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MARGINALS, CITIZENS, SUBJECTS: THE PERILOUS FOUNDATIONS OF ASIAN AMERICAN STUDIES

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ABSTRACT

MARGINALS, CITIZENS, SUBJECTS: THE PERILOUS FOUNDATIONS OF ASIAN AMERICAN STUDIES

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This dissertation examines the philosophical impasse of Asian American Studies, which consists of a reiteration of biological and cultural racialisms within counterhegemonic strategies meant to counter the processes of marginalization and racialization. By addressing marginality, citizenship, and subjection, which are the three major conceptual moments/registers that determine knowledges about Asian America across the twentieth century, this dissertation argues for a re-orientation of the field which can untether the thinking of Asian America from the yoke of racial domination.

In the first chapter, the history of the concept of "marginality" is examined in relation to its academic origins: the Chicago School of Sociology. The concept of marginality rests upon notions of racial assimilation and biological amalgamation and remains intact in current Asian Americanist thought. The racial foundations of American law are addressed in the second chapter in relation to Japanese American internment and the reparations movements. Because Asian American citizenship is an articulation of the racial exception which resides at the core of the U.S. legal system, it is argued that Asian American Studies must develop a

theory of its relation to the state that addresses the limitations of "inclusion" and "full" citizenship. In the final chapter, the problem of racial subjection is explored in light of contemporary strategies which are meant to secure the academic "place" of Asian American Studies. Rather than argue for a reconsolidation of Asian American identity, this dissertation contends that the field must commit itself to a radical critique of its foundations in order to develop viable epistemological alternatives. Asian American literature is read as a strategic response throughout, intervening in debates surrounding the three major concepts; the works of Younghill Kang, Maxine Hong Kingston, Chang-Rae Lee, R. Zamora Linmark, Toshio Mori, Fae Myenne Ng, John Okada, Hisaye Yamamoto are examined for alternative ways to think of Asian America's possible futures. This study seeks to understand the limits of various Asian American Studies projects by exploring the perilous notions of racial identity that inhabit the heart of contemporary literary, sociological, and historiographical works.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction: Three Views of Progress

> He walked along, thinking, searching, thinking and probing, and, in the darkness of the alley of the community that was a tiny bit of America, he chased that faint and elusive insinuation of promise as it continued to take shape in mind and heart.
>
> —John Okada[1]

> That a backward people or social group may need a coercive external discipline so as to be educated in the ways of civilisation does not mean that they should be reduced to slavery, unless one considers all state coercion to be slavery.
>
> —Antonio Gramsci[2]

Asian American cultural studies, at present, faces a predicament. The dilemma emerges in terms of how Asian Americanists attempt to understand the production of Asian American subjects and their proposed solutions meant to counter marginalization and racialization. For the purposes of this introduction, I will examine the works of three prominent Asian Americanists: E. San Juan, Jr., Lisa Lowe, and David Palumbo-Liu; these three scholars, arguably, have produced the most work on the "question" of Asian America, and their work undoubtedly demonstrates a high level of theoretical/philosophical rigor and sophistication. Each scholar's attempt to solve the problem of race relies on a specific mode of engagement, like Lowe's and San Juan's reliance on the writings of Antonio Gramsci, that ends up

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[1] Okada, John. No-No Boy. 1957. Seattle: U of Washington P, 1995. 251.

[2] Gramsci, Antonio. "Antonio Labriola [1]." Further Selections from the Prison Notebooks. Ed. and Trans. Derek Boothman. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1995. 159.

replicating the very ideas that they seek to counter. The limitations of each argument presented reveal how, at the forefront of the field, the grounds of Asian American cultural studies have reiterated that which should be dismissed: a reliance upon racial(ist), exclusionary logics without either a dismissal of the calcified, particular "Asian American" identities which are produced via exclusion or an evacuation of hierarchies of power within Asian America. Political intervention, cultural production, and Asian American subjectivity can only be thought of, as I will demonstrate below, as "war" or competition--like the Gramscian concept "hegemony"--and this ultimately determines the ways that each theorist's exit strategies from the problems (and ravages) of race end up being exclusionary in principle. In other words, each theorist's work meets a theoretical threshold that cannot be crossed; their strategies repeat and replicate the racial domination they seek to counter. Hence the epigraphs above: while Ichiro in No-No Boy chases the "faint and elusive insinuation of promise"--arguably a future without exclusions--we are reminded that even radical theorists like Antonio Gramsci have no problem, unwittingly or not, prescribing a kinder, gentler "discipline" in order to pursue counterhegemonic ends.

In "On Asian American Cultural Projects," Lisa Lowe claims that "some cultural forms can succeed in producing alternatives in the encounter with ['the law, capitalist

exploitation, racialization, and gendering']" (49). This statement demands a number of questions, not least of which is how to define "cultural form" and what its exact relationship to Asian American "culture" is. Likewise, do these "alternatives"--produced in encounters with varying forms of interpellation and (materialist) determination--point in a specific direction, fundamentally altering the conditions that produce a need for alternatives in the first place? In another vein, Palumbo-Liu and San Juan are concerned with the history of subjectivities and racisms. Palumbo-Liu declares that a task "more worthwhile" than offering "alternatives" is to "ascertain at each historical moment the nature of . . . [Asian American] subjectivity . . . and what it might teach us about our own historical situation" (Asian 13); concomitantly, San Juan endorses studies that "posit historically demarcated racisms and then proceed from there" (Racial 46). Strategies that call for the study of how the history of subjectivities or instances of racism can help develop a future politics are still unclear in terms of describing how such strategies will help address and counter the forces and institutions that create the grouping "Asian American," and I maintain that the primary way of addressing this problem is to reassess the epistemological foundations of the term "Asian American" and, in the end, develop new ways of thinking about and addressing subjectivity and subjection that refuse to replicate common (and debilitating) conceptions of race. This introduction

seeks to understand the current modes of envisioning a future (or futures) in current Asian American cultural studies in terms of their logical trajectories and proposed ends.

In his introduction to the collection Questions of Cultural Identity, Stuart Hall addresses the fundamental problem with the concept of "identity": "Throughout their careers, identities can function as points of identification and attachment only *because* of their capacity to exclude, to leave out, to render 'outside', abjected" (5, emphasis in original). "Difference"--be it in the form of "identity" or in claiming a group status or culture--is constituted by an exclusion, and I will show how this exclusion is perpetuated by, for example, Lowe's discussion of Asian American culture below. Because the use of difference is often "foundational" instead of descriptive, the introduction and instantiation of difference in analysis is fraught with peril, and we should be attuned to how both difference and identity are mobilized, especially in terms of critiques meant to counter racial exclusion in the first place.[3] Kent Ono perceptively points out that Asian American Studies needs to be (re)evaluated in terms of what it purports to represent:

> The very idea of Asian American, as a collective

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[3] In Being Singular Plural, Jean-Luc Nancy uses the terms "distinction" and "foundation" in order to stress the danger of mistaking a distinction of social position, like class or race, for a foundation or origin:

> Undoubtedly, the task is wholly a matter of not confusing distinction and foundation; in fact, this point contains everything that is at stake philosophically, ethically, and politically in what is brewing [*se trame*] around 'identities' and 'subjects' of all sorts. (Being 152)

> assignation, is a problematic issue. Indeed, Asian American can only be theorized as an imaginary discursive formation, with no possibility of ever describing, containing, or producing such a community. (Ono 75)

Since the only "real" Asian American constituency is produced through racialization--Asian Americans don't just "appear"--then the central problem facing Asian American studies is how to confront and change the various structures of power that govern, regulate, and call into being specific Asian American lives.

As a result, I will focus here on problems concerning the "social." Apart from relying on notions of economic determination or prescribing ways to counter the Western canonical literary tradition, it is essential to grasp how economic, political, and institutional contexts imagine and envision their subjects and constituencies. In her discussion of Chinese intellectuals, Rey Chow argues that the social must be cleared of racialisms and essentialisms before structural change takes place:

> Before any structural changes are introduced at the level of the party-state, changes need to be introduced, however imperceptibly, at the "social" level . . . Future change as such is, of course, imaginary. Its possibility is that of providing an alternative to what is currently being dismantled and demolished. (Chow 92)

Social changes--imaginary by circumstance--will be the focus of this introduction; I will assess San Juan's, Lowe's, and Palumbo-Liu's projects and the "solutions' presented in terms of the social. Implicit in my analysis is that "subjects" are, according to Judith Butler, always formed in subordination and that "this subordination provides the subject's continuing condition of possibility": "This attachment [to subordination] in its primary forms must both *come to be* and *be denied*, its coming to be must consist in its partial denial, for the subject to emerge" (Butler 8, emphasis in original). From San Juan's reliance upon a Gramsci that (re)instates "intellectual" exclusion and educational coercion to Lowe's use of "culture" to counteract the effects of capital to Palumbo-Liu's new "ethnic canon" of literary texts based upon non-judging judgements, each strategy approaches the subject of subordination by first introducing their own brand of subordination in order for the Asian American subject to emerge. This new subject(ion) remains racialized in the first instance, proof that the techniques and technologies for providing "alternatives" are, in fact, (re)iterations of the very contexts they seek to dispel and hold at bay. Further, these new solutions of/to subordination envision nothing past said subordination; subjection continually remains, unable to be mobilized in order to confront and reduce/eliminate the forces of domination. As such, "unworking" the work of power as a goal is unthinkable. It is only through the examination of

strategies that are exclusionary in principle that we can develop a mode of thinking that, in principle, will allow Asian American Studies to realize that "faint and elusive" possibility of equality.

E. San Juan, Jr., Gramsci, Counterhegemony

E. San Juan, Jr. is perhaps the most prolific Asian Americanist. In this section, I will address how San Juan's trenchant critiques of postcolonial theory, transnational capital, and "identity politics" are jeopardized by his deep investment in and indebtedness to the works of Antonio Gramsci. I contend that analyses that deploy Gramsci's concepts of "hegemony" and "counter-hegemony" risk reiterating exclusion and, as a result, are dangerous if used to formulate alternatives to racialization. In his most committed treatment of Gramsci's work, Beyond Postcolonial Theory, San Juan defines his theoretical stance against current developments in critical theory, especially postcolonial theory:

> Postcolonial Theory, in brief, can be read as metaphysical idealism masking its counterrevolutionary telos by denying its own worldly interest and genealogy. It occludes its own indeterminacy by deploying psychoanalytical and linguistic conceptual frameworks that take market/exchange relations for granted. (9)

What is troubling about this stance--a marking of the "psychoanalytical and linguistic" as counterproductive and

indeterminate--is that San Juan implies that there is a determinate, if not determining, space/area that needs to be foregrounded in postcolonial theory: market/exchange relations; dividing the world into "real" and secondary concerns, he later chides Lisa Lowe's work as "vapid formalist culturalism" that is "impotent to influence the political wars of position and movement within the expanded or integral state form" (182). And the assertion of a "misdirected" nature of postcolonial theory carries over to Asian Americanist works. San Juan continues, noting the inadequacies of postmodernist theory by rejecting all projects that deal with the "social" at the "expense" of an analysis of capital:

> [P]ostmodernists celebrate the alleged dispersal of power into shifting and arbitrary sites of the social field. This move, I submit, effectively disables any long-range collective project of discovering and possible Archimedean point at which the whole system [of global capital] can be dismantled. (165)

Perhaps the most intriguing claim San Juan makes deals with the "Archimedean point" or center that he hopes will be "dismantled" through a collective theoretical project. This central point/authority is eventually addressed as "hegemony" in his work, and the counter-hegemonic--that which enables a dismantling of global structures of power and domination--becomes the primary concept that drives San Juan's critiques.

Overall, San Juan proposes a two-fold strategy for countering racialization, domination, and imperialism. First, he astutely locates Asian and Asian American literature in a complex sociohistorical context that other critics often ignore or downplay. Second, San Juan develops a Gramscian analysis to create a theory of (re)education the relies upon the formation of "organic" intellectuals; as such, his thoughts rest on a foundation of intellectual coercion and assimilation. In Racial Formations/Critical Transformations, San Juan criticizes Ronald Takaki's Strangers from a Different Shore: A History of Asian Americans as a "positivist-empiricist valorization of 'lived experience' [that] is carried out within the master narrative of evolutionary, gradualist progress" (101). Then, San Juan casts doubt on any "tactical" strategy that attempts to assert an "indigenous Otherness":

> [If we can't challenge the] logic of liberal, possessive individualism and the seductive lure of consumerism . . . I suspect that the only recourse is to revive versions of individualist metaphysics, the most popular of which is "identity politics," that is, the tendency to base one's politics on a sense of identity . . . From a strategic angle, this tactical move recuperates an autochthonous will, an indigenous Otherness if you like. (104)

This doubt, however, soon emerges as a growing contradiction in San Juan's work; clearly wary of "identity politics" and

any other "strategic angle" in others' works, he is still committed to a conception of (and minimal investment in) the "autochthonous"--a figure before (or without) relation to the outside world. For example, he rhetorically asks:

> Should we ("natives" of internal/external colonies, Fanon's "wretched of the earth") repudiate both the Enlightenment paradigm and its antithesis, the ludic play of cyborgs and nomads in favor of autochtonous [sic] programs enacted by "specific intellectuals" and the *testimonios* of indigenous survivors? (Hegemony 9-10).

The answer is, conditionally, yes, though this isn't readily apparent; as I will demonstrate below, organic intellectuals--akin to "specific intellectuals"--and indigenous status take center-stage in San Juan's use of the concept "hegemony."

What is readily apparent, however, is San Juan's investment in establishing a relationship of alterity between the "canon" of American literature and Asian/Asian American literary works. After lucidly arguing that "white supremacist standards" form the traditional canon in a "pluralist" vein that "preserves material inequality and justice," San Juan offers his alternative:

> I propose that we deploy the concept of "emergent literature," which, according to Wlad Godzich, does not refer to literatures of developing or underdeveloped countries; rather, it refers to "literatures that cannot be readily comprehended

> within the hegemonic view of literature that has been dominant."[4] . . . Our task resembles that of comprehending the postmodern sublime (Kant via Lyotard) whose conception is intuitively accessible but somehow resists articulation and representation. (Beyond 191)

The hegemonic conception of literature, then, cannot easily accommodate Asian American literature; indeed, Asian American literature emerges out of a history of immigration regulation, "determinate forms of [cultural and aesthetic] value" that emerge out of white supremacist standards, and "geopolitical actions between Asian nations and the United States" and should be contextualized as such (192). Likewise, San Juan trenchantly argues against using Filipino American writing to affirm the "immigrant paradigm of Euro-American success" ("In Search" 219). Despite this committed stance, San Juan claims the lack of a historical, political, and economic analysis of literature--especially in terms of postcolonial theory--leads to the "salient question of agency, the intentionality of transformative practice" being "elided" (Beyond 7). This turns out to be "problematic" for "people of color seeking to affirm their communal identities and autochtonous [sic] traditions" (7). There is a dilemma, however, in terms of how "agency" in the service of "transformative practice"--practice that is a counter-

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[4] Godzich, Wlad. "Emergent Literature and the Field of Comparative Literature." The Comparative Perspective on Literature. Ed. Clayton Koelb and Susan Noakes. Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1988. 35.

hegemonic response to hegemony--relates to autochthonous traditions: how can "original" traditions "know" the historical development of oppression and exclusion? And how does any sociohistorical context impinge, if at all, on the autochthonous traditions (and peoples) that inhabit San Juan's text?

San Juan's helpful critique of the canon and his desire to "uplift" the oppressed is undermined by his investment in Gramscian logics of hegemony and subalternity. In order to affect a "radical transformation of grassroots consciousness and practice"--an explicit goal of all of his work--San Juan relies upon notions of subaltern "consciousness" and "psychology" that demand reeducation in order to counter racialist and imperialist practices ("In Search" 219). Instead of viewing the subaltern as a product of colonial and imperialist practices and discourse, San Juan develops his own definition that relies upon his investment in the idea of a "peasant psychology": "One other way of defining the subaltern condition is to consider it as a terminal point before the beginning of self-awareness, before the critical elaboration of the inventory of infinite 'traces' deposited by this historical process" (Beyond 89, 97). This "self-awareness," a "consciousness" that must be developed, is centered on a telos of development that depends upon a programmatic determination of educational standards and evaluation. San Juan's strategy, then, is to (re)educate the masses/peasants so that they can comprehend the "totality" of

social forces and human agency, especially since the "peasant lacks a knowledge of the institutions of the modern state" (88). What is essential to note here are the key differences between "psychology" (a mental/psychological state) and "knowledge" (a comprehension of the social terrain), a difference between "nature" and "rank."

Knowledge, then, is only one part of San Juan's project of developing "grassroots consciousness and practice," mainly because subalterns are defined by a constitutive "lack" that is in need of "not just political leadership of an alliance or classes but also moral and intellectual leadership of a historical bloc of forces engendered in the process of revolutionary transformation" (Beyond 87). The moral "leadership" that San Juan deems necessary for transformation actually recapitulates the hierarchy and condescension of the racial/colonial/imperial systems that create subalterns in the first place; subalterns are naturally "uncivilized" and brutal, demanding the strong arm of social and intellectual coercion in order to effect counterhegemony. This much is evident when San Juan quotes Gramsci concerning the role of intellectual leadership:

> Again, Gramsci stresses that the transcendence of subalternity requires organization and education: "Organized in this way, the peasants will become an element of order and progress; left to themselves, incapable as they are of waging any systematic and disciplined action, they will become a disordered

> rabble, a *tumultuous horde driven to the cruelest barbarities.*" (90-91, emphasis added)[5]

The notion of an inevitable backsliding of the masses or the "mob"-like nature of the subaltern is always buttressed by a schedule of intellectual development, as Gramsci points out in his essay "The Study of Philosophy":

> When one's conception of the world is not critical and coherent but disjointed and episodic, one belongs simultaneously to a multiplicity of mass human groups. The personality is strangely composite: it contains Stone Age elements and principles of a more advanced science, prejudices from all past phases of history at the local level and intuitions of a future philosophy which will be that of a human race united the world over. (Selections 324)

Implicit in this statement is Gramsci's maneuver to establish a hierarchy of exclusion; quite starkly, the prospect of "mass human groups" is analogous to a sort of confusion or, at best, a muddled and "prehistoric" epistemology that smacks of "savagery"; while characterizing the group as salvageable, Gramsci opens up a space for what he deems positive change through education. Because of the "savage" nature of the subalterns, San Juan deems it necessary to alter their "mental habits" so that they can fall in line with his own

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[5] Gramsci quote from: Gramsci, Antonio. Selections from Political Writings 1910-1920. Ed. Quintin Hoare. New York: International Publishers, 1977. 86-87.

counter-hegemonic, revolutionary program; it is difficult to tell where the "nature" of the peasantry ends and their "consciousness" begins, and the lack of a clear distinction in San Juan's work runs the risk of merely pathologizing subalternity as a "condition marked by the absence of a will" (Beyond 95).

"Organic intellectuals"--the "specific intellectuals" mentioned above--become the "organizers of group mentalities" for San Juan (Hegemony 48). Indeed, he begins his History and Form: Selected Essays by claiming that his "project" is "to become an organic intellectual of the Filipino working masses" (10). And even though Gramsci contends in his essay "The Intellectuals" that "All men are intellectuals," it is clear that some are more intellectual than others (Selections 9). San Juan declares that the "process of establishing hegemony" never "happens" but is mediated by a new category of organic (as opposed to traditional) intellectuals whose command over material and intellectual knowledge endows them with a "directive" power to fashion ideologies that gradually become "common sense" through a complex network of consensus formation (Hegemony 62). Much like the "critic" in his work, the organic intellectual "activates a principle of transformation" that "entails an inventory comprised of the systematizing and refinement of 'common sense,' together with the socialization of philosophical and scientific concepts that can move society forward by releasing suppressed human potential" (64). While San Juan uses fairly non-judgmental

terms like "consensus formation" in these passages, he also omits a key Gramscian term that, because of its definition, drastically changes the function and meaning of education and "consensus": "good sense."

"Good sense," for Gramsci, comes about after organic intellectuals give direction to the subaltern masses. The masses possess "common sense," which is like a religion in that it "cannot constitute an intellectual order because they [the masses] cannot be reduced to unity and coherence even within an individual consciousness, let alone collective consciousness" (Selections 326). Common sense must eventually become, through intellectual mediation, good sense, which is sense that comes into being after the masses "realize fully that whatever happens is basically rational and must be confronted as such, and that one should apply one's power of rational concentration and not let oneself be carried away by instinctive and violent impulses" (328). "Savagery," in this instance, can be contained. Gramsci continues:

> One can see from these examples that the terms have quite a precise meaning: that of overcoming *bestial and elemental passions* through a conception of necessity which gives a conscious direction to one's activity. This is the healthy nucleus that exists in "common sense," the part of it which can be called "good sense" and which deserves to be made more unitary and coherent. (328, emphasis added)

Though there is a "healthy nucleus" in common sense, it is difficult not to imagine that what Gramsci is calling for is more than just a "development" that ends in good sense for the masses. "Overcoming bestial and elemental passions" is a particularly violent and striking phrase, one shot through with a language not just of "maturation" or development, but of ablation or destruction; the very thing that makes good sense good sense is also the process by which the masses are reinvented--despite having a "healthy nucleus"--in order to become more unified and coherent. Gramsci simultaneously utilizes a language of development--"The philosophy of praxis . . . [leads the 'simple'] to a higher conception of life"--and of creation--"precisely in order to construct an intellectual-moral bloc which can make politically possible the intellectual progress of the mass"--in a gesture that calls for the fashioning and generating of the "simple" for counterhegemonic ends (332).

As such, the role of organic intellectuals in motivating the masses/peasantry/subalterns/simple resembles a "civilizing" mission in that counterhegemony can only succeed through the manipulation of those "below" the intellectuals. This fashioning of the masses exposes the exclusionary basis for Gramsci's supposedly inclusive praxis. He justifies the necessity of intellectuals and details how they help develop "critical self-consciousness" in the masses:

> Critical self-consciousness means, historically and politically, the creation of an *élite* of

> intellectuals. A human mass does not "distinguish" itself, does not become independent in its own right without, in the widest sense, organising itself; and there is not organisation without intellectuals, that is without organizers and leaders, in other words, without the theoretical aspect of the theory-practice nexus being distinguished concretely by the existence of a group of people "specialised" in conceptual and philosophical elaboration of ideas. (Selections 332)

Here it is evident that the process of developing good sense is very much a top-down affair. I want to stress that Gramsci's language is neither equalitarian nor totalitarian--everyone can "become" critically self-conscious--but, rather, he relies on a certain logic of "assimilation"--by which I mean a certain "forgetting" implicit in his use of "overcoming"--that centers not only on bringing the masses into the intellectual fold but also killing off any retrograde passions that may have existed in the first place. This process of popular asceticism--or ablation of all that has come before in terms of (mass) subjectivity--eventually leads to the masses being able to exert counterhegemony in order to change the State; Gramsci continues:

> Every relationship of "hegemony" is necessarily an educational relationship and occurs not only within a nation, between the various forces of which the

> nation is composed, but in the international and world-wide field, between complexes of national and continental civilisations. (350)

This type of educational relationship is crucial to note; the charge of the "*élite*" intellectuals in educating the "savage" masses contains, at its foundation, an exclusion. And despite Gramsci's desire to "create a hierarchy, but one which [is] open," there is nothing to guarantee that the "new" counterhegemonic hierarchy is significantly different from the hegemonic hierarchy that allows the counterhegemonic to come into being (Antonio 50).

Gramsci's work has a specific trajectory: to transition from a hegemonic State to an "ethical state." In "State and Civil Society," Gramsci argues:

> But, in reality, only the social group that poses the end of the State and its own end as the target to be achieved can create an ethical state--i.e. one which tends to put an end to the internal divisions of the ruled, etc., and to create a technically and morally unitary social organism. (Selections 259).

The difference between the "State" and the "ethical state" is rooted in the idea that the social will be "unitary," but the question still remains as to how the "standards" of morality will be decided upon and implemented. At this particular moment, Gramsci leaves a fissure in his formulation: the end of the State--that which creates hierarchy and exclusion--can only come about by a social group that "poses," but may never

realize, the end of the State. In "Utopia," an essay the predates the Prison Notebooks by at least eleven years, Gramsci offers up a disturbing vision of freedom:

> Dictatorship is the fundamental institution guaranteeing freedom, through its prevention of *coups de main* by factious minorities. It is a guarantee of freedom, since it is not a method to be perpetuated, but a transitional stage allowing the creation and consolidation of the permanent organisms into which the dictatorship, having accomplished its missions, will be dissolved. (Antonio 50)

In order to create "Utopia"--and Gramsci is writing just after the Russian Revolution--resistance or counterhegemony cannot exist; hence, the only guarantee of freedom is not the (supposed) dissolution of the dictatorship, but the assurance that dissent no longer exists. The "moral" leadership here--leadership that is entrusted to end dictatorial domination--must be unconditionally trusted by the masses--no questions tolerated. Despite the time-lag between "Utopia" and essays like "State and Civil Society," the same kind of relationships are deployed using different concepts.

As a result, when San Juan identifies "cultures of resistance" as holding the key to a more equalitarian future, we should wonder exactly what is being resisted and what future beyond the reinstantiation of hierarchy--moral and intellectual, this time--is possible. Wendy Brown contends

that resistance is often uncritical of its aims or mission(s): "Resistance stands against, not for; it is reaction to domination, rarely willing to admit a desire for it, and it is neutral with regard to possible political direction" (Brown 22). When Gramsci calls for an end to all internal divisions, he curiously elides any explanation of how both violence and the ablation of subjectivity for the masses play a large role in his creation of a division-less state. As a result, San Juan's work advances a notion of counterhegemony that replicates the very exclusions--racial, colonial, and capitalist--that enable counterhegemony to emerge as a political strategy and possibility. And the Gramscian proclamation that "Possibility means 'freedom'," at this moment, rings hollow: counterhegemonic possibilities, as such, underwrite domination (Selections 360).

Lowe's Moving Athwart

In the introduction to The Politics of Culture in the Shadow of Capital, Lisa Lowe and David Lloyd attempt to think through the possibilities for "cultural formations" and counterhegemonic alternatives in a world of globalized capitalism. They contend that "culture" should constitute "a site in which the reproduction of contemporary capitalist social relations may be continually contested" because culture should be understood as neither "commodified" nor "aesthetic" but, rather, as "imbricat[ed] in political and economic relations" (Lowe and Lloyd 26). While I will discuss the dangers of Lowe's conceptions of culture and cultural

formations below, I would like to stress how Lowe's and Lloyd's envisioned future--a future marked by greater and greater confrontations between local cultures and the economic/political state apparatuses that undermine and dominate them--is constituted by avoidance: "Our moment is not one of fatalistic despair; faces turned toward the past, we do not seek to make whole what has been smashed, but *to move athwart* the storm into a future in which the debris is more than just a residue: it holds the alternative" (27, emphasis added). Two points in this passage bear elaboration. First, moving athwart--to shuttle between points--is a lateral movement; to move "into a future" would demand a confrontation that Lowe and Lloyd cannot admit into their formulation. Likewise, the resistances that would constitute a moving athwart will not fundamentally address the "storm" that leaves destruction in its wake. Second, the "debris" created by the "incessant violence of the new transnational order with its reconstituted patriarchies and racisms" will constitute a future "alternative" (26). This poses two problems: literally, there is (re)cobbling of those cultural forms that have been "smashed"--without rethinking how to address the conditions of their destruction in the first place--and, figuratively, there is a "residue" that comprises the debris that will produce the alternative which, in another context, will refer to an investment in (and reliance upon) racialization. This residue eventually leads Lowe, in her other writings, to recapitulate the logic of

racialization in her attempt to comprehend and develop an Asian American cultural politics.

In Immigrant Acts: On Asian American Cultural Politics, Lowe relies upon Gramscian notions of hegemony in order to imagine a future predicated upon the difference(s) of culture within the United States. She writes: "When a hegemony representing the interests of a dominant group exists, it is always within the context of resistances from emerging groups" (69); these resistances vie for the right to determine future hegemonies, where hegemony is the "process by through which a particular group gains consent to determine the political, cultural, and ideological character of a state" (205).[6] The question remains, as with San Juan's work, of how to break out of this shuttling and volleying between the resistant and dominant, out of the highly determined circuit of (consensual) power that, in the end, is premised on nothing but the trust that those counterhegemonic forces who gain hegemony will not replicate that which has been overthrown. Immigrant Acts, as a result, relies upon this logic and circuit of power and Lowe's analysis seems stalled by the concepts of culture and resistance, from which she calls for a "non-essentialist" essentialism to undergird

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[6] Lowe does remark in her notes that hegemony is a "suggestive construct" and not an "explicitly interpreted set of relations" (Immigrant 204). She also suggests that "We must go beyond Gramsci's notion of hegemony" because the "'social' is an open and uneven terrain" (204). It is unclear how an "open and uneven terrain" can mobilize any strategy of (counter)hegemony, and Lowe does not offer any extended analysis of what, specifically, in Gramsci's thoughts about hegemony "we" must go beyond--if there is a "beyond" that can still be called "hegemony."

present and future Asian American cultural politics without aiming to evacuate the racial origin of such a politics. In the end, Lowe's analysis is unable to escape the grasp of race, and Asian American identities and subjectivities--the very things that allow for resistance to emerge--are built atop the "residue" of racialization to create a more free Asian America.[7]

Lowe's concept of culture, initially, relies upon "memory":

> Culture is the medium of the *present*--the imagined equivalences and identifications through which the individual invents lived relationships with the national collective--but it is simultaneously the site that mediates the *past*, through this history is grasped as difference. . . . It is likewise in culture that individuals and collectivities struggle and remember and, in that difficult remembering, imagine and practice both subject and community differently. (Immigrant 2-3, emphasis in original)

What seems problematic in this formulation is the Asian

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[7] Lowe's analysis depends heavily upon the notion of contradiction as it relates to nation, citizenship, and race: "the concept of the abstract citizen--each formally equivalent, one to the other--is defined by the negation of the material conditions of work and the inequalities of the property system" (Immigrant 2). I find Lowe's work here perceptive and smart; my protests, though, are lodged on the terrain of the social and the resolution(s) that she proposes. Beyond material conditions and racialized, gendered working conditions, Lowe, as we will see, relies heavily upon a sort of cultural "essence" that corresponds to what Asian Americans "remember, and what they forget" (2).

Americans' "invention" of a relationship with the "national collective"; I take the "national collective" to mean Americans and the formation of American subjects/citizens" as a whole. Yet the distinction between the "historical" and "lived" relationships is confusing; the historical already creates the racialized subject--through immigration restrictions and alien land laws, for instance--but the "lived" relationship must be created. Situating a self within the national "narrative," the Asian American subject is imbued with a large memory, one that responds to the remembered histories that "contradict the abstract form of citizenship" (2). But what secures such memories and, even if such memories are marked by "fragments, shocks, and flashes of disjunction," what insures the securing of meaning for them? (2). The meaning of memory is marked by difference--in the practice of "subject and community"--without relation (hence "imagining") or, rather, the relation the prevents identification with the national narrative makes possible this alterity. Such a characterization of non-relationality allows Lowe to label Asian American productions as "countersites to U.S. national memory and national culture" (4). Also, Lowe posits that racial differentiation allows "images, memories, and narratives" to be "rearticulated in Asian American culture through the emergence of alternative identities and practices" (12). The difficulty with this Asian American "cultural" constitution is that the very forces of racialization that produce alterity are the same

constraints that mark and produce "culture"; this does not move beyond racialization but beside it--"athwart"--allowing such racializations to still exist unchallenged.[8] Put another way, the condition of possibility for the constitution of an Asian American subject is the very basis for the subject's culture; suffering becomes productive and it is only through suffering--and not an engagement with the actual production of subjects through domination by citizenship for Lowe--that such a subject can emerge.

Lowe goes on to argue that when inequalities cannot be resolved, culture "erupts" and through it "alternative forms of subjectivity, collectivity, and public life are imagined" (Immigrant 22). Shifting from "difference" to "alternatives" is strategic, and Lowe's discourse relies upon such a shift so that she can accommodate the irreducibility of the (Asian American) subject that was, previously, fairly easy to produce. She continues:

> Cultural identities come from somewhere, have histories. But, like everything which is historical, they undergo constant transformation. Far from being eternally fixed in some essentialized past, they are subject to the continuous "play" of history, culture and power.

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[8] See, for example, Wendy Brown, who argues that "Such images of freedom perform mirror reversals of suffering without transforming the *organization of the activity through which the suffering is produced* and without addressing the *subject constitution that domination effects*, that is, the constitution of social categories" (7, emphasis in original).

(64)

It is apparent that Lowe is unwilling to pin anything down in terms of "cultural identities," save that they change in history; however, such an unwillingness brings into relief the difficulties of her racial schema: first establishing a strict relationship to the citizen-subject, Asian American cultural identities are subject to a "constant transformation." The vacillation between State-induced subject construction and a benign sort of creativity in relation to identity is intriguing, but this relation is shored up by another definition: "The making of Asian American culture includes practices that are partly inherited, partly modified, as well as partly invented" (65). Culture and cultural identity here both forecast a sense of racial "ownership"--"inheritance" and "invention"--over culture due to the ability to invent something still tied to an Asian American identity. Also, such identities are dependent upon racial logic: the one who "creates" must also be racialized in the first instance in order to become a legitimate (or authentic) creator. What seems like a pushing at the boundaries of racialized identities becomes, logically, a reification of such identities and, in the process, the social categories and forces that produce the Asian American subject are used as currency for purchase into a realm of "cultural identity."[9]

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[9] Spivak discerns between the "descriptive" and "transformative" levels of the constructed nature of "class," which sheds light on the problem of investing in a racialized identity:

This concept of cultural identity leads Lowe to a discussion of how Asian Americans who are Asian Americanists--indeed, there is no other relationship proffered--should approach their work and theorizing:

> I argue for the Asian American necessity to organize, resist, and theorize *as* Asian Americans, but at the same time, I inscribe this necessity within a discussion of the risks of a cultural politics that relies on the construction of sameness and the exclusion of difference. (68, emphasis in original)

What theorizing "as" an Asian American entails is not elaborated upon, but the condition of being Asian American--the problem of being racialized as such--is used in service of political efficacy. Nancy speaks to the dangers of this dynamic by pointing out "[I]dentity *makes difference*: it presents itself as preeminently different from all other identity and from all nonidentity; relating itself to itself, it relegates the other to a self (or to an absence of self) that is different" (Birth 10, emphasis in original). Instead of investing in a transformative theoretical praxis, Lowe's "difference"--cultural or otherwise--always appears against a backdrop of self-positioning. Making difference--

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> "Class" is not, after all, an inalienable description of a human reality. Class consciousness on the *descriptive* level is itself a strategic and artificial rallying awareness which, on the *transformative* level, seeks to destroy the mechanics which come to construct the outlines of the very class of which a collective consciousness has been situationally developed. (In Other 205, emphasis in original).

manufacturing difference that moves beyond the descriptive towards the ontological--provides Lowe with a stable ground out of which to work as an Asian American(ist) theorist. The problem, though, of what is excluded in the constitution of the "as" comes back to haunt Lowe's later formulations.

