Oedo Reggae Festival, 5th Anniversary.

Racial Representations in Asia

Edited by

Yasuko TAKEZAWA

Kyoto University Press

TRANS PACIFIC PRESS

8

Toward an Analysis of Global Blackness: Race, Representation, and Jamaican Popular Culture in Japan

Marvin D. Sterling

In recent years, there has been increasing concern in the social sciences with exploring representations of blackness across the African Diaspora as analytical spaces in which black cultural practices intersect and mutually inform each other. Distinct bodies of scholarship on Latin America and Europe in particular have emerged investigating the ways in which African cultural identity is asserted or reasserted due to a confluence of social and political forces that bind these spaces, and in ways that manifest themselves on the levels of representation and performance. In this chapter, I consider another perspective in the representation of blackness around the world. Using the case of Japanese engagement with Jamaican popular culture, and with the politics of race that inhere within this engagement, I explore how blackness is constituted in Japan as a space in which few black people have historically lived. I further use this case to articulate several discursive terms in which blackness is globally represented. The ethnographic data, although situated primarily in Japan, might be linked to these broader global representations of blackness through recognition of the explicit visual, verbal, and other instances of symbolic resonance between Japanese representations and international ones. They may be linked by how closely the circumstances under which these representations are produced, and the ideological purposes they are made to serve correspond with those in the broader global context.

The Japanese adoption of Jamaican music and religion in Japan does not always evidence explicit engagement with race. It is reasonable to suggest that to most fully appreciate Jamaican culture in Japan, it should be viewed not according to the racial political terms in which it is constructed in Jamaica, but more strictly according to Japanese social politics. Japan, after all, is the ultimate site in which Japanese representations and performances of Jamaican popular culture are to be situated, where the politics of blackness as constructed

in Jamaica are sometimes erased from view. Yet I would argue that attention to these processes of erasure themselves, where they do take place, potentially facilitates deeper insight into the range of ideological purposes to which blackness is mobilized in Japan and elsewhere around the world.

I begin the article by discussing more fully the scholarship on global blackness, centering my argument on those works that bear particular relevance to performance and representation. I do so given my ethnographic focus on reggae and Rastafari in Japan, cultural expressions I will briefly introduce. From there I identify some key discursive currents, mentioned above, along which ideas of blackness are circulated around the world; their historical representation in Japan; and how they are manifested in Japanese engagement with Jamaican culture. Drawing on twelve years of ethnographic research on this topic, I consider this engagement primarily in Japan, but also in New York and Jamaica. I do so given Japanese pursuit of their interests in Jamaican culture overseas, and since Japanese experiences in Jamaica disclose aspects of racial discourse in Japan that are less immediately evident when the analysis is centered only on Japan.

Global blackness

The social scientific literature on blackness around the world has grown markedly over the last twenty years along several distinct trajectories. The most obvious has been the proliferation of the literature on the Black Atlantic and the African diaspora (Gilroy 1993; Harris 1993; Roach 1996; Rahier 1999). Among these works are those adopting a transnational performative frame of analysis, one that facilitates recognition of the important links between black cultural production across these spaces. Recognition of reggae music, for instance, as distinctively Jamaican and of hip-hop as distinctively African American is coupled with exploration of the way African Americans and Jamaicans have influenced each other's cultural productions, as seen in the heavy influence of African American bebop and rhythm and blues on Jamaican ska—a precursor to reggae—and in the heavy influence of Jamaican sound system culture on the emergence of hip-hop (Stolzoff 2000; Chang 2005). Related to this earlier trend toward diasporic analysis are several recent volumes centered on 'modern blackness,' 'global blackness' or 'transnational blackness' (Clarke and Thomas 2006; Marable and Agard-Jones 2008). Debra Thomas' understanding of modern blackness (2004) is one that articulates a series of geosocial relationships between, in the ethnographic instance she focuses on, the Jamaican national and the local, the national and the global, and the local and the global. To a significant extent, 'the global'

represents the 'mother country,' Britain, and the regional, economic power of the United States. These sites represent nodes in which Jamaicans have travelled overseas in search of economic, educational and other opportunities, which have deeply informed Jamaican aesthetic sensibilities and modes of cultural production. Thomas' understanding of modern blackness is largely aspirational, one in which Jamaican people as the citizens of a third world country strive towards modern nationhood in the idealized, 'developed' sense of the term. Much as is true with Thomas' work, almost all of the work framed under the rubric of 'global blackness' or 'transnational blackness' has been centered on the West-qua-African diaspora. Dominic Thomas (2007), for instance, invokes the term 'global blackness' to describe the ways in which Paris constitutes a global node on which African diasporic people converged out of a sense of artistic, political, and other forms of identification with each other. The proliferation of these works on global and transnational blackness arguably represents an effort to bring the earlier scholarship on the African diaspora and the Black Atlantic in line with the dominance of globalization theory in the social sciences over the past two decades. Other recent works have explored the African diaspora in particular European countries (Gilroy 1991; Nassy-Brown 1998; Essed 1990) as well as across the continent (Hine, Keaton, and Small 2009).

A second, also pronounced trend in the literature on blackness around the world has been scholarship on the claiming or reassertion of African-descended identities. Latin America has been one region in which this trend has been prominently noted in the scholarship, both regionally (Whitten and Torres 1998; Ishibashi 2009) and nationally (Wade 1997, 1995). In many of these countries, blackness has been historically marginalized given national ideological privileging of whiteness and/or racial mixture (M. Lewis 1995). But more and more scholarly attention has been directed toward claims of African heritage, which appear to be emerging with significant vigor largely due to a confluence of forces. These range from the continued international influence of the US Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s to the global spread of Afrocentric popular cultural expressions like reggae and hip-hop to political changes that have fostered a new politics of race in countries like Brazil and Mexico (L. Lewis 2000). Jan Hoffman French (2006), for instance, has argued that narratives of familial origins among Brazilian *Quilombolas* (descendants of fugitive slaves) have shifted given changes in the national constitution making it possible for those who might be able to claim *Quilombola* identity to receive grants of land. Jean Muteba Rahier (1998) situates the national response to the 1995 crowning of Mónica Chalá, the first black Miss Ecuador, within tensions between white-mestizos and blacks in urban Ecuador, and in mass-mediated representations of blackness originating in such countries as the United States.

A third trend concerns the literature on blackness in East Asia (Dikötter 1997, 1992; Russell 1998). Much of this literature has centered on expressions of racial chauvinism directed against blacks in China and Japan. These include acts of violence against African exchange students in China (Sautman 1994), a series of comments by Japanese politicians in the late 1980s and early 1990s characterizing black people as dirty, hypersexual and irresponsible (Russell 1991a); and the circulation of images and artifacts stereotyping black people's physical features (Russell 1991c). A fourth, related trend pertains to 'the Afro-Asian'—both works explicitly named as such and those that might be so categorized—which explores the historical and contemporary interchanges—demographic, cultural, political—between peoples in both diasporas (Prashad 2001; Jones 2001; Jones and Singh 2003; Mullen 2004; Gallicchio 2000; Raphael-Hernandez and Steen 2006).

