To speak of Asian American literature in the 1950s is to speak of something which did not yet exist, and would not for over a decade hence. This is not to say that there were no literary works by people of Asian descent being written or published in America during this time – there were, and had been since at least the turn of the century – but rather to acknowledge how significantly the task of reading and analyzing such texts is shaped by how we perceive their relationship to a literary genre and academic discipline which would not take shape until the late 1960s, and to acknowledge also the multiple “afterlives” which these texts have enjoyed (or, in some cases, suffered through) in the decades since.

The “birth” of Asian America as a political consciousness during the 1960s and 1970s was in many ways a direct outgrowth of the civil rights and antiwar movements in which African Americans in particular played an influential role. The emergence of Asian American literature as a recognized field in the mid-1970s can be understood as a continuation of this political struggle to make Asian American “voices” heard, this time by articulating connections between Asian American political and aesthetic agendas. Such was clearly the impulse behind the 1974 publication of *Aiiiiiiieeee!* one of the earliest (and certainly the most infamous) Asian American literary anthologies. Coedited by Jeffery Paul Chan, Frank Chin, Lawson Fusao Inada, and Shawn Wong, *Aiiiiiiieeee!* was instrumental in recovering many of the Asian American Cold War texts discussed in this chapter; indeed, the controversial brand of “cultural nationalism” which the co-editors championed – one frequently criticized for its militant masculinity and essentializing tendencies – was in fact grounded almost entirely in Asian American works from the 1950s, most notably John Okada’s *No-No Boy* and Louis Chu’s *Eat a Bowl of Tea*, virtually unknown novels which Chan et al. succeeded in getting republished by the University of Washington Press in 1976 and 1979, respectively. This chapter accordingly focuses on a cluster of mainly Chinese and Japanese American texts which not only reflected their Cold
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War moment but were deeply influential in shaping the definition of Asian American literature as we understand it today.

In the Wake of Internment

The most consequential South Asian and Filipino American writers of the 1950s – namely, Santha Rama Rau, Ved Mehta, and Carlos Bulosan – frequently used their craft to critique the post- or neocolonial processes which were transforming the countries of their birth, countries which provided the settings for many of their short stories and novels during this decade. Being expatriates, these writers often identified more as members of their particular nation’s diaspora rather than as part of an emerging domestic community of “Asian Americans”; in part, perhaps, because they were not American born – and in Bulosan’s case, never became American citizens – but also because, collectively, they made up less than one-quarter of the total Asian American population, which, in 1950, was a community overwhelmingly composed of Chinese and Japanese immigrants and their descendants.

The Cold War literary output of these latter two groups reflects the extent to which their communities remained deeply affected by the massive and sudden economic, political and social upheavals brought on by World War II. In 1941, following the bombing of Pearl Harbor, both Chinese and Japanese Americans found their fortunes changed virtually overnight. Within months, 119,000 Japanese Americans, many of them American citizens, were forced into internment camps in some of the most desolate places in the country – an experience which was, and continues to be, a painful yet generative source of Asian American literary production. The first of these works of internment literature to be widely known among American readers was Monica Sone’s *Nisei Daughter*, published in 1953 by Little, Brown and Company, and cited as the inspiration for *Snow Falling on Cedars* an award-winning 1994 novel by American writer David Guterson, which spawned a successful Hollywood film adaptation. Following in the footsteps of Jade Snow Wong’s highly successful *Fifth Chinese Daughter* (discussed below), *Nisei Daughter* (“Nisei” refers to the second, American-born generation of Japanese) opens in 1925, focusing mainly on Sone’s idyllic childhood growing up on Seattle’s waterfront before tracing her family’s experience of internment at the Minidoka camp in Idaho through the war’s end.

These days, however, the best known internment novel is arguably not *Nisei Daughter* but John Okada’s *No-No Boy*, which was first published in
1957 but quickly went out of print, and would remain virtually unknown until its rediscovery by Asian American writers in the early 1970s. The title of Okada’s novel refers to the double negative with which the main character, twenty-five-year-old Ichiro Yamada, and twelve thousand real-life Nisei (of whom Fred Korematsu is perhaps the most famous) responded to two questions on the Government Leave Clearance Form, a document distributed by the US War Relocation Authority in 1943 to all internees older than seventeen. More commonly known as the Loyalty Questionnaire, the clearance form remains one of the defining moments in the internment experience and its critical appraisal. The two questions over which controversy erupted were:

27. Are you willing to serve in the armed forces of the United States on combat duty wherever ordered?

28. Will you swear unqualified allegiance to the United States of America and faithfully defend the United States from any or all attack by foreign or domestic forces, and forswear any form of allegiance or obedience to the Japanese emperor, or any other foreign government, power, or organization?