Lowe's discussion of the term "Asian American" in Immigrant Acts moves towards a transformative definition, as opposed to the identity of Asian American(ness) discussed above that secures difference without offering up any tangible alternatives or modes of action against racialized conditions. I will quote Lowe at length:

> The grouping "Asian American" is not a natural or static category; it is a socially constructed unity, a situationally specific position, assumed for political reasons. It is "strategic in Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's sense of [positive essentialism]. . . . The concept of "strategic essentialism" suggests that it is possible to utilize specific signifiers of racialized ethnic identity, such as "Asian American," for the purposes of contesting and disrupting the discourses that exclude Asian Americans, while simultaneously revealing the internal contradictions and slippages of "Asian American" so as to unsure that such essentialism will not be reproduced and proliferated by the very apparatuses we seek to disempower. (82)

Yet in the original, Spivak is at pains to point out that the strategy of strategic essentialism is contradictory , a strategy that "adheres to the essentialist notion of consciousness, that would fall prey to an anti-humanist critique, within a historiographic practice that draws many of its strengths from that very critique" (In Other 206-7). Ono addresses Lowe's passage in the following:

> While problematizing essentialized identities is a major focus of her essay, toward the end of it, Lowe nonetheless recuperates an authentic and essentialized notion of Asian American. Thus, her problematization of the term becomes a strategic essentialism of it; Lowe readjusts its meaning to more full address the imperative exigencies of difference. (Ono 72)

Whatever the "exigencies of difference" entail, the difficulties that Lowe's analysis face are rooted in her final project which is to ensure that essentialism will never be used again by the very apparatuses of power being railed against; in other words, Lowe aims to strategically essentialize in order to prevent further essentializing while still relying on essentializing to discuss Asian American "culture."[10] Likewise, strategic essentialism will only

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[10] Kawash, as with Spivak and Ono, points out the contradictory position people of color are placed in when confronted with the color line, and offers a way to mediate the "real" and illusory foundations of race in American society without relying upon a naturalized notion of race:

> The critical task, then, is to confront the essentialism of the color line without resorting to yet another version of

disempower apparatuses and not, presumably, the counterhegemonic movements, like Asian American cultural politics, which will eventually assume the hegemonic position. Though she makes a gesture towards positioning "Asian Americans" as a "socially constructed unity," such a move negates all that she has written before that moment, especially in her reliance upon "cultural difference". Because of this, Immigrant Acts is ambiguous and, at worst, a continuation of the very discourses and practices that disempower Asian Americans in the first place. In her discussion of Chinese intellectuals' reliance upon a "Chinese" identity, Rey Chow argues that "at specific moments ["Chinese-ness"] becomes the source of oppression and catastrophe which they will try to survive" (Writing 98). The catastrophe of reiterating "race" and racialization as the (unacknowledged) founding concepts/practices for a future Asian American cultural identity is evident, and such a reiteration can do nothing to transform the very laws, institutions, and practices that create "Asian Americans" in the first place.[11]

> essentialism that would function as a naturalizing explanation for the way things are. The color line continually both produces and maintains social order and hierarchy. Therefore, it must be addressed doubly, as both the origin of an absolutely real [social and political] division and as the product of an utterly false and impossible distinction [the biological]. (19-20)

[11] In "Canon, Institutionalization, Identity: Contradictions for Asian American Studies," Lowe presents an analysis of the canon that is quite similar to the arguments that David Palumbo-Liu advances. Unfortunately, Lowe also reproduces the investment in biological racialisms evident in my analysis of Immigrant Acts; she revised this essay for Immigrant Acts as "Canon, Institutionalization, Identity: Asian American Studies." One example of this (re)investment in race is

Palumbo-Liu, Particulars, and the Canon

In Democracy Realized: The Progressive Alternative, Roberto Mangabeira Unger claims that in rich industrial democracies, the "public intelligentsia" "deride ideological politics, large-scale projects of institutional reform and popular political mobilization as romantic and impractical" (4). As a result, the "practical problem-solving by experts" eventually allows politics to "degenerate into short-term and episodic factional deals, struck against a background of

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the following:

> Asian American literary texts often reveal heterogeneity rather than producing regulating ideas of cultural unity or integration. On one level, this heterogeneity is expressed in the unfixed, unclosed field of texts written by authors at different distances and generations from the "original" Asian culture. ("Canon" 53)

What this "distance" means--literally or figuratively--goes unexplained in the article, and Lowe revises the end of the sentence in Immigrant Acts: " . . . different distances and generations from cultures as different as Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Philippine, Indian, Vietnamese, and Lao--or in the case of Hawaiian and Pacific Islander cultures, not *immigrants* at all but colonized, dispossessed, and deracinated" (43, emphasis in original). Whether "distances" can be tied to a notion of "assimilation"--texts that may be, through some calculus, more "American" than "Asian"--is unclear, but the criteria for determining what an Asian American text is relies upon, in part, a determination of how the text relates to a culture that is determined by geopolitical borders and an "original" homeland culture; this appears in distinction to those texts from Hawaii and the Pacific Islands, which reflect colonization and dispossession: texts (and subjects) that emerge *in relation* to the dominant and not apart from it (nor in an "autochthonous" mode, which would express a cultural/racial relationship premised on alterity).

Also, Lowe lauds Elaine H. Kim's Asian American Literature: An Introduction to the Writings and Their Social Context (Philadelphia: Temple UP, 1982) by claiming that importance of establishing a social context for Asian American literature because it "*resists* the formal abstraction of aestheticization and canonization" ("On" 54, emphasis in original). San Juan, in a particularly blunt passage, points out the dangers of this "social context" because Kim, in her discussion of Carlos Bulosan's America is in the Heart (1946. Seattle: U of Washington P, 1973), subscribes to the "immigrant paradigm of Euro-American success" instead of "perceiving the deviancy of Bulosan's text" from this paradigm" ("In Search" 219). Social context, in this light, is no guarantee for avoiding the traditional criteria for canonization.

institutions and assumptions that remain unchallenged and even unseen" (4). Much like Lowe's advocacy for strategic identities to counter hegemony, the short-term and episodic outlooks that are, in the immediate sense, mobilized by the promise of counterhegemonic change do not address the fundamental, constitutive conditions of mainstream Asian Americanist counterhegemonic politics: the presence of institutions (and institutional regulations) that provide the context and grounds for the emergence of oppositional politics. Likewise, "transformative" and "solidaristic" politics, as described by Unger, is a way to realize "the interests and ideals of [group interests] through the step-by-step change of a set of arrangements" that will "revise the content as well as the context of recognized interests and professed ideals" (11). What is missing in San Juan's and Lowe's critiques (as well as transformative politics in general), though, is the "visionary element in politics," which would provide us with the "intimation of a different world, in which we would become (slightly) different people, with (slightly) revised understandings of our interests and ideals" (12).

In his writings on the dynamic of the universal and "its" particulars, as well as his pieces on the canon, David Palumbo-Liu attempts to create a space for minority discourse and literature within the structure of the university. At the same time, Palumbo-Liu's critique relies upon notions of "idioms" and counterhegemony--as understood by both Lowe and

San Juan--to develop a new vision of aesthetic and cultural inclusion; the "visionary," then, is compromised and unmentionable. In "Universalisms and Minority Culture," Palumbo-Liu notes a contradiction located within the universal: "So, how can one speak of the 'minor' if not in *differentiating* the space of universality, thereby breaking the illusion of its democratic distribution of its attributes and noting that it actually dispenses its entitlements unevenly?" (188, emphasis in original). Astutely arguing that the fundamental relationship between the particular and the universal is one of exclusion, he contends that the two terms are "mutually inclusive and in fact, constitutive" (199). This allows Palumbo-Liu to argue that what is needed is a new view, an outlook that sees "reconfiguration [of the universal] as a site of a politicized aesthetics" that can serve as "one possible mode of intervention . . . to radically contest the *content* of the universal" (202, emphasis in original).

In his introduction to The Ethnic Canon: Histories, Institutions, and Interventions, Palumbo-Liu continues his call for the reconfiguration of the "universal" in terms of a specific target: the Western literary canon. But because his intervention relies upon a strange logic of minority discourse as "idiom," his strategy replicates much of the thought embodied in Lowe's "strategic essentialism" and San Juan's thoughts on "peasant" consciousness. "[R]evisionist practices may suffer from remaining contained within

hegemonic social and pedagogical practices," asserts Palumbo-Liu, so "the goal [of The Ethnic Canon and minority discourse in general] is to resist the essentializing and stratifying modes of reading ethnic literature that make it ripe for canonization and co-option" (17). He goes on to establish a shifting sense of alterity for minority discourse by using a "linguistic analogy": "minority discourse" has "the status of an idiom" (17). Universals and particulars are mutually constitutive for Palumbo-Liu, but a space remains where "idioms have the weakness of being incomprehensible or only partially understandable outside their particular community of speakers" because "they operate with *relative autonomy* from the ideological formations of the dominant linguistic code" (17, emphasis added). Drawing out the analogy, minority discourse, as opposed to being constituted by the dominant (and vice-versa), can (and does) function in a relatively "free" and sovereign manner since it is "located in [the hegemonic's] proximity but not engulfed by it" (17). The logic of mutually constitutive entities here is contradicted by "strategic" "relative autonomy"; minority discourses and literature have an "idiomatic code" that can be "recognized" and, in turn, such discourses need to preserve their "latitude as a counterdiscourse" and "ability to designate a shifting open space outside the hegemonic" (17). If the counterhegemonic, as argued in relation to San Juan and Lowe, is already contained within the hegemonic and replicates many of the hierarchical relationships perpetuated

by the dominant, then there can be no "shifting open space" apart from the hegemonic that isn't also a part of it.

Palumbo-Liu attempts to address this problem of the particular through a conception of "critical multiculturalism," a multiculturalism that avoids the "celebrating [of] the plurality of cultures by passing through them appreciatively" (Introduction 5). Traditional (or "pluralist") multiculturalism participates in a "monocultural discourse" that "has argued for a single normative culture to which all may subscribe voluntarily while in fact forcing a consensus from those on the margins" (5). The "idiom(s)" here, then, become "cultures" for Palumbo-Liu, and these "cultures," through "critical multiculturalism" can produce an "ethnic canon." But it is difficult to tell the difference between what may be "cultures" and what may just be "race" in another guise. Palumbo-Liu's analysis here hinges upon a lack of specificity when dealing with the concept of "culture"; as a result, the trajectory of his critique remains unclear, save the possibility that his theory cannot formulate a world different from the traditional vision and dynamics of hegemony and counterhegemony.

Palumbo-Liu continues much in the same vein as San Juan and Lowe in terms of linking the struggles of culture to growing transnational capital:

> Within this revision of corporate capitalism as transnational, cultural "difference" is an

> important element to "domesticate" and make not only unobstructive, but attractive. This attraction is in part derived from its translatability, that is, commodification. (Introduction 5)

Though his aim is admirable--locating the problem of "difference" as a result of consumption--there is a reliance on the concept of "translatability"; put another way, the strength of the "idiom" is also the weakness of cultural difference: both can be "domesticated" or "recognized" at which point challenges to the hegemonic can no longer exist. There is also a complementary problem that emerges in relation to this recognition: apart from the "unrealness" of commodification, there is something "untranslatable" and "real" about culture before commodification; yet the untranslatable cannot participate in a "critical multiculturalism" since this project, in the first instance, is concerned with how to approach minority literatures and cultural production in a just manner in light of transnational capital. Commodification, then, emerges as an inevitability, and the minority "code" or discourse--unwittingly for Palumbo-Liu--loses its status as counterhegemonic interlocutor.

Palumbo-Liu, undeterred, develops a theory of critical multiculturalism but replicates Gramsci's hierarchical dynamic between intellectuals and students, who are placed in the silent, unmentioned position of the masses outside of official discourse. He further defines critical

multiculturalism:

> However, there is a key difference in the way a *critical* multiculturalism can be constituted; while the traditional canon is based on a presumed set of accepted texts . . . an ethnic canon should be always in revision and contestation, its critics conscious of both its historical and ideological constructedness and their own pedagogical goals. (Introduction 14, emphasis in original)

While the pedagogical goals of such a project are not elaborated upon, Palumbo-Liu's criticism of a set canonical inventory for traditional literary texts doubles back on itself by positioning the "ethnic" critic as the one who participates in the contests and dialogues over what ethnic texts are included and which are jettisoned in this new, critically multicultural canon. Like Lowe's "cultural identities" that are always in "play" in relation to power and history, Palumbo-Liu's critical multiculturalism is mired in an indeterminacy that hands over the power of determination to an anonymous set of critics that must negotiate their place in the canon's constructedness while also considering their pedagogical goals. Likewise, the problem of "consciousness" reemerges in relation to the problem of the canon.

The "indeterminacy" of the ethnic canon's textual inventory plays a crucial role in the formation of a critical multiculturalism, yet Palumbo-Liu does not question the very

concept of canons and canonization in the first place. He cites Spivak on the question of the canon: "There can be no general theory of canons. Canons are the condition of institutions and the effect of institutions. Canons secure institutions as institutions secure canons" (Introduction 25; Spivak "Making" 784). Yet Palumbo-Liu never mentions the larger aim and project of Spivak's essay: "[W]e are attempting not merely to enlarge the canon with a countercanon but to dethrone canonical *method*" ("Making" 790, emphasis in original).[12] Dethroning, akin to Unger's "intimation of a different world," is altogether different from the project that Palumbo-Liu sets forth, and he follows the same party line as San Juan and Lowe by speaking of "resistance":

> [Y]et it aims the take of a critical multiculturalism to be alert both to the ways that multiculturalist criticism can fall in line with hegemonic assumptions and, indeed, serve to reinforce them, *and* to ways that a truly multicultural criticism might theorize points of opposition and resistance. (Introduction 15, emphasis in original).

If, as Brown points out, resistance stands against something and not "for" anything, then what may be happening here is a

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[12] Palumbo Liu cites Spivak after the following statement: "[R]ather, canons must be thought of within specific institutional practices inscribed within particular historical moments and as securing specific positions of authority" (11).

power play of sorts: the "right" to determine an ethnic canon--regardless of its contingency or impermanence--resides in a resistance to determination from without, but nothing insures that this (resistant or counterhegemonic) power will not replicate the very forces it seeks to counteract except by relying on ethnic (studies) scholars being self-reflexive enough to participate in the new order of canon contestation and revision. Apart from relying on scholars' "consciousness" of their own positions, the only way of positing a different world is by "dethroning" canonical method in the first place; the ethnic canon and critical multiculturalism cannot transform the very relationships that create racial hierarchy and exclusion in the first place.

Two years after the publication of The Ethnic Canon, Palumbo-Liu published "Theory and the Subject of Asian American Studies." Here, Palumbo-Liu reflects upon "knowledge" and institutions of higher learning with an aim of coming to a (re)evaluation of the field of Asian American Studies:

> I believe it is imperative to recognize our own historical situation. We might wonder how we have come to be able to articulate precisely these issues--what institutional functions have taken place, and are talking place, that allows for (even encourages) the production of certain kinds of knowledge? This is not to blindly cast suspicion on all we do, *nor* innocently celebrate the effects of

> postmodernity, rather I think we need to track the effects of our theoretical mediations, specifically as they intersect and interpenetrate specific regimens which materialize our discourse differently. (63, emphasis in original)

This statement clearly illustrates a taking into consideration of the problematics of Asian American Studies, but there is still no mention of where Asian Americanists can or could be headed, save a realignment and consideration of what exactly the field attempts to accomplish. In the same issue of Amerasia, Kent Ono's stance is similar to Palumbo-Liu's: "I am not calling for 'new' terms to take their place [the terms 'Asian American' and 'Asian Americans'], but rather for a reconfiguration of discursive relations that may necessitate the evacuation of the need for such terms in the first place" (Ono 76). But Ono holds out the possibility that "Asian American" may need to be dismantled in light of his comments on Lowe's essentialism and (the impossibility of) collectivities[13]; in the end, though, we are left with a broken and directionless future of further investigation in a field where Ono seems to be one of the few calling for radical reevaluation and reconsideration. In line with "culture," cultural difference, hierarchical relations,

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[13] Ono takes Yen Le Espiritu to task for her writing on Asian American panethnicity: "While she remains skeptical of an essential conception of panethnicity, the very goal of panethnic alliances underscores the need for continued essentialism" (Ono 71). See Espiritu's Asian American Panethnicity: Bridges, Institutions, and Identities. Philadelphia: Temple UP, 1992.

exclusions, and "strategic essentialisms," San Juan, Lowe, and Palumbo-Liu walk a hazy line of "resistance" without a baseline (self-)critique of why exactly they are engaged in such projects and what those projects' logical ends and limits are.

Beyond and Before the Project(s)

Past the need to assert a cultural identity and beyond the call for critical multiculturalism(s), a move towards claiming racial status as racialized needs to be made--what Rey Chow calls a "loosening of the positivity of the [ethnic, racial, and/or nationalist] sign" (93). Put another way, Lowe and Palumbo-Liu work within a context that takes the process of racialization as the impetus to fashion cultural identities and a notion of Asian American literature as "idiom." Unfortunately, this strategy of difference replicates exactly what it seeks to vanquish. If our intended goal is to decouple freedom from the desire for secured or fashioned identities, then we will need to heed Wendy Brown's call to "generate futures together rather than navigate or survive them" (Brown 4). Likewise, San Juan's call for the dismantling of the world capitalist system in favor of local production and a recuperation--however slight--of the autochthonous glosses over the constructedness of class and its descriptive function; the call for intellectuals to bring the masses into line reworks a pedagogy of condescension and violence for revolutionary ends. The problem of relationships--relationality as such--is the problem of Asian

American Studies, and resistance as commonly defined cannot cure all ills.

One of the central concerns facing Asian American studies is the possibility of "agency" in relation to power, which Judith Butler speaks of at length:

> Agency exceeds the power by which it is enabled. One might say that the purposes of power are not always the purposes of agency. To the extent that the latter diverge from the former, agency is the assumption of a purpose *unintended* by power, or that could not have been derived logically or historically, that operates in a relation of contingency and reversal to the power that makes it possible, to which it nevertheless belongs. This is, as it were, the ambivalent scene of agency, constrained by no teleological necessity. (Butler 15, emphasis in original)

Because Asian Americans are already and always racial subjects, it serves no purpose to replicate such racial status through ideas of "culture" and "community" that, even though ostensibly based on "memory" and "shared history"," necessitate the use of such a status as the ground for orientation and condition of possibility. Butler's "agency" is not resistance not is it oppositionality but, rather, a rare and unique scene where the subject created by power exceeds the thresholds of that power--albeit briefly--by assuming a purpose not premised on power's inherent

contradictions; Lowe's call for practicing identity and community "differently" is a move towards inclusion in the "national narrative" in the sense that she advocates for a non-essentialized view of Asian Americans while still relying on essentialized notions of Asian American "identity" that never, in the future, disappear; this barely moves from the seat of power. The same can be said for Palumbo-Liu's desire for agency and self-determination in terms of establishing (and revising) and ethnic canon.

What may break this circuit (and the circulation of the same) in Asian American Studies is a reevaluation of political goals and the simultaneous evacuation of any positive (cultural) meaning for the terms "Asian American" where racialization becomes the suffering out of which identity is based. Since identity is based on exclusion--for Asian Americans, exclusion from citizen-subject status and the concomitant exclusion through cultural difference--the future(s) of Asian American studies cannot be based on such a concept. Rather, the need for torquing conversations towards the problems/promises of relationality may be at hand. In The Inoperative Community, Jean-Luc Nancy takes up the problem of revolution and resistance:

> The idea of revolution has perhaps still not been understood, inasmuch as it is the idea of a new foundation or that of a reversal of sovereignty. Of course, we need gestures of foundation and reversal. But their reason lies elsewhere: it is in

> the incessantly present moment at which existence-in-common resists every transcendence that tries to absorb it, but in an All or in an Individual (in a Subject in general). (xl)

Existence-in-common goes beyond moments of opposition, resistance, and wars of position. The terrain of the social in Asian American Studies, at least in terms of San Juan, Lowe, and Palumbo-Liu, hesitates at the very moment of being-in-relation in order to recoup a being founded in domination. While such political projects are valuable, what's lost is a chance--fleeting or not--that such modes of "agency" will not repeat what has come before; "identity" lies in the grasp of power and commodification and yet this grasp fashions the grounds for resistance to be pursued. We must imagine an alternative trajectory, one where "resistance will belong decidedly to another world entirely" and where "community" will not consist of "beings producing their own essence as their work, and furthermore producing precisely this essence *as community*" (Nancy xli, 2, emphasis in original). This does not evacuate the grounds of critiques that are concerned with racial, gender, class, and sexual oppression, but, rather, this strategy offers up another context to situate our claims in, one that relies not on exclusions--racial, cultural, etc.--but takes such interpellations and refuses to utilize them for positive identification. As Samira Kawash puts it:

> Without absolute assurance of the right or the just, we are faced with the continual, and

> necessarily political, demand of responsibility not just for one time or for one decision but *at each instant, in each relation*. This means more political engagement, not less, more challenging, more questioning, more struggling to expose and counter the violence disguised and justified in the name of self-evidence, nature, justice, or common sense. (Kawash 218, emphasis added)

At each instant, Asian American Studies must confront the conceptual framework that undergirds its project; indeed, we must attend to those historical, theoretical, and conceptual moments that prevent, as Ono puts it, the "evacuation of the need" for the term "Asian American" in the first place.

What follows is a study of how a series of concepts (marginality, citizenship, and subjection) have been developed over time. In complementary fashion, I will also focus on how Asian Americanists have deployed these concepts in the interests of future freedom and equality. In the first chapter, I demonstrate how the concept of marginality emerges out of the Chicago School of Sociology's stated desires for both racial assimilation and biological amalgamation. These concepts remain intact within Asian American Studies, perpetuating the racialist foundations of Asian American inclusion imagined by the Chicago School. In terms of the "citizen," I examine the problem of sovereignty as it relates to the racial state in the second chapter. By examining the racial foundations of American law, I reinterpret Japanese

American internment as an articulation of the racial exception which resides at the core of the U.S. legal system; as a result, Asian American Studies must develop a theory of its relation to the state that addresses the limitations of mere "inclusion" and "full" citizenship. Finally, I address how concerns surrounding subjection invariably result in a conception of the subject who "needs" inclusion; this results in a reconsolidation of a racial identity which questions nothing concerning Asian American identity's reinvestment in the racialisms developed by the Chicago School. Rather than arguing, in a circular fashion, that we are back where we began in our thinking of Asian America, this dissertation aims to provide a critique which can untether the thinking of Asian American Studies from the yoke of racial determination. This re-orientation of the field will escape the racial "peril" comfortably lodged at its very heart; only then will we be able to undo the subjection of identity--proceeding toward freedom past the limit of conditional inclusion.

Chapter 1: Marginality Revisited

> The contrast between what you are and what you would like to be is the basis of the sense of inferiority.
>
> —Robert Park[1]

> All of our so-called racial problems grow out of a situation in which assimilation and amalgamation do not take place at all, or take place very slowly.
>
> —Robert Park[2]

> The absolutely other is the Other. He and I do not form a number. The collectivity in which I say "you" or "we" is not a plural of the "I."
>
> -Emmanuel Levinas[3]

Credited with "confront[ing] the power of vested interests," the work produced by the sociology department at the University of Chicago from the late 1890s to the early 1950s is often seen as a preamble to or the beginning of a sociology capable of a "permanent program of research" that was concerned with the "development of a theory explaining social relations" (Smith 8, Matthews 2). Indeed, the "Chicago school" was the "first successful American program of collective sociological research" which took advantage of "foundation grants" and external funding to sustain investigations into, among other things, urban demography, youth culture, and race relations on the U.S. Pacific Coast (Bulmer xv). Chicago sociology introduced and/or integrated a

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[1] Park, Robert Ezra. Collection, [Box 2, Folder 4], Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library.

[2] Park, Robert Ezra. "Human Migration and the Marginal Man." American Journal of Sociology. 33.2 (May 1931): 95-110. Rpt. in Race and Culture. 1928. Glencoe, IL: The Free Press, 1950. 352.

[3] Levinas, Emmanuel. Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority. Trans. Alphonso Lingis. Pittsburgh: Duquesne UP, 1969. 39.

wide range of qualitative research techniques into the study of society: from urban cartography to participant-observer research to oral histories and interviews. These techniques set the Chicago school apart from "other sociological work at the time" because they reflected a "processual" understanding of society: "examining organization and disorganization, conflict and accommodation, social movements and cultural change . . . [and] imagin[ing] society in terms of groups and interaction" (Abbott 6). The responsibility of building the school's reputation rested on a number of professors and graduate students, including William I. Thomas, Ernest W. Burgess, Albion Small, Rose Hum Lee, and Robert Ezra Park; yet the continuity implicit in the term "school" glosses over the fact that there were three schools within the Chicago school (depending on the time period): from 1890s to the end of World War I, the 1920-1930s, and 1936-1951 (Smith 3).[4] Part of this constructed continuity is due to Albion Small's creation and editorship of the American Journal of Sociology, which was housed and printed at the university; with this journal, the Chicago school secured its place as one of the preeminent (and formidable) sociological research institutions. But is was the school's intense (and consistent) focus on ethnic and racial issues over time that

[4] In this chapter, I will focus on the second "school" of Chicago sociology that (roughly) existed from 1920 to the 1930s. Besides having Robert Park as its central figure, this school produced a sociology that, supposedly, escaped the earlier school's biological racialisms and avoided the problems of the later school's investments in quantitative research by focusing on the social relationships between racial groups.

secured the place of the Chicago school in the annals of American sociological thought.

Over the course of this chapter, I will argue that Park's (and his students') investment in biological racialisms undermine his solutions to racial conflict and demonstrate how these solutions aggressively (re)produce a biologically white American society. At stake in this study is the future of Asian American Studies: the conceptual network laid down by Park and his followers remains the most fundamental set of concepts utilized by Asian American Studies--despite the resistance to or qualified acceptance of such concepts--in its attempts to understand Asian Americans and their identities across the social sciences and humanities. To this day, the Chicago school's influence and cache in sociological and humanities research looms large. For example, sociologist Timothy Fong credits Robert Park, the most committed researcher on race relations at the university, with developing the "preeminent theory" of "immigrant adaptation to life in the United States" (157). Likewise, Henry Yu contends that the "intellectual construction" of the "Oriental problem," which was a major concern for Park and the Chicago school, "provided the vocabulary and the concepts for scholarly discussion about Chinese Americans and Japanese Americans between 1920 and 1960" ("'Oriental'" 191). Indeed, Yu claims that the "consciousness of American intellectuals of Chinese descent was profoundly shaped by the theories and writings of a

handful of social scientists from the University of Chicago" (191). Robert Park's influence on these Chinese American intellectuals, who were the "only scholars studying Asian communities in America at that time," and his publications on race relations "allowed [for] greater optimism about the possibility of improvement in group relations" in America ("'Oriental'" 96, Matthews 158).

And yet the promise of Park's contribution to Chicago sociology is not, as some scholars claim, that he "kept asking questions" instead of "produc[ing] clear answers and explanations regarding the development of American society" (Smith 132). Along with Ernest W. Burgess, Park published the (in)famous Introduction to the Science of Sociology (1921)--otherwise known as "The Green Bible"--which codified and explained the Chicago school's take on topics ranging from racial conflict to ethnic assimilation to migration; clocking in at 1,040 pages, the Introduction offers students an exhaustive collection of sociological materials with chapter introductions that develop and explain Park's and Burgess' concepts; this work alone, along with the essays discussed below, demonstrates Park's strong investment in producing a sociology that could effect social change by textually grounding the discipline and offering a foundational set of concepts and readings in the context of an introductory college reader. In this chapter, I argue that Park's theories of race relations and marginality offer up "clear" alternatives to racial oppression and not just more

"questions" to produce more research; these alternatives, like assimilation and amalgamation, are slanted towards maintaining the privilege that constitutes racial hierarchy and reproducing "white" society through an elimination of supposed biological inferiors. In all, the Chicago school was an intellectual powerhouse that (re)produced intellectuals to spread the (sociological) gospel (Abbot 1). Taken in this light, the Chicago school and, more importantly, the work of Robert Park, was concerned with establishing a "progressive outlook" that "strengthened scholars in their expectation that ethnic differences and conflicts would ultimately be resolved in a general amalgamation" (Persons 37).

Marginal Sociology

In his 1926 essay "Behind Our Masks," Robert Ezra Park claims that "The faces we know have no secrets for us" (252). Noting that "we" feel "secure and at home" with those faces that express easily interpretable sentiment, Park attempts to explain the discomfort white Americans experience when confronted by the "Oriental's" "racial uniform" (252). Strangely, Park locates the "secret," which Georg Simmel claims is an "aggressive defensive" that characterizes "every human relation," in the literal faces of Asians ("Secrecy" 330). As such, the Asian face constitutes a secret that is both a *natural* and a biological bar: inclusion and the "secur[ity]" of social knowledge can only emerge if a biological change takes place to reconfigure the Oriental face/body into a more familiar countenance. This, however, is

a philosophical distraction. Simmel cogently contends that the secret, which is one of "man's greatest achievements," creates a "second world alongside the manifest world," and the "latter is decisively influenced by the former" (330). If secrets do indeed determine the workings of the social world, then Park places the onus of racial difference--which produces secrets--squarely on Asian shoulders. The "special value of the secret" allows those that possess it a "position of exception" (332); this "exception," though, does not make Asians or Asian Americans exceptional for Park. Rather, we should view Park's work with the utmost suspicion since the actual exception rests in the sociologist's ability to mask the desire for racial amalgamation and coercion by claiming, on the surface, that social assimilation is inevitable (and desired). Truly, whiteness is the exception that proves the racial rule.

Park's desire to "contain" the racial other's face is also, according to Levinas, an attempt to counter the face's "refusal to be contained" and "comprehended" according to a racial ordering (Levinas 194). Essential to note is that for Levinas, "ethics" can only emerge with the appearance of the Other who is also the "Stranger" that "disturbs the being at home with oneself" (39). Because being "at home" for Park's whites occurs *only* when whites are with other whites, the logical end of notions of amalgamation is the eradication of ethics: everywhere "we" go, "we" are all "we" see; there is no obligation to treat the racial other in any other way than

coercion. In this sense, the white subject--the "I" in this formulation--is absolved of social, legal, and political responsibility in terms of racial exclusion; the "we" that Chicago sociology demands (and fantasizes about) is a plural term, a society of racial sameness that always polices its borders to bring (or force) minorities into the racial fold. Park's theories advance a re-arrangement of racial politics that can never escape the grasp of exclusion, yet, by force of will, we are lead to believe that we can.

Strangely, America's "non-ethnic" whites remain unnamed and undertheorized in Park's writings on race. Noting later in his career that "race relations and all that they imply are generally, and on the whole, the products of migration and conquest," Park tends to forget that those responsible for "conquest," in the largest sense, also produce the conditions necessary for oppression ("Nature" 104). We could say that the undertheorized "Anglo-Saxons" in Park's works serve as the ultimate arbiters of race relations, and that their "desire to survive" and "not see the Native Sons of the Pacific replaced by Asiatics" demands submission to racial hierarchy despite Park's invitations to think "through" Asian American subordination ("Our" 140).

In this chapter, I will explore the works of Park and his student E.V. Stonequist in order to explore the contradictory racial logics that they produce; their works set the terms and conditions for social inclusion while advocating for racial "mixing" and demanding allegiance to

white supremacy. After this, we will grapple with contemporary Asian Americanist theoretical responses to Park's works as well as attempts to re-mobilize Chicago sociology in "positive" or productive ways. Finally, I will analyze Asian American responses to the sociological definition of and the solutions provided for Asian American racial oppression that emerges out of the Chicago school. By looking at Fae Myenne Ng's Bone, Younghill Kang's East Goes West: The Making of an Oriental Yankee, and the sociological work of Paul Siu (who was Park's student), I hope to show that the end of the highly-qualified sociological inclusion explored in this chapter begins at the moment where the "secret" nature of white supremacy is exposed and interrupted by meditations on the future of Asian American in spite of and/or apart from social, legal, and economic mechanisms of exclusion.

Interests

Despite vocal claims of outright racism, contemporary Asian Americanists re-read the theories of Chicago sociology for varying reasons. For example, David Palumbo-Liu emphasizes Park's heavy investment in the "abstract," which prevents him from integrating a "critique of the actual material histories of American racism" (87); this "abstracted and bracketed" treatment of race, for Palumbo-Liu, allows Park to fantasize about the "Asian race" without a full sense of social and political realities (87). Paul Takagi dismisses Park as only concerned with the perpetuation of the "Anglo

race" in order to dismiss current (1970s) Asian Americanist quantitative sociology as complicit with this aim due to its investment in "ahistorical" "cultural determinants" that are used in studies of assimilation (154, 149). Gary Okihiro attempts to produce African American/Asian American social and political alliances (by claiming a biological kinship and racial mixing) in order to confront Park's theories of and desire for "social control" of distinct racial groups (134). Given that Park haunts all of these Asian Americanists' analyses, it is essential to reassess the particular goals and aims of Park; while it is easy enough to dismiss and/or qualify Park's corpus if we only read a few of his selected essays, it is even more difficult to tease out how these futures envisioned for Asian America in contemporary works rely on and, frankly, are constituted by the racialist thinking of Park. This theoretical reliance never moves far from a "disowning," and in order to integrate a greater understanding of Park's sociological program, we have to entertain the possibility of jettisoning all sociological logics--which are all implicitly racial logics--in developing alternative futures for Asian American Studies. At each moment, Asian Americanist responses to Chicago sociology rely upon racialization in order to develop solutions to racialization. This self-same circuit, as I will show in my analysis of Park and my further exploration into Asian Americanist responses, becomes self-defeating, reconsolidating the racialisms of 1920s and 1930s sociology

in what purports to be promising alternatives to racial determinism.

In 1928, Robert Park claimed that "so-called" racial problems concerning Asian Americans emerge from a social context where assimilation and amalgamation either never take place or do so at a "slow" pace ("Human" 352). Six years earlier, in his and Ernest Burgess' Introduction to the Science of Sociology, Park claims that sociology "seeks to arrive at natural laws and generalizations in regard to human nature, irrespective of time and of place" where natural laws pertain to "any statement which describes the behavior of a class of objects or the character of a class of acts" (11). Fundamentally, these two statements threaten to cancel each other out; racial problems, tied to specific historical moments and social contexts--where some government or some racial group regulates the pace of assimilation and amalgamation--do not necessarily follow "natural laws" in the sense that such laws, being applicable across a totalized temporal spectrum, are universalized[5]. We can develop two conclusions from this conceptual tension. First, that natural laws presuppose--without admitting it--a "worldview" that

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[5] Cox contends that there always exists an element of volition in race prejudice and, by extension, racial "problems" since prejudice is the "social-attitudinal concomitant of the racial-exploitative practice of a ruling class in a capitalistic society. The substance of race prejudice is the exploitation of the militarily weaker race" (476). This social-attitudinal concomitant emerges from rationalizations--at every moment and in different, particular places--tied to issues of economic, legal, and social advantage; while they follow a certain historical (racial and capitalist) logic, they also exist in specific historical circumstances.

anticipates an end; in other words, the goal of eradicating racial problems--which Palumbo-Liu locates in Park's works--must be solved through "unnatural" methods to counter the "deep-seated" and "instinctive" "racial antipathies" that people possess (Introduction 623). Second, amalgamation and assimilation are the unnatural methods that will "correct" racism and social, economic, and political segregation. At its heart, Park's theories of racial equality seek to "control competitive [and reproductive] processes" in order to produce a society where racial stratification is perpetuated by the desire to incorporate, biologically and socially, racial others (Schwendinger 386). While some argue that Park's and Burgess' desire, in their Introduction, is to create a "*formal* perspective which ignored the enduring moral and political realities engendered by class relations in the United States," I argue that Park's brand of sociology, in light of epistemological inconsistencies and legal regulations, could never escape the bounds of exclusion despite the concerted effort by Park to find a way out of exclusion (401, emphasis in original). As such, it is not a question of Park "ignoring" any political or moral realities inasmuch as it is that Park cannot extricate himself from a sociology envisioned as a "conservation" project that seeks to incorporate social groups into a wider, nebulous white majority.

