REPARATIVE ACTS: REDRESS AND THE POLITICS OF QUEER UNDOING IN CONTEMPORARY ASIAN/AMERICA

by

ROBERT G. DIAZ

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in English in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York

2007

ProQuest Information and Learning Company
300 North Zeeb Road
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346

This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in English in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

_____	_____
Date	Steven F. Kruger, Chair of Committee
_____	_____
Date	Steven F. Kruger, Executive Officer
	_____
	Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick
	_____
	Robert Reid-Pharr
	_____
	José Esteban Muñoz

THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

Abstract

REPARATIVE ACTS: REDRESS AND THE POLITICS OF QUEER UNDOING IN CONTEMPORARY ASIAN/AMERICA

by

ROBERT DIAZ

Adviser: Steven F. Kruger

My dissertation examines the relationship between queer representation and reparative performances that seek to undo traumatic violence, focusing on specific geo-political traumas inflicted upon marginalized subjects within Asian America, the Philippines, and Korea. Research for this project began with a question: In moments of crisis, ones that also effect calls for redress, how do Asian/American diasporic cultural productions use queerness to enrich definitions of what reparation—psychic, political, monetary, and bodily—might mean? My study moves from discussing the compensatory feelings of melancholia and queer envy in Asian American Literature (exhibited in Maxine Hong Kingston's *The Woman Warrior* and R. Zamora Linmark's *Rolling the R's*), to examining the ways in which queer relationships constitute calls for the undoing of Manila's cleansing during the Marcos Regime (most resonant in the Philippine New Cinema and Jessica Hagedorns' *Dogeaters*), to studying the deployment of queerness as a critique of testimony, victimhood, and symbolic reparation through the "comfort woman figure" and the Korean American historical re-memory (in Gil Portes's *Markova: Comfort Gay* and Theresa Hak Kyung Cha's *DICTEE*), to interrogating demands for queer bodily reparation within HIV/AIDS activism (in Chay Yew's *A Language of Their Own* and Asian and Pacific Islander Coalition on HIV/AIDS prevention strategies). I suggest that in all of these cultural sites, the various modalities of

queerness—lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender identity, camped performativity, and non-heterosexual forms of kinship—become key methodologies for analyzing the possibilities and failures of reparative actions. Following the work of Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick and Judith Butler, I assert that queerness' potential to destabilize and challenge dominant ways of understanding identity formation also make it a crucial space for examining acts that express demands for compensation and retribution. Making a needed intervention to this earlier queer work, I specifically study queerness outside of the ways it has been circulated in the United States. Contributing to David Eng, Gayatri Gopinath and Martin Manalansan's research on queer diasporas, I broaden the current archive and include queer subjects from the Global South who also seek redress.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The most fulfilling and satisfying decision I have ever made in graduate school is walk into Steve Kruger's office in order to inquire if he would be willing to direct my dissertation. I was extremely fortunate that he had agreed, because he has shown such constant attention to the project, guiding it from its conception to what it is now with such thorough, conscientious, supportive, knowledgeable, astute, and forgiving care. Steve has no doubt given such an investment in responding and reading my work. "Luck" would not be enough to label my situation after having completed this dissertation with his help.

I am also indebted to those who have served on both my Orals and Dissertation Committees. Since I seem to be attached to the memories of walking into advisers' offices, I also note that walking into Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's "art room" to seek advise, a possibility that still astounds me, was an experience that has affected how I have re-viewed her scholarship after having been so immensely influenced by her work as an undergraduate student. Eve has shown such generosity and pedagogic wit, and I will never forget how she was able to convey the meaning of her work by simply moving her glasses, drinking her tea, and sitting in her chair surround by stacks paper, stamps, and watercolor. Robert Reid-Pharr's office was the first I had ever walked into in graduate school, and he was the first one who had suggested that I write about reparation. His strategic comments about professionalization, and his constant humorous warnings about the "things that graduate students do" have stayed with me as I continue to teach. Jose

Muñoz's office, which is located in an altogether different location and institution, was also a welcoming space to discuss both the anxieties around the project and the inspiration that Jose's own scholarship has given to alleviate these anxieties. I have been able to walk into the offices of many people that I have admired and have emulated as friends and scholars. I thank David Kazanjian, David Eng and Patricia Clough for helping me understand the questions of the dissertation in their seminars and through our personal conversations. As the Director of Women's Studies, Patricia gave me the financial support needed to continue on as a graduate student, as she provided a space for scholars such as myself to ask our questions in a space of mutual sociality trough the Conviction Seminars.

I have also been very fortunate to have an office at Queens College. I feel genuinely appreciative of my three years teaching there, and would like to foremost thank Duncan Faherty, for not only trusting me with interdisciplinary courses that have shaped my thinking as a scholar, but also for giving advice for questions which ranged from my professional goals to navigating our departmental photocopier. I am also very appreciative of the collegial atmosphere at Queens College, which Professors Glenn Burger, Carrie Hintz, and John Weir have helped foster throughout my stay there.

The majority of the time I spent writing the dissertation I was surrounded by scholars, colleagues and friends who offered such astute comments about the project, and who have fortunately anchored the work in its politics. My thanks to Jamie Skye Bianco, Una Chung, Karen Weingarten, Rebekah Sheldon, Andrea Rosso Efthymiou, and Justin Rogers Cooper for reading many drafts of these chapters, and for letting me read their work with such openness and trust. I thank my friends and fellow

scholars at New York University, Andre Carrington, Tina Majkowski, Christine Balance, Heather Lukes, and Jeanne Vaccaro for truly demonstrating what it means to work across institutions and disciplines with the same conviction and intent. I thank Joshua Chambers-Letson for not only co-editing work with me in the past, but for being such a pillar during the difficult times of writing this dissertation. I also would like to thank mentors and friends at UCR, Jennifer Doyle and Molly Mcgarry, for believing in my scholarship as an undergraduate student. I pursued graduate school because they had taught me Eve's work in the first place.

I would not have survived New York City without the sustenance of friends outside of the institution. I am deeply grateful to Mike Atienza for giving me the needed push when I had given up on the project, and for offering a space in California to call respite. I am also thankful to Russell Jaime, who has been my constant companion to Queens. Through our trips, I was not only able to do much needed research, I was also given the chance to travel back to the Philippines, even ever so briefly, by experiencing the joy of Filipino food. Aside from them, I have also been surrounded by friends whose company and support I still deeply enjoy: Jopet Abaya, Richmond Ramirez, Alex Drilon, Cindy Chavez, Rupert Vallarta, and Pia Reyes-Sia. Jeff Angeles gave me much needed emotional sustenance during the times I had needed it the most.

This dissertation would not have been written without the help of Anthony Cocciolo. Anthony's patience throughout the 7 years we have been together has only been matched by his generosity in giving me the needed space to pursue the scholarship and teaching that I love. Anyone who has been in a relationship with an academic understands the toll that their partner can place on them, and Anthony has been able to

assuage this stress by providing the needed patience amidst the many crises being in graduate school entails. I am deeply and sincerely grateful for the love and the countless forms of support he has kindly provided. His companionship has mattered the most.

Finally, I acknowledge my family. They have given much of the values and background needed to pursue this project, and academia as a whole. I thank my grandparents, Aurea Diaz and Heraclio Diaz, whose legacy I hope I can maintain. My mother, Josefina De Jesus, has been a constant presence, inspiring me to understand both a feminist consciousness at such a young age, and an appreciation for what is yet to come. David and Yvette Flynn, Joanna Moriwake, and Andrea Garcia have been such immense sources of love during these times. They also made me laugh. Kathrine Garcia Minzlaff sheltered the dissertation during its final and most crucial stages. If she had not provided me with a space to write, a place to think, and constant companionship to bounce one's ideas off, then this dissertation would not have been written. I dedicate this entire dissertation to Emilia Desphy or "Lola Neneng." This might not be equal to what I promised her 10 years ago when I left the Philippines, but I hope it can show what I have tried to make of that promise.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction: Undoing and Redress Amidst the Impossible

> I would insist not only that the struggle to survive is not really separable from the cultural life of fantasy, but also that the foreclosure of fantasy is one strategy for providing for the social death of persons … Fantasy is what allows us to imagine ourselves and others otherwise; it establishes the possible in excess of the real; it points elsewhere, and when it is embodied, it bring elsewhere home.
>
> (Judith Butler, "Global Violence, Sexual Politics")

Soon after she discovers that Japan surrendered during the Second World War, Mrs. Yamada—one of the key characters in John Okada's *No-No Boy*, a novel set in Post-Internment Seattle—commits suicide. Before she takes her own life, however, she performs an uncanny ritual that is worth narrating at length here. The scene occurs after Kenji, a Japanese war veteran, goes to Mrs. Yamada's house to pick up his friend Ichiro. He notices her in the grocery store. She goes through her daily routine of arranging various objects before selling them. Curious, he observes this woman whom he's heard about, the person who's partly responsible for making Ichiro a "No-No Boy":

> Inevitably, he saw Ichiro's mother and it gave him an odd sensation as he watched her methodically empty cans with painful precision on the shelf,… [S]he grasped only a single can with both hands each time she stopped to reach the box. Finally she stood and examined her handiwork. Kenji rapped briskly at the door but she took no notice. Instead, she reached out suddenly with her arms and swept the cans to the floor. Then she just stood with arms hanging limply at her sides, a

> small girl of a woman who might have been pouting from the way her head dropped and her back humped.… Kenji looked once more before driving off and noticed that she, having gathered all the cans, was once more lining them on the same shelf. (136-137)

She knocks the cans over. Then she picks them up. She scatters them. Then she places them in neatly ordered stacks. Repeating her methodology with such discipline, she creates a world of order only to chaotically undo it. The ritualistic arranging and rearranging of these seemingly mundane objects is fascinating in light of Mrs. Yamada's refusal to accept that Japan has lost the war. This scene not only foreshadows her own death in the later part of the novel. It ultimately highlights the ways in which the oppressed practices some form of agency amidst the impossibility of historical record and truth. That Mrs. Yamada fails at this attempt only exemplifies the limits of this agency, culminating in her refusal to live the civic death that the thought of Japan's loss will bring. She chooses literal death instead. This refusal, given the particular historical moment the novel is set in, makes both this act and her subsequent passing all the more compelling as blatant forms of contestation.

Amidst the rebuilding of a community after *Executive Order 9066*—the executive order signed by Franklin D. Roosevelt on February 19, 1942 which authorized the internment of Japanese Americans by creating military areas where the military can search for and control "enemy aliens"—and amidst a population's coping with the forced removal of Japanese Americans from the west coast, we see a character who does not only come to grips with this particular traumatic removal. We see someone who refuses to live in this post-internment world, and one who instead practices her own form of

arranging reality so that she can stubbornly pledge allegiance to Japan. She refuses the logic of acceptance, a refusal which might be considered mentally unsound, but unsound only in light of the historical moment which forces her to state "I am an American" even when her 5th and 14th amendment rights have been taken away. As Ichiro reflects in another moment of the text: "Did it matter so much that events had ruined the plans which she cherished and turned the once very possible dreams into madness which was madness only in view of the changed status of the Japanese in America? Was it she who was wrong and crazy not to have found in herself the capacity to accept a country which repeatedly refused to accept her or her sons unquestioningly?" (104).

Mrs. Yamada is neither at fault nor is she insane. Kenji also searches for the logic behind internment, and the justification for war. Before visiting the Yamada household, Kenji searches for the answer to the continued oppression of Japanese Americans in United States, even if people like himself had already served in the army: "Kenji thought about these things and tried to organize them in his mind so that the pattern could be seen and studied and the answers deduced therefrom. And there was no answer because there was no pattern and all he could do and feel was that the world was full of hatred" (136). John Okada juxtaposes these two characters, one who represents the "most American" subject for serving in the war, and another who represents the unassimilable "enemy" for her continued belief in Japan. Yet both experience the oppression of being *Nissei* at a particular historical moment when being Japanese is synonymous, on all accounts, with being a "terrorist." In so doing, Okada highlights the ways in which minoritarian subjects desire to make do with their world even though it is inhumane, and to find a tangible way of understanding the struggles they face. He makes clear that Japanese American

oppression for the hyper-exceptional and the stubborn Japanese subject—both of whom die by the novel's end—cuts through similarly.

I begin this project during the geo-temporal space of post-internment United States for the obvious reason that *Nissei* Internment indexes one of the most legible historical moments within the nation's cultural lexicon for discussing reparation, atonement, and redress. The discourses of "reparation" for internment have now been thoroughly examined after *Korematsu vs. United States* (1944). Certainly, by using Okada's work, I gesture to a text that has already been established within the canon of Asian American literature for analysing Japanese American experiences post-internment. Yet much still needs to be done in considering the ways that *acts* of redress are defined—outside of the monetary, the symbolic, and the juridical. Returning to this scene, I ask instead: What do we make of Mrs. Yamada's performance of agency? How might this singular moment of destabilizing truth, of creating an alternative space in order to make oneself useful, functioning, and able again, affect our understanding of the possibilities inherent in psychically negotiating an event such as internment? How might the war cause this character's desire for the reparation of a past, or for some semblance of an "unquestioned" belief system before the time of barbed wires, desert heat, and guard posts? Why must we consider this everyday and quotidian act of denial as a crucial space for understanding redress and reparation, in excess of their limited representations in mainstream U.S. discourses?

Indeed, in the wake of traumatic geopolitical violence, political and economic "reparations" have been linked to emergent demands for acknowledgement and financial redress. "Reparations"—for American slavery, for the Holocaust, for Japanese internment

camps during the Second World War, for human rights abuses during the Marcos regime, for South African Apartheid—have been placed at the doorsteps of state governments in order to usher in a "new beginning" for the nations and communities affected. As the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission resolutely states, personal reparation arguably leads to national reparation. Within cultural studies, critics, artists, and intellectuals have produced work that seeks to "repair" the place of traditionally elided persons (feminists, queers, people of color, the disabled, to name a few) within contemporary political discourse, cultural memory, and intellectual history. With the advent of HIV/AIDS in the United States, bodily reparation (literally the need to heal) and its failure have been the concern of multiply placed narratives and performance practices about the disease, heightened by dying family, friends, and community members catastrophically ignored by the nation state. Within the field of psychoanalysis, which is also one of the key frameworks for this project, Melanie Klein defines making reparation as an act that "includes the variety of processes by which the ego feels it undoes harm done in phantasy, restores, preserves, and revives objects. The importance of this tendency, bound up as it is with feelings of guilt, also lies in the major contribution it makes to all sublimations, and in this way to mental health" (*Love, Guilt, and Reparation* 48). Succinctly reading Klein's work, R.D. Hinshelwood adds that reparation involves "the sublimation of guilt for constructive action" or, more positively, requires the understanding that within "the possibility of retrieving the disaster remains a hope […] It is the confidence for optimism after all" (*Dictionary of Kleinian Thought* 148).

Yet the dominant meaning of reparation has often been linked to financial forms of compensation. In *Making Whole What Has Been Smashed*, John Torpey cites Karl Jaspers's work on *The Question of German Guilt* in order to map out the dualistic meanings of "reparation", meanings that have then undergone significant changes after the Holocaust. Torpey notes that reparation initially meant 1) a general way to eliminate distress for a past atrocity by providing immediate material necessities to the nations affected by German invasion and 2) an admittance of "guilt" and personal responsibility that must coincide with the provision of material compensation. He then goes on to differentiate between "reparation" as a singular term, which means the restoration of the "status quo", or "a restoration before the states of affairs occurred" (44), and the plural form, which "has come to be used with almost synonymously with compensation—that is, with money transfers of relatively direct kind. One *makes* reparation, in short but one *pays* reparations" (45). The singular term for reparation is thus open to more activities of redress, outside of monetary and material compensation. With the ever expanding atrocities enacted upon ethno-racially marginal populations within a transnational framework, however, and especially with the introduction of the United Nation's "Basic Principles and Guidelines on the Right to Remedy and Reparation for Victims of Violations of International Human Rights and Humanitarian Law," reparations, the plural version, has been the most often cited form of the term. Torpey suggests that, "Despite (or possibly because of) the fact that the plural version of the term *reparations* now largely means one thing—money—it has become the central idea structuring various campaigns around the world for addressing various wrongs" (47). Because of the numerous violent atrocities spread across the globe, ranging from the Nazis' wartime

actions during WWII, to black oppression in the United States through slavery and Jim Crow laws, to Apartheid in South Africa, financial reparations have become the dominant mode for seeking redress for past atrocities.

Assuming that reparation has often been a method for surviving and living against elision, for asserting a presence deserving of recognition, or for coping with insurmountable losses, what might the potential for an expansion of reparation's meanings and enactments hold for us? That is, what other forms could reparation take outside of the juridical, the monetary, and the symbolic? What critical interventions, historical events, and cultural archives serve as rich places to parse out the multiple manifestations of reparation? Are these definitions exclusive; when do they overlap? When does a particular manifestation of reparation fail? When does it succeed? What are the ethics of reparation? Why is reparation even needed? What would an act of reparation look like and what would such an act be capable of doing? That is, borrowing from J.L. Austin, what is the performativity of reparation? How is reparation related to atonement? As cultural studies critics continually work towards and wish for an "undoing" of the many injuries committed in our midst, what could a deepened notion of "reparation" as a hermeneutics do to our critical projects and their political possibilities?

Certainly, reparation and redress could possess varying meanings. Examining what redress means for African Americans during slavery, Saidiya Hartman notes that reparation and redress index an impossible event, one which is deeply tied to the larger systems of oppression that black Americans faced as slaves: "The limited means of redress available to the enslaved cannot compensate for the enormity of this loss; instead, redress is itself an articulation of loss and a longing for remedy and reparation. It is

impossible to fully redress this pained condition without the occurrence of an event of epic and revolutionary proportions—the abolition of slavery, the destruction of a racist social order, and the actualization of equality" (77). For Hartman, the abuse perpetrated on slaves' bodies affected the cultural production of this community during and after The Civil War. This highlights the importance of "practice" to producing alternative spaces where the most oppressed and the most dehumanized find possibilities to live and survive: "The importance of the concept of practice is that it enables us to recognize the agency of the dominated and the limited and transient nature of agency. The key features of practice central to this examination of the agency of the enslaved are the non-autonomy of the field of action; provisional ways of operating within the dominant space; local, multiple, and dispersed sites of resistance that have not been codified or integrated; and the nonautonomy and pained construction of the slave person" (61). Slaves viewed redress not through its finality, for hope does not necessarily belong there. They created redress through their rich performance and practices as a community. They circulated redress as a way of alleviating their current conditions of existence.

It is through this definition of reparation and redress, as a performance "practice" and an "act" that has a wide range of meanings, rather than only a demand for monetary compensation, that this theoretical project anchors its analysis. *Reparative Acts: Redress and the Politics of Queer Undoing in Contemporary Asian/America* examines recent transnational cultural production from Asian America, the Philippines, and Korea. Studying victims' testimonies, government policies around HIV/AIDS funding, Asian American performance pieces, international film movements, and literary works such as *The Woman Warrior*, *Dogeaters*, and *DICTEE*, this dissertation maps out reparation's

multiple iterations in order to think beyond the monetary and the juridical—and into new ways of understanding calls for redress. Like Hartman, I stress "act" in this project because, as the various cultural sites being examined will exemplify, the calls for reparation within these works, whether psychic, symbolic, monetary, or somatic, re-imagine not an "end", not a "finality" to atonement, but a process of constant negotiation with and pursuit of a more ethical and humane world.

These works ultimately highlight that reparation is a term laden with multivalent cultural significance. This project then examines these multiple valences. If reparation's most basic definition is an act that mends, repairs, and restores a loss, rupture, or break, in what other complex ways has reparation been defined and enacted? I am interested in tracing the ways in which reparation's variegated vicissitudes open contemporary postcolonial, queer, and feminist discourses up onto a new terrain, one that produces new subjects and performance practices that are constituted by and constitute the "reparative acts" in their multiple configurations.

Apart from studying the tensions present in reparation's competing meanings, I also argue that queerness—as lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender identity, camped performativity, non-heterosexual forms of affinity—expands what forms of undoing constitute reparative acts *alongside* and not only centered on the juridical, symbolic, and monetary. I assert that queerness's potential to destabilize and challenge dominant ways of understanding identity formation also makes it a crucial space for examining acts that express militant demands for compensation and retribution. Judith Butler suggests that "If the term 'queer' is to be a site of collective contestation, the point of departure for a set of historical reflections and futural imaginings, it will have to remain that which is, in

the present, never fully owned, but always and only redeployed, twisted, queered from a prior usage and in the direction of expanding political purposes" (*Bodies That Matter* 230). If we are to believe that a reparative practice is not only invested in the success of an action but also the process one undergoes to seek it, the *doing* of reparation and not only its result, then the deployment of queerness in spaces that explicitly imagine new possibilities for social transformation is a crucial performance. It is with the expansion and interrogation of reparative acts in their many forms that the chapters below seek to make their contribution.

Chapter Sketches

Chapter 1, "Melancholic Maladies: Paranoid Ethics, Reparative Envy, and Asian American Critique" is concerned with reparation as both a reading practice and a psychoanalytic lens. It emphasizes the ways in which marginalized subjects work through the forms of oppression around them, and enact performances that do not only mourn the loss of, but add meaning to whiteness, heterosexuality, or normativity. Because of the seemingly continuous violence experienced by marginalized individuals, cultural critics have deployed psychoanalytic terms that speak to these oppressions. Melancholia (in Freudian terms, unending mourning) and its relationship to loss (of citizenship, of masculinity, of whiteness, of a body without HIV or AIDS) has clearly been picked up as the seminal frame to understand identity's multiple modalities.

If Freudian melancholia is used as a hermeneutic, what are the politics of such a move? Can melancholia's deployment also coincide with what Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick defines as "strong theory", or theory that breeds certain paranoid and totalizing ways of

reading? Sedgwick writes that great losses occur when paranoid forms of inquiry become "coextensive" with criticism rather than being a "cognitive/affective" possibility out of many (*Touching Feeling* 126). Sedgwick suggests that critical inquiry is paranoid when: it is anticipatory, reflexive, and mimetic in nature, it is reliant on negative affects, and it has constant faith on what exposure can do. Paranoid theory makes claims to knowledge so totalizing that other possibilities for creative exploration are elided. Paranoid theoretical inquiry can perform tautological thinking without knowing it, since it "knows some things well, and others poorly" (130).

Sedgwick's critique of paranoid critical lenses will help clarify melancholia's relationship to paranoid reading practices. Critiquing Freudian melancholia's deployment, embodied through the term *Racial Melancholia*, this chapter instead offers *Reparation* as an alternative theoretical site for exploring identity formation. I would argue that as a "structure of feeling" and as a way of reading marginalized subjectivity, Klein's notion of reparation has always been oriented differently than Freudian melancholia, since it does not necessarily depend on a pathologizing of otherness, or on failure to mourn a lost loved object such as "American citizenship" fully. Rather, reparation entails a process wherein the persecutory objects which individuals seek to destroy co-exists with the good objects they want to nurture, requiring creativeness that synthesizes guilt into an assumption of existing hope. This creativity is also what attracts Sedgwick to reparative performances such as camp that, among other things, possess "the prodigal production of alternative historiographies; the 'over' attachment to fragmentary, marginal, waste or leftover products; the rich highly interruptive affective variety" and "disorienting juxtapositions of present with past" (150). In other words, reparation, unlike

melancholia, does not just involve pining for the lost object but requires constructive creative action around emotions of loss, mourning, depression, and abjection.

These reparative acts affirm just how crucial racialized, queer, and female identity is to the very production of "good enough" selves rather than the "fully assimilated" ones cultural critics insist on in a discourse of melancholia. After moving through and critiquing melancholic readings of Maxine Hong Kingston's *The Woman Warrior,* I then turn to R. Zamora Linmark's *Rolling the R's* in order to suggest that other affective lenses, such as a re-worked notion of Kleinian envy, can change the politics of reading assimilationary processes. Arguing for the ways in which envy—the need to spoil the exemplarity of the loved object—can also be a reparative psychoanalytic frame, I suggest that assimilation does not always have to be read around anxieties of failure and mimicry. Assimilation can also be read as a process of contestation, playfulness, and queer performativity.

Chapter 2, "Undoing Martial Law Manila: Queer Diasporas and the Marcos Regime," rethinks the relationship between queer representation in the Philippines and calls to undo the Marcos regime's transformation of Martial Law Manila. In this chapter, I suggest that while the Marcos period marks one of the most restrictive local governments in the country, it also encouraged some of the most productive work by artists and intellectuals around queer identity. Examining New Cinema, an artistic movement that comprises Philippine Cinema's "third golden age," dating from the 1970's to the early 1990's, I map out the ways in which a particular representation of queerness becomes an essential element in destabilizing, critiquing, and threatening the Marcos government. By examining Ishmael Bernal's *Manila By Night* and Marilou Diaz Abaya's

Baby Tsina, I will suggest that the directors of these films cull dominant melodramatic narratives about love, intimacy, and queerness in order to present a veiled but effective critique of the regime's policies If, as Rey Chow suggests, that the affect of fascism in filmic representation is that of love, I note how love then gets deployed and augmented in these films in order to further interrogate the oppression existent in the Philippines during the Marcos presidency.

The final critical move in this chapter notes that traces of queerness in New Cinema also circulate in diasporic literature about Martial Law Manila, such as Jessica Hagedorn's *Dogeaters*. Speaking of the potentiality of diaspora, Paul Gilroy notes that it "disrupts the fundamental power of territory to determine identity by breaking the simple sequence of explanatory links between place, location, and consciousness. It destroys the naïve convocation of common memory as the basis of particularity in a similar fashion by drawing attention to the contingent political dynamics of commemoration" (123). Hagedorn mines the richness of diaspora by embodying the intertextual and transnational production of queerness used to critique the Marcos regime across multiple spaces and times. Ironically, the majority of the criticism around the novel has focused specifically on Jessica Hagedorn's status as an exilic writer, and on what has been suggested as her "pandering" to an American readership through her constant circulation of exoticized Filipino subjects and Hollywood cinematic allusions. On the other hand, putting pressure on the term diaspora in the ways that Gilroy defines it, I recuperate *Dogeaters* to suggest that Hagedorn maps the presence of diaspora through the narratives of New Cinema around queerness. The connections she maps out, between local New Cinema and her work allows us to recognize the ways in which a militant form of queerness travels across

geo-political realms. The production of queerness in New Cinema films and in *Dogeaters* encourages critics to see the intimacies between diasporic Filipinos, beyond temporal and geographic limitations.

If, in Chapter 1, I focus on psychoanalytic forms of reparation and its relationship to melancholia, and, in Chapter 2, I examine the ways in which modalities of queerness have been deployed to undo the many policies that have affected Manila and its populace during the Marcos regime, Chapter 3, "Periperformative Acts and the Undoing of Victimhood" studies the relationship of limited forms of subjectivity to calls for reparation, either because of systemic abuse such as rape, or because of erased cultural memory through colonialism. The assumption behind juridical reparation is that a victim's testimony should usher in other forms of reparation: economic reparation (in the form of financial compensation), personal reparation (in terms of psychic atonement), and national reparation (to produce a more unified nation state through its apologetic posturing). A victim's testimony is taken as illocutionary and perlocutionary performatives, acts that do something by the virtue of the utterance and acts that do something as an effect of the utterance. On the other hand, as this chapter suggests, what this notion of political reparation misses are the ways in which trauma and psychic suffering haunt the limited constraints of both the illocutionary and perlocutionary. That is, trauma cannot always be alleviated by the performative utterance. More nearly, literal discussions of trauma can do violence to both the "victim" and "aggressor", since articulation might produce the assumption of forgetting or moving "past" what has been experienced—a forced movement motivated by the nation-state's need to portray or create the event as being "the past.

Yet this chapter focuses on writers and directors who re-imagine testimony differently in order to examine contradictory ways of making personal and national reparation. By studying the figure of the "comfort woman" in a film about "comfort gays" (*Markova, Comfort Gay*), and the multiple subjectivities present in a work that attempts to re-member Korean diasporic history (*DICTEE)*, this chapter rethinks what a deferral of testimony, or a literal destabilizing of both witnessing and reporting of violence can do to economic, psychic, and juridical forms of reparation on a personal and national level. Again, I am interested in thinking of the ways that delay, rather than immediate articulation, becomes an important counter-narrative around a traumatic event.

I am inclined to see reparation in these novels through what Sedgwick calls the "periperfomative" utterance, an act which disinterpellates the performative scene of testimony by poisoning its very stability. Discussing the marriage proscenium in Victorian literature, Sedgwick writes of the "potential of periperformative refusals, fractures, warpings, of the mobile proscenium of marital witness" (73). What then of the periperformative's potential to "warp" testimony's assumed power in making reparation after a traumatic event? Sedgwick's work on the periperformative utterance has not been used to analyze "catastrophic" moments that produce limited forms of witnessing, speech, and locution. To intervene, this chapter shifts Sedgwick's project beyond the marriage proscenium in order to understand its potential when applied to literature and film that rethinks the meanings of victimhood.

Chapter 4, "Repairing the Body, Repairing a Community: Asian American Performance in the Specter of HIV/AIDS," argues for the importance of a particular Asian American play and the prevention practices of the Asian and Pacific Islander

Coalition on HIV/AIDS, an HIV/AIDS organization in New York City, when thinking about discourses around HIV/AIDS subjectivity and ethnic identity. In *Melancholia and Moralism*, Douglas Crimp asks a difficult question, one which still haunts those who "survived" and continue to "live with" memories of dying loved ones during the "advent" of HIV/AIDS in the 80's and early 90's: "How are we to dissociate our narcissistic satisfactions in being alive from our fight to stay alive? And, insofar as we identify with those who have died, how can our being alive escape the guilt of having survived" (138)? Rather than read this feeling as producing a melancholic disavowal of loss and the tensions around the desire to "move on", as Crimp suggests, I want to think about how activist performances by queers of color around the guilty, living, racialized HIV positive body become a useful psychic process and method that catalyzes new ways of re-thinking HIV/AIDS within a politically constricting environment.

In 2003, the CDC and NIH changed prevention funding and policy to only focus specifically on those at "high risk" for HIV and their positive partners. With this change, more and more money is being re-routed to these "populations", thus eliminating similar funding for community based organization that reach out to ethnic minorities, adolescents, and women about HIV/AIDS awareness as they also discuss issues of sexuality, domestic violence, abuse, and other significant issues that always already influence "safer sex practice". At a moment of intense elision of the various specificities of HIV positive and AIDS status subjectivity, I suggest that we return to these performance, to understand the ways in which the body's failure to repair itself is then consistently performed aesthetically through bodies that demonstrate the intersectionality of HIV/AIDS incurability and the impossibility of "othered" assimilation.

Through a close examination of Chay Yew's *A Language of Their Own*, and the outreach and prevention work of the Asian and Pacific Islander Coalition on HIV/AIDS (APICHA), I argue that the production of this intersectionality demonstrates the need to resist the removal of performance practices from the realm of public policy—that which allows a "scientificity" to dictate the changes in both prevention and intervention strategies in the first place. This removal denies the key role that activist theater has always had in influencing policy around, let alone understanding of, the various issues that affect HIV/AIDS such as sexuality, race, gender, and class.

Rather than represent the body as a somatic marker for melancholic longing, or as an index for the pining inherent in wanting a "repaired" self without HIV/AIDS, Yew re-shifts the discourses of loss by foregrounding the intersection of the "ill" and the "unassimilated", thereby also touching upon the demand for communal "reparation" in the Kleinian sense, as a broader community's psychic sublimation of guilt for constructive action. With the increase of HIV cases in the United States post-2000 onwards, how might we "re-sublimate guilt" again for constructive action—around HIV prevention and intervention—and thus learn from the rich archive of activism around HIV/AIDS provided by queers of color? I argue that it is precisely through a re-introduction of the crucial role that minority performance has always had in the discussion of sexuality—alongside and not separate from public policy—that we arrive at a more in-depth and effective rumination on the pointed issues that must color HIV/AIDS strategy, policy, and funding.

Chapter 1

Melancholic Maladies: Paranoid Ethics, Reparative Envy, and Asian American Critique

Out of the blackest part of my soul, across the zebra striping of my mind, surges this desire to be suddenly white.

(Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin White Masks*)

Amidst seemingly unending violence and strife, critics, writers, artists, and intellectuals have gestured to various psychoanalytic concepts in order to examine, understand, and chart oppression's multiple iterations. Deploying psychoanalysis and stretching its limits, critics have thought about the ways in which particular affects are produced by the social and about the quotidian means abject individuals feel through and survive the everyday. Amongst a plethora of possible lenses, Freudian melancholia and its relationship to loss (of citizenship, of masculinity, of whiteness, of a body without HIV or AIDS) has become a privileged site for understanding these often ambivalent processes.[1] Given our difficult times, Freudian melancholia has tangible currency. This chapter will begin by tracing melancholia's re-articulation in Asian American Studies. Much of the field's most generative thinkers have put melancholia to good use, suggesting that Asian American experiences demand a reconfiguration of melancholia's constrained definitions. As I trace melancholia's articulation, I will also examine its

[1] Some examples melancholia's usage in contemporary critical thought and political theory are Paul Gilroy's *Postcolonial Melancholia*, Douglas Crimp's *Melancholia and Moralism*, Judith Butler's *The Psychic Life of Power*, Anne Cheng's *The Melancholy of Race: Psychoanalysis, Assimilation, and Hidden Grief*, and collection from David Eng and David Kazanjian's *Loss: The Politics of Mourning*.

political and theoretical limitations. I study the imaginative blindspots exhibited when this constant state of mourning is felt and explicated. Moving through other forms of affect, such as envy, love, hate, and, what will be the larger focus of this chapter and the dissertation as whole, Kleinian reparation, I will provide alternatives to melancholia, suggesting that these "alongside" affects are equally attentive to the ways in which Asian Americans, both within and outside of the United States, navigate their world.

Sigmund Freud writes that mourning is a "reaction to the loss of a loved person, or to the loss of some abstraction which has taken the place of one, such as one's country, liberty, and ideal, and so on" (245). He makes clear, however, that this reaction should be temporary, since individuals pining the lost object inevitably find a replacement for what is lost. What is yearned gradually dissipates; something else takes its place. Melancholia is connected to but distinct from mourning. Melancholic individuals cannot fully comprehend what they've lost for they have introjected this entity. It is inside of them. It has become them[2]. David Eng and Sinhee Han interpret this incommensurate and "interminable grief" to be "the result of the melancholic's inability to resolve the various conflicts and ambivalences that the loss of the loved object or ideal effect. That is, the melancholic cannot 'get over' this loss, cannot work out this loss in order to invest in new

[2] I am deploying introjection here through J. Laplanche and J.B. Pontalis's definition of the term. In *The Language of Psychoanalysis*, they suggest that introjection is a processs which is revealed through pyschoanalytic investigation, whereby "in phantasy, the subject transposes objects and their inherent qualities from the 'outside' to the inside of himself. Introjection is close in meaning to incorporation, which indeed provides for its bodily model, but it does not necessarily imply and reference to the body's real boundaries (introjections into the egom into the ego-ideal, etc.). It is closely akin to identification" (229). Through this definition, we see the importance of the processes that involve both the identification with and the taking in of the loved object within a melancholic state. This definition also highlights how Freud's 1916 essay begins charting a similar object relations model to those forwarded by Sandor Ferenczi, Melanie Klein, Christopher Bollas, and many others in British psychoanalytic thought.

objects" (345). In an astute reconfiguration of Freud's work, Eng and Han further propose that paying responsible attention to mourning must simultaneously link it to marginalized persons' conditions of existence, as a depathologized "structure of feeling"[3] exacerbated by forced or unforced immigration, assimilation, and integration within the U.S. nation state. What they call *racial melancholia* is an affective state caused by material inequity. Melancholia is effected by the "failures" of various individuals to be subsumed into U.S. hegemony. Using Asian Americans as a concrete example, they suggest that the 'model minority myth', language disparities, displacement from literal homeland, loss of cultural space, laws which encourage exclusion/inclusion, all tie in with the inability to incorporate into ideals of 'American whiteness'.

Although Eng and Han rightfully examine systemic injury and its profound effects on Asian Americans, their dialogue underscores just how often *racial melancholia* is theorized *within* the United States, encountered by subjects who do not line up with U.S. based identitarian models. What of individuals who experience iterations of

---

[3] "Structure of feeling" derives from Raymond Williams. In an essay of the same title included in *Marxism and Literature*, Williams highlights the ways in which "feeling" is separate from "ideology" or "world view." Feelings are "concerned with meanings and values as they are actively lived and felt, and the relations between these and formal or systematic beliefs are in practice variable (including historically variable), over a range of formal assent with private dissent to the nuanced interaction between selected and interpreted beliefs and acted and justified experiences" (132). Williams also notes that this process is often hierarchized, and that these modes of affective attachment and processing are also codified, especially when they have been "built into institutions and formations" (132). Towards the end of the essay, as he notes the differences of feeling present in the defeated Puritans and the restored Court in England between 1660-1690, he also highlights the "complex relation of differentiated structures of feeling to the differentiated classes (134). As a methodology, "Structure of feeling" derives from "attempts to understand such elements and their connections in a generation or period" (134). In this sense, we see how the work that contemporary Asian American studies critics have produced explicate the specificities of feeling in this sense, as a way of organizing the world for those oppressed by the U.S., and as a way of contesting these institutionalized forms of oppression.

"American whiteness" that are not automatically tethered to U.S. based assimilation and integration? The move in Asian American studies to think about diasporic formations, to argue for the transnationalizing of "Asian" and "American" as umbrella terms, and the desire to underscore the U.S. nation's own disavowed history of colonization and empire building outside of its borders, demand reading practices that move beyond limited U.S. identity categories, or even away from the U.S. as a geographic gravitational point. Compulsory "whiteness" *also* certainly occurs under the multiple variations of American colonialisms (in countries like the Philippines, which I will consider in my second chapter), and even in arguably interstitial spaces such as Hawaii (a state both within and outside of the U.S. national imaginary). A more attentive reading practice then demands theoretical approaches able to imagine larger networks of bodies and affect not necessarily tied to melancholic immigration. Turning to Melanie Klein's notion of envy in the second section of this chapter, I will consider these concerns in light of R. Zamora Linmark's *Rolling the R's*, a queer Filipino Hawaiian text which compels us to think beyond the melancholic lens.

Mapping *racial melancholia* onto her interpretation of Maxine Hong Kingston's *The Woman Warrior*, the critic Anne Anlin Cheng similarly explores how the Asian American subject's longing to assimilate often produces forms of loss, mourning, and melancholia. Yet she takes a different approach from Eng and Han, suggesting that:

> Cultural assimilation may thus be said to be a form of haunting, whereby the dream of the socially immaculate body simultaneously introjects itself and provokes a host of hypochondriacal responses. The double malady of melancholia for the racial-ethnic subject is the condition of having to incorporate and encrypt

> both an impossible ideal and a denigrated self. More than any other identificatory disorders, racial melancholia speaks of a dream of perfection (72).

Melancholia produces a desire to cure. That is, the "dream of perfection" is conflated with the desire for "whiteness" or American hegemony, a form of pining that often becomes an impossible nightmare. Quite different from Eng and Han's interpretation of Freud, this form of melancholia also entails a hypochondriacal response particularly when the Asian American wants to assimilate into "whiteness" and inevitably fails to do so. If, as Freud writes, melancholia stems from the lost object's introjection, an ideation's literal incorporation, Cheng further heightens its effects by reading the subject's need to cleanse herself of the racialized body which marks her, which jettisons her outside of American racial normativity. This is a "disidentificatory disorder", one which produces the "doubly malady" of otherness

Is it possible that this interpretation of the novel maintains the seemingly dominant "whiteness" it seeks to question, by assuming that it is a stabilized concept, that it can only be mimicked by the character and never changed nor augmented? What is the politics of hypochondria, and how does it pathologize the Asian American subject, given that Eng and Han have suggested that racial melancholia precisely moves away from pathological understandings of loss? Is "whiteness" a stable concept anyway, when one can trace how Kingston's narrator continually subverts this term as she observes other minorities in the novel, and as she creates points of negotiation beyond "white American authority"? How can the melancholic framework limit the conditions of possibility for Asian Americans in *The Woman Warrior*? Can the move to hypochondria be symptomatic of paranoid subjectivity and paranoid ways of reading?

Paranoid critical lenses have indeed occupied debates about certain strands of Marxist and Critical Theory. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick suggests that great loss occurs when paranoid forms of inquiry become "coextensive" with criticism rather than being one "cognitive/affective" possibility out of many (126). Sedgwick suggests that any critical inquiry is paranoid when: it is anticipatory, reflexive, and mimetic in nature, it is reliant on negative affects, and it has constant faith on what exposure can do. Paranoid theory makes claim to knowledge that can be totalizing since other possibilities for creative exploration are blocked, halted, or short-circuited. Paranoid theoretical inquiry relies on "strong theory", theory that often performs tautological thinking without knowing it, since it "knows some things well, and others poorly" (130). What might we learn from Sedgwick's intervention into the limited/limiting frameworks we have come to deploy at times of crisis? I suggest that certain iterations of melancholia in Asian American studies bear the characteristics of "strong theory," or theory that proliferates certain paranoid and totalizing ways of reading critically. In the next section, interrogating Cheng's reading of melancholia further, I question how a specific use of racial melancholia, particularly its hyper-presence in readings of marginalized subjectivity, stages an anticipatory need to see "whiteness" as the ultimate desire for the melancholic subject who performs as "white American authority," when other possibilities, with a different politics, exist.

