Minor Diaspora:
Secularization and the Making of the Regional Transpacific

by

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DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

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The end of the Cold War marked the long-awaited arrival of racial and gender multiplicity in South Korea and the Philippines, two key US-allies in the Pacific. *Minor Diaspora* mediates this arrival from the vantage point of militarized zones of exception where recalcitrant and deviant differences had been sequestered across the postcolonial period. Arguing that the national laboring subject emerges as a remainder of this violent Cold War zoning practice, this project investigates the fraught politics of procuring postcolonial national temporality from the 1950s to the present. The story of postcolonial national identity formation told from these zones might instead reveal where sexual deviancy sequestered into US military camp towns of South Korea morphs into multiculturalism and where the Indigeneity spectralized during the Cold War in Southern peripheries of the Philippines today mobilizes 'culture' pit against Islamic religious difference. Analyzing government documents, speeches, interviews, and museum exhibits, this project examines the cultural politics of reviving liberal forms that extends colonial policies and Cold War sensibilities, revealing new and inventive modes of settler colonial logics mobilized to abstract the violent conditions of securing nation, labor and secular postcolonial time. *Minor Diaspora* more broadly traces the rise of the 'Asiatic' emerging into the world historical imagination, reflecting on the developments of capitalism and the threshold of the political installed through the timely circulation of discrete liberal forms. Ultimately, this project traces how the strategic implementation of racial and gender politics folds the once racially marked "Orient" towards the selective transcendence of race.

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Introduction

I begin with two tales of relics discovered two continents and more than two centuries apart, bound today by their respective quest for postcolonial redress. In January 2023, twenty-two artifacts of "what appears to be very valuable Asian art,"[1] including scrolls, pottery, and a map were discovered in the private residence of a deceased World War II veteran in Massachusetts. Reported to the FBI and eventually recovered, the relics were matched on the FBI's "National Stolen Art File" identified to be 18th and 19th Century artifacts from Okinawa, Japan taken in the aftermath of the Pacific War. In a case that had been hailed a successful joint endeavor of the "role the public plays in recognizing and reporting possible stolen art,"[2] the artifacts would pass through the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of Asian Art where, under the care of expert hands, would be unveiled, documented, then packaged and returned to its place of origin, safely greeted by the Governor of Okinawa by March of 2024. This scene of discovery to homecoming appears straightforward, certainly compared to her more notorious counterpart, the Rosetta Stone. First discovered in Egypt in 1799, the Rosetta Stone is claimed at the intersection of colonial powers—the French discovery of the object, the French and British joint endeavor in decoding the inscriptions, and the 1801 British defeat of the French in Egypt that eventually led to the artifact's current residence at the British Museum. In this sense, the Rosetta stone appears 'stuck' between the object's status as an article meant to be exchanged at the time of inscription in the 2nd century BC, thereby lacking clear ownership, and claims to the object traced through the European Enlightenment that had made the stone of apparent little value, a hieroglyph of global proportions, hence rightfully housed in The British Museum.[3]

I recall these two somewhat familiar scenes of historic preservation to note the underlying terms that appear to govern objects made worthy of exhibition. In the first instance, the scene of cultural recovery is instantiated by the inherent value of the artifact. So saturated

[1] "FBI Boston Recovers and Returns 22 Historic Artifacts to Okinawa, Japan," FBI, March 15, 2024, https://www.fbi.gov/news/stories/fbi-boston-recovers-and-returns-22-historic-artifacts-to-okinawa-japan.

[2] Statement from Jodi Cohen, the FBI special agent in charge of the investigation. How the artifact had come into the hands of a veteran remains undisclosed, though the article notes that the veteran in question had never served in the Pacific War. See "FBI Boston Recovers and Returns 22 Historic Artifacts to Okinawa, Japan."

[3] See also Michael Allan's reading of the Rosetta Stone, highlighting the hermeneutic flattening of differences made into discrete comparable forms, thereby also tracing how the object creates an interpretative community "properly trained to make sense of it," 41. See Chapter 2 of *In the Shadow of World Literature.*

with a historic aura that any layperson might be able to detect, its identification needed no expertise to surmise its inherent cultural value, laden with a certain sense of history. It is only after this ordinary moment of identification that the objects of certain Asian cultural value are reaffirmed, not unlike the Rosetta Stone, as both objects traverse through the hands of experts, legitimated by this 'rite of passage' that safeguards their status as artifacts. On the other hand, as David Abulafia, a Professor of Mediterranean History at the University of Cambridge, puts it, the Rosetta stone appears to be a seemingly worthless piece of "ancient rubbish,"[4] only able to garner historic value through the intellectual gaze placed on it.

What interests me is less the global scandal of the Rosetta Stone stirred up in the present moment but rather the comparatively unchallenged field of 'culture.' Though echoing with a difference across continents and periods, its underlying assumption appears reaffirmed in the uncontested discovery and return of Japanese artifacts. So ubiquitously understood that any layperson might identify its inherent value, its safe return 'home' appears to reinforce a certain civilizational assumption: could it be, then, that the hands that had once created the everyday piece of pottery and cartography hold greater *intrinsic* value as compared to the hands that inscribed the Rosetta Stone, a piece of rubble only redeemable through the intellectual exercises of the European gaze? Where then, is the inciting moment of "value" identification of Japanese artifacts emerging from—between ordinary rock and intrinsic art, if not merely a product of the promise of time to *cultivate or civilize* nor sanctioned wholly by the intellectual's task in legitimating their value? Rather, are these artifacts, despite being made and discovered continents and more than two centuries apart, governed by a certain aura of 'culture' or lack thereof that suffuses their contrasting value judgments, caught up in a distinctly contemporary debate of an object's value? In other words, how do objects trafficked continents and even centuries apart, allude to the similar terms of recoverability that allow for certain objects to speak beyond their status as mere stone?

I start with this comparative moment to note the persistent need to make the Rosetta Stone *mere stone* in order for a certain civilizational discourse to commence, one which is saturated by centuries-old assumptions of civility that inscribe certain objects with the 'auratic.'

[4] As David Abulafia writes, "...Nor was it [the Rosetta Stone] a treasure belonging to a wealthy court, like the Benin Bronzes. For most of its existence, it had no owners at all. The British Museum needs to hold on to this discarded piece of ancient rubbish." https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/why-the-rosetta-stone-shouldnt-be-returned-to-egypt/#

In particular, I situate in the 'Asiatic' or rather the question of 'Asian culture' as a remnant of this longstanding civilizational discourse,[5] appearing exemplar in its ability to convey the *auratic*. What about this relatively unchallenged transnational circulation and return of "Japanese art" produces the continued mutual recognition among civilizations? And what if the ascription of a certain 'cultural aura' is likewise a product of this saturated circularity, replayed across centuries that redoubles its self-assured association as the very birthplace of culture—the land of origins? Though appearing immoveable in the ways we have identified and produced an entire continent historically, linguistically, politically, anthropologically, religiously, ethnically, etc., I draw attention to its comparative status that remains squarely tethered to the same civilizational gaze that makes stones mere stones and certain artifacts 'historical,' or rather also uniquely 'Asian' or even *particularly* 'Japanese." It is this resignification of 'Asia' emerging into particularity as an exemplar region that I aim to trace, constructed through this mutual gaze of civility that sanctions its modern reconfiguration.

Minor Diaspora is concerned with the twentieth-century reconfiguration of Asia-Pacific and the etchings of historical memory that have defined its spatial and temporal designation. As I stage in the opening anecdote, the return of self-evident cultural artifacts in the present moment might best be mediated by the rise of the Japanese empire in the near past and its apparent resolve in the present moment, in and amongst the international community of the civilized. Inconceivable within this matrix of 'cultural returns' at the time of imperial power, the reconfiguration of the empire and the Pacific War waged in the name of universal freedom would soon recodify empire into the model and modern Asian nation, even as the region at large is simultaneously entrenched into the heart of the Cold War. A geographic area designated as "postcolonial from the outset,"[6] Asia's emergence into modernity, as Naoki Sakai and Hyon Joo Yoo argue, might best be articulated *not* in terms of oppression or repression but rather the post-World War II hegemony of the United States and the emerging matrix of sovereign national complicities harnessed across the region.[7] As the strategic geographic site where capitalist Asia

[5] See also Ammiel Alcalay's astute observations in *After Jews and Arabs:* "This also signals an effort to move beyond the critique of institutional Orientalism and into an examination of how cultures produce *themselves* within the conditions in which they happen to exist and evolve," 33.

[6] Sakai and Yoo, *Trans-Pacific Imagination, 6.*

[7] Sakai and Yoo, 12.

had selectively been aligned into the present post-Cold War world order, Asia, in particular, its allied nations, offers a unique site to mediate the resignification of the region reshaped through the dynamics of the twentieth-century 'hot exception' of the Cold War. In other words, Asia as we know it remains haunted by a seemingly essential *modern* difference produced through these alliances and consolidated during this temporal zone of exception, one that would emerge into a sense of an identifiable particularity by the end of the Cold War.

In the case of the Philippines, a national difference appears to coalesce into identifiable formation by the 90s, as Martin Joseph Ponce rethinks the timely discourse, cultural products, and the partial visibility afforded to Filipino Studies. Instead of taking as given the unmarked nation on which further progress is made possible, Ponce instead points to the layers of strategic historic amnesia internalized to "maintain American innocent self-conception." Made possible by casting the 1898 Spanish-American war as that 'splendid little war,'[8] likewise framing the US as the savior freeing the nation from Japanese Imperialism, the emergence of US exceptional involvement in the region and its joint venture with the rise of the sovereign postcolonial nation undergird the foundations for the proliferation of nation-based artifacts produced, installed and transnationally mobilized since the 90s. [9] Similarly, though to an extent more poignantly realized in the South Korean case, by the 1990s, the sudden eruption of South Korea squarely within modernity has brought forth the question of the grounds of South Korea's modernization that has risen in tandem with its continued alliance with US militarism in the Pacific (see chapter 2 for a longer discussion). Similar to the strategic amnesia enacted in the Philippines installed through the rehearsal of the World War II allied victories, the silent but stunning arrival of South Korea into modernity often elides not just the "forgotten" Korean War, arguably one of the most violent conflicts that instantiated the Cold War, but the Cold War itself that has been the crucial backdrop in which the nation's monumental ascent had been made possible.

This project remains tethered to these two US-allied sites of investigation to consider *not just* the post-World War II hegemony of complicities that has made Japan the center of Asian modernity under US tutelage, as Sakai and Yoo argue, but also the implementation of this

[8] Ponce, 8.

[9] As Ponce writes, "In the most basic terms, Filipino migration to the United States was and is a direct consequence of U.S. colonialism and neocolonialism: 'Filipinos went to the United States because Americans went first to the Philippines,'" 8. See also the lowland 'indio' and the development of capitalist relations within the diaspora in Adrian De Leon's *Bundok.*

modern telos harnessed into albeit partial success in South Korea and the Philippines. As an early site of US colonialism and the under-examined beginnings of US Cold War bloc-building, the Philippines and South Korea respectively offers a unique vantage point to mediate how the US empire has silently remapped the modern Pacific stage through its allied matrix of postcolonial complicities. Too often overlooked amid the crisis of historical violence and its resolve written within discrete postcolonial national history, I extend what Victor Bascara notes as the disappearance of US empire by "branding imperialism as a European problem that American culture... has solved."[10] Like Bascara, I dwell on the politics of procuring culture—now postcolonial national culture—as part of this rebranding. Obtained through the politics of the Cold War, ultimately, I ask, how might a closer evaluation of the cultural politics revived in the Philippines and South Korea mediate this repositioning of US empire amid both Cold War block building and nation-building? How might the unmarked terms of procuring self-evident civil liberal democratic national cultures mediate the limits and erasures enacted by these emergent structures, alliances and complicities?

On the one hand, *Minor Diaspora* emerges from the need to better understand the temporal lacuna of the Cold War and the role of US alliances that had served as the conditions for the production of a certain Asian national difference emerging by the 90s. On the other, this project wrestles with the immediacy of violence that plagues the present moment as we increasingly witness the post-Cold War world order overtly taking up right-wing fascist policies that have ironically gone hand in hand with the rapid rise and adoption of new liberal democratic principles under the guise of multiculturalism, humanitarian intervention, and notions of freedom and rights. As David Lloyd astutely puts into global scale, the "racially driven anti-immigrant sentiment" that targets black and brown people in the United States and the "indigenous peoples across white settler colonies, from Canada to Israel to Australia," have become increasingly difficult to dissociate with the "dispensation" of various universal democratic values utilized by "apartheid Israel" and "Fortress Europe."[11] Plunged into a state of global exile in the post-Cold War era, those fleeing from the "wars on terror" waged by the renewed allied nations precisely in the name of democracy appear undergirded by the rhetoric of a now global postracial outlook

[10] Bascara, Victor, *Model Minority Imperialism*, xiii.

[11] Lloyd, David. *Under Representation, 1.*

where multicultural reform has become "alibis of the West's racial ordering,"[12] naturalizing the dividing line between the just inheritors of neoliberal capitalism, those sanctioned into death and disposability, and those justly eradicated through renewed western-allied militarism.

To outline these new configurations of power and violence that have ironically proliferated precisely in the name of the universal human subject, as Lloyd summarizes, demands not just the contention with the immediacy of violence, particularly with the new subject of racial and religious disdain —the terrorist—but requires a closer evaluation of its shifting modalities, sanctioned through our understanding of violence and reform. In other words, the reversals of apparent violence rehearsed by the postcolonial nation today must necessarily contend with the primacy of *history* that appears readily able and willing to capture and project this post-racial future as a new global norm.

At large, *Minor Diaspora* contends with the exceptions of regional Asia during the Cold War as it sutures and becomes part and parcel of this emergent post-Cold War world order. In particular, I am concerned with the post-racial discourse adopted by US-allied Asian states such as South Korea and the Philippines that systematically emerges by the 90s. At first glance, the institutionalization of liberal politics appears to enact the progressive future promised under proper US-led liberal democratic tutelage. Yet, as I seek to complicate, set against the backdrop of the shifting global rule of war, the adoption of neoliberal multiculturalism within these allied states offers not just a site that mediates the global circuitry of this emerging world order, but more significantly empire's strategic abstractions as the notion of the universal subject traverses within the shifted but steady grammar of violence. In other words, not unlike the neutral return of cultural artifacts to Japan that trafficks a certain understanding of an unmarked 'auratic' culture, I ask, how might the return of 'race' (and to a degree, other markers of liberal sociological value such as gender, class, sexuality and also religion) to the exemplary racial other mediate the narrowing of an international community of neoliberal subjects of proper civil governance? Who or what is cast outside the dividing line set by a now global postracial order?

On the one hand, the staging of multiculturalism in allied nations appears to reenact the same Cold War alliances by pointing to the lack thereof in non-allied nations, as a telos of progressive modernity that likewise assumes and installs a certain US-led progressive future

[12] Lloyd, 2.

across the region (see chapter 1). Yet, beyond pointing out how the recuperation of progressive figures rearticulates Cold War binaries, I am interested in sites often unnoticed due to their apparent 'proper' installation internal to the exemplary US-allied nation. Hence, contrary to posing liberal politics within Asia as the long-awaited decolonial horizon yet to arrive, I instead consider how their successful installation appears to enact the very intended effects of US Cold War intervention in Asia. In other words, how does the proper installation of the postracial order differentiate between the docile laboring subject and those locked out of and made criminal or recalcitrant under these emergent rubrics of the proper neoliberal subjectivity?

Minor Diaspora focuses on three key figures who might herald the long-awaited arrival of progressive politics across the region—the comfort woman, the multicultural woman by marriage in South Korea, and the Indigenous peoples in the Philippines—each arriving into public discourse by the 90s. Questioning their timely restitution in key sequestered sites within their respective nations, I argue that the public emergence of these figures conveniently sidelines the contradictions and violent conditions of nation-building, rendered invisible to make possible the emergence of these figures and at large the unmarked US-allied nation. The story of postcolonial national identity formation told from these zones of exceptions might instead reveal where sexual deviancy sequestered into US military camp towns of South Korea morphs into multiculturalism and where the Indigeneity spectralized during the Cold War in Southern peripheries of the Philippines today mobilizes 'culture' pit against Islamic religious difference. Ultimately, I read this moment of cultural recuperation in the 90s *less* as an arrival of a celebratory post-Cold War moment, but rather as a site of timely displacements, where the violent contradictions of Cold War bloc-building and nation-building are resolved as liberal forms of race and gender are propelled onto the world historical stage.

This project also moves between two axes of historical inquiry. The first axis traces the discursive context in which these central figures emerge, noting figures of racial and religious disdain hidden beneath the legibility of these public figures—the Afro-Asian and regional migrant sex workers in military camp towns of South Korea and the Muslim-Indigenous land-based claims in the Southern peripheries of the Philippines that remains contentiously 'stuck' amid political turmoil. Existing historicist accounts of these racialized figures, at best, pity them, and, at worst, have made them into the enemy within, foregoing or making anecdotal their very excluded grounds and selective inclusion that have made possible the nation-building enterprise.

My effort here is to remedy this condition by mediating how these central figures of disdain or recalcitrance have been key sites of national discipline across the postcolonial national history, sanctioned into historical amnesia with the rise of their respectable public postracial counterparts by the end of the Cold War. In other words, I trace how their contingent exclusions and selective inclusion have aided in the writing of a coherent national history itself. Partaking in the task of naturalizing such a thing as the exemplary right-bearing national citizen, as I ultimately argue, the figures of recalcitrance hidden beneath the legibility of liberal subjects might mediate the violent task of procuring normative national laboring subjects, one that I argue, emerge as a *remainder* of this violent Cold War zoning practice.

The second axis of this project contends with the parameters of historicity, particularly attending to the lacuna of the Cold War *produced* through the unmarked terms of modern violence. Citing the central locus of concern to the prototypical political violence mapped within the Euro-American context—the Holocaust—I follow emerging critical race scholarship that note the receding signification of the biopolitical, *then* racial, *then* the economic, each constructed in the image of the exemplary and modern political violence historically reconstructed in the aftermath of the Shoah. Henceforth consolidated into the exemplary US multicultural that has become the model to be replicated on the global scale, contrary to the purported effects of installing a more liberated future, their timely emergence in Asia, as I have alluded to, appears to be staged as the incomplete project "freedom" or the incomplete task of aligning the region into the new world order as universal subjects of proper multiplicity are staged as 'yet to be harnessed' in regional Asia. Instead, I ask, who is excluded as sociological particularities are remapped onto the region? What forms of life are emptied of signification or relegated to premodernity to make neutral certain liberal subjects of modern sociological particularity? Attentive to the *excesses* produced through the writing of national postcolonial history within the terms of modern violence and history mapped within the Euro-American contexts, I trace the *negations* of history effectively put to use in Cold War Asia. In other words, I ask, how has the apparent *irrelevance* of racial blackness in East Asia, or Islam in peripheries of Southeast Asia been productively used to harness and abstract new modes of subjection within the exemplary US-allied nation? In doing so, this project seeks to unsettle the assumptions of history made discrete into continental and periodized truths that have productively been

mobilized to negate, make anecdotal, and thereby internalize and criminalize the other within the temporal and spatial exceptions of Cold War Asia.

Ultimately, this project seeks to mediate Asia's hardening regional borders, now properly staged as the incomplete project of 'freedom' as the region is remapped within terms laid out by the post-Cold War rule of war that embarks on a global scale. As the Pacific's *regional* exception during the Cold War is sutured within the neutrality of a post-Cold War US internationalism, I return to mining the temporal and spatial exceptions of the Cold War in hopes that such a study might temper the present site of fearmongering (re)emerging from its historically-laden constructs as the transregional threat—the Middle East and Islam.

The Homogenous Empty Time of the Region

Minor Diaspora observes the form and function of the area we have designated as the 'region,' in particular, the self-evident region called 'Asia.' Between the world of 'local nations' in which the 'global' might appear constituted is this curious formation, masquerading an invisible container of sorts. Its universality as an unmarked form is visibly etched in textbooks in which the disciplines of "history," "religion," or "politics,' for instance, are often located in their varied "regional" and *then* "local" articulations. Students who enroll in certain disciplinary 'majors' across university campuses might first look up the 'regional' index of "Asia," eventually landing on a specific topic such as "South Korean feminism." The 'regional' in each of these instances is a gateway into local particularity, one that appears to ease the transit of universal disciplines always ready to be located in their corresponding local particularity.

Yet, this familiar formation of the 'region' often belies a critical assumption that secures its universality; had it not been for the fecund site of 'local' differences, uncontainable as their global counterparts might not be easy to locate, the framework of the 'region' might not have been necessary to invent. This ripe ground of the regional is often characterized as 'syncretic,' particularly in the non-West, appearing as an admixture of a tradition yet to fully modernize that might strike both local and foreign audiences of certain possibilities, multiple modernities, and generally the fertile grounds to imagine alternatives to the uniform and often deadly future promised to be mapped by modernity and their attending disciplinary modalities.[13] At times also

[13] See, for instance, Dipesh Chakrabarty's famous articulation of this argument in the Indian context in *Provincializing Europe*, alongside Harry Harootunian's exploration of Japanese modernization through the visible

uncomfortably resonant with the philological task of cataloging language groups developed through so-called 'small-scale exchanges' of yesteryears, the idea of the 'region' appears entrenched in colonial Enlightenment thinking encoded into its more neutral secular and modern formulation. Troublingly, as we see in the case of the Rosetta Stone, this fecundity of the region's syncretism hovers between its apparent lack of modernity or is evoked to provide an antidote to its woes, securing, in both instances, its tethered state as the quintessential object to be gazed at, perhaps even enlightened. Not yet capable of 'carving stone' in any meaningful capacity, destined as an object only to be *read* into history, the Rosetta Stone's past life *merely* traded in and amongst what is safely understood premodern regional exchanges appear *yet* to rise to modern particularity of *proper* global exchanges until its discovery and passage through the hands of the intellectual.

I begin with this rather broad scope of the region's geographical and analytical contours to articulate the emergence of the particular, and the particularly exemplar reformation we call 'Asia,' rising from its prior designation as the 'Orient,' a broad region often associated with the geographic area spanning from North Africa to the Pacific East. As a site believed to originate culture itself, yet can never fully imaginatively triumph over the creativity of European Enlightenment, it nevertheless became the privileged space that allowed Europe to systematically write itself into secular modernity. The unburdening of the West's imagined degeneration often looked East, for instance, into modern Chinese history, one that as Rey Chow reminds us, is riddled with the imagination of the Orient as a means for the West to "work out" its self-imagination:

> First, post-structuralism's dismantling of the sign, which grew out of a criticism of phonetic logocentrism from within the Western tradition and which was to activate interest in "text" and "discourse" across humanistic studies, began in an era when Western intellectuals, in particular those in France (Jacque Derrida, Julia Kristeva, Philippe Sollers, Roland Bathes, Louis Althusser, to name a few) "turned East" to China for philosophical and political alternatives. Chinese "writing" has been a source of fascination for European philosophers and philologists since the eighteenth century because its ideographic script seems (at least to those who do not actually use it as

unevenness of its development in the cultural domain that alludes to the sense of multiple, coeval or alternative modernities.

> language) a testimony of a *different* kind of language—a language without the mediation of sound and hence *without history*.[14]

If "phonetics" secures the mediation of China as having a wholly different system, akin to having 'no history' or rather often characterized as 'exotic' rather than purely 'irrational,' Chow's characterization of the Chinese language in the European imagination returns us to the terms of the secular enlightenment thinking that had differentially imagined *difference*. Exotic rather than irrational, perhaps secular rather than heathenic, the unburdening of Europe's neutral self-understanding shifts from the fifteenth century to the nineteenth as Sylvia Wynter outlines.[15] First having made heathens and *then* irrational others out of "Indians" and "Negroes" in its Christian, *then* biologized scientific measures of race, the 'Orient,' in contrast, appears exemplar within this deadly differential continental gaze. Having escaped the patronizing gaze of the shifting European self-understanding of irrational heathens across the centuries, Asia instead appears to maintain its exemplar status as a figure of *difference-as-alternative, difference-par excellence,* perhaps even *difference as threat* to Europe's Enlightenment, but not wholly irrational.

As Tomoko Masuzawa historicizes, 'Asia' by the nineteenth century became the privileged space where the anxieties of the once-universal Christian Europe unburdened itself. Inventing 'religions' as discrete and varied formations of a now secular Europe's religious past, Europe's identification of the "Orient" as the "land of origins" appeared timely as the space that made possible Europe's slow dissociation with its Christian root, instead tracing its origins to a "Hellenic pedigree of the European heritage"[16] or the Indo-European or Aryan roots in the discovery of Buddhism as a 'great' world religion. In contrast to the non-distinct figures of heathenism and irrationality of the "Indians" and "Negroes," the discovery of Buddhism in the nineteenth century emerged from under the "blanket rubric of paganism/heathenism/ idolatry,"

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[14] Chow, 18, my italics. As Chow examines, the figure of the modern native intellectual is chastised for either taking up modern disciplinary tools in the recodification of 'Asia' into universal secular modernity, or worse yet, appearing ignorant of the transformation wrought on by modernity in being a traditionalist. The modern 'native' intellectual in their dealings with the longstanding tradition of Enlightenment thinking, appears confined, both emerging as a vessel for the possibilities of 'Enlightenment' as she also remains the object that testifies to the Orientalists' lost dreams. See "Introduction: Leading Questions" in *Writing Diaspora.*

[15] Wynter, Sylvia, "Unsettling the Coloniality of Being/Power/Truth/Freedom."

[16] "Introduction," Masuzawa *Invention of World Religions"*

for the first time as singular religion identifiable across the region—from "China, Tatary, Japan, India,"[17] akin to a venerable or ancient philosophy more so than its complete dismissal as the pagan other.[18] In other words, as Christian Europe began to secularize its self-imagination by reconfiguring the "heathens" of Christianity's past into the "irrational" biologized racial others, 'religion' for the first time also emerged as a discrete scientific formation, making possible the neutral transformation of secular Europe from its once unmarked 'religious' self-imagination into the unmarked exemplary 'race.'[19]

I lay out these broad-scale and contemporaneous developments of the four continents to remain with this exceptional "Orient," caught up in the emerging terms of the secular modern that had rebirthed Europe at the center of rationality through the burgeoning science of race and religion. Categorically making Christianity alongside 'other religions' into discrete formations of Europe's and now the world's *past*, I follow Masuzawa in tracing this nineteenth-century legacy of the "Orient," emerging as the privileged 'race' that made possible Europe's unmarked secular modern self-conception. Once more complicated by the impending identification of colonial enslavement as figures of a discrete past by the twentieth century, emerging themselves as identifiable formations of racial liberalism and postcolonial nationalism, this dissertation, at large, seeks to trace the compounding effects of the region's 'history-as-such' molded by the unmarked assumption of religion and colonial-enslavement as *discrete forms of a certain past.*

This is *not* to claim that Edward Said's *Orientalism* and the otherness of 'Asia' at the hands of the West is now defunct. On the contrary, I trace 'Asia' captured within the shifting and mutually reinforcing gaze of the secular modern in which the 'Orient' had been a key component in Europe's secular makeup, even as 'Asia' today vies *within* these secular same terms that

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[17] Masuzawa, 122-3.

[18] As Masuzawa writes, "More generally, prior to the nineteenth century, European literati had been in the habit of harboring highly laudatory, unrealistically exalted, images of venerable Oriental societies. This was particularly evident with respect to their views on the ancient Egyptian and Chinese dynasties. These regimes were typically fantasized and praised, especially by the Freemasons and other exponents of the so-called Radical Enlightenment, as epitomizing the equanimity and stability of the civilization governed by Reason... The image of the rational empire of the East was simply a very useful tool for sharply criticizing and denigrating, by means of contrast, what the proponents of the Enlightenment perceived as grievously benighted, hidebound institutions within their own society, in particular, the Catholic Church," 311.

[19] In this process, as Masuzawa outlines, the 'Semitic' made further distant from Europe's 'Hellenic' origins, "facilitated a new expression of Europe's age-old animosity toward the Islamic powers, insofar as this science categorized Jews and Arabs as being "of the same stock..." Masuzawa, 26.

differentially offer legibility and thereby place in the world. The remainder of this process encapsulated as the 'region' today, as I argue, echoes as the unmarked site of cultural prowess, one that cannot dissociate itself from the ways 1) *culture* had been identified in Asia to reinforce the *non*-religious origins of the emerging exemplary European secular modernity. 2) Similarly, as the privileged site of *difference,* not *irrationality* that may have secured its evasion of colonial enslavement, 'Asia's' emergence as the 'far eastern' continent likewise echoes as the exemplar 'race.' It is the effects of these *negations* embedded in the unmarked formation of 'Asia' that I seek to trace—to *generally* be associated as the quintessential place of culture, thereby less associated with *religion*, often claiming its *ethnic* cultural prowess for having evaded colonial enslavement, thereby maintaining its untainted, un-westernized and uniquely 'Asian' cultural formation (see chapters 2 and 3).

The twentieth-century historical stage is mired within these terms that have brought to focus the much-anticipated study of the abolition of racial slavery, the postcolonial rise of the secular modern nation, the World Wars, and the Holocaust, etc. The legacy of this period perplexes intellectuals, characterized as both viciously 'violent' yet also 'modern,' a period that has yielded the hopes of this violence differentially 'resolved' into the minority question. As I explore across this dissertation and rearticulate in the conclusion, the question of the 'minority' as Saba Mahmood reminds us, "has always been entangled with the struggle for national sovereignty, and never autonomous of the concepts, practices, and policies that Western power promoted." [20] Hence, the minority question should be complicated beyond self-evident sites of protest to emergent global forms of power, but rather must attend to their differential trajectories of their articulation within the "West" and in the "non-West" and the forms of life they both allow and disavow.[21] In other words, their implementation and their promises of liberation requires thorough mediation, especially when staged within the longstanding Western imperial tradition that had often constructed itself as the 'empire for good'—as the unfinished task of revolutionary freedom. Today naturalized within the unmarked nation as the normative container

[20] Mahmood, "In the minds of anticolonial nationalists at the time, the term *minority* was an exemplary device of the divide-and-rule policy that the British had pursued in the colonies. The British allocation of special seats to Christians, Jews, and Bedouins in the Legislative Assembly of 1913 was seen as evidence of this," 69.

[21] As Saba Mahmood and Talal Asad remind us, "the issue is not the Western or non-Western origins of these concepts but 'the forms of life that articulate them, the powers they release or disable.'" [21] Talal Asad quoted by Saba Mahmood in *Religious Difference in a Secular Age*, 10

for secular modern governance, one that Benedict Anderson most famously historicizes as stemming from European secularizing history made globally modular, the state emerges as the rightful mediator to the now sociologically identifiable formations of race and religion. Yet, in this process of hopeful modern and formal identification by the state, is not just the terms of their modernity modulated by the exemplary examples of Euro-America and the legal transnational regime that sustains it, but also the radical transformation of the ways of life and claims made within the terms laid out by the modern state.

I route my critique of the interplay between the postracial and the postcolonial, the Euro-American example and their inadequate global application with Talal Asad's reading of the civil rights movement in the United States and the concomitant regime of global human rights that has placed nations and minorities on the common regulatory table on which Ferreira da Silva's 'subjects of transparency' are reconsolidated as the ideal types. Mediated today by the postwar reconstruction of 'minority rights' legalized to attempt to solve the apparent political violence staged on the world-historical Euro-American consciousness, Asad offers a telling reading of the inadequacies of 'minority rights' as the universal solution.

Placing the US civil rights movement within the genealogy of prior wars and revolutions, Asad writes, "After all, the English Bill of Rights of 1699 came out of the seventeenth-century civil war, the War of Independence produced the American Bill of Rights, the French Revolution gave birth to the Rights of Man and the Citizen, and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 was a response to the destructive horrors of World War II."[22] Indicating their specific Euro-American location from which universal human rights are imagined as emancipatory, perhaps and especially including Hannah Arendt's conception of *the human* emerging from the aftermath of Europe's Holocaust, Asad's retelling of the story of 'human rights' highlights the tragic inadequacies of its universality when applied to the simultaneous fight for civil rights in the United States, i.e. a *domestic* or rather domesticated, but not a universal contestation. Citing Malcolm X's creative use of the notion in the 1960s, Asad quotes Malcolm X:

> We need to expand the civil-rights struggle to a higher level—to the level of human rights. Whenever you are in a civil-rights struggle, whether you know it or not, you are confining yourself to the jurisdiction of Uncle Sam... You may wonder...why all the

[22] Talal Asad, *Formations of the Secular,* 142-143.

> atrocities that have been committed in Africa and in Hungary and in Latin America are brought before the UN, and the Negro problem is never brought before the UN. This is part of the conspiracy. This old, tricky, blue-eyed liberal who is supposed to be your and my friend, supposed to be acting in the capacity of an adviser, never tells you anything about human rights. They keep you wrapped up in civil rights...When you expand the civil-rights struggle to the level of human rights, you can then take the case of the black man in this country before the nations in the UN. You can take it before the General Assembly.[23]

As Asad reads, by invoking "human rights" and not civil rights, Malcolm X "identifies America as the violator," making Uncle Sam guilty of the very crimes it has long played judge and jury for by pointing its fingers towards other nations. Identifying this moment as nothing short of revolutionary in that it follows the insurrectionary trend of the revolutionary history that instantiated the United States itself, Malcolm X appears keenly aware that "war is necessary...reaffirm[ing] the connection of rights discourse with war and revolution."[24]

Yet, Asad notes Malcolm X's fatal oversight in his claim to revolution. That is, even and despite the Arendtian notion of the universal subject guarded by natural law—the sacred man in the "state of nature" or innately "created in the image of God"—this universal "human" of the human rights must concretely be drawn up within the scope of the abstract but sovereign nation-state as Arendt herself recognizes; Malcolm X appeared to underestimate the "power of the state in which he and other African Americans lived and turned to a collection of states that had neither the power nor the authority to intervene."[25] In contrast, Martin Luther King, in forsaking the secular language of human rights, usefully gathered the "prophetic" language of the Judeo-Christian heritage of the founding fathers. Taming the movement's own revolutionary possibilities by appealing to the *Revolutionary* salvationist project of the nation's *"*origins and redemption" through a distinctly nonviolent practice, a King-led civil rights movement "became [about] the moral restoration of the white majority"[26]—of a demand to "redeem" the universal

[23] Malcolm X cited by Asad, 140-141.

[24] Asad, 142.

[25] Asad, 144.

[26] Asad, 146. Asad's readings provide a much deeper understanding of the secular language of human rights, the Judeo-Christian heritage of revolution that I am able to evoke here, one that I recount for my own uses beyond Asad's argument.

subject. The tragic failure to take Uncle Sam to court would once again unmark the universal human within the Christian heritage of the white man that would bind the black man to his domestic sphere of particularity—i.e., race—delimited to the sanctity of the nation-state.

This dual interiority would prove lethal as the United States, having domesticated the problem of 'race,' mobilizes it towards the nation's now exemplary redemptive project globally—towards what Asad might call the quintessential secular project[27] of enforcing the universality of the abstract human as that appears to require no "legal obstacles."[28] Procuring such "freedoms" abroad through the circulation of 'human rights,' including and especially the notion of "minority rights" and "religious freedom" as a set of legal doctrines able to bypass even the sanctity of the international nation-states[29] as universal moral and ideological principles, the now model figure of American *domestic civility* of 'racial' particularity appears to secure the proper direction of universal abstract 'nation' in the making. The fatal remainder of this domesticating impulse of 'race' that inaugurates the framework of the 'global multicultural' is what I attend to as I trace their productive yet often ruinous effects in remapping Cold War militarized Asia towards the universal world historical trajectory.

Now made into discrete 'artifacts,' transferable across the global circuitry of universal disciplines and local particularities, 'race,' like the return of cultural artifacts 'home,' as I invoke in my opening anecdote, though seemingly unchanged except for the passage of time, is irreversibly altered at the moment the exemplar 'racial other' receives it. No longer merely an object to be gazed at, the once oriental other rises onto the historical stage, capable of making objects speak on their own behalf. This project holds onto the strangeness of these returns,

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[27] "The American secular language of redemption, for all its particularity, now works as a force in the field of foreign relations to globalize human rights. For that language does, after all, draw on the idea of "freedom" and "America" are virtually interchangeable—that American political culture is (as the Bible says of the Chosen People) "a light unto the nations." Hence, "democracy," "human rights," and "being free" are integral to the universal moral project of the American nation-state—the project of humanizing the world—and an important part of the way very many Americans see themselves in contrast to their "evil" opponents," 147.

[28] Asad, 147.

[29] "The latter project of secular redemption explains, for example, Congress's passing and the president's signing the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998. ... The right of freedom of religion undergirds the very origin and existence of the United States... The act then lays down the policy of the United States in this regard, requiring the president of the United States to enforce religious freedom globally by using economic sanctions wherever necessary, setting up new office in the State Department to report annually on religious persecution in all foreign countries (that is, excluding the United States), and prescribing training in "religious freedom" for members of the U.S. Foreign Service, and so on." Asad, 147.

particularly of various sociological categories—race, religion, gender, class, etc.—across this transpacific highway, particularly embedded in the Cold War and post-Cold War world order.

This peculiar underlying process that animates these global exchanges might go by the name of liberalism, neoliberal capitalism, orientalism, the secular modern, among others. Though not often the preferred term used when studying Asia, of these, I seek to privilege the secular modern, one that I choose, not just by sheer necessity of circumscribing scope but also due to the intellectual tradition coalesced around the term.[30] Yet, as we will soon see, the question at hand is as much about attending to the inadequacies of the liberal form we have attached to processes of abjection that might always already be one step ahead of the names, forms, periods, and regions we designate as hopeful remedies.

Methodology and Arc of the Project

The following chapters of this project investigate the terms of historical memory, and the epistemological constructs of the region framed as the site *yet to be mapped* onto modernity and civility. Negotiated not outside but intimately *within* the terms of 'universal' human rights, minority and religious rights made into legal and reproducible forms since the postwar era, I situate figures whose signification appears 'stuck' within the regional imagination, never fully transnational, global, nor fully 'transparent' as the universal subject, yet pose themselves as subjects that direct the nations of the region in the proper direction. As such, this dissertation examines the timely recovery of three key regional figures such as the comfort woman as the emblem of US-led regional futurity (chapter one), multiculturalism recovered in militarized zones of exception in South Korea (chapter two), as well as the contention toward Indigenous recognitions strategically framed in Muslim Mindanao in the Southern peripheries of the Philippines (chapter four), each emerging and suturing the US-allied Asian nation toward the neutrality of the post-Cold War global world order.

Over the course of this project, I not only highlight violence further interiorized precisely when postracial politics are implemented but also highlight the multiple registers of the 'secular' embedded in their recovery within US-allied South Korea and the Philippines. Secularism, as this project foregrounds, centers not just on the political doctrine of state neutrality, produced

[30] Here, I am specifically thinking of *Powers of the Secular Modern: Talal Asad and His Interlocutors,* among others who contend with the term.

and circulated through a series of legal claims to "human rights" or "minority rights," as I have earlier alluded to. As the role of the modern secular state emerges as the guarantor of various social differences, I also draw attention to the limits of this political doctrine that aspires within widely accepted notions of freedom and the concept of the sovereign individual that has fundamentally reconstituted the various practices, beliefs, and *sensibilities* in which both state actors and minorities lay claim to differences. Like Asad, my interest moves between this normative and secular modality of national governance in which the state acts as a mediator, and the question 'the secular' as a certain kind of sensibility of the 'human' as such that is "conceptually prior to the political doctrine of 'secularism."[31] Instead, as Asad might characterize the secular "best pursued through its shadows,"[32] this project seeks to mediate the cultivation of the subject of proper secular governance, too often left to the wayside in liberalism's long-awaited arrival within Asia. Beyond the scope of a set of legal doctrines, my interest in historicizing this timely moment of racial and gender recuperation is to explore the secular sensibilities embedded in the recuperation of the 'minority,' one that is entrenched in (re)constructing the neutrality of national cultures. As such, this dissertation foregrounds 'gender,' 'race,' and 'religion' not as self-evident sociological categories patiently awaiting recovery, but as central figures mobilized to naturalize Asia towards modern revolutionary trajectories of secularization,[33] made to rearticulate the assumptions of the subjects of proper multiplicity and proper governance.

Chapter 1 traces representative figures such as the Chinese-born American artist Hung Liu within US borders as her evocation of the comfort woman issue appears to naturalize a certain transhistorical register of Asian culture. Instead, I question the strategic distancing of politics, particularly Cold War politics, from culture signaled in Liu's transpacific move, exhibition, and

[31] Asad, 16

[32] See Talal Asad, Saba Mahmood, Kabir Tambar, and Michael Allan's works derived from the context of Egypt, India, and Turkey, among others. Each note that the underlying aspiration towards the secular is embedded in all nations, whether or not they are overtly 'religious' in state formation or in nations in which the majority of the population is "religious."

[33] 'Secularization' denotes the naturalized telos towards the modern in which religion is said to soon disappear, a dominant category that as Jose Casanova notes "serves to structure and delimit, legally, philosophically, scientifically, and politically, the nature and boundaries of 'religion.'" Casanova, "The Secular and Secularism," 1063.

reception within the US. Highlighting feminism and its recourse to modernity, I investigate the liminality of the comfort woman situated on either side of the premodern-modern divide. Is she a figure of the *premodern* past that has successfully been left behind with the instatement of modern feminist discourse in Japan, as evoked by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's contentious statement regarding the comfort woman? Or, as South Korean national historiography writes, is she a figure of *modern* violence that makes legible communal violence of a nation that otherwise would dissolve into the temporal and spatial folds of 'premodern cultural hybridity' subsumed under the weight of the cultural and modern histories of China and Japan? As I argue, both nations appear to stage the comfort woman to allow for the joint emergence of modern Japan and South Korea under US liberal democratic tutelage, a condition that entombs her a perpetual specter of modern liberal democratic regionalism 'yet to arrive.'

Chapter 2 questions the emergent interest in the comfort woman issue in South Korea that coincides with the Minjung democratic class-based movement. I do so to explore the underexamined racialized and sexualized conditions of the nation's modern prowess—a distinctly liberal democratic class-based and feminist one—emerging by the 90s. If national liberal democratic history is claimed by the 'true' laboring subject of political revolution, this chapter argues that US military camp towns functioned as key site of discipline, sequestering those who could not conform to the emerging family and factory-based conditions of national modernization into camptown prostitution. I trace the transpacific diasporic trajectories of the camp town sex worker into the United States, simultaneously as the 'Afro-Asian sex worker' and the 'regional ethnic camp town sex worker' are sequestered within. Such a receding signification from national class-based struggle to the gendered and then the racialized, as I argue, bespeaks the terms of historical memory itself that appear persistently unable to account for a nation's racialized and sexualized conditions of possibility. As I argue, such contradictions of the nation's *'racial economic'* conditions of possibility must first be 'resolved' *internally* before the *political* emblem of the comfort woman can be made synonymous with the now mono-racial South Korean national imagination. In focusing on the camp town as one key site of discipline across South Korean history, I trace the genealogy of the comfort woman interiorized and sequestered to mediate the terms of national historiography that articulate across the ideological border of propriety and respectability, dividing those whose claim to the South Korean tradition is a birthright or must be labored for.

As I theorize and place these national case studies within existing literature, chapter 3 contends with historicity's demand for an 'event' based on the quintessential site of modern violence—the Shoah. Often cited for its comparative potentials, yet also criticized as a site of relativizing, I trace the possible limits to these comparative potentials traced across Asian and Asian American studies, gathering insights through recent Black studies. Questioning the bifurcation of 'violence' understood as essentially 'racial' or 'regional' in nature (or the established division between the Japanese American and the comfort woman), this chapter ultimately argues that historicity's demand for an event constructs the 'region' as the only legible container that reaches the threshold of modern violence. History's attending Euro-American solutions appear to become their own thresholds of difference and resolve, constructing the 'regional' as an ideological landscape of a liberalism yet to arrive.

Chapter 4 similarly reflects on the terms of historical memory in the Philippines when Indigeneity is recuperated as a sign of an ontological national cultural past. I frame indigeneity's revival amid communist uprisings during the Cold War as their official recognition by 1997 with the passing of the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act (IPRA) would soon strategically pit cultural and religious difference (or the Indigenous and Muslims) in the Southern peripheries of the nation. Addressing the terms of modern secular governance that determine how racial and religious minorities differentially make claims to land, nation, and decolonial futurity, I question the dematerialized terms of 'religion' relegated into the space of private belief that makes possible the slow encroachment of Christian settlements, and the sequestering of recalcitrant difference in Muslim Mindanao across postcolonial Philippine history.

