

Explorations in Sights and Sounds

recommending it alongside perhaps LeRoi Jones' (Amiri Baraka) *Blues People* (New York: William Morrow, 1963), since the latter text situates itself also on the historical axis of what Jones called the "changing same" of African American musical aesthetics and its more fully and challengingly developed historical context. Such, in this regard, picks up roughly where Jones leaves off and offers nice transcriptions and splendid insights as both a musician and an ethnomusicologist.

Andrew Bartlett

Ronald T. Takaki. *Violence in the Black Imagination: Essays and Documents*. Expanded Edition. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993) 348 pp., \$14.95.

Originally published in 1972 and re-issued in 1993, *Violence in the Black Imagination* was an early attempt to overcome the pitfalls of what some academicians have termed disjunctive scholarship. Ronald Takaki reminds us that too often fiction is analyzed narrowly as an art rather than as social documents that might be useful not only to those studying literature but also to those examining history. Reviewing three fictional works, Takaki makes a case for their use as historical sources. He asserts that "black fiction not only adds to our already limited number of ante-bellum black written documents, but also represents a particularly important genre of evidence" (12). Nineteenth century fiction, according to Takaki, lends insight into the *feelings and emotions* African Americans harbored towards slavery—insight often lost in traditional historical sources.

Takaki re-issued and expanded this book in response to the 1992 Los Angeles rebellion. Taking issue with the soundbites and superficial reporting used to characterize the rebellion, Takaki calls for the historical contextualizing of this seemingly sudden explosion of violence: "More than ever before, we must examine our past in order to understand the roots of racism and its legacy of racial conflict and violence" (6). To provide this contextualization, he turns to three fictional essays: "The Heroic Slave" by Frederick Douglass, "Blake: or, the Huts of America" by Black nationalist Martin Delany, and "Clotell: a Tale of the Southern States" by William Wells Brown, a pioneering Black novelist.

Violence in the Black Imagination contains these nineteenth century texts, corresponding review essays offering historical background about the authors and the factual events providing backdrops for these stories, and analysis of the conception of violence that is a common theme among all three. "The theme of violence," notes Takaki, "provides a provocative angle from which to probe the complexity of [Black people's] daily lives and the intricacies of their thoughts on...the destiny of

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blacks in America" (12).

Douglass' narrative is based on the 1841 mutiny aboard a slave ship. It is a story of personal liberation through the only means available—violence. In Delany's work, the protagonist moves beyond personal liberation, instead, risking his own freedom by organizing slave insurrections throughout the South and Cuba. Violence, in this case, works toward emancipation of the race rather than of individuals. In Brown's story, the use of violence is seen through two lenses. First, one is introduced to the overwhelming violence used by whites against their slaves. This, however, is challenged by a second level of violence employed by the slaves as they resisted such oppression.

Through these stories, the image of violence against the oppressor in the Black mind takes the shape of resistance, liberation, and emancipation. Perhaps, by understanding violence in these terms, the causes and motivations of contemporary urban rebellion might take on a new and more clearly defined meaning. This is the essential message in *Violence in the Black Imagination*.

Jennifer L. Dobson
University of Washington

Eileen H. Tamura. *Americanization, Acculturation, and Ethnic Identity: The Nisei Generation in Hawaii*. (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1994) 326 pp.

Eileen Tamura's new book on the first American-born generation of Japanese immigrants to Hawaii is a well-researched and readable study of the period in the early twentieth century, largely between the world wars, when Japanese immigrants to Hawaii realized they were not going to return home and that they would have generational conflicts with their children, entitled to U.S. citizenship as their parents were not until 1952. An outgrowth of Tamura's 1990 dissertation, "The Americanization Campaign and the Assimilation of the *Nisei* in Hawaii, 1920 to 1940," *Americanization, Acculturation, and Ethnic Identity* develops the original topic and works back to the beginning of Japanese immigration to Hawaii, but does not work forward past 1940 to record the monumental changes that occurred in Hawaii. Tamura uses numerous personal interviews she conducted with *Nisei* and always supports her general statements with anecdotal quotes from the subjects themselves. While not an oral history, this study nevertheless employs oral material to document research statistics. As a result, the text comes alive; the reader hears real voices, sometimes in Pidgin English or Hawaii Creole English, but more often the educated voices of the generation caught between two cultures which had much in common (educational goals, "puritan" work ethic, family and community values) but also much that conflicted (American individualism