

Queering the Transpacific: Race and Sexuality across the U.S. and Japanese Empires

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Abstract

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The primary thesis of *Queering the Transpacific* is that 20<sup>th</sup>-century U.S.-Japan relations evince a genealogy of the racial and sexual logics that underpin today's transpacific complicity with neocolonial capitalism and violence, but what I heuristically call a "queer transpacific critique" can help foster non-complicity. The project is particularly attuned to the role of progressive discourse in extending the reach of empire. Throughout, I cross-pollinate insights in Asian/American studies in order to analyze the intersection of transpacific racialization and queer exclusion/inclusion, and think through race and sexuality as inter-imperial modalities.

Chapter 1 investigates the "queering of empire" during the Russo-Japanese War era when the ascent of Japan—the young empire configured in Western sexological discourse as more heteroflexible than the West—unsettled scientific racism. Progressive thinkers on both sides of

the Pacific called for racial egalitarianism and U.S.-Japanese cooperation without questioning the teleology of empire. Chapter 2 thoroughly unpacks the African American intellectual W.E.B. Du Bois' support of Imperial Japan by juxtaposing his political realism and doubts about transwar racial progressivism with that of the Asianist revolutionaries Sun Yat-sen and Anand Mohan Sahay. I interpret the role "Japan" plays in his 1928 novel *Dark Princess*, which depicts competing transpacific pluralisms: I argue that in the interplay between its realist and utopic registers, the novel evinces a queer political ontology beyond the imperial logics of the transwar period.

Chapter 3 updates the "racial castration" model in Queer Asian American studies given the rise of Asia and presence of overlapping masculinities in the transpacific. I call for a reconfiguration of the symbolic so as to contend with a world ordering that does not add up to white heteropatriarchy as the sole structuring of the universal. I reread Lonnie Kaneko's 1976 short story "The Shoyu Kid" and Soon-Tek Oh's 1970 play *Tondemonai—Never Happen!* for how they narrate homosexuality during Japanese American internment not as abject, but as entangled with an abusive, "queerly-inclined" U.S. state that was in competition with Japan's model minoritization ambitions. Finally, Chapter 4 expounds upon the queer chronopolitics of the Japanese director Ōshima Nagisa with a reading of his 1983 film *Merry Christmas, Mr. Lawrence* as presaging homonationalism at a time when neoliberal logics were cementing and the U.S. state treated potential Japanese economic ascendancy as perilous.

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A note on conventions: As per the regional practice, East Asian names are rendered with the family name preceding the given name. I have excepted friends here as well as scholars hereafter for whom the reverse order appears on their published English-language work.

## Introduction

The primary thesis of *Queering the Transpacific* is that 20<sup>th</sup>-century U.S.-Japan relations evince a genealogy of the racial and sexual logics that underpin today's transpacific complicity with neocolonial capitalism and violence, but what I heuristically call a "queer transpacific critique" can help foster non-complicity.<sup>1</sup> The project is particularly attuned to the role of progressive discourse in extending the reach of empire. Throughout, I cross-pollinate insights in Asian/American studies in order to analyze the intersection of transpacific racialization and queer exclusion/inclusion, and think through race and sexuality as inter-imperial modalities.<sup>2</sup> Utilizing a Cultural studies method that draws from literature, plays, art, film, nonfiction and a range of archival and secondary sources, the project contributes to Critical Race studies, Queer studies and Transpacific studies.

*Queering the Transpacific* is a response to a global and scholarly milieu that I think Asian American studies scholar Colleen Lye has put best: "In the context of transition to an Asian, or at least not strictly Euro-American capitalist world system, it may be that the critical value of critical Asian[/]American studies lies less in the particularizing or debunking of residual European universalisms than in theorizing the contradictoriness of emergent Asian ones."<sup>3</sup> Much

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<sup>1</sup> For "transpacific complicity," see Naoki Sakai, "Trans-pacific Studies and the US-Japan Complicity," in *The Trans-pacific Imagination: Rethinking Boundary, Culture and Society*, eds. Naoki Sakai and Hyon Joo Yoo, 279–315 (Singapore: World Scientific, 2012).

<sup>2</sup> As Augusto Espiritu, "Inter-Imperial Relations, the Pacific, and Asian American History," *Pacific Historical Review* 83.2 (May 2014): 238, writes, inter-imperial relations are sites of "cooperation, competition, and conflict between [and among] empires, including subaltern attempts at creating spaces for maneuver and agency between [and among] them."

<sup>3</sup> Colleen Lye, "Unmarked Character and the 'Rise of Asia': Ed Park's Personal Days," *Verge: Studies in Global Asias* 1.1 (2015): 248.

of that contradictoriness is predicated on the inter-imperial response to otherness. I argue that “queerness” is the site of the racial/sexual other not-yet disavowed/incorporated by empire (both white and nonwhite empires), instrumentalizable for both critical and complicit agendas. Empires seek to “out-queer” one another—that is, to disavow/incorporate otherness to an effect greater than other empires—so as to stabilize modernity in their favor and justify their violence for access to capital.

This project investigates imperial queering during the tumultuous periods of the Russo-Japanese War (Chapter 1), the transwar (Chapters 2 and 3), and the post-Vietnam War rise of neoliberalism (Chapter 4). Although focused at the U.S.-Japan nexus, other large powers do appear throughout: chief among them, Germany, Britain, China, Russia and India. As I researched, I became interested in how inter-imperiality generates a more complex narrative, and foregrounds neglected yet important themes, such as the “yellow–white peril debate” and Indo-Japanese cooperation. A more robust inter-imperial narrative also seems appropriate given the return to multipolarity in the post-Cold War. As U.S. imperial power wanes and China’s waxes—the U.S.-led War on Terror shifting toward greater transpacific competition—critique that starts from the inter-imperial transpacific will become more and more needed.

## **Chapter Outline**

Chapter 1, “Asian Racialization and the Early 20<sup>th</sup>-Century Queering of Empire,” focuses on the Russo-Japanese War era and the unsettling of the scientific racism undergirding sexology by the rise of Japan and the material impasse of China. First, I depict the era through the lens of the German-Jewish sexologist Benedict Friedländer who considered the West’s

heteronormativization for the health of the white race and empire to be misguided. Friedländer argued that the East, particularly Japan, was threateningly closer to the humanist truth of male homosexuality as “necessary for the existence of nations.” Even if his “pro-gay” stance is regarded as a minority viewpoint, his views on Japan aligned with a dominant Western interpretation of Japan’s trajectory toward the forefront of modernity, as illustrated in its defeat of a major white power, as fueled by a not-quite-civilized masculinity. For the health of empire amidst trans-imperial crises in masculinity, the white world squabbled about how to respond to its projected yellow peril: by either racializing it as queer and abject, and/or by incorporating Japan into colonial modernity through measured racial egalitarianism.

I follow the insight of Hemi Chari that imperialism across patriarchal societies East and West is concerned with the subordination of men by men, the “other man” fulfilling the psychosexual needs of the self.<sup>4</sup> In reverse terms, there is East–West desire for a potentially dominating otherness to rejuvenate the progressive flow of civilization. After historicizing queerness in the transpacific, I think through what I call the prewar “unconsummated same-sex marriage” of the U.S. and Japan. During and following the Russo-Japanese War, progressive thinkers like Kaneko Kentarō and Sidney Gulick opined about the “white peril,” calling for U.S.-Japanese cooperation as the only path toward egalitarianism and world peace, even as the two powers implemented their own imperial projects in the Philippines and Korea. The chapter also analyzes surprising 1904–5 artwork by an unknown Japanese artist who satirized the Russo-Japanese War as a “comical rape” of a Russian soldier by a Japanese soldier.

Chapter 2, “Queering the Color Line within the Color Line: W.E.B. Du Bois and the

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<sup>4</sup> Hema Chari, “Colonial Fantasies and Postcolonial Identities: Elaboration of Postcolonial Masculinity and Homoerotic Desire,” in *Postcolonial, Queer: Theoretical Intersections*, ed. John Hawley, 277–304 (SUNY Press, 2001).

Transpacific,” thoroughly unpacks the renowned African American intellectual’s support of the Japanese Empire from the First Sino-Japanese War through the Pacific War. Making extensive use of his decades-long oeuvre, including his turn-of-the-century global “color line” thesis when the rise of Japan was already central to his thinking about a globality of race, I push against scholarship that pigeonholes Du Bois’ thinking as too dictated by race as defined by the white world such that he sidelined Yamatoism and Japan’s racial hierarchization of Asia. My sense is that scholarship on the matter of Du Bois and Asia is too affectively entangled with the postwar Americanization of racial justice such that, in effect, historical nuance has been undermined.

I show how Du Bois’ framing of the movement of race in the transpacific and inter-Asia paralleled and intersected with Asianist (regionalist) discourse in Japan, China and India. Notably, Asianism seldom registers in Critical Race studies conversations, continuing to be relegated to Cold War-born Area studies. I compare Du Bois’ realpolitik rhetoric on inter-Asia with that of the Chinese revolutionary Sun Yat-sen, who Du Bois admired, as well as with the Indian nationalist Anand Mohan Sahay who was based in Japan during the transwar period and who helped facilitate Indo-Japanese alliance during the Pacific War (Sahay reached out to Du Bois during the latter’s 1936 trip to the region). Both Du Bois and Sahay toured Manchukuo to make sense of the Japanese pluralist experiment.

Du Bois’ 1928 novel *Dark Princess*, wherein the phrase “the color line within the color line” appears, features an Indo-Japanese alliance integrating the black world under what I contend is an Asianist framework. The novel has not been adequately unpacked for the ways it triangulates blackness, brownness and yellowness, as scholars tend to neglect “Japan” in their analyses and focus solely on the principal “utopic” brown-black heterosexual dyad. Offering a queer transpacific reading that positions the text as not just utopic but also realist, I show how

*Dark Princess* critiques competing transpacific pluralisms that require racial, including mixed-race reproduction, rather than merely advocating for one (Afro Asianist) over the other (U.S. interracialist), which is how the novel tends to be interpreted. In other words, the “color line within the color line” remains at the novel’s conclusion just as the color line does. Following José Esteban Muñoz’ work on the interplay of realism and utopia, I argue that *Dark Princess* facilitates the imagining of not-yet queer agency unbounded by the color line, or what Du Bois in the narrative calls a “divine Anarchy in some faraway heaven.”

In Chapter 3, “Provincializing Racial Castration: Inter-imperiality and Asian/American Masculinities,” I posit that inter-imperiality has not been considered enough in Queer Asian American studies. Reworking the framework that David Eng has called “racial castration,” I argue that, given the rise of Asia, Asian American studies needs a reconfiguration of the symbolic that contends with a world ordering that does not add up to white heteropatriarchy as the sole structuring of the universal. Getting to this theorization includes thinking through how model minoritization was not just a product of the postwar U.S. ascendancy, but was a white and nonwhite venture in the transpacific, as Takashi Fujitani and others have shown. Accordingly, I suggest the presence of overlapping masculinities in the transpacific, and posit that homosexuality’s symbolic location was not entirely abject across the Cold War. Ranajit Guha’s phrase “dominance without hegemony” is useful to describe both the expanse but also the limits of white heteropatriarchy during much of the Cold War and beyond.

I revisit Lonny Kaneko’s 1976 short story “The Shoyu Kid,” which has been canonized and widely taught in Asian American studies as instructive of the racial-gendered logics of Japanese internment. I read it in terms of the limits of whiteness, as well as for the ways Kaneko narrates the mid-century U.S. state as “queerly-inclined” as opposed to treating homosexuality as

abject (a bias of 1990s readings of the story). Then, I analyze the non-canonized and largely-forgotten 1970 play *Tondemonai—Never Happen!* written by Soon-Tek Oh of the East West Players (the Asian American theatre troupe based in Los Angeles, founded in 1965) that features a Japanese-Chinese same-sex relationship in the post-internment context. The play strategically centers Kibei masculinity<sup>5</sup>: the main character has an enhanced immunity to U.S. interpellation, a reflection of the playwright’s own biography as an immigrant born in Japanese-occupied Korea. The intra-racial queer relationship in the play is a site of masculinity in recuperation in a liminal space between empires.

Finally, Chapter 4, “The Queer Chronopolitics of Ōshima Nagisa,” features the work of the renowned Japanese director. Juxtaposing the antinationalist Ōshima with the famous right-wing queer author Mishima Yukio (who I suggest had a “homo-ethnonationalist” orientation), I focus on the former’s 1983 film *Merry Christmas, Mr. Lawrence*, arguing that the film presaged what Jasbir Puar in 2007 coined as “homonationalism.” Set in a Japanese POW camp in Java during the Pacific War, and released at a time when U.S. yellow peril sentiment was resurgent in response to Japan’s booming 1980s economy, Ōshima presents sexual progressivism and exceptionalism by white characters who box in Japanese homophobia as backwards.

Whereas the Pacific War concerned the U.S.-Japanese competition over who was “less racist” in coeval attempts to build pluralist empires, *Merry Christmas* presciently extends representation of that competition to who is “less homophobic” at a time LGBT rights were being configured into the postwar teleology of civil and human rights, buttressed by neoliberal individuation and heteroflexible capitalism. Along with his final 1999 film *Gohatto* (“Taboo”)

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<sup>5</sup> Kibei (帰米 or “Return to America”) are U.S.-born Nisei who returned to the U.S. after a childhood education in Japan.

that also concerned the role homosexuality and homophobia played in the unfolding of modernity—specifically, at the close of Japan’s Tokugawa era—Ōshima gifts the viewer with a queer postcolonial gaze.

As the chapters of *Queering the Transpacific* close with the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, in a short coda, I speak to the rising Sino-U.S. tensions in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## Chapter 1:

### Asian Racialization and the Early 20<sup>th</sup>-Century Queering of Empire



*“Oh, East is East, and West is West...*

*But there is neither East nor West, Border, nor Breed, nor Birth,*

*When two strong men stand face to face, tho’ they come from the ends of the earth!”*

Rudyard Kipling, 1889<sup>6</sup>

*“Mimicry is the desire for a reformed, recognizable Other, as a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite...a process of disavowal...which ‘appropriates’ the Other as it visualizes power. Mimicry is also the sign of the inappropriate, however, which coheres the dominant strategic function...”*

Homi Bhabha, 1984<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> FIGURE 1: 1905 *Punch* (magazine) cartoon depicting the 1905 renewal of the 1902 Anglo-Japanese Alliance following Japan’s defeat of Russia. Artist: Edward Linley Sambourne. Courtesy: *Punch* cartoon archival site ([www.punch.co.uk](http://www.punch.co.uk)). The lines from Rudyard Kipling’s famous 1889 poem “The Ballad of East and West” were reprinted beneath the cartoon.

<sup>7</sup> Homi Bhabha, “Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse,” *October* 28 (Spring 1984):

## 1.1 Sexology Destabilized: White Schizophrenia, Hetero-(in)flexibility and the Russo-Japanese War

In his 1906 booklet, *Male and Female Culture: A Causal-Historical View*, the German-Jewish biologist and sociologist Benedict Friedländer (1866–1908) extolled Japan as the prime example of modern “male culture” and denounced the U.S. as the worst example of modern “female culture.”<sup>8</sup>

Friedländer was contributing member of the renowned sexologist Magnus Hirschfeld’s Scientific-Humanitarian Committee (*Wissenschaftlich-humanitäres Komitee*), which formed in 1897 and is often considered the world’s first gay rights organization. The committee published an annual periodical until 1923, the Yearbook for Sexual Transitions (*Jahrbuch für sexuelle Zwischenstufen*), on the advancements in the globalizing field of sexology, namely on the topic of sexual and gender minorities—the minoritization itself having been delineated in the preceding decades. The committee’s chief political goal was to demonstrate homosexuality as normal human variation so as to repeal Imperial Germany’s 1871 sodomy law that would, later, in the context of Nazism, be used to persecute homosexuals viciously. In Friedländer’s view, the prevailing conflation of homosexuality with decadence, as the sensationalized 1895 trial of Oscar Wilde in Britain framed it, was false. After all, he argued, homosexuality had enhanced, not degenerated ancient Greek civilization. Friedländer was a believer in the biologist Gustav Jäger’s theory of hypermasculinity that destigmatized male-male attraction as a precondition for human

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126. Emphasis added.

<sup>8</sup> Benedict Friedländer, “Male and Female Culture: A Causal-Historical View (*Männliche und weibliche Kultur: Eine kausalhistorische Betrachtung*) (1906),” in *Homosexuality and Male Bonding in Pre-Nazi Germany*, eds. Harry Oosterhuis and Hubert Kennedy, 207–17 (Harrington Park Press, 1991).

sociability.<sup>9</sup> He attested that the crises of masculinity in *fin de siècle* Germany, Britain, France and the U.S. were the result of “feminizing” variables, such as “democratic levelling” (calls for women’s suffrage), industrialization and overconsumption, the rise of plutocratic governance, and the sexual hypocrisy and prudery generated by centuries of Christianity gone awry. “Female culture” he described as including such characteristics as women playing an important role in society and “in extreme cases the principal role”; wealth as highly respected, thus the danger of plutocracy and corruption is great; women considered the only beautiful sex; and same-sex intercourse as prohibited among men even as it is generally allowed among women. In contrast, “male culture” included such characteristics as women playing a subordinate role in society; wealth and those who produce and accumulate wealth as receiving little respect so that the danger of plutocracy is minimal; esteem for youthful beauty; and same-sex intercourse of men tolerated or celebrated since love might apply toward both sexes.

On Japan versus the U.S., Friedländer cited Japan’s 1904–5 war against Russia as “masculine”: “heroically fought for national defense against overpowering attackers” and guided by a “masculine morality” oriented toward an “esteem for sincerity and justice.” In the lead up to the Russo-Japanese War, Anglo-American observers eagerly reported on Japan’s exhaustion of all diplomatic options before conducting the war with the stated lofty goal of securing Manchuria and Korea from the lavish tsarist autocracy. Britain especially disliked Russia and allied with Japan in 1902. As Russia’s Trans-Siberian Railroad neared completion, the 19<sup>th</sup>-century Anglo-Russian “Great Game,” which concerned Britain’s control over India, extended into an inter-imperial scramble for China. Among Anglo-American and Japanese commentators, Russia saw

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<sup>9</sup> Rainer Herrn, “Magnus Hirschfeld’s *Onnagata*,” trans. Michael Taylor, in *A Global History of Sexual Science, 1880–1960*, eds. Veronika Fuechtner, Douglas E. Haynes, Ryan M. Jones, 374–97 (U of California Press, 2017), 377.

framings as the “white peril,” a repudiation of Kaiser Wilhelm II’s 1895 “yellow peril” propaganda (Germany was allied with Russia) that attempted to pigeonhole Japan as a racial other at the end of the First Sino-Japanese War (for German-Japanese relations soured by the Kaiser, see the note).<sup>10</sup> I will expound upon the white peril discourse later.

Conversely, Friedländer regarded the U.S.’ 1898 war against Spain as “feminine”: “predatory and exploitative...with the goal of enriching the [American] plutocracy,” guided by a “feminine morality” of “hypocritical pity, and a falsely understood humaneness.” Against the progressivism of the Anti-Imperial League, U.S. policymakers had propagandized the war as one of liberation for Cuba and the Philippines from the old-world, floundering empire Spain. As the British author and poet Rudyard Kipling phrased it in the context of the 1899–1902 Philippine-American War, the U.S. was extending the “white man’s burden” to civilize. Yet, for many

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<sup>10</sup> On the one hand, Germany celebrated Japan’s defeat of China in 1895 as a sign of civilizational progress in the German image, since Japan had adopted the Prussian constitution as a blueprint for its own in 1889 and rapidly absorbed *Wissenschaft* (“science,” including sexology) for its modernization. Hailed in Germany as a “Prussia of the East,” Japan was viewed as Germany’s military foster-child. On the other hand, since Imperial Germany had itself only formed in 1871 and had a limited foothold in Asia, its elites were anxious of being wedged out of Asia. Kaiser Wilhelm II soured German-Japanese relations by joining Germany with Russia and France in the Triple Intervention at the conclusion of the First Sino-Japanese War to prevent Japanese acquisition of Chinese territory, only for Russia and Germany to annex Chinese territory themselves in the following years.

In an infamous 1895 cartoon known as the “Knackfuß painting” sent to his cousin Tsar Nicholas II and then presented in the international arena, the Kaiser attempted to stereotype Japan as the yellow peril to isolate Japan from the West. Anglo-American commentators largely considered the rhetoric as propaganda in line with the Kaiser’s *Weltpolitik* (“World Policy”) imperial expansion into Africa, the violence of which British media cited as a result of German inexperience. Britain, against a violent Germany, rebranded itself as a wise and benevolent force in the world. The Kaiser did not help the German image when he invoked the Huns as an example for German troops to emulate during the 1900 suppression of the Boxers. The Germans would pejoratively be nicknamed “Huns” during the First World War. See Rolf-Harald Wippich, “Japan-enthusiasm in Wilhelmine Germany,” in *Japanese-German Relations, 1895–1945*, eds. Christian Spang and Rolf-Harald Wippich, 61–79 (Routledge, 2006).

progressive observers (and not-progressive ones in empires less allied to Anglo-America), the U.S. adventurism in the Pacific (Hawai'i was also annexed in 1898) was blatant opportunism, the swelling of a young empire caught in the throes of its own masculinity crisis, and intent on acquiring a better foothold in the scramble for China.<sup>11</sup> When Wilhelm II's specter of Japan as the yellow peril reemerged in the lead-up to the Russo-Japanese War, the white powers squabbled among themselves. A commentator in *The Times* of London opined in May 1904: "When war between Japan and Russia became imminent, a certain section of the Continental Press proclaimed...in its eagerness to curry favor with St. Petersburg, that the coming victories of Russia would deliver civilization from the dreadful menace of the 'yellow peril.' ...A few years ago, very much the same newspapers raised their voices in a similar chorus to warn the peoples of Europe against the American peril. Perhaps the motives which produce the phenomenon in the present case are not that dissimilar from those which produced it in the other."<sup>12</sup>

The Kaiser sought to undermine Theodore Roosevelt's courtship with Japan when his words appeared on the front page of the *New York Times* the day after the signing the Treaty of Portsmouth.<sup>13</sup> Roosevelt, who won a Nobel Peace Prize for hosting the peace talks, was assuredly pro-Japan due to his sense that the Russians sought to close China's "open door"; he

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<sup>11</sup> The scramble for China coincided with the U.S.' own masculinity crisis linked to the waning of the Indian Wars, the completion of the Transcontinental Railroad and the closing of the romanticized Western frontier, a localized version of the closing of global frontiers. As in Europe, the percentage of white working class men in American cities, estranged from their wage labor, rose considerably as feminists called for suffrage. The elites who won the contest of public opinion against the Anti-Imperial League called for extending Manifest Destiny into the Caribbean and across the Pacific so as not to be wedged out of Asia.

<sup>12</sup> *The Times* (London), 12 May 1904: 9.

<sup>13</sup> "Kaiser Says Japan Will Control China," *New York Times*, 6 Sep 1905: 1.

had jested to the Japanese delegation that Japan should try to establish an “Asian Monroe Doctrine.” The short *NYT* article began with a U.S. congressman who was received in Germany, describing the Kaiser as a “man of the Roosevelt type—strong, strenuous, manly, and extraordinarily frank.” Wilhelm II stated that *he* had been the one to initiate the peace talks at the request of his cousin, Tsar Nicholas II, but that *Japan* was now closer to “closing the open door” on the West. Given the anti-Japanese sentiment that swept the U.S. West Coast after the war (Roosevelt’s impassioned pro-Japan and pro-Japanese immigrant speech to Congress in 1906 was met with xenophobic backlash, and his administration was pressed to deliver the 1907 Gentleman’s Agreement), one could say that, in policy terms, the “Continental Press” won the yellow–white peril debate.<sup>14</sup>

With the West bickering and faltering in material and moral terms, which Friedländer

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<sup>14</sup> For Roosevelt’s 1906 speech, see Theodore Roosevelt, “Sixth Annual Message” (3 Dec 1906, *House of Representatives, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States*), in *Major Problems in Asian American History*, eds. Lon Kurashige and Alice Yang, 137–9 (Boston: Cengage Learning, 2017).

Ultimately, Roosevelt would side with the xenophobes for reasons of U.S. “security.” In a 1909 letter to the incoming Secretary of State Philander Knox, Roosevelt expressed his views on Japan, Japanese immigration to America, and the white reaction to both. Aligning with his maxim to “speak softly and carry a big stick,” he cautioned that the U.S. ought to “treat Japan so courteously that she will not be offended more than is necessary” as Japan was a “most formidable military power...influenced by two contradictory feelings”: “self-confidence” for defeating Russia and a “great touchiness” for not being welcomed in the “brotherhood of Occidental nations”—“bitterly humiliated” to find that “even their allies, the English, and their friends, the Americans won’t admit them to association and citizenship, as they admit the least advanced or most decadent European peoples.”

But he argued: “it is necessary to keep them out” to prevent a domestic “race contest” while showing “all possible courtesy...in carrying out this necessarily disagreeable policy of exclusion [while] we should be thoroughly armed, so as to prevent the Japanese from feeling safe in attacking us. Unfortunately, great masses of our people show a foolish indifference to arming, and at the same time a foolish willingness to be offensive to the Japanese.” Although confident in American naval power if war were to come, on the domestic front Roosevelt was concerned with the “civilizational” challenge for the average working class white American. Theodore Roosevelt, “Roosevelt to Philander Chase Knox, 8 February 1909,” Theodore Roosevelt Papers: Library of Congress Manuscript Division [online].

read as a result of feminization and hetero-inflexibility, he viewed a queerly masculine Japan as moving closer to modernity's forefront. With misogyny at the base of his reasoning, Friedländer regarded Japan's rise as the result a virtuous male homosocial and homosexual past toward which Japan remained temporally attuned: a mere thirty-seven years divided the 1867 collapse of the shogunate from the Russo-Japanese War conducted by an impressively modern navy. *Nanshoku* ("male colors") or male-male sexuality, as well as *shudō* ("the way of boys") or adolescent same-sex sexual behavior were detailed in an article of the 1902 volume of the *Jahrbuch* by Iwaya Sazanami, a teacher and writer of children's literature sojourning in Germany; Hirschfeld's entourage began their framing of Japanese sexual pre/modernity by way of Iwaya's contribution.<sup>15</sup>

As Furukawa Makoto has pointed out, an echo of *nanshoku* flourished in Tokyo in the decade between the First Sino-Japanese and Russo-Japanese Wars due to increased nationalist fervor and an association of the traditional same-sex sexuality with *bushidō*<sup>16</sup> or the samurai code. The Japanese government would seek to curtail the uptick in public queer behavior following the war so as to align a "civilizing" Japan with the heteronormativization in the inter-imperial field.<sup>17</sup> Yet, the impulse to stamp out what he saw as a necessary component of civilization—homosexuality—lead Friedländer to conclude that the white powers were only exacerbating their state of degeneration. As he would write in 1908: "every normal youth is more

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<sup>15</sup> Greg Pflugfelder, *Cartographies of Desire: Male-Male Sexuality in Japanese Discourse, 1600–1950* (U of California Press, 1999), 250.

<sup>16</sup> Nitobe Inazō's 1899 English-language *Bushido: The Soul of Japan* popularized the term internationally, providing the West a shorthand for Japanese modernization achieved via a traditional masculine spirit; in Japan, *bushidō* was reworked as an ideology that shaped young men toward the empire's goals.

<sup>17</sup> Furukawa Makoto, "The Changing Nature of Sexuality: The Three Codes Framing Homosexuality in Modern Japan," trans. Angus Lockyer, *U.S.-Japan Women's Journal, English supplement* 7 (1994): 103.

or less capable of physiological friendship...A certain degree of ‘homosexuality’ is consequently quite generally distributed and in addition is necessary for the existence of nations. ...These men are...the born educators of youth, legislators, and military leaders of their people...of more benefit to the human community than if they were to procreate dozens of children. For those who can see, history is full proof of this.” Echoing the Kaiser’s yellow peril rhetoric, he warned: “The continuing misunderstanding of these truths must harm the entire white race to the benefit of the yellow. Behind the 40 million Japanese stand 400 million Chinese.”<sup>18</sup>

Friedländer was not alone in his impression of a Japanese martial valor spawning from *bushidō*, presumed replete with homoerotic prowess. The English poet, philosopher, sexologist and activist Edward Carpenter, citing Iwaya’s article in the 1902 *Jahrbuch*, remarked in his 1914 *Intermediate Types Among Primitive Folk*, that “it is said by well-informed folk that the population in [Satsuma Province] where the love of youths prevail is more manly and robust, while in regions which are void of it the people are softer, more lax, and often more dissolute”; “a remarkable list may be made of well-known heroes of the Russo-Japanese War coming from this general region—among them for instance, Field-Marschals Saigo, Kawamura, and Oyama, and Admirals Togo and Yamamoto.”<sup>19</sup>

Although one might catalogue Friedländer, Carpenter and other early 20<sup>th</sup>-century “pro-gay” Westerners as *minority* viewpoints in what was otherwise a wash of patriarchal heteronormativization for the reproduction and extension of the white race and empire, in fact, their framing of Japan as having a not-quite-civilized masculinity that propelled it threateningly

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<sup>18</sup> Benedict Friedländer, “Seven Propositions (1908),” in *Homosexuality and Male Bonding in Pre-Nazi Germany*, eds. Harry Oosterhuis and Hubert Kennedy, 219–20 (Harrington Park Press, 1991).

<sup>19</sup> Edward Carpenter, *Intermediate Types Among Primitive Folk: A Study in Social Evolution* (NY: Mitchell Kennerley, 1914), 148–9.

to the forefront of modernity against an increasingly effete West, was representative of a *dominant* Western interpretation. What Eve Sedgwick detailed in her 1990 *Epistemology of the Closet*—the universalizing and minoritizing discourses for same-sex relations—were applied by Western sexologists for self/other racialization to the effect that, as Rudi Bleys has put it: “racial evolutionism...impelled [Western] ethnographers to present male-to-male sexuality as ‘endemic’...when applied to non-Western societies...[and] a ‘minority’ model when applied to the West.”<sup>20</sup> Friedländer homosexualized Japanese *society* but Western *individuals*; his justification for the distinction was his sense of the tolerance of *nanshoku* by a Shinto Japan with one foot in premodernity, awash with communalism, and the other foot in modernity tempered by individuation—unlike the longstanding homophobic consensus of a modern and individuated Christian West. As a medico-juridical regime of truth, sexology associated a perverse (or from Friedländer’s point of view, a rather optimal) regime of pleasure with both the Western/white past and the non-Western/nonwhite present. In his 1976 *History of Sexuality*, Michel Foucault problematically delineated this duality as Western *scientia sexualis* against Eastern *ars erotica*.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Rudi Bleys, *The Geography of Perversion: Male-to-male Sexual Behavior outside the West and the Ethnographic Imagination, 1750–1918* (NYU Press, 1995), 192.

<sup>21</sup> Foucault’s *scientia sexualis/ars erotica* dualism perpetuates orientalism in spatiotemporal terms. Even if, as David Halperin has argued, that Foucault’s intention was not to himself historicize sexuality as stagist (i.e., premodern sodomy to modern homosexuality) but rather to elucidate how this was the discursive practice of the West, the problem remains that Foucault does not trouble the notion of the non-West as the site of a static *ars erotica*. Howard Chiang, *After Eunuchs: Science, Medicine, and the Transformation of Sex in Modern China* (Columbia UP, 2018), 131–7, hybridizes Foucault’s dualism to name an “East Asian *scientia sexualis*,” given the internationalization of sexology as intersected with East Asian nation-state formation.

Although not addressing the divide as orientalist due to her own focus on the West, Eve Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet* (U of California Press, 1990), 44–8, famously critiqued it as a misleading “narrative of supersession” since minoritization (identity) and universalization (acts) are supplements of one another. Prior to the homo–hetero binary in early modern and medieval Europe, as Carla Freccer, *Queer/Early/Modern* (Duke UP, 2006), chapter 3, points out, other minoritizing identifiers for designating

As Greg Pflugfelder has noted, Foucault's dualism is "clearly inadequate," since sexology "found its way to Japan within decades, if not years, of its articulation"; moreover, it was "not unidirectional," since Western sexologists relied not just upon Western ethnographers, but also Japanese interlocutors (such as Iwaya cited above) to make claims about Japan as part of the universal.<sup>22</sup> Minoritized homosexuality found translation into the Japanese vernacular by the early Taisho period (1912–26) as *dōseiai* ("same-sex love") whereas Western framings of *nanshoku* and *shudō* as "endemic" would be critiqued by Japanese sexologists as stereotype.

Pflugfelder cites a notable response to Friedländer: Tanaka Kōgai who, in 1924, charged the German sexologist with a "flawed understanding of history." Tanaka argued that in Friedländer's sourcing of valor from male-male sexual practice rather than the sexual practice sourced from Japan's "peculiar," isolated Tokugawa era (1603–1868), the German was "reversing the true relationship of cause and effect."<sup>23</sup> As Rainer Herrn writes, the ethnologist Ferdinand Karsch-Haack also critiqued Friedländer for classifying Japanese homosexuality as hypervirile for domestic political goals (that is, the homosexual emancipation movement in Wilhelmine Germany), while disregarding female homosexuality and "feminine" male homosexuality. But although Karsch-Haack was able to recognize that Friedländer's views were colored by his position as an "Occidental-Christian," neither man could shed the construction of Japan as a country whose premodern, homo-tolerant sexual norms were gradually being ruined by the adoption of modern sexual prejudices.<sup>24</sup> In their estimation, homosexuals were an

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and controlling sexual/racial otherness arose and receded. Pflugfelder, *Cartographies of Desire*, 7, writes that in Tokugawa Japan, too, there was a "formidable array of juridical mechanisms for regulating male-male erotic behavior."

<sup>22</sup> Pflugfelder, *Cartographies of Desire*, 7, 13.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 279–80.

<sup>24</sup> Herrn, "Magnus Hirschfeld's *Onnagata*," 379–80.

indispensable global minority that should be accepted and appreciated in every culture, a humanist truth with which the East—at least around the time of the Russo-Japanese War—was more closely and threateningly attuned.

Keith Vincent has argued that early 20<sup>th</sup>-century Japan would come to reject the “truth” of a “good” homosexuality. Vincent outlines how Japanese sexual modernity was delineated by a “two-timing” nostalgia for the premodern era so as to maintain a core of tradition upon which to build civilizational difference from the West, but ultimately broad disavowal and a quarantining of premodern sexuality like *nanshoku* to the past. By the 1920s, homosexuality was largely framed in Japan as *hentai seiyoku* or sexual perversion.<sup>25</sup> However, when zooming out to the inter-imperial field, what is striking about the early 20<sup>th</sup> century is how the rising material power of the East signaled a perceptible end to Europe’s civilizational models in both Western and Eastern eyes as progressive observers regarded the West’s worst impulses as surfacing.<sup>26</sup> Eastern

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<sup>25</sup> In his *Two-Timing Modernity: Homosocial Narrative in Modern Japanese Fiction* (Harvard UP, 2012), Keith Vincent analyzes the shape of Japanese sexual modernity through an investigation of canonical Japanese literature such as that of Mori Ōgai’s 1909 *Vita Sexualis* and Natsume Sōseki’s 1914 *Kokoro*. His formulation of a “two-timing modernity” coheres with that of Marilyn Ivy, *Discourses of the Vanishing: Modernity, Phantasm, Japan* (U of Chicago Press, 1995), 241: Japan’s need to conduct a search for “authentic survivals of premodern, prewestern Japanese authenticity..., inescapably a modern endeavor, [but] essentially enfolded within the historical condition that it would seek to escape.”

For a critique of Vincent, see Kazuyoshi Kawasaka, “Contradictory Discourses on Sexual Normality and National Identity in Japanese Modernity,” *Sexuality & Culture* 22.2 (2018): 593–613.

<sup>26</sup> For the turn of the century West as faltering morally, consider the rhetoric of Mark Twain of the Anti-imperial League, who in his 1901 satirical essay, “To the Person Sitting in Darkness,” *The North American Review* 172.131 (Feb 1901): 161–76, critiqued the extortion and violence of all the Western powers in China (the quelling of the Boxer Rebellion in 1900), as well as the American backstabbing of Filipino revolutionaries. The “person” was the supposed object of civilization, Manchurian or Filipino, who as a subject “observing and noting” the stream of invading powers—the “Disseminators of Progress” in the form of a “Blessings-of-Civilization Trust”—thinks to himself: “It is yet *another* Civilized Power, with its banner of the Prince of Peace in one hand and its loot-basket and its butcher-knife in the other. Is there no salvation for us but to adopt Civilization and lift ourselves *down* to its level?”

ethics and “traditional” social cohesion—whether one read queer sexuality as a boon or a hindrance to that cohesion—were imagined by East and West observers as potential models to help cure a decadent, over-individuated and violent West. Many in the West regarded the East as perilously threatening to become the disseminator of moral and perhaps eventually material progress. As Colleen Lye has succinctly put it, the yellow racial form came to mark the “appearance of the otherness of Western modernity to itself”: yellow peril discourse as the enunciation of white anxiety about a coming modernity when the “temporal hierarchization of Self and Other is reversed or abolished.”<sup>27</sup> The rapid industrial and military rise of a racially-other and democratizing (or individuating) Japan that defeated an autocratic white power in 1905, as well as the ongoing material impasse of China for colonial interests,<sup>28</sup> destabilized the epistemological undergirding of *scientia sexualis*: the scientific racism that divvied the world in temporal terms: stagnantly primitive, barbaric, degenerating, civilized, over-civilized and decadent. Although only a minority of thinkers, such as Friedländer, came to view heteronormativization itself as a sign of white degeneration, more and more thinkers did begin to view excessive inflexibility against “queer”/racial otherness as a hindrance to imperial health.

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<sup>27</sup> Colleen Lye, *America's Asia: Racial form and American literature, 1893–1945* (Princeton UP, 2005), 17, 56. The “peril” of an imagined Japan-China bloc was in the rendering of Asia as fully-fledged within modernity while exposing Western vulnerability to degeneration. The U.S.’ attempted postwar production of a “model modernity” in Asia coheres with the postwar coding of Asian Americans as model minorities.

<sup>28</sup> Unlike Africa, which fell to the European onslaught (with the exception of Ethiopia that warded off Imperial Italy until 1934), China was considered uncolonizable by any single power; in the 1930s, Japan would be quagmired after invading China. Those who fought on the side of the 1850–64 Taiping Rebellion labeled the intruding Westerners as barbaric, but even after the civil war and the steady erosion of the Qing Empire’s sovereignty under the pressure of Britain, France and Russia—and the coding of China as the “Sick Man of Asia” in need of protection from itself—China still marked the spatiotemporal limit of the European models for modernity. This limit was reflected in the suppression of the 1900 Boxer Rebellion: “several small men” (Euro-America plus Japan) were needed to quell the ire of “one giant child” or “old man” (China), a spectacle of mass impotence and mutual castration.