To move between these vectors of the secular as political doctrine of neutrality and the sensibility of the transparent human is likewise to be cognizant of what Masuzawa traces as the discreteness of religion emerging in the nineteenth-century secularizing European imagination, even as critical race scholars often note the inadequacies of the liberal ethnic form in attending to a shifted yet underlying abjection still in effect. In other words, to view both 'race' and 'religion' as self-evident sociological categories of liberation belies the kinds of subjects we are asked to be and the terms of governance that dictate how and what we can contest under the terms of "race" or "religion" as we have come to know it.

In the global decolonial struggle that often cites its relevance in the New World historical context, particularly in the context of the United States, my observations of their oft assumed

'delayed' application in the 'Old World' appeared less about the story of 'finally arriving' as I was accustomed to reading, but rather the story of the internalized divisions created to stage the postcolonial nation as having finally arrived. In the legal, cultural, and epistemological constructs of 'race' and 'religion' mapped onto Old World nations, I instead highlight the receding citations to legible universal 'resistance,' often withdrawing out of purview of 'relevance' into self-evident recalcitrance, disdain or even unmediated violent acts of 'terror.' I offer this dissertation project as an attempt to hold onto the strangeness of the ethnic terms of the decolonial, presumed to exist across the postcolonial and global imagination. Instead, I question how the naturalized circulation of 'race' and 'religion' as liberal forms compound conditions of abjection, where the apparent lack of a citable decolonial history mediates the productive force of history itself that has made certain forms of abjection and resistance illegible, thereby consigning them to various death processes.

I do so *not* to place myself outside these deadly processes of 'secular history-making,'[34] or the remapping of the ethnic decolonial in Asia. On the contrary, this research topic began from a series of observations of various receding or disappearing positions internal to 'regional Asia' so to speak (i.e., the Afro-Asian sex worker, the illegibility of Islamic religious difference within the neutral cultural terms of the nation, etc.). As the daughter to South Korean Protestant missionaries to the Philippines, I see myself within a set of legal and cultural terms of inclusion in which my acceptance across various nations across the Transpacific—the Philippines, South Korea, and eventually the United States where I currently reside—had been made possible often at the expense of those receding outside the very terms that have sanctioned my inclusion. As such, my critique of transpacific diasporic circuits and their racial returns is certainly not outside but precisely made possible through the circuitry of inclusion (or rather, the processes of

[34] As Casanova points out, the tendency for Western secular modernity to "self-validate justification of the secular separation of religion and politics as the condition for modern liberal democratic politics, for global peace, and for the protection of individual privatized religious freedom" (i.e. making religion, particularly Islam, one of fanaticism and intolerance) is at the cost of tracing "the common structural contexts of modern state formation, interstate geopolitical conflicts, modern nationalism, and the political mobilization of ethnocultural and religious identities." Casanova names a few instances: "But none of the horrible massacres—neither the senseless slaughter of millions of young Europeans in the trenches of World War I; nor the countless millions of victims of Bolshevik and communist terror through the Russian Revolution, Civil War...Nazi Holocaust and the global conflagration of World War II, culminating in the nuclear bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki—none of those terrible conflicts can be said to have been caused by religious fanaticism and intolerance. All of them were rather the product of modern secular ideologies," 1059-1060.

exclusion through inclusion) into the expansionist civil imagination of US-allied internationalism of which I am entirely complicit in.[35]

To trace these racial returns as part and parcel of the global structures of neoliberalism, capitalism, and secularization, then, is likewise to probe South Korea's monumental ascent into secular modernity. Often left to the wayside of what counts within the terms of public records or the 'historical,' is the story of this relatively small US-allied East Asian nation that has strategically been "developed into the most Protestant nation in the region" as a result of twentieth-century Cold War-driven US evangelism. Today, South Korea "sends out more missionaries per capita than any other country in the world."[36] Placed in great numbers in the Philippines, the only Christian-majority nation in Southeast Asia, this project also seeks to heed the calls, often coming from scholars of Middle Eastern Studies, to rethink the assumption that "Christian missions belong to a bygone past" to examine instead "the entwinement of secular and Christian principles in international diplomacy."[37]

I understand the risk of rote comparison when drawing a more direct link between Christianity, its geographical spread, and its embeddedness in what has amounted to the secular norm,[38] one that might stage a self-contained genealogy of 'religions as such' that often resorts to noting the diversity of religions and the prominent rise of Protestant Christianity in South Korea (or stage the lack thereof across the region). At risk of oversimplification, I draw such

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[35] As Trinh Minh-ha makes clear, "Multiculturalism does not lead us very far if it remains a question of different only between one culture and another...To cut across boundaries and borderlines is to live aloud the malaise of categories of labels; it is to resist simplistic attempts at classifying, to resist the comfort of belonging to a classification, and of producing *classifiable* works. ...[Interdisciplinarity] is to create in sharing a field that belongs to no one, not even to those who created it. What is at stake, therefore, in this intercreation is the very notion of *specialization* and of *expertise,* of *discipline* and *professionalism.* To identify oneself with a position of specialized knowledge, to see oneself as an expert or as an authority on certain matters, even and especially on artistic matters is to give up all attempts at understanding the relations in the game of power." (Trinh Minh-ha as quoted by Ammiel Alcalay in *After Jews and Arabs,* Alcalay's emphasis, 13-14).

[36] Kim, 15.

[37] Mahmood, 48.

[38] As Elizabeth Shakman Hurd poses the question of religious freedom, and the kind of subject implied when we evoke this term, Hurd questions, "What kind of religion, and what kind of religious subject, are presupposed and promoted through these efforts? What are the consequences of promoting religious freedom as the right to believe or not, and the right to choose among beliefs in a free religious marketplace? Is it possible that state programs, international initiatives, and human rights instruments designed to secure a universal right to religious freedom in fact disseminate and instantiate a particular notion of the "free" believing—or nonbelieving—religious subject?" "Believing in Religious Freedom," 46.See a longer discussion of this debate in *Politics of Religious Freedom.*

parallels to instead probe the strategic disappearance of religion through the now-normalized tenets of secularism. Positing religion to be merely a matter of personal belief, made irrelevant to secular national history as such, this assumption of the secular has been crucial in not only abstracting key transnational actors and human rights laws manufactured in the immediacy of the Cold War politics, [39] but also ideologically isolating 'race' from 'religion.' This ideological abstraction might best be visible when we situate the simultaneous universalizing of the 'minority rights' under the same Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) that had sanctioned the secular norm through the legal rights for Christians to proselytize, a lethal pairing of 'religious freedom' with 'minority rights' made visible when applied in the Global South or in the Middle East. As I attend to in greater depth in the context of the Philippines, Christian humanitarian actors engaged in staging first encounters with Indigeneity amid the Cold War appears to strategically resolve the contradictions of the nation-building and modernizing under US empire. As I further explore in the epilogue, we would not be hard pressed to find 'the missionary middleman' lingering in the peripheries of the global 'nations,' precisely as agents of naturalizing the telos of the secular modern nation, its history and its timeless 'culture' as such; the abject conditions of Afro-Koreans in US military camp towns made the excess to constructing the modern South Korean nation under the 'good-willed' self-imagination of empire is successfully made anecdotal, adequately internalized as a 'human rights' crisis putatively 'resolved' through humanitarian intervention.

In this sense, like my interlocutors who question the norms of secular governance, I seek to highlight *not* the hopes of the secular in properly placing 'religion' into the private sphere but rather note the ideological abstraction and capillary function of empire when 'religion' is successfully sequestered *from* the public. Made into one particularity, or rather *religious* history, this prefixed condition might index a kind of ideological sequestering at work, much like other disciplines I attend to across this dissertation—'racial' history,' history of 'gender,' etc. At heart, *Minor Diaspora,* seeks to conjoin the disjointed and changing configuration of race and religion by foregrounding historical and continental dissonances whose discordant echoes might only just be heard in the once removed site of Euro-American modernity—in the exemplary 'Asian'

[39] See Samuel Moyn's *Christian Human Rights.* See my discussion of Moyn in the context of the Philippines in chapter 4 of this dissertation.

region whose construct has always already been tied to the central Euro-American historical example, as we witness the region once again being compelled or 'conscripted'[40] into its renewed normative *secular modern* workings.

[40] See David Scott's use of the term in *Conscripts of Modernity.*

CHAPTER 1
The Cultural Subject

Blood red defines the backdrop of a portrait of six women, perhaps even a seventh ghostly figure strewn across a mixed media diptych titled "Women in the War-Comfort Women II." Referencing the victims of Japan's wartime sexual slavery, the women dressed in yellowed white gowns gaze back at their viewers with mistrusting eyes in an exhibition that lines the halls of the Jordan Schnitzer Museum at the University of Oregon. The issue of comfort women appears to be self-evidently transnational in scope, perhaps even global, as are the roots and routes that commemorate the Chinese-born-American artist Hung Liu, the issue and artist converging into the syncretic form embodied in the collage of this mixed medium artwork. Liu's work emerges as one of the many exhibits, films, and protests in the efforts for social justice surrounding the issue, whether emblemized by the bronze statue of a young girl seated across the Japanese embassy in Seoul, the same status replicated in a busy street in Berlin or protested on the streets of Manila. In each of these instances, the language of social justice underlies these transnational efforts—a language of gendered violence on display that coalesces with the iconographies of cultural production that makes legible the issue through the works of a representative Asian American subject like Hung Liu. For instance, Liu's exhibit showcases motifs such as the various anonymized figures of bodies toiling with an emphasis on women and children, Zen enso-like circles meant to signify the passage of time, and stylistic choices that range from a socialist realist, traditional Chinese, avant-garde, and expressionist modes that follow the life path of the artist-subject from the tumultuous Cultural Revolution in China towards her West-bound training in the arts, eventual abode and passing in the United States.

As a literary scholar within the field of Asian and Asian American studies, Liu's transnational life path is enticing as is the archive of her prolific artistic productions; each is neatly couched within pre-existing fields of knowledge production—ones attainable as segments of knowledge placed together that participate in drawing a fuller image of the artist, artwork, and her social impact. Perhaps as a colleague or even mentee in the arts, Liu's attainment of the status of the symbolic functions pedagogically, certainly in the setting of a university where Liu's life work is further memorialized in exhibition form upon her passing in 2021. Yet, rather than considering Liu's achievements as emblematic of a quintessential 'Asian-American' character

through which further social progress becomes imaginable, I dwell on the question of a certain *coming to pass*—the coalescing of a *specific amalgamation* of struggle, migration, cultural exhibition, and history that becomes the recognizable, perhaps also the exclusive passage through which the formation of the 'Asian' and 'Asian American' subject become solidified in the global imagination.

I begin with the figure of Hung Liu as one example of the institutional embeddedness of the 'Asian-American' subject to trace the underlying assumptions and material conditions that propel the legibility of such a representative Asian figure. To place Hung Liu within the convergence of an academic discipline, Asian American juridical formation, and the cultural and social justice sphere of influence serves to point out the underlying 'Asian' as a 'prefixed' category that lends legibility to the sectors of disciplinary knowledge Liu participates in. 'Asia' then, as a self-evident category, floats across these disciplinary lines that, despite various claims to differences, are bounded by the geopolitics of the Cold War, the rise of U.S. involvement in the Pacific, the rise of China's cultural and military power, the waning and disciplining of Japanese war-time imagination of Asian regionalism, and the effects of these immediate violences of *modernity* traced into the lives have become redetermined by exile and migration. The immediacy of these historical events gives the geographical region a distinct shape as a modern formation. It is from this point of mutuality and the categorical facticity of 'Asia' as a distinct ideological and geographical site that particularities come to be articulated, for instance, as a geographical separateness of the 'Asian-regional' context of individual nations versus the 'U.S. or Western diasporic context' under the banner of 'Asian-America' where each finds legibility and legitimacy as a distinct 'locality.'

The 'local' indicated by the modifier 'Asian' emerges as a product of the need to attest to the particularities of foundational modern violence,[1] centering historicity's demand for a cohesive event that secures the lives and afterlives of the foundational violence. Yet as Lisa Yoneyama raises the need to weigh the geopolitical conditions that give rise to what "constitutes as an object of knowledge and nonknowledge,"[2] the 'local' as I extend, harbors an underlying

[1] See Lisa Yoneyama's *Cold War Ruins* and Jina Kim's *Postcolonial Grief: The Afterlives of the Pacific Wars in the Americas.*

[2] Yoneyama, "Toward a Decolonial Genealogy of the Transpacific," 472.

epistemology that comes to dictate the very *terms of* what comes to be *mourn*-able in an arena where displacement, diasporic trauma, and loss coalesce into an (in)articulable 'local' history. What I mean to draw attention to are the *forms and disciplines* that bound the objects teeming with the signification of 'Asianness'—the formality of a disciplinary gendered and racialized historicity that comes to inspire self-evident notions of 'Asian culture,' functioning as a sociological marker that makes sense of and gives shape to the designated areas and the peoples they pertain to.

Over the years, the discussion of the state of the two 'local' disciplines has yielded the need to recover 'race' as the "'consistently repressed' problem in area studies which has long shown a 'persistent denial of racial inequities.'"[3] As these recent debates bring to the surface, such claims, often headed by Asian and Asian American scholars in the United States, point to area studies as an imperial formation minted by the United States government during the Cold War. On the flip side, such a critique is met with criticism from area studies experts, often outside of the United States, pointing to the material conditions of those relatively economically privileged laying claims against the area studies scholars' refusal to adequately address questions of gender, class, race, and sexuality. Such 'internal Asian' debates, instead, point to how relative privilege across the two fields has been negotiated under a persistent though often differential proximity to power that makes only certain forms of knowledge speakable.[4] Such recent reflections, at the very least, give us pause to question the oversimplification of the imperatives to recuperate that which is repressed, to instead question, into what episteme are we recuperating figures of self-evident repression?

It bears to consider then, the function of a 'cultural paradigm' that amid cataloging differential conditions of repression across the two disciplines, remains the mutual claim to an identity form safeguarded by the boundaries of a recognizable 'Asianness' to which 'Asian Labor,' 'Asian History,' etc. articulates simultaneously across both fields; the referent, though articulated with a difference, remains largely identifiable as the same object of study. Throughout this dissertation, I aim to shift our attention away from the model of repression towards examining the productivity of an "Asianness" shared across the divided discipline as a

[3] Chow as quoted by Shih, "Racializing Area Studies, Defetishizing China," 36.

[4] See recent issue of *Positions*, 'End of Area'

mutual product of that which has been made selectively *speakable*, a condition that may allow us to glimpse what remains profane, locked out of, and disciplined by their very mutual formations.

As the 'local *prefix'* that often safeguards the very grounds of our relevance in our respective 'global' fields of history, area studies, gender and sexuality, ethnic or other sites of disciplinary distinctions, I instead seek to mediate the structuring effects of their mutuality.[5] At large, what this project aims to consider are the lives and livelihoods that come to be disciplined by the gendered and racialized epistemology of 'Asian-Americanness,' and the afterlives of the rise of certain representational figures 'coming to pass.' What are the outcomes of this co-constitutive relationship between the Asian *national* and the Asian American *ethnic minority*? What effects are produced in the process of recovering the emancipatory figure of the 'woman' or the 'racial other' and have they all been liberatory? How have the unspoken, and as I argue, the secular proclivities of "Asian America" been naturalized as certain narratives of diasporic trauma are revived within the borders of the US imagination and its allied nations? Finally, and as I ultimately dwell on, how has the "region" as a geographic and an epistemic form been re-constructed through these diasporic evacuations and revivals?

I draw attention to the sociological categories themselves that give shape to racial, national, and cultural differences that delimit the bounds of their categorical distinctions; we find in these formal disciplinary categories the disciplining mechanism through which 'local' objects come to be recognized within the terrain of the 'global.' In other words, the ability for 'Asian-America' to denote a distinct 'local' set of concerns seems to burst at its seams, its epistemology of violence demarcating the very borders of relevance and relegating that which cannot come to pass or erupt as recognizable moments of diasporic trauma into the terrain of the 'every day.' To these ends and towards a *regional* Asian critique of the decolonial, this first chapter offers, albeit a broad-stroke investigation of the modern region emerging into epistemic relevance, shaped and reshaped through the co-constitutive emergence of the local and global archives of gender and multiculturalism.

[5] The structuring effects of the disciplinary area studies is heavily noted in the context of Cold War geopolitics and the question of knowledge production. This work continues this almost redundant argument to question what the stakes are of noting a 'post' or a 'crisis' to Cold War geopolitics.

Boundaries of the Cultural and Secular 'Everyday"

Critical directions in Asian American studies note how Asian migration coupled with the narratives of recovery and inclusion functions to recodify an imperialist U.S. into the exceptionalist multicultural and progressive U.S. state.[6] On the one hand, we can read Liu within the paradigm of the model minority where the selective inclusion of Asian difference comes to mediate the inner workings of the civilizing project that continues to resolve the contradictions of empire by delimiting the borders of yellow peril and docile aliens both within and without the borders of the United States.[7] If indeed as Shih implies 'repression' is the underlying motivation that calls upon the urgent need to address race within area studies, the modular and productive fashion through which the politics of racial inclusion has become the globally replicable norm, used as a means to draw the international borders of national docility and their perilous others, should not nor does not go unnoticed in state-implementation of multiculturalism within capitalist Asia.[8] It follows, then, that what Shih and other proponents of the repressive model must be indicating is the global 'false consciousness' of state-led narratives of the minority against the imperatives to address and redress Liu's everyday struggle as an Asian minority. In this formulation, Liu's state-defined condition is placed antagonistic to her everyday negotiation as a minority living in the United States, a model that is assumed to be reproducible in those captured by repressive or top-down state articulations of minority recuperation on a global scale.

While this binary between politics and lived experience often undergirds the interpretative framework found within gender and ethnic studies, I would like to suggest a different kind of the "every day" instituted, one that requires unpacking the restitutive function of the arts that comes to distill the concept of "culture" into its final representative form. Liu's tumultuous lifepath, whether caused by U.S. involvement in the Pacific front or narrated as the perilous state-led oppression, comes to connote not only the restitutive function of the disciplinary body polity of 'Asian-America' as the model minority paradigm alerts us to, but also the restorative function of 'cultural humanities' that purifies 'culture' of the violent sort left behind in Asia to the nonviolent alternatives memorialized through the recognizably Confucius and Daoist portrayals or towards the amalgamation of these traditional calligraphic ink and brush

[6] See works by Chandan Reddy, David Eng, among many others.

[7] See Victor Bascara's *Model Minority Imperialism,* pg. 12-13

[8] See *Multiculturalism in Asia,* edited by Will Kymlicka and Baogang He.

styles. These self-evident objects that fill the archives of an authentic and peaceful cultural 'Asia' invoked through Hung Liu's biography and her artwork function to reinforce the proper distillation of a redemptive diasporic narrative, one that not only *imagines* a purity of a cultural history presumed to innately exist in the Asian individual but one that can fully manifest once *outside* the regimented confines of various state-mandated narratives of a false 'cultural authenticity.' Only at this point, once culture appears distilled of violence does the possibility of cultural hybridity as an artistic form, perhaps even an embodied identity become possible. As I argue, this move to recover the 'cultural everyday' as that which has been "falsely" recuperated reveals a transnational border of a different sort—one that implicates the boundedness of the 'cultural everyday' that appears delimited to a distinct set of struggles distilled once the true cultural subject crosses the edifying borders of the United States and more broadly, the borders of the global neoliberal university. This epistemic and literal move conjoined, I suggest, may precisely construct their constitutive outside when the problem of violence becomes relegated to spaces *somewhere* out there, and more likely than not, embodied in the spaces and peoples in 'regional Asia' left behind.

To raise the question of the secular when invoking culture, then, is to probe at this underexamined transnational border, questioning the materiality of sustaining the edifying borders of an identifiable 'Asian cultural every day.' Rethinking the 'everyday' of the minority through Liu as a representative figure begins by acknowledging the everyday cost of upholding one's role in the symbolic—the day-to-day realities that those across various traditions face when one's livelihood and legibility under the banner of neoliberal multiculturalism comes to matter only in particular and particularly essentialized way. We see Liu's celebration in life contingent upon the same standards of essentialism that come to monumentalize Liu's biography in her death as a circular narrative, neatly tied off, self-enclosed, and packaged for public consumption. Liu's border crossing then, allows for the aggrieved subject to come out in the open, a telos of the secular notions of "history-making" and "self-empowerment" Talal Asad notes are inscribed onto the afflicted body that instantiates the progressive telos of "replac[ing] pain by pleasure."[9] Yet, this coming out narrative instigates the underlying prerogative to be productive as a contributor to the arts and certainly as someone engaged in pedagogy. If the negotiation of the minority's 'everyday' emerges as the uninterrogated site for a universalized

[9] Asad, *Formations of the Secular,* 68.

resistance, for Asad, this move to romanticize resistance too often underdetermines and externalizes the power structures such that the workings of power and pain are slated to be overcome by a sense of individual responsibility.[10] What I mean to denote by secular culture, beyond its initial associations with the waning of religion, is to take a somewhat indirect route to the question of the secular to trace the kinds of power at play when the uninterrogated site of 'everyday minority resistance' participate in the reproduction of the secular agentive global subject. How might the process of valuation precisely relegate others into the sphere of the private, mundane, or construct the subject yet to be 'empowered,' 'educated,' thereby also denoting those who must be governed?

Where then, does so-called 'violence' reside if strategically expelled from the cultural every day? Continuing to follow the trajectories of this question, the following three chapters outline the implications of the Asian American cultural subject's return to 'regional Asia' as neutral sociological categories of 'race' and 'gender' as I continue to interrogate what comes to be resolved when a quintessential Asian figure like Hung Liu solicits a particular understanding of the modern and secular Asian subject. For now, we follow the traces left by Liu herself, hidden in plain sight through the inconspicuous mutuality contained under the heading of an Asian transnational and feminist experience—the figure of the comfort woman—as we follow the construction of a region made and remade through the appearances and disappearances of this object and subject of study.

The Aporia of the Regional Feminist Archive

When Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe addresses that he is "deeply pained to think of the comfort women who experienced immeasurable pain and suffering," he does so in the context of relegating the issue to the past to focus the attention on the future—one that acknowledges his personal feelings of pain and duty yet refuses to dwell on it due to the moral imperative to move forward into the "21st century…free from further violations of women's dignity and basic human rights."[11] In Prime Minister Abe's call to move away from

[10] Asad, 72.

[11] Points of Remarks by Prime Minister Abe during the Upper House Budget Session in May of 2013 regarding the Kono statement from 1993 issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. As Prime Minister Shinzo Abe says, "Regarding the Kono Statement, I am deeply pained to think of the comfort women who experienced immeasurable pain and suffering, a feeling I share equally with my predecessors. My position is that this issue should not be

"politicizing" or making the comfort women a "diplomatic issue," the address achieved the contrary, inciting anger from various interest groups that claimed the address had been neither sincere nor official, pointing also to the long-standing issues of the systematic exclusion of this historical event from Japanese textbooks that for many, reflects Japan's inability to fully account for the past to merit moving forward from it.

Ensuing debates about whether the women had been really 'forced' into sexual slavery or whether the issue should be contextualized in its 'historical time' when violence against women had been more commonplace reveals much about the premises about gendered violence and the role of recorded history in the matter. If historicity as the underlying disciplinary tool gives credence to the recovery of aggrieved female bodies, more alarmingly, it appears readily available for the Japanese state, where the ubiquity of gendered violence *in the past* muddies the significance of the comfort woman's recuperation and instantiates a progressive telos through which to evade the responsibility in preserving this past. In this way, feminist historiography is presented with a series of aporias exemplified in the statement:

> 1) Where history as a discipline requires evidence of an *exceptional* nature, evidence of gendered violence is assumed to proliferate in *ubiquity* across the premodern. Such an assumption of periodized history that instantiates the progressive telos of feminist historiography appears to be a conundrum ripe to be exploited by its detractors, as we see in this instance.
>
> 2) For the feminist, the silence of the archive speaks for itself to denote the masculinist conditions that continue to silence women from coming forward, emblematized by the empty bronze seat often found next to the statue of the young girl. Yet, the same silence seems to speak of an evidentiary dearth that delimits the scope of its legitimacy as dictated by masculinist historiography proper.[12]

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politicized or be turned into a diplomatic issue. Throughout history, women's dignity and basic human rights have often been infringed upon during many wars of the past. The Government of Japan places paramount importance and is committed to doing its utmost to ensure that the 21st century is free from further violations of women's dignity and basic human rights."
https://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/page3e_000119.html#:~:text=Comfort%20Women%20Issue,turned%20into%20a%20diplomatic%20issue.

[12] The historical positivism regarding the comfort woman issue has certainly been dealt with previously. For Hyunah Yang and Laura Hyun Yi Kang who are attuned to the positivistic confine and assumed transparency

In both instances, the ease to which the feminist premise is reversed instead gives us pause to reflect on the shared disciplinary tools and assumptions of the archive that seem to bypass the strict boundaries drawn between the unfinished work of global feminism against what is identified as the continued global masculinist and nationalist forces that hinder its recuperation. To put it in simpler terms, despite the wide range of responses to this ongoing contention, the facticity of the historical event, the relevance of the gendered body in need of restitution, and the pertinence of feminism as a noble cause come to inform the shared language used by various parties to make legible their claims. What we witness then, is not necessarily who the comfort women are or the pertinence of feminism to the matter at all, but rather, as we have noted, differing points of *interpretation* safeguarded by these historical and moral facticities.

The issue in discourse is once more complicated by the *hierarchies* of overlapping issues that determine when, how, and which female figures come to be legible in the public sphere. What is the German government to do with the bronze statue in Berlin in light of the diplomatic *faux pas* it poses with its relations with the Japanese government? In a similar bronze statue replicated in the streets of San Francisco, we find race-conscious citizens concerned for the well-being of Asian-American communities, particularly those of Japanese descent whose history of racialization within the borders of the United States during the same period caused mass incarceration for those bound to internment camps. What is Taiwan to do with realities that women of "good background in large numbers" had been enlisted, implying domestic collusion or worse even, consent from the women themselves? The publicization of the issue is further hampered again by the geopolitical hierarchies that require Taiwan to maintain good relations with Japan which has consistently lobbied for Taiwan in the ongoing conflict with China.[13] Similarly, the reluctance of the issue to emerge for half a century in the South Korean instance

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of procuring testimonials, the academic gaze appears difficult to temper as the comfort women themselves are rendered "passive recipients of the final text," wherein they find themselves "reduced to a nightmarish experience for slavery for public consumption." Rather, the ways in which the comfort women themselves appear to understand their role as participants in what have become "highly formulaic [accounts] with an intense focus on the repetitive sexual acts and abuses," reveals not just the always already political nature of testimonials as Kang argues becomes "in danger of serving voyeuristic curiosity," but also alludes to the conspicuous yet often bypassed conditions of *embeddedness* of the comfort woman who appears to understand and actively participates in a particular telling and futurity enacted in such a testimonial. As Kang recounts a testimony, "You want me to begin from the beginning. You mean when I was taken, don't you" (28). See respectively, Hyun and Yang's "Finding the 'Map of Memory': Testimony of the Japanese Military Sexual Slavery Survivors," (86) and Laura Hyun Yi Kang's "Conjuring 'Comfort Women': Mediated Affiliations and Disciplined Subjects in Korea/American Transnationality," (28).

[13] Shogo, "The Competition to Attain Justice for Past Wrongs," 241.

implicates the systematic and institutional complicities where 'Chongshindae" comfort women had been recruited from local elementary schools clearly with the knowledge and consent of local authorities. Such delays in recuperation appear to also implicate South Korean historians when taking into consideration the conditions of recovery.[14]

In these hierarchies of relevance, it appears, then, that the issue's transnational pertinence is delimited by more pressing matters of various "local" importance. In this sense, the entanglements of the issue suggest not just evidently masculinist narratives that falsely recuperate or continue to suppress "the woman" but also the limits and complicities of "locality," "immediacy" and "relevance" as part of the processes that collude in the degree to which certain figures like the comfort woman can emerge into the public sphere. The 'regional,' then, emerges as a curious container of sorts. Between the various local articulations of the comfort woman issue and the global pertinence of feminism appear to be 'the region' as strategic formation caught up between the issue's differential entanglements. At times, the only formation capable of encapsulating the issue in any legible formation, 'the region' is, at other times, precisely the ideological formation that exists as a 'catch-all' in which issues like the comfort woman are dismissed as both geographically and ideologically distant from the world of various locals and the global, relegated to the "regional" by nature.

It is this framework of the "regional" that interests me, not as a self-evident category where figures like the comfort woman find cozy relevance as a "regional feminist" issue, but rather as a framework and teleological organizer that relegates certain issues to the regional sphere that make possible the seamless mutuality of the 'global' and 'local.' In other words, a closer evaluation of when and how such 'regional' issues like the comfort woman come to be evoked, suppressed, or made entirely irrelevant, I argue, reveals much about not just the contradictions sidelined into the 'regional,' but the productivity of the underlying disciplinary tool of historicity and its unmarked disciplinary mechanism of finding equivalence across global-local area distinctions.

Organizing Regional Time

We return to the aporia in feminist historiography and its productivity in organizing regional time. What we begin to see are the assumptions of the past, in particular, the unspecified

[14] Yang, "Re-membering the Korean Military Comfort Women."

but inherent violence of the unmodern or premodern that is imagined when invoking the comfort woman issue. That is, contrary to the image of an idyllic premodern past distilled through a particular understanding of "the cultural subject," the figure of the "woman" appears to participate in a particular understanding of a joint future "free" of such gendered violence. Here, we see the coalescing of the oft-reproduced disciplinary distinctions between the "cultural feminine" and the "political masculine," a binary that disturbingly appears to make possible Prime Minister Abe's call to depoliticize the issue of the comfort woman to reinstate a "peaceful" return of the feminist epistemological into the realm of the self-evident "cultural." What is innate in our assumptions of "the woman" localized into the terrain of the cultural and peaceful that makes legible Abe's remarks, for that matter Liu's reception safely within the scope of the "cultural"?

Implicit are the underlying assumptions of progressive futurity and history's recourse to the modern. That is also to say, for modern historicity, the disciplinary tool-*proper*, to appear unmediated requires the convergence of its "others" into nonrelevance—the assumptions of the irrecuperable premodern to the legible modern, the visibly violent rise of modernity that punctuates "history" over the relatively seamless passage of "cultural" time. Such conditions of epistemic knowledge production mark its constitutive outside in the construction of modern historicity's binary other(s)—the "premodern" and the "regional" often relegated into the realm of hybridity, evoked either to denote an idyllic familial and cultural past prior to Westernization, modernity, capitalism, etc. *and/or* its warring history of turmoil dismissed as the uncivilized past overcome by the rise of modern civil discourses, heralding the nation-state as that embodied 'end of history,' as Fukuyama ushers in the age of liberal democracy's finality.

Yet, the aporia of regional feminist historiography and its modern proclivities amplifies in its stakes when such a historically liminal figure like the comfort woman comes to be mediated through the bounded context of the arrival of women's discourses, one that has gone hand in hand with U.S. imperial interests in enacting reformed liberal democratic ideals in the region. In the case of the heated issue between Japan and Korea, where (or rather when) the comfort woman comes to be identified, on either side of the dividing line between the assumed "premodern" violence against women or the progressive and "modern" future devoid of this violence, appears to contribute to the legibility of two US-allied nations, on opposite sides of this issue, nevertheless emerging as modern postcolonial states.

In the case of Japan, national history proper appears to be written in the hopes of relegating its imperial ventures to the scope of this pre-political past to restart national history proper.[15] The resulting elision of the comfort woman issue is relativized into the domain of this non-distinct premodern, hovering between the wholesale denial of its imperial past through an emergent national identity shaped around its victimhood consciousness,[16] and the partial recognition of its wartime crimes makes possible Japan's liberal democratic future in terms of its unfinished tutelage under the US-sanctioned the rhetoric of the 'good war.' As Sakai and Yoo configure the scope of the transpacific, one defined by the "complicity of the old and the new empires, the new alliance of Japan and the United States,"[17] the emerging 'postcolonial' ethnic indigenous nationalisms instead must be understood in part as complicit with this new power configuration in which the rise of a Japanese victimhood nationalism and anti-American sentiment had reshaped the narratives of a lost empire towards the legitimation of its anticolonial nationalism.

On the other hand, the legitimacy of the South Korean nation is founded on the ridding of colonial violence of a *modern* sort—of a twentieth-century Japanese Imperialism. For it is in marking this regional violence as "modern" in essence can the South Korean nation itself emerge distinct from its regional neighbors into the *modern* terrain of postcolonial internationalism, lest its pertinence as a national sovereign too becomes relativized into the imagination of a regionalism subsumed under the imagination of a "hybridized" regional premodern and modern hegemony of China and Japan. This *modern* emphasis on the comfort woman for South Korea, then makes legible those 'saved' by the US-led good war, whereby marking the comfort woman and the nation as synonymous with the beginnings of an agentive national narrative of "overcoming," accentuates South Korea's development under the proper tutelage of liberal

[15] Victor Koschmann summarizes Japan's use of "premodern particularism versus modern universalism," noting how Japan often claimed the idea of the "premodern residue" that became "the key to interpreting Japan's entire modern history, including especially the wartime period.... It was as if history had begun anew in the autumn of 1945." See Yamanouchi and Koschmann, *Total War and 'Modernization.'*

[16] See Sakai and Yoo's *Trans-Pacific Imagination.* See particularly Jie-Hyun Lim's chapter, "Towards A Transnational History of Victimhood Nationalism: On the Trans-Pacific Space." Lim points out the problem of 'victimhood nationalism' that haunts the rise of postwar internationalism: "Very often it is not difficult to find the outcry of victimhood nationalism among victimizers in Germany and Japan." Such a condition yields not just the problematic of placing the nation's genealogy as the abstract hereditary collective but also becomes a "weapon by the newly emerging national power elites," 45-47.

[17] Sakai and Yoo, 6.

democratic principles (In the following chapter, I consider the timely recovery of comfort woman's emergence into South Korean feminist discourse by the end of the Cold War, one that is productively put to use in resolving the violent conditions of nation-building within South Korea).

As we begin to see, contrary to the purported vision of progressive gender politics promised in the nations of the region, the aporia of feminist historiography, one grounded in the legitimacy of our present liberal democratic moment, appears to govern the extent to which the comfort woman issue can be mediated in their respective national history proper. We are met with the possibility that the reason the comfort woman issue appears to "float" as a specter of regionalism, unable to fully find various local national articulation, may be due to the compounding struggles to become legible in terms of the emergent regional imagination. Entombed in a state of partial public mediation, the comfort woman and her testimony cannot but remain in the *symbolic regional* imagination—consolidated by a periodized and spatialized assumption of culture and gender—as she mediates the legible rise of two model and US-allied liberal democratic nations.

Woman without a Country, Woman with a Country

As a historical subject of study, the comfort woman perplexes in her state of sociological, geopolitical, and temporal liminality. Yielding thematic readings, for instance, as the 'Incurable Feminine' as Hyon Joo Yoo's work exemplifies, Yoo's reading of the comfort woman emerges as a universal and "global sign of the deviant body" that potentializes the "incurable feminine without a hygienic nation" as a site of protest and resistance to the rule of the Law or the name of the Father.[18] Appearing in the context of Sakai and Yoo's *Transpacific Imagination* that intimate the end of "Pax Americana," the comfort woman issue is invoked as part of the efforts for feminist futurity in the region as symbolic of the universal fight against masculinist forces. Yet, as I have suggested earlier, feminism's ability to be a part of the organizational matrix that privileges 'locality' instead casts doubt on the universality of the 'incurable feminine' framework. What I aim to consider in this section are the geopolitical propulsions of the "incurable feminine," a framework that, I argue, participates in the renegotiation of the changing power dynamics in the Pacific front with the rise of China, the disciplining of Japan's wartime

[18] Sakai and Yoo, 171-172.

past, and the stronghold US maintains *not* in spite of decolonial feminist efforts, but perhaps even precisely through them.

Let's consider the emergent relevance of the decolonial mapped across the transpacific. Often premised on the foundational condition of "the Pacific" that has "long been treated 'as an open frontier to be crossed, domesticated, occupied, and settled,'" Shigematsu and Camacho problematize the structuring legacies of a gendered Pacific that rationalized U.S. militarized presence by redoubling on the region's requirements for 'protection.' As Sakai and Yoo further trace, the region's requirement for protection ushered in the transformation of the once-Japanese empire, reconfigured into the emergent East Asian 'subempires' that have (re)emerged in the wake of U.S. involvement in the region. As Yoneyama traces the field's decolonial impetus, the recent calls to unsettle East Asia, instead to recenter Southeast Asia and various Indigenous Pacific Islanders Studies appear as some of the many decolonial efforts subsumed under the disciplinary study called the transpacific.

To trace the inherence of the secular in the gendered Pacific, then, does not necessarily stop at what decolonial scholarship in the transpacific note as the multiply compounded erasures of Indigenous epistemologies across that Pacific.[19] Such calls prime regional discourses in terms of a new sub-region or the identification of the 'Indigenous' in terms of 'global indigeneity'[20] as the newly designated 'subaltern' in this milieu, often bypassing the temporal-spatial context in which 'indigeneity,' for instance, become grafted across the Transpacific (the fourth chapter contends with this question of Indigenous recovery in the Philippines and its timely state recuperation). Rather, we probe the underlying mechanics of the gendered decolonial—the process of identifying known violence and designating the new 'local' as a subaltern to file into existing sociological identity markers. For one, such a process appears to curiously depoliticize the issue as one 'local' iteration within the scope of a universal category with equally universal solutions. As Sakai and Yoo file the issue of the comfort woman within the broader framework of universalized "incurable feminine" framework, it appears as though the problem of being 'localized' is then dealt with by propelling this figure as an emblematic figure of 'global

[19] "The transpacific discourse that vacates the Pacific of European and Japanese rule as well as opposition to US imperialism while concealing how the new and old geohistorical entanglements involve the interbase struggles in the islands of Okinawa, Jeju, and other highly militarized locations in America's client-states." Yoneyama, 478.

[20] We might find methods of recuperating 'global indigeneity' in works such as Chadwick Allen's *Trans-Indigenous: Methodologies of Global Native Literary Studies.*

deviancy.' More concerning is the universality of the sign, not unlike the usage of the feminist telos in Prime Minister Abe's statement that appears ripe to be imaginatively appropriated precisely to negate.

While such a simplified account of this trend is meant to be hyperbolic, what I am probing at are the co-constitutive *processes* of identifying and cataloging as 'subaltern' itself and their corresponding solution to herald a universal 'deviancy' that too often bypasses its historical and material conditions for its articulations. Remaining in the figurative, such universal propulsions partake in narratives of circular resolve that reinforce, as I have earlier noted through Asad, a certain secular propulsion of the global subject. Rather, I ask, what might a reflection of our participation in this act of designating and filing reveal about the certain universal or romanticized workings of the decolonial as it silently participates in shaping the regional?

We can begin by contextualizing Sakai and Yoo's characterization of the 'Incurable Feminine" as part of their projections of the decline of Pax Americana in the region that implies, though does not explicitly state, the unspoken threat of an economic and militarized rise of China *in the present.* The neutrality of the decolonial begins to unravel when we consider how the present rehearsal of an (under)repentant Japan under U.S. tutelage[21] functions to frame the narratives of an unrelenting threat of Japan's past made present in China that propels a newly reinvigorated relevance of the decolonial in the region. Accordingly, perhaps what is required is further mediation of the need to construct such a site of "cultural every day" (the site of a universal agentive and resistant subjectivity), one that, as I have alluded through the figure of Hung Liu, is the articulation of 'culture' that reaches the public American sphere, that at times, implies the certain distance from various state-led 'false cultural' agendas of Japanese and Chinese states. I recall this to note the false binaries that appear naturalized in this epistemic conundrum—good culture/bad culture—often traced across the transpacific diaspora and to reiterate what might be an obvious but crucial point; that, at the very least, the framing of the

[21] The connection between the waning of Japanese power and the rise of China certainly does not go unnoticed. As Yoneyama writes of the structuring legacies between Japan's post-World War II US tutelage that "to the extent that the mobilization of these spaces [post-independence Asian nation's free market client states in Japan, Taiwan, South Korea, and the Philippines] was aimed at containing the Chinese Communist Party's reach, such transpacific Cold War formations came to dominate post-World War II inter- and intra-Asian associations with China, regardless of whether this China was imagined as a threat, opportunity, hope, or even in disavowal of its sovereign presence," 473.

apparent violence of the Chinese and Japanese states appears to *produce* the very conscious need to invent and install the 'Incurable Feminine' paradigm.

Instead, Rey Chow's insights might prove useful when noting how imperialism might best be visible precisely where there is no visible "physical coercion, without actually capturing the body and the land,"[22] to highlight instead cultural imperialism or culture *as* imperialism at work. Amid the often politically charged and binary articulation of 'good culture-bad culture' visibly written across the West-bound transpacific, what likewise remains unspoken in these efforts to mark and unmark the apparent violence designated by the 'problem' seemingly embodied by 'the Chinese state' are often the under-interrogated, unmarked, and exceptionally 'peaceful' articulations of multiculturalism within Pax Americana—the ethnic migrant woman by marriage in South Korea and Japan for instance, or the recognition of the Indigenous in Japan or the Philippines. Their residence in the archive of 'cultural pluralism' appears always already imbued with the 'cultural every day,' in other words, meant first and foremost to stage the paternalizing "prowess" of the nation's multicultural inclusion. Their ability to be made into global political emblems of 'deviancy' appears to be, first and foremost, mediated through the sanctity of the unmarked nation and the priorities of that which rises into political consciousness, often made relegated into the conundrums of 'everyday' laborers (this dissertation, at large, maintains an interest in the contradictions between politics and economics).

Yet, embedded in the so-called innocuous recuperation of multiculturalism in such US-allied Asia are the conditions that have secured an active labor force and reproductive futurity in late capitalist post-industrial East and Southeast Asia that have safeguarded national futurity within neoliberal capitalism.[23] I note this not just to reiterate the claim that multiculturalism inheres into the fabric of neoliberal capitalism. Certainly, the fact that neoliberalism flourishes in the region appears to need no theorizing nor the concept of multiculturalism to visibly see the flow of capital as characteristic of the region. Rather, my claim is that capitalism's abstraction is made more complete under multiculturalism's unmarked usage within Pax Americana, where Chow's remark on cultural imperialism might best be mediated in its unmarked prowess. Hence, I ask, when Sakai and Yoo note the unmistakable facticity of the rise of China while *detaching*

[22] Chow, 8.

[23] Cheah, "Universal Areas."

the language of feminism from the emerging matrix of power binaries within the Pacific precisely through spectralizing a potential universal deviancy, does a certain unmarked neoliberal future become naturalized under Pax Americana? Remaining, not with figures of universal global deviancy, I instead ask, how might an interrogation of the unassuming articulation of cultural pluralism *within* the region return the discourse of empire towards the capillary and neoliberal intent that had mobilized the 'gendered Pacific' in need for protection? I follow the traces of this question, at large, to note the "externalizing" tendencies of the progressive telos Asad might warn us of that have participated in remapping the neutral economic terrain of the Pacific that have often gone underexamined in the mapping of apparent violence.

Organizing Time: Premodern and Modern Hybridities

We have begun to explore the geographical construct of the 'regional' as a self-evident site marked by a particular kind of 'violence' of Japan and China as the *modern* region comes into self-conscious coherence. As I argue, such an imagination of the region is one that the decolonial Pax Americana appears, not outside, but actively participates in its remapping. Through the diasporic staging of Hung Liu in exhibition, I have also begun to allude to the organizational force of the "cultural subject" that cannot merely be a sign of universalized resistance, as the staging of cultural artifacts and figures across the transpacific partakes in naturalizing certain borders of temporal-spatial norms. We return to the organizational force of the "cultural subject" found in the quintessential diasporic story of Liu, as she returns in modular formation of 'culture' that informs the present regional decolonial imagination.

