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CHAPTER 6

Invisible Diversity

The process of becoming international is characterized by a sense of ambivalence inherent in hybrid identities. Cosmopolitanization is a social strategy that TIS students use to mediate their positionality within a transnational space. It is a process of negotiating boundaries, sometimes by blurring them and at other times by reinforcing them. I propose that becoming "Western" and becoming "Asian" are both mutually constitutive with becoming "international," as they represent ways of practicing cosmopolitanism that emerge out of the cultural inequalities embedded in transnational and national structures.

The previous chapter demonstrated that the students who were perceived to be international and therefore perceived to be practicing cosmopolitanism had Western capital. They were constructed as "normal." This chapter shows that students who did not acquire sufficient Western capital were constructed as Other and homogenized. The different ways in which students experience a transnational space produces diverse ways of practicing cosmopolitanism. Students respond to cultural hierarchies by reinforcing boundaries of difference to create home turfs into which they can retreat and find relief from feeling marginalized. Students form groups based on language as a response to losing their social network because of a high rate of student turnover. They also gravitate toward these groups as they mature due to the increasing importance of culture with age. Students who feel their transnational upbringing has led to a lack of exposure to their parents' home culture compensate for this lack by immersing themselves in the corresponding language-based groups. I argue that Asian students respond to processes of socialization, mobility, and blurring of boundaries by practicing a form of cosmopolitanism characterized by a form of pan-Asian cultural competency and identity.

Changing Names, Changing Identities

As discussed in chapter 5, students from non-Anglophone backgrounds acquired Western capital in order to integrate into the dominant school culture. Some students experienced this process of acculturation as a change of identity. Students cited name changing as a potent example of the process of accepting an identity change. Sometimes the students themselves initiated the name change, and sometimes it was imposed.

Jenny said that she used to go by her real name, "Hae Jin." But some of the non-Korean boys teased her by deliberately mispronouncing her name. Jenny explains, "I was in elementary school, in sixth grade; they kept calling me 'Hey Jean, Hey Jean' intentionally, so I felt really bad." So she changed her name. Jenny laughingly explained, "I just told them I'm Jenny now, and they're like, 'Okay.'" She had picked the name of her favorite character in a novel for herself. Another Korean student whose Korean name was "Jae Soo" went by the name "Jay (Jae)." When I asked how he got the name, he said that his fifth-grade teacher kept calling him "Jay," so he has been just "Jay" ever since.

A few female students shared similar stories. We were sitting at one of the new picnic tables in the main senior hangout area one typically sunny day when a casual chat turned into an animated discussion about identity. There were two students who were Indian nationals, and they were both named "Vandana." One of them joined the conversation after the rest of us had already been chatting for about half an hour. When she joined, I tried to double check with her whether I was pronouncing her name correctly, and this simple gesture triggered a discussion about the subtle ways in which the dominant culture requires its participants to assimilate.

"Van*da*na, is that how you pronounce ... ," I began to ask, as I pronounced it like I would "bandana" and stressed the second syllable.

Before I could finish my question, Vandana cut in with a firm, "Actually, no! That's a wonderful place to start! First of all, you pronounce my name *Van*dana." With a big smile, she stressed the first syllable, as it would be pronounced in Hindi. The "V" sounded a little like a "W"; the first vowel like "one" than "ban" or "van"; and the last two vowels were pronounced lightly: *V uh n* – d uh – n ah.

"*Van*dana?" I repeated after her.

Once I pronounced it correctly, she said, "Yes, and that's, I mean, that's probably the *basis* of my confusion! Like, I have no idea where I come from. I honestly don't, 'cause I was born here. I've lived here my whole life, and I've gone to an international-based system, school since I was five."

"So, kindie?" I asked.

"Huh, like prep senior, yeah, kindergarten," Vandana continued. "And when I walked into my classroom my teacher goes, 'Oh, so your name is Van*da*na?'" she said, as she imitated my initial pronunciation of her name. "And I don't say anything! I'm like, 'Yaaah.'" She put a blank look on her face. "That's meeee."

We all burst out laughing at her vivid narration as the other Vandana chimed in, "Oh my god, that's so true."

"Yeah, right! I knowww, like." The two Vandanas started to finish each other's sentences. They were caught up in the excitement of knowing that they could empathize with the other's experience.

"And then after that I started introducing myself as Van*da*na," continued the second Vandana, while the first piped in to finish her own explanation: "As, as 'Van*da*na!' Exactly! *Total* identity change, right there! It, it was crazy!"

Although the (mis)pronunciation of a name may appear trivial, it is symbolic of the power of the dominant culture to shape identities. As Vandana impressed upon me, even a change in the pronunciation of a name can result in an instant and "*total* [her emphasis]" identity change. Both Jenny and Vandana hung out in the mainstream English-speaking groups. But even among those who did not socialize with the mainstream English-speaking groups, many still used name changes as a means to connect with the English-speaking world at TIS.

Names can serve as a gateway to another world, another fragment of a person. Daniel (see chapters 1 and 5), whose parents were Danish and American, gave an example of this when he spoke of his two Korean friends, with whom he spends a lot of time in class, but rarely outside of class. Outside of class he hangs out with the English-speaking groups while his Korean friends hang out with other Koreans. Daniel explained:

> Another interesting thing is their names. I always call them David and Lisa. I've never gotten this impression that they seem to mind that. But if ever, like, "Jeong Tak" and "Ye Ryun" [their Korean names]—they sound so foreign. Those sound so foreign when I'm saying them, not the actual way they sound, but foreign to my tongue, that, I really don't associate it with the same person. It's like if all of a sudden I started calling David "Jeong Tak," I would have to like, meet him all over again, and it's really strange. [We both laugh.] But, 'cause I've often considered, you know, "Why do I always call him David?" That's how he introduces himself to the teachers, but that's 'cause most teachers can't remember Korean names.

English names make it easier for other English-speakers to relate to Daniel's two Korean friends, but they also construct boundaries be-

tween Daniel and his friends. The Korean and English names compartmentalize the Korean-speaking and English-speaking cultural worlds that David and Lisa operate in, similar to the way Indian and American accents compartmentalized the cultural worlds that the South Asian boys operated in and demarcated the line between insiders and outsiders (chapter 2).

Those who are not socialized into the dominant culture in the home environment can acquire the necessary cultural capital, including name changing, and learn to operate in the dominant culture. Some integrate into English-speaking groups and thus enrich the international appearance of these groups. The visible diversity that these students bring to the English-speaking groups renders the Western cultural capital that they share invisible. Those who cannot or refuse to acquire the necessary cultural capital may separate themselves from the dominant English-speaking groups. This is often interpreted as ethnocentrism on the part of the non-English-speaking groups without regard for the complexity of factors that contribute to the formation of these social groups, such as the way they are constructed as a homogenized "Other."

