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Poetic Assemblages: Filipinx Method on the Transpacific

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Abstract

Emergent calls to revise the analytic term *transpacific* in relation to Indigenous-centered regional formation have emphasized the need to attend to various epistemological and historical distinctions that explain distinct orientations to the Pacific by Indigenous and migrant populations, including diasporic formations. Within these calls, I operationalize poetry, a distinctly aesthetic practice of queer diaspora, as a way of illuminating new forms of relationality that such calls require. Examining works from Jan-Henry Gray, Mark Aguhar, Kimberly Alidio, and Kay Ulanday Barrett, I posit poetry as a crucial element of generating hermeneutic possibility. I further apply postmodern conceptualizations of assemblage theory in order to demonstrate how poetry not only offers interpretive resources to understand the social categories that have been widely considered to constitute identity, but represents an analytical method with which to rearticulate and reimagine how identities are fundamentally mapped across local and global cartographies, producing circuits of time and space that one must invariably navigate.

Keywords: transpacific, queer diaspora, poetry, assemblage theory

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1 Introduction

Since its storied occupation by the imperial power of the United States, the Philippines has emerged as a politically significant site of analysis for inquiries into migration, diaspora, and colonial formations in the globalized age. One, then, can trace this development to its revolutionary history and emergent participation in globalized processes as an independent nation-state following decades of colonial and neoliberal management by the United States governance and economic development. The desire to promote a newly independent Philippines within a neoliberal economic order consequently led to the widespread extraction of its resources and labor. Importantly, these logics of extraction are reflected in the phenomenon of migration, defined in part by various "structural parameters of labor exchange and population mobility."[1] As heavily theorized by other scholars, these economic structures have come to rely on differentiated relations of domination that result in the production of classes, with structural parameters of race, gender, and citizenship undergirding the "hierarchical institutional and ideological structures"[2] that constitute a pervading system of racial capitalism. Locating Filipina/x/o subjects within these hierarchies raises considerations of "criticism, contestation, and control…colonial subjects thus charted along imperial cartographies."[3]

Therefore, any structural analysis must ultimately tend to these imperial histories, accounting for how various dimensions of identity might differently situate the material forces at work in shaping the conditions for those of Philippine descent and diaspora.

Indeed, discussions of the historical development of racial capitalism under U.S. imperialism emerge from the significant turning point of World War II, a defining moment that tracks and charts the growth and migration of Filipina/x/os in the United States. This post-war period, "framed by Cold War security and propaganda needs of the United States and the rise of

an independent new nation called the Republic of the Philippines," represented a dramatic shift in U.S.-Philippine relations, particularly in a labor context for the 150,000 Filipina/x/os living through Hawaii and the U.S. mainland by the war's conclusion. Coinciding with increasing demands for labor, immigration reform beginning in the Cold War with the expansion of naturalization pathways through the Luce-Celler Bill extending to the landmark Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965, which by 1985 had renewed mass immigration by 667,000.[4,5] The increasing expropriation and appropriation of Filipina/x/os for the purposes of labor and naturalization represent a historically contingent process that reflects the expanded role of U.S. empire within the international sphere. Despite the newly formed independence of the Philippines, the continuity of globalized processes of labor exchange and neoliberal participation in a broader global economy continued to tie the U.S. and the Philippines through such chains of migration for decades beyond their theoretical 'separation.'

In attempting to understand this migration as constitutive of a racial capitalist system reinscribed through the continuous project of empire, alternate conceptions the cultural political significance of the Asian American subject's exploitation under such a system may be required. Recent scholarship has emphasized the possibilities that unfold from the analytic of transpacific, an alternative oceanic framework in which those with orientations and stakes within the Pacific Rim can be broadly understood in terms of a subjectivity demarcated by features and networks of circulation, movement, and materiality. Such a subjectivity, as noted by Aimee Bahng and Erin Suzuki in recent moves to reevaluate the deployment of a transpacific analytic, ought to be understood as intimately entangled with "militarism, racial capitalism, empire, and settler colonialism, and the 'transits of empire' they subtend.'" At the same time, such an intervention has been central to reevaluating the deployment of the transpacific within an Asian American

Studies context, expanding to include intersectional settler colonial considerations that implicate Indigenous and Pacific Islander experiences within the processual construction of empire.

The historical phenomena of Filipina/x/o migration and labor therefore reflect the nation-claiming and racialized logics that undergird the political status of such diasporic communities within the United States. Naturalization operates to confer notions of citizenship and identity construction that have contributed to the expansion of settler projects—the expansion of economic production systems through migrant labor be conceived as a form of labor theorized to extend United States hegemony in its function, further producing legacies of racial capitalism that continue to tether the Philippines to the United States long after the legal recognition of independence. As E. San Juan Jr. puts it, "[i]t is impossible to divorce Filipinos from the problems of the larger class-divided society and from the effects of the global power conflicts configuring U.S.-Philippine relations…Filipinos remain unassimilable if not recalcitrant elements."[7] Indeed, the observed tension between the assimilative effects of naturalization and the Juan's characterization of Filipina/x/o subjectivity to broader class considerations appear to indict how notions of citizenship are thus normatively evaluated. Filipina/x/o migrants, then, are rendered legible vis-à-vis the extent to which they conform and adhere to the universality and ubiquity of an unmarked standard or norm such as whiteness.[8]

Given the United States' historical premising on notions of whiteness and settler colonialism in its expansion of empire and citizenship, diasporic formations have continued to tarry with the contradictions that are produced when historically contingent migrant legacies undercut the production of viable and recognizable subject positions within a dominant order. For decades, scholars such as David Eng and Kareem Khubchandani have tracked overlapping theoretical questions of home within both Asian American Studies and queer studies that emerge

from considerations of departure and displacement from origin. Specifically, it is the "often literal ejection of queers from their homes—coupled with their marginalization by pervasive structures of normative heterosexuality…Traumatic displacement from a lost heterosexual 'origin,' questions of political membership, and the impossibilities of full social recognition" that have demarcated the material exclusion of non-normative subject positions.[9] These conditions, however, raise salient theoretical possibilities of considering queerness and diaspora co-extensively against historical legacies that have configured Asian Americans as exterior or pathological to the U.S. nation-state and its corresponding processes.[10] Moreover, Khubchandani articulates how queer diaspora can additionally refer to a method of analyzing culture through a transnational lens that tends to how normative identities—genders and sexualities—are managed and manipulated for nationalist projects.[11] The imbrication of queerness, citizenship, and diaspora, then, offers up a rigorous analytical method with which to further interrogate how processes of migrant labor and citizenship ought to be problematized regarding subject formation.

I aim to demonstrate how the transpacific subject, such as the Filipina/x/o migrant is ontologically rendered via queer subject formation in relation to the nation-state. On this view, queer populations come *into* being through their supposedly perverse sexual-racial attributes and histories. The transpacific subject warrants further analysis into how such social location and positioning might serve to challenge dominant modes of control that regularize queerness through its contributions to the ascendancy of whiteness, conferred by legacies and social formations demarcated by the transpacific. In this way, normative national subject positions function as a regulatory mechanism that seeks to punish and oppress those who deviate from the prescriptive norm. Although charges have been levied against the deployment of the technical

term “Filipinx” as a colonial construct meant to capture these overlapping subjectivities, I echo Kay Ulanday Barrett, Karen Buenvista Hanna, and Anang Palomar’s theoretical defense of the ‘x’ as an imaginative practice located within the politics of naming. In order to deploy a queer diasporic lens which seeks to articulate clarity, it is from the analytic starting point of identifying how violence enacted against queer diaspora has effectively been obscured in the normative and liminal discourses that have persisted.[12] Similarly, constructions of the transpacific in a predominantly Asian American context have worked to obfuscate decolonial possibilities that promote a divestment from the logics of settler humanism and invest instead in Indigenous modes of relationality.

Taking after Kale Fajardo,[F161] I locate myself as a self-identified Filipinx American queer diasporic subject who is situated within various transnational contexts and formations between the United States and the Philippines. It is in this vein that I evoke my multiple identity formations, in order to chart an account of queer diasporic subjectivity as it is rendered within creative productions such as poetry, offering a theoretical analysis and deconstruction of its methodological value as a stabilizing analytic. I aim to understand how these divergent and malleable formations, then, might be read in varying contexts, and what radical interpretive possibilities arise from doing so. Thus, the transpacific subject is at once implicated in the constant political struggle to undo the pernicious effects of colonialism and the affects it has inviolably left us to process.

2 Poetry as Method

2.1 Transpacific Reimaginations

> *Our brown bodies split the water*
> *no para conquista* (not for conquest)
> *kundi para sa unyon* (but for union)
> …
> *Bawat plankton, bawat maliit na hipon,* (Each plankton, each tiny shrimp)
> *bawat nabubuhay na bagay* (each living thing)
>
> *Ser anfibias*
> *upang maging kasuwato sa dagat* (upang maging kasuwato sa dagat)
> *is to breathe underwater.*
> *— Aimee Suzara, "Amphibious"*[14]

Within ocean studies, transpacific inquiry has emerged as a critical form of theoretical engagement, a genealogical methodology which aims to tarry with the colonial, imperial, and militarized undercurrents flowing from the Pacific Ocean's histories of geopolitical contestation. Constructions of empire under the United States have recently been examined as part of the critical recapturing of the theoretical analytic of the 'transpacific.' Scholars have attempted to read new meaning and theoretical significance into this term to develop a critical transnational framework that explains the specific geohistoric conditions responsible for constituting the Pacific "as an object of knowledge and nonknowledge"[15] Through this analytic turn, scholars seek to challenge traditional conceptions of "the Pacific…[as] an open frontier to be crossed, domesticated, occupied, and settled," while simultaneously considering how the Pacific continues to be materially rendered as such.[16]

In line with these traditional conceptions, notions of a transpacific studies have been used to construct "the Pacific as a geographic space of movement and interface—of people, capital, cultural products, and labor."[17] An ocean passage charted within transpacific inquiry, in the immediate sense, captures the movement and connection characterizing processes of migration,

exchange, and travel. However, Erin Suzuki has further noted a second interpretation of 'passage' made legible through a focus on oceanic movement within textual works such as books or poems, producing the transpacific "not as a singular geopolitical space or descriptor… but rather as a keyword or category that can be used to compare and contrast different ways of approaching the… complexity of the region."[18] On Suzuki's account, this theoretical frame relies on the extraction of literary passages in order to analyze how meaning is generated while simultaneously preserving "the sense of movement and connection that the term…implies. A text… also operates as a conceptual passage…Stories of ocean passage ask us to remain mindful of this fluidity and connectivity and to understand how position and context can shape both composition and interpretation."[19] In taking on this secondary meaning, Suzuki expands understandings of the transpacific beyond its spatial conception and introduces key linguistic interventions that illuminate the complexity of that which constitutes the transpacific.

This literary move represents a departure from a transpacific analytic narrowly focused on the specificities of transwar, interimperial, Cold War formations in service of presenting a reimagined, decolonial transpacific. Suzuki resists the adoption of transpacific "as shorthand for an Asian American or Asian diasporic critique that seeks to move across national borders and boundaries," instead insisting on its material and cultural engagement with "Indigenous Pacific histories, frameworks, and methodologies" in order to maintain its critical purchase to interrogate the Pacific's aforementioned regional complexity.[20] The deployment of a "decolonial transpacific" alternative therefore tends to "the dynamic potential that inheres in the prefix 'trans-,'... but also to how these very acts of circulation create their own epistemologies of passage with the potential to change and shape the worlds around them."[21]

Building upon Aihwa Ong's early interpretive work, Denise Cruz and Jian Neo Chen have all considered how the prefix *trans* serves a meaningful linguistic function in various contexts.[22] When conceived as states of transition and change, movement through space or across lines, and changing or going beyond the nature of something, such readings of a *transpacific passage* aim to move away from an abstractive and extractive vision of the Pacific in its generation of new epistemologies. Suzuki ultimately aims to deploy a transpacific critique that centers an analytic of relationality—how to use critical queer and feminist "frameworks to reconceptualize intimacies among differently situated human (and nonhuman) communities in ways that disturb the processes of subjectification and commodification responsible for producing a racialized Asian subject, engaging more directly with Indigenous Pacific concepts of relationality."[23] For example, Juliann Anesi et al. have offered up one interpretation of this relationality articulated through Indigenous epistemologies: reaffirming an "understanding of and commitment to the discursive power of centering Native bodies…people-centered terminology that asserts ties to place even in the diaspora… an active focus on the lands, waters, and skies of Oceania," especially within dialogic practices of talanoa—a methodology of 'telling and unraveling' for the purpose of knowledge cocreation.[24] Centering such conceptions of relationality aligns with previous moves to understand that "the transpacific space may be levied, conceptualized from multiple, contested points of origins,"[25] pointing to the need for developing ways to reimagine a methodology tends to the multiplicity of these contestations. For Suzuki, then, the relational possibilities conceived through critically attuning to Indigenous and Oceanic epistemologies rearticulates transpacific critique against the continually entangled histories stemming from the project of empire that structure Asian diasporic subjectivity formation and critique.

