LATINX

THE NEW FORCE IN AMERICAN POLITICS AND CULTURE

ED MORALES

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Introduction

After several years of debate about America's progress on its racial question, the election of Donald Trump has brought white supremacy into the mainstream. Replacing coded dog whistles with an authoritarian bullhorn, he has openly declared undocumented Mexican and Central American immigrants to be violent threats to the American people and, indirectly, to the integrity of American identity. While Trumpian white supremacy still features anti-black racism at its core, as well as a large dose of Islamophobia, its intensified scapegoating of the undocumented has disrupted the black-white binary that has anchored race discourse throughout American history. Latinx, neither just black or white and eternally considered outsiders despite our 500-year presence in this hemisphere, are poised to signal a crucial turn in this debate.

Conversations about race in the United States have always been plagued by the unresolved trauma of Europe's colonization of the Americas and the resulting legacy of slavery. The United States, along with most of the Western world, has long roiled in an identity crisis stemming from the unfinished business of race and the slow decentering of the white, male, Western subject. Could America's identity begin to include people of color, women, and LGBT people?

With the election of President Barack Obama in 2008, two contradictory narratives emerged: one of a post-racial society in which racism was "withering away" with the emergence of elites of color, and the other arguing that white supremacy and overt racism had been obscured by what

sociologist Eduardo Bonilla-Silva calls "racialized social systems." The latter narrative pointed to a structural racism evident in racist micro-aggressions and in "dog whistle politics," a set of coded signals transmitted to America's eroding white majority assuring them that they were still in charge. Trump's emergence signaled the crash and burn of post-racial ideology, while at the same time foregrounding new racial scapegoats and blurring the neat boundaries of black-white opposition.

Latinx is a book about a growing group of Americans who are injecting a different idea about race into the American race debate. It will attempt to demonstrate that Anglo- and Latin America are two versions of the idea of "America," with two very different articulations about race. In Anglo-America, race is considered through a binary in which white and black are strictly defined opposites. In Latin America, while the racial binary still resonates, it is complicated by a tangled caste system that openly acknowledges several categories of mixed-race people and different ideas about how to assimilate them.

I don't intend to argue for the superiority of one of these ideologies or forms of social organization—they're both seriously flawed and represent competing traditions of Western modernism. But I believe that the Latinx view of race, inherited from nation-building ideologies that lionized race-mixing in Latin America, poses narratives that challenge and resist Anglo-American paradigms. While these ideologies have not ended racism and in some ways have even reinforced it in Latin America, they have the potential to explode binary contradictions. The convergence of Anglo- and Latin American ideas about race may point the way towards more nuanced ideologies, and possibly significant social change.

By titling this book *Latinx*, I'm attempting, like the mostly young folks that are embracing this label, to engage with several threads of thinking about identity and naming, recognizing and evaluating the potential of such a label's elasticity and ability to evade categorization. I'm drawing attention to the Latinx people as one of the primary destabilizers of American—and by extension, Western—identity. Often erased from America's founding narrative, Latinx—in all our previous guises—have always been present as a crucial counter-narrative, a people that live in a world of many worlds, possessing an identity of multiple identities.

What's in a Name?

The advent of the term *Latinx* is the most recent iteration of a naming debate grounded in the politics of race and ethnicity. For several decades the term *Latino* was the progressive choice over *Hispanic*; according to G. Cristina Mora's *Making Hispanics*, the latter was pressed into service by the Nixon administration in the 1970s, an apolitical attempt at an antidote to the "unrest" created by increasing activism in Latinx communities inspired by the African American civil rights movement. As he did with African Americans, Nixon promoted Hispanic entrepreneurship by appointing a Mexican American as the head of the Small Business Administration. *Hispanic* became a "pan-ethnic" category whose development was fostered by data researchers such as the Census Bureau, political "entrepreneurs" of both liberal and conservative stripes, and media marketers, who ultimately created the vast Spanish-language media.

Hispanic overtly identified Latinx with Spanish cultural, racial, and ethnic origins. Yet *Latino* carried with it the notion that Latin American migrants to the United States were not merely hyphenated Europeans, but products of the mixed-race societies and cultures south of the border who freely acknowledged that they were not "white." It has over the years become more widely accepted among liberals, while *Hispanic* still carries a strong weight among conservatives—including many who are Latinx.