Melancholic Hypochondria in The Woman Warrior

Anne Cheng's "A Fable of Exquisite Corpses" focuses on *The Woman Warrior's* "Bathroom Scene." This well-known episode is punctuated by a violent confrontation

between the narrator and another Chinese girl, occurring in their elementary school lavatory. Within a supposedly antiseptic space, the former abuses her classmate, verbally and physically exerting hostile force through her gaze, her jabs, and her utterances:

> "You're going to talk," I said, my voice steady and normal, as it is when talking to the familiar, the weak, and the small. "I am going to make you talk you sissy girl." She stopped backing away and stood fixed. I looked close to her face so I could hate it up close. She wore black bangs, and her cheeks were baby soft. I thought I could put my thumb on her nose and push it bonelessly in. (176)

The narrator repeatedly demands that her counterpart articulate any words, in Chinese or in English. She closely observes the Chinese child's physical characteristics, which are in a sense properties she hates about herself. Shame serves as a catalyst for her actions, as her self-loathing as a racial marked subject causes her to tease out her counterpart's characteristics. Those traits that arguably cause the protagonist to hate her victim with such passion are the same properties she continually hates about herself (i.e. black bangs, weak fingers, and fragile voice).

The bathroom scene manifests the melancholic hypochondriac because it ritualizes a very specific relational process of identification with "whiteness" and dis-identification with the girl being accosted. This wanting must then be manifested and enacted through *abuse*: "Abusing the other girl allows for a self-identification with whiteness/American pedagogic authority ('the white thumbprint of the self'), which serves to *mask even as it exposes* a racial identification (by blood) between the girls" (Cheng 78). Aside from the very anticipatory and dual movement this statement must rely on, "the simultaneous masking/unmasking of racial identification", what also

seems to complicate this argument are the ways in which "failed" (i.e. racialized) bodies get produced through abuse. Thus, even at the very moment a bad object is projected outward for destruction, the "aggressor's" actual materiality and physicality put her into an oscillating cycle that makes this process impossible to complete. This is similar to the racial other thinking: "I can become white by feeling and exerting dominance towards someone like me. But hey, she is like me!" What we see here is a perpetual feedback of ingestion and projection doomed to failure.

Cheng further writes, "This peculiar form of imitation enacts a vicious, hypochondriacal circle of identification and disidentification: the subject manages the fear of her own bodily 'failures' by asserting an identification with power and health, an identification whose fundamental incommensurability has made the subject abject in the first place" (78). That is, the protagonist's need to assume the prevailing position must simultaneously entail projection of a sick racialized self outside of her, a move traumatic in its very nature since abjection not only stems from racial subjection but is located in her very hypochondriacal act. Abjection is simultaneously produced, in this instance, through the subject's painful need to cure herself, or to obsess about her unhealthy body. Jacques Lacan deftly points out that the *imago*'s function is to help "establish a relationship between an organism and its reality" (*Ecrits* 97). The *imago* here places the subject in a double bind, where her idealization and its relationship to real conditions of existence loop into a disturbingly trapped binary that persistently traumatizes her as *victim* to the state and as *aggressor* to the girl before her. The subject is placed in a cyclical movement between victim and aggressor that she cannot get away from.

I would argue that what obscures and challenges the seemingly stable desire for "whiteness," a desire enacted through an authoritative form of abuse, precedes the barrage of hostile jabs and touches. Before she fully accosts the Chinese girl, the narrator "walked around her, looked her up and down the way *the Mexican and the Negro girls* did when they fought, so tough" (176). *The speaker's performance of authority in the restroom mimics the racially marked*. If this scene epitomizes the desire for "whiteness" and the need for an authoritative exploiting of another Asian American in order to enact this desire, what theoretical and political possibilities are offered through the protagonist's explicit articulation that she is performing to idealize other racial minorities and their apparent "toughness"? Not as "whiteness" and its attributes of purity and authority but as something else.

I suggest that this moment of abuse cannot be easily or even automatically marked as a performance of "whiteness." Yes, it is definitely still possible to encase this racial hostility within a reading of assimilationary motives, so that even black and Mexican characters instill violence on each other and those around them in order to emulate *the* ultimate oppressor, those that exhibit racial privilege. Yet Kingston provides a needed intervention in this regard. Kingston highlights the ways in which spaces of affinity exists between subjects of different racial categories. These affinities in many ways destabilize the dominant understandings of both who is the oppressor and who is the victim in these narratives. Remembering another moment in school, she writes:

> I liked the Negro students (Black Ghosts) best because they talked to me as if I were a daring talker too. One of the Negro girls had her mother coil braids over her ears Shanghai-style like mine; we were Shanghai twins except that she was

> covered with black like my paintings. Some Negro kids walked me to school and home, protecting me from the Japanese kids, who hit me and chased me and stuck gum in my ears. The Japanese kids were noisy and tough. They appeared one day in kindergarten, released from concentration camp, which was a tic-tac-toe mark, like barbed wire on the map. (166)

Kingston sees her black classmates as more than just playmates and school friends. They play a performative function in helping her deal with feelings of racial inadequacy. She treats the black students at school as crucial sites for locating, mapping, being, and performing "daring", that which can reduce one's feelings of fragility. Moving away from Cheng's reading, or by positioning the politics of this framework quite differently, I would argue that the methods used by black and Mexican persons to coax the narrator into the becoming "daring talker" that she wants to become can be read as re-staged through the speaker's daring of the other Chinese girl to talk. That is, rather than merely reading the narrator's actions as abuse which then produce the "malady of otherness" through a failed pining for whiteness, I read is as a need to destabilize what is being pined for, what is being desired, and how racial identity is being performed. "Whiteness" is certainly a palpable presence in Kingston's work, through her turn to "white ghosts" that always already haunt the text. Yet I choose to read these events in the text, where forms of affinity and community get created through a negotiation between multiple subjectivities, as moments that seem to offer different possibilities for exploration. For indeed, how do other minorities function in a work such as Kingston's, or in any Asian American cultural space for that matter? This seems to me an important question that hasn't been fully explored in the field, and the time has come to do so. We must imagine

this narrator's world, as a girl in elementary school learning to negotiate her surroundings and contesting the ways that she has been marginalized in this space of learning. What is compelling about this narrator is that she has explored possibilities, and has thought about how to create a sense of belonging not necessarily tied to "whiteness," through her black and Mexican friends.

Returning to the passage, other Asian American students, such as Japanese classmates, are also considered to be tough for bullying the narrator. This highlights an aggressivity not always tethered to the performance of "whiteness." *Aggressor* is a signifier that oscillates between specific individuals and larger forms of state sponsored oppression, so that the Japanese American who taunts the little girl and holds sway over her life in elementary school is then oppressed in turn by the nation state that excluded him or her from participating in American society through the traumatic removal of Japanese Americans during WWII. What this points out is the often totalizing ways that differing subjects, bodies, and identities can be read and conflated into the one encapsulating identity *Asian American* or *white* without a questioning of this move. The Japanese classmates escape a mere reading of "whiteness" as they bully the speaker. At its core, the figure of the tough Japanese American in this passage—an interstitial entity that represents both a history of Japanese empire building abroad and Japanese subjugation within the U.S. nation state—complicates the very subjecthood that constitutes the Asian American person as Cheng defines it. The spaces of affiliation and re-affiliation escape the binary of "white" and "Asian American," and the tidy narratives around *victim* and *aggressor* that the narrator arguably performs through abuse are questioned. Kingston, as the critic Kandice Chuh would say, is "imagining otherwise", is

teasing out the linkages between diasporic subjects that necessarily affect that ways in which Asian American subjects are conceptualized and articulated in her writing.

Closely inspecting the previous passage, we also see that hair, another metonym often used for racial identity, figures strongly in the bathroom scene and in this passage. Kingston's narrator pulls the Chinese girl's hair in the bathroom to make it like hers, which she has grown longer. In the previous quotation, the black child has her mother mimic Kingston's hair. What if we were to read the protagonist's desire to pull the other Chinese person's hair as a desire for affinity and likeness that does not automatically have an assimilationist imperative around it? At the beginning of Kingston's novel, she mentions how her aunt, who is not named and who is forgotten by her family for having an adulterous relationship, uses her hair as a space for dissidence: "At the mirror my aunt combed individuality into her bob" (9). For the speaker, this aunt represented both dissent and its punishment, and the chapter "No Name Woman" can be read as a treatise on the narrator's affinity with this aunt, whom she alone "devotes pages paper to her" (16). Hair's appearance is a representational trope. Similar to how black and Mexican "daring" functions in the previous discussion, hair, as one of the key historical and representational tropes which produce racialized subjects, functions as a quotidian way for the narrator to construct a complicated form of racial affinity. It allows for different ways to read the speaker's act of *abuse* and its assumed ties to desired whiteness. It is possible to read the other Chinese girl's abuse not through the desire to destroy one's "failed" racialized body. That is, the reasons behind the "bathroom incident" and its violence do not necessarily evoke the trauma of assimilationary desires for dominance.

Melancholia is useful in tracing a genealogy of loss and pain. Yet there are other

ways of reckoning with the bathroom scene using Kingston's own complications. Other approaches might produce a different politics, might have us imagine other desires for the Chinese narrator, aside from the anticipatory, mimetic, and reflexive need to cure. That is, I am concerned with how hypochondria, as a failed process these characters undergo, also labels them—and more generally the abject Asian American—as continually paranoid themselves. Cheng writes that "hypochondria is not merely the staging of illness but the paradoxical staging of health in fear and anticipation of the haunting prospect of illness" (90). Claims such as these, and there are numerous similar ones in the chapter, make one wonder about the oscillating anticipatory modes that seem to trap this narrator within illness and pathology. There are other ways to read her. The moments that precede the "bathroom scene" and surround it introduce new ways of approaching the abusive moment, ones that are equally complex. Yet they differ from the tone of the hypochondriacal reading—since these do not necessarily possess the imperative and anxiety of *failure to* assimilate but rather move towards the *possibility of* contestation. What I have tried to do here is move away from melancholia as a failed "malady of otherness." Cheng's reading hinges on a sense of self-pathologizing for the abject person, and although this offers theoretical possibilities, it also must produce an uncomfortable conflation of traumatic loss with illness. By arguing that the speaker wants to create a space of affinity through her reading of other minorities, ones not always tethered to "whiteness," we produce a subject who possibly wants to re-create a protective space for herself and her kin.

As I have been mapping out, I am more inclined to see criticism in the ways that Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick has, to think about critical inquiry that occupies positions that

can co-exist rather than forecloses exploratory potentials. This ethical call also requires re-doing the affective routes we have been accustomed to. Indeed, aside from the discursive elements that lend to and discipline its making, the subject is also created affectively. In his preface to Delueze and Guattari's *Anti Oedipus*, Michel Foucault writes, "Do not think that one has to be sad in order to be militant, even though the thing one is fighting is abominable" (X). I am drawn to the notion that the affect and affectation of, and the emotion of militancy aren't always dependent upon forms of sadness, or mourning, or loss. Racial melancholia as it has been theorized must often limit itself epistemologically, and does not approach the multiplicities present in a performance of citizenship such as the one Kingston's narrator practices. Is it possible to interpret this abusive scene not as a sign of self-hatred, what can be flat-footedly referred to as traces of "internalized racism" embodied through this self-deprecatory act? Christopher Bollas' concept of "Loving Hate", as discuss in *The Shadow of the Object*, is a useful intervention here. According to Bollas, when a subject hates an ideation or an object, what is assumed is that hatefulness is then followed by an attempt to destroy the object. This seems to be the logic that Cheng follows. The face that the narrator comes close to in order to "fully" hate in all its materiality and representative anxiety is that which needs to be inevitably destroyed with her jabs and touches. I pinch because I want to forget. That is, hatefulness of the object and destruction are assumed to have a necessary causal relationship.

Bollas counters this assumption however. He argues that hating and destruction are not necessarily linked. A seemingly hateful action in some cases must be read as the substitute for what is at its core an act of love: "When a person hates, is it always true to

say that he wishes to destroy? ... It is my view that in some case a person hates an object not in order to destroy it, but to do precisely the opposite: to conserve the object. Such hate is fundamentally nondestructive in intent. Although it may have destructive consequences, its aims may be to act out an unconscious form of love" (118). This reading of hate is stunning in light of the scene that we have just witnessed in Kingston's narrative. What Bollas' statement allows us to absorb are the multifaceted ways that love, as an unconscious affect, gets interpellated by the critic as hatefully destructive because of its negative consequences. Although the effects of various acts can be understood as "negative", the intent upon which these are based is nevertheless rooted in the desire to perform loving acts; it is thus "hate that is not the opposite but the substitute for love" (118). Love is part and parcel of what oftentimes are coded as hateful performances. What is more striking in Bollas' terms is that love for the object seeks *conservation* rather than *destruction*. I pinch because I love. I pinch in order to remember. Bollas allows us to read the narrator's actions toward the other Chinese girl not as embodying self-hate that projects and then destroys her raced self, but as seeking to preserve this aspect of her identity. What is projected through "hate" is that which the subject intends to *maintain and ultimately save*.

This conservation also seeks to mitigate the fear of elision. Bollas provides another route into processing this violent scene, one which contributes to what I have been intending to parse out. When one hates another object (and here object can also mean the person which the object is projected onto), this hate "is illusory, as the object is never assumed to be capable of genuine mutual action: even one of hating." Rather, "a person who hates with loving passion does not dread retaliation by the object; on the

contrary, he welcomes it. What he does is live in fear of indifference, not being noticed or seen by the other. Passionate hate is generated as an alternative to love, which is assumed to be unavailable" (118). That is, the act of hateful destruction is a performance which does not concern itself with the *effectiveness* of the act, or if indeed what is being projected will be destroyed, but rather is concerned with the "doing" of the action and the recognition elicited from those being acted upon. What underlies the performance of jabbing, pulling, and touching is the knowledge that the other girl will not and cannot hate back because of their intrinsic affinity. This knowledge of an inability to do so is hinged upon the desire for recognition, to be noticed by the girl as a *peer* with the same racial characteristics. Thus, it is precisely at the moment in which the narrator performs the demand that the other speak that she desires to be "noticed", to be recognized, to be acknowledged in her raced identity.

Envy in Rolling the R's

Christopher Bollas's research, and Object Relations psychoanalytic work in general, is deeply indebted to the work of Melanie Klein. Although conceivably all psychoanalytic writings are traceable "back" to Freudian epistemologies in some way, Kleinian psychonalaysis nonetheless departs from Freud's theories through a centering on object-relations theory rather than drive theory. Klein's work thinks in *positions* rather than developmental stages. It is then not surprising that Eve Kosofsky Segwick turns to Melanie Klein and Silvan Tomkins in "Paranoid and Reparative Reading." Sedgwick draws from psychoanalytic theory outside of Freud, arguing that Klein's notion of *positions* rather than *stages* makes it possible to reconsider and demonstrate other

theories around affect equally as generative. Before concluding this brief inquiry, Melanie Klein's notion of envy—slightly worked over and misread—will be used to demonstrate the theoretical possibilities associated with using reading practices outside of Freudian scripts, especially in thinking about the subject's desire to become, identify with, or disidentify with traces of U.S. hegemonic culture.

In "A Study of Envy and Gratitude" (1956), Melanie Klein defines envy as "the angry feeling that another person possesses and enjoys something desirable—the envious impulse being to take it away or *spoil* it" (211). If envy in common parlance is to want something that another has, Klein introduces another facet to this process. Envy entails the desire to *spoil the goodness* of that object with *bad parts of yourself*. In relation to the infant, Klein's envy involves the psychic splitting of the mother's breast into a good and bad breast. Envy for the good breast "not only aims at robbing in this way, but also at putting badness, primarily bad excrements and bad parts *of the self* into the mother—first of all into her breast—in order to spoil and destroy her; in the deepest sense this means destroying her creativeness" (213). R.D. Hinshelwood differentiates this form of attack on the good breast from other forms of attack occurring within the infantile psyche, stating that: "It is important to distinguish this phantasy of attacking, entering, and spoiling the good object *because it is good* from other forms of attack and hatred. It is not hatred towards a frustrating object which withholds what it has, nor is it the violence of feeling toward a rival that has occupied the good object for itself" (*A Dictionary of Kleinian Thought* 168). Moreover, the psychic splitting encountered because of non-excessive envy, "appears to be healthy: that is to say, without too much hatred" (*A Dictionary of Kleinian Thought* 171).

Drawing on Kleinian envy better to understand the movie *Single White Female*, Sianne Ngai writes that the villain Heddy's envious desire to mimic Allie demonstrates how "the good or ideal object is phantasmatically attacked because it *is* idealized and good—as if the real source of antagonism is less the object than the idealization itself" (162). That is, Heddy attacks Allie's very exemplarity, thus making her *subject to duplication*. Kleinian envy opens up new possibilities for thinking about idealization. The process of spoiling and the instrument of spoiling are important. Apart from being tethered to the paranoid-schizoid position, as Klein consistently states, and apart from being solely a paranoid defense, envy may operate as a resource of immense usefulness for the raced subject undergoing and working through the pleasures, desires, needs, and anxieties around her racialized position. More specifically, what do we learn when we move away from the melancholic reading of a process such as assimilation and instead utilize a re-worked concept of envy to think about this vexed imperative and process? I am drawn to Klein's definition of envy because it does not entail merely the wanting of the good object or the desire to have the properties of the good object. Rather, envy becomes an affect that allows us to conceive of a way for minoritarian subjects to contest their marginalization.

Interestingly enough, Eng, Shinhee Han, and Anne Cheng briefly gesture to Klein's concept of psychic splitting to theorize racial subjection. Amidst a sea of Freudian readings, Eng and Han use Klein's work to think of the infant's psychic splitting of good and bad breast as allegorical to the Asian American subject's splitting into racialized (bad)/non-racialized (good) subjectivity (360). Cheng also writes that, in the bathroom scene, the Asian American girl child enacts a split between a good object

(the good object being "whiteness" vis-à-vis a hegemonic culture which she envies) and a bad object (the racialized self). Taking Klein further, I would argue that her notion of envy allows us to perceive ways for the abject *self* to participate in the process of identification and disidentification. To clarify, the bad *self*—and in the case of Asian American persons their "raced" selves—are integral to the process of creating the idealized whole identity, the seeming product of a fully assimilated body. Rather than an object that the subject wishes to be rid of, her bad self actually becomes a way to muddle, problematize, and in a way spoil the desired good object of "whiteness." "Whiteness," both a position the individual wants to inhabit and a "thing" that she wants to become, is always already questioned, since it is never just that.

Possible objections exist. Some will argue that Kleinian envy comes from a more primary place in the infant, thus questioning the complex notions of agency, identification, and creativity around oppression that have just been laid out. Interestingly enough, Klein departs from play technique, her usual analytical mode, when exploring how envy works. Meira Likierman writes that, "at the time of formulating her thoughts on envy, Klein was immersed in work with adult patients rather than with child patients, deprived or otherwise" (178). Klein's envy was primarily based on adult interaction, and thus has been influenced by psychic mechanisms not necessarily tied to the infantile working through. Understandably, then, her theory has been challenged and criticized in psychoanalytic circles because it seems to forward complicated notions of agency in the infant. It "implies the infant's ability to employ abstract thinking which can designate nonmaterial qualities in differentiated others" (179). For the purposes of this project, envy, theorized in relationship to Klein's treatment of adults, provides a generative

beginning to pursuing alternative psychoanalytic and affective vocabularies around abjection and resistance.

Klein makes a distinct separation between envy and acts of reparation. Envy according to Klein mitigates reparation, since it hinders the infant's working through of fragments in order to mend a rupture or break. Klein defines making reparation as a psychic process in the infant seeking to atone for injuries—both real and in phantasy for which we remain unconsciously guilty as adults—towards a sustained seeking of pleasure. Reparation is also a very creative process, since the infant needs to synthesize what it wants to nurture and what it wants to destroy in order to make do of its world. Although Klein specifically demarcates notions of envy from acts of reparation, I will propose that envy can also be a reparative process. What marginalized identity demands from Klein is an understanding of envy as a creative, strategically deployed move that augments what has been idealized not necessarily to destroy it but to question its very exemplarity. Klein suggests that reparation is also the "variety of processes by which the ego feels it undoes harm done in phantasy, restores, preserves and revives objects" (48). If a reparative process is both creative and synthetic, and seeks to undo harm that has been done, then the ways in which I think about envy seem to line up with these characteristics. Reparation's creativeness seems to be what attracts Sedgwick to it. Towards the end of "Paranoid and Reparative Readings," she imagines what reparative performances could possibly look like. She finds such practices in camp that, among other things, possess "the prodigal production of alternative historiographies; the over attachment to fragmentary, marginal, waste or leftover products; the rich highly interruptive affective variety" and the "disorienting juxtapositions of present with past"

(*Touching Feeling* 150). I thus similarly end with camp in order to demonstrate how this re-worked theory of Kleinian envy might affect readings of assimilation within Asian American literature.

As a text that exemplifies the intersections among queerness, Asian American identity, Filipino American identity, Hawaiian identity, and postcolonial subjectivity, R. Zamora Linmark's *Rolling the R's* continually problematizes the assumed desire for "whiteness" and the various psychic processes around it. David Eng writes of Linmark's focusing on Hawaii's colonial status, and on the "ethnic hierarchies that divide the island's immigrant inhabitants" (225). Linmark's hybrid and fragmented writing, set in Hawaii, allows for a reconfiguration of affect outside of the U.S. nation state. It encourages readers to imagine what performances of identity can look like when done by those outside of immigrant subjectivity's limited forms, linked as these are to the constricted ways the nation state is viewed.

Imagining a version of Hawaii populated by queer adolescents who tease, taunt, and play with each other, Linmark inevitably creates an entire town that wants to be Farrah Fawcett: "Everybody in Kalihi wants to be 'Farrah.' The name itself sounds sultry and expensive. Who doesn't want to be the reigning queen of pin-up posters thumbtacked on every wall of the house?" (22). Yet ever so playfully, Linmark rethinks what "wanting" and "becoming" Farrah Fawcett, or Liza Minelli, or Matt Dillon, or any other American celebrity might entail. Characters in *Rolling the R's* do not faithfully mimic and embody those they adore with such intensity. Instead, they perform a camped out wild(er) version of stardom that has already been altered and augmented.

Orlando Domingo epitomizes this form of warped celebrity. Domingo is the quintessential Filipino campy queen. Like any good Kalihi citizen, he loves Farrah Fawcett. He follows every Charlie's Angels episode to mimic her gestures, outfits, hair, swish, and style. Orlando is not merely Farrah from time to time. He becomes Farrah Fawcett everywhere. He even refuses to be interpellated into his legal name, or "won't answer to his friends and classmates who call him Orling" (24). The name publicly marks this version of Farrah; the name and the mane do. He is addicted to the actor's mane, and decides to curl his hair to possess her beautiful gold locks. Unsurprisingly, the other high school queens register both envy and adoration:

> "Farrah, Farrah, what's the secret to your hair?" the Filipino Farrah wanna-be queens ask him. And all he says is, "Once a Farrah Flip always a Farrah Flip." Or, "A Flip is a Flip is a Flip." (34)

A hermeneutics dependent on racial melancholia might possibly interpret this moment as a literal desire for and participation in a specific version of "American whiteness." That is, Orlando's campy performance as sexy blonde bombshell can be read as a means to seek the full embodiment of whiteness culled from the screen. This is done precisely to become acculturated (i.e. assimilated) into the hegemonic identity valued by those fawning over its beauty. Yet an equally provocative reading imagines Orlando as producing a Farrah Fawcett that strategically includes queer Filipino-ness in the mix, through the many contradictory and generative ways that becoming queer and Filipino can be thought of or performed. Orlando is disidentifying with whiteness. José Esteban Muñoz suggests that disidentificatory practices are characterized by the need to not merely disavow the absence of the minoritarian subject whom notices its lack within a

particular cultural production. In fact they are not centered on disavowal at all. For Muñoz's, disidentification is a minoritarian survival tactic that destabilizes the very object that marks this absence in the first place such as "whiteness", or any other normative modalities coded as majoritarian. Rather than privilege loss, disidentification privileges constant creativity and production, since the minoritarian subject negotiates otherness through performances that alter what's normative, creating entities "whose relation to the social is not over determined by universalizing rhetoric of selfhood" (*Disidentifications* 20). Inspired by Munoz' turn to augmentation, I re-shift the discourses of melancholia to ask instead: How is queer Filipino-ness produced here? What sites in Orlando's body does it get located in, as he becomes Farrah? What is the role of envy, desire, and wanting to this "becoming"? What if "wanting" does not only entail the envy of or desire for an object or idealization, but the literal changing of that idealization through the multiple ways its metonymic parts are re-coded and redeployed? What does the flipped out hair do? How is "Flipped" out queerness different from limited readings of queerness?

Orlando gestures to other affective and performative possibilities outside of the move to undo loss or lack. The mentioning of "flipped hair", and the insistence that "a Flip is a Flip is a Flip," do not only mark his coif. Flip is also often used as a racial signifier for Filipino. Flip can be said in the most derogatory or the most endearing of ways. Flip is used in multiple spaces, from the bar to the web. "Flip" changes "Farrah", and Orlando's request to be called "Farrah Flip" demonstrates how the ethnic-queer subject works himself into the seemingly scripted narrative of "idealized" whiteness that he is supposed to maintain, incorporate, and "be". Through the literal flipping of hair,

Orlando becomes not just the white, blond, and beautiful figure of Farrah Fawcett but something else: a truly Flipped out Farrah. As David Eng states, "Orlando's Farrah Flip marks both his queerness and his racialization as diasporic Filipino" (228).

Orlando's insistence on being marked through "flip" is an intervention that shouldn't be taken lightly. Through linguistic and material play, he indexes the networked relationship hair has always had to ethnic-queerness. He seduces readers who know "flip's" colloquial usages and double entendre to better understand his subject position; hair becomes a marker for minoritarian subjecthood that is always in flux, always in deployment, always in circulation. Moreover, Orlando's quotidian performance of a "Flipped Farrah Fawcett" shows us that to want something, to love something, can also mean to play around with it, to mess it up, to camp it out, and to add meaning to it. The deployment of the Flipped-out Farrah has a contestatory politics, one that undoes the limited configurations that queer, white, Filipino, and Hawaiian possess.

This, according to Deleuze, has always been characteristic of a "minoritarian" position in the first place. If majority is defined as the model to conform to such as "man" or in some instances "white", a "minority" position is one that "creates models for itself", a creation that is essential since "its power comes from what it manages to create, which to some extent goes into the model, but doesn't depend on it" (173). Orlando, as the Filipino Hawaiian queer minority in this book, partakes in this process. Deleuze also suggests that all acts of creation are dependent on "mediators":

> Creation's all about mediators. Without them, nothing happens. They can be people—for a philosopher, artists or scientists; for a scientist, philosophers or artists—but things too, even plants and animals.[…]Whether they're real or imaginary, animate or

> inanimate, you have to form your mediators. It's a series. If you're not in a series, even a completely imaginary one, you're lost. I need my mediators to express myself, and they'd never express themselves without me: you're always working in a group, even when you seem to be on your own. (125)

Farrah Fawcett is a mediator. Flipped hair is a mediator. Hair is a mediator. "Flip" is a mediator. All are mediators in the series, in the process of creation that Orlando is performing in this instance. And there are other ones throughout "Kalihi in Farrah." After each Charlie's Angels episode, a compulsory gathering occurs, a "Farrah debriefing" if you will. Farrah related objects oscillate or re-circulate in this meeting, from letters being written to Farrah, to collections of memorabilia and swimsuit posters about her, to actual performances as Farrah Fawcett, to a charged discussion of "socio-politically charged issues raised by the show, such as prostitution, lesbian undertones, and Orientalism" (23). These "objects", both phantasmatic and real, shared within a collective, mutate and accrue multiple tactical meanings in different moments of creation. For instance, the critique of orientalism gets reproduced through Orlando's body, through the performance of the camped out Farrah. Even though the current telling of Hawaii is always influenced by the major language of colonialism, it is up to the critic to recuperate and deterritorialize it, to catch a single character like Orlando as he is in the act of performing his Hawaii. As critics, we must catch the literal performativity of telling.

Linmark's hybrid and fragmented writing produces other routes outside the limited forms of "identity" currently fetishized in current Asian American discourses: the "failed immigrant" or the "unassimilated American", both labels that are in constant suspension. Orlando undergoes multiple lines of flight, and thus requires multiple ways

of reading. Orlando's simple and effective move to Flip Farrah is generative precisely because it ushers in a new place from which this theoretical project can begin moving, to "catch" what is being produced at the moment of its production. Rather than seeing Orlando "as" Farrah, one can see him as "becoming-Farrah," "becoming queer," "becoming Flip," and "becoming Filipino." Through Orlando, we see how queer Filipinos provide other routes to feeling, remembering, and producing nationhood as they seek to become or distance themselves from normative deployments of "diasporic" subjectivity. Through what Martin Manalansan calls "the drama of everyday life," they "constantly recognized the range of scripts and processes of scripting available to them in instances of quotidian articulation of class, family, religion, and race relationship, practices and identities" (121).

This act is also the space where militancy can occur. The object-ness of his performance, of the hair, of the swish, of the style, pose the most palpable threat to the disciplinary institutions that seek to foreclose these avenues for play. Completely adamant about Orlando's version of Farrah, the football coaches tremble with fear, demanding that "We gotta do something before our boys catch this madness and start huddling in skirts and pom-poms" (24). The fear of contagion marks the fear of ethnic subjectivity and queer subjectivity. The fear of contagion is potently linked to the objects which mark it: the skirt and the pom-pom. The fear of contagion is key, since it calls attention to the destabilizing politics that Orlando's Farrah—in its raced and queered form--possesses. Contestation can also be felt and seen when marginalized persons, akin to Orlando Domingo's Flipped Farrah, decide to "work it."

Linmark's chapters pollute each other and are polluted by other characters such as Edgar, Vicente, and Trina. Moreover, some chapters are variations of common texts in the Filipino community (i.e. prayers, novenas, poems about Filipinos, etc), that have been changed to negotiate the shifting tropes of nationhood, identity, and colonialism. It is precisely these enmeshed and constantly hyperbolized vignettes that make this text fertile ground for a new form of criticism. Writing of the role gossip plays in the quotidian dramas of the everyday for the Filipino community, Manalansan suggests that: "It [gossiping] is perhaps the most quotidian if not stereotypical activity for Filipinos" (164). In fact, a major image in the Philippines of wastage, albeit a commonly done task, is spending hours doing *telebabad*; *tele* from the first syllable of telephone and *babad* literally meaning to dip completely or to immerse. *Telebabad* is synonymous with gossiping, since one's stories inevitably end. To continue, either the re-telling/re-fashioning of old stories or the creations of new ones need to occur. Manalansan further writes, "Filipinos, especially Filipino gay men, are seen as the proverbial gossips" (164). Except *telebabad* is not just a site of wastage. It is an opportunity to locate oneself in a Filipino community; with possible multiple sites as 'home'. *Telebabad* and the resulting gossip are done in the United States and in the Philippines--*within* both countries and *between* both. Even as the phone "symbolizes one of the main connections of diasporic Filipinos to their homelands" (135), it also symbolizes the connection diasporic Filipinos have to each other in America through the gossip it produces. This is tangibly exemplified in Manalansan's chapter "Tita Aida: Intimate Geographies of Suffering" (152). Even though the phone and the resulting gossip introduces shame when an informant is called about his HIV+ status, it can also usher in moments of sympathy,

camaraderie, and aid; especially when a sizeable number of gay Filipinos were going through the pandemic. Even though *telebabad* can be read as wastage, it must also be read as a site of queer Filipino connections.

Revision as a characteristic of gossip is clearly taken up in *Rolling The R's.* It possesses a textuality that looks like gossip between narrators and readers, especially since the book shifts between various voices. *Rolling The R's* has the ability to be almost secretive in its disclosures. Facts shared are usually blasphemous and should not be discussed elsewhere. The work has shifting narrators, beginning with Edgar and then switching between Vicente, an omniscient narrator, and others. It even has a "group" voice involving two or more characters either reciting in unison or in a dialogue. These group voices are fascinating; particularly when they are invoked in scenes straddling culturally specific practices such as Catholicism, exhibited in the act of praying together. Praying as a group (i.e. "the family that stays together prays together") is one of the most common quotidian practices of Filipinos in the United States and the Philippines. These prayer gatherings allow for the sharing of stories about each other, provide the opportunity to gossip about others.

In the chapter "Daldalera" (literally meaning "talkative woman"), a dialogue unfolds which can easily be imagined as taking place after mass. In this scene two women are gossiping about Katrina and her mother. Both are viewed as "a disgrace to the Filipino race" (75). We learn what counts as disgraceful behavior. We find out about their disrespect for communion (76), the fact that they talk during mass (76), and that Katrina's mother has a child out of wedlock (76). All these tropes are directly connected to an appropriate Catholicism. However, rather than say that they are disgraceful

Catholics, both are seen as disgraceful Filipinos. The speakers fuse these two identities together, illustrating the rooting of national identity in religious affiliation. Even though the two are already immigrant subjects within the U.S., they are still deeply rooted in their country's colonial traditions, influenced still by its historic trajectory. This dialogue forecloses the possibility of other religions affecting the contestation of Filipino-ness, again homing in on the prevalence of Catholicism in both the personal and national imaginary. This is an interesting contrast to the first chapter entitled "Skin, or Edgar's Advice to Closet Queens", where the queer Filipino does not use religion as his markers of what appropriate homosexuality is. Rather, dreams of American celebrities and visions of pornography--combined with his secretive sexual experiences with Mr. Campos--influence his markings of himself. For the *bakla* (a term that itself is a counter-narrative to 'gay'), the alternative narrative is formulated out of American shows patched together, as opposed to a 'strict' religion, which provides no sites of reading queerness.

Consistently, R. Zamora Linmark seems to question religiosity in the culture. Linmark's version of novenas and prayers are always modified in blasphemous proportions. What happens when the fixity of prayer itself--the very reason why people meet in the first place--is played around with? In "Bino and Rowena Make a Litany of Our Lady of The Mount" (28), the speakers begins with a traditional litany, a public prayer which is said by a leader and then repeated by others. The prayer begins in the traditional way, praising Mary as the "Mother of Christ", "Mother of Perpetual Help", and "Mother of all Mothers" (28). Yet its continuation necessitates its transformation. Here is a short list of changes: "Queen of Camay, Queen of Lysol, Queen of Revlon, Mother of Wonder Woman, Holy Sister of Betty and Veronica, Mother of Gary Coleman,

Holy Sister of the Jackson 5, Queen of Visa, Mastercard & American Express, Vessel of Martial Law, Mother of my mother's bruises, Mother of my father's belt buckle" (28-32). I argue that this scene can be read as a humorous gossip between Bino, Rowena, and the books reader(s). Again it is a negotiation of various tropes that influence Filipino diasporic formation. What is fascinating about the transformation is an awareness of the various issues that affect Filipino identity; both in the United States and the Philippines. These will be discussed in detail below.

Linmark confronts formative elements of the Filipino Diaspora through layers. First he encapsulates a critique of Spanish colonial enterprises in the Philippines, which had the spread of Catholicism as one of its main strategic projects. The dissemination of Catholicism had a practical purpose. It facilitated the easier subjection of Filipinos into Spanish rule. Filipinos incorporated the values of sacrifice and suffering, metonymic with the suffering body of Christ. Suffering works to influence both the national and personal imaginary of what proper Filipino behavior means. Within the prayer, this historical trajectory is then painfully re-inflected through familial domestic space in the United States. Suffering and sacrifice is reified through the mother figure and her child: "Queen of All Wounds/Mother of my mother's bruises/Mother of my father's belt buckle" (32). This gesture to the domestic space highlights everyday experiences such as abuse and frames it with a narrative similar in aesthetics to prayer, a product of the very same institution whose standards possibly foster its continuation. Ultimately the use of a modified litany as a platform for critiquing abuse is palpable precisely because it illustrates possible connections to Philippine colonialism—that the personal infliction

within the domestic space can indeed be shaped by the historical violence which can happen to a nation through colonialism.

On top of this palimpsest is a critique of American colonialism, capitalism, and globalization. The various "Queens" highlight the movement of capital across borders and the historical locomotion Filipinos have undergone by being uniquely linked to the United States. American movie characters, comics, cleaning products, and other consumer objects and the possible sites of their incorporation into Filipino vocabulary muddle the very notion that Asian American assimilation is fixed, or that it can only occur in the United States as one desires to assimilate. Identification with these various 'products' did happen in the Philippines as well, not just because of the distributionary flows of capital, but because of the directly rooted colonizer/colonized historical relationship between the two nations until the late 1950's. This revision also directly speaks to the political facets of Philippine governments. "Vessel of Martial Law" (31) refers to Ferdinand Marcos. Marcos can be a source of an ambivalent relationship Filipinos have to America by living in the country, particularly those in Hawaii where *Rolling The R's* is set. The dictator was exiled, died and buried there. As Linmark states in another piece, "Memory is a mosaic of tongues licking dirt, of lies, embroidered to protect the King of Martial Law" (63). The memories of Martial Law's atrocities are re-membered and re-told in various spaces, by different methods. One of most interest and the one represented here is gossip as methodology. These stories will inevitably change, and some will be created to protect and bolster the dictator's legacy. But in the end they must be negotiated, for these are nonetheless parts of Filipino diasporic building; something they will carry with them everywhere.

The use of 'Queen', as this prayer exhibits, can also be a provocative site of 'Queer' inquiry. "Queen" constantly comes up in the context of specific characters. Edward--the *bakla* character-- is marked as, "Queen of Ice Pack and Curad, Queen of Contraband Books & Whispers, Queen of Afterschool Gymnastics & Donna Summer, Queen of Catechism" (4-8). In doing so the *bakla* is gendered as female. One can easily read the femaleness of the gossipy Edward as problematic, since again it always attaches femininity to a specific act, a hyperfeminity for the *bakla* who gossips. On the other hand, Edward's queerness has different historical roots because he is Filipino, his is an identity that cannot be automatically incorporated (or converted) into 'gay', 'transgender', or other easily defined categories of sexuality. Quoting Ong and Noni, Manalansan states that "*bakla* is not a premodern antecedent to gay but rather, in diasporic spaces, *bakla* is recuperated and becomes an alternative form of modernity" (21). Alternative lenses exist such as the *bakla* or *mahu* (i.e. the Philippines for *bakla* and Hawaii for *mahu*) which are linked to the historical trajectories and geographic placements of queer Filipinos. These alternative lenses then collide with the lived realities of Filipino queer subjects.

The revision of religion in a specific gathering, the gendering of the queer subjects as 'queen', and the notions of shifting identifications of home through the quotidian-ness of gossip are equally present in Martin Manalansan's *Global Divas*. A particular scene I would like to juxtapose to Linmark's religious prayer is the performance of the drag Sta. Cruzan Manalansan observes in New York. The Sta. Cruzan is an annual religious procession that has been called the "Queen of all Filipino fiestas" (128) theatrically combining "biblical myth with world history" (129). Similar to the

prayer in *Rolling The R's*, this procession has historical roots in Spanish colonialism. Also similar to the prayer in Linmark's book, the 'traditional' form has been changed via performance. Again gossip plays a crucial role, but gossip here is not only performed through speaking but it is embodied through the persona of Reyna Chismosa (Gossipy Queen). Diverging from Manalansan, I do not read her name as *Queen of Gossip*, since this would require a preposition equal to *of*, which in Tagalog translates to *ng*. On the other hand Reyna Chismosa has a different valence, her name is a proper noun denoting the *pure* embodiment of "gossipy", *Gossipy* incarnate; more than just the female authoritative figure doing the most gossiping out of everyone, which *Queen of Gossip* implies. She is then an interesting juxtaposition to Reyna Banderada (Flag Queen). Manalansan writes, "The spectacular Reyna Banderada, flimsily garbed in the diaphanous colors of the Philippine flag, re-conceptualizes *Inang Bayan*, or the motherland, by wresting it away from its virginal and maternal tropes" (135). Notions of home also surfaces through Reyna Chismosa's performance, who while carrying curling irons and a phone, points to the audience stating, "Your mother said that you should go home" (132). Manalansan reads this juxtaposition by observing that "the character of Reyna Banderada and Reyna Chismosa represented a kind of oscillation between idioms of vulgar sexuality and comedic domesticity" (135). To play with this oscillations further, Reyna Banderada and Reyna Chismosa play on each other's images and material realities (what they wear, say, and carry), using tools commonly perceived in the national imaginary as having fixed meaning, like the flag and the phone, and creates alternative ways of seeing them and building home through them. The re-configured flag on top of a male who then performs as the quintessential representation of *mother*land already provides alternative

sites and entry ways for imagining community for the queer (and non-queer) Filipinos that are part of this audience.