If we look at Park's essays in chronological order, it becomes apparent that he attempted to create a limited model

of social inclusion that could deal with racialist determination. For instance, he writes in 1926 that "*most of the racial traits that determine race relations are superficial*" ("Behind" 251, emphasis in original). While noting that where the perception of "racial differences are great, the individual is often quite unseen," the "individual" still possess some "racial traits" that affect and determine race relations (246); most traits are "superficial," but which traits count? As early as 1913, Park invests in a notion of "fundamental racial characteristics" and "temperaments" that makes the project of assimilation difficult for racial minorities ("Racial Assimilation" 205). One problem is that "homogeneity" is the quality that "mobilizes the individual man" because it removes "social taboo" and "permits the individual to move into strange groups" (205). The "secondary groups" in society--those that are racial/ethnic minorities--prevent this homogeneity from being fully realized, thereby weakening the State, which depends on assimilation for its "nutrition" (209); the differences that create subordination prevent the smooth functioning of the status quo, and these differences aren't superficial but, rather, essential for Park to eradicate in an attempt to usher in the "corporate character" of an envisioned, future society where assimilation has already taken place (207). Park cannot develop a strategy that would end racial oppression by other means. He develops a theory of "bi-racial" organizations where Blacks and whites live in

separate but equal spheres of work. These organizations "preserve race distinction, but change their content" in such a way as to provide for a formal equality within a cooperative, segregated world ("The Bases" 243).

This change in the "content" of race relations, though, is a ruse. Racial groups inherit their "temperaments," which are "transmitted biologically" ("Education" 280); these "racial qualities" determine what racial groups "will be interested in," what "they will assimilate," and, "to state it pedagogically, [what] they will learn" (282). As early as 1918, Park argued that miscegenation would provide for a "breaking up or [sic] the complex of the biologically inherited qualities which constitute the temperament of the race" (283). Whereas miscegenation is highly guarded against in race-based societies such as the U.S., Chicago sociology looked at intermarriage and miscegenation as promising processes that would end the bi-racial, bi-partite organization of society. By settling and eradicating race conflict through race-mingling in order to produce a smooth functioning corporate society, Park, in 1926, envisioned an end-point for his "race relations cycle." This cycle, "apparently progressive and irreversible," consisted of "contacts, competition, accommodation and eventual assimilation" ("Our" 150). Accommodation is a context where "mutually respective relations of superordination and subordination" existed, while assimilation promised an eradication of behavioral, structural/governmental, and

biological differences between groups (Schwendinger 396). Assimilation, in its fateful relationship with amalgamation, was a "practical" goal rather than a "sort of state men should desire" or envision because, "human nature being what it is," society could only hope to "survive in the world in which it found itself" (Smith 114).[6] For Park (in 1943), only a "revolution in race relations" and "race ideologies" could "fundamentally [change] the mind of the American people" in order to produce equality, but since the revolution "has not yet arrived"--as if revolutions appear without warning--the appropriate course turned out to be racial incorporation through miscegenation ("Race Ideologies" 315).[7]

Yet incorporation becomes not the "end" of race and

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[6] Near the end of his career in 1937, Park hedged his bets on the race relations cycle, admitting that the cycle "once initiated, inevitably continues until it terminates in some predestined racial configuration, and one consistent with an established social order of which it is a part" ("Race Relations" 195). Noting that there are three different "predestined" outcomes (a caste system, "complete assimilation," and the creation of a "permanent racial minority within the limits of the nation state"), Park seems to have felt a need to tone down his stance towards assimilation and amalgamation, noting the possible impossibilities contained within the cycle's system (194).

[7] Stanford M. Lyman argues that the equating of "assimilation with [racial] fusion" is a mistake because "pluralism" was a "core value" in American society while fusion was not (133). In effect, Lyman is attempting to salvage the race relations cycle and Park's corpus by claiming that it should serve as a "model" instead of a "theory" (130); in this formulation, the "questions of verification or falsification [of the cycle] no longer are relevant" (133). Sociology, then, does not have to answer to "society" in this formulation, and the "case studies" that are produced out of this revised "model" status only serve to gauge how the model--as "ideal"--is true (or how data deviates from the ideal). Furthermore, Lyman ignores Park's statements about pluralism in relation to his work. Park asserts that he does not "accept" the idea of cultural pluralism and instead, he maintains his desire to see society embody a "harmonious whole" where "ideas and beliefs" (most especially about race and assimilation) become one ("Culture" 31).

racial thinking, but a process whereby racialized groups come into the majoritarian fold via assimilation and amalgamation. Cox argues:

> To be assimilated is to live easily and unobtrusively in the society. One must be at home, so to speak, with the dominant social organization. So long as a group is identified or remembered as alien, it will be forced to have a divided allegiance. (547)

This "alien" status was continually reproduced by Park. First, Park could never fully settle on a strict definition of what a racial "group" was. In what seems to be an outline for a sociology course that Park taught at the University of Chicago, he writes: "The group is a xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx" (Collection 2,5). The twenty x's--which cover up an attempt at definition--are followed by a terse explanation of how "nations" come into being: "A nation is a nation because it is recognized as such and because of this recognition has certain . . . rights and responsibilities" (2,5). If we spin this kind of logic out, a "group" can only become a group via recognition by the dominant social organization; also, the "rights and responsibilities" of groups determine the place of the group within the social order. Given Asian Americans' "racial uniform," the group comes into being through their embodiment and the concomitant racialization by the majority. And the dissolution of the group, for Park, could never come about through a brand of color-blindness because he declares

that assimilation is "second-generation stuff" (Collection 17,3). If the first-generation can never assimilate, what we are facing is a question of the general disappearance of the racial uniform to create "faces" that hold no (racial) "secrets" for "us." The end of racial "antipathies" is always lodged on the horizon, at a (untraversable) distance; unless, of course, Asian Americans are subsumed so that a new race (of whites) is created without a trace of the Oriental to be found.

In his definition of "amalgamation" for the Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, E.B. Reuter, who was Park's colleague at the University of Chicago, claims that there are "three major stages" that make up the "biological union of previously distinct racial groups" (16). After miscegenation occurs and a "mixed-blood" population is in place, this group must go through "isolation and selective adaptation" in order to create a "distinctive racial strain" (16). Yet the strained logic of amalgamation proves that amalgamation is never merely "natural" and must be targeted as an explicit goal through (physical and reproductive) "isolation." As a result, amalgamation is a "cause and effect to social assimilation" because it increases the "number and intimacy of social contacts" and promotes the "fusion of social heritages and the diffusion and blending of cultures" (17). The realistic trajectory of the amalgamative process, given the historical and legal circumstances, is that the "new" racial strain to be produced would, in actuality, be racially

"white"--if it is produced at all. In light of the two major pieces of legislation that impinge upon Asian America's (heterosexual) reproduction (the 1922 Cable Act and the Immigration Act of 1924), it is evident that an impossible and unattainable "whiteness" becomes the sole aspiration for the "Orientals" in America's midst.

This channeling of reproduction into whiteness is evident in the details of the laws during Park's years of teaching and writing. The Cable Act, which was repealed in 1936, stipulated that a "woman citizen of the United States" shall "cease to be a citizen" if she marries an alien ineligible to citizenship (Cable). Sucheng Chan points out that this made it a "real liability for American-born women of Asian ancestry to marry immigrant men" (Chan 106). Asian American women could, under the legal requirements, only maintain their citizenship if they married citizens; this conditional citizenship, then, attempts to prevent the reproduction of Asian Americans through the control of future Asian-only heterosexual coupling. At the same time, the Immigration Act of 1924 narrowed the definition of admissible (but still ineligible to citizenship) Asian American women to those who were married to Asian American male professors, students, or religious ministers[8]; the wives of merchants, who received "more favorable treatment than any other group of Chinese women" in past versions of the Chinese Exclusion Act

[8] Also, the quota for immigrants from Asian countries was firmly established at one hundred per year in the Act. This can be contrasted with the quota for German immigrants, which was set at 51,227.

and its iterations, were now inadmissable (Chan 106). These restrictions, then, create a situation for both Asian American men and women that, for the most part, prevents any "concentration" of Asians in America; funneled into a restricted reproductive space, Asian American men and women, if they were to reproduce at all and not "disappear," would most likely have "hybridized" (in a "white" way), biracial children.[9] And given the severe penalties for white women marrying Asian men, both the Cable Act and the Immigration Act of 1924 guaranteed a virtual halt to the creation of any "distinctive racial strain" in that manner.[10]

In "Race Relations and Certain Frontiers," Park claims that amalgamation will create a "relatively homogenous racial stock which with time tends to assume the character of a new race and a new people, with traditions and institutions peculiarly their own" (133). And yet in the same year, 1934, Park wrote "The Negro and His Plantation Heritage" in which he writes that "marginal peoples"--those who are racially on

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[9] Chan notes that an amendment to the Immigration Act of 1924 was passed which allowed "Chinese women who had married U.S. citizens before 1924 to come into the country" (Chan 106). Asian American women were basically directed to marry white U.S. citizens by the law creating a context of allowing only "interracial" couples--Asian American women with white men, mostly--to legally exist in the U.S.

[10] It also bears mentioning that Filipinos, because of the Tydings-McDuffie Act of 1934, suffered a greater blow in terms of immigration and citizenship status. The quota for immigration in Tydings-McDuffie was set at fifty Filipinos per year. Likewise, Filipinos, who were considered "nationals" of the U.S. and were not citizens, had their status changed to "aliens" in section 8.1 of the act (Tydings); exclusion was permissible because Tydings-McDuffie set the stage for the eventual independence of the Philippines, requiring a change in status.

the margins of society--are "peoples in transit between simpler and primitive and more sophisticated and complex cultures" (69). This transition to civilization does not proceed, "with time," in any particularly easy manner; indeed, "Institutions are borrowed or imposed upon peoples to whose traditions, instincts, and actual needs they are quite foreign, or have not yet fully assimilated" (69). The conflict between the "new" race that possesses their own institutions and the "marginal" peoples who must either borrow or have "institutions" imposed upon them is strange: addressing the biological aspect of race in order to create a "new people" in no way neutralizes the need for the "civilized," through benevolent coercion, to organize this newly formed group. In his writings on African Americans, Park consistently claims that slavery created a context where "assimilation [of "alien races"] followed rapidly and as a matter of course" ("Racial Assimilation" 69). So, despite arguments that assimilation consists of the "process on interpenetration and fusion in which persons and groups acquire the memories, sentiments, and attitudes of other persons or groups" and that this acquisition leads to the creation of a "common cultural life," Park's theories of assimilation still rely upon a context of coercion and inequality (Introduction 735); racial others must submit to the dominant social order in order for assimilation to proceed. The "growth" that Park attributes to assimilation is nothing more than a submission, especially when he argues, "A

common language is indispensable for the most intimate association of the members of the group; its absence is an insurmountable barrier to assimilation" (737). Difference, if it cannot be "easily" solved (via language acquisition), must be managed through hierarchy and amalgamation. Obviously, then, amalgamation can only proceed through the dominant majority, and the "whitening" of society is the logical end point to counter a social world where racial alterity and foreignness threaten the promise of "unity" and "homogeneity."

Strangers

In "Symbiosis and Socialization," Park argues that the process of "socialization" will end with assimilation, "which involves the more or less complete incorporation of the individual into the existing moral order" (262). During the same year (1939), he also argued that the "precise nature of race relations" is "that they are the relations of strangers" who "have not been sufficiently knit together by intermarriage and interbreeding to constitute a single ethnic community, with all that it implies" ("The Nature" 114). The "interpenetration" and "fusion" of assimilation, then, appears at the moment where strangers and strange-ness disappear via biological, moral, and "ethnic" incorporation. Cox claims that being a stranger is impossible in communities "where a negative attitude has been indirectly nurtured" and racial minorities are "singled out for differential treatment on the basis of prepared racial sentiments" (Cox 354). And by

a sleight of hand maneuver, Park reconfigures the "strange" in order to advance a rational, practical conception of social/racial organization: that which is "different" must be incorporated *and* eradicated in order for race to disappear.

Apart from this notion of amalgamation, Park frequently cites Simmel's conception of the "stranger" in his works, but Park's usage of Simmel's concept is, frankly, a misunderstanding. Simmel envisions an ideal world of "sociability" in which the stranger, indirectly, counteracts social exclusion by his/her mere presence; the "stranger" is not a status that needs to be destroyed in order to "knit together" the races. For example, Simmel claims that "sociability"--the quality of being-"social"--resolves the solitude of the individual through "togetherness, a union with others" ("The Sociology" 255). This union, however, has no "ulterior end" and "no content" but is, rather, an association not "determined by content" (255, 256). In this way, Simmel attempts to come to an understanding of a social world that comes before "society" and sociological knowledge. Without the coercion and incorporation that is explicit in Park's theories, Simmel's sociability produces the "only [world] . . . in which a democracy of equals is possible without friction" (257). And even though this is an "*artificial* world" made up of people who have "renounced" the "material accent" of life, Simmel attempts to imagine a society where the "verification of a truth"--in this sense a "racial" truth--is never the driving purpose (257, 259,

emphasis in original). To this end, Park's theories exhibit the "freedom of bondage" or the freedom that can only be envisioned through bondage: a society where verification, calculation, and exclusion remain even after the incorporation of difference into homogeneity (260). How else to ensure and regulate homogeneity if not through a continual calculation of (retrograde) difference? If Park's theories of race and society rely on such terms as knowability, amalgamation, and sameness, then the contrast between his work and Simmel's couldn't be greater. And this is the lost opportunity that continually haunts Park's work: Park creates a set of instructions for how to maintain and rebuttress white supremacy through his ability to calculate one's race and, in turn, his desire to create a society that incorporates racial others.

What's "lost" in all of this concern over the creation of a society through sociology is that we can use the "stranger" to expose the bankruptcy of racialist thinking. Simmel contends that, before political, economic, and, by extension, racial determination, "Man, in his totality, is a dynamic complex of ideas, forces, and possibilities . . . as an economic and political man, as a family member, and as the representative of an occupation he is, as it were, an elaboration constructed *ad hoc*" ("Sociability" 46). It is only through the establishment of an identity that the "*ad hoc*" or temporary nature of all being is cemented and frozen; possibility becomes certainty, and exclusion becomes

possible. And yet the stranger is and isn't a member of the group. He/she exists "near" the group when the group "feel[s] between him and ourselves common features" of a national, social, or occupational nature, while the stranger is "far" from the group because he/she reveals that the "effectiveness of the common features becomes diluted in proportion to the size of the group composed of members who are similar in this sense" (405, 406). "Groups" can only exist through difference, and when that difference is enforced/chosen, there must be a system that enforces difference lest the group becomes "diluted" and ineffective. In this sense, the stranger's "liberation" from "fixation" is also the promise of being undetermined and, by extension, surviving oppression. Since Park invests in a "complete moral order" and in the idea of "incorporation," we can clearly see assimilation is a policing of the borders of the "group," and that which produces any group--even an "inclusive" one--continually produces strangers in order to constitute itself.[11] If the stranger can only exist in relation to a

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[11] In "L'intrus," Nancy claims that "strangers," in order to maintain such a status, always possess a quality of intrusion, and it is not "ethically admissible" to "exclude all intrusion in the coming of the stranger, the foreign" (1). Park's use of Simmel's stranger is at attempt to eradicate the stranger; the white majority's "identity" is "equivalent to immunity" (33). This immunity, or protection from the possibility of a ideological revolution--that which Park deems necessary for future equality--prevents society from "becoming" anything apart from being white supremacist, as Nancy points out:

> The empty identity of an "I" can no longer fall back into its simple adequation ("I"="I"), once it speaks: "I am suffering" implies that there are two "I," each one foreign to the other, strangers yet touching. It is the same with "I am coming." . . . [I]n the case of "I am suffering," one I rejects the other, while in "I am coming," one I exceeds the

world/society of "groups," the "artificial" or ideal world of full equality can only exist through a renunciation of the group itself. Since Park attempts to eliminate strangeness through regulation (amalgamation and intermarriage), he becomes what Nancy calls "the most terrifying and troubling technician" because the (white) group will always exist within a social ordering, apart from the social by denying its part in producing racial hierarchies ("L'Intrus" 13).

Marginality

In the preface to his 1937 book The Marginal Man: A Study in Personality and Culture Conflict, E.V. Stonequist thanks his friends for their contributions to his understanding of "marginal men," a concept that, in a simple way, can describe Asians in America as "caught" between two cultures and unable to reconcile the two (viii). Yet there's a fibrillation when Stonequist thanks them *as* "'marginal men'" while enclosing the term in scare quotes. Park claims that the marginal man is a "personality type" in his introduction to Stonequist's work, yet what to make of Stonequist's friends who both embody and escape the impossible "typing" of sociology and sociological knowledge (Introduction xiv)? Ernest W. Burgess, in "Sociological Research Methods," claims that Park's use of the "ideal type" in his research was actually developed, in part, by Simmel,

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other. (11)

Park gambles on making the many into "one," yet the "one" is a violent incorporation that presupposes whites' self-mastery and their identity as a group that is "capable of the origin and the end" (13). The unity of a "complete moral order" cannot admit the division and discord that provides the constitutive outside of such an order.

and that it "provides a bridge from the study of individual cases to the construction of an attitude and other personality tests and scales" (478). For Simmel, however, the stranger serves as a "type" to the extent that it demonstrates the limit of sociological thinking: the stranger, in this context, can only exist in and through oppression. The "ideal" in ideal type analyses, then, can only provide "quantitative measurement of the degree to which ideal constructs . . . characterize a person or a group" (478). The group for Stonequist (and Park) exists because racialization becomes the self-evident basis for identity, and the "marginal man" becomes an ideal whereby to judge how raced individuals either fail or succeed in living up to the sociological expectations and desires of assimilation and amalgamation. The marginal man, though, is negative and positive: negative because he/she is (according to Park) an "effect of imperialism" and positive because "marginality" is a stop along the path to a "new racial stock" (Park, Introduction xviii, Stonequist 220).

Park, again in his introduction, allows for an individual's "conception of himself" to shape his/her "personality," but the temperaments and instincts that assimilation eradicates still constitute the subject, along with their "endocrine balance" (xvii); as such, the question of assimilation will always be answered through amalgamation. The marginal man's personality, according to Stonequist, relies on questions of psychological "adjustment," and he

will invariably find himself not "well adjusted to himself and his social world" (Stonequist 1). Mirroring Park's notion that the first-generation immigrant is inassimilable, Stonequist defines the "Oriental Marginal Man" as a second-generation Asian American who is a "problem" because "Culturally he is an American; racially he is of the Orient" (105). There is "no easy way out of this dilemma," apparently, and only through the "rates of interracial marriage" can we determine, in a negative fashion, the "degree to which particular groups are marginal" (105). Stonequist's analysis, however, attempts to play down the role of amalgamation through coercion by making "individual adjustment," which is a form of "psychological integration" into the majority, a stop-gap solution to racial oppression: those who become psychologically integrated will "become pioneers and creative agents in that new social order which seems to evolve as narrower group loyalties give way to larger human values" (2-8, 209).

These "larger human values" can only appear when the "marginal personality" disappears, and this disappearance will take place the moment that the "conflict of cultures" ceases (Stonequist 214). Stonequist contends "the world requires races" at present (137). Marginality equates racial origin with cultural conflicts, especially in terms of how second-generation Asian Americans--those who *can* be assimilated--are more "culturally American" than anything else--and this "Americanness" is a desirable trait (105).

While the marginal personality can be found in "pure bloods" as well as "mixed bloods" within racial minorities, the "new social order" that is to come--which will put an end to the psychological disturbance of marginality--must always be involved in a determination of what kind of "blood" will eventually produce a "new racial stock" that ends the race relations cycle (220). The new racial stock that ends "relationship[s] of inequality" and allows overall assimilation to take place--as opposed to individual assimilations which are not solutions but psychological adjustments--is actually white(ned) (121). Society, if it is to progress, must eliminate what Park calls "antagonistic cultures" so that, as Stonequist argues, "biological origin" no longer "places" people "between" races (Introduction xv, Stonequist 10). And given that biological origin also determines personality and that the first generation of immigrants (non-white in this case) is inassimilable, we can locate the trajectory of this amalgamation that will eliminate "betweenness": a "whitened" new race. So, despite Stonequist's claim that the race that is to come, with "time and acquaintance," will be "new," this newness is only determined by a calculation, again, of how soon the racial uniform that produces racialization--and marginality--will be removed from racial circulation.

Marginality, then, is a suspect categorization that can only emerge in relation to domination: the margins' racial, cultural, and even political identity is determined by the

mainstream's figuring of racial difference. This is the logical extension of Okihiro's claim (which will be discussed in the next section) that the margin is the mainstream: identities based on notions of blood-relationships must always root themselves in racialisms in order to be effective. If the promise of "freedom" within American democracy is to be realized, then Asian Americanist responses to the sociological legacy of the Chicago School must divest themselves not only of the romanticization of racial identities (and coalitions) but also of the desire to embody the (liberatory) margin.

Qualifications

Recent Asian Americanist evaluations of Park's work attempt to make do with limited resources; for example, the most trenchant and uncompromising critique of Park's work, "The Myth of 'Assimilation in American Life'" by Paul Takagi eventually dismisses Chicago sociology as useless based on an evaluation of three essays by Park. Beyond these quantitative concerns, each evaluation attempts to salvage something of Asian American "identity"; as argued in the introduction, these attempts perpetually reiterate the racialist thinking of those works they critique. Before moving into a detailed analysis of Park's works, it is essential to confront how Asian Americanist works use Park as motivation for their own envisioned futures. For example, Takagi contends that Park is and was an "apologist for racial conflicts and race prejudices" (152). Cogently pointing out Park's investment in

notions of "instinctive" race "antipathies," he goes on to argue that Park's "real" mission was to guarantee the "survival of the Anglo race" (154). The "clash of [racial] interests" for Park could only be solved through "cooperation," and Takagi notes that this form of accommodation ultimately reproduces racial subordination in a "sinister" mode ("Race Prejudice" 226, Takagi 153, 154). What Takagi overlooks, however, is the sentimental strain in Park's works; the "cooperation" that Park mentions appears at the moment where he laments the passing of the "plantation" and, as a result, the "intimate" bonds that develop out of bondage: "Each race being in its place, no obstacle to racial cooperation exists" ("Race Prejudice" 226).[12] This investment in interpersonal contact and relationships is what allows Park to develop his theories of supremacy maintenance; because Takagi bypasses this, he can only suggest that the "science" in "social science" be removed "to reveal in its bald form the racist ideologies that are frequently contained within it" (156). In turn, he suggests that "alternative theory" be developed that can "'check out my thoughts and experiences'," which is the same criteria Park uses to claim that plantation slavery was, in effect, preferable to the

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[12] For other instances where Park approvingly describes the kind, grateful obedience of slaves to their masters (and where such racial antipathies "disappear" despite their being "instinctive," please see the following essays: "Racial Assimilation in Secondary Groups: With Particular Reference to the Negro." Publication of the American Sociological Society. 8 (1913): 66-83. Rpt. in Race and Culture. Glencoe, IL: The Free Press. 204-22.; "The Bases of Race Prejudice." The Annals. 140 (Nov. 1928): 11-20. Rpt. in Race and Culture. 230-43.

racial prejudices borne out of emancipation: personal experience and sympathy create intimacy, cooperation, and progress (156).

Whereas Takagi stresses the emotive, Gary Okihiro, in his Margins and Mainstreams: Asians in American History and Culture, attempts to discern the "place" of Asian Americans within the U.S. racial structure while trying to mobilize African American and Asian American social/political alliances. Claiming that the white "master class" has produced Asian Americans as "near-blacks" and "near-whites"--the latter explicitly refers to Park's concept of "marginality" in the text--Okihiro goes on to argue that "yellow is a shade of black, and black, a shade of yellow" (34). While managing to build a hypothetical black-yellow alliance through the recognition of shared oppression (albeit in different historical contexts), he feels a need to justify the alliance through a kind of historical/cosmic "kinship" that has always been present between Africans and Asians (34). Okihiro wants to free "our storytellers who have been whispering amid the din of Western civilization and Anglo-conformity," and he is up to the narrative task as well, reminding us of the "Negritos" in "South and Southeast Asian" who were "gatherers and hunters and slash-and-burn cultivators" (34); these Negritos were possibly "absorbed or expelled by the Veddoids" and "remnants survive today as the Semang of the Malay Peninsula" (34). Also, the same essay cited by Takagi, "Race Prejudice and Japanese-American

relations," is cited later in Margins and Mainstreams; Okihiro points out that for Park, "Interracial amity . . . depended upon 'the extension of the machinery of cooperation and social control,' which included racial castes or even slavery, where each knows 'its place' and accepts its status" (134-5). While Okihiro's reading is correct, his logic of kinship reduplicates the biological foundations of the American "caste" system and slavery; put another way, the desire to establish a "historical" race-mixing in Asia for political efficacy still invests in racial heredity: we are all "kin" because there was African-Asian miscegenation in the past. This, unfortunately, gives new meaning to one of his final claims: "[T]he margin has been the true defender of American democracy, equality, and liberty. From that vantage, we can see the margin as the mainstream" (175). The margins are the true heroes in this narrative, yet the origins of alliances among the marginals must be, at root, inspired and verified by and through a deep historical/biological record. The distance between Park's instinctive "antipathies" and Okihiro's amalgamation-turned-politics is slight, and though his ultimate purpose is to provide hope for the future of "American democracy," Okihiro must motivate his analysis through biological--not social or political--similarities.

In the only book-length study on Park, the Chicago school, and the Asian American sociology graduates from the University of Chicago, Henry Yu attempts to "retrace how Orientals came to be valued for being exotic and

representative of a faraway place that was defined as being un-American, and how this helped to define what was American" (vii). In Thinking Orientals: Migration, Contact, and Exoticism in Modern America, Yu is mainly concerned with how Asian Americans came to study with Park and how their "paths came to cross, and how by crossing paths they came to an understanding of each other and themselves" (3). Beyond this historical and psychological study, Yu never completely confronts Park's racial theories; in one instance, he claims that Park believed that "race . . . was in the mind, a matter of consciousness. . . . [I]f we just stopped thinking about race, it would go away" (11). This misconception--countered even with the brief citations about instinctive antipathies above--shapes Yu's overall project, which is to avoid calling the "white sociologists" "bad men": "Without these men (there were few women in positions of power), none of the Asian American intellectuals in this book would have had the chance to enter academia" (10). Because social theory "becomes[s] true in the way in which any group of words and ideas can achieve truth, which is true to a group of people," we are doomed to remain in a relativist world where the veracity of social theory--not sociology, strictly--depends upon how "groups" wield their (intellectual) powers in order to inculcate, regulate, and determine regimes of truth (12); Yu institutes a relationship of hegemony, seemingly to proffer an alternative vision of knowledge production. In doing so, he eventually argues that we develop a "universal standard

that evaluates forms of knowledge . . . through a democratically defined dialogue that takes into account the mutual nature of ignorance and knowledge" (197). It is unclear what this "mutual nature" is, but Yu's strategy resembles backpedaling; the Chicago sociologists' investment in a "common humanity that would overcome all such [racial] differences" mirrors Yu's desire to see the "very humanity of the categorizers" because proving that "categories" are "always fictive is a banal exercise in the obvious" (198, 184). If all is self-evident in this way, then Yu fails to see how Chicago sociology produces an epistemological structuring of the world and that this structuring, despite claims that it is apolitical, responds to and revises social, political, and racial thought.[13]

In Asian/American: Historical Crossings of a Racial Frontier, David Palumbo-Liu contends that we are in a holding pattern, and the sociological vision of "assimilation," or complete social inclusion, has yet to be realized. Palumbo-Liu's critique is compelling for a number of reasons, not least of which is Palumbo-Liu's respect for "utopian vision[s]" of Asian America that seek to end the use of race

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[13] And this is perhaps why Yu's claim that "We all need maps, in a sense, and we are all mapmakers" is an inadequate metaphor (Yu 186); maps, in this way, reveal the "intellectual constructions of other people" so that we can "walk a mile in their shoes" (186). Yet if any and all maps contain the "methods of control and domination," these maps are not just about surveying: every map also contains a pre-set itinerary (186). From the very beginning, Yu's analysis has determined the path we are to follow; as such, his "counterhegemonic" reading of the Chicago school merely seeks to supplant hegemonic dismissals of Park--like that of Takagi--with a more "reasoned," less "banal" control.

as a "*negative* and *destructive* element of identification" (393, emphasis added). Near the end of Asian/American's introduction, he writes that "[N]ow, more than ever, the Asian/American predication may be completed, somewhere on the horizon" (13). But instead of taking up the possibility of resolving the term, he suggests a more "helpful" strategy for scholarly work: "Another, perhaps more worthwhile task might be to ascertain at each historical moment the nature of that [Asian American] subjectivity . . . and what it might teach us about our own historical situation" (13). Palumbo-Liu provides us with a postponement of sorts; the call for the study of "historical moments" can only lead to the resolution indirectly.

Since he holds no faith in seeing what is "on the horizon"--indeed, he clearly implies that this is an impossibility--Palumbo-Liu leans back on American sociology in order to give motivation to his goal of contributing to the completion the Asian/American predication:

> I sense we are still awaiting that disappearance that early twentieth-century American sociologists deemed necessary for "real" assimilation--the disappearance of race. The degree to which race remains a powerful and negative signifier is the degree to which the *modern* project is left incomplete. (393, emphasis in original)

The question of the "modern project's" end--in a sense, the end of "race"--is mentioned throughout Asian/American, but it

is unclear whether this "end" to race is a "complete" end to the term or a reiteration of it in a "positive and weak" mode of identification. This indecision (or impasse), in turn, can be understood as the postponement of a decision about what Asian America is and what it will be.

But near the end of the book, Palumbo-Liu offers a strange moment of resolution: we are encouraged to think of "ethnic choice" and agency in order to complete the "modern project." He calls for a "more complex understanding of Asian America" in order to "recognize the agency of Asian Americans in fashioning their own existences and how that refashioning has impact on Asian America" (390); the "pragmatics of agency" will lead to the "deconstruction" of the "identifying *topos*" of Asian American in order to resolve the contradictions of Asian America (390, 392, emphasis in original). Yet this agency/independence that emerges from a more intricate understanding guarantees nothing in particular; a complete end to the modern project is never called for but, rather, Palumbo-Liu supports an augmented ending where race continues to signify something, albeit not something "powerful and negative."

This augmented form of race appears in discussions concerning Robert Park. While cogently noting that, for Park, miscegenation plays a large role in ending racial antagonisms, Palumbo-Liu claims that in Park's work, "racial difference is determined not by mental nature, but by a *physical* sign" and that Asian Americans are relegated to the

margins of society until phenotypic changes take place (86, emphasis in original). This claim--and the claim that race has a positive and weak content/valence in the augmented form--is misleading; Palumbo-Liu discusses only three of Park's essays and one of his textbooks while developing his arguments.[14] As a result, Palumbo-Liu omits Park's notions of racial "temperaments" and instinctual prejudice in his analysis. To complicate matters, George W. Stocking, Jr. contends that Park's work--and the work of the whole Chicago School--is indebted to neo-Lamarckian thought, which stresses a "behavioral theory of biological evolution" in which behaviors and changes in the body are hereditary, transmitted from parents to child (Stocking 238, 243). The impact of Lamarckian thinking should prevent us from viewing Park's works as either "hopeful" or politically progressive, especially in terms of his racial theories. If biological/behavioral heredity comprises the new positive and weak use of race and racial identity for Palumbo-Liu, then a major concern emerges: how does this remove us from the circuit of racial logic(s)? Further, Palumbo-Liu asserts that Park "completely bypasses the socioeconomic apparatuses that perpetuate and manage racism" so much that he develops a

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[14] These are: "Human Migration and the Marginal Man." American Journal of Sociology. 33.2 (May 1931): 95-110. Rpt. in Race and Culture. 345-56; "Race Prejudice and Japanese-American Relations." (Formerly Introduction.) The Japanese Invasion. By Steiner, J.F. Chicago: A.C. McClung & Co., 1917. vii-xvii. Rpt. in Race and Culture. 223-29; "The Mentality of Racial Hybrids." American Journal of Sociology. 36 (Jan 1931): 534-51. Rpt. in Race and Culture. 377-92; and Introduction to the Science of Sociology. 3rd Ed. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1969. (original 1921).

"fatalistically" inflected theory of assimilation that can only guarantee that assimilation will "happen," eventually (86). The business of Chicago sociology is management: of social groups, of threats to the State, and of racialized bodies in a capitalist context. Perhaps the only way Park sidesteps the socioeconomic structures of oppression is in the way he offers up theories to maintain these structures; this, in effect, is the trajectory of Park's work.

Asian American Responses

Perhaps the most interesting Asian American attempt to respond to Park and the Chicago School came from one of its students: Paul Siu. In 1953, Siu presented his dissertation "The Chinese Laundryman: A Study of Social Isolation" to the University of Chicago sociology department, though he had done the majority of his research in the 1930s (Yu 133). One year earlier, he published "The Sojourner," an article that can be considered a smaller, yet more focused, attempt at explaining the difference between the sojourner "type" and the marginal man. Siu's work has been lauded as "the richest and most detailed portrait of Chinese American that Chicago sociologists would ever produce" and as the product of a "true" organic intellectual (in the Gramscian sense): "[Siu] was personally close to, and deeply empathized with, those he studied. . . . He spoke for the class of Chinese laundry workers" (Yu 134, Tchen xxxiii).[15] With analysis, however, we

[15] Likewise, sociologists like Philip Q. Yang have attempted to rescue the "sojourner" concept from "reasoning [and] . . . qualitative descriptions based on a few cases" in order to test the "validity" of

can view these comments as romanticizations of Siu's work; Siu neither provides us with a "collective memory long silenced in American history" nor does participant observation (Siu's technique) necessarily serve as a technique that will create a "positive" identification for Chinese Americans (Tchen xxxv, xxxi).[16] Siu's works, while denying the universal nature of the marginal man type for second-generation and "biracial" Asian Americans, prove to be lost opportunities. Even though he attempts to disprove the marginal man concept by denying its psychological "torture," his aim of documenting how social and legal exclusion created a "personality type" not only relies upon the logic of the "ideal type" (like Stonequist), but it also utilizes supposedly self-evident racialisms in order to manufacture the "sojourner" type.

In "The Sojourner," Siu claims that the sojourner

the concept with qualitative evidence (236). Yang's aim is to develop a stronger understanding of "transnationalism" as a "*new form of sojourning in the new era of globalization*" (254, emphasis in original). For the purposes of this chapter, quantification in order to prove validity is not a concern; "proving" the validity of a concept in this way merely attempts to assess the use-value of a term without questioning the fundamental logical problems of a "concept."

[16] Siu's participant observer technique is often overlooked by his critics. Or, rather, it is accepted out of hand as bringing "us" closer to how Chinese Americans lived and survived in the past. By stressing Siu's background in social work and his status as "the best field researcher" of those sociology students "who studied the Chinese in America," one thing is overlooked: how Siu uses deception to gather his evidence (Yu 137). Siu eavesdrops, refuses to tell his informants that they are being interviewed, often quotes conversations verbatim when he only records them hours or days after the fact, and reads personal letters without consent. In the interests of establishing the "value" of Siu's work, these ethical transgressions are either excused or elided in the name of verisimilitude. The effect is astounding considering that one of the projects of Chicago sociology--to develop "natural laws" that govern race relations and equality--is to present a version of (inevitable) verisimilitude that will always reaffirm racial hierarchy.

