

## ABSTRACT BOOK

### PANEL SESSION 1: In and Between Lands and Waters: Margins, Boundaries, and Centers

#### **Code of Conduct in South China Sea: Positions of Southeast Asian Non-claimant States**

Jim Colandog Duran (he/him/his)

PhD Candidate, Southeast Asian Studies, Centro Escolar University (Philippines)

Interstate policy is a post-Cold war global phenomenon and in the Asia-Pacific, it is a prevailing discourse. This cross-sectional study analyses cultural and nationalistic position of non-claimant states of Myanmar and Indonesia on a legally binding code of conduct in South China Sea expected to be implemented in 2021 by all ASEAN member state claimant nations. Key expert discussion involving authorities from Myanmar and Indonesia gives the study in depth focus in investigating policy implications, and the practical, generative framework in the light of Southeast Asian Exceptionalism.

Findings revealed that non-claimant countries have a balancing power in promoting peace and security in the region undermining conflict and geopolitical tension caused by unclear rules in the assertion of sovereign rights. It appears that cultural nationalism is necessarily a reliable or strong predictor of non-claimant's decision process. Historical details of the predictor may vary from Myanmar to Indonesia. But the grounding is similar, both are post-colonial sentiments. Results also suggest that Myanmar and Indonesia are essentially independent of their concurring position towards a binding code of conduct. In sum, cultural nationalism in this study posits a unified and economic inclusiveness guided by respect in culture and ideology. A significant and effective regional peace initiative is a rules-based order in Southeast Asia.

**Presenters' biosketch:** Mr. Jim Duran is a PhD in Southeast Asian Studies candidate at the Graduate School of Centro Escolar University, Manila.

#### **The Complexity of Transnational Spaces of Migration in South East Asia**

Shahanaz Parven (she/her/hers)

PhD Candidate, Political Processes, Institutions, and Technology, RUDN University (Russia)

The theory of international migration considers the space of transnational migration as the physical and symbolical territories on which migration takes place (Haller & Verwiebe, 2016). Within that space, geographical, economic, social, and political factors affect both the migration processes itself (Parkins, 2010), but also the modifications that occur in the migrant's perception of the self and his own definition of a personal identity (Conway & Leonard, 2014). Within the space of transnational migration, the migration and life path that migrant undertakes is a reflection not as much of the complexity of the migrant's internal cognitive mechanisms, but rather of the complexity of the environment that the migrant navigates. The migrant, by acting as a relatively simple system in relation to a much more complex environment, uses simple rules to navigate the latter and to update his own beliefs regarding his individual identity (Feldman, Dant, & Lutters, 2018). As he does so, he follows a path that indicates not only the geographical complexity of the space that he traverses on the physical map of the world, but also of the complexity of the social and symbolic spaces. Successful integration of the migrant, in the context of this theoretical approach, implies the arrival of the migrant to a region of the symbolic

environment which well corresponds to the symbolic identity that the migrant assigns upon himself.

In the paper, we study how the complexity of migration paths that occur in South East Asia may be a better reflection of the physical and symbolic environment in the same region, rather than the topology of states as is defined in the political map of the world.

**Presenters' biosketch:** Shahanaz Parven is a PhD candidate of the Department of Political Processes and Analysis, in the Faculty of Social and Humanitarian Sciences of People's Friendship University of Russia, Moscow. She is writing a dissertation on the subject of "Political Management of Migration from Bangladesh in Modern Conditions". She contributes to the research activities of the Centre for Genocide Studies, University of Dhaka, and studies the impact that the Rohingya immigration has on the Bangladeshi society.

### **“Heaven and hell embraced in the belly of our boat:” Water and Ghostliness in Vietnamese Diaspora Literature**

Alan Yeh (he/him/his)

PhD Student, French, University of California, Berkeley (USA)

Following Arendt and Agamben, if the existence of refugees exposes the instability of the modern nation-state and its incapacity to uphold human rights, how might refugee narratives illuminate alternate epistemologies about humanity? Heaven above and hell below, but what of the space in between, the boat where the passengers' distinction between life and death collapses? Building upon the significance of water and ghosts already explored in scholarship on Vietnam and its diaspora, I offer my own concept of “ghostly subjects:” the wandering ghosts of those who died “bad deaths” in war and oft-perilous refugee flight as well as the survivors who, I argue, have also become ghostly after traumatic rupture. Employing Vinh Nguyen's “oceanic spatiality”—a waterscape which consists of both the boat and the sea—as a critical site for the formation of these ghostly subjects, this paper argues that ghostliness is not purely pernicious, but rather reconstructive and empowering for Vietnamese refugitude. Comparing narratives across the diaspora by Kim Thúy, Viet Thanh Nguyen, and Linda Lê, this paper reveals the formation of subjects who escape normative juridico-political boundaries and metaphysical demarcations through the characters' boat passages and their spectral encounters. Neither quite dead nor alive but something else altogether in a floating state of Derridean survivance, these stateless subjects divest from terrestrial nationalism and its sovereign claims to identity, life, and belonging. Instead, they reclaim and redefine their subjectivities by forging a ghostly, extranational collective way of being within and beyond an oceanic spatiality. Reconceptualizing the refugee subject in this way heralds a universal symbolic reordering that is both necessary and impending in a world where the global refugee crisis and growing transnational networks and identities make migration and migrant experiences increasingly urgent concerns for 21st-century thought.

**Presenters' biosketch:** Alan Yeh is a second-year PhD student in French at the University of California, Berkeley. His primary interests lie in the Vietnamese diaspora and modern French and Francophone literature. He is particularly drawn to questions of subject formation, especially as they pertain to transnationalism, migration, language, memory, and food and

foodways—themes which have most recently been informed by ocean studies, critical refugee studies, and contemporary affect theory. A strong believer in the critical power of “me-search,” he credits the relentless desire for insight into the intersections and tensions of his own identity and history as a driving force behind his work.

### **La Punta: Navigations on the Liminal and Aquatic Space of Iloilo City**

Ram Paulo Agduma Anayan (he/him/his)

MA Student, Literary and Cultural Studies, Ateneo de Manila University (Philippines)

**\*prerecorded\***

Iloilo City’s geography, caught between land and sea, historically served as an important port in the Philippines, inevitably placing it in the networks of the world economy. Following a narrative of growth, decline, and renaissance, Iloilo’s dynamism leads to the simultaneity of multitextured experiences expressed through numerous literary representations. This paper attempts to identify the various identities the city has engendered as I map the ways of its production via lived imagination including my own. I also navigate the spatiotemporal shifts and stratifications of its urban character which offer a common dialogical space to a multigenre and transtemporal set of artistic texts, namely, the folk song “Iloilo ang Banwa Ko” (Iloilo is My Native Land), short stories such as Angel Magahum’s “Si Montor” (Montor) and John Iremil E. Teodoro’s “Ang Lalaki sa Suba sang Iloilo” (The Man in Iloilo River), and the local short film Buang Bulawan (Fool’s Gold). Consequently, the selected texts allude to images of water that return the imaginary city to its natural location. At the same time, they characterize the city as liminal, located both at its historical limits and at the beginning of an extended sociopolitical consciousness. Ultimately, these explorations reflect Iloilo as a nexus of various local, national, and transnational forces characteristic of most port cities.

**Presenters’ biosketch:** Ram Paulo A. Anayan is a candidate for Master of Arts in Literary and Cultural studies under the Department of English, Ateneo de Manila University. He currently teaches part-time under the Kagawaran ng Filipino (Department of Filipino) in the same university. He spent his undergrad in Iloilo City.

### PANEL SESSION 2: Reconfiguring ‘Beyond’ Spaces: Activism, Community, and Freedom

#### **Experts in the Production of Nature: Indonesian Forest Fire Policy and the ‘Issues’ of Documents**

Umar Al Faruq (he/him)

recent graduate (MPhil in Human Geography), University of Oslo (Norway)

The Government of Indonesia (GoI) have ramped up national measures in mitigating and culling forest fires following the 2015 Southeast Asian Haze Crisis and the Paris Agreement. Such policies are attempts at producing new, amiable natures amid environmental and legitimacy crises. This research analyzes the documents representing these policies, particularly the documents by the Peat Restoration Agency (PRA), the Ministry of Environment and Forestry (MoEF), the GoI, and Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). Written by ‘experts,’

the proposed policies mainly focused on restoring lost peatland in affected areas like Sumatra and Kalimantan, and increasing ‘local capacity’ in fire prevention. This research investigates how policy documents are planned, written, disseminated, and implemented and explores the labor of so-called experts. I argue that documents and their writing process are central in the formation of ‘issues’ which are highly contingent on their authors; the issues presented in the documents do not necessarily represent the desires of impacted communities. Environmentalists have argued that most fires are caused (directly or indirectly) by agroforestry companies and that any mitigation efforts should squarely focus on their regulation and emancipation of local actors. The production of these documents instead framed the problem of forest fires as issues of reducing ‘emission targets,’ ‘technocratic superiority,’ and ‘non-indigenous intervention’—pointing to expert-led interventions in reducing GHG emissions. As indigenous groups argued for greater autonomy over their ancestral land, blanket peatland restoration to offset emissions risks inducing unwanted side effects such as further indigenous disenfranchisement. In this context, the production of nature-as-space is being done by labor elsewhere; experts in (national) government agencies form certain issues as objective reality where the production of new peatland is a shared universal priority to combat climate change. Meanwhile, issues raised by indigenous and local communities—who are most affected by the fires—are subordinate.

