

PERVERSE
MODERNITIES

A series edited by
Judith Halberstam
and Lisa Lowe

RACIAL CASTRA- TION

MANAGING
MASCULINITY
IN
ASIAN AMERICA

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INTRODUCTION

Racial Castration

I am an Oriental. And being an Oriental,
I could never be completely a man.

SONG LILING, *M. Butterfly*

Being Oriental: the antithesis of manhood, of masculinity? So declares Song Liling to the judge, to the law, under oath, and in a suit. The derobed Chinese opera diva/transvestite/spy attempts to explain to the pontificating bureaucrat how it is that Gallimard, the white male diplomat, can mistake him less for a rug than a woman: "The West thinks of itself as masculine—big guns, big industry, big money—so the East is feminine—weak, delicate, poor."¹ Such is the particular crossing of sexual and racial fantasy that compels Gallimard's colonial world order, a fantastic reality in which the *Oxford English Dictionary* would define *Oriental* as "submission," as "weakness," as "woman." Such is the fantasy that makes *Oriental* and *masculine* antithetical terms in Gallimard's universe, a place in which an "Oriental . . . could never be completely a man." In such marvelous narratives of penile privilege, the Westerner monopolizes the part of the "top"; the Asian is invariably assigned the role of the "bottom." For twenty-five years, *Aiiieeeee!* editors Frank Chin, Jeffery Paul Chan, Lawson Fusao Inada, and Shawn Wong have bemoaned the predicament of Asian American masculinity in similar terms: "It is an article of white liberal American faith today that Chinese men, at their best, are effeminate closet queens like Charlie Chan and, at their worst, are homosexual menaces like Fu Manchu."² In "Looking for My Penis," Richard Fung summarizes the phenomenon even more bluntly: "Asian and anus are conflated."³

Racial Castration: Managing Masculinity in Asian America explores

this conflation of *Asian* and *anus* through a group of cultural productions—literature, drama, and film—focused on representations of Asian American masculinity. Investigating the intersection of racial and sexual differences, stereotypes, and fantasies, this book considers from numerous angles the impact of gender and sexuality on the racial formations of Asian American men. Even more, it insists that sexual and racial difference cannot be understood in isolation. What the example from David Henry Hwang's 1988 Tony-award-winning drama *M. Butterfly* so incisively illustrates is the impossibility of thinking about racism and sexism as separate discourses or distinct spheres of analysis. Rather, Song's statement insists that racial fantasies facilitate our investments in sexual fantasies and vice versa. As such, they must be understood as mutually constitutive, as drawing their discursive legibility and social power in relation to one another.

Racial Castration—the book's title derives from my reading of *M. Butterfly*—brings together analyses of masculinity in Asian American literary and cultural productions with psychoanalytic, feminist, queer, postcolonial, and critical race theories. This book analyzes the various ways in which the Asian American male is both materially and psychically feminized within the context of a larger U.S. cultural imaginary. In his 1927 essay "Fetishism," Freud states that the man, traumatized by the sight of female difference—of castration—creates a fetish—a surrogate penis—and projects it onto the female body in the guise of a substitute object: a plait of hair, an undergarment, a shoe.⁴ From a slightly different perspective, fetishism describes a psychic process whereby the man attempts to obviate the trauma of sexual difference by seeing at the site of the female body a penis that is not there to see.

A psychoanalytic reading of *M. Butterfly* would seem, then, to insist upon an analysis of the drama through the logic of fetishism. While Gallimard's misrecognition of Song's anatomy indicates the white diplomat's abiding psychic investment in the protocols of the fetish, Hwang's drama also resists, reverses, and ultimately revises Freud's traditional paradigm by opening it upon a social terrain marked not by singular difference but by multiple differences. That is, rather than seeing at the site of the female body a penis that is not there to see, Gallimard refuses to see at the site of the Asian male body a penis that is there to see. The white diplomat's "racial castration" of Song thus suggests that the trauma being negotiated in this particular scenario is not just sexual but racial difference. As such, Gallimard's psychic reworking of fetishism challenges our conventional interpretation of the Freudian model by delineating a crossing of race with what is traditionally seen only as a paradigm of (hetero)sexual difference.

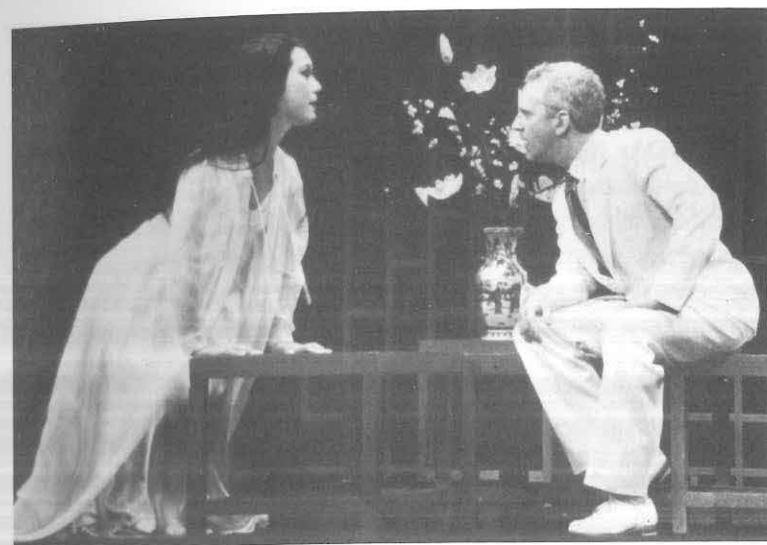


Figure 1 Not a rug but a woman: B. D. Wong and John Rubenstein in David Henry Hwang's *M. Butterfly*

Through this racial castration, Gallimard need not see Song as anything other than a woman. Through this distinct refashioning of fetishism, an Oriental "could never be completely a man." And through this elaborate exercise of mental gymnastics Gallimard can strive to maintain the tenuous boundaries of his own assaulted white male (hetero)sexuality (fig. 1). Hence, in Gallimard's orientalist world fetishism cannot be understood as a scandalous perversion of the social order. Indeed, fetishism is naturalized, functioning as a normative psychic mechanism by means of which a ubiquitous sexualized and racialized vision of the feminized Asian American male emerges and takes hold.

Racial Castration investigates the numerous psychic and material crossings—the various political, economic, and cultural conditions—that solicit our view of Asian American masculinity in these particular and constrained ways. Especially focused on the critical intersection of psychoanalysis and Asian American studies, this book examines the less apparent and visible aspects of sexual and racial identifications that come together not only to construct Asian American male subjects but also to produce against these particularized images the abstract national subject of a unified and coherent national body. From another angle, then, *Racial Castration* might be described as a theoretical project examining the numerous ways in which articulations of national subjectivity depend intimately on racializing, gendering, and sexualizing strategies.

Analyzing critical works by Freud and Lacan in relation to cultural productions by Hwang, Maxine Hong Kingston, Frank Chin, Lonny Kaneko, Louis Chu, David Wong Louie, Ang Lee, and R. Zamora Linmark, among others, *Racial Castration* focuses primarily on Chinese American and Japanese American texts. I do not, however, want these particular readings to be construed as a universal prototype for Asian American male subjectivity. Indeed, the experiences of Asian American men are not easily homogenized. At times, they are seen as analogous (e.g., as racialized, exploitable, noncitizen labor), but in other historical moments they are configured as singular (e.g., Japanese internment during World War II).⁵ As the individual chapters of this book illustrate, conceptions of Asian American masculinity are historically and psychically bound by the particularities of race, ethnicity, national origin, sexuality, gender, class, and age. I hope that the analyses I pursue here between specific Asian American cultural productions and particular psychoanalytic paradigms will serve as a modest albeit critical model for the continued interrogation of the commonalities that support, as well as the dissonances that qualify, coalitions among Asian American men.

Focusing primarily on the domain of the specular and the role of the imaginary, *Racial Castration* investigates both the psychic and the material limits circumscribing Asian American male subjectivity. Moreover, it undertakes a crucial examination of the numerous ways in which subjects, both mainstream and minority, remain invested in the normative identifications, stereotypes, and fantasies that maintain the dominant social order. It is, after all, only through Gallimard's sustained identifications with and Song's sustained investments in conventional stereotypes and fantasies of the Oriental geisha that Hwang's drama can unfold to its pitiable end. And it is only through a critical investigation of the production, dissemination, and reinscription of these sexual and racial identifications, stereotypes, and fantasies that we can begin to examine the ways in which Asian American cultural productions also help us to expose, confront, and dispute these significant representational burdens.

Psychoanalysis and Race in Asian America

From an alternate perspective, *Racial Castration* might be considered an extended theoretical meditation on the following question: can psychoanalysis be as useful to Asian American and ethnic studies as it has been to feminist and queer studies? Until recently, the answer to this query would have been an emphatic "no."⁶ Detractors of psychoanalytic theory have justifiably noted that, in its insistent privileging of sexu-

ality as the organizing principle of subjectivity and loss, psychoanalysis has had little to offer to the study of race or processes of racialization. Indeed, psychoanalytic, feminist, and queer theories traditionally have had the same conceptual blind spot: these are all critical discourses that emphasize sexual difference over and above every other type of social difference. Yet we need to ask whether (hetero)sexual difference is the only and primary guarantor of loss structuring our psychic lives. Is it (hetero)sexual difference that gives legibility to—indeed, sanctions the emergence of—our subjectivities?

Psychoanalytic theorists have been slow to consider the ways in which diverse social categories underpin, intersect, disturb, or disrupt their investigations of sexuality and sexual difference. Alternative markers of difference—race, ethnicity, class, nationality, language—are often uncritically subsumed into the framework of sexual difference. It is indispensable to incorporate socially and historically variable factors into what hitherto has been rather ahistorical and essentializing psychoanalytic formulations of the construction of subjectivity. This incorporation allows us to consider the ways in which multiple forms of difference underpin the genesis of subjectivity. How, for example, are racial boundaries secured or contested through symbolic norms as well as prohibitions on sexuality and sexual practices? How does the social regulation of sexuality produce—and how is it produced by—race? This type of critical inquiry advances an understanding of how psychoanalysis as a philosophical body of thought helps authorize and reinforce the (re)production of social hierarchies, such as sexuality and race, as the essentialized and naturalized order of things.

As our example from *M. Butterfly* unequivocally illustrates, we are at one and the same time, to borrow a phrase from Norma Alarcón, multiply interpellated subjects.⁷ *M. Butterfly* underscores the fact that sexuality and race, often seen as disparate or independently articulated domains, are mutually constitutive and constituted. Gallimard's management of sexual difference through his exploitation of the fetish is a management of racial difference as well. In this regard, the sexual effects of the fetish are also racial effects, a reiterated racializing practice. Sexual and racial difference are legible—indeed, they are derived—in relation to one another. Hence, *M. Butterfly* not only suggests that castration is always a *racial castration*, but it also insists that the traditional ways in which scholars in feminist and queer studies have deployed psychoanalytic theory to deconstruct naturalizing discourses of sexual, and in particular heterosexual, difference must be rethought to include viable accounts of race as well.

This constitutive crossing of sexual and racial difference is not just

found in Hwang's contemporary drama. Significantly, this crossing traces its critical genealogy to the psychoanalytic project itself. Any careful investigation of Freud's oeuvre reveals the numerous ways in which a racialized account of subjectivity is constitutive of the psychoanalytic project. From its very inception, psychoanalysis has systematically encoded race as a question of sexual development. As the privileged episteme of psychoanalytic theory, sexuality often comes to stand for—and serve as a displaced category of—racial difference in Freud's writings. At the same time, racial difference repeatedly operates as a proxy for normative and aberrant sexualities and sexual practices. Before moving on to a discussion of the status of sexuality in Asian American studies, I would like to illustrate briefly an emblematic instance of this constitutive crossing of sexuality and race in psychoanalytic theory: the convergence of two "pathological" Freudian characters, the figure of the primitive in *Totem and Taboo* (1912–13) and the figure of the homosexual in "On Narcissism" (1914). Commenting on the writings of Frantz Fanon, the black Algerian psychoanalyst, Diana Fuss writes in *Identification Papers* that "Fanon's remarks on homosexuality, while failing to challenge some of Freud's most conventional and dangerous typologies of sexuality, simultaneously question, at least implicitly, the ethnological component of psychoanalysis that has long equated 'the homosexual' with 'the primitive'" (155). I would like to trace explicitly the theoretical and political stakes of this conflation.

Totem and Taboo, a speculative treatise on the relationship between "primitive" sexual practices and "civilized" neuroses, provides a compelling account of the ways in which Freud's psychoanalytic project manages racial difference through a discursive strategy configured as the teleological evolution of normative sexual practices and "pathological" sexual perversions. Freud opens this volume by centering his discussion on the figure of the primitive. With the expressed purpose of tracing the "dark origins" of the contemporary European psyche, Freud writes in the opening pages of *Totem and Taboo* that primitive man

is known to us through the inanimate monuments and implements which he has left behind, through the information about his art, his religion and his attitude towards life which has come to us either directly or by way of tradition handed down in legends, myths and fairy tales, and through the relics of his mode of thought which survive in our own manners and customs. But apart from this, in a certain sense he is still our contemporary. There are men still living who, as we believe, stand very near to primitive man, far nearer than we do, and whom we therefore re-

gard as his direct heirs and representatives. Such is our view of those whom we describe as savages or half-savages; and their mental life must have a peculiar interest for us if we are right in seeing in it a well-preserved picture of an early stage of our own development.⁸

"Savages" and "half-savages," standing in close proximity to primitive man, can be observed because they exist *during* Freud's time. However, these racially other savages and half-savages do not exist *in* Freud's time. Instead, they are securely positioned as temporally other to modern European man. That is, these contemporaneous savages not only exist in an indeterminate premodern past from which present-day European society has decisively emerged, but they are psychically frozen in this indeterminate past.

For Freud, white European man represents civilized man, or what he suggests to be primitive man's unrealized psychic potential. In insisting that there "are men still living who, as we believe, stand very near to primitive man, far nearer than we do, and whom we therefore regard as his direct heirs and representatives," Freud implies that these present-day savage races have fallen outside the chain of psychic evolution and human development. That is, these racialized groups are savage (and not only primitive) because they are not (nor can they ever be) in any process of psychic or social advancement. Locked in time, they are preindividuals and maldeveloped groups, undeveloped and undevelopable. This temporal congealing of Freud's figure of the savage with the primitive is evident in his assertion that in their mental life we see an atavistic image, a "well-preserved picture of an early stage of our own development." If, for Freud, ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny, then the development of the individual recapitulates the development of civilized mankind not only through a specifically sexualized form but through a specifically racialized valence.

The teleological evolution into and the claiming of civility by modern European man thus rely on the presumed incivility of the figure of the primitive who underpins the "dark origins" of Freud's narrative of white racial progress. If the figure of the primitive attests to a certain analytic transparency for Freud, this transparency is the result of an unquestioned faith in the steady progress of European civilization. It is crucial to point out that the primitive's presumed incivility is symptomatized by Freud precisely as a problem of sexual development. Freud focuses much of *Totem and Taboo* on an extended discussion of the multiple sexual prohibitions against incest found in primitive societies. He concludes the first chapter by stating that it is "therefore of no small im-

portance that we are able to show that these same incestuous wishes, which are later destined to become unconscious [in us], are still regarded by savage peoples as immediate perils against which the most severe measures of defence must be enforced" (17).

Further honing what exactly constitutes the limits of the primitive psyche, Freud states that the primitive has no unconscious to speak of, that his thoughts and motivations are eminently one-dimensional, present, and transparent. Even more, Freud contends that what marks the primitive psyche as such, beyond all other distinguishing characteristics, is its propensity for sexual impropriety:

We should certainly not expect that the sexual life of these poor naked cannibals would be moral in our sense or that their sexual instincts would be subjected to any greater degree of restriction. Yet we find that they set before themselves with the most scrupulous care and the most painful severity the aim of avoiding incestuous sexual relations. Indeed, their whole social organization seems to serve that purpose or to have been brought into relation with its attainment. . . . It must be admitted that these savages are even more sensitive on the subject of incest than we are. They are probably liable to a greater temptation to it and for that reason stand in need of fuller protection. (2, 9)

Freud's racial certainty forecloses the figure of the primitive from the category of the unconscious. Unable to banish forbidden sexual impulses to this inaccessible domain, primitive peoples are thus liable to the horrible seductions of incest. This foreclosure of the unconscious is symptomatized precisely as the failing of sexual decorum, the falling into excessive sexual temptation, represented by incest. For Freud, the fact that primitive societies have scrupulously regulated their sexual impulses does not function as collateral for their social restraint or as evidence of their civil progress. Rather, he reads this heightened sexual regulation back into primitive societies as pathognomonic of their susceptibility to such temptations and consequently as further proof of their incivility.

Freud hypersexualizes the primitive, racialized body. What emerges most clearly from this linking of the sexually voracious primitive with the failure of the incest taboo, then, is the inseparability of racial from sexual identity. By invoking the "dark origins" of these primitives, Freud clearly connects the savage tribes under discussion in *Totem and Taboo* with a type of visual darkness—with a type of visual marking, that of being dark-skinned. Yet, the legitimate mark and proof of racialization is ultimately to be found neither in the register of pigmentation nor in

any system of visual authentication. To the contrary, this proof is established through Freud's depiction of the sexual practices and pathologies of primitive peoples.

In delineating the figure of the primitive in this particular manner, Freud thus links an explicitly psychosexual discourse with a Western anthropological tradition bound to eighteenth- and nineteenth-century epistemologies of European dominance and colonial expansionism. In "Notarizing Knowledge," David Kazanjian points out that the "argument that non-Europeans were pre-modern and atavistic was, of course, one of the most important justifications for many Euro-American colonialist and, later, imperial enterprises, because it allowed colonial and imperial exploitation to proceed under the guise of economic and/or cultural 'modernization.'"⁹ Indeed, *Totem and Taboo* might be seen as a paradigmatic treatise on this sanctioning of colonial exploitation through a rhetoric of modernization—a rhetoric that takes the specific form of the regulation of sexual practices and propriety. In this regard, Freud's psychological theories of sexual development express what Fuss, in *Identification Papers*, describes as one of psychoanalysis's less studied historical genealogies, that of colonial imperialism. Writing about Fanon's investigation of the neurotic structure of colonialism, Fuss states that "Fanon's investigation of the dynamics of psychological alterity within the historical and political frame of colonialism suggests that identification is neither a historically universal concept nor a politically innocent one. A by-product of modernity, the psychoanalytic theory of identification takes shape within the larger cultural context of colonial expansion and imperial crisis" (141–42).

Freud concludes *Totem and Taboo* with an expanded discussion on the question of the unconscious and the manner in which the thoughts of the primitive are directly transformed into actions and deeds. Excluded from the repressive forces of the unconscious—its exacting symbolic norms and prohibitions—their thoughts assume a kind of omnipotent pretension: "Primitive men . . . are *uninhibited*: thought passes directly into action. With them it is rather the deed that is a substitute for the thought. And that is why, without laying claim to any finality of judgement, I think that in the case before us it may safely be assumed that 'in the beginning was the Deed'" (161; emphasis in original). Alongside the argument that the primitive lacks mental complexity and an adequate moral framework is this more pernicious, yet fundamental, conflation of sexual perversions with racial difference, a constitutive crossing motivated precisely by the absence of unconscious regulation. This merging of sexual and racial difference not only subtends Freud's account of the progressive evolution of European society from its "dark origins"; by

embedding this racial narrative into his theory of the unconscious, the convergence of sexuality and race also comes to penetrate the central metapsychological structure of the psychoanalytic project itself.

Freud does nothing to problematize his observations on this privileged coupling of European racial progress with the advancement of normative sexual practices and the repressive standards of unconscious regulation. Throughout *Totem and Taboo*, Freud invokes his observations on the figure of the primitive with a positivist self-confidence not evident in his other writings. Freud's assertions that certain non-European savage tribes—the Akamba, Australian Aborigines, Barongos, Battas, Malays, Maori, Melanesians, Polynesians, Ta-Ta-thi, Zulas, and so on—have attained a level of sexual, psychic, and social development equivalent to that of the ancient ancestors of Europe are not based on firsthand observations. To the contrary, they are gleaned from a variety of secondary anthropological sources and written accounts by anthropologists such as J. G. Frazer, Anthony Lang, John Lubbock, E. B. Tylor, and Wilhelm Wundt. For this reason, Kazanjian observes, critics have often dissociated *Totem and Taboo* from the Freudian oeuvre proper as an unfortunate, but anomalous, foray into bad anthropology. In the same logical breath, the figure of the primitive is also disregarded as an incidental effect of this bad anthropology.

Although it clearly participates in a quotidian racist discourse of white superiority, the racial logic embodied in *Totem and Taboo* should not be dismissed as an aberrant example of a poor psychosocial analysis. Instead, the racial logic found in *Totem and Taboo* must be recognized as one that comes to inhabit and embed itself within the organizing structure of Freud's metapsychological theories—as a logic indicative of a problematic internal to the “proper” Freudian oeuvre itself. Attention to the bridging of this racial logic has far-reaching implications. It facilitates a more thorough understanding of the ways in which racial difference is both constitutive of and managed in the production of modern liberal subjectivity. At the same time, it forces us to consider the various ways in which race implicitly underpins the more explicit narratives of sexual development that permeate the psychoanalytic canon.

I conclude this section on psychoanalysis and race by turning to “On Narcissism: An Introduction,” which was published one year after the appearance of *Totem and Taboo*. In this well-known essay—a cornerstone of Freudian metapsychology on individual development from narcissistic to “proper” anaclitic love attachments—Freud initially isolates the figure of the homosexual as an exemplary model of a stalled and pathological narcissism. He goes on to elaborate his observations on narcissism in terms of a libido theory that he connects to the mental lives of

both children and primitive peoples. “In the latter,” Freud observes, “we find characteristics which, if they occurred singly, might be put down to megalomania: an over-estimation of the power of their wishes and mental acts, the ‘omnipotence of thoughts,’ a belief in the thaumaturgic force of words, and a technique for dealing with the external world—‘magic’—which appears to be a logical application of these grandiose premises.”¹⁰ Notions of the primitive—those whose mental thoughts pass directly into action—developed in *Totem and Taboo* return here embedded within the metapsychological narrative of “On Narcissism.” Unlike children, who according to Freud naturally develop out of their narcissism during the process of psychic maturation, the primitive remains interminably trapped within a narcissistic loop, locked in an atavistic temporal prison.

