

Article

Choreographing Multiraciality: Mixed-Race Methods in North American Contemporary Dance

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Abstract: Multiracialism, or the concept of “mixed-race”, remains a key racial discourse within twenty-first-century North American societies. Scholarly and mainstream studies of multiracial people often highlight the function of speech in theorizing mixed-race experiences, where interviews or other first-person narratives resist racialized stereotypes and express complex multiracial identities. Yet these studies often overlook the body as a comparable analytical site, ignoring how the body’s mobilization—in dance, choreography, and everyday actions—might further nuance mixed-race subjecthood. My article emphasizes experimental dance and choreography as alternative methods for imagining multiracial subjects, where these body-based approaches reject both stereotypical depictions of multiracial people in mainstream media and “transparent” representations in interviews. Drawing on the concept of “opacity,” which describes unknowable, illegible difference, I propose that experimental dance enables the expression of “opaque” multiracial subjectivities. This article then offers a choreographic analysis of Glenn Potter-Takata’s *Yonsei f*ck f*ck*, an experimental dance that produces opacities for its performers, who are of mixed Japanese heritage. Through movement scores, stand-up comedy, and a re-created “late-night” talk show, the dance invites audiences to move beyond the desire to recognize, categorize, and “know” the mixed-race Asian American performer.

Keywords: critical mixed-race studies; dance; choreographic analysis; Asian American studies; opacity; Japanese Americans; yonsei generation



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1. Introduction

In 2021, The New York Times, The Washington Post, and other mainstream media outlets reported on the growing population of self-identifying multiracial or “mixed-race” people in the United States (Corbett 2021; Foster-Frau et al. 2021; Tavernise et al. 2021). Drawing on the results of the 2020 US Census, which collects data on race and ethnicity, these articles emphasized a 276% increase in people who identified with more than one broad racial group (e.g., American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Black or African American, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, White),¹ tracking this growth from 2010 to 2020. Each article follows a similar structure, beginning with census statistics and then supplementing these findings with first-person testimonials from people of mixed heritage. The authors’ objectives, then, go beyond exclusively publicizing the “changing”² racial demographics of the US. Instead, they examine the complexities of multiracial life, which census statistics cannot wholly capture, and nuance stereotypical understandings of mixed-race people as evidence of increasingly progressive race relations. Articulating one’s (multi-)racialized realities complicates narrow imaginings of race in the US, with personal voice illuminating a full diversity of mixed-race experiences.

The topics of these articles are not new, and neither is their focus on personal narrative. Scholars of critical mixed-race studies (CMRS) have long observed that North American mainstream media demonstrate significant interest in mixed-race self-identification, emphasizing first-person testimony as central to understanding *who* multiracial people are (Ifekwunigwe 2004; Nakashima 1996, 2001; Paragg 2023). CMRS exhibits similar tendencies,

as several scholars have acknowledged that the qualitative, open-ended interview is a dominant methodology within studies of multiracial populations and their representation in arts and popular culture (Essi 2017; Kina and Dariotis 2013; Mahtani 2014; Rockquemore et al. 2009). Yet Minelle Mahtani (2014) argues that critical mixed-race scholarship is at times overly reliant on interviewing, cautioning scholars about the uncritical use of this method. Although the interview emphasizes mixed-race agency—supporting the ability to define oneself, on one’s own terms—it is also problematically “mired in the present tense” (Mahtani 2014, p. 249). Given that interviews typically highlight the mixed-race person’s present-day activities, they “do not necessarily allow [interview] participants to explore the historical tensions surrounding race, empire, and imperialism that shaped and clouded their experiences” (Mahtani 2014, p. 249). Mahtani (2014), therefore, advocates for scholars to “go beyond [. . .] the qualitative interview” and challenge the predominance of this method in critical mixed-race scholarship (249).

My article responds to this call for alternative methodologies in studies of twenty-first century North American multiracialism, engaging dance studies to circumvent the limitations of the qualitative interview. Elaborating on Mahtani’s concerns, I identify an additional contention with interviewing and other forms of first-person narrative in CMRS: these methods prioritize speech as the vehicle for articulating complex mixed-race experiences while rendering the body an inert object. Mixed-race embodiment is often theorized as the site of intense objectification, where the perceived “racially ambiguous” features of some multiracial people are studied and surveilled (Elam 2011; Haritaworn 2009; Heinrich 2023; Leboeuf 2020; Alcoff 2005; Paragg 2023; Williams 1996).³ The speaking “I” frames these “ambiguous” traits with direct statements of racial and ethnic self-identification (i.e., “I have X, Y, and Z ancestries”), which assumedly demystify who the mixed-race person is in relation to their “confusing” phenotypic appearance. The multiracial subject therefore “speaks back” to their racial scrutiny, yet the body itself remains incoherent and inactive by comparison. I challenge this perspective by exploring the choreographic activation of the multiracial body within experimental dance,⁴ a medium which directly mobilizes the (racialized) body and puts it on display. I argue that analyzing dance prompts inquiries beyond *knowing who* mixed-race people are—that is, rather than striving to make “ambiguous” embodiment legible, as mixed-race personal narratives often do, dance can reimagine the body’s resistance to both its own objectification and the expectation that it be knowable.

Édouard Glissant’s (1997) concept of “opacity” provides a foundation for this argument. In *Poetics of Relation* (1997), Glissant argues for opacity as “that which cannot be reduced,” referencing a theorization of unknowable, unquantifiable difference (191). Opacity contrasts “transparency,” or legibility, a standard which hegemonic social powers often enforce. Glissant (1997) writes: “if we examine the process of ‘understanding’ people and ideas from the perspective of Western thought, we discover that its basis is [a] requirement for transparency” (189–90). In contrast to this, opacity represents “a diversity that exceeds categories of identity difference” (Blas 2016, p. 149). For Glissant (1997), opacity also creates and sustains ethical relations: relating to others requires respecting their “right to opacity,” as we must form relationships while accepting that we will never know others fully (194). Although Glissant developed this idea in the context of postcolonial Martinique, and thus implicates opacity for the Afro-Caribbean subject, scholar Zach Blas (2016) acknowledges that opacity “is increasingly deployed in political thought, media studies, queer theory, and art criticism today” (149). I further extend Glissant’s concept to mixed-race Asian Americans in dance, demonstrating how choreographic strategies can produce these subjectivities as opaque. Examining opacity challenges the methodological prominence of personal voice in CMRS and its broad aim to “know” mixed-race subjects, thereby shifting focus to alternative ways of exploring multiraciality. For multiracial Asian Americans specifically, opacity complicates racist stereotypes of Asian “inscrutability,” which, as Vivian L. Huang (2022) articulates, is a “powerful Orientalist discourse” that insists on perpetual Asian otherness and foreignness to “Euro-American subjectivity” (2). Insisting on the “right to opacity”

for Asian Americans rejects normative expectations to be “scrutable” and challenges the pejorative resonances of inscrutability altogether (Huang 2022).