**Presenters’ biosketch:** Umar recently graduated from the University of Oslo with a Master of Philosophy in Human Geography, specializing in Climate Change Adaptation and Social Transformations. Previously, he studied Urban and Regional Planning at Bandung Institute of Technology, Indonesia and worked as a researcher in disaster and resilience studies. My current research interests are in looking how experts and intellectuals influence and negotiate urban imaginaries, therefore policies, in sociopolitical landscapes, with a specific focus on Indonesia’s new capital city project.

### **Resistance Through Communal Art: A study of the practices of two Southeast Asian independent cultural centers**

Martin Grishev Lukanov (he/him/his)

PhD Student, Cultural Studies, Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" (Bulgaria)

Resistance Through Communal Art: A study of the practices of two Southeast Asian independent cultural centers Using methods from auto- and digital ethnography, in-depth interviews, and analysis of audio-visual archives, this paper studies the processes related to the formation of the collectives behind, as well as the strategies for the survival, of two independent spaces dedicated to the practice of alternative culture in Southeast, UrbanVillage in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia and RAM10 in Bangkok, Thailand. Though very different at first sight, UrbanVillage was created a decade ago and in its short existence was dedicated to the grooming of what the late creator of the collective behind the space Hasnizam Zaki calls indiepreneurs, young and trendy individuals who aim at creating widely liked pop-cultural products while being independent from the predatory practices of the Malaysian cultural industry, while the collective behind RAM10 is formed during the last months of 2020 and is staunchly dedicated to the

practice of anti-popular artforms and ways of expression such as noise music, free improvisation, and dada-esque theater, the two spaces share some fundamental similarities. Firstly, they both aspire to for independent existence, in the case of UrbanVillage even in opposition to the dominant ways of creating and distributing popular culture. Secondly, they use the physical space of the independent venue as a means of fostering a community of like-minded individuals who help each other find their unique place and independent stance in the contemporary artworld in Southeast Asia. Finally, the paper aims at showing that these alternative spaces aim at recreating, or rather, creating, new village-like spaces of communality that by reminding their members of the (imagined) togetherness of the idealized hometown, help them resist spread of Western-style individualism and neoliberal consumerism and show an alternative way of existence based on solidarity and communalism.

**Presenters' biosketch:** Martin Lukanov is a Ph.D. student in Cultural Studies from Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski". His research is predominantly on alternative cultures and underground music in East and Southeast Asia. These interest stems from the years he has spent in the two regions, where he was involved in different art collectives, as well as his involvement with the Bulgarian experimental collective AMEK.

### **Examining the Soundscapes of Children's Play Spaces in a Filipino Urban Poor Neighborhood**

Aireen Grace Tomagan Andal (she/her)

PhD Student, Philosophy and Geography, Ural Federal University (host) and Macquarie University (partner) (Russia/Australia)

This work examines the sonic materiality in children's play spaces located in an urban poor neighborhood in the Philippines. Analysis focuses on how children's play experiences are both shaped by, and shape, by the soundscape of their play social spaces. Drawing an unstructured interview with 25 Filipino children (9-12 years old), this work articulates what comprise children's sonic environment and how children make sense and meanings of the soundscapes in their play spaces. Children participants shared their encounters with sounds from humans, non-humans and more-than-humans and gave descriptions mostly in terms of how these sounds enable or disrupt their play activities. Three relevant discussions have emerged from this interest: first, children navigate multiple, sometimes contradictory, sonic environments in their play spaces in the urban poor environment; second, certain features in the soundscape of children's play spaces can act as a way to either attract or appal them to continue playing in a specific area; and finally, children imagine territories of their play spaces with distinct sounds existing in different venues of play. These observations suggest that children in this study have a complex sonic relationship with their place spaces beyond physical dimensions, offering another dimension to rethinking about children's auditory encounters with their spaces. The discussions raised in this work speak more broadly to geographical work that seeks to address the complexities of children's play spaces and what it means to critically engage with the embodied soundscape imbued in their play spaces. This work thus contributes to analysis of children's geographies in Southeast Asia using the production of space through sounds, an idea that is also hitherto underexplored.

**Presenters' biosketch:** Aireen Grace Andal is a Filipino citizen PhD student in Ural Federal University, Russian Federation. She holds a bachelor's degree in sociology (University of the Philippines) and a graduate degree in Political Philosophy (Ural Federal University). Her main research interests are children's spaces and child-friendly cities in the Global South. Her doctoral research focuses on children's play spaces in slums during the pandemic lockdown in the Philippines.

### PANEL SESSION 3: Practices of Spirituality: Devotion, Commemoration, and Enactment

#### **Sattha, Money and Fandoms: Intersections Between Capitalist Commodification of Thai K-pop and Buddhist Fandoms**

Pornpailin Meklalit

MA Student, Asia Pacific Studies, University of San Francisco (USA)

This study represents an initial attempt to investigate the cultural, economic and spiritual meanings and goals of activities carried out by K-pop fandom, specifically fans of EXO and NCT, and Buddhist devotees in Thailand and their considerable degree of overlap and similarity. While Thai Buddhism is revered, K-pop fandom is stigmatized as an extreme, problematic form of behavior. This research questions that distinction by building parallels between these activities as forms of faith, which are mostly shaped by the same economic structures, with money as a medium that allows spiritual connection comfort for fans. Another important is how travel and pilgrimages are physical and spiritual journey that exist for both religious devotees and K-pop fans. The findings from the study indicate that both Thai K-pop fandom and Buddhism bear a striking resemblance in their faith rituals, practices, and capitalist-oriented activities, in which fans and religious devotees get happiness and spiritual nourishment in exchange. Through the lens of secondary sources and participation observations onsite in Thailand, the real-life experiences of those involved in religious and fan activities will be illustrated. In exploring relevant connections, the implication of this study offers insightful explanations that link K-pop and Buddhist subcultural communities so that we can better understand the complex functioning of Thai society and culture.

**Presenters' biosketch:** Pornpailin Meklalit (Pauline) is a second-year graduate student at the University of San Francisco's College of Arts and Sciences where she is pursuing in a degree in Asia Pacific Studies. In her studies, Pauline is focusing on humanities and social sciences while also furthering her knowledge of comparative studies of Thai and East Asian histories, linguistics and societies. Upon the completion of her graduate studies, she hopes to pursue a doctorate degree in Comparative Media and Culture and eventually teach at the college level and progress toward career as a researcher.

#### **Contentious Histories: Intercommunal Relations and Phang Nga's Multiple Pasts**

Chantal Croteau (she/her/hers)

PhD Candidate, Sociocultural Anthropology, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor (USA)

In the 20th century, the Thai state began to conflate ethnicity and religion in its definitions of Thainess or *khwa m pen Thai*, a move entangled in processes of nation building and marked, perhaps most strikingly, by the assimilation programs of Field Marshal Phibunsongkhram's Pan-Thai Movement (Anderson 1991; Thongchai 1994). Increasingly, to be Thai, as a full-fledged citizen and participant in the nation, meant to be ethnically Tai, the category Tai itself constructed and re-made in various ways throughout history (Keyes 1995), and Theravada Buddhist. The equation of citizenship with ethnicity and religion has carried forward into the present moment; as a result, Muslims living in Thailand face the challenge of staking their own claims to citizenship and belonging.

My research brings these questions of citizenship and belonging into the context of Phang Nga, a province in Thailand's Buddhist-majority Upper South. Drawing from locally compiled historical texts and oral narratives collected during ethnographic field research in 2018 and 2019, this paper delves into the multiple Phang Ngas imagined, remembered, and enacted by both Buddhist and Muslim residents in their daily lives. In particular, I trace how Buddhists and Muslims work to situate themselves and their communities within both the Phang Nga province and the Thai nation. Through attending to the aspects both highlighted in and omitted from these locally compiled histories, this paper works to make sense of Phang Nga's multiple, sometimes competing, pasts and the myriad ways that Buddhists and Muslims in Phang Nga negotiate belonging to a shared place.

**Presenters' biosketch:** Chantal Croteau is a PhD candidate in sociocultural anthropology at the University of Michigan. In her doctoral research, she examines the microsociological dynamics of intercommunal relations in southern Thailand through a focus on everyday interactions, daily forms of care, and the telling and retelling of regional histories. She received her master's in Asian Studies from Cornell University in 2016, and she is currently the co-coordinator of the Southeast Asian Studies Rackham Interdisciplinary Workshop at the University of Michigan.