Still, as *Latino* became the preferred choice of those who wanted to identify as multiracial, gender politics quickly emerged in the politics of labeling. Spanish is a Romance language in which all nouns are assigned a gendered identity (ordinary objects such as shoes, automobiles, and computers, for example, are male or female); therefore the Latino population necessarily consists of Latinos (male) and Latinas (female). As racial identity began intersecting with gender and sexual preference, *Latino* became *Latino/a*, then *Latina/o* to move "o" out of the privileged position. After the universalization of digital communication, it briefly became *Latin@* among Latino/a student unions and nonprofit organizations and in academic articles and books (*Latino/a Condition: A Critical Reader,* published in 2012, became *Contemporary Latin@ Media Production* in 2015).

For all of *Latinx*'s space-age quirkiness, the term has a technocratic emptiness to it that can make it hard to warm up to. It feels like a mathematician's null set, and many are unsure of how to pronounce it. But even amid ongoing debate around the term on campuses and in the media,

the growing movement to embrace *Latinx* highlights how it dispenses with the problem of prioritizing male or female by negating that binary. The real power of the term and its true meaning, however, erupts with its final syllable. After years of Latin lovers, Latin looks, Latin music, and Latin America, the word describes something that is not as much Latin—a word originally coined by the French to brand non-English- and Dutch-speaking colonies with a different flavor—as it is an alternative America, the unexpected X factor in America's race debate.

Who or What Are Latinx, and What Is the Nature of Our Doing?

Latinx intends to describe the in-between space in which Latinx live, which allows us to cross racial boundaries more easily and construct identities, or self-images, that include a wide variety of racial, national, and even gender-based identifications. Rather than simply creating a new shade of person somewhere between black and white, this in-between space has the potential to reveal the blackness and indigenousness often erased in Latin America by mixed-race utopian ideologies, but kept alive through oscillating tendencies toward tolerance and repression. Many premodern roots and traditions remained intact while others, fragmented by Spanish colonialism, always threatened to reemerge, and new hybrid identities, like the syncretic religions of the Afro-Caribbean, took hold.

While mixed-race culture in Latin America evolved with the help of Catholic doctrine, Spanish law, and twentieth-century nation-building ideologies, the development of racial identity in the United States has been significantly different. Because of the United States' unique racial ideology of hypodescent—one drop of black blood makes you black—with no official recognition of "mixed-ness" in state ideology, media, or "common sense" discourse, the hybrid and mestizaje elements of American culture remain obscured. Yet the widespread creation in the United States of hybrid and hyphenated identities such as Nuyorican, Chicano, Dominican-York, Tejano, and Miami Cuban has created space for excluded identities to assert themselves.

For Latinx in the United States, this relatively new process of creating hybrid identities dates back to the end of the Mexican-American War and the absorption of the Southwest territories in 1848. While the hegemony of the black-white racial binary has effectively rendered a true understanding

of the Latinx experience unintelligible in the standard narrative of American history, the pattern of racial discrimination has had the paradoxical effect of encouraging a stronger assertion of African and indigenous identities. This became particularly clear in the 1970s when Puerto Ricans in New York formed the Young Lords, a militant political group modeled on the Black Panthers, and Chicanos of California and the Southwest organized around an indigenous identity connected to an imaginary homeland called Aztlán.

In a nation built on profit extracted from slavery, the legacy of Jim Crow, the exploitation of imported Asian workers, and guest worker bracero arrangements with migrant Mexican labor, Latinx can play a pivotal role in uncovering the uncomfortable truths of America's dark past as well as the fallacy of "non-racist" societies prevalent in the countries from which our parents emigrated. While the one-drop rule was metaphorically reversed in Latin America, allowing a majority to believe that we were white, this whiteness has not transferred smoothly to the States, revealing not only US racism but also aspects of racial identity formation that had been papered over in the home countries. The messy conversation about racial identity, multiracial identification, passing, and potential inter-ethnic alliances has already begun.

Yet the possibility looms of a shift in the United States towards what some have called a tri-racial system of whites, blacks, and an unnamed in-between category, presumably for those of mixed-race or not-quite-white identities, in which, as Eduardo Bonilla-Silva argues, increasing numbers of non-European people will be granted honorary white status. One of the challenges of observing the Trump era will be to monitor how the extension of class privileges to non-whites that began in neoliberal Obama-world may actually continue, despite the seemingly overt white supremacist rhetoric embodied by Trump. The fact that as many as 29 percent of Latinx voted for Trump indicates that these privileges may be extended to people of color who accept the language of xenophobia and intolerance as a path to the restoration of American "greatness."

