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*New WORLD Theater Archives*Asian American Women Playwrights
in Western Massachusetts

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In the early 1990s, Roberta Uno, founding artistic director of New WORLD Theater, created a collection currently called the Roberta Uno Asian American Women Playwrights Scripts Collection at the University of Massachusetts Amherst.¹ Housed at the W. E. B. Du Bois Library, this extraordinary collection currently contains more than two hundred plays as well as supplementary materials documenting the work of Asian American women playwrights. While the collection contains the writings of many contemporary playwrights, such as Alice Tuan, Jeannie Barroga, and Velina Hasu Houston, it also houses rare materials by early writers, including those of Gladys Ling-ai Li, a Hawai'i-based playwright whose play was staged in New York as early as 1924.² My discussion of the emergence of this particular archiving project is embedded in multiple understandings of the term "archive" and of the processes of "archiving" within the specific context of Asian American women playwrights. I use "archive" and "archiving" here to mean the gathering of objects, in this case plays by Asian American women, for preservation and centralization of access. I deploy these terms to refer equally to the process by which an institutional entity emerges as a source of and material site for plays by Asian American women. Such a history of the Uno Collection is thus grounded in an understanding of archival projects as always already engaged in entangled structures of poetics, power, and politics.³

The Uno Collection is unique in that it is one of the few institutions to specifically archive the plays of Asian American women playwrights.⁴ Crucial here is that it is directly attached to a theater company and a university. The works of Asian American women playwrights may be found in other collections, such as the East West Players (housed at the University of Cal-

ifornia, Los Angeles) and the Asian American Theater Company (housed at the University of California, Santa Barbara). These companies' official archives primarily store scripts of plays that have been produced in their season productions while individual theater companies usually oversee and fund their own preservation and documentation processes.⁵ Centralized archiving institutions such as the New York Public Library's Performing Arts Library have, over the years, amassed an equally formidable collection of diverse dramatic materials. A repository of plays/performance texts by Asian American women, I will suggest, figures the very dynamics of archival formation, not simply as a site of preservation but rather as a venue for theorizing processes of production, dissemination, and appropriation. I analyze the emergence of the Uno Collection primarily through an engagement with debates around archivization in Asian American Studies and Performance Studies. To do so, I delineate a strategic overview of the contents of this archive, highlighting a few key works and artists. Such an effort moves beyond the language of summary to signal an "imagined community" of Asian American women playwrights made possible through the creation of the Uno Collection, a community otherwise effaced within the vastness and whiteness of American theater. My essay closes with a set of provocations that emerges from the formation and institutionalization of archives such as the Uno Collection.

Genealogies, Archives, Politics

While this essay tells the story of the specific emergence of the Uno Collection, I first briefly rehearse issues central to the question of "archive" in both Performance Studies and Asian American Studies. In doing so, I intend to frame the story of the Uno Collection within and outside the politics of established archival practice. The foundation of the Uno Collection extends and complicates such inherited genealogies of archival formation in Asian American and Performance Studies. The emergence (temporally and spatially) of the Uno Collection in western Massachusetts foregrounds the archival convergences and divergences of Asian American Studies and Performance Studies. I am especially interested in some of the shared archival preoccupations of these two fields and their intersection with a community-based project such as the Uno Collection. As Performance Studies scholar Diana Taylor writes, "What makes an object archival is the *process whereby it is selected, classified, and presented for analysis*" (19; emphasis added). For Taylor the emergence of an object as "archival" is an active and conscious un-

dertaking that involves deliberate classification, selection, and presentation. Taylor's insistence on the active, embodied, and historical practices of archival formation is key to my concerns on the practice of archiving and its relationship to performative expressions of community and self-identity. As I will demonstrate, the process of building the Uno Collection, and by extension any archive, is one of calling up a community into being.