Drama, when read through gossip, allows the various modes of feeling and affect present in the texts and their aesthetics. The delivery of gossip--particularly its productive potential for creating and building a queer Filipino diaspora--is also connected to the common or disjuncted emotions surrounding the re-fashioning and creating of stories. For example, queer Filipino jokes do not have the same register when translated (Manalansan 108). These linguistic turns are not only mismatched because of the particular nuances between English and Tagalog. They are cleaved because of the performative turns involved in creating the joke. The actual mis-alignment of the affective properties of those who are being told and those who create the stories--or quite simply what each group finds 'funny'--allows for the joke to work or fail. And this funny-ness is rooted in culturally specific notions of the self, which constantly change or is negotiated in multiple spaces.

Exotica, the transgendered character in Linmark's work, performs the following lines to the narrator with a swish and accompanying props: "'Not the nose, not the cheeks, ears, tits, legs, nor eyes,' she says. 'They say eyes speak a thousand languages, but the lips honey, the lips hold a million secrets-and it's secrets that attract attention" (14). This passage is telling for a couple of reasons: For Exotica, lips are a necessary tool in reading herself as a transgendered person. Other than having a clear aesthetic purpose through bodiliness, lips also have a hermeneutic function. Focusing on her body, Exotica elaborates on the rituals involved in hiding her penis in the beginning of the piece. Her bodily limitations prevents her from transitioning; these hold her back from being a full

woman. On the other hand, lips allow her to articulate a different reality, a different story and movement for her identity. They make it possible to create and articulate a myth--an alternative (re)vision--of why she is indeed a woman in a man's body; how her mother did not like apples and thus she came out as a boy (12). Lips are also important because of the secrets they can hold and who they can tell their gossip too. The politics of shame around Exotica's revealing her bodily insecurity is poignant and deeply moving. It is being revealed to specific people who are also queered in various ways, at a moment of supposedly mere banal interaction between friends. Of course these conversations are more than what they seem.

What lips do is aid the voicing and 'sounding' of feelings, not only the ability to create language. They provide the means to which the queer subject can articulate how emotion forms an integral part of her self identification. Exotica continues, "It's got to do with feelings, honey, *feelings*…at first I went through my guilt-trip episodes, but those were a centuries-old program, if you know what I mean" (13). Exotica and Edward are linked not because Edward has identified as transgendered which Exotica also has done. They are linked through the various "dramas" that being a queer Filipino entails. As Manalansan states, sexual identity is not just grounded in clear identity politics but is often complicated by a different politics around feeling: "Filipino gay men argue that identities are not just proclaimed verbally, but are also felt or intuited" (34). Right after Exotica's revelations of her personal stories, Edward asks, "You think you can make my eyes look like Liza Minelli's *Cabaret?"* (13). Looking *like* the trope of beauty here is more than just a trite response. It ties into the struggle both of these characters undergo, what Manalansan terms as the aesthetics of struggle (16). Ultimately both Exotica and

Edward are not just linked when they are both *looking* like women. They are connected when they feel through the varying grooves of Filipino queer identity. Exotica states that she chose to be beautiful and defy god, rather than *feel* miserable (13). Here the aesthetics of being and the emotional properties of being are both given a hand in her contestation of identity.

III: Reparative Vocabularies

Jose Muñoz writes that, "Standards of United States citizenship are based on a national affect … it is thus critical to unpack the material and historical import of affect as well as emotion to better understand failed and actualized performances of citizenship" ("Feeling Brown" 67). Quite different from narratives around racial melancholia, I would argue that Muñoz allows the subject more room to work by focusing on how the individual *performs* failed *and* actualized conceptualizations of citizenship, rather than centering on the "impossible ideal" of this subject's position within the social. Apart from merely stating the obvious, that the subject will fail to assimilate, that seeking racial normativity just enacts the opposite for the perpetually non-normative person, it would be easy to imagine Muñoz as being more interested or invested in finding out if the subject does see itself or its actions as a failure, if one must necessarily depend on the materialized success of an action to know that he/she has performed ideal notions of citizenship, or if failure itself is always as psychically violent as imagined. Yes, material and representational realities of assimilation limit the realm that the subject can maneuver in. Yes, psychic instability through the juridical, material, and representational facets of race are deeply troubling and must be considered by all who believe that theoretical

projects must have social relevance. Yet, through Muñoz's turn to failed and actualized performances of identity, the author places equal privilege on the *resources* assimilating subjects have at their disposal and what they strategically use, while still being sensitive to the materialities of racial oppression. He provides a different quality around his criticism, intrinsically tied to the conditions of possibility available to the reader, writer, and subject of his work.

Returning to his work on disidentification, he writes that his project "departs from the anti-assimilationist rhetoric for reasons that are both strategic and methodological" (*Disidentifications* 18). By departing from anti-assimilationist rhetoric even though he is "indebted" to its ideals, Munoz enacts what I would suggest is a reparative reading practice. As a practice and a psychic position, reparation mostly concerns itself with the "pleasure" of the subject; and, concentrating on the individual's pleasure recalibrates the value system through its focus on the resources needed to fulfill pleasure and "ameliorate" pain (Sedgwick, *Touching Feeling* 144). Centering on complicated conceptions of pleasure frees us from the anticipation of an action's success. We concentrate on the "doing" as opposed to the truth-value of an action, what in an Austinian paradigm is the *performativity* of the subject's enactments. Rather than merely focusing on the malady that the racial other is inevitably trapped in through failure, a reparative reading might be able to see other ways raced individuals view this very same abject position and try to work through it. These are performances that seek not necessarily to contest but to strategically deal with racial oppression. Possibly, this failure to fulfill the assimilationary paradigm might even allow for a generative practicing, alternative ways of approaching citizenship that have not been previously practiced.

The provocative theories Eng, Han, and Cheng forward are much needed theoretical interventions into the often vexed assimilationary processes, convincingly highlighting the many violences, disturbances, and pleasures racially othered persons go through. More importantly, these works do not *only* register paranoid readings. Eve Sedgwick suggest that paranoid ways of reading are often infused with reparative ones as well (129). In Eng and Han's dialogue for instance, one of the main goals is to "investigate structural questions of social inequity as they circulate both inside and outside the therapeutic space of the clinic" (356). That is, they move away from familial narratives such as generational conflict that have been predominantly deployed to read Asian American depression. There could be no more reparative project than what they provide. The most compelling moment in Cheng's chapter on Kinston occurs when she discusses drag, when she writes how the "*agency* in drag (be it racial or gender) is borne out of the maneuver between opposites, that is, in drag, one is neither 'just acting like' nor 'really being' but some complicated combination of the two'" (74). Here we are given a glimpse of the possibility Cheng locates in drag as an act of, or attempt at, agency. One only wishes that she could have pursued this much further, to think about how Kingston's narrator drags not whiteness, but other minorities in the text. Following Sedgwick's lead, I seek to state my own cautiousness about what forms of knowledge racial melancholia produces, most evident in its symptomology as hypochondria. How might a reading of paranoia and melancholia make "it less rather than more possible to unpack the local, contingent relations between any given piece of knowledge and its narrative/epistemological entailments for the seeker, knower, or teller?" (*Touching Feeling* 124). Simply, how can the melancholic frame in this instance foreclose avenues

of both theoretical and affective possibilities for the Asian American subject?

Suspicion can be contagious. When we try to move out of our dominant modes of reading, we can feel lost. On the other hand, this project attempts to provide an initial vocabulary for readers, writers, and subjects dealing with everyday manifestations of minoritarian identity. The difficulty lies in our need for a new vocabulary. Eve Sedgwick states that the "vocabulary of articulating any reader's reparative motive towards a text or culture has long been so sappy, aestheticizing, defensive, anti-intellectual, or reactionary that it's no wonder few critics are willing to describe their acquaintance with such motives" (*Touching Feeling* 151). What is smarmier than love? What is sappier than being Farah Fawcett? This project's desire is to unpack reparative ways of understanding the relationship between Asian American identity, non-normative forms of affect, and the literary production associated with them. Admittedly, it might stumble in its vocabulary, or might actually end up enacting what it wishes to critique. Nevertheless, this exploration is predominantly moored to a belief that the creation of reparative vocabularies, in all their complexities, contradictions, and inherent difficulties is now due.

How does one not *automatically* think of ineffable loss or failure when the political climate for the marginalized person has arguably gotten bleaker with each passing day? How can one comprehend and articulate the millions of deaths and violent occurrences that have been affected by colonialism and the expansion of capital? I draw hope from what Sedgwick says, that to "practice other than paranoid forms of knowing does not in itself, entail a denial of the reality of enmity and oppression" (*Touching Feeling* 128). That is, practicing other ways of seeing systemic

marginalization does not require a rejection of the materialities of this process. On the contrary, to move out of this dominant or "strong" way of knowing allows us to pursue other resources, inter and intra-psychic, that co-inhabit a mode that can be limited by its a priori expectations. The point of a non-paranoid way of reading, and arguably a non-paranoid way of being, is not to admit that there isn't always an unforeseen danger to forestall. The point of a non-paranoid practice is to believe that the "performative effect" of one's actions, for example the actual working through of one's material and structural limitations—sometimes even disentangled from the ethical questions of how one does this working through—carries invaluable properties that should never be easily dismissed.

More than a decade after the publication of Lisa Lowe's *Immigrant Acts*, I gesture to her work since more still needs to be done: "The universals proposed by the political and cultural forms of nation precisely generate the critical *acts* that negate those universals" (9). Invoking Orlando's "Farrah Fawcett" and her flip once again, to flip something is to turn it over or around. To flip someone off is to perform an act of signification registering a gamut of possible readings, from coyness to aggression. To be flip is to be playful. I would argue that how Kingston's narrator and Linmark's Orlando negotiate their emotionally contradictory relationship to ideals of citizenship or compulsory whiteness offer palpable and powerful way of understanding what the act of contesting these normative modalities might look like, what questions they leave us with, and what forms of identity they can produce.

Chapter 2

Undoing Martial Law Manila: Queer Diasporas, and the Marcos Regime

Rather than relay the event of nationhood, episodic histories linger on the thresholds of meanings. Dwelling in the shadows of details, they convey the eventhood of events, that is, the conditions of possibility and impossibility for the historical emergence of the nation and its various states.

(Vicente Rafael, *White Love and Other Events in Filipino History*)

A lot of the most exciting recent work around "queer" spins the term outward along dimensions that can't be subsumed under gender and sexuality at all: the ways that race, ethnicity, postcolonial nationality criss-cross with these and other identity constituting, identity fracturing discourses… Thereby the gravity (I mean gravitas, the meaning, but also the center of gravity) of the term "queer" itself deepens and shifts.

(Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Tendencies)*

Nineteen eighty-five in the Philippines: a time of chaos, economic implosion, and national discontent. Two years prior, and on live television, opposition senator Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino is assassinated, shattering a nation's hopes for much needed political change. The ensuing trial around his death becomes a fiasco, as the prosecution chooses to ignore the Agrava commission's findings (the exploratory committee which investigated this event). Instead they follow the military's official version of the crime. All twenty-six suspects are acquitted. This polarizing verdict sets off mass unrest

simmering throughout the country, localized in the streets of Metropolitan Manila. Receiving an award amidst this volatile political backdrop, the influential director-activist Lino Brocka raises a defiant fist as he demands:

> To the best of our abilities, and even if we oftentimes fail, we must produce films that will hurt, films that will disturb, films that will not let you rest. For times are bad and, given times like these, it is a crime to rest. We cannot rest, and should not, while there is a Filipino starving in Negros, an Aquino crying for justice, a victim of police killing lying in a garbage heap. Although it is the duty of the artist to work for what is true, good, and beautiful, first we must expose and fight what is wrong. (205)

Brocka echoes the thoughts of other directors, writers, and producers during this tumultuous period. His rousing appeal suggests that even though the Marcos presidency marks one of the most repressive policing regimes enacted by a local government, it also exhibits a generative move by artists and intellectuals to rethink various modes of resisting these oppressive mechanisms.

New Cinema, Philippine Cinema's "Third Golden Age," of which Brocka is a seminal figure, is crucial to understanding this resistance. New Cinema is a local artistic movement that spans the early 1970's and the late 1980's. The majority of its most acclaimed films were produced at the height of the Marcos regime. Alongside Brocka, directors Ishmael Bernal, Eddie Romero, Celso Ad Castillo, Mike De Leon, Mario O'Hara, and Marilou Diaz Abaya contributed to New Cinema's growth. Nick De Ocampo and Kidlat Tahimik were its most prominent independent filmmakers. These directors drew from a gamut of sources to inspire their work, from European neorealists

such as Roberto Rossellini, to divergent Asian artists such as Akira Kurosawa and Satyajit Ray.[4] New Cinema films often departed from filmic narratives that have existed since the 1920's, when sound pictures were first mass produced: melodrama (*iyakan*), comedy, or action (*bakabkan*).[5] Whenever these storylines were utilized, they appeared in hybridized form, and primarily offered stark social commentary about governmental corruption, increasing poverty, patriarchy, Catholicism, and American imperialism.

Even before artistry, however, New Cinema directors needed to focus on making profit. Film production in the Philippines is a highly taxed venture that exceeds the percentages in film industries within the United States and Europe. Thus, local cinema had to "sell" to a mass audience. Following this trend, New Cinema works were all the more compelling because they coupled the director's artistic vision with the requirement for commercial success. Film historian Gina Marchetti suggests for instance that Brocka, Bernal, and other directors's works were not generally made for the elite or the local film festival circuit. Rather, they were geared towards the "bakya crowd", which is a derogatory term and metaphor for the poor. It literally means the wooden slippers used

---

[4] Nicanor G. Tiongson, in the essay "The Filipino Film Industry," provides brief history of the Philippine film industry from American colonialism to the Aquino government. Tiongson also provides useful strategies for the expansion and preservation of Filipino films that have not received adequate resources from the government.

[5] For a more detailed discussion of the effects of Spanish colonialism on early cinematic traditions, Nick DeOcampo's *Cine: Spanish Influences on Early Cinema in the Philippines*, is a good source of information. Philippine cinema, even under American colonialism, predominantly deployed Spanish cultural mores: "During cinema's formative years, Spanish influences were cast on the genres imitated from the stage: in the depiction of characters; in the constructing of loose narrative structures resembling the *moro-moro* or *zarsuela*; in artistic conventions; in pictorial representation; in notions of entertainment; in manners of viewer reception; and in the conservative Catholic ideology the cinematic works espoused" (206). Thus, even if the United States is one of the most influential providers of melodramatic narrative forms in Philippine film even to this day, exacerbated by its neo-colonial status, these influences must always already mix with local indigenous and Spanish colonial narratives.

for going to the *palengke* (wet market) or what people in the provinces wear in lieu of shoes. Precisely because the "bakya crowd" made possible Philippine film's existence, the plots of New Cinema works constantly displayed characters that the audience could relate to, and individuals whose pain on screen mimics their travails off-screen.[6] This intersection of profit and artistry fueled the directors even further, since they prided themselves on an ability to produce effective allegories for the people's plight while pushing the limit of their films' artistry.[7]

A cursory look at films made during the regime's most tumultuous period (1978-1985) also generates this staggering insight: almost all of them featured queerness in its

---

[6] For a thorough discussion of the relationship between local spectatorship, and the role that women have general played and ideologically occupied in film during New Cinema, see Gina Marchetti's article "Four Hundred Years in a Convent, Fifty in Hollywood: Sexuality and Dissent in Contemporary Philippine Cinema." Marchetti for instance writes that, "Cinema sexuality can be fantasized, reworked, rebelled against, or reconstructed in a way in which relations of power could only be changed by revolution" (27). Here, I am interested in the particularized tethering of sexuality, and I would further argue queer sexuality, to the revolutionary calls of New Cinema. Why use sexuality as the matrix for thinking and enacting calls to end the regime? In what specific ways has sexuality been re-thought through a desire for revolutionary change?

[7] In his essay "Philippine Movies: Some Problems and Prospects," Lino Brocka writes that the two aspects that affect Philippine film making are the financial problems dues to taxes and foreign competition, and the "real or imagined problems which beset film-makers in relation to Filipino mass audience, the so called *bakya* crowd" (259). Brocka's solution to this "problem" of spectatorship and financing if a commingling of the two: "The only way to elevate local cinema from its bakya status to an artistically acceptable level is to introduce gradual changes until one succeeds in creating the desired audience…. One should work perseveringly with the material at hand, should be aware of but not stunted by our cinematic tradition, and should place one's trust in the Filipino mass audience" (260). Brocka sees cinema as the main process of not only creating an audience which can "enjoy" the cinema at hand, but an audience that can also be molded around a specific politics of the moment. He continually advocates for a "sense of responsibility" to both the craft and the political change that he views Philippine film can disseminate. Mario Hernando, writing about Ishmael Bernal in "Ishmael Bernal: Merging Art and Commercialism," also praises Bernal's work not only for its "artistic" accomplishments but through a mapping out of the difficulties facing any director/producer/actor in Philippine cinema during the Marcos regime.

multiple forms. In what follows, I examine the ways in which New Cinema deploys queerness as an essential element in destabilizing, critiquing, and threatening the Marcos government. Queerness is not only a signifier for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender identity, but also a modality for thinking through intimacies between individuals, queer and non-queer alike, that nonetheless destabilize normative (i.e. hetero-patriarchal) notions of sexual behavior, affiliation, and consanguinity.

It would be useful to give examples of queer traces within a couple of notable films. In Mike Deleon's *Batch '81*, the illustration of seven men desiring to join a college fraternity creates an allegory of the Marcos regime's fascist underpinnings, through the excessive spectacularizing of sadomasochistic and homosocial disciplining of men as part of the fraternity's initiation rites. In Lino Brocka's *Tinimbang ka Ngunit Kulang [You Are Weighed But Found Wanting] (*1974), the hypocrisy present in the Marcos government is re-imagined through a display of a small provincial town's refusal to accept its outcasts, specifically its shunning of the gay teacher, the leper, and the "crazy" woman. Brocka gestures to the immensity of the government's hypocrisy through melodrama, and simultaneously provides a critique of the relationship between Catholicism and complicity. In another of Brocka's social commentary films, *Manila Sa Mga Kuko Nga Liwanag [Manila in the Claws of Neon]* (1975), a gay man's prostitution is directly linked to his movement to Metropolitan Manila, a city completely depleted of economic opportunity. This necessitates his entering into sex work in the first place. Brocka's re-imagining of Manila directly challenges Imelda Marcos's marketing of the metropole as the quintessential space for economic prosperity and cultural development, as "the true, the good, and the beautiful." Aside from those I mention here, there are many New

Cinema movies that explicitly represent queer characters or implicitly queer subtexts.[8] Nick DeOcampo's short films for instance have always linked homosexuality, bakla identity, and queerness to struggles against the Marcos regime (in *Oliver* and in *Revolution Happen Like Refrains in a Song*). He also discusses the relationship between transgender bakla and Japanese overseas contract sex work (in *Sex Warriors).* As Marchetti notes, "although meant to be 'shocking,' these representations go beyond mere exploitation. They try to explore alternatives and look for ways to reveal inequality and to point to change" (44). It is ironic, then, that considering the range of New Cinema, little has been written about what queerness does to these movies and their politics. Making a contribution to current critical work, I further interrogate the ways in which queerness is circulated in specific films from the movement. I ask: what was the political utility of queerness in these cultural sites, and how does queerness challenge or maintain the particularized manifestations of injustice enacted by the Marcos regime?

In what follows I will examine Ishmael Bernal's *Manila By Night* and Marilou Diaz Abaya's *Alyas Baby Tsina*. *Manila By Night* is generally touted as Bernal's best cinematic piece. This movie, unlike others of the day, is "queerest" in form, refusing categorization and description. It follows the lives of more than eight disparate characters—a lesbian drug pusher (Kano), a blind masseuse (Bea), a clothes maker (Sister Sharon), a former prostitute turned pious wife (Virgie), her son who is a drug addict (Alex), his girlfriend who is also an addict (Val), a waitress from the province (Baby), and a taxi driver (Pebrero) who impregnates her out of wedlock—as they navigate Manila nocturnally during Martial Law. Focusing on Kano, Bea, and Sister

---

[8] For the scripts of all of DeOcampo's films, see *Beyond the Mainstream: The Films of Nick DeOcampo*.

Sharon, I will discuss the ways in which the city and its inhabitants produce unstable queer intimacies with each other that then escape the grips of capital. These relationships present a counter-discourse to the often rehearsed narratives of love proliferated by popular melodramatic movies and the conjugal dictators to maintain a foothold on their rule.[9] Bernal points to how an affect such as love is narrativized in order to stage, restage, and produce legible although veiled criticism of the Marcos regime.

---

[9] Imelda and Ferdinand Marcos gained mass popularity through an excessive display of themselves as nurturing duo, as a spectacle of domesticity that persons could carry in their pocket, quite literally. The Marcoses are famous for handing out personal portrait pamphlets when meeting people on the streets, a sign of their generosity towards everyone. This uncannily returns in Diaz' documentary. In more than one scene, Imelda distributes portraits to everyone outside of her motorcade. These moments bear the trace of her husband's death and her loss; she has taken on his "mission" even after his passing. We must be cautious of this token however. What was exchanged in order to possess it? Historian Vicente Rafael wisely points out that "the giving of souvenirs was not only meant to commemorate the mere fact of having been in the presence of the Marcoses but also the means for memorializing the distance of the benefactor from his or her client long after the visit had occurred" (122). Rather than merely being a gift to keep, the souvenir highlights the Marcoses' understanding of themselves as a commodity to be devoured and as a distant dream to be achieved. This token creates the admissibility of their relationship, akin to possessing a national treasure that makes the Philippines unique. National desires and personal narratives are essentially made to cohere through the Marcoses. This combination has strategic political use.

Atop Malacañang Palace's entrance (the seat of Philippine government), a mural portrays them as *Malakas* (strong) and *Maganda* (beautiful), the country's mythic father and mother, the root of its inhabitants. Rafael writes, "As Malakas and Maganda, Ferdinand and Imelda imaged themselves not only as the father and the mother of an extended Filipino family. They also conceived of their privileged position as allowing them to cross and redraw all boundaries: social, political, cultural" [122]. Aside from serving as metaphor for and spectacle through this mythic relationship, the Marcoses saw themselves as destined to run the nation, unify the country through their regime: "appropriating the legend of Malakas and Maganda was but one way that the Marcos regime sought to set itself apart from its predecessors" (123). Amidst all these examples, we see that the couple carefully crafted their image through the proliferation of very scripted heteronormativity. In fact, their biographies serve as a sort of gossipy palimpsest, where stories end up covering over each other to rehash the thematic of the strong husband who follows his destiny to the palace and his most beautiful wife (she was a former beauty pageant queen, and they met at a beauty pageant) whose life completely changed after meeting her husband.

Marilou Diaz Abaya's *Alyas Baby Tsina* follows the travails of a sex worker, Baby, as she avenges her rape and the death her co-worker Sandra. Consistent with the representation of the prostitute figure in Philippine cinema, Baby serves as symbol of the

---

The performance of masculinity and femininity through the Marcoses is a vexed one, and it is made more complicated when we consider Imelda's role. Imelda as spectacle was initially produced for the benefit of her husband: "the narratives of the Marcos romance are about the domestication and deployment of sexual and historical differences in the realization of one man's ambition" (25). Ferdinand Marcos was completely aware that heterosexuality and masculinity had to be performed and done well, staged in order to succeed. Thus he deployed this most fervently during his presidency. Instead of discussing only politics on the podium, Marcos would draw crowds by enticing them with a duet: "Singing together at political rallies, they turned their private lives into public spectacles, staging a stylized version of their intimacy" (129). As expected, this stylized intimacy was often strictly codified. Marcos was the damsel's headstrong pursuer and Imelda only survived through his protection. The song she is most famous for singing during these rallies is *Dahil Sa Iyo* [Because of You], where the chorus' first two lines are "dahil sa iyo, nais kong mabuhay/dahil sa iyo, hanggang mamatay" [because of you, I want to live, because of you, until death]. This song catalyzes their relationship as national fairytale. Hearing their intertwining vocals, the people see that only through a strong foundation between a man and a woman can the country be legible as a viable body; a lack of an exemplary marital bond can make the national body disintegrate. While she sings, Imelda's body becomes the canvas, the space where the nation's inhabitants see themselves manifested, a projection made more violent because it is mapped onto a body that they can never realistically become, only aspire to. Her body is meant to strengthen metaphorized femininity for the purposes of hetero-patriarchy. The people share in her fate as the headstrong wife suffering for both her country and her mate. This shared affect blinds them to be complicit to the ways that they have been deceived.

These performances also became the source of Imelda's political power. By gaining political clout for Ferdinand, Imelda became indispensable within these spaces. Because of her ruse, she overshadowed the president especially when she was most hyperbolic. Imelda realized that at her most excessive, she also claimed political muscle through the images she offered. Indeed, the First Lady was also able to reap the financial benefits of her "harmless" performances of "beauty." Her desire to make the landscape of Manila beautiful literally led to her heading of development projects for the city. She was able to change the cityscape through structural projects such as the building of the Cultural Center and various health institutions, the majority of which the average Filipino could not afford. This culminated in her being named Metro Manila's governor. Rafael writes, "Imelda's numerous attempts to spread beauty and culture were of a piece with Ferdinand's nationalist pretensions in 'making this nation great again'" (131). Imelda's body becomes a rich site to read personal shifts amid national claims to the country's cultural destiny. She negotiated both through her performances, opulent stagings of self and nation.

victimized Filipino woman. Yet removed from being the "passive" victim of corruption, Baby experiences a transfiguration after her sexual exploitation, one that transforms her into a revolutionary figure by the end of the film. The other two protagonists in Diaz Abaya's film are Roy and George. Roy is Baby's lover and the everyman's hero. At a period when citizens were required to follow curfew rules, he refuses to obey any law but his own.[10] As a lawyer who first shelters Roy and Baby as fugitives but then betrays them, George believes in the dysfunctional law, even when it is oppressive. His profession also provides him the financial independence the other two not have. Aside from Roy, George, and Baby, however, the character I find most compelling is Sandra. Precisely because she is a sex worker *and* a transgender bakla, Sandra destabilizes all the normative forms of female subjectivity that have indexed victimhood, heroism, or corruption under the Marcos regime and American imperialism. Although Sandra is arguably a marginal figure within the plot, appearing only in the movie's first half, I suggest that Diaz Abaya's excessive display of her rape, and the staging of some crucial scenes with her, situates the transgender bakla as a central figure in the main

---

[10] The Filipino Action figure has been a seminal figure for the bakya crowd, particularly since the 1970's, and offers not only respite from but a possibility for moving out of the various problems citizens face. In fact, the ousted former Philippine president Erap Estrada was a famous action star who ran on the platform "Erap para sa mahirap" (Erap for the poor), thereby capitalizing on his already solidified image as a fighter for the poor's rights on film. Mapping out the qualities of the Filipino action hero, Augustin L. Sotto suggests that he (since these are often men) 1) is always a virtuous individual, 2) shows that violence is never a gratuitous act, 3) has an unusual reserve of patience 4) is always protective of the weak, 5) believes that blood money is not acceptable, and 6) always a one woman man. ("Notes on the Filipino Action Film" 9-10) Sotto suggests that rather than dismiss action movies and their stars as remnants of Spanish *moro-moros,* the elite and the intelligentsia should indeed reflect on what their mass popularity shows, and what politics they offer.

protagonists' struggle against oppression, poverty, government neglect, and American imperialism.

Alongside filmic production, I will also focus critical attention on Jessica Hagedorn's *Dogeaters*. This non-linear fragmented text centers on the lives of Filipinos during the Marcos regime, and depicts a plethora of characters from the abjectly impoverished to the excessively wealthy. Turning to specific scenes within the novel, I highlight the ways in which New Cinematic tropes around queerness also circulate in diasporic literature about the Marcos regime. Indeed, the novel's cinematic qualities are tangibly clear from its initial scenes. Hagedorn introduces the narrator Rio Gonzaga, and her cousin Pucha Gonzaga, as they are watching a Hollywood movie in the neo-colonial city: "1956. The airconditioned darkness of the Avenue Theater smells of flowery pomade, sugary chocolates, cigarette smoke, and sweat. *All That Heaven Allows* is playing in Cinemascape and Technicolor. … In this picture perfect tableau, plaid hunting jackets, roaring cellophane fires, smoking chimneys, and stark winter forests of skeletal trees provides costume and setting for Hollywood's version of a typical rural Christmas" (3). If the initial phantasmagoria of this passage assures us of anything, it is that cinema's modes of viewing, its metaphors, its means of production, and its ideological bent will be a crucial departure point for the novel. Even within this seemingly innocuous description of both the theater and the film, Rio highlights dissonant "versions" of Christmas, indeed, dissonant versions of "reality," transporting the enraptured pair outside of the tropical heat of the Philippines (marked by the air-conditioned theater and the smell of sweat) and the "perfect" holiday the actors are experiencing on screen. It is precisely the novel's fondness for American movie metaphors that has troubled some of

the novel's critics. E. San Juan Jr. for instance notes that *Dogeaters* is devoid of historical contextualization because of its "postmodern" form, so that "the novel can be conceived as a swift montage of phantasmagoric images […] virtually a *cinematex*t of a Third World scenario that might be the Philippines or any other contemporary neocolonial milieu processed in the transnational laboratories of Los Angeles or New York" (118).

Although San Juan does raise valid concerns about possible misreadings of the text and elisions of its geo-political specificity, I take issue with his assertion that *Dogeaters* "might" be occurring in the Philippines as opposed to another neo-colonial setting. On the contrary, I would argue that Hagedorn's various scenes and representations of cinema inextricably link *Dogeaters* to particularized narratives present within local discourses such as New Cinema. Linking queerness to cinema, Viet Nguyan suggests that "in *Dogeaters*, the problematic of commodification and sexuality finds its center in the world of film and its various locations of expression: the movie theater, the film industry, the star cults, the entire 'intertextual' apparatus in which the moviegoer is inserted and from which the moviegoer as spectator derives meanings from its stars" (133). Concurring with and enriching Nguyen's statement, I suggest that any thorough reading of the work's cinematic elements must not only understand the ways in which it lines up with the Hollywood metaphors, plots, and idealizations. The novel's connections to localized Philippine cinematic and narrative traditions must also be understood.

Intersectionalities between New Cinema and *Dogeaters* demand that we recognize the ways in which militant forms of queerness travel across geo-political realms, to provide powerful recalibrations of a politically rife moment in Philippine history. The filmic and literary iterations of queerness present in these cultural sites point

to the generative potential of queer diasporas when imagining the ways in which the regime is critiqued and challenged[11]. David Eng first leaves us with questions of queer diasporas and their relationship to Asian American subjectivity in his epilogue to *Racial Castration*: "How might queer diasporas provide new methods of contesting traditional kinship structures, reorganizing communities based not on filiation and biology but on affiliation and the assumption of a common set of social practices or economic and social justice? What new forms of community could emerge from a diasporic and queer challenge to the linking of home to nation state?" (207). For Eng, queerness is a powerful mode of re-thinking diaspora as a term precisely because it does not merely base itself on

---

[11] Filipino diasporic writers have traditionally contested the limited scripts about national identity that have been given to them, especially constituted through disciplinary practices such as family law. Seminal Filipino American texts from Carlos Bulosan's *America is in the Heart* to Bienvenido Santos center on manifestations of appropriate heterosexuality and sanctioned citizenship, either by registering an anxiety about miscegenation or by highlighting the very staged genderedness of the marriage in the U.S. Taking Santos as a brief example, his short story "Immigration Blues" shows how enforced heterosexuality, familial servitude, and juridical dictates come to the fore when the old time Filipino *manong*, the literal product of U.S. labor practices during the twentieth century, takes in a newly immigrated undocumented woman for a wife. She replaces the one who has just passed away. She provides a sense of usefulness for him, a sense of personal worth. The new wife is pious, willing to work, willing to help. "Being willing" becomes a point of contestation, however, since Santos understands that for the Filipino woman her juridical non-entity as undocumented immigrant fuels the very enactment of familial loyalty. The staging of domesticity reworks limited availabilities for claiming juridical citizenship, a limitation linked to the government's domestic agenda to limit what constitutes an appropriate "family" and appropriate citizens.

Kandice Chuh suggests that Santos "demonstrates how heterenormativity may be co-opted and deployed as a tool for resistance to racialized exclusionary immigration legislation and simultaneously as an instrument of community building" (41). That is, the narrative metaphorizes the messiness of colonial pasts and post-colonial presents—transected by diasporic needs located outside of the Philippines while situated within its own national shifts. Santos adopts the familial narrative understanding that what underlies domesticity's performance is the need to juridically make one legible to the U.S. nation state through the discourse it has provided. This is a strategic deployment of "the family" as a way of critiquing racist state practice that oftentimes get produced through laws that govern marriage.

the displacement of individuals linked through normative notions of kinship and ethnic filiation. Rather, *queer diasporas* open affiliation between individuals through a much needed questioning of the dominant iterations of "home, nation, and ethnicity" that have been circulated with such force, often through the elision of queer subjects and their experiences. Queer diasporas challenge hetero-patriarchal notions of nationhood and diasporic identity by asserting that queer lives matter. I would argue, then, that representations of queerness in *Manila By Night*, *Alyas Baby Tsina*, and *Dogeaters*—as a mode of contestation, as a form of play, and as needed element of survival—are essential to understanding the ways in which the Marcos regime is re-imagined by Filipino diasporic artists across national borders and disparate temporalities.

Queerness in Philippine New Cinema enriches, deepens, and affects established archives such as "New Queer Cinema" and "Third Cinema". New Queer Cinema is a term famously coined by film theorist B. Ruby Rich to discuss the wave of films released from 1990 onwards that achieved critical success in film circuits in the United States, Canada, and in Europe. Inspired by the previous independent work of British and American filmmakers such as Derek Jarman, Tom Kalin, Gus Van Sant, and Isaac Julien, these filmmakers represented queerness in all its possible formations, departing from merely displaying "positive" imagery of lesbian and gay characters on screen. Instead, they followed "the beat of a new kind of film and video making that was fresh, edgy, low-budget, inventive, unapologetic, sexy, and stylistically daring" (6).[12]

---

[12] In an introduction to a critical reader on New Queer Cinema, Michele Aaron clarifies five general characteristics of films that belong to this movement: 1) They centered on subgroups within the lesbian and gay community, discussing issues of class, race, and postcoloniality (in films such as *Young Soul Rebels*, *Tongues Untied*, and *Paris is Burning*), 2) They eschewed positive representation for politically resonant messages

Interestingly enough, in her most recent reflection about the movement, Rich also cautiously discusses its bleak future, linked to what she sees as the deployment of queer representation within mainstream Hollywood movies in order to market identity politics—quite explicitly, the production of films with queer characters to entice queer viewers—regardless of their quality or political content. For Rich, New Queer Cinema had political and creative force at precisely a moment of crisis, when directors, writers, and critics were struggling with dying loved ones and the death of a community because of AIDS, and an intensely present institutionalization of homophobia in the Reagan and Bush governments. Writing for the March 26, 2002 issue of *The Village Voice*, she further suggests that, "the fierce political and aesthetic energy of the early-'90s cinematic breakthroughs is hardly omnipresent today. The prevalent Queer Lite formula endlessly recycles romantic comedy, pausing every now and then for tragedy, then getting back on the dancefloor. Issues of race, class, family trauma, and life-changing desire are not likely to pop up on the current menu" (41).

In order to mitigate this lack, she then calls for an exploration of films from other countries that have been ignored, that have produced much more complex, contradictory, and generative images of queerness: "Now that the U.S. has rushed headlong into war, nursing a toxic cocktail of masculinity and patriotism, we need queer visions of sexuality,

---

of anger, violence, and crime—a move connected to the anger of the queer community because of the AIDS epidemic (*Swoon*, *Poison*, and *The Living End* are some example of this glorification of violence), 3) They "bastardized" the sanctity of previous historical figures or events by displaying them in queer contexts (*Edward II* and *The Hours and Times* are good examples, depicting the homosexual relationships of famous figures as King Edward, John Lennon, and Brian Epstein), 4) They defied cinematic convention in form, content, and genre, 5) They did not couple HIV+ status with images of death, understanding that "living with AIDS" as a term also has political potency (most resonant in films like *The Living End* and *Zero Patience*).

gender, desire, and community more than ever. Without them, all we've got for a queer cinema any time soon is the closing scene of Lord of the Rings: two boys in a boat, devoted to each other, off to battle evil with swords. Need I point out that this is not the movement I had in mind" (41)? Taking what I read as Rich's challenge to critics that we re-consider the activist potential inherent in New Queer Cinema, I explore an archive of Philippine cinema that offers modalities of queerness that precisely shift the boundaries of revolutionary consciousness and social transformation beyond dominant representations present in mainstream U.S. and European films. Although Philippine New Cinema predates New Queer Cinema by many years, what I intend here is a "queering" of what B. Ruby Rich considers the New Queer Cinematic archive—outside of the United States.

It is compelling that, for Rich, the politics, aesthetics, and relevance of New Queer Cinema are always already tied to the urgency of a given crisis. Whether invigorated by the advent of HIV/AIDS in the United States, or the current war in Iraq, New Queer Cinema attempts to challenge these intensely masculinist paradigms for patriotism or nationalism. Akin to New Queer Cinema, Philippine New Cinema also responded to a moment of intense urgency, one that necessitated the demand for artists to recalibrate how oppression is challenged through non-heteropatriarchal forms. Which is to say, what I interrogate here is the crucial role that queerness plays in cinematic narratives and aesthetics of defiance. Is it merely a coincidence that, similar to American New Queer Cinema, Philippine New Cinema deployed queerness as an essential mechanism of critique?

"Queering" Philippine New Cinema also attempts to enrich current readings of Third Cinema, a movement that since the 1960's has been comprised primarily of films from the Third World that contest colonial, postcolonial, and neocolonial iterations of nationhood. Critics such as Jacqui Alexander, Manthia Diawara, Ella Shohat, and Robert Stam have suggested that Third Cinema is an essential cultural space for producing counter-memories and counter-narratives to revolutionary movements that practice intensely patriarchal and homophobic politics. Yet there has been little written on the relationship between New Queer Cinema and Third Cinema, leading Helen Hok-Sze Leung to suggest that, "A *new* New Queer Cinema … would have to address the complex relation between late capitalism and sexuality. … Such cinema necessarily intersects with the legacy of Third Cinema, which has not only pioneered the critique of colonial history and of capitalism, but also developed cinematic forms and productions methods that mobilize the audience's awareness of the material circumstances of their own spectatorship" (157). The commingling of the properties present in Queer New Cinema and Third Cinema is also palpable in Philippine New Cinema. For indeed, it is precisely the movement's emergence that solidifed an awareness of the ways in which local movies can produce a politics around resistance and social responsibility, a desire uncommon in Philippine film production before the late 1970's.

Bakla as a Queer Modality

Any study of queerness in Filipino diasporic culture must also discuss its normative iteration within Philippine discourses. The closest word for "queer person" in Tagalog (a language which itself is problematic since it occupies the privileged position

of being the "national" dialect when there are as many as seventy others) is *bakla.* Bakla is a derogatory term that usually interpellates effeminate homosexual men, men who are seen as "passing as" female. Bakla can also mean male to female transgender identity, since it is etymologically derived from the first syllable of the word for female (babae) and the last syllable of the word for male (lalake). Yet *bakla* has always been more elusive than these seemingly fixed representative tropes. Bakla continually poses problems for those who seek to use it as an identitarian category. Consequently, its meanings have been debated in various disciplinary spaces. The most lucid definition of *bakla* comes from Martin Manalansan, who explicates its multiple meaning to provide an ethnography of gay Filipinos in New York. Refusing to use "transgender" identity as equivalent to bakla, Manalansan instead suggests:

> My non-usage of transgender identity category is due to the dissonance it creates vis-à-vis the bakla, but also, as I have mentioned before, cross-dressing and effeminacy, which are the conceptual core of the social construction of the bakla, are not necessarily encompassing realities for all my informants. The majority of my informants did not cross-dress, but they drew on the bakla as a social category and as a pool of meanings in analyzing everyday events in terms of the intersections of race, gender, and sexuality. In some situations, *bakla* symbolized Filipino queerness while *gay* symbolized white queerness. (24)

What is fascinating about Manalansan's explanation is that bakla simply cannot be limited to the sentence: "This is what a bakla *is*" (in fact the tension registered here is about a constant hesitancy to name or label it). Neither does it easily translate to the often-rehearsed declarative sentence: "I am gay." Rather, bakla is a term that better

describes a process where queerness gets performed and queerness accrues significance through a constant becoming, at once situated historically and geographically. The "pool of meanings" which configure, reconfigure, and oscillate to form the *bakla* allow it to change. For instance, Manalansan's informants, who are located in a diasporic space like New York City (and more generally the United States), view bakla as a *racialized* or ethnic form of queer identity that *gay* cannot stand in for.[13]

Bakla has been re-coded locally in the Philippines through a Western "rights based or recognition based liberatory politics", evident in the work of poet Tony Perez or historian Nicanor Tiongson. Writing about this phenomenon, Manalansan infers that: "Writing from a self conscious 'gay-liberationist' perspective, Perez's view of bakla salvation is thoroughly conditional and contingent upon an *unquestioned* set of *universal* values and qualities" (36, my emphasis). Bakla in this instance is policed into normative notions of gay identity when, as I would argue, this reduces its political force and glances over its multiple meanings. I am more inclined to listen to what Manalansan proposes, that "*bakla* is not a premodern antecedent to gay but rather, in diasporic spaces, *bakla* is recuperated and becomes an alternative form of modernity" (21). Because of its refusal to be thought of through limited identitarian signifiers such as "gay" or "transgender," the *bakla* figure is a much-needed referential node for a nuanced reading of queerness at a time when, as Lisa Duggan argues, even "queer" can be homonormative.[14] More

---

[13] This becoming-ness of *bakla* also highlights the political utility of Judith Butler's work on gender performativity. For an article that specifically discusses queer drag, or a the term "panggagaya" or queer mimicry, see Roland B. Tolentino's "

[14] Lisa Duggan writes: "This new homonormativity comes equipped with a rhetorical recoding of key terms in the history if gay politics: 'equality' becomes narrow, formal access to few conservative institutions, 'freedom' becomes impunity for bigotry and vast inequalities in commercial life and civil society, the 'right to privacy' becomes

importantly, as a modality of queerness, New Cinema redeploys the *bakla* figure, blasting it outside of colloquial usage. The multiple representations of bakla in all these films encourage new ways of viewing queerness that resist its constant conflation with consumerism and capital. Given that films of New Cinema possess such urgency, as sites to re-explore resistance not merely through plot but through aesthetics, the feel, and the sound of a filmic medium, we also must find ways to think beyond queerness as purely representational of "gay/lesbian" characters on screen, or as being akin to a mimicking of the audiences' lives. Examining the works of Ishmael Bernal and Marilou Diaz Abaya, I will parse out how New Cinema films calibrate the unexpected, and interrupt the "normative" representations of queerness that have existed in local cinema since the 1920's.

