Asian American Literature: Discourses and Pedagogies
12 (2023) 47–68

Course Design as Critical Creativity: Intersectional, Regional, and Demographic Approaches to Teaching Asian American Literatures

By Thomas Xavier Sarmiento

Teaching as Creative Act

Teaching is both an expression of creativity and critique. In assembling a selection of literary and scholarly texts for a course, I am exercising creativity, as I formulate relationalities where there might not have been one—or rather, not readily thought. My emphasis on intersectional, regional, and demographic approaches to Asian American literatures is a critique of multiethnic literature courses' representation of race, largely to students outside of that racial marker. Unlike the anecdotes of Asian American studies colleagues at other institutions, Asian American students do not comprise a sizeable enrollment in my Asian American Literatures course. I teach at a public land-grant university in the Midwest, which is predominantly white at all levels (students, faculty, staff, administrators). Thus, even as I imagine an Asian American student as an enrollee and audience (yes, Asian Americans exist in the middle of the country!), I design the course with non–Asian American and mostly white students in mind. However, my approach, regardless of students' sociocultural identities, aims to pivot students away from engaging multiethnic literatures as simply accounts of the real. Certainly, I am not unique in this regard as other teacher-scholars have worked to challenge the reception of multiethnic and multicultural literatures as historical truths. And yet, the tendency for such courses to serve as historical consciousness-raising for and about minoritarian subjects remains. The very curricular structure of US literary studies, as Kandice Chuh interrogates, positions multicultural literatures as epiphenomenal and external to so-called true or canonical literatures (*Difference Aesthetics Makes* 15–17).

Thomas Xavier Sarmiento (they & he) is an award-winning associate professor of English and an affiliated faculty member of Gender, Women, and Sexuality Studies at Kansas State University. They are completing a book manuscript that queers the US heartland and Filipinx diaspora through literary, visual, and archival representations of Filipinxs in the Midwest.

ISSN: 2154-2171

With this structural conundrum at the forefront of my course design and pedagogy, I work to emphasize the conditions of possibility for such a course like Asian American Literatures in the English major and department. I start with the premise that "Asian American" is not an a priori noun or adjective. Following Chuh, "Asian American" points to subjectlessness, to the discursive construction of "Asian American" as a subject position (*Imagine Otherwise* 9). As I state in the course description, "Through close readings, analyses, and evaluations of a select body of work by US-based writers of Asian descent, this course invites you to explore how Asian American authors and their narratives call into question the racialized signifiers *Asian* and *American* and why Asian American prose, poetry, and drama not only serve aesthetic ends but also historical and political ones." While the parameter of the course is authors of Asian descent based in or connected to the United States, the texts themselves are not meant to speak for all of Asian America, as if any one text or collection of texts could. Leading with a deconstructed sense of "Asian American" works to (re)construct what about a text makes it modified by "Asian American."[1]

I view course design, akin to scholarly writing, as a form of art curation, as I arrange and assemble artistic works to communicate a different story than perhaps intended by the artist/author and/or traditionally received by audiences. Such curation is an act of creativity. However, as Gayatri Gopinath explains, such a creative endeavor is not simply about (re)organization but importantly an act of care, citing scholars/curators Erica Lehrer and Cynthia E. Milton, who trace the etymology of "curate" to "caring for" (4). For Gopinath, the (re)arrangement of seemingly unlike objects results in a repurposing of their meaning and enacts queer curation. Such a practice resonates with José Esteban Muñoz's theory of disidentification for minoritarian subjects (*Disidentifications*). As a queer-identified scholar-teacher of color engaged in queer-feminist theories and in the queering of ethnic studies, I find Gopinath's and Muñoz's methods instructive for rethinking how we might approach the narratives we construct about bodies of knowledge and objects that purport to engender a (literary) field to our students. To perform queer curation in my course design aims to unsettle commonsense views of Asian American literature and culture and to inspire more expansive and relational worldviews in students, especially those not of Asian descent. A young adult (YA) graphic novel focused on LGBTQ+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and related identities) youth suicide prevention (*Flamer* by Mike Curato) or a poetry collection about mothering, the physical environment, and animals (*Oceanic* by Aimee Nezhukumatathil), while authored by and featuring Asian Americans, may not readily prompt readers to categorize such texts as Asian American

[1] See Chuh, *Difference Aesthetics Makes* 40–41, 53, for a discussion of "Asian American" as a modifier.

literature because they do not foreground race; however, such deviance from what should constitute "Asian American" is exactly what enables us to render Asian American subjectivity complexly.

Describing my curatorial practice as "queer" emphasizes the performative sense of "queer," as "a doing" (rather than as "a being") oriented to nonnormative sensibilities, rather than simply an identity position. Even as I remake new boundaries by grouping and juxtaposing texts not always readily imagined as relational and intersubjective, ultimately, I hope for those boundaries to disintegrate and be remade in order to make room for other configurations, such as through the final research projects students produce—making space for further queering.[2] I exercise creativity in my curation of Asian American literatures because I care about the particular texts I select; I gravitate toward them because they each speak to me for various reasons. I also care about how we tell the story of Asian America, desiring for more complexity, relationality, and surprise. Aligned with Gopinath, I also want students to care about these texts, the stories they tell, and the metanarrative I construct to engender more ethical worlding that is truly inclusive and just (4).

Admittedly, the literary texts I select for the course tend be realist.[3] While such a curation may be an unconscious effect of genre (in that "Asian American literature" is dominantly framed as narrating the lives of "Asian Americans") and curriculum (the course is meant to be an introduction to the field for lower-level undergraduates)—and thus reveals another opportunity to push at the limits of designation and categorization—realist fiction enables students who are new to Asian American life to find a point of connection more easily. The empathetic argument of literary studies holds true here. Empathy is not simply a motive to promote student engagement, which certainly makes for more enjoyable teaching; rather, the likelihood of empathy also emerges as a form of accessible pedagogy. That is, how can I teach a course that makes Asian American literatures accessible to as many students as I can? This also points to the fact that

[2] In lieu of a final exam, students conduct independent research that culminates in a 2,000–2,500-word scholarly essay or a digital humanities/media artifact (such as a photo or video essay [static: 12–15 slides; moving: about 10 minutes] or a webpage/site [about 1,500 words]; equivalent in scope to a scholarly written essay) that presents an original argument about Asian American literature and culture based on one (or two) of our creative texts and that engages critical scholarship to support that argument. In *World-Making*, Dorinne Kondo discusses the futility of attempting to eradicate power altogether through subversion (I interpret queering as one such method), as "any intervention both contests and reinscribes power" (198).