Archiving practices in the fields of Theater and Performance Studies and Asian American Studies have elaborated common concerns around what and who gets archived. In Theater and Performance Studies, the question of what constitutes archival objects is complicated by performance and embodiment that are not captured in text-based materials. Taylor's critically acclaimed *The Archive and Repertoire* propels debates on archive and performance within Theater and Performance Studies. She critiques the process that led up to the dominance of texts as *the* objects that make up the archive. She proposes the "repertoire" as an alternative concept for the archival formation, underscoring the embodied and textured forms of recording and performing history. Useful here is Taylor's emphasis on how the social relations produced by historical conditions directly influence what gets constituted as archival objects. More specifically, Taylor has provocatively argued that European colonialism (as historical condition) produced domination and hegemony as determining social relations that naturalized the written text and writing as objects worthy of archiving. That is, the colonial archive's privileging of text-based materials routinely suppressed other forms of expressions. By offering the idea of the repertoire, Taylor proposes an alternative that shifts a text-based paradigm toward the inclusion of embodied expressions of self- and community identity.

Such a shift in archival practices has been prominent in Asian American Studies, a field formation preoccupied with the (re)collection of silenced and lost voices, disappeared and distorted by racism in U.S. society. More generally, Asian American Studies has vigorously promoted a "community-based" first-voice perspective that prioritizes the point of view of Asians in America. Academics play a key role in the recovery and constitution of archives as they can be made to mobilize the resources of the university to support the community. Asian American Studies encourages projects that break down the hierarchical relationship between academia and community, that are driven by community needs, and that make a recognizable impact on the community. Scholarship production within Asian American Studies must be understood as a transformative project that should be accessible and relevant to the community. As the field of Asian American Studies dynamically changes and adjusts, its commitment to recovery proj-

ects and to community continues even as it struggles to account for what Lisa Lowe calls Asian America's "heterogeneity, hybridity, and multiplicity."⁶ At stake here is a sustained interrogation of the ideological entailments that fuel and fracture Asian American Studies' historical attachment to the very idea of the community and the archive. Thus, any invocation of the Uno Collection must necessarily engage its situatedness at the cusp of multiple archival initiatives: a performance studies project that focuses on the inclusion of embodied self and community expressions and an Asian American Studies project that attempts recovery amidst the detritus of historical racism and elision.

The Uno Collection provides a key instantiation of the force of multiple archival logics. As I elaborate later, the Uno Collection disrupts, even transforms, what Asian American Studies historian Stephen Sumida has termed the hegemony of the "Californic-paradigm" or the "Pacific-dominated" paradigm within Asian American Studies (86). Sumida's description of Asian American Studies' earlier trajectory productively critiques the dominance of scholarship and institutional formations that "originate" in California, the *unmarked* point of origin for the Asian American Studies imaginary. His formulation challenges Asian American Studies scholars to examine closely privileged intellectual and political constructs such as the concept of community, so key to any teleology of minority development. Sumida's call for a re-imagining of Asian American Studies de-links location, majority, and longevity as primary categories for the composition and emergence of community. Within such re-imaginings, the concept of community becomes primarily a space of the imagination, anchored to narratives that may or may not be attached to more conventional geographies of Asian migration.

The Uno Collection is an artist-centered archiving process in which the artists determine the contents of the collection. It is an exemplar of the multiple forms through which a community chooses to record (or disappear) itself. Here, the artist chooses what she submits to the archive, thereby maintaining partial control of the archiving process and what it might mean to her. It is also thus a vivid and strikingly "living archive."⁷ In this context, this "living archive" refers to how these materials are attached to a place of production. The allusion to "liveness" foregrounds the continued process of archival evolution (if you will), and the life of the works archived in it. Of equal significance is that the Uno Collection is directly connected to a theater-producing institution, one that supports and manages the "liveness" of the archive. From its inception, the Uno Collection was designed to expand and remain active. The Uno Collection's affiliation with an educational institution that incorporates the contents of the archive into the

curriculum clearly authorizes some of the frames through which the works and the artists in this archive, and the archive itself, may be understood and interpreted. In other words, the Uno Collection is housed within a structure that can produce knowledge about itself, even as it continues to emerge as a space of knowledge formation. In what follows, I detail Uno Collection's histories of emergence within a multiracial theater company and an Asian American-led organization drawn from the hub of Asian American communities in New England.