Reaction to this destabilization of scientific racism in the West took a binary form. On the one hand, the white world clamped down on white heteropatriarchy, rendering yellowness as perilously queer, as seen in the increased anti-Asian agitation and anti-immigrant laws in white colonial and settler colonial societies: from the U.S. 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act and alien land laws following the Russo-Japanese War, the Anglo-American rejection of Japan's 1919 Racial Equality Proposal after the First World War (on behalf of an Australia anxious about its white settlement policy), the cementation in U.S. law that Asians are "not white" (e.g., *Ozawa v. United States* [1922]) and ultimately the U.S.' 1924 Immigration Act.<sup>29</sup> As Nayan Shah has investigated, white heterosexual social reproduction in the U.S. was normativized partially against Chinatowns in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, as white onlookers viewed the spaces as queer and uncouth, with an overabundance of bachelors, prostitutes and contagions, the perceived deviancy and unassimilability of the male laborers framed in terms of racial otherness (a "barbarian horde" of China) rather than the U.S.' own immigration policies, such as the 1875 Page Act that exacerbated the dearth of female Chinese immigrants.<sup>30</sup> In contrast to the excluded Chinese, by the time of the Russo-Japanese War with Japan's "graduation" into civilization eliciting Japanophilia internationally, Japanese immigrant male laborers were perceived as more sexually normative, but also as bringing the threat of miscegenation by bachelor Japanese thought to be pursuing white females, and replacing or surpassing the white male working class (Japanese men, like their empire, regarded as exceedingly efficient). U.S. white xenophobes read Japanese immigration as a conspiracy to weaken the white race in their "own" country. After the 1907 Gentleman's Agreement, most Japanese immigrants were the wives of male Issei residents,

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<sup>29</sup> For Japan's proposal, see Naoko Shimazu, *Japan, Race, and Equality: the Racial Equality Proposal of 1919* (Routledge, 2003).

<sup>30</sup> Nayan Shah, *Contagious Divides* (U of California Press, 2001).

which only accelerated family formation and reproduction as the xenophobes framed the quick rise of U.S.-born Nisei as an invasion by a non-Christian civilization.<sup>31</sup> As Iyko Day has importantly formulated, Asian racialization in white settler colonial societies (America, Canada, Australia) is undergirded by a “romantic anticapitalism”: whiteness configured as worthy, normative and natural social reproduction and expansion on colonized land against Asianness associated with the artificial, perverse, abstract evils of industrial capital and labor, such as its dehumanizing/inhuman, estranging, mechanistic and I would add, emasculating qualities.<sup>32</sup>

Yet, on the other hand, the white powers also sought to incorporate the other into the self through measured racial egalitarianism and sexual flexibility: the 1902 Anglo-Japanese Alliance, musings on the “white peril” during the Russo-Japanese War, and the T. Roosevelt administration’s pro-Japan policy goals and rebuke of U.S. West Coast anxieties about Japan as somehow practicing *imperium in imperio* by way of unassimilable migrants. An additional layer of deliberated subject-object temporal reversal, or as David Palumbo-Liu terms the phenomenon, “racial schizophrenia,” factored into the contemplations of many observers and policymakers.<sup>33</sup> As a 1904 editorial in *The Times* of London noted, the “irony” of the soon-to-commence war between Japan and Russia was that “the Asiatic Power represents the forces of civilizing progress, and the European Power those of mechanical repression.” The author could not

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<sup>31</sup> Eiichiro Azuma, *Between Two Empires: Race, History and Transnationalism in Japanese America* (Oxford UP, 2005), 9.

<sup>32</sup> Iyko Day, *Alien Capital: Asian Racialization and the Logic of Settler Colonial Capitalism* (Duke UP, 2016), introduction.

<sup>33</sup> David Palumbo-Liu, *Asian/American: Historical Crossings of a Racial Frontier* (Stanford UP, 1999), 388, borrows “schizophrenia” from Deleuze and Guattari’s 1987 *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* to refer to how “under capitalism...there is no fixed authority to anchor and legitimate a schizophrenic diagnosis.” At 321–5, Palumbo-Liu discusses the symptoms of a lack of wholeness appearing in the white psyche in the context of 1970s/80s neoliberalism/postmodernism, but here I am suggesting an earlier manifestation with the “appearance” of the yellow peril.

pinpoint the source of the repression in the established racial schema, stating that the “European Power [Russia] is also semi-Asiatic, and this war must settle whether the Oriental element in her Empire—an element very different in character to that represented by Japan—is to preponderate decisively in determining its nature.”<sup>34</sup>

The early 20<sup>th</sup> century white psyche vis-à-vis rising nonwhite power and progress became schizophrenic about its wholeness as a modern race, racializing not just on the basis of a self-configuration against the queer and presumed less-modern other, but with greater concern with the interiority of the other: the other’s racialization of the white self. As Palumbo-Liu has suggested, the ethnic duality of the racial subject (e.g., W.E.B. Du Bois’ formulation of “double-consciousness” for African Americans) is a psychic phenomenon that ought to also, in fact, be extended as well to whites, even if the “neither-nor formula of marginality was not as pernicious for the Euroamerican subject [who was]...placed at the center of a modern teleology.”<sup>35</sup> As Whiteness studies scholar Veronica Watson has interpreted, Du Bois “intervene[d] in the specter of white double-consciousness” by claiming the split-subject position for subjugated blackness in his 1903 *Souls of Black Folk* with the goal to “‘unveil’ whiteness to itself by challenging and undermining supremacist ideologies that were being touted as...mental health.”<sup>36</sup> On a greater basis than against the Asiatic other, white heterosexual social reproduction in the U.S. was rendered normative against blackness associated with sexual deviance, hypervirility and licentiousness—stereotypes scientized by sexological discourse on Africa that extended anti-

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<sup>34</sup> *The Times* (London), 6 Feb 1904: 11. Cited at Ikura Akira, “Japan under Paternalism: The Changing Image of Japan during the Russo-Japanese War,” in *Rethinking the Russo-Japanese War, 1904–5, vol. 2: The Nichinan Papers*, eds. John Chapman and Chiharu Inaba, 257–73 (Brill, 2007), 267.

<sup>35</sup> Palumbo-Liu, *Asian/American*, 321.

<sup>36</sup> Veronica Watson, *The Souls of White Folk: African American Writers Theorize Whiteness* (U of Mississippi Press, 2013), 56.

blackness post-emancipation.<sup>37</sup>

But with the quick rise of Asia and the destabilization of scientific racism at the *fin de siècle*, racial schizophrenia manifested as the trans-imperial crises in masculinity and entered the medico-juridical field as a form of illness affecting the “over-civilized.” The etiology of the mid-19<sup>th</sup>-century to WWII, highly-diagnosed psychosexual disorder, neurasthenia, was presumed to be industrialization and civilization itself: the modern life of the mind and lack of cultivation of primal instinct thought to whittle away at a man’s virility.<sup>38</sup> As the “cured” neurasthenic, and a hero of the Spanish-American War whose man-child frontiersman masculinity was celebrated during his presidency—and, too, he was a fan of *bushidō* masculinity—Theodore Roosevelt put it in 1899: “Unless we keep the barbarian virtues, gaining the civilized ones will be of little avail.”<sup>39</sup>

Racial schizophrenia also took hold in Asia with the imposition of an East–West sexual modernity such that many in Asia appropriated “Asian” or “Asiatic,” and even “yellow” and “brown” as positive identifiers against whiteness.<sup>40</sup> In Japan, “Asia” (particularly China and

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<sup>37</sup> See Siobhan Somerville, *Queering the Color Line: Race and the Invention of Homosexuality in American Culture* (Duke UP, 2000).

<sup>38</sup> As Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization* (Chicago UP, 1995), chapter 3, has discussed, neurasthenia had symptoms of lethargy, insomnia, impotence, headaches, depression and suicidality. Masturbation was not considered an act of freeing one’s primal instinct, but rather a symptom of enervation, described by the American psychologist Stanley Hall as “far more common among the civilized than among savage races” (101).

<sup>39</sup> This was stated in an 1899 letter from Roosevelt to Stanley Hall, as cited at Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization*, 100–1. Roosevelt received his copy of Nitobe’s *Bushido: The Soul of Japan* from Kaneko Kentarō, discussed below.

<sup>40</sup> As Naoki Sakai, “‘You Asians’: on the historical role of the West and Asia binary,” in *Japan after Japan: Social and Cultural Life from the Recessionary 1990s to the Present*, eds. Tomiko Yoda and Harry Harootunian, 167–94, (Duke UP, 2006), 169, explains, the colonization and attempted colonization of Asia (Japan, China and Siam/Thailand retained semi-autonomy) was “essential to the possibility called Asia”; “insofar as the *post* of postcoloniality is not confused with ‘that which comes after’ in chronological

Korea) came to be viewed as not only civilizationally-delayed or stagnant, but as sites of barbaric virtues, whereas the West appeared as a site of probable degeneration such that civilizing Japanese masculinity was triangulated against white and Asian otherness.<sup>41</sup> Just how much “civilization” from the West ought to be adopted was hotly debated in Japan’s last decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, given the presumed tendency of it to feminize, just as Friedländer presumed of it.<sup>42</sup>

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ordering, Asia was a postcolonial entity from the outset.” For Asianism as a response to the imposition of Western colonialism, see Chapter 2.

<sup>41</sup> Ever since Japan’s forced entrance into colonial modernity in the 1850s, its ontological security has depended upon the production of a Japanese “self” that is beyond the white particularization of it, as well as ongoing differentiation from China and the rest of Asia. On Japan’s engagement with Western racialization and the transitions from *jinshu* 人種 (or roughly “race” in the Blumenbachian or Gobineaurian sense of an evolutionary hierarchy with “white” on top), to *minzoku* 民族 or roughly “ethnicity” that cohered with Japanese universalization and imperial expansion (c.f., the 1920s/30s rejections of essentialized race among U.S. anthropologists and sociologists like Franz Boas and Robert Park), to the present-day *nihonjin* 日本人 or “Japanese” (aligned with Japan’s postwar reversion to monoculturalism), see Yuko Kawai, “Deracialized Race, Obscured Racism: Japaneseness, Western and Japanese Concepts of Race, and Modalities of Racism,” *Japan Studies* 35.1 (2015): 23–47.

On Japan’s racialization of China and greater Asia, see Oguma Eiji, “Postwar Japanese Intellectuals’ Changing Perspectives on ‘Asia’ and Modernity,” trans. Roger Brown, *The Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus* 5.2 (Feb 2007) [online]. To briefly summarize, after its triumph in the 1895 First Sino-Japanese War, Japan operated under the presumption of a pejorative view of Asia as backward but grew increasingly frustrated with the West that presumed a backwardness of Japan. To redress the racism and “overcome modernity,” Japan officially shifted toward its violent “Asia for Asians” policy in the 1930s. After defeat, the influential Sinologist Takeuchi Yoshimi posited in a 1949 essay that Japan had merely ridden the coattails of Western imperialism, carrying out aggression against “Asia.” Mao’s communist victory that same year suggested an “Asia” resurgent regardless of the spectrum of ideological thought. As Oguma writes, in the minds of particularly conservative Japanese policymakers still today, “Asia” remains a dependent variable: “if relations with the West are threatening, [they] extol ties with ‘Asia,’ but when relations with West settle into the background they revert to denunciations of ‘Asia.’” The waning of U.S. global power in the post-Cold War amounts to a threat for Japan that forces the nation to consider a closer relationship with China. Meanwhile, as depicted in early to mid-20<sup>th</sup>-century Western literature about the yellow peril, the potential of a Japan-China bloc is especially dangerous to white supremacy, so whereas the postwar U.S.-Japan alliance has kept such racial anxiety at bay, it is reemerging with China’s rise that strains the alliance.

<sup>42</sup> Jason Karlin, *Gender and Nation in Meiji Japan: Modernity, Loss, and the Doing of History* (U of Hawai’i

Neurasthenia (*shinkeisuijaku* or “nervous breakdown”) as an imported diagnosis took hold during Japan’s colonial expansion, as Sabine Frühstück has investigated.<sup>43</sup>

## 1.2 Historicizing Queerness in the Transpacific

Thus, reflections on the “queer” in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century intersected with both East and West racialization in the construction of a conflicted and unstable modernity yet to unfold. Powers East and West sought to “out-queer” one another in their incorporation/disavowal of the other so as to stabilize modernity in their favor and justify violence for access to capital. To say that empire “queers” is not to suggest that Queer theory has been falsely critical in light of the fact that now, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, many non-heteronormative subjects have acquired sexual citizenship in many nations. Rather, queerness is the site of the other not-yet incorporated/disavowed by empire, instrumentalizable for both critical and complicit agendas.<sup>44</sup>

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Press, 2014), chapter 1.

<sup>43</sup> Sabine Frühstück, “Male Anxieties: Nerve Force, Nation and the Power of Sexual Knowledge in Modern Japan,” *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 15.1 (2005): 71–88.

<sup>44</sup> I draw my sense of an ontology for queerness in part from a longstanding debate that was taken up a 2005 panel at a conference of the Modern Language Association: see Robert Caserio, et al., “The Antisocial Thesis in Queer Theory,” *PMLA* 121.3 (2006): 819–28. The debate centered around Lee Edelman’s polemical 2004 book *No Future* (Duke UP) that posits “reproductive futurism” as the sexual/temporal norm that Queer theory and politics should be oriented against. In his 2009 *Cruising Utopia* (NYU Press), José Esteban Muñoz responded that, given that racialized populations are often violently positioned in ways that undercut their futurity, queer politics can only be future-oriented: “queerness is not yet.” My sense is that Edelman’s and Muñoz’ positions actually overlap considerably, even if Edelman seems to rhetorically neglect race. As Edelman responded to his critics: “Neither liberal inclusionism...nor the redemptive hope of producing brave new social collectivities can escape the insistence of the antisocial... [A]nxiety strikes only what’s organized, [so] we must note as well that organization depends on internal antagonism” (Caserio, et al.: 821). Both Edelman and Muñoz configure queerness as beyond the edge of a symbolic system, and though the “child” is the figure Edelman pinpoints in his book, his psychoanalytical approach permits the problem of “reproductive futurity” to more broadly include homonormative social

By using “queer” in this fashion, I am rejecting the Hegelian vision of civilization as a dialectical movement of progress while turning to Theodor Adorno’s critique of Hegel: what appears as progress is actually the increasing administration of difference into a capitalist totality.

Imperial queering on the East–West divide can be seen when juxtaposing the trial of Oscar Wilde with the First Sino-Japanese War, events that appeared side-by-side in newspapers in 1895: Japan breaking through the material gridlock of China for/against the West as Britain came to embrace the nonwhite “queer” other against a “degenerating” Russia (the 1902 Anglo-Japanese Alliance) while also attempting to excise queerness at home. The 1907–9 Eulenburg Affair (the purging of homosexuals from Wilhelm II’s cabinet and entourage) can be read in tandem with Germany’s yellow peril rhetoric and weakening position in the East before Japan, in alliance with Anglo-America, would expel Germany from Asia during the First World War. Jumping to mid-century, the U.S. occupation of Japan and the lifting of Asian exclusion in U.S. immigration law so as to become “racially-inclusive” in the face of Soviet and Maoist rhetoric and avert the threat of an “Oriental” communism, occurred as a domestic Lavender Scare conflated homosexuality with communism and the Orient.<sup>45</sup>

Prewar racial egalitarianism, underpinned by racial schizophrenia, has been largely overlooked in Asian American studies due to the emphasis the field has placed on the trajectory of exclusionary-to-inclusionary immigration law—the 1924 and 1965 Immigration Acts as the poles—whereby Japanese internment is often cited as the contradictory “moment” between the two paradigms. Yet, as Lon Kurashige has usefully phrased it, the prewar racial egalitarianism

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reproduction—for example, Friedländer’s 1908 claim that homosexuality is “necessary for the existence of nations.”

<sup>45</sup> See Naoko Shibusawa, “The Lavender Scare and Empire: Rethinking Cold War Antigay Politics,” *Diplomatic History* 36.4 (2012): 723–52.

was the “second face of exclusion.”<sup>46</sup> Another way to think about the supplementary face is to recognize it as the progressive side of white empire-building across the trajectory of 19<sup>th</sup>- to 20<sup>th</sup>-century U.S. racial capitalism and settler colonialism: just as the mid-19<sup>th</sup>-century debate about slavery and abolition did not question Manifest Destiny, both Asian exclusion and egalitarianism were oriented toward maximizing the success of the empire’s goals in Asia. In an inter-imperial framework, racial egalitarianism does not appear as an emergent paradigm in early 20<sup>th</sup>-century international relations that would take effect only in the postwar, but as a *dominant* one also in the prewar, as exemplified by the now largely-forgotten yellow–white peril debate. As I will discuss in the next section using a queer psychoanalytic framework, the U.S.-Japan relation in particular can be understood along the lines of a transpacific homoerotics: a flirting with egalitarianism or a “same-sex marriage” between two masculinist “equals,” but that went unconsummated until the postwar, after the U.S. violently secured an asymmetry of power.

The queering of empire is also visible in sites of exclusion that foreshadowed the humanist “freedoms” yet to come. As Madeline Hsu has argued, in order to understand the bachelor era of Chinese American history on its own terms, its homosociality should be divorced from a “discomfiting deviation from heterosexual family norms,” as Chinese male immigrants often found freedom in America from the expectations of familial piety in China—a “freedom” now understood as problematically intertwined with U.S. exceptionalism.<sup>47</sup> Although Chinese coolies, as Moon-Ho Jung has explained, were regarded by white capitalists as a necessary labor force in the U.S. post-slavery,<sup>48</sup> the coolie as evocative of an unmanageable excess of otherness

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<sup>46</sup> Lon Kurashige, *Two Faces of Exclusion: The Untold History of Anti-Asian Racism in the United States* (UNC Press, 2016).

<sup>47</sup> Madeline Hsu, “Unwrapping Orientalist Constraints: Restoring Homosocial Normativity to Chinese American History,” *Amerasia Journal* 29.2 (2003): 229–53.

<sup>48</sup> Moon-Ho Jung, *Coolies and Cane: Race, Labor, and Sugar in the Age of Emancipation* (Johns Hopkins UP,

was barred on account of racial difference in 1882, and Japanese and Mexican immigrant labor filled the gap. The U.S. Empire's formula for management of sexual/racial otherness remained "undiscovered" until 1943, the lifting of Chinese exclusion and the fabrication of liberal multiculturalism.<sup>49</sup> In terms of Japanese America and the "freedoms" yet to come, Amy Sueyoshi has written on the sojourning author and poet Yone Noguchi who, at the opening of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, could live a more queer life in America as an excluded other but adopted a more heteronormative life when returning to Japan.<sup>50</sup> As Tina Takemoto has noted, an irony of Japanese internment is that while nationalist wartime rhetoric coaxed Nisei men to disavow queerness and distance themselves from stereotypes of Asian effeminacy to become masculine U.S. patriots, incarceration simultaneously disrupted the heteropatriarchal norms of everyday Japanese American life.<sup>51</sup> Internment and its afterlife were thus not only about containing racial-sexual otherness for the bolstering of U.S. white heteropatriarchy for the Pacific War and beyond, but a workshop for a U.S.-led modernity grounded in earlier progressive notions of "manageable" egalitarianism and eventually, by the end of the Cold War, heteroflexibility as global bellwethers of the civilized (see Chapter 3 for "queering internment").

David Palumbo-Liu has summarized how the U.S.' othering of Asia and the "Asia within" is a symptom of its own racial frontier: Asia marks the spatiotemporal limit of U.S.

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2006).

<sup>49</sup> For U.S. "liberal multiculturalism," see Jodi Melamed, *Represent and Destroy: Rationalizing Violence in the New Racial Capitalism* (U of Minnesota Press, 2011). For this governmentality in the inter-imperial arena, I use the term "liberal-pluralism."

<sup>50</sup> Amy Sueyoshi, *Queer Compulsions: Race, Nation, and Sexuality in the Intimate Life of Yone Noguchi* (U of Hawai'i Press, 2012).

<sup>51</sup> Tina Takemoto, "Looking for Jiro Onuma: A Queer Meditation on the Incarceration of Japanese Americans during World War II," *GLQ* 20.3 (2014): 241–75, 246. Takemoto is comparing the insights of Greg Robinson and John Howard.

modernity for a “new world” against the European imperial models.<sup>52</sup> As Susan Koshy has put it, U.S. Asian racialization can be understood in terms of a trajectory of “sexual naturalization” in accordance with the nation’s fulfillment of its “extraterritorial desire” to be at the forefront of modernity through imperial expansion into Asia—the U.S.-Japan alliance established only after Japan was deemed sufficiently subjugated. After Imperial Russia collapsed in 1917 and the Anglo-Japanese Alliance was severed in 1923, Japan and the U.S. became the main competitors in the Pacific. U.S. Asian exclusion and anti-miscegenation laws lifted only as Pax Americana cemented with Japan’s defeat—the fallen empire’s own multiculturalist aspirations shifted almost immediately toward monoculturalism. In the postwar U.S., white male–Asian female social reproduction increased with proxy war-making against Soviet Russia and Maoist China, as many Japanese, Korean and Vietnamese women became “war brides.”<sup>53</sup>

Yet, even as white heteropatriarchy was materially re-entrenched after WWII—a control that appears to be re-fraying with the post-Cold War waxing of China—as a general trend across the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the material power of nonwhites and females rose so that a semiotics of consolidating white heteropatriarchy in literal white, heterosexual, male terms proved increasingly untenable. Humanist individuation demanded that after the Japanese defeat of a “stagnant” China in 1895 and a “degenerated” Russia in 1905, the American defeat of a “perilous” Japan and a “barbaric” Germany in 1945, followed by the collapse of a “still degenerated” Russia in 1991—securing what Francis Fukuyama prematurely celebrated as the “end of history”—sexual and gender minorities should follow racial minorities as part of the integrated self of progressive empire: what Jasbir Puar in 2007 coined “homonationalism.”<sup>54</sup> A

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<sup>52</sup> Palumbo-Liu, *Asian/American*.

<sup>53</sup> Susan Koshy, *Sexual Naturalization: Asian Americans and Miscegenation* (Stanford UP, 2004).

<sup>54</sup> Jasbir Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times* (Duke UP, 2007).

“barbaric” Islamic world and a “perilous” China remain on the U.S.’ horizon of otherness, framed as threats to civilizational progress in a period of dwindling planetary resources and environmental degradation. The relative lack today of LGBT rights in Japan, China, Russia, or the Islamic world, and so on, are projected as a delay of those powers in adopting a “civilized” orientation.

Homonationalism as a critical concept has been rightly critiqued for relegating the non-West as either derivative, delayed or outside the production of modernity. I agree with Puar’s critics insofar as, firstly, homonationalism defined in terms of a West–rest framework problematically extends the orientalism of Foucault’s *scientia sexualis–ars erotica* duality. As currently defined, homonationalism neglects how liberal-pluralist governmentality emerged in the transwar transpacific competition. Takashi Fujitani has shown how the Japan-U.S. rivalry over how to respectably “deal with” minorities in their respective empires pushed each empire to become “less racist” than their cross-Pacific competitor.<sup>55</sup> Along with the movements for Afro-Asian independence that led to the downfall of the European imperial models by midcentury, the trajectory of Imperial Japan delimited the form that a U.S.-led global white supremacy could take: racial egalitarianism that, as I have been arguing, is intertwined with heteroflexible empire-building. Secondly, homonationalism as linked to an ascendancy of whiteness is too limiting in explanatory force given the U.S. imperial decline. Not incidentally, as Petrus Liu has pointed out, Queer theory arose and spread unevenly across the global academy at the end of the Cold War—a regime of knowledge and critique that continues to have trouble developing a program beyond the disruption of a U.S.-led liberal-pluralism due to the situatedness of its interlocutors.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Takashi Fujitani, *Race for Empire: Koreans as Japanese and Japanese as Americans during World War II* (U of California Press, 2011).

<sup>56</sup> Petrus Liu, *Queer Marxism in Two Chinas* (Duke UP, 2015), 25–9, points out that Queer theory was “born

Rather than dismiss homonationalism, what I have been working toward here is a more transpacific historicization of its emergence, including roots as early as the inter-imperial scramble for China and the racial schizophrenia of that era.

### **1.3 The Prewar Unconsummated “Same-sex Marriage” of the U.S. and Japan**

For the rest of this chapter, I will expound upon the early 20<sup>th</sup>-century U.S.-Japanese vacillation between homophobic rejection and homosocial embrace of the other so as to enhance the imperial self. My goal is to show how early 20<sup>th</sup>-century progressive calls for racial egalitarianism on both sides of the Pacific were aligned with the imperial drive, but to also begin to locate radical critique of the homosocial imperial embrace. I develop this line of inquiry at length in the next chapter (Chapter 2) on W.E.B. Du Bois and transwar Asianism.

Postcolonial theory has often followed the heteronormative coding of the Orient as feminine (static or passive) for penetration by the masculine West (the flow of modernity), since in psychoanalytic terms this relegates the East to a critically useful status of abjection. Yet, not only did the East reject this gendered binary, imperialism across patriarchal societies East and West, as Hema Chari has pointed out, concerns the subordination of men by men, such that the “other man” fulfills the psychosexual needs of the self: the “predominant trope of the colonial

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in the shadows of the failures of liberal-pluralism,” associated with the ascendancy of the U.S. in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. Liu observes that the East–West divide is actually not present in Eve Sedgwick’s “famous list of ‘axiomatic binarisms’...as the fabric of modern culture, because it is exterior to it”—not to imply that Sedgwick’s thought has been orientalist all along (as I have indicated, her universalizing/minoritizing dialectic is usually seen to cohere with questions of racial othering), but is an example of how Queer theory has generally failed to ask “questions of location and situatedness without reifying alterity.”

enterprise...is [actually] that of male rape.”<sup>57</sup> I read Chari as naming the problem of 20<sup>th</sup>-century modernity, often presumed to be that of white heteropatriarchal ascendancy, to instead be about the management of queerness on the West/non-West fulcrum. By rendering the other as also male, Chari is not rejecting feminist psychoanalysis but extending it: the feminine/queer is the not-yet-incorporated/disavowed by empire, but the *embodied* other is already a “self” of a competing empire (say, e.g., Japan or Russia against America or Britain, or Japan against Russia) or an otherwise phallogentric formation (powers without the reach of an empire, e.g., Korea).



FIGURE 2: 1904–5 *shunga* depicting Japan’s defeat of Russia as male-male rape.  
Artist: unknown. Courtesy: The British Museum.

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<sup>57</sup> Chari, “Colonial Fantasies and Postcolonial Identities: Elaboration of Postcolonial Masculinity and Homoerotic Desire.”

The above art, dated 1904–5, and displayed in a 2013 British Museum exhibit titled “*Shunga: Sex and Pleasure in Japanese Art*,” is striking for a number of reasons. First, it depicts the male-male rape of a Western power by an Eastern one, a queer reversal of the male West–female East trope. Secondly, it presents Japan’s triumph over Russia as the initiation of a masculinist, perverse future—or a rejection of the path for Japanese modernity that Keith Vincent has outlined: Japan as quarantining same-sex sexual behavior to a perverse, premodern past. Third, whereas scholars have indicated that both Japanese and Western artists at the time of the Russo-Japanese War fashioned Japanese men as the “white men of Asia”—giving both Japanese and Russians phenotypically Caucasian features<sup>58</sup>—here that aesthetics is rejected to maintain racial difference. Finally, the medium of the art (*shunga* or traditional woodblock prints that featured images of sensual pleasure) were by the time of the Russo-Japanese War already considered obscene by the Japanese government; a significant crackdown would occur following the war.<sup>59</sup> So, the artist’s choice of same-sex *shunga* could be interpreted as anti-modern defiance; yet, I contend that because this queer ephemera was part of wartime popular culture, as I will explain, it is indicative of a destabilized modernity.

The 2013 exhibit’s curators, who named the image “Bugging the Russian,” describe it as a “particularly savage piece of anti-Russian propaganda.”<sup>60</sup> “Propaganda” seems an exaggeration and likely a misreading of the intentionality, however. While not much is known

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<sup>58</sup> Naoko Shimazu, *Japanese Society at War: Death, Memory and the Russo-Japanese War* (Cambridge UP, 2009), 217–8.

<sup>59</sup> Ishigami Aki and Rosina Buckland, “The Reception of ‘Shunga’ in the Modern Era: From Meiji to the Pre-WWII Years,” *Japan Review* 26 (2013): 52: “The greatest motivation for the suppression of *shunga* was victory in the Russo-Japanese War, and subsequent acknowledgment by the West that Japan was a ‘civilized’ country.”

<sup>60</sup> Timothy Clark, et al, *Shunga: Sex and Pleasure in Japanese Art* (Leiden, Netherlands: Hotei Publishing, 2013), 323.

about this particular image’s production, including the artist, Ishigami Aki writes that portable *shunga* depicting male-female eroticism were often carried into battle during the Tokugawa period, a practice that continued into the First Sino-Japanese and Russo-Japanese Wars prior to the widespread use of photography.<sup>61</sup> They were sold clandestinely by street vendors, and in sets, so one might imagine the above image not purchased as a single unit but within a set of other *shunga* depicting male-female eroticism for soldiers’ entertainment and stress relief. The image is probably political satire, as another known version is glossed with the following text:

<u>Image text</u>	<u>Standard Japanese &amp; English translation/notes</u>
[ロシケ] ワタクシモヲシニソヲデス	[ロシケ] 私もう死にそうです。  “[ <i>Rusky</i> (derogatory term for a Russian)]: <i>I’m already about to die...</i> ”
Wa ta ku shi mo o shi ni so de su	(Romanization of the Russian’s words also appears, likely to indicate his foreignness.) <sup>62</sup>
[日兵] スグトバメヲサシテヤロウ	<sup>にちへい</sup> [日兵] すぐ止めを刺してやろう。  “[ <i>Japanese soldier</i> ]: <i>Soon I’ll deliver the final blow!</i> ”

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<sup>61</sup> Ishigami and Buckland, “The Reception of ‘Shunga’ in the Modern Era,” 44–5.

<sup>62</sup> Although katakana may be used to indicate “foreigner speak” in present-day Japanese, Japanese orthography had not yet been standardized to that effect at the time of the Russo-Japanese War. The appearance of katakana for the speech of both the Japanese and the Russian probably indicates that their words are spoken aloud, whereas the appearance of romanization for the Russian’s words likely denotes his foreignness. I thank Chris Lowy for this information.

Perhaps the Russian is speaking Japanese with a Russian accent, or more conceivably, the soldiers are speaking in their native tongues, which makes the verbal exchange comedically (and intentionally so) impossible such that only the violent act (the rape) is mutually comprehended.

[ロスケ] ハヤクニケロ

[ロシケ] 速く逃げろ(う)。

“*[Russkies] Quickly, let’s escape!*”<sup>63</sup>

Reading the image as indicative of the modern instead of as anti-modern aligns with my claim that the Russo-Japanese War marked an unsettling of the hitherto racial/sexual schema in the inter-imperial field. The artist satirizes that unsettling in a way that is legible to a relatively broad audience: namely, the average Japanese soldier. As already discussed, discourse emanating primarily from Germany and Russia painted Japan as perilous, while the Japanese and Anglo-Americans rebuffed that chronopolitics: Japan was a model pupil (in Western eyes) or a co-progenitor of civilization (in Japanese eyes). Same-sex rape on the battlefield, though, would have been deemed barbaric by any empire’s standard, so the image mockingly leans into yellow peril discourse by framing Japan for humor’s sake as a “de-civilizing” force in the world.

The Japanese government was so worried about Wilhelm II’s lingering yellow peril propaganda that at the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese War that they sent a pair of diplomats to America and Europe (Kaneko Kentarō and Suematsu Kenchō, respectively) with the express purpose of quashing it. As Naoko Shimazu writes, the two were relieved to find that, among Western elites, they were largely “preaching to the converted.” Most commentators in Japan avoided explicit racial framings in favor of civilizational ones (Japan as “carrying the torch of civilization” against a degenerated Russia), but a minority of commentators did adopt the formulation of Japan as “civilizing yellow” and Russia as “degenerating white” as an indignant response to the yellow peril rhetoric that they presumed to represent Western racial thinking at

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<sup>63</sup> In this version of the image, the nationality of the background soldiers is changed via an alteration to the carried flag: from the Japanese flag (the red sun) to the Russian Imperial Navy flag (a blue X).

its root.

Some within this smaller group reasoned that Anglo-America would only ever be temporarily allied with Japan.<sup>64</sup> One such thinker was Mori Ōgai (1862–1922), the literary giant who was a medical student in Germany in the 1880s where he read German sexology (such as Krafft-Ebing’s 1886 *Psychopathia Sexualis*) that would inform his 1909 novel *Vita Sexualis*; Ōgai is lesser known for his grappling with yellow peril discourse. In a 1904 published lecture titled *Kōkaron Kōgai* (“Outline of the Yellow Peril Concept”), Ōgai reasoned that, given the West’s perception of China’s “shadow,” the Anglo-American support of Japan was structured similarly to the German-Russian rejection:

It is true that we, the Japanese Yellow race, are becoming more and more aligned with the White race, and have even reached the point of fighting other Yellow races as in the recent Boxer Rebellion... [But] like it or not, we must wake up to the fact that we are fated to oppose the White race... if the [Russo-Japanese] war is unfavorable to us, they, the white peoples, will triumph because they could suppress part of the Yellow Peril before its germination. If this war is favorable to us, it is a matter of course that they will try to reduce the prize of our victory and revive the Yellow Peril concept... If we look at this in a wider perspective, the Westerners, while having a trial of strength with Japan, are taking a fearful sideways glance at the great shadow of China... [Some] fear the Japanese and expound the Yellow Peril, [while others] refuse to believe that we really are frightening. That the Chinese might become frightening in the future is merely because they are only a shadow at present.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Shimazu, *Japanese Society at War*, 2, 157–67.

<sup>65</sup> I use a translation from Richard Bowring, *Mori Ōgai and the modernization of Japanese culture* (Cambridge UP, 1979), 116–7. The National Diet Library has a digital version of Ōgai’s 1904 text 黄禍論梗概

In his 1907 *Uta no Nikki* (“Verse Diary”) in which he recounts his experience as a soldier during the Russo-Japanese War, Ōgai included a poem titled *Kōka* (“Yellow Peril”). The following is the first stanza:

勝たば黄禍	負けば野蛮	Yellow peril in victory, barbarian in defeat;
白人ばらの	えせ批判	White peoples’ false criticism.
ほ 褒むとも誰か	よろこばん	At the praise, who rejoices?
そし 誇るを誰か	うれふべき	Who laments the slander? <sup>66</sup>

Significantly in this poem, by dismissively questioning who rejoices or laments the “false criticism” emanating from the white world, Ōgai is advocating for a universalism for Japan beyond the white binary particularization, or what Asian Americanists now call the peril–model binary of Asian racialization.

Kaneko Kentarō (1853–1942), the diplomat sent to the U.S. to address yellow peril discourse and who would solicit Theodore Roosevelt’s help to host the 1905 Treaty of Portsmouth, took another approach. Penning a highly-read 1904 essay in the *North American Review* entitled “The Yellow Peril Is the Golden Opportunity for Japan,” Kaneko leaned into the rhetoric, arguing that Japan was indeed trying to secure an “Asia for the Asiatics,” not unlike the Monroe Doctrine of an “America for the Americans”:

“Blessed are the meek,” is one of the precepts of the Christian faith, “for they shall inherit the earth!” For many years the missionaries have taught this precept to the Asiatics; but it

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(*Kōkaron Kōgai*) here: <http://dl.ndl.go.jp/info:ndljp/pid/798459> (accessed Apr 20, 2020).

<sup>66</sup> My translation of Ōgai’s poem is different from Bowring’s, 120–1. The original Japanese I found through an online search.

has never been practised by the so-called Christian Powers in their dealings with Oriental nations. Indeed, the direct contrary has been the fact; for, many a time during the past fifty years, it has been shown that a nation's surest step to its "disinheritance" of the earth is to be meek and to remain meek. That a cry should arise in the East demanding "Asia for the Asiatics" is thus a natural outcome of the policy which the Christian Powers have pursued in that part of the world. ...If there is a peril in the East, it is not the "Yellow Peril," but the "White Peril"; the former being a mere myth, while the latter is an actual reality. ...The alarm about a "Yellow Peril" takes on the character of a golden opportunity for Europe and America to become acquainted with the real strength and ambitions of Japan. The same cry, moreover, intended to work us injury and disgrace, provides Japan with a golden opportunity to show the world that selfish ambition has no part in the aspirations of her people.<sup>67</sup>

Kaneko's white peril rhetoric cleverly appealed to the American self-image of offering a more virtuous path for civilization than Europe: the Monroe Doctrine of independent states under U.S. leadership (what would later evolve into the Wilsonian vision for global capitalism)—with Japan as a worthy and like-minded partner.

Kaneko's words reflected the attitude of progressive Americans. An author of a February 1905 *New York Times* opinion piece remarked that against the U.S.' 1899 open door policy in China, the other white powers sought a "permanent or indefinite foothold" in China, so readers ought to consider whether "[it is] the 'yellow' or the 'white peril' that menaces the peace of the world, the spread of commerce, the development of general well-being, the progress from lower

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<sup>67</sup> Kentarō Kaneko, "The Yellow Peril Is the Golden Opportunity for Japan," *The North American Review* 179.576 (Nov 1904): 641–8. For analysis, see Iikura Akira, "The Japanese Response to the Cry of the Yellow Peril during the Russo-Japanese War," *Josai International Review* 11 (2006): 29–47.

to higher civilization.” The writer went on:

[The Japanese] are brave, and they are richly endowed with warlike qualities, but they have not been quarrelsome or reckless. ... They have fought in the past and profess to be fighting now for the extension of trade and the suppression of selfish trade monopoly. No Western nation has given such superb and solid guarantees of devotion to that principle. The Japanese may abandon it. They may, if they succeed, fall to the level of Western peoples and become grasping, bellicose, untrustworthy, after the example that Europe has set for them.<sup>68</sup>

Here one sees an expression of the racial other as a model for a better self, while absent is any reflection on the imperial quality of the open door policy.

Perhaps the most well-known at the time, but now largely-forgotten, early 20<sup>th</sup>-century white American defender of Japan was the Japanese-fluent Christian progressive Sidney Gulick (1860–1945). Gulick routinely argued in newspapers and in his books for the assimilability of Japanese immigrants in the U.S. as anti-Japanese sentiment increased across his lifetime. During the Russo-Japanese War, Gulick was a theology professor at Doshisha University in Kyoto. In his 1905 *The White Peril in the Far East*, Gulick described Japan’s *sakoku* or isolation period (1633–1853) as the result of the “discovery of the white peril,” or the European empires driven by greed.<sup>69</sup> Gulick argued for a shift in terminology from “oriental”/“occidental” to “communal”/“communo-individual” social orders. Japan, having long been “communal,” he opined, was shifting in many respects toward a “communo-individual” society, whereas autocratic Russia was stuck in the former. A “communal” society does not “recognize the value or the right of the

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<sup>68</sup> “The Yellow Peril,” *New York Times*, 15 Feb 1904: 6.