[3] Exceptions to this include Sam Chanse's play *Lydia's Funeral Video*, which is set in a dystopian near future and deals with the politics of severe abortion restriction and which I taught in spring 2020, and Theresa Hak Kyung Cha's experimental autobiography *Dictee*, whose narrative style prompts readers to question the real and which I taught in spring 2015.

Asian American literatures may be inaccessible, and thus not self-evident, thereby interrupting the false binary between literature as art and literature as sociohistorical truth. Like all literature, there is an art, an aesthetics, to Asian American literatures (Chuh, *Difference Aesthetics Makes*; Janette; Lowe; Song; Wang; Yu). This is not a new revelation, but it bears repeating given that Asian American literatures are often used to teach Asian American history and reality (within and beyond the English discipline). And yet, because dominant cultural representations of Asian America are often flat and stereotypical, realist depictions of Asian American life in all their complexity as well as their mundaneness by Asian American writers can serve as a powerful antidote for readers, especially those of Asian descent who rarely get to see themselves justly represented.[4] To interrupt the impulse to read and interpret Asian American literatures as purely sociohistorical truths, I teach a variety of genres (short story, novel, drama, poetry, memoir, graphic novel, YA novel) and multiple texts from the same ethnic group, refrain from over-contextualizing social history, and focus on literary interpretation.

Critically Informed Teaching

Critique also is performative. It does. It produces. It creates. Critique is not simply negative criticism or judgment, to point out wrongs and failures for the sake of doing so. Rather, critique engenders a reorientation to ways of knowing and being in opposition to hegemony. Judith Butler illumines the performative nature of critique in their analysis of Michel Foucault's conceptualization of critique as virtue. Butler concedes that "critique is always a critique *of* some instituted practice, discourse, episteme, institution, and it loses its character the moment in which it is abstracted from its operation and made to stand alone as a purely generalizable practice," thus emphasizing the contingent and relational nature of critique (212; original emphasis).[5] They go on to emphasize that critique for Foucault ultimately is about self-fashioning, wherein a "subject is both crafted and crafting" in a field of power (225). For Butler, Foucault "ask[s] us to rethink critique as a practice in which we pose the question of the limits of our most sure ways of knowing," and this engagement with epistemological limits primes us to reimagine who we are and want to be (215). Accordingly, critique is less about the particular object being scrutinized and more about how we want to live in a world not designed for us. As such, critique has the capacity to be infinite as a disidentificatory position in relation to power. While critique in the Foucauldian sense via Butler appears to focus less on curricular regimes, its performative preoccupation with selfhood gets at the heart of

[4] Kondo writes, "For some minoritarian subjects, realism and naturalism may yield much needed 'realistic' portrayals in the face of flattening stereotypes" (219).

[5] I appreciate Jigna Desai's recommendation to read Butler's essay as I reflected on what critique does while in graduate school.

teaching and learning as transformative enterprises at both the individual and societal levels. To be critical indicates a desire for change and advocates for what is right and just.

I came to understand critique as creation while teaching bell hooks' *Feminism Is for Everybody* in an Introduction to Women's Studies course as a newly minted PhD. The first chapter, "Feminist Politics," presents a critique of "white supremacist capitalist patriarchy" (hooks 4) not as an end but rather to reveal how such systems of power impede visionary feminist thought (hook 5). Critique serves to engender "visionary feminism," which also is the last chapter title. The chapter opens, "To be truly visionary we have to root our imagination in our concrete reality while simultaneously imagining possibilities beyond that reality" (hooks 110). hooks' utopian vision resonates with Muñoz's, as he writes, "Queerness is a structuring and educated mode of desiring that allows us to see and feel beyond the quagmire of the present" (*Cruising Utopia* 1). Like hooks, Muñoz grounds his vision in "concrete utopias," which are responses to "historically situated struggles" (*Cruising Utopia* 3). As such, critique engenders creation, echoing Foucault and Butler.

My pedagogical creativity is a product of my critique of academic knowledge production, taking up Foucault's formulation of critique as concerning the onto-epistemic. While critique can expose the workings of power, it alone is insufficient to engender change. However, creativity and critique are not mutually exclusive. As Lisa Lowe illumines, "Asian American culture is the site of more than critical negation of the U.S. nation; it is a site that shifts and marks alternatives to the national terrain by occupying other spaces, imagining different narratives and critical historiographies, and enacting practices that give rise to new forms of subjectivity and new ways of questioning the government of human life by the national state" (29). Asian American literature as a form of Asian American culture operates as both a critique of dominant US culture and a creative object that moves people. Lowe's claims emphasize the agentive potential of cultural production to engender alter-narratives that dignify the minoritarian subject position. While the texts I teach critique US exclusionary practices that materialize through xenophobia, racism, classism, sexism, homophobia, and ableism, they also create a different narrative of the United States that centers Asian Americans of varying migration and (re)settlement histories, socioeconomic class backgrounds, gender identities and expressions, sexualities, and physical and cognitive abilities. In the process, students begin to forge or reconfigure multiple relations to Asian America, recognizing their intimate entanglement with Asian American racialization and the relevance of Asian American storytelling to everyone, not just those of Asian descent.

Critique as theoretical conjecture may seem disengaged from artistic practice, while creative work that supposedly transcends politics may garner more aesthetic valuation. However, Dorinne Kondo rightly debunks these false binaries in her dramaturgical analyses of racialized performance,

illustrating the entanglement of social critique, artmaking, and political activism. For Kondo, "Critique 'reveals' the ways power relations can pervade realms in which they are thought to be absent" (43). She goes on to posit, "Critique is a pivotal step in creating different theatrical/political alternatives, for without a finely grained analysis of what is problematic and why, how can we address those problems, to remake worlds?" (43–44). Accordingly, my critique of the American and Asian American literary canons through the creation of an ethnically diverse, regional, chronologically nonlinear, intersectional, and relational framing of Asian American literatures works to trace how power operates within, through, and above these texts. The challenge lies in managing a text's multiple registers, from its enclosed narrative to its intersubjective narrative and metanarrative. And yet, this very wrestling with a text's opacity guides students to recognize a text's open-endedness and invites them into critical conversation. Muñoz's definition of critique as "willful disloyalty to the master" further encourages us to conceptualize critique as a deconstructive position in order to reconstruct (*Cruising Utopia* 17). Critique as dissent, as deviation, makes room for the nondominant as it spotlights the dominant's relation to power.