*A New WORLD, A New Archive: Global Theater
in Rural Massachusetts*

to have my work archived means
i have a voice beyond myself
to have my work archived
with other Asian American women writers means
i am part of a community of women
diverse in experiences, cultures, generations
and artistic expressions
to have my work archived means
it is possible that some distant day
a young sister struggling for her voice,
might stumble upon us and realize,
hey, these women have lived and found a way to tell their stories
i can do it too
to have my work archived means
my voice is part of the colorful, unruly, eurythmic choir that is Americana
—Nobuko Miyamoto

I imagine my words blending among sister playwrights, as safe as a locket, as independent as stone. My daughters and my daughters' daughters will move on, but I smile knowing they have a glimpse of who I once was.
—Louella Dizon

Any discussion of the Uno Collection of plays by Asian American women must include an understanding of the organization that formed and continues to coordinate this project in process. As mentioned earlier, this archive project was initiated and established by the NWT's founding director

Roberta Uno. One may well ask, what is a nearly thirty-year-old-theater by, about, and, for people of color doing in the hinterlands of western Massachusetts? Perhaps such a question no longer needs to be asked, but in 1979, when playwright, director, and premed student Roberta Uno had just dreamed up the idea of a multiracial, global theater company, it was one that did not seem to belong in a rural western Massachusetts town.⁸ Uno notes the racial context of the Pioneer Valley in the early years of NWT:

I founded the New WORLD Theater in 1979, at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, as a student-organizing project, when students of color numbered a marginal 6 percent at the University and were minimally reflected in campus life or curriculum. The founding vision was to create a theatrical space that would offer a contemporary program of works by Black, Latino, Asian, and Native Americans, a repertory that was completely invisible within the existing arts environment of the region. The theater was founded while apartheid was still the rule in South Africa, and it drew parallels between supporting the anti-apartheid movement and combating racial and cultural de facto segregation in America. (“Introduction,” *The Color of Theater* 7)

From its inception, New WORLD Theater, formerly named Third World Theater, filled a lacuna in the academic curriculum; it asserted narrative and aesthetic points of view that were underrepresented and directly excluded in the canon of American theater. NWT's mission exceeded strict university boundaries. After all, those who worked at the university belonged to other social networks outside of the university. Hence, this artistic organization serviced and found its support from those in the local community who sought and believed in the labor of culture in calling up a community.

In its early years, NWT productions primarily operated within the politics of inclusion through representation. In other words, they staged plays to present stories and experiences of people of color not typically dramatized on American stage. Their productions confronted and defied racism in the larger American society and in its microcosm, American theater. An artistic team of actors and designers, who were students as well as nonuniversity theater artists living in western Massachusetts, usually made up NWT's artistic, technical, and administrative staff. Yet from the very beginning, Uno was clear that the NWT project was not primarily about *integration*. She did not see this project as solely about claiming its rightful place within an existing canon or caliber of standards in American theater. As Uno elaborates,

New WORLD Theater, as a theater of artists of color, was never an *integration* project, we were a *desegregation* project — and that is an important distinction. We never intended to join the existing structure of American theater or higher education. Nor did we aspire to reform those structures. Our goal was, as artists, to gain access to the means of production, however temporally, and transform the environment. We knew we were the people who weren't supposed to be there in the first place. And we have been creating "guerrilla" transformations of spaces — formal theater space and informal community space — for twenty-two years. ("Being Present: Theater and Social Change" 71)

NWT was focused on setting its own sets of standards that accounted for what mainstream white American theater did not. It was, and continues to be, a project of paradigm transformation, and thus was not an exclusionary project. To this day, NWT supports all theater artists who imagine a new world, who offer a vision of transformation. True to its desire to disrupt standards, the renaming from Third World Theater to New WORLD Theater signaled a forward-looking and more capacious politics. While "Third World" described the politics that imagined the emergence of NWT, "New WORLD" signified a dynamic politics of always imagining new ways of being, creating, and relating.

NWT's multidimensional programming commitments that included producing and presenting theatrical works simultaneously involved collecting playscripts and supplementary materials and occasionally artist interviews. Artistic director Uno taught University of Massachusetts Amherst courses — such as "Third World Theater," "American Theater and Race," and "Contemporary Plays by Women of Color" — that integrated the theater's season productions into the course curriculum. These courses were laboratories for theorizing a radical genre of work, where frameworks and approaches included inquiry into modes and means of production and circulation. NWT also presented touring works by artists, in addition to producing and developing new works.⁹ Hence, visiting artists gave classroom lectures, offering the students an opportunity to engage with the performance, dramatic literature, and aesthetic in the works of contemporary artists of color. It also trained students in skills such as oral history by assigning, for example, artist interviews that become part of the archival collection. At a personal level, I directly benefited from this pedagogical practice as a student and a teacher in training. Our intellectual and artistic training urged us to reimagine the archival process as one of transparency and collaboration, as opposed to one of surveillance and cataloguing.¹⁰