I explore these ideas through choreographic analysis of choreographer Glenn Potter-Takata’s experimental dance work, *Yonsei f*ck f*ck* (2022). Premiering at Mabou Mines, a theater in New York City, *Yonsei f*ck f*ck* is an evening-length performance featuring four New York-based artists: Potter-Takata, evan ray suzuki, and Kimiko Tanabe dance as a trio, and they are later joined by writer and performer Matt Seiji Ketai. According to a description of the dance on Potter-Takata’s website, *Yonsei f*ck f*ck* “imagines a future where the cultural erasure stemming from Japanese internment camps has been overcorrected and distorted into a value system where anime and Japanese junk food have been assimilated into the pantheon of Buddhas and bodhisattvas” (Potter-Takata 2023). The dance is therefore not “about” mixed-race people, their identities, or experiences; however, *Yonsei f*ck f*ck* invokes the mixed-ness of twenty-first century Japanese American communities and can therefore be interpreted through a critical mixed-race perspective. The term “*yonsei*” describes the fourth generation of Japanese diaspora living in the US,⁵ a group that several scholars have identified as significantly mixed-race given the high intermarriage rates of Japanese Americans throughout the latter half of the twentieth century (King-O’Riain 2019; Nakano 2023; Omi et al. 2019). Moreover, all performers in *Yonsei f*ck f*ck* are, in fact, of mixed Japanese heritage.⁶ The experiences of *yonsei*, therefore, involve both the intergenerational impacts of Japanese American internment, which the description of *Yonsei f*ck f*ck* highlights, and, for many within this demographic, multiraciality also. To understand some fourth-generation *yonsei* requires critically assessing multiracial discourses, attending to the multiple racialized positions that intersect within the bodies of these Japanese diasporic subjects.

Opacities in *Yonsei f*ck f*ck* contest the typically objectified status of the mixed-race Asian American body and the presumed clarifying function of speech, leveraging body and dialogue as methods of making (multi-)racialized identities illegible. The dance first engages movement to construct a “mixed” body, one which exceeds “quantifiable” signifiers of mixed-race identity, such as phenotype and genetics. Through combining movement vocabularies drawn from both elements of the natural world and Japanese *anime*, *Yonsei f*ck f*ck* creates a hybridized Asian American performance style that represents “mixed-ness” through a merging of ecological and technological movement sources. Further, *Yonsei f*ck f*ck* employs stand-up comedy and re-creates a “late-night” talk show, staging “forms of talk” (Brodie 2008) premised on first-person narration to disrupt the coherency of speech. In the talk show, language excavates shared histories of Japanese American internment between the performers, transforming the hindering “present tense” (Mahtani 2014, p. 249) of interviewing into historical inquiries. By interpreting *Yonsei f*ck f*ck* from a critical mixed-race perspective, this article insists on the necessity of analyzing twenty-first century multiracial discourses within dance and beyond. The mainstream news articles which open my discussion are significant for their publication date: 2021 marked a year since the “so-called racial reckoning” of 2020 (Bradley 2021), when global communities protested anti-Black police violence and demonstrated the urgency of anti-racist action. Amidst this context, displays of white supremacy were ongoing. On 6 January 2021, a mob of far-right supporters of former US president Donald Trump stormed the US Capitol, many wearing Nazi symbols and proudly waving the Confederate flag. It is often within circumstances of heightened racial divisions that discussions of mixed-race people gain renewed prominence;⁷ the mainstream media reporting attests to this, and dance is not separate from these sociopolitical realities. Analyzing multiraciality in dance allows us to examine how the mixed-race body functions in the public imaginary—and how it might be re-choreographed in new, challenging, and even opaque ways.

I begin by connecting critical mixed-race studies and critical dance studies, fields that are not often approached in tandem. Although CMRS scholars have extensively explored multiracial representation in literature (Ibrahim 2012; Elam 2011; Collins 2022), theater (Paulin 2012; Nyong’o 2009; Heinrich 2023), and visual arts (Kina and Dariotis 2013; Joseph

2013; Nishime 2014; Storti 2020), dance is absent from most of these analyses (Shaffer 2023). For dance scholars, studies of racial representation in dance have been a major concern, as have analyses of intercultural choreographic processes (Albright 1997; Chatterjea 2013; DeFrantz 2004; Desmond 1997; Dixon Gottschild 1998; Kwan 2021; Mitra 2015; Wong 2016, among others). Yet explicit examinations of *mixed-race* dancers and choreographers are not necessarily included in this scholarship, although there are a few notable exceptions, which I will discuss later (Borelli 2016; Chatterjee and Moorty 2003; Kina 2017; Le Lay 2023; Storti 2023). By joining these fields, I demonstrate how dance scholarship complicates the division between speech and body that many CMRS scholars implicitly advance, affirming the body-in-motion as essential to theorizing complex mixed-race ideas. Further, in linking this discussion to the concept of opacity, I contribute to existing scholarship on the opacities of minoritarian performance (Daniher 2018; D'Oleo et al. 2021; Nguyen Donohue 2016; Holzapfel 2018; Huang 2022; León 2017; Post 2023; Willis 2016), most of which have yet to fully explore the multiracial Asian American subject in dance specifically. I then begin my close reading of *Yonsei f*ck f*ck*, which I divide into two sections. The dance can be understood as distinct halves: the first features movement, while the second, which occurs after an abrupt blackout, depicts the comedy and “late-night” talk show scenes. Following from this structure, I analyze *Yonsei f*ck f*ck*’s opacities of body and then of speech, producing my interpretation from a choreographic analysis of the dance’s archival recordings; textual analyses of movement scores and the performance script, which were generously supplied by Potter-Takata via personal email; and information from interviews conducted with Potter-Takata, which supplements my reading. In its opaque choreographies, *Yonsei f*ck f*ck* cultivates a relationship between audience and performer premised on the spectator’s limited capacities to recognize, categorize, and know the multiracial Asian American subject onstage.