### **Elephant Commemoration: Place-Based Aura, Agency, and the Making of Places for Commemoration in Vietnam**

Chari Hamratanaphon

PhD Student, Anthropology, University of California, Riverside (USA)

Elephant statues are installed in certain Vietnamese temples for commemoration. Vietnamese (Kinh) people worship elephants for their significant contributions in the war history and their spiritual potency in granting a wish. This paper, developed from my ethnographic research at Voi Phục and Voi Ré Temples in Vietnam, investigates the interrelation between elephant statues, spaces, and patriotic narratives in creating places for commemoration. First, applying Benjamin's concept of aura, I argue that the sacred aura of a ritual object is not inherently created through the authentic production process or the object itself, but it is place-based, and socially constructed by the worshipper's individual interpretation. Certain location in each temple, sacred environment, and their relations with other surrounding objects in the area, play a big role in creating the object's aura. In addition, following Gell's concept of social agency, I suggest that the agency of the elephant statues is also place-based: spiritual potency is transferred from the human deity to other surrounding objects, including the elephant

statues. The distance between the statues and the inner sanctuary, where the main god is located, partly affects their efficaciousness. Secondly, I propose that the existence of elephant statues in each respective temple helps add nationalistic meaning to the sacred spaces, partly due to the elephant's deep connection with wars and historical figures. Lastly, the paper illustrates how mythical and historical narratives involved in creating the aura and agency of the elephant statues within the sacred spaces, blurring the boundary between sacred and secular spaces, as well as transforming the sacred space into a place of commemoration, which ties to the Vietnamese nation-building project. Studying how spaces and objects co-construct the meanings of each other, in this research, provides an alternative way to understand the Vietnamese place-making in a larger context.

**Presenters' biosketch:** Chari Hamratanaphon is a PhD student in the Department of Anthropology, University of California, Riverside. Her research interests include Vietnamese folk religions, narratives, and material objects, in relation to nation-building process, socialism, and modernity. She is also interested in studying the interrelations of Southeast Asian folk beliefs. Chari's current research is focusing on amulets and the tradition of making wishes in Vietnam.

### **Sacred Spaces, Musicking, and Representation of Thai Communities in Chicagoland**

Matthew Allen Werstler (he/him/his)

MA Student, MM in World Music and Southeast Asian Studies, Northern Illinois University (USA)

"Thai-Americans are constantly imagining, sustaining, and indeed performing their "Thai" identity to varying degrees. Religious spaces provide a possible extension of a home for Thai immigrants which encourages them to perform their core identity as Thai (Bankston, Kim, Zhou 2002). It is through religious spaces that Thai-Americans negotiate and perform their Thai identity (Bao 2017). Regardless of the differences in musical genre or form, Thai diaspora communities perform and negotiate identity within sacred spaces through musicking.

I focus on two specific religious spaces in Chicagoland: Thai Cultural Center of Chicago (TCFAI) situated at Wat Buddhadhamma, and St. Paul Thai Lutheran Church. I argue that regardless of the musical genres performed, musicking in sacred spaces of Thai diaspora communities allows participants to enact and negotiate their Thainess. With the onset of the COVID-19 Pandemic, Thai musicking communities of religious spaces in the Chicagoland area turn to virtual and outdoor mediums to perform and create. While changes were needed so that musicking opportunities could continue in the pandemic, the fluidity of space is not a new concept, as the Thai musicking communities in Chicagoland were seen creating outside of their designated spaces even prior to the pandemic. The identity of who they are and the religious spaces they come from still are a part of the performances as they create beyond the sacred space. Through varied musicking experiences, Thai diaspora communities discover opportunities to perform and negotiate their Thainess through assorted sacred spaces that carry out functions transcending their proscribed practices.

**Presenters' biosketch:** Matthew Werstler is pursuing a M.M in world music at Northern Illinois University. In addition, he is pursuing a graduate certificate in Southeast Asian Studies and

Geographical Information Analysis. From 2016-2018, Matthew was an Instructor of English Language and Culture at Youjiang Medical University for Nationalities. While in China Matthew furthered his studies of Chinese music and music of Tai peoples. While at NIU, Matthew participates in Chinese music ensemble, Thai Music ensemble, and Indonesian Gamelan. As an Asian-American, he is interested in the role of sound in Asian-American communities, presently looking at Thai communities in Chicago.

#### PANEL SESSION 4: Intersectional Spaces: Power, Identity, Placemaking

##### **Creating Spaces and Creating Demand: Myanmar-Burmese Buddhist Women, Monk Teachers, and the Shaping of Transnational Teachings**

Rachelle Saruya (she/her/hers)

PhD Candidate, Study of Religion, University of Toronto (Canada)

As the Abhidhamma's (higher teachings) importance in Myanmar Buddhist society is well known, it is only within the last century that this doctrine has become more accessible to the laity, and specifically to women devotees. As women make up the majority of devotees for monks, instilling this doctrine and giving women access to it could have only increased societies' views on its significance. While monks such as Ledi Sayadaw reworked the teachings to make them more accessible to the laity (Braun 2013), this paper argues that lay women may have played an active role in creating a "demand" (Starling 2018) for learning the more difficult Buddhist teachings that were once only available to monastic elites. My work is informed through a modern-day case study, having conducted multi-sited ethno-graphic fieldwork at a village monastery in Myanmar and at a suburban house monastery in the San Francisco Bay Area. I observed the same teaching monk in both locations, understanding just how women were able to influence this monk's teachings, his pedagogical approaches for them, and how the changing sites and different student backgrounds also influenced these teachings. Recovering the "cacophony of voices and agents that engendered the key changes" (Turner 2014) helps create less of a top down and male dominated discourse, and reflects the ways in which supply and demand in education practices flow between actors through time and space.

**Presenters' biosketch:** Rachelle Saruya is a PhD Candidate in the Department for the Study of Religion at the University of Toronto. Her research interests include Burmese Buddhism, monasticism, Abhidhamma, gender and Buddhism and Buddhist education. Her article, 'Directions of Learning, Learning Directions: Myanmar-Burmese Buddhist Nuns, Responsibility, and their Experiences with the Scriptural Examinations' was just published in the Buddhist Studies Review.

##### **Building New Subjectivities: Female Weightlifters in Vietnam**

Annika Yates (she/her/hers)

PhD Student, Anthropology, University of Minnesota (USA)

"How do we consider the many spatial and temporal layers of elite athlete experience? How do these different spatial and cultural experiences converge in embodied subjectivity? This research takes as a case study the women's national weightlifting team of Vietnam. This team of

athletes are powerhouses. They are small but mighty, lifting double their body weights to secure medals at the 49 and 55kg weight classes. By the standards of international sport, they are successful athletes, but being so requires these athletes to push cultural norms of the country and space that they live in. What's more, other Vietnamese citizens are by and large not even aware of the team's success. While there is much research on the ways in which transnational organizations, like governments, athletic governing bodies, and the media enact power over athletes, there is little research on how athletes themselves experience these forces. Athletes live and work within many cultural realms; local, trans-national, and international: international sports organizations, local sport culture, local or national culture beyond sport, international cultural norms, and the economies, local and global, that the athletes exist within, or the specific geographic spaces. Though theorizing any one of these angles separately is of course valuable for giving space to the parameters, none of them exist separately. They exist as they are experienced by the individual, the athlete. What hierarchy might these planes/spheres be ordered into for the athlete? I build on Marx's understanding of work as transformative of subjectivity in social relations to argue that action creates not only subjectivity, but the future. Continuing in that line of argument, these athletes' jobs—and more specifically the action involved—acts to create new, transnational subjectivities and futures in Vietnam.

**Presenters' biosketch:** Annika Yates is a PhD student in anthropology at the University of Minnesota. Her research focuses on: the body and subjectivity, sports, air pollution, urban political ecology, and Vietnam."

### **Filipinx Transnationalism: the Diasporic Gaze and the Spatial Un-making of Filipinx America**

Tiffany Marie Sloan (she/her/hers)

Undergraduate Student, Asian Studies and Political Science, Rice University (USA)

Transnationalism occupies a central role in contemporary Filipinx American political consciousness and radicalism. In her article *#NeverAgaintoMartialLaw: Transnational Filipino American Activism from Marcos to Duterte*, Joy Sales illustrates the legacies of Filipinx activist networks in the diaspora, centering history as a site of political mobilization. Today, Filipinx Americans nearly exclusively organize transnationally, integrating themselves within intergenerational activist networks to expose political and economic linkages between the United States and the Philippines. Acknowledging the direction of the diasporic gaze raises questions regarding the centrality of the Philippines as a source of social political praxis, and signals the potential unmaking of Filipinx America, spatially and politically. The sense of Filipinx America as a physical space has historically been constructed by the emplacement of local activism. Legacies of Filipinx labor organizing in the 1920s and 1930s are a testament to this concrete sense of communal space and its role in informing politicization. However, the mechanisms driving the reconfiguration of Filipinx American radicalism in the 21st century have not been adequately addressed through scholarship. Put differently, we have yet to question why Filipinx America has developed an intense preference for transnational organizing. What Filipinx American activism communicates is that notions of the diaspora and the home country as discrete categories are no longer useful in understanding how meaning is made across a transnational community. Building from the groundwork of Sales' account of transnational

Filipinx activism, I ultimately argue that the unmaking of Filipinx America is signaling a need to redefine how scholarship engages with notions of space in the diaspora.

