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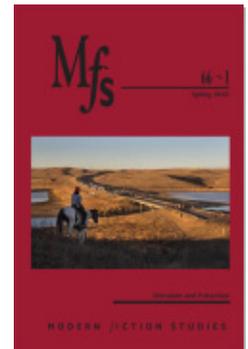
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Futures

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The Great Arrangement: Planetary Petrofiction and Novel Futures

Shouhei Tanaka

Manzanar Murakami gazes over the panorama of the Los Angeles Harbor Freeway and its hubbub of crisscrossing cars and trucks. Composing symphonies out of the traffic, the so-called “homeless conductor” (Yamashita, *Tropic of Orange* 107) summons the freeway’s transport infrastructures through his musical cartography. Standing above this “automotive kingdom” (120), he likens the trucks to “the largest monsters of the animal kingdom—living and extinct, all rumbling ponderously along the freeway” (119). As zombielike apex predators occupying the top of the city’s food chain, they continue “living” by extracting not only the “extinct” fossil fuels but the land and labor required to build and maintain this metropolitan center. The “nature of the truck beast . . . was to transport the great products of civilization” (120), Manzanar observes. Tracking the trucks shuffling “back and forth, from the harbor to the train station to the highway to the warehouse to the airport to the docking station to the factory to the dump site,” he traces the global trade and transport networks of fossil-fuel capitalism. Poignantly described as a “great writhing concrete dinosaur” (37), the freeway system thus becomes the nexus of oil infrastructure and extractivism. This key scene in Karen Tei Yamashita’s novel *Tropic of Orange* calls forth petroleum’s

intertwined geological and geopolitical forces, orienting oil as a twin barometer of historically situated energy hegemony and planetary deep time—a topic of equal concern in her earlier novel, *Through the Arc of the Rain Forest*. Like the Anthropocene more broadly, oil introduces the emergence of a “planetary conjuncture” (Chakrabarty 199) in which the ecological consequences of fossil-fuel use ascend to a new magnitude and collapse natural and human histories. As Yamashita demonstrates, this in turn calls for an energy justice framework that conjoins planetary and postcolonial thinking by connecting oil’s ubiquity, invisibility, and inhuman scales to historically situated energy ecologies and cultures.

Amitav Ghosh has coined the term petrofiction to describe the genre that explores these novelistic and planetary problems. For Ghosh, petrofiction’s trouble goes beyond the mere paucity of oil literature: the form of the novel itself fails to meet oil’s representational challenges due to its limited scalar investment in the individual, family, place, and nation. Oil resists representation because the “experiences associated with oil are lived out within a space that is no place at all, a world that is intrinsically displaced, heterogeneous, and international” (“Petrofiction” 142). Moreover, it materializes as what Rob Nixon calls “slow violence” (2) because its accretive, attritional, and delayed unfoldings evade detection. In *The Great Derangement: Climate Change and the Unthinkable*, Ghosh details further that the novel, preoccupied with confining the modern world to the dimensions of the everyday and ordinary, cannot imagine the inhuman scales of ecological phenomena such as climate change.¹ Within the recent field of the energy humanities, some critics have called for a “world energy literature” (Szeman 282) as part of an effort to “rethink resources and their connection/s to culture within and across differentiated sites, settings and milieus of the capitalist world-system” (Westall 267). Some have also begun to compile a diverse canon of petrofiction since the term’s coinage. Yet Ghosh’s diagnosis still lingers: How can the novel render petroleum into legible planetary form? What might such an oil novel look like with the concurrent rise of literary transnationalism and the Anthropocene?

This essay reads Yamashita’s *Through the Arc of the Rain Forest* and *Tropic of Orange* as case studies for what I call planetary petrofiction, novels that envision energy justice by locating oil’s multiscalar forms across geopolitical and geological histories.² Through novel worldmaking practices, Yamashita’s planetary petrofiction unsettles Ghosh’s contention that realist and speculative fiction are limited by their respective inability to imagine the otherworldliness of ecologi-

cal catastrophe and the worldliness of a reality under it. Carousels of the bizarre and familiar, the ordinary and uncanny, her novels upset such binaries through their hybridized speculative and realist modes. Featuring oddities such as a sentient plastic narrator, an orange that carries the Tropic of Cancer, a cartographer who excavates the unseen layers of Los Angeles's urban ecology, and a centuries-old mythical performance artist, Yamashita's novels conjure wondrous, more-than-human natures that materialize across actual geographies and histories. This blend of the marvelous and historical is especially effective at imagining petroleum on planetary scales, as eclectic ensembles of characters, commodities, and cultures from around the world converge at the flashpoints of extraordinary events to splinter our sense of narrative localization. In the process, her transnational novels track the flows of oil that cut across state, species, and scale. Linking energy to empire, they challenge us to see how fossil-fuel regimes are powered by the extraction of both humans and nonhumans as expendable sources of fuel. They pinpoint the imperialist fictions that propel such energy regimes: oil's bounty, necessity, and potency for the current energy systems and practices that dominate capitalist life.

Planetary petrofiction's features are fourfold. First, such works locate petroleum within the entanglement of geopolitical and geological histories to capture its material and social forces. Apprehending oil's multiscalar forms in this way necessitates what Jason W. Moore calls "world-ecology" (4), a framework that understands "capitalism as already co-produced by manifold species, extending even to our planet's geo-biological shifts, relations, and cycles." Oil in this light, as Matthew T. Huber argues, materializes as the "product of social relations" (3) whose "biophysical capacities only come to be mobilized in specific historical circumstances" (4), a union of oil and capitalism that some critical geographers call "petro-capitalism" (xviii). Second, they register oil's worldmaking capacities across habitat and habitus, such that energy regimes come into view as powerful meaning-making systems that shape the everyday contexts, practices, and symbols of social life. These "petrocultures," as some energy theorists put it, comprise "the material and immaterial infrastructures and superstructures that shape our daily lived realities and govern our choices and mobilities within existing social, economic, and political networks" (Wilson, Szeman, and Carlson 12). Third, they translate oil's global flows into the uneven energy impacts and risks that afflict the poor and marginalized across regional, national, and transnational contexts. Finally, in its attention to the extraction,

extermination, and regulation of nonhuman biota and environments, planetary petrofiction pursues what Ursula K. Heise calls “multispecies justice” (*Imagining Extinction* 17), an enterprise that explores the “connections and disjunctures between violence against disenfranchised communities and against endangered species” (194) without ignoring the interplay between cultural and species differences.

