Transpacific Nonencounters

RACIAL DISCONNECTS ACROSS TWENTIETH-CENTURY JAPAN AND MEXICO

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Racial Disconnects Across Twentieth-Century Japan and Mexico

ANDREA MENDOZA

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Note on Terminology

Korean and Japanese words follow the revised romanization, or McCune-Reischauer and modified Hepburn systems, respectively. For names of those who primarily reside in countries where names are written with surnames preceding given names (such as Japan and Korea), I follow these conventions. For individuals who reside and publish primarily in English or other European languages, I follow the convention of surname following the given name.

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Introduction

Transpacific Nonencounters

I didn't know why the target of the violence was always us. The only thing I know is that, at the time that these instances came to was when our Fatherland, North Korea, had nuclear weapons suspicions and pressure to show their nuclear facilities to the United States. And after they rejected, Japanese antinuclear sentiment, fueled by the United States, it turned to actual violence toward our bodies. When some political problem was sensationalized through the media—for example, when there were suspicions of a North Korean terrorist aboard a Korean airline—the political target of the violence was always us.—KUM SONI, *Beast of Me*

Then all of the sudden they tell you to be at ease with what you are, with someone dying, with surviving whatever you have had to survive, the violence you have been through, because God wanted it that way. God had illuminated a path you had to follow, and you can only arrive that way.—MARE ADVERTENCIA LIRIKA, *Cuando una mujer avanza* (When a woman steps forward)

Kum Soni's experimental short documentary *Beast of Me* opens with footage of a home video showing a group of girls performing on a school stage in Japan to a song and dance dedicated to Kim Il Sung. They glide gracefully

across the stage with unflinching smiles painted across their clean, bright faces, syncing their lips to the song that conveys a devotion to the North Korean leader and explains the importance of their costumes: "Although this is not our land or our sky, we live in happiness within the embrace of our fatherland. . . . Our scout's motto is always one: even though foreign enemies attack us, we are going to keep our Korean clothes until the end." Through the footage, *Beast of Me* archives Kum's intimate observations of the lived experiences of Zainichi (a term used to refer to Koreans living as permanent residents in Japan for multiple generations since the Second World War) girls and women who inherit the effects of Japanese colonialism, the partition of Korea, and present-day Japanese ethnonationalism. These are girls and women who belong, as Kum describes in a separate project, to "a community left out of the official record of history."[1] The performance of nationalist devotion evinces a disjointed reality for Kum, for the young girls, and for those whose bodies sync and spiral as they grasp for a sense of homeland in a state of statelessness.

The Zapotec "xip xop" artist and activist Mare Advertencia Lirika likewise understands the potential of art in dissolving the silences, borderlines, and demarcations surrounding the legacies of colonial violence. Made in collaboration with the US community organizer and filmmaker Simón Sedillo, Advertencia Lirika's 2012 documentary, *Cuando una mujer avanza* (When a woman steps forward), opens with juxtaposing images of the city of Oaxaca, first in 1939, then in 2012, to frame a multigenerational story of a young artist who traces her feminism to matrilineal genealogy of "the class of women who might even go completely unnoticed in the street."[2] Her story is one of stepping forward in a country where Indigenous identity and Indigenous roots have been systemically challenged and threatened, often through the perpetuation of misogynistic and racial violence. In response, Advertencia Lirika uses her story to construct a multigenerational model of a Zapotec community life and activism that connects the legacies of settler colonial appropriation of Indigenous identity and cultural practices to the Mexican state's continued attempts to control and eradicate Indigenous rebellion against systems of oppression.[3] Like *Beast of Me*, *Cuando una mujer avanza* highlights a refusal of official history. Kum's and Advertencia Lirika's works offer mediations that unravel institutionalized knowledge and work through how the official record contorts the real experiences of dispossession and violence for those whom it leaves out.

By turning their experiences of vulnerability to violence and marginalization into sites for radical solidarity, Advertencia Lirika and Kum show

that official discourses justify the conditions of their transgenerational oppression. Kum and Advertencia Lirika are, admittedly, speaking about instances of misogyny and xenophobic violence occurring in geographically and historically disconnected contexts. Kum retells her experience with systematized racial violence against girls of Korean descent in Japan. Advertencia Lirika addresses the heterosexist underpinnings of religious colonialism in discourses that justify the oppression of Zapotec women and girls in Mexico. And while Japanese colonial aggression against Koreans extends to the histories of forced migration that shape the little-attended-to history of the entanglements between the Korean diaspora and Indigenous populations in Mexico, even the savviest historians might be hard-pressed to find evidence of meaningful empirical links that connect the context of *Beast of Me* and that of *Cuando una mujer avanza*.[4] Traditional disciplinary approaches may therefore treat Kum and Advertencia Lirika as voices of separate archives, pertinent to distinct areas of study, if they are studied at all. But does that absence of relation necessarily premise irrelevance?

If demonstrating proof of connection is the prerequisite for relating histories and experiences of gendered and racial violence, then one must conclude that Kum and Advertencia Lirika cannot be studied or spoken about together. At least in the production of humanistic and social scientific knowledge, the echo chambers of disciplinary authority teach us that disconnection premises the particularity of an "area" or "field." Reified disparity was, after all, the framework that heralded the establishment of area studies in the North American academe during the Cold War, which relegates the study of subjects from distant geographic regions into neat, regionalized epistemic boxes—Asian Studies, Latin American Studies, Africana Studies, Middle East Studies, and so forth—each box containing numerous more boxes depending on the target of empirical particularity. And before then, the anthropological method offered epistemologies that sustained the incommensurability of human subjects based on an array of racial colonial categorizations that mediated the reification of cultural difference. Post–Cold War critiques, including postcolonial thought and theories of decolonization, variously theorized the inheritance of colonial disconnections as a "denial of coevalness" or even as "hauntings" to explain the workings of subjugated knowledge and its effective role in silencing subjugated peoples.[5] But what if we hold on to the possibility of resonance in and *because of* (not despite) disconnect? How does the refusal to adhere to disciplinary enclosure and official records generate a possible

dialogue out of separation? These are some questions that guide the proposal of this book about nonencounters.

....

Transpacific Nonencounters: Racial Disconnects Across Twentieth-Century Japan and Mexico argues that key texts of Japanese and Mexican intellectual and cultural production generate a disconnected, albeit critical, perspective on twentieth-century transpacific racial politics that extends conceptualizations of global racism. I begin with disconnect to write against the persistent perception that questions relating to colonialism and racism are either tangential or irrelevant when it comes to the connected or comparative study of Asian and Latin American contexts when not speaking about migrant or diasporic subjects (for instance, Asians in Latin America as a specific, racialized population). In titling this book *Transpacific Nonencounters*, I signal an approach to using transpacific critique to find ways to engage the initial perceived absence of relationality between the historical and cultural phenomena that Kum and Advertencia Lirika address. In it, I examine the formation of philosophies of race and racism across Mexican and Japanese intellectual histories and cultural productions of the twentieth century to rethink the ongoing effects of transpacific imperialism and nationalism since the 1910s. I proceed, however, not from the perspective of empirical historiography but from a speculative, critical inquiry. Beyond the task of affirming how Mexico and Japan interact across the connected histories of labor migration, intercultural exchange, and other evidence of contact, this book interrogates the de-emphasized role that ideas about race played in the formation of transpacific imperial and settler national modernities. I turn to the construction of two racial ideologies as my points of departure—Pan-Asianism, an ideology that promoted the construction of a multiracial and multiethnic Japanese imperial identity; and *mestizaje*, an ideology that promoted the supremacy of Mexican racial polygenism by promoting the "whitening" of the Americas through miscegenation and Indigenous dispossession—as resonant phenomena that shaped modern transpacific racial politics. While these ideologies did not shape or influence each other in any proven capacity, when put against an intensifying racist world order, the ideological formations and residues of Pan-Asianism and *mestizaje* reveal a common strand of thinking among elite male intellectual and political actors that fomented figurations of modern state power and their long-standing cultural impact. Analyzing Pan-Asianism and *mestizaje* as the transpacific legacies of racism draws

attention to how ideas that promote racial inclusion and incorporation conceal the underpinning and interlinked structures of what I will call racial settler colonialism and imperial nationalism.

In using the term *nonencounter*, I refer to what has been erased, divided, or kept distant by official archives, disciplinary traditions, and colonial modalities of knowing. Through theorizing nonencounter as what is constructed as absent, I show how the structures and legacies of racism and colonial dispossession are embedded in the structures of *disconnect* that unevenly shaped global modernity and how we are trained to study its effects. With this provocation, I excavate the political and epistemic stakes of analyzing histories of settler colonial and imperial racial formations and racisms across Japan and Mexico as being embedded in the larger effects of global coloniality, anti-Indigenous and anti-Black dispossession, and violence. Throughout, my interrogations probe into the inequities and limits of the frames for understanding questions of racism, heterosexism, coloniality, and empire within a post–Cold War North American academe and conversations surrounding methods of comparison, the object and objective of world literary systems, and—the site of my project's departure—the role of the critique of area studies in addressing as well as perpetuating disciplinary disconnections.

Finding meaning in resonance without direct relatability has been a key practice for the anticolonial feminist politics of solidarity and theoretical practices I draw on in my citational framework. Kum and Advertencia Lirika address gendered racial violence and its erasure in ways that mirror how philosophers like Sylvia Wynter and Denise Ferreira da Silva theorize racism and heterosexism as structures threaded into the ideological contours of our popular and cultural imaginaries through the signifying power of the language of difference, the ethico-civilizational binarism of religious colonialism, and the legacies of imperial and colonial violence.[6] For Kum, who identifies as a third-generation Zainichi North Korean, the attention of news media to crafting popular conceptions of North Korea within the Japanese mainstream imaginary becomes a fuel for racialized and gendered violence against her and other Zainichi girls and women. Left out of the official record, Kum uses her artistic practice to offer a new archive of memory and its transmission. For Advertencia Lirika (whose stage name translates to "Lyrikal Warning"), participating in the production of an Indigenous Oaxacan feminist "xip xop" (spelled with an *x* to identify with Indigenous Oaxaca) becomes a way to confront the systemic oppression and violence against Indigenous women and girls in Mexico

that has continued since the heteropatriarchal colonial impositions of Catholicism in the state. In their disconnected trajectories, Advertencia Lirika and Kum share the power of refusing to be made to disappear. "The class of women who might even go completely unnoticed in the street" step forward in a resonant, lyrical warning.[7] And from the limits of archives and official narratives, they invent new modes of speaking and listening to histories shaped by the uneven structures and legacies of global colonialism. The two works address at once the intersectional, overlapping, and ruptured dimensions of gender, race, and class not through frames of temporal entrapment—structures that affix their stories in a particular time or place—but as conditions for a new way to understand the embeddedness of colonialism and dispossession in the present.

Throughout this book, transpacific nonencounters generate opportunities for reading through a queer phenomenology, to draw on the philosopher Sara Ahmed's terminology. Phenomenology's theories of perception, directionality, and consciousness provide a groundwork for conceptualizing nonencounter as a figure that emerges from within and against the impetus of transpacific frameworks to provide accounts of fraught geopolitical and cultural phenomena. Thinking through nonencounter crystallizes for me the ways of reckoning with a sense and condition of the inability to re-encounter or relate to intimate pasts without relational intimacies. Although Kum and Advertencia Lirika voice incongruent geohistorical reflections of what it means to resist being caught at the violence of margins, their incongruence is nevertheless generative and directional. My task as a reader and audience to their texts is to develop a critical framework that draws on the moments of resonance between the structures and histories that they unearth for each other. Through that framing, the discursive, political, and epistemic underpinnings of gendered and colonial violence in Japan and Mexico become less discordant. Their disconnect transforms into a fragile, perhaps even resisted, echo that exposes the intertwined logics of heterosexism and racial coloniality on a scale beyond the national and regional frames that attempt to secure a sense of distant particularization. Ahmed's discussion about how "things deemed breakable" share stories through fragile connections can be helpful here. Fragility is a thread, Ahmed writes, "a way of opening up a reflection on histories that have become hard, histories that leave some more fragile than others."[8] If histories, as objects constructed from particular and disciplinary perspectives, require hardening to "become hard," then opening them, by way of breaking them and breaking from them, means

exposing them to a different modality of understanding the past and how its legacies bear into the present. *Beast of Me* and *Cuando una mujer avanza* propose a way of working through the fragility of broken histories and caution us against the convenience of the official record. Together, Kum and Advertencia Lirika help me make sense of how to work through the unrecognized and disavowed. They guide my hypothesis that contemporaneous or resonant phenomena can remain unrelated but still allow for a shared critique of how estrangement brings phenomena to light. Reading their deeply philosophical and political projects through the transpacific phenomenology of nonencounter unfolds the resonant yet distant ways that the legacies of empire and settler coloniality in Japan and Mexico may bear on and inflect each other.

Nonencounter. A Hermeneutic for the Disconnected

The transpacific phenomenological approach to nonencounter both draws from and struggles to align with frameworks of intimacy and entanglement. Typically, these relational figures help signify how diverse archives of intellectual, cultural, and political production inherit interweaving genealogies of capitalist expansion and colonial exploitation to create complex networks of relationality among people, texts, and objects. In Lisa Lowe's foundational contribution to reading across the archives of liberal modernity, "intimacy" attends to "spatial proximity, or adjacent connection" that can "evoke the political and economic logics" through which racial capitalism and the rise of the liberal modern bourgeois republic forced violent colonial encounters.[9] Intimacy, then, not only highlights the rich, intersecting histories of colonialism, empire, and their entanglements but also offers a targeted point of critique for interrogating schematized archival and disciplinary divisions in the production of knowledge. Such divisions often rely on the putative boundedness of geographic, linguistic, and temporal categorizations when producing knowledge about contexts that we register as being outside the liberal modern West while emphasizing the politics of universalism in liberal modernity's ontology.

Nonencounter therefore does not mean non-encounter—it does not signify a reification of an absence of encounter. Instead, it points out a phenomenon that emerges when discipline and epistemology disavow and refuse to acknowledge encounters with, for instance, questions of race and racism and their global application across the study of the legacies and consequences of colonialism. The term *nonconformity*, for example, means

a "failure or refusal to conform"—a *choice* and *structure* of going against the evidence and possibility of conformity—rather than the absence of conformity overall. In similar fashion, *nonencounter* implies a failure or refusal to bring critical attention to the centrality of certain topics within the systems of epistemic representation that shape the study of culture and race. This failure or refusal takes place across the variety of disciplines that concern themselves with producing knowledge about contexts such as modern Japan and Mexico and questions of race in a globalized perspective—namely, US formations of area and ethnic studies, whose histories intersect across the militarized and politicized relationship between university departments and state power. It is thus apt, albeit with irony, that the term *nonencounter* exists for me in English, as it derives from the specific Anglo-American spheres of knowledge production that I attempt to trouble in this book. While my efforts to place discourses on race across twentieth-century Japan and Mexico emerge at moments where material connections may be present, a practice of reading transpacific nonencounters is a way to theorize and imagine a larger network of obfuscated resonances and legacies that compose the incomprehensive and uncontainable archives of transpacific and global modernity. The critical frame of nonencounter signifies more than unlikeliness or absence of linkages between racial formations in Japan and Mexico. Transpacific nonencounters refer also to the implied suppression of accounts of how thinking about the violence of imperialism and settler colonialism requires a capacious and imaginative understanding of the workings of racial supremacist domination as a global structure that goes beyond the centrality of white hegemony.

Recent studies on the politics of race in the development of national modernity reveal the shared institutional and imaginary dimensions of settler and colonial governance that brought the political regimes of Japan and Mexico into contact. Laura Torres-Rodríguez's *Orientaciones transpacíficas* examines how Japan's role in Asia, as a site of geopolitical dominance and cultural influence in the context of twentieth-century international relations, inspired ideas about national modernity and modernization in Mexico. Critically, Torres-Rodríguez points to the administration of Porfirio Díaz, whose three-decades-long dictatorship (termed the *Porfiriato*) was marked by its attention to the Meiji Restoration and an ambition to align Mexico with the Pacific rim at the turn of the century.[10] In tandem, the work of Eiichiro Azuma, Sidney Xu Lu, and others has highlighted how Japanese government officials and military leaders of the early

decades of the twentieth century increasingly viewed Mexico, more than other countries in Latin America, as a "racially tolerant" nation.[11] During the years that marked the period of what Azuma calls "emigration-led colonial expansion" into and across the Pacific, the Meiji government looked to Mexico and Brazil as the preferred destinations for ambitious Japanese frontiersmen.[12] The crucial contributions of scholars such as Jason Oliver Chang, Robert Chao Romero, Selfa A. Chew, Rachel Lim, and Jessica Fernández de Lara Harada furthermore teach us the importance of examining the particular conditions of Asian migrant and diasporic experience in Latin America. These scholars and their work contribute tremendously to contextualizing formations of race and racism in the global dimensions of Asian diaspora, the impact of US anti-Asian immigration laws on transpacific migration, and the role that the exploitation of Asian migrants played in the uneven capitalist development of Latin American states.

While the historical and present-day connections between Asia and the Americas are the backdrop of the texts I examine, the absence of empirical encounter as well as the strategic de-linking of Asia and Latin America in the institutionalized production of knowledge are my premise for analysis. In other words, to register disconnection as something epistemically constructed is only a first step to a methodology that resists the prerequisites of the empirical or archival. The epistemic construction of nonencounter serves as a critical analytical grounding in the project of antiracist epistemology. With this goal in mind, the approach to the nonencounter brings to the fore the problems, both pedagogical and structural, with methods of comparison and the structures that uphold the model of world literary studies in North America. That is, nonencounter responds to the caveats of attempts to overcome the systems of difference and distance that come into play when geographic, temporal, or cultural contexts do not seem to "touch" but require forms of disciplining.[13] Under the reconciliatory model of "world literature," comparison implicates accounts of literary and cultural production to a territorial regime that values the quantification of cultural texts, imagining a spectral extension of the relationship between war and diplomacy onto the politics of literary study.[14] Thus, while the area studies approach to read literatures by strategically "mining" them for information on the essentialized "other" or in their mimetic relationship to more "universalized" Euro-American texts, comparative and world literary methodologies pose similar ethical foreclosure. When the disciplinary takes precedent, an understanding of relation comes through as reification. Worlding and comparison, then,

can be read as apparatuses of disconnect and disconnection. In this vein, Édouard Glissant's theory of relation as "the possibility for each one at every moment to be both solidary and solitary there" encapsulates the hermeneutic role of nonencounter in terms of the colonial inheritance of epistemic division.[15] When comparison is complicit in forms of racial objectification that disable possibilities for solidarity, attention to the racism that informs the construction of separations of regimes of knowledge provides a possibility to reformulate an account of the "world" of "world literature" in terms of Silva's theorization of the global as racial.

Kum's and Advertencia Lirika's artistic practices define for me what it means to "be both solidary and solitary there," to see how histories of oppression that are not our own, that are far from our own, unravel and unearth, as Kum describes when writing on her own work, "the chaotic reality that shapes our worlds."[16] I read them, therefore, as suggesting something similar to Glissant's proposal of relations that honor opacity and remain solidary without putting energy into repairing the incommensurable. When I talk about the idea of nonencounter as a trace or evidence of the construction of absences (disciplinary, political, racial), I am discussing an alternative strategy for addressing the many actors—people, institutions, ideas—involved in forging devices that erase certain modalities of encounter from official archives and forms of knowing. Rather than tracking the history of nonencounter, which would assume that nonencounter has been consistently upheld, I offer in this book an interpretive cultural historiography and analysis that works to disentangle how its logic operates and how it can be reexamined in specific spatiotemporal frames. This by no means limits the hermeneutics of nonencounter to these frames. The historiographic approach tracks and excavates nonencounters in association with other accounts that deviate from and *queer* the histories of racist worlding. Nonencounter can teach us, in other words, to make meaning not *despite* but *from* and *because* of absence by asking us to interpret foreclosure as having heuristic potential.

Throughout the chapters of this book, the heuristic of nonencounter helps me situate various figurations of constructed absence and its violence: chapter 1's tracing of the ingrained disavowal of gender in conceptions of universalism that contour the "grammars" of "anti-racist" ideologies that legitimated genocide and continued colonial and racial oppression; chapter 2's description of Mexican philosophy as a *tierra incógnita* by a prominent Japanese intellectual after meeting with a visiting philosopher from Mexico City; chapter 3's exploration of the gendered and racial politics

of "cacophonous" representations of Japanese people as Indigenous in popular cinema and literary fiction; and chapter 4's analysis of the inscriptive legacies of anti-Blackness in literary works from the 1960s that have reached a worldwide canonical status. At times, nonencounter is a way to think about how the absence of empirical links generates the possibility of a critical comparative inquiry. At other times, I employ the term *nonencounter* to give meaning to how the obfuscated histories of racism across Asia and Latin America figure in the ways that Indigenous, Black, Asian, and other marginalized subjects experience the continued effects of racial settler colonial violence. Nonencounter operates, therefore, to signify how the constructed disparities of discipline and the structural erasures of racialized and colonized subjects are not only entangled and resonant but also central to transpacific cultural critique.

Through a focus on the hermeneutic value of disparity and disconnect, a framework of nonencounters provides a way of mapping out a practice of reading against spatial registers of nation- and area-based models of study. Attending to a perceived absence of encounter or connection requires us to dismantle not only how we traditionally privilege evidence as a basis for empirical comparisons but also the ways that Asia and Latin America are broadly imagined as disparate fields for study and therefore as almost hermetically sealed off from one another. Indeed, the very conception of "Latin America" and "Asia" as geopolitical *ideas* as early as the fifteenth century was premised on the paradox of their equivalence and disparity within the cartographies of colonialism. The failure of an encounter with Asia led, after all, to the colonization of the space that would be later abstracted into the terrain called "Latin America." As Evelyn Hu-DeHart is correct to point out, "After all, was not Columbus heading to Asia when he got lost instead in a part of the world heretofore unknown to Europe and later named America?"[17] Wynter's "1492," of course, offers a more nuanced interpretation of Columbus's failure to encounter Asia not as a story that gives meaning to the geopolitical organization of the modern world but as one that understands global colonialism as a system reproduced through the ongoing subjugation, displacement, and marginalization of Indigenous and Black populations as well as the fungibility of Asian subjects.[18] In Wynter's account, the violence of a failure of encounter is foundational to the uneven power structures that underwrite a modern liberal global capitalist ethos that still reduces the relationality of Latin America and Asia to their capacity for extractive economic practices. "1492," in other words, cannot be understood outside European colonial objectives to classify swaths of

the human population of the world to the status of labor and capital. The Black theorist of Marxist thought Cedric Robinson elaborates this as part of the history of racial capitalism.[19]

The analytical traditions of Asian American critique, Pacific studies, studies in comparative racial formations, and an ever-growing corpus of critical area studies enable this book's examination of the racist capitalist logic of imperial nationalisms across Asia and the Americas. Still, too often, popular narratives of race mythologize a nation's ability to neutralize race or deracialize itself altogether—for instance, in cases where Mexico or Japan are discussed as not being racist because they "do not have race" (in the case of Mexico) or because they are "ethnically homogeneous" (in the case of Japan). Through the framework of nonencounter, my approach to the study of racial formations in twentieth-century Japan and Mexico attends to an analysis of the modern state and global modernity as apparatuses of racial differentiation and inequality. In other words, understanding European white supremacy as exclusive of the fundamental role that racial colonialism played in Mexico and Japan puts at stake a comprehensive analysis of how the *discursive* spheres that constructed Japanese, Mexican, and other "nonwhite" cultural nationalisms were themselves complicit in legitimizing the violence of colonial racial supremacy. Functionally and publicly, mestizo and Japanese identities were negotiated with and against a desire to attain forms of racial hegemonic power. Following Bolivar Echeverría's analysis of *blanquitud*, which argues that the hegemony of whiteness does not need white people to be upheld, I read Japanese imperialism and mestizo nationalism as supremacist models of using race as an instrument of power and as upholding standards of racial belonging and segregation. In so doing, the focus of this book is less about inquiring into how nonwhite nations can be racially supremacist and more about asking how transpacific national modernities not only participated in the global structuring of race as a field of settler and imperial domination but also produced oppressive racial hierarchies and forms of racial hegemony that are not often taken into account in Anglo-American and Western European–centered dialogues.

The hermeneutic approach of nonencounter also doubles as a citational reframing. The work of Wendy Matsumura has taught me to think about how the politics of knowledge production in and about modern non-European settler states such as Japan and Mexico "ha[s] to contend with anti-Blackness, as well as anti-Indigeneity, not as additive context but as the very grounds on which our understandings of imperialism, colonialism, and

total war must stand."[20] In this vein, this project is also indebted to anticolonial and decolonial feminist scholarship that has shown in varying ways how to attend to the dehumanizing violence of area epistemologies by engaging models that emerge from Black and Indigenous critiques of the colonial violence of knowledge production. I also draw on and am in intellectual debt to the scholarship of Denise Ferreira da Silva, Sylvia Wynter, Hortense Spillers, Jodi A. Byrd, Christina Sharpe, and other scholars of Black and Indigenous epistemologies who link the construction of the modern world to violent anti-Black and anti-Indigenous structures and processes. Anti-Blackness and anti-Indigeneity, after all, shape relations among all subjects implicated within the systems of power produced by the enduring conditions of empire, settler colonialism, and the legacies of exclusionary liberalism and universalism. I call my citation of the work by these scholars a form of indebtedness, however, because I view their interventions as absented links within the critical discourses that have been used to deconstruct the traditional model of area studies. Conversations in the critique of area studies have crafted historical materialist narratives that attempt to reckon with the implications of what Wynter termed, in her 1987 article "On Disenchanting Discourse," the partitioning "discourse of the universal Human self from 'anthropology'" (as is the episteme of area studies).[21] Yet as Matsumura has incisively pointed out, even as they illuminate the twentieth-century formations of racial heteropatriarchal colonial violence, the genealogies of Indigenous Black radical, intellectual, and philosophical production are rarely recognized within the corpus of the materialist critique of area studies.[22] Similarly—though outside the scope of my work here—despite long-standing citation of Edward Said's *Orientalism*, much of the work done to criticize the discipline of area studies has eliminated from its agenda the decolonizing imperative of Edward Said's critique of ongoing dehumanization and destruction of Arab life under the continuing effects of European and North American settler and colonial violence. (How come?)

Theorizing nonencounter is thus a heuristic hermeneutic for refusing the limits of disconnected histories and intellectual genealogies that helps me understand why an analysis of anti-Blackness and anti-Indigeneity are not just inscribed in the logics of Pan-Asianism and *mestizaje* but also reinscribed in the critiques of colonialism, heteropatriarchy, and racism that fail to register their centrality. This refusal to *not recognize* pushes me to reconfigure my own intellectual formation and consider instead how the failure to register processes of dehumanization was symptomatic in the violence

perpetuated by the intellectual contours of transpacific racial settler and imperial oppression.

Racial Settler Colonialism and Imperial Nationalism

While the imperialistic function of area studies has been the target of criticism mainly because of its formation as a tool for the US military apparatus and its complicity with reproducing the trappings of US military power and racial supremacy, it is also important to extend our criticism to the disavowal of the structures of racial supremacy perpetuated within the conception of "Asia" and "Latin America" as objects of study. "Disavowal," in this sense, refers to what Nayoung Aimee Kwon defines as "the ambivalent and unstable play of recognition and denial" that underpins the social, political, and cultural contexts of imperialism.[23] Often, in making questions of racism and settler coloniality—or, further, racial settler colonialism—into non-matters (nonencounter) for the production of cultural knowledge, traditional area studies (as well as many of its critiques) default to white epistemological genealogies of anthropology, theory, and comparative methodologies. Analyzing Japanese and Mexican imperial nationalist discourses and ideologies through the frame of racial settler colonialism is key, for me, to providing a capacious analysis of race and racism. From Indigenous American critique, the term *settler colonialism* has typically been employed to reflect on the exploitation, exclusion, and dispossession of Indigenous communities in the colonial processes that constituted the history of modern nation-statehood in, especially, anglophone America. But as the scholar of comparative colonialisms J. Kēhaulani Kauanui incisively argues, settler colonialism is a *structure* rather than a single historical event within a single context.[24] By "structure," Kauanui refers to the continued subjection of Indigenous people to "an ongoing genocidal project" that has not ended, as evidenced by the permanence of settlers on Indigenous lands and the continued removal of Indigenous peoples from their lands. Confronting the notion that "colonialism is something that ends" with the dissolution of formal colonies, the use of settler colonialism as an analytic furthermore debunks the myth that Indigenous and other marginalized peoples subjugated by colonial violence exist in the past of the settler nation.[25] As Kum's and Advertencia Lirika's projects prove, resistance to the historical and present structures of settler colonial violence and empire remains very much a part of the enduring and global legacies of racial and anti-Indigenous dispossession.

The focus of this book is the global colonial context in which disparate "anti-racist" discourses emerge across transpacific formations of racial settler power. I argue that the ideological productions of Mexican and Japanese racial settler colonialisms demonstrate a shared tendency for intertwining the violent colonial processes of nation-building—the coercive integration of colonized populations and territories into a hegemonic state—with processes of imperial domination. Therefore, a critical point that I emphasize throughout is defining Mexican mestizo nationalism and Japanese Pan-Asianism as ideologies of imperial nationalism. The term *imperial nationalism* denotes, more than the physical attributes that constituted the spatial expansion and reorganization of the territorial sovereignty, the intellectual and speculative investments that invariably inform the occupation of colonized space—be they geographic, political, or sociocultural terrains.

The intellectual historian and cultural theorist Naoki Sakai has defined imperial nationalism as an emotive attachment whereby the project of the nation adopts imperialistic rhetoric and ideologies that intersect with the systematization of the territorial state.[26] In the context of the Japanese Empire, Sakai describes imperial nationalism as a "pastoral power structure" of Japanese imperialism that later transmuted itself into US (neo)imperial nationalism.[27] Here I extend the notion of imperial nationalism to the constitution of Mexican settler nationalism in order to make visible the multiple forms of subjugation that Indigenous, Black, and Asian populations in Mexico experienced during the systemization of mestizo hegemony in the twentieth century. While the constitution of Mexican racial settler and cultural nationalisms has apparent differences to Japanese imperialism, the ideological productions that underwrote them shared a justification of state power as a pastoral apparatus for administering colonial and Indigenous subjects. From Sakai's definition, I conceptualize imperial nationalism as a phenomenon of a racial colonial transference in transpacific national modernization wherein the racial heteropatriarchal logic of empire helps assert nonwhite settler hegemony.

The co-occurrence of intellectual histories of racial philosophy in Mexican and Japanese national modernities demonstrates that transpacific modernity was underwritten by a recurring and violent scene of conquest and the making of race into an object of liberal humanism. Of course, the modern Mexican state, unlike the Japanese Empire, never participated in what could be recognized as a formal model of colonialism.[28] But when I talk about Mexican imperial nationalism and its resonances

with—rather than equivalence to—Japanese imperial nationalism, I refer to the discursive construction of a national ideology that predicated itself on the coercive linguistic, cultural, and racial subjugation of Indigenous populations and the exclusion of other racialized, migrant, enslaved, and formerly enslaved people from the ideological and political aspirations of Mexican modernity. Rather than only identifying an emotive-affective structure of the imperial framework of national identification, the term *imperial nationalism* also theorizes the role of cultural and ideological discourses in the erasure and dehumanization of subjects, which conditioned the construction of multiracial settler hegemony. Furthermore, early twentieth-century discourses on the formation of *Mexicanidad* through mestizo nationalism parallel Japan's imperial project of Pan-Asianism in several ways, even while attempting to meet different goals. It matters as well that the view of *mestizaje* as justification for Mexican cultural universalism carries enormous hegemonic weight in the construction of Latin Americanism and *Latinidad* across the Americas. As I explore in chapter 2, one of the critical components of *mestizaje* ideology was that it theorized Latin American scientific racialism and became central, as Juan De Castro explains, to different national elitist attempts to promote the "whitening" of Latin American populations.[29] Thinking about Mexican racial settler nationalism as an *imperial* nationalism, I push for a way to analyze the role of Mexico as a cultural hegemon in the construction of Latin American modernity and place it in uneasy juxtaposition with the continued impact of Japanese cultural imperialism in East Asian geopolitics.

While underscoring imperial nationalism as an ideological structure within the formation of the Japanese Empire and the postrevolutionary Mexican state, I also examine how this ideological phenomenon intersects with the present-day articulations of Japan and Mexico as settler colonial states that uphold their status through the perpetuation of anti-Indigeneity. As Indigenous critiques have highlighted, the modern nation-state cannot be considered without the co-constitutive ontologies of settler possession and the colonial underpinnings of the national. As Jodi A. Byrd argues, the emphasis on the national in international law "predicates that indigenous people remain still colonized liminally within and beside the established and geopolitical and biopolitical borders and institutions of (post)colonial governance as stateless entities."[30] In anglophone academic discussions, *settler colonialism* typically refers to how the dispossession and exploitation of colonized Indigenous populations serve the purpose of the nation-state. By systematizing the exclusion of subjects included within the nation-state

proper, settler colonialism encodes modes of internal settler colonization as racialization, and such racialization as an imperative for the forceful remediation and assimilation of colonized people and territories into the borders of the settler colonial state.[31] This is why key scholars in Indigenous studies—from Byrd, to Aileen Moreton-Robinson, to Tiffany Lethabo King, to Kathryn Walkiewicz—argue for analyses of nation-state formation that emphasize the role of racial possession and dispossession in the establishment of national identity and culture. In the context of Japan, alongside Lu and Azuma, Danika Medak-Saltzman demonstrates how crucial settler colonialism was not only for the primitive accumulation of capital in modernizing Japan at the end of the nineteenth century but also, overall, for Japan's colonial influence in Asia and the Americas.[32] Beginning with the development of Hokkaido through violent interventions in Ainu homelands, the creation of Japanese settlers and Japanese settler colonial subjects transformed the legacies of Japanese imperialism across each side of the Pacific. To attend to the question of settler colonialism from the perspectives of both Japanese and Indigenous studies, as Medak-Saltzman inspiringly demonstrates, means to better engage with arguments that address the settler colonial contexts "already haunted by the specters of colonialism" while enabling deeper engagement with the consequences of colonialism as they bear on continued practices of incorporating Indigeneity into cross-disciplinary and interdisciplinary scholarship.[33]

Imperial nationalism can furthermore be theorized as the nexus between the production of ideology that justifies the formation of the state and the mechanisms of racial supremacy and settler colonialism. The projects of racial settler colonialism in both Japan and Mexico gave way to a slew of academic and cultural discourses that looked to "discover" a national past in the identities and cultural practices of the people whose Indigeneity they erased. More than an "emotive-affective" identification of the nation as an imperial project, imperial nationalist disciplines like *minzokugaku* ("folk" studies) and cultural aesthetic ideologies like *indigenismo* in the early 1900s ensured that what became the ideal of the national community could manage Indigeneity through the possession of Indigenous lands, labor, and practices while eschewing the role of Indigenous people in the projects of modernization.[34]

Considering imperial nationalism as an intellectual enterprise cannot, therefore, be divorced from an analysis of its role as a racial settler colonial phenomenon that animates heteropatriarchal understandings of

land, people, culture, and community. Another resonance across Japanese and Mexican imperial nationalist epistemologies, for instance—the role of male elites in these nonwhite European majority states—served a role in the consecration of racial settler hegemonic discourses. Through their knowledge production, discourses on race were used to transform the definition of the national community, including those forced within it, through performative sloganizations—or, as Silva argues, "discursive short-cuts" for the "racial (ethical-political) truths that set in motion the colonial mechanisms of expropriation."[35] As such, I read the construction of some of these sloganized "short-cuts" that signify imperial nationalist endeavors—the "cosmic race," "the Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere"—to examine how, within them, race becomes a conceptual vehicle and terrain of political fantasy through which to compose a homosocial vision of global modernity.

The Question of Area and Transpacific Critique

My vision of transpacific critique theorizes the transpacific according to a perspective that brings into alignment, without collapsing the differences among, the various, if disconnected, historiographies of oppression and resistance that underwrite the uneven structures of global coloniality.[36] Thus, when I refer to "transpacific racial discourses," I mean a set of perspectives situated in the entangled histories of racial formations across Asia and the Americas that shaped how the category of "humanity" could be processed and bifurcated in the construction of a global modern world. Transpacific critique, in other words, provides a frame for holding to account relations of dominance and power to the continued and intersecting legacies of Japanese, Spanish, and North American colonialisms. I interpret, therefore, the transpacific as a frame that enables an analysis of the geopolitical and biopolitical dimensions of what Silva conceptualizes as "a global idea of race"—how race shapes and conditions how human difference is reproduced across the social and political configurations of modernity. As a global idea that has evident structural and systemic manifestations, race continues to link the legacies of colonialism to dominant epistemological formations, both materially and discursively. If we take race as a global idea, it therefore follows that this book's formulation of the transpacific might find itself at odds with dominant definitions of the framework of transpacific studies.

Wynter's writings on how "present arrangements of knowledge" (disciplines) perpetuate the global colonial division of humanity formulate my understanding of the stakes of the transpacific critique of area studies as a critique of the overrepresentation of hegemonic figures and discourses.[37] Wynter describes how limited the "figure of Man"—constituted by eschewing the universality of those who are not Western European (ergo, white) bourgeois men—is for new vantage points and objects of knowledge to emerge. While creating an account for the genealogies that sustain the academic fields concerning humanity in general—the humanities—the "figure of Man" has historically politicized itself *against* the inclusion and *for* the erasure of Black, Indigenous, Asian, and other marginalized and nonheteronormative subjects. In many ways, this figure of disciplinary authority dominates the frameworks and questions that we turn to when we produce global knowledge, especially in ways that devalue, ignore, or discredit work that holds disciplines and practices of teaching accountable to their supremacist constructions. If the traditional racist and heterosexist model of knowledge production renders the "figure of Man" into a universal, relatable subject, I argue here for further ethical interrogation of the impetus toward relation, relationality, and relatability. As coloniality is premised on a relational center, de- and anticolonial thinking must be antirelational.

In a similar vein, Lisa Yoneyama's mindful analysis of the prefix *trans-* in *transpacific* plays a further, indispensable role in the way I understand the transpacific as a critical vantage point. Yoneyama reads *trans-* as a pathway that dislocates the directions of paths carved through the heterosexist, racist structures of empire and colonialism.[38] It is through and across—*trans*—the partitions enabled by the effects of racism, colonialism, and imperialism that we begin to denaturalize the ongoing reification and expropriation of those marginalized and rendered disposable by their effects. After all, area studies do not reflect the world; rather, they produce a world that inscribes the hegemonic specters of empire and racial supremacy onto how we receive "our present arrangements of knowledge." For instance, Shu-mei Shih identifies how area studies' disavowals of race and racialization limit these fields' viability as lenses for humanistic knowledge production.[39] What Shih terms the "deracialization" of area studies applied to a neocolonial operation that made it possible for scholars to produce knowledges about racialized others without considering the systemic and interpersonal manifestations of racism at play in

the operations of these fields and their use. Vicente Rafael likewise raises a critique of US area studies' disavowal of race and racism as "conceived at a moment . . . when liberal ambitions for enforcing global peace [were] necessary for capitalist expansion."[40] By disavowing race and racism as part of their institutionalization, area studies have been able to perpetuate the militarized racist practices of knowledge production as a form of strategic diplomacy.

In other words, the enforcement of cultural difference through what Rafael characterizes as "disciplinary containment" of the non-liberal-capitalist world had further consequences in the formation of Latin American studies—a field founded at the beginning of the Cold War to contain and control leftist and populist movements in the region. In his discussion of the construction of Latin America in Latin American studies, Alberto Moreiras cites Uruguayan writer Ángel Rama's *La ciudad letrada* (The Lettered City, 1984) to argue that historically, the "lettered city" that typifies academic imaginaries of Latin American cosmopolitanism and constructed the ideal of Latin America "structurally excludes a number of historic populations, some of them originary, some mestizos or descendants of slave groups."[41] As Latin American studies privileges cultural and intellectual productions from the "militantly liberal-criollo" and majority-white populations of Latin America, Moreiras points out, even experts of the field who identify as Latin American framed a relationship to the field of study "that left behind literary priorities in order to center themselves."[42]

If area studies is an orientation, a direction, and a way of centering certain formations of the "figure of Man," we might call area studies a type of phenomenological apparatus that functions as a device to flatten the world into anthropological knowledges that follow the racial colonial divisions of humanity. The unraveling of the kind of systemic *worlding* engaged in the area model—and often reproduced as a comparative method—would offer a possibility of forging new directions and approaches beyond racial disciplinary containment. In many respects, reconsiderations of the area model reenact the strategies and approaches that characterized how the problems of essentialism and particularism have been interrogated since the 1980s. For this reason, however, holding the area model to account as an articulation of false universalism and hegemonic worlding can expose it as a model that forecloses relationalities and relatabilities. Indeed, even at the level of the politics of language and translation, the apparatus of area (as a silo that enables cultures and histories to be studied in utmost

specificity) persists in foreclosing relationships to and among languages by managing and articulating differences through their separation.

I therefore engage transpacific critique not simply to chronicle the translation of national languages into others (though instances of this do emerge in my writing) but to use translational modes as a practice for representing how moments of instability, constructed differences, and strategies of categorization can be negotiated. The geographical, political, and, indeed, linguistic contexts that shape the arguments of this book are also consequential to my own intellectual stakes as a Mexican immigrant and scholar trained in area studies. Writing as someone born to the millennial generation, following the end of the Cold War, my life has encompassed many instances in which human lives were lost to the violence of systemic inequalities and reproductions of the colonial divisions of humanity. I therefore often think about what we owe to disciplinarily constructed erasures. Yet I am aware of the forms of privilege that my positionality as a mestiza with educational privilege has afforded me, including in my ability to traverse the fields and languages of Asian and Latin American studies within US academe. It is therefore pertinent to me, both personally and intellectually, to delineate why interrogating area studies as a racist disciplinary formation is not just a form of antiracist decolonization but also a crucial critical intervention that constitutes a new form of understanding the work of translation as an anticolonial practice. It is not merely that the materials that I engage are originally produced in languages other than English and require the work of translation but rather that the work of translation reconciles the disciplinary lenses and traditions that inflect how we understand the materialities of these texts (the context of their production based on understandings of their historical and geopolitical specificities).

In my field of training—Japanese literary studies—for example, those who inhabit bodies like mine often struggle to attain legibility as scholars—and, in some ways, as human beings. In part, this is likely because bodies like mine were not imagined as having voices in the field upon its inception. After all, Japanese studies was founded by a group of scholars affiliated with US military and intelligence agencies who were tasked with the reconstruction of the image of Japan after the Second World War.[43] In other words, the economy and, indeed, the capital—both financial and cultural—of Japanese literary studies is built on the exclusion of nonwhite racialized subjects from the practices of the discipline, beginning with the recruitment of military and intelligence officers from prestigious schools

who founded and shaped the field in the 1940s to their continuing influence in how Japanese literary studies is taught, who gets to teach it, and who gets to be taught it. If we begin with the account of how militarized and politicized discrimination truncated academic and financial opportunities for nonwhite Americans in the field, we can begin to think about how the history of area studies largely involved biopolitical processes that decided whose lives were more valuable and expendable. Who was allowed to live and produce knowledge about Japan after 1945? Who was excluded or left to die? The debt that I feel is not a moralistic one that pushes me to condemn the cis white men whose names adorn prestigious centers and libraries across the country; rather, it is a debt precisely to those who did not get to be disciplined, those whom I did not encounter. But more than a moralistic debt, it is an intellectual debt that I am attempting to begin to pay in *Transpacific Nonencounters*.

Key to paying my intellectual debt is my turning to the transpacific as a vantage point that does not make a particular demographic, ethnic, or regional group into an object of study. If in the context of the North American academy, the rubrics of Asian and Latin American studies—area studies—have been insufficient for examining the global historicity of racism, I cannot comfortably say that the antidote to the field's disavowal of racism exists in frameworks that study how Asian, Brown, Black, and Indigenous subjects are subjugated in the specificity of the United States or Anglo-America. The branches comprising ethnic studies, in other words, do not often account for structures and histories of race and racism encountered outside the imaginary of the so-called West. Knowledge production around questions of race, in disciplinary practices at the very least, often places race and racism in the domain of Eurocentric ideas about whiteness. US-centered ethnic studies are limited because they do not address the heterogeneity of the global structures of colonialism, racism, and white supremacy, which are not incommensurate with Eurocentric racisms but require multiple axes of historical analysis and cultural critique to account for. Joo Ok Kim addresses the connections between the establishment of ethnic studies and the deracialization of area studies a step further by arguing that the branches of ethnic studies are "tethered through Cold War militarization" in Asia. "The Cold War and neo-liberal university's incorporation of the radical political desires of differentially positioned social movements into such disciplines and fields as ethnic studies," Kim writes, function "to manage, order, integrate, secure, and rule subjects marked as unruly."[44]

Amid area studies' disavowal of questions of racism and ethnic studies' self-reflexive critical model, which pays little attention to the material conditions of racism in most of the world, a disciplinary model of transpacific studies seems like a productive venue for staging a deconstructive dialogue that remedies the distances between these fields. In Anglo-American academe, transpacific studies typically functions today to connect the histories of the United States' military, colonial, and neocolonial impact on Asian and Pacific diasporic movements in anglophone North America while illuminating prospective convergences among the fields of Asian studies, Asian American studies, and American studies. Such a notion of transpacific studies, however, often forecloses the possibility of creating a "decolonial genealogy," as Lisa Yoneyama argues, that may "clarify the specific geohistorical conditions under which that space has been constituted as an object of knowledge and nonknowledge."[45] Further, such a notion does not consider the transpacific as a conceptual frame for critiquing intersecting geohistorical structures of colonialism, empire, racism, and Indigenous dispossession beyond an anglophone colonial and postcolonial center. In Pacific studies, meanwhile, critiques of the transpacific engage in a critique of transpacific studies in order to highlight the erasure of the Pacific Islands and Pacific Islanders from an Asia-centered ideology of the Asia Pacific and the disregard for the continued violence of the interrelated structures of Japanese and US colonialism.[46] As Erin Suzuki incisively points out, early twenty-first-century articulations of US-oriented "transpacific studies" often understood the transpacific as a productive metaphor that highlights the histories that traverse the Pacific but that often renders invisible other modes of relating and orienting the critical decolonial scope of the transpacific.[47] Okinawan feminist scholar Ayano Ginoza's proposal of the term "archipelagic feminisms" similarly highlights the intention "to nuance relationalities and solidarities of islands and islanders in a way that their agencies and mobilizations are not predetermined by language barriers or ideological divisions, as well as the hegemonic geopolitical designation of islands by their isolation, distance, and smallness."[48]

The limitations of the disciplines of area and ethnic studies in providing a language structure of racial and anti-Indigenous violence within non-Anglo-American contexts inflect the ways that the histories of Japanese imperialism and Mexican mestizo nationalism bear on the ways that forms of anti-Blackness, anti-Indigeneity, and anti-Asianness structure and inflect on each other across these contexts. To register the specificity

of anti-Indigeneity and anti-Asian racism in the discourses of *mestizaje* and Pan-Asianism, for instance, I use terms such as *racial settler coloniality* and *imperial nationalism*, which target the ways that categories such as "Japanese" and "mestizo" were produced as structures of racial supremacy vis-à-vis Black, Indigenous, and colonized and migrant Asian subjects.