From the vantage point of the recorded moments of punctuated history and politics, it appears as though the usual 'peaceful' workings of the premodern *cultural* hybridity of the region exist in perpetuity, only to be momentarily thwarted by the forcefulness of a false cultural imperialism of both Japan and China. We begin to witness the productive effects of the distilled understanding of the 'cultural subject':

(1) Implicit in the construct of a timeless Asian cultural subject is, at times, the infantilizing tendencies that evoke "culture" or "cultural hybridity" as though culture can be distilled of violence in both the premodern and modern societal formations. The distillation of the "premodern cultural" only becomes possible as certain disciplinary distinctions or

dislocations take shape—culture and language often understood within the paradigm of innocuous intersocietal exchange that produces such a concept problematized in the term, "creole."[24] For instance, we see the assumptions of the creole play out when Sinophone scholar Shu-mei Shih characterizes the Korean language as a matter of an organic intermingled cultural hybridity. The possible celebration of an "organic interdependence" of a linguistic thereby a culturally admixed past elides historiographical Korean accounts that mark a tenuous relationship with China as once its tributary that would certainly disavow the characterization of the Korean language as a matter of organic intermingled cultural hybridity[25] when the need for linguistic differentiation came precisely due to its turbulent history with its regional neighbors. Similarly, Martin Manalansan historicizes the impetus that called for the formation of the Philippines as a site of study, namely in the assumptions of "a senior Chinese American ethnic studies professor [who] blurted out that Filipinos have three kinds of phenotypes—they either look Chinese, Malay or Indonesians." Such impetus within and across Asian and Asian American studies calls to attention the *filing* of difference and desire for differentiation that draws attention to the centrality of the Sinophone that becomes the (un)marked site of 'cultural Asia' that primes the region in terms of a certain violence it purported embodies today or seeks to strategically expel from its past or present. This dissertation takes particular interest in South Korea and the Philippines precisely as their often-tenuous relationship with China might offer insights into the often-simplified cultural trafficking of the global Sinophone.

(2) Shih cites the necessity of multicultural inclusion through the global Sinophone, citing the history of global Chinese exclusions to then conclude that "diaspora must have an end date." This recentering of the global Sinophone appears to elide the intersecting and longstanding history of the Chinese diaspora across Southeast Asia. It was the Chinese

[24] Here, Sidney Mintz evaluation of the assumptions and limits of the 'cultural' for the anthropologist is telling. If the "breath of spread was correlated with ancientness of pattern" when tracing an identifiable pattern of "food areas," Mintz shows how such assumptions were "often employed to infer or to imply historical processes" that came at the cost of the stakes, material conditions and violent admixing too often overlooked in identifying the constitution of Caribbean societies as "creole" (Mintz 1996; 293).

[25] The cultural or linguistic that comes to be relegated into premodern hybridity is the point I wish to raise here, rather than to highlight the sanctity of linguistic plurality that recenters the Korean language itself.

diaspora in the Philippines, at large, that constituted the formation of the mestiza consciousness as global trade relations coincided with Spanish colonial trade relations. Unlike her Latin American counterpart, the "mestiza" in the Philippines denotes largely those of Chinese descent whose condition is marked by her management under Spanish empire, simultaneously dispossessed while harnessing selective political and economic opportunities in the colonial imagination of broader China. The contemporary anti-Chinese landscape and the violence experienced by the Chinese-Filipino today as Shih cites[26] remains complex beyond what the term "historical minority" due to "exclusions" can encompass. I revisit this question in the fourth chapter by recalling Anderson's The S*pectres of Comparison,* a monograph that takes particular interest in the Chinese population across Southeast Asia. Anderson does not highlight the Chinese population in any transhistorical relevance but precisely situates Southeast Asia as the once-removed site of Cold War politics, in which the US agenda during the Cold War is poignantly, and at times, fatally experienced by the Chinese diaspora across Southeast Asia.

(3) We likewise witness the naturalization of multicultural inclusive politics *effect* the very conditions of possibility for the epistemic erasure of the Indigenous within regional Asia. Even Shih recognizes that the Chinese diasporic population in Taiwan is "colonial vis-a-vis the indigenous people there," where the history of Taiwan from the perspective of the indigenous is "a history of serial colonialism" (Dutch, French, Chinese, Japanese),[27] an argument that can be extended to the Indigenous populations in the Philippines (See Adrian De Leon's *Bundok*). It bears repeating that to expect the Indigenous to reside in the realm of "cultural recognition," as the Shih's formulation implies, belies the material, political and legal complexities that delimit what constitutes culture or the extent that the Indigenous must satisfy existing rubrics of state-based ethnic inclusion.[28]

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[26] Shih writes, "the expulsion of the Hoa (local construction of the Chinese) by the Vietnamese government, ethnic riots against the Chinese in Indonesia, the massacre of the Chinese by the Spanish and by the Dutch in Java, the kidnapping of Chinese children in the Philippines, and many other such examples…" Shih, "Against Diaspora," 28.

[27] Shih, 31.

[28] See Byrd, ''BEEN TO THE NATION, LORD, BUT I COULDN'T STAY THERE;' Byrd and Rothberg, ""BETWEEN SUBALTERNITY AND INDIGENEITY;" Povinelli, *The Cunning of Recognition;* Trask, "Settlers of Color and 'Immigrant' Hegemony;" Mahmood, *Religious Difference in a Secular Age.*

(4) Furthermore, the question of Indigenous recognition in the Philippines enacted since the passing of the Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act (IPRA) in 1997 is mediated by the intersections of both the secular postcolonial Philippine nation and the question of religious difference. [29] As I argue in the fourth chapter, the boundaries of the postcolonial nation's "cultural" sphere of influence appear to draw a line between the cultural, Indigenous, and religious differences as armed conflict in the rural peripheries of the nation haunts the era of multiple "posts"—postcolonial and post-Cold War. I revisit these contradictions in the fourth chapter.

I lay out these often-strained attempts at recuperating the "global Indigenous," or "global Sinophone" for instance, *not* to herald a new figure of quintessential dispossession in need of global accounting as the decolonial paradigm too often incites us to do. Rather, I precisely highlight these fraught politics of recognition, emphasizing the rubrics through which the knowable identity comes to be recognizable that have been part and parcel of the ways the issue of violence has been resolved in particularly secular ways. In other words, we must recognize the relativizing tendencies of the notion of "cultural hybridity" when distilled— a 'deviancy' imagined outside the state, outside the law or history, that is unable to account for the deeply tumultuous "premodern" past relativized into the scope of the regional. It neither does justice to the desires for differentiation from the global Sinophone consciousness, one that has often taken center stage in reifying dominant narratives of violence and resolve.

Ironically, as I have begun to argue, the eruption of the Sinophone in the global consciousness also appears to condition the so-called normative site of US-led neoliberal multiculturalism found in its allied states, one that I seek to further mediate in this dissertation, precisely in their often-tenuous relations within what erupts within global historical and political consciousness. Ultimately, it is the convergence of the premodern region *as imagined* as a state of 'cultural hybridity' and the present moment *imagined as* the globally destined 'multicultural' future to come that interests me. How have such normative understandings of periodized history,

[29] Casumbal-Salazar notes the postcolonial complicities in the 'recognition' of the Indigenous and Muslim minorities in the rural peripheries of the Philippines. I also expand on this intersection of racial recognition, Indigeneity, culture, and religious difference in the Philippines.

culture,[30] and gender inform historical accounts and present-day implementation of multiculturalism in Asia-Pacific? How has each cohered to produce the disciplinary result in maintaining Asian regionalism as such?

Arming the Postnational 'Hybrid' Imagination

I close out this first chapter to return to and perhaps further temper the common impulses to figuratively propel a gendered figure like the comfort woman as a global emblem of 'deviancy.' If the condition of being 'localized' appears to be resolved in this move, what makes legible its 'deviancy,' and do these 'radical' futures purportedly opened by this gesture have the same access to its promised futures? Until now, we have traced the secular impulses of the gendered Pacific that identify violence of a particular kind and assume to resolve it in various categorical distinctions, in our case, either national or minority nationalist divisions. In this light, insights from Indigenous studies scholars begin to dismantle the limits of the nation in accounting for its internal differences through hybrid identities, when hybridity imagined under the banner of multiculturalism for the global Indigenous has meant assimilation, not peaceful amalgamation.[31] Not forgoing these crucial insights, I seek to mediate this moment of global attention on Indigeneity to continue tracing the productivity of these sociological categories of the gendered and racialized often made synonymous with a particularly US-allied decolonial imagination.

With an increasingly self-reflexive decolonial scholarship in tune with the limits of the nation, there has been a marked trend in moving away from nation-focused studies towards the transnational, translocal or the global as a framework in an attempt to provide a remedy for it. Not surprisingly, and perhaps precisely due to these factors, we often find that the site of decolonial futurity found *not* in the nationalist recuperation of, for instance, the Indigenous of the Philippines and Japan or the "multicultural" ethnic woman in South Korea, but as Sakai and Yoo

[30] On the fatal conjoining of nation and culture, Asad writes, "The men and women of each society make and *own* their history. "Nature" and "culture" (that famous duality accompanying the rise of nationalism) together form the conditions in which the nation uses and enjoys the world. Mankind dominates nature and each person fashions his or her individuality in the freedom regulated by the nation-state." See *Formations of the Secular,* 193.

[31] See for instance, Haunani-Kay Trask's inception of "Settlers of Color," Itsuji Dean Saranillio's "Why Asian Settler Colonialism Matters; Kale Bantigue Farjardo's "Queering and Transing the Great Lakes." Trask, Saranillio and Farjardo considers the intersections of Asian immigration in light of their settlements on Indigenous lands in the context of Hawaii and the Midwest of the United States.

note, in a future-imagined emblematic figure of the 'incurable woman.' Such a figure who hails a post-national dimension appears less complicit and certainly more universal than their embodied counterpart embroiled in the woes of the nation. It is as though the 'global post-national' paradigm is ushered in by our current fascination with coming to terms with the limits of the nation, which says much about our frantic efforts to dissociate the decolonial from the national, now safely relegated into the transnational or global framework. For these reasons, relatively little attention has been given to tracing the broader genealogies of liberalism through the uptake of gender and ethnic minority discourses within Asia, one that might reveal themselves as part and parcel of the intended effects of US interests in unmarking nations under its liberal democratic tutelage.

We recall the particularity of Southeast Asia as a site of investigation, particularly Indonesia[32] and at large Southeast Asia that animated Benedict Anderson's study of nationalism, though the particularity of this site comes to be abstracted in Anderson's theoretical insights of the rise of the 'global nation' as a modular and replicable form. What I mean to return to is the stubborn question of nationalism and the inadequacies of the *consensus* surrounding the problem of the masculinist nation that is assumed to be resolved where gender and racial recognition is bypassed into the terrain of the transnational and global or their contradictory recognition *within* the nation neatly negated through the paradigm of the *uncapturable "*every day" somehow outside politics. Such impulses regularly found across decolonial scholarship in the Pacific, as I argue, are ironically shared by the very masculinist Asian nation the decolonial seeks to differentiate itself from.

Let's consider these claims in terms of Pheng Cheah's critique of sociological categories. Cheah rehearses the critiques of the formation of "area studies" often conceived of as the non-Western region teeming with raw materials such as the immediacy of experience through which Western sociological universals seem to "rise above the immediacy through the mediation of abstract concepts that are universally communicable." Cheah, in this sense, seeks to attend to the problem of the "non-West" made into "mere object of factual knowledge rather than the subject

[32] I am referring to the "Cornell Paper" where Anderson's work refutes the official Indonesian narratives of the Thirtieth of September Movement that led to mass eradication and imprisonment of suspected communists in 1965. Anderson was famously expelled from Indonesia in 1972 though the ban was later lifted in 1998.

of theory,"[33] instead, heralding the possibilities of "universalizing Asia" by marking Asia's decolonial spirit as "the true heirs of the world-historical spirit of the French Revolution." Citing the collaborative possibilities where global finance (installation of ASEAN) meets the site of cultural exchange, Cheah for instance, evokes the transnational relevance of Indonesian novelist, Pramoedya Toer found in exile as a result of being betrayed and denied by the present Indonesian state. As Cheah reads, Toer's state of exile is the emblem of the new global torchbearer of "universal freedom," considered an "untranslatable" local, and precisely the site of alterity that can be potentialized as a "radical openness" to redefine, interpenetrate or construct the universal anew.[34] The future amalgamated universal is read in Toer's exile and hopeful anticipation of a return, not to the literal Indonesia in the present, but a reformed perhaps even modernized version that permits not just Toer himself, but his amalgamated liberal ideals to return.

Yet, what *kind* of amalgamation imagined by Cheah is permissible in making possible this new and improved humanism? What radical alterities or "raw experience" codified in this exilic narrative are admissible as part of the 'universally communicable' in the postnational, cosmopolitan, and global imagination Cheah forwards? We might further ask, what does a reflection of the act of identifying the problem that is nationalism, and its flip side, heralding the solution in the postnational freedom fighter who takes up the pen reveal about the limits of this new humanism?

Here, insights from Michael Allan prove useful to situate Toer's legibility within the terrain of world literature. As Allan historicizes and rethinks the "world republic of letters" Pascale Casanova celebrates in the inauguration of the Bengali poet Rabindranath Tagore in 1913, he questions whether indeed this moment marks the start of moving beyond Europe as the center of Enlightenment. Rather, Allan points to the curious semblance of form and address—"rules and norms that constrain how texts come to be recognized as works of literature…[where] the path to recognition entails working within genres, categories, and motifs [that] can be intelligible to readers as reaffirming and working within debates of this literary world."[35] What Allan draws in the rise of an internationalist field of literature is a curious narrowing of such a

[33] Cheah, 56-57.
[34] Cheah, 64-65.

[35] Allan, *In the Shadow of World Literature,* 32.

community with the formal education, identifiable features of form, and ways of address that insulate the world of literature as one that is not only exclusive but follows in redrawing the boundaries of what passes its secular thresholds and what is deemed illegible and impermissible. Similarly, what if the interpenetrations of what Cheah contends is 'radical alterity' are not so much radical as they are *permissible* differences that precisely redraw the borders of the progressive secular with the inclusion of Toer into not just the nascent internationalist terrain as Allan historicizes, but a post-nationalist one?

As I argue, we must rethink our frantic efforts to dissociate the decolonial from the national with our fixation on the transnational or global. To do so is *not* to return the site of the nation as a site of progressive futurity but to reflect on how the post-national moment that pervades our milieu continues to be a centrifugal force that precisely institutes notions of permissible alterity that partakes in reenacting these edifying boundaries of a new liberal humanism. By pushing the field of progressive critique to the point of nationalism and then post-nationalism, such a critique appears to abstract the creative and insidious means the 'national tradition' has taken up the language of the decolonial. To return to Anderson's nationalism is to also cite the site of Indonesia where "violence" appeared so readily available to critique, where Toer's contingent acceptance into the world of world literature had uncomfortably toed the line between "western democracy," "Marxism" and Islam.[36]

In other words, I step away from binaries of masculinist nationalism and decolonial liberal feminism to trace how such uptakes in new liberal principles propel the Cold War legacy of (de)territorial global capitalism under the so-called auspices of US-led internationalism. Such universal liberal principles tend not only to bypass the materiality of Cold War politics that has given shape to the articulation of apparent violence and universal resolve but also systematically forget that this postnational formulation of celebratory cosmopolitanism is also a product of the militarized and ideological legacy of the Cold War. As such, in somewhat complicating Rey Chow's claim that imperialism might best be visible precisely where there is no visible "physical coercion, without actually capturing the body and the land,"[37] I return precisely to uncanny places where multiculturalism is articulated in two US-allied nations, South Korea and the

[36] Anderson, 293. See Chapter 4 for a fuller discussion of the implication of recovering a singular liberal democratic terms of protest.

[37] Chow, 8.

Philippines. As I argue, in these spaces of apparent unmediated multicultural prowess staged as a façade of national prowess might hide behind them the irrecoverable militarized history that makes possible the forward-facing staging of multiculturalism.

In the intimacies of multiculturalism and militarism I draw, I aim to mediate the violent contradictions of the US Cold War waged in the Pacific, neatly resolved through the strategic use of implementation of progressive politics in US-allied Asia. The decolonial ethos mobilized to negate these violent exceptions likewise produces an amnesia that makes possible the continuation of the Cold War's exceptionally 'hot' fronts. This dissertation remains within such 'exceptions' found *not* in the progressive and capitalist part of Asia nor normatively found across transpacific diasporic circuits, but in various sequestered spaces, relegated to multiple 'elsewheres' in the so-called 'yet to be cataloged' parts of regional Asia. In doing so, I aim to show the limits of this new liberalism that has only selectively allowed for the once premodern "Orient" to transcend 'race' to emerge as modern "Asia." No longer requiring universal mediation, now part of the "universally communicable" as "true heirs" of the Revolutionary Spirit, Asia's partial emergence into modernity instead might mediate the series of historical exceptions that have allowed for the shifting and violent global fronts of revolutionary history-making from the Cold War to the War on Terror, from Asia to the Middle East.

As I continue to trace the *return* of the 'Asian America' as a sociological category into regional Asia as a harbinger and global decolonial emblem *proper,* I do so *not* to find a renewed transnational solidarity between the cosmopolitan sensibilities garnered by Hung Liu, Pramoedya Toer or their early predecessor, Rabindranath Tagore. Rather, I trace the return of sociological categories of race and gender to contextualize the emergence of their *nationally bound counterparts*—the migrant woman in South Korea or the Indigenous in the Philippines. What can a study of these two categorical racial figures emerging from the edges of history, the outskirts of secular modernity, and quite literally in the rural peripheries of their respective US-allied nations who have barely even 'reached' national recognition, let alone a postnational one, teach us about the exclusive world imagined under this new liberalism? Can this act of identifying and instituting the national moral boundaries of the nation and region contribute to creating the backwardness of criminality it seeks to undo? As we transition into the second chapter, I move from the argument we have traced so far—that the secular thrives by identifying 'apparent' violence—towards a closer look at the organizational effects of an instituted 'hybrid' future

purportedly devoid of this violence that strategically utilizes the figures of racial and gender inclusion.

As we have investigated throughout this chapter, we have followed the loose ends of the "Asian" cultural subject across the transpacific regional terrain. Quintessentially recovered under the secular decolonial tradition, this chapter mediated how the temporal-spatial distinctions of the self-evident "Regional Pacific" demarcates its relevance through a particular disciplining of "violence" as somehow easily identified by existing disciplinary formations of the political and historical, thereby conveniently expelled into the ideological constructs of the peaceful and feminine sphere of the cultural. Though this essay only briefly outlines some of the effects of the ideological separations between 'history vs. the every day,' 'politics vs. culture,' 'masculinist nation vs. feminist subject,' I have aimed to show how such disciplinary separations have conditioned what we can know about the visible etchings of the region reeling with their (after)effects. Such strategic evacuations of "violence" cannot be removed from the possibilities that the decolonial *participates* in and precisely becomes the desirable object exchanged to reinforce the moral and ethical boundaries towards naturalizing US militarized presence and neoliberalism in the region. What we begin to see is that if the geopolitical boundaries of the transpacific are redrawn according to where 'inherent violence' appears to reside, it is one ensured by the stubborn reinforcement of the cultural domain and its secular presuppositions.

CHAPTER 2
The South Korean Historical Subject

By the early 1990s, the comfort woman issue would emerge in its self-evident belatedness after more than five decades of silence since their systemic abductions at the height of the Japanese Empire before and during World War II. Referring to women taken as sexual slaves for the Japanese Imperial army from across East and Southeast Asia, "comfort women" appear today in South Korean discourse in the weekly Wednesday protests in front of the Japanese embassy, often referred to as the longest-running peace protest in effect since January of 1992. With the subsequent installment of the bronze statue of a young girl seated across the Japanese embassy in 2011, belated as it may seem, the issue has since found a degree of transnational visibility as versions of this "Statue of Peace" would soon be found replicated across museums in South Korea, Berlin, Sydney, San Francisco, and other sites of social justice organizing.[1] This much anticipated moment the subaltern "speaks" for the first time in more than half a century appears to evince the prowess of the transnational feminist coalitional movement in the decades leading up to the issue's eruption. As if to enact what Hannah Arendt anticipated as the international community's efforts to ensure the "right to have rights,"[2] even and despite the inability of nations to secure rights for their citizens, the exemplary success of this coalitionary movement appears to anticipate the rise of progressive politics across Asia. Not unlike the concomitant Minjung Movement, this crucial moment of liberal democratic and feminist protest culminated from the decades-long struggle against militarized governance, appears to be the timely and exemplary site of resistance often cited as the model to be replicated to combat the common Cold War problem of militarized governance found across the region.

While the Minjung Movement marks the agentive *political* grounds through which South Korea transitioned into its present system of parliamentary elections by the late 1980s, the puzzle of South Korea's *economic* modernization appears grounded in the often-opaque conditions of

[1] "Comfort women statues were only built intermittently at first, with one in 2007, one in 2008, and one in 2010. But since the comfort women statue went up in front of the Japanese Embassy in 2011, the statues have been increasing exponentially. There were three in 2012, five in 2013, 11 in 2014 and 23 in 2015." https://english.hani.co.kr/arti/english_edition/e_international/755207.html

[2] Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 298.

the Cold War. Often attributed to the era of militarized governance that had undeniably had some part to do with the economic "miracle on the Han River," the militarized Cold War conditions under which South Korea's capital accumulation had been achieved appear neatly resolved through the rising political consciousness of its citizenry. It is as though the once "oriental subject" of apparent underdevelopment appears to emerge into neutrality as citizen subjects, now capable of partaking in the modern discourse of gender and even racial recognition, but only once on the other side of this crucial political and economic temporal fold. I dwell on this key moment when, for the first time in South Korean history, the political and the economic appear to cohere into national legibility, the necessary condition, as I argue, for the emergence of such an emblematic and politically viable figure as the comfort woman.

At large, this paper seeks to problematize the assumptions of "locality" surrounding the transpacific decolonial project emblematically instantiated by the recovery of the comfort woman and exemplarily found in South Korea. We recall Elaine Kim and Chungmoo Choi's characterization of twentieth-century Korea as "a palimpsest of multiple layers of Japanese colonialism and neoimperial domination, especially by U.S. hegemony, which superimposed its systems on the political and social infrastructure of Japanese colonial rule," citing this change of hands as the reason why "South Korea, like many other former colonies, never had an opportunity *to decolonize in the true sense of the word*."[3]

What concerns me in Kim and Choi's remark is the unmarked site of the local nation as the grounds where the "decolonial" in the "true sense of the word" is imagined to take place. Underlying this formulation is the assumption of US settler colonialism understood as the fundamental problem of "confiscate[ing]...indigenous lands" and setting up "extralegal spaces of exception [that]...exert[s] influences over local politics,"[4] as Lisa Yoneyama outlines to signify the continued presence of US military bases across its allied nations. Yet, the 'local' US-allied Asian nation made synonymous with "indigeneity" as a legible marker, for one, appears to sidestep the formation of the nation that, from its very inception, had been a product birth through its alliance with US militarism and its underlying capitalist interest in the nation and

[3] Elaine Kim and Chungmoo Choi, "Introduction," 3 (my italics).

[4] Lisa Yoneyama, "Toward a Decolonial Genealogy of the Transpacific," 474.

region at large.[5] In the workings of empire that might function today precisely through handing over the task of discipline to its allied nations, for Naoki Sakai and Hyon Joo Yoo, is the problematic formation of the postcolonial national identity built on a "victimhood consciousness of an anti-Americanism" that reinforces the self-enclosed boundaries of the nation "in relation to which the atrocities of the global sovereign state are legitimated and authorized."[6] In other words, in the anti-American sentiment that often imagines demilitarization as the gateway to "local Indigenous national sovereignty" may reside oft-forgotten underlying neoliberal workings of these alliances that make possible such the 'locality.' Hence, "Indigeneity" made synonymous with postcolonial national sovereignty and then conceptually reduced to a matter of demilitarization appears only to doubly enshroud US empire's *satellite* dominance and its murkier neoliberal interests imagined and enacted through such alliances. I bring to the fore the need to further examine the mutually constitutive constructs of this US-allied 'local' nation in light of the continued role of these "extralegal spaces of exception;" whose "sovereignty" is secured in such a decolonial imagination when proximity to militarized violence and thereby proximity to death processes have been unevenly distributed across South Korean history?

I begin by noting this unsatisfactory decolonial framework that often posits demilitarization and the hopes of progressive politics *yet to arrive* in Asia that stands in to resolve the contradictions of political and economic freedom projected into the perpetual horizon of the future anticipated. The irony of this future anticipated is none the more clearly seen than precisely by the 90s when political liberal democratic 'freedom' alongside 'gender' and 'racial' recognition, alongside the recognition of the comfort woman, appears finally enacted by the South Korean state, paradoxically in the same moment both reproductive and productive labor in the peripheries of the nation is handed over to the 'ethnic other.' This timely displacement, as I argue, might instead be suggestive of the inadequacies of radical progressive politics and its future orientation to attend to the murky 'interiorized' conditions of South Korean economic racialized and gendered modernity. In other words, despite radical politics' purported position against the state, their claims within a revolutionary future unmarked in national terms beg the

[5] Sakai and Yoo, *Trans-pacific Imagination.* We are reminded that US empire differentiates itself by claiming its ability to recognize ethnic national sovereignty, unlike its colonial predecessors.

[6] Sakai and Yoo, 9.

question of what might remain irrecoverable to their joint vision of futurity in the age of US empire.

To this end, I briefly set aside the unease often felt when bringing together the comfort woman made synonymous with South Korean nationalist discourses to note its unsatisfactory counterpoint—the common recourse in gender and ethnic studies to construct the comfort woman's "everyday struggle" seemingly uncapturable by politics. Instead, I mine the liminal space where the comfort woman's "every day" appear to meet its limits within a discursive regime that had cast the comfort woman against the 'yanggongju' (the "Yankee Princess," "Yankee whore" or the kijich'on woman),"[7] a slur that had been used to indicate sex workers in the emergent US military camp towns since the inception of the South Korean nation. Separated by one degree of difference to abstract the literal displacement of the Japanese Imperial army with the US military since 1945, this strategic differentiation between Japanese Imperialism and US Empire, or the comfort woman and the "yanggongju" leaves us crucial clues as to the ensuing ideological abstraction between camp towns, and the economic conditions that have amounted to the unmarked site of South Korea's emergent political and economic prowess.

In short, this essay asks, how might a return to US-military camp towns mediate its uses as a key disciplinary site that had procured social reproduction and order across South Korean history? What might a closer evaluation of the differentiated conditions of militarized governance reveal about the nation's economic conditions of possibility, made obscure precisely as it is left outside the purview of 'local' relevance, sequestered into this zone of exception? Today inhabited by sex workers from former Soviet countries and Southeast Asia since the 90s, this camp town genealogy seeks to mediate how *difference* is strategically made irrelevant, spread into the global diasporas or sequestered within, simultaneously as the comfort woman issue becomes politically viable within the national and transnational feminist frame of vision. In other words, investigating the *terms* of the comfort woman's historical legibility may mediate why such a configuration as "comfort woman and race" or rather South Korea's 'racial' economic conditions of capital accumulation is deliberately made illegible.

[7] Moon, *Sex among Allies: Military Prostitution in U.S.-Korea Relations.* Moon delineates the relatively unsuccessful attempt at shedding light on behalf of kijich'on women of US camp towns in comparison to the chongsindae "comfort woman" movement where voluntary sexual labor and forced sexual labor was the line drawn to differentiate the two.

"Orienting" the Bronze Statue

We return to the bronze statue first staged across the Japanese embassy in Seoul, today replicated across the self-evident transnational sphere of influence. The comfort woman issue appears transnational in nature given the spread of the Imperial army's reach that can be traced across the newly formed postcolonial nations of the region. On the one hand, the ongoing feminist effort in South Korea might exemplify the region's broader hopes of the comfort woman's proper restitution within Asian nations, an anticipation that appears presently hampered by layers of imperial occupation and emergent repressive masculinist states. Yet, this oft-naturalized division between the masculinist national-building enterprise and the transnational feminist project appears insufficient to explain why a figure so actively proliferated as an emblem of South Korean *gendered* nationalism in the transnational field of vision is difficult to locate locally. To date, there are no monuments in South Korea to mark known sites of Japanese encampments during colonial times, an 'unmarking' that might appear peculiar when the terms of protest at times take to comparison the Holocaust;[8] a simple monument 'on-site' *like* in Auschwitz could have easily remedied a dearth in the archives that could have better attested to the fullness of the comfort woman's experience. What then is the purchase of this figure so readily understood in its global applicability, strategically facing outward, and floating transnationally when its site of "origin" remains uncertain, perhaps even intentionally muddled?

This crucial omission at the heart of the comfort woman issue might not be difficult to glimpse when we move away from the bronze statue strategically facing outward to situate "on-site," where we find the Japanese encampment inherited by the US military since 1945. As recent scholarship note the intimacies of the two figures—the comfort woman and US military *kijich'on* prostitutes—the displaced undertaking of sexual labor prompts a reflection on the productive effects of their steadfast divisions as well as the historian's task of archival selection. In particular, I build on Katherine Moon's account of the branching of the comfort woman and the kijichon women's movements[9] that simultaneously occurred in the mid-1980s. As a period

[8] The comfort woman issue is often contested in terms of the broader global failure towards reparations in the aftermath of World War II, often noting the Nuremberg Trials as its point of reference. As one protestor during an early Wednesday protest in front of the Japanese Embassy declares, "They were only interested in their own compensation and staged the war tribunals. They did nothing about Asian countries" (From the documentary, *Murmuring*).

[9] Moon, "South Korean Movements against Militarized Sexual Labor," 319-320.

also marked by widespread national labor-based activism, notably with the Minjung democratic struggle towards liberation against the series of US-sanctioned military dictators, both the comfort woman issue and the kijich'on women's movement appear caught up in their differential struggle toward legibility within this broader national context. I bring in this national backdrop *not* to further justify the diminishing interest in either the comfort woman or the kijich'on issue. On the contrary, I do so precisely to dwell on the *terms* of both national and transnational legibility to bring to light those who may be left outside of these terms of protest. I briefly recount the productive genealogy of the bronze statue's 'local' elision.

Coinciding with the Korean feminist efforts of the 80s to recover the comfort woman as a virtuous figure fit for national mourning were often the parallels yet distinctions drawn between the forced and the voluntary. As a figure that stands as the "other" to the nationally legible comfort woman, the "willing" and thereby often irrecuperable participants of the sex industry unveils a lesser-known lineage of the figure of the 'yanggongju' or the kijich'on woman.[10] As Katharine Moon shows the highly systematized regulation of US militarized camp towns agreed upon by the two governments (notably with the signing of the Status of Forces Agreement in 1966 that gave free use of land for US military activities), the prolific sex industry raked in millions of dollars to the nascent industrializing nation, pleasuring US military personnel as well as foreign businessmen with "sex tours."

The argument that there would be no South Korea without the economic value produced through the kijich'on woman's sacrifice that had built the economic foundations of the nation[11] echoes across the study of camptown history. What I seek to highlight, alongside emerging scholarship, is the tenuous relationship between sex work and the nascent industrializing nation. As Kathleen Barry suggests, the state-led constructs of the sex industry had been the convenient "dumping ground...between patriarchal family structure and the industrializing labor force,"[12] one corroborated by the growing anecdotal evidence that shows migrant women arriving in Seoul looking for employment opportunities in the post Korean War era, were often strategically

[10] Statistics collected in 1991 show that by 1987, 30% of jobs available to women were sex industry-related. See Louie, "Minjung Feminism," 420.

[11] "The Korean economy is built on my back, my mother's back," as one adoptee voices in the film, *The Woman, the Orphan, and the Tiger.*

[12] Barry, *The Prostitution of Sexuality*, 163.

targeted and funneled into the sex industry at train stations or even, at times, state-approved employment agencies.[13]

To contextualize the recovery of the comfort woman by the 90s and her irrecoverable counterparts is likewise to note the receding signification from the central site of national historical relevance—working-class protests erupting by the 80s. As the contemporaneous feminist movements often cite the death of a young woman killed at a women's factory in 1979 that had triggered mass protests against the Park Chung Hee militarized regime, the citations that lend legibility to her death appear *delimited* to her status as a productive laborer. Itself resting on the broader celebratory story of South Korea's modernization attributed to the mass influx of rural women to emergent yog'ong or women's factories, such labor-based efforts towards national recovery appear haunted by those whose sexualized labor might have been the very excluded foundation to the nationalist labor-based terms of the Minjung movement into national historical memory.

The terms that seek to revive the kijich'on woman through notions of labor echo with greater unease as we follow the trajectories of the kijich'on woman. On the one hand, Grace M. Cho traces the ghostly figure of the 'yanggongju' (the "Yankee Princess") into Korean American history whose militarized beginnings are resolved into the "privatized" sphere of the family through marriage to her American GI husband. As a figure who accounts for approximately half of the ethnic Koreans in the United States,[14] the 'yanggongju' emerging within US borders indexes the further interiorized history of sexual labor for those who remained within South Korean borders. The interiorized genealogy continues with the systematic expulsion of children born from these state-sanctioned sexual encounters into the transnational adoption system. In a system that began in 1953 in the aftermath of the Korean War and remains the longest-running

[13] Park, *The State's Sexuality: Prostitution and Postcolonial Nation Building in South Korea*. In a testimony by Park Yeongja, a kijich'on sex worker testifying in a lawsuit filed in 2014 against the Korean government, she states, "...we tried to find a job at state-approved employment agencies, but they trafficked us to camptowns," 1.

[14] Cho, *Haunting the Korean Diaspora: Shame, Secrecy, and the Forgotten War*, *23.* Cho traces the hauntings of the figure of the 'yanggongju' whose migration to the United States is enabled by the War Brides Act of 1945. Through subsequent laws that extended immigration opportunities to families of 'war brides,' the figure of the 'yanggongju' accounts for around half of ethnic Koreans in the US.

international adoption system in the world, as some argue, South Korea's economic miracle may not have been possible without its major export—its children. [15]

Yet, transnational adoptions followed a further interiorizing genealogy of sexualized and racialized sex work. White Amerasian children who could better perform the ideals of the heteronormative and white nuclear family were preferred over black Amerasian children. Though roughly one in three Amerasians had been fathered by an African American GI, black Amerasians only constituted thirteen percent of all adoptions from 1950-1966, the result of which was the subsequent overrepresentation of black Amerasians within South Korea. [16] Unaccepted within South Korean society and often unadoptable, Black Amerasians often came from and remained in camp towns, erased either through sheer sequestering in camp towns or at best through the promises of ascending miscegenation across the legible modern ethnic formations of the Transpacific—Korea, Asia, and Asian America each as co-constitutive. With blackness evoked as the monstrous interior as the literal embodiments of the Transpacific fear of "apocalyptic monsters" in reference to Asian multiracials being born at the turn of the century, considered "even more frightening if [their] multiracial composition includes African ancestry,"[17] the Afro-Korean sex worker stood as the figure of abject miscegenation even behind the legibility of the 'Yankee Princess.' Yet, she, too, would disappear with a demographic change—the replacement of the Amerasian sex worker with migrant women from Southeast Asia and former Soviet states by the mid-90s. [18]

The story of modern South Korea written from the perspective of this genealogy narrates the impossibilities of recovering a self-contained ontogenic 'Korean' identity, instead revealing

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[15] Kim, "'The Ending Is Not an Ending at All': On the Militarized and Gendered Diasporas of Korean Transnational Adoption and the Korean War;" Duncan, "Genealogies of Unbelonging: Amerasians and Transnational Adoptees as Legacies of U.S Militarism in South Korea," 277.

[16] Lee, "The Black Amerasian Experience in Korea: Representations of Black Amerasians in Korean and Korean American Narratives," 8, 15. As Lee writes, "One in three Amerasians were fathered by an African American GI, though they only constituted thirteen percent of all adoptions from 1950-1966." As Adaora Ede also writes, "In the mid-20th century, many publications catered towards middle-class African Americans introduced the Black-Korean children left behind in the spoils of war as "brown babies" willing and ready to be adopted and taken out of a society that did not accept who they were. Nonetheless, the bulk of Black- Korean orphans were unadopted to the United States because frankly, in the heat of the Civil Rights Era, many African-American families were not financially stable enough to adopt."

[17] Houston and Williams, "No Passing Zone," vii-xii.

[18] Choo, "Selling Fantasies of Rescue: Intimate Labor, Filipina Migrant Hostesses, and US GIs in a Shifting Global Order."

the violent conditions of possibility for the monoethnic nation carved through the strategic expulsion and extraction of gendered and racialized bodies. Yet, rather than recuperate such repressed bodies as identities, such impulses must give way to a reflection of a "tradition" Talal Asad argues are "the historical conditions that enable the production and maintenance of a specific discursive tradition and their transformations."[19] Such a view of "tradition," in this case, perhaps the now tired question of the national tradition attunes us to the collusions required to maintain this identifiable formation. Whether through the often-unquestioned synonymity of the "gendered" that appears to universally attach itself to the postcolonial national paradigm, the desires for restitution derived from the staging of "violated body on display," as Saidiya Hartman highlights, instead must also scrutinize its archival mediation that "determines, regulates and organizes…subjects and objects of power."[20] In other words, we must attend to the foundational violence and the assumptions of gendered recovery that is productive rather than repressive. As Hartman calls to instead focus on the "itineraries of disappearance," I extend, how might this return to camp town mediate not just disappearances of gendered and racialized bodies but the productive appearance of historical agents coming into self-conscious coherence?

In other words, I remain with the stubborn terms of recovery—labor and the economic, the forced and the willing—that appear to dictate the terms of national, feminist, or even racial recovery. For instance, it was the "Yankee whore" or the birth mother's *willing* participation in the sex industry and her willingness to give up her body and her children for national progress that allocates blame on the individual. *Choice,* then, allows for the evasion of responsibilities of the state's hand in systematically staging these women as unfit mothers. Even as the state anticipates the return of adoptees alongside the global Korean diaspora into the South Korean imaginary through newly installed immigration channels,[21] the birthmother's compounding 'choice' of labor and 'choice' in relinquishing the child is relied upon to ensure her continued silence. Instead, appearing to thwart the good-willed efforts to stage a global ethnic diasporic reunion, the birth mother's absence becomes grounds through which to stage the figurative national father who steps in on her behalf.

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[19] Asad, "The Idea of an Anthropology of Islam." 23.

[20] Hartman, "Venus in Two Acts," 10.

[21] For instance, the F-4 visa, known as the visa for ethnic Koreans, is often limited to those of Korean descent.

To situate the longstanding sex industry within the apparent eruption of class-based and feminist movements by the 90s, whose rubric of archivability is written at the limits of the agentive national subject, belies the criminalization and economic value engendered through placing individual responsibility on the willful subject. Made persistently and recedingly difficult to archive, this camptown genealogy mediates the sex industry as both the ideological and material grounds for the production of the normative working-class citizen subject. Yet, if this genealogy I have thus far summarized mediates the 'economic' contributions garnered through the marginalization of the fallen woman, each is still embedded in the terms of recognition that depends on the otherness of the Afro-Korean sex worker. In other words, if (re)productive labor is the prerequisite for historical legibility, the Afro-Korean sex worker, bound within Cold War camp towns whose impossibility of contributing to any national liberation struggle, resistance, or social reproduction, appears to be the excluded grounds required for the legibility the emergent national value-producing 'laboring' subject of any sociological particularity (i.e. race, class, gender, sexuality, etc.). As the figure of abject miscegenation, the Afro-Asian sex worker may be the unrecoverable interior to the legibility of even the kijich'on' woman recoverable under notions of reproduction and economic value produced, however belatedly recognized today.

Afropessimism—in other words, blackness as the negative resource for South Korean social reproduction—might give us a name for this abject process. Yet, racial anti-blackness evoked here appears oddly misplaced, exceeding its "original" citations to transatlantic slavery. An epistemology of unmarked violence appears to be produced, *not* because abjection of a racial order cannot be found, but because Black death here slips outside the purview of the spatialized and periodized contours of world history and their attending assumption of what amounts to the "historical"—the preconditions of value production and the agentive claims to "resistance" and its revolutionary "posts." In other words, the 'Afro-Asian sex worker' appears liminal to the possibilities of 'archivability,' further interiorized as she is made *symptomatic* of her more universal counterparts. Interiorized into the temporal-spatial exceptions of the Cold War in South Korea, she, like others in this genealogy, appears only ever visible as she dissolves into that which we have already named. Yet, antiblackness evoked as one remainder of her world-historical counterpart—as merely *one example* of racial discrimination—appears to be the very denial of experience necessary to ground the unmediated ascendence of modern South Korea into capitalist modernity, made possible through its contemporary alliance with US empire.

Notwithstanding the critical possibilities of recovering Black lives in Cold War South Korea, can "race" as a biologized episteme fully attend to the disappearance of Afro-Asian bodies? Similarly, is it a language sufficient to account for the "regional camp town sex worker" emerging in the wake of the Afro-Asian's disappearance from camp towns by the 90s? In the scope of relevance historians often delimit to ethnic or national import, there may not have been a place for the recovery of such a figure, made redundant through sheer hyphenated terms. In other words, what might the utterance of "race" only visible as they dissipate into a periodized and spatialized understanding of world history say about the productive workings of the historical archive? If the voids of the archive are made to speak, can they say more than to reaffirm these disciplinary distinctions? Or can the anecdotes of "race" found in Cold War camp towns of South Korea and their once more interiorized present "regional racial" testify to a denial of experience—of present-day (re)configuration of militarized labor extractions in regional Asia made illegible under existing rubrics of sociological and historical signification? I situate in however contingently visible incongruities of the 'racial,' particularly the anecdotal disappearance of black bodies found *not* in chattel slavery within the often-assumed safety of the periodized premodern, but within *modern* camp towns of South Korea as the interiorized gendered of the racialized (or rather, also the racialized of the gendered) figure of non-value required for the possibility of the unmediated global multicultural archive.[22]

From Regional to Racial, Premodern to Modern

I extend a twofold critique of the "racial," one that reiterates what many discontent with a Marxist and liberal pluralist orientation note are the imperatives to be productive, progressive, and respectable to be recognized within multicultural discourses sanctioned within a legal framework of rights.[23] Reflecting on the public emergence of the feminist and multicultural culminated within the broader national Minjung movement erupting by the late 80s, the

[22] Reddy, "Asian Diasporas, Neoliberalism, and Family." Reddy characterizes the archive that is "not imply an institutional site for the recording of the past and of historical and social difference...It is a technique by which the modern U.S. state promotes the citizen as a universal agent through that knowledge production—to women, queers, people of color, etc.—demanding that we take up its framework for difference (both historical and social) as a prerequisite for a validated agency....the legal archive subjugates the pasts and futures in the name of recording supposedly both difference and community," 115-116.

[23] Ferguson, *Aberration in Black.*

boundaries between the agentive and its others appear drawn across the temporal threshold of the Cold War. In other words, I draw attention to the possible timeliness of the discourse of class struggle, *then* gender, *then* race at this crucial juncture that may indicate an arrival of sorts—to have reached a certain threshold of historical recognizability as the nation finds itself morphing to meet the "neutral" terrain of modern politics as such and their attending sociological formations of the properly-oriented citizen subjects—race, class, gender, sexuality, etc.[24]

Yet, traced across this temporal fold is *first* the militarized construction of the underdeveloped "oriental" nation in the aftermath of the Korean War and the ensuing period of militarized 'US-liberal democratic tutelage.' What interests me is the nation's capital accumulation derived from the nation's state of sociological non-particularity. I note the curious moment South Korea emerges into modern self-governance capable of governing its own citizen subjects of multiplicity, *only once* capital accumulation had been enacted through the construction of the non-distinct 'oriental other.' The memory of its conditions of possibility strategically left to the wayside, the nation only appears able to recover historical memory at the limits of the resistant citizen subject bound within the world-historical tale of revolutionary class struggle. It is as though nation's proper historical direction only begins in the 1990s, once properly sutured into the neutral terrain of democratic self-governance.

Yet, this retroactive suturing of South Korea's revolutionary national history mediates the hidden genealogy of the improper that had recast this Cold War period of capital accumulation into a recognizable liberal democratic framework. For one, the Minjung Movement—the privileged site of agentive history in the making—appears reconfigured from its socialist decolonial origins sequestered into Cold War history in favor of rewriting the movement as one of civil liberal and democratic protest, eliding in one move the red scare that had haunted and disciplined the nation's very formation. Further still, what remains irrecuperable to this nationalized tale of "democratic resistance," as I have narrated, are also the racially differentiated conditions of sexual labor that had built such a thing as South Korean modernity, left to the

[24] See Ferguson's discussion of the overdetermination of historical materialism that has the bourgeoisie tendency "to read modern civilization as the racialized scene of heteronormative disruption. Marx fell into that ideology as he conflated the dominant representation of the prostitute with the social upheavals wrought by capital," 10. The heteropatriarchal retrieval of class struggle into the universal is made possible through the relegation of particularities into the zone of the private—race, gender, and sexuality (might I add, religion)—whose relevance even in the particular is only made thinkable as they become retrievable once surpassed the unspoken boundaries of respectability or progress, i.e. universality.

margins of what counts within the framework of "ethnic national history." In this sense, the 'regional sex worker,' met with these unspoken limits of the agentive historical, compounded once more by the receding significance of the "ethnic" into hyphenated regional terms, is neither recoverable within the catalogs of the trans-*national* nor the racial multicultural. Yet, this receding signification might provide the means to rethink the "region" as an undertheorized formation—the vertiginous temporal and spatial void and the site of multiply compounded exceptions that make possible the unmediated terms of the global decolonial archive. I dwell on the regional historical imagination productively put to use to abstract these conditions of racialized and gendered national modernity.