These four features take shape in Yamashita’s novels through various forms of worldmaking practices. Through an energy-oriented narratological approach, this essay pursues a set of narrative strategies and forms that calls attention to fiction’s fuels. I follow and expand on Graeme Macdonald’s call to examine not only the “energy *in* fiction” (5) but also the “energy *of* fiction”—that is, how energy inflects the organization and mechanism of narrative itself. Such an approach locates, as Macdonald writes,

Fiction’s formal requirements and stylistic capabilities: its narrative energetics; its psycho-social dynamics; its requirements for causality, impetus and productivity in plot and character development and its chronotopic ability to straddle and traverse multiple times and spaces. Narrative requires power to become powerful. It can change speed, alter force, utilise digression, and in so doing proves a forum to reflect on matters of efficiency and the rationale for certain modes of energy and power. (4)

Under this rubric, energy fictions do not simply thematize energy but articulate through their form the “means to contemplate—and possibly to deconstruct—energy capital’s formidable representative skills, notably its narrativization of the ‘natural’ necessity of oil to our functioning social systems.” My aim is to avoid a reductionist method that simply restates familiar narrative features with new metaphors inflected with the grammar of energy. Instead, I explore what Yamashita’s petrofiction affords at the meaningful intersections between fuel’s fictions and fiction’s forms. Such pursuits excavate what Patricia Yaeger calls the “energy unconscious” (“Editor’s Column” 306) of texts to explore how fictional forms enact ways of reading, erasing, and narrativizing the forms of social life that are propagated by energy cultures.³ This kind of energy analysis explores how both petrocultures and narratives shape oil’s social lives through modes of fictional abstraction and figuration.

Yamashita’s planetary petrofiction strategically positions extractivism and infrastructure as the two key entry points into the novels’ oil encounter. Although both works attend to the politics of global petroculturalism, their energy critiques address different geopolitical

arenas. While *Through the Arc* examines the proliferation of oil extractivism in Brazil's Amazon rainforest under US resource imperialism, *Tropic of Orange* shifts its energy critique to oil infrastructures in Los Angeles against the larger US-Mexican context. Reading the two together with this energy through line brings into view Yamashita's sustained interest in exploring the deep interconnection between extractivist and infrastructural petrocultures in the postwar context. The novels capture the rise of US oil imperialism that emerged out of the energy boom of the 1980s and 1990s, a period following the 1973 oil crisis in which falling energy prices proliferated the "cheap ecologies regime of overproduction" (Huber 144) and further solidified the US as the top global consumer of petroleum. If the experiences of oil are heterogenous and displaced as Ghosh notes, Yamashita traverses oil's various social and material geographies in order to bridge what Huber identifies as the disconnect between the "big stories of oil" (xi)—the stuff of "geopolitical strategy, oil kingdoms, titans of oil finance, and global oil capital"—and the ordinary ones that are "embedded in everyday patterns of life" elsewhere. Such efforts posit that the "biggest barrier to energy change is not technical but the cultural and political structures of feeling that have been produced through regimes of energy consumption" (Huber 169). I begin with *Through the Arc* before moving to *Tropic of Orange*. Through her experimentation with narrative form, Yamashita dramatizes how extraction and infrastructure—far from being static material practices and objects that simply nest in the background—shape the very contours of contemporary life. This engagement with oil's worldmaking capacities is largely made possible through her use of parody, a device, as Linda Hutcheon argues, whose "double process of installing and ironizing" (89) foregrounds the "*politics* of representation" (90). Her planetary petrofiction critiques the ideological means through which oil's powers are circulated: the fictions of infinite accumulation, human exceptionalism, and technoscientific progressivism that propel such petrocultures.

Extractivism's Arcs

Through the Arc of the Rain Forest chronicles the strange and sudden emergence of a mysterious rocklike polymer that infiltrates the Amazon rainforest. The Matacão, as the substrate is called, quickly catches the world's attention and kickstarts a scramble of global market forces, corporations, and vendors attempting to capitalize on the alluring polymeric substance. Exposing the environmental

and economic ramifications of developmentalism in Brazil under the auspices of US capitalism, the novel revolves around a wide cast of characters who flock to the Matacão for one reason or another. Only toward the end do we learn that the substance is the refined byproduct of nonbiodegradable garbage from landfills in “virtually every populated part of the Earth” (202); although buried and compacted across the entire planet, it only materializes in “virgin areas of the Earth.” In this way, the Matacão’s particular emergence in the Amazon rainforest, despite its global ubiquity, allegorizes the uneven offloading of plastic waste to Brazil and elsewhere in the Global South as a result of US capitalism’s oil extractivism and commodity exports. While the novel spotlights other extracted resources such as timber, rubber, nuts, and iron (and other general resources, all of which contribute to the industrial waste that constitutes the Matacão), the Matacão developmentalist storyline primarily highlights the transnational flows of petroleum resources and capital between the US and Brazil during the twentieth century, bringing into historical focus the oil extractions in the western Amazon that began in the 1920s and peaked during the US energy production boom in the 1970s.

Various critics have examined the politics of extractivism in the novel. Aimee Bahng argues that the novel excavates the various imperialist projects that have operated through the “racialized discourse[s] of tropicalization” (50) in the Amazon, particularly focusing on Yamashita’s nod to the rubber boom that reached its peak with the construction of Fordlândia (a rubber plantation) by the Ford Motor Company in the 1920s. Meanwhile, Matthew S. Henry analyzes the forms of nonhuman resilience and resistance at play against extractive capitalist practices, categorizing the novel as a material narrative that unseats the human exceptionalist narrative of the Anthropocene. Finally, Treasa De Loughry takes the important lead in arguing that plastic becomes “a symbol for the text’s world-systemic registration of the uneven effects of petro-plastic pollution and oil financing” (332) by examining the neoliberal financialization of the Amazon rainforest under the Brazilian military regime in the 1960s and 1970s. Building on these critics, I consider how Yamashita stages the flows and geographies of oil extractivism through her experimentation with nonhuman focalization and emplotment. This experimentation is crucial to apprehending extractivism’s socioecological arcs: it interlocks the itinerant geographies of commodification, consumption, waste, and extraction in order to foreground the geopolitical and geological life cycles of oil.