Each of these trends offers important insight into the construction of blackness around the world. They give substance and detail to the still underappreciated insight that the black experience, and representation of that experience, bears some remarkable similarities across societies (the spread of 'darky' iconography comes immediately to mind). However, despite the clear ways in which these literatures are interlinked, there is strikingly little conversation between them. The three discourses of global blackness that I will discuss might be one way of facilitating this conversation. Recognizing how, in each body of literature, all of these discourses are situationally in operation provides an opportunity to consider the shared circumstances of their production, as well as those locally particular cases in which they are differentially mobilized. While Japanese engagement with Jamaican culture represents a highly particular ethnographic instance, it nevertheless richly encapsulates each of the three discourses of global blackness. John Russell, in his contribution to this volume, invokes Homi Bhabha's discussion (1994) of the operation of colonial discourse in his own redeployment of the concept of '*ricorso*.' For Russell, *ricorso* is the simultaneity with which blackness has historically been rendered as ideologically fixed according to a narrow range of ideas with which blackness tends to be singularly and absolutely associated, even as these narrow imaginings of blackness are fluidly mobilized across a range of sociocultural situations. This concept as articulated by Russell fits readily with my own observations of Jamaican culture in Japan, and might be seen as a means by which to link this case to the broader global discursive economy of blackness. Even as the racial dimensions of Japanese engagement with Jamaican culture represents a very particular case, the explicit (or 'fixed') visual correspondence between 'darky' iconography ('fluidly') circulated around the globe and those through which Afro-Jamaicans are sometimes represented, for instance, in Japanese

music magazines, suggest their strong interrelation. In this way, I use the case of Japan's Jamaican popular cultural scenes not necessarily as a representative instance, but rather as one that facilitates consideration of how similar analyses of other instances of global blackness might proceed.

Jamaican popular culture in Japan

But what are these racialized Jamaican cultural forms that have become re-situated in the Japanese context? While there are several elements of Jamaican popular culture that have a presence in Japan, I will briefly discuss four: Rastafari, roots reggae, dub and dancehall. Rastafari is an Afrocentric religious and political movement born in the 1930s—when Jamaica was a British colony—whose followers view Ethiopian Emperor Haile Selassie as black people's returned messiah (Chevannes 1994). The movement is characterized by a view of the imperial, capitalist, Western-dominated world, including Jamaica, as corrupt; of Africa as the true home of black people throughout the diaspora, and to which they should actively seek return; and of the value of the natural world (embodied in the consumption of marijuana and natural or 'I-tal' food and in the wearing of dreadlocked hair) as opposed to artificial, consumerist, over-technologized Euro-America. Roots reggae is a genre of Jamaican folk music born in the late 1960s; it lyrically incorporates the Rastafarian message of spiritual ascension and resistance against local governmental, neocolonial, and capitalist corruption. Dub music is a form of electronica that also emerged in the late 1960s, and is associated with such artists as King Tubby and Lee 'Scratch' Perry. It privileges the studio engineer as artist, who often removed the vocal tracks from roots reggae songs, adding echoes, reverbs, and other sonic effects to the instrumental tracks. The aesthetically reengineered product was released on the B-side of 45 records as 'versions.' Finally, dancehall is also a form of electronic music that came into being in its present form in the mid-1980s. It is characterized by 'toasting'—similar to African-American rapping—in patois over digital tracks or '*riddims*.' Dancehall as subculture is dominated by sound systems—mobile audio systems usually operated by crews of young men who play dancehall records at clubs and outdoor venues. It is also associated with the culture of *donnettes*, often minimally dressed female patrons who engage, with male partners or alone, in erotic dance. There is also a male dance scene. Compared with female, and with male-female dancing, men performing solo or in all-male groups do not dance in the erotic manner of women, tending to perform 'more upright, sinewy dances that involve vertical dips, bold arm gestures, and side-to-side twisting movements' (Stolzoff 2000: 206).

Roots reggae music reached Japan at much the same time that it did other parts of the world outside Jamaica, in the early 1970s. Several of my older research participants described discovering the music not so much on reggae albums, but rather through reggae-influenced British punk albums imported to the country around this period. With growing appreciation of reggae as a genre in its own right, a small subculture developed in the 1970s, whose interests were catered to by a few clubs, record shops, and other small businesses specializing in the music. In 1979, roots reggae came to its fullest mainstream attention to that point when the legendary reggae musician Bob Marley performed in the country. The scene developed in the 1980s under the influence of a number of entrepreneurial interests, including Overheat, which publishes the long-running *Riddim* magazine, and Tachyon, which published *Reggae Magazine* (no longer in publication). These companies also sponsored major reggae events in Japan, inviting Jamaican reggae acts to perform and record in the country, with moderate success.

These developments culminated in the latter part of the 1980s to the late 1990s with a major reggae boom, perhaps the most prominent manifestation of which was Tachyon's Reggae Japan Splash, a concert tour largely comprised of Jamaican reggae acts, but also including such early Japanese reggae artists as Nahki. In its heyday, the nationwide tour drew about 100,000 fans over the course of several days in the summer. Given these numbers, it was easily one of the most successful concert tours in the country. Increasingly aware of the lively reggae market in Japan, many Jamaican reggae artists travelled to the country, including performing in their own concerts. This boom saw the proliferation of reggae clubs, bars, record shops, I-tal food restaurants, clothing stores, craft shops, and other businesses associated with Jamaican culture, not only in urban areas like Tokyo, but even in the countryside. Thousands of Japanese travelled to Jamaica during this period. Most did so as tourists; some were practitioners of the music; a few wanted to come into a deeper, more interpersonally profound understanding of Rastafari beyond its links to roots reggae.

By the late 1990s, despite the continued presence of more serious practitioners, the roots reggae boom was waning. Around this time, however, dancehall was on the rise, particularly in Yokohama. This was largely because of the sound system Mighty Crown, whose members had travelled and spent extended periods of time in New York and Jamaica living among Jamaicans, learning not only Jamaican patois, but also that patois particular to the dancehall scene. In part due to their credibility in these terms, their already significant popularity reached new heights when, in 1999, the sound system won World Clash, a major sound system competition in Brooklyn, New York, which otherwise featured only Jamaican competitors. In 2002, Junko Kudo, a dancer from Japan's 'reggae

Photo 8.1: Japanese sound system Mighty Crown.

dance' scene, entered Jamaica's National Dancehall Queen Competition and was also the only non-Jamaican in the field of contestants; Kudo, too, won her event. Japan has since experienced a new, long-sustained boom in dancehall reggae, a measure of whose strength has been the approximately 35,000–40,000 fans who annually attend Yokohama Reggae Sai, a one-day reggae event sponsored by Mighty Crown Entertainment. Thousands of young men are drawn to sound system culture, and although Jamaica is a much smaller country than Japan (2.75 million to 127 million), it is still significant that there are more sound systems operating in Japan than on the Caribbean island. Similarly, the largest contingent in what is now Jamaica's *International* Dancehall Queen Competition is regularly from Japan.

