10.22439/asca.v57i2.7658

David G. Siglos, Jr.
University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, 0009-0001-0457-6010

FILIPINO DREAMING:

The Powers of Death and the Limits of Diagnostic Narratives

ABSTRACT: This article provides a transnational perspective on the Filipino American novel *Leche* (2011) and its depiction of both *tsismis* ("gossip") and the fatal Filipino medical phenomenon *bangungot* ("nightmare"). I pay particular attention to the unpredictability of bangungot—its ability to paralyze and kill during sleep without warning—which is precisely why it becomes an object of speculation and gossip. Through *Leche*, I examine how bangungot kills, but also how it lives on through tsismis, and how tsismis provides not a medical diagnosis, but an unofficial and insurgent narrative through which to understand bangungot, and queer Filipino fantasies and desires, differently. By going against postmodernist and poststructuralist discourses on narrative, I highlight how bangungot's haunting quality and refusal to be medically diagnoseable disrupt Western diagnostic traditions, which are novelistic. My use of tsismis also highlights subaltern forms of documentation that run counter to imperial narratives of development, enlightenment, and modernity. Throughout the article, I incorporate personal narrative, speculations, alternative sources, and fantasies to challenge imperial notions of theorizing and knowledge-making. Bangungot quietly and violently kills, but it also continues to live on, not in scientific certainty or in the developmental depths of the novel, but in the fleeting and evasive speculations, experiences, and fantasies of Filipinos.

Keywords: diagnostic narrative, death, gossip, imperialism, transnationalism, queer fantasy

Prologue

My departure from and return to the Philippines was framed by a fatal Filipino medical phenomenon called *bangungot*. Bangungot (Tagalog) loosely translates to "nightmare," a mere bad dream, but in the Filipino context, it can leave its prey (often young, healthy men) dead, unable to break away from the terrifying dream. A week before my family moved to the United States in 2004, our morning was disrupted when one of the neighbors (who was also a distant relative) came running and screaming, looking for my mother because her thirty-nine-year-old son, Juvenal "Bentot" de la Peña, would not wake up. My mother was a midwife and the only medical professional in the neighborhood. Composed as she always was, my mother comforted the neighbor, grabbed her medical bag, and rushed to their house. Curious, I promptly followed. I was behind my mother when she entered the room and felt Bentot for a pulse before telling our neighbor that her son had most likely been dead for hours. Amidst the grieving was the immediate chatter about what could have happened. One of the family's maids speculated that Bentot had been drinking heavily days before he died. Another said that he had been consuming dishes made with animal organs—Filipino stewed dishes like *dinuguan* and *paklay*, made with pig intestines, kidneys, hearts, livers, stomachs, and ox tripe—insinuating that it may have been the unhealthy diet that did it. But everyone, including me, understood that he had died of a bad dream: bangungot. Almost eighteen years later, I returned to my hometown in the Philippines for the first time. On the first night, over drinks, grilled meats, and karaoke, friends and relatives filled me in on the town gossip, or *tsismis*: neighborhood feuds, who had died since I left, who had gotten pregnant out of wedlock, who else had left town to work abroad, etc. But the main story that night was about another neighbor, Kyle Glen Verador, who, at thirty-two, died in his sleep just days before I arrived. Kyle and I were not friends as boys (I was a few years older), but the name rang a bell because his father, Epoy Verador, had worked for my parents, and I remembered being very fond of him. The rumor was that, because of the recently concluded town fiesta, Kyle had been drinking and eating heavily days before he died. My Aunt Perla, a nurse at the town hospital, said she *overheard* that when Kyle's body reached the hospital, he vomited barely chewed pieces of *humba* (braised pork belly) before the doctor could officially call his death. Bangungot, I thought then, had once again, in a very particular way, marked my movement back to that town and my relation to its people. For me, bangungot—and the tsismis (gossip/speculation) that conveys it—is not only a paralytic and deadly nightmare, but also a coordinate to my past, to memories both tragic and pleasurable.

In both deadly instances, tsismis acted as the narrative mode that articulated bangungot's workings and elusive manifestations. That is, the unpredictability of bangungot—its ability to paralyze and kill during sleep without warning—is precisely why it becomes an object of speculation. Through R. Zamora Linmark's 2011 novel *Leche*, and its depictions of the deadly nightmare, this article examines not only how bangungot kills, but also how it *lives on* through tsismis, and how tsismis provides not a medical diagnosis, but an unofficial and insurgent narrative through which to understand bangungot, and Filipino desires, differently.[1] This article also provides a transnational perspective on both the Filipino American novel and the bangungot phenomenon by placing them away from postmodernist and poststructuralist discourses on narrative (that is, as deeply American/Eurocentric philosophical traditions) and instead within the context of the Philippine-American imperial relation.[2] In the section "Bangungot, Tsismis, and Diagnosis," I examine how bangungot's haunting quality and refusal to be medically diagnoseable disrupt Western diagnostic traditions, which, as

Joel Fineman has argued, are novelistic. I also highlight the ways that tsismis, as a subaltern form of documentation, runs counter to the ideological function of imperial narratives of development, enlightenment, and modernity. My formulation of bangungot and tsismis intervenes in what Rita Charon calls "narrative medicine" because of the ways they not only describe the limits of, but also exceed, imperial logics of both "narrative" and "medicine." Paying attention to *Leche*'s narrative style and focus on the Philippine-American imperial relation, my section titled "The Queer Filipino Colonial Condition" highlights, through bangungot, queer forms of sense- and meaning-making that also reveal the erotics and fantasies of the US empire. I describe how Filipino narratives and traditions are not erased by, or simply assimilated into, US imperialism; instead, they reveal how Western forms such as the novel fail to contain or explain bangungot's evasive power. By centering queer fantasies, I also describe bangungot's and tsismis's abilities to generate more stories and meanings, way beyond the world of the novel. In my section titled "The Powers of Bangungot as Mess," I highlight *Leche*'s depiction of bangungot as "*kalat*" ("mess" as both displacement and disorganization), which articulates, I argue, not only Filipino nightmares, but also Filipino styles of survival, creativity, and pleasure. Kalat also describes tsismis's viral and parasitic tendencies, which displace, disorganize, and fabricate stories. Bangungot and tsismis thus *mess up* the narrative medicalization of life and death and draw us to their excesses, out of which we may conjure new ways of living together amidst crises. Additionally, I incorporate personal anecdotes throughout this article, including the stories that bookend it, about my own encounters with bangungot to underscore how and why bangungot continues to haunt *me* and many other Filipino men at home and throughout the diaspora, and to examine the different ways that we might rethink such haunting—that is, beyond mere discourses of morality and medicine. My incorporation of personal narrative, speculations, alternative sources, and even fantasies throughout this article also challenges imperial notions of theorizing and knowledge-making, which often hierarchize bodies of knowledge and reconcile the individual with the demands of social conformity, as in the ideological function of the nineteenth-century bildungsroman, or novel of formation.[3] Following Lisa Lowe, I understand the novel form as a "developmental narrative . . . designed to justify the histories of colonialism, neocolonialism, and forced labor and to erase the dislocations and hybridities that are the resulting conditions of those histories" (58). "Development," which, as Philippine historian Reynaldo Ileto has noted, extends eighteenth-century European ideas of "Progress—the belief that the growth of knowledge, capabilities, and material production makes human existence better," is also deeply implicated in power relationships within Filipino society and reproduced as a "universal 'given'" in "any text emanating from the [Philippine] national government and its technocrats" (Ileto 98). And because Filipinos from a young age "learn about themselves, their society, history, and culture through books, the mass media, and the classroom," which are steeped "in ideas of development, emergence, linear time, scientific reason, humane pragmatism, governmental ordering, and nation building," it becomes all the more crucial to find alternatives, particularly those, like bangungot, that thrive in the dark recesses of consciousness and political life, that evade, resist, and exceed such logics (Ileto 98). Bangungot quietly and violently kills, but it also continues to *live on*, not in scientific certainty or in the developmental depths of the novel, but in the fleeting and evasive speculations/tsismis, experiences, and fantasies of Filipinos.