<sup>69</sup> Sidney Lewis Gulick, *The White Peril in the Far East: an interpretation of the significance of the Russo-Japanese War* (NY: Fleming Revell Co., 1905), 18. Hereafter cited in the text as “WP.”

individual person as such,” has “autocratic absolutism in government; it emphasizes the rights of the superior and the duties of the inferior; it ranks man as superior to woman” (WP 88–90, 108). If Russia triumphed over Japan, the result would be the white peril in the “worst form for it adds hypocrisy to aggressive greed, and cloaks its crimes with the very religion that condemns them.” Russia would conduct a “virtual extermination of the [Japanese] people, for Japan is unconquerable” as well as prompt a partitioning of China among the powers, for Russia represented “absolute imperialism...[that] the yellow man should toil for the white man.” France and Germany, Gulick averred, were similar in ideology to Russia, and although British rule “does not exclude elevating influences” (i.e., racial uplift), it still “signifies enrichment of the white at the expense of the yellow” (158–60). Thus, Gulick surmised, only America partnered with Japan as “equals” could bring lasting peace.

In considering the “true” meaning of a perilous yellowness, Gulick described it as “fifty, a hundred or two hundred years hence,” when—assuming the white peril continued wreaking havoc—China with a “torrent of hatred” would “overwhelm the white man...with modern weapons” (168). But if Japan were to win the present war against Russia, that would help with the desirable and necessary sweeping of the white peril into the dustbin of history. Were Britain and the U.S. to have sided with Russia, the risk of an East–West race war would have accelerated, because “Japan would have followed our lead in counting the war one of race and religion, thus deepening the chasm that separates the East and the West...[Anglo-American] sympathy accorded regardless of race and religion has knit Japan to the West in ways that will be permanent” (176–7). Concluding that the “white peril breeds the yellow peril” (182) and that Russia would no doubt vengefully try to reassert its will in China after defeat, Gulick’s surprising suggestion was for Anglo-America to assist Japan in an expulsion of Russia from

Eastern Siberia, “practically an uninhabited country” (188), making use of the land, and letting Asia develop under the joint leadership of a benevolent Japan–Anglo-American partnership.

In essence, Gulick read the rise of a non-Christian Japan as a catalyst for developing a progressive and racially-integrated Christian future. At the root of his thinking was a teleological outline of colonial modernity such that the white peril was the expression of a sin-prone natural man, and that nonwhites, as a result of their subjugation by it, were in the position of eliciting a modern global spiritual awakening, provided they continued to civilize themselves, including Christianizing in due course.

How Gulick would factor Japan’s 1910 annexation of Korea into his teleological outline is worth considering. I quote from his 1914 *The American Japanese Problem* at length:

In view of the white man’s outrageous treatment of the colored races, it is no doubt difficult for Asiatics to see any justification whatever for the white man’s world-wide expansion. As a matter of fact, however, this whole situation has been practically inevitable. It has arisen out of the long ages of divergent evolution producing diverse races, languages and civilizations. Some peoples are inevitably in advance of others on specific lines of development. Any race developing as the white has developed would have entered on the same course of world-discovery and conquest and would have treated alien races in the same way. It is hard for conquered races to acknowledge that they themselves are in part to blame for the way in which they have been treated. Japanese partial loss of sovereignty from 1853 to 1899, however, was due to her defective civilization and laws which allowed inhuman treatment of individuals charged with crime and to the intolerance of all aliens. . . .If China is finally partitioned among the “powers,” it will really be through Chinese political incompetence. Japanese absorption of Korea

was likewise due to Korean political corruption and incompetence. The White Peril, accordingly, is not to be conceived as due exclusively to wanton aggression. . . . But the time has come for whites and yellows and browns and blacks to seek methods of peace and progress.<sup>70</sup>

To unpack this passage, so long as Japan as the representative of the East, and America as the representative of the West, worked diligently toward a shared destiny to bridge the East–West divide and foster transpacific integration rather than allowing xenophobic race conflict to boil over, any ethical hiccups along the way (e.g., the colonization of Korea) were the fault of unfortunate misunderstandings between the leaders of the “advanced” races and/or the inadequacies of the “belated” among them.

This is not to say that Gulick gave a pass to Japanese aggression in Korea (e.g., the bloody suppression of the 1919 March First Movement) and China (e.g., the invasion of Manchuria in 1931), but as Sandra Taylor has explained, Japanese expansionism for Gulick was “repellent only when it produced barbaric behavior”; he was primarily interested in convincing an increasingly anti-Japanese West that the Japanese were not a “brutal people”—at least, no more than Westerners—and “sometimes this necessitated withholding information about their actions until such time as they could be explained and coupled with assurances that such behavior had ceased.”<sup>71</sup> Yet, Gulick’s vision for transpacific peace was contradictorily predicated on the maintenance and naturalization of a racial teleology driving civilizational competition for access to capital, which threatened that peace. He died optimistic in 1945 that a

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<sup>70</sup> Sidney Lewis Gulick, *The American Japanese Problem: a study of the racial relations of the East and the West* (NY: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1914), 244–5.

<sup>71</sup> Sandra Taylor, *Advocate of Understanding: Sidney Gulick and the Search for Peace with Japan* (Kent State UP, 1985), 190, 210.

projected postwar alliance would finally unfurl the transpacific integrationism that he had advocated for decades.

To return to Chari's insight at the beginning of this section, that in queer psychoanalytic terms, the "other man" fulfills the psychosexual needs of the imperial self: one might describe Gulick's preoccupation with Japan as an "equal" other that could stimulate America's better self, or Kaneko's advocacy for U.S.-Japanese cooperation against the white peril, as calls for a "marriage" between the two masculinist powers—a marriage that would go unconsummated in their lifetimes. Ōgai, on the other hand, questioned the formative logic of the egalitarian position, although did not question Japan's own masculinist aims.

Usually, the trope of a "Pacific Marriage" between the U.S. and Japan is reserved for the postwar U.S.-Japan alliance: the U.S. as "father" and Japan as "mother," and their children (the Asian Tiger economies), midwived by Australia, as Neferti Tadiar put it in 1993.<sup>72</sup> The male-female gendering reflects the U.S.' subordination of Japan: during occupation, U.S. policymakers regarded Japanese men, women and children as dependent and malleable subjects for America's Cold War aims that included transforming Japan into a "geisha ally," to use Naoko Shibusawa's phrase.<sup>73</sup> But given how racial schizophrenia permeated the arc of 20<sup>th</sup>-century empire, a masculinist homosociality between the U.S. and Japan—or a queering of empire in an attempt to alleviate racial discord for the overall health of empire—comes into view.

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<sup>72</sup> Neferti Tadiar, "Sexual Economies in the Asia-Pacific Community," in *What Is in a Rim? Critical Perspectives on the Pacific Region Idea*, ed. Arif Dirlik, 183–210 (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1993), 185–7.

For a queering of the "Pacific Marriage," see Chapter 3.

<sup>73</sup> Naoko Shibusawa, *America's Geisha Ally* (Harvard UP, 2006).

## Chapter 2:

### Queering the Color Line within the Color Line: W.E.B. Du Bois and the Transpacific

*“The greatest and most dangerous race problem today is the problem of relations between Asia and Europe: the question as to how far ‘East is East and West is West.’ There is in reality no difference between the reaction to this European idea on the parts of Japan and China. It is a question simply of the method of eliminating it.”*

W.E.B. Du Bois, 1944<sup>74</sup>

*“Everywhere, massed and concentrated power is necessary to accomplish anything worthwhile doing in this muddled world, hoping for a divine Anarchy in some faraway heaven.”*

W.E.B. Du Bois, 1928<sup>75</sup>

This extended chapter is a meditation on the preeminent African American intellectual W.E.B. Du Bois (1868–1963) and his under-examined engagement with the transpacific, and in particular, with Japan. Scholars tend to root Du Bois’ wartime support of Imperial Japan in a presumed or willful ignorance about inter-Asian relations (usually, Sino-Japanese and Korean-Japanese relations), postulating that his preoccupation with race as constructed by the white world made him unduly subordinate Yamatoism that violently placed Japan at the top of an Asian hierarchy or, in some ultranationalist thinkers, a global one.<sup>76</sup> Yet, Du Bois’ realist politics

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<sup>74</sup> W.E.B. Du Bois, “Prospect of a World without Race Conflict,” *American Journal of Sociology* 49 (Mar 1944): 450–6, in *Writings in Periodical Literature by W.E.B. Du Bois, vol. III*, ed. Herbert Aptheker, 184–92 (White Plains, NY: Kraus-Thomson Organization, 1986), 185.

<sup>75</sup> W.E.B. Du Bois, *Dark Princess: A romance* (1928) (NY: Oxford UP, 2007), 204. Hereafter cited in the text as “DP.”

<sup>76</sup> To take a couple of examples of scholars who read Du Bois’ support of Imperial Japan as a matter of race: Yuichiro Onishi, *Transpacific Antiracism: Afro-Asian Solidarity in 20th-Century Black America, Japan,*

should not be confused with his sense of the ontology of race: he did not hypostatize the white world's racial categories, and beyond his pre-1945 vociferous support of Japan was his understanding of an "artificiality" to the empire's aims in the inter-imperial system. To make sense of this artificiality, which he discussed in 1925, requires also returning to his 1899 color line thesis for how he rejected the Manichean futurity for Asia that Asian Americanists now call the peril-model binary of Asian racialization.

This chapter has several goals. First, I provide historical context for Du Bois' views on Japan and China vis-à-vis the international relations construct of "racial equality" to highlight his doubts about transwar racial progressivism. Then, I foreground the "color line within the color line" in his thought to push against scholarship that conflates his political realism with his views on the ontology of race. I raise the likelihood that Du Bois' realpolitik after the First World War was in conversation and alliance with Asianist (regionalist) thinkers in China, Japan and India. In particular, I compare his views at length with those of the Chinese revolutionary Sun Yat-sen (1866–1925) and the Indian nationalist Anand Mohan Sahay (1898–1991). Finally, I offer a queer transpacific reading of Du Bois' 1928 novel *Dark Princess* that triangulates "Japan" in the text alongside the "India-Afro America" heterosexual dyad at the center of the narrative. I argue that the novel does not quite project a utopic Afro Asian future, as is usually interpreted, but

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*and Okinawa* (NYU Press, 2013), 92, writes that Du Bois had a "preoccupation with giving moral, epistemic, and political authority to the concept of race at a scale exceeding the nation-state wedded to gendered and heterosexual normativity," which made him "unable to extricate himself from the strong shaping force of colonial and capitalist modernity." Seok-Won Lee, "The paradox of racial liberation: W.E.B. Du Bois and Pan-Asianism in wartime Japan, 1931–1945," *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* 16.4 (2015): 513–30, 523, 27–8, points out that when Du Bois visited the region in 1936, his itinerary did not include Korea, and the oversight, "whether intentional or not, deprived [him] of an opportunity to see the wider reality of Japanese colonialism." Lee regards Du Bois' summative error to be a result of a conviction in "intrinsic race": "Du Bois adhered to the unfounded hope that East Asia might be a place of liberation for the Asian 'race,' and perhaps by extension the African."

rather in its realist register critiques competing transpacific pluralisms of the transwar period (the “color line within the color line” remains at the end of the narrative). Accordingly, the novel in the interplay of its realist and utopic registers evinces a queer political ontology beyond the strictures of the color line, or what Du Bois calls a “divine Anarchy in some faraway heaven.”

## 2.1 Japan and then China: Thwarted Proposals for Racial Equality

In his 1945 *Color and Democracy*, Du Bois recounted two thwarted proposals for racial equality. The first was the Racial Equality Proposal proffered by the Japanese delegation at the founding convention of the League of Nations in 1919. Woodrow Wilson unilaterally vetoed it on behalf of an Australia anxious about its white settlement policy. Increasingly rejected by its closest allies, Britain and America, humiliated by the U.S.’ 1924 Immigration Act (known in Japan as the *Hainichi iminhō*, or “Anti-Japanese Immigrant Law”) as well as increased Western policy of economic and military containment (such as the 1921–2 Washington Naval Conference and the 1923 dissolution of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance), “Japan,” Du Bois wrote, “gradually turned and began to work toward the hegemony of Asia...the question no longer one of partnership with the West, but one of domination...by an Asiatic imperialism.”<sup>77</sup>

Du Bois is rightfully criticized for his keen support of Japan’s attempt in the 1930s and early 1940s to undermine or even overturn the Anglo-American economic order via its exploitative and violent Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere. In 1936, he praised the empire’s pluralist and semi-socialist experiment, Manchukuo, which along with the Japanese cities of Kyoto, Osaka, Kobe and Tokyo, he visited that year. In 1941, he wrote that Adolf

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<sup>77</sup> W.E.B. Du Bois, *Color and Democracy: Colonies and Peace* (NY: Harcourt Brace & Co, 1945), 6–7.

Hitler's alliance with Japan suggested that even Nazi Germany "apprehends this great truth or else is biding her time before ignoring it": that the nonwhite world would "not remain quiescent" to exploitation by the white world.<sup>78</sup> His critique of Japan's extension of colonial capitalism and violent Yamato racialism he would save until 1945 and Japan's defeat, when he wrote:

So far as Japan was fighting against color caste, and striving against the domination of Asia by Europeans, she was absolutely right. But so far as she tried to substitute for European, an Asiatic caste system under a 'superior' Japanese race, and for the domination and exploitation of the peasants of Asia by Japanese trusts and industrialists, she was offering Asia no acceptable exchange for Western exploitation.<sup>79</sup>

I will return to the matter of Du Bois' support of Imperial Japan in the next section.

The second thwarted proposal he named in *Color and Democracy* was the one formulated by the Chinese delegation in the run-up to the founding of the United Nations, the 1944 Dumbarton Oaks Conference. Du Bois noted that China's proposal was "suppressed" by the

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<sup>78</sup> W.E.B. Du Bois, "Neuropa: Hitler's New World Order," *The Journal of Negro Education* 10.3 (1941): 386.

<sup>79</sup> W.E.B. Du Bois, "Winds of Time," *Chicago Defender*, 25 Aug 1945, in *Newspaper Columns by W.E.B. Du Bois, vol. II*, ed. Herbert Aptheker, 650 (White Plains, NY: Kraus-Thomson Organization, 1986).

Although his reading of Japan's imperial project as a whole would ultimately be negative, he only had praise for Manchukuo, Japan's pluralist experiment, during his 1936 tour there. Referring to Manchuria as the "natural mainland of the isles of Japan" in the context of Japan "surrounded with guns pointing at her heart," he cast Japan and the West in conversation: "Unless I take Manchuria now, when you can't stop me, you will seize it at the very first moment you can. England, France and America, gorged with the loot of the world, suddenly become moral on the subject of annexing other people's land. No! they said, and Japan walked out of the League of Nations and took Manchuria."

He claimed as "immaterial the question of whether Manchukuo was an independent state or a colony of Japan" so long as Japan was not "reducing the mass of the people to slavery and poverty...stealing the land and monopolizing the natural resources." Commenting on Manchukuo's *gozoku kyowa* or "five races, one union" policy, Du Bois was apparently astounded by what he saw: he found little in the way of a "caste of Superiors and Inferiors" and considered whether "colonial enterprise by a colored nation need not imply the caste, exploitation, and subjection...always implied in the case of white Europe." Du Bois, "Forum of Fact and Opinion," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 13 Feb 1937, in *Newspaper Columns, vol. I*, 166-7.

same Anglo-U.S. bloc that rejected the Japanese proposal at Versailles.<sup>80</sup> In September 1944, novelist Pearl Buck warned readers of the *New York Times* that racial equality was the “one issue” in 1919 on which the Japanese and Chinese were of “one mind”; “bitterness...expressed itself finally in the attack on Pearl Harbor,” Buck opined, and a “new bitterness” might result if the Chinese were similarly rebuffed.<sup>81</sup> Among African Americans, anticipation for the Chinese proposal ran high, but as the *Chicago Defender* somberly reported in December 1944: “The Chinese did not even bring up the subject in spite of the fact that it was part of their original plan.”<sup>82</sup> In fact, the Chinese delegation led by Wellington Koo, who was also a leader for his country’s delegation at Versailles, was more concerned with condemning the Japanese and German theories of master races (Yamatoism and Aryanism) than confronting the U.S. on its “Negro problem.” Because there was no way to broach the former and not the latter using the language of racial equality, China dropped the proposal in the interests of Sino-U.S. relations.<sup>83</sup>

As Du Bois saw it, notwithstanding any UN-backed measure for racial equality, global white supremacy would persist into the postwar because the transition from Pax Britannica to Pax Americana saw not only a material continuity of colonial capitalism, but U.S. policy retained the impression of the white man’s burden to civilize—beginning with an “immoral” Japan. In 1937, he identified “two irreconcilable faces of white alarm” that called for Japan’s ruin: the first was the traditional “white economic reaction based on imperial exploitation of colored peoples [that] wants Japanese capitalism to collapse lest it undermine white domination” while the

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<sup>80</sup> Du Bois, *Color and Democracy*, 6–7

<sup>81</sup> Pearl Buck, “Equality Issue Again Looms: China’s Anticipated Request May Renew Bitterness of 1919,” *New York Times*, 19 Sep 1944: 20.

<sup>82</sup> “Chinese Drop Oaks Fight for Racial Equality,” *Chicago Defender*, 2 Dec 1944: 3.

<sup>83</sup> Marc Gallicchio, *The African American Encounter with Japan and China: Black Internationalism in Asia, 1895–1945* (UNC Press, 2000), 186–9.

second was a progressive “white economic reform [that] wants Japanese capitalism to collapse in order to advance the universal collapse of industrial imperialism.” He wrote: “Both [the] reformers and investors cheer heartily for the economic debacle of Japan but for fatally opposite reasons, which faces Japan with a unanimity...[that] has all of the too familiar earmarks of the Color Bar.”<sup>84</sup>

As a realist, Du Bois knew that condemnation of an imperialism of color was strategic for extending a moral authority for the U.S. and legitimating continued capitalist exploitation under an emerging imperial paradigm. The paradigm shift was what Takashi Fujitani has called the transition from “vulgar” to “polite” racism in the transwar—toward ostensive “racial equality”—and marked by the competing liberal-pluralist governmentalities of Japan and the U.S.: a “new type of sovereignty that was both colonized and independent at the same time.”<sup>85</sup> Following Fujitani and others, Lisa Yoneyama has formulated that the postwar Americanization of racial justice was probably “not effective, if even possible, without the discursive production of the U.S. relation with the enemy of color that had earlier championed the rhetoric of racial justice.”<sup>86</sup>

Du Bois did not want to grant moral authority to America, given what he famously understood as a global “color line” of exploitation and violence by the white world that stretched across centuries. In 1939, a year after the Nanjing Massacre, and in response to a rumor that he

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<sup>84</sup> W.E.B. Du Bois, “‘Chapter 16—Jones in Japan’: from *A World Search for Democracy* (1937),” *CR: The New Centennial Review* 12.1 (2012): 260–1.

<sup>85</sup> Takashi Fujitani, *Race for Empire* (U of California Press, 2011), 8, 25, explains that Manchukuo and the U.S.’ 1934 Tydings-McDuffie Act, or Philippine Independence Act, were parallel and competing experiments in setting up a new type of semi-colonized sovereignty (“polite racism”), distinguished from the “vulgar racism” when Japan colonized Korea and America colonized the Philippines with the explicit goals of spreading civilization to those deemed not yet developed enough for self-rule and/or too weak to defend themselves against “less benevolent” powers. Benevolent imperialism was the modus operandi of the British Empire.

<sup>86</sup> Lisa Yoneyama, *Cold War Ruins* (Duke UP, 2016), 19.

was a spokesperson for Japan, he stated: “I believe in Japan. It is not that I sympathize with China less, but that I hate white European and American propaganda, theft, and insult more. I believe in Asia for the Asiatics and despite the hell of war and fascism of capital, I see in Japan the best agent for this end.”<sup>87</sup> Writing in 1944 on the U.S.’ intention to occupy Japan in the postwar and maintain the American military in Asia indefinitely, Du Bois lamented that beneath “the very reforms that we have in mind” (democracy, gender equality, a peace constitution to certify that Japan forever renounce war) was the “deep-seated belief that...black and brown and yellow people are...a danger to civilization” and that Asia requires “policing by foreigners.”<sup>88</sup>

In a famous 1947 petition to the UN, he warned that America, poised to adopt the role of civilization’s guardian, was a power that “tends toward isolationism” until and unless discerning a “chance to make inflated profits from the want which came upon the world.”<sup>89</sup> Here he was referring to the ethical failure of Wilsonianism: the U.S. never joined the League of Nations it proposed, and even if it had, its interests were not aligned with colonized and exploited peoples except to the extent that their “want” could help facilitate its moral authority. Du Bois’ words were thus preemptive caution toward the duplicity of U.S. racial justice and the rhetoric of racial equality during the Cold War and decolonization, although he was clearly aware of the imperial strategy of appropriating “justice” and “equality” in the earlier transwar context.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> Gallicchio, *The African American Encounter with Japan and China*, 92.

<sup>88</sup> Du Bois, “Prospect of a World without Race Conflict,” 186.

<sup>89</sup> W.E.B. Du Bois, “An Appeal to the World: A Statement on the Denial of Human Rights to Minorities in the Case of Citizens of Negro Descent in the United States of America and an Appeal to the United Nations for Redress (1947),” W.E.B. Du Bois Papers: Special Collections and University Archives, U of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries (hereafter cited in the notes as “W.E.B. Du Bois Papers”), 2, 5, 11.

<sup>90</sup> In a 1956 speech, Du Bois cited the 1948 integration of the American military and the 1954 ruling *Brown v. Board of Education* as indications of a “partial breaking of the color line, used to answer the stand of the Soviet Union against color discrimination and its fight on colonial imperialism...and to split American Negroes from union or sympathy for colonial people.” The Korean War was the first war to feature a

As the first epigraph of this chapter indicates, Du Bois believed Japan and China were, since mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, responding to the same “dangerous race problem as to how far ‘East is East and West is West.’” But they had merely adopted opposing strategies in how to eliminate the problem:

The idea of Japan was to invoke force—to drive Europe out of Asia and substitute the domination of a weak Asia by a strong Japan. The answer of China was co-operation and gradual understanding between Great Britain, France, America and China. [But] Chinese leaders are under no illusions whatever as to the past attitude of Europe toward Chinese.<sup>91</sup>

As he would recall in his autobiographical 1940 *Dusk of Dawn*, he had been aware of the East–West “race problem” as early as his university years when he “began to see something of the struggle between East and West” in the First Sino-Japanese War that shifted hegemonic power in Asia from China to Japan.<sup>92</sup> After the Manchurian incident in 1931, Du Bois called upon Japan and China to “unmask [the Western leadership]...tear apart their double faces and double tongues and unite in peace.”<sup>93</sup> But by the start of the Second Sino-Japanese War in 1937, he observed that the long-brewing conflict between the two powers had resulted in the then-weaker and less organized one shifting toward Anglo-America. “[B]y her size, by the very magnificence

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newly-integrated military for U.S. interests in Asia. The U.S. government, in response to his 1950s anti-nuclear weapons and anti-Korean War activism, prevented Du Bois’ attendance of the 1955 Bandung Conference because, as he wrote in 1956: “travel abroad save for Negroes who would testify for Negro equality in the United States was systematically curtailed” while even the “white worker was blasted by the charge of communism and ‘communists’ were deprived of civil rights and even of common decency.” W.E.B. Du Bois, “The New Negro Liberation Movements (1956),” W.E.B. Du Bois Papers, 14. For more on the U.S. state’s appropriation of racial justice, see Mary Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights* (Princeton UP, 2000); Penny Von Eschen, *Race against Empire* (Cornell UP, 1997).

<sup>91</sup> Du Bois, “Prospect of a World without Race Conflict,” 186.

<sup>92</sup> W.E.B. Du Bois, *Dusk of Dawn* (1940) (Oxford UP, 2007), 15.

<sup>93</sup> W.E.B. Du Bois, “Listen, Japan and China” (1931), in *W.E.B. Du Bois on Asia Crossing the World Color Line*, eds. Bill Mullen and Cathryn Watson, 74 (U of Mississippi Press, 2005).

of her history...[China] moved with exasperating indecision and yielded at fatal points,” he wrote. “[I]t became clear that [the West was] going to dominate China, and that the only country who could dispute this was Japan”—who took advantage of the “breathing spells” of the First World War, the collapse of Imperial Russia and then the Great Depression to establish regional dominance. Du Bois wrote that after the death in 1925 of the “great and far-sighted leader, Sun Yat-sen,” the staunch Asianist who advocated for Sino-Japanese-Soviet cooperation against Euro-American encroachment,<sup>94</sup> “China, after hesitation, turned toward the leadership of modern industrial imperialism as represented in China, especially by England,” and with Chiang Kai-shek’s reluctant coordination with the West to fight Japan, Japan chose to “fight Europe by attacking China.”<sup>95</sup>

In *Color and Democracy*, he noted that China, against Japan’s quest to secure an Asia for the Asiatics, became a symbol in the West “of a power which might dominate Asia but would do so in collaboration with Europe and the United States and indeed under their guidance, if not actually under their power.” Only “because of Japan,” he wrote, which explicitly threatened

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<sup>94</sup> W.E.B. Du Bois, “Forum of Fact and Opinion,” *Pittsburgh Courier*, 25 Sep 1937, in *Newspaper Columns*, vol. I, 240–1.

Sun Yat-sen’s speech on “Pan-Asianism” given in 1924 Kobe, Japan, is generally cited for his call for Sino-Japanese cooperation, discussed below. See also the chapter “China and Japan: Natural Friends—Unnatural Enemies” (1917) in Sun Yat-sen, *The Vital Problem of China* (Taipei: Sino-American Publishing Co., 1953), 109–25.

The 1953 text from which I cite not only includes Sun’s 1917 *The Vital Problem of China*, but also letters and speeches dated 1914 to 1924.

<sup>95</sup> Du Bois’ opinion of Chiang Kai-shek was quite low. In “Russia and America” (1950), W.E.B. Du Bois Papers, 142, he described Chiang as a “greedy, crafty man of no ideals or integrity” who “pretended to keep Sun Yat-sen’s principles of nationalism, democracy and people’s livelihood, but he married into the rich Soong family and ended in such dictatorship and reaction, that even when I was in China, in December 1936, the northern Chinese, both warlord and Communist, resented his surrender to Japanese imperialism, kidnapped him, hiding on a rock in his nightshirt and without his false teeth; and held him until he promised to fight Japan.”

global white supremacy with its Co-Prosperity Sphere, was China slated to receive the only nonwhite seat on the UN Security Council: China was “pushed forward in theory as the representative of Asiatic peoples and as promise of Western sincerity toward the yellow race.”<sup>96</sup> But then in 1949, with Mao Zedong’s Communist victory over Chiang’s Kuomintang—what U.S. policymakers called the “loss” of China—Du Bois’ outlook shifted toward optimism. The Communists, he believed, better upheld Sun’s vision for a sovereign China and perhaps eventually Asia and Africa, free from foreign control and exploitation. In 1959, he and his wife Shirley Graham visited Mao and Zhou Enlai and lay a wreath at the tomb of Sun Yat-sen.

## **2.2 Foregrounding “The Color Line within the Color Line” in Du Bois’ Thought**

Du Bois’ propensity for realpolitik provided him insight into how moral evaluations of empire are often inextricably linked with what Vincent Schleitwiler has called “imperialism’s racial justice.”<sup>97</sup> But his realism has also led many scholars to submit that Du Bois was not able to think outside the box of imperialism. The fact that he did not, from the outset, condemn Japanese colonialism (or Stalin’s and Mao’s violent authoritarianism) has been perceived among scholars as a moral and/or analytical failing.

Bill Mullen has argued that Du Bois’ support of Imperial Japan is principally a result of a “faulty understanding of both capitalism and Marxism” that prevented him in the transwar from seeing beyond a “racialist nationalism in favor of Japan, motivated by anti-Eurocentrism [that] bleaches capitalism of its universal particulars like surplus value and allows it to pass as benign

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<sup>96</sup> Du Bois, *Color and Democracy*, 6–7.

<sup>97</sup> Vincent Schleitwiler, *Strange Fruit of the Black Pacific: Imperialism’s Racial Justice and Its Fugitives* (NYU Press, 2017).

modernization.” He suggests that Du Bois delinquently reversed his pro-Japan position sometime in the early 1940s as he came to support what would become Maoist China.<sup>98</sup> However, as Etsuko Taketani has rightly pointed out, Mullen’s is a “teleological narrative of interpretation” that paints Du Bois as “naively credulous of, or misguided by, a utopian vision of a transpacific alliance of peoples of color.” At the base of the teleology is an expectation that the celebrated “African American intellectual ultimately criticized (as we criticize and want him to have criticized) Japanese imperialism as a reflection of and response to Western imperialism.”<sup>99</sup> Taketani instead demonstrates how Du Bois’ support of Manchukuo illustrates the “mutual implications” of his supports for Imperial Japan, the Soviet Union and Maoist China for “what lies at the heart of Du Bois’ sympathy with the Manchurian venture is his affirmation of Manchukou’s socioeconomic experiment of departing from a capitalist development.”<sup>100</sup>

My understanding is that, on the question of structure versus agency in international relations, Du Bois favored structure as explanatory, implied in his 1899 assertion that the “problem of the 20<sup>th</sup> century is the problem of the color line.” His lifelong study of the history of chattel-slavery revealed to him a real-before-ideal dynamic at the intersection of race and economics. In the aforementioned 1947 UN petition, he summarized his findings: “when looking at the facts frankly, slavery was a matter of economics, of income and labor...rather than a

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<sup>98</sup> Bill Mullen, *W.E.B. Du Bois: Revolutionary Across the Color Line* (Pluto Press, 2016), 84–6.

<sup>99</sup> See Etsuko Taketani, “The Cartography of the Black Pacific: James Weldon Johnson’s Along This Way,” *American Quarterly* 59.1 (2007): 81–3. Taketani takes as a point of departure that African Americans of the era often “positioned themselves squarely within the ideological flows of colonialist and fascist discourse,” and thus, instead of focusing concern on whether Du Bois “wrongly defended imperialism or rightly condemned it”—a suggestion that seems extendable to his support for the violently authoritarian regimes under Stalin and Mao—Taketani aims to better trace the complex changes across the 20<sup>th</sup>-century transpacific vis-à-vis black agency and positionality toward imperialism and racism.

<sup>100</sup> Etsuko Taketani, *The Black Pacific Narrative* (Dartmouth College Press, 2014), 151, 165.

matter of right and wrong...[W]hen slavery became a source of vast income...[only then] there followed a frantic search for moral and racial justifications.” After the end of legalized slavery and despite the tune of racial justice, America and the white world aimed not for “freedom and higher wage for black labor, but its control under such forms of law as would keep it cheap.”<sup>101</sup> Beyond cheap labor were desired resources: Europe closed out the century with the Scramble for Africa, which, in 1915, Du Bois explained led to the First World War.<sup>102</sup>

Revisiting his 1899 color line thesis in a 1925 article in *Foreign Affairs* entitled “Worlds of Color,” Du Bois described the color line as casting “shadows” of exploited and exploitable labor maintained, in large part, by inherited and manufactured provincialism qua racism, that prevented white laborers from seeing their plights as linked with overseas nonwhite labor. An exception was Soviet Russia who he described as “seeking a rapprochement with colored labor...making her peace with China and Japan...her leaders...in close touch with the leaders of India.” The European powers sought to maintain control over their respective shadows, both materially and ideologically, lest they be forced to acknowledge that “over all Europe there stretches the yellow shadow of Asia that lies across the world.” Here Du Bois rhetorically deployed yellow peril discourse that saw material threat in Japan’s proposal for racial equality at Versailles: actually acknowledging equality would mean revealing the falsity of the racial hierarchies that had been used to justify Europe’s material ascendancy via the exploitation of non-European peoples.

Significantly, Du Bois then named a “shadow of shadows”: global nonwhite cultures with “little in common, either today or yesterday...pounded together artificially and not attracting

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<sup>101</sup> Du Bois, “An Appeal to the World,” 2, 5, 11.

<sup>102</sup> W.E.B. Du Bois, “The African Roots of War,” *Atlantic Monthly* (May 1915).

each other naturally.”<sup>103</sup> The conundrum of artificiality for inter-Afro, inter-Asian and Afro Asian relations he would speculatively explore in his 1928 novel *Dark Princess* (which I analyze in the last section). The novel illustrated clashing strategies—violence versus nonviolence, hierarchy versus non-hierarchy—among nonwhite peoples for how to bring about global racial justice: the clash he referred to as the problem of the “color line within the color line.”

Notably, scholarship on *Dark Princess* has tended to neglect the key role of a powerful and rather villainous Japanese character who exhibits Yamato supremacy. The character illustrates Du Bois’ sense of an artificiality to Japan’s leadership. That is to say, rather than a racially-essentialist view of Japan as a natural leader for the nonwhite world despite the empire’s problematically-acquired material power, Du Bois’ vision for Afro Asian alliance began with a materiality of racial difference “pounded together artificially” by the homogenizing color line such that Japan, or any other power, as a potential leader required the support of other powers to respond to the global color line conundrum. Du Bois did not fabricate this support for a naively utopian vision of interracial alliance, but saw it in realist, interwar regionalist discourse: Asianism.

### **2.3 Rethinking Du Bois alongside Asianism**

Du Bois is generally claimed within the U.S. black radical tradition, but as David Haekwon Kim has discussed, given Du Bois’ internationalism, the intellectual was also a “participant in other critical traditions that are...concerned with a dominative modernity,” such as the ethnonationalisms (for example, India’s pursuit of home rule) and ethno-regionalisms of

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<sup>103</sup> W.E.B. Du Bois, “Worlds of Color,” *Foreign Affairs* 3.3 (1925): 423, 443.

the post-WWI world (Africanism and Asianism).<sup>104</sup> In the next few sections, my goal is to deprovincialize Du Bois by showing how his thinking on Asia aligned with dominant threads of Asianist realpolitik as concerned the continent's three dominant powers: Japan, China and India. By "Asianist," I mean the regionalist thinking on the continent that blossomed especially in the wake of the moral and "civilizational" failure of the First World War.<sup>105</sup> With anxiety that Asia might succumb to the same fate as Africa for white greed, Asianists sought to organize and disidentify "Asia" from the "West" to ward off the threat of white world colonialism.<sup>106</sup> In a 1915 article in the *Journal of Race Development* (the first American international relations journal, and what would later become *Foreign Affairs*), a Japanese policymaker attempted to explain the Twenty-One Demands that Japan placed on China during the First World War as the most recent in a series of costly interventions—the First Sino-Japanese War, participation in the quelling of the Boxer Rebellion, the Russo-Japanese War—to "retain the now-independent parts of Asia for the Asiatics, to be responsible for the prevention of further encroachment until China is strong enough to hold her own against foreign aggressor whether Eastern or Western."<sup>107</sup> Here one sees that Japan, like America, saw opportunity in the "want which came upon the world" to

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<sup>104</sup> David Haekwon Kim, "Love is God, and Work Is His Prophet: Decolonial Extension and Gandhian Exploration in Du Bois' Interwar Years," in *A Political Companion to W.E.B. Du Bois*, ed. Nick Bromwell, 303–44 (UP of Kentucky, 2018), 306.

<sup>105</sup> For Asianism, see, as examples, Cemil Aydin, "Japan's Pan-Asianism and the Legitimacy of Imperial World Order, 1931–1945," *The Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus* 6.3 (3 Mar 2008) [online]; Urs Matthias Zachmann (ed.), *Asia after Versailles: Asian Perspectives on the Paris Peace Conference and the Interwar Order, 1919–33* (Edinburgh UP, 2017); Torsten Weber, *Embracing 'Asia' in China and Japan: Asianism Discourse and the Contest for Hegemony, 1912–1933* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).

<sup>106</sup> For the white peril discourse during the Russo-Japanese War, see Chapter 1. See also Sven Saaler, "The Construction of Regionalism in Modern Japan: Kodera Kenichi and His 'Treatise on Greater Asianism' (1916)," *Modern Asian Studies* 41.6 (2007): 1261–94.

<sup>107</sup> M. Honda, "The Reasons for Japan's Demands upon China," *The Journal of Race Development* 6.1 (Jul 1915): 3.

draw up a paradigm for benevolent imperialism that would set the former against the latter in a race for moral authority in the transpacific. Conversely, those one might call “Asianists from below” recognized imperialism itself as the problem. For example, when considering Korea after annexation by Japan in 1910, regionalist sentiment would have seemed empty idealism if it did not first address the problem of Japanese colonialism.

During his exile in Japan, Sun Yat-sen, the foremost Asianist of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, met with revolutionary leaders from India to Indochina to the Philippines to Korea as he also worked to secure China’s future. Meanwhile, Du Bois saw the appeal of Sino-Japanese cooperation, first, in the white anxiety embedded in yellow peril discourse, and by the time of Versailles, in the realist rhetoric of Asianists like Sun. Du Bois kept himself apprised of Asianist discourse through scholarship of the day and acquaintances like the Indian nationalist Lala Lajpat Rai who met Sun many times in Japan and to whom Du Bois dedicated *Dark Princess*, as well as Yasuichi Hikida who Taketani has described as “Japan’s first international student of the Harlem Renaissance.”<sup>108</sup> Indo-Japanese alliance—an alliance of the colonized with a colonizer—

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<sup>108</sup> Lala Lajpat Rai met Sun Yat-sen many times in 1915 when the latter was exiled in Japan. During his stint in America from 1915–20, Rai befriended Du Bois, and as the story goes, read a draft of *Dark Princess*. Du Bois dedicated the novel to Rai who, in 1928, died from injuries sustained after a beating by British police during a protest of the Simon Commission, an inquiry into constitutional reform for India that consisted of entirely British parliamentary members and no Indians.

Regarding the ubiquitous Yasuichi Hikida, as Taketani, *The Black Pacific Narrative*, 188, writes: Hikida immigrated to New York in 1920 to work as a domestic, and then from 1938 until internment as an “enemy alien” and his repatriation in 1942, was a clerk for the Japanese consulate in New York. During his two decades in the U.S., Hikida became the friend or acquaintance of many African American intellectuals. Unfortunately, renowned scholars such as David Levering Lewis and Bill Mullen have framed Hikida as a kind of covert agent of Japanese expansionism, which is how the FBI described him. Taketani, 153–7, works to reframe Hikida (and Du Bois) when she writes that Du Bois’ support of Japan ought not to begin with an unsubstantiated premise of a Japanese agent, but how “Japan seems have shaped Du Bois’ perceptions.” Hikida, who is “remembered, to the extent that he is remembered, as a covert agent of the Japanese imperial government” was probably closer to being “Japan’s first

would feature in *Dark Princess*, and manifest in the real-world collaboration of the Indian National Army (INA) lead by Subhas Chandra Bose with Imperial Japan to fight the British Empire during the Second World War. I will focus on the neglected significance of the trope and real-world manifestation of transwar Indo-Japanese cooperation in a later section.