Jamaican culture in Japan as instance of global blackness

Ideas about blackness—the set of phenotypic traits according to which peoples of sub-Saharan descent have been located within a modern, quasi-scientific regime of race; ideologies of selfhood and otherness given situation within this morally, politically, and economically invested racial regime; and the body of representation according to which sub-Saharan African heritage as identity

Photo 8.2: Oedo Reggae Festival, 5th Anniversary.

and difference is worked through—have circulated around the modern world in a range of discursive terms. Before discussing the three such terms that represent the focus of my analysis, I want to qualify how I will use them. Despite my appreciation of global blackness as a modern construction, its analysis must always be rooted in local history. This includes domestic premodern constructions of social difference, such as caste and ethnicity, found within a given society. Yasuko Takezawa in her edited volume (2005) on the question of race's conceptual universality (i.e. Did race thinking exist before the birth of the modern West?) identifies three 'dimensions' of race: 'race in the lowercase' (race as caste or other premodern, social hierarchical orders), 'Race in the uppercase' (the globally-circulated modern scientific concept), and 'Race as Resistance' (race as reclaimed in minority and independence movements). In addressing a similar problem, that of articulating the discursive terms in which blackness has come be circulated around the globe, I have identified three, mutually informed discourses in which this has taken place. These include the colonial modern, postcolonial, and the global postmodern. These discourses, which define my own understanding of the term 'global blackness,' are not chronological, nor discrete. The colonial modern bears within it elements (concepts, symbols, institutional forms, stereotypes, archetypes, cultural material) that inform the postcolonial; elements of both the colonial modern and the postcolonial are mobilized within

the global postmodern. A reading of these discourses as chronologically discrete (first the colonial modern, then the postcolonial, then the global postmodern) would suggest that people of color were in a state of passive subjugation before postcolonialism. Just as colonial modern discourses of blackness did not simply disappear with the independence movements of the 1940s to the 1960s (earlier, in the case of much of Latin America), postcolonial resistance as discourse and practice did not begin with the independence movements. Such discourses and practices date to the earliest days of slavery, in such small, everyday acts as secret ridicule of the master, work slowdowns, and feigned misapprehension of assigned tasks (Scott 1985).

The colonial-modern

By identifying colonial modernity as a key discourse of blackness, I wish to speak to the ways in which blackness emerged as a direct product of the modern experience, both broadly speaking and also specifically in terms of the colonial legacy. If one aspect of modernity is the Enlightenment ethos of totalizing, rationalized, scientific classification, then blackness and race as the classification of human diversity (Brace 2005) exemplifies this effort. This is related to a second aspect of the modern experience: the increasingly sophisticated institutional means through which populations, including, fundamentally, their bodies, are controlled. While the work, as well as commentary on the work, of Michel Foucault (1995, 1988), best reflects the scholarship on this matter, far less has been written on the clear relevance of Foucault's work to the case of slavery as an institutional means of controlling the bodies of black people. A third aspect of the modern experience is the technological popularization and urbanization of cultural production. Along with such media as film, African-American jazz recordings are an exemplary instance of black popular cultural expression produced within, reaching across, and speaking profoundly to life in the increasingly crowded American, European, and other international cities in the early twentieth century (Atkins 2003). Related to this, a fourth aspect of the modern experience that defines my use of the term 'colonial-modern' is the fact that it reveals a tension between notions of progress and the marginalized but discreetly romanticized primitive, as reflected, for instance, in the inspiration that modern artists found in African art (Lemke 1998). The influence of this art on, famously, Picasso's masterpiece *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon* (1907) coexisted with ideas about the primitive unsophistication and aesthetic worthlessness of African artistic traditions. To loosely adopt Russell's metaphor in characterizing the African presence in Japanese history, it becomes an 'excluded presence' (Russell 2007). In novelist and essayist Toni Morrison's metaphor, it inhabits the space of shadows (1992), one that is simultaneously venue and effect of blackness in its condition as subaltern. A fifth critical aspect of the modern experience is the emergence

in Europe of centralized nation states competing amongst each other for global resources; colonization of Asia, the Americas, and the Caribbean and, of course, Africa, and the global capitalism that this colonialism helped facilitate, required an imagination of the indigenous peoples found in or translocated as labor to these parts of the world as objectified capital, as marginal and abject. In the African case, such an imagination came to be expressed in the exhibition of black bodies at slave auctions and at world's fairs, as Mammy and Sambo dolls and figurines, in minstrelsy and similar performance traditions.

Japan's effort to reshape itself as a modern nation at the end of the Tokugawa Period involved large-scale adoption of the educational and political institutions of the West, its classical and popular culture, and its philosophy. Many Meiji-era leaders believed that it was through these things, in their minutiae, that Western power could be achieved, and thus defended against. This defense led to dual imperialisms, internal and external. In the first case, the Ainu territories to the north and the Ryūkyū Kingdom to the south were made part of the Japanese nation. Ainu and Okinawans were made citizens but remained stigmatized as uncivilized. The Ainu, for instance, had long been looked upon as 'hairy savages,' a pejorative view discreetly motivated by mainland desire to occupy Ainu lands (Siddle 1996). With the arrival of race, however, these domestic premodern constructions of the difference of the Ainu came to be articulated as a scientifically determined inferiority that could be mapped in relation to the perceived biological worth, or worthlessness, of all other human populations (Tomiyama 1994). In the case of the second, overseas imperialism, race was used to rationalize Japan's colonial ambitions. Even as Koreans, Chinese, and other colonized people were nominally made part of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere (Young 1999), they also were marked as others whose blood was impure by virtue of not being Japanese. This position evidences itself in colonial Japan's artistic and scholarly gaze at the music, theater, dance, and religious expression of its colonies, in which China, Korea, and other countries were often imagined—explicitly pejoratively, but also often nostalgically—as reminders of progressive Japan's primitive past (Atkins 2010; Baskett 2008).

Japan has also mobilized the West's own others for racial and ethnonational ideological purposes. These others include black people. Russell, who has written extensively on literary and visual representations of blackness in Japan (1991a, 1991b, 1991c, 1998, 2007), notes that there is little written evidence on how Japanese viewed the African servants, slaves, interpreters, and artisans accompanying Portuguese travelers who arrived to Japan in the sixteenth century. The written and visual evidence that does exist, however, suggests that while these Africans were sometimes represented as demonic outsiders, the Portuguese and later European arrivals were portrayed in similar terms, given their common

status as outsiders. Records by a Portuguese captain suggest that Japanese were fascinated by the African visitors, a fascination that was not necessarily expressed in a chauvinistic manner; Russell notes sympathetic representation of Africans in Japan, including by such Meiji era artists as Hashimoto Sadahide. Other representations of blacks in Japan were 'devoid of overt caricaturization, capturing in colorful detail the procession of Western power and the place of blacks within it' (Russell 2007: 20).