In Okada’s novel, Ichiro’s “no-no” lands him in jail for draft resistance; the book begins around 1947, upon his release and ignominious return to his hometown of Seattle. The novel documents Ichiro’s agonizing struggle to find a place in postwar America and in the Japanese American community—and, even more, to psychically reconcile the troubled relation between the two. No-No Boy portrays the Seattle Nikkei (Japanese immigrants and their descendants) as a community starkly divided between those like Kenji Kanno, who becomes a highly decorated Nisei veteran, and Ichiro and those Issei (first-generation immigrants) like Ichiro’s mother, who, even upon her son’s return, praises his decision to answer “no-no” and refuses to believe that Japan has lost the war. Critics have made much of the novel’s provocative oedipal resonances; Ichiro’s relationship with his mother, as with his “mother country,” America, careens between intense hatred and anguished sympathy, blame and shame. Ichiro’s ability to reconcile and rehabilitate both relations ultimately depends on him, and the reader, recognizing that Mrs. Yamada’s brand of jingoistic Japanese nationalism, and the incurable insanity in which it manifests, is simply another result of the “impossible choice” imposed upon Japanese Americans by their own government’s wartime actions. After all, Ichiro muses,

Was it [his mother] who was wrong and crazy not to have found in herself the capacity to accept a country which repeatedly refused to accept her or her sons unquestioningly, or was it the others who were being deluded, the
ones, like Kenji, who fought and gave their lives to protect this country where they could still not rate as first-class citizens because of the unseen walls?²

In this light, Ichiro’s own decision to answer no-no, “in a frightening moment of insanity” (134), begins to take on a different meaning, marking a signal step in his therapeutic journey – one which involves his friendship with Kenji; his masculinity-redeeming romance with a young Japanese American woman; and, ultimately, the deaths of both Kenji and Mrs. Yamada, the two characters who, as made clear by the above quotation, represent complementary, rather than competing, versions of Japanese American “delusion.”

Much of what has made *No-No Boy* a seminal Asian American novel is its harrowing portrait of the lasting psychological anguish and emotional turmoil that accompanied the internment’s economic and social devastation of the Japanese American community. More recently it has also attracted interest as an “exemplary mid-century Cold War text,” with a particular focus on Okada’s deployment of tropes of surveillance and paranoia, and his allegorical foregrounding of Asian masculinity as the primary grounds on which racial, generational, and diegetic battles are waged.³

Given the many similarities between Monica Sone’s *Nisei Daughter* and Okada’s *No-No Boy*, it is worth asking why *Nisei Daughter* garnered such publicity, and the attention of a major American publishing house, while Okada’s novel fell immediately into obscurity. While Okada, as Jinqi Ling has persuasively argued, clearly made strategic efforts to increase the appeal of his novel to a 1950s American reading public, it is equally clear that while the majority of those readers were sympathetic, even ashamed, of their government’s wartime actions toward Japanese Americans, they were less than interested in being reminded of it.⁴ Indeed, the positive reviews which embraced Sone’s *Nisei Daughter* are indicative of the delicate post-war American climate surrounding the internment and Japanese Americans more broadly. In the words of one *Chicago Tribune* reviewer:

Books that deal with the wartime mass evacuation of Japanese Americans from the west coast generally tend to be grim reading. Or else they are stodgy sociological tracts between hard covers. Monica Sone’s “Nisei Daughter” is neither. It is, instead, a warm hearted, sometimes sobering, but more often gay and humorous, story of a Japanese immigrant couple and their American born children.⁵

One finds, in this praise of Sone, a clear rehearsal of notions which would find their fullest expression by 1966, when conservative pundit and
Berkeley sociology professor William Peterson’s exuberant *New York Times* article – “Success Story, Japanese-American Style” – would hail Japanese Americans as an emergent model minority for their dogged determination in overcoming even “the highest barriers our racists were able to fashion.”