2.2 Diasporic Poetics as Transpacific Passage

The medium and practice of poetry, particularly as informed by various diasporic orientations and experiences in relation to the ocean, emerges as a salient site of analysis for understanding the dynamism of these new epistemologies of passage. In *Poetics of Relation*, the Martinique poet Édouard Glissant demonstrates how the ocean is constructed as a space for knowledge production. Glissant's metaphorizes an oceanic abyss, a relational geography, as an orientation to the ocean that exceeds the bounds of a liberal individual identity: "having been at the abyss and freeing knowledge of Relation within the Whole… this experience made you, original victim floating towards the sea's abysses, an exception, it became something shared and made us, the descendants, one people…Relation is… made up of… shared knowledge."[26] Glissant's account enables an understanding of the ocean as a relational place, often producing uneven relations at critical intersections of people, space, economy, and power within geopolitical discourses. In particular, Glissant's focus on Relation as linking, relaying, and relating offers explanatory power for addressing not only a "threefold dispossession: of place, of history, of language" emerging from these relations, but also the very unknownness of the worlds that epistemologies of passage aim to navigate through its collective and shared construction.[27,28] Glissant's analytic of Relation effectively clarifies that oceanic passages are not merely constituted by the phenomenal act of migration, rather, that the ocean serves to epistemically connect people across various oceanic networks—mediated through poetry—that look past boundaries demarcated by traditional discourses of the Pacific.

In the poem "EXAQUA," Jan-Henry Gray examines the role of the poetic form in achieving intelligibility for his multivalent identities. As an undocumented and queer person, Gray tarries with how his "gay male body" is interpellated within the desire for state-sanctioned

citizenship. Gray speaks of his "31 years of waiting for documents," a status "locked in a utopian vision—objects on the horizon."[29] What then, can poetry do regarding these material constraints, to achieve a necessary unlocking of this vision? In examining an initial mathematical relationality of "poetry=freedom," Gray is principally interested in what poetry as a form can free up in its methodological possibility. One such feature that Gray considers is the spatial function of poetry. In a particularly oceanic move, Gray conceives of poetry, attuned to water in its configuration, as rendering one essentially mobile and unconstrained:

> *It often feels like I am swimming / or at least orbiting and poems feel like I am pausing or resting*. Water is the medium, the texture, the space, the weight, the motion/emotion of your writing/thinking. Would you agree? Is that too tidy? Your work is attuned to water and being close to it (or, / better, being inside it) is important to you. *Sure, we share the desire to never be too far from it. There's a fear of being landlocked.*[29]

Gray's invocation of poetry as freedom reflects an affective anxiety related to "being landlocked," a condition of enclosure by land. The juxtaposition of land as enclosure and water as a site of mediated ontology encapsulates a particularly important feature of a reenvisioned transpacific framework. As Erin Suzuki and Aimee Bahng write, "the setup of enclosure… is already a settler grammar."[30] To demonstrate this, American imperialism expanded enclosure's logics of settlement significantly throughout the early 20th century. By extending the Regalian Doctrine—Spanish Royal Law— in the form of "land laws… which dispossessed the indigenous peoples of all claims to their lands," along with the commodification of land resources through a Torrens system which required a proof of land title for public lands the US intended to expropriate and therefore appropriate for itself.[31,32] Thus, the letter and language of the law within a post-Spain, U.S.-occupied Philippines not only reflects the imbrication of capitalism with colonialism, but its enactment of the settler colonial convention of a processual dispossession in service of the capitalist accumulation of enclosure.[33,34] While Gray highlights

the linguistic function of poetry as a relieve from a landlocked status, the material realities of enclosure for those occupying the colonized subject position—including that which is necessarily 'locked' away—must be understood in terms of the construction of land vis-à-vis capital and its consequences.

Previous environmental scholarship on enclosure has come to understand the phenomenon as "a relation of capital-in-nature"—one that not only comes to causally affect one's orientation and relationality to nature itself, but has come to govern class relations in a global sense.[35] Akram-Lodhi furthers that enclosure is a continuous characteristic of capital, whereby capital, and its accumulation, function as social relations that determine the domination of the capitalist over the worker in concurrence with various economic forces.[36] Kale Fajardo specifically identifies these exploitative forces of enclosure manifesting within the unjust masculinist power of the "Philippine and U.S. state, multinational corporate, IMF-World Bank, and global capitalist formations,"[37] predicated on the circulation of both capital and subjects within the aforementioned transits of empire.

To contest the realities of these settler grammars which characterize the "complex processes of Filipinx negotiations and dis/articulations with the flow of capital, culture, and people moving across the Pacific,"[38] Gray turns back to the radical possibility represented by the ocean. Gray emphatically describes the ocean as "Fugitive. Objects are not fugitive, / the waves carrying them are."[39] While Gray's desire for state-sanctioned citizenship constitutes one such 'object on the horizon,' it is not the fulfillment of that desire that is inherently fugitive, but how the ocean itself, as described by Renisa Mawani, conceptually centers fugitivity in its mobilization of subjects across land and sea. Mawani elaborates that conceiving of the ocean as fugitive offers a productive schema with which to normatively evaluate the processes

undergirding the emergence of anticolonial critique "[i]nformed by the limitless horizon of the sea" and notions of freedom and self-determination engendered by fugitivity. Gray, actively occupying the vastness and inexhaustibility of the ocean's interiority, embodies the fugitivity of the maritime worlds described by Mawani, whereby fugitivity generates "spaces for creative imaginaries and new possibilities, and for a future that was yet to be realized."[40]

While Mawani traces an account of oceanic fugitivity emerging out of a transatlantic history and proceeds to caution against incommensurate applications with forced migration, the potentiality of fugitivity remains ever relevant. What is made salient within a framework of fugitivity is the modal function of an orientation to the ocean, which can potentially be applied in a transpacific context as well. In this way, Gray's oceanic gesture represents an embrace of the fugitivity and freedom illuminated by poetry, suggestive of, yet not necessarily commensurate with, Fred Moten's conception of fugitivity as "a desire for and a spirit of escape and transgression of the proper and the proposed… a desire for the outside, for a playing or being outside, an outlaw edge proper to the now always already improper voice or instrument."[41] The poetics, in its fugitive and therefore insurgent character, hearken back to Suzuki's understanding of the potential for subjective world-making—described by George Shulman as enabling one to "both imagine and *make* themselves and that other world 'in and out of' this one."[42] As María Lugones clarifies, such a process is not necessarily a willful or even conscious shift from being one person to another, rather, that 'traveling' between worlds—the in/out movement Shulman is referring to—is a matter of "someone who… uses space and language in that particular way."[43] Concerned with how this multiplicity is normatively evaluated, such as the aforementioned relation between law and language, Shulman problematizes how the law deploys language in order to reentrench state power, shutting "down the creative hermeneutic principle spread

throughout our communities."[44] On this view, fugitivity is that which recuperates the hermeneutic frame from which to engage in the potentiality of multiplicity.

Gray ultimately rejects the symbolic representation of ontologically-enclosing land as the violent nation-state, instead advancing countersymbolism in the form of an idealized boyhood tending towards the horizon, repetitiously defined as "a permanent humiliation" on/through/to "the act of arrival."[45] Gray's use of repetition in order to emphasize the varying propositional ways in which one engages in the mobilizing "act of arrival," is one that posits different possibilities and engagements with affective space in order to materialize and actualize the world located on the horizon. Using a primarily transpacific lens, then, leaves room for the kind of "speculative spaces" that are engendered from alternative modes of imagining possible worlds.[46] He, the boy who runs, rushes out to the water and then disappears, "points down, / looks back and says, *another world over there!*,"[10] is carried by a wave of fugitivity, a passage from an unlivable world—one that denies Gray documented citizenship—to another world made accessible in poetic imagination.

What are the implications of this poetic, and grammatical, intervention and reworking of Gray's undocumented queer condition? Bearing in mind Suzuki's analytic of relationality, I turn to Neferti X. M. Tadiar's recent theoretical intervention of remaindered life, whereby "the position of *remaindered*—neither simply oppressed nor exploited, neither disposable nor wasted—life is a situation bearing possibilities for the radical remaking of 'human' social relations."[47] The project of world-making that Gray points to represents Tadiar's social reproductionist call to reimagine and remake social life as part of a fundamental reconceptualization of politico-theoretical norms that are determinative of contingent identities such as those of "worker, woman, or citizen."[48]

Specifically, Tadiar is concerned with how "the remaindered subject," under a capitalist production of value, can exceed the capitalist grammars of the capture and absorption of the *vitality* of organic life. Vitality, then, represents both living labor, the creative capacities of humans, and "encounters… interactions with others (ourselves and our others, as well as our other selves). It is not a positive object but a simultaneous happening making (in Filipino, *pangyayari*)."[49] This political hermeneutic posits a common social world in which remaindered subjects—such as worker, woman, or citizen—are cast into a world featuring horizons locked behind pervasive capitalist and nationalist boundaries.

Along with these hermeneutic frames, Linda Martín Alcoff has attempted to focus on materiality in constructing an account of subjectivity that accurately describes the agency of these remaindered subjects, correcting "the tendency to *overplay* agency."[50] This theoretical hedge buttresses emergent materialist feminist methods that emphasize "the materiality of power relations,"[51] including the role of ideology in reduce women to the state of material objects across social arrangements premised on capitalist forms of value creation and extraction. The following sections therefore reference various forms of diasporic poetry as a methodological engagement in generating new meaning into social life fashioned in resistance against the oppression of subjects under continually reinforced systems of domination.

2.3 Poetic Engagement as Filipinx Method

> *"BLESSED ARE THE BELOVED WHO I DIDN'T DESCRIBE, I*
> *COULDN'T DESCRIBE, WILL LEARN TO DESCRIBE AND*
> *RESPECT AND LOVE*
> *AMEN"*
> — *Mark Aguhar, "Litanies to My Heavenly Brown Body"*

MT Vallarta, examining the creative productions of the transfeminine Filipinx multidisciplinary artist Mark Aguhar, develops a conceptual methodology termed "'Filipinx

method,' a deployment of art, theory, and resistance executed by queer Filipinx artists and writers across the demarcations of race, class, gender, sexuality, and ability."[52] Vallarta explores how poetry—assessing Aguhar's digital poetry—functions as a site of critique and queer futurity. Vallarta argues that a Filipinx poetics takes on a "hybrid method, where a poem's formal elements do not only reflect the social conditions of Filipinx people, but also articulate queer futurisms that enable us to know and feel that another world is possible."[53] This two-fold function is politically significant precisely because it utilizes poetics as an accessible form of activism in pursuit of justice, and also as an interpretive frame with which to modally envision a different world where dominant norms, "the institutionalization of 'male' and 'female,' as well as the colonial implications of these categories, can be investigated and eradicated."[54] As a form of queer expression, Aguhar's digital poetics work to construct schemas of alternative possibility undergirding queer, trans, and gendernonconforming (QTGNC) justice.

This dimension of queer futurity via possibility is especially salient in Aguhar's two-part poem "Litanies to My Heavenly Brown Body," a digital poem premised on contesting dominant normative scripts. Despite the continual alienation and violence faced by "racialized, queer, femme, migrant, and disabled populations," "Litanies" represents the insurgent character present in Aguhar's work and the need to mobilize such populations for social change.[55] Aguhar's poetics can be situated as a set of touch points intended "to grasp, to graze, and even to embrace the reader….this tactility…giving texture to the poem itself."[56] Although this textural analysis is applied by Vallarta to another of Aguhar's poems, Aguhar's tendency to use uppercase text, combined with the anaphoric structure in "Litanies," connectively "allows the speaker's words to resonate in readers' heads like a scream."[57] Aguhar's experimentation with form and texture enable her poetry, mediated by affect, to link readers who may necessarily be disconnected from

the materiality of the content being conveyed. The following analysis of "Litanies" reveals how Aguhar's poetics tends towards these queer futures by establishing an unimagined, relational connection between reader and speaker in recognizing the condition of QTGNC subjectivities and the violence faced therein.