Freud concludes “On Narcissism” by observing that

[T]he ego ideal opens up an important avenue for the understanding of group psychology. In addition to its individual side, this ideal has a social side; it is also the common ideal of a family, a class or a nation. It binds not only a person's narcissistic libido, but also a considerable amount of his homosexual libido, which is in this way turned back into the ego. The want of satisfaction which arises from the non-fulfillment of this ideal liberates homosexual libido, and this is transformed into sense of guilt (social anxiety). Originally this sense of guilt was a fear of punishment by the parents, or, more correctly, the fear of losing their love; later the parents are replaced by an indefinite number of fellow-men. (101–2)

Freud's extension of the libido theory produces such a rich understanding of the ego ideal as the central mechanism of sexual regulation that “On Narcissism” ultimately concludes by expanding its claims beyond individual psychology and the Oedipal family romance to an analysis of group psychology and the emergence of the social sphere. The transformation of homosexual libido into heterosexual identification and esprit de corps—the turning back of homosexual desire as conscience and guilt—allows for the formation of a legible and legitimated heterosexual identity supported by parents and community (“an indefinite number of fellow-men”) alike. The formation of a legitimated heterosexual identity through the sublimation of homosexuality into a sense of custodial dread is, according to Freud, essential to the advent of “the common ideal of a family, a class or a nation.” This sublimation is governed by an exacting ego-ideal organized by a heterosexual imperative and its concomitant homosexual prohibition. In other words, the formation of the normative Freudian (male) ego depends upon the elimination of homo-

sexuality. Desire for the father must be transformed into a desexualized identification with him.¹¹

It is important to emphasize that Freud's formulation of modern psychic life and sociality through mechanisms of heterosexual production and homosexual interdiction are sanctioned in part by his initial observations on the narcissistic, stalled mental life of savages. However, while Freud's children have grown up to be functioning adults, the figure of the primitive has vanished by the conclusion of this essay, has fallen through, as it were, the cracks of Freud's civilized polity. Only the figure of the homosexual remains—remains, that is, to be banished. In "Notarizing Knowledge," Kazanjian notes that Freud's vision of this social formation "is not that of 'primitive peoples,' however, but one in which a paranoia like Schreber's [the repressed homosexual *Senatspräsident*] can exist and, presumably, can be resolved—that is, a 'civilized' social. Freud thus claims that modern, 'civilized' European political formations like family, class, and nation can be understood, in part, on the basis of the study of colonized subjects figured as pre-modern 'primitives.' Although they function as objects readily available to observation and interpretation, these 'primitive peoples' are excluded from the social formation they somehow inform" (104). As excluded native-informant, the primitive secures the fantasy of Freud's civilized European sociality. This is a civilized sociality that can seemingly exist and be (sexually) analyzed independent of colonialism and racial problematics. Constituting the external, atavistic prehistory of this civilized European sociality, primitive peoples, in their brief appearance on the scene of "On Narcissism," authorize and underwrite the analysis of homosexuals, children, and narcissism in its multiple psychic forms. Through exclusion, the banished figure of the primitive is thus positioned as the limiting condition of possibility for a psychoanalytic project that tracks the development of narcissistic subjects into functional, socialized, and neurotic citizens.

We might understand the proscription on homosexuality in "On Narcissism," then, as also coming to signify this expunging of racial difference. Freud's management and erasure of the figure of the homosexual are a simultaneous management and erasure of the figure of the primitive. As such, the sublimation of homosexual desire upon which Freud focuses in his concluding remarks to "On Narcissism" is itself predicated on the simultaneous sublimation of racial difference. The management and erasure of "primitive" sexual impulses are no longer figured here as the threat of incest but as the threatened return of same-sex desire. In this regard, a displaced racial otherness is made legible in the lexicon of pathological (homo)sexuality.¹²

In crossing *Totem and Taboo* with "On Narcissism," we witness a convergence of homosexuality with racial difference, a coming together of the homosexual and the primitive as pathologized, banished figures within the psychic landscape of the social proper. In this merging, the figure of the homosexual is racialized as the figure of the primitive is (homo)sexualized. To approach this issue from a slightly different angle, we come to understand that the troping of racial difference in *Totem and Taboo* as pathological sexual practices is reformulated in "On Narcissism" as the sublimation of a pathologized racial difference into a normative theory of (hetero)sexual development. It is through this management and erasure of racial difference that sexuality—specifically, a system of compulsory heterosexuality—gains its hold within psychoanalytic theory as a universal and ahistorical principle. Resisting this universalizing impulse, we must recognize that any discussion of sexuality within psychoanalytic theory not only signifies sexuality per se but necessarily accounts for racial difference as well.

Judith Butler remarks in *Bodies That Matter* that "it seems crucial to rethink the scenes of reproduction and, hence, of sexing practices not only as ones through which a heterosexual imperative is inculcated, but as ones through which boundaries of racial distinction are secured as well as contested. Especially at those junctures in which a compulsory heterosexuality works in the service of maintaining hegemonic forms of racial purity, the 'threat' of homosexuality takes on a distinctive complexity" (18). Butler challenges us to question the ways in which symbolic prohibitions against homosexuality and nonwhiteness secure the very boundaries by which subjects are granted a social legibility and cultural viability. In light of our present discussion, Butler's statement not only emphasizes the fact that a theory of heterosexual development cannot be easily dissociated from racial regulation but also suggests that heterosexuality gains its discursive power through its tacit coupling with a hegemonic, unmarked whiteness. At the same time, I would suggest, the "distinctive complexity" arising from the "threat" of homosexuality necessarily entails restoring to the psychoanalytic project its "dark origins": the return of the "threatening" racialized figure of the primitive, the return of race to psychoanalysis, and the return of psychoanalysis to race.

The investigation of the figure of the homosexual and the primitive underscores the theoretical necessity of further exploring the intersection of sexual and racial difference in psychoanalytic theory. It insists that we examine how one category cannot be constituted save through the other. It asks us to consider how the assumption of a normative social identity requires a heterosexualizing imperative bound to a hege-

monic structure of whiteness—how the assumption of a “pathological” social identity is circumscribed by a homosexual prohibition bound to a racialized position. How might we understand homosexuality and race to converge at the outside limits of the symbolic domain governed by norms of heterosexuality and whiteness? These questions are especially relevant to our investigation of Asian American masculinity. If Asian American male subjectivity is psychically and materially constrained by a crossing of racial difference with homosexuality—what Fung describes as the conflation of “Asian” and “anus”—then its relation to these dominant social norms and prohibitions takes on a distinctive critical cast and an urgent critical dissonance. What types of identificatory routes—what types of ambivalent psychic detours—are impressed upon the Asian American male psyche to bring it to this particular social destination?

My examination of Asian American masculinity in terms of sexuality and race works against contemporary claims that dismiss the applicability of psychoanalysis to critical race studies. Moreover, it resists modern theories of self that configure subjectivity as a type of essentialized sexual subjectivity. As Ann Pellegrini notes in *Performance Anxieties*, feminist (and I would argue queer) projects aimed at analyzing the complex crossings of multiple social differences are implicated, for better and for worse, in psychoanalysis. Pellegrini writes that the solution to this theoretical impasse “is not to abandon psychoanalytic categories or theory—as if psychoanalysis (and Freud) could be so easily bracketed from the narrative frame of modernity and postmodernity” (3). Instead, as I have been arguing, we must recognize that psychoanalytic narratives are not only integral to but also are integrated into our contemporary sense of self as modern liberal (sexualized as well as racialized) subjects. As one of the most significant intellectual and cultural influences of the twentieth century, Pellegrini concludes, psychoanalysis provides “patterns of order and interpretation for telling, retelling, and making sense of life experiences, and this is no less the case when the story told emerges in reaction against psychoanalysis.” What is called for “is the engagement of psychoanalysis on very altered terms” (3).

Psychoanalytic theory can help us understand the important lesson that sexuality is not natural—that it is resolutely cultural and constructed. We need to expand this valuable axiom into the field of Asian American and ethnic studies to insist that psychoanalysis also and at once describes, marks, and produces social differences other than sexuality. Feminism and queer studies—as both intellectual and political projects—cannot proceed without an active reengagement of psychoanalysis on these radically and racially modified terms. In this new form,

psychoanalytic theory might provide a rich set of conceptual paradigms for the investigation of Asian American racial formation in relation to specific epistemologies of sexuality and sexual development. To bring the discourse of psychoanalysis to the field of Asian American studies is to consider explicitly questions of sexuality and gender as they impact the formation of Asian American male subjectivity. As one of the premier theories exploring the relationship between gender and sexuality, and between identifications and desires, psychoanalysis provides a set of critical paradigms that helps us to understand not only the multiple ways in which sexual and racial difference intersect to configure the Asian American male psyche but also the significant material effects of these productions. To account for the production of race, processes of racialization, and the naturalization of racism in psychic terms would be to provide potentially transformative methods of exploring how Asian American men are managed by, and in turn manage, their masculinities.

Sexuality in Asian America

The broadening of the psychoanalytic project to encompass a serious analysis of racial difference is imperative. However, insofar as psychoanalytic theory and criticism must be reexamined in relation to social formations other than sexuality, I might also stress with equal insistence that the investigation of racial formation in Asian American studies must include a systematic consideration of sexuality. Scholars in Asian American studies have typically paid great critical attention to the ways in which Marxist analyses of class underpin the emergence of racial identity.¹³ Yet, to the extent that sexuality has been theorized in this field, it has often been seen as additive or adjunct and not primary in the constitution of Asian American racial formation.¹⁴

Moreover, while there has been substantial research done in Asian American studies—in both the humanities and the social sciences—on female subjectivity and gender, mother-daughter relations, and questions of feminism, less critical attention has been paid to the topics of masculinity and sexuality.¹⁵ *Racial Castration* extends important scholarship in Asian American and women’s studies on female subjectivity and gender to think specifically about the formation of Asian American male subjectivity and, in particular, homosexuality. In “The Woman Warrior versus The Chinaman Pacific,” King-Kok Cheung evaluates from a fresh perspective the historical conflicts between seemingly divergent agendas of feminism and heroism in Asian American studies. Cheung observes that “the racist treatment of Asians has taken the peculiar form

of sexism—insofar as the indignities suffered by men of Chinese descent are analogous to those traditionally suffered by women.”¹⁶ Hence, she admonishes, Asian American activists and critics must refrain from seeking antifeminist solutions to predicaments of Asian American masculinity. To do otherwise would reinforce not only patriarchy but white supremacy. Precisely because the feminization of the Asian American male in the U.S. cultural imaginary typically results in his figuration as feminized, emasculated, or homosexualized, we must vigilantly pursue the theoretical connections between queer studies—with its focus on (homo)sexuality and desire—and women’s studies—with its focus on gender and identification—in relation to the production of Asian American male subjectivity.¹⁷

In the field of Asian American studies, the recent work of Lisa Lowe helps us to underscore the disparate ways in which race, gender, and sexuality come together in various configurations to secure and organize a genealogy of Asian American male subjectivity. Rehearsing the lengthy history of U.S. legal definitions of citizenship, Chinese immigration, naturalization, exclusion, detention, national antimiscegenation laws, and legislative bans on the entry of Chinese wives into the United States, Lowe observes in *Immigrant Acts* that collectively these juridical practices produced a “technology” of simultaneous racialization and gendering of the Asian American male subject (ii). That is, for Asian American men racial identity was—and continues to be—produced, stabilized, and secured through mechanisms of gendering.

Lowe observes, for instance, that the rapidly industrializing U.S. nation-state in the nineteenth century required a cheap, abundant labor force for the construction and maintenance of a growing national infrastructure. The construction of the transcontinental railroad entailed the recruitment of over ten thousand Chinese male immigrant laborers for the completion of the western portion of its track. Commenting on the contradiction that emerged between the U.S. nation-state’s economic imperative to procure cheap, flexible, Chinese immigrant labor and its political refusal to enfranchise these male workers as full citizens, Lowe concludes that

[R]acialization along the legal axis of definitions of citizenship has also ascribed “gender” to the Asian American subject. Up until 1870, American citizenship was granted exclusively to white male persons; in 1870, men of African descent could become naturalized, but the bar to citizenship remained for Asian men until the repeal acts of 1943–1952. Whereas the “masculinity” of the citizen was first inseparable from his “whiteness,” as the state extended

citizenship to nonwhite male persons, it formally designated these subjects as “male,” as well. (ii)¹⁸

Lowe analyzes the juridical exclusions through which Chinese American male immigrant laborers were barred, at once, not only from institutional and social definitions of maleness but from normative conceptions of masculinity legally defined as “white.” In this particular crossing, let me emphasize that the nation-state’s sustained economic exploitation, coupled with its political disenfranchisement, of the Asian American male immigrant is modulated precisely through a technology of gendering not adjunct but centrally linked to processes of Asian American racial formation. Indeed, Lowe concludes, there is no social contradiction that is not simultaneously articulated with other social contradictions. In this respect, Asian American male identity is historically and increasingly characterized by critical intersections in which racial, gendered, and economic contradictions are inseparable. They are mobilized by means of and through one another. Put another way, it might be said that the acquisition of gendered identity in liberal capitalist societies is always a racialized acquisition and that the exploitation of immigrant labor is mobilized not only through the racialization of that labor but through its sexualizing. Acknowledging these mutual imbrications is to understand the social emergence of masculinity and femininity as dependent on these fundamental constitutive intersections and crossings.

From another historical vantage point, the high concentration of Asian American male immigrants in what are typically thought of as “feminized” professions—laundries, restaurants, tailor’s shops—further illustrates a material legacy of the intersectionality of gender and race.¹⁹ Collectively, these low-wage, feminized jobs work to underscore the numerous ways in which gender is mapped as the social axis through which the legibility of a racialized Asian American male identity is constituted, determined, rendered coherent, and stabilized. Popular stereotypes connecting past and present Asian American male laborers to these types of professions are succinct and compelling illustrations of the ways in which economically driven modes of feminization cling to bodies not only sexually but also racially.²⁰

Finally, important lessons from Asian American history teach us that the antimiscegenation and exclusion laws that interdicted, for example, the entry of Chinese wives into the United States (such as the Page Act Law of 1875) worked to produce Chinatowns as exclusive “bachelor communities,” which exerted great influence on questions of sexuality.²¹ The particular historical configuration of the bachelor society in-

sists that we extend our theoretical study of the intersectionality of race and gender for Asian American male subjects into the domain of homosexuality. Physically, socially, and psychically isolated, these segregated bachelor communities might easily be thought of as “queer” spaces institutionally barred from normative (hetero)sexual reproduction, nuclear family formations, and entitlements to community. Collectively, these material and social conditions provide a compelling argument for the relevance of queer critiques of the normative and the deviant in formulating questions of Asian American historiography and epistemology.²² Collectively, these numerous historical examples—of the legal definitions of citizenship, of the economic imperatives of professions, of the institutionalized productions of social space—link racial, gendered, and sexual constructs. Considered in relation to one another, they encourage us to understand that critical discourses on “deviant” sexuality do not affect merely those contemporary Asian American subjects who readily self-identify as queer, gay, or lesbian. Rather, discourses on deviant sexuality describe and encompass a far larger Asian American constituency whose historically disavowed status as full members of the U.S. nation-state renders them queer as such.

Lowe concludes her juridical critique of citizenship—its racial and gendered productions—with an observation on Chinese American male subjectivity before and after the Magnuson Act repealed immigration exclusion in 1943.²³ She notes that Chinese American male immigrants prior to this historical moment can be said to have occupied a “feminized” position in relation to the universalized national white male citizen and after this historical moment a “masculinity” whose “racialization is the material trace of the history of this ‘gendering’” (11–12). Lowe’s provocative statement insists that we investigate the ways in which the racialization of Asian American masculinity functions as an opaque screen. This screen obscures the complex histories of social organization through which categories of sexuality and gender gain their coherence and symbolic significance. From this particular angle, Asian American masculinity must always be read as an overdetermined symptom whose material existence draws its discursive sustenance from multiple structures and strategies relating to racialization, gendering, and (homo)sexualizing. In this regard, uneven national histories of anti-Asian discrimination might be described not only as being turned into the subject but also as being repressed and erased through the abstraction of that turn, the subjection of that subject. Disavowed histories turned inward are internalized in—and as—Asian American male subjectivity.

In our contemporary context, we cannot think of race as a fixed or

singular essence; instead, we must view it as a constitutive formation in which multiple social contradictions converge to organize a socially dominant view of Asian American male identities. In other words, the conceptualization of racial and sexual difference as if they were distinct categories of analysis is a false construction that serves the political power, economic interests, and cultural hegemony of a mainstream social order. We cannot isolate racial formation from gender and sexuality without reproducing the normative logic of domination that works to configure these two categories as opposed, independent discourses in the first instance. Thinking about the ways in which gender and sexuality are inflected by race, and vice versa, *Racial Castration* brings together two fields of study—psychoanalytic theory and Asian American studies—that are typically seen as disparate in the humanities. This unorthodox pairing encourages not only a more comprehensive analysis of the psychic valences and material dimensions by means of which Asian American male subjectivity is constituted and sustained but also a more adequate understanding of the critical importance of sexuality and sexual difference to Asian American racial formation.

Stranded Identifications

Considering Asian American studies and psychoanalytic theory together yields a more comprehensive understanding of the historical intersections of race, gender, and sexuality that produce a dominant image of the Asian American male subject in the U.S. cultural imaginary. In addition, a critical focus on the vocabulary of psychoanalysis offers a compelling theory of identification that allows us to delineate the specific psychic processes by means of which the Asian American male subject internalizes these dominant images as processes of self-regulation. While Asian American studies has not widely embraced or acknowledged psychoanalytic theory as a viable or necessary discourse, I would like to point out that throughout the historical development of the Asian American studies movement numerous scholars and activists have borrowed critical concepts and vocabulary from psychoanalysis to describe the psychological predicaments, social parameters, and internal dimensions of Asian American identity. As a result, these critics stress, and even inadvertently argue for, the need for a more in-depth understanding of the processes of identification that both produce and constrain the psychic limits of Asian American male subjectivity.

Various contemporary critics of Asian American and ethnic studies lament the field’s historical reliance on the social sciences and its exclusively materially based analyses of Asian American identity. These

critics argue that Asian American studies' sociological emphasis on the "quantifiable" aspects of racism curtail the ability of scholars in the field to confront the more immaterial and psychological aspects of race and racism. This criticism is certainly nothing new. It was precisely those "qualities which are incapable of objective management" that formed the basis for the Supreme Court's decision in *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) to abolish racial segregation in education.²⁴ Material considerations alone did not—and still do not—adequately encompass the full effects of race and racism, for, as the Supreme Court held in this landmark decision written by Earl Warren, they cannot capture "intangible considerations." Furthermore, while material considerations might be remedied, the Supreme Court believed that these intangible considerations affected the racialized subject psychologically "in a way unlikely ever to be undone." Yet, despite such passionate arguments, a divide remains between the psychoanalytic and the sociological.

Elizabeth Abel, Barbara Christian, and Helene Moglen, the editors of the recent *Female Subjects in Black and White*, point out that if "psychoanalysis has entered and been reconstituted within the academy under the aegis of the humanities, 'race' has been institutionally positioned as an object of primarily sociological inquiry" (5). I resist, along with these editors, any false opposition between the "psychological" trajectory of the humanities and the "material" emphasis of the social sciences. Instead, I argue that our conception of the real and the "reality" of race occurs not on one side of the psychic or on the other side of the material but at its very intersection.²⁵

Let me note further that from the early days of the Asian American movement scholars and activists committed to material analyses of U.S. racism stressed the need to explore the psychological dimensions of Asian American identity. In the 1973 preface to *Aiiieeeee! An Anthology of Asian-American Writers*, for instance, the editors emphasized the necessity of thinking about the ways in which "legislative racism and euphemized white racist love have left today's Asian-Americans in a state of self-contempt, self-rejection, and disintegration."²⁶ In this manner, the *Aiiieeeee!* editors insisted on an understanding of the complicated ways in which the external conditions of race and racism—material structures productive of contempt and rejection by mainstream society—are internalized by Asian Americans and transformed through this movement from outside to inside as feelings of "self-contempt, self-rejection, and disintegration."²⁷

In the example drawn from the *Aiiieeeee!* editors it is important once again to point out a continual and circular process of internalization and externalization, the ways in which internalized racial feelings of self-

contempt, self-rejection, and disintegration are reexternalized, transformed, and displaced in the process as a war between the sexes. In their obsessive focus on—in their incredible anger over—the feminization, emasculation, and homosexualization of the Asian American male, the *Aiiieeeee!* editors advance an untenable solution for the redress of these exclusions. They argue that the rehabilitation of Asian American masculinity depends on the programmatic reification of a "pure" Asian martial tradition. Paradoxically, this reification of a strident cultural nationalism, with its doctrine of compulsory heterosexuality and cultural authenticity, mirrors at once the dominant heterosexist and racist structures through which the Asian American male is historically feminized and rendered self-hating in the first place. Not to question cultural nationalism's heterosexist discourse of authenticity, in other words, reinscribes the same mechanisms of identification that support oppression in the first instance.

This heralding of an Asian American cultural nationalist project often engenders displaced masculinist attacks against Asian American women socially for their "treasonous" romantic filiations with white men and politically for their lack of racial "authenticity."²⁸ This argument, indeed, establishes the political parameters of the enduring debate between Frank Chin and Maxine Hong Kingston over authenticity and fakeness. This see-saw between psychic forms of internalized self-hate and their externalized material effects raises yet again the issue of the intersectionality of race and gender. That is, racial problems consistently manifest themselves in questions of sexual relations between Asian American men and women, with the figure of the Asian American homosexual entirely banished from this heterosexual landscape. Indeed, Asian American cultural nationalism posits a slippery equation of homosexuality instead of a virulent homophobia with white racist agendas. As such, the *Aiiieeeee!* group obviates the possibility of undertaking an antiracist and antihomophobic agenda at once. This is a dynamic that lends an uncanny racial valence to Freud's provocative statement, slightly altered here, that—for Asian American men and women and Asian American straights and queers—"love is a phase apart."²⁹

Writing in the same historical period as the *Aiiieeeee!* editors, but from the perspective of clinical psychology, Derald and Stanley Sue prefigure many of the political and social lamentations of the *Aiiieeeee!* editors in their concept of the "Marginal Man." In 1971, in the early pages of the new *Amerasia Journal*, the Sue brothers defined the "Marginal Man" as an Asian American male subject who desires to assimilate into mainstream American society at any cost (the psychological equivalent of the sociological phenomenon of the "Banana"). The Sues point out

that this type of assimilation is purchased only through elaborate self-denial on the part of the minority subject of daily institutionalized acts of racism directed against him. In "Chinese American Personality and Mental Health," the two write about the complex psychological defenses that the Marginal Man must necessarily employ in order to function within a racist American society. The Marginal Man finds it "difficult to admit widespread racism since to do so would be to say that he aspires to join a racist society."³⁰ Caught in this untenable contradiction, the Marginal Man must necessarily become a split subject, one who exhibits a faithful allegiance to the universal norms of abstract equality and collective national membership at the same time that he displays an uncomfortable understanding of his utter disenfranchisement from these democratic ideals.

Ultimately, the untenable predicament of wanting to join a mainstream society that one knows clearly and systematically excludes oneself delineates the painful problem of becoming the instrument of one's own self-exclusion. This psychological paradox comes to mark not only Asian American male subjectivity but also all minority subjectivities in varying degrees of severity. Here, as Fuss points out in *Identification Papers*, the work of Frantz Fanon is particularly relevant: "Fanon asks us to remember the violence of identification, the material practices of exclusion, alienation, appropriation, and domination that transform other subjects into subjected others. Identification is not only how we accede to power, it is also how we learn submission" (14). A fuller understanding of this model of conflicted identifications requires, I argue, a more nuanced psychoanalytic vocabulary of repression, disavowal, and erasure. In other words, the minority subject must, in the vein of the fetishist, simultaneously recognize and not recognize the material contradictions of institutionalized racism that claim his inclusion even as he is systemically excluded. This formulation provides a rich psychological model for evaluating the contemporary model minority stereotype (a project I undertake in chapter four).

In this respect, I am not interested in psychoanalysis as some urtext of universal human development, pure individual truth, or absolute descriptive reality. Instead, I am interested in the ways in which it might be creatively deployed to leverage a more thorough understanding of the psychic burdens and material costs imposed on the Asian American male subject who aspires to assimilate into mainstream society. What is psychologically required of the Asian American male subject who desires to be part of the dominant mainstream society? How is the Asian American male subject encouraged or coerced to see himself in a social order

governed by race and racism? How does he unconsciously or unwittingly contribute to the perpetuation of his already contested existence?