Bangungot, Tsismis, and Diagnosis

In *Leche*, the incorporation of bangungot into its plot is afflicted with chaos, contradictions, speculations, and (sexual) fantasies. The sequel to Linmark's highly praised debut novel, *Rolling the R's* (1995), which was set in Honolulu, *Leche* follows the return of protagonist Vince de Los Reyes to the Philippines over a decade after he and his family have immigrated to the United States. The trip is part of his prize for winning first runner-up of "Mr. Pogi [Mr. Handsome]," a Filipino-style male beauty pageant he joins in Hawaii (Linmark 242). Upon arrival, and throughout his stay in Manila, Vince navigates not only the city's heat, stench, and chaos, but also the melancholy of immigrant return. As with many postcolonial narratives of return, he questions his sense of identity and place in the Philippines—he still identifies as a Filipino, yet he does not quite feel like a Filipino. Throughout his time in Manila, Vince encounters various eccentric characters including President Corazon Aquino's actress daughter, Kris Aquino, known as the "Massacre Queen of Philippine Cinema," and Dante, Vince's married cab driver, towards whom he develops a deep crush. Not unlike *Rolling the R's*, which was known for its obsession with popular culture and playfulness with form, *Leche* manages to be "at once formally inventive and compulsively readable" (Boggs). Woven into its primary plot are postcard correspondence between Vince and his family and friends in Hawaii, dream sequences, sarcastic lists of "Tourist Tips," and entries from "*Decolonization for Beginners: A Filipino Glossary*," which acts in the novel as a translator of sorts for foreign visitors. One of the glossary entries provides bangungot's etymology: "bangungut, *noun*. A contraction of *bangun* (to rise) and *ungul* (to moan). See also *batibat*, *hupa*, *Sudden Unexpected Death Syndrome*."[4] The novel also indulges in extended retellings of Vince's youth both in the Philippines and in Hawaii. In one such instance, Vince recalls his first encounter with bangungot after reading about it in "Bonifacio Dumpit's essay 'The Contagion of Folk Beliefs: Bangungut and Racial Profiling in Hawaii's Plantation Camps'" in an "Ethnic Literature in Hawaii" course (Linmark 28). Vince's narrative of return, as well as the novel's initial portrayal of bangungot, thus unfolds not through the neat regulation of plot, character development, or resolution, but through the chaos and contradictions of both Manila and the novel's narrative structure.

As *Leche* notes, bangungot comes from *bangun* (to rise) and *ungul* (to moan), and is known colloquially as that performative moment, popularized in Filipino TV and films, when a person struggles and moans during sleep to break away from a bad dream. Bangungot's English equivalent is "nightmare," a mere bad dream, but the bangungot that *Leche* refers to here is a specifically Filipino one. It leaves its young and healthy prey (like Bentot de la Peña and Kyle Verador) dead—unable to break away from the bad dream.[5] And, "to Filipinos raised on Catholicism and folk superstition," what makes bangungot even more terrifying

> is that the victim returns momentarily to the world of the living, only to witness, in his limbo state, the final scene of his life—moaning and kicking helplessly. He wants to get up, but he can't. He opens his mouth to scream but he can't. Because sitting on his face, which is how survivors of the nightmare described their near-death experiences, is the bangungut, shoving his fat cigar down the victim's throat, determined to drag his young and healthy prey to the underworld. (Linmark 18-19)

As the passage points out, in its nightmare form, bangungot is also paralytic. As if in a straitjacket, the helpless victim tries to struggle away from the bad dream, yet is completely unable to move or speak. While my focus is on bangungot as a

deadly phenomenon, it is worth noting that not all bangungots are deadly. One might suffer the paralytic and nightmarish symptoms of bangungot (as I have in the past) but still wake up to tell the story. Some Filipino researchers have noted that bangungot can refer to chronic sleep paralysis—a non-deadly combination of nightmare and immobility during sleep—which is common among young Filipinos/as in high school and college (Alegre et al.).[6] I focus on the paralytic and deadly characteristics of bangungot here precisely because they force us to find other ways of telling stories—that is, in situations where one is unable to speak and tell the story because *one is dead*.

One such way of telling stories of the dead is through speculation, or tsismis. Because death through bangungot happens quickly during sleep, without prior indication, its enigmatic quality is precisely why it becomes a prime subject of speculation. *Leche* reminds us of the workings of tsismis. While in line at the Honolulu airport for his trip back to the Philippines, Vince overhears a "group of [Filipina] women gossiping about him literally behind his back" (Linmark 9). As he points out, this is "not uncommon. Filipinos talking loudly behind your back is their indirect way of showing you that you are important enough to kill time with. If they don't do it behind your back, they'll do it beside you or in your face. And if you're not within sight or hearing distance because you're in Serengeti National Park, or glacier-sighting in Patagonia, they'll make certain their words reach you" (9). What this passage performs about tsismis is its attention-seeking quality, exemplified by its need to exaggerate—and, I should add, misrepresent and manipulate—to be heard. While tsismis is nevertheless propelled by some fact or actual event, it prioritizes recognition rather than truth. Having caught Vince's attention, the women are encouraged to amplify the tsismis even more:

> "He is here, Mare."
>
> "Who, Mare?"
>
> "The 'Let America be America Again' guy, Mare."
>
> "Ay, really? Where?"
>
> The woman stretches her pursed lips to Vince.
>
> "He looks so much better live than on my Sony Trinitron," her friend says, eyeing Vince up and down through her rhinestone-studded glasses.
>
> "And so much more gwapo [handsome] than that Negro who won."
>
> "He's a gay, you know, Mare," she whispers loud enough for the natives on Easter Island to hear. (9-10)

But instead of being offended, Vince is tickled by the conversation and makes all efforts to hear every word. He is especially delighted to hear one of the women cuss out the airline supervisor with "Leche" for charging her an extra fee for her overweight luggage. Leche means "'Milk' in Spanish," but for Filipinos, its one variation is equivalent to "Shit!" (11). Vince has not heard that word in so long, and it "conjures up childhood memories of melodrama movies, when deceived lovers, during a confrontation scene, threw it in the face of their cheating partners before walking away, as if to tell them no one could ever break their heart again" (11). Not only does *Leche* (the novel) articulate and perform tsismis—its hyperbolic, seductive, and manipulative tendencies that at once catch Vince's attention and make him complicit—but it also describes how tsismis, like bangungot, serves as Vince's coordinate to the past. Here, I am especially interested in tsismis's parasitic nature—its aggressive, authoritative, manipulative, and appropriative tendencies—as a counter-narrative logic for thinking about bangungot differently, in how it describes the deadly bangungot phenomenon

as a *mirror* rather than a developmental narrative's *other*.