The first part of "Litanies" is characterized by an affective, willful opposition. Such opposition is denoted by an uppercase, anaphoric invocation of "FUCK YOUR" and "FUCK THAT." Aguhar's anger and discontent is, at times, directed at a seemingly embodied subject, with "YOUR BEARD," "YOUR PRIVILEGE," "THAT YOU AREN'T MADE TO FEEL SHAME ALWAYS" being problematized by the speaker in an indignant rebuke. At other times, the speaker expresses a particular defiance not directed towards a particular subject, but at their ontological condition, contesting the "MARGINALIZATION OF MY IDENTITY," that "THE AMOUNT OF SPACE I TAKE UP IN THE WORLD IS CONSTANTLY QUESTIONED," and how "THE AMOUNT OF WORK I PUT INTO THE BEAUTY OF MY INTELLECT AND MY / TALENT IS STILL NEVER ENOUGH."[58] In particular, the insufficiency of the speaker's effort to 'be enough' in their inhabitants of the world they find themselves in represents both a subjective frustration and simultaneously a recognition of "the pain and suffering produced by such violence"—violence of a racialized, gendered, and homophobic nature.[59] Again, Aguhar aims to contest the imposition of normative identifications underwriting queer modes of existence, with such normativity producing contingent social norms that structure and characterize how queer subjects are located within the world. Aguhar's intention to begin with an articulation of QTGMC anger in the first part of "Litanies" therefore represents an attempt to effectively express the disparate realities faced by QTGMC subjects.

The second part of "Litanies" conveys alternative conceptions of kinship and affiliation representing the indeterminacy of queer futurity. Retaining the same anaphoric structure of its preceding part, the speaker employs phrasings of "BLESSED ARE" and "BLESSED IS," expressing 'blessings' in a manner laden with religious undertones. Subverting these Catholic elements, however, is the fact that the object that these blessings are bestowed upon are "THE PEOPLE OF COLOR MY BELOVED KITH AND KIN," THE TRANS," and "THE GENDERQUEERS," among others who the speaker "COULDN'T DESCRIBE, WILL LEARN / TO DESCRIBE AND RESPECT AND LOVE."[60]

Here, the act of blessing extends beyond the aforementioned political referents—Aguhar acknowledges that certain subject positionalities exist beyond the boundaries of dominant normative scripts, those who one must *learn* to describe. For David Eng, this kind of relational recognition represents the emergence of new forms of kinship whereby queer diaspora carves out distinct conceptions of affiliation, "demarcating alternative material structures and psychic formations that demand a new language for family and kinship" in order to live within the social world as "intelligible beings and recognizable subjects."[61] The second part of "Litanies" thus produces a distinct affect from its complement, esconcing a paradigm of 'respect'—etymologically, to look back at—for subjects who have systematically been denied intelligibility and recognition. Following the theoretical contributions of José Esteban Muñoz, the language of blessings works to emphasize the political significance of futurisms as futures-creation, an anticipatory activation of a world not yet realized for subjects resisting the dominant systems responsible for the violence they experience.[62]

While both parts of "Litanies" produce different effects, considerations of the piece altogether reveal elements of the critique and queer futurity essential to Filipinx method.

Foregrounding Aguhar's projection into a queer future premised on recognition, respect, and love, is a critical critique of normativity, including the normalization of QTGNC bodies as a site of social violence.[63] As Vallarta elaborates, Aguhar's "subjectless approach to queerness…highlights normativity as an expansive organizing logic that renders racialized, queer, femme, migrant, and disable bodies as routinely aberrant, exploitable, and expendable, exposing non normative populations to bare life, social death, and death itself."[64]

In light of this subjectless approach typically found within emergent notions of queer critique, however, subjects may be provisionally adopted as existing analytical categories in order to document relationships of inequality.[65] However, Aguhar's poetics aren't merely a descriptive vehicle for pointing out the violence of normative structures, but also represents a method of resisting supposedly coherent subjecthoods through Judith Butler's 'performativity,' a "discursive practice that enacts or produces that which it names," rather than operating on the basis of a pre-supposed and stable ontology to subjecthood.[66] On Vallarta's interpretation, the communicative action Aguhar undertakes in "Litanies" is both gestural and verbal in its structuring and function—"a *doing* as much as a *saying*."

For example, the performative utterance of the "amen" that concludes each part of "Litanies" not only evokes the ephemeral nature of prayer, but "it is also a speech act, a hope and a promise that one day this prayer will come true."[67] Aguhar's poetics, in its discursive function, therefore attempts to create the very queer futures it articulates. Materially, Susan Stryker explains that performatives such as Aguhar's do not assert positively, it "'constates' nothing" as the specific content of an utterance is effectively authorized by "social and political forces."[68] Yet, as a form of queer and trans expression contesting these authorizing forces, Aguhar speaks from a vantage point that, as previous trans methods have sought to do, reinterprets "the unique

situation of embodied human consciousness" into a Foucaultian "'insurrection of subjugated knowledges.'"[69] Jian Neo Chen has argued that the critical imaginaries within queer of color cultural and literary practices help to transform "differentials into interdependent relationships and shared resources."[70] In this way, Aguhar's poetics represent an insurgent production of shared epistemic resources and recovered knowledge derived from the embodied experiences of QTGNC subjects.[40]

Politically, the resistant poetic praxis of Mark Aguhar illustrates the critical possibility configured by a Filipinx method. Stryker further clarifies that Foucault's articulation of subjugated knowledges—including both senses of "'historical contents that have been masked or buried in functional coherences or formal systemizations'" and "'the knowledges that have been disqualified by the hierarchies of erudition and science'"—rely on a genealogical coupling that "gives discursive critique its essential vigor."[71] Drawing from Juana María Rodríguez, Vallarta points to how the relational possibilities produced by Aguhar's poem "charges us with vitality…'that force of connection and communion that binds us to friends and strangers.'"[72]

Although the subject of the speech acts contained in Aguhar's poem are normatively constrained, by systems capturing the vitality of organic life as described by Tadiar, the poem functions to breath new vitality into the imaginative theorizing required to "foster unimagined alliances and liberatory modes of social organization."[73] Indeed, the political function of critique points to modal futures "where the potentiality of queerness is boundlessly known and felt."[74] In doing so, one is able to envision a subject position considered, in Gayatri Gopinath's terms, impossible and unimaginable due to the "deep investment of dominant diasporic and nationalist ideologies."[75] Aguhar's poems can be read through a particular lens of excess, whereby such advocacy transforms the excess vitality generated by the remaindered subject into diasporic

subjectivities previously rendered inconceivable. Filipinx method, then, presents a rigorous analytic methodology which engages in poetic deconstruction, whereby such deconstruction moves towards possibilities of queer futurity for those fashioned across diasporic subject positions and formations.

Central to this interpretive and deconstructive understanding of poetry's potential is Yunte Huang's articulation of a transpacific counterpoetics and its imaginative function. Huang is centrally concerned with possibilities of literary representation and historical knowledge in the transpacific context: "a critical terrain… a contact zone between competing geopolitical ambitions and a gap… riddled with distortions, half-truths, longings, and affective burdens never fully resolved in the unevenly temporalized space of the transpacific."[76] While Huang attempts to explore this transpacific rendering across discursive modes of literature and history, he, like Suzuki, articulates a secondary sense of crossing—one along a path paved by linguistic "devices, inventions, or simply fictions."[77]

The diverging histories undergirding poetic formations, then, represent a distinct sense of historicity that warrants a dynamic hermeneutical endeavor in which one, embroiled in the "epistemological battle between the documentary and the fictional," must engage in the interpretive labor of looking beyond the documentational limits of history or literature through poetic subversions.[78] Poetry thus emerges as a distinct form of expression that demands further attention towards how one navigates a transpacific space imbricated by affect and ideology. Huang articulates how an emergent 'counterpoetics,' "carries on the critique of the violence of the imperial double vision…a host of marginalized poetic/historiographical practices…toward the enactment of poetic imagination as a means to alter memory and invoke minority survival in the deadly space" of the transpacific, including its material and epistemic violence."[79]

Poetry offers itself as an alternative hermeneutic frame contesting dominant histories and epistemologies that have come to structure the transpacific space which individual subjects must navigate. Huang's transpacific reimaginations view poetry as offering a particular clarity of the Pacific which, amidst orientalist understandings that temporally and spatially posit it as separate and distant from the contemporary context, advances modes "of inscription that sits uneasily with literary and historical authority" in its resistance to narrative enclosure.[80] In analyzing this process and mode of inscription, Huang notes that poetry spans a "situated and contested social imaginary," a resistant practice where "the powerless take advantage of the power of writing and inscribe themselves into the fabric of history, or rather, tear the fabric apart."[81]

Diasporic poetry, in its imaginative configuration, thus embodies much of these same creative features, including an absorption of "its material relations to its intended readers," enabling it to locate, transgress, and unsettle boundaries of the "contingent origin of cultural practices" within "nationalist historical frameworks."[82] The following section attempts to identify and make legible the boundaries that are delimited by these nationalist historical frameworks, operationalizing a counter poetic analysis against dominant norms governing transpacific space.

3 Diaspora and Belonging

3.1 Queer Diaspora

Blessed be
our ugly grief
our helpless beauty
this very moment of utterance incarnate in an absent brown body
joining us
alive painfully so
strand us alone together

— Kimberly Alidio, "All the Pinays are straight, all the queers are Pinoy…" after the projects the resound[83]

Previous attempts to theorize the relationship and connection between queerness and racialization have manifested through emergent discourses and articulations of queer diasporas. David Eng has explored the tension between queer liberalism and "queer diasporas" in the global system, calling for a reconceptualization of family and kinship which exceeds the bounds of the nation-state. Lisa Lowe situates these bounds within a broader understanding of liberalism as a transnational projects rooted in promises of economic freedom, expansions of imperial space, and histories of racial difference.[84] Lowe's study of interconnected continental relations—"the circuits, connections, associations, and mixings of differentially laboring peoples, eclipsed by the operations that universalize the Anglo-American liberal individual"[85]—functions to illuminate various constructions of social difference within specific conditions. She specifically considers linking "the emergence of liberties defined in the abstract terms of citizenship, rights, wage labor, free trade, and sovereignty with the attribution of racial difference to those subjects, regions, and populations" excluded by liberal ideals characteristic of the "Anglo-American settler imperial imaginary" which has persisted for centuries.[86]

Lowe's genealogical understanding of how social difference can be constituted informs various tensions that exist within the production of diaspora as a politically significant consequence. Eng problematizes understandings of diaspora within Asian American studies for "its focus on point of departure and displacement from origin," insisting on a reconceptualization of the problematics of home by employing a queer studies framework that still heeds "[t]he often literal ejection of queer from their homes—coupled with their marginalization by pervasive structures of normative heterosexuality." Eng thus articulates a notion of queer diaspora that subverts normative understandings of it as traumatic displacement from a lost heterosexual and

nationalist 'origin,' adequately tending to the suspension of the queer subject between origin and destination, private and public space, as well as home and nation-state.[87] Specifically, Eng opposes "the normative impulse to recuperate lost origins, to recapture the mother or motherland, and to valorize dominant notions of social belonging and racial exclusion" effectively naturalized by the nation-state.[88] Centered within this opposition is a key lens of inquiry offered by Eng: "[h]ow might we theorize queerness and diaspora against a historical legacy that has unrelentingly configured Asian Americans as exterior or pathological to the U.S. nation-state?"[89]

This methodological engagement with queer diaspora, however, has not been widely applied to contexts regarding relational engagements within the transpacific. As Yoneyama cautions, an "[a]nalytic of queer diaspora is not necessarily a distinct property of transpacific inquiries."[90] Still, however, the notions of movement and belonging that underlie queer diaspora come into direct opposition with liberalism's teleological constructions of disciplined subjectivity and personhood.[91] Emergent transpacific approaches have worked to incorporate queer perspectives to "destabilize heteronormative assumptions and categories that feed capitalist imaginaries…seen at once as an analytic and as living actors, both of which 'refuse' reproduction and capitalist production."[92] Thus, grounding transpacific inquiry within a queer diasporic context enables for a rigorous analysis that: one, investigates and theorizes "the multidirectionality and contradictory effects of circulations, transactions, and mobility/immobility," and two, focuses attention "toward the reproduction of the *relations of production*," an Althusserian notion of understanding queer subjectivity as it is "eminently imbricated in a web of social relations and responsibilities, a self with primary ties to unknown and unknowable others."[93]

Again emphasizing Suzuki's relational indictment of the nation-state's racial pathologizations of Asian subjects, the deployment of queer diaspora within transpacific contexts poses an analytic upshot in reconceptualizing traditional structures of kinship that serve to clarify queer subjectivity. Sara Ahmed, in articulating queer phenomenology as an ontological account of queerness disrupting relations of orientation, has attempted to resituate the notion of home to capture this relational feature. For Ahmed, homes are not singularly tied to the lost heterosexual and nationalist origin problematized by Eng; rather, homes can be conceptualized as centered on histories of arrival, including "the 'entanglement of genealogies of dispersion with those of 'staying put''... [d]iasporic spaces do not… take shape with the arrival of migrant bodies… it is more… the arrival of those who appear 'out of place.'"[94] For the queer diasporic subject, Gopinath furthers that "[b]eing suspended need not be the same as being trapped or in perpetual stasis; rather, it may be a temporary temporal and spatial respite from… demands to stay put or to relocate."[95] The queer diasporic subject is not immobilized by this suspension, but approaches the construction of home by disentangling oneself from dominant paradigms which demand a determinative arrival.

