UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles

Walking with the Ghost:

Contested Silences, Memory-Making, and

Cambodian/American Histories of Violence

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy

in Gender Studies

by

Lina Chhun

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Walking with the Ghost:

Contested Silences, Memory-Making, and

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by

Lina Chhun

Doctor of Philosophy in Gender Studies

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Professor Michelle F. Erai, Co-Chair

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Commemoration is highly fraught; memory and history-making are dialectical processes, constituted by the contingent relationship between what is remembered and forgotten, and what Lisa Yoneyama terms the "forgetting of forgetfulness." Memory-making is always punctuated by acts of forgetting, the proliferation of silences that produce historical amnesias as they also produce, paradoxically perhaps, affective remnants—what Ngô, Nguyen, and Lam (2012) refer to as "the particular resonances of…wars, refugee archives of feeling, and the recursive traces of both" (673). Challenging static renderings of history, "Walking with the Ghost: Contested Silences, Memory-Making, and Cambodian/American Histories of Violence" queries the complex relationships between registers of memory regarding the Cambodian Holocaust of 1975-79 and remembrances of the preceding U.S. bombing campaigns of 1964-1973. This study challenges historical models of "tragedy" and individualized models of trauma—as damage-centered, deviance-driven, and/or invested in abjection, vulnerability, and injury—which

disavow the complex humanity of Cambodian survivors and the continually intersubjective ways in which knowledge about violence and Cambodia is produced and reproduced.

I begin with an analysis of passages from my father's interview regarding the U.S. bombing of Neak Loeung, highlighting the ways experiential registers contain the potential to reproduce as well as trouble dominant Cold War logics. From here, I analyze two cases—the Documentation Center of Cambodia's framing of its archival mission and artist-documentarian Vandy Rattana's body of work—addressing the ways archives function to produce different claims to "historical truth" in the afterlife of violence. Following Rattana's 2009 exhibit "Bomb Ponds"—which photographically depicts the affective pull of landscapes in conjunction with the need to listen to experiential narratives—I then center the "landscape ethnography" as one site of memory-making concerning the U.S. bombing campaigns. Expanding the notion of "living archive," I employ a capacious understanding of the everyday, assessing how landscapes and stories-in-motion make visible the violence of Cold War histories. Centering an analysis of the multiple meanings of crossing in two oral histories, I end with an exploration of the relational affects and effects of violence and trauma as they travel across time and space. Thinking through queer temporalities, (enforced) transit, and the phenomenon of return, I grapple with notions of justice and reparation in the afterlife of historical violence, thinking reparation not as "repair"— "to fix"—but as "amends," "to mend," and therefore, to do the work of care.

The dissertation of Lina Chhun is approved.

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2019

TABLE OF CONTENTS

		Page
Introduction	Walking with the Ghost: *On Feminist Epistemologies and Feminist Praxis*	1
Chapter One	"Sometime American Can. . .Make Mistake Too. . ." *Memory, Documentation and Contested Framings of Violence*	41
Chapter Two	Living Archives and Spatial Histories: *Landscape Ethnography and an Accounting for the Present*	74
Chapter Three	Walking with the Ghost: *On Affective Archives and the Work of Care*	113
Conclusion	*The Koh Tree*	147
Notes		159
Bibliography		170

LIST OF FIGURES

Page

Figure 1. “Stone plaque” superimposed on “Rubber trees in formation” and Takeo (2009) by Vandy Rattana. Image by Mary Uyematsu Kao 5

Figure 2. CMAC map of Cambodia, Landmines and Unexploded Ordnance 34

Figure 3. *Khmer Rouge Trial 7* (2009). Digital C-Print. 60 x 90 cm/Edition of 5 + 2AP. Photograph by Vandy Rattana 59

Figure 4. *Takeo* (2009). Digital C-Print. 91 x 111 cm. Edition of 5 + AP. Photograph by Vandy Rattana 61

Figure 5. *Kompong Thom, Sambor Prey Kuk* (2009). Digital C-Print. 91 x 111 cm. Edition of 5 + AP. Photograph by Vandy Rattana 64

Figure 6. Rubber trees in formation, Tbong Khmum Province (2015). Photograph by Linda Chhath 68

Figure 7. Stone plaque, Tbong Khmum Province (2015). Photograph by Linda Chhath 69

Figure 8. Bomb Crater at Lumphat, Ratanakiri Province (2016). Photograph by Heang Chhun 70

Figure 9. Banana Tree in a Bomb Crater, Mondulkiri Province (2016). Photograph by Lina Chhun 81

Figure 10. Crossing the Tonle San, Ratanakiri Province (2016). Photograph by Lina Chhun 89

Figure 11. Bomb Crater at Lumphat, Ratanakiri Province (2016). Photograph by Heang Chhun 90

Figure 12. Boundary marker at Lumphat, Ratanakiri Province (2016). Photograph by Lina Chhun 94

Figure 13. Water tower at Lumphat, Ratanakiri Province (2016). Photograph by Lina Chhun 94

Figure 14. Interior of bombed building at Lumphat (2016). 99
Photograph by Lina Chhun

Figure 15. Exterior of second building at Lumphat (2016). 100
Photograph by Lina Chhun

Figure 16. Sign at Yeak Loam Lake, Ratanakiri Province (2016). 100
Photograph by Lina Chhun

Figure 17. History of Yeak Loam Lake, Ratanakiri Province (2016). 101
Photograph by Lina Chhun

Figure 18. Yeak Loam Lake, Ratanakiri Province (2016). 101
Photograph by Lina Chhun

Figure 19. Yeak Laom Lake nearing sunset, Ratanakiri Province (2016). 103
Photograph by Lina Chhun

Figure 20. Installation Piece, Cascading "Bombies," COPE 107
(Cooperative Orthotic and Prosthetic Enterprise) Vistor Centre,
Centre for Medical Rehabilitation (CMR), Vientiane, Laos (2016).
Photograph taken by Lina Chhun

Figure 21. The new hospital in Neak Luong, Prey Veng Province (2017). 108
Photograph by Lina Chhun

Figure 22. Along the Mekong River, Neak Luong (2017). 109
Photograph by Lina Chhun

Figure 23. (Bomb) Ponds at Stung Sloat, Prey Veng Province (2017). 109
Photograph by Lina Chhun

Figure 24. Blue marker marking UXO, Stung Sloat (2017). 110
Photograph by Lina Chhun

Figure 25. Close up, blue marker marking UXO, Stung Sloat (2017). 110
Photograph by Lina Chhun

Figure 26. The Mekong river nearing sunset in Neak Loeung (2017). 112
Photograph by Lina Chhun

Figure 27. On the road to Battambang (2016). 142
Photograph by Lina Chhun

Figure 28. Pagoda grounds on the way back to Phnom Penh (2016). 143
Photograph by Lina Chhun

Figure 29. Pagoda on the way back to Phnom Penh (2016). 144
Photograph by Lina Chhun

Figure 30. Former grounds of labor camp (2016). 145
Photograph taken by Lina Chhun

Figure 31. Kapok tree at Ta Prohm Temple, 154
Angkor, Siem Reap Province, Cambodia.
Photographed by Victor Yezhov, Provided by Liny Chhun

Figure 32. Close-up of kapok tree at Ta Prohm Temple. 155
Photograph by Lina Chhun

Figure 33. Wide-Shot, Ta Prohm Temple, 158
Angkor, Siem Reap Province.
Photographed by Victor Yezhov, Provided by Liny Chhun

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INTRODUCTION Walking with the Ghost:
On Feminist Epistemologies and Feminist Praxis

A few months after returning from dissertation work abroad, I attended a talk…. The talk expanded on Aisha [Finch]'s recent book, explored gendered dimensions of slave insurgencies in Cuba and the sugar time of the plantation economy.
…

As I listened to Aisha speak all those months ago, I thought about the terror of carpet-bombing campaigns—the infinite time of terror that was sugar cropping on the plantation—and the perpetuity of insecurity accompanying the oftentimes indiscriminate nature of bombing campaigns (elsewhere of course, in our contemporary history). I thought about what happened to the body when it was obliterated in the U.S. carpet bombings of Cambodia in the 1960s and early 1970s. And I wondered about the body and how it might register that historical trauma in the present.

I want to approach with caution here.[1]

When I began what would eventually become—through unexpected twists and serendipitous (re)turns—this dissertation project ten years ago, we seemingly were living in a different time. Ten years ago, after the George W. Bush two-term presidency that saw the beginnings of the ongoing "war on terror," Barack Obama was elected to the office of the President of the United States of America on a wave of hope and a platform of change. Fast forward to March 2016, and I return to the U.S. after fourteen months of fieldwork in Cambodia, at the tail-end of the Obama administration and at the height of the Democratic and Republican primaries. As of this writing, it is June 2019, and we are in the third year of the Donald Trump presidency.

Ten years and much has changed, although through the production and reproduction of neo/liberal logics, much also remains the same—albeit in different form, possibly more insidious form, as Michelle Alexander argues regarding mass incarceration in the U.S. as the new Jim Crow during the "post-racial" Obama era: "We have not ended racial caste in America; we have merely redesigned it."[2] As a child of the '90s during Bill Clinton's "welfare reform," I came of

age at the turn of the millennium during the George W. Bush era, turning sixteen years old on September 11th, 2001. Within my lifetime, the entrenchment and naturalization of neoliberal logics and intensification of racial capitalism has produced a period of seemingly never-ending war, the war of compounding debt and what Neferti Tadiar terms "the war to be human." In this time of entangled liberal war and liberal peace,[3] Tadiar asserts that:

> "Rather than propaganda in the service of war…the present war has been placed in the service of propaganda. By this I mean war is the means for propagating a long standing international and domestic order that the struggles of people everywhere trying to live and be free have placed in crisis."[4]

Addressing the "war on terror" that officially began with the United States invasion of Afghanistan on October 7, 2001, Tadiar's analysis provides the foundation to link domestic sites to transnational sites of violence—Ronald Reagan's "War on Drugs," Bill Clinton's euphemistically-entitled "Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act," and George W. Bush's "War on Terror," all functioning in the service of producing and reproducing (neo)liberal empire and the wages of racial capitalism.

Beginning March 19th, 2003 with the U.S. invasion of Iraq, the devastating "shock and awe" campaign—the use of overwhelming power and spectacular displays of force to paralyze the enemy—of "Operation Iraqi Freedom," in turn resonated with a multitude of historical predecessors, including Richard Nixon's desire to induce "a little shock" via debilitating bombardment of Cambodia from 1970-1973 with "Operation Freedom Deal." The U.S. war machine operates through the use of these technologies to debilitate and kill, producing the infinite time of terror that structures ongoing war, the perpetual insecurity that comes to structure the day to day. And although the immediate enemy is continually constituted and reconstituted, the "war on terror"—a war *of* terror—continues on, the amorphous specter of "terrorist" and "terrorism" retaining their utility and fungibility.

In this introduction, and throughout this dissertation, I think through the contours of terror, time, space, and the body and the registers of violence, memory, history, and reparation vis-à-vis Alexander Weheliye's method and methodology of "bringing-into-relation": the possibility of "think[ing] through the commonalities and disparities between…two spaces without awakening the demon of comparison."[5] Disentangled from the trap of comparative models, this "bringing-into-relation" forms the foundation of my work, offering an analytical lens to query the racialized and gendered logics that construct the world in which we live and die. "Bringing-into-relation" also opens up our understanding of what it means to be human in this deadly time of war,[6] Weheliye's intervention reiterating the necessity of anchoring our analysis of "the human" to a different "entry point" without conflating this subjectivity for all human experience.

For those of us who are citizens of the United States as well as guests on this stolen land, "bringing-into-relation" also provides the grounds for a reckoning with the colonial logics that shape/d the violent institutions of settler colonialism and transatlantic slavery.

In the wake of the election, on the morning of November 9, 2016, I woke up feeling a deep sadness. Feeling a kind of mourning that I knew many others across the United States and elsewhere were feeling too. Feeling a kind of setting in motion that feeling in my body I know too well… knowing that this was likely happening across the nation, too.

But if I am completely honest, I know the mourning started much earlier than this. Started even before the results were announced. Started the evening of November 8th, when I marked my ballot for Hillary Clinton and enacted my imperial privilege as a U.S. citizen. The mourning started before that, too.[7]

Through this "bringing-into-relation," we might trace the continuities and discontinuities of these logics across time and space, within and across the constructed borders of the national and transnational.

