

Joseph J. Tobin, ed. *Re-made in Japan: Everyday Life and Consumer Taste in a Changing Society*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992) vii, 264 pp., \$27.50 paper.

The introduction's title to *Re-made in Japan*, "Domesticating the West," captures precisely the characteristics of the contemporary westernization of Japanese culture. The book is a collection of twelve papers which were originally presented at the American Anthropological Association meeting in 1986 at the University of Hawaii. Japan's economic success has global receptions, ranging from admiration and envy, to resentment. Yet the role of Japan as an avid importer and consumer of western products and ideas is not appreciated. On the contrary, quick adaptation of the Japanese to western culture arouses curiosity, wonder, and even mockery from Eurocentric perspectives. The contributed papers aim at, with various degrees of success, correcting the mistaken notion of the westernization of Japan being a mere infatuation with the exotic West. Unfortunately, the papers are of uneven quality; some are poorly articulated, while others stray from the theme. In addition, there is no sequence or interrelationship among the papers. One can only deduce from the better presentations a uniform message that Western merchandise is transformed and naturalized to Japanese tastes as the Japanese themselves experience a self-rediscovery in the process.

Japanese department stores and tourists are the main importers of western goods. These imports, however, become unmistakably Japanese through the function of the cultural mentorship undertaken by Japanese department stores ("The Depato: Merchandising the West while Selling Japaneseness," Millie R. Creighton) and the traditional Japanese custom of gift-giving ("Shopping for Souvenirs in Hawai'i," Fumiteru Nitta). Even the English language comes to serve the Japanese exclusively, bearing little resemblance to the English spoken by the donor ("For Beautiful Human Life," James Stanlaw). Japanization of the West occurs in other unexpected areas such as haute French cuisine ("A Japanese-French Restaurant," Jeffrey Tobin), the Tokyo Disneyland ("Bwana Mickey," Mary Yoko Brannen), and Argentinean tango ("Tango in Japan and the World Economy of Passion," Marta E. Savigliano) once the West came into contact with Japan's history, social system, and the Japanese ego.

Japanese consumption of the West extends to its customs and ideologies which, however, have little impact on traditional patterns of Japanese life. "Tractors, Television, and Telephones: Reach Out and Touch Someone in Rural Japan" (William W. Kelley) and "Alienation and Reconnection in a Home for the Elderly" (Diana Bethel), respectively, account for the Japanese struggle to recover a sense of community on privatized, mechanized farms and in one western-

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style institution. Western aversion to the Japanese practice of bathing did not change the Japanese bath as a basic cultural institution ("The Japanese Bath," Scott Clark). The importation of beer and whiskey, instead of replacing the drinking of indigenous sake, finds an alternative social niche of individual and private consumption ("Drinking Etiquette in a changing Beverage Market," Stephen R. Smith).

The reappraisal of western influence in contemporary Japan through consumerism promises a new paradigm for the relationships between the dominant and dominated cultures. From the book's amusing episodes on flamboyant consumption by the Japanese, however, a coherent, critical discourse on Japan's consumer culture does not come forth.

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Faythe Turner, ed. *Puerto Rican Writers at Home in the USA: An Anthology*. (Seattle: Open Hand Publishing, 1993) 349 pp., \$19.95 paper.

Puerto Rican Writers at Home in the USA is the most recent, best edited and most complete anthology of literary texts, written in English, by the superstars of Puerto Rican letters residing in the United States of North America.

This marvelous collection of verse and prose includes samples of the finest literary texts penned by Puerto Rican writers during the past five decades. The first and oldest writer included is Jesus Colon (1901-1974), and the youngest is Martin Espada, born in Brooklyn, New York, in 1957.

The anthology opens with a very moving and informative introduction by the editor, Faythe Turner, where she explains her journey through Puerto Rican culture and literature. She further explains how she met most of the authors included in the anthology in her trips to places like the Nuyorican Poets' Cafe and how she was moved by the "bountiful literature that was coming from the Puerto Rican community in New York." She rightly points out that, "the seventies had seemed filled with promise for New York's Puerto Rican writers" and offers a chronology of the best literary pieces written in those years by writers like: Piri Thomas, Victor Hernandez Cruz, Pedro Pietri, Jose Angel Figueroa, Nicholasa Mohr, Sandra Maria Esteves and others. Most of these writers are still alive and very active, and a new generation has increased their numbers, but they still confront the same problem, "they are still published mostly by journals with limited distribution and by small presses. . . ."