Queer Manila By Night

Manila By Night immediately posed a threat to the Marcos government and the image it sought to cultivate. Before it was submitted to the Berlin Film Festival, Imelda Marcos demanded that the film be censored and "cleaned" of its controversial content. As Roland Tolentino recalls, the first lady asked that "all footage showing the dying city or any direct mention of Manila be deleted" ("Cityscape" 166). The city's "dying" property was correspondent with the presence of poverty, crime, prostitution, homosexuality, and other "vices." Mario Hernando writes that these editing changes—the movie's shortening by a full thirty minutes and the cutting of crucial sex scenes—damaged its politics, its filmic "rhythm, texture, and visual power" (243). *Manila By Night* was the only film up

---

domestic confinement, and democratic politics itself becomes something to be escaped" (65-66).

till then that the government had banned from all forms of international exhibition. Its censorship is directly linked to representations of Manila that contradicted what Imelda wanted (and needed) to portray abroad. Yet it is precisely Bernal's unique imagining of an active, constantly moving metropolis that holds the most relevance for the militant politics present in *Manila By Night*. Its unflinching look at a city of the poor, a city of the prostitute, a city of the homosexual, and a city of the street-wise caused problems for Imelda as the governor of Metro Manila, who nonchalantly paraded the metropole as the quintessential space for a new cultural resurgence.[15]

It's of immense importance that the movie takes place in Manila. The city has always resisted attempts at normalization and restructuring. Because of the demand by international institutions like the World Bank for the metropolis to "modernize," and the Marcos regime's own push to showcase it as a "central destination" in Asia (most resonant in their holding of the ASEAN summit in Manila, and the multiple presidential visits they demanded from the United States), the municipal government enacted the massive clean-up of squatter areas and fostered controversial development projects throughout the city—the Cultural Center, the Heart Center, the Lung Center, and the ill-fitted Metro Rail Transit are some glaring examples. Manila was also expanded to include outlying townships, through a "networking" of smaller towns into the larger Metropolitan Manila. Tolentino explains that "the preparation of the city by the Marcos

---

[15] For a history of Manila's remodeling and its relationship to the Marcos's social proclivities, which is also in turn related to the couple's political fortunes domestically and internationally, see Raymond Bonner's *Waltzing with a Dictator*. For an analysis of the relationship between rampant sexwork and the excess of labor force in relationship to the decaying neo-colonial city, see Nefertiti Tadiar's "Manila's New Metropolitan Form." For an analysis of Imelda's own history as a First Lady and her various projects to "re-new"and "re-culture" both Manila and the provinces, see Katherine Ellison's *Imelda: Steel Butterfly of the Philippines*.

regime required the development of a national transport infrastructure—to speak metaphorically, a *network* of developmental grids which might foster the flow and mobility of capital through the nation" ("Cityscape" 160). On the other hand, this gridding was constantly met with failure. For one, Manila's geographic flatness made it consistently prone to flooding after each tropical storm. This made planning for an architectural systematizing of capital flows highly difficult. In terms of its populace, the quotidian resistance of squatters and other un-hinged nomads, individuals who refused to end their viral proliferation, made every effort to "clean" the city of both human and non-human waste impossible. Which is to say, Imelda's projects to make Manila "beautiful" have had to rely on purely cosmetic change, such as covering over squatter areas by creating large white walls, rather than their continual demolition. Understanding it in this light, we see how Imelda's deletion of specific scenes and the word "Manila" in *Manila By Night* register a disciplinary attempt to normalize the city. Imelda erases any possible readings of the city's resistance. The seemingly innocuous "cutting" of the movie, in a larger sense, is indicative of how state power continually attempted to control what was considered unseemly about the metropole and its populace.

Of course there is no limit to how Manila can be imagined. The Manila Bernal creates is antithetical to the ordered metropolis the dictator demanded. In plot alone, *Manila By Night* departs from realist cinema which privileges the linear depiction of characters' struggles. It does not follow protagonists through a focused chronological story about an overcoming of strife. According to Jonathan Beller, it is important that Bernal illustrate how "progress is not linearly connected with plot development according to World Bank-approved script, and individuated subjects do not emerge either

triumphant or even altogether consolidated" (356). This rhizomatic and fragmented non-linearity can be seen as an extension of Bernal's first work, *Nunal Sa Tubig* (1970), which applied the same aesthetic and narrative techniques to discuss female sexuality. In *Manila By Night*, however, this non-chronological form serves other purposes. This non-linearity is a strategic move to resist the very elision Imelda enacted, one that was expected from the government censorship board. Cutting, editing, and the changing of movies' endings were heavily practiced during this time.

Manila by Night also presents an excessive display of sex work and drug trafficking. During the regime's height, the government condoned sex work and drug abuse on the city streets with the stipulation that they serve the purposes of monetary gain for the police, which in turn furthered corruption through cronyism. *Manila By Night*'s editing shows its audience a paradox they are familiar with: sex work and drug trafficking must in actuality only happen *on the streets* of Manila, but never *on screen*. Aside from showing the audience that sex work and drug trafficking *are* rampant in the city, what I find fascinating about Bernal's work are the rich relationships formed out of these monetary exchanges. Even in this most seemingly goal oriented form of bodily exchange, possibilities for dissidence can be performed through the presence of an uncontrollable and excessive pleasure inherent in these interactions. At a period when the Marcos regime required a networked populace, when it was precisely the need for the control of chaos that justified Martial Law, it is, then, the chaotic precariousness of the characters' relationships with each other in *Manila By Night*, their constant professing of and withdrawal of intimacy, that serves as an effective allegory of an entire city's refusal to be "networked" into these revitalization projects. Narrative breaks, discontinuities, and

fissures are heightened in order to juxtapose the characters' refusal to be molded into the state sponsored script that demanded they conform to particular forms of affinity—affinities that must, in the end, further the flow of capital *through* the city and its populace.

The camera simultaneously gazes at the city in motion as it follows a gamut of disparate "marginal" characters weave in and out of the city's own "perverse" spaces. The most banal interactions of the film's protagonists—when the lesbian drug addict falls in love with a blind woman who is only interested in the drugs she provides for free, when that same blind woman is almost sold to Japanese businessmen by her failed lover, when the bakla figure is able to discern that the "love" for him could only be an illusion, when the prostitute turned pious mother learns that her "love" cannot save a son who has a bakla lover—highlight just how unmitigated pleasure can be. This pleasure *both* conforms and moves away from what the conjugal dictators demanded. Characters run into each other in its dark alleys, Luneta Park, squatter crevices, and red light districts. These perverse spaces, even though controlled by government agencies like the police, offer the possibility of unrestrained pleasure *because* they are mostly used for drugs and sex during the darkness of the evenings. This also highlights the importance of the nocturnal shift the entire movie is pre-disposed to, for it is the Manila bathed in darkness that is also the Manila that is full of possibility. Although the monetary exchanges occurring in these dark neon-lit spaces still benefited the state, they also fostered pleasure than could not be easily plugged into a formula of capitalistic exchange. Pleasure in this film is unstable, fickle, and deeply powerful. Pleasure cannot be corralled within a linear narrative, and it escapes each shot, and jumps into others.

Jonathan Beller further notes that if "Manila is a cinema", then "its illusions, as well as its spirit, are made out of its people" (357). By connecting the city to its inhabitants, the director taps into the metropolis's thriving force. In a metonymic sense, Ishmael Bernal imagines the resistance of the people transecting the gritty and dark Metropolitan Manila as part and parcel of the dissidence that has always characterized the city. The camera shots he uses are often unstable. There are no large-scale panoramic frames in the film. Bernal focuses on characters who constantly walk, run, or sprint through the city. The screen shots are almost manic, refusing to situate themselves in a comfortable position as stable representations of the setting. Both the people's movement and camera's gaze are, in a sense, nomadic. Discussing nomadic subjectivity, Rosi Braidotti writes that, "Nomadic shifts designate a creative sort of becoming; a performative metaphor that allows for otherwise unlikely encounters and unsuspected sources of interaction of experience and of knowledge" (6). We see this form of nomadicity existing in *Manila By Night,* furthering the contact of characters with each other, a contact that cannot be easily policed because it inadvertently produces much needed experiences about how characters can survive Martial Law Manila. This nomadic ontology fosters the making and re-making of their world, in ways that are counter-productive for capital. Nomadic subjectivity is a key site for explicating resistance, because it highlights the failure of state power to police citizens precisely in the spaces where they can be most stealthy and playful.

The pleasure coming from these tactile interactions is reminiscent of a "dying" space in another city, on another continent. In *Times Square Red/Times Square Blue*, Samuel Delany writes a treatise on how to revive the generative relationships (sexual and

non-sexual alike) that existed in Times Square before it was cleansed of its "seedy" locales. In one particular instance, the author ruminates on whether love would better characterize what occurs in the quick and furtive interactions between the city's marginalized people: "Despite moments of infatuation on both sides, these were not love relationships. A few hustlers excepted, they were not business relationships. They were encounters whose most important aspect was that mutual pleasure—an aspect that, yes, colored all their aspects, but that did not involve any sort of life commitment. Most were affable and brief because, beyond pleasure, these were people you had little in common with. Yet what greater field of force than pleasure can human beings share?" (56). For Delany, although these moments cannot be categorized as love relationships, they evoke a different discourse of desire, pleasure, and intimacy as potent as love. The pleasure that Delany experiences is, by its very definition, queer. It is queer not only because pleasure moves beyond normative modes of affiliation (heterosexual, procreative, and between people of similar classes). It is queer because, in its vast richness, it stems from relationships that cannot foreclose possibility. Similar to the nomadic consciousness that continually opens onto itself, the knowledge gained from these interactions has multiple valences. Some examples of these queer openings: Delany speaks of the pleasure a quirky sexual encounter brings, especially when it does not end with ejaculation. He speaks of the pleasure of being called "professor", especially by a regular sexual partner in a movie theater. He discusses the pleasure of realizing what forms of community exist in the most unexpected places, such as a pornography theater's restroom. He narrates the pleasure of providing someone he does not have a monogamous relationship with, and someone in clear need, with a meal.

Where's The Love? Queer Intimacy in the Neo-Colonial City

Figure 1

The tension between a potent form of intimacy, a queer form of relationality, and the desire to name, categorize, and corral it, consistently gets registered through the frequently asked question in *Manila By Night*: Where's the love? In the proceeding discussion, I suggest that the tension Samuel Delany highlights, between the interpellation of specific forms of queer intimacies through limited narratives of love, and the ways in which they escape this scripting, becomes a crucial site for producing a critique of the Marcos regime. As a palimpsest, narratives about love are intensely resonant to the urban poor watching the film. Which is to say, the political work Bernal's film enacts is inherently linked to the production of discourses and images that, although recognizable to the viewers, also act as crucial destabilizing mechanisms, challenging them to be aware of any complicity to current conditions. The film's political project, although veiled as mundane reflections on a quotidian affect and product of sociality, nonetheless register with an audience that is used to a particular deployment of love through hetero-normative narratives of melodrama and through the dominant political

posturing of Imelda and Ferdinand Marcos as the quintessential couple. Moreover, studying the ways in which the city and its inhabitants perform a constant yearning for and profession of love, I exhibit the ways in which queer characters register the tensions, contradictions, and failures of these citations, thus placing these individuals within the larger political project of demands for justice and redress amidst governmental disciplinary and policing mechanisms.

Uncannily, Bernal's film begins with one character's enthusiastic, and unstable, profession of love. Without any hesitation, and in a drugged out high, the lesbian drug pusher Kano stands on the ledge of a building rooftop. She proclaims her love for the city; her voice conveys a hint of euphoria as she utters in the most carefree tone: "I love you Manila, no matter what you are. Young, old, smelly, ugly, woman, man, bakla, or lesbian" [I love you Manila, kahit na ano ka pa man. Bata, matanda, mabaho, pangit, babae, lalaki, bakla, o tomboy.] Kano is covered in darkness. This darkness encourages her to yell what is marked as excessive queer affect. The dark serves as a space for a form of connection to the city removed from the "clean" and "sanitary" place that Imelda desired Manila to represent. Kano's love is messy, because it moves away from the romantic ideals commonly shown in Philippine melodrama. Melodramatic films often deploy love as that which exists between lovers in a courtship or marriage. Often the plot then revolves around a mistress who attempts to come in between this love. It is also often about an idealization of love for another person, one who reciprocates this love. This love is certainly not love for a filthy, dirty, and chaotic city. As a point of departure, one that the film continually restages, Kano's love is instead about the pleasures of being on a cognitive and geographic high. She sees everything from this dual pedestal, and is

able to discern the sensate and carnal experiences the city and its citizens offer. The only hints of color the audience sees come from the neon lights of the clubs above, clubs that entice further contact and unmitigated pleasure through drugs and sex. Aside from Kano, Bea and her guide are standing on the rooftop with her. They are present for only one purpose, to get high with Kano. Although the blind masseuse cannot see the city, she can, however, feel and hear it through her drugged out "trip." Bea's tagging along to acquire a similar high also exhibits the pleasures of the metropolis, directly channeled through the city's inhabitants.

Kano chooses to state her elation as love. Yet her standing on the ledge, which literalizes her own tenuous position on screen, underscores the very instability of the "love" she professes. The love Kano so assuredly mentions in the beginning, as a declamatory statement, starts breaking down after its initial utterance. Kano's love dematerializes when she moves from love of the city to her affection for Bea. Prompted by Bea's assertion that she plans to go with her boyfriend Greg Williams to Saudi Arabia, Kano feigns suicide, and then angrily asks: "So do you really love me?" [Mahal mo ba talaga ako?] In response to Kano's question, Bea quips: "Of course, you give me drugs. Come on, let's do shotgun again." This non-sequiter highlights the tenuousness of love in *Manila By Night*, regardless of its citational recognizability. Bea's love is inherently linked to the sensation that drugs provide through Kano's generosity. Her love for Greg Williams is equally uncertain, since it is based on the hope of a new beginning through his job as an overseas contract worker. Both Bea and Kano will be betrayed. Ironically, the Manila Kano feels for ends up being cruel to her. When she tries to run away from the police at the movie's climax, the streets do not offer her shelter. The clubs do not offer

sanctuary. Darkness becomes useless. Manila at night cannot save her from "rotting in jail." Moreover, Bea will not offer the massage parlor as a place of respite when Kano most needs it. Similarly, Greg Williams will also betray Bea. He will attempt to sell her to Japanese businessmen, after his contractor in Saudi Arabia swindles him. He must find the means of making a living in the Philippines, and decides to use Bea's body as his livelihood.

Is it a coincidence that all of the interactions between characters, especially when they involve sexual intercourse or drugs, are punctuated with a demand for, a profession of, or a disavowal of love? I would argue that Ishmael Bernal uses love as an allegory, and calls on the local audience's recognition of an often-rehearsed narrative in Philippine cinema and Philippine politics during this historical period. The thematic of betrayal and love is common in most melodramatic movies in the Philippines in the 1970's and 1980's. Love teams such as the infamous Nora Aunor/Tirso Cruz coupling catapulted formerly unknown actors into "super stardom". The government also proliferated this romantic ideal. Imelda and Ferdinand Marcos mass-produced themselves as a "love team", marketing their marriage as a national conjugal spectacle. Their strong marriage is a metaphor for a unified and stronger nation-state. The production of a veneer of love, especially in its most hetero-patriarchal form, was about disciplining a population to be complicit in their being subjected to the dictatorship.

Understanding these dynamics, Ishmael Bernal uses love as a place to initiate critique. Bernal breaks with these chains of filmic and political signification; love's iterability and citational force are dependent upon its constantly changing meaning. Love is not linked to a romanticized notion of reciprocity but is instead a signifier for excessive

pleasure: pleasure despite illusion, pleasure despite contradiction, and pleasure amidst suffering. The "love" characters feel, for the city and each other, is always jaded and precarious precisely since it always depends upon forms of exchange that are never fully achievable. The love in Bernal's film, contrary to the limited phrases, images, and narratives the Marcos regime deployed, produces political possibilities inherent in the interactions between citizens that, in their most banal forms, produce complex notions of kinship, militancy, and knowledge. These allow them to enjoy, live, be pained, and survive. For Bernal, love is a hermeneutic for what can be an affect that defies any form of logic.

I argue that the practicing of love in *Manila By Night* is a site of social transformation. In *The Methodology of the Oppressed*, Chela Sandoval suggests that love has the ability to be "unruly, willful, and anarchic" (141). Tracing a genealogy of love through the work of Roland Barthes in *A Lover's Discourse*, Sandoval argues for the ways in which love's potency gets re-produced in the writings of Gloria Anzaldúa, Cherríe Moraga, and Trinh T. Minh-ha, Third World feminists who deploy love's modalities in their ruminations in order to imagine a feminist approach to challenging oppression: "These writers who theorize social change understand 'love' as a hermeneutic, as a set of practices that can transit all citizen-subjects, regardless of social class, toward a differential mode of consciousness and its accompanying technologies of method and social movement" (142). Love performs what she refers to as differential consciousness, which can be understood "as the zero degree of meaning, counter-narrative, utopia/no-place, the abyss, amor en Aztlan, soul" (147). Differentiality makes love an epistemological framework that is always negotiated, always moving, and is

always in a state of becoming. Sandoval is able to configure love as that which always resists teleology. It is thus an essential element in an already resistant methodology for those who experience oppression: resistant to particular forms of expression, resistant to academic and critical reading, resistant to closure and definition, resistant to a seemingly fixed category.

Through Bernal's deft touch, love is teased out similarly. *Manila By Night* queers dominant representations of love in order to make it a space for revolutionary possibility. The continual obsessive iteration of love in the film simultaneously makes the movement of "falling in love" and "falling out of love" recognizable to an audience while also blasting it out of the ways it has been depicted. Bernal understands that for the audience watching, the constant turn to love allows them to both recognize normative scripts around this affect, while also indexing how it has been re-deployed and changed. Akin to Sandoval's reading of this affect, love for Bernal is constantly a site of differential positionality, an unfixed, fragmented, and constantly fluctuating epistemological framework that allows characters to undo and redo their world. Love is that which buttresses the logic of discipline and control, and that which also allows this logic to break down.

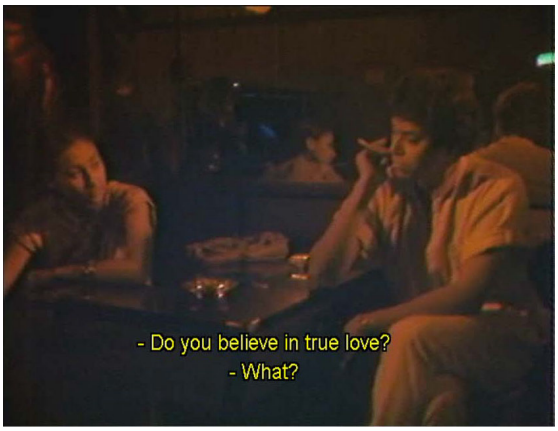


Figure 2

If love is a site for political consciousness in the movie, one of the routes to this consciousness is mapped out through the ability to gauge when love is only an illusion. In *Manila By Night*, this ability is squarely placed on the shoulders of Sister Sharon, the bakla figure who, in its abject representation, produces an undoing of its own phobic re-citation. In one particular scene, Kano and Sister Sharon meet for the first time in Bea's massage parlor. This is, consequently, the only time that the two legibly queer characters will share the screen at all in the entire film. Both are bathed in red light. The music is 70's disco and upbeat. This differs from other background music during other scenes, which is a psychedelic compilation of non-synchronic rhythms often used to signal drugs or sex. Sharon is at the parlor to help Bea see an eye specialist. He does so as a favor to one of his lovers, Alex. Alex has in turn asked Sharon because he is Bea's customer. After discussing the music, Kano informs Sharon of a curiosity about his "kind." Sharon is offended, and Kano attempts to soothe him: "Don't get offended. Don't you … aren't men hard?" Sharon replies, "Look, that's what makes it delicious". Kano's turn to a double entendre represents an understanding of her own gendered positionality within the streets of Manila as a lesbian. She confronts the difficulty of navigating the streets among men, and embodies the ways in which her queerness is hierarchized differently from Sharon's. Unlike Sharon, Kano is also subject to sex work and prostitution because of her class. Kano's drug pushing is about a resistance to this normative form of gendered labor. Sharon's reply is meant to be comedic, and, consequently, disturbing to its viewers. Bernal confronts the expectations and preconceptions about the bakla figure. In the cultural lexicon, a common phobic stereotype about the bakla figure is that he is parasitic

for “pleasures of the male flesh.” This insatiable desire must be fed in any way, the most common of which entails maintaining a relationship with a “straight” man where the bakla figure is a provider. Thus, bakla in Philippine culture also often phobically gets read through classed narratives of patronage and support. Bakla relationships are about classed forms of intimacy.

After Sharon’s quirky comment about the deliciousness of men, Kano further asks: “Do you believe in true love” (Figure 2)? This question is consistent with the movie’s beginning. Kano still searches for a logic that adequately describes how she feels for Bea. Initially, Sharon gives in. Ever so briefly, he envisions the love of the men he supports. This momentary lapse is a temporary matter. Sharon abruptly comes to a stark realization: “Stop with your love talk, that is already passé. You know true love, that’s just an illusion. They say when you have true love life becomes beautiful. When I fall in love, life goes to shit.” For the majority of the local audience watching this movie, in a majority Catholic country, it would be understandable why Sharon’s love “goes to shit.” The bakla figure’s love is unlawful and morally unacceptable. On the other hand, what does it mean that the love of *all* characters in *Manila By Night*, regardless if they are bakla or not, also “goes to shit?” What is striking about Sharon’s statement is that it comes to voice a noticeable failure of how love has been constituted and re-constituted in the film. Which is to say, Sharon’s resistance to love is fascinating because it produces—akin to the differential consciousness that Sandoval mentions—an epistemological position that constantly undoes illusion through one’s abject status. Sharon becomes a voice of resistance in this film precisely because of the ways in which “queer love” must always be at a remove from the love of all the other characters. If love

is a representative trope for dominant narratives that flatten rich and unstable relationships between individuals, and a larger allegory for the Marcoses themselves, it is then compelling that Sharon sees this flattening out. It is precisely the bakla figure's disposition to be phobically read as someone who can only be loved a certain way, and never in others, that allows him to serve as an epistemological site to question love's very limitation as a signifier for other forms of intimacy and pleasure.

To see one's own oppression, to decipher one's own abjection, also provides a site for alternative forms of queer intimacy that escape identitarian formations. In another moment of the film, Bea and Sharon have a discussion about "seeing" as an act of understanding. The scene begins at an altar on the street. Sharon, Bea, and her guide pray in front of the Virgin Mary. They stand still, offering their contrition for the day. Everything around them is silent. A horse-drawn carriage passes by behind them, interrupting the solitude of the moment. Then, the three proceed to walk around the streets of Manila. The camera moves with them, as they pass by the city's various slum districts on their way to the hospital. Sharon asks Bea how long has she been blind, to which she responds, "since three." Sharon then delivers a speech about the burden of seeing: "You're so lucky. I mean, that is the tragedy of my life. I see everything. Even things that I am not supposed to, I see. Even if there is no possibility of seeing anything, I still see things". Bea then replies, "Maybe you are just seeing things in your imagination". Sharon's response is much more pointed: "Actually, what I mean is: everyone in this world is crazy, the faces that they show us, that's not their real face. People have different faces. A different face for their families, friends, spouse, gay friends, etc, etc. Right? Faces keep changing. Like layers. For example, when my

boyfriend tells me 'I love you,' what face is that? If I know, it's for money." Bea tries to end the discussion, "Why are you going to pity yourself? Even if you're crazy, the world turns. Everything nice that we do comes back, right?" To which Sharon's final reply is: "Queen of martyrs, part two".

This scene is striking because of how layered it is. First, it is consistent with the ways in which Sharon is able to discern what is around him, to see the illusion of love that his boyfriends deploy for material gain. Sharon's ability to see a lack of authenticity, the "different faces" of people, can be read as a direct allusion to the many faces of the Marcos regime. Consistent with other New Cinema films, Bernal constantly deployed allegorical metaphors to discuss larger questions about the urban poor's political and economic plight. The questioning of love in this moment is also about the questioning of *hope* for love. It is a turn to naiveté and a desire for social consciousness. Sharon wants to hope, wants to believe that the love he experiences is "real", yet as the queer character who ends up seeing how the other characters betray one another (precisely because he plays the role of the provider), he is able to see when this love repeatedly fails. The scene is also a critique of the Catholic Church, which fosters a valuation of sacrifice. The movement of the characters from altar to hospital—where they will inevitably discover that Adel is not a nurse—directly highlights the harmful ways that narratives of religious sacrifice have indoctrinated the Filipino population into accepting their plight. Sharon's quip at the end about Bea's martyrdom states this point implicitly. Reiterating the importance of placing the nomadic subject at the center of knowledge production, this scene is also about the literal movement of the characters through the streets of Manila. The movement through the slums of the city highlights both the aesthetic and auditory

aspects of the walk. Although Bea cannot see, she is aware of the oppression that is around her, at one point even saying that she can "see" and "feel" things, to which Sharon says, "but you are blind". What Bea is alluding to at this moment is not the literal seeing of events but the awakening of a revolutionary consciousness that she herself must enact. Bea, like Sharon, can also discern the oppression of the Filipino people.

The connection between Bea and Kano, their intimacy, is further strengthened by their climactic screams towards the movie's conclusion. After Adel's murder, Sharon, with his coterie of bakla friends and Pebrero, visit the morgue to pay respects to her body. They find out, however, that Adel has been shipped accidentally to the province. Amidst this confusion, Sharon bellows out an eerie, resounding, and acute scream of "Ayoko na!" (I don't want to do this anymore). The scream echoes in this shot, and bleeds into others. As he screams, Sharon writhes in pain on the pavement. This is the first time a character's body is shown in such physical agony. Similar to the ways in which Sharon voices the audience's plight though a refusal of love, he also channels this suffering through his body, through the literal convulsion of his constitution. The last scream belongs to Bea. Bea screams as she discovers that her boyfriend has decided to pawn her to Japanese businessmen as a sex worker. Although she does not see where she is being led, she hears the men from afar. Her face is shown, attentive and alert. In a decisive move, she starts kicking and screaming to break free from Greg. Bea is able to deploy her skills for "seeing" amidst the lies of others. Similar to Sharon, Bea refuses to be complicit in what she witnesses. Reading the "scream" in another context, Fred Moten has noted that it is a crucial scene of subjection and intervention in African American cultural production. In *Manila By Night*, Bea's and Sharon's bodily and vocal screams provide a

palpable critique of the Marcos regime and the failure of its policies. By turning to the most resonant images and sounds of anguish, Bernal presents the audience with a jarring image representative of the larger political issues at stake during this turbulent period.

Contact(ing) Within Manila

As I have been demonstrating, Ishmael Bernal blasts *Manila By Night's* characters outside the boundaries that their intimacies are supposed to conform to. The uncontrollable field of force—the field of force that critic Wimal Dissayanake links to the effectivity of Third Cinema's politics and aesthetics—in Bernal's film is unquestionably linked to the proliferation of the most sensate pleasure that bonds individuals together and rips them apart. Which is to say, the power that *Manila By Night* has, and the threat it possesses, is directly linked to the forms of pleasure that stem from the encounters between its characters, pleasures that can escape the movement and desires of capital, pleasures antithetical to the projects the regime imagined for the city and its inhabitants. These relationships are queer because they move away from dominant scripts that dictate how people enjoy each other and hurt each other. Even the most heteronormative relationship in the movie is "damaged," so that the most pious wife Virgie is "tainted" with a morally dubious past as a sex worker. As Jonathan Beller notes, if "*Manila By Night* steals images of the unofficial Manila from those who would control its representation, effectively stealing cinema from capital, and coupling a conceptualization of totalitarian domination with an aesthetics of liberation" ("Third Cinema in a Global Frame" 360), this aesthetics of liberation is nonetheless linked to the multiple ways in

which pleasure functions in the film, the unbridled pleasure that exists amidst pain and suffering.

These intimacies, rather than only being categorized as redeployments of love, can also be thought of through what Samuel Delany refers to as "contact". Differentiating "contact" from "networking," Delany writes, "Networking tends to be professional and motive-driven. Contact tends to be more broadly social and appears random. Networking crosses class lines only in the most vigilant manner. Contact regularly crosses class lines in those public spaces in which interclass encounters are at their most frequent. Networking is dependent on institutions to promote the necessary propinquity … where these social skills can maneuver" (129). Contact is everywhere in Bernal's work. More nearly, contact is what drives it. One could easily imagine a grid of "contacts" that crisscross these characters' experiences, enriching and spoiling their relationships with each other, with pleasure as their key motivator. Given that Bernal seeks to critique the Marcos administration, one of the most effective ways of doing so must entail imagining a city and inhabitants that produce blockages to the "networked" flow of bodies and "goal oriented" architectural layout aimed at benefiting the Philippine government and capital.

Figure 3

The "queerest" sexual encounter in the movie can be read through this notion of contact. After Bea finds out that there is no eye specialist to help her see, that they have been conned by Adel, she accidentally runs into Kano. At first, she resists her, "I hate you. I hate the world." Kano attempts to soothe Bea with their childhood stories in Olonggapo City. The constant mentioning of Olonggapo City at this moment is seminal to another critique Bernal introduces to this film. This provincial city is an effective "other" site to Manila, a place that similarly bears the traces of the American imperial project because it houses one of the largest U.S. bases in Asia. After Bea calms down, the two start walking the streets, again an effective metaphor for a refusal to be pegged down, to be located in a stagnant position. After Kano provides Bea with alcohol, they find a wooden cart near a filthy canal; both get into the cart. There is nothing around them but garbage, and Bea immediately notes the smell. The camera pans and we see them holding hands. Their hands touch in the middle of the screen. Their bodies are distributed evenly. There's also background music, the first time any sexually charged scene with Bea has had any music. For the majority of the movie, Bea's sexual intercourse with men is filled with silence, or children playing in the background. Interestingly enough, the music Bernal uses is the same as that which marks scenes when characters are high on drugs or sex. After initially saying "no", a "no" that can be read as disingenuous because she is smiling, Bea's breasts are fondled by Kano. She asks her, "Why do you like it there?" Kano then responds, "That's where the rhapsody is" (figure 3). This one wanton act of sexual pleasure, one that is reciprocal, is crucial because this is the first time that Bernal stages Bea's own joy at having sex. Throughout *Manila By*

Night, all of Bea's sexual encounters have been obligatory (because of her work), and have been with men. On the other hand, this sexual encounter disrupts all the other ones in the film, and destabilizes all the ways sex has been linked to monetary exchange. What we see here is sex that is playful. Play sex in a pushcart, amidst heaps of trash, beside a noisome canal, can be as erotically charged as the other iterations of sexual intercourse in the movie. But also, pleasurable play sex amidst heaps of filth produces intensity, a feeling, and an image that is precisely destabilizing to the city Imelda wanted to create.

It is ultimately the contact between disparate people that resists the most violent elision in the movie. *Manila After Dark* "ends" with a non-diegetic narrator—one who had not existed in the movie before its conclusion. This omnipresent voice, echoing and booming with authority, "cleans" up the characters and the city by discussing their turn "away" from immorality. Following a developmental narrative, each of the characters either learns from or is punished because of their experiences with "drugs" and "sex." Alex the bisexual drug user decides to clean up, and is a contributing member to society. Kano, because of her drug pushing, will rot in jail. Baby, the woman impregnated out of wedlock, is fortunate enough to marry a doctor who understands her "problem". Virgie the former prostitute turned housewife is now a social worker who gives advice to other women who have "gone astray." Bea the blind masseuse can no longer stand the filth of her line of work, and is now working as a waitress in a deaf and blind restaurant in Manila. Sister Sharon, the bakla clothes maker, after joining a religious organization, and abandoning his clothes business, has "fixed" what is wrong with his mind. He has successfully been able to refuse calls of the flesh. Val, the former drug addict, has learned to study well and is now a good student. As these closures exhibit, this summary becomes

a decisive moment when all the "loose ends are stitched together," when the queerness of all the characters is eliminated. This narration clearly posits that since they are all agents in their own "moral demise," they are also able to change their fate to succeed as "stable" citizens of the nation-state.

On a visual level, this narrative intrusion fails because of the dissonance between the miraculous transformations being mentioned and the scenes demonstrating these changes. In fact, as the narrator goes through each character, the shots that are used are repetitions of the scenes that have already been used in the film. Rather than provide the audience with new scenes that depict these transfigurations, the visuality of what is sutured to the narration contradicts the seemingly stable story being told. Aside from this visual dissonance, contact further undoes this re-working of the movie. Contact highlights how encounters between the city and its inhabitants cannot be subsumed under narratives of progression or development. Immediately after the narrator ends his tirade, Alex is shown walking through the streets of Manila. At one point, he encounters a man dressed as a valentine's heart. Together with another man playing the guitar—coincidentally strumming a song that Alex himself played in the beginning of the movie—the three of them sit on the wall of Luneta Park. They do not speak to each other. Sitting at Luneta Park, enjoying the pleasures of this exchange, and the moment when this brief encounter could have led to other intimacies, is a counter-narrative to this obtrusive closure to *Manila By Night*. Luneta Park is a site for pleasure, sexual and non-sexual alike. Their sitting on the wall, on the edge of this space, positions the three as agents in what could be other routes to intimacy and kinship. The circulating of the song, which was played at the film's beginning by Alex, and which another man plays at its

end, is about the narrative's refusal of closure—it is circular and not linear. Delany writes that "Contact encounters so dramatic are rare—but real. The more ordinary forms of contact yield *their* payoff in moments of crisis" (125). In a moment of national crisis, it is fascinating that Bernal imagines how contact, between the most disparate people and the city, can unhinge how the state has tried to require "networked" relationships between citizens of the metropole.

Transgender Injury in Alyas Baby Tsina

Figure 4

Similar to *Manila By Night*, Marilou Diaz Abaya's *Alyas Baby Tsina* offers a critique of the Marcos presidency by centrally locating turmoil in Metropolitan Manila. Departing from Bernal's piece, however, Diaz Abaya explicitly dates her film's events as occurring in 1969. 1969 is the year that Ferdinand Marcos was inaugurated into his second presidential term. 1969 is also three years shy of the declaration of Martial Law, which would be in effect for almost sixteen years, even in 1983 when the movie was released. 1969 is also the moment when intense rallying against the president's re-election occurred, as protests swept the country. Choosing this particular turning point in

Philippine politics makes the film's initial scenes even more jarring to its audience. Diaz Abaya shocks them by displaying mass chaos and unrest on an immense canvas, about a past they've now been living for quite some time. Even though Marcos's acceptance speech focused on the elimination of corruption and mass poverty, the movie suggests that the city's streets and the anger of its people tell a far more harrowing tale. Diaz Abaya begins with bedlam the like of which has not been aestheticized in any New Cinema film. The movie's initial shot is a wide scale panoramic sweep depicting civil unrest, as men shout at each other, women utter inaudible sounds and desperate screams, church bells clang ominously in the background, and people punch, hit, jostle, and kick each other. This panoramic shot is sutured with rally footage, as Filipinos take to the streets with banners that demand "Makibaka" (fight) [Figure 4]. The paradoxical juxtaposition of the organized march with the disjointed unrest sends a palpable visual message; four years of the presidency have done nothing to uplift the lives of the Filipino people. The film demands political change.

Out of this disarray emerges Baby. We first see Baby as she starts walking away from the crowded landscape. Her nonchalant and confident gait makes her easy to single out even amidst the camera's display of mass hysteria. After a few seconds, the camera chooses to leave its stable position in order to gaze at Baby's traveling figure. It moves in further for a close-up of her body in motion. Baby continues to strut, ignoring the chaos around her. She barely even utters a response when someone beside her is shot and dies. After this almost comedic, if somewhat overly dramatic death scene, the camera slowly focuses on her legs and shoes. These are shown stepping over a trash strewn road, wet pavement, and dead corpses, none of which Baby pays any attention to. At the end of

Baby's walk, a crazy man confronts her in front of the nightclub *Pussy Cat*. He admonishes her to pray for peace and love, to which Baby replies: "Even peace and love are not free now." Baby's initial immersion in and movement out of the crowd provides a key visual index that strategically positions the female sex worker as a central allegorical figure for the failure of Marcos's economic and political policies. Baby is indeed a part of "the masses". Her sex work is the result of the poverty she strives to get out of, and an index of the resilience that is needed to survive. Baby's rebuttal of the man's comments echoes a critique resonant in the film: nothing is free in Martial Law Manila, even the most intangible dreams and objects. She sells her body to avoid landing in the same fate as the people she distances herself from.

From its initial shots to its plot development, *Alyas Baby Tsina* offers the audience legible representatives of their own experiences under the Marcos regime. As I've mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, the majority of the people watching these films are from the urban poor. Precisely because the audience belongs to this particular class, the general experiences of the characters on screen are resonant with and reflect their own experiences off-screen. As the most resonant representation of allegorical female identity in the film, Baby symbolizes the oppressed Filipino woman. Her being caught up in a proliferating system of bodily exchange calls for the audience's identification with the ways their own situations have been fostered by the Marcos regime. Departing from depictions of the "passive" female victim who is forcefully dragged into prostitution, however, Baby also symbolizes the ways in which an individual can resist her subjugation through a refusal to sell her body. This is exemplified in her stubborn refusal to have sex with the ringleader of the police, Toto,

who is responsible for the district where the Pussy Cat is located. She also refuses to "tip" him, claiming that it is her hard earned money and no one else's.

Discussing the consistent representation of the prostitute figure in contemporary Philippine cinema, Gina Marchetti suggests that "prostitution not only provides an excuse for the erotic display of women's bodies and a reification of their powerlessness (as it does in Western Cinema), but it also allows for a spark of recognition from men as well as women in the audience. Impoverished and powerless viewers can see their own representations within these fantasies—their own desperation, their own lack of control over the most intimate features of their lives" (32). Marchetti's reading of "the prostitute" raises questions about the legibility and citational iterations of female identity in *Alyas Baby Tsina,* and in other Philippine New Cinema movies that place the prostitute at a privileged site for recognizing both victimhood and resistance. What "woman" is produced through the recognition of the prostitute's plight? What does it mean to allegorize narratives of abuse, resistance, and the demands for "justice" by deploying a particular figuration of victimized female identity? In order to interrogate these questions, I turn to the most legible queer character in Diaz Abaya's work. I would suggest that the transgender bakla highlights the tenuousness *and* proscriptive recognizability of "woman as victim" in the calls for political change. Indeed, if the female sex worker is a key site for both mapping out a gendered form of oppression and resistance, Diaz Abaya complicates this figure's citational force through Baby's friend and co-worker Sandra.

In order to highlight Sandra's own relationship to sex work, Diaz Abaya first introduces her in the Pussy Cat. After Baby enters the club, she takes a seat near the

burlesque stage.[16] Sandra emerges from the back, with an American soldier in tow. They are arguing with each other. Sandra yells at the soldier, first in English: "You Americans are sons of a bitches". Baby asks Sandra what she is fuming about, to which she replies in Tagalog: "This guy, he's been touching me everywhere in the dark but then he doesn't want to pay." The chaos of this encounter causes the club Mama San to approach. She pacifies the American soldier, as he complains, "I thought he was a girl god damn it." Sandra quips back (again in Tagalog): "If you want a real woman, then make a full payment. This is genuine." The American then replies in a final blow, "You're a fake." This dialogue is marked with what is an already familiar narrative about bakla as transgender identity in Philippine local discourse. Sandra is introduced through a discourse of failed authenticity, one that relies on the performative inability of the bakla to "be a real woman." This is consistent with another part of the movie. After Sandra and Baby have tagged along with Roy to his gambling place, Sandra mentions her need for a "true man", to which Baby's advises, "Sandra, look at what is real. You will be happier if you know where you are placed".