To be clear, in holding the Anglocentrism of transpacific studies to account, I am not calling for the valuation of a Latin American or East Asian transpacific. I do want to conceive transpacific critique as a troubled conversation with Anglo-American epistemologies that can interrogate the systems of power that shape the disconnects of race across Latin America and Asia. But arguments proposed by Latin American decolonial theory to replace the overrepresentation of European or anglophone contexts with hispanophone ones is not the decolonial praxis I espouse.[49] To critique area studies as a problem requires a critique of how a proposal to center hispanophone, lusophone, or other non-Anglocentric configurations of the transpacific may center the cultural and political hegemony of Europeanness. Junyoung Verónica Kim's work has therefore been uniquely important to my understanding of how to conceive the perceived (non)relationship of Latin America to the transpacific. Writing on the expansion of critical race studies through a framework she terms "Asia-Latin America as Method," Kim offers a powerful foundation for how we may deconstruct the divisive formations of Asian and Latin American studies not through a centering of an inter-geopolitical, regional, or "area" model but through a "method" that offers a more nuanced and capacious approach to the contexts of racial, gendered, and capitalist violence that underwrite relations of power across the formations of "Asia–Latin America."[50] To move away from the schematization of the non-West as spaces where relationality cannot occur without the mediation of the West is a process of refusing the enclosures of discipline, of carrying out an approach and account of transpacific historiographies that may shift how we perceive the once prearranged representations of those spaces and their relations. What interests me in Kim's critical revision of the transpacific approach to Asia–Latin America is that she notes the epistemic violence of discipline itself, not affording the frames of area or ethnic studies any reprieve from their complicity in naturalizing knowledges that in fact erase and dislodge the experiences of racial and migratory formations situated outside the discursive regime of "the West and the Rest."[51] I join Kim's effort in this book to theorize Asia–Latin America not as a framework of peripheral exchange or exception but as a site for a critical anticolonial epistemic practice. For

such a practice to emerge in transpacific critique, the intersections of Black, Indigenous, and anticolonial epistemologies should be central to interrupting arrangements of knowledge, present or otherwise, that participate in strategies of domination and dispossession.

Chapters

Deploying transpacific nonencounters to confront the legacies of area means bringing together critical epistemologies that can examine what has been historically devalued, erased, and excluded. Of course, a more encompassing project might require several volumes and many other voices. While I have written this book with several audiences in mind—first and foremost being students of literary and cultural studies for whom a transpacific framework of nonencounter resonates with analyses of power, knowledge production, and formations of race and racism—I recognize that it is part of an unfinished critical theoretical endeavor. My archive is, after all, mainly limited to Japanese, Spanish, and English-language sources. I recognize as well that this book is not just indebted to but *depends* on conversations with works that engage the multitude of Indigenous and Asian languages that exist in the margins of the narratives, geographies, and histories explored here. Transpacific nonencounters are also the many fissures that are left over, even in and despite the attempts to address and tend to them. Nonencounter is therefore a reappearing structure because it functions as a figurative way to address the melancholic apparatus of constructed disciplinary fragmentations and structural removals as they emerge, even if in obfuscated and disarticulated ways, in the global legacies of modern racism. In other words, transpacific nonencounters require constant pathological attempts to *return to* and *witness* their formations, even when the systems that sustain them might be coming to an end (as is the ongoing promise and threat to the area-studies method).

This book is thus organized as threads of arguments that reach out to the expansive possibilities of types of relations that are "solidary and solitary there" across unlikely sites of knowledge making and unmaking. I bring together a set of texts and histories that may appear disconnected from one another but that, in nonencounter, collectively contextualize and help conceive a transpacific critique of imperial nationalism and twentieth-century modernity. In terms of periodization and the genre of materials I examine, the book's four body chapters can be read as two parts, with the first two chapters focused on analyzing intellectual histories from

the first half of the twentieth century, and the second focused on the legacies of those histories in post-1945 literary and cinematic representations. Together, the chapters respond to the ways that the structures of modernity and legacies of imperial nationalist ideologies inform, produce, and influence how categories of race emerge and get reinscribed.

The first two chapters examine the heteropatriarchal and racial colonial formations of the intellectual terrains in which imperial nationalist ideologies emerged during the first four decades of the twentieth century. Chapter 1 analyzes the role that elite male intellectuals associated with two schools of thought played in the production of imperial nationalist and culturalist philosophies. From the 1910s, the Kyoto School and El Ateneo de la Juventud (the Mexican Youth Athenaeum) gained national prominence. Philosophers associated with these epistemological currents, including well-known figures such as Miki Kiyoshi and José Vasconcelos, provided terminology for conceptualizing Pan-Asianism and *mestizaje* as part of the modernizing systems of racial settler governance. Drawing on Hortense Spillers's analysis of the "grammars" that structure the consequences of histories of racism and dehumanization in "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe," I explore how Pan-Asianism and *mestizaje* structure the racial grammars of imperial nationalisms. I discuss how philosophical discourses were codified by the heteropatriarchal and supremacist apparatuses of empire and settler coloniality and track how the two strains of multiracialist ideologies culminate in the political subjugation of racialized and colonized subjects within the project of imperial national capitalist development. Thus, they testify not to the intellectual or historical allegiances or similarities between Mexican and Japanese philosophers of race but rather to how the dispossession of colonized Indigenous, Asian, and Black subjects participates in the conceptualization and production of transpacific modernity.

While the philosophers and political figures juxtaposed in chapter 1 very likely never formally met, chapter 2 traces an instance in which archival evidence creates the record of the encounter between Kuwaki Gen'yoku and Adalberto García de Mendoza, two philosophers who met at a symposium on phenomenology in Tokyo in 1931. Across both philosopher's writings about their meeting, Kuwaki's repeated surprise over the existence of a "Mexican philosophy" is striking. In a letter that García de Mendoza translates and reprints in his collection of essays about his time in Japan, Kuwaki goes so far as to say that, to him, Mexico had been a "*tierra incógnita*" (terra incognita). I trace how this term echoes the disconnect that mediates

an inability for "Japanese" and "Mexican" to be aligned with the object of philosophy. First, *tierra incógnita* signals the sense of the power of Wynter's "figure of Man," in which philosophy, as a regime of universal humanity, can only be filtered through as a European practice, which transforms the relationship between the anthropological Japanese and Mexican philosophies into one of nonencounter, wherein Japan and Mexico cannot be recognized without the triangulation of Europe. And second, *tierra incógnita* demonstrates how the politics of knowledge and exchange are influenced by the workings of global racial politics. Probing further into each philosopher's contributions to the conceptualization of imperial nationalist ideologies, I read their encounter as premised on the homosocial dynamics of nonwhite male elites' latent identification with the demands of relational and relative whiteness.

Chapters 3 and 4 shift to consider the legacies of imperial nationalist philosophies within popular literary and cinematic texts. Chapter 3 grapples with how *indigenismo* and *mestizaje* discourse structure the cacophonous nonencounter between Indigenous and Asian racialization in Ismael Rodríguez's 1961 film *Ánimas Trujano* and Ōe Kenzaburō's novel *An Echo of Heaven*. In an extended dialogue with both texts, my analysis focuses on how Japanese individuals are "transformed" into Mexicans to represent the moral and racial excesses of modern national community-making. Using Jodi Byrd's concept of "cacophony," I argue the structures of anti-Indigeneity in both texts enact the erasure of Asian characters and reenact the normalization of anti-Asian racism as a legacy of twentieth-century imperial nationalism. By juxtaposing the film and novel, I track how representations and performances of racialized subjects contend with the continuing globality of settler colonial power, in which the traces of modern coloniality and progress intersect to condition racial and gendered othering and belonging.

The final chapter turns to the ways that post-1945 models of racial national belonging are conditioned by their association to the *longue durée* of anti-Black racism in the constitution of Japanese and Mexican nationalisms. Christina Sharpe's assertion that anti-Blackness is an all-encompassing climate in the wake of the violent construction of global modernity illustrates the urgent critical theoretical approach to any explorations of national belonging and coherence among modern subjects. In the chapter, I reassess how Blackness becomes a referent for social displacement and political dispossession in two globally popular and prolifically translated novels, Abe Kōbō's *Tanin no kao* (The Face of Another, 1964)

and Carlos Fuentes's *La muerte de Artemio Cruz* (*The Death of Artemio Cruz*, 1962). Despite their wide circulation and canonicity, scholarly discussions around *The Face of Another* and *The Death of Artemio Cruz* have seldom touched their intertextual mediations of race and of Black cultural production in the twentieth century. In examining the nonencounter between the two novels as the trace of the narrative and historical influence of Black creative and intellectual productions on both works, I discuss how they reinscribe the struggle for Black liberation across the histories of colonialism. The novels and their reception signal how, even in the absence, eradication, and denial of Black presence, anti-Black racism shapes the dominant discourses on nation, identity, and racial genealogies in Mexico and Japan.

The coda returns to the works of the feminist artists and filmmakers I introduced here, the Zapotec rapper Mare Advertencia Lirika and the Zainichi Korean multimedia artist Kum Soni. My final analyses situate anticolonial feminist histories and creative and critical productions as models of how transpacific nonencounter builds on the entangled struggles against settler and imperial nation-state formations and the apparatuses of knowledge production that construe and uphold them. Engaging decolonial imaginaries, we might arrive, I want to hope, at better ways of listening and attending to the silences, erasures, and exclusions that structure the multiple tendencies to refuse relationality in scholarly work and community-making. Nonencounters and other complex manifestations of constructed disconnection or abstraction are a product of what Cindi Textor terms "intersectional incoherence"—the structures of inequity that render differences across the perceived divides of race, gender, sexuality, language, physical ability, and class illegible even when they are visible or representable.[52] Perhaps transpacific nonencounters may be used, then, to address such experiences of refusal and being refused. They might confront how disciplines such as area studies negate and devalue lives, voices, and knowledges. If so, perhaps nonencounters may redirect, or even misdirect, our attentions to imagine new ways of untying the loose ends of area.

1

Grammars of Imperial Nationalism

The Philosophical Contours of Racial Settler Colonialism

Today, few might assume that Mexican discourses on *mestizaje*, which promote the ethical, moral, and civilizational virtues of mixed racial and ethnic national identity, might have anything in common with the ideological and intellectual currents of the Japanese Empire. If we follow the post-1945 myth of *nihonjinron* that Japan has always been a uniquely homogeneous or monoethnic society since before the advent of modernity, or that Mexico has triumphed as a locus of cultural, ethnic, and racial heterogeneity, it might stand to reason that Japanese imperialism and Mexican national modernity could be considered diametrically opposite formations. Yet from the late 1920s and into the early 1940s, prominent figures in philosophical and social thought engaged theories of regional culturalism in relation to race in imperial Japan and Latin America and became influential sources for public discussions on the construction of idealized forms of multiethnic national modernity. Their perspectives gave rise to ideologies that aligned Mexican and Japanese national modernity and culturalisms with new ways of conceiving a global order beyond white supremacy. Philosophical and academic production, in other words, became a site not only for conceiving the terms for modern cultural national belonging in the settler colonial states of Mexico and Japan but also for theorizing *mestizaje* and Pan-Asianism as forms of racial universalism or multiracialism.

The philosophies informing Pan-Asianism and *mestizaje*, in turn, provided an intellectual basis for disavowing the participation of these ideologies in constructing forms of racial settler hegemony. Keeping with nonencounter, the aim of this chapter is not to read the epistemological productions of Pan-Asianism and *mestizaje* as sharing a mutual or coherent logic. In this sense, Rei Terada's notion of the "metaracial" is an example of how the language of the racial, even when functioning at a metalevel as antiracist language, transposes racialist logic as a "complement to scientific racism" that rises alongside forms of anti-Black, anti-Indigenous, and anti-Asian philosophical projects.[1] Through considering how imperial nationalist philosophies engage the racial as a project of state-building and modern subject-making, this chapter focuses on moments of resonance and tension that expose their metaracial and racialist constructions. Further, their contemporaneity speaks to the limits of analyses that view racism as only a manifestation of European white supremacy and European colonial violence.

In her foundational essay "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe," the literary critic and philosopher Hortense Spillers introduces the idea of an "American grammar," a symbolic order that constructs national belonging and humanity in the United States as a repeated sequencing of the suppression, misnaming, and decontextualization of Black subjects and bodies since the violence of the Middle Passage.

In conversation with Spillers's critique, this chapter traces the history of the philosophical production of *mestizaje* and Pan-Asianism as discourses, or grammars, of imperial nationalisms. I examine how the grammars of imperial nationalisms come up in contingent moments when intellectual production becomes entwined with an investment in determining the status of the national community and subordinating the insurgencies that threaten its figuration. After the Mexican Revolution of 1910, a number of philosophers in Mexico contributed to affirming a sense of postrevolutionary cultural nationalism by defining and advocating for the contribution of a "Mexican philosophy" to a modern universal culture. Within this ideological program, several prominent intellectuals and artists associated with the National Autonomous University of Mexico in Mexico City helped establish a school of thought, El Ateneo de la Juventud (the Mexican Youth Athenaeum). Around the same time, an array of philosophical discussions shaped the creation of the Kyōto-gakuha (Kyoto School) housed at the Kyoto Imperial University. Like the thinkers of the Ateneo, Kyoto School philosophers engaged the definition of universal

culture through the influences of German idealism and metaphysics, sharing a concern with defining the links between the composition of a modern nation-state and the heterogeneity of its population. In negotiating Eurocentric philosophies of universalist and culturalist thought, however, these early twentieth-century intellectual discourses on Japanese and Mexican national modernity also resonated in their discursive promotion of the coercive integration of minoritarian ethnic groups into a hegemonic cultural assemblage. Therefore, on the one hand, early twentieth-century philosophies of race and nation in Japan and Mexico could be thought through their expression of a multiracial nationalism that countered the global reach of white hegemony. On the other hand, the vast and varied literatures of mestizo nationalism and Pan-Asianism emerge as a sphere where ideologies for and toward an imperial settler colonial state premised a different arrangement, or grammar, for racial domination. As Spillers writes of the structures that misname and decontextualize the traumatization of Black subjects in the construction of the American state, I argue that the grammars of Japanese and Mexican imperial nationalism work to dislocate the violent forms of dehumanization, disenfranchisement, and oppression that are steeped within the philosophical production of national modernity.

I want to begin by delineating the stakes of defining the grammars of imperial nationalist ideologies as structures underwritten by nonencounter. In this and subsequent chapters, my definition of *imperial nationalism* signifies an ideological and discursive phenomenon rooted in the dialectical formation of modern nationalism as a settler colonial and imperial ideology. As I noted, in Naoki Sakai's theorization, imperial nationalism is defined as an "emotive-affective" structure that attaches the project of nation-building to imperialist desires and processes.[2] I elaborate, however, that the structure of imperial nationalism emerges out of a fundamental disconnect between the "emotive-affective" and the systemic as well as between the *epistemic* and the *political*. And in the context of transpacific imperial nationalist ideologies that emerged in the first half of the twentieth century, my use of the term *imperial nationalism* refers to a logic that decontextualized the violent registers of coloniality through notions of multiracial culturalism, universal belonging, and, in the case of Japan and Mexico, the re-signification of heterosexist racial settler coloniality as a form of anticolonial and antiracist philosophy. Therefore, an analysis of imperial nationalism as a philosophical and ideological stance cannot be divorced from an analysis of how racial settler colonial logics contour the

ideological, psychological, and epistemological productions of heteropatriarchal state power.

In defining the stakes of imperial nationalisms as structures of nonencounter, I also underline that the discourses of race proposed in the ideologies of *mestizaje* and Pan-Asianism intersect with and bear on questions of gender and class. Although they wrote in distinct political contexts and about the formation of different regimes of cultural hegemonic power, the philosophers that I discuss are all (cis) men with class and educational privilege as intellectuals. Though their gender itself is not—at least overtly—at issue, what should be noted is the heteropatriarchal colonial function of knowledge production. In this regard, Heidi J. Nast's discussion of how nonwhite male elites work to "identify tacitly and racially with global hegemons" while speaking "in racialized opposition to these same global hegemons" incisively captures how the ideologies of *mestizaje* and Pan-Asianism understood their contestation to white supremacy not as antiracism but as a desire to justify their own supremacy through a logic of racial settler hegemony.[3] This logic is expressed, for example, in Bolivar Echeverría's concept of *blanquitud*. For Echeverría, *blanquitud*, "whiteness" refers to a hegemonizing process in which polygenic racial ideologies can bypass the idea of ethnonational purity while using race as a heteropatriarchal and ethical-civilizational marker: "Whiteness—not being quite white [*la blanquitud—que no la blancura*]—is the condition of the pseudoconcrete identity destined to fill the absence of real concreteness bestowed upon the human by established modernity."[4] Participating in a logic of *blanquitud* does not equate to being or wanting to become white; neither is *blanquitud* an investment in the mythical construction of phenotypical whiteness or "white skin" as an epidermic schema recognized in a history of retroactively equating European origins to a sense of whiteness. Rather, Echeverría speaks of an aspect of whiteness that yields to the fabrication of colonial hierarchies, gendered power relations, and the pejorative racialization of those subjugated by the structures of colonial racial capitalism. Racialized systems, including and especially knowledge-producing ones, underwrite not just the redefinition of the terms of cultural power and hegemony but also the dependence on gendered divisions to preserve the exploitative dimensions of social reproduction under liberal modernity. Hence, examining how the grammars of imperial nationalisms both consider and obfuscate the question of gender requires taking seriously the fact that the philosophies of Pan-Asian co-prosperity and *mestizaje* were conceived

in predominantly homosocial modes of epistemic reproduction invested in, at the very least, an affect of *blanquitud*.

Once again, Spillers's idea of a settler colonial grammar offers important and resonating language to my analysis of the gendered and racial grammars of transpacific imperial nationalisms. In defining the grammar of America, Spillers reads how Black bodies are misnamed as nonhuman through the repeated sequencing of subject-making that defines transatlantic enslavement, colonial domination, and the lasting legacies of anti-Blackness in the Americas. An American grammar, therefore, is a discursive vector that conditions the settler nation-building of the United States through the deprivation of, in particular, Black women's humanity. The grammars of transpacific imperial nationalisms are not divorced from the historiography of dehumanization in Spillers's analysis. By analyzing Japanese and Mexican imperial nationalisms as grammars, I respond as well to the normalization of anti-Blackness, the violence of the Middle Passage, and their legacies in processes that bear on gendered and racialized bodies globally. Spillers's attention to this grammar, as Wendy Matsumura similarly concludes, is instructive in describing the production and reproduction of the ideas of national modernity precisely because anti-Black racism structures global colonial capitalism.[5] Across the imperial nationalist discourses of Pan-Asianism and mestizo nationalism—as well as, one could say, US imperial nationalism since the mid-twentieth century—conceptualizations of multiracial universal belonging are rooted in anti-Black racial imaginaries that structure practices and policies that uphold anti-Asian and anti-Indigenous violence. At the same time, the grammars of imperial nationalism also produce critical sites of nonencounter through the forms of disavowal, disconnect, and distancing. They not only generate the assumption—upheld by the Cold War epistemic regimes of area studies—that Mexican mestizo nationalism and Japanese imperialism are incoherent phenomena but also flatten out the possibilities for critically engaging these phenomena as parts of a global racial politics.

The concepts of "intersectionality" and "intersectional feminism," first proposed by the legal theorist Kimberlé Crenshaw, are therefore instrumental to what I foreground as a critical transnational feminist engagement with the intellectual histories of Pan-Asianism and *mestizaje*.[6] Along with engaging Spillers's concept of a "grammar," the incisive indictment of Sylvia Wynter, Denise Ferreira da Silva, Lisa Lowe, and Lisa Yoneyama, among others, of the coloniality of universal humanism, liberal modernity, and the settler colonial logic of nationalized integration and inclusion

underscores the possibility of reckoning with race and racialization as shaped by gendered dynamics and their colonial influences.[7] This chapter situates nonencounter, therefore, not merely through the vantage point of disciplinary or epistemic disconnects but within the capacity to discuss gender as remarkable—something to remark on—in contexts where it seems disconnected or absent from the object of critique. Despite these epistemic and historiographic disconnects, this chapter unpacks the nonencounters of transpacific imperial nationalisms along three divisions: the emergence of as Pan-Asianism and *mestizaje* ideologies as multiracial racisms; the dialogic formation of Kyoto School and Ateneo philosophies on race and universal belonging; and the suppressed gendered and masculinist logic of imperial nationalist philosophies.

Constructing Racist Multiracialisms

The term *mestizaje* emerged first as a legal category in the sixteenth-century Spanish colonial caste system.[8] While the use of *mestizaje* as a category in the discourse of modern national identity-formation varies across time and location, its function as a colonial and settler phenomenon facilitated the accumulation of capital and political power for the role of *blanquitud* within the uneven global order of the twentieth century.[9] In the formation of Mexican and, ostensibly, Latin American national modernity, the figure of the Indigenous subject and her relationship to the project of the nation continuously overlapped concerns for racial and socioeconomic disunion within the state with settler desires for regional culturalist identification that could resolve the "Indigenous problem." During the years of the dictatorship of President Porfirio Díaz, the term *indigenizing modernity*, for example, indicated a project of uniting the Mexican national community. And even after the collapse of the Porfiriato in the Mexican Revolution, intellectual and political discourses alike continued to approach this "problem" by arguing that the modern nation-state would fail as a project without the incorporation of Indigenous populations into the project of capitalist development and progress.

This argument did not pertain solely to the inclusion of Indigenous subjects into the national labor force. Notably, in his 1910 inaugural address at the newly reformed National Autonomous University of Mexico, the philosopher Justo Sierra expressed his fear of Mexico's precarious relationship to the projects of civilization and modernization. Sierra states that the four-hundred-year history of the contact between Spanish colonizers

"of Christian culture" and the "strange aboriginal cultures" was symbolized by "the first kiss between Hernán Cortés and the Malintzin," constituting a never-ending and yet-to-be-realized project of a "consummation" between the "persistence of the Indigenous soul" and that of the "Spanish soul" of Mexico.[10] Sierra also had a more explicit program for the realization of this "consummation": "What we need is to attract immigrants of European blood, who are the only ones who can procure the intermixing with our Indigenous groups and who are the only ones who can secure a level of civilization that can produce our nationality and protect it from regression."[11] The idea of a fungible Indigeneity for *mestizaje* was therefore absorbed into the logic of a modern national telos. *Mestizaje* was not merely an ideology around a national racial or ethnic identification but a rationale for the coercive integration of non-Hispanic Indigenous populations into the project of state capitalist development central to the modernizing, postrevolutionary body politic. That is, mestizo hegemonic discourse deploys temporal cultural distancing as a tool for asserting the superiority of societies identified with liberal progress and capitalist development.

However spurious its theorization, Sierra was not unique in conceptualizing this geochronocultural account of an ontology and teleology of a racial transformation more capable of "consummating" a modern national future. From the Meiji period, several anthropological discourses argued for a view of Japanese modernity as an evolutionary consequence of an integrated multiethnic and heterogeneous state. Historian Stefan Tanaka's work on the Orientalist conceptualization of Asia within Japanese social scientific and political discourses at the turn of the twentieth century teaches us that Japanese intellectuals of the Meiji period drew on European history as an episteme that could create an evidence-based counterargument to the West for Japan's cultural and temporal separation from China and Korea. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the discipline of *tōyōshigaku* (East Asian studies) emerged, Tanaka writes, to "synchronize Japan into the international world by defining Japan as a progressive place like other Western countries" by defining the histories of China and Korea as part of the ontology of Japanese multiethnic identity.[12] By the early 1910s, as Seok-Won Lee's research on the anthropological origins of Pan-Asianism demonstrates, anthropologists like Inoue Tetsujirō would adopt *tōyōshigaku*'s arguments to theorize the notion of *minzoku*, or the national ethnos or people, as a product of racial mixing that made up the Japanese Empire's growing settler colonial community. Inoue argued not for a heterogeneous or mestizo-like development of the Japanese

ethnic community but for an ideology that viewed Japanese ethnicity as already multiracial and for that multiracialism to be the premise of an integrated *minzoku*: "In the Japanese *race* (*jinshu*) there exists a *minzoku* that came from the Korean peninsula in ancient times, and there exists the southern *minzoku* that came from the Southern Seas. The Ainu have been mixed with the Japanese race and the Chinese have migrated to Japan."[13] Under the proto–area studies formation of *tōyōshigaku*, the construction of China and Korea as Japan's "Orient" does not follow, as Tanaka also points out, the late nineteenth-century imperialist anthropologist Fukuzawa Yukichi's nationalist call for *datsu-A ron* (casting off, or separating from, Asia) in 1885. Similarly, the concurrent development of ethnographic accounts of Ainu, Ryukyuan, and other Indigenous ties to the construction of the Japanese body politic known as *minzokugaku* (native ethnology) reinforced the settler Orientalist perspective of the existence of native, but inferior, others whose subordination could facilitate the modernization of the state.[14] Across the grammars of early twentieth-century imperial nationalist epistemologies, anti-Indigenous, anti-Chinese, and anti-Korean racisms were thus cast as fundamental technologies for the biopolitical survival of a Pan-Asian future.[15]

Geochronoculturalization is also an apparatus in the post-1945 formation of area studies. The anthropologist Johannes Fabian calls this construct of historico-civilizational disconnect a "denial of coevalness" to highlight how racist colonial and epistemological modes of representing nonwhite European societies invest in the fantasy that they do not share time with modern Western modalities of being in the world. What Wynter describes as the exclusionary "arrangements of knowledge" that separate the study of the "figure of Man" (universal humanity) from "anthropologized knowledge" is one form of the disavowal of coeval time in the disciplinary formation of both area studies and ethnic studies, where the study of cultures outside Europe and Anglo-America whose histories of colonial subjugation have not aligned them with the trajectory of a homogenized view of "Western universalism" encodes them in excess otherness—an effect that Stuart Hall termed the "discourse of the West and the Rest."[16] In area studies, the result is the separation of the studies of foreign contexts in their particularized, regional, or national models of discipline. In ethnic studies, racialization becomes a conduit through which to signify the many ways that the histories and cultural and intellectual productions of those who live in the effects of diaspora, migration, dispossession, and displacement constitute "minority" discourses in anglophone North America. Because the

"discourse of the West and the Rest" is ingrained in a geopolitical account of racial supremacy and anti-Asian racism as products of white racial supremacy, neither area nor ethnic studies epistemologies provide language that accounts for the perpetuation of racism and Orientalist discourses under the specific multiracial ideology of Japanese imperial nationalism.

In its minoritization of the ethnonational particularity of those subjected—through imperial and colonial domination—to the imperative of "becoming Japanese," *tōyōshigaku*'s Orientalism exemplifies one of several ways that the discourses of imperial nationalism harnessed anti-Asian (in this case, anti-Chinese) racism to produce a new logic of cultural universalism. What becomes clear in thinking about *tōyōshigaku*, *minzokugaku*, and the development of Pan-Asianist ideology is that the early twentieth-century formation of Japanese imperialism introduced a dialectics of racial supremacy that reacted to white colonialism and constituted a teleology of Japanese imperial universalism that was at once multiracial and exclusionary. Pan-Asianist anti-Asianism, therefore, served the purpose of structuring categories of ethnic and racial belonging and non-belonging that became central to the philosophy of imperial nationalism. Above all, it shared with *mestizaje* a biopolitics of racial capitalist expansionism. Imperial expansionists viewed the glorification of Japanese colonialism throughout Asia as an answer to concerns about overpopulation, a crisis in resources, and, above all, the struggle against white racism within a world increasingly influenced by the rise of Anglo-American hegemony.[17]

Early twentieth-century discourses of Chinese and Asian racial otherness furthermore factored into the transformation of mestizo nationalist racism as a eugenicist project of the coercive integration of Indigenous subjects into national modernity. According to examinations by Jason Oliver Chang and Robert Chao Romero, anti-Chinese politics were central to the logic of modern *mestizaje*, beginning with the state-sanctioned anti-Chinese campaigns that began under President Francisco Madero in the 1910s to, in brief, make Chinese migrant laborers into a scapegoat for the subjugation of "unruly" Indigenous groups into the national body politic.[18] Among the most violent of these campaigns was a genocide known today as the Torreón Massacre, during which Madero's revolutionary soldiers killed 303 Chinese and Chinese Mexican people and five Japanese migrants on May 15, 1911.[19]

The Torreón Massacre catalyzed a series of postrevolutionary mass murders and xenophobic violence against Asian migrant communities in Mexico—predominantly Chinese—that began under Madero's

administration and continued into the 1930s under the direction of the Mexican military and government.[20] Despite international criticism, Mexican politicians would defend the racist violence and policies through medicalized discourses—arguing, for instance, that widespread illness could only be prevented through the elimination of Chinese residents—and by taking other biopolitical measures that established the persecution of Asian migrants and their descendants as necessary for the health and progress of the national population.[21] Chang, writing on the violence of *antichinismo* during the postrevolutionary period, observes that anti-Chinese racism was instrumental for rendering a cohesive nationalist vision of modernity. *Antichinismo*, Chang writes, enabled *mestizaje* to function as "an abstract ideal used to reward loyalty and punish resistance," helping create new regimes of state capitalism and socialization in which the integration of Indigenous subjects into Mexican citizenship became contingent upon the expulsion of Asian populations, often regardless of ethnic or national specificity.[22] Indeed, while anti-Chinese campaigns targeted the Chinese diaspora in Mexico, *antichinismo*, Chang explains, fueled the normalization of ideals around race and nation in Mexico that considered Asian presence not only dispensable but threatening to the dominance of a white mestizo national polity. The persecution and dispossession of Asian migrants in Mexico became an instrument, in other words, for the settler colonial ontology of a modern Mexico, creating a cultural and political landscape in which the disenfranchisement and dispossession of Indigenous sovereignty could be cast as a form of progress into national secularization under mestizo hegemony.

Antichinismo rhetoric became considerably closer to the polygenistic racism of *mestizaje* in the 1920s. José Vasconcelos's well-known manifesto on mestizo racial universalism *The Cosmic Race/La raza cósmica*, for instance, is laden with *antichinismo* rhetoric, serving as one of many cultural sites in the early twentieth century that used discriminatory language against Chinese migrants to promote a vision of Mexico's progress toward modernity. The Ateneo cofounder wrote:

> It may happen sometimes, and in fact, it has already happened, that economic competition may force us to close our doors . . . to an unrestrained influx of Asians. But, in doing so, we obey reasons of economic order. We recognize it is not fair that people like the Chinese, who, under the saintly guidance of Confucian morality multiply like mice, should come to degrade the human condition precisely at the moment when we begin to understand that intelligence serves to refrain and

> regulate the lower zoological instincts. . . . If we reject the Chinese, it is because man, as he progresses, multiplies less, and feels the horror of numbers, for the same reason that he has begun to value quality.[23]

It goes without saying that the passage is an obvious example of the oppressive and discriminatory xenophobia of Vasconcelos's brand of postrevolutionary multiracial nationalism. But I charge here that Vasconcelos's anti-Asian racism can also be noted with the impression of Japanese imperial nationalism. In fact, a muted permeation of Pan-Asian ideology persists in much of the philosophy that led to his theory of the synthetic cosmic race, including his 1919 *Estudios indostánicos* (Hindustani studies), which attempts to connect Hindu culturalism and caste supremacy in India to an Orientalist conception of Mexican cultural nationalism.[24] Yet what is curious about *The Cosmic Race*'s appeal to *antichinismo* is that it also reveals Vasconcelos's attempt to speak to another racial reconfiguration: the expansion of the Japanese empire in the 1920s. Vasconcelos's stance on Japan, in fact, urges the reader to think about the valorization of the Japanese military outside the "yellow peril" posed by Chinese immigrants. Within the same paragraph as his dehumanizing portrayal of Chinese immigrants, Vasconcelos goes on to fulminate against the "ladies of San Francisco" who "refused to dance with officials of the Japanese Navy, who are men as clean, intelligent, and, in their way, as handsome as those of any other navy in the world."[25] The racist discourse that Vasconcelos applies earlier to his description of Chinese migrants is, in this moment, legitimized through his emphasis that the appeal of the Japanese military and imperial prowess can only be seen through the more enlightened perspective of *mestizaje* ideology. It is in their indiscriminate anti-*Japanese* racism (not to be confused with the *antichinismo* that *The Cosmic Race* normalizes) that "the Yankees," he concludes, "will end up building the last empire of a single race, the final empire of White supremacy."[26]

Intellectuals in Japan similarly characterized Japan's racial settler colonial project in Asia in terms of its challenge to Anglo-American hegemony and white supremacy. Highlighting the United States' rejection of Japan's proposal for racial equality in the 1919 Paris Peace Conference and subsequent anti-migrant policies, many involved in producing the ideology of Japan's Pan-Asian empire deployed critiques of racism as critiques of Americanism and US imperialism. By the 1930s and 1940s, the notion of Japanese racial and ethnic heterogeneity was emphasized by a number of scholars, journalists, and political ideologues who produced extensive

discussions on the political stakes of ethnic differences in the Japanese empire. The words *jinshu* and *minzoku* were deployed in various works to question nationalist stances on the racial purity of the state to promote a future vision for an already multiethnic Japanese state. These works included the writings of Kosaka Masaki, who conceptualized the notion of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere, Shinmei Masamichi's essays against Anglo-American and Nazi white nationalisms in *Jinshu to shakai* (Race and society), and Takata Yasuma's sociological discussion and argument for an ethnically diversified total state in *Minzokuron* (On the nation). While some Kyoto School thinkers, such as Watsuji Tetsurō and Nishitani Keiji, have been discussed by American scholars of area studies as paradigmatic of Japanese intellectual support of xenophobic and ethnonationalist fascism, the diversity of philosophical discourses on race and nation in wartime Japan betrays any Orientalist claim that ethnonational purity was the rule, rather than the extreme or the exception, in the formation of Japanese imperial nationalism.[27] Indeed, Japanese imperial government propaganda began using the slogan "harmony of five races" (*gozoku kyowa*) and, eventually, adopted Miki Kiyoshi's political philosophical theory of Pan-Asian Cooperativism to refer to its expansion as a form of antiracism and anticolonialism. It is crucial to highlight, therefore, that imperial ideology benefited from rejecting an understanding of the imperial national community as a project that denied its inherent heterogeneity in favor of a project of homogenization that affirmed a cohesively national "fictive ethnicity," as it was in Nazi Germany.[28] As Shinmei—a Taiwan-born journalist living in Germany during the rise of the Third Reich—states in *Jinshu to shakai*, many interwar political and social scientific discourses considered white supremacy and the notion of racial purity to be fallacious and unscientific. "While Nazism has layers of German nationalist ideologies," Shinmei wrote, "its most fundamental aspect is racism, which cannot be constituted as a worldview."[29]

In fact, Japanese ideologues sometimes referred to US relations with Asian, Latin American, and Black populations in order to criticize racial injustice in the United States, even while promoting imperial expansion in Asia. One prominent example of this comes up in a text from 1930 titled *Sekai wo kyoui suru amerikanizumu* (Americanism's threat to the world), by the nationalist political critic Ikezaki Tadataka in a section on US economic policy in Mexico and other parts of Latin America. In the section "Mekishiko seisaku sono ta" (Policy toward Mexico and others), Ikezaki points out that the United States' military treatment of Mexico and exploitation of its oil

fields and other national resources after the Mexican Revolution exposed the United States as a "hypocrite" (*gizensha*) and culprit of political oppression.[30] Another chapter, "Sekai ni haru han-Amerika no shiko" (The surge of anti-American thinking across the world), discusses the rise of criticism against US foreign policy in Germany and Latin America. Recounting a conversation with "older Mexican gentlemen," Ikezaki talks about how Pan-Americanist sentiments were a direct response to the "threat" of US white supremacy and contrasts the racism of the United States' clinging to the Monroe Doctrine of manifest destiny to the rise of a new definition of national self-determination in Mexico.[31]

Undoubtedly, white supremacy defined and contoured the particularities of colonial racial capitalism in resonant ways across the Pacific. The global reach of white supremacy—characterized by the legal and social histories of antimigrant policies, Jim Crow laws, and numerous other anti-Black, anti-Indigenous, and xenophobic policies—may be why Ikezaki's and Vasconcelos's critiques created a critical landscape for multiracial philosophies. As Nahum Chandler explains, the discourses of the Japanese Empire held the attention of philosophers across the ocean, including the philosopher W. E. B. Du Bois, whose writings paint an optimistic portrait of Japanese imperialism as a form of racial liberation.[32] Gerald Horne furthermore shows how Japan's racial propaganda "heightened the distress among those of 'pure European descent'" in Great Britain and continental Europe, who feared Japanese imperialism's discourse or racial liberation would gain traction.[33] The imperialistic entanglements of antiracist critique in 1930s discourses, while critical of white supremacy and lucid in the goal to construct multiracial coalitions, often reflected the interests of the state and its institutions. Contrasting Japanese imperialism's multiracialist vision with the horrors of US and British colonial racial violence within and at its borders, Japanese imperial racial propaganda created a clear enemy out of white supremacy without having to address the violence of Japanese colonialism.[34] As Yuichiro Onishi and George Lipsitz have also shown that one of the repercussions of the politicization of US racism in Japanese and Mexican discourses on race and racism was the alignment of prominent African American and Black intellectuals in the United States with the Japanese Empire and Mexico. According to Onishi, Cyril Briggs—one of the founding organizers of the African Blood Brotherhood—urged African Americans "not to fight against Japan or Mexico, but rather fill the prisons and dungeons of the white man (or face his firing squads) than to shoulder arms against members of darker races."[35]

The antiracist critical turns of Pan-Asianism and *mestizaje* did not, however, occur in a vacuum. Their ideologies shared their triangulation with the realities of Anglo-American hegemony and global white supremacy in post–World War I racial politics. Situating Pan-Asianist and *mestizaje* discourses in the intersection of anti-Chinese, anti-Indigenous, and, ultimately, anti-Black racism enables us to view them as part of the imperial function of the project of global modernity. Much like Silva's understanding of the global political significance of an "analytics of raciality" to describe the emergence of the modern, I chart imperial nationalist discourses as epistemologies that render modern subjectivity through an ethicopolitical grammar of the racial. The grammars of imperial nationalisms manufactured strategies and discourses that rendered the violence of mestizo settler nationalism and Japanese imperialism into a necessary possibility for more universalized self-determination, or a racial *nomos*, to bring the polygenic racial settler imperial state into existence.[36] Yet if Japanese and Mexican racial ideologies mirror each other in their use of anti-Asian discourse to construct a racial settler logic of not just national but universal belonging, it is because their philosophical contours emerge in dialogue with the conditions of their initial exclusion from the universal. Imperial nationalist grammars therefore hold out the possibility for dislocating that exclusion by imagining the possibility for articulating and enacting a form of universal belonging from within the logic of the state.

Philosophy and Imperial Nationalism. A Transpacific Grammar

For the construction of a new order, the creation of a new culture is important, which means that Japanism cannot be a mere revivalism. Especially today, the obvious tendency on the part of some Japanists to imitate Germany while at the same time asserting the uniqueness of Japanese culture is extremely regrettable. The Japanese spirit must be newly formed as today's Zeitgeist*; it must advance toward the creation of a new culture that possesses global significance. It is correct for Japanism to emphasize the uniqueness and the mission of Japanese culture, as has been stated, but Japanism should never remain at the stage of mere ethnic nationalism or turn into irrationalism.*—QTD. IN HARRINGTON, "Miki Kiyoshi and the Shōwa Kenkyūkai"

Kyoto School philosopher and Marxist thinker Miki Kiyoshi wrote this argument in his elaboration of his theory of Pan-Asian cooperativism in the 1939 text *Shin Nihon no shisō gensō* (Principles of thought for a new Japan).

Ethnonationalist "Japanism," he sustained, obstructed the project of consolidating a universal world order. He offers, then, a powerful synthesis of the role of intellectual production in the development of a philosophy of the Japanese Empire's historical position as a humanistic project. For Miki, a "new Japan" that harmonized tradition with modernity could offer various reforms in politics, education, and society that could foster the universalization of Japan's cultural and historical specificity. The quote exemplifies a discourse of Pan-Asianism that aligned itself against a narrow view of cultural hegemony (*haken*) while avoiding an explicit critique of imperialism. Yet while Miki's conception of the "Japanese spirit" as a zeitgeist avoided an explicit xenophobia typical of the Nazi conception of the Third Reich, his ambiguous reference to "culture" remained closely tied to the project of imperial state power. Lewis E. Harrington highlights, for instance, that Miki's call for the creation of "East Asian Community," while lacking "explicit mention to the emperor," imagined universal culture as an imperial ideal. The modern universal East Asian subject, for Miki and other Pan-Asian ideologists, was de-linked from nationalist specificity while still evoked under the slogan "*Ikkun banmin no sekai ni muhi naru kokutai*"—literally, "The unequaled national polity of the sovereignty of one ruler over all subjects."[37] In other words, Miki characterized an integrational Pan-Asian future through a Japanocentric nomos philosophy to redefine the stakes of disavowing not just Japan's but colonial ethnonational identifications under a rhetoric of modern liberalism. The East Asian subject is modern and universal and thus necessarily part of the ontology of becoming a "New Japanese" subject.

How do we interpret the obfuscation of imperialism from Miki's conception of Pan-Asianism? First, it should be noted that Miki wrote *Shin Nihon no shisō gensō* during his participation in the think tank of Prime Minister Konoe Fumimaro, the Shōwa Kenkyūkai (Shōwa Research Association), a year after the publication of his theory of the Greater East Asia Cooperative System (*Dai Tōa Kyōdōtai*), which has been discussed as an ideology that mobilized the logic of Japanese colonial expansion in the Sino-Japanese War.[38] As Harrington elaborates, *Shin Nihon no shisō gensō* "was the first of three manifestos produced by the Cultural Problems Research Group of the Shōwa Kenkyūkai" and demonstrated Miki's shift from Marxist critiques and questions regarding the objectives and policies of the Japanese Empire to "world-historical answers" in the service of "creating a more efficient machine" for the imperial government.[39] In short, Miki's call for a universalized Japanese multiculturalism is not a critique of

Japanese ethnonationalism inasmuch as it is a restructuring of the terms that strengthened the rhetoric and epistemic production of imperial nationalism as a philosophy of racial and settler hegemony.

As others have discussed in analyses of Kyoto School engagement with the Kantian notion of "Geist," or spirit, the words *spirit* and *zeitgeist* loom in Miki's text as clear indications of the philosopher's engagement with a project for a transcendental definition of universalism.[40] But by the time that Miki wrote *Shin Nihon no shisō gensō* in 1939, the question of modern philosophy could not be divorced from the project of Japanese imperialism, and neither could the notion of a transcendental philosophy or modality for universal subject-becoming for East Asia emerge without its denial from the universal. Hence, Miki constitutes the transcendental "spirit" of Japan not simply as a productive force for a modern representation of universality (*fuhensei*) but as a way to exteriorize an onto-epistemological sense of denial from historical significance. In other words, *spirit*, like *zeitgeist*, is a term that appeals to the self-consciousness of exclusion and its disavowal. What Miki's argument institutes, then, is what Silva calls the "principle informing the transparency thesis," which attempts to engulf an overidentification with the actualization of "spirit" that marks its desire for recognition through heteropatriarchal and colonial authority.[41] Read this way, *spirit* and *zeitgeist* are ultimately racially charged terms. Through these terms, Miki emphasizes not only Japan's "uniqueness" but inscribes in Japanese uniqueness the capacity to transcend "ethnic particularity" by functioning as a transhistorical object that refused to "imitate Germany" and "advance toward the creation of a new culture that possesses global significance." The critical role that disavowing Japanese racial and ethnic particularity play here is that for Miki, Japan becomes elevated as an apparatus for the racial and ethnic integration of its heterogeneous empire. In other words, he calls for Japan to dislocate global white supremacy ("global significance") by overcoming the perceived irrationality of racial and ethnic belonging.

Scholars of Miki's extensive oeuvre hold the philosopher's work with the Shōwa Kenkyūkai in tension with his more critical anti-imperialist and antimilitarist writings. As I will elaborate with Tanabe Hajime's *Shu no ronri*, a common divide in studies of Kyoto School philosophies of imperial nationalism persists between those who read Pan-Asianist thought as active "complicity" in colonial violence and those who depoliticize the work of the Kyoto School.[42] But the question of direct complicity can remain debatable for any concept. What I want to point out, instead, is that

the desire to equivocate the racial colonial problem that haunts interwar philosophy relies on the possibility of disavowing its materialization out of the broader utility of philosophy to conceive not only universal humanity but also a decontextualized inhumanity. In terms of an epistemological critique, we can and should consider how the tools and concepts of interwar racial philosophies participated in the production of empire, racial violence, and, indeed, mass death.