"clings to the culture of his own ethnic group in contrast to the bicultural complex of the marginal man" (34). One fundamental characteristic of the sojourner type is that his behavior is almost entirely volitional; that "cling[ing]" to one's culture and "willingness" to assimilate become the preliminary criteria necessary to create the sojourner attests to this. He claims that the sojourner is a "non-racial" term that "may be applied to a whole range of foreign residents in any country to the extent that they maintain sojourner attitudes" (34). Yet in The Chinese Laundryman, Siu implicitly affirms a "student of sociology's" claim that because "intermarriage is very rare," the "Chinaman is not ['given the chance to assimilate], being of Mongoloid stock" (10). As a result, the sojourner's attitude to not assimilate is partially predicated upon his (enforced and regulated) inability to intermarry. The non-racial, universalist aspirations of the sojourner concept are also undercut by Siu's investment in "unassimilation"; when he cites a "private document" that "seem to be nearly a perfect cycle of the sojourner's career," he argues that "Mr. C," the speaker/writer, "joins his countrymen in isolation in the racial colony" ("Sojourner" 39, 41). Mr. C, however, claims that "'We [Chinese] are just outsiders. Outsiders, particularly of the nonwhite race, have not much of a chance. Some Americans are very nice to you, but deep in their hearts you are still, you know, different from their own'" (41). This awareness of the racial exclusion that produces the

racial colony in Mr. C's response is a lead that Siu does not follow. As a result, the language of "joining," coupled with terms or assertions like "clinging" and "feeling content [in isolation and segregation]" expose Siu's deep ambivalence concerning causes and effects; in other words, by making the claim that the "mind is not so much the cause as it is the result of activities," Siu risks undercutting his volitional theory of unassimilation by stressing the mind-lessness of action while simultaneously excusing exclusion (Chinese 294).

Self-exclusion, on the part of the Chinese laundrymen, is described as a "clinging" multiple times in Siu's larger work, and this clinging refers to the "cultural heritage" of the laundrymen's homeland (Chinese 2). It is difficult to pin down what Siu means by "cultural heritage," but it is defined at different points as language, food, topics of conversation, and the use of an abacus ("Sojourner" 38, Chinese 65). Given the problem of social exclusion, Siu's claim that for the laundrymen "to be able to speak English is something extra rather than necessary" is misleading (Chinese 138); the degree to which clinging is enforced through segregation is never discussed in Siu's texts, and his characterization of the world outside of the "racial colony" as a "broad cosmopolitan community" is shocking (272). Much like Park and Stonequist, behavior takes center stage, and even though Siu does not replicate the overtly racialist claims of inherited instincts or temperaments, he also never directly confronts the structure(s) of white supremacy that

create and maintain economic disparities, enforced "alien" status, and social segregation. If, for contemporary Asian Americanists, Siu's work represents the "right" kind of "empathy" for Chinese Americans as well as the "richest" depiction or documentary of life in the racial ghetto, then what we are facing is an uncritical, laudatory academic stance towards "lost" Asian American works; this project of "reclaiming" can only accomplish a kind of group-building logic that, despite shared historical suffering, exalts the racialized status of the writer (and his subjects) in order to mobilize a "strong, clear voice" without question. As a result, Asian American Studies moves backward in time to launch a reclamation project with little critical evaluation of those works that may recapitulate the conditions that produce racialization.

While "time" takes on a negative definition for the laundrymen--the time to return "home" never comes--time takes center-stage in Younghill Kang's East Goes West: The Making of an Oriental Yankee. Described as a Korean American "search for the fictional [imaginative] America" that employs a "universal, transcendent temporality" to create a "common, worldwide literary culture," Kang's work explores the forward march of "progress" through time as opposed to the "timing" of assimilation (and amalgamation) that is, supposedly, to come (E. Kim 37, Palumbo-Liu 117). Patricia Chu argues that the narrator, concerned with "wandering, exile, and homelessness," desires "recognition from his adopted country,

both as an author and as a unique and 'priceless' text" (Chu 31, 35). I contend that beyond the literary aspirations of Chungpa Han, the protagonist attempts to find a "time" apart from biological and spatial determination: a time that, in order to achieve equality, must "never" pass (into an ordering) (Kang 3). Implicit in my argument is that all "temporal discourse" is involved in producing a "knowledge of the Other" that also implies "difference as *distance*" (Fabian 1, 16, emphasis in original). Han is conscious of time's double production of racial knowledge and the simultaneous spatial segregation and distancing that coappears with such knowledge and, as a result, Kang attempts to envision an alternative future for (Asian) America apart from racial determination, assimilation, and amalgamation; eventually, all alternatives are undermined by white protectionism of the nation-state.

Kang dedicates the first six pages of East Meets West to a consideration of time. Claiming that "Time never passes," Chungpa Han imagines the universe as an "undying bird" that "forever lives, forever breathes, forever, with its two wings fluttering, flies" (3). The universe-as-bird has no specific trajectory, and as long as "we" "have a clock to calculate [time] for us," "we are illusioned": "It is not time that passes, but ourselves" (3). The measurement of time, then, is wed to a sense of time passing towards something; and this is the impression Han gives as he comes to New York City, which embodies "those hard, cold, magic words--opportunity,

enterprise, prosperity, success" that denote the transcendent project of the "machine-age" which is embodied in every articulation of "America" (4). The "promise" of time--exemplified by the city which is a "shadow of white" and "remorselessly new"--cannot be extricated from what Palumbo-Liu deems the "logic of modern capital," which "insists on the production of waste--the creation of luxury is parasitic on the creation of expendability" (Kang 6, Palumbo-Liu 120). We soon discover that the "waste" that time produces is the racialized body, left to be segregated from the whiteness of progress.

Han claims that it is his "destiny to see the disjointing of a world" (Kang 4). And this is precisely what happens when the social is organized in a segregated manner: the "flexibility" of human embodiment is defeated through the (hyper)extension of white privilege. Perhaps the most pertinent example of this is Han's stilted amorous relationship with Trip, a white co-ed whom Han attempts to woo. Apart from the common conception of white female bodies serving as a "potential trophy for Asian American males in the race to assimilate," Chu contends that the white woman "represents the American cultural establishment with which the Asian American literary author must negotiate in order to establish both his literary authority and his Asian American subjectivity" (Chu 28). And Han attempts to interest Trip in his life story, asking her to write his biography and, by extension, helping in the masculinist (co)production of a

subjectivity that will serve as a "trip" into the American mainstream and the "all-earth-embracing age" that Trip, as a white woman, represents (336).

Yet Han's desire for Trip is not predicated upon a desire to "assimilate" a la Chicago Sociology; he only wants to get Trip's "mind working with" his own (Kang 393). Trip, however, will have none of it, and after this initial conversation about Han's life, both have dinner in Chinatown. When Han leaves Trip on the street to go purchase some "Chinese wine," Trip is approached by a plain-service policeman who has "to protect American girls in Chinatown" (Kang 344, 345). Trip, as a result of this confrontation, becomes excited, claiming that this experience of white protectionism (by the policeman) embodies "Just what you always expect from Chinatown, and never get" (345). With this confirmation, Trip validates the felt strangeness of Chinatown as the dangerous, "sinister" ghetto--the only thing that makes Chinatown "interesting" (345). While Trip "associates [Han] with Chinatown"--spatially locating (racial) danger apart from the "American"--Han's desire is to establish a relation with Trip that isn't grounded in the forced dis-location of the Asian American but, rather, in the shared location of the "mind" (Chu 34). And Trip's eventual dismissal of Han as a lover confirms that the "waste" of America is representable as a ghetto residing in the "white shadow" of the city. Interracial affiliations for Trip, then, can only exist through a strict logic of

segregation/separation.[17]

While Stonequist argues that marginality produces an (ant)agonistic confrontation between East and West in the mind of the cultural/racial hybrid, Kang contends that it is only through the arresting of time (and the prevention of racial equality) that "our" "only plea" of human commonality can be dismissed (Kang 5); as such, Kang's New York City can only serve as a "vast mechanical incubator" for him, keeping him alive until his "rebirth and happier reincarnation" (6, 401). Even though Elaine Kim argues that Han eventually accedes and accepts that life under racial hierarchy is the only life available right now, the ending of East Goes West argues otherwise. In a recurring dream, Han envisions climbing up a "lofty tree" in America and seeing, across the "leafy ocean of verdure" and "wide water," his childhood friends from Korea, Yunkoo and Chak-doo-shay (400). While struggling to reach the bridge that connects America to Korea, Han finds that "money and keys, contracts and business letters" begin to fall out of his pockets (400). In the past, he's dreamt of returning to Korea with Trip "in a car," now Han has perpetually lost all of these symbols of (upward)

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[17] This is also the logic of the three other Korean male-white female relationships in East Goes West: Kim and Helen, George Jum and his white "dancer" girlfriend, and Richard Chai's eventual engagement to a fellow medical student. Kim eventually commits suicide because Helen dies after her family disapproves of the relationship. Richard's success is predicated upon his discipline and patience in waiting to be "admitted" into a relationship by his white partner. Finally, George Jum moves to Hawaii and plans to marry a "Korean girl, one American-born" (Kang 399); George claims that in Hawaii, one can "spend" time "eating, loving and sleeping," all the while knowing that, in America, failure is impossible because racial hierarchy will not allow success (399).

mobility (400). But Han continues to search, and he finds himself running down into a "cryptlike cellar" "under the pavements of a vast city" (401). Soon, Han finds that he, along with "some frightened-looking Negroes" is stuck in the cellar, and the cellar is being attacked by "red-faced" white men brandishing "flaring torches" (401). Eventually, Han wakes up like "the phenix out of a burst of flames" (401). Stephen Knadler argues that Han (and Kang) attempts to create a more "particularized affiliation with the heterogeneous groups that constitute and, at the same time, dis-able the fiction of a 'naturalized' white US citizenry" (Knadler 37).[18] And in this scene, Han can only escape race's disciplinary powers not by thinking of the "next" life/incarnation, but by attempting to imagine how society may be reborn out of the internal combustion of the racial state. Strongly dismissing any programmatic plans to either "whiten" society or produce assimilation through intermarriage, Kang presents us with a vision of America that is in perpetual process while simultaneously arguing that the "phenix"/bird of the universe--a rebirth or response to a previous social order(ing)--must have no particular trajectory but should fly, perpetually, without a reinvestment in "progress" and its racialized "waste" by-products. By eliminating this "time" of forward movement, we can, perhaps, acknowledge that the illusion of time passing covers over the only thing that

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[18] Since Jouvert is an on-line publication without page numbers, I have substituted the paragraph number of the quotation in this citation.

binds us together: "we" pass away, always and forever.

While Kang documents Korean American life in the 1930s in order to suggest reconfiguration, Fae Myenne Ng, in her novel Bone, certifies that the legal and sociological production of Asian America--especially Chinese Americans dealing, in the 1990s, with the legacies of exclusion and marginality--has created a perpetual and urgent need for certification (of social and racial location): through birth certificates, historical narratives of exclusion, and the like. Tracing the history of the Leong family in San Francisco Chinatown as they deal with the suicide of a daughter, Ona, Ng organizes her novel via a stop-start, almost backwards chronology.[19] While some critics argue that this movement is either solely backwards or interrupted, the main contention surrounding Bone is that it attempts to both prove that "*causality* as a means of investigation is disorganized" and that by disrupting the "logic of cause and effect," "there is no originary or volitional subject but only a subject-effect, materialized via performativity, within hegemonic discourses" (Lowe 122, T. Kim 53, emphasis in original). But these conclusions ignore a crucial characteristic of the novel: it ends in the present with Leila, the narrator, leaving Chinatown and moving to San Francisco's Mission District. In the end, I argue that Ng

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[19] For example, the first three chapters all move backwards in time, while the fourth chapter moves forward from the end of chapter three, only to reinitiate the backwards chronology until the end, which is in the present tense.

advances an argument dismissing any investment in abject, racialized Asian American identity through the character of Ona. Rather than produce a reinvestment in and recertification of the Asian American ghetto that provides the foundation of the story, Ng offers up another critical argument: Asian American subjects (and their certification through historical knowledges) must eventually "disappear" in order for liberation--albeit "personal"--and freedom can be achieved. In this way, the second generation's physical presence in America--which offered so much promise for assimilation in Chicago Sociology--confronts a sociology of "group" behavior; Ng's second-generation characters confirm, applaud, resist, and eventually commit suicide over the "marginality" of racialization and authentication of their citizen-status. In the end, it is the figure of Ona that offers up a tenable beginning to a solution to the problems that arise out of the concepts of assimilation, amalgamation, and marginality: as the "in-between" second child of three sisters, she embodies the "marginal man," but she also attempts to escape the sociological investment in racial/group legacies (and inheritances) by "count[ing]" and counting on "the living" (Ng 51, 88).

The character of Leon exposes the centrality of documentation and, by extension, the verification of legitimacy, that undergirds immigration and Asian American subjectivity. As a paper son, Leon keeps all documents of his "forged" citizenship in order to secure his place in

America.[20] Included in this documentation are all of the rejection letters he has received, marking lost "opportunities" and racial suffering (Ng 58); all of this evidence proves, for him, that "time mattered": "Leon had paid. Leon had earned his rights. American dollars. American time. These letters marked his time and they marked his endurance. Leon was a paper son" (58). This personal and historical record of "illegitimacy" verifies for Leon a subjectivity predicated upon exclusion. We also learn that Leon "enjoys making old things work" and that he is a "junk inventor" that hoards mostly disposable items (takeout containers, aluminum tins, Styrofoam cups, etc.) (5). By manufacturing "very weird stuff" like "Cookie-tin clocks" and "clock lamps," Leon attempts to reconcile unlike objects--creating hybrid entities--in order to make more "functional" items that serve multiple purposes (5). These items, like Leon, are disposable and their worth questioned by Leila and other family members. Ultimately, Leon founders and can never find success, leading him to declare America a "lie of a country" that makes "big promises" while "breaking every one" (103). Leon, then, is caught in a doubled, double lie: the duplicity of an America created through exclusion mirrors the passing of time/rejection that comes for the paper son who circumvents the institution of citizenship through

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[20] Paper sons were those men who entered America by claiming to be born in the U.S. to Chinese parents after the 1906 San Francisco earthquake destroyed "almost all of the municipal records" in the city (Takaki, Strangers 234, 235).

unauthentic documents. Leon eventually declares that there are "More dead than living" and his quest for Grandpa Leong's bones--those which he promised to send back to China but never did--reveal that Leon, and paper sons in general, are arrested/frozen in a legacy and lineage: the materials of the past--bones, found objects, rejection letters--override and dominate present-day concerns (71). In all, the character of Leon is used as a foil for the three sisters in the novel, serving as a representation of an Asian America wed to questions of legitimacy that can only be answered by "new" inventions consisting of old products.

The three sisters in the novel, however, question these grounds of legitimacy--an aspect of Ng's work that is often overlooked. Leila, Nina, and Ona all have separate views towards lineage, and each advances their own take on the future of Asian America. For instance, Leila is the first child and step-daughter to Leon; all of the other sisters are Leon's and Mah's children. Leila is forthright in her exhaustion with Leon's tinkering and stasis as well as the family "guilt" that all suffer after Ona's suicide. Claiming that Ona's "choice" was to die, Leila--who clearly separates life before and after the event as "Before and After Ona Jumped"--wants a "new life" (Ng 15). Her "out" is her relationship with Mason Louie, another Chinatown resident who "didn't speak the same dialect, but he was one of us" (19). Inclusion through shared racialization aside, Leila loves Mason because, unlike Leon, he is able to continue with his

life despite the social stigma of race: "He's generous and he can let something go. Sure, I went for Mason for his looks, his long, lean build and his car. But he's got plenty of other qualities: he has a job and he finishes whatever he starts" (19). Despite Leila's desire, through her relationship with Mason (and through sex), for a "ritual to forget" and a "ritual that forgave"--a "finishing up" and neat completion and resolution to the agony of Chinatown life and Ona's death--she continually attempts to yoke her memories and experiences of Chinatown back into her new life, which begins in the Mission District with Mason. Her confession that her job as a liaison between the Chinatown elementary school and the (overworked) parents feels like "missionary work" is telling: full integration into American society for Asian Americans will come with "look[ing] back" and "remember[ing]," but also with a physical removal from the racialized space of Chinatown (16, 192).[21] The "mission" of countering racism is, put bluntly, to escape while maintaining an emotive tie to the people and memories of

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[21] David Eng argues that the paper sons' "absent presence"--a presence without "real" documentary legitimacy--"create[s] unexpected paths of affiliation and kinship for their progeny, like Leila, to remember, 'to remember them all'" (Eng 67). The problem of physical distancing--which for Leila is a decision to sever all physical ties with ghetto-ized Asian America despite her realization that the "us" involves both old-timers and the "new" generation--should bring this "remembering" into question: if the purpose of remembering is to justify a movement away, then where is one moving to in order to live without remembering? Put another way, why does Leila justify the decision to distance herself unless she wants to "finish" what she's "started" in terms of creating a new, but ultimately reiterative, subjectivity through her "missionary work" and position outside of a racialized constituency?

Asian America.[22]

The "old" and the historical is summarily rejected by the most distant and youngest sister, Nina, and her desire for a distancing from Chinatown is much stronger than Leila's. Indeed, Nina eerily embodies the fully assimilated marginal man, at least in terms of "behavior"; she strives to "assimilate" by moving to New York, becoming a stewardess, and escaping her family. Leila, though, thinks that Nina suffers from a "deep down loneliness" that comes with the rejection of family and the rejection of her Asian American roots (113). Nina refuses any form of ethnic identity, claiming that, for example, she has "'no use'" for chopsticks "at home" (27). Likewise, she employs a logic of separate worlds; her mother and Leon represent another "world" because "They don't want to come into our worlds" (33). It may be more helpful to think of Nina as attempting to escape the exclusive bounds of "family," which exists "only because somebody has a story, and knowing the story connects us to a history" (36). Certainly, Nina is reactionary; after Ona's

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[22] It is difficult not to view Leila with suspicion in terms of her strategy for dealing with the social exclusion that comes from being Asian American in Chinatown. Her claim that *"The heart never travels"* and the fact that Ng's award-winning, mainstream novel closely resemble Park's and Burgess' notion of assimilation--where "Assimilation is a process on interpenetration and fusion in which persons and groups acquire the memories, sentiments, and attitudes of other persons or groups, and, by sharing their experience and history, are incorporated with them in a common cultural life"--is untrustworthy (Park and Burgess 735). The "sharing" of Bone--the telling of ethnic stories to a general public--is complicated by Leila's desire for a conditional escape; sharing creates, in this context, an economy of affect that is central to the notion of assimilation and, by extension, this sharing contributes to the "common cultural life."

suicide, she gradually withdraws and forgets her old Chinatown life. And even though she was castigated as a teenager for "only" dating "white guys," Nina falls in love with Zhang, a man from China who speaks Spanish and who is "different" from the usual Chinatown suspects (28). Leila claims that "Nina had a whole map of China in her head; I had Chinatown, the Mission, the Tenderloin," and this may be the crucial evidence for comprehending Nina's strategy of distancing: her version of ethnic identity can only be confirmed through "versatility" (28). While Leila attempts to create a new life and "finish" her move from Chinatown, Nina invests in the "international" aspect of Asian America that values difference while maintaining biological kinship. This, then, is a conditional rejection of racialization and Chinatown life, for the racial(ized) ties that bind oppressed groups can be loosened through intra-ethnic "difference" and novelty.

Finally, Ona's short life mobilizes Ng's narrative. Regardless of claims that Ona's suicide and (almost) backwards narrative structure removes the reader from a chain of causality, I argue that Ona's jump from the thirteenth floor of one of the buildings in the "Nam" housing project is more complicated and, by extension, can reveal a quashed strategy of dealing with legal exclusion, the demand for certification, and the racially interpellative demands of Chinatown (and Asian America). Ona, since she was a child, was dressed by Mah in white, the traditional color of

mourning/death (136). But Ona is also characterized by Leila as the "forward-looking one" that was "always excited about the next day, the tomorrow" (88). Forced to embody mourning while always thinking that there are "more living than dead," Ona inhabits the contradictory position that Ng, by extension, will argue Asian American Studies holds in relation to the recuperation of a "historicized," abject racial identity: attempting to understand historical and racial determination while daring to think about the future (88). Also, Ona counts. She counts down/off (the day's until Leon returns from his seafaring trips), counts to record (the number of times her "pet rooster" crowed during his life), and counts the "living" in an act of verification: the living outnumber the dead by their mere presence, which is always defined by an arrested, racially excluded (social and legal) death within American society (88). Regardless of this determination, the future or "tomorrow" exerts a pressure on Ona--to the point where she kills herself. Strangely, Leila mentions that "In our dialect . . . [thirteen] was a good number. Thirteen sounds like 'to live'" (123). "Living" for Ona was a process of verifying one's existence, anticipating an end (to estrangement/distance), and also of confirming that the present and future far exceed Asian Americans' social and legal determination in the past and present. As a response to Nina, Leon, and Leila's strategies for dealing with racism, Ona's purpose--if there is a lesson to be learned from all of this--seems to complement the Nancian

project of thinking about "revolution": for revolution to appear, existence-in-common must not be "absorb[ed]" by transcendence (Inoperative xl). Leon's hybrid machinery, Nina's distancing and eventual (racial) acceptance, Leila's affect-based strategy of "remembering": all of these merely "deal" with the punishing powers of "race" in personal, pragmatic ways. Ona's demonstration of the death-in-life of exclusion serves to bring the Leong family together in suffering, but it also (almost) rends them apart. Regardless, Ona's suicide can also generate critique: the disruption of the "logic of cause and effect" opens up a space where life serves no programmatic or sociological purpose (T. Kim 44). Indeed, sociology and Nancy's "humanity" have "never been ready for questions of end" apart from the ends organized by racialist thinking: "humanity's un-preparation for death is but death itself: its blow and injustice" ("L'intrus" 7). There is no identity or life except in relation (existence-in-common), and the coercion of white supremacy and claims of ethnic identity and autonomy organize these relations through their own styles of (counter)hegemonic coercion. As a result, "marginality" can only think survival, never "revolution."

Chapter 2: Exception(al)/Internment

> Maybe it will be for some future historian to say that America was tested and found wanting.
> --William Minoru Hohri[1]

This chapter takes seriously the call by legal and ethnic studies scholars to "reinterpret" Japanese American internment and reparations. In light of legal developments post-9/11 (especially the passage of the USA PATRIOT ACT), the constant problem of national security's relation to the U.S. government's "compelling interests" seems more pressing than ever. By revisiting the vexed relationship between national security and Japanese America--under the guise of the *Korematsu* and *Hirabayashi* Supreme Court decisions--my analysis points out the central problem that continues to plague both Asian America and non-white America as a whole to this day: the perpetuation of two-tiered citizenship in order to consolidate white majority rule. Mari Matsuda implores Asian Americanists to use internment "as a lens to take the denial of human rights directed against Japanese Americans as a starting point for understanding the bigger picture of repression in America" (16). As will be discussed below in relation to the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians and the Japanese American Citizens League, the official narratives of Japanese American

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[1] From Hohri, William Minoru. Repairing America: An Account of the Movement for Japanese-American Redress. Pullman, WA: Washington State UP, 1988. 76.

internment and reparations focus, ordinarily, on the "retrieval of the facts of internment and condemnation of the Constitutional wrong" (16); at the end of the day, we are often left with a narrative of racial transcendence and justice "served" through the reparations garnered in the 1980s. There are "rewards for acquiescence," Chris K. Iijima points out, and the highly compromised restitution process--with political jostling, as any Congressional debate will have--was governed by governmental self-interest (408). With this in mind, Asian American Studies also faces these concerns, especially in terms of the standards and goals set for effecting and realizing legal, political, and social change; highly invested, as we have seen, in reiterative notions of agency and resistance, the field must reckon with the limitations of critique solely focused on the recuperation or realization of rights and the citizen's entitlements. Beyond a mere acceptance of reformism, this chapter will analyze the promises of Asian American legal studies and literary studies in order to examine how Asian America is reproduced--always in subjection--through legal channels and in academic scholarship. By analyzing the fundamental concepts of resistance and equality in relation to internment, I argue that current Asian Americanist studies stop short of a larger critique of governmental sovereignty and the racial state; because of this, the transformative possibilities inherent for ethnic studies, as a whole, are compromised.

Implicit in the following discussion of internment and reparations is that the U.S. has maintained a racial polity--indeed, a "*white-supremacist polity*"--through legal norms and exceptions (Mills, Blackness 123, emphasis in original). Alexander T. Aleinikoff argues that one way this racial polity reproduces itself is through the doctrine of plenary power, whereby "virtually unreviewable congressional power" exists to regulate, among other things, "Indian tribes, the territories, and immigration" (vii). These congressional privileges to legislate with limited accountability have existed, as Aleinikoff contends, since the late nineteenth century--roughly the beginning of official Chinese exclusion--and "Congress [has] had plenary power to construct the American state and its membership largely immune from judicial review" (11). In terms of Asian American concerns, Aleinikoff only refers to immigration as it relates to plenary power. But because plenary power and issues of national sovereignty not only allow for "control of borders" but "also implied [the] power to construct an 'American people' through the adoption of membership rules," decisions about internment also rest on the concept of unreviewable congressional and executive authority (12-13); this can be seen in the Supreme Court's internment cases and the quest for reparations, both of which will be discussed below. Important for my discussion is non-difference between terms "alien" and "(racial) citizen" in the context of Japanese American internment; despite, for example, Fred Korematsu's

belief that the U.S. government wouldn't "go as far" as to intern the nisei "citizens" but only the issei "aliens" (who were ineligible for citizenship), Asian America exists in a perilous place in relation to decisions concerning the racial group(ing) (Of Civil). What internment teaches us is that the U.S. government reserves the right to ultimately question and hold suspect Asian America's claims of membership in the polity regardless of citizenship status--making Asian Americans, virtually and literally, perpetual outsiders under the law. Ironically, as we will see, Japanese Americans during World War II could only be included in America's partitioned social structure through forced military removal and internment.[2]

The legislative power--and the executive power, which emerges alongside it--to *not* be reviewed authorizes the suspension of "color-blind" law, or laws that deal with "individuals" despite continued racial domination; this suspension, inherent within the practice of American law, has led legal scholars such as Neil Gotanda to argue that "color blind constitutionalism . . . fosters white racial domination" because "particular manifestations of racial subordination . . . [are] understood as an attitude" as

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[2] Mills refers to this phenomena as the creation of a "partitioned social ontology" in relation to his formulation of the "racial contract," or the racial foundations that undergird social contractarian thought (Mills, Racial 16). This social ontology directly leads to a partitioned, or multi-tiered, political ontology that is maintained through admissions requirements for the white polity: "full cognitive standing in the polity, the official epistemic community" depends upon the ability to "*mis*interpret the world," which will be "validated by white epistemic authority" (18, emphasis in original).

opposed to a structural or institutional problem ("Critique" 2, 45). Indeed, the institutional power to pass law without review is characteristic of what Carl Schmitt deems the "exception," and sovereignty "decides the exception" (5). Without formal mechanisms to review legislation, such legislation is included in U.S. law by its very exemption from legal standards; the ability to decide on the exception and the unmitigated power to determine the legal order without accountability reveals an extra-legal realm--an outside of the system--contained within the legal order. The exception should be "understood to refer to a general concept in the theory of the state, and not merely to a construct applied to any emergency decree or state of siege," according to Schmitt, and, likewise, the emergence of racial suspicion (and the concomitant finding of racial guilt) leading up to internment should be viewed as a general rule of U.S. law (5).[3] Schmitt's formulation of the sovereign exception is helpful for analyzing internment, especially in terms of comprehending that the exception, while a "case of extreme peril," "cannot be circumscribed factually and made to conform to a preformed law" (6). At minimum, the concept of the sovereign exception reveals that the state is always

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[3] This "general rule" may be viewed in light of the multiple and various exclusionary laws and restrictions placed upon racial minorities. In terms of Asian Americans, one could examine immigration restrictions, deportation requirements, alien land laws, unlawful business practice requirements, marriage bars, legalized employment discrimination, evacuation and detention, etc. in order to "see" the "rule" of both racial suspicion and racial exclusion inherent in the U.S. legal system.

implicitly a racial state, and laws, at any particular moment and for any particular reason as it relates to "security" or military necessity, may be suspended since certain legislative and executive powers exceed the boundaries of "preformed" law while still remaining "within the framework of the juristic" (13); this is possible because even though the "state remains," the "law recedes" (12). Likewise, sovereignty (and the ability to make/enforce the exception) "embodies the entire body of authority necessary to bring the state into existence . . . [as a] condition of possibility" (Vincent 24). Though internment was an exceptional event, notably in terms of its unprecedented scale and scope in twentieth-century America, it was also of the exception, produced at the moment when racial anxieties triggered a more serious exclusion that moved beyond the legal apparatuses and codes that guaranteed the marginalization of Asian Americans. Internment, then, is the moment when the exception--in terms of an "offense" to liberty and equality--becomes a "rival norm" and the racialist state/sovereign invokes the exception-al nature of U.S. law (Mills, Blackness 132).

This view of the sovereign exceptionalism can be contrasted with, for example, Michael Omi's and Howard Winant's vision of the "racial state." The differences between the two visions are stark when one considers the political and epistemic limitations a sociological formulation provides for analyses of internment; the sociological state and its institutions participate in racial

conflicts--and are even structured by race--yet it is imagined that the state and its institutions exist prior to any consideration of race. Omi and Winant contend that "State institutions acquire their racial orientations from the processes of conflict with and accommodation to racially based movements" (78). In this process of acquiring a racial orientation, the state transitions and becomes "inherently racial" and "racially structured . . . [and] intervened" (82, emphasis in original). Unlike Mills' theorization of the racial state, Omi's and Winant's characterization of the state--only becoming "inherently" racial after "acquiring" an "orientation" in response to racial resistance--reveals the central problem for any study which approaches the state as either mediator or guarantor of liberty: the state becomes the "preeminent site of racial conflict" (82). Rather than view the state as structured by racial concerns at its very foundations, it is viewed by Omi and Winant as a deracinated place where racial interventions by oppressed groups create and spur on the development of a racial philosophy. As a "site," we could take for granted that internment was just another manifestation of racial chauvinism which went against the grain of a more truly American exceptionalism. This would foreground war as the "duress" or atypical moment when the nation must, against its "better" judgement, suspend constitutional rights (16). Instead, Mari Matsuda contends that internment was "business as usual in a country where racism and capitalism have always proved the unbeatable pair

in a doubles match against individual rights and equality" (16). Omi and Winant's vision, a vision that inflects the majority of pro-Japanese American writings on internment, can only provide an opportunity for "moral condemnation" and not a chance to understand "how racially conditioned governmental actions take place" (Gotanda, "Other" 1192).

Because the (re)creation of a racially inflected polity is and has been at stake in American jurisprudence, then we face with a situation where legal rulings are "moments in which the decision between just and unjust" is determined and "insured by a rule" (Derrida, "Force" 16). The rule, as Derrida points out, can never square itself with "justice" due to its commitment to legitimating the rule (of white supremacy) (16). Building off of Derrida's formulation, the legal decisions surrounding internment were founded not on the "authority" of laws--laws that can only ground themselves on their authority/force to exist as laws/rules--but within the context of authority that demands acquiescence--through force--of the racial polity during a time of duress (12). In the most general sense, I argue that the *Hirabayashi* and *Korematsu* decisions allow us to formulate not only the extraconstitutional state of exception that resides at the heart of American government, but also the link between military and state, which reveals how the nation-state is founded upon a perpetual warring against racial minorities--be it via mere force, through the law, or a combination of the two. Much like the Chicago School's goals of biological

amalgamation and assimilation that promised Asian America's vanishing, the state's goal of maintaining white privilege during wartime is premised, finally, upon the disappearance of Japanese America; the critiques that lament the "failure" of due process during internment skirt this point while inadvertently believing that life under color-blind law--another articulation of racial subordination--is better than "no life" at all. In this instance, they are the same thing.

The purpose of this chapter is two-fold: to reassess the nature of explanatory legal narratives of internment and the reparations process and to rethink the range of Japanese American literature as it relates to literary production across the twentieth century (and not solely "before" or "after" internment). Currently, both areas of academic analysis elide an understanding of Japanese America as a "product" of America's racial rule, opting instead to explore the "place" of Japanese America within the nation. My analysis demonstrates that strong alternatives to this continuing "production" of Japanese America must be deployed to avoid the reintegration and co-opting of intellectual projects by a "faith" in the inevitability of inclusion. The "obligation" of producing justice, of understanding that justice resides within the "very dimension of events irreducibly to come," will allow Asian American Studies, in the most general sense, to commit to projects with the recognition that "each advance in politicization obliges one to reconsider, and so reinterpret the very foundations of law

as they have previously been calculated or delimited" (Derrida, "Force" 27, 28). Rather than envision the end-point of legal reform--in the full legal standing of the (racial) subject, for example--Asian American Studies must commit itself to a fundamental questioning of the foundation of racial law without reserve. This process of legal reinterpretation, then, will be able to develop a sustained project and orientation of undoing--instead of rectifying--legal exclusions. Because a racial order undergirds the legal system in the form of exceptional, unreviewable political power, we must be vigilant in the questioning (and suspicion) of our own intellectual calculations that confront this sovereign power. With this, the satisfaction of any (re)consolidation of Asian American citizenship, identity, or even privilege under the law will dissipate, allowing Asian American Studies to "advance" without satisfaction--but with a endless obligation to work for a justice "to come."

Absent(ing) Hindsight

In assessing the motivations for internment, The Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians compares internment to discriminating against people based on the color of their shirts in order to demonstrate that the governmental policy was an "arbitrary intrusion" (ix).[4] In

[4] The Commission was established, at least in partial response to, a redress bill submitted by Representative Mike Lowery, a Washington democrat who suggested that $25,000 be paid out to the victims (or heirs) of internment. (Another important event was Gerald Ford's "An American Apology," which proclaimed that evacuation was wrong and "officially" rescinded Executive Order 9066, which authorized the evacuation.) The Japanese American Citizen's League, with the assistance

another vein, Jerry Kang contends that from our vantage point, post 9/11, we can see that the whole problem boils down to a simple equation: "wartime coupled with racism and intolerance creates particular types of mistakes" (197). Between the Commission's move to establish the capriciousness of human actors and Kang's invocation of mere racism as generative of certain, preventable mistakes during a state of war, we witness two interpretive strategies that rely upon a volitional understanding of the racial state: either there's a random targeting or there are special "types" of problems that emerge out of racism, especially during a war. Huong Vu offers up a qualification of the debate: the government should focus on the "true threats to national security" like

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of Senators Daniel Inouye and Sparks Matsunaga and Representatives Norm Mineta and Robert Matsui, introduced bills in the Senate and House to establish the commission, which would study not only if redress were possible, but if there was any specific injury resulting from internment that could ground any claim for reparations. After Lowery introduced his bill on November 28, 1979, the Senate approved the "JACL" plan on May 22 of the following year, with the House following suit on July 21--effectively killing Lowery's bill.

The commission was made up of seven members: former Supreme Court Justice Arthur J. Goldberg, former Eisenhower cabinet member Arthur S. Fleming, Senator Edward W. Brooke (the only African American on the committee, who also happened to be Republican), Senator Hugh B. Mitchell, federal judge William M. Marutani (the only Japanese American), Representative Daniel E. Lundgren, and Joan Z. Bernstein (the chair of the commission). There were twenty days of hearings in nine cities, and over 750 witness testified. The commission's report, Personal Justice Denied, was released in December 1982, and argues that there was no military necessity that demanded Japanese American internment. In June 1983, the commission issued their recommendations for remedies, which included an apology from Congress and the President, compensation payments of $20,000 to each surviving internee, the restoration of status and entitlements for Japanese Americans, pardons for those arrested during wartime, and Congressional funding of a foundation to educate the American public about internment. When Ronald Reagan signed the Civil Liberties Act of 1988, the government provided for all of these provisions. (Fred Korematsu, Gordon Hirabayashi, and Minoru Yasui all had their convictions vacated in *coram nobis* suits.)