Lisa Lowe has argued that tsismis, although "unofficial," does not "[occupy] a terrain that is separate or discreet from official narratives; rather, gossip is peculiarly parasitic, pillaging from the official, imitating without discrimination, exaggerating, relaying" (113). Discussing the Filipino-American novel *Dogeaters* as it relates to the narrative and national formation of the Asian American citizen-subject, Lowe points out that the novel's use of gossip acts "as an antifiguration of narrative" that "[interrupts] the traditional forms for narrating the development of the individual subject and its reconciliation to the national social order." That is, gossip, as a "destructuring device," challenges "concepts of identity and identification within a universalized narrative of development" (100-101) and, as such, "disorganizes official history" (114). By "official history," Lowe is referring to colonial narratives of development, including the novel and historical narratives that "[legitimate] particular forms and subjects of history and [subjugate] and [erase] others" (98). For Lowe, gossip's disorganizing tendencies describe both the workings and the limits of developmental narratives, particularly as the method through which national identities are constructed. Following Reynaldo Ileto, Lowe also places tsismis within the longer colonial history of the Philippines under Spain, pointing out that "nineteenth-century discourses of modernization privileged a small elite and subjugated the knowledges of 'others'" (115). Here, Lowe notes that tsismis, as an unofficial narrative mode, must be understood as counter-knowledge or "counterhistory," emerging alongside "the popular and regional activities of bandits" that provide "an account of mobile, dispersed insurgency and of the official modes of regulation erected to police and suppress those insurgencies" (115). Following Lowe's (and Ileto's) call for more expressions of insurgent knowledge production, I use tsismis to articulate the ways that bangungot conveys not only its relation to, but the limits of, the developmental logics of Western diagnostic narrative.

In my use of "diagnostic narrative," I follow Joel Fineman's formulation of "diagnosis" as "one that starts from some zero-degree of vulnerable healthiness, that then builds up to a series of significant symptoms, to a predictable dramatic climax at a moment of required 'crisis' . . . after which the disease completes its predetermined and internally directed course, when the patient either dies or returns to health" (65-66). Here, Fineman highlights the fundamentally novelistic quality of medical diagnosis, which is the movement from infection to crisis to healing or death: beginning, middle, and end. In the diagnostic process, that movement is then propelled by anecdotes:

> the anecdote is the literary form that uniquely *lets history happen* by virtue of the way it introduces an opening into the teleological, and therefore timeless, narration of beginning, middle, and end. The anecdote produces the effect of the real, the occurrence of contingency, by establishing an event within and without the framing context of historical successivity. (Fineman 72)[7]

Fineman is skeptical of the New Historicist approach that relies too much on the anecdote, confined as they are within the given developmental narrative, in *getting at* the historical/novelistic/medical "truth." What is unique about bangungot is that it happens suddenly, without prior indication, and so it is unavailable to a diagnostic method that requires beginning, middle, and end. In bangungot, death is the beginning, middle, and end. Death is the only truth, everything else is speculation. Tsismis, on the other hand, unlike the New Historicist anecdote, does not project itself as "real," nor does it require a standard narrative form, for it can feed

off anything. As such, tsismis provides us a different mode of (medical) articulation that does not rely on or expect a universal etiology.

Bangungot's and tsismis's defiance to being confined within diagnostic narratives also has to do with a particular Western obsession with health, with the preservation of life and the alleviation of pain caused by disease. In her discussion of the fascination with pathology and disease during the Victorian period, and how such fascination reflected the novelistic pursuits of the time, Erika Wright notes that illness or the sick body—that which threatens health—provides the condition for a developmental narrative: "For the doctor, illness is a problem *to solve*; it must be diagnosed, treated and cured. For the patient, illness is an obstacle *to overcome* or perhaps a punishment for sin" (5). Illness creates narrative energies that propel one to act, "to take notice of our bodies and behaviors, to experience compassion, to purge, to repent," while anticipating a particular end, a return to health (5). As such, health provides a narrative point of both departure and return; it plunges the reader into an interpretive exercise of "crisis and recovery," "conflict and resolution, mysteries and solutions, a beginning that moves (but not too quickly) toward an end"—qualities that draw us to the novel (6). As Rita Charon has also pointed out about the relation between health and narrative drama, "health improvements decrease all the societal events that would have followed from ill-health—hospitalizations, days lost from work, wages lost for sick days, inability to fulfill familial roles, and the like" ("Novelization" 43). Although it occurs locally—that is, it mostly only directly affects the individual body—ill health creates a condition of chaos that has implications for the sick body's larger environment, the very condition necessary for creating conflict and making the story move. Bangungot fails to fit within these parameters precisely because, although it may be propelled by ill health, it is not driven by "a sense of an ending," to borrow from Julian Barnes, either in the form of death or a return to health, for death in this case has already happened and health as such is now an impossibility. Here I situate my formulation of bangungot and tsismis within literary discourses in the Medical Humanities to argue for an expansion of what Charon calls "narrative medicine," which Charon describes as a "narrative competence" that utilizes "methods such as close reading of literature and reflective writing" ("Narrative Medicine" 1897). "[P]roposed as a model for humane and effective medical practice," Charon argues for "bridging the [narrative] divides that separate physicians from patients, themselves, colleagues, and society" to "[offer] fresh opportunities for respectful, empathic, and nourishing medical care" ("Narrative Medicine" 1897). But as Shreya Srivastava has pointed out, "narrative medicine" in its current formulation is limited to medical pedagogies "created by artists and writers from the West . . . rooted in Western ideology" (Srivastava). This article echoes Srivastava's call to "diversify narrative medicine" and "expand the tools used in narrative practices to include oral and participatory forms of expression" (Srivastava). However, my formulation of bangungot and tsismis as alternatives and disruptions to diagnostic narratives also accounts for the fundamentally colonial and hierarchical logics of Western (narrative) medicine. Beyond simply diversifying the institutional tools, we must also find narrative tools and logics that exceed the parameters of the (medical) institution.