Through the Arc is narrated by a nonhuman focalizer: a mysterious rocklike ball that floats near the head of Kazumasa Ishimaru, a Japanese emigrant who works in Brazil as a renowned railroad inspector with the help of the ball's mysterious magnetism. Following a strange collision between the ball and Kazumasa, the ball becomes permanently tethered to Kazumasa's head as a satellite. Kazumasa's emigration to Brazil is partly explained by the ball's mysterious attraction to the Matacão in the Amazon. This is because our narrator, we later learn, is itself a fragment of the Matacão. Yamashita offers an intriguing petroleum derivative as the novel's focalizer, whose proximity to Kazumasa literalizes the oscillation between first- and third-person narration. Moreover, as Caroline Rody argues, the ball becomes a "parodic literalization of narratorial omniscience itself" ("Impossible Voices" 629), as its focalization enormously expands in scope: the ball mysteriously possesses the power of "simple clairvoyance" (*Through the Arc* 15) and accordingly narrates simultaneous events that occur elsewhere in Brazil, New York, and other parts of the globe. "I could see all the innocent people we would eventually meet. . . . I knew their stories as you will also know them" (8), the ball casually remarks. Its narratorial omniscience plays a key role in delineating the geopolitical routes of oil for the Matacão developmentalist plotline, as the story shuffles between the different perspectives of extractivism's perpetrators and victims, from the narrative of J. B. Tweep (the savvy American tycoon who leads the Matacão resource rush for the multinational US corporation GGG) to that of Mané da Costa Pena (a Brazilian farmer who loses his land following the discovery of the Matacão), amongst others. In this way, the ball's globetrotting traces the transnational networks that comprise oil's extraction, financialization, commodification, and disposal.

Thus, through its narratorial power, the ball becomes, as Heise argues, a "miniature replica of the Earth itself, the voice that emerges from the depths of geology" (*Sense of Place* 112). The ball's material composition, however, also brings into focus its status as a plasticized planet, so that it is oil that is compacted and translated into a miniaturized planetary narrator. In endowing it with the human power of narration, the novel provides focal access to omniscient oil that speaks. In a strange twist, then, the ball embodies the vantage point of both narrator and object of the plot (as a Matacão fragment). As Jinqi Ling aptly puts it, "on one level of the novel's narrative, the ball operates as a plot-driven 'actant' within the story, and on another level, it operates as a plot-generating mechanism signifying the novel's extratextual relations" (86). One crucial relation that arises from

this dialectic between plot product and producer is the analogous dialectic between petroleum as natural resource and geophysical matter—its instrumentalized status as an expendable commodity on the one hand and its capacity to shape planetary life as a geological force on the other. This tension highlights the ironic entanglement of human and nonhuman agencies in the novel, literalized by the contradictory power relation between the ball and Kazumasa: the ball's ability to exert magnetic influence on Kazumasa's movements and its equal inability to escape his orbit. By making the Matacão the product of both anthropogenic industrial waste and geologic processes, Yamashita illustrates petroleum's dual nature as subject and object, as it simultaneously mobilizes and is mobilized by human social relations.

Through this literary-material relation between producer and product, *Through the Arc* also stages oil's life cycle through a series of strategic emplotments. Crucially, the ball deliberately staggers the sequence in which we learn three key pieces of information: (1) the discovery of the Matacão, (2) its material origin, and, subsequently, (3) the narrator's origin. It is only in the diegetic climax (the final moment in which we discover that the Matacão is actually plastic detritus) that the initial extradiegetic mystery (the material origin of the narrator) is answered. This delay, of course, is all thanks to the ball's deliberate narrative postponement, whose discursive ordering loops the story's ending back to its provenance. Crucially, Yamashita demystifies extractivism's arcs through this narrative deferral. By waiting until the novel's end to connect the narrative's origin to the Matacão's origin, Yamashita figuratively stages the reading process as a form of petroleum extraction, an analogized extraction that is nonetheless literalized due to the narrator's own material status as plastic. Extractivism entails the extraction of raw materials from the earth; subsequently, they are transformed into natural resources that then become commodities, and, eventually, waste. The novel's emplotment reverses and loops this process: the narrative presents a plastic narrator that eventually discloses its origin as raw material, an origin that, in fantastical fashion, directs us back to the byproduct of industrial garbage made from other extracted matter elsewhere. In this way Yamashita reverses the sequence of extractivism's arcs to challenge the reader to reconcile narrative product with process and thereby petroleum waste with resource. The novel installs oil's life cycle—compaction, refinement, extraction, commodification, and disposal—into the story's logic of emplotment to ironize the very developmentalist narrative arc that organize its six parts: "The

Beginning,” “The Developing World,” “More Development,” “Loss of Innocence,” “More Loss,” and “Return.” Rather than ending with the technoscientific utopian future that the Matacão resource discovery and rush seem to promise, the novel upends this fiction of developmentalism by reassembling postextraction petroleum waste into the originating site of oil extraction.

This arc, however, eventually unfolds a posthuman narrative stage, as seen in the surreal and impossible ending. Toward the end, a resilient plastic-consuming bacteria begins to break down the Matacão—by now manufactured into an endless array of commodities—and destabilizes the global Matacão market. When it seems inevitable that the ball itself is next to go, however, we learn that its powers go even beyond omniscience or clairvoyance. After it, too, is consumed by the bacteria and disintegrates before Kazumasa’s eyes, the ball is somehow able to narrate its own death and present the novel’s two endings. The first ending describes the domestic tranquility that Kazumasa and his partner Lourdes share on a tropical farm in the mode of “pastoral cliché” (Heise, *Sense of Place* 105). However, a second ending upends this denouement. “But all this happened a long time ago” (*Through the Arc* 212), the ball explains in the final passage:

On the distant horizon, you can see the crumbling remains of once modern high-rises and office buildings, everything covered in rust and mold, twisted and poisonous lianas winding over sinking balconies, trees arching through windows, a cloud of perpetual rain and mist and evasive color hovering over everything. The old forest has returned once again, secreting its digestive juices, slowly breaking everything into edible absorbent components, pursuing the lost perfection of an organism in which digestion and excretion were once one and the same. But it will never be the same again.

Now the memory is complete, and I bid you farewell. Whose memory you are asking? Whose indeed.

This sudden transportation into the unknown future that begins the story raises a range of questions: Is the direct address to “you” diegetic or extradiegetic? Exactly when does this ending take place? And how is the ball able to recount this post-Matacão landscape following its own bacterial extinction? This ending’s posthuman prolepsis posits an impossible focalization, ontologically and temporally. The ball’s “temporal displacement of the narrating instance, which speaks its memories even as it has itself become memory” (Heise, *Sense of Place* 113), thus envisions an anticipatory ecological future narrated by an already extinct planetary agent. This posthuman ending ironizes and unsettles the first ending’s human pastoral, as

the temporal and deictic displacement of the narrator and narratee destabilizes the perspectival conventions and limits of human narration through parody. Thus, the second ending decenters the human to unveil a multispecies ecology that is as durable as it is adaptive. Presenting a speculative ecology of resilience and wonder in which post-oil life surfaces, Yamashita orients the horizon of postextractive futures as one that wields “the resistant potential of a ‘coalition’ of human-nonhuman actants” (Henry 578). In so doing, *Through the Arc* illuminates how the possibility of a post-oil future requires the imaginative destruction of extractivism’s fictions of development, accumulation, and technoscientific progress. This is literalized by the logic of the ending’s own fictional self-negation: the narrative’s postextractive future is only made possible through the logical and literal disintegration of the narrator as plastic waste and, hence, of the narrative itself.