Yet, Russell continues, around the turn of the century, a corpus of images and performance traditions rooted in a particularly Western colonial modern imagination of blackness came to take root. Commodore Matthew C. Perry, for instance, infamously ended a treaty by entertaining Japanese diplomats with a minstrel show featuring white sailors in blackface (Russell 1991a; Yellin 1996). As noted above, a key aspect of colonial modernity that has informed discourses of blackness has been the technological popularization of cultural production. Blackness played a significant part in this process not only in the West, but also in Asia (Atkins 2001; Jones 2001). Throughout much of the early twentieth century world, from India to Japan and China, jazz music became a critical way in which international society expressed its modernizing aspirations. Heard in the commentary about jazz' presence in these countries, both among jazz musicians and in these societies more broadly, was adoration of the music seen as containing a specifically modern energy, a progressive spirit whose perfect symbol was America. There was also a sense in other social quarters of this music as a foreign encroachment, as a 'wild,' 'savage,' 'vulgar' threat to traditional ways of life. This vulgarity was often characterized, again, as American; it was also voiced, sometimes discreetly and sometimes not, as specifically African-American (Atkins 2003).

Colonial modern blackness—blackness as a narrow function of its objectification under the forces of modernity and more specifically colonialism, even as it operates as an occluded sign (such as in jazz music) or instrument (most explicitly as enslaved labor) of modern progress—is represented in a range of ways in the more contemporary context of my research on reggae and Rastafari in Japan. These discourses sometimes manifest themselves ambiguously, and in other contexts explicitly; to some extent these extremes align themselves locationally, in Japan and Jamaica, respectively. During this research, I attended dozens of sound system events in Tokyo, Yokohama, and other cities. At many of these events, the MC exhorts his patrons not to let the Jamaicans surpass their level of energy. Perhaps what gives this exhortation its force is the (colonial modern) assumption of Afro-Jamaicans as bearing, as black people, a particular capacity for physical enthusiasm that Japanese supposedly lack. More explicit, however, are the comments of Junko Kudo, the reggae dancer, in an interview with me in

Jamaica, in which she candidly expressed her initial concerns about whether she would be able to compete with Afro-Jamaicans, whom she felt were generally more muscular and in this way more athletic than Japanese. 'Japanese don't have good...muscle,' she said. 'Black people have...more, compared, I feel...I don't have long [legs] like Jamaican...I don't really have a big bottom like... Jamaican people [laughs].' Here, ideas about blackness that have quietly taken root in the Japanese context, that express themselves ambiguously, are erased or not expressed at all in Japan come to the foreground in the encounter with Afro-Jamaicans in Jamaica. Even so, Kudo's comments are in line with the cover of a reggae dance DVD, among many now being produced in Japan, called 'Reggae Body/Muscles Body,' which features two young Japanese women, both with their bared and muscular backs turned to the camera; the DVD is an instructional video explaining how Japanese reggae dancers might go about developing such muscular bodies. The deep brown tan of their skins and the fact that this was a reggae dance DVD clearly references an imagination, similar to that held by Kudo early in her encounters with Jamaicans in Jamaica, of black women as essentially corporeal, a preoccupation with the racially objectified body routinely reflected in many colonial modern representations of blackness around the world.

Japanese who most deeply identify with Rastafari may have a more sensitive appreciation of the movement than most in Japan. However, I have also discovered representations in a range of more mainstream settings—photographs and illustrations appearing in music, style, and other magazines; dolls and figurines; images on t-shirts and other apparel—in which dreadlocked figures are rendered according to visual caricatures of black people as wild, as products of the tropics like the bananas they are often seen to be consuming (these images gain geographic and ethnoracial particularity with Rasta's associations with tropical Jamaica, as opposed to, say, urban African-America). Black people are rendered as simian, in the strikingly familiar black-skinned, thick white- or red-lipped iconography that has found its way around the globe. Despite the particularities of the Japanese situation, including the few black people in the country, these images are striking not only for their visual accord with their Western sources (Goings 1994; Lindsfors 1999; Nederveen 1992), but also for what they ultimately share: the objectification of black people in ways profoundly structured in the assumption—tacit and otherwise—of the inability of black people to speak against these images. This assumption of voicelessness, of an unreciprocated gaze, is built into such representations, and has been a critical aspect of the colonial modern imagination of black people within and beyond the African diaspora.

Such visual stereotypes of Afro-Jamaican corporeality and primitivism have their counterparts in textual representation. The boom in roots reggae and dancehall, as mentioned above, has encouraged many Japanese to travel to

Jamaica. Some of these travelers have written works of non-fiction and fiction on their, or their Japanese characters' experiences in Jamaica. Several of these works (Hirō 1991; Yamakawa 1985) reflect a profound preoccupation with the blackness of black people. There are many references to the bodies of black people that render these bodies into a collection of discrete, remarkable parts. Reiji, the protagonist of Yamakawa's novel, for instance, is a writer who flees the pressures of Tokyo for respite in a more relaxed Jamaica.[1] Reiji constantly refers to the blackness of Jamaicans. 'My shoulder was tapped, and when I turned around, there was the face of an utterly *black-faced* girl' (1985: 19). 'On both sides of the streets, *black-skinned* Jamaicans overflowed' (1985: 48). 'The boy's checkered shirt was torn here and there, and his lustrous *black skin* peeked out' (1985: 88). 'At that moment, right before me, a *black hand* was extended [through the car window]. Without thinking, I pulled back' (1985: 116).

These preoccupations with blackness can be seen to some degree as the reflexive responses of Japanese people to being in a place where everyone is black, in contrast to their home in Japan, where almost everyone is of Asian descent. But unqualified, this preoccupation necessarily becomes situated within a national, as well as international discursive realm in which the bodies of black people have historically been objectified. More problematic in this way is how other representations of the blackness of black people, like the final quote above, invoke originally Western, colonial modern assumptions about the black body in more explicitly negative terms. This includes ideas about this body as bearing a powerful odor. Yamakawa describes Reiji working his way through a crowd of people outside a Jamaican recording studio: 'I walked, as though swimming, through hot air filled with the smell of the body odor of black people, and went inside the studio' (1985: 176). Jah Hirō, author of the novel *Rasutaman bibureeshon* (Rastaman Vibration), writes of his protagonist's attendance at a dancehall event in Brooklyn: 'The underground floor, with a black crowd of several hundred people jostling, was full of the smell of perfume and sweetish-sour body odor, and Gorō felt dizzy' (1991: 188).

The colonial modern renderings of blackness as menacing, again like the final in the series of quotes from the Yamakawa novel, are rendered in such works in other ways, including in gendered terms. Yuko Kimoto, the author of *Honjama jamaika* (1994), describes in this non-fiction work her several trips to Jamaica. On one of these trips, she becomes high on marijuana. Riding a cab with several Jamaican men, she becomes paranoid, thinking that the men are about to assault her. She jumps out of the cab, rolls to a stop, runs to a nearby house and knocks on the door. A white man emerges; she explains that strange men are pursuing her. The author at this point confesses with embarrassment to the reader that she felt she was saved because the man was white. 'He was white so

it was okay...In these situations of imminent [danger], one's true human feelings utterly come out' (Kimoto 1994: 13). While in the Japanese context blackness can be ambiguous, in the Jamaican one, these colonial modern imaginations of blackness (and its counterpoint in whiteness) 'must' be disclosed in the frankest terms to convey with phenomenological intensity one's presence in a place that is darker, more frightening, and so, more exhilarating than home.

