mainstream popular culture, and especially film, thus receive well-targeted consideration. Among the latter are John Ford's accusatory *December 7* (1943), the intendedly more even-handed *Tora! Tora! Tora!* (1970) from which Akira Kurosawa, no less, was dropped as director, and the vapid million-dollar Hollywood war story as love story, *Pearl Harbor* (2001). Executive Order 9066 and with it the internment of nearly 120,000 Japanese Americans equally, and rightly, enters the reckoning as an American injustice. This is connected into the role of the Japanese American Citizens League, the highly decorated World War II Nisei soldiery of the 442 Regimental Combat Team, John Okada's seminal novel *No-No Boy* (1957), and Japan as post-MacArthur US ally yet global economic trade threat, and out of which arose the different 1980s waves of Japan-bashing.

Rosenberg further scores in how she situates Pearl Harbor within the current "memory boom," not least history given cyber-instantaneousness by the web and the different series of TV documentaries available on ABC's History Channel and C-Span. She also links a rallying abbreviation like "Remember Pearl Harbor" to other US war-memory, whether "Remember the Alamo," "Geronimo" or, more recently, Tom Brokaw's "the Greatest Generation." Turning to Maya Lim's 1982 Vietnam Veterans Memorial, with its poignant V-shaped black marble and name inscriptions, she takes up the murmurs of more recent Asiaphobia whether on account of a "lost war," or the contrast with Arlington Cemetery's World War II Iwo Jima sculpture, or its prize-winning architect's Chinese American lineage. Her account, overall, displays not only acuity but also winning succinctness, the Pearl Harbor of the one wartime American history refigured through those both before and in its wake.

Greg Robinson's *By Order of the President: FDR and The Internment of Japanese Americans* and Tetsuden Kashima's *Judgment without Trial: Japanese American Imprisonment during World War II* nicely dovetail the one into the other. In reassessing America's "relocation" of the nearly 120,000 internees of Japanese lineage in the wake of Pearl Harbor, Robinson's emphasis falls upon Washington policy-making, and FDR as its central player, whereas Kashima settles more upon the conduct of the War Relocation Authority, Justice Department, and Army administration. Both leave little doubt of the internment as a staining, not to say unconstitutional, episode, at successive times rightly if belatedly apologized for by Truman, Ford, Bush, Sr. and Clinton.

Robinson sees the internment as "the most tragic act of [FDR's] administration," EO 9066 promulgated against all lack of evidence of espionage by either Issei (Japanese-born first generation), Nisei (US-born second generation), or Kibei (US-born but educated in Japan). Its origins lie both in the US's long-aborning invasion fantasy by Asia, in "racial fear" of Japan in particular, and in a whole slew of

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eugenicist mystique including FDR's own "gentlemanly racism," his professed belief that despite exceptions the Japanese were "inherently savage." *By Order of The President* shows a clear grasp of backdrop, from the Russo-Japanese war to the 1924 Immigration Act, and from Nanking and Manchuria to Pearl Harbor itself. But Robinson's forte lies in unravelling the politics within, and around, 9066. He alights on the "tide of misinformation" brought to FDR by the intelligence services and FDR's own mandarin lassitude in allowing the internment to proceed without fair legal representation and without civilian oversight of confiscated Japanese American property. Constitutionality was simply ignored given that nearly two-thirds of the internees were US citizens by birth. It might have been a profitable comparison to bring into play the current situation in Guantanamo Bay and Camp X-Ray and issues of due process, detention, and legal rights.

The account reads especially well on the governmental politics of the internment, whether the complex circuits of decision which led to formation of the War Relocation Authority, the selective treatment which singled out Japanese Americans above German or Italian Americans, or the response to the nativist phobia whipped up by the Hearst newspapers with their talk of spy-ring conspiracy and use of Pearl Harbor as an excuse to hound Japanese Americans. Likewise the political and military gallery most in play comes over with a lively touch to include Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson, Dillon S. Myer as WRA administrator, General John DeWitt as West coast military supremo ("a Jap's a Jap" and "I don't want any Jap back on the West Coast" as two of his more dire, and effortlessly racist, conflations of Japanese and Japanese Americans), or Attorney General Francis Biddle in his deployment of the Alien Enemies Act and related legislation.

To be sure, FDR can be said to have had his sights elsewhere–the domestic economy, the alliance against Hitler with Churchill or his worry about division of the navy into Atlantic and Pacific fleets. But why, as was put to him by, among others, Harold Ickes and Eleanor Roosevelt, did he not recognize the need for due basic equity, whether in the form of loyalty courts or the mechanisms of due process? For all his Depression-era triumph, and allowing that illness and exhaustion had rendered FDR a part-time President by his fourth term, this in Robinson's verdict was "shocking unconcern," a tragic failure "to transcend the prejudice around him."