I want to approach these understandings of violence with care, as Christina Sharpe has written, "I am trying, too, to find the words that will articulate care,"[8] *an ethics of care. In doing so, I hope to minimize the harm I might do in further extracting from vulnerable histories and communities, to do less violence to the silences of history, and honor—as my amazing friend Karen Hanna has recently articulated—the necessity of "challenging academic thievery."*[9]

When I began conducting familial oral histories ten years ago—regarding family members' experiences growing up in Cambodia, living through civil war and genocide, and immigrating to the United States—I never could have imagined the paths I would come to take as a result of these familial stories. Feeling a kind of fraught ambivalence regarding the collection of trauma narratives and dissatisfaction with much of the literature on Cambodian survivors and silence, I've experienced an unrelenting tension these last ten years. This tension however—oftentimes experienced as discomfort—has driven many of the unexpected twists and turns this dissertation would come to take, and this tension has served as a continual reminder to pause when necessary. This accompanying tension has served as a guide in the search for a language that might best articulate care, an epistemology and praxis that takes care not to perpetuate the harm of "academic thievery;" this academic thievery manifested in both citational form as well as methodological form—scholarship invested in the extraction of trauma, in the appropriation of experiential violence, and in the consumption of the dead and dying.[10]

What I hope to do in this dissertation is to continue to find and refine the words that might articulate care. Such words ask how we account for silences in the historical record, remember and mediate violence, and engage with the ethics of harm in addressing ways of knowing and ways of being; knowing and being inextricably intertwined in what Christina Sharpe calls 'the wake.' In the way Christina Sharpe puts forth the possibility of 'wake work' as a mode of living otherwise—"we join the wake with work in order that we might make the wake and *wake work* our analytic, we might continue to imagine new ways to live in the wake of

slavery, in slavery's afterlives, to survive (and more) the afterlife of property"[11]—I offer the possibility of 'walking with the ghost' as my capacious enactment of wake work in this dissertation. Through 'walking with the ghost,' I hope to continue to contribute to a language and praxis for knowing, living and being otherwise, to an imperfect ethics of care, in the wake of historical violence.

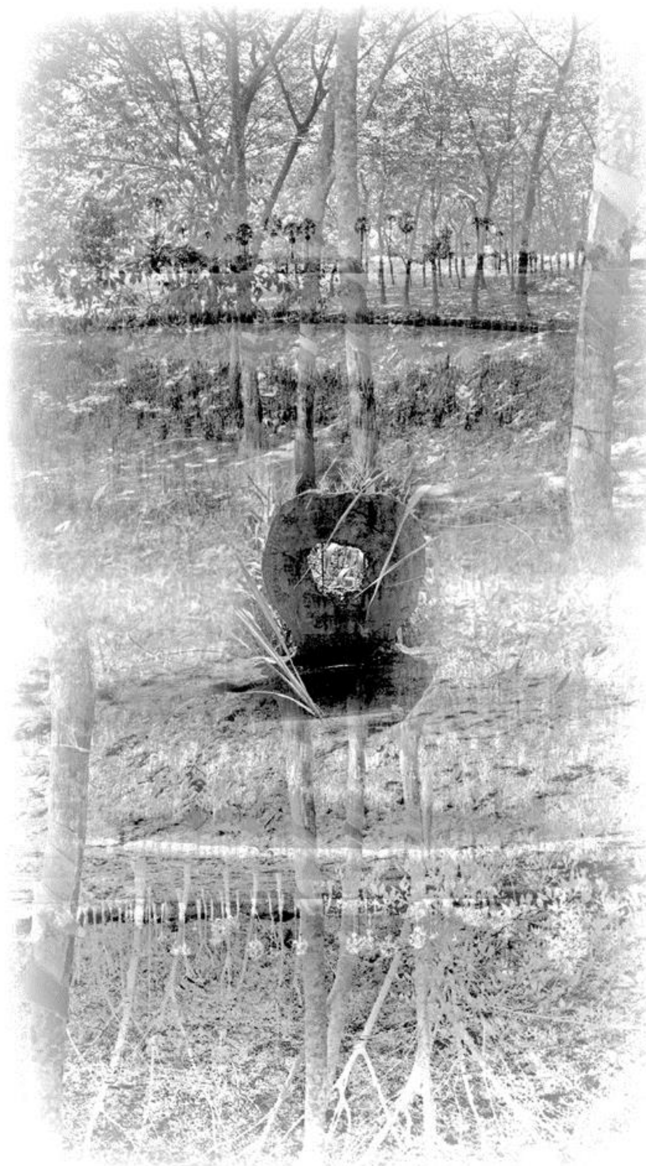

Figure 1. "Stone plaque" superimposed on "Rubber trees in formation"
and *Takeo* (2009) by Vandy Rattana.
Image by Mary Uyematsu Kao[12]

Cambodian/American Histories[13]

During the Cold War, a multitude of regional and global geopolitical events culminated to bring about the conditions that enabled the extremist regime known as the Khmer Rouge to come into power, ushering in the period of time William Shawcross has termed the Cambodian Holocaust.[14] Between the years of 1975 to 1979, an estimated one-fifth of the population of the Southeast Asian country of Cambodia was decimated; within the span of these three years, approximately 1.5 to 2 million Cambodians died from starvation, disease, illness, murder, or torture. Along with this destruction of human life came the loss of cultural and social infrastructure.[15]

Before gaining independence from the French in 1953, Cambodia existed as a part of the Indochinese French colony composed of Cambodia, Vietnam, and Laos. During the Vietnam War of the 1960s, many North Vietnamese retreated into sanctuaries in Cambodia. Prince Sihanouk, head of Cambodia's constitutional monarchy, adopted an official stance of neutrality at the beginning of the Vietnam War. In 1965, under President Lyndon B. Johnson's administration, the bombing of Cambodia began in an attempt to draw out the North Vietnamese that had retreated there. Selectively taking into account Cambodia's neutrality, President Johnson did not allow U.S. troops into Cambodia. This changed however, in 1969 with the administration of President Richard Nixon.[16]

In 1969, Nixon escalated the bombings begun under Johnson. In 2000, President Clinton released extensive Air Force data on American bombings in Southeast Asia from 1964 to 1975. The data released show that the bombing was nearly five times as extensive as previously thought; 2,756,941 tons were dropped on Cambodia. Owen and Kiernan give the following comparison for perspective: "the allies dropped just over 2 million tons of bombs during all of

World War II, including the bombs that struck Hiroshima and Nagasaki: 15,000 and 20,000, respectively. Cambodia may well be the most heavily bombed country in history."[17] Previously, about 50,000 to 150,000 Cambodians were estimated to have died from American bombing. Given the revised data concerning tonnage dropped on Cambodia, this number must be higher, with estimates ranging up to 500,000 deaths, in a country at the time of about 7 million.

Along with the deaths of Cambodians, the U.S. bombings contributed to driving the North Vietnamese further inside Cambodia, as well as to the mass exodus of an estimated two million displaced peasants from the countryside to the cities. Malnutrition, inflation, and military corruption added to the growing discontent of these rural refugees. Prince Sihanouk's policies led to destabilization in Cambodia and the United States-backed coup instigated in 1970 by Lon Nol, a former general in Sihanouk's army. This began a five-year civil war in Cambodia. In response to the coup, Sihanouk officially aligned himself with a Khmer Rouge coalition backed by China. This move legitimized the Khmer Rouge and allowed for the group's eventual takeover of the government.[18]

The Khmer Rouge came to power in April 1975. When the Khmer Rouge first took over the Cambodian capital, Phnom Penh, they were received as liberators and saviors. This soon changed. Upon seizing power, the Khmer Rouge evacuated Cambodia's people from its cities into the countryside and forced the populace to work in cooperatives. When placing people in these rural work camps, the Khmer Rouge separated families and mandated collective eating. A vast number of people who died under the Khmer Rouge's reign died of starvation, a result of the severe rationing of food. Medical care became nonexistent in the camps as doctors were targeted along with other "intellectuals" for extermination. Major purges took place as the Khmer Rouge sought to eliminate any perceived enemies of their revolution. Secret prisons were opened, the

most infamous being Tuol Sleng—known as S-21 during the genocide—which was converted from an old high school. At Tuol Sleng, close to 40,000 prisoners were interrogated, tortured, and then killed, their bodies buried in mass graves; these graves, along with other mass graves containing those who had died during this time period, came to be known as "the killing fields." From 1975 to 1979, approximately 1.5 to 2 million Cambodians died under the Khmer Rouge regime from starvation, disease, illness, murder or torture.[19]

Mediations: Cambodian/American Histories

Although I write this overview of modern Cambodian history in the language of "facts," as many critical theorists and scholars have illustrated, history writing—although cloaked in the guise of objectivity—is not neutral. Rather, the production of history (and the narrative of "the historical event") is and has always already been, imbedded in cultural frames that determine what becomes highlighted and what goes missing (or silenced). In addition to determining what becomes history, these dominant frames—and the logics that undergird the naturalization of such frames—also come to establish the kinds of stories we tell about national as well as "world" history.

To illustrate the functioning of these predominant frames and the production of history, as well as foreground the intervention this dissertation hopes to make, I would like to take David Chandler's 1979 article, "The Tragedy of Cambodian History" and his 1994, "The Tragedy of Cambodian History Revisited," as one site of analysis. In his 1979 text, Chandler engages in a psychological (and potentially pathologizing) profiling of Cambodian culture—its people and leaders—in order to explain the historical violence of the Cambodian Holocaust. Chandler begins his article with the following statement:

> "The word 'tragedy' springs to mind in writing about Cambodia, I think, because of the price its people have been made to pay for their Republic and their liberations, for their alliance and their war with the United States, for independence in the 1840s and French protection after that…and for the deeply ingrained notion that there are 'big' and 'little' people in society, which is in turn woven, right or wrongly, in a hierarchal design."[20]

While gesturing towards "outside" complicity as well as geopolitical considerations in what becomes the "tragedy" of Cambodian history, Chandler ultimately frames historical violence in Cambodia as an internal affair. Mentions of Western intervention in the form of U.S. imperialism or French colonialism of the era before, ring with a benign tone at best and what could be marked as paternalism at worse, as is evident in Chandler's few references to French presence in Cambodia:

> "In the 1960s, Cambodians would often say that the temples were the work of gods, or giants, even after French *savants* had *proved* they had been built by people who spoke (and wrote) recognizable Cambodian, or Khmer."[21] Later on, Chandler also writes: "During the colonial era, the French *gave Cambodia back its past* by deciphering inscriptions, refining chronological frameworks, and roughing out notions of Angkorean law, religion, and society. Whether the *gift* was usable or not is another matter…." (emphasis mine).[22]

The framing of Cambodian history in this article reflects the kinds of Enlightenment and colonial logics that undergirded the violence of European expansionism. The investment in "truth"—oftentimes read as a superiority of rationality/reason the colonizer had over the colonized[23]—as well as progress narratives—the trope of benevolence that positioned the colonizer as morally advanced—foreground the author's constructed authority to speak on behalf of Cambodian history and to project onto that history the interiority of the Cambodian people. Ultimately, Chandler frames Cambodian history as "tragic" due to fatalistic Cambodian legacies and cultural traditions: "Thus, the history of Cambodia before 1970 was tragic, because its people were exploited by their leaders and, in a sense, by their own way of looking at the world.

Powerlessness encouraged further exploitation, which was seen as 'correct' or 'inevitable,' perhaps because it so frequently succeeded."[24]

Fifteen years later in 1994, Chandler's "The Tragedy of Cambodian History Revisited" moves beyond its predecessor's more discrete framings of "tragedy"—a framing that predominates American popular consciousness of Cambodia. However, although Chandler moves beyond narratives of historical violence in Cambodia as contained, he continues to frame Cambodian history through oftentimes reductionist and essentialist approaches to Cambodian culture. Although the article makes attempts at explicating Orientalism (including Chandler's own prior assumptions)—

> "In 1978 Cambodia's tragedy was not so much historical as it was a case of ongoing suffering. As I spoke Cambodians were saddled with the Khmer Rouge, home-grown fanatics who were still in power at the time. It was the 'home-grown' aspect that had attracted my attention and bewildered me. So did the apparently limitless ferocity of the regime, which was at odds with my sentimental and Orientalist recollection of the country, where I had lived and worked for two years in the early 1960s"[25]

—this is oftentimes followed by cases of Eurocentric framing. Chandler's continual framing of Cambodian leaders (past and present) as "clownish,[26] incompetent leaders"[27] and Cambodia's people as "cowed, bewildered subjects,"[28] his positioning of France as savior—"Anticolonialism never struck very deep roots in Cambodia, where people were probably better off under France than they would have been as a backwoods minority in Thailand, Vietnam, or both"[29]—as well as his rhetorical question, "What was it about the society and its arrangements that angered Pol Pot and his colleagues, and led them to try to take the place and its traditions apart?,"[30] construct a narrative both binary as well as isolationist, with Western and outside powers such as China, taking no part in the "tragedy" of Cambodian historical events.

In the second section explicitly devoted to the "revisiting" of Cambodian history, Chandler continues to expand on many of these narratives, this time in regards to the aftermath

and first set of elections in Cambodia in the 1990s. Here again, Chandler engages in a psychobiography of the Cambodian people in the context of legacies of "uncontrolled power" producing a *déjà vu* in regards to human rights abuses— "Prior to the elections the party went out of its way to terrify the recently formed, inexperienced, and unarmed opposition parties, whose members often displayed the stubborn, foolhardy courage that is another characteristic of the Cambodian people."[31] Chandler ends this "revisited" text with a return to the benevolence trope in his first article, imagining "features that seemed to me peculiarly Khmer, such as the widespread belief that UNTAC would linger in Cambodia indefinitely, to protect the people against themselves."[32]

To this benevolence trope is an imbuing of liberal logics and Enlightenment reason, "that politics in Cambodia can be changed and that such concepts as the rule of law, civil society, and respect for human rights can take root in Cambodian culture."[33] Chandler argues that progress can indeed happen if those in Cambodia and those among Cambodia's neighbors learn to change their ways (to do "democracy"—here called "pluralism"—as we in the West do) and come to accept "freedom." As Tyner, Sirik, and Henkin argue, like most "[c]onventional accounts of Cambodia's recent violent past," David Chandler's texts "present a series of discrete, temporally bounded periods: war (1970-1975), genocide (1975-1979), occupation (1979-1989), and post-transitional (1989-present),"[34] which participate in a dialectical history-making that petrifies this dominant periodization, making legible only those forms of violence marked as barbarism by liberal empire.