What Is Race for Latinx?

There is a long and unresolved argument about what race is, what racism is, and when and where it started. Historians have traced anti-black racism to

antiquity, although it has not always been used to justify slavery. Regardless of when and how the idea of race began, it seems to be the product of a distrust and/or condemnation based on distance, whether in religious beliefs, physical location, or phenotypical appearance. Some historians and religious scholars believe that the biblical story of Ham—the son of Noah banished to reign over Africa because he laughed at his father's nakedness—was revived in the nineteenth century and sparked the ill-conceived "race science" that defined five racial categories. Foucault, on the other hand, argued that racist thinking emerged from the civil wars of the medieval era among the nobility and was merely translated in the formation of the European state. And the decolonial school, particularly followers of Argentine-Mexican philosopher Enrique Dussel, proposed that the Spanish Catholic re-conquest of Iberia after almost 800 years of gradually receding Islamic occupation transformed religious differences into ones based on "race."

As the twenty-first century unfolds in America, we are still grappling with racial division, which the election of Trump appears to have made even more explicit. Trumpian authoritarianism shuns difference and promotes intolerance to protect white supremacy and "make America great again." But despite Latinx being "racialized" or branded as "non-white," it's not clear how they fit into the new authoritarianism. Through centuries of racial mixing, Latinx in some senses constitute our own race, albeit one that includes Northern, Southern, Eastern, Western, and Mediterranean Europeans; Northern and sub-Saharan Africans; Muslims and Jews; Semites from the Middle East; Asians from East Asia; and their descendants called Native Americans.

The word that is often used to denote that Latinx are a "collective" race, itself a mixture of races, is *raza*: Spanish for race. This use of *raza* became popular in the early twentieth century to describe mixed-race society in Mexico, largely driven by the publication of an essay by postrevolutionary Mexican minister of culture José Vasconcelos. Titled *La Raza Cósmica*, or "The Cosmic Race," the essay argued that Latin America's mixed-race societies augured a kind of racial transcendence that would end racial categorization and liberate humanity. Vasconcelos's treatise formalized a social process of race-mixing called *mestizaje*, a system of social ranking based on permutations of sexual unions (sometimes coerced, sometimes

allowed by the relaxing of laws against intermarriage) between Spaniards, indigenous people, members of the African diaspora, and Asian migrants.

Vasconcelos's cosmic raza, which grew into an ideology that had parallel versions in several other Latin American countries—was the twentieth-century reimagining of a centuries-old, inherently racist caste system through which a peculiar and somewhat tainted brand of Spanish whiteness devalued, diminished, and erased the presence and importance of indigenous Americans and those of African descent. Membership in la raza was ostensibly open to everyone, but was ultimately a mechanism for gradual whitening over generations. African and indigenous presence in politics, culture, and sports was embraced, but only to the extent that it prioritized universalized national identities and minimized cultural particularities.

As Latinx became a part of the fabric of Anglo-America through both the absorption of the Southwest territories in the mid-nineteenth century and gradual migration from the Caribbean and South America in the early twentieth, *raza* became part of local vocabularies. While not entirely universal among Latinx—some preferred *Hispano*, others *Latino—raza* began to be primarily used in the United States by Mexican immigrants. Faced with racism in their new country, they used the term to unite different Latin American national identities into one progressive force and collective "brown" identity, one that would give voice to marginalized people of color erased by mestizaje.

There's an irony here that can only be explained by viewing the migration of Latinx to the United States as a kind of dialectical process, in which one view about race collides with another and creates something new. The same mestizaje ideology that worked to sublimate indigenous and African identity in Latin America became a resource for Latinx to claim racial difference as their identity in the black-white race binary of the United States. This is central to the Latinx factor, and explains why *raza* matters in America. It also explains why the choice by the National Council of La Raza to change their name in 2017 to UnidosUS—fearing that Latinx would be marginalized by the Trump version of white supremacy—was a panicky attempt to blunt the racial awareness of the label *raza.*

Although *raza* has been primarily used by Mexican Americans, who make up about 62 percent of all US Latinx, other Latinx groups have drawn on variations of the term to identify themselves, particularly when

into this aspect of their identity formation. While the oppressive weight of racism based on phenotypical perception is undoubtedly the dominant narrative, the history of the Americas is unavoidably hybrid, in the daily lives as well as the cultural legacies of blacks, Natives, and Asian Americans. Foregrounding the mixed-race reality of Latinx may, ultimately, have a liberating effect on groups that don't always view themselves that way.