**Presenters' biosketch:** Tiffany Sloan is an undergraduate at Rice University majoring in Asian Studies and Political Science. In her scholarship, Tiffany pulls inspiration from postcolonial theory, women of color feminisms, and decolonial praxis to expand the image of the Philippines in social science literature. Her most recent work on Filipina subalternity can be found in the Rice Asian Studies Review. Tiffany is also a spoken word artist who writes about her position as a biracial Filipina in the context of the Philippine diaspora. Her work integrates her experiences with activism, community engagement, and personal growth into lyrical narratives of self and struggle.

#### PANEL SESSION 5: Moving in Circles: Relationality, Habituation, and Embodiment

##### **Constructing 'magic circles': Games, stories, and the re/framing of play in contemporary Indonesian art**

Caitlin Hughes (she/her)

AB Art Theory and Asian Art History, Bachelor of Art History and Curatorship, Australian National University

The Bahasa Indonesia word for 'playground' is tempat bermain (tempat meaning 'place', and bermain meaning 'play'), anchoring play to a place. Through this idea of the playground connecting place to people to play come associated provocations: where is this playground, who is playing, what are they playing, and why? By its very nature, play relies on participation, but, in the contexts of art and intervention, play provokes ideas of performativity and double-edged, double-visioned meaning. Play theorist Johan Huizinga coined the idea of the 'magic circle' as a special place for play that suspends the rules of the normal world. Huizinga's concept of the magic circle, I argue, allows us to examine how artists have used play to construct social and relational spaces through which to spotlight injustice, tell stories, and imagine a better world.

This presentation considers three works of art produced by contemporary artists from Indonesia, for the way they use patterns of play and participatory practice to construct social spaces. In transforming the site of the gallery into a game-like configuration, the artists draw participants into the 'magic circle'; working together within this realm to deconstruct the problems of the world and interrogate complex social issues. From the position inside this imaginative, inventive, 'magic' space, artists and audience alike engage in a process of reconstructing the possibilities of society by imagining the world as it could be. This process of creating social spaces through play, in turn, makes visible the distinct standpoint that the artists put forward through their work: not only presenting themselves as artists and social commentators, but also – most importantly – as citizens and voices for change.

**Presenters' biosketch:** Caitlin is a writer and researcher, focusing on art from Southeast Asia and Australia, play, and urban and environmental aesthetics. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in Art Theory and Asian Art History, and a Bachelor of Art History and Curatorship (Honours, First Class) from the Australian National University. In 2020, she was the recipient of the Janet Wilkie Memorial Prize for Art History and Art Theory Honours, and the Kate and Bill Guy Prize for Art History and Art Theory Honours.

## **Kinamaret: Whimsical Playfulness and Cultural Habituation in Contemporary Festival Binanog Performances in Panay Island, Philippines**

Jose Rabara Taton, Jr. (Mr.)

PhD Candidate, Music (major in Ethnomusicology), University of the Philippines Visayas

**\*prerecorded**

Several contemporary festivals in Iloilo in Panay Island, Philippines source their movement repertoire from the binanog (hawk-eagle dance) of the Panay Bukidnon indigenous cultural communities in Central Panay. Because of its “folkloricity,” the dance had been utilized by local cultural brokers and managers as a cultural symbol juxtaposed within contemporary festival artistic framework and aesthetics. While traditional binanog performances emphasize conventions and, to an extent, a greater degree of flexibility and play of movements, (re)conceptualizations and (re)interpretations of the dance using contemporary choreographic elements, however, had been a popular subject of evaluation among Panay Bukidnon culture bearers. Described as kinamaret or “whimsical playfulness” by adept community performers, interpretations of the binanog in festival spaces challenge the structures and conventions of traditional village performances. Because of its non-serious character, kinamaret acts in the festival elicit ambiguous and mixed responses particularly among the cultural masters whose performance appraisals often remain reserved, if not articulated. As such, these types of festival performances continue as an uncontested bodily praxis.

In this exploratory paper, I look at several issues associated with the production of kinamaret style binanog in festivals. Using the context of two local events that showcase several festival performers utilizing binanog dance elements, I ask the following questions: To what extent is this playfulness permissible? How do kinamaret acts shape the habitus of the performing body in the context of culture and the festival? What are its impacts on the cultural identity of indigenous and non-indigenous performers? With these in mind, I view festivals as potential spaces of cultural habituation, following Bourdieu, where the body is in a discourse where various modes of signification, i.e. traditional and contemporary, are openly absorbed, negotiated, and expressed. These inquiries are, nonetheless, preliminary considerations on cultural habituation in the context of contemporary festival spaces.

**Presenters’ biosketch:** Jose R. Taton Jr. is an Assistant Professor at the University of the Philippines Visayas in Iloilo. He finished his Masters of Music, major in Ethnomusicology at Philippine Women’s University where he is currently pursuing doctoral studies in music, major in Ethnomusicology. His research interests include festival studies, organology, indigenous pedagogy, and cultural studies. At present, he is undertaking collaborative research on the music-dance practices among the Panay Bukidnon people living in southern Panay Island, Western Visayas, Philippines.

## **On Detour with Dinagyang Digital 360°: Delving into the Future of Philippine Dance Festivals**

jemuel jr. barrera garcia (he/him/his)

PhD Candidate, Critical Dance Studies, Designated Emphasis in Southeast Asian Studies, University of California, Riverside (USA)

Iloilo City, Philippines’ Dinagyang Festival, a religious and cultural festival that celebrates the feast of Señor Santo Niño went virtual on January 24, 2021. Because of

COVID-19 and the ensuing protocols that followed thereafter, the local government unit of Iloilo City partnered with various foundations and NGOs to put up a 360° concept in the festivity: a “360 Degrees Platform” which allowed dancers to perform in a virtual space and provided an avenue for its spectators to witness Dinagyang Festival in the homeland and across the globe. This paper aims to analyze how the digital dance presentation of Dinagyang engaged with its colonial history, the Filipino dancing bodies, and its virtual spectators. In a move that seemingly presented an alternative route for the future of engaging with any of the 42, 000 festivals in the Philippines amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, how do the tensions between history, memory, and remembering emerge in how the Dinagyang Digital Festival was developed, presented, and accessed? What does it mean to virtually dance for devotion to Señor Santo Niño in the middle of the pandemic? What does a pre-recorded video production streamed globally that showcase dancers wearing masks entail for both dancers and spectators? I contend that it is vital to illuminate the way that Dinagyang Digital 360° engaged its dancers and spectators to better understand how power circulates in the virtual realm, how colonial systems affect digital dance productions, and how decolonial futures may be imagined through engaging with virtual dance."

**Presenters' biosketch:** jemuel is a Filipino 4th year Ph.D. student in Critical Dance Studies with a Designated Emphasis in Southeast Asian Studies at the University of California, Riverside (UCR). He is a 2017 Fellow of the Fulbright Foreign Student Program and also a Classroom Fellow in the Gluck Program of the Arts at UCR. As a transdisciplinary mover, his choreography were performed in countries like the USA, Thailand, Japan, Germany, and Spain. His research foregrounds an Indigenous-centered and decolonial dance studies lens to nuance the intercultural convergent experiences of Filipino Indigenous communities and folk dance companies in the homeland and the diaspora.

#### PANEL SESSION 6: Making and Unmaking Hmong Spaces of Research

Riffing off SEASGRAD's 2021 conference theme, “Making and Unmaking Hmong Spaces of Research” is a 90-minute panel discussion between Hmong artist/researchers Koua Mai Yang, Magnolia Yang Sao Yia, May Yang, and Sun Ny Vang. We begin by acknowledging that Hmong studies and (Western) research developed out of “twentieth century European colonial conquests,” and was largely shaped by white European missionaries and anthropologists (Xiong et al. *Hmong American and Diaspora Studies: Perspective and Prospects* xiv). In order to destabilize, address and perhaps, decolonize from this lineage of research, we center and privilege Hmong ways of knowing and making. We understand Hmong ways of knowing and making as Hmong oral and embodied knowledge that is disseminated through artistic practice and knowledge/cultural production. This is the space in which we move from and towards.

During the panel discussion, we will examine some central issues in conducting research on Hmong cultural production. Further, we will reflect on the importance and implications of an artistic practice and/or lens in our methodologies. Some questions we are interested in asking is: How does artistic practice and research inform one another? What is the relationship between Hmong researcher and the Hmong community? What are the ethics or political considerations involved in conducting research on Hmong cultural production? What are the possibilities for an Indigenous/a decolonial approach in Hmong research, and what does that entail? “Making and Unmaking Hmong Spaces of Research” attempts to do just that, and in particular, by

interrogating the colonial legacies that permeate Hmong scholarship, cultural production, embodied practices and subjectivity, and reenvisioning alternatives.

**Magnolia Yang Sao Yia (she/her/hers)**

PhD student in Critical Dance Studies, UC Riverside

**Panelist's biosketch:** Magnolia Yang Sao Yia is a dance artist and PhD student in Critical Dance Studies with a Designated Emphasis in Southeast Asian Studies. She holds a BFA in Dance and Minor in Asian American Studies from University of Minnesota, Twin Cities. Focusing on the dance and embodied practices of Hmong in the United States, Magnolia researches at the intersection of social justice, decoloniality and diaspora politics.