Before outlining the remaining sections on Du Bois and Asianism, I should explain Du Bois' engagement with a chief critical tradition: Marxism. I follow thinkers like Cedric Robinson and Lisa Lowe who read Du Bois to have interpreted orthodox Marxism as a potential extension of whiteness when the intrinsic conflict theorized—how the fruits of the Industrial Revolution should be divvied: for the few or the many—does not take into account the material conditions that underpinned industrializing Europe: slavery and colonialism. Du Bois retooled Marxism most notably in his 1935 *Black Reconstruction* that focused on the U.S.' postbellum era, with recognition of slaves as historical agents and slave labor as labor, as he reconfigured capitalism as what Robinson calls “racial capitalism.”<sup>109</sup> In 1936, he wrote that there is “no automatic power in socialism to override and suppress race prejudice,” and though he regarded Marxism as holding “essential truths,” the support he had for communism or socialism-in-practice was contingent on his sense of movement of a centuries-long color line.<sup>110</sup> On the one hand, Du Bois

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international student of the Harlem Renaissance” (189).

The Japanese leg of Du Bois' 1936 trip, which included lectures and dinners, was arranged by Hikida while his weeklong tour of Manchukuo was arranged by employees of the South Manchurian Railway Company.

<sup>109</sup> Cedric Robinson, *Black Marxism: the Making of the Black Radical Tradition* (Zed Books, 1983); Lisa Lowe, *The Intimacies of Four Continents* (Duke UP, 2015), 149–50.

<sup>110</sup> See W.E.B. Du Bois, “Social Planning for the Negro, Past and Present,” *The Journal of Negro Education* 5.1 (1936): 110–25, in *Writings in Periodical Literature, vol. III*, 26–40. Du Bois formally joined the Communist Party (USA) in 1961 at the age of 93, but this was not a gesture that issues of capital ultimately subsumed issues of race. In fact, he felt that colored peoples needed to be ever-more vigilant against the duplicity of imperialism's racial justice during the Cold War, and that communism seemed the most pragmatic option at the time.

witnessed how the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution was a rejection of and by Euro-American imperialism and thus a fortuitous fissure in whiteness. Visiting Russia for two months in 1925, he took significant interest in the Communist International's uptake of the race and colonial questions. On the other hand, by the time he wrote *Color and Democracy* in 1945, he considered the possibility that communism-in-practice might amount to a mere possible episode in the long arc of exploitation: "[S]hould the Russian experiment fail and Communism be proved unable to cope with the problems of land, property, and income, [Russia]...at least faced the problem and...tried to solve it; and other nations must eventually face and solve the same problem if civilization is going to be preserved."<sup>111</sup>

A possible successful communism, he wrote in his unpublished 1950 manuscript "Russia and America," would take a "new way of thinking on Asiatic lines" with a "stress on character, on goodness, on spirit, through family loyalty and affection"—a communism "out of India, out of Buddhism and Shintoism, out of the age-old virtues of Japan and China itself" that could "stop the tendency of Western socialistic states to freeze into bureaucracy."<sup>112</sup> It is this "thinking on Asiatic lines" in Du Bois that I aim to expound on here, which I contend is beyond mere orientalism, but points to his piecemeal analysis over the course of his life—and particularly in

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As he summarized his sense of colonial history in memoranda to the participating nations of the 1955 Bandung Conference, most of whom were non-aligned: "Since the Renaissance (that is, the awakening of Culture in western Europe in 1500 A.D.), Africa was drawn out of the Asiatic orbit into the European by the slave trade and American slavery. The tendency thereafter was for Asia to seek intercourse with white Europe who was controlling her, and for Africa to do the same." Returning to his turn-of-the-century call to "fade" the color line as "mists before the sun," Africa and Asia, he declared, ought to "close ranks" and especially "oppose the hypocrisy of the United States," who "under the cry of Peace and Freedom...threatens the world and its civilization with destruction by atomic bombs for the ends of pure selfishness and greed." W.E.B. Du Bois, "Memorandum on the Bandung conference, April 1955" and "To the peoples of Asia and Africa meeting at Bandung, April 1955," W.E.B. Du Bois Papers.

<sup>111</sup> Du Bois, *Color and Democracy*, 122.

<sup>112</sup> Du Bois, "Russia and America," 149–50.

the latter half of the 1930s—on the matter of racial capitalism linking the transatlantic with the transpacific.

The remaining sections are divided as follows: In §2.4, I discuss the meaning of Japan for Du Bois’ influential turn-of-the-century color line thesis and argue that his early thinking on Asia, or what he called “the brown and yellow world,” was to reject the racial binary thinking found in early 20<sup>th</sup>-century Western conceptions of Asia—what Asian Americanists refer to as the peril–model binary that continues to underpin Asian racialization to this day. Then, in §2.5, I juxtapose Du Bois’ 1930s rhetoric regarding Asian history with that of Sun Yat-sen’s in the 1920s to show that Du Bois was not ignorant of inter-Asian relations, but disidentified with imperial formations just as Sun did. To expound upon how disidentificatory politics took form in transwar Asia, in §2.6, I take a detour from Du Bois to draw upon the memoirs, unpublished until 2009, of the Indian nationalist Anand Mohan Sahay who, was based in Kobe, Japan, during the transwar years.<sup>113</sup> In 1936, Sahay messaged Du Bois in hopes to meet him during Du Bois’ trip to the region.<sup>114</sup> Although the two likely did not meet despite Du Bois visiting Kobe, the existence of Sahay’s letter speaks to the neglected significance of the Indo-Japanese relation to transwar Afro Asian realist scripts. Indo-Japanese alliance was configured as exemplifying the difficult choices thrust upon the region by global white supremacy while simultaneously cast as a site of potential overcoming. Sahay was a key actor in rallying the Indian diaspora in Japan, as well as educating the Japanese public, for Indo-Japanese alliance in the lead-up to the Second World War, notwithstanding his Gandhian orientation and misgivings about Japanese actions in

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<sup>113</sup> Anand Mohan Sahay and Bharati Choudhry, *Stirring Times: Memoirs of Anand Mohan Sahay* (Kolkata: Purple Peacock Books, 2009). Hereafter cited in the text as “ST.”

<sup>114</sup> Anand Mohan Sahay, “Letter from Indian National Congress Committee of Japan to W.E.B. Du Bois, December 5, 1936,” W.E.B. Du Bois Papers.

China. Like Du Bois, Sahay toured Manchukuo to better apprehend the pluralist puppet-state.

Finally, in §2.7, I present a reading of *Dark Princess*, Du Bois' only "Asianist" novel. *Dark Princess* speculates an Indo-Japanese alliance integrating the black world under an Asianist framework. Scholarship on the novel has invariably focused on its principal gendered relation—a "female India" (the dark princess) paired with a "male Afro America" (the black protagonist)—as indicative of what scholars often deem a heteropatriarchal and orientalist conjuring of a utopian Afro Asian alliance. However, I read the relation as realist given Du Bois' sense of an artificiality to Afro Asian relations, or a color line within the color line. As I mentioned, the text also features a "male Japan": when triangulating yellow, brown and black, the novel critiques the emerging and competing pluralist models that relied/rely on the reproduction of raced, including mixed-raced bodies for imperialism: what would become Japanese pan-Asianism and U.S. integrationism. Following queer of color theorist José Esteban Muñoz' work on disidentification and utopia,<sup>115</sup> I argue that *Dark Princess*, through its interplay of realism and idealism, elicits a "queering of the color line within the color line"—or evinces a political ontology whereby agency is unbounded by the strictures of the color line. To cite Muñoz, the site of utopia is always beyond the politics of the now: "queerness is not yet." As the second epigraph indicates, Du Bois narrated utopia in *Dark Princess* not in terms of the text's heteronormative pairing and their reproduction of a mixed-race messianic child, which is how the novel tends to be critically framed, but rather as a "divine Anarchy in some faraway heaven" due to the need of "massed and concentrated power...to accomplish anything worthwhile doing in this muddled world."

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<sup>115</sup> See José Esteban Muñoz, *Disidentifications* (U of Minnesota Press, 1999), and Muñoz, *Cruising Utopia* (NYU Press, 2009).

## 2.4 The Meaning of Japan for the Color Line

Du Bois' color line thesis was formulated during the years of the quick rise of the U.S. and Japanese Empires when, as Schleitwiler has put it, "accelerated imperial competition generated intensified processes of racialization."<sup>116</sup> Attending university in 1890s Germany, Du Bois undoubtedly encountered the yellow peril discourse propagated by Kaiser Wilhelm II who popularized the concept to justify Germany's participation in the Triple Intervention to thwart Japan at the end of the First Sino-Japanese War.<sup>117</sup> As gleaned from his later writings, Du Bois interpreted the discourse as a symptom of white anxiety about losing the material and ideological power necessary to control the terms of civilization, or put differently, losing the means to continue to define a global hierarchy of race as it had been constructed across centuries of colonization, buttressed by scientific racism. As Colleen Lye has explained, early Imperial Japan was racialized by various Western powers as not just a potential peril to a modernity assumed built by the West, but also a model rising power that appeared to adhere to and enhance the West's image of the modern, given that Meiji Japan (1868–1912) not only adopted Western technologies and practices in governance and civic life, but that its rapid modernization served as a respected example for Western nations to self-regenerate so as to retain dominance.

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<sup>116</sup> Schleitwiler, *Strange Fruit of the Black Pacific*, 46–8. The accelerated competition at the turn of the century included Japan acquiring Formosa (Taiwan) from the Qing Empire after the First Sino-Japanese War, prevented by the Triple Intervention of Russia, France and Germany from acquiring Korea until after the Russo-Japanese War. The U.S. acquired the Philippines from the Spanish Empire after the Spanish-American War.

<sup>117</sup> Du Bois, "The Present Outlook for the Darker Races of Mankind (1900)," in *The Problem of the Color Line at the Turn of the Twentieth Century*, ed. Nahum Dmitri Chandler, 111–37 (Fordham UP, 2014), 119, raced Japan as yellow and Russia as mixed: "[Russia's] own great population of slaves stands midway racially between the white Germans and the yellow Tartar, and this makes the whole progress of the Bear a faint reflection of the color line."

Much of the binary thinking, or what Lye and other Asian Americanists refer to as the peril–model binary, hinged/hinges on an imagined outcome of the Sino-Japanese relation. The perceived threat was that of “a miraculous Japanese developmental capacity conjoin[ing] with the numerical power of a Chinese industrial capacity,” or the fear that Japan might “wake” China and the two powers would, or at least could, strategize how to overturn global white supremacy. The yellow/Asiatic racial form, Lye writes, marked the “appearance of the otherness of Western modernity to itself,” the yellow peril the sign of a “coming modernity” when the “temporal hierarchization of Self and Other is reversed or abolished.”<sup>118</sup> Naoki Sakai has referred to the binarizing tendency of Western modernity as the problem of the construction of a universal West and a particularized rest, whereby the West continually seeks to contain the rest out of anxiety of otherwise being engulfed by it.<sup>119</sup>

Du Bois engaged with these dynamics of East–West modernity in his 1900 essay “The Present Outlook for the Darker Races of Mankind.” Projecting a hundred years into the future, he prophesized a 21<sup>st</sup>-century “brown and yellow world” or Asia that might bring about a “color line...faded as mists before the sun” so long as “every free born American Negro” ensured the consummation of that future. In other words, he called for an Afro Asian cooperation to unravel the white world’s stranglehold on defining race and the terms of civilization, which included the particularization/territorialization of the world as either a peril to, or model mimic of white civilization. On the matter of Japan’s rise, a few events stood out to him that he would analyze

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<sup>118</sup> Colleen Lye, *America’s Asia* (Princeton UP, 2005), 17, 56. The peril of a feared Japan-China bloc was seen as not only rendering Asia fully-fledged within modernity but exposing Western vulnerability to degeneration. Lye discusses how the U.S. postwar production of a “model modernity” in Asia and beyond coheres with the postwar coding of Asian Americans as model minorities.

<sup>119</sup> Naoki Sakai, “Modernity and Its Critique: The Problem of Universalism and Particularism,” *South Atlantic Quarterly* 87.3 (1988): 475–504.

further in the 1930s (see next section), such as the First Sino-Japanese War which, given the dog-eat-dog colonial system, enabled Japan to avert Western extraterritoriality. In “The Present Outlook,” Du Bois described Japan’s ability to maintain territorial sovereignty as the “greatest concession to the color line which the nineteenth century has seen.” Prophesizing a “gigantic strife across the color line” across the 20<sup>th</sup> century, he foresaw the coming Russo-Japanese War: “With the advance of Russia in Asia, the completion of the great trans-Siberian railway, and the threatened seizure of Corea [*sic*], comes the inevitable clash of the Slav with the yellow masses of Asia.”<sup>120</sup>

Was Du Bois’ response to yellow peril discourse to simply reverse its stereotyping binarism: instead of a “peril,” did Du Bois configure Japan as a potential “promise,” and instead of a “model” or unthreatening Asianness, did he envision the inadequacy of an Asian Uncle Tom? Scholars have frequently read this form of orientalism in Du Bois given his support of Japan at the expense of those Japan colonized. A particularly harsh 1937 quote seems to lend credence to the interpretation: Du Bois described China under Chiang Kai-shek as “licking the boots that kicked her,” choosing to be a “coolie for England rather than acknowledging the only world leadership that did not mean color caste [Japan]...the straight road to world dominance by the yellow race...ruined in Asia by the same spirit that animates the ‘white folks’ nigger’ in the United States.”<sup>121</sup>

However, just as Du Bois regarded the Uncle Tom as a fabrication undermining black multiplicity, he did not see Japan as a “natural” leader in line with white racial/temporal hierarchies, but as an “artificial” one responding to Western particularization. In his unpublished

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<sup>120</sup> Du Bois, “The Present Outlook for the Darker Races of Mankind (1900),” 118–9.

<sup>121</sup> Du Bois, “Forum of Fact and Opinion,” *Pittsburgh Courier*, 23 Oct 1937, in *Newspaper Columns*, vol. I, 245.

1937 manuscript of creative nonfiction, “A World Search for Democracy,” written after his 1936 trip to the region, Du Bois presented a competing Chinese interpretation of Imperial Japan’s grand strategy, paraphrasing responses he received from interlocutors at Shanghai University on why China’s focused anger on Japan did not imply a shelving of the crimes of the white world:

[The Chinese] were going to build a new Chinese industry which should emancipate them from European industry; and they felt themselves able to do this and they bitterly resented the intrusion of Japan coming in as though she were a western power destined to dominate orientals; as though she, the child culture of China, was going to show China the way of life—that China, which had lived a thousand years before Japan was known and would live long after Japan’s end. The intrusion of Japan was resented because of its very success and because of its all too apt imitation of western technique. They were not called upon to take hold of the hands of their yellow brother and march side by side toward freedom and domination. They were asked rather to put their millions at the mercy of Japanese exploitation and let Japan finish what England and Germany and France had begun, but should never complete.<sup>122</sup>

Rather than replicating the peril–model binary by overlaying Japan and China onto its poles, this passage shows Du Bois interrogating a contested space along the lines of what Schleiwiler has described as the opening of “fissures between the disparate sites of racialization that competing imperialisms are unable to fuse together”—in this case, Euro-American, Japanese and Chinese hierarchies.<sup>123</sup> Mullen has argued that Du Bois was stirred by events and opinions (such as with Chinese interlocutors) in the 1930s to reverse his support of Japan as he came to support

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<sup>122</sup> W.E.B. Du Bois, “Chapter 17—Jones looks back on China’: from *A World Search for Democracy* (1937),” *CR: The New Centennial Review* 12.1 (2012): 276–7.

<sup>123</sup> Schleiwiler, *Strange Fruit*, 46–8.

Communist China.<sup>124</sup> But the teleology is not only unnecessary; it problematically presumes Du Bois doubled back on binary, white progressivist thinking—as though Japan revealed itself to be, in the end, a “model” imperial power, while China was the new “promise” of the Orient. Instead, I argue that, for Du Bois, the same globality underlay the potential of both Japan and/or China to act as prime movers in fading the color line and the white world’s peril–model binary along with it, which he did not see happening until the 21<sup>st</sup> century at the earliest.

He showcased his early rejection of racial binary thinking with his notion of “double-consciousness” for the American Negro as found in his 1903 *The Souls of Black Folk*. As Chandan Reddy has explained, Du Bois “refused the integration of blackness into a white–nonwhite binary, whose system of operation will always already position the black subject as simulacrum and copy.” Against interpretations of Du Bois as a positivist who hypostatized racial categories, Reddy writes that Du Bois identified the “meaning of blackness inhere[d] in the recognition and critique of binaries...that would demand the reduction of black existence to the position of the ‘other,’” so he developed a “nonbinary understanding of racial formations...[such that] true self-consciousness existed outside the binary constructions of race.”<sup>125</sup> Nahum Dmitri Chandler has proposed that Du Bois applied double-consciousness to his reading of Asia: “It was this double and redoubled sense of critical perspective that allowed Du Bois to think otherwise than an alignment with a dominant Europe or a strident and precipitative America, and

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<sup>124</sup> Bill Mullen, *Un-American: W.E.B. Du Bois and the Century of World Revolution* (Temple UP, 2015), 137–8, 144, presents a teleology as follows: “An essentially historical materialist analysis replaced Du Bois’s prior ‘exceptionalist’ image of Japan...with an assertion of its fundamentally capitalist character. ...Du Bois’ evolving assessment of World War II as an inter-imperialist rivalry hinged on a reconsideration of capitalism as white supremacy; under the pressure of German and Japanese atrocities, the Gordian knot of that conception was coming undone. What the world needed now was a colored nation that was clearly committed to smashing capitalism itself [China].”

<sup>125</sup> Chandan Reddy, *Freedom with Violence: Race, Sexuality and the US State* (Duke UP, 2011), 76.

prophetically as it were, with regard to Asia...Du Bois proposed to name the possibility of an Asian future as other than that bequeathed by the West.”<sup>126</sup> Du Bois would find easy alliance with thinkers who sought or simply conceived as a result of geography their self-definitions and futures beyond the non/white, un/civilized and peril–model binaries. For example, in a 1929 editorial in *The Crisis*, he solicited words from the Indian Nobel Prize laureate Rabindranath Tagore who wrote briefly on provincialism preventing most Indians from seeing “world tendencies.” Du Bois cautioned his black American audience that those who “criticize white America have also by our very criticism been forced into provincialism” because “white America is provincial and material to the last degree.”<sup>127</sup>

## 2.5 Du Bois and Sun Yat-sen: Asianisms Paralleled

Whereas his earlier thinking had Asianist features, Du Bois’ closer engagement with Asianism followed the 1919 Versailles Peace Conference, since it was the failure of that conference to address the wants of the colonized that would lead to increased regionalist strategizing.

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<sup>126</sup> Nahum Dimitri Chandler, “Intro: On the Virtues of Seeing—At Least but Never Only—Double,” *CR: The New Centennial Review* 12.1 (2012): 18–20.

<sup>127</sup> In his 1929 message for *The Crisis* solicited by Du Bois, Rabindranath Tagore wrote that due to the “fenced seclusion of our racial tradition...[w]e had neither the wisdom nor the opportunity to harmonize our growth with world tendencies.” Du Bois glossed Tagore’s words: “Tagore’s message is in a language which neither white nor black Americans can easily understand. White America is provincial and material to the last degree. To its little narrow mind nothing in earth, sky or sea is as big and rich and ancient as America. But we who criticize white America have also by our very criticism been forced into provincialism.... This is natural, and today perhaps and in this generation, almost inescapable.” W.E.B. Du Bois and Rabindranath Tagore, “A Message to the American Negro from Rabindranath Tagore,” *The Crisis* 36.10 (1929). For analysis, see Madhumita Lahiri, “World Romance: Genre, Internationalism, and W.E.B. Du Bois,” *Callaloo* 33.2 (2010): 538–9.

During the conference, Du Bois was in Paris as an organizer of the first Pan-African Congress, which gave modest proposals to the white powers on the question of colonized Africa. As a reluctant Wilsonian during the war, he had argued in an 1914 essay, “World War and the Color Line,” that Imperial Germany, due to entering the game of empire late, behaved as the “most barbarous of civilized people” toward nonwhites, whereas the British and French Empires, who had more experience as “administrators of colonies,” had “at least begun to realize the cost and evil” of race prejudice. If Germany were to win the war and its brand of white supremacy permitted to flourish, Du Bois surmised, the world would see a “crucifixion of darker peoples unparalleled in history.” But, he ventured: “considering that black Africans, brown Indians, and yellow Japanese are fighting for Britain and France, it might be that they come out of this frightful welter of blood with new ideas about the essential equality of all men.”<sup>128</sup> In his notorious 1918 editorial in *The Crisis* entitled “Close Ranks” for which he was excoriated by the African American community, Du Bois wrote that his community should, “for as long as the war lasts, forget our racial grievances and close our ranks, shoulder to shoulder with our own white fellow citizens and the allied nations that are fighting for democracy.”<sup>129</sup> Essentially, Du Bois advocated American intervention during the Great War because he wagered that the mass inclusion of soldiers of color from the French, British and U.S. Empires, assisted by Japan in the Far East, might result in cascading antiracism when those soldiers returned home with honors. His reasoning was not unlike that of former slaves who fought for their freedom in the American Civil War, securing the Thirteenth and Fourteen Amendments to the U.S. Constitution, which

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<sup>128</sup> W.E.B. Du Bois, “World War and the Color Line,” *The Crisis* (Nov 1914).

<sup>129</sup> W.E.B. Du Bois, “Close Ranks,” *The Crisis* (Jul 1918). For many in the African American community, the chaos of the war was precisely the time to push for change, not close ranks with white America. The online W.E.B. Du Bois Papers collection hosted by the University of Massachusetts Amherst includes scans of many letters to Du Bois expressing concern, surprise and outrage towards his editorial.

bespoke of a seeming possibility of racial progress in the nation.

Du Bois would be sorely disappointed. Not only were black American soldiers mistreated on the warfront, but they were not welcomed home as heroes by white America, and instead cast as potentially dangerous Bolsheviks. Anti-black race riots erupted in dozens of cities, and lynching, including those in military uniform, increased. As if in retort to Japan's proposal for racial equality, anti-Asian sentiment on the U.S. West Coast also deepened. Du Bois would later reflect on the confluence of anti-black and anti-Asian racism in the passing of the 1924

Immigration Act:

The people of the United States...excluded the Japanese by law, not because they were vagabonds and burdens but because they were too thrifty and too efficient; a political deal between the West and the South brought the Japanese exclusion law in return for the defeat of the anti-lynching bill in 1924. Thus America showed her clear attitude toward colored labor whether it was her own black citizens or yellow foreigners.<sup>130</sup>

Disillusioned with Wilsonianism, the League and the tyranny of the U.S. white majority, Du Bois in the 1920s turned with greater hope toward events unfolding on the other side of the Pacific: the 1922 formation of the Soviet Union, the Indian independence movement, Chinese republicanism, and Imperial Japan.

Meanwhile, a mastermind of the 1911 Xinhai Revolution and the "founder" of modern China and Taiwan, Sun Yat-sen, was also highly invested in the outcome of Versailles. Sun was not in Paris, but acted in support of the Chinese and Korean delegations, calling for the abrogation of the unequal treaties placed upon China since the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, the return of

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<sup>130</sup> W.E.B. Du Bois, "The Meaning of Japan (1937)," 241.

Shandong province from defeated Germany, and Korean independence from Japan.<sup>131</sup> Sun's views were only validated by the conference. He had regarded the choice by Chinese leaders to join the war on the side of Britain and France rather than remain neutral to be dangerously shortsighted because Imperial Germany, he wrote in 1917, had "so far been the least aggressive, and also the least ambitious" toward China, whereas Britain and France had waged wars of imperial aggression (the Opium and Tonkin Wars).<sup>132</sup> Sun supposed that if China joined Britain's war against Germany in hopes of gaining respect from the West—that is, aiming for abrogation of the unequal treaties and the return of Shandong province—as well as a favorable postwar position against Japan (that is, as he put it, China following a "traditional, stupid policy" of "attacking the neighbor with friends from a distance")—then China would, in the end, find itself suffering Britain's longstanding policy of "sacrificing friends to befriend the enemy" in order to, at any cost, safeguard control over its crown jewel, India.<sup>133</sup>

On the Japanese position that China ought *not* to join the war, Sun mused:

Commenting candidly...we may say that [Japan] placed her [China's] interests even before her own. (It is unnecessary to point out that...Japan and China have common interests.) Instead of showing gratitude towards Japan for her kindness in saving China from danger, some Chinese officials have expressed the opinion that the Japanese have been attempting to deprive China of her diplomatic freedom. These officials...are all

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<sup>131</sup> Erez Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment: Self-Determination and the International Origins of Anticolonial Nationalism* (Oxford UP, 2007), 129. The fractious Beiyang government and Sun's Kuomintang cooperated to send a delegation to Versailles.

<sup>132</sup> Sun, *The Vital Problem of China*, 13.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*, 47, 78, 80. Sun colorfully described British policy toward its allies as like the "delicate care usually shown by farmers in the rearing of silkworms; after all the silk has been drawn from cocoons, they are destroyed by fire or used as food for fish."

clamoring for revenge. Are they all out of their minds? Japan realizes that China's participation in the war will not help the Allies to conquer Germany, but will only result in the immolation of China even in the case of Allied victory. If China is sacrificed [to Western interests], not only China, but Japan will also suffer. ...[China has] lost the opportunity of cooperating with Japan in developing East Asia, and played in the hands of the White peoples.<sup>134</sup>

As he predicted, China at Versailles saw its interests sacrificed by Britain and France (Shandong was transferred in secret arrangement from Germany to Japan), which resulted in a surge of anti-foreign, and particularly anti-Japanese, nationalism: the 1919 May Fourth Movement.

As Erez Manela has noted, May Fourth was a turning point for Chinese nationalism, as “most Chinese intellectuals were much more familiar with Wilson than with Lenin” but with the “collapse of the Wilsonian promise, Bolshevism as an alternative path for resisting imperialism” quickly gained appeal.<sup>135</sup> Notably, Wilson and the American delegation at Versailles were chagrined by the Shandong outcome since the U.S. had its own reasons for opposing European backdoor deal-making and Japanese aims in China (the possible threat to the open door policy), but the outcome reflected American deference to Anglo-French diplomacy at the time.<sup>136</sup> As for Korea, the 1919 March First Movement in support of Korean independence, triggered by the

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<sup>134</sup> Ibid, 54–5. Sun goes on to suggest that the Twenty-One Demands that Japan placed on China in the midst of the First World War were “drawn up not at Japan’s dictation,” but by Yuan Shikai to appeal to Japan in his “eagerness to mount the Throne” and reinstate a Chinese monarchy.

<sup>135</sup> Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment*, 196.

<sup>136</sup> Within a few years Shandong would be returned to China with the Nine-Power Treaty during the 1921–2 Washington Naval Conference that sought to curb Japan’s growing power and reaffirm the open door policy against Japanese and growing communist influence. Too, the conference saw the severing of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, an event that Du Bois, “Russia and America,” 148, described as occurring for “no reason, except the unstated one of color prejudice in America, South Africa, Australia and even Britain, of unwillingness to link [Britain’s] fortunes with yellow people.”

false siren song of Wilsonian self-determination, was violently suppressed by Japan, with little reaction from the West.

Although Japan's proposal at Versailles for racial equality was blatantly duplicitous given Japanese actions in Korea and towards China, both Sun and Du Bois nevertheless considered Japan as Asia's best hope against the West. This was because of their shared view that "Asia" was acting in self-defense against the "West," including Japan who, according to the Asianist framework, was in the position of needing to choose "Eastern" over "Western" civilization. Sun's evaluation of Japanese modernity is encapsulated in his famous 1924 "Pan-Asianism" speech before a Japanese audience that "Japan today has become acquainted with the Western civilization of the rule of Might, but retains the characteristics of the Oriental civilization of the rule of Right. ...[T]he question remains whether Japan will be the hawk of the Western civilization...or the tower of strength of the Orient."<sup>137</sup> Du Bois' appraisal of Japan is summarized in his 1937 statement: "In the nineteenth century, Japan saved the world from slavery to Europe. In the twentieth century she is called to save the world from slavery to capital."<sup>138</sup>

To unpack Du Bois' first sentence—that Japan saved the world from slavery to Europe—Japan effectively ended its subjection to unequal treaties and extraterritoriality, and perhaps even avoiding colonization by the West, after proving its strength in the First Sino-Japanese War, which, Du Bois noted, had the deleterious effect of "convinc[ing] Europe that the time for dismembering China and making her a colonial appendage to European commerce had come."<sup>139</sup>

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<sup>137</sup> Sun, "Pan-Asianism" in *The Vital Problem of China*, 173.

<sup>138</sup> W.E.B. Du Bois, "What Japan Has Done," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 20 Mar 1937, in *W.E.B. Du Bois on Asia Crossing the World Color Line*, eds. Bill Mullen and Cathryn Watson, 66–8 (U of Mississippi Press, 2005), 66.

<sup>139</sup> Du Bois, "The Meaning of Japan (1937)," 238.

Formosa (Taiwan), which was a site of Anglo-French as well as Sino-Japanese rivalry, and Korea, which was a site of Anglo-Russian, Japanese-Russian and also Sino-Japanese rivalry, were as a result of Japan's wars with China and Russia, kept out of Western hands even as they were shifted into Japan's. Du Bois wrote next to nothing on colonial Taiwan and Korea; however, my sense is that Sun's realist interpretation of the 1910 annexation of Korea aligns with Du Bois' outlook.

According to Sun, annexing Korea had been a matter of "life and death" for Japan, whereas for the U.S. who had forcibly coaxed Japan in 1853 and then later Korea in 1871 to open to Western commerce, it was a matter of a "slight loss of trade" by a power that "talk[ed] about justice and righteousness only for themselves, not for the Yellow race." Korea, who for "thousands of years...was a tributary state of China...perished," Sun explained, because America had "persuad[ed] it into a declaration of independence and then [left] it in the lurch" in an ever-expanding Darwinian world system (the Westphalian system) in which weaker powers like Japan ate yet weaker ones like Korea in order to avert being eaten by stronger ones. "Resentful as the Korean intellectuals are towards Japan on account of the annexation of their country," Sun wrote, "they are even more so towards the United States."<sup>140</sup> According to Du

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<sup>140</sup> On Korea's annexation, Sun wrote in *The Vital Problem of China*, 111–2: "Europeans and Americans talk about justice and righteousness only for themselves, not for the Yellow race. The American nation, whose Constitution is based on the principles of equality and liberty was the *first* to advocate discrimination against the Yellow race [the Chinese Exclusion Act]. The United States may show us friendliness and sympathy, but when the time comes...to conquer China...will she oppose the conquest...to champion the cause of a different race? Let us take Korea as an example. For thousands of years, Korea was a tributary state of China. It was the United States that first seduced Korea into separating herself from China and sent a diplomatic representative to negotiate a treaty with that country. Yet, when Britain and Japan entered into an alliance, and Korea was about to be annexed by Japan, the United States was the first to recall her minister from Korea, instead of responding to the Korean appeal for assistance. Resentful as the Korean intellectuals are towards Japan on account of the annexation of their country, they are even more so towards the United States for persuading it into a declaration of independence and then leaving it in the

Bois, “the very boldness” of Japan during the period was a “curious flanking movement of power” that “showed a deference to the power and method of Europe, which was flattering. ...Britain rose to the bait” with the 1902 Anglo-Japanese Alliance against Russia.<sup>141</sup> Here one can see a disidentificatory attitude toward imperialism on the parts of both Sun and Du Bois: even as Japanese colonialism ought to be rejected as a “method of Europe,” Japan was the only regional power with the ability to establish an Asian Monroe Doctrine as U.S. President Theodore Roosevelt would term it in jest at the 1905 Treaty of Portsmouth negotiations that concluded the Russo-Japanese War.<sup>142</sup>

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lurch. ...However the United States cannot be blamed for such an action. As long as Korea existed as an independent state, Japan had no room for expansion. So far as the United States is concerned, the annexation of Korea cost her nothing more serious than an indirect, slight loss of trade. It should be expected that a transient feeling of sympathy could not avail against the Japanese determination to annex Korea, which for Japan at the time was a matter of life and death. Korea perished because it had relied upon somebody who could not be relied upon.”

To which Korean intellectuals Sun is referring, who were more resentful toward America than Japan, is unclear and beyond the scope of my study. One might consider the extent to which Sun was exaggerating for his regionalist outlook. According to Young-Seo Baik, “Conceptualizing ‘Asia’ in modern Chinese mind: a Korean perspective,” *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* 3.2 (2002): 280–2, Sun’s 1924 “Pan-Asianism” speech was reported in Korean newspapers as “careless” and “clumsy” for not raising the problem of Korea under Japanese rule.

<sup>141</sup> In “Russia and America,” 140–1, Du Bois described the period thusly: “Trade ensued, slowly and methodically in Japan; roughly and drunkenly in China, until by the time of the American Civil War, China was all but a British colony, while Japan was silently preparing to meet the whites on their own ground. Rebellion and hatred of the whites ebbed and flowed in China, while industry grew in Japan, and by 1894 Japan challenged China and disclosed her weakness to Europe, insisting only on being counted among the harpies who gathered about the corpse. It was a curious flanking movement toward power. As partial master of China, Japan appeared as a partner of Europe in the further exploitation of Asia. The very boldness of this move showed a deference to the power and method of Europe, which was flattering. ...Britain rose to the bait. But China was not dead; the Boxers rose in rebellion, the intrepid Empress Dowager played politics, and a dreamer and reformer, Sun Yat-sen, began to loosen the Manchus on their throne. Japan conquered Czarist Russia but Communist Russia gave advice and training to Sun Yat-sen.”

<sup>142</sup> An “Asian Monroe Doctrine” was suggested by Roosevelt who would be the first American to win the Nobel Peace Prize for hosting the peace talks between Japan and Russia. At the time of the Russo-

Japan's strength was recognized in both the East and the West with the defeat of Tsarist Russia, cited by white supremacist Lothrop Stoddard as paradigm-shifting and an omen of a "rising tide of color." Du Bois cited the conflict as the one that "[broke] the myth of white world domination."<sup>143</sup> In his 1924 speech, Sun recounted the Japanese victory as a regionally-celebrated one, with Britain, Japan's ally at the time, "painfully surprised...for the victory was certainly not a blessing for the White peoples" (in the same speech, Sun, like Du Bois in his 1929 debate with Stoddard, criticized the white supremacist for his presumption that only whites were capable of civilization and that emancipation movements somehow constituted rebellion).<sup>144</sup>

In his 1917 *The Vital Problem of China*, Sun figured that China avoided colonization by Britain only "by accident," but that Japan's rise had put a halt to the possibility of not only Britain's intentions to dismember China to settle the inter-imperial rivalry, but all of Asia succumbing to Western colonialism. Citing the year 1860 when China was "in the throes of civil strife," the Manchu emperor recently dead and the "entire nation not in the mood to resist foreign invasion," Sun pondered what could have come to pass were Britain to have had an economic equivalent of the British East India Company inside China: no other power in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century would have been strong enough to stop Britain from acquiring the vast territory. If Britain had "combined the territories of India and China into one," the empire would have "secured an impregnable position in the world due to its monopolistic control of the largest

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Japanese War, Britain and the U.S. saw Japan as a lesser threat than Russia because Japan seemed to better abide by the open door policy in China. The U.S.-Japan relationship during this period can be described as that of self-congratulatory new empires sizing up each other with regards to their intentions toward China, while respecting one another's "civilizing" missions in the Philippines and Korea (e.g., the 1905 Taft-Katsura Agreement). Within a few decades, the open door policy and the Co-Prosperity Sphere (essentially, Japan's operation of an Asian Monroe Doctrine) would prove incompatible.

<sup>143</sup> Du Bois, "The Meaning of Japan (1937)," 238.

<sup>144</sup> Sun, "Pan-Asianism" in *The Vital Problem of China*, 164.

market of the world” such that the “present war” (the First World War) would “not have happened” (that is to say, the “African roots” of the war outlined by Du Bois in 1915 would have perhaps been materially superseded).<sup>145</sup> The open door policy as proposed by the U.S. in 1899 would become an acceptable remedy for the British crown to alleviate the rising competing interests in the region, except for, of course, China’s. To his 1924 Japanese audience, Sun explained how the open door policy as paired with the unequal treaties from all the major powers—except Russia, who ended theirs in an “awakening to a sense of justice” after the Bolshevik Revolution, and Germany, whose was abrogated at Versailles—was no better than colonization and perhaps even worse: China’s situation was tantamount to being “the slaves of more than ten countries,” of which Japan was one.<sup>146</sup>

Du Bois’ latter sentence—Japan in the 20<sup>th</sup> century as called to save the world from slavery to capital—may be paired with Sun’s plea for Japan to “retain the characteristics of the Oriental civilization of the rule of Right” and reject Fukuzawa Yukichi’s 1885 “Datsu-A Ron” or “leaving Asia” thesis. To distinguish civilizations of “might” from those of “right,” Sun cited the Western imperial (Westphalian) system versus the Chinese tributary system. Whereas India had “always entertained the thought of independence” from Britain and would, if Britain were to weaken, “overthrow British rule and regain independence within five years,” Nepal conversely continued to send tribute to China even when the “status of China had deteriorated to such an extent that it [was] inferior even to that of a British colony.” As Sun framed it: “The rule of right respects benevolence and virtue, while the rule of might only respects force and utilitarianism...People who are influenced by justice and virtue will never forget their superior

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<sup>145</sup> Sun, “The Foundation of the British Empire” in *The Vital Problem of China*, 70–3.

<sup>146</sup> Sun, “Japan and China’s Unequal Treaties” in *The Vital Problem of China*, 155–61.