### The Shifting Fortunes of Chinese America

The almost overnight removal of over 110,000 Japanese Americans had a profound economic and social impact on the Chinese American community as well. By 1941, Chinese Americans along the West Coast had taken to wearing pins reading “I am Chinese” to reduce the risk of being mistaken for Japanese and, more importantly, as a way to declare their patriotic loyalties. China’s wartime alliance with the US had greatly increased positive public perception of Chinese Americans; in 1943, the US government took the nominal step of passing the Magnuson Act, officially permitting Chinese immigration for the first time since 1882 and providing for the naturalization of some Chinese immigrants already residing in the States. (Naturalization would not be extended to Japanese Americans until the McCarran-Walter Act of 1952, which eliminated race as a basis for naturalization).

It was in this climate that Jade Snow Wong, born to Chinese immigrant parents in San Francisco in 1922, found a warm reception for her memoir *Fifth Chinese Daughter* (Harper, 1950), which covers Wong’s life from 1927–1946, focusing on her experiences growing up in Chinatown, attending Mills College, and eventually becoming a celebrated ceramicist. Often discussed in terms of overarching themes of intergenerational conflict and assimilation, *Fifth Chinese Daughter* paved the way for an enduring tradition of Asian American *bildungsromans*, most notably Maxine Hong Kingston’s *The Woman Warrior* (1976), as well as Sone’s *Nisei Daughter*. Like *The Woman Warrior*, however, *Fifth Chinese Daughter* is better understood not as a straightforward memoir but rather as a meditation on the thorny representational issues inherent in participating in that genre, particularly as a young Chinese American woman. Wong’s combination of first and third person perspectives is a particularly noteworthy and novel contribution; “although a ‘first person singular’ book,” she notes, “this story is written in the third person from Chinese habit. The submergence of the individual is literally practiced.” Such a device challenges simplistic readings of the text as the inauthentic, self-exotifying “Chinatown tour guide” which Asian American critics in the 1970s would accuse it of being.
Eight years after Wong’s novel was published, the rousing success of *Flower Drum Song*, Richard Rodgers’s and Oscar Hammerstein’s high-spirited 1958 Broadway musical adaptation of playwright C. Y. Lee’s 1957 novel of the same name, would seem to underscore Chinese Americans’ increased acceptance and their integration into the body politic. Indeed, as Rodgers and Hammerstein imagined it, *Flower Drum Song* was both testament to and celebration of the emergence of a new postwar American political sensibility, one whose emphasis on cultural pluralism and universalism stood in stark contrast to earlier decades’ equally emphatic insistence on racial biologism and, in particular, on East and West as entities separated by innate “human” distances as incommensurable as their geographic ones. As Rodgers put it,

> What’s [*Flower Drum Song*] about? Well, it’s the story of the confrontation of the Far Eastern and American civilizations, told in terms of the conflicts between first- and second-generation Chinese Americans in San Francisco. The usual thing you hear, you know, is East is East, and West is West, and all that nonsense. We show that East and West can get together with a little adjustment.9

In this new America, Rodgers insisted, the conflict between East and West was essentially a domestic dispute, a family (melodrama) which staged the universal struggle between parent and child, old and new, tradition and modernity; a struggle whose resolution required merely “a little adjustment” and compromise on the part of both.

As a nascent expression of the liberal multiculturalism which would find fullest expression in the 1990s, postwar American liberalism was further defined by its embrace of the “ethnic” over and above the marker of race. As “racialization gave way to ethnicization,” Christina Klein points out, “the socially and culturally defined category of ethnicity replaced the biological category of race as the preferred way to explain differences among populations.”10 Klein persuasively argues that the success of Asian American works like *Fifth Chinese Daughter* and *Flower Drum Song* was a direct result of their ability to capture and promote this zeitgeist, to “ethnicize Chinese Americans by representing their difference in cultural rather than racial terms” (229). The work of Klein, and of Asian American scholars like Jodi Kim and Colleen Lye, recognizes how that narrative strategy aligns texts by Asian Americans with those written by white Americans about Asia and Asians, whether Cold War works like James Michener’s *The Voice of Asia* (1951) or slightly earlier texts like Pearl Buck’s *The Good Earth* (1931).
The status of these intersections, however, is additionally complicated by the once again shifting positions of China and Japan in the late 1950s American imagination. Mao Zedong’s ousting of the Chinese Nationalist government in 1949, and the US’s subsequent official recognition of Taiwan and establishment of the 1951 US-Japan Security Treaty, largely meant that Chinese Americans had, by the mid-1950s, become once again the target of public suspicion and disdain.\textsuperscript{11} \textit{Flower Drum Song} made its Broadway debut in 1958, a mere four years after the end of the McCarthy trials, and only two years after the US Immigration and Naturalization Service had begun its Chinese Confession Program, which ostensibly offered amnesty to Chinese Americans who had gained their citizenship through fraudulent means, but functioned largely as a means of deporting suspected Communist sympathizers and limiting future immigration. Given these conditions, a further explanation for \textit{Flower Drum Song}’s success is a version of the one earlier suggested by Sone’s \textit{Nisei Daughter}; the American public seemed especially hungry for cultural works which would allay national fears about Chinese Americans the same way Sone did for national guilt about Japanese Americans, by providing “warm hearted” yet authentic accounts about Asian American families which were heavy on entertainment value and light on racial critique.\textsuperscript{12}