Ahmed's queer phenomenology is concerned with disorientation—a disruption to orientation's "different ways of registering the proximity of objects and others"[96]—as it relates to an unsettling of the *arrival* central to the rearticulated conceptions of home for queer diaspora. Kinship can be conceptually located within such a framework, with Sharon Luk contending that practices of Chinese diasporic letter writing attempted to instantiate a kind of proximity in response to the alienation of physical distance.[97] Insofar as arrival is accordingly determinative of Ahmedian registers of proximity,[98] these alternate forms of kinship, in tending towards arrival, expand notions of orientation. Such an orientation makes a conceptual turn from bodies

occupying space together in a primary sense to envisioned alternative relations of space that function to hold constant the proximity of arrival.

This emphasis on the occupation of space within queer subjectivities is particularly salient in the racializing experiences of the Asian American subject. The Asian American settler not only comes to occupy land in their displacement, but the realm of memory as well. Sociological examinations of Filipinx diaspora within Canada have noted how narratives of the 'hardworking Filipino' as a figured laborer serves to "further ideological work" in rendering Indigenous peoples and populations as indigent in comparison.[99] Thus, not only do the assimilative logics of the state posit Asian American settlers in closer proximity to settler futures by breathing "new life into an argument that… justified dispossession of [I]ndigenous peoples from their lands."[100] These ideological mechanisms of the state thus come to structure the spaces inhabited by others, both physically and abstractly. The realm of memory is perhaps felt most deeply in how "a complex set of intimacies… tends to be forgotten or written out of accounts… to… stop us from knowing other ways of relating, and different pasts that are also resources for imagining different futures."[101]

Past examinations of the transnational role in shaping a conception of Filipinx American identity in fact draw parallels to the way that the selective media-projected identity which only portrays Filipinx subjects in a negative light "resemble the propaganda papers during Spanish colonization era of the Philippines: Both promote an idealized identity of what the Filipino… should be, while simultaneously creating an 'other' as it discards the promotion of undesirable aspects."[102] This colonial contingency has similarly led to aesthetic diasporic practices—such as 'Pilipino Cultural Nights' (PCNs) as they are informally known—that, in yielding to the interests of empire, deploy Indigenous elements of performance in order to project the Indigenous other

within a foreclosed past of suspended 'pre-coloniality'[106] resembling a distinctive "imperialist nostalgia."[104] Thus, between the use of media and diasporic subjects as mechanisms of the U.S. nation-state apparatus, one observes how the romanticization and appropriation of Indigenous cultural and epistemic practices all but "assumes that Igorot Filipino identity only exists through folkdance performance."[105] As Dylan Rodriguez aptly describes it: "the ontological condition of possibility for contemporary Filipino and Filipino American subjectivities—including projects of community and cultural integrity—is formed by the historical technologies and institution architectures of global white supremacy, and that… inscribe Filipino social materialities across…U.S. nation building."[106]

What does this historicity, cultural imperialism, and spatial construction mean for formations of queer diaspora? Resistant practices of queer diaspora seek to challenge and disrupt the settler futures that are ideologically propagated and materially enacted to sever the relational paradigms of reproduction that govern queer subjectivities and orientations. Emily S. Lee, examining the ambiguous practices of the inauthentic Asian American woman, points to the theoretical significance of this relationality for hermeneutic projects. Specifically, she regards the prospect that "one's relation with others fulfills a psychic purpose for the self,"[107] in addition to epistemic resistance against the aforementioned ideological practices of the state. Alcoff further emphasizes the individual need to feel a "'connection to a community, to a history, and to a human project larger than [one's] own life. Without this connection, we are bereft of a concern for the future or an investment in the fate of our community. Nihilism is the result.'"[108] Through this assertion, Alcoff aims to point to the significance of a subject's situated identities, ones which constitute interpretive horizons from which one can discern meaning from interacting with others and the world at large. In this sense, one comes to understand their experience and

the world through interpretive mediations and "ethical engagement or interest with the issue at hand," one that draws upon a "historical a priori that is cultural, collective, historical, and politically situated."[109]

The queer diasporic subject, then, is situated just as it is suspended. Such a subject is simultaneously located and yet disidentified "across a long history of colonial relations and imperial practices… it can only return as a structure of feeling…a melancholic trace demanding historical explanation… race as an affective life-world."[110] Tracing these circuits of affect and desire is José Esteban Muñoz's attempt to capture the social difference that structure experiences between a subject and others or the world, articulating a methodology of disidentification: "a hermeneutic, a process of production, and a mode of performance."[111] Queer diasporic subjects, who are necessarily embedded in the world, are constantly "'within a situation, and throwing light on it is a task that is never entirely finished.'"[112] The interpretive task of relationality, then, attempts to resolve this futurity by demanding that Asian American settlers consider how individual and group identities "dynamically and hermeneutically affect each other."[113] This perceived tension between individual and group identities pushes against the situation of subjectivities within a liberal humanist tradition which privileges "a conception of the self and authenticity as individualistic, unique, and separate from a community."[114]

As Lee elaborates, developing a sense of authenticity is complexified by the mythmaking function of the state and its foreclosed possibilities. The state advances dominant interpretations configured by concepts such as William Peterson's 1966 theory of the model minority myth, the belief that 'lifestyle patterns and cultural values of some racial minority group (Asian) are more conducive to successful integration into the mainstream U.S. economy than those of other groups.'"[115] On Lee's account, the myth is effective in its demands for cultural assimilation—and

a corresponding abandonment of "the practices of one's cultures of origin"[116]—despite its metaphysical inaccuracy because "it centers on the achievement of class mobility…relies upon the perpetuation of a capitalist narrative."[117]

Reiterating her and Eng's emphasis on how "race and racial difference continue to saturate our material and psychic lives,"[118] Lee draws affective parallels to John Zuern's description of the anxious manifestation of masculinity for boys: the model minority myth "predicts a possibility… the future is felt in the present as an anticipation that 'directs itself to the not-yet, to the nonexperienced, to that which is to be revealed. Hope and fear, wishes and desires, cares and rational analysis, receptive display and curiosity: all enter into experience and constitute it.'"[119] In this sense, a subject occupying various social positions within dominant horizons which render unprivileged subjects as unintelligible comes to experience the future in a deeply affective manner—"with the expectation of taking up certain futures comes the anxiety of not taking up these futures."[120] This understanding of the futurity of the model minority myth as an articulated anxiety thus supervenes on the potential for situated identities to serve "'as a generative source of meaning, necessarily collective rather than wholly individual, and useful as a source of agency as well as a meaningful narrative.'"[121]

In articulating the debilitating anxiety of settler futurity that all but coerces adoption of the myth, Lee aims to explain both the distinct racialization of the Asian American settler and the need to address group identity formations in subject-making. She problematizes how "[t]he class and cultural associations of the Asian American identity work against each other to make obscure a sense of authenticity coherent with both characteristics of the group identity."[122] Despite the myth's produced obfuscation, Lee points to the significance of "recognizing that historico-material circumstances condition identity but that identity can dynamically develop…

the difficult work for over-determined women of color now lies in determining which actions, and eventually practices, are available, effective, or transformative of the group identity."[123] In positing the malleability of identities constrained by social conditions, Lee points to the need to contest the "the inescapability of over-determined… associations with the group identity for gendered and racialized subjects."[124] However, Lee emphasizes the unresolved question of *which* differences must be delineated in contesting these overdeterminations, thus pointing to the need for negotiation.

As previously discussed, queer diaspora approaches these contestations by presenting an alternative imaginary from which these processes of negotiation can be cultivated. Gopinath turns to the aesthetic practices of queer diaspora, articulating an account of how such "practices negotiate diasporic movement in multiple geographic locations, and suggest other ways of being in and moving through…spaces that deviate from the straight lines of hetero- and homonormative scripts that typically determine one's life trajectory."[125] In rejecting these determinative scripts, queer diaspora distinguishes itself from a broad sense of diaspora rooted in discourses of nationalism and "virulent notions of racial purity and its structuring heteronormative logics of gender and sexuality"[126] that cannot accommodate queer subjects. Queer diaspora instead "denotes a spacio-temporal praxis that negotiates between home and abroad, lived and imagined places, memory and trauma, nostalgia and self-loathing."[127]

Such a praxis emerges from the ontological condition of exile from heteronormative conceptions of home. For Edward Said, those who appear 'out of place,' are said to occupy a sense of in-betweenness, extraterritoriality, a perpetual "state of being neither here nor there."[128] Said, however, operationalizes the so-called 'postcolonial' character of a notion like queer diaspora to articulate a humanist critique of history-making "attuned to the emergent voices and

currents of the present, many of them exilic, extraterritorial, and unhoused, as well as uniquely American."[129] Queer diaspora certainly falls within this description offered by Said by virtue of being situated within this zone of the in-between, what can be considered "'worlds of their own, extraterritorial spaces of liminality and statelessness.'"[130] It is within these spaces where extraterritorial domination is exacted through transnational relations and capital exchanges between the 'origin' and 'destination' states implicated within nationalist frames of migration. Such extraterritoriality takes on what L. Ling-Chi Wang calls "the structure of dual domination," whereby "[t]he relationship is linked *externally* by the changing bilateral relations… and internally…by their interaction with each other at the level of" diasporic community.[131] Wang furthers that such a structure is "reinforced and constantly modulated by… the rapid trans-Pacific movements of information, capital, and people under global capitalism," noting how Asian Americans are often scapegoated in their racial oppression, effectively delinked and denaturalized from the social privileges conferred by the liberal promise of citizenship.[132]

Still, however, resistant queer diasporic practices have been levied in response to these dominant modes of production—practices which seek to engage in a transformation of queer diaspora's status as an underclass. Extending Judith Butler and Karen Barad's notion of 'misfitting' as a performance "in that agency is being enacted and subjectivity is being constituted," the performing agent works to "ground discursive constructivism in matter" where "[t]he performing agent… materializes not in herself but rather literally up against the thingness of the world… the disjunctures that occur in the interactive dynamism of becoming."[133]

While Rosemarie Garland-Thomson has situated the Butlerian conception of materiality within matter, and specifically the body as a corporeal schema, Butler's focus on language has aimed to describe how discursive power is captured through language, rather than merely offer

the appearance of materiality.[134] Specifically the relation between language and the body is emphasized for the unintelligible body—the construction of the "sexed, gendered, and sexualized body" is normatively-laden as it is "regulated by oppressive norms among them… heterosexuality" whereby such norms proceed to permeate our "lived experience of the body."[135] In this sense, the resistant character of aesthetic practice such as poetry—as a queer diasporic practice—isn't merely understood in terms of the appearance it offers, but the ontological context in which it is operationalized—it it constituted at disjunctures of *becoming*.

Hedging against the mimetic charges of linguistic monism raised against Butler's understanding of the visual and its perceived limitations in accurately capturing the materiality of subjecthood, Gopinath explains how queer diasporic practices might be situated more squarely within agency. Notably, she writes:

> The aesthetic practices of queer diaspora are finely attuned to the violences of the visual field and its centrality to the workings of colonial modernity. They therefore work within the visual field in order to point to that which exceeds the visual, and which the visual field cannot accommodate. They gesture to realms outside and beyond it, suggesting instead the sensorial and the affective as alternative modes and conduits for apprehending the intertwined nature of seemingly discrete historical formations. They allow us not only to see, but also to sense, the proximity of these histories and their contemporary instantiations. In other words, the aesthetic practices of queer diaspora enact an intimate relation between the visual, the affective, and the sensorial: the visual serves as a portal to other senses and affects, and the alternative modes of knowing and accessing the past they make available. The aesthetic practices of queer diaspora thereby open the way to a

> different apprehension of time and space, history and memory, that counters those instantiated by colonial modernity and its legacies.[136]

Indeed, Gopinath's reading of the aesthetic practices of queer diaspora point to its political salience in resisting the various features charted as a symptom and function of colonial modernity thus far. The subjugation of colonized subjects through means of physical space, social norms, and epistemic production constitute not only phenomena that queer diasporic practices struggle to position themselves in opposition to—"the ontological elements being integrated into phenomenological experience are not *disclosable* in the dominant culture to begin with"[137]—but a set of contradictory and ambiguous conditions in which such subjects must necessarily reside.