The postcolonial

A second term in which discourses of blackness have circulated around the globe is the postcolonial. Blackness in its postcolonial aspect represents a symbol with which peoples of color have sought to come to terms with the legacy of colonial modernity (Fanon 1967). This reckoning, self-conscious and otherwise but viewable in either instance as an effect of the colonial-modern experience, can also involve the creation of politico-cultural spaces and routes that variously come to exist outside the immediate reach of colonial modernity (Roach 1996). The postcolonial incorporates not only major counterpoints to the story of unqualified oppression, but also small-scale, largely unrecorded acts of tactical resistance (Scott 1985).

I use this open phrasing 'come to terms with,' as opposed to, say, 'resist,' out of my view of any given discursive expression as articulated in relation to other discursive expressions. While postcolonial discourses of blackness most obviously manifest themselves in the rhetoric and practices of resistance, as overt rejection of colonial modern ideas and institutions, they can also subtly manifest themselves as adoption of those institutions. This subtle adoption can be seen in the continued operation of colonial ideology in postcolonial societies, in which political and economic elites see their privilege as best sustained by maintaining elements of the colonial order. The disproportionate share of economic and political power still amassed in the hands of the (often lighter-complexioned) elites who came to power during the colonial era (Douglass 1992); national beauty contests in which the winners phenotypically tend toward whiteness and appear less like the colored masses (Rahier 1998); the continued writing and teaching of the histories not of the postcolonial society in question but rather of the colonizer (Hubbard 2000; Campbell 1996; Watson 1982); slavery-era black performance traditions mobilized by these elites in ways that subtly move to foster an ethos of black acquiescence (Thomas 2004); and the willingness to accommodate First World governmental and corporate power in ways that benefit these elites even at the expense of national economic stability (Easterly 2007), all illustrate some terms in which postcolonial societies, including many in which blacks numerically dominate, remain structured in and continue making choices that sustain colonial modern hegemony.

How have postcolonial discourses of blackness been represented in Japan? While as mentioned above much of the early modern Japanese regard for blackness was one of disdain, many Japanese came to see blacks as fellow colored peoples who, like themselves, have had to fight against Western imperial and economic domination on the global stage. Yukiko Koshiro (2003) has noted that during the Reconstruction period that followed the American Civil War, some Japanese came to view African-American political leaders, businessmen and educators as standard bearers for the possibilities of colored peoples' accomplishment if freed from Western domination. Japanese communists, she further notes, have viewed African-Americans as potential allies whose cause reflected their own, albeit primarily in class-based rather than racial terms. She notes that burakumin, too, have made connections between their situation and that of African-Americans in ways that are inclusive of but also transcend class, recognizing the common ways—caste-based and occupational in the case of the burakumin and modern racial in the case of African Americans—in which they are stigmatized as 'impure' people.

Although Japan was never colonized, its relationship with the West generally and with the United States during the occupation in particular evidence many of the issues that postcolonial societies face. During the occupation, Japan went through a period of soul searching given its involvement in this extraordinarily destructive war, and sought political institutional, economic, and other cues from the West in its efforts toward recovery. This period, as was true during the Meiji and Taishō eras, witnessed great receptivity to American popular culture. While Japanese engagement with African-American musical culture during this period as well as subsequently was one expression of identification with the American, this musical culture would also come to facilitate critique of the American, as well as a Japanese political order viewed as complicit with it. The Vietnam War and counterculture movement occasioned a heightened Japanese engagement with black popular music. Not unlike white and other youth then, before, and today, 'disaffected Japanese youth came to see the African–American as a counter to the values of the Japanese establishment, and the black Other was adopted as a symbol of defiance, forbidden fruit, and their own alienation from the Japanese mainstream' (Russell 1991a: 20–21). Among the ways in which this figuration of the black Other appeared in the Japanese media, Russell notes, was the subsequent writing of a number of authors, including Murakami Ryū (1976) and Yamada Eimi (1987), who have fictionalized to spectacular press the sexual relationships between black men—often American military personnel—and Japanese women. Black men in these works are often sexually stereotyped, metonymically reduced to their phalluses (Russell 1991a). In this way, ironically, representations of the black male idealized as a figure of resistance can be discursively linked with colonial modern representations of this black male as less than human. This speaks to the strategic, situational terms in which the flexible metaphor of blackness is employed, the way that these discourses are opportunistically (as opposed to singularly or categorically) mobilized to inform each other.

Colonial modern readings of blackness as abject emerges from an awareness of the historical struggles of black people that also potentially facilitate an appreciation of this blackness (or the appearance of such an appreciation, however successful or sincere) in more empathetic terms. The story of modern African slavery has indeed travelled to many parts of the world, where blackness has come to stand in fraught postcolonial counterpoint to the apparent hegemony of whiteness, or hegemony in general, including, as suggested above, not only in racial, but also caste, class-based, gendered, and other terms. With regard to gender, Karen Kelsky (1994) notes that Japanese women sometimes date Western men, including black men, as a sign of resistance against Japanese patriarchy. With focus on Japan's hip-hop scene, Nina Cornyetz (1996) emphasizes the fact that Japanese women have chosen not just Western, but more specifically African-American men. She views the particularity of this choice as significant, holding as she does these relationships between Japanese women and black men as potentially destabilizing colonial modern (both Western and Japanese) assumptions of white masculinity as always preferable to black masculinity. On the intersection of blackness and other social politics in Japanese hip-hop culture, Ian Condry (2006) criticizes the tendency to evaluate the authenticity of Japanese hip-hop in terms of American racial politics. Despite the different contexts in which Japanese and African-American hip-hop are situated, and despite the fact that much of Japanese, like African-American hip-hop can be decidedly apolitical, he notes that some Japanese hip-hop artists mobilize hip-hop's status as protest music to criticize American political power in the world. This includes King Giddra's song and music video, '911,' in which the artist mourns the murder of thousands of New Yorkers on September 11, 2001, while condemning American violence toward Afghan refugees, the Japanese victims of atomic bombing during World War II, and other victims of American power around the world.