Terminology and Positionality

I use “multiracial” and “mixed-race” interchangeably, terms that reference self-identification with more than one broad racial group. Census-based racial categories are, of course, fraught with contradictions and they do not represent the full spectrum of racialized experiences; however, defining “mixed-race” in this way represents the standard North American understanding of the term and I employ it accordingly (Zack 2017). I write this article from the perspective of a multiracial Asian American cisgender woman. My father is Japanese Canadian, and my mother is of Ashkenazi Jewish heritage. My own mixed-descent background and Japanese identity align me with the performers in *Yonsei f*ck f*ck* and informs my interpretation of the dance overall.

2. Speaking Voices and Dancing Bodies: Connecting Critical Mixed-Race Studies and Critical Dance Studies

Critical mixed-race scholars have argued that first-person narrative, both spoken and written, can critique mainstream fascination with the multiracial body. Some mixed-race appearances—specifically those deemed racially “ambiguous”—function as racialized curiosities, as they complicate the popular belief in race as “a truth that the body of the subject announces” (Ehlers 2012, p. 51). In contrast to dominant assumptions about race as a construct which is visible in skin color, eye color, hair texture, and other phenotypic traits, the multiracial body does not always visibly represent the subject’s racial self-identification, thereby leading to surveillance of the mixed-race person’s physical features. Scholars routinely highlight the “what are you?” interaction as exemplary of this scrutiny. The “what are you?” encounter consists of a questioner (typically imagined as a non-multiracial person) and a mixed-race respondent.⁸ The questioner perceives the multiracial person’s physical appearance, yet is unable to racially categorize them according to normative standards of what racial groups “look like.” They subsequently ask, “what are you?” implying an unstated connection between the word “what” and racial classification. The

respondent is then expected to describe their ancestry, clarifying the perceived ambiguity of their body with coherent statements of race and ethnicity.

The “what are you?” question demonstrates the failure of what Omi and Winant (2014) term the racial “compass,” a set of social assumptions and practices that facilitate the (often visual) decipherment of the body (62). Although some scholars have argued that this failure can prompt “new meanings of race” by expanding stereotypical understandings of racialized appearances (Williams 1996), others have characterized the “what are you?” interaction as objectifying (Elam 2011; Haritaworn 2009; Leboeuf 2020; Mahtani 2014; McClain DaCosta 2007; Paragg 2023). Céline Leboeuf (2020) emphasizes the literal reference to objecthood embedded in the question itself, as the racially ambiguous respondent becomes a “what” as opposed to a “who” (293). Similarly, Jin Haritaworn (2009) approaches the “what are you?” question as a “dissective racializing technology,” one which aims to pry apart and decode the mixed-race person’s physical features (115). Jillian Paragg (2023) has theorized this process of dissection as a “multiracializing gaze,” a variant of the standard “racial gaze” which racially categorizes bodies based on their phenotypic appearance (2).⁹ Rather than simply assigning bodies to racial classifications, the “multiracializing gaze” responds to the perceived *ambiguity* of the mixed-race body and seeks the “originary point of mixing” to decipher physical presentation (Paragg 2017, p. 290). That is, this gaze aims to discover the multiracial body’s “lineage on ‘each side’ (mother and father)” to produce understanding; this process also implicates limiting theorizations of race as biological, as it suggests that the “originary point of mixing” occurs through heterosexual reproduction—“mother and father” (Paragg 2023, p. 21). The “multiracializing gaze” puts forth the possibility that, if the observer looks deeply enough, they can uncover the observed body’s genetic “truth” (Samuels 2014; Spencer 2004).

The verbal becomes an important supplement and site of resistance to this objectification. In the “what are you?” interaction, the question is uttered only after visibility fails to produce stable information. Speech also enables the respondent to challenge the question, claiming a sense of agency through linguistic choices. The mixed-race person can “foist the burden of explaining racial features back onto the questioner” by asking “what do you think I am?” among other similar retorts (Leboeuf 2020, p. 301). Some multiracial people answer with a straightforward run-down of their ancestries, using this brief discussion to shut down conversation further. Paragg (2017) theorizes these responses as “ready narratives,” stories about the mixed-race person’s background that they have “ready” for questioning (278). Ready narratives can also “play on” and against the mixed-race person’s objectification; for example, some narratives substitute terms of nationality (i.e., Canadian, American) for racial descriptors, both challenging the questioner’s determination of race and insisting on the mixed-race subject’s ability to self-define, at their own choosing (Paragg 2017, p. 290). Verbal responses to the “what are you?” question are therefore not exclusively “transparent” (Glissant 1997), as they can confuse the questioner further. Yet, language remains the vehicle through which resistance occurs—regardless of whether speech provides accurate information, scholars frequently uphold the linguistic as necessary for the mixed-race person to react, respond, and resist.

The “what are you?” encounter is a singular example from critical mixed-race scholarship, but it exemplifies a tension between speech and body that permeates multiple discussions within the field. In analyses of artistic mixed-race representations, some scholars continue to uphold verbal elements even within visual and body-based art forms. Nicole Rabin (2012) argues for the ability of written language to counter objectification in her study of visual artist Kip Fulbeck’s *Part Asian, 100% Hapa*, a photographic exhibition depicting people of mixed Asian and/or Pacific Islander heritage. The series depicts its subjects in portrait form, photographed at close range and from the neck up. Fulbeck also instructed each photographic subject to write a response to the question, “what are you?” which he then displayed alongside the portraits. Rabin (2012) contends that the images alone risk objectification, inviting scrutiny of the subject’s facial features given their close-up positioning (397). The written descriptions “save” the photographs from this

function, as they provide each subject with “a voice to narrate and “do” their own sense of identity” (Rabin 2012, p. 397). Laura Kina (2017) demonstrates a comparable approach in her analysis of mixed-race Asian American artists, despite her insistence that visual and body-based art are powerful theorizations of mixed-race subjectivities themselves. Analyzing the performances of artists Maya Mackrandilal and Zavé Martohardjono, Kina (2017) largely employs interviewing as the basis for her discussion (141). Although this method gives a voice to each artist, it also reasserts the significance of personal narrative in theorizing multiracial experiences, including those that are available in artistic forms; to some degree, the performing *bodies* in Kina’s study become less present than their words.