The novel’s posthuman parody is made all the more apparent through its basic narrative template. The “Author’s Note” introduces the novel as “a kind of *novela*, a Brazilian soap opera” whose familiar templates of human drama—love and betrayal, happiness and sorrow, good and evil—are subject to change according to the “whims of public psyche and approval.” Referencing Claude Lévi-Strauss’s *Tristes Tropiques* and its structural anthropology, the note further explains that “the basic elements must remain the same” for the *novela*/novel because they rely on fundamental human themes.⁴ That this *novela* parody is arranged by the nonhuman ball only heightens the extent to which *Through the Arc* ironizes the practice of human storytelling itself, suggesting that our apprehension of petroleum requires a compact and digestible narrative template such as the *novela*. If anything, the ball seems to hint, what it shares with the *novela* is the reification of form into commodity. Like the Matacão’s fetishized form for its ability to mimic virtually any substance, the *novela*/novel form is malleable enough to cater to diverse audiences and recreate “the very sensation of life” (*Through the Arc* 142). This in part explains why the ball suggestively describes its materialization into a memory/story as though it was extracted and produced from the raw materials of life. The ball wryly notes, “I have become a memory, and as such, am commissioned to become for you a memory” (3). By calling attention to the novel’s own conversion from narrative nonexistence to existence—or from non-memory to memory—through the narratorial extraction of this plastic agent, Yamashita tracks petroleum’s own material transformations from raw material to natural resource, from commodity to waste.

But to reiterate the novel's last line: whose memory, indeed? In the very beginning of the frame narrative, the ball states, "By a strange quirk of fate, I was brought back by a memory" (3). While this reincarnation may stem from the Afro-Brazilian rite of Candomblé, the ball also suggests an alternative origin that goes deeper than any kind of human history. Read this way, the narrative logic of the ball's "reentry into this world" suggests the ball's transition from geological to geopolitical life, its entrance into the realm of human social relations. This is demonstrated in the opening scene of the primary Matacão storyline that immediately follows the frame narrative, in which the ball explains its sudden and unexplained emergence—and collision with Kazumasa—along the shoreline in Sado Island, Japan. As the ball vaguely puts it, a "flying mass of fire plowed into the waves, scattering debris in every direction," ending in a "sudden burst of steam and sizzle as when tempura dipped in batter is plunged into hot oil" (3–4). Only in retrospect can this apocalyptic tableau be understood to oddly match the description of an offshore oil blowout, such that the ball's collision with Kazumasa allegorizes oil's entrance into the human fossil-fuel economy. Like its two endings, then, *Through the Arc* presents these two beginnings to entangle oil's more-than-human geohistories with the situated human histories of extractions in Brazil and the Global South more broadly.

In this light, the epigraph, which explains the novel's title, is central to this narrative refraction: "I have heard Brazilian children say that whatever passes through the arc of a rainbow becomes its opposite. But what is the opposite of a bird? Or for that matter, a human being? And what then, in the great rain forest, where, in its season, the rain never ceases and the rainbows are myriad?" Highlighting "adaptation as an ecological mechanism that transforms bodies as well as landscapes" (Heise, *Sense of Place* 110), this epigraph begs the key question: what is the opposite of this petroleum narrator by the very end? This story or memory? Providing a narrative perspective from without and within the human, Yamashita orients collective memory within an entangled multitude that interlocks human and nonhuman histories. This multipositional focalization combines what Lawrence Buell identifies as the four spatiotemporal scales of environmental memory: "'biogeological' memory, 'personal' memory, 'social or collective' memory, and 'national' memory" ("Uses and Abuses" 95). In this instance, however, we are given a narrative vantage point from "a tiny impudent planet" (*Through the Arc* 5) that eventually refracts into an unknown entity or scope. Thus, the novel envisions a post-oil future by replacing petroculturalism's extractive logic with a fantastical assembly of planetary multispecies memory.

Although *Through the Arc* primarily revolves around the politics of extractivism, it also contains a crucial centerpiece that keys us in to an adjacent petroculture. In the middle of the novel, the revelation of the Matacão's polymeric composition is followed by another: the discovery of an enormous parking lot in the Amazon rainforest "filled with aircraft and vehicles of every sort of description" (99), a gigantic pile of wreckage comprising "an assorted mixture of gas-guzzlers." This decrepit automotive junkyard signals the novel's second energy unconscious: the absent center that links Matacão extractivism to petroculturalism's fuel economy and its transport infrastructures both within Brazil and beyond to the US. Migrating from junkyard to freeway, *Tropic of Orange* picks up this thematic thread to explore oil infrastructures and transportation in the city of Los Angeles.

Transport Tropics and Energy Cartography

In *Tropic of Orange*, erratic weather patterns and natural disasters abound as a bizarre orange warps the fabric of spacetime during its northward journey from Mexico to Los Angeles. In Los Angeles, a global cast of seven characters converge around another series of extraordinary events: a *lucha libre* match between two mythical figures, a recall crisis involving toxic drug-laced oranges, and a series of massive oil conflagrations that erupt on the 110 Harbor Freeway. The novel, as various critics have argued, critiques the trafficking of bodies, labor, and commodities across the US-Mexico border following the inception of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in the 1990s.⁵ Equally important, however, is how Yamashita plots the energy infrastructures that make those flows possible in the first place in order to foreground the environmental ramifications of NAFTA and its fossil-fuel economy.⁶ Her infrastructural imaginary brings together four key environmental issues: the increase of fossil fuels powering US capitalism's global trade and transport networks; the resource colonialism and labor exploitation across the Global South that undergird the extraction, production, and distribution of such commodities and fuels; the consequent biodiversity losses; and the local forms of displacement and disenfranchisement in Los Angeles's petrocultural geographies. Infrastructures emerge as key forces in the novel. Far from being mere background props, they dramatize the geographies of automotive petrocultures by inhabiting and shaping the narrative logic of setting, chronotope, and characterization.