The danger of working in corporatized higher education and teaching such a course like Asian American Literatures, though, lies in being seduced by its norms and rewards for compliance. As Steve Salaita discusses, "critical thinking" should not be confused with critique as outlined above. Critical of the university's abstracted notion of critical thinking as a marketable skill aligned with its corporate values, Salaita calls us to enact critique as recalcitrance within and beyond the corporate university. Recalcitrance enables us to "nurture our own visions of success. [For i]t is in the imagination . . . that material realities first come into existence" (Salaita). Salaita reinforces the notion that critique engenders creation and echoes Foucault's sense of critique as an ethics and politics. Though my course design and classroom teaching may not overtly appear as recalcitrant to the norms of my institution, my aesthetic, ethical, and political commitments take priority over satisfying the diversity and humanities requirements set out by my institution. As a minoritarian scholar, I have learned how to thrive in a setting not designed with me in mind. Thus, while I appreciate the space academia grants me to teach and research my areas of expertise, I am constantly reminded of its peripherality but embrace it as a site of normative undoing.

But that embrace of creative normative undoing takes work, my intellectual and emotional labor. Kondo foregrounds creativity as labor in her study of the performing arts: While creativity may conjure individual, artistic prowess, it also describes the making of art, which is collaborative and relational (6).[6] As she explains, "'Making' . . . links structures of power, labor processes, and performances of gendered, national, and racialized

[6] Kondo also associates "creativity" with "innovation" and "artistic endeavor" (33).

subjectivities, in historically and culturally specific settings. . . . Art is work. . . . Commonsense binaries between creativity and the arts, on the one hand, and labor, theory, and politics, on the other, split a complex, multilayered process. Creativity is work, practice, method: a site of theory making and political intervention" (6–7). Writing in the context of theater, Kondo spotlights the creativity of the arts as performing cultural and economic work. The arts are mired in the social, political, and economic. They respond to and create our understandings of race, gender, and nation. They are products of laboring bodies. Artists produce theory—ways of knowing and being from particular vantage points. In emphasizing the onto-epistemic character of the creative arts, Kondo illumines the world-making potential of creativity.

I transpose Kondo's insights onto course design as a mode of making. Course design is not neutral; it is a negotiation of the teacher's interests, field politics, and students' learning needs. To craft a syllabus is work.[7] A common challenge is to communicate a cohesive narrative of the course topic through content that captivates students' (the audience) imagination and prepares them to engage the field as well as equips them with the skills to succeed in their career aspirations and lives. A critical move is to also expose the structures of power that constrain and eclipse (other) ways of knowing and being. Respectful of Kondo's focus on theater artists, I find resonance with the performative work such artists do and recognize teacher-scholars as performers as well. In training new graduate instructors in my department, I tell them, "The show must go on," when confronted with unexpected challenges in the classroom. Not to say that teachers and actors are one and the same; rather, Kondo's observations have wide reach. The art of crafting a syllabus, especially one that aims to be diverse, equitable, and inclusive and to promote a sense of belonging, requires the labor of the teacher—a labor often unrecognized and un(der)valued. And yet, that very labor engenders an alternative pathway to engaging the world in which we live. Like Kondo, who aims to disrupt the false binary between critic-scholar and performer-artist, I seek to disrupt the false binary between scholar-theorist and teacher-practitioner.[8] That is, pedagogical inquiry often does not carry the same value as cultural critique. "Scholarship" (that "counts") often is not focused on teaching. The very distinction between "research-intensive" and "teaching" institutions indicates differing priorities, even though 60 percent of my appointment at a "research university" is devoted to teaching. Teaching, in fact, is the primary reason I decided to pursue a career in academe. Certainly, our research and scholarship inform our teaching; however, more often than not,

[7] Kondo notes that "making" and "crafting" are interchangeable concepts of creativity (6).

[8] Chuh, *Difference Aesthetics Makes*; Gopinath; Kapadia; Keeling; Khubchandani; Lowe; Muñoz, *Cruising Utopia*; Muñoz, *Disidentifications*; Quiray Tagle; and See likewise exercise epistemic humility in foregrounding the artist as also cultural critic.

a division remains between research and teaching, the former prized more than the latter.[9]

Through various professional development opportunities, I have learned to see the humanities classroom as a research laboratory, where students and instructor all take intellectual and emotional risks as we test out ideas. The improvisational nature of dialogic teaching enables me to depart from the rigid, rehearsed professing dominantly imagined as the work of college professors. Nevertheless, as course designer, I hold power in shaping the discourse. Even as I create alter-narratives of American and Asian American literatures, I end up generating new tropes for students to latch onto, which risk becoming shorthand and flattening complexity. In her reflection as dramaturg for Anna Deavere Smith's play *Twilight: Los Angeles, 1992*, Kondo writes, "to be part of *creating* something . . . it's impossible to avoid problematic images or stereotypes altogether" (162; original emphasis). She goes on to illumine the work of participatory creativity as the bringing together of "critical reflection, creative practice, and political intervention" (163). Concerning the former insight, the desire to craft a perfect course that introduces Asian American literatures to an unpredictable learning community is an impossibility, which does not mean we should forgo criticality; rather, because Asian American literatures are not monolithic—a foundational concept of my course—I have had to embrace imperfection, risk, uncertainty, and failure—principles that go against the arrogance of liberal humanism. Concerning the latter insight, my curation of Asian American literatures through the tropes of rebellion and utopian desire (Unit 1), the particularity of region (Unit 2), the legacies of war (Unit 3), and the vantage of Filipinx American teen boys (Unit 4) reflects my participation in the onto-epistemologies of Asian American literary studies. Teaching is praxis and a form of participatory creativity. How I present Asian American literatures is an assemblage of critique and creativity, emphasizing the "heterogeneity, hybridity, [and] multiplicity" of Asian America and Asian American cultural forms (Lowe 60).

Teaching Asian American Literatures at a Predominantly White, Public Land-Grant, Midwestern University

Unsurprisingly, Asian American Literatures is an elective course at my institution, though it has a dedicated course number and is typically offered once every other year. Any student can enroll in the course, so the course is comprised of both English majors and non-majors. It draws students interested in minoritarian perspectives as well as those needing to fulfill

[9] Such a division between research and teaching is not unlike the (neo)liberal university's penchant for compartmentalization. See Chuh, *Difference Aesthetics Makes*, for further discussion of liberalism and the university.

major, college, and/or university diversity overlay requirements.[10] English majors must take one course in the department that focuses on ethnic minority literature and culture, one of which can be Asian American Literatures, but also African American Literatures, American Indian Literatures, Latina/o Literatures, and other approved-topics courses. Students completing their degree in the College of Arts & Sciences, which houses English, must take one approved course offered by select College departments that focuses on structural inequities people of color experience in the United States, such as Asian American Literatures. And all undergraduate students must take one approved course offered across campus that explores human diversity (e.g., race, socioeconomic class, gender, sexuality, ability, religion) in the United States, again such as Asian American Literatures.