Japanese engagement with Jamaican culture strongly reflects postcolonial discourses of blackness claimed as a metaphor through which to negotiate colonial modern hegemony in its various guises. Many of my interviewees as well as authors writing about Japanese travel to Jamaica expressed a strong Japanese identification with Afro-Jamaican people (even where this identification can involve Jamaican stereotyping), including given mutual Jamaican and Japanese struggle in the face of Western hegemony. One dub musician, for

instance, railed against the evidence of Western influence all across the city where he lived, pointing to the many signs in English as we drove along its streets. Hirō's *Rasutaman bibureeshon*, mentioned above, registers a steady complaint against Western power. At one point in the novel, Gorō, the main character, a disaffected Tokyo construction worker, is introduced to an article entitled, 'Rastafarianism and Starving Africa.' The article begins with a long quote by a scholar who describes Rastafari as an Afrocentric movement that asserts the continent's religion, culture, sciences, and technology as the world's greatest. The leaders of the West, far from heeding Rasta petitions for reparation and repatriation, only wish to continue their exploitation of African people in the form of low wage labor. The friend who introduces Gorō to the article himself notes that through Western predation, 'the villages' self-sufficient economic structure was destroyed, and is one reason for hunger in Africa...The advanced countries of the West, including Japan, are involved in the exploitation of the now independent African states as well. With the value of farm produce low, the greater part becomes the profit of the industries of the advanced countries' (1991: 103–104). This criticism of Japan's complicity in the domination of the Third World is meant to facilitate a more positive relationship between Japan and Africa. Many Japanese reggae songs, too, bear this 'Afro-Asian,' anti-Western theme. Nanjaman, for instance, much like King Giddra, in 'Born Japanese,' links his complaint against European theft of the lands of Jamaica's indigenous people, and the enslavement of Africans later brought to the island, to America's dropping of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima. This, Nanjaman dryly observes, is the country 'everyone yearns for.'

Although Jamaican roots reggae is so strongly influenced by a Rastafari that has historically been skeptical about Jamaican national identification, and despite a national motto of 'Out of Many, One People,' Jamaican reggae has often been the venue through which Jamaican artists have expressed pride in the nation often specifically articulated as black (Carnegie 1996), and linked to the African motherland (here the Rasta position is more fully accommodated). Much of Japanese reggae mimetically reflects this musical valorization of the racial national and (East Asian) regional, which thus constitutes, in addition to Japanese identification with Afro-Jamaicans against the West, second and third racialized aspects of the Japanese postcolonial engagement with Jamaican culture. Japanese dancehall artist Ryo the Skywalker, in 'Nishimuku Samarui' (Samurai Facing West), instructs his (presumably Japanese) listeners (in patois) to 'seh [say] yu proud to be yellow'; Osaka based deejay Miki Dōzan in 'Japan Ichiban,' implores his listeners to feel proud about their racial appearance, including their skin color (*'Orera no hada no iro sugata katachi dō mitemo utsukushii.'*) As an example of Japanese adoption of Jamaican reggae's racialized expressions of national pride through identification with other yellow peoples throughout Asia, the artist Hibikilla in 'Appare Japan' (Honorable Japan) articulates Japan as a unique distillation of such Chinese influences as kanji, and raises the possibility that the Emperor was descended from the ancient Korean kingdom of Kudara (Watts 2001). This message strongly resonates with the 'peace and love' message with which Rastafari and reggae are internationally associated. I have argued elsewhere (Sterling 2010) that reggae's appeal for many Japanese in the recessionary era concerns its associations with a simpler, more naturalistic lifestyle; these calls for Pan-Asian unity, like the claims for pan-African unity with which Rasta and roots reggae are strongly associated, resonate with Koichi Iwabuchi's (2002) assertions that recessionary Japan's recent 'popular Asianism' invokes an imagination of Asia as bearing a modernizing vitality that Japan has lost. This apparent compliment is problematic, of course, since it discreetly positions vital Asia (much like developing Jamaica) as backward in relation to a fully modernized, albeit now stagnant, Japan. It sits uncomfortably with the Japanese cultural nationalist valorizations of *yamato damashii*, given the tensions that exist between Japan and its former colonial subjects in the former colonies as well as in Japan itself.

The global postmodern

Although no longer dominating the social sciences the way it did a few years ago, postmodern theory deeply informs the globalization theory that has in some measure taken its place of prominence. 'Global postmodern' blackness are those discourses—including, as with the other two discourses, the inherent tensions—formed around the unsettling, global circulation and local re-seeding of representations of blackness according to contemporary social and economic developments in much of the world today, developments of central concern in both bodies of theory. Among the concerns addressed by each is what in postmodern theory would be characterized as a cosmopolitan appetite for hybridization, aesthetic fragmentation, and pastiche, and in cultural globalization as the concern with how cultural material from around the world has become grist for the mill of this appetite (Hall 1997a, 1997b). This is related to a second link between postmodern and globalization theories that define my use of the term global postmodern: the centrality in both of late capitalism (Jameson 1991). In both bodies of theory, global capitalism drives the identification of potentially profitable local cultural expression, its packaging and global circulation as product, and its diverse local reseedings around the globe. Key among the social and economic forces that have shaped global postmodern discourses of

blackness, then, is a capitalism which drives the mass production and circulation of black cultural expression originating from given sites in the African diaspora to new spaces.

Colonial-modern artifacts, performance modalities, and visual caricatures of black people have been in circulation in the United States, Europe, Asia, Latin America, and even Africa all throughout modernity (Lindfors 1999; Pieterse 1992; Goings 1994). Postcolonial-minded Rastafarians are said to have identified Haile Selassie as their returned messiah upon reading newspaper accounts and seeing photographs of his coronation in 1930, and are similarly said to have started wearing the dreadlocks with which the movement is now closely associated on seeing similar photographs of the Mau-Mau, freedom fighters in British East Africa who wore their hair in this manner (Chevannes 1994). The global circulation of representations of blackness, then, is by no means particular to global postmodernity. And yet, the global postmodern remains distinguished from the colonial modern, and postcolonial production and circulation of black representation by the intensity with which these processes occur. This intensity is an immediate function of the borderless profit-seeking of neoliberal capitalist production and consumption, of accelerated developments of media and technology in which people and cultural materials rapidly traverse the globe.

Blackness in the colonial-modern and postcolonial context, furthermore, has tended to be *representational*—the Venus Hottentot, for instance, as 'African Woman.' This is racial representation in the spirit of objective, scientifically rationalized representation of human diversity. But of course, such representations are also often *morally associative*. The Venus Hottentot onstage, as an object of knowledge, discloses her condition as a subjugated and thus supposedly lesser person. The global postmodern can bear the above elements, but is distinguished by its *hyper-reflexive* quality. There have long been individuals and institutions—the authors of slave narratives, abolitionist societies and the like—that have reflected on race, slavery, and colonialism, its imagined propriety and its actual ills (Seymour 2009). In the (global) postmodern context, however, race is more routinely, more profoundly recognized as a 'socially constructed idea' that is, as such, subject to deconstruction. Underlying postmodern representations of blackness are a politics of representation in which gestures (however sincere) are sometimes made about the progressive intent behind these representations, but in which another dimension of these politics, those internal to representation itself, often ends up trumping these gestures. This happens in ways that clarify the difficulty of politically progressive representations of blackness, given the very nature of representation as reduction. For example, Jah Hirō narratively frames Gorō's 'choice' of Rastafari as stemming from a chance encounter with

a Jamaican Rastafarian playing drums on a sidewalk in Tokyo.[2] But although Gorō, as a result of this encounter, embarks upon an international journey into the Third World to commune with his fellow colored, Afro-Jamaican brethern, Hirō, in *representing* this encounter, mobilizes those familiar imaginings of the blackness of black people. Representation is essentially a means by which, through a symbolic system, a more complex reality is essentialized to make it sensorially accessible to the consumer, in ways that defy the immediacies of time and place. In the case of Hirō's representations of blackness, a gap persists between representation as reduction returnable to the real in instructive and insightful ways, and representation as reduction collapsing in on itself as a consumable stereotype.