Tropic of Orange opens with the discovery of a magical orange by Rafaela Cortes, a Mexican American caretaker working in a house

near Mazatlán. This orange, as it turns out, possesses the incredible power of altering climate zones because it carries the Tropic of Cancer wherever it goes. Over the course of the story, the orange is swapped among different characters as it is transported to Los Angeles. This key storyline foregrounds the transportation networks of NAFTA by destabilizing the hemispheric zoning between the US and Mexico. While the magical orange becomes Yamashita's geopolitical imaginary for bisecting the Global North and South, it also foregrounds the materiality of Mexico's climate zone. Notably, the magical orange is in poor health due to the effects of climate change back in Mexico, maturing "much too early" due to "a sudden period of dry weather" (11). Puzzling over the sudden onslaught of off-season drought and rain, one character muses, "What do they call it? . . . Global warming. Yes, that's it." A mobile microcosm of the warming planet, the orange becomes the master referent for climate change and its uneven environmental impacts by unmooring and transporting Mexico's climate zone to the US. Crucially, the magical orange transports the climatic effects that transportation produces, linking fossil fuels to the anthropogenic climate zones that they impact. By dragging climate zones from the Global South to the Global North, the magical orange makes visible US petrocapi-talism's geopolitical energy routes and their uneven energy impacts.

Fittingly, Yamashita chooses Los Angeles—the paradigmatic synecdoche for US automobility—as the orange's final destination to connect oil's extractive and infrastructural geographies. Famously nicknamed "autopia" (213) by Reyner Banham, Los Angeles brings into focus "the most spectacular paradoxes" (216) between "private freedom and public discipline" due to its abundance of automobiles and freeway systems. Geographically partitioned by transport infrastructures in this way, Los Angeles becomes what Stephanie LeMenager calls "petrotopia" (74), an oil city encapsulating Fredric Jameson's famous concept of postmodern hyperspace in which the "capacities of the individual human body to locate itself, to organize its immediate surroundings perceptually, and cognitively to map its position in a mappable external world" ("Postmodernism" 83) are disabled. For Mike Davis, this dislocation in part informs the cultural overtones of Los Angeles as "Doom City" (278), an apocalyptic metropolis with a continual "propensity for spectacular disaster."⁷ Automobility, hyperspace, and apocalypse: these three key imaginaries coalesce in Yamashita's Los Angeles to tie together oil's multifaceted worldmaking capacities across economic, infrastructural, and cultural vectors.

Against this backdrop, *Tropic of Orange* emphasizes cognitive mapping as a way to locate these geographies of power, as the two central characters Buzzworm (an African American war veteran and homelessness activist) and Manzanar (a Sansei Japanese American and former surgeon) demonstrate with their cartographies. Their maps, as critics have argued, pinpoint the city's geographies of division and exclusion across different contexts and scales. Buzzworm's street maps primarily identify the local forms of racial and socioeconomic segregation, dispossession, and displacement, while Manzanar's maps frame Los Angeles across broader contexts.⁸ While critics have examined the latter's transnational, transpacific, and global imaginaries, I key in closer on Manzanar's car(bon) cartography, as shown earlier with his unearthing of the Harbor Freeway's transport ecologies.⁹

Two significant moments further illustrate the extent to which Manzanar's maps excavate the deeper energy ecologies of the Harbor Freeway. In the first, Manzanar identifies the complex layers of the infrastructural city. Below the surface lie "the man-made grid of civil utilities" (57) that make up the "pipelines of natural gas," the "unnatural waterways of the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power," and the "electric currents racing voltage into the open watts of millions of hungry energy-efficient appliances." Sitting above all of this is everything that "ordinary persons never bother to notice": the "prehistoric grid of plant and fauna and human behavior . . . the historic grid of land usage and property, the great overlays of transport—sidewalks, bicycle paths, roads, freeways, systems of transit both ground and air, a thousand natural and man-made divisions." This infrastructural vista unearths the expansive networks of transit, wealth, zoning laws, and architectures that are built around the city's energy systems. Absent of human actors, this infrastructural focalization unsettles the narrative hierarchy of character over setting by reversing our typical reading of infrastructures as ancillary descriptive fillers. Infrastructures extrude from the narrative background, becoming dynamic actants that determine the parameters that make action, habitation, and movement possible for the novel's characters. In another key moment, Manzanar links this spatial map to an energy genealogy that reveals the historical evolution of different energy sources:

There was a time when the V-6 and the double-overhead cam did not reign. In those days, there were the railroads and the harbors and the aqueduct. These were the first infrastructures built by migrant and immigrant labor that created the initial grid on which everything

else began to fill in. Steam locomotives cut a cloud of black smoke through the heart of the West. Yankee pirates arrived with cotton linens, left with smuggled cowhides and tallow. And the water was eventually carved away from the north, trickled, then flooded, into this desert valley. And after that nothing could stop the growing congregation of humanity in this corner of the world, and a new grid spread itself with particular domination. As someone said, now the freeways crashed into each other with flower beds. (237)

This palimpsest chronicles the development of different energy sources (water, steam, coal, tallow) across various historical moments (Western Expansion, nineteenth-century railway transportation, the rise of steam engines and diesel motors), reaching all the way up to the contemporary predominance of fossil-fuel capitalism. Yet the crucial through line that Manzanar discerns across these energy genealogies is the harnessing of human labor to construct and maintain these energy systems, such that human labor itself is reified into expendable energy sources. Here, energy evolutions unfold not as technoscientific advancements but as histories of slow violence that reveal the instrumentalization of human bodies and nature as fuel. It illustrates how, as Andreas Malm argues, energy economies—fossil-based or otherwise—“necessitate waged or forced labour . . . as conditions of their very existence” (19). Moreover, this genealogy captures capitalism’s historically contingent relationship with fossil fuels to show that a post-oil energy future neither institutes nor guarantees an end to capital. Fast-forwarding back to the freeway with this hindsight, Manzanar now identifies the primary force organizing Los Angeles’s energy ecology: “a thing called work” (237). “It was work that defined each person in the city” (238), he observes, work that made people “scatter across the city this way and that . . . inside cars that they imagined defined their existence” (237–38). Here, the ironic contradiction of oil’s double valence as material fuel and social power under capitalism comes into full view: the technological maximization of transport mobility, speed, and efficiency only increases the alienation of human labor.

Although Manzanar’s cartography makes visible the synchronic and diachronic layers of Los Angeles’s energy ecology, it eventually zooms out beyond the city altogether. At one point, the vision of the Pacific Rim encroaches on Manzanar to reveal the transpacific flows of capital that route in and out of Los Angeles. If Buzzworm’s maps delineate the local coordinates of social injustice in Los Angeles, Manzanar’s maps register their deep links to the transnational geographies of power that cut across north-south and east-west lines

under US oil hegemony. In addition, his maps go so far as to excavate the freeway system's geological history, taking notice of "the changing crust of the Earth's surface . . . over billions of years" (170) until, eventually, humanity "covered everything in layers, generations of building upon building upon building the residue, burial sites, and garbage that defined people after people for centuries." Put altogether, this is a deep oil cartography encompassing Fernand Braudel's three historiographical *durées*, which Jameson summarizes as "the *longue durée* of geological time, then the middle time of the waxing and waning of institutions, and finally the short *durée* of historical events" (*Valences* 532). "*There are maps and there are maps and there are maps*" (*Tropic* 56), Manzanar declares. Envisioning a political cartography of adaptation, expansion, and scalability that ascertains energy's vectors across carbon and class, race and geography, place and planet, this planetary energy imagination puts into practice what Dipesh Chakrabarty calls a "negative universal history" (222). This vision counters globalization's universalism in which free-flowing capital masquerades as planetary collectivity and models an energy critique for the Anthropocene that attends to the routes of power that traverse across geopolitical and geological histories.

