

Number 15 (Summer 1995)

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

Explorations in Sights and Sounds

versus Japanese group consensus, voicing opinions versus keeping a low profile).

Much of Tamura's discussion of education has to do with the conflicting agenda of the *haole* elite (ruling Caucasians) teaching "American values" to immigrant children while at the same time keeping them in their place (i.e., in the plantation economy). If the principles of Americanization involve striving for excellence and expressing individualism, how can children simultaneously be taught to accept their station on a rural sugar plantation? Issues of race and class undercut the professed American sense of equality. As Tamura says in her preface: "Ironically the Nisei goal of economic advancement was more mainstream American than that of the Americanizers' goal for them, that they be good, docile plantation workers" (xiv). Thus the American school system, while teaching Americanization, succeeded all too well. Attempts were made to create a two-tiered educational system of English Standard Schools for mostly Caucasians and regular public schools for ethnic immigrants. Too often there was blatant racial discrimination to keep bright and qualified ethnics out of English standard public schools; this was particularly directed against the Japanese, the largest ethnic group by far in Hawaii during most of the twentieth century. Now I understand why my son's school, Mid-Pacific Institute, has an overwhelmingly Japanese-American student body. Tamura notes that "more than half of the students at Mid-Pacific Institute during the 1920s through the 1940s were Japanese" (117). In contrast to Punahou, the *haole* private school, other private schools welcomed Japanese students. These patterns persist even today.

One thing missing from Tamura's study is at least some discussion for what happened during and especially after World War II to the Nisei in Hawaii. A political revolution took place in the mid-1950s with fundamental and far-reaching implications. During the elections of 1954 and 1956, Japanese-American democrats, most of them World War II veterans, were elected to the state legislature. Since that time, they and their descendents have essentially controlled the state government and the public school system. Tamura explains these origins: between the wars public school teaching was one of very few professions open to the Nisei, so they often became teachers rather than professionals in other fields. But the Nisei generation succeeded finally because of World War II. Tamura devotes a small general paragraph to post-1940 developments on page 237. While I realize Tamura's study concentrates on the 1920-40 period, it would give readers a necessary perspective on the results of this generational struggle if they understood just how successful and powerful the Nisei in Hawaii later became.

Tamura's scholarly apparatus is carefully in place. Included in the appendix is a table of "Firsts among Japanese Americans in Hawaii," comprehensive notes to chapters, an extensive bibliography, and an

Number 15 (Summer 1995)

index. Missing from the bibliography is one book that should probably be cited and that includes oral history material from prominent Nisei, *Okage Sama De: The Japanese in Hawaii* by Dorothy Hazama and Jane Komeiji (Honolulu: Bess Press, 1984). All in all, *Americanization, Acculturation, and Ethnic Identity* is an excellent and focused contribution to the study of Japanese Americans and is a reminder that this stereotyped "model minority" suffered decades of racial discrimination without much complaint and persevered quietly (Governor George Ariyoshi's campaign motto in the 1970s was "quiet but effective"), steadily, and surely in Hawaii to achieve a remarkable public dominance by the second half of the twentieth century.

Ann Rayson
University of Hawaii

Jesus Salvador Trevino. *The Fabulous Sinkhole and Other Stories.* (Houston, TX: Arte Publico Press, 1995) 176 pp., \$9.95 paper.

This collection is aptly titled, for it *is* fabulous and a pure delight to read. Film director and writer Jesus Salvador Trevino is a worthy successor to such Chicano luminaries as Mario Suarez and Rolando Hinojosa with his creation of microcosm of a Mexican American community—Arroyo Grande, Texas. His blending of the real with the magical and the surreal along with a whimsical tone also links him to Ron Arias. The title story gives the reader an introduction to the collection of six interrelated tales since main characters in all the stories are observers of the sinkhole, and all the objects that float to the surface provide catalysts for plots in others.

The Fabulous Sinkhole is playful and full of wonderfully quirky characters, including Chicano authors who show up to marvel at the increasingly large hole. Members of the crowd take away things that float to the surface that are peculiarly useful to them. For example, a twelve-year-old aspiring writer fishes out a 1965 model Smith-Corona typewriter, which provides a frame for the story "An Unusual Malady." The reporter who is sent to cover the event retrieves a fountain pen, and he and his pen show up many years later in Arizona in the final story, "The Great Pyramid of Aztlan." The most unusual item is a 1949 Chevrolet Fleetline which appears in the tale titled "Attack of the Lowrider Zombies," a splendidly imaginative piece in which Latino cinema stereotypes arise from the dead and proceed to murder the movie executives who have been dehumanized them for decades. "Last Night of the Mariachi" provides a link to the past as it shows changes in the cultural tastes in Arroyo Grande. Juan Alaniz, who takes a silver dollar from the sinkhole is a musician who has