\textit{The Flower Drum Song} was the first of many novels written by Chinese American C. Y. Lee, who had emigrated from central China in 1943 as a student and had earned an MFA in playwriting from Yale University – and his American citizenship – shortly after. The book focuses on the characters of Chinese immigrant Wang Chi-Yang and his two sons, Ta and San, and their experiences as recent arrivals to San Francisco’s Chinatown during the early 1950s. Old Master Wang is initially horrified by the changes in his sons, whose “Americanization” manifests, in thirteen-year-old San, as a taste for football, comic books, and cowboy movies, and in twenty-eight-year-old Ta as an equally rapacious hunger for casual love affairs with American girls of all races. Desperate to prevent Ta from dishonoring the Wang family name with these “loose” American girls, Old Wang attempts to broker his elder son’s marriage to a girl “from the East,” an arrangement which Ta rebels against by pursuing the naïve yet spunky May Li, a street musician who has recently joined the Wang household as a maidservant.\textsuperscript{13}

While numerous – indeed, nearly all – contemporary critical appraisals of \textit{Flower Drum Song} focus exclusively on the Rodgers & Hammerstein adaptations, this chapter instead takes a closer look at the novel; which, unlike the musical, enjoyed only momentary success, and went quickly
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out of print. While the musical version took as its central metaphor the one Rodgers pithily identified – international conflict rewritten as intergenerational conflict – to interpret the relationship between Wang Chi-Yang and his sons as primarily a clash between “old-fashioned” Eastern tradition and “liberal” American modernity is to greatly obscure the complex historical, economic and political struggles which the Wang family’s domestic drama encapsulates, struggles which gave the novel much of its force and texture as Cold War Asian American literature. Two particularly significant erasures are explored here, having to do with class and with gender disparity.

Like *Fifth Chinese Daughter*, Lee’s *Flower Drum Song* would be derided by the *Aiiieeeee!* co-editors for its perceived inauthenticity as a “Chinatown tourist” novel which pandered to white readers’ desire for exotic, proto-Orientalist subject matter. Yet while *Flower Drum Song* is unquestionably a “Chinatown” novel – indeed, Master Wang rarely sets foot beyond its boundaries – it is immediately clear that Old Wang is almost as much an outsider in San Francisco’s Chinatown as any white tourist would be. He is not only unable to speak English, but, being from the Mainland, is also unable to speak Cantonese, the predominant dialect of the Southern Chinese who made up the vast majority of the Chinese American population at the time. Wang is a curious anomaly even in Chinatown, refusing to wear Western clothes, place his money in a bank, or seek membership in the powerful family associations or Tongs which dominated Chinatown political life until well into the 1970s. The latter has little to do with Wang’s actual political leanings, however; while his departure from China in the mid-1940s, several years before the novel opens, was apparently the result of political turmoil in his home province, and although the Communist takeover prevents his return, yet “he had no strong political convictions. He disliked communism for one reason only, that it destroyed Chinese traditions and turned the Chinese social order upside down” (9).

For Wang, traditions and “social order” mean in part what the musical version of *Flower Drum Song* foregrounds to the point of caricature: Confucian ideals of filial piety and obedience. More than the subordination of son to father, however, the “Chinese social order” in the novel represents a hierarchy of *class*. Unlike the majority of Chinese American immigrants, Master Wang is exceedingly wealthy; when his sister-in-law finally convinces him to put his money into a bank rather than in a trunk beneath his bed, his initial deposit is $87,700 (roughly equivalent to $825,000 in 2017 dollars). Not only does Wang not work, but he has a full staff of servants in his household: a handful of middle-aged immigrants who are some of the only people in Chinatown besides his immediate family with whom Wang
can converse, hailing as they apparently do from his home province (and perhaps even his original household in China).