Given this claim, however, recognition and clarification of the scope of queer diasporic inquiry may be warranted. While criticisms have been raised against emphasizing the queer diasporic subject as a site of critique for its inability to "recognize the patterns of contradiction and complicity between the psychic and the social, the cultural, and the economic, that converge to produce the formations of queerness,"[138] poetry as a queer diasporic practice can be understood within its structural characteristic of indeterminacy. As Gopinath elaborates, it allows us to consider what queerness looks like both "in place" and "out of place"[139] as it "heightens a sense of disorientation even as it promises orientation."[140] In holding such a tension, Gopinath notes how these practices are strategically used to "transform the states of disorientation and suspension that are the by-product of dominant constructions of national and communal (un)belonging into forms of disorientation and suspension that are potentially disruptive and productive."[141]

This alternative conception of queer diaspora thus calls us to sit within indeterminate states of disorientation, contradiction, and ambiguity—it is from these locations where undertakes the task of interrogating "the relation between the sexual and the global, without knowing in advance whether or not the forms that sexual identity might take will even be recognizable to us."[142] Within this articulation, positing the queer diasporic subject as *not* tending towards a static possibility of liberation understood within the dominant charted frame of globalization is what these aesthetic practices illuminate. By remaining perpetually displaced, and ultimately never fully identified within the bounds of visual practice, subjectivity instead becomes reimagined "beyond the colonial and neoliberal scripts,"[143] simultaneously using creative acts such as poetry as tools "for reincorporating corporeal intuitions and subaltern knowledges back into the fabric of lived experience."[144]

3.2 Filipinx Diaspora

> *"aky po ang mga bagon bayani"* (you are the new national heroes)
> *— Corazon Aquino, former President of the Philippines*[145]
> *"2. The Fallen Hero*
> *...*
> *No rags to riches story, but equally*
> *intriguing: a nothing, a brown speck*
> *set adrift from an unfamiliar*
> *planet or archipelago. It lands"*
> *— Luisa A. Igloria, "Christopher Reeve's Filipino Nurse"*[146]

In a similar manner to conceptions of queer diaspora, discourses surrounding a Filipinx diaspora have been characterized by its own indeterminacy and inconclusiveness. Charting formations of Filipinx diaspora alongside political developments in the 1960s and 1970s—including the U.S.'s loosened immigration restrictions and the Philippines' labor export policy in response to the "twin problems of development failure and…the educated unemployment problem"[147] which led to the extensive dispersal of Filipinx workers across the

globe—E. San Juan Jr. has noted a particular struggle for "the Filipino collective identity."[148] Within this struggle lies tensions in sustaining "identities outside the national time/space," expressly not an "open-ended 'plural vision' characterized by arbitrary border-crossing, ludic alterities, and contingencies," but rather a "very provisional and indeed temporising epilogue to a narrative still unfolding."[149] In looking past San Juan Jr.'s references to an abstract, unarticulated return as a potential object of desire, one finds calls for inhabiting "a new collectivity," one that identifies the ideological underpinnings of a racial politics that distinctly operates transnationally for those such as Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) tending towards the never materialized future bliss promised by commodity.[150]

Constructions of Filipinx diaspora, then, can never be materially separated from various systems of value constituted not only by commodification, but corresponding processes as well. For example, inclusion of the labor export policy in the labor code of the 1970s worked to promote the practice of remittances constituted a vital economic dependence for the Philippines and its entrenchment within "the free-market neoliberal status quo."[151] Rocío Zambrana, examining a similar case in Puerto Rico, characterizes the role of this kind of colonial debt produced by the neoliberal relationship between the U.S. and the Philippines: "a key apparatus for the creation and extraction of value in financialized capitalism…debt involves expulsion, dispossession, and precarization through which race/gender/class hierarchies are deepened, intensified, posited anew."[152]

In order to reconcile this debt, then, the Philippines has greatly relied on nationalist discourses of return that keep the contemporary Filipinx subject materially tied to it as a nation-state of 'origin.' As Robert Diaz problematizes, normative distinctions of 'good' and 'bad' returnees produce "contradictory dynamics of return… a disoriented version of return"

which the literary subject in R. Zamora Linmark's novel must mediate through his longing and desires.[153] Diaz thus calls for an investigation of the tensions inherent to Filipinx diaspora as one that ought not re-valorize narratives of *balikbayan*, the transnational returnee, in service of the strategic narratives and gestures that the nation-state demand.[154]

Idealizations of these transnational subjects as 'heroes' meant to recuperate the deteriorating economic condition of the nation-state, then, fulfills the first feature of Wang's dual structures of domination. Internally, the hero discourse has emerged as an enforcement of model citizenship subjectivity, one that has not "been evenly applied… but… delineated according to the racialized, ethnic, and migrant identities of nurses,"[155] a profession which has constituted a significant amount of migration to the metropole.[156] Filipinx diaspora thus exhibits notions of contradiction that, too, must be reconciled within dominant discourses of the imperial project. In doing so, notions of 'home' and 'homecoming'—in its orientation to the construction of a legible Filipinx diaspora subjecthood—come to be characterized as continually "deferred," "remade," "unraveled and renewed."[157]

As alluded to, constructions of Filipinx diaspora cannot be separated from the vectors of race, gender, and class that creates and operationalizes identities and hierarchies derived from the globalized processes that enable diaspora in the first place. Denise Cruz has offered one account and interpretation of these processes by examining a figured 'transpacific Filipina' within various literary representations. For Cruz, the transpacific Filipina represents a conceptual figure meant as a theoretical starting point, one with which to understand how configurations of women mediate colonial conditions mapped across racial, gender, and national regimes or imaginaries.

Specifically, "the modern 'Filipina' is created through numerous and competing discourses,"[158] ones that work to inscribe economic and national anxieties onto the body of the Filipina as a product of the "gendered moral economy of labor."[159]

Despite such competing—and often oppositional discourses[160]—Cruz reads the literary constructions of the Filipina as enacting an alternative conception of femininity, a sort of 'crossing' along byways of national and imperial structures.[161] Lily Wong posits that this crossing, what she terms "Pacific Crossing," functions as a mode of emotional provocation or "friction" through its intertextual consideration of a figure such as the transpacific Filipina. Drawing upon Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing's understanding of "friction," Wong notes how this crossing qua friction "provides a method to classify creative qualities of global encounter across differences, even if those qualities are uneven and unstable." More specifically, Wong argues that certain mediated representations that activate Pacific Crossings operate through the reassembling of images in order to galvanize differing expressions of identity.[162] For example, Wong is interested in how crossing images activate a particular kind of "emotional excess that accumulates *and* spills beyond the use-value of" nation-building.[163] This kind of affective excess is one that effectively pushes against the global capitalist scripts that "depends on and produces the proletarianization of female labor" as a distinct conceptualization of femininity that literary constructions have attempted to subvert and undermine.[164]

The diverging accounts of the subjecthood of the Filipinx diaspora points to the need to intervene across various imperial narratives in an attempt to negotiate the "indeterminate national fates"[165] of the transpacific subject. The diasporic Filipinx subject is, at once, wrestling with "codes of race, gender, sex, and nation in the Philippines and the United States,"[166] a tension that can potentially be explained, if not addressed, through the reworking and reimagining of Filipinx

possibility. For Cruz, tending to the transpacific Filipina's multiplicity may foreground a transcendence of limitations and instabilities represented by the very identity hierarchies that render her as an object of criticism, contestation, and control.[167] This transcendence may therefore entail various forms of recasted racial difference, gendered critique, and restructured class elitism that project Filipina destiny toward futurity.

Notably, however, Cruz does not posit her understanding of the transpacific Filipina as sufficient for the recovery of Indigenous, working-class, or rural women; rather, her analysis is meant to illuminate lines of difference implicating or structuring the social positioning of such women.[168] Indeed, these lines of difference are significant in not only charting colonial subjects across imperial cartographies that have come to structure the globalized distribution of capital, but operate in conjunction with the project of transforming one's concepts—within its orientation of deferral, the diasporic Filipinx subject necessarily comes to reconceptualize home as a "'site of intersecting lines of movements—one begins towards the past and back into the present and the other contracting the past into future.'"[169]

How might the textuality of poetry be able to capture the transpacific Filipina's rendering of recasted racial difference, gendered critique, and restructured class elitism as described above? Drawing from various literary traditions that have understood these social categories as separable, at least for analytic purposes, one can draw a salient analogue to the role of literature while simultaneously tending to the unique features generated by the poetic form. In describing the multiplicity not captured when knowledge is subjugated, Patricia Hill Collins highlights the Black feminist notion of using lived experience as a criterion for meaning—one in which such experience can come to symbolize new meanings.[170] Articulating a specific tension between the universal and the particular that is mediated by poetry on Nikki Giovanni's account, Collins

reads the particular as that from which the universal emerges.[171] As Wong puts it, the body "accumulates symbolic value through the multiplicity of interpretations projected onto it."[172]

Whereas in the labor context, nationalized anxieties are inscribed upon the transpacific Filipina, literary methods aim to reverse the flow of meaning encapsulated by such a relationship. Instead, a kind of phenomenological interiority is able to be conveyed, whereby books "can be fruitfully interrogated as a narrative centrally concerned with race, where phenomenology…offers an invaluable rubric to mine the text… perception and (narrative) perspective structure the construction of racial ideology as it is routed through the protagonist… to expose a regime of whiteness that strips race of its particularity."[173] While the literary and poetic are not typically considered as commensurate methodologies, the deployment of phenomenology as a way to understand how identity is constructed across social differences is what grounds the application of such analysis as a more particularized form of understanding how diasporic formations are imbricated within the dimensions of race, class, and gender—especially in ways that are understood as transgressing dominant norms responsible for unintelligibility. For Eng, Halberstam, and Muñoz, this characteristically queer approach to meaning as it is textually captured can be mobilized in the "continuing critique of queerness" that considers "empire, race, migration, geography, subaltern communities, activism, and class."[174] Such an understanding of social difference rooted in particularity thus resists the liberal temptation to universalize an account of Filipinx diaspora as it continues to be negotiated and deferred in its formulation.

3.3 Citizenship & State-Sanctioned Desire

6

Good Mor-Ning,
North America!

Hell-O.
I boil the classics, roast with plum sauce
and the fiercest ginger
I eat Gone with the Wind
Scarlet exists in the Bay of Tonkin.
It was difficult to get a visa.
— Angela Peñaredondo, "Women and Children for Sale"[175]

Emerging from this queer critique are traditional notions of citizenship constructed by liberalism that ought to be contested. Leti Volpp advances that the "guarantees of citizenship as status, rights, and politics" are insufficient to produce citizenship as identity, calling instead for an understanding of "the membership of kinship/solidarity that structures the U.S. nation."[176] Volpp also suggests that in conceiving of citizenship as a kind of network that captures this kinship/solidarity structure, to also conceive of it as a *process of interpellation*, one that "starts from the perspective that power both subordinates and constitutes one as a subject."[177] Referring back to the Althusserian notion of relations of production, ones which are socially reproduced within "certain collectivities' capacities to subsist and survive tangentially to capitalist ways of life,"[178] one can genealogically trace how such relations come to be undermined through various logics of dispossession.