The Queer Filipino Colonial Condition

Without the obsession with health—that is, for a narrative structure that requires the disciplinary tactics of (medical) development and aspires to a particular (healthy/happy) ending—bangungot and tsismis allow for queer logics of sense- and meaning-making. I use the term "queer" in this article to refer to Vince's identity as "bakla," the

Filipino equivalent for "gay" and "queer." But I also follow Martin Manalansan's formulation of "queer" as "mess," which "[focuses] on the recognition and centering of underrecognized practices, stances, and situations that deviate from, resist, or run counter to the workings of [colonial and neoliberalist] normality" (97), to which I shall return later. In *Leche*, bangungot, and not the developmental plot of the novel, is that which creates a narrative "sense" for Vince's return to, and queer awakening in, the Philippines. After reading about bangungot in his "Ethnic Literature in Hawaii" course (Linmark 16), Vince is transported back to his childhood in San Vicente, "a small provincial town four hours north of Manila by car, [where] he read about the bangungut from the Tagalog komiks [his grandfather] Don Alfonso bought him" (18). Before moving to Hawaii, Vince remembers how his grandfather used to pick him up at school and take him to the "magazine stand right across the plaza," where his grandfather would pick up "*Life* and *Time*" magazines and "Tagalog komiks [comic books]" for Vince (18). Vince admired and inherited this literary interest from his grandfather. However, while Vince learned the habit of, or developed a love for, reading through his grandfather, it is not exactly the "enlightening" and "realist" qualities of reading—that is, reading as the formative process of rationalizing the progressive unfolding of information and events to *get at* the "truth"—that becomes immediately meaningful to him; instead, it is reading about the disruptive, violent, fantastical, and even erotic tendencies of bangungot that comforts him and transports him back to a pleasurable past. Vince's favorite comic series, "Stories of the Unexpected," depicts "stories about bangungut, which disguised itself as a nomad by day, wandering around Metropolitan Manila for potential victims, then transformed into a cigar-puffing hairy beast that terrorized them in their sleep" (Linmark 19). In one issue, bangungot's new victim is "Mr. Smith, an American businessman who ran an illegal logging business on the island of Leyte, where much of the virgin forest had been destroyed" (19). Bangungot often preys on "crooks and greedy men" (20). Apart from being a womanizer, Vince adds that Mr. Smith "bore a striking resemblance to his grandfather, who was also very debonair" (20). Mr. Smith is Vince's first crush. Vince's "hot lips were all over the pages" of the magazine (20). At night, "Vince went to bed thinking about him, kissing him goodnight, telling him 'Sweet dreams, Mr. Smith,' 'I love you, Mr. Smith,' 'Do you love me too?'" (20). Vince even goes so far as to imagine being married to the American; they would hold hands "as they walked along the promenade of Manila Bay, chitchatting about full moons, wedding bells and the houses, love-nest resorts, and nurseries he would build for them and their babies" (20). By likening Vince's grandfather to Mr. Smith, *Leche* warns us about the seductive charms of male (literary) figures who are meant to be bearers of wisdom (the grandfather) and economic development (the American businessman). That is, bangungot complicates Vince's attachments to these men by *not* treating them as liberatory, moral, or modern figures. While folklores and superstitions often offer moralistic narratives of "good and bad," exemplified by bangungot's victims being "crooks and greedy men," Vince's relationship with bangungot is instead one of desire, pleasure, and sexual awakening.[8] Not only does bangungot articulate Vince's attraction to men through the stories in the komiks, but it also indexes the messy entanglements of his (sexual) desires with the developmental fantasies of the US empire.

The obsession with Mr. Smith haunts Vince in his sleep, which, I argue, highlights the connections and discontinuities between his diasporic location and colonial fantasies. In one of Vince's nightmares, "Mr. Smith knelt down to kiss Vince . . . [and] As he rolled his tongue inside Vince's mouth . . . a python slithered from Mr. Smith's mouth and down into his throat" (21). Trying to

get away from the bangungot, Vince is "moaning, kicking, and gasping" (21). Had he not been heard and woken up, "the bangungut would have sucked out Vince's last breath, smelling of Mr. Smith's kisses" (21). Here, bangungot articulates not only Vince's desires, but also the violence of those desires. That bangungot acts for Vince as a reference to both pleasure and pain underscores the workings of the queer Filipino colonial condition. Mr. Smith stands in for the American empire, whose logic of occupation in the Philippines was one of violence and benevolence, discipline and desire. As Nerissa Balce has noted about the "erotics of the American empire," "the relationship of U.S. imperial culture with the play of eroticism, racism, desire, and fantasy . . . constructed the figure of the Filipina savage" (94). Balce points to the ways that Filipino desire has to be understood within the context of American imperial knowledge production, which includes, beyond traditional archival sites like libraries or museums, "a fantasy of knowledge . . . collected and united in the service of the state and empire" (94). In other words, the desire for the American heteronormative ideal—what Karen Tongson has called "whiteness and promises," "an American suburban fantasy of the good life, with a good wife"—(e.g., Vince's sexual and marital desire for Mr. Smith) works alongside the construction of the Filipino as the savage and undesirable other (Tongson 14). Vince's fantasies as a child, along with his sexual awakening, are entangled with American imperial fantasies of occupation and expansion. That someone like Mr. Smith, a corrupt and greedy American, becomes the subject of the (sexual) desires and fantasies of Filipinos like Vince is symptomatic of the "inferiorising discourses" of the US empire, which promotes "narratives of civilization and progress" and "continue[s] to live on in ubiquitous notions of 'development' . . . after World War II" (Bulloch 230). *Leche*'s use of bangungot thus reveals not only Vince's, but also imperial fantasies. Bangungot acts as a colonial conduit of violence that relates Filipino fantasies and desires to the erotics of the US empire. But *Leche* refuses to reproduce such "inferiorising discourse" by revealing, through bangungot, the inherently deceptive and violent nature of that fantasy. Furthermore, *Leche*'s focus on imperial fantasy is not a reminder of the colonial subject as an "other"; that is, it is not about a certain *lack*. Instead, *Leche* reminds us how queer Filipino identity in fact exceeds the contours of the "civilized" and "developed" imperial subject.

In a diagnostic narrative, bangungot is understood as that which is antithetical to, or a violation of, life and health, a "happy ending." In the imperial fantasy, bangungot is that which reflects the nightmarish violence of empire. But here, I also want to offer a formulation of bangungot that teaches us life-making logics of fantasy, desire, and pleasure beyond the disciplinary, normalizing, and accumulative tactics of empire. One such way is by centering queer pleasure within the economy of imperial desire. Just a few months after Kyle Verador's death, I travelled back to the Philippines in the summer of 2023 to look at archives and find out more about bangungot. During my research, I was struck to find that most of the articles available about bangungot were from 2002. But I also had a creeping suspicion as to why. In the early morning of Good Friday, March 29, 2002, Rico Yan—a very well-admired twenty-seven-year-old actor and heartthrob known for his romantic roles in Filipino films and "teleseryes" (telenovelas)—was found dead while on a Holy Week vacation in Puerto Princesa, Palawan. I was fourteen at the time, and, having been a fan of celebrity talk shows, I remember vividly the rumors that circulated about his death, which included drug overdose and even suicide. But as one of the newspapers I found put it the following Easter Sunday, it was bangungot that killed Yan: "'Bangungot' Kills Rico Yan; Claudine Still in Shock" (Lo). As a result, many of the archival accounts on bangungot—medical and