My raza-speak flows from my location, or where I'm writing from. My starting point is a place of radical exteriority, playing the tried-and-true outsider game of counter-discourse. My experience is that of a racialized person living in a US mega-city, who has a somewhat ambiguous phenotypical appearance, who in daily life speaks a mixture of two European languages that themselves are mixtures of many world languages, who embraces the collective black urban space of my upbringing in New York, and who holds within me memories of Africanness and indigenousness that I'm constantly bringing to light, even as medieval and Greco-Roman cultural politics ebb and flow in the background.

I could begin with a story, like Cornel West does in his book *Race Matters*, about the bitter memory of feeling at the top of my game in New York City, only to be reminded of how I can never escape my racial identity by cab drivers in Midtown Manhattan who turn down my hails as if I were an ambassador from a leper colony. What if I were to say that at various points in time, depending on where I was hailing the cab, what I was wearing, and how the sunlight was hitting my skin, the chances of the cab stopping for me hovered between 40 and 60 percent. What if I were to say that I feel, in a society ruled by a binary perception of race, that I am judged more by my performance than by my appearance, even though the latter might still be enough to classify me as "other."

I recall an incident when two Latinx policemen stopped me at West 125th Street and Broadway, just around the corner from the campus of Columbia University, where I am a lecturer, and insisted that I was carrying a knife and that I show it to them immediately. I'd come to campus to get a couple of books out of the library, and because I wasn't teaching that day I was wearing a backward baseball cap, worn-out jeans, and a long-sleeved T-shirt, attire that made me either look "ghetto" or resemble a criminal suspect which, for these policemen, who were employing the controversial stop-and-frisk approach of postmodern urban policing, justified my

questioning. They looked at me with insistent eyes, convinced that I was carrying a weapon and that this was going to be a long afternoon, evening, and perhaps several days for me, ostensibly sitting in a local precinct waiting to be processed.

Consider the ambivalence that passed between us in this charade. Although I come from a working-class background, could not be considered a "white" Latinx by mere appearance, and have at times actively chosen to identify as black, at least for political or cultural reasons, I've avoided street fights and petty crime for the most part, have never carried a weapon, and live a rather pedestrian life built around teaching, writing, and attending cultural events.

The policemen, on the other hand, were signaled by my unkempt appearance and perhaps a furtive movement of my hand toward a keychain holder protruding from my right front pocket, a plastic Puerto Rican flag in the shape of an island. They were operating in the context of 125th Street; in Morningside Heights, a neighborhood on the gentrified West Side of Manhattan, the street is a racial and class dividing line of sorts, a border zone to be patrolled. Both Latinx with complexions similar to mine, they no doubt categorized me as "black," as they probably wouldn't have stopped me if they thought I was "white." At the same time, they were probably involved in complex internal negotiations about their own "whiteness" and "blackness."

Did they recognize me as someone from their own racialized upbringing, or did they identify as white and see me as a threat? In enacting the colonial narrative of racial identity, were they both feeling "black" and "white" simultaneously? They looked blankly at my university ID, reluctantly questioned me for a few more minutes, then decided I was not who they were looking for and did not pose a threat. It was difficult to tell whether their lack of emotion indicated frustration at the waste of time or indifference as they went through the motions with another faceless suspect. It was a Fanon *en español* moment, and whatever black or white masks we were wearing had dissolved into an uncertainty of racial identity, despite the fact that the reason for the stop was racially charged.

The Stories of Latinx Past, Present, and Future

Latinx begins with Chapter 1, "The Spanish Triangle," describing the partial origins of our constantly changing identity in Spain, which struggled to reconstitute itself as a universal Christian nation after a nomadic branch of Islam encountered the post-Roman fragments of Iberia. Despite centuries of *convivencia*, or a tenuous "living together" arrangement between Christians, Jews, and Muslims, exclusion based on religion shifted to one based on race. This ultimately became the root of the modern conception of race, as Spain's racial politics allowed for genocide, slavery, indoctrination, and acculturation. The unique model of race and class hierarchy formed in Latin America remains influential to this day through centuries of strife, miscegenation, and race-based trial and error.