Initially, Uno had reservations about establishing an archive of this sig-

nificance in western Massachusetts. She had been collecting scripts and did not necessarily have a consistent system of storing these materials. She was also working on her first anthology of plays by Asian American women, *Unbroken Thread*. Uno considered sending the scripts to a place where the materials would be more accessible to a geographical and institutional center that had a large, established Asian American community, as well as an academic institution that already supported Asian American Studies.¹¹ Ultimately however, Uno's choice to build this archive at the University of Massachusetts Amherst (in western Massachusetts) is a statement about Asian American community formation in the United States: "We are everywhere, and such spaces [the university, western Massachusetts, the archive] belong to us as well" ("Introduction," *Unbroken Thread* 3). Thus the Uno Collection is not only archiving an emergent culture (the practice of theater making by Asian American women); it is also a cultural practice in itself. The creation of the Uno Collection accessed and showcased Asian American communities in marginal locations; in doing so, it also created future communities of alliance through its collection of Asian American writings.

As noted earlier, formations such as the Uno Collection, the East of California Caucus, and Asian American Studies in the South interrupt a "Californic paradigm" or "Pacific-dominated" paradigm within Asian American Studies. These projects make us attentive to the literal presence of Asian Americans in places outside of California, Hawai'i, and the Pacific Coast of the United States, where large concentrations of Asian Americans reside. However, they also challenge the categories of analysis that hinge on majoritarian politics. They make us rethink the terms in which we seek to be included or visible. The political project then, as Uno asserts, is to acknowledge and create the community where you are and resist reifying "centers" of community formation. This differentiated relationship to Asian America emerges from a political practice of coalition and an understanding of racial formation (and its representation) as relational. In other words, the process by which Asian American subjects and communities become racialized is in direct relation to other racialized communities.

In my consideration of the politics of the archive and archiving through the Uno Collection, the notion of performance as ephemeral provides another possibility for rethinking community, specifically in regards to the link between belonging and time. The presumption is that a community forms over time and hence deserves recognition and acceptance. Performance and the university setting urge a rethinking of longevity and fixity as hegemonic values guiding our principles of what constitutes community and the politics of community. Student contributors to the establishment of the Uno Collec-

tion accurately demonstrate my point. Those of us who worked with Uno were students temporarily making our home in a largely unfamiliar western Massachusetts.¹² My involvement with the archive and the theater taught me to acknowledge and engage with the local community that supported the existence and operations of the university. Our contributions in helping to establish the Uno Collection were small but significant to the project of Asian American theater. My current research in Filipino migrant labor and performance studies grew out of these early understandings of access and institutionalization and informs my insistence on the acknowledgment of how temporary work contributes and ultimately transforms our notions of labor (regarding production and product) as well as social relations.¹³

From Object to Archive: A Sampling of the Works in the Uno Collection

It is an honor to have work archived. The cultural marketplace defines the label of Asian American Woman Playwright as passive, lyrical, long-suffering, ornamental, dragony. I tend to write against dominant norms, drawing from my edgier voice. So I am glad to be included in the AAWP Uno collection, as it gathers varied works that exist despite the marketplace.

My earlier writing is naïve and furious, perhaps an overcompensation for invisibility. Later works drift away from “Asian American” ethnicity as a primary concern, though women are always placed in the center of the drama. To be archived is to be able to follow an organic progression; it takes the pressure off of having to exist through meeting market-imposed categories.

— Alice Tuan

I remember UM-A [University of Massachusetts Amherst] folks reminding me via many letters and phone calls that I should submit any updates or ephemera relating to my plays. And I remember hauling out, from my own haphazard filing system, boxes of scripts and agonizing whether or not to “rewrite” this one, or maybe that one, before sending it to any archives. . . . once production is achieved, a stage play performed—in a moment—stamps a memory, instant, affecting, impressionable. Without further documentation, that moment would be difficult to re-create. Archiving all these amazing works by fellow Asian American women playwrights has, with this collection, moved us all into an uncarved niche of theater history.