State, even if that country has become weak.” From the Western powers, Sun concluded, Asia only needed “science for industrial development and the improvement of our armaments, not, however, with a view to oppressing or destroying other countries and peoples as the Europeans have done, but purely for our self-defense.”<sup>147</sup>

For Sun and other Asianists then, “Asia” was imagined as a third space that was neither {a} behind the West and catching up to it—or, according to yellow peril discourse, always threatening to surpass it (even if an *oitsuki, oikose* or “catch up and surpass” principle did have adherents in Japan). Nor, {b} was Asia a pure site entirely separate from the West. Rather, it was {c} a space of reclaimed authority for the purposes of regional welfare and improvement, to ward off Western encroachment. As Homi Bhabha has described the discursive process that is often mistaken as self-orientalism: “The anticolonial realignment of the spiritual and the material, the inner and the outer, mimics the colonialist’s color line of archaism and modernity, *up to a point*...[T]he anti-colonialist strategy introduces an inappropriable or untranslatable element of juxtaposition that unsettles the temporal framing and the political spacing of polarities.”<sup>148</sup> As mentioned in the previous section, such third space thinking was also present in Du Bois’ formulation of double-consciousness for the American Negro that evoked a practicable “outside” of Western racial temporalities for a liberated consciousness.

To the notion that 20<sup>th</sup>-century Japan was called to save the world from slavery to capital, Du Bois formulated a third space, or a virtuous core that belied Japanese capitalism. In 1937, he wrote:

Japanese industry is controlled by the great groups of capitalists. They are generous and

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<sup>147</sup> Sun, “Pan-Asianism” in *The Vital Problem of China*, 168–70.

<sup>148</sup> Homi Bhabha, “The Black Savant and the Dark Princess,” *ESQ: A Journal of the American Renaissance* 50.1-3, (2004): 147–8. Emphasis in original.

patriotic men. ...But they are capitalists, completely subjected to the domination of the private profit motive. They are allied with international capital. They fear communism. Yet their supremacy in government influence is not as great as in many European lands. Above them stands the tradition of Imperial authority, the power of the essentially communistic Japanese family and the deep belief in the Japanese people.<sup>149</sup>

Whereas Mullen has interpreted this passage as proof of Du Bois' orientalism and as a symptom of his failure to grasp basic Marxist tenets, I propose a different interpretation along the lines of third space thinking. Du Bois intentionally infused his reading of Japanese modernity with a rejection of what Iyko Day has referred to as "romantic anticapitalism." As Day has explained, whiteness has been associated with "good" social reproduction against yellowness/Asianness associated with capital's abstract evils.<sup>150</sup> As Du Bois' quote about the 1924 Immigration Act (cited on page 70) shows, he recognized the matter of Japanese and other Asian immigrants excluded on the basis of such abstraction: not as "vagabonds and burdens but because they were too thrifty and too efficient." Rebuking yellow peril discourse, Du Bois instead interpreted whiteness as the embodiment of colonial capitalism that threatened to envelope all, and against it configured the rise in Japanese material power as a signal of a possible global corrective. After all, Japan's ascent had forced the issue of racial equality to the table of international relations regardless of the empire's own motivations for proffering the proposal (structure over agency along the color line). His impression of Japan's ascent has features of romantic anticapitalism, too, by way of idealizing Japaneseness over whiteness, but Du Bois surmised that the Japanese imperial project was imbued with a potentially different disposition than the Euro-American

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<sup>149</sup> W.E.B. Du Bois, "What Japan Has Done (1937)."

<sup>150</sup> Iyko Day, *Alien Capital* (Duke UP, 2016), introduction. Day's applies her analysis to white settler colonial societies with histories of expendable Asian labor, namely America, Canada and Australia.

projects because of the unique shaping of Japanese modernity: namely, the leaders of the Meiji Restoration had consolidated the emperor system with the chief goals of modernizing Japan and unifying the Japanese people to deflect colonization. Whereas the profit-motive in the West was reinforced by the false morality of scientific racism, missionary Christianity and the white man's burden to civilize, Japan as an object of these dogmas was in a potential position to reject them.

Of course, a positive trajectory for Japan's ascent was challenged, firstly, by the young empire's extension of colonial capitalism and strident anticommunism (Japan participated in Wilson's 1918–22 Siberian Intervention, for instance); yet, Du Bois reasoned that Japan was prone to self-correction because of its intrinsic defensive relation to the West. The "Marxian interpretation must be changed," he wrote, "to accord with a different set of facts." Those facts included how, notwithstanding the "great groups of capitalists" (*zaibatsu* or Imperial Japan's business conglomerates), "primary accumulation of capital in Japan [is] largely a government function, and therefore government control of capital is natural and awaited...[C]ommunal welfare [is] considered far more than in Europe and America" resulting in a "contrast in class incomes [that] is not nearly as great as the money wage would indicate, since in the distribution of social satisfactions there is wide equality."<sup>151</sup> Japan was "essentially communistic," he surmised, which was a point of agreement between himself and Yosuke Matsuoka, the diplomat who gave the defiant 1933 speech withdrawing Japan from the League of Nations, who Du Bois met during his 1936 stay in Manchukuo.<sup>152</sup>

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<sup>151</sup> W.E.B. Du Bois, "Chapter 16—Jones in Japan": from *A World Search for Democracy* (1937)," 261–2.

<sup>152</sup> See Taketani, *The Black Pacific Narrative*, 165, 180–3, for the meeting between Du Bois and Matsuoka. At the time, the latter was the director of the South Manchurian Railway Company. Taketani also writes of how later, as Foreign Minister, Matsuoka used a similar notion in his negotiation with Joseph Stalin to secure the 1941 Soviet-Japanese Neutrality Pact: although he did not "agree with political and social communism" he told Stalin that he "basically adhered to communism" and was "decisively against Anglo-

A positive trajectory was challenged, secondly, by Yamato supremacy, but Du Bois figured this too could self-correct with interracial, including inter-Asian dialogue, a recourse that he had narrativized in his 1928 *Dark Princess* (discussed later). As no speaker of Japanese, Du Bois had little access to debates in Japan about Japan's role in the region and the world, such as the 1930s Kyoto School (thinkers like Nishida Kitaro whose writings would inform the famous 1942 "Overcoming Modernity" conference, and were adoptable by *both* ultranationalists and anticolonial thinkers).<sup>153</sup> Yet, the theme of world-reducing racial/temporal dualisms undoubtedly arose when Du Bois toured Japanese universities in 1936, sharing with faculty and students his insights on the plight of the American Negro.

On the intersection of communism and the Asianist cause, both Du Bois and Sun read the Bolshevik Revolution as a welcomed development. I already touched on Du Bois' views on communism, but Sun went so far as to describe the nascent Soviet Union as "join[ing] with the Orient":

There is a new country in Europe which has been looked down upon and expelled from the Family of Nations by the White races of the whole of Europe. Europeans consider it

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Saxon capital." On the Second Sino-Japanese War, Matsuoka told Stalin that the war was not against the Chinese people, "whom Japan does not want to fight," but Chiang Kai-shek who was an "agent of Anglo-American capital."

<sup>153</sup> Consider the rhetoric of Nishida Kitaro's 1942 essay "The Principle of the New World Order" (*Sekai Shin-Chitsujo no Genri*) that was taken up by both the Japanese left and right. Nishida argued that the Co-Prosperity Sphere had the potential to move the world beyond the failure of Wilsonian internationalism that feigned a universal morality of self-determination yet sustained subjugating imperialisms, communism that "still derives from the 18<sup>th</sup>-century abstract conception of the world based on individualism" and the Chinese tributary system that was too provincial; Asianism had the potential to serve as a model for "formative globalism" where individual peoples engaged in not simply self-determination, but "self-transcendence...in accordance with [their] own regional tradition." See Yoko Arisaka, "The Nishida Enigma: 'The Principle of the New World Order,'" *Monumenta Nipponica* 51.1 (1996): 100–5.

as a poisonous snake or some brutal animal, and dare not approach it. Such a view is also shared by some countries in Asia [such as Japan]. This country is Russia. At present, Russia is attempting to separate from the white peoples in Europe. Why? Because she insists on the rule of Right and denounces the rule of Might. She advocates the principle of benevolence and justice, and refuses to accept the principles of utilitarianism and force. ...She joins with the Orient and separates from the West. The new principles of Russia were considered as intolerable by Europeans. They are afraid that these principles, when put into effect, would overthrow their rule of Might...[so they] denounce [them] as contrary to world principles.<sup>154</sup>

Under Sun, the Kuomintang developed working relationships with both Russian and Chinese communists to secure China's future, but these relationships deteriorated after his death in 1925 (a year after Lenin's death in 1924). The Chinese Civil War began with the 1927 Shanghai Massacre, Chiang Kai-shek's campaign to purge communists from the Kuomintang.

Sun's death meant that he never saw the Japanese invasion of Manchuria in 1931, the usurpation of his words for the puppet-state of Manchukuo and the 1940–5 collaborationist government in Nanjing, led by Wang Jingwei who lost control of the Kuomintang to Chiang. Du Bois, however, factored in how Japan's invasion of China closed the open door in the face of the West, as the League of Nations condemned Japan who withdrew from the League in 1933 over non-recognition of Manchukuo. In response to the transpacific propaganda war, progressive white Americans like Pearl Buck advocated for civil rights and argued before Congress for the lifting of the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act, warning that America needed to prove Japan wrong in its contention that the West was irreparably racist so as to prevent Japan from potentially

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<sup>154</sup> Sun, "Pan-Asianism" in *The Vital Problem of China*, 172–3.

winning the ideological war in Asia. Buck would later denounce the wartime internment of Japanese Americans for the same reason. As Colleen Lye has described Buck: her “appeal [gave] voice to the war’s radical potential for advancing the civil rights struggle at the same time that it rest[ed] the ideal of universal equality upon the U.S.’ moral authority.”<sup>155</sup>

But Du Bois read the racial progressivism as little but rhetorical one-upmanship to maintain as near to the global material status quo as possible:

Japan...faces her enemies and easily confounds if not misjudges them. Why, she logically asks, is Europe, gorged with the loot of centuries, become suddenly so solicitous over the rights of backward peoples? Why is England today defending the integrity of that same China which she more than any people on earth, reduced to impotence and helpless disorganization? What new and lofty regard for human dignity is animating self-righteous America, which declares the yellow race even less worthy of citizenship in the republic than black slaves? And whose knight in shining armor refused at Versailles, even to consider a League of Nations declaration in favor of racial equality?<sup>156</sup>

He knew that Japanese pan-Asianism exhibited two-facedness, too, but for reasons outlined above, averred that the “chances for economic reform under Japanese imperialism are infinitely greater than any chances which colored people would have under the most advanced white leaders of Western reform, except in Russia.”<sup>157</sup>

In sum, in both the eyes of Du Bois and Sun, the post-1895 rise of Japan was not “good until it was bad”—that is, convincingly leaning toward egalitarianism until they naively and

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<sup>155</sup> Lye, *America’s Asia*, 239.

<sup>156</sup> Du Bois, “‘Chapter 16—Jones in Japan’ (1937),” 261.

<sup>157</sup> W.E.B. Du Bois, “Forum of Fact and Opinion,” *Pittsburgh Courier*, 29 Feb 1936, in *Newspaper Columns*, vol. I, 36.

delinquently recognized it as not—but rather “bad until potentially good.” The latter stance requires attention to the ways Imperial Japan did not have a monopoly on Asianism, as well as the ways Asianism was/is not an uncritical, less critical or necessarily self-/orientalizing political orientation. The Asianist discourse of Sun and others urged Japan to become better, even as the discourse was appropriated for a “better empire.” Repudiating Asianism for this reason would be akin to impugning the U.S. Civil Rights Movement for abetting U.S. exceptionalism and the nation’s Cold War aims, as well as the Western civilizing impulse generally. In fact, antiracist activists on both sides of the Pacific have long tried to configure their praxis in ways that are differentiating from empire rather than incorporative by it. Near the end of his life in his 1961 novel *Worlds of Color* (the third installment of his *Black Flame* trilogy), in a reflection on Japan, Du Bois would deploy decidedly Asianist prose reminiscent of Sun Yat-sen: with “headstrong leaders [Japan] chose to apply Western imperialism to her domination of the East, and Western profit making replaced Eastern idealism.”<sup>158</sup>

As I will now discuss in the penultimate section, collaboration with imperialism’s racial justice was a realist strategy many in transwar Asia saw as unavoidable.

## **2.6 Collaborating with Empire for India: Anand Mohan Sahay in Japan**

Du Bois’ orientation toward Asia tends to be segmented into an India decade (the rise of Gandhism in the 1920s), a Japan decade (the Co-Prosperity Sphere) and a China–Russia decade (from Mao’s 1949 victory to the late-1950s Sino-Soviet split). But just as Taketani engages the mutual implications of Japan, Russia and China for Du Bois in Manchukuo, here I want to read

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<sup>158</sup> W.E.B. Du Bois, *Worlds of Color* (1961) (Oxford UP, 2007), 43.

India in multilateral, Asianist terms in Du Bois' thought, particularly concerning the trope of Indo-Japanese alliance. He described Indian independence from the British Empire on August 15, 1947 as "the greatest historical date of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries" because "on that date four hundred million colored folk of Asia were loosed from the domination of the white people of Europe."<sup>159</sup> Yet, writing a decade earlier, he was concerned that India had "temptation to stand apart from the darker peoples and seek her affinities among whites," what might be rephrased as embracing the model side of the peril-model binary, as opposed to seeking to fade the color line in coalition.<sup>160</sup>

On this very matter, in the months before his 1936 trip to Japan and Manchuria, he debated in the *Aryan Path*, a Bombay-based theosophical journal, with N. S. Subba Rao, an educator and oft-contributor to the journal. Du Bois noted with approval that Indians had "appeared in the four or five Pan-African Congresses" and he cited Lala Lajpat Rai and Rabindranath Tagore as examples of advocates interested in bringing "these [two] groups," Indians and Negroes, "into sympathetic understanding." By the end of the debate, Rao found Du Bois' proposition of a union of color impractical due to internal division, and prone to violence since the white world would never allow it (see the extended note for the full debate).<sup>161</sup> In

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<sup>159</sup> W.E.B. Du Bois, "The Freeing of India (1947)," in *W.E.B. Du Bois on Asia Crossing the World Color Line*, eds. Bill Mullen and Cathryn Watson, 145–53 (U of Mississippi Press, 2005), 145: "This is saying a great deal, when we remember that in the nineteenth century, Napoleon was overthrown, democracy established in England, Negro slaves emancipated in the United States, the German Empire founded, the partition of Africa determined upon, the Russian Revolution carried through, and two world wars fought. Nevertheless, it is true that the fifteenth of August [1947] marks an event of even greater significance than any of these."

<sup>160</sup> W.E.B. Du Bois, "The Clash of Color: Indians and American Negroes," *The Aryan Path* 7 (Bombay, India) (Mar 1936): 111–5, in *Writings in Periodical Literature*, vol. III, 41–4.

<sup>161</sup> The debate consisted of four parts: {1} W.E.B. Du Bois, "The Clash of Color: Indians and American Negroes," *The Aryan Path* 7 (Mar 1936); {2} N. S. Subba Rao, "The Union of Colour," *The Aryan Path* 7 (May 1936): 213–6; {3} W.E.B. Du Bois, "The Union of Color," *The Aryan Path* 7 (Oct 1936): 438–84

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[sic], in *Writings in Periodical Literature*, vol. III, 45–7; {4} N. S. Subba Rao, “A Rejoinder to Dr. Du Bois,” *The Aryan Path* 7 (Oct 1936): 484–5.

Rao rejected Du Bois’ call for a union of color of the darker races as inherently “violent.” He wrote: “In the closing years of the nineteenth century, the success of Japan roused the Kaiser [Wilhelm II] to call upon the nations of Europe, through a famous cartoon, to unite themselves against the Yellow Peril, and it is just as easy and unwise to call upon the coloured peoples to league themselves against the white races. Narrow loyalties can be developed, and unholy passions roused, by dwelling on one’s disabilities and dangers, which can always be attributed to others. Swift and violent action unhappily appeals to mankind, but if the results are to endure the path towards a new and stable order lies through reason and persuasion. To range the forces of the world into two camps, sullen, suspicious and menacing, is no answer. Mr. Du Bois is happy...that the union of the darker races should bring a new and beautiful world not simply for themselves but for all men. That is to say, they should help by their joint action to bring about a new economic order in which exploitation makes room for equity, a new political order in which rivalry and subjection are replaced by peace and equality, and, above all, a cultural synthesis to which all will contribute and which all will share. If that is to be the goal, then the darker races for the sake of the larger good must, in spite of humiliation and suffering, *accept the present framework of their existence, and seek to reconstruct it with the cooperation of the white races.* That way lies the hope of mankind” (emphasis added).

Du Bois responded thusly: “We Negroes in the United States have repeatedly passed through this phase of reasoning. We have said: ‘You must not unite or seem to unite against white people. You must not organize in opposition. You must not even think of yourselves as by any possibility existing apart from them or with an object of your own.’ The result of this self-denying attitude is easily disastrous. It is too true that only two awful paths seem to face the suppressed peoples of today: The path of humiliation, and the path of war...[W]hat I propose is a hearty and even a desperate attempt *to find a third path*—a path that will not necessarily range the forces of the world into ‘two camps, sullen, suspicious and menacing,’ but which will aim at inner cohesion and understanding among the colored peoples, and especially organizations designed to meet and solve their pressing economic problems. ...[We can] establish new ideals of mutual respect which shall not be exclusively and continually white ideals. I cannot see that this path must necessarily lead to war unless the white world openly and flatly insists that any organization of colored folk for the advance of colored folk is a menace to white people ...I believe...in men of all colors and races. I do not want to supplement the hegemony of the white race with a tyranny of black folk or yellow folk or brown folk” (emphasis added).

David Haekwon Kim, “Love is God, and Work Is His Prophet,” 332, has made the case that Du Bois’ language in this passage “clarifies the final outcome of the...revelatory dialectic of *Dark Princess*” in which Du Bois demonstrates a “black Marxist-Gandhian” orientation. The third path advocated strikes me as similar to the Asianist method discussed in the previous section: a path of disidentification with the West.

I disagree with Kim that the position toward violence in the endeavor is Gandhian, given that nonviolence is not idealized and a potential need for violence is deemed a prospect, depending on the

question for Du Bois were not only the possible effects of British colonialism on Indian thinking, such as discussion at that time among Indian elites that India should join the British Commonwealth on the same terms as, say, Australia, thereby linking India's economic future with the Anglo-U.S. economic order, but also how Indians positioned themselves within a global hierarchy of race.

Bhagat Singh Thind had argued in *United States v. Thind* (1923) that he was, in fact, "Caucasian" (and not "Negro," the only other legal option at the time eligible for U.S. naturalization). In his 1916 *The United States of America: A Hindu's Impression*, Du Bois' friend Lala Rajpat Rai wrote that "The Hindu is Caucasian by race...[but] the Europeans are not prepared to acknowledge that his racial origin is the same as theirs." Rai went on, describing how Indian immigrants in the U.S. were regarded as compared to Japanese and Chinese immigrants:

The Jap has to be tolerated because he is a citizen of a country which recently whipped one of the great powers [the Russo-Japanese War]. Against the Chinese, the Americans

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response of the white world. I quote Rao's rejoinder because he presumes the same:

"I fear that the difference between Dr. Du Bois and myself is fundamental. ...My attitude probably appears to him to be a parody of the adjuration to turn the left cheek when the right is smitten. To me his desire to be strong and organised without any desire of aggression appears to be a latter-day version of the famous declaration, 'I do not bite my thumb at you, sir, but I bite my thumb.' Surely history illustrates in a tragic manner the inevitable sliding from the path of defensive preparation down the inclined plane which leads to aggression and war. ...It is not merely a question either of expediency or of the rightness of such a course of action. Does Dr. Du Bois seriously believe that any such united stand is possible for the coloured people? Internally they are so divided among themselves that it is hard to believe they will ever arrive at anything like a common understanding, any more than the European peoples have so far succeeded in doing. Let alone the union of coloured peoples in the whole world, but consider the unhappy divisions in a country like India. ...It is also idle to expect that any serious and sustained effort on the part of the coloured people to organise themselves implicitly against the European peoples will be allowed free play by the latter. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru has given an amusing account of the Pan-Asiatic Congress held some years ago, which was attended by a number of European spies in the guise of authorised representatives of the coloured peoples."

do not feel the same bitterness as they display against the Jap or the Hindu. The former they hate; the latter they scorn; but the Chinese they pity. China is America's protege, and the Chinaman in the United States, though dreaded as a competitor in the labor market and therefore shut out by law is otherwise petted.<sup>162</sup>

Conversely, Du Bois had long understood the continent as “brown and yellow” (Richard Wright would later discuss the different permutations of a brown–yellow divide in his 1956 *The Color Curtain*, on the 1955 Bandung Conference).<sup>163</sup> In his 1928 *Dark Princess*, Du Bois incorporated a brown–yellow schema in the form of Indo-Japanese alliance (collaboration of the colonized with a colonizer). Strangely, *Dark Princess* has seen almost no analysis that triangulates the interplay of Japan, India and Afro America in the text.

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<sup>162</sup> Lala Lajpat Rai, *The United States of America: A Hindu's Impressions and a Study* (Calcutta: R. Chatterjee, 1916), 411–2.

<sup>163</sup> Richard Wright, *Black Power: Three Books from Exile: Black Power, the Color Curtain, and White Man, Listen!* [1954–57] (NY: Harper Perennial Modern Classics, 2008), depicted the brown/yellow divide as manifesting in issues that remain contentious to this day: Japanese imperialism in East and Southeast Asia, the competing postcolonial visions of India and China (the de facto leaders at Bandung), and the Chinese communist, non-religious appeal to what Wright termed an “Asianism” to try to build relations with religious (namely, Islamic) Indonesia who hosted the conference, as well as Islamic South, Central and West Asia. On the issue of Japanese imperialism, see 584. On the China/Islam divide, Wright, 557–60, described Chinese Prime Minister Zhou Enlai thusly: “A shrew man speaking... Yet all was not easy in the mind of Chou En-Lai [*sic*]. In Indonesia Moslems had butchered Communists, even though Communists held a balance of power in the present government. The rational Mr. Chou En-Lai knew that religious feeling could rise threateningly against him, if it chose.” In Wright's estimation, Islamic nations would never accept the atheism of communism, so Wright depicts Zhou as making concessions to develop consensus. He states optimistically: “There was an element of ‘Asianism’ in the whole conference... All Chou had to do was stand his ground and wait with outstretched hands, and they came to him...” Wright then ponders whether the Chinese could succeed in Africa where Russia had not: “If there was no effective opposition to Chou En-lai at Bandung, among the Asian and African elite, how much would there be among the illiterate millions sprawled over Asia and Africa? ... Western academic personnel is still discussing whether Africans have the capacity for self-government, a psychological prejudice which no Communist worthy of his salt would ever carry as a handicap. And the delegates at Bandung felt that profound difference in approach.”

Before I turn to the novel in the concluding section, I want to foreground a nonfictional account of the intersection of Indian nationalism with Japanese pan-Asianism in order to illustrate how realist politics actually took shape in transwar Asia. I do this because my sense is that Du Bois' outlook toward Japan has been subjected to the affective trappings of the postwar Americanization of racial justice and a particularization of inter-Asian relations that strip away historical nuance for U.S. moral authority. Whereas Sun Yat-sen's call for Sino-Japanese cooperation would manifest in Wang Jingwei's collaborationist government in Nanjing, which Chinese nationalist memory today deems as traitorous, no such nationalist censure is present in India on the matter of Subhas Chandra Bose's collaboration with Japan (as Japan did not colonize India). Given the importance of maintaining historical nuance unsubsumed by nationalism, Timothy Brook, writing on Chinese context, has made the call of the need to "interrogate the normative logic that presupposes the moral subject": namely, that "resisters are spared the moral censure we currently reserve for collaborators."<sup>164</sup> To expound the transwar Indo-Japanese relation and its contradictions, I turn to the memoirs of Anand Mohan Sahay who from 1923 was based in Kobe, Japan, before he and his family's repatriation to India in 1947. In 1937, Sahay mailed a letter inviting Du Bois to join a meeting and have dinner with the Indian National Congress Committee of Japan. Du Bois' itinerary was already booked, but Sahay's trajectory nevertheless overlapped with Du Bois' on the matter of touring Manchukuo to make sense of the pluralist state.

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<sup>164</sup> Timothy Brook, "Hesitating before the Judgment of History," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 71.1 (2012): 112. Perhaps the chief example of the ethical limits of the resister-collaborator paradigm is the Kuomintang's breaching of the dikes of the Yellow River in June 1938 as a desperate attempt to halt the advance of Japanese forces. Sacrificing (by low estimates) 500,000 civilians who died in the floodwaters (displacement and famine affected millions), the stratagem highlights how in wartime the survival of the "nation" or "ethnos" becomes conflated with survival of a "regime."

A self-identified Gandhian who acquired Japanese fluency in the early 1920s, Sahay worked to educate the Japanese public in support of Indian independence, and then eventually rallied the Indian diaspora in Japan for Indo-Japanese alliance. By the late 1920s, Sahay gained a reputation in Japan as a popular speaker on Indian nationalism, informing audiences of the need for India and Japan to see their causes as one against the West, particularly against then-global hegemon, Britain. In a 1926 speech, he stated:

Once there was an Anglo-Japanese alliance...but you must think deeply about the actions of England during the treaty. Do you think England regarded [the] Japanese as their intimate friend? The policy of England from ancient times is to create a quarrel between nations...and make profit in the confusio[n]. ...The Great World War broke out [and] Japan fought Germany in helping England on account of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance... After that, Japan cooperated with China and made efforts to help the Asiatic nations, in realizing the idea of Great Asia. Who interrupted this movement? It was not Soviet Russia, but England. The present Sino-Japanese incident was caused by the crafty design of England. We Indians already well know...the English diplomatic course...and believe that there cannot be created a true happiness and peace for all the Asiatic races unless the power of England is taken out of the land of Asia. (ST 155–6)

After Japan invaded China in 1931, Sahay was “determined not to support Japan’s aggression in China” focusing the topic of his speeches on India and Britain. “At heart,” however, he was “already feeling that Japan has some justification and reasonable grievances against the pro-Western attitude of President Chiang Kai-shek” (242–3). Sahay was surprised to learn from Japanese informants that even though the Western, and particularly the U.S. press, was vehement in opposing Japan in China, American aid for China was a duplicitous publicity stunt. The U.S.

supplied China with free yet obsolete arms, but sold Japan more sophisticated hardware; the Americans mainly wanted “profit and to see that their war industry flourishe[d] and not to help either China or Japan” (233).

Sahay was convinced before his 1938 trip to Manchukuo that Japan was indeed at fault, as he could not help but see China as subjugated by a colonial power just as India was. He regarded the South Manchurian Railway Company as the Japanese version of the British East India Company (230). Like Du Bois’ 1936 tour, Sahay was invited by Japanese hosts to ascertain the feelings of “Chinese people in general” so as to report his honest findings—in Du Bois’ case, to Afro America—and in Sahay’s case, to the Indian diaspora in Japan and beyond. The trip left Sahay feeling “disturbed and confused” (253).

A discussion he had with fifteen Chinese professors at Yenching University (a U.S.-managed university in Beijing) who were “partly products of Tokyo Imperial and Waseda universities” revealed leftist or communist orientations. The intellectuals were anti-Chiang and not “anti-Japanese, but wanted Japan to be progressive and sympathetic to the Chinese people’s interests.” Sahay met two of them at nightclubs for a “closer look at China”: both were tied to groups “working incognito in all cities and towns of China and Manchuria and even some Japanese youth were collaborating in their efforts to prepare for revolution.” The topic of India arose during the conversation, and one of the Chinese asked: “What are the possibilities of India achieving freedom only through Gandhi’s nonviolent means?” Sahay explained how, in India, it was “impractical to organize an armed mass revolution,” so Gandhi was “trying to organize the masses and make them fearless and ready to suffer and sacrifice en masse so that the conscience of humanity at large may peacefully revolt against British repression and brutality.” The Chinese responded that India’s situation was similar to their own: the people are “poor, philosophic and

resigned to fate.” The Americans in the group dismissed Gandhian tactics and said: “Look, if you’re prepared for armed revolt, America could help you with arms and funds” (249–50).

The following day, Sahay decided to meet the “common man” and so he took a rickshaw to a village where he was invited into the home of an elderly man. When questioned about Japanese rule, the old man stated: “China has become accustomed to repeated changes of rulers. They come, boss over us, make money and go away. And then another army comes and the same thing is repeated. That is why our people are so poor and resigned to fate.” When Sahay asked if the Japanese were making money through oppression, the man smiled and said: “On the contrary, their officers visit us every now and then and enquire about our difficulties and needs.” When Sahay pressed that the Japanese are foreigners, so their rule in China might be regarded as indefensible, the man responded: “Chinese troops who invade are more aggressive and extract money or grain more ruthlessly, so what difference does it make, Chinese or Japanese?” Sahay thought: “As an Indian...I could not help feeling sad at this complacency...the old man was not a politician...[but] represented the philosophic mind and approach to the world as preached by Confucius, centuries ago.” Before ending his trip and returning to Japan, Sahay had dinner with his host, Yuzawa Michio, the de facto leader of Japanese-occupied Beijing, where he gave Yuzawa his “frank impression” of the trip. Yuzawa appreciatively admitted that he was unsure of Japan’s future, because Japan could “neither surrender or withdraw or conquer...even if we want to make peace we don’t know with whom to negotiate and settle matters” (252–3).

When war broke out in Europe in 1939, Sahay had to decide whether his Gandhian principles and feelings about Japanese aggression in China were enough to prevent his rallying the Indian diaspora for alliance with Japan. That is to say, “successfully enlist[ing] the sympathy of Indians in Japan and of the Japan branch of the Indian National Congress” would go a long

way toward effecting positive sentiment across the Indian diaspora in Asia, which Japan needed if it were to take on Britain and the other Western powers. Ultimately, Sahay chose in favor of alliance and co-published a declaration to that effect (with Mahendra Patrap, a fellow nationalist who was also Japan-based at the time) (264–5). As his memoirs show, Sahay took a lead role in the part of the Second World War associated with Bose and the INA. After the war, and in the midst of the continuing fight for independence, realized in 1947, Sahay asked Gandhi for forgiveness for “breaking his promise...to remain loyal to the ideals of Ahimsa [nonviolence].” Gandhi replied that Sahay had “atoned for the sin by repentance” and that the “INA has set a great example for Hindu-Muslim unity.” Then Gandhi asked in earnest: “Anand, tell me frankly, is Bose really no more? ...If he is not alive, that would be the greatest misfortune for our country” (354–5).<sup>165</sup>

Sahay’s memoirs instill hesitation in the reader from making quick moral judgments about collaboration with imperialism’s racial justice. Reading the lived experience of actors caught between fighting for antiracism (Indians, Chinese, Japanese and so on, at various sites and in various alliances) and imperialism’s racial justice (Anglo-American “benevolence,” Japan’s “Asia for the Asiatics,” Chiang’s authoritarian regime that sacrificed countless civilians for a “strong China”) pushes against the temptation to judge on presentist and nationalist grounds.

To conclude this section, I wish to give one more example of Sahay instilling hesitancy in judgment, regarding the matter of the famous 1938 correspondence between Rabindranath Tagore and the novelist and poet Yone Noguchi.<sup>166</sup> Tagore and Noguchi had been friends for two

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<sup>165</sup> Subhas Chandra Bose died in August 1945 after his plane crashed in Taiwan. Somewhat contentiously, his alleged ashes remain housed at Renkō-ji, a Buddhist temple in Tokyo.

<sup>166</sup> Although I disagree with the framing, the full correspondence between Tagore and Noguchi is reprinted in

decades, but public disagreement over Japanese aggression in China severed their friendship. Recognizing Tagore as a fellow Asianist, Noguchi could not comprehend how Tagore could support Chiang who Noguchi viewed as siding with the West over Japan's goal to liberate Asia. Scholars today tend to cast harsh judgment on Noguchi, and side with Tagore who, in the similar manner to Sun Yat-sen, beseeched Japanese audiences to choose "Eastern" over "Western" methods. In his memoirs, Sahay wrote to nuance Noguchi's position, citing that in his private conversations with the poet, Sahay felt Noguchi "fully supported [his] views" and that Noguchi told him that "Tagore did not realize that my two dear sons are serving in the Japanese army and they cannot leave the army" (ST 232). Sahay's words read as if to present Tagore as naively anti-realist, or at least to urge the reader to postpone judgment of Noguchi.

## **2.7 *Dark Princess*: A Critique of Transpacific Pluralisms in Competition**

In his novel *Dark Princess* that links black liberation with the Indian independence movement, Imperial Japan and Bolshevism, Du Bois deploys ethical tentativeness in the characterization of his black male protagonist who instinctively responds at every turn with idealism, but comes to see the value of realpolitik. Mullen has posited that the idea of the color line within the color line in the text is "perhaps reflective of Du Bois' ambivalence...about Japan's rising national ambitions."<sup>167</sup> But he and other scholars have not dwelt on "Japan" in the text and instead construe the line as resolved with the novel's concluding pages that feature a full-fledged Afro Asian alliance, as if the color line within the color line were between "Afro"

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Zeljko Cipris, "Seduced by Nationalism: Yone Noguchi's 'Terrible Mistake.' Debating the China-Japan War With Tagore," *The Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus* 5.11 (3 Nov 2011) [online].

<sup>167</sup> Bill Mullen, "Du Bois, *Dark Princess*, and the Afro-Asian International," *positions* 11.1 (2003): 226.

and “Asian,” preventing the former from allying with the latter until the line falls away. Rather, given that the color line within the color line is a symptom of the color line—as I explained earlier, it concerns nonwhite relations “artificially pounded together”—it cannot be so easily resolved and does not actually overlay onto hypostatized racial categories. As Nico Slate has correctly put it, *Dark Princess* does not “even attempt to resolve the challenges facing colored unity raised throughout the book. The potential for a color line within a color line remained to haunt readers, as it would continue to occupy Du Bois in his quest to unite the colored world.”<sup>168</sup> Homi Bhabha has explained that the novel does not present a “special pleading for the African American cause, [as] Du Bois [makes] a larger point about the politics of minoritization and its consequences for global solidarity...the risks and ruses that exist within revolutionary groups who claim to represent the wretched of the earth.”<sup>169</sup>

To summarize *Dark Princess* on the basis of its triangulated dynamic of yellow, brown and black: in Part I, “The Exile,” the black American protagonist Matthew Towns flees America for Germany after racism terminates his dream to become an obstetrician.<sup>170</sup> In Berlin, Matthew happens upon the Indian princess Kautilya of Bwodpur with whom he falls instantly in love. The princess invites him to meet a gathered council of nine who represent the darker peoples of the world. The council consists of the princess and two Indian men of lower status than she, a Japanese baron who is much later revealed to be the “great Prime Minister of the Darker World” (DP 188–9), two male-female couples (one Chinese and one Egyptian) and finally, a “stiff” Arab

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<sup>168</sup> Nico Slate, *Colored Cosmopolitanism: The Shared Struggle for Freedom in the United States and India* (Harvard UP, 2012), 78.

<sup>169</sup> Homi Bhabha, Introduction to *Dark Princess: A romance* (1928) (Oxford UP, 2007), xxvi–xxviii.

<sup>170</sup> The dean of the medical school that Matthew attended explains why Matthew could never be an obstetrician: “Do you think white women patients are going to have a Nigger doctor delivering their babies?” (DP, 4)

(14). Only the Indian princess and the Japanese baron play significant roles in the text. The baron remarks to Matthew that the council is “all agreed that the present white hegemony of the world is nonsense; that the darker peoples are the best” because they are “the natural aristocracy, the makers of art, religion, philosophy, life, everything except brazen machines.” The quote brings to mind Sun Yat-sen’s impression that the East needs nothing from the West, save technology.

The Japanese further states that because Asia “counts our millenniums of history whereas Europe counts her centuries,” a “natural inborn superiority” must eventually take charge (18). Matthew questions the rectitude of any belief in racial superiority, so the Japanese clarifies that once the “present color bar of Europe” is removed, “superior men of all colors—the best of Asia together with the best of the British aristocracy” will rule. When considering the “darkest of the dark” or the Negro, the baron and the majority of the council agree that Matthew’s race lacks signs of civilization and thus would be of little use, and likely of detriment, to their cause.

Du Bois writes of Matthew’s predicament: “there loomed plain and clear the shadow of a color line within a color line” (16). Matthew attempts to prove Negro greatness with a slave song of emancipation, and a few of the council come to his defense, notably the Chinese couple. The princess Kautilya, who herself is not entirely convinced of black worthiness, comments: “I cannot see that it makes a great difference what ability Negroes have. Oppression is oppression. It is our privilege to relieve it” (16). After her recent trip to Russia, which reflects Du Bois’ own 1926 trip to the Soviet Union and interest in the Communist International, Kautilya compares Negroes to the Bolsheviks who have certain potential to effect world-historical change. To the chagrin of the rest of the council, she wants Matthew to return to America on a mission to determine if Negroes match her hunch as having a capacity for revolution. Infatuated with the princess, Matthew assents.

But that night he is nearly assaulted by a group led by the Japanese baron who wants Matthew eliminated from the picture. The baron goads Matthew to admit that American Negroes are “cowards,” for which he does not “blame them, poor things, they were slaves and the children of slaves. They cannot even begin to rise in a century. We Samurai have been lords a thousand years or more” (22). Intervening before the assault, Kautilya speaks with the baron in a frank and elitist exchange that demonstrates how the color line within the color line in the story is structured in terms of competing visions of yellow and brown for the non/integration of blackness into an Asia-centric world order. The baron states nonchalantly to Kautilya that he has “failed” to thwart her wishes.

“You have failed,” she said. “I am glad there is no blood on your hands.”

“A drop of blood more or less matters little in the great cause for which you and I fight. ...[R]emember that...I stand ready tomorrow night to repeat the deed and seal it with my life.”

The Princess looked at him with troubled eyes. ...“I may be wrong,” she said, “and I know how right, but infinitely and calmly right, you usually are. But some voice within calls me. ...I want to see for myself if slaves can become men in a generation. If they can—well, it makes the world new for you and me.”

The Japanese started to speak, but she would not pause.

“There is no need for protest or advice. I am going. Mr. Towns will perform his mission as we agreed.” (24–5).

In Part II, “The Pullman Porter,” Matthew, now in Harlem, adheres to the task Kautilya gave him: he investigates a Marcus Garvey-like figure named Miguel Perigua who is determined to respond to Jim Crowism with violence. Rather than revolutionary, Matthew finds Perigua

unorganized and dangerous and writes as much to the princess, but he receives no reply from her due to, he assumes, the Japanese baron intercepting his letters (44, 54). Matthew, lonely, and believing he is permanently separated from Kautilya, settles into a job as a Pullman porter to travel and broaden his worldview. He undertakes and fails at the task of organizing black labor under the conditions of Jim Crow and is witness to the lynching of a friend. When learning of the crime, Perigua plans a bombing to derail a trainload of Ku Klux Klan members headed for a national conference in Chicago, and Perigua needs Matthew's assistance. Caught in a whirlwind of vengeance, Matthew acquiesces. But the princess happens to be on the same train intended for derailment, which snaps Matthew back to his senses; Matthew halts the train while Perigua martyrs himself on the tracks.