The elective quality of Asian American Literatures both signals choice and the place of diversity in the curriculum. Students both want and have to be there (in the classroom).[11] My institution's curricular structure implies diversity should not be forced upon students, and yet it should be something students engage with, but not necessarily a part of their core learning. While this institutional ambivalence poses challenges, I relish the opportunities it affords me to give students a different perspective and approach than what they are often accustomed to, which can empower them to be actors in their learning and enable them to develop empathy for people who experience the world differently than them. In their anonymous course evaluation comments, one student praised the class for "transform[ing] [their] mindset and provid[ing] . . . a new lens" to "see the world," and another student similarly attributed their expanded worldview and ability to better understand "what it means and feels like to be different" to the course. Chuh describes the paradox of multiethnic literature courses when she writes, "Coupled with the institutional validation of minoritized literary studies as a sign of a commitment to diversity, such literatures have in the main been framed and studied in terms of authenticity, racism, and resistance rather than literariness per se" (*Difference Aesthetic Makes* 16). This tension between veracity and creativity haunts how I design and teach Asian American Literatures, since my institution's diversity requirements appear to emphasize the sociological

[10] The course also counts toward the university's aesthetic interpretation general education requirement.

[11] Given the many requirements that students must fulfill to complete their degrees, which often yield little incentive for them to deviate from a rigid academic plan that may not accommodate all of their intellectual curiosities, unless they are willing to increase their time to degree and possibly take on more financial burden, for better or worse, curricular requirements can encourage student enrollment in minoritarian fields of study. I state this to affirm that student desires and needs are not mutually exclusive; often, students enroll in my courses because they are interested in the topic *and* the course counts toward graduation.

over the aesthetic value of taking such a course. Indeed, some English majors have struggled to approach our texts as both political and aesthetic in contrast to their other English courses unmodified by social identity and difference. While my course description notes such literatures as simultaneously serving aesthetic, historical, and political ends, in practice, literary and cultural analysis in our class often felt compartmentalized and disjointed each time I have taught the course.[12] On one hand, I welcome this sense of fragmentation, as it reflects the complexity of minoritarian subjectivity and creative production. And yet, I worry the cordoning of minoritarian literatures as something other than "lit-tra-cha" leaves students with an uneven sense of literature as a whole.

In my most recent iteration of the course (spring 2022), I asked students how our course might be different from American Literature, one of the survey courses all English majors and minors are required to take. Students, regardless of familiarity with the field of English, recognized the paradox of distinguishing our class from a seemingly deracinated literature survey course and the reality that race and ethnicity are central to US national identity.[13] A key point I raised concerned the politics of knowledge production and disciplinary formation—in short, I laid bare the structural dimensions of power in shaping students' learning. A part of my motive to be explicit about the politics of curriculum design stemmed from the last time I taught the course (spring 2020), wherein one student was offended by having to read about a sixth-grade Indian American boy's queer sexual fantasies (Rakesh Satyal's novel *Blue Boy*) instead of learning about the so-called plight, as they put it, of Asian Americans. This student's dissatisfaction raises at least three issues: queerness supposedly has no place in an Asian American literatures course, perhaps Indian Americans in suburban Cincinnati are not truly representative of Asian Americans, and an Asian American literatures course must only focus on historicizing Asian American racial trauma. And yet, for at least one other student, queer Asian American representation positively impacted their experience in the course (as they shared in their anonymous course evaluation comments), exposing them to perspectives other courses failed to present.

The modifier "Asian American" in a course titled Asian American Literatures calls attention to race. It also suggests possession, as if a collection of creative work deemed literarily valuable could derive from a unified Asian American subject position. Even as I review our course student learning outcomes on the first day of class and return to them throughout the semester during class and on written assignments—one of which explicitly emphasizes the intersectional and relational nature of the course: "You will be able to summarize, synthesize, and apply intersectional

[12] Since I began working at my institution in 2014, I have taught Asian American Literatures three times.

[13] Certainly, American Literature engages race and ethnicity, but US writers of color are not always readily imagined as simply American.

Asian American critical theory"—students tend to focus on racial difference as the epistemic value of our texts. Certainly, Asian American literatures intervene in the racially unmarked literary canon of American literature and center Asian American voices and perspectives. However, as feminist and queer Asian American scholars have rightly pointed out, Asian American racialization often materializes through gender and sexual difference (Bahng; Balce; Chuh, *Imagine Otherwise*; Coráñez Bolton; Cruz; Eng; Isaac; R. Lee; Lowe; Manalansan, *Global Divas*; T. Nguyen; Ponce; Sarmiento, "Peminist and Queer Affiliation"; Shah; Suarez).While I assign feminist- and queer-oriented Asian American texts in part because of my personal identification with such orientations, I also assign them because of their pedagogical value in rendering a more complex and realistic representation of Asian American life.[14]

For example, teaching the graphic novel *Flamer*, which focuses on the protagonist Aiden Navarro's coming to terms with his queer sexuality, challenged students to see this as an Asian American text, even as Aiden's Asian Americanness recedes to the background, appearing almost as a nonissue. The novel takes place over the span of seven days at a Boy Scouts camp. During our first class discussion of the text (week 12 of a sixteen-week semester), I had assigned the first two days, "Saturday" and "Sunday," alongside Martin Manalansan's *Keywords for Asian American Studies*' entry on "queer." Although we had already engaged issues of queerness in A. Rey Pamatmat's play *Edith Can Shoot Things and Hit Them* (week 6) in our unit on the Midwest, I decided to wait on introducing "queer" as an analytical concept until this later point in the semester, given that students often find the term dense. To open our discussion, I asked, "How can we apply 'queer' [according to Manalansan's essay] to our reading of *Flamer*?" Then I asked for students' general first impressions of the novel, focusing on things that stood out to them, as I typically do when starting a new text. To end that first discussion, I asked, "How do we know Aiden is Asian American?" Whereas the first question primes students to read *Flamer* as a queer text, the second one gives students an opportunity to share their own take on the text, and the third one again primes them to connect the text to Asian American storytelling. And even if Manalansan's essay encourages students to focus on queerness in their reading of Curato's novel, it is framed in relation to Asian American studies, and thus guides students to think intersectionally and relationally. These three discussion questions further remind students of the infinite ways we can analyze a text. *Flamer* is at once (and at the very least) a queer, coming-of-age, Asian American, Filipinx American text.