entertainment gossip alike—were responses to Yan's death. According to the same article, Yan's family immediately made the autopsy result public to dispel the rumors, stating that he "was found to have died of cardiac arrest resulting from hemorrhagic pancreatitis (commonly known as *bangungot*). The doctor said that Rico ate so much seafood during the party [the night before], downed with [alcoholic] drinks" (Lo). While Yan's autopsy seems consistent with bangungot's general characteristics, other doctors remain skeptical. One medical article has linked bangungot to Brugada syndrome, "a genetic disorder that can cause a dangerous irregular heartbeat" ("Brugada Syndrome"). Brugada is better known as SUNDS (sudden unexplained nocturnal death syndrome), and is also known to be genetic. Linking bangungot to Brugada is quite significant, according to the article, because it clashes with popular perceptions that bangungot is about bad diet, heavy drinking, or high carbohydrate and sodium intake. It also disputes the suggestion that it is a pancreatic failure, since pancreatic failures do not generally kill overnight and are known to be fatal mostly to men and women over 40 (Gaw et al.). Despite these findings, many Filipino doctors remain skeptical about the link between Brugada and bangungot. Some doctors have admitted to being on the verge of giving up research precisely because of bangungot's elusiveness and inherent contradictions (Gaw et al.). It is worth noting here how bangungot is used as a diagnostic term in both newspapers and medical articles, as though it is synonymous with pancreatitis. This is precisely why, in the Filipino context, diagnostic methods must account for, or think alongside, folklores, superstitions, religious mysticisms,[9] and, I would argue, gossip. But of more interest to me here is that what medical researchers find to be an epistemological impasse is in fact an enormous site of inquiry if one thinks beyond the borders of Western developmental traditions—that is, for instance, if one leans into "queer fantasy," which, as Karen Tongson has pointed out, is "forged just as much from the facts of our shared intelligence, which are far from being untrue even if they aren't always grounded in what is verifiable fact" (81).

What struck me most about rediscovering Rico Yan's death was how Yan, like Mr. Smith for Vince, served as a coordinate to *my own* queer sexual awakening. Growing up as a closeted gay boy in the Philippines during a time when hetero-nationalist Filipino films and "teleseryes" were our main source of media entertainment, young matinee idols like Yan were the (hidden) objects of my queer fantasy. Yan's on- and off-screen romantic relationship with Claudine Barretto, for example—which in the mid '90s was the envy of all Filipino celebrity love teams—allowed me (and many other Filipino queers, I'm sure) to imagine a way into the seductions of heteronormativity, which I knew was not available to me. That Easter Sunday of 2002, while watching TV with my family, I learned of Yan's death when the breaking news disrupted regular TV programming. No one acted hysterical, but I remember everyone in the room almost audibly gasping—and for a moment I recklessly and shamelessly allowed myself to show sadness and even shed tears, my fear of being *outed* be damned. That moment of death allowed me to openly grieve and express my feelings for Yan in a way that I could never have done when he was alive. In that instance, death became a good distraction, a moment of exception in which to be dramatic, sentimental, and soft. It became a fleeting opening through which my queer fantasy could realize and express itself. But bangungot is not just a distraction for queerness, either. There is something queer about bangungot because, like queerness, it poses a threat to heteronormativity and socially constructed notions of propriety; it serves as a consequence, a "mystical retribution," for defying normative social and health practices (Tan 38). And, for that same reason, because of its

inherent insurgency, recklessness, and sense of chaos, bangungot also not only abstracts or hides, or merely distracts from, but *fuels* other forms of queerness. It fueled the gay fantasies of this Filipino boy to see beyond the heteronormative horizon. In this way, bangungot, as both bearer and reproducer of queerness, *messes up* the developmental and assimilationist cycles of imperial norms.

The Powers of Bangungot as Mess

In *Leche*, the theme of "messing up" also describes how the novel uses anecdotes not to propel the plot forward so much as to serve as reference points to further anecdotes and speculations—way beyond the novel's diegesis. This highlights, I argue, Filipino styles of survival, creativity, and pleasure that are meaningful in themselves and not only insofar as they drive a grand narrative. In the chapter "Fuseli Revisited" (a nod to the eighteenth-century Swiss painter Henry Fuseli known for "The Nightmare"), Vince's housemaid in Manila, Burrnadette, wakes him up after suspecting that he was suffering from a nightmare. Burrnadette then tells Vince that her brother died from bangungot and explains the myth about how it kills:

> You see, where I come from, we believe that when we're sleeping, our soul leaves our bodies. It travels, you know—the soul. It goes on a journey. And like many journeys, it runs into problems. The soul gets lost or gets tricked by spirits. When that happens, that's when the bangungut appears and drags us to hell. . . . Like purgatory, surr. Except it's here, surr. On earth . . . the soul, surr, it just ends up wandering. Like it's homeless. But that's part of being Filipino, surr. We're here, we're there, we're everywhere. Scattered like the stars. That's us, surr. Kalat kalat, even in our sleep. (314)

Burrnadette points out not only the superstitious and religious narrative sources of bangungot, but also the Filipino condition of displacement. In response, Vince thinks about how indeed "Filipinos are wanderers, peregrinators, seafarers, scattering themselves across the world" (314). Filipinos fled "Malaysia toward the islands of a thousand volcanoes before it was christened by the Spaniards as 'Islands of St. Lazarus' . . . Seafarers then, overseas contract workers now, nothing much has changed" (315). Both Burrnadette and Vince note how bangungot's story of displacement goes beyond colonial narratives of not only medical diagnosis, but also Christian enlightenment. Here, the purgatory that bangungot portrays is not so much a holding place for lost souls—which must be purified before they are allowed to move on—as a space in which lives thrive in all their messy forms. During the nightmare, Burrnadette describes the soul as "kalat" (*verb*, "to displace"), referring to how the soul wanders outside the body during the nightmare, but "kalat" (*adjective*) also means "mess," the disorganization that displacement creates. Kalat, in both senses of the word, can then serve as another conduit through which to think about how both bangungot and tsismis operate together. On the one hand, kalat describes how the nightmare separates the soul from the body, thereby disorganizing the Christian body-and-soul unity. As such, bangungot draws our attention away from notions of spiritual divinity/sublimity and into the body itself and its affective relationships with other bodies. On the other hand, kalat also describes how tsismis not only creates mess through disruption and disorganization, but, as an appropriative and parasitic narrative mode, also disseminates information like a virus. Bangungot and tsismis, as active forms of subaltern disorganization and displacement, thus defy normative notions of health, which, not unlike Christian ideas of divine unity, propel the narrative from pathology to cure/salvation. Highlighting the active and reactive

tendencies of "mess" in queer immigrant lives, Martin Manalansan has asserted that "'queering' and 'messing up' are activities and actions as much as 'queer' and 'mess' can be about states/status, positions, identities, and orientations" (97). They "focus on the recognition and centering of underrecognized practices, stances, and situations that deviate from, resist, or run counter to the workings of normality" (97). Kalat disorganizes not merely for the sake of disorganization, but to create more stories and meanings, especially in inhospitable places.