---

[16] Before Baby takes a seat, there is a peripheral exchange that is noteworthy precisely because of the allegories around American imperialism that I suggest the movie displays. Baby banters with a pregnant co-worker who is expecting a "blue seal" baby. Similar to the staging of sex clubs and nightclubs in various New Cinema works (and in Filipino American Literature), the Pussy Cat is an effective metaphor for the effects of the U.S. incursion into Philippine politics. GI soldiers abound in the club. The pregnant sex-worker's excitement at having a "blue seal child", blue seal being the metaphor for U.S. made products, highlight how American imperialism literally gets produced through her body. This scene also elicits a privileging of ethnic mixing, another common thread in New Cinema films.

The notion of "realness" occupies a privileged position in the ways gender performativity gets policed, and transgender individuals particularly get oppressed. In *Undoing Gender*, Judith Butler notes that, "to be called unreal, and to have that call, as it were, institutionalized as a form of differential treatment, is to become the other against which human is made. It is the inhuman, the beyond human, the less than human, and the border that secures the human in its ostensible reality. To be called a copy, to be called unreal, is thus one way in which one can be oppressed" (218). The scene of abjection that Butler maps out, its citational force, exists in the exchange between Sandra and the soldier. The injurious act in this scene is necessarily linked to a re-citation of a tradition that negates Sandra's position "as" a woman, one that the bakla figure can never occupy precisely because she will always only be "passing" as such. Not only is Sandra's body subject to the whims of heterosexual men, it becomes a site for perpetrating further negation precisely because it is never a "good enough" body. Sandra's body can never be legible for sexual pleasure and exchange, in an economy where payment is always already necessitated on the constant production of a virginal Filipino womanhood that is available for conquering.

On the other hand, is it significant that the man performing the injurious speech act is an American soldier, one who is presumably stationed in the Philippines because of the American government's relationship with the Marcoses and U.S. colonial rule in the islands since the beginning the late nineteenth century? Aside from providing an instance of trans-phobia, what is most compelling about this exchange is that Sandra recasts and unseats all the American soldier's expectations around the commodity he is buying. Which is to say, Sandra's failure to be a woman, at precisely the moment in which an

American soldier desires her to be, produces a dilemma around the very stability of the purchasing power that the soldier possesses. Even though this phobic scene of abjection is about the usage of an almost over-determined representation of transgender bakla in Philippine cinema, it is also a re-staging that is legibly fueled by the anxieties to and resistance around the American imperial project. What I mean to suggest here is that this moment of trans-phobia and homo-phobia, amidst its violent oppression of the queer subject, also produces the destabilization of the American soldier's expectation about what he is buying, one that catalyzes, inadvertently, a critique of the very ability of the American to buy the commodity in the first place. Moreover, this moment "queers" the American soldier, a "queering" that brings to the fore his own complicity in wanting and producing a "woman" precisely because he has been duped into groping, touching, and caressing a "man". The "queering" of the American soldier also brings to light the often glanced over relationship between strictly scripted narratives of heterosexuality and American post-imperial patronage.

If the female sex worker is a national allegory for the pillaging of women by American men, what does it mean for the bakla figure to replace this citational imperative at this particular juncture in the film? Through a Foucauldian understanding of power, Butler suggests that although normative modalities of gender identity produce the subsequent policing of the individual who drags another gender, it is in the process of re-citation, and the misfires inherent in this staging, that we can see the possibility of gender performativity as an act of becoming that resists enclosure. She reminds us that, "although there are norms that govern what will and will not be real, and what will and will not be intelligible, they are called into question at the moment in which

performativity begins its citational practice. One surely cites norms that already exist, but these norms can be significantly de-territorialized through their citation" (*Undoing Gender* 218). As an illuminating dynamic in this exchange, Sandra gets re-cast not merely as a queer figure who is oppressed, but as a Filipino citizen who has been able to trouble an American soldier's notion of superiority. I do not suggest of course that what Sandra has done is necessarily liberatory, for her being easily replaced points to just how tenuous "resistance" actually is. What I do suggest is that this moment of misunderstanding, one rooted in Sandra's failure to be a "woman," can "deterritorialize" the limited allegories of "female identity" an audience is expecting, through the mingling of queerness with the symbolic valuation of that female identity. Often, the destroying of the Filipino woman's "purity" is also linked to the Filipinos' fear of racial contamination. In a speech given by Benigno Aquino, for instance, he warns his fellow senators of the racial mixing that is liable to occur because of the increasing prostitution during Marcos' regime, a proliferation that he suggests produces a removal of Filipino-ness through female prostitution. What is then compelling about Abaya's staging of the argument is that it departs from New Cinema films and local discourse that use female prostitution to limitedly critique American imperialism. In *Alyas Baby Tsina*, "woman" itself is called into crisis. The scene also calls into question how women's bodies have been deployed in discourses of anti-imperialism.

Figure 5

If *Alyas Baby Tsina* is fraught with a dilemma around where to "place" Sandra's sexuality and gender, it is to our pain, shock, and sorrow that she "becomes a woman" at precisely the moment in which she is subjected to the same fate, the same rape that Baby experiences under Toto and his gang. The rape scene in *Alyas Baby Tsina* is graphic, uncomfortable, and intense. After Baby refuses to have sex with Toto, he seeks revenge by ambushing the Pussy Cat and killing almost all of its sex workers. A funeral for these women follows, and it is during this funeral that Baby and Sandra are kidnapped and brought to Toto's lair. The rape scene itself is claustrophobic. Both characters are led from the elevator to a room that is covered in red light. The camera shot is centered on the room, as foreboding, non-diegetic music exists in the background. Baby can be heard, struggling as she screams alternating yells of "Please have pity on us" and "Sandra." Sandra is in the foreground. She is stripped to her bra. She tries to run out of the room, and the door is shut. After the door is closed, we are only able to see a sliver of the characters through a viewing hole at the center of the shot. Baby is in the back of the room, struggling to be free, and Sandra is in the foreground, being forced by one of Toto's men. This scene is then sutured to Sandra's funeral, as Baby cries over her. Baby takes out her rosary, and breaks it over Sandra's coffin.

Is it a coincidence that Sandra is "made" into the sacrificial woman at the moment in which she shares the violence perpetrated on Baby? What can a movie like *Alyas Baby Tsina* offer a feminist analysis of the role rape plays in the production of Filipino womanhood in these films? We see that "woman" gets institutionalized in Philippine cinema—here I mean codified, made legible, marked, and brought into a symbolic order—at the moment in which the scene of injury, the scene of rape, occurs. The system of meanings, terms, and constructs that form the raped woman, the revolutionary woman, the former a sex worker, gets hyperbolized and highlighted precisely when the transgender subject shares in Baby's victimhood. Sandra's death reminds us of how tenuous her questioning of gender binaries actually is, and the ways in which her phantasmatic idealization of womanhood is prone to erasure by the hegemonic order that rules it. This dynamic recalls Judith Butler's reflections regarding the violent death of the transgender subject Venus Xtravaganze in *Paris is Burning*. Butler painfully notes, "as much as she crosses gender, sexuality, and race performatively, the hegemony that reinscribes the privileges of normative femininity and whiteness wields the final power to *re*naturalize Venus's body and cross out that prior crossing, and erasure that is her death" (*Bodies That Matter* 133). In the film, although Sandra similarly crosses gender and sexuality performatively, it is her positionality both as a sex worker, a civilian, and a queer person, that fosters her death and the violence she incurs.

The rape scene in New Cinema, and particularly in Philippine cinema, is often laden with immense symbolic value. In most melodramatic movies, this foreshadows a female character's death, since rape often gets portrayed as a moment so violent that the woman cannot possibly survive it. Revising this general narrative, New Cinema directors

deployed the scene of rape and its aftermaths to directly reflect on the populace's current conditions under the government. In Lino Brocka's *Orapronobis* for example, which is a movie that confronts Corazon Aquino's inability to produce political change, the rape of the main protagonist is about the rape of a character who has symbolized "inang bayan" or mother country. Her death at the hands of a vigilante rebel group represents the death of the nation and the failure of this post-Marcos promise. Or in his other work *Insiang*, it is the rape of the naïve girl living in a destitute squatters' area at the hands of her mother's lover that turns her into a cunning survivor who vengefully punishes them both. In another of Ishmael Bernal's films, *Himala* (Miracle), the rape of the "miracle worker" Elsa and her most faithful disciple Chayong calls to crisis Elsa's ability to perform miracles, and the authenticity of her claims that she has been given power by the Virgin Mary to heal and help those who are in need. Chayong views her rape as the ultimate sign of being tainted, or being made unchaste, and thus she commits suicide (which follows a confessional scene where she constantly repeats, "it is so dirty"). Caused by Chayong's death, Elsa convenes all the residents of the town to announce that there is no miracle. In what could be one of the strongest critiques of the Catholic Church in a New Cinema work, Elsa announces: "There is no miracle. We create our own miracles, curses, and Gods." As these movies exhibit, if sex work to the local audience symbolizes the curse of poverty and desperation, the rape of the woman in New Cinema films is often marked as a foreshadowing of death and the making of a revolutionary consciousness. The constant turn to rape as a pivotal moment is often about confronting the audience with trauma that calls on them to ask: What more can we take?

Sandra's death is open to multiple interpretations. One could suggest that her death undoes all the metaphorical links between mother country and the female rape victim, "queering" this figure to suggest that queer men and women must also be included in the struggle and resistance against these forms of violence. Her death could also be read as the maintenance of the heterosexual norm in local discourse, since it is the erasure and sacrifice of the queer subject that allows Baby to become a revolutionary in the first place. Despite numerous competing readings, Sandra's death is a seminal event in *Alyas Baby Tsina*, one that leaves us with many questions rather than closed answers: What does it mean that Baby's newly found voice of dissent and revolution is fueled, colored, and affected by her desire to revenge a queer friend's death? How does Sandra's passing recast the entire film and the initial encounter with resistance we witness? What does it mean to try to situate redress for queer violence as central to a film's revolutionary politics?

Lov(ing) the Night Life in Dogeaters

Jessica Hagedorn has articulated the ways in which her writing is specifically influenced by the Philippine public culture that she experienced as a child. In "The Exile Within/The Question of Identity," she states, "I sought escape in Tagalog melodramas and radio serials—especially our own lurid and wonderful Tagalog 'Komiks'—but I was nevertheless drawn to Hollywood movies and the classics of Western Literature" (174). Although Hagedorn's statement can certainly be interpreted as a genuflection to Western cultural production, this would elide the tension that she herself calls upon here. What is fascinating about the texture, movement, and aesthetics of *Dogeaters* is that Hagedorn

literalizes the tension between competing Hollywood images and Philippine cultural discourses. To say that Hagedorn only privileges American metaphors misses the novel's own relationship to the larger tradition of Philippine public culture which Hagedorn herself invokes—the *komik*s that are sources of the melodrama, action, and comedy in Philippine cinema, radio, and TV serials. Hagedorn also views sexuality as a crucial intervention into these forms of cultural production: "Identity for me is not only racial, but sexual. I cannot think of myself as addressing the multicultural issue without including the gender culture issue within the framework" (178).

For instance, akin to these films, marginal spaces where queer pleasure proliferates also become key sites for locating critique in *Dogeaters*. One of the most fascinating scenes in the novel occurs in the Coco Rico, a gay club that is also used for prostitution. Although the Coco Rico is first introduced as a space removed from Philippine politics, traces of American capitalism (through sex work), gendered hierarchy (through the treatment of women), and class (through the clientele) slowly emerge. In one particular scene, the queer club goers are gossiping with each other, particularly about how the First Lady's personal fixations morph into a full-on "edifice" complex. Interestingly enough, while poking fun at her, they inadvertently reflect on political realities of the moment. The banter begins with Joey Sands:

> The Manila International Film Festival is the First Lady's latest whim. She orders the city and slums rejuvenated with fresh coats of paint, windows and doorways lined with pots of plastic flowers, the streets swept and reswept by women in 'Metro Manila Aide' printed in big black letters on the back and front. Even Uncle's shack gets the treatment. Funny thing is, it all looks fake. Painted scenery

> in a slum no one's going to bother visiting. … Fucking crazy bitch, he calls the First Lady. *Talagang Sirang Ulo.* (130)

Joey's ironic tone vacillates between comedic sarcasm and deeply felt resentment. As the supposedly quintessential bakla yet "distant" prostitute in the novel, Sands embodies the influence of U.S. imperialism within the country, something he resents but also benefits from. His father was stationed at one of the U.S. naval bases (thus he was named after the Sands Casino in Las Vegas) and his mother (who was a Filipino sex worker) committed suicide after being abandoned. Having Sands deliver this scathing (and misogynistic) criticism of Imelda's predispositions allows Hagedorn to skillfully meld Imelda's projects with the effects of American imperialism, while symbolizing what a multiply placed queer Filipino critique can look like. Similar to Sharon in *Manila By Night*, Joey is the embodiment of the nation's historical shifts. His "seeing" and awareness of what he witnesses heightens the sense of violence Imelda's schemes produce.

Joey oscillates between straightforward accounts of how the cityscape is changed and a critique of the emptiness and fakeness these changes exemplify. Again, the contradictions of this critical intervention stem from Sands' own dreams, which have primarily been the possession of luxurious new objects, the yearning for the smell of new hotel products, the feel of recently torn plastic, and the desire to immigrate to the U.S. Yet for a fleeting moment we are given a glimpse of a different Joey. His consistently indifferent character, coupled with his constant yearning to possess material objects throughout the novel, stages a complicated relationship to Imelda Marcos and her plans for national growth. He resents the First Lady and thus creates a discourse within a revolutionary framework, while envying the superficiality she represents. The book ends

with Joey Sands's turn to guerilla militancy in the mountains; this scene offers initial glimpses of that final nationalistic act (albeit a forced one).

This contradiction between envious desire and resentment is further redistributed through other people's gossip in the Coco Rico. Rainer (a gay German director whose movie was screened at a film fesitval), Andres (the Coco Rico's owner), and Chiquiting (beautician to the First Lady and the stars) continue their *tsismis* (gossip) about the Manila Film Festival and Imelda Marcos. Even though the characters start with a whimsical discussion of the first lady's various inane habits such as her dancing or her buckets of home-made perfume, they also manifest a serious, contemplative conversation about the ways in which these translate to needless waste and silenced death. Rainer initiates the banter by imitating the First Lady's dance. Andres the owner of the club is aghast, while Chiquiting adds his own *tsismis*:

> Chiquiting joins in with his *tsismis* (gossip), entertaining the German with stories about the First Lady's "edifice complex," plus her natural obsession with personal hygiene. 'Perfume here and *there*--' Chiquiting smirks, pointing delicately to his crotch. I bet its all made up, part of Chiquiting's revenge, but who cares? None of us have had this much fun in a long time.
>
> Andres leans forward to speak more intently to the German. "Did you know how many workers were crushed to death when your film center fell on top them?"
>
> "It's your film center." The German protests feebly. Andres is panting, quite drunk now. "They were rushing to build that so-called cultural center where your censored films are being shown—for the first and probably the last time—to

a big shot audience", Andres continues. I am watching him with curiosity. I've never known him to be bitter, or to give a shit about a bunch of workmen. "When the festival ends next week, you and the others will fly back to your countries and remember our hospitality with such fondness…We'll all still be here, of course," Andres says, "nothing will change, your brilliant movies won't make any difference."

"Opiates to the people," Rainier murmurs wearily. What Andres says makes him sad. He holds out his empty glass. "Talaga—sayang ano?" (Really, what a waste right?) Chiquiting Moreno agrees, a faraway look in his eyes. We are all silent for a moment …

"I must admit, opening night was impressive," Rainer says.

"Siempre! (Of Course!) Built on a foundation of flesh and blood," Andres snorts.

"You're jealous because you weren't invited," I tease him. Andres starts to say something, looks at the famous German director, then shuts up, if looks could kill, I'd be dead.

"They say ghosts of the dead workmen haunt the place," Chiquiting says, "you can hear them howling, late at night." […]

"After the festival, the building will stand unused. Wasted, like all her other monuments, those ridiculous resort hotels with their empty rooms. Di ba, Chiquiting?" Andres turns to our inevitable source of *Tsismis* (gossip) for confirmation. (134-135)

Aesthetically framing the conversation through gossip (it explicitly ends and begins with *tsismis*) is crucial to the possibilities that this form of exchange produces as critique. Hagedorn reconfigures the political potentiality present in a discursive practice doubly marginalized during this period as one that should only to be performed in specific places (i.e. a gay club, the beauty parlor, etc.) and by specific individuals (by women and bakla figures). She uses this seemingly mundane banter as a platform to air national grievances. The author is keenly aware of the ways in which gossip can be utilized to create alternative forms of nation, one that must draw from what is "official" and "sanctioned" in order to parody them. Gossip has always been useful as resistance, especially during times of national occupation such as Japanese colonialism. It is thus stunning that Hagedorn understands its utility and deploys it for queer critique. More nearly, the overdeterminedly metonymic relationship between Imelda's body and the city's landscape begs for a criticism of her cultural projects' ridiculousness.

To demonstrate this farce, the bakla figures in this bar create a discursive structure far removed from the dominantly permissible discourse produced in a newspaper article or a television show (both of which were heavily censored during the regime). They synthesize the personal and the national, the most obviously banal and the most harmfully oppressive. Throughout the text, Hagedorn offers readers a plethora of resources to see where the country is going, from official newspaper clippings, advice columns, trashy magazines, and television shows. Gossip in a gay club is not an exception. Gossip realizes that, within these other forms of mass distributed stories, one can create a counter-narrative with a very specific politics about both the First Lady as farce and the national project as failure. The novel sees the polyphonic mixing of these mediums as a

rich beginning to maintaining a stance and critique. The gay club becomes a place for negotiating gay suffering amidst the Marcos government's constant policing of dissent.

Lisa Lowe writes that what the gossip achieves in *Dogeaters* is an anti-representational style of historical narration, one that presents alternative views of the Marcos government through its destabilized language: "Spontaneous, decentered, and multivocal, gossip is antithetical to developmental narrative. It seizes details and hyperbolizes their importance; it defies the notion of information as property. Gossip exemplifies both anti-narrative and anti-representational strategies that dehierarchize linear historical accounts, both orientalist and nationalist, with a popular, multiple record of very different kinds of activities and modes of social organization" (115). The questions that Hagedorn raises are: Who can deliver this narrative of change? How will it be manifested? This seemingly ordinary exchange between queer men encourages us to comprehend criticism as multiply placed, and does not necessarily privilege the "official." Apart from producing an alternative discourse about the country's current state and future, what is most important is that Hagedorn argues for the ability of other subjects to provide criticism.

Similar to the distribution of resistance that is present in *Manila By Night* and *Alyas Baby Tsina*, Hagedorn's text shows individuals from different backgrounds producing dissonant national consciousness through the most tenuous and non-heteronormative forms of kinship, from the senator (who was assassinated), from the beauty queen (who quits and becomes a guerilla after winning the pageant), from the university professor, and from the bakla figures gossiping in a dance club. Returning to Lowe, "the text opens a space for a different historical subject engaged with that

aesthetic" (121). That is, apart from merely being a discursive practice that provides the Marcos regime's most blatant criticism, gossip allows for the entry of queer subjects into national citizenship. Towards the end of the quotation, the dead workers—killed during the construction of the cultural center—return to haunt the building, to haunt the nation's conscience. They howl at night, reminding us of their passing. It is only fitting that the queers in the gay bar hear them. Through this seemingly quotidian act, we see individuals who are aware of what is at stake in a gloriously celebratory event, and do not easily dismiss the opportunity to mock it as they mock Imelda Marcos' make up, dance, and perfume. These two facets are imbricated in each other, and their banter understands this relationship.

This scene is also rich when read through who gets to speak, who is envied, and why. Akin to our encounter with a seemingly changed Joey Sands, the gossip about Imelda is seminal because this is the first time we encounter other characters as categorically "involved" in the country's future in any sense. Prior to this moment, Andres is abusive to his janitor from the provinces, and is unaware of how his condescension links to his own anxieties around class. He is a bitter Alacran, the poor side of the illustrious and wealthy family. He is envious and constantly wants to be a part of this heritage. Chiquiting Moreno is portrayed as a hairdresser who has anxieties about being famous, epitomized when he meets Bianca Jagger in Studio 54 and she does not recognize him. Yet through this quotidian exchange both Andres and Chiquiting engage with Philippine politics, rather than embodying the simplistic selfish, devouring, flamboyant, catty pejoratives assigned to the *bakla* figure in Filipino cinema and literature.

Andres suddenly understands the burden of class disparity, and sees that this film festival was not for his benefit but rather for Rainer's, and generally for directors from the "West." His quick rebuttal underscores a deep comprehension of what will happen to them after the "guests" have left. But Andres also knows the working of colonial and capital movement. He regards Rainer as an important customer for his bar and Joey. Rainer represents what the other characters resist and envy. Joey mentions that both Chiquiting and Andres try to seduce Rainer, which buttresses the ambivalence registered here. They want what he possesses, the ability to mock the event and Imelda without being tied down to Philippine citizenship. At the same time, they are also resistant to what he embodies, to the ways the country genuflects to the "West". Envy also resurfaces when Joey jokes with Andres, cajoling him by saying that he is only upset for being uninvited to the party. This begins a complicated negotiation between desire to be a part of the larger event, to be "invited" to the nation's sense of itself, but also a realization that the current nation's state needs to be altered.

Rainer's imitation of the First Lady's dancing is violently paradoxical since he directly benefits from the film festival and the host whom he mocks. Similar to Bernal and Abaya, Hagedorn understands that queerness as a category is a hierarchic one. The all too easy staging of Imelda by the German obscures his positionality as a foreigner. He is able to objectify and ridicule her without fully being aware of the power that betrays this campy performance. Differing from the others who are *bakla* and situated within the Philippines, he can gaze at Imelda with misogynistic contempt yet be unaffected by the very politics she espouses. He can mimic her but he cannot understand the anxieties of those around him. Moreover, Rainer ends up buying Joey's time immediately after this

moment, and thus his critique misrepresents how his wealth and status enable him to participate in a system of bodily exchange implicated in poverty, colonialism and capitalism.

Also similar to what we have seen in New Cinema, love, and the bakla figure's ambivalent relationship to it, is a crucial site of critique in *Dogeaters*. For instance, a similar pessimism and ambivalence about love exist, in the way that Joey views his relationship with Rainer. As the bakla prostitute, Joey is all too aware of his place within this scripted economic and bodily transaction. He understands the precariousness of what Rainer sees as their intimacy. Before he decides to steal Rainer's drugs and money, and before he witnesses the assassination of Senator Avila, he hears the German ask: "Have you ever been in love?" (148). Immediately, Joey remembers his previous lover, the American soldier who had left him and sent a postcard of the Sands Casino. This memory highlights the failure of love for Joey, the hopefulness that is squashed when someone like him invests in such a narrativizing of these forms of relationships. Joey does not reciprocate Rainer's profession of being a "little" in love with him, and is aloof when he is asked if he will be sorry when he leaves. Joey nonchalantly mentions that he will be whatever the director wants him to be, and thus Rainer gets agitated: "Whoretalk. You are too young to be cynical, Joey. You enjoy hurting me don't you? This is foolish I suppose. I'm much too old for you, anyway" (148). The failure of love in this scene is tied to Joey's recognition of his role in this relationship. Rainer's turn to his age again glances over the fact that, from the beginning, their relationship has always been about a very specific objectification of Joey as an exotic Filipino sex worker.

Hagedorn further exhibits this through Joey's ambivalence about Rainer's taking mental and "real" pictures of him: "I feel his eyes boring holes into me, watching every move as I eat, as if he'll never get enough. 'It's a picture I take with my mind so I won't forget you.' I wish he'd stop. I don't mind that he take *real* pictures of me with that fancy camera of his which he has done all week… Let him look all he wants—he's paying for every second" (149). Rainer's gaze, his literal taking in of Joey, and Joey's own awareness of his role as spectacle, further make the love in this scene merely a veil for what is indeed an economic transaction. If anything, the German's desire to leave—and his constant clutching of his passport, drugs, and money—is a testament to that. This skewed notion of love exists everywhere in *Dogeaters*. The hopeless actor Romeo Rosales, when he decides to leave his girlfriend Trinidad, is warned by his mother, "Sometimes its not about the kind of love you've learned about from those silly movies and songs you like so much" (163). This warning is indeed ominous, because it is Romeo's refusal to heed this advice that makes him a suspect in the murder of Senator Avila. Moreover, the direct allusion to Philippine local movies and songs highlights the ways in which Hagedorn views this novel as a mingling of Hollywood metaphors and local narratives about love. The love in *Dogeaters*, similar to *Manila By Night*, is contingent upon the relationship between individuals who are always already affected by American imperialism, poverty, and governmental control.

Having mapped out these intersections, I suggest that we shift the ways we have been reading *Dogeaters*, and Filipino American literature in general, asking not whether these works are merely exilic forms of writing, since, returning to San Juan's interpretation of Hagedorn's work, this reading practice often hinges on traditional

readings of diasporic subject as "wanting to go home" while being unable to find "home." On the other hand, writing about Filipino culture specifically, Jonathan E. Okamura suggests that "the Filipino American diaspora is far from being simply an ethnic minority with historical and contemporary experiences of immigration, adaptation, and settlement in the United States,… they have transnational relations, diasporic identity and consciousness, and fluidity of community boundaries, all of which are socially constructed and maintained" (29). That is, the Filipino diaspora has a fluidity around notions of geo-political ethnicity that challenges the limitations of what diaspora can and has meant in the ways critics have produced it. Moreover, new work by queer theorists such as Gayatri Gopinath have argued that the potency of queer diasporas is that these precisely recalibrate notions of "home" in an effort to understand what forms of elision, violence, and possibility queer bodies and queer subjects bring to this idealization. Gopinath suggests that "a queer diaspora mobilizes questions of the past, memory, and nostalgia for radically different purposes. Rather than evoking an imaginary homeland frozen in an idyllic moment outside history, what is remembered through queer diasporic desire and the queer diasporic body is a past time and place riven with contradictions and violences of multiple uprootings, displacements, and exiles" (4). In other words, queer diasporas are effective frameworks and bodies for thinking through ways to disturb these seemingly simple—and limitedly dominant—notions of diasporic past, ones that are often based on the erasure of queerness itself. Adding to this, she notes that, "the concept of a queer diaspora enables a simultaneous critique of heterosexuality and the nation form while exploding the binary oppositions between nation and diaspora, heterosexuality and homosexuality, original and copy" (11). It is the move away from binaristic notions—

Amercan as opposed to Filipino, "homosexual" as opposed to "heterosexual", "pleasurable" as opposed to "barren", falling "in" love as opposed to falling "out" of it, and many more—that animates this rumination. By examining the aesthetics of *Dogeaters* through the queerness that is also manifest in *New Cinema*—in its subject, its characters, its time, its texture, its non-linearity, its "ordered" chaos as the author puts it—we can free ourselves from the limiting concerns of whether the book is authentic to Filipino culture, or whether it is a far too simple allegory for American cinema. Instead, we are left to ponder what the utility of queer diasporas is to the social movements and political moments both these kinds of works are gesturing towards. We study the ways in which queerness has been represented and produced through and within New Cinema and *Dogeaters*, as a generative node for contesting a disciplinary regime that has, for quite some time now, occupied a privileged space in the psyches and narratives of Filipinos everywhere.

Chapter 3

Periperformative Acts and the Undoing of Female Victimhood

What indeed, is literary justice, as opposed to legal justice? How does literature do justice to trauma in a way that law does not or cannot? Literature is a dimension of concrete embodiment and a language of infinitude that, in contrast to the language of the law, encapsulates not closure but precisely what in a given legal case refuses to be closed and cannot be closed. It is with this refusal of trauma to be closed that literature does justice.

(Shoshana Felman, *The Juridical Unconscious: Trials and Traumas in the Twentieth Century)*

Minority discourse sets the act of emergence in the antagonistic *in-between* of image and sign, the accumulative and the adjunct, presence and proxy.… Minority discourses acknowledges the status of national culture—and the people—as a contentious, performative space of the perplexity of living in the midst of the pedagogical representations of the fullness of life.

(Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture)*

One of the most jolting scenes in J.M. Coetzee's *Disgrace* occurs when Lucy Lurie, a white lesbian living in a formerly black township during Post-Apartheid South Africa, is raped by three black men. A pivotal moment in the novel, this violent act then haunts the language of the text. Lucy refuses to recount what has happened to her. This refusal then paradoxically produces a repetitive uncovering of South Africa's traumatic

past every time she is asked to state her victimhood. During their first confrontation about her rape, her father David Lurie inquires, "Lucy my dearest, why don't you tell? It was a crime. There is no shame in being the object of a crime. You did not choose to be the object. You are an innocent party" (111). Lucy does not answer immediately. Instead she draws her breathe, as her body performs the angst and complexity of her predicament. Her silence, her breathing, and her posture highlight her ambivalent relationship to the terms "object", "choose" and "innocent." Indeed, for Lucy, victimhood, and one's agency to claim it, is not as simple an act as it seems. David continues to ask for a justification for her willful silence, and in each time, Lucy deflects these queries.

Since the novel is set after Apartheid, one could argue that the primary reason for Lucy's refusal is her view that her body is the price to pay, and that her rape is the rightful exchange for making reparations around the systemic abuse of colored and black South Africans during this period. Certainly Lucy herself gestures to this notion repetitively. In one of the few moments where she directly confronts David, she states, "The reason is that, as far as I am concerned, what happened to me is a purely private matter. In another time, in another place it might be held to public matter. But in this place, in this time, it is not. It is my business, mine alone…. This place being South Africa" (112). The locatedness of Lucy's response and its temporal specificity gesture to the vexed role that testimony and confession play when thought of in the South African context. Lucy's subjecthood, her being an "ample" (65) queer white woman, complicates the seemingly obvious role that she is supposed to embody as a female victim or a white "oppressor." Again and again, the notion of the country's past, its deeply divided national history, comes to affect this "personal and private matter," precisely because Lucy does

not align with the subjects that often get circulated in the national consciousness as indexing victimhood during post-Apartheid times. Repeatedly, we get the sense that Lucy has internalized her own complicity as a white person living in this land and that she has a role, even indirectly, in the events of the past. Even in the act of her own rape, she reflects that the "ancestors" must have spoken through her abusers. She notes that she has never encountered that much "hate in the act", and that, based on their affect, these men must rape since "they see themselves as tax collectors, debt collectors" (158). Lucy's being a lesbian further casts the scene of violence in a phobic light. She is doubly marginalized as a queer woman, further highlighting the complexities of the positionalities that she occupies. One could also argue that this causes a rift with her father, whom she views as nothing more than a womanizer who treats women merely as sexual objects and nothing else.

Lucy's contradictory relationship to her own victimhood, and her internalizing of complicity towards colonial violence, is a tangible sign of the damage that colonialism and Apartheid have brought to South Africans struggling to repair the nation's past atrocities. What is compelling about Lucy's rape is her response to David's desire to produce a testimony about it. Lucy consistently refuses to answer her father directly, often resorting to long pauses, rarely affirmative gestures, and nonce sentences. Through these deferrals and deflections, Lucy understands that what lies before her is the failure of specific forms of testimony to capture the nuances of both the personal and national histories that collided in this particular act of violence against women. I would suggest that Lucy's refusal to give the performative utterance "I report rape", to claim her very victimhood, is precisely hinged on the awareness that it is inadequate, indeed itself

violent, in a place and time that is post-Apartheid South Africa. Moreover, it is not merely the confession of one's victimhood that is inadequate. Rather, it is the language itself—the medium in which one is to lay claim to one's abuse—that is at issue. David internalizes this in his own reflections, as he interrogates Petrus about Lucy's rape: "More and more he is convinced that English is an unfit medium for the truth of South Africa. Stretches of code whole sentences long have thickened, lost their articulations, their articulateness, their articulatedness" (117). David points out that it is not merely the testimony or the confession itself that is problematic in post-Apartheid South Africa. Alongside these particular narrative forms, are the increasingly complex upheavals and colonialisms that have been brought onto the land through languages such as English, and Dutch before that. These are languages that have affected both its minoritarian and majoritarian citizens. How does one deliver testimony if there are 11 official languages in the recently unified nation? Indeed, how does one process guilt, complicity, apology, and confession, when the languages to do so are tinged with the very same colonial heritages they seek to undo?

Lucy's responses, then, embodied by long and short silences, sighs, incomprehensible fragments, various refusals, and nonce sentences are utterances that possess a different politics around them. Her utterances leave their own mark on both the personal rape and the larger history of post-Apartheid reparation. She practices a form of personal atonement outside of how the nation state wants its citizens to perform healing during this time of national solidarity. Allusions to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission are consistently made in the novel, as Lucy refuses those dominant categories such as "victim" and "oppressor" that a "truth" commission relies on.

Ultimately, in the most blatant critique of its process, she refuses to publicize her trauma. Lucy denies making her rape a public spectacle because she realizes that she is neither a "victim" nor an "oppressor". She further exemplifies this when she allows the difference between her father and herself to materialize, as a barrier of both gender and understanding: "I can't talk anymore, David, I just can't, she says, speaking softly, rapidly, as though the words will dry up. 'I know I am not being clear. I wish I could explain. Because of who you are and who I am, I can't," (155). Lucy, even at the behest of her rapists, seeks to form affinities and sympathies with their plight, a linkage that she does not think her father can perform.

The assumption behind juridical reparation is that a victim's testimony should usher in other forms of reparation: economic reparation (in the form of financial compensation), personal reparation (in terms of psychic atonement), and national reparation (in terms of producing a more unified nation state through its apologetic posturing). A victim's testimony is taken as illocutionary and perlocutionary performatives, acts that do something by virtue of the utterance and acts that do something as an effect of the utterance. On the other hand, as Lucy highlights through her refusal to be called "victim", through her questioning of the ways in which words such as "choice" and "complicity" are embodied by an individual, this notion of political reparation misses the ways in which trauma and psychic suffering fall outside the constraints of both the illocutionary and perlocutionary. That is, trauma cannot be frozen or alleviated by the limited forms of performative utterances that are circulated in these spaces. In addition, literal articulations of trauma can do violence to both the "victim" and "aggressor", since these statements might produce the assumption of forgetting or

moving "past" what has been experienced—a forced movement motivated by the nation-state's need to portray or create the event as "the past"—when individuals may never recover, heal from, or fully be whole after a traumatic event.

Yet the acquisition of narrative and testimony has been the primary mode for beginning redress in the many "truth commissions" across the globe. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) is the most publicized contemporary example of this, as "the new" South Africa attempts to acquire national unity through a particular form of "transitional justice." On the other hand, critics have suggested that, while these commissions have been predominantly moored to the belief that a "truthful" testimony about human rights violation is needed in order to initiate national healing, they have also been less attuned to the many layers and particularities that constitute what "abuse" or "violence" might mean in the first place. This is especially applicable when one considers the forms of violence enacted against women, from everyday forms of humiliation to such forms of bodily violence as rape. Thoroughly mapping out these tensions through a reading of the basic stipulations of the TRC and the policies it adheres to during its hearings, Fiona C. Ross notes that, "the definitions of violence and violation laid down in the Act were narrow. They did not address forms of structural violence or racial discrimination that characterized Apartheid. The Act defines 'gross violations of human rights' as killing, torture, abduction (often referred to in the Commissions words as 'disappearance') and/or severe ill treatment, or the conspiracy to attempt to commit such acts" (11). Thus, the TRC focused only on the most severe of harms enacted on the bodies of woman. Again, we see the ways in which these performances of testimony required a particular modality of female identity under duress and an iteration of this

body's abuse. Ross also attributes the severity of the requirements to the notion that these hearings constitute a public spectacle of mourning and grief. Thus they demanded narratives that jolted witnesses to the violence of Apartheid, as they bifurcated and binarized the subjects of the narrative into "perpetrators" and "victims" (11). These testimonies in the end "stripped away context and the effects of power by condensing suffering to its traces on the body" (12).

They did not, for instance, address the fact that these women, when testifying in front of the commission, mostly discussed the experiences of their husbands and children, rather than recount their own abuse. In a sense, the commission's bylaws about violence did not make room to explicate the power dynamics behind various forms of sociality imbricated in these communities—such as the presence of hetero-patriarchy or other mechanisms for policing the voices of women. When it did become apparent that women were testifying for men instead of themselves, the committee then demanded that they speak about their "abuse" in language that again predetermined the acts done to them as "gross human rights violations" (23). Read thus, in the context of the TRC, "sexual violence was represented in the hearings and in public discourse as a defining feature of women's experiences of gross violations of human rights. It was defined as an experience about which women *could* and *should* testify, and about which they *would* testify under certain conditions" (24). What this does is flatten out a more historical and layered understanding of the ways in which subjectivity and subjecthood are constituted. This is especially true with regards to postcolonial/Third World women. As Ross explains, "the subject of violence is construed as naturally gendered, and the sociological problem to be explained becomes women's experience of violence, rather than violence and its links to

gender and power" (25). This is no small matter. In relationship to monetary and material reparation, the "Interim Relief Grant" and "Individual Reparations Grant" stipulated that one had to be identified as a victim and to claim that subject position in order to be compensated financially, which, as we can see both through the literary and juridical examples I have provided, entails a fraught and highly complex negotiation of one's abjection.

Indeed, victim as a subject position can be a problematic identity category and politicized entity, especially in light of its being frozen within officializing discourses of redress. Writing about the term "victim" and its importance in reparative calls made during the age of modernity, Paul Gilroy suggests that, "From Palestine to Bosnia, the image of the victim has become useful in all sorts of dubious maneuverings that can obscure the moral and political questions arising from the demands for justice. And yet, for all its pragmatic or strategic attractions, the role of victim has its drawbacks as the basis of any political identity" (113). Gilroy makes a compelling intervention into the circulation of victim as politicized identity precisely because he understands the ways in which both the nation state (from the fascist to the neoliberal one) and global circuits of capital can co-opt the term, a co-optation that often further occludes the very forms of justice victims seek to demand. In other words, the difficulty around using victim as a coalescing identity category, similar to other identity categories that have come to occupy such currency in neo-liberal discourse, is that it can also tend to only further victimize others because it does not fully encapsulate the ways in which hegemonic power structures enact such dominance through the very cooptation and instrumentalization of such narratives of victimhood.

In a similar vein, Wendy Brown critiques the production of victimhood as it pertains to the neo-liberal state, since some iterations of this subject position proliferate the false pretense that in order to broker any form of freedom, one has to claim a right to victimhood in the first place. She then suggests this brokering is built on an affect of *ressentiment* and an attachment to "woundedness". The problem with this cathexis is that this attachment cannot see itself outside of its limited positionality, and more importantly, does not see a futurity where its constitutiveness through this attachment is no longer needed. She thus notes that, "In its emergence as a protest against marginalization and subordination, politicized identity thus becomes attached to its own exclusion, as exclusion, augments or 'alters the direction of suffering' entailed in subordination or marginalization by finding a site of blame for it. But in so doing, it installs its pain over its unredeemed history in the very foundation of its political claim, in its demand for recognition as identity.… Politicized identity thus enunciates itself, makes claims for itself, only to be entrenching, restating, dramatizing, and inscribing its pain in politics; it can hold out no future—for itself or for others—that triumphs over this pain" (74). For Brown, the most obvious iteration of *ressentiment's* repetitive creation is the constant turn to limited notions of identity politics, as a form of coalescing category that in the end demands some form of recognition as it simultaneously becomes over-invested in its own otherness. This attachment then proliferates through narratives of oppression in the modern age. She suggests that politicized identity "is shaped as well by the contemporary problematic of history itself, by the late modern rupture of history as a narrative, history as ended because it has lost its end—a rupture that paradoxically gives history an immeasurable weight" (71). This problematic historiography then, rather than being

something the oppressed should resist, becomes something that they embrace without pause or caution, precisely because it is this particular strand of history that allows their politicized status to exist. As Shoshana Felman notes in her reading of the Eichmann trials, such a form of testimonial acquisition and the desire for juridical justice "unwittingly reflects and duplicates the constitutional blindness of culture and of consciousness toward the trauma. A pattern emerges in which the trial, while it tries to put an end to trauma, inadvertently performs an acting out of it" (5).

Yet, as I have laid out, testimony and its relationship to particular forms of victimhood continue to play a key role in acquiring various forms of redress within a transnational context. I thus began this chapter with the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission, to highlight the role testimony plays as a method for redressing various losses ranging from the everyday to the macrocosmic. More importantly, works like *Disgrace* exemplify how literary and other forms of cultural production further interrogate the problematic assumptions involved when limited subjecthood fuels demands for juridical redress. The literary then becomes a crucial alternative site to parse out the concerns Ross, Gilroy, and Brown assert. More importantly, the complex issues that Coetzee's work raises have wider implications outside of countries such as South Africa. These also have resonance outside of the most legible historical traumas that have required testimony to pursue personal or national reparation.