On Memory and History

Dialectical processes of memory and history-making are detailed in Haitian scholar Michel-Rolph Trouillot's *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History.* Trouillot's text primarily addresses the *how* of history rather than the *what*—or "an abstract [and simultaneously essentialist] concern for the nature of history"[35]—focusing on the process of historical production as well as the purposes of historical narrative. In his discussion of history and its production, Trouillot distinguishes between what he calls "historicity 1": the materiality of the sociohistorical process (i.e. "what happened") and "historicity 2": our knowledge of the historical process or the produced historical narrative detailing "[that] which is said to have happened;"[36] historicity 2 always produced within a particular historical context. Although Trouillot is clear in describing these two dimensions of historicity, he is also careful to "acknowledge both the distinction and the overlap between process and narrative. Thus although [his] book is primarily about history as knowledge and narrative, it fully embraces the ambiguity inherent in the two sides of historicity."[37]

Attuned to the contingency regarding the production of historical narrative—"what history is changes with time and place, or better said, history reveals itself only through the production of specific narratives"[38]—Trouillot describes the ways in which an excavation of the overlapping processes of the two sides of historicity can lead to an understanding of "the differential exercise of power that makes some narratives possible and silences others."[39] In tracing this exercise of power, Trouillot enumerates how "[s]ilences enter the process of historical production at four crucial moments: the moment of fact creation (the making of *sources*); the moment of fact assembly (the making of *archives*); the moment of fact retrieval (the making of *narratives*); and the moment of retrospective significance (the making of *history*

in the final instance)."[40] For the purposes of this dissertation project, I am most interested in how Trouillot describes these silences and their processes of incorporation in regards to what he positions as the "general silencing of the Haitian Revolution by Western historiography"[41]—a revolution and history that becomes what Trouillot conceives of as a "non-event."

Similar to the ways in which Lisa Yoneyama—in a special issue of *Amerasia Journal*—later theorizes what becomes the "unthinkability" of U.S. war crimes,[42] Trouillot positions the erasure of the Haitian Revolution in History (with a capital "H") as a consequence of unthinkability during both the processes of historicity1 as well as historicity 2. Following Bourdieu, Trouillot defines the unthinkable "as that for which one has no adequate instruments to conceptualize."[43] Trouillot goes on to note that, "in spite of the philosophical debates, in spite of the rise of abolitionism, the Haitian Revolution was unthinkable in the West not only because it challenged slavery and racism but because of the way it did so…. very few in the Americas had been willing to acknowledge…the humanity of the enslaved."[44] Rather, ideologies of innate pathology and deviance were constructed in relation to racialized Others in order to reconcile the contradictions of slavery and colonialism with Enlightenment ideals.

Such an intervention into silenced histories and their underlying logics is also at the heart of W.E.B. Du Bois' *Black Reconstruction in America*. Through his engagements with Marxist theories of labor-capital and his critiques of hegemonic historical accounts situated in a refusal to recognize Black humanity, Du Bois articulates the kinds of Enlightenment logics undergirding predominant narratives regarding slavery, the Civil War, and Reconstruction. Speaking back to "the propaganda of history," a propaganda that would have us believe that "Negroes were the only people to achieve emancipation with no effort on their part," and "That Reconstruction was a disgraceful attempt to subject white people to ignorant Negro rule,"[45] Du Bois re-centers Black

labor and subjectivity, re-articulating the experience and meaning of the war for Black laborers in the South.

Articulating a Black agency silenced by an Enlightenment science invested in the biological (and thus intellectual, rational, and moral) inferiority of the racial Other, Du Bois re-imbues the Black laborer in the South with a different kind of reason—a reason that allowed "the Negro to wait, look and listen and try to see where his interest lay,"[46] before withdrawing of his labor from the plantation South and transferring this labor to Northern armies. Du Bois' argument regarding this transfer of labor by Black slaves, and the subsequent transformation of slaves from laborers to soldiers fighting for their own freedom, forms the crux of his critique of predominant historical narratives—those narratives embedded in the logics of white supremacy, for which Black agency and humanity were illegible. Articulating those colonial logics of white supremacy lodged in institutions of knowledge production, Du Bois—as Trouillot does regarding archival power's ability to define the Haitian Revolution as "not a serious object of research and, therefore, of mention"[47]—materializes the conditions that erased the contributions of Black labor to the winning of the Civil War as well as the conditions that made Black thriving unthinkable during Reconstruction.

Trouillot and Du Bois' theorizing of "unthinkability" as well as Trouillot's discussions regarding formulas of erasure and banalization-trivialization (both formulas of silence), offer a generative framework in which to think through the complex relationship between historical "event" narratives of the Cambodian Holocaust of 1975-1979 and the preceding U.S. bombing campaigns of 1964-1973, as well as the varied ways in which the violence of these events are framed and come to take hold and register as human experience. Trouillot's assertion that continual forgetting or silencing of the Haitian Revolution—"The revolution that was

unthinkable became a non-event"[48]—has been premised on a highlighting of Haiti's fate itself—"Ostracized for the better part of the nineteenth century, the country deteriorated both economically and politically—in part as a result of this ostracism. As Haiti declined, the reality of the revolution seemed increasingly distant"[49]—parallels the ways in which a historical narrative of "tragedy" regarding Cambodia obscures and elides international complicity and imperial violence and functions to strip Cambodian populations of their full humanity. Such considerations remind us of the necessity of being attuned to what Trouillot calls the "renewal" of practices of power, a renewal that requires historians to reckon with "the present as it re-presents the past"[50] as well as the meanings of history in its purpose.[51] In such an explication of power's renewal, Trouillot turns our attention to the urgency of recognizing the forms Enlightenment logics may take in the processes of memory-making, drawing our attention to the varied affects and effects of protracted histories of violence.

Processes of remembrance, commemoration, and memory-making are highly fraught; *how* as well as what we remember is mediated, both individually as Khatharya Um notes—"memory…refracted by time, distance, and the trauma itself, hence mediated in many instances by the need to preserve and magnify the treasured fragments of prewar moments that intensifies against the starkness of the present condition"[52] —as well as collectively, as Schlund-Vials details—"Cambodian American genocidal remembrance is imbued with an evidentiary impulse that ultimately militates against multiple forms of amnesia."[53] Memory and the forms of representation in which it becomes constituted, is always already[54] mediated by various nostalgias and motivations. As a result of these conditions, memory and remembrance is always punctuated by acts of forgetting,[55] the proliferation of silences that consequently (and perhaps paradoxically) produce historical amnesias as they also produce affective remnants, what Ngô,

Nguyen, and Lam refer to as "the particular resonances of secret wars, refugee archives of feeling, and the recursive traces of both."[56]

As Lisa Yoneyama notes, memory is a dialectical process, constituted by both remembering as well as forgetting. Memories and historical narratives are constituted by this dialectical process, refracted through binary logics of race and gender. As Trouillot explicates in regards to history, the production of memory is neither innocuous nor passive; rather, memory and remembrance are inextricably bound to context as well as relationships of power. Even as such relationships of power function to make salient or visible in order to elide and obscure their machinations, they continue to leave behind recursive traces. These traces become legible along various registers, allowing for the epistemological and methodological shift the authors articulate in the introductory chapter to the 2012 special issue of *Positions* dedicated to Southeast Asian American Studies: "from descriptive efforts to 'witness' the presence of Southeast Asians in the United States," toward "…haunted memory and trauma, cultural geography, alternative archives, and the political work of feelings."[57] Such a shift may allow for the expanded utility of Cathy Schlund-Vials' usage[58] of "memory work," a term drawn from James Young[59] "with regard to the collective articulation of large-scale human loss embodied in Holocaust memorialization debates" to explain what Cambodian/American cultural producers do to "mediate the unresolved question of justice through transnational frames of public remembrance."[60]

On Logics and Empire

In contrast to traditional conceptualizations of empire as "the extra-territorial extensions of sovereign nations beyond their own boundaries,"[61] a "model of nineteenth-century imperialism" as "a matter of territorial acquisition and expansion,"[62] Hardt and Negri outline a

form of empire produced as an effect of the increasing globalization of the world, the transnational circulation and deployment of juridical discourses of morality.[63] Here, "empire functions as a "*decentred and deterritorializing* apparatus of rule."[64] As Denise Ferreira da Silva expands, Hardt and Negri define "imperial authority" as having "two main attributes: (1) the juridical power to rule over exception and (2) the capacity to deploy political force;"[65] da Silva iterates: "Unlike previous imperial political formation, the sovereign of the present global configuration is a form of supranational juridical authority which enjoys the right to intervention, or in other words, the moral authority to declare 'just wars.'"[66]

This deterritorialized formation of empire functions through both the hegemony and obfuscation of its logics, its epistemologies and structures of knowledge. The contemporary formulation of empire naturalizes its constitution through its operations of power—its deployment of the exception and its rule over "reason," the power to define "(humanist) freedom and enlightenment, justice and equality, prosperity and progress."[67] Thus, contemporary empire's ability to utilize abstraction—to determine and deploy logics of morality—further obscures its machinations and its violences, those places and peoples displaced and obliterated in the name of "pre-emption" and "freedom."

Within the context of this dissertation, empire functions in deterritorialized form—masking imperialist violence through selective historical memory and rubrics of value and justice (in regards to the Cambodian Holocaust) that commemorate one historical event at the expense of an interrogation of the relationships of power that determined its emergence. Empire functioned in the implementation of the exception during the U.S. carpet bombings of Cambodia in the 1960s and 1970s, and empire functions in its forgettings, dictating the language of tragedy that overwhelmingly defines the U.S. public imaginary regarding Cambodia. Such a discourse of

tragedy fixes the "event" of the genocide at the expense of a reckoning with interconnected histories of colonialism and imperialism in Southeast Asia, and such a discourse of tragedy consequently fixes models of Western "juridical reconciliation" and clinical paradigms regarding the extraction of trauma, as the only means of "justice" or "solution" for the violence of the genocide's afterlife. Such models are not in and of themselves necessarily problematic, but the predominant usage of such models functions as a smokescreen for the antecedents and afterlives of violence in Cambodia and transnationally.

However, as Neferti Tadiar describes, "language—or more broadly, figuration or codification—also matters to the extent that it is constitutive of the concrete material processes that sustain the idea of empire as well as the standpoint from which those processes, as the very facts that others accept, can be critically contested."[68] Language and the racialized, gendered cultures in which it is embedded, as contradictory formations, contain the possibility to intervene, to "challenge rather than accept the facts of empire,"[69] and to materialize and de-naturalize empire's histories, structures, and practices in order to imagine new possibilities for living and being. Interrogating language within the context of empire makes visible its practices of power as well as empire's structures of continuity and entanglement.

Such discursive analysis is evident among many pieces in the 2005 special issue of *Amerasia Journal* addressing the continuities of U.S. imperialism reflected in the United States' "global war on terror" in the aftermath of the September 11th attacks on the World Trade Center. Khatharya Um's analysis regarding the effects of naming—the dialectics of memory and forgetting that naming invokes—mirrors the process by which narratives of "eventness" (making "events" discrete and bounded) functions to elide historical contextualization.[70] As Um notes, "The common reference to the war itself as the 'Vietnam War' locates it politically and

geographically in a specific region and country. The war was promoted as being *in, about,* and *for* Vietnam;"[71] this "has the effect of reducing the conflict to a singular theatre."[72] In addition to U.S. discursive practices of remembering the Vietnam War that erase the Vietnamese people—as detailed by Marita Sturken[73]—Um attunes us to the ways in which discursive practices of naming also serve imperialist interests through making discrete and singular, separating the violences of "Vietnam" from the structures of empire undergirding war and violence throughout Southeast Asia.

Just as Cambodia and Laos disappear as a result of the "Vietnam War" moniker, U.S. imperialism in Cambodia becomes displaced by a foregrounding of the event of the Cambodian Holocaust. The language and binary logics of empire de-historicize the spectacular violence of the genocide, de-coupling the "barbarism" of the Khmer Rouge from the "barbarism" of the indiscriminate and deadly U.S. bombing campaigns that eventually ushered in the Khmer Rouge's rise to power. Such power over language and rubrics of morality reflect Lisa Yoneyama's discussion of the "(un)redressability of U.S. military violence" and the il/legibility of U.S. war crimes.[74] The exception(alism) of U.S. imperialism allows the "U.S. to offer[] both violence and liberation as debts to the liberated…. [the economy of liberation] implies that the injured and violated bodies of the liberated do not require redress, for their liberation has already served as payment/reparation that supposedly precedes the U.S. violence inflicted upon them."[75] U.S. imperial power is upheld simultaneously by a claim to abstract ideologies of liberation-freedom as it is upheld by the ability to defer onto others the designation of "barbarism," "war crimes," and "human rights violations."