A Nameless, Faceless "Other"

As discussed in the previous chapter, the students in the main English-speaking groups maintained their cultural dominance by defining who or what kind of behavior was considered "normal," in the same way that the staff defined who was considered "international." The more normative a student's behavior appeared, the more they were perceived and engaged with as individuals. The notion of "normal people" was reinforced through the presence of those who lie outside the norm. Those who fell outside the norm became part of a nameless, faceless Other in the eyes of students in the English-speaking groups.

One day I followed the team-sports class out onto the field, and was standing around watching them under the hot sun. When it came time to select the team members, Chris and Naomi, the team captains for the day, started taking turns picking their team members. Both Chris and Naomi usually hung out in the English-speaking groups. "Max," said Chris. "Juan," said Naomi, as she squinted in the sun. One by one the students went behind the team captains as their names were called out. Toward the end, only the Korean students, all of them male, were left. It was Kyu Sik, DJ (short for Dae Jeong), and Jay (short for Jae Soo). The names of the latter two had been Anglicized to make it easier for English speakers to pronounce. But instead of calling them by their

names, Naomi, hesitatingly, said, "You and, you," as she lifted both arms to point at each of the Korean students she was referring to. She could not remember even their Anglicized names and seemed slightly embarrassed about it. Kyu Sik, DJ, and Jay looked a bit unsure as to which one of them Naomi was referring to. "Yeah, you," Naomi added as she pointed again. While those who are part of the norm are recognized as individuals with names and personality, the "Other" becomes a nameless mass.

In addition, cosmopolitan practices are situational. Naomi is a Japanese national who speaks fluent English and hangs out with the English-speaking groups. She was also a member of the UN Day Japanese club and she was quite vocal in criticizing the club leadership (see chapter 8). She regularly complained after club practice that they were being insensitive toward the non-Japanese members of the club by refusing to speak English, the common language, and insisting on speaking in Japanese, which many of the members could not understand. In objecting to the leadership's Japanese-centric management of the club, Naomi aligned herself with the school's ideology of being international. However, once she was outside the Japanese subcontext and in the larger context of the school, she unwittingly conformed to the Eurocentric view that marginalized the students who were not part of the English-speaking groups, such as the Korean boys in her team-sports class. Naomi was committed to engaging with difference in one situation, but reinforced cultural dominance in another.

This incident echoes what Jenny noted in her interview: "I don't think anybody outside the Korean group really knows the Koreans individually. So if one of them comes and, like, tries to hang out with the mainstream people, they would be nice and all but they wouldn't be friends." Later, I asked Ashley, a white American, and Anton, an Indonesian student who spoke English better than Indonesian, whether or not they knew the names of the Korean students. Ashley hardly knew any and was amazed when Anton rattled off the names of Korean students from their grade. I asked Anton why he knew them by name when the others did not. Anton shrugged his shoulders and said, "They don't try I guess."

Daniel, the student council president, gave a nuanced account of cultural racism. He argued that while growing up in a "third culture environment like TIS" would encourage people to be more "open to meeting other people and [be] much more tolerant," it does not "cure people from having prejudices and stuff." He thought that many other factors, such as parenting, come into play in shaping our views. "I still see people who are, you know, I definitely wouldn't say racist, but prej-

udiced against certain people. Stereotypes," he said. Daniel then continued, "I mentioned that some of my friends happened not to really know any Koreans, but some of them, well some of the people I know at least, I feel, kinda, actually just don't want to meet them 'cause they're [the Koreans are] stereotyped as uninteresting people." The "Other" was constructed as devoid of individuality, "uninteresting," and therefore not worth knowing. Similarly, an alumnus I spoke to even claimed that the ESOL program did not exist back when she was a student because she could not recall any ESOL students from her grade even though there were many enrolled at the time.

The lack of interest in the "Other" hinders the development of free and easy social relations. Yoo Mi recounted that she found it difficult to make "foreign" friends when she first joined TIS as a tenth grader. She explained (interview, 28 April 2009):

> It was frightening. I came here ... I mean I had, like, blond friends when I was young, but when I first came here there was an outing [for orientation] and then I would see people with blond hair and blue eyes and I'll be like, "Oh my god. It's a foreigner there." It was like, it was new. Seem[ed] like I never been to international school before.
>
> My English wasn't that fluent, 'cause I was spoken Korean, so my English wasn't that good. So, then, just play with my Korean friends I guess. And you know how this school really doesn't like Koreans? You know how they, how they, the impression that Koreans always studying and 'cause Koreans never go parties, and they always study, they always good students, so the impression isn't that great.

Yoo Mi was racialized as "Korean" despite her transnational experiences that were not typically Korean. Yoo Mi was born in Korea but moved to Kalimantan, a large Indonesian island, when she was five years old because her father worked for a mining company. They lived in a remote area in Kalimantan. "It was a forest. I would see orangutan," said Yoo Mi. After living there for two years, she relocated with her family to Surabaya, a city on the densely populated island of Java, where she attended an international school. Yoo Mi did not know what "A, B, C" was but quickly learned English and made friends who were from diverse backgrounds. Then the family repatriated to Korea where she studied at a local school from grade five to ten, during which time she lost her fluency in English. These diverse experiences did not add much to her cultural capital when she moved to TIS in spite of its ideology of being international. In the eyes of the dominant culture, Yoo Mi was simply "Korean."

Despite having had "blond friends" when she was younger, the adolescent years she spent in Korea instilled in her a perception that

"blond hair and blue eyes" were superior and, therefore, intimidating. Colonial discourses remain a powerful force that constructs racial imaginaries that are reinforced through contemporary global hierarchies. It perpetuates a gaze that sees the West as at once desirable and intimidating.