The circular conflict traced here between external and internal and material and psychic contradiction is not dissimilar to Althusser's description of ideology as representing "the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence," a theoretical elaboration of Marx's notion of the ways in which estranged labor is lived out subjectively as alienation and assimilation into ideals of the dominant class.³¹ In "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses," Althusser points out that it is on the level of the "imaginary," in the sense of both the psychological and the fictional, that the contradictions between the psychic and material are alternately negotiated, denied, and managed. Thus, for example, the ideology of American liberal pluralism posits an analogical identification between the individual and the democratic state. In light of American rhetoric of equality and freedom, questions of systematic exclusion are especially inadmissible, albeit widespread in all aspects of American political, economic, and cultural life. As we see through our discussions of the Marginal Man, the identifications of the particular, marked individual with the abstract national universal body require a continual, repressed recognition of difference and exclusion. While the formation of the minority Asian American subject takes place on the material terrain of disparate social relations, the processes through which the marked Asian American male subject is interpellated and stitched into the national fabric are sustained through the register of an imaginary whose force of seduction and lure of fantasy create a fiction of identification as seamless equivalence. This fiction of identification, Lowe points out in *Immigrant Acts*, "reveals and sutures the gap in the lived misidentification of difference as the same, [and] is responsible for the production of universalities, harmonies, and gratifications" (151).

While the *Aiiieeeee!* editors, the Sues, and Lowe all acknowledge the ways in which psychoanalytic theories of identification, and misidentification, might help us understand the ways in which Asian Americans live out imaginary relationships of equivalence to the otherwise unbearable contradictions of their everyday material lives, none of these critics pursues the development of a sustained psychoanalytic model. While the rhetoric of equality in American representational democracy suggests that all individuals, despite their particular circumstances and material situations, have equal access to political, economic, and cultural representation, the degree to which differential inequities continue to exist, particularly for the racially marked populations to whom that notion holds out the promise of national membership, is especially prevalent.

The color line, as W. E. B. Du Bois predicted at the turn of the last century, endures as the national predicament of this century.³²

More work needs to be done in the field of Asian American studies in particular and ethnic studies in general to elaborate and specify the imaginary aspects of racial identification, the ways in which the more immaterial, invisible, or unconscious effects of racism are internalized by the minority subject as a social system of self-regulation and self-domination. *Racial Castration* takes up this project by isolating, in the key Asian American texts it analyzes, specific moments of lived (mis)identifications in which the fantasy of abstract equivalence breaks down and disintegrates for the Asian American male subject. Moreover, considering Asian American male subjectivity not only in relation to gender and (homo)sexuality but also in terms of black and white racial and sexual ideals helps us to triangulate what is admittedly still a national landscape of Manichean race relations. This analysis of the racialization of Asian Americans—a group alternately seen as the most foreign, racialized, and unassimilable in the era of exclusion (the myth of yellow peril) and the most invisible, colorless, and compliant in the post-1965 era (the model minority myth)—in the greater landscape of American race relations remains crucial. Such an investigation provides a better understanding of the Constitution and the continual project of U.S. nation building on the uneven liberal capitalist terrain of a sexually and racially diverse society.

Impossible Origins

Psychoanalysis provides us with a compelling theory with which to explore how marginal subjectivities are constituted across lines dividing outside from inside, abstract from particular, group from individual, and public from private. It allows us to explore, as Homi Bhabha observes, what is private in the public and what is public in the private.³³ This idea underscores a notion evident in our discussion of the Marginal Man: the individual subject can never be a fully autonomous or private “I.” The I, in other words, is the result of hybrid mixing. Like Bhabha, Maxine Hong Kingston’s narrator in *The Woman Warrior: Memoirs of a Girlhood among Ghosts* also points to the impossibility of fully separating what is private and particular from what is public and intrinsic to society at large. “Chinese-Americans, when you try to understand what things in you are Chinese,” Kingston’s narrator asks in a famous passage, “how do you separate what is peculiar to childhood, to poverty, to insanities, one family, your mother who marked your growing with stories, from what is Chinese? What is Chinese tradition and what is the movies?”³⁴ The

quest for pure origins—for an unpolluted vision of Chinese tradition—compels Kingston’s narrator to question the dream of authenticity, the impossible quest for a pure self.

Taken together, Bhabha and Kingston underscore the impossibility of purity for the individual subject. The clear understanding, then, that Asian American male subjectivity is the hybrid result of internalized ideals and lived material contradictions that were once external allows us a compelling qualification to historical debates about authenticity—realness and fakeness—in Asian American studies. Moreover, it forces us to make an explicit distinction between subjectivity and agency in Asian American politics. While questions of subjectivity preoccupy the theoretical project of psychoanalysis, the identity politics of race are historically more “thoroughly examined in terms of domination and agency rather than subjectivity.”³⁵ They have, in other words, been predominantly motivated by questions of domination and agency as well as autonomy and self-will.

Our psychoanalytic discussions about the impossibility of purist subject positions warn us that the quest for a self-willed—an autonomous and transparent—subjectivity is an illusory goal. “Why on earth should we be on that impossible ahistorical quest for purist positions, that’s about as non-materialist as could be,” Gayatri Spivak contends: “Isn’t it autonomy that is suspect?”³⁶ We must understand, in other words, that the subject is not the agent, that the two are never fully in alignment, and that the notion of a pure political agency is itself questionable. “If we persist in reductively defining black subjectivity as political agency,” Claudia Tate suggests in *Psychoanalysis and Black Novels*, “we will continue to overlook the force of desire in black texts as well as in the lives of African Americans” (10). Departing from Tate, I might add that if we persist in reductively defining a “progressive” Asian American male subjectivity as pure political agency we will continue to overlook the vexing question of conflicted and stranded identifications in both Asian American politics and movements for social justice.

From a psychoanalytic point of view, the distinction between the subject and the agent might be usefully rethought of as the gap between identification and identity. In *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego* (1921), Freud suggests that collective political action pivots on the individual’s ties to the social group. To the extent that social groups are constituted through identifications between their individual members, through psychic bonds formed by the perception of common interests, ideas, and values, identification is a prerequisite for political action. Yet, as Fuss warns, our social “identity is continually compromised, imperiled, and one might even say embarrassed by identification” (10; Fuss’s

emphasis). Our psychic identifications, in other words, never quite align with our political or politicized identities.

In Asian American political struggles it is thus crucial that we do not conflate our conflicted identifications with our desired identities. To understand this distinction—to understand that identification is the mechanism through which dominant histories and memories often become internalized as our own—is to understand that we are all borrowers and thus not pure. It is to underscore that our social identities as well as our political intentions are not irreproachable, that political agency while a necessary goal must be continually interrogated for its slippages, thought of more as a variable process than a permanent position. To acknowledge that our identifications come from elsewhere—from overlapping and opposing communities—is to understand that our seemingly voluntary and self-willed political agendas are sometimes misaligned, compromised, or curtailed. As the subject can never be aligned with the agent, so, too, identity and identification never quite meet. All identifications are inevitably failed identifications, a continual passing as a coherent and stable social identity. Even the most orthodox of subject positions, finally, are ambivalent and porous.

To espouse such an understanding of subjectivity and agency, identification and identity, is not to place the politics of Asian American identity in the discourse of fracture—the discourse of injury and victimization that compels, as Wendy Brown points out, the identity politics of race and *resentiment* in the late twentieth century.³⁷ Equally important, it is not to place the politics of Asian American identity in opposition to poststructuralist theory. Rather, it is to think of the two fields in a dialectic tension. Too often debates in social sciences and humanities assume the position that scholars in ethnic studies desire to recuperate a naive notion of wholeness and a pure ethnic identity that has been suppressed by mainstream racism. These debates often configure scholars in poststructuralist theory as having moved beyond this naive position to deconstruct the constructed notions of a pure and whole identity.³⁸ Put another way, the latter is all about abstraction and philosophical questions of being while the former is about a materiality based in transparent notions of experience. To cast the debate in these terms is to ignore the significant work of past and present Asian American activists and critics, in both the humanities and the social sciences, who have theorized the question of the autonomy of the subject in relation to abstract conditions and material concerns. It is also to place entirely at the doorstep of ethnic studies questions of purity, wholeness, and self-will. Let us remember that these concepts also trace their genealogy to discourses of universalism, Enlightenment theories, and the legacies of abstract lib-

eral humanism that impose the burden of authenticity and essentialism upon racialized subjects even as they exclude and erase them.

To espouse an understanding of the distinction between subjectivity and agency, between identification and identity, is to understand structures of domination that inform and constrain our ability to act politically. We need to transpose this useful distinction to rethink not merely the limitations of our political agency but also the new political possibilities that this knowledge generates for the Asian American movement. At the very least, an understanding of the decentered subject allows us to interrogate the exclusionary mechanisms of our own identitarian claims.

To approach for a moment this issue from the point of view of queer studies, let us turn to Judith Butler's *Bodies That Matter*. As Butler writes of queer activism's desire to resignify a term of shame and degradation against its constitutive history of injury,

if the genealogical critique of the subject is the interrogation of those constitutive and exclusionary relations of power through which contemporary discursive resources are formed, then it follows that the critique of the queer subject is crucial to the continuing democratization of queer politics. As much as identity terms must be used, as much as "outness" is to be affirmed, these same notions must become subject to a critique of the exclusionary operations of their own production: For whom is outness a historically available and affordable option? Is there an unmarked class character to the demand for universal "outness"? Who is represented by *which* use of the term, and who is excluded? For whom does the term present an impossible conflict between racial, ethnic, or religious affiliation and sexual politics? What kind of policies are enabled by what kinds of usages, and which are backgrounded or erased from view? In this sense, the genealogical critique of the queer subject will be central to queer politics to the extent that it constitutes a self-critical dimension within activism, a persistent reminder to take the time to consider the exclusionary force of one of activism's most treasured contemporary premises. (227; Butler's emphasis)

How might we appropriate the premises of poststructural theory not to oppose and deconstruct but to strengthen and democratize the community we claim under the label "Asian American"? As we must examine the ways in which a resignified and affirmative view of queerness presents "an impossible conflict between racial, ethnic, or religious affiliation and sexual politics," those of us working in Asian American studies must also consider the consequential operations of our own ex-

clusions. As vital a term as "Asian American" has become in affirming a necessary political identity in the late twentieth century, it is imperative that we continue to examine the difficult definitions and tenuous coalitions of Asian American identity—the ways in which it is constructed and self-constructed, the ways in which it circulates and is sustained. If we cannot construct a political platform exclusively around the notion of a pure Asian American "I," we must adopt other strategies of community building, projects based on goals and participation, on becoming, rather than on exclusive notions of being. As the interrogation of the queer subject reveals a set of impossible identity conflicts relating to race, the interrogation of the Asian American subject, I have been arguing, reveals a set of impossible identity conflicts relating to gender and (homo)sexuality. What other exclusions might we interrogate?

Here we are back on the sticky terrain with which I began this introduction: the vexed crossing of sexual and racial difference in *M. Butterfly*. We must think of the political necessities for claiming Asian American identity. At the same time, we must also consider responsible methods of bringing together Asian American studies and psychoanalytic (and poststructuralist) theory to examine the ways in which their dialectic combination might yield a strengthened rather than a diminished sense of Asian American identity and community as well as Asian American coalitions and movements for social transformation. I do not think, in other words, that psychoanalytic theory and Asian American studies need to be thought of as mutually exclusive or opposed. In this sense, my specific focus in this book on psychoanalysis and the intersections of racial and sexual difference that form our conceptions of Asian American male subjectivity might be thought of as one particular study meant to open these larger and more pressing questions.

Managing Masculinity in Asian America

Racial Castration is a project at once descriptive and political: descriptive because it presents through psychoanalytic theory a method of analyzing the ways in which Asian American male subjectivity is formed, circulated, and sustained; and political because it is with this understanding that we are able both to reformulate and to transform the conditions under which we claim our identities and communities. In this manner, *Racial Castration* takes seriously the fact that we are both objects and subjects of racism, that we both manage and are managed by our masculinity. In other words, while we are continually subjected to institutional structures of material and psychic domination, we can also assert

our rights as racialized subjects to contest and to alter these significant conditions.

The book is divided into four subsequent chapters and an epilogue. Chapters one through four focus on particular historical events or ruptures—the building of the transcontinental railroad, the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II, the era of cold war diplomacy, and the rescinding of immigration exclusion and the liberalization of immigration policy from 1943 to 1965—that have worked to shape a mainstream perception of the Asian American male as what Frank Chin derisively calls the "emasculated sissy." These chapters dialectically pair canonical and noncanonical Asian American texts focused on masculinity with several traditional psychoanalytic paradigms: photography and the dreamwork, the mirror stage and the primal scene, fetishism and the signification of the phallus, and male hysteria. Throughout *Racial Castration*, I pay particular attention to the influential status of the image and the ways in which visual representations significantly constitute our sense of everyday reality. In our current age of technology, these images and representations assume a ubiquitous power in their now global dissemination and speed. This project insists that psychoanalytic theory can teach us useful methods of reading to understand and to contest the ideologies of the dominant image-repertoire.

In this sense, I am less interested in the new historicist approach to psychoanalysis that reads its theoretical discourse as an anthropological chapbook on colonialism. Rather, I am interested in analyzing, deconstructing, and revising several major psychoanalytic paradigms in order to proffer some productive ways to read the intersection of race and racialization with gender and (homo)sexuality. If these Asian American literary texts seem to call for a psychoanalytic frame of reference, I suggest, they simultaneously demand a revision of psychoanalytic theory along very altered lines of racial difference. As such, I isolate not only textual moments in which the Asian American male subject is coerced and held to certain (de)idealized sexual and racial identifications but also instances when these identifications fail or threaten to break down. Collectively, then, these chapters trace the psychic methods as well as the material practices with which we attempt to manage, misremember, or forget historical events configuring Asian American male subjectivity in ways that challenge the exceptionalist American ideology of liberty, its rhetoric of abstract equivalence, and its convictions of integration and inclusion.

Chapter one, "I've Been (Re)Working on the Railroad: Photography and National History in *China Men* and *Donald Duk*," begins with an

exploration of the relationship among Asian American masculinity, the photograph, and history. Pairing Maxine Hong Kingston and Frank Chin, two authors who initially seem to be unlikely critical bedfellows, I argue that both writers rework dominant narratives of national history through an emphatic shifting of the visual image. Photography's "reality effect," its status as transparent historical record and "truth," is insistently challenged. In *China Men* and *Donald Duk*, both Kingston and Chin critique the now infamous 10 May 1869 photograph taken at Promontory Summit, Utah. Commonly referred to as the "Golden Spike Ceremony," this photograph depicts the joining of the Central Pacific and the Union Pacific Railroads, often described as this nation's greatest technological feat of the nineteenth century. While more than ten thousand Chinese American male laborers were exploited in the building of the western portion of the Central Pacific track, not one appears in the photograph commemorating its completion.

For both Kingston and Chin, the irony of their visual project is this: there are no pictures of their railroad ancestors to be seen; "there is no record of how many died building the railroad."³⁹ Seeking a historical narrative for these men—fighting for those images that would "threaten to disappear irretrievably"—thus entails for Kingston and Chin radical new methods of looking.⁴⁰ Focusing on memory and the dreamwork—on the unconscious aspects of looking—Kingston and Chin teach us how to resist what Lacan terms "the given-to-be-seen" of the visual order so as to see something else: a history, an image, a historical reflection of Chinese America that should not be regarded as lost to itself. In its attention to the status of the visual image and history, chapter one not only begins, as it were, at the beginning of Asian American literary studies with a critical reading that brings together the matriarch and patriarch of Asian American literature; it also establishes a particular structure of vigilant looking that continues to be developed through the remainder of the chapters.

Chapter two, "Primal Scenes: Queer Childhood in 'The Shoyu Kid,'" explores the identificatory limits in Lonny Kaneko's short story of Japanese American male subjectivity during wartime internment. As opposed to the invisibility of the Chinese laborer during the nineteenth-century railroad building project, this chapter explores the hypervisibility of the Japanese American body during World War II. The need to fix and repeat hypervisible images of disloyal Japanese Americans—what Homi Bhabha describes as the paralyzing fixity of the stereotype—during World War II underwrote a national project in which media representations played an increasingly ascendant role. The lives of these Japanese American internees (two-thirds of whom were American citizens),

nominally recognized as citizens yet dispossessed of constitutional freedoms and personal property, find their specular correlation in the inability of the Japanese American male to find or create a jubilant image of self with which to identify.

Kaneko's short story follows the lives of four young Japanese American boys interned in the Minidoka concentration camp, one of whom—the Shoyu Kid—is molested by a camp guard. The story is obsessed with the psychic effects and seductions that normative white male heterosexual images exert upon the sexual and racial identifications of these young boys. Ultimately, "The Shoyu Kid" presents a dense psychological commentary on these Japanese American boys' inability to maintain a coherent ego and thus a stable image of self. Their frustrated attempts to change "face," to mimic and incorporate psychically those idealized male images of "heterosexuality" and "whiteness" to which they pay such great obeisance, resolutely fail. These images remain stubbornly exterior to them. Chapter two analyzes two fundamental mechanisms of psychic identification within the visual domain: Lacan's mirror stage and Freud's primal scene. Placing these theories in critical dialogue, I analyze Itchy's witnessing of the Shoyu Kid's molestation by a white soldier as a "sodomitical" primal scene. This reconfigured primal scene is one that ultimately encloses these young boys not within a normative and jubilant identification with heterosexuality and whiteness but within a profoundly negative identification with homosexuality and Japaneseeness. This is a historical condition that clearly results in, to return to the vocabulary of the *Aiiieeeee!* school, destructive feelings of "self-contempt, self-rejection, and disintegration."

Chapter three, "Heterosexuality in the Face of Whiteness: Divided Belief in *M. Butterfly*," the play by David Henry Hwang with which we began our discussion, shifts its focus from the formation of Asian American male subjectivity to consider the limits of conventional white male heterosexuality during the era of cold war diplomacy. The chapter investigates how symbolic norms of whiteness and heterosexuality coerce the material and psychic allegiance of Gallimard, the white male diplomat from France, to these impossible paternal ideals. Analyzing these patriarchal norms—what Lacan describes as the "Name-of-the-Father"⁴¹ in his essay on the signification of the phallus—in relation to Gallimard's utter failure to approximate them discloses the inability of even the most conventional of white male subjects to align securely their identifications with their desired identities.

Hwang's drama ultimately exposes the production of whiteness as a universal norm that attempts to project the burden of racial difference onto the Asian American male body. Moreover, it reveals how

this production of an unmarked and invisible whiteness is achieved only through its complicit intersection with a system of compulsory heterosexuality. Focusing on fetishism—perhaps Freud's most privileged visual mechanism for the management of sexual difference—I refigure this psychic category in terms of a racial castration, one demanding serious reconsideration of Freud's psychoanalytic paradigm along the lines of race. In the process, it becomes clear that Gallimard's appropriation of the fetish is meant to protect the integrity of heterosexuality and whiteness. Ultimately, the diplomat's failed attempt to arrest the trauma of (hetero)sexual difference commemorates the unsuccessful management of racial difference as well.

Chapter four, "Male Hysteria—Real and Imagined—in *Eat a Bowl of Tea* and *Pangs of Love*," delivers what is conventionally viewed as a female malady to the doorstep of the Asian American male. Given the long and formidable history of female hysteria, contemporary critics have been at a loss to account for a theory of male, or for that matter racial, hysteria. However, even the most cursory glance at Louis Chu's *Eat a Bowl of Tea* and David Wong Louie's short stories in *Pangs of Love* suggests the need to account for their male characters' recurring physical impotence through this locus of psychic trauma. How might we explain the shift of hysterical symptoms from the female body to the Chinese American male body? How might we explain the recurrence of Asian American male hysteria across two historical periods—the post–World War II late 1940s and the multicultural 1980s—before and after the easing of immigration exclusion, before and after desegregation and the civil rights movements, before and after the rise of the "model minority" stereotype, before and after the renewal of Chinatowns as dying bachelor communities?

Collectively these questions raise issues of sickness and health in relation to Asian American assimilation. As the state legally transforms the Asian alien into the Asian American citizen, it institutionalizes the disavowal of its history of racialized exploitation and exclusion through the promise of freedom, abstract equality, and inclusion in the nation-state. Placing illness and dis-ease, then, in the context of Asian American immigration, assimilation, and racialization opens up new ways of considering not only the limits of a teleological narrative of American progress but also the limits of Asian American male subjectivity in the age of citizenship and multiculturalism. Reworking Freud's theory of hysteria across lines of sexual and racial difference, this chapter considers the ways in which Asian American male subjectivity remains haunted by the enduring regulations of ghostly racial and sexual norms.

The epilogue, "Out Here and Over There: Queerness and Diaspora

in Asian American Studies," shifts the book's emphasis from the domestic to the diasporic. In the process, it serves to bring the project of Asian American cultural politics to new locations outside the immediate borders of the U.S. nation-state. The psychoanalytic readings I undertake in the four previous chapters focus largely on stereotypical representations and images of a feminized and emasculated Asian American masculinity within the domestic borders of the United States. However, the question of how queerness and diaspora impact new formations of Asian American identity must be explored in our increasingly transnational era of global capitalism. Might Asian American identity be considered more appropriate to diasporic discourses of exile and emergence than domestic ideals of immigration and settlement?⁴²

Beginning with a historical analysis of Asian American cultural nationalism's claiming of the domestic landscape through naturalized structures of compulsory heterosexuality, I argue for a new pairing of queerness and diaspora in a globalized age. Through a reading of queer diasporic immigrants in Ang Lee's *The Wedding Banquet* and R. Zamora Linmark's *Rolling the R's*, I suggest that the popular presumption in both Asian American and American studies that our intrinsic fields of inquiry are necessarily grounded in one location—limited to the domestic space of the United States—merits reconsideration through the lens of a more spatially and sexually encompassing theoretical framing. How might we theorize queerness and diaspora against a historical legacy that has unrelentingly configured Asian Americans as exterior or pathological to the U.S. nation-state? How might queerness and diaspora provide a critical methodology for a more adequate understanding of Asian American racial and sexual formation as it is shaped in the space between the domestic and the diasporic? What enduring roles do nations and nationalism play in the delineation of such a critical project? What new forms of community, identities, and representations emerge through a diasporic and queer challenge to the linking of home and the nation-state in an age of globalized sexual and racial formation?

Examining literature, drama, film, and other representations of Asian American masculinity, *Racial Castration* takes seriously the relationship between cultural production and the nation's political landscape. That is, it takes seriously the intimate connection between aesthetics and politics. Precisely because culture in our postmodern era of what Fredric Jameson has called "late capitalism" has been especially burdened with managing the contradictions of the nation-state, it is often on the terrain of culture that discrepancies between the individual and the state, politics and economics, and the material and the imaginary are resolved or, alternately, exposed.⁴³ The distance at which Asian American cul-

tural production is often positioned from the national culture constitutes it as an alternative location for political formation and resistance, with Asian American male subjectivity as an especially contradictory identity within discourses of national citizenry. Rather than constituting a “failed” integration of Asians into the American political, economic, or cultural spheres, this distance preserves the creative works of Asian America as an alternative site where, as Lowe suggests, “the palimpsest of lost memories is reinvented, histories are fractured and retraced, and the unlike varieties of silence emerge into articulacy” (*Immigrant Acts*, 6). Thus, we begin our critical excavation of Asian American cultural politics, a psychoanalytic project in which race and sexuality are integral and integrated, challenging and deconstructing the assumptions of Being Oriental.