Scholars have overlooked why Kautilya is on the train, citing her presence as an implausible ploy to build romance with Matthew. In fact, she is headed to the KKK meeting with the Japanese baron. The two are planning to attend the conference to get a better sense of white supremacist propaganda that is meant to "discount, in advance" their cause for global colored unity (harkening to Stoddard's "rising tide of color" rhetoric). Kautilya informs Matthew that the baron has recently joined her in seeing the "tremendous possibilities of the American Negro." Matthew is dumbfounded: he cannot "fathom the intricacies of the tactics of the Japanese," given that the baron intercepted his letters (67). The passage indicates Matthew's doubts about the devised pluralism of the Japanese baron and the Indian princess. Before he is imprisoned after a public trial attended by the baron and the princess, he insists to Kautilya that black America will surely aid in their goal of emancipation of the darker races, but due to the shame of his own moral shortcomings, he feels he must exit her life and the quest. Kautilya tries to convince him that he is merely "conscience-mad": "[S]ome of the guilt of which you accuse yourself—can you

not balance this against the good you can do your people and mine if free?” He responds that he is a “mass of quivering nerves and all too delicate sensibility...liable to be a Perigua or a hesitating complaining fool,” not yet “trained” enough to collapse the idealism–realism binary into responsible action (77).

In Part III, “The Chicago Politician,” Matthew secures this training after a release from prison by scheming politicians Sammy Scott and Sara Andrews who intend to make him the face of a new, no-nonsense black politics. Matthew and Sara enter a relationship that starts out as romantic but devolves into convenience, which parallels their participation in a rotten and mechanistic Chicago politics that drains Matthew of “all his enthusiasm, all his hope, all his sense of reality” (93). Sara is mulatto, a trait that Du Bois strategically essentializes to signify corruptibility as Sara moves shrewdly between the white and black worlds, making deals with even the KKK in order to secure power for herself, Sammy and Matthew, albeit in the name of the black community. As Roderick Ferguson describes Matthew and Sara’s relationship that becomes a marriage: “marriage, according to the novel, is a technique of liberal governmentality that gives legitimacy to black middle-class efforts to assimilate into liberal democracy, and acquire power according to its rules of engagement.”<sup>171</sup> Matthew and Sara’s relationship implies the prospect of reproduction as a tool for the white U.S. state within which multiracial bodies do not inherently undermine, but often prop up the state, as Sara’s mixed-raceness and politics attest.

However, Du Bois portrays Sara as unsuitable for reproduction with Matthew in terms that Alys Weinbaum has phrased as Sara’s “sterile whiteness” against Kautilya’s “fecund

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<sup>171</sup> Roderick Ferguson, “W.E.B. Du Bois’: Biography of a Discourse,” in *Next to the Color Line: Gender, Sexuality, and W.E.B. Du Bois*, ed. Susan Gillman and Alys Eve Weinbaum, 269–88 (U Minnesota Press, 2007), 284.

brownness.”<sup>172</sup> Matthew is predestined to pair and mate with the princess. For Weinbaum, this gendered relation is damning: in an oft-cited analysis, Weinbaum summarizes *Dark Princess* as “reinscrib[ing] the elitism and orientalism we might expect it to challenge, while simultaneously making what can be called a *racial origin mistake*,” resulting in a story that is “racially essentialist in the way in which it conjures black internationalism, and heterosexist in the manner in which it (re)produces antiracist, anti-imperialist alliances.”<sup>173</sup> Central to Weinbaum’s interpretation is the notion that the color line within the color line falls away with the consummation of brown-black heterosexual dyad as symbolic of its overcoming. But as I argue, Du Bois’ alliance of the dyad with the Japanese baron who symbolizes duplicitous justice, suggests that the triangulated “romance” carries a different message.

As Matthew reflects on his realist trajectory with Sara and Chicago’s politics that is costing him “ugliness, writhing, dirty discomfort of the soul and thoughts” (DP 109), the baron reenters his life. He tells Matthew that against his earlier doubts, he is “much interested in noting the increased political power” of the American Negro. The council of the darker peoples has granted “full representation” to Matthew’s race, and Matthew is invited to hold the position of Negro chairman at a meeting in London three months hence. Matthew flatly rejects the offer, responding that his place is in America, where Negroes can “fight out our own battle...with more or less success.” He tells the baron that the “dream at Berlin was false and misleading” and whether he feels so out of resentment toward the baron in particular for having “wrecked his world” (that is, the baron initially led the fight to prevent black entry into the alliance and

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<sup>172</sup> Alys Weinbaum, “Interracial Romance and Black Internationalism,” in *Next to the Color Line: Gender, Sexuality, and W.E.B. Du Bois*, ed. Susan Gillman and Alys Weinbaum, 93–123 (U Minnesota Press, 2007), 111.

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid*, 116. Emphasis in original.

obstructed Matthew's romance with Kautilya) he is unsure. The baron simply apologizes and leaves (110).

The scene is important for how it connects with the scene that ends the section, when the princess also reenters Matthew's life. Off the page, Kautilya has been laboring in Chicago, working to fulfill her character arc as a woman ostensibly shedding her elitist bias—learning how to, in a word, toil. She saves Matthew from being nominated to Congress where he would have become a cog servicing a never-ending cycle of U.S. democracy reinforcing the white capitalist state. With Kautilya, Matthew flees a dinner party full of Chicago's political elite, leaving his wife Sara in a state of shock.

The Afro Asian alliance is thus secured on less-than-ideal terms. Whereas Asian material power is advanced as providing a possible exit route from a white global order, Matthew regards the Japanese baron's vision as corrupt since black worthiness became evident to him only upon observing rising black power within a white state. The princess welcomed blackness from the start, but is conjoined with the baron in elitist terms. Despite his love for Kautilya, Matthew remains hesitant to join her and the baron's cause, although his experience as a politician has given him greater self-assurance.

In the final section, Part IV, "The Maharajah of Bwodpur," which consists mainly of Matthew and Kautilya's love affair, the latter recounts her past: she claims to have overcome a colonial brainwashing that was her school years in Britain before embarking on her present quest. She informs Matthew that her "great and good friend," the baron, "whom you have met and dislike because you do not know him" is actually, in poetic terms, "civilization":

"[H]e is the high goal toward which the [world] blindly gropes; high in birth and perfect in courtesy, filled with wide, deep, and intimate knowledge of the world's past—the world,

white, black, brown and yellow: knowing by personal contact and acquaintanceship the present from kings to coolies. He is a man of lofty ideal without the superstition of religion. He is our leader, Matthew, the guide and councilor, the great Prime Minister of the Darker World.” (188–9)

This is quite the portrait for a man who considered all American Negroes to be “cowards,” so Du Bois here enables the reader to recognize, as Matthew does, that the princess actually remains elitist in her worldview and has only superficially completed her character arc. When Matthew and Kautilya decide that they must once again separate because he is still married to Sara, and she is being pressured to produce a male heir to rule Bwodpur, Matthew reverts to self-doubt. He sees with “increasing clearness, something that Kautilya, he thought, must begin to realize”: that “her freedom from him and his people—her freedom from this entanglement from which the thoughtful Japanese and Indians had tried to save her—would mean an increased and broader chance for her own work in her own world.” He ponders how Kautilya had “tried to see a way in America for...[them] to tread together. But all this was self-deception” (207). Ultimately, the two do give their relationship a chance after Matthew divorces Sara and when Kautilya reveals that the maharajah of Bwodpur shall be none other than his and her newborn son, Madhu, who the reader can assume will become a global leader in the next generation, during or after an impending war against the white world.

Considering that after his experience with Perigua, Matthew rejected violence as revolutionary, the coming war (that takes place after the novel) is significant. Kautilya, a self-professed Gandhian who believes in “gradual emancipation,” tells Matthew that among the newly-formed “Great Central Committee of Yellow, Brown and Black,” the “strongest group among us believes only in Force.” The group intends to, if necessary, “pound [white] arrogance

into submission” and despite having no “alliance with oppressed labor, white and colored,” Kautilya states, the group “may be right—that’s the horror, the nightmare of it: they may be right. ...[W]e have started forward. Our chart is laid” (213).

One can assume the Japanese baron leads this group advocating force, a man Kautilya named as “civilization...without the superstition of religion” who is conspicuously absent in the final scene celebrating Madhu’s birth, a religious ceremony of Christian, Buddhist, Islamic and Hindu proportions. The child is given many titles, including the “Messenger and Messiah of the Darker Worlds” (223) and whereas his future is left to the reader’s imagination, what is clear is that Matthew and Kautilya are collaborators with imperialism’s racial justice, the narrative arc of the novel presenting the color line within the color line not as overcome, but in the form of an outstretched coil.

Rather than merely utopic fiction as it has been branded and critiqued on the basis of the central brown-black dyad, I read *Dark Princess* as a speculative, pragmatic fiction concerned with the emancipatory limits of competing pluralisms in the transwar period. Part I depicts a segregation of Afro Asia by a vulgar Japanese racism (Yamatoism) that becomes, by Part IV, integrated via polite racism, bookending U.S. segregation and integration dynamics of Parts II and III. In the end, Matthew and Kautilya are no less realist than Sara and Sammy; Du Bois gives both dyads happy endings (Sara marries Sammy after divorcing Matthew) as if to parallel the two sites of pragmatism presented in the text: working within and without the U.S. capitalist-democratic system. The novel ends with a forward march toward equality and freedom, but Du Bois does not depict it, because the color line and the line within it force a deferral. The location of utopia in *Dark Princess* is not the world that Madhu will inherit after a projected fall of global white supremacy, but as Matthew explains, is a “divine Anarchy in some faraway heaven” (204).

At its foundation, *Dark Princess* depicts what José Esteban Muñoz and others have referred to as a politics of disidentification with modernity's oppressive structures. Muñoz' formulation of the temporality for queerness as "not yet" is instructive on the limits Du Bois places on liberation by way of racialized reproduction and/or allying with imperialism's racial justice. Critiques of queer theorist Lee Edelman's 2004 book *No Future* by Muñoz, Chandan Reddy and others, have shown that a manner of theorizing that would, for example, read Du Bois' celebration of reproductive futurity (the birth of the messianic child for an antiracist future) as an extension of heteropatriarchy, neglects how racialized populations are violently positioned in ways that undercut their futurity.<sup>174</sup> Besides, beyond the heterosexist realpolitik in *Dark Princess* is a supplemental idealism also enfolded in the text: a "divine Anarchy" or a queer political ontology with a future-oriented temporality when agency is unbounded by the strictures of the color line.

Sanda Mayzaw Lwin has usefully compared Du Bois' political ontology as expressed in *Dark Princess* with what Jacques Derrida in his later work referred to as "democracy to come" (*la démocratie à venir*), which does not refer to a utopian democratic politics, but its impossibility in the present.<sup>175</sup> To expand on the comparison: for Derrida, democracy is contradictory and perhaps even self-defeating, since the conflict between its implicit notions of equality and sovereignty of the self and of the group conflict with the presumed peril of the other undermining that sovereignty.<sup>176</sup> Du Bois ruminated on this conundrum when he editorialized in

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<sup>174</sup> Muñoz, *Cruising Utopia*, 97; Reddy, *Freedom with Violence*, 179.

<sup>175</sup> Sanda Mayzaw Lwin, "Romance with a Message: W.E.B. Du Bois's *Dark Princess* and the Problem of the Color Line," in *Strange Affinities: The Gender and Sexual Politics of Comparative Racialization*, ed. Grace Kyungwon Hong and Roderick A. Ferguson, 175–191 (Duke UP, 2011), 190.

<sup>176</sup> Jacques Derrida, *Rogues: Two Essays on Reason*, trans. Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas (Stanford UP, 2005).

1938: “Democracy does not and cannot mean freedom. On the contrary, it means coercion...[the] submission of the individual will to the general will [which is] justified in this compulsion only if the will is general and not the will of special privilege.”<sup>177</sup>

In *Dark Princess*, Matthew wonders in a letter to Kautilya whether life can only be “made good by compulsion,” and whether any choice truly exists between “monarchy and oligarchy and democracy” or if the choice is “only the objects for which we will enthrone tyrannical dictators...for the sake of aristocrats as in Czarist Russia, or dictators for the sake of millionaires as in America, or dictatorship for the factory workers and peasants in Soviet Russia” (DP 204). She responds: “Oh, my Matthew, your oligarchy as you conceive it is not the antithesis of democracy—it is democracy, if only the selection of the oligarchs is just and true.... The tyranny of which you dream is the true method which I too envisage. But choose well the Tyrants” (205–6). Matthew does not seem convinced, which reflects Du Bois’ own struggle with democracy: that it is somehow an answer to, but especially over the course of his lifetime, tended to be applied in a manner that extended the color line. This problem of democracy-in-practice would haunt him until the end of his life.

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<sup>177</sup> W.E.B. Du Bois, “Revelation of Saint Orgne the damned, June 8, 1938,” W.E.B. Du Bois Papers.

## Chapter 3:

### Provincializing Racial Castration: Inter-imperiality and Asian/American Masculinities

*“An enormous labor of knowledge is and will be necessary (its delay can only be the result of an ideological occultation); but it is also necessary that, leaving aside vast regions of darkness (capitalist Japan, American acculturation, technological development), a slender thread of light search out not other symbols but the very fissure of the symbolic.”*

Roland Barthes, 1970<sup>178</sup>

#### 3.1 Queering Japanese American Internment

In Asian American studies, a standard formulation is “racial castration,” or Asian masculinities as emasculated and rendered “queer” by white heteropatriarchy.<sup>179</sup> It draws from the history of gendered tropes in East–West relations as interpreted through the lens of feminist psychoanalysis. Yet, the rise of Asia across the 20<sup>th</sup> century and especially since the closing decades of the Cold War suggests the need for an ordering of the symbolic that takes into better account inter-imperial racialization: that is, a reconfiguration of the symbolic that contends with a world ordering that does not add up to white heteropatriarchy as the sole structuring of the universal.<sup>180</sup> As Colleen Lye and others have discussed, the U.S. postwar production of a “model modernity” in Asia and beyond for the Cold War coheres with a coding of Asian Americans as model minorities. But as Takashi Fujitani and others have shown, the transwar exclusion-to-

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<sup>178</sup> Roland Barthes, *Empire of Signs*, trans. Richard Howard (NY: Hill and Wang, 1983), 4.

<sup>179</sup> See, e.g., David Eng, *Racial Castration* (Duke UP, 2001).

<sup>180</sup> Feminist psychoanalytic thinkers have begun to contemplate the possibility of post-patriarchy, but here I am thinking more in terms of the spatiotemporal limits of white supremacy.

inclusion paradigm shift for the imperial maintenance of racial minorities, or model minoritization, was not merely a white enterprise, but a transpacific one at the U.S.-Japan nexus.<sup>181</sup> Accordingly, as I will argue, the rise of what Jasbir Puar coined in 2007 as “homonationalism” when considered non-monolithically appears as an inter-imperial phenomenon, provoking a reimagining of the Cold War U.S.-Japanese “Pacific marriage” as having been, in semiotic terms, male-male, to reflect the Venn diagram of overlapping and competing masculinities in the transpacific.<sup>182</sup>

Asian American texts have registered homonationalism as an extension of Cold War racial formation. In this chapter, I rework the standard narrative of racial castration to account for overlapping masculinities, and then revisit two 1970s fictional texts that queer Japanese American internment to effectively provincialize white universality. The first text is highly-read as instructive of the racial-gendered logics of internment: the 1976 short story “The Shoyu Kid” by Lonny Kaneko (1939–2017) that first appeared in the *Amerasia Journal*, and then was reprinted in the 1991 Asian American literary anthology *The Big Aiiieeeee!*. 1990s readings by Sau-Ling Wong, David Palumbo-Liu and David Eng position Japanese American masculinity in

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<sup>181</sup> See Colleen Lye, *America's Asia: Racial form and American literature, 1893–1945* (Princeton UP, 2005); Takashi Fujitani, *Race for Empire: Koreans as Japanese and Japanese as Americans during World War II* (U of California Press, 2011).

<sup>182</sup> For homonationalism, see Jasbir Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times* (Duke UP, 2007). For my critique of the concept, see pp. 30–1, this dissertation.

For the “Pacific marriage,” see, e.g., Neferti Tadiar, *Fantasy-Production: Sexual Economies and Other Philippine Consequences for the New World Order* (Hong Kong UP, 2004), 39–42.

In their 2014 anthology, Janet Hoskins and Viet Thanh Nguyen, *Transpacific Studies* (U of Hawai'i Press, 2014), 15, suggest that if Pax Americana is figured as a masculine presence dominating a feminine Asia, then the waxing of Asia features stronger Asian powers seeking to “appropriate the masculine position, often at the expense of weaker Asian and Pacific countries.” But here I am suggesting that there is not a single masculine position, but rather overlapping masculinities as a reflection of the inter-imperial scene.

the text as castrated, homosexualized and abject in the face of a universalizing white heteropatriarchy.<sup>183</sup> But what happens when internment is re-contextualized by inter-imperial dynamics that inform the limits of whiteness as opposed to its expanse? The above critical readings interpret the interned Nisei boys as coming to recognize themselves positioned as queer and meek after bullying another boy, the Shoyu Kid, who they discover is receiving chocolate from a white camp guard in exchange for sexual favors; the boys recognize themselves in the victim, since they are all incarcerated as racial others. But what is noticeably glossed over in the earlier critical readings is the boys' confirmation of their suspicion that the white guard is a "queer" with a gun pointed at them.

As homosexuality was entangled with racial otherness at midcentury, the white guard's behavior in "The Shoyu Kid" is *illicit*, but I propose that Kaneko does *not* narrate homosexuality as *abject* as the earlier critical readings presume, but quite the opposite. As Eng-Beng Lim has phrased it, a "white man-Asian boy dyad" was both "everywhere and nowhere" across the 20<sup>th</sup> century: everywhere due to white paternalism but nowhere due to homophobia (though the paternalism was rejected in Asia as soon as it appeared on the continent whereas the homophobia began to lift with the end of the Cold War).<sup>184</sup> The homosexuality in Kaneko's text represents, to cite Chandan Reddy's formulation, "the nontransparent within the transparent vision produced

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<sup>183</sup> Sau-Ling Wong, *Reading Asian American Literature: From Necessity to Extravagance* (Princeton UP, 1993), 47–50, 99–102; David Palumbo-Liu, "The Minority Self as Other: Problematics of Representation in Asian-American Literature," *Cultural Critique* 28 (Autumn 1994): 75–102 (a shorter, slightly different reading can be found in Palumbo-Liu's 1999 *Asian/American*, 131–8); and Eng, *Racial Castration* (2001), chapter 2, which extends his essay "Primal Glances: Race and Psychoanalysis in Lonny Kaneko's The Shoyu Kid," *Critical Mass* 1.2 (1994): 65–84.

<sup>184</sup> Eng-Beng Lim, *Brown Boys and Rice Queens: Spellbinding Performance in the Asias* (NYU Press, 2013), 8.

by military rationality and instrumentality.”<sup>185</sup> Subjected to the state’s unseen rationality—the desire to incorporate/consume racial/sexual otherness or queerness at a pace the U.S. state could manage against the threat of Japan’s parallel pluralist trajectory—the Nisei boys lose their innocence bound up in their mimicking of white heteronorms as a false image of power. They must now construct their masculinities against an abusive, “queerly-inclined” white state. Kaneko’s story thus reflects internment as a workshop for a yet-to-become homonational U.S. state, its contradictions as triggering the production of symbolic space beyond whiteness, including Kaneko’s own storytelling.<sup>186</sup>

The second text I will revisit is uncanonized and has seen almost no almost critical attention despite being at the center of Asian American cultural production: the play *Tondemonai—Never Happen!* by Soon-Tek Oh (1934–2018), performed by the East West Players in 1970. It was brought to scholarly attention in 2013 by Greg Robinson.<sup>187</sup> At first glance, Oh’s play seems unusual for its portrayal of a Nisei man married to a white woman during internment, but post-internment he is in a relationship with a younger, third-generation Chinese American man. The play critiques Nisei assimilationism and model minoritization by portraying an instance of Japanese American masculinity as a result of internment in a state of “dis-integration” from the white state. Strategically centering Kibei masculinity,<sup>188</sup> the main

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<sup>185</sup> Chandan Reddy, *Freedom With Violence* (Duke UP, 2011), 233.

<sup>186</sup> How the boys work against model minoritization with their new-found self-awareness is a theme that Kaneko explored in his 1995 story “Nobody’s Hero” (1995) in *Asian American literature: a brief introduction and anthology*, ed. Shawn Wong, 147–56 (NY: HarperCollins College, 1996), which has received scant critical attention. My discussion of “The Shoyo Kid” will thus include a short synopsis of its sequel. That “Nobody’s Hero” is a sequel I take from Kaneko’s blog: <http://chinadayze2.blogspot.com/p/about-me.html> (accessed Dec 27, 2019).

<sup>187</sup> See Greg Robinson, “Early play took an unflinching look at the trauma of the wartime incarceration,” *Nichi Bei*, 30 May 2013 [online].

<sup>188</sup> Kibei (帰米 or “Return to America”) are U.S.-born Nisei who returned to the U.S. after a childhood

character has an enhanced immunity to the white state's interpellation, which is mirrored in the playwright's biography as an immigrant born in Japanese-occupied Korea. The intra-racial queer relationship in the play is a site of masculinity in recuperation in a liminal space between empires.

The existence of *Tondemonai* and the lack of critical response to it raises questions about the Asian American canon. An obvious distinction between the "The Shoyo Kid" and *Tondemonai* is the way that homosexuality is depicted: in the former it is a negative source of emasculation and in the latter it is a positive source of masculinization. Feminist and queer scholars have long critiqued the 1970s masculinist and homophobic leanings of early Asian American canonists (the Frank Chin–Maxine Hong Kingston debates about "authenticity" and cultural nationalism). But critical readings of masculinity in Asian American texts seem somewhat overdetermined by a teleology of canonization and critique without adequately addressing the boundaries of cultural production (the culture–academy disjunction). Cynthia Wu has pointed to the need to "decenter the conversation...from the familiar schema of cultural nationalism versus feminism" so as to get a better sense of the varied ways masculinity and queerness function in both canonized and non-canonized texts.<sup>189</sup> I agree with the observation, but from a different angle: following Palumbo-Liu's "Asian/American" formulation and in consideration of inter-imperiality, masculinization is not necessarily the buttressing or mimicking of white heteropatriarchy, but is often somewhere between reconstituting hierarchy and tearing it down for symbolic space beyond what Judy Tzu-Chun Wu in 2003 phrased as "racialized compulsory deviance" and the postwar racially/sexually flexible U.S. state.<sup>190</sup>

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education in Japan.

<sup>189</sup> Cynthia Wu, *Sticky Race: A Politics of Intra-racial Desire* (Temple UP, 2018), 16.

<sup>190</sup> Judy Tzu-Chun Wu, "Asian American history and racialized compulsory deviance," *Journal of Women's*

### 3.2 Who Castrated Whom? Accounting for Asia's Rise

As the standard narrative of racial castration goes, in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the white powers gendered the Orient as a feminine, passive space for penetration by masculine civilization. Asian masculinities were deemed inadequate to the task: the Qing and Japanese Empires, the two strongest Asian powers, were coded as a sick, old man and a youth respectively vis-à-vis the leading white powers cast as healthy, adult men. Although the First World War amounted to a “self-castration” of the white world that provided Japan a strategic opening for an ascent in Asia, Japan’s attempted construction of an alternative modernity—the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere—proved short-lived, geographically-bound and plagued by what is now commonly regarded as racial supremacism and hypermasculinity. During the Pacific War, Japanese propaganda cast the empire as a virile youth fighting to overthrow the yoke of white decrepitude in Asia, a thesis supported by Japan’s swift victories over Australian, British, Dutch and American forces in 1941–2.<sup>191</sup>

But the U.S. is construed to have “rescued” white masculinity from castration by bombing Japan into submission in 1944–5, castrating Japan, and quickly dismantling the Co-Prosperity Sphere for a “racially-inclusive” U.S.-led liberal world order. Gender equality was written into Japan’s postwar constitution, and the nation embraced monoculturalism. Meanwhile, as the U.S. attempted an implementation of a model modernity in Asia via developmentalism, Asian exclusion and anti-miscegenation laws lifted as white male–Asian female heterosexual

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*History* 15.3 (2003): 58–62, notes how Adrienne Rich’s phrase “compulsory heterosexuality” as a presumed universal fails to capture how “racialized groups experience both compulsory heterosexuality and compulsory sexual deviance.”

<sup>191</sup> John Dower, *War Without Mercy* (Pantheon, 1986), 111, 126, 254, 259.

dyads increased; brides and orphans from Japan, Korea and Vietnam were taken as war spoils. In white-majority gay contexts, men of Asian descent remain stereotyped as suited for the role of the “bottom”; Asian top–white bottom pairings are still uncommon in global gay pornography.<sup>192</sup>

The Cold War particularization of Asian immigrants and nations for a universalizing white world order is a chief component of the standard racial castration narrative. As Lisa Lowe put it in 1995: the interpellation of the racialized immigrant subject is not “dissimilar to the family’s oedipalization...of the son; [he] becomes a citizen when he identifies with the paternal state, and accepts the terms of this identification by subordinating his racial difference, and denying his identification with the feminized ‘motherland.’”<sup>193</sup> In Lacanian terms, the feminine is beyond the reach of a masculine symbolic order. To legitimate its violence, the masculine both needs, but is also unable to fully incorporate the feminine “other” that it perpetually reconstitutes as a threat to its “self.”

The ascendant white paternalism in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the U.S. Empire, targeted with violence two overlapping “feminine” threats to its self. First was *stasis*: blackness, indigeneity and femaleness conflated with barbarism, criminality, irrationality, underdevelopment and/or the natural world. Qing China was configured as a site of once great progress, but in stasis or

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<sup>192</sup> See Tan Hoang Nguyen, *A View From the Bottom: Asian Masculinity and Sexual Representation* (Duke UP, 2014). Greater representation of Asian masculinities in Western media is often cited as helping to combat “sexual racism.” Yet, such “re-discovery” of the masculine Asian there all along, only buried beneath Western stereotype, continues to harken to the days of the Orient as a site of static truths revealed for universal progress. This progressive view of the Asian male with his presumed-severed manhood intact is an extension of the Western management of gender in the face of the rising material power of Asia. At the same time, that the Asian male may be celebrated, or suspiciously regarded, as “masculine again” or as “always was masculine” points to transpacific masculinities in competition.

<sup>193</sup> Lisa Lowe, “Canon, Institutionalization, Identity: Contradictions for Asian American Studies,” in *The ethnic canon: histories, institutions, and interventions*, ed. David Palumbo-Liu, 48–68 (U of Minnesota Press, 1995).

“asleep” until the 1911 Xinhai Revolution when the power “awoke” as a youth in need of guidance. The second threat is *alterity* whereby male youths overthrow the father who has degenerated. As Lye has put it, the yellow racial form (Japan/China) marked alterity *par excellence*: the “appearance of the otherness of Western modernity to itself,” a coming modernity when the “temporal hierarchization of Self and Other is reversed or abolished.”<sup>194</sup> Intersecting the orientalist anxiety was angst about powers configured as contagiously degenerative: whether autocratic (e.g., Imperial Russia), authoritarian (Stalinist Russia, Maoist China), totalitarian (Nazi Germany), anarchic, terrorist, separatist or theocratic (parts of the Islamic world, and Bolshevism that triggered anticommunism and retriggered anti-Semitism). The U.S. responded to these “civilizational” threats much like Zeus did to the pregnancy of his first wife Metis: anxious of the prophecy that he would be overthrown by a son, he swallowed her whole.

Whereas the standard narrative of racial castration presumes that the U.S. successfully swallowed Japan whole through bombing, unconditional surrender, occupation and asymmetrical alliance, the U.S. is no Olympian god: it choked on otherness. As John Dower has pointed out, Japan across the 20<sup>th</sup> century *thrice* cracked the parent-child or man-boy dynamic of East–West relations: the 1904–5 Russo-Japanese War, the aforementioned 1941–2 military victories, and the nation’s 1980s economic miracle that rung the “death knell for a world system dominated by the Atlantic community.”<sup>195</sup> By the 1980s, U.S. policymakers fretted about the waning strength of the dollar against the yen (meanwhile, the 1982 murder of Vincent Chin by white autoworkers in Michigan rekindled Asian American pan-ethnic alliance). By the mid-1990s, Gary Okihiro and other Asian Americanists theorized the circularity of the peril–model binary that pivots on

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<sup>194</sup> Lye, *America’s Asia*, 17, 56.

<sup>195</sup> Dower, *War Without Mercy*, 316.

the material *limits* of whiteness in the transpacific.<sup>196</sup> The 1985 Plaza Accord targeted the threat of Japanese economic supremacy and contributed to the ongoing stagnation of Japan's economy into the post-Cold War, but Chinese policymakers today aim to avert a similar fate for China.

The 1972 opening of the People's Republic of China is no longer interpreted as a sign that America successfully incorporated China into its model modernity; instead, the U.S. acted, to use Ranajit Guha's phrase, with dominance but not hegemony.<sup>197</sup> After failing to coerce the Vietnamese people to accept a north-south schism in the 1955–75 war of attrition, and with the Sino-Soviet split providing a window of opportunity, the U.S. was impelled to bring the PRC back into global politics to contain the damage of defeat. Mao's Three Worlds theory took hold as a world-ordering, reflected now in China's aims for the global South. As Giovanni Arrighi argued in 2007, the tragedy of the Vietnam War was followed by the disastrous Iraq and Afghan Wars that rendered stillborn the neoconservative Project for a New American Century; China has likely "won" the War on Terror by consolidating capital for future dominance rooted in Asia.<sup>198</sup>

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<sup>196</sup> Gary Okihiro, *Margins and mainstreams: Asians in American history and culture* (U of Washington Press, 1994), 142, formulated the gendered circularity of the peril–model binary thusly: “[T]he yellow peril and the model minority are not poles, denoting opposite representations along a single line, but in fact form a circular relationship that moves in either direction. We might see them as engendered images: the yellow peril denoting a masculine threat of military and sexual conquest, and the model minority symbolizing a feminized position of passivity and malleability. Moving in one direction along the circle, the model minority mitigates the alleged danger of the yellow peril, whereas reversing direction, the model minority, if taken too far, can become the yellow peril. In either swing along the arc, white supremacy is maintained and justified through feminization in one direction and repression in the other.”

<sup>197</sup> Waning dominance has been reluctantly acknowledged by U.S. policymakers who have shifted U.S. China policy from “strategic cooperation”—the 1979 recognition of Beijing over Taipei by the Carter administration—to “strategic competition” under the Trump administration, as outlined in a sweeping policy speech by U.S. Vice President Mike Pence in October 2018 [online]. The phrase “dominance without hegemony” from Ranajit Guha as applied to U.S. influence during the Cold War, is cited at Giovanni Arrighi, *Adam Smith in Beijing: Lineages of the Twenty-First Century* (NY: Verso, 2007), 150.

<sup>198</sup> See Arrighi, *Adam Smith in Beijing*.

In the aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis—de-globalization and as Nancy Frazer has phrased it, the hyper-reactionary neoliberalism of the Trump administration—the sole superpower status of the U.S. has only depreciated further.<sup>199</sup> A meme depicting racial castration—that is, the castration of whiteness—went viral in Chinese social media in May 2018.



FIGURE 3: Photographs juxtaposing 2018–ongoing Sino-U.S. trade negotiations with the 1901 Boxer Protocol talks. Weibo viral meme, May 2018.

It juxtaposes two photographs: the bottom photo is the elderly Qing (“Old Man” China) and younger Western representatives at the 1901 Boxer Protocol talks, while the top photo is the younger negotiators of a rising China across from their aged U.S. counterparts in the 2018–ongoing Sino-U.S. trade negotiations.<sup>200</sup> Rather than whiteness castrated, however, the photo

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<sup>199</sup> Nancy Frazer, “From Progressive Neoliberalism to Trump—and Beyond,” *American Affairs* 1.4 (Win 2017) [online].

<sup>200</sup> Raymond Zhong, “In China, Photo of Trade Talks Embodies ‘Young’ Country Passing Aging U.S.,” *New*

depicts U.S. and Chinese masculinities competitively extending neoliberalism for their respective gain.

The twists and turns of Zeus' anxiety about alterity or the un-incorporable feminine/queerness are reflected in U.S. immigration law: the 1952 McCarran-Walter Act that overturned the 1924 Immigration Act and permitted the naturalization of Japanese and Korean immigrants, was passed in the same frame as the signing of the Treaty of San Francisco that ended the occupation of Japan and established the U.S.-Japan alliance; yet, the law also explicitly banned communists and homosexuals.<sup>201</sup> By the end of the Cold War and the presumed success of the alliance, homosexual exclusion began to be lifted with the 1990 Immigration Act.<sup>202</sup> Whereas Puar has framed homonationalism as “white” in relation to the War on Terror (the racialization of Arabs as antifeminist and antigay “terrorists” vis-à-vis the American exceptionalist self-image as a “leader” in human rights, freedom and moral progress), there is need to consider the transition into homonationalism for the U.S. across a longer

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*York Times*, 21 May 2018 [online]. As a symptom of their growing rivalry, the U.S. and China are at war over representations of benevolence and civilizational progress. To counteract the spotlight on Han supremacy and interning and cultural genocide of Uyghurs in Xinjiang that China frames as part of a “necessary” People’s War on Terror, Chinese officials remind of the U.S.’ genocide of indigenous peoples, positioning the U.S. settler colonial state as foundationally unethical. Such moral one-upmanship reminds of Japan’s 1930s citation of U.S. segregation and exclusion so as to avert criticism of Yamato supremacy in colonized Korea, Taiwan and Manchuria.

<sup>201</sup> For the 1952 McCarran-Walter Act and queerness, see Siobhan Somerville, “Sexual Aliens and the Racialized State: A Queer Reading of the 1952 U.S. Immigration and Nationality Act,” in *Queer Migrations*, eds. Eithne Luibhéid and Lionel Cantú, 71–91 (U of Minnesota Press, 2005); and Naoko Shibusawa, “The Lavender Scare and Empire: Rethinking Cold War Antigay Politics,” *Diplomatic History* 36.4 (2012): 723–52.

<sup>202</sup> Removal of “perversity” (read: homosexuality) as a category of exclusion in the 1990 Immigration Act was arguably the start of U.S LGBT inclusion. Conservative pushback resulted in the U.S. military’s “don’t ask, don’t tell” policy, in effect from 1993 to 2011, and the 1996 Defense of Marriage Act, overturned by *Obergefell v. Hodges* (2015). In June 2020, the U.S. Supreme Court extended the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to include LGBT individuals as protected from workplace discrimination on the basis of “sex.”

historical arc in relation to non/white material power: from the McCarran-Walter Act vis-à-vis Mao Zedong's 1949 communist victory, the Lavender Scare and the surveillance of Chinese America, to the 1990 Immigration Act vis-à-vis the fall of the Berlin Wall. As Susan Koshy has put it, U.S. Asian racialization has been a trajectory of "sexual naturalization" that has overlapped with the U.S. Empire's fulfillment of its "extraterritorial desire" for extending its reach into Asia for dominance over the flows of global capital.<sup>203</sup>

The occupation of Japan was the first step to the fulfillment, but rather than "castrated" for anticommunism, which was already a shared creed of the two empires in the prewar (e.g., Japan's participation in Woodrow Wilson's 1918–22 Siberian Intervention), defeated Japan was deemed sufficiently aligned with a U.S. aiming for increasing racial/sexual flexibility to function with moral approbation as the leader of the anticommunist bloc. When Francis Fukuyama prematurely announced an "end of history" at the end of the Cold War, a "same-sex marriage" of the U.S. and Japan had been at the root of the triumph. Petrus Liu has made a compelling case that queer critique in the post-Cold War "needs China" for supplementation, but here I am suggesting that queer critique also needs Japan since the exclusion-to-inclusion paradigm shift in imperial logics upon which homonationalism was built formed at the site of U.S.-Japanese competition and cooperation.<sup>204</sup> As the U.S.-Japan alliance is strained by China's rise, notably the American commitment to the postwar framework of liberal inclusionism wavers.

To activate the slash in David Palumbo-Liu's 1999 formulation "Asian/American" is to

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<sup>203</sup> Susan Koshy, *Sexual Naturalization* (Stanford UP, 2004).

<sup>204</sup> Petrus Liu, *Queer Marxism in Two Chinas* (Duke UP, 2015), 25–9, points out that Queer theory was "born in the shadows of the failures of liberal-pluralism" usually associated with the ascendancy of the U.S. in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century so that queer critique in the West continues to have trouble developing a program beyond the disruption of U.S.-led liberal-pluralism. Queer theory has generally failed to ask "questions of location and situatedness without reifying alterity."

consider not only the limits Asia poses to white supremacy, but the contradictory path being traversed beyond those limits. Transpacific studies has begun to provide a framework for rethinking how model minoritization was not just a product of the postwar U.S. ascendancy, but a white and nonwhite venture. Japan's 1919 Racial Equality Proposal indicated a Japan seeking to overcome a racist modernity led by the colonizing white world. Effecting a multiculturalist governmentality in Manchuria from 1932–45 as an archetype for its Co-Prosperity Sphere, Japan particularized the exclusionary white world as civilizationally-stagnant. In response to both Japanese imperial and other nonwhite anti-imperial critique, U.S. policymakers by the 1930s recognized that racial exclusion and colonial domination were a threat to both U.S. national security and the future of the Wilsonian vision for global free trade.<sup>205</sup> In an effort to “out-model minoritize” Japan, U.S. policymakers during the Pacific War pushed for Japanese American soldiering; Japanese American internment remains as evidence of the contradiction of the U.S.’ showcasing minority loyalty as proof of colorblindness.<sup>206</sup> As Lisa Yoneyama has succinctly

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<sup>205</sup> Naoki Sakai, “Trans-pacific Studies and the US-Japan Complicity,” in *The Trans-pacific Imagination: Rethinking Boundary, Culture and Society*, eds. Naoki Sakai and Hyon Joo Yoo, 279–315 (Singapore: World Scientific, 2012), 287. Beginning in the 1930s, U.S. policymakers sought to avert Japanese, pan-Asianist and pan-Africanist propaganda that America was “unable” to overcome its “Negro problem” and anti-Asian immigration policies.