In the first ninety-seven pages of the graphic novel, Aiden's last name (Navarro), religion (Catholicism), and dark, wavy hair clue readers to his racial-ethnic identity. Readers can easily overlook such minor details if

[14] Sara Ahmed's play with "orientation" in *Queer Phenomenology* influences my thinking here.

they are not inclined to spotting the textual and visual cues of racialization. Ironically, given the ubiquity of the visual when it comes to race and racialization, the narrative's focus on Aiden's sexual awakening and unrequited love steers readers toward the themes of sexuality and gender expression. Despite the class's focus on Asian Americanness, students struggled to articulate how the novel concerns Asian American experience in these initial pages. However, in a pivotal moment in the novel, six square panels arranged two across and three down reveal the interlocking ways in which Aiden perceives himself as lacking, based on the bullying he endures by some of the campers: "Too SHORT." "Too FAT." "Not MAN enough." "Not WHITE enough." "Not STRAIGHT enough." "I'll never be safe ANYWHERE" (Curato 281). The first five panels are extreme close-ups on Aiden's legs, navel, right eye, hands, and lower face. The fragmented sentences parallel this bodily and identitarian fragmentation and appear either on the bottom or top of each panel. The visual and textual composition of this page renders Aiden as an intersectional subject; he exceeds and fails to meet normative societal scripts. This assemblage of excess and lack are what position him as an outsider among his peers. During class discussion, students could palpably sense Aiden's helplessness through the panels' dark-gray tones. They also could recognize the simultaneity of Aiden's competing identities as they pointed out words and phrases connected to his different identities scribbled in oranges and reds across a two-page spread, following the six dark-gray panels, with Aiden cocooned on his bunk in the fetal position covering his eyes with his hands (Curato 282–283).

The novel's dominant narrative appears to be Aiden's flaming homosexuality, but the minor narrative of his racial difference brings to bear on it. While his patrol group is generally supportive of his oddities, other boys are less so. One boy uses his index fingers to stretch his eyes into horizontal slits and makes an offensive joke about Aiden not being in the right class "'cause it's orienteering, not orientALing" (Curato 102). This is the first instance in the novel of Aiden being overtly racialized. Later, the same boy tells another boy, "Check it out, it's that Chinese f****t [censorship added] I was telling you about," to which one of Aiden's friends retorts, "He's Filipino you ignorant asshat!" (Curato 122). Coupled with the panels discussed in the preceding paragraph, these bullying scenes remind readers of the intersection of race, gender, and sexuality and illustrate how Aiden's deviation from whiteness cannot be disentangled from his queer gender expression and sexuality. *Flamer* effectively illustrates for students such a core concept in Asian American critical theory by showing versus telling them that Asian American identity is intersectional and not exclusively defined by race.

To invite students into the discourse of Asian American cultural studies, I assigned select essays from *Keywords for Asian American Studies* that complemented the themes of our texts and to expose students to scholarly writing, starting in Unit 2: "Asian Americans in the Midwest"

(weeks 4 through 7). I paired Sylvia Shin Huey Chong's "Orientalism" and Karen Leong's "Foreign" with Celeste Ng's novel *Everything I Never Told You* to help students think through the perpetual foreigner trope in general and how region particularizes it. I paired Crystal Parikh's "Minority" with Pamatmat's *Edith* not only to address the model minority myth but also to contemplate the value of the minor manifested in Asian American cultural production in general and in a play about regionality and queerness in particular. I paired Evelyn Hu-DeHart's "Diaspora" with Aimee Nezhukumatathil's collection of poems *Oceanic* to synthesize its idiosyncratic regional and global travels (e.g., Chicago; Clarence, New York; Singapore; Bolinao, Philippines; Cambridge, Massachusetts; Periyar National Park, India; Kerala; Monte San Salvatore, Switzerland). In Unit 3: "War, Memory, Trauma," we read Yến Le Espiritu's "Refugee" alongside Viet Thanh Nguyen's collection of stories *The Refugees* to distinguish the figure of the refugee from the immigrant. In Unit 4: "Coming-of-Age Stories" we read Manalansan's "Queer" as discussed above.

Parikh's keyword essay on "minority" especially helped to clarify my vision of Asian American literatures as performative texts that simultaneously grapple with the status of Asians in America as cultural minorities and reorient readers to the generativity of minoritarian cultural production. As I explained to students, the concept of "minor" and "minority" draws attention to how our texts challenge the status quo through their narratives and production as cultural objects. I asked students to consider the function of Asian American literatures as "minority" literatures, how they challenge us to re-see the world from the vantage of the racial-ethnic "minority," the "minor," the "marginalized," the seemingly insignificant. Parikh argues that the "minor" is "a *critical* position"; "to describe a subject, object, or practice as 'minor'—for example, minor literature or minor discourse—is to . . . call critical attention to the way in which such a position, perspective, or practice is excluded from the norm, so as to account for how our normative ideals are themselves constructed as universal goods (163; original emphasis). Parikh's conceptualization of minor as critical position aligns with my framing of critique above. As a relational position, the minor ceases to operate as a fixed category, thereby unsettling "Asian American" as bound to essentialist characteristics, which frustrates students' desire to know what defines "Asian America/n"—but that is exactly the point I want to make. Through Parikh, students began to see how our discipline and dominant society ascribe value to white literatures by unmarking them simply as literature: creative writing of artistic merit. In the context of the week's lesson, I asked students to apply Parikh's abstract concept to our analysis of Edith by considering how the play might alter their perception of teens, tweens, guns, farms, and Middle America. That the play tackles these different identity categories and sociocultural issues from the minor perspectives of a twelve-year-old Filipina American tomboy living with her sixteen-year-old brother who explores his queer sexuality on "a remote non-

working farm outside of a remote town in the remotest Middle America" during "the early 90's [*sic*]" makes palpable how the minor engenders new vistas (Pamatmat 6).