ONE

I've Been (Re)Working on the Railroad: Photography and National History in *China Men* and *Donald Duk*

The replicants are perfect “skin jobs,” they look like humans, they talk like them, they even have feelings and emotions. . . . What they lack is a history. For that they have to be killed. Seeking a history, fighting for it, they search for their origins, for that time before themselves. Rachel succeeds. She has a document—as we know, the foundation of history. Her document is a photograph.

GULIANA BRUNO, “Ramble City:
Postmodernism and *Blade Runner*”

Ah Goong does not appear in railroad photographs.

MAXINE HONG KINGSTON, *China Men*

Reviewers of Maxine Hong Kingston's *China Men* (1980) and Frank Chin's *Donald Duk* (1991) typically point out the authors' attempts to challenge and rework dominant historical narratives that exclude Chinese American men.¹ David Leiwei Li, for instance, notes that “Kingston

pressing question of how in Japanese American male childhood during wartime internment it could possibly be otherwise.

Yet Sedgwick's analysis neglects the fact that in the war on effeminate boys some racialized communities are indeed produced precisely as feminized, homosexualized, queer. In "The Shoyu Kid," the heterosexual stability of the patriotic white American male icon emerges only in contrast to the resolute linking of queerness with Japaneseeness. In this manner, normative masculine self-representation constitutively depends upon the sexual "perversion" and pathologizing of the racialized masculine subject. The solution to such warfare on a racialized and effeminated Japanese American childhood, however, cannot be to reify or aspire toward those normative masculinized images underwritten by mainstream society—a version of Frank Chin and his *Aiiieeeee!* group's political prescription. We cannot place our psychic hopes in this type of so-called limited, positive imagery; we cannot place our political hopes in the extension of masculine, patriarchal privileges to these Japanese American youngsters. In the final analysis, we must not conserve but proliferate the idealized images of the screen.

The struggle to recompose the psychic and material body of the racialized masculine subject can often result in the ascribing of conservative norms to emancipatory political projects. For instance, Fanon—in reconstructing the black male body that has "burst apart"—has often been criticized by feminist and queer commentators for building his incisive critique of French colonialism on the reassertion of woman as lack and on the linking of racism with homosexuality rather than homophobia.⁵⁵ Countering stereotypes of Asian American male subjectivity as the conflation of "Asian" and "anus" by valorizing whiteness and heterosexuality would not only serve to reinforce the racist and homophobic logic that produces these limited and debilitating roles from the onset but also sanction the racist and homophobic logic that understands Japanese American internment as having been both legitimate and necessary in the first place. Psychic salvation for the Asian American male cannot be the monopoly of a masculinist compulsory heterosexuality. To accept this racial and (hetero)sexual logic—to aspire to the presumed material rewards it offers—amount to what Angela Y. Davis calls "accepting a bribe"—an illusory compensation for powerlessness.⁵⁶ Redeeming Japanese American queer childhood does not require, then, material and psychic strategies to maintain the dominant order of things. On the contrary, it requires renewed material and psychic challenges to the structures of domination altogether.

THREE

Heterosexuality in the Face of Whiteness: Divided Belief in *M. Butterfly*

White is a color—it is a pastel. . . .

In a place where it doesn't belong, on Michael,
that same pastel remains a flaming signifier.

EVE SEDGWICK, "White Glasses"

For some time now, critics in gender, ethnic, queer, and cultural studies have stressed the importance of giving disenfranchised subjects—women, people of color, gays, and lesbians—"voices," full subjectivities, visibilities in the face of invisibilities.¹ In my discussion of photography and national history in *China Men* and *Donald Duk*, I noted the great psychic and material difficulties encountered by marginal Asian American male subjects who attempt to emerge from a domain of silence and invisibility into an order of speech and visibility. However, this emergence into history, as it were, is only one part of a larger cultural politics of difference. My analysis of the hypervisibility of the young Japanese American male during wartime internment in "The Shoyu Kid" expands my critique of the discursive mechanisms by means of which Asian Americans continue to be rendered speechless and invisible despite their appearance in the visual field. Chapter two takes into consideration the particular historical conditions of World War II to explore the psychic constraints under which Japanese American male subjectivity is allowed to emerge within the realm of the visible. Chapter two concludes with a caveat on the false promises of investing in a dominant ideology of heterosexuality and whiteness, the psychic costs of valorizing this hegemonic pairing instead of making a concerted attempt to contest and dis-

mantle it. The present chapter extends the critique of heterosexuality and whiteness from yet another perspective. Reading *M. Butterfly* allows us to discover the costs of heterosexuality and whiteness not just from the Asian American male's point of view but from that of the putatively normative, straight white male.

Kobena Mercer provides an initial entry point for this investigation by insisting that we initiate a critical examination of whiteness and its strategic occlusion from the visible domain. For "all our rhetoric about 'making ourselves visible,'" he asserts, "the real challenge in the new cultural politics of difference is to make 'whiteness' visible for the first time, as a culturally constructed ethnic identity historically contingent upon the disavowal and violent denial of difference."² Mercer's intervention is significant. Whiteness—in its refusal to be named and its refusal to be seen—represents itself as *the* universal and unmarked standard, a ubiquitous norm from which all else and all others are viewed as a regrettable deviation.

I would like to take up Mercer's challenge to make whiteness visible, then, by investigating not only its conditions of possibility but its moments of failure. Consider the remarkable closing scene of David Henry Hwang's Tony-Award-winning drama *M. Butterfly*, which takes place moments before the demise of the French diplomat. Donning the robes of the forsaken Japanese geisha Cio-Cio-San (memorialized in Puccini's 1904 opera *Madama Butterfly* and its numerous antecedents),³ René Gallimard commits seppuku, but only after uttering these final words: "There is a vision of the Orient that I have. Of slender women in chong sams and kimonos who die for the love of unworthy foreign devils. Who are born and raised to be the perfect women. Who take whatever punishment we give them, and bounce back, strengthened by love, unconditionally. It is a vision that has become my life."⁴ I read this final scene of the drama in contrast to the unveiling of opera diva Song Liling's penis at the opening of act III. Gallimard is so committed to Puccini's *Madama Butterfly* fantasy of "the submissive Oriental woman and the cruel white man" (17) that it is impossible for him to imagine an alternative outcome to this dreary story of heterosexual domination and white supremacy. Indeed, because he cannot relinquish his colonial fantasy of "slender women in chong sams and kimonos who die for the love of unworthy foreign devils," the diplomat must "turn somersaults" (60) in order to protect the psychic integrity of his farce.

Vigilant in his desire to maintain this particular vision of a submissive Orient, Gallimard is forced to counter the disrobed diva with a transvesting act of his own: now that Song is publicly the man, Gallimard must publicly become the woman. "Get away from me!" he orders Song

petulantly. "Tonight, I've finally learned to tell fantasy from reality. And, knowing the difference, I choose fantasy" (90). Rejecting the psychoanalytic axiom that posits a constitutive relationship between fantasy and reality—that what is most real to the subject is fantasy—the diplomat refuses to face the real world effects of his geisha dream. He assumes the sartorial role of Cio-Cio-San and thus recedes into the imagined realm of his *Madama Butterfly* fantasy by "straightening" his relationship to the exposed Chinese man. He returns it once again, in the realm of his imagination and in the domain of the visible, to a normative heterosexual union. This concluding scene is of course an ironic rendering of Puccini's dictum that "death with honor is better than life . . . life with dishonor" (92; Hwang's ellipsis), for the price of Gallimard's phantasmatic sartorial conversion—the death of the white man—is materially high. Gallimard commits suicide, but he dies with his orientalist fantasy intact and, most importantly, as a nominal member of the acceptably heterosexual community.

I would like to isolate a striking visual detail emphasized in this concluding scene both in Hwang's stage version and in David Cronenberg's film adaptation of the drama. Before Gallimard dons his wig and kimono, he carefully—even methodically—applies a thick layer of white makeup to his face, appearing literally in whiteface (figs. 8 and 9). Several commentators have read this cosmetic transformation as a faithful rendering of the aesthetic protocols of Japanese theater, relating Gallimard's application of whiteface to the traditional makeup of the *onnagata* in Kabuki theater.⁵ Majorie Garber, however, expands the possible interpretations of this critical moment by analyzing the diplomat's bad makeup job in the confluence of various ethnic channels:

The whiteness of the makeup is traditional in Japanese theater as a sign of the ideal white complexion of the noble, who can afford to keep out of the sun, and the pallor of the protected young woman (or trained geisha) even today. We might note that in *Chinese* opera face-painting participates in an entirely different sign system, in which white on an actor's face symbolized treachery, as red does loyalty, yellow, piety, and gold, the supernatural. In this story of spies and treason the Chinese and Japanese significations are at odds with one another, and Song has already warned Gallimard not to conflate the two.⁶

Although Garber's analysis of this scene largely focuses on Gallimard's egregious misreading of disparate East Asian cultural aesthetics—the conflation of Chinese chong sams and Japanese kimonos—she subsequently appends a final and provocative interpretation: "The white



Figures 8 and 9 Heterosexuality in the face of whiteness: Jeremy Irons in David Cronenberg's *M. Butterfly* (Warner Brothers)

makeup has yet another significance, since [Gallimard] is continually described as a ‘white man’ throughout the play, even in France, where ‘There’re white men all around’” (244).⁷ Garber proffers a triple reading of Gallimard’s bad makeup job through this condensed cultural survey, but I would like to elaborate on her final point: Gallimard is continually described by Song as a white man; the visible face underscoring Gallimard’s failures, demise, and swan song appears to us literally as a white face; the Orientalist and heterosexist fantasy for which Gallimard ultimately dies is achieved only in the face of whiteness.

Judith Butler insists that we must begin to theorize the compulsory regimes of the symbolic order—the numerous interpellations and coercive prohibitions by which individuals are rendered legible as subjects—through the lens not only of (hetero)sexual but also racial difference. “The symbolic—that register of regulatory ideality—is also and always a racial industry, indeed, the reiterated practice of racializing interpellations.” She continues:

Rejecting those models of power which would reduce racial differences to the derivative effects of sexual difference (as if sexual difference were not only autonomous in relation to racial articulation but somehow more prior, in a temporal or ontological sense), it seems crucial to rethink the scenes of reproduction and, hence, of sexing practices not only as ones through which a heterosexual imperative is inculcated, but as ones through which boundaries of racial distinction are secured as well as contested. Especially at those junctures in which a compulsory heterosexuality works in the service of maintaining hegemonic forms of racial purity, the “threat” of homosexuality takes on a distinctive complexity.⁸

Butler asks us to consider how sexual and racial norms intersect to produce viable and recognizable subject positions and to consider how the homosexual and racial prohibitions that underpin the foundations of the symbolic order interdict a spectrum of repudiated social identities. If the symbolic order is always also a set of racializing norms, it becomes impossible to speak of the heterosexual matrix apart from racial distinctions. The articulation of such a “colorless” category would assume a priori the ontological presumption of sexual over racial difference while denying race any constitutive role in the formation of a legible subjectivity.

Moreover, the assumed primacy in this model of the sexual over the racial would imply that sexual difference is in effect “white sexual difference, and that whiteness is not a form of racial difference.”⁹ In producing whiteness as an unnamed and invisible category, the symbolic order

projects the burden of racial difference onto those bodies outside a universalizing discourse of whiteness. In other words, if a symbolic system of compulsory heterosexuality depends on the occlusion of whiteness as a racial category—drawing its discursive potency in and through this concealed alignment—then it is imperative that we insist on making whiteness emphatically visible as a culturally constructed and racialized category.

Furthermore, we must begin to consider the multiple ways in which this universalizing of an unmarked whiteness works to authorize at one and the same time the naturalizing power of heterosexuality. This attention to the discursive erasure of whiteness is a necessary amendment to the critical ways in which feminism and queer studies have hitherto framed issues of gender and sexuality. To deconstruct a system of compulsory heterosexual privilege (as psychoanalytic critics in feminist and queer studies have worked so hard to do) without considering racial difference—to fail to understand whiteness through the perspective of racial formation—would be to concede from the very outset that “whiteness . . . is yet another power that need not speak its name.”¹⁰ It would in effect allow the discursive pretensions of whiteness as a universalizing and unmarked racial category to continue unchecked and unqualified.

Granted that the consolidation of the symbolic order is contingent upon unstated norms of heterosexuality and whiteness, as well as prohibitions against homosexuality and nonwhiteness, we must note that this consolidation has functioned largely as a regulatory standard hitherto invisible within the field of the visible and unremarked in the protocols of social discourse. In their “ideal” form, heterosexuality and whiteness maintain their compulsory power by remaining veiled and undisclosed. Furthermore, they work in collusion, drawing their discursive force in and through their smooth alignment. If, as Eve Sedgwick says of her friend Michael Lynch—a gay, white male—whiteness somehow “doesn’t belong” on him, remaining a “flaming signifier,” it is because the crucial and mandatory combination of heterosexuality and whiteness has been violated and transgressed.¹¹ In his “flaming” queerness, the whiteness of Michael Lynch is suddenly brought into relief, rendered visible and disconcerting.

Consequently, I read Gallimard’s phantasmatic sartorial conversion as a frantic attempt to maintain the normative sexual and racial stipulations of the symbolic order, as a desperate effort to maintain heterosexuality in the face of whiteness. Unable to occupy the position of the domineering European imperialist following Song’s morphological unveiling, Gallimard is so invested in heterosexuality and whiteness that he ultimately elects to occupy the position of the “other” so as to guarantee

the structural integrity of his *Madama Butterfly* fantasy. In a grave sense, then, the symbolic appeals of heterosexuality that impel the death of—and Gallimard’s death as—Cio-Cio-San can be realized only in a white face. And it is, of course, this dual presumption of a (hetero)sexual and racial positioning that the French diplomat vigilantly struggles to maintain but fails miserably to preserve.

Gallimard’s self-sacrifice must finally be read not only as a visible failure of heterosexuality and whiteness but as a hyperbolic illustration of the homosexual and racial anxieties that underpin the abject borders of the symbolic domain. Nevertheless, the overwhelming majority of commentaries generated by *M. Butterfly* do not account for this complex nexus of (homo)sexual and racial regulation. They focus exclusively on Song Liling’s dramatic male to female crossing rather than on the possibility of Gallimard’s passing between an acceptable white male heterosexuality and an abjected white male homosexuality. *New York Times* theater critic Frank Rich, for instance, claims that Hwang is not “overly concerned with how the opera singer . . . pulled his hocus-pocus in the boudoir.”¹² Rich dismisses the possibility that Gallimard’s blunder over Song’s anatomy might be explored through the lens of a closeted or self-denying homosexuality. Moira Hodgson, in her summary of the drama for the *Nation*, emphatically concurs with Rich’s latter point: “Hwang never gets to the bottom of Gallimard’s character. He doesn’t question whether the Foreign Service officer knew that Song Liling was in fact a man (‘It was dark and she was very modest’), nor does he make him into a self-deluded homosexual.”¹³ Collectively, much of this criticism is so thoroughly transfixed by *M. Butterfly*’s bizarre (homo)sexual story that the drama’s incisive racial critique is in danger of vanishing.

Furthermore, when race is discussed, commentators by and large refuse to investigate the (hetero)sexual limits of white male subjectivity. Instead, they focus their critical attention solely on the “multicultural” issues of the drama: Asian American political agendas, assimilation, the model minority myth, and artistic license.¹⁴ John Simon’s bitter dismissal of *M. Butterfly* in *New York Magazine*, for instance, attacks Hwang as the “son of affluent Chinese Americans [who] has scores to settle with both America and the new China, the former for making him embarrassed about his ethnicity, the latter for repudiating his bourgeois status and Armani suits.”¹⁵ Deflecting his attention away from the inherent qualities of the drama itself, Simon dislodges Hwang from the position of the disembodied artist. That is, Simon refuses Hwang the site of liberal subjectivity and artistic license, conflating the playwright with his opera diva. Hence, Simon’s review largely focuses on the motivations and failures of Hwang as a frustrated, self-loathing Asian Ameri-

can dramatist, insisting instead on the “burden of liveness” for this artist of color. Ironically, while Simon conflates Hwang with Song, he resolutely disidentifies with Gallimard’s cognitive inadequacies and avoids giving any serious consideration to the failures of conventional white masculinity that inform the play.¹⁶

These asymmetries remain unchallenged by critics, even though Song bluntly reminds Gallimard of these racial and sexual inequities from the very beginning of the play. At their first encounter, the diva challenges the diplomat’s enthusiastic praise of his performance as Cio-Cio-San, responding with a sharp rejoinder: “Consider it this way: what would you say if a blonde homecoming queen fell in love with a short Japanese businessman? He treats her cruelly, then goes home for three years, during which time she prays to his picture and turns down marriage from a young Kennedy. Then, when she learns he has remarried, she kills herself. Now, I believe you would consider this girl to be a deranged idiot, correct? But because it’s an Oriental who kills herself for a Westerner—ah!—you find it beautiful” (17). Song’s *Madama Butterfly* parable—his cultural inversion of spurious sexual and racial asymmetries—seems to be a critical point lost on both Gallimard and his commentators.¹⁷

Hwang’s drama allows us to consider the methods through which symbolic norms and prohibitions coerce Gallimard’s phantasmatic allegiance to ideals of heterosexuality and whiteness. *M. Butterfly* ultimately exposes the production of whiteness as a universal norm that projects the burden of racial difference onto the Asian (American) male body. Moreover, it reveals how this production of an unmarked and invisible whiteness is achieved only through its complicit intersection with a system of compulsory heterosexuality. Focusing on fetishism—perhaps Freud’s most privileged mechanism for the management of difference—I refigure this psychic category in terms of a “racial castration,” one that demands serious reconsideration of Freud’s paradigm along very altered lines of race.

What exactly is the “enchanted space” of the prison cell, ruled by the “work of fairies,” that Gallimard describes in his opening monologue (2)? What are the queer and racial phantasms that order and control the white diplomat’s psychic blunders and material failures? I turn my critical attentions to Gallimard in order to consider how for more than twenty years he could have been ignorant of Song’s anatomical sex. “Did Monsieur Gallimard know you were a man?” (81) persists the officious judge, swinging the all too familiar juridical gavel as he interrogates the Oriental diva. In his desire to categorize and stabilize the foundational terms of the symbolic order for which he is a citationary mouthpiece, the

judge’s obsessive question (Hodgson’s question, too) emerges as the central concern of the drama. Yet psychoanalysis would tell us that there is no clear-cut answer to the judge’s query, that to know and not know, that to *not see* what is apparently there for us to see, is a perfectly explicable condition in the realm of the psyche.

“An Almost Artful Dealing with Reality”

In “The Dissection of the Psychical Personality” (1933), Freud provides a visual map of the structural relations between the ego, the id, and the superego and the psychical territories of the repressed, the unconscious, the preconscious, and the perceptual-conscious systems.¹⁸ This “final topography” is a structural elaboration of a comparatively schematic “late topography” developed in *The Ego and the Id*. In contrast to the late topography, in which the ego is seen to occupy a less capacious area of the psyche, the final topography illustrates a definitive expansion of the ego’s psychic territory as it comes to occupy areas in the preconscious, the unconscious, and the territory of the repressed. As such, the final topography is notable because it visualizes a point repeatedly underscored in *The Ego and the Id*: a “part of the ego, too—and Heaven knows how important a part—may be unconscious, undoubtedly is unconscious.”¹⁹ If the ego is the seat of both (pre)conscious knowledge and unconscious resistance, then the final topography provides us with a visual representation of the divided subject, one who can know and not know at the same time.

The notion of the divided ego is most fully elaborated in one of Freud’s posthumously published works, “Splitting of the Ego in the Defensive Process,” written in 1938. In this essay, Freud explains that under the sway of a powerful instinctual demand whose satisfaction is threatened by the danger of an encroaching reality the ego is forced to decide “either to recognize the real danger, give way to it and do without the instinctual satisfaction, or to repudiate reality and persuade itself that there is no reason for fear, so that it may be able to retain the satisfaction.”²⁰ Unable to make this no-win decision, the ego pursues both possibilities simultaneously through a defensive maneuver that results in two “contrary reactions”: on one hand, the ego refuses reality and its constraints on instinctual satisfaction; on the other hand, it recognizes the danger of reality and attempts to divest itself of this fear. The “two contrary reactions to the conflict persist,” Freud maintains, “as the centre-point of a splitting of the ego.”²¹

Freud goes on to describe the paradigmatic psychic mechanism for this simultaneous gratification of instinctual demand and obedience to

social prohibition as fetishism. A little boy caught masturbating is subject to the threat of castration not only by the father's admonishments but by the traumatic sight of female "castration," the absence of a penis on the girl.²² Because the boy is reluctant to give up masturbation, and because the danger of an encroaching reality—the potential loss of his privileged organ—is effective only insofar as the threat of castration by the father is coupled with and reinforced by this frightening visual affirmation of absence, the boy creates a fetish that disavows the girl's lack and thus circumvents the paternal threat. Consequently, he carries out his denial of female castration by finding a substitute that can be projected in its place: a shine on the nose, a plait of hair, an undergarment, a shoe. The fetish serves, then, as a paradigmatic example of divided belief. Its very existence both denies and attests to female castration: it says that she does and does not have a penis. Freud maintains that the fetish serves as an ingenious mechanism that "almost deserves to be described as [an] artful" means of dealing with reality.²³ Through the fetish, the boy confronts the exigencies of psychic life and the redoubtable threats of the father. In this way, the little boy not only eludes paternal prohibition but facilitates a method by means of which he can continue undisturbed in his gratifying sexual activities.

In both "Splitting of the Ego in the Defensive Process" and "Fetishism," Freud provides us with a model of divided belief that explains how Gallimard could, at once, both know and not know Song's anatomical sex. Extending for a moment fetishism's logic of female castration to the Asian male body, might Gallimard's psychic appraisal of Song's corporeal endowments also fall into simultaneous affirmation and disavowal? Moreover, the defensive splitting of the ego explains how on a *conscious* level the diplomat could not see what he had already perhaps acknowledged on an *unconscious* level: Song's penis. We come to understand, through the diplomat's simultaneous disavowing and affirming of the presence of this male organ, how he could at once be and not be a (self-denying) homosexual.

Although Freud relishes his description of fetishism as a means of instinctual satisfaction and the evasion of paternal constraint, he leaves us with a foreboding caveat: "But everything has to be paid for in one way or another, and [the boy's] success is achieved at the price of a rift in the ego which never heals but which increases as time goes on."²⁴ The fetish, which "almost deserves to be described as [an] artful" means of dealing with reality, is secured at the cost of a split ego whose misrecognition only grow larger with time. Castration inevitably comes back to haunt the ego in frightening and unpredictable ways. How does this promised homecoming of castration plague Gallimard in *M. Butterfly*? And what

are the social conditions under which the diplomat is first coerced into such a state of divided belief?

Lotus Blossom Fantasy

"We were worried about you, Gallimard," remarks an envious Manuel Toulon, ambassador extraordinaire of the French embassy. "We thought you were the only one here without a secret. Now you go and find a lotus blossom . . . and top us all" (46; Hwang's ellipsis). In one fell swoop, Toulon assuages his worries about Gallimard through the reassuring articulation of the diplomat's heterosexuality. For Toulon, the secret of Gallimard's illicit affair with Song Liling is perfectly "straightforward"—filtered, that is, through symbolic imperatives of heterosexuality and whiteness and framed by a historical legacy of colonialism. As a consequence, Gallimard's secret is really no secret at all but a projection of Toulon's own proleptic confusions and orientalist dreams: the secret affair of the cruel white man and the Oriental "lotus blossom." Put otherwise, because Toulon's own fantasies are played out in and projected onto his imaginings of Gallimard's illicit affair, the ambassador is blind to the circular logic whereby Gallimard's relationship with Song proves his heterosexuality at the same time that Gallimard's heterosexuality proves his affair with Song.