Yoo Mi felt that Koreans were not perceived in a positive light. She said: "[After school started] I approached some, some foreigners and I say hi blah, blah, blah but they, they didn't really welcoming 'cause I was new, and they didn't know me and I was Korean. I mean, they say, 'Hi,' and say only service talk, you know what I mean? Like, just like, 'How's the weather?' Not like deep, deep talk. So I couldn't join that group." "That group" was in reference to the mainstream English-speaking group(s). There was a lack of mutual intelligibility between Yoo Mi and students with Western capital that could facilitate further connections. After two to three weeks of trying to join them, she gave up and started befriending other Korean students with whom she had a sense of mutual intelligibility. "After that, I realize that I started playing with my Korean friends, and I felt comfortable you know, how the language, it was much easier for me and they understood me, like how the Western people don't understand, 'How come you don't party and stuff?' But then in Korea society [laughs], not partying [is] good." I asked Yoo Mi to elaborate on the differences between conversing with Korean and Western students: "Asking school homework is the easiest thing.... If I ask Korean friends, 'Oh, what is the school homework,' they tell you and they talk about other things: talk about teacher and how the other teachers that doesn't give this homework but our teacher does and blah, blah, blah.... But if I go to the Western people then they'll just tell me the homework, you know what I mean? And finish that talk." In addition to a lack of mutual intelligibility, Yoo Mi was implying that there is a lack of interest among the students in the mainstream groups toward the others, which negatively affects the flow of conversation and creates a sense of dissonance. The Other is perceived through stereotypical images. The Other is differentiated from each other by their nationality labels "Korean," "Japanese," "Indonesian," etc. Otherwise, the diversity within these groups is invisible. Cultural dominance is maintained by constructing the Other not as individuals, but as nameless, faceless, uninteresting, homogeneous groups.

Invisible Diversity

The seniors who hung out in the Indonesian-speaking group during the first semester of my fieldwork were culturally and ethnically di-

verse. I regularly found two Filipinos, two Koreans, two Taiwanese, and a few others who were only partially of Indonesian descent in the group. The Filipinos and one of the Korean students were not fluent in Indonesian, and admitted that they could not understand all that was said by their Indonesian friends. Nonetheless, they chose to hang out with the Indonesians. Those who were of part-Indonesian decent were also part British, Japanese, or Thai. Even those who were Indonesian by nationality were of varied ethnic backgrounds. Most were ethnically Chinese, while some were indigenous Indonesian or of Indian descent.[1] Many of these students said that when they were younger they hung out with peers who were of different nationalities, but their social groups changed as they got older, which I discuss later. Many factors contributed to the formation of a (diverse) Indonesian-speaking group, who just as equally use English in their conversations.

The Indonesian in-group diversity was invisible to the staff and many students from the dominant culture. A student from a high-status English-speaking group spoke of the "Indonesian" group as though it were made up exclusively of "Chindos" even though when he spoke of individual members of that group, he was in fact aware that there were a handful of indigenous Indonesians, Filipinos, Taiwanese, and Koreans. But when he thought of them as a group, their diversity became invisible. He racialized them as "Indonesian."

I pointed out to a staff member that the senior Indonesian-speaking group was also diverse. In response, she said that Indonesia was a diverse country anyway. She dismissed the diversity of the Indonesian group as nothing out of the ordinary. I said, "But it is not common to see indigenous, Chinese, and Indian Indonesians form friendships with each other the way they do here." The effort the Indonesian-speaking students made to overcome their differences was not recognized as "international." It was simply seen as being "Indonesian." The diversity in the English-speaking group could have just as easily been dismissed as, "The United States (or the United Kingdom) is diverse anyway." But it was not. The diversity of the Indonesian-speaking group was second class because it did not conform to the school's ideology of being "international," which emphasized *racial* diversity and Western capital.

Creating Home Turf

Linguistic and culturally based groups that were separate from the English-speaking groups provided protection from dissonance for those who did not have Western capital. For those who do not have

the necessary cultural capital (e.g., speaking fluent English or a having a Western giss), the Korean- and Japanese-speaking groups provide some degree of shelter from the discomfort of having to engage with the dominant culture.

"English-Infested Society"

Dong Gun, as previously mentioned, floated from group to group instead of being entrenched in the Korean-speaking groups. But Dong Gun spoke at great length defending his Korean peers' choice to remain within the Korean-speaking groups: "So it's natural and it feels more comfortable for Koreans to just be with Koreans in an English-infested society, I guess, in [TIS]." He chuckled at his own choice of the word "infested." He then continued to explain why the Korean students liked to hang out with other Koreans: "They try to survive, live through the day. They need it because they just need to belong somewhere. And if it's not with their culture, then with who, right? But the teachers who always argue that this is an international school, you have to speak English, you have to get along with the people. I mean, that's ideal, but Koreans are, what can you do when one doesn't feel comfortable in that way? So I feel very sad and sorry for the Koreans ... because they're always getting the teachers' fingers pointing at them" (interview, 20 April 2009). Dong Gun's comments suggest that some Korean students experience dissonance due to their lack of fluency in English. Others are fluent in English, but their cultural capital is not sufficient for them to feel a sense of belonging within the larger school community due to a lack of mutual intelligibility.

David (Jeong Tak) described Koreans as "family." David had been at TIS since elementary school, was fluent in English, and said that he used to have "international" friends. Even then he hung out almost exclusively with Koreans as he progressed through school. David says, "It's like all the Koreans are my family." He claimed to feel "way closer to Korean people." The sense of closeness is derived from a sense of mutual intelligibility of experiences that he shares with other Korean young people at TIS.

In the previous chapter I explained that marginal English-speaking students remained marginal because they were unable to mobilize their social capital to form groups. Unlike the marginal English-speaking students, Korean students formed groups with clear linguistic boundaries that were separate from the dominant English-speaking groups. Like the South Asian boys in chapter 2, choosing to speak in Korean enabled Korean students to reclaim the power to draw the boundaries

between insider and outsider, and thereby position themselves as insiders. Although they were marginal vis-à-vis the dominant school culture, at least within these linguistic groups they were "normal." As can be seen in figure 6.1, I will show in the next section that the situation was similar for the Japanese-speaking groups.