With this routine emphasis on language in analyses of both everyday mixed-race experiences and artistic depictions, the multiracial subject in experimental dance finds relatively limited scholarly support. This absence, in part, might be attributed to the medium specificity of dance relative to other aesthetic practices. In contrast to film or theater, where mixed-race characters might “voice” their agency through dialogue, experimental dances are often non-narrative, and they invite audience engagement beyond recognition of characters and their ethnic backgrounds (Chatterjee 2013; Kwan 2017). Representations of (racial) identity in experimental dance are not always made explicit (Ginot 2003; Martin 1992). In brief, it is relatively uncommon for a dancer to simply announce “I am mixed-race” to their audience, or to articulate comparable statements of racial and ethnic identity to those that Rabin (2012) and Kina (2017) foreground. Audience members are, therefore, tasked with deciphering the mixed-race performer as they visually appear in the moment of the performance. Viewers might scrutinize the performing body or compare the performer’s physical appearance with their last name or biographical details listed in the dance’s program notes—actions which are, perhaps, not dissimilar to the “what are you?” interaction. Despite these challenges, some scholars demonstrate how performers of mixed heritage explore dance and choreography to articulate nuanced multiracial identities (Borelli 2016; Chatterjee and Moorthy 2003; Le Lay 2023; Storti 2023). Outside of a North American context, Melissa Blanco Borelli (2016) has shown how the hip movement of the *mulata*, a Cuban woman of African, Indigenous, and European ancestries, can reclaim powerful subjecthood. Although the *mulata*’s hips typically convey stereotypes of sexual promiscuity and the colonial “taint of miscegenation” in Cuban popular culture, Borelli (2016) argues that the *mulata* can also use hips to “choreograph her racial identity” in ways resistant to gendered and racialized objectification (6).

Within Asian and Asian diasporic dance specifically, scholars have examined the significance of movement style in representing multiple racial identities: rather than denying some of their ancestries, dancers can combine movement forms to express *all* parts of their ethnic heritages. Sandra Chatterjee and Shyamala Moorthy (2003) emphasize their backgrounds as artists of South Asian and European descent as essential to choreographic inspiration. They have created intercultural performances that combine culturally associated movement vocabularies, such as ballet and Bharatanatyam, to effectively represent their multiracial and multicultural experiences. Maïko Le Lay (2023) identifies a similar approach in the social media dance performances of professional tennis player Naomi Osaka, who has a Haitian American father and a Japanese mother. Le Lay (2023) observes that Osaka’s dances employ “Africanist aesthetics [. . .] and manga-style moves” to showcase her “unapologetically Japanese, Black, and American identities” (206, emphasis in original). By showing how multiracial experiences become visible through movement, these authors argue for the dancing body’s challenge to mixed-race stereotypes, such as sexual promiscuity (Borelli 2016), and societal expectations to “choose” one racial/ethnic background over another (Chatterjee and Moorthy 2003; Le Lay 2023). Through hip movement and intercultural choreographies, the dancing body becomes *knowable* as a mixed-race subject with a clear representation of racial and ethnic self-identifications.

Yet how might the multiracial subject also remain unknowable to their audience, cultivating “opacity” (Glissant 1997) for their dancing body? Anna Moncada Storti (2023) offers an important response to this question, exploring illegible elements in performer

Zavé Martohardjono's work. Storti (2023) asserts that Martohardjono's dances do not exclusively aim to express a "mixed-race identity," although Martohardjono is of Indonesian and Italian heritage. Rather, their performances illuminate how the body "retains the pain of unresolved colonial violence" and can "recondition itself" through choreographic choices (272). One of these choices involves obscuring the body from the audience's view, which Storti (2023) analyzes through Martohardjono's use of a veil. Through veiling, Martohardjono deploys a "mode of marking invisibility" to complicate the "neoliberal longing for representation" (Storti 2023, pp. 276–77), a "longing" aligned with the societal expectation to be "transparent" (Glissant 1997). Within this perspective, the minoritarian subject's visibility—their transparency—is assumed to initiate understanding, inclusion, and ultimately political progress (Storti 2023, p. 277). For Storti (2023), Martohardjono rejects this demand and uses the veil, among other choreographic interventions, to make their queer, trans, and mixed-race identities illegible. I continue from Storti's inquiries by asking: how might the multiracial body, unveiled and on display, become opaque also? I begin my close reading of Potter-Takata's *Yonsei f*ck f*ck* from here: the dance complicates visual scrutiny of the Asian American mixed body, refuses linguistic coherency, and thus preserves an opacity for its performers.

3. Opacities of Body: Re-Mixed Corporealities

*Yonsei f*ck f*ck* develops throughout five sections.¹⁰ The dance begins with Potter-Takata, Suzuki, and Tanabe standing beside each other: to the sound of a repetitive electronic beat, the trio begins their performance of *butoh*, a Japanese avant-garde movement form that Potter-Takata has trained in for several years. Working through independent movement phrases, the performers eventually exit and return holding several objects, initiating the dance's second section. Here, the trio creates an altar with the objects and performs *mantras* and *mudras*, repeated speech and gestures with spiritual significance (Banerji 2019). Potter-Takata is a Shingon Buddhist practitioner, a form of Japanese esoteric Buddhism, and this scene reinterprets and re-choreographs a Buddhist ritual as part of the dance's theatrical world.¹¹ A blackout precedes the third section. As the dancers disassemble the altar and exit, Ketai replaces them and performs a fifteen-minute stand-up comedy set, which he wrote himself. In the fourth section, the dance transforms into a "late-night" talk show, with Ketai as host. He interviews the dancing trio, whom he refers to as the "world renowned" performance troupe, "Yonsei f*ck f*ck." Ketai also invites the dancers to participate in a game, which consists of catching a set of objects while blindfolded.¹² The dance's fifth and final section returns all four performers to movement. Suzuki exits the stage and returns in a large costume depicting Pikachu, the rodent-like character from the *Pokémon* video game series. Suzuki-as-Pikachu joins the group, and they bring the dance to a close with a unison movement phrase.¹³

Throughout the first two scenes, the dance contests the legibility of the mixed-race body by displacing "mixture" from its genetic and phenotypic associations: the dancers construct a "hybrid" choreographic style, connecting movement drawn from ecological and technological influences to represent mixed-ness beyond dominantly objectified features. When the lights first illuminate the trio, each performer is mid-step—the dancers walk slowly, covering minimal territory, as if prying the soles of their feet from thick, consuming ground. Suzuki displays his back to the audience while Potter-Takata and Tanabe emerge face-first from the shadowy upstage perimeter. Slight tremors ripple through each performer's otherwise rigid stances, as though a current of electricity has punctured a body part with a sudden shock before a quiet settle. This short introductory sequence and all other movement phrases throughout the dance are structured according to a "score," a set of directives that sequence improvised and set movement (Lepecki 2016). As the score outlines, the performers' initial walk—upright, with small, sudden wavering—is guided by the prompt "incense stick burning." The dancers begin their movement from the image and perhaps the feeling of the incense stick, their alternating rigidity and trembling evoking the activity of this object.