The *Madama Butterfly* tableau that Toulon enjoys is a fantasy reinforcing and reinforced by the foundations of the colonial order—its demarcation of distinct sexual and racial borders materially fortified by a long history of European imperialism. I must emphasize that Toulon's "recognition" of Gallimard's perceived heterosexuality in this scene of economic, political, and cultural domination is facilitated through the diplomat's perceived possession of the Oriental butterfly—the sexual and racial exploitation of the little brown woman upon whom white male subjectivity in the colonial order is built. Indeed, Toulon's (mis)recognition of the diplomat's affair with the Oriental lotus blossom—Gallimard's racialized heterosexuality, as it were—speaks to a colonial structure of knowledge in which sexual and racial difference gain a new and full significance in relation to one another. Ultimately, this lotus blossom fantasy is neither private nor personal but an open secret that is passed down in time from one colonial bureaucrat to another, from one colonial administration to the next. In the process, it becomes, like Puccini's *Madama Butterfly* tableau, the same old story through its continuous reprisals and compulsive rescriptings.

That Hwang chooses to set *M. Butterfly* during the cold war and Vietnam War eras as well as the late 1980s (at the end of Reagan's "evil

empire" discourse) is significant.²⁵ Gender scholars of the cold war era, such as Robert Corber and Lee Edelman, note that this was a historical period when a triumphant U.S. exceptionalism spearheaded the movement to contain the threat of communism on the international level. At the same time, it also labored on the domestic front to consolidate its "democratic" ideals as leader of the so-called free world through the codification of middle-class family values and the (re)consolidation of strict gender norms.²⁶ This historical era of the Red scare—of *Father Knows Best*, the witch-hunts of the House Un-American Activities Committee, and the shift from production to consumer capitalism—witnessed the interpenetration of nationalism with new figurations of sexuality. These included the development of the "organization man," the rise of corporate culture, and the suburbanization of the efficient middle-American housewife.

In *Homosexuality in Cold War Culture*, Robert Corber writes that in this historical context homosexuality "was understood as a form of psychopathology that undermined the nation's defenses against Communist infiltration. The politicization of homosexuality was crucial to the consolidation of the Cold War consensus. The homosexualization of left-wing political activity by the discourses of national security enabled Cold War liberalism to emerge as the only acceptable alternative to the forces of reaction in postwar American society" (3). In the national imaginings of the cold war era, heterosexuality is linked to national health and security while homosexuality is connected not only to the threat of communist infiltration but to the figure of a foreign and racialized other.²⁷ The national paranoia ensuing from this double threat, it is important to note, arose precisely as a problem of visuality. The possibility that homosexuals could escape detection by passing as heterosexuals linked them in the cold war political imaginary to unidentified and undetected communists who were thought to be conspiring against U.S. government interests.

Given this particular historical context, Toulon's lotus blossom fantasy might be also said to illustrate the vexed crossings between psychoanalysis and an ascendant Western neoimperialism. It is worth remarking that many of Freud's psychic paradigms rely heavily on metaphors of economic domination and compensation. As was noted earlier, for instance, in "Splitting of the Ego in the Defensive Process," Freud states: "But everything has to be paid for in one way or another, and this success is achieved at a price of a rift in the ego which never heals but which increases as time goes on" (275–76). In *M. Butterfly*, the economics of colonialism as well as an ascendant neoimperialism intersect with these economic metaphors of the psyche in ways that demand the historicizing

of psychoanalysis and the psychologizing of colonialism and its contemporary legacies. In the context of *M. Butterfly*, such crossings indicate that, like any other commodity in the imperial system, Toulon's knowledge of Gallimard's open "secret" circulates as a kind of "intellectual" property undergirding the rise of Western neoimperialist interventions across the globe, often configured as the political containment of communism.

If Toulon's secret *Madama Butterfly* fantasy is less an individual than a collective fantasy of Western domination, then its articulation serves not merely to describe the conditions of a culturally acceptable heterosexual and white colonial desire but, more importantly, to produce these symbolic ideals in its very utterance. In this structuring of the social order, colonial ideals of heterosexuality and whiteness acquire their efficacy only in and through a reiterative structure of citationality and a material structure of the circulation of commodities, capital, and knowledge on the global stage. As such, Toulon's gleeful utterances function as a kind of colonial performative, hailing Gallimard into its ideological web. Toulon—subject of and subjected to the symbolic norms and prohibitions of the colonial order—becomes a spokesperson for this exclusive club, another cog in the wheel, as it were.

That the presumptuous Toulon and the pontificating judge ("Did Monsieur Gallimard know you were a man?") are scripted by Hwang to be played by the same actor works to underscore their collective psychic and material investments in the colonial regime they mindlessly extol. The very fabric of the social world dramatized in *M. Butterfly* thus gains its psychic and material resilience through the homogeneous fantasies of corporate players like Toulon and juridical tools like the judge. Collectively, their primary responsibilities to their particular domains of economics and politics involve the repeated interpellations of bureaucratic tools such as Gallimard into this old boy network.²⁸

The French ambassador's gleeful statement—"We were worried about you, Gallimard. We thought you were the only one without a secret. Now you go and find a lotus blossom . . . and top us all"—is an optative hailing of the bumbling diplomat into a compulsory network of heterosexuality and whiteness and into an economic and a political structure of colonial privilege. Hence, the performative utterance by which Toulon transforms and renders Gallimard's little secret public functions as the reiterative mechanism through which the colonial legacy strives to secure its psychic investments, bind its political entitlements, and guarantee its economic inheritance. How well does Gallimard recite the prescriptive norms of this collective lotus blossom fantasy?

In "Fetishism" (1927), Freud describes the fetish as a psychic process by means of which a little boy gives the female a penis substitute so as to disavow her "lack" and difference and make women "tolerable as sexual objects."²⁹ Freud thus implies that fetishism serves as a compensatory psychic mechanism through which the trauma of female sexual difference is managed and heterosexual relations between men and women are normalized. Since fetishes are "easily accessible and [the fetishist] can readily obtain the sexual satisfaction attached to [them]" (154), Freud offers this psychic process as an everyday means of facilitating a normative heterosexual relationship between the sexes.

Classic fetishism, according to Freud, plays itself out along lines of sexual difference. The male fetishist refuses to acknowledge female castration by seeing on the female body a penis that is not there to see. In *M. Butterfly*, however, we encounter a strange reversal of this psychic paradigm, a curious reconfiguration of the fetish beyond what Freud's essay explicitly offers. With Gallimard, we do not witness a denial of sexual difference and lack resulting in the projection onto the body of a female a substitute penis that is not there to see. Instead, we encounter the opposite, a "reverse fetishism," so to speak: Gallimard's blatant refusal to see on the body of an Asian male the penis that is clearly there for him to see. How might we account for this strange reconfiguration of the fetish and its *avowal* of castration?

At this juncture, it is necessary to consider racial difference in the formulation of any potential explanation since in Gallimard's reconfiguration of the fetish, castration is not denied but stringently affirmed—and affirmed not at the site of the white woman but at the site of the Asian man. How might this racial castration—this curious crossing of castration with race—make possible the heterosexual relationship between the white man and white woman on which Freud implicitly centers his discussions? In this particular psychic scenario, what kinds of differences and lacks are being denied, shorn up, and rendered invisible?³⁰

To begin our exploration, let us turn to an example of racial dynamics offered by Kaja Silverman in *The Threshold of the Visible World*. In her discussion of the different ideological and cultural values conferred upon the black and white male penises, Silverman delineates a social structure in which the black penis works to disturb the sexual relations between white man and white woman: "The differentiation of the white man from the black man on the basis of the black man's hyperbolic penis consequently reverberates in disturbing ways within the domain of gender. It places the white man on the side of 'less' rather than 'more,' and,

so, threatens to erase the distinction between him and the white woman. This is the primary reason, I would argue, why the body of the black man disrupts the unity of the white male corporeal ego."³¹ The putatively hyperbolic black male penis threatens the unity of the white male ego by placing him in the position of being less masculine, thereby endangering the structural distinction between him and the white woman.

In *M. Butterfly*, however, we encounter the opposite situation: a white male is placed into the position of being more masculine through his disavowal of the Asian penis—a triangulating of American race relations beyond the conventional Manichean relationship of black and white.³² In other words, by denying the penis that is clearly there for him to see, Gallimard psychically castrates the Asian male, placing him in a position of lesser masculinity to secure for himself a position of greater masculinity—a material illustration of Richard Fung's contention that in the Western imaginary "Asian and anus are conflated."³³ The white diplomat's racial castration of the Asian male works, then, not to disturb but to stabilize the distinction between him and the white woman—a reversal of the psychic anxiety he conventionally faces with the black male body. Indeed, this model of racial castration—of "reverse fetishism" and its denial of the Asian penis—might be seen as an attempt to produce and normalize heterosexual relations between the white couple. In *M. Butterfly*, racial castration comes to reinforce the very structures of normative fetishism described by Freud: the myth of the sufficient white male and the lacking white female is upheld and strengthened. Put otherwise, a gendered distinction between the white man and the white woman is stabilized and secured through racial difference.

The French diplomat's reconfiguration of Freudian fetishism in this particular manner, then, works less to problematize than to reiterate the prescriptive norms of the colonial order—the emasculation of the Asian male functioning through not only a material but a psychically enforced orientalist framework. In this particular example of reverse fetishism, the Asian male is psychically emasculated, foreclosed from an identification with normative heterosexuality, so as to guarantee the white male's claim to this location. As such, the potential trauma of sexual difference is not arrested at the site of the female body (as in the case of classic fetishism). Instead, sexual difference is managed through the arrest, disavowal, and projection of racial difference at the site of the Asian male body. Hence, Gallimard's racial castration of Song presents a psychic scenario in which sexual and racial differences intersect and are simultaneously managed in attempts to affirm and stabilize the diplomat's subjectivity. Gallimard's refusal to see the Asian penis before him thus illustrates the complex manner in which Asian, white, and black male

identity circulate in a psychic economy of racial as well as sexual differences, gaining their discursive legibility in relation to one another. In this particular instance, Gallimard's racial denial of Song's penis facilitates the smooth alignment of heterosexuality and whiteness. This is an invisible alignment that, in its refusal to be named or seen, attempts to secure heterosexuality and whiteness as universal norms in a colonial world order.

Gallimard's use of reverse fetishism in an effort to shore up his flagging masculine position illustrates a definitive instance in which racial difference must be discussed in terms of sexual difference. The white diplomat's racial castration of Song exemplifies a distinct psychic process through which whiteness and heterosexuality work collectively to articulate and secure their universal status in relation to a devalued Asian racial positioning. Through Gallimard's psychic revision of classic fetishism, the potential trauma of racial difference is deflected away from the white male body and projected elsewhere. In his continual defense against the potential threats of numerous social differences, Gallimard's reworking of classic fetishism both manages and erases race. In this respect, we might recall our introductory discussion of Freud and psychoanalysis's management and erasure of the figure of the primitive to assert that castration is in every case racial castration. This administration of sexuality and race simultaneously reveals the gaps while suturing the fissures through which various material incongruities and lived misidentifications are not psychically experienced as discrepant. Racial castration thus functions for Gallimard and the colonial legacy he represents as a psychic mechanism that, in its protectionist veiling of heterosexuality and whiteness, is "responsible for the production of universalities, harmonies, and gratifications."³⁴ In this manner, conventional white male subjectivity, as well as a normative heterosexual relationship between the (white) sexes, is scripted and sustained through a specified racial distinction and loss.

Anatomical Weenies and Epic Fiction

Freud describes classic fetishism as serving to normalize the white heterosexual relations on which the paternal legacy is built through the management of female sexual difference and the simultaneous denial of female castration and lack. Reconfigured by Gallimard, fetishism also manages anxieties of racial difference by facilitating a normative white heterosexual relationship through the affirmation of a castrated Asian male body that serves to reinforce white male sufficiency. However, as we come to see in *M. Butterfly*, this psychic mechanism turns out to be a

profound disappointment for the diplomat. *M. Butterfly* qualifies Gallimard's call to normative white masculinity by charting a series of notable (hetero)sexual reversals.

Ambassador Toulon's attempts to interpellate Gallimard into a colonial matrix of whiteness and heterosexuality through their shared lotus blossom fantasy, as well as the diplomat's own attempts to shore up his flagging masculine position through his racial reconfiguration of classic fetishism, are qualified in the course of the drama by a long history of repeated failures with white women: the pinup girl, Helga, and Renée. If the purpose of the Freudian fetish is to remake the (white) female body into a viable sexual object through the denial of her sexual difference and the projection of a penis substitute, then Gallimard's relationships with these three white women come to be marked by a strange psychic reversal. The trauma of castration is not neutralized at the site of the female body. Indeed, it returns to wash over the white male body.

The diplomat's history with white women—before, during, and after his relationship with Song—is highlighted by the continued failure of the heterosexual imperative. In the young Gallimard's *Playboy* fantasies, we witness the first instance of this washout. His onanistic activities are rapidly short-circuited by uncooperative anatomy:

GALLIMARD: I first discovered these magazines at my uncle's house. One day, as a boy of twelve. The first time I saw them in his closet . . . all lined up—my body shook. Not with lust—no, with power. Here were women—a shelfful—who would do exactly what I wanted.

The "Love Duet" creeps in over the speakers. Special comes up, revealing, not Song this time, but a pinup girl in a sexy negligee, her back to us. Gallimard turns upstage and looks at her.

GIRL: I know you're watching me.

GALLIMARD: My throat . . . it's dry.

GIRL: I leave my blinds open every night before I go to bed.

GALLIMARD: I can't move.

GIRL: I leave my blinds open and the lights on.

GALLIMARD: I'm shaking. My skin is hot, but my penis is soft.

Why?

GIRL: I can't see you. You can do whatever you want.

GALLIMARD: I can't do a thing. Why? (10-12)

Within the confines of the avuncular "closet," Gallimard's reactions seem atypical of most pubescent heterosexual males. Although the dip-

Iomat's identification with paternal power is definitively aroused, his penis remains permanently soft. On one hand, Gallimard is thoroughly excited by the prospect of phallic control—enthralled by the power to make “women . . . do exactly what I wanted.” On the other hand, he lacks the necessary equipment and is racked by performance anxieties about his heterosexual adequacy. Despite the pinup girl's self-proclaimed inability to return Gallimard's look, the young diplomat is overwrought by seeing and being seen. He is, moreover, disturbed by the visible failure of his privileged organ: “I'm shaking. My skin is hot, but my penis is soft. Why? . . . I can't do a thing. Why?” Gallimard, the young voyeur, is thus himself caught at the peephole, subjected to the power of an unapprehensible and terrorizing gaze. Since the diplomat literally occupies center stage at this particular moment, the visible failure of his organ comes under intense scrutiny, its flaccid presence given our full cinematic attention.

As a “queer” adolescent, the diplomat's struggle to identify with the position of the father—with a position of heterosexuality and whiteness—comes to be haunted by the masculine dis-ease of his organ. Just as Gallimard's racial reconfiguration of fetishism in relation to Song suggests a logic of reversal—the affirmation of the “castrated” Asian male—here, too, we witness a further inversion. Castration is not disavowed and projected onto the white female body but emphatically returns to wash over the white male body. Gallimard—the white male, not the white female—becomes the locus of insufficiency. Hence, we witness in this *Playboy* phantasmatic an incipient pledge to a white and heterosexual paternal order, one strongly qualified by a dissonant trajectory of desire. Penis and phallus work toward opposite ends, a slippage of phallic power from anatomical control.

At this point, it seems appropriate to invoke recent feminist debates on the distinction between phallus and penis and the displacement of a differential “lack” and “castration” onto the female body. Silverman, for instance, delineates two separate castrations experienced by all subjects: the entry into language (primal repression) and the paternal metaphor (the Oedipus complex). If primal repression and the paternal metaphor can be thought of as two separate events, Silverman argues, we can understand the Freudian castration complex “as the metaphoric re-inscription and containment of a loss which happens much earlier, at the point of linguistic entry—as the restaging with a ‘difference’ of a crisis which would otherwise prove inimical to masculinity.”³⁵ Silverman's critique of Freud's inequitable distribution of a prior linguistic castration onto a “lacking” female (and, in Gallimard's instance, racial) body finds

an unwitting ally in the diplomat. Gallimard's inability to place his flaccid penis within a phantasmatic scene of tumescent phallic plenitude suggests that there is nothing inevitable, after all, in the connection between anatomical male penis and symbolic phallus. The diplomat's failures with white women, as well as with Asian men, emphatically illustrate that he is also—and most hyperbolically—a subject of sexual and racial lack.

Gallimard's psychosexual inadequacies are further elaborated in his “arranged” marriage to Helga, the Australian ambassador's daughter. Their conjugal union exemplifies the continuous rescripting of a divided allegiance between white paternal authority and heterosexual desire. To begin with, the couple's marriage is overshadowed by Gallimard's “vow renouncing love . . . for a quick leap up the career ladder” (14). Moreover, the political, economic, and social gain enjoyed by Gallimard through this union is subsequently qualified by a noticeable absence of progeny, the material failure of what we might call, in a contemporary context, “family values.” That their marriage remains childless is, as Helga contends, not of her doing. Gallimard's loyalties to a white and heterosexual symbolic order appear yet again to be undermined by a slippage between the psychic and the material. Although he identifies with the privileges of paternal, colonial power, the diplomat is immobilized by the performative requirements this power demands.

This rift between phallic authority and bodily penis finds its most resonant example in Gallimard's interactions with Renée, the assertive Danish coed. If the male René Gallimard's patronym, which invokes one of France's largest publishing houses, indicates an inherited legacy of paternal privilege, his first name qualifies this presumption through its relationship to his female *doppelgänger*. Renée's presence, perhaps more than that of any other white woman in the drama, works to the utter ruination of Gallimard's identifications with a colonial regime of privilege. To begin with, the diplomat's extramarital affair with the Danish coed is marked by a reversal of gender norms. She is a woman who is “too uninhibited, too willing . . . too masculine” (54; Hwang's emphases). Furthermore, Renée's discourse on anatomical “weenies” and epic fiction attests to the slippage of male penis from symbolic phallus, bringing the male René face to face with his sexual insufficiency:

RENÉE: I—I think maybe it's because I really don't know what to do with them—that's why I call them “weenies.”

GALLIMARD: Well you did quite well with . . . mine.

RENÉE: Thanks, but I mean, really do with them. Like, okay, have you ever looked at one? I mean, really?

GALLIMARD: No, I suppose when it's part of you, you sort of take it for granted.

RENÉE: I guess. But, like, it just hangs there. This little . . . flap of flesh. And there's so much fuss that we make about it. Like, I think the reason we fight wars is because we wear clothes. Because no one knows—between the men, I mean—who has the bigger . . . weenie. So, if I'm a guy with a small one, I'm going to build a really big building or take over a really big piece of land or write a really long book so the other men don't know, right? But, see, it never really works, that's the problem. I mean, you conquer the country, or whatever, but you're still wearing clothes, so there's no way to prove absolutely whose is bigger or smaller. And that's what we call a civilized society. The whole world run by a bunch of men with pricks the size of pins. (*She exits*)

GALLIMARD (*To us*): This was simply not acceptable. (55–56)

René Gallimard's horrified reaction to the female Renée's disquisition on the separation between anatomical weenies and their symbolic manifestations—wars, epic fiction, large buildings—clearly results from her unwelcome incursion into the realm of paternal privilege and her appropriation of its most powerful tool: language. Renée is completely dominant, physically and psychically. In bed she is in charge, quite literally on top, as Gallimard admits in saying “you did quite well with . . . mine” (his penis). Outside the bedroom, she assumes a position of discursive authority, vexing the tongue-tied diplomat by running verbal circles around him in conversation.

Renée's scaling down of penile presumption, as well as her incisive observations on the “phallacy” of male size and privilege, drives the wedge ever more deeply between bodily penis and symbolic phallus.³⁶ If the silent *e* that marks the difference in their shared name is that letter whose responsibility is to both signify and stabilize a relationship of gender, the silent “e” also accounts for a certain unavoidable symbolic *e*-masculination that Gallimard undergoes at the hands of Renée. In this particular world, Gallimard clearly lacks the *e*. As a consequence, the diplomat, in all his encounters with his female double, cannot avoid confrontation with—he can no longer render invisible—his heterosexual failures. On the contrary, the diplomat's relationship with Renée comes to epitomize all his interactions with the white women of the drama: castration and lack return to sit squarely on the shoulders of the white male.

A Homosexual and a Fetishist: Rice Queens and Yellow Fever

How might we reconcile Gallimard's curious attraction to the paternal legacy but not to white women and heterosexuality?³⁷ Can the fetish serve to deny male homosexuality rather than female castration? Can the fetishist be a homosexual?

On the face of it, these questions might seem rather untenable, since Freud claims that it is precisely the fetish that saves the little boy “from becoming a homosexual, by endowing women with the characteristic which makes them tolerable as sexual objects.”³⁸ Yet the distinct homosexual and fetishistic pathways by which Freud leads the boy out of the horror of female castration are not so straight as never to cross. If the male fetishist creates a penis substitute and projects it onto the body of the female to make her an acceptable sexual object, this projection is entirely necessary, we learn, for the very reason that the boy holds an incredible narcissistic investment in the corporeal integrity of his male organ: “No, that [female castration] could be true: for if a woman had been castrated, then his own possession of a penis was in danger; and against that there rose in rebellion the portion of his narcissism which Nature has, as a precaution, attached to that particular organ.”³⁹

And here Freud implies that the heterosexual man is no more, no less, a (displaced) narcissist who can only love those objects that remind him of himself, can love only those objects endowed with a penis, with the corporeal outline of his own bodily ego. According to this logic of similitude and false equivalence, the female body becomes a substitute for the male body as heterosexuality becomes a substitute for homosexuality. As such, the homosexual—traditionally excluded from Freud's cast of anaclitic love objects—would nevertheless be the one love object holding the greatest psychic cache for the heterosexual man. Not only does the homosexual man reassuringly and faithfully mirror his body back to the heterosexual man; furthermore, the homosexual man also has a putative narcissism that would be a potent reminder of the renounced libidinal territory the heterosexual man relinquished in his departure from narcissistic to anaclitic (heterosexual) love.⁴⁰ In this scenario, the simultaneous masculine (dis)avowal of homosexuality structures the very condition of possibility by means of which conventional white masculinity is allowed to emerge.

How might this model of fetishism and homosexuality intersect with Gallimard's racial castration of the Asian male? How might the disavowed Asian male penis that Gallimard refuses to recognize on Song's body serve as a displaced representative of a tabooed homosexual and racial desire? The psychic configuration of “reverse fetishism” in

M. Butterfly suggests that Gallimard's denial of Song's penis works not merely to shore up a heterosexual relationship between white man and woman; it also covers up an abjected homosexual desire for the Asian male body. In this sense, we might describe this scenario as Gallimard's "passing" between an acceptable white male heterosexuality and an unacceptable white male homosexuality. How might the diplomat's refusal to see the Asian penis before him pass off a prohibited homosexual desire for that masculine body as a normative heterosexuality in the face of whiteness?