<sup>206</sup> In a 1942 memo (located by Takashi Fujitani in 2000) to the U.S. Department of War, Edwin Reischauer, an architect of Asian studies during the Cold War, described Japanese Americans as potential “major assets” if their patriotism could be instrumentalized to prove that America, contra Japanese propaganda, was aiming for a “better world order for all”: “We should...make of these American citizens a major asset in our ideological war in Asia. Their sincere and enthusiastic support of the United States at this time would be the best possible proof that this is not a racial war to preserve white supremacy in Asia [as Japan argues it is], but a war to establish a better world order for all, regardless of race.” As Fujitani explains, Reischauer’s disavowal of race pivoted on the operationalization of Japanese Americans as raced subjects to assist in building U.S. moral authority and preserving a U.S.-led economic supremacy in Asia after the anticipated defeat of Japan. Reischauer went on: “[W]hen the military victory is achieved, these American citizens of Japanese ancestry could serve as an opening wedge into the minds and hearts of the Japanese people. That they had fought willingly and gladly for our side would prove to the Japanese people that this

stated, model minoritization and the Cold War Americanization of racial justice were probably “not effective, if even possible, without the discursive production of the U.S. relation with the enemy of color that had earlier championed the rhetoric of racial justice.”<sup>207</sup> It would be inaccurate to describe the disassembling of the multicultural Japanese Empire and the reversion of Japan to monoculturalism as “particularization” or “castration” since Japan was a co-engineer of the liberal-pluralist paradigm of inclusion that would take shape during the Cold War, and upon which homonationalism would arise.

### 3.3 Revisiting Lonnie Kaneko’s “The Shoyu Kid”

Although U.S. wartime rhetoric coaxed Nisei men and boys to distance themselves from stereotypes of Asian emasculation or the hypermasculinity of Imperial Japan viewed as overcompensation in order to become “properly” masculine U.S. patriots, as Tina Takemoto has noted, because incarceration stripped households of their patriarchal ordering (families placed into the custody of the white state), both Issei and white heteropatriarchal norms were actually undermined.<sup>208</sup> Consequently, internment not only segued to model minoritization—Nisei soldiering and the postwar “all-American” Japanese American family—but an afterlife of queer

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was not simply a war to defeat them as a people, but was a war to crush the wild schemes of their military clique and to win Japan back to a system of international cooperation.” Takashi Fujitani, “The Reischauer Memo: Mr. Moto, Hirohito, and Japanese American soldiers,” *Critical Asian Studies* 33.3 (2001): 379–402. The memo is reprinted at Edwin Reischauer, “Memorandum on Policy toward Japan” (1942), in *The Trans-pacific Imagination: Rethinking Boundary, Culture and Society*, eds. Naoki Sakai and Hyon Joo Yoo, 317–21 (Singapore: World Scientific, 2012).

<sup>207</sup> Lisa Yoneyama, *Cold War Ruins* (Duke UP, 2016), 19.

<sup>208</sup> Tina Takemoto, “Looking for Jiro Onuma: A Queer Meditation on the Incarceration of Japanese Americans during World War II,” *GLQ* 20.3 (2014): 246. Takemoto is comparing the insights of Greg Robinson and John Howard.

contradictions that continue to be reflected upon among the generations since.

“The Shoyu Kid” is one such reflection, published in 1976 by Seattle-born Sansei Lonny Kaneko and canonized in 1991. The story is about interned Nisei boys who are highly enculturated by whiteness, as evidenced by their consumption of icons like John Wayne, the discarding of their given names for whitened nicknames (“Jackson” for Hiroshi, “Itchy” for Ichiro, and Masao, the viewpoint character who is never directly named), as well as the lack of Japanese male role models in the camp. The only other Japanese male depicted in the camp—the Minidoka Relocation Center, Idaho—is a bumbling elderly Issei who, as Palumbo-Liu writes, represents the “former figure of authority and power, now dissembled, fragmented, and ultimately impotent.”<sup>209</sup> Palumbo-Liu follows Sau-ling Wong’s 1993 reading of the story: through their bullying of another boy and seeing themselves in the victim, the three boys catalyze recognition of their own Japanese American maleness as abject within the white U.S. context. From the standpoint of the boys, the Shoyu Kid, by participating in transactional homosexuality with a white guard, “assents to the feminization of the Japanese American male by the dominant culture[;] he has furthered both the American disdain for them and confirmed the stereotype...rewarded with the symbol of America (Hershey’s chocolate) in exchange for confirming its symbolic ordering of his/their body.”<sup>210</sup> David Eng offers a similar reading in his 2001 book *Racial Castration*: the “heterosexual stability of the patriotic white American icon emerges only in contrast to the resolute linking of queerness with Japaneseness. [The] normative masculine self-representation constitutively depends upon the sexual ‘perversion’ and pathologizing of the racialized masculine subject.”<sup>211</sup>

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<sup>209</sup> Palumbo-Liu, *Asian/American*, 135.

<sup>210</sup> *Ibid*, 136.

<sup>211</sup> Eng, *Racial Castration*, 136.

Curiously, these readings sideline the only portrayal of embodied white masculinity in the text that is especially perverse: the red-headed white camp guard taking sexual advantage of an interned child. How does abusive homosexuality in the text add up to heterosexual stability in the analyses? The answer is, in 1990s critical circles, homosexuality was still largely configured as abject such that any appearance of queerness propping up the state was considered collaboration rather than representative of the state itself. By the 2000s, with the rise of queer of color critique, U.S. LGBT politics came to be recognized as assimilationist to the white state: e.g., Lisa Duggan's 2003 term "homonormativity" and David Eng's 2010 "queer liberalism."<sup>212</sup> But as Jack Halberstam has explained, the desire by gay scholars to separate homosexuality from the state had resulted in an casting as homophobic attempts to connect them, which contributed to a reduction of the "multiplicity of gay history and simplif[ication of] the function of homosexuality."<sup>213</sup> In contrast to this disconnect, I read Kaneko's narrative as presenting *correspondence* between the state and homosexuality.

The story begins with the boys asserting their heterosexual attractions and lack of being "queer"; they soon turn their attention to the mystery of how the kid has special access to chocolate. After Itchy mentions he has seen him with the guard, Jackson says: "There's something strange about that guy. I mean that's the soldier who used to stand and point his gun at me like he was going to shoot." Masao thinks how the guard makes them all nervous, but: "Maybe he's changed. Let's ask the Kid." Itchy's reply: "Are you kidding? That snot-nosed brat. Makes me nervous to look at him, too."<sup>214</sup> The climactic scene unfolds as the boys uncover the

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<sup>212</sup> See Lisa Duggan, *The Twilight of Equality?: Neoliberalism, Cultural Politics, and the Attack on Democracy* (Beacon Press, 2003); David Eng, *The Feeling of Kinship: Queer Liberalism and the Racialization of Intimacy* (Duke UP, 2010).

<sup>213</sup> Judith [Jack] Halberstam, *The Queer Art of Failure* (Duke UP, 2011), 171.

<sup>214</sup> Lonnie Kaneko, "The Shoyu Kid" (1976) in *The Big Aiiieeee!: An Anthology of Chinese American and*

illicit transaction and punish the kid for his behavior by taunting and depantsing him; the boys perhaps recognize their own victimhood in him. But as a singular reflection from the day's events, Itchy thinks back to the camp guard: "Jeez...I thought the guy was just taking a leak behind the garage. Goddam queers. Jezus, everyone's queer."<sup>215</sup> As the boys grapple with being surrounded by queerness (the oppressively flexible white masculinist state), Kaneko shifts to a closing image of them throwing rocks at a sign that reads "Minidoka Relocation Center"—an assertion of their unbroken determination to construct empowered masculinities for themselves while aware of their entrapment.

Palumbo-Liu suggests that the boys cannot move beyond the bounds of the dominant symbolic order, just as they cannot escape the camp: "As far as the boys' existence approximates the Lacanian Imaginary (sensing difference but not yet stabilized as different), the boys can engage in the kind of self-representations that they do—fantasizing themselves as empowered Others. But they can never actually breach the Other's Symbolic order and thus must retreat into being interpellated as that order has predetermined."<sup>216</sup> Yet, what Palumbo-Liu's leaves unexplained, and ultimately what cannot be substantiated without defying his own "Asian/American" formulation, is why the boys' masculinities would be *predetermined* rather than, at most, *overdetermined* by whiteness if their racial otherness indeed prevents their interpellation from being complete. It would seem that Palumbo-Liu's correspondence of homosexuality with abjection forecloses the possibility that the boys, as a result of their experience of contradiction, acquire some capacity to construct for themselves an alternative

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*Japanese American Literature*, ed. Paul Chan, Frank Chin, Lawson Inada, and Shawn Wong, 304–313 (NY: Meridan, 1991), 308.

<sup>215</sup> Ibid, 312.

<sup>216</sup> Palumbo-Liu, "The Minority Self as Other: Problematics of Representation in Asian-American Literature," 96.

normativity to the queerly-inclined white state rather than merely having to “retreat” into whiteness that regards them as queer subjects to be assimilated.

Along the same lines of overextending a category of victimhood at the expense of agency and nuance, both Palumbo-Liu and Eng succumb to the problematic logic of analogy between Japanese American and indigenous dispossession. An overarching motif of the “The Shoyu Kid” is the childhood game “Cowboys and Indians”: the boys pretend to be cowboys hunting down the kid, an “Indian.” From Palumbo-Liu: “The ‘torture’ of the Kid is a displaced act of masochism, for the Kid takes on the identification of the group as Japanese Americans. This aggression against the Self via such a displacement parallels the boys’ hatred of the Indians, who, like them, represent a group of peoples historically disenfranchised from their land and property.” From Eng: “In adopting the role of the cowboys...[the boys enact] a fantasy of nationalism and citizenship...the patriotic duty of conquering the frontier from disenfranchised Indian hands... [One boy attempts] to displace his own racial brownness...to shore up his own dissonant relationship to valorized white male images of the cowboy.”<sup>217</sup>

As Asian American and Transpacific studies cross paths with Indigenous studies, more consideration is being given to the boundaries of white dominance and nonwhite complicity, versus nonwhite dominance. For instance, Hawai’i has been theorized by Hawaiian and Asian American scholars as an exception to white symbolic dominance due to the archipelago’s Asian majority since the 1898 annexation of the islands and the mass influx of Japanese and Filipino laborers. Upon statehood in 1959, Japanese Americans in particular quickly entered positions of power through democratic majorities. Haunani-Kay Trask has referred to Hawai’i as administrated by “settlers of color” who assert an “immigrant hegemony” as justification for

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<sup>217</sup> Palumbo-Liu, *Asian/American*, 134; Eng, *Racial Castration*, 118–9.

their rule.<sup>218</sup>

There is ongoing debate about the limits of the phrase “Asian settler colonialism” since the white U.S. state maintains sovereignty over its immigration policies and census categories that reduce bodies to racialized abstract labor. But Asian American studies has too rarely taken into consideration the history of nonwhite settler colonialism in the Americas. Eiichiro Azuma has discussed how Issei were settlers in their own right since Japan’s expansionist ambitions intersected with American rhetoric of an “open” frontier. Issei settler colonialism was not a mimicking of white nativism—that is, a “model” performance—but came to be regarded as a “peril” to white settler state stability by the T. Roosevelt administration and the negotiation of the 1907 Gentleman’s Agreement. A significant element of the perceived peril of early 20<sup>th</sup>-century Japan was the limits the expanding empire seemed to impose on white sovereignty over settled lands in the transpacific, including in Oceania. U.S. West Coast xenophobes feared the T. Roosevelt administration was *unable* to bar Japanese immigrants whereas Australia would demand Japan’s 1919 Racial Equality Proposal be rejected to safeguard its white settlement policy. Conflated with, but often supporting the aims of the expansionist Japanese Empire, Issei were subjected to alien land laws prior to the passing of the U.S. 1924 Immigration Act, and on a hemispheric scale, the U.S. reactivated its Monroe Doctrine.<sup>219</sup> Japan’s proposal for racial

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<sup>218</sup> See Haunani-Kay Trask, “Settlers of Color and ‘Immigrant’ Hegemony: ‘Locals’ in Hawai’i,” *Amerasia Journal* 26.2 (2000): 1–24, republished in *Asian Settler Colonialism*, ed. Candace Fujikane (U Hawai’i Press, 2008). Trask describes “immigrant hegemony” thusly: “Exploitative plantation conditions...underpin a master narrative of hard work and the endlessly celebrated triumph over anti-Asian racism. Settler children, ever industrious and deserving, obtain technical and liberal educations, thereby learning the political system through which they agitate for full voting rights as American citizens. Politically, the vehicle for Asian ascendancy is statehood. As a majority of voters at mid-century, the Japanese and other Asians move into the middle class and eventually into seats of power in the legislature and the governor’s house.”

<sup>219</sup> Eiichiro Azuma, “Japanese Immigrant Settler Colonialism in the U.S.-Mexican Borderlands and the U.S.

equality was welcomed among those colonized by the white world, but was recognized in “native” Korea as hypocrisy on Japan’s part. Thus, the relationship of “Asian” to “settler/native” is context-dependent and not reducible to complacency/resistance to a white universality without making the orientalist move of completely subsuming transpacific history under whiteness. Likewise, the Nisei cowboys in “The Shoyu Kid” are a symbolic composite that is more than just mimicked whiteness, as their Japaneseness is more than a category of victimhood.

Kaneko revisited the characters in his 1995 “Nobody’s Hero” where they are slightly older and with a greater sense of awareness of their circumstances as internees. In the under-examined sequel, they have a concerted desire to assert an empowered masculinity. Notably, Jackson, which was the nickname for Hiroshi, are now two separate characters. Hiroshi tries to convince Masao of an inherent heroism in robbing the camp store.

“Answer me. You, your mother, your sister—why are they here?” ...

“Old man Tsugu says they put us here to keep us safe,” my words stumbled.

“As if those guys in the blockhouses are keep crazy mobs of Americans out,” Hiroshi laughed. ... “Jackson’s brother wants to join the army and become a hero. But they won’t let him. He’s tore up inside cause he wants to fight out there. But, see, he should be fighting here. Nobody’s fighting here. That’s what we’re going to do. We’re going to be camp heroes cause we’re going to make life miserable for those WRA [War Relocation Authority] guys.”<sup>220</sup>

As they carry out their plan, the boys maintain formation by pretending they are soldiers. The enemy is imagined as not only the WRA, but their own over-complicit families: “If your father

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Racial-Imperialist Politics of the Hemispheric ‘Yellow Peril,’” *Pacific Historical Review* 83.2 (May 2014): 255–76.

<sup>220</sup> Kaneko, “Nobody’s Hero,” 148–9.

catches us,” Hiroshi tells Ichiro, “you pretend he’s Tojo or that fascist Muscle- lini [Mussolini] trying to make you squeal.”<sup>221</sup> In the store, the viewpoint character, Masao, tries to embody the feeling of a “soldier behind enemy lines, doing something brave for my country” but he is unable to “figure out why it was brave or how it was good for my country.”<sup>222</sup> When they are caught by guards on patrol, one white guard taunts Hiroshi that their names will be published in the paper, their delinquency on display: “Your mother will be embarrassed, so embarrassed that she won’t show her face in the dining hall. And your brother fighting out there for the United States of America, he’ll hear about this and wonder why his little brother has become a traitor.” Hiroshi responds that “no army [is] good enough for my brother”; the guard strikes him across the face, but Hiroshi maintains his composure.<sup>223</sup> For a few weeks, the boys are celebrated as heroes by other youth in the camp until a newspaper article appears that frames them as pranksters and “bored children.” Their egos deflated, Hiroshi suggests they carry out another mission disruptive to the camp, but Masao declares: “I don’t want to be no hero.”<sup>224</sup>

Like “The Shoyu Kid,” “Nobody’s Hero” presents the boys, on the one hand, as seemingly unable to breach the bounds of the dominant symbolic order: they cannot actually become masculine heroes who overturn the racial logics of the camp, but are re-positioned as children. Still, the boys clearly have developed a capacity to question and disrupt the everyday while condemning the complacency of their elders. If the two stories are read in tandem with one another, the boys’ experience with gendered and racial contradictions in the “Shoyu Kid” contributes to their refusal to succumb to wartime model minoritization in “Nobody’s Hero.”

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<sup>221</sup> Ibid.

<sup>222</sup> Ibid, 152.

<sup>223</sup> Ibid, 154.

<sup>224</sup> Ibid, 156.

### 3.4 Soon-Tek Oh's *Tondemonai—Never Happen!*

Staged by the East West Players for five weeks in May–June 1970, the play *Tondemonai—Never Happen!* by Soon-Tek Oh has been described by Greg Robinson as the first commercially-produced play to dramatize the Japanese American wartime confinement. Despite this historical significance and its rich content, it has received surprisingly little critical analysis, a sign of the culture–academy divide. Robinson suggests that because the play received a mixed reception due to its theatrical clumsiness, unwieldy themes and taboo content in the Japanese/Asian American community (homosexuality, interracial marriage, and internment itself), it was not renewed and was largely forgotten.<sup>225</sup> In a manner similar to John Okada's 1957 *No-no Boy* published too early to receive a natural audience, *Tondemonai* also seems before its time even as the play was performed at the heart of Asian American theatre during the Asian American Movement.

As a Korean immigrant, Oh was in a position to both frame and critique Nisei assimilationism and the white state's Cold War inclusionism. When asked in 2004 by Esther Kim Lee why he chose to produce a Japanese American-themed play instead of a Korean American-themed one, Oh stated that internment was more dramatically accessible but since Nisei were too unwilling to talk about it, he was in a better position as an outsider.<sup>226</sup> Oh's intention to use the stage for political commentary on Cold War inclusionism is obvious from his writing between the title page and the cast list: "individual rights and human dignity are increasingly and rampantly trampled upon under the flag of 'social justice' all over the world.

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<sup>225</sup> Greg Robinson, "Tondemonai-Never Happen! (play)," *Densho Encyclopedia* [online].

<sup>226</sup> Esther Kim Lee, "Transnational Legitimization of an Actor: The Life and Career of Soon-Tek Oh," *Modern Drama* 48.2 (Summer 2005): 400 n. 33.

This is a story of a young man who is ‘suddenly’ told that he is free after a decade of confinement.”

In Japanese, *tondemonai* means “no way!”, “impossible!” or “preposterous!”, which reflects the script’s unlikely content and characterizations. It is structured as a series of tragic flashbacks during internment intermixed with “flash forwards” of an unspecified time “sometime in between Wars, somewhere in the United States of America.” Because the play features lyrics from the 1959 hit song in Japan “Nangoku Tosa o Atonishite” (“Farewell Tosa”), I suggest that the “flash forward” scenes probably take place around that year, a decade before the play itself was performed.<sup>227</sup>

The plot follows Koji Murayama, a Kibei who is in his twenties during internment and his late thirties in the postwar scenes. He and his parents, Ume and Goro, are originally interned at the Manzanar Camp, California. Prior to their transfer to the Tule Lake concentration camp, Goro suicides by seppuku to protest the treatment of his family and the disrespect shown despite his WWI veteran status—a highly unlikely biography that mixes American and Japanese nationalism. Their transfer is the result of Ume and Koji answering the two infamous “loyalty” questions in such a way that honors both Goro and Koji’s off-stage older brother who has been fighting on behalf of the U.S. before becoming severely wounded. Ume reminds Michael

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<sup>227</sup> “Nangoku Tosa o Atonishite” (“Farewell Tosa”), lyrics and music by Takemasa Eisaku, performed most famously by Peggy Hayama (1933–2017) in 1959. The lyrics of the original song are about the homesickness of Japanese soldiers from Tosa (located in Kōchi Prefecture, which is on the southern coast of the island of Shikoku) who were deployed to China during the Second Sino-Japanese War. The 1959 version sung by Hayama concerns the homesickness of the *shūdan shūshoku* (“en masse employment”) generation: youth who left rural areas during Japan’s postwar economic boom. “Nangoku Tosa o ato ni shite, Kashi no i, Yosakoi setsu” 南国土佐を後にして、歌詞の意、よさこい節 [The meaning of the lyrics of “Farewell Tosa,” Kōchi-based dance and folk music], *Worldfolksong.com* [online]. In the context of Oh’s *Tondemonai*, 28–9, the song takes on the meaning of homesickness for Japan itself, sung by Koji and his landlord Cherry, a Japanese war bride.

Takeo—a unlikable character who represents the assimilationist Japanese American Citizens League (JACL), and is described in the cast list as Koji’s “friend” despite betraying him repeatedly—that she cannot even visit her wounded son in the hospital, so why would she agree to volunteer as a nurse if asked by America? Since her husband recently “died as a Japanese because he was denied citizenship to this country,” she would “like to remain a Japanese.”<sup>228</sup> In a postwar scene, Koji narrates that his brother soon died from his war wounds, and that Ume died from the compounded losses and the “uncivilized weather” of Tule Lake. Koji becomes an empty and angry shell, since the war and internment took his entire family.

Two romances in his life—an interracial heterosexual one during internment and an intra-racial homosexual one in the postwar—portray a remarkable transition in Koji’s masculinity. His first romance is with Jane Franks, a white woman to whom Koji became engaged pre-internment. In order to visit her betrothed while he is confined, Jane gets a job at the camp office, urging Koji to apply for relocation on the East Coast so that they can continue their life together, and where Koji can complete his training as a pianist. Although his parents urge him to follow Jane’s advice, internment creates what seems an insurmountable divide between the young couple that Jane treats as a matter of overcoming through personal resolve. When she questions whether his feelings for her are dissipating because she is “not Japanese,” Koji responds: “Jane, do you see that barbed wire fence?” She says: “No, but I see a thick wall around you.” When learning that Koji is ineligible to leave camp because relocation is only open to Nisei who never lived or attended school in Japan, Jane reappears onstage in a traditional Japanese bridal gown as an assertion of her resolve. Ume admonishes her for selfishness, stating that after the death of Goro

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<sup>228</sup> Soon-Tek Oh, “Tondemonai—Never Happen!” (unpublished theatrical script, 1970), 32–3. Hereafter cited in the text as “TM.”

and her older son—and now the U.S. government’s denial of an education for Koji—she and Koji plan to return to Japan after the war. “You are pretty and bright young lady,” Ume tells Jane. “I advise you to choose one of your own race.”

Jane replies: “Nobody believes your loyalty to this country simply because you are Japanese. ...[But] I believe what you just said to me is as emotional as Americans who are screaming that all Japanese in this country are spies. ...[After] a few generations of...inter-marriage there will be no gaps where anyone can build any kind of fence” (TM 35–6). Jane and Koji are convinced that their interracial love will not only triumph over their present circumstances, but is a symbol of progress of what the nation can and will become. When Ume further presses Jane why the government is behaving in such a racist manner toward its own citizens in the here and now, Jane pivots again to her imagined future: “This matter of proving one’s loyalty to enjoy rights of an American citizen is nothing but a hocus-pocus.” Ume replies: “[But] isn’t this ironic that fighting and dying for America has become more of a privilege to be sought than a duty to be performed?” Jane responds: “Yes, but I find the situation I am in is more ironic. Mrs. Murayama, in your own way you are as hysterical as the Americans who are yelling ‘Jap, go home!’” Ume slaps her out of frustration, but then amusingly acquiesces to the marriage in the next beat.

Others forbid Jane and Koji’s imagined miscegenated future from taking hold without additional suffering. Namely, masked hyper-nationalist Nisei enter the stage and break Koji’s fingers, ending his career path as a pianist, while exclaiming that he is not permitted to “sit the war out in a nice clear room in ‘an American concentration camp’” (39). Michael (the JACL-like character) is later revealed to have been one of the masked men. Although he was instrumental in getting Jane access to the camp and suggesting relocation for them to become model citizens,

when Michael sees Jane in Japanese wedding garb, he is seemingly overcome with jealousy at Koji's access to the white female body. One of the masked men, perhaps Michael, even disparages Jane as a "Jap lover." As a Kibei with greater immunity to U.S. interpellation, Koji will later corner Michael as a hypocrite for aiming to assimilate into a state that disparages his masculinity. I will return to this point later.

Koji and Jane's marriage cannot withstand his confinement at Tule Lake. Although Jane gets pregnant and, during visiting hours, they enact a playful farce of daily routine for a married couple, their dialogue shifts into a revelation that Jane began to find Koji's presence in her life "nauseating" and "damp." Whereas she claims she could "endure any humiliation," she recoils at how Koji does not behave like the proud Japanese man she fell in love with; instead he is "wallowing in the sweet pain of being wronged, yet...[letting himself] be fed and protected by Americans." Koji does not acquiesce to her framing of him as emasculated and instead responds: "What was I supposed to do? Starve to death?" Jane admits that she has been wanting to "be held by a normal, healthy, strong male animal who just needed a female animal," and so she threw herself at a white sergeant who had been eyeing her. The sexual encounter turned into a gang rape, resulting in the miscarriage of their child. Jane tries to brush it off: "Pregnant? Who's pregnant? Nobody wanted that child...", but she is overwhelmed by the loss. The episode spells the end of their marriage and their dyad as a symbol of America's heterosexually-miscegenated future (50-1). Koji narrates that he stabbed the sergeant out of vengeance and was imprisoned as a "traitor" for ten years, and that Jane killed herself.

The postwar scenes, which include the opening scene with the morning after a homosexual encounter, feature Koji's second romance with Fred Chung, a third-generation Chinese American. Koji's queer desire is portrayed as awakening during his imprisonment: alone

for “days and nights...in a solitary cell,” one night, a young man was “pushed into [his] cell”; and in the present when he looks at Fred, Koji is reminded of that fleeting love. Initially, Koji is dismissive of Fred who attempts to frame his stoicism and bottled anger as an ideal, masculine personality. Fred comments that Koji seems lost, but he still finds reassurance in the older man: “I woke up during the night and saw a face lying next to me. Your face, no, I saw a face which could be mine maybe twenty or thirty years from now. A face exhausted from forever running...” That “other” face represents the toll of the peril–model binary on Asian American lives, as Koji comments: “You should damned glad that the country is not at war with China” (55). Since all Fred’s father did during WWII was “dump garbage, wash dishes and take care of latrines,” he fantasizes that Koji is a “real” man who “aim[ed his] gun at another man—sight him—bang—he drops, dead” (8, 54). Deflating Fred’s fantasy and annoyed at the younger man’s naiveté and persistence, Koji states: “I clean horse-dung.” He tells Fred to get lost, offering him money as if he were a hustler. Fred cries: “Why you God damned filthy Jap!” and leaves in a huff.

Koji reevaluates his treatment and feelings toward Fred after Michael, the JACL-like “friend” reenters his life. Michael urges him to sign an evacuation claim or else the “money will be dead in the government’s hands.”<sup>229</sup> Seeing the evacuation claim as a monetary exit to clear Michael’s guilty conscience, and as a representation of Nisei assimilationism, Koji tells him to “shove it.” Michael fumes: “You damn stupid pervert.”

KOJI: Oh, ho, listen to that vicious tone. Am I refusing you a chance of bringing yourself one more step nearer to your heaven? [...]

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<sup>229</sup> The Japanese American Evacuation Claims Act of 1948 provided insufficient recovery of property loss, but through Nisei and Sansei activism in the 1960s and 70s was expanded to the Civil Liberties Act of 1988.

MICHAEL: Why don't you try to lead a decent, normal life?

KOJI: I can't; I castrated myself.

MICHAEL: That's against the law.

KOJI: Is it?

MICHAEL: Who operated on you?

KOJI: You.

MICHAEL: A desperate subterfuge of excuses for being a homosexual?

KOJI: Why do I need an excuse?

MICHAEL: Because it is illegal.

KOJI: Behold the law abiding citizen of the United States. (TM 42–3)

In this exchange, although the Nisei is jested to have castrated the Kibei when breaking his fingers in camp, the reverse is actually the case: the queer Kibei is the one with the liminal relation to both the white state and assimilated Nisei masculinity. Drawing his masculinity from a source beyond whiteness, he has particularized the effect of white universality on the “castrated” Japanese American, and begun to move beyond his own castration toward an empowered masculinity.

When Fred returns after an intervention by Cherry Williams—Koji's landlady and a Japanese war bride married to a disabled black veteran—Koji admits his feelings to Fred. Their intra-racial queer relationship amounts to a recuperated masculinity for Koji. Embracing their liminality, Fred refers to Koji as a “Jap who loves a Chinese boy.” Koji responds: “Chink. ...If I'm a Jap; you're a Chink. ...Oh, let's not be so conceited. Nobody knows I even exist. Let's stop testing each other. I'm glad you came back” (56).

Interestingly, the play does not end there, as Oh makes additional commentary on the

U.S.' Cold War "social justice" inclusionary paradigm to which even an intra-racial queer relationship is vulnerable. Namely, Oh prefigures homonationalism. Fred tells Koji that he plans to enlist in the military, not to "fight, but to defend what I care for," and Koji responds: "Hocus pocus." He narrates that he cannot live a lost life through Fred and that they must eventually grow apart (60). The play ends with Koji checking out of a psychiatric institution, picked up by Cherry and her disabled husband who now refer to Koji as their "son." The new family's queer kinship model is a result of compounded war loss—homeland, biological family and able-bodiedness—which the postwar inclusionary state can never repair.

In sum, I have argued that the notion of racial castration in Asian American studies should be reformulated with an ordering of the symbolic that takes into better account inter-imperial racialization, or overlapping orders of the universal. The rise of Asia and homonationalism indicates that white heteropatriarchal ascendancy is an insufficient maxim for defining the parameters of the symbolic. As scholars like Fujitani have shown, the transwar rise of model minoritization was a non/white imperial enterprise, which I suggest indicates the presence of overlapping masculinities in the transpacific and homosexuality's symbolic location as not entirely abject. Asian American creative texts register homonationalism as an extension of Cold War racial formation. Here I have focused on a couple that rendered Japanese American internment as both the white state's "queering workshop" for inclusion, but also a site of contradiction unresolvable by inclusion. In the case of Kaneko's storytelling, a queer internment experience leads his child characters to critique model minoritization, while in Oh's play, the U.S.-Japanese competition over model minoritization results in various permutations of masculinity that a white-universalist framework for racial castration fails to capture.

## Chapter 4: The Queer Chronopolitics of Ōshima Nagisa

*“When you have a group of men, there always exists some aspect of homosexuality.”*

Ōshima Nagisa, 2000<sup>230</sup>

The Japanese director Ōshima Nagisa (1932–2013) is known for his films that explore the intersection of sexuality and violence. His best-known film, *In the Realm of the Senses* (1976), was made as a French production to circumvent Japanese obscenity laws, and is based on a true story of the sadomasochistic affair between the geisha Sada Abe and her lover who she strangles to death.<sup>231</sup> The film’s historical backdrop is the February 26 or 2-26 Incident (*Ni-ni roku jiken*), the 1936 failed coup conducted by young Japanese Imperial Army officers to purge those they saw as disloyal to the emperor—an incident generally agreed to have steered Japan toward fascism. In a more commemorative fashion, the 2-26 Incident also serves as the backdrop for the 1960 short story and 1966 short film *Patriotism* by the famous right-wing queer author and playwright Mishima Yukio (1925–1970). In November 1970, with a small group of students, Mishima famously conducted a coup by occupying the headquarters of Japan’s Self-Defense Forces in a futile attempt to reinstate a strong emperor system, and then—shocking the nation

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<sup>230</sup> Ōshima Nagisa and Max Tessier, “Taboo” (press kit), *New Yorker Films*, 10 Mar 2000 [online].

<sup>231</sup> Other notable films include Ōshima’s 1961 *The Catch* (based on the 1957 novel by Ōe Kenzaburō) about a downed African American airman, held as a POW by a small village in Japan; the villagers objectify and scapegoat the man for their problems, ultimately killing him just as Japan is about to surrender. In his 1968 *Death by Hanging*, a dark comedy about an ethnic Korean man sentenced to death by hanging, the character survives his failed execution but loses his memory. His executioners try to reenact his crimes to jolt his memory, even killing a woman in the process, as the film critiques capital punishment and Japanese intolerance toward Zainichi Koreans.

and world with an already unrelatable act in 1970—committed ritual suicide by seppuku. Probably knowing his coup’s success was far-fetched, Mishima had already determined to die to make the impression that an ideal masculine spirit was buried beneath a postwar spiritual emptiness in Japan.<sup>232</sup>

The left-wing Ōshima and the right-wing Mishima make a useful pair to compare what I am calling the queer chronopolitics of the former against the “homo-ethnonationalism” of the latter. Ōshima’s only mixed Japanese-English language film, a joint Japan-UK production, *Merry Christmas, Mr. Lawrence* (1983), explores links between homosexuality and violence, and explicitly summons the life and suicide of Mishima with its main score titled “Forbidden Colors”—the same name of Mishima’s 1951 novel that features an older, misogynistic queer male protagonist who is frustrated with Japan’s postwar consumerist, heterosexual-majoritarian democracy. Ironically, the song, written and performed by Sakamoto Ryūichi, is still regularly played during the highly-commercialized Christmas season in both the U.S. and Japan. Across from the British icon David Bowie who in *Merry Christmas* plays as Captain Celliers (who represents the ideal, modern white man), Sakamoto stars as Captain Yonoi, an attractive, hypermasculine queer Japanese man who, like Mishima, feels “out of time”: he expresses to the

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<sup>232</sup> Mishima detested not only Japan’s consumer culture—albeit was an unabashed cultural fetishist himself—but also leftist politics that asserted transnational solidarity against neocolonialism at what he saw as at expense of Japan’s emperor system and nation-state. According to Mishima, “An Appeal,” trans. Harris I. Martin, *Japan Interpreter* 7.1 (1971): 73–7, as a result of defeat, the U.S.-imposed “peace” constitution and the de-deification of the emperor (the 1946 “Humanity Declaration”), Japan had “stumbled into a spiritual vacuum, preoccupied only with its economic prosperity, unmindful of its national foundations, losing its national spirit, seeking trivialities without looking to fundamentals, and falling into makeshift expediency and hypocrisy.” He went on: “We have had to stand idly by while the policies and the future of the nation were entrusted to foreign powers, while the humiliation of our defeat was merely evaded and not effaced, and while the traditions of Japan were being desecrated by the Japanese themselves.... Such fundamental inconsistencies are bound to cause a deterioration of the Japanese people’s spirit and a corruption of their morals.”

title character, a British POW named Colonel Lawrence (played by Tom Conti) that he should already be dead alongside his comrades who were executed for mutiny for their participation in the 2-26 Incident.

*Merry Christmas* depicts the Pacific War as a homoerotic competition between Japan and the Allied white powers. The backdrop is the early-1940s Japanese supremacy in Southeast Asia, a microscale of loss of Western control over the reins of modernity, as Japan handily defeated Britain and Holland in Singapore and the Dutch West Indies in 1942 (the American campaign had not yet commenced in earnest). Both in terms of its historical setting and the context of its release—Japan’s 1980s economic miracle—I argue that *Merry Christmas* presaged what Jasbir Puar in 2007 coined as “homonationalism,” but as a phenomenon with roots in transpacific racial capitalism.<sup>233</sup> As yellow peril sentiment reignited in response to Japan’s booming 1980s economy, Ōshima’s film presented the deployment of sexual progressivism and exceptionalism by white characters who box in Japanese homophobia as backwards.<sup>234</sup> Yet, by using the screen to box in the progressivism as anchored to imperial conquest, Ōshima gifts the viewer with a queer postcolonial gaze. Along with his final film *Gohatto* (“Taboo”) (1999) that also concerned the role homosexuality and homophobia played in the unfolding of modernity—specifically, at the close of Japan’s Tokugawa era (1603–1868)—the anti-homonationalist (and anti-homothnonationalist) chronopolitics of the acclaimed filmmaker come into view.

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<sup>233</sup> Jasbir Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times* (Duke UP, 2007), describes homonationalism in terms of the West’s adoption of sexual/gender flexibility for the maintenance of white supremacy, contextualizing it in terms of racial othering during the War on Terror. Here I am suggesting that its formation is also linked the earlier flow of racial capitalism in the transpacific.

<sup>234</sup> Notably, progressivism on the issue of women’s liberation had already been applied to propagandistic effect by the Allied powers during the occupation years. See Lisa Yoneyama, *Cold War Ruins* (Duke UP, 2016), chapter 2.

#### 4.1 Inter-imperial Homoerotics in *Merry Christmas, Mr. Lawrence*

*Merry Christmas* is based loosely on novels by the Afrikaner (South African Dutch) writer Sir Laurens Jan Van der Post, and takes place in a Japanese POW camp on the island of Java, Indonesia, in 1942.<sup>235</sup> The geopolitical and psychosexual parameters of the film are set in the opening scene. A sadistic Sergeant Hara (played by Beat Takeshi) wants the title character Colonel Lawrence to witness his resolution of a “secret” and “disgraceful incident.” A Korean soldier with the Japanese surname Kanemoto is charged to have raped a Dutch POW named De Jong. Both men lie prone, shirtless on the ground, surrounded by armed Japanese guards. Whereas De Jong appears unharmed (any injury from the rape is hidden), Kanemoto’s back and shoulders have been severely lashed by bamboo poles. Lawrence, who speaks fluent Japanese and plays the role of a cultural mediator akin to Lawrence of Arabia, asks Hara: “If it’s a secret, why are you showing me?”

The reason: Hara has a minor obsession with demonstrating control over homosexuality, aware of its dynamism of power in disrupting the status quo. In exchange for permitting Kanemoto to commit seppuku for his “shameful” act, Hara goads him to first show everyone “how he used his thing on [De Jong’s] white ass.” The rape is a symbol of the virility of Japanese pan-Asianism over degenerating whiteness, but to disassociate from the violent homoeroticism of the inter-imperial competition, Hara outsources its barbarity onto colonized and conscripted “Korea.” Yet, in his eagerness to show supremacy over racial/sexual otherness in front of Lawrence, who represents a fellow colonizing power, a homosocial dynamic between “Japan”

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<sup>235</sup> For a summary of the differences between the Van der Post’s novels and Ōshima’s adaptation, see Masao Miyoshi, *Off Center: Power and Culture Relations Between Japan and the United States* (Harvard UP, 1991), 179–84.

and the “West” is extended.<sup>236</sup>

Lawrence later asks Hara to protect De Jong, worried that additional harm might come to him now that everyone knows he was raped. Hara jests that the request is because all British men are queers (*okama*), so those in the camp probably want their chance to bugger the Dutchman. Hara links a propensity for queer behavior with a lack of discipline, as if accounting for the reason Japan could rout Britain and Holland in battle. He asks De Jong if he is an *okama* and when the man vehemently denies it, Hara then scolds him and Lawrence for being scared of homosexuality, whereas a “samurai doesn’t fear it.” Lawrence shrugs off Hara’s accusation with a self-assured clarification that wartime comradeship does not equate with homosexuality.