This opening sequence also introduces *Yonsei f*ck f*ck*'s engagement with *butoh* and the nature-based implications of this movement form, which the dance's score makes explicit. Following "incense stick burning," subsequent prompts reference the natural world. As the performers continue their walk, Potter-Takata extends one arm towards the sky, a movement that the score describes as "flower sprouting (right wrist)." Tanabe also begins her own exploration of the arms, working through the prompt of "smoke floating" as she lets meandering limbs extend to the side of her torso. Scholar Sondra Fraleigh (2020) has written about *butoh* as an "eco-somatic" practice, wherein movement initiates a process of "becoming" different environments, minerals, and non-human animals. Fraleigh and other scholars characterize *butoh* as an embodied philosophy, fundamentally concerned with generating movement, as opposed to performing codified dance steps (Baird and Candelario 2019; Candelario 2016; Fraleigh 2020, 2022; Sakamoto 2022). Some of the conceptual processes involved in creating *butoh* movement entail the "metaphoric matter of becoming creature, becoming other animals and objects, becoming elements of earth or atmosphere, and becoming nature as inhering in nature" (Fraleigh 2020, p. 467). The human body in *butoh* temporarily performs as ecological matter and non-human animals, establishing an intimacy with the natural world through this process.

The *butoh* score in *Yonsei f*ck f*ck* outlines comparable acts of "becoming," directing the performers to "become" frost, winter, trees, carp gills, meerkats, warthogs, petrified wood, and butterflies through movement. A consistent vibration and shiver through the body might represent the culmination of "becoming" winter, with the performers attuning their bodies to the sensations of this season as a method of structuring their movements. The slight raising of the heels, accompanied by a back-and-forth twitch of the head, are movement stylings that evoke the activities of a meerkat, thereby depicting the human performer in the process of "becoming" animal. In addition to their performance of *butoh*, Potter-Takata, Suzuki, and Tanabe also explore movement derived from animated television programs, initiating a movement style that engages these pop cultural references. When Potter-Takata extends his arm above his head (an action which might evoke the "flower sprouting" of the score), his hand stretches into a taught open palm and his posture transforms from a slight hunch to a confident uprightness. Based on my reading of the score, this movement responds to the prompt "Sailor Venus," one of the characters from the *Sailor Moon* franchise. Originally a manga series and later developed into an *anime*, or animated television show, *Sailor Moon* follows a group of teenagers-turned-superheroes, the "Sailor Guardians" who must defend their hometown of Tokyo, Japan from extraterrestrial enemies. Each guardian is named after a planet or moon in the solar system, representing "Sailor Moon," "Sailor Mercury," "Sailor Mars," and so on.

In scoring "Sailor Venus" for Potter-Takata, *Yonsei f*ck f*ck* extends the *butoh* practices of "becoming" nature to include the "becoming" of *anime* characters, constructing a flexible boundary between human, ecological, and technological forms.¹⁴ Potter-Takata's movements—raised arm, open palm, erect posture—cite the "transformation scene" in the *Sailor Moon* television show, a fast-paced montage of bright colors, upbeat music, and dynamic movement that signals the schoolgirl's transformation into her Sailor Guardian role.¹⁵ Sailor Venus begins her transformation with a continuous *pirouette*; when she arrives at stillness with her right palm held taught and vertical above her head, the music swells to a conclusion and indicates the transformation's completion. In *Yonsei f*ck f*ck*, Potter-Takata re-creates select moments of this movement sequence. As his right arm reaches the peak of Sailor Venus's triumphant gesture, he lowers the limb with a slight shiver. The score indicates "frost" following the "Sailor Venus" prompt, connoting the process of "how a cold front will make a flower wilt and eventually die," a sensation to which Potter-Takata's quiver might correspond.¹⁶ Flowing through these transitions, he performs an embodied style that shifts fluidly, imperceptibly, between movement derived from the natural world and *anime* representations of human bodies.

The dance's "hybrid" performance style also excavates and expresses the racial and cultural hybridity of the *Sailor Moon* source text, which imbues an additional reference

to “mixture” into the body’s movement. Erica Kanesaka (2023) has suggested that *Sailor Moon* characters, among other late-twentieth-century Japanese pop cultural exports, appeal to what she terms the “mixed-race fantasy” apparent throughout Japanese *kawaii* culture. She argues that many representations of *kawaii*, which roughly translates to “cute” (Dale 2016), combine “Japanese and Western aesthetics”—for example, although the character of Sailor Moon speaks Japanese and lives in Tokyo, she appears white, with long blonde hair and blue eyes (Kanesaka 2023). “By combining racial and cultural elements,” Kanesaka (2023) argues, “*kawaii* characters are thought to float freely across national borders [...] promising a naïve post-racial future much like multiracial children do.” When *Yonsei f*ck f*ck* re-creates movement from Sailor Venus’s transformation scene, Potter-Takata’s own body of mixed Japanese ancestries performs this “mixed-race fantasy” (Kanesaka 2023), employing movement to evoke multiracial discourses even without explicit reference to mixed-race identities, physical features, or ancestries. Mixture is ingrained into the body’s mobilities through the synthesis of the natural and the mediated, the human and the non-human, and the mixed-race “fantasies” that persist within the dance’s source material.

*Yonsei f*ck f*ck* therefore produces an opacity for its multiracial performers by substituting the limiting biological and phenotypic terms of standard multiracial embodiment with an emphasis on “hybrid” movement vocabularies. In doing so, the dance complicates the audience’s ability to know and objectify the performers’ racialized appearances, to “dwell long on the body, hair, face, and sound of the mixed-race person” (Elam 2011, p. 163). *Yonsei f*ck f*ck*’s final scene exemplifies this choreographic strategy, deploying costumes to enhance its existing opacities of movement. Suzuki performs in an oversized, inflatable Pikachu costume, representing a creature with yellow fur, a rounded body, pointed cat-like ears, and a jagged tail. In addition to these animal-like features, Suzuki’s own feet and ankles remain visible, jutting out from the costume’s lower borders. He plants a lunge before him and shuffles back and forth, exchanging his weight between two supportive feet. The costume inhibits the full extension of movement, preventing Suzuki from finding the depths of his lunged position and restricting his arms to the rigid outward reach of the costume’s design.