In this chapter, I will focus my attention on Asian diasporic writers, artists, and critics who re-imagine the forms of subjecthood ascribed to victims during Japanese and American colonialism. To limit its scope, I will look at the Comfort Woman figure. This

figure continually catalyzes calls for both monetary and symbolic redress in the Philippines and in other former Japanese colonies, even though comfort women have yet to be offered any compensation—monetary, symbolic, or otherwise—by the Japanese government. Explicating a particular film about "comfort gays", I would suggest that the linking of queerness to the "comfort woman" figure produces an undoing of the many limited forms this figure has acquired, and in so doing, exemplifies the potentiality of queerness to expand and critique the hetero-patriarchal production of womanhood in the name of patriotism and national solidarity. I also study a Korean American woman's narrative and her attempt at re-membering and "repairing" a lost history of Korean diasporic colonialism through multiple subjectivities and aesthetic methods. Her work embodies the multiple migrations and colonialisms experienced by the diaspora. If in the first chapter my concern has focused on psychoanalytic forms of reparation and its relationship to melancholia, and in the second I examined the ways in which modalities of queerness have been deployed to undo the policies affecting Manila and its populace during the Marcos regime, this chapter is then concerned with the relationship between forms of subjectivity that have been attached to calls for reparation, either because of systemic abuse such as rape or because of erased cultural memory through colonialism.

As a larger concern, I am interested in examining the ways in which these works challenge limited understandings of victimhood. Indeed, similar to Lucy's refusal and acts of deferral, how might these cultural sites create spaces and subjectivities that open up the multiple meanings of abuse, and redress, through their destabilizing of the normative acts that have been circulated to claim one's victimization? Brown suggests that forms of cultural production that address these injustices must also re-think the

normative methods that have been utilized do so: "This is not to say that freedom becomes aesthetic, but rather that it depends upon a formulation of the political that is richer, more complicated, and also perhaps more fragile than that circumscribed by institutions, procedures, and political representation" (9). I would suggest that the artists I study below hesitate to use testimony and the subjecthood tethered to it in order to re-imagine what a deferral of testimony, or a literal unhinging of both witnessing and reporting of violence can do to economic, psychic, and juridical forms of reparation. To be clear, I am interested in thinking of the ways that delay, rather than immediate articulation, becomes a counter-narrative and another form of "making reparation", for both the "victim" and the "aggressor" of a traumatic event.

Periperformativity within the Postcolonial Context

I am inclined to see the performance of reparation, for both personal violence and for lost cultural memory, through what Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick calls "periperfomative" utterances. Sedgwick writes that aside from the Austinian notion of happy performatives, which are, in a sense, the ones that Austin is often cited for by post-post-structuralists, other utterances exist. These carry potentiality for minoritarian subjects—particularly queer subjects—because they inherently refuse one's interpellation into the normative structures that Austin himself creates when he uses the marriage vow to categorize felicitous and infelicitous utterances. Periperformative utterances are connected to negative performatives through their affinity with disavowal, demurral, and delay:

> The fascinating and powerful class of negative performatives—disavowal, demur, renunciation, deprecation, repudiation, "count me out", giving the lie—is marked

> in almost every instance by the asymmetrical property of being much less prone to becoming conventional than the positive performatives. To disinterpellate from a performative scene will usually require not another explicit performative nor simply the negative of one, but the nonce, referential act of a periperformative. Negative performatives tend to have a high threshold of initiative. (Thus Dante speaks of refusal—even refusal through cowardice—as something great). It requires little presence of mind to find the formula "I dare you," but a good deal more of the dragooned witness to disinterpellate with "Don't do it on my account." (*Touching Feeling* 70)

The periperformative scene that Sedgwick is concerned with is the marriage proscenium. She attends to the intervention that queer performativity and performance practices have brought to such normative ideological rituals of promise, witness, and testimony. Queer subjectivity constantly registers the tenuousness of the "I" in an Austinian "I do". Queerness is an anti-essentialist category where "the emergence of the first person, of the singular, of the active, and of the indicative are all questions rather than presumptions" (71).

Referring to the periperformative's effects on the Victorian Marriage Proscenium, Sedgwick notes that such an utterance creates "variant allusions to the marriage vow as maledictions or curses, moving diagonally through time and space, not preventing the marriage but poisoning it, prospectively, retroactively … mining the threshold of who can or must or can't or mayn't regard the drama of whose life" (74). The wedding proscenium is, like the testimonial and the confessional, juridically and symbolically enmeshed within the cultural space of norms policed by the state. It is a ritual that

necessarily creates, circulates, and excludes specific subjects to maintain its potency. For Sedgwick, it is no less surprising, then, that queer and feminist cultural production have found ways to formulate, play with, and camp their own processes of deferral amidst these normalizing rituals, through performance practices that allow the possibility of disinterpellating from and contesting the heterenorormativity in their midst. For queer individuals and women, refusal becomes an act filled with rich mental and creative energies that find means of producing a possibly more humane and ethical world.

What might the periperformative's potential be to "warp" an utterance's assumed power, especially when it is tied to legible notions of state sponsored and decreed narratives of witness and testimony? More specifically, how might the periperormative reconceptualize and challenge processes of subject formation that are dominantly ascribed to reparative acts within the postcolonial context? Sedgwick's work on the periperformative utterance has not been taken up as a theoretical approach for analyzing historical events that produce limited forms of witnessing, speech, and locution in the post-colonial and Asian diasporic contexts. I would suggest that we further examine the presence of various periperformative acts at these cultural sites as a critical method utilized by postcolonial writers to reconceive their own disinterpellation from dominant critical discourses that have policed them. I am attracted to the periperformative utterance's constant move to possibility, and its refusal of definition and closure. Through its fluctuating definition, it allows its performer to wrest control away from what is "official" and "sanctioned". As Sedgwick notes quite playfully and powerfully, if it sounds like a periperformative, then it probably is. What would these periperformative

acts and utterances look like? What might their utility be? How might the periperfromative link queer and postcolonial performance practices?

Indeed, the practice of deferral—aesthetic and temporal—has been deployed by multiple postcolonial critics, artists, and writers before. Discussing her own creative process, Vietnamese critic and artist Trinh T. Minh-ha suggests that she also depends on a constant "envasive" movement and temporal delay: "To write is to become. Not to become a writer (or a poet), but to become, intransitively. Not when writing adopts established keynotes of policy, but when it traces for itself lines of envasion. Can any one of us write like a man, like a woman, like a white? Surely someone would quickly answer, and this leads us straight back to the old master-servant's Guilt. A sentence-thinker, yes, but one who very so often does not know how a sentence will end, I say. And as there is no need to rush, just leave it open, so that it may later on find, or not find, its closure. Words, fragments, and lines that I love, for no sound reason; blanks, lapses, and silences that settle in like gaps of fresh air as soon as the inked space smells stuffy" (19). For Trinh, the postcolonial subject must defy logic and notions of linguistic truth precisely because this subjects very abjecthood has historically been rooted in standards that codify what are and are not appropriate forms of articulation. For Trinh, the question of subject position for the postcolonial critic who then speaks from the vantage point "I" must be, "which is to be filtered out as superfluous, fake, corrupt, and which is to be called pure, true, real, genuine, original, authentic?" (94). As the works I study show, this question is continually re-animated as female identity and victimhood are re-worked and fleshed out.

The Comfort Woman Figure, Queer Undoing in *Markova, Comfort Gay*

Comfort woman, or *jugun ianfu* in Japanese, refers to the more than 200,000 Asian women who were forcibly taken by the Japanese imperial army during the Pacific war in order to perform as the military's "sexual slaves." These women were taken from Japan's imperial colonies, a move that the Japanese government legalized in 1942. Chunghee Sarah Soh documents that, while the majority of comfort women were abducted from Korea, women from Japan and other territories such as the Philippines, Taiwan, Indonesia, Burma, and Thailand "were also used as comfort women' during the fifteen-year war of aggression Imperial Japan pursued, starting from the Manchurian invasion in 1931 to Japan's unconditional surrender in 1945" (72).

Although they experienced abuse during the Pacific war, it was not until the 1990's that the Comfort Women's Movement garnered international attention, encouraged by the renewed attempts of slowly dwindling victims to share their testimony as their respective governments demanded both symbolic and monetary redress from Japan. These efforts have, to this day, been met with the Japanese government's silence and refusal to provide an official public apology. Instead, the government has strategically "apologized" through specific officials (the narratives of which are even listed in the official webpage of the Japanese Embassy in the United States) and through private institutions that have provided monetary "welfare" money rather than "atonement" compensation (the recently closed Asian Women's Fund is an example of these institutions, where 285 women in South Korea, Taiwan, and the Philippines received almost seventeen thousand dollars from private donations, along with an apology from the prime minister).

One need only look at the most current discourses around comfort women's demands for redress in order to see the linkages this call has to the production of nationalism for the countries involved. On April 28, 2007, Japan's highest court rejected the claims for compensation by two comfort women and forced laborers from China. As the New York Times reports, "It was the first time that the Supreme Court has ruled on lawsuits by Japan's mostly Chinese and Korean captives during World War II, effectively quashing dozens of similar cases that have been working their way through the lower courts in recent years" (A.8). This ruling is noteworthy on various accounts. In order to rule in this regard, the court noted that legal claims could no longer be filed post-1972 because of a joint treaty between Beijing and the Japanese government, one where Beijing renounced reparations from Japan. What this effectively does, then, is absolve the Japanese government from any future claims of the same nature monetarily. It does not, however, absolve the government of symbolic forms of redress and apology. While the court did refuse to give monetary compensation to the plaintiffs, it "acknowledged that Japanese soldiers had abducted two Chinese girls and forced them to work as sex slaves for months"; thereby also "striking a rebuke to nationalist politicians who have tried to play down Japan's wartime crimes, the court acknowledged the historical fact of sex slavery and forced labor" (A.8).

This departs from the current Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's stance on the issue, which caused anger around Asia when he denied that Japan forcibly abducted women as Comfort Women. He was again required to reiterate this point of view when the U.S. House Committee on Foreign Relations passed House Resolution 121 (H. Res 121), which states that, "The Government of Japan should formally acknowledge, apologize,

and accept historical responsibility in a clear and unequivocal manner" for the "coercion of young women into sexual slavery, known to the world as 'comfort women'" (1). The passage of this resolution is all the more interesting given that the vote was moved so that it did not coincide with Abe's visit to the United States. Immediately after the U.S. House took action, the Philippine House of Representatives, a government body of a nation once under the colonial guise of the U.S. and Japan, and a nation that is still heavily connected to U.S. and Japanese transnational capital, also sought to file its own resolution, not coincidentally, as calls for national independence from both countries have had recent success. What these various legal calls demonstrate is that while the very forms of redress being required seem to be symbolic and tenuous at best, what is clear are the ways in which these official statements coalesce nations, represented by their respective governments, around an identity such as the comfort woman, one that is often represented as a helpless victim of colonial or neo-colonial rule.

In terms of the Philippines, the most famous Filipino testimony about comfort women is Maria Rosa Henson's *Comfort woman: A Filipina's Story of Prostitution and Slavery under the Japanese Military*. This autobiography is a detailed account of how, as a young girl of 16, Henson was abducted from her small town by Japanese soldiers and placed into one of the many "comfort stations" across the country. Similar to the example of the testimonies given to the TRC, narratives such as Henson's are compelled to present a particular modality of female identity in order for the experiences of these victims to have legibility, and to be ultimately worthy of categorization as a heinous experience that must then produce an official apology. Writing of the ways in which comfort women's narratives such as Henson's were co-opted in response to the hostile

reaction by Japanese Prime Minister Nakasone that these women were just "prostitutes" and thus were already "paid", You-Me Park recounts how the Korean government and activists on the ground, "took it upon themselves to speak for former comfort women by echoing the patriarchal assumptions of Japanese officials. National sentiments were provoked and exploited in casting former comfort women as young (age of the comfort women was a big issue of contention, as if it would have been all right if the Japanese Imperial army had the decency to conscript only women over 18 years of age), and virgin (again, the assumption seems to be that it would have been better if only they took women who were sexually active, and thus 'impure')" (205). What I am particularly interested in is the assumption that victim can only mean certain things and not others, so that someone who is virginal and young can be ascribed to this role while someone who is a "prostitute", and thus someone who is already tainted, polluted, and "used", cannot. Although victim does certainly occupy multiple positions in a gamut of possible narratives of experiences worthy of any form of redress, some women tend to become much more dispensable than others within the national-legislative discourse of the comfort woman as it currently exist. Again this is also connected to monetary redress, in that it is precisely the argument that these women were paid that allows the government to suggest that they were not coerced. And this narrative is not only produced by governments and institutions of state power. It is also problematically circulated by those who are sympathetic to the causes of these women. Returning to the NY Times piece about the two plaintiffs, the columnist stresses that both girls were virgins "who had not had their first periods" (A8). While the turn to their virginity gestures to the immensity of the violence experienced especially because of their youth, one must also question how

this problematically raises questions about which particular form of female figure is not only most prone to abuse but also most legible as one who is unfairly victimized.

One must be cautious, especially since the narrative of the virginal woman to be conquered as a metaphor for national pillaging has been deployed before. In the context of the Philippines, often, the destroying of the Filipino woman's "purity" marks colonial and economic impingement on the country. In a famous speech given by nationalist hero Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino, for instance, he warns his fellow senators of the increasing prostitution in areas near U.S. bases and across the country, a proliferation that he suggests marks economic despair and American neo-colonial enterprise. He also argues that prostitution indexes the collusion between the Marcoses and the U.S. government. Interestingly enough, as Aquino seeks to coalesce a nation around an anti-imperialistic stance, what he also produces is the dichotomy of the "pure" woman as opposed the "prostitute". He maps how these two occupy such different spaces and temporalities, the former existing during the Marcos regime's control, and the latter occurring only as a sign of what is brought on by American colonialism. Yet, as Philippine history shows, both these forms of women have existed, have been victimized, and have been exchanged during Spanish, Japanese, American colonialism, and even, in times of national prosperity. Indeed, in the attempt to rescue these women and liberate them form the grips of imperial control, what Aquino ends up producing is a hierarchy of appropriate forms of womanhood and their relationship to victimization. What this does is highlight the fact that the production of the "female victim" within nationalistic discourses is predominantly affected by contestations around the language and terminology that defines this subject. As Soh notes in her study, even if the official discourse around the

"comfort woman" coopted the term as such to define these women, the soldiers and other officials in the military system called them through a graphically objectifying phrase for "public" toilet. The women were literally equated with public lavatories where one releases and disposes of waste. With the much needed intervention of the transnational feminist movement, the term "military sex slaves" has then had the most currency in the calls for apology, highlighting the ways in which even as the political terrain shifts, so do the categorical ascriptions for these victims of abuse (78-80). Even within these three terms, ones that suggest different degrees severity of abuse, it is possible to see how the comfort woman embodies the tensions between language, victimhood, and redress.

It is in this regard that the film I study below makes an intervention into this discursive field of meanings. *Markova, Comfort Gay* is a messy, episodic, and highly textured film. Mostly set in the Philippines during Japanese colonialism, it follows the life of Walter Dempster Jr. or Walterina Markova (Dolphy Quizon), his four friends Carmen (Melvin Lee), Sophie (Andoy Ranay), Anita (Ricci Chan), and Minerva (R.S. Francsico) as they are forced into "sexual slavery" under Japanese soldiers. In what follows, I suggest that the presence of queerness in Gil Portes's film exhibits the possibilities that a particular modality of Filipino queerness produces as it disrupts dominant discourses about the comfort woman. If, for instance, local representations of this figure have necessarily circulated limited, hetero-patriarchal, and gendered expectations of what comprises a female victim, queerness in this film continually interrupts this seemingly simple staging of this figure. For, indeed, the properties of *bakla* as I discussed in the previous chapter--its inherent multiplicity, its refusal to be placed within a particular sexual category, and its phobic relationship to Philippine cultural

discourses--complicates a film about queer subjects who experience similar violence to that expressed by the comfort women.

The movie begins with Dempster's insistence that his story is real: "Have you heard of comfort gay? This is the story of my life, one bad dream, a nightmare, but every bit as real". Authenticity's assertion is unsurprising. These testimonies precisely depend on the acknowledgment of sexual abuse and violence in order for redress (psychic, legal, and monetary) to occur. Dempster must perform a narrative that already has specific citational legacies and iterabilities around female victimhood. Strengthening this link further in the film, what pushes Dempster to tell his story is a news segment about comfort women's "call for justice." He contacts the same reporter (Loren Legarda) in order to take part in this compensatory ritual. Using Legarda as witness, Dempster joins the comfort women in their quest to be heard.

The most seemingly obvious point in the movie also seems to be the most elusive: Markova is not a comfort "woman" at all. Shuttling between the names "Markova" and "Dempster" signifies the undecidability of the film around the character's gender identity and sexuality. For instance, it is not clear which name stands in for whom, if Markova represents the "woman" who is abused and Dempster the "man" re-narrating abuse. When Loren Legarda visits Dempster for the first and last time, she naively asks for Ma'am Markova or Mrs. Markova. When told of her absence, she calls attention to this lack angrily, "So … there isn't a Mrs. Markova here?" Dempster confirms that there isn't. She then asks, irritated, "So there also isn't any comfort woman? So, what do we have?" Dempster replies, "Comfort gay." The movie consistently registers this anxiety: Is Dempster or Walter gay, transgendered, *bakla*, or a drag queen?

During the first episodic flashback to his youth, Dempster is shown sitting on a swing with his female friends, admiring men playing basketball. His homophobic brother Bobby (Freddy Quizon) catches him and beats him up, demanding: "Remember this: be a man! Understand that?" Immediately after, Dempster is shown in his bedroom, refusing to follow these orders. He borrows his sister's clothing and make-up, and admits that in doing so "the woman in me comes out." The make-up and the clothing function similarly to the comfort woman's narrative; they index Dempster or Walter's attempt at deciding a "truth" about his identity. The most explicit display of this anxiety also produces the most brutal scenes of violence. Japanese soldiers imprison Markova and her friends because they discover that the "female lounge dancers" they've courted (and had every intentions of having sex with) are not women at all. Again the assertion of Markova's maleness comes to the fore, as a Japanese soldier feels under her skirt and beats her up for being a man, before sending the group to a holding place to perform sexual favors for Japanese troops. Violence in this movie also indexes national identity. Indeed, aside from their outside clothing, violent acts are the only ways to differentiate characters sexually and racially from each other.

In *Bodies That Matter*, Judith Butler suggests that "Gender is neither purely psychic truth, nor it is reducible to a surface appearance; on the contrary, its undecidability is to be traced as the play between psyche and appearance (where the latter domain includes what appears in words). Further, this will be a 'play' regulated by heterosexist constraints though not, for that reason, fully reducible to them" (234). *Markova, Comfort Gay* seems to gesture towards the undecidability of gender precisely as these characters attempt to articulate an already lucid story about "female" abuse.

Thus it constantly uses "woman" a site of contestation, highlighting the performativity of gender through the queer characters' constant dragging of a particular form of Philippine womanhood. Yet as we all already should know, Butler also states that dragging another gender should not be seen as a self-creation that produces only contestation or even agency. Rather, gender and gender performativity are terms limited to a historicity by which they draw their meanings. Thus the play on "woman" and "man" that Dempster or Markova performs is always already regulated by the heterosexist assumptions of the audience watching the film about the bakla figure, and the ways in which this figure is incompatible with the trafficked woman figure that narratives of female victimhood must enact on screen. These assumptions revolve around what constitutes appropriate male and female identity in the first place.

This performance can, however, mess these constraints up. What is most potent about *Markova, Comfort Gay* is that it uses heterosexist assumptions about queer desire, one based on the phobic turns I've mentioned about the bakla figure, to inevitably create what I would call a queer undoing of the very limited scripts "victimhood" occupies through and within the comfort woman's story. This queer undoing ushers in possibilities for disrupting (not to be equated with doing away with) citational forms and repeated attributes that have come to signify what "woman" means when represented under Japanese colonialism. Queerness disturbs, ruptures, undoes, destabilizes, and augments the already complicated representation of the woman as victim that these movies have traditionally heavily relied on, a good example of which is provided by the 1989 Philippine film *Comfort Women: A Cry for Justice.*

In the most explicit example of this queer undoing, the movie repeatedly

gestures to what makes the comfort woman figure most legible in a cinematic piece, violent scenes of rape. There are only two overtly anal-penetrative sex scenes depicted, and both are staged as rape. The first one occurs when his brother's business partner sexually abuses Dempsey. This act initiates his "awakening" into queer sexuality. In what can be read as the movie's homophobic turn even as it seeks to "humanize" homosexuality, Dempster re-narrates the rape as both painful and desirable: "I liked and didn't like it". Desire's articulation, its possibility, is jarring. It colors the second rape scene. Arguably the most violently graphic moment in the fi;m, the second rape occurs in the stable as soldiers force Markova and her friends to perform multiple sexual acts. One of her friends yells "array" (meaning "ouch") while he is being raped, as he begs the Japanese abuser to stop. This moment is a literal re-staging of the first rape scene. The young Dempster also utters this word and asks for reprieve as the camera pans away. What happens to the second rape scene then, when desire, not only of the rapist but also of the one being raped, is even alluded to? Rape in this movie possesses a new valance. The queerness of those being raped, their inability to be women in the first place, compels viewers to ask about victims' sexual desire, their yearning, and their pleasure. Does it matter that queer persons, as opposed to "passive women" are being raped? Might Markova and her friends desire the sexual acts they are being forced to perform? Uncomfortable as it is to think about rape in this light, the film forces this question open. *Markova, Comfort Gay* re-routes the phobic properties an audience might possess. It turns that phobic presence into a destabilizing force, one that can disturb the very narratives that have come to represent female identity in acts of rape. It problematizes

how victimhood has become the key trope for reading Japanese scenes of terror and subjection in Philippine cinema after Japanese colonialism.

Butler also suggests that the notion of "realness" occupies a privileged position in the ways gender performativity gets policed, and transgender individuals particularly get oppressed. In *Undoing Gender*, she notes that, "to be called unreal, and to have that call, as it were, institutionalized as a form of differential treatment, is to become the other against which human is made. It is the inhuman, the beyond human, the less than human, and the border that secures the human in its ostensible reality. To be called a copy, to be called unreal, is thus one way in which one can be oppressed" (218). The scene of abjection that Butler maps out exists in the multiple scenes of violence perpetrated on the bakla figures in this move. The injurious act in this scene is necessarily linked to a re-citation of a tradition that negates their position "as" women, one that they can never occupy precisely because Markova and her friends will always only be "passing" as such. Not only are their bodies subject to the whims of heterosexual men, they become sites for perpetrating further negation precisely because these are never "good enough" bodies to signify rape.

As Roland Tolentino suggests through a re-working of the word *panggagaya*, which is a camped version of likening oneself to another, the bakla is often seen as the site for a mimicked version of female identity in Philippine cinema ("Transvestites and Transgressions"). Of course, as I discussed in the beginning of this presentation, this consignment to mimicry elides the ways in which bakla exists within a gamut of sexualities, even transgender identity. That is, Markova and her friends' failure to be women, at precisely the moment in which there "need" to be women present to make this

scene legible as a scene of colonial subjection, produces a dilemma around the very stability of the identities "woman" and "victim" circulated in these scenes. Even though this scene of abjection is still phobic, produced through heteronormative representations of bakla figures as desiring their rape, it is also a re-staging that is legibly fueled by the anxieties, and resistance around the Japanese imperial project. If the female sex worker is a national allegory for the pillaging of women by colonial forces, then what does it mean for the bakla figure to replace this citational imperative at this particular juncture in the film? Butler suggests that although normative modalities of gender identity produce the subsequent policing of the individual who drags another gender, it is in the process of re-citation, and the misfires inherent in this staging, that we can see the possibility of gender performativity as an act of becoming that resists enclosure. She reminds us that, "although there are norms that govern what will and will not be real, and what will and will not be intelligible, they are called into question at the moment in which performativity begins its citational practice. One surely cites norms that already exist, but these norms can be significantly de-territorialized through their citation" (218).

Markova and her friends get re-cast not merely as queer figures who are oppressed, but as Filipino citizens who have been able to both trouble narratives about female identity under duress and to "queer" Japan's own masculinity, which the Japanese soldiers represent. It is also interesting that, as the film progresses, one of Markova's friends becomes revolutionary, luring Japanese soldiers into an alley through her sexuality as she then stabs them to death. I do not suggest of course that what Markova and her friends have done is necessarily liberatory, for their being exchangeable as sexual slaves with women points to just how tenuous "resistance" actually is. What I do suggest

is that this moment of abuse can "deterritorialize" the limited allegories of "female identity" an audience is expecting, through the mingling of queerness with their symbolic valuations. In *Markova, Comfort Gay*, "woman" itself is called into crisis. Indeed, what does it mean to allegorize narratives of abuse, resistance, and the demands for "justice" by deploying a particular figuration of victimized female identity through the bakla figure? I would suggest that the transgender bakla highlights the tenuousness *and* proscriptive recognizability of "woman as victim" in the calls for political change that then almost always gets linked up to a national consciousness. Returning to You-Me Park, she suggests that, "Unless we rigorously examine the language representing and interpreting this particular part of the history, we might end up reinscribing the violent patriarchal assumptions which made possible the practice of comfort women in the first place"(205). I would argue that this movie allows us to examine and unpack these patriarchal assumptions, through the multiple affinities Filipino queer identity has in the film to seemingly fixed notions of female identity.

Queerness even seems to undo dominant narratives around Philippine liberation. As is expected with a movie set during Japanese colonialism, the U.S. liberation gets portrayed as a moment when everyone is gaily celebrating all forms of freedom. Thus under U.S. occupation, Markova can be her "true self". A scene where Markova dances in decadent clothing is punctuated by Anita's return from the market. Markova and Anita sing, "Happy days are here again!" They parade around the house, as they display the silky smoothness of the pantyhose that Anita was presumably only able to purchase because the U.S. has returned. The same pantyhose become a transitional object in the next scene. Before dancing gaily in front of an American audience, Markova

strokes her legs and says: "How good it is … to feel like a real woman". In yet another instance of "freedom", Markova kisses a white solder. She then sees Carmen dressed as a man. Markova approaches and asks Carmen why she looks that way. Carmen responds that has decided to return to the province in order to "forget the past, and try to change." Markova replies jokingly, "You bitch, you've never been uglier, it doesn't suit you." She further lectures Carmen on the virtues of finding one's true self.

The simplest and most obvious way to read this ending suggests that American liberation frees Markova from having to hide her queerness. She can now be herself. Surely this is what the movie tries to portray (since, as Carmen stands in for, it was "pretending" to be a woman that got them into trouble in the first place). On the other hand, while it is certainly undebatable that the U.S. "liberation" has always inherently been justified through the freeing of women and children, does it really intend to free queers? After the lecture, Carmen asks Markova whom she is kissing. Markova points to the white soldier. Carmen asks, "Does he know?" Markova's reply ultimately epitomizes the potency of queer undoing in *Markova, Comfort Gay*. Without a touch of irony and hesitation, with the most blatant naiveté, Walterina Markova insists, "of course."

Re-Membering Korean Diasporic Subjecthood in DICTEE

The history of Korean national and diasporic formation is rife with multiple erasures and occlusions. Discussing the Japanese occupation of Korea from 1910 until the U.S. takeover in 1945, Lisa Lowe writes that, "The Japanese government ruled by means of a military dictatorship, through land administration that made a majority of the farming population heavily taxed tenant farmers; by censorship of newspapers and other

publications; and most significantly, through a carefully administered educational system whose 'objective was to educate loyal subjects for the Japanese emperor'" (137). Thus, Japan was able not only to monetarily control the literal land that it occupied but also to police the various performance practices of its citizens. The colonial power was able to restrict language, and was able to dictate the various narratives that circulated about Korean national identity. Through an effective ideological state apparatus, it was able to discipline a population to state its adherence to Japanese hegemony. The experience of Korean migration has also been about an occlusion and erasure of Korean national identity, ever more present for the second generation Korean Americans who have had to piece together cultural memory through traces of what has been lost. As Ronald Takaki observes, second generation Korean Americans drifted away from the fierce nationalism of their *ilse* or immigrant parents. For them, Korea existed as another space and another time, a disjunction that is further exacerbated by the lack of historical information in school, and by forced or unforced acculturation into U.S. cultural norms (286).

Amidst these competing definitions, Korean American artist and critic Theresa Hak Kyung Cha makes a compelling intervention by embodying the multiple subjectivities involved in the production of Korean diasporic identity. Her work *DICTE*E serves as a 'counter-memory' to the present 'memory stain' which has engulfed or assimilated Korean selfhood and nationhood. Similar to *Markova, Comfort Gay*'s refusal to produce fixed subjectivities and legible narratives around victimhood in order to critique the hetero-patriarchal assumptions about the comfort woman figure, Cha chooses to narrate the violent history of diasporic formation through subjects who deliver anti-narratives rather than normative testimonies of a lost historical record. These anti-

narratives switch between text and mage or between jarring blank and filled spaces, continually deferring historical specificity, and refusing linguistic reliability. Indeed, as Min Jung notes, any study of DICTEE's visualities and aesthetic properties cannot be performed without the acknowledgement of intrinsic and often painful ways that these are undercut by the experiences of the diaspora: "The historical project is inseparable from the aesthetic one, and provides the specific social contextualities to DICTEE's many intertextualities" (37). These decontextualized images, fragmentary thoughts, and silences register the many losses experienced by the postcolonial subjects within the text. DICTEE's many speakers attempt to fill these gaps not by asserting a singular temporal moment, nor a monolithic subject position. Rather, they further proliferate multiple positionalities that simultaneously gesture to the impossibility of being truly able to "fill" the lack that has been left, while acknowledging the paradoxical need for these spaces to be reclaimed. Cha's work interrogates the tensions involved in creating cultural memory for the postcolonial subject, when these have been erased either trough force or through a lack of representation in historical records.

Citing Derrida's *Of Grammatology* to discuss what she refers to as "Subaltern Consciousness", Gayatri Spivak writes, "Thought [here the thought of the subaltern consciousness] is for me a perfectly neutral name, the blank part of the text, the necessary indeterminate index of a future epoch of difference" (*In Other Worlds* 204). In an attempt to aestheticize what is, I would argue, subaltern consciousness, a key strategy for the text's reclamation of cultural memory is to shift narrative form. Through movement between text and image, Cha jolts the reader into the violence of historical formation for the postcolonial subject through a sudden introduction, at any given moment and without

any clear background, of an image beside the written words on the page. Through this back and forth movement, Cha visually invokes the difficult, often painful process of historical creation that is entailed in re-membering Korean, Korean-American, and female identity. These artifacts—at one point a handwritten letter, at another a photograph of a revolutionary, in another Chinese words for mother/father, and in another a photograph of an execution—serve as remains, traces of a history that have personal and national implications. Yet, they cannot be fully deciphered, as they represent the ambivalent relationship of the subject to any officializing record. Elaine Kim suggests that "Cha stylizes the text as a cinematic production by treating the page as a screen. Thus, while the apparatuses of European theory, Korean tradition, and History silence what cannot be communicated or translated form one discourse to another, they also combine to create cross-cultural, multivalent nexuses and thereby, new spaces from which to assert a unique subjectivity" (36).

These unique subjectivities are produced through the constant creation of a new language, whether through image, space, void, or fragments. This reclamation is circulated through the mixture of mediums that are essential in any form of cultural production. Yet, rather than anchoring these artifacts through a concrete sense of locality and intelligibility, Cha forces open the question of loss on a transnational scale by suggesting that for some of these images, and for some of these languages, no historical record exists. When records do exist, these are often seen through the image of the colonizer: "Japan has become the sign. The alphabet. The vocabulary. To *this* enemy people. The meaning is instrument, memory that pricks the skin, stabs the flesh, the volume of blood, the physical substance blood as measure, that rests as record, as

document. Of *this* enemy people*"* (32). What happens when Japan has become the visual and linguistic index for historical truth? The subjects of DICTEE wrestle with this question, and as they do, they produce varied forms of witness, promise, and locution.

For instance, as one the text's many speakers articulates, the desire for DICTEE's many voices is "to claim and to re-claim the space" (83) by focusing on the "space, not the objects that fill the space" (100). Lowe notes that it is through linguistic re-appropriation of French as "unfaithful" translations, that DICTEE's many speakers leave their mark on the colonizer's language: "*Dictee* problematizes the premise of translation as fidelity, underscoring instead the ambivalence, or double valence, of the translation enterprise; in *Dictee*, translation is both an apparatus of cultural domination … as well as means by which the dictation is adulterated, resisted" (42). The speaker in DICTEE challenges this notion of translational fidelity precisely to embody not only the process of linguistic acculturation, one of the key projects of the colonial enterprise, but to hyperbolize the insufficiency of language to stand in for any form of "truth" the postcolonial subject can anchor its narrative in. The speaker of Cha's world is hesitant to occupy the space of representation. As transnational feminists such as Rey Chow, Chandra Mohanty, and Ella Shohat have argued, it is through the production of the native informant, and the circulation of the othered subject as authentic translator for cultures of the Global South, that Eurocentric forms of knowledge production occur, even after the end of neocolonial rule. In this regard, Cha's writing is conscious of the many ways that history can be modified to silence the colonized, especially colonized women, through losses embodied within text and image.

One of the first photographs at the beginning of the work is a grainy etching of a few sentences in the Korean language, written by a Korean worker in a Japanese coal mine. This image makes ever more present the colonial legacy between Korea and Japan, through its materiality as an artifact. This image also shows the failure of history to record all the events of colonialism, which Cha then stylizes by providing no context or record of the image. We do not know *who* wrote this text to a certainty. The author's identity has been erased, both by Cha and by the historical record that does not register this particular historical moment. Even if one ascertains that this wall is from a Korean coal mine, we still are left to ponder *when* precisely the statement was carved on the wall—thus questioning the very stability of its temporal location. Regardless of its decontextualized state, the image does gesture to a particular form of female domesticity, that of motherhood. The translation for the photograph, "mother/I miss you/I want to go home" is poignant precisely because as, DICTEE circulates multiple positionalities, it nonetheless anchors itself by constantly gesturing to the various capacities assigned to female subjectivity.

As the text moves through its various geo-temporal cultural sites, between Korea and the United States, between the time of Japanese colonialism and the movement of specific characters to the United States, it becomes clearer that Cha anchors the text's utterances through a common rooting in feminist consciousness. In one moment in the work, the unnamed speaker writes, "Mother, you are eighteen years old. You were born in Young June. You are not Chinese. You are Korean. But your family moved here to escape the Japanese occupation. China is large. Larger than large. You tell me that the hearts of people are measured by the size of land. As large as silent" (45). The mother

has escaped into China because of Japanese occupation, and thus has already, in a violent way, lost her language and homeland simultaneously. The immensity of loss this mother experiences again illustrates the effects of colonialism on the most susceptible postcolonial subjects. The mother's migration and uprooting does not occur only through geographic movement but also through linguistic policing. Speaking to this mother yet again, the narrator says that she is forced to speak "the mandatory language like the others. It is not your own. Even if it is not you must. You are bilingual. You are Tri-lingual. The tongue that is forbidden is your mother tongue" (45). The play on motherhood, as both an allusion to the land and an allusion to domestic space, demonstrates the cooptability of various ascriptions of female identity to the production of nationhood. That is, it is through the deployment and policing of women especially during times of colonialism, that one can see the ways in the postcolonial female subject is truly, as Spivak would suggest, "under surface" (135).

If Japan has become the sign, or the nation that has influenced dominant cultural production within one's "homeland", DICTEE's many narrators understand that one has to then find alternative means of re-producing this history, apart from these norms. In another moment, the speaker writes, "Little at a time. The commas. The periods. The pauses. Before and after. Throughout. All advent. All following. Sentences. Paragraphs. Silent. A little nearer. Nearer. Pages and pages in movement line after line void to the left void to the right, void the words the silences" (69). Cha highlights the tension between language creation and occlusion. The literal breaking down of language that these phrases embody might have us see the potentiality of a restructured language under the strict eyes of colonial rule, one that has dictated what can and cannot be uttered. The

literal erasure of the silences can be read as a desire of the colonial power to have the colonized speak its language. Yet the text seems to gesture that silence itself, with the availability of little possibility, becomes the space for any resistance in the work. So that, "biting the tongue" can be a key mode for contesting one's oppressed status. Cha further writes, "You speak in the dark. In the secret. The one that is yours. Your own. You speak very softly, you speak in a whisper. In the dark, in secret" (45). These moments of demurral, deferral, and silence resonate with an insubordinate quality as they gesture to the need for the postcolonial subject to survive. Yet it is the fact that the speaker asserts her own desires and her own dialect within this oppressive darkness that produces the possibility of finding a means to contest the many limitations colonial decree has wrought. Even if done in the dark, it is the power of the utterance which is deeply encouraging, since it depicts a subject who, even in the face of intense loss, has chosen to fight this erasure of female and Korean identity.

Within an intergenerational and diasporic framework, the re-membering in DICTEE is also fueled by the desires of a Korean American subject who, as Takaki mentions, has historically been removed from her own historical links to Korea. This removal is painfully and violently rearticulated through a failed return: "Eighteen years pass. I am here for the first time in eighteen years, Mother. We left here in this memory still fresh, still new. I speak another tongue, a second tongue, this is how distant I am" (85). This statement is compelling precisely because it illustrates the palpable loss of language that has, through the many scenes of the text, been experienced inter-generationally. The mother has been forced to speak languages other than her own. The daughter, because of her distance, also speaks of a new tongue, a second tongue. Cha

highlights that, whether through the presence of colonial rule or through the slow and systemic abrogation of Korean history in the United States, the experience of the diasporic subjects concerned have been deeply inflected by a forgetting enacted through language. This is most resonant at precisely the moment the promise of a new subjectivity, of an American identity, is brokered through an erasure of a past history, a promise which the subject ultimately doubts: "One day you raise the right hand and you are American. They give you an American Pass Port. The United States of America. Somewhere someone has taken my identity and replaced it with their photograph. The other one. Their signature their seals. Their own image. And you learn through the executive branch the legislative branch and the third. Justice. Judicial branch. It makes the difference. The rest is past" (56). The constant turn to "their" in this passage demonstrate the subject's self removal from this process of Americanization. The speaker understands that, similar to the colonial power, the immigrant's proscription into American identity is brokered on a systematized form of promise and testimony.

Ultimately, the reclamation of historical record that DICTEE embodies is a tenuous process. As I have been suggesting, this reclamation is done through the piecing together of fragments—fragments of both personal and national importance. For example, the photograph of letters in script juxtaposed with typed words on the parallel page illustrates the intimate process of writing as a metaphor of the re-writing and re-instilling of national memory. The personal letter embodies both a personal act and a collective performance. In a similar vein, Cha includes a letter written by Korean Americans in Hawaii to Theodore Roosevelt petitioning for the recognition of Korea's national sovereignty. Produced in its entirety, it illustrates forceful disempowerment

because we are reading it *in* the present. The letter's naïve characteristics are heightened because of the historic facts that push against it. Through the secret Taft-Katsura pact, the United States agreed to give Japan free rein over Korea in return for its own unchallenged hegemony in the Philippines.

Discussing the compositional pressure to undo the singularity of "Asian/American woman" as a category of identification and subjectivity, Laura Hyun Yi Kang notes that, "The shifting and yet problematically recurrent representations of Asian/American women can, in turn, shed critical insights into the changing and often contradictory understandings of those social and ontological categorizations across different epistemological frameworks" (In Kang, Alarcon, and Kim 22). As I have been meaning to illustrate through an analysis of both *Markova*, *Comfort Gay* and *DICTEE*, the shifting meanings of female victim within these works point to the tenuous and often problematic assumptions around what forms of female subjectivity can and do get acknowledged as appropriate victims within narratives of redress. By depicting the life of comfort gays navigating the Philippines during the time of Japanese colonialism, *Markova, Comfort Gay* provides a possibility for questioning the stability of the comfort woman figure and its deployment within narratives of national solidarity. Indeed, what assumptions about women in terms of their "purity" get reproduced in these nationalist narratives of redress against Japan, and how does queerness destabilize these assumptions? Ultimately, the film gestures to the possibility of understanding the problematics involved in the calls for an apology by calling to crisis a systemic assumption about who can stand as victim in the way comfort women get represented in both official government discourse and the national imaginary—within which the queer subject is rarely if ever present. *Dictee*

similarly demonstrates the compositionality of "Asian/American woman" by refusing to highlight and embody a singular voice that then speaks for the Korean diasporic subject whose lost history, language, and geographical linkages get re-membered in the text. Through the constant turns to a multiplicity of identities, these works then ask the necessary questions around what forms of hetero-patriarchal structures get re-inscribed on women as they are, arguably, supposed to be narrated under the liberatory politics of redress.