We can draw a parallel, albeit not an equivalence, between Miki's influential role in generating the discursive contours of imperial nationalist ideology and Ateneo philosophies of *mestizaje*. Like the propagandization of Japanese imperialism as "antiracism," discourses on *mestizaje* similarly proposed a model of hemispheric national modernity that, by way of racial integration, would supersede the dominant status of US and European racial and political influence in the world. Across Latin America as well, the voices of Brazilian social scientist Gilberto Freyre (*Casa grande e senzala* [*The Masters and the Slaves*], 1933), Peruvian thinker Carlos Mariátegui (*Siete ensayos de la interpretación de la realidad peruana* [*Seven Interpretative Essays on Peruvian Reality*], 1928), and Argentinian writer Ezequiel Martínez Estrada (*Radiografía de la pampa* [*X-Ray of the Pampa*], 1933) were among many voices who evoked a current of liberal progressive thought that exemplified a settler romanticization of cultural *mestizaje* often referred to as *indigenismo*. As Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui explains of the context of mestizo nationalism in Bolivia, the success of *mestizaje* and *indigenista* discourses is owed to its appeal to an existential account of Latin American modernity and modernization. She suggests that *mestizaje* has become an ornamental and "official politics" of nationalism and authoritarianism, which transforms Indigenous populations into mestizo national subjects, on the one hand, and codifies the social and political power of whiteness within the state, on the other.[43] Therefore, despite the discursive formation of *mestizaje* as a celebration or even an impetus for the dislocation of white supremacy from Latin American transnational modernity, *mestizaje* was an ideology and system of white assimilation that masked its violent project in terms of aesthetic and philosophical valorization.

Beyond the ideological and epistemic, imperial nationalism operates in ways that bolster the racial regimes of biopower. It goes without saying, following Michel Foucault's analysis of how populations are produced and reproduced, that imperial power manifests as biopolitics. In imperial nationalism, biopower is also expressed as epistemic power; that is, imperial nationalism is structured through a form of subjection that demands

the individualization of the racialized or minoritized subject through their integration into the racial settler hegemonic state. *Mestizaje* and Pan-Asianism interpreted the realization of new manifestations of global power through the coercive integration, subjugation, and exploitation of colonized populations and the expropriation of colonized land and resources. In view of this, one cannot overlook the disconnect between the ideological, visionary, and epistemological production of imperial nationalist philosophies and their nonencounter with the social relations that manifest within the context of racial settler colonial domination.

As mentioned, Vasconcelos's *The Cosmic Race* is perhaps the most cited text to contribute to the racist multiracialism of mestizo settler ideology. A substantial volume of scholarly literature looks at his work and its controversial proposition when analyzing Vasconcelos's impact both on Mexican racial and Chicanx identity politics in the United States.[44] In more recent scholarship on *The Cosmic Race*, Sony Corañez Bolton joins Laura Torres-Rodríguez and others who have interpreted the entrenched racism, ableism, and colonial violence in the theory of *mestizaje* in relation to the Asian racialized subject.[45] Vasconcelos's *mestizaje* offers a narrative of a multiracial subject who is marked, again and again, by a racial settler ontology that requires the displacement of Indigenous particularity through a logic of integration into the "clean, intelligent" and "genius" races. As with Justo Sierra's revision of the history of Spanish colonialism as a "consummation," racial-sexual colonial entanglement is metaphorized throughout *The Cosmic Race* under the semantics of racial integration and fusion. Vasconcelos's political vision for a global institutional *mestizaje* yet again makes the project of the Mexican state legible only as a valorization of settler masculinity. Once the critique of "white supremacy" has been established and managed through the argument for *mestizaje*'s superiority and efficacy, the thesis of the manifesto becomes a mechanism for hiding its racial settler logic in terms of racial universalism while denying entry to others across gendered and classed lines. The figure of Vasconcelos's mestizo embodies an anticolonial struggle against European and Anglo-American hegemony as well as an idealization of a form of racial heterogeneity that sustains cultural imperialism founded on "the creation of a new race founded out of the treasures of all the previous ones."[46]

In 1938, Vasconcelos's former student and fellow Ateneo member Samuel Ramos published a treatise, *El perfil del hombre y la cultura en México* (*The Profile of Man and Culture in Mexico*), arguing for a Mexican unconscious to

be "liberated" from its "mimesis": "Mexicans have imitated for a long time without noticing that they have been imitating. They thought, in good faith, that they were incorporating civilization into the nation. Mimesis has been an unconscious phenomenon that uncovers a peculiar character of *mestizo* psychology. . . . What the *mestizo* has unconsciously sustained is an impulse to hide not only from a foreign gaze, but, even still, from the gaze of unculture."[47] Ramos presents the Mexican "unconscious" (*el inconsciente mexicano*) as wrought with a sense of inferiority produced through a looping relationship to negativity. This "profile" then views the mestizo subject as incomplete, caught in the double bind of mimetic modernity. In fashion with the psychoanalytic critique of the Enlightenment subject, a complete lack of agency or access to the fullness of subjecthood insinuated, for Ramos, an obstacle to self-determination that Jacques Lacan similarly identified in 1936 as the "mirror stage."[48]

On the mirror stage of racial settler coloniality, however, the split mestizo subject must simultaneously present himself (as the mestizo subject of Ramos is assumed to be male) both as a subject who lacks culture and as a subject who incorporates, by way of imitation, the very thing that he lacks. "A superior culture," Ramos goes on to write, "needs to complete the organic duality of our culture and make it more efficient. Only when this community can access part of its enlightenment can minority cultures be incorporated in the flows and movement of its nervous system."[49] Like Vasconcelos, Ramos considers the Mexican subject capable of a "superior culture" and identity only by overcoming his desire to "hide . . . from a foreign gaze." He elaborates, however, the mechanisms of cultural assimilation by interjecting a difference between "Mexican mimesis" and the project of a cohesive national organism. Throughout *El perfil del hombre y la cultura en México*, Ramos therefore provides a psychoanalysis of Mexican history, arguing for a need to redefine and revitalize the "real" character of Mexican man and his culture beyond his inferiority complex to his internalization of European hegemony. In his call for reformation, Ramos sees the birth of a new mestizo male subject as the only resolution for this inferiority complex. Here, the reformed mestizo is elevated to a metaphor for resolving a split cultural subjectivity with total integration of the mestizo psyche that has been, up to a point, deprived of a meaningful relationship to power as a result of an overdetermined investment in European culture. In Ramos's philosophy, male identification with the state is the final form of a *bildung* for a universalized synthetic racial subject.

Ramos's psychoanalysis of the mestizo subject thus refashions the mind of the national subject as a signifier for a Darwinian principle of natural selection. Within it, the compulsion to equate or conflate the telos of a national community with that of an organic, human body illuminates the hegemonic formation of *mestizaje* and its roots in both Enlightenment universalism and nineteenth-century scientific racism. In her critique of the scientific methods and strategies that post-Enlightenment European thought used to produce and fashion the modern liberal subject, Silva locates how the "analytics of raciality" presuppose racial difference as an "'empirical' basis for distinguishing Europeans and their 'others.'" In staging an onto-epistemology of being "global" ("globality") as a constitutive force for civilizational recognition, post-Enlightenment racial theorists produced, she writes, "two kinds of minds": the "*transparent I*, which . . . is able to know, emulate, and control powers of universal reason"; and the "*affectable 'I,'* " which "emerged in other global regions, the kind of mind subjected to both the exterior determination of the 'laws of nature' and the superior force of European minds."[50] The universal subject, endowed with *interiority* and *transparency*, emerges from and depends on the engulfment of the "affectable" other ("I"), whose *exteriority* cannot be assimilable within modern representation. In hyper-racial colonial discourses like *mestizaje* and Pan-Asianism, those who cannot fit into the "transparency thesis" are indispensable because their affectability is required to insist on the onto-epistemology of universal subject formation.

How the racial situates the configuration of an imperial nationalist "transparent I" from a racially and ethnically differentiated "affectable 'I'"/other can be read with more clarity in Tanabe Hajime's thesis of a "logic of species." In a series of essays compiled between 1935 and 1940 and published as *Shu no ronri* (Logic of species), the Kyoto School philosopher and former Miki mentor asserts that the project of imperial national belonging must be committed to redefining itself as a project of universal identification. Having just published a series of articles condemning Martin Heidegger's support of the Nazi Party in 1933, Tanabe wrote *Shu no ronri* as an attempt to reinvent and redefine the post-Enlightenment subject (as imagined by German metaphysical thought and idealism) to produce a version of universality inclusive of a multiethnic Japanese imperial subject. The strategic role of "engulfment" in Tanabe's philosophy is especially evident in his discussion of the social ontological relationship between a transcendental universal subject (a "transparent I," one could say) and the affectable ethnic colonial other.[51] This redefinition not only draws from

German idealist, Marxist, and liberal philosophical conceptualizations of the dialectical relationship between the individual and society but also sums up a troubling Aristotelian algorithm that uses the classification system of genus and species to bifurcate humanity according to racial difference, in which genus encompasses a higher order of multiple species (a multiethnic state).

In the text, the term *shu* (species) represents a specific form within a larger *rui*, or genus, that must mediate the inner contradictions of the *ko*, or the individual. In this formula, species comes to represent and operate as the total state that serves as an intermediary between the individual and a transcendental universal being, or God. Whereas individuals are seen as subsets of the species, according to this logic, in order to be closer to the universal, individuals must risk or disavow their particular differences from the species. In that sense, the concept of species is a *logic* that triangulates the relationship between the universal, or the absolute, and the individual through the imperative to belong to a species.[52] Reading Tanabe's concept of *rui* as a theory of the universal exposes what Étienne Balibar and others have exposed in observations of universalism as an ideology that sustains and reproduces colonial racial divides.[53] Insofar as universalism translates to the encircling, or engulfment, of a heterogeneity of individuals (*ko*) into a singular and, in fact, particularistic formation, universalism is a structure that demands the division and disavowal of individuality.[54] For Tanabe, consolidation of a total imperial state as species (*shu*) rests on the logic that defines the state as the site for that disavowal. Whatever transcendental or godly form Tanabe's universality presupposes, it remains nonetheless related to a philosophical genealogy of positing the universal as a transcendental "I"—that is, as an abstraction of a gendered, racial particularism that requires the exclusion of specificity from the self to locate its definition. Judith Butler's summary of the paradox of the universal as particular is apposite here: "What is universal is therefore what pertains to every person, but it is not everything that pertains to every person."[55]

While *Shu no ronri* cannot be reductively read as a justification for the invasion and colonization of Asia, as it criticizes totalitarianism and global imperialism, it equates identification with the imperial state with universal belonging. In one essay, "Shu no ronri to Sekai zushiki" (The logic of species and the world schema), Tanabe argues that ethnicity is a contradiction that needs to be overcome for the project of a total society. Within his framework, racism was a manifestation of the contradiction between the universal principles of equality and freedom and the particularities of racial

identity and social hierarchy, which he saw as reductive essentializations of "biophilosophical irrationalism."[56] But for Tanabe, the project of a universal society did not resolve itself through the violence of imperialism, as he writes: "Everything in biophilosophy is reduced to the exceptionalization of the *shu* (species) and the reduction of life into individuals and classes. . . . Despite this irrationalism, however, when one tries to deny other species and annex other peoples, world imperialism will fall into a contradiction that results in the extinction of the species."[57]

For Tanabe, racism and world imperialism had no universal orientation. And so redefining "biophilosophical irrationalism" meant, for him, interpreting the function of identification within the ideology of the Japanese imperial state. "For me," he writes in another essay, "Kokka sonzai no ronri" (The logic of national existence), "the nation is the most concrete existence; all fundamental ontology must involve the realization of the nation as a logic of social existence."[58] Just as Japanese imperialism cannot be considered universalizing under the logic of ethnonationalism, Tanabe argues that the goal of the Japanese Empire could be one of ideological and ethnic integrationism. In other words, his philosophy of the Japanese imperial state promoted a kind of ideological and identitarian *mestizaje*. This mode of imperial racial identity, as Ōguma Eiji elucidates, was thus produced along the lines of a "mixed nation theory" (*kongōminzokuron*), which helped define a view that the "irrational" non-Japanese populations could be incorporated into Japan because they "could be described as non-Japanese Japanese."[59] The superiority of a sense of Japanese hegemony could be retained by constructing the ethnonational and Indigenous particularities of specific Asian colonial subjects as part of an ontology of universal becoming.

It is worth noting that the term *irrationalism* appears across both Tanabe's and Miki's characterizations of ethnonationalist identification. Similarly, an anxiety for not being seen as rational or as needing to ameliorate the national racial society through the "genius" of Europeans is a thread across the logic of *mestizaje*. Understanding Tanabe's *Shu no ronri* as a racial theory is instrumental to parsing out the implications of this dialectic of rationalism/irrationalism. By constructing racial identity as separate from, or at risk of being excluded from, universal belonging, *Shu no ronri* appeals to the very contradiction of an ethics of affectability, as Silva postulates. When applied to the philosophy of a national settler colonial society, Tanabe's equation of *shu* to the project of a total state and *ko* to the status of Japan's colonies assumes that *rui* (a universal transcendental

essence) can only be achieved through a logic of colonial disavowal and self-negation. In this racializing formulation, ethnic identification (being individuated from the onto-epistemic project of the total state, *shu*) is theorized as an impasse for the telos of Japanese imperial subject formation, which sees ethnicity as a substrate to the imperial state and forms of ethnonationalism not devoted to belonging to the state as a problem of logical and spiritual failure, or irrationalism.

The charge of irrationality, of lacking "genius," is not, however, merely a racial marking. While marking the irrationality of the racialized subject had a crucial effect on normalizing the subjection of Indigenous, colonized, enslaved, and indentured subjects under the racial settler hegemonic grammars of Japanese and Mexican imperial nationalisms, the charge of irrationalism also conveys a deeply gendered system. Given the alignment of Vasconcelos, Ramos, Miki, and Tanabe with Enlightenment and post-Enlightenment European philosophies of civil social belonging, to place oneself in the position of a "rational" subject is to articulate a strictly male-centered position. In articulating the subject of imperial Japan or the Mexican settler state as a rational subject, the basis for racial subjection becomes served and structured by an absent subjugation of gender differences and their relation to what María Lugones terms the "modern/colonial capitalist gender system" of the racial settler state.[60] Across the deployment of *mestizaje* and Pan-Asianism as modernizing projects, the production of a new universal subject predicates on a racial and sexual colonial entanglement. Through that entanglement, the labor of the production of a global racial future becomes an act of heteropatriarchal sexual domination.[61]

While Rivera Cusicanqui, Lugones, Estelle Tarica, and others analyze the explicit gendered structure of *mestizaje*, the philosophies of the Kyoto School have gained less attention in regard to the question of gender. Ogoshi Aiko's 1996 "Jendāka sareta kokka ni kōshite" (Against a gendered nation) is one of the few texts analyzing the conception of the imperial Japanese subject as a male-centered ideology in the work of Nishida Kitaro. With regard to Tanabe Hajime's *Shu no ronri*, Yoko Fayolle Irie's 2020 essay "Tanabe Hajime no *Shu no ronri* ni okeru 'josei' no fuzai" (Absence of the "woman" in Tanabe Hajime's *Shu no ronri*) remains one of the few texts addressing the lack of mention of women in Tanabe's essays as an "unconscious" avoidance.[62] Fayolle Irie concludes that Tanabe avoided an explicit definition of gender differences in part because "they are hidden inside the household": "At the base of his philosophical system, there are

countless faceless and silent women [*kao mo naku, kataranai joseitachi*] who are not only charged with the reproduction of the *shu*, but who are not mentioned at all."[63] Gender and sexual difference appear, in other words, to hold at least a reproductive role in the transformation of the multiracial state, but they remain absent in the conceived heterogeneity that must be, like ethnonationalism, resolved for the configuration of the state.

Beyond its avoidance or absence, what are the stakes, then, of gender as a lens for theorizing and critiquing the philosophies of imperial nationalisms? As we learn with Ann Laura Stoler's work, turning to gender as an intentional frame allows for thinking through "sites of imperial anxieties in colonial contexts" that resonate in ways that mark both the particularity and the complexity of racial formations.[64] If formations of race and racialization are central for the making of Pan-Asian and mestizo subjects, then it stands to reason that imperial nationalist ideologies equally invoke, in conscious and unconscious ways, gender and sexual politics in varied forms of ideological and systemic function. A hermeneutic of the nonencounter with gender in the grammars of imperial nationalism compels us to reject its disavowal.

Gender and the Intellectual Misogyny of Imperial Nationalisms

In this final analysis, I turn to a moment in the philosopher Hannah Arendt's synthesis of the imperial constitution of the modern nation in her 1945 essay "Imperialism, Nationalism, Chauvinism." "In theory," Arendt writes, "there is always an abyss between nationalism and imperialism; in practice it can and has been bridged. Ideologically speaking, the bridge between them is called chauvinism."[65] On a semantic register, Arendt's phrasing is indicative of the important depth necessary for understanding and further theorizing the emotive-affective mechanisms that connect the phenomenon of nationalism to an imperial structure. Her use of "chauvinism" is key. She refers to an ideology that privileges Eurocentric universalisms and unitarian perspectives that call for conformity to the national project and its mission. But what if we read Arendt's "chauvinist" as a figure heavily inflected with the intersections of gender (cis heteropatriarchy) and race (whiteness)? Once we critique the bridging of imperialism and nationalism as something that occurs "in theory"—in the realm of expertise and the order of things—how does identifying chauvinism as part of the affective attachments of imperial nationalism speak to the content of its

productions? What are the stakes of gender for theorizing the grammars of transpacific imperial nationalisms?

This chauvinism, or intellectual misogyny, can be defined as a structure, or *logic*, that enforces and polices a historically patriarchal order in intellectual production and that intersects with systems of domination.[66] The problem of the nonencounter with gender in the homosocial epistemic production, or intellectual misogyny, of *mestizaje* and Pan-Asianism as philosophies of multiracial universalism is not simply that women are excluded or absent from representation as the "transcendental I" of a mestizo or Japanese imperial zeitgeist. Japanese and white Hispanic women were often mobilized by imperial nationalist ideologies to promote the projects of nationalization throughout the first half of the twentieth century.[67] Cultural production was also key to romanticizing and providing a gendered pathos to the grammars of imperial nationalism. As Michael Baskett has shown, in the early 1940s, racial settler cinematic productions became productive sites for structuring the ethico-civilizational pathos of state power. The Manchuria Film Production Company's casting of actress Yamaguchi Yoshiko to act, in ethnic masquerade, as an archetype of Chinese femininity who "falls for" Japanese male colonizers is a prime example of the gendered dimensions of Japan's imperial nationalist cultural sphere.[68] A figure like Yamaguchi can be read alongside the casting of white or passing mestiza actresses in Mexican cinema from the same era, where the figure of the assimilable Indigenous woman, always played by white and passing mestiza actresses, becomes an index for upholding postrevolutionary *mestizaje* through the narrative of love marriage. As Monica García Blizzard analyzes in her discussion of 1940s Mexican melodrama, "Mexican Whiteness plays a key role in the creation of a Tehuana that functions as a desirable woman, physically and romantically," within the cultural, commercial, and industrial management of *mestizaje*'s idealization of Indigenous femininity.[69] The trope of heterosexual interracial and interethnic romantic love thus stages the signifiers of ethico-civilizational self-actualization that reproduce mestizo and Pan-Asian universalisms into cultural representation as the premise of numerous literary and media texts circulating in the decades that marked the epistemic production of Japanese imperial and Mexican national modernity. Interracial and interethnic romantic relations are not in themselves manifestations of racial settler domination, but they become so through the imperial nationalist grammars and regimes of identification that represent them. We can further recall that these same ideologies that upheld heterosexual settler

colonial romance also upheld the sexual subjugation of non-Japanese Asian and Indigenous women and continued efforts to exclude them from public histories. Still today, the hegemonic status and legacy of imperial nationalisms persists in the disavowal of their atrocities, from the coercive mestizo eugenics that forced sterilization and denied fertility to Indigenous women and men, to the illegal systemic sexual enslavement and trafficking of women from colonized territories across the Asia-Pacific under the Japanese colonial "comfort system."[70]

The entangled, contradictory, and incommensurable ways that Japanese imperial and Mexican settler colonial racial ideologies and politics constitute gender and sexual politics expose how the disavowal that premises the grammars of imperial nationalisms leads to intersectional aporias. What must be acknowledged is that gender, like race, functions as a principle of social exclusion within the political and ideological mechanisms that generate the conditions for racial settler hegemonic subjectivity. And within the disavowal of gender and race from inclusion into settler hegemony, those most vulnerable to the global regimes of colonial violence become unintelligible. Laura Hyun Yi Kang reminds us, for instance, that the transpacific arrangement of Cold War geopolitics erased violence against racialized women in "power/knowledge regimes that disqualified, segregated, and demoted 'Asian women' from both humanity and women."[71] Similarly, the sexual and colonial violence that premises *mestizaje* is often displaced through the systemic erasure and delay in acknowledging the subjugation of Indigenous, Black, Asian, and other marginalized women and gender-nonconforming victims of state-sanctioned racial settler violence in Mexico.[72]

Examining the development of Pan-Asianism and *mestizaje*'s grammars of imperial nationalism from a transpacific perspective allows us to rethink the relationship between cultural and intellectual production and the workings of racial and gender subjugation. This transpacific perspective further urges us to understand the critical role of formations of race and racism that did *not* represent an Anglo-American or European ethos of white supremacy. Even while Pan-Asianist and *mestizaje* ideologies sought to criticize US white supremacy in particular, their multiracial or antiracist stances were, in large part, strategic justifications for discourses and policies that promoted racial settler colonial domination. Pan-Asianism and *mestizaje*, after all, shared goals of expansionism, even if they exercised those goals in vastly different ways. Across these discursive intellectual histories, gender and race are always interpolated within

a strange temporality, neither present nor absent but conjurable as sites in which to consolidate power relations in settler colonial domination. But the formation of that strange temporality produces another consequence for the grammars of imperial nationalisms. As I will discuss in chapter 2, if the grammars of imperial nationalisms are underwritten by intellectual misogyny (a practice of the philosophical production of men who think of themselves in relation to other men), they also magnify a sense of unintelligibility and disconnect from the universal for those very same men.

2

Tierras Incógnitas

Japanese Humanity and the Question of Mexican Philosophy

In 1931, the philosopher Kuwaki Gen'yoku published a short article for the journal *Bungeishunjū* that details his first impressions of meeting with a philosopher from Mexico two years before. Titled "Mekishiko no tetsugakusha" (A Mexican philosopher), the piece begins with the author's disclosure that he is not a geographer, historian, or someone with "much knowledge about or interest in foreign affairs."[1] After a nonchalant mention that he has taken a "sudden interest" in Mexico, Kuwaki describes that, before this meeting, his understanding of the country came almost exclusively from the "historical writings of Washington Irving" and "North American depictions of the Southwest."[2] In other words, the Mexico that Kuwaki knew was therefore drawn from the specifically racist and exoticizing imagination of Anglo-American writers like Irving and William Prescott. To Kuwaki, Mexico was a mere projection of images and narratives that replayed the scene of Spanish conquest over Indigenous populations through the filter of US imperial, racist, and nationalist fantasies.[3] He offers this admission, however, not to launch readers into an anthropological overview or reflection but as a departure. Throughout the article, the philosopher, who then served as the dean of philosophy at Tokyo Imperial University, is concerned foremost with how to disconnect his impressions from a visual literary tradition that idealized a whole

country and culture as objects incommensurable with his idea of modern philosophical thought.

"Mekishiko no tetsugakusha" provides only the eponymous Mexican philosopher's last name: "Mendōsa." We learn that Mendōsa was invited to Kuwaki's university as part of a tour of lectures on phenomenology. And though Kuwaki tells us little else about the visiting scholar and the members of his student group from Mexico who attended the lectures, he writes in detail about the implications of the lectures. "While I was imagining Mexicans dressed in the style of cowboys," Kuwaki writes, "I watched with interest as this man before me spoke about things like German and English contemporary philosophy, thinking quite a bit about how I needed to tell the world about this."[4] Rather than focusing on topics about Mexico's traditions or history, Kuwaki further remarks, Mendōsa's work dealt predominantly with modern European thought, modeled after trends in German philosophy that, for Kuwaki—a neo-Kantian thinker—felt familiar to his own philosophical training and trajectory. While Kuwaki does not offer observations about the content of Mendōsa's engagement with German philosophy, he remarks that their exchange suggests something important about the progress of cross-national dialogues in academia:

> We often hear that nations become hostile towards each other when their borders come into contact. This is also most likely the case in the academic traditions of Mexico, but I feel it would be appropriate to say that—even though many readers might receive my observation with due mockery—I couldn't really predict the degree to which this statement was true until I listened to the main points of Mendōsa's lecture. Regardless, I think it's important to note that Mr. Mendōsa's discussion was proof that, besides our common philosophical interests, philosophers in Mexico and Japan deal with and discuss similar problems in similar ways.[5]

Kuwaki's regard of this encounter as a philosophical exchange between non-European subjects who can share thoughts through the language of European philosophy cannot be taken as blithe or merely observational. While the pairing of Mexico and philosophy, alongside the idea of a Mexican philosopher, is implied as an idiosyncrasy, Kuwaki suggests that his readers should hold back their doubt and criticism ("many readers might receive my observation with due mockery") and consider, instead, the similarities between their "common philosophical interests." In keeping

with their philosophical commonality, a phenomenological reading of the force of Kuwaki's commentary as a phenomenological account establishes the significance of the exteriorization of Mexico and Mexican philosophy throughout the text. Because Mexican philosophy is deferred significance as a "common" philosophy, Kuwaki's article suggests an outline of a critique—at the very least—of how Mexican philosophy threatens the colonial divisions of humanity across the constructed differences between Western subjects and those deemed as "other," or outside the paradigm of Western humanism. Nishitani Osamu's analysis of the bifurcation of signifying humanness in Western European epistemologies can further elucidate Kuwaki's perplexed appraisal of Mexican philosophy. In Nishitani's terms, Kuwaki's musings express unease with the division of the subjective capacity for philosophy in *humanitas* (humanity as "universal") from the objectified *anthropos* (human races as objects of anthropological knowledge).[6] This unease, then, mobilizes a case for articulating his surprise over the existence and possibility of a Mexican philosopher. The article, in other words, pinpoints some tensions of an idea of philosophy that requires non-European subjects to affirm a degree of *humanitas* in order to become legible as philosophers. For Kuwaki and Mendōsa, as well as for their contemporaries in the Kyoto School and the Ateneo de la Juventud (Mexican Youth Athenaeum), achieving that legibility meant displacing themselves from the processes and practices of racialization that condition their marginalization from the white colonial construction of liberal modern philosophy.

The record of Kuwaki's meeting with Mendōsa appears in another set of archives: the philosopher Adalberto García de Mendoza's collection of essays about his tour of imperial Japan, *La filosofía oriental y el puesto de la cultura de Japón en el mundo* (Oriental philosophy and the place of the culture of Japan in the world). Though far less known and written about than Kuwaki and more canonical figures in Mexican philosophy, García de Mendoza's writings span an expansive array of topics, ranging from classical music and music theory to theology. That I encountered him first as a last name in a short article by one of the most prominent philosophers of early twentieth-century philosophy in Japan might suggest that García de Mendoza's work and influence in Mexican philosophy was, at best, marginal. And yet his family archives—preserved by his daughter and granddaughter—place him at the center of some of the most prominent developments in the professionalization of modern Mexican philosophy.[7] Mendoza was a colleague and mentee of José Vasconcelos and Antonio

Caso at the National Autonomous University of Mexico, and like many Ateneo participants and members, he adapted neo-Kantian thought and other philosophical currents from Germany to advance the project of committing Mexican identity to a vision of universalism. Understanding this, the essays in *La filosofía oriental* can be traced through their unspoken dialogue with the various Ateneo de la Juventud philosophers and philosophies of mestizo nationalism and cultural universalism that were foundational to a culturalist account of Mexican philosophy.

Composed of vivid retellings of the philosopher's travels to universities around Japan during a Japan Foundation–sponsored tour, *La filosofía oriental* includes the following recollection of García de Mendoza's meeting with Kuwaki:

> When I visited Dr. Kuwaki Gen'yoku at the Tokyo Imperial University, I was surprised by the very modern collections in his library and by the familiarity with which Dr. Kuwaki discussed questions of logic and phenomenological methodology. Even more, during the conferences that I held at the Tokyo Imperial University . . . I was glad to see the passion with which some people discussed the latest philosophical and sociological studies on Simmel, Max Weber, Von Wise, Tonnies, Marx, Engels, and others who represent the modern aspect of the science of collectivity.
>
> I should inform you, though, as a parenthesis, that Dr. Kuwaki was also surprised that I spoke to him about these topics. At the end of one of our talks, he, in his own handwriting, wrote the following in German: *It's a great pleasure and honor for me to be able to greet a specialist in my own field who comes from a country that, until just a few moments was, to me, a* tierra incógnita, *but which, as I have come to learn, has had connections with our homeland for a long time. I am therefore especially pleased that Dr. García de Mendoza always treats philosophical problems from perspectives that are identical to ours*.
>
> Here, what was clear to me was that our country is completely ignored even by the intellectual class of Japan, who not only doubted our philosophical capacity, but moreover understood us as a *tierra incógnita*.[8]

While Kuwaki's sentiment that Japanese and Mexican philosophers shared philosophical similarities, what most impresses García de Mendoza in this exchange, in the end, is Kuwaki's description of Mexico as a "*tierra incógnita*." His "philosophical capacity" put in doubt, García de Mendoza expresses here an experience of feeling misunderstood, unrecognized, even

within a context where he himself did not expect—was surprised, even—to encounter philosophy. Once again, in a context where phenomenology is made an object of philosophical valuation, a phenomenological reading of the question of Mexican philosophy puts into question the territorial and ontological claim of philosophy.

How does a *tierra incógnita* signal both what is "identical" and unrecognizable? The typical definition of the Latin term *terra incognita* is "land that has never been explored or mapped; uncharted territory; by extension, ideas or concepts that have not yet been tried or explored."[9] Historically, the term referred to a space outside the cartographic imagination and the production of knowledge about areas of the world that European fantasy had yet produced as a target of colonialism and unstable homogenized ideas about its others. Looking into its history and definition, we can see how the notion of the terra incognita asserts, on the one hand, a lack of knowledge by the speaker and, on the other, a lack of knowledge within the imagined space of its terrain; more than an absence, the terra incognita signals a predetermined lack of what modern thought proscribed as the conditions of humanity. It is accordingly also a space that is seen as offering up the possibility to reproduce the known, explored, and recognized without due resistance, because knowledge, exploration, and recognition have been evacuated from its conceptualization.

The terra incognita, however, is not merely a metaphor for the perceptibility of philosophical capacity. It invokes the metaphor of territory and land, yes, but the historical use of this metaphor was tied to the oppressive history of the systemic removal of people by way of racial differentiation. In Indigenous studies, Kathryn Walkiewicz has shown and theorized how the logic of territory and removal from territory (in the US context) "signals how the modern world order, forged through the global projects of enslavement and colonization, made bodies marked as Black or Native movable in order to secure capitalist-colonialist accumulation."[10] Thus, to be marked as being outside the logic of territory has implications for the settler *and* the colonial power dynamics underwriting the context of the Kuwaki–García de Mendoza encounter. Here, the multivalent nature of the *tierra incógnita* triggers, for García de Mendoza, a sense of being marked with the constructed nonencounter of colonized territory, on the one hand, and the racial logics implied in that constructure on the other. Insofar as García de Mendoza and Kuwaki produce writings that struggle with the impositions of anthropologized and racialized discourses, they also share a sense of disconnect from the territory of modern philosophy

that has rendered them, and their own metaphorical and literal territories of philosophical belonging, into imperceptible figures that cannot share knowledge with each other without a hegemonic intermediary. Indeed, what their documentation of their meeting ultimately reveals is that the impositions of European thought, beyond philosophy, have made them unrecognizable to each other. And in this unrecognizability, these philosophers thus desire to identify with each other—that is, to become identical.

If García de Mendoza had read Kuwaki's "Mekishiko no tetsugakusha," would being understood as a *tierra incógnita* carry the same offense? While I began my discussion of transpacific nonencounters with the resonances between the writings of philosophers of imperial nationalist and racial settler ideologies of Pan-Asianism and *mestizaje*, I turn in this chapter to an encounter that becomes about the resolution of a perceived nonencounter between Mexican and Japanese philosophy. This chapter traces the brief exchange between Kuwaki and García de Mendoza in relation to the intellectual systems that produce a world in which Japaneseness and Mexicanness are encoded outside philosophy—as epistemological *tierras incógnitas*. By centering the figure of the *tierra incógnita*, I question how philosophy becomes a placeholder for what constitutes the conditions and possibility for a subject's access to a liberal modern conception of universal humanity and think about how Kuwaki's and García de Mendoza's writings about and beyond this exchange demonstrate a kind of anxiety about what it means to feel excluded from the systems that enable that access.

In philosophy, the verbal noun *worlding* refers to the ontological view of the world as something that is made. For Martin Heidegger—a figure influential to post–World War I philosophical developments in Japan and Mexico (discussed briefly in chapter 1)—worlding reflected not the generation of the world but a *sense* or phenomenology of how human subjects understand what it means to be in the world. Worlding is, in other words, inextricable from giving meaning to and normalizing the relations that shape how we experience the world.[11] Put into effect, acts of worlding appear in the development of cartography, writing, and the technologies of representing forms of knowledge that render the world in accordance with the desire to capture space as the experience of one's positionality. Dealing with being a *tierra incógnita* was central to the resonant laments of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century intellectuals across Asia and the Americas who sought answers for what it meant to be modern within a world constructed through the ideological and epistemic relegation of

these regions into non-worldly realms. The *tierra incógnita*, after all, is a figure of unworldliness—of being left out of knowledge and therefore out of the production of humanity as a universal matter. Kuwaki's terming of Mexico as a *tierra incógnita* in his note to García de Mendoza is therefore not necessarily a dismissal but a sympathetic recognition of what it means for men from the "intellectual class" to be unworlded and to have to resort to the tools of Eurocentric thought to find mutual understanding.

In examining the concept of "worlding" as a comparative approach and generalizing epistemology, we must attend to its implications of imperial domination, (neo)colonial expropriation, and the deprivation of humanity to populations that are typically excluded from the categories of humanity often aligned with fashioning a white supremacist world order. Pheng Cheah's trenchant critique of Heidegger's Euro-Christian theorization of worlding points out that worlding is a "normative force" rather than a proscriptive, reality-unfolding act.[12] As a phenomenological, political, and, we could add, racial colonial matter, worlding is therefore an act of refusing a relationship with and between those deprived of agency in making sense of the world; in other words, worlding is a phenomenology of expropriative encounter. Following my discussion of the attempts of male intellectual elites to carve universalism out of the projects of imperial and settler nation-building, I explore Kuwaki and García de Mendoza's encounter as addressing what worlding means when philosophers express a sense of being the object of *being worlded*. Specifically, what does it mean that Kuwaki and García de Mendoza, two philosophers from "non-worldly" sites, not only fail to see each other as agents of worlding but also recognize this failure of recognition as an epistemological *tierra incógnita*?

Tracing the record of Kuwaki and García de Mendoza's encounter to its geopolitical context permits us to unfold the consequences of exclusion from the processes of worlding implied in the claim to philosophy as an affirmation of humanity. What their sense of exclusion reveals, in other words, is the sense of "being worlded" as a form of racialization and their anxieties around race. They confirm that the specter of European colonialism—invoked by their repeated references to European continental philosophy—conditions and sustains not only their surprise over each other's existence as philosophers from Japan and Mexico, but their expectations to not be *tierras incógnitas*. As chapter 1 examined, intellectual discourses were productive grounds not only for theorizing new forms of racial settler colonial power in non-worldly contexts but also for disseminating a

desire to be recognized within a white supremacist world order. Foundational theorizations for settler colonial and imperial nationalist modernity were, after all, very racist—from Fr. Junipero Serra's call for the Europeanization of Mexico by encouraging a politics of *mestizaje*, to the imperialist anthropologist Fukuzawa Yukichi's call for Japan to solidify its orientation toward Western European models of nationalization by "throwing off Asia" (*datsu-A ron*). If we understand imperial nationalist ideology-making as an effort to participate in worlding rather than being worlded—or to feel that one's "philosophical capacity" is indubitable—philosophy is a practice that requires a de facto disavowal of one's vulnerability to colonial domination.

Taking it one step further, this chapter probes into how the appeal for being worldly is also tied to an investment in discourses on the pseudoscientific arguments of racial difference and to concerns with how philosophical exclusion coincides with the registers of other macro-level exclusions. These anxieties are therefore productive for developing a critique of the implicitly chauvinistic orientation of the many European philosophers whose thought inflects the formation of Kuwaki's and García de Mendoza's ideas and concerns. Specifically, the work of both men is inflected with the notion that their own difference from these European philosophers is primarily racial, rather than geographic or cultural or regional. In the context of early twentieth-century geopolitics, that difference puts into question the possibility of their philosophy, on the one hand, and their access to a (white masculinist European) model of universality. Through this analysis, the chapter engages a larger story about how the philosophical contours of imperial nationalism and racial settler colonial ideologies are forged out of bonds between men who think of themselves in relation to the heteropatriarchal episteme of global modernity.

By the early 1930s, nineteenth-century ideas about the forcible Indigenous integration into the imperial settler state eventually evolved into the guidelines that informed the liberalist iterations of mestizo nationalism, Pan-Asian co-prosperity, and the necessity for the expansion of a regionalized culturalist identification. Liberalist articulations of imperial nationalisms reconfigured their demands for cultural cohesion into various philosophical expressions on how "culture" could contain and execute the potential for measuring and marking modern progress. In other words, in the name of civilizational progress, imperial nationalisms offered a critical way to disavow the foundational settler colonial violence that

secured the exploitation and then erasure of Native populations. Imperial nationalisms were premised on the project of envisioning the entry of the non-European elite into a Eurocentric recognition of universal humanity at the expense of the designation of internal non-universals. We can affirm, drawing on Kandice Chuh's analysis, that liberal humanism binds "human beingness" to an expansive project of dominance and conquest. Thus, challenging the normalization of universal humanist dehumanization requires a disavowal of liberal humanism.[13] Such a disavowal, however, risks exclusion from the global project of national modernity and recognition within the gendered, racial capitalist matrix of the international world.

Therefore, the appeal of Wynter's "figure of Man" as a model of universal humanity is not just a metaphor in my analysis. The production of universal humanity as a form of worlding can be contextualized within the heteropatriarchal colonial production of and desire for the systemization of racial difference. In other words, to conceptually map the problem of anthropological knowledge onto Kuwaki's and García de Mendoza's reflections on philosophy, their gendered self-interests in aligning themselves with either the position of *humanitas* (as male upper-class philosophers who share interests in neo-Kantian thought and other continental European philosophical currents) or that of *anthropos* (as nonwhite and non-European people) cannot be effaced. Elaborating both the function of worlding and the schematization of racial and gendered coloniality within worlding, I frame my discussion of this encounter in conversation with a feminist reading of the liberal progressive imaginaries of imperial nationalism that rest on the rewriting of colonial heteropatriarchy into the conceptualization of a non-Eurocentric universal. After all, neither Kuwaki nor García de Mendoza write as colonial subjects. In fact, the archives of their lives and writings suggest that these philosophers helped perpetuate settler and colonial ideologies, including through their participation in producing and supporting imperial nationalist philosophies in various ways. But their accounts of their positions within philosophy link to an imperative within philosophy to articulate a sense of universal belonging that at the same time excludes the possibility to relate "Japanese" philosophy to "Mexican" philosophy. Through their work, we can trace the difficulty of overcoming the persistent tensions that underwrite transpacific imperial nationalist philosophies into the status of cultural universalisms as well as the epistemic systems of worlding that create disciplinary divides between them in the cultural imagination and in the field of area studies.

Worlding Japanese Humanity

"Mekishiko no tetsugakusha" is not the first place where Kuwaki Gen'yoku interrogates the limiting Eurocentrism of universalism. A renowned philosopher of Taishō liberalism, Kuwaki's writings from the first two decades of the twentieth century were pivotal in transforming the discourse of Japaneseness to make the case for a Japan-centric politics of modern subject formation by theorizing "Japanese" as an identity that was beyond ethnic particularity. Although he was not directly affiliated with the Kyoto School, he began his career as a professor at Kyoto Imperial University, then moved to Tokyo Imperial University the same year that Nishida Kitarō—Tanabe Hajime's close colleague and cofounder of the Kyoto School—transferred from the religious studies department to philosophy. He shared with his former Kyoto colleagues and generational counterparts a deep engagement with German metaphysics and heralded the influence of Kant on his conception of Japanese philosophy. Looking at Kuwaki's theory of culturalism remits us to the popularity of neo-Kantian philosophy in Taishō liberalism as well as to what I will refer to here as the racial turn in Japanese imperial nationalism. Writing against modern narratives regarding the emergence and exclusivity of the modern universal subject as inherently Western or European, Kuwaki argues for "Japanese" to be "understood not as an object of experience" but as "a transcendental idea" and identity with transformative historical subjectivity.[14]

What interests me, however, is not only the obvious alignment between Kuwaki's culturalist definition of "Japaneseness" and *mestizaje* ideology but also the clear distinction that Kuwaki draws between his proposition of a "transcendental" Japaneseness and one that, as in the case of the Japanocentrism of *nihonjinron* (the ideology of Japanese ethnic and racial continuity that gained popularity after 1945), attempts to reconcile the exclusion of Japaneseness from universality by highlighting the limits of Eurocentric imaginaries about Japan. In the 1920 essay "Nihonteki to iu koto" (What "Japaneseness" is), for instance, the author's elaboration of what it means to define "Japaneseness" as a category for global or universal belonging interpolates recollections of his own experiences of feeling that Japan was a *tierra incógnita* during his years studying abroad in Berlin. The essay begins with an argument for the "diversity" of Japaneseness: "Words like 'Japaneseness' and 'Japan' are used in various cases and for various reasons, and many who use them consider them extremely clear and precise concepts. Such people, however, act as if they are the only ones who can

understand and protect them and despise or exclude others who attempt to define [Japaneseness]. In contrast, I acknowledge that these words are not at all clear concepts and believe that the diversity of these words can be expressed by anyone."[15] It bears to mention that Kuwaki wrote "Nihonteki to iu koto" in a context in which the epistemologies of *minzokugaku* (folk studies) and *jinruigaku* (human race studies) incorporated an ideology of a multiethnic *minzoku* that built on evolutionary theories of Japanese imperial society by late nineteenth-century anthropologists like Tsuboi Shōgoro and Yanagita Kunio.[16] But whereas anthropological discourses focused on the production of Japanese imperial humanity as *anthropos*, Kuwaki's philosophy engages this production of humanity under the signs of the universal and the cultural. Published in the first edition of Kuwaki's essay collection *Bunkashugi to shakai mondai* (Culturalism and social problems), "Nihonteki to iu koto" unfolds from a scene in Kuwaki's early career as a philosophy professor at the Kyoto Imperial University, in which a visiting Japanese American academic declared, "This is Japan!" (in English) upon seeing "temples and landscapes of the past."[17] Disagreeing, Kuwaki argues that Japaneseness should not be understood as an externally distinguishable quality. He championed instead a viewpoint of Japaneseness that sought to understand the concept from a critical philosophical standpoint rather than an ethnonational one or one that asserted Japaneseness as a matter of defined cultural difference. "Japaneseness," according to the philosopher, was a progressive concept whose advancement was only hindered by the dangerous perceptions of those who attempted to "monopolize" it as a monolith.[18] In other words, we could say that Kuwaki develops a clear argument in this essay that is in line with what later philosophers and cultural critics have described as the binary of humanistic and anthropological knowledges.

Kuwaki's challenge of Eurocentric thought makes the case for a critical yet contradictory philosophical conception of Japaneseness that can be described as part of the epistemological nonencounter of a transpacific politics of identity and culture. The contradiction to the theorization of a transcendent Japaneseness lies in the reality, however, that Kuwaki's intellectual orientation was very much immersed in European philosophy. "Nihonteki to iu koto" is filled with various references to Kant, Hegel, and Husserl as much as it references Kuwaki's colleagues in the Kyoto School and Japanese philosophers of culturalism. While he troubles the notion that culture and philosophical reason were exclusive to Western European thought, Kuwaki's theorization of Japaneseness ultimately reflects a

certain Eurocentric investment. And yet his interpretations provide a challenge to modern narratives that construct an equivalence between transcendental and universal subjectivity and the so-called West. Japan, in Kuwaki's view, was not a static signifier nor an empirical object that could function as a referent for identifying the West as the subject of universal humanity. And by suggesting the irreducibility of Japaneseness to empiricism, Kuwaki not only imparts the failings of Eurocentric modern humanism but refuses the limitations of the particularistic determination of Japaneseness as a definable double or foil to a transcendental European humanity. Philosophy in Kuwaki's take on Japaneseness operates as a site for rethinking the figure of the human within global capitalist modernity, offering, as the intellectual historian Travis Workman has examined, a new vantage point for understanding the notion of "Japaneseness" as more than a national, cultural, or regional particularity. Kuwaki's philosophy of history posed an immanent critique of what Japan and Japaneseness are, entailing, as Workman writes, "the constant reconfiguration of the anthropological concepts that one uses to define the essence of this subject" and positing that the subject of Japanese identity is one that is constantly transformed by and transforms history.[19]

Through Kuwaki's work, we can also trace the enmeshment of post–World War I cultural philosophies to the difficulty of overcoming the persistent tensions between white supremacy and Japanese imperialism as well as the divides between them in imperial nationalist imaginaries. Notably, "Nihonteki to iu koto" was published a decade after the annexation of Korea and one year after the March First Movement for independence in Korea—a suppressed anticolonial uprising that was followed by the intensification of Japanese cultural assimilationist policies.[20] Kuwaki's interaction and influence on colonized intellectuals, particularly bourgeois Korean scholars, is also well documented. For example, Kuwaki was a mentor to Korean novelist and philosopher Yi Kwangsu, whose work regarding the post-1919 reconstruction of Korea under Japanese colonial governance adapted the concept of "culturalism" to advance a developmental theory of Korean national identity, arguing for Korean participation in the project of capitalist modernity.[21] The relationships between Japanese and Korean intellectuals—particularly those of a pedagogical nature—less so complicate the status of imperial nationalism's participation in colonial subjugation inasmuch as it points to its role as an anxious facet of an elite intellectual ethos. As Nayoung Aimee Kwon points out, Pan-Asianist intellectualism "was always self-divided and contradictory" in its "production

and consumption of the colonized as same yet different."[22] While it is outside the purview of this chapter to elaborate on Yi's collaboration with the ideology of Japanese imperial nationalism, it pays evident attention to the desire to participate in the project of global capitalist development. The desire to be global—to not be a *tierra incógnita*—is a key transmission between these men, who expressed frustration with a problem that they saw as a global dismissal and devaluation of their "philosophical capacity."