The traditional interpretation of reproduction as it is relevant for an account of citizenship can be traced to the historical formations of capital in relation to overarching economic systems. As Lowe notes, a particular plastic construction of "the ideology of free wage labor that was necessary to buttress industrialization at home, while coerced labor remained highly profitable in the colonies" eventually developed into the concept of "'racial capitalism'; that is, the organization, expansion, and ideology of capitalist society… expressed through race, racial subjection, and racial differences."[179] The historically contingent, race-, gender-, and class-inflected assumptions about the nature of freedom and labor that structure such ideological

systems thus point to the importance of understanding the conceptual drivers in the transformation of capital and its corresponding exploitation of people through multiple meanings and genealogies.[180] For example, Iyko Day has charted how Asian American and Asian Canadian visual cultures has functioned as a "transnational genealogy of settler colonialism's capitalist logics," one which problematizes what Day calls romantic anticapitalism, "the misperception of the *appearance* of capitalist relations for their essence."[181] Similar to the linguistic charges raised against Butler's account of the visual, Day is concerned with the appearance/essence distinction as it is formulated within accounts of capital. While Day recognizes how capitalism both produces and operates by racialized difference, she rejects the contradiction of this with Marx's formulation of abstract labor:

> What is missing from Lowe's and Roediger's critiques of abstract labor is a recognition of its dialectical relation to concrete labor. Concrete labor represents the racial, gendered, and qualitatively distinct form of actual labor that is rendered abstract as a value expression. Where I locate the principal violence of capitalism is in the very way it abstracts (or renders homogeneous as commensurable units of labor) highly differentiated gendered and racialized labor *in order to create value*. It is therefore the law of value that obscures the racial and gendered character of labor power. For value itself is what necessitates what we could characterize as the metaphoric process of turning particular labor into quantifiable units of abstract labor.[182]

This move from the particular to the quantifiable through the social mediation of capitalist processes leaves room to understand how such labor differently situates itself within and across racialized and gendered subjects. Since exchange value is constituted in the abstract in its social construction, romantic anticapitalism utilizes the aesthetic dimension in order to resolve the issue

of representation. In this way, Day proposes that "the Asian subject in North America personifies abstract processes of value formation anchored in labor, giving "human shape to the abstract circuits of capitalism" which are unrepresentable.[183]

Within Day's account of settler colonial racialization, multiple considerations regarding the contradictory status of the settler state as a superstructure must be considered. Examining distinctions between territorial entitlement between the alien and settler, Day is able to acknowledge that the Marxist notion of primitive accumulation played a significant role in producing the material outcomes that warrant such distinctions in the first place. Day thus notes that for enslaved people "and racialized migrants, the degree of forced or voluntary migration or level of complicity with the settler state is ultimately secondary to their subordination under a settler colonial mode of production driven by the proprietorial logics of whiteness."[184] On this view, race becomes constituted as the organizing principle of settler colonialism, governing settler colonial modes of production that "reproduces the exploitability, disposability, and extraterritoriality of a surplus alien labor force."[185] For example, such logics of exclusion manifested within or utilized stringent immigration restrictions as a form and expression of settler power—it "increasingly privileges flexible Asian citizens with foreign capital, expanding and entrenching the alignment of Asians with an abstract dimension of destructively alien capital."[186]

Such flexible notions of citizenship are derived from understandings of capital as it relates to the state. Aihwa Ong, develops a notion of "[f]lexible citizenship is shaped within the mutually reinforcing dynamics of discipline and escape… the disciplinary norms of capitalism and culture also constrain and shape strategies of flexible subject making… traveling subjects are never free of regulations set by state power."[187] Invoking Foucauldian notions of biopolitics and

governmentality, Ong has further noted that the state regulates the conducts of subject by constructing and ensuring "the needs of the marketplace through a policy of acting and not acting on society."[188] With regards to governmentality, the state finds "ways in which 'subjects' could be brought to internalize state control through self-regulation… a process whereby the modern state and the modern autonomous individual 'co-determine each other's emergence.'"[189]

Indeed, the gendered dimension of the aforementioned practice of remittances represents a form of this self-regulation deployed to "ensure security and prosperity for the nation as a whole:"[190] "remittances enable state elites to postpone crucial reforms, thus acting as what economists call a 'moral hazard.'"[191] As embodied by the epigraphical praising of the transnational subject, the malleability of citizenship is thus highlighted by Ong—culturally situated ideals of sacrifice are posited as a feature of the construction of figures such as the transpacific Filipina whose self-regulation and systematic privileging work in tandem to constitute a broad application of flexible citizenship. As flexible citizens materialize that which capitalism abstracts, Ong articulates that which is missing in the traditional conception of flexible accumulation: "human agency and its production and negotiation of cultural meanings within the normative milieus of late capitalism."[192] The layered process of flexible citizenship offers explanatory power for why immigration reform was highly successful in "the substitution of 'economic desirability for racial desirability'... the Asian embodiment of economic abstraction once again threatens the *concrete* human values invested in traditional rather than flexible citizenship."[193]

While this understanding of flexible citizenship can be immediately problematized, another dimension of settler colonial racialization has yet to be thoroughly examined: the ontological status of the refugee within a politics of migration. Evyn Lê Espiritu Gandhi has

theorized the "*refugee settler condition*: the vexed positionality of refugee subjects whose citizenship in a settler colonial state is predicated upon the unjust dispossession of an Indigenous population."[194] For Day, such complicity is secondary to one's subordination under a settler colonial mode of production; however, while Espiritu Gandhi recognizes that "refugee settlers are not directly responsible for the settler colonial policies of the state into which they are both interpolated and interpellated… their processes of home-making… do take place on contested land."[195] Espiritu Gandhi thus calls for not only considerations of of how refugee critiques of the nation-state can be held in conversation with Indigenous critiques of settler colonialism to challenge settler colonial states' monopoly of the land in service of forging decolonial futures, but calls for a characteristically generative reading understanding and naming refugee settlers, and grappling with the colonial implications of their conditions.[196] Tadiar charts that within understandings and capacities of social reproduction, "[r]efugees are people whose own accumulated value… are, in one blow or in innumerable attacks, destroyed through war… pushed into indefinite territorial and temporal confinement by legal, economic, and social forces of imperial dispossession."[197] Readings of the refugee settler condition do not, in absolute terms, posit war as a singular 'event,' rather, it considers how processes of forced migration likewise resemble the extraterritoriality and imperial dispossession characteristic of the narratives and journey produced by the displacement of war and its associated logics.

Perhaps one way to reconcile these divergent understandings is to turn to the contradiction that contours formulations of settler status. At this juncture, Day reads Candace Fujikane as noting that "it is not necessary for migrants of color to migrate 'intentionally' to become settlers; rather settler status is a mixture of both *self-determination and structural contingency*."[198] Indeed, by moving away from "a frame of Filipino American activism," poetry

that tends to this bifurcated status of the refugee settler condition can be situated within "a decolonial diasporic politics committed to Indigenous survival and self-determination."[199] In this way, Gandhi's focus on refuge settler condition works to identify the tensions that exist between, in the Hawaiian context, "Kanaka attempts to assert self-determination… a space of visioning where the lessons of Philippine sovereignty can inform the theorizations of Hawaiian sovereignty from our own unique perspective. We are a diaspora, in process of decolonizing ourselves, our relationship with war, land, and futures worth fighting for."[200]

3.4 Homonationalism, Intersectionality, & Assemblage Theory

> *American feminist queer theory has no grip as you buy gum at a store*
> *Near the sleeping goats, or hold breath next to the baskets*
> *in a northern province. Ocean salt finds its way into your everything.*
> *Karabaos don't give a shit about your gender pronouns.*
> *…*
> *Convictions of divide and conquer are tossed like habits.*
> *…*
> *After midnight you assemble your limbs back to*
> *their rightful place as you rid the pressure formed*
> *by all day heat and no privacy.*
> *— Kay Ulanday Barrett, "Ways The Philippines Can Talk," When The Chant Comes*[201]

These competing conceptions of citizenship align with Jasbir Puar's notion of homonationalism. As part of its conceptual construction, homonationalism charts an account of "a form of sexual exceptionalism—the emergence of national homosexuality… that corresponds with the coming out of the exceptionalism of American empire…operates as a regulatory script not only of normative gayness, queerness, or homosexuality, but also of the racial and national norms that reinforce these sexual subjects," such as through "segregation and disqualification of racial and sexual others from the national imaginary."[202] Although Gopinath necessarily reads queer diasporic practices as rejecting and contesting these determinative, normative scripts, Puar cautions against queer diasporic exceptionalisms. Such exceptionalisms are exponentially

fortified and proliferated through the construction of social stigmatization through "generative figures" and "forms of queerness-as-exceptionalism… offered in response to this stigmatization…may mimic forms of… model minority exceptionalism, positing queerness as an exemplary or liberatory site devoid of nationalist impulses… the highest transgressive potential of diaspora."[203] These exceptionalist logics operate to advance these nationalist impulses, articulating a perverse queerness to bodies that become disavowed "as a rite of initiation and assimilation into U.S. heteronormative citizenship."[204] Homonationalism thus works to pathologize queer subjects through a "visual representation or historical signification"[205] of corporeality, prioritized in service of "the biopolitical valorization of life in its inhabitation and reproduction of heteronormative norms."[206]

Puar is further concerned with how these heteronormative norms intersect, and interact, with other modes of identity in order to produce the situated experiences of homonational subjects implicated in "an upright (national) homosexuality."[207] Specifically, Puar considers how queer theorists have previously moved to implicate queer politics within intersectional models, one that are formulated to challenge identity norms of race, gender, and class, *as they intersect* with heteronorms. Puar problematizes these approaches, as "resistance to heteronorms may be privileged in a way that effaces the effects of this resistance in relation to possible complicities with other norms, such as racial, class, gender, and citizenship privileges. Queer intersectional analyses… may fail to subject their own frames to the very critique they deploy."[208] Puar's concern regarding the characterization of "all (of one's) identities (not just gender and sexual) must be constantly troubled, leading to an impossible transcendent subject who is always already conscious of the normatizing forces of power and always ready and able to subvert, resist, or transgress them,"[209] reflects Jennifer Nash's attempt to clarify the theoretical, political, and

methodological murkiness of how intersectionality has traditionally been understood. Put another way, Maria Lugones raises a critique grounded in the provisional methodologies mentioned up until this point: "once intersectionality shows us what is missing, we have ahead of us the task of reconceptualizing the logic of the intersection so as to avoid separability. It is only when we perceive gender and race as intermeshed or fused that we actually see women of color."[210] In raising such critiques against intersectionality as it is presently formulated, then, one aims to identify a theory that is able provide the visual clarity in which social identity becomes legible.

Nash raises a particular concern regarding one of intersectionality's potential shortcoming as it has been conceived by Kimberlé Crenshaw concerning the presumptions intersectionality operates on. She notes, "[B]lack women are treated as a unitary and monolithic entity… differences… including class and sexuality, are obscured in the service of presenting '[B]lack women' as a category that opposes both 'whites' and '[B]lack men.'"[211] This concern is raised within the context of emergent understandings that social categories like "sex and gender are best conceptualized as points in a multidimensional space,"[212] an attempt to resignify social categories as distinct social processes which "utilize differing technologies of categorization and control, disciplining bodies in distinctive ways, and coalescing (or colliding) in particular formations in certain… moments."[213] Within the ideological discourses surrounding the theoretical legitimacy of intersectionality, Nash points to Devon Carbado's suggestion that "[i]ntersectionality should be replaced by or at least applied in conjunction with [fill in the blank]."[214]

The indeterminacy of Carbado's suggestion, combined with the lack of consensus within the so-called 'intersectionality wars,' poses a serious methodological gap that any theoretical alternative to intersectionality seeks to bridge. Still, however, Puar extends her analysis of homonationalism to defend an explicated account of assemblage theory that is able to address

intersectionality's shortcoming to adequately tend to the full effect of different vectors of power it has traditionally concerned itself with. Puar proposes that queerness—building upon Aguhar's subjectless queer critique and its compatibility with the provisional deployment of existing analytical categories—"as not an identity nor anti-identity, but an assemblage that is spatially and temporally contingent. The limitations of intersectional identitarian models emerge progressively… as I work through the concepts of affect, tactility, and ontology… This shift forces us to ask not only what terrorist corporealities mean or signify, but more insistently, what do they do?"[215]

Puar thus offers the assemblage as a way to remedy the aforementioned visual representation and historical signification of corporeality as the primary mode of interpellation. If the body does not merely represent a site for the inscription of norms and the accumulation of symbolic value as previously established, a number of theoretical concerns arise: how might the assemblage pose an alternative resignification of subjective embodiments located within taxonomies of identity politics that produce contested formations of un/belonging? How can an assemblage way of thinking recuperate "alternative formations of desire and relationality deemed impossible within the dominant nationalist and diasporic discourses that structure the present moment?[216] In situating the impossibility of those subject to regulatory regimes rooted in the liberal fantasy, Puar identifies a target for queer assemblage critique along affective, tactile, and ontological grounds not present in the intersectionality account: "the heterosexual mandates of national belonging, a circuitry implicating homonational subjects, model minority heterosexuality, and perversely queered populations."[217]

In charting the contingent formations of these underclass populations, one might consider that assemblage notions "proceed from a double worldly perception—both a perception of

resistant forms of… sociality as well as a perception of the dominant ones."[218] While Talia Mae Bettcher is articulating a ground-bound philosophical approach in the context of a specific trans sociality, conceptualizations of assemblages aim to descriptively capture how sociality and intimacy might govern how one 'sees' the world, effectively tending to dimensions of trans identities as well. In this sense, Puar considers the visible as racially contested: "'[s]eeing' is not an act of direct perception, but 'the racial production of the visible, the workings of racial constraints on what it means to 'see'"... an act of reading, a specific interpretation of the visual." What is salient in these Butlerian understandings of seeing, is that the impartial view hides "the 'contestable construal' of what is seen… racist organization and disposition… works to define what qualifies as visual evidence; thus the *ocular* distinctions,"[219]—in effect, a denial of ground.