**Koua Mai Yang (she/her/hers)**

MFA alumna in Art, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities

**Panelist's biosketch:** Kuab Maiv Yaj, Koua Mai Yang is an artist based in the Twin Cities, Minnesota. Yaj's studio practice investigates HMong identity, culture and history. Ongoing for a little over 900 days, her current project, Hnav HMoob, Wear HMong is photographs, moving images, and installations. The project engages in everyday HMong clothes through making, dressing and performance to raise questions about HMong materiality, aesthetics, culture and female representation in the circulation of global cultural production.

**May Yang (they/them/their)**

Ph.D. student in Interdisciplinary Humanities, UC Merced

**Panelist's biosketch:** May Yang is an artist and writer publishing under the nom de plum hauntie. They are currently attending the University of California, Merced as a PhD student in the department of Interdisciplinary Humanities, with an emphasis in Critical Race and Ethnic Studies. They perform art-based interventions into silenced and displaced Hmong American histories, interrogating the ways in which Man is always already affected by racialized other.

**Sun Ny Vang (he/him/his)**

Ph.D. student in Ethnomusicology, UC Davis

**Panelist's biosketch:** Sun Ny Vang belongs to Moob Leeg Moob Xais Nyab (Blue Hmong people from Sainyabuli Province, Laos), but was born and raised on Dakota lands (occupied by the city of St. Paul, MN). His BA in Music Education was routed through Anishinaabeg lands (occupied by The College of St. Scholastica in Duluth, MN). His graduate experience in Ethnomusicology is being routed through Patwin lands (occupied by UC Davis), with a designated emphasis in Native American Studies under the advisorship of musicologist Jessica Bissett Perea (from Dena'ina Elnena, ancestral homelands in southcentral Alaska). His interests include Hmongness, musicking, Indigeneity, and epistemologies.

PANEL SESSION 7: Mobilities Revisited: Fragmentation, Freedom, and Fluidity

**A comparative analysis of the production of space in Bangkok and Tokyo: reinterpreting Freedom and Constraint in mobility and its role on Spatial practice**

Chai Skulchokchai (he)

Undergraduate Student, Language and Culture, Chulalongkorn University (Thailand)

A comparative analysis of the production of space in Bangkok and Tokyo: reinterpreting Freedom and Constraint in mobility and its role on Spatial practice Transportation is vital in giving place the meaning. The experience of being transported is as important as the experience of the place. Hence, freedom and constraint in one's mobility reflect one's freedom and constraint in certain spaces. Mobilities are the ability for one to travel further in a shorter time and at a lower cost which will also improve their class mobility. This paper aims to reinterpret the notion of freedom and constraint that freedom is, in fact, constraint and vice versa in the production of space compared Bangkok to Tokyo. This paper employed Margin of Indeterminacy, government mobility and Lefebvre's production of space in reinterpreting the mobility in the space of the two cities. The paratransportation and decentralized transportation in Bangkok allows it to have a wider margin of Indeterminacy compared to Tokyo. By that, its user has more alternatives and less prone to major disruption. Foucauldian governmentality also reflected in mobility since it is a way which the government impose its order and people feel the sense of being governed. Government mobility is the new form of authority which govern through connections and the power to mobilizing mobility. While Tokyo has a rigid predesignated path that one must commute to work, Bangkok does not have due to its wide range of modes of transportation which create different memories of practice. Therefore, the biopower of the government to dictate the route is different. Lastly, difference in state's ideology led to different production of space. States has the most complete picture of space, conceived space, and tries to create spatial practice. While Tokyo's ideology is facilitating labour to work, Bangkok is to segregate people from accessing a certain mobility which create different social relations. It is about people feeling the oppression in the system of mobility or finding freedom in the inefficiency.

**Presenters' biosketch:** Chai Skulchokchai is a cultural studies student at the Faculty of Arts, Chulalongkorn University. He had been in the exchange program at the University of Tokyo for one semester. He has a board interest across disciplines such as modern Asian history, public policies and urban anthropology. He aspires to be a part of the academia. As for the space, he is interest in the politics of space and how space governing people's ideology.

### **On the Edge of Bolsa Avenue - Đại Lộ Trần Hưng Đạo: Frictional Spaces in the Vietnamese Diasporas**

Trangdai T Glassey-Tranguyen (she/her/hers)

Ph.D. in Anthropology, MA in Southeast Asian Studies, University of California, Riverside (USA)

This presentation draws from my three-year study that examines mobilizations against anti-immigrant sentiments within an immigrant/refugee community located in a white supremacist county. The study combined ethnographic fieldwork, archival research, and oral history interviews with participants at civic events in and around Westminster. The project highlights the frictions and fragmentations in a population often dismissed as uniformly conservative, as people continue to grapple with the impact of war and imperialism on their everyday lives and navigate regimes of belonging and non-belonging. I argue for an attention to changing political subjectivities and the emergence of new political actors and spaces for debate about contemporary immigration issues in "Little Saigon" that call for collective action against deportation and other anti-immigrant policies that continue to devastate immigrant communities.

In particular, this paper explores how space is claimed, utilized, and re-imagined in Little Saigon when it comes to refugee-immigrant discourses and rights. Little Saigon is one place but many spaces. It is an assemblage. The sidewalk in front of Phước Lộc Thọ - the Asian Mall, for instance, serves as the center stage where actors new and old come, perform, make a mark, claim their stake, and engage with the public in whichever way they can. In that way, this “place-space” enables the democratic processes of public engagement that might not be obvious or likely in a community deemed “conservative” like Little Saigon. This strip of cement along the artery of Little Saigon keeps “the Republic of Bolsa” open, emergent, conditionally transparent, and alive. The competing, co-existing, and often-times frictional “spaces” that were made on the edge of Bolsa Avenue - Đại Lộ Trần Hưng Đạo, therefore, show that space is always in motion, transnational, never static albeit fragmented, and flexible.

**Presenters’ biosketch:** Trangdai Glassey-Tranguyen, Ph.D. (trangdai.net) is an award-winning multilingual author. She is the sole scholar having conducted hundreds of oral history interviews and multi-sited ethnographies on the Vietnamese diasporas in the U.S., Europe, Australia, and Asia for over 27 years. She holds an M.A. in History from CSU Fullerton, an M.A. in Anthropology from Stanford University, an M.A. in Southeast Asian Studies and a Ph.D. in Anthropology from UC Riverside. Her research has been supported by 2001 NAFEO Fellowship, 2003 CSU-system Graduate Equity Fellowship, 2004-05 exceptional-ranking Fulbright Fellowship, 2005-06 Stanford University Graduate Fellowship, 2007 Luce Foundation Grant for Civil Liberties and Faith, 2011-2012 California Endowment for the Health Journalism Fellowship, 2014-16 UCR Dean's Distinguished Fellowship, a 2016 Melon Grant, among others.

### **Poetic Walking Across Mobile Boundaries: Contemporary Southeast Asian Narratives in the Work of Trinh T. Minh-ha and Apichatpong Weerasethakul**

Weiyang Yu (she/her)

MA in Asia Pacific Studies, University of San Francisco (USA)

\*pre-recorded

Poetic Walking Across Mobile Boundaries: Contemporary Southeast Asian Narratives in the Work of Trinh T. Minh-ha and Apichatpong Weerasethakul "This research investigates how personal politics, the poetics of cinematic narrative form, and current Southeast Asian landscapes are embodied in the work of filmmakers/artists Trinh T. Minh-ha (b. 1952, Hanoi, Vietnam) and Apichatpong Weerasethakul (b. 1970, Bangkok, Thailand). Trinh and Apichatpong’s transnational reflections and radical poetics challenge the West as the authoritative domain of modern knowledge, evoking a border rupture that questions hegemonic definitions of culture, history, geography, and society. Synthesizing art and politics, their works create experimental spaces to navigate the multidimensional consciousness associated with the Asia Pacific and global political issues of immigration, refugeeism, military action resistance, and surveillance. Ultimately, this research highlights the ongoing impact of Trinh and Apichatpong’s work on our awareness of relevant cultural and local phenomena along with identity transformation by calling attention to intangible borders that overcome the limiting boundaries of reality.

Through a multidisciplinary approach, this paper analyzes visual expressions and narrative strategies in Trinh and Apichatpong's work that suggest global fluidity and multiplicity and utilizes the metaphor of "walking" to illustrate the idea of mobile boundaries. Particularly, my work addresses Trinh's notion of "resonances in displacement" through innovative poetics and rhetoric regarding the concepts of "believe in land not borders" and "making and unmaking identity," as well as Apichatpong's meditations rendered through filmic and digital spaces on states of dream and reality, fiction and fact, and decayed memories of personal and regional histories. In doing so, this project furthers existing discourse about Southeast Asian narratives, providing a fresh and deeper understanding of how Trinh and Apichatpong's contemporary poetic visual practices resist singular definition and contextualize their personal politics.