Being excluded is, after all, the centerpiece of Japanese culturalism's origin story. In what might be the most telling moment for reading Kuwaki's sense of racial subjection in "Nihonteki to iu koto," the philosopher recounts a moment of discord during his experience studying abroad in Berlin. Giving an account of watching the famous American opera singer Geraldine Farrar in a performance of Giacomo Puccini's *Madama Butterfly*, Kuwaki lingers on the opera's incoherent representation of Asianness and Japaneseness:

> Once in Berlin I saw and heard the opera *Madame Butterfly*. At that time I was going to plays, opera, and musical theater quite often, but I did not have any desire to go see Japanese things. However, I had a change of heart and ended up going because it was my only opportunity to see Geraldine Farrar, who had returned from the United States after a long time. This was a useless justification that I made to myself. Really I wanted to show that I did not appreciate this kind of play. Why did I not appreciate it? One reason was that I did not have time for that sort of thing, because I was researching Western cultural artifacts for only a brief time and with limited means; however, the main reason was that I could not bear to see the frequent mistakes made in such a play.[23]

Workman's analysis of this passage in *Imperial Genus* points out the peculiarity of Kuwaki's use of personal anecdote in his philosophical writing, giving emphasis to the disorientation that the philosopher expresses in witnessing the "mistakes" of *Madama Butterfly*. Kuwaki's vexation and embarrassment are discernible in his recapitulation of the opera's treatment of Japan as an othered, gendered, and crude Orientalist fantasy. And he is, in this regard, right: *Madama Butterfly* conflates fragments of Japanese and Asian "things" for unquestioned cultural appropriation and consumption, perpetuating the Orientalist assumption that racist stereotype was a universal aesthetic *meant* to alienate Japanese viewers from partaking in its enjoyment. But the stakes for Kuwaki do not involve condemning this racism. He continues to criticize the play for crudely glamorizing "the art

of our ancestors" and equating it to the "behaviors" of the "lower classes." Ultimately, the opera signaled to him the importance and urgency of arguing for a definition of "Japanese" that corrected this misrepresentation.

The moment that Kuwaki describes in "Nihonteki to iu koto" is not by any means an admonition of Orientalism or racism of *Madama Butterfly*'s inaccuracies. Rather, he views the Orientalist depiction of Japan as unacceptable because he has no "time" for it as a cultural artifact while he seeks to theorize Japan beyond its status as an (inaccurate) projection of Eurocentric fantasy and its anthropologizing discourses. It offers a call, then, toward a deracialization of Japaneseness by rejecting the knowledge about it generated by a Western European episteme. Reading the essay nevertheless reveals that it was written with the objective of producing Japaneseness as a subject that can be self-determined, historical, and therefore a producer, rather than an object of, anthropological knowledge. Entangled in this objective, what is most telling is Kuwaki's centering of his experience of feeling excluded from the object of desire produced by Puccini's opera: a white woman in yellowface singing about her love for a white European man. That is to say, although the affect of racism is what inspires Kuwaki to argue against the Eurocentric and Orientalist representation of Japan in *Madama Butterfly*, the feeling of being racialized takes shape, as does a logic of emasculation and an investment in a justification for disavowing the experience of racial *and* sexual exclusion.

To explore the dynamics and stakes of Kuwaki's investment in envisioning what it means to be a universal subject *as* a Japanese, I turn again to Wynter's illustration of the "genre of the human" as "Man" as an important interjection. In Wynter's critique, globalizing discourses on race from the early modern period onward conceive an ethnoclassist conception of the human, "the figure of Man," as something that overrepresents itself to the point that it becomes the mainstream definition of humanity. Rather than attempt to resolve or outright denounce the power of this figure, however, "Nihonteki to iu koto" attempts to re-represent Japanese subjectivity in terms of this ethno-classist conceptualization by undermining the validity of Japanese ethnic particularity and instead legitimating a vision of Japan that is *both* anti-Eurocentric (anticolonial) and aspirational for the creation of a new formulation of global cultural hegemony. We can therefore situate the semantical force of Kuwaki's philosophy of culturalism across the chauvinistic lineages of imperial nationalism. Kuwaki aimed to rewrite the philosophy of the human by arguing for an ontology of humanity that gained self-consciousness by "breaking"

from “primitive” social and cultural formations. Breaking from what Kuwaki saw not only in Puccini’s opera but throughout his experience studying philosophy in Germany during the early twentieth century meant arguing for and asserting the theoretical value of “Japanese” not only as a human subject but as a subject who has equal “philosophical capacity” to “the figure of Man.”

I read Kuwaki’s perception of the break between anthropologizing images and discourses on Japan and universal humanity as extending to his experience of Mexico. Mexico and Mexican philosophy were not objects without historical subjectivity, he demonstrates, but had been coopted as indexical illusions of European philosophy’s discreditation of Mexico and Mexican philosophy’s universal and philosophical merit. Encoded in “Mekishiko no tetsugakusha” is thus a palpable deconstruction of Kuwaki’s own expectations about the figure of Mexican philosophy as it becomes interpolated with his own preoccupations about what constitutes the universal import of Japaneseness. In “Mekishiko no tetsugakusha,” race and gender are not as explicitly articulated, and yet the racial and gendered dynamics between “Mendōsa” and Kuwaki become silent metaphors for expressing the processes at work in rupturing the fantasy of Mexican philosophy. This scene of a transpacific crossing conveys the various ways that nonencounter premises the possibility of recognizing Mexican philosophy, including compromised understandings of the impact of US knowledge production about Mexico (“North American depictions of the Southwest”) and uneven understandings about what Mexican philosophy produces. “Mekishiko no tetsugakusha” thus opens an opportunity to reconceptualize, at a microdynamic level, an orientation that anchors its account of the meeting between the two men as a moment in time and space that engages a larger story about knowledge production and the philosophical formations that underpin, if not connect, the political and ideological projects that situated Japan and Mexico within the modern world.

Reading a *Tierra Incógnita*. An Identical Politics

One of José Vasconcelos’s and Antonio Caso’s first students, Adalberto García de Mendoza has been described, in the limited secondary archive on his life and work, as the “father of Mexican Neo-Kantianism” and credited for pioneering phenomenology in Mexico.[24] Yet given his alignment with German epistemologies, historians of philosophy like Antonio Zirión

Quijano seem to frequently distinguish García de Mendoza's philosophy from the project of Mexican philosophy that was the focus of the Ateneo de la Juventud. Reading through this limited secondary archive, I am more struck, however, that the minor biographical writings on García de Mendoza's life vacillate on the credibility of claims that he studied with Husserl, Heidegger, Max Scheler, Heinrich Rickert, and other prominent German philosophers during his studies in Germany in the 1920s.[25] Nevertheless, García de Mendoza did spend significant time in German universities, and if his own reports are to be believed, his time in German academe (1919–26) overlapped with that of several of the philosophers affiliated with the Kyoto School, including Miki Kiyoshi.[26]

The problems of verification and availability of archival records are themselves questions of nonencounter, but delving further into García de Mendoza's contact with German or Japanese philosophers before his tour of Japan is beyond the scope of this section. What we can verify, through Kuwaki's writing, is the record of his time as a cultural and academic envoy to imperial Japan, where he lectured and developed preliminary versions of his writing on transcendental phenomenology.[27] His account of the meeting with Kuwaki furthermore survives in two collections: *Japón: Conferencias filosóficas* (Japan: Conferences in philosophy) and, the focus of my discussion in this section, *La filosofía oriental y el puesto de la cultura de Japón en el mundo*.

While Kuwaki's "Mekishiko no tetsugakusha" makes explicit the Japanese philosopher's struggle with negotiating his meeting with García de Mendoza and "discovery" of the existence of Mexican philosophy García de Mendoza's recollection of the meeting in *La filosofía oriental* reads like a negotiation of the asymmetry between the image of Japan as "Orient" and the treatment of Mexico as "*tierra incógnita*." Therefore, I consider in this section how the homosocial politics of (mis)identification played out in the brief documentation combine a concern for "philosophical capacity" with discourses of universal affect and become a marker for being recognized as human. The perception of being diminished or even made absent expressed in García de Mendoza's sense that his "philosophical capacity" is doubted highlights an attention to the affective and sentimental dimensions of confronting the inadequacy of Mexican philosophy's universality as an experience of racialization. What García de Mendoza perceives from his reading of Kuwaki's note, in other words, is an exclusion from the very discourses of Enlightenment ideals of universality and self-determination

that he and Kuwaki relied on to identify with each other. And yet the very strategies that enable that identification become the reason for their feelings of exclusion from each other.

The incoherent Orientalist aesthetics of *La filosofía oriental* offer a productive site for comprehending how both the racial and gendered dimensions operate as affects of disconnect and nonencounter in the accounts of both men. The nearly four-hundred-page treatise reads as a composition of dissociations that at moments align with and at other moments challenge the construction of Japan as an object of anthropological inquiry—the "Orient." On the one hand, these multiple and often at odds discourses betray the expected appropriation typical of the archetypal Orientalist text, resulting from García de Mendoza's latent desire for philosophical recognition, which situates the use of Orientalist tropes to the long-standing European philosophical, political, and military imperial tradition that Edward Said critiqued in *Orientalism*. On the other hand, what García de Mendoza also expresses is his own entrenchment in a genealogy of Mexican philosophical production that transposed the logics and grammars of Orientalism onto the projects of mestizo nationalism and modernity in Latin America. As Torres-Rodríguez explicates in her discussion of José Vasconcelos's Orientalism, the role of Orientalism in Mexico's "obsession with Asia" in the decade following the Mexican Revolution "can be considered a complimentary practice to nationalist work."[28]

For García de Mendoza's part, his Orientalism differs from Vasconcelos's not just insofar as it pertains to Japan rather than India but because it struggles with providing an account of Japan as "Orient" while also presenting Japan as a European non-Europe. The collection's first chapters, for example, are a mix of original poetry and prose with citations of Lao Tzu, Rumi, Horiguchi, and others to frame his romanticized impressions of the Pacific Ocean as he recounts his brief stay in Honolulu and arrival in Yokohama. Figuring himself as an adventurer, García de Mendoza deploys the ocean as a motif that conveys the trajectory of his estrangement. The farther he moves from the American coast (from "the West"), the closer his encounter with the confrontations between the familiarity of modernity and disorienting cultural and religious terrains and practices. He writes in "En el Mar de Japón" (In the Sea of Japan):

> I wish I could overwhelm myself of the marvelous fauna that the Ocean keeps. I wish I could carry, forever imprinted, not only in my memory and in my imagination, but in my senses, the plasticity of the fish of the

> Pacific, the multiplicity of their colors, the richness of their forms and the marvel of their fantasy. . . .
>
> In them, the mystery becomes more clear. The Orient must be felt and never thought.[29]

The Orient is established, therefore, as having no philosophical capacity ("must be felt and never thought"). But once he arrives in Japan, the poetic form is the limit to García de Mendoza's application of Orientalist tropes. Upon arriving, he finds himself becoming the subject of estrangement. As his account of his tour in Japan unfolds, he comes to terms with the competing narratives of Orientalism and Japan's status as an imperial power. In a turn toward praising Japanese imperialism, García de Mendoza's writing begins to resonate less with Vasconcelos's *Estudios indostánicos* (Hindustani studies) and the anti-Muslim, anti-Black, and anti-Indigenous colonial discourses of European Orientalism.

Revising Said's terms for understanding Orientalism as a discourse of domination, I read García de Mendoza's defense of Japanese imperial nationalism in *La filosofía oriental* not as an anti-Orientalist discourse but as a form that emerges out of a mestizo nationalist tradition of deploying self-Orientalism (for instance, in the logic and aesthetics of *indigenismo*) that reflects the intermixing of otherness as a strategy to both interrupt and assimilate into cultural hegemony. Whereas Edward Said unpacks the homogenizing illusion of the Orient as "almost" a place of European invention that secures the uneven relations of power between European cultural, political, economic, and military institutions and the people and places engulfed by the marginalizing category of "the Orient," García de Mendoza imagines the Orient as a structure of feeling that is movable, dislocatable, and assimilable.

We can draw an analogy between the jarring effect that *Madama Butterfly* had on Kuwaki and the surprise that García de Mendoza conveys over Kuwaki's note. Like Kuwaki's discussion of the possibility of a Japaneseness without European Orientalist mediation, García de Mendoza's discussion of Kuwaki's note emerges at a moment in which European philosophy is used as a lingua franca to reinforce the philosophers' "shared interests" as well as to mediate an encounter between "Japanese" and "Mexican" philosophies as otherwise incommensurable objects. Significantly, what the institution of European philosophy as a form of homosociality reveals in García de Mendoza's account of this encounter is an exposure to racial exclusion. When Kuwaki discloses that, before meeting García de Mendoza,

he never thought about Mexico as anything other than a *tierra incógnita*, he reasserts the presumed gaps between Japan and Mexico as linguistic *and* philosophical communities. Kuwaki and García de Mendoza thus confuse the inadequacy of Eurocentric paradigms as the condition for their own inadequacy in philosophy.

The impact of Kuwaki's note on García de Mendoza becomes clear in the latter half of *La filosofía oriental*, in which he navigates the reality of Japanese imperialism and aligns his work closer to the ideologies of Pan-Asianism. In chapter 43, "Lo que significa Japón en el momento actual" (What Japan means in our present moment), he offers a clear defense of Japanese philosophy as a possible vehicle for reconfiguring the global order, challenging its devaluation within the larger field and, by extension, Japan's place within the international world order. He argues that while modern philosophical currents in Japan and Asia had continued contact with European thought, the opposite remained rare. García de Mendoza contends, therefore, that this lack of contact with Japanese philosophies should be recognized as a problem for European thought. Japan, he observes, was steadfastly assuming a responsibility to advance social, cultural, and political life in Asia despite efforts in Europe and North America to restrain its advancements. Unlike Kuwaki, whose article stresses an awareness of a lack of understanding of Mexico, García de Mendoza portrays Japan in a way that gradually assimilates into a form of transpacific imperial nationalism. He argues, for instance, that Japan is the "vanguard" of Asia, just as Mexico could be the "vanguard" of Latin America: "Mexico and Japan," he begins his retelling of a speech to the audience at the Tokyo Imperial University, "will be the porters of a new culture of human existence."[30]

In distancing himself from Europe and Anglophone North America, García de Mendoza recalibrates Orientalism to create an imperial nationalist account for transpacific philosophical camaraderie. At the center of his argument for Japan's "significance" in the world is once again a homosocial imagining of Japan-Mexico relations, addressing his presumed Mexican upper-class readers as "*señores*" (gentlemen) throughout. The most productive gesture in the argument for Japanese philosophical significance is the doubling of Japan's exclusion from the post–World War I international order as the exclusion of other racialized male elites from global recognition overall. His concern, therefore, is not with the racism of European philosophy or the ideology of universal humanity that eschew both Kuwaki and him from its category but with generating an

argument for the possibility that an alliance between Japan and Mexico could originate "a new culture of human existence." Passages of *La filosofía oriental* further clarify his imperialist apologism: "And now that the noble and intelligent Japanese people (*el noble e inteligentísimo pueblo japonés*) have understood the responsibility it carries as the force of progress in the East, it is necessary that Japan [and China] should unite not only under a shared technique, but under the fundamental protection of life."[31] Without equivocation, García de Mendoza follows this description of Japan as a "force of progress" in post–World War I Asia with further detail about why he regards Japanese culture and politics as critical to the creation of a new world order.

García de Mendoza's discussion further reveals his clear awareness of the arguments made for the reconfiguration of Japanese imperial power into a new global order. He goes on to write that the advancement of regionalist ideals in Asia, which were at the time led by Japanese and Chinese intellectuals through a series of conferences in the late 1920s and early 1930s, were "the fault of a cowardice and lack of strength in the League of Nations in Europe."[32] And so he calls on other non-European intellectuals to recognize that while Europe and North America had once invited Japan to the "concert of Western nations in the last century," they refused to treat Japanese nationals as equals. Worse yet, the "absolute lack of comprehension" of European and North American relations within Japan, he argues, had culminated in the United States' "brutal immigration law" of 1924, which he characterizes as an "attempt to restrain the progress and the strength of this noble nation, which conquers, from moment to moment, the conscience of a world power."[33]

Another chapter, "Filosofía oriental y filosofía occidental" (Oriental philosophy and occidental philosophy) argues against the separation of Eastern and Western philosophies, positing that Japanese philosophy has mutated into something more contemporary by adopting traditions in both. García de Mendoza continues this line of thinking to theorize Japanese imperialism as a direct consequence of the hybridity of Japanese philosophy: "Each day, [Japan] gets closer to conceiving itself as the Occident, and its problems offer a very interesting question for our contemporary civilization. In fact, for example, the formation of the State of Manchukuo is located not within the realm of international politics, but within one of the phases of Japanese philosophy."[34] For García de Mendoza, it seems that Japanese culture occupies a central position in the refashioning of "our contemporary civilization," wherein colonial domination and

violence ("the formation of the State of Manchukuo") provide a foundation for its ideological and territorial manifest destiny. The idealization of Japanese imperialism here is, at best, naive; it fails to recognize the destructive power of Japan's colonial violence in Asia not merely out of an admiration of Japan's opposition to European colonial power, to getting "closer to conceiving itself as the Occident," but out of an idealization of Japan's nonwhiteness.

The effect of García de Mendoza's critique is nevertheless conflictive. It both describes an encounter between two philosophers trained in German philosophy who could write to each other in German and other modern European languages (save for Spanish) and expresses the difficulty of each philosopher to overcome the particularities of their national positions and the exclusion of Japaneseness and Mexicanness from philosophy. Yet García de Mendoza's appeal to Japanese culturalism, which transforms into apologia for Japanese imperial nationalism, is not lodged within a total rejection of European epistemic or political hegemony but in a *relocation* of a subject position of power. García de Mendoza, in other words, seems to misinterpret his identification with the structures of racialization that he reads into the international marginalization of Japan as a premise for defending colonial power. Similar to the caveats of contemporary Latin American decolonial thought, in which concepts such as "de-Westernization" assume the possibility for decolonization through the discursive and institutional structures of intellectualism, the appeal to imperial nationalist ideology in García de Mendoza's writing fails to map a historically conditioned terrain of power relations built on the logic of settler colonial recognition that underwrites modern internationalism.[35]

As discussed in chapter 1, giving light to and vociferously criticizing the persistence of racial tensions and violence in the United States was prevalent in Japanese and Mexican intellectual discourses of the early twentieth century. As much as Japan's wartime ideologues lengthily discussed the racism of US and European imperialisms, academics and cultural critics in Mexico and other parts of Latin America inveighed against white supremacy in the United States to promote the various political, educational, and economic agendas that propelled the project of a culturalist integrated modern settler nation. What can be observed about the binding of governmental power and knowledge production in imperial Japan and Mexico does not merely affirm the Foucauldian paradigm of how models of truth-making create relations to and within populations in ways that construct reality. Philosophical practices created realities about

processes of nation-making (*mestizaje*, the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere), rhetorically constructing an illusion and therefore a new imperial national reality that disavowed its exploitative practices across and among the divides of class, Indigeneity, caste (*casta*), nationality, ethnicity, race, and gender. This disavowal of the policies underscoring the "antiracism" of their colonialism promoted the colonial/imperial function of the modern nation in several ways. By affirming, for instance, the integration of colonized ethnic groups and Indigenous peoples into the national imperial regime, for instance, the Mexican and Japanese states expanded and tightened their control over colonized spaces and populations. And as Takashi Fujitani demonstrates in the case of Japanese imperialism, sweeping claims about integrative governmentality in imperial national regimes, while rhetorically calling for the integration of colonized people, depended on "apparatuses and institutions that have been identified with modernity, disciplinization, and government" as part of the mission for purported "integration."[36] In the realm of education, the coercive enforcement and strengthening of Spanish and Japanese language education abetted a form of educational eugenics, aiming to produce national subjects unevenly across the imperial national state. While language expansionists launched "educational crusades" aimed at the incorporation of colonized children into the sphere of the national, colonized (Indigenous, Korean, Taiwanese) both children and adults were affected by systemic exclusion and segregation from their colonizer counterparts.[37] Imperial nationalism and its veiled settler colonial and imperial rhetoric built not only on brutal economic and educational inequalities but also on the legal and extralegal violence and systemic genocide that allow for the dehumanization and devaluation of people within sites of expansion and accumulation.[38]

The notion that the structures of empire and settler colonialism exist in mutual exclusion of the regime of knowledge production is thus further belied in the political philosophical trajectories that shaped Kuwaki's and García de Mendoza's identification with each other as they situated their positions and agencies within philosophy from their respective *tierras incógnitas*. The issue at stake is not that evidence of their meeting does not exist but that the archival approach would fail to situate what is absent from their writings about each other within the network of imperial nationalist and settler colonial sensibilities that carry through in their identification with each other.

Reading Kuwaki and García de Mendoza's encounter across the archives of Pan-Asian and mestizo imperial nationalisms requires probing into the

often-paradoxical histories of twentieth-century antiracist epistemologies and the rhetoric of imperial nationalism that emerged in post–World War I transpacific exchange, recognition, and critique. Returning to Kuwaki and García de Mendoza's meeting, we can revisit their descriptions of their common interests in the way that the world, and world culture, should be conceived. This recognition that they shared interests and were thinking about "similar problems in similar ways" may enable us to understand similarities among the works of other philosophers in the 1920s and 1930s who, like Kuwaki and García de Mendoza, tried to conceive new narratives of modern subjectivity and universal belonging outside Eurocentric paradigms but who, unlike Kuwaki and García de Mendoza, never met. Even while contending with pure-race theory associated with the United States and, later, Nazi Germany, Japanese and Mexican intellectuals pushed forth ideologies regarding the constitution of future multiracial universality as inseparable from the successful management of health, education, medicine, and public welfare, promoting, especially, ideas that charged the imperial nation-state as the apparatus of social integration among colonized populations. It may well be that I am overestimating the consequences of imperial nationalism as a facet of the systems of global modernity that shaped the transpacific nonencounters among the intellectual histories of "antiracist" cultural discourses. Yet through an analysis of imperial nationalist discourse as not only a transpacific but a modern global phenomenon, we can turn to the further implications of what it means to trace the *tierras incógnitas* across the archives of "Mekishiko no tetsugakusha."

Separations. Transpacific Nonencounters Beyond *Tierras Incógnitas*

The story of Kuwaki and García de Mendoza's meeting ends as a story of separation and missed encounters. In 1940, García de Mendoza was invited back to Tokyo to receive an award from the Kokusai bunka shinkokai (the Japan Foundation). But because Mexico had, by that time, severed its political ties with Japan as a result of its alliance with the Allied powers during the Asia-Pacific War, García de Mendoza would not receive his award until 1954, fourteen years later, following the end of the war and the official end of the US occupation of Japan and the beginning of its long-term military industrial base complex across Asia and the Pacific, and once Mexico could reestablish international relations with Japan. Prince

Nobuhito Takamatsu, the younger brother of Emperor Hirohito, made the following remarks during the award ceremony:

> In this great contest, you, Doctor, obtained the first prize and we had the pleasure to invite you to Japan in accordance with the premise of the contest. Unfortunately, and to our great regret, we were obligated to postpone this invitation as a result of the war and other reasons for which we offer our apologies.
>
> Though delayed, your visit brings us tremendous joy and satisfaction and we gather here today to receive you with open arms.
>
> Doctor, twenty-three years ago, you visited our country for the first time and since then you have become renown for your expertise on Japan. The depth of your knowledge about Japanese culture was evident when, among the more than five hundred works by thinkers and intellectuals across the world who participated in the contest, you were successfully ranked first place.[39]

Prince Takamatsu's comments conclude with the message that García de Mendoza's work and engagement with philosophy in Japan were "contributions to the promotion of world peace." In Mexican periodicals, García de Mendoza's return to Japan was received as a demonstration of Mexico's high regard among global elite philosophical institutions.[40] His daughter Elsa later discussed the impact to *Revista Panamericana* a year after García de Mendoza's death in 1963:

> Japanese and European newspapers commented on the happy news regarding the intellect of our country the fact that within a contest organized by the Department of Cultural Promotion in Japan and the country's universities . . . Mexico was ranked first among the most cultured nations of Europe, Asia, and the Americas.
>
> Since the occasion, the news of this award remained vague in that year due to the beginning of the world war; but once international relations were reestablished with Japan, professor and Dr. Adalberto García de Mendoza was immediately invited back to that distant country to receive the coveted award.[41]

In photographs taken at the award ceremony, García de Mendoza is shown flanked by prominent figures in Japanese academia: professors and rectors from Waseda, Keio, and Kyoto Universities, and delegates from the Ministry of Education. Kuwaki Gen'yoku did not attend, as he had passed away

in 1946. Although Kuwaki's photograph appears in *La filosofía oriental*, the two philosophers never had the chance to meet again.

If a breaking of political and international ties generates a situation in which encounters are severed, blocked, or damaged, what does an encounter look like when these ties are reestablished? What changed after 1954, and what remained a trace? What would it mean to try to explore the encounter between Kuwaki and García de Mendoza, which is at best a footnote in the transpacific archive of global modernity, as directing us toward the larger trajectory of the *tierras incógnitas* of modern intellectual history and its cultural discursive legacies? If we follow the historical circumstances surrounding Kuwaki and García de Mendoza's encounter and García de Mendoza's delayed return to Japan, we find further intersections between the nonencounters of Mexican and Japanese intellectual productions, the construction of imperial fantasies, and their effect in a world system of modern racism, which is inextricable from the projects of settler colonialisms that forged the twentieth-century Mexican and Japanese states. Like the cowboys and geisha fetishized and then dismantled as images of exotic otherness in García de Mendoza's and Kuwaki's accounts of Mexico and Japan, the idea that global modernity can be separated from the actualities of racism and heterosexism must also be subject to scrutiny. Viewing the encounter between Kuwaki and García de Mendoza from the vantage point of nonencounters opens up the ways in which we can confront and analyze philosophical discourse and forms of knowledge production premises on regional, cultural, religious, and ethnic differences (inclusive of the post–Cold War development of area studies) across expansive, even if disjointed, archives.

But rather than focusing on the coeval construction of Pan-Asianism and mestizo nationalism, the nonencounter I examine here engages the unspoken role of philosophy in producing transpacific racial settler colonial and imperial nationalist ideologies. To be clear, in this and the previous chapter, the project of antiracism and its important role in dismantling historical and continuing forms of racism in knowledge production proves incompatible with the production of Pan-Asianist and mestizo nationalist ideologies. The nonencounter between these ideologies is furthermore a product of what psychoanalytic theory might elaborate as the "gaze of the other"—a dialectical configuration of the modern self as a product that is incomplete without translating the self outside cultural difference. For this reason, because the gesture of universal definition requires tactics of disavowal and distancing from one's own difference, antiracist critique

premised on the claim to universal belonging does not uncover a strategy to counteract the violence of colonialism, anti-Indigeneity, and anti-Blackness—nor does it uncover a strategy to really counteract the violence of Eurocentrism that Kuwaki and García de Mendoza, in their respective critiques, refer to in terms of its mistakes, cowardice, or lack of strength to recognize non-European political power. Turning to a different set of lenses, we may better take up the imperial nationalist genre of universalism to address questions of masculinity, homosociality, and heteropatriarchal racial reproduction to consider the limits of a logic of liberation that is predicated on the capacity to belong to the exclusionary, abstract, and seemingly deracialized construct.

When reading the statements Kuwaki makes in "Nihonteki to iu koto" and "Mekishiko no tetsugakusha" alongside García de Mendoza's reflections in *La filosofía oriental*, we can consider what, once again, Silva discusses with regard to how the play of reason has two moments of signification: the "*stage of interiority* and the *stage of exteriority*," which constitute the historical and scientific "metanarratives" that "bring modern subjects into representation."[42] Drawing on Jacques Lacan's structures of "displacement" and "negation," Silva describes how the effort to belong to the exclusive regime of self-determination and universal belonging began with the displacement and distancing of the other. For Kuwaki and García de Mendoza, the ability to relate to each other despite their displacement as others requires that they cast onto themselves a form of legible whiteness through the use of European philosophy as a mode of address. When they identify with each other through their shared views on philosophy, they in fact identify with a larger slew of discourses, experiences of class and educational privilege, and gender formations that construct the possibility for their encounter.

The registers of gender, as they intersect with class and race, are key here because they render a more complex picture of the epistemological terrains of transpacific imperial nationalisms. Wynter's critical description of the philosophical concept of the "human, Man," as a phenomenon that "overrepresents itself as if it were the human itself" offers further insights.[43] According to Wynter's critique, universal humanity is a mythology produced to consolidate and limit knowledge about "others" as anthropological objects. Universality therefore creates a poiesis of humanity that requires the production of a category of being apart from others in a way that avoids an active engagement with humanity's heterogeneity. In this way, the universal is not an all-encompassing or inclusive structure but a structure that depends on the logic of exclusion and the

displacement and marginalization of the anthropological other from its limited conception of humanity. Universalism, ultimately, is a particularizing structure constructed on the denial of its lack of relationality and relatability beyond the “figure of Man.” More than an issue of the uncanny alignment between the universal and the particular, however, the systematization of the modern human as universal subject within the construction of modern global power demonstrates how the extractive enterprises of settler coloniality and empire help obfuscate the racialized and gendered violence required to authenticate the desire for universal belonging.

As I discussed in chapter 1, in anticolonial and decolonial feminist philosophies, the critique of the logic of universality emerges alongside the revelation of how the masculinity of philosophy renders the subject into a project of disappearance under the sign of the universal. As Sara Ahmed points out, universalism’s demand for self-abnegation follows a “melancholic” structure.[44] In demanding that we identify with our repudiation of our own differences, universal displacement does not occur as a model of exclusivity but as a model of a failure of inclusion, leaving behind a string of melancholic concepts—community, the state, the world—while pathologically displacing and disavowing its own ability to meet its promises. As Lugones states in the opening of “Toward a Decolonial Feminism,” “Universalism centers the claim that the intersections of race, class, sexuality, and gender exceeds the categories of modernity.”[45] The insistence on disavowal thus reveals imperial nationalism’s heavily masculinist logic. It is a rhetoric, much like the rhetoric of the creation of any world order, that predicates on bonds of power between men who think about themselves in relation to and as sharing views with other men while disavowing the epistemic and structural power and violence that these bonds perpetuate.

How do we interpret the consequence of the scene of universalism’s disavowals? The rhetoric of transformation, transparency, and transubstantiation were cycled into the epistemological landscape of imperial nationalist ideologies and became metaphysical foundations that mapped onto the vicissitudes of colonial violence and life for marginalized populations. Thus, I am concerned with the idea that the only way to understand the archive of cross-cultural philosophical encounter is through an argument about the comparative contemporaneity between Japanese and Mexican modernities. As Chuh warns, to recognize the false promises of universality and liberal rationality we must “remember that comparison is at the heart of liberal-colonial epistemologies”

and that it correlates with the demands of racial capitalism and cis-heteropatriarchy.[46] Cis-heteropatriarchy has played a key role in conjuring both the image of the world and the figure of man's privileged relation to it. Thus, cis-heteropatriarchy, paired with epistemic power, enabled the imperial nationalist imagination, the vicissitudes of racial capitalism, and experimentation with coercive integrationist settler colonialism. Yet a framework of nonencounter that embeds into these histories an optics for evincing the paradoxes of imperial nationalism is one that can, I argue, be used to craft a more critical archival account of both transpacific modernity and its consequences: the creation of and reproduction of knowledge that attempts to define *tierras incógnitas*.

The record of Kuwaki and García de Mendoza's meeting in 1929 animates my reading of how the racialized structures of philosophies of culturalism and imperial nationalist ideology privilege a category of universal belonging that, as Wynter, Silva, Ahmed, Lugones, and Chuh show us, is founded on the abjection of perceived *tierras incógnitas*. Seeing the masculine assertion of philosophical capacity as an assertion of imperial national subjectivity helps us recognize how articulations of colonial power manifest across the homosocial encounters of intellectual production. It is precisely because imperial nationalism is an unstable, affective-emotive discourse that we require an analysis of how philosophies of modern national subjectivity that predicate on relations of domination and subordination disseminate across regimes of knowledge and representation.

In chapters 3 and 4, I discuss the stakes of racial settler colonial ideology through a reading of post-1945 cultural productions that structure the entangled status of the racial subjugations of Asian, Black, and Indigenous subjects. By thinking about imperial nationalism and racial settler colonialism as enduring structures and by not disavowing colonial spatiotemporal continuity, chapters 3 and 4 catalog the discursive and systematic continuation of imperial ideologies and contest what Oguma Eiji and others have pointed out as the myth of a temporal discontinuation between conceptions of national identity before and after 1945.[47] While Pan-Asianism and *mestizaje* were deployed within assimilationist policies in the years leading up to and including the Second World War, discourses around the construction of integrationist national community formations shifted after 1945, especially in Japan upon the arrival and occupation of Allied forces, which occupied the archipelago formally between 1945 and 1952 and continue to have military presence as part of the broad network of the US military industrial complex in the Asia-Pacific. As Kang Sangjung observes

of the late 1990s, the end of the post-1945 period of economic prosperity in the 1970s was followed by an "engulfing wave of globalization and accompanying crises of social denigration" that imperiled notions of public memory in relation to the atrocities of war and colonialism during the first half of the twentieth century.[48] The transformation of memory into a debate, however, is inextricable from the effects of Cold War–era knowledge production, which helped provide a vision of a Japan that had transformed, almost seamlessly, into an ethnically homogeneous economic superpower.

The work of Kang, Oguma, Ukai Satoshi, and others has elucidated how right-wing ethnonationalism in Japan is complicit with US military, political, and epistemic power.[49] In contrast to the discourses of racial, cultural, and ethnic inclusion and assimilation that dominated the propaganda of Japanese imperialism, post-1945 "operated according to a structure of exclusion" based on a transnational axis of patriarchal and racist modes of domination.[50] The notion of Japanese national homogeneity, Oguma and others have argued, therefore enabled the construction of post-1945 Japanese identity politics that erased the inherent heterogeneity of the settler colonial and postimperial state and worked to enforce the dispossession and subjugation of the marginalized communities, which continue to live and experience the aftereffects of interwar and wartime colonization. Zainichi Koreans, Indigenous people of the Ryūkyūs and Ainu Mosir, Burakumin, Indigenous populations in Taiwan, and many other colonial and diasporic subjects who suffered from the biopolitical violence—including displacement, deterritorialization, genocide, state-sanctioned sexual enslavement, and militarization—of Japanese imperial nationalism were subsumed as discursive figurations that rendered them incoherent with the late twentieth- through twenty-first-century identity politics of the Japanese state. Alejandro Anaya Muñoz similarly discusses how the political mobilization for recognizing the conditions of inequality faced by Indigenous populations in Mexico does not always erode the legitimacy of oppressive policies or threaten the governmentality of the hegemonic state. Yet, as Anaya Muñoz argues, tracing the persistence of the push for political recognition has helped provide an account, however murky, that articulates demands for a response to the question of Indigenous and postcolonial rights.[51] Through that murkiness, I argue that legacies of Japan's and Mexico's imperial nationalist constructions in the twentieth century reverberate and come onto the political stage belatedly and through often dissonant, colonial logics that strategically silence victims and their memories.

Racisms, in the plural, reinforce and mobilize one another. The chapters that follow, discuss how cultural representations produce certain figures of nonencounter—cacophonies, inscriptions—that register the grammars of imperial nationalism as part of modern and contemporary receptions of cultural identity. Nonencounter can serve as a metaphor, in this case, for an interpretative hermeneutic and framework for revisiting the established and canonical to consider how the logic of historical subjugation inscribes itself into representation and as re-presentation. A hermeneutic of nonencounter, however, does not constitute a praxis of liberation from the structures or grammars of imperial nationalism. A hermeneutic of nonencounter attends to the cacophonies and erasures that are the legacies of the racial settler ideologies, transmuted into the formation of Mexican and Japanese cultural and national discourses during the latter half of the twentieth century. To read through nonencounter, therefore, is a way of interpreting the continued structures of racial dispossession and racialized expropriation and their reception in the fictions that shape dominant cultural imaginaries.

3

Mestizaje's Echoes

The Spectacle of Race as Cacophony

In the spring of 1961, the Mexican newspaper *El Universal* featured several reports on the arrival of Japanese film star Mifune Toshirō in Mexico City. One article begins with a narration of Mifune descending from the airplane, describing how he responded to questions from journalists in a "very peculiar Spanish full of Japanese idioms." "He told us," the reporter writes, "that he had already learned, in Spanish, all his lines for the film *Ánimas Trujano*, which he has come to film in our country."[1] The portrait of Mifune's arrival continues to marvel at the actor, who had recently accepted the leading role in a film by one of the most prolific Mexican Golden Age directors, Ismael Rodríguez—*Ánimas Trujano: El hombre importante* (Ánimas Trujano: A very important man, 1962). The article contains a photograph of Mifune standing in front of the airplane at the Benito Juárez International Airport. Beneath the main story, another reporter going under the pseudonym "El Pajarito Indiscreto" (The Indiscreet Bird) published a brief titled "Cómo vi y oí a Toshiro Mifune" (How I saw and heard Toshiro Mifune): "He is a man verging on forty, tall, dark skinned, with a long and full mustache and a sparse beard. He resembles a Native Mexican, like those who live in Oaxaca. He was wearing an original, elegant Japanese outfit that, he explained, was the kind that they

use in formal ceremonies. . . . His hair was long and arranged on top of his head."[2] Context clues suggest that El Pajarito Indiscreto's projections are merely that: projections of certain racialized characteristics onto the Japanese actor's appearance to affirm the glamorous Mifune's suitability to play the role of Ánimas Trujano: an impoverished Zapotec man who lives with his family in a makeshift shack in Oaxaca during the early years of the Mexican Revolution. Mifune's tenability in this role is linked not to his skill or craft but to the writer's ability to liken his physical appearance to a contained, unnuanced, and mediated image of Nativeness. The commentary even impresses upon readers that the "elegant Japanese outfit" is what is out of place given Mifune's physiological appearance as an "authentic" or "native" Mexican: "dark skinned, with a long and full mustache," "hair . . . long and arranged on top of his head."

In other words, per El Pajarito Indiscreto's description, the actor already possessed a hybridized affect that overshadowed other markers of his ethnic and national identities. Even while Mifune had by that time reached the height of his international fame for his depiction of characters in the films of Akira Kurosawa, the commentary in *El Universal* speaks to the entrenchment of specific yet not unrelated tropes about race and Indigeneity that are often collapsed in the exoticizing discourses of mainstream national imaginaries about Mexico. And thus the discussion of Mifune's appearance offers an apt parallel to the topic of this book: the disconnected modes of making knowledge about race in contexts that inherit the political histories and ideological traces of imperial nationalism and racial settler coloniality. Though Mifune's positional difference—being an international movie star—is significant, his depiction within *El Universal* demonstrates the double bind in which racial imaginations about both Asian and Indigenous bodies in Mexico inscribe them as disappearing objects. By asserting Mifune's biologized resemblance to Zapotec Oaxacans, El Pajarito Indiscreto pushes forth a narrative that draws on both the exoticizing stereotypes of Indigenous people and the Orientalist tropes that mark Asian subjects as unassimilable others. Through this objectification, racial identification becomes inseparable from racial representation because the representation of race follows the treatment of a racialized subject as something to be produced, performed, and verified through the structure of representation. And through this structure of representation, what "authentic Oaxacan" identity comes to signify vis-à-vis Mifune's body is the obfuscated fungibility of anti-Indigenous and

anti-Asian racisms within the discourse of popular Mexican culture. *El Universal*'s Orientalist rhetoric takes form and finds articulation precisely at this juncture of nonencounter. El Pajarito Indiscreto's description of Mifune echoes, without naming, the extensive history that inscribes the entangled disappearance of different racialized subjects. In this case, the casting of Mifune as a Zapotec man does not erase Mifune's ethnicity but rather enables the erosion and foreclosure of narratives that show how the imaginary of the Indigenous subject structures the inscribed disappearances of Asians within the logics and geopolitics of race in postrevolutionary Mexico.

Jodi A. Byrd has written that the settler colonial logic of cultural representations of and narratives about Indigenous and marginalized subjects produce cacophony: moments that illuminate the fallacy of a liberal settler colonial ontology of the modern nation (for instance, multiculturalism) by evincing the persistence of racial, anti-Indigenous violence and subjugation within the dream of the modern national community. This chapter analyzes such cacophonous moments where discourses of *mestizaje* function to racialize Japanese subjects as Indigenous or mestizo, repeating *mestizaje*'s function as a settler colonial apparatus of racial erasure and subjugation. The proposal to read through nonencounter addresses the ideological and epistemic structures that create disconnects between the discourses that shaped Mexican mestizo settler colonialism and Japanese imperial nationalism. Extending the initial inquiry to the post-1945 period, this chapter pivots away from the production of ideological and epistemic structures for crafting narratives about racial national belonging to the cultural representative legacies of mestizo settler colonialism and Japanese imperialism. It illustrates how mestizo settler and Pan-Asianist conceptions of race play a muted yet not insignificant role in the creation of narratives and productions about both Asian and Indigenous subjects to generate literary and cinematic articulations that evoke earlier racial discourses and tropes while at the same time burying them under the signs of the transnational and the cross-cultural. By drawing attention to the nonencounter that structures the disconnected intimacies between anti-Indigeneity and anti-Asianness in Mexico-Japan, I discuss transpacific collaboration and intertextual influence as forms that conjure the violent histories of transpacific racial capitalism. Across the transpacific nonencounters of Indigenous and Asian exclusion and expulsion, mestizo nationalist racism functioned to enable what Jodi Melamed flags as racial capitalism's capacity for "ongoing accumulation through dispossession."[3]

Mifune's interpretation of a Zapotec character in Ismael Rodríguez's *Ánimas Trujano* is not alone in its inheritance of a certain racial settler colonial treatment of Indigeneity in Mexico within transpacific cultural productions. *Ánimas Trujano* reflects a trajectory of the film industry's sensibilities to collapse the racialization of Japanese and other Asian actors into variations of the American (in the continental sense) imaginary of Indigeneity—or, in this case, Indianness—or other Brown identities. Mifune's performance in fact joins that of Sessue Hayakawa's portrayal of El Jaguar, a Mexican bandit, in Marshall Neilan's *The Jaguar's Claws* (1917), as well as that of Japanese Mexican actor Noé Murayama, Mifune's contemporary who played character roles in Mexican soap operas and films of the mid-to-late twentieth century. The use of actors of Asian descent to develop Indigenous or "darker" mestizo characters to contrast the white or white-passing mestizo actors playing principal, heroic roles is therefore not unique to Rodríguez's film. These interpretations productively lend themselves to examining how Japanese and other Asian subjects are racialized by the lenses of *mestizaje* and mestizo settler colonialism. But these cacophonous lenses that inherit the exoticizing and dehumanizing discourses of Vasconcelos are not unidirectional.

Nearly three decades after the release of *Ánimas Trujano* and its nomination for the 1962 Academy Award in the foreign film category, Nobel Prize winner Ōe Kenzaburō published the novel *Jinsei no shinseki* ("A relative of life," published in English as *An Echo of Heaven*). Set in the 1970s and early 1980s, *An Echo of Heaven* is told from the perspective of the semi-autobiographical K, a writer and university professor grappling with the tragic memory and death of his close friend Marie Kuraki. At the start of the novel, K receives a letter from a Japanese filmmaker in Guadalajara, Mexico, informing him that a crew will be putting together a documentary about Marie's life after her passing from cancer. K, we learn, had agreed to write for the film, which he tentatively called "Like a Mistress" (*Ai suru onna no you ni*, literally "Like a woman I loved"). And as Marie's life story unravels from K's perspective, we discover how a strong, sexually liberated feminist who spoke out against gender inequality and political oppression turned to Christianity after the dual suicide of her sons and ended up committing the remainder of her life to a Japanese Christian cult in the Mexican countryside. And this middle-aged Japanese woman, who represented such a stark contrast to the expected roles of women in 1980s Japan, is embraced at the end of her life as a venerated saint by workers and residents of a Mexican village: "Marie Kuraki spent the last few years of her life helping

to run a cooperative farm in the Mexican countryside, devoting herself to the health of the Indians and mestizos who worked there. While she was there she came to be regarded as a saint, not only in the village where the farm was, with a pyramid—an Aztec ruin—looking down on it from a high mountain peak, but also in the neighboring villages from which some of these poor workers came."[4] Throughout the novel, the narrator spends much of the novel referring to Marie as beautiful and feminine; however, she is also perceived as threatening, often being compared to popular cultural figures like Betty Boop and, later, the mestiza *indigenista* artist Frida Kahlo. What is striking about Marie's transmutability, however, is less associated with the narrator's perception of her as caricature; rather, it is that her description is constantly used to account for both her gender and her appearance as something *other* than Japanese. By the time that the novel arrives to the moments before Marie passes away, her body is described as becoming brown as it is ravaged by cancer, only to later be morphed and fetishized as religious iconography: La Virgen de Guadalupe—a Catholic appropriation of the Aztec goddess Tonāntzin Coatlaxopeuh, a Nahuatl word meaning "Our Mother." Like Mifune's Ánimas, Marie's racial transformation throughout the novel is illustrative of what these characters offer to the imaginary that transforms them into colonial appropriations of Indigeneity through their undifferentiation from Mifune's and Marie's racialized otherness. These cacophonous entanglements between anti-Indigeneity and anti-Asian racism thus construct Ánimas and Marie in connection to a long-standing history of racial masquerade and cross-ethnic representation that reproduce other historical registers of global racial colonial violence.