Denise Ferreira da Silva expands further on the logics of U.S. imperial power through her discussion of the deployment of the language of Freedom and the construction of "friends" and

"enemies" of Freedom along racial rubrics.[76] In the contemporary moment of empire, the U.S. has "waged war not to protect its territory and the lives of its citizens but to defend Freedom—the principle that for over two hundred years has been deployed to mark the ethical boundaries of post-Enlightenment Europe."[77] In order to do so, the "new (racially marked) friend" of freedom must be constructed in contrast to the "enemy of freedom," such that the "true friends" of freedom (read: Western) have justification for a "'rescue and liberate' narrative" as well as U.S. claims to innocence and the loss of innocence after 9/11.[78] Such logics of freedom and "friendship" provide discursive justifications for U.S. imperialism during the Cold War in Southeast Asia and U.S. imperialism in the contemporary moment in the context of the ongoing "War on Terror." In the contemporary moment of global capital, the meaning of "freedom" shifts from state to attribute, becoming a "property of certain human beings" designated by the language and logics of empire. In a reflection of its continuities *and* transformations, the ethical boundaries of empire demarcate intrinsically "free" from "un-free" societies; such "un-free" societies the former "others of Europe" as potential "friends of freedom," perpetually provide the grounding for the "killing of other persons and the invasions of other nations"[79] that might "threaten" freedom (read: Western "free markets").

The rubrics of morality that underlie the monopolization of "freedom" and "unthinkability" of U.S. imperialist violence are disentangled in Jodi Kim's *Ends of Empire: Asian American Critique and the Cold War.* Through her text, Kim explicates the origins as well as ends of the Cold War, engaging with the recursiveness of what she calls "Cold War Manichean epistemology" underlying U.S. empire's histories of violence and their continuities.[80] In analyzing the various origins of the Cold War, Kim highlights the ways in which "this Western interimperialist war…was also a civil war *within* the West taking place amidst and

against global decolonization movements as well as struggles for racial democracy in the United States."[81] Kim makes the argument that the Cold War was in many ways a response to *national* anxieties—including racialized, gendered anxieties, a white masculine response to changing race and gender relations—just as much as a response to various international anxieties regarding decolonization and anti-imperialist (anti-capitalist) sentiment. The doctrine of containment particular to the Cold War was thus applied both internally and externally, as a mechanism for reproducing white heteropatriarchy.

In response to such Cold War logics, Kim demonstrates how "Asian American cultural productions shift, reframe, and critically extend dominant Cold War culture and historiography by showing the ways in which they stage the Cold War as a geopolitical, cultural, and epistemological project of gendered racial formation and imperialism undergirding U.S. global hegemony."[82] Using Asian American cultural productions as a site of critique, Kim's book challenges the privileging of European and American perspectives regarding "Cold War historiography in general and Cold War cultural criticism in particular"[83] and manifests what "could be called the *gendered racial political unconscious* of the Cold War."[84] In Chapter five especially, Kim illustrates how Asian American critique might highlight the dialectics of memory and history-making within the context of empire, articulating how Asian American cultural production disarticulates "the masculinist hypervisibility of representations of America over 'there' in Vietnam," invoking a reckoning with both "Vietnamese Americans over 'here' in the United States"[85] and America's anxieties regarding its "failure" as paternalistic "savior" of the Vietnamese people.

In the Introduction to her text, Kim also interrogates the multiple meanings of empire's "ends," explicating the various ways the history of the Cold War of American imperialism was

"in part a history of false endings."[86] This history reveals the ways the Cold War has outlived its discreteness as event; Kim's attention to the plurality of empire's ends attunes us to the ways in which the logics and epistemologies of the Cold War—its structures of knowledge and feeling—enjoy a recursiveness beyond the Cold War itself. She writes: "The Cold War is not only a historical period but also an epistemology and production of knowledge, and as such, it exceeds and outlives its historical eventness. This constitutes what I call the *protracted afterlife* of the Cold War."[87] This epistemology and production of knowledge displays such recursiveness through its protracted effects (and affects) as well as its resonances of antecedent genealogies in American settler colonialism of the sixteenth century. Such recursiveness of empire also undergirds the paradoxical relationships between repression and return—silence and eruption—which characterize memory and remembrance in the afterlife of historical violence. Kim's analysis regarding empire's origins as well as ends and her usage of *protracted afterlife* to disarticulate the discreteness of the violence of empire, subsequently functions as an entry-point in which to query the effects, affects, and interventions of memory-making—especially by subjects in the diaspora—in the afterlife of historical violence.

Feminist Interventions: On the Ethical Politics of Work on Silence & Historical Violence

Much of Western European history conditions us to see human differences in simplistic opposition to each other: dominant/subordinate, good/bad, up/down, superior/inferior.

…We speak not of human difference but of human deviance.

-Audre Lorde, *Sister Outsider*[88]

It may seem a bit curious to begin this discussion of feminist interventions with these excerpts from Audre Lorde's "Age, Race, Class, and Sex: Women Redefining Difference." Yet Lorde's explications of the binary, her feminist theorizing of Western[89] logics that divide,

demarcate, and assign hierarchical values to marked and unmarked populations, bodies and lives, undergird the kinds of silences this dissertation seeks to reckon with. I begin with Lorde to emphasize the ways in which Western colonial logics—epistemologies, "common sense," and structures of knowledge—have and continue to simultaneously construct notions of deviance and normalcy, naturalizing particular claims to life that obscure the relationships of power underlying their genealogical (re)production. Such Western ways of knowing and claims to "reason," have functioned to construct just-so-stories, historical narratives that become History—and a History in turn with effects, affects, and resonances for the present and future. As Patricia Hill Collins notes, silence is produced because those that write dominant histories as well as "those who control the schools, the media, and other cultural institutions are generally skilled in establishing their view of reality as superior to alternative interpretations," thereby suppressing the "self-defined standpoints [of] oppressed groups."[90]

As Lorde and many feminist and critical race theorists have long recognized however, silences do not necessarily mean absence—especially for those gendered and racially-marked Others oftentimes relegated to the margins of History. Rather, silences are sites potentially ripe with meaning—omissions, elisions, exceptions, and forgettings produced by power; and also, perhaps paradoxically, refusals, resistances, and illegible registerings of historical violence-trauma not so easily co-opted into (neo)liberal discourses. Although there has been a robust amount of feminist inquiry regarding silence (see MacKinnon and Herman for feminist discussions of sexual violence; see Sedgwick for an engagement with silence in the field of queer studies[91])—following Audre Lorde and bell hooks[92]—my project is most interested in an intersectional feminist theorizing of silence from the margins.

As Sojourner Truth articulates in her 1851 speech "Ain't I a Woman?", and as Angela Davis argues in her groundbreaking *Women, Race, and Class*,[93] silences and processes of silencing are always inflected and mutually constituted by structures of gender, race, class and sexuality. For Black women and women of color under slavery and colonial systems of rule, silences and absences in official and unofficial registers can only be understood via recognition of a simultaneous invisibility-hypervisibility of racially-marked bodies. As Davis and Hortense Spillers note, within the historical context of slavery and in its afterlife, a paradox of gender emerged; within the violent institution of transatlantic slavery, the captive became slave through what Spillers articulates as the subsequent "*theft* of the body" and "severing of the captive body from its motive will,"[94] the production of "unprotected female flesh… female flesh 'ungendered.'"[95] This "ungendering" of female flesh did not equate to an ungendering of slavery's violences however, as Davis, Spillers, and Saidiya Hartman[96] articulate. Rather, the "ungendering" of the female captive under slavery functioned to make illegible her humanity and thus impossible her physical, sexual, and psychic violation. Understanding her silence and the silences of such violations—and the violence of such silencing—in the historical record consequently means understanding the paradox of gender produced by systems of slavery and colonialism.

Understanding the silences and absences of women of color in the afterlife of slavery also requires a reckoning with the hegemonic status of whiteness in feminist movements and masculinity in antiracist movements. Kimberlé Crenshaw addresses such a double erasure of women of color under (neo)colonial and white, heteropatriarchal systems through her discussion of domestic violence in communities of color in the United States.[97] Crenshaw develops intersectionality theory as a lens in which to analyze the "strategic silences of antiracism and

feminism [as organized movements]"[98] and to gesture towards the "critical issues of power"[99] that determine which experiences stand in for the whole and whose experiences are incorporated into the formulation of policy.

Although intersectional frameworks are predominantly associated with the ability to materialize silences or absences in political and historical spheres—following Ange-Marie Hancock's[100] reading of Crenshaw and Zinn and Dill's[101] formulation of multiracial feminism—I would also like to address the ways in which intersectional frameworks do not just materialize absent experiences and individual voices but also work to illuminate complex and complementary systems of power and privilege, domination and oppression.[102] As Patricia Hill Collins notes, such intersectional systems of domination and forms of knowledge production are grounded in Eurocentric, masculinist ideologies and structures of logic, the production and validation of knowledge already informed by Eurocentric, masculinist traditions. These traditions—steeped in binary Enlightenment distinctions (e.g. rational /irrational; reason/feeling; mind/body; culture/nature; male/female)—position positivism as the standard measure for methodological rigor and authoritative forms of knowledge.

In response to such Eurocentric masculinist modes of knowing, Hill Collins articulates an Afrocentric feminist epistemology that provides the contours for Black feminist thought and scholarship. Such epistemology responds to positivism's privileging of "factual knowledge" over experiential knowledge, centering racialized, gendered lived experience as a criterion of meaning, reflecting a feminist genealogy of lived experience as conduit for knowledge production. Hill Collins' positioning of material, immaterial and shared experience—knowledge located in and through the body—as mediating the abstract, disarticulates Eurocentric binaries, challenging hegemonic forms of knowledge and denaturalizing conventional knowledge's claim

to absolute truth. Theorizing silences from the margins through an intersectional feminist lens means accounting for such gendered, racialized logics—neutralizing and naturalizing logics which funnel knowledge and experience into zero-sum ways of seeing the world, correct and incorrect ways of being in the world.

Taking an intersectional feminist approach to knowledge production requires being attuned to anticolonial approaches to silence, a feminist approach to studying violence that simultaneously recognizes what Veena Das[103] and Audra Simpson[104] refer to as the potential violence of visibility and "voice"—the violence of speech subject to masculinist standards of "objective truth" that undergirds much disciplinary and Western academic work—as well as the necessity of materializing traces and continuities of colonialism and imperialism. Such an anticolonial approach to silence must reckon with the gendering of colonial violence and its accompanying systems of legibility. As Anne McClintock argues, the violence of "voice" addressed by Das and Simpson is undergirded by the positioning of the visual as a technology of colonial conquest, a violent mapping of colonial and epistemic anxieties onto the unknown.[105] Such mapping-marking followed from pre-existing gendered processes: "Knowledge of the unknown world was mapped as a metaphysics of gender violence—not as the expanded recognition of cultural difference—and was validated by the new Enlightenment logic of private property and possessive individualism."[106] As the "world [was] feminized and spatially spread for male exploration,"[107] "discovery" came to be defined in terms of the white, male gaze: a visual consumption that existed as retrospective act—"discovery" figured by the inventions of what McClintock terms (male) *panoptical time* and (female) *anachronistic space.*[108]

This translation of unknown to known, this production of knowledge via the visual technology of conquest, came to legitimate the violence of "discovery": the figures of "woman,"

"Native," and "degenerate" coming to stand in anachronistic space, where "[g]eographical difference across *space* is figured as a historical difference across *time*."[109] Subsequently, the universal figure of the European male subject came to stand in as emblematic of historical and scientific progress, naturalized as the standard by which the world's Others came to be categorized. Responding to such naturalized logics, and following Saidiya Hartman's caution against models of recuperation invested in knowable and singular historical truths and origins, the following project seeks to trouble hegemonic framings of violence and its afterlives in Cambodia, exploring contested narratives and the dialectical processes of memory-making that have resulted in the predominant relegation of Cambodia to the abject margins. In doing so, this project foregrounds a feminist approach to silence and memory that reckons with the intersectional dynamics at both the margins and centers of Cambodian/American histories and experience.

Navigating the space of ambivalent tension that seeks to materialize silence without inflicting further harm, I hope to channel what Saidiya Hartman describes as a profound desire "to tell a story about *two girls* capable of retrieving what remains dormant [in the archive of slavery]—the purchase or claim of their lives on the present—without committing further violence in my own act of narration."[110] In addition to disarticulating the colonial logics that foreground such erasures of historical violence, I hope to give form to the contradictory experiences and sentiments produced by such violence—a giving form that does not speak for or seek to assume a subjectivity that ultimately reinscribes the Enlightenment will to "truth."

In thinking through these concerns, I am especially drawn to Laura Kang's — following Foucault—turn to the "how" in addition to the "why" of power in her *Compositional Subjects*,[111] addressing the ways in which the rending of bodies as in/visible always functions within

disciplinarily-situated representational frameworks. Instead of viewing critique and ethical considerations as gatekeepers to knowledge production, we should view these as guides, learning to remap our approaches to understanding violence and trauma. In the same vein, we should learn to rethink our notions of ethics—moving away from static conceptualizations of "ethics" (liberal notions of "agency" and "morality")—towards an understanding of ethics that may in contradictory ways, honor *the ghost* (following Avery Gordon) and contribute to ongoing processes of care.