CHAPTER 4

Repairing the Body, Repairing a Community: Asian American Performance in the Specter of HIV/AIDS

> The question of AIDS is an extremely important terrain of struggle and contestation. In addition to the people we know who are dying, or have died, or will, there are the many people dying who are never spoken of. How could we say that the question of AIDS is not also a question of who gets represented and who does not? AIDS is the site at which the advance of sexual politics is being rolled back. It's a site at which not only people will die, but desire and pleasure will also die if certain metaphors do not survive, or survive in the wrong way.
>
> (Stuart Hall, "Cultural Studies and Its Theoretical Legacies")

> What needs to happen now, and I believe what can happen, is the even more radical and shaming realization that under the present regime of systemic exclusion from health care in at least the United States, *every* experience of illness, is, among other things, a subjection to state violence, and where possible to be resisted as that.
>
> (Eve Sedgwick, *Tendencies*)

In 2006, the Open Society Institute, an international organization funded by the Soros Foundation, published *HIV/AIDS Policy in the United States: Monitoring the UNGASS Declaration of Commitment to HIV/AIDS*. This report concludes that precisely

because the U.S. is still plagued by inadequate and unequally distributed health care, "the country has failed to come to grips with an interwoven set of social factors—including economic inequality, gender disparities, racial discrimination, and homophobia—that creates vulnerabilities to HIV infection and leads to poorer outcomes from health care services" (24). This assessment and scathing critique of domestic policy around HIV/AIDS care comes three years after the Federal Government introduced new strategies for HIV prevention. On September 2003, amidst continually changing requirements given to Community Based Organizations (CBOs) and health care facilities in order to maintain or acquire funding, the CDC also implemented a new plan for action. Innocuously entitled "Advancing HIV Prevention: The Four Strategies," it required "routinized" HIV screening in health care facilities, as it simultaneously focused attention on HIV positive individuals and their partners. Of course, the logic here seems clear; try to eliminate "contagion" by focusing on those who are already "ill" with the disease, individuals considered to be within "high risk" groups. What this new initiative does, however, is reduce and in some cases eliminate funds to many CBOs whose main emphasis is to pursue prevention services for those considered at "low risk" for HIV/AIDS: women and various minority communities. These organizations then have to cope with increasingly limited support by shifting their emphasis in accordance with these requirements, thereby abandoning strategies that link up HIV/AIDS and wellness with other issues of importance to ethnic minorities, such as domestic violence, immigration, abuse, language disparities, and the continued lack of awareness around non-normative and queer sexuality.

Even in the current fiscal year (2007), prevention accounts for only 5 percent of the national budget for HIV/AIDS services provided by the Federal Government. It also accounts for "the smallest percentage increase of all funding policies. As a percentage of HIV/AIDS funding, prevention declined, from 9% in FY 1995 to 5% in 2004.… Relative to the overall CDC budget, funding for HIV/AIDS has grown at a slower pace" (CITATION 8). Policy changes during George W. Bush's presidency demands a revisiting of queer activism and performance at the beginning of the epidemic in the United States during the early 1980's. For indeed, the calls from various activists during this period for a more nuanced understanding and representation of HIV/AIDS subjectivity and its relationship to minoritarian identity eerily echo the damning critique of health care policy introduced more than two decades after. What the trauma of HIV/AIDS had done to a queer community coping with dying loved ones, a community whose calls for change have all but been ignored, is compel the understanding of the many complexities HIV positivity and AIDS subjectivity present to those who are abject—amongst the many hierarchical forms of oppression that sexual and racial minorities face.

The continued lack of health care access also makes clear that the fight against HIV/AIDS must be fought on the terrain of signification and meaning. Speaking specifically of the limited codifying of groups according to the seemingly pejorative term "risk", Simon Watney warns us as early as 1987 that, "the notion of 'high risk' group (which functions as an avatar for 'AIDS carrier') operates to suggest that certain social groups may of their essence present a risk to others.… Instead of 'risk' we should be talking of high vulnerability. Instead of high-risk groups, we should be talking of 'highly

vulnerable groups'. Instead of 'AIDS victims', a term which carries connotations of terrorism, we should be talking of people with AIDS. Instead of 'AIDS carriers' we should be talking of people with HIV infection. Instead of 'the AIDS virus', we should be talking of HIV. And, most importantly, instead of 'compulsory' testing—or as the President Reagan put it in 1987, 'routine' testing—we should be talking of punitive testing" (25-26). Although written to intervene in a different historical moment, Watney's words register the anxiety of various communities ignored but directly affected by the policy shifts I've discussed above. These changes, ones that do affect lives, violently demonstrate the mattering of some bodies over others, a mattering that is skewed to a limited understanding not only of "risk" but also of the ways that "illness" is internalized and worked through within certain communities. In other words, "risk", commonly made synonymous with particular sexual practices and the identities attached to them, does not encapsulate the many ways that HIV/AIDS affects individuals along a gamut of positionalities, and along multiple identifications outside of homosexuality. These oppressive changes also force open the urgent need to continually map and fill out the complexities and intersections between HIV/AIDS, racial, gendered and sexual oppressions. Contrary to what Andrew Sullivan or Dan Savage might claim, the AIDS crisis has neither "ended", nor is it "over" for many who continually struggle around these healthcare issues.

It is precisely the terrain of meaning, and who gets to wrest control of the ways in which certain bodies are represented with or without HIV/AIDS, that characterizes the beginning of calls for inclusion within narratives of the diseases in official discourse. When the department of health first released an account of the number or HIV/AIDS

cases documented in New York City in 1982, it did not include Asian Americans in the breakdown of various racial classifications affected. Even when the Minority HIV/AIDS initiative was implemented as late as 1999, it lacked wording concerning Asians and Pacific Islanders domestically. Representing 2% of HIV/AIDS cases in the city, Asian Americans were relegated, together with Native Americans, as part of the "other" category in this statistical summary. Of course, this occlusion, seemingly mundane as it is, affects the lives of countless Asian American communities and the organizations that serve them, as funds for respective CBOs are often distributed according to what the state considers the "neediest". Voicing her anger around this effacement in an interview with *Body Positive*, Suki Terada Ports, an activist and one of the founders of the Asian and Pacific Islander Coalition on HIV/AIDS (APICHA) notes that, "It's been very difficult to not only have to teach the community AIDS work but also to teach funders and the health care departments about Asian History" (9).

One example of this ignored history is the government's refusal to acknowledge that there are multiple languages being spoken in Asian America. In one specific case, the Chinese American Planning Council, a local organization in New York City, has been unable to hire additional case managers for those diagnosed with HIV positive status and AIDS due to limited funding. They thus overburden the load of two case managers as they translate for and help the daily lives of more than 50 clients each. Or, in another case of historical oversight connected to these language disparities, the $20,000 that is usually given to organizations such as a "Hispanic group for outreach to print a bilingual brochure would not be sufficient for an API group that needs to provide outreach to at least seven major Asian languages and dialects" (Lo 10). And, in the most recent round

of funding for the fiscal year of 2007-2008, organizations such as APICHA, which has existed since 1987 in order to serve Asian Americans in New York City by giving them HIV/AIDS related services, and which has focused on a more well rounded approach to HIV/AIDS by emphasizing both HIV care and issues of importance to immigrant communities, saw its funding cut. Thus, APICHA had to abandon its Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender project, together with its efforts to conduct prevention outreach for Asian and Pacific Islander men who have sex with men in the city.

With the changing political climate, the absence of attention to these concerns is appalling, and at its worst, life threatening. This fact is made even more pressing given the following information: 1) Data from 1993 to 2001 suggest that the number of Asian/Pacific Islander Persons living with AIDS in the United States increased from 1,295 to 3,193, an increase of 147%. 2) Asians and Pacific Islanders have a higher rate of preventable diseases such as hepatitis-B, which is also strongly associated with HIV transmission. 3) A recent study from San Francisco has shown that Asian drug users who are hidden within the street drug scene engage in HIV risk behaviors, and are often not offered adequate health awareness. 4) Given the current projected immigration and migration patterns in the United States, one that foresees a greater number of Asian Americans moving in and out of the country, and given that more than 7.2 million people in the Asia and the Pacific islands have HIV, greater focus on prevention for Asian Americans living in the U.S. is of critical importance.

I point to these discrepancies since they animate the concerns of this chapter: Why would the Asian American body be incongruous with a body with HIV/AIDS? Why, amidst the general knowledge that HIV/AIDS disproportionately affects people of

color, have Asian Americans not a part of this given category of epidemiological study? Even today, aside from a study by Georgetown University, no full-scale research is being conducted around the ways in which Asian Americans have grappled with HIV/AIDS subjectivity as they also deal with concerns specific to diasporic, migrant, and ethnic identity. Returning to the questions that have been posed by Stuart Hall, Cindy Patton, and others in the attempt to conceptualize the utility of theory in an epidemic, what would the usefulness of cultural studies be in this particular moment of ongoing crisis? More specifically, how might an interdisciplinary field such as Asian American Studies and its archive help unpack this specific elision further, and contribute to having us understand the types of work that were and are being done around this erasure? If, in the first chapter, I study psychoanalytic forms of reparation and their effects on Asian American communities in the United States, and in the second chapter I speak of a transnational Filipino diasporic culture that seeks to "repair" the place of both the city and its inhabitants from the Marcos Regime's erasure of their pleasures, and in the third I discuss the tenuousness of claiming victimhood through a particular iteration of testimony, this chapter studies the effects of bodily reparation, or more nearly, the effects of somatic desires for health by the Asian American community around HIV/AIDS.

Indeed, the elision of Asian American health concerns around HIV/AIDS is consonant with the ways in which Asian American as an identity category has been circulated within the national imaginary. For instance, David Palumbo-Liu suggests that, "The key instruments that have been deployed in the historical construction of Asian America—immigration law, scientific racism, economic and social policies, and cultural practices—all drew on particular understandings and imaginings of the racialized

Asian/American body and psyche, and the ways Asian American might occupy, or should occupy, a particular place in America" (7). The erasure of the multiple experiences of Asian Americans from this national narrative around HIV/AIDS follows the dynamics that Palumbo-Liu highlights. Historically, Asian Americans have been policed through discourses around racial cleansing, as laws against miscegenation illustrated the fears of a population's pollution, a fear enacted specifically through the exclusion of certain races of Asian Americans from immigration (Chinese in 1882, Asian Indians in 1917, Koreans and Japanese in 1924, and Philippines immigrants in 1934). It is no coincidence, then, that with the exceeding importance of the "model minority myth" in the contemporary moment, shifting the frame from the unassimilable alien to the hyper-productive one, and with the presence of the desexualized Asian Americans on screen and on stage, that the Asian American body is devoid of the possibilities of being represented with a particularly vexed illness. This is all the more important given that HIV/AIDS has the ideological underpinnings of being caused by a "polluted" sexual practice. That is, with the ever increasing production of the Asian American figure by the liberal state as that which performs as the exceptional subject, it is no surprise that a particularly charged illness such as HIV/AIDS, one which carries stigmatizing value, becomes incommensurate with this figure.

This is made even more paradoxical when one considers the juridical relationship between Asian American immigration and HIV/AIDS. Those who doubt the direct link between immigrant subjectivity and HIV subjectivity need only look at the current laws in the United States, which, to this day, still bar the acquisition of permanent residence to individuals who are HIV positive, while granting citizenship to the very same people in a

bizarre slippage in juridical logic. In this sense, the plight of the immigrant with HIV/AIDS violently parallels that of the experience of Asian American migrants, whose social and political life, as Lisa Lowe suggests, "have been significantly determined by the U.S. state through the apparatus of immigration laws and policies, through the enfranchisements denied or extended to immigrant individuals and communities, and through processes of naturalization and citizenship" (7). That is, with the continued importance of transnational immigration to the very creation of Asian American as an umbrella term within the United States, it is only necessary that we study the effects of HIV/AIDS on this particular formation, and to explicate the ways in which illness both affects and effects Asian American identity.

In what follows, I study the link between Asian American identity and HIV/AIDS subjectivity through a reading of Chay Yew's *A Language of Their Own*. This play was first staged in 1994, at a moment when representations of Asian Americans with HIV/AIDS did not exist. I suggest that the play limns HIV/AIDS identity and subjectivity by juxtaposing it with the experiences of Asian Americans around language, immigration, and assimilation. Set mostly in Boston and Los Angeles, *A Language of Their Own* follows the lives of four characters, three of whom are Asian American and one who is Caucasian, as they work through the complexities of their relationships during the age of AIDS. The first act, entitled "Learning Chinese", centers on a dialogue between Ming and Oscar, two gay Chinese Americans who rehearse and go through the turmoils of their four year relationship—one that is affected by both their ethnic identity and Oscar's having AIDS. The second act of the play, entitled "Broken English", follows the lives of Ming and Oscar as they meet new partners. Ming starts a relationship with

Robert, a white waiter from a "trendy" restaurant in Boston, while Oscar meets Daniel, a hyper-political Filipino American student who is also an activist in Act-Up. Through the enmeshing of immigrant-ethnic identity with the experiences of people living with HIV/AIDS, Yew not only produces a cogent acknowledgement of the ways in which Asian Americans have been elided in discussions of health care during the beginning of the epidemic. He also understands that this linking of HIV/AIDS to ethnic and racialized identity problematizes notions of "healing" from illness, at precisely the moment in which "living with AIDS" becomes an important goal, and one could say identity, for individuals affected by the disease.

As he simultaneously touches on issues of assimilation, Yew also asks what other complex ways could having AIDS be perceived during a moment of its still limited representation. Who else might be legible as "victims" of HIV/AIDS, and how might this legibility be inflected by experiences of those doubly marginalized because of experiences with immigration and othered ethnic identity? What other identity formations does HIV/AIDS produce? Is HIV/AIDS an ontological state, and not merely an "illness"? As critics such as Michael Warner and Douglas Crimp remind us, while HIV/AIDS is a disease with immense ideological import, it is also about the existence of non-normative sexualities and the practices of belonging or intimacy these entail. These practices have been historically policed and contested. Yew uses Asian American narratives around the inability to be assimilated into the national body—and the contestations involved because of these tensions and policing—as a metaphor for the ways in which HIV/AIDS also produces new forms of belonging amidst dire circumstances. At a moment when living with AIDS becomes an important way of re-viewing the disease, Yew makes a

compelling case for thinking through how, for Asian Americans, this living with AIDS is always already coupled with anxieties around one's ethnic-migrant status.

HIV/AIDS always already affects the experiences of Asian Americans within the diaspora. Martin Manalansan suggests for instance that for Filipino Americans, "HIV/AIDS subjectivity takes on a new hue" in that "the spaces and memories bring forth what can be called an intimate geography of suffering. By this I mean the various ways in which suffering under the pandemic is structured and constituted not just by the here and now, but by remembered spaces and time fragments of one's biography and history. Suffering in the case of Filipino gay men in the diaspora is experienced and understood through and refracted by the exigencies of home and the problems of displacement and settlement. Suffering is not a process imbued only with forlornness but rather is a purposive series of acts that build and create spaces for negotiating location and positionality" (155). What Manalansan suggests is that notions of mourning around HIV/AIDS subjectivity, when worked out through one's diasporic status, is almost always influenced by experiences of displacement and loss, not only of one's "health", but also of one's homeland, one's language, and one's legal status. Moreover, HIV/AIDS brings to the fore the mechanisms that make surviving the disease, and surviving migrant identity in the United States possible, making them intricately tied occurrences.

Manalansan further notes that the presence of HIV/AIDS in Filipino American communities also registers a gamut of responses, at once creative and exploratory. Rumor, gossip, and humor become key forms of finding spaces to cope with and understand the disease. This form of understanding one's relationship to illness is eloquently articulated by Eve Sedgwick, in reading her own connection to Michael Moon

in the piece "White Glasses" (*Tendencies*). Discussing the effects of cancer on her psyche and body, Sedgwick reflects on the identity-shattering effects illness has, even on the most quotidian task of getting dressed in the morning. Thinking with intimate detail about what to wear, at some points humorous and in others full of apprehension, Sedgwick writes that she "never felt less stability in my gender, age, and racial identities, nor anxious and full of the shreds of dread, shame, and mourning as this process is, have I ever felt more of a mind to explore and exploit every possibility" (*Tendency* 264). Although what is seminal here are the painful effects of illness, Sedgwick also calls on its explorative potential amidst her going through cancer. This desire to find what indeed is "left" after a debilitating disease affects one's very being, and what other forms of identity it can create, parallels the reflections Yew's work demands. His channeling of the anxieties illness produces, coupled with the difficulties of one's ethnic-racial status, allow for the creation of a space where one can see the relationship between identity formation and disease. Similar to Manalansan's reading of "geographies of suffering", the oppression of the HIV positive for Yew becomes a key space for interrogating both the effects of race and illness on individuals who have not had the possibility of being represented the feelings and experiences of HIV/AIDS within the national imaginary.

Asian American Theater and Prevention

In the context of Asian American performance and theater, the abjection of the Asian American body from what is considered the national body becomes a key tropology for rooting performance practices, narratives, and aesthetics. Writing about abjection and its relationship to performance, Karen Shimakawa suggests that the

incommensurability of Asian Americans within the dominant U.S. culture—whether as exceptional "model minorities" or as persons who are unable to be incorporated within the melting pot—produces what she calls a critical mimesis on stage. Shimakawa makes a compelling argument about how Asian American bodies in performance redeploy historicized forms of abjection for their own purposes, and resignify the abject figure into productive forms of belonging and community:

> Rather than an outright disavowal or rejection of stereotypical, racializing/nationalizing discourse, these plays critically reterritorialize the position of the "abject" through mimicry, not necessarily to render the Asian American as nonabject but to redeploy the threatening force of abjection.… These plays are effective, to the extent that they are effective, because they do not merely respeak the discourse of abjection (perfectly, playfully, or otherwise); rather, they self consciously engage the effects of that discourse on the *Asian American body* and recirculate and redirect the force of abjection through and on that body. (21)

In other words, this abjection, one that is rooted to the jettisoning of the Asian American from notions of American whiteness, the contemporary iteration of which is the very hyper-exceptionalizing of this ethnic category amongst other minorities, is re-historicized through the production of the "force" or the "affect" of abjection. The Asian American body then becomes a site of contestation not merely by being an instrument of a historical moment's re-citation. Rather, this body becomes the locus for re-visiting the consequences of abjection, in multiple temporalities and geographic locations. I would suggest, then, that Chay Yew's play also mimics and produces this abjection, the

affective force entailed in the oppression of an ethnicized other, through the conflation of the unassimilable racial body and the body with HIV/AIDS. This is especially relevant, given that the play does so at a geo-temporal location that refuses to accept the presence of both figures, or sees them as incommensurate. The play demands the recognition of the relationship between these subjectivities, that these can and do affect each other. That is, the body with HIV/AIDS, which, especially during this period, was a "threat" to the healthy national body, and which was, indeed, at its most violent disciplining, desired by some in the nation to be jettisoned from its borders, becomes linked up to the Asian American body, which, as history also shows us, has been excluded, jettisoned and re-appropriated by the nation-state to buttress both colonialism outside its borders as it polices racial minorities within. Thus, for Yew, his concern does not only lie with the "hyphenated" ethnic-American subject. Rather, he mines the multiplicities present within how Asian Americans contest and negotiate their multiple positionalities *as* ethnic-Americans to provide the much needed ground work—indeed the intervention—for reading the many subjectivities HIV/AIDS effects.

As I have mentioned, terms that define HIV/AIDS, like the various markers for racial identity, is mapped out on a continually shifting terrain of meanings and signification. The definition of HIV/AIDS subjectivity is also about the struggle to find linguistic idioms that mark both terms. Discussing the changing definitions of HIV and AIDS from the beginning of the epidemic for instance, Paula Treichler argues that: "The name AIDS in part *constructs* the disease and helps make it intelligible. We cannot therefore look through language to determine what AIDS "really" is. Rather, we must explore the site where such determinations *really* occur and intervene at the point where

meaning is created, in language" (11). That is, HIV/AIDS, similar to other codifications of illness, and I would suggest not unrelatedly so, to codifications of racial identity, is not only located in what one could consider scientific and empirical "truth". The example I mentioned at the beginning of the chapter shows that this fact is precisely prescient when epidemiological data around HIV/AIDS is incapable of reconciling a particular iteration of "truth" about Asian Americans in the United States and their vulnerability to HIV/AIDS, an inability that is, at its center, connected to the ideological structures that cannot take into account a particular representation of this population. Thus, ethnic identity and HIV/AIDS in this instance are not only disciplinarily and methodologically bounded by science, they are also bounded by the ideological spaces in which these classifications are created and policed. As Foucault would argue, race, sexuality, and illness are bounded in the discursive structures—the medicalizing processes—that produce and re-circulate them.

It is then no surprise that *A Language of Their Own* predominantly centers its narrative force through an unpacking of the characters' dilemmas around language and notions of "truth". We are first introduced to Ming and Oscar as they discuss both their affinity and cleaving from each other, stemming from the difficulty of linguistically assimilating within normative notions of American identity. Ming is a U.S. born Asian American, an "ABC, American Born Chinese" (130). Yet this does not necessarily align him to the dominant culture and its linguistic norms immediately. For instance, he discusses his interpellation into "proper", grammatically correct English, an experience rife with shame and confusion: "I don't know when I stopped learning how to speak Chinese. Must be in grade school. Everyone at school spoke English beautifully, and my

English was always—well, unrefined, pidgin, tainted.… But I finally did speak English like everyone else, if not better" (131). Like most representations of Asian Americans in post-1945 writing, Ming is inculcated into American hegemonic norms through a process of negotiation in school. Interestingly enough, he not only performs the task of speaking English properly but does so exceptionally well. Again the model minority myth comes to the fore, as that which hyperbolizes the Asian American subject as beyond "white", as one who is able to speak better than those who have trained him. But as Homi Bhabha would argue, it is precisely the failure of the colonized to perform exact mimicry of the colonizer's language as "not quite white" (131), a failure rooted to Ming's hyper-exceptionality, and, moreover, to his always being prone to being judged through his very ability to cleanse and "heal" himself of this polluted tongue in the first place. Ming's facility for linguistic re-appropriation in this instance then makes possible the cleansing of what is polluted, what is tainted, and what is contaminated. Interestingly enough, the Asian American subject is not only oppressed because he is racially non-normative. He is othered because he is queer. This is again connected to his linguistic ability, since he is able to erase any sign of queerness by watching *My Fair Lady*, a film that makes him realize that he is gay. In Yew's world, the production and representation of normative raced subjectivity is also always related to the simultaneous production of queer identity—that at the moment in which one attempts to be racially normative one is also, in every sense of the word, queer. Race and sexuality are in this sense constitutive of and constituted by one's negotiation with the dominant linguistic norms of the U.S. nation state.

Although not born in the United States, Oscar also goes through a similar process of linguistic normalization. He states, "My father used to beat me with his fists, when I didn't get the perfect grade in school. Once I failed English. I was ten. I didn't understand my tenses—couldn't get them right—got them all mixed up—past, present, perfect, continuous. That night, with a whip in his hand and the test paper in another, my father caned me. And in a consuming rage, he struck me in the left eye. The next day, I went to school half blind. My left eye was covered with a patchy white cream. The pain didn't bother me. The embarrassed, silent looks from my friends did. Fighting and violence didn't solve a thing even if I got an A in my next English test. Now, I correct my father's English. Most of the time—deliberately" (127). Oscar's failure to initially incorporate into the dominant norms of American culture as an immigrant is tethered not only to his inability to correctly repeat the linguistic tenets of English. He also fails at ascertaining the temporal shifts this language marks. In other words, if linear temporality is produced through a very specific usage of vocabulary, then the ethnic immigrant subject cannot re-produce both the vocabulary and the notion of time this grammatical idiom demands.

If, as Judith Halberstam argues, minoritarian identity, particularly queer identity, necessitates a re-doing of the very ways in which we conceptualize time as "queer", suggesting that a good example of this is the HIV/AIDS epidemic, since it demanded a "queering" of futurity, as the queer community had to struggle with an illness that halts any longing for a certain future, then in Yew's play, this problematic around temporality is directly linked to one's immigrant status. Moreover, we see how racial normativity gets wrapped up in queer identity, through Oscar's antagonistic relationship with his father. That is, this failure of re-production is then policed by the latter, wrestling with the

desire to have his son learn the language of the culture, as he also must come to grips with his own failure to learn the language himself. The irony then does not escape us that it is his own son, seemingly cleansed of this tongue, who is able to show him his own lack. As a mark of Oscar's own incorporation into U.S. hegemony, and similar to the hyper-exceptional citizen that Ming performs through his linguistic skills, Oscar corrects his father, at any given moment, thereby not only making him more "American" than the latter, but also, in the process, allowing him to align with a particular form of heterosexual masculinity that his father produces in the beginning through violent abuse. Thus, again and again, Yew gestures to the sense of "becoming" American that both Asian American characters perform through their hyper-exceptionality. What polices this into being, what locks it into place, in Oscar's case, is the shame caused by his classmates' stares, more than the physical pain his father inflicts. Shame becomes the most effective means of inculcating him into American cultural norms.

The characters' grappling and negotiation with linguistic norms in order to align with and cleave from Asian American identity allows Yew to then produce a similar dynamics around the discursive production of HIV/AIDS as subjectivity. The play depicts characters that continually rehash their "unbecoming" Chinese and "becoming" more American through an articulation of their experiences as Asian Americans—specifically through their relationship to linguistic acquisition. HIV/AIDS is then presented as a parallel conversion that the couple experiences, albeit with different results. What illness does is complicate the assumed affinity between the two lovers, precisely because one of them has HIV/AIDS and embraces it as an identity while the other cannot. In the beginning of the play, Ming and Oscar view their multiple

experiences as ethnic-subjects as a place to initiate a dialogue around various key terms of negotiation. These differences even encourage them to "steal each other's vocabulary" (136). Since one can speak Chinese and the other cannot, they simply make up for it by teaching each other new ways of saying things, or, in the most quotidian sense, they translate for each other when needed. Yet Oscar's having AIDS seems to produce a sudden impossibility of this shared linguistic intimacy. Sero-conversion and AIDS become an event that produces linguistic terms that the two of them cannot circulate between each other. After the diagnosis, Ming says, "We had nothing to say to each other," to which Oscar responds, "If we did, the word that lingered at the tip of our tongues was AIDS" (140). The Chinese American identity that both hold so close, which both share, is shattered by the presence of illness as a similar ontological space for one of the partners. This also temporally marks the change in their relationship, one that is located in the negotiation of what language needs to be spoken because of illness. The temporal confusion that marked their movement into and out of American identity returns, not as confusion around merely a past and present, but a refusal to think of, what is in essence, a future. In another moment, when they meet for the first time in a year at a party, the reflection dawns on Ming that, "All of a sudden, we've become two awkward strangers in a cold room. Wrestling with a new unspeakable language that belongs only to old lovers" (160).

At first, it might seem that Yew's deployment of conventional narratives around Asian American assimilation and linguistic norms seems unrelated to the play's discussion of HIV/AIDS. Yet I would suggest that *A Langue of Their Own* deploys issues around language as a palimpsest to show how these characters' intimacy is

simultaneously affected by their histories as queer and ethnically othered subjects, as it is by the presence of HIV/AIDS. In other words, the tension around their relationship does not only have to do with a negotiation of their linguistic ability because of their immigrant and diasporic status, or their difficulty with public intimacy because of a generational difference with their immigrant parents. *A Language of Their Own* then makes a much needed intervention into the official culture which makes Asian Americans absent in HIV/AIDS discourses by suggesting that similar to the linguistic production that circulates what is Asian American, as a subjectivity that is negotiated even by the individuals coalesced under this category, HIV/AIDS is a subjectivity that is negotiated through its discursive production.

Again and again, the play suggests that illness also goes through a similar working through of one's oppression, similar to how to the labor entailed in working through one's ethnic status. When Ming discovers that Oscar has HIV, and that possibly he could be diagnosed with AIDS, he grapples with the different ways that both of them read what having the disease might mean. Ming asserts that Oscar is "sick", while Oscar asserts that he is "HIV Positive". After some frustration which causes Ming to say "Sick is a better word", the dialogue below then ensues:

> Oscar: But it has the same meaning.
>
> Ming: I don't know why you keep volleying, ramming the words AIDS and HIV positive down my throat. It's like you're almost fucking proud to wear the label around your neck. I hate it. I hate it.
>
> Oscar: But it's the truth.

> Ming: He likes categorizing people. Boxing things into their rightful places. This is white. This is Asian. This is gay. This is straight. And this is what your fucking supposed to do when you're in this category. He organizes people like he organizes his office. (139)

Yew maps out the tensions in language around HIV/AIDS, sexuality, and ethnic identity. Oscar sticks to the "technical terms" that circulate around HIV/AIDS, embracing these as a form of depathologizing identity, as a "truth" to hold close to, which Ming cannot understand. Oscar makes attempts to understand the illness that is present, in order to find compelling ways to live with HIV/AIDS. His organization is not a trite response but rather a key form of negotiating the disease. It is an enactment of the desire to live through illness by refusing to re-structure and organize his world around those who might not have the same ontological location. Ming's refusal to have words "rammed" down his throat is all the more noteworthy, given that their relationship lasted precisely because of their abilities to share and learn new languages as Chinese Americans. If through ethnic affinity the two are able to coalesce, illness presents a limit that neither of them can overcome. When they meet each other again for the first time in years, Ming asks Oscar about his health, to which Oscar replies that his "T's are up". Ming then asks, "your what?" Ming's answer in this moment further highlights a failure to comprehend Oscar's positionality because they now speak different languages.

After they end this brief conversation, Oscar asks Ming to renew their relationship, which Ming refuses because he has already changed. Oscar then replies, "Become more Chinese?" Again, the play gestures to the conflation of HIV/AIDS with

ethnic-American identity in this moment. After further being questioned for his reasons, Ming finally discusses why he cannot return to Oscar:

> We can't go back to the ways things were and make everything all right. It's like learning Chinese. Once I started speaking English, I stopped learning how to speak and write Chinese. I dropped my culture for another. And you can't go back, only forward. And every now and then, you'll remember a few phrases, a few words, and the names of Chinese dishes. It sounds a little vague, a little romantic, but the language escapes you because you let it go. It's like learning Chinese. Learning to be Chinese. (174)

Narratives of assimilation and narratives of sero-conversion are linked in this regard. That Ming refuses to live with Oscar again by equating a life with someone who has HIV/AIDS with learning a new language that he is not ready for is all the more astonishing given that, in many ways, it is precisely his wanting to reconnect to his Chinese identity that encourages him to have a relationship with Oscar in the first place. The play gestures to the linguistic production of Chinese American identity, only to then state how this serves to map out how having HIV/AIDS becomes the "point of no return" for the couple. For Ming, learning English symbolizes his acculturation to the dominant culture, one that he cannot go back from.

Even as Oscar decides to die an early death in the play's second act, and as he asks Daniel to help him enact this desire, it is through language that the couple finds solace in what they are about to do. Ruminating around what possible explanations to give the hospital around his death, Oscar hesitatingly states, "If the hospital finds out." To which Daniel replies, "I'll say I can't read English or something … Misread the

prescription on the bottle" (218). Different from Ming, Daniel is able to create a point of affinity with Oscar around his having AIDS. Daniel is able to understand the latter's relationship to desire for death. Departing from plays that depict the body with AIDS as belonging to a helpless victim decimated by the disease, Yew chooses to show a character that has chosen to die on his own terms. That Daniel again uses a misreading of language in order to justify this act to the medical establishment and the law again point to the importance of a failure of linguistic faithfulness as a form of negotiation and contestation. By the play's end, Daniel does have an affinity with Oscar beyond his understanding from another's perspective. In a dream after Oscar's death, we find out that he is also HIV positive and is staying healthy.

Discussing the value of conversion in Tony Kushner's "Angels in America," as a marker for how HIV/AIDS also constitutes an identity, Steven Kruger suggests that "closely wrapped up with the play's analysis of sexuality is a recognition of how AIDS—identified in the popular imagination with a gayness conceived as always already diseased and weak—becomes not just a category of health or illness but also an identity" (152). I would argue that Yew's play should also be included in the canon of performance pieces analyzed during this period that calls on the understanding of HIV/AIDS not just as an debilitating illness, but as a conversion into and out of an identity, as an unbecoming and becoming into a form of *living with* illness. Yew's play is different in that it addressed the immense lack of representation around Asian Americans who have HIV/AIDS. As the beginning of this chapter shows, this community also struggles with the disease. Yew's play forces us to acknowledge what's missing in epidemioligical data, the canon of HIV/AIDS plays, and the national imaginary.

In *Excitable Speech*, Judith Butler remind us that, "The resignification of speech requires opening new contexts, speaking in ways that have never yet been legitimated, and hence producing legitimation in new and future forms" (41). The intimacy between two Asian Americans speaking on stage, about an illness that has not been ascribed to this ethnic identity, is indeed powerful. This rare coupling does not escape Yew's knowledge and thus he mines it to further unpack both the politics of illness and the inner-workings of inter and intra-racial sociality. Similar to a play like David Henry Hwang's *M. Butterfly*, Yew 's play interrogates the politics of inter-racial relationships. In another section of the play, the rice queen myth comes to the fore. Oscar and Ming even have an argument about Ming's relationship with Robert, a white man. Oscar accuses Ming of abandoning his politics for being in a relationship with a white man. He says that the Ming does so to "assimilate" into and to "emulate" whiteness. Ming then admits that for him, it was "the politically correct thing to do" (168). What Yew highlights here are the politics of this relationship, the various power dynamics that might be entailed by an inter-racial relationship that is fraught with fetishistic potential. On the other hand, he turns this stereotype on its head, by depicting Ming not only as having more financial ability than Robert, but also as physically abusive to him. The introduction of interracial intimacy and violence in the play becomes a space to discuss issues that do face Asian American and their desires. Yew demonstrates the many issues with shame that the power dynamics of a relationship can bring, which, as the play shows, drives Ming to frequent bathhouses and have anonymous sex. Indeed, towards the end of the first act, after Ming and Oscar decide to separate, Oscar goes to an HIV support group. He then reaches a stark realization, "The best analogy for being positive is losing your boyfriend. Losing a part of you you took for granted. You're still the same, but never

whole, not completely. In the group, there was a new vocabulary, a new language, discussions on T-cells, AZT, and PCP" (155). Oscar exemplifies the ways in which his relationship forms the central space for him to negotiate his ethnicity, migrant status, sexuality, and now health. The intimacy here is deeply enmeshed in a vocabulary of sociality and kinship with both Ming and then Daniel after him.

What then, is the significance of a play like *A Language of Their Own* and the issues it raises to understanding HIV/AIDS prevention for Asian American communities? Although *A Language of Their Own* was released in 1994, I would argue that its mapping of the relationship between ethnic-migrant identity and illness speaks to the prevention practices of CBOS directly influencing the community today. Before concluding the chapter, I thus briefly highlight the work that was and is being done by APICHA. I suggest that, apart from the dominant discourses which have flattened the experiences of Asian and Pacific Islanders around illness, this organization's work highlights the interconnectedness of sexuality, race, gender, migrant identity, and HIV/AIDS subjectivity.

I worked in APICHA from June 2002 to June 2005, serving in multiple roles from Peer Educator to Project Coordinator. During this time, I went to the various spaces where sexual interactions between men occurred, from the city's many bathhouses, to the various ethnic clubs and bars across the five boroughs. I also conducted HIV/AIDS outreach at various ethnic parades and events in the city as well. Although APICHA's prevention budget has been slowly decreasing, it has been able to produce prevention material that has synthesized and forwarded the political and social issues that have been of primary concern for Asian Americans in the city. A general strategy in these materials

is to initially discuss issues that affect Asian Americans, such as domestic violence and abuse, before discussing health concerns.

The first example provided is from the Women's Project (Figures 1-6). Concerned with the health and wellness of women, this branch of the organization goes to various ethnic enclaves in the city, the majority of which are in Queens, in order to invite women to create spaces where they can discuss issues of importance to them and their households. Here is a passage from the project's main brochure:

> In many Asian cultures, a girl or a woman is most often blamed if she has been raped or sexually abused. She is seen as the person at fault, instead of the man who hurt her…Violence by a woman's husband, partner, parents-in-law, extended family members or employer is also a significant problem in Asia and here in NY. Many A&PI women do not have green cards have limited English language skills, and are in low wage jobs—this forces women to depend on the person who is hurting them for food or shelter. (Women's Project, Figure 3)

The deployment of the narrative form in discussing the presence of domestic violence and abuse in Asian American communities is key to APICHA's strategy of creating spaces of affinity with the women it seeks to reach out to. This brochure, as simple as the story may seem, also exemplifies a complicated understanding of the many ways women might accept culpability around the pain inflicted on them. Moreover, the text gestures to the diasporic link that the domestic space occupies, highlighting the notion that change of "place" does not necessarily mean a change in one's domestic environment. Finally, the brochure highlights the tenuous identification of these women with English, again an identification that is connected to their status as immigrant subjects. It is after

the establishment of these affinities, that the brochure then discusses HIV/AIDS and women's health. Of course, a discourse of scientificity and empiricism would argue that, since no significant number of these women are being tested, nor are the majority of them testing positive for HIV, that they are then at low risk and thus not worthy of these services. Yet, as this brochure highlights, the knowledge that it imparts not only about one's health, but also about one's status within the domestic space, and one's capacity to act through a notion of affinity with another's story of abuse, moves beyond the mere distribution of HIV/AIDS information. For indeed, it is precisely the relationships between all these identity constructing norms, sexuality, together with race, class, migrant status, linguistic ability, and gender that can produce an awareness of one's self.

Similar to the Woman's Project, APICHA also launched the Young People's Project, which, as a training ground for Asian and Pacific Islander Youth, conduct workshops about not only HIV/AIDS awareness but self-esteem (which it calls capacity building) and issues of generational conflict. Apart from these workshops, APICHA also conducts outreach to Asian American youth in malls, suburbs, and other spaces in the city. Here is an example of the Young People's Project outreach material:

> Sometimes it can be hard to talk to families about the things we care about. Some of us grew up in cultures that taught us that we shouldn't talk about sex. Some of us are new to this country, and struggling to adjust.

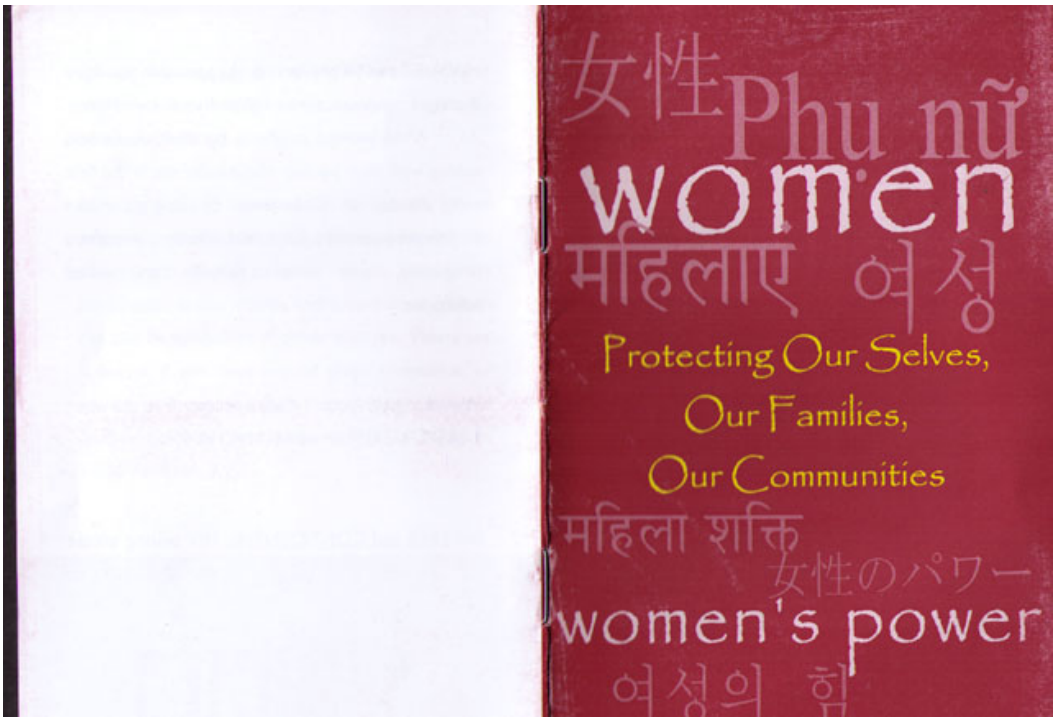
Again, similar to the strategies deployed by the Women's Project, one can see that one of the key terms of engagement in these packets in the centering on issues of generational conflict and language. Also, similar to the Women's Project brochure, a clear and unobscured discussion of HIV/AIDS cannot exist if APICHA does not confront the

specificities of one's being an Asian American youth as well. This again understands the positionalities of Asian American identity outside of the limited category of "risk" which gets circulated in current official discourses.