A key intervention I proffer in teaching Asian American literatures is to feature regional voices and perspectives germane to our location in the Midwest, at the crossroads of the rural and the urban. As mentioned above, we read different genres (fiction, drama, poetry) in Unit 2 ("Asian Americans in the Midwest"), set in different places within the region and during different historical periods. Whereas Ng's novel is set in a small Ohio college town in the 1970s and focuses on the challenges of being the only interracial Chinese-white family in their community, Pamatmat's play is set in generic rural Middle America in the 1990s and focuses on the courageousness of queer-feminist latchkey Filipinx siblings, and Nezhukumatathil's poetry places the Midwest as points of a larger constellation that comprise the author's upbringing and life. I also teach authors who connect to the Midwest in Units 3 and 4. Cathy Park Hong's memoir/nonfiction essay collection *Minor Feelings* touches on her education at Oberlin College in Ohio and the Iowa Writers' Workshop, while Randy Ribay's YA novel *Patron Saints of Nothing* focuses on a biracial Filipinx teen boy living in contemporary suburban Michigan, not unlike the author, who is biracial Filipinx and grew up in the Midwest. I teach a specific unit on region and select authors with regional connections to encourage students to develop a connection with our texts. Even if students do not possess strong geographic ties to place, they find common ground with characters and social dynamics that reflect life in the middle. For non–Asian American students, the seemingly strange is made familiar; and for Asian American students, the potential to read stories similar to their own, which do not always mirror that of their sub/urban coastal counterparts, can be affirming and empowering. The sense of being "the only one," the only Asian, can feel even more pronounced in the heartland (E. Lee; J. Lee; Sarmiento, "Literary Perspectives").

Another intervention I proffer is to focus on the voices and perspectives of ethnic groups not readily imagined as Asian American but who nevertheless constitute one of the fastest growing populations, namely Southeast and South Asians.[15] To introduce students to some of the early and key Asian American writers, our first unit focused on select fiction stories from *Charlie Chan Is Dead 2* (*CCID2*), featuring Filipinx, Japanese, Chinese, Indian, Korean, Vietnamese, Hmong, and multiracial authors whose stories are set as far back as the early twentieth century and across the United States, Pacific, and globe.[16] On one hand, such a pedagogical

[15] According to the 2020 US Census population estimates, Indians and Filipinxs are the second and third largest Asian ethnic groups in the United States, respectively, with Chinese as the first ("Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month").

[16] About half of the stories that I assigned from *CCID2* are authored by Southeast and South Asian/Americans.

choice disorients students, as no unified Asian American narrative emerges. But that is exactly the point. By the end of Unit 1, which engaged twenty-five stories over the span of two weeks (weeks 2 and 3), students were able to articulate the diversity of Asian America as evidenced by their close reading and analysis of one or two of the assigned stories from the anthology in terms of both content and form in a short essay (1,000–1,200 words) and their responses to exam questions. Moreover, of the seven single-author books I assigned, five were written by Asian Americans of Southeast or South Asian descent: *Edith* by Pamatmat (Filipinx), *Oceanic* by Nezhukumatathil (Filipinx and Indian), *The Refugees* by Viet Nguyen (Vietnamese), *Flamer* by Curato (Filipinx and Irish), and *Patron Saints of Nothing* by Ribay (Filipinx and white).[17] My choice to foreground Southeast and South Asian American writers and characters is not meant to diminish the important writers and characters of East Asian descent (Chinese, Japanese, Korean); rather, expanding what constitutes Asian America in students' minds is the goal.[18]

As my reading list indicates, writers of Philippine descent authored half of the course texts. Whereas Pamatmat's play and Nezhukumatathil's poems comprised the second unit on Asian Midwestern perspectives, Curato's YA graphic novel and Ribay's YA novel comprised a fourth and final unit on coming-of-age narratives (weeks 12 through 16). Certainly, selecting Filipinx American texts reflects my personal identity and more importantly my scholarly expertise. My mentor and colleague in the department has often emphasized Vietnamese American texts when they teach Asian American Literatures, given their expertise, though their embodied positionality as not Asian American or queer may shield them from charges of racial-ethnic and/or sexuality bias. Still, such a model has inspired my pedagogical choices. It also has given me the freedom to stop chasing the impossible feat of trying to represent all of Asian America. However, I caution against not putting in the work to diversify and make more inclusive the notion of "Asian American," which can result in representing Asian America as a monoculture.[19]

Teaching multiple texts centering diasporic Filipinx American identity and community invited us to compare and recognize Filipinx American narratives as not monolithic. In designing an introductory course to Asian American literatures, I certainly confronted the challenge of

[17] In the past, I have taught *America Is in the Heart* by Carlos Bulosan (Filipinx), *Blue Boy* by Satyal (Indian), *The Book of Salt* by Monique Truong (Vietnamese), *Dogeaters* and *The Gangster of Love* by Jessica Hagedorn (multiracial Filipinx), *Letters to Montgomery Clift* by Noël Alumit (Filipinx), *On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous* by Ocean Vuong (Vietnamese and white), and *Souvenir* by Aimee Suzara (Filipinx).

[18] For critiques of the historical dominance of East Asians in imagining Asian America, see Shankar and Srikanth; Davé et al.; Espiritu, *Asian American Panethnicity*; See xi–xxxiv; and Toribio.

[19] Ahmed, *Living a Feminist Life*, and Kondo discuss diversity work as labor.

balancing breadth and depth. However, I opted to apply my belief in particularity as having universal value—that a racial-ethnic or regional specificity can and does illuminate onto-epistemic truth-claims resonant with a broader public.[20] To avoid being too didactic however, I framed these texts in terms of theme and genre rather than ethnicity. In fact, I framed all course texts not as representative of their ethnicity, though ethnic plurality did factor into my curation, but rather as congruent to key themes in Asian American studies. By the time we arrived at the final unit of the course, students had some fluency in Filipinx/American culture through stories by José Garcia Villa, Carlos Bulosan, Bienvenido Santos, R. Zamora Linmark, and Gina Apostol in CCID2, Pamatmat's play, and Nezhukumatathil's poems. Although some students would have liked to read from other ethnic perspectives (as noted by one student's anonymous course evaluation comments), they were exposed to vastly different cultures within Filipinx American storytelling. I chose Ribay's novel for its Midwest origin (suburban Michigan), transnational focus (much of the novel occurs in the Philippines' metro Manila and the Bicol province), and engagement with contemporary politics via a critique of the extrajudicial killings by then President Rodrigo Duterte's regime (2016–22) . While both protagonists are multiracial Filipinx teen boys, their character arcs differ as Curato's Aiden comes to terms with his racialized sexuality and Ribay's Jay comes to terms with his diasporic biracial subjectivity. Moreover, given my department's strength in children's and YA literatures, I selected these two texts to dialogue with a racially unmarked genre and to complicate how we understand adolescent narratives and who gets to have a childhood.[21] Of course, in practice, students did not always see past race and ethnicity, as they understood such texts as Filipinx American, especially in the case of Jay in Ribay's novel, whose multiraciality intersects with nationality, as his uncle fails to see him as Filipino because he does not live in the Philippines.