In thinking through these questions of visibility—"materializing silences"—I would like to work through how we might resist the violence of silencing without reproducing colonial logics and Enlightenment reason.[112] In answering such a question, our concern with ethics should perhaps lie less with visibility than with its effects, especially those effects that individuate, the consequent production of individuation, discreteness, and an oftentimes accompanying will and certainty to know, which come with visibility. Visibility itself is not necessarily at issue (although it may be), but rather it is visibility's ability to obscure that we must attune ourselves to, the visibility of the spectacle, *the event*, to obscure the conditions and afterlives of violence—Veena Das' descriptions of the violence of the event enfolding itself like tentacles into the moving present of the everyday.[113] Such a spectacular, discrete visibility (violence as event rather than a recursive phenomenon) invokes the notion of the exception, eliding the incredible embeddedness of colonial and imperial violence in our material and everyday world. In response to these effects of visibility, an ethical framework that may attempt to materialize without individuating or subjectifying, may help move us towards a conceptualization of reparation as doing less harm.

In this same vein, I would like to turn to a discussion of the ethics of witnessing that Derrida[114] posits as well as the contradictory "responsibility of the critic" that Spivak[115] discusses in her landmark piece "Can the Subaltern Speak?" Thinking through the impossibility and the imperative of witnessing as well as Spivak's notion of "measuring silences," we may reach a different conclusion regarding what Avery Gordon calls the "something to be done."[116] Derrida states, "For the axiom we ought to respect, it seems to me, even though it may be problematized later, is that *bearing witness* is not *proving*."[117] Here, Derrida touches on the critique articulated by many of the feminist and critical theorists I have mentioned, a critique of narratives that purport to stand in as "historical truth," narratives of violence and genocide more indicative and productive of relationships of power than reflective of the complexity of experiences of violence. Rather than testimony standing in for "truth" or "authenticity," Derrida illustrates the ways in which our access to knowledge and experience is always already mediated.

In doing so, Derrida also illustrates the ethical politics of collecting experiential narratives, especially those encompassing experiences of historical violence. Shifting our reading of these testimonies from proof to an enactment of bearing witness, allows such testimonies to be heard outside of narrowly defined parameters of truthfulness or falsehood. This is particularly important given the ethical considerations regarding representation of experiences of violence. For violence—especially prolonged, deeply entrenched violence—oftentimes splinters the world, producing aftershocks and afterlives, trauma produced as a break, a fracturing; and such a fracturing will come to be reflected in the various archives produced, the various modalities that might register violence. In articulating the possibility of bearing witness

that does not necessarily stand in for truth, Derrida gestures towards the potentiality of a recognition not as easily co-opted for power's petrification.

Background

This dissertation and its broader questions are part of a larger project that I began in a previous graduate program in Social Psychology at the University of California, Santa Cruz. In the spring of 2009, I began an oral history project with members of my family. A qualitative approach was adopted using semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions addressing family members' experiences growing up in Cambodia, enduring civil uncertainty during the U.S.-backed Lon Nol military coup in 1970, surviving the Cambodian Holocaust from 1975-1979, escaping Cambodia in a clandestine border crossing to Thailand, and ultimately immigrating to the United States as refugees. The principal interviewer was my older sister, who was chosen for her fluency in Khmer and sensitivity to Cambodian cultural issues.

Using autoethnography, I explicitly position myself as a research participant in the project, interweaving my own reflections on the process of collecting oral histories with my family's stories, providing an example of second-generation Cambodian/American cultural memory in what became my master's thesis—culled largely from journal entries and personal reflections on the process of collecting oral histories. Ellis and Bochner[118] define autoethnography as, "an autobiographical genre of writing and research that displays multiple layers of consciousness, connecting the personal to the cultural."[119] Autoethnography is a genre that is utilized across multiple disciplines including sociology, anthropology, and psychology. In 2006, Leon Anderson proposed the use of a specific type of autoethnography which would more explicitly create a connection between the personal positioning of the author and the greater

social phenomenon being studied. He called this analytical autoethnography, in contrast to more literary forms which he termed evocative autoethnography.[120]

According to Anderson, analytical autoethnography is research in which the author is a full member of the community of study, visible as a member of that community in published texts, and committed to a theoretical analysis of broad social phenomena.[121] The use of analytical autoethnography allows for the explicit reflexivity of the researcher within the context of the social world in which she or he is studying. Within the context of my study, this social world is that of my Cambodian family. In developing this project and initially exploring the psychological dimensions of Cambodian experiences of genocide and survival, Cambodian history—both within the context of Cambodia and within the context of sponsorship countries for Cambodian refugees—is critical to contextualizing trauma and resilience.

While doing this research in psychology however, I encountered disciplinary constraints, as the framing of my family's stories oftentimes became overdetermined by psychological theories of trauma and empowerment that directly or indirectly pathologized survivors' responses of silence. Subsequently, I became increasingly interested in new ways of reading the proliferation of silence in the afterlife of historical violence. In Fall 2011, I began a new interdisciplinary program and revisited this previous project. Recruiting my sister once again, we reviewed the oral histories and conducted follow-up interviews with family members, addressing what we read as possible silences in the narratives: points for potential clarification and expansion.

While in my doctoral program at UCLA, I applied for and received retroactive approval of the project and use of interview data for publishing/presentation purposes through the university's Internal Review Board (IRB)—IRB Study #12-000594. In the initial project,

narratives were analyzed through psychological frameworks which sought out a mapping of family silences, cultural memory, and the possible transmission of intergenerational resiliency. Conducted interviews were analyzed using Grounded Theory Methodology,[122] whereby emerging themes were noted across interviews and then compared against the existing psychological literature on cultural memory, collective trauma, and silence. Contradictions in interview answers were also noted in the previous study, and such an analytical approach figured predominantly in the next steps of the study.

I used Grounded Theory Methodology as my primary avenue of analysis in order to find connecting themes, patterns, and contradictions. Grounded Theory was chosen as the main method of analysis due to its potential for both reflexivity and flexibility; as a methodological tool, Grounded Theory allows the researcher to become attuned to emerging themes in the data before an overlaying of predictive theoretical frameworks onto research materials. Given the wealth and breadth of qualitative data in this project—as well as the project's attunements to phenomena both salient and latent—Grounded Theory Methodology provides an apt foundation for the materialization of assumed as well as surprising deviations and interconnectivities found among collected materials.

Methods and Methodology

My primary data collection strategies for this project were: 1) oral history narratives; 2) archival research and historiography; and 3) ethnographic methods.

Through an attunement to the present—what I came to call a "pedagogy of the moment" while in conversation with Aisha Finch—the methodological contours of my project shifted and took form over a total of eighteen months in Cambodia. I left for Cambodia in November of

2014 intending to work largely with textual documents at the archives at DC-Cam (Documentation Center of Cambodia). I had been in touch with one of the institution's deputy directors prior to leaving for Cambodia, but was not able to access the archives when I first arrived. Due to this initial obstacle, I turned to Bophana Audiovisual Center—with whom I had an affiliation letter—and instead began working with the audiovisual archives available to the public there. Through Bophana and contacts I made as a fellow at the Center for Khmer Studies, I also became connected to a community of artists and scholars.

The Bophana Audiovisual Resource Center opened in 2005 in Phnom Penh with the mission of collecting film, images and sounds of Cambodian cultural history and making this audiovisual heritage accessible to a wider Cambodian public. Making more available these archives through translation and digitalization, the Bophana Audiovisual Resource Center also offers Cambodians vocational training and professional support in archival and audiovisual fields. The Center was co-founded by Cambodian filmmakers Rithy Panh and Ieu Pannakar; Panh and Pannakar were able to secure funding for the Center ten years after first developing the idea for an audiovisual center dedicated to preserving Cambodia's audiovisual archives and transmitting this audiovisual heritage to future generations. The Center was named after Hout Bophana, a young female prisoner executed during the Khmer Rouge Regime. Before her execution at infamous S21 prison, Bophana wrote thousands of pages of confessions, enabling her story to come to light years after her death.[123]

While in Cambodia, I was fortunate enough to receive an invitation from artist-documentarian Vandy Rattana—whose work I had encountered years prior via a colleague of a colleague I was connected to—to accompany him to Tbong Khmum province in late September 2015 to survey some of the bombing landscapes depicted in his 2009 exhibit entitled "Bomb

Ponds." The sites and stories I experienced that day pushed me to think more profoundly about landscapes, and when my father offered to serve in the capacity of research assistant and translator on trips to provinces along the border of Cambodia and Vietnam, the "landscape ethnography" portion of my working manuscript was born.

During my initial sixteen months in Cambodia and a follow-up visit of two months, while using Phnom Penh as my home base between "field trips," I conducted an ethnographic survey of sites in Cambodia where some of the heaviest U.S. bombardment took place. To determine which sites to visit, I consulted the electronic map of major bombing sites compiled by the Yale Genocide Project, reviewed available online documents from DC-Cam, and checked in with officials at CMAC (Cambodian Mine Action Centre) in Phnom Penh. Through CMAC, I was able to obtain extensive maps, including a full map of Cambodia but also maps of individual provinces, which demarcated the location of landmines as well as different types of unexploded ordinance.

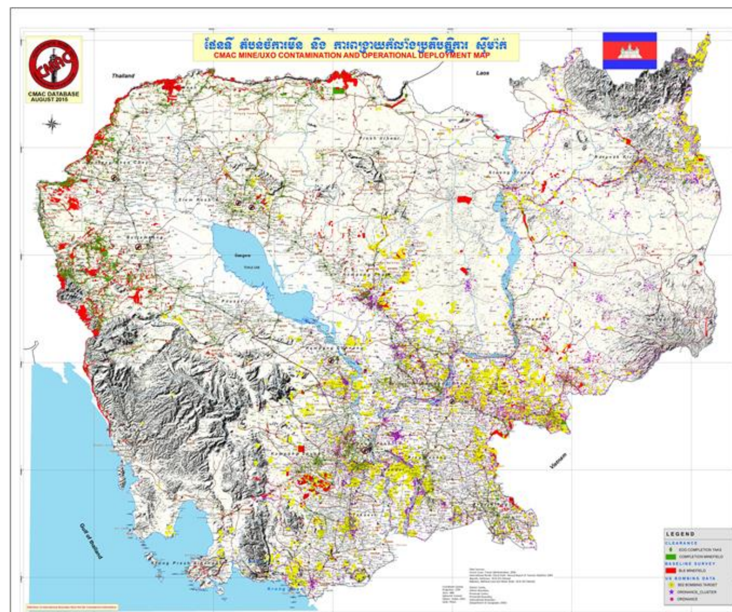

Figure 2. CMAC map of Cambodia,
Landmines and Unexploded Ordinance

With my father as research assistant and occasional translator, I took trips to six provinces along the border of Cambodia and Vietnam, where I saw many different kinds of bombing landscapes—such as craters in rubber plantations and forestation as well as the charred residues of bombing raids on the stones of various temples—and had the opportunity to spend time in villages speaking to people. But the landscapes themselves were not the only source of "data" during these trips; the stories-in-motion, in transit, which my father elicited in everyday conversation while traveling on public buses, private vans, and to-and-from destinations, exemplified what would become the migratory nature of my "data collection" and the resonance of crossing and return in my narrative analysis. The descriptive survey portion of the project employed convenience and small-scale snowball sampling, employing organizational and individual contacts as a starting point from which to speak to people and identify further bombing sites. Such methods— especially informal conversations with people in villages as they happen—are utilized not to produce absolute claims to truth, but to provide examples of the multifaceted dimension of registers and registerings of historical violence.

I also employed autoethnography during fieldwork in the capital, Phnom Penh, and six provinces—Mondulkiri, Ratanakiri, Stung Treng, Svay Rieng, and Kampong Cham— in Cambodia from 2014-2016. My fieldnotes from my time in Cambodia not only include description but also initial analysis and reflection in the moment, oftentimes while in transit. During my time in Cambodia, I centered an explicitly reflexive approach to doing research, privileging feminist praxis. Attuned to transnational as well as local conditions of power, I am aware that this approach encompasses not only the theoretical frameworks I employ, but also the personal and interpersonal decisions I make while "in the field."

Significance and Overview of Chapters

Although much has been written about contemporary Cambodian history, detailing the Cambodian Holocaust of 1975-79 as well as the preceding U.S. bombings of 1964-73, much less literature has addressed the complex relationships between historical narratives of these events as well as how they come to register as human experience. Despite the current privileging of transnationalism, global circuits of exchange, and migration in our understandings of violence, literature on Cambodian history and experience continues to be modular—circumscribing knowledge production regarding these fields rather than emphasizing their mutual constitution. This dissertation project explores how various modalities of remembrance document and make transparent the conditions of historical events in Cambodia during the twentieth century, while also gesturing towards different forms of accountability and redress in the wake of mass violence and whole-sale loss.

Pushing against the dominant framing of Cambodia as "tragedy" in the mainstream U.S. imaginary and within individualized models of trauma—as damage-centered and/or invested in abjection and injury—this dissertation builds upon feminist, queer, and critical race studies scholarship that seeks to challenge binary logics (such as those of cause, of morality), logics which disavow the complex humanity of Cambodian survivors and the continually intersubjective ways in which knowledge about Cambodia is produced and reproduced. What is the relationship between what becomes salient and what becomes latent (silenced) in the construction of various forms of historical narrative and memory? How do resonances or traces of violent events appear in survivor narratives? What forms do these resonances or traces take in the moving present of daily life? And how are such traces reflected in commemoration projects and processes of accountability, reparation, and redress in the wake of violence?