The saga continues with Chapter 2, "Mestizaje vs. the Hypo-American Dream," which describes how mestizaje, in ideology and practice, became the cultural legacy that accompanied Latinx on their migration north to the United States, characterizing racial mixed-ness both as a path towards whiteness and as a source of strength, the basis of a Latin American exceptionalism. A precursor to the forces of globalization waxing poetic on "hybridity," Latin America's view of race seems to represent the borderless future. But despite being an ideology of the powerful that preserves white supremacy, mestizaje differs from globalized notions of hybridity because it represents an "organic" form of cultural mixing achieved through centuries of interracial procreation and intra-societal cultural negotiation. Mestizaje itself is built on the stories of everyday people, narratives in transition, as Afro-Latinx and pro-indigenous movements continue to grow in Latin America and push back against the white supremacy inherent in it.

This chapter next examines how mixed-race realities have been obscured in culture and ideology during the gestation of the United States, a necessary part of establishing the black-white racial binary. Rather than arising simply from the opposition between Anglo Protestantism and Latin American Catholicism, the imposition of the binary through hypodescent was designed to maintain slavery as a driver of capital accumulation. The tension between the black-white binary and mixed-race realities produced a marginal space that spurred the creation of new hybrid identities for Latinx in the United States.

Chapter 3, "The Second Conquista: Mestizaje on the Down-Low," tells the story of Latinx arrival in the United States through both migration and absorption of territory thanks to nineteenth-century Manifest Destiny,

laying the groundwork for a new set of nomadic cultural identities. These were inflected both by Latinx's Latin American origins and efforts to remake their new homes in their own image. Such nomadic identity formation is evident in the hybrid living spaces of the Southwest borderlands, the Caribbean transformation in Northern cities such as New York, Boston, and Chicago, and the establishment of Miami as the northernmost capital city of Latin America. It also leaves a significant cultural footprint, generating artistic touchstones from salsa to bilingual literature to the concept of intersectionality as developed by Kimberlé Crenshaw that has deeply informed the feminist and LGBT movements. I argue in this chapter that Latinx's cultural inclination to view the world through multiple perspectives has given them a central role in US cultural creativity.

In Chapter 4, "Raza Interrupted," I describe the parallel histories of the formation of Nuyorican and Chicanx identities, contemporaneous with and inspired by the African American recontextualizations of the civil rights era. A new kind of nationalism, crafted around identifications with racial difference, helped create hybrid cultural and political practices that at once tried to strip away the racism of Latin American mestizaje, yet still struggled with feminism and gay activism in parallel fashion to the New Left movement of America's 1960s.

What follows are narratives that grapple with how two facets of Latinx reality—English-Spanish bilingualism and mixed-race identities—have an innate potential to resist the restrictions of normalized American identity. Chapter 5, "Border Thinking 101: Can La Raza Speak?," explains that Latinx self-perception and how they are perceived are fundamental to assessing twenty-first-century America, as such narratives break down phenotypical determinism and the rigidly polarized conceptions of racial experience. The transgressive potential of Latinx viewpoints stems from "border thinking," a notion rooted in the work of Mexican American writer Gloria Anzaldúa, who was intent on disrupting the divide between a boundaried self and the reality of multiple subject positions. Her work, as well as that of the many writers influenced by her, begins with the argument that Latinx can be perceived differently in terms of race at varying moments of the day, even when they gather as family units, which creates a radical exteriority to the false notions of unity at the center of Trumpist white supremacy.

My discussion of border thinking is done in conversation with W. E. B. Du Bois's "double consciousness," a mind-state that not only parallels Latinx consciousness but in practice fuses with it, particularly in urban areas where blacks and Latinx mix.

Chapter 6, "Our Raza, Ourselves: A Racial Reenvisioning of Twenty-First-Century Latinx," tries to move the mestizaje ideal from the Latin American project of race erasure to the need for Latinx assertion of racial difference and ultimate bonding with African Americans and other racial minorities, theorizing about the potential political strength of the "collective black."