Still, however, examining the theoretical formulation of assemblages may subtend to this obfuscation of the visible, subverting it to achieve the resistant sense of worldly perception. As Puar understands it, an abstract notion of territory is central to the complex configuration of assemblages—assemblages both reterritorializes and deterritorializes the very territory encroached upon by the extraterritorial apparatuses of the state. Similar to the appearance/essence distinctions produced by linguistic constructions, Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari note in their original formulation of assemblages:

> On a first, horizontal, axis, an assemblage comprises two segments, one of content, the other of expression. On the one hand it is a *machinic assemblage* of bodies, of actions and passions, an intermingling of bodies reacting to one another; on the other hand it is a *collective assemblage of enunciation*, of acts and statements, of incorporeal transformations attributed to bodies. Then on a vertical axis, the assemblage has both

territorial sides, or reterritorialized sides, which stabilize it, and *cutting edges of deterritorialization*, which carry it away.[220]

First, within the two constitutive parts of the horizontal axis of the assemblage, a machinic assemblage of bodies, actions, and passions can be understood within the feminist conception of cyborg semiologies as articulated by Donna Haraway, a mode of articulating how ideology, objects, or persons can be conceived in terms of disassembly and reassembly, with no natural constraints on system design.[221] Haraway's concept of the cyborg, then, represents "a kind of disassembled and reassembled, postmodern collective and personal self."[222] In its reassembly, one finds "a search for a common language in which all resistance to instrumental control disappears and all heterogeneity can be submitted" to these foregrounding logics.[223] In moving away from paradigms of control to ones of orientation and proximity, a second turn is correspondingly at work—a rethinking of "race, sexuality, and gender as concatenations, unstable assemblages of revolving and devolving energies, rather than intersectional coordinates."[224] Puar makes another distinction concerning "a body's intimacies between organic and nonorganic matter, blurring the distinction between them… speaking to the field of force… in relation to and melded into the organic."[225] This move—from the stable (how thing *seem*)[226] to the unstable—invites a particular upshot in that such analysis can be applied "to all sorts of other bodies to destabilize the taken-for-granted assumption that the discursive body, however socially constructed it may be, is always already presume to be a wholly discrete, intact, and fully-abled organic body."[227]

Second, the collective assemblage of enunciation may refer to the consideration of "the possibility that form inheres in matter as the potential capacity for self-organizations out of which bodies… arise."[228] A Merleau-Pontean ontology of language considers its function to

"demarcate indifferent difference," an essence constituting "adherence in and reversibility of one another—as the visible things are the secret folds of our flesh, and yet our body is one of the visible things."[229] In this way, the "incorporeal transformations attributed to bodies" via language renders new meaning "in the 'modulation of existence' enacted by the body."[230] Put in Butlerian terms, "language always already mediates our knowledge of the body, of reality in general: to have an idea of what a female body is, we need to know the meaning of the words *body* and *female*," therefore indicating that bodily transformations rely on the assemblage construction through linguistic interventions

4 A Sea of Affects: On Oceanic Space and Time

4.1 Territorial Space

In addition to these dimensions of the horizontal axis spanning both content and expression, the vertical axis constitutes a significant function of territory, particularly as it is operationalized for processes of reterritorialization and deterritorialization. Prevailing interpretations of the term diaspora are typically connoted with a particular interpretation of an "imagined community" that one participates in on the basis of a transnational nationalism that tends to how these modes of territory are charted and enacted overseas.[23] Indeed, on the basis of this interceding imaginative presumption, a reterritorialization of diaspora reflects the logics of capture that the state relies on in order to enact its extraterritorial interests in transnational ways—echoing Wang's dual structure of domination. Queer diaspora, however, contests this reterritorialization as something that can be unquestioningly adopted due to its reliance on the mythical construction of origin. On Mashrur Shahid Hossain's account, both constitutes and

possesses a deterritorializing agency in that its malleable structure reflects a processual passing, or crossing. Such deterritorialization is taken up when lines of flight, "unrestricted movements of desire, intervene on established assemblages and build new configurations,"[232] thereby unsettling the territorialized features of diaspora. In the transpacific context, Huang identifies that previous attempts to produce a spatial understanding have served to illuminate that "the Pacific also needs to be understood in multilayered ways."[233]

Invoking Wong's articulation of the literary figure of the Chinese sex worker, the deterritorializing function of queer diaspora may illuminate how the transpacific Filipina, normatively rendered as a queer diasporic subject, might galvanize expressions of ethnic "identity *across* nations…*rejecting* the nation-state altogether."[234] These modes of expression, which decenter the nation-state in its defiant transgression, offers agency for these figured subjects to invert their social positionings as "a 'desired other' in service for U.S. empire- and nation-building,"[235] and reorder both imperial and anti-imperial desires.[236] This deterritorialization of the desired other is effectively what enables a reterritorialization along lines of flight whereby desire becomes projected and mobilized in order to "reconfigure a 'we'" that, in diasporic unity, advances a rearticulated vision for the transpacific and its highly differentiated social formations.[237]

It is important to note, however, that in deterritorializing, or destabilizing, the dominant configuration, what is occurring is deterritorialization "inheres in a territory as its transformative vector… it is tied to the very possibility of change immanent in a given territory" in a way that doesn't structure it in a binary relationship with the corresponding consequences of reterritorialization.[238] For the subjects implicated within the domain of the territory, neither do they fall into facticity given the lack of stabilization. Instead, the multiplicity—and

transcendence it makes possible—derived from the figured transpacific Filipina preserves the process as "continuous movements of development and variation unfold new relations of materials and forces"[239] that come to constitute the assemblage structure.

In what follows, a deconstructive rooted in the logics of assemblage will be deployed in analyzing various cultural productions of queer diasporic poetry collections in order to chart how processes of deterritorialization and reterritorialization can be determined along creative schemas possessing boundless interpretive potential. For example, Marissa Largo reads possibility within "the diasporic Filipina, who through her creative labor presents radically different conceptions of ethnicity, gender, and belonging beyond national frames… that exceed dominant facile imaginaries of what it means to be a Filipina."[240] In this sense, Largo's call for the diasporic Filipina's creative labor—tools for, as one might recall, reincorporating subaltern knowledges within lived experience—posits an ontologically unstable Filipina identity *qua* its indeterminacy. In doing so, it "opens other ontologies of self, other social practices, other social values and other social logics that hold possibility for unanticipated histories and plural normative horizons" undergirding points of departure from empire.[241] When configured this way, the diasporic Filipina remains ever compatible with the principal task of preserving the relational character of our political deployment of the transpacific. Largo thus rejects the premising of reterritorialization within the bounded limitations of nationalist grammars that attempt to locate the queer diasporic subject despite the lack of social location for its ontological status.[242]

In line with such calls to reterritorialize the creative potential of a diasporic Filipinx subject, Kimberly Alidio's *why letter ellipses* offers one lens with which to interpret the subjective relation to territory within a context of spatial construction. Reiterating the assemblage character of this collection of poetry, Huang remarks that "[c]ollection as a

subversive economic practice… finds literary and historiographical ramifications in… a writer assembling words as objects into a text as collection."[243] In the epistolary poem "dearest, I'm writing from inside this place to you / who are in a totally different place," Alidio articulates a diasporic narrator who recognizes their ontological distance and attempts to surmount it in writing, excerpted below:

> I'm far away. Our bargain – settle on the lowest common denominator.
> Geography after all is a modernist romance, a language for how
> We diverged from one another. Writing is the fragment of a relation
> Made possible by archival preservation and document's promise.
>
> You and I are here to unsettle. Technologies of settling are colonial.
> A 1903 language primer gave me my subjective experience of place.
> My presumed sphere: pastoral tropics in which play is innocent
> Folktales are toothless, a mommy, a daddy and a twin
> …
> Including our bodies. We drew a series of maps. The roads
> Connecting our homes to the neighborhood school, our town,
> Our province, this archipelago, and, finally, nearby countries.
> Objects beyond our field of vision are other houses, towns,
> …
> It is perverse to claim normativity once normativity is
> Imposed upon you so that you claim something both
> Assumed of you and denied to you? Did you create the good life?
> Did you displace anyone? Craig Santos Perez writes new poetic maps
>
> Of the Pacific to make Guam visible. The Philippines shows up
> In maps more often than the Marianas do. But still there is a sense
> That no one notices when a U.S. warship runs aground of a coral reef.
> And once it does it goes into battle position against Philippine park rangers.
> …
> Oneself is the delusion we can repossess lost property. A place
> Is an archive of its own ruins. A place is the archive of trauma
> As fact. It happened here. The ships came by to pick up people,
> Their cargo and the people hauling cargo. The pacific is our trauma and

Our desire. The rim is everywhere there has been a war
To get caught up in, always carrying the officer's status in the body
In the closed-door domesticity of empire. Your daily commute through a place,
Your tourist visit to it, your wrong turn leading to it, or

Your binding obligation to stay in it may be a document
Of the place's ruin. You sense the bodies that passed
Through. Flown above. Eaten tunnels into. Exposed brick and oil spills.
Paid out. Locked down. Bodies know more than the curatorial eye.

Of the drone or the tight porn shot. The preservationist's weak references.
The developers' biopolitical commitments to life. Ruins and remains
Is a place of present presence, neither passed nor futurist.
You and I are here to unsettle.[244]

Extending the literary analysis of Sharon Luk and Jinah Kim to Alidio's phenomenologically-laden poem, a number of features, understood within an analytic of assemblage, become salient in this poem offered up by Alidio. First, the ambiguity of the word 'settle' offers multiple meanings: to resolve a dispute by agreement, to pay a debt in light of 'our bargain,' to come to occupy a new area, or to come to rest. Given the implied diasporic context—the speaker recognizes that 'we diverged from one another'[245]—each of these viable interpretations of the word 'settle' offer divergent forms of meaning that aren't immediately resolvable or sequential. Adilio, then, immediately begins with an assemblage construction—one that "scrambles into chaotic combinations,"[246] but foregrounds an ontological aim 'to unsettle' and to problematize the technologies of settling given the concerning "heightened sensorial and anatomical domination" within the "contemporary political terrain" and "narratives of U.S. exceptionalism that secure empire."[247]

As previously established, a phenomenological method with which to 'mine the text' is where literary traditions are located within an analysis of Alidio's poem. Luk notes that the form

of an epistolary structure of the poem constructs a particular "life of paper" from which reflective interrogations into social transformations for diasporic practice can be undertaken. Luk is therefore not concerned with the truth value of that which is contained within a particular letter, rather, "the significance of her narrative resides in the process and act of remembering that produce and are produced by the letter."[248] Alidio's letter functions similarly to the phenomena of imagining a paper family that Luk centrally examines as Alidio's speaker, too, "remembers alienation"[249] in locating the contradiction of the diasporic subject mapped along the domain of postcolonial imaginaries. Alidio's speaker claims: "It is perverse to claim normativity once normativity is / Imposed upon you so that you claim something both / Assumed of you and denied to you? Did you create the good life? / Did you displace anyone?"[250]

The speaker thus points to how normativity functions as an inherent constraint for the diasporic subject's interpretive task—"the interplay of perversion and normativity necessary to sustain in full gear the management of life."[251] Specifically, the "commonality of perversion becomes clearer, in that… bodies represent pathological spaces of violence that are constituted as sexually excessive, irrational, and abnormal, taking us back to… Orientalist, public policy, and feminist archives."[252] The speaker thus reads the writing as "the fragment of a relation / Made possible by archival preservation and document's promise,"[253] pointing to the relationality and future embedded in investigation the tensions of normative adherence to colonial prescriptions of "the good life."[254] The speaker thus moves to identify how a social transformation predicated on understanding the spaces they navigate as a form of archival practice—"A place / Is an archive of its own ruins. A place is the archive of trauma / As fact. It happened here. The ships came by to pick up people, / Their cargo and the people hauling cargo. The pacific is our trauma and / Our desire."[255] This transpacific orientation thus calls for spatial reterritorialization, one that works to

free up the Pacific as 'Our desire' for legibility via the archive. This freeing up or liberation of desire represents a kind of decoding articulated by Stuart Hall, "Decoding within the *negotiated version* contains a mixture of adaptive and oppositional elements: it acknowledges the legitimacy of the hegemonic definitions to make the grand significations (abstract) while, at a more restricted, situational (situated) level, it makes its own ground rules − it operates with exceptions to the rule."[256] This decoding thus relies on logics of exceptionalism—not of the U.S. nation-state, but of the deterritorialized transpacific subject—in order to free oneself from the libidinal investment in desires that are encountered in place. This move seeks to sever the body, as a desiring machine or assemblage, and its tie to "the excess consumption of a class, that… reduces all the decoded flows to production… rediscovers the primitive connections of labor… linked to capital and to the new deterritorialized full body."[257]