Tracing the archival residues and historical absences regarding registers of violence—of imperialist intervention and authoritarian regimes—this project responds to "official histories" regarding Cambodia and the predominant accumulation of archival material in Cambodia and elsewhere that largely positions violence in Cambodia as "something that happened over there." Much of this material has supported a historical narrative of (spectacular) violence that distances "the rest of the world" (namely, Western nations) from the violences that have occurred in Cambodia, eliding and fostering forgetting regarding colonial and imperialist histories and their afterlives. Accordingly, this dissertation engages various dimensions of archival work, simultaneously addressing the epistemic violences enfolded into the processes of archival creation and interpretation, while also yet addressing the possibilities of archival frameworks to manifest historical silences and disrupt violent historical logics. This project seeks to address the question of mediation, the ways in which historical violence comes to be registered, understood, and written into the record via such mediums as archives, landscapes, and experiential narratives. Destabilizing the boundaries of content and form and medium and method, this project gestures towards the ways in which mediation might constitute an approach to knowledge production, a reading of archival, interview, and storied data for narrative as well as for affect and contradictions, reckoning with what those contradictions might tell us.

In this study's foregrounding of feminist theory and ethics, this project seeks to address bio- and necropolitical events in ethical ways that mediate without subjectifying or demarcating experience, Eve Tuck's explication of complex personhood that imagines desire as assemblage.[124] This desire might result in the simultaneous critique of interventionist and regime violence, existing alongside investments in neoliberal progress—the embeddedness of lived experience in its sociohistorical context. These simultaneous critiques and adoptions of colonial

logics will themselves in turn, be inflected by relationships of race, gender, class, nation and power.

In my project's hope to honor *the ghost*—the dead as well as those living the afterlives of violence—and in my hope for engagement with the complex, and perhaps difficult humanities I've encountered, I center Viet Thanh Nguyen's imperative to "question…the harm that we ourselves can do."[125] Thanh Nguyen's provocation—"Even as we must tell upon the acts of others, we must also tell upon ourselves"[126] —intervenes into the kinds of distancing we may (perhaps inadvertently) do as second-order (or second-generation) witnesses of violence. Thinking through this ethical imperative—this "telling on oneself"—requires those of us for whom such violence has been transmitted and felt but not personally witnessed, to engage in what Laura Kang might refer to as trenchant reflexivity while doing work on violence, a trenchant reflexivity that might recognize Derrida's imperative to witness while still yet recognizing our own complicities in dominant structures of power. In heeding Thanh Nguyen, Kang, and Derrida's call, my project ultimately hopes to intervene in ways that explicate but do not necessarily pass absolute judgment, a feeling my way into alternative rubrics of value and harm.

Chapter one begins with a passage from my father's follow-up interview concerning the U.S. bombing of Neak Loeung, engaging the notion of "mistake" as commentary on the deployment of the exception as well as American exceptionalism. I trace the propagation of the logics of empire as well as the potentialities of rupture of such logics through contradictions in my father's story. Inspired by initial limited access to documentary data about the bombing, I then extend Anne Laura Stoler's notion of an "ethnography of the archive,"[127] tracing the logics of the archival institution's (DC-Cam's, in this case) contradictory investments in

commemorating violence in Cambodia. Engaging contestations of archival narrative as historical truth, I contrast this analysis with a reading of artist Vandy Rattana's work regarding the aftermath of the U.S. bombing campaigns as documentation and "living archive."

Expanding the notion of "living archive" through the use of an ethnographic survey, in chapter two, I employ a capacious understanding of the everyday, assessing how landscapes and stories-in-motion make visible the violence of bombings and genocide. Through a landscape ethnography along the border of Cambodia and Vietnam, this chapter addresses the ways in which physical landscapes reflect "small references to violent events,"[128] accounting for the past through the modality of the mundane. And through the register of moments of encounter, unplanned moments of intersubjectivity—conversations which foreground each speaking subject's positioning in history—this chapter engages alternative models of justice and recognition, moving away from carceral logics of punishment and individualized models of blame and apology.

In chapter three, I return to the oral history. Here, I revisit "deviant" instances and phenomena in my mother and father's oral histories regarding the Cambodian Holocaust—moments punctuated by silence, by occasions of crossing that could be labeled as "false memory"—and contrast such instances with narratives told in passing upon return to Cambodia many years later. Thinking through enforced transit and the phenomenon of return, I grapple with notions of redress and reparation in the afterlife of historical violence, thinking reparation as the work of care—an approach vastly undertheorized in regards to Cambodia and the Cambodian diaspora.

The dissertation illustrates the dynamics of crossing and return not only in its content, but also in its form, paralleling the ebb and flow of the larger project's methodology, a call for

attunement to the moment. Through the use of institutional archives, documentary art, ethnographic narratives, and oral history, my work re-theorizes silence, trauma and (de)pathologization, thinking "deviance" in relation to Martin Manalansan's theorizing of "mess"—queer of color critique offering one avenue in which to navigate the contradictions and complexities of living in neoliberal contexts.[129] In my project's inter- and cross-disciplinary positioning in Women, Gender and Sexuality Studies, American and Global Studies, Asian and Asian American Studies, Memory Studies, Archival Studies, and historiography, I employ the language of normative social science provocatively and capaciously, in order to contribute to a fuller understanding of war, militarism, trauma, recognition and care—troubling models of historical violence as spatially and temporally contained and models of memory and witnessing as individually bounded. This body of research reflects my pedagogical approach to understanding race, gender, power and violence—mapping the relationality and tensions of global and local, constraint and agency, and latency and eruption, which define the production of knowledge and experience.

CHAPTER ONE "Sometime American Can... Make Mistake Too..." Memory, Documentation and Contested Framings of Violence

> Yes, usually in the war, all the. . .time, they not [one] hundred percent right on the target. People make mistake so, sometime American can. . .make mistake too. . .one time. . .I have experience myself. That they bomb. . .on the town of Neak Loeung. . . .They drop bomb on the town of Neak Loeung that kill two hundred people. And I see by my eye, when I wake up, even my wall, that the place I sleep, it broke over me. And. . .see outside to the street, I see a lot of arm, leg, they fly to the tree, something like that. Yeah, that a lot of people was killed, that one mistake like that, that I meet with myself.
>
> . . .
>
> I don't know what is the. . .wrong, the technical wrong for what because even in the town, we still have one, they call beam-co [beacon] or something like that, that to show that its friendly position but I don't know what's wrong, why they still bomb on that place.

On August 6, 1973, in the midst of nonstop bombing raids on Southeast Asia, an American B-52 bomber mistakenly dropped its 20-ton load on the Cambodian river town of Neak Loeung, killing at least 137 Cambodians and wounding 268 more. The unprecedented destruction of this purported accident—in addition to the loss of Cambodian lives, over two-thirds of the town was razed or heavily damaged—quickly made it "the worst bombing error of the Indochina war," as many newspapers of the time dubbed it.[130] The 1973 bombing of Neak Loeung, as well as its subsequent cover-up attempt by the U.S. military, was most notably depicted in director Roland Joffé's 1984 film *The Killing Fields*. The bombing has also functioned as a pivot point for discussions of contemporary Cambodian history that move beyond the tragedy narrative engendered by such popular remembrances.[131] These remembrances, while footnoting the U.S. imperialist violence that served as precursor to Khmer Rouge rule, nevertheless popularize a singular memory of historical violence in Cambodia, bookended by the events of the genocide that ultimately took place from 1975-1979.

Although Neak Loeung became one of the most salient examples of "American error" during the (hot) Cold War in Southeast Asia, Neak Loeung was by no means an isolated incident; in fact, there had been several American "bombing errors" in the days leading up to the devastation of August 6. Contrary to the exceptionality deployed in the framing of this and other "bombing errors," remembrances of Neak Loeung can be read as emblematic of the complex and transnational dimensions of contemporary historical violence in Cambodia.

On December 9, 1970, after an arguably unsuccessful ground invasion of Cambodia, President Richard Nixon met with his national security adviser Henry Kissinger to discuss further amplification of the ongoing bombing. Five minutes after this conversation ended, Kissinger called General Alexander Haig with the following message: "He [Nixon] wants a massive bombing campaign in Cambodia. He doesn't want to hear anything. It's an order, it's to be done. Anything that flies, or anything that moves. You got that?"[132]

The two passages that begin this chapter illustrate the experiential losses obscured by such indifferent campaigns to "bomb them back to the Stone Age."[133] These passages disrupt the innocuous historical framing of U.S. interventionism during the Cold War, manifesting the discursive and material violences of "pre-emptive policy" and "collateral damage." In doing so, these testimonial passages trouble hegemonic narratives of isolated tragedy, moving a reckoning with U.S. imperialism from the margins to the center of an inquiry regarding historical violence in Cambodia.

In the spring of 2009, when my sister and I first conducted an oral history interview with our father regarding his life in Cambodia and experiences immigrating to the United States as a refugee, our father made no mention of his intimate encounter with U.S. bombing. Rather, his story about the bombing of Neak Loeung—excerpted in two parts at the beginning of this

chapter—emerged much later, almost two years later, in response to direct questioning in a follow-up interview regarding his experiences in the civil war years in Cambodia before the genocide. When asked during Fall 2011 if he had had any knowledge of the American "secret bombings" of Cambodia before the Khmer Rouge took power in 1975, our father responded with this near-death story of "mistaken bombing."

Our father's detailing of U.S. bombing in his follow-up interview can be read as indicative of the contradictions of meaning making that mark the politics of remembrance and forgetting that foreground (colonial and imperial) war-waging and its logics, as well as the processes of reification by which war-waging eventually becomes History. Centering Lisa Yoneyama's discussion of the dialectics of memory—especially regarding what she terms the "forgetting of forgetfulness" in the production of historical knowledge about Hiroshima[134]—and Jodi Kim's notion of the "*protracted afterlife* of the Cold War,"[135] this chapter turns to three official and unofficial documentary registers regarding historical violence in Cambodia.

In *Hiroshima Traces*, Yoneyama engages a study of Hiroshima memories that moves beyond remembering and forgetting, "question[ing] why and how we remember—for what purpose, for whom, and from which position we remember,"[136] "disentangl[ing] the processes that have produced postwar forgetfulness about the [Japanese] nation's recent past."[137] Foregrounding a Benjaminian dialectics of memory which positions historical knowledge about the past as "critically germane to present struggles for social change,"[138] Yoneyama outlines the critical danger in the contemporary "hegemonic process in the production of Japan's national history [that] mov[es] beyond amnesia, beyond the mere suppression of past knowledge."[139] Referencing Adorno, Yoneyama explicates a process of "amnes(t)ic remembering," whereby current acts of remembrance and partial acknowledgment of prewar Japanese empire in Asia and

the Pacific, function to "tame" rather than redress the nation's past history of violence. Rather than an accounting for the past—a reckoning with the ways in which the past holds currency for the present—rote recognition of prewar Japanese military and colonial crimes instead reflects "the ultimate foreclosure," the desire to "turn the page" of historical time, in order to "wip[e] [such events] from memory."[140]

Like the absorption of prewar Japanese war crimes into a "mainstream national historiography, which remembers Hiroshima's atomic bombing as victimization experienced by the Japanese collectivity, or in[to] the equally pervasive, more universalistic narrative on the bombing that records it as having been an unprecedented event in the history of humanity,"[141] the deployment of the exception in historical narratives regarding the U.S. bombing campaigns in Southeast Asia also entails the forgetting of forgetfulness, a process of remembering in which the violence of past (and ongoing) U.S. empire is tamed and obscured by contemporary narratives of tragedy and barbarism.

Foregrounding an Asian Americanist critique of empire, and deploying an analysis of exceptionalism as the pivotal device in this exploration of memory and construction of historical narrative, I begin with a deeper engagement with the aforementioned passages, highlighting the ways in which experiential registers both reproduce as well as trouble binary, Cold War logics. This chapter then transitions to a discussion regarding the relationship between contested memories and archives in the afterlife of historical violence, illustrating the possibilities of reading my father's story as documentation alongside what I term two "archival collections." Analyzing how these cases, one "official" and one "unofficial," differentially fulfill the traditional archival purposes of documentation (especially for those missing from the historical record), transparency (especially of relationships of power), and accountability (via archival

transparency and per acknowledgement, redress, restitution, or reparation), I query the ways in which archives—and the relationships of power that constitute them—might function to produce different claims to "historical truth" in the afterlife of violence.

Following Yoneyama's discussions of forgetfulness and the political implications of remembrance, my intention is not to read these registers as acts of recuperation, highlighting an objective truth that has been suppressed and recovered. Rather, I read these three registers as differential illustrations of *how* the historical violences of the Cambodian Holocaust and the preceding U.S. bombings are remembered, addressing *why* such remembering may or may not disrupt dominant narratives of U.S. empire. In doing so, I address the following questions: How might we make historical silences legible without reproducing a regime of truth invested in independent events of (spectacular) violence? In relation to the protracted afterlives of historical violence, how might we also do so without reifying a narrative of U.S. exceptionalism that allows us to forget the ongoing violences of militarism and empire?