In *Leche*, the author and protagonist act as orchestrators of mess, and not authoritative orchestrators of truth. Instead of creating characters that develop, Linmark uses doubling as a form of both breaking and bonding (what I refer to elsewhere as "non-coherence"),[10] and to revive (the stories of) those who have been erased by bangungot but continue to reverberate in the lives of the living. Here, I think of "doubling" in line with queer mess and messing up, insisting on a logic of non-coherence, rather than assimilation and integration. The word "leche" itself holds multiple meanings. As I mentioned above, it means both "milk" and "shit." But in the novel it is also the name of a popular gay sex club in Manila—the inside of which is likened by Linmark, quite (disturbingly) beautifully, to Dante's nightmarish nine circles of Hell—because one of its colloquial meanings, particularly among gay Filipino men, is "cum." Another object of doubling that Linmark is fond of is the names of minor characters. One of them is Bino Boca, a "controversial filmmaker" known for his "sociopolitical flicks. . . . Before he ventured into filmmaking, he was directing plays for the Philippine Unconventional Theater Association (PUTA)" (210). Given what we know about Boca in the novel, it is safe to suggest that he is a character after the real-life renowned queer Filipino filmmaker Lino Brocka. But the name revision is not a simple misspelling. "Bino Boca" (or "binubuka") means "to open," often referring to something sexual or reproductive in nature, like a flower or a vagina. The acronym "PUTA," as in Spanish, also means "whore" in Tagalog, but it is more often used as an equivalent to the curse word, "fuck!" Here, doubling acts as a form of breaking that does not reduce the meaning of the words but multiplies it, placing it in different cultural and historical contexts. As I have discussed in more detail in another article, punning is a national pastime for Filipinos; to pun is to make and have fun together. Punning, especially among queer Filipinos, is a decolonial act of contesting linguistic boundaries, as well as creating alternative forms of community (Siglos 4).[11] But what interests me more about Boca here is how he leads us to an actor in his films who has just died of bangungot. In the novel, Vince and his fellow gay friend Edgar argue about whether to see a Boca film or not, with Vince pointing out that he is "just not in the mood to sit through a two-hour porno passing off as sociopolitical flick" (210). Edgar counters by admitting that he only wants to watch the film because he has the "hots for the hustler" (211).

> "Too late. The hustler is already dead," Vince said, of the Amerasian and then-rising movie star.
>
> "How you know?" Edgar asked. "Jing told me. She read it in Kislap. He died in his sleep last week."
>
> "Bangungut?" Edgar asked. "Supposedly," Vince said. (211)

Though the "hustler" is not named in the novel, the two are most likely referring to the Filipino American actor Miguel Rodriguez, who in real life was discovered by and appeared in the many films of (the non-fictional filmmaker) Lino Brocka. Rodriguez died in his sleep on February 14, 1997, at the age of 34. The cause, according to the *Filipino Reporter* article "Mystery Shrouds Death of Actor Miguel Rodriguez," was said to have been a "collapsed pancreas" or

"bangungot." However, as with many bangungot deaths, particularly those of celebrities like my childhood crush Rico Yan, tsismis immediately emerges as bangungot's double—that which often betrays it but also necessitates its condition of possibility. Implied by the article's title, Rodriguez's diagnosis of pancreatitis was not enough to prevent speculation about possible suicide or drug use. The same article points out "that Rodriguez was last seen drinking, the night before his death," a mode of excess, like overeating and over-partying, that is too often used as the main subject of speculation when it comes to "making sense" of the deadly nightmare.

In the spirit of (extradiegetic) speculation, beyond such deadly cautionary tales implicit in these gossip newspapers, I want to offer another way of understanding Filipino excess as instead constituting *moments of splendor*. Developmental narratives—and by extension imperial narratives of progress, modernity, and enlightenment—are often moralistic, particularly in reference to queer, racialized, sexualized, and deviant bodies and identities, and focus on lives that have lessons to teach, have serious political implications, or overtly resist. But what do we make of stories about (reckless and messy) lives lived for the sake of living? In all those stories of death I discussed above—those about Bentot de la Peña, Kyle Verador, Rico Yan, and Miguel Rodriguez—the presumed (moral) faults of excessive drinking, eating, and partying, not to mention the alleged drug use and suicide, which are forms of excess in themselves, have overdetermined their life stories. And gossip has been very much complicit in reproducing that—not least in the ways that gossip tabloids capitalized on these deaths. But gossip, or tsismis, in the way that I have formulated it throughout this article, also provides the means through which to speculate about these lives *otherwise*. The lives of these men (Bentot, Kyle, Rico, and Miguel), I argue, are moments of splendor because they were lives lived for the thrill of living, reckless lives that, although they have ceased to exist, and thus ceased their life-productivity, have continued to live on in non-productive yet moving and memorable ways in the stories told about them, not least in the ways they each affected *me* then and now. Throughout this article, I have tried to reconfigure their life stories not as lessons on how not to be reckless, but on how recklessness is part of being. By "moments of splendor," I do not mean to romanticize any form of excess or recklessness, since, as Sarita See has argued, recklessness is also a mode of capitalist accumulation and speculation, that is, "as a form—*the* form—of gambling with debt" (121). Instead, I place recklessness and moments of splendor in conversation with Subaltern and Marxist-Feminist Studies scholars who think about the survival and reproduction of life that is deemed disposable within the logic of global capitalism (See 121). In particular, I situate "splendor" alongside what Neferti Tadiar calls "remaindered life," which understands the

> global present . . . as the aftermath and perdurance of decolonization, those processes and practices of quotidian as well as formal, organized social struggles among the colonized to live nevertheless and otherwise—beyond the constricted fates that Western European-American colonialism's transfiguration into a dominant global mode of life continues to impose. (ix)[12]

"Remaindered life" thinks about the human as the life-form of value—about how, under global capitalism, the human becomes valuable, then waste, and then valuable again *as waste*, a process out of which, Tadiar argues, remaindered lives can be traced. In such an economy, human life is seen as a means for more value creation and, as such, is disposable. However, something else becomes *excess* in such a relation of value and waste: "splendor." According to Tadiar, "splendor" is "one fleeting glimpse of remaindered life . . . the unexpected gratuitous

abundance . . . that might unfold in the everyday arts of survival" (274-75). Splendors are "also lifetimes of expenditure, times of waste, but unredeemed, not simply placed to more productive ends—times of waste that are also times of recreation, openings, cheap thrills, and boundless relation" (275). Here, I situate bangungot and tsismis, and the moments of splendor they engender, precisely within these spaces of "re-creation, openings, cheap thrills, and boundless relation" in which they thrive most. These deaths are not necessarily splendid in themselves, but they become splendid insofar as they provide the necessary means for endless narrative speculation. They create mess where righteousness, order, discipline, control, and productivity are the names of the global capitalist and imperialist game.