The Pikachu costume almost covers Suzuki’s human form, creating a very literal sense of opacity for his (multi-)racialized body. In Blas’s (2016) summary of Glissant, he emphasizes that opacity “exposes the limitations of schemas of visibility, representation, and identity” (149). *Yonsei f*ck f*ck*’s Pikachu costume plays with similar “schemas,” making visible a human/non-human hybrid instead of Suzuki’s racialized, gendered, and other “visible” identities. Although Pikachu is associated with a Japanese context and, therefore, represents an East Asian cultural signifier, the costume within Potter-Takata’s dance functions to disallow the audience’s gaze upon and objectification of Suzuki’s racialized human figure. Throughout *Yonsei f*ck f*ck*’s first two sections, movement vocabularies operate similarly to this final moment: just as the Pikachu costume represents “mixture” through the human/non-human and not the racially “ambiguous” human performer, the dance’s movement styles emphasize mixed-ness in ecological and pop cultural acts of “becoming,” as opposed to the performers’ genetic makeup and phenotypic presentation. Like the Pikachu costume, the movement sources are also Japanese, thereby representing an Asian American performance vocabulary for *Yonsei f*ck f*ck*’s dancing trio. Yet this style is distinctly mixed, constructing a mixed Asian American performance mode which “exposes the limitations of” standard, quantifiable multiracial representation (Blas 2016, p. 149).

4. Opacities of Speech: Finding Shared Historical Experience through Dialogue

*Yonsei f*ck f*ck* also represents two genres of popular performance—stand-up comedy and “late-night” talk shows—to activate an additional opacity: the dance employs styles of speech premised on sharing and disclosing information about oneself, engaging these genres to complicate the performers’ legibility as multiracial Asian American subjects. A blackout signals the transition from the second to third scenes, in addition to marking a shift from the dance’s predominantly movement-based first half to its subsequent speech-based

focus.¹⁷ When the lights brighten again, a voice can be heard from the wings: “why don’t people tap dance in the street anymore?” Another performer, Matt Seiji Ketai, saunters into the audience’s view, holding a microphone and threading its wire through his hands. “Anyways,” he continues, finding a comfortable stance at center stage:

Ketai: My name is Matt Ketai. It’s pronounced key-tie, like a key and a tie, two objects that I canonically like. I like keys because they open things. I like keys because they open doors. What do they open doors to? Rich men. And what do these rich men have? Good jobs. And what do these rich men wear to these good jobs? Ties! Ketai, that’s my last name.

In these statements, Ketai informs the audience of who he is and how to pronounce his last name, detailing a humorous, long-winded word association. The remainder of his set highlights personal anecdotes, many of which employ seeming banality as a source of humor. Ketai discusses his likes and dislikes, referencing his love for award shows but his disdain for outer space. He recounts childhood memories, such as growing up as a “reverse ugly duckling,” a child who is regarded as cute but then becomes an adult who is considered average-looking.

Ketai’s jokes rely on the expectation of self-disclosure in stand-up comedy, yet his often illogical statements deny the audience’s ability to grasp his (mixed-)racial position. Standup comedy is often premised on sharing personal details, enabling a relationship of intimacy between spectator and comic (Brodie 2014; Goltz 2023; Lee 2004). The comedian might share memories of embarrassment, annoyance, or adversity, which can include discussions of race, gender, sexuality, and other identities. The straightforward self-introduction in *Yonsei f*ck f*ck* (“My name is Matt Ketai”) initially adheres to this convention, yet it becomes confusing, as the notion that Ketai “canonically” likes “keys and ties” outlines an unusual set of interests, and his logic throughout the word association is purposefully difficult to follow. Ketai offers minimal information about his identities, save for the allusion to queerness in the “rich men” comment, which challenges normative expectations for a joke about naming. Discussing one’s surname evokes family history and ancestry, concepts that can involve further conversation about racial and ethnic difference. Ketai denies this trajectory and complicates what Glissant (1997) terms a “graspable” representation of identity difference. For Glissant (1997), transparency facilitates “grasping,” the “movement of the hands that grab their surroundings and bring them back to themselves. A gesture of enclosure, if not appropriation” (192). In other words, transparency enables us to bring others into our established understanding of the world, limiting them to our preexisting approaches to negotiating otherness. In stand-up comedy, the audience might aim at “grasping” the comic, establishing familiarity by “enclosing” the comedian within preconceived assumptions (Glissant 1997, p. 192). Ketai’s comedy does not provide clarity about his racialized self, resisting the audience’s “enclosure” and instead inviting them to navigate incoherency.

The talk show demonstrates a similar deployment of speech, engaging the “late-night” genre to provide confusing, at times illogical information “about” the *Yonsei f*ck f*ck* performance. Ketai’s stand-up concludes with the statement: “we’ve got a great show for you tonight!” Gesturing to the stage behind him, he then joins Potter-Takata, Suzuki, and Tanabe, who have returned to the stage to assemble a late-night talk show set of a desk, chair, and long sofa. Jazz music plays throughout this transition, a brassy melody that might remind some audience members of theme songs for other late-night programs, such as *Saturday Night Live* (1975–). When the music fades, Ketai sits at the desk and introduces his “guests,” a performance troupe named “Yonsei f*ck f*ck,” who “have played sold out shows all over the world,” and “were named Time Magazine’s Most Influential.” Potter-Takata, Suzuki, and Tanabe re-enter the stage and begin an interview with Ketai, answering questions about their performances, creative processes, and personal backgrounds. One of their exchanges summarizes the *Yonsei f*ck f*ck* performance:

*Ketai: Now, for any audience members that might be unfamiliar with your work, could you describe Yonsei f*ck f*ck to us?*

Potter-Takata: It's a post-dramatic deconstruction of science's gravity from the point of view of Pina Bausch. It's basically Phantom of the Opera meets Fast and the Furious: Tokyo Drift meets water. And starring Pikachu! All from a yonsei perspective.