As Hemi Chari has explained, imperialism across patriarchal societies East and West is concerned with the subordination of men by men, the “other man” fulfilling the psychosexual needs of the colonizing self so that the “predominant trope of the colonial enterprise...is that of male rape.”<sup>237</sup> In the early 1940s, neither Japan nor the Allied white powers could embrace/incorporate or subdue/rape the “other man,” but as Ikuo Shinjō points out in his reading of the film, both the Japanese and white characters, as in the actual Pacific War, look to each other to justify the death drive of their battle for supremacy.<sup>238</sup> Homosexuality as a “death drive”

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<sup>236</sup> Ikuo Shinjō 新城郁夫, “Nihon kuia eigaron josetsu: Ōshima Nagisa ‘Senjō no Merī Kurisumasu’ o kōgen toshite” 日本クィア映画論序説—大島渚『戦場のメリークリスマス』を光源として [Japanese queer film theory introduction: Ōshima Nagisa’s “Merry Christmas on the Battlefield” as a light source], in *Sukurīn no naka no tasha (Nihon eiga wa ikiteiru, dai 4 kan)* スクリーンのなかの他者 (日本映画は生きている 第4巻) [*Others on the Screen (Japanese Cinema is Alive, volume 4)*], ed. Kiyoshi Kurosawa 黒沢清 et al, 113–39 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2010), 120–1.

<sup>237</sup> Hemi Chari, “Colonial Fantasies and Postcolonial Identities: Elaboration of Postcolonial Masculinity and Homoerotic Desire,” in *Postcolonial, Queer: Theoretical Intersections*, ed. John Hawley, 277–304 (SUNY Press, 2001).

<sup>238</sup> Ikuo, “Nihon kuia eigaron josetsu,” 121.

prompts assumptions of the presumed absence of reproduction of a “race,” although framed in that manner also obscures 20<sup>th</sup>-century heterosexism and racism that stereotyped homosexuality as associated with the less- or over-civilized (depending on locale: associated with communism, decadence, sinfulness, selfishness and so forth).<sup>239</sup> In the work of Theodor Adorno, who was responding to the masculinist violence of WWII, “homosexuality” appears as a metonym for the shared psychosexual expression of the masculine principle of domination over the feminine other, which usefully reminds that the imperial self looks toward potentially dominating otherness for guidance on how to rejuvenate and sustain the oftentimes violent drive for civilizational progress.<sup>240</sup>

Homosexuality in this Adornoian sense is abundant in *Merry Christmas*, but aside from the opening scene, actual same-sex sexuality does not rise to the surface, to correspond with the limits imposed by trans-imperial heterosexism at mid-century. As Katsuhiko Suganuma has pointed out, although the film is hailed as one of Ōshima’s masterpieces, because the homosexuality depicted in *Merry Christmas* largely amounts to “shame,” it seldom appears on Japanese or English lists of Queer or LGBT cinema. Such lists are often interested in homosexuality as “pride” so as to effect a liberatory consciousness that displaces what Elizabeth Freeman calls the “chrononormativity” of heterosexist temporalities, even if “shame” is depicted with historical accuracy.<sup>241</sup> Yet, I contend that *Merry Christmas* is a critically and

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<sup>239</sup> For homosexuality and the death drive, see Lee Edelman, *No Future* (Duke UP, 2004) that posits “reproductive futurism” as the sexual/temporal norm that Queer theory and politics should be oriented against—but also José Esteban Muñoz’ critique of Edelman in his *Cruising Utopia* (NYU Press, 2009) that racialized populations are often violently positioned in ways that undercut their futurity.

For my view on the debate, see p. 25 n. 44, this dissertation.

<sup>240</sup> For this usage of homosexuality, see Aphorism 24 in Theodor Adorno, *Minima Moralia* (1951),” trans. Dennis Redmond. *Marxists.org*. 2005 [online].

<sup>241</sup> Katsuhiko Suganuma, “Off-genre: notes on (dis)-locating Oshima Nagisa’s *Merry Christmas*, Mr.

chronopolitically queer film in its attention to how the shame–pride binary, as expressed through nationalist formations of homophobia and heteroflexibility, are entangled with inter-imperial competition, something that is now clearer with the post-Cold War rise of homonationalism and celebration of gender/sexual minority lives as aligned with humanist and neoliberal individuation.

A contrary view of Ōshima’s chronopolitics comes from Masao Miyoshi, who in his 1991 reading of the film that incidentally dovetailed with American triumphalism at the end of the Cold War blasts Ōshima for “accepting the hegemonic and hierarchic view that would rank nations and races on a scale of progress and development.”<sup>242</sup> In Miyoshi’s view, Ōshima’s 1960s–70s filmic depictions of Japanese othering of Zainichi Koreans, Okinawans, and so forth, were merely “humanitarian” and not anti-assimilationist to progressive state logics. That is, while Ōshima filmically rejected the postwar myth of a homogenous Japan that sidelined minority lives, Miyoshi does not read him as also rejecting the benevolence of the postwar pluralist state, such as the U.S. multiculturalist state. In Miyoshi’s critique is the impression that *Merry Christmas* naturalizes the Cold War white exceptionalist narrative of Western-led humanist progress in racial and gendered/sexual terms, facilitating tacit acceptance of an orientalist othering of Japan as delayed. Instead, as I will show in my analysis of the film, with Ōshima’s reorientation of the cinematic apparatus from othering in Japan to othering at the transnational East–West nexus, white exceptionalism, too, appears in the crosshairs of representation.

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Lawrence (1983),” *Reconstruction: Studies in Contemporary Culture* 16.2 (2016).

For “chrononormativity,” see Elizabeth Freeman, *Time Binds: Queer Temporalities, Queer Histories* (Duke UP, 2010).

<sup>242</sup> Miyoshi, *Off Center*, 187.

The film was released at the height of the Japanese economic miracle that would be curtailed by the Reagan administration's 1985 Plaza Accord that sought to re-center U.S. capitalist supremacy for a new era of deregulation and transnational corporatism, or neoliberalism (a transition from the more Keynesian 1960s–70s). Between the occupation and the 1980s, U.S.-Japan relations retained homosociality on the issues of the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty, signed in 1960, and the reversion of Okinawa to Japan in 1972 (the Ryukyu Islands annexed by Japan in 1879; the islands now officially Japanese, but the American military remains stationed in Okinawa as its chief hub in Asia). Ikuo Shinjō, who is a Gender/Sexuality studies scholar of Okinawa, notes that the conventional heterosexual or gender-binary matrix in postcolonial theory of the white male colonizer (U.S.) and nonwhite female native (Okinawan) cannot account for two cooperating non/white colonizers (U.S. and Japan).<sup>243</sup> (In contrasting terms, *Merry Christmas* depicts the competition of an Allied white–Japanese masculinities in early-1940s Indonesia.) As the Japanese economy swelled in the 1970s—Japan as an accomplice of the Vietnam War—so did the threat of the U.S.-Japanese homosexual matrix upon the white heteropatriarchal U.S. state, even as the alliance remained vital for U.S. postwar strategy. A settling of the clash between the yen and the dollar in the latter's favor by the mid-1980s paralleled the de-politicization of populist anticolonial politics of the 1960s–70s via the opening of greater entrepreneurial avenues for flexible, yet measured, consumption of racial and gendered difference. This, alongside the administration of civil and human rights in both the U.S. domestic and international arenas, culminated into what Jodi Melamed has named as “neoliberal

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<sup>243</sup> Ikuo Shinjō, “The Political Formation of the Homoerotics and the Cold War: The Battle of Gazes at and from Okinawa,” trans. Nitta Keiko, in *The Trans-pacific Imagination Rethinking Boundary, Culture and Society*, eds. Naoki Sakai and Hyon Joo Yoo, 97–105 (Singapore: World Scientific, 2012).

multiculturalism.”<sup>244</sup> Whereas the Pacific War concerned the U.S.-Japanese competition over who was “less racist” in their coeval attempts to build pluralist empires,<sup>245</sup> *Merry Christmas* presciently extends representation of that competition to who is “less homophobic” at a time LGBT rights were being configured into the postwar teleology of civil and human rights.<sup>246</sup>

The success of Ōshima’s representation is ensured by solid casting, characterization and cinematographic choices. The East–West competition is embodied not only by the dyads Kanemoto/De Jong and Hara/Lawrence, but more centrally by Yonoi/Celliers (the camp commandant played by Sakamoto and the South African British POW played by Bowie). Throughout the film, Yonoi’s men work diligently to contain the queer impulses of their captain who is spellbound by Celliers so as to prevent homoeroticism from destabilizing the Japanese order of the camp. As Mehdi Derfoufi has pointed out, David Bowie’s image in the context of 1980s Thatcherism was “ambiguously remasculinized,” a modification to his 1970s onstage persona: “Gone...[were] the makeup and the orange hair, the Glam rock outfits and the glitter dust.”<sup>247</sup> While more mainstream, Bowie’s 1980s image nevertheless retained seductive sexual

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<sup>244</sup> For “neoliberal multiculturalism,” see Jodi Melamed, *Represent and Destroy: Rationalizing Violence in the New Racial Capitalism* (U of Minnesota Press, 2011).

<sup>245</sup> See Takashi Fujitani, *Race for Empire: Koreans as Japanese and Japanese as Americans during World War II* (U of California Press, 2011).

<sup>246</sup> In 1980s America, the push for LGBT rights was intertwined with the national debate over the Equal Rights Amendment. Conservatives argued, not incorrectly, that if civil rights law were to become as indiscriminating on “sex” as it was toward “race,” then eventually laws forbidding same-sex marriage must become as invalid as laws forbidding miscegenation.

In the international arena, LGBT rights would become “human rights” when in June 2011, the United Nations Human Rights Council passed a resolution against violence and discrimination on the basis of “sexual orientation and gender identity.”

<sup>247</sup> Mehdi Derfoufi, “Embodying Stardom, Representing Otherness: David Bowie in ‘Merry Christmas, Mr. Lawrence’” in *David Bowie: Critical Perspectives*, eds. Eoin Devereux, Aileen Dillane and Martin Power, 160–77 (Routledge, 2015), 163.

ambiguity; his white masculinity exuded alluring heteroflexibility. Ōshima seized upon this new image to cast him in the role of an ideal white man (blond, blue-eyed, soldierly, charismatic), funneling the idol's international stardom into the mold of a sexual object for a Japanese man: Yonoi played by Sakamoto, a music and sexual idol in his own right. As Earl Jackson points out, Ōshima "renders [Bowie] primarily a body," exploiting his glamour while suppressing his musical talent; as a kind of inside joke, he gave full production of the soundtrack to Sakamoto. In effect, viewers on both sides of the Pacific and across the Atlantic experience an epistemic disjoint when witnessing the disempowered white male "object" in the gaze of the empowered Asian male "subject" (see figure).<sup>248</sup> Yet, the film is also not sutured to the Japanese male gaze



FIGURE 4: Frames from *Merry Christmas, Mr. Lawrence* (1983). Director: Ōshima Nagisa.

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<sup>248</sup> Earl Jackson, Jr., "Desire at Cross(-Cultural) Purposes: *Hiroshima*, *Mon Amour* and *Merry Christmas, Mr. Lawrence*," *positions* 2.1 (1994): 158–63.

either, as Yonoi's character, as I mentioned in the introduction, is presented as "out of time": a bygone Japanese masculinity intentionally orientalized. Rather, the film offers a third space between the East–West ethnonationalized gazes, or a queer postcolonial gaze.<sup>249</sup>

From this in-between position, the viewer follows the major plot line concerning how the lead white characters retain their subjecthood by operationalizing irrepressible queerness in their favor. Lawrence and Celliers behave as if the hetero-inflexibility of their captors is a symptom of Japanese inadequacy. To return to the opening scene, whereas Hara considers the rape barbaric, what Lawrence finds worse is Hara's sadistic response to it: at the prospect of having to watch Kanemoto commit seppuku, Lawrence states with revulsion: "Do you want me to hate the Japanese?" From Lawrence and Celliers' perspective, even if white masculinity is ensnared, the situation can only be temporary, since Japan proves itself incapable of exercising competent and measured control and incorporation of otherness/queerness. Reflecting on Hara's violent overreach and Yonoi's anxiety about the queer self/other, Lawrence and Celliers preserve the binary of a progressive West and ossified East by disparaging what they remark upon in various scenes as false ritual (Shintoism) informing an overwrought hypermasculinity (*hagakure*).<sup>250</sup> "It's your gods," Lawrence angrily shouts at Hara at one point. "It's your bloody-awful stinking

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<sup>249</sup> Derfoufi, "Embodying Stardom," 167, explains the third space as follows: "From the Western viewpoint, Sakamoto's (Yonoi's) body belongs to a clearly otherised character. [But] Sakamoto's (Yonoi's) desire for Bowie (Celliers) destabilizes this unequal relationship and oscillates [the] position [of] viewers...[L]ike Yonoi, we desire Celliers too...[and] become aware of the exoticization of Bowie's (Celliers') body...[his] whiteness...tend[ing] toward an absolute Whiteness so as to become the ideal object of desire...[Thus], *Merry Christmas* invites us, as viewers, to experience the position of the postcolonial subject."

<sup>250</sup> *Hagakure* or "hidden leaves" was an interpretation of *bushidō* or the "way of the warrior" that emphasized the willingness to die at any moment, popularized during the Pacific War. The term was coined in 1716 by the retired samurai Yamamoto Tsunetomo, his book recovered and republished around the same time of Nitobe Inazō's 1899 global sensation *Bushido: The Soul of Japan*, although Yamamoto's book did not gain popularity until the 1930s.

gods. They made you what you are. May they rot in whatever filthy hell they came from!” In another scene, Yonoi exhibits dread about Celliers’ heteroflexible allure: “Who do you think you are? An evil spirit?” With inviting eyes, Celliers responds: “Yes, and one of yours, I hope.”

When Celliers and Lawrence escape imprisonment in the final third of the film, they run into Yonoi who draws his sword in such a way that his life suddenly has meaning: a chance to overcome, by death if necessary, the object of his desire (the white male other). Yet, denying Yonoi the opportunity (the Japanese male other is backwards!), Celliers thrusts his sword into the sand, rejecting the death drive. Frustrated, Yonoi cries: “Why do you not fight me? If you defeat me, you will be free!” An underling who failed to prevent Lawrence and Celliers’ escape commits seppuku out of dishonor, but not before warning: “Captain, that man is a devil who is trying to destroy your spirit.” Because Yonoi does not punish Celliers in this scene, and in previous ones has almost affectionately protected him from bodily harm, Lawrence realizes that the captain has “taken a bit of a shine” to his comrade, a queer situation that can be exploited.

In the memorable and cult-classic climax, in front of the entire gathered camp, Celliers thwarts Yonoi from beheading the ranking Allied officer Hinksley by pulling the Japanese captain in close and kissing him on both sides of his cheeks. Exasperated and saturated with desire, Yonoi draws his sword over his head—and, although as Hara had explained to Lawrence, young Japanese officers “love to try out their swords on white necks”—Yonoi cannot bring himself to cut down the object of his desire. With his failed masculinity on display, Yonoi loses command and must transfer from the camp. Celliers is sacrificed as punishment: buried to his neck and left to die under the blazing sun. Before his exit, Yonoi cuts a lock of hair from Celliers’ corpse as a keepsake (see figure), one man’s life a small price to pay for the march of humanist progress.



FIGURE 5: Frames from *Merry Christmas, Mr. Lawrence* (1983). Director: Ōshima Nagisa.

Yet, the dubiousness of the humanist trajectory is expressed in the film's closing scene, the viewer returned to the epistemic norm of the postwar: Japan's defeat and the reascension of whiteness. Hara, now imprisoned and awaiting execution, is visited by Lawrence. To address Hara's inquiry of why he must die for actions not unlike any other soldier's, Lawrence explains: "You are the victim of men who think they are right. Just as one day you and Captain Yonoi believed absolutely that you were right. And the truth is, of course, that nobody is right." Hara comments that Yonoi, before his execution, gave him the locket of Celliers' hair to place on Yonoi's family shrine. Lawrence responds: "It was as if Celliers by his death sowed a seed in Yonoi that we might all share by its growth." In Miyoshi's reading, this is where Ōshima's film delivers the wrong-headed message that Japan is teleologically-delayed: the seed's growth

connotes Celliers' "prideful" transformation of violent homosexual panic within the organization of Japanese heteropatriarchy to that of a pro-gay, nonviolent shock. But I would point out that the growth also names the "shameful" trajectory of masculinities flexibly adapting for imperial health, the Japan-West competition temporarily "resolved" by the shock of atomic bombings and the postwar occupation.

#### 4.2 The Homo-ethnonationalism of Mishima Yukio

In 1968, Ōshima and Mishima debated about the ubiquitous presence of news cameras covering the left-wing student protesting of the renewal of the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty and the Vietnam War. For Ōshima, the mass-televised protest contributed to greater political potential, whereas in Mishima's eyes, the substitution of political "acts" with mere "expression" was part of the bankrupt aestheticism of Japan's postwar consumerist culture.<sup>251</sup>

Sometimes characterized as a "homofascist," or as Keith Vincent has put it, "everyone's favorite homofascist," Mishima was nostalgic for the Tokugawa era when *nanshoku* ("male colors" or male-male sexuality) was within normative bounds and a homosocial samurai elite offset any potential for plutocracy, and for that matter, democracy.<sup>252</sup> The intersection of fascism with homosexuality has been largely explored in the context of Wilhelmine to Nazi Germany (as suggested in Adorno's usage of "homosexuality," mentioned above), but in the post-Cold War, the intersection returns to scholarly and popular attention with a global rise in neofascism that

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<sup>251</sup> Mishima Yukio and Ōshima Nagisa, "Mishima Yukio / Ōshima Nagisa: Fashisuto ka kakumeika ka" [Mishima Yukio / Ōshima Nagisa: Fascist or revolutionary?], *Eiga Geijutsu* [Film art] 16.1 (Jan 1968): 23–34, as cited at Yuriko Furuhata, *Cinema of Actuality* (Duke UP, 2013), 1.

<sup>252</sup> Keith Vincent, "Mishima Yukio: Everyone's Favorite Homofascist," *Multitude* 13 (2003) [online].

comes in both homophobic and homonational varieties. In particular with the waning of U.S. imperial power, in post-Cold War Japan right-wing nationalism is reinvigorated as Article 9 of Japan's "peace" constitution seems all but certain to be amended (the position increasingly "centrist"). Although jeered as out-of-touch in 1970, Mishima's politics half-a-century later are now "vindicated" by changing geopolitics.

Here and in previous chapters I have outlined how homonationalism has roots in 20<sup>th</sup>-century East–West relations that indicate a longstanding "imperial queering" on both sides of the Pacific, a supplement to the more discernable heterosexist exclusionism. To encapsulate Mishima's politics, instead of fascism, I suggest the term "homo-ethnonationalism." To follow but also depart from Puar's formulation, homonationalism connotes a post-Cold War ascendancy of whiteness via the rise of heteroflexible markets: a contradictory teleology of civil and human rights advocacy and militarism for maintaining Western-led contours of racial capitalism. But the term cannot account for the intersection of queerness and nationalism in nonwhite contexts without subsuming those contexts under a racially reductionist schema of global capitalism.<sup>253</sup> Through his literature, short films, plays and public suicide, Mishima not only brought attention to queer lives in postwar Japan, but as Kazuyoshi Kawasaka has pointed out, helped to generate an epistemic "inside" for male Japanese homosexuals within the temporal trajectory of the Japanese nation-state by focusing on "living tradition" (the emperor system) that continues to provide the nation ontological security within the flow of neocolonial modernity.<sup>254</sup> Although his

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<sup>253</sup> The post-Cold War rise of China makes clear that the days of naming the capitalist world system as "white" are numbered, but as John Dower, *War Without Mercy* (Pantheon, 1986), 316, pointed out, Japan's 1980s economic miracle already rung the "death knell for a world system dominated by the Atlantic community."

<sup>254</sup> See Kazuyoshi Kawasaka, "Mishima Yukio and the Homoeroticisation of the Emperor of Japan," *Feminist Encounters* 2.2 no. 23 (2018), 1–11.

right-wing nationalism is anathema to transnational leftist and feminist politics, his homo-ethnonationalism significantly offset the need to look toward the “outside” for liberation, namely at a West that, now in the post-Cold War, continues to position Japan as civilizationally-lagged in the realms of gender and sexual progress.

Inadequate attention has been paid to the intersection of homosexuality and self-/orientalism across the course of 20<sup>th</sup>-century East–West relations. As I discussed in Chapter 1, during the Russo-Japanese War era, the German-Jewish sexologist Benedict Friedländer romanticized the samurai as having had a homoerotic martial prowess buttressed by Japan’s “premodern” communal and naturalist culture as compared with the West’s “modern” homophobic individualism that Friedländer saw as entrenched in a conflicting confluence of increasing political enfranchisement (e.g., women’s suffrage) and plutocracy/consumerism. For Friedländer, the preponderance of male homosexuals among the great men of history was a result of their “nature” that gave them no choice but to sin against law and custom.<sup>255</sup> Accordingly, he argued, when self-actualized, male homosexuals disproportionately drove civilizational progress—a “truth” of social relations that if ignored or constrained by heterosexual-majoritarianism would soon imperil the West given the rise of what he characterized as the less homophobic, non-Christian East. Also discussed in Chapter 1, the prewar white American Christian progressive Sidney Gulick read modernizing Japan as in the leading position to critique the spiritual misdirection of the West and stimulate racial egalitarianism. Both these thinkers treated a “queerly masculine” East as the West’s supplement for defining an enlightened

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For Japan’s struggle with its “ontological security” as a state rejected by both the East and West, see Ayşe Zarakol, “Ontological (In)security and State Denial of Historical Crimes: Turkey and Japan,” *International Relations* 24.1 (2010): 3–23.

<sup>255</sup> Andrew Hewitt, *Political Inversions: homosexuality, fascism, & the modernist imaginary* (Stanford UP, 1996), 105.

trajectory for a shared modernity.

Mishima seems to have been caught in the same teleology. Fluent in English and well-read in Western philosophy, he fell prey to chasing a phantasm of a bygone homosocial greatness in which Japan sought its “proper” place among nations.<sup>256</sup> Against Mishima’s homo-ethnonationalist orientation, Ōshima’s queer chronopolitics offer a critical alternative.

### 4.3 *Gohatto* and the Ambivalence of Anti/homophobia

In his final film, *Gohatto* (“Taboo”) (1999), Ōshima once again engaged with the intersection of homoeroticism and violence. *Gohatto* takes place at the *bakumatsu*, or the end of the Tokugawa period between U.S. Commodore Matthew Perry’s 1853 landing and the 1868–9 Boshin War.<sup>257</sup> The film focuses on the *Shinsengumi*, a special militia formed by the shogunate in 1863 that consisted of samurai, *rōnin* (masterless samurai), trainees, physicians, and so on. Beat Takashi, who played Hara in *Merry Christmas*, returned to play the lead character, the historical samurai Hijikata Toshizō who would eventually be killed in the Boshin War. Sakamoto Ryūichi returned to compose the film’s mysterious-sounding soundtrack.

Set in 1865 Kyoto, the story centers on a fictional disruption of the *Shinsengumi* by the entrance of two young recruits: the beautiful Kanō (played by Matsuda Ryūhei) and the

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<sup>256</sup> For “phantasm,” see Marilyn Ivy, *Discourses of the Vanishing: Modernity, Phantasm, Japan* (U of Chicago Press, 1995), 241: Japan’s need to conduct a search for “authentic survivals of premodern, prewestern Japanese authenticity..., inescapably a modern endeavor, [but] essentially enfolded within the historical condition that it would seek to escape.”

<sup>257</sup> The shogunate signed the 1855 Treaty of Kanagawa that opened Japan’s ports to outsiders, ending over two centuries of isolationism. The Boshin War, fought 13 years later, was a civil war between supporters of the shogunate and supporters of an imperial restoration to champion Japan’s independence on the world’s stage.

handsome Tashiro (played by Asano Tadanobu). Kanō, who comes from a wealthy mercantilist family is a highly-skilled swordsman, whereas Tashiro is low-skilled and of average class. At first, Kanō resists Tashiro's advances, but once Kanō appears to be allowing Tashiro to best him during practice, Hijikata recognizes that the two have likely become lovers. Their relationship is to the chagrin of other jealous members of the militia who have their eyes on Kanō.

Depicting *nanshoku* as the historical norm that it was, was still slightly unusual in 1999; yet, the film's limited on-screen same-sex sexuality probably underwhelmed Japanese audiences given the uptick in explicit queer content targeting female consumers in early-1990s popular culture (a *gei būmu* or "gay boom").<sup>258</sup> But like *Merry Christmas*, homosexuality in *Gohatto* is deployed less for the purposes of "prideful" or titillating representation than to express a link between sexuality and violence. By fixing its gaze on Kanō, a *bishōnen* or a gender-bending beautiful youth, the film adopts, to quote Greg Pflugfelder in a different context, the "characteristic stance of Tokugawa discourse on male-male sexuality."<sup>259</sup> Ōshima follows a common motif regarding *bishōnen*: their beautiful youth is ominous—like a cherry blossom tree in bloom, it is a sign of life's transience and ultimately death. Such beauty is also dangerous: like the enchanting effect of Aphrodite, men are at risk of losing their senses in their drive to possess it.

Such is what transpires when an older member of the militia takes sexual advantage of

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<sup>258</sup> Mark McLelland, *Queer Japan from the Pacific War to the Internet Age* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005), 59–66, argues that Japan's 1990s "gay boom" was not the first. With the fall of the disciplined heteronormativity of the empire at the end of the Pacific War, the virtual opposite of the Lavender Scare occurred in Japan. The U.S. military reacted laxly toward a proliferation of *kasutori* or "perverse" culture during the occupation period.

<sup>259</sup> Greg Pflugfelder, *Cartographies of Desire: Male-Male Sexuality in Japanese Discourse 1600–1950* (U of California Press, 1999), 225.

Kanō and mysteriously ends up dead. After a second officer is murdered with a presumed erotic connection to Kanō, and Tashiro's knife is found as evidence, Hijikata and the commander of the militia, Kondō, resolve that Tashiro must die by Kanō's sword in order to end the circle of jealousy threatening the group. In the course of their fight, Kanō admits to Tashiro that he framed him for the deaths; he asks Tashiro for forgiveness only to distract him before delivering the final blow. However, Hijikata has solved the mystery of Kanō's deception, and has an older captain named Okita (who Kanō loves unrequitedly) then kill Kanō. For his part, as he waits in a beautiful field of cherry blossom trees in full bloom and hears Kanō's death cry, Hijikata slices down a young tree, remarking that Kanō was "too beautiful."

A shared theme with *Merry Christmas* is the desire to control threatening homosexuality, which led some Western reviewers of the film to conclude that it represents Ōshima's end-of-career return to conservatism—not by choice but by an unfortunately outdated vision. For example, a 2000 review in the *New York Times* describes the film as "subscrib[ing] to the same view of homosexuality as an inevitably disruptive force that is held by opponents of allowing openly gay people to serve in the military. It illustrates the underlying fear that when energies should be directed toward warfare are diverted into passion, unity is impossible."<sup>260</sup> In a scathing 2001 review titled "Gohatto, or the End of Oshima?", Andrew Grossman extended the critique of homophobia to Ōshima's cinematographic choices. He wrote that the film "purports to be fearlessly uncloseted about its homosexuality, [but] its aesthetic tactics of substituting spurting blood for semen, or displacing sexual tensions to the safe spaces of the kendo duels—tactics that will draw praise for their 'poeticisms'—are also masks that ironically mystify and fetishize the content of the film's homosexuality, masks that beg us to look for subtexts and symbolic

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<sup>260</sup> Steven Holden, "A Disturbing Interloper in the Samurai Circle," *New York Times*, 30 Sep 2000: A24.

meanings where none may exist.”<sup>261</sup> The sentiment in these reviews is homonationalist: whereas homosexuality as disruptive in *Merry Christmas* (released in 1983 and set during the Pacific War) may have been “tolerable”—especially since the likes of David Bowie playfully queered the film—by continuing to render homosexuality abject in a 1999 Tokugawa-era film is a “disservice” not only to Japan’s own queer past, but to the “global” pro-gay arc of justice at the opening of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In a word, the reviewers find Ōshima’s film “dated” on arrival, such that he is doing Japanese progressivism and his own legacy no favors.

Yet, in Ōshima’s own words, the felling of the cherry blossom tree at the end of the film symbolizes not just Kanō’s death, but the impending fall of the *Shinsengumi* and the world of the samurai with the dawn of the Meiji Restoration in a few short years.<sup>262</sup> As Yoshihiro Yasuhara puts it, the felled tree represents the “eradication of a growing intranational other in the history of modern Japan.”<sup>263</sup> The relative invisibilizing of *nanshoku* and the murder of a threatening *bishōnen* symbolize the phantasmatic quality of Japan’s queer past against an increasing internationalization and adoption of progressive time from the Meiji era onward that would include a trans-imperial rise of homophobia. Hence, the threat to the *Shinsengumi* in the film is not homosexuality, but the flow of colonial-era sexual modernity.

When viewed longitudinally, both homophobia and its rejection as bellwethers for a nation’s status in modernity take on an ambivalent quality due to their neo/colonial application. In the post-Cold War, Japan has been expected to collapse its longstanding dialectic between the national and the international in service of joining “freedom-loving” nations in their present and

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<sup>261</sup> Andrew Grossman, “Gohatto, or, the End of Oshima Nagisa?”, *Bright Light Films Journal*, 1 Jul 2001 [online].

<sup>262</sup> Ōshima and Tessier, “Taboo.”

<sup>263</sup> Yoshihiro Yasuhara, “Nagisa Oshima’s Vast Historical Project and the Theme of Homoeroticism in ‘Taboo (Gohatto),’” *Literature/Film Quarterly* 35.1 (2007): 356.

future battles against those deemed backward: after 2001, primarily configured as the Islamic world, and increasingly after 2018, as China. In his depictions of Japan as both a subject and an object in the endless war for civilizational progress, Ōshima places a welcomed wrench into homonationalist and homo-ethnonationalist ambitions.

## Coda

In this dissertation I have deployed the heuristic of queer transpacific critique to think through race and sexuality as inter-imperial modalities, focusing on 20<sup>th</sup>-century U.S.-Japan relations where complicity with neo/colonial violence was often paired with progressive discourse. In this coda, I will speak briefly to the transpacific complicity in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, which sees waning U.S. imperial power and a waxing China.

The “American Century” began with Woodrow Wilson in Versailles in 1919 where he vetoed Japan’s Racial Equality Proposal. U.S. ascendancy cemented with the “good war” that ended with the nuclear bombings of Japan to assert U.S. dominance over Asia and terminate Japan’s liberal-pluralist experiment and replace it with the U.S.’ own. But by the start of the third decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the American Century—from Wilson to Trump—has all but faded. The U.S. wavers on the question of whether capitalist profit can be satisfactorily secured by the multilateral Wilsonian approach it spearheaded but never fully committed to. The U.S.’ isolationist tendency about which W.E.B. Du Bois in 1947 warned the newly-formed United Nations sees resurgence as America recalibrates its role as a global “leader.”<sup>264</sup> During an ongoing War on Terror, the empire has embraced near unilateralism to safeguard its petrodollar, ironically couching its violence in “universal values.” Now it aims to reorient capital flows and its network of allies against China amidst a scene of planetary degradation and warming.

As Du Bois prophesized in 1900, the 21<sup>st</sup> century features the rise of a “brown and yellow world”: China’s economy is poised to surpass the U.S.’ sometime in the 2020s or 2030s, Japan has the world’s third largest, and India is also set to soon surpass its former colonizer, Britain.

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<sup>264</sup> See p. 50, this dissertation.

The vulgar racism of colonial modernity, as Takashi Fujitani has discussed it, sees echoes with a rise in white and nonwhite (ethno)nationalisms as the U.S.’ Cold War liberal inclusionary, “social justice” paradigm wobbles under the material interests of empire. The developmentalist or “globalist” logics of the Cold War are increasingly displaced by anti-globalist calls for more autarky—or, at least, against dependence on Chinese manufacturing. Tensions on the color line remain in terms of what Du Bois in 1944 phrased as the “dangerous race problem...as to how far ‘East is East and West is West’” that take shape in the downturn in Sino-U.S. relations. China is cast by the U.S. as the threat of alterity to the “stability” of the postwar world order—a 21<sup>st</sup>-century yellow peril—while blackness and indigeneity remain configured as the threat of stasis to modern “progress.”

Most of the world is pulled between the U.S. and China to varying degrees. Chinese development of Asia and Africa, as well as Central and South America, trespassing the Monroe Doctrine—as well as the appeal in Europe for Chinese technology and trade—are considered by the U.S. to be a weaponization of capital. America frames China as an authoritarian bully who seeks to rewrite a regional and global order with a pernicious form of capitalism, which, to return to Iyko Day’s work, is a perception shaded by romantic anticapitalism and the racialization of the “uncivilized” Asian as linked to capital’s abstract, inhuman evils, and a “lack” of individuated freedom. Du Bois’ 1944 lament that the U.S. military shall remain in Asia indefinitely due to the white supremacist perception that a capitalist ascendancy of nonwhiteness would be a “danger to civilization” remains pertinent.<sup>265</sup> Even among those on the Western left, post-Maoist state-control of capital tends to be regarded as more perilous for humanity than that practiced by democracies. The shape of Islamophobic repression in Xinjiang for securing the Belt and Road

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<sup>265</sup> Ibid.

Initiative (BRI), and the suppression of Hong Kong and Taiwan, are often cited as symptoms of China's barbarity, but the impression is too often a displacement or neglect of the "democratic" U.S. Empire as the leading agent of supremacist violence since 1945—in Asia, the Middle East, its own hemisphere and toward racial others within its own national borders. Like the capitalist love a farmer shows his silkworms, to use Sun Yat-sen's analogy about the behavior of the benevolent British Empire toward its allies, the U.S. shall throw Hong Kong and Taiwan onto the fire if and when necessary for imperial interests.<sup>266</sup> The conundrum for Hong Kong and Taiwan is thus the increasing loss of inter-imperial maneuverability.

China officially cites an outmoded Cold War mentality for the U.S.' behavior, but the Chinese nationalist desire to overcome the humiliation of the Boxer Rebellion era implies that the underlying problem is the long arc of racial capitalism (c.f., Imperial Japan's desire to "overcome modernity" in the 1930s).<sup>267</sup> The U.S.' 1899 open door policy did not quite pan out for the maintenance of Euro-American dominance even after Richard Nixon's meeting with Zhou Enlai to "open" China in 1972. Now that the U.S. has resolved that China shall remain "illiberal" so long as the Chinese Communist Party reigns, the two powers have all but entered a Second Cold War. As Cedric Robinson aptly observed about the (First) Cold War, the capitalism–communism binary was a mere "discursive cloak" that obfuscated the more "transcendent and more enduring dualism": a racial and gendered order of Manichean colonial domination and submission.<sup>268</sup> The same might be said for the cloaking applications of the

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<sup>266</sup> Ibid, 71 n. 133.

<sup>267</sup> Ibid, 81.

<sup>268</sup> Cedric Robinson as cited at Jodi Kim, *Ends of Empire* (U of Minnesota, 2010), 14, 28. According to Oswaldo de Rivera (also cited at Kim, *Ends of Empire*, 23), the battle between "capitalism and communism was a civil war between two extreme viewpoints of the same Western ideology: the search for happiness through material progress disseminated by the Industrial Revolution." The Cold War can also be

illiberal–liberal and authoritarian–democratic binaries.

Similar to the Anglo-German propaganda war in the lead up to the First World War,<sup>269</sup> the U.S.-Japanese propaganda war in the lead up the Pacific War, and the U.S.-Soviet propaganda war during the Cold War, the U.S. and China are engaged in a competition for moral approbation. Deploying progressivist rhetoric, China frames the U.S. as unethically curtailing its rise in its “own” region. Beyond human rights rhetoric, the U.S. also deploys techno-orientalist refrains of theft and duplicity, echoing the rhetorical tactics it used against Japan in the 1940s and 1980s.<sup>270</sup> In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic was propagandized by both the U.S. and China as projections of “modern” state capabilities and the imperial other as a source of the inhuman and dehumanization (at first in terms of the virus itself and then the respective failures to respond to it). The Hong Kong prodemocracy protests and the George Floyd antiracism protests have filtered through the propaganda machines of both empires as gauges for judging the imperial other as failing to live up to its messaging of benevolent governance and global leadership

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framed in Franz Fanon’s terms of colonial “misrecognition” (the U.S. and Soviet Empires). There is question, however, as to the extent any rise or “return” of a Chinese suzerain system might operate with de facto rather than de jure authority, and diverge from the Westphalian system.

<sup>269</sup> See p. 11 n. 10, this dissertation.

<sup>270</sup> In U.S. propaganda during the Pacific War, Japan was framed as having “stolen” Western technology during its Meiji era to stab the West in the back and expand its empire. In Frank Capra’s 1945 propaganda film *Know Your Enemy: Japan* (U.S. War Department), this “treacherous backstabbing” was described as part of the *bushidō* or samurai code. In the 1980s, fears of potential Japanese economic ascendancy in the midst of the computerization of knowledge lead to a resurgence in yellow peril sentiment in the U.S., quelled by the 1985 Plaza Accord. Now such sentiment is honed on Chinese “theft,” supercomputing and telecommunications. 21<sup>st</sup>-century techno-orientalism toward post-Maoist China is contiguous with that of the 19<sup>th</sup> century that weighed a “civilizing progress” of Anglo-Saxons and Meiji Japan against the “mechanical repression” of Tsarist Russia and Qing China. Notably, the U.S., Britain and Australia have been quick to align against post-Maoist China, but Russia, Japan and the leading powers of the European Union, Germany and France, are circumspect about their own security in a post-U.S.-dominant world order and less apt to simply follow the U.S.’ new “yellow peril” discourse.

potential.<sup>271</sup>

What many analysts stress is the threat of an approaching armed conflict between the two powers due to a Thucydides' trap could be dispelled by some form of Asianism. The main hosts of the U.S. military in Asia, Japan and Korea, would have to acquiesce to any operation the U.S. military might conduct, but regional sentiment has shifted significantly against tolerating U.S. aggression in Asia in the half-century since U.S. and Chinese forces last clashed during the Vietnam War. Despite the shared practices of democracy and liberalism, Japan, Korea and perhaps India, too, might seek greater disentanglement from the U.S. in the coming decades so as to deter the threat of violence and/or foster regional stability. A "Pax Asiana" like what Sun Yat-sen and Du Bois called for a century ago appears on the horizon if the U.S.' white supremacist drive can be successfully contained.

Still, a post-white-dominant world would not imply the end of imperialism or racial capitalism, as those in the neocolonial orbits of China and Japan would attest. Certainly, the prospect of such a world does not speak to the problem of planetary degradation caused by the trans-imperial onslaught of unsustainable consumption. As I have explored throughout this project, "progress" that is configured in racial and gendered/sexual terms is cited by empires in cooperation and competition with one another. Critical praxis should aim to be queerly less appropriable by empire, and my hope and aim is that queer transpacific critique assists in that effort.

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<sup>271</sup> For U.S. anti-China propaganda on COVID-19 and the Hong Kong versus George Floyd protests, see Michael Pompeo, "On the Chinese Communist Party's Obscene Propaganda," U.S. State Department, 6 Jun 2020 [online].

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