We recall the tendencies of the Japanese affront in the Pacific to be relegated into regional terms, that is, to be recalled as mere evidence of a "premodern residue,"[25] filed into the "hybridized" abyss of the periodized premodern where the region's monolithic and uncivilized past is quickly dismissed with the proper instantiation of modern universalism. The comfort woman's liminal position, neither premodern nor modern, reflects the struggles of periodization itself—is she merely a figure of the premodern past neatly resolved with the rise of postcolonial sovereignty under US democratic tutelage?[26] The recent uproar regarding the alleged "legal" and thereby consenting status of the comfort woman in an article published by Harvard Law School Professor Mark Ramseyer in the International Review of Law and Economics mirrors these anxieties of periodization.[27] For if Ramseyer's *modern* tools of economic analysis yield the comfort woman as the 'willing' subject under contractual obligation, we are confronted with the contradictions of the Japanese empire that cannot safely be relegated into the premodern imaginary when its mode of colonial governance has been a recognizably *modern* and legal one, obtainable as discrete data points for economic analysis.[28]

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[25] Yamanouchi, Koschmann, and Narita. *Total War and "Modernization."* Victor Koschmann summarizes Japan's use of "premodern particularism versus modern universalism," noting how Japan often claimed the idea of the "premodern residue" that became "the key to interpreting Japan's entire modern history, including especially the wartime period...It was as if history had begun anew in the autumn of 1945," xi-xii.

[26] As I outline in the first chapter, I trace the discursive effects of the comfort woman as she participates in remapping US-allied regionalism.

[27] Ramseyer, "Contracting for Sex in the Pacific War."

[28] The historicity of the figure of the abducted woman is often challenged. It appears the statistical significance of the comfort woman premised on Japanese abduction of women is called into question when met with the systematic

For Mark Peterson, a scholar of Korean Studies, the contradictions in Ramseyer's claims are anyway neatly resolved by assuming "healing" occurs with a certain "passing of time," founded on the understanding that the issue of the comfort woman can safely be relegated to the scope of the past. After all, we have instantiated a new temporality—the national South Korean *post*colonial time—that, coupled with a discourse marked by a particular kind of "sensitivity" safely within the scope of gender, is assumed to have the potential to heal.[29] Redrawing the distinction between the abductions of the "comfort women" and 'willing prostitutes,' the contradictions of Japan's modern mode of colonial governance appear sidelined as a result, and its continuation within US imperial alliances further *interiorized* into the present postcolonial South Korean state.

The compounding effects of the *idea* of the 'premodern regional' continue to interiorize violence into 'premodern South Korean history.' Take, for instance, Kun Jong Lee's account of the Afro-Asian experience in South Korea, rationalized as the deployment of a collective consciousness where blackness became the "personification of the Korean blood contaminated by foreign soldiers...through innumerable military conflicts with China, Mongolia, and Japan throughout its history."[30] Yet again, we witness the recourse to the regional premodern imagination as a "dumping ground" of sorts, abstracting the very terms that have allowed for the modern rise of the postcolonial state. If only to belabor the point, the very terms that have made the comfort woman, and even the once-monstrous figure of the "Yankee whore" later (albeit only partially) redeemable through notions of social (re)production, consigns the monstrous non-productive and non-value producing Afro-Asian object of sexual desire irredeemable. The Afro-Asian sex worker is neither the unpalatable reminder of the premodern Asian regional struggle spilling over into the present, nor merely a remainder of transatlantic slavery's legacy

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means through which sexual labor had been procured, both as a means of displacing existing Chosŏn courtesan systems of prostitution, a remnant of a premodern Korean slave system, as well as the transplanting of existing Japanese means for prostitution made present in the colony. I do not recite these efforts precisely because this paper takes a discursive approach to question the synonymity of the figure with national discourse fifty years after the fact. See Lee, "Ramseyer's Paper: Criticism of It, and Arguments in Its Favor." See also Jin, "Reconsidering Prostitution under the Japanese Occupation: Through the Korean Brothels in Colonial Taiwan."

[29] Peterson, "Comfort Women: Japan Again Provokes Anger in Korea."

[30] Lee, 12.

manifesting as racial discrimination, but a contemporary figure of repudiation that makes possible the unmediated rise of South Korea and her US-allied regional futurity.

Mediating Racial Blackness in the Public Sphere

The selective and timely mediation of blackness in the public, at times, evoked as the symbol of camp town monstrosity and in others to solicit the prowess of nationalist inclusion, enact the entwinement of national mourning with blackness and restitution *after the fact.* As Kun Jong Lee recounts, the invocation of Afro-Koreans in the South Korean consciousness had indelibly left a mark in the Korean literary and filmic landscape,[31] one that had been figures cast as the racially repudiated, circulated to reinforce the borders of ethnic national moral propriety. Yet, the disappearance of the Afro-Koreans as figures of disdain, replaced by the changing 'progressive' mediation of blackness, demands that blackness once more speak to reinforce the same borders of nations that had once sanctioned the slow and systematic means of black death into camp town amnesia.

As we see in the case of the exceptional national inclusion and celebration of the Afro-Asian R&B singer, Insooni, born from an African American soldier and a Korean mother, Insooni's singular and public restitution reflects what Hartman notes as "the spectacular character of black suffering"[32] whose inclusion into contemporary Korean imaginary mediates the conditions of (im)possibilities of celebrating certain bi-racial ethnicities only in particular moments in Korean history. While today, the restitutive gesture implied through Insooni's story is brought to light to reinvigorate the South Korean nation as the surrogate adoptive father for the

[31] As Lee recounts the black Amerasians evoked within the Korean consciousness, Lee writes, "they [black Amerasians] have left indelible marks on Korean culture and literature. We can find at least four Korean films featuring black Amerasians: Kim Han-il's *Nae-ga naeun geomdungi* (The Darkie I Gave Birth To) (1959); Kang Dae-seon's *Heungnyeo (*A Black Woman*)* (1982); Yu Hyeon-mok's *Sanghan galdae (*The Broken Reed (1984); and Kim Ki duk's *Suchwin bulmyeong* (Address Unknown) (2000). Black Amerasians associated with the U.S. military, camptowns, and military prostitution were also persistently if not frequently featured in Korean narratives from the late 1950s: Yu Ju-hyeon's "Taeyang-ui yusan" (A Legacy of the Sun) (1957); Kim Sun-deok's *Eomma, na-man wae geomeoyo?* (Mom, Why Am I Alone Black?) (1965); Jo Jung-rae's "Miun ori saekki" (Ugly Ducklings) (1978); Mun Sun-tae's "Munsin-ui ttang" (Land of Tattoos) (1987); Yun I-na's "Samdae" (Three Generations) (1992); and An Il-sun's *Ppaetbeol* (Quagmire) (1995). Lee, 9.

[32] Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection,* 3.

fatherless Insooni, as her hit single "Father" speaks of,[33] her story instead contextualized within the camp town genealogy reflects the sensationalized and exemplary figure of blackness whose genealogical relevance as the literal grounds for social (re)production remains tragically and historically irrecuperable.

On the other hand, the anecdotal evocation of "Africa" or 'racial blackness' within the South Korean public sphere eagerly cites the potentials of a progressive Afro-Asian solidarity,[34] raising adjacent questions of the limits of the archive and its recourse to a certain assumption of world history. As Soo Ryun Yoon explores, the recent struggles of Burkinabe performer's labor rights disputes against the Pocheon Africa Museum of Original Art in 2014[35] highlight the mediation of blackness in the public sphere that cast doubt on the potentials of an unmediated 'Afro-Asian' solidarity. As public accounts of the Burkinabe performers are cast as a "slave labor exposé" to unearth the performer's condition of living in "mice infested housing, unpaid extramural activities, subminimum wage and terminated contract," Yoon notes the dual evocation of Africa and racial blackness productively placed into use for political purposes. First, as part of the agenda to "self-refashion...contemporary South Korea as a progressive, humanitarian nation," the staging Black performers as museum exhibits associated with premodernity thereby underdevelopment, stages blackness not just to fashion "progressive and humanitarian South Korea," but redoubles by mediating their struggles to publicize the violation of human rights, in this case, by the oppositional political party.

To cast doubt on the potential of a global decolonial Afro-Asian solidarity is instead to mediate their second order of violence in their enunciation in the present. I do so, also to highlight the possible excess to this assemblage of the historically racialized—labor presently *unmarked*, providing that ideological and material conditions that sustain such a thing as the

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[33] Insooni recounts the meaning behind her hit single "Father" released in 2010 with a story that relays how her parents met in the backdrop of the Korean War: "When I sang 'Father,' I thought of my own father and tried to see things from his perspective... When my father came to Korea as a soldier, it was a time when America employed conscription... He probably lived in constant fear of a possible outbreak of war in a foreign country, which he was sent to in the name of peace. The parents of drafted men probably resented the fact that their sons had to fight for a country that they didn't even know. Then, my father met my mother, in whom he found solace, and eventually I was born out of their love. [When I sing the song], I [think] about the soldiers who fought in the Korean War." (The INNERview)

[34] See for instance, this Afro-Asian paradigm reproduced in Vijay Prashad's *Everybody was Kung Fu Fighting.*

[35] See Yoon, "Artists or Slave Laborers? Performing Uncapturability in Burkinabe Performers' Labor Rights Struggle in South Korea."

"Afro-Asian" modality of "resistance." To further contextualize Yoon's critique of the politicization of racial blackness, might also reveal the limits of Yoon's argument delimited to the terms of archival selection; in the sheer need to delimit the scope of relevance, Yoon's articulation of racial blackness might reveal the under-remarked economic basis that undergird the possibilities of the public eruption of such contentious issues. What Yoon leaves out in recounting the performers' conditions of living are the ongoing dire working conditions of migrant workers[36] found residing in the *same* spaces the Burkinabe performers had been found, quite literally in the same migrant workers' shelter where Lee's exposition places black performers celebrating their ongoing political struggles for recognition.

At first glance, the issue of migrant laborers in South Korea appears as one example of the larger global migrant issue we have neatly called "racial capitalism," whose world historical referent is always already embedded in the historical conditions mapped across the Afro-Asian contours of world history. Yet, in the threshold of politics that differentiates between these struggles might be the intimacies of the guest and migrant, legal and illegal, cosmopolitan and rural, performance and labor, and perhaps even global or regional, [37] whose thresholds of the political mediate the normalized conditions of labor-extraction across agricultural and manufacturing industries presently sustain the imagination of a late-capitalist South Korea. In other words, to conceive of the political as a threshold of sorts, might also reveal how the evocation of the 'global migrant struggle' must also contend with the thresholds of the 'racial'—multiply mediated and compounded by the nation, regional and world history at large. The productive results of invoking 'race' within the scope of a nation's "rights-based" discourse, as these examples show, trace its intimate participation in the symbolic regime that redraws the boundaries of such global legibilities.

Hence, we must also ask, how has the spatialized ideological limits of the 'Asian' confine internal to itself the question of labor extraction and social reproduction as the analytic category

[36] See one of many examples of the death of migrants in farms located in Pocheon. https://apnews.com/article/world-news-south-korea-migrant-workers-asia-cambodia-a1f673629d0682f74984c4ea3a850316

[37] Hartman reminds us, "The task of describing the status of the emancipated involves attending to the articulation of various modes of power, without simply resorting to additive models of domination or interlocking oppressions that analytically maintain the distinctiveness and separateness of these modes and their effects, as if they were isolated elements that could be easily enumerated--race, class, gender, and sexuality—or as if they were the ingredients of a recipe for a social whereby the mere listing of elements enables an adequate rendering, 118-119.

of the 'regional' renders progressively invisible *interiorized* labor through the facades of a racially charged and globally understood 'Afro-Asian' solidarity? In other words, to mark the echoes of a descending categorical distinction from 'Asia' as a legible region that assumes such a thing as national "South Korea" to which the particularity of blackness is only ever recoverable as anecdotes *within* the secure folds of these naturalized epistemes, instead must unravel the productivity of its world-historical underpinnings that have established the primacy of such spatial and racial distinctions. As Hartman reminds us, we must "attend to the articulation of various modes of power without simply resorting to additive models of domination...as if they were isolated elements...as if they were the ingredients of a recipe for a social" (118). Such a strategic ideological separation of race, class, gender, sexuality, especially the separation between spatialized and periodized geographies, instead reveal themselves as management tools that proves itself useful in sequestered internally, by through sheer delimiting of scope, in this case the scope of the so-called 'political' and secondarily the scope of the 'racial,' and then the 'racial economic.' I will continue to attend to the contradictions of the political and the economic in the following chapter.

Guarded by these ideological separations and the underlying primacy of propriety that secure the unspoken borders of archival relevance is the emergence of the most recent articulation of the new citizen subject fit for national inclusion—the figure of the "multicultural woman" by marriage on whose "willing" body the South Korean nation is presently sustained.[38] As a non-distinct juridical category who stands in for the regional "others" within, hers is a story of inclusion that is always already spoken for in her willingness to marry that obscures the conditions that reproductive labor is the price to be paid for inclusion set against the unquestioned global call for Korean ethnic reunification. While progress under the umbrella of gender identities cannot necessarily be claimed in other areas of South Korean society in comparison to her Western counterparts, the recognition of the "woman in color" in South Korea, albeit "delayed," emerges as curiously exceptional to minority nationalism(s) claimed

[38] As reports from the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family show, more than 75% of these marriages occur with women from China and Vietnam. State recognition of the 'ethnically diverse' woman in South Korea points towards the multicultural family as its basic unit that began with state-sponsored matchmaking of Chosŏnjok [Chinese Korean largely from northeastern parts of China] women and rural farmers in the 1990s to combat the slowing birth rate and reducing in the laboring population. Welfare support exists for multicultural families, a fact that is often criticized as 'reverse discrimination' for low income Korean families (2012 Comment on Republic of Korea, "What government policies are there for multicultural families?: from marriage preparation to childcare." April 25. http://blog.daum.net/hellopolicy/6978106, accessed May 29, 2021).

against a foreign power. Multiculturalism under the banner of the "multicultural woman" seems to indicate South Korea's ethnonational exceptionalism, applauded for having reached the furthest point of progress where the "multicultural" is voluntarily instituted, foregoing the misfortunes of having any direct history of violence. Her instatement into the archive of multiculturalism appears to start history anew, a category that anticipates labor yet-to-occur to merit the title, a promise of ascending miscegenation that traces a sequestered genealogy of the gendered and racialized interior illegible to the instantiation of multiculturalism and gender politics proper.

Standing at the precipice of a new terrain, the multicultural woman likewise crystallizes a national temporality. Her story solidifies the post-national and post-racial future as national "homogeneous empty time" writes a romantic tale of origins and recovery through staging the agentless comfort woman against which the quiet systematic institutionalization of the willful multicultural woman is made natural. Yet, what if we situate the emergence of this exceptional woman of color at the intersections of this spatial and temporal threshold—as a privileged site of diasporic movement that displays, as Chandan Reddy argues, the rise of a new "multicultural" figure within "the symbolic regime capable of splitting global populations into productive, democratic, capitalist civil citizens versus the racialized terrorist or criminal others"?[39] The multicultural woman then, mediates the conditions of obedient assimilation in which failing to pass may mean the fall into a life of camptown illegality—an underground state of being and the sequestered conditions of possibility for the very sustenance of the intimacies of US empire and neoliberalism in the region.

Conscripting National Political Time, Abstracting the Time of Capital Accumulation

We return to the hopeful yet perhaps unsatisfactory efforts of the transnational feminist coalition to recover the figure of the comfort woman within the Arendtian ambitions of securing the "rights to have rights" over and beyond what the nation had been capable of providing. I take a brief reprieve from the South Korean context to reflect on the limits of Arendt's framework thought through the stubborn discordance between the political and the economic as Susan Buck Morss and David Scott wrestle with the question of political abolition to return to

[39] Reddy, 106; Balibar, "The Nation Form: History and Ideology." Balibar also explores the fictive imagination of the multicultural U.S. citizen as the new national figure of universality.

the silent militarized conscription of "revolutionary postcolonial national time."

If, as Hannah Arendt argues, revolutionary time is the paradigmatic way modern *political* time is organized, Susan Buck Morss complicates the self-enclosed European understanding of revolution to historicize the fundamental contradictions between slavery as metaphor and "really-existing slavery" contemporaneous to the time of Locke,[40] Hegel,[41] and Marx.[42] Slavery made into a mere *metaphor* for legal tyranny in the British parliament and the grounds for the realization of universal freedom used to represent class struggle characterizes a stagist and self-enclosed European understanding of revolutionary *political* time made possible through an *economic* elsewhere procured through the racialized conditions of labor extraction that sustained such a thing as "revolutionary Europe."

Yet, in the eyes of the metropole, political abolition epitomized by the insurrectionary Haitian Revolution, as David Scott explores, becomes conscripted into this revolutionary modern time only to reaffirm "that the French Revolution was not simply a European phenomenon but world-historical in its implications"[43] to the disdain of the material conditions that had sustained the possibilities of political progress. As Arendt in *On Revolution* laments the loss of such a revolutionary spirit in the period after the formal abolition of slavery where "freedom had been surrendered to necessity, to the urgency of the life process itself," [44] the material conditions of reconstruction are once more cast as merely a hindrance to proper political progress. With it, as Scott notes, is the register of tragedy lost in conscripting the revolutionary romantic tale of abolition into political time: Toussant L'Ouverture in C.L.R James' *The Black Jacobins,* when "faced with economic devastation, foreign military encirclement aiming to return the blacks to

[40] Buck-Morss, "Hegel and Haiti." Susan Buck Morss writes, "But Locke's outrage against the "Chains for all Mankind" was not a protest against the enslavement of black Africans on New World plantations, least of all in colonies there were British. Rather, slavery was a metaphor for legal tyranny, as it was used generally in British parliamentary debates on constitutional theory," 826.

[41] Buck Morss writes, "And, yet, when it came to slavery, the most burning social issue of his time, with slave rebellions throughout the colonies and a successful slave revolution in the wealthiest of them—why should—how *could* Hegel have stayed somehow mired in Aristotle?... The actual and successful revolution of Caribbean slaves [in reference to the Haitian Revolution] against their masters is the moment when the dialectical logic of recognition becomes visible as the thematic of world history, the story of the universal realization of freedom," 851-852.

[42] Buck-Morss, 835.

[43] Buck-Morss*,* 835-6

[44] Hannah Arendt. *On Revolution*, (New York: Pelican Books, 1973): 60.

slavery...had precious little space within which to act...He opted to secure economic (necessity) over the risk of political (freedom) on the calculated grounds that the *former was at least a guarantee of the latter.*"[45]

In political abolition made recognizable only as it is sutured into revolutionary time may be the abstraction of the material conditions that had and continue to sustain "revolution" in and economic "elsewhere," perhaps shifted and interiorized by the severed ties between racial domination and class subjection.[46] The effects of slavery relegated to political premodernity then folded into a categorical understanding of the "racial multicultural" would wreak havoc not just for those directly finding genealogical relevance as Saidiya Hartman historicizes the period of Reconstruction in *Scenes of Subjection,*[47] but also those conscripted into the now globally legible language of the multicultural made the replicable measure of social progress across militarized transnational Asia.[48]

Like Scott, my goal has been to mediate this tragic register of the illegible economic elsewhere to a much-awaited set of political freedoms in South Korea, where even this much anticipated 'multicultural' appears mobilized to resolve an unsavory past and conscript historical subjectivit(ies)-proper into the neutrality of a post-Cold War US-allied revolutionary future. I remain with these contradictions to question why the time of capital accumulation remains the stubborn lacuna that is conveniently resolved with the import of bourgeois liberalism. In other words, I draw attention to the limits of a future-oriented decolonial pluralist outlook, one that produces an amnesia of the nation's postcolonial conditions of possibilities, instead drawing attention to the decolonial ethos that had disciplined the nation from its very inception. This is why I ask, how has this idea of the properly oriented postcolonial, multicultural, or feminist

[45] Scott, *Conscripts of Modernity: The Tragedy of Colonial Enlightenment*, 220. (my italics).

[46] Singh, "On Race, Violence, and So-Called Primitive Accumulation." Singh draws the limits of Afro-Pessimism in radical politics perceived as outside the developments of capitalism when historiographical accounts instead show how chattel slavery had been "a new kind of laboring being and new species of property born with capitalism," 29.

[47] Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection.*

[48] As David Scott writes of his approach in *Conscripts of Modernity* inspired by Asad's argument, "Asad's point is neither that authentic difference is disappearing or surviving, but that difference, such as it is, is increasingly obliged to respond to—and be managed by—the categories brought into play by European modernity. Culture, as he says, may always be invented, but the rise of the modern imperial world has irrevocably altered the conditions of that invention," 9.

subject always already been operational in guarding the limits of what is permissible to be transacted across the US-allied liberal democratic internationalism?

As Miriam Ching Yoon Louie recounts the emerging transnational feminist coalitional movement before and after the rise of a 'citizen-led' government in the late 80s, the disarticulation of a decolonial nationalist and feminist movement from Marxist tenants towards the more 'practical concerns' of women across industrializing Asia would destine South Korea and by extension, South Korean model feminist coalition politics, as one that colludes with the expansion of capitalism's reach in Asia.[49] Simultaneously, the phenomenon that Folker Frobel terms as "the New International Division of Labor" or as Pheng Cheah extends as the "New International Division of Reproductive Labor"[50] would soon normatively adapt certain forms of gender recognition as state management tools that had made possible the hyper development in East and Southeast Asia.

Yet, as I have sought to complicate, such recent trends found across Asia instead must be mediated by the hauntings of the historically saturated conditions of the gendered and racialized mediated by the postcolonial state. What I mean to indicate is the gendered and racialized *history*

[49] Louie lists several organizations dedicated to women's well-being in the workplace such as The Korean Women Workers Association (KWWA), and the Committee for Asian Women (CAW). Louie writes, "Korea was one of the earliest outposts along the global assembly line… CAW organizes exchanges between women workers groups in Korea, the Philippines, Malaysia, Japan, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Indonesia, India, Taiwan, and Hong Kong so women workers can better confront class and gender abuse up and down the global assembly line" pg.422 It is important to note the complexities of the feminist movement beyond the scope of complicity I invoke in this chapter. Louie notes how "organizations that formerly were called socialist feminist and Marxist feminist, [had] now [been recoined as] the Alternative Culture and the Research Center for Korean Women's Studies, respectively" (425). Louie likewise quotes Professor Ailee Cho who recounts her sense of disorientation at the time. "All our lives Marxism was censored and was impossible to discuss openly. Up until 1984 anyone caught reading a Marxist text would be thrown into prison. Ironically just when the ban on reading Marxism was finally lifted, socialism collapsed in Eastern Europe, leaving us very confused since we had been denied access to any kind of objective information for so long. *It's important to get away from the labels. Our most important objective is to understand the Korean situation and do whatever we can to improve the lives of women here*" (Cho Ailee, personal communications, May 23, 1992, quoted by Louie, p 426 my emphasis). Alongside the issue of the comfort woman, such a turn to 'practicalities' produced concerted efforts against workplace violence against women in the now fully-fledged industrialized nation that was slow to reflect on the emerging neoliberal implications of women's role in the workplace. With the organized 'expulsion of violence' that came hand in hand in instantiating the 'proper' ways of incorporating workers into the global assembly line, 'South Korean feminism' emerged as a forerunner of 'democratizing' the workplace. This transitional moment likewise emerged with the claims that feminist movements had long been ignorant of middle-class women's issues, as organizations catering towards clerical workers, housewives, and consumers began to materialize into organized efforts, and henceforth would reinforce the middle-class contours of 'Korean feminism' as such.

[50] See Frobel as quoted by Pheng Cheah, "Biopower and the New International Division of Reproductive Labor," 187.

proper that appears at odds with the recognition of the Asian nation's own minorities that forestalls the promises of modernity, uncannily resembling the logic of a colonial past we have so-called 'left behind.' The retroactive recovery of South Korea's history written at the limits of the tamed and "properly" political working-class subjects compounds in its exemplar status where the institutionalization of multiculturalism once more abstracts this unmarked racialized time of capital accumulation; if the nation's *economic* modernity is birthed through its non-distinct deviant past of the racialized and sexualized, multiculturalism deployed today appears to guards the ethnic nation's now naturalized borders as both reproductive and productive labor is relegated to the 'regional ethnic others' within.

Today, the echoes of this unarchivable history often present itself in a leftist sentiment that laments the "mainstreaming of former student activists,"[51] rehearsing the need to revive the 'proper' genealogy of such a decolonial nationalist project momentarily disturbed by the politics of the Cold War.[52] If the tragic suturing of a potential socialist decolonial project into the singular story of liberal democracy, as David Scott likewise laments in the context of the Caribbean, remains the specter of South Korea's potential decolonial future, my question has been less about the need to 'revive' a genealogy of the 'properly oriented decolonial' (though this itself can be useful too). But rather, I have raised the question of the 'human' written at the limits of revolutionary history and its unmarked terms of recovery. What remains to be seen (or rather remains difficult to recover) are the abject processes that procure such a thing as the rights-bearing subject, made doubly invisible with the import of bourgeoise liberalism that promises to silently remap the Cold War's "hot" exceptions in Asia into albeit partial universality, that is, if this time, we manage to surrender, *not* to the "urgency of the life process itself" but to the revolutionary spirit of so-called "freedom."

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[51] See Yang, "The Specter of the Past: Reconstructing Conservative Historical Memory in South Korea."

[52] In the context of the red-scare in South Korea in a nation still at war and divided by the Cold War, campaigns for 'spy-hunting' and at large the anti-communism became the basic doctrine of state. According to Kim Dong Choon, the yet-to-be achieved decolonization is matter of Japanese collaborators who are now the hegemonic group have yet-to-be brought to justice where the newly introduced principle of liberal democracy is "overwhelmed" by the state ideology of anti-communism. As I seek to complicate, the story of liberal democracy is not one of an incomplete project of decolonization, but also the successes of a 'decolonial' as articulated thus far that may precisely allow South Korea to emerge into the emergent U.S.-allied internationalism. See Dong Choon Kim's "The Social Grounds of Anticommunism in South Korea—Crisis of the Ruling Class and Anti-communist Reaction."

Itaewon, the Exception of Camp Town Exceptions

I return to camp towns, this time, an exceptional camp town among camp towns, Itaewon, a district in the heart of Seoul, to further mediate the shifting and displaced terrain of South Korean modernity. As one central site that housed the "yanggongju" with the settlement of US Army Garrison Yongsan (USAG-Yongsan) by 1945, Itaewon emerges as a hub of the pleasure industry that conjoins the intimacies of US satellite dominance in the region, and the ground zero of xenophobia, desire, commerce, and cosmopolitan sensibilities that converge in a collage of bright night lights. As the privileged site that embodied the nation's fears and desires of westernization and modernization, Itaewon hovers dangerously between xenophobia and multiculturalism, an imagination that as we have earlier noted, is subtended by the racialized interior that remains outside collective memory, quite literally as Sturdevant and Stolzfus reminds us of the racially segregated nature of camp towns where African American GIs were often stationed at Dongducheon near the DMZ (The Demilitarized Zone, also known as the "Dark Man's Zone") bordering North Korea, in contrast to the excess of the "fenced compounds in Itaewon... with American style ranch houses, two-car garages, a golf course, and swimming pools..." [53]

As more recent moments of national crises allude to, such as the targeting of Itaewon as the source of early COVID-19 clusters of infections, its latent xenophobic associations cite a longer history as one of the most interpenetrated localities in Korean history. As a historic transportation hub in the Joseon Dynasty (1392-1910), gendered historicity inscribes the space with violence written and rewritten over centuries of foreign invasions as the locale records the traumas of Buddhist nuns violated in the 16th century during the Imjin War by Japanese soldiers whose children came to define it as the place for foreign pregnancy [異胎院], as one homophonic translation of the Sino-Korean characters suggests. Today, public records display the more respectable translation of Itaewon [梨泰院] as the Pear Orchard.

The past-future is lathered thick atop this geo-historic canvas. Whether through the attempts to "clean up" Itaewon from its long-standing associations with prostitution, the influx of

[53] Sturdevant and Stoltzfus, *Let the Good Times Roll: Prostitution and the U.S. military in Asia*, 170. Sturdevant and Stolzfus write of the racially segregating nature of camp towns until the 1970s where African American servicemen were often found in Dongducheon near the DMZ (Demilitarized Zone) that separates North and South Korea as opposed other camp towns that catered more to white servicemen, often noted to have better facilities.

Russian gang violence in the late 90s, or its general associations with crime, gentrification appears to enact a blank slate through which a new, post-Cold War future could be imagined. Such a future appears to have been enacted. Today, Itaewon is at the heart of the emerging LGBTQ movement, likewise boasting of a multicultural register found in this cultural commercial district often known as the "foreigner district" now made into one of South Korea's most recognizable tourist hubs. Itaewon houses fusion restaurants, for instance, Usadan-gil [□ □ □ □], also known as "Halal Highway" in the vicinity of Seoul Central Mosque, "Homo Hill" to denote the gay bars that arose since the mid-1990s, alongside "Hooker Hill," the historic red light district that served the US Army Garrison Yongsan until in 2018, the garrison relocated a majority of its soldiers to Camp Humphreys in Pyeongtaek in the southern outskirts of Seoul.

Despite the long-awaited emergence of *differences* in South Korea, remaining with Itaewon as the strategic site of resignification might further mediate the limits of national historical recovery. For one, we locate the emergent LGBTQ movement awakening into global and national consciousness as a site of strategic displacement. For what movement towards a bourgeois rights-claiming homosexual citizenry teleologically foretold in Itaewon can remove itself from its historical significance as a site systematically targeted for state-sponsored transnational adoptions to fulfill the demands for kinship now extended to homosexual couples?[54] Itaewon's haunted past mediates this progressive narrative as strategically reformulated and museumized—an obtuse reversal of its violent past, remade and projected for a certain cosmopolitan global audience; its potential progressive future emerging at this critical juncture refracts and reflects onto itself the troubling genealogy we have so far traced. Only barely reminiscent of its haunted past further made irrecuperable with the garrison's relocation where sexualized labor becomes strategically dispersed into the rural and housed by "the regional sex worker," even the remaining remnant of this historically estranging terrain appears to be all but completely eradicated through strategic displacements reshaped to fit progressive narratives of gender and racial identities rewritten over morally irrecuperable bodies.

Yet, as both the emergent "queer" and the "multicultural" cannot help but refract onto itself this troubling genealogy of the (ir)recuperable past, we recall their states of being insulated into this zone of historical and spatial exception that instead mediates the tragic story of the rise

[54] Petersen and Myong, "(Un)Liveabilities: Homonationalism and Transnational Adoption."

of the unmarked 'local citizen.' In this tale that summons the receding significance of the comfort woman may reside critical, might I even suggest, ruptural possibilities that reveal the terms of the present US empire and the beguiling promises of the decolonial that defines the very sanctified grounds of our futurity—the postcolonial nation, the legal, and the agentive human subject. Made to circulate within the bounds of the so-called "global multicultural" as it is confined within periodized and spatialized world history, its participation in remapping the 'regional Asia' mediates a strange continuity, one that cannot but instantiate a disoriented look further inwards.

Such strategically recuperated figures of gender and race, instead, mediates the story of revolution that titillates the sensibilities of a certain global audience with the emergence of a nation respectable *enough* for the endowment of such a thing as 'national history' and with decorum *enough* to instantiate the particularities of a self-enclosed and timeless 'national culture,' 'Asian Feminism' as such, as they are trafficked worldwide. I conclude this chapter by recounting this celebratory moment in South Korean history, one that I hope, as David Scott reorients the romantic tale of political emancipation towards its tragic sensibilities, may resonate with the latter.

Limits of the Minjung Democratic Movement

As international attention turned to Seoul, South Korea for the 1988 Olympics, the rumblings of the antigovernmental movement that grew in the 1970s and 1980s reached its peak in what we have recounted in this chapter as the *minjung* grassroots democratic movement that marked the nation's transition from a series of military dictatorships into a parliamentary democracy. Amid the waning of the once stringent film censorship laws of the 70s, the rise of an East Asian 'New Wave' film movement, and the eyes of the international community directed at South Korea, a comparatively little-known local film called *Chilsu and Mansu* (1988) directed by Park Kwang-Su made an unexpectedly successful debut at various international film festivals. As if perfectly mirroring the political landscape in South Korea, this breakout film appears to coincide with the decades-long struggle for 'democratic reform' within the nation, cohering with its international recognition as a site of filmic 'revolt.'[55]

[55] As Sangjoon Lee recounts the film's significance in the introduction to *Rediscovering Korean Cinema,* Lee quotes Isolde Standish's remarks that coined the term "Korean New Wave" which "[came] about as a 'revolt' against

The film tells the tale of two manual laborers painting billboards and struggling to find regular work. Set in the backdrop of a heightened national sphere of protests and union demonstrations that had reached its peak by the late 1980s, the grim portrayal of two working-class men curiously registers as cynical even to these nationwide protests that seem to fight for an end to their working-class struggles. It seems the *past* clings onto Mansu whose legibility as the nationally recuperable 'subaltern' working-class citizen is hampered by the markings of his imprisoned "communist" father, locking Mansu out of the new direction South Korean national 'subaltern' or 'working class' history desires to write. While Mansu's illegible struggle, 'subaltern' even to the figure of the national working-class man, is reflected in his apparent suicide at the end of the film, his story appears vindicated not in fiction, but in what appeared as concrete changes within South Korean legislature that finally decriminalized family ties to 'communist' political prisoners. Appealing to an increasingly weary global public of the seemingly interminable Cold War as its impending end and the ousting of a military regime in South Korea coheres at this critical moment, Mansu's tragic end appears to rewrite itself as redemptive; in this multiply compounded field of vision directed towards the 'international public' is the birth of a film as a site of 'filmic revolt' in which Mansu emerges as the quintessential national citizen within a new terrain, unhampered neither by the Cold War nor South Korea's militarized history.

As South Korean film historians write, the 1990s heralded a decade of recognition for South Korean films in the eyes of the international community, producing films such as the *Hwaomkyun* by director Jang Sun-woo that won the forty-fourth Berlin Film Festival in 1994 based on Buddhist thematic, alongside the settling of Im Kwon-Taek as the household name both locally and at international film festivals as the representative auteur contributing to the revitalization of cultural traditions such as the musical traditions of Pansori.

Paralleling this South Korean cultural revival was the rise of the feminist film movement that anticipated its disciplinary formation through re-*reading* female figures and spectators of 1950s Golden Age films towards the marked shift to a more pedagogical direction of 'feminist' films. It seems this crucial decade saw the rise of a self-aware 'South Korean tradition,'

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traditional conventions imposed by a stringent system of political censorship" characterized by working class and radical student subjects set in factories and slums in the backdrop of urbanization, the breakdown of family and civil protests, 3.

coalescing not just into an identifiable cultural form, but one that adapted the language of feminism. As Soyoung Kim recounts the executive director of Women Make Movies Debbie Zimmerman's reaction to the Asian feminist film movements emerging in the 90s, "It's just like our 70s," it appears national film production and its accompanying cultural histories and feminist theories reached a threshold of recognizability to a certain international community as the self-evident boundaries of the 'national subaltern' finally seemed to have begun writing their own histories, albeit just a few decades *behind*.[56] The 'feminist' now safely embedded *within* the national subaltern, the telos of modernity would safely relegate both women's issues, and the issue of race interiorized within in unmarked national framing.

Yet, as Kim recounts the strange 'grafting' of the feminist onto the South Korean landscape, emergent literature on the Cold War militarized period likewise note the disappearance of the once central figure of the fallen woman from the big screen, replaced by full-fledge pedagogical and feminist-oriented film production (yeosong yonghwa), centering on rehabilitating women's voices.[57] For instance, Molly Hyo Kim note the rise of the "hostess film" genre centered around the fallen woman that ironically proliferated in the era of militarized governance. As the curious exception to an otherwise stringent censorship rule that had explicitly banned sexual and otherwise socially critical content, the prolific genre of the 'hostess film' raises the question of the extent to which the mediation of sexual deviancy played a role in consolidating social order. In a genre so widely consumed that it may have single-handedly kept the film industry from collapsing due to an otherwise stringent Yushin system,[58] the social consensus of the fallen woman supplied both the negative grounds for social discipline, but quite literally became the grounds for the economic sustenance for both the film industry, and at large, the nation in the throes of early national development. Yet, if emergent questions of feminist or feminist film as such begin to mediate the very economic grounds of South Korea embedded in

[56] See Soyoung Kim's "Questions of Woman's Film: The Maid, Madame Freedom, and Women," 186.

[57] For Kim who traces the "ideal audience constructed by feminist film critics in the 1990s," reflects on how emerging feminist understandings came to be grafted onto the cultural sphere—notably displacing films women watched, often 'tearjerkers' that mobilized "working class femme fatales" to cater to the emerging middle-class sensibilities fears of the female factory worker and domestic helper of the nascent industrializing moment since the 1960s that mobilized the middle class.

[58] Kim, "Film Censorship Policy During Park Chung Hee's Military Regime (1960-1979) and Hostess Films," 43. In a genre so popular, Molly Hyo Kim writes, 87.5% of all female characters in films produced from 1971-1979 were sex workers and out of the 10 highest-ranked box office films, 8 were hostess films.

sex work, it may not be far-fetched to witness the racial interior mapped across both sides of the vertiginous void of Cold War militarized governance.

What if we locate *Chilsu and Mansu* within this key transitional moment, as the site of political eruption that mediates an economic elsewhere, sequestered internally and made outside the terms of its transnational circulation and visibility? As newly positioned leaders eagerly announce the end to violent pasts, we might also ask what comes to be *grafted* onto this new post-Cold War 'liberal democratic' landscape, from the socialist and Marxist underpinning of the antigovernmental Minjung movement of the 1980s under military rule towards mobilizing under a newly democratized civilian government in the 90s? As we might witness in the figure of Mansu, staged as the globally legible South Korean resistant citizen subject, the tragic emplotment of revolutionary struggle in South Korea appears legible only ever *after the fact.* As the once war-ridden and militarized governance in South Korea joins in the choir of an emerging political subjectivity as part of a certain legible international community, the universal yet particular subjects of the working-class struggle, and by extension the Minjung feminist and multicultural recovery occurring concomitantly, cannot emerge into particularity without producing their own *elsewheres.*

As this model minority nation further gains global standing now thirty years removed and squarely situated within modernity, the global resonance of Bong Joon Ho's film, *Parasite* (2019) instead intimates the ongoing hauntings of the universal story of revolution; what other subterraneous remains operational in the state of being sequestered epistemically, driven outside of scope? As world-history eagerly announces multiple 'posts,' I continue to mine what may remain hidden and illegible, in hopes of recovering the tragic registers of world history playing out of sync to the tune of 'freedom' as such.

CHAPTER 3
The Asian Historical Subject

> After Auschwitz, after the Catastrophe, "history is still a disguised theology;" it is still "the primary discipline of all human sciences."[1]
>
> - Gil Anidjar in Marc Nichanian's *Historiographic Perversion*

> Now to talk to me about black studies as if it's something that concerned black people is an utter denial. This is the history of Western Civilization. I can't see it otherwise. This is the history that black people and white people and all serious students of modern history and the history of the world have to know. To say it's some kind of ethnic problem is a lot of nonsense.
>
> - C.L.R James

We return to the site of feminist protest in South Korea in front of the Japanese embassy to reflect on the terms of the comfort woman's historical recognition that often cites the global failure towards reparations in the aftermath of WWII that took to comparison the Nuremberg Trials as its point of reference.[2] On the one hand, we recall Mark Peterson's call for the "need for sensitivity" when evoking the issue, citing feminism's potential to heal, alongside the instantiation of a new *modern* temporality of postcolonial time that, as we have aimed to complicate in the previous chapters, appears neither fully "modern" nor "restorative." For if Peterson's formulation of the comfort woman's historical significance is to fully gather epistemological force, it requires the joint acknowledgment of her 'lived experience' that merits

[1] See Gil Anidjar's afterword of Marc Nichanian's *Historiographic Perversion. "*These are the politics of historical meaning as well (the relation 'between life and history,' as Nietzche puts it), whereby history has been made into 'the measure of all social things' (and the quasi-exclusive route toward a demonstration of their resilience, contingency, or finitude), explicitly and implicitly identified as foremost among 'cultural technologies of rule,' part and whole of 'a cultural project of control.' After Auschwitz, after the Catastrophe, 'history is still a disguised theology;' it is still 'the primary discipline of all human sciences.'" Nichanian, *Historiographic Perversion,* 126-7.

[2] As one protestor during an early Wednesday protest in front of the Japanese Embassy shouts, "We're trying to persuade the U.S. government to advise the Japanese government to perform legal justice and responsibility for the comfort woman problem. For this, we need to contact Christian groups, and ask Cardinal Kim Su Hwan to take some measures. We should also the First Lady of the US Her name Hilary Clinton. Yes, we like her to join our movement. The us have advised us that the allied actions of the World War II such as Great Britain and France are also responsible for the comfort woman problem. They were only interested in their own compensation and staged the war tribunals. They did nothing about Asian countries" (From the documentary, *Murmuring*).

the 'need for sensitivity,' which must first establish the facticity of the comfort woman—her historical status as sexual slave. Yet, existing efforts to gather a fuller account of her status as a witness in the space of the experiential has the tendency to relativize the comfort woman's experience into the domain of the economic conditions *of her time* that often either relegates her as a subject of modern individual responsibility as a 'mere prostitute' assumed in the modern economic analysis Mark Ramseyer's controversial essay intuits or consigns her to the status of a 'slave' reduced to forms of nonracial slavery, the last remnants of this 'premodern nonracial slavery' incidentally finding direct genealogical relevance to the comfort woman as we have come to know her (We will return to these distinctions later).

We are returned to the stubborn recourse to history that sanctions her (il)legitimacy, in part, made liminal because there appears to be no singular event nor a clear historical period that makes legible her struggles—neither premodern nor modern, slave nor free, and colonial only by standards of regional *internal* imperialism. As such, unlike her comparative counterpart, Holocaust denial in many places today that is punishable by law, the comfort woman appears *stuck* in the state of partial historical fact. As we have explored in the previous chapters, despite the uptake of the 'feminist every day' and the hopes of postcolonial modernity symbolized by the revival of the comfort woman issue, neither the terms of the 'feminist' nor 'postcolonial nation' appear to do justice to the comfort woman's struggles as her liminal historical status appears selectively recovered, and as this chapter seeks to further specify, made unintelligible as she is thrust into the era of 'posts' without ever having reached the status of 'historical truth.'

On the one hand, this chapter seeks to further expound on this elision of historical truth as the comfort woman issue is written in relation to and thus made symptomatic of historical modernity birth from the Jewish condition understood by the Euro-American contours of "biopolitics" *then* "race" *then* "region," a receding citation "muddled" as it is written in the image of their 'original' site of world-historical and political relevance. The previous chapters sought to trace the effects of the region's purported decolonial future that remains stubbornly entangled with the US empire's supposed mobilization for good, tracing more 'microscopically' the productive effects of the exemplary US feminist and multicultural history reproduced as the exemplary US-allied South Korean subject writes itself into the *historical,* a process that I argued precisely produces its excess such as the Afro-Korean sex worker or the regional sex worker, for

instance. This chapter returns us to the broader relational terms of the comfort woman's historical legibility and her partial, albeit sequestered conditions of regional recovery.

Race and Region

We return to the spectral transnational circulation of the comfort woman issue and its embedded assumption of the lack of gender and racial recognition in area studies that appears to install a gaze of backwardness (i.e., the repression model forwarded by Shih for instance) that primes the non-distinct regional whose lack of sociological particularity seems to orient the region towards a particular US-allied world historical direction. What I am interested in is the '*prior to'* the uptake of Asian America as the site of proper restitution or the site of exemplar resistance to be modeled and implemented within Asian nations, in short, to question the bifurcation of Asian American and Asian Studies that depends on the separation, or rather, the exemplary invention of an 'Asian racial threat' in the US imagination that had separated Japan and Japanese Americans from the once-monolithic imagination of Oriental perhaps 'premodern Asia.'