— Jeannie Barroga

Although it is beyond the scope of this essay to provide an account of each archival entry, the following discussion is a glimpse of the richness of the

materials collected in the Uno Collection.¹⁴ Playwrights whose works are housed in the Uno Collection include some of those who have published and often produced plays, including Velina Hasu Houston (*Tea*; editor of *The Politics of Life: Four Plays by Asian American Women* and *But Still, Like Air, I'll Rise*), Jeannie Barroga (*Walls, Bubblegum Killers*), Diana Son (*R.A.W. 'Cause I'm a Woman, Stop Kiss*), Bina Sharif (*Ancestor's House*), and Brenda Wong Aoki (*The Queen's Garden*). Contents archived are records of scripts in varying stages—early drafts, versions that are finalized for production, and published plays.¹⁵ Because the archive is attached to a theater company, it also contains records of Asian American women artists who have developed works at NWT. For example, Leilani Chan's *E Nana I'ke Kummu / Look to the Source*, *thúy lê's bodies between us*, and Chitra Divakaruni's *Clothes* (adapted by Divakaruni from her short story with the same title, choreographed by Aparna Sindhoor and performed with Purva Bedi) found support in their early forms at NWT. These are examples of the direct imbrications of archival practice and the politics of production. In other words, the process of archiving is already implicated within the struggle for the limited resources for actual staging of plays, a material concern that continually plagues the genre of theater by people of color.

In its archiving of plays by early Asian American women playwrights such as Gladys Ling-Ai Li, Betsy Inoue, and Wai Chi Chun, the Uno Collection performs the task of what Josephine Lee, Imogene Lee, and Yuko Matsukawa call “re/collecting early Asian America.” Its commitment to “re/collecting” is not simply one that any archival project undertakes. Specifically for Asian Americans, whose “presence” in the United States is often relegated as “contemporary” or “recent” phenomenon, the project of “re/collecting” becomes a political project that challenges the very ownership of and belonging to history. To “re/collect” the works of early Asian American women playwrights is not just to amass minoritized voices; rather such a process of “re/collection” mandates the very rethinking of forces of temporality, authorship, and community formation within histories of archives and documentation.

“Asian American woman playwright” as archival object already signals a deviation from conventional notions of a “playwright.” The inclusion of pieces by Asian American theater artists who work in performance collectives or ensembles, for example, further expands the conventional definition of a “playwright” as a single author writing plays. These performance collectives include a wide range of community collaborations, such as the Vietnamese American theater ensemble Club O’Noodles, spoken-word

pan-Asian American collectives *I Was Born with Two Tongues* and *Mango Tribe*, and the multiracial dance theater ensemble *Maura Nguyen Donohue's In Mixed Company*. One of the prized materials in the Uno Collection is the work of early women of color performance collaborations among Jessica Hagedorn, Ntozake Shange, and Thulani Davis (*mississippi meets the amazon*), and those among Hagedorn, Robbie McAuley, and Laurie Carlos, also known as *Class Thought (teenytown)*. With the inclusion of these ensemble pieces, the Uno Collection acknowledges multiple forms of authorship and diverse modes of creative process. The playwrights sought out and invited to submit their works to the Uno Collection do not strictly nor necessarily develop or produce their plays with Asian American, multiracial, or women's theaters. NWT's commitment to its profile as a multiracial theater company is attentive to the possibilities and the limits of strict cultural nationalism that may operate within the logic of ethnospecific cultural projects. Uno, as well Velina Hasu Houston, for instance, has openly pointed to the ethnocentrism within Asian American cultural communities and in Asian American theaters in particular.¹⁶

The practice of collective creation and multiracial collaboration takes a different form and significance in the work of the activist-theater group *Sining Bayan*, which produced many unique archival materials now housed in the Uno Collection. The scripts written by *Sining Bayan* made their way into the archive through *Ermena Vinluan*, a Filipina American political activist and multimedia artist. From 1972 to 1981, *Sining Bayan* staged plays about the struggle of Filipino people in the Philippines and in the United States and was relentless in its criticisms of martial law and imperialism. *Sining Bayan* was the cultural arm to the radical political organization *Katipunan ng mga Demokratikong Pilipino/KDP*.¹⁷ This group's original productions dramatized the pressing political concerns of Filipinos in the United States. These concerns included the history of Filipino labor and labor organizing in the United States, the U.S. military's and Philippine central government's joint intervention in the Southern Philippines's search for land rights, and the fight for the acquittal of two Filipina nurses of murder charges in Chicago. The inclusion of the *Sining Bayan* materials alongside more recognizable dramatic productions makes the Uno Collection not just an archive for and about Asian American women. Its reach extends to include larger questions of imperialism and nation formation. I close this essay with some thoughts that return us to the relationship of archiving and performance to rearticulate what I see as the Uno Collection's interventions.