Contested Memories: Exceptionalism and the Remembering-Forgetting of Empire

In the narrative passages from his follow-up interview that introduce this chapter, my father begins by constructing the specific historical event of Neak Loeung as an exception, a case of mistaken identity. Rendering Neak Loeung's destruction as an exceptional case allowed my father to normalize such an instance of indiscriminate bombing as a natural—albeit unfortunate—element of war. As my father continues on with his narrative, however, he contradicts this story. Mistaken identity may have been justified as an unintentional consequence of war if Neak Loeung had *not been identified*. Yet as my father muses, Neak Loeung was visibly demarcated as "friendly" (read: allied with the United States).

Foregrounding the beacon that supposedly marked Neak Loeung as non-enemy territory changes the valence of my father's narrative, attuning us to the interplay of legibility and silence in the construction of historical memory. Although Neak Loeung may have been exceptional as an incident of non-deliberate U.S. bombing, its appearance in my father's narrative—"in the war, *all the. . .time*, they not [one] hundred percent right on the target"—manifests the instability of such notions as "intention," troubled by the indiscriminate nature and disregard for life of carpet bombing campaigns.

Remembrances of Neak Loeung whether in the form of mistake—an unfortunate instance of unintentional bombing, "human error," in U.S. efforts to contain Communism preceding the *real* tragedy of Cambodian history—or example—of the violent disregard of U.S. interventionism in Southeast Asia—highlight a politics and dialectics of memory, whereby the act of remembering is simultaneously constituted by, yet also productive of, the act of forgetting. There are few mainstream historical accounts of the genocide and contemporary Cambodian history that do *not* mention the U.S. bombing campaigns[142]; indeed, several accounts concretely articulate the bombing campaigns and U.S. interventionism as the most significant factor in the rise of the Khmer Rouge.[143] However, regardless of whether mention of the bombing campaigns is done innocuously as part of a timeline regarding Cambodian history or explicated as a contributing factor for the decimation of millions in the genocide (or even centered, perhaps ironically so, in the case of Shawcross's *Sideshow*[144]), U.S. imperialism continues to be elided.

In the Introduction to her *Ends of Empire*, Jodi Kim interrogates the multiple meanings of empire's "ends," explicating the various ways in which the history of the Cold War of American imperialism was "in part a history of false endings."[145] This history reveals the ways in which the Cold War outlives its discreteness as event; Kim's attention to the plurality of empire's ends

attunes us to the ways in which the logics and epistemologies of the Cold War—its structures of knowledge and feeling—enjoy a recursiveness beyond the Cold War itself. She writes: "The Cold War is not only a historical period but also an epistemology and production of knowledge, and as such, it exceeds and outlives its historical eventness. This constitutes what I call the *protracted afterlife* of the Cold War."[146] This epistemology and production of knowledge—the naturalization of binary Manichaean logics and the selective deployment of the mechanism of exception(alism)—displays such recursiveness through its protracted effects (and affects) as well as its resonances in the antecedent genealogies of American settler colonialism in the sixteenth century.

U.S. exceptionalism works to suspend Western juridical law, defining the parameters of U.S. empire through the implementation of "exceptional acts" of clandestine bombing in Southeast Asia, acts justified by the construction of a "state of emergency" designated as the (hot) Cold War. Through a selectively comparative rubric of violence that relegates absolute atrocity to the racial Other, the deployment of U.S. exceptionalism functions to shift the central focus of historical narratives regarding Cambodia, justifying while simultaneously obscuring the violences of U.S. empire.

As Jodi Kim details in her book, this brand of American exceptionalism functions to equate "the enemy" with totalitarianism—in this case, the enemy being the specter of Communism—resulting in a zero-sum framework that justifies a U.S.-induced juridical state of exception, a suspension of international juridical order. The implementation of the exception during the U.S. carpet bombings of Cambodia in the 1960s and 1970s functions in their forgetting, dictating the language of tragedy that overwhelmingly defines the hegemonic public imaginary regarding Cambodia. Such framing functions to distance "the civilized world" from

the "savage" genocide of the Khmer Rouge, and the narrativization of the genocide as event functions to hide its continuity with histories of U.S. imperialism. This U.S. exceptionalism and subsequent U.S. suspension of juridical order have a recursive corollary in the unlawful detention and deportation of Khmer/Americans "back" to Cambodia. Here, the particular logics that produced "the violent conditions of possibility for why it is that Asian Americans are here in the first place"[147] also come to produce the violent conditions of further displacement.

Kim's analysis regarding the protracted afterlife of the Cold War and the recursiveness of empire also provides a framework in which to read the paradoxical relationships between repression and return—silence and eruption—that characterize memory and remembrance in the afterlife of historical violence. The proliferation and power of binary narratives reinforces my father's initial deployment of the narrative of exceptionalism; however, as my father's assertion regarding the unfortunate yet exceptional status of Neak Loeung gives way to, following Keith Camacho,[148] perilous memory with the potential to contradict the logics of imperialism, we also see the ways in which historical elisions might travel as latencies, always already containing the possibility of eruption.

Building upon T. Fujitani, Geoffrey White, and Lisa Yoneyama, Camacho conceptualizes public memories as "precarious or endangered memories in need of recuperation and as memories that continue to generate a sense of danger for various peoples throughout the Asia-Pacific region."[149] Examining Chamorro public memories of WWII in the Mariana Islands as understudied and marginalized histories of the war that have been obscured by "official histories," Camacho illustrates the entangled nature of such cultural memory and history-making, illuminating the complex and complicated ways power informs both individual and collective forms of remembering. This framing of marginalized public memory as "perilous memory" and

history as inextricably bound to such memory-construction echoes in the contradictions of my father's narrative regarding "the mistake" of U.S. bombing in Cambodia. Like the "official narratives" of WWII Camacho references that construct the war as a history of American and Japanese colonialisms in the Pacific, eliding the war's effects on Pacific Islanders in the Pacific, "official narratives" of "America's Cold War" and its' corollary the Vietnam War, function to obscure the violences of imperialism enacted by the U.S. throughout Southeast Asia on Southeast Asians.

Countering what Cathy Schlund-Vials terms *the Cambodian Syndrome*—a "transnational set of amnesiac politics… encompass[ing] the paradoxical nonadmission of U.S. culpability before, during, and after the Democratic Kampuchean era," "cognizant of the Killing Fields as genocide event yet tactically forgetful of the U.S. role in the making of the Khmer Rouge"[150]—my father's words in the beginning passages are "perilous" in their contradistinction to such "official narratives." In an illustration of what Bryan Thao Worra describes as "this little side war we were the center of,"[151] my father's remembered musings throw into relief those events that were meant to be forgotten, illustrating the interconnections among historical events that have been constructed as independent—the separation of the violences of the U.S. Cold War in Southeast Asia and the violences of the Cambodian Holocaust of 1975-1979. Reading my father's narrative alongside dominant narratives regarding Cambodia allows us to more clearly see the workings of empire and the protracted afterlives of Cold War logics: the proliferation of power in the continued utilization and naturalization of discourses of U.S. exceptionalism. Analyzing his words in conjunction with a discussion of other accounts regarding the genocide and its transnational conditions of emergence also allows us to see how histories become

constructed not only by the events remembered, but by the interactions between said events and the ellipses they generate.

The Archival Case: Remembering Cambodian/American Histories

In the afterlife of decades of war and genocide in Cambodia, a discussion regarding the dialectics of memory and meaning making would be incomplete without a discussion of archives and archival frameworks. As Kenneth Foote notes, "archives are sometimes said to be society's collective memory," a vehicle for transmission of information across generations and a "valuable means of extending the temporal and spatial range of human communication." As a form of institutional memory, archives oftentimes perform a selective function, participating in the effacement of memory as they simultaneously produce and reproduce social and collective memory.

What we see in the contemporary moment regarding the politics of remembrance and historical production in Cambodia is a dual emphasis. On the one hand, there is an emphasis on what has been lost—the absence of archives, centuries of history lost prior to and during the Khmer Rouge regime, the ransacking of libraries, desecrating of sacred texts, and the forbidding of writing and cultural production that did not serve the *angka* [organization]; on the other, an equal emphasis on the abundance of Khmer Rouge archival production—the meticulousness of Khmer Rouge record-keeping, especially at infamous Tuol Sleng prison, where thousands of pages of records were produced during the regime's reign and now function as evidence in the indictment of former Khmer Rouge leaders in the ongoing international tribunal. With these two archival narratives of loss and recovery informing the creation of public and institutional

memory regarding contemporary Cambodian history, I turn to an analysis of the next set of documentary registers.

Juxtaposing the ways in which two archival cases reflect these two archival narratives, I trace the possibilities and limits of unofficial and institutional remembrance to conform to as well as trouble well-established models of historical truth. Following Jacques Derrida's theorizing of "archivization" as "produc[ing] as much as it records the event,"[152] and keeping in mind the power of my father's interview to register the dialectics of historical memory, I turn to an engagement with dimensions of archival work to remember and forget, simultaneously addressing the epistemic violences enfolded into processes of archival interpretation, while also yet addressing the possibilities of archival frameworks to manifest historical silences and disrupt violent historical logics, such as the deployment of U.S. exceptionalism.

DC-Cam: Evidentiary Documentation and Juridical Accountability

My first archival case is the publicly-accessible presence of the Documentation Center of Cambodia, abbreviated as DC-Cam. DC-Cam is the primary archival institution in Cambodia dedicated to the documentation of the Democratic Kampuchea period and contains the world's largest repository of primary documents from this period, including those produced by Khmer Rouge leaders. Although currently an independent NGO, DC-Cam initially stemmed from the Yale Genocide Project's Cambodian Genocide Program, a program created with grant funding from the Office of Cambodian Genocide Investigations in the U.S. State Department's Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs. This office, in turn, was created as a result of the April 1994 Cambodian Genocide Justice Act passed by the U.S. Congress. DC-Cam is currently funded by various state bodies as well as by independent institutions, including funding from the U.S.

government. As stated on its website, DC-Cam's two central objectives are to "record and preserve the history of the Khmer Rouge regime for future generations" and "to compile and organize information that can serve as potential evidence in a legal accounting for the crimes of the Khmer Rouge," resulting in what the institution considers a "promotion of *memory* and *justice*."[153]

DC-Cam's online presence includes two websites: a "main" website which provides information regarding the institution and its functions and a complementary website containing collections of documents and reports, including a link to digital copies of selected documents from DC-Cam's holdings in Cambodia. DC-Cam's "main" website functions as the "face" of its institution, constructing a narrative regarding DC-Cam's functionality as a memory center in Cambodia (and internationally). DC-Cam's second website functions to "back" its main website, serving as an informational tool that provides a survey of the institution's projects, publications, and examples of documents available in DC-Cam's archives. The "archives" link on this second DC-Cam website leads to what might be classified as "collections" in Archival Studies terms rather than as "archives" in the traditional sense, as documents are not organized or kept in original order or with respect to provenance (most available documents at the institution are copies of original material). Aside from the selection of DC-Cam documents available under the subheading "Archives," among the readily accessible resources on this second website is a series of databases (biographic, bibliographic, photographic, geographic) from which a viewer can browse documents in DC-Cam's holdings as well as an extensive number of uploaded copies of the organization's monthly magazine— *Searching for the Truth*—in both the Khmer and English language.

DC-Cam's websites advertise the archival institution's investments in documentation, evidence, accountability, and justice. Its secondary website, especially, conveys an emphasis on collecting "truth" and "physical evidence" in order to fulfill the juridical function of DC-Cam's documentary purpose within the context of Cambodia's ongoing criminal tribunal, formally known as the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC). Due in part to this stated juridical purpose, both websites seem to necessarily emphasize singular, discrete truths about the historical event of the Cambodian Holocaust—an emphasis sometimes at odds with the institution's actual documentary holdings.[154]

One case-in-point of a potential contradiction is the juxtaposition of two articles in early issues of *Searching for the Truth*. DC-Cam's monthly magazine began its first publication in January 2000 with the stated purpose of "disseminat[ing] the Center's work to the public, facilitat[ing] discourse on issues related to the Khmer Rouge, and otherwise promot[ing] justice and reconciliation in Cambodia."[155] Each magazine issue usually begins with a letter from DC-Cam's director Youk Chhang, oftentimes addressing the issue of accountability for the violence of the Khmer Rouge period, sometimes in conjunction with stories from survivors of the Democratic Kampuchea period and sometimes in conjunction with commentary on the international criminal tribunal and the former Khmer Rouge leaders to be tried. From the opening letter, each monthly magazine is a collection of articles written by legal and academic scholars as well as various news commentators on a range of topics related to both the genocide of 1975-1979 and the Khmer Rouge tribunal proceedings. Magazine issues also include material from DC-Cam's holdings, such as translated "confessions" and photographs of prisoners from infamous S-21 (Tuol Sleng) prison, stories from survivors collected through DC-Cam's Family Tracing Project, and letters to the editor regarding the impact of *Searching for the Truth*.