Discourses of blackness dominated by colonial modern and postcolonial tendencies write within or against colonial modernity. This situation in which not only stereotypes about the black man as armed and fond of sports are represented, but also *knowledge of* the social constructedness of these stereotypes is ironically re-presented for mass consumption, write very much within a postmodern moment. Such readings of blackness, then, pose a risk of reducing blackness to depoliticized chimera, as fodder for postmodern play. This tension between race as depoliticized representation and race as ongoing, politically charged social reality through which people continue to define their sense of who they are, is key in my use of the term 'global postmodern.'

The 'postmodern' in 'global postmodern,' then, speaks to the political complexities involved in navigating and (seemingly) transcending the modern master narrative of race. The 'global' speaks to the configuration of power between nation states in the movement of ethnoracial cultural material and peoples from one site to the next. First world governments, multinational corporations, international lending institutions and other major players on the stage of neoliberal capitalism dominate much of the semiotic globe given their capacity to locate, finance, (re-)produce, market, circulate, and consume image, sound and text as commodity, including those associated with ethnoracial difference. Japan presents an interesting case. 'Cool Japan' (McGray 2002) has an enormous presence on the global cultural stage, given the international popularity of its animation, horror films, comic books, cuisine, fashion, and athletes (Napier 2000). Japan is not only a major first world producer of global culture: 'postmodern Japan' (Miyoshi and Harootunian 1989) is also renown as a major first world consumer of cultural material from all over the world. As discussed above, this includes contemporary African-American musical cultural expression such as hip-hop. Condry (2006) argues importantly for the need to view hip-hop not so much according to the racial politics of the United States, but rather according

to the social politics found in Japan. Doing so facilitates appreciation of hip-hop more fully on Japanese terms. It is a way of overcoming the marginalization of Japanese hip-hop as *not* (African) American, as imitation rooted in nothing nearly as 'real' as the racial and economic inequality (Rose 1994) out of which American hip-hop emerged (given Japan's status as a relatively safe society with a purportedly homogenous middle class).

This cautioning, however, is situated in a difficult place, between recognition of the need to analytically respect the efforts of Japanese artists dismissed as imitators, and the need to acknowledge legitimate African-American concerns about the way they have historically been denied the financial benefits of their creative labor. These issues manifest themselves in other African-American musical expressions, like jazz (Atkins 2003); they also do so among Japanese practitioners of reggae and Rasta. In a sense, this tension between the pursuit of black cultural expression as constructed within the original sites of production and as fair game for international cooption becomes more pronounced given Jamaica's status as a third world country. While reggae and Rasta is all there is for many Jamaicans who wish to challenge the inequities they experience in their economic, spiritual, and racial political lives, for most Japanese reggae and Rasta are simply two more items on the crammed shelves of the global cultural supermarket (Mathews 1996). The popularity of reggae music in Japan has been profoundly commoditized, used to sell such items, often in the colors of the Rastafarian or Jamaican flags (red, yellow, and green; and green, black, and yellow, respectively), as clothing and accessories (watches, handbags, belts, hats, shoes); books (novels, music guides, music biographies, travel guides, travelogues, and other works of non-fiction); reggae CDs; concert and instructional reggae dance videos; and even pornography DVDs featuring 'real reggae dancers' (Sterling 2010). In the latter case, commercial ethnoracial and gendered objectification become interlinked. One of these DVDs goes by the name of 'Black Dance': the Afro-Jamaican ethnic and subcultural nuances of reggae dance are reduced to racial blackness, and blackness in turn to sexual exhibition.[3]

Above I identified heightened consumer-driven reflexivity as a key aspect of global postmodern blackness (a reflexivity routinely found in many other arenas of contemporary Japanese life). This reflexivity does not simply reference the Japanese person who wears the signs of Rasta, dancehall or roots reggae identification in one-to-one equivalence. More ambiguously, it invites questions about who the individual 'is.' This ambiguity achieves particular resonance in Japan given the individual's engagement with black subculture in a country with few black people. Of course, actual questions about the person's identity are rarely asked, except by anthropologists, as in the case of my encounter with a

dreadlocked bartender at a reggae bar in Tokyo in 1998. I asked the man, quite innocently, if he was Rastafarian; a profound look of embarrassment crossed his face. He explained that his dreadlocks were an expression of his identification with reggae music, but that he did not know much at all about Rastafari. While I also often met—and focused my research on—Japanese who were not only very knowledgeable about Rastafari, but who pursued Rastafari as the central guide of their spiritual lives, most Japanese who wore their hair in dreadlocks were like this man I met.

The man's embarrassment was perhaps a response to the fact that he was being asked this question by someone who is black, to whom he felt his dreadlocked appearance was somehow disrespectful. Ashley Carruthers writes about a similar situation in which two Japanese women in Japan wearing a Vietnamese *ao dai* dress encounter and quickly apologize to a Vietnamese man (2004). Carruthers interprets:

> the women's embarrassment...as a painful moment of recognition of themselves as mirrored in the gaze of the Vietnamese-Japanese. Suddenly confronted with an actual Vietnamese subject, the women were overcome with shame at the thought that he might somehow 'mind' them wearing *ao dai*. The shocking and contingent appearance of this Japanese-speaking Vietnamese man shatters entirely the *ao dai* wearers' fantasy of a subjectless Vietnamese exotic, leaving them stranded in the gaze of an other whose very existence they experience as a mute reproach. (2004: 424–425)

Much of my discussion has positioned Japanese as the citizens of a first world nation that consumes an Afro-Jamaica—like Vietnam in much of the popular Japanese imaginary—discreetly understood as 'mute' and without subjectivity. This Afro-Jamaica is fixed and re-presented in a Japanese consumerist gaze structured in the impossibility of reciprocation. Yet, although on very different economic scales, Japan, like Jamaica, has recently been negatively subjected to the forces of economic globalization (Yoda and Harootunian 2006). Furiitaa—'free-timers' lacking full-time employment—and others disaffected by the long recession are now freer to engage in musical subcultural and other pursuits not only domestically but also as 'lifestyle migrants' in places like London, New York, and Paris (Fujita 2009). The Third World represents a key site in this endeavor (Yoshikawa 1999); this includes travel to places like Jamaica. Global postmodernity, then, as the complex global movement of fragmented media representation (in this case of reggae and Rastafari from Jamaica to Japan) and, under the influence of this mass-mediation, of people (from Japan to Jamaica); and global postmodernity as

facilitating the mutual marginalization of Japanese and Jamaican youth under the forces of neoliberal capitalism, constitutes a significant dimension of the socio-economic context in which these youth encounter each other in Jamaica.