Coda

While I believe that the Asian American feminist voice is and must be a vital part of the overall American theatre voice as well as the global theatre voice, sociopolitical challenges remain that complicate the recognition of that voice. Special archives that focus on that voice aid in keeping those voices from being lost in history.

— Velina Hasu Houston

I return now to the crucial question of the politics of archival formation as debated within feminist performance theory. The Uno Collection was instituted at the height of these debates, and any engagement with its history must thus necessarily trace its engagement (or lack thereof) with contemporary discussions of gender, performance, and archival formation. In the 1990s, stimulating conversations among feminist performance theorists centered on the impossibility of archiving performance. Peggy Phelan provocatively argued for an understanding of performance as that which is unrepeatable and thus cannot be archived. In Phelan's *Unmarked*, she challenges the dominance of a text-based Theater and Performance Studies, arguing for a shift toward the body-in-performance.¹⁸ The body-in-performance interprets performance as a "representation without reproduction" (148). Theater scholar Elin Diamond situates Phelan's body-over-text within the genealogy of poststructuralism's declaration of the death of the author. The turn to the body-in-performance raises questions of authenticity and the "real," as well as where the true interpretation of performance may lie. Phelan's "representation without reproduction" is informed by radical queer studies' critique that imagines an alternative to the normative notions of reproduction, lineage, and generation naturalized in the project of visibility and representation. Taylor's *The Archive and the Repertoire*, as previously noted, builds upon these conversations in the 1990s and argues for "repertoire" as a practice of memory-keeping and remembering that exceeds the materiality of the written text.

Phelan's theory of the body-in-performance provokes us to ask, "What are we archiving when we archive performance?" Within the context of the Uno Collection, I am wary of the oversimplification of the turn to the body-in-performance, where performance and embodied expressions displace conventional archival objects such as written materials. A polemical distinction between archive and embodiment advocates for a privileging of performance without accounting for the process of selection of what gets performed. An

approach to performance that makes primary the body-in-performance must also account for the inescapable fact that what gets performed is necessarily what becomes the basis of what gets archived (through scholarly work, reviews, publication, and so forth). Rather, one could ask more productively how Phelan's anti-representational theory informs the politics and poetics of ethnic theaters, including NWT and the Uno Collection, which focus on representing stories that have been deliberately silenced. Is the Uno Collection a recuperative project that maintains its unreconstructed attachment to materials and objects as well as to the project of preservation? Or is it merely reproducing the repressive categories of representation that produced its conditions of possibility in the first place?

This essay has been an attempt to address these questions and to suggest that the Uno Collection and its artist-centered process of archiving propose alternatives beyond recuperation and a disavowal of subjectivity. Even as we generatively critique the desire for fixed subjectivity offered through the recovery of lost archives, equally we must be attentive to a more complicated theorization, not abandonment, of agency, representation, and alternative social formation. A project such as the Uno Collection can only remind us that the struggle for agency, representation, and alternative social formation remains a powerful political project, a "new WORLD" archive of possibility and collaboration.

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NOTES

1. For the rest of this essay, I will refer to New WORLD Theater as NWT and the Roberta Uno Asian American Women Playwrights Scripts Collection as the Uno Collection.
2. For more on Gladys Ling-ai Li, see Roberta Uno's "Ling-ai Li: Remember the Voice of Your People's Gods" and Sucheng S. Huang's bio-bibliography entry in *Asian American Playwrights: A Bio-Bibliographical Critical Sourcebook*. For Li's play, "The Submission of Rose Moy," see *Paké: Writings by Chinese in Hawai'i*.