Ketai's question elicits transparency, inviting Potter-Takata to explain "Yonsei f*ck f*ck" for the audience. This style of dialogue is common to late-night talk shows, which represent "congenial, playful" question-and-answers between hosts and guests (Timberg 2002, p. 7). Late-night programs specifically feature public figures, such as actors, musicians, and politicians, whose appearances on the show promote an upcoming film, musical tour, or political campaign (Reijven et al. 2020; Loeb 2017). Self-promotion also strives for relatability: the talk show offers an opportunity for the audience to "get to know" the otherwise unattainable celebrity guest, with the interview providing some level of familiarity (Reijven et al. 2020; Loeb 2017). Ketai's interviewing aims for a similar intimacy, yet Potter-Takata's responses challenge this effort. In his description of "Yonsei f*ck f*ck," Potter-Takata creates an incoherent representation of the dance as simultaneously comparable to Broadway musicals, Hollywood action films, and German choreographer Pina Bausch's *tanztheater*. The talk show's metacommentary produces an opacity for the dance itself—the clarifying function of speech is disrupted, as dialogue is unable to produce an intelligible understanding of who the performers are and what themes their dancing explores.

By challenging the construction of a legible speaking "I," the talk show enables alternative functions for language, such as emphasizing shared historical experience. Ketai follows Potter-Takata's summary with another question:

Ketai: What is yonsei?

Potter-Takata: It's a Japanese term which means "fourth generation."

Suzuki: . . . which in an American context means that all our grandparents were interned during World War II.

Ketai: Oh, my mom is from Japan! What would that make me?

Potter-Takata: That would make you nisei.

Ketai: And what would that make my mom?

Potter-Takata: Japanese.

These statements reference the Japanese diasporic generational framework, which numerically organizes generations of Japanese immigrants to the US, in addition to those from other countries such as Brazil, Canada, and Peru (Nagata et al. 2019; Nakano 2023; Tsuda 2016). *Yonsei*, or fourth generation, follows *issei* (first), *nisei* (second), *sansei* (third), and precedes *gosei* (fifth generation).¹⁸ Takeyuki Tsuda (2016) has argued that each generation shares a "common historical location," both temporal and social; for example, *yonsei* are often considered to overlap with the "millennial" generation, born between 1981–1996.¹⁹ Suzuki's statement in *Yonsei f*ck f*ck* also illuminates the social parameters of this group, highlighting enduring familial connections to Japanese American incarceration during the Second World War. This reference also invokes a prevailing scholarly and mainstream narrative about Japanese Americans in the late twentieth and twenty-first centuries, one that connects their high intermarriage rates and significant mixed-race population with the intergenerational legacies of internment (Nagata et al. 2015; Omi et al. 2019). Although this theory is contested, there remains a belief that the trauma of internment intensified assimilation for Japanese Americans, a process that can entail interracial marriage, specifically with European Americans (Nakano 2023, p. 10).²⁰ These histories are important to understanding the experiences of mixed-race *yonsei* and, in *Yonsei f*ck f*ck*, affirm the heterogeneity of contemporary multiracial Asian American life. The fourth-generation position of Potter-Takata, Suzuki, and Tanabe excavates a shared history and distinguishes their (mixed) Asian American experience from Ketai, whose *nisei* status entails a different relationship to internment and assimilation. In this scene, the "present tense" (Mahtani 2014, p. 249) of the interview disrupts a strictly "present tense" or ahistorical focus: interviewing affirms

common historical lineages and demonstrates the continued, yet, importantly, varying, legacies of structural racism within contemporary multiracial Asian American existence.

The brevity of *Yonsei f*ck f*ck*'s references to internment also provides opacity for these historical narratives, initiating a specific "relation" (Glissant 1997) between the performers and their audience. Ketai dismisses the discussion of Japanese diasporic generations and their relationships to internment, quickly moving on to another topic. Internment is not mentioned again until Tanabe misunderstands a conversation about a horseback riding summer camp, where Suzuki was once a counselor. As Suzuki describes the camp, Tanabe states: "well, there were horse stalls, but they were for people." She then corrects herself: "oh, you were talking about summer camps, not internment camps." Tanabe alludes to the Santa Anita facility in Arcadia, California, a temporary internment site where incarcerated Japanese Americans were forced to live in the horse stalls of a racing track (Hinnershitiz 2019). The other performers do not acknowledge Tanabe's statements; although their ignorance might be understood as an unwillingness to talk about internment,²¹ these dismissals further construct opacity. *Yonsei f*ck f*ck* distances internment histories from audience understanding, and thus creates a relationship between performance and audience premised on withholding these traumatic pasts. Returning to Glissant (1997), opacity functions to create "relation," offering a method of connection beyond *knowing* those around us. He argues that "to feel in solidarity" or to "build with" others, it is "not necessary for [us] to grasp" them (Glissant 1997, p. 193). *Yonsei f*ck f*ck* encourages a comparable relationship between spectator and dance, where audience members "build with" the performers without necessarily "grasping" their identities and histories. To "build with" requires spectators to tune in, yet also to let go of desires for transparency about inherited traumas—audiences are invited to view, listen to, and acknowledge without "dwelling long" (Elam 2011, p. 163) on familial lineages and their connection to legacies of state-sanctioned violence.

5. Conclusions

This article has argued for the capacities of experimental dance to produce opaque multiracial subjectivities. Through choreographic analysis, I have demonstrated how dance studies methodologies foster significant theorizations of mixed-race Asian American bodies. In doing so, I have also reevaluated the speech-body binary that pervades much of critical mixed-race scholarship, complicating the demand for "transparencies" in interviewing and other linguistic narratives (Glissant 1997). Choreographer Glenn Potter-Takata's *Yonsei f*ck f*ck* (2022) offers an example of multiracial Asian American opacity, engaging dance to explore how these subject positions might be represented beyond normative, quantifiable difference. The dance confronts its audience with an alternative rendering of bodily mixture through movement; moreover, in connecting *butoh* with *anime* movement styles, *Yonsei f*ck f*ck* also complicates acts of "reading" mixed race within cross-cultural or intercultural choreography. The dance shows that choreographing mixed Asian American heritage does not require combining different cultural dance styles. Rather, *Yonsei f*ck f*ck* deploys specifically Japanese movement sources and instead combines ecological and technological inspirations to evoke "mixed-ness." Through dialogue, the dance renders language fallible. Speech does not offer clarity but instead gestures to historical memory, excavating the intergenerational legacies of Japanese American internment from within the dance's mixed-race Japanese diasporic performers.