Critiquing to Create

Like the written construction of a scholarly argument, the efficacy of course design lies in its reception, in its engagement with an audience. To close my reflection on the critical creativity I enacted to design an Asian American literatures course that aimed to unsettle students' expectations, I share two divergent student responses. Both emerged in the context of engaging Hong's *Minor Feelings*, the only creative nonfiction text we read, which occurred at the midpoint of the semester. The first response illustrates a defensive position. Hong's polemical tone struck some students as harsh, which ironically coincides with Hong's critique of the dominant

[20] See and Kondo advocate for the particularity of Filipinx and Japanese American positionalities, respectively, as nevertheless having universal resonance.

[21] For a critique of the racialization of childhood, see Keeling 103–104; Muñoz, *Cruising Utopia* 95; and Owen 79.

expectation that Asian women be docile and not confrontational. While some students could sympathize with Hong's righteous anger, others questioned its efficacy, finding the text difficult to read to the point of needing to put it down and return to it when they felt less tense. My philosophy is students are entitled to their emotional response to a text—texts are affective; they move us. However, I also challenge students to critically engage with what a text says and does regardless of their personal beliefs. I had hoped Hong's essays would contextualize the anti-Asian hate resurgent in the era of COVID-19 and illustrate the psychic and material consequences of the dominant Black-white racial paradigm that fails to adequately grapple with Asian American subjectivity and subjection.[22] Instead, for some, the text's rhetorical deviance prevented them from recognizing its aesthetic and critical value. Even as Hong explains the tension of autobiography and aesthetics, some students could only see Hong the Asian American and not Hong the Asian American writer, thereby rehearsing the very trope I (and Hong) had tried to avoid: reading Asian American literatures simply as historical truth and not creative endeavor (17, 49). I also wondered whether white fragility unconsciously materialized despite students' seemingly general embrace of a liberal ethos.

The second response illustrates a reparative position.[23] As we moved on from Hong and started reading Viet Nguyen's *The Refugees*, an English major intimated with me after class that our course readings thus far had been more impactful to them than any of their other classes' readings. Even though this student did not identify as Asian American, I gleaned that our readings resonated with them for their frank critique of systemic inequities and their gorgeous creative language. Sociocultural relevance and aesthetic appreciation did not appear to conflict; rather, the literary seemed even more powerful because it was avowing the open secrets of xenophobia, racism, classism, sexism, homophobia, and ableism that undergird our society and yet making do within such onto-epistemic aesthetic confines. After this exchange, I also reflected on how minority literatures are elective and peripheral to the curriculum but often, ironically, are crucial courses that students find personally and socially transformative.[24] Both responses, the defensive and the reparative, reveal that normative and narrow perceptions of what Asian American literatures should be and do persist despite our pedagogical attempts to imagine

[22] Incidentally, I had recommended Hong's book as a potential first-year campus-wide common read for the following academic year to engage anti-Asian hate due to COVID-19, to which a committee member anonymously shared that such a text seems irrelevant given the university's low Asian population. Such microaggressive rhetoric ironically captures the spirit of minor feelings.

[23] See Sedgwick and Kondo for more on reparativity.

[24] This observation aims to contribute to the larger humanities conversation about so-called great books courses, which are considered as transformative (see, for example, Montás) but often exclude or fail to substantively engage with minority literatures.

otherwise but also that another view of Asian America, its people, and its literatures is possible.[25] These revelations are not incompatible as they illustrate the symbiotic dynamic of critique and creativity.

I have always appreciated the official course title as Asian American Literatures, plural. Though subtle, and thus lost to most students, the plurality resists unity and foreclosure. Such a plurality aligns with the "cacophonous complexity" of illiberal humanisms that Chuh forwards (*Difference Aesthetics Makes* 79). The will to know/ledge that many students desire as they grapple with this thing called Asian American literatures resonates with Chuh's critique of liberal humanities and their orientation to discrete categorization and quantifiability. In effect, students who enroll in my course become subject to undiscipline as I unsettle the notion of the literary and refuse a definitive description of Asian American literatures. While many students perhaps find this unsettling approach unsatisfying, I find it conducive to prompting students to further inquiry.[26] For in questioning, critiquing, students develop the capacity to make, create, transform.

---

[25] "Imagine otherwise" derives from Gordon 5 and Chuh, *Imagine Otherwise*.

[26] Fittingly, as Ponce outlines, the etymology of *queer* relates to *inquiry* (27).

Works Cited

Ahmed, Sara. *Living a Feminist Life*. Duke UP, 2017.
---. *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others*. Duke UP, 2006.
Alumit, Noël. *Letters to Montgomery Clift*. Alyson, 2003.
"Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month: May 2022." *United States Census Bureau*, 18 Apr. 2022, www.census.gov/newsroom/facts-for-features/2022/asian-american-pacific-islander.html. Accessed 18 Aug. 2022.
Bahng, Aimee. Migrant Futures: Decolonizing Speculation in Financial Times. Duke UP, 2017.
Balce, Nerissa S. Body Parts of Empire: Visual Abjection, Filipino Images, and the American Archive. U of Michigan P, 2016.
Bulosan, Carlos. *America Is in the Heart: A Personal History*. U of Washington P, 1973.
Butler, Judith. "What Is Critique? An Essay on Foucault's Virtue." *The Political: Blackwell Readings in Continental Philosophy*, edited by David Ingram, Blackwell, 2002, pp. 212–226.
Cha, Theresa Hak Kyung. Dictee. U of California P, 2001.
Chanse, Sam. *Lydia's Funeral Video*. Kaya, 2015.
Chong, Sylvia Shin Huey. "Orientalism." Schlund-Vials et al., pp. 182–185.
Chuh, Kandice. *The Difference Aesthetics Makes: On the Humanities "After Man."* Duke UP, 2019.
---. *Imagine Otherwise: On Asian Americanist Critique*. Duke UP, 2003.
Coráñez Bolton, Sony. "Filipinx Critique at the Crossroads of Queer Diasporas and Settler Sexuality in Miguel Syjuco's Illustrado." *Journal of Asian American Studies*, vol. 24, no. 2, 2021, pp. 219–245, doi.org/10.1353/jaas.2021.0022.
Cruz, Denise. *Transpacific Femininities: The Making of the Modern Filipina*. Duke UP, 2012.
Curato, Mike. *Flamer*. Henry Holt, 2020.
Davé, Shilpa, et al. "De-Privileging Positions: Indian Americans, South Asian Americans, and the Politics of Asian American Studies." *Journal of Asian American Studies*, vol. 3, no. 1, 2000, pp. 67–100, doi.org/10.1353/jaas.2000.0003.
Eng, David L. *Racial Castration: Managing Masculinity in Asian America*. Duke UP, 2001.
Espiritu, Yến Le. *Asian American Panethnicity: Bridging Institutions and Identities*. Temple UP, 1992.
---. "Refugee." Schlund-Vials et al., pp. 208–211.
Gopinath, Gayatri. *Unruly Visions: The Aesthetic Practices of Queer Diaspora*. Duke UP, 2018.
Gordon, Avery F. *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination*. U of Minnesota P, 1997.
Hagedorn, Jessica. *Dogeaters*. Penguin, 1991.
---. *The Gangster of Love*. Penguin, 1997.