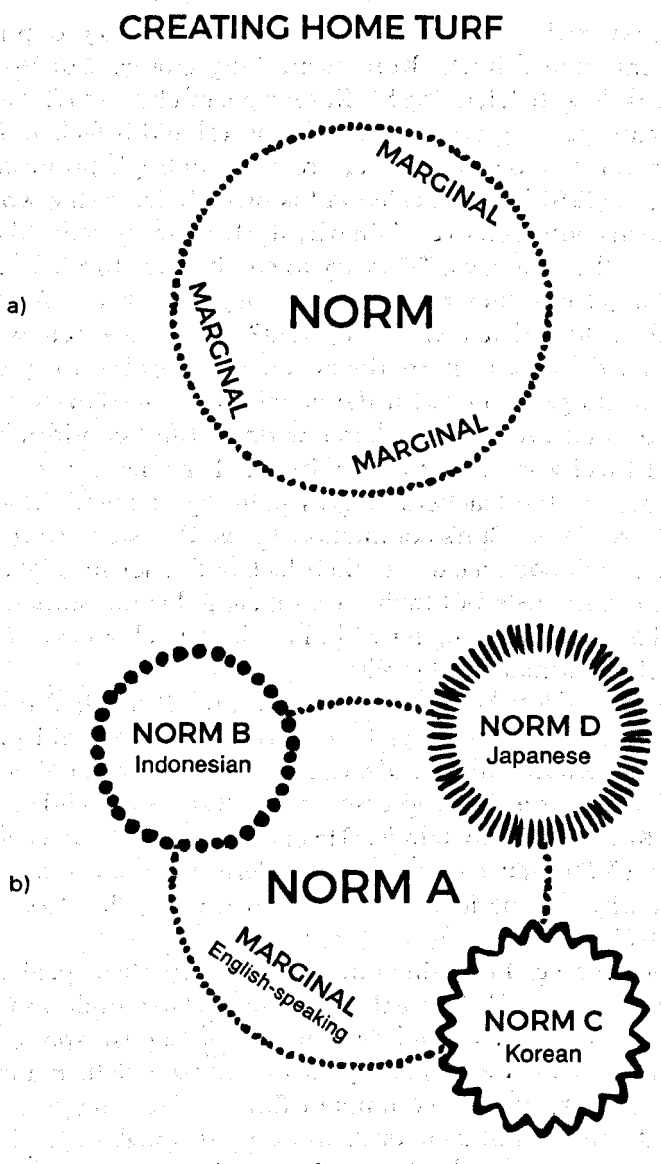

Figure 6.1. Creating home turf.

From Cultural Hybrid to Being "Japanese"

Koichi or Tomioka-kun, as he was commonly known by his Japanese peers, found that moving from the Japanese school to TIS negatively affected his social status.[2] Koichi claimed that he used to be a central or popular figure among his schoolmates back at the Japanese school. His friends corroborated this claim. Moreover, Koichi was a cultural hybrid, but his hybridity was not recognized as being international at TIS since he hung out almost exclusively in the Japanese hangout area. Although both of his parents are Japanese, his family moved to Indonesia when he was in grade two and he grew up mostly in Indonesia. He was a native speaker of Japanese and near-native speaker of Indonesian. I have reproduced an extract of my interview with Koichi in the original languages, accompanied by an English translation, to give the reader a visual picture of his cultural fluidity. The part written in the English alphabet is in Indonesian and the other parts are in Japanese. In explaining how he learned Indonesian at the Japanese school in Jakarta, Koichi switched between the two with ease (interview, 1 April 2009).

KOICHI: 俺の友達でも、俺より長い奴とか俺よりもできない奴もいるんだろうと思うんだけど。(Even among my friends, I'm sure there are guys who've [lived here] longer than I have but can't speak as well as I can.)

DT: Kenapa? Kok bisa? (Why? How come?)

KOICHI: インドネシア語ってこう、なんか面白いなって、「こういう風に色んなことがあるんだ」って。で、だんだん興味持ち始めて、、、だから、[ケンジ] みたいにインドネシア語話せるとこにも入っていくわけ、自分自ら、わかんないけど最初は言葉、「こいつは何言ってんの？」って言って、、、(So, I thought, Indonesian is kind of interesting, like, "Oh, so it's got all sorts of stuff like this." And I started getting more and more interested.... So, I chose to join the kids who could speak Indonesian, like [Kenji]. I dunno. At first it was the language. I was like, "What's he saying?")

DT: Apa, maksudnya di sekolah, apa ... ? (Huh? You mean at school or ... ?)

KOICHI: Maksudnya di sekolah, dan teman Indonesia ngomong-ngomong. Ini tuch pikir, ini kayak [*sic*] bagus. Belum keluar kata-katanya juga mau ngomong, gitu. Ya gitu, jadi, "Ini ngomong apa?" Jadi tanya-tanya. "Ini apa? Ini apa? Ini apa?" Gitu. それで、こういう意味だよ、こういう意味だよって 言って、Oh, gitu. Gini, gini. Ya udah, 面白くなって。(I mean at school; like, my Indonesian friends were chatting. And I thought, this seems cool. So I couldn't say anything yet, but I wanted to talk. Yeah, that's how. So I was, like, "What are you saying?" So I kept asking. "What's this? What's this? What's this?" Like that. So then, they

would be like, "It means this. It means that." "Oh, really?" "Like this, like this." So yeah, I got interested.)

Koichi explained that he also learned Indonesian from the maid and driver who worked for his family.[3] He got along well with the maid when he was a child and, because she did not speak Japanese, learned Indonesian so that he could play with her. "I probably ended up like this because I spoke Indonesian thinking that it's really fun to speak it," Koichi added in Japanese. Learning Indonesian was "fun." At the Japanese school, being Japanese meant that Koichi was part of the dominant culture and therefore positionally higher than his mixed Japanese-Indonesian schoolmates, making it easier for him to join them. Similarly, he was positionally higher than his adult Indonesian maid and driver in terms of both cultural and class hierarchies. He was also still young and impressionable.

At TIS, Koichi's social circle extended from the Japanese group to the Indonesian group. His interest in Indonesia and fluency in Indonesian was unusual for a Japanese, who, according to the regional cultural hierarchy that reflects the economic structure, are considered higher in status than Indonesians and generally not too interested in Indonesia. Even the way he sat sometimes betrayed his Indonesian upbringing. Indonesians were interested in befriending him. Neither did he seem to have problems talking to Koreans, in fact he had dated one before. Koichi said he used to hang out in the Indonesian hangout area when his older Japanese classmates all graduated together and the Japanese hangout area was left empty. But by the time I met Koichi in his senior year, Koichi's recess time was spent mostly at the Japanese hangout area while his Indonesian-speaking friends regularly visited him there and stayed to chat with him. The most regular of these visitor friends were a Chinese Indonesian, a mixed Japanese-Indonesian (Kenji), and a Korean (Dae Sik) and a Taiwanese who had grown up mostly in Indonesia. Koichi engaged with those who were different on a regular basis, but his cosmopolitan practice was not visible to the teachers and administrators because he did not engage with the "Western" students. Intergroup interaction among the nonmainstream groups was common. However, these cosmopolitan practices remained largely unrecognized.

Although he was a dominant figure within the Japanese-speaking group, Koichi was not a popular figure within the school at large due to his lack of Western cultural capital. Koichi confessed that he wished he could join the English-speaking groups, which he referred to as the "Westerners" as he pointed toward the main senior hangout area:

KOICHI: I do wanna join them. I bet it's really fun to be friends with those guys. I do think so. But there's still, like, a part of me that just can't go there [the English-speaking hangout area]. It's 'cause, it's sort of, like, umm, maybe there's still, like, a language barrier, I guess? I haven't tried, but I guess, to be honest about it, I still feel insecure about my English. I'm not sure I can keep up with the kind of conversations that Americans have. So, it's like, it's really hard to break into that group, I guess.