In recent decades, such readings of Japanese American exemplarity have been gathered through Moishe Postone's reading of the Nazi personification of the Jew as the abstract embodiment or threat to a romantic anticapitalistic logic that had expelled the Jews into concentration camps. Namely made applicable in Colleen Lye and Iyko Day's works that complicate the "degenerationist discourse" or as Lye characterizes as the "expected dominance of civilization over savagery" implied within racial discourses, Lye and Day parallels the Jewish condition and by comparison the Japanese and Chinese American constructed as the *embodied* image of "the otherness of the Western modernity to itself," revealing the threat of the 'Asiatic' to "the potentials for the modern 'decline of Western civilization.'"[3] Yet, what concerns me is the question of the exemplarity of the Jewish condition imagined as the 'abstract embodiment of capitalism's evils,' whose symbolic regime and exemplarity extends, though only partially to the exemplarity of the Japanese American or Chinese American.[4] Such significations appear

[3] Lye, 56.

[4] We might also extend the receding of this symbolic regime to the figure of camp town monstrosity, the "Yankee Princess" that Grace M. Cho traces as the "dead yanggonju [that] became a trope of diasporic memory through which both fantasies of future and the horrors of the past are played out," 22. Cho likewise takes recourse to

precisely ebbing into nonrelevance as capitalism's *embodiments* recede with the prefix *racial* to capitalism—its precondition as the non-distinct laboring subject of the Asiatic, and even prior to their 'ethnic' distinctions, the unconscious 'elsewhere' of labor and genocide, slavery and indigenous erasures. As Lisa Lowe reminds us,[5] the *historical process* appears to mark 'race' always already as an 'a priori elsewhere,' abstracted as they are crystalized into liberal forms of 'freedom,' thereby *only historical* in nature and evacuated from the present. It is this unconscious of racialized labor and genocide that critical race studies in the context of the US first sought to name as the *historical* conditions of possibility for such a thing as 'revolutionary America.'

What interests me is the temporal and spatial transition indexed in the question of the 'Asiatic,' more precisely where the once manageable ethnic laboring body rises to the threshold of a threat in the US imagination that may signal where the racial economic *subjectable* body—the precondition of Indigenous erasures, slavery, and immigrant labor—transitions into an embodied and conscious racial 'threat.' Hence, if as Lye delineates, the 'coolie' in the US imagination signifies the non-particular horde, the monolithic "cheap labor force" that follows its 'outdated' counterpart—slavery—"coolie labor" in the turn of the century morphs into, as Lye takes on Postone's framework, the "urban multitude" of a coming "alien invasion"[6] that threatened the US romantic anticapitalistic outlook. In other words, I ask, what makes possible the exemplary site of the 'Asiatic' where the US empire's relegation of its past and present conditions of possibility is selectively brought under submission as its "racial economic" conditions of possibility are filed and relegated into 'ethnic history' and pit against its new subjects ready to be placed under submission in the age of US empire?

As Lye reminds us, the genealogy of yellow peril must be framed both within and without the borders of the United States as part of the story of "the emergence of the United

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assemblage and transgenerational haunting as a mode of recovering memory and trauma, taking on Marianne Hirsch's framework of post-memory, tracing the Jewish intergenerational trauma and diaspora as the "unconscious entanglement" that "affectively connect[s] Israeli Jews and Palestinians," 30. The previous chapter sought to address the limits of the assemblage of "transgenerational haunting," where affective recovery and the scope of "intergenerational" are delimited to the limits of the historical archive and the assumptions of periodized and spatialized history. The result is the irrecoverablility of such a figure as the Afro-Korean sex worker.

[5] See Lowe, *Intimacies of Four Continents.*

[6] Lye, 55.

States as a world power…[that had been] choreographed on the Pacific Stage."[7] I continue to situate in the indexicality of the 'Asiatic' where the racial unconscious *historical* meets the *present* unconscious [non]racial, made increasingly unintelligible as each appears selectively written in the image of that which rises to conscious politics proper. Under what world historical rubrics is "violence" being understood first as essentially 'biopolitically' and then 'racial economic' in nature, thereby being reconstituted into the neutrality of ethnic multicultural, and historical forms? And what remains illegible to these joint formations?

Existing critical studies of the Japanese American note how the figure is first recognized as a 'racial' threat and then reconstituted as the model minority unmarked within modernity, a condition that appears to further *interiorize* violence of both Black and Indigenous death as they recede into the redundancy of the historical past. This chapter seeks to extend this critique toward the historical reconfiguration of the Japanese Empire in the age of US Empire. First staged as an imminent threat to the Euro-American metropolitan imagination that has since reformulated Japanese Imperial violence into the safety of a periodized and spatialized "regional premodernity," this ideological separation between the *modern* proclivities of recovering *racial* violence enacted on the Japanese American versus the relegation of Japanese Imperialism into premodern regional violence (occurring simultaneously!), may reflect the dividing line between that which registers within the scope of historical memory and those destined to be relegated as their 'nonhistorical' or 'nonracial' others.

What about the historical process itself is mediated in the separation of Asian American and Asian studies that has forked into the naturalized division between the Japanese American and the Comfort Woman, between racial and regional violence, race and gender, and perhaps even between the modern proclivities of history and its 'others'? It is this return to the *prior to* the reification of the model minority made into a neutral sociological category of 'race' and the *prior to* 'Asia' being recast under exemplary US-allied liberal democratic tutelage, spectralized by the invention of the comfort woman (in a region still 'backward' against the measures of the exemplary gender and multicultural 'revolutionary America') that I seek to explore in this chapter. I return 'prior to' their separations perhaps more 'broadly' from the Catastrophe that marks the site of *politics* proper in the heart of modern Europe to trace the receding [non]racial *economic* elsewhere(s) in hopes to further elucidate where the limits of historical and political

[7] Colleen Lye, *America's Asia,* 23

memory meet the unintelligibility of the contemporary capitalist 'every day' and where the racial multicultural *historical* might inhere into the *present* US empire "for good."

Furthermore, at the present world-historical juncture where the threat of the Chinese state is being 'racially [re]constructed,' the stakes of this *historical* reformulation of the Japanese Empire of the near past may be instructive in mediating the present Chinese threat rising to the US racial imagination. As such, this chapter aims to further mediate a critique of Asia's emergence into the unmarked modern world historical imagination to question the terms that have made comparable the modern political example of the Jewish condition mapped within European political modernity to that of the Japanese in the near past and now the Chinese racial example. Yet, despite my interest in mapping the relational significance of these figures emerging into selective political modernity, ultimately, this dissertation remains with the [non]racial conditions of possibility of the 'racial' constructed in the echoes of the Hegelian gaze recodified within the age of US empire.

The Modern 'Political' Example and the 'Economic' Elsewheres

We take what may be perceived as a circuitous route to reflect on what Moishe Postone offers as the emergent interest in the Holocaust in Germany thirty years after the fact to eventually return to a critique of Postone's framework taken up within Asian and Asian American studies. As I have argued in the previous chapter, the temporal lacuna between the Japanese Imperial event itself and the eruption of the comfort woman issue in South Korea in the late 80s appears to be the often-abstracted time of capital accumulation only momentarily glimpsed in its relation to the eruption of national political or historical time, one that mediates the rise of modern South Korea remade through its militarized alliance with US empire. My aim is to think of these lacunas, occurring is disparate places, as part of the similar regime of historical memory that reproduces the stubborn illegibility of the time of capital accumulation.

In the German instance, "collective shame and guilt appear[ed] three decades after the fact," as Postone reflects.[8] Has "history...slowed down" enough to catch up to as Postone initially asks? Or rather as he complicates in the decades leading up to this emergent collective consciousness:

[8] Moishe Postone, "Anti-Semitism and National Socialism: Notes on the German Reaction to "Holocaust."

> A kind of collective somnambulism resulted, with the majority of the population sleep-walking its way through the Cold War, the 'economic miracle,' the reemergence of politics with the student revolt,[9] repressing the past,' the era 'when happiness was to be achieved through consumerism—is over. The past, which has thought to have been left far behind, has reemerged…It had always been in two, one step behind.[10]

Postone's reflection echoes on two registers. On the one hand, the conditions of possibility for the re-emergence of a certain political discourse in Germany thirty years after the fact appear to address a kind of collective consciousness aware of the waning *economic growth* with "an increasingly authoritarian technocratic capitalism" that threatened its progressive outlook—the Marxist-Hegelian sense of ever-expanding progressive time—that, as far as the international community is concerned, has been reinstated with the ousting of fascism into the annals of *history*. Simultaneously, in the period of 'silent' economic reconstruction attributed to this German 'miraculous growth,' transnational capital came to be secured, in part, through the Cold War waged continents apart that articulated exceptionally 'hot' in East and Southeast Asia. It is not hard to imagine the external factors in which such economic growth could register in Germany, made possible precisely through violence relegated *elsewhere,*[11] outside the scope of relevance, neither German nor European where the relevance of 'politics in Germany' would not find local national relevance *yet* lulled by the safety of economic progress.

On the other hand, Postone attributes the sudden relevance of the Holocaust thirty years removed from the event to the emerging *political* consciousness looking 'outwards' to the Israel-Palestinian conflict.[12] With the "victorious 'blitzkrieg' of the Israelis," the once pro-Zionist German Left underwent a "psychological reversal in which the Jews as victors became identified with the Nazi past—positively by the German Right and negatively by the Left. Their victims,

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[9] Written in 1980s, Postone in the article also specifies political activism that ensued from this point: "The foci of political concern and activity in West Germany today are the struggles against repression, Berufsverbot, the infringement of civil liberties, court procedures, the appalling mistreatment of political prisoners (of all prisoners, in fact), discrimination of foreign workers, racism, and atomic energy in its political as well as ecological consequences," 103.

[10] Postone, 100.

[11] Terrada writes, "For radical philosophy, racism is *a priori* elsewhere," 16.

[12] At the time of writing this chapter, the conflict in Palestine had yet to escalate to the scope of what it has become as I submit this dissertation in 2025. What is subterraneous and what emerges into consciousness is once again thrown into crisis at this moment where alignments are shifting.

the Palestinians, became identified as the Jew." In a reversal that identified Israelis as 'brutal' and 'racists' hence 'Nazis,' the emerging identification of Palestinians as the "New Jew" came with the value judgment that they had 'proved' themselves to be "better Jews" because "they resisted," a recognition Postone specifies has very little to do with "the expulsion and suffering of the Palestinians which, after all, began long before 1967."[13] In this reversal, for the emerging German left, "struggle against Zionism was transformed into the long-yearned-for struggle against the Nazi past, *freed of guilt,*"[14] a condition that prompts the activation of 'politics' on the left in support of the Palestinians, as the rise of 'German politics proper' was now free to gather its own collective consciousness. The result of which had been the emergence of a legible site of politics that had self-identified universal resistance *like* the identification of Palestinians as the 'new Jew,' likewise finding equivalence with the contemporary "authoritarian technocratic capitalism" *likened to* its 'fascist' past now understood with the prefix "economic" authoritarianism[15] against which the *German national* union of political citizens[16] can emerge as a timely and legible site of 'resistant' and 'political' subjectivity.

Yet, a poignant remark undergirds Postone's reflections on the limits and erasures enacted in the rise of what is deemed a long overdue *political* discourse and national reflection on the Holocaust: "The very word ["Zionism"] became as negatively informed as Nazism in the one country *where the Left should have known better*" (my emphasis). In the ominous stakes of Postone's statement, "the Left should have known better," is the uncanny return of the resistant anti-capitalist logic shared amongst the underlying national citizenry thirty years *after the fact*

[13] Postone 104. For even in the recognition of Palestine as the site of abjection, are the value judgment of what it means to be recognizably 'resistant' only to be taken to affirm a particular leftist political subjectivity in the metropole whose resistance, as David Lloyd aptly critiques must futilely engage with the human rights regime that promises the rights to have rights, yet fails to deliver on such promises as the validity of rights is first delimited to the sanctity of international law that upholds the violent enacting of Israeli statehood over and beyond the Palestinian peaceful right to have rights. See David Lloyd, "From the Critique of Violence and the Critique of Rights." See also Ronit Lentin's *Traces of Racial Exception: Racializing Israeli Settler Colonialism.*

[14] Postone 104, emphasis.

[15] Postone writes, "On the other hand, the struggle against the authoritarian capitalist present in the FRG, a present with important elements of continuity with the Nazi past, could be interpreted as a direct struggle against fascism, an attempt to make up today for the lack of German resistance then" (103).

[16] I take this term from Rei Terrada's work. "As practiced, the union of political citizens resembles the 'common participation' of the church whose inner relations are regulated by Spirit's authority for the truth and for the relation of each individual to the truth.' Translated into political vocabulary, this means that social totality is regulated through each relation to the reality of history as evidenced in the real abstraction of global relations—individual, colonial, and transnational," 17.

that Postone is wary of, a condition of strategic amnesia that obscures the "anti-bourgeois aspects" of antisemitism and German National Socialism at the time: "the revolt, the hatred of the Establishment and of the greyness of capitalist everyday life"— "a movement which, in terms of its own self-understanding, representing a revolt."[17] With the return of the uncanny public semblance to the conditions that had once framed the Jew as an overclass, as the representational embodiment of the "social ramifications" of a rapidly industrializing socio-economic relation or the secular power of the Jew,[18] Postone's fears an emergent national consciousness engaged in 'realpolitik' as such that appears to occlude its own vicious past—a past that Postone reflects on "has continued to operate subterraneously."[19]

I begin by mapping the coordinates of Postone's ominous statement—between the foreboding return of the global left and its relation to militarized Asian transnational capital that appears spectrally present yet remains unremarkable within the scope of a reinvigorated leftist discourse in Europe and its understanding of global events. On the one hand, this chapter continues to mine what constitutes this "subterraneous," perhaps understood as the un-namable condition that intimates an underlying structure that neither 'politics' nor 'economics'-proper seem capable of naming, that is until it reaches the borders of European ideological and perhaps literal borders of recognizability. We might also extrapolate this "subterraneous" as the interim time prior to the eruption of the political, prior to the recognition of the secular power of the Jew, prior to the self-recognition of the "resistant Palestinian" as the mirror of the universally resistant subject now evacuated of its violent doings, or perhaps the persistently uncapturable time of capital accumulation we designate in this project as militarized 'regional Asia.'

While Postone's critique presents one persuasive means of deconstructing the singular status of the Genocide of the Jews, questioning its characterization as the epitome of senseless totalitarian violence to embed their eradication as symptomatic of the resistant national subject, what concerns me and (and many others) is his characterization of modern antisemitism as set apart from the archives of racial subjection—the argument that the Jewish condition is not just "a

[17] Postone, 103 and 106.

[18] Postone 107.

[19] Postone 104.

particular example of racism in general" as Postone remarks,[20] a characterization that reflects the longstanding protest within ethnic studies with regards to the Holocaust's exemplarity, for instance by Aime Cesaire since the early 1950s.[21] Instead, as recent insights from Alexander Weheliye argue, if the Shoah's exemplary status reflects a self-evident world historical relevance, it manages to do so *contra* the logics of 'intents and end' in which slavery, colonialism, and Indigenous genocide, *motivated* by the accumulation of land or wealth does not qualify against the characterization of Auschwitz as a crime against humanity—genocide-proper.

We are returned to the longstanding contradictions framed between the political and economic that have haunted post-war philosophy. Between the exceptionalism of the Nazi genocide and the economic characterized as the "often slow and concealed violence of appropriation" and "encompassing economic tyranny" that Nikhil Pal Singh notes as the "quasi-hallucinatory genocidal force that never entirely vanishes," are the registers of the "racial" written as Weheliye performs the inadequacies of west centric 'universal' theories of bare life, biopolitics, and the 'racial' itself that may be formed in bondage to their central comparative image. Like Postone, I am *less* interested in the naming the of "New Jew" identified in realpolitik as such, but in the lingering 'subterraneous,' one that Weheliye narrates as the racial economic *history's* relational diminution and one that might narrate its inherence where the continued story of capitalist development appears to thrive, as Singh argues, through the "expanding fields of appropriation and dispossession...whose stealth (or veiled) power rests upon a supposed ability to dispense with violent domination,"[22] in other words, in the power of dispensing violence and its particularized form of 'racial' violence contained *into history*.

As East Asia marks a relatively "new" relation with the West, having evaded colonial enslavement during its periodized and spatialized zoning into 'history,' its relation with revolutionary America appears codified within the good-will of the US empire in the age of

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[20] Postone, 88.

[21] As Aimé Césaire writes, "that it is Nazism, yes, but that before they were its victims, they were its accomplices; that they tolerated that Nazism before it was inflicted on them, that they absolved it, shut their eyes to it, legitimized it…before engulfing the whole of the Western, Christian civilization in its reddened waters, [Nazism] oozes, seeps, and trickles from every crack." Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism,* 36.

[22] Singh for instance, questions the unsatisfactory premise for instance, of Afro-Pessimism that too often imagines blackness as the "excluded grounds of politics [that] further alienates an understanding of slavery tied to the development of capitalism," 29.

postcolonial national sovereignty.[23] Hence, my goal thus far has been to draw attention to the centrality of 'history' and its prefixed counterpart, 'racial economic history' now circulating within a discursive regime that appears readily available for use and abuse for emergent East Asian nationalisms and their selective relations with US empire (remember East Asia's stealthy appropriation of racial history in its adamant claims to exceptional negation. Racial slavery does not exist in Asia, it says!). As such, at this present moment where the racial historical is met with a discursive regime that appears to facilitate its continuation as the internalized [non]racial economic unconscious, the following section aims to bring together a literature review of the relational diminution from 'history' to 'racial history' to offer what may be glimpsed as its continuation internalized within the [non]racial regional and present militarized condition of transnational Asian capital.

From Biopolitics to Race, Race to the Non-Racial

Critical studies investigating the singular status of the Genocide of the Jews recently expounded in Alexander Weheliye's protest of Giorgio Agamben's 'homo sacer' or 'bare life' discourses, center the relation between the exemplarity of political violence epitomized by the Shoah and the ideological relegation of racial subjection (slavery, colonialism and indigenous genocide motivated by capital accumulation) as that which does not fully qualify as genocide proper. As such, Weheliye questions the theorization of 'bare life' taken from the exemplary status of concentration camps as the epitome of the deathly function of modern sovereignty as an epistemological force that appears to enact an erasure; biopolitics as the overarching theory that explains the modern death machine appears to supersede all other *caesuras* along the lines the religion, race, class, and gender, etc. As Weheliye argues, "This is what invents the homo sacer as homo sacer, for bare life must be measured against something, otherwise it *just appears as life*; life stripped of its bareness as it were"—that is, to emphasize the productive force of

[23] I am reminded of Jodi Byrd's reluctance to file 'indigeneity' as one racial group that frames the US as a nation "struggling with the legacies of racism rather than a colonialist power engaged in territorial expansion since its birth" (Byrd 2011; 34), questioning the postcolonial-oriented subaltern studies that often intuit a "misleading suggestions that colonialism is over," to instead point to the ongoing US imperialist project that has successfully mobilized the rhetoric of state-based neoliberal multiculturalism to resolve the contradictions of empire. Byrd and Rothberg, 4

biopolitics as theory that comes to supplant all other caesuras as *mere examples* of the epitome of genocide-proper. [24]

For Marc Nichanian complicating Agamben's premises, this 'unspeakable violence' appears to birth a truth-fabricating machine called history, built from the fundamental occlusion as its very foundation—the differend. As it premises, for the name 'Auschwitz' to have become truth, in other words, to truly be 'genocide' requires the verification of an archive that cannot but prove its own authenticating mechanism—testimony—false: how could there be survivors to testify to an event that by definition cannot have any survivors? Genocide leaves no survivors to tell its truth. This aporia at the heart of the Holocaust brings about not just Agamben's exploration of the lacuna inherent in the witness testimony that asserts the survivors bore witness to an unspeakable event, but also Nichanian's critique of the episteme of the 'unspeakable violence.' As Nichanian provocatively declares, "Genocide is not a fact," for central to this truth is the genocidal will of the archive—the necessary object or 'evidence' to make truth claims, for there is no truth but "the truth grounded in law, a truth grounded in memory, a truth grounded in artistic representation (and whatever else, God only knows!) and none of these do much to improve the business of truth."[25]

What appears to be a straightforward statement—that there is no truth without the archive to support its claims, for Nichanian instead reveals the *dependency* of truth on the formal dimensions, more particularly, the public sphere that authenticates its reality.[26] Hence, in the process of Auschwitz having reached the status of the emblematic name, becoming fact, not in and of itself, but through its status as the unspeakable violence secured through international law,

[24] Weheliye, 37, my emphasis. Weheliye writes, "Though murdering slaves was punishable by law in many U.S. states, usually these edicts were not enforced, and the master could kill slaves with impunity since they were categorized as property. Consequently, slavery conjures a different form of bare life than the concentration camp, since the more prevalent version of finitude in this context was what Orlando Patterson has referred to as "social death," the purging of all citizenship rights from slaves save their mere life," 37-38.

[25] Nichanian, 3.

[26] Nichanian in another encounter with David Kazanjian rearticulates the terms of the public sphere in making sense of the witness and thereby truth. Nichanian cites Robert Antelme's famous lines, "Three men: two guys to carry the dead man and the sentry. One more and it would have been a ceremony. The SS wouldn't have permitted. The dead mustn't be allowed to serve as a symbol for us. Here, where there is no crematorium, our dead must disappear nevertheless...Our national death is tolerated, but no trace of it may be left behind." Nichanian continues to reiterate the mutual formation of the witness and public sphere: "You have to return in order to witness the limit, to insert it into an audible discourse of civilized humanity." Kazanjian and Nichanian, "Between Genocide and Catastrophe," 140.

secured through the aporia of testimony[27] and proliferated in representations, inaugurates a new regime of historiographical perversion, as Nichanian title her monograph in which no other 'genocides' can be marked as such. This is why Nichanian necessarily concludes that "there is only genocide in the twentieth century"[28] whose status of truth leads Nichanian to conclude, "There is only one plot, and it is history... [not the] plot of the colonizers opposed to a plot of subalterns, a plot of dominant truth against another, vanquished, and crushed plot of dominated truth,"[29] a claim that she explores to attempt to narrate the epistemic silence brought in the Armenian genocide in its relation to the emblematic status and modern history itself born from the archival regime.[30]

If the futures-past of 'genocide' is nullified by that which has already been written, spectacularized, and agreed upon by the quintessential genocide of the twentieth century, the act of assembling, might begin to dissemble the emblematic name, a task Weheliye takes to linking 'other modern death camps'— Gunter's Landing as part of the campaign for "Indian removal," contraband camps during and after the Civil War for the "freed" slaves in the US South, and one might also add the Japanese American internment camp.[31] Yet, to bring together a disparate set of contexts—the Armenian Genocide, the cause of the Palestinians, and the Comfort Woman's plight—ones that could be added to these 'racializing assemblages,' instead must necessarily also investigate the "inevitability of exemplarity that both undermines and enables the very project of historical representation" as Parisa Vaziri notes, or the employment of history as Nichanian argues underlie each. That is, such linking through assemblage might participate in

[27] Nichanian explores shame that is involved in testimony, of the continuous demand to speak of a genocide in which speaking itself constitutes its very negation. Such is not limited to the Armenian conditions but also applicable to the Jewish plight. The difference is, one is inaugurated as the 'unspeakable violence' enacted into law and sanction by the international community while the other is destined to speak but remain illegible.

[28] Nichanian, 55.

[29] Nichanian, 71.

[30] Expounding on Hayden White's argument that history's mode of writing as narrative emplotment determines its outcome, Nichanian delineates the repercussions of the genocidal truth whose rubrics disclose its genocidal will that "was always intent on the destruction of spectatorship, on erasing all traces and all evidence linked to its murderous actions," 144. In the hands of the "murderers and historians, by jurists and archivist alike" is the invention of the singular fact and revisionism born—a fact on which the renewed law and the emerging international community is called upon to bear witness, 143.

[31] Weheliye, *35.*

the historiographic perversion that installs with it an episteme of nonviolence—those "strangled underneath so many absent, destroyed, or impossible archives."[32]

If a 'racializing assemblage' aims to dismantle the emblematic name yet still inheres into that which passes the threshold of the historical or political, what each of these instances cites is the question of interiority—a [non]*racialized* biopolitical core hidden beneath the conception of modern genocide that probes how the latter appears to subordinate the prior in its framing, first as the centralizing rubrics of what constitutes modern violence, and *then* its prefixed 'racial' delimited by measures land and labor that sustains its relational legibility or that which amounts to the accumulation of land or wealth, i.e. modernity accounted for through *historical measurable events.*

In other words, to become visible within the scope of historical memory—within the scope of biopolitics-proper—appears to participate in the operative function of historical relations that can only record the echoes of violence as it registers in the metropolitan imagination or justifies its formation. For Weheliye historicizing the devastating consequences of the "ontological differentiation between ethnic and biopolitical racism" that constructs biologized race as a matter of a temporal and spatial elsewhere to biopolitics, is instead the need to see its constructs made legible to the archival regime produced through the particularly Jewish contours of biopolitical violence. 'Race' understood as merely one example, or the primitive remainders applicable to Europe in so far as it references 'mere racial discrimination' within "naturalized racial categories,"[33] would echo in a binary historical articulation of modern versus premodern violence—"the Jew" and "the slave"—that organizes the conception of (un)punctuated time itself, between 'bare life' and 'life' as it just appears that carries into the renewed age of US Imperialism or revolutionary history-making and its deadly 'elsewheres' presently being enacted.

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[32] Vaziri, "False Differends: Racial Slavery and the Genocidal Example," 19.

[33] As Weheliye continues, "...all modern racism is biological, first, because it maintained the believed natural—often evolutionary—inferiority of the targeted subjects and, second, because racialization is instituted, as elucidated by Wynter, in the realm of human physiology as the sociogenic selection of one specific group in the name of embodying all humanity... Put bluntly, there exists no significant difference between ethnic and biological racism in the way Foucault imagines since both rely on the same tools of trade: racializing assemblages. Nevertheless, it appears as if Foucault can only authenticate the uniqueness and novelty of European biopolitical racism by conjuring the antithetical spirits of racism always already situated in a primitive elsewhere," 59-60.

Vaziri explores the further ramifications of the Shoah to trace the contours of non-racial slavery in the so-called 'premodern' Indian Ocean World. Its exception precisely "mandated by the emblematic name,[34]" historical time instead figures as an ideological formation unfolding into nonhistorical, unmarked time not just from the shared understanding of biopolitical racism of Europe, but also from the emblematic status of transatlantic slavery made selectively legible through their subsumption into the archival regime. Historicizing the institutionalization of Black studies in relation to the Holocaust's exemplarity, as Vaziri argues, in the constructs of postwar philosophy and the eventual institutionalized ethnic studies arising with the Civil Rights movement, Black studies came to be undergirded, albeit partially by the safety of the archival regime hence, historical truth. Such a regime under which recovery is made possible, Saidiya Hartman exposes as the confines under which enslaved black bodies now 'freed' are made to perform the task of naturalizing 'the human' as such,[35] revealing instead the cunning narrative of 'freedom' defined by the dichotomy of the slave's social death and the worker's exploitation, always already written within the folds of emancipatory revolutionary political time foretold and eventually enacted.[36] As Anthony Reid also reminds us, concepts of personal freedom appear naturalized when "all other forms of servitude are subsumed into a clearly defined category of 'slaves,'"[37] inciting a reflection on not just 'other slaveries' or 'premodern slaveries' prominently studied in the Indian Ocean World as that which precedes the exemplarity of its transatlantic counterpart, but also of the 'post' to its exemplarity (we have explored this question in the previous chapter and we will soon return to the relevance of 'non-racial' slavery in the South Korean instance). Yet, before we return to the discursive recovery of *history as such* within the modern Asian context, we wrestle a little longer with this episteme of 'non-violence,' the nonarchival, or the deadly separation of ethnic racism and biopolitical violence (politics vs. economics) embedded in the present abstraction produced by a reified understanding of race, capital, and modern time.

[34] Vaziri, 16.

[35] Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection.*

[36] Scott, *Conscripts of Modernity.*

[37] Reid, "Introduction: Slavery and Bondage in Southeast Asian History," 21.

Echoes of 'Asia' in the World-Historical Consciousness

When analyzing what may be subordinated to biopolitics and then race, what we may be witnessing are two 'poles' of what might constitute 'racial' violence (if we might be momentarily reductive) in what Walter Benjamin characterizes as the inherent violence of law-making that appears to make little distinction between the 1) *creation* and *2) maintenance* of the law (or we might add, the law as also interchangeable as state or the revolutionary anti-bourgeois, middle-class sensibilities). To elaborate, if on one *more abstracted* side of the pole, 1) the 'racialized' can be understood as the unconscious economic conditions of possibility for the *creation* of the law, the state, or such a thing as 'the middle class,' its *exemplary* counterpart might be 2) the 'racialized' that rises to the level of a *conscious* political threat to its existing formation.

In other words, we might map this second pole as the *conscious* threats to the Euro-American interests where historical Japan and now China in the Pacific front, the war on terror, each supposedly 'elsewhere' to each other, appears to meet these terms of a conscious political and racialized 'threats' to the centrality of the West as the so-called beacon of 'freedom.' It is this exceptional site of "racial violence" that preoccupies our present global attention, both as a site of perceived threat and the site of modern racial invention and protest. Yet, it is the interim time I am more concerned with—the relatively 'unconscious' time of [non]racial economic suppression prior to their conscious recognitions—the time of Palestinian abjection prior to their destitution reaching some form of recognizability under the terms of 'genocide,' the time of the racial economic history of slavery and Indigenous erasures in the United States prior to the 'Asian American' reaching the threshold of a 'racial' threat of a 'yellow peril,' the time of the [non]racial economic conditions of Imperial Japan garnered through its colonies, and subsequently, the economic grounds of possibility for the model South Korean nation prior to its class-based national revolution and selective institution of gender and racial exemplarity within regional Asia.

As both Nichanian and Vaziri contend, the marking of modern violence exemplified by the Jewish condition appears to naturalize its others of nonviolent premodernity and their posts. Equally important is to question the site of modern exemplar restitution—the modern nation and in particular, the renewed dominance of a US-allied internationalism within the neutrality of international law, from the Jewish State as the so-called beacon in a "backward" Middle East, the

racial historical threat of Japan later restituted into the exemplarity and particularity of the Japanese American in the matrix of US racial politics and their mutual formations of national multiculturalism restituted in the model Asian nations of Japan and South Korea. While I am not drawing an equivalence across these instances, as I have aimed to delineate across this dissertation, each appears to hide behind it a comparative site of the 'racial' non-exemplary or 'non-racial' economic condition of possibility, selectively and in timely fashion made legible through their comparison with the modern camp though receding as they selectively make avail of the rubrics of history and international law.

On the one hand, drawing a genealogy of US national historical memory from the perspective of the North American ethnic configuration—from the Indigenous, African American to Asian American— demands the immediacy of the question of race too often relegated to the primitive *elsewhere* to a self-enclosed and stagist understanding of Euro-American revolutionary history. Yet, 'Asian-America,' particularly the Japanese American reflects not just the privileged *temporal* site of modern racial recognizability within the US racial configuration, but also the liminal site that mediates where historical memory of the 'racial' meets the present [non]racial economic 'elsewheres.'

If Agamben's camp indexes that which rises to modern historical memory, enacted into law, enacted into the renewed sphere of the international to the epistemic illegibility of its others, the recognition of the Japanese American as the "New Jew" in Iyko Day's *Alien Capital* raises the adjacent question of what might subtend the legibility of the 'Japanese' in the scope of historical memory. As Day correlates Moishe Postone's reading of the secular power of the Jew to the rising conception of the Japanese as the embodied abstract evil of capitalism in the North American imagination, Day delineates how the underlying romantic anticapitalistic imagination transmuted the Japanese not "merely a [as] a form of human capital but a representation of capital itself."[38] Yet what perplexes Day's study is the generalized idea of the Asian laboring body characterized as merely one form of human capital from which the very embodiment of Japanese hyper-capitalist aggression comes to be legible, a non-distinction that appears to replicate the conflation of 'Asia' as a legible totality lurking beneath (I recall Weheliye's comments on 'bare life' that constructs 'life' as it just appears). Where is such a totality, or endless potential for labor, gathered from that becomes the grounds through which Japanese

[38] Day, 6.

hyper-capital can register? Further still, what undergirds the possibility of such a comparison—the Jew, the Japanese, and now the Chinese as they are each understood and selectively unmarked within modernity and within the scope of the political 'racial' (the second exemplary 'pole' of the racial)? It appears we are met with a similar conundrum early Black scholars have noted in protest of the historical revision embedded in the Jewish condition, in which the underlying material grounds appear relegated outside the purview of political violence.

If Day through Postone narrates how the Japanese American had come to be marked and unmarked within the scope of the North American racial triangulation, as Colleen Lye reminds us, we situate Japan's emergence into Euro-American political recognizability (i.e. modernity) that has been as much a product of US imagination and relations with an emergent idea of Asia. Marking *new* modes of capitalist relations with East Asia is the instigation of historical relations proper with the opening of East Asia to the *dominance* of Western industrial capitalism by the mid-1850s with China's defeat in the Opium Wars. The reconfiguration of power in its wake yielded another force in East Asia—Japan's rapid industrialization and advancement into modernity.

What interests me is the scramble for 'Asia' or rather China that marked the turn of the century as the exemplary site of the Orient's transition from its premodern mercantile relations with the West to its modern exemplary signification within transnational capital. As Lye outlines, the expansion of the US into Asia inaugurates the post-territorial garnering of economic relations that at once rehearses where the anxieties surrounding the ending of US expansion meet the imagination of the modern Chinese capital. Imagined as the emblem of the potential monopolistic form and the possible fulfillment of capitalism's monstrous industrial future,[39] China in the US imagination, as Lye delineates through the figure of the 'coolie,' signified the non-particular horde, the monolithic "cheap labor force" as the "urban multitude" and of a coming "alien invasion"[40] that threatened the US romantic anticapitalistic outlook. A 'laboring horde,' not fully subjected to the West, but now appearing to be fully 'utilized' by the rising threat of a Chinese monopoly, Lye work appears to be marking this transition of the signification

[39] As Lye writes, "The rhetoric of expansion's end and consolidation's onset, shared by writers from Brooks Adams to Jack London, repeatedly articulates the sense of the end of the American frontier with the image of Asia and Asian new proximity," 54.

[40] Lye, 55.

of the Asian body from the manageable and docile plural laboring body under Western jurisdiction ('the coolie') towards the threat of a global Asian capitalistic modernity signaled by the rise of Japanese modernity in the near past, and that of China in the present ('yellow peril'). Here, in the echoes of the US imagination, we might find the exemplary site of the Asiatic transitioning from its premodern and modern world-historical imagination.

It is in this broader context of the 'scramble for China,' or rather the global imagination of endless potential for Chinese labor that we place the rise of a new Japanese imperial power. In the United States, the figure of the 'coolie' by the late nineteenth century had already become a "familiar icon of American capitalist modernity" as the image of "industrial subjection" coinciding with the growing sensibilities of capitalism's evils for the underlying resistant anticapitalistic US citizenry.[41] Yet, the 'coolie' as the abstract embodiment of capitalism's evil in the US imagination must also give way to the lurking threat to the possibilities of an ever-expanding market logic threatened by the rising East. Furthermore, I am interested in the coolie as an index of a 'docile' laborer contrasted to the figure of 'yellow peril,' the imagination of a *subjectable* racialized laboring body constructed an Asian "laboring horde" yet to be brought under subjection to make possible an ever-expanding US-dominated market attempted through militarism in the Pacific front.

On the one hand, the conjoining the two epistemically separate figures of the Japanese American and the Japanese Empire might mediate the limits of a self-enclosed internal ethnic group within the US imagination when the concoction of the Japanese American as the epitome of 'yellow peril' is an extension of the seemingly sudden rise of modern Japan in the eyes of the metropolitan center oozing into its territorial borders and a threat to continued capitalist expansion into Asia. On the other side of the Pacific, the retroactively suturing of Japan's Imperial moment too often foregoes the reading of empire as part and parcel of the deadly processes of revolutionary history-making. Imagining itself to be enacting revolutionary history against the West through the installation of an 'East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere,' the Japanese empire appears to reenact the puzzling story of the 'revolutionary struggle' once again showcasing its discomforting ties with death processes, i.e., the deadly articulation of the (non)racial economic elsewheres. As Susanna Lim reminds us, the Japanese East Asian Co-

[41] Lye, 55.

Prosperity Sphere not only reaches the threshold of the Hegelian gaze[42] as partakers of history-proper but emerges on equal footing with the Imperial West, the result of which had been the "construct[ion of] its own Orient in its representations of China, Korea, and Taiwan."[43] In other words, the result of Japan reaching the threshold of the political 'racial threat' had been Japanese Americans taken to internment camps. Yet hidden beneath the legibility of a 'racial threat' recorded and reifed as 'racial' within the borders of the United States, is the economic elsewhere of Imperial Japan's militarized procurement of the regional imagination of "East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere."

While Iyko Day's work delimits the scale of ethnic relations within the North American imagination by the sheer need to tame the scope of invoking the 'nondistinct Asian laboring body' whose significance is carried across the premodern-modern divide in a continent bursting at the seams of multiplicity, the epistemic repercussions of delimiting the Japanese American struggle within the neat configurations of ethnic relations in the North American context—the settler, native, slave, and immigrant—magnifies in its epistemic repercussions. As Day argues, the invention of the Japanese American constructed as the figure of 'hyper capital' would later be instated as the model minority through the proper disciplinary action instilled through internment. Yet, the explanatory power we attribute to the concept of the 'model minority' might instead reflect what Weheliye conceives of as that which is "imbue[d] with the magical aura of conceptual value."[44] In other words, saturated with the comparative aura of the quintessential European twentieth-century violence, thereby denoting that which rises into historical recognition, such readings of the Japanese American as an "abstract embodiment" of capital might be made possible through its selective and thematic interchangeability with modernity, violence, and historical memory itself to the literal abstraction of the economic conditions relegated elsewhere to political violence and thereby history. This may also explain why concepts such as Marianne Hirsch's postmemory, first theorized in the context of the trauma that follows those of Jewish descent, are adaptable to the conditions of communal violence recounted

[42] See Rei Terada's "Hegel's racism for radicals" where Terada probes the spatialized non-relation in Hegel's imagination of the African continent and Indian subcontinent in comparison. See discussion further in this chapter.

[43] Lim, *China and Japan in the Russian Imagination, 1685-1922, To the Ends of the Orient,* 14.
[44] Weheliye, 57.

as part of the 'Asian North American cultural production."[45] Yet, Day's application of 'postmemory' appears unable to account for the *conditions* that have birthed 'historical memory' itself, the conditions of punctuated history that delimit the scope of the 'political' first and subsequently the scope of the 'racial' within its frame, thereby marking the limits of what might register within the purview of memory, thereby even postmemory.

Fragments and fissures of comparison with the Jewish condition emerge—from concentration camp to internment camp—whose linearity of history is not guaranteed for the Japanese as it is for the Jewish. In other words, the collective communal consciousness Day evokes—the 'Asia' of 'Asian America'—cannot escape its epistemic significance bursting at the seams of historical recognizability not just by sheer saturation of 'Asia' within a certain aura of 'history,' but also precisely because Japan's referent—the emergence of modern Asia cannot be tied directly to a historical event like Auschwitz, beyond the scope of that which erupts within the purview of political 'violence' defined and constructed in the Shoah's image. 'Sliding' outside the purview of its "magical aura," the promises of the historical truth, and thereby the possibilities of comparison do not equally follow all victims restored into the emergent international communal memory against which is the construction of *its excess*—those whose experiential violence is sanctioned into selective amnesia, whose resonance might only be captured through the prefixed condition—racism as prefixed to the biopolitical, the 'region' as the unmarked prefix to Asia.

The amplification of the *racial as a discrete* epistemic regime is doubled in the inheritance of revolutionary futures within the imagination of the United States whose exemplary ethnic inclusion, the site that originates the civil rights movement, would participate in the construction and spread of racial liberalism as a global norm, destined to be reproduced as an *operative* tool not just in an emergent postcolonial world at large, but, as our study specifies, in the exceptionally militarized conditions of nationalism emerging in East and Southeast Asia. From the central site of comparison, contradictions abound in the installment of this operative tool of racial liberalism *within the region,* as I have delineated in the first two chapters. The historical 'excess' of the Japanese Empire, now safely relegated as the political 'imperial' by nature, signals figures like the comfort woman as one of liberal democratic futurity yet to be saved, redoubling the neutrality of 'Asia' primed to be brought under proper and naturalized

[45] Day, 35.

subjection, under nation, law, and capital. This is also why the previous chapters have been attuned to the unmarked formations of 'race' and 'region,' where contradictions amplify the further we move from these central sites of comparison. In particular, I traced the ramifications of racial liberalism's spread in South Korea that, contrary to the purported possibilities of multiple hyphenated identities (the Afro-Asian, the Afro-Korean, the Filipino-Korean), instead highlights where such hyphens mediate the progressively receding significance of 'camp' (i.e., a camp that cannot be recuperated as a historical event) that stages decolonial multiculturalism to unmark the violent conditions that wrought on the normativity of capitalism in US-allied Asia.

In other words, I have painstakingly noted the series of exponentially increasing 'excesses' stemming from the citations of the quintessential 'modern violence' to question the region, not as a self-evident formation but as an epistemic one. Could it be, then, that 'regional' violence, as a prefixed condition, stands in for the apparent lack of modern legibility—i.e., the event—where periodized and spatialized boundaries we have designated as the region is the remainder of what which has managed to appear in the image of the event? Often read as the underdeveloped region primed *as a totality* to be modernized and liberalized, I have sought instead to 'flip the script,' as such—to contend with the relegation of events and deaths *made* recedingly outside modernity, or in this case, modern subjection under the western gaze, yet to be properly incorporated into secular modernity. As revolutionary futures are poised to expand from a central understanding of the event, the nation, minority nationalism, into the unmarked global regions, I have instead aimed to amplify the stakes of the ever-increasing state of contradiction made to comply as the region comes into neutral modern and secular formation.

Hegel and Regional Difference *Par Excellence*

China marks the exemplary site of the 'Orient' in the Hegelian imagination, often characterized by its mercantile trade across East and Southeast Asia in the so-called premodern that garners its comparative significance with the Jew as the merchant. Yet, as I have argued in the previous section, its premodernity rising to the level of threat or political recognizability emerging as the site of modern racial disdain must also be theorized in terms of its emergence within global economic relations *proper* that threatened the maintenance of an ever-expanding US capitalist imagination. I draw attention to the two vectors of 'Chinese' exemplarity from the

premodern to the modern to return to how the remainder of the world-historical process has left China as the site of racial exemplarity.

Wang Hui traces the ambiguities of 'Asia,' in particular as it is written in relation to Europe. Marked by longstanding trade relations between Europe and East Asia as early as the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, perhaps even earlier from the tenth century, Hui cites Andre Gunder Frank to state that the only "logical conclusion" is that were it not for the trade sustained between Europe and East Asia before the rise of Europe since the 1400s and the decline of East Asia since the 1800s, the industrial revolution as we know it would not have occurred."[46] What both Hui and Frank offer is not just 'Asia' constructed in the mirror of the European gaze as the abstracted 'racial economic' conditions of possibility to the rise of Europe's modernity, but also the constructs of 'Asia' that remain the privileged inheritor of modernity justified by its contributions to the rise of the modern telos. We are returned to the question of the agentive human subject that undergirds the possibilities of recuperating premodern 'Asia'—the rubrics of history that appear bound by that which amounts to Western modernity and also the non-West's relation to the West, bound by the universal story of modernity.

Similarly found across various registers of *difference*, the echo of the region today appears to be constructed within the mirrors of the European gaze. If the idea of Asia invokes a panoply of exotic goods through trade of milieus past that has spatially 'orientalized' the region, this oriental imagination of the 'Far East' echoes the present ubiquitous understanding of modern Asian transnational capital, now selectively 'ordered' within modern and legal forms. As Hui writes, 'Asia' as we have come to know it, encompasses more than half of the world's population and three-fifths of the world's landmass rife with heterogeneity—Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Sikhism, Zoroastrianism, Daoism, and Confucianism characterize the multiplicity 'inherent' to Asia, reproducing Asia within the world-historical imagination as the 'cradle of civilization,' perhaps even the origins of plurality itself. The reproduction of this oriental imagination is likewise seen subtending Foucault's discussion of heterotopias in *The Order of Thing* as China is evoked as the embodied site of difference itself, imagined as an 'alternative' form of social organizations and difference *par excellence*, we might say, that makes possible the particularly European contours of biopolitical 'ordered' classifications. I dwell on the uncanny echoes of these prior images to mediate the changing imagination of

[46] Andre Gunder Frank as quoted by Hui, "The Idea of Asia and Its Ambiguities," 986.

'Asia'—from China's centrality in the world-historical imagination of the premodern to the implication of the properly ordered recuperation of plurality within modernity.