Once the personal internal border is breached and the new racially diverse subject is crystallized through bilingual oral and written expression, music, theater, and visual arts, as well as the always necessary quotidian interactions on the streets, Latinx reality can manifest itself as a political phenomenon. As Chapter 7, "Towards a New Raza Politics: Class Awareness and Hemispheric Vision," argues, merely inhabiting and performing the de-centered identity of Latinx becomes a political act, one that can render the binary, two-party political debate dysfunctional and irrelevant and substitute a class-based, hemispheric-visioned politics that constantly centers exploitation of the Global South in the discussion.

In Chapter 8, "Media, Marketing, and the Invisible Soul of Latinidad," I describe the contradictory reality of how Latinx are excluded from some media narratives and highly targeted by marketers at the same time. As the subjects of a commodifying effort by media and marketing forces, politically aware Latinx—from Providence, Rhode Island, punk rockers Downtown Boys and L.A. folkloric Mexican fusionists Las Cafeteras to socialist firebrands such as Rosa Clemente and Immortal Technique—see through the false set of homogenizing traditions invented for them to appeal to global consumers.

All of these tendencies—the border thinking of multiple subjects contained within a single individual, the code-switching of bilingualism, the assertion of racial difference, the ability to participate in local politics while fighting against worldwide wealth inequality and worker exploitation, and the potential to remain elusive to the targeting forces of media marketing—can be nurtured in unique urban spaces, whose postwar multicultural essence mirrors the multifaceted Latinx experience itself.

Chapter 9, "The Latinx Urban Space and Identity," focuses on the merging and cross-fertilizing of multiracial cultures that is best accomplished in cities, particularly in opposition to neoliberal projects that ironically intend to reduce them to cultural artifacts. It is in these urban spaces that Latinx best achieve their necessary integration into the collective black, which includes people of color, women, sexual minorities, and anyone alienated from the binary order that has remained constant from colonialism to neoliberalism. Urban spaces allow for the creation of oral, textual, and visual languages that Latinx are central to devising, and reclaiming these spaces can be seen as one of the first key moments in a broader resistance.

The argument made by Audre Lorde with her famous invocation to use new tools to dismantle the master's house is the subject of *Latinx*'s Chapter 10, "Dismantling the Master's House: The Latinx Imaginary and Neoliberal Multiculturalism." At this crucial historical juncture, Latinx have the challenge of interpreting and acting on their future as they are offered new ideologies of inclusion, acculturation strategies that are neoliberal updates of the mestizaje ideology they inherited from Latin America. Even as the old white supremacist order is temporarily revived by the Trump presidency, false neoliberal narratives of racial inclusion will tempt many people of color into believing that racial inequality is finally eroding in twenty-first-century America. Latinx will have to decide how their identity will survive in the context of new syncretic symbols of inclusion forming the basis of a revisionist history, which may have the same results as in Mexico, when the government put indigenous heroes and symbols on their paper currency.

In conclusion, the Epilogue argues that both overtly and under the radar, a conscious movement of Latinx and other people of color struggling to define themselves outside of whiteness is emerging. Rather than finding new paths to assimilation, they are discovering the other that exists within themselves, the one previously relegated to unconscious dreams of Iberia, Africa, Aztlán, and the Moors transferred to the New World. They are finding that the "otro yo," the inner dialogue between indigenous and diasporic utterance and African origins and the media-reified urban Latino reality, is becoming foregrounded by practices such as hip-hop, jazz, and plena, folkloric retellings of syncretic religion, and work songs. These are counter-narratives that are forms of resistance.

The social contract that underpins the American nation hinges on forgetting. For almost two centuries the project seemed as if it might succeed, but of late, we have been besieged by a flood of memories. The emergence of Black Lives Matter is inexorably tied to the many atrocities and genocides that have occurred in the Americas and have not been properly addressed. Latinx have brought many memories with them as well, some forgotten in their native lands but all kept alive through a common language of translating traditions. Latinx can play a crucial role by translating and transcending the rigid rhetoric that is splitting the left: the conflict between racial and sexual identity politics and class-based politics. From their words and actions arise a real-time image of what is happening in communities across the country to the targeted, reviled, and rejected. It's a voice of indigenous blackness, both those who identify as such and those who live in their embrace, struggling to think differently, living in the space where the self cannot silence them.