"antigovernment groups" in order to avoid the use of "national security" as "an excuse to discriminate" (693). The particularly bad behavior of the American government through misplaced judgement, formal (and racial) equations/equivocations, and recommendations for a more "just" war: these theories of what caused or aided the government's ability to intern Japanese Americans all avoid acknowledging the deep history of racial targeting and discrimination experienced by Asian America. Even greater, these kinds of analyses profess a strong, abiding faith in the legal system to insure racial equality. Coupled with a reading of the *Hirabayashi* and *Korematsu* decisions, however, it can be seen that these interpretive strategies also dovetail with the logics of racial assimilation and racial war within the Supreme Court decisions themselves; the refusal to analyze beyond the government's racial performativity and articulations seizes Asian Americanist critique at the moment before theorizing the state's compicity with the state of racial war.

Racial/racist articulations appear in both Chief Justice Stone's unanimous opinion in *Hirabayashi v. U.S.* and Justice Black's majority opinion in *Korematsu v. U.S.*; both are broadly apologist, arguing that the military decision to place only Japanese Americans under a curfew restrictions and evacuating the population, respectively, was justified due to the absence of substantive "assimilation" on the part of Japanese Americans. In *Hirabayashi*, we learn that the

"social, economic and political conditions" or exclusions in place since the end of the nineteenth century "have intensified their [Japanese Americans'] solidarity and have in large measure prevented their assimilation as an integral part of the white population" (320 U.S. 81, 96). Mirroring the language of Robert E. Park and the Chicago School, Stone baldly notes the end point of assimilation: minority populations must make themselves useful to white society and bear the responsibility for integrating themselves despite the social, economic, and political contexts which produce segregation; Japanese Americans matter such that the manner of exclusion either replicates racial animosity or produces a population that strives to include itself in white supremacist society. Because there has been "little social intercourse" between Japanese Americans and the "white population, the latter's "attachments to Japan and its institutions" might possibly have been strengthened (98). If "friendship"--a racial friendship in submission--is the salve for racism, the opinion argues that public opinion, or "public notoriety," allows one to judge the fitness of "residents having ethnic affiliations with an invading enemy" (101).[5] This discussion of racial affiliations is dismissed by

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[5] In his All the Laws but One: Civil Liberties in Wartime, Chief Justice William Rehnquist weighs in on the matter of assimilation: "Residents became fearful of ethnic Japanese among them. Japanese immigrants . . . had not been assimilated into the rest of the population" (188). Yoking together white fear and non-assimilation, Rehnquist supports the military's desire to evacuate and intern Japanese Americans due to the effects of white supremacy. While Rehnquist attempts to distinguish between the status of the issei and the nisei "citizens," it is evident that both are compressed into one group for

Justice Black in his *Korematsu* opinion, mainly because "cast[ing] this case into outlines of racial prejudice, without reference to the real military dangers which were presented merely *confuses the issue* (323 U.S. 214, 223, emphasis added). The "pressing public necessity" that demands racial restrictions, for Black, triggers the government's "rigid scrutiny" of racial restrictions (216); because some racial restrictions are constitutional, we can see what both *Hirabayashi* and *Korematsu* are attempting to theorize: racial minorities embody the underbelly of white America, thereby demanding an extraconstitutional measure in order to insure the national security--or secure the borders of whiteness--and protect not only the nation, but the nation that can only be white.

The constitutional extraconstitutionality of racial targeting and imprisonment is complemented by the Court's judgements concerning the constitutionality of military judgements of (racial) necessity, which some commentators have referred to as "judicial abdication" and "blind acquiescence" (tenBroek, et. al. 220, Bannai and Minami 756). Yet given the problem of sovereignty and the exception, the lack of concern shown in *Hirabayashi* or *Korematsu* in terms of

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the sake of more racial/legal theorizing: "German emigration had gone on *since colonial days*. People of German and Italian ancestry were far more *spread out* in the population in general than were the Issei" (210, emphasis added). Time and dispersal are key conditions for determining the "suspect-ness" of a given racial population, and yet it's not entirely evident how the time-lag between "colonial days" and the end of the nineteenth century (or even the late twentieth century, when Rehnquist is writing) insures an assimilation whereby racist "fear" dissipates to a level where an ethnic group can be "assimilated."

resolving the problem of military necessity outside of the context of martial law demonstrates the gravity of the cases' challenges to the racial state; in other words, the decisions attempt to justify a kind of racial/martial law without a declaration of martial law. In *Hirabayashi*, Chief Justice Stone stresses the "circumstances, the time and place" of military decisions so as to remove the judiciary (and any other non-military constituency) from the obligation of judging such decisions's legality (320 U.S. 81, 91); furthermore, it is argued that the judiciary cannot review military decisions because it can no longer access "that hour" of the decision because the military possesses no "hindsight" with which to judge the appropriateness of their actions (106, 107). The nation, then, can't "afford" to question or review military decisions because, in the first place, the military acts *without thinking*, without the critical ability to assess issues of legality because hindsight/reasoning is absent in enforcement (107). And Stone is partially correct: the racial exception to the Constitution, authorized by Executive Orders 9066, delegates the power to determine who is an enemy alien to the military, and the power to make the exception resides in Roosevelt's ability to execute such an order; the military, despite making the racialist decision, is merely following through with the enforcement of the racial rule of law, which is never involved in questions of justice.

The unthinking nature of the military and the

"abdication" of judicial review in *Hirabayashi* are developed to a greater extent in *Korematsu*, where Justices Black and Frankfurter further theorize the nature of "hindsight." First, Black asserts that his majority opinion will only "pass upon the order which petitioner [Korematsu] violated [the evacuation order]" because to rule on the constitutionality of internment would "decide momentous questions not contained within the framework of the pleadings or the evidence in this case" (323 U.S. 214 at 222); the momentous nature of racial law's foundation, obviously, is off the table for Black. He claims that the "calm perspective of hindsight" which the Court actually possesses--in fact, everyone already has hindsight in this situation--should prevent the Court from "say[ing] that at the time these actions were unjustified" (224). What's remarkable in this turn of phrase is that Black wholly dismisses hindsight, or historical evaluation, through a warning of "presentism" pushed to its very limit: if hindsight can never be right when attempting to judge historical events, then the "historical" as we know it must be abolished in the eyes of the law; history, effectively, is history, and the "context of war," which Frankfurter mentions, proves to serve as an exceptional moment which, by its very existence, can do nothing but deny interpretive access in the future (224). Racialisms are mildly reviewable based on the whims of the Court, but any racial targeting that protects the boundaries of the white polity are rubber stamped and approved; the

racial state has history on its side. Justice Murphy, in his dissent, maintains that "all residents of this nation, are kin in some way by blood or culture to a foreign land," yet they constitute the "new and distinct civilization of the United States" (242). Murphy's dissent offers us a qualified way out of the racial state, where color-blindness demands a recognition of America's "new" civilization. Yet perhaps Justice Jackson's argument in his dissent is more helpful: "guilt is personal and not inheritable," especially if a person belongs to a "race from which there is no way to resign" (323 U.S. 214 at 243). The ability to re-sign, or recalibrate the meanings of race in service to "justice," then, will end up being the key concern (or problem) of plans for restitution and reparations--or life in general after *Hirabayashi* and *Korematsu*. Key to all of the worries about the after-effects of these two cases is that "the ghost of Korematsu might be resurrected at any time, possibly in a less outrageous increment, given a sufficient threat by a specific racial group" since the cases have never been overturned (Braber 469).

Error and Recompense

Scholars who attempt to come to terms with the events during and after World War II often locate the evacuation and internment along a continuum of historical exclusions that have targeted Asian and Japanese Americans. But while attempting to demonstrate the normalcy of racial targeting since at least the nineteenth century, critics also make use

of a narrative of aberration(s): the internment was caused by the racist actions of individual actors and not necessarily by a system of law or any other factors. In the documentary Of Civil Wrongs and Rights, Rita Takahashi maintains that Pearl Harbor and the events that immediately followed the attack gave the "perfect opportunity of getting rid of people of Japanese ancestry" (Of Civil); in close proximity to Takahashi's comment, Peter Irons deems the Hirabayashi and Korematsu cases as moments where "every branch of government failed," especially in terms of withholding evidence during oral arguments before the Supreme Court (Of Civil). And in what is perhaps the earliest legal article on internment, Eugene Rostow claims internment was "calculated to produce both individual injustice and deep-seated social maladjustments of a cumulative and sinister kind" which were mere reiterations of "familiar West Coast attitudes" (Rostow 489, 496). This general strategy of placing the special aberration within the more "broad historical causes" of "race prejudice, war hysteria, and a failure of political leadership" places the decision on the exception on the shoulders of individual (or corporate actors) who have since fallen from the good graces of color-blind governance (Commission 459). Effectively, this moral condemnation reasserts white privilege in relief: marking those (white) historical actors who failed at extending equal protection to non-whites.

In this section, I will discuss the question of

reparations for internment, especially in relation to the narratives of aberration and lapsed moral characters; likewise, I will examine Fred Korematsu's *coram nobis* case and the Hohri lawsuit against the United States government. Here, the main purpose is to both expose the limits of legal discourse as it relates to racial justice and formulate alternative ways to mobilize Asian American Studies in the service of liberation. Essentially, the twenty thousand dollars and the apology issued to Japanese Americans and authorized by the Civil Rights Act of 1988 was surely "symbolic," as Natsu Taylor Saito points out, yet what allows scholars and critics to judge reparations as "something that counts" or a "going out of one's way . . . to apologize" (Saito 2; Waldron 7)? The "ways" or paths taken by the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians (CWRIC) and others reveals a concerted effort to glide atop the racial state through narratives of misdirection. As a result, the question (and fact) of reparations (and the challenges to the mainstream reparations movement) allows us to comprehend how American law can only accommodate its own wrongdoing to the point that it senses a disruption--a "balancing" that would insure, legally and economically, racial equality--which threatens the enforced immunity of the sovereign.

Published in 1982 by the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians (CWRIC), Personal Justice Denied serves as the U.S. government's official

evaluation of the events surrounding evacuation and internment. While astonishing in the sense that it formally acknowledges the government's and military's racial targeting of Japanese Americans, the text also maneuvers its analysis so that internment becomes a racist articulation of a bygone era--effectively evacuating any critique of institutional structures that aid and abet the racial ends of the state. In the section entitled "The Conditions Which Permitted the Detention," the CWRIC claims that there was no military necessity for internment, and General John J. DeWitt's Final Report, a document detailing both the justifications for and logistics of internment, heads a chain of texts and events in which government figures fail to point out or question DeWitt's racist motivations. While the military necessity leg of both the Hirabayashi and Korematsu decisions were based on DeWitt's Final Report, Personal Justice Denied attempts to divorce the larger problem of racial subordination from internment, blaming a whole host of characters for a number of reasons: prosecutors ignoring FBI and Naval intelligence that rebutted DeWitt's concern with potential espionage, Congress' silence, Franklin Roosevelt's failure to "pursue cabinet-level discussions" concerning his executive orders, etc. (Commission 8-9). In this particular case, "hindsight" has become a legitimate strategy for understanding historical events, but in a narrowly tailored sense: the "event" is only made up of decisions, and those decisions (along with their effects)--premised on "race prejudice"--form the proper

grounds for developing suitable suggestions for reparations.

Perhaps the most striking characteristic of the CWRIC's report is the nonchalant nature in which it announces the death of the *Korematsu* and *Hirabayshi* decisions. The "rigid scrutiny" standard established in *Korematsu* has proven helpful, according to the Commission; the decision is "isolated in law" and remains the only case where an invidious racial discrimination was approved by the Supreme Court (239). Likewise, the cases have "never been followed" by other courts (239). The Commission contends that *Korematsu* has been "overruled in the court of history," and in the same breath mentions that it is a "curiosity, not a precedent" (238, 239). Reggie Oh and Frank Wu note that *Korematsu* has been cited "as an authority more than fifty times" from 1945 to 1995: "Typically, the reference was literally a single sentence, so that it stood as legal authority barren of substantive analysis" (170). If, as the Commission contends, each part of *Korematsu* "has been discredited or abandoned," it is extremely curious how the case has been considered authoritative enough to be used without analysis or comment. *Korematsu* remains "controlling case law" and an "integral anomaly in constitutional law" (167, 173).[6] The Commission

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[6] See also Scott Michaelsen's and Scott Shershow's "Practical Politics and the 'Coming Community': The Cases of Affirmative Action and Welfare." The authors suggest that the appearance of *Korematsu* and *Hirabayashi* in affirmative action cases, most notably in *Regents of the University of California v. Bakke* (438 U.S. 265 (1978), develops a coherent political strategy that rests on the logic of these internment cases: *"Affirmative action can only proceed so long as it does not disturb white privilege, while at the same time the Constitutional protection of raceless citizenship extends also only to the point where*

claims that the *Duncan v. Kahanamoku* decision overruled *Korematsu*, making it "adamantly clear that the principles and practices of American government are permeated by the belief that loyal citizens in loyal territory are to be governed by civil rather than military authority" (238).[7] Since *Duncan* refers to the imposition of martial law in Hawai'i during World War II--along with the suspension of habeas corpus and the establishment of military tribunals--the fit of this statement isn't quite right; what the Commission refuses to see is that because martial law was never declared within the United States, *Korematsu* and *Hirabayashi* represent moments where the racial state can impose martial law without declaring it. Alternately: at any moment and in any (racial) decision, the "martial" resides within civil society and not apart from it. This constant threat of racial war is precisely the promise and continuing effect of the *Korematsu* and *Hirabayashi* decisions. The Commission, in leading up to their recommendations for restitution, maintain that "history cannot be undone" because there cannot be "an accounting which would balance or erase the events of the war" since this would be "beyond anyone's power" (469). The "symbolism," then, of reparations is grounded on the prevention of an "accounting" which would realize any form of racial balancing or justice; the optimism surrounding the supposed diminishing influence/returns from the *Korematsu* and *Hirabayashi* decisions, then, is the most the government can do. As such,

white privilege senses its disturbance" (16, emphasis in original).

[7] 327 U.S. 304 (1946).

congressional, executive, and especially judicial powers will never undo their histories--like overturning the Supreme Court's decisions, for example--but only acknowledge them and promise to behave better.[8]

The expectation of this kind of "solution"--the answer where the government only obliquely answers to minority demands--seems to have governed the general strategy of pursuing reparations through Congress. While the National Coalition for Redress/Reparations (NCRR) supported the "overturning of the legal basis that justified the evacuation of the camps," the coalition also joined with the Japanese American Citizen's League (JACL) and Japanese American legislators in supporting the Commission's formation instead of "merely" introducing a bill for reparations (Maki, et.al. 90); overturning *Korematsu* and *Hirabayashi* were jettisoned from the planning for reparations. This strategy was, according to Harry H.L. Kitano and Mitchell Maki,

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[8] In "Superseding Historical Injustice," Jeremy Waldron essentially comes to the same conclusions. In terms of philosophical ethics, any "history of injustice" needs to be "studied and condemned, remembered and lamented" (4). Reparations, then, are ways to "apologize" in order to provide a "clear public recognition" of the injustice (7). The problem of actual reparations--the figuring of recompense--becomes the problem for Waldron when he asks, is it "possible to rectify particular injustices without comprehensive redistribution" (13)? Answering in the negative, he argues that this would be "costly and disruptive" because we "can only affect people's lives in the future" (16, 7). Any accounting must take account of the white privilege built atop injustice and suffering, mostly in terms of property. Because people may have "organized their lives around" such privileges, disturbing them would prove, according to Waldron, to be yet another injustice (16). The "future," as a result, can only accommodate the maintenance of racial hierarchy, creating a trickle-down form of justice that reinscribes an original injustice in order to prevent the liquidation of historical advantage.

"essentially a 'hedged bet' for the legislators," who proved to be the linchpin in the quest for reparations (86). Kitano's and Maki's "proper alignment model," explained in the book Achieving the Impossible Dream, was developed in response to Representative Norm Mineta's comment that for redress to pass, the "planets" would need to move into their proper alignment (17). The plan, which attempts to explain the "specific streams of influence [that] need to be properly aligned for certain types of federal laws to be passed," does more than just demystify the political process for groups interested in pursuing reparations, it also--despite the best wishes of Kitano and Maki--reveals the difficulty of obtaining recompense for (racial) damages (17). Despite all the anxieties about how to obtain redress--or perhaps because of it--the JACL and Mike Masaoka, their main representative at the hearings and former league president, maintained what some have called a "superpatriot" stance (Eric Yamamoto, 450). Testifying that Japanese Americans, particularly those who served in the U.S. Army, demonstrated a willingness to not perpetuate the "very mannerisms and thoughts which mark us apart," Masaoka and the JACL exhibit an astute understanding of race politics: because we will always have a "racial uniform," the only option is to stress how Japanese Americans supported America despite the internment (Maki, et. al. 94).[9] According to Chris K. Iijima, the Commission's

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[9] This quote from Masaoka comes from the days of internment. I use it only to show the consistency in the JACL's stance toward internment. Maki, Kitano, and Berthold mention how, during 1980 hearings to

arguments for reparations proved that the "kind of patriotism that does not resist injustice gets rewarded" (395).

The evidence used to produce the CWRIC's report formed the groundwork for the *coram nobis* cases filed by Fred Korematsu, Gordon Hirabayashi, and Minoru Yasui in 1983.[10] All of the *coram nobis* cases rested on the finding contained in Personal Justice Denied that the Supreme Court, in their original deliberations, were deceived by a deliberate withholding of evidence--evidence which would possibly prove that there was no military necessity for the evacuation and internment. General DeWitt's original and revised editions of Final Report: Japanese Evacuation from the West Coast 1942 are the key documents in this finding, and the Supreme Court only saw the following passage from the revised edition, which follows a description of Japanese Americans as a "tightly-knit racial group":

> While it was believed that some were loyal, it was known that many were not. To complicate the

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determine the possibility of reparations, Masaoka professed his faith in America and the commission to develop the "best remedy" that was "not just in the interest of the evacuees, but in the national interest of the United States" (94).

[10] *Coram nobis* refers to a writ or error in which the "court can correct errors in criminal convictions where other remedies are not available" (584 F. Supp 1406, 1411); in order to petition for a writ of *coram nobis*, a person must have served their full criminal sentence and prove that "other relief is wanting" (584 F. Supp 1406, 1411). Minoru Yasui's case (320 U.S. 117 (1943)) was decided by the Supreme Court on the same day as *Hirabayashi*. In the District Court's consideration of Yasui, the curfew order was declared unconstitutional when applied to American citizens. The Supreme Court cited its own decision in *Hirabayashi* to determine that citizenship status, as it applied to Japanese Americans, did not matter; instead, the curfew order's constitutionality was the narrow ground on which the Court rested its judgement.

> situation no ready means existed for determining the loyal and the disloyal with any degree of safety. It was necessary to face the reality--a positive determination could not have been made. (Department 9)

In *Hirabayashi*, the Court contends that they could not "reject as unfounded the judgement of the military authorities and of Congress that there were disloyal members of that population whose number and strength could not be precisely and quickly ascertained" (320 U.S. 81, 99). As a result, the timing of military necessity--the pressing obligations of time during war--can escape judicial review. The original version of the report, which DeWitt was persuaded to revise, read:

> It was impossible to establish the identity of the loyal and the disloyal with any degree of safety. It was not that there was insufficient time in which to make such a determination; it was simply a matter of facing the realities that a positive determination could not be made, that an exact separation of the "sheep from the goats" was unfeasible (Bannai and Minami 777).[11]

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[11] Peter Iron's Justice at War documents this "persuasion." Edward Ennis of the Justice Department and John J. McCloy, the Assistant Secretary of War, worried that DeWitt's original report, according to Irons, "smacked of racism" (208). Compounding the problem, Ennis tracked down the author of "The Japanese in America, the Problem and the Solution," which appeared in the October 1942 issue of Harpers Magazine. The author, Lt. Commander Kenneth D. Ringle of the Office of Naval Intelligence, contended that the "Japanese problem" was taken out of its proper context, and loyalty should be determined on the "basis of the

DeWitt's claim that race makes any determination of loyalty "impossible," then, exposes the racial motivations behind internment; time, for DeWitt, was never a concern. The *coram nobis* lawyers used this (suppression of) evidence as the basis for their suits.

Because the CWRIC's report exposed the problematic nature of the government's and military's arguments for military necessity, Judge Marilyn Hall Patel granted Fred Korematsu's writ of *coram nobis* since the Supreme Court "had before it a selective record" (584 F. Supp. 1406, 1419). Patel's decision is perhaps the most interesting of all the *coram nobis* rulings, mainly because she cautiously notes the uncertainty of whether a "different decision" would have emerged given a full, honest presentation of the evidence; the failure of the government in fulfilling their "ethical obligations" is cause enough vacate Korematsu's conviction (1419). Since a writ of *coram nobis* can only "correct errors of fact," Patel also warns that the *Korematsu* decision "stands as the law of this case and for whatever precedential value it may still have" even though it now has "very limited application" (1420). Given *Korematsu*'s standing as controlling case law, however, Patel's broad agreement with the CWRIC's contentions about the case lapses into the same logic as the Commission's report: petty, personal racisms can

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individual, regardless of citizenship, and *not* on a racial basis" (qtd. in Irons 203, emphasis in original). Ennis declared that if the Supreme Court were not made aware of the "Ringle Report," the action "might approximate the suppression of evidence" (qtd. in Irons, 204). As a result, DeWitt's report was revised to stress the time constraints the military faced.

lead to grave injustices in the name of the federal government. Her opinion ends with a call to all "legislative, executive, and judicial" branches be prepared, "in times of international hostility," to "exercise their authority to protect all citizens from the petty fears and prejudices that are so easily aroused" (1420). The strict separation between institutions and "petty fears and prejudices" assumes that, given the "correct" evidence, the judiciary would always counter those who are unthinking and generally undemocratic. At the root of the problem, however, is that the certain improbability of overturning the internment cases--given their use value for subsequent courts, especially in terms of racial policy--is submerged in Patel's decision, leaving Korematsu with, basically, the only option available under color-blind law: arguing for the "citizen" that has been wronged. And Donald K. Tamaki's contention that Korematsu's *coram nobis* case was the "trial that Japanese Americans had," sadly, rings hollow: the individual case stands no chance in the face of precedent and racial practice (Of Civil).

The NCJAR's twenty-seven billion dollar class-action lawsuit against the U.S. government was the only viable alternative to the congressionally sanctioned reparations recommended by the CWRIC, but the admissible grounds for suing the U.S. was limited to one cause of action: the "Takings Clause" of the Fifth Amendment.[12] In the lawsuit, the

[12] The "Takings Clause" of the Fifth Amendment consists of the following: "nor shall private property be taken for public use without just compensation."

NCJAR lists twenty two causes of action, which served as the "distillate of the dozens of allegations" resulting from evacuation and internment (Hohri 200). Ranging from violations of the Fourth Amendment (unreasonable arrest, search, and seizure) to the Eighth Amendment (cruel and unusual punishment) to the Fourteenth Amendment (due process), the NCJAR's suit was decided to be admissible only on the grounds of the Takings Clause because of the "alleged damage to appellants' real and personal property" (251 U.S. App. D.C. 145, 242); for all other causes, sovereign immunity prevented the U.S. from being sued.[13] In terms of sovereign immunity, individuals only have standing to bring a complaint against the U.S. when the "state permit[s] avenues of redress to operate . . . [but the] state [must grant] to the individual prior permission or the right of access to these procedures" (Horowitz 12). This "prior permission" is contained within the Federal Tort Claims Act, passed in 1946, but only in regards to the actions of "officers or employees of the United States, members of the National Guard while engaged in training or duty. . . and persons acting on behalf of a federal agency in an official capacity" (28 U.S.C. 2671

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[13] Sovereign immunity, or the right of the sovereign to be free of legal challenge, may be waived if a suit meets the requirements of the Tucker Act (28 U.S.C. 1491), the Little Tucker Act (28 U.S.C. 1346), or the Federal Torts Claims Act (28 U.S.C. 2671-2680). Because the focus of this chapter is on the effects of the law in relation to the racial state's maintenance by the sovereign/white polity, I will not discuss the issue of torts; rather, the issue of remedy for governmental transgression is central to my analysis--with a focus on the government's (lack of) ability to make restitution to racially targeted groups.

(1)). The effect of clearly delimiting parties to a suit (as opposed to suing the state in fact and name)--individuals and representatives--magnifies a central problem that emerges with sovereign immunity: there is no judicial recourse available to question the state's policies--only the recourse of claiming injury based upon a government representative's actions.

Though the Tucker Act and the Little Tucker Act both allow for civil actions "not exceeding $10,000 in amount, founded either upon the Constitution or any Act of Congress," the Federal Tort Claims Act makes clear that the United States "shall be entitled to assert any defense based upon judicial or legislative immunity" (28 U.S.C. 1246 (a) (2), 28 U.S.C. 2674). The judicial and legislative branches may claim immunity from prosecution as they see fit, and their "products" (decisions, public laws, etc.), when utilized by an employee or representative of the state, may be unquestionable if the government chooses to make it so. Given the limitations placed upon the NCJAR's lawsuit and the Supreme Court's denial of the NCJAR's final writ of certiorari, it is clear that the passage of time has not revised the most fundamental theoretical understanding of sovereign immunity from Oliver Wendell Holmes' opinion in *Kawananakoa v. Polyblank*: "A sovereign is exempt from suit, not because of any formal conception or obsolete theory, but on the logical and practical ground that there can be no legal right against the authority that makes the law on which

the right depends" (105 U.S. 349, 353).[14] The pertinent lesson of the NCJAR's lawsuit, perhaps, is that sovereignty is self-generating, producing its own right to rule based upon its ability to both establish the law and serve as the authority that insures the functioning of the law. Possibly opting for the CWRIC's suggested avenue of reparations instead of ruling on the NCJAR's class action lawsuit (as Leslie Hatamiya argues), the Supreme Court was also a signatory to the ultimate (and most harrowing) result of government-sponsored reparations: the requirement that reparations would only be paid out to living persons prevented Japanese American reparations "from becoming precedent for other groups with long-standing histories of oppression" (Maki, et. al. 240).[15]

The ultimate goal of the NCJAR's lawsuit--re-signing the Constitution, or changing the meaning of the law as it relates to Japanese Americans--was handed its ultimate defeat by questioning the foundations of the racial state, yet legal scholars have attempted to develop alternative strategies in order to realize justice in the future. Curiously, Japanese Americans were left with one option in the NCJAR case: using the property system as a way to levy a claim of personal and

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[14] The history of the NCJAR's lawsuit is marked by judicial concerns over appropriate jurisdiction and "tolling" or extending the statute of limitations. Deliberations mainly took place in the United States District Court for the District of Columbia and the United States Court of Appeals for the Second Federal Circuit. The final appeal (and denial of certiorari) is the following: *Hohri, et. al. v. U.S.* (488 U.S. 925 (1988)).

[15] Hatamiya reads the Supreme Court's denial of Hohri's write of certiorari as "implying that Congress had resolved the matter" (177).

class injustice against the immunity of the sovereign. As Cheryl I. Harris lucidly argues, "property," amid the "deep historical roots of systematic white supremacy," "has given rise to definitions of group identity predicated on the racial subordination of the 'other'" (1785). Since property as such never escapes social inequities--indeed it serves as the foundation of whiteness--strategies for legally challenging the state that are not predicated upon rebuttressing white supremacy via individual ownership arguments must be developed.

Asian American critical race studies scholars have attempted to develop alternative legal strategies, yet most plans fall short of fully confronting white supremacy. Eric Yamamoto argues that the only reason reparations were eventually paid out was because Japanese Americans "were able to fit their claims tightly within . . . the individual rights paradigm," which made the eventual payment a "finality" (E. Yamamoto 490). Yamamoto locates a special obligation that Japanese Americans have towards other minorities: "now and tomorrow press for racial, immigrant, gender, class and sexual orientation justice in the United States" (501). This would effectively lead to a "dual strategy" for reparations in which the "bite-sized legal claims" would be complemented by another strategy that "recognizes the distortions of narrow legal framing" so that "law and court process--regardless of formal legal outcome--[would generate] . . . 'cultural performances' . . . for

providing outsiders an institutional public forum" (492). This strategy of using cultural performances to address "root problems of misuse of power" will heal "social wounds" and the "breach in the polity" that has given rise to the "social disease" of racism and discrimination (522). The dynamic of redressing historical wrongs committed by a group assumes a simple cause and effect relationship, where specific actions create racial problems in the present. Given the given-ness of the racial polity, the American polity has already been "breached" by a larger social and institutional structuring; as a result, addressing the "misuse of power" never fully approaches the problem of how power is vested over time, thereby limiting a possible justice that would either redistribute such a power or, more explicitly, eradicate the white privilege that is encoded in American law.

Natsu Taylor Saito, akin to Yamamoto, acknowledges that Japanese American "legal scholars and activists have a responsibility to ensure that the redress provided furthers the struggle for equality and justice in this country" (2). Saito notes the current post-9/11 targeting of Arab Americans by the U.S. government in order to give urgency to her ultimate suggestion: "institutionalize the changes implicit in the granting of reparations" (28). The only description of these possible changes comes when Saito refers back to Eugene V. Rostow's "The Japanese American Cases--A Disaster" where he maintains that there are three forms of reparations: the federal government must "protect the civil rights of Japanese

Americans against organized and unorganized hooliganism," "generous financial" indemnities must be paid for "heavy property losses," and the "basic issues" must be re-presented to the Supreme Court "in an effort to obtain a reversal of these war-time cases" (Saito 28, Rostow 534). It is unclear how the second proposition, unless formalized by law and legal measure, would help to solve the problems of racial targeting except as a deterrent; and the first suggestion lacks clear definition, sapping Saito's and Rostow's critiques of their analytical power. Certainly, the overturning of the *Hirabayashi*, *Korematsu*, and *Yasui* Supreme Court decisions would help to remove the foundation of racial suspicion at the basis of the federal government's treatment of minorities, but Saito offers no vision of what comes beyond these possible reversals.

If we are to realize the other side of Gotanda's call to analyze how "racially governed conditions take place," it surely must involve an ability to commit to "long-run, cumulative context change" that attempts to avoid "ideological co-optation"--the only option available to Japanese Americans through reparations (Unger, False 306). Roberto Unger suggests that "experimentalism" is the "most defensible part of American exceptionalism," yet--and this particularly relates to problems of sovereign immunity--American government has consistently barred the "institutional structure of the country against effective challenge" (What 29). As is evident in the *Hirabayashi* and

Korematsu decisions, the judiciary eventually barred all challenges to military policy based on a Court-granted plenary power; if the decisions were to be reversed, we would still be left with the *Korematsu* that appears as precedent in decisions which, presently, narrow the opportunities and resources available to minorities. To counter this problem, Unger provocatively suggests "institutional reimagination and reconstruction" whereby the "foundations of the world" can be put on the "agenda" in order to "create the future society within the present one" (What 33, False 134, 449). Rather than "righting a wrong" or "realizing" justice, legal studies must attempt to move beyond a context where abuses of power serve as the largest concern, which deflect attention from the ways that law allows such abuses to come into being.

Knowing what this "experimentalism" might result in is impossible, but its inclusion in a movement towards justice would allow for "free decisions" and not decisions that are merely the "programmable application or unfolding of a calculable process" (Derrida, "Force" 24). Derrida continues in this vein, calling for "reinstituting act[s] of interpretation" for each singular "case," since justice is "owed to the other, before any contract," and this "owing" would be capable of addressing the foundations of the racial state--which participates in a perpetual state of war against minorities--so that future calculations of the law could dismantle the law's racialisms to realize equality (25). In this way, reparations and apologies for internment would

escape the "service of a finality" that "aims to re-establish a normality" or normal, color-blind relations (Derrida, On 31-2). Forgiveness, in the future tense, would exist apart from the "sovereign power" which presupposes it: apologies and forgiveness would then be "without power"--the power to broker and negotiate power's immunities from prosecution (Derrida, "On" 59).

Literary Challenges

Despite the nagging problems Japanese America has faced in terms of confronting the sovereign powers of the state, critics often partition Japanese literature into two camps: before and after internment. Before internment, it is argued, the general mood was one of "hope and optimism" for integration and, possibly, citizenship status (Inada x). Further, Sau-Ling Cynthia Wong contends that Japanese American literature exhibits an "at-homeness" in America that is the "product of a narrow window of confidence in Japanese American history when full participation in American society seemed within reach" (Reading 74). These types of analyses, as a result, reify the literature in a manner similar to the "aberration" school that reifies internment: World War II serves as the cataclysm that reveals the duplicity of American law--but not because of its foundation in racial rule. In this section, I will examine two short stories and one novel in an attempt to demonstrate a continuity of thought *across* internment; Japanese American authors before, during, and after internment puzzled over the mechanisms of

racial (and intraethnic) exclusion(s) and developed alternative strategies for understanding the exception-al place of Japanese Americans in the racial polity. From Toshio Mori's concerns about the "suffering" that constitutes qualified social and political inclusion to Hisaye Yamamoto's portrayal of psychosis within an internment camp, the "madness" that the racial state produces is seen as both a condition of inclusion and a paralyzed social status. In the end, I examine John Okada's No-No Boy to demonstrate how the renewable architecture of the state can be confronted between its structures; Japanese American literature, in this vein, argues for the "growth" of America via the promise of as yet imperceptible forms of organization that avoid the strict structuring of inclusion through citizenship.

In his 1935 short story "The Chauvinist," Toshio Mori presents us with a protagonist, Takanoshin Sakoda, who decides to become deaf to effectively isolate himself from his "people" (23). In effect, the purpose of the short story is to reveal how deafness becomes the "great calling" for Japanese America, a calling that demands "dignity, humbleness, humor, and the limits of human traits" in order to produce a "harmony of human beings" (17). Sakoda, however, still speaks, but it is only to himself; his silent speech is described as a "swirling river seeking an ocean outlet" (18). The chauvinist's voluntary removal from the social sphere runs parallel to the narration of the story which shuttles between third person and first; this strategy reveals that

the "harmony" to come will consist of an ability to "pity" each other "for the sake . . . [of] our roles" and not because of our "characters," or possessed identities that exist in a state of removal from the social (22). These "roles" as subservient actors prove to be the largest problem facing segregated Japanese Americans, and the "character" of present-day social relations exposes the glossed-over position of racial exclusion. Sakoda refers to this social positioning as a "new sufferage," a neologism that marks the "suffering" that accompanies the franchise of middle-class inclusion (18); it is in this sense--the inclusion that can only be premised on exclusion--that the new sufferage invests in "power (now) and beauty (in the future)" (18). The deferral of "harmony" now is accomplished through power (grabbing).

This vying for power appears in the story through the married Japanese American couples that comment on Sakoda's status as included outsider--present at the women's functions at his family's home but removed from conversation and interaction. The power to socially define the "character"--of anyone--is indicative of a world that is "out of order" (Mori 19). Mrs. Tariki, a friend of Mrs. Sakoda, exhibits this desire, declaring during a function that "It's time to put everyone in their place. It's about time someone definitely define the activity of Takanoshin" (19). Alternately described as "lazy" and shameful, Takanoshin responds to this desire from the "outside" to locate and describe him by

claiming that his "ears are out of order" and that, actually, the "system of civilization," "the people," and "the world" are as well (19). This disorderliness, in terms of Sakoda's deafness, is one of choice, but the question of "civilization" proves to be the larger problem since social disorders rely upon social/racial enforcement. The "choice" of becoming deaf, for Sakoda, is not an abdication because he still lives within and interacts with society, but on limited terms; on the other hand, civilization creates racial and gendered "roles" which demand predictability and systematic articulation. Not quite citizens enmeshed within the "life" of America, the intraethnic spite of Mrs. Tariki is emblematic Sakoda's desire to become deaf in order to "survive the living" who curiously demand a regimentation of social life (19).