How is this body territorially rendered? Given that the materiality of these desires exceed the boundaries of the written form, Luk turns to the conceptual schematic of cognitive maps. Luk conceives of "migrants' 'cognitive maps'" as discursively constraining the sorts of questions the speaker is asking within the bounded materiality of the paper, this works to "illustrate a process of people grappling with modern Eurocentric epistemology, heteronormativity, and aesthetic representation in order to communicate their own humanity and material condition in a way that could be both memorized by the migrants and recognized by the interrogators."[258] Jinah Kim extends upon this definition, and Frederic Jameson's definition of "'the imaginary representations of the subject's relationship to his or her Real conditions of existence'" by developing the term *racial cognitive mapping* in which she identifies "repeated representations of bodily suffering to represent the traumas of the past that are dangerous to speak and remember."[259] Kim thus conceives of diasporic space—for her, Los Angeles—as "no longer the

repository of images and meaning for futurity and survivability… [but] a repository for shared traumas across the Pacific Arena and the Americas."[260]

Alidio's speaker draws a necessary connection between embodiment and mapping in order to understand how these traumas are reinscribed into the body. The speaker writes of drawing "a series of maps. The roads / Connecting our homes to the neighborhood school, our town, / Our province, this archipelago, and, finally, nearby countries" which is juxtaposed to the fact that "Craig Santoz Perez writes new poetic maps // Of the Pacific to make Guam visible. The Philippines shows up / In maps more often than the Marianas do."[261] Here, the speaker operationalizes a kind of "archipelagic way of apprehending self and space,"[262] while simultaneously still noting the invisibilizing violence that functions to obscure Guam and the Mariana Islands. Epeli Hau'ofa has articulated how the Pacific Islander subject has, in a sense distinct from the violence mythmaking of the state, utilized "myths, legends, and oral traditions, and the cosmologies of the peoples of Oceania" to conceive of the world beyond the "microscopic proportions… Smallness is a state of mind."[263] Kim finds that racial cognitive mapping may constrain these archipelagic conceptions because "'people are unable to map (in their minds) either their own positions or the urban totality in which they find themselves: grids… are the most obvious example."[264] Racial cognitive mapping thus corresponds to the spatial constraints imposed by colonial geographies proliferated within projects of mapping, of territorializing space. Hau'ofa genealogically traces this pervading reality to the phenomenon in which "continental men—Europeans and Americans—drew imaginary lines across the sea, making the colonial boundaries that confined ocean peoples to tiny space for the first time."[265] Fujikane has situated this historical contingency as constituting a spatial geography governed by modes of production, ones which "work to enclose and domesticate Indigenous places and their

significance precisely because the seizure of land continues to be constitutive of the very structure of occupying and settler states."[266] Therefore, such settler cartographies have functioned to "dismember land into smaller and smaller pieces isolated from one another"[267] in order to disrupt relational possibilities and obscure ocean peoples from the territorialized view.

Alidio aims to disrupt the entrenched in/visibilizing effects of this mapping through the speaker's articulation of embodied navigation of space. In light of a reality in which "no one notices when a U.S. warship runs aground of a coral reef" or one is "always carrying the officer's status in the body / In the closed-door domesticity of empire,"[268] the speaker aims to emphasize the various ways in which "U.S. militarism shapes our collective imaginaries and our (in)ability to imagine humane survival in a time of immense vulnerability and violence."[269] However, to make these realities, the negotiated and contested arrangement of the "domestic life of… colonized subjects"[270] legible, one might read the speaker's observation that "[b]odies know more than the curatorial eye," as a constitutive component of interpreting the intimate entanglements between trauma produced by an ocean space where "desiring and desirable bodies are used to serve as the biopolitical vector through which the United States naturalizes its militarization of the region"[271] and "Indigenous resilience in the face of these damages."[272] The speaker thus calls for bodies to be read—not as desiring machines or as an unmediated visual encounter, but a site from which affects begin to unfold the biopolitical contexts that "[y]ou and I are here to unsettle."[273]

4.2 Temporality

In addition to the role that space, via historically contingent processes of territorialization, has played in constructing queer diasporic formations, the temporal dimension offers a significant analytic distinction for understanding assemblage approaches to the transpacific. As

Lowe suggests, "the 'coloniality' of modern world history is not a brute binary division, but rather one that operates through precisely spatialized and temporalized processes of both differentiation and connection.[274] Suzuki articulates "an ocean-centered approach to space/time" which "opens new venues for revitalization and resurgence." More specifically, a kind of "tidalectic temporality" emerges out of Suzuki's literary readings of subjects that cycle "through different time periods and points of view… refusing to privilege a single perspective or (progressive) trajectory."[275] The supposed coherence of a temporal linearity is thus problematized by transpacific understandings of temporality. As Huang puts it, "[t]he territorial expansion into the Pacific in the nineteenth century was not also an extension of America's Manifest Destiny, but also a step in the historical progression of the world."[276]

In contesting these temporalities, Suzuki's call for an ocean-centered approach can be understood within a broader attempt to deploy poetry as a resistant aesthetic practice of queer diaspora. Indeterminately, however, is poetry's relationship to affect, particularly as it is mapped across Huang's understanding of the transpacific as unevenly temporalized.[277] As Puar ambivalently puts it, "what these slippages between emotion, feeling, and affect are performing in queer critique are continuing efforts to elaborate different and alternative modalities of belonging, connectivity, and intimacy, a response, in fact, to paradigms that have privileged the deterritorialization of control societies."[278] To formulate the melancholic trace, the affective life-world" that can recuperate understandings of queer diaspora, one can examine Kay Ulanday Barrett's poem "Albany Park/Logan Square 1993-2000, Chicago IL" as embodying the features of this tidalectic temporality. As Johan Lorraine Alvarado puts it, "Barrett's childhood neighborhood manifests as a place a multiplicity in which they can interweave the various registers of voices, bodies, and cultures."[279] Barrett's invitation to this multiplicitous inhabitance

of "*an instant of time*," a recorded past relayed by an imagistic poem depicting scenes of Filipinx sociality.[280] While Barrett relays a playful alphabetization of seven years with each stanza of the poem, the following excerpts resemble what David G. Siglos calls incoherence, "a non-coherence that refuses to come together or simply become one thing:"[281]

Boys brandish harsh syllables, *Don't be so bakla!*

They berate. They break. They belittle.

Brraaap braaap braaap making fake

Bullets into one another's brows.

…

The Filipino's first call and response:

Kain na tayo! Time to eat! Food is ready! Get your asses ovah here, na!

…

Miscreant: noun, [mis-kree-uh nt]

(Migrant. Misplaced. Mapping. Misunderstood. Melancholy. Mahirap.)[282]

These stanzas, depicting various interactions that reflect the incoherence that contours Filipinx social life. On one hand, this sociality is present as "[t]he Filipino language manifests a strong semantic orientation toward sociality and concern for other human beings."[283] At the same time, Barrett's invocation of being called *bakla* or the associated valences within 'miscreant,' denote the linguistic "dis/junction between playfulness and pain, the relationship between the pain of breakage and the play that breaking allows."[284] Within this tension, Lugones's account of world-traveling is able to stabilize these disjunctive modes—"to the extent that I can materialize or animate both images at the same time I become an ambiguous being."[285] Furthermore, in derogatorily being denied the queer conception of *bakla*, Barrett's rearticulation of their

experiences—in all of its ambiguity—resembles Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of heteroglossia, "'another's speech in another's language, serving to express [the speaker's] intentions, but in a refracted way.'"[286] The dialogic refraction of these heteronormative charges, despite being located in diaspora, thus insists "that those contested voices be heard."[287] Barrett's poem thus offers a dialectical point of synthesis for this ambiguous subjectivity, rendering a transpacific temporality that is necessarily generative and navigably directed. As Glissant notes:

> This movement allows giving-on-and-with the dialectic among aesthetics. If the imaginary carries us from thinking about this world to thinking about the universe, we can conceive that aesthetics, by means of which we make our imaginary concrete, with the opposite intention, always brings us back from the infinities of the universe to the definable poetics of our world. This is the world from which all norms are eliminated, and also it is this world that serves as our inspiration to approach the reality of our time and our place. Thus, we go the open circle of our relayed aesthetics, our unflagging politics. We leave the matrix abyss and the immeasurable abyss for this other one in which we wander without becoming lost.[288]

This poem, Barrett's personal offering, locates Barrett within "an otherwise generalized, objectified history" and instead to approach the projects of world-traveling and home-making through the poetic assertion of 'our time and our place,' irrevocably marking this time as Barrett's own.[289] Barrett's specific focus on the multi-valent miscreant thus identifies how one's ontologically unstable identity can be differently read within a context of affect, mapped across "[t]he biopolitics and bioeconomics of neoliberalism [which] fetishize vitality and flexibility, against which grief appears as a melancholic attachment and as an unhealthy hyperremembering of a past best forgotten."[290]

5 Poetic Assemblages

How do queer diasporic aesthetic practices such as poetry present an alternative picture to the rational structures of space and time as they work to configure a regime of normativity? By rejecting "normative frames of linearity and temporality," poetry proffers alternative embodiments that are able to "exit this question of temporality that doggedly binds all cultural forms navigating the yesterday of tradition with the futurity of the modern, to instead inspire anew other temporal and spatial possibilities." For example, Puar emphasizes the repetition of the daily ritual of wrapping turbans for the figured sikh, whereby "repetition is key; it enables not only the repetition of the familiar and time-worn but also the becoming of something open to the future… to huge variations over lifetimes… lines of flight that always hold open the chance of a disruption of the exact terms of mimesis."[293]

The repeated deployment of poetry as a resistant method then, contributes to continual—and necessary—articulations of creative production that are crucially relational. These queer diasporic aesthetic practices mobilize Kale Fajardo's understanding of seafaring epistemologies as generating "other time-spaces of solidarity, resistance, critical learning, teaching, and beauty" that serve as "alternative—decolonized—everyday practices and epistemologies" which "teach us that like currents in the sea, it is still possible… to move, sail, live, think, read, relate, and/or write in an opposite, alternative, and/or queer/decolonized direction."[294] Fajardo situates the limited understandings of oppression "expressed through race, gender, class, nationality, temporality, and space," within his ethnographic observations of working-class Filipino seamen experiencing a phenomenal "blues" generated by the dominant

practices of repetition rooted in a normative spatiality and temporality, effectively blocking or marginalizing the temporal fluidities and flows made legible through poetry.[295]

Fajardo's identification of the possibilities inherent in oceanic conceptions represent a methodological and analytical bridge to new political projects that assert relational connections in order to overcome the debilitating condition generated by normativity. For example, Jian Neo Chen situates the features of self-realization within trans cultural production as mirroring "legacy of navigation… which treats the ocean as a dynamic entity… a voyage that navigates already interrelated internal and external worlds and past, present, and future selves."[296] Indeed, the dynamism of this oceanic embodiment is one in which enables an orientation and cultivation of self-understanding that is both temporally fluidity and necessarily entangled in interrelationships with both "human and nonhuman entities."[297] For Puar, a notion of political urgency is inherently embedded in this assemblage conception—poems produce a foundation, a "consistent referent"[298] that aims to inspire political outcomes which seek to address the "[v]iolence, especially of the liberal varieties, [which] is often most easily perpetrated in the spaces and places where its possibility is unequivocally denounced."[299]

An emergent task, then, is to consider the deployment of the poetic and its relational possibilities as coextensive to both the constant formation and reformation of assemblages and the relationality demanded of a decolonial genealogy. Reading poetry against what Gayatri Spivak calls 'teleopoesis,' "to affect the distant in a *poiesis*—an imaginative making—without guarantees,"[300] represents the sheer possibility inherent in a poetic assemblage. Such assemblages are further guided and governed by readings of bodies as affectively troubling, whereby its affective character produces a kind of "communal affect as the ties that bind utopian community… already within signification, within narrative, functioning as a form of critical

resistance to dominant modes of being and becoming."[301] Indeed, in tending towards futures that are yet to be guaranteed in normative terms, one deploys a textual way of understanding relationality that brings one closer to the "radical relationalities that transcend settler geographies and maps, temporalities and calendars, and/or other settler measures of time and space."[302] This notion of radical relationality—reducing the 'remoteness' of one's relationship to the transpacific and reflecting a desire to reclaim, rearticulate, and re envision the transpacific from its normative hold—underscores the ultimate need to reinscribe it as a space for communal memory, survival, and resistance against colonial undercurrents. To heed its call is to swim in the depths of poetic assemblage, to embody a Filipinx method, and to imagine new worlds for us to inhabit.

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