Hagedorn, Jessica, editor. *Charlie Chan Is Dead 2: At Home in the World; An Anthology of Contemporary Asian American Fiction*. Penguin, 2004.Hong, Cathy Park. Minor Feelings: An Asian American Reckoning. One World, 2021.
hooks, bell. *Feminism Is for Everybody: Passionate Politics*. Routledge, 2015.
Hu-DeHart, Evelyn. "Diaspora." Schlund-Vials et al., pp. 49–54.
Isaac, Allan Punzalan. *American Tropics: Articulating Filipino America*. U of Minnesota P, 2006.
Janette, Michele. "Hedonistic Responsibility: Pain, Pleasure, Experiment, and Empathy in Lily Hoang's Parabola." *Journal of the Midwest Modern Language Association*, vol. 51, no. 1, 2018, pp. 75–101, www.jstor.org/stable/45017406.
Kapadia, Ronak K. *Insurgent Aesthetics: Security and the Queer Life of the Forever War*. Duke UP, 2019.
Keeling, Kara. *Queer Times, Black Futures*. New York UP, 2019.
Khubchandani, Kareem. *Ishtyle: Accenting Gay Indian Nightlife*. U of Michigan P, 2020.
Kondo, Dorinne. *World-Making: Race, Performance, and the Work of Creativity*. Duke UP, 2018.
Lee, Erika. "Asian American Studies in the Midwest: New Questions, Approaches, and Communities." *Journal of Asian American Studies*, vol. 12, no. 3, 2009, pp. 247–273, doi.org/10.1353/jaas.0.0045.
Lee, Josephine. Introduction. *Asian American Plays for a New Generation*, edited by J. Lee et al., Temple UP, 2011, pp. 1–10.
Lee, Rachel C. *The Americas of Asian American Literature: Gendered Fictions of Nation and Transnation*. Princeton UP, 2000.
Leong, Karen. "Foreign." Schlund-Vials et al., pp. 98–101.
Lowe, Lisa. *Immigrant Acts: On Asian American Cultural Politics*. Duke UP, 1996.
Manalansan, Martin F., IV. *Global Divas: Filipino Gay Men in the Diaspora*. Duke UP, 2003.
---. "Queer." Schlund-Vials et al., pp. 197–202.
Montás, Roosevelt. *Rescuing Socrates: How the Great Books Changed My Life and Why They Matter for a Generation*. Princeton UP, 2021.
Muñoz, José Esteban. *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity*. New York UP, 2009.
---. *Disidentifications: Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics*. U of Minnesota P, 1999.
Nezhukumatathil, Aimee. *Oceanic*. Copper Canyon, 2018.
Ng, Celeste. *Everything I Never Told You*. Penguin, 2015.
Nguyen, Tan Hoang. *A View from the Bottom: Asian American Masculinity and Sexual Representation*. Duke UP, 2014.
Nguyen, Viet Thanh. *The Refugees*. Grove, 2017.
Owen, Gabrielle. *A Queer History of Adolescence: Developmental Pasts, Relational Futures*. U of Georgia P, 2020.

Pamatmat, A. Rey. *Edith Can Shoot Things and Hit Them*. Samuel French, 2012.
Parikh, Crystal. "Minority." Schlund-Vials et al., pp. 161–165.
Ponce, Martin Joseph. *Beyond the Nation: Diasporic Filipino Literature and Queer Reading*. New York UP, 2012.
Quiray Tagle, Thea. "Salvage Acts: Asian/American Artists and the Uncovering of Slow Violence in the San Francisco Bay Area." *ACME: An International Journal for Critical Geographies*, vol. 18, no. 5, 2019, pp. 1112–1127, acme-journal.org/index.php/acme/article/view/1702.
Ribay, Randy. *Patron Saints of Nothing*. Kokila, 2019.
Salaita, Steve. "Punishment and Reward in the Corporate University." *Steve Salaita: No Flags, No Slogans*, 23 Mar. 2022, stevesalaita.com/punishment-and-reward-in-the-corporate-university/. Accessed 28 June 2022.
Sarmiento, Thomas Xavier. "Literary Perspectives on Asian Americans in the Midwest." *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Literature*, Oxford UP, 2019, doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190201098.013.896.
---. "Peminist and Queer Affiliation in Literature as a Blueprint for Filipinx Decolonization and Liberation." *Asian American Feminisms and Women of Color Politics*, edited by Lynn Fujiwara and Shireen Roshanravan, U of Washington P, 2018, pp. 82–104.
Satyal, Rakesh. *Blue Boy*. Kensington, 2009.
Schlund-Vials, Cathy J., et al., editors. *Keywords for Asian American Studies*. New York UP, 2015.
Sedgwick, Eve Kosofsky. *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity*. Duke UP, 2003.
See, Sarita Echavez. *The Decolonized Eye: Filipino American Art and Performance*. U of Minnesota P, 2009.
Shah, Nayan. *Stranger Intimacy: Contesting Race, Sexuality, and the Law in the North American West*. U of California P, 2012.
Shankar, Lavina Dhingra, and Rajini Srikanth, editors. *A Part, Yet Apart: South Asians in Asian America*. Temple UP, 1998.
Song, Min Hyoung. *The Children of 1965: On Writing, and Not Writing, as an Asian American*. Duke UP, 2013.
Suarez, Harrod J. *The Work of Mothering: Globalization and the Filipino Diaspora*. U of Illinois P, 2017.
Suzara, Aimee. *Souvenir*. WordTech, 2014.
Toribio, Helen C. "The Problematics of History and Location of Filipino American Studies within Asian American Studies." *Asian American Studies After Critical Mass*, edited by Kent A. Ono, Blackwell, 2005, pp. 166–176.
Truong, Monique. *The Book of Salt*. Mariner, 2004.
Vuong, Ocean. *On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous*. Penguin, 2019.
Wang, Dorothy J. *Thinking Its Presence: Form, Race, and Subjectivity in Contemporary Asian American Poetry*. Stanford UP, 2013.

Yu, Timothy. *Race and the Avant-Garde: Experimental and Asian American Poetry Since 1965*. Stanford UP, 2009.