Ōe's and Rodríguez's uses of "browning" as a signifier for becoming or presenting as "Indigenous" are not commensurable, yet their seemingly incoherent sources and histories are similarly cacophonous, remaining in excess of the liberal progressive multiculturalist logic of their texts. As José Esteban Muñoz observes, brown performativity articulates the traces attributed to "multiple and intersecting regimes of colonial violence."[5] We can also understand the excesses of "being brown" in terms of what Aileen Moreton-Robinson defines as a kind of racialization "existentially and ontologically tied to patriarchal white sovereignty."[6] Racial performativity is a regime of power, in other words, that evades complete representation. In its transpacific reimagining and reproduction, the "browning" of Japanese subjects apprehends the cacophonous aspects of subject-making

that minoritarian subjects experience when they are integrated into settler desires. As a result, browning in *An Echo of Heaven* and *Ánimas Trujano* demonstrates how technologies for conveying Asian identity as brown Indigenous otherness re-create racialized knowledges that inform modern national imaginaries about culture and identity. Critics like Anne Anlin Cheng and Estelle Tarica have elaborated on Edward Said's critique of Orientalism to unfold the complex political, historical, and aesthetic dimensions of racial objectification as it pertains to Asian and Indigenous subjects in cultural representations. These scholars underline the liberal settler colonial ontology of the modern nation (for instance, through discourses of multiculturalism) as operative to the persistence of racial and ethnic violence and subjugation within the dream of the modern national community. Thus, cacophony is a productive metaphor for examining the representative dissonances that signal how the racialized dynamics of modern nationalism manifest as continuations, or legacies, of their settler colonial constitution and its imperialistic underpinnings.

In what follows, I do not attempt to reconcile Mifune's performance as Ánimas Trujano with the "transformation" of Marie into La Virgen de Guadalupe in Ōe's novel. Rather, I turn to these representations and to different traces of imperial nationalist discourses within political and journalistic discourses to examine how formations of Indigeneity, race, and ethnicity resonate and reside between, while not linking, the legacies of mestizo settler colonialism and Japanese imperialism. Read apart, Rodríguez's and Ōe's works have little in common; they treat distinct narrative subjects and are produced in languages and about historical perspectives with minimal overlap. What they share is a representative eradication of Asian corporeality as part of the narrative of Indigenous erasure that is at the core of mestizo settler community-making. In the cacophonous presentations of eradicated racial subjects in Ōe's and Rodríguez's works, gendered, queer, and racialized characters contend with the vicissitudes of the ever-present and exclusionary discourses of a heteropatriarchal modernity. In their narratives, those who are Indigenous or single mothers or poor or who have disabilities are portrayed as unassimilable within aspirations for community belonging. A failure to be assimilated translates, then, into being a trace and an aporia of the past at the center of a progressive imaginary about national becoming and belonging. I therefore argue that we can read these productions through a framework that interprets them as traces of the post-1945 treatment of the history of Japanese imperialism,

mestizo ideology, and their convergence in the politics of a transpacific legacy of historical amnesia around what historian Beatriz Urías Horcasitas terms the "secret histories of racism."[7] These histories are not marked by "breaks" between the periods before, during, or after the Japanese Empire or the construction of the modern Mexican nation-state, or by the post-1945 investment in the moral, cultural, educational, and economic transformations that politicians of both states credit to Mexico's and Japan's contemporary definitions of national identity. The histories of racism conjured by Rodríguez's and Ōe's works take root not in the form of detectable continuation but, indeed, in the forged nonencounters between ideas and the institutions that carry out the missions of racism under the guise of securing an ideal of the national.

Given the sometimes subtle and often obvious continuation of the pre-1945 discourses that orchestrated imperial expansion and colonial oppression within post-1945 institutions, relations of power, and ideologies, I argue for thinking of imperial nationalisms as having continued legacies. Imperial nationalisms' legacies do not only emerge in the settler colonial logics that underpin the structural manifestations of racial oppression and its intersectional ramifications across gender, class, national origin, ethnicity, language, caste, ability, or other systems targeted by the exclusionary nature of modern liberalism's universal humanity. They emerge as well in the genealogies that repeat the scenes of imperial loss and desire as well as those that acutely deconstruct the revisionism of colonial violence. Nationalist revisionism, then, is not a mere failure of contending with historical violence, but rather an intentional cacophony in the post-1945 constructs of transpacific nonencounters.

"He Had the Face of a Zapotec Indian!" The Vanishing Asian in Ismael Rodríguez's *Ánimas Trujano* (1962)

In September 1961, four months before the Mexican release of *Ánimas Trujano*, Mifune gave an interview to Yamamoto Kyoko for the film magazine *Kinema Junpo* to reflect on his time filming in Mexico. When asked what it meant to him to act in Rodríguez's film and play an Indigenous character, Mifune discussed affinities that he saw between Mexico and Japan in the early twentieth century. He called the two countries "neighbors separated by a border called the Pacific Ocean" and spoke about his

impressions of Mexican people and their relationship with native populations in Oaxaca:

> MIFUNE: Almost everyone [in Mexico] is [mixed] Latin American. . . . As expected, though, at its core, white people tend to hold control, even in politics and the economy.
> YAMAMOTO: So, do *indios* have a low standard of living in Mexico?
> MIFUNE: I only witnessed a bit of it, but many do live in terrible conditions. It's kind of similar to the lives of farmworkers in Manchuria, China, and Korea [満州や中国、朝鮮などヌの地方の農村生活と似ています]. They reminded me of those Japanese colonial peasants who were said to only drink water. The land is dry too, so nothing can really be grown except maybe for corn and beans.

We can return here to the conversation about the impact of *minzokugaku* and *tōyōshigaku* in the discourses of Japanese imperial nationalism, whereby the "Asianness" of colonized Chinese, Taiwanese, Korean, and Indigenous subjects (Ainu, Ryukyuan) were seen as part of a teleology toward Japanese racial universalism. The language that Mifune uses to describe Manchuria and Korea here is the same as the language used to refer to these sites during their occupation under Japanese imperialism ("Manshū," "Chōsen"). Mifune's use of these terms is not, however, unexpected or unusual. The actor was born in Qingdao, Shandong, and grew up in Japanese-colonized Manchuria. But by invoking outdated vocabulary here, Mifune's words demonstrate that the impact and legacies of Japanese imperial nationalism were, on a discursive if not systemic level, intact not just within the public imaginary of the 1960s but within Mifune's own personal experience as a settler. Mifune's discussion offers a contrast to Mexican media reporters who, much like *El Universal*'s reporters, indulged the Orientalist fantasy by continuing to assert that his Asian features rendered him already more authentically Indigenous than an Indigenous or mestizo actor. Whereas the Mexican media saw Asianness in Indigenous identity, Mifune identifies Indigeneity in Mexico as a kind of equivalent to Japan's colonial relationship with other parts of Asia. We can then situate his emphasis on an existing transpacific link between Japan and Mexico in the early twentieth century within the very real histories that brought Indigenous dispossession into contact with imperial Japan's project of migration-led settler colonialism in Mexico and other parts of Latin America during the first half of the twentieth century. In other words, what Mifune's statements signify are part of a

longer history of mythologizing Indigenous and Asian alterity as part of a racial settler ontology.

While Mifune's commentary seems to read Indigeneity within the framework of Japanese imperial and settler colonial past, the Mexican media as well as Rodríguez's own account of the production offers another dimension to the actor's positioning in the role of an Indigenous subject. In his memoir, the director writes about how he came up with the idea of adapting the film and casting Mifune during a conversation with Mexican writer Juan Rulfo. Notably, Rodríguez decided on recruiting Mifune for the role once he decided that the primary characters from the film's source material, a 1951 novella by Rogelio Barriga Rivas titled *La mayordomía* (The stewardship), should be refigured as Zapotec peasants. He writes in his memoir, *Memorias*: "[Juan Rulfo] brought me a novel called *La mayordomía* by Rogelio Barriga Rivas, and I thought it was amazing. I spoke with Rivas and made many modifications. The [original] story was based more on the story of the woman, but what seemed more interesting to me was the personality of the untrustworthy man: Ánimas Trujano. In Mexico, *The Rickshaw Man* had just premiered and I said, 'That is my Ánimas Trujano—and what's more, he had the face of a Zapotec Indian!'" While certainly less explicitly racist than the brief in *El Universal*, this commentary is only one example of the various instances—in interviews, newspaper profiles, and scholarship—over the last five decades in which Mifune's racial difference is rendered as an uncontestable justification for his casting.[8] The repetition of this justification illustrates a continuing discursive investment in understanding *Indigeneity* as both exotic and authentic to Mexicanness. This justification furthermore obfuscates the commercial reasoning for recruiting Mifune, an international film star who Rodríguez believed could elevate the profile and success of his production, and the difficulties that the director faced at first when proposing the role to the actor.[9] At the same time, it eclipses the transactional and economic features of the film's early stages in casting and production. Mifune's performance as an image of and Orientalist approximation to Indigeneity therefore enables a logic of both racial capitalism and settler coloniality through embracing the paradoxical claims of a Mexican "race" that requires the expulsion of exotic Indigenous otherness for the assimilation of Indigeneity into mestizo biopolitics.

In using the phrase "Orientalist approximation to Indigeneity," I do not mean to identify Mifune's Asianness as Indigenous but rather to examine how the discursive phenomena in the preceding excerpts play into the exclusion and racialization of both Asian and Indigenous subjects in

similar (yet by no means equivalent) ways. As ideologies and policies born out of a fascination with *mestizaje* deemed Asian and African people undesirable for the Mexican body politic, they promoted *mestizaje* eugenics to violently assimilate Indigenous populations into the hegemonic state. In this instance, *not being* Mexican or mestizo triggers a fantasy of otherness that can be translated by the settler imaginary into a fantasy of the exemplary and inscrutable figure of the "authentic Indian." This figure is more easily understood as exotic and as incommensurate to the national community by being cast as foreign and as requiring racial as well as linguistic interpretation by way of the technical mixing afforded by the cinematic medium. Latching on to an idea about Mifune's Japaneseness in particular and Asianness in general, the racializing rhetoric of Rodríguez's and *El Universal*'s comments epitomize a "spectacle of the Other," as Stuart Hall describes, that satiates a fascination with casting difference as hypervisible.[10] These comments ascribe an affinity to Indigenous and Asian difference that separates Mifune from mestizo and white Mexicanness and draws attention to the erasure of both Indigenous and Asian subjects within dominant narratives about the Mexican national community. Thus, we can examine how the premise of casting Mifune as the titular character in a film that requires its protagonist to "resemble a native Mexican, like those who live in Oaxaca" resonates with the thematics and politics of race in the construction of Mexican modernity.

Filmed in black and white, *Ánimas Trujano: El hombre importante* relates thematically to early twentieth-century *mestizo* nationalism in several ways. Aesthetically, the film echoes the ideologies of *indigenismo*, a nationalist project interrelated with *mestizaje* that constructed Indigeneity as an aesthetic of the Mexican national body politic and Mexican cultural production. Born from an investment in creole and mestizo nationalism in postcolonial Latin America in the twentieth century (meaning after the structural dismantlement of Spanish and Portuguese colonialisms that resulted in the establishment of territorial state sovereignties across the subcontinent), *indigenismo*'s discourses and aesthetics became embedded in the conception and production of national selfhood. The ideology flourished in the twentieth century and, in Mexico, illuminated the appeal of making Indigenous peoples appear "nationalized" as a source of Mexico's cultural uniqueness.[11] Beyond romanticizing racial relations between settler whites and creoles and Indigenous populations, however, *indigenismo* and *mestizaje* discourses, as the literary theorist Gloria Chacón has brilliantly argued, "represent two vectors connecting to historical events

(i.e., the encounter) and the political ideologies that prescribe the whitening of Indians and Blacks in Latin America (*mestizaje*)."[12] In other words, *indigenismo*, like *mestizaje*, fantasized Indigenous heritage in Mexico as always being in the process of assimilation into whiteness. Its hegemonic discourse played a role in fueling the imagination of Indigeneity as an other that could be eugenically dominated, subsumed, incorporated, and transformed into a desirable subject of the modern mestizo community. We could posit, furthermore, that although the film does not gesture at the history of the dispossession and erasure of Asian migrant communities in Mexico, its settler colonial aesthetics of *indigenismo* do play out as an Orientalist trope, whereby the history of transpacific racial capitalism looms starkly in the characterization of Ánimas Trujano.

Arguably, the setting of the film stages a crucial dimension to its transpacific and settler colonial cacophonies. The film takes place in an impoverished Oaxaca town during the beginning of the Mexican Revolution—an important frame that helps reenact the processes of coercive integration and the construction of national narratives about the imperative to resolve the "Indian problem" by including Indigenous populations in the project of capitalist development. The setting carries historical import because Oaxaca, since early European colonialism, has been the site of Indigenous political struggle and resistance. Home to the largest populations of Indigenous people in the Mexican state, Oaxaca operates in the political and cultural imaginary as both a site for *indigenista* fantasies of assimilation and a site for the collective mestizo Mexican struggle against colonial domination.

Ánimas Trujano recalls and renders the history of Indigenous struggle, however, as interconnected with a representation of a settler nation. In its opening sequence, the film documents its nationalized memory of the Zapotec community in the form of an anthropological documentary narrated by a deep male voice. Every year, the voice tells us, small towns like this one in Oaxaca celebrate a religious festival. For the festival, the local Catholic priest chooses a man from the local Indigenous community to serve as the leader of the celebrations, and this man, "el mayordomo," must cover the costs of the entire festival. "For three days," the voice-over continues, "the 'indios' are afforded a period where they can forget their *sad, lonely existence*."[13] Upon those last three words, the camera pans upward to Mifune's seemingly inebriated Ánimas, an impoverished Zapotec campesino described by the voice as one of the "sad Indians" who "wanted to become a very important man" and be chosen as his village's mayordomo. The major conflict of the

film revolves around the question of whether Ánimas, burping next to a young girl who seems otherwise disaffected, is suitable for the role.

The voice-over's words take root in the history of racialized othering that helps emphasize Zapotec alterity while at the same time exposing Ánimas as a character marginalized even within a marginalized community. He represents, in other words, bourgeois Mexican anxieties about Indigeneity that link to the idea that destitution, alcohol abuse, poor hygiene, and crime are heritable characteristics that helped characterize Indigenous people as deviations from the civilizational mandate of modernity. In the film, Ánimas functions to stage a temporal distance between the "problematic" Indigenous subject, who refuses to assimilate into national normativity, and the Zapotec characters—all played by white or mestizo actors—who show the promise of assimilating Indigenous Mexicans into hegemonic Hispanic culture. Connecting the Zapotec subject to a "sad, lonely existence" furthermore suggests not only the asymmetries between Indigenous subjects and landowning white criollos and clergymen but also the trope of debt undergirding settler imperial relations. In the context of the early period of the Mexican Revolution, however, it is not military empire that constitutes the imaginaries and aesthetics of settler logic but rather the imaginaries and aesthetics of settler logic that constitute and expose the militarist and imperial construction of the Mexican state. To become a mayordomo means to participate in honoring the power of settler imperial indebtedness that colonized subjects must indulge, even while knowing that the position requires further impoverishment. As the plot unfolds, the tale of how Ánimas remains poor, sad, and morally reprehensible is linked not to his refusal but to his unmet desire to participate in the intra-class and intra-caste politics of respectability that hold the promise to his becoming "an important man" as village mayordomo. Reading *Ánimas Trujano* as a case of cacophonous representation, we can examine how settler imperial debt and Indigenous otherness, attenuated in Mifune's racialized embodiment, collide in the film to recycle a mestizo nationalist justification for the history of Indigenous dispossession.

To the extent that it conjures a dislikable, unrefined character in Mifune's performance, *Ánimas Trujano* constructs its protagonist as a fantasy of the wayward, primitive *indio* for modern Mexican audiences through a plethora of stereotypical tropes. Ánimas refuses to act as a devout Catholic or as an appreciative, diligent, and masculine working-class man, thus attenuating the film's moralistic portrayal of the need to transform Indigeneity through the imposition of social order. In being "in excess"

of the expectations set upon Indigeneity by the heteronormalizing impositions of liberal modernity, Ánimas is painted as a queer specter of Orientalist approximations to Indigeneity that challenge, albeit through the spectacle of their failures, the patriarchal foundations of mestizo nationalism. Throughout, Ánimas explicitly pursues material, spiritual, and sexual desires, acting in stark contrast to other men in his community. The opening conflict of the film, after all, revolves around Ánimas's belief in witchcraft, thus showing the deep, consequential connection between Indigenous poverty, superstition, and fear. Meanwhile, the other Indigenous characters with speaking roles—those played by white or mestizo actors—criticize Ánimas, deeming him lazy, illiterate, drunk, and corrupt. In making a mess of his and his family's situation, Mifune's Ánimas serves as a warning to viewers who understand Indigeneity as something to be managed, made less fluid and less volatile, and proscribed from risking the normative and disciplinary structure of the modern community.

We could read Ánimas's failure to produce and turn away from sympathy in line with what literary scholar Xine Yao describes in their definition of *disaffection* as an ambivalent politics of sympathetic identification and disidentification that unmake the structural conditions of Indigenous dispossession in the settler colonial context and that produce the modern.[14] Ánimas's utterly unsympathetic characterization functions as a kind of pharmakos—a scapegoating apparatus that signals the possibility for remedy—which engages with the film's use of representations of Indigenous disaffection as signs for the need of assimilationism.[15] It doubles, then, as a call for the rectification of an infectious Indigenous waywardness. As Ánimas rejects sympathy, other characters invite a feeling of pathos, relation, or fellowship among themselves. (The word *sympathy*, after all, has its roots in the Greek word *sumpathēs*, from *sum* and *pathos*, "feeling"—so feeling in common, feeling in sum.) The film directs our sympathy, our ability to feel in common, to Ánimas's wife, Juana. Played by light-skinned Mexican actress and singer Columba Domínguez, Juana serves as a tragic symbol for the possibility of Indigenous existence in moral servitude. A paragon of modern duty and morality, Juana aspires for a better life for her children. She is the main source of income for her family and spends her days working for a local mezcal manufacturer. Meanwhile, Ánimas steals her money to purchase and consume mezcal with total abandon, gamble, and show off to his mistress, Catarina—a local sex worker with whom he becomes obsessed. The message is clear: While Juana displays all signs of moral rectitude

and modern progress, Ánimas's existence hinders her socioeconomic and ethical-civilizational mobility.

It is meaningful that one of the props of Ánimas's disaffection is mezcal—in fact, the very mezcal from the *mezcalería* that employs Juana. The characterization of Juana not only smooths out the violence of practices of Indigenous resource extraction by the Mexican state but further supports the idea that the capitalist extraction of mezcal brings her and her family closer to the ideal of the productive national community. A product made from the indigenous agave plant, mezcal operates in the film's discourse on cultural progress and as a dense signifier for the impasse that strains the couple's relationship. Read in line with the history of Mexican settler colonialism, mezcal links to the circulation of materialist modernity and the impositions of capitalist development. It is a product that enables the continual violence and violation of Indigenous livelihood. The mezcal in the film conveys a story about gendered colonial violence. The events that lead to Ánimas becoming mayordomo of his community begin with Ánimas attacking his daughter's rapist: a white man and son of the Spanish landowner who is Juana's boss at the *mezcalería*. The rape of the young Zapotec girl is displaced, and its violence becomes an indictment on Ánimas's refusal to "remain civil." The enraged Ánimas is turned into an example: He is quickly arrested and imprisoned for a year for his infraction against a white man. Juana, meanwhile, is left to apologize. Where Ánimas fails to produce a sustainable family unit, the ideal of the modern Mexican nation upholds Juana's fantasy of belonging and respectability. While the film turns our attention to Ánimas's noisy, unassimilable presence as a "problem," it is Juana who figures in the film's cacophony, as she is a conduit that brings a mythical whitened (transparent) Indigeneity closer to a community of sympathy (the nation). Juana wishes to belong to the national community, even though "belonging" means accepting the genocidal processes of sexual violence that Indigenous feminist theorists Maile Arvin, Eve Tuck, and Angie Morrill critique as part of the intersecting systems of heteropatriarchy and heterosexism that serve to justify colonial conquest.[16] In the settler colonial imaginary that Juana represents, vanishing (a euphemistic eradication) the Indigenous subject and Indigenous *subjectivity* is necessary for the often oversimplified, gendered biopolitical narrative of the modern nation to emerge. Indeed, when Ánimas returns from prison, he comes home to a mestizo grandson.

Ánimas's exclusion from the politics of mestizo/*indigenista* respectability thus enables the film's ontological claims about the link between his

sense of emasculation and disempowerment and his refusal to transform into a "good Indian." The racializing trope of Ánimas's alienation from civilizational progress is readily identifiable in moments that make it clear that his exclusion is prophylactic and necessary for instituting moral order in his family. The intrusion of Ánimas as a hyper-racialized character into a space where Indigeneity is otherwise represented as aspiring toward whiteness is a stark source of ideological emphasis. Ánimas exemplifies an excess beyond the politics of mestizo nationalism, wherein the relationship between the narrative of Indigenous assimilation into the modern nation and the biopolitical violence of settler colonial capitalism is obscured. The film thus articulates new racial imaginaries that the fantasy of the Mexican national community provides through the "browning" of a Japanese man performing an Indigenous character. Although Ánimas eventually does become mayordomo, he continues to be the object of everyone's reproach. Soured by the absence of accolades for his new title, Ánimas flies into a rage and exclaims his desire to run away with Catarina. In a climactic moment of heterosexist symbolism, it is the Madonna who strikes the final blow to the proverbial Whore. Grabbing Ánimas's machete, Juana stabs and kills Catarina, prompting her husband to take the blame as a kind of redemption. The final sequence shows Ánimas running away after the village decides to let him live in exile as a fugitive. Mifune's purpose is revealed: He was cast precisely to be cast out.

Indeed, Mifune's casting as Ánimas produces a peculiar racial masquerade that goes beyond its function as a means to hegemonize an image of the place of Indigeneity within national culture. In *Ánimas Trujano*, Mifune's racial masquerade provides access to Indigenous alterity through its scopic availability in an Asian body rather than its mere performance by white and mestizo actors. Donning a shade of makeup to darken the appearance of his skin, Mifune's characterization is a spectacle of the mestizo nationalist imaginary of the wayward *indio* set in stark contrast to the fairer-skinned white and mestizo actors who hold speaking roles, including Ánimas's family and other Zapotec characters. His deliberate alienation from the ontology of whiteness—to use Echeverría's term *blanquitud*—is therefore integral to the film's use of race as a technology and epistemology for the disappearance of Indigenous and Asian subjects from the postrevolutionary national body politic. To put this in the terms of the eugenicist tropes that shape the history of mestizo settler colonialism, Mifune was cast as being *outside* caste.

By “caste” here, I refer again to the Hispanic colonial system of *castas*: a socially stratified system for classifying people in the Iberian Americas according to sixteen racial groupings, ranked according to their proximity to “blood purity.” Cast(e)ing, in this case, can serve as a useful trope for emphasizing how Mifune’s racial difference transforms into a cacophonous marker of the excesses of Indigenous and racialized existence in the imaginary of the Latin American racial community. It is also a reminder of how Asian embodiment is erased from the colonial myths of racial hierarchies in Mexico and their reverberations into nineteenth- and twentieth-century eugenics. *Mestizaje* offered, per the legacies of Vasconcelos’s concept of the creation of a “cosmic” or “synthetic” new race, a eugenicist teleology. In the creation of the mestizo nation, Indigenous populations could assimilate into the national economy. Yet within the mestizo nation, as Qyunh Nhu Le points out, “Asians and Asian immigration . . . are situated as both possibilities and threats to internal cohesion.”[17] While Vasconcelos and his contemporaries viewed the rise of Japanese imperialism as a possible future for nonwhite nations, the thesis of the cosmic race insisted on the promise of an Ibero-America-centric race, pit firmly against the project of Japanese imperial domination and its possible racial, ethnic, and cultural hegemony. But the imperative to form a cohesive national body was predicated on the use of the Asian body as its limit. In other words, the mestizo nationalism of *Ánimas Trujano* stages the cacophonous structuring of anti-Indigeneity as a locus for the normalized erasure of Asianness.

Against its casteist and heterosexist colonial genesis, *mestizaje* ideology cannot be defined as a mixing or a strategic ambiguation of ethnic subjectivity. From the onset of its use, *mestizaje* was a racial settler colonial discourse predicated on the exclusion, expulsion, and marginalization of Asian and Black subjects and the normalization of anti-Asian and anti-Black racism through the structures of Indigenous dispossession and coercive assimilation. Through the interpolation of caste and *mestizaje* discourses in the cast(e)ing of Mifune, *Ánimas Trujano* stages a kind of *blanquitud* that goes beyond an investment in the construction of white skin and deploys whiteness as a hegemonizing process by which racism bypasses the idea of ethnonational purity while using race as an ethical-civilizational marker. Meanwhile, the whiteness of other Indigenous characters with speaking roles participates in what Mónica García Blizzard identifies as a diegetic “whiteness-as-indigeneity”—the “discursive and performative dimension of Whiteness” in Mexican cinema that is “an

aggregate of the discourses of Western modernity."[18] *Blanquitud* in the film is thus a matter of performance that transforms Indigeneity into a component that can adjudicate and qualify racialized subjectivity as a form of humanity. In part, this is because *blanquitud* constructs the dynamics of possession and dispossession in the film's settler colonial structures and imaginaries. *Blanquitud* posits that a subject is elevated by drawing closer to the ideal hybrid subject: In *Ánimas Trujano*, the white mestiza woman uses her agency to forge a new civil society through her maternal, generative, and unflinching moral position. This modern white mestiza mother reclaims her agency to deliver the final blow to wayward subjects, and her act of violence triggers the expulsion of those who fail to integrate into the civil community. The treatment of racializing Indigeneity as Asian and therefore other does not just demonstrate the effects of the failure of Ánimas's assimilation as a subject existing in the excesses of the national. In the film, Asianness-as-Indigeneity also justifies his symbolic function in configuring postrevolutionary national sovereignty. In the performance of the brown Indigenous subject through the Asian and othered body, we find a logic of exclusion that legitimizes Ánimas's banishment as a narrative resolution. By rendering Ánimas a radically excluded subject, this logic dispossesses him and prevents him from accessing the material, political, and communal structures of national belonging. Within Rodríguez's adaptation, the possessive and dispossessing nature of *blanquitud* operates as an ontological, epistemological, and phenomenological condition driven by the logic of colonial racial capitalism.

For the Martinican psychoanalytic theorist Frantz Fanon, the deconstruction of the modern human idealized by coloniality begins with the moment of a traumatic encounter with the imperial and racist other (the moment in *Black Skin, White Masks* when he recalls encounters in which white passersby in France signaled to him and called out to white others, "Look, a Negro!").[19] In his theory of racial subjectivization, processes of racialization and racism are schematized through the internalization of colonial domination's demand for the identification of one's body with one's skin color.[20] What he terms the "racial epidermal schema" is, in the context of a white supremacist society, a psychological framework through which one relates to the schematization of racism as a mode of everyday existence.[21] In the transpacific context of Mifune's performance as Ánimas, however, the regime of racial subjectivization is also tied to a longer history of the cinematic circumvention of both Asian and Indigenous racial fixity and becomes what André Keiji Kunigami describes as

an "ontological premise" in which "yellowness functioned as a template for local elites to envision a future in which racial difference, overcome by whiteness, would disappear."[22]

The spectacle of Mifune's skin in the moment when he appears as an incommensurable subject to be outcast and outside cast(e) not only authenticates his estranged status but also pejoratively associates his racialization with an *excess* of his brownness. Rodríguez's racial and religious iconographic screening of Juana's performance as part of an ultramoralizing mestizo nationalist semiotics might not be legible, were it not that the film intentionally captures the expulsion, exclusion, and erasure of Ánimas's browned yellowness. In the extraordinary moment when Ánimas *chooses*, not out of nobility but out of fear of going to prison, to take the blame for Catarina's murder, Juana is exonerated from her status as an "Indian problem" and encased in the national trajectory toward mestizo *blanquitud*. Meanwhile, Ánimas's own flesh absorbs all markers of the original sin of racial colonial capitalism, rendering him and his "epidermal racial schema" fugitive signifiers for the racial histories of the exploitation and expulsion of Asians that figured in ideologies about the national body politic. Ánimas's fear of systemic entrapment in the minutes of the film's closing both doubles as and overwrites mestizo nationalism's central role in abetting the incarceration and expulsion of Japanese subjects in Mexico just two decades before Rodríguez's production began filming.

Highlighting the settler logics of Rodríguez's film allows for a more careful tracking of its unstable relationship to the modern politics of race and racism that emerged out of early-to-mid-twentieth-century rhetoric and epistemologies. The film registers the colonial and Indigenous subject through a telos that demands not only assimilation but the Indigenous subject's instrumentalization into a "modern" liberal and capitalist citizen body, while at the same time eschewing Indigenous agency over that duplicitous process. *Ánimas Trujano*'s aesthetics of cacophony emerge at the very moment when the fantasy of the modern subject is formulated under the aspirational title of "el mayordomo." In the film, the voice-over that introduces the narrative describes this title as being given to the local villager who exemplifies the "highest morals" (and most funds) in town. The irony of the title, however, lies in its multiple definitions. While Ánimas and the voice-over define el mayordomo as a man of supreme import (a very important man), the term *mayordomo* colloquially refers and is equivalent to *butler*, someone enlisted as the head of a household staff, who is, indeed, meant to lead all its functions but whose role remains firmly in the

category of a working servant. Furthermore, the Indigenous villager chosen as mayordomo is done so with the understanding that he will spend all his funds and become destitute by the end of the religious festival. Thus, the status that Ánimas seeks—to "be el mayordomo" (*ser mayordomo*)—is linguistically interpolated, much like his namesake "anima," along the axes of class, gender, and the binary of the human/nonhuman. The coveted title reinscribes racial and class categorization and, in its aspirational status, signifies an ironic subjugation. When Ánimas finally becomes mayordomo, however, his status is undercut by a scene of literal cacophony that gestures not only to the settler and imperial structure of the film's narrative but also to the racial and linguistic politics that frame Mifune's performance. In the moment leading up to Ánimas's cathartic decision to run away, he flies into a fit of rage about not being recognized or respected for his position. As an extra-diegetic blow, the story of the film's final edit reveals that the voice coming from Ánimas's body is not and has never been his own.

Upon descending from the airplane in Mexico City in late April 1961, Mifune assured reporters that he had phonetically learned all the lines in the script of Rodríguez's film. According to Rodríguez's account, Mifune's interpreter, Carlos Kasuga, had suggested that instead of asking Mifune to recite his lines in Japanese and then edit the Spanish dub over them, Mifune could learn his lines phonetically, even if his pronunciation was imperfect. And, indeed, the actor filmed all his scenes following a recording made by the Mexican voice-over actor Narciso Busquets—the same voice actor who lent his voice to the opening sequence. Busquets would later agree to rerecord all the lines over Mifune's dialogue, recognizing that he could imitate the register of Mifune's voice.[23] On the behest of Rodríguez, Busquets also agreed to provide the character of Ánimas with the same treatment that the voice actor had given to the mestizo actor Emilo Fernández's "El Indio"—a recurring figure in 1940s *indigenista* films.[24] Thus, the final edit of *Ánimas Trujano* intentionally calls attention to the racial stereotypical aspects of Mifune's performance. Dubbing allows the erasure not of Mifune's racial or cultural difference but of his access to the Spanish language to create a register for racialized linguistic recognition that produces "Indianness" as a signifier that emphasizes incommensurability and estrangement. Dubbing functions as a practice, then, of producing difference that aligns with a politicization of language as a regime of difference-making, secured by the practice and ability to represent translation. Although Mifune's performance captures the spatial,

temporal, and, indeed, visual investments in a stock image of Indianness, the performance is double voiced and bracketed against the colonial racial structures of *mestizaje* as a performative affect. This bracketing, we can deduce, arrests the potential to recognize him beyond the narrative of the impossibility for a character in his body—an Asian body performing "Indian"—to belong. Consequently, the narrative shows that this body must be both banished and vanished.

A Japanese Mother for the Mestizo Nation

Ōe Kenzaburō wrote five works influenced by his year spent as a visiting professor of post–World War II Japanese intellectual history at the Colegio de México between 1976 and 1977.[25] Despite the apparent influence of his time at the Colegio de México on his work in the decade that followed, few studies within the substantial scholarship that analyzes the corpus of the Nobel laureate's writings incorporate the impact of Ōe's connections to Mexico in his larger oeuvre. As Jordan A. Y. Smith writes of the effect of the "eclipsing" of Mexico and the influence of Mexican literature on Ōe, Ōe's personal connection to Mexico indicates not only a passing cultural awareness or knowledge of the country or its people but "a sustained philosophical engagement" that allows for the legibility of Ōe's understanding of the affinities between Japanese and Mexican cultures as "two cultures seen as peripheral within the logic of their respective nation-states."[26]

Though short, Ōe's stay in Mexico encompassed dinners with fellow Nobel laureate novelists such as Octavio Paz and Gabriel García Márquez, as well as meetings with the poet Aurelio Asiain and Juan Rulfo, whom he admired since first reading the 1955 novel *Pedro Paramo*.[27] Since 1964, the Colegio de México has housed one of the strongest area studies programs in Mexico through the Centro de Estudios de Asia y África (Center for Asian and African Studies), renamed, according to Matías Chiappe Ippolito, from the Center of Oriental Studies in response to "the impact of Edward Said's theories."[28] The Center for Asian and African Studies was founded through an initiative to create deeper links between the faculty of the university and scholars in Asia. In the tradition of many of the programs that emerged in Europe and other parts of Latin America to study Asian and African histories and cultures through anthropological and ethnographic lenses, students specialize in one of six designated areas: the Middle East, South Asia, Southeast Asia, Africa, China, or Japan. The Colegio de México that received Ōe had not, at that point, hired any

full-time research faculty from the areas taught at the center but rather reproduced the popular model of hiring academics from Anglo-America and Western Europe during a time when the proliferation of the study of these areas in higher education was inextricable from the epistemological, political, and military interests of the Global North.[29] His time in Mexico furthermore coincided with the aftermath of the late-1960s student activist movements as well as with the incipiency of the postcolonial critique of the formation and epistemic power of the Cold War neoliberal model of area studies since its initial establishment at US universities.

The context of area studies in Mexico, and in the Colegio de México specifically, seems irrelevant to the study of Ōe's oeuvre, including *An Echo of Heaven*. In the corpus of literary scholarship on the author, whose works comprise a significant portion of the canon of modern and contemporary literature written in Japanese, significant attention is given to his representations of disability, questions of race and nationalism, and a general view of his politics as "progressive."[30] Nevertheless, *An Echo of Heaven* suggests the specific influence of Mexican academic discourses on national identity, culture, religion, international politics, and, indeed, leftist activism within Ōe's reimagining of both the Colegio de México and broader Mexican cultural history. The task of my analysis of *An Echo of Heaven* is not to affirm Ōe's ability to find resonances between Japan and Mexico by highlighting the cultural; rather, I argue that the cultural circumvents the operation of the racial in the narrative's structural thematic adoption of *mestizaje* and *indigenismo*. In the novel, the discourses of culture range from the use of Catholic iconography to describe Marie's corpse to the narrator's interest in and awareness of Mexican and other North American literary figures and histories. In these contained forms, cross-cultural awareness evokes the specters of the histories of racism while at the same time burying them under the signs of the cultural and geographic. And so, despite the canonical valuation of *An Echo of Heaven* as writing read for its progressivism, I argue that we can interrogate the work's gender and racial politics as substantive examples of how the logics of anti-Indigeneity, anti-Blackness, and, indeed, anti-Asianness are operative, even against the global platforming of liberal ideals in Ōe's work.

In contrast to Rodríguez's forceful expulsion of the wayward racial subject who fails to assimilate into the diegetic "whiteness-as-indigeneity," *An Echo of Heaven* refashions the disappearance of the "browned" "yellow" body as a condition for settler representation. And from the onset, the novel reveals itself as a story of canonization. The young men who contact

K at the beginning want to create a filmic synthesis of Marie's life that affirms their veneration of her as a love object: "We want to start by showing the image of a beautiful woman, and three younger men, and that wholesome kind of love they have for her. . . . The[ir] smiles come naturally, because they're working with a beautiful woman, but they're also in love with their own future, and that's what keeps the smiles from fading."[31] To read into an image is to read a projection into the inaudible. Images are easily manipulated through editing, annotation, cropping, and other tools that render the image into a translational object of meaning. Marie's image thus becomes a text that enables its readers—K and the young men who are making a film to honor her life—to create new connections and disconnections through transforming the way that she made them *feel* into a way of understanding and engaging her as a partial digital history. K dreams of the photograph of Marie as an object for worship: "In the dream I had that night, some Mexicans were gazing up at a photograph of a Japanese woman, projected onto a sheet they had hung in the middle of a vast plain where black lizards scampered up twisted willow trunks. . . . With this scrubby foliage in the background, in a world where everything was dying, the image of an emaciated Japanese woman in her mid-forties loomed over the lifeless desert."[32] Becoming canonical, being canonized, refers to two modes of aestheticizing and decontextualizing a history of human action and production. To canonize means to "recognize as a saint" as well as to "regard as belonging to the canon of literary or artistic works."[33] To canonize, then, is to give a life a meaning by whittling it down to a fantasy of its authority—a mechanism not unlike the anthropologized knowledge of area studies tasked with producing a specific and putatively bounded cultural, national, or regional object. *An Echo of Heaven* presents the history of a Japanese woman as something overdetermined by and saturated with a set of gendered, racial, and spiritual optics that strategically translate an image of Marie's death by separating it from the more complex reality of Marie's life. Through the asynchrony among the spatiotemporal, historical, and personal, the narrator reconciles the image of Marie as the projection of a saint onto the "lifeless desert" of Nahua lands with the clear, colorful, and very real Marie Kuraki, who disappears with only the adoration of Indigenous villagers as a testament to her existence.

An Echo of Heaven is the first of Ōe's novels to have significant focus on a female protagonist. This significant focus is, however, framed through the novel's aesthetic of autofiction, which uses the narrator K as a device for fictionalizing a *figure* of Ōe: a middle-aged, upper-middle class novelist,

husband, and father to a disabled son (a fictionalized portrayal of Ōe's own family). But *An Echo of Heaven* is only autobiographical in the sense that as K performs as a self-referential lens, Marie operates as a conversion of the self-referential and therefore an objectified figuration that reflects K's subjectivity. Early on, K characterizes Marie as an unexpected equal: she holds a PhD in English, is a researcher of American women's literature, and shares many of the same interests in music, art, and politics as K. Though divorced, Marie is also the parent to a disabled son, and much of the novel's exposition unfolds around the suicides of her two children. In the end, what Marie becomes is a literal *projection* that consequently attempts to sanctify her life as a perpetual inspiration to a range of men—from K and his filmmaker friends, to Marie's deceased sons, to Marie's ex-husband, to the Indigenous and mestizo workers who essentially worshipped Marie. The last image of the film, K tells us, will be raw footage that shows Marie naked on her deathbed, one hand on her breast forming a V and another at her groin. Her racial, national, political, and even sexual expression become an enduring image of her religiously ornamental form.

It might seem, at first, that the canonization of Marie, by way of the narrative of her maternal relationship to the Indians and the mestizos, offers the reader a generous portrait of her. But this framing, which places Marie into the canon of religious national pride, simultaneously displaces her humanity. Canonization is also a process of fetishization in multiple senses. Aside from the modern and Freudian understanding of the fetish as an object of sexual titillation or desire linked to an unconscious fixation, *fetish* is also a term used to describe inanimate objects worshipped for their supposed mystical capacities. In Ōe's novel, Marie, a Japanese woman, is an ornament and fetish who stands in for a manifestation of the Virgin Mary/Maria. This treatment of Marie holds an important function in the imaginary of K's narrative and the racializing gaze that it deploys in the story of Marie's death in Mexico. In the context of Mexico, Marie's comparison to the Virgen de Guadalupe recalls the appropriation of the Nahua goddess Tonāntzin into colonial Christianity, marking how the heteropatriarchal colonization of Indigenous spiritual practices was part and parcel with the colonization of matriarchal deities. This fetishization also has roots in the history of the phenomenon of the thingification of Asian/Asian American femininity in Euro-American cultural histories. In the thingification, or ornamentalization, of Asian femininity, Anne Anlin Cheng writes, the flesh of these human subjects becomes a site for aestheticization: "The term *yellow woman* denotes a person but connotes a style,

promising yet supplanting skin and flesh, an insistently aesthetic presence that is prized and despoiled. The particularity of this kind of object-person who is radically undone yet luminously constructed—that is, meticulously and aesthetically composed yet degraded and disposable—troubles some of our deeply held, politically cherished notions of agency, racial embodiment, subjecthood, and ontology."[34] Cheng here theorizes what she terms *ornamentalism*—a portmanteau of *ornament* and *Orientalism*—to speak to the dehumanization of Asian/Asian American women in the popular imagination. Ornamentalism describes a type of objectification in which one is considered "meticulously and aesthetically composed yet degraded and disposable." Skin and flesh are foreclosed of humanness and regarded as racialized objecthood. In this sense, ornamentalism can be read, to return to Byrd, as a cacophonous process by which people who are racialized and feminized are deprived access to the "politically cherished" values of modern liberalism and are therefore prevented from being represented as human. Ornamentalism is the process by which objectification becomes a matter of crafting, by way of cultural mediation, Asian femininity as an object. It is precisely the process that Marie Kuraki is subjected to in *An Echo of Heaven*—a process that renders her an object to which K and other men feel entitled.

To analyze *An Echo of Heaven* as a story of entitlement and the thingification of racialized femininity is to tackle the ways that the novel exhibits forms of misogyny and racism that stem from an expectation that racialized women—Marie Kuraki in particular—will help situate a man as a subject in a narrative about gendered, sexual, and racial oppression. As with the figures of Rodríguez's white Indians in *Ánimas Trujano*, Ōe's narrator does not present as an empathetic subject or as a relatable voice. Throughout, Ōe's writing is careful in putting into question K's motivations behind what could be doubly read as care for and obsession with Marie insofar as his attraction to her progressively becomes a source of his unhappiness. As moral philosopher Kate Manne describes in *Entitled*, entitlement is an affect that connects with misogynistic behavior: "When a woman fails to give a man what he's supposedly owed, she will often face punishment and reprisal—whether from him, his himpathetic supporters, or the misogynistic social structures in which she is embedded."[35] Entitlement, in short, is a perception that enables men to see women, nonbinary, and other marginalized genders as things to *take from*. Entitlement occupies a position of domination inextricable from systems and processes of racial colonial capitalism and its intersections with other processes of oppression.

The entitled treatment of women as ornaments is also a common practice in religious idolatry and stories of canonization. But in *An Echo of Heaven*, the ornamentalization of Marie also pairs with a messy and perhaps unwitting equivalence between her looks and racialized figures in American popular culture. The thingification and ornamentalization of Marie intersect in a pronounced way with traces of anti-Brown and anti-Black misogyny. The narrator, for instance, makes frequent references to Marie's similarity to the American cartoon character Betty Boop—a caricature of hypersexual white femininity whose inception in the 1930s drew from appropriations of African American jazz performers like Esther Jones.[36] "Those lips really did have a Betty Boop look to them," remarks K in one passage after Marie describes an experience of being recorded during sex without receiving consent from a past partner.[37] These comparisons call to mind sociologist Sabrina Strings's explanation of how Black femininity was stigmatized when colonial discourses began associating Black bodies with dehumanizing caricatures that pitted images of fat, curvaceous, and therefore "primitive" Black women's bodies against the bodies of white women as markers for morality and social status.[38] What happens to Marie across these various comparisons to Betty Boop and other cultural figures is not just a diminishment of her humanity but a chipping away at her capacity to be perceived beyond a latent racial colonial and overtly prurient fantasy.

Even before Marie's departure for Mexico, K's discursive possessiveness over Marie's body precludes his ability to recognize her agency as a complex, suffering subject. Throughout the novel, we learn so much from Marie's voice, as retold by K, but moments where she expresses political and sexual autonomy often elide the narrator's understanding. When K learns that Marie had outpaced her ex-husband in pursuit of graduate study and professional success while raising a handicapped son, K tells us of his wife's response: "My wife had said: 'Marie's husband doesn't say much, and it seems like her whole family treated her like a princess, always let her have her own way.'"[39] He then describes her choice to raise her handicapped son on her own as "atonement" for having "her own way." Her attempts to explain experiences of domestic violence and abusive relationships (including being filmed during sex without her consent) are expressed through K's eyes and as relative to *his* experience of *her*. Marie having "her own way" becomes a source for explaining how she fails to fit in as a mother, a wife, a friend, or a woman, and how she became estranged from other women. In her estrangement, Marie is reduced to a typical

heterosexist model of unrelentingly giving and sacrificing femininity—a model that exists for the consumption of an entitled male gaze.

When Marie experiences the sudden loss of her two sons, we witness this event through K's eyes. K learns, while working as a visiting instructor at a prestigious college in Mexico City, that Marie's sons committed suicide. This news spurs anxieties over his own son's health and K's sense of (albeit elected) distance from his family. As Marie attempts to get on with her life, building a closer friendship with K's wife in Tokyo, K obsesses over her loss, connecting it to his unconscious sexual longing for Marie. He describes, soon after hearing about Marie's sons, a dream in which Marie, baring "her round Betty Boop breasts," teases him that she can "tickle [K] with my pitchfork . . . the black tail of pubic hair setting off her flawless skin."[40] K can therefore witness Marie's pain while not actually seeing her by treating her as an erotic object. Envisioning her as a witch facilitates an aesthetic of Marie that transforms her as being central to the constitution of his vexations.