First, we situate in the imagination of 'Asia' invoked through mercantile relations with the West that must be contextualized at large within the broader fictive flights of fancy in Hegel's *Philosophy of History* that had divided continental relations into the centralized European image of historical progress. As Rei Terrada outlines, Hegel's conception of history imagines 'proper relations'—the oceanic that "enlivens" relations to the external world where nations derive their world-historical significance through global relations, or in other words, through the exchange of commerce. Such value judgment differentiated between Sub-Saharan Africa[47] as self-enclosed and "savage" compared to North Africa "being coastal and oriented towards Europe: '[it] is not independent on its own account... Spain is said to belong to Africa. But it is just as correct to say that this part of Africa belongs to Europe"[48] (13). Further still, Hegel's perception of India's 'castes' as further developed in relation to those whose social organization resembled insular kinship structures reflects the teleological gradation in the civilizational imagination where "Hegel's sub-Saharan Africa does not even get that far."[49] As Terada reminds us, 'slavery' is reflected through the Hegelian gaze as the process through which the consciousness of Africa's "lack of connection" or "global relations" becomes instilled, thereby "Africans have to remain enslaved for a while longer."[50] Further along in this civilizational gradation is Hegel's perception of East Asia as he writes, "historical *movements* in it—that is in its northern part—belong to the Asiatic or European World" measured against Sub-Saharan Africa understood as being stuck in the condition of "mere nature" had been achieved through East Asia's centuries-old mercantile relations imagined as less stagnant thereby closer to the "threshold of the World's History."[51]

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[47] As Terada writes, "As part of the same train of thought, Hegel complains that Africans 'see nothing unbecoming' in being connected to Europeans only through slavery. 'There is no slavery in the state that is rational; slavery is found only where spirit has not yet attained this point." Quite literally, for Hegel this lack of connection and its ill effect, blackness, is why Africans have to remain enslaved for a while longer," 17.

[48] Terada, 13.

[49] Terada, 14.

[50] Terada, 17.

[51] Hegel, 99.

If in Hegel's perception, 'racial' differences (and thereby also regional differences) are a reflection of such value judgment that differentially subjects people to the world historical process, and thereby death processes, this comparative spatialized and racialized condition reflects the conditions of possibility for the evasion of certain genocide in India along British perceptions of primitivity, as Spivak argues, resulting in the differentiated modes of subjection of the Native Americans through settler colonialism versus colonialism in India.[52] Similarly, following Spivak's logic, if the perception of 'East Asia' could gather force in the European metropole as the 'land of origins,' East Asia constructed in the echoes of this civilizational ladder appears to be not just the product of its mercantile relations with the West but also the product of its condition of *skirting* paternalizing colonial enslavement and genocide by the West.[53] Hence, through the measures of historical teleology bound by the criteria of global kinship and commercial relations, are the differing vulnerability to death processes enacted and in its global aftermaths, conditioned into the self-evident scope of relevance understood as the global 'regional' emerging through their respective differential contact in relation to the ascendence of European civilization.

If Asia's longstanding relations with the West had been characterized by its mercantile and 'orientalist' past with Europe, it too must be displaced to come into proper historical relations with the West, sanitized from its orientalist imagination towards a secular understanding within modern transnational capital—one, as I drew earlier, is imagined in its rightful order only when subordinated to Western modernity. Mediating this transition are the compounding sites of exception that have allowed for this transition from the premodern to the modern, from 'Orient' to 'Asia' in the age of US-led postcolonial nationalism. Having first evaded colonial-enslavement, the exception of East Asia is poised as the next frontier yet to fall

[52] Gayatri Spivak in "Constitutions and Culture Studies" writes of India's evasion of settlement along the British perceptions of primitivity: "Let us also remember that in the eighteenth century, economists such as Adam Smith, functionaries of the East India Company, as well as the British popular press, were exercised by the failed parallel between the American and Indian examples. Let me therefore ask you to imagine that, because the East India Company was incorporated, and because India was not sparsely populated, thoroughly pre-capitalist social formation easily handled through pre-political maneuvers and the manipulation of chattel slavery, in other words because it was not possible for a group of British merchants to establish a settlement colony there, no apparent origin could be secured and no Founding Fathers could establish the United States of India, no "Indian Revolution" against Britain could be organized by foreign settlers," 137.

[53] As Susanna Lim writes, "The tendency to accord Japan an intermediary status in racial and civilizational classification schemes, i.e. below the Europeans but above the peoples of other parts of Asia, Africa and the Americas, was in fact common in nineteenth century Europe because of the unique circumstances of Japan," 86.

under the purview of proper order, this time mediated by the twentieth-century proclivities of the primacy of history as the modern disciplinary tool proper.

First, as the banner of revolutionary history dislocates from Europe to the North American imagination precisely in the post-war era, the recognition of Japan as a threat that had recast 'Asia' from the non-distinct 'orient' to 'yellow peril' curiously registers not necessarily in Hegel's Europe, but in the twentieth-century New World in the North American imagination. What I have been interested in is the retroactive recuperation of ethnic differences, one that as Indigenous studies scholar Jodi Byrd reminds us, is the deadly byproduct of a revolutionary America that had founded itself, *not* as a "multicultural nation that is struggling with the legacies of racism" but rather has always been "a colonist power engaged in territorial expansion since it birth."[54]

We resituate the legibility of the 'historical' within the discursive regime of a "good-willed' empire. As Lowe, Ferguson, Hong, and Vaziri among others note the timely rise of Ethnic Studies with the Civil Rights movement and global decolonial struggle in the 60s and 70s, race marked always already as an a priori elsewhere appears to sequester the racial historical *process* into 'racial history' or 'ethnic history' of Euro-America's past. All the while, as I have argued in the previous chapters, the civil rights movement and the attending formations of the 'racial multicultural' appear to gaze into the abyss of a good-willed US imperialism inherited from the prior European French revolutionary moment that has and continues to voraciously capture reified difference of the past to enact its intended revolutionary futures, always already elsewhere, twice and thrice removed and made exceptional 'temporally' and 'geographically.' Like many other critical race scholars, I draw attention to ethnic studies and their knowledge production that is not *outside* the historical process of garnering 'historical relations-proper,' as the now exceptionally multicultural United States is mobilized within the non-historical contemporary moment and made applicable in the so-called 'exceptional' twentieth-century relation between Asia and the West.

We return to question the self-evident scope of relevance that has naturalized the division between modern and premodern, Asian American studies and Asian studies, race and region, the Japanese American and the comfort woman, etc. If 'East Asia' as a region whose premodern *difference par excellence* comes to be understood as the cradle of civilization, and the origins of

[54] Byrd, "'BEEN TO THE NATION, LORD, BUT I COULDN'T STAY THERE,'" 34.

cultural diversity itself that had been the means through which a uniquely European biopolitical 'ordered' classification is imagined, its exemplary site of premodern difference (having *evaded* colonial enslavement by the West) appears similarly rewritten *into modernity,* bound by the new relations garnered through the opening of China to Western capitalism. Not yet properly *historical* (or subservient) *and* thereby marked as the next frontier within historical relations proper, we situate the privileged site of 'China' in the world-historical and 'racial' imagination that is contingent on rising to the level of political consciousness within modernity and within the western gaze, with China's economic and military prowess emerging as a 'racial' threat.

The Japanese instance remains instructive to mediate the *abject processes* of having risen to match the Hegelian gaze and then made subservient within US empire as 'model' subjects of 'racial' modernity. For in Japan's imperial moment relegated into the historical also mediates the separation of 'racial political' from its conditions of possibility—Japan's colonies, the scramble of China, and the subsequent embarkment of the mantle of revolutionary futures that promises to expand into and remap the once premodern 'oriental' space. Yet, as I have belabored the point, the operative function of reified 'race' found strangely misplaced but quietly instituted across East Asia where there is *no history* of colonial violence, racial slavery, or indigenous genocides *by the West,* yields the necessary historical negation that appears to fuel the present regional formation. In other words, in reifying 'race' delimited by the Japanese American staged within the properly 'ordered' diversity of the 'multicultural' North American imagination, its lack thereof conditions the still 'oriental' contours of Asian regionalism where only *certain* US-allied nations have managed to 'overcome' its premodern proclivities to properly stage 'orderly' sociological values within the modern political state.

What remains in the present post-Cold War consciousness of militarized Asia, is the silent *staging* of this unmediated and 'self-made' model US-allied nation on its way toward proper recovery of pluralism (that conceals its racialized, gendered, and militarized conditions of possibility) pit against the 'backward' idea of China that lacks sociological particularity in comparison. In this sense, the bronze statue's 'transnational circulation' is likewise instructive in mediating the spectral presence yet difficulties in 'localizing' differences, or caesuras into regional Asian nations when its spectrality appears only to redouble the signification of the region's lack of, staging the dichotomy between the exemplary US-allied multicultural and their others.

On the flip side, the '[non]racial economic' interior of the Chinese state that registers as a threat in the US imagination depends on the construction of backward non-particular Chinese subject. It is this imagination of the Chinese state still 'oriental' in their unnatural garnering of capital and as the monstrous embodiment of capitalism's industrial future that makes possible western modernity's natural course, through the harnessing of a liberal democratic imperialism found in its allied states that become unmarked as the revolutionary future in the *interim* present.

Yet, as the ideological formation of the *proper* in US-allied states is militarily sustained and interiorized to make possible the exemplary-proper minority and national subjects, both the non-distinct laboring subjects of China and the non-racial figures of disdain interiorized in US-allied South Korea remain the present possibilities of labor production under both regimes of power. Still marked by an 'Oriental' premodern time of the interim illegible, the supposedly unaccounted-for subjects yet to be restituted into modern caesuras appear to make possible the so-called benevolent US rule, looming as a perpetual specter of the future yet to come. The result of this strategic deployment of sociological classifications mediates not just the violent militarized rise of the US empire in the region but also the silent and intended task of transcending 'race' in Asia—the unmarking of the oriental towards marking the Asian national citizen brought into proper 'model minority' status and more significantly, under Euro-American naturalized capital subservience.

Non-Racial Slavery, Courtesan Slave, and the Genealogy of the Comfort Woman

I return briefly to the South Korean context to attempt to draw out the implications of the longstanding protest within ethnic studies with regards to the Holocaust's exemplarity I have thus far summarized through a brief literature review across this chapter. Traced across recent scholarship, in particular, the emerging study of 'other slaveries' or Indian Ocean World (IOW) slaveries, as Vaziri reflects, is the apparent consignment of Indian Ocean World slavery into epistemic illegibility as "transatlantic slavery's historical shadow, its antecedent and result, purportedly "obscured" by the transatlantic's notoriety."[55] As Gwyn Campbell also surveys the nascent field, at large Indian Ocean World slavery must be contextualized with the rising "forces of the international economy [that] increasingly embraced the macro-region," from the first millennium AD and lasting into the nineteenth century. As Campbell writes, increased activity

[55] Vaziri, 10.

across the IOW is not independent of the forces of slavery as understood within Western borders, for instance, as anti-slave pressures in East Africa in the early nineteenth century contributed to the millions of Indian and Chinese indentured laborers recruited across the Indian Ocean World, even as elites within the Indian Ocean world, managed through colonial rule, likewise profited from this growing international economy as emerging commercial centers in Africa and Southeast Asia that appeared regionally to meet the demand for cash crop plantations across the Indian Ocean world led to "approximately 6.7 million people...emigrat[ing] from South China to Southeast Asia ...[as compared to] 4 percent end[ing] up as "indentured" labour on European estates."[56]

As Vaziri reflects, the contrasting and comparatively irrecuperable IOW slaveries rest on the assumption that IOW slavery is "gentle, seamless histories…forgettable" that "hinges on the imagined warmth of a domestic interior versus the isolation of the field; the protected, invisible feminine body versus the tragic and spectacular male muscular body in chains" characteristic of the New World Plantations,[57] reflecting the gendered assumptions of productive and reproductive labor, or as we have explored previously, unproductive labor as that which does not amount to modern capitalist relations proper. The result of which, as Vaziri reflects, is the disappearance of black bodies into the Persian Gulf that uncannily echoes the role of ascending miscegenation not just across the premodern Indian Ocean World as such, but one as we have painstakingly explored within regional East Asia, particularly South Korea, disavows a 'racialized' interior strategically sequestered outside of the scope of periodized and spatialized histories and its assumptions of labor production as the prerequisite of radical history-making (however tenuous in relation to 'the event').

Poignantly exemplifying this comparative regime is the example of slavery in Korea that for Peterson[58] signals the 'peaceful transitions' between aristocracies over the centuries that can only indicate a stable society where the slave class sustains an uninterrupted lineage spanning

[56] Campbell, "Slavery in the Indian Ocean World," 58.

[57] Vaziri, 245.

[58] See Mark Peterson's outline of 'slavery' in Korea. https://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/nation/2023/08/638_289137.html#:~:text=Korean%20slaves%20are%20called%20%22nobi,sold%2C%20inherited%2C%20traded%20and%20moved

approximately 1500 years across the Three Kingdoms, Silla, Goryeo and Chosŏn periods[59] until the twentieth century thereby making accessible "true history and tradition of Korea" left to be recovered by the modern state. Yet, to relegate Korean slavery into the space of nonracial premodern slavery appears to reinforce the images of a prehistoric family unit that reproduces Hegel's philosophy of history, whose 'uncivilized' condition evinced through its insularity of outdated kinship structures appear ready to be left behind in favor of modern sensibilities of "open relationality"[60] of the global. Distilling the past only as it suits emergent categorical significance of various sociological caesuras including the past distilled into concepts of culture, gender, and race, we have explored their devastating discursive effects in the previous chapters.

Yet, what if we were to take 'Korean slavery' as one example of 'non-racial' slavery as the academic consensus today lies, to instead place its epistemic significance in relation to the long shadow cast by transatlantic slavery's legacy,[61] emerging, as Vaziri historicizes in the case of IOW scholarship in the 1970s and 80s, a few decades after the formal institutionalization of Black studies in the 1950s and 60s that is itself trailing the legal category of 'the event' emerging in the 1940s?[62] With the reign of the 'genocidal intent' of the archive as Nichanian draws attention to that, as Weheliye reflects, has made subsidiary its racial historical conditions of possibility, each appears reinforced through their separated historical knowledge productions sanctified into separate but contingently legible modern legal form. What is often dismissed in this assumption of periodized and spatialized history as such, are the conditions of knowledge production in which 'non-racial slavery' becomes an object of knowledge that puts to productive use the assumptions of 'slavery' relegated as a modality of the essentially premodern. In the context of South Korea, non-racial slavery emerges into the safety of periodized legibility, as one

[59] See Kim Heeho's "Changes in Informal society and slavery in the Chosŏn-Era in Korea." Kim outlines the final century prior to the official abolition of slavery in 1894 by law. As Kim notes, the year 1731 marks a transitionary period from Jongcheon law to the Jongyang law where "the new slave regulation, Jongyang, stated the child was a slave only if the mother was a slave, regardless of the status of the child's father. This effectively elevated some children—who otherwise would have been potential slaves—to the taxpaying, commoner status." This resulted in the dramatic decrease in slaves, from approximately 25-40% of the population or roughly 6.9 million in the seventeenth century to 0.1% of the population by 1867.

[60] Terada, 14.

[61] As Kim makes the inevitable comparison, "It was easy for slaves to flee since they had the same appearance and spoke the same language as commoners whereas the appearance and language of the Black slave populations in the U.S. and the Caribbean were distinct from that of the common population," 2.

[62] Vaziri, "False Differend," 15.

nonracial example of transatlantic slavery's legacy whose exemplary legacy of abolition subsumed into the notions of 'revolutionary history-proper,' always already assumes all 'slaveries'—racial or nonracial—destined to be displaced by proper notions of individual freedoms. It would also be the exemplarity of the US instance that heralds itself as the site of multiply compounded 'revolutions' that would reify 'multiculturalism' as another modality of 'freedom' to be garnered militarily, as we have explored.

Taken to the emerging modern postcolonial national time in South Korea, such a binary of the 'enslaved' and 'free' is particularly concerning as it is mediated through the legacy of Japanese Imperialism that understood itself as enacting a sense of 'regional independence' against Western Imperialism. Read in terms of such a binary would misconstrue Japanese Imperialism as 'emancipatory' having taken the last remaining vestiges of slavery in Korea—the Chosŏn courtesan slave[63] 'abolished' in favor of legal prostitution under the Japanese "Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere" when Chosŏn was made protectorate in 1905. As the historiographical accounts construe, it is in these changing hands of power where we witness 'comfort women' as we have come to identify today working alongside 'legal prostitutes' once Chosŏn courtesans perhaps even as prostitutes under the 'miuri contract'[64] installed under the Japanese Imperial rule.[65] Incidentally, as Katherine Moon explores the ideological separation between the comfort woman and the kijich'on women's movement in the height of the transnational feminist coalitional movement of the 80s and 90s, the separation of the two figures, perhaps even the third 'courtesan slave,' who could each have been the same person, reflects the liminality of the 'comfort woman' as the exemplary site of meaning-making, and the site of historical recuperation that instead unveils the terms of the naturalized division between the premodern and the modern, the colonial and the postcolonial, the enslaved and the free.

[63] See Park's article on "Courtesan Slaves" where the distinction between prostitutes and courtesan slaves comes to be questioned. Korean history appears exemplar even within the framework of 'premodern slaveries' in the sheer number of records that exist in what is often cited as the quintessential example of nonracial slavery, spanning approximately 1500 years across the Three Kingdoms, Silla, Goryeo and Chosŏn periods.

[64] See Wooyoun Lee's discussion of the Miuri contract. Lee argues that the narrative of the abducted 'comfort woman' must contextualize in relation to the statistical significance of more 'consensual' means of procuring women for Japanese comfort stations. See "Ramseyer's Paper: Criticism of It, and Arguments in Its Favor."

[65] See Jin, "Reconsidering Prostitution under the Japanese Occupation: Through the Korean Brothels in Colonial Taiwan."

Empires and racial economic conditions anyways tamed into liberal forms and historical periods, it is in this renewed consent-based framework of international law that the US presence in South Korea is overwritten by two consenting and self-aware nations, not in colonial relations, but under the triumphant emancipatory claims to 'posts' that unwittingly naturalizes the system of sexual extortion that continues to abound sequestered within. What may pass uninterrogated under its binary gaze of the 'free-willed' and 'coerced,' instead reveals the uncanny semblance, perhaps even a genealogy between the Chosŏn courtesan slave, licensed prostitutes of the Japanese empire, and the illegal 'Yankee whore' whose conditions of legibility appears enshrouded by the multiple changing hands of power, ultimately recodified in the present age of US endowment of so-called 'freedoms.'[66] And with these inherited, as I argued, is the naturalization of capitalist Asia—or the US-allied nation—modeled under proper US subservience and tutelage.

If Peterson, in one epistemologically legible move, is able to delineate the unbroken chain of a 'cultural' Korean society, he does so precisely through delimiting the scope of relevance of the comfort woman issue as essentially *different*, periodized as a matter of the colonial past to which the positivistic archive of premodern slavery in Korea often noted as the longest existing archive of non-racial slavery can only reinforce an unbroken totality of an essential "Korean tradition' made recuperable today by the sovereign nation. Yet, the retroactive recognition of the comfort woman as a nationalized figure of abduction in postcolonial South Korea constructed precisely to indicate its status as 'devoid' of this forced violence in the sovereign nation, makes possible the seamless transition from the more 'heinous' forms of Japanese Imperialism, including 'internal Korean' premodern slavery to that of the more 'benign' US imperial interests in the region.

It bears repeating that it is precisely through enacting the framework of this free-willed subject of individual responsibility that camp towns could emerge as an ideological site of discipline, where the excesses of procuring the labor-oriented national market were subjected to

[66] The assumption that feminism is a future-oriented concept yet to 'free' Asia of its own backwardness is contested by the fact that the Japanese empire's tactical use of comfort stations had been precisely to remain outside the purview of women's emancipation activists in Europe seeking to prohibit women's trafficking by the early 20th century as Japan had already been in diplomatic negotiations with European powers regarding this issue. As Jin also notes, despite state-regulated prostitution's intended purpose of regulating sexual contact with native women in the colonies, the colonies too abided by the same rules of prostitution as Japanese women so as not to admit Japanese women were indeed trafficked across the Japanese empire, thereby also admitting to colonial expansion, 129-130.

spaces of illegality and sanctioned brutality as prostitution under US-backed military government became illegal in 1961 and remains so. Hence, in stating "premodern Korean slavery" within the ubiquity of violence that characterizes Euro-American assumptions of Asia's pre-political premodernity or insularity, belies the formation of the modern state installed not just through overt militarism but also through modern tools of sociological categories installed to discipline the proper 'free-willed human' as such. The teleological force of history, as Hegel foretold, appears finally enacted within 'free Asia' through *proper contact* with the 'foreign,' one that replicates both the violent, yet also capillary means of garnering the subject of proper individual responsibility and thereby subservience to US-dominant capitalism. I end this chapter by further reflecting on the historical process still in effect as 'East Asia' is primed to be brought under 'proper' contact with US revolutionary history.

From the 'Orient' to 'Asia'

If the echoes of 'Asia's' mongrel orientalist past resonates with the present sanitized imagination of proper transnational admixtures, the descending categorical distinctions from 'Asia' as a legible region, and subsequently 'Asian Culture' "Asian Feminism" "Asian Religions" "Asian ethnic differences," each as prefixed grouping now *ordered* into its rightful categorical significance, must contend with its very condition of possibility—proper contact and place under Western subservience. If Asia's mongrel past could evade colonial enslavement, as we have explored, it was in its recognition as relatively developed within Hegel's historical relations. Yet, the relegation of the 'racial' captured as mere caesura to become yet another positivistic metric of pluralism appears operative in remapping or even redoubling East Asia's significance as the 'cradle of civilization'—the exemplary premodern and modern form of hybridity, one that is only truly ever ordered if classified 'biopolitically' so to speak.

In other words, as Rei Terada places Hegel's philosophy of world history squarely within the genealogy of the present radical post-racial and posthuman assumptions that must first be placed into 'proper' contact with the 'foreign,' such a Hegelian world-historical "maximal value" still ideologically in effect must at least place a damper on the wholesale celebration of the postmodern conditions of hybridity that intuit multiculturalism as a globally-destined

future.[67] Instead, we turn our attention to the conditions of possibility of Asia's inauguration into world history and the subsequent imagination of such a hybrid postmodern Asian transnational future, first with the opening of China to transnational capital proper, then militarized hence selectively brought into proper subservience in US-allied nations. As we explored in the case of South Korea, their eventual conscription into modern historical time that stages its proper 'multiplicity' or proper transnational economic relations under US dominance, reflects what Terada writes, as the unmarked site of the "union of political citizens" where the metrics of global relations in the abstract comes to be grafted through the "reality of history"—from the microscopic unmarked sanctity of the 'freed' human subject that magnifies towards the "the individual, colonial and transnational."[68]

If the oft-repeated fantasies of "hybridity as a panacea for racial difference" forwarded by Foucault, Deleuze, and Guattari appear to resonate with the terms of Hegel's history strewn across the crude reversal of history's mongrel past and the purported hybrid future, the disquieting intimacies between Hegel as the predecessor to the latter scholars might reveal the rubrics of world historical relations that voraciously subsumes difference into one revolutionary world history.[69] To perplex the outcry that East Asia has not been colonized and thereby mongrelized by the West—that the issue of race appears only in 'nonracial' forms of peaceful admixtures of the pre and post to modern racial violence—instead mediates the need to unravel the layers of naturalized classifications to question 'specificity' and 'locality' itself as it sutures an understanding of the 'self' into such global infrastructural orders of revolutionary futures that predetermines the very spatialized and temporalized understanding of what is 'regional' in scope.

At large, the question that I have been interested in exploring in this chapter is the Shoah's exemplarity that appears to predetermine "life" as it "just appears," life that cannot have "a name" or life that has been obscured through these logics of "intents and end" as Weheliye explores in a construct of modern historical temporality. If the task has been to complicate the

[67] Terada writes, "A radically anti-identitarian movement of subjective undoing often walks in the tracks of subject-building, as Gayatri Spivak pointed out in her criticism of Deleuze in 1988. They are two kinds of 'training,' humanist and posthumanist; yet also not even two, because while it's clear what posthumanists are fleeing, it's not clear where they can go," 15.
[68] Terada, 17.

[69] See Charles Stewart on the origins and reformulations of hybrditiy in "Syncretism and Its Synonyms: Reflections on Cultural Mixture."

conception of historical time—what amounts to historical agency and the operations of periodization that result from these assumptions—what Vaziri, Nichanian, and Postone each point to, is the exceptionalism of the Jewish condition, made relevant not at the moment of violence enacted on the collective, but rather *constructed* in the aftermath, thirty years after the fact, as Postone intuits as it rises to collective 'political' consciousness, and most crucially, in the heart of the Cold War. Hence, unlike the 'lacuna' Agamben specifies as the condition in which survivors bore witness to "something...impossible to bear witness to,[70] I drew attention to the temporal amnesia that appears to plague the exceptionally hot region of 'Asia' during the Cold War, a condition that may be the result of the prior lacuna, the "unspeakable violence," being sanctioned into law, history and transacted across the legible sociological fields of the so-called 'transnational.'

Reflected, on the one hand, in Vaziri's question of the institutionalization of Black studies and ethnic studies at large, the emergence of the disciplinary formation of 'nonracial slaveries' 'premodern slaveries' by the 70s, as we have discussed, is one that cannot be seen outside its epistemic comparability to its exemplary transatlantic counterpart. Yet, reflecting on the simultaneous temporal lacuna of the exceptional Cold War in Asia, emerging coeval with the category of 'other slaveries,' as Vaziri intuits, requires not just the critical rethinking of racial forms and its naturalized 'nonracial others' as written in the image of the Shoah, but also their distinctly Cold War formations that have, at large, been bypassed in favor of recuperating the 'racial' or 'nonracial' slaveries within the emerging neutrality that historiographical inquiry purportedly affords.

Simultaneously as 'exceptionally hot' wars in Asia are waged in the economic elsewhere, sequestered geopolitically from the 'Cold War' as such, the subsequent criticism often directed at Asian studies or area studies as a Cold War formation sanctioned by the US government has been the subject of much critical self-reflection. I end this chapter to probe whether the question often directed at area studies could be extended towards the formation of ethnic studies as an epistemological Cold War formation, in other words, to draw attention to the historical rubrics that subtend the legibility of the third world movement that likewise exemplarily articulated in US-based social movements of the 60s and 70s. Not just as formative works in the field, particularly by Jaspir Puar reflect on the question of gender's exceptional formation in the West

[70] Agamben, *Remnants of Auschwitz,* 12.

that likewise spectacularizes their lack thereof elsewhere in the Middle East, I draw attention to the means through which Cold War's exceptional violence in Asia—a condition that precisely undergirds the very possibility and the boundaries of the field's historical relevance today—becomes unmarked as it becomes mapped within the exceptionally postmodern and multicultural historical time of US empire. What then, remains subterraneous as the scope of Asia as a region is consolidated and unmarked within the time of US empire, as yet another exemplary region—the Middle East—emerges into racial political relevance?

We return to Postone's ominous 'subterraneous' unmarked time of capital accumulation in Germany. Even as Postone leaves us with the analytical 'subterraneous' produced through the return of the resistant anti-capitalist national consciousness that had fashioned the Jewish event to begin with, what remains 'unnameable' in his work may provide one means to further question the unmarked site of an economic elsewhere, a possible global amnesia that has made invisible dispossession as they become multiply compounded in the 'subterraneous' workings of politics and historical relations proper. Such is perhaps the 'subterraneous' that Weheliye, Day, and Lye begin to ask in the naming of ethnic difference *par excellence* made legible through the regime of historical comparison that may install with them, their own thresholds of political relevance in the long shadow cast by 'intents and ends' that subtends the possibility of naming both old and new Jews.

CHAPTER 4
The Secular Subject

Read today, Benedict Anderson's 1998 publication, *The Spectre of Comparisons,* echoes with a certain temporal and spatial dissonance. On the one hand, the Cold War casts a shadow on the potential of the postcolonial nation-form bound within the designation 'Southeast Asia.' In particular, dwelling on the figure of the 'communist' or by ethnic association, the Chinese, Anderson astutely captures the 'once-removed' site of Southeast Asia where '*internal'* differences had been managed in the midst of and in the immediate aftermath of the Cold War.[1] Anderson's critique lingers in the supposed 'post'-Cold War Southeast Asia, where the central locus of the Cold War set as the backdrop of Chinese exclusions[2] appears to ebb in their associations with the period, instead taking on a somewhat trans-historic register with the centuries-old association of the Chinese with migration, trade, and capital, and thereby akin to the "Jew" as the embodied figure of capital we have explored in the previous three chapters (i.e. as the privileged site of a recognizably *modern* violence and their institutionalized aftermaths we have traced throughout this dissertation).[3]

On the opposite end of this 'Sinitic' pole might index Anderson's emergent fascination with the 'Indigenous,' reflected in his stunning reading of the Peruvian Nobel Prize-winning novel, *El Hablador* (*The Storyteller*, 1989) by Mario Vargas Llosa. In an encounter with the

[1] As Anderson revises his stakes in anticolonial nationalism, "...my long attachment to, and interest in, anticolonial nationalism had occluded from my vision its menacing potentialities once it got married to the state. A new recognition of this menace was the start of the process which has, more than a decade later, led to the essay in this volume (chapter 16) devoted to Mario Vargas Llosa's *El Hablador*—an extraordinary, aporetic, nationalist novel about modern Peru and its Amazonian "tribal minorities." Anderson, 26.

[2] As Anderson writes, "As the Cold War in Asia abated, as electronic communications developed, and the long boom of the 1970s and 1980s deepened, the belief that the Chinese would do for Southeast Asia economically what the diplomats of ASEAN were trying to do for it politically and strategically became more widespread. Whether this vision corresponds to reality is, however, rather doubtful," 15.

[3] For instance, the Sinitic consciousness and readings that parallel the twentieth-century Jewish condition echo particularly across Asian American studies and Sinophone studies that call for the end of violence directed towards the Chinese as a legible totality, calling for an 'end in diaspora' towards the hopeful possibilities of various minority localizations. See Shih, *Against Diaspora;* See also chapter 3 on the various citations to the Jewish condition found across Asian American studies including works by Iyko Day, Colleen Lye, and Grace Cho. As I aimed to question in the previous chapter, what undergirds the possibility of comparison across these apparently disparate fields of historic inquiry?

nationalist novel about modern Peru that Anderson writes "[brought] back, powerfully and unexpectedly... remembrances of Southeast Asia's past,"[4] is the strange continuity occurring continents apart that appear to require but "a few descriptive sentences ...to bridge the space/time between 'Southeast Asia' and 'Latin America,'"[5] between Mario Vargas Llosa, Indonesia's Pradmoedya Ananta Toer and the Philippine national hero Jose Rizal. Featuring the novel and also Anderson's central intrigue in Saul Zuratas, the son of a Polish Jew who emigrated to Peru in the 1930s, Saul emerges as a figure who sets himself apart as the quintessential storyteller, or the hablador. First encountered in a primal photographic scene that features the Machuguengas, a remote tribe in Peru's Amazonia, "threatened with extinction by the advance of missionaries, rubber-tappers, miners, loggers, and the national state,"[6] Saul is seen both literally with his back turned against the missionaries, and as the reader will soon discover, against his anthropological scholarly orientations[7] that would eventually mirror his apparent refusal to make the Alyah, despite rumors that he may have accompanied his father who "wanted to die in Israel."[8] In this central figure whose lingering narrative disappearance into the Amazonian jungle by becoming an "... ex-Jew, ex-white man, and ex-Westerner"[9] who had decided "irrevocably...chang[ing] his skin, his name, his habits, his tradition, his god" in service of the Indigenous in imminent threat of extinction, is the curious paralleling of "history of the Jews," one that in no uncertain terms equate the two in their rejection of the state, capital, or even "the very notion of modernity and progress;" "The people of Tasurinchi-jehova[10] was not warlike and never won wars," Llosa writes, instead can be found "traveling, escaping walking," ever faithful to their "customs and prohibitions."

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[4] Anderson, 26.

[5] Anderson, 337.

[6] Anderson, 339.

[7] Anderson summarizes, "As time passed, it became clear that although Saul completed his B.A. in anthropology to please his father, he had become convinced that anthropology was immoral and had no intention of becoming an academic," 340.

[8] Anderson, 343. See also the rumors that might trace Saul's disappearance. "Back in the national capital. N. uncovered the fact that Don Salomon had never gone to Israel, but had died in Lima and been buried there, on October 23, 1960. No one seemed to know what had happened to his son," 346.

[9] Anderson 347. Anderson quotes Llosa, 230 and 232.

[10] The name used in the novel in reference to the God of the Jewish people.

Anderson's readings of Llosa's novel, were it not for the moments delimited by citational bounds, might have slipped into the first person, becoming one with the *hablador* who needed no translator (or rather needed no missionary middleman) to communicate with the Machiguenga; as the ex-Jew, ex-white man, ex-Westerner, ex-scholar, Saul's disappearance into the jungle, to an extent, mirrors Anderson's love of, once-tarnished ousting from yet eventual passing in Indonesia. Yet, if the reader might momentarily be lost in the figure of the 'native' as the quintessential itinerant, anti-modern, anti-capitalist, and staunchly pacifist symbol eagerly escaping outside of historical memory, one footnote in Anderson's reading intrudes in the otherwise coherent 'primal' photographic scene—the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL), a "controversial American Protestant Organization"[11] whose referent in the real world reflects a rather uncomfortable juxtaposition to the vision of the 'noble savage' the novel might leave us with. Citing David Stoll's *Fishers of Men or Founders of Empire? The Wycliffe Bible Translators of Latin America,* Anderson recounts the controversial real-world organization that had provided the backdrop of narrative possibility:

> Founded in the early anticommunist American 1950s by Peter Townsend, former friend and biographer of Lazaro Cardenas, it received substantial support from USAID and the CIA for its missionary work through the underdeveloped world, but especially in Latin America. By the mid-1970s, it was a more or less official arm of the governments of Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, Panama, Surinam, Columbia, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, and Brazil. "No other translation organization surpassed Wycliffe's influence among Indians. None matched its command of Indian languages and loyalties, its logistical system and official connections." It was not long, however, before *"each government faced the same, disquieting, phenomenon: increasingly visible, militant Indian organizing, a trend to which, like a number of other brokers, SIL had contributed in largely unintended ways. Promotion of literacy, the trade languages and inter-group contacts helped members of scattered communities identify as ethnic wholes." Between 1976 and 1981 SIL was pushed out of Brazil, Mexico, Panama, Ecuador, and Peru.*[12]

Though seemingly misplaced in the extradiegetic elsewhere to Llosa's narrative, the starkness of Indigenous revolt appears to halt the unequivocal comparative fantasy of Saul's refusal to make Alyah in service of the Indigenous, outside of the purview of narrative visibility, modernity, and apparent violence. In other words, to think that the 'Indigenous' would not take

[11] Anderson, 339.

[12] Anderson, 342, my emphasis.

up the tools of modernity fast-encroaching to resist the modern state appear almost farcical given the novel's backdrop that tells the tale of imminent Indigenous extinction.[13] Yet, on the flip side, the disquieting comparison of what it means to take up the quintessential language of modernity—militarism, arms, the state, and the language of the institution—insinuates the stakes of the secular modern, Indigenous, and the religious seemingly stacked atop one another, vehemently defended and fought for as we visibly witness today in the Middle East.

My interest in making explicit this world-historical conundrum we presently inhabit is to mediate sites of violence we have naturalized and safely relegated into 'regional' discourse—the 'war on terror' in the Middle East, slavery, Indigenous genocide and the Cold War in South America, or the Cold War's "hot" articulation in East and Southeast Asia, etc.—one that might reveal the limits of the longstanding academic tradition of 'telescoping' between Europe and its non-western others. On the one hand, Anderson's telescoping from "South America" or "Southeast Asia" towards "my Europe"[14] might suggest a narrowing international community in which each postcolonial nation finds itself pulled towards the modern—the naturalized telos towards the secular—to the clear dispossession of the 'global Indigenous."[15] Yet, Anderson's own scholarly overture belies a simple telescopic East-West formulation that may have lapsed in a moment of comparative fantasy too quickly formulated across the Latin American and Southeast Asian contexts. In other words, Anderson's works painstakingly bring together the disparate site of 'Southeast Asia' as a formation coming into self-conscious coherence to precisely note its *in*commensurability with the global postcolonial, written as a conglomerate due

[13] I do not mean to oversimplify the context in which Christian-Indigenous conflicts occur in this context. Mahmood Mamdani recounts one such instance, again in Central America. "Christian-rights activism in foreign policy focused on Central America and began with Guatemala, where General Efraín Ríos Montt had been converted to Pentecostalism by a group of young Californians who had brought their Gospel Outreach church to Guatemala after a devastating earthquake. Following the 1982 coup that installed Mont as dictator of Guatemala, Pat Robertson and other Christian-right leaders lobbied successfully for the resumption of U.S. military aid to the country. When Montt's army annihilated entire Indian villages, Gospel Outreach members defended the "scorched earth" campaign in religious terms. One enthusiastic pastor put it: "The Army doesn't massacre the Indians. It massacres demons, and the Indians are demon-possessed; they are communists. We hold Brother Efraín Ríos Montt like King David of the Old Testament. He is the King of the New Testament," 109-110. Mamdani's reflections are in the context of the US cultivation of drugs to fund its global proxy wars against communism, of which fundraising had occurred through "paramilitary mercenary outfits, Christian-right "ministries," and the secular political network of conservative lobbies," 110.

[14] See Harootunian's reading of the limits of this East-West telescopic reading. Harrootunian,"Ghostly Comparisons: Anderson's Telescope."

[15] We might find methods of recuperating 'global indigeneity' in works such as Chadwick Allen's *Trans-Indigenous: Methodologies of Global Native Literary Studies.*

to its "mottled imperial" history, its "staggered schedule of decolonization,"[16] and perhaps most significantly, as the site of an emerging US imperialism that exceeds Anderson's conception of "my Europe;" it is thereby also the 'once-removed' site of apparent violence—the 'violence' touted to be resolved in Washington's and perhaps the global imagination of the "Cold War" in Asia and the ensuing rise of China in the region, for instance.

This is precisely why he asks how Southeast Asian nations *reacted* to their Chinese diaspora within the context of US Cold War political pressures and militarized alliances that have conditioned an anti-communist and Sinophobic landscape; how Indonesia's radical writer, Pramoedya Ananta Toer and his likely candidacy for the Nobel prize[17] might have been grounded when the terms of his protest uncomfortably toed the line between "western democracy" and "Marxism" in the context of "Muslim Indonesia."[18] Though only peripherally, we find him asking, what of Indonesia's mass killings in East Timor, and what of the Philippines' expansion into Muslim territory and the ensuing armed secessionist movement in the Southern Provinces of the nation? In each of these telescopic readings, Anderson moves not just towards the West but instead indicates an internalized form of violence where the 'global

[16] Harrootunian,139. Harrootunian continues: "As a unit in area studies, Southeast Asian Studies was therefore organized later than the study of other regions, such as East Asia, the Middle East, and Latin America, owing to its staggered schedule of decolonization. Yet its prior history of colonial subjugation prefigures this delayed recognition of the region as a unit of study. Only Belgium and Italy were missing from Euro-America's participation in this mottle imperialism, which itself dates back to the sixteenth century, when the first Portuguese and Spanish appeared in search of booty and converts. Unlike the colonization of Africa, which mainly took place in the late nineteenth century; of South Asia, the fruits of Great Britain's victory over the French in the eighteenth century; or even of East Asia, which became the object of intense imperial competition in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Southeast Asia's long encounter with "mottled imperialism" seemed to condense the whole, diverse history of Euro-American expansion and colonization, and served as the "central factor" that differentiated the region from others," 136.

[17] Anderson writes, "The best-known and probably the most important radical in Indonesia today is the brilliant autodidact-writer Pramoedya Ananta Toer (or "Pram" as he is generally known), whose novels and stories have been translated into dozens of languages, and who is Southeast Asia's likeliest candidate for a Nobel prize when the region's turn of the Oslovian wheel comes round. Born in 1926, he was first imprisoned by the Dutch in 1948-49 as a nationalist revolutionary, then by the Sukarno regime in 1959-60 for publicly defending the Chinese minority, and finally by the Suharto dictatorship in 1966-78 for his vocal leadership of the Left intelligentsia from the late 1950s until 1965," 291-292.

[18] Anderson writes, "At the end of the 1970s, when the manuscripts were finished, Pram was fully aware of the roles played by Congressman Donald Fraser of Minneapolis, and of Amnesty International, in securing his release after twelve terrible years in prison, and of the contrasting indifference of the "actually existing" communist regimes to his condition. Prison had shown how wide could be the gap between communist credentials and moral courage. At the same time, he was writing between the lines against a brutal dictatorship which claims legitimacy among its own citizens on the grounds of the total unsuitability of "western democracy" as well as "Marxism in all its forms" for an Indonesian nation whose origins are said to lie solely and exclusively in a pristine, thousand-year-old, 200 percent native past," 293.

regional' appears telescopically folded onto one another in the twice and thrice-removed spaces interior to even the recognizable formation of 'Asia' or even 'Southeast Asia,' and foremost, what visibly erupts in the Euro-American consciousness.

Put differently, if the racio-religious figure of Saul as the exemplary "Jew" disappears into the Amazon to signal global 'Indigeneity' safely resolved within the anti-capitalist or the anti-state imagination of "cultural resistance," it appears Anderson may have fallen into the trap of demographic certainty and the promises of national historical accounting. In the Chinese population of Southeast Asia that Anderson so closely follows, whose historical parallel with "the Jew" finds the Chinese only selectively included economically or quite literally politically excluded or executed during the Cold War, is Anderson so naively pointing to the Indigenous as an antidote of sorts—a way to reorient the proper direction of the decolonial ethnic nation in the post-Cold War moment? Or rather, does Anderson's 'Southeast Asia' prelude the hardening of demographic lines as modern nations map the two poles of national historical time in relation to modern capital—the now apparent 'transhistorical' relevance of Chinese exclusions[19] and the equally global and 'transhistorical' relevance of the 'pre-colonial' Indigenous past? (We will return to this collapsing of '*internal'* national differences as critiqued in existing Indigenous Studies scholarship. For now, we remain with Southeast Asia's incommensurability.)

With the United Nations declaring the years 1995-2004 as "the international decade of the world's Indigenous peoples,"[20] the Philippines would rise to international recognition as the first nation in Southeast Asia to acknowledge its Indigenous peoples. In 1997, just one year before Anderson's The *Spectre of Comparisons* would be published*,* the Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act (IPRA) would be passed as the Fidel Ramos administration sought to pass the 1996 Final Peace Agreement with Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) that laid out the terms of an earlier Tripoli agreement President Ferdinand Marcos signed soon after one of the bloodiest

[19] Anderson writes, "In the same period [WWII], however, native nationalisms began to emerge in Southeast Asia, first in the Philippines and last in Cambodia, Laos, Malaya, and Singapore. The immigrants [of Chinese descent in Southeast Asia] and their descendants often found themselves, for the first time, caught between increasingly racist colonial regimes (who despised, exploited, but also protected them) and nativist nationalists (who despised them as aliens and colonial collaborators but envied their economic successes)," 303.

[20] Indigeneity appears yet to be fully installed in BARMM amid these ongoing struggles. International pressures are applied on both sides—those seeking recognition as a means to end violence, asking for humanitarians and international organizations to acknowledge the Indigenous, even as pressures from the Arab world, and the need to keep good international relations with nations of the Middle East are also cited as one reason for the delayed recognition of the Indigenous.

decade of conflict with the MNLF that began in the late 1960s.[21] After decades of militarized struggle that finally secured the Muslim Bangsamoro right to self-determination in Southern Philippines, most recently with the formal establishment of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) in 2019, the recognition of the Indigenous is sorely entangled as Indigenous claims under the IPRA and the most recent "Organic Law" enacted in BARMM remains contentious amid ongoing claims to land rights and differential terms of self-determinacy between largely Muslims population and Indigenous minorities.