While the musical version explicitly depicts the Wang sons as Chinese Americans, i.e., as unmistakable foils to their “foreign,” Chinese-born father, in the novel, the Wang sons are not only not American born, but very recent immigrants, ineligible for naturalization for at least another five years. In the musical, this issue of citizenship is focalized through May Li, who enters America illegally as a stowaway in order to expedite a process which could take up to a decade through legal immigration channels. In the novel, however, it is not May Li’s immigration status, but the “Americanized” Wang Ta’s, which causes the greatest problem. Indeed, in the novel, May Li is not a “picture bride” at all (as she is in the musical), but a resident of Los Angeles, where she and her father were long-time servants in the household of a certain General White, an American who had first arrived in China just before World War II and only recently “driven out” by the Communists. Upon the death of this beloved “benefactor,” May Li and her father travel by Greyhound bus to San Francisco, making their living as street musicians and eventually becoming employed as house servants by Master Wang. In the novel, then, Old Wang’s disgust with his “unfilial dog” (186) of a son, Ta, stems only partially from the boy’s refusal to marry the woman his father has selected; the far greater offense is Ta’s decision to marry a woman from a lower class – not only an uneducated street performer, but a servant in the Wang household.

It is thus important to recognize that part of Master Wang’s – and his son’s – frustration is not, as it is in the musical, the result of Ta’s having too many choices of potential brides, but rather far too few. Like Louis Chu’s Eat a Bowl of Tea, discussed below, C. Y. Lee’s Flower Drum Song paints a historically accurate picture of Cold War Chinese America as a largely moribund bachelor community in which, as a result of exclusionary immigration laws and practices, men outnumbered women nearly six to one – an imbalance which would not be fully corrected until the 1980s. One of the most valuable contributions of Lee’s Flower Drum Song, then – and one which is altogether obliterated in the musical – is its prescient deployment of an economic metaphor to dramatize these unique social conditions. In the novel, the coldly rational logic of supply and demand normally associated with the market comes to determine the “inflated” value of Chinese American women, whose recognition of their own scarcity leads them, at least in the eyes of Chinese American men like Wang Ta, to regard marriage in similarly dispassionate terms – as business propositions – and to become “conceited” (15) about their own worth. Such a phenomenon is embodied
in the tragic demise of Helen Chao, an older Chinese American seamstress whose affections Ta enjoys but whose physical “defect” (100), a pockmark-scarred face, renders her ineligible as a potential wife in the eyes of both father and son. In the musical, Helen is depicted as a Chinese American beauty (no pockmarks in sight), the oft-forgotten third option presented to Wang Ta as a “middle road” between Mei Li and Linda Low. In the novel, Ta’s rejection of Helen leads her to commit suicide, an act over which Ta is initially wracked with guilt—until his Chinese American friend insists that Helen was the victim not of her lover’s cruelty but of an economic miscalculation. “Because of this shortage [of Chinese women],” Ta’s friend reassures him, Helen “automatically priced herself high, or overestimated her own value. Consequently she was only interested in customers like you, young, handsome, well-educated and so forth . . . and she took it for granted that you should marry her” (115). Absolved of his guilty conscience, Ta comes to appreciate even more the self-deprecating modesty and simplicity of the humble May Li, who inspires in him “a sense of fairness and uprightness” (242) and earns even Old Wang’s begrudging respect.

In 1961, the same year the musical film version of Flower Drum Song was released, Louis Hing Chu would translate this curious yet defining phenomenon of Chinese American female “scarcity” into overtly sexual and reproductive terms through his own novel, Eat a Bowl of Tea—a work which, like No-No Boy, was virtually unknown until its republication in the 1970s and its 1989 film adaptation by Chinese American director Wayne Wang. Although Chu, who had immigrated from China to New Jersey at the age of nine, set his novel in New York’s Chinatown rather than San Francisco’s, yet there are a number of important parallels between Eat a Bowl of Tea and Flower Drum Song.