But other modes of survival exist as well, and the narrator imagines the husbands coming to pick their wives up, talking about "business and fishing and club activities" (20); the tedious nature of the husbands' conversations--written as a quick shuttling between statements about subjects like house painting and car maintenance, only to be followed by curt responses--demonstrate the transactional nature of aspiring middle-class relationships that Sakoda is attempting to escape. These relations are "dead," avoiding the talk of "death (slow death)" and the "death in our life" that is postponed by finding meaning in relationships through an individual accounting of events and accomplishments (21).

The death-in-life that the chauvinist points out is indicative of the "simplicity of each generation" that assumes that "sleep is a period between sunset and sunrise" (21). Yet sleep is the "time of man" characterized by "helplessness" (21). And sleeping avoids the recognition of our shared fate by producing the illusion of change over time despite the sameness of exclusion being carried over from day to day.

Opposed to this somnambulance, Sakoda expresses his desire for conversation and the ability to "tell all the people what I know and how little I know" (22). This would allow him to escape present-day reality, which is only the "nightmare of a dream reversed," and enter into a social world where dreams serve as "reality in hope" (24). These dreams of "conversation"--where "hope" can be communicated--are also "productions," but of a different quality: the shared relation between our "selves" is, at present, produced via social and legal restrictions, but hope allows one to reenvision these relations on a different ground. In contradistinction to the "government," the "church," and the "friends" that "care" about us, existence in common apart from regulation--and "definitely defin[ing]"--becomes the only hope for Japanese America (24). The intraethnic tension that replicates greater social/racial exclusions is productive of suffering that results from suffrage and qualified inclusion. As such, an alternative reality, one that resides "in hope," provides Japanese America a way to

question the foundations and "nightmare" of pre-internment exclusion.

In contrast to the "chauvinist's" strategy of refusing to produce a more legitimate subjectivity within subjection (to realize a different future), Hisaye Yamamoto's protagonist in 1950 short story "The Legend of Miss Sasagawara" presents us with a failed attempt at accepting the terms and conditions of exclusion. Alternately interpreted as either a reflection of Japanese American "cultural beliefs" that promote intra-group misogyny or as an exploration of "domestic"/home-bound repression amid cultural and national stigmatization, Miss Sasagawara's plight can also illuminate the impossibilities of freedom within the concentration camp that are produced apart from (and in contradistinction to) U.S. citizenship (Yogi, "Legacies" 169; Cheung 109). The "nightmare" of being in an internment camp is also the "troublous, scented scene" and the "madness" of two-tiered citizenship (Yamamoto 33); and the "cleansing" of Japanese American subjectivity, a la Masaoka, in order to realize the full franchise of citizenship becomes an attempt to cover over the "imperceptible blemishes" of a democratic republic that can only emerge through military/militant necessity (33).

The story begins as Kiku, the narrator, discusses the arrival of and gossip surrounding Mari Sasagawara's arrival with her father, a recent widower, at an Arizona internment camp; we learn that Kiku, and the whole camp, is preoccupied

with developing an understanding of Mari and her strange behavior, but only apart from an analysis of how exclusion forms and promulgates her abject and "suspect" identity. Elsie, Kiku's best friend, reports that Mari is "really temperamental," but then undercuts her own authority by claiming that "I guess it's because she was a ballet dancer before she got stuck in camp, I hear people like that are temperamental" (H. Yamamoto 20-21). Hearing about "people like that," Elsie enacts a logic analogous to internment: that racial suspicion/gossip necessarily leads to presumed/lived guilt. This inability to confront the racial conditions that led to internment surfaces shortly after. Kiku and Elsie are firmly focused on the future, as is apparent in the following:

> But we ended up as we always did, agreeing that our mission in life, pushing twenty as we were, was to first finish college somewhere *when and if the war ever ended and we were free again*, and then to find good jobs, and two nice, clean young men, preferably handsome, preferably rich, who would cherish us forever and a day. (21, emphasis added)

Both women relegate the uncertain future--if and when freedom can be realized again--to a mere assumption of business as usual, and locate the present tense effectively in the past; put another way, the racial state will eventually disappear, giving way to a normal, gendered life where marriage and "cherish[ing]" (of the unracialized self) will emerge as the

norm of Japanese American life. The thought of opportunity, here, strongly implies full inclusion, and internment is just a stop along the way towards a citizenship without qualifications.

In contrast to this sleight of hand, the figure of Mari Sasagawara serves as the locus of a doubled exclusion: not only in terms of being a racial enemy of the state, but also because she is separate from the "communal" nature of camp life that attempts to "create some semblance of normalcy" while interned (Cheung 115). We learn that Mari exhibits what's assumed to be anti-social behavior in camp; for example, she throws water at Mr. Sasaki, who wants to help her clean her living quarters in the barracks, and she attempts to escape the camp hospital because of the "doctors pawing her" (H. Yamamoto 21, 26). In terms of the former event, Miss Sasagawara suspects Mr. Sasaki of being a "spy," sent to monitor the cleanliness of her stall. Coupled with the hospital scene, it is evident that Mari is hostile to those social and institutional actions that attempt to "pretty up" or naturalize oppression (especially "unquestionable [misogynist] authority" of the medical profession) (Cheung 112)

This polishing of the not-quite citizen, however, is partially realized, much to Mari's chagrin. After exhibiting "questionable" behavior involving teenage boys, which will be discussed below, Mari is sent to a sanitarium, only to return to camp as a "friendly being" (28). Part of her reintegration

into camp life is a ballet class which she teaches for the camp's younger girls. At the "Block Christmas party," the girls' ballet performance proves to be "all elbows and knees," and Kiku claims that Mari's teaching achievement "had been undeniably small" (29). In the background, however, the crowd hears a "feeble rasp" of a "Mozart minuet" from the phonograph, revealing that "[s]omething was past its prime" (29). What's "past it's prime" turns out to be two-fold: Mari's supposed mobility before internment and the "dance" of racial "etiquette" which Japanese Americans must submit to. Elsie learns that Mari is thirty-nine years old, that she's never been married, and that she "got to go all over the country a couple of times, dancing in the ballet" (21). Pre-internment, Mari's performances allowed for travel, while at camp, the only travel involved is the short trip between the identification of Japanese Americans and the concomitant incarceration due to the identification. This racial "performance"--well-scripted--annuls Mari's previous "freedom," for travel was the condition of a racialized performance marked by the lyrics to the minuet that Kiku remembers: "When dames wore hoops and powdered hair,/And very strict was e-ti-quette,/When men were brave and ladies fair,/They danced the min-u-et. . . . " (29). The lyrics' appeal to a bygone era, an era where dancing was predicated on a racial and gendered order-ing in order for the dance to occur (for Mari), bear repeating because an analogous situation still exists; Mari's questionable behavior reflects

an existence determined by a foregrounded, perpetual marriage to the nation-state that demands internment's restricted existence within the camp. Her frustration at the "pawing" hands of social and legal exclusion reveals what Schmitt argues is the sovereign's main role: "determining definitively what constitutes public order and security, in determining then they are disturbed, and so on" (Schmitt 9). The "friendly being" demanded by those in camp--and enforced by occasional trips to the sanatarium--is ordered into being both by the camp's inhabitants and the sovereign; the "public order" of the outside is perpetuated internally--within the ethnic group, inside the barbed wire--and such an order demands acquiescence.

The danger of Miss Sasagawara's behavior stems from her interest in the teenage boys within the camp. After her initial trip to the sanitarium, Kiku learns from Elsie that Miss Sasagawara has "gone away again" because the camp inhabitants are puzzled by her apparent infatuation with younger men. While wearing a "beatific expression" and bending her head "to one side," Mari stares at a group of young men engaged in "joking and loud laughter" (H. Yamamoto 31). Mrs. Sasaki quickly admonishes Mari for staring at the group because she's "'old enough to be their mother!'" and Mari, "with all her strength," strikes the walls of Mrs. Sasaki's adjacent stall with "something heavy like a hammer" (31). At another point, Mari is caught staring at Joe Yoshinaga while he sleeps; "long hair all undone and flowing

about her," Kiku tells us that "all she was doing was sitting there watching him" (31). Afterwards, Mrs. Yoshinaga speaks with the Reverend Sasagawara, who promises to speak with Mari. The cryptic nature of these events leads Kiku, now in college in Philadelphia, to speculate that Mari "had no doubt looked upon Joe Yoshinaga as the image of the lost lover or the lost son" (32). Immediately, Kiku catches herself, claiming that this explanation makes her "uneasy" because of its "glibness," and she begins to "wonder seriously about Miss Sasagawara" (32). From this, Kiku suspects that Mari's behavior is tied to the mistreatment she faces while living with her father, a Buddhist minister who was "deaf and blind to the human passions rising" within the "selfsame room" that he shared with Mari (32). Yet because this information comes from one of Mari's published poems, the autobiographical interpretation is difficult to sustain, if not because the home life of Mari and Rev. Sasagawara is never discussed in the story.[16]

By combining a reading of Mari's desire to look at the young men and a teasing out of her poem's analogy, I argue that Yamamoto develops a larger critique of camp life. Mari is, literally, paralyzed, placed into an internment camp

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[16] Cheung also assumes that Reverend Sasagawara demonstrates "insensitivity to his daughter," but that we should "modify our judgement" of him because it "parallels the government's callousness toward its own citizens (who make up two-thirds of the internees)" (Cheung 119). But this parallel is "not clear-cut," and Cheung effectively drops this possibly productive analogy that is crucial in interpreting a story with so many loose ends and missing narrative pieces.

where even those similarly racialized exclude her from everyday activities. At the same time, the two "looking" moments expose a fascination with laughing and sleeping, or moments where behavior is least determined by the circumstances meant to restrict it, what Agamben refers to as *"pure biological life without any mediation"* (41, emphasis in original). Given Miss Sasagawara's rejection of the un-civil nature of the disciplinary institutions within the camp--from the Sasaki family's admonitions to the doctors' "pawing" to the rumors floating around to the institution of marriage--we can assume that the "gaiety" of camp life and the normalization of social hierarchies ground both her desire to observe this "unmediated" life as well as her distaste for camp members' attempts at embodying authority within the camp itself. This much can be seen in her poem, where a man "whose lifelong aim had been to achieve Nirvana, that saintly state of moral purity and universal wisdom" finally feels free enough to do so after his wife dies (H. Yamamoto 32). With all "unworthy desire and consequently all evil" extinguished, the man commits himself to the "highest" actions possible--always in isolation (32-3). Mari continues her poem, wondering how someone "called to companion such a man" yet did not want to "achieve this sublime condition" would deal with the man's "deaf[ness] and blind[ness]" to the other (33). She concludes that the "man's devotion" would be a "monstrous sort ['of madness']" and that such an experience would be fuel for the companion's future nightmares. The man,

much like the fellow camp inhabitants and the U.S. government at large, attempts to assume certain forms of sovereignty through the determination of an order, marking Miss Sasagawara as the embodied zone of the exception within the exception(al) camp. The doubled exclusion that Mari faces is produced through ostracism--determined by a normalcy that emerges from the normalization of social hierarchies within the camp--and the state's "management of the biological life of the nation" during a "period of permanent [racial] crisis" in order to protect the "highest" form of democratic governance apart from the camp (Agamben 43). The man's desire for purity disentangles itself from the relationship with the Other, thereby refiguring those exclusions that form the very core of internment in the first place, and white supremacy becomes the pedagogical program of camp life. We are left, then, with a woman who becomes "suspicious," and her future, like the broken phonograph, can only be a "feeble rasp" which marks the "lethal machine" that is the nation (Agamben 43).

The fatal allure of the "machine"/nation is explored by John Okada in his 1957 novel No-No Boy. Whereas Miss Sasagawara's future is forever hemmed in by the machinations of racial and intraethnic exclusion, Okada's protagonist Ichiro wanders through the Pacific Northwest and explores his troubled--and possibly misplaced--faith in what America could signify for Japanese Americans after internment. Ichiro is a "no-no boy" who answered "no" to both of the following questions, which were part of the "Loyalty Questionnaire"

given to able-bodied Nisei males in the internment camps: "Are you willing to serve in the armed forces of the United States in combat duty wherever ordered?"; "Will you swear unqualified allegiance to the United States of America and faithfully defend the United States from any or all attacks of foreign or domestic forces, and forswear any form of allegiance of obedience to the Japanese Emperor, to any other foreign government, power, or organization?"[17] While traces of DeWitt's formulation (races have previous, unalterable allegiances to their nations regardless of immigration or citizenship status) remain--especially in the second question's assumption of a previous allegiance to Japan that must be forsworn--Ichiro's crisis is produced by the conflict between inclusion through the promise of "America" and the obedience demanded by racial stratification and bars to the franchise of citizenship. For Okada, the nation is a grand piece of architecture, but this architecture covers over its actual purpose: to "fight with [the others] . . . And kill and hate and destroy but not enough, so that they must kill and hate and destroy again and again and again" (Okada 16). Self-preserving to a fault, America eventually becomes a "faint and elusive insinuation of a promise" at the end of Okada's novel (251). I contend that Okada's depiction of Ichiro's mental anguish serves to counter the "aberration" school of internment studies while formulating an alternative

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[17] Quoted from Weglyn, Michi. Years of Infamy: The Untold Story of America's Concentration Camps. New York: William Morrow, 1976.

to the logic of reparations as the justice of "repair" by introducing a sense of future indeterminacy--an open-endedness akin to Unger's experimentalism-- and an invitation to perpetually "realize" America.

Studies of No-No Boy often ask thoughtful, yet second-order questions about the novel that rarely address the torturous nature of "belonging" as it relates to the logic of nationhood. For example, critics have approached No-No Boy as a text that explores the possibility of an integrative Japanese American identity in a post-WWII landscape, and Jinqi Ling argues, correctly, that critics "overestimate the success of Ichiro's search for identity" (363).[18] This focus on identity, while productive, ignores the fact that Ichiro is the only character without an "identity" while all other characters possess the "protective shell" of either an identification with or in spite of the nation (Okada 47); Ichiro's confusion and search for the "true" reasons he said "no-no" drives the narrative along. Stan Yogi asserts that the novel "depicts Ichiro's attempt to claim an identity as an American as he analyzes why he answered 'no' to the

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[18] Ling, however, looks to the publishing history of No-No Boy in order to establish the "limited range of dissent" available to Okada in his writing of the Ichiro character (363). This focus leads Ling to conclude that Ichiro (and Okada) exhibit an "inability to fashion alternative arguments in any but the dominant discourse" (367). The drawback to this mode of argumentation is that Okada's argumentative options within the novel are preliminarily defined *before* analysis, thereby leading interpretation into a mode of either "confirming" or "resisting" dominant discourse; rather than adopt this mildly fatalistic rhetorical strategy, this section assumes that the novel can entertain revolutionary goals as a possibility and not as an impossible, fleeting thought. Ling's work will be discussed at greater length in the next chapter.

[loyalty] questions" ("You" 64). As I will point out, the question of claiming "American" status is certainly on the table for Ichiro, but the more crucial question that needs to be asked is whether such a claiming needs to take place for Ichiro in order to survive and realize equality in the future. On a related note, Gayle K. Fujita Sato investigates the possibility of "redemption [for Japanese Americans] in terms of cultural difference and multiple loyalties" mainly as a way to critique Ichiro's misogyny and spite for his mother (257). Certainly, Ichiro blames his mother's "Japan-loving" stance, but his venom appears alongside attempts to comprehend how nationhood and citizenship have usurped nativity and birth--and how his mother's loyalties are a response to racialization.[19] Shifting the ground from concerns over racial/cultural identity, I will explore the literal constructions of nation-bound selves within the novel; in the end, Ichiro's "quest" ends up being both in continuance and without end amid the "faintness" of a future promise in which all "citizens" have an obligation to confront sovereignty with justice.

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[19] Sato and Apollo Amoko both link up Ichiro's quest for self-identity and inclusion to the death and/or denial of his mother. For example, Sato claims that Okada can only affirm "Japanese American" identity "through a character who rejects everything 'Japanese'"--meaning Ichiro's mother (239). What's at stake for Ichiro, as I will demonstrate, is whether the questions surrounding the nativity of immigrants and second generation inclusion mean anything when he's confronted by the "family" created through citizenship. When Amoko presses for an understanding of the mother's death as "structurally and thematically necessary for the success of Ichiro's will to American nationhood," he bypasses how Ichiro's "will," in the end, is canceled out by the constructions and architecture of the state--effectively neutralizing any attempt he can make at "claiming" America (43).

The language of structure pervades No-No Boy, marking both the strictures of the self and the imposing edifice of an America that is capable of internment. When Ichiro meets up with Eto, an old friend, upon his return to Seattle, Ichiro feels the "walls" that "crush" him and his "unspoken words" (2); Eto, a veteran, spits on Ichiro after finding out he was a no-no boy, and Ichiro's inability to explain precisely why he became a no-no boy--in the face of the pressure to identify with the state while in a concentration camp--becomes the prison that he attempts to escape over the course of the novel. One possible explanation for the crushing walls is that the traditional structure of the family has eventually been replaced by the "emptiness" of American citizenship; Ichiro speaks to his mother in the following internal monologue:

> Now that I know the truth when it is too late and the half of me which was you is no longer there, I am only half of me and the half that remains is American by law because the government was wise and strong enough to know why it was that I could not fight for America and did not strip me of my birthright. But it is not enough to be American only in the eyes of the law and it is not enough to be only half an American and know that it is an empty half. I am not your son and I am not Japanese, and I am not American. (16)

The "empty" half of Ichiro corresponds to the inheritance

from his mother, yet this half will forever be missing in America. At the same time, the legitimate half consists of the citizen produced by "birthright"--a citizen by birth and accident who must remain second-class and is disciplined when attempting to assert equal status. In turn, the half that is American is also "empty," marking the place of Ichiro as the non-citizen, present and accounted for but still actively enmeshed in racial hierarchy due to suspicion of disloyalty. Jacqueline Stevens points out that the "nation" is always a "familial nation" that establishes "kinship rules for particular political societies" (108); the "juridical family form" that Ichiro is excluded from "regulates a naturalized discourse of nationality, one that renders this form of being to be inherited from one's parents" (134). Ichiro's mother's political investments--and the "fact" of being Japanese American--automatically removes her from this chain of inheritance, and Ichiro is left to inhabit a space without family, without nation, but with a state-based racial identity in a "prison of forever" (Okada 40).

This isn't to say that there aren't options for Ichiro; these options, however, all rely upon a building/construction of a new America which remains exclusive, exceptionalist, and unable to accommodate dissent and racial "difference." First, there is the "time" that will pass, killing off the older Issei and reducing the philosophical differences between the veteran Nisei and the no-no boys (Okada 52). But just when Ichiro "mercifully stacked the blocks of home into the

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pattern of an America which would someday hold an unquestioned place for him" in this formulation of time passing, he rejects this simple solution and the "castle" of a future, harmonious America tumbles because of the "darkness of his soul"--or the pessimism surrounding the creation of an America without loyalties (Okada 52). Then, Ichiro visits his old university to see Professor Brown, a former engineering teacher. Ichiro imagines the "slide rule" from his undergraduate days that would have both allowed him to calculate the "right decision" and rid himself of the "bitterness" of having to prove his loyalty (53). The absent "finely calculated white sword," able to produce and build allegiance, doesn't help Ichiro in his meeting with Dr. Brown, who assumes Ichiro's valor for serving in the U.S. Army--much to Ichiro's embarrassment (53). Brown's office becomes a "revolving door" in a building that "swallows" up people, "seeing without meeting, talking without hearing, smiling without feeling" in a "world of students and slide rules" (57). More importantly, Brown's office is "cut off from the rest of the world by the narrow stairs which one would not think to climb" (57). "Brown is still Brown": the unchanging promise of continuing to "build" America for Ichiro is marked by limited access and the "swallowing" mechanism of patriotism (57). The "narrowness" of the line to be walked for a greater inclusion--answering "yes-yes"--consumes young Japanese Americans; the institutions able to ask such questions reside up the "stairs," effectively

masking their sovereign power to regulate the emergence of, in this case, intellectuals who may help build the nation. Resistance is never calculated in the process of professing loyalty, and the university's "garden in the forsaken land" feels "empty and quietly sad and hungry" (57). There is no "building" of Japanese American "identity" for Ichiro, no possibility of constructing a "correct" answer to the loyalty questionnaire. Instead, the pedagogical function of the university--which stands in for the nation--gives no tangible answer for Ichiro.

Yet Ichiro finds hope in Portland when he interviews for and is offered a position at an engineering firm; the renewed promise of rebuilding his life spurs Ichiro on, only to be lost in his prospective employer's unvanquished faith in America. Ichiro meets Mr. Carrick, who confesses that he "used to have some very good Japanese friends" before internment, an event which he describes as a "big mistake" (Okada 149, 150). Carrick then declares that despite this "big black mark in the annals of American history," the country can "still be the best damn nation in the world" (150). Immediately following this confession, Ichiro is offered the position without having to interview, and he notices that Carrick is trying to "atone for the error of a big country which hadn't been quite big enough" (151). Seemingly an acceptance without qualification, Ichiro distrusts this white favoritism which is also racial pity. Instead, he admits to himself that the job truly belongs to

"another Japanese who was equally as American as this man" and eventually refuses it (151). Much like the snowplow he's building (despite the professed lack of snow in Portland), Carrick tries to clear a pathway that leads toward the promise of an inclusive America but away from (and blind to) the permanent exceptional status that Ichiro and Japanese America must face.

Finally, Ichiro points out the heart of the problem: something has spoiled America. He describes this "miserable little world" as the "same big shiny apple with streaks of rotten brown in it. Not rotten in the center where it counts, but rotten in spots underneath the skin and a good, sharp knife can still do a lot of good" (232). Even though he qualifies this observation by arguing that his choice to become a no-no boy was a "serious error," it is evident that the rottenness of two-tiered citizenship has marred the potential whole-ness of the United States despite his self-effacement (232). Instead of near the surface problems dealing with loyalty--the brown streaks--which he dismisses in the scene with Carrick, Ichiro's observation that the center still holds "goodness" could be read two ways: either as a yearning for America's untainted wholeness before internment or as a rebuke of the white legal privilege that stains all articulations of America. Given the strong suspicion and dismissal Ichiro exhibits throughout the novel, I contend that Ichiro attempts to invoke the "core" values of America that reside within the larger structure; much like

Carlos Bulosan's "heart" that constitutes the potential of America amid racial violence, Ichiro's core reflects the possibility that there will be "a lot of goodness" which is "not expected" in the untainted seeds which represent the possibility of freedom (233).[20] This goodness, nevertheless, is "only a thread, but how much it seems in a life where there might have been nothing" (233). And this is where the slight hint or "insinuation of promise" resides: in a social world that continues, incessantly, "to take shape in the mind and in heart" (251). Ichiro comes to this conclusion while "in the darkness of the alley of the community that was a tiny bit of America," and his vantage point in the space between and apart from "loyal" Japanese Americans allows him to view the shapelessness of a future America--when the "hint" of a promise of equality is enough to sustain one's faith in a state of emergency without racial exception(alism)s. In terms of race, the "camp" of being Japanese American is "born out of the state of exception and martial law," where the conditions of possibility for inclusion are incessantly qualified by what it "included by virtue of its very exclusion" (Agamben 38, 40). At this limit of American law, Okada suggests that without a redefinition of sovereignty, the exception that precludes any "promise"

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[20] Dorothy Ritsuko McDonald interprets the final pages of No-No Boy as Ichiro "thinking of the goodness he had found in an imperfect world" (26). Without a definition of "goodness" or "imperfect," it is difficult to decipher McDonald's larger argument concerning Ichiro's final "emancipation" from the questions of loyalty and putative patriotism that plague him over the course of the novel.

will burrow its way into any and all social formations. In an alley, between the "camp" structures/buildings where one either determines racial hierarchy by being "outside" of it in an unquestioned position of authority or attempts to profess loyalty to the state in a "new and stable spatial arrangement" born out of the state of racial exception, Ichiro finds the epistemological back door that can effectively question sovereignty. While not providing "solutions," what Japanese American literature can "do" for us is travel to the very seeds that generate the racial state and propose, however obliquely, to cut off the growth(s) of white supremacy which provide its very foundations.

Chapter 3: Producing Asian America

> To resist means to seek to enter a world free of what is being resisted. That world does not exist; it is one's act of resisting that brings it into existence--one's act of seeking to enter it, and of entering it with others.
>
> --Steve Martinot[1]

> He'd made a move when he should be upsetting the chessboard.
>
> -Maxine Hong Kingston[2]

Evelyn Hu-DeHart notes that despite the "fits and starts" from the late 1960s onward, ethnic studies programs are "definitely here to stay" because they have been "increasingly institutionalized" (Hu-DeHart 696). And though she distances herself from the idea that institutional "trade-offs" are inherently necessary for university-wide "legitimacy," Hu-DeHart's contention that Asian American Studies (and ethnic studies) programs and departments "were insurgent programs with a subversive agenda from the outset" belies a central tension present from the early rumblings of the Asian American Studies movement: the oftentimes antagonistic relationship between trenchant critiques of the American racial order and the pedagogical function/mission of the university (Hu-DeHart 700, 702; Wei 138). Likewise, William Wei's The Asian American Movement tells the story of the growth of Asian American Studies while emphasizing the

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[1] Martinot, Steve. Introduction. The Problems of Resistance: Studies in Alternative Political Cultures. Ed. Steve Martinot and Joy James. Amherst, NY: Humanity Books, 2001. 9.

[2] Kingston, Maxine Hong. Tripmaster Monkey: His Fake Book. 1987. New York: Vintage: 1990. 107.

need for "clear lines of authority" within the movement/departments so that "academic legitimacy" could be realized (Wei 146, 147). Over the course of Wei's narrative, we witness, among other things, the takeover of the University of California-Berkeley's Asian American Studies program--a "coup" which many "considered . . . illegal"--by a group of academics seeking to "regularize the decision-making process" and "educate" the university on why Asian American studies was important for the school (147). Of course, this coup also banished the "insurgent" and "subversive" elements involved in the program's administration (the Wei Min She and I Wor Kuen, two anti-imperialist organizations) because they promoted an "anarchic system in which decisions . . . were made in meetings attended by fifty to a hundred people," making "administrative paralysis inevitable" (146). Which is to say: Asian American Studies can only survive, in the present, as an streamlined institutional structure which must exclude the more antagonistic elements of action/thought within the racialized community in order to "improve their [Asian American Studies programs'] chances of approval" (147).

Certainly, the Berkeley situation is a small example of how "loss," created by management decisions which determine who may and may not participate, constitutes the institutionalization of Asian American Studies. In a related vein, the Asian American subject is also characterized by a racialized loss or lack: of citizenship rights, legal

protections, economic opportunity, and the "self." By looking at the compromises demanded by the forces of institutionalization with the losses which make up the subject (via emplacement in a hierarchy), we can more readily see how the limitations imposed by institutional "inclusion" relate to the racial foundations of the state: Asian American Studies is obligated (and relegated) to work within the very racial system that produces inequality. At the same time, Asian American Studies' projects of recovery and identity rely upon this inequality in order to produce the subjects to be studied. The primary purpose of this chapter is to examine how Asian American Studies can most effectively inhabit this space of negation and duplicity, and how it may possibly develop the analytical means to challenge and dismantle the conditions which produce subjection. Far from claiming a self-generating "agency" in this battle, the reassessment of current thought and methods in Asian American must take center-stage[3]; with this in mind, we can "question foundations" in order to "think a freedom" that can "posit and define" freedom rather than inhabiting a space where

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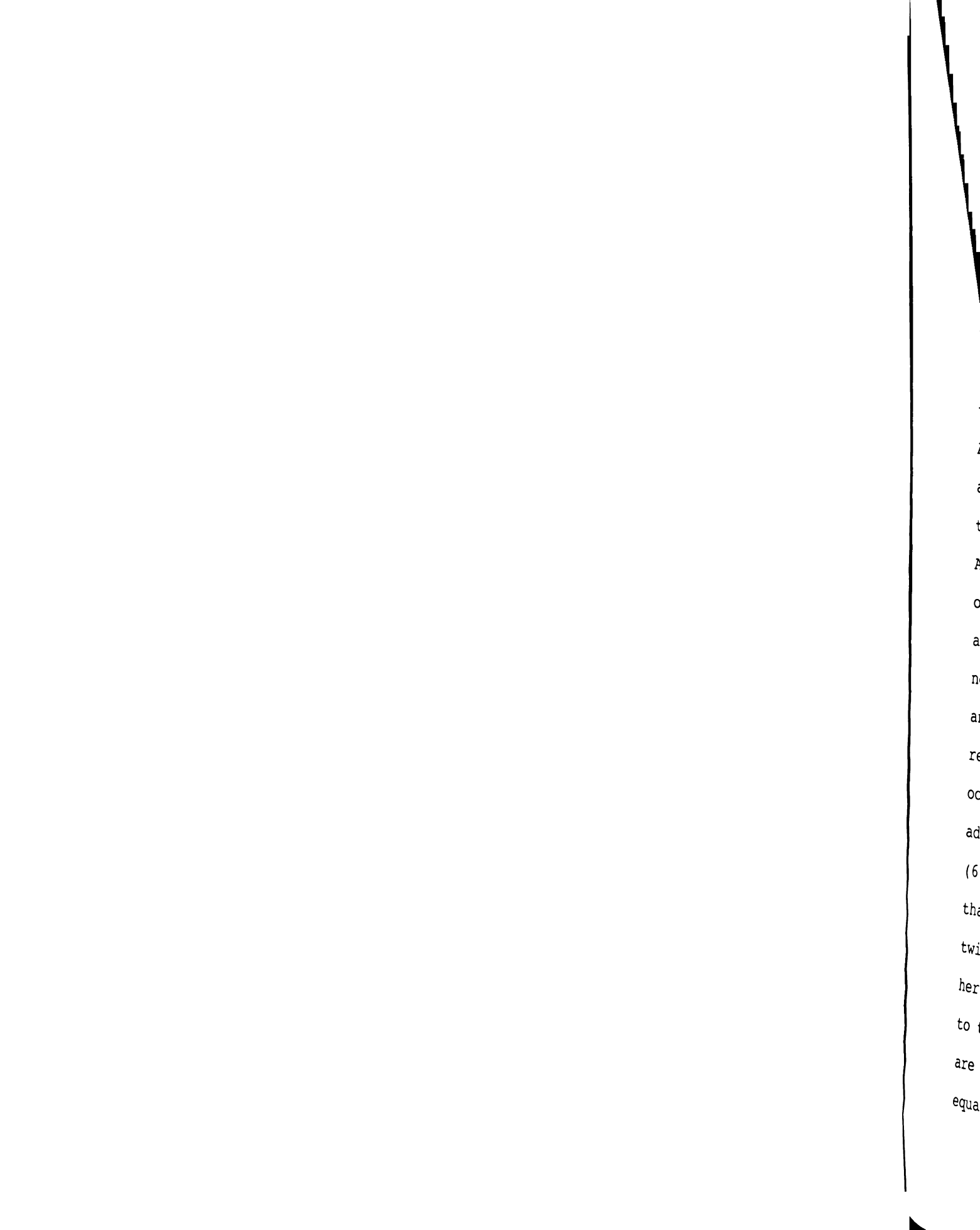
[3] As opposed to John M. Liu's characterization of Asian American Studies and Ethnic Studies as fields which aim to "establish a more equitable social order" by "remold[ing] racial differences into an affirmation of life rather than being a stamp of oppression," I will analyze why Asian Americanist works tend to reclaim subjection to generate equality (Liu 281). My aim is similar to Leslie Bow's call to examine and understand the "very structure of allegiance" (Bow 15); Asian American Studies' involvement in "merely romanticiz[ing] individual agency" has, in part, determined the work of the discipline, resulting in an integrationist stance which redeploys the structure of racial domination despite the aim of "creating new social realities" (Liu 282).



racializations are loosened and concessions granted (Nancy, Experience 3). Other-wise, we remain within the realm of subjection and subjecthood which is, as will be argued, a closed and self-generating system.

As noted in the introduction, agency in its most transformative posture enacts a purpose unintended and unanticipated by power despite power's ability to bring the subject into being (Butler 15). Often, though, agency is thought to be embodied in the "pure sovereign subject" as Ann Anlin Cheng points out. In The Melancholy of Race, Cheng attempts to use the "model of melancholic incorporation" as the "seed for revising political thinking" within Asian American Studies (xi); by pointing out that the "vocabulary of grievance (and its implied logics of comparability between and compensation among racial groups), in part, "sustains the notion of 'one nation'," Cheng also exposes the difficulties and dangers of both filing a racial grievance and demanding recompense or reparations: the nation's racial "healing" occurs at the moment when the "solution" is found and addressed, as was seen with Japanese American reparations (6). Furthermore, this economy of racial solutions assumes that the racialized subject appears or comes into being twice: when something is done to remind the subject of her/his subjection and when a grievance is articulated; prior to the event which re-establishes racial subordination, we are all formally equal and, after compensation, we will be equal--and the same--again. Of course, this process of

securing the racial organization of society by merely assuming its aberrational nature--that it occurs infrequently enough and only in documented events that can be rectified--ignores the racial structuring of the social world. In this chapter, I will address the endurance of "subjection" and its complement, the "subject," in relation to the contemporary concerns of Asian American Studies in order to locate the methodological and epistemological stopping-points that further entrench and reiterate racial domination; these appear over the course of deliberations concerning Asian American psychology, historiography, South Asian American challenges to Asian American canonical knowledges, and the "queer" nature of the Asian American diaspora. Further, I will examine various ways of thinking through subjection and, over the course of the chapter, offer what I think are fruitful ways to pursue Asian American Studies in terms of future approaches--ways that guard against the seductive impulses of counterhegemonic moments while developing techniques that effectively challenge power.

One of these philosophical stopping-points occurs in Cheng's work when she attempts to rethink "'agency' in relation to forms of racial grief" (15). Cheng defines the melancholy that produces this grief in two ways. First, "[d]ominant white identity in America operates melancholically" because the racial other must be distanced from "official American ideals"(11); hence, the constitutive racial exclusions which enable white (and American) identity

to emerge must also be denied in a "racist" or "white liberal" way so that the nation can "'go on'"--and the "ideal" of America can be realized (11). Alternately, racialized identity is melancholic as well, resulting from the "injury" and suffering of the "loss" of equal social and political status (14). From this, Cheng calls for a new "vocabulary" to discuss Asian American subjection that goes "beyond the immediate demands of advocacy" and gets to the heart of the American racial problem: the "future of social transformation" lies in our ability to be "open" to the "passions" that the "grief" of racial violence and exclusion "bequeaths" (29). This can be accomplished by situating "every subjective being as *historical* beings" within a "*context*" that "teaches us to be attentive to . . . the hauntedness of history"--ostensibly, to "reenvision a politics attuned to the reality of grief in all its material and immaterial evidence" (28, 29, emphasis in original). Cheng's formulation leaves Asian America in a mode of recovery--recovering the emotive content of a wounded identity--whereby if we "listen" we'll be able to see how the "living" are "still speaking" about the melancholic origins of their subjecthood (29). Perhaps at its furthest extent, this strategy could claim mistreatment and explain how this mistreatment came into being--through historical context--but the future promise(s) of the formulation is murky, particularly in terms imagining a possible end to subjection and subjecthood. If melancholia is an "entangled relationship

with loss" and a "legislation of grief," it is difficult to see how a new form of regulation will assist in developing liberatory politics and modes of thinking (8).