Fiction's Fuels

In addition to apprehending oil's multiscalar geographies and histories, the narrative form of *Tropic of Orange* captures the formative roles that oil plays in the production of social life. Whereas Manzanar's deep cartography traces oil's *longue durée*, the central plotline (or short *durée* of the historical event) concerning the conflagrations on the 110 Harbor Freeway dramatizes oil's worldmaking capacities. The first conflagration is caused by a collision between a Porsche and a propane truck, the second by an exploding semi containing "ten thousand gallons of sloshing gasoline" (112). Born out of the collision of two automotive petrocultures—the commercial and consumer industries—this carbon catastrophe, nicknamed the "Eternal Flame" (156), sustains itself for an entire week by feeding off a leaking natural gas reserve sitting below the freeway. In this way, the Harbor Freeway becomes the site of narrative rupture in which oil's slow violence is made hypervisible in the form of an apocalyptic spectacle at the infrastructural heart of the city.

As automotive petrocultures structure plot in this fashion, they also infuse setting and emplotment with a sense of speed, dynamism, and techno-power that occasionally even manifests in the syntax.

When Manzanar tracks the flow of automobiles that pour out of the Greater Los Angeles area, he senses the “solidarity” (206) of “all seven million residents” as they “all jam their bodies into vehicles of every size, all slam their doors, all buckle their belts, all gun their motors, all simultaneously” in one giant orchestration: “And CLICK, one two, SLIDE, three four, FLOMP, one two, BLAM, three four, SNAP, one two VROOOM, three four . . . and a five and a six, and MERGE, MERGE, MERGE. They all converged everywhere all at once. Man’s most consistent quest for continuing technology in all its treaded ramifications jammed every inch of street, driveway, highway, and freeway.” Mimicking comic book onomatopoeias, these horsepower verbs (MERGE, VROOM, SLIDE, FLOMP, BLAM) portray a dizzying technologized metropolis reminiscent of F. T. Marinetti’s futurist automobilism. This scene’s energetics informs the novel’s larger chronotope pronounced loud and clear through the 49 chapters of rapid-fire jumps in perspective and setting, such that Manzanar’s ability to “envision the automobile as an orchestral device with musical potential” (207) becomes our narrative analogue: a chaos of traffic sliced, sequenced, and exported into narrative order. Automotive petroculture in this way shapes the logic of emplotment. This is also evident in the characterization of Emi, a Westside television producer and car enthusiast whose narrative presence almost entirely revolves around her automobile: “Emi gunned the Supra around the corner, jammed into first, second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, dancing up and down each gear to the vehicle’s purring acceleration. ‘I love to shift gears,’ she gripped the stick and confessed” (60–61). Shortly afterward, “the black Supra moaned. Emi moaned” (62). This gear-shifting parallels the novel’s fast-paced chapter switches, stutters, and jumps across perspective, location, and time, such that automobility translates into erotics of sped-up emplotment. Through this petrocultural parody, *Tropic of Orange* suggestively likens its own narrative architecture to a freeway infrastructure with its own narrative merges, lane changes, and accelerations. Yamashita additionally illustrates this parallel with the “HyperContexts” chart that precedes the novel and lays out its chapters as a nonlinear diagram of characters, days, and locations. A gridded network divided by space and time, this unusual table of contents graphs the interweaving movements and locations of the seven central characters and notably contains many automotive-themed chapter titles, including “Traffic Window,” “Rideshare,” “The Hour of the Trucks,” “Lane Change,” “SigAlert,” and “Drive-By.” By creating a narrative grid inflected by automobility, *Tropic of Orange* showcases a sociology of oil in which automobility fundamentally

shapes our basic sense of interactivity, movement, and habitation through space and time.

In a novel driven at many levels by automotive energetics, the counterforce comes in the form of the narrative jam or slowdown. Eventually, the Eternal Flame causes the “greatest traffic jam the world had ever seen” (207), as the freeway shutdown halts all traffic and triggers an exodus of drivers who walk out onto the streets. Buzzworm witnesses firsthand the city’s sudden transformation and observes, “Amazing thing was everybody in L.A. was walking. . . . There wasn’t a transportation artery that a vehicle could pass through. It was a big-time thrombosis. Massive stroke. Heart attack. You name it. The whole system was coagulating right then and there. . . . Cars so squeezed together, people had to climb out the sun roofs to escape” (218–19). A new pedestrian urban ecology emerges in which post-disaster flâneurs, finally freed from their automobiles, stroll the city that had “become unrecognizable from an automotive standpoint” (219) with fresh new eyes. Close to the ground, the pedestrians now notice and interact with the city’s palm trees, which enable them to develop a form of multispecies cognitive mapping centered on situated intimacy, curiosity, and knowledge. As transplant species themselves, the trees emblemize the city’s potential to become a sanctuary ecology for both human and nonhuman migrants. As Buzzworm explains, “That was what the palm trees were for. To make out the place where he lived. To make sure that people noticed. And the palm trees were like the eyes of his neighborhood, watching the rest of the city, watching it sleep and eat and play and die” (33). Crucially, this narrative jam coincides with the moment when the homeless multitude radically reclaims the city through what Buzzworm calls “gente-fication” (83). Claiming the freeway as their new home by occupying the abandoned cars, the homeless decentralize the freeway system by transforming petrotopia into an informal sanctuary: significantly, the new community resembles a kind of post-oil commune centered on sustainability and refuge, including everything from urban gardening to waste management services. This coagulation of petrotopia’s urban metabolism through the standstill momentarily converts the freeway system into a kind of infrastructural commons for the disenfranchised. In this way, *Tropic of Orange* formalizes the collision of petrocultural and post-oil imaginaries through its play with narrative speed. Yamashita’s petrocultural parody imports and subverts automobility by alternating its narrative speed (fast/slow) and duration (long/short), ironizing automotive chronotopes conventionally found in road fiction such as Vladimir Nabokov’s *Lolita*

and Jack Kerouac's *On the Road*. In contrast to the diachronic logic of Manzanar's deep cartography, the synchronic story logic lays bare the ideologies of individualism, technological power, and freedom that compose automotive petrocultures.