DT: So, you can't join, but you also have a desire to join?

KOICHI: Yeah, I do, I do.

DT: Is it quite strong?

KOICHI: Well, yeah, kinda; it looks like fun, and I've got a few friends there actually. So, if my friends are there, I'll drop by and stuff. When I see them chatting, I think, yeah, it seems cool. I think, you know, it would be kind of cool to be with my Western friends and be kind of like, "Hey look, I'm the only Japanese guy who's hanging out with them" [laughs]. But yeah, there's a part of me that just can't go there.

And it's like, I've got a normal life here [points to the Japanese hangout area that we were sitting in], so I guess I'm not that desperate. Yeah, I'm not desperate. So, it's like, I've got enough friends even if I don't go there. And there's a part of me that's, like, [trying to convince myself] "Well, if I really wanted to go there, I can, so whatever"; but then again, there's another part of me that wishes I could be that guy who could [freely] hang out over there with them *and* hang out over here [with my Japanese friends]. But in a way, I'm not that desperate, so I guess I don't try.[4]

The friends who Koichi was referring to were his baseball teammates. Doing sports together seemed to be one of the few occasions when language and cultural barriers mattered less and students were able to bond despite their differences. The Japanese girls on the softball team would also occasionally have brief, friendly interactions in the hallways with teammates from the English-speaking groups as they passed each other by. But these friendships rarely developed into anything substantial beyond the sports grounds.

As he spoke of his desire to join the English-speaking groups, Koichi gazed toward their hangout area in the same manner that I saw a few others—Korean-speaking, Indonesian-speaking, and low-status English-speaking students—gaze at those groups. Their gaze carried a sense of longing for something unattainable, something out of their reach. A few months later, as he was about to graduate, Koichi wrote in the school yearbook that I had purchased for myself: "It's only been a short while, but of all the Japanese here, I think you understand me the most. I don't really talk much about myself with others, so that

says a lot." I believe he was referring to the time when he spoke of how he could not bring himself to join a group that he longed to join. His words caught me by surprise because I had not realized that he had shared with me something that he had felt was too vulnerable to share even with his close friends.

In Koichi's eyes the English-speaking groups became "Western," even "American," in the same way that he became "Japanese" in their eyes. Those without Western capital perceived being international as being "Western" or "American." Similarly, students in the English-speaking groups and staff perceived the cosmopolitan practices of Asian students as being "Korean," "Indonesian," or "Japanese." Despite his desire, Koichi felt unable to join the English-speaking groups for fear of rejection. He thus remained within the Japanese group where his cultural capital enabled him to feel as though he belonged. Even though he was interculturally competent and practiced cosmopolitanism with other Asian students, Koichi became Japanese at TIS. However, fear of marginalization was not the only reason students hung out in non-English-speaking groups. Neither were these groupings static. Language-based groups became more and more distinct as students got older, as I show in the next section.

Changing Friendship Circles with Age

Asian students, particularly those who had been at TIS since elementary school, noted a clear pattern of change in student interaction where cultural background mattered more as they progressed from elementary to middle to high school. In elementary school, they interacted regardless of cultural background. In middle school there was a vague sense, at least retrospectively, that Asian students hung out more with other Asian students and Western students with other Western students. By high school, student groups became more distinctly based on nationality or language. Patterns of friendship change because having a sense of mutual intelligibility becomes increasingly important with age. It is also a result of student mobility.

Kumar joined TIS in the third grade and initially struggled due to his inability to speak English. But he remembered being friends with children of various cultural backgrounds. As he progressed to middle school, he was mostly friends with other Indian students but still retained friendships with non-Indian students. By the time I met him in his junior year of high school, he hung out almost exclusively with other Indian students.

David (Jeong Tak), who is Korean, had been at TIS since grade two and tells a similar story.

> In middle school it's international kids that I was friends with. Well, I had friends from my ethnicity, but the ones that I usually hang out with. They were much less Korean. So it was really hard for me to have Korean friend or befriend with Korean because in middle school, it was so tiny percent of the students, the level of Korean, the number of Korean. In middle school, I kind of have half American friends ... not American, but international friends, and half Korean friends. Now in high school, it's like 80 percent Korean friends.

By "international," David meant non-Koreans. Even though he found it hard to befriend Koreans when he was younger, he ended up hanging out with Koreans in high school.

Yun Shin, or Sam as he was known among non-Koreans, followed a similar trajectory in that he had more international friends when he was younger, but hung out mostly with Koreans by the time I met him. Sam had lived outside Korea since he was six weeks old. Initially he lived in Jakarta and attended a Korean school until the 1998 riots forced him to relocate temporarily when he was in third grade. He went with his mother to Brisbane, Australia, where he attended a local school and learned English. A year later he moved back to Indonesia to attend TIS. Sam had a transnational upbringing, but he hung out almost exclusively with other Korean students.

Sam cited mobility as one of the reasons for changes in his friendship circles. Even for those who stayed at one international school, mobility featured significantly in their lives. Sometimes all their friends left at the same time, leading them to lose their whole social network with the turn of a single academic year. As his non-Korean friends left, Sam was unable to replace them with other non-Koreans. He eventually hung out more and more with other Koreans: "People come and go, come and go, most people are like that. All my Korean friends are quite stable here, so I have them as very stable friends." As he grew older, it became easier for Sam to maintain friendships with other Koreans than to make new friends among non-Korean students because cultural capital weighs in more on relationships as a teen than as a young child.

Another Korean, Seung Gi, makes this point more explicit. Seung Gi similarly cited mobility as a reason for the changes in his friendship circles. Seung Gi had friends of many different nationalities and, like Dong Gun, I often saw him shuttle among different groups of friends. But as a senior he hung out mostly in the group labeled "Indonesian."

Unlike Sam, he preferred to hang out with Indonesians as opposed to Koreans despite being only able to understand 70 percent of what was said when his friends spoke in Indonesian.

Seung Gi used to have more "international" friends when he was younger. Many of them came and went. As he became older, Seung Gi found it increasingly difficult to befriend the new "international"—which was often conflated with "Western"—students and ended up hanging out mostly with the Indonesian students. He found that he "can't connect [*nggak nyambung*]" with the newcomers. As he grew older, not only did his social capital to access the "international" group diminish as his friends left, but he was also unable to cultivate the Western cultural capital necessary to relate to the incoming Western students. Having a sense of mutual intelligibility with friends is more important as a teen than it is as a young child. As for his preference for hanging out with the Indonesian students over the Korean students, Seung Gi cited financial reasons—his family was generally better off than the other Korean families. Social, cultural, and economic capital all intersected to affect Seung Gi's friendships.