Melancholia imprisons the subject and the two alternative modalities for dealing with loss (mourning and mania) assume, respectively, a transcendent subjective power to overcome loss or a perpetual entanglement with melancholia; melancholia, evidently, is a closed system. Judith Butler, in The Psychic Life of Power, explains how, in melancholia, the subject "incorporates" the lost person/thing/object being mourned in order to "*preserve* the object as part of the ego and, hence, to avert the loss as a complete loss" (134, emphasis in original). Mourning, according to Freud, ends with a coming to terms with the loss, and recovery allows the subject to be "free and uninhibited again" (Freud 245); accepting Cheng's premise that racialized subjectivity is constituted by loss and, therefore, unfree in its very articulation, mourning solely involves a subjectivity which deludes itself, assuming an ability to exceed the bounds of race without addressing the conditions of oppression. Alternately, mania serves as a "temporary suspension" of melancholy according to Butler, but the "tyrant" of the "attachment to the lost object . . . remains ensconced" in the psyche (191-2). Freud confirms this, noting how "the manic subject plainly demonstrates his liberation from the object which was the cause of his suffering, by seeking like a ravenously hungry man for new

object-cathexes" (Freud 255). This newfound liberation of the subject, while temporary, indicates that mania allows the subject to "throw off at a single blow some oppressive compulsion, some false position which he has long had to keep up" and show an "increased readiness for all kinds of action" (254).

This "action"--the self's ability to throw off the yoke of supposed "loss"--is described by Freud as a "nuisance" since it will inevitably lead back to melancholia--whose origins are, in part, a "mental constellation of revolt" (Freud 248). The intimate relationship between mania and melancholia and the inevitability of the subject slipping back into a melancholic state demonstrates how mania's "revolt" is quelled by overwhelming demands to demonstrate "humility and submissiveness," which "befit[s] such worthless people" for Freud (248). The only possible way out of the structure of melancholia/mania is a revolt that can be sustained as a revolt (instead of a iterative celebratory reaction) to undo the "loss" of equality which creates Asian American subjecthood. And this would fall in line with Butler's formulation of "agency" as enabled but not constrained by power or "teleological necessity" (Butler 15).

The subject is an "identificatory unity," Jean-Luc Nancy maintains, which produces a "subjecthood" where a "*one* raises its unicity to the power of unity" (Sense 104, emphasis in original). The unification of marginalized subjects on the grounds of melancholic sameness, then, relies upon the

recognition of unity through a (suffering) identification; while this may be effective in a strategic manner--mobilizing a marginalized group, for example--Chen's desire to "hear" the voices of grief only threatens a unity of suffering out of which a "revolt" may take place. Put another way, Chen's strategy calls for a new mode of describing, recording, and annotating power's effects, leaving us with no new politics which can address the central problem of the subject being a "modality of power that turns on itself; the subject is the effect of power in recoil" (Butler 6). Instead of relying on the "phatic function" of language and representation to communicate disabling emotive conditions, Asian American Studies must consider "another politics rather than those of a 'private' therapy in the interior of an incurable 'public' sickness of civilization" (Nancy, Sense 117). Truly, delivering "freedom" from the realm of individual or community possession--which is the temporary mania which will end up slipping into melancholia *ad infinitum*--means that Asian America must "*hold fast* to the *coming* of what is coming" so as to avoid those organizational principles which calcify and consolidate subjecthood in the face of a hostile world (Experience 7; Sense 109, emphasis in original).

As a result, this chapter analyzes those "ideological forces" from within Asian American Studies that attempt to "enable" the Asian American subject to escape subjection and oppression (Chow, Protestant 32). In the end, concerns about the "voice" of agency for Asian Americans prove to be

arguments about how to voice Asian American concerns in an academic forum; rather than fall prey to a strain of multiculturalist thought which enables an agency-in-difference by determining the value of different sub-ethnic groups, Asian American Studies must become passionate about its aims for justice.[4] This justice, however, should not settle for the constitution of a "boundary" of ethnic identity which struggles for rights and the ability to articulate political aims/passions (Nancy, Inoperative 32); because the residual effects of racialized subjection within Asian American Studies serve to reinstate the bound(arie)s of ethnic particularisms, the "triumph" of the "specular recognition" of racial and cultural identities--which relies upon an "origin of identity"--needs to be jettisoned (34, 33). In this way, the demands of and for inclusion will rest

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[4] The "indifference" of agency-in-difference is clearly articulated by Charles Taylor's formulation of multiculturalist "consensus":

> I would like to maintain that there is something valid in this presumption, but that the presumption is by no means unproblematic, and involves something like an act of faith. As a presumption, the claim is that all human cultures that have animated whole societies over some considerable stretch of time have something important to say to all human beings. (Taylor and Gutman 67).

Taylor's "act of faith" is undergirded by a conditional inclusion; only those "cultures" which have existed over time--rather than in and through the time of exclusion--will be able to be recognized as legitimate entities in multiculturalist discussions. South Asian American Studies, for example, grounds its political strategies in differences which are racially/culturally embodied, (biologically) determining the grounds of resistance; as such, the epistemological tactics of the sub-field meant to realize inclusion are tailored to meet Taylor's requirements by stressing the sub-ethnic group's lineage, particularity, and history. Because of this, the aim of forming a power bloc supersedes any goal to share power in an equal manner--stressing the importance of the racialized group's contributions rather than the exclusion which gives life to racialized identity.

on the grounds of a community whose limit will be a passion opposed to "mastery," or the securing of status and rank within a perpetual racial order (34). The enterprise of the field will inhabit the space of committed critique, where the "loss" of freedom will serve to rethink all ordering(s). This, indeed, will allow the discipline to extricate itself from the thought of its loss--of worth, of identity, of agency--in order to think of the "unworking of works" which examine how inequality is fortified (39). My aim in this chapter is to examine various contemporary strategies which aim to resist racial domination by both calling into question the concept of the "subject" in different disciplines and attempting to shift the subject of Asian American Studies to more fertile ground. Assuming that the only effective resistance is the one able to undo power in order to enter a world free of the racialisms being resisted, the end point of this chapter serves as an invitation to think with every Other in mind and to think together for a common solution to racial subjection. The manic revolt of the racialized subject, then, can aspire to a restlessness of identity, a discomfort that refuses to recoup subjective loss so that a future freedom may be thought.

As a prelude to my discussion of South Asian American responses to Asian American Studies and current Asian Americanist theoretical works, I will briefly examine Asian American psychological studies and political organizing. As a form of praxis--dealing with "real world" subjects in terms

of identity issues--psychology redefines Asian American subjectivity in order to alleviate suffering; in the end, however, these redefinitions turn out to be recombinations of racialist discourses which can only respond to power by citing it (and confirm its pervasiveness).[5] In The Mental Health of Asian Americans, Stanley Sue and James K Morishima argue that there are three "types" of Asian Americans: traditionalists, marginals, and Asian Americans. The first two types, marked by either strong or less severe ties to "home culture," are challenged by the "Asian American" type, which is an "integrative personality" (94, 95). Noting how the "Asian American" type possesses "adaptive strategies," Sue and Morishima advocate for a "bicultural interaction approach" to comprehend the racial subject since this methodology doesn't rely solely upon "cultural determinism" to explain Asian American identity--which "traditionalist" and "marginal" types depend on for their formulation and articulation (102); "bicultural" assumes two things: that there are strict divisions between cultural groups within a society/structure and that the unnamed structure produces racial traits in different groups. For the authors, there are certainly "true" (racial) group "traits" and because the "false" traits associated with stereotypes are "not accurate," we can see where Sue and Morishima are headed: the

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[5] This focus on psychology and political organizing is far from comprehensive. As a result, the purpose of this section is to expose a problematic by noting how these discussions--concerned primarily with serving the "community" of Asian Americans via mental health care and political representation--rely upon subjection rather than address it.

Asian American *must signify* something either divorced from or exceeding the processes of "putative" racialization (116); Asian Americans contain a racial group core before being called into being as Asian American. Redeploying the racialist basis of "marginality" discussed in the first chapter, the authors only understand race as appearing after "cultures" establish themselves and their traits are discovered/recorded. This, at least in the case of Stanley Sue, can be attributed to the desire to realize the "ideology" of "pluralism," which "supports the rights of groups of things to be different within a common set" (Sue, Moore, Iscoe, and Nagata 23). Merely protecting against the potential for genocide--groups of "things" are inherently different from other groups which means that the "rights" supported in the theory solely consist of the right to exist "differently"--Sue's "view of mental health" only asks for personal "option[s]" or "choice" within a pluralistic society (23). These options, which should be "consistent with their [Asian Americans'] cultural backgrounds," are the most clear demarcations of the subjection within psychological subjecthood: with "choice," the biological inheritance of Asian American-ness can be psychically negotiated without purportedly risking the consequences of racial violence or exclusion. "Human beings," Nikolas Rose writes in his analysis of the "psy-" disciplines:

> must interpret their past, and dream their future, as outcomes of personal choices made or choices

> still to make yet within a narrow range of possibilities whose restrictions are hard to discern because they form the horizon of what is thinkable. (Rose 17)

Coupled together with Cheng's dismissal of the "pure sovereign subject," Rose allows us to see how the cobbled-together nature of Asian American psychological subjectivity, especially in terms of its reliance upon the "protection" of "pluralism," represents a deflection in theorizing the subject. Psychology as such produces free individuals who, when faced with the issue of ethnic/racial "choice," must follow what is consistent with their "cultural background" in order to "enact their freedom appropriately" (29). If anything, Sue's work with other psychologists should remind us that describing Asian American subjects constitutes a limit of our present (social scientific) thinking; the resulting descriptions already involve a narrowing of the subject (and his/her aspirations) in order to theorize a more equal existence within domination.

This social scientific knowledge carries over to mainstream Asian American political organizing. Perhaps the most influential Asian American political organization besides the JACL at the moment, the Committee of 100 (C-100), a Chinese American non-partisan political organization established in 1990, offers "concerned Chinese Americans" the resources necessary to "promote the full participation of Chinese Americans in all areas of American society"

("Domestic"). And the promise of the organization is clear: political representation for a numerically smaller minority must go to the centers of political power in order to preserve the "health" of Asian America. Seeking to be the "bridge between the cultures and systems of Asian and America," this group of "leaders in their field" promises to provide an "in-depth understanding of both cultures" in order to "discuss with leaders in government, education, and the business community" issues like civil rights, immigration, and the "glass ceiling" ("History"; "Domestic"). The "bridge"/translator logic--Asian American racial subjects can understand both their "homelands" and their "adopted" country--of the group's philosophy argues for the "marginality" hypothesis (like Stonequist and Sue). As a result, the C-100 mobilizes racial/ethnic identity to produce inclusion and, indeed, to insinuate the racial other into the political system via the promise of "insider" knowledge. Given the "invitation"-only access to organization membership and the non-partisan stance the organization takes, it is clear that the C-100 aims to provide exclusive access to business and government insiders while serving as ethnic entrepreneurs representing Chinese American interests ("Structure").

While this entrepreneurial stance isn't much different than, for example, the mission of a local Chamber of Commerce, the C-100 also released a "benchmark" study entitled "American Attitudes Toward Chinese Americans and

Asian Americans: A Committee of 100 Survey" in 2001. The survey attempts to gauge and "change misperceptions" of Asian Americans in contemporary American society ("American" 2). Noting the "surprising findings" of the survey--mainly that a fourth of Americans "hold 'strong negative attitudes' towards Chinese Americans"--the C-100's aim is to eventually produce a greater unity within America for a "fuller integration" of Chinese/Asian Americans "into a more harmonious American life" (2). Yet a strange moment occurs in the survey when the C-100 attempts to argue how anti-Chinese American sentiments are a "subset of broader, anti-Asian prejudice" involving multiple Asian ethnic groups, but that the effects of this anti-Asian sentiment need "to be investigated separately" (8). It is unintelligible how the establishment of primarily white American attitudes toward, for example, Filipino Americans will help to create a more "harmonious" life apart from exposing exclusionary/"wrong-headed" sentiments, but the logic of the C-100 survey is starkly clear: in order to serve as the "bridge" between Asia and America, one must prove one's unique difference and subjection to entrenched American power. In other terms, the C-100 survey counters the "very flattering portrait" of the model minority myth by quantifying the level or racial suffering still experienced by Asian America in order to bolster its position as the best possible "bridge" to Asian American representation (10). While helpful in confirming for white America that anti-Asian sentiment still exists, the elitist, members-only logic of

the organization also authorizes the suspension of any critique of racial structures within America in favor of introducing a "misunderstood" identity in need of full admission into society (and the business world).

Simply introducing the tension of an "identity" constrained by outside forces, however, will not lead Asian American Studies to another way of thinking about the possibilities of the subject. Rey Chow argues for a cessation of any further theories of ethnic or racial identity intended to produce liberation since,

> contemporary articulations of ethnicity . . . are already firmly inscribed within the economic and ideological workings of capitalism, replete with their mechanisms of callings, opportunities, and rewards. In this context, *to be ethnic is to protest*--but perhaps less for actual emancipation of any kind than for the benefits of worldwide visibility, currency, and circulation. (Protestant 48, emphasis in original)

To be ethnic is to work/protest for inclusion within a racial structure--based on the (market) value of one's ethnic identity. Chow continues, asserting that the time has come to end any speculation about any "ideological forces . . . that would enable the individual representative of an ethnic minority to move beyond" or think they could move beyond the "macro sociological structures that have already mapped out" our existences (32).

"To Be a Solution": South Asian America

While mounting a serious challenge to the historically exclusionary foundations of Asian American Studies' focus on East Asian ethnic groups, South Asian American academicians also present their subject (the subjection of South Asian Americans under an East/Southeast Asian American paradigm) on the treacherous terrain of (hyphenated) American identity formation, transnational migration, and other particularisms like caste-loyalty and religious affiliation. In a broad sense, there are two related lines of argumentation present in these challenges: one with a particularist/pluralist agenda and another which attempts force the realization of the "heterogeneity" of Asian America so that South Asian Americans will be included in the narrative via difference construed on "sub-ethnic" grounds; the "sub-ethnic," assuming a distance from traditional Asian Americanist concerns, also involves more "local" differences like an immigrant's state/province of origin. In his The Karma of Brown Folk, Vijay Prashad offers up what may be the central dynamic/problem facing both Asian American and South Asian American Studies: the advancement of "concrete identities" which can participate in a liberatory project (ix). Prashad suggests that "imputed universalism[s]" must be rejected for a greater understanding of how particular groups--class-based, racial, or gender-based, for example--can challenge oppression through various "forms of unity" (x). Yet in "harness[ing]" these identifications, it is unclear why

Prashad's "hope of a future" consists of "oppressed peoples . . . explor[ing] their own cultural resources toward the construction of a complex political will" (x). There is certainly a variant of "strategic essentialism" at work here, but without an undoing of Asian American "identity" as an ultimate goal--a moment where the strategy envisions an end to racialisms. Prashad's vagueness also runs the risk of maintaining a kernel of cultural/racial identity which relies upon racialization; the resources available to a group, born out of a racialized and postcolonial context, belong solely to the group, and unity is generated through a weeding-out or winnowing process which results in a political "will"/strategy to counter the structures of subjection.[6]

On the other, related side of the coin, Rajiv Shankar offers up a reformulation of Asian American Studies that is unabashed in its call for separate spheres of racial/cultural identity. Noting that South Asians have "offered to America (and the world) considerable wealth in terms of spirituality, peace, and civilization," Shankar suggests that the South Asian American "category" only needs to be "'admitted'" into Asian American Studies proper, thereby producing a field

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[6] Prashad's reformulation of W.E.B. DuBois' famous "How does it feel to be a problem?" from The Souls of Black Folk ends up being "How does it feel to be a solution?" (DuBois 1; Prashad viii). Over the course of the book, Prashad takes pains to demonstrate how both South Asian American immigrants and citizens can become a "weapon against black folk" by acceding to the demands of mainstream white society and capitalism (viii). As the inspiration for this section's subtitle, Prakash's reformulation marks the conflicted, inter- (and intra-) group rivalries which can either lead to a new "solution" (with its "multicultural" distillates) or towards the eradication of racial subordination.

where "under the *genus* Asian American we may have the *species* East/Southeast Asian American and South Asian American" (R. Shankar xi, xiii, emphasis in original). Notwithstanding the biologisms of the previous statement, the tone of Shankar's piece is one of resignation and non-engagement, where South Asian American Studies is both apart and alienated from the "prevailing American epic" but "unfolding its own unique drama to claim an equally special place in the standard American repertoire" xiii). While attuned to both the hedging of Prashad's strategic inclusion(s) and Shankar's desire for ethnic purity and state recognition, this section will address the problem of "unity" as it relates to South Asian America; as much concerned with "grounding" theory in "practice" as realizing the possibility of inclusion, South Asian Americanist critiques of both Asian American Studies and the racial state allow for conditional subjection in order to trade for effective subjectivities in the academic and political spheres; the central goal, then, is to make racial structures more hospitable and inclusive.

The political, social, and literary effectiveness of the South Asian American subject resides in the development of the "species" that partially constitutes (and completes) the "genus"; because the genus of "Asian American Studies" proves its incoherence by its historical neglect of South Asian Americans, the species must both confront and seek a "proper" place within the larger academic field. This strategy is marked by a multi-layered deployment of epistemological

strategies involving reformulating the definition of the "canonical" as well as Asian American "identity"; yet as we will see, the end-point will result in a kind of benign apartheid. Rajini Srikanth and Lavina Shankar contend that the "true test of legitimate inclusion . . . is the presence of South Asian American texts in the Asian American curriculum" (12). Because the authors never get around to addressing the overall purpose of Asian American Studies (save its role in disseminating texts to an academic public), this strategy strongly invests in the canonical by locating the standard for inclusion as a project of assimilation into the larger body for canonical recognition. To counter or temper this wholesale concession to Asian American Studies (in the form of demanding full recognition), Shankar and Srikanth also question the nature of Asian American identity because it "encompasses people of many different races, linguistic groups, religions, cultures, and nations" (1). Among this list of affiliations, perhaps the "nations" category is the most puzzling since it advances a notion of identity as a naturalized ontological bearing; in other words, the "nation" of a subject's origin is "of" the person or an internal possession that lives in and through the subject's existence. Because the authors are at pains to point out the constructed nature of Asian American identity as both a "census label" and "political and social consciousness," they redeploy identity as a (national) given in order to combat the problem of Asian American Studies'

"narrower" definition of its subject(s) through the concept of a "*felt* identity" (1, 2, emphasis in original). The genus can only benefit from allowing "'multiple layers of identity'" to be celebrated and recognized (7). The end result of this redistilling of subjectivity is that the "[in]coherent identity" of Asian America's "premise" is countered by "smaller and more compact platforms [which] must be used for making focused deliberations" (4). With the loss of a large amount of faith in the possibility of panethnic alliances for social and political change, Shankar and Srikanth suggest that South Asian America should rarely share a wider platform with Asian America since coherence can only be found within the ethnic group/species. Much like the desire to see South Asian American texts included on reading lists, this reinvestment in ethnic particularity--without a clear, transformative direction in mind for Asian American Studies--results in a logic of the multiple which stresses the incommensurability of political interests between the canonical and subaltern; affiliated with but not "of" Asian American Studies, South Asian American Studies protects an identarian integrity in order to produce a wider variety of subjects within Asian America.

This protectionism, however, is countered by Deepika Bahri and Mary Vasudeva in a qualified way. Arguing that the "use of 'South Asian' to make visible a political constituency is likely to lead to unproductive generalizations, suggesting a false homogeneity," Bahri and

Vasudeva claim that "South Asian" is an "aggregate category" where "various situations" or social positions, like caste-status, may prove to be "less or more relevant" depending on the political exigencies faced (15, 16). The authors avoid a wholesale jettisoning of the relation between Asian American and South Asian American interests, but the trajectory of their strategy depends on their notion of the "aggregate." Because the "false homogeneity" mentioned above also helps "identarian moves" in "demonizing the equally fictional dominant Other" alongside the creation of "minoritized Others," the aggregate category loses its ability to signify a sum total outright (with regards to Asian American Studies) (15); the possibilities for Asian Americanist theory and politics are chained to an obligation to portray the "dominant" in a fair manner. This obligation tends toward social management since Bahri and Vasudeva also call for an understanding of "South Asian" as "contingent and discursive" in nature (16); this discursive nature is compromised by a general strategy of "fairness." If, indeed, we must be fair to the dominant--say, white supremacy--then we must also be fair and well-meaning in our "meaningful discussion[s]" with the dominant (16). Since the terms and conditions of what is "meaningful" aren't fully established by Bahri and Vasudeva in this formulation, we are left with a situation where instead of radical social and philosophical change being possible, ethnic identities are calcified into their dominant/subordinate positions and power relationships--

guaranteeing that "discussions" will turn out to be appeals rather than demands. The aggregate that is Asian America, then, is a (more) benign separatism: a critical mass of units who conceive of the political (and white supremacy) as ending up in a possible "win-win" situation where inclusion--with racialized identities used as an entry point into negotiation--is the ultimate destination.

Developing the particular(ist) in hopes of realizing an "intellectual paradigmatic shift, and a new vision of Asian American studies scholarship and pedagogy," a group of seven South Asian Americanists produced a joint analysis of their field's relation to Asian American Studies in 2000 (Davé et. al. 67). Generally, the group's aim is to move away from an "inward-looking preoccupation with ethno-racial solidarity" within Asian American Studies towards an "active concern with other ethnic and racial groups in the American socio-political landscape" (71). Unique to all of the South Asian Americanist writings analyzed here, the desire to seek (and possibly develop) political and academic coalitions across racial and ethnic lines in order to strengthen the field promises to escape the pluralist spheres that marked previous attempts to resituate South Asian Americans in a broader academic discourse. Curiously, the writers double-back on this promise and revert to standard first-/second-generation narratives of South Asian American life to develop a sense of the kinds of projects a more inclusive Asian American Studies could undertake. For example, it is argued that first-

generation immigrants "from South Asia tend to closely cling to their parochial sub-ethnic identities (Tamil, Sikh, Bengali, Pakistani, Sri Lankan, Jain, and so forth)" while the second-generation "replicates and transforms these [identity] boundaries in the (re)creation of their own communities" (72, 73). Assuming the linear, developmental transmission of cultural/ethnic "traits" from one generation to the next, the authors' desire to determine the foundations of South Asian American racial identity bears a strange relation to the future of Asian American Studies, which must rely on a mythos of subsequent generations embodying the original's characteristics and "emanat[ing]" its qualities through racial inheritance (73). These sub-ethnic affiliations are equated with other "components of identity building," like religion, caste loyalties, and "linguistic diversity" (75); with the clash of "identity" and "history," along with the "collision of home and host country politics," now central research possibilities in the minds of South Asian Americanists, Davé and his co-writers deem this racialist logic "one of the most promising areas for future research" (73).

This is to say, according to the seven scholars, that the South Asian American "species" must create its own areas of future research in order to make itself "matter" for Asian American Studies in total, and the kinds of studies that the authors suggest, like "South Asian cab-driver-passenger relations" and "interethnic relationships such as South Asian

marriages with Latinos," will serve to broaden to scope of South Asian American Studies but never challenge the fundamental racial assumptions of the "genus" (95). As a result, analyses of the "lived experience of transnationalism," which help to develop critiques of the "nation state," will only serve to show how the "'local'"--those ethnic traits which emerge from different divisions within their national origins--mediates the construction of "community and nation" in order to establish a "sense of place and of location in grids of power" (78, 81). Race/ethnicity/local(ity) is a chain of equivalence here, and the attempt to create more localized, restricted identities which reside within the ethnic group and respond to "power" mark a theory of subjection through identity: to the idea/integrity of Asian American Studies as an "inclusive" umbrella term which will respect South Asian American differences.

Perhaps the strongest challenge to Asian American Studies comes from Lavina Shankar's "With Kaleidoscope Eyes: The Potential (Dangers) of Identarian Coalitions" which appears in the same text has the introduction co-written with Srikanth. Shankar's "kaleidoscopic and futuristic vision"--the "next stage of cultural politics"--develops the "strategic essentialism" strategy more fully than the previous texts (42, 25). "Spurious sociological solidity" must be refused in order to develop identarian coalitions via a "strategic re-memorying and un-memorying" which, rather

than serve as an inventory or roster of ethnic "consciousness," allows an oppressed group to go about "infusing identity with political charge" (25, 26). With the flexibility of contextually determining what "Asian American" means according to particular social, historical, and political moments, (South) Asian America, in theory, will be able to adapt their "historical differences" in a panethnic setting to effect change (25).

At the same time that this flexibility of identity allows for a greater freedom under the sign Asian American, however, Shankar stresses the "heterogeneity" of these "historical differences" among South Asians despite her stated goal of "forging a new collective memory" (27); similar to the problem introduced by the counterhegemonic in the Gramscian war of position, there is no stated endpoint proper for this general strategy of strategic essentialism, which makes Asian American Studies an eternal enterprise in need of guiding hands to shape the "forging" necessary to produce a collective. For example, Shankar states two "ultimate goal[s]": to "transcend the categories imposed by colonial and imperial hegemonies" and the process of "undoing categories designed to keep us in place" (41, 42). Explicit in both of these formulations is that the future resides in the reaction to the dominant order which produces Asian America. Likewise, the "undoing" or "transcending" prescribed brings South Asian America to a crisis point since "historical differences"--those differences produced by

colonial and imperial hegemonies that generate the material inequalities which demand identarian coalitions composed of historical differences--must be preserved for future identities. Circling around the problem of dis-abling power, Shankar's goal(s) of either surpassing or disfiguring dominant "categories"--two antithetical thoughts--end up in the same place: redeploying identities within a system of subjection after strategic essentialism ends. Beyond the "census label" that Shankar and Srikanth claim "Asian American" is, there is no sustained way to address the production of subjects by the racial state; rather, we are encouraged to examine only the imposition of identity in order to secure truer identities. Whatever the end result--ethnic "choice," benign separatism, multiple centers, etc.--Shankar's futuristic vision ends up in virtually the same place it began: as a subject, with identarian possessions, in a locatable sub-ethnic group. The genus and species both remain, but in a friendlier, coalitional sense. The "justice" in Shankar's formulation is the ability to react to the political strategically; in other critical areas, South Asian American Studies proves the rule of Asian American Studies (which establishes the need for coalitions by its past exclusions). The benefit of claiming South Asian American identity within Asian American Studies, without fundamentally altering the structure of the dominant, will never dislodge the privileging of subject(ion)s--as Prashad warns us.

Strategically opposed to the "framing" of the Asian American subject which results in, predictably, racial domination, Asian Americanist historians, theorists, and literary scholars have attempted to (re)describe and reinscribe the field in order to more accurately portray the forces and influences that shape and determine Asian American social and political possibilities. At the same time, any question of how to "frame" studies of Asian America--how to situate and describe such work--must take into account what feminist historian Joan Wallach Scott argues is essential for "new visions of history": "[M]aking . . . visible" is "not simply a matter of unearthing new facts" but also "advancing new interpretations which" provide "new readings of politics" and identity (3). Alongside this need to provide new ways of interpreting historical (and literary) materials, "asking where the identities come from, when they arise, and what ends they serve," Scott writes, will allow scholars to avoid the process by which "descriptive labels" become "fixed categories" (7). Before analyzing the development of contemporary Asian Americanist literary strategies, I will examine two historiographical works in order to demonstrate how the interpretive frames of "biculturalism" and "childhood" circumscribe the possibility of thinking otherwise from traditional understandings of the racial, cultural, and gendered Other, resulting in historical narratives of Asian American subjects who are bound into cultural fixity. The project of unearthing and recuperating Asian American

voices from the past, in the end, must guard against using these voices only to confirm established modes of comprehending subjectivity and identity.

Judy Yung's Unbound Feet: A Social History of Chinese Women in San Francisco begins with Yung claiming that her personal family history grounds her larger concerns with Chinese American history; as a result, she claims that this personal, experience-driven revelation will guide us to "insights into Chinese immigration patterns and the different experiences of Chinese women from those of men" (1). This eventually leads, as we will see, to Yung advocating for Chinese American women's "personal experiences" at the expense of also questioning how such experiences are produced by wider-ranging discourses of "foreignness" concerning the East/West divide. While the historical and legal circumstances and prohibitions that affected Chinese women were indeed stricter than those that applied to men during the Exclusion era, Yung alters her argument slightly, marking her desire to see Chinese American women as "active agents": "Taken together, these sources, I believe, provide an alternative and more accurate view of Chinese American women than has existed before, for they show definitively that these women were not passive victims but active agents in making their own history" (9). The "sources" that Yung refers to include oral histories, census data, and, interestingly, interviews from Robert E. Park's Survey of Race Relations. The implications of this are important, mainly because what's

at stake for Yung ("allowing women from the bottom up to tell their own history") partly relies upon the sources culled from the Chicago School which demands the racial other confess in order to verify and qualify their ability to "assimilate" (11). The uncritical, unnuanced use of such sources--and their implicit link to Park and his work on amalgamation--presents us with a context where Chinese American women's history and "agency" can only be reclaimed with a tip of the hat to the amalgamation-tinged narratives of the Chicago School.[7]

For example, Yung summarizes the situation of Chinese American women as a "culture dilemma" where a schism developed between their "desires and rights as individuals" and the "traditional gender role expectations of their parents" (107); this divide between East and West is instated and will remain for the remainder of the work. Beyond merely pointing out this general distinction, a more interesting issue emerges in relation to Yung's evaluative claims; she writes: "Whereas Alice [Sue Fun] was raised according to Chinese tradition, Florence Chinn Kwan faced fewer restrictions growing up in San Francisco because of the liberal middle-class background of her parents" (112). Two

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[7] Yung is not the only scholar to use these personal interviews produced by the Chicago School in this way. Ronald Takaki, for example, cites the interviews as evidence of authentic Asian American voices in his Strangers from a Different Shore. Likewise, Sucheng Chan, in her article which will be discussed shortly, uses the interviews as data. Given the highly mediated nature of such documents, it is fairly astounding that none of these scholars deals with or addresses the origin of the interviews or how they were framed by sociological concerns.

general problems emerge here: low- or working-class Chinese Americans cannot access the "liberal" leanings of the middle-class and the proximity to more lax--and presumably less patriarchal--modes of parenting also enables those middle-class Chinese Americans to brook the chasm between Chinese and American modes of gendered behavior. As such, the fact that women of the middle class are able to become "individuals" with their own "identities" marks a moment when the claiming of identity coincides with the familial and personal disavowal of an imaginary "Chinese" behavioral pattern or, as Park puts it, temperament; Chinese Americans, then, only have to choose not to be racial subjects.

The central tension of Unbound Feet is between the binaries that Yung deploys in order to make her historical actors "active agents': home/world, public/private, and "tradition"/freedom. Take, for example, the following:

> As young daughters, Chinese American girls had little choice but to give unquestioning obedience to their parents. However, as they became older and more exposed to a Western lifestyle and ideas of individuality and equality through public school, church, and popular culture, she began to resist the traditional beliefs of their immigrant parents, even to the extent of ridiculing their "old-fashioned ways." (115)

Yung employs a fairly straight-forward model of "biculturalism" to explain how Chinese American women in San

Francisco negotiated the boundaries between tradition and freedom, but because these boundaries are solely a result of the backward Chinese parents, a dynamic is set up where the family--because of the inability to come to terms with a "new" social world--serves as the authoritarian source of oppression instead of situating the parents and daughters within a social and political world rife with negotiation and compromise. Also, Yung lauds Jade Snow Wong's Fifth Chinese Daughter because Jade's character "escape[s]" from "Chinese tradition" through a bicultural identity that can, like her pottery, combine "classic Chinese and Western utilitarian motifs" (120). The "utilitarian motifs" need to be questioned at this particular moment; even though the goal of writing the hidden histories of Chinese American women is crucial for the Asian American Studies enterprise of examining how the histories of racial and gendered subjection coalesce at particular moments, Yung's narrative/causal frame allows her to create Chinese American female subjects marked by a dreary sameness which allows for the "freedom" of Americanization. Since we can date Yung's strategy back to the 1920s and the rise of Chicago Sociology, the "new interpretations" that Joan Scott calls for can never be realized: historical recuperation, in this case, represents recapitulation.

Sucheng Chan, in her essay "Race, Ethnic Culture, and Gender in the Construction of Identities among Second-Generation Chinese Americans, 1880s to 1930s," uses Chinese American autobiographies in an attempt to understand the

construction of "identity" in her subjects during the Exclusion era. In contrast to Yung's strategy of arguing for a transition from a particularist and racialized "culture" to a liberatory American (gendered) universalism, Chan attempts to locate Exclusion-era identities within a universalist psychological framework. Arguing that the selection of autobiographies she analyzes is "representative," Chan claims: "These documents preserved more than the unique voices of individuals; they likely captured the consciousness of sizable numbers of Chinese Americans during the historical period that these documents covered" (129). The "consciousness" of Chinese Americans, however, relies upon normative notions of childhood and development which Chan uses to reclaim the "agency" and "identity" of her subjects' ephemeral nature; this is accomplished by undergirding her analysis with Erik H. Erikson's theories of childhood development. Offering a curative narrative, Chan contends that

> Although Erikson's theories have not widely been applied to the study of ethnic identities because he paid little attention to the impact of culture on identity formation, a number of his insights, particularly those on the adolescent phase of human development, can help us better understand the evolution of Chinese American identities. (130)

Later, Chan uses Erikson's notion of "identity crisis" to analyze why second-generation Chinese Americans felt excluded

and targeted by their "Euro-American" peers (138). At all of these moments, Chan's analysis hits a wall by merely accepting the universal process of assimilation and inflecting it with an "ethnic" flavor; divorced from any exigent social pressures, Chinese American identities in literature/autobiographies only begin to make sense once a comprehensive psychological explanatory apparatus is mobilized and established instead of, as we will see, the interpretation of language and representation(s).

One moment which clearly exemplifies Chan's epistemological stop--an intellectual decision to accept, as a whole, particular disciplinary definitions of identity and culture--occurs in the middle of the essay when Victor Wong's autobiographical essay is discussed. Wong, a Chinese American who grew up in San Francisco in the 1930s, expresses frustration at his failure to understand Chinese American culture: "The thing that is so puzzling is not to know what Chinese culture *is*. I mean, I'm taught by my parents what it means to be Chinese, and then I watch their actions, and there's so much discrepancy" (Chan, "Race" 149, emphasis in original). Chan interprets this passage as a failure on the Chinese parents' part; Chinese immigrant parents "tried their best to pass on to their children the *ideals* they had learned from their own childhoods in China, [but] they did not always follow those guiding principles after they arrived in the United States" (149, emphasis in original). Apart from Chan's tight interpretive frame--where Chinese culture is something

that must be aspired to and worked for--Wong's statement presents us with an opportunity to inquire about an inconsistency or rupture within the concept of Chinese culture in the first place; eliding Wong's "is" and subsequent "to be," Chan assumes a content and inventory of Chinese culture--constituted by "ideals"--without addressing, respectively, the foundational and performative aspects and definitions of Chinese culture that Wong wishes his parents would exemplify. As a result, the historical question of Asian American subjectivity isn't really a question, but rather an investigation that anchors subjectivity to one (universalist) model of understanding racialized identity without entertaining the possibility of alternatives or, frankly, providing an interpretation of such an identity. Examining the constitution of the subject as an "active agent," then, prevents a questioning of how subjects are manufactured and how subjection may eventually end.

The frame or borders of Asian America loosen in contemporary literary criticism, which actively approaches identity and subjection as first-order concerns that affect how Asian American literary and cultural studies can proceed.[8]

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[8] In the following section, I will analyze a number of works that both challenge the reading practices associated with Asian American literary criticism in order to rethink our approaches to understanding the nature of and prospects for Asian American subjection and identity. By tracing the emergence of a literary criticism which admits alternative reading practices and wider, more "global" contexts into their analyses--especially in light of this chapter's preoccupation with subjection and subjectivity--we are able to view how the recurring pressure points of race and racial subjection produce works which attempt to revise the very foundations of Asian American Studies.