**Presenters' biosketch:** YU Weiyang is an independent curator and art writer. Currently living and working in San Francisco, she has been organizing artist residency programs and overseeing exhibitions at the Bay Area non-profit organizations; and she also works for the Asia Collection Fellowship at the Kadist Art Foundation. Her research interests center around fictional narratives in contemporary art involving urban memory/imagination and literary science fiction.

### **The Coloniality of Infrastructure: Modernizing the Jeepney**

Angela Mallari Romea (she/her/hers)

PhD Student, Anthropology, The Graduate Center, City University of New York (USA)

A ubiquitous and commonplace icon, the jeepney is a bus-like form of public transit that originated as repurposed US military vehicles from World War II (jeeps, from which "jeepneys" get their name). It is, with the average ride costing about twelve cents, considered among the cheapest and most accessible form of public transportation in the Philippines. In 2017, the "jeepney modernization program" was announced, which planned to decommission jeepneys older than fifteen years with cleaner, safer minivan-like vehicles, establishing new routes with designated stops and better accessibility for the elderly and people with disabilities. In some spaces, however, the program was derided as "anti-poor," as a proxy for class warfare, with jeepney driver and commuter associations arguing that the \$33,200-\$45,700 cost of upgrading vehicles will result in a massive loss of livelihood. In this presentation, I explore the jeepney as a colonial artifact. Drawing upon Quijano's "coloniality of power" (2000), I examine the ways in which colonial histories imbue the post-colonial present, particularly as narratives of modernity are configured within the state's claims to power. I combine social media ethnography with an analysis of online news articles and their comment sections to construct a narrative of jeepney modernization as it was announced and then implemented and to explore how Filipinos in turn participated in these narratives. In Filipino vernacular conceptions of jeepneys and the modernization program, the intricacies of politics and class antagonisms in the Philippines are rendered legible.

**Presenters' biosketch:** Angela Romea is a Filipino-American and a first-year PhD student of Anthropology at the CUNY Graduate Center. Her work revolves around questions of urban and political anthropology, focusing in particular on the intersections of infrastructure, sovereignty, and postcolonial theory. Her previous research includes ethnographic research on perceptions on the Duterte administration in online Filipino communities.

## PANEL SESSION 8: Literary and Cultural Sphere: Projection, Affect, Internalization, and Performance

### **Asia of Pure Invention**

Jakapat Koohapremkit (he/they)

PhD Student, English Literature, University of Texas at Austin (USA)

Oscar Wilde once describes the image of Japan in the British consciousness as nothing but a “pure invention.” Nothing best exemplifies this than the Gilbert and Sullivan’s opera, *The Mikado*, which represents Japan as a commodity for the British public to consume. But what happens when this orientalist image is translated back to Asia? For Rama VI, a noted lover of the stage and of Victorian culture, the answer is to transform Japan into a China of pure invention. Though it was never staged, the King of Siam translated the opera twice, first setting it in Japan before changing the location to China. This decision to relocate the setting is based on practical concerns about staging and his vision of modern Thai subjects. Rama VI’s attempt to equate the Chinese immigrants in Siam to negative anti-Semitic stereotype in his writing is a means to an end: by doing so, he can distinguish himself and other civilized Siamese from the image of the yellow peril imposed onto Asian subjects in America. However, the process is not simply a mimicry of Western hierarchy. Though embedded with fraught power dynamics, now mapped onto Siamese context, Rama VI always does it with a knowing wink, satirizing the idea of the modern woman to articulate his own image of Siam. By tracking the changes in his translation of *The Mikado*, we also map how the orientalist image is constructed and negotiated across the continents of America, Europe, and Asia and its importance to the imperial project.

**Presenters’ biosketch:** Jakapat Koohapremkit is a second-year Ph.D. student in the Department of English Literature at the University of Texas at Austin. Their research concentrates on Oscar Wilde, Friedrich Nietzsche, Orientalism, and the translation of English Literature in Asia during the late 19th and early 20th century. Their current focus is a translation of *The Mikado* in Asia and the construction of a queer archive by means of a weak form of reading with Wilde and Nietzsche’s writings as a basis.

### **The Feeling of Translation in Vietnamese Diaspora Poetry**

Sydney To (he/him)

PhD Candidate, English, University of California, Berkeley (USA)

Given poetry’s reputation for resisting translation, my paper is interested in the affective space which is generated when a poet is tasked with an impossible translation. I examine Hai-Dang Phan’s poetry collection *Reenactments* (2019) alongside his English translation of Phan Nhien Hao’s *Paper Bells* (2019). Hai-Dang Phan’s translation practices are interesting because he views translations as not simply reproductions but also poetic creations unto themselves. Hence, he includes his translations of Vietnamese language poetry in *Reenactments*, inviting the reader to read them alongside his original poems. The juxtaposition of translations and original poems reveals how the collection as a whole is, in Rebecca Walkowitz’s terminology, “born-translated.” This dialogic spirit towards writing and translating also informs *Paper Bells*, which was the product of a long-term collaborative translation between the two poets.

Joining together translation studies and affect studies, I suggest that Sara Ahmed’s ethics of pain—“an ethics of responding to pain involves being open to being affected by that which

one cannot know or feel... I am moved by what does not belong to me” (30-31)—is appropriate for understanding Hai-Dang Phan’s poems and translations as the empathetic reenactments of other lives: the impossibility of translation is rooted in the impossibility to know the pain of others. But through his textual reenactments, Phan produces and dwells within a “translingual space” which initiates the task of translation by constantly foregrounding its failure. Through close readings of the two poets, I argue that this attempt cross the linguistic border parallels the diasporic subject’s dangerous border crossings and enigmatic forays into a deformed cultural archive. By conceptualizing the diasporic subject’s sense of geographic, temporal, and intergenerational distance through the gap between the original and the translated language, Hai-Dang Phan’s work suggests that the Vietnamese diaspora is paradoxically and affectively bound together through this impossible task of translation.

**Presenters’ biosketch:** Sydney To is a Ph.D. student in English at UC Berkeley. His research interests are in Asian American literature and critical refugee studies. He has an upcoming chapter on "Refugee Noir" in the Routledge Handbook of Refugee Narratives.

### **Uncorking Colonial Struggles through the Indigenous Lens: A Literary Analysis on F. Sionil Jose’s *The God Stealer***

Felisa Francesca Navarro Foronda (she/her/hers)  
Undergraduate Student, Political Science, Ateneo de Manila University (Philippines)

Filipino National Artist for Literature F. Sionil Jose continues to be a celebrated English author of the late twentieth century. Jose’s *God’s Stealer* is a story that involves two “best of friends” (1) with very disparate upbringings. Philip Latak, born as Ip-pig, is an Ifugaoan that chose to abandon the terraces and pursue an urban-esque life in the lowlands. Conversely, Sam Christie is an American colleague that accompanies Philip on his return home. Jose’s work embodies the most marginalized within Philippine society, the indigenous ethnic groups, who in their own right, uncork facets of the national struggle. This article is a literary analysis that explores the spatial dynamics of Manila-centric and Cordilleran-periphery Philippine ethnic identities at the backdrop of globalization, glocalization and cultural homogenization. By using an intersectional framework, this article traces the connection between historical experiences and modern-day manifestations of domination, struggle, and resistance amongst Filipino indigenous peoples. This article contends to elaborate how Jose embarked on the pressures of continued internalized ethnic inferiority has repressed an appreciation for every aspect of Filipino heritage.

**Presenters’ biosketch:** Felisa Francesca N. Foronda is an undergraduate of AB Political Science at Ateneo de Manila University. She is an active member of Akbayan Youth-Loyola, a democratic socialist organization that fights in the pursuit of equality and social justice for all Filipinos. Her research interests include the rights and development of Philippine indigenous groups and marginalized sectors of Southeast Asian societies.

### **Dislocating the Cambodian Diaspora: Virtual Performances during COVID-19**

Allan Zheng (he/him/his)  
MA Student, Ethnomusicology, University of California, Riverside (USA)

On September 27th, 2020, Cambodia Town, home to one of the largest Cambodian communities in diaspora, hosted its first virtual parade and cultural festival livestreamed over Facebook and YouTube. Through this online event, Cambodians across the diaspora carved out a temporary space against heightened disconnect resulting from COVID-19. Using Alonso and

Oiarzabal's (2010) framework of digital diaspora, my paper investigates how a digital diaspora, or globally imagined community, is realized through analyzing how notions of the homeland are reimagined and complicated by the performers and festival organizers at this virtual event. I argue that the recorded performances and place-making endeavors at this virtual festival offers insights into how Cambodia is imagined by the Long Beach Cambodian community. Because of the Khmer Rouge genocide and political turmoil in the 1970s and 80s, diasporic Cambodians construct the homeland is based on their traumatic experiences. I interrogate how place is invoked during the virtual festival to show how attendees are dislocated and transported from across the diaspora, homeland, and internet throughout the event. By comparing two apsara performances as well as different images and backdrops of Cambodia Town and Angkor, I suggest that the festival organizers construct an alternative narrative of Cambodia. These performances offer images of Cambodia that elide the Khmer Rouge genocide in order to present a rich and vibrant Cambodia rooted in feelings of nostalgia for the ancient Angkor empire. Instead of deliberately forgetting the Khmer Rouge, these performances intentionally concentrate on remembering Angkor to demonstrate the legacy and resilience of Cambodian culture in the face of genocide and diaspora."