Tetsuden Kashima arrives at a shared judgement, not least FDR's "total ignorance about people of Japanese ancestry," though he makes his focus more the actual process of evacuation with its assembly centres, train and truck relocation, and the emergent camp life and culture. Be it Manzanar, Lake Tule, Topaz, or Honouliuli Gulch Camp this makes for an assiduous account: the different types of internment centre, the use of A, B and C political categorizations, location maps, tabulations of internees, a selection of first-hand case studies, and a genuinely enlightening comparative survey of the detention experiences of "Japanese" populations in Peru, Cuba, Canada, Hawai'i, and Alaska (Mexico proves the exception on the grounds it was thought by the PRI government an intrusion into sovereignty), as well as the West Coast in general in the wake of Pearl Harbor. Consideration is also given to the issue of contravention of the Geneva Accords, the so-called Manzanar riot, a close reading of the Lordsburg, New Mexico camp, the use of interrogation techniques, and the few actual homicides. Kashima ends with an anatomy of Japanese American internment as stigma, its long-term damaging psychological shadow.

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"This is an American story," he concludes, history as error or cautionary tale yet a necessary challenge to future avoidance of all "ethno-racial" pariahdom.

Gerald Early's *This Is Where I Came in: Black America in the 1960s*, the University of Nebraska's Abraham Lincoln lecture series for 2000, does a sparkling personal reprise of the Civil Rights/Vietnam years as "an age of self-conscious redefinition." In every way it enters the spirit of the series begun in 1995 and whose previous luminaries include Sander Gilman on stereotypes of the "Smart Jew" and Gerald Vizenor on the play of "absence and presence" in how Native America features in the American historical narrative. If a species of first-person diary ("I came of age in the 1960s,"), its main aim is to profile three key players in the interaction of modern Afro-America with white America.

In Muhammad Ali, Kentucky's bawling manchild as it once seemed, arguably the ring's most exceptional heavyweight, Nation of Islam convert and rhymester, Early discerns "the biggest hero in the entire colored world of the post-World War II era." He unpacks Ali, the pugilism, the love–hate iconography he inspired, and the champion's own self-absorption, as "the product of fixed, highly racialized, caste-arranged society that most whites did not want to acknowledge." Sammy Davis, Jr. he treats as "a mythic life" that embraces the vaudeville beginnings, Rat Pack membership, the autobiography as told in *Yes, I Can*, and with May Britt the "most famous interracial marriage in American social history." Given, thereafter, Jewish conversion, the on–off Sinatra connection, and the odd affinity with Richard Nixon, Early issues a challenging revisionist view of Davis as "a more influential and important person than either Malcolm X or Muhammed Ali." Cecil B. Moore, co-Philadelphian, community activist, 1960s president of the city's NAACP, and foil to Mayor Frank Rizzo, signifies "the toughest black man I knew, a man's man, and he was fearless." Early also revisits his own youthful city origins, from his short-lived friendship across the race boundary with an Italian American boy to Moore's lead role in seeking to desegregate Girard College. The result, overall, is a species of memorial prism, a deft, engaging synopsis of the continuing challenge, the ambiguity and residue, of the black 1960s.

Urban Indians – despite the fact that more than half of America's Native population lives in the cities, the phrase still has about it a call to attention, a break with reservation or related stereotypes. In *Our Elders Lived It: American Indian Identity in the City* Deborah Davis Jackson brings an urban anthropologist's eye to the community she calls Riverton, the community of Upper Great Lakes families of mainly Chippewa-Ojibway or *Anishinaabeg* (along with others of Odawa or Ottawa lineage) from Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan and Ontario. She portrays their life in the one city, with a population of nearly 4,000 in 1980, through a lattice of first-person interview and participant observation as to the footfalls of a prior way of life, the habits, the voicings, even the silences, carried from "Indian Country" past into "Indian Town" contemporaneity.

A sense of history usefully underwrites her findings, from the calamitous 1887 Dawes Act through the Allotment legislation to 1950s relocation (she cites Winona LaDuke's description of the latter as "one way bus tickets to major urban areas"). She also gives an informed reprise of Anishinaabe creation, nature, and trickster mythologies. But above all Jackson looks to the interface, the transitional overlap and plait, of Native with non-Native America, the lines of supposed mainstream

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assimilation, and yet community unforgetting. In working her way through this urban migration, she looks to understand how *Anishinaabe bimaadiwin* or right kinship behavior has or has not persisted through cross-marriage, schooling, the tough economics of industrial factory employment and unemployment, the community grouping she terms Birmingham County Indian Association (BCIA), student activism, and the ways of "indigenized Christianity."

For these "urban raised Anishinaabe" much, evidently, has become oblique, attenuated by time or even denial. As borne out in her case studies and evidence, however, Jackson is right to insist that much equally remains beneath all the urban overlay. In this respect, perhaps not unsurprisingly, the account comes most alive in the self-description of an interviewee like the Odawa-born Michelle Duncan as a "paper Indian," yet heir, however elusively, to a legitimate Native heritage, or an elder like the Ottawa-born Wuanetta Dominic saying that "people get mixed up when they talk about Indian culture. They think powwows, dancing and beadwork … But our way of life is [our] culture … our way of raising children, our way of dealing with each other."