The story of Marie as a bereft mother folds into a story about her loss of identity. While the narrator all but misses her crisis in his sexual fixation, Marie chooses to leave Japan. She follows a Christian spiritual leader to Mexico, where she eventually ends up in Cacoyagua, a fictional representation of a small farming village in the state of Chiapas, where early twentieth-century migrants from Japan first arrived and settled.[41] While finding community with members of the Japanese diaspora there, she is diagnosed with terminal cancer. The next time that Marie appears for K is as a captured image—an aestheticized form meant to provide some kind of spiritual solace that reduces her lived experience to almost nothing. Her constant sacrifice and loss become, in turn, the conditions for her sanctification in the eyes of K and the male filmmakers. While K learns about Marie's life through a series of letters from both her and the men in her life, the reader is still left with questions. The novel never discloses what enabled Marie to forge a relationship with the Indians and mestizos who cultivated the land where she perished, yet it creates uncritical fabulations about the impact of Marie on this community. In any case, from the beginning of the novel to the end, Marie is reduced to nothing: K has taken up the space of her life. When he finally learns what happened to her, it is too late, and Marie herself admits that whatever story K tells about her "will be his own story, one acceptable to him—it's only natural, isn't it?" (「Kさんは私についても、自分お物語として了解できるように書くわ、突然のことながら?!」)[42]

We can turn here to the matter of K's (and perhaps Ōe's) entitlement and its role in the racialized treatment of Marie in her death. Toward the

end of the novel, K relates a message in which his filmmaker friend Asao narrates a story about Marie's skin:

> *She doesn't look all that bad, but her voice is terribly weak, barely audible. It must have been a tremendous effort for her to talk that much. We thought filming would be too hard on her, so we took one snapshot. . . . We were talking among ourselves about how dark Marie's got—just like a Mexican peasant—when our Japanese-Mexican guide told us she was much darker before, and that in the three months she's been in the hospital she's actually gone back to looking Japanese. I'm enclosing the snapshot we took, so you can see what you think. . . .*
>
> . . . Did she finally come to see the world as "intelligible" during those years or not—who knows? Even if I went all the way to the hospital in Guadalajara, I don't believe she'd tell me, assuming I managed to ask. A smile might appear on her Betty Boop face, now much darker than before, but I expect she would remain silent, the shadows around her eyes only deeper still.[43]

What does it mean for Marie to transition from getting "dark" to going back "to looking Japanese" while on the precipice of death? Echeverría reminds us that *blanquitud* conditions the construction of modern national identity as an identitarian-civilizational trace in which the equivalence between whiteness and sainthood enacts capitalist hagiography. Returning to Echeverría's definition, *blanquitud* "was about the confusion of the 'white' appearance of [settler] populations with visible and indispensable markers of the capitalist sainthood of the modern human."[44] Thus, this trace mestizo nationalist ideology interpolates a relativity to whiteness as a way to overcome the problem of racial difference (and disavow the "racial epidermal schema") by equating the processes of "whitening" oneself as a marker of modern capitalist goodness. In *An Echo of Heaven,* however, the staging of Marie's whitening as both *mestizaje* and becoming Japanese evinces the layered and complex complicity between *mestizaje* and the myth of a legible ethnonational Japaneseness. The passage's emphasis on her skin displaces her humanity and turns her into an object that can be subsumed into both racial and national teleologies. The irony is that Marie's entrapment between these ideologies also signals her entrapment in the progressive, definitive condition of terminal cancer.

The novel's commentary on Marie's racialization also becomes grounds for the narrator to struggle with speaking about Marie's experience with sexual assault in Mexico. In the final pages of *An Echo of Heaven*, K discloses that Marie had been raped by a Japanese Mexican acquaintance, a man

referred to as "Macho Mitsuo," citing the racialized trope of Mexican hypermasculinity. Although the description of this episode in Marie's life is linked to her finding community among Japanese Mexicans in the farm where she worked, it also links to her other experiences with misogynistic violence and harassment throughout the novel. Mentioned only briefly, K seems to affirm in the end that the only story he can tell about Marie is one that is acceptable to him—one in which his focus affixes not to Marie's experience but to Macho Mitsuo and his "male prowess" and how he can understand and sympathize with it through the writings of Octavio Paz: "I had to turn to a book by Octavio Paz, which I used as a sort of primer on Mexican life, to learn about the macho type."[45] But through a homosocial triangulation of information, the issue of Marie's assault becomes an issue for K's ability to tell the full story that he wanted to tell: "I had already read Sergio Matsuno's diary when I started writing about Marie's life, but I left out the part about her rape because, as I mentioned, I couldn't give it any firm reality."[46]

The fact is that misogyny (for what else can we call the capture of Marie's life and voice in the novel?) has a history of killing racialized girls and women and of moralizing the obstacles and violence those racialized girls and women come up against as sacrifice. And misogyny functions as well to disavow and refuse recognition to the systemic sacrifice of those women and girls. Like the role of Juana in *Ánimas Trujano*, the figure of Marie is meant to solicit and draw moral attention and concern on behalf of related male subjects (her sons, K, the Japanese Mexican man who attacked her, the Indigenous and mestizo laborers). And, like Juana, Marie's moralized suffering pulls her closer into settler colonial temporality and farther from an ability to be an agent in the telling of her own story.

In rural Mexico, Marie's purpose becomes simply to *become* something other than herself. And in this process of becoming, the novel participates in perpetuating a cultural ideology formulated by Mexican white and mestizo elites to glorify the simplification and uncritical incorporation of Indigenous cultures in order to render them palatable for national hegemony. Her asymmetrical and cacophonous "browning" also functions as an apparatus of Indigenous erasure in the service of a liberalized narrative about foreign settler "saviors" sacrificing themselves for the "happiness" of marginalized Indigenous subjects. But the fissures of K's narration do not illuminate Marie's conscious complicity in the violent settler project of the Mexican state. Rather, they signal how the convergence of the histories of the Japanese diaspora in Mexico, the postwar Japanese state, and the *longue durée* of Indigenous dispos-

session enter into a space of cacophony, which the novel embraces through its admission of the incompleteness of Marie's story. The scene of cacophony conveys what Byrd refers to as the process of signification that "reboots the colonialist discourses that spread along lines of flight that repeatedly challenge the multicultural liberal state"—and, I would add, that contest the appearance of the liberalism projected onto the image of Marie's death.

The Japanese title of *An Echo of Heaven—Jinsei no shinseki*—translates directly as "A relative of life." Although the word *echo* is adequate for understanding the treatment of its female protagonist's voice in a story narrated by a fictionalization of the author (the narrator K), the word *shinseki* (a relative, a relation) accurately captures how the existence of a racialized woman, a *feminist*, predicates on her being reduced to the status of something relative.[47] In fact, Marie only exists in the novel *in relation to* the various roles of a woman in relation to men. We first meet Marie as someone's *mother* (a mother to K's son's *friend*) and learn that she was once a *wife*; finally, she is cast as a sort of emotional *mistress* to K. When she leaves Japan after her sons' suicides in search of a different place, a different home, she fails to fulfill a role of functional yet always incomplete relationality (mother, wife, friend, mistress). Finally, when Marie dies, she becomes an ornamental relative—a canon, a *saintly mother*; her lack of relatability beyond her functional relationality in a racist, patriarchal, misogynistic imaginary displaces her humanity, and she must be canonized as something *other than woman* to make sense in a narrative concerned with a man's feelings and perspectives. She must fit into a canonical view of the function of a saint, La Virgen de Guadalupe—the ultimate relative, a progenitor of the mestizo nation. Marie's "relative quality" (quality of being a relative but not related), to put it into Lacan's psychoanalytic maxim, makes manifest that the narrative of *An Echo of Heaven* is about how a relation to Marie is a relation of no relation. Marie herself becomes skewed by her being merely relative to the desire and demand for her symbolic function as a displaced and barred subject.

The Cacophonies of Racial Histories

Rodríguez's *Ánimas Trujano* and Mifune's interpretation of the titular character and the transformation of Marie into La Virgen de Guadalupe in Ōe's *An Echo of Heaven* imagine a gendered and racial mutability for Asian bodies through discursive *mestizaje*. At the same time, as my analyses of these cultural works tracks, these representations unearth moments of transpacific nonencounters that reveal how the foreclosure of the histories

of racial expulsion, entrapment, and extermination shaped the legacies of twentieth-century settler nationalisms. The vanishing of Asian bodily presence nevertheless brings us back to the traces of imperial nationalism's foreclosures in the Asian-Indigenous cacophonies that contour each text. Perhaps, then, Ánimas and Marie are not ineluctable products of geohistorical dissonance but rather markers of how heterosexist racism is operative within the temporal trajectory of the national subject as one produced through what Silva calls the "logic of obliteration" that produces *mestizaje*'s directive toward whiteness.[48] Such a directive that enables the racial visuality of brownness and Indigeneity animates the double bind in which the imaginary of the Asian body emerges as a body already inscribed in the process of both capital accumulation and disappearance. In Ōe's and Rodríguez's texts, the logic of obliteration also plays out through a logic of racial undifferentiation. In her work on the history of Orientalist and colonial representations of Muslims and Indigenous people, Shaista Patel describes the function of racial masquerade in the production of the "phantasmal creations" that conflated Indigenous, Black, and Muslim subjects within the supremacist episteme of European colonialism with "European savagery, projected onto the undifferentiated 'Indian,' [that] legitimized European superiority."[49] Patel's argument that the projected exclusion of "undifferentiated Indians" from the ethico-civilizational imperative of white European colonialism operated as an erasure of colonial violence stands here. Within the context of *Ánimas Trujano* and *An Echo of Heaven*, however, the racial transmutability generates a myriad of dissonant visuals and sounds that emerge each time as layered projections and reflections of the cacophonous convergences of anti-Indigenous and anti-Asian racism in the establishment of national transpacific settler modernities.

If the figure of the modern Mexican subject was what was at stake when revolutionaries and intellectuals of the revolutionary and postrevolutionary period imagined the new, ethnically integrated Mexican nationalism, the 1950s heralded an era in which the sovereignty of the postrevolutionary Mexican state depended on a mission to assert the success of the civilizing mission of *mestizaje*. Ana María Alonso, for example, argues that while the equivalence between Mexicanidad/Mexicanness and *La raza cósmica* since the 1960s has been heavily contested, the erasure of local ethnicities under the Porfirian and postrevolutionary liberal projects of Mexican nationalism continues to pose challenges to Indigenous activist and intellectual resistance. Toward the end of the twentieth century and

into the twenty-first, the myth of Mexican anti- or non-racism undercut attempts by Indigenous and non-Indigenous intellectuals and activists to question mestizo nationalism and *indigenismo* and began to have national impact. In 1991, the Mexican government signed Convention 169 of the International Labor Organization, which prompted the 1992 revision of the federal constitution to redefine the Mexican nation-state as "a pluricultural composition, originally based on its indigenous pueblos." These ratifications to official records culminated, Alonso writes, in the passing of the so-called Ley Indigena—a "watered-down version" of attempts by Indigenous political activists to have the government recognize Indigenous rights to territory and self-determination.[50]

But unlike the visibility and visibilization of the anti-Indigenous structures of Mexican culture and politics that Alonso highlights, the struggle for the recognition of Mexico's history of anti-Asian racism and dispossession remains largely muted within mainstream political discourses. Iterations of "yellow peril" that followed the mestizo nationalist logic of Chinese expulsion continued into the 1940s and were transmuted into anti-Japanese racism. Selfa A. Chew's discussion of the turning point in Mexican–Japanese relations in the 1940s is key to situating my reading of both Mifune's Ánimas and Marie. While Japanese labor migration—"migrant-led settler colonialism"—was viewed through the frames of its capitalist desirability through the relationships between the Porfiriato and the Meiji government, Chew's *Uprooting Community* explains that the context of Second World War geopolitics dramatically shifted the conditions of the Japanese diaspora in Mexico. By the early 1940s, the US media had cultivated anxieties about Japanese expansion in the Americas, leading various Latin American politicians to abet the US government's efforts to control and surveil the Japanese migrant populations of their countries. With Mexico's alliance with the United States and other Allied powers, the wartime Japanese imperial government was unable to interfere diplomatically to "provide complete protection against racism" for Japanese immigrants in the Americas, leading to their incarceration in concentration camps both in the United States and Mexico and an increased militarization of the US–Mexico borderlands.[51] Despite long-standing calls for redress, however, the Mexican government has yet to formally address this history of unjust persecution.[52]

While these histories of the anti-Indigenous and anti-Asian construction of modern governmentality in Mexico are absent from *An Echo of Heaven* and *Ánimas Trujano*, their text seem to inherit as well as expose the

paradox of cacophonous settler representation. Across their narratives, while Mexicanness is fashioned as a locus for cultural and literal *mestizaje* for Japanese subjects, they remain and are required to remain excluded from the whiteness/*blanquitud* that is a prerequisite for cultural relatability and relativity. In this chapter, I followed the vanishing of Asian bodily presence by tracing its cacophonous entanglement with the imaginary of the Indigenous subject in the narrative of *mestizaje*. Yet these representations of racial mutability must also be thought of as inheritances of the complex and uneven histories of racism and colonial racial capitalism that stem from Japanese imperial nationalism. They prompt a phenomenological paradox in the logic of racial settler colonialism insofar as they exemplify how Asian and Indigenous subjects become intelligible only through their aesthetic operation for realizing that the national imaginary is predicated on the production of racial interiority through technologies that render racialized bodies invisible.

In chapter 4, I talk about how the logic of anti-Black racism structures the narratives of two popular novels from the 1960s—Abe Kōbō's *The Face of Another* and Carlos Fuentes's *La Death of Artemio Cruz*. As with the work of Ōe and Rodríguez, my attention to cultural productions that have a well-established legacy in the disciplines of literary scholarship signal a repetition of their reading not as parts of a corpus or system that, through their popularity, renders them more "comparable" but rather as sites through which to interrogate the cacophonies and nonencounters that emerge through their engagement—or lack thereof—with the racial. A decolonial and transpacific approach to understanding this logic of obliteration requires further examination into how the trajectory of Asian and Indigenous aestheticization and invisibility indexes other regimes of racial dissociation in the legacies of mestizo settler nationalism and Japanese Pan-Asianism. While the unsettled and cacophonous nonencounter between anti-Indigenous and anti-Asian racisms have specificity in the geopolitical backdrops of Ōe's and Rodríguez's works, they are also part of a larger experience of global coloniality that is inextricable from racism's primal inscription in anti-Blackness and its reverberating violence. This nonencounter, in other words, is part of what Christina Sharpe calls the "weather": a systematized and routine disconnect within practices of cultural production and consumption that enables the obfuscation of racism and, in so doing, perpetuates the continual effects of colonial racial violence.[53]

4

Racial (Dis)connects in the Wake

Transpacific Inscriptions and Erasures of Black Life

In *Living in the Wake: On Blackness and Being,* Christina Sharpe describes the normalization of the dehumanization and death of Black subjects as a global inheritance of "living in the wake." For Sharpe, "living in the wake" signifies living in the afterlife of the terror that has been visited upon Black bodies and become a kind of environment, or "weather," that "comes, breaks, changes quickly; . . . it is remarked upon and forgotten; it is."[1] "The weather," she continues, "is the totality of our environments; the weather is the total climate; and that climate is antiblack."[2]

This chapter considers how the racial disconnects that separate and eschew relationality from the epistemologies of area studies are part of this weather. What does the hermeneutic of nonencounter owe to addressing the all-encompassing effects of anti-Blackness in the production of racialization and its disavowal across the legacies of transpacific imperial nationalisms? Indebted to Sharpe's theorization, this chapter takes the materiality of Black erasure as a premise for reading this weather as an inheritance of racial settler hegemony and its effects within what Japanese literary scholar William H. Bridges terms "fictions of race." The fact is, the weather that is anti-Blackness structures the racial disconnects that have become the premise for my analyses in this book. The links among experiences of colonial violence across Asia and the Americas, from the

entangled histories of the transoceanic enslavement of Black Africans to the expropriation of Indigenous sovereignty, overwhelm the archives that make up the grammars and logic of global racial settler hegemonic systems. A preoccupation with categorizing the otherness of Blackness thus forged the terms for the biopolitical management of the settler colonial configurations of the modern world order. As Lowe and many others have pointed out, "the dramatic, encyclopedic proliferation of both racial classification and racial misattribution" marks the construction of global modernity.[3] Despite this mark, official archives that contain these histories work to obfuscate, or "forget," how anti-Black racism conditioned the modern politics of humanist knowledge. From this view, we can argue for a comprehensive centering of the matter of Black life—how Black life matters because it *has* matter, even when it does not *materialize* in the official record—as unearthing an ethics and politics of race in literary studies.

Here, I turn to two novels published in the early 1960s that have reached, since their publication, an undeniable canonicity in their circulation within both national and world literary canons: Abe Kōbō's *Tanin no kao* (1964; *The Face of Another*) and Carlos Fuentes's *La muerte de Artemio Cruz* (1962; *The Death of Artemio Cruz*). In these novels, the trauma of becoming other or of being alienated from national community formations has been a core focus in the immense scholarly corpus that informs their readership. Read as fictions of race, however, I argue that these novels interpret their subjects through what Sharon Patricia Holland calls a "project of belonging" by conjuring the repression of racialization as a trace that becomes a condition for fracturing "the work of identifying with others."[4] I explore, ultimately, how each novel responds to the trace of the racial as a disarticulated history of the role of anti-Black racism within the literary legacies that remained in the wake of the violence of Japanese imperialism and Mexican mestizo nationalism.

Notably, the inscriptions and erasures of Black life are central to the production of the world literary canon of the 1960s, in which *The Face of Another* and *The Death of Artemio Cruz* achieved significant circulation. As Bridges has discussed, a year between the publication of Fuentes's and Abe's novels, Ōe Kenzaburō remarked on the "qualitative similarities" between contemporary Japanese literature and "black literature," embarking, from then, on producing a series of texts that represented and wrote Blackness into musings over the existential condition of postwar Japan.[5] "Ōe," writes Bridges, "penned numerous essays, articles, and speeches in which he attempts to re-create himself as a kind of 'black Japanese author'

by resituating his literary techniques and thematic concerns in proximity to those of African-American authors."[6] Ōe's appeal to be read as a "black Japanese author" is, of course, a misappropriation, yet he was not alone in creating an analogy between the conditions of 1960s literary production in Japan and its counterparts within African American cultural production. Marco Polo Hernández Cuevas reads the emergence of the Latin American boom in the 1960s as "marked" by a double movement between the concealment of Black Mexican identity and the cultural discursive appropriation of African American literary production.[7] What comes under further erasure, then, within the scholarly reception of these works is the very disavowal of the inheritance and legacy of appropriating the global impact of Black literary productions within the global circulation of non-Black literary voices. In this regard, Bridges's attention to reading adaptations of Blackness in the "absence of black characters" as *fictions* of Blackness in literary texts disrupts the deracialization of their study, which underwrites the fantasy of geocultural and epistemic separation that is foundational to the area studies model.[8]

For Sharpe, the concept of being "in the wake" refers to a conscious sense of being occupied by "the continuous and changing present of slavery's as yet unresolved unfolding."[9] Thinking through and working with "being in the wake" will be described here as critically and actively confronting how literary production (and, indeed, literary analysis) is not divorced from the actualities of the struggle for Black liberation, even in texts and contexts that are otherwise studied, assumed to be, and therefore spoken about as disparate and distant from the history and contemporary reality of racial violence and oppression. And so a question that leads my analyses here is whether and how reading through nonencounter can evince the centrality of Black life in literary narratives that do not center, or in fact foreclose, Black experience. Across the novels examined here, Blackness figures a site of nonencounter for each novel's depiction of the violence of racialization. If we understand race as a conceptual and fantastical structure of difference-making that engrains itself into societal, political, and psychic systems, racism could be understood as a history of nonencounters constructed through a systemic and, indeed, traumatic disarticulation of relationality. Racism, in other words, operates in a comparative, anti-relational realm insofar as it functions through defamiliarizing non-whiteness, thus rendering whiteness into a relatable universal center. To explore the meaning of this disarticulation and how it bears on Abe's and Fuentes's works, the first section of this chapter takes up the theoretical model of trauma

studies to explain how the languages of wounding, disfiguration, and death bear on the *marks*, or inscriptions, of anti-Black racism that appear across each text. I therefore agree with Andrea Bachner's discussion of inscription as a "conceptual deep structure" that acts as an interface to connect the materiality of the body to processes of signification.[10] In the inscriptions of Blackness across each novel, racial indicators are not determined as inherited traits or outward signs but are nevertheless marked through processes that connect each work of fiction to a non-relationality with Blackness. The sections that follow turn to each novel's fictionalization of Blackness to demonstrate that each narrative enables metanarratives for witnessing the conditions of Black experience and Black life—as well as their erasures—in their political and historical backdrops. My analyses remain attentive to the limitations that condition each novel's fictionalization of the matter of Black life and the weather that encompasses it.

Histories of/as Skin. On Inscriptive Beginnings

Suddenly, a deep hole popped open in my face. It seemed gouged out so deep that with my whole body in it there would still have been more room. A liquid, like pus from a decayed tooth, dribbled down. Terrific stenches in the room, catching the sound, came swarming out like cockroaches—from inside the chair, from the corner of the cabinet, from the drain of the sink, from the lampshade discolored with the dead bodies of insects. I wanted a stopper for the hole in my face—anything would do. How I longed to put an end to this anguish, this game of blindman's bluff with no blindman. —ABE, *The Face of Another*

The story of *The Face of Another* shows the breakdown of the body of the Cartesian "I" ("I think, therefore I am") by linking the awareness of the self to its very deconstruction. Written in the perspective of an unnamed Japanese scientist whose face has been scarred and deformed after a liquid oxygen explosion, the novel is structured in three notebooks (Black, White, Grey) and addressed to the narrator's estranged wife ("you"), who writes back to him in the final installment.

Recall that to disarticulate from a humanist history of selfhood is the ontology of anti-Blackness that Hortense Spillers outlines in "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe." In *The Face of Another*, this disarticulation occurs as a moment in which the desexualized state of the scarred flesh renders the disabled and injured body into one not only reduced of corporeal capacity but also incapable of constituting itself through separation from the other. Stenches, cockroaches, dead bodies of insects, and other vermin and

effluvia occupy the fragmented body and bring the narrator to the conclusion that he is unfit for social life. Through the affective dynamic between the narrator and the wife he believes rejects him because of his transformation and degeneration, the narrator's facial and psychological disfiguration ascribe the human skin to a sociopolitics of differences. In the scene described in the quoted passage, the antisocial ontology manifests as the displacement of the Cartesian model of the subject. This displacement is important to Abe's work because it modifies the trajectory of human relationality as not premised on the principles of resolving the status of the self-representing individual through the moral and ethical entry into the community of the collective. Instead, it refashions self-representation as a manner of expressing a disconnect between the body that cannot accommodate or be accommodated by the home or the extended collective. In this way, in rebuffing "this game of blindman's bluff with no blindman" that establishes the enlightened citizen-subject, the passage excavates the fragmentability of the poiesis of modern subjecthood, which is exposed through the inscriptions of epidermal difference.

Abe's anti-Cartesian narrator thus also rebuffs the appeal to the evacuation of difference in deference to reason and universality by performing the decomposition of the human subject. This is key to understanding the operative role of racialization in *The Face of Another*. This chapter reads *The Face of Another* as having a specific preoccupation with the question of what it means to be, become, or identify with Blackness. Unspecified representations of alterity and moments of national communal identification with alterity based on the level of scarring or wounding have also created a lacuna in reading how the novel attempts to extend critique on the narrator's identification with the wound through the interruptive question of race. Abe's writing and comments on writing have furthermore demonstrated the author's unwillingness to reassert or inscribe the national community onto his work and tendency to employ its fragmentability as a vantage point.[11] "As I wrote in my novel *Tanin no kao* [*The Face of Another*], the notions of 'other' and neighbor coexist within us," writes Abe in an essay titled "Beyond the Neighbor."[12] Further comments detail how the notion of being "loyal" to a community or organization must be challenged in a form of ideological conversion, relating the arc of *The Face of Another* to the process of dislodging the individual from the fabricated construction of the nation, organized religion, and other forms of loyalty. To "overcome" the constructed fantasy of the "neighbor" (to whom one is loyal within the imagined community of the nation), Abe proposes

that we must efface it.[13] The novel therefore tunes into a critique of ethnonational identification, and this critique begins at the level not of the citizen-subject but of the decomposition of its possibility.

As the quoted passage demonstrates, the story begins from *within*—in rotting flesh, a wound, a mark—and moves gradually outward to explore the other as a matter that extends beyond the experience of the skin. For the narrator, to be wounded and disfigured means to have one's epidermal experience be consumed in totality: The space of the wound infinitely penetrates and is penetrated by the space of the narrator's home, foreclosing in this moment the ability to reach out beyond it. The mechanisms of the domineering and almost narcissistically driven wound are revealed: the wound opens the narrator up, so to speak, to be witnessed as a wounded subject. The wound exposes him to and as the other, and this becomes the condition of possibility for rejection that doubles as the possibility for a new form of relation—a relation I will describe in this chapter as premised on the nonencounter with racial difference and Blackness. In its urgent tone, the passage points to a large history of uncontainable wounds that ooze out, against our desires to suppress them, and into the space of the domestic. The wound undoes, *unbecomes*, a once familiar, controllable body (the twentieth-century investment in the coherent national body) in the familiar, controllable space of the home. The wound reorients a relation to the skin, signaling a new way of witnessing the traumatic realities of an untethered body.

Indeed, the wound becomes a central figure in *The Face of Another* not only as a marker of the narrator's dysfunctional narcissism but also as a signifying figure to the role of trauma. As Cathy Caruth reminds us, the story of trauma—a term that translates from the ancient Greek as "wound"—is "the narrative of belated experience" that attests to an interruptive impact on life.[14] Trauma, in its classical psychoanalytic reading as a structure that produces fragmented meaning, then manifests as the repetition of an ongoing experience of inheriting an encounter with death as a temporal proximity to otherness, whether it be one's encounter with their mortality or the encounter with death or *death in life* of the other. Fanon's reference to race as an "epidermal schema" can find relevance in reading the oscillations between life and death that mark the structure of the wounded subject. For Fanon, the mark of race binds the subject to relations of power and domination and returns them to experiences that exist beyond the body and experience. Racism, in turn, operates as a denial of human recognition, which, as Zakiyyah Iman Jackson elaborates,

developed in response to interrelated systems of imperial domination, including Enlightenment discourses on humanity, which Jackson argues are inextricable from the traumatic effects of racialization and racism.[15] In the quoted passage, the languages of trauma and necropower emerge through a crucial term: "whole body." Trauma is a wound, we could say, of the whole body. To address one's wound from one's whole body means to expose oneself (the "I"), perhaps unwillingly, and one's history ("therefore I am") in a way that tethers life to death. To address the wound that oozes from the trace of an injury whose causal event goes without representation is to testify to the un-representability of the whole body. At the same time, the body in *The Face of Another* is subjected to processes of negation (a violence understood as a confrontation with death) and cast onto an "incessant movement of history" that uphold the body's status as living death.[16] If the narrator represents a trace of the traumatic history of nuclear power in Japan, or the ostracism experienced by those whose skin makes them incompatible with a regime of racial hegemony, or the very condition of living marked by an "epidermal schema," the novel works to make these links unclear. The "whole body," in other words, remains inaccessible, already split, because it exists to signify histories beyond it—that is, the various histories that ooze through the narrator's wounds and recall, often in misdirected ways, the subjection of bodily difference (marked as racialized disability) to violence.

It is at the level of fleshy inscriptions and mutilations that *The Face of Another* and *The Death of Artemio Cruz* share and give symbolic meaning to the discourses of ethnicity and race through their articulations of modern national political life and its imaginaries. In both novels, what begins on the surface as a living wound that gnaws at the meaning and value of identity becomes a vehicle for traversing the distance between racial and national identification. Wounds in both novels structure racial othering as the condition for the incomplete and polemical status of the fictive construction of ethnic and national identity inherited from earlier settler hegemonic discourses. The history of the skin upon which an encounter with death inscribes itself into life is, ultimately, what enables Abe's and Fuentes's narratives to contend with a politics of race as it links to the modern subject. And thus the inscriptions of the necropolitical status of the subject mobilize the novels' commentaries about the contradictions of discourses on the national body. Where nationalist discourse may represent the national body as a "whole body," in each novel the "whole body" of the nation is already inscribed by an epidermal relation to negativity. The

question of raciality and racial inscription becomes especially critical in both novels, as the fragmentations endured by the protagonists' bodies link to each novel's fictionalization of Blackness and its role in the grammars of communal body politics. In Abe's and Fuentes's novels, fictionalizations of Blackness thus expose how Blackness operates as a phenomenological condition that undermines the fixity of reason and categorization.

In *The Death of Artemio Cruz*, for instance, the necropolitical status of the "whole body" links to the processes of racialization and what it means for the body to exist in the wake of racism's key role in the structuring of the modern nation. This figurative function is central to Fuentes's narrative, which tells the story of the broken identity of Artemio Cruz. Artemio is a corrupt *latifundista* (land magnate) estranged from his family and his origins as the illegitimate son of a rich Veracruz hacienda owner, who raped Artemio's mother—an Afro-Indigenous domestic worker named Isabel Cruz. The story opens not with the beginning of Artemio's life, however, but with its end, introducing readers to the last hours of the protagonist's life as he encounters his fractured reflection:

> I wake up. . . . The touch of that cold object against my penis wakes me up. I didn't know I could urinate without being aware of it. I keep my eyes shut. I can't make out the nearest voices. If I opened my eyes, would I still be able to hear them? . . . But my eyelids are so heavy: two pieces of lead, coins on my tongue, hammers in my ears, a . . . something like tarnished silver in my breath. It all tastes metallic. Or mineral. I urinate without knowing I'm doing it. . . . I open my right eye, and I see it reflected in the squares of glass sewn onto a woman's handbag. That's what I am. That's what I am. That old man whose features are fragmented by the uneven squares of glass. I am that eye. I am that eye. I am that eye furrowed by accumulated rage, an old, forgotten, but always renewed rage. I am that puffy green eye set between those eyelids. Eyelids. Eyelids. Oily eyelids. I am that nose. That nose. That nose. Broken. With wide nostrils. I am those cheekbones. Cheekbones. Where my white beard starts. Starts. Grimace. Grimace. Grimace. I am that grimace and that has nothing to do with old age or pain. My teeth discolored by tobacco. Tobacco. Tobacco. My bre-bre-breathing fogs the squares of glass, and someone removes the handbag from the table.[17]

The fracturing image of Artemio's face here can be read as a movement between the "hidden" identity of Artemio and the recognition of signs that refer readers to his broken, crossed, or "*cruz*"-ed embodiment, over

which he has relinquished physical and psychic control. The story of Artemio Cruz is then told from multiple points of view and shifts between stream of consciousness and linear narrative across temporalities. And as this broken narrative unfolds, we learn that Isabel Cruz is Black. In other words, the double, crossed (double-crossed) language of identity, inheritance, and wounding structures an encounter with a history of trauma inextricable from Artemio's body, beginning with the repression of the rape of his mother and the repeated appearance of Isabel Cruz's name in Artemio's surname, marking him not only as illegitimate but as a product of her dehumanization in the matrix of hacienda necropolitics. This inextricable double-crossed personal history recalls the histories of violence against working-class women of African descent in Mexico and the Americas and the containment of such histories within the discourses that produce national subjects.

Beyond their traumatic histories, the meditations of the fragmentable "whole body" shape how the notion of race participates in a grammar that constitutes the fantasy of a national community. Spillers's "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe" is therefore instructive here again. Deprived of kinship, desire, and subjectivity—which begins, Spillers argues, with the "ungendering" that takes place in the Middle Passage—enslaved Africans were submitted to "undecipherable markings on the captive body" that "render[ed] a kind of hieroglyphics of the flesh, whose severe disjunctures" came to be "hidden through the cultural seeing by skin color."[18] Here, Spillers calls attention to how the violence of racial inscription becomes "transference" across generations through the symbolic and structural "substitutions" that reproduce meaning for the "undecipherable markings" of the flesh. Returning to the psychological dimensions of race and identity that each novel explores, it is telling that both *The Face of Another* and *The Death of Artemio Cruz* translate a representation of the disintegrated "whole body" with cinematic-like close-ups of faces in decay. As Abe's cantankerous narrator so well summarizes, we exist in a world that cannot recognize man's personality—his humanity—without the "passport of the face." Without a face, the narrator contends, a human might be deemed lacking of humanity at all—of being soulless. For each protagonist, the answer to that lack and the anxiety that it produces appears as their tenuous practices of self-rejection and self-doubling. In his account on the figure of the "double," or the "doppelgänger," Sigmund Freud's once close collaborator and Austrian psychoanalyst Otto Rank saw the soul as a manifestation of one's idealized identity. Accordingly, the figure of the idealized double appears in both

texts as a way of refusing the dehumanized otherness of the self. In *The Face of Another*, the narrator seeks the help of modern science to achieve an identitarian split by donning a face that is not his own and thereby creating a doppelgänger out of another to regain a sense of admission in society. Meanwhile, Artemio's "double identity" is that of the repression of a personal, racial, and class history; he re-creates himself to blend into the life of a father who rejected him.

By adopting duplicity, these fractured identities produce lenses of double consciousness through which to read their worlds as environments of prejudice, rejection, and, above all, the social and psychological barriers (what W. E. B. Du Bois might call the "veil") that separate othered subjects from those understood as fitting comfortably within normative society.[19] Through these lenses, *The Face of Another* and *The Death of Artemio Cruz* highlight the interspersed interplay of identity, disability, and race by rendering the lurid fragmentation of identity into the un-becoming of the image of the ethnonational subject. In other words, their displaced and disfigured subjects predicate on reading an unconscious racial disconnect. Thus, the questions that concern the following sections are, How can we read Abe's and Fuentes's novels as signaling how the construction of the modern national community engenders fixed hierarchies of racial domination? And how do their overinscriptions of fictionalized Blackness render Blackness and other forms of racialized marginalization both central and illegible to these narratives?

Blackness as Nonencounter in *The Face of Another*

Abe's oeuvre, not limited to *The Face of Another*, is often celebrated for its amplification of the questions of alienation and the impossibility of belonging to a political homeland. In line with Abe's appeal to a politics of estrangement, *The Face of Another* extends these politics to a global history of racial discrimination. Here I examine how *The Face of Another* implicitly juxtaposes the history and legacy of the transatlantic enslavement of African peoples in the American continent with the history and legacy of Japanese imperialism, extending consideration to the treatment of Zainichi Koreans in post-1945 Japan alongside an account of anti-Blackness in the Jim Crow–era United States. While these juxtapositions offer glimpses into the nameless narrator's attempt to define what it means to survive a condition of not belonging, they are deployed as instances that refer to his positionality.

The narrator, a scientist, seeks treatment for his facial disfiguration from a doctor who ultimately crafts a face molded after the face of a stranger, whom the two pay to borrow his visage. The scientist initially believes that the face of another will gain him comfortable entry back into society but soon realizes that he can use this new identity to take revenge on those who he feels have rejected him—primarily, his wife. The novel thus follows the narrator as he plans his revenge, which involves a convoluted plot to get his wife to cheat on him with himself (the letter in the final installment, purportedly written by her, will attest that she knew it was him all along). Various encounters with people and events impress upon him the sociocultural terrain of alterity and discrimination not only within Japan but on a broader global scale. The narrator's cynical detachment is intentional and conflictive; characterized as a scientist, he frequently employs technical language to describe the details of his facial disfiguration and, later, the making of his mask. It may be, we could surmise, that the appeal to science and scientific language signals the novel's attention to the intimate relationship between scientific language and processes of race-making.

The science of identity-making throughout *The Face of Another* recalls the impossibility of community with the other (with another) while emphasizing the fragmented state of a nationalist identification with woundedness. Racial identity in fact becomes a locus for defining what it means to belong in the first place, contextualizing for the reader the narrator's failure as a subjectified member of the post-1945 Japanese national community, constructed through the displacement and refusal to acknowledge its settler colonial and imperial past and embrace a logic of victimization. Indeed, this fragmented subject is repeatedly invoked to negotiate references to Black and Korean experiences of oppression with hegemonic whiteness and Japanese ethnonationalism. The logics of representation that encompass moments of racialization are an inseparable effect of "blurring," which Fred Moten has described as "a kind partition in refusal of partition; a general assertion of inseparability, which nevertheless still moves in and as a ubiquitous and continual differentiation."[20]

In *The Face of Another*, the performance of "a kind partition in refusal of partition" thematizes how facelessness (the face of the other) cannot be conceived without the question of racial difference. In the Black Notebook, Abe's protagonist begins to overtly pose the questions of race and ethnicity as extensions to a more global understanding of anti-Black and

racist violence, beginning with his recognition of anti-Korean discrimination and its quotidian persistence, which is juxtaposed throughout the White Notebook with anti-Black violence in the United States and eventually transformed into part of his experience of a crisis of identity in the Grey Notebook. Playing with the temporality of his confessional, the narrator later goes back into his text to write commentary that analyzes and attempts to give meaning to his crisis (signified in the English translation by italicization and in the original Japanese by deliberate sectioning off). In one section of commentary appearing in the Black Notebook, the narrator compares his disfigurement to the ascription of racial difference on Koreans living in Japan and the experience of internalized oppression:

> *Incidentally, one more thing—I read once in some newspaper or review a strangely thought-provoking article about a Korean with Japanese blood, who in order to look more like a Korean went to the trouble of undergoing plastic surgery. This was clearly a stress on facial restoration, but it could never be said that the man was implicated in prejudice. In the final analysis, I realized I hadn't comprehended a single thing. If the opportunity presented itself, I should like very much to hear what kind of advice the Korean would give to someone like me who had lost his face.*[21]

Though brief, this commentary applies a historical critique to how Korean identity, particularly racialized in the context of postcolonial East Asia, is constructed. As in Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks*, where the self-perception of a Black subject internalizes a sense of inferiority in the wake of the irretrievable loss of homeland, this passage in *The Face of Another* theorizes what it means to internalize and act out against the former colonizer (attempting, whatever it may mean, to "look more like a Korean" to offset the presence of "Japanese blood"). In other words, what the commentary describes is a manifestation of postcolonial melancholia that the narrator wrongfully identifies as possibly "implicated in prejudice" and that enables an acting out of resistance despite the impossibility of eliminating the history and memory of colonial trauma that haunt the ethnonational state in the wake of colonial violence.

The discourse of identity in *The Face of Another* is thus not merely psychological but also extends to a politics of difference. In pronouncing the crisis of his alteration, the narrator suggests identity as asserted through his perception of the status of his masculinity. Equating "forgery" and "hysteria" to women, he conflates the deconstruction of stereotypical

gender roles (feminization seen as emasculation) with the restriction of his identity and subjectivity. In other words, this discourse on identity is heavily rooted in both the physical and political, wherein the transformation of the subject occurs as a making of the masculine self into the other (the face of the other, *tanin no kao*). In this vein, what Saidiya Hartman has signaled as the fabrication of "manhood" in accordance to racial domination and citizenship appears in *The Face of Another* as a fashioning of the fragmented masculine citizen-subject.[22] Hartman argues that the representation of mature manhood, equated to white manhood, historically serves to deny civil equality to Black men, but in Abe's narrative, the prospects of belonging and having an identity and masculinity are likewise scrutinized as isomorphic. For the narrator, heterosexual relationships become attenuated in the context of misogynistic violence (exemplified in the narrator's desire to take revenge on his wife) and anxieties over the unstable prosthetic construction of race (as in the note about race-altering plastic surgery). Based on and derived from gendered anxieties, a conversation with his doctor in the section that follows the note about the Korean man's surgery is the first to address the "race problem" in response to whether the narrator's new face could liberate him from discrimination and hypervisible estrangement:

> "Well, then. Are you trying to say that the difference in skin color has yielded a profit for history? I absolutely can't accept such a meaning for correlation."
>
> "Good heavens! Were you discussing the race problem? But isn't that something of an overblown interpretation?"
>
> "If it were possible, I should like to blow it up as much as I could. To every single face in the world. Only, with a mug like mine the more I talk about it the more it becomes a prisoner's lament."[23]

This insight underscores a fundamental critique in the novel: that human recognition is not merely epidermal but also encompasses various processes of human identity-making, in which the self is put at risk of becoming other than himself. What is signaled as an issue of identity, of its crisis, is not the changing of the face through inorganic supplementation by bandaging it; rather, it is the transformation of the face into another human face—the grafting of a new, uncanny skin onto one's own—that gives the narrator pause. Ralph Ellison's 1952 *Invisible Man* is an obvious influence and mediator in this conversation. We can see how *The Face of*

Another might speak back to Ellison's preface, written in the voice of the "invisible man":

> Nor is my invisibility exactly a matter of a biochemical accident to my epidermis. That invisibility to which I refer occurs because of a peculiar disposition of the eyes of some with whom I come in contact. A matter of the construction of their *inner* eyes, those eyes with which they look through their physical eyes upon reality. I am not complaining, nor am I protesting either. It is sometimes advantageous to be unseen, although it is most often rather wearing on the nerves. Then too, you're constantly being bumped against by those of poor vision. Or again, you often doubt if you really exist.[24]

The Face of Another construes this figure of invisibility, wounding, and facelessness as Ellison does: in terms of a triangulated politics of race, gender, and visibility. Visibility, in both cases, is debunked as a trap. Nonetheless, Abe's novel historicizes the "problem" of race as the perceptibility of the event of discrimination.

The stakes of Abe's fictionalized account of racialization appear most poignantly in a section from the final (Grey) notebook, when the narrator, looking for a "distraction," inadvertently witnesses a televised report on antiracist protests in the United States:

> For a distraction, I turned on the television set. As luck would have it, it was just the time for the foreign news, and a report was in progress on the race riots in America. Having talked about the wretched Black people in torn shirts who were being marched away by white police officers, the announcer continued matter-of-factly:
>
> > *The racial disturbances in New York are a cause for concern at the beginning of this long, black summer. . . . Harlem streets are overflowing with more than five hundred helmeted police, Black and white. One is reminded of the summer of 1943. . . . The contempt and mistrust that exist between police and colored citizens.*[25]

This scene parallels the phenomenon that Stuart Hall addresses in his 1981 essay "Whites of Their Eyes." Hall writes about the media ecology of racist representations of Black resistance in postwar Britain through an appeal to race-baiting: "In numerous incidents where black communities have reacted to racist provocation . . . or to police harassment and provocation . . . the media have tended to assume that 'right' lay on the side of the law, and

have fallen in to the language of 'riot' and 'race warfare' which simply feeds existing stereotypes and prejudices."[26] Though the novel does not disclose it, the news report that the narrator dispassionately overhears gives an account of the 1964 Harlem Protests—characterized by Abe as "riots" in the novel—which were organized around the killing of James Powell, a Black teenager, by Lieutenant Thomas Gilligan, a white off-duty police officer.[27] Bridges notes that the inclusion of this scene was a deliberate addition to the serialized publication of *The Face of Another* in the January 1964 issue of *Ginzo* magazine, as it only appears in the book version published in September of that year, "some two months after the 1964 Harlem riots."[28] Here, both the novel and the author exit the world of fiction and spill into a political reality to use the novel as testimony that scrutinizes a traumatic moment in the global history of anti-Black racism in its truncated visibility. Yet I would argue that this moment of recognition enables neither a dialogue with Black Americans nor, as Ōe Kenzaburō's analysis of *The Face of Another* attests, an opening of an engagement with racial politics in Black America. My reading is similar to that of Bridges: Abe's construction of race engages the languages of science and fiction and deploys them, as Abe himself attests in his writing about *The Face of Another*, as an exploration of a generalized otherness through which Blackness indexes a form of radicalized estrangement or expulsion that becomes self-referential. Watching the televised "riots," the narrator then asks, "Like Black people, could we, the brotherhood of the faceless, arise resolutely against prejudice? It would be impossible. Disgusted with each other's ugliness, we would probably begin to battle among ourselves."[29]

The news report, in other words, lays bare a moment in which Black existence emerges as an affective reorientation and puts the narrator's positionality into question: "The words gave me an intolerable feeling of pain and depression as if a sharp fishbone had thrust itself between my teeth. Of course, I had almost nothing in common with Black Americans except for being an object of prejudice. . . . Even though the problem facing Black people might be a grave social problem, my own case could never go beyond the limits of the personal."[30] These passages gesture at the impossible equivalence between the experience of structural racism in the United States and the narrator's individualized sense of alienation. Yet despite the echoed rhetoric of anti-Blackness's historical systemic effects ("One is reminded of the summer of 1943"), the narrator identifies racism as an issue of interpersonal prejudice within the particular context of the United States rather than as the structural violation of Black existence

and the globality of anti-Blackness, illustrated by the discourse of "riots" in the report and the narrator's own perception of the event. While recognizing the stark differences between his experience and anti-Black racism, the narrator fails to recognize the implications of this moment in the novel. And yet despite its disaffected narrator, the narrative signals what theorists of Black thought, Afro-pessimism, and decolonial critique have articulated. Anti-Blackness begins not at the level of the skin but with the construction of a world order that renders Black life violable in the service of colonialism, capitalist exploitation, and the global consecration of the myths of white supremacy while obfuscating the foundational violence of anti-Blackness in the making of modern societies.