As discussed earlier, the cruel white man and the submissive Oriental lotus blossom mark a narrative of imperial knowledge that is assiduously cultivated and rescripted by the colonial order. Yet this phantasmatic—deployed from Puccini to Ambassador Toulon—as well as the diplomat's numerous anatomical failures with white women come ultimately to qualify Gallimard's tenuous position (and finally his life) within the colonial matrix of white heterosexual power. If the *Madama Butterfly* phantasmatic occupies the acceptable side of a colonialist fantasy, the conscious side of authorized desire, how might we describe the unacceptable underside of this fantasy, the unconscious denial of a tabooed desire? To answer these questions, we might turn to Hwang's striking afterword to the play, in which he offers a potential explanation for the diplomat's state of divided belief, one unnamed in the drama proper:

Gay friends have told me of a derogatory term used in their community: "Rice Queen"—a gay Caucasian man primarily attracted to Asians. In these relationships, the Asian virtually always plays the role of the "woman"; the Rice Queen, culturally and sexually, is the "man." This pattern of relationships had become so codified that, until recently, it was considered unnatural for gay Asians to date one another. Such men would be taunted with a phrase which implied they were lesbians.

Similarly, heterosexual Asians have long been aware of "Yellow Fever"—Caucasian men with a fetish for exotic Oriental women. I have often heard it said that "Oriental women make the best wives." (Rarely is this heard from the mouths of Asian men, incidentally.) This mythology is exploited by the Oriental mail-order bride trade which has flourished over the past decade. American men can now send away for catalogues of "obedient, domesticated" Asian women looking for husbands. (98)

According to Hwang, the concepts of Yellow Fever and Rice Queens are constructed along congruent lines of heterosexual and homosexual submission—the conscious and acceptable as well as the unconscious and

abject sides of a colonialist fantasy. The concept of Yellow Fever exists squarely within the approved norms and acceptable knowledges of a conventional colonial order, working to buttress white male heterosexuality through the possession and exploitation of the native brown woman.

Conversely, the suppressed equivalent of this phenomenon is the homosexual Rice Queen fantasy. This Rice Queen fantasy—entailing attachment to and desire for the Asian male body—exists squarely within the tabooed regions of symbolic prohibitions against homosexuality and nonwhiteness. Its emergence into the domain of visibility would thus shed light on the abject underside of the symbolic order, an order whose stability is contingent upon not only the disavowal but also the violent suppression of homosexuality and nonwhiteness. In this regard, we might view Gallimard's psychic makeover and denial of Song's penis as serving a dual purpose. Gallimard's castration of the male opera singer could function as both an attempt to buttress his flagging white masculinity and an effort to remake the unacceptable Asian male body into an acceptable Asian female form for colonial consumption, enjoyment, and privilege.

This double-sided fantasy explains how the white diplomat's failures with white women might be interpreted through both a heterosexual and a homosexual valence. I would suggest, finally, that we must read Gallimard's state of divided belief through both of these possibilities: a failed heterosexuality in the face of whiteness and an occluded fantasy of homosexual desire. The former serves as a psychic mechanism through which the symbolic norms of heterosexuality and whiteness are shored up and consolidated in Gallimard's colonial world; the latter serves as a psychic mechanism through which symbolic prohibitions against homosexuality and nonwhiteness are suspended and called into question.

In which fantasy—the *Madama Butterfly* or the Rice Queen phantasmatic—does Gallimard hold the most faith? Is the diplomat finally heterosexual or homosexual? This question may ultimately be unanswerable, for in a larger sense Gallimard's putative ignorance concerning Song's anatomical sex suggests a fundamental equivocation—as well as the fluidity of sexual identification and desire—that structures the symbolic order itself. It suggests the ultimate unknowability and therefore the unreliability of sex and sexual practice as indicators of a psychic truth or an unwavering sexual disposition. In slightly different terms, Gallimard's psychic equivocations over Song's anatomy concede the inevitable failure of symbolic norms and prohibitions to command faithful versions of heterosexuality and whiteness that they cannot ultimately produce, enforce, or guarantee.⁴¹

Nevertheless, if the very conception of our bodily ego and borders of the self come to be informed by a threat of symbolic and material punishment—a threat of pain, a threat of bodily disintegration, and a threatened loss of social identity—it may be that Gallimard's ostensible obeisance to a conscious *Madama Butterfly* fantasy serves as a mechanism of self-preservation and advanced self-punishment, the compensatory result of an unconscious disavowal of a desired Rice Queen phantasmatic. Indeed, Butler writes, the symbolic order marshals an incredible force of coercion: “When the threat of punishment wielded by that prohibition [against homosexuality and nonwhiteness] is too great, it may be that we desire someone who will keep us from ever seeing the desire for which we are punishable, and in attaching ourselves to that person, it may be that we effectively punish ourselves in advance and, indeed, generate desire in and through and for that self-punishment” (*Bodies*, 100). Should we read Gallimard's wavering allegiance to symbolic norms of heterosexuality and whiteness as a rebellion against or as a submission to this advance self-punishment?

Gallimard's passing between an acceptable white male heterosexuality and a tabooed white male homosexuality brings with it not only psychic relief but concrete material rewards. The diplomat's passing—whether consciously or finally unconsciously achieved—is reinforced by a corresponding framework of economic and political benefits. As Earl Jackson Jr. observes, gay white males occupy “a peculiar position in a heterosexist society in that, as men (if they are not ‘out’), they potentially have full access to the very power mechanisms that repress them and their fellow ‘outsiders,’ who cannot ‘pass,’ white women and people of color of any sexual orientation.”⁴² The political, economic, and cultural stakes are high for the passing gay white male: full access to the world of colonial privilege and rewards. In light of these considerable material advantages, could Gallimard's putative ignorance be seen as conscious bad faith? Could Gallimard's anatomical blunder be seen as a consciously self-denying homosexuality encouraged by the likes of Toulon and the pontificating judge?

This question—yet another version of “Did Monsieur Gallimard know you were a man?”—may not be answerable. However, unconscious self-deception and conscious bad faith often have similar results in the social context of the real world. The material rewards of Gallimard's passing as a heterosexual conqueror in Toulon's colonial regime are great—promotion and adulation by others—whereas the consequences of Song's disrobing and Gallimard's exposure as a homosexual lead to imprisonment, ignominy, and death. Hence, questions of the conscious intent to pass must be considered, for venal complicity in

a system of colonial privilege enjoyed by gay white men who do consciously pass is a phenomenon all too familiar in Hwang's context of colonial, cold war China as well as in our contemporary Western context.⁴³

If, as I have argued throughout this chapter, the power of symbolic norms of heterosexuality and whiteness functions largely through the tacit veiling of their collusive ideals, then rendering visible by naming the invisible workings of a compulsory system of both heterosexuality and whiteness is an imperative project. Gallimard's passing and his slippage from normative ideals of white masculinity can be used to provide a model through which we may contest and dislodge the social structures that seem to guarantee an immutable and universal position of privilege to the normative white male subject. To this effect, I conclude with a final interpretation of fetishism and the failure of heterosexuality and whiteness. I conclude, that is, with the failure of the fetishizing Ambassador Toulon, the most strongly coded “sufficient” white male subject of the drama, to prevent even himself from falling into the abjected domain of homosexual desire.

The Confidence of the Thing

We come to learn in Freud's essay “Fetishism” that the struggle that impels divided belief and calls for the psychic mechanism of the fetish is not merely the sight of female “castration” but the truly threatening proportions that this visual castration takes when coupled with the threatening prohibitions of the father. In this respect, what the little boy struggles against in “Fetishism” is the father himself and the ambivalent attitudes of both hatred and love that his paternal authority elicits.

My observations on the father-son drama that underpins fetishism are supported in the Freudian text by an interesting story of denial, which I would describe as the urtext of castration, that of two young boys who disavow the death of their father. Describing one of the youngsters, who “oscillated in every situation in life between two assumptions” of divided belief, Freud observes, “the one, that his father was still alive and was hindering his activities; the other, opposite one, that he was entitled to regard himself as his father's successor.”⁴⁴ The boy's state of split knowledge thus suggests that the assumption of the paternal position is ultimately an ambivalent process that is never complete. To borrow loosely from the logic of fetishism: the boy can and cannot be his father.

If the purpose of fetishism is to normalize a relationship between a (white) man and woman, then this psychic mechanism serves to encour-

age and facilitate the assumption of the father's place, Freud suggests, specifically through the axis of sexuality, by offering the boy a pathway into heterosexual desire. In other words, fetishism, by (re)making the female body an acceptable locale for his libidinal investments, encourages the boy to identify with the heterosexual position of the father while denying any residual homosexual desire that he may have for him. This psychic process, as we have observed, occurs only by (re)configuring the female body in the guise of the male—by neutralizing the “horror” of her sexual difference and lack. And in this regard, we witness in fetishism a rather overt attempt on the part of the little boy to write out a desire for the father, which is nevertheless curiously preserved in the male form that the female body must invariably assume. Consequently, the social order—its system of compulsory heterosexuality—is maintained by a tenuous line between heterosexual identification and a constant promise of resexualized homosexual desire. Here we must remember that the “pangs of conscience” resulting from the little boy’s identification with the father through the sublimation of his homosexual desire are, as Judith Butler points out, “nothing other than the displaced satisfactions of homosexual desire” (*Bodies*, 277). These pangs, whose role lies in keeping the boy from acknowledging a prohibited desire for his father, are in no way secure, for they are the displaced result of a psychical conservation of homosexual desire and not an obliteration of it.

In my reading of *M. Butterfly*, I have focused attention on Gallimard as a hyperbolically marginal male figure occupying the conventional borders of white masculinity. The diplomat’s shaky relationship with paternal authority is, however, not an anomalous psychic position but one that all white men come to embody, including Ambassador Toulon himself, the most strongly coded father figure in the drama. In highlighting the phallic failures of white heterosexual masculinity in general, Hwang thus qualifies its universalizing pretensions. Let us return one last time to this dynamic father-son duo. Promoting Gallimard to vice consul, Toulon offers a few words of advice to his new protégé in training:

TOULON: Humility won’t be part of the job. You’re going to coordinate the revamped intelligence division. Want to know a secret? A year ago, you would’ve been out. But the past few months, I don’t know how it happened, you’ve become this new aggressive confident . . . thing. And they also tell me you get along with the Chinese. So I think you’re a lucky man, Gallimard. Congratulations.
They shake hands. Toulon exits. Party noises out. Gallimard stumbles across a darkened stage.

GALLIMARD: Vice-consul? Impossible! As I stumbled out of the party, I saw it written across the sky: There is no God. Or, no—say that there is a God. But that God . . . understands. Of course! God who creates Eve to serve Adam, who blesses Solomon with his harem but ties Jezebel to a burning bed—that God is a man. And he understands! At age thirty-nine, I was suddenly initiated into the way of the world. (37–38)

Embracing the psychic contract of Toulon’s old-boy network, Gallimard comes to realize that his emotional battering of the Oriental diva has been swiftly and richly rewarded. Indeed, Gallimard would be—as Toulon suggests—“out” were it not for his racial buttress, his ability to “get along with the Chinese.” The silence of whiteness—the race that need not speak its name—thus ensures that Gallimard need not speak his (homo)sexuality. At age thirty-nine, Gallimard’s interpellation into a colonial realm of heterosexual and white privilege is rather late. He “matures” only under the tutelage of Toulon, who rewards the late bloomer with an unexpected promotion.

In his enthusiastic response to Toulon, Gallimard unwittingly begins to mime the ambassador’s lessons through an equivocating turn to biblical law: “There is no God. Or, no—say that there is a God. But that God . . . understands. Of course! God who creates Eve to serve Adam . . . that God is a man.” The diplomat suggests, through biblical references to Adam and Eve, that his promotion to vice-consul signals divine acceptance of the lotus blossom fantasy. Yet, although the rhetoric of the language of Genesis is meant to lend an eternal vision to Gallimard’s symbolic revelations, the fact that this knowledge is “written across the sky” produces a contradictory feeling of transience. The truths of this religious law are written in air, and the urgency of Gallimard’s newfound confidence in normative white masculinity has no solid foundation.

Are we back in the territory of fetishism? We must note that Toulon and Gallimard’s dialogue is firmly embedded in the logic of divided belief, the willful splitting of heterosexual identification from homosexual desire. Invoking yet again the open secret and knowledge of colonial presumption—the possession of the Oriental lotus blossom—Toulon attempts to forestall any psychic equivocation on the part of Gallimard by installing him in a psychic network of heterosexuality and whiteness through his material promotion to vice consul. Pay attention to the ambassador’s words, however. The diplomat’s assumption of a place within the paternal legacy is dependent upon a “revamped intelligence division.” As dictated by Toulon, this division of intelligence—Gallimard’s knowing and not knowing (of Song’s penis, of there truly being a sexist

God)—is one that ultimately becomes emblematic of an unstable white male heterosexuality *tout court*.

As such, fetishism and divided belief become the privileged psychic linchpin for the maintenance of white male colonial subjectivity as the universal norm. In this regard, we must note that the figure of the aggressive woman—Eve and Jezebel—explicitly invoked as the heterosexual buttress of the white male subject is finally overshadowed by an occluded homosexual desire. In Toulon's congratulatory words to the new vice-consul, the ambassador invariably turns Gallimard into a fetishized object, resexualizing the borders of a prohibited homosexual desire. “You've *become* this new aggressive confident . . . thing” (my emphasis), he tells Gallimard. What is the all-powerful thing that Toulon euphemistically describes but the delegated symbol of male privilege and abuse—the anatomical penis as symbolic phallus? How might we interpret Toulon's conflation of penis and phallus? And what does it mean that Gallimard has “become this new aggressive confident . . . thing” for Toulon—has become, in effect, the phallus for the ambassador?

Mark Chiang suggests that in becoming the phallus “Gallimard no longer occupies the position of the man, who is possessor of the phallus; he occupies the position of the woman, whose only hope is to be the phallus. . . . Masculinity in this reading would seem to be just as much a fetish, just as much the object of fetishization, as femininity. If Gallimard accedes to the plenitude of heterosexual masculinity, it is by making himself over into the phallus, by becoming a fetish for Ambassador Toulon.”⁴⁵ If, as Lacan argues in “The Signification of the Phallus,” the male must have the phallus and the female must be the phallus, then no longer can white masculinity lay claim to having the phallus in *M. Butterfly* once Gallimard has become this privileged signifier.⁴⁶ If the male Gallimard can become—is made to be—the phallus for Toulon, then masculinity, as Chiang points out, is apparently “just as much a fetish, just as much the object of fetishization, as femininity.” The male body itself is (re)made to function for Toulon as the locus of libidinal investment and homosexual desire.⁴⁷ Gallimard's bodily frame comes to mark the conceptual limits of the ambassador's (hetero)sexual desire. As such, no longer is a female body—or even an Asian male dressed up as a female—required to be the phallus for the white male. Instead, Gallimard can be the phallus for Toulon, a homosexual relay of a white male object for a white male subject. Here, homosociality and its exchange of women gives way to a libidinal economy that no longer, for the moment, requires their presence. Undoubtedly, we have returned to the narcissistic psychic terrain in which the normative white male subject sees only himself everywhere he looks.

Toulon's brief discourse on Gallimard as a thing speaks not only to the contradiction of a Lacanian binary—the having of the phallus on the part of the male and the being of the phallus on the part of the female—but also to the very collapse of the having/being distinction that legitimates normative white male heterosexuality as the universal norm of the social order. In other words, if one can only have the phallus as a male, Gallimard's falling out of this naturalized framework suggests that the logic of a compulsory heterosexual matrix requiring that one can either have or be the phallus is beset by a fundamental contradiction, an irreconcilable state of anxiety over having and being the phallus that can never be fully surmounted or strictly separated. The French ambassador's configuration of Gallimard as the phallus thus comes to illustrate a nagging yet entirely normative equivocation at the heart of conventional white masculinity: a having that can never be fully had and a being that can never fully be.

Ultimately, as *M. Butterfly* brilliantly illustrates, borders between heterosexual identification and homosexual desire, between white and non-white identity, are hardly clear-cut; they are unable to function in isolation. This brief exchange between the ambassador and the diplomat renders visible the insistent partitioning of heterosexual identification from homosexual desire that underwrites normative white male subjectivity. Furthermore, this masking of homosexual desire also involves the masking of whiteness as an invisible racial category. The lotus blossom fantasy—Toulon's open “secret,” which underpins all the ambassador's exchanges with Gallimard—attests to conventional white male subjectivity's resolute dependence on the maintenance of both a hegemonic whiteness and an occluded racial boundary. And it is this complex crossing of (homo)sexual and racial difference, exposed in Gallimard's donning of whiteface, that not only marks the extravagant failure of his *Madama Butterfly* phantasmatic but insists on a sustained investigation of racial difference in conventional psychoanalytic paradigms of sexual difference such as fetishism.

In the final analysis, Gallimard's application of a thick layer of white makeup to his face—his colonization and assumption of the “other’s” place—must be read not merely as an attempt to deflect the explicit homosexual implications of Song's penile unveiling but as the unveiling of whiteness as a fetishistic application itself, a mask. This relativizing of whiteness as a universal racial category acknowledges the constructedness of both sexual and racial categories. It stresses the need to enlarge our critical focus in Asian American, ethnic, feminist, gender, and queer studies by considering—by naming—heterosexuality and whiteness at one and the same time as they work in tandem to secure the symbolic

ideals of colonial authority. In applying this white mask to his face, Gallimard's actions acknowledge that one can be neither heterosexual nor white, that symbolic ideals of colonial rule demanding compliance to universal notions of heterosexuality and whiteness can only be approximated—that they are ultimately unfulfilled and unfulfillable.

In *M. Butterfly*, the possession of the lotus blossom fantasy exacts an expensive toll on Gallimard, for the fetishistic costs of arresting the trauma of homosexual and racial difference at the site of the Asian male body require a definitive rift in the diplomat's ego, "which never heals but which increases as time goes on."⁴⁸ It is the concerted focus on the attendant sexual and racial crossings of this rift that turns the analytic lens of Asian American studies and psychoanalytic theory onto heterosexuality and whiteness as universalizing categories for deconstruction in a new cultural politics—and play—of differences.

FOUR

Male Hysteria—Real and Imagined—in *Eat a Bowl of Tea and Pangs of Love*

All symptoms, after all, are states of conviction.

ADAM PHILLIPS, "Keep It Moving"

What is the relationship between assimilation and illness, between assimilation and hysteria? Much of Asian American literature is populated with hysterical female bodies.¹ For instance, the narrator of Maxine Hong Kingston's *The Woman Warrior: Memoirs of a Girlhood among Ghosts* falls mysteriously ill after torturing a fellow Chinese American classmate for what she most abhors in herself: unwavering and unrelenting silence. "The world is sometimes just, and I spent the next eighteen months sick in bed with a mysterious illness," the narrator recounts. "There was no pain and no symptoms, though the middle line in my left palm broke in two. Instead of starting junior high school, I lived like the Victorian recluses I read about."² Unable to trace the etiology of her disease, Kingston's narrator postpones for a year and a half her entry into junior high school. Not unlike the numerous female hysterics who populate the frigid landscapes of popular Victorian novels, she withdraws entirely from the public sphere and the normal social activities that characterize typical girlhood adolescence. This retreat from the public space of the classroom—perhaps the most crucial site of childhood integration into national ideals of proper citizenry—does not prove to be a psychic burden for Kingston's narrator. On the contrary, it provides her with unequivocal psychic relief: "I saw no one but my family, who took good care of me. I could have no visitors, no other relatives, no villagers. My bed was against the west window, and I watched the sea-

Tung's access to the domestic space of a public U.S. nation-state finally depends upon queer control over and possession of a devalued feminine realm—Wei-Wei's home, privacy, body, labor, and child. Hence, we might describe queer diaspora in *The Wedding Banquet* as a formation that rescripts a domestic patriarchal narrative of home and nation-state, of private and public, on a global scale. To think about the queer and diasporic formation of Asian American male subjectivity in *The Wedding Banquet* is to understand that the domestic tranquility that marks the end of the film has been purchased at a high price, one borne by the figure of the Third World woman. This is a model of queer and diasporic Asian American subjectivity that, as Sau-ling Cynthia Wong suggests, might be far more useful if critiqued as “*modes* rather than *phases*” of identity, a cleaving of queerness and diaspora that cannot be “lauded as a culmination” over the domestic or feminine, “a stage more advanced or more capacious.”⁵³

Ultimately, *The Wedding Banquet* provides a qualified model of a progressive queer and diasporic Asian American male subjectivity; queerness and diaspora in Lee's film do not constitute any inherent challenge to local and global status quo. *The Wedding Banquet* provides a new model for thinking about the numerous pitfalls of queerness and diaspora as an integral mode of Asian American domestic claims to home and nation-state at the turn of this past century. At the same time, this model requires vigilant critical scrutiny for the enabling positions as well as the disabling violences it effects. It is a tortured model that recontextualizes our very notions of Asian American citizenship in both the larger global arena and the domestic realm of a liberal, capitalist, U.S. nation-state, which today is rapidly and urgently (re)consolidating itself as the preeminent and unforgiving bastion of economic freedom, straightness, and whiteness.

I would like to end this chapter and *Racial Castration* with a brief analysis of R. Zamora Linmark's *Rolling the R's*, a remarkable novella chronicling the travails of a group of pan-Asian and Pacific immigrant adolescents and teenagers in Honolulu's upscale Kalihi district. Like *The Wedding Banquet*, *Rolling the R's* brings together queerness and diaspora in innovative, destabilizing, and compelling ways that contest the dominant representations comprising the domestic image-repertoire. Through its multilayered assault of cultural, linguistic, and narrative hybridity, *Rolling the R's* ultimately exposes the uneven production of abstract nationalist subjects through the management and erasure of a host of disavowed social identities and differences. *Rolling the R's* shatters the popular myth of Hawai'i as an island paradise and vacation resort free of racial tension and ethnic strife. It presents the reader with

competing native, local, and mainland nationalisms and an ugly colonial history of U.S. political domination, economic exploitation, and cultural hegemony. Set in the manic disco era of the 1970s, Linmark's novella accomplishes this shattering not only through its insistent attention to Hawai'i's colonial status in relation to the U.S. mainland but through its incisive critique and reimaging of the intransigent Asian American and Pacific Islander ethnic hierarchies that organize and divide the island's immigrant inhabitants. (This is a social hierarchy with established East Asian Japanese and Chinese at the top and new immigrant Filipinos, Vietnamese, and Pacific Islanders at the bottom).

It is crucial to point out that the possibility of surmounting the various internal and external, intersecting and conflicting streams of Asian American social discord that animate *Rolling the R's* is mobilized precisely through a diasporic immigrant subjectivity organized by queerness. That is, while the disparate ethnic affiliations of the immigrant adolescents who populate Linmark's novella threaten to divide further their tenuous loyalties, it is precisely sexuality—an obsessive queer sexuality that permeates *Rolling the R's* from beginning to end—that binds them together as a social group with a common sense of purpose and esprit de corps. In this regard, the coalitional possibilities of “Asian American” as a viable or even workable group identity are engaged, renewed, and rendered efficacious by this detour through queerness. Indeed, while a recurring queerness orders Linmark's novella, it functions not just in the register of sexuality but as an organizing *topos* that affirms rather than effaces a host of alternate differences. As a consequence, constitutive differentials of nationality, sexuality, race, and class are rendered heterogeneous, creating complex and shifting rather than singular and static social histories of individual development.