Epilogue

The thing that has haunted me throughout the research and writing of this article, the thing that I have been uncomfortable to mention up to now, is the fact that *I am* bangungot's perfect prey. I am a Filipino male in his mid thirties, and, having worked as a chef in Las Vegas throughout my twenties, I am no stranger to stress and excess of various kinds. Ever since my first close witness encounter with it through our neighbor Bentot, bangungot has continued to haunt me long after I left the Philippines for America—like an old memory of home only without the feeling of longing—as I am sure it haunts, for one reason or another, many other Filipino men of a certain age in the Philippines and its diaspora. When I left cooking to pursue graduate studies almost a decade ago now, I was overweight (another form of excess) and felt especially anxious about bangungot—even though weight is not an exclusive indicator of victimhood and none of the men I mentioned above would have been considered "overweight." It was also around this time when I started following the queer Filipino YouTube vlogger Lloyd Cafe Cadena, known particularly for his eccentric personality. Cadena had over five million subscribers when his death was announced on September 4, 2020. He suffered from a heart attack *in his sleep* while confined in the hospital for being positive for COVID-19 (Newcomb). Although none of the reports about Cadena's death mentioned it, bangungot was the first thing that came to mind when I heard the news. And, perhaps due to a concern about my own weight, I also immediately associated it with Cadena's being overweight. That scared me enough to keep up with my yearly blood checks and hire a personal trainer to get into better shape.

I tell Cadena's story not as a cautionary tale, for that would be antithetical to the goal of this article, but as yet another coordinate to my own anxieties about excess and being haunted by bangungot. But more importantly, Cadena's life, although cut short, and his YouTube contents perform precisely the excessive moments of splendor I discuss above. In the video "MGA GANAP SA JEEPNEY (LAPTRIP to Bes!) | LC Learns #110," which currently has eleven million views, he and his group of queer friends create a skit that highlights "proper" etiquette when riding in a jeepney—a cheap and eccentric Filipino mode of transportation, and a remnant of the US military presence in the Philippines. This is part of an informative series—hence, "LC [Lloyd Cadena] Learns"—on the "*ganap* [goings on]" in a typical Filipino communal space, but with a queer and comedic twist. In the opening, Cadena explains the structure of the video in his signature flamboyant and excessive (loud and fast) speech. He then sets up each scene before the video cuts to the reenactment, which is also flamboyantly performed by Cadena and his friends. On the surface, the video immediately captivates in the style of Filipino queer comedy with which Cadena's viewers, including me, are very familiar: loud, quick, self-deprecating, crass, morbid, physical (sometimes violent), overtly

mocking, and unapologetically sexual. In a scene that warns about how some people cannot help feeling horny in a jeepney, an actor rubs himself next to a woman who feels extremely uncomfortable: "*Hoy manong, ano po ba ginagawa niyo?*" ("Excuse me, sir, what are you doing?") she calls him out; "*Oy, makati lang, ano ba?*" ("I'm just itchy, what's your problem?") he retorts; "*Kanina pa kita nakikitang nagjajakol diyan ah!*" ("I also saw you rubbing your dick there, don't deny it!") another woman in the jeepney interjects (Cadena). The jeepney can be a communal place of laughter, gossip, and entertainment. As *Leche* points out, it is a place where "several conversations are exploding all at once. A talk-stew of morning news peppered with tsismis, theories, and queries" (Linmark 353). But here, Cadena also plays out its dirtier side. Aside from occasional perverts, the video also points out how riders are squeezed like sardines inside the unairconditioned jeepney (there is no regulation on the number of riders the jeepney can accommodate; the more, the better for profit), how riders sometimes get robbed, how loud and inconsiderate riders can be, and how lovers take their quarrel in a jeepney and treat it like a soap opera set. The video performs a characteristically Filipino comedic style that operates through excess, that is, in excess of polite society: sexual harassment, morbidity, violence, etc., which is that "Third-World" moment of *making fun* and *creating pleasure* out of a completely dire situation. Characteristic of *splendor*, the Filipino comedic style is "excessive" because it faces head-on the desperate conditions in the Global South created by global capitalism, yet also exceeds them by making fun and creating pleasure *anyway.* Like bangungot and tsismis, it does not provide pure pleasure (whatever that is), but pleasure amidst direness and crisis—which is pleasure, nevertheless.

Lastly, I tell the story about my fear of bangungot in this section to describe the ways that the writing of this article has transformed my relationship with that fear. I learned that my fear of bangungot is also tied to a fear of diverging from particular kinds of (hetero)normative and imperial development, whether in the ways we tell stories about ourselves and others, or in the value we put in our (biopoliticized) lives and ways of living. This article's transnational turn in taking the US-based Filipino American novel and interpreting it through forms emerging from the tight corners of everyday Filipino life (and death) contests not only the borders of the nation-state, but also the epistemological logics that reproduce them. Throughout this article, I revisit the events of the lives of those who have died of bangungot not to diagnose them or explain what exactly might have killed them, but instead to explore, through fantasies and tsismis, the different afterlives and modes of pleasure they have generated for the living, including Vince and me. Bangungot lives on in tsismis, I argue, because together they have the potential to transform our fear of death into alternative ways of living and living on within power structures that are often hostile to those caught up in them. Through queer mess and recklessness, we move away from the (narrative) medicalization of life and turn death from nightmare and tragedy to moments of splendor and times of impasse that are also times of shift, revision, and refashioning.

Notes

1. I borrow the terms "unofficial" and "insurgent" in relation to tsismis from Lowe's *Immigrant Acts*, which I will discuss further later. Throughout this article, I use "gossip," "speculation," and "tsismis" interchangeably. But I must note that I use "gossip" not in the tradition of British bourgeoise life (as described, for example, in the novels of Jane Austen and George Eliot) but, following subaltern studies scholars like Lowe and Rafael, who view gossip as anti-colonial resistance.

2. After almost four hundred years under Spain, the Philippines became the first (and only) formal US colony in Asia in 1898 under the Treaty of Paris. The United States granted the Philippines its independence in 1946, but it would remain a US neocolony (that is, economically and geopolitically dependent) for far longer—arguably to this day. See Rafael, *White Love and Other Events in Filipino American History* (2000); Abinales and Amoroso, *State and Society in the Philippines* (2005); and McCoy, *Policing America's Empire: The United States, the Philippines, and the Rise of Surveillance State* (2009) for more on Philippine history and the Philippine-American neo/colonial relation.

3. See the Introduction of *A History of the Bildungsroman*, edited by Graham.

4. *Leche* uses the spelling "bangungut" while all my other sources use "bangungot." I will use "bangungot" throughout this article except when citing the novel directly.

5. However, the English word "nightmare" is not unrelated to bangungot either. Bangungot's Ilokano (regional) version "batibat" is said to be about a supernatural creature, in the form of a large old woman or man, who sits on the male victim's chest, suffocating him to death. Like batibat, the Western nightmare figure (from "night" and "mare") is a female horse-like creature that sits heavily on the male victim's chest during sleep.

6. I want to acknowledge and thank a group of Communication students from the University of the Philippines, Cebu, who wrote their senior thesis on *Urom*, a Cebuano (regional) variant of bangungot, as a non-deadly but paralytic nightmare phenomenon among displaced college students. Alfaro, Gonzalez, and Composo, who wrote "Urom: A Phenomenological Study of Sleep Paralysis Experiences among University of the Philippines, Cebu Student Dormitory Residents," asked me to serve as their dissertation defense panelist after hearing about my lecture on bangungot at the Ateneo de Manila University. I learned a great deal from their work, especially from how they reinforce and rethink the role of displacement and storytelling in "making sense" of urom/bangungot.