Finally, if petrocultures shape the forms of social life that are made possible for the novel's actors, *Tropic of Orange* strategically links "petro-violence" (Watts 1) to the body to explore extraction's material, psychosocial, and ecological repercussions. This is most explicit in the final freeway showdown, in which the crackdown on the homeless settlement by the military assemblage—made up of the "coordinated might of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, the Coast and National Guards, federal, state, and local police forces" (239)—eventually escalates to a "foul massacre" (240). In other instances, however, petrocultures enter and shape the psychosocial spaces of actors. For example, the freeway drivers, enclosed within each vehicle as its "pulpy brain" (207) and disconnected from their "defenseless body," become alienated automotive cyborg assemblages, their mouths "speaking out of sync, as in a Toho Film production of Godzilla, with a strange dubbed language not their own." Moreover, Yamashita signals gendered forms of petroviolece with Emi and Rafaela, the two women who experience significant forms of violence inside automobiles (Emi is killed and Rafaela is beaten and raped). The link between extraction and petroviolece is made most apparent with Emi, who is killed by a stray bullet from military forces on the freeway. As she dies, Emi recounts an odd yet telling dream in which she envisions her eventual fossilized doom: "I had a dream that I got buried in the La Brea Tar Pits, and years later I became the La Brea Woman" (250). The figuration of Emi as the La Brea Tar Pits—the only human skeleton to be found in the La Brea Tar Pits among other fossils—associates the freeway with the tar pits as a space of subsumption and erasure, thereby connecting oil infrastructure to the site of hydrocarbon decomposition and extraction. Emi's dream of her future petroleum fossilization articulates fossil fuel's "double relationship to planetary time. . . . a sense of time borrowed against an exhaustible past and an exhaustible future" (Nixon 69). Rendered into a future extractive site, Emi's body illustrates life rendered expendable and obsolete under fuel cultures. Comparing her death to *The Big Sleep*, a Chandler story that revolves around the daughters of an oil baron, Emi dies with the final words, "Abort. Retry. Ignore. Fail . . ." (252). This utterance finalizes the transformation of her body into petroleum media, a glitched archive whose digital-material footprint will make its mark in geological futures.

While *Tropic of Orange* explores petroviolence's various manifestations, it also presents key forms of resistance. Arcangel, the magical prophet and performance artist who journeys to Los Angeles from the Global South, embodies such resistance. Carrying the colonial histories of Latin America, he becomes the "mythical agent of subaltern liberation" (Ling 132) and "symbolic sponsor of human emancipation on a hemispheric scale" (133). One of Arcangel's central performances occurs as he crosses the US-Mexico border in a bus with Rafaela, her son Sol, and other migrants. When the bus breaks down near the border, Arcangel—with attached "steel cables and hooks" (196) and "skin pulled taut across his bony chest and empty stomach" (197)—pulls the bus forward with his own body. Linking petroviolence to his subaltern body, Arcangel replaces oil power with material labor to convert the bus into people-powered transport. As he crosses the border, Arcangel inventories "*everything and everybody*" (201) in his poem, carrying the collective voices of the disenfranchised communities who have borne the brunt of extractivism's impacts and their perpetrators alike. Among those listed are the poor, the colonized,

And every rusting representation of an American gas guzzler from 1952 to the present and all their shining hubcaps. Then came the rain forests, El Niño, African bees, panthers, sloths, llamas, monkeys, and pythons.

Bearing witness to the legacies of violence, appropriation, and dispossession that have afflicted not only human but nonhuman communities, Arcangel's poem assembles a multispecies coalition across multiple histories and geographies. Finally, the novel's ending links extraction to infrastructure and periphery to imperial center when Arcangel reaches his final destination—the *lucha libre* showdown in the Pacific Rim Auditorium—to battle SUPERNAFTA, an equally mythical agent who, appropriately described as a cartoonish fuel truck, becomes the stand-in for US oil imperialism. Replicating the pyrotechnics of the Harbor Freeway fire, this final battle allegorizes US oil hegemony versus Global South resistance: surrounded by fires and explosions, Arcangel "*grip[s] his opponent like a splash of gasoline*" (262) as SUPERNAFTA implodes into "*a red cinder within, / a burning furnace.*" This final performance transforms political resistance into a spectacle of visual excess and mass entertainment, even as it strategically links US oil imperialism to Latin American extractivism through allegory. Like Manzanar's maps, Arcangel's magical performances and poems excavate oil's violent histories to show how carbon footprints

are colonial footprints. And like the magical orange's carrying of the tropic, Arcangel's magical transport highlights how petroviolece produces what Nixon calls "displacement without moving" (19) for the poor, in which they are left "stranded in a place stripped of the very characteristics that made it inhabitable"—a critique that is ironically highlighted through Arcangel's migration. Unlike Manzanar's mapping, however, Arcangel's pilgrimage enacts decolonization through the site of the subaltern body. As the metonym for the multitude, Arcangel transforms into a planetary assemblage that houses not only "every aboriginal, colonial, slave, and immigrant tongue" (47) but nonhuman biotic communities as well, his fantastical figure described as a "body-tree" made up of a mix of bamboo, birch, oak, pine, sequoia, and cactus. A planet housed inside the body and the body inside a planet: this fantastical embodiment, similar to the narrating ball in *Through the Arc*, envisions a multispecies alliance that resists extractive energy regimes through the power of collective memory and testimony.

Through the Arc of the Rain Forest and *Tropic of Orange* exemplify the possibilities of planetary petrofiction by situating readers at the crossroads of extractivist and infrastructural petrocultures. This orientation, as I've argued, captures planetary petrofiction's four key criteria: an attention to oil's intertwined geopolitical and geological histories; an understanding of the social and material worldmaking capacities of energy cultures; a depiction of the uneven energy risks and impacts under empire; and a framing of multispecies justice. Shuffling from body to network, labor to resource, species to geology, Yamashita's planetary petrofiction demands an energy justice framework that locates oil's diffusive forms and reaches across diverse ecological and cultural terrains. Her novels call for modes of seeing, critique, and resistance that are attentive and adaptive to energy genealogies that are often transhistorical in scope.

Ghosh declares that "the novel is never more comfortable than when it is luxuriating in a 'sense of place'" ("Petrofiction" 142), and does "not yet possess the form that can give the Oil Encounter a literary expression." Planetary petrofiction meets these challenges by contending that such a literary form may be incohesive in the singular. To seek a single form that gives shape to the planetary novel may be to ask for nothing less than the totality of the planet in the form of an infinite Borgesian library. Rather, the sense of perspectival adaptability and multiplicity that Yamashita's novels continually emphasize suggests that the roads to planetary thinking are many. In an intriguing scene in *Through the Arc*, Tweep and the GGG corpora-

tion force the ball to find other possible Matacão sites elsewhere in “Greenland, central Australia and Antarctica, not to mention every pocket of virgin tropical forest within 20 degrees latitude of the equator” (149). Given the novel’s metafictional hijinks, this scene raises a rather interesting question: are there other Matacão fragments that similarly materialized by “a strange quirk of fate” (3) elsewhere in the world? By providing us a brief glimpse into other unexplored geographies in this fashion, *Through the Arc* self-reflexively highlights its limited narratorial omniscience by suggesting the possibility of other narrators and untold stories. This literary imagination models a world text whose globe-trotting form conjures a planet that is both immense and unbounded, incomplete and partial.