The very narrative form that *Rolling the R's* assumes—with its hybrid episodes of letters, dream sequences, streams of consciousness, poems, book reports, dramatic monologues, scripts, progress reports, vocabulary lessons, and songs—might be characterized not only as miming this heterogeneity but as being distinctly queer. In Linmark's text, queerness gains its very meaning and discursive consistency as a critical terrain on which overlapping histories of sexuality, experiences of racialization and gendering, narratives of immigrant trauma and displacement, and strategies of class oppression and resistance are mobilized. Linmark's queer immigrant narratives, Chandan Reddy notes, “refuse to either hierarchize historical differentials or provide totalizing viewpoints. If one were to discuss an immigrant narrative of formation, for example, identifying as a ‘queer’ immigrant rather than an American immigrant powerfully deflects identification with the U.S. . . . The cultural

formation of 'queer Asians' establishes 'queer' as the subjective site that registers Asian immigrant displacement, immigrant racialization, and the continuing force of the historicity of homeland for the racial immigrant. . . . These 'queer' narratives explore the uneven determinations of multiple histories 'piled up,' 'over-ripe,' and 'decaying' within their narrative space."⁵⁴

Rather than demanding the abnegation of homeland or the sublation of it—of Asian—into standard American narratives of immigration, assimilation, and settlement, the queer diaspora that organizes the six male and female stars of Linmark's novella—Edgar Ramirez, Vicente de los Reyes, Mai-Lan Phan, Florante Sanchez, Loata Faalele, Katherine Katrina-Trina Cruz—offers something patently different. That is, it emphatically substitutes a queer affiliation that preserves individual histories of development for a more conventional notion of diaspora ordered by racial filiation and abstract narratives of group identity. This type of queer affiliation allows us a particular insight into debates on minoritarian identity politics. It allows an understanding of queerness as a form of social and political organization that proffers the provisional identity of a name. This is a name under which progressive politics can be strategized and rallied, one not predicated on the suppression but rather on the engagement of racial, gender, class, and national differentials for its social efficacy and effectiveness. In our contemporary moment, this is what a diaspora organized around queerness potentially offers.

In *Rolling the R's*, Linmark brokers this queer insight and affiliation across a number of youthful age groups, thus establishing a historical legacy and an emotional inheritance not just horizontally but vertically shared across generations. He writes about Orlando Domingo, a senior at Farrington High School, whose fierce overidentification with Farrah Fawcett of the television series *Charlie's Angels* causes him to insist that others call him "Farrah . . . as in Far-Out Farrah, or Faraway Farrah" (23). Orlando spends copious amounts of time styling his locks into "the million-dollar mane coveted by Farrah wanna-be's" (24). This Farrah Flip is accessorized with "a fire-engine red polyester long-sleeved shirt tied around his 24" waist, yellow bell-bottoms, and Famolare platforms. His face is painted, courtesy of Helena Rubinstein's The Paris Boutique Kit, which includes lipstick and nail lacquer, and Aziza's Shadow Boutique. Twelve shimmering eye colors for every occasion" (24).

Orlando's over-identification—indeed, his intense sexual and racial cross-identifications—with Farrah Fawcett arouses extreme consternation on the part of agitated Farrington High School authorities. The football coaches, Mr. Akana and Mr. Ching, as well as the principal, Mr. Shim, are especially disgruntled. Unable to normalize Orlando as an

abstract citizen-subject of that particular educational institution, Principal Shim considers more drastic measures:

Leaning back in his vinyl chair, Principal Shim considers the possibility of expelling or suspending Orlando on the grounds that he is endangering the mental health of other students, especially the athletes. But he can't. Not after he examines Orlando's file:

Born in Cebu in 1962; Immigrated to Hawai'i at the age of ten; Lives with mother in Lower Kalihi; Father: Deceased; Speaks and writes English, Spanish, Cebuano, and Tagalog; Top of the Dean's List; Current GPA: 4.0; This year's Valedictorian; SAT scores totaling 1500 out of 1600; Voted Most Industrious and Most Likely To Succeed four years in a row; Competed and won accolades in Speech and Math Leagues, High School Select Band, Science Fairs, and Mock Trials; Current President of Keywanettes, National Honor Society, and the Student Body Government; Plans to attend Brown University in the fall and eventually take up Law.

Principal Shim closes the file and throws it on his desk.

"I can't expel him. Maybe suspension." He squirms at the thought of Orlando turning the tables and charging him, Mr. Akana, Mr. Ching, and the Department of Education with discrimination against a Filipino faggot whose only desire is to be Farrah from Farrington, as in Farrah, the Kalihi Angel. (25)

Orlando's school file reads like a précis of a model minority's stunning achievement of the American dream. It illustrates a consistent history of superior academic accomplishments in face of material deprivation and in the absence of a traditional nuclear family structure. Orlando's file indicates as well a type of well-roundedness (outside of the math and sciences) not typically associated with the model minority subject, especially a recent Asian immigrant. Linmark is not content, however, to let his resignifying project of this queer immigrant rest there. Indeed, Linmark extends this project to its imaginable limits by bringing together the model minority myth with the image of the flaming Filipino faggot.

Orlando's outrageous physical comportment as a Farrah Flip, coupled with his academic achievements as a model minority, forces two disparate and stereotypical images into conceptual overload. This improbable bringing together of the model minority myth with a flagrant and flaming queer sexuality, as well as the stitching together of a racialized diasporic immigrant identity with dominant images of the (white) drag queen, mark a novel combination of queerness and diaspora that challenges, resists, and ultimately explodes the dominant representations and expectations that crowd our domestic image-repertoire.

Orlando's Farrah Flip marks both his queerness and his racialization as a diasporic Filipino. This crossing of queerness and diaspora disturbs many of his less than generous high school authorities and peers, all of whom emphatically conclude that Orlando has "flipped out." Nevertheless, Orlando's outrageous and unwavering composure—accompanied by his unimpeachable academic achievements, his stellar social accomplishments, and his stalwart political resistance to conventional norms and ideals—also serves as a point of exuberant identification, of unmitigated inspiration, for the younger generation of queer diasporic children that populates *Rolling the R's*. Unlike the constrained and painful queer childhood that overshadows Kaneko's young Japanese American boys during wartime internment, for instance, this is a queer childhood marked by psychic strength and material resistance to the demands of the law and the demands of others—a flipping of traditional representations and expectations. It is Linmark's remarkable detour through queerness and diaspora that allows this explosion and reworking of stereotypical images and categories, this wonderfully de-ranged and transformative bildungsroman. It is this turning to queerness and diaspora that provides us with a new set of images for a different type of Asian American male subjectivity in the twenty-first century.

NOTES

INTRODUCTION

- 1 David Henry Hwang, *M. Butterfly* (New York: Plume, 1989), 83.
- 2 Jeffery Paul Chan, Frank Chin, Lawson Fusao Inada, and Shawn Wong, eds., *The Big Aiiieee! An Anthology of Chinese American and Japanese American Literature* (New York: Meridian, 1991), xiii.
- 3 Richard Fung, "Looking for My Penis: The Eroticized Asian in Gay Porn Video," in *How Do I Look?* ed. Bad Object Choices (Seattle: Bay Press, 1991), 153.
- 4 Sigmund Freud, "Fetishism," in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, ed. James Strachey (London: Hogarth, 1955), 21:152–57.
- 5 In the juridical realm, the Gentleman's Agreement (Act of 2 March 1907, chap. 2534, §3, 34 Stat. 1228) between the United States and Japan worked toward this type of racial specificity. The Japanese, agreeing to curtail emigration from Japan, were exempted from U.S. laws barring Asian immigration.
- 6 In recent years, several well-known psychoanalytic feminist and queer scholars have written books with individual chapters or sections exploring psychoanalysis and racial difference. See, for example, Mary Ann Doane, *Femme Fatales: Feminism, Film Theory, Psychoanalysis* (New York: Routledge, 1991); Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"* (New York: Routledge, 1993); Diana Fuss, *Identification Papers* (New York: Routledge, 1995); Kaja Silverman, *The Threshold of the Visible World* (New York: Routledge, 1996); and Ann Pellegrini, *Performance Anxieties: Staging Psychoanalysis, Staging Race* (New York: Routledge, 1997). More recently, several African American feminist scholars have produced notable book-length examinations of black novels through the lens of psychoanalysis. See Saidiya V. Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997); and Claudia Tate, *Psychoanalysis and Black Novels: Desire and the Protocols of Race* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998). In the fields of Latino and performance studies, see José Esteban Muñoz, *Disidentifications: Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999). See also recent anthologies such as Elizabeth Abel, Barbara Chris-

- tian, and Helene Moglen, eds., *Female Subjects in Black and White: Race, Psychoanalysis, Feminism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997); and Christopher Lane, ed., *The Psychoanalysis of Race* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998).
- 7 Norma Alarcón, "The Theoretical Subject(s) of This Bridge Called My Back and Anglo-American Feminism," in *Making Face, Making Soul: Haciendo Caras*, ed. Gloria Anzaldúa (San Francisco: Aunt Lute, 1990), 356–69.
- 8 Sigmund Freud, *Totem and Taboo: Some Points of Agreement between the Mental Life of Savages and Neurotics*, in Freud, *Standard Edition*, 13:1.
- 9 David Kazanjian, "Notarizing Knowledge: Paranoia and Civility in Freud and Lacan," *Qui Parle* 7.1 (fall-winter 1993): 103. Much of my argument on the crossing of the figures of the primitive and the homosexual is indebted to Kazanjian's article as well as his personal discussions of this problem with me. I would like to thank him for this critical dialogue.
- 10 Sigmund Freud, "On Narcissism: An Introduction," in Freud, *Standard Edition*, 14:75.
- 11 See Judith Butler, *The Psychic Life of Power: Theories in Subjection* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), 132–66, for an elaboration of how a hierarchy of gender and a system of compulsory heterosexuality are melancholically formed through a doubly disavowed repudiation of never having loved the father and never having lost him.
- 12 See Daniel Boyarin, "Freud's Baby, Fliess's Maybe: Homophobia, Anti-Semitism, and the Invention of Oedipus," *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 2.1–2 (winter-spring 1995): 115–47; Jonathan Geller, "'A Glance on the Nose': Freud's Inscription of Jewish Difference," *American Imago* 49 (1992): 427–44; Sander Gilman, *The Jew's Body* (New York: Routledge, 1991); and Ann Pellegrini, *Performance Anxieties*. All of these works argue that Freud enacts a similar displacement of racial difference into the realm of sexual difference in his theories on hysteria. These critics maintain that Freud displaces hysterical symptoms from the marked Jewish male body to the deracinated female body. This displacement symptomatizes the psychic and material burdens of Jewish racial otherness for Freud, a displaced racial otherness made legible in the arena of sexual difference. In making hysteria a mark of female sexual difference, Freud seeks to make possible the Jewish male's claims on normative masculinity and a Christianized whiteness. Chapter four of this book explores this problematic. We might also note that Freud, as Mary Ann Doane points out in *Femmes Fatales*, uses the term *dark continent* to describe female sexuality as "an unexplored territory, an enigmatic, unknowable place concealed from the theoretical gaze and hence the epistemological power of the psychoanalyst" (209). Here, the "dark origins" of the primitive converge with female sexuality as the dark continent and a marker for a displaced racial otherness.
- 13 Turning to issues of sexuality in Asian American racial formation is especially important. Questions of sexuality must be considered in relation to the waning of class-based critiques of race, which have been challenged and eroded in the age of globalization. See, for instance, Victor Burgin, *In/Different Spaces: Place and Memory in Visual Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996): "The enormous wealth accumulating in the newly 'global' economy, however, has yet to 'trickle down' to the unemployed, the deranged, and the diseased who accumulate not only at its spatial margins but also at its centers—on the streets of the world's richest cities. However, although the economic gap between wealthy and poor has increased in this last quarter of a century, the rights most conspicuously claimed today are more likely to be the civil rights of a social minority than the material rights of a broader economic class. Toward the close of the twentieth century, various forms of 'identity politics' have largely superseded the economic-class politics that was the privileged form of social contestation at the beginning of the century" (193). I will return to this issue of sexuality and race, as well as class and globalization, in the epilogue of this book, where I discuss queerness and diaspora in a transnational age.
- 14 See also the introduction to David L. Eng and Alice Y. Hom, eds., *Q & A: Queer in Asian America* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1998), 1–21.
- 15 See, for example, the feminist literary criticism in Elaine H. Kim, *Asian American Literature: An Introduction to the Writings and Their Social Context* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1982); Sau-ling Cynthia Wong, *Reading Asian American Literature: From Necessity to Extravagance* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993); King-Kok Cheung, *Articulate Silences: Hisaye Yamamoto, Maxine Hong Kingston, Joy Kogawa* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993); Lisa Lowe, *Immigrant Acts: On Asian American Cultural Politics* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996); and Traise Yamamoto, *Masking Selves, Making Subjects: Japanese American Women, Identity, and the Body* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999). More recently, David Leiwei Li, in his *Imagining the Nation: Asian American Literature and Cultural Consent* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), and David Palumbo-Liu, in his *Asian/American: Historical Crossings of a Racial Frontier* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), have provided critical studies that focus in part on issues of masculinity.
- 16 King-Kok Cheung, "The Woman Warrior versus The Chinaman Pacific: Must a Chinese American Critic Choose between Feminism and Heroism?" in *Conflicts in Feminism*, eds. Marianne Hirsch and Evelyn Fox Keller (New York: Routledge, 1990), 244.
- 17 For an elaboration of this women's studies/gender versus queer studies/sexuality distinction, see Judith Butler, "Against Proper Objects," *differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 6.2–3 (summer-fall 1994): 1–26.
- 18 Mae Ngai notes that the 1790 naturalization act granted all "free white persons" (not just, as Lowe writes, white male persons) the right to claim citizenship. It was not until after the Civil War, with the passage of the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments to the Constitution, that the naturalization statute was enlarged to include free men of African nativity or descent in 1870. In language, the 1790 statute is technically general.

- der neutral. As such, definitions of citizenship would also by logical extension be so. Nevertheless, as women continued to be barred from fundamental rights of U.S. citizenship such as voting until 1920, with the passing of the Nineteenth Amendment, Lowe's larger contention that in this historical period, "as the state extended citizenship to nonwhite male persons, it formally designated these subjects as 'male,' as well" seems justified. I would like to thank Mae Ngai for discussing this issue with me.
- ¹⁹ See Victor G. Nee and Brett de Bary Nee, *Longtime Californ': A Documentary Study of an American Chinatown* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1972), which documents the range of professions undertaken by Chinese male immigrants in San Francisco's Chinatown.
- ²⁰ For critical studies of these stereotypes in the popular and mass media, see James S. Moy, *Marginal Sites: Staging the Chinese in America* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1993); Darrell Hamamoto, *Monitored Peril: Asian Americans and the Politics of TV Representation* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994); and Robert G. Lee, *Orientals: Asian Americans in Popular Culture* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1999).
- ²¹ Page Act, Act of 18 February 1875, chap. 80, 18 Stat. 318. See also Sucheng Chan, ed., *Entry Denied: Exclusion and the Chinese Community in America, 1882–1943* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1991); and Bill Ong Hing, *Making and Remaking Asian America through Immigration Policy, 1850–1990* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993). In fact, by the time the Supreme Court ruled in *Loving v. Virginia* (388 U.S. 1 [1967]) that antimiscegenation laws were unconstitutional, thirty-eight states had enacted them, sixteen of which were still in effect. See Leti Volpp, "American Mestizo: Filipinos and Antimiscegenation Laws in California," *University of California at Davis Law Review* 33 (2000).
- ²² Jennifer Ting has studied the formation of bachelor communities as queer spaces. See her "Bachelor Society: Deviant Heterosexuality and Asian American Historiography," in *Privileging Positions: The Sites of Asian American Studies*, eds. Gary Y. Okihiro, Marilyn Aquizola, Dorothy Fujita Rony, and K. Scott Wong (Pullman: Washington State University Press, 1995), 271–79.
- ²³ Magnuson Act, Act of 17 December 1943, chap. 344, §1, 57 Stat. 600.
- ²⁴ *Brown v. Board of Education*, 347 U.S. 483, 489 (1954).
- ²⁵ See Butler, *Bodies*. Writing about the "reality" of the body, Butler states: "First, psychic projection confers boundaries and, hence, unity on the body so that the very contours of the body are sites that vacillate between the psychic and the material. Bodily contours and morphology are not merely implicated in an irreducible tension between the psychic and the material but are that tension" (66).
- ²⁶ Frank Chin, Jeffery Paul Chan, Lawson Fusao Inada, and Shawn Wong, eds., *Aiiieeeee! An Anthology of Asian-American Writers* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1975), x.
- ²⁷ The psychic introjection and transformation of debilitating material inequities once external as "feelings" of inferiority and self-hate outlines a process of melancholic incorporation that various scholars of race are currently elaborating with extraordinary promise. See, for instance, José Esteban Muñoz, "Photographies of Mourning: Melancholia and Ambivalence in Van Der Zee, Mapplethorpe, and *Looking for Langston*," in Muñoz, *Disidentifications*, 57–74; Anne Anlin Cheng, "The Melancholy of Race," *Kenyon Review* 19.1 (1997): 49–61; David L. Eng and Shinhee Han, "A Dialogue on Racial Melancholia," *Psychoanalytic Dialogues* 10.4 (2000): 667–700; and David L. Eng and David Kazanjian, eds., *Loss* (forthcoming).
- ²⁸ This debate between feminism and heroism is also very much alive in African American studies. For example, Ishmael Reed has attacked Toni Morrison's work in ways similar to the *Aiiieeeee!* group's critique of writers such as Kingston.
- ²⁹ Sigmund Freud, "Femininity," in Freud, *Standard Edition*, 22:134.
- ³⁰ Stanley Sue and Derald W. Sue, "Chinese-American Personality and Mental Health," *Amerasia Journal* 1.2 (July 1971): 42.
- ³¹ Louis Althusser, *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, trans. Ben Brewster (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1971), 162.
- ³² See W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk: W. E. B. Du Bois, Writings* (New York: Library of America, 1986), 372.
- ³³ See two essays by Homi Bhabha, "Interrogating Identity: Frantz Fanon and the Postcolonial Prerogative" and "How Newness Enters the World: Postmodern Space, Postcolonial Times, and the Trials of Cultural Transmission," in *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 40–65, 212–35.
- ³⁴ Maxine Hong Kingston, *The Woman Warrior: Memoirs of a Girlhood among Ghosts* (New York: Vintage, [1976] 1989), 5–6.
- ³⁵ Abel, Christian, and Moglen, *Female Subjects*, 5.
- ³⁶ Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Negotiating the Structures of Violence," in *The Post-colonial Critic: Interviews, Strategies, Dialogues*, ed. Sarah Harasym (New York: Routledge, 1990), 150.
- ³⁷ Wendy Brown, *States of Injury: Power and Freedom in Late Modernity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995). Brown writes: "Starkly accountable yet dramatically impotent, the late modern liberal subject quite literally seethes with *resentiment*. . . . But in its attempt to displace its suffering, identity structured by *resentiment* at the same time becomes invested in its own subjection. This investment lies not only in discovery of a site of blame for its hurt will, not only in its acquisition of recognition through its history of subjection (a recognition predicated on injury, now righteously revalued), but also in the satisfactions of revenge, which ceaselessly reenact even as they redistribute the injuries of marginalization and subordination in a liberal discursive order that alternately denies the very possibility of these things and blames those who experience them for their own condition. Identity politics structured by *resentiment* reverse without subverting this blaming structure: they do not subject to critique the sovereign subject

- of accountability that liberal individualism presupposes, nor the economy of inclusion and exclusion that liberalism establishes" (69–70).
- ³⁸ See, for instance, the 1987 debate in African American studies aired in *Cultural Critique*: Barbara Christian, "The Race for Theory," *Cultural Critique* 6 (spring 1987): 1–63; and Henry Louis Gates, "Authority, (White) Power, and the (Black) Critic: It's All Greek to Me," *Cultural Critique* 7 (fall 1987): 19–46.
- ³⁹ Maxine Hong Kingston, *China Men* (New York: Vintage, [1980] 1989), 138.
- ⁴⁰ The quotation is from Walter Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy of History," in *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*, ed. Hannah Arendt (New York: Schocken, 1969), 255.
- ⁴¹ Jacques Lacan, "The Meaning of the Phallus," in *Feminine Sexuality: Jacques Lacan and the École Freudienne*, eds. Juliet Mitchell and Jacqueline Rose (New York: Norton, 1985), 74–85.
- ⁴² See Oscar V. Campomanes, "Filipinos in the United States and Their Literature of Exile," in *Reading the Literatures of Asian America*, eds. Shirley Geok-lin Lim and Amy Ling (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992), 49–78.
- ⁴³ See Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991). Lowe in *Immigrant Acts*, for example, writes: "From roughly 1850 to World War II, Asian immigration was the site for the eruptions and resolutions of the contradictions between the national economy and the political state, and, from World War II onward, the locus of the contradictions between the nation-state and the global economy" (158–59).