Ben, whose Korean name is Hyun Bin, moved from Korea to Canada, then back to Korea before moving to England, and then Indonesia. In Indonesia, he already had preexisting family friends from the Korean community that helped him make friends among the Koreans at TIS when he joined in ninth grade.

> BEN: I have family friends here who are Korean. I hang out with them. I was automatically [in] the Korean group. I had several friends, because my dad would travel [to] Indonesia and then Korea, Indonesia, Korea. Sometimes brings friends from Indonesia and they were Koreans here, in TIS. So we become very good friends.
>
> DT: So you mean you knew them from before?
>
> BEN: Yeah. Since, like, seven years old.

Ben's social capital facilitated his friendships with other Korean students. Ben believes they were "welcoming" because they knew what it was like to be new at the school: "Yeah, cause they were all like, some time in their life they have, they came here, right? So they know how it feels to first come to see the different groups and stuff. So they were really welcoming and stuff."

Ben was one of the most westernized among the Korean seniors, but still he felt that a lack of social and cultural capital made it difficult for him to befriend the students in the English-speaking groups. Ben explained:

> I don't have really many Western friends because I wasn't here in middle school, elementary school. It's Korean people from middle school and elementary school have much more Western friends. 'Cause in elementary school, like, there's no cultural difference because they're so young and stuff. Even middle school, it's less division. But as you go to high school, there's such a strict and vivid division between cultures. It's so hard to make foreign [non-Korean] friends. If they're not in your class, it's like, almost impossible to just go up to them, and it's kind of like intruder. Like, Western [hangout area], Korean guy going in, just random [Korean] guy walking in, and talking to a random Western person—it's kind of weird. But if I have a purpose, that kind of thing, then I can just talk to them.

Students were generally amicable to each other, and felt able to approach individuals in other groups if they had a specific purpose for doing so, such as asking a classmate about a homework assignment. But they found it difficult to just go and socialize with another group.

As Ben suggested, many of the students who had been at TIS since elementary or middle school used to be good friends with students who were, by high school, hanging out in different language-based groups. Students in all the major groups that had been at TIS since elementary school agreed on this. The groups had distinct boundaries in high school, but the friendship trajectories that students had taken indicated that most of them used to practice cosmopolitanism, according to the school's ideology of being international, in that they were friends with people across racial, cultural, and linguistic differences. As they grew older, however, social and cultural capital grew in influence over their sense of mutual intelligibility with each other, affecting their ability to maintain or make new friendships across these differences.

Initially, Ben wondered why students seemed to form the distinct groups, and attributed it to the different future trajectories they would be taking: "I kind of see why now. But when I first came here, I didn't quite see why [laughs]. I heard that in middle school it's better there. They would mix easily, more. But in high school, I don't see why people would divide up, that kind of stuff. But now I see, because what their ultimate goal, like, university and that kind of stuff, is different—how they study, like their parents and stuff—is different. So they wouldn't really get along [with] forei- [*sic*], other people." According to Ben, different home environments and post-graduation plans influenced students' choice of friends. This argument appears to run contrary to the fact that many students were interested in studying in the United States or the United Kingdom, including Koreans regardless of their cultural background. I suggest, however, that while their destinations

for university may be similar, the path they take to get there and their projected life trajectory after university are affected by their family culture, finances, and country of passport, which I discussed in chapter 4.

Both those who stayed and moved found that their social, cultural, and economic capital had a greater influence on their ability to make friends with various groups of transnational youth as they grew older. Even among the high school students I observed, the boundaries based on language were more pronounced among the twelfth-grade students than they were for those in ninth grade. In contrast, the cliques *within* the language-based groups diminished as students matured and popularity within the groups mattered less. It is too simplistic to dismiss the existence of non-Anglophone groups at the school as the result of "self-segregation" and the failure to practice cosmopolitanism. Various factors intersect to influence the formation of these groups.

Significantly, it was mainly Asian students who cited the pattern. In contrast, students from English-speaking group(s), regardless of how long they had been at TIS, were mostly unaware of the pattern. They almost never mentioned that they used to be friends with some of the Korean or Indonesian students until I asked about it. They did not volunteer this information as the Asian students did. Due to their dominant position, members of the English-speaking groups were rarely aware that they were in a group that shared a sense of mutual intelligibility, because this was perceived as normal, as I argued in the previous chapter.

I Miss Being "Korean"

In addition to the impact of mobility, students commonly cited the transnationality of their upbringing as the very reason for being drawn to their Korean peers. All four Korean students mentioned above spent a considerable time, if not their whole lives, outside Korea. They are multilingual, have a "natural" command of English, and, in most cases, are able to write better in English than in Korean, though some are more comfortable speaking Korean than English. However, apart from Seung Gi, who hung out with Indonesians, they (David, Sam, and Ben) claimed that they hung out with other Koreans at TIS precisely because they had limited experience with Korea and had a desire to know their parents' country. Some had no friends in Korea, which was not surprising given that they had not been living there. However, each imagined Korea in a slightly different way, which was reflected in their practice of cosmopolitanism.

Imagining "Korea"

For Ben, who had extensive transnational experiences, hanging out with Koreans at TIS was a new experience. He had left Korea for Canada during elementary school and spent grades five and six in a Canadian town at a school with only three Asian students—himself, his younger brother, and a Canadian-born Chinese. He had gone to Canada on a study abroad program organized by his school in Korea. Ben and his brother home-stayed with a Canadian family during that time. He then returned to Korea for seventh grade before moving to England to study at a boarding school. This time, his brother stayed behind in Korea and Ben was one of two Koreans at the school. Ben prefers to speak Korean, as he can "express more feelings" in Korean than English, but he speaks English fluently with an accent that sounds mildly North American.

During my fieldwork, however, I noticed that he hung out mostly with the Korean students. When I asked him whether he missed hanging out with non-Koreans, since he had spent some time almost exclusively with non-Koreans while in Canada and England, he responded:

> But like, I had that experience so I like kind of having this experience [i.e., hanging out with Koreans] now. So when I go to college, I'll have a different experience. It's okay with me. It's a chance for me to have that experience.
>
> But the bad thing is, since I have to move around so much, like, when I was about to get so close to the friends there as friends, when I made that kind of friends, I had to leave. It's kinda, it's hard for me to leave those kinds of people and then settle in a new environment. But, yeah, that's kind of [the] bad part of it. But I can just contact them with MSN or, it's okay, yeah.