Finally, if such novelistic arrangements imaginatively give form to oil, is there an alternative to the Great Derangement, an epoch characterized by a declension that “seems to leave us nowhere to turn but toward our self-annihilation” (Ghosh, *The Great Derangement* 111)? In Yamashita’s novels, it is precisely the odd tonal ambiguity that often befuddles readers, what Buell aptly characterizes as the strange oscillation between “pathos and carnivalesque ecocultural confusion, clutter, anxiety” (“Nature and City” 15). In her petrocultural parodies, this tonal seesawing springs out of the continual readjustments of narrative mood and mode, and enacts the precarious balancing of dystopian and utopian impulses. In this way, the possibility of post-oil futures—moments of nature emerging as multispecies ecologies of wonder and resilience, resistance and sanctuary—is simultaneously manifested and foreclosed at the precise moment of catastrophe. But apocalypse can be dangerous for its cheapness. At its worst, its proleptic logic leads to a pessimistic fatalism of extinct futures. For Yamashita, the workaround emerges through her experimentation with time. In *Tropic of Orange*, following its three epigraphs, a brief address by an already fictional author to the reader prefaces the narrative. It reads in part, “Gentle reader, what follows may not be about the future, but is perhaps about the recent past; a past that, even as you imagine it, happens. Pundits admit it’s impossible to predict, to chase such absurdities into the future, but c’est L.A. vie.” This preface is a present-tense metafictional address to a reader about the recent past, whose persistent presence propels the future forward. This liminality between a future that has already arrived and a past that lingers into the now produces a speculative presentification that enfolds past and future, situating, as Kandice Chuh argues, “the present as embedded in a geologic, epochal temporality” (537). To historicize the present in this way is to imagine alternate futures rendered unthinkable by

petrocapi-talism's powerful fictions. We might call this a mobilization of weak apocalypse: a worldmaking that ushers in vulnerability, intimacy, and precarity as alternative starting points for strategically revamping instances of planetary crisis into installations of planetary coalitions. This kind of imagination reveals a world that is already rendered otherworldly by a more-than-human nature that hails us. It elicits post-oil energy futures in which multispecies justice is as possible as it is necessary. It points us toward novel futures.

Notes

1. For Ghosh, the novel's probabilistic form enacts modes of concealment, unconscious or otherwise: if "narrative proceeds by linking together moments and scenes that are in some way distinctive or different. . . . What is distinctive about the form is precisely the concealment of those exceptional moments that serve as the motor of narrative" (*The Great Derangement* 17).
2. Examining the planetary turn in contemporary novels, Min Hyoung Song aptly notes that "one is never asked to wonder . . . about all the oil that is required to make possible all the travel these novels narrate" (568). He discusses *Through the Arc* as an example of such planetary novels. This essay in part builds on Song's analysis of Yamashita's planetary imagination by focusing more closely on oil extractivism and infrastructure.
3. Similarly, Michael Rubenstein proposes "infrastructuralism" as a literary-critical method for reading infrastructure. Such methods read for the "symbolic structures of material infrastructures, and for the ways in which those symbolic structures impact the construction of setting, plot and character in fiction."
4. Bahng explores the ethnographic aspect of *Tristes Tropiques* in the context of *Through the Arc*, arguing that both the text and the Brazilian *novela* participate "in the perpetual reconstitution of a national and international understanding of Brazilian culture" (31).
5. Criticism of *Tropic of Orange* has generally revolved around the two intersecting issues of globalization and social/environmental justice. Critics concerned with the former examine globalization's forms of neoliberal imperialism on the one hand and countering models of transnational decolonization and collectivity on the other. For example, Molly Wallace argues that the novel "is particularly attuned to the materialities of the U.S. in a globalizing world, and offers a critique not only of the politics of NAFTA and of globalization, but of the politics of the discourses sur-

rounding these phenomena" (148). Sue-Im Lee analyzes how, against the universalism of global village discourse, Yamashita "postulates another model of global collectivity, a different rationale for a globalist 'we' that can express the transnational, transcontinental nature of human existence without imperialist dimensions" (503). Robin Blyn takes a different approach from Lee by contending that "Yamashita's postmodern networks simultaneously figure the world space of neoliberalism and a mode of collectivity endowed with the potential to instigate radical change" (192). Meanwhile, critics focused on the latter explore the various forms of displacement, dispossession, inequity, and environmental hazards for racialized, gendered, and poor bodies. For example, Julie Sze examines the "gender politics of environmental justice, and the role of raced and classed people in the postindustrial city that functions as a nodal point in [the] global movement of people and goods" (40). Kara Thompson pinpoints the intersecting genealogies of race and climate change in the context of automobility and freeway ecologies to examine "the convergences and assemblages of racism, sexism, and environmental destruction that bear out Western taxonomies of the human" (93).

6. For an overview of the environmental impacts of NAFTA, see Karpilow, et al. 2–4.
7. Yamashita references Davis's *City of Quartz* in chapter 13 when Buzzworm discusses the city's racialized geography.
8. Rody argues that Manzanar's maps illustrate "Yamashita's sustained attention to human passages and interactions across seas and borders, and to the global economic and political changes to which they are intimately tied, transform[ing] the multicultural vision increasingly common in American ethnic fiction, [by] situating local Asian American, other ethnic, and interethnic events and relationships in the convergence of far broader forces" ("The Transnational Imagination" 132). Meanwhile, Sato argues that Manzanar's maps embody a transpacific gaze that foregrounds the "planetary flow of capital, commodities, and people" (83) across the Pacific Rim, functioning as forms of ethical witnessing and cognitive mapping that capture the imperialist legacies of dispossession, social abjection, and displacement. Not all critics read cartography positively. Blyn, for example, reads Manzanar's maps as a shorthand for the neoliberal network: "Manzanar's immaterial labor is not to produce the common, a collective subjectivity, but to make manifest an essential commonality among disparate objects and thereby to forge a coherent totality" (201). I argue that this simplifies his cartography.
9. Yaeger briefly discusses Manzanar's infrastructural maps; see "Introduction" 17. My analysis further contextualizes infrastructure by connecting it to oil.

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