3. For a nuanced understanding of archival hermeneutics, see Anjali Arondekar, "Without a Trace: Sexuality and the Colonial Archive" and her *For the Record: On Sexuality and the Colonial Archive*.
4. Worth mentioning here is the Native American Women Playwrights Archive (NAWPA) at the King Library, Miami University at Ohio. For more information about NAWPA, see <http://staff.lib.muohio.edu/nawpa/index.php>. Of course, a playwright's work could be archived in several different places. For instance, Velina Hasu Houston, a hapa, Afro-Asian American playwright, has her own collection, The Velina Hasu Houston Collection, archived at the Huntington Library's Art Collections and Botanical Gardens in San Marino, California, in addition to having a smaller number of pieces housed in the Uno Collection.
5. Objects in the archives include scripts, playbills, artistic notes from the director and designers, production reviews, as well as budget reports and official company meeting minutes. Scripts and other materials that have been submitted for production consideration in these theaters, but were rejected, are not included in the official archival roster.
6. See Viet Nguyen's *Race and Resistance: Literature and Politics in Asian America* and Kandice Chuh's *Imagine Otherwise: On Asian Americanist Critique* for works that take to task uncritical invocations of the notion of community. These works question the celebratory uses of community as well as the presumed progressive politics it is made to connote.
7. I say "partial" control as any archiving process already involves shared operation. Having (partial) control of the means of production, or more accurately the right to self-determination, is an abiding principle in NWT's projects.
8. For more about NWT's history, see Uno and Kathy Perkins' introduction to *Contemporary Plays by Women of Color*; Uno's "Being Present: Theater and Social Change"; Uno's introduction to the section on "Drama" in *Bold Words*; Uno's introduction to *Unbroken Thread*. Also see a special issue of *MELUS*, called "Ethnic Theater," celebrating NWT's tenth anniversary, edited by and with an introduction by Uno. Theses about New WORLD Theater include: Donna Beth Aronson's "Access and Equity: Performing Diversity at the New WORLD Theatre"; and Nona E. Chiang's "Speaking Up, Speaking Out: Negotiating an Asian American Cultural Identity at New WORLD Theater."
9. Arts administrator Sansan Wong observes that NWT often was, significantly, the first touring invitation for many Asian American artists (especially solo performers) in the 1980s and 1990s.
10. Other scholars who have found research support from the Uno Collection include theater historian Esther Kim, dance studies scholar Yutian Wong, and Japan-based literary scholar Iwao Yamamoto.
11. Before the 1990s, various faculties have been teaching courses about Asian immigration to the United States and Asian American communities at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. There had been early efforts to increase the presence of Asian American Studies in the curriculum through the labor of professors such

- as Sally Habana-Hafner (international education), James Hafner (geography), Bob Suzuki (School of Education), and Lucy Nguyen (Southeast Asian Studies and the director of the United Asian Learning Resource Center), and through the support of Lee Edwards, the former dean of humanities. Mitzi Sawada, professor of history at Hampshire College, and Peter Kiang, professor of sociology at the University of Massachusetts Boston, assisted in the galvanizing efforts toward a more formalized and sustained curriculum building of Asian American Studies in the early 1990s. Graduate and undergraduate students and staff actively collaborated with faculty in these efforts as well. Now, the University of Massachusetts Amherst offers a certificate program in Asian American Studies and the Five Colleges (Amherst College, Hampshire College, Mount Holyoke College, Smith College, and the University of Massachusetts Amherst) have been granting dissertation fellowships and postdoctoral fellowships. A significant number of faculty with expertise in Asian American Studies have been hired steadily in the Five Colleges since the early 1990s; in addition, a joint, multicampus faculty position has been filled.
12. Students who worked on the Uno Collection in its early years include Hillary Edwards, Sangeeta Rao, Megan Smith, Patti Chang, Esther Kim, and many others.
 13. Dance Studies and Asian American Studies scholar Priya Srinivasan draws out further interesting tensions between corporeal influences and kinesthetic traces among and between classical Indian dancers and modern dance choreographers in the early twentieth-century United States. Through her discussion of these early dancers as contract and temporary laborers, she argues for a transformation of our notions of labor, especially in Asian American Studies. See "The Bodies Beneath the Smoke; or, What's Behind the Cigarette Poster: Unearthing Kinesthetic Connections in American Dance History?"
 14. A complete list of the Uno Collection contents may be accessed through <http://www.library.umass.edu/spcoll/ead/mums345.htm>. The Web site listing of the archive contents is a new phase of the collection that is now managed by NWT literary associate Priscilla Page. Page builds upon the notion of the Uno Collection as a "living archive" through her theater courses and her proposed graduate concentration on multicultural theater in the University of Massachusetts Boston's theater department. NWT's project to transform theater and academic institutions continues.
 15. It is beyond the scope of this essay to analyze the role publication plays within the archival process. Some questions worth considering, however, include: Is there a difference between a performance text and dramatic literature? What is the role of publication in transforming a playscript into dramatic literature?
 16. See Velina Hasu Houston's introduction to *The Politics of Life* and Uno's foreword in Hasu Houston's second edited collection *But Still, Like Air, I'll Rise*.
 17. *Katipunan ng mga Demokratikong Pilipino* translates as the Union of Democratic Pilipinos.

