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Transnational Crossroads: Remapping the Americas and the Pacific by Camilla Fojas and Rudy P. Guevarra, Jr. (review)

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what Donald Rumsfeld termed “unknown unknowns” produce the madness of a Caligula? Pagán offers a careful reading of Suetonius’s *Lives of the Twelve Caesars* and makes a convincing case that they should be read as a unified meditation on power and suspicion.

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Camilla Fojas and Rudy P. Guevarra, Jr. *Transnational Crossroads: Remapping the Americas and the Pacific*. Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 2012. 504 pp.

In the discourses on transnationalism, “crossroads” has taken its place alongside (if not supplanted) “borderlands” as a mobile metaphor for the kinds of work that people in cultural studies, American studies, and ethnic studies do. Offering a locus for the intersection of diverse paths (whether historical, cultural, or disciplinary), “crossroads” suggests a meeting place—and, potentially, a new direction. As such it provides an apt metaphor for Camilla Fojas and Rudy Guevarra’s collection, *Transnational Crossroads: Remapping the Americas and the Pacific*. Situating the book as part of a larger intervention into exceptionalism in American Studies, the editors open up the spaces of “America”—now configured not as a center but as a junction for the interactions of diverse Caribbean, Asian, Pacific, and “American” (North and South) cultures, peoples, histories, economies, and politics. Like any diverse anthology, *Transnational Crossroads* will draw readers interested in just one of its various threads—Hawaiian nationalism or comparative labour history or literary studies—but those who read it in its entirety will be treated to a geographically and disciplinarily vertiginous reading experience, as, to invoke a few examples, island locales, from Puerto Rico to the Philippines to Hawaii, come together in a history of American imperialism (Fojas); *Extreme Makeover: Home Edition* illuminates a history of disenfranchisement (Arvin); and identities get hybridized and coopted in cyberspace (ho’omanawanui).

The book is divided into four sections—“The End of Empire”; “Comparative Racialization”; “The American Pacific”; and “Crossroads of American Migration”—though the concerns in different sections are overlapping, organized less by geography or history or disciplinary approach than by general thematic concern. The logic of these pairings is not always clearly marked, but the juxtapositions produce some fascinating resonances, as in the apt pairing of Jane Yamashiro and Hugo Córdova Quero’s comparative analysis of Japanese Brazilian and Japanese American immigrants in Japan with Ryan Masaaki Yokota’s account of the Peruvian Nisei in Los Angeles. Reading such essays alongside each other is a useful reminder that migration goes both ways, producing experiences that are as diverse as they are resonant. Such comparative work is also contained within the essays, as in

Faye Christine Caronan's illuminating piece on performance poet activists in the Philippines and Puerto Rico, or in Erika Lee's analysis of "yellow peril" discourse in the US and Peru. (Among the ways in which the US is sometimes still positioned as "exceptional" in American studies is in its exceptional racism; analyses like Lee's remind us that the US may not be entirely exceptional in that arena either.) Not surprisingly, Hawaii, as a locus of American imperialism that is also characterized by a fraught history of Asian immigration and a present context of transnational economic production, offers a particularly rich resource for thinking the "crossroads." Paradigmatic here are Vernadette Vicuna Gonzalez's piece on Hawaiian quilts, which she traces from the colonial "civilizing mission" to the contemporary tourist trade, the quilts for which are manufactured in the Philippines, and Bianca Isaki's reflective meditation on walking the Kamehameha highway with her grandmother, in which she illuminates some of the complexities of Asian settler disenfranchisement and colonial complicity.

The editors acknowledge that *Transnational Crossroads* "may seem like a project with an ambitious scope" (11), and this is true not only in its geographical reach but also in its disciplinary diversity. Such interdisciplinarity is, of course, characteristic of ethnic studies and American Studies more generally, but seldom is it contained so ambitiously in a single volume. *Transnational Crossroads* brings together the humanities and the social sciences, covering such diverse topics as contemporary literature of migration (Oh; Sadowski-Smith), the histories of internment and migrant labour (Kim; Guevarra; Poblete), and the experiences of high school students in Los Angeles (Ochoa et al); primary texts correspondingly include novels, memoir, the historical archive, and fieldwork in the community. In their compelling introduction, Fojas and Guevarra appeal to the potential audience of students, suggesting that their "hope is that this volume enables new cross-discipline work and creative collaborations that will help students to think differently and maneuver an increasingly complex and interconnected global world" (6). Such "students" may indeed be undergraduate or graduate students of the universities of the future, but they are as likely to be scholars attempting to navigate outside of our traditional fields. In this context, the disciplinary diversity of *Transnational Crossroads* offers a kind of immersion course, as the stylistic and rhetorical protocols proper to different disciplines ground this material in strikingly disparate ways. In a climate in which interdisciplinarity is so often invoked and so seldom actually accomplished, this volume indeed provides a useful starting point, suggesting both the necessity of such work and the difficulty, given the differences in what counts as evidence and claims in different disciplinary contexts. To be at a crossroads can also, after all, mean to be at an impasse; it can mean a point of decision or, — as often — indecision, a position arguably facing many traditional disciplines today. A collection like *Transnational Crossroads* offers, as its subtitle suggests, a "map" that might guide a transnational and interdisciplinary way forward.