In this telescopically folded interior within one Southeast Asian nation, could indigeneity's 'trans-historical,' 'transregional' and perhaps even 'global' significance stand in as an antidote for the ongoing abject process relegated to the hinterlands of the nation? Yet, if the secular postcolonial Philippine state seeks to write itself in 'homogenous empty time' to rehearse the coherence of a pre-Spanish cultural totality through recuperating 'indigeneity,' it appears to run up against *not* an ever-receding time before capitalism (or historical memory itself), but rather a crisis of world-historical signification. 1492 marks the historic year Columbus sets sail towards the New World, and King Ferdinand of Spain invades Granada to oust Muslims and Jews to redraw the borders of modern European political modernity. By 1521, less than thirty years later, the Spanish would arrive in the Philippine Archipelago to enact the same borders first installed in Europe. Met *not* with the Indigenous or 'indio' population as often cited in the New World contexts, but with an old enemy—the 'moro' or Muslim leaders in an emergent Islamic influence that had just begun to take shape in the Philippines—the successful Spanish sequestering of the 'moro' population in Mindanao[22] and subsequent conversion of the 'indio'

[21] At the time, the Tripoli Agreement "provided a much needed breathing spell from the economic drain of the war and eased the considerable diplomatic pressure for settlement coming from the Middle East. It is doubtful that President Marcos ever sincerely intended to implement the agreement as signed," (McKenna, 168). This agreement would later be dissolved as hostilities would soon resume between the Moro National Liberation Front and the Philippine government.

[22] Majul, Cesar Adib. *Muslims in the Philippines*. 2d ed. Quezon City: Published for the Asian Center by the University of the Philippines Press, 1973. "At first, the Spaniards called the Bornean traders "Moros," a term initially applied indiscriminately to most inhabitants of the Philippines. Although this term was not always used accurately, its use suggest that the Spaniards were able to recognize, albeit vaguely, certain practices among some people that were indeed Muslim in character; practices shared with the Muslims of North Africa. In time, the Spaniards, at least those who were more knowledgeable among them, were able to distinguish those inhabitants of the Philippines who were Muslims from those who were not. For example, writing about the people around the area of Manila Bay, Legazpi distinguished those who were Muslims from those who were still pagans... In time, those inhabitants who had abandoned what little Islamic practices they might have adopted as well as those who were clearly not Muslims, were designated as 'indios' by the Spaniards. Although it appears in early Spanish records that the pagan natives were also called "indios" this term in time came to mean the Christianized inhabitants of the Archipelago. " 91.

towards Catholicism remains the productive historical elision to the potential celebratory reversal of Spanish colonial relations rehearsed by the secular postcolonial Philippine nation today.

In other words, if Spanish subjection of the 'indio' and their celebratory reversal bounds the limits of a resistant, postcolonial nation today, how might we reconsider the figure of 'indio' taken up by the Philippine state today, given the Spanish had successfully sequestered simultaneously the 'moro' and the recalcitrant non-Christian highland native 'infidels' as the remaining 'indio' had been turned towards Catholicism? Further still are the grounds of the secular that appear to rewrite the terms of national demography legible within 'ethnic' terms. In the naturalized terms of secular governance today that dictate that the rightful place of religion is in the private sphere of 'personal belief,' thereby dematerialized, 'moro Muslims' designated as merely 'religious' today appear to abstract the emergent secularizing European gaze during colonial times that had differentiated 'indigenous,' 'moro' and 'infidel' within *religious*, not ethnic terms.[23] (I will soon return to tracing these terms of secular governance that dictate the immateriality of religion versus the materiality of the ethnic).

My interest rests *not* just in Indigeneity constructed through 'first encounters' or even the claims to 'prior occupancy' but in mining the logic of the secular modern that undergird their differential legibility within the age of secular national governance.[24] For scholars of secularism, secularism is not just a product of a modernizing disenchanted world that removes religion from its worldview in what is often called the 'subtraction theory.' Rather, secularism entails the management of religion that delimits what and how religious differences can be articulated, modulating new modes of life as it curtails others. In other words, while the displacement of 'religious' governance of the so-called 'premodern' past is often celebrated by its displacement with 'modern secular governance' as the normative national form of governance to aspire to, the changing *terms* of governance require a closer look at the life worlds both enabled and disabled by its new modality of governance. As I aim to explore further in this interiorized 'region's

[23] While this changing secularizing gaze is a topic I am interested in exploring in the future, for now, I continue tracing the impact of modern secular governance in postcolonial Philippines. See also Gil Anidjar on Bernard Lewis' transformation of religion into ethnicity. "(in our case, Jew), and a confinement, even a kind of eradication of religion (here, Arab, which stands for, and erases, Muslim or Christian) as an identity category. The significance of this "secular" institution that would leave religion behind in the historical distance finds its origin, as we saw, in the nineteenth century's 'denial...of a solely religious character of Jewry, and the attempt to redefine Jewry along national/racial lines,' 29. Anidjar, Gil, *Semites: Race, Religion, Literature.*

[24] I am deeply inspired by Saba Mahmood's *Religious Difference in a Secular Age: A Minority Report.*

region,' where national policies during the Cold War have further sequestered differences, recalcitrance, and claims to land interiorized within Mindanao, I ask, on what grounds of self-determination is made accessible to Muslims when religion under normative assumptions of secularism becomes sequestered as a matter of personal belief, thereby dematerialized?[25] Similarly, on what grounds of sovereignty is made available to the Indigenous, relegated into the sphere of the Philippine 'cultural,' whose recognition, even when implemented, too often limits tribal claims to land, particularly its resources?[26]

I choose to dwell in the Philippines as a site of these regionally interiorized and telescoped foldings to note its exemplary yet typical site where secular postcolonial governance might disclose its ruses. On the one hand, as Anderson explores, the Philippines, or largely Southeast Asia has been the exceptional site to mediate the continuities between European colonialism and its 'mottled' history of post-colonial national sovereignty, precisely as Victor Bascara reminds us, US imperialism proper disappears by "branding imperialism as a European problem that American culture, in various ways, has solved."[27] Citing Edward Said, Bascara notes that by 1914, when "85% of the earth's surface was under the control of colonial powers...a paltry few holdings in the Caribbean and the Pacific could be officially claimed as extraterritorial additions to the United States."[28] Of these, only the Philippines had been a colony "in the proper, modern, flag-flying, European sense."[29] In the problem that the Philippines-as-colony posed to US decolonial self-imagination, the Philippines had been primed to 'decolonize' from its very inception. Yet remaining a territorial ally to the United States in the changing landscape of Imperial Japan, subsequent Cold War and the War on Terror, the Philippines, I argue, remains a

[25] Albert E. Alejo summarizes Roger Plant's reflections on the sensitivity of the issue in Mindanao. "...the distinction between Indigenous and Muslim identity is not always clear. There is considerable debate as to whether the members of the various Islamized ethnic groups might be included in the term *indigenous.* This can be a highly political issue, and also one in which there may be 'shifting identities' in accordance with the nature of claims and benefits that can be derived from a particular ethnic, political, and religious status" (Plant, 13 as quoted by Alejo).

[26] International Crisis Group: Asia Report N 213. "Another weakness is that the Philippine state claims ownership over all natural resources. The 1987 constitution states that 'with the exception of agricultural lands, all other resources shall not be alienated." Likewise, the IPRA distinguishes between rights of ownership to land and rights of ownership to natural resources within an ancestral domain. Indigenous communities only enjoy "priority rights" over natural resources: therefore, they have less control over these than the land in their ancestral domain."

[27] Bascara, Victor, *Model Minority Imperialism*, xiii.

[28] Bascara cites Edward Said. Bascara, xxxv.

[29] Bascara, xxxv.

key site where we might trace the deployment or expansion of colonial and settler colonial logics in new and imaginative ways.

In other words, Bascara sets out to extend Said's *Orientalism* of the 1970s and 1980s that had "recast the British literary canon as a rationalization of imperial policy" to consider how the revisionist bent on American literature canon "was taking shape as multiculturalism,"[30] suturing the excesses of a settler colonialist empire and reformulating it into the US exceptional multiculturalist project. In the 'exceptional' always already primed to be sutured into the emergent typical understanding of a global-US-led multiculturalist project, "empire," as I suggest, eagerly appears to deploy settler colonial logics beyond its signification with Indigeneity as mapped within Anglophone Indigenous studies. My claim is *not* to simply equate violence that is both by nature incommensurable and also historically specific. Yet, as my dissertation has thought through the incommensurable of the political and economic, the exemplary and the ordinary, I hope that mediating the strategic deployment of 'culture' in the hinterlands of Southeast Asia might uncover not just the expansion, but also the day-to-day inner workings in the capillary ends of US empire. As such, I begin to ask, albeit in just one short chapter, how might this reproducible multicultural regime dramatized in a timely fashion through the 'cultural politics' of the Indigenous in the Philippines, hyphenated and thereby interiorized into the so-called "post-Cold War-US-allied-Philippines" mediate these global transitions, abstractions and ultimately networked workings of US empire?

On a more personal note, by nature of unconscious coincidence (perhaps more accurately, a methodical diasporic placement as I am continuing to discover), the Philippines has become my site of intrigue because of the strong sense of strange familiarity I have with the patch of Manila my family settled on and freely roamed, having spent the first seventeen years of my life as a child to South Korean Protestant missionaries since the early 90s. Between my somewhat 'unconscious childhood' returning to me now as an early academic is "The Philippines" written, as it seems, with such self-assured futurity in the metropolitan bulwark of Manila that troublingly appears to script the continued pertinence of Christian missionary humanitarian work that mobilizes the comparatively modern South Korea into its fold. Today, the relatively small US-allied East Asian nation "sends out more missionaries per capita than any other country in the world," a nation that had strategically been "developed into the most Protestant nation in the

[30] Bascara, xxxv.

region"[31] as a result of twentieth-century Cold War-driven US evangelism.[32] Stationed ironically in greatest numbers, in another US-allied nation, the Philippines, the only majority Christian nation in Southeast Asia, its relatively welcoming disposition for foreign Christian missionaries has become the strategic base from which to expand into secular communist China, and at large across non-Christian Southeast Asia and beyond. Historicizing the construction of secular Communism or Islam through the lens of contemporary missionaries sent to China or the Middle East could certainly yield a promising critique, as missionary activities have often strategically been directed towards these regions. Even still, I dwell on the Philippines as the grounds for such a possibility, the site not unlike Llosa's 'primal' photographic scene of contact often abstracted in the construction of comparative fantasies. As Thomas McKenna also reminds us, Cotabato, the center of many contemporary sites of conflict in the Philippines "lies in the easternmost extremity of the Eurasian Islamic world [where] [n]o significant Muslim populations of the Old World are further distanced from the central sites of Islamic ritual and instruction than those of Mindanao."[33] Perhaps it is no mere coincidence that conflicts arise from the edge of the Islamic World and in spaces that meet normative understandings of secular modern governance, one that I argue might be produced from the present configuration of regional US sub-empires and through the shifting global attention from the Cold War to the 'war on terror.'

To my great surprise, my encounter with Anderson's otherwise engrossing reading of Saul and his associations with the Machuguengas had immediately been ruptured by his footnote on the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL),[34] the controversial American Protestant mission organization. SIL had been a familiar household name growing up in a Christian international school that, only until recently, had been exclusively dedicated to Christian missionary children

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[31] Kim, Helen Jin. *Race for Revival: How Cold War South Korea Shaped the American Evangelical Empire, Oxford University Press,* 2023, Print, 15. Kim delineates the role of evangelism in the US Cold War empire-building in Asia.

[32] Kim, 3.

[33] McKenna, 281.

[34] On the homepage of SIL Philippines, SIL is characterized as a "volunteer, nonprofit organization that has worked on behalf of language groups since 1953. In cooperation with the Philippine Department of Education and other partners, SIL serves language communities throughout the Philippines, building their capacity for sustainable language development by means of research, translation, training, and materials development...SIL has 70 years of language development experience in the Philippines. Out of the 184 languages spoken today in the Philippines, SIL has worked in 94 languages... SIL Archives contain 1,998 titles relating to languages in the Philippines, in the field of linguistics and cultural anthropology, literacy, and community development."

whose families are placed across the region where SIL would circulate as one of the many global mission organizations. To remain in Anderson's footnotes as the ruptural site in the present academic milieu that heralds 'global indigeneity' is to work with and against existing scholarship on indigeneity—to remain as much attuned to the metaleptic moment of the novel's conditions of possibility for such 'primal' contact that exceeds the conception of Anderson's "Europe," the white man, the westerner of colonialism's past, or even the "ex-Jew."[35] For if Indigenous Studies scholars often rely on the epistemic move from the metropolitan center to the 'hinterland,'[36] not unlike Saul's disappearance into Peru's 'interior,' what happens when we return to the hinterland to encounter not just the Indigenous but also the Muslim alongside a strange cacophonous conglomerate of contemporary international humanitarian organizations, the scholar, or even the South Korean who are found together with (or likewise might have always already been) 'the missionary middleman'? What if the certainty of national demography instead gives way to a dissonance of unresolved culture, religion, and violence, out of which a legible 'heartland' postcolonial national difference is written?

(Re)constructing Religious and Indigenous Difference

Cesar Abid Majul's *Muslims in the Philippines* published in 1973 is the first comprehensive work that documents the history of Islam in precolonial Philippines as part of the larger Malay world. In the opening remarks delivered by executive secretary Alejandro Melchor at the launching of the book on May 25, 1973, at the University of Philippines, Diliman, Melchor cites President Ferdinand Marcos' proclamation of the "founding of the New Society" that "lie in the awakening of the Filipino consciousness, the re-identification of self, and a rediscovery of the power and purpose of the Filipino people."[37] Couched in the language of pluralism, the book announces the promises to address the "burning issue of national integration and to our relations

[35] Anderson writes, "After several readings of Doris Summer's *Foundational Fictions,* it occurred to me that the best place to go and look at the question of how the late-century writer might still attempt to figure the nation was Latin America. The western hemisphere contained a large number of the oldest struggles against imperial centers in Europe. But in the United States and Haiti, oldest of all—the one risen to world hegemony, the other sunk in desperate abjection—were too sui generis for ready-to-hand comparisons within the region," 335-336.

[36] See, for instance, Adrian De Leon's *Bundok: A Hinterland History of Filipino America,* or Shona Jackson's *Creole Indigeneity: Between Myth and Nation in the Caribbean* whose study of Indigeneity in Guyana begins with her travels to a reservation to meet the Lokono/Arawak writer Basil Rodrigues.

[37] Cesar Abid Majul, vii.

with the Asian world" towards a "more inclusive context of national society" as part of "a larger international community."

Read today, over half a century later, the remark registers curiously dissonant, particularly in light of Marcos' declaration of martial law less than a year prior on September 23, 1972, citing the sectarian forces of communist and Muslim rebels in Mindanao, precisely where the majority of the six percent of Muslims in the Philippines reside. Further still, just five years before Marcos declared Martial Law, on March 18, 1968, Muslim Moro men who had been recruited into the Philippine military to partake in an undercover operation to usurp parts of Sabah, a state in Malaysia, would be found brutally murdered at the hands of the Philippine military in what would be known as the Jabidah massacre, inciting the ongoing nationalist movement towards self-determination in Mindanao.[38] Executed on the historic Corregidor Island of Manila Bay, often commemorated as the central national site of anticolonial resistance against Japanese Imperialism, the elision of the Jabidah massacre in the historical site of 'Corregidor,' indexes that which remains largely internalized within the postcolonial nation as an ongoing contention sequestered into the multiply compounded 'regional' in scope.

Coinciding with the start of Marcos' Martial Law regime, 1971 would also mark the year of the "discovery of a supposedly untouched Stone Age tribe," the 'Tasaday' in Mindanao. Garnering global attention and in particular of National Geographic, the image of the "gentle Tasaday...touted as a figure of our lost innocence, of a peaceful Edenic existence," as Sears and Benitez criticize, appears opportunistically drawn by the Marcos regime that "need[ed] to project an image of an essentially peaceful Philippines in the face of an ongoing communist rural and armed struggle."[39] In the widespread media attraction of the Tasaday that, at least in part, had been acknowledged to be a hoax manufactured by the Marcos regime, the subsequent ethnolinguistic recovery of the Tasaday who are likely to be of the Lumad indigenous group, are today found caught up in the differential struggles for recognition within BARMM.

I begin with an ongoing site of contention to draw attention to the designation of the ethnic minority—the 'Indigenous.' Amid shifting and continued unresolved conflict in the

[38] An estimated 200 people were brutally executed by the Philippine military.

[39] Sears, Laurie J and J. Francisco Benitez. "Passionate Attachments to Area Studies and Asian American Studies: Subjectivity and Diaspora in the Transpacific." *Transpacific Studies: Framing an Emerging Field*, edited by Hoskins, Janet, and Nguyen, Viet Thanh, University of Hawaii Press, 2014, 162.

peripheries of the nation is this enduring figure evoking eternal national time part and parcel of the landscape in which the border of the nation rearticulates itself. Yet, what interests me is the temporality of the unresolved present, and the inadequacies of a liberal form to stand in for an abject process that I have thus far argued throughout this dissertation appears to parasitically draw upon the universal story of 'resistance,' decolonial future possibility, and a "racial liberalism" that Jodi Melamed warns is taken up by empire to mark the "ultimately disappearing" nature of oppression. From the monuments and museums rehearsed on Corregidor that mark the stability of postcolonial national sovereignty to the People Power Revolution (EDSA Revolution) that finally ousted Marcos from office in 1986,[40] the present political sphere is often framed as the unfinished Marcos-era fascism that persists in the oligarchic caciquismo—the unfinished decolonial project towards proper liberal democratic governance. Similarly, when reflecting on the 'peripheries' of the postcolonial nation, we might also find narratives of the failures of 'good governance' or the (im)proper adjudicating of religious or multicultural pluralism that naturalize the progressive national orientation yet to be achieved in the Philippines.

Yet, for those engaged in the question of the 'minority' outside Euro-American borders, the term itself resonates within the legacy of a difference articulated precisely to divide and conquer. We might recall the British efforts to act as "official protectors" of Egypt's religious minorities that had often led to the rejection or at least hesitation in taking up the term itself for fear of continued foreign interventions. As such, Mahmood reminds us, "the demand for minority rights (or opposition to it) has always been entangled with the struggle for national sovereignty, and never autonomous of the concepts, practices, and policies that Western powers promoted." [41] In the Philippines, the question of managing Islamic difference in the Southern peripheries of the emergent American colony (1898-1946) reflected the dual intent to cultivate religious difference through educating the religious elites as a means to properly manage Islamic subjects. Utilizing a colonial tactic unlike other Southeast Asian colonies such as Dutch

[40] As Gonzalez notes, Corregidor now also houses a monument dedicated to the People Power Revolution that had ousted Marcos from the presidency, one that appears to abstract US collusion during Marcos-era dictatorship, 73.

[41] Mahmood, "In the minds of anticolonial nationalists at the time, the term *minority* was an exemplary device of the divide-and-rule policy that the British had pursued in the colonies. The British allocation of special seats to Christians, Jews, and Bedouins in the Legislative Assembly of 1913 was seen as evidence of this," 69.

Indonesia that had "attempt[ed] to rule Muslims" through "deemphasizing Islam," [42] even as the shifting terms of subjection during the Cold War era would trace the United States in support of "Sarekat-i-Islam against Sukarno in Indonesia."[43] I draw upon these multiple instances (I will return to some of these points) to note the particularity of various intersecting power relations that draw on the figure of the 'minority' at different moments in time, exceeding various efforts to write a coherence of the 'Filipino national subjectivity,' cultural indigeneity or Islam in a given bounded territory.

The question of the Lumad Indigenous recognition in BARMM under secular postcolonial Philippine governance reflects a similarly fraught politics of minority recognition. As such, the 'old' question of precolonial Spanish designated 'indio' and 'moro,' must be mediated not just by colonial divisions installed by the US, but also exacerbated in the distinctly modern postcolonial and 'explosive' decade of the Philippines in the late 60s and 70s. [44] Both groups had been subject to a series of land grabs and displacements in the twentieth century as Mindanao became incorporated under both American colonial rule and the ensuing postcolonial Philippine state, as the influx of Christian settlements from the 1930s traces the ensuing Philippine government with US military support, "simultaneously fighting with communist New People's Army and the Moro National Liberation Front." Mindanao, then, in the Philippine national historical memory marks the site of violence *sequestered internally.* First, as the site of Christian settlements in which the Americans had sought to "courage Christian immigration to Muslim Mindanao" with the "intention to 'civilize Muslims by contagion,"[45] Mindanao became the location to strategically quell the radical Hukbalahap Agrarian Rebellion of the 1950s that saw the region as 'empty' land to relocate 'Huk' rebels. From 1951, with the support of US aid,

[42] See Roff 1985, quoted by McKenna ,112.
[43] Mamdani, 121.

[44] As Thomas McKenna contextualizes this explosive decade beginning in 1968, at large, despite massive socioeconomic changes, "including the formal abolition of slavery and the introduction of private property in land—the basic character of political relations between Magindanaon datus [Muslim leaders] and subordinates changed hardly at all between 1890 and 1968."[44] Instead, McKenna frames the apparent and sudden violence that constituted 1970s Mindanao as the culmination of the failures of Muslim leader, who since the US colonial period, had been "ruling indirectly through cooperating datus." The subsequent uprising that marks the 1970s revolts against its own datus for allowing for the continuous dispossession of land and its resources.

[45] Thomas McKenna in *Muslim Rulers and Rebels* writes, "Government-assisted migration to Mindanao on a large scale began with the establishment of the Philippine Commonwealth in 1935. While the American Colonial government had sponsored agricultural colonies in Muslim Mindanao as early as 1913, those settlements remained limited and experiential," 114-115.

the army-administered Economic Development Corps (EDCOR) relocated "Huk" rebels in Mindanao, a policy that at large saw the Muslim majority in the region sway towards Christian settlers who were often given more opportunities and succeeded in acquiring legal titles to land through political and kinship ties to Luzon-based governance.[46]

It may be tempting to take positions, even resort to the language of pluralist tri-faith Christian-Indigenous-Muslim potentials, citing at large the peaceful co-existence of Lumads and Moros for centuries before the contentious present moment. Yet, the differential means through which 'religious' or 'ethnic' differences are managed and their subject positions (or lack thereof) made legible must also be contextualized as a reflection on secular postcolonial governance that had allowed for the slow and gradual dispossession of land within the emergent language of private property and US alliance that had favored the majority. In the possible joint stance that the Indigenous and Moro could articulate against Christian settlers, "Indigeneity" recovered as the native ethnic marker whose naturalized ties to land appear pitted against the figure of "religiosity" relegated as a premodern residue in the present unmarked age of secular postcolonialism, precisely demarcating 'indigenous' Lumad identity as having remained unconverted by both Christianity and Islam.[47]

The civilizational discourse haunts their differential legibility. Islamic difference arriving in the fourteenth century cites itself as the beginnings of civil society at times mobilizing progressive historical accounts of modernity to cast a downward gaze on Indigenous difference, redoubling their naturalized claims to Bangsamoro after having managed to evade three hundred years of Spanish colonialism.[48] Today, the militarized conditions of Bangsamoro claims to ancestral land cite the Lumads resenting the peace negotiations, noting the relative power and

[46] International Crisis Group: Asia Report N 213. Thomas McKenna recounts the aftermath of the armed rebellion called the Hukbalahap Rebellion in Central Luzon in 1946 on the precipice of political independence for the Philippine state where around fifteen thousand armed fighters and a half mission sympathizers sought agrarian reform and complete freedom from United States involvement. With the rebellion subdued by 1953 with the support of US aid, the subsequent army-administered Economic Development Corps (EDCOR) aided in relocating "Huk" rebels in Muslim Mindanao from 1951. 115-117.

[47] "We are the un-Islamized indigenous peoples in Mindanao and we are different from the Kristiyanos...We are Filipino citizens," as Albert E. Alejo summarizes the Lumad's strategic identity, 44-45. Alejo, Albert, "Strategic identity: Bridging self-determination and solidarity among indigenous peoples of Mindanao, the Philippines."

[48] As McKenna historicizes, "Although individual Muslim polities offered sporadic armed resistance to Spanish attempts to conquer the South, no significant concerted opposition to Spanish aggression ever developed among the separate Muslim peoples of the archipelago," 6.

class imbalances between Indigenous and Muslim groups that might reflect why the IPRA has yet to be implemented in ongoing zones of contentions in Mindanao. As Indigenous political leaders often note, the present Muslim claims to land in Mindanao may be a reflection of those who have had the means to resist across key historical moments.[49] At times evoking ancestral "enslavement by the datus (highborn Muslim leaders)," as one Lumad activist states, the "tradition of oppression" was with the Moros, not the Christians: "We will never subject ourselves to Moro Domination."[50]

On the other hand, the European discourse of "race and eugenics" that undergird the legibility of an untainted and un-Islamized figure of Indigeneity appears parasitic on the image of Islam as barbaric, responsible for "plunderous invasions" and premodern extremism[51] remaining to haunt the postcolonial interior. Exacerbated in the global consciousness since the events of 9/11 and the so-called "global war on terror," as Mamdani reminds us, 'culture talk' in the post-Cold War moment aligns culture with modernity, marking "the dividing line between those in favor of a peaceful, civic existence and those inclined to terror."[52] Indigeneity, then, appears to stage the coherence of a national telos towards civil modernity and proper capital, which necessarily entails a certain self-understanding of culture, modernity, and nation when signified in Muslim majority BARMM. Likewise placed within this broader field of vision of an ongoing US empire and its global alliances, it behooves us to think carefully about when minority politics are rejected, incorporated, or partially accepted in the *aftermath* of resistance movements, and more specifically after having been *differentially* subordinated and made legible within the emergent norms of secular postcolonial governance. As Saba Mahmood and Talal Asad remind us, "the issue is not the Western or non-Western origins of these concepts but 'the forms of life that articulate them, the powers they release or disable.'"[53] As such, while the topic of

[49] "The Philippine Congress passed the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act (IPRA) in 1997, but its weakness means few tribes in Central and Western Mindanao have received titles for their ancestral domains. Some Lumad leaders worry that even if their communities have titles, these may not be respected in an expanded Bangsamoro homeland. The act has never been implemented in the existing autonomous region, ARMM," International crisis group, 8.

[50] Crisis Group Interview, Davao, 2 May 2011. Quoted by Crisis Group Asia Report, 2.

[51] Mahmood, 72.

[52] Mamdani, 17-18.

[53] Talal Asad quoted by Saba Mahmood, 10.

intersecting resistance movements and their aftermaths require greater elaboration than is possible here (and each has already been dealt with extensively from the People Power Movement, the rise of the New People's Army, Muslim secessionist movements and Indigeneity), I draw from the insights I have already gathered across this dissertation to highlight where legible resistance to the liberal democratic minimum might meet the construction of interiorized violence.

Postcolonial 'Resistance' and their Aftermaths

A large part of this dissertation has been dedicated to the stubborn incompatibilities of politics and economics—between slow and systemic dispossession wrought on by economics and the sites of apparent violence that reach political visibility, reflecting on that which exceeds or hides behind revolutionary 'class struggle' proper. As national historiography writes, the People Power Revolution or the EDSA Revolution (February 1986) marks the moment the popular middle-class and Metro Manila-based civil resistance overthrew President Marcos from office to restore democratic liberalism in the nation. This curious moment where dictatorship meets dissent from the middle-class citizens as the nation under Marcos spirals under debt and extreme poverty raises not only the instability of the idea of the 'middle class' often evoked when historicizing pertinent actors of the EDSA Revolution, but also of the movement's legibility delimited to *civil* disobedience that enshrines the legacy of the People Power Movements (in 1986 and later 2001) into national history. Ironic enough, as Vernadette Gonzalez notes, a series of monuments on Corregidor that tells the "dominant Allied heroic narrative" constructed during the Marcos era likewise displays a monument of the People Power Revolution that celebrates his ousting from power.

If memorialization is a disciplinary tool that partakes in reproducing the cultural boundaries of the nation, this most recent addition of the People Power Revolution into *national history* indexes what Gonzelez astutely argues are the elided "contradictions between World War II American rescue account and American manipulation during Marcos years."[54] Such monuments omit not just American manipulation of Marcos's dictatorship that certainly affected the "people," but also elides the unevenly administered 'discipline' garnered through the political rationale of keeping public order to sustain this idea of the "people." The 'racial economic'

[54] Gonzalez 73.

elsewhere to the maintenance of 'order' or the idea of the 'people' as such is one that I have begun to allude to in the irreconcilable history of the murder of Muslim soldiers on Corregidor that indexes the broader legal and social ramifications of Christian settlements across postcolonial Philippine history.

Instead, if we highlight the liberal democratic minimum as an unspoken threshold to emerge into the national *legibility,* the People Power Revolution might index various 'failed' revolutionary efforts, ones that instead might reveal the permissible boundaries of national memorialization. From early sites of Communist-led agrarian insurgency, Hukbalahap Rebellion, and later the New People's Army led by Jose Maria Sison, the postcolonial period also saw the rise of "Islamic" movement by Nur Misuari where we will almost always also find the Indigenous fighting alongside various figures of revolutionary action. Each had been conceived of as part of the broader story of the radical Bandung Third World project that understood itself and took on the language of revolutionary Marxism, where such radical orientations originated from the same anti-imperialist[55] student movement centered in the University of the Philippines, Diliman. However, despite their self-understanding of decolonial 'resistance,' what interests me are the diminishing terms of resistance in the decade that followed. As David Scott characterizes, the 1980s consolidated a new global norm with the rise of "the regime of transitional justice that refigured the revolutionaries as criminals"—the ending of an "era of revolutionary socialist expectations—indeed, of revolutionary socialist possibility,"[56] casting once heroes of nationalist revolutionary struggle into villains harbored within.

Set against the backdrop of these global transitions from the decolonial nationalist, the Cold War, and the War on Terror, the global consciousness saw the transition from "national-liberation struggle and more and more as an international religious crusade: a jihad,"[57] one that Mamdani historicizes the roots of jihad manufactured by US foreign policy. From the visible failures of direct militarism in Vietnam, the United States during the Cold War shifted its tactics

[55] As McKenna summarizes, "By 1972, the Muslims had organized themselves into Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), organized on the pattern of the Palestinian National Liberation Front. The threat to secede now became real, as the MNLF movement was better organized..." See The American Colonial Administration of "Moros" https://asiasociety.org/origins-muslim-separatist-movement-philippines

[56] Scott, *Omens of Adversity,* 3-4.

[57] Mamdani, 118.

towards proxy wars in which political Islam had been "considered an unqualified ally in the struggle against the Soviet Union" and "militant Third World nationalism,"[58] one that would later be reconfigured into the tropic figure of the terrorist, "the true ideological children of Reagon's crusade against the 'evil empire' [global communism]"[59] (I will soon attend to the rise of global religious discourse in the context of the Cold War).

Contextualizing this revolutionary self-conscious moment of the '60s and '70s in terms of US foreign policy during the Cold War, instead reveals how such internal revolutionary struggle had been perceived by the US. As Mamdani delineates, the "defeat of U.S.-backed dictatorships in the Third World was evidence that the Soviet Union was 'on a roll,'" a policy that rationalized the swift US response towards "communist" rural uprisings that "demand[ed] that all possible resources be marshaled to "roll back" the Soviet Union, 'by all means necessary.'"[60] Within this shifting global frame, US-backed militarism redoubled its martial laws, particularly targeting the hinterlands of the Philippines. Remaining the site targeted for 'martial laws' that exceeds the nationwide declaration during the Marcos Era (1972-86), the persistence of martial laws in the hinterlands today probes the question of how political order for the majority in the metropolitan center maintains its normalcy as violence continues sequestered within BARMM. Most recently in 2017, the Marawi Seize led by Abu Sayyaf whose historic ties of Al Queda have risen to jihadist notoriety in Southern Philippines, has led to the declaration of Martial Law until December of 2019, though this soon dismantled, followed by the passage of the controversial Anti-Terrorism Act of 2020.

To recount the present moments of "terror" that plague the interiorized region and place it within the broader context of US Imperialism is not to diminish the intersecting forms of struggle

[58] Mamdani, 120-121.

[59] Mamdani's key argument in *Good Muslim and Bad Muslim* is to mark the transition from the Cold War to the War on Terror in which the U.S. had constructed political Islam during the Cold War to fend off global communist forces. As he also concludes, "The source of privatized and globalized terrorism in today's world, the international jihadis are the true ideological children of Reagon's crusade against the "evil empire," 177. We might find similar distinctions between "good" and "bad" Muslims being raised as McKenna historicizes the propping up of Islamic leaders under US guidance. The 1960's 'moro' rebellion marks itself as resistant to US-led Islamic leadership that had allowed for the slow and steady Christian resettlements in the now Bangsamoro Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (BARMM, formalized in January 2019).

[60] Mamdani cites President Ronald Reagan in the height of the Cold War in 1979, 120.

and violence that have constituted the region.[61] This has been well-documented as indicative of 'violence' that often piques academic intrigue, one that has sustained the intersecting academic knowledge production and US military interests in this exceptional region within Southeast Asia. Rather, my goal has been to move away from identity forms, instead taking heed of how variously positioned actors seek to make legible their differential claims within a nation, given existing norms that govern who or what political action is deemed viable, or in the case of the lack thereof viability, is cast into the realm of 'violent' revolution. Certainly, we might be able to look at Mindanao and visibly see the markings of 'jihadists,' as Georgetown University Professor Zachary Abuza summarizes in a recent Special Report for the United States Institute of Peace, noting how Mindanao appears ridden with "intra-Moro competition," "factionalism," "global insurgency," "clan and intergenerational disputes," "private armies," and "political dynasties" that threaten the going peace negotiations and implementation. Yet, apparent violence appears rife in Mindanao always already marked as 'violent,' precisely as 'differences' deemed recalcitrant to the postcolonial nation have historically been sequestered, one that can only redouble in Mindanao's continued association with it.

On the other hand, I am deeply indebted to works that are sensitive to where resistance and violence meet and are inextricably enmeshed. Thomas McKenna's 1998 publication, *Muslim Rulers and Rebels* historicizes the violent 1968 moment of Islamic resistance as one that was also aimed at existing religious rulers of Mindanao who have done little to stave off encroaching settlements in the eyes of the rebels who have historically held the popular support of the people in Mindanao. In this sense, McKenna's attunement to the intersection of class and religious leadership speaks volumes to the selective privilege and national inclusion given to a few, in turn also giving voice to those cast out as 'rebels," a category that often follows class lines within Mindanao. Similarly, for Mahmood Mamdani, the apparent violence of the 'religious fanatic' that haunts the hinterland of the Global South requires the mediation of this 'violence' precisely constructed through US proxy alliances as a means to fight its war on communism now turned into the war on terror. Yet, in such calls to differentiate between national decolonial future and communist uprising, religious resistance of the ordinary people of Mindanao and political Islam,

[61] For instance, Mamdani writes, "The legitimization of violence against civilians was a direct consequence of something the CIA manual called training in "strategic sabotage," which was categorized as either simple or indirect... The Islamist terror that we are witnessing today is more a mutation than an outgrowth of Islamic history, the result of a triple confluence: ideological, organizational, and political," 169.

I cannot help but wonder if the politics of "good Muslim, bad Muslim" remain embedded in such moments of differentiation, sequestered further interior to the region's region, perhaps localized *into* violence. This reflects what I have sought to argue in this section—that the hidden *terms* of the "people" that make legible the People Power Revolution appear to do so 'over and above' or precisely *at the expense of* those whose 'resistance' becomes the sequestered difference unacceptable to its majoritarian conception. Similarly, the "people" articulated in Mindanao may intuit the same false dividing line between respectable resistance and its others that only exacerbates how we conceive and reproduce apparent 'violence' unable to meet the civil liberal democratic minimum of resistance struggle, doubly made abstract in being sequestered interior to the nation and region at large.

Rather than continue down this path, one that appears to further telescopically interiorize into the 'region's region' so to speak, Talal Asad on the question of the "terrorist" or the "suicide bomber" instead shifts our attention to the "question of political violence that constitutes our modern world" or "war waged by liberal democracies"[62]—from modern warfare's continuous need to "undermine the distinction between the killing of 'innocent civilians' and the 'justified' deaths of soldiers," notions of collateral damage, and the everyday vicissitudes of capitalism, particularly those "deliberately allow[ed]…to die" as the norms against which 'terrorism' is invented historically and continuously reproduced in their discourse. In the looping of global historical matters that remain tethered to what is legible 'resistance' to this decolonial liberal democratic minimum, one of the ways I have sought to take up Asad's question is to draw attention to the borders of liberal democracy installed in the timely recognition of the Indigenous by the state. Recuperated precisely to delimit the space of essentially peaceful 'cultural,' indigenous recuperation might instead draw our attention to that which recedes from or remains the 'excess' to 'cultural Indigeneity' conceived by the state within the context of a heavily militarized historical and present-day martial law regime in Mindanao.

As the Filipino scholar of Indigeneity Adrian De Leon notes the insurgent rural highland Indigenous who lurks behind one staged for easy national consumption, cultural indigeneity's *others* are rife across the political terrain of Mindanao, often excluding the Indigenous who have joined the New People's Army or have converted or continue to fight alongside Muslims in

[62] Asad, 124-5.

BARMM.'[63] Read within these shifting global terms of legible resistance that afford only selective recognition, the much-awaited recovery of the 'Indigenous' might instead mediate the ploys of recognition that not only promises Indigenous restitution perpetually relegated into the future but also indicate the performance of mobilizing a disciplinary figure that delimits the proper direction of the postcolonial nation.

While much existing decolonial scholarship relies on the model towards 'better governance,' one that certainly also remains valid, the unwieldy residues of this disciplinary figure haunt its universality, instead turning our attention to the very shifting terms of resistance struggle. Placed within this broader rescripting of the Cold War period and US alliances where "revolutionaries become criminals," or rather only certain revolutionaries *remain* scripted as 'the recalcitrant' as such, as others emerge within the neutrality of the 'universally resistant subject,' Islamic difference appears to emerge into recognizability precisely as it *remains* the 'recalcitrant other' within these transitions. In other words, their resistance *remains* unsalvageable by the world-historical rubrics of the revolutionary national independence struggle, illegible to class struggle-proper, unrecognizable by the periodized "Cold War" anyways 'over,' irrecoverable by cultural indigeneity and neither made recognizable as proper religious subjects who understand religion's place is a matter of private interiorized belief.

Religious subjection under secular postcolonial governance raises significant questions regarding the material conditions that sustain the legibility of subjects and perhaps even the rubrics of proper subjectivity that have only partially been accessible to both ethnic and religious minorities. While the tools for certain claims to land, albeit limited, are afforded to the Indigenous, the crux of Islamic illegibility often rests on the terms of religion today enshrined as a matter of 'personal belief' and thereby dematerialized, a condition that has itself contributed to the construction of recalcitrance when religious groups' desire to defend land rights. It is no coincidence, then, that the same international laws used to preserve the sanctity of the nation-state have afforded the nation the systematic and legal structures to disavow or slowly diminish Islamic presence, simultaneously also disavowing the means through which to make legible

[63] The uncanny semblance between Spanish identification of differences echoes in Professor Zachary Abuza's distinction between Indigenous and the recalcitrant. "Enormous security challenges are posed by militant Moro groups that have eschewed the peace process. These include the Islamic State Lanao (better known as the Maute Group), the ASG, the Ansuar Khalifa Philippines, and the BIFF faction led by Abu Turaife. While all four of these groups are indigenous, they have pledged allegiance to the Islamic State, continue to attract foreign fights, and are determined to undermine the peace process. They also sometimes fight among themselves," 17.

communal claims through redefining what is 'protectable' religious acts under the law. Further taking up Asad's call to examine normative sites where political modernity and their 'resistant' limits are articulated, the following sections examine this crucial development of secular governance that today enshrines religion as mere private belief, traced through new developments of religious difference constructed during the Cold War.

Cold War and Christian Human Rights

Similar to the ways Saba Mahmood asks us to question when and where the 'minority' is evoked, particularly in the non-West, Christianity's so-called diminishing role announced by secularism in the West must likewise reflect the differing trajectories of its implementation in the non-West, particularly in light of religious mobilization during the Cold War that takes a uniquely transnational turn. On the one hand, we recall Mahmood Mamdani as he traces the rise of political Islam made possible through US covert operations through proxy wars shifted from southern Africa to Central America and Central Asia by the 70s as 'religion' had been the unofficial tool to fight against the secular forces of communism during the Cold War. While the rise of Islam in the global consciousness in the post-Cold War context has dominated the question of religious difference in the contemporary age, the role of Christianity that proliferated as part of the fight against secular communism is rarely discussed as part of the landscape in which the terms of religious freedom had been newly instated into legal forms. Reflecting on the mobilization of Christianity engendered through Cold War politics, I briefly trace scholarship that addresses the changing postwar framework with the passing of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) in which the definitions of religious freedom have been enshrined and mobilized against both secular communism in the Cold War and later against Islamic difference.

Heralding new modes of Euro-American Christian fervor that expanded during the Cold War, as Samuel Moyn historicizes, Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) altered previous understandings of religious liberty and Christian evangelism amid fears that "secularist communists would topple Christian democracy."[64] As Moyn contextualizes, the discourse of 'human rights' that circulated for the first time in the post-war era centered its activism prominently around the notion of international religious freedom, specifically around

[64] Moyn, 66.

the right to change one's religion.[65] For many Middle Eastern nations, as Linde Lindqvist recalls, Article 18 triggered the fears of "Christian missionaries throughout history [who] had abused the invocation of such rights to stir up religious emotions and pave the way for political intervention."[66] Particularly in the Cold War Asian context, the legacy of Article 18 that entails the right to convert has had one of the most rampant conversion rates in South Korea, strategically viewed as a suitable 'good' Asian mobilized at large against secular China.[67] Within this context, the underground Christian missionary in China became mobilized as quintessential figures for rescue, staging secular Communist intolerance in the process.

While the figure of the persecuted Christian, the martyred missionary, or its secular configuration of the frontline humanitarian worker is selectively mobilized across various historical moments to haunt 'Christian democracy's' others, within the context of the emerging secular threat to religion engendered during the Cold War, as Mamdani among others recall, the once rife divisions across "Abrahamic religions" came to be simultaneously mobilized. As Moyn recalls, against this impending threat, 'internal' divisions were momentarily set aside as Protestants Christians, Catholics, and the once extricated Jews now incorporated into the European conception of the 'Judeo-Christian,' even Islam had been systematically albeit unevenly incorporated into the "Abrahamic religions." As Rosemary Renette Hicks reminds us, the *Muslim* as a racio-religious symbol now mobilized within Abrahamic religions, "rose in tandem with the war on terror," displaying that "religious freedom had always been about religious inclusion and pluralism combined with exclusion and discrimination."[68] As we have earlier traced the effects of this tactical separation in Mahmood Mamdani's *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim,* the manufacturing of a political Islam led by US proxy wars had been done so in the hopes of fending off secular communism globally, leading to the once unquestioned support of political Islam later reconfigured and staged as the quintessential premodern residue of religious fanaticism.

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[65] Moyn, 68

[66] Lindqvist, 442.

[67] As Helen Jin Kim historicizes, "At mid-twentieth century, Eisenhower's Cold War America was dubbed "God's Country," intensely devout with a religious revival across traditions and denominations. The reach of this revival was global, as it dovetailed with a Cold War expansionism that made no postcolonial apologies for intervention in non-US territories. At this time, the rise of Mao Tse-tung in 1949 was detrimental to the US foreign missionary enterprise, as Christian missionaries were ousted from China," 11.

[68] Hicks quoted by Moyn, 74

Beyond the Christian's intent to enforce the 'right to convert,' paving new ways for various political interventions transnationally, Article 18 also delineated particularly troubling new stipulations of what counts as religious freedom, one that has also become deeply implicated in determining the dividing line between political Islam and private religious practice. Modifying the League of Nations' minority rights that once included terms that safeguarded "freedom of worship" towards religious freedom understood as "the liberty of conscience," Article 18, in effect, made "religious liberty an antimaterialist political good" in other words, making religion a matter of interior private belief more so than defined as the safeguarding of a communal practice. Notably seen in the controversial issue of the Turkish ban on wearing the hijab, as many scholars have noted, the basic premise of religious freedom as antimaterialist meant that such bans were legally only ever considered as "a minor restriction on liberty, which left the core of free conscience and belief untouched."[69] In other words, by determining what counts as protectable forms of religious acts, it also appears to define what counts as narrow 'religious belief' and what falls outside the purview of this secular 'civil' conception of religion, thereby falling into the scripts of 'terror.'