7. While, as Fineman points out, the New Historicist approach sees the anecdote as having "the effect of the real," which authenticates the narrative, my use of personal anecdotes throughout this article is not a claim for authenticity, but merely highlights further speculations and fantasies.

8. For more on the relationship, and conflict, between Filipino indigenous beliefs and Western Judeo-Christian morality, see chapter 3 (on "mystical retribution") of Tan's book *Revisiting Usog, Pasma, Kulam*.

9. This is Tan's main argument in his book *Revisiting Usog, Pasma, Kulam*—though he does not talk about gossip.

10. See Siglos, "Walang Arte: Gina Apostol's *Insurrecto* and Filipino Non-coherence."

11. See also See, *Decolonized Eye: Filipino American Art and Performance* and Manalansan, *Global Divas: Filipino Gay Men in the Diaspora* for more on Filipino punning.

12. I also borrow the term "splendor" from chapter 11 of Tadiar's book *Remaindered Life*.

Works Cited

Abinales, Patricio N., and Donna J. Amoroso. *State and Society in the Philippines*. Bloomsbury, 2017.

Alegre, Miguel, et al. "A Phenomenological Study on Bangungot Among Young Filipinos." *Qualire*, 27 Aug. 2012, https://qualire2012a52.wordpress.com/2012/08/27/a-phenomenological-study-on-bangungot-among-young-filipinos/.

Alfaro, Princess Rikah, Hazel Jane Composo, and Kenneth King Gonzales. "Urom: A Phenomenological Study of Sleep Paralysis Experiences among University of the Philippines, Cebu Student Dormitory Residents." Undergraduate Thesis, University of the Philippines, Cebu, 2025.

Balce, Nerissa S. "The Filipina's Breast: Savagery, Docility, and the Erotics of the American Empire." *Social Text*, vol. 24, no. 2, 2006, pp. 89-110. https://doi.org/10.1215/01642472-24-2_87-89.

Boggs, Nicholas. "'Leche' by R. Zamora Linmark." *Lambda Literary Review*, 4 July 2011, https://lambdaliteraryreview.org/2011/07/leche-by-r-zamora-linmark/.

"Brugada Syndrome." *Johns Hopkins Medicine*, 15 May 2024, www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/conditions-and-diseases/brugada-syndrome.

Bulloch, Hannah C. M. "Concerning Constructions of Self and Other: Auto-racism and Imagining *Amerika* in the Christian Philippines." *Anthropological Forum*, Vol. 23, No. 3, 2013, pp. 221-41.https://doi.org/10.1080/00664677.2013.804400.

Cadena, Lloyd Cafe. "MGA GANAP SA JEEPNEY (LAPTRIP to Bes!) | LC Learns #110." *YouTube*, 24 Sept. 2017, www.youtube.com/watch?v=zMhnU8m-QIM.

Charon, Rita. "The Novelization of the Body, or, How Medicine and Stories Need One Another." *Narrative*, vol. 19, no. 1, 2011, pp. 33-50. https://doi.org/10.1353/nar.2011.0004.

---. "Narrative Medicine: A Model for Empathy, Reflection, Profession, and Trust." *Jama*, vol. 286, no. 15, 2001, pp. 1897-1902. https://doi.org/10.1001/jama.286.15.1897.

Fineman, Joel. *The Subjectivity Effect in Western Literary Tradition: Essays Toward the Release of Shakespeare's Will*. MIT Press, 1991.

Gaw, Albert C., et al. "Unraveling the Enigma of Bangungut: Is Sudden Unexplained Nocturnal Death Syndrome (SUNDS) in the Philippines a Disease Allelic to the Brugada Syndrome?" *Philippine Journal of Internal Medicine*, vol. 49, no. 3, 2011, pp. 165-76.

Graham, Sarah, ed. *A History of the Bildungsroman*. Cambridge University Press, 2019. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781316479926.

Ileto, Reynaldo C. "Outlines of a Nonlinear Emplotment of Philippine History." *The Politics of Culture in the Shadow of Capital*, edited by Lisa Lowe and David Lloyd, Duke University Press, 1997, pp. 98-131. https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv11smp8b.7.

Linmark, R. Zamora. *Leche*. Coffee House Press, 2011.

Lo, Ricky. "'Bangungot' Kills Rico Yan; Claudine Still in Shock." *Philippine Star*, 31 March 2002, https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2002/03/31/155539/145bangungot146-kills-rico-yan-claudine-still-shock.

Lowe, Lisa. *Immigrant Acts: On Asian American Cultural Politics*. Duke University Press, 1996. https://doi.org/10.1515/9780822379010.

Manalansan, Martin F., IV. "The 'Stuff' of Archives: Mess, Migration, and Queer Lives." *Radical History Review*, vol. 120, 2014, pp. 94-107. https://doi.org/10.1215/01636545-2703742.

McCoy, Alfred W. *Policing America's Empire: The United States, the Philippines, and the Rise of the Surveillance State*. University of Wisconsin Press, 2009.

"Mystery Shrouds Death of Actor Miguel Rodriguez." *Filipino Reporter*, 27. February 1997. HighBeam Research, 10 Jun. 2014, https://web.archive.org/web/20140610083654/http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1P1-3628539.html.

Newcomb, Alyssa. "YouTube Star Lloyd Cadena, 26, Had a Heart Attack after Testing Positive for Covid-19." *TODAY.com*, 8 Sept. 2020, www.today.com/popculture/youtube-star-lloyd-cadena-s-family-reveals-his-cause-death-t191219.

Rafael, Vicente L. *White Love and Other Events in Filipino History*. Duke University Press, 2000. https://doi.org/10.1515/9780822380757.

See, Sarita Echavez. *The Filipino Primitive: Accumulation and Resistance in the American Museum*. NYU Press, 2017.

Siglos, David G. "Walang Arte: Gina Apostol's *Insurrecto* and Filipino Non-coherence." *Alon: Journal for Filipinx American and Diasporic Studies*, vol. 2, no. 1, 2022, pp. 1-26. https://doi.org/10.5070/LN42154867.

Srivastava, Shreya. "The Need to Diversify Narrative Medicine." *Biomedical Odyssey*, 20 Feb. 2025, https://biomedicalodyssey.blogs.hopkinsmedicine.org/2025/02/the-need-to-diversify-narrative-medicine/.

Tadiar, Neferti X. M. *Remaindered Life*. Duke University Press, 2022. https://doi.org/10.1215/9781478022381.

Tan, Michael L. *Revisiting Usog, Pasma, Kulam*. University of the Philippines Press, 2008.

Tongson, Karen. *Why Karen Carpenter Matters*. Faber, 2021.

Wright, Erika. *Reading for Health: Medical Narratives and the Nineteenth-Century Novel*. Ohio University Press, 2016.