ONE I've Been (Re)Working on the Railroad

- 1 Maxine Hong Kingston, *China Men* (New York: Vintage, [1980] 1989); Frank Chin, *Donald Duk* (Minneapolis: Coffee House Press, 1991).
- 2 David Leiwei Li, "China Men: Maxine Hong Kingston and the American Canon," *American Literary History* 2.3 (fall 1990): 482.
- 3 Tom De Haven, "He's Been Dreaming on the Railroad," *New York Times Book Review*, 31 March 1991, 9.
- 4 In addition to railroads, sugar plantations, laundries, and restaurants, Chinese immigrants also found jobs in the mining industry, agriculture, grocery stores, and specialty shops. As in the railroad industry, laborers in these jobs often fell victim to poor working conditions and low wages. See Sucheng Chan, *Asian Americans: An Interpretive History* (Boston: Twayne, 1991), 25–42; and Victor G. Nee and Brett de Bary Nee, *Longtime Californians: A Documentary Study of an American Chinatown* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1972).
- 5 In the *re Ah Yup* (1F. Cas. 223 [C.C.D. Ca 1878]) court ruling, Chinese immigrants were deemed ineligible for citizenship because they were not "white." The first exclusion law against any racial group was the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 (chap. 126, 22 Stat. 58), which targeted Chinese immigrant laborers. Subsequent legislation was enacted in attempts to exclude all Chinese from the United States (Act of 9 July 1884, chap. 220, 23 Stat. 115). The Geary Amendment (Act of 5 May 1892, chap. 60, 27 Stat. 25) extended Chinese exclusion for another ten years. Further exclusion acts were passed in 1902 (Act of 29 April 1902, chap. 641, 32 Stat. 176) and 1904 (Act of 27 April 1904, chap. 1630, 33 Stat. 428). Finally, the Johnson-Reed Act (Immigration Act of 1924, chap. 190, §131, 104 Stat. 4978) barred virtually all Asian immigration to the United States. These acts were not repealed until the Magnuson Act of 1943 (Act of 17 December 1943, chap. 344, §1, 57 Stat. 600), which instituted a small quota system that granted Chinese naturalization privileges. See Shirley Hune, "The Politics of Chinese Exclusion: Legislative-Executive Conflict 1876–1882," *Amerasia Journal* 9.1 (1982): 5–27; Sucheng Chan, "The Exclusion of Chinese Women, 1870–1943," in *Entry Denied: Exclusion and the Chinese Community in America, 1882–1943*, ed. Sucheng Chan (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1991), 94–146; Bill Ong Hing, *Making and Remaking Asian America through Immigration Policy, 1850–1900* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993); and Lisa Lowe, "Immigration, Racialization, Citizenship," in *Immigrant Acts: On Asian American Cultural Politics* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996), 1–36.
- 6 Robert M. Utley points out, "On May 10, 1869, a self-important and somewhat boozy array of frock-coated dignitaries gathered with several hundred rowdy laborers to drive the last spike in the Pacific Railroad. The site was Promontory Summit, Utah (not Promontory Point, 30 miles to the south). The last spike was an ordinary spike (not a 'golden' spike, which would have been crushed by a sledgehammer's blow)." See Robert M. Utley, "The Spike Wasn't Golden," *New York Times Book Review*, 12 December 1999: 10.
- 7 Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 1981), 65.
- 8 Walter Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy of History," in *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt (New York: Schocken, 1969), 255.
- 9 Kingston, *China Men*, 138.
- 10 Benjamin, "Theses," 255.
- 11 André Bazin, "The Ontology of the Photographic Image," in *What Is Cinema?*, trans. Hugh Gray (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), 1:13.
- 12 Christian Metz, "Photography and Fetish," in *The Critical Image: Essays on Contemporary Photography*, ed. Carol Squiers (Seattle: Bay Press, 1990), 155–64.
- 13 Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," in *Illuminations*, 233.
- 14 Eduardo Cadava, *Words of Light: Theses on the Photography of History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 13–14.
- 15 See Rey Chow, "Walter Benjamin's Love Affair with Death," *New German Critique* 48 (fall 1989): 63–86. Chow provides another suitable place for us

- bian and Gay Studies Reader, eds. Henry Abelove, Michèle Aina Barale, and David M. Halperin (New York: Routledge, 1993), 307–20. See also Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982); and Jean Laplanche and J.-B. Pontalis's entry on "foreclosure" in *The Language of Psycho-Analysis*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (New York: Norton, 1973), 166–69, for a further elaboration of the abject.
- 34 Homi Bhabha, "Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse," *October* 28 (1984): 130; Bhabha's emphasis.
- 35 See Althusser, "Ideology," 127–186.
- 36 See Jacques Lacan, "Some Reflections on the Ego," *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis* 34 (1953): 11–17.
- 37 See Laura Mulvey, *Visual and Other Pleasures* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989).
- 38 The example of Sartre's voyeur is invoked in Lacan, *Four Fundamental Concepts*, 84.
- 39 Sau-ling Cynthia Wong, *Reading Asian American Literature: From Necessity to Extravagance* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 100.
- 40 Jean Laplanche, *Life and Death in Psychoanalysis*, trans. Jeffrey Mehlman (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), 102. In *The Language of Psycho-Analysis*, Laplanche and Pontalis mention three primal fantasies, calling them original fantasies (*fantasmes originaires*) or fantasies of origin (*fantasmes des origines*): the primal scene, the seduction scene, and the castration scene. These three fantasies of origin, taken together, constitute an entire Oedipal history of the subject. Like myths, they claim to provide a representation of, and a solution to, the major enigmas that confront the child: "In the 'primal scene,' it is the origin of the subject that is represented; in seduction fantasies, it is the origin or emergence of sexuality; in castration fantasies, the origin of the distinction between the sexes" (332).
- 41 The "spying" infant cannot be in an actively voyeuristic position. The infant by definition occupies a passive role precisely because of its inability to understand or control the events it witnesses.
- 42 Lee Edelman, "Seeing Things: Representation, the Scene of Surveillance, and the Spectacle of Gay Male Sex," in *Inside/Out: Lesbian Theories, Gay Theories*, ed. Diana Fuss (New York: Routledge, 1991), 95.
- 43 Silverman, *Male Subjectivity*, 164.
- 44 Freud coined the term *stereotype plate* in his earliest writings in *The Interpretation of Dreams* (Standard Edition, vols. 4, 5). He returns repeatedly to this concept, most notably in "The Dynamics of Transference" (Standard Edition, 12:99–100). He discusses the concept of the readymade in chapter 6 of *The Interpretation of Dreams*.
- 45 Sigmund Freud, "Some Psychological Consequences of the Anatomical Distinction between the Sexes," in *ibid.*, 19:241–60.
- 46 Silverman, *Male Subjectivity*, 165.
- 47 Sigmund Freud, "From the History of an Infantile Neurosis (The 'Wolf Man')," in Freud, *Standard Edition*, 17:1–122.

- 48 Lee Edelman writes: "Insofar as the participants in the primal scene are as yet undifferentiated sexually to the infant who observes them—both, that is, in the logic of Freudian theory, are seen as phallic—it is no small wonder that he has little difficulty in experiencing an identification with each of their positions; but insofar as that scene must thereafter bear traces of sodomitical phantasy and homosexual desire, it is small wonder that Freud has great difficulty indeed in allowing himself or his psychoanalytic practice to be implicated in this scene at all" ("Seeing Things," 101).
- 49 Ibid. Laplanche and Pontalis in *Language* define the primal scene as a "scene of sexual intercourse between the parents which the child observes, or infers on the basis of certain indications, and fantasies. It is generally interpreted by the child as an act of violence on the part of the father" (335). They go on to state the "the act of coitus is understood by the child as an aggression by the father in a sado-masochistic relationship; secondly, the scene gives rise to sexual excitation in the child while at the same time providing a basis of castration anxiety; thirdly, the child interprets what is going on, within the framework of an infantile sexual theory, as anal coitus" (335).
- 50 The emasculation of the Asian American male—a youngster in this instance—follows the strict logic of French active / Greek passive.
- 51 Teresa de Lauretis, *The Practice of Love: Lesbian Sexuality and Perverse Desire* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 82–83.
- 52 See also the installation work of artist Ik Joong Kang. At the Whitney Museum of American Art, Kang recently installed "8490 Days of Memory," a work with 8,490 squares of chocolate hung on foil-covered walls. This same number corresponds to the polished clear plastic cubes amassed on the floor below, under the feet of a solid chocolate-covered Douglas MacArthur. Each three-inch square on the wall consists of an insignia from the U.S. Army cast in relief. Each three-inch cube on the floor contains a memento from Kang's childhood—marbles, wind-up toys, and dice preserved in resin.
- 53 See R. Zamora Linmark, *Rolling the R's* (New York: Kaya Production, 1995); Shyam Selvadurai, *Funny Boy* (New York: Morrow, 1994); and Norman Wong, *Cultural Revolution* (New York: Perseus, 1994).
- 54 Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, "How to Bring Your Kids up Gay: The War on Feminine Boys," in *Tendencies* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993), 161.
- 55 For a feminist critique of Fanon, see Fuss, *Identification Papers*, as well as Gwen Bergner, "Who Is That Masked Woman? or the Role of Gender in Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks*," *PMLA* 110.1 (January 1995): 75–88. For a queer critique of Fanon, see Lee Edelman, *Homographesis: Essays in Gay Literary and Cultural Theory* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 42–75.
- 56 Angela Y. Davis, *Women, Race, and Class* (New York: Vintage, 1983), 200.

THREE Heterosexuality in the Face of Whiteness

- 1 For instance, Ralph Ellison's novel *Invisible Man* (New York: Random House, 1952); Christine Choy's *Out in Silence* (San Francisco: National Asian Ameri-

- can Telecommunications Association, 1994), a documentary on AIDS in the Asian Pacific American community; and ACT UP's chant of queer affirmation and protest, "We're here, we're queer, get used to it!" are examples that collectively emphasize—even demand—the need for the disenfranchised subject to emerge into the domain of visibility and speech.
- 2 Kobena Mercer, "Skin Head Sex Thing," in *How Do I Look*, ed. Bad Object Choices (Seattle: Bay Press, 1991), 206. See also "White Like Who? Notes on the Other Race," a special issue of the *Village Voice*, 18 May 1993, 24–41. This special issue is a compendium of articles examining whiteness as an invisible racial identity.
- 3 Ping-hui Liao's article, "'Of Writing Words for Music Which Is Already Made': *Madama Butterfly*, *Turandot*, and Orientalism," *Cultural Critique* 16 (fall 1990): 31–59, provides an excellent summary of Puccini's opera and its critical antecedents. According to Liao, the opera was originally based upon a drama, *Naughty Anthony*, written by American playwright David Belasco (see *Six Plays: Madame Butterfly, Du Barry, The Darling of the Gods, Adrea, The Girl of the Golden West, The Return of Peter Grimm* [Boston: Little Brown, 1928]). Belasco adapted the story from a novella by American author John Luther Long (see *Madame Butterfly, Purple Eyes, A Gentleman of Japan and a Lady, Kito, Glory* [New York: Century, 1898]). The original story line is apparently based on the actual suicide of a Japanese geisha, a story notably recorded by the French writer Pierre Loti in *Madame Chrysanthème* (Paris: Calmann-Levy, [1887] 1922).
- 4 David Henry Hwang, *M. Butterfly* (New York: Plume, 1988), 91.
- 5 See, for example, Gabrielle Cody's article, "David Hwang's *M. Butterfly*: Perpetuating the Misogynist Myth," *Theatre* 20.2 (spring 1989): 24–27; and John Louis DiGaetani's interview with the playwright, "M. Butterfly: An Interview with David Henry Hwang," *Drama Review* 33.3 (fall 1989): 141–53.
- 6 Majorie Garber, *Vested Interests: Cross-Dressing and Cultural Anxiety* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1992), 243; Garber's emphasis.
- 7 Here Garber quotes Hwang.
- 8 Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 18; Butler's emphasis.
- 9 Ibid., 182; my emphasis.
- 10 Ibid.
- 11 Eve Sedgwick, "White Glasses," in *Tendencies* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993), 255.
- 12 Frank Rich, "M. Butterfly: A Story of a Strange Love, Conflict, and Betrayal," *New York Times*, 21 March 1988, Cr3.
- 13 Moira Hodgson, "M. Butterfly," *Nation*, 23 April 1988, 577.
- 14 See Miriam Horn's review of *M. Butterfly*, "The Mesmerizing Power of Racial Myths," *U.S. News and World Report*, 28 March 1988, 52–53. In this article, Horn compares Hwang to African American film director Spike Lee. For an excellent summary of the material conditions prohibiting the Asian American artist from full participation in the American mainstream of artistic production, see Sau-ling Cynthia Wong's *Reading Asian American Literature: From Necessity to Extravagance* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), chap. 4.
- 15 John Simon, "Finding Your Song," *New York*, 11 April 1988, 117.
- 16 In "An Actor Despairs," *New York*, 24 October 1988, 145–46, which Simon wrote after *M. Butterfly* won the Tony Award, he retracts his earlier statement and responds to the issue of white masculinity: "While sharing in the shame and heartbreak of René Gallimard as embarrassingly well conveyed by Lithgow, I let the quality of the play slip out of my focus" (146). For an analysis of Simon's admission of a vexed (dis)identification with Gallimard's failed white manhood, see Angela Pao, "The Critic and the Butterfly: Socio-cultural Contexts and the Reception of David Henry Hwang's *M. Butterfly*," *Amerasia Journal* 18.3 (1992): 1–16.
- 17 For a similar debate on the use of yellowface by a white actor, see Yoko Yoshioka's analysis of the *Miss Saigon* controversy, "The Heat Is on *Miss Saigon* Coalition: Organizing across Race and Sexuality," in *The State of Asian America: Activism and Resistance in the 1990s*, ed. Karin Aguilar-San Juan (Boston: South End, 1994), 275–94.
- 18 Sigmund Freud, "The Dissection of the Psychical Personality," in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, ed. James Strachey (London: Hogarth, 1955), 22:79.
- 19 Sigmund Freud, *The Ego and the Id*, in Freud, *Standard Edition*, 19:18.
- 20 Sigmund Freud, "Splitting of the Ego in the Defensive Process," in Freud, *Standard Edition*, 23:275.
- 21 Ibid., 276.
- 22 I place *castration* in quotation marks since one can technically be castrated only when one loses something that one once had. The idea of female castration is problematic, since the woman never had a penis to lose in the first place. Freud's conflation of female penis envy (and the notion of clitoris as an inferior penis) with loss and castration is both slippery and overdetermined. I thank David Hirsch for discussing this issue with me.
- 23 Freud, "Splitting of the Ego," 277.
- 24 Ibid., 275–76.
- 25 Indeed, *M. Butterfly* was based on the actual story of a low-level attaché in the French Foreign Service, Bernard Boursicot, and a Chinese opera diva, Shi Pei Pu, who had an on-again, off-again affair for nearly eighteen years (from about 1965 to 1983). Shi Pei Pu regularly dressed as a man but confided to Boursicot that she was, in fact, a woman who had been raised as a boy by her family. During the course of their relationship, Boursicot not only "sired" a son but passed on several hundred documents from the French embassies in Beijing and Ulan Bator, Mongolia, to the Chinese authorities. In 1983, after Boursicot had returned and Shi Pei Pu had emigrated to France, they were both charged with espionage. During various medical examinations resulting from the espionage charges, French officials discovered that Shi Pei Pu was a man, despite Boursicot's belief to the contrary. In 1987, Boursicot

- and Shi Pei Pu were given presidential pardons due to the inconsequential nature of the stolen documents as well as the embarrassment this unimportant legal case caused the Chinese and French governments. The story of Boursicot and Shi Pei Pu is chronicled by Joyce Wadler in *Liaison* (New York: Bantam, 1993).
- 26 See Robert J. Corber, *Homosexuality in Cold War America* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997); and Lee Edelman, *Homographesis: Essays in Gay Literary and Cultural Theory* (New York: Routledge, 1994), esp. chap. 9.
- 27 Commenting on this crossing of homosexuality and racialization, Edelman notes in *Homographesis* that "the historical pressure upon the post-war American national self-image found displaced articulation in the phobic positioning of homosexual activity as the proximate cause of perceived danger to the nation at a time of unprecedented concern about the possibility of national—and global—destruction. Revising late nineteenth-century arguments about racial degeneration and bringing them to bear upon mid-twentieth-century social and political conflicts, historically deployed readings envisioning male homosexuality in terms of the abjection associated with the men's room could complain of the threat homosexuality posed to the continuity of civilization itself" (168).
- 28 I do, of course, make ironic reference to this abduction of Gallimard into heterosexuality and whiteness over and against the hysterical accusations of those who would say that homosexuality is given over to the logic of recruitment in its "reproductive" affiliative capacities.
- 29 Sigmund Freud, "Fetishism," in Freud, *Standard Edition*, 21:154.
- 30 It is interesting to note that Freud ends "Fetishism" with a gesture toward a race-psychological parallel to this psychic mechanism of denial and projection: the Chinese custom of foot binding, of "mutilating the female foot and then revering it like a fetish after it has been mutilated" (157). "The Chinese male wants to thank the woman for having submitted to being castrated" (157), Freud claims. Here, he seems to raise this racial example only to further his assertions of fetishism's role in the anatomical distinction between the (white) sexes.
- 31 Kaja Silverman, *The Threshold of the Visible World* (New York: Routledge, 1996), 31.
- 32 Here I am allowing a certain slippage from *Asian* to *Asian American* not only because Hwang's text functions within the politics of Asian America but also because, to many a Western eye, Asians and Asian Americans all "look alike."
- 33 Richard Fung, "Looking for My Penis: The Eroticized Asian in Gay Porn Video," in *How Do I Look?* ed. Bad Object Choices (Seattle: Bay Press, 1991), 153.
- 34 Lisa Lowe, *Immigrant Acts: On Asian American Cultural Politics* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996), 151.
- 35 Kaja Silverman, "The Lacanian Phallus," *differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 4.1 (spring 1992): 113.

- 36 This scene suggests that Renée neutralizes the gender of the phallus. As Jane Gallop notes in *Reading Lacan* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), the typographical error concerning the definite article *la*, which marks the "phallus" in the French publication of Lacan's "La Signification du phallus," speaks to a breakdown in symbolic structuration: "If 'the phallic signifier is intrinsically neutral,' then the signifier 'phallus,' the word in language, might be either feminine or masculine, epicene" (137).
- 37 Eve Sedgwick, for example, argues that the homosocial order annexes the figure of woman as the conduit through which homosexual desire is channeled. See *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985).
- 38 Freud, "Fetishism," 154.
- 39 Ibid., 153.
- 40 See Freud's discussion of anaclitic and narcissistic love in "On Narcissism: An Introduction," in Freud, *Standard Edition*, 14:87–91. In this essay, Freud names homosexuals, females, children, cats, and criminals as exemplary narcissists. See also Judith Butler's excellent discussion of normative heterosexuality as a melancholic renunciation of homosexual desire in *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 57–72 and *The Psychic Life of Power: Theories in Subjection* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), 132–50.
- 41 A suitable parallel can be drawn from Freud's admonition in *The Ego and the Id* that, although the superego comes about through an abjection of homosexuality, it cannot ultimately enforce this prohibition, from which it is produced.
- 42 Earl Jackson Jr., "Scandalous Subjects: Robert Glück's Embodied Narratives," *differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 3.2 (summer 1991): 121.
- 43 In an earlier reading of the drama, I explored the material conditions around which Rice Queens might choose to pass. The identitarian bent with which I approached this first reading of *M. Butterfly* remains crucial in debates on identity-based politics. See my "In the Shadows of a Diva: Committing Homosexuality in David Henry Hwang's *M. Butterfly*," *Amerasia Journal* 20.1 (1994): 93–116. I hope that the current reading of *M. Butterfly* provides a supplementary angle from which to merge my arguments on the material and psychoanalytic levels.
- 44 Freud, "Fetishism," 156.
- 45 Mark Chiang, "A White Thing: Fetishism and Paranoia in the Nation," paper presented at the annual conference of the Association of Asian American Studies, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, April 1994, 5. I thank Mark Chiang for allowing me to quote from his manuscript.
- 46 Lacan, in "Signification of the Phallus" (in *Écrits: A Selection*, trans. Alan Sheridan [New York: Norton, 1977], 281–91), states: "But one may, simply by reference to the function of the phallus, indicate the structures that will govern the relations between the sexes."

- "Let us say that these relations will turn around a 'to be' and a 'to have,' which, by referring to a signifier, the phallus, have the opposed effect, on the one hand, of giving reality to the subject in this signifier, and, on the other, of derealizing the relations to be signified" (289).
- 47 As Lacan points out: "It should not be forgotten that the organ [the penis] that assumes this signifying function [of the phallus] takes on the value of a fetish" (*ibid.*, 290).
- 48 Freud, "Splitting of the Ego," 276.
- FOUR *Male Hysteria—Real and Imagined—in Eat a Bowl of Tea and Pangs of Love*
- 1 Some prominent female hysterics in Asian American literature include Miss Sasagawara in Hisaye Yamamoto's "The Legend of Miss Sasagawara," in *Seventeen Syllables and Other Stories* (Latham, NY: Kitchen Table/Women of Color Press, 1988), 20–33; Hualing Nieh's split narrator Mulberry/Peach in *Mulberry and Peach: Two Women of China*, trans. Jane Parish Yang with Linda Lappin (Boston: Beacon, 1981); the narrator in Wendy Law-Yone's *The Coffin Tree* (Boston: Beacon, 1983); and Jessica Hagedorn's Baby Alacran in *Dogeaters* (New York: Pantheon, 1990).
- 2 Maxine Hong Kingston, *The Woman Warrior: Memoirs of a Girlhood among Ghosts* (New York: Vintage, [1976] 1989), 181–82.
- 3 Louis Chu, *Eat a Bowl of Tea* (New York: Lyle Stuart, [1961] 1990); David Wong Louie, *Pangs of Love* (New York: Knopf, 1991).
- 4 For a brief overview of the history of female hysteria, see Charles Bernheimer, "Introduction: Part One," in *In Dora's Case: Freud—Hysteria—Feminism*, eds. Charles Bernheimer and Claire Kahane, 2d ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985) 1–18. For a more detailed history of female hysteria, see Ilza Vieth's *Hysteria: The History of a Disease* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965). For a psychoanalytic account of female hysteria, see Monique David-Menard's *Hysteria from Freud to Lacan: Body and Language in Psychoanalysis*, trans. Catherine Porter (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989).
- 5 Magnuson Act, Act of 17 December 1943, chap. 344, §1, 57 Stat. 600; and War Brides Act, Act of 28 December 1945, Pub. L. No. 271, 59 Stat. 659. Sucheng Chan notes that the 1945 War Brides Act, which "had initially excluded veterans of Asian ancestry, was amended in 1947 to include them. That fact enabled GIs to marry in Asia and to bring their brides back to the United States, where they started families. From the late 1940s through the 1950s and the first half of the 1960s, the number of Asian women entering the country exceeded the number of men." *Asian Americans: An Interpretive History* (Boston: Twayne, 1991), 140.
- 6 Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Scattered Speculations on the Question of Culture Studies," in *Outside in the Teaching Machine* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 255–84; "Culture," in *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Toward a History of the Vanishing Present* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 312–421. Spivak defines the "new immigrant" in relation to the continuing influx of immigrants since the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1 October 1965—as those "groups escaping decolonization one way or the other" (393). *New immigrant* refers primarily to immigrants from Asia, the Caribbean, Central America, and Mexico. See also Lisa Lowe, *Immigrant Acts: On Asian American Cultural Politics* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996); and Aiwha Ong, *Flexible Citizenship: The Cultural Logic of Transnationality* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999).
- 7 Slavoj Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology* (New York: Verso, 1989), 113.
- 8 See Bernheimer, "Introduction," on which the following historical summary of female hysteria draws.
- 9 Gerard Wajeman, *Le Maître et l'hystérique* (Paris: Navarin, 1982), 127.
- 10 Even as late as 1855, for instance, the *Dictionnaire de médecine* by Littré and Robin continued to deny the possibility of a male diagnosis of hysteria: "If one does not want to confuse hysteria with a great many other illnesses, one cannot locate the originary locus of this affliction in the brain. One can also not accept that such hysteria could be observed in the male sex: hysteria is an illness that is peculiar to the female sex" (Emile Littré and Albert Robin, *Dictionnaire de médecine* [Paris: J. B. Bailliére, 1855]). It was not until 1878, with the publication of the fully revised fourteenth edition of the *Dictionnaire de médecine*, that this entry was emended, leaving out the claim that hysteria could not be observed in the male sex. Quoted in Ursula Link-Herr, "'Male Hysteria': A Discourse Analysis," *Cultural Critique* 15 (spring 1990): 203.
- 11 See Jean-Martin Charcot, *Lectures on the Diseases of the Nervous System*, trans. George Sigerson (London: New Sydenham Society, 1877). See also Mark S. Micale, "Charcot and the Idea of Hysteria in the Male: Gender, Mental Science, and Medical Diagnosis in Late Nineteenth-Century France," *Medical History* 34 (1990): 363–411.
- 12 Sigmund Freud, "Observation of a Severe Case of Hemi-Anesthesia in a Hysterical Male," in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, ed. James Strachey (London: Hogarth, 1955), I: 25. Indeed, Freud's first medical lecture upon returning to Vienna from Charcot's clinic specifically concerned male rather than female hysteria. Daniel Boyarin writes that it is "well known that what most aroused the ire of the Viennese medical audience that heard Freud's first lecture upon returning from Charcot was the fact that it was about *male hysteria*" ("Freud's Baby, Fleiss's Maybe: Homophobia, Anti-Semitism, and the Invention of the Oedipus," *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 2.1–2 [1995]: 118; Boyarin's emphasis).
- 13 Jacques Lacan, "Kanzer Seminar at Yale University," trans. Barbara Johnson (1975), quoted in Shoshana Felman, *What Does a Woman Want? Reading and Sexual Difference* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1993), 101.
- 14 Josef Breuer and Sigmund Freud, "On the Psychical Mechanism of Hysteria,"