**Presenters' biosketch:** Allan Zheng is a second year MA student in ethnomusicology at UC Riverside writing his master's thesis about musical transmission and performance at the Khmer Arts Academy in Long Beach, California. His broader research interests also include music sustainability, the music of ethnic minorities in Cambodia, and Cambodian popular music.

#### PANEL SESSION 9: Surviving Diaspora: Coping, Resistance, and Healing

##### **When Trauma Transcends Borders and Generations: Examining Transgenerational Trauma and Healing Among Second Generation Cambodian Americans**

Amira Noeuv (she/her/hers)

PhD Student, Ethnic Studies, University of California, San Diego (USA)

This paper draws on existing literature as well as personal narrative to examine the concept of transgenerational trauma of second-generation Cambodian Americans. Though the Khmer Rouge genocide directly affected Cambodian survivors, research supports that their traumatic experiences also indirectly affect the second-generation Cambodian Americans who did not experience the genocide or diaspora firsthand. This paper examines how the Cambodian genocide and the traumatic events of Cambodian survivors who immigrated to the United States impact the second-generation children, thereby demonstrating that trauma transcends generations and boundaries. Furthermore, it discusses how these factors influence the collective Cambodian American social experience. Cambodian survivors experienced extreme violence and then are confronted with cultural maladjustments when they immigrated to the United States, contributing to traumatic psychological problems. In turn, the resulting behavioral and social ills influence the environment the second-generation children are raised in. Exposure to emotional instabilities and inadequate coping mechanisms can have negative outcomes for both survivors and their children. Additionally, many second-generation Cambodian Americans struggle with identity issues,

contributed by clashing cultural values. Overall, these individual psychological issues and social behavioral problems create another layer to the existing Cambodian American collective trauma.

In addition to an analysis of transgenerational trauma and second-generation Cambodian Americans, this paper also highlights important factors to consider regarding creative trauma healing and social rehabilitating work within the Cambodian American community. Relying on strengthening kinship, re-culturalization, social activism, and other creative forms of expression, many second-generation Cambodian Americans are interested in not only interested in embarking on personal healing journeys, but also creating counter-narratives to the collective identity.

**Presenters' biosketch:** Amira is currently pursuing her Ph.D in Ethnic Studies at UC San Diego. She also graduated with an M.A degree in Ethics, Peace and Global Affairs from American University and a B.A in Psychology from UC San Diego. Her research interests are in inter/transgenerational trauma and healing, peace studies, and decolonizing global mental health.

### **Investigating Collective-Based Coping Strategies among Vietnamese Boat Refugees**

Tiffany Jennifer Nhan

Undergraduate Student, Psychology and Sociology, Clark University (USA)

Overseas Vietnamese are subject to oppression based on their out-group membership associated with their immigrant and refugee identities. Vietnamese refugees' experiences consist of fleeing war and other political violence, and integrating into new societies. However, little is known about how Vietnamese refugees have coped with these hardships. This research examines Vietnamese boat refugees' psychological responses to collective trauma and integration to a new society. In doing so, this study hopes to address limitations of Vietnamese perspectives on the "Vietnam War". While Americans reference the 1955-1975 war as the Vietnam War, the Vietnamese refer to it as the American War. Further, although PTSD emerged as a diagnosis on behalf of establishing victimhood for U.S veterans, mainstream concepts of PTSD fail to include the collective victimization of the Vietnamese population. This research explores collective based coping strategies and employs psychological concepts such as post-traumatic growth (Hernandez-Wolfe, 2008), altruism born of suffering (Vollhardt, 2009) and radical hope (Mosley et al., 2020) to make sense of Vietnamese refugee experiences.

In this qualitative study, I thematically analyze ten testimonies of Vietnamese Boat Refugees from two nonprofit organizations: The Vietnamese Boat People (<https://www.vietname-seboatpeople.org/>) and Project Yellow Dress (<http://www.projectyellowdress.com/>). Participants were selected for this sample highlight the experiences generation 1.5, immigrants who came to the United States as children and during their early teens. In the testimonies, participants discussed post-war experiences, measures of taking refuge, strategies of hope and resistance, and adjusting to life in the United States. Using thematic analysis, I identified the following four themes shared by participants: a) Collective Memory in Storytelling, b) Altruism Born of Suffering/Post Traumatic Growth, c) It Takes a Village, and d) Conserving Culture while Navigating New Experiences. Overall, the findings show the need to go beyond the individual approaches to coping that the mainstream literature has focused on, and examine culture and context-specific, collective forms of coping.

**Presenters' biosketch:** Tiffany Jennifer Nhan is a first-generation American whose parents migrated to the United States as refugees of the Vietnam War. Tiffany is a fourth-year student at Clark University, where she is pursuing a degree in Psychology and Sociology. She is currently working on an honors thesis that examines minority relations, power, historical and present-day victimization among the Vietnamese American community. Upon completion of her undergraduate studies, she intends to apply to graduate school to further her knowledge of intergenerational trauma and progress towards a career as a psychologist.

### **Searching For Má: Motherhood and Dis/Inheritance in On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous**

Victoria Thanh Nguyen Huynh (she/her)

PhD Student, Ethnic Studies, University of California, Berkeley (USA)

In a December 2020 interview, the poet Ocean Vuong reflects: 'Being queer saved my life. Often we see queerness as deprivation. But when I looked at my life, I saw that queerness demanded an alternative innovation from me. I had to make alternative routes; it made me curious; it made me ask, "is this enough for me?"' Vuong's novel *On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous* elaborates on his need to escape war trauma, domestic violence, poverty, and homophobia. It excavates multiple spaces of gendered violence in Vietnamese refugee life, including his characters' war-torn homeland, nail salon, and family home. Yet Vuong's "alternative routes" of queerness gesture towards life beyond these spaces. This paper draws from the queer, familial relationships of *On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous* to articulate a framework for refugee healing. First, I center the character Rose to examine how refugee trauma is tied to heteropatriarchy. Espiritu & Duong's feminist refugee epistemology helps us re-frame Rose's violent relationship with her son Little Dog as a form of motherhood within displaced, militarized life. Secondly, I ask: how might queer relationalities disrupt the transmission of familial trauma? How might Vuong's alternative routes lead us towards intergenerational healing? To understand Little Dog's love for his mother, I turn to both critical refugee studies and queer of color critique. Ly Thuy Nguyen's term refugee dis/inheritance describes how Little Dog both embraces his familial histories while rejecting traditions of homophobia, sexism, and nationalism. Furthermore, Vuong's interview echoes Jose Estaban Munoz's musing that "queerness is that thing that lets us feel that this world is not enough, that indeed something is missing." Little Dog's queer relationships help him believe that a utopic elsewhere is possible, both for him and the mother he refuses to leave behind.

**Presenters' biosketch:** Victoria is committed to healing and freedom in Southeast Asian communities. She's a PhD student in Ethnic Studies learning about land relationships, abolition, and gender justice. You can read her writing here ([victoriaky.com](http://victoriaky.com)) or find her listening to BTS.

### PANEL SESSION 10: Power Structures: Expression, Orientation, and Representation

#### **A Preliminary Spatial Analysis and Social Landscape of Early Temples in Chiang Saen, Northern Thailand**

Piyawit Moonkham (he/him/his)

PhD Candidate, Anthropology, Washington State University (USA)

This article applies space syntax analysis as an experimental tool to assess the spatial organization and social landscape among the Chiang Saen community in Northern Thailand. This paper aims to highlight concepts and interpretations of social spaces that have both ritual and domestic components providing insights into similarities and differences in the use of space. Space syntax research elsewhere has shed light on issues of social inequality through spatial accessibility. Application of the method to the spatial arrangements in sites in Northern Thailand greatly enhances our understanding of similar issues. This paper also seeks to demonstrate that the space syntax methodology is an appropriate platform for revealing common practices of spatial relationship and arrangement, and development through time. With ten space syntax measurements of the open space structures of six temples in the Chiang Saen Basin, this experiment demonstrates common systems found among six archaeological sites: first is an asymmetrical and hierarchical or what this paper term a conventional pattern, and the second identified the symmetrical and “openness” qualities of social spaces, termed the nonconventional pattern. The result, first, demonstrates that the building’s orientation, composition and floorplan are unlikely to appear in a conventional pattern. Second, some temples illustrate a unique spatial arrangement, which indicate a series of renovations and/or multiple sets of residential and religious units. Lastly, among the six temples show one common practice, the more communally-orientated the spatial arrangement is the more “open” the system will be.

**Presenters’ biosketch:** I am a PhD Candidate in Archaeological Anthropology at Washington State University. My research focuses on Northern Thailand and Mainland Southeast Asia, where I address human use of social space and the built landscape through a diachronic investigation of spatial patterns of historical monuments. My recent research is to elucidate how local social worldview interacts with the spatial layout of Buddhist temples in Chiang Sean, particularly how it may reflect changing concepts of social life. I am working on developing a theoretical approach that integrates archaeological and cultural theories to understand patterns of interaction and relationships between human, objects and the landscape.