Diaspora under US auspices has long been a necessary point of reference, Chinese, Irish, or Jewish. Few migrations, however, have been quite so intimate, so shadowed in the US's own colonialism or culturally overlapping and inlaid, as that which has involved the Philippines. Yen Le Espiritu's *Home Bound: Filipino American Lives across Cultures, Communities, and Countries* does sterling service, closely researched yet responsive to more inclusive ideological debate about coloniality and its post-colonial implications. Written by an American scholar, herself Vietnamese-born and married to a Filipino spouse, this study has a companion in her earlier *Filipino American Lives* (1995), fourteen life-histories keyed to Filipino history and settlement in the US.

Centred in San Diego's Filipino community, and drawing on more than a hundred interviews, Le Espiritu's new study insists upon a necessarily transnational perspective. The Filipinos/as given scrutiny she situates within "the politics of location," a Pacific history from Spanish to American hegemony, labor migration which she ties into a context of other race-marked Asian, Pacific, and Latin American population flows, the "alarmist" color-line which has stereotyped Filipinos/as as either passive–infantile or dangerous–primitive, and a working context of family, homemaking, separation, gender, intergenerational relation, Catholicism, and language. Without giving way to victimology she sees Philippine history as one of "conquest, occupation and exploitation," be it the Spanish to the Marcos years (1965–86), or the 1898 Spanish–American War and its resulting American takeover under President McKinley, or Filipino service in the US Navy in World War II through to a current younger "American" generation in San Diego as navytown California. Given this, and the welter of cultural imperialism – movies, music, food, dress, the Americanization of Manila and other cities – an interviewee like Renato Constantino can understandably insist, "The United States is the biggest reality in our lives."

The detail Le Espiritu brings into play in analysing Filipino America gives a bracing momentum to her writing, whether analysis of the span from the elite *pensionados* who came to the US from the 1920s onwards to the *manongs* or field-workers at the bottom of the employment ladder, or of Filipino men as wartime

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"feminized" navy stewards, to Filipinas as low-paid housemaids and nurses (which is not to overlook a professional medical elite with US residence). Her account tackles both the race lines involved and the counter-fact that more than a million US nationals live in the Philippines, "the largest concentration in Asia." She looks carefully into what she terms "differential inclusion," the acceptability of Filipinos/as as "American" within generally prescribed lines of employment or residence, and the complex process of financial remission from American-based Filipinos to the home-based community.

An especially acute reading comes into play of Filipina American women's roles: the "unpaid reproduction and kin work," the Filipina mother/American daughter syndrome, the issue of marrying in or out of the culture, the symbolism of the chaperone, and the role of Catholic patriarchy. Filipino American experience, the endurances, the racism, and all the personal diversity of which San Diego County serves as a microcosm thus offer themselves as "a site for critiquing state claims of liberal democracy and cultural inclusion." Le Espiritu rightly invokes another interviewee's notion of the ongoing need for Filipino American "ownership of identity" (219), the long footfall of the Philippines's own historic time and space, yet also the destiny of becoming quite wholly American.

9–11, if indeed the new Pearl Harbor, has put one community above all under accusing scrutiny: that of Arab and Muslim America. There may well have been frequent political avowal of no guilt by association, no scapegoating, but the shadow persists. It may, therefore, be timely compensation that attention has turned almost as for a first time to the history and culture of those nearly six million Americans of Arab or Muslim lineage. Literary anthologies like *Grapeleaves: A Century of Arab-American Poetry* (1988) or *Post-Gibran: Anthology of New Arab American Writing* (1999) supply a pointer. In Elisabeth Boosahda's *Arab-American Faces and Voices: The Origins of an Immigrant Community* lies another, the first-hand family documentation of the evolution begun between the 1880s and 1915 and now past its third generation of the Arab American community, Muslim and Christian, of Worcester, Massachusetts.

Working from a mix of first-hand archives and more contextual historical material, Boosahda develops a lively if amateur portrait of an American immigrant story to embrace Syrian, Palestinian, and her own Lebanese heritage. It might well seem a leap of space and time to link the Arab and Ottoman empires, subsequent European colonization and the Arab migration in their wake, to New England as heir to Anglo-Puritan writ. But this community study does just that: the arriving first dynasties, a multi-religion of Orthodox Christianity and Islam, early itinerant peddlers with their *kushee* or box, the rise of Worcester's Arab American entrepreneurship, the workings of language, dress and marriage, anti-Arab prejudice in spite of war service, a rich trove of local photography, a brief Arab-language lexicon, and selective maps and bibliography.

If the poet–philosopher Kahlil Gibran, the comedian–philanthropist Danny Thomas, George Bush's Secretary of Energy, Spencer Abraham, the pollster John Zogby, the Edward Said of a lifetime's activism and his Middle East-to-America autobiography *Out of Place: A Memoir* (1999), or indeed Ralph Nader, have been among the pre-eminent names, Worcester as given in this account refracts the more median grain of Arab American history. Boosahda's different family genealogies,

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albeit for the most part Christian Arab, provide a mirror to the larger story. Given 9–11, Iraq, and the US role in the Israel–Palestine equation, it is a story whose better disclosure requires a billing both in its own right and as inextricable from America's encompassing and overall multicultural evolution.

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