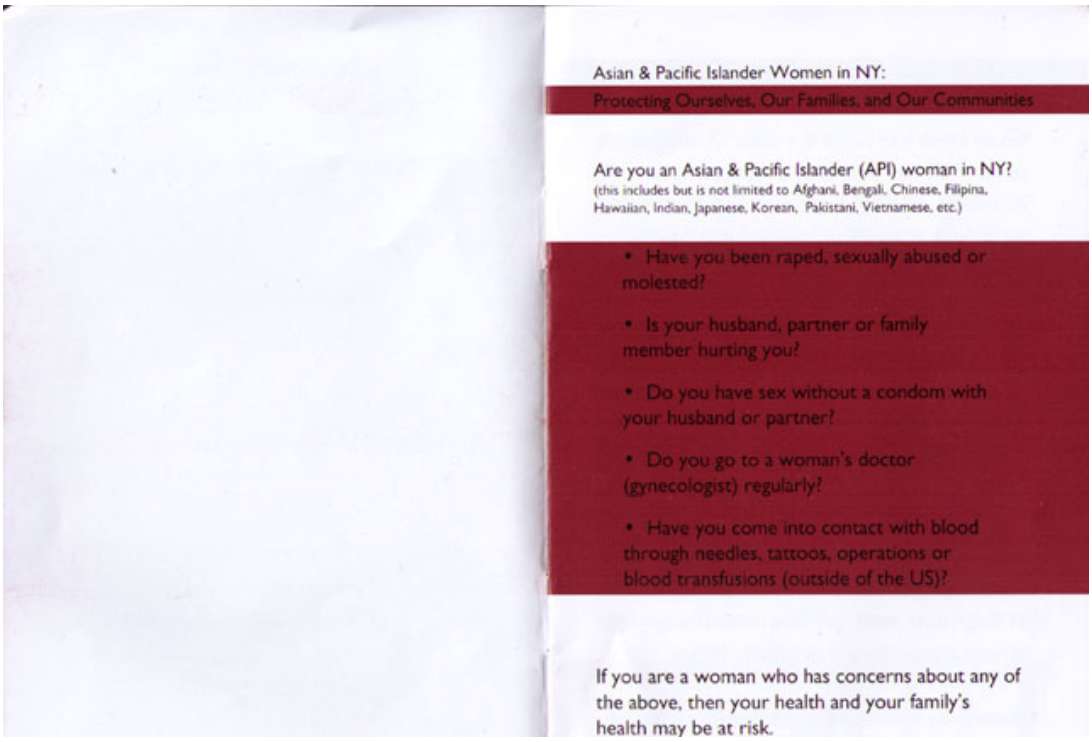
Finally, even with those already considered at risk by the CDC, who are men who have sex with men (MSM), APICHA understands the various inter and intraracial conflicts that exist within the community. Through its magazine *GAM (Gay Asian Male Magazine)*, APICHA covers many of the issues that are relevant to the queer Asian American community. One of these is the fetishization of Asian men by white men. Similar to plays such as *M. Butterfly* and *A Language of Their Own*, or critical works such as Richard Fung's "Looking for My Penis", GAM discusses and interrogates the problematics around this fetishism, precisely because it understands that intimacies are also always already inflected by the power dynamics within them. Thus, through various essays and narratives, even a short hand list that asks "Is He a Rice Queen" (Figure 8), GAM confronts these stereotypes and their possible implications for caring about one's health. As Samuel Delany notes, "Power. Power is what distinguishes the psychic discourse of desire from the social rhetoric of sex" (20). Through these various materials, we see how APICHA attempts to find ways to highlight the power dynamics present within different Asian American communities. In doing so, it seeks to create a rhetoric of prevention that does not stigmatize HIV/AIDS, as it, also, refuses to stigmatize Asian American identity itself by fully respecting the various concerns of the community.

Ultimately, through the analysis of Chay Yew's *A Language of Their Own*, and the outreach work of APICHA, I have been arguing that the intersectionality of Asian

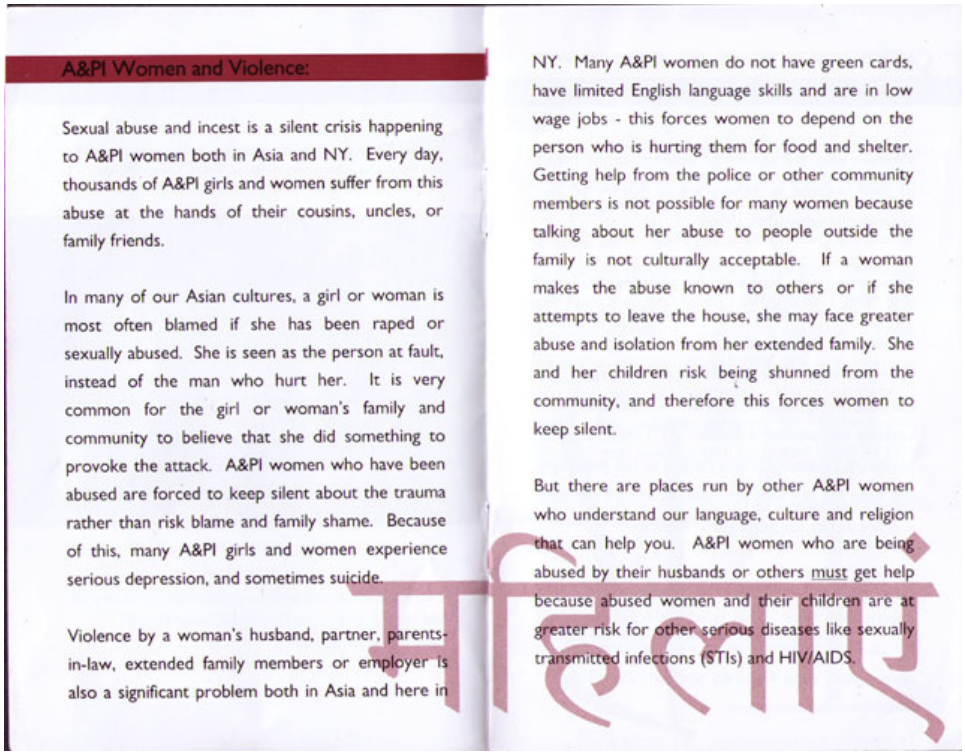
American identity and HIV/AIDS demonstrates the need to resist the removal of performance practice from the realm of public policy—that which allows a "scientificity" to dictate the changes in both prevention and intervention strategies in the first place. This removal denies the key role that activist theater and community work has always had in influencing policy around, let alone understanding of, the various issues that affect HIV/AIDS such as sexuality, race, gender, and class. Rather than represent the body as a somatic marker for melancholic longing, or as an index for the pining inherent in wanting a "repaired" self without HIV/AIDS Yew re-shifts the discourses of loss by foregrounding the intersection of the "ill" and the "unassimilated", thereby also touching upon the demand for communal "reparation" in the Kleinian sense, as a broader community's psychic sublimation of guilt for constructive action. With the increase of HIV cases in the United States post-2000 onwards, how might we "re-sublimate guilt" again for construction action—around HIV prevention and intervention—and thus learn from the rich archive of activism around HIV/AIDS provided by queers of color? I argue that it is precisely a re-introduction of the crucial role that minority performance has always had in the discussion of sexuality—alongside and not separate from public policy—that allows for a more in-depth and effective rumination on the pointed issues that must color HIV/AIDS strategy, policy, and funding.



(Women's Project Brochure, Figure 1)



(Women's Project Brochure, Figure 2)



A&PI Women and Violence:

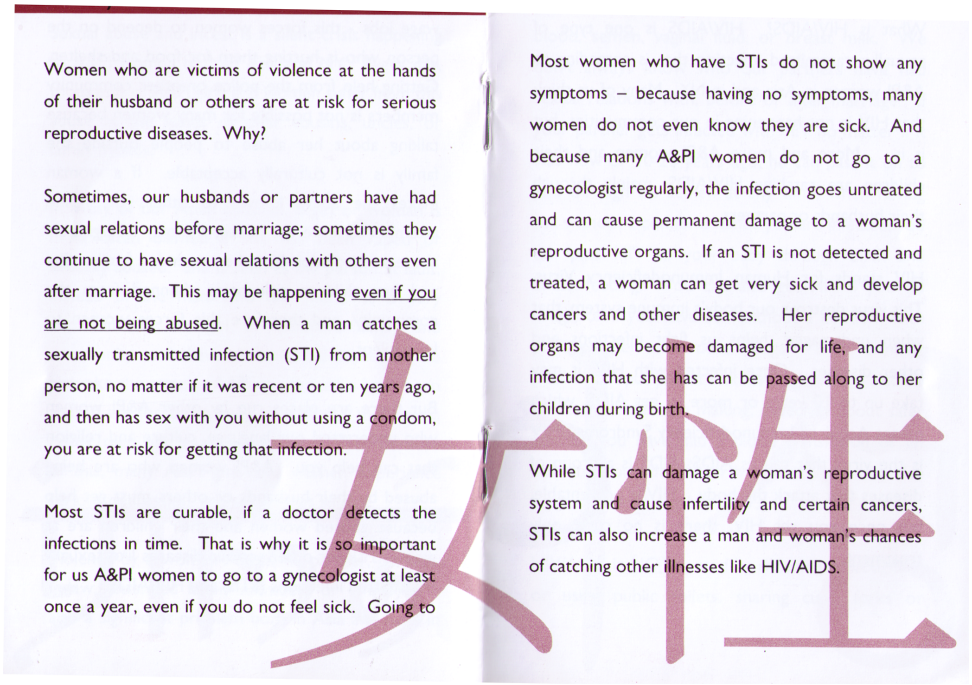
Sexual abuse and incest is a silent crisis happening to A&PI women both in Asia and NY. Every day, thousands of A&PI girls and women suffer from this abuse at the hands of their cousins, uncles, or family friends.

In many of our Asian cultures, a girl or woman is most often blamed if she has been raped or sexually abused. She is seen as the person at fault, instead of the man who hurt her. It is very common for the girl or woman's family and community to believe that she did something to provoke the attack. A&PI women who have been abused are forced to keep silent about the trauma rather than risk blame and family shame. Because of this, many A&PI girls and women experience serious depression, and sometimes suicide.

Violence by a woman's husband, partner, parents-in-law, extended family members or employer is also a significant problem both in Asia and here in NY. Many A&PI women do not have green cards, have limited English language skills and are in low wage jobs - this forces women to depend on the person who is hurting them for food and shelter. Getting help from the police or other community members is not possible for many women because talking about her abuse to people outside the family is not culturally acceptable. If a woman makes the abuse known to others or if she attempts to leave the house, she may face greater abuse and isolation from her extended family. She and her children risk being shunned from the community, and therefore this forces women to keep silent.

But there are places run by other A&PI women who understand our language, culture and religion that can help you. A&PI women who are being abused by their husbands or others must get help because abused women and their children are at greater risk for other serious diseases like sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and HIV/AIDS.

(Women's Project Brochure, Figure 3)



Women who are victims of violence at the hands of their husband or others are at risk for serious reproductive diseases. Why?

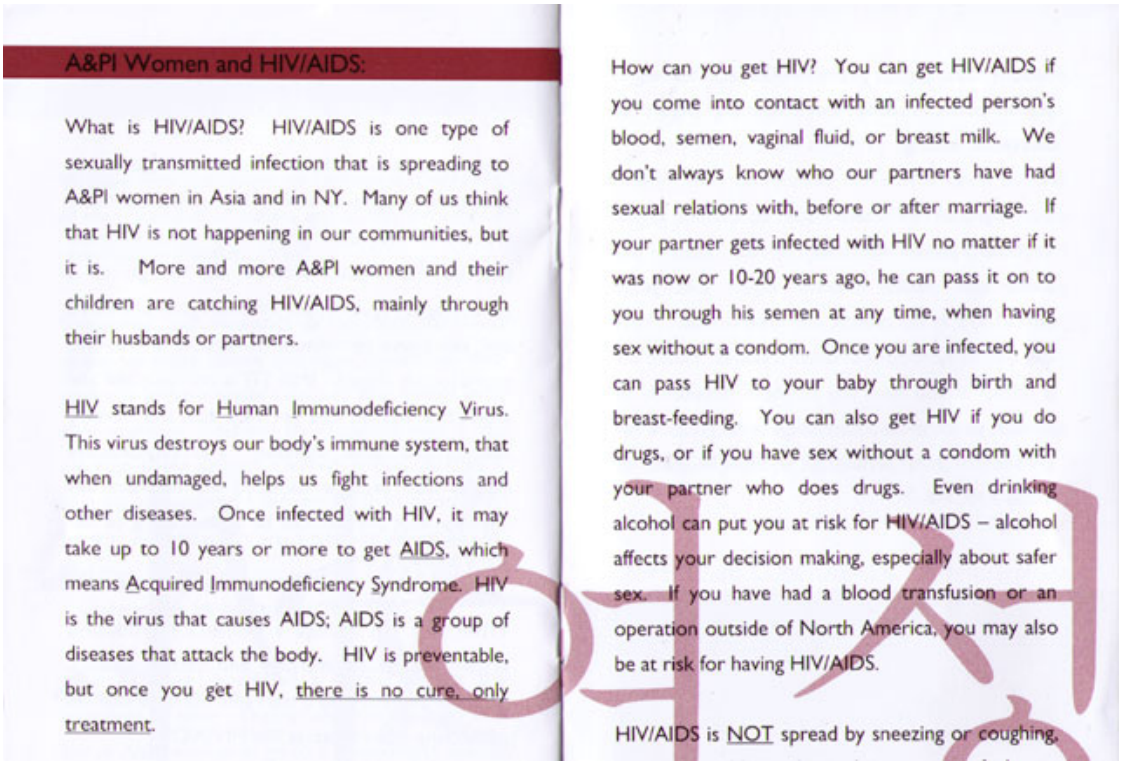
Sometimes, our husbands or partners have had sexual relations before marriage; sometimes they continue to have sexual relations with others even after marriage. This may be happening even if you are not being abused. When a man catches a sexually transmitted infection (STI) from another person, no matter if it was recent or ten years ago, and then has sex with you without using a condom, you are at risk for getting that infection.

Most STIs are curable, if a doctor detects the infections in time. That is why it is so important for us A&PI women to go to a gynecologist at least once a year, even if you do not feel sick. Going to

Most women who have STIs do not show any symptoms – because having no symptoms, many women do not even know they are sick. And because many A&PI women do not go to a gynecologist regularly, the infection goes untreated and can cause permanent damage to a woman's reproductive organs. If an STI is not detected and treated, a woman can get very sick and develop cancers and other diseases. Her reproductive organs may become damaged for life, and any infection that she has can be passed along to her children during birth.

While STIs can damage a woman's reproductive system and cause infertility and certain cancers, STIs can also increase a man and woman's chances of catching other illnesses like HIV/AIDS.

(Women's Project Brochure, Figure 4)



A&PI Women and HIV/AIDS:

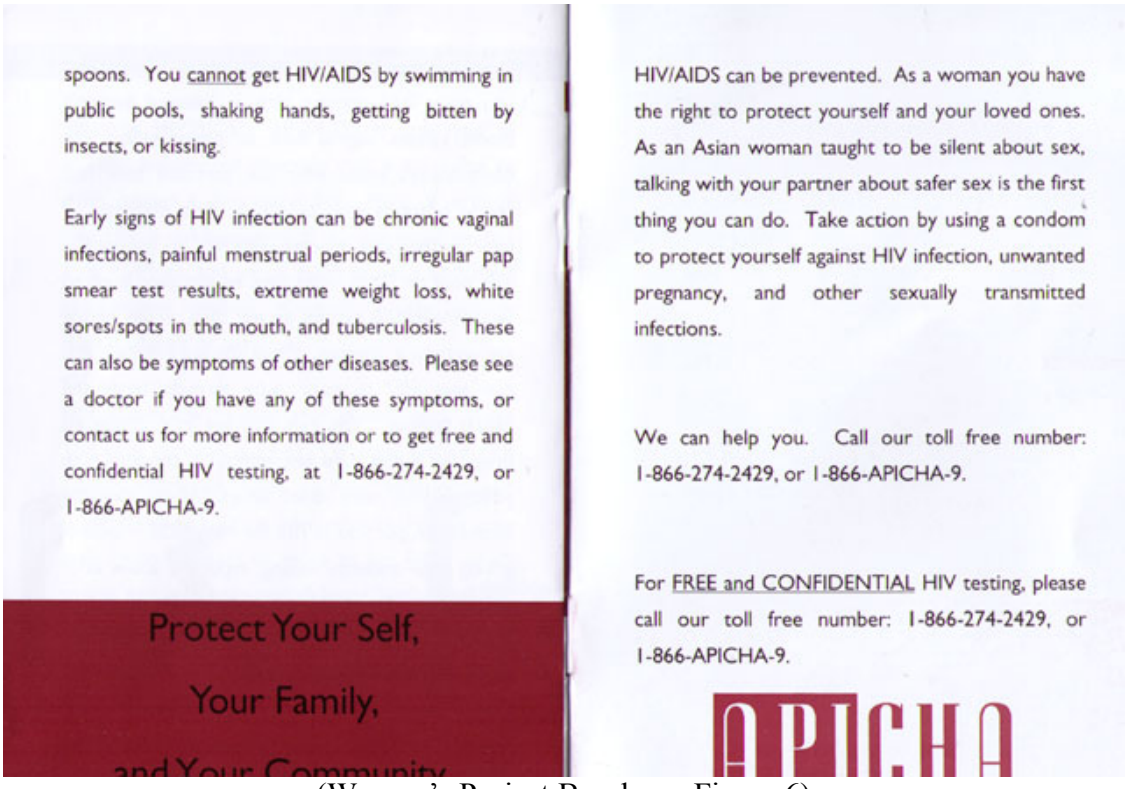
What is HIV/AIDS? HIV/AIDS is one type of sexually transmitted infection that is spreading to A&PI women in Asia and in NY. Many of us think that HIV is not happening in our communities, but it is. More and more A&PI women and their children are catching HIV/AIDS, mainly through their husbands or partners.

HIV stands for Human Immunodeficiency Virus. This virus destroys our body's immune system, that when undamaged, helps us fight infections and other diseases. Once infected with HIV, it may take up to 10 years or more to get AIDS, which means Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome. HIV is the virus that causes AIDS; AIDS is a group of diseases that attack the body. HIV is preventable, but once you get HIV, there is no cure, only treatment.

How can you get HIV? You can get HIV/AIDS if you come into contact with an infected person's blood, semen, vaginal fluid, or breast milk. We don't always know who our partners have had sexual relations with, before or after marriage. If your partner gets infected with HIV no matter if it was now or 10-20 years ago, he can pass it on to you through his semen at any time, when having sex without a condom. Once you are infected, you can pass HIV to your baby through birth and breast-feeding. You can also get HIV if you do drugs, or if you have sex without a condom with your partner who does drugs. Even drinking alcohol can put you at risk for HIV/AIDS – alcohol affects your decision making, especially about safer sex. If you have had a blood transfusion or an operation outside of North America, you may also be at risk for having HIV/AIDS.

HIV/AIDS is NOT spread by sneezing or coughing,

(Women's Project Brochure, Figure 5)



spoons. You cannot get HIV/AIDS by swimming in public pools, shaking hands, getting bitten by insects, or kissing.

Early signs of HIV infection can be chronic vaginal infections, painful menstrual periods, irregular pap smear test results, extreme weight loss, white sores/spots in the mouth, and tuberculosis. These can also be symptoms of other diseases. Please see a doctor if you have any of these symptoms, or contact us for more information or to get free and confidential HIV testing, at 1-866-274-2429, or 1-866-APICHA-9.

Protect Your Self,

Your Family,

and Your Community

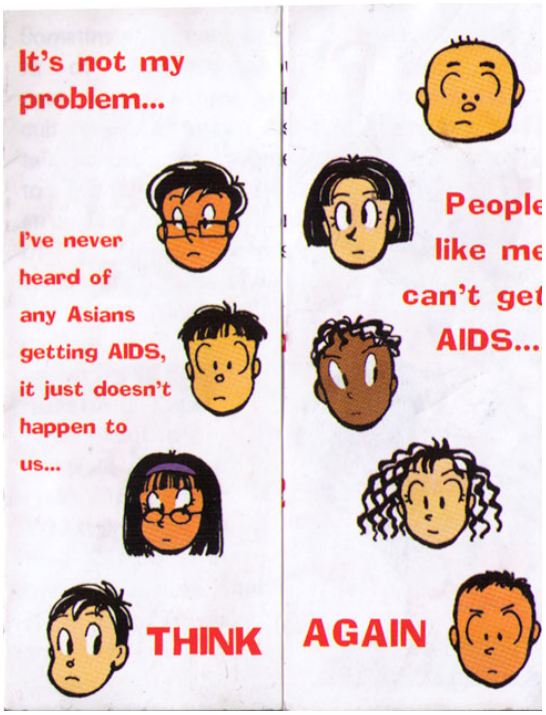
HIV/AIDS can be prevented. As a woman you have the right to protect yourself and your loved ones. As an Asian woman taught to be silent about sex, talking with your partner about safer sex is the first thing you can do. Take action by using a condom to protect yourself against HIV infection, unwanted pregnancy, and other sexually transmitted infections.

We can help you. Call our toll free number: 1-866-274-2429, or 1-866-APICHA-9.

For FREE and CONFIDENTIAL HIV testing, please call our toll free number: 1-866-274-2429, or 1-866-APICHA-9.

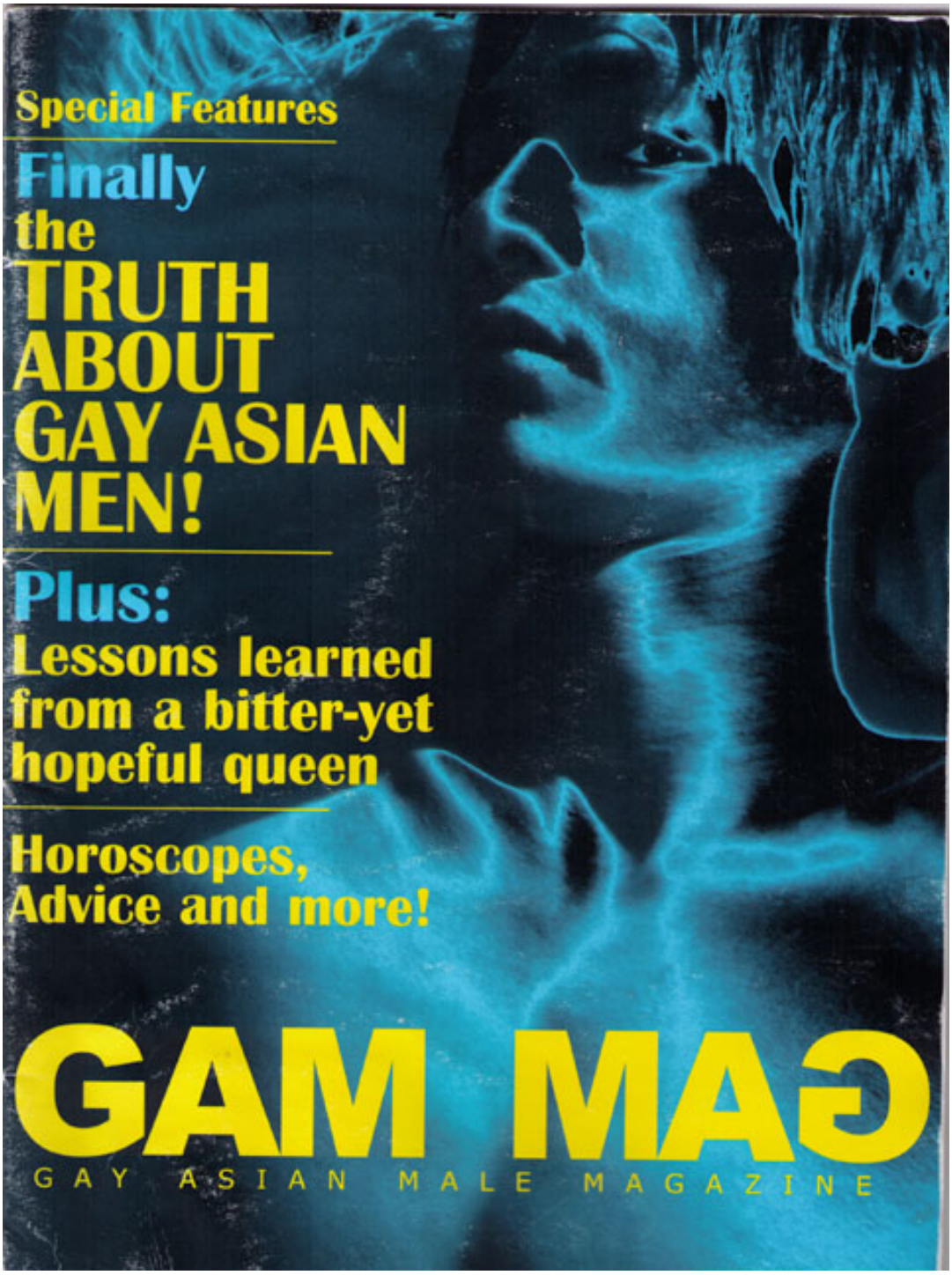
APICHA

(Women's Project Brochure, Figure 6)



(Young People's Project, Figure 7)

(Young People's Project, Figure 8)



(Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Project, GAM Cover, Figure 9)

Works Cited

Aaron, Michele. "New Cinema: An Introduction." *New Queer Cinema: A Critical Reader.* Michele Aaron, Ed. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2004.

Ager, Maila. "House Resolution on Japan Apology to 'Comfort Women' filed." *Philippine Daily Inquirer* 13 August 2007.

Alexander, M. Jacqui, and Chandra Talpade Mohanty. *Feminist Genealogies, Colonial Legacies, Democratic Futures*. New York: Routledge, 1995.

Austin, J.L. *How To Do Things With Words*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1975.

Beller, Jonathan L. "Third Cinema in a Global Frame: *Curacha,* Yahoo!, and *Manila by Night." positions* 9.2 (2001): 331-367.

Bernal, Ishmael, dir. *Manila By Night.* Regal, 1980.

Bhabha, Homi K. *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge, 1994.

Bollas, Christopher. *The Shadow of the Object: Psychoanalysis of the Unthought Known.* New York: Columbia University Press, 1987, 118.

Bonner, Raymond. *Waltzing With a Dictator: The Marcoses and the Making of American Policy.* New York: Times Books, 1987.

Boraine, Alex, et al. *Dealing with the Past: Truth and Reconciliation in South Africa*. Cape Town: IDASA, 1994.

Braidotti, Rosi. *Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1994.

Brocka, Lino. "Philippine Movies: Some Problems and Prospects." *Readings in Philippine Cinema*. Manila: ECP, 1983

Brown, Wendy. *States of Injury: Power and Freedom in Late Modernity*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1995.

Bulosan, Carlos. *America Is in the Heart*. New York: Harcourt, 1946.

Butler, Judith. *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"*. New York: Routledge, 1993.

---. *Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative*. New York: Routledge, 1997.

---. "Global Violence, Sexual Politics." *Queer Ideas: The Kessler Lectures in Lesbian & Gay Studies*. Martin Duberman and Alisa Solomon, Eds. New York: Feminist Press/CUNY, 2003

---. *The Psychic Life of Power: Theories in Subjection.* Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997.

---. *Undoing Gender*. New York: Routledge, 2004.

Cha, Theresa Hak Kyung. *DICTEE*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001.

Cheng, Anne Anlin. *The Melancholy of Race: Psychoanalysis, Assimilation, and Hidden Grief*. New Yorl: Oxford University Press, 2001.

Chow, Rey. *The Age of the World Target: Self-Referentiality in War, Theory, and Comparative Work*. Next Wave Provocations. Durham: Duke University Press, 2006.

---. *Ethics after Idealism: Theory, Culture, Ethnicity, Reading*. Theories of Contemporary Culture; V. 20. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998.

---. *Primitive Passions: Visuality, Sexuality, Ethnography, and Contemporary Chinese Cinema*. Film and Culture. New York: Columbia University Press, 1995.

---. *Writing Diaspora: Tactics of Intervention in Contemporary Cultural Studies*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993.

Chuh, Candice. *Imagine Otherwise: On Asian Americanist Critique*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003.

Coetzee, J.M. *Disgrace*. New York: Penguin, 1999.

Crimp, Douglas. *AIDS: Cultural Analysis, Cultural Activism*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1988.

---. *Melancholia and Moralism*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2002.

Crimp, Douglas, and Adam Rolston. *AIDS Demo Graphics*. Seattle: Bay Press, 1990.

Delany, Samuel R. *Times Square Red/Times Square Blue*. New York: New York University Press, 2001.

Deleuze, Gilles and Felix Guattari. *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983.

Deleuze, Gilles. *Negotiations.* New York: Columbia University Press, 1990.

DeOcampo, Nick. *Beyond the Mainstream: The Films of Nick DeOcampo*. Pasig: Anvil Publishing, 1997.

---. *Cine: Spanish Influences on Early Cinema in the Philippines*. Quezon City: The National Commission for the Culture and Arts, 2003.

---. *Short Film: Emergence of a New Philippine Cinema.* Manila: Communication Foundation of Asia, 1985.

Derrida, Jacques. *Limited Inc*. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1988.

Diaz Abaya, Marilou, dir. *Alyas Baby Tsina.* Regal, 1984.

Dissanayake, Wimal. "Cinema, Nation, and Culture in Southeast Asia: Enframing a Relationship." *East-West Film Journal* 6.2 (1992): 1-21.

Duberman, Martin and Alissa Solomon. *Queer Ideas: The Kessler Lectures in Lesbian & Gay Studies*. New York: Feminist Press/CUNY, 2003.

Duggan, Lisa. *The Twilight of Equality?: Neoliberalism, Cultural Politics, and the Attack on Democracy*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2003.

Ellison, Katherine. *Imelda: Steel Butterfly of the Philippines.* New York: Mcgraw-Hill, 1988.

Eng, David L., and Shinhee Han. "A Dialogue on Racial Melancholia." *Loss: The Politics of Mourning*. Ed. David Eng and David Kazanjian. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003. 343-371.

Eng, David. *Racial Castration: Managing Masculinity in America.* Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001.

Eng, David L., and Alice Y. Hom. *Q & A: Queer in Asian America*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1998.

Eng, David L., and David Kazanjian, Eds. *Loss: The Politics of Mourning*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003.

Fanon, Frantz. *Black Skin White Masks*. New York: Grove Press, 1967.

Felman, Shoshana. *The Juridical Unconscious: Trials and Traumas in the Twentieth Century.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002.

---. *The Scandal of the Speaking Body: Don Juan with J.L. Austin, or Seduction in Two Languages*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003.

Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. New York: Vintage Books, 1995.

---. *The History of Sexuality*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1978.

Freud, Sigmund. "Mourning and Melancholia." *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Vol 14.* Ed. James Stratchey. London: Hogarth Press, 1953.

Fung, Richard. "Looking for My Penis." *Q and A: Queer in Asian America*, David Eng and Alice Y. Hom, Eds. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1998.

GAM: Gay Asian Male Magazine. New York: APICHA, 1999.

Gilroy, Paul. *Against Race: Imagining Political Culture Beyond the Color Line*. Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2000.

---. *Postcolonial Melancholia*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2006.

Gopinath, Gayatri. *Impossible Desires: Queer Diasporas and South Asian Public Cultures*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2005.

Hagedorn, Jessica. *Dogeaters*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1990.

---. "The Exile Within/The Question of Identity." *The State of Asian America: Activism and Resistance in the 1990s*, Karin Aguilar-San Juan, Ed. Boston, South End Press, 1994.

Halberstam, Judith. *In a Queer Time and Place*: *Transgender Bodies, Subcultural Lives*. New York: New York University Press, 2005.

Hall, Stuart. "Cultural Studies and Its Theoretical Legacies." *The Cultural Studies Reader*. Simon During, Ed. New York: Routledge, 1993.

Harper, Michel. *Imelda Marcos, La Rose Carnivore*. Paris: Edition 1, 1990.

Hart, Lynda, and Peggy Phelan. *Acting Out: Feminist Performances*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1993.

Hartman, Saidiya V. *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997.

Henson, Maria Ross. *Comfort woman: A Filipina's Story of Prostitution and Slavery under the Japanese Military.* Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1999.

Hernando, Mario, ed. Lino Brocka: The Artist and His Times. Manila: Cultural Center of the Philippines, 1993.

---. "Ishmael Bernal: Merging Art and Commercialism." *Readings in Philippine Cinema.* Ed. Rafael Ma. Guerrero. Manila: The Experimental Cinema of the Philippines, 1983.

Hinshelwood, R.D. *Clinical Klein: From Theory to Practice*. New York, N.Y.: BasicBooks, 1994.

---. *A Dictionary of Kleinian Thought.* New Jersey: Jason Aronson, 1991.

Hwang, David Henry. *M. Butterfly*. New York: New American Library, 1989.

Kang, Hyun Yi. *Compositional Subjects: Enfiguring Asian/American Women*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2002.

Kang, Hyun Yi, Norma Alarcâon, and Elaine H. Kim. *Writing Self, Writing Nation: A Collection of Essays on Dictâee by Theresa Hak Kyung Cha*. Berkeley: Third Woman Press, 1994.

Kim, Elaine H. "Poised on the In-between: A Korean American's Reflections on Theresa Hak Kyung Cha's Dictée" In *Writing Self, Writing Nation.* Elaine H. Kim and Norma Alarcón, Eds. Berkley: Third Woman Press, 1994. 3-33.

Kingston, Maxine Hong. *The Woman Warrior: Memoirs of a Girlhood among Ghosts*. New York: Vintage International, 1989.

Klein, Melanie. "A Study of Envy and Gratitude" in *The Selected Melanie Klein*, ed. Judith Mitchell (New York, NY: The Free Press, 1986), 211-229

---. *Envy and Gratitude, and Other Works, 1946-1963*. New York: Free Press, 1984.

---. *Love, Guilt, and Reparation and Other Works, 1921-1945.* New York: Delacorte Press, 1975.

Klein, Melanie, and Juliet Mitchell. *The Selected Melanie Klein*. New York: Free Press, 1987.

Kruger, Steven F. *Aids Narratives: Gender and Sexuality, Fiction and Science*. Garland Reference Library of the Humanities; Vol. 1628. New York: Garland Pub., 1996.

---. "Identity and Conversation in *Angles in America." In Approaching the Millennium: Essays on Angels in America*, Deborah R. Geis and Steven F. Kruger, Eds. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997.

Lacaba, Jose F. "Movies, Critics, and the Bakya Crowd." *Readings in Philippine Cinema*. Manila: ECP, 1983.

Lacan, Jacques. *Ecrits: A Selection.* Trans. Bruce Fink. New York: Norton, 2004.

Laplanche, J. and J.B. Pontalis. *The Language of Psychoanalysis*. Trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith. New York: Norton, 1974.

Lee, Min Jung. "Baring the Apparatus: DICTEE's Speaking Subject Writes a Response." *Hitting Critical Mass 6* (1999): 35-44.

Lee, Rachel C. *The Americas of Asian American Literature: Gendered Fictions of Nation and Transnation*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1999.

Lee, Ricardo. *Si Tatang at mga Himala ng Ating Panahon.* Manila: National Book Store, 1990.

Leung, Helen Hok-Sze. "New Queer Cinema and Third Cinema." *New Queer Cinema: A Critical Reader.* Michele Aaron, Ed. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2004.

Likierman, Meira. *Melania Klein: Her Work in Context.* New York, Continuum, 2001.

Linmark, R. Zamora. *Rolling the R's*. New York: Kaya Production, 1995.

Lo, Kevin C. "HIV Prevention among NYC Asian Immigrants." *Body Positive.* 16.5 (2003): 22-24.

---. "The Forgotten Minority." *Body Positive* 16.5 (2003): 8-12.

Lowe, Lisa. *Immigrant Acts: On Asian American Cultural Politics*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1996.

Manalansan, Martin F. *Global Divas: Gay Filipinos in the Diaspora*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2003.

Marchetti, Gina. "'Four Hundred Years in a Convent, Fifty in Hollywood': Sexual Identity and Dissent in Contemporary Philippine Cinema." *East-West Film Journal* 2.2 (1988): 24-49.

McEachern, Charmaine. *Narratives of Nation Media, Memory and Representation in the Making of the New South Africa*. Horizons in Post-Colonial Studies. New York: Nova Science Publishers, Inc., 2002.

Meiring, Piet. *Chronicle of the Truth Commission: A Journey through the Past and Present--into the Future of South Africa*. Vanderbijlpark

Minh-ha, Trinh T. *Woman, Native, Other.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989.

Mohanty, Chandra Talpade. *Feminism without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity*. Durham; London: Duke University Press, 2003.

Moten, Fred. *In The Break: The Aesthetic of Black Radical Tradition*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003.

Muñoz, José Esteban. "Feeling Brown: Ethnicity an Affect in Ricardo Bracho's The Sweetest Hangover." *Theatre Journal* 52 (2000), 67-79.

---. *Disidentifications: Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999.

Ngai, Sianne. *Ugly Feelings*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2004.

Nguyen, Viet Thanh. *Race and Resistance: Literature and Politics in Asian America.* New York: Oxford University Press, 2002.

O'Brien, Anthony. *Against Normalization: Writing Radical Democracy in South Africa*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2001.

Okada, John. *No-No Boy*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1976.

Okamura, Jonathan Y. *Imagining the Filipino American Diaspora*: *Transnational Relations, Identities, and Communities*. New York: Garland, 1998.

Omi, Michael, and Howard Winant. *Racial Formation in the United States: From the 1960s to the 1990s*. 2nd ed. New York: Routledge, 1994.

Onishi, Norimitsu. "Call by U.S. House for Sex Slavery Apology Angers Japan's Leader." *New York Times* 1 August 2007: p. 3.

---. "Japan's 'Atonement' to Former Sex Slaves Stirs Anger." *New York Times* 25 April 2007: A.3.

---. "Japan Court Rules Against Sex Slaves and Laborers." *New York Times* 28 April 2007: A.8.

Palumbo-Liu, David. *Asian/American: Historical Crossings of a Racial Frontier*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1999.

Park, You-Me. "Comforting the Nation: 'Comfort Women,' the Politics of Apology and the Workings of Gender." *Interventions* 2.2 (2000): 199-211.

Patton, Cindy. *Fatal Advice: How Safe-Sex Education Went Wrong*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1996.

---. *Inventing Aids*. New York: Routledge, 1990.

Portes, Gil, dir. *Markova, Comfort Gay*. RVQ Productions, 2000.

Rafael, Vicente L. *White Love and Other Events in Filipino History*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2000.

Reyes, Emmanuel A. *Notes on Philippine Cinema.* Manila: De La Salle University Press, 1989.

Rich, B. Ruby. "New Queer Cinema." *Sight and Sound* 2.5 (1992).

---."Vision Quest". *The Village Voice* 26 March 2002: 41.

Ross, Fiona C. *Bearing Witness: Women and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa. Lodon: Pluto, 2003.*

Said, Edward W. *Orientalism*. 1st Vintage Books ed. New York: Vintage Books, 1979.

Sandoval, Chela. *Methodology of the Oppressed*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000.

San Juan Jr., Epifanio. *Hegemony and Strategies of Transgression: Essays in Cultural Studies and Comparative Literature*. New York: State University of New York Press, 1995.

Santos, Bienvenido. "Immigration Blues." In *Scent of Apples: A Collection of Stories*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1992.

Scarry, Elaine. *The Body in Pain*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1985.

Sedgwick, Eve Kosofsky. *Tendencies*. Series Q. Durham: Duke University Press, 1993.

---.*Touching Feeling*: *Affect, Pedagogy, and Performativity.* Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003.

Shimakawa, Karen. *National Abjection: The Asian American Body Onstage*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2002.

Shohat, Ella. *Talking Visions: Multicultural Feminism in Transnational Age*. New York: New Museum of Contemporary Art, 1998.

Soh, Chunghee Sarah. "Prostitutes versus Sex Slaves: The Politics of Representing the "Comfort Women," In *Legacies of the Comfort Women of WWII,* Margaret D. Stetz and Bonnie Oh, Eds. New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2001.

Sontag, Susan. *Illness as Metaphor and Aids and its Metaphors.* New York: Doubleday, 1989,

Sotto, Augustin L. "Notes on the Filipino Action Film." *East-West Journal* 6.2 (1992): 1-14.

Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. *In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics*. New York: Routledge, 2006.

---. *Outside in the Teaching Machine*. New York: Routledge, 1993.

Tadiar, Nefertiti. "Manila's New Metropolitan Form." *Differences, A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 5 (1993): 154-178

Takaki, Ronald T. *Strangers from a Different Shore: A History of Asian Americans*. Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1989.

Tiongson, Nicanor. "The Filipino Film Industry." *East-West Film Journal* 6.2 (1992): 23-59.

Tolentino, Rolando B. "Cityscape: The Capital Infrastructuring and Technologization of Manila." *Cinema and the City: Film and Urban Societies in a Global Context.* Ed. Mark Shiel and Tony Fitzmaurice. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2001.

---. *Geopolitics of the Visible: Essays on Philippine Film Cultures.* Manila: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2000.

---. "Transvestites and Transgressions: *Panggagaya* in Philippine Gay Cinema." *Journal of Homosexuality* 39.3/4 (2000): 325-337.

Torpey, John C. *Making Whole What Has Been Smashed: On Reparations Politics*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006.

Treichler, Paula. *How To Have Theory in an Epidemic: Cultural Chronicle of AIDS.* Durham: Duke University Press, 1999.

Trinh, T. Minh-Ha. *Woman, Native, Other: Writing Postcoloniality and Feminism*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989.

United States. Cong. Committee on Foreign Relations. *H. Res. 121: A resolution expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that the Government of Japan.* 110th Cong., 1st sess. Washington: GPO, 2007.

Warner, Micheal. *The Trouble with Normal: Sex, Politics, and the Ethics of Queer Life*. New York: Free Press, 1999.

Watney, Simon. *Practices of Freedom: Selected Writings on HIV/AIDS*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Women: Protecting Ourselves, Our Families, Our Communities. New York: APICHA, 2001.

Williams, Raymond. *Marxism and Literature*. Marxist Introductions. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977.

Yew, Chay. *A Language of Their Own.* New York: Grove Press, 1997.