Other similar appeals to the hypervisibilization of racial inscriptions and markings that expose vulnerable subjects to systemic violence and discrimination follow in the latter sections of the novel. In the White Notebook (the final segment), the narrator, wearing his new face, visits a Korean restaurant and overhears a patron call out to a waitress, in Japanese, "Hey! Girl! You've got the face of a Korean country girl."[31] Having identified the patron and his companions as themselves Korean, the protagonist then ponders, "If she were Korean, his remark, far from poking fun, was more an affirmative, friendly remark. It must surely be that. In the first place, a Korean wouldn't use the term 'Korean' negatively, would he?"[32] The intersecting phenomena of racialization and gendered language are here posed in relation to how the narrator perceives them from his position as a non-Korean deciding whether a Korean patron remarking that the waitress had "the face of a Korean country girl" could be perceived as an insult. Nevertheless, in bringing up a context where having "the face of a Korean country girl" could be perceived as a form of discrimination, the narrator's reflections capture the complicated history of what it means to be a "Korean country girl" in modern Japan. After all, less than two decades before the publication of Abe's novel, "Korean country girls" were violently dehumanized and transformed into exploitable property by the Japanese Empire. In this case, I would ask, What does it mean for the narrator, a Japanese man, to attempt to recognize the "face of a Korean country girl"?

It could help to turn to the language that the narrator employs to examine how Abe's novel understands the racism of this passage. In the original Japanese, the word that Abe's character uses to refer to the waitress as "Korean" is *chōsenjin*.[33] The self-identified Zainichi scholar Choi Jinseok highlights that the term *chōsenjin* is a title given to a Korean subject who

is neither a migrant nor identified by the Cold War partitioning of the Korean Peninsula as *kankokujin* (South Korean) or *kitachōsenjin* (North Korean). *Chōsenjin*, Choi argues, is a term that emerges from the spectrality of postcolonial East Asia to elucidate the ongoing violence of Japanese colonial discourses within the post-1945 state.[34] Further, the narrator's affinities with Black Americans protesting the shooting of a Black child or with Koreans living in Japan require a heavy reframing of his privilege of being a man of an ethnic majority through reminders of his disfiguration. We might therefore ask whether an ethical literary encounter with Blackness or the so-called racial other is possible for the novel, or whether the narrative forces a stabilized, hierarchical relation on Blackness and other figurations of racial difference. To follow a question that Hartman has posed about narratives relegating Black and enslaved subjects to "the position of the unthought": Who does that narrative enable?[35]

The anti-relationality of Black life and death returns at the very end of the novel in another form of intertextual mediation. The segment following the "wife's letter" details the plot of a film that the narrator references earlier in the novel, *One Side of Love*—a film about a young woman whose face "was pitifully disfigured with keloid ridges and distortions," which "completely transformed" her otherwise conventionally attractive appearance. The narrator interjects in a parenthetical remark: "No full explanation was given, but the name 'Hiroshima' was constantly repeated in the following dialogue)."[36] Described as lacking "sense-organs to receive external stimuli," this character in the intertextual mise en abyme appears as a radical and explicit reference to the traumatic breakdown of familial and racial identification. The film, the narrator tells us, is ultimately an incest narrative: the young woman commits suicide after consensually sleeping with her brother by walking into a "black, heaving sea."[37] Beyond the explanatory lens of the psychoanalytic reading of incest as a breakdown of normative kinship, the young woman's incestuous desire is less a result of her scar and "lack" of "sense-organs" than a resolute renunciation of the networks of community that regulate necessary exogamy.[38] Read as a marker of racial difference, the connection between the "inhumanity" of incest and the scar of historical trauma not only mark this character's alienation or derealization from community but also condition her exclusion from the reproduction of the community. The blackness of her scar and the blackness of the heaving sea act as powerful racializing motifs—specifically ones that see Blackness as injurious to a reproductive future. Further, these motifs gesture to the novel's understanding of the ways that

those marked by the epidermal schema of race become excluded from heteronormative national belonging are subjected to necropolitical violence and exclusion.[39] Within the affective experience of this film within the text, the narrator creates another account of how subjects schematized through the marker of epidermal difference become castaways within a disidentified, disconnected Black Pacific.

Indeed, partially witnessing but being unable to address—and thus being on "one side" of an unrequited spectatorship—the symbolic and structural effects of racism underpin an ethical, political dilemma in *The Face of Another*'s accounts of racialization and Blackness. As Bridges also notes, for the most part racial othering throughout *The Face of Another* is predicated on the visibility of difference as an inscription: the *hibakusha* woman's scarred face in a film the narrator watches, tattoos on yakuza, makeup on Japanese women, and so forth.[40] Racialization, however, generates discursive *hypervisibilization,* as in the case with the marking of Black Americans as racialized in the news report. This marking of racialization involves positing Black and marginalized people as opposite to or opposing heteronormative whiteness, making them hypervisible through the spectacularization of the structural violence of police brutality.

Processes of racialization are thus doubly displaced from and central to the premise of *The Face of Another*—in which a "faceless" man perceives a crisis of identity and communal belonging in identifying his injuries as the inscriptions of becoming other. Yet if a prosthetic approach to racialization becomes the foundation for the novel's discourses on identity and injury, is Blackness unthinkable? Considering Hartman's question and critique, Abe's novel's fictionalization of race must be considered not in regard to the questions of community and its possibility but in regard to the ethical interrogations that its metanarratives enable. Throughout, processes of racialization, exploitation, and subjection render racial difference faceless, effectively obfuscating "whole bodies" to give face to its protagonist. As the novel anchors its critique of the ethnonational in the violence of racism and anti-Blackness, it is the distortion of the heteropatriarchal subject position (for instance, through the role of the Korean waitress onto whom the narrator projects his own identity crisis) that ultimately sustains the novel's engagement with the processes of racism. The phenomenological distortions that emerge out of the novel's encounter with Blackness, however, do not encroach from outside the narrative; they premise the constitution of its subject and tone. In what follows, I explore how such a nonencounter is troubled in Fuentes's fictionalization

of Blackness, in which the heteropatriarchal subject shatters, unable to contain the repressed inheritance of Black identity in postrevolutionary Mexico, and confronts the politics of death in life.

The Disappearing Inheritances of *The Death of Artemio Cruz*

Spillers's "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe" reads a cultural emphasis on the denial of Black women's sexuality under the power that the "global sign" of race exerts in the systems and legacies of chattel slavery: "Whether or not the captive female and/or her sexual oppressor derived 'pleasure' from their seductions and couplings . . . we could go so far as to entertain the very real possibility that 'sexuality,' as a term of implied relationship and desire, is dubiously appropriate, manageable, or accurate to *any* of the familial arrangements under a system of enslavement, from the master's family to the captive enclave. Under these arrangements, the customary lexis of sexuality, including 'reproduction,' 'motherhood,' 'pleasure,' and 'desire,' are thrown into unrelieved crisis."[41] These erotic and sensuous grammars, Spillers suggests, are rendered captive through contact with the transformation of Black bodies into property. Through the Middle Passage, Black African women are "ungendered," reduced to their physicality and reproductive capabilities and treated as commodities. Through the capture of Black women, the encounter between enslaved Black women and white masters becomes, then, one premised on the "unrelieved crisis" of matrilineal relations as the blood rite of "motherhood" is subsumed into a system of profitability and commercial exchange. Black motherhood, for Spillers, is negated humanity by the provisions of a white heteropatriarchy that disavows her mark on a culture that delegitimizes the Black mother as part of a cultural inheritance through the forced separation of Black women from their children and the turn of reproductive labor into a form of violent dehumanization for both mother and child. In other words, the Black mother becomes what could be read as a site of nonencounter within the heterosexist colonial "American grammars" that misname her and displace her humanity. And yet, her undeniable, even if disavowed, inheritance remains a mark across the boundaries of legitimized upheld relations.

The precarious "unrelieved crisis" of the Black mother is illustrated throughout Carlos Fuentes's *The Death of Artemio Cruz*. The novel intercrosses the last hours of the life of a former revolutionary turned land magnate with the events following the end of the Mexican Revolution—a

period of cultural, economic, and political upheaval that tied cultural hegemony in Mexico to the scientific racist notion of mestizo identity. The novel introduces its protagonist in the moments before his death as he reflects on his estranged relationship with his wife and daughter and the rippling effects that the death of his son during the Spanish Civil War had on his family and life. Through this reflection on the loss of familial bonds and, in particular, legacy, the trajectory of Artemio Cruz's life unfolds. He is, the novel reveals, the son of a mulatta domestic worker from Veracruz, a servant raped by her boss—a wealthy landowner named Atanasio Menchaca—who kicks her off his estate upon learning of her pregnancy and whose fortune, but not name, Artemio inherits. In turn, Artemio's unspoken inheritance from his mother, whose name becomes a textual refrain ("Isabel Cruz, Cruz Isabel"), ultimately resonates into the account of Artemio's history and the novel's fictionalization of Black identity in twentieth-century Mexico. Throughout, the novel demonstrates that the nationalistic displacement and refusal to incorporate Blackness into the logic of *mestizaje* persists in the wake of the traumatic and violent histories of colonialism and slavery in Mexico.

Often associated with Fuentes's contributions to the Latin American Boom literary movement, *The Death of Artemio Cruz* mediates the myth of Mexican multiracialism, which often disavowed (and continues to disavow) the history of African and Black identity in the national community. The novel's legibility as a text that speaks to its appropriation of Black literary and intellectual production importantly resonates in its critical reading. For instance, Edna Aizenberg and others have described the "pessimistic" and "fissured" style of *The Death of Artemio Cruz* as part of a movement in Latin American literature that confronts and contests the use of literature to consecrate the idea of "representing" the nation in Latin America.[42] Fuentes's novel, in other words, undertakes a task of vanishing the national body (the body of Artemio Cruz) through the realization of the actualities of what constitutes the nation—that is, the "disfigurement" that Fanon describes as giving way to the challenge of the nation and identity and ultimately anticolonial independence. Rather than reading the "pessimistic" and "fissured" elements as inscriptions of a "Latin American" mode of representation, however, I argue that the novel's engagement with the questions of race and racism, and in particular with Afro-Mexican identity, is central to the conceptualization of an anticolonial ideology. Throughout, Fuentes's painstaking critique of the official national discourse instituted in the postrevolutionary period about

Mexican identitarian cohesion appears in the struggle between the discourses of the patriotic promises of the Mexican Revolution and what he called the "profane realities" of an emergent bourgeois ruling class.[43] The effects of the state's turn to overseas capital and the consequences of a socially stratified society that exploits its marginalized classes attenuate the conditions under which Fuentes's novel constructs and deconstructs the identity of Artemio Cruz. Here I want to turn particular attention to how the novel's critique of economic injustice depends on its attention to the question of race, expressed through the repression of the Blackness of Artemio's mother and its role as an inheritance that counters the myths of racial identity, economic mobility, and cultural origins. *The Death of Artemio Cruz*, I demonstrate, resists not only the consecration of the myth of the imagined national community but also the overwriting of the history of Black life—and, in particular, Black women—in Mexico.

Inflected by the work of intellectuals like José Vasconcelos, the term *mestizo* traditionally referred only to Mexicans of mixed Indigenous and white European descent. As Alberto Ribas, who traces the narrative to the anti-Blackness of *mestizaje*, points out, this so-called cultural phase coincided with the gradual and violent disintegration of Black and Afro-Mexican identity from the idea of the Mexican national community: "The absence, vanishing, or degradation of the African component of identity can be detected in the racist connotations of the hegemonic ideology of *mestizaje*."[44] Ribas stresses that the novel's deployment of Blackness to question the validity of heteropatriarchal national identity emerges as a form of intertextuality. Like *The Face of Another*'s citation of Ellison's work, *The Death of Artemio Cruz* resonates with James Weldon Johnson's 1912 *The Autobiography of an Ex-Coloured Man*. In Johnson's work, the son of a light-skinned woman abandons his Black identity to marry the daughter of an upper-class New York family. While Johnson's novel speaks to the "fear" of racial invasion among white Americans, the thematic of undetected miscegenation shares with *The Death of Artemio Cruz* an unraveling of cultural anxieties about the rigidity of specific socioeconomic and racial boundaries—specifically those between impoverished Black and wealthy white subjects. Fuentes's novel, for instance, makes a point to describe how Artemio inherits not only his father's wealth after the latter's death but also the wealth of his dead wartime acquaintance Gonzalo Bernal, when he takes over the landowning Bernal family after marrying Gonzalo's sister Catalina.

It is no coincidence that "being *hacendado*" (owning a hacienda, a plantation) in the novel is equated with socioeconomic and racial mobility. The pre-independence history of the hacienda structure demonstrates precisely how landowning in Mexico connects to the long history of racism and enslavement. Haciendas, after all, existed as a microcosm of Spanish colonial biopolitics. In haciendas, Indigenous and African populations were exploited and managed for primitive accumulation, transformed into part of the politics of ownership, property, and mastery that typified the systemic development of a stratified and *casted* colonial society.[45] By becoming *hacendado*, Artemio thus reenacts the troubled legacies of racial and colonial violence that underscore the structure and history of property in Mexico. Through his connections with the Bernal family and the legitimization of his white *ladino* ancestry, Artemio ultimately wins a seat in congress and continues to accumulate wealth despite being heralded as a hero of land and agrarian reform. Artemio's gradual proximity to white and whiter Mexican society and assimilation into the ideal of the contradictory revolution coincides with the repression of his racial and class origins.

Across the novel, the vanishing and repression of Black life and experience from the narrative of the national polity connects intimately to the mythmaking processes that engender the myth of *mestizaje* in Mexico, the romanticization of the colonization and dispossession of Indigenous populations, and the dehumanization of Mexicans of African descent who arrived on the colony as property. Between the Spanish colonization of the Aztec empire in the sixteenth century and up until the establishment of the independent state, Black labor in Mexico was exploited to constitute the representation of Mexico in the modernizing and globalizing world. In fact, the Mexican government did not abolish slavery in most of the country until 1829, when it issued the Guerrero Decree, named after then-President Vicente Guerrero, who was Afro-Mestizo. Even then, however, ranchlands in the southern Isthmus of Tehuantepec and Texas were exempt from the Guerrero Decree. The total abolition of slavery was not encoded in the Mexican constitution until 1917. As I describe in chapter 2, historical and philosophical accounts of the modern state often erase the materiality of racial violence, and anti-Black racism in Mexico became a symbolic mechanism that operated through the exclusion and subjection of Black life. In a time when the ideal of Mexico was one of integration and resistance to cultural colonialisms, anti-Black racism was, alongside anti-Indigenous

violence, integral to the establishment of the modern ideology of the national community.

Fuentes's novel demonstrates this history of Black enslavement and disenfranchisement as entangled in the threads that bind Artemio Cruz to his mulatta mother. Yet for the Black mother—and the Blackness of the mother—to be recognized becomes a matter of repeating the impossibility of her representation. Each time the novel flashes back to the moments of Artemio's birth and parentage, the text makes an effort to disclose his mother's unstable name: she is either "Cruz Isabel" or "Isabel Cruz." The mother does not have an established surname (none of the mulattoes who raised Artemio did), but it becomes Artemio's only inheritance from her. In the enunciation of the Black mother's name, the novel returns to and repeats Artemio Cruz's identity as a *cruzado*. The appeal back to the Black mother who died in childbirth therefore emerges at the site of her erasure in the death of her son. Instead of disappearing, the traumatic history of the mother enables and commands a response to the encounter with the fragmentation, disfiguration, and eventual death of the subject whose race remains addressed only in the trace of her name. Attending to the figure of the Black mother in Fuentes's novel, I return to Spillers, who offers a lens for reading a cultural emphasis on paternal absence against the paradox of maternal presence to critique the dynamic between race and gender that originates in the history of the transatlantic slave trade and culminates in the countless histories and actualities of women of African descent in the Americas who are treated as disposable, burdened all the same with the reproduction of the state. Reading Fuentes's novel with Spillers's theorizations, we can explore how *The Death of Artemio Cruz* puts into question the identity of its protagonist, whose status as a bastard son interrupts the fabric of cultural patriarchy by being named, marked, and racialized through matrilineal legacy.

Throughout the novel, the thematic of racial crossing performs the deconstruction of anti-Black anxieties about confronting the history of the miscegenated national community by articulating Artemio's racial background without addressing it overtly. "I'm afraid of thinking about my own body," the story begins in Artemio's voice.[46] Our initial perception of Artemio is thus one that avoids the "whole body." The novel never explicitly identifies him as Black, biracial, or mixed race—configurations never assimilable within the ontologies of mestizo nationalism, which educate his coming into national subjectivity. Instead, early on, his relationships to others become an unstable index for his identity. While describing him

as having been born in a "*choza de negros*" (a Black shack) on the outskirts of the Menchaca hacienda, the novel also reveals that Artemio is one of Atanasio Menchaca's "fair-haired" bastard sons of raped "Indian and Mulatto" women. On the many occasions when we are reminded that Artemio resembles Menchaca, our attention is drawn back to the "puffy green eye" that ties him to the father that he never knew, designated by others as Menchaca's white "green-eyed son."[47] This eye, which travels to the reflection of Artemio's disfigured and wounded body, nevertheless dislocates this patriarchal resemblance and relocates itself in the trajectory of Artemio's history—a history that becomes inextricable from the history and *inheritance* of racism in twentieth-century Mexico.

In another poignant section written in second-person stream of consciousness, the novel makes explicit reference to how the modern nation-state transmits this inheritance: "You will bequeath them their thieving leaders, their submissive unions, their new latifundia, their U.S. investments, their jailed workers, their monopolizers and their great press, their field hands, their hit men and secret agents, their foreign bank accounts, their slick speculators, their servile congressmen, their adulatory ministers, their elegant subdivisions, their birthdays and commemorations, their fleas and wormy tortillas, their illiterate Indians, their fired laborers, their despoiled mountains, their fat men armed with scuba gear and socks, their thin men armed with their fingernails. Take your Mexico: take your inheritance."[48] This passage, which addresses Artemio, proposes as his inheritance a Mexico in which racial and class struggles, entangled with the effects of religious colonialism and global capitalism, exacerbate the exploitation of marginalized populations. Here, the text portends the rise of the neoliberal developmental state and juxtaposes it with Artemio's childhood and the promise of a Mexico that could never be. The passage continues:

> Your land.
>
> You will not die without returning.
>
> . . . The languid hand of dry Mexico, unchanging, sad, the Mexico of stone cloisters and locked-in dust on the high plateau, the half-moon of Veracruz will have another history, tied by the golden strings to the Antilles, the ocean, and beyond, to the Mediterranean, which in truth will only be conquered by the battlements of the Sierra Madre Oriental. . . . It will be the frontier no one will defeat—not the men from Extremadura and Castile, who exhausted themselves in the first

> foundation and were then conquered, without knowing it . . . not the pirates who loaded their brigantines with shields thrown with a bitter laugh from atop the Indian mountain; not the monks who crossed the Pass of the Malinche to offer new disguises to unshakable gods . . . not the blacks, brought to the tropical plantations and softened by the depredations of Indian women who offered their hairless sex as a redoubt of victory against the black race.[49]

The entanglement of land property and Blackness is thus positioned against the grain of institutionalized and colonial narratives about Mexican culture and nationality (notably, the myth of *mestizaje*'s whiteness). Artemio's legacy interpolates a lost, displaced inheritance and history that is not the inheritance or history of the Menchacas but the inheritance lost to the "land" and whose history intercrosses colonial conquest, the transatlantic slave trade, and the trappings of Mexican settler racial capitalism.

Despite the inclusion of this history, however, race nevertheless is merely instrumental in Fuentes's narrative. In other words, as Ribas has pointed out, passages about Artemio's background often point to the repression of his race while participating in the omission of African presence in the narrative of the nation. Blackness and Indigeneity are described as "softened," for instance, and Artemio's Blackness throughout emerges as a matter of *passing*.[50] As in Nella Larsen's 1929 novel *Passing*, which centers on the conundrum of a light-skinned US Black woman who can "pass" as white (and therefore have access to social and economic mobility), race in Fuentes's novel is relational, and Blackness is treated as malleable and repressible and always posited in conjunction to the idea of becoming white through deliberate *mestizaje*. Reading Fuentes's novel as thematizing passing, the narrative's deliberate "repression" of Artemio's race operates as a discourse on the traumatic treatment of Blackness in the myth of Mexican ethnonationalism. Yet as Ribas points out, the novel's treatment of Black and other racialized subjects circumscribes itself to superficial or stereotypical characterizations. For instance, although the novel contains several Black and mixed characters, Blackness is only ascribed to one character: Artemio's surrogate father and uncle, Lunero, who was killed when Artemio was thirteen and left him to be raised by the Menchacas after Atanasio's death. A flashback nearing the end of the novel and the final moments of Artemio's life depicts this decisive moment in Artemio's childhood: "You, standing there, Cruz, thirteen years old, at the edge of life. . . . You, green eyes, thin arms, hair made coppery by the sun. . . . You,

friend of a forgotten mulatto. . . . You will hear Lunero's long 'Hellooo.' . . . You will compromise the existence of the infinite, bottomless freshness of the universe. . . . You will hear the horseshoes on the stone. . . . In you, the stars and earth touch. . . . You will hear the report of the rifle after Lunero's shout."[51] Lunero, who worked for the Menchacas after his sister died in childbirth, is one of a handful of characters in the novel given interiority. He is also the only character who expresses love for Artemio and recognizes the precarity and danger of Artemio's birthright as Atanasio's son:

> Thirteen years before, when they gave him the boy, he thought of sending him down the river, cared for by the butterflies, the way they did with that king in the white folks' story, and then waiting for him to come back, big and powerful. . . . Lunero had spent fourteen years living off the fat of the land, taking care of a crazy old lady and drunk. And Lunero did not know how to tell this to young Cruz, he thought the boy would never understand. The boy had only known work on the bank of the river . . . and the town, inhabited by Indians who never spoke to him. But in truth the mulatto knew that if he started pulling on one thread of the story, it would all come unraveled and he'd have to start from the beginning and lose the boy.[52]

In his short appearance, Lunero serves as a counterpoint to the greed and capitalism of the Menchaca family and other male characters. His heroism, grounded in the "secret" of Artemio's birthright, nevertheless manifests as sacrifice: from spending fourteen years working for a family that he is critical of, to becoming a silent tool for triggering the repression of Artemio's childhood. With Lunero's death, which is depicted only as a shout and a gunshot heard by the thirteen-year-old Artemio, Artemio's connections to his childhood and Black uncle are displaced.

The displaced connection to Lunero therefore forges the translation between racialization and trauma, doubling as the dislocation of Blackness outside the discourse of the Mexican national subject that Artemio comes to embody in later years and onto whose racial otherness is implicitly inscribed as a patriarchal trauma: a series of markings inherited from an overidentification with a paternal recognition and the repudiation of matrilineage. Race, in the novel, is thus an unspoken inheritance, imposed upon the body by the repression of the other and embodied in the account of Lunero's death as the memory of the sounds of his shout and a gunshot. In this way, the novel proposes race as a paraphysical inscription that links Artemio's life to larger cultural collectives—women, Afro-Mexicans,

Indigenous peoples—who are the targets of recurrent state violence and subjugation.

Fuentes's novel eventually returns us to the open green eye that contemplates his own abjection, but begins its final section with the birth of Artemio:

> He, curled unto himself, in the center of those contractions, he had his head dark with blood hanging, held by the most tenuous thread: open to life, at last. Lunero held the arms of Isabel Cruz or Cruz Isabel, his sister, he closed his eyes so he wouldn't see what was happening between his sister's spread legs. . . . Lunero cut the cord, tied up the end, washed the body, the face, held him close, kissed him, tried to give him to his sister, but Isabel Cruz, Cruz Isabel was moaning again after another contraction, and the boots were approaching the shack where the woman lay on the dirt floor under the palm roof, the boots were coming closer and Lunero turned the body face down, he slapped the baby so he would cry, cry as the boots came closer: he cried: he cried and began to live.[53]

The mother's name—"Isabel Cruz, Cruz Isabel"—is not invoked simply to describe the mother who is distant and whom Artemio cannot know. The Black mother is, in a sense, an uncertainly named stranger—one who can welcome into the narrative the life of Artemio Cruz, and whose difference becomes his, but who is, until the end, an unassailable other. Isabel Cruz becomes acknowledged only through her death and disappearance. In relegating the Black mother to its unconscious, Fuentes's novel plays out the processes of erasure that mark the relationship between the Mexican state and subject and their entanglements with anti-Black, heterosexist violence.

Artemio Cruz is therefore a subject inscribed by a life in the wake of the violent erasure of the Black mother. And as such, I posit that Artemio's existence as well as the construction of his narrative parallels Sharpe's theorizations of "living in the wake":

> Living in the wake of slavery is living "the afterlife of property" and living the afterlife of *partus sequitur ventrem* (that which is brought forth follows the womb), in which the Black child inherits the non/status, the non/being of the mother. The inheritance of a non/status is everywhere apparent now in the ongoing criminalization of Black women and children. Living in the wake on a global level means living the disastrous time and effects of continued marked migrations, Mediterranean and Caribbean disasters, trans-American and -African migration, structural

adjustments imposed by the International Monetary Fund that continues imperialisms/colonialisms, and more. And here, in the United States, it means living and dying through the policies of the first US Black president; it means the gratuitous violence of stop-and-frisk and Operation Clean Halls; rates of Black incarceration that boggle the mind.[54]

To live in the wake of the narrative and history of slavery is also to live in the sublimation of the specters and ongoing consequences of slavery, anti-Blackness, and Black dispossession in the present. Artemio's ability to "pass" as one of the fair-skinned mestizo sons of the Mexican nation-state doubles as the repression of Isabel Cruz and the erasure of the Black child of Lunero's account. Isabel Cruz, Cruz Isabel arrives as an estranged figure in the moments that fracture the borders between Artemio's life and its unraveling history. In this way, the history of Artemio's wounded body, and the racial inscriptions that emerge in the moments of its disfiguration, ultimately echoes what Caruth calls a "history that undoes itself."[55] And in making the death of Artemio Cruz a matter of confronting what it means to live in the wake, *The Death of Artemio Cruz* opens a new relation, a new reflection, for the grammars that inflect the languages of anti-Black racism within the narrative of the national subject. The puffy green eye, fragmented, reflects back, bearing witness to and witnessing itself as other, as it turns the arrival of death into the return of an incomplete history and an inheritance in the process of disappearing.

Nonencounters "in the Wake" of a Black Transpacific Analytic

I began this chapter from the wound—a wound that, as Brett de Bary has described, extends beyond the boundaries of the self to express the violence of the past as well as a form of exposure to the vulnerability of the present.[56] And I have offered more questions, I think, than answers to understanding the significance of a critical reading of the inscriptions of race along the lines of a critical "being in the wake." In the cases of *The Face of Another* and *The Death of Artemio Cruz*, racial representation is also a part of what William H. Bridges terms "a hauntology of Blackness" in post-1945 literature. If we apply Bridges's concept of this "hauntology of Blackness," Abe's and Fuentes's works do not exist as Japanese or Mexican representations of Blackness but as constructions or even, as Bridges impresses on us, *translations* that render Blackness visible in a literary imaginary.

Because my concern here is how fiction thinks about Blackness as a site of nonencounter, I want to ask how this translation of raciality generates a challenge for reading these novels within frameworks that privilege the models of area or nation. The discourses of both *Tanin no kao* and *La muerte de Artemio Cruz* reopen the legacies of the questions of race and racism in the present articulations of national identity. They reflect the subtlety with which racism in Japan as well as in Mexico—even after the end of the Asia-Pacific War and the end of Japanese imperialism, even after the Mexican Revolution—is socially and institutionally ingrained in the psychic fabric of the national community. On the one hand, the construction of both Japan and Mexico in the twentieth century depended on the marginalization of colonized and racialized bodies in the name of a mythical and mystified Japanocentric Pan-Asian or Mexican mestizo imaginary. On the other, it used those very bodies to ensure the permanence of a racial other within the national community. Yet the fluidity of racial identity in both novels allows for a fragmented analysis of what that traumatic myth forces individuals to inherit. To understand this fragmentation, we need to understand how the invocation of the total presents us with the rifts, the splits, of this cross-cut inheritance.

Abe's and Fuentes's novels are not alone in provoking unresolvable questions about practices of reading Blackness as an inscription or trace. Yet their narratives suggest that anti-Black violence cannot be reduced to mere representation. And so in lieu of a conclusion, I want to consider how the hermeneutic of nonencounter can be a purposeful, critical push to a comparative literary analysis of racialized erasure. In the comparative model, the differential apparatus of comparison typically refers to the specialization of the literary as a teleological device that emphasizes for readers the idea of "another culture" position against a knowledge of its conceived objective difference. Comparison's function as a territorial regime that values the quantification of "literature," in turn, forfeits an ethics of relationality by foreclosing difference to cultural, linguistic, or national distinctions. But to read nonencounters "in the wake" of the inscriptions or traces of Black life (and death) across *The Face of Another* and *The Death of Artemio Cruz* exposes the operative logics of area and separation typically deployed to consider and analyze these works. We might say, then, that *The Face of Another* and *The Death of Artemio Cruz* begin with bodies that resist, in their fragmentability and injury, the racial and cultural totality that are the prerequisites to the comparative model. Rather than securing their subjects as placeholders for the narration of a national

subject, they put into crisis the condition of losing one's capacity to have a place in the world—a loss that suppresses the cognition of being marked by the existential realities and histories of racialization and racial violence.

In *Philosophie de la relation* (Philosophy of relation), Martinican philosopher Édouard Glissant presents a picture of what Lewis R. Gordon has described as "Black consciousness": the production of a consciousness of being Black as posed and foreclosed with the experience of being racialized in an anti-Black society.[57] For Glissant, racial consciousness is defined as *la pensée de la trace* (the thought of the trace), which hinges on an understanding of the emergence of the racial through the transoceanic slave trade.[58] Trace, then, emerges not as a remnant of the past but as a wandering figure that guides and reroutes a systematized historical disconnect by becoming a marker that signifies the possibility of relation in the condition of Blackness, or *negritude*. In tracing the trajectory of the fleshy inscriptions of Black life and the wounds of anti-Black violence, we confront the paradoxical excesses and absences of the Black body. Reading transpacific nonencounter through the centrality of Black life thus heeds Glissant's description of *relation* as a condition of both solidarity and solitariness—a break from the foreclosures of territorialized and taxonomized modes of reading and knowledge-making. The whole, not the split, body emerges in the stories—the narratives, however broken, however incomplete—of being in the wake.

The final chapter of Sharpe's *In the Wake* brings into further focus practices of reading the thought of the trace: placing Black annotation in contrast to representational images of Black life, Black humanity, and especially Black suffering. Such images, she notes, "appear so regularly in our lives" and "purport to 'humanize' Black people—that is, they purport to make *manifest* 'humanity' that we already know to be present."[59] In adapting the historical account of the erasure of Black life and Black suffering, *The Death of Artemio Cruz* and *The Face of Another* leave the conditions under which Black and other racialized people can access representation to fall by the wayside in many ways. By centering white-oriented *mestizaje*, *The Death of Artemio Cruz* banishes Blackness as traumatic, as incommensurate to the formation of the national subject, and as being outside the categories of universal humanity and subjectivity that predicate on the racialization and abjection of Blackness. Likewise, the ambivalence of the racial other in *The Face of Another* indicates a dissonant misreading of the systemic nature of racial discrimination and violence, latching on to the sign of race as an affective symbol of (non)belonging.

The consequences of avoiding race and circumscribing instances of Black agency to fictional accounts are that Black life is read as what Xine Yao has described as "racialized unfeeling"—a deprivation of racialized subjectivity in the logics of fictionalization.[60] Yet a dialogue between these texts is productive because they signify the specific processes of racialization and its subsequent erasure as a legacy of the racial settler colonial violence that is foundational to twentieth-century national community-making. These accounts catalog the histories of modern identity and its status as a signifier for anti-Blackness. My reasoning also extends to the submission of these texts into the archive of transpacific nonencounters and critique of the ways that scholarship around these texts has predominantly avoided the questions of race and Black life that these novels raise.

Despite the totality of anti-Blackness, the weather of being in the wake also produces "new ecologies" shaped by practices of reading, writing, and citation, Sharpe tells us. Given Sharpe's call for the expansion of such "ecologies," I want to return to the question that opened my inquiry regarding what reading Abe's and Fuentes's novels means for addressing anti-Black violence across the archive of *Transpacific Nonencounters*. What responsibility does literary scholarship and the transpacific framework have to being in the wake of the totality of anti-Blackness? In this chapter, I engaged with practices of fictionalizing Blackness in *The Face of Another* and *The Death of Artemio Cruz* to examine how the question of race lingers in the political and historical environments of each narrative. These environments call to mind what Sharpe articulates about the inflections of the weather in representation and pivot toward actualities of racism and anti-Blackness in the logics of everyday representation. In these novels, the fictions of race confront the nonencounters that bear the inscriptions of the climate of racial violence. They reflect the subtlety with which racism and anti-Blackness in Japan and Mexico are socially and institutionally ingrained into the grammars of the nation. Following Sharpe and the many critical voices here who contend with the fractured, disfigured concepts of "humanity" and "identity," we can draw attention to the indispensable role that Black existence occupies and opens up an ethics for transpacific literary comparison. By showing how erasure is a trace, an inscription, we can keep open the possibility of attending to what has been displaced. And so the point is not whether Black life and death have mattered, can matter, or are a matter in transpacific comparison and literary analysis; rather, it is that reading in the wake—giving matter to Black life, even in fictionalization—may invite the disruption of its diminishment in our analytical frameworks.

Coda

Nonencounters at the "Ends" of Area

At this moment, the specific impact of the disconnects produced in the wake of the grammars of imperial nationalism continues to resonate in both the academic disciplinary and the geopolitical present. Nonencounters represent more than an instance of constructed absence or erasure of connection, but the condition that elucidates how our "present arrangements of knowledge," to echo Wynter's words, hinge on racial epistemologies to reframe what might be resonant as unrelatable, unpalatable.

The various textures and dimensions of nonencounter open, or lay bare, the structures of disavowal, refusal, foreclosure, and erasure produced in political, discursive, and epistemic domains across seemingly disconnected terrains. In rejecting the requirement of commensurability or equivalence, nonencounters become a mode of working through the critical potential of a form of refusal that, as Audra Simpson writes, "raises the question of legitimacy for those who are usually in the position of recognizing."[1] From the perspective I have elaborated in *Transpacific Nonencounters*, these unsettling confrontations help us recognize, listen to, and stay with what we understand as disconnected and illegitimate. For this book, nonencounter, too, becomes a way of holding on to that disconnect as an orientation for understanding a disarticulated, uneven global present.

The confrontation that this book endeavored to lay out shows how degrees of refusal, rejection, and negation inure us to settler-supremacist habits of division and isolation. According to some, we stand on an epistemological precipice not simply of the decline but of the *death* of the disciplines of area studies. Read optimistically, this proclamation might convince us that we are but a step away from completely undoing the violence of a politics of knowledge that inherited the militarist and neocolonial agendas of Cold War US governmentality. These inheritances include not only the disavowal of area studies' racial settler colonial logics but also the naturalization of territory, language, nation, and culture as defined boundaries for how we receive, produce, and converse about knowledge. But have we arrived, truly, at an end to this model? I want to suggest, again, a confrontation with area studies not as a death but as a set of loosened ends. Here, *ends* refers not merely to the reimagining of knowledge in the afterlife of a schema but to the threads left loose after being cut off by the many declines of area studies, and what they may extend toward. What kinds of voices come to the fore when we pull the threads of the echo chambers of isolated frames?

Korean-born feminist philosopher and poet Lee Chonghwa introduces a political discourse of murmurs (*tsubuyaki*) in her poetic treatise *Tsubuyaki no seiji shisō: Motomerareru manazashi kanashimi e no/soshite himerareta mono e no* (Murmurs as political thought: In search of ways of seeing hidden sorrows and things). The poem begins with an account of the Korean and Japanese words *bē,* written in both *katakana* and *kanji* (ベー・舟), to mean "stomach" in Korean and "boat" in Japanese. In its double meaning, *bē* operates as a vessel that carries what we pass down and inherit: the murmurs that connect us not only to our personal and familial genealogies but to the histories and structures that bind us to the genealogies of others. The *bē* thus carries an embodied politics of a refusal of total meaning. Lee writes:

BĒ/BOAT

Things that we don't know. Things that we cannot know. Things
that you have to take in rather than consume.
From the outside, we can interpret them however we like. But
from we moment we enter their frame
We cannot refuse their interpretation.
Because that frame is where we live.[2]

Carrying the unknown and unknowable, *bē* (in the plural) reshape meaning, signification, and connection into the overlaps that orient us to their "otherwise" frames. Once, these vessels suspended personhood through the violent passages of those exploited through militarized sexual enslavement, indentured labor, and other forms of oppression perpetuated by Japanese racial colonial capitalism, and continued through the complicity of silencing and the expansion of US (neo)colonial military and capitalist power. They descended from the very vessels, we could say, that rendered the worlding grammars of the Middle Passage. In the poem, however, *bē* become a powerful mode of address. This address of the *bē* is an address of murmurs that asks for those unable to bear witness to learn to listen to what breaks through the violence of silence. Understood in this way—as "things that you have to take in rather than consume"—the murmurs carried in Lee's *bē* compel us to reread and reenvision silence, disparity, and lack of meaning not as aporia but as the very frictions that come up to expose overdetermined schemas of knowledge. To talk about the things that we cannot know, Lee suggests, we pass on and receive murmurs "to find words that cannot be consumed."[3] Murmurs, like Sara Ahmed's queered, strange, and estranged figures, are willful subjects that refuse subjugation and guide bodies across spaces that throw them out of alignment.

The political theory of murmurs and its amplification of voices that must be held without being consumed or enclosed reflect my preoccupations with nonencounter in this work. Indeed, Lee's words resonate profoundly with the works of Kum Soni and Mare Advertencia Lirika. Kum's and Advertencia Lirika's staging of the impact of racial settler colonialism—of the disconnected but resonant global histories of territorial dispossession, dehumanization, and vulnerability of women and racialized and queer subjects to exploitation and death—indicate the continuums of Pan-Asian Japanese imperialism and mestizo settler nationalism in the twenty-first century. Their works furthermore illuminate an intertextual and transtemporal weaving of political artistic traditions, imagining, as Brett de Bary writes of Kum's *Beast of Me*, possibilities of "going towards modes of solidarity that might link the victims of twentieth-century violence in modes of community that eschew the model of cultural nationalism."[4] Across them, we see and learn to listen to the inherited entanglements of post- and settler colonial murmurs, wherein official histories are forged to avoid confrontations with the presents of those "left out of the official record," those who "might even go completely unnoticed in the street."[5]

They also teach us how we can honor difference and distance without equivocating and collapsing them into equivalence. Kum and Advertencia Lirika attend to distinct genealogies of murmurs that address histories of colonialism and empire and their legacies in contemporary nationalist discourses that have left their ends loose. Yet in their disconnect, in the nonencounter, we can read the specific and individualized ways that Kum's and Advertencia Lirika's decolonial feminisms confront the tethered legacies of racial settler violence and the chauvinistic investments of nation-states that repress their imperialist affects by translating them into racist misogyny.

Advertencia Lirika's political, intellectual, and artistic praxes underline the continuity of early twentieth-century imperial nationalisms on Oaxaca, structured through the legacies of US (neo)colonial political and economic hegemony and Indigenous susceptibility to the forces of capitalist extraction and state oppression. For Advertencia Lirika, Oaxaca is also a space of poetic pedagogy interwoven with aspects of uneasy histories and traditions that bind together the legacies of the Middle Passage, the grammars of anti-Blackness, and the effects of colonization and systems of exploitation that have become part of the everyday for her and her community. The city, she tells us at the beginning of *Cuando una mujer avanza*, is the space that inspired her to begin writing poetry from a young age after first reading poems about protest in school. And through honoring that poetic practice, her account of anti-Indigenous violence under settler colonial modernity generates conversation with other lyrical practices and traditions of anticolonial and antiracist resistance. Advertencia Lirika's xip xop is thus a feminist citation practice that aligns the struggle for Indigenous women's rights with approaches developed by Black and working-class feminists across the Americas since the 1990s.[6] Her rap throughout continues a poetic resistance to the political turbulence that expresses both specific and relational dimensions of her experience as a Zapotec woman in a transnational urban context.

The confrontation that she stages in *Cuando una mujer avanza* is explicit in its message. The opening sequence of the documentary opens with an American newsreel showing a group of Zapotec dancers whose actions are narrated by an English voice-over riddled with mispronunciations: "Representatives of every tribe in the state of Wowowaca [Oaxaca] are here today to honor President Abelardo Rodríguez and his wife. The fete is known as Wellawetsa [Guelaguetza], an old Indian word meaning gifts and presents and it signifies the president has the undying homage of the

Wowowacans [Oaxacans].”[7] In its risible treatment of Indigenous words and words for Indigenous places, the voice-over exposes the contradictions of Oaxaca as a heterotopic space: the meaning of Oaxaca, in other words, becomes a matter of positionality, coalescing the contradictory and confrontational dynamics of US (neo)imperialism, Mexican settler coloniality, and Indigenous susceptibility to the forces of capitalist extraction and state oppression, particularly the treatment of Indigenous people as fungible, fetishizable ornaments within these layered structures of oppression. In exposing their risibility, Advertencia Lirika’s work refuses the ornamentalizing discourses on Indigeneity that these images produce.

Advertencia Lirika’s “Bienvenidx,” from her 2022 EP *SiempreViva* (AlwaysAlive), offers further trenchant critique: “Thirdworlder, marginalized by birth / Born south of where dreams begin / Having patience isn’t an option when one waits / For progress that was promised to my people.”[8] “Bienvenidx,” like *Cuando una mujer avanza*, requires our betrayal of the spatiotemporal disconnects that sustain the intellectual impulse to read her work within a national framing. On the one hand, the song refers to the material realities of Indigenous working-class women in Mexico, who bear the brunt of the ongoing neoliberal policies and unequal trade partnerships between Mexico and the United States that continue to exploit, oppress, and kill marginalized women. But with her powerful lyrics, Advertencia Lirika exposes the transnational conditions of being a “thirdworlder” (*tercermundista*) as a condition undergirded by social, racial, and gender inequity for Indigenous and other marginalized people who are “born south”—born into a world where the only “option” becomes resisting and mobilizing against systems of exploitation. This sentiment reaches back to the confrontations that she stages in *Cuando una mujer avanza*, taking the viewer through the streets of her city to interrupt the dehumanizing gaze of patriarchal neoliberal neocolonial regimes. Her work underscores an anticolonial practice of rendering the margins and the marginal ineluctable by forcing us to listen.

The power of raising one’s voice from the margins, from the sites foreclosed by constructed disconnects, is also central to my reading of Kum’s art. In contrast to Advertencia Lirika’s lyrical force, Kum compels us to listen to her voice as a layered and hushed murmur. The opening sequence of *Beast of Me* showing a group of young Zainichi school girls dancing is followed by an abrupt cut to a grainy video of Kum, shown wearing a white dress and sitting in the middle of an open field. Long blades of grass encircle her as the camera zooms in on her mouth and hands, moves over

her face, but never shows her full body. She speaks, alternating between Korean and Japanese, while in a voice-over she dubs her words in English. These fragmented voices are soft, speaking in undertones, yet the difficult words they utter are poignant. From this cut, Kum recounts personal experiences of being sexually assaulted and attacked by Japanese men while on the train from school and witnessing a friend be hospitalized in the aftermath of a news report about suspicions that North Korea had nuclear weapons. She tells us that Japanese anti-nuclear sentiments, fueled by state and international media, "turned into actual violence against our bodies."[9] These instances became a pattern: whenever North Korea appeared in the news—from suspicions of nuclear arms to the 1987 bombing of Korea Air Flight 858—violence intensified against Kum and other girls who wore, like the girls dancing in the home video, Korean uniforms.

Beast of Me, alongside *Foreign Sky*, became part of Kum's MFA thesis at the California Institute of the Arts. I first encountered these works in 2013 as part of a course led by my doctoral adviser, Brett de Bary, in which we read and translated parts of Lee Chonghwa's edited volume *Zanshō no oto: Ajia, seiji, āto no mirai e* (*Still Hear the Wound: Toward an Asia, Politics, and Art to Come*), a collection of mediations in feminist and queer art that excavate the intersections of gendered, sexual, and racial trauma across the contexts of Okinawa's ongoing colonial occupation by the Japanese and US states, Zainichi marginalization, and the globalized effects of the US military-industrial (neo)imperial apparatus on human and nonhuman spheres across the Asia-Pacific.[10] Unlike Advertencia Lirika's self-produced and released music and the circulation of *Cuando una mujer avanza*, an initial reception of Kum's works was part of a larger academic discussion around the function of performance and artistic production in fashioning modes of solidarity and possibilities to address the ongoing legacies and systemic issues that stem from the histories of Japanese imperialism and colonialism in Asia. On her official web page, Kum highlights the influence of Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's "Can the Subaltern Speak?" on these works. The oft-cited essay criticizes the gendered, racialized, and classed politics of listening and speaking within predominantly white colonial epistemic production and its effects on furthering the oppression of marginalized subjects by questioning the possibility of those subjects—"subaltern" subjects—to speak. But Kum's exploration of subaltern recognition and representability within legal, sociocultural, and historical discourse goes beyond the presumption of being able to "speak" for marginalized and erased subjects from the standpoint of academic knowledge production

and collaboration.[11] Kum interprets issues of meaning-making for dispossessed and colonized subjects through affective solidarity.

Kum departs from Spivak, however, by not creating undifferentiated victims of violent marginalization. Instead, like Advertencia Lirika, her practice takes seriously the specific implications of attempting to represent and address the trauma of others at the juncture where history has been foreclosed by intersecting systems of racial, class, gender, sexual, linguistic, and colonial oppression. Where the discourses of hegemonic representations of subalternized subjects fail to grapple with the cacophonous vicissitudes of settler colonial, imperialist, racist, and casteist subjugation, Kum's soundscapes document the tensions of what it means to listen to but not speak for or fill spatial and temporal lacunae. In *Foreign Sky*, for instance, she emphasizes the irony of Japanese postwar "historical amnesia" and ethnonationalist refusals to acknowledge colonial-era war crimes with expansive documentation of Korean colonial subjects working under open "foreign" skies. All the while, Kum, in a voice that echoes the tentative murmurs of *Beast of Me*, muses over what it means that the official records of the past have eschewed her and her community's existence from collective remembering across the muddied often-denied actualities of Japanese colonialism, US-military aggression during the Korean War, and enduring trauma. For Kum, the grief over these actualities is not solitary but connected to a grief over the speed at which technologies have advanced modes of eliminating life by dispossessing and erasing communities from the annals of official history. Scenes of highways in settler-occupied California and the surrounding smog-eaten green patches that flank them show Kum attempting to bury and mourn animals killed by unaware drivers—victims that demonstrate the vulnerability of certain bodies to the historical revisionist machine of global capitalism. Through these acts and uneasy connections between disconnected structures of death-making, Kum's work, like that of Advertencia Lirika, compels viewers not just to bear witness to but, again, to *confront* the gendered, racial, and environmental consequences of the global reaches of war and empire.