At one level, my discussion contributes to a still-developing conversation between the fields of critical dance studies and critical mixed-race studies. At another, there are ways in which mainstream multiracial discourses are already choreographic themselves. The very concept of "mixed-race identity" might be considered a "social choreography" (Hewitt 2005; Johnson 2018), as it represents a method of organizing bodies in relation to each other and to the broader racial system in the United States. For some of the mainstream news outlets that initiate my discussion, mixed-race "social choreographies" intervene into normative North American racial hierarchies, which have historically relied on discrete racial

divisions. In this perspective, the growing population of self-identified multiracial people is a re-choreographing of US racial structures, creating a world wherein so-called “singular” racial groups might ultimately become less dominant given an increase in “mixed” identities. A multiracial choreography of the social is therefore one that risks undermining the material impacts of race and racism. By representing the possibility of “overcoming” race through intermarriage and multiracial self-identification, the need for real, anti-racist actions becomes less urgent. Approaching multiraciality as opaque might intervene into its dominant “choreography” of racialized bodies—rather than promising a legible, knowable “solution” to ongoing racism, mixed-race identities can exist as unknowable difference, as embodied experiences beyond these limited implications.

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Notes

- ¹ I write these categories exactly as they are listed on the Census documents. There are many issues with these categories: first, the language for “American Indian or Alaska Native” does not always represent Indigenous people, who might prefer to identify with terms such as “Indigenous,” “Native American,” or might refer to themselves according to their specific tribe. The current categories for racial data collection do not account for individuals with ancestries from SWANA (Southwest Asia and North African) countries, as the Census deems these communities to be white (Williams 2006).
- ² I use scare quotes around “changing,” given that popular media outlets have repeatedly emphasized a “changing” US racial landscape due to increased interracial couplings for several decades (Ifekwunigwe 2004)
- ³ It is important to note that not all people who identify as multiracial appear as racially ambiguous, and there are many people who are perceived as having a racially ambiguous appearance who do not identify as mixed-race; indeed, what even qualifies as “racial ambiguity” is often dependent on the specific observer (Elam 2011)
- ⁴ I borrow my definition of “experimental dance” from Kwan (2017) and Chatterjea (2013).
- ⁵ Japanese communities in Brazil, Canada, and Peru also employ the term *yonsei* to describe the fourth generation of diasporic subjects.
- ⁶ Potter-Takata, interview with the author, 16 February 2023.
- ⁷ See Nakashima (2001) for more information on the symbolic roles of mixed-race Asian Americans throughout US histories.
- ⁸ Leboeuf (2020) has argued against the assumption that the “what are you?” questioner is non-multiracial, and the respondent is a mixed-race person. She suggests that this division oversimplifies the “what are you?” encounter, which is less about mixed-race identities and more concerned with perceived racial ambiguity, regardless of racial self-identification.
- ⁹ Paragg (2023) develops her understanding of the “racial gaze” from Fanon’s (2008) phenomenological account of racialization.
- ¹⁰ My description of the dance throughout this section, and the following section, come from repeated viewings of a filmed recording of *Yonsei f*ck f*ck*, uploaded to Potter-Takata’s Vimeo video-sharing account. The video is private, and I thank Potter-Takata for his generosity in sharing this resource.
- ¹¹ Potter-Takata, interview with the author.
- ¹² Potter-Takata, comment on paper, 16 December 2023: “This section is sort of an homage to Japanese variety shows.”
- ¹³ Potter-Takata, comment on paper: This scene is also “a remix (could also say deconstruction) of bon folk dancing, which typically incorporates gestures from pre-industrial life, like tending the fields or fishing, except with moves inserted (or lifted) from anime (mostly Sailor Moon).”
- ¹⁴ Potter-Takata, comment on paper: “This Sailor Venus part was also done in tandem with becoming Dainichi Nyorai, the cosmic Buddha. It’s sort of part of the anime/buddha pantheon thing. There’s this idea that some Japanese Buddhists believe where there’s only one pantheon on the whole planet among all religions, and different deities reveal themselves to different cultures at different times in different forms. So the different cultures might depict the deities differently or call them different things, but the deity is the same. Like some people believe that Shiva and the bodhisattva Kannon are the same deity. It’s the same idea with the Dainichi Nyorai/Sailor Venus score. They may be different depictions of the same being.”

- ¹⁵ For an example of Sailor Venus's "transformation scene," see "Sailor Venus Transformations," YouTube video, 1:09, posted by danoogy, 12 May 2011, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_JR9v2BfPwg (accessed on 30 September 2023).
- ¹⁶ Potter-Takata, comment on paper.
- ¹⁷ The description of Ketai's comedy set and the "talk show" script come from the stage directions for *Yonsei f*ck f*ck*, which Potter-Takata shared with me via email.
- ¹⁸ Tsuda (2016) has observed that the Japanese generational framework is significant to how Japanese Americans understand each other, with statements such as "I'm nisei, she's sansei, those children are yonsei" facilitating connection and understanding (9). Japanese Americans are also the only ethnic group with listed generational categories on the US Census, which provides an opportunity for respondents to self-identify with one of the (current) five generations (King-O'Riain 2019; Nakano 2023; Tsuda 2016).
- ¹⁹ Omi et al. (2019) emphasize that *yonsei* are not limited to the millennial generation and that "millennials" can be of any Japanese diasporic group. They argue that the normative generational schema is homogenizing and cannot account for the diversity of experience within the Japanese diaspora; for example, many millennials are *shin-nisei* ("new second generation"), the children of Japanese immigrants who migrated to the US after the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965, which terminated restrictions on Asian immigration to the US. While this group of millennials would have some similar experiences to the fourth-generation *yonsei*, they do not have the same relationship to Japanese American incarceration during WWII.
- ²⁰ Nakano (2023) argues that the causal relationship between internment and increased interracial marriage for Japanese Americans overlooks experiences of assimilation broadly. Japanese Americans are somewhat unique in comparison to other Asian American groups, as the bulk of Japanese immigration occurred between 1880–1924, a brief historical window wherein US policies permitted Japanese migration before the 1924 Immigration Act, which formally excluded all immigration from Asian countries. Japanese communities have, therefore, existed in the US since long before immigrants from other Asian countries, who largely began to migrate after the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act. Given their long-standing presence in the US, Japanese Americans might be considered more assimilated relative to other Asian diasporic groups; Nakano argues that Japanese communities display most "assimilative benchmarks," such as interracial marriage, economic mobility, and suburban residential settlement. Given that Japanese American communities demonstrate multiple assimilative criteria, Nakano argues that directly linking internment with interracial marriage exclusively is an oversimplification.
- ²¹ The brief mentions of internment might also reference the intergenerational silence about these histories. Nagata et al. (2019) have identified silence as a key coping mechanism for interned Japanese Americans, which also has intergenerational effects: the authors argue that *sansei* (third generation) and *yonsei* (fourth generation) experience similar silence, as internment histories were often not discussed within families.

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