The plot of Eat similarly revolves around the marriage of a recent Chinese American immigrant, Ben Loy, to a young and naïve Chinese village girl, Mei Oi; a match arranged by their fathers, Wang Wah Gay and Lee Gong, aging Chinatown residents whose own wives remain in China. Upon returning to New York with his new wife, Ben Loy is plagued by impotence which neither Western nor Eastern medicine can cure, and which he suspects is the result of his having “ruined his health” frequenting prostitutes in New York; Mei Oi, in turn, becomes the target of endless attention by Chinese American men both young and old. What begins as a disturbing rape scene eventually becomes a love affair between Mei Oi and Ah Soong, one of Wang Wah Gay’s friends; when Mei Oi becomes pregnant and rumors begin to spread about her relationship with Ah Soong, the elder Wang seeks vengeance for this egregious loss of face. With the
support of Wang’s family association and their Tong connections, Ah Soong is subsequently punished and exiled. Ben Loy and Mei Oi relocate to San Francisco, where Ben Loy’s impotence is ostensibly cured after following the directives of a local Chinese herb doctor, and the young couple bond over their cherished new infant, whose paternity remains unresolved.

_Eat_ is clearly a novel of its Cold War moment, although it has not garnered nearly as much attention in this area as _No-No Boy_. As in _Flower Drum Song_, the Chinese American men in Chu’s novel find themselves trapped in Chinatown as refugees and exiles, unwilling or unable to return to China after the 1949 Chinese Civil War and the Communist takeover. As a historical document, the novel tracks the slow but steady transformation of mid-century Chinese American communities as bachelor “uncles” are replaced by nuclear families, a shift which began with the 1943 Magnuson Act and was further expedited by the passage of the War Brides Act of 1945, which allowed American veterans, including Louis Chu himself, to bring over foreign wives. At the same time, the novel’s subtle but persistent return to themes of suspicion, paranoia, and propaganda – “don’t trust anybody, not even your best friend” (238) becomes the shared motto of those Chinese American men in the novel fearful of being exposed as either cuckolds or Communist spies – underscores the enduring influence of McCarthy-era terror on Chinese American communities, a defining anxiety which would continue well into the 1970s, long after the US had re-established diplomatic ties with Beijing, and arguably even into the present moment.

**Rehistoricizing Cold War Asian American Literature**

As mentioned in the opening of this chapter, Asian American literature of the 1950s has, for better or worse, become inextricable from the aggressive political views espoused by the _Aiiieeeee!_ co-editors, views which had become increasingly unpopular by the 1990s. A 1995 essay by Elaine Kim, who in 1982 had published the first sustained academic monograph on Asian American literature, is a much-cited example of this shift, which Jinqi Ling describes as the result of “Asian American critics’ resistance to ethnocentrism through an internal critique of ‘Asian American developmental narratives.’” In her aptly titled “Beyond Railroads and Internment: Comments on the Past, Present, and Future of Asian American Studies,” Kim critiques the field’s fetishization of “sacred Asian American texts” by such “dead yellow men” as Bulosan, Okada, and Chu. By likening these
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writers to those “dead white men” who were at the center of the “canon wars” which defined the multiculturalism movements of the 1990s, Kim and many other Asian American critics aimed to expand the field to include a number of marginalized Asian American perspectives and identities, both in terms of geographic origin and issues of gender, sexuality, and class.

While this critical turn, as Ling rightly notes, has since produced “profound and largely positive results in Asian American literary studies,” it has at the same time, as Colleen Lye observes, contributed to the “underdevelopment of both formalist and historicist approaches to the Asian American text” of the sort Ling and Lye themselves undertake – and of which this chapter, too, has sought to highlight and value. That is, by considering Asian American texts through both their original historical context as well as their afterlives, we see how issues of reception and political realities were not merely captured in, but actively shaped and anticipated by, the books themselves. Similarly, attending to these works’ formal qualities – for example, Wong’s unconventional narrative point of view or Okada’s jagged, halting prose style – allows us to resist the tendency to cast them in zero-sum terms as either wholly “complicit” or “subversive” – and to recognize that these tensions in fact give form to the content as well as the meaning of the texts themselves.

NOTES

5 Togo W. Tanaka, “110,000 Held without Trial; Sobering, Yet Gay Story of Nisei Upheaval in ’42,” Chicago Sunday Tribune (February 26, 1953), 5.
Tanaka, “110,000 Held,” 5. This is not to suggest that either *Flower Drum Song* or *Nisei Daughter* were, in fact, devoid of racial critique, but rather that they seem to have invited and rewarded a reading which could overlook or absorb such critiques.