The critical phenomenological dimensions of Kum's and Advertencia Lirika's works unsettle and distort the limits, the ends, of the epistemological and ontological claims of the past by expanding the depths of a politics of solidarity in the absence of a central link or relation. Each work is specific to the histories of colonial domination that keep the artists outside "official" histories. Yet each work also subverts these histories by confounding the existing epistemological methods and geopolitical discourses

through which they are usually studied and expressed. What they leave us with, however, are not neat connections or conclusions. Kum and Advertencia Lirika forge openings for speaking about and bearing witness to those subjected to the legacies of imperial nationalism within present-day modes of settler colonial oppression. But especially relevant to this book is that they involve methods of reorientation that mobilize a queer phenomenology of disconnected experiences and knowledges that emerge from conditions of foreclosure and disavowal.

What relationship do or can we have to the murmur, to figures of constructed nonencounter, if it cannot be one of consumption? This book examines cultural, intellectual, and political terrains whose global relevance has been obscured because the frameworks of knowledge that typically hold them obscure their resonance and function within larger structures of violence. The wide reach of white supremacy in the post–World War I international order and its consolidation within US immigration policies set a transpacific stage upon which we can trace the underpinnings of Japanese Pan-Asian and Mexican mestizo settler colonial and imperial nationalist ideologies. But while these formations are otherwise disconnected, they lay bare the particularity of racial settler structures that upend fixed categories and logics of racism as well as the globality of the symbolic power of white supremacy. Through nonencounter, mestizo nationalism and Pan-Asianism do not relate but illuminate a strange and estranged constitution of racial settler logics that imagine multiethnic and multiracialist futures of docile subjugation—fantasies especially concerning to those of us who understand universalizing promises of diversity, inclusion, and equity as false. What happens when we refuse false promises of inclusion and integration and attempt to read the histories that they obscure from view, such as the global inscriptions of anti-Black violence and erasure, the cacophonies of Indigenous subjugation and anti-Asian racism, and the ongoing dispossession of subjects from their bodies amid those histories?

But especially relevant to the question I pose through transpacific nonencounters are the obfuscations of area. If what Advertencia Lirika, Kum, Lee, and the other critical voices and narratives that I draw on in this book may help envision a queer phenomenology of transpacific critique, area, too, has had its own phenomenology. It has an orientation—often an Orientalizing orientation—that unfolds the world toward specific and specifying directions, which see objects of study in their specificity and without global value. Their knowledges extract but refuse extraction. When we take up

the phenomenology of area—as conceived by the agendas of US Cold War intellectual impulses—to orient ourselves to the survival of what we have understood as problematic, racist, and heterosexist colonial structures wrapped in disciplinary rhetoric, we define that structure, that orientation, as our only source of direction. Such is the uncritical phenomenology of area; it normalizes and renders routine strategic positions of knowing and being known, mapping a performance of intellectualization onto repetitive acts of racial colonial hegemony.

I wrote and rewrote the majority of this book during the height and aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. It was a time when I felt more disconnected than ever from my personal and professional communities and, at the same time, more obliged than ever to witness and to listen to what seemed at once intimate and unrelatable. This was also a time that followed separate announcements from the governments of Japan and Mexico to address, without the intent of formal redress or reparation, the violence of their imperial and settler histories. Upon taking office in 2018, then president of Mexico Andrés Manuel López Obrador announced that his administration would undertake the task of issuing a *petición de perdon* (a formal request for forgiveness) to recognize the political, social, and economic legacies of the "crimes of the state" that led to the "darker chapters" in Mexico's national history, which included the violence of Spanish conquest, the ongoing subjugation and dispossession of Indigenous people within their robbed lands, and, in 2021, the state-sanctioned persecution of the Chinese migrant community during the Mexican Revolution. On May 17, 2021, López Obrador traveled to Torreon, Coahuila, to officially apologize to the Chinese ambassador to Mexico for the systemic genocide of Chinese residents in Mexico during the first half of the twentieth century.[12] Filmed for national broadcast, the ninety-minute-long recording shows López Obrador standing next to ambassador Zhu Qingdao, in the presence of high-ranking Mexican government and military officials and the absence of the 303 victims of the massacre and their descendants. At that time, my mind went to the now dissolved so-called Japan–South Korea Comfort Women Agreement from December 2015—another instance of apologies declared (not given, not requested) in the absence of victims.[13] Later in 2021, US legal scholar J. Mark Ramseyer was publicly called out by scholars of Japanese colonialism for publishing a paper in a premier academic journal that affirmed Japanese nationalist revisionist accounts that denied the existence of the system of military sexual enslavement euphemistically called the "comfort women system."[14]

Racial capitalism's power to evoke the specters of violent histories thus reemerged in the fragmented landscape of contemporary geopolitics, renewing tensions in the politics of knowledge production. But are we surprised by how the legacies of racial settler violence return in such moments where relationality is entangled in the structures and interests of state and epistemic power?

In addition to area's phenomenology of a nonencounter forged through constructed disconnect, disparity, and essentialized difference-making, I have also discussed in this book, following Shu-mei Shih's intervention, area as a deracializing phenomenology. We can make the case, as well, for area studies as a form of *blanquitud*. Of the field of Asian studies in particular, Shih observes that the regime of area studies follows a racialized and gendered logic that involves multiple actors: white male area experts; the "natives" who become spouses, translators, and interlocutors; and the "natives" who become experts and are pressured to preserve the "area" by "authenticating it." Conversely, she continues, "It is an open secret that there is a dearth of African American or other non-Asian minority scholars in Asian Studies."[15] Area studies' tense relationship to race and racism often leads to the rejection of any critical study of race and ethnicity. The genealogies of area studies, she points out, reinforce and institutionalize deracialization—a systematic willful ignorance to the notion that race and ethnicity participate in how scholars think about their relationship to the object of their study, which offers, in Shih's words, the "convenient excuse" to refuse to engage in the reality of racial tensions not only within the Anglo-American academy but also within the context from which "experts" position themselves to speak.[16] To understand a "deracializing" logic of area as a logic of *blanquitud* (of a supremacy of *whiteness*), is also to identify how it continues to underscore the persistence of racial settler and imperial nationalist logics beyond and outside Anglo-American and European academes. This persistence manifests with clarity across, as Shih points out, Han hegemony in the study of China and the misappropriation of issues relating to minoritized and persecuted communities; the idea of ethnic Japanese identity, which relegates the study of Okinawan and Ainu histories and cultural productions to a subcategory of Japan studies; or the erasure of the racial settler colonial hegemonic lens through which Mexican and other Latin American histories and cultural productions is frequently studied.

Taking up the nonencounters of area as both heuristics and hermeneutics for reading race across "areas" creates an aperture for listening to

and looking for epistemologies that deconstruct their deracializing logics. As one of those few "non-Asian minority scholars in Asian Studies" that Shu-mei Shih identifies *as well as* a brown mestiza scholar of Latin American cultural studies, I began this book initially as a complaint to speak from the relevance of these two intersecting positionalities in my scholarship and teaching. It transformed, however, into a project that held me accountable to the tensions of holding on to the resonances that tether systems of colonial domination—including those within projects of nation-building—without needing to create functional equivalences across modes of violence that insist on difference and distance. Nonencounters taught me to read disconnect as the murmurs that break through, that are carried within us and defer the impulse to misrecognize the unrelated as vacant of meaning.

What may be left at the untying of the loose "ends" of area might not be a complete undoing of the violence of a politics of knowledge, a "regime of area" that reproduced anthropological knowledges or particularized iterations of racialized humanity. Are their effects on the politics of knowledge surmountable? Of course, an ontology to understand the epistemic crisis of the "ends" of area may at this moment be insufficient for addressing a future beyond them. Giving theoretical coherence—even through the incoherence of nonencounters—to the transpacific does not rupture or break the molds of area. Yet the transpacific emboldens us to imagine what unfolds and carries over. When we disown and refuse a connection to the myths of area, perhaps we can begin to grasp for the intellectual and pedagogical directions that teach us to murmur across their disconnects.

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Notes

Introduction

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1 Kum, *Foreign Sky*.
2 Advertencia Lirika and Sedillo, *Cuando una mujer avanza*.
3 *Cuando una mujer avanza* was released six years after Advertencia Lirika stepped into public activism and joined the popular protests that broke out across Oaxaca for more than seven months in 2006. Led by local teachers' unions, the coalition of over one million included Indigenous community leaders, university students, and professors from across the state calling for the ouster of the governor, Ulises Ruíz Ortíz, after their demands for increased school budgets were met with further budgetary cuts to education. In a demonstration of civil disobedience, protesters led marches and set up encampments in the city center, remaining resolute even when local officials urged strikers to leave and return to work. Within days, Ruíz Ortíz deployed the state police to attack the encampments with pepper spray and tear gas and fight protesters with deadly weapons, including batons and firearms. In total, reports conclude that the militarized police attack killed seventeen people. Associated Press, "A Week Later, Protesters Still Hanging On at University of Oaxaca."
4 Historian Rachel Haejin Lim has written about indentured Korean labor in Mexico in the first decades of the twentieth century and the early years

of Japanese colonization in the Korean Peninsula. See Lim, "Ephemeral Nations."

5 Fabian, *Time and the Other*; Avery Gordon, *Ghostly Matters*.

6 Wynter, "Unsettling the Coloniality of Being/Power/Truth/Freedom"; Silva, *Toward a Global Idea of Race*.

7 Advertencia Lirika and Sedillo, *Cuando una mujer avanza*.

8 Ahmed, *Living a Feminist Life*, 164.

9 Lowe, "Intimacies of Four Continents," 193.

10 Torres-Rodríguez, *Orientaciones transpacíficas*, 22.

11 See Azuma, *In Search of Our Frontier*; Lu, *Making of Japanese Settler Colonialism*.

12 As Azuma describes, "In Japanese public discourse in the 1910s, Mexico consistently ranked third (after Korea and Brazil) on the list of preferred destinations for ambitious Japanese frontiersmen." Azuma, *In Search of Our Frontier*, 114.

13 As Natalie Melas explicates, the comparative method has a tradition of creating taxonomies of cultural media to collect data and reveal fundamental equivalencies and hierarchies among them. See Melas, "Merely Comparative."

14 See Hubert, "World Literature, Diplomacy, and War."

15 Glissant, *Poetics of Relation*, 132.

16 Kum Soni, "About," accessed July 28, 2025, http://www.sonikum.com/about.

17 Hu-DeHart, "Transpacific Confrontation/*Confrontación transpacífica*," 4.

18 Wynter, "1492: A New World View."

19 Robinson, *Black Marxism*.

20 Matsumura, *Waiting for the Cool Moon*, 3.

21 Wynter, "On Disenchanting Discourse." I should note that critics of the area studies model have turned to Naoki Sakai's "Theory and Asian Humanity" (2010) as well as Étienne Balibar's discussion of "anthropological difference" in "Civic Universalism and Its Internal Exclusions" (2012). Before these, the earliest instance of materialist critiques of area studies' analysis of anthropological difference appears in Nishitani Osamu's 2006 "Anthropos and Humanitas," in which the mention of the dehumanization of Black slaves as a component in the construction of anthropological difference is relegated to a footnote. This is one significant example of the erasure of Wynter and other Black philosophers from the genealogy of the deconstruction of the universal human from the anthropological subject.

22 Matsumura, *Waiting for the Cool Moon*, 2.

23 Kwon, *Intimate Empire*, 6.

24 Kauanui, "'Structure, Not an Event.'"

25 Kauanui, "'Structure, Not an Event,'" 5.

26 Sakai, "Subject and Substratum."

27 Sakai, "Subject and Substratum," 511.

28 One exception to the postindependence Mexican state's lack of a formal history of expansionist colonialism occurred during the short-lived First

Mexican Empire (1821–1823), when the Mexican government (then operating as an independent monarchy) attempted to expand its borders into other territories of the viceroyalty of New Spain and into what is present-day Guatemala. For more on the history of the First Mexican Empire, see Vázquez Olivera, *El Imperio Mexicano y el Reino de Guatemala*.

29 De Castro, *Mestizo Nations*, 17.

30 Byrd, *Transit of Empire*, xix.

31 Byrd, *Transit of Empire*, 170.

32 Medak-Saltzman, "Staging Empire."

33 Medak-Saltzman, "Empire's Haunted Logics," 16.

34 See Amino, *Rekishigaku to minzokugaku*; Loo, *Heritage Politics*; Tarica, *Inner Life of Mestizo Nationalism*.

35 Silva, "Globality," 36.

36 As Tina Chen cites from my comments on a 2021 Zoom-based seminar in her article "Global Asias," the goal of the transpacific framework, as is the stated concept of an epistemology of global Asia, is not to generate another disciplinary silo but rather to "encourag[e] us to consider the multiple and relating parts of a situation, the dis/connections that make possible world-spanning dynamics and suggests a modality of representation/anti-representation that can offer alternatives to nation-based frameworks" (1002).

37 Wynter, "On Disenchanting Discourse," 208.

38 Yoneyama, "Towards a Decolonial Genealogy of the Transpacific."

39 Shih, "Racializing Area Studies, Defetishizing China."

40 Rafael, "Cultures of Area Studies in the United States," 97.

41 Moreiras, *Against Abstraction*, 15.

42 Moreiras, *Against Abstraction*, 15

43 Helen Hardacre's edited volume *The Postwar Development of Japanese Studies in the United States* historicizes and chronicles the postwar military development of Japanese studies as a field that charted its future through its complicity in US Cold War governmentality.

44 Joo Ok Kim, *Warring Genealogies*, 11.

45 Yoneyama, "Towards a Decolonial Genealogy of the Transpacific," 472.

46 See Shigematsu and Camacho, *Militarized Currents*; Fujikane and Okamura, *Asian Settler Colonialism*; Annmaria Shimabuku, *Alegal*.

47 Suzuki, *Ocean Passages*, 27.

48 Ginoza, "Archipelagic Feminisms."

49 I refer here to a tension that I perceive in the contributions of prominent scholars of decolonial theory, such as Anibal Quijano and Walter Mignolo. In the United States, it is rare to still question that white intellectuals dominate discussions about what is deemed "decolonial" in spaces where those very intellectuals and the structures that uphold their authorities are themselves evidence of the impossibility of decolonization in Latin America.

50 Junyoung Verónica Kim, "Asia-Latin America as Method."
51 Junyoung Verónica Kim, "Asia-Latin America as Method," 106.
52 Textor, *Intersectional Incoherence*.

Chapter 1. Grammars of Imperial Nationalism

1 Terada, *Metaracial*, 17.
2 See Sakai, "Subject and Substratum."
3 Nast, "'Race' and the Bio(necro)polis," 1458.
4 Echeverría, *Modernidad y blanquitud*, 10 (my translation).
5 See Matsumura, *Waiting for the Cool Moon*.
6 See Crenshaw, "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex."
7 Wynter, "Unsettling the Coloniality of Being/Power/Truth/Freedom"; Silva, *Toward a Global Idea of Race*; Lowe, *Intimacies of Four Continents*; Yoneyama, *Cold War Ruins*.
8 After the Spanish Empire began to colonize the territory that became Mexico, especially from the seventeenth to the late nineteenth century, *mestizo* identified people through their specific genetic proportions of European versus Indigenous heritage. Other categories helped to further delineate the genotypical and racial differences among colonial populations, including *criollos* (people of "full" Spanish descent with no Indigenous or Black lineage) and *mulattos* (people of Black and Spanish descent). For a more comprehensive discussion of the Spanish caste system and contemporary racism in Mexico, see Moreno Figueroa, "Distributed Intensities."
9 In *Keywords for Latina/o Studies*, Alicia Arrizón refers specifically to the distinctions in the uses of *mestizaje* across Latin America, the Caribbean, and the Philippines as sites that inherited the settler colonial and racial supremacist structures of Spanish colonialism since the sixteenth century. I refer here specifically to Mexican mestizo nationalism in view of the fact that, for contexts like the Philippines, racial *mestizaje* was not simply a discursive ideology of national identity formation but a structural condition for socioeconomic mobility and access to property.
10 Sierra, *Discurso inaugural de la Universidad Nacional*, 19. All translations of Sierra's works are mine.
11 Sierra, *Evolución politica del pueblo mexicano*, 394.
12 Tanaka, "Time and the Paradox of the Orient," 170.
13 Qtd. in Seok-Won Lee, *Japan's Pan-Asian Empire*, 62.
14 For further discussions on the politics of *minzokugaku*, see Loo, *Heritage Politics*.
15 Fukuzawa Yukichi's essay, which first appeared in the March 1, 1885, edition of his newspaper *Jiji shinpō*, argued for the Meiji government to cut ties with the governments of Qing China and Joseon Korea in order to align itself with European powers.

16 See Hall, "West and the Rest."

17 Sidney Xu Lu describes how the Japanese imperial state deployed various epistemic and cultural practices to interpret a cosmopolitan ethics into expansionist ideologies and practices. The imperial government employed think tanks to interpret colonialism, settler colonial migration, and imperialism as examples of the successes of Pan-Asianism, even in contexts of transpacific migration to the Americas, where Japanese colonialism was never politically formalized. Lu, *Making of Japanese Settler Colonialism*, 224–25.

18 See Chang, *Chino*; Chao Romero, *Chinese in Mexico*.

19 Chao Romero, *Chinese in Mexico*, 152.

20 See Herbert, *La casa del dolor ajeno*.

21 See Rénique, "Anti-Chinese Racism, Nationalism, and State Formation."

22 Chang, *Chino*, 21.

23 Vasconcelos, *Cosmic Race*, 20.

24 See Torres-Rodríguez, "Orientalizing Mexico."

25 Vasconcelos, *Cosmic Race*, 20.

26 Vasconcelos, *Cosmic Race*, 21.

27 See Kevin M. Doak, "Building National Identity Through Ethnicity"; Bellah, "Japan's Cultural Identity: Ethnology in Wartime Japan and After," *Journal of Japanese Studies* 27, no. 1 (2001): 1–39.

28 In writing on "fictive ethnicity," Étienne Balibar highlights how the nationalization of the state depends on the idealization of a shared, originary cultural identity that transcends differences among class, gender, or race. See Balibar, "Nation Form."

29 Shinmei, *Jinshu to shakai*, 127 (my translation).

30 Ikezaki, *Sekai wo kyoui suru amerikanizumu*, 181.

31 Ikezaki, *Sekai wo kyoui suru amerikanizumu*, 182.

32 Chandler writes that "references to Japan comprise a persistent and densely interwoven strand in [Du Bois's] thought. . . . What role might Japan play in the ongoing possibility . . . of a reorganization of local and indigenous forms of social practice on a world-wide scale, on the one hand, and global level systems of economy, governance, and moral conception, on the other, beyond what had been bequeathed to the planet under the different concatenations of Western-based hegemonies across the past half-millennium?" Nahum Dimitri Chandler, "Introduction," 1–2.

33 Horne, *Race War!*, 68.

34 In the 1940s, the Japanese imperial government practiced propaganda strategies that involved using Black American POWs to broadcast radio programs to US listeners that compared Japan's racial tolerance to US racial tensions and civil unrest. See Kushner and Sato, "'Negro Propaganda Operations.'"

35 Qtd. in Onishi, "New Negro of the Pacific," 206.

36 Schmitt defines *nomos* as a spatial order that governs the modern international world. See Schmitt, *Nomos of the Earth*.

37 Harrington, "Miki Kiyoshi and the Shōwa Kenkyūkai," 67.
38 Sugawara, *Kyōto Gakuha*, 113.
39 Harrington, "Miki Kiyoshi and the Shōwa Kenkyūkai," 44.
40 See Sakai, "Resistance to Conclusion"; Miki, *Logic of Imagination*.
41 Silva, *Toward a Global Idea of Race*, 89.
42 Christopher Goto-Jones addresses this point in the foreword to the edited volume *Re-Politicising the Kyoto School as Philosophy*.
43 See Rivera Cusicanqui, "El mito de la pertenencia de Bolivia al 'mundo occidental.'"
44 For examples of scholarship on Vasconcelos's influence on the ideology of twentieth-century national and cultural identity politics, see Gómez-Quiñones and Vásquez, *Making Aztlán*; Fell, *José Vasconcelos*; Tenorio-Trillo, *I Speak of the City*; Spitta, "Of Brown Buffaloes, Cockoroaches, and Others."
45 See Corañez Bolton, *Crip Colony*.
46 Vasconcelos, *Cosmic Race/La raza cósmica*. 40.
47 Ramos, *El perfil del hombre y la cultura en México*, 22 (my translations).
48 Lacan's ideas about the formation of a subject established through identification with external others ("the mirror stage") were first presented at the International Psychoanalytical Association in Marienbad in 1935 and later published in *Ecrits* in 1966. See Lacan, *Ecrits*.
49 Ramos, *El perfil del hombre y la cultura en México*, 25.
50 Silva, *Toward a Global Idea of Race*, 117.
51 Tanabe is essentially drawing on Aristotle's argument in *Categories*, which observes the differentiation of species, genus, and individuals according to the role of species as an intermediary between an indefinable and encompassing genus and the individual categories that make up the species.
52 Sakai further elaborates the rationale of this triangulation in "Ethnicity and Species."
53 See Balibar, *Des Universels*.
54 The Latin roots of the terms *universal* and *individual* in fact fold them into this dialectic. Whereas *individual* comes from the Latin word *indīviduus*, meaning "divided or divisible into two parts," *universal* comes from the word *universus*, a merging of *unum* (one) and *vertere* (turning), meaning literally "all turned into one."
55 Butler, "Restaging the Universal," 17.
56 Tanabe, *Shu no ronri*, 264 (my translation).
57 Tanabe, *Shu no ronri*, 266.
58 Tanabe, *Shu no ronri*, 473.
59 See Oguma, *Tan'itsu minzoku shinwa no kigen*.
60 Lugones, "Heterosexualism and the Colonial/Modern Gender System," 187.
61 As Takashi Fujitani argues, understanding wartime racial ideologies complicates how the history of Japanese imperialism and notions about nationality, race, and ethnicity produced in favor of imperial power often contrast

and belie popular conceptions of what it means to study race in Japan. Fujitani, *Race for Empire*.

62 Fayolle Irie, "Tanabe Hajime no *Shu no ronri* ni okeru "josei no fuzai," 72.

63 Fayolle Irie, "Tanabe Hajime no *Shu no ronri* ni okeru "josei no fuzai," 82 (my translation).

64 Stoler, "Tense and Tender Ties," 28. See also Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power*.

65 Arendt, "Imperialism, Nationalism, Chauvinism," 457.

66 As the moral philosopher Kate Manne describes, misogyny can be thought of not as an interpersonal hostility but as "serving to uphold patriarchal order, understood as one strand among various similar systems of domination (including racisms, xenophobia, classism, ageism, ableism, homophobia, transphobia, and so on)." Manne, *Down Girl*, 13.

67 See Narita, "Women's Total War"; Fiol-Matta, *Queer Mother for the Nation*. Narita and Fiol-Matta each explore the construction of state-centric womanhood in mobilizing ideologies of national subjectivity within Japan's and Mexico's projects of modernization.

68 Yamaguchi's role in Osamu Fushimizu's film *Shina no yoru* (China nights, 1940) is notable. In the film, Yamaguchi, credited under her Chinese stage name Li Xianglan, plays the role of "Kei Ran," a young Chinese woman with extreme anti-Japanese sentiments who transforms, through the "corrections" by Japanese characters in the film, into a virtuous and assimilated love interest to a Japanese naval officer. For further reading on Yamaguchi's role in Japanese imperial propaganda films during the height of the Second Sino-Japanese war, see Baskett, *Attractive Empire*.

69 García Blizzard, *White Indians of Mexican Cinema*, 94.

70 See Sánchez-Rivera, "From Preventive Eugenics to Slippery Eugenics"; Choi, *Comfort Women*.

71 Kang, *Traffic in Asian Women*, 15.

72 As queer feminist theorists Maria Ruiz Trejo and Tito Mitjans Alayón incisively summarize, the "cis-heterosexual project of mestizaje"—responsible for erasing Indigenous populations through the mestizo settler colonial logic of integration—similarly and perhaps more violently erased Black presence from official national histories. Ruiz Trejo and Mitjans Alayón, "Contra despojos y violencias coloniales," 258–84 (my translation).

Chapter 2. *Tierras Incógnitas*

1 Kuwaki, "Mekishiko no tetsugakusha," 8 (my translations).

2 Kuwaki, "Mekishiko no tetsugakusha," 8.

3 Likely, Kuwaki is referring more to William Prescott's 1843 *History of the Conquest of Mexico* than any one particular text by Washington Irving, whose

depictions of Indigenous Americans in his writing about Spanish colonialism, Christopher Columbus, and the settlement of what is now the US Southwest may be conflated here with an image of Mexico.

4 Kuwaki, "Mekishiko no tetsugakusha," 10.

5 Kuwaki, "Mekishiko no tetsugakusha," 9–10.

6 See Nishitani, "Anthropos and Humanitas."

7 Many of Adalberto García de Mendoza's writings, including *La filosofía oriental y el puesto de la cultura de Japón en el mundo*, have been republished through the efforts of his daughter, Elsa García de Mendoza Taylor, through the independent publishing house Palibrio.

8 Adalberto García de Mendoza, *La filosofía oriental*, 310–11.

9 *Oxford English Dictionary*, "terra incognita (n.)," https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/5570434502.

10 Walkiewicz, *Reading Territory*, 2.

11 Heidegger, *Off the Beaten Track*, 67.

12 Cheah, *What Is a World?*, 178.

13 Chuh, *Difference Aesthetics Makes*, xi.

14 Workman, *Imperial Genus*, 26.

15 Kuwaki, "Nihonteki to iu koto," 102 (my translation).

16 As Prasenjit Duara discusses, *jinruigaku* and *minzokugaku* argued for an understanding of Japanese society as inclusive of "different regions and levels," among which Ainu, Okinawans, and *burakumin* peoples and cultural customs "existed both outside the nation and within it." Duara, "Ethnos (*minzoku*) and Ethnology (*minzokushugi*) in Manchukuo," 10.

17 Kuwaki, "Nihonteki to iu koto," 101.

18 Kuwaki, "Nihonteki to iu koto," 117.

19 Workman, *Imperial Genus*, 3.

20 Workman, *Imperial Genus*, 4.

21 See, for instance, Christina Yi's discussion of Yi Kwang-su and the question of collaboration in postwar debates on responsibility and colonial memory in postwar Korean intellectual and literary discourses in chapter 6 of Yi's *Colonizing Language*, "Collaboration, Wartime Responsibility, and Colonial Memory."

22 Kwon, *Intimate Empire*, 6.

23 Qtd. in Workman, *Imperial Genus*, 1.

24 One of the few recent works on García de Mendoza's philosophy highlights that the claim to this title is disputed between García de Mendoza and Francisco Larroyo, another Mexican neo-Kantian philosopher. See Méndez-Martínez, "Phenomenology and Pedagogy."

25 The account written about García de Mendoza's life in the Palibrio publications, including *La filosofía oriental*, claims that he "returned to México in 1926, after living in Germany for seven years studying at the universities of Leipzig, Heidelgerg, Hamburg, Frankfurt, Freiburg, Cologne, and Marburg.

There, he took courses with Rickert, Cassirer, Husserl, Scheler, Natorp, and Heidegger" (qtd. in *La filosofía oriental*, 385). Méndez-Martínez, however, writes that although this scant biographical reporting indicates that this might be true, García de Mendoza "does not appear in the chronicles of Husserl's courses." Méndez-Martinez, "Phenomenology and Pedagogy," 244.

26 In English, Miki's time studying with Heidegger, Rickert, and Husserl between 1922 and 1925 is discussed in Yusa, "Philosophy and Inflation."

27 García de Mendoza was likely among the first philosophers to discuss the content of Edmund Husserl's *Méditations cartésiennes: Introduction à la phénoménologie*. First published in 1933, the book is based on lectures Husserl gave in February 1929.

28 Torres-Rodríguez, "Orientalizing Mexico," 78.

29 García de Mendoza, *La filosofía oriental*, 9–10.

30 García de Mendoza's speech is published separately in another collection of writings about Japan from 1931, *Japón: Conferencias filosóficas*.

31 García de Mendoza, *La filosofía oriental*, 319.

32 García de Mendoza, *La filosofía oriental*, 319–20. In this section, García de Mendoza refers to a series of lectures and papers that promoted the creation of a Pan-Asian League and Pan-Asian solidarity in response to the brutality of US immigration laws. For more on the Pan-Asian conferences, see Weber, "Regionalization of 'Asia.'"

33 García de Mendoza, *La filosofía oriental*, 320.

34 García de Mendoza, *La filosofía oriental*, 300.

35 I thank an anonymous reader for their suggestion to engage Mignolo's concept of "de-Westernization" and its applicability to my reading of Kuwaki and García de Mendoza's exchange. According to Mignolo, de-Westernization "is not an anti-Western move but, on the contrary, a moving in a different direction, regaining of the confidence that the West took away from it first by classifying them as the 'yellow race' and second by the humiliating experience of the colonial wound impinged through the Opium War." Mignolo, *Darker Side of Western Modernity*, 34. I am cautious, however, about the applicability of de-Westernization in this context as either a structure of solidarity or one that dismantles racial colonial hegemony.

36 Fujitani, *Race for Empire*, 37.

37 See Barriga Villanueva and Martín Butragueño, *Historia sociolingüistica de Mexico*; Jina E. Kim, *Urban Modernities in Colonial Korea and Taiwan*.

38 As Jodi Melamed and Chandan Reddy discuss in "Using Liberal Rights to Enforce Racial Capitalism," administrative actions, which translate to administrative power, are a means through which racial violence becomes a routine to the everyday processes of "colonial, plantation, and early industrial modes of capital accumulation globally."

39 Elsa García de Mendoza, "México obtiene el primer lugar en un Concurso Internacional de Filosofía," xiv.

40 As well as appearing in Japanese newspapers (*Asahi*), the announcement of García de Mendoza's award appeared in national periodicals (*El Nacional*, *Revista Orbe, Novedades, Revista Arte*), Japanese-Mexican newspapers (*Sol Naciente*, *Japón Comercial*), and Japanese-English periodicals (*Asahi Evening Times*, *Nippon Times*) between 1941 and 1954.
41 Elsa García de Mendoza, "México obtiene el primer lugar en un Concurso Internacional de Filosofía," xv.
42 Silva, *Toward a Global Idea of Race*, 30.
43 See Wynter, "Unsettling the Coloniality of Being/Power/Truth/Freedom," 206.
44 Ahmed, "Melancholic Universalism."
45 Lugones, "Toward a Decolonial Feminism," 742.
46 Chuh, *Difference Aesthetics Makes*, 114.
47 Oguma, *Genealogy of "Japanese" Self-Images*.
48 Kang Sangjung, "Post-Colonialism and Diasporic Space in Japan," 137.
49 See also Ukai, "Colonialism and Modernity."
50 Kang Sangjung, "Post-Colonialism and Diasporic Space in Japan," 138.
51 Anaya Muñoz, "Emergence and Development," 599.

Chapter 3. *Mestizaje*'s Echoes

1 Talavera, "Toshiro Mifune, el japonés que filmó en México y se transformó en indígena."
2 El Pajarito Indiscreto, "Como vi y oí a Toshiro Mifune."
3 Melamed, "Racial Capitalism," 78.
4 Ōe, *An Echo of Heaven*, 8.
5 Muñoz, *The Sense of Brown*, 121.
6 Moreton-Robinson, *White Possessive*, 34.
7 For a capacious historiography of racism in Mexico (especially in relation to anti-Indigenous and anti-Black racism), see Urías Horcasitas, *Historias secretas del racism en México*.
8 For instance, a 2018 article from *El Universal* that profiles the film was titled, "The Japanese who transformed himself into a Zapotec" ("El japonés que se transform en zapoteco"). In a 2014 issue of the magazine *Relatos e historias en México*, a reprinted article about Mifune's acting in *Ánimas Trujano* is advertised with the heading "The Zapotec Samurai" (El samurai Zapoteco).
9 In interviews about *Ánimas Trujano*, Rodríguez described that in order to convince Mifune to take the role, he had to travel to Japan multiple times with the help of Luis Kasuga, an assistant, and Isa Araiza, a Mexican Japanese employee of Toho Films studio, which had an exclusive contract with Mifune. After negotiations, Rodríguez proposed that Mifune could

recite his lines in Japanese and later have his voice dubbed over, but Mifune requested that the lines be recorded in Spanish, and he would learn them phonetically. Talavera, "Toshiro Mifune, el japonés que filmó en México y se transformo en indígena."

10 See Hall, "Spectacle of the Other."

11 See Tarica, "Indigenismo."

12 Chacón, "Metamestizaje and the Narration of Political Movements from the South," 182–83.

13 Rodríguez, *Ánimas Trujano* (my emphasis).

14 Yao, *Disaffected*, 14.

15 Jacques Derrida's "Plato's Pharmacy" reads the figure of the *pharmakos* in Platonic thought as "the evil and the outside" whose exclusion is a basis for the reconstitution of a purified community. (*Dissemination*, 131–33).

16 Arvin et al., "Decolonizing Feminism," 26.

17 Le, *Unsettled Solidarities*, 102.

18 García Blizzard, *White Indians of Mexican Cinema*, 23.

19 Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 111.

20 Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 112

21 Cheng, *Ornamentalism*, 4.

22 See Kunigami, "Yellowness as Transpacific Technology."

23 Rodríguez, *Memorias*, 77–79.

24 Aviña, "El samurai zapoteco."

25 Ōe's Mexico-inspired fictional works included the novel *Dōjidai gēmu* (The game of contemporaneity, 1979); the short fiction collection *Rein-tsurii o kiku onna-tachi* (Women listening to the rain tree, 1982); the novel *Jinsei no shinseki* (*An Echo of Heaven*, 1989); the essay "Mehiko no ōnukeana" (The great loophole of Mexico," 1984); and the novel *Natsukashii toshi e no tegami: Mekishiko no Doriimutaimu* (Letters to the nostalgic years: Dreamtime in Mexico, 1987). See Chiappe Ippolito, "Image of Latin America in Ōe Kenzaburō's Post-Mexico Fiction," 121; Smith, "Eclipsing Mexico."

26 Smith, "Eclipsing Mexico," 299.

27 See Botton Beja, "Kenzaburo Oé y su paseo por México."

28 Chiappe Ippolito, "Image of Latin America in Ōe Kenzaburō's Post-Mexico Fiction," 123.

29 For a rich and critical account of the neoliberal and colonial formation of the Center for Asian and African Studies at the Colegio de México, see Aroch-Fugellie, "Performing African Studies at El Colegio de México."

30 Ōe's semi-autobiographical novel inspired by the birth of his disabled son, *Kojinteki na taiken* (A Personal Matter), as well as his other work on experiences of marginalization have been extensively written about. See, for example, Michiko N. Wilson, *The Marginal World of Ōe Kenzaburo*.

31 Ōe, *An Echo of Heaven*, 7–8.

32 Ōe, *An Echo of Heaven*, 10.

33 *Oxford English Dictionary*, "canonical (adj. & n.)," https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/1723742918.
34 Cheng, *Ornamentalism*, 1.
35 Manne, *Entitled*, 11.
36 For an overview of the roots of Betty Boop in appropriations of Black American popular culture of the early twentieth century, see Meyers, "'You Know, Let Me Put My Two Cents In'"; Lehman, *Colored Cartoon*, 4.
37 Ōe, *An Echo of Heaven*, 26.
38 Strings, *Fearing the Black Body*, 9.
39 Ōe, *An Echo of Heaven*, 40.
40 Ōe, *An Echo of Heaven*, 69–70
41 "Cacoyagua" is, I assume, a respelling of "Acacoyagua," a rural town in the state of Chiapas that was the site of the establishment of the Enomoto colony in 1897, named after Enomoto Takeaki, a Meiji-era proponent of Japanese transpacific settler colonialism. See Azuma, *In Search of Our Frontier*.
42 Ōe, *Jinsei no shinseki*, 227; Ōe, *An Echo of Heaven*, 187.
43 Ōe, *An Echo of Heaven*, 187–88.
44 Echeverría, *Modernidad y blanquitud*, 60.
45 Ōe, *An Echo of Heaven*, 201.
46 Ōe, *An Echo of Heaven*, 203.
47 Sara Ahmed aptly writes of this phenomenon in *Living a Feminist Life*, arguing, "Women become relatives, only registered as existing when existing in relation to men. . . . To become woman is to become relative: not only in the sense of kin (connected by blood or marriage) but also in the fundamental sense of being considered (only) in relation or proportion to something else" (216).
48 Silva, *Toward a Global Idea of Race*, 225.
49 Patel, "'Indian Queen' of the Four Continents," 428.
50 Alonso, "Territorializing the Nation and 'Integrating the Indian,'" 59.
51 Chew, *Uprooting Community*, 7.
52 See James et al., "Separate National Apologies, Transnational Injustices."
53 Sharpe, *In the Wake*.

Chapter 4. Racial (Dis)connects in the Wake

An earlier version of this chapter was originally published in 2021 as "Non-encounters 'in the Wake': Re-Inscribing a Black Transpacific in *Tanin no kao* and *La Muerte de Artemio Cruz*," *Japan Forum* 35, no. 3: 249–70.
1 Sharpe, *In the Wake*, 15.
2 Sharpe, *In the Wake*, 104.
3 Lowe, "Intimacies of Four Continents," 197.
4 Holland, *Erotic Life of Racism*, 3–4

5 See Bridges, "In the Beginning."
6 Bridges, "In the Beginning," 326.
7 See Marco Polo Hernández Cuevas, *África en México*.
8 See Bridges, *Playing in the Shadows*.
9 Sharpe, *In the Wake*, 13.
10 Bachner, *The Mark of Theory*, 3.
11 Abe, "Beyond the Neighbor."
12 Abe, "Beyond the Neighbor," 95.
13 Abe, "Beyond the Neighbor," 98.
14 Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience*, 7.
15 Jackson, *Becoming Human*, 49.
16 Mbembe, *Necropolitics*, 68.
17 Fuentes, *Death of Artemio Cruz*, 3–4.
18 Spillers, "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe," 67.
19 Du Bois's concepts of "double consciousness" and the "veil" importantly rethink the Enlightenment understanding of liberal modern universal freedom by explaining the mediation of consciousness through the other. This reversal of classical dialectical thinking, according to Du Bois, elucidates the way that Black subjects learn to understand themselves through the internalization of the pervasive anti-Blackness and racially prejudiced lenses that constitute the dominant, white society of the United States. See Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*.
20 Moten, *Black and Blur*, 246.
21 Abe, *The Face of Another*, 32.
22 See Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection*.
23 Abe, *The Face of Another*, 40.
24 Ellison, *Invisible Man*, 3.
25 Abe, *The Face of Another*, 217.
26 See Hall, "Whites of Their Eyes."
27 A record of the protest and police brutality appears in a 1964 WNBC/WNYC episode from July 26, 1964, "Who Speaks for Harlem." The episode is available in full here: https://www.wnyc.org/story/who-speaks-for-harlem/.
28 Bridges, *Playing in the Shadows*, 165.
29 Abe, *The Face of Another*, 218. I have made two re-translations. In the 1966 translation of *The Face of Another*, E. Dale Saunders translates, "Like the Negroes, could we arise resolutely against prejudice . . . ?" Yet the Japanese term「黒人」(*kokujin*) does not formally translate as such. Historically, the term *Negro* was applied in conditions under which Black people were subjected to processes of "differentiation, classification, and hierarchization aimed at exclusion, expulsion, and even eradication" (Mbembe, *Necropolitics*, 24). While the term was used predominantly in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to refer to people of African descent (including by Black intellectuals like W. E. B. Du Bois and Booker T. Washington), after

the Black Power movement of the 1960s, the term *Black* has become favored unless citing historical references or the names of older organizations. According to the Oxford Dictionary, "It is now regarded as old-fashioned or even offensive in both British and US English." Recognizing that the word *Negro* is a translator choice rather than a direct translation of「黒人」(*kokujin*), I will be re-translating the term when not used to refer to historical context or official terminology. The translation of「黒人」into "Black people" here is more precise to the context that Abe addresses in the passage. In the second re-translation, I have chosen to attend to the gendered inflection of the word ぼくら (*bokura*), which Saunders translates as a genderless "we," by translating it as "we, the brotherhood of the faceless."

30 Abe, *The Face of Another*, 218.
31 Abe, *The Face of Another*, 113.
32 Abe, *The Face of Another*, 114.
33 Abe, *Tanin no kao*, 134.
34 See Choi Jinseok, "Specters of East Asia."
35 See Hartman, "Position of the Unthought."
36 Abe, *The Face of Another*, 232.
37 Abe, *The Face of Another*, 234.
38 I draw here on Judith Butler's analysis of the incest taboo as the regulation of gender and sexuality through the exchange of women, which acts as a reproductive force for the basis of compulsory binary genderism in heterosexist patriarchy. See Butler, "Quandaries of the Incest Taboo."
39 As Paul Gilroy writes in *The Black Atlantic*, the exclusion of Black Africans from European modernity and exclusionary Eurocentrism operates on the level of the subjugation of Black identity and identification within the construction of global modernity.
40 Bridges, *Playing in the Shadows*, 167.
41 Spillers, "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe," 76.
42 See Aizenberg, "Untruths of the Nation."
43 In *Tiempo Mexicano*, Fuentes characterizes the Mexican state as having a history of "a battle between sacred texts and profane reality," drawing on Antonio Gramsci's work to question the status of civil society in the wake of the realities of revolutionary progress and the materialization of a liberal democracy that failed to overcome the demands of a self-serving Hispanic bourgeoise. See Fuentes, *Tiempo Mexicano*, 125.
44 Ribas, "Una herencia perdida," 101.
45 As Carlos A. Jáuregui and David M. Solodkow write: "Durante el periódo colonial, varias instituciones a cometieron el dominio y gobierno . . . de las heterogénas poblaciónes americanas y, más tarde, de los esclavos traídos de África. Entre estas podemos mencionar la encomienda, la mita, el repartimiento, el yanaconazgo, la hacienda, el ingenio, la mission y otras formas de regulación y explotación de la vida." [During the colonial period, various

institutions committed themselves to the domination and governance . . . of heterogeneous American populations and, later on, of Africans brought as slaves. Among these were forms of indentured and forced labor, the creation of Indigenous servants, the *hacienda*, sugar refinery, the mission, and other forms that regulated and exploited life.] Jáuregui and Solodkow, “Biopolítica colonial, gestion de la población y modernización Borbónica en Santo Domingo,” 154.

46 Fuentes, *Death of Artemio Cruz*, 3.

47 Fuentes, *Death of Artemio Cruz*, 284.

48 Fuentes, *Death of Artemio Cruz*, 269–70.

49 Fuentes, *Death of Artemio Cruz*, 270.

50 Ribas, “Una herencia perdida,” 103.

51 Fuentes, *Death of Artemio Cruz*, 309.

52 Fuentes, *Death of Artemio Cruz*, 276.

53 Fuentes, *Death of Artemio Cruz*, 305–6.

54 Sharpe, *In the Wake*, 15.

55 Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience*, 183.

56 See De Bary, “Afterthoughts, ‘Afterlife’ on the Occasion of Translation.”

57 See Gordon, *Fear of Black Consciousness*.

58 Glissant, *Poetics of Relation*, 80.

59 Sharpe, *In the Wake*, 115–16.

60 See Xine Yao, *Disaffected*.

Coda

1 Simpson, *Mowhawk Interruptus*, 64.

2 Lee Chonghwa, *Tsubuyaki no seiji shisō*, n.p.

3 Lee Chonghwa, *Tsubuyaki no seiji shisō*, n.p.

4 De Bary, “Looking at *Foreign Sky*,” 21.

5 Advertencia Lirika, *Cuando una mujer avanza*.

6 For further reading on “xip xop feminism,” see Martínez, “Indigenous Feminist Hip Hop.”

7 Advertencia Lirika, *Cuando una mujer avanza*.

8 “Bienvenidx.”

9 Kum, *Beast of Me*.

10 In both *Beast of Me* and *Foreign Sky*, Kum explores the intersections of transpacific settler colonialism by linking the histories of anti-Zainichi Korean racism in Japan to the impact of US nuclear tests on the ecology of the Marshall Islands and parts of the western United States.

11 In their article “‘We Cannot Write About Complicity Together,” Shaista Aziz Patel and Dia Da Costa discuss the issues regarding the “subaltern subject” of Spivak’s 1988 critique. Patel and Da Costa reveal that the “subaltern” of the essay was not, in fact, an Indigenous or caste-oppressed subject

forgotten from either history or Spivak's memory; she was Spivak's own maternal relative. Their critique argues, therefore, that while the subject of Spivak's tragic retelling of an unjust death is rendered as dispossessed by heterosexist caste oppression, the essay itself engages broader schemas of marginalization that are integral to postcolonial Hindu and Brahminical hegemony in India.

12 On May 17, 2021, President López Obrador announced his administration's plan to issue formal apologies for Mexico's "crimes of the state" committed since Spanish colonialism, which included this lesser-known history of the systemic ethnic cleansing of Asian migrant populations during the Mexican Revolution.

13 Choe, "Japan and South Korea Settle Dispute."

14 See Stanley et al., "Scholarly and Public Responses to 'Contracting for Sex in the Pacific War.'"

15 Shih, "Racializing Area Studies, Defetishizing China," 45.

16 Shih, "Racializing Area Studies, Defetishizing China," 57.

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