### **Monumentalizing Memories, Memorializing Monuments: Luneta Park and American Colonial Philippines, 1898-1946**

Jefferson Robles Mendez

MA Student, History in the Public Sphere, Central European University (Austria)

Recent scholarship about American colonization in the Philippines has focused largely on conformities and interruptions (Balance 2016, McCoy 2009, Abinales 2017). However, there has been a dearth of studies analyzing the reconfigurations of new forms of cultural expression in the spatial realm to remember the past, such as the manipulation of the natural and built environment for cultural purposes; the re-ordering of existing spaces or architectural forms in the colonization context. This research will explore the relationship between monumentalizing memories and memorializing monuments, concentrating on the disparate images of the past generated by the material manifestations of the Philippine society’s framing of Philippine history on the urban landscape, in particular the processes of memory in the Philippines.

The questions on how colonial past should be remembered, and how it should be treated and disseminated, are current debates in the contemporary Philippine history and politics.

Though recognizing that various acts of commemoration are formed by debates on identity, I propose the way in which the Philippine's past is being presented and 'packaged' for Philippine society is also influential in determining which historical narratives the population prefers to visually 'consume'. Through this study, I will look on the 'material dimensions' of the past by undertaking a perspective that comprises the exterior and interior forms of various visual representations of the past as well as interrogating how people monumentalized their memories as the traditional role of the historian and how people memorialized monuments to understand the identity of a Filipino Public historian.

My study will rely heavily on qualitative data collection such as historical and discourse analysis. These methods are complemented by archival research and secondary data collection from different researches from both foreign and Filipino authors. Spatial representation like monuments and buildings will be discussed, scrutinized, and assessed in this proposed Study.

**Presenters' biosketch:** Jefferson R. Mendez is a faculty member at the Department of History, Polytechnic University of the Philippines where he also received his Bachelor of Arts in History and awarded as the Most Outstanding Graduate for 2015. Last year, he completed his Master in Asian Studies major in Northeast Asian Studies in the Asian Center of the University of the Philippines and currently taking a Master of Arts in History in the Public Sphere (HIPS) program in various Universities in Europe and Japan as an Erasmus Mundus scholar.

### **Gentle Architecture and a Sensory Remapping of Singapore**

Eunice Ying Ci Lim (she/her/hers)

PhD Candidate, Comparative Literature and Asian Studies, Pennsylvania State University (USA)

Synesthetic arts draw on multisensory perceptions to reorient the ways in which people navigate the city, drawing attention to overlooked lapses in the city's triumphalist urban design. Comparing the 2012 Espaces Sonores sound walk "Umbrella for 2" by Stephane Marin, which was part of the Singapore Arts Festival, to Diana Rahim's 2020 photography series interventions, I explore how immersive artworks reflect upon the inconspicuous hostile architecture of the Singaporean landscape and the profound implications that numerous restrictive urban features have on the way public spaces come to be defined and managed. While the former interrogates the flawed design of tactile strips in train stations and the lack of accommodations for the visually impaired, the latter prompts its audience to reconsider the implications of public benches that are designed to deter unwanted loitering. These multi-sensory artworks seek to reclaim these seemingly faultless, efficient, and pristine urban surfaces by inviting different synesthetic encounters that bring neglected and cursorily managed issues of class, gender, and disability to the foreground. Informed by Deborah Kapchan's listening acts and the debility studies of Jasbir Puar, this paper explores how multimodal and highly participatory artworks engage and immerse their audience in the discreet, exclusionary violence of the city's spatial design. I argue that these synesthetic arts and their modes of participatory immersion resist Singapore's national blueprint of neoliberal progress and homogeneity and enact a vivid sensory remapping of Singapore's cityscape. It is through these thoughtful renegotiations of spatial permissibility and the digital rehearsals of these artistic pathways that a gentle architecture begins to take shape and resist the well-sustained narrative of national efficiency.

**Presenters' biosketch:** Eunice Lim Ying Ci is a PhD candidate in Comparative Literature and Asian Studies at Pennsylvania State University. Her research interests include literacy studies, language policies, and decoloniality, especially in the contexts of East and Southeast Asian literature and media. She has published a book chapter on gendered food consumption in Korean dramas in the Routledge Handbook of Food in Asia (2018) and an article in *Antipodes: A Global Journal of Australian/New Zealand Literature*.

PANEL SESSION 11: Vietnamese Spaces: Saigon, Little Saigon, and the Transpacific Vietnamese Language Sphere

Vietnamese spaces past and present are being created and remembered in the Vietnamese American diaspora through YouTube videos, ethnic enclaves and language reform policy. This panel brings together scholars who dive into the relationship between history and memory in the making of Vietnamese/American spaces. Alvin Bui looks to motorbike YouTube videos of Saigon to analyze how the Cold War is re-formed through contemporary development projects and continuously re-encountered in the Vietnamese diaspora's memory of the city. Vincent Tran explores the 1988 creation of Little Saigon through the establishment of the Little Saigon Development Committee, their leaders' backgrounds, and their imagining of an ethnic enclave. Finally, John Tran compares efforts in Vietnam and the Vietnamese American diaspora to remove Chinese influences from the Vietnamese language and argues that this decoupling is driven by an anti-imperialist ideology rooted in Vietnam's long historical quest for independence from outside influences. Together, these papers show how Vietnamese/American spaces are irrevocably informed by their genealogical pasts as well as the politics of the present.

**Korean Footprints of War in Sài Gòn: Motorbike YouTubers and Diasporic Memory as Cold War Recombinant Reencounters**

Alvin Bui (he/him)

PhD Student, modern Sino-Vietnamese history, Cold War Asia and Diaspora, University of Washington, Seattle (USA)

A convergence of advances in action camera technology and the online video-content revolution fueled by the COVID-19 pandemic has crystalized mnemonic YouTube videos into a transnational space for the (re)circulation of diasporic Vietnamese memories about Vietnam. This paper discusses how diasporic Vietnamese interact with motorbike YouTubers in examining two Saigonese locations with Korean "footprints of war". These locations are lieux de mémoire where the Cold War is both re-formed through contemporary development projects as well as continuously re-encountered in the Vietnamese diaspora's memory of the city.

**Presenters' biosketch:** Alvin Bui is a Ph.D. student in modern Southeast and East Asian history with interests in Cold War Asia, migration and diaspora studies at the University of Washington, Seattle. His research contextualizes the experiences of the ethnic Chinese in the Republic of Vietnam to their interactions with both the RVN state and the Republic of China/Taiwan. He graduated Phi Beta Kappa and magna cum laude from UCLA in History, Asian American and Vietnamese language studies after which he spent the majority of his post-baccalaureate life living and working in Vietnam.

**Imagining Little Saigon: The Creation of a Vietnamese Ethnic Enclave**

Vincent Tran (he/him)

Independent Scholar and Community Engagement Coordinator (VietRISE), Garden Grove, California (USA)

The creation of Little Saigon, an ethnic enclave in Southern California, in 1988 was a part of a larger movement and debate within the Vietnamese American diaspora raging in the 1980s on homeland and local politics and community building/formation. This presentation traces the establishment of the Little Saigon Development Committee, the RVN state-bureaucratic background of the committee's leaders, and the continuation of their nation-building project centered on an anti-Communist and anti-Chinese ideology through the imagining of an ethnic enclave. The committee members' nostalgia of the RVN would ultimately guide them in their (re)creation of Little Saigon.

**Presenters' biosketch:** Vincent Tran (he/him) is an Independent Scholar and Community Engagement Coordinator for the non-profit organization VietRISE based in Garden Grove, CA. His research interests include French Colonialism, the Vietnam War, and Vietnamese American diaspora studies. He graduated from UC Berkeley and served as a Research Assistant for the UC Berkeley Oral History Center.

### **Becoming Vietnamese: Language Reform as a Path to Nationalism**

John Tran (he/him)

Independent Scholar (Southeast Asia and East Asia), Seattle (USA)

There are contemporary efforts by the Vietnamese government and Vietnamese American diasporic intellectuals to remove Chinese influences from the Vietnamese lexicon. This talk examines how these efforts affect heritage learners' comprehension of the language, which is estimated to have anywhere from 40% to 80% words of Sinitic roots. These de-Sinicization processes reveal transpacific nationalism efforts in both demographics to build an imagined linguistic community. I argue that the decoupling of Sinitic and Vietnamese languages is driven by an anti-imperialist ideology rooted in Vietnam's long historical quest for independence from outside influences, be it through Chinese or the host country (English).

**Presenters' biosketch:** John Tran (he/him) is an Independent Scholar of Southeast Asia and East Asia focusing on de-Sinicization, nationalism, colonialism, imperialism and nation-building. He is attending the University of Washington Jackson School of International Studies Master's program in International Studies - Southeast Asian Studies in the Fall of 2021. He is also a small business owner in the Seattle area.