18. Also see Phelan's "Reciting the Citation of Others; or, A Second Introduction" in *Acting Out: Feminist Performances*.

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✦ 7

Vietnamese American Community Cultural Development and the Making of History in Boston

SHIRLEY SUET-LING TANG AND JAMES ĐIỀN BÙI

From 2001 to 2005, a variety of grassroots creative expressions of Vietnamese diasporic history and culture became increasingly visible in public spaces throughout the Fields Corner neighborhood in Boston, Massachusetts. These creative expressions revealed a hidden dimension of Vietnamese American community development. They were products of new collaborations between Viet-AID—the nation's first Vietnamese American community center—and various civic and cultural groups constituting their multiracial and multigenerational community. They were testimony to the efforts and visions of a younger generation of activists and artists who chose not to define "development" simply as housing, land redevelopment, or business investment. They presented a different sort of vision of urban community development: a vision within which the multicultural, multilingual, and multigenerational diversity of people living and interacting in the same neighborhood were acknowledged and appreciated, as well as their lived experiences, collective memories, and cultural traditions. While Viet-AID's organizers devoted many of their resources to political organizing within the Vietnamese American community, especially through the Viet-Vote campaign (which will be discussed in the following section), they also undertook new initiatives that promoted interracial and intergenerational relations across the neighborhood. Their call for the long-term, holistic development of Fields Corner focused not only on the civic engagement of an older generation of Vietnamese who were already politically active, but also on the mobilization of a broad-based, multicultural constituency toward shared community visions and political actions. As Viet-AID's cofounder and former executive director Hiep Chu recently noted, "If the community in Fields Corner and Dorchester is diverse and strong, we need to work

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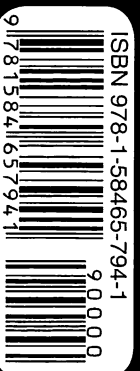
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Asian Americans in New England

Culture and Community

Edited by Monica Chiu



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✦ *To all Asian Americans in New England,
those arrived and those still arriving*



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Preface

The seed for this project was planted in 2003 when I discovered the resource-rich Institute for Asian American Studies, directed by Paul Watanabe, at the University of Massachusetts Boston. During discussions with the Institute's subgroup, members of the Asian Americans in New England Research Initiative (AANERI), and through an inaugural 2005 AANERI conference, I realized that I was sitting among a collection of impressive scholars whose important work deserved public circulation. I wanted to capture and disseminate this groundbreaking, regional research that certainly would impact the shape and scope of Asian American Studies nationally.

As contributors were writing their essays, an article appeared in my local New Hampshire newspaper in April 2007 that highlighted the impetus of this compilation (Alan B1, B7). The article emphasized the connections between New England and Asia through an exhibition of paintings and calligraphy at Boston's Museum of Fine Arts from the collection of Chinese immigrant Wan-go Weng. Weng, who moved in 1977 from his original post-immigrant location of New York to the Upper Valley Region of New Hampshire, stated that his collection of Chinese art has been passed down from generation to generation within his family, until it came into his possession. He likens himself to a link between generations and nations through art, a connection between past and present, between the United States and China, and between members of his extended family. Ultimately, he serves as a conduit to promote the practice of art and the appreciation and study of China.

A year later, another article about the relationship between these seemingly disparate regions of the Far East and New England appeared in the same local newspaper (Henry D1, D6). The article discussed how Chinese tourists, emerging from a national, economic boom, have been visiting