Ben only spoke in passing about his difficulty in leaving friends behind. But his experiences echo the existing research on Third Culture Kids. They learn to cope with repeated loss of friendships and social networks due to mobility, but these losses can lead to a sense of "unresolved grief" that resurfaces later in life (Pollock and Van Reken 2009 [2001]: 159).

Meanwhile, David spoke of Korea with a sense of longing for the "home" that has never been, apart from temporary visits home (Baldassar 2001). He was a senior and said he would most likely go to Korea rather than the United States (his other choice) for university, partly due to the lower tuition fees in Korea and partly because he had missed out on living in Korea.

> Since I've been overseas for a long time, I would like to go back to Korea, stay there, live there, work there, be educated there, and, for now, I don't really wanna travel around the world. I just want to stay and live in Korea. That's my home, so I just wanna, I've been away from home for such a long time, so I wanna go back and live there. That's home. I think I have enough international overseas experiences. And I have barely, you know, Korean experience, experience in Korea. Maybe, like, twenty years later I'll get sick of Korea and wanna live overseas, but for now I wanna stay. I really feel that I'm secluded from the "Korean experience" [makes air quotes], like, that I was, that I'm kind of missing the Korean experience that normal Korean people should have. So yeah, I wanna go back to Korea.

David made frequent references to Korea as "home" and his strong desire to return there as he spoke to me in fluent English. His parents had played a major role in influencing his identity and orientating him toward Korea, as I discussed in chapter 4.

It was common among transnational youth who had lived overseas for most of their lives to be curious about and even *infatuated* with their parents' country precisely because they had very limited experience of living there. During a dinner event that the Japanese students organized themselves, many, especially the younger ones, enthusiastically related that they want to go to Japan for university. They were infatuated with the idea of experiencing student life in Japan, which was something they had only seen on TV drama series that they rent on DVD from a Japanese-style supermarket in Jakarta or read about in Japanese *manga* (comic books). Furthermore, David's (as well as Sam's and Ben's below) desire to immerse himself in the lives of his Korean peers echoes an identity-development stage common to children from minority groups as well as Third Culture Kids when they seek out a "reference group" with whom they share a sense of mutual intelligibility (Cross 1991; Schaetti 2000).

Using Korean "Roots" to Build International "Routes"

Sam claims that he hangs out with other Koreans because he wants to retain his connection to Korea. Sam articulates his interest in Korea as a need to know his "roots." Sam speaks English fluently, though his accent is not as native sounding as David's. He says that he hung out mostly with Koreans even in middle school and cites language retention as one reason.

> SAM: 'Cause it's, well I, I didn't want my Korean, to forget my Korean. Nowadays my relatives say that my Korean is pretty good, but still it's

shaky. 'Cause if I speak Korean, it seems fluent and all—no pronunciation issue—but, yeah, some of the hard, like, words, yeah.

DT: Why is Korean important to you? Like, speaking Korean?

SAM: It's a root. It's like, wherever I go, I won't be considered as, like, even though how good I am in English and all, my root is from Korea so I don't wanna lose that. 'Cause I've seen people get like, like, who miss their countries. I've also seen people who don't actually know how to speak Korean but they're Korean. So I don't, I don't want that to happen. 'Cause, I like my relatives [laughs]. I wanna speak with my relatives.

Maintaining connection with relatives through language retention is important for Sam in establishing roots. This corroborates the TCK literature that argues that transnational youth find "home" in relationships (Pollock and Van Reken 2009 [2001]). Even so, Sam said he did not mind changing his Korean passport to an American one if it meant he could avoid the compulsory Korean army service. For him, identity was not about nationality.

Sam believed that knowing his Korean "roots" enhanced his ability to be "international." The two are mutually constitutive because he became more aware that he was Korean when he was in an international space. This struck home for him when he joined a summer school program run by one of the top high schools in the United States, which drew students from a diverse array of countries:

There were like people from all around the countries with like different accents, different sound talking, different faces, speaking and all. I think it was great, really great fun. People say if you live in foreign countries, they say if you go somewhere that is very international, people say that you become an international person. But I think it's more different. You actually become an international person, but your origin actually becomes stronger 'cause the fact that, the fact that, oh, how should I say, you seem to know that you are a Korean *more* in international society. It seems that you *represent*, 'cause you're in international place, in different countries, it seems you represent more.

It's not that you lose your roots, but you become more aware of it. But at the same time you *are* becoming international. The fact that you are Korean speaking English, you still can speak Korean and you're speaking English, and then you are ... intermingling with other countries—I think that's what makes it international rather than a person who's actually born in foreign countries.

"A person who's actually born in foreign countries" is a reference to, for example, Korean Americans who are born and raised in the

United States and can speak English but not Korean. In Sam's view, "they're just American," and "that's not showing diversity, that's showing America."

Sam articulates becoming "an international person" in terms of bilingualism and biculturalism, whereby one has the ability to mediate between cultures. In order to do this, one needs to know their "root" or "basic" identity, and English is useful insofar as it is a tool to communicate that "root" with others, as opposed to it (English) becoming part of one's identity. Sam said, "you can share *your* basics to other countries in English so that, I think that's what international means." Sam's belief that he needs to speak Korean to be Korean and to establish Korean roots to become international appears to contradict research that argues that linguistic ability is not requisite for claims to identity (e.g., Ang 2001). In light of Hall's (1996: 4) words that it is "not the so-called return to roots but a coming-to-terms-with our 'routes,'" it would appear as though Sam is unable to come to terms with his "routes."

Through his long explanation, Sam, like David and Ben (in the previous and next sections), was critiquing the school's ideology of being international, which did not acknowledge alternative practices of cosmopolitanism. Korean students were well aware of the way members of the dominant culture at TIS perceived them as deviating from the school's model of an ideal student. The dominant ideology made the cultural sameness shared by the English-speaking groups invisible, while celebrating physical diversity. In contrast, for Sam intercultural interaction occurs in the presence of difference where difference is defined based on language as opposed to physical attributes such as "race" or ethnicity. Sam was arguing for a different way of practicing cosmopolitanism—becoming international by first becoming Korean to make up for his transnational upbringing. For Sam, becoming "Korean" is mutually constitutive with becoming international.

Becoming "International" by Becoming "Asian"

Young people who experience a sense of ambivalence in transnational spaces negotiate cultural boundaries through varied practices of cosmopolitanism. For transnational youth of Asian descent, becoming "Western" and becoming "Asian" are mutually constitutive with each other. Asian students who did not hang out in the mainstream and

high-status English-speaking groups but were more westernized than the other Asian peers they hung out with expressed greater identification with being "Asian," as contradictory as this may seem.