As Moyn attends to the troubling signs of human rights authored by Christian evangelical impulses amid the Cold War, what Moyn, Mahmood, and Lindqvist each highlight, beyond the spread of Christian missionaries that proliferated in the non-West during the period, were the equally insidious implications of defining the rightful place of religion or the stipulation of the 'liberty of conscience.' While the fatal marriage between humanitarianism and evangelism continues to be a source of anxiety that often leads to the desire to disjoin the Christian origins of human rights in the hopes of making humanitarianism more 'universal,' the persistence of Christian missionary presence enshrined into normative practice by doctrines of human rights, and quite literally placed within conflict zones, raises the question of their persistent role as vanguards of modernity, and civility undergirding the norms of the secular modern postcolonial nation. Like the extradiegetic intrusion of the missionary who might otherwise be set to disappear under secular postcolonial futurity in Llosa's novel, the dual legacy of evangelism enshrined *into* human rights arguably made into the recognizable secular figure of the humanitarian worker today, in tandem with the redefinition of religion as an antimaterialist good continue to determine the landscape in which resistance for religious subjects also appears to

[69] Lindqvist, 443.

dematerialize. As we have begun to explore in the context of the southern Philippines, I return to this interiorized region where we might find the often-unnoticed role of the missionary qua the secular humanitarian at work in (re)producing these norms of religious difference.

The Secular Production of the Orient

By 1991, the Philippine Senate voted to end its 94-year-old agreement with the US military that led to the removal of Clark Air Base and Subic Bay Naval Base, once one of the largest and most developed American bases overseas that had played a significant role during World II. While Clark and Subic have "ostensibly demilitarized," US-Philippine alliances and the militarism engendered since remain active and relevant, particularly with the passing of the 1998 Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA) that ironically saw "broader U.S.-Philippine military cooperation than ever before."[70] Militarism and its ties to global capital, as Vernadette Gonzalez reminds us, "serves as a guarantor for potential investors," in particular, by taking up the neoliberal rhetoric of "making the world safe for tourism,"[71] the fastest growing global industry in the Global South. What Gonzalez is interested in and as I extend, is the strange conjoining of war exhibitions, tourism, and perhaps even living exhibits of 'culture' that haunt Pacific war histories, particularly rehearsed in strategic tourist attractions and museums staged in Corregidor and Bataan, the historic "hallowed grounds of American World War II valor in the Philippines."[72] Yet, as we have explored earlier, Corregidor's militarized legacy displaced by tourism hides behind it the present 'unarchivable' interiorized violence on this island in Manila Bay.

By 2001, with the emerging global war on terror announced by Bush, the bilateral VFA between the US-Philippine military would find the necessary rationale for articulation. In May of 2001, twenty hostages, including two American missionary couples and a Peruvian-born American from California vacationing in Palawan would be taken captive by the members of the Abu Sayyaf Group, identified as part of a trans-regional terrorist group. As a figure of recalcitrance perhaps symbolizing similar rogue transnational flows once embodied by the 'Maoist' or Chinese by ethnic association, the 'terrorist' at this moment reappears as the

[70] Gonzalez, 66.

[71] Goldston, *Making the World Safe for Tourism,* 67.

[72] Gonzalez, 83.

unmediated figure of contemporary violence, ones that have since the end of the Cold War been the target of sustained US-Philippine militarism.

I bring up this exceptional moment of violence, not to reify this instance as justification that had quite literally led to an almost fifteen-year-long (2001-2015) Joint Special Operations Task Force under "Operation Enduring Freedom"[73] directed yet again at those internally sequestered and differentiated in Mindanao. Today, the Philippines ranks ninth among countries most affected by terrorism, a statistic that must also go hand in hand with the Philippines as the first nation to sponsor Bush's 'war on terror.'[74] Yet, despite its statistical world historical relevance, this sequestered site remains, at large, peripheral to the study of the broader developments of US empire in the Pacific. Perhaps enacted into amnesia by persistently being made symptomatic to *other* world-historical 'regional' discourses, US-allied militarism in the Pacific, more prominently centers around the post-Cold War emergent threat of China that often justifies the 1998 passing of the VFA, while the legacy of "Operation Enduring Freedom" most often linked to the September 11 attacks in New York has situated global attention on direct US militarism in the Middle East.

On the one hand, I draw attention to this violent 'ruptural' moment of abductions and their aftermaths to showcase the exemplary site where the binaries of the victim-perpetrator are rearticulated. In this sense, each signified subjectivity of this 'violent event,' from the exemplar US citizen, the tourist as the capitalist consumer, and humanitarian activist, mediates one site where the edges subjectivity-proper, or the boundaries of 'civil society' come to be rearticulated. As we see in the swift response by the US-Philippine militarized alliance, those naturalized as deserving of protection are capable of conjuring militarized 'order' even in 'officially demilitarized,' exceptionally directed at the quintessential figure of 'terror' in our age.

Yet, what also interests me is the lesser recoverable figure of the humanitarian. While it is unlikely that these particular abductions were knowingly directed at the 'humanitarian,' the figure often found in conflict-prone zones participates in the signification in the aftermath of

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[73] Shumaker, Robert. "Operation Enduring Freedom - PHILIPPINES." *Special Warfare*, vol. 30, no. 4, 2017, pp. 60–61. The persistent recourse to citing transregional networks of violence is central to the declaration on the 'global war on terror.'

[74] This statistic is based on the Vision of Humanity's 2019 global terrorism index. ("Global Terrorism Index 2019," November 2019, www.visionofhumanity.org/app/uploads/2019/11/GTI-2019web.pdf).

violent events. As Neferti Tadiar highlights, the figure of 'human rights activist' has become more and more "like adjuncts of the states than their opponents," with previously allied forces reformulated into the normative conception of "global civil society." [75] As such, the mobilization of human rights organizations in present-day conflict zones is also implicated in reinforcing definitions of what constitutes a humanitarian crisis as it likewise participates in drawing the boundaries of victims and perpetrators, those deserving of care, and those whose deaths appear justified. As Talal Asad also notes, "Humanitarian law deals only with direct death dealing, not with deliberately allowing people to die,"[76] one that in this instance, privileges the exceptional site of political violence that not only abstracts the slow and steady dispossession of land and capital, but also participates in their further dispossessions.

The lesser recoverable figure of the humanitarian worker appears likewise symptomatic of the often-abstracted role of humanitarianism, not just in crisis zones but within the everyday workings of transnational exchanges. Hence, while the mediation of the event precluded the 'humanitarian,' the humanitarian involved in this event had been longstanding missionaries placed within Muslim majority Mindanao. As though to abstract the hand of Christianity intimately at work in so-called 'crisis zones,' this curious doubling of the humanitarian, often synonymous with the figure of the missionary, might reflect the anxieties evoked when associating humanitarianism with religion and religious zones of conflict in the otherwise universal efforts towards crisis management and maintenance of this 'civil society.' Similarly, as Saba Mahmood warns, while tempting to assume "Christian missions belong to a bygone past, their power replaced by secular values and norms of geopolitics…it behooves us to think carefully about the entwinement of secular and Christian principles in international diplomacy." [77] In this case, we might see these entwinements at play in the doubling or interchangeable secular and religious 'identities' evoked as needed in service of the norms of civil society. This interchangeable identity is particularly rampant in places where Christian missionaries historically had not been welcomed and must take on *secular* roles as humanitarian workers,

[75] Tadiar, 20-21
[76] Asad 125.

[77] Mahmood, 48.

teachers, investors, etc, hence, if not actually doubling as the missionary, are often found in collaboration as both take on humanitarian principles in tandem with their evangelistic mission.[78]

As we have begun to explore, this entwinement of mission work and humanitarianism is certainly not coincidental, specifically engendered through Cold War politics and the renewed tenets of the UDHR that stipulate the rightful place of religion outside the public sphere. As Moyn shows, the result of these norms has also contributed to the abstraction of the continued role of Christianity as part and parcel of humanitarian intervention and the secular construction of events in their aftermath. With these historical trajectories in mind, I would like to dwell a little longer on the effects of this interiorized religious unarchivable or the characterization of 'religious martyrdom' that uncomfortably echoes across the Islamic-Christian divide when the story shifts from the public mediation of humanitarianism to the death of the two US Protestant missionaries.

Martin and Gracia Burnham, the two white American missionaries who had been kidnapped by Abu Sayaff had been part of the broader protestant missionary community I had grown up in. As a child, I distinctly remember the echoes of violence that would have otherwise been relegated in the hinterlands, inciting religious fervor and reminding us of the dangerous calling of contemporary mission work to "hazard our lives and gamble all for Christan until we have reached the last tribe,"[79] as is declared on the website of the New Tribe Mission organization the Burnhams have been a part of. In other words, *outside* these moments of violence where we are met with the quintessential religious fanatic,[80] 'the terrorist,' our self-understanding cohered and was often indistinguishable from secular notions of humanitarian work to the extent that Corregidor had been the backyard playground for missionary children—a safe campground to replicate the American 'Boy Scouts' tradition of basic survival training, all

[78] I bring up an interesting parallel Talal Asad makes to the self-understanding of radical anthropologists who study "primitive societies." "I believe it to be both mistaken and unjust to attribute invidious political motives to anthropologists studying primitive societies—as is something done by opinion in ex-colonial countries and by left-wing writers in the West. Most social anthropologists held and still hold radical, or liberal, political views. Nevertheless, it remains true that classic functionalism prevented them from effecting a fruitful conjunction between their political commitments and their sociological analysis." Talal Asad as quoted by David Scott in the appendix of the *Powers of the Secular Modern*, 257.

[79] https://ethnos360.org/stories/story/new-tribes-mission-usa-changes-name-to-ethnos360

[80] As Mahmood Mamdani reminds us in *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim*, "'Fundamentalism' is, in fact, a term invented in 1920s Protestant circles in the United States," a term that must be placed into conversation as a "reaction within religion to its changing political circumstances," 36.

the while rehearsing and consuming the heroic tale of US interventions and exemplary humanitarian activism across the globe. This ability to maneuver between secular humanitarianism and religious missions would prove useful, both as narratives recoverable by the state and in moments characterized as 'religious conflicts,' sequestering martyrdom into histories of religious struggle outside the purview of national, let alone global issues of tourism, activism, national independence, etc. Yet, in such moments of conflict—in the clash between two religious fanatics—the missionary, abiding by the legal and cultural norms of religion and religious conversions, reveals himself to be the exemplary religious subject, one who is rational in understanding that the proper place of religion is in the sphere of private belief.

Though troubling secular sensibilities, Christian humanitarian's ability to straddle the secular-religious divide instead may reflect what Gil Anidjar through Edward Said reminds us are the devastating effects of the *secular* production of the *Orient* made "suitable for the study in the academy, for display in the museum." Noting how colonial knowledge is produced and validated by "poets, novelists, philosophers, political theorists, economists, and imperial administrators," and "apparently neither [produced by] priests nor theologians nor religious scholars nor missionaries," [81] the relegation of 'missionary's role' to the realm of a religious event sequestered as anecdotes of religious fanaticism, *not suitable for* public and universal value knowledge, appears to abstract Christianity's role as enduring handmaidens of the colonial past and present wherein the missionary as agents are enlisted to the task of guarding the borders of what is "suitable" to be staged as a museum exhibit, in other words, suitable for recovery into Weberian divisions.

Beyond this moment of erupted violence and their narrative aftermaths, I draw attention to the missionary-activist's every day that indexes a curious continuity between the 'bygone' colonial past and the present age of the postcolonial. Engaged in educational reform, providing sanctuary for the urban poor, or in the front lines of ethnolinguistic recovery of Indigenous epistemologies made into public forms of secular knowledge, such tasks normalized with humanitarianism mimic the missionary curiously engaged in staging 'first encounters' with the indigeneity in their colonial mapping of *difference*. Transfigured though still contiguous with the

[81] Anidjar, 55-56. Gil Anidjar quotes Edward Said, defending Said against those who claim Said had done to the religion what Orientalists had done to the Orient to highlight the quintessential religions—Christianity underlying all Weberian divisions.

past, what these persistent 'first encounters' with 'indigeneity' might mediate is the need to untether 'indio' from an ontological sign toward the study of the colonial gaze that sustained and continues to sustain the division between 'indio' and 'infidel' and also 'indio' and 'moro,' in other words, the division between those 'conducive' to Euro-American and now "global civil" modernity or those relegated outside as recalcitrant.

Though less conspicuous, perhaps because whiteness, or rather also secular sociological categories are not directly indexed as globally legible deaths worth mourning, Thomas McKenna recalls the Christian hegemony in Campo Muslim in the 1980s with the installation of Christian Children's Fund (CCF)[82] where overseas funds, often from American sponsors had been called on to provide for educational expenses, clothing, and supplies. While the program itself was the "cause of some considerable anxiety among its participants,"[83] particularly with its disapproval by the MILF leadership, Christian forces providing supplementary funds that the MILF leadership had otherwise been unable to provide for reflects once again the inadequacies of mapping notions of 'religious freedom' in conflict zones. Such reification of the 'right to convert,' one that South Korean Christian missionaries today are also engaged in within BARMM, must necessarily be placed into the context of the slow and strategic diversion of land and its resources from Mindanao to settlers that have transitioned the region into the most impoverished one in the Philippines today.

While McKenna often cites datu leadership collaborating with the Marcos regime that astutely marks the issue of class privilege internally consolidated in BARMM to the dismay of "rank and file" Muslims, the Christian humanitarian's role in this context appears auxiliary to settler colonial logics that is eager to continue to highlight the inadequacies of Islamic governance. Coupled with the very terms of 'resistance' made illegible within the norms of the secular postcolonial nation, 'reified religious belief' shows itself as a secular tool of justifying the division between those who must fight for one's *place* and those whose rights are already safeguarded within international law, land, and nation. As I have ultimately sought to show, between the publicness of the ethnic "suitable for the study in the academy"— its materiality in

[82] See Chapter 9 of McKenna's *Muslim Rulers and Rebels.* This is in the context of the religious revival in Cotabato largely in the 1980 where the MNLF (Moro National Liberation Front) had already been displaced by the MILF (Moro Islamic Liberation Front)

[83] McKenna, 212.

need of national cultural preservation versus the immaterial of religious belief—may lie Christianity's function as the intermediary, perhaps made more effective through its privatized role as enduring handmaidens of the revolutionary spirit of Christ.

Indigeneity and Anglophone Transnational Circuits

As Asad, Tadiar, and Gonzalez each ask us to look internally at sites of normative meaning-making under the US-led capitalist world order, we might begin to see the boundaries of proper transnational flows guarded in the two far-reaching poles of geographic and ideological nation. At the *cosmopolitan* center that houses war monuments, we find staged the gendered body in continued need of protection, one that as I have argued, is reproduced and embodied in the *rural* peripheries that stage an essentially peaceful 'Indigenous' cultural difference. As Sears and Benitez also warn, citations to "origins" tend to discursively return to itself, pointing to the "ways in which certain subject positions are naturalized as subaltern, and the work of ideology...hidden or at least repressed."[84] I return briefly to the question of indigeneity in the Philippines, in particular, with its designation as the 'subaltern' within emerging literature that places it in the framework of transnational capital, labor, and transpacific circuits of diaspora.

For Adrianne De Leon, a Filipino scholar of Indigeneity, the highland Indigenous historically consigned as the recalcitrant 'infidel' embodies the insurgent and radical ethnological possibilities that arise from the hinterland, who together with the 'moro,' have constituted the imagined threat to Cold War modernization in which "the Philippine state doubled down on counterinsurgency in the hinterlands."[85] Astutely highlighting the slow and systematic dispossession of Indigenous lands through the nation's further incorporation into global capitalism that had pushed the highland Indigenous into Northern Luzon, De Leon attends to the transpacific relevance of Asian settler colonialism and Indigenous erasures within both the US and the postcolonial Philippine nation. Distinguishing between the highland and lowland natives, the latter of whom "comprise the hegemonic group that dictates nation-state formations and capitalist modes of relation," De Leon notes how the latter "emigrated across the Pacific to

[84] Sears and Benitez, 166. See also Casumbal-Salazar, "The Indeterminacy of the Philippine Indigenous Subject: Indigeneity, Temporality, and Cultural Governance."

[85] De Leon, *Bundok,* 217.

work in industries built on stolen land" are often found "commodify[ing] and appropriate[ing] Indigenous cultures for the sake of their own precolonial self-discovery."[86]

On the one hand, global indigeneity as a framework mediates the disavowed racial economic *elsewhere* to the emergent political sites of racial threat, one that I have also painstakingly sought to survey across this dissertation—from their Euro-American articulations of the historical 'racial' ordering to their uses and abuses within emergent imperial formations newly directed at Asia. It is certainly true that 'indigeneity' is the racial economic elsewhere—the *sign* that indicates the *quiet* systematic dispossession against which the normativity of capital relations and their violent exclusions are staged, one that in the Pacific has often centered around Chinese migrations, capital, and exclusions throughout colonial history. I likewise take heed of Indigenous scholarship that note that while racial logics are applied to the Indigenous, "indigeneity is not race," highlighting the "erasure of Indigenous place-making" precisely engendered by "racialization under empire."[87]

Yet, in this chapter, I have aimed to complicate the radical possibilities of reading the hinterlands delimited to the designation 'indigeneity,' particularly as its uses under that signification cohere so well with state-defined trajectories of national futurity. As Chris Patterson also warns, the uptake of racial multicultural is often "where identities, histories, and language are routinely transformed in order to obfuscate the structures of imperial power,"[88] and as De Leon himself questions, Indigeneity as an index mediates the "matter of who counts as subject and who is disposable as an impediment to economic, national, and racial progress,"[89] precisely to highlight the 'recalcitrant' receding outside the visibility of state-defined 'Indigenous.' Weberian sociology intuits the dividing line of what can be staged as exhibits and made legible to the academy. Similarly, 'indigeneity' as an index mediates not just the dividing line amongst 'natives' within the matrix of this multiculturalism to which our desires for cosmological differences revive epistemes *contra* the 'racial' configuration that can certainly no longer serve

[86] De Leon, 2. See also Lloyd Fernando's who writes of pluralism in Malaysia and Singapore, highlighting those "too disadvantaged to claim cosmopolitan or global belonging. They thus appeared to onlookers within locailized racial forms, and their political attitudes were difficult if not impossible to parse because their very survival relied upon being identified as ethnically authentic." (Fernando quoted by Christopher Patterson, 3).

[87] De Leon, 21.

[88] Patterson, 61

[89] De Leon, 215.

as the means to justice under empire. Yet, I have sought to ask, does cosmology as an episteme tied to Indigenous place-making suffice or does it likewise participate in inventing a difference precisely irrecoverable as they are made illegible to its very formation? This is why I ask, under whose *Christian* patronizing guidance are such cosmologies of radical difference made albeit only partially acceptable? A return to the hinterland must do more than identify a difference among the cacophony of violence, religion, indigeneity, and transnational actors, for in this exceptional space of violence out of which our decolonial hopes are written, might also be ones readily staged for *secular* consumption.

In the emergent post-Cold War ethnological binaries that might make *transhistorical,* thereby universal Indigenous erasures and Chinese exclusions, as Anderson's work might intuit, what BARMM's present formation as the 'region's region' offers, telescoping further interior from 'Southeast Asia,' is instead the continued story of the exemplary US liberal notions of freedom in its early colony, morphing into possibly one of the strongest US-allied sites in Southeast Asia. As I argue, it is a site that mediates *less* a universal *history* of colonialism and its 'posts' but more so a *transition* of sorts from the Cold War to the War on Terror. To remain within this "non-Western" space of sequestered history then is to take an intimate look at the microscopic spread of the so-called "civil society" drawn inward and mobilized on behalf of empire, also calling attention to the externalizing tendencies embedded in telescoping between Europe and its others within region-based discourses. For what may lurk beneath the legibility of the decolonial we often delimit to postcolonial sovereignty, demilitarization, racial multiculturalism, or pluralist tri-faith futures, is the curious return of the 'old' image of Islam as the quintessential transregional threat,[90] or 'rogue flows' made incommensurable, perhaps even immaterial to the possibilities of a legible decolonial insurgence.

[90] See Tomoko Masuzawa's discussion of Islam constructed as a quintessential "transregional' threat under the secularizing European gaze. "Given that Islam had long been known to Europeans as a defacto transregional religion and moreover, as a formidable, imperious domain of non-Christianity and a constant threat to it, the eruption of this controversy [the discovery of Buddhist in the late 19th century as a "great religion"] is highly peculiar....[It] had much to do with the problematic status of Islam, as with the possible relation—morphological or genealogical—of Buddhism, a newly discovered religion of Aryan origin, to European Christianity," 24.

Epilogue

The end of the Cold War marked the long-awaited arrival of racial and gender multiplicity in South Korea and the Philippines, two key US-allies in the Pacific. Such promises of expanded civil citizenship, as I have argued, requires a closer evaluation of the broader Cold War geopolitical context in which such rights-based discourses are grafted. Instead viewing pluralism as part of broader goal of the nation enlisted towards the task of procuring proper subjects of labor and secular liberal democratic governance, this project reflected on key militarized zones of exception where figures of recalcitrance and sexualized disdain had been sequestered—the Afro-Asian or regional sex worker in South Korean camp towns, the Huk Rebel, the recalcitrant Indigenous and Muslims in the Southern peripheries of the Philippines, for instance. Retelling the story of national modernization from this vantage point, instead mediates the fraught politics of procuring the seamlessness of postcolonial national temporality, one that I have argued, emerges as a remainder of this violent Cold War zoning practice. Today, the arrival of key figures such as the comfort woman in South Korea and Indigeneity in the Philippines might signal the potentials of a decolonial pluralist outlook. Yet, contextualized as part of these zoning practices instead mediate their presence as a stabilizing force, strategically spectralized to perform the cultural task of smoothing over, thereby also excising from historical memory the volatile Cold War conditions of national modernization.

This work also comes from the need to rethink the present moment framed as the unfinished Marcos-era fascism (1972-1981) or as the remnants of Park Chung-Hee regime (1961-1979) in the Philippines and South Korea respectively, ones that appear as self-evident violence in which an ongoing decolonial project purportedly aims to resolve. Instead, I sought to question the *idea* of the decolonial that appear, oddly not far from the projections of a promised liberalism spectralized at the time of Cold War militarized governance. Evaluating these very promises of liberal democracy that had been the normative position in which these US-allied nations and its subjects had been differentially subjected to violence, the task had been to mediate a continuation of a Cold War-era governance and its transformation that had at its roots, the civil subject of proper governance in mind.

In the postcolonial nation that had mobilized both overt violence and tactics of liberal governance, I have aimed to conjoin both within the same modality of nation and bloc building. For instance, liberal subjectivity might be selectively granted to the ‘multicultural woman by

marriage' in South Korea whose recognition is contingent upon labor production, while the sex worker—the economic underground conditions to national modernity itself—might be subject to the vicissitudes of early death. In other points, the state sanctions obvert violence against others, as seen in the case of the Muslims of Mindanao today or the 'communist' of the Cold War era. We might also trace various tactics of liberal governance that mobilizes diaspora into the folds of nation and bloc building, at times violently sequestering some internally (the Afro-Korean sex worker, or the moro), expelling others through narratives of US humanitarian intervention (the war bride, the transnational adoptee, the exiled artist), while at the same, producing unprecedented mobility for others (the tourist, the scholar, the missionary-humanitarian, and increasingly the neoliberal global citizen subject etc.). Hence, I have sought to rethink of violence of the Cold War era and its so-called end now being aided by the expansion of citizenship rights in which the nation strategically naturalizes those who appear deserving of the violence enacted on them and those whose claims to land, nation, and decolonial futurity appear naturalized as a result.

Furthermore, I have sought to examine the expansion of universal political rights in the 90s as part and parcel of securing the neutrality of postcolonial national temporality, particularly in the timely staging of Indigeneity in the Philippines or the 'multicultural woman' in South Korea. In the case of the arrival of state-recognized Indigeneity in the Philippines, the staging of such figures of self-evident culture secures the ever-receding time before colonialism, capitalism, modernity or even time itself that instantiates the very postcolonial telos of overcoming. Yet, as I have argued, it is one that cannot be garnered without eliding both communist and Islamic difference from the Cold War and its end. If at once the Spanish used *religious terms* to differentiate between those subjectable to governance and its others, the same division appear to be reconfigured by the present secular modern postcolonial state as the nation takes up the language of Indigeneity at the limits of demarcating governable bodies. In the case of South Korea, the much-awaited recognition of the comfort woman might suggest a postcolonial overcoming as it appears now properly able to recognize its minorities. Yet, as I have argued, to resume South Korea's eternal cultural time squarely within modernity instead must attend to the division of those whose contributions to proper labor—reproductive or productive—amounts to the exemplary national difference emerging by the 90s, while the rest appear consigned to the

waiting room of history, i.e. of labor production *yet to occur* to merit one's inclusion, or be subject to the disciplinary site of camp town sex work.

At heart, this project also sought to address the problem of historical revisionism, questioning why the idea of the decolonial itself may recede from view or outside possibilities of claiming amid its shifting twentieth century global terms of violence and thereby recognition. We might locate the delayed emergence of civil rights in the United States framed, as Talal Asad points us towards, in relation to the abstract universal subject of human rights drafted in the aftermath of a distinctly European problem that the installation of 'minority rights' had been made to resolve (see introduction). *Domesticated* into a civil ethnic struggle,[1] not of universal human rights, the indexicality of ethnic differences within US borders, itself made into the abstract universal as the discrete *domestic* particularity of the universal nation (assumed to be found elsewhere), raises the question and problem of the 'human rights' itself that has been differentially imagined and enacted across the transnational. As Saba Mahmood among others note, its inherent design had often enforced the minority question in non-West while disavowing minorities within Euro-American borders.[2]

If 'race' appears within the legible boundaries of the United States' *historical* not present conditions of possibility, as often the multicultural pluralist framework takes, I have sought to historicize the moment this conception of 'race' is consolidated within the United States with the 'Asiatic' question. As Lye reminds us, the genealogy of yellow peril must be framed both within and without the borders of the United States as part of the story of "the emergence of the United States as a world power…[that had been] choreographed on the Pacific Stage."[3] In the third chapter, I question the strategic bifurcation of the Japanese American condition of internment within US borders as a matter of 'racial' violence simultaneously as the question of Japanese Imperialism—revised *within* the same Euro-American terms of the human—emerge as a matter of 'regional' or even 'premodern' violence. Focusing on comfort woman, less as the figure that

[1] "Malcolm X appeared to underestimate the "power of the state in which he and other African Americans lived and turned to a collection of states that had neither the power nor the authority to intervene," Malcolm X cited by Asad, 140-141.

[2] As Saba Mahmood and Talal Asad remind us, "the issue is not the Western or non-Western origins of these concepts but 'the forms of life that articulate them, the powers they release or disable.'" Talal Asad quoted by Saba Mahmood, 10.

[3] Colleen Lye, *America's Asia,* 23

heralds the decolonial yet to arrive, but rather as a spectral figure of the 'regional' shaped in relation to both modern European violence and racial violence of the United States, I have sought to probe the liminality of her legibility within world history that may instead reveal the *demands* of history itself. As I argue, neither the emerging postcolonial national history, the hopes of recovering the comfort woman, instantiating 'multiculturalism,' nor even the safety of periodized history ('premodernity') can adequately encompass the demands of history that has delimited the 'comfort woman' as *mere* regional violence.

Finally, this dissertation situates at the intersection of race and religion—their shifting historical significance and where they appear to reach an impasse. While I have yet to probe this question at greater length and depth,[4] the impasse of 'race' and 'religion' might already be visible in the rise of the regime of international human rights; as an organization mechanism, it tethers who or what can amount to modern violence, where race, and region appears only selectively made visible in its purview. As I have extended this discussion in the fourth chapter, how might the proliferation of 'minority rights' sanctioned by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights be complicated by the concomitant legal consolidation of 'religious freedom' under the same declaration of rights—in other words, the legal grounds for Christian actors to freely proselytize in the non-West? [5] I repeat at length Saba Mahmood's introductory remarks, reflecting on the present forces of US evangelical-driven human rights at work in Egypt that might conjoin the often-deadly but underground workings of 'religious freedom' that has consolidated together with 'minority rights' in the non-West. Reflecting on her work with the Egyptian Initiation for Personal Rights (EIPR), Mahmood writes:

[4] Though perhaps the question is implied throughout the work. Is the secular only conceivable in relation to religion? Or does the secular disappear as modernity recognize religious difference of a certain premodern proclivity, as Mazusawa argues? How might gender's essential modern proclivity clash with these assumptions of religion conceived of as ultimately disappearing or needing to be placed within its rightful place in the domain of the private? How does reified culture produce disciplinary results in conditioning what can or cannot be recovered in the present or past, one that always already appear devoid of religion? Likewise, secular governance that claims neutrality has been criticized throughout this work. I have also sought to think of the secular as prior to the idea of the citizen subject, as Asad might point us towards the sensibilities of the human that is "best pursued through its shadows," 16.

[5] See my discussion of Samuel Moyn who historicizes Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) amid the Cold War that had reformulated Christian evangelism and existing discourses of religious liberty amid fears that "secularist communists would topple Christian democracy," 66.

> They also painstakingly taught me the landscape of international human-rights law, its simultaneous globality and parochialism, under the shadow of which they operated. This exposure to the potential and limits of the international human-rights regime inspired me to gain a better understanding of this tradition and its historical importance for the struggle for religious minorities. To my surprise, during the course of this fieldwork, I came to learn that human-rights discourse had powerful religious patrons, most prominently in the American evangelical movement. With help from the US State Department, evangelicals have mobilized a successful global campaign since the 1990s to "save persecuted Christians" in the Middle East. For some Egyptians, the contemporary evangelical movement is reminiscent of nineteenth-century missionaries who also mobilized in the name of religious freedom and intervened in Egyptian domestic politics. For others, the evangelical movement of today is categorically different from the missionaries of the past in that it aims not to convert Coptic Christians but to bring their plight to the global stage... it is important to underscore how deeply contested any invocation of these concepts—religious liberty and minority rights—is because of their enmeshment in histories of colonial rule and missionary campaigns as well as ongoing projects of Western hegemony in Egypt. In other words, Egypt's differential sovereignty in relation to Western power crucially determines the meaning and praxis of these concepts. This is manifest not only in the colonial history these concepts recall in the present, but in the significant power that human rights and international law command in settling domestic conflicts in Egypt today. In contrast, violations of minority rights and religious liberty in Euro-Atlantic societies are rarely if ever adjudicated on this terrain. [6]

For Mahmood, framing the minority question must first address the differential power relation between Egypt and the West, urgently requiring the thorough mediation of the universalizing of political rights to instead question "the kinds of subjects who can speak in its name, transforming how religious differences are lived, recognized and contested."[7] Similarly, I have contemplated this differential power relation and trajectory of minority rights that require not just when and where the minority question is reluctantly (in the West) or forcefully (often in Islamic States or China, for instance) made present, but also when it is enthusiastically accepted, in the case of certain US-allied states like South Korea and the Philippines. In whichever scenario the question of the 'minority' might articulate, the aim had been to trace *not* whether the universal adoption of minority rights had been effective in curbing violence and creating order, but rather the life worlds both enabled and disabled by their emerging universal modality of governance.

[6] Mahmood, 17, 19.

[7] Mahmood, 33.

As Mahmood argues in no uncertain terms, the role of present-day missionaries appears as a stabilizing force in consolidating the 'global minority' as part of the "ongoing projects of Western hegemony" that has yielded the necessary question of their similar role in the Global South. As I have begun to allude to, their role in South America[8] and Southeast Asia as part of the tactics of Cold War bloc building has yielded missionaries stationed strategically to aid in the ethnolinguistic 'cultural' recovery of Indigeneity precisely to delimit the docile boundaries of national subjects and secure the neutrality of national temporality. Similarly, we might witness the role of Christian humanitarianism[9] across the transpacific. Tracing the function of Christian missions might conjoin the prolific acceptance of South Korean adoptees into the United States, that, at the same time aided in making mere coincidental, the sequestering and disappearance of Afro-Korean difference within camp towns, a condition that I have sought to recover as the very excluded grounds of the reconstruction of the South Korean national family emerging into prowess by the 90s.

In this sense, like Mahmood, I have also sought to consider the broader landscape in which missionary work and humanitarianism in tandem with the emerging expansion of a rights-based discourse have participated in drawing the liminal boundary between those deserving of protection and those who fall short. If only to reiterate this point, while the discussion of human rights today registers prominently as a mechanism to attend to the Holocaust in Europe that has extended partially to the discussion of the racial minority in the West, as Moyn reminds us, the universalization of minority rights also intended to instantiate the international right to religious

[8] Mahood Mamdani reflects on Christian rights activism in South America targeting the Indigenous as part of the US cultivation of drugs to fund its global proxy wars against communism, of which fundraising had occurred through "paramilitary mercenary outfits, Christian-right "ministries," and the secular political network of conservative lobbies," 110.

[9] In one crucial footnote in Yuri Doolan's "Camptown Origins of International Adoption and the Hypersexualization of Korean Children," Doolan writes, "It is no coincidence that there were so many religious organizations affiliated with the postwar recovery effort, and the campaign to adopt Korean children in particular. Useful for understanding this phenomenon is historian Arissa Oh's concept of 'Christian Americanism,' which she defines as 'vaguely Christian principles with values identified as exceptionally "American:" an expansive sense of responsibility and a strong belief in the importance of family. Although it was never fully articulated as a doctrine, American churches, the government, and the mainstream media promoted it, and it took hold in white, middle-class America—the segment that adopted the majority of the GI babies. Christian Americanism encapsulated the prevailing attitude that equated being a good Christian with being a good American," 379.

freedom,[10] a side to the discourse on 'minority rights' that often appears strategically separated from the concomitant rise of the former two in public discourse. Like Mahmood among a growing number of scholars, I have sought to delineate the fatal results when the two are ideologically separated—the so-called antiquated discussion of 'religious freedom' and missionary humanitarianism arising alongside the universalization of the racial minority of minority rights. For what we might find behind the legible figures of multiculturalism appearing within the transpacific frame are those who remain tethered to both slow and vicious death processes relegated to the hinterlands and in camp town exceptions, an exception that remains so through the strategic placement and role of Christian humanitarianism in making neutral the national telos towards modernity.

If the US empire emerges by "branding imperialism as a European problem that American culture... has solved,"[11] my attention across this dissertation has been to dwell on sites often overlooked amid the crisis of violence and purported resolve that has written the history of the Pacific. In other words, I have been interested in the Philippines as the early and overt site of US colonial occupation precisely as it mediates how the US strategically repositions its colonial occupation through this rebranding of empire into the neutrality of culture.[12] Now engaged in the strategic recovery of liberal differences as part and parcel of this "rebranding" of empire, the Philippines, as I argue, mediates one crucial site where new and imaginative settler colonial logics are being deployed through the recovery of cultural logics in the hinterlands. I have also been preoccupied in South Korea's monumental transformation into modernity-proper viewed from the elision of the Korean War and its aftermaths, the first large scale and arguably one of the most violent conflicts that instantiates the Cold War. The silent but strategic rise of this model Asian nation, viewed from camp town exceptions, might instead reflect the very Cold War intention of procuring model subjects of proper neoliberal subjection under US tutelage. Ultimately, I read this moment of cultural recuperation *less* as an arrival, but rather as a site of

[10] Moyn, 68

[11] Bascara, Victor, *Model Minority Imperialism*, xiii.

[12] I am reminded of Naoki Sakai and Hyon Joo Yoo's remarks that problematize the postcolonial national identity built on a "victimhood consciousness of an anti-Americanism" that reinforces the self-enclosed boundaries of the nation "in relation to which the atrocities of the global sovereign state are legitimated and authorized," 9.

timely displacements, where the violent contradictions of US Cold Politics appear to be resolved as liberal forms of race and gender are propelled onto the world historical stage.

As I conclude this epilogue, I want to reflect a little further on this shifting global terrain of the secular and the scene of multiply staggered arrivals on the world historical stage. I return to the early moments of US empire consolidating itself, ironically through the very staging of differences that silently places the US at the center of an emerging secular modern empire.

Securing the Secular Modern Time of US Empire

In 1887, Mohammed Alexander Russell Webb, an American journalist for the *Missouri Republican*, commenced his US consular post to Manila in the Philippine Islands. Having been introduced to Islam while stationed in Manila through the works of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the Indian founder of the Ahmadiyya movement, Webb would resign his post to embark on a two month journey from Singapore to colonial India to meet prominent members of the Indian Muslim community.[13] Perhaps also fleeing from the political unrest that followed the armed rebellion of the Philippine Revolution against Spanish colonialism just a year prior to his posting, Webb's retreat into "religion" as such, formally declaring himself to be Muslim by 1888, would mark him as one of the first North American converts to Islam. By 1893, Webb would cement his place in religious history, becoming the sole representative of Islam in the World Parliament of Religions, the first interfaith assembly instantiated on a global scale.

On the one hand, Webb's exceptional travels across Asia might index the potentials of interreligious exchange as an early precursor to the celebratory story of secularism that stages religion as a matter of choice in and amongst the free marketplace of various world religions.[14] Disengaged from the politics and the decolonial insurgency of the Philippines brewing right beneath his feet, Webb's retreat from politics into religion might suggest this unmediated success story of secularism. That is, if one could tame 'religion,' for that matter, the Parliament of Religions, outside the terms of its recognition and representation.

Nestled within and strategically scheduled around the World's Fair in the bustling city of Chicago to commemorate Columbus's arrival in the New World, the World Parliament of

[13] Webb, Alexander Russell. *Yankee Muslim: The Asian Travels of Mohammed Alexander Russell Webb*. Vol. no. 7. Maryland: Borgo Press/Wildside Press, 2007.

[14] Elizabeth Shakman Hurd, "Believing in Religious Freedom," 46.

Religions had been set in the backdrop of close to twenty-seven million visitors flooding into the city to consume the Fair's distinctly cultural representation of the world's nations. Set apart from and made into one subsidiary of the fair's main technological and orientalist spectacle, this framing of world religions might index the shifting terms of both national and religious governance. If at once the European philological tradition of identifying differences had been modulated within religious terms, this nineteenth-century shift towards secular modernity might indicate the violent task of dissociating religion from, thereby producing the now *secular* assumptions of world national cultures.[15]

Now armed with the norms of secular enlightenment, within a few years and in the backstage of empire-building, the US would inherit the Philippine colony in the aftermath of the Spanish-American War (1898). The 'Moro' Muslims of the Southern Philippines, who, having made a name for themselves in their resistance against US colonial rule,[16] would now be subject to being displayed in the 1904 World's Fair in St. Louis, Missouri. Photographed in prayer, or at times found engaged in "unapproved activities" such as trading "no less than fifty rifles and revolvers of the very latest models,"[17] the 'moros' together with the Igorot people, believed to be one of the most uncivilized tribes of the Philippines, would suggest the monumental task of civilizing, if not Christianizing that was left to be done before the US would endow the promised sovereign nation to the coming postcolony.

I stage this panoply of orientalist fantasies in the budding twentieth-century US empire to map the semblances of the once grandiose cultural exhibition that, though somewhat made a thing of the past,[18] still appear to govern the legibility and legitimacy of nation-state. By 1946, with the sacred task of civilizing now handed over to the Philippine postcolonial state, the

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[15] On the discursive emergence of the multiculturalism in the 1990s, Saba Mahmood notes the limits of liberal theorists of multiculturalism that depended on maximizing individual autonomy and freedom. As Mahmood adds, "These theorists were primarily concerned with 'cultural difference' and largely silent on the question of religious difference, often assuming religion to be a relatively minor attribute of "culture," 18. What then is the relation between religion and culture? How might it shift depending on the context, yet remain tethered to the primacy of secular culture?

[16] Here I am referencing the Moro Rebellion (roughly 1901-1913), resulting from the assumptions from the Moro peoples would govern themselves once liberated from the Spanish.

[17] See Thomas McKenna citing Peter Gowing, 86

[18] See my discussion of tourism and tourist sites in both South Korea and the Philippines that appear to mimic this World's Fair logic, now drawn inward in each nation.

nation's place in and amongst the civilized appears likewise measured against the emerging and shifted terms of secular culture and modern governance. Though staged ten years apart, the juxtaposition between Webb and the Philippine 'moros' and Igorots would set into motion the civilizing mission at work in the backstage of nation-building. Webb's physical departure preluding his symbolic return to the Philippines as a prototype of proper religious subjectivity, the twentieth and twenty-first century proclivities of racial and religious classification—now the Philippine Indigenous peoples and Muslims—would continue to serve as the site of disciplined ordering, and the abstracted grounds on which the postcolonial nation would join in the spectacle of world cultures and civilizations (see chapter 4).

I end this dissertation with this anecdote to draw attention the compounded and contested backstage of historical revisionism that I have sought to attend to across this project. Addressing the significance of the 1893 World Parliament of Religions, Tomoko Masuzawa notes the event as part of the broader nineteenth-century development of making religions discrete at the same moment Europe birthed itself into the neutrality of secular modernity. What Masuzawa also notes is the geopolitical shift occurring concomitantly, where the institutional center for pluralist discourse appears, not necessarily rearticulated within a European hegemony, but in the United States, one that has served as the backdrop of interrogating empire and its capillary function throughout this project. In addition to noting the flattening of differences within the terrain of world religions—Hinduism and Islam in India, for instance, that often neglects their staggered articulation bound within the new postcolonial state, or the necessary constraints on Judaism made as a mere precursor to Christianity as such—for Mazusawa, the coalescing of world religions made into discrete and comparable forms depended not just on securing native adherents willing to be recognized within this framework, but as much with the audience who at times were obliged to witness, perhaps begrudgingly, at this emergent understanding of world religions. Undoubtedly divided on this staging of Christianity within a leveled plane of religious pluralism, the reaction to Christianity's apparent waning dominance had also incited religious fervor that had occasioned the moment to study religious and indigenous differences on the metropolitan US stage to learn of differences precisely to convert, as missionaries embarked on

their civilizing Protestant missions abroad.[19] Webb's conversion to Islam might have also indexed the threat of religious conversion encroaching US borders, one that might have been reinforced through the presentation of the Philippine 'moros' soon, thereafter, rearticulating the centuries-old threat of Islam. Yet, while the assemblage of Christianity in and amongst other world religions might have registered as a threat to Christianity's dominance, this turn towards a privatized conception of religion—the right to convert—instead became the very means through which an international campaign proliferated relatively unnoticed as the very grounds that procured and staged liminal subjects of national historical recovery.

Beyond the legal framework of the human rights, I have also aimed to probe the 'human' of individual rights and self-empowerment left untouched by this emergent regime. Such a fatal conjoining of national history[20] with the untouched individual subject, preludes the nation as the sole adjudicator of differences that must necessarily "clearly demarcate spaces that it can classify and regulation: religion, education, health, leisure, work, income, justice, and war,"[21] as Asad reminds us. It likewise adjudicates the kind of religious discourse acceptable in the public sphere,[22] in other words, ones that promote civil societies and individual liberties, and ones that do not that also appears to bypass the strict Christian-Muslim divide central to my inquiries in the fourth chapter. As President Marcos himself claim Muslims ancestry amid the Martial Law regime as he engaged the "The War of Representations,"[23] my aim had been to likewise temper

[19] See chapter 8, "Interregnum: Omnibus Guide for Looking toward the Twentieth Century" in Tomoko Masuzawa's *The Invention of World Religions.*

[20] On the fatal conjoining of nation and culture, Asad writes, "The men and women of each society make and *own* their history. "Nature" and "culture" (that famous duality accompanying the rise of nationalism) together form the conditions in which the nation uses and enjoys the world. Mankind dominates nature and each person fashions his or her individuality in the freedom regulated by the nation-state." See *Formations of the Secular,* 193.

[21] Asad, 201.

[22] As Asad writes, the acceptance of religion in the public sphere appears to depend on "the kind of religion... compatible with modernity. For when it is proposed that religion can play a positive role in modern society, it is not intended that this apply to *any* religion whatever, but only to those religions that are able and willing to enter the public sphere for the purpose of rational debate with opponents who are to be persuaded rather than coerced," 183.

[23]"The War of Representations" is the title of a section in Thomas Mckenna's *Muslim Rulers and Rebels.* McKenna also cites Cesar Abid Majul who notes Marcos' claims to Islamic ancestry. "The culmination of this series of proclamations was the 1977 investiture of President Ferdinand Marcos himself as Sultan Tinanmuman (the Sultan Who Has Fulfilled the Prophesies) in a ceremony sponsored by the combined royal houses of Lanao," 166-167.

the common readings that denounce Marcos and his recourse to religious language as a political tool and clear abuse of power that appears to reinstate the secular norm. But rather, I highlight the political rationality of secularism that all modern states are bound by, including Marcos who had also appealed to and had been contingently bound by its principles amid the crisis of nation and bloc-building. As I have argued, this secular sensibility of the human-as-such together with the national telos mark differences in the hinterlands precisely to instantiate a particular telos towards the secular, the modern and the historical. If only to belabor the point, I end this project by highlighting the need to rethink the universality of the minority question *less* as a matter of a decolonial eventuality, but rather, as a timely formation and part and parcel of the contested backstage of procuring secular national cultures. For behind the legibility of 'culture' as our present moment appear neutrally and discretely made of, might be a history drawn up against the limits of staging those made worthy of protection.

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