Blackness as represented on international music video television stations, in music and fashion magazines, and other such sources have an important bearing on the global imagination of places like Jamaica as cool. But in the pursuit of this cool, many Japanese actually travelling to Jamaica encounter poverty and struggle profoundly at odds with the glossy, sunset-bathed images of inner city life presented in these media.[4] My interviewees almost routinely reported great surprise about the depth of poverty when they first travelled there. The member of one sound system commented: 'It was really shocking for me, the first time I saw the situation. You know. Out from Japan, New York, straight into Jamaica and see the old shacks, people living in there, so much kids running around ... barefoot and all that, it was a real culture shock for me.' While the harshness of the Jamaican experience becomes an opportunity for some Japanese travelers to revalorize Japan, it brings home for others a deeper appreciation of the sociopolitical realities—including the racial ones of Jamaica's status as, in many ways, a neocolonial society—out of which reggae and Rastafari emerged.

I have already discussed how blackness is represented in works of fiction and non-fiction by and about Japanese travelling to Jamaica, and the ways they invoke the colonial modern and postcolonial discourses of blackness (such as, respectively, stereotypes of the Afro-Jamaican body, and Afro-Jamaicans as being allied with Japanese given their mutual marginalization in the eyes of the West). But as an example of the imagination of blackness analytically reframed in the global postmodern terms of the neoliberal consumerist, multinational corporate fragmentation of Afro-Jamaican cultural expression—in terms of its resituation and rearticulation in Japan and, focally here, in terms of the politics of the encounter between recessionary Japanese youth and economically struggling Jamaicans in Jamaica—I want to discuss the tensions between Japanese sound systems and some of their Jamaican counterparts. While in the Japanese context Afro-Jamaican blackness is more readily managed—demonized, valorized, coolly occluded—to fit a social space in which there are few black people, in Jamaica, where Japanese sound system crew travel to hone their craft, they encounter real Afro-Jamaicans. As complex human beings and not just mass-media figurations, neither mute nor without interpersonal subjectivity, these Afro-Jamaicans do not simply exist to facilitate Japanese practitioners' reggae and Rasta identifications. Indeed, while many Jamaicans are welcoming to Japanese and see Japanese interest in reggae as yet another sign of reggae's cultural power in the world, others contest these Japanese reggae and Rasta identifications, sometimes in problematic ways.

Among the most publicized of these is the tension between Japanese sound system Mighty Crown and Jamaican DJ Bounty Killer. Bounty Killer, long one of the top dancehall artists in Jamaica, during a sound clash in which Mighty Crown was competing, scolded the rest of the field—all Jamaican—for having been recently beaten by Mighty Crown. He questioned why it was that this Japanese sound system should be speaking in patois, and said he did not believe that Mighty Crown plays Jamaican records better than any of the many great Jamaican sound systems he proceeded to mention. He encouraged Mighty Crown to engage in pursuits more appropriate for the Japanese, like the martial arts. These comments are, of course, obnoxious, even beyond the ritual antagonisms routinely heard in sound system clashes. But without attempting to justify them, the sentiment that underlies these remarks speak directly to the politics of blackness, in this case Afro-Jamaican blackness, in the global postmodern era. Through his comments, Bounty Killer positions himself as speaking on behalf of Jamaicans—particularly poor Afro-Jamaicans who tend to be most drawn to dancehall—for whom dancehall is an intimate cultural expression through which to enjoy their lives as best they can despite being cast on the national and international margins. He imagines himself as speaking on behalf of Jamaicans who skeptically view the Japanese presence in dancehall as yet another moment in a long history of first world 'discovery' of and desire to exploit Jamaican music, to deprive another generation of Jamaican musicians of the benefits of their creative labor.

Conclusions

In this paper I have explored Japan as one site from which to consider the circulation of discourses of blackness around the world. Positioning the Japanese case as an underexplored thus instructive instance of extra-diasporic constructions of blackness, I identified the colonial modern, the postcolonial and the global postmodern as three major, mutually informed discursive terms through which ideas of blackness have traversed the modern world. I focused on the case of Jamaican popular and religious culture in the country to provide ethnographic substance to the way in which these discourses are mobilized. The insights revealed and possibilities for further research are to some degree particular to this case. Yet it suggests the need for future research on how discourses of blackness are articulated more generally in relation to race around the world. While the focus of my general research has been on Jamaican religious and popular cultural expression in Japan, the encounter between Japanese and Jamaicans *in Jamaica* reveal that among the ways cultures travel (Clifford 1997)

is in the form of inchoate ideas about distant racial others becoming awkwardly mobilized in an encounter with these others overseas. When Kimoto, fleeing her imagined black persecutors, feels embarrassed relief upon discovering that it is a white man who opens the door, this suggests not only psychosocially deep-rooted (albeit ganja-induced) anxieties about black masculinity, but also the relation of such anxieties to similarly deep-rooted identifications with whiteness. Conversely, although Jamaicans have until recently had few encounters with Japanese, the readiness of Bounty Killer's remarks suggests how some Jamaicans' perceptions of Japanese are dominated by Orientalist stereotypes of Japanese as martial artists and ninjas, geisha and samurai. An opportunity for future study, then, might be exploring not only other instances of the colonial modern, postcolonial, and global postmodern representations of blackness, not only the way in which whiteness and Asianness might be articulated according to these discourses (the degree to which, for instance, Orientalism might be viewed as colonial modern Asianness), but also the way these discourses intersect with and inform each other.

9
Effects of Human Migration on Genome Diversity in East Asia

Hiroki Oota and Mark Stoneking

Background

According to population genetics theory, an ideal 'population' is defined as a spatio-temporal group of interbreeding individuals who share a common gene pool. That's a lot of big words, but the concept is pretty simple: in the ideal theoretical situation, populations have boundaries in both time and space, that thus set them apart from other populations, and individuals within a population interbreed more often with other members of the same population than with members of different populations. From a population genetics standpoint, it is the gene pool (the set of alleles, or variants, at each gene) that is of paramount importance, not the individuals who make up the population, because individuals die out, but the gene pool lives on from generation to generation. So far, so good—but problems arise because the terminology is imprecise, and in reality human groups do not conform to this ideal, theoretical situation. The major question then becomes; how and where do we set the boundaries that define a population? In practice, the boundaries themselves are defined by non-biological categories. Moreover, boundaries are not inviolate, but rather permeable: migration between populations can and does occur, thereby shifting the composition of the gene pool over time. Further, there are many different levels at which one can define the population a particular individual belongs to. For example, a native of the Reudnitz neighborhood of Leipzig, Germany could be classified as belonging to the population of Reudnitz (as opposed to other neighborhoods in Leipzig), the population of Leipzig (as opposed to other cities in Saxony), the population of Saxony (as opposed to other German states), the population of eastern Germany (as opposed to other geographic regions of Germany), the population of Germany (as opposed to other European countries), the population of northern Europe (as opposed to other geographic regions of Europe), the population of western Eurasia (as opposed to other regions of