Ben explained that the reason his Korean friends do not hang out with the English-speaking groups is because they do not understand their culture, such as the practice of "egging" and "how they party" and "prom and that kind of stuff." Indeed, despite the large number of Koreans, only a handful attended the prom that year. But because Ben feels "40 percent Western and 60 percent Korean," he is sympathetic to the various practices of Western teenagers. As mentioned before, Ben appeared to me to be one of the most westernized senior Korean students. Even then, he had difficulty befriending the "Western" students in the English-speaking groups.

In contrast, Ben described a sense of affinity with other Asians, in which the cultural boundaries are blurred. I asked him whether he also found it difficult to approach the Indonesian group. "Indo, I'm fine," Ben answered immediately and assertively. Then he continued:

> BEN: There's like more, I don't know. I think it's easier to go into Indo group. 'Cause, like, it's still Asian. And their culture is a little bit more similar to ours than the Western[ers].
>
> DT: Do you know more Indo people?
>
> BEN: Actually, I don't really know them much. But I have friends who are Indo, and friends who are Cantonese and [slight pause] Italian. But people who are Western, like English-speaking countries, it's harder to make friends with since they have their own group and stuff. I don't know. Even Italians have different cultures from like States, and like English, and so it's easier to hang out with Italians. That's how I find it. I don't know why, still.

Ben acknowledges the Western influence on his cultural identity. His experiences in Canada and England had blurred the boundaries between Koreans and other minorities in Anglophone spaces. His sense of "we" includes other Asians and even Italians, and he considers those who are "Western"—in other words students in the English-speaking groups—as "them." Ben is uneasy about not being able to define the boundaries of being "Asian," especially once he began to explain that he could also relate to Italians. This is because he becomes "Asian" through the sense of mutual intelligibility that comes with the shared experience of being a minority in Anglophone spaces. Being "Asian" facilitates Ben's cosmopolitan engagement with others.

At TIS, Asian students seemed to share a sense of being "Asian" that was subsumed under the students' more specific national or ethnic identities. Yae's interview contained slippages between being "Japanese" and being "Asian." Yae, a recent graduate of TIS, was one of the few Japanese who had no qualms throwing in English words into her speech while speaking in Japanese. She was born in Japan, from where she moved to Thailand, then back to Japan, before moving again to the Philippines, Malaysia, and then Indonesia, where she finished high school. In chapter 4, I discussed Yae's predicament with regard to her future. Her parents wanted her to attend university in Japan, her passport country, to establish her identity as a Japanese and ensure that she would not end up in a liminal cultural space. Yae agreed with this, but in explaining her reasons for returning to Japan, she conflated being "Japanese" with being "Asian":

> For one thing, I don't have a feel for what is common sense [*jyōshiki*] in Japan because I've lived in Southeast Asia for so long. And my Japanese is nowhere near perfect.... They [her parents] said I'm lacking in my Japanese identity. I got told, "You just don't have it in you. And it's not like you speak perfect English either." I totally agree with them, as much as I hated having to admit that. But, yeah, at the end of the day, I am more Japanese, [more] Asian after all. I'm Japanese, and up until now I've always hung around Asians. I am Asian after all. But I am lacking in my knowledge of history and *jyōshiki* as a Japanese.

Besides, she says, "Japan is fun, and it feels safe," and even if she did go to the United States, "I probably would have ended up hanging out with Asians anyway." To capitalize on and consolidate her Asian identity, Yae feels the need to become more knowledgeable in Japanese history and competent in performing and understanding Japaneseness or "*jyōshiki*." Yae often conflated being "Japanese" with being "Asian." She gives her tendency to have Asian friends as evidence of being "Asian after all." Yae's conflation of becoming "Japanese" with becoming "Asian" reflects the sense of ambivalence inherent in hybrid identities. Being "Asian" is an expression of her cosmopolitan engagement with others.

Becoming "Asian" suggests a sense of mutual intelligibility among Asian youth who have a transnational upbringing and share the experience of not being part of the dominant culture of a Western transnational space. It is an expression of cosmopolitanism in the same way that being international represents an ideological expression for the cosmopolitan practice that emerges out of the sense of mutual intelligibility shared among transnational youth with a certain degree of Western capital.

The Diversity of Cosmopolitanism

Cosmopolitan practices are situational. In order to participate in cosmopolitan practices that conform to the school's ideology of being international, students acquired Western capital and accepted an identity change. Students who were unable or unwilling to do this were constructed as a nameless, racialized Other, making their cosmopolitan practices invisible. Although cosmopolitan practices that privilege Western capital were conceived as being international by those who were able to participate in them, these same practices were conceived as being "Western" or "American" by those who were unable to integrate into the dominant school culture. In turn, cosmopolitan practices that deviated from the school's ideology of being international were invisible to the dominant culture and conceived as being "Korean," "Japanese," or "Indonesian." Whether or not cosmopolitan practices are recognized as such depends on how difference is defined.

At TIS, Korean-, Japanese-, and Indonesian-speaking students chose to hang out in their language groups because they felt they could "connect" better with their peers and escape feeling marginalized. By creating separate groups, they went from being nameless to being the norm within these groups. The use of languages different from that used by the dominant group enabled them to construct boundaries between insider and outsider, and in the process reclaim their status as insiders, and the power to be gatekeepers.

Some of the Asian students who were more westernized than their peers in their language groups articulated an ambiguous sense of being "Asian." Their sense of hybridity caused their identifications to slip between being Korean or Japanese and being Asian. Asian students shared a sense of mutual intelligibility as minorities within an Anglophone space. Being "Asian" is an expression of cosmopolitan practices that privilege Asian cultural capital in the same way that being "Western" or "international" is an expression of cosmopolitan practices that privilege Western capital. Being "Asian" facilitated alternative forms of cosmopolitanism. The next chapter continues to discuss the dominance of Western capital in transnational spaces by focusing on (hetero)-sexual attraction among transnational youth.

Notes

1. Most of the Indonesian nationals at TIS were of Chinese descent. Although they are a minority in Indonesia, their financial standing means many of

them are better able to afford the expensive international school fees compared to the majority of the Indonesian population.

2. It is common in Japan to use surnames or given names followed by *kun* to refer to someone, usually male or younger. In this case, they have used Koichi's surname, "Tomioka."
3. Expatriate families typically employed a maid, driver, or sometimes a gardener and/or security guard using their own salaries, or these were provided by one of their employers. Many TIS students said that they learned Indonesian through these employees, particularly maids and drivers.
4. Translated mainly from Japanese.

Growing Up in Transit

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