For example, Patricia Chu maintains that the "multiple marginalization" that Asian American women writers face in writing a "literature defining American identity" invariably results in a "more complex range of narrative strategies than their brothers require" (Chu 5). A recurring dilemma in these literary studies, however, is how to surmount the obstacle of a nation-bound identity given the diasporic history of Asian America. Chu responds by reconsolidating the national, assimilative narrative by arguing, "To be Asian *American*, one claims Americanness but reshapes conventional narratives of American subject formation" (6, emphasis in original). As a result, subjectivity may only be reshaped or challenged by ethnic particularity but never transformed due to a reliance upon minimally "proving" Americanness. This process of proof-through-difference generates "literature that is both American and transformative of established, implicitly Anglo-American norms," intimating that Asian American literature serves as a salvage project which (re)claims and "transforms" the racial organization of society so as to introduce more "ethnic" and ethical norms. The end result of obliging this literature to a work of recouping identity through citizenship results in Chu's claim that the "interracial couple who relish difference without inequity" in Maxine Hong Kingston's Tripmaster Monkey: His Fake Book (which will be discussed below) "signal[s] the prospect of Asian American subjects' *true interpellation* into the nation" (188, emphasis added). Benign racial differences which result in an equality

that assimilates the Asian American subject into the national narrative, however, follows an amalgamation logic: biological access to whiteness and interracial reproduction initiates the process of inclusion for Kingston's Chinese American characters. When Chu asks, at the end of her work, "[W]hen will Asian Americans write as assimilated subjects, and when we do, what will it mean to write as Asian American?" the die has already been cast: racial identity will disappear at the moment (the violence of amalgamative) assimilation has been overtaken by thoughts about "what we [Asian Americans] should become" (188, 189). Alternately, to write as Asian American after the "success" of assimilation will mean that Asian American literature has acceded to the racial order's concessions, accepting the limited revisions to racialized and cultured subjectivity in order to take the next step toward a "new social order" where "Asian American" exists in a deracinated, cultured state (189). With Asian American literature slowly becoming a predicate of "straight" American literature in purpose and content, Chu attempts to spur the process of inclusion along without protest; her work reinstates the borders of the nation and national identity so that equality can be realized through a forced sameness in literary intent and racial identity.

In a more direct manner, Jinqui Ling, in Narrating Nationalisms: Ideology and Form in Asian American Literature, attempts to "intervene" in the "privileging of content over form in assessments of 'traditional texts'" (Narrating v).

Because Asian American literary studies has surpassed the need of "mid-1970s and early 1980s" critical works to examine the "social or political function" of literature, Ling advocates for a methodology which stresses both cultural studies and neo-pragmatist approaches in order to avoid a "presentist theoretical agenda" (v, vii). Along with this investment in developing a deep historical context to be more "responsive" in the interpretation of Asian American literary texts, Ling expresses his desire to construct a "progressively pluralistic culture that creatively privileges multiple centers" (viii). These multiple centers have two major ramifications. First, "historically constituted constraints" upon writer's thoughts must be foregrounded in order to demonstrate how the "easy fulfillment of their strategically conceived counterhegemonic goals"--which current works stress in their "presentism"--have been prevented by nebulous social and political forces which have determined writers' opportunities for publication (9); squarely locating interpretive authority in the critic's ability to establish a definitive historical context, Ling assumes that the historical record as it pertains to literary production can be fully realized in a transparent way. Secondly, Ling criticizes post-structuralist literary theory in a general sense since it "does not arise from the actual historical condition of Asian Americans' displacement" from the national narrative of citizenship (9). By noting how the "uncritical application" of theory can never help the

"socially disenfranchised" to speak "meaningfully about their social betterment," Ling's populist stance stresses an indigenous/autochthonous theoretical agenda whereby minority literatures must produce their own interpretive theories because they serve as alternative "centers" of discourse. The tension between the historical constraints which determine the "sayable" in Asian American literature and the noble, autochthonous nature of such literature is palpable; despite Asian America's subjection (and enforced racial limitations), we must also develop a wholly separate theory of interpretation that serves and "reflects" the "peoples'" concerns--as if the "people" appear without mediation.

The peoples' concerns, however, are contained within hermetically sealed pasts; since literary texts serve as documentary evidence of the constraints writers faced in forming their literary arguments, critics cannot pass philosophical or epistemological judgement on these texts; we can, however, rationalize our support for the texts' goals and aims. Ling notes how the ground-breaking Asian American literary anthology Aiiieeeee! "clearly reflects both the limitations of the ideological horizons available" to the editors and "their provisional need for a one-directional method of contestation"--evidenced by the cultural nationalist bent of the collection (14). Thinking, while certainly historical, becomes frozen in time, and because contemporary critics are unable to come to terms with the presentist frame they tend to place around "dated" discourse,

we must respect the integrity of older arguments since only certain modes of thinking were available at "that time." Ling stresses how authors' "social imagination[s]" were shaped by three "determinants" which are situated in a "social-material terrain . . . frequently inhospitable to the voices of the emergent": "authorial design, available social space, and accessible cultural resources" (30). But the "fundamental" need for Asian American writers to construct an "alternative space in which to organize and articulate agency--through lived historical subjects of the state" marks the two-tiered, separatist nature of Ling's critique: past and present are incommensurable and "agency" is only productively theorized in an "alternative space" through real "historical subjects" (160). If our analyses of alternatives are limited by the alternatives' datedness (and our misguided critiques of them due to our "presentist" tendencies), they are failed alternatives. Despite the variegated historical circumstances that authors from different periods faced, the common origins of hegemonic rule and counterhegemonic response(s) prove that there are no separate spheres in developing these alternatives since agency--or the desire to determine an indigenous will--serves as an imagined escape from racial subjection.

Advancing another attempt to escape the racialist circumscription of Asian American literature, Viet Thanh Nguyen stresses the "ideological diversity" of contemporary Asian America and how Asian Americanists actively work

against this diversity because of their "own biases and priorities" affecting the interpretation of literary texts (Nguyen vi). In Race and Resistance: Literature and Politics in Asian America, Nguyen contends that critics need to approach literature and politics in a more objective vein since the "actual multiplicity" of Asian America is often submerged by the general "intellectual perception" and deformation of its "actual" articulation (vi); in this more "objective" and responsible vein, intellectuals can develop effective ways to "study, organize and lead"--ways which avoid the "crisis of representation" between the critically imagined and palpably "real" circumstances of Asian American lives and thought (vi). Also, Nguyen asserts that the institutionalization of Asian American Studies has lead, in part, to a general "strategy of panethnic entrepreneurship" that critics engage in--where they trade in the "commodity of race" (4). As a result, the search for "resistance" in literary texts--"resistance" that ignores how "global capitalism" reifies "Asian American culture" by substituting "relationships between things" for "human relationship[s]"--is merely a careerist move meant to consolidate personal privilege as an Asian Americanist intellectual (4-5, 9). But Nguyen's political critique is quickly undercut by his notion of "ideological diversity" in that he recognizes "Asian American neoconservative political leadership" and its ability to "lay claim to the mantle of what Antonio Gramsci calls the 'organic intellectual'--the intellectual of the

people, a position to which Asian American intellectuals now generally aspire" (13). Bypassing the working-/subaltern-class origins of Gramsci's organic intellectuals who organize counterhegemonic movements against the hegemonic state, Nguyen substitutes the Asian Americanist academic "industry" for the racial state, resulting in a critique which ignores neoconservative complicity with racialist thought; neoconservatives, in this formulation, serve as proxies for the state in that the "ideological diversity" they represent is only opposite to more left-leaning academic politics. This key dilemma puts Nguyen's project of "criticizing American society's methods of racial and class domination" at risk, since the "self-critique" that Asian Americanists should submit to must operate within the context of "real," diverse Asian Americans who can, contradictorily, lay claim to conservative revolution (11).

By noting the dissonance between the "real" and intellectually "fancied" Asian America, Nguyen's strategy mirrors Lisa Lowe's desire to redefine the "political project for Asian American studies" so that the field "does not proceed from an assumption of the uniformity of the political subject along lines of racial, ethnic, or cultural identity" ("Epistemological" 274). The risks of acknowledging this "diversity" with Asian America, however, are exposed in Nguyen's critique of Lois-Ann Yamanaka's novel Blu's Hanging where, in contradistinction to the thought that "Asian America . . . [is] oppressed *first* by dominant [white]

society," the "local community, in many of the most important events . . . [are] responsible for both the alienation and inclusion of its members" (Nguyen 161, emphasis in original). Removed from the larger social sphere of racial domination, Nguyen uses intraethnic exclusions to support his prescriptive theory of Asian Americans "fracturing" around "more complicated notion[s] of socioeconomic equality," especially in terms of "economic interests" since racial oppression can also be perpetuated by the racially oppressed (166). This new orientation for Asian American politics relies upon an understanding of whiteness where Asian Americans possess the ability to write, someday, as "assimilated subjects" so that they "may become white or become aligned with whiteness" (169). The intellectual fancy of Nguyen's proposition--that Asian Americans will someday assimilate (biologically?) and that race, in this way, is mutable--refuses to make a distinction between ontological similarity and political alignments; put another way, becoming white involves both a process of literally becoming white and espousing, presumably, the white racial politics that place Asian America in subordination.[9] For Nguyen, using

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[9] In order to support his point, Nguyen claims that Ronald Takaki's notion that ethnicity is subordinate to race--which is "fundamental for Asian American intellectuals"--is "based upon" the following "tautology" (which, strictly speaking, is not a tautology): "the Irish can become white because they look white, and the Chinese cannot become white because they do not look white" (Nguyen 169). Though correctly pointing out that "race is . . . something that we learn to see," Nguyen argues, wrongheadedly I believe, that race is and was "not inherently visible through physical characteristics" in the present (170). By assuming that the nineteenth-century illustrations and political cartoons he mentions--notably those of Thomas Nast--are

race for "pursuing the *long-term* radical political goals" is dangerous because the "*short-term* goals of a middle-class-based project of nationalist assimilation into a capitalist society" are more immediate, pressing, and "real" (24, emphasis in original). Preferring to confront the threat of Asian America's full integration into a global capitalist system, Nguyen overlooks the systemic nature of racial organization and forces a strategy of "resistance" that diminishes the "lesser" threat of racial subjection.[10]

Seemingly evacuating the political from Viet Nguyen's sense of global capital, David Eng attempts to combine queer

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evidence of major shifts in racial thought and not evidence of ongoing conversations concerning the place of the Irish in the American racial system, Nguyen claims that the "Irish *did not look white*" (169, emphasis in original); Whatever the "dynamic and unpredictable" nature of race is or becomes, Nguyen's idea that ethnicity can override race while race still serves as an essential marker of differentiation--indeed, he does not argue against this premise--jumps the gun by assuming that resistance can be coopted by whites' attempts to realize Asian American incorporation by "ethnicizing" them (170); in effect, Nguyen assumes the rightness of a more extreme form of the "model minority" thesis in that Asian Americans, because all ethnicities (despite their racial status) can become white in a wholesale manner. Likewise, Nguyen's dismissal of Takaki's legal and historical analysis--that the "American racial pattern . . . will continue long after the enactment of legislation prohibiting discrimination based on color, race, or ethnic origin, unless public policies act affirmatively to overcome racial inequality" because of racial subjection's origin in codified legal exclusion(s)--cannot confront the "long-term" nature of racial rule (Takaki, "Reflections" 34).

[10] This view can be contrasted with David Leiwei Li's contention: "[W]hile I recognize the inevitable political nature of all forms of representation, I do not believe that the symbolic struggle over image and identity in the aesthetic realm can necessarily be substituted for the real struggle over social resources and justice" (Li 15). Whereas Nguyen (re)deploys a notion of representation that is more accurate in admitting the "ideological diversity" of Asian America (while minimizing the urgency of racial oppression in favor of class issues), Li disentangles representation from "justice," thereby viewing literature and literary studies as the "cultural practice of testing boundaries, critiquing existing social arrangements, and imagining more emancipatory relations" (16).

theory with diasporic studies in order to "orient the future development of Asian American political strategies . . . away from a politics of cultural nationalism to a politics of transnational culturalism" (Eng 220). Yet Eng's project is more directly concerned with addressing the "'reality' of race," which appears at the intersection of the "psychic" and the "material" (20). Noting the "false opposition between the 'psychological' trajectory of the humanities" solely to describe Asian American identity and "'material' emphasis of the social sciences" which aims to make racism "quantifiable," Eng's Racial Castration: Managing Masculinity in Asian America characterizes the typical Asian Americanist concern with "home"--with the nation serving as a site of identity--as not recognizing the "material contradictions of institutionalized racism that claim . . . inclusion" despite Asian America's being "systemically excluded" (19-20, 22). This approach, unlike those of Chu, Ling, and Nguyen, promises to get at the heart of subjectivity's (re)production through racial and sexual subjection by "denaturaliz[ing] claims to the space of the U.S. nation-state as enfranchised citizen-subjects" (209). While I think key portions of Eng's proposal are essential for Asian American Studies to incorporate, it is important to express reservations concerning both "transnational culturalism" and the desire to develop a "sustained psychoanalytical model" which would, in a "responsible" manner, combine with Asian American Studies to "reformulate and transform the conditions under which we

claim our identities and communities" (28). Rather than incorporating the possibility of a future "end" of/to Asian American Studies as Kent Ono suggests, Eng advances a "model" which attempts to create a more just and fair ground (or foundation) on which to establish "Asian American identity and community" (28). Regardless of whether or not this "ground" is more equalitarian or right-headed, claiming and establishing a newer version of Asian America is still caught in the bind of the "double gesture" of the state's racial recognition which contains an acknowledgement of minority status while not fundamentally altering the social organization of race (Martinot 26). Steve Martinot rightly maintains that opposing "racism from within the racializing function of the state" invariably betrays "itself to that racializing function," and strategies must be developed to counter the "concretiz[ation]" of racial existence in order to "reencounter" the Other without "generalizations" (208).

This "reencounter," however, is not about discovery or new knowledges of an alternative Asian America, and Eng's Racial Castration cogently points out that the current modes of racial belonging and subjectivity must be "denaturalized" and delinked from the notion of a "home" within a racial system. The queering of Asian America, as we will see in R. Linmark Zamora's work below, begins with the de-formation of the Asian American subject so that the performance of the subject--as racialized or assimilated or amalgamated--can be seen as dependent upon the forms of racialization already

present and determinative of the subject in the first place. At the crossroads of the epistemological and the social/material and, arguably, the minority class closest to "whiteness" as an economic structure, Asian America occupies a unique position, a social emplacement that can both lay claim to the space of "America" and challenge it through the apparent "foreignness" of its appearance. By examining Maxine Hong Kingston's Tripmaster Monkey: His Fake Book, Chang-Rae Lee's Native Speaker, and R. Zamora Linmark's Rolling the R's in the next section, we will see how strategies of reclaiming America attempt to avoid the desires to be fully incorporated into the (racial) American system while, at the same time, offering possibilities for rethinking community, belonging, and identity on non-exclusionary grounds.

Imagining

In the second epigraph of this chapter, the narrator of Maxine Hong Kingston's Tripmaster Monkey: His Fake Book describes protagonist Wittman Ah Sing's mental calculations when dealing with Yoshi Ogasawara, a "Nisei girl of Okinawan ancestry" who he's "in hate" with (107, 106). Yoshi tells a group of white friends why she wants to have surgery on her epicanthic folds: to create "double lids" for her eyes because whites "'don't like [single-lid] eyes like ours'" (107). Wittman decides to invert the rules that govern the "chessboard" or order of racialized standards of "beauty" by turning on Yoshi, calling her talk "Nazi anthropology" while thinking she's a "[s]ick seppuku chick" with her "shameful,

unique deformity" (107, 108). Celebrated as Kingston's attempt to describe a "new community that is truly more inclusive," Tripmaster Monkey investigates the possibility of "upsetting" the racial order by re-presenting the narrative of Asian America--and America writ large--through Wittman's ambitious, never-ending play that ends the novel (Chu 174). Yet how do we deal with the rejection of Yoshi, Wittman's fellow Asian American, who ingratiates herself to the white constituency by expressing a desire for surgery that will partially realize a kind of Asian American racial amalgamation? Shameful and deformed, Yoshi serves as an object of hate for Wittman, an embodiment of Asian America dissatisfied with itself and actively seeking a technology (or surgery) of inclusion through the excision of its racial looks. Because of Wittman's development as an "ethnic" artist who attempts to include everybody in his "play," Kingston details a possible shift in thinking for Asian America. Rather than inverting the racial rule of order by "becoming" white, Kingston, in the end, offers a vision of the "impossible," an alternative to racialization which avoids both accommodation and intraethnic exclusion and upsets and overturns the racial order.

Wittman's hate, evidently, cannot accommodate the "heterogeneity" of America that Elliot H. Shapiro claims is at the center of Kingston's theorizations of America (6). Despite strategic citations of Chinese texts like Journey to the West, the attempt by Wittman in Tripmaster Monkey to both

"define a community" and think that "[c]ommunity is not built once-and-for-all; people have to imagine, practice, and re-create it" reveals the central tension of a "heterogeneous" Asian America in search of "unity": the attempt to produce inclusion must be vigilant--socially and politically--and guard against the violence and exclusiveness of group identity which creates the need for inclusion (Kingston 306). Described as a *kunstlerroman* that attempts to address the marginalization of the ethnic artist by making the "margin . . . a site of agency and empowerment," Kingston's work also relies upon the logic of the "fake book," a compendium of jazz "standards" (with chord changes and lyrics) ostensibly meant to serve as a minimal guide for musicians to use in developing their own "improvisations" and "fresh interpretations" of popular songs (Maini 243; H. Wong 3). If community, as Wittman theorizes, must be imagined and re-created according to a minimal template in order for agency to be realized, then the content that undergirds or supports this narrative must be examined; much like the fake-book logic which encourages individual performance within a "unified," translated standard, Kingston's novel purportedly advances a structuring of community that attempts to "reconcile unity and identity" by demonstrating how Wittman's play, "as in real life," expresses "things . . . [that are] happening all over the place" (Kingston 298).

Despite all of these "happenings," Wittman's play leaves us with an inclusive community that attempts to revise the

national narrative through the reclamation of American identity; this community, as Irma Maini points out, can only come from an individual's "[imbibing] the lessons of communal love and responsibility from his extended Chinese and Chinese-American 'family'" (252). Wittman pines for a more enlightened ethnic identity where the "superior man loves anyone he sets his mind to. Otherwise, we're fucked" (337). In the same breath and opposed to the critical assessments that deem the novel a success in building a new "community based on multiplicity rather than uniformity," Kingston informs us that the production of a "new" Asian American identity and community is a "work" of "the impossible" (Williams 98; Kingston 277). Rather than leave the world to decisions about "who" to love, Kingston uses Wittman as a limit-case for arguments concerned with the "inclusion" of Asian America. Though the logics of nationhood and belonging have determined Asian American subjectivity in the past, all that we know now is that "they"--those who possess the ability to enforce the borders of national identity--have (or are) "lost" (Kingston 340). And perhaps this is all we need to know.

Broadly speaking, Wittman's strategy of reclaiming American identity is exemplified by his staging of a perpetual play with an ever-expanding cast constituted by whomever wants to join in. Before the play is staged, however, Wittman applies for unemployment benefits; as a condition of receiving the benefits, he must watch a cartoon

which offers instructions for job interviews. When the cartoon's voice-over commands applicants to "'Come alone to the interview'," Wittman thinks the following:

> An American stands alone. Alienated, tribeless, individual. To be a successful American, leave your tribe, your caravan, your gang, your partner, your village cousins, your refugee family that you're making the money for, leave them behind. (Kingston 246)

The call to represent oneself as a deracinated worker (removed from "community") is analogous, in Wittman's mind, to the racialist notion that Asians are "inscrutable" and "unknowable"; whites' "willful innocence" and the rules of work and capitalist accumulation gloss over the enforced estrangement of the ethnic (worker) from his/her social context (310). All context--personal, familial, historical--is left behind at the moment of incorporating the (racially) impoverished into the nation. Wittman solves this problem by claiming in his book-ending soliloquy, "Pretty soon we'll all be miscegenated and intermarried, we'll be patriotic to more than one place" (333). Introducing the possibility of interracial love (and reproduction) as well as a future without the "American" imperative of a patriotism that excludes and must be worked for, Wittman envisions a unification to come; this unification of America consists in the disappearance of both race and nations.

While the realization of this dual disappearance is

never fully formulated by Wittman by the end of the novel, Kingston argues that the nation only emerges by producing "unity" through war. Joining a group who has dosed on LSD at a party, a sober Wittman watches the "snow" on a television. With or without illicit drugs, everyone imagines pictures and images on the set (on an "open channel to a possible future"), and Wittman pictures American "nuke mutants" after World War III (Kingston 96). After the nuclear blast, he sees a baby "attached to its mother's back . . . permanently" (96). Fused together with a common, suffering fate, the dystopic mother/child figure represents the shared, violent reproduction of the literal nuclear family (through nuclear destruction). Thinking that the nuclear age ushers in an age of accelerated "evolution," nations can only effect unity through a violent assault on "Nature" (96). Since this violence exhibits a specifically "human" nature, Wittman's only curative is to be patient, wait for amalgamation to happen, and, in the meantime, "declare" that he possesses an "American face" (314). Staging a two-stage process of future peace--making a down payment in the form of claiming Asian America's Americanness in order to usher in a new "nature" of "peace"--Wittman envisions only two future options: the state's coercive unity or his own identity of declaration and belonging.

At the end of the novel, however, Kingston has Wittman reflect on this "attack" on American exclusion, and he realizes that despite the racial ordering, nuclear weapons,

and the "clanging and banging" of war, America continues to be "lost" (340). Changing into a "pacifist," he realizes that all wars of identity--regardless of whether they end in a plurality or a disaggregated multitude--are wars of "master[y]" and domination (340). Rather than work on the impossible full inclusion of the racialized group--be it through amalgamation or the claiming of Americanness to guarantee a place in greater white society--Kingston's novel ends with a final call to cease the warring; in this way, the impossible and unlocatable future apart the structures of racial domination that cause segregation may be approached without the lure of conditional inclusion.

Wars of identity take center stage in Chang-Rae Lee's Native Speaker, and the post-1965 nature of Asian America as a product of increased immigration--supposedly producing a new "Rome"--spurs on an increased surveillance of the nation's borders and racial hierarchies by white power (Lee 237). Perhaps the most obvious feature of the novel, besides Lee's reformulation of the spy novel, is the central figure of family, and there are three separate configurations of family which either confront or maintain the racial structuring of society: Henry Park's, John Kwang's, and the family that encompasses everyone within the borders of America. As with John Kwang's campaign to become mayor of New York City (which meets the white political establishment's violence), Henry Park's interracial relationship with Leila, along with their "mixed" son Mitt, demonstrates the

inevitable death of any challenge to the fixed racial ordering of America. In the end, we are left with a broken politics which can only attempt to make minorities more "visible" by erasing their political invisibility. As such, the domestic concerns of Kingston prove to be important for Lee's critique: any "denaturalization" of Asian American identity must not collapse the distinction between Asian and Asian American since, as Sau-ling Cynthia Wong points out, the domestic and foreign as it relates to Asian America is "still distinct," and the "political consequences" of assuming a "new" America (in a "transnational" sense) risks forgetting the "minority" status of Asian Americans within the American political structure ("Denationalization" 20).

Despite the "biracial" make-up of his son Mitt, Henry Park soon realizes that miscegenation will never effectively counter the social enforcement of racial distinctions. As such, the interracial family--and its biological byproducts--will always fail in addressing both social and political exclusions. For example, Mitt is described as a "child of ceaseless movement," and his body, for Henry, is "beautifully jumbled and subversive and historic" because "[n]o one . . . had ever looked like that" (Lee 101, 103). Contrasted with Henry's "difficult face"--a face that purportedly represents foreignness--Mitt's white/Asian "mix" holds a promise for escaping racial determination: the "jumbled" becomes "subversive" at the moment when one's racial background can't be easily determined or posited (323). This dream of

inclusion through amalgamation, though, is quickly quashed by Mitt's death underneath a "dog pile" where the white neighborhood kids leap on top of Mitt and suffocate him--playfully, literally, and "accident[ally]" enforcing racial subordination (105). Noting, through memory, the "spontaneous crèche" of Mitt's death, Lee squarely dismisses any liberatory logic of the "birth" of a new nation despite Henry's "romantic notion of identity": biracial nativity will asphyxiate under the pressure and weight of a racial system based on hypodescent (Lee 104; Chen 639). This much is evident in the epithets Mitt faced before his death; the neighborhood kids, after initially referring to Mitt in standard anti-Asian epithets like "chink" and "gook," begin to call him "mutt" and "mongrel" after seeing Henry and Leila (103). The interracial family, then, consists of a tainted whiteness which can never be escaped, and all attempts to ground a liberatory racial politics upon race-mixing will perpetually fail due to the enforceable borders of (pure) white racial identity.

John Kwang, a local politician from Queens, attempts to construct a multiracial political constituency in response to non-whites' limited access to American political structures; this more inclusive grouping, however, is subject to the regulatory mechanisms of the state, especially the Immigration and Naturalization Service. In his campaign, Kwang constructs a new "house" and "family" by investing in the "pure idea of family . . . which in its most elemental

version must have nothing to do with blood" (Lee 146). Linking up Korean American and African American concerns, Kwang meets with Black ministers and, afterwards, tells a throng of supporters to "think differently" in order to realize that the "sadness and pain and injustice" of racialized existence brooks the "differences" between racial groups' differential treatment and histories of oppression (151, 152). In spite his desire to create a coalitional politics, Kwang's establishment of a *ggeh* or Korean money club proves to be the weak link that allows the INS to effectively end his political campaign--due to the "illegal" status of many of the *ggeh*'s members.[11] Henry, as a spy employed to gather information on Kwang, is obliged to provide a list of the *ggeh*'s members to his boss, Dennis Hoagland, because an anonymous source has been worried about Kwang's challenge to their "vested interests" (18); we can safely surmise from the narrative that the New York State and U.S. governments have been keeping tabs on Kwang's mayoral campaign as part of their strategy to "marginalize" and "isolate" the "ethnic challenger" (36). As a result, Kwang's attempt at creating a "family of thousands" confronts the central problem of minority politics: "There aren't enough of our own" (326). This is the Middle Passage that non-white

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[11] A *ggeh* is similar to the "rotating credit systems" established by Chinese Americans (*woi*), Korean Americans (*kae*), and Japanese Americans (*tanomoshi*) earlier in the century to provide enough capital to establish businesses. Generally, the rotating credit systems allowed Asian Americans to borrow the money that banks wouldn't lend them because of racist lending practices (Takaki 275).

America still faces, according to Lee: the growing post-1965 immigrant constituency of Asian America, which represents a "*new life*," will invariably meet the old life of racial hierarchy (327); Asian America still travels in bondage.[12]

As an alternative to building a political constituency, Henry proposes an alternate understanding of America which confronts the "invisibility" of Asian America by noting that "who we are" as Americans should be a matter of linguistic and ontological presence (349). In the final scene of the novel, Henry accompanies Leila to her ESL classroom and helps her teach English to the children of immigrants. Noting that citizenship is solely an "accident of birth," Henry is also aware of the underfunding of ESL classes (to the point of claiming that the instruction won't "make much difference") (Lee 334, 348). As a result, citizenship, while accidental, serves as an institution vested in determining the standards for linguistic assimilation (despite the lack of monetary investment). This coercion without state support is countered by Leila's strategy of proving that the children have "nothing to fear" (349); she gives each student a personalized "sunburst-shaped badge" written on it, letting each child know that they are "good citizen[s]" (349). Patricia Chu reads the ending as a simple "reaffirm[ation]": the students will "one day be assimilated subjects" because

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[12] Likewise, Kwang's *ggeh*, and his campaign in general, fail because he invests too highly in "paternal[istic]" systems (Lee 334). This can be seen is Kwang's abusive relationship with his wife, May, as well as his role as organizer of the *ggeh*, siring a new political constituency which can only be conceptualized as "family" (145, 252).

Leila "becomes the person who calls the names" of the students as they wait for their badges (3). But the "difficult names" (of "who we are"), because they are uttered--with difficulty--by Leila, works against Chu's argument; even Leila, who serves as the novel's linguistic "standard-bearer," has trouble assimilating the children's names into her lexicon (Lee 12).

Alternately, Min Song contends, accurately, that Leila is portrayed in an "atemporal" manner, and this banishment from time (and character development) permits the patriarchal investments of the novel's male characters to develop over the course of the narrative (and over the female characters) (187). The misogynistic nature of the narrative, however, allows Lee to posit Leila, also, as a figure of white American reproduction, insuring the "dream" of inclusion via linguistic citizenship for the children of immigrants--a narrative of immigrant development which appears against the backdrop of unchanging standards of (white) citizenship and inclusion. In opposition, Henry attempts to situate the children in a temporal scheme by claiming that the students are "who we are" as a nation (349); the children represent the growth and "diverse" nature of America due to its burgeoning racial and linguistic complexity. To this end, the "dozen lovely and native languages" that Leila speaks proves the being-there--the always-already presence--of difference within U.S. borders (349). Leila is a doubled character with her pronunciation difficulties and her ease in including all

of the children as "citizens" regardless of their language capacities, and this mirrors the formulation that Lee advances overall: until the majority can reconcile its racial standards of inclusion and citizenship with the "difficulties" that racial, foreign, and linguistic others embody, we will face an aggressive reproduction of white America through deportations, violence, and regimes of privilege. Unlike the general notion of cultural identity in South Asian American Studies, Lee's notion of distinction without coercive judgement is idealistic, assuming a future white benevolence instead of a redeployment of ethnic identity and difference through cultural politics. But without the thought of America's potential deracinated being, the possibility of a future without "resistance"--without the reinvestment in various racialisms--will never be realized.

Marking the tension between the "uneven production of abstract nationalist subjects" and the "disavowal of social identities," R. Zamora Linmark's Rolling the R's relies upon a discourse of the "closet" in order to mark the "queer" circumstances of subject production (Eng 224). Linmark centers a majority of the narrative's vignettes on Edgar Ramirez and Vincente, two Filipino Americans living in the poor Kalihi neighborhood on Oahu, Hawai'i; in doing so, Vincente's missing last name and his inability to come out of the sexual closet exposes the central problem for Asian America according to Linmark: the enforced inability to articulate one's "full" racial and sexual "queerness" for

fear of social repercussions is a reflection of the American "style" of social integration (which depends upon continued racial segregation) (Linmark 49). David Eng, in his analysis of the novella, argues that "queerness" allows for a "form of social and political organization that proffers the provisional identity of a name," which allows a group to develop a "progressive politics" based on negotiations of identity (Eng 226). The end point of such a politics, however, lies in a "transnational culturalism" (220); on the other hand, I argue that Rolling the R's forces the hand of white supremacy by demanding Asian Americans determine the "side" they are "on" in combating social exclusions (Linmark 119). The condition necessary for progressive politics' emergence is an unrepentant identification with a corrosive queerness which attacks whites' "Asthmatic Otraphobia," the condition of white protectionism that either suffocates racial others or, if forced into the close proximity of the nation-as-closet without an escape, suffocates itself (Linmark 108). Present-day America, then, must come out of the closet of "constitutive [racial and sexual] differentials" which result in social segregation (Eng 225). The way to truly "feel mighty real" in the face of oppression, for Linmark, is to "make that move" (on the dance floor, in the schools, in the government) so that all of us will "be waitin'" for the endless articulation of an America to come--apart from racial domination (Linmark 27).

In his fifth-grade classroom, Edgar Ramirez

characterizes America--constituted by a nationalist pedagogy and reality which excludes racially- and linguistically-deficient subjects in separate classes and school districts--as "not the freakin' meltin' pot but one volcano" which, one day, is "goin' erupt" (Linmark 49, 70). Ending Ms. Takemoto's exercise of having each student identify their ethnicity, Edgar also points to the most pressing and difficult conflict that comes with Asian American subjecthood/subjection: determining which "side" one belongs to. Nelson Ariola, a Filipino American who "says he is an American although he is as Filipino as any Filipino can be," attempts to sidestep the bounds of racial subjecthood by asserting that he's "'not like'" other Filipinos because he doesn't "speak Tagalog or Ilocano" (68). But English proficiency cannot save Nelson, as Edgar reminds him, since he's the "'best candidate for Mr. Pinoy--brown skin, yellow teeth, and no nose'" (68). Edgar, a fair skin "mestizo born in the U S of A," chides Nelson's middle-class-infected aspirations--the latter's father is a lawyer and his mother is a nurse--because, regardless of social and economic success, the racial predicate will inflect even whiteness with an "ethnic" or "cultural" identity. Ms. Takemoto's ethnicity-locating activity, which demands an "appreciation" of the mixed constitution of the classroom and naturalizing/aestheticizing the modifying effect of the non-white on "America," reflects the impossible status of Asian American belonging: assumed, "appreciative" inclusion is determined by the exclusions that engulf it.

By analogy, Linmark portrays the Hawaiian tourist industry as complicit with this process of ethnic/racial exclusion; as a result, ethnic identification is a strategy which encourages "recognition" for minorities but can never help in insuring equality. White tourists, on the other hand, are unable to see Hawai'i as anything else except a destination for affirming patriotism (and divorcing the island from the mainland's racial economy via the ability to indulge in leisure). There are two buses on Oahu: the "unventilated green bus" that makes local stops and the yellow air-conditioned bus which stops at the USS Arizona/Pearl Harbor Memorial, the pineapple fields, the sugar plantations, and "Sea Life Park" (Linmark 106, 107). Katrina, Edgar's friend, mentions that the yellow bus can "make one quick getaway to Waikiki" from Kalihi via the freeway so that tourists don't "freak out" when they run into the racial others that live on the island and who aren't involved in the tourism industry (107, 108). Both Katrina and Edgar remember the white tourists from Orange County, California, who mistakingly get on the green bus and eventually die because of the stifling heat; and the "Asthmatic Claustrophobia" of taking the green bus with the locals becomes, in Edgar's words, a "newly diagnosed mental disorder": "Asthmatic Otraphobia" (108). Being subjected to the same treatment that racialized workers experienced during "plantation days," the white tourists wilt, unable to cope with the mere existence of "multiracial" and economically

stratified Hawai'i. The illusion of Hawai'i as destination and escape, so much a part of the islands' racialized economy, is easily shattered in the presence of economic inequality. Indeed, this is why Linmark titles this particular vignette "Kalihi Is in the Heart"; the ghetto-ized racial space of Kalihi is contained within the very heart/pulse of American life but, like the volcano Edgar mentions, Kalihi is also ready to cause a heart attack by attesting to--through its presence amid the tourist destinations--the racial subjection which undergirds whites' ability to travel freely. Like Bulosan's "America" (through inversion), Kalihi is a space of pure negativity--the non-place of failed aspirations which puts into question any strategy attempting to bypass or aestheticize the "ethnics" in our midst.

Rolling the R's offers us a moment to contemplate the narrow, claustrophobic "closet" of Asian American subjection produced through a "appreciation" of differences. By denaturalizing the space of America's white fantasy of Hawai'i, Linmark's work offers up the only available political option for Asian Americans: avoiding the "denial" and "two-face closet-case" of assimilatory aspirations in order to combat subjection (Linmark 131, 133). Indeed, Asian America needs to go through a process of philosophical "remixing," creating a "restless[ness]" with various mollifying ideologies--mixedness, assimilation, amalgamation, counter-hegemony, etc.--which redeploy the politics of racial

domination without undoing them (26, 27). Without reformulating the present-day, envisioned "ends" of being Asian American, "we" are left in perilous territory. This "remixing" could result in banal, (in)consequential repetition for the sake of survival or enjoyment by not deviating from the epistemological template of biological racialisms, but the argumentative "stops"--reinvestments in the racial status quo--analyzed over the course of the previous chapters also give life, however cliché, to the "ruthless criticism" that Karl Marx envisioned as a necessary component of radical change (Marx 13). Asian American Studies is capable of resisting without the directionless residue of racialisms, and a world we can not anticipate--one apart from racial determination--must serve as the goal of thinking together and, for the moment, taking "sides."

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