In an article in Issue 03 (March 2000) entitled "Chantrea Village Fell into the Devastation of War," Sopheak Vichea Tieng describes the destruction of Chantrea Village, located about five to six kilometers from the Vietnamese-Cambodian border, and the terrifying violence experienced by its inhabitants from South Vietnamese attacks and U.S. heavy bombardment during the years 1964-1975. Tieng employs both historical and individual narrative in illustrating this violence, describing experiences such as that of Brother Daek Det, a farmer whose family's home burned in the fires of napalm dropped from U.S. fighter planes in 1964. Two of Daek Det's brothers later died from their injuries, while his elder sister was horribly burned: "After her wounds had healed, both arms were stuck to her body at the armpits, making even such simple tasks as showering difficult. Her arms and hands were rendered almost useless."[156] From Daek Det's story, Tieng goes on to discuss the levels of suffering villagers from Chantrea Village recounted in their interviews in both this issue and the next, stating that the "war between Vietnam and the United States left hundreds of villagers in Chantrea Subdistrict homeless and caused severe food shortages. More than a hundred villagers died meaningless deaths. Many were injured, while others were left physically and mentally disabled."[157]

Although there is no language of "error" or "mistake" present in this narration of Chantrea Village, as there was in newspaper descriptions of Neak Loeung, Tieng makes legible the experiential dimension of bombing campaigns through this particular account. Consequently, Tieng illustrates the disregard of U.S. imperialist violence in Southeast Asia through his accounting of its human cost. Centering this loss within a magazine dedicated to *Searching for the Truth* regarding the Cambodian Holocaust, Tieng's article provides

commentary on the historical continuities of the violences of U.S. empire and the violences of Khmer Rouge rule.

In contradistinction to the previous article gesturing towards international culpability regarding historical violence in Cambodia, Elizabeth van Schaack presents a trenchant argument *against* the expansion of temporal jurisdiction in the not-yet-commenced international tribunal in her article in Issue 05 (May 2000) entitled "Temporal Jurisdiction '1970-1975' to Be Solved." In her argument against the expansion of the court's jurisdiction to include crimes committed outside the Khmer Rouge period of 1975-1979, van Schaack begins by acknowledging the historical context of "interventions by foreign powers in Cambodian affairs."[158] She spells out the violent conditions preceding the period of Democratic Kampuchea, articulating the corruption of the (U.S.-backed) Lon Nol regime while stating that "[m]ost saliently, the United States is credited with dropping many thousands [in reality, millions] of bombs on Cambodia, in violation of its own internal law, during the Vietnam War."[159] Van Schaack goes on to detail the conditions post-dating the Khmer Rouge period, describing how "after Vietnam's 1979 invasion, members of the international community continued to treat the ousted Khmer Rouge regime as the 'legitimate government' of Cambodia… even as the evidence of the extreme brutality of that regime mounted."[160]

Van Schaack sets up a transnational and historically contextualized accounting of the Cambodian Holocaust that ultimately falls as straw man in her argument's transition to an absolutist and binary narrative regarding violence. Trafficking in the predominant "tragedy" discourse applied to Cambodia, she writes: "Despite these unfortunate realities of Cambodian history, it cannot be disputed that the human rights violations that occurred during these periods paled in comparison with the abuses that took place during the Khmer Rouge era."[161] Van

Schaack decisively states that it is “the most serious violations of international law”[162] committed by the Khmer Rouge that “offend all of humanity,”[163] and thus deserve an undivided reckoning.

Van Schaack’s rote recitation of the violences of U.S. empire both preceding and following the violences of Khmer Rouge rule is an apt example of Yoneyama’s discussion of the “forgetting of forgetfulness,” a partial acknowledgement of imperialist violence that functions as an empty gesture. The “despite” used as transition in Schaack’s narrative illustrates activation of the trope of exceptionalism by which such imperialist crimes, while recognized, are always already justified. Through this rhetorical move, U.S. imperialist violence becomes firmly entrenched in the past, wiped away from the contemporary moment, and ultimately deemed insignificant in regards to the proceedings of the present.

Van Schaack’s hierarchical assessment regarding historical violence in Cambodia reflects Haitian scholar Michel-Rolph Trouillot’s theorizing on formulas of erasure and banalization-trivialization in regards to history.[164] Trouillot’s assertion that continual forgetting or silencing of the Haitian Revolution has been premised on a highlighting of Haiti’s fate itself parallels the ways in which a historical narrative of “tragedy”[165] regarding Cambodia erases and elides international complicity and imperial violence. Commemorations of the genocide as a discrete event and preoccupations with the “barbarism” of Cambodia’s former and current authoritarian regimes[166] function to elide both the violence that precipitated the genocide as well as the devastating effects of the embargo on Cambodia by the U.S. and its Cold War allies for over a decade post-genocide.[167]

Such a discourse of tragedy fixes the “event” of the genocide at the expense of a reckoning with interconnected histories of colonialism and imperialism in Southeast Asia; it also

consequently fixes models of Western juridical reconciliation as the "solution" for the violence and trauma of the genocide's afterlife. Such models of juridical reconciliation are not in and of themselves necessarily problematic, but, as we can see with Schaak's article, the predominant usage of these models functions as a smokescreen for the antecedents and afterlives of the violences of genocide. The current international criminal tribunal in Cambodia functions to assign individual blame and accountability for the harm of historical violence, masking the entanglements of historical and ongoing structures of colonial, imperial, and regime violence.

DC-Cam's evidentiary purpose in regards to the international criminal tribunal makes it unique as an archival institution, concretizing its claims to accountability. However, such explicit evidentiary investment also posits limits on such a function, as these two articles illustrate, including the inability of the archival institution's notions of juridical justice to account for "forgotten" war crimes such as the U.S. bombings of Cambodia. The international tribunal's bounded temporal jurisdiction from 1975 to 1979 perpetuates a continuing containment around the historical event, resulting in an encapsulation of the genocide (and its documentation) that is unable to account for the conflicting epistemologies, conditions, and structures of power foregrounding the kinds of experiences my father details at the beginning of this paper. And although it is undeniable that DC-Cam's presence is invaluable in documenting the Cambodian Holocaust and making transparent histories of violence as part of a dealing with the past, the archival institution's spotlighting of dominant historical narratives of the genocide as "event" and "tragedy" reifies static histories and memories of violence in Cambodia that may unfortunately result in the simultaneous "forgetting" of others.

"Bomb Ponds": Landscape Histories and Disruptive Remembrance

This is where my second archival case might intervene. I was introduced to Vandy Rattana's 2009 installation "Bomb Ponds" a few years ago when a colleague of mine sent me a link to the exhibition's information page on the Asia Society of New York's website. From there, I followed the installation's movements (both backwards and forwards), tracing its provenance—its origins and documentary context—as well as its trajectory of exhibit. "Bomb Ponds" was exhibited at the Guggenheim Museum in New York, a collection whose physical exhibition was complemented by public access via an online collection catalog through the Guggenheim's website[168] and continues as an exhibition in photographic form on Rattana's personal website.[169]

Although Vandy Rattana's art-documentary installation might not necessarily be an archive in the traditional sense—here, I reference Sir Hilary Jenkinson's view of archives as "natural accumulations" and archivists as custodians of such material[170]—"Bomb Ponds" and Rattana's larger body of work readily lend themselves as records or registerings of historical violence, and thus function as a generative comparison to DC-Cam's online presence. Vandy Rattana's personal website does not purport to be a digital archive; but as a working, growing collection of his exhibitions, Rattana's website serves many functions of online archives, including documentation, transparency, and accountability. Rattana's body of work can also be read as a non-traditional archival collection when refracted through more contemporary formulations of archival operations of documentation and transparency,[171] as well as deconstructive conceptualizations of the archive, which read cultural texts as repositories of histories of violence-trauma.[172] In contrast to DC-Cam's more singular investments in accountability and documentation, Rattana's website and art-documentary collections fulfill such

archival purposes through their physical manifestation of dimensions of Cambodian everyday life (and their resonances with the historical events of Cambodia's past).

In what could be read as its own documentation of "landscape histories,"[173] Rattana's "Bomb Ponds" exhibit seeks to make visible the presences and absences of U.S. imperialist violence in Cambodia today. "Bomb Ponds" consists of a series of landscape photographs as well as a short film documenting the event and afterlives of the U.S. bombing campaigns in Cambodia from 1964 to 1973. Rattana's photography captures the residues of the bombings on the Cambodian countryside, depicting the absence-presence of this history through still images that show the incorporation of bombing sites into various "natural" settings, such as rice fields, rubber plantations, clearings, and forests. Available on YouTube, the short film that accompanies Rattana's series of photographs gives both historical context to the meaning of such landscapes as well as an experiential dimension through testimonies from survivors.[174]

Figure 3. *Khmer Rouge Trial 7* (2009).
Digital C-Print. 60 x 90 cm/Edition of 5 + 2AP. Photograph by Vandy Rattana

Rattana's "Khmer Rouge Trial" collection of photographs especially, invokes a different kind of affect from that solicited in viewing DC-Cam's materials. Rather than a focus on the spectacular violence of the "event" of genocide and the function of the tribunal as reconciliatory force, Rattana's collection focuses on the quotidian quality of the trials (i.e., shots of microphones and filming equipment), consequently addressing the process by which violence becomes enfolded into the everyday. Like Veena Das's discussion of how the violence of the Partition of India in 1947 and the massacre of Sikhs following the assassination of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in 1984 come to take hold in the moving present,[175] Rattana's photographs construct an alternative archive of violence. Such an archive gestures towards multiple truths, reminding us of the complexities of violence not captured by binary models of justice, while also reminding us of the ways in which historical violence comes to structure our daily lives.

Rattana's remarks to me regarding this exhibit also gesture towards Yoneyama's question regarding how we might "fill the void of knowledge without reestablishing yet another regime of totality…and universal truthfulness."[176] When I ask him his thoughts regarding the ongoing Khmer Rouge tribunal, Rattana comments that he intended the exhibit to mock, to display the dimension of artifice in the proceedings. Contrasting his scenes with "what the world expects"—"it's a play" says Rattana[177]— this exhibit functions as a provocation for a self-critical look at the tribunal. The seriousness of the tribunal's hegemonic framing becomes undercut by Rattana's pragmatic and mundane scenes, a sense of something close to tediousness hinting at Rattana's commentary regarding the ineffectiveness of the tribunal. Highlighting the staging and performative elements of the proceedings, "Khmer Rouge Trial" underscores the inadequacy of

the tribunal as a medium for a reckoning with memories of the past and a generation of reflexive accountability for the present.

Figure 4. *Takeo* (2009).
Digital C-Print. 91 x 111 cm. Edition of 5 + AP. Photograph by Vandy Rattana

Juxtaposing the exhibition of landscape photographs of the remnants of bombing with experiential descriptions of the violence-trauma the bombings caused in "Bomb Ponds," Rattana captures a particular and collective memory of U.S. imperialism. In between experiential passages from survivors, the camera pans to the vast expanse of various bomb pond landscapes in Rattana's film, contrasting the violence of death in the testimonials—"I saw my grandmother die bleeding all over. I cannot speak anymore," says one man—with the stillness of the scenery in which the descriptions take place. Contrasting particular details from survivors— "Local people usually named the planes after the birds they looked like because they did not know the names of the planes," remarks another man—with repetition of testimonial comments regarding the ubiquitous nature of the bombing—"There are so many bomb ponds that we can't describe them all now"—Rattana's exhibit negates the discourse of "targeted warfare" perpetuated by

Cold War logics. Reading against the grain of dominant "official histories"[178] that obscure these experiences of violence, Rattana develops a body of work that might reckon with enablings of archives to remember and forget.

As an installation that travels, Rattana's work also speaks to Kenneth Foote's formulation of the communicative potential of archives to transgress spatial and temporal borders,[179] moving this memory in a way that might respond to diaspora and historical interconnectivity. Although Vandy Rattana is not "Asian/American" in the ethnic nationalist sense, he and "Bomb Ponds" compel us to think diasporically and transnationally. Born in 1980, a year after the Cambodian Holocaust, Rattana lives and works between Phnom Penh, Paris, and Taipei, among other cities; the content of his work also crosses temporal and spatial borders and boundaries, referencing "forgotten" histories of French colonialism and U.S. imperialism in Cambodia. As he states in the video available on the Guggenheim's website as well as in a personal correspondence with me in July 2015, the serendipitous origins of "Bomb Ponds" itself was entangled in such histories of colonialism and imperialism.

While photographing rubber plantations in Kampong Cham province in early 2009 in an effort to trace the residues of French colonialism in Cambodia, Rattana had his first encounter with a "bomb pond," one of the sometimes massive, almost always perfectly circular craters left behind by the U.S. bombings. Curious regarding what his camera had captured, Rattana asked local villagers about the craters pockmarking Kampong Cham's rubber fields and came to learn stories regarding a history of violence that he had up to that point been ignorant of. As he related to me, Rattana questioned his ignorance regarding these intertwined histories and "the image of the bomb pond haunted [him] for a year."[180] In late 2009 when he returned to Cambodia,

Rattana set out to document this "forgotten history" in his "Bomb Ponds" series spanning ten provinces along the eastern Cambodian-Vietnamese border.

Among his collections, "Bomb Ponds" is an especially apt example of the potentialities of Southeast Asian American Studies Fiona Ngô, Mimi Nguyen, and Mariam Beevi Lam outline in their introduction to the 2012 special issue of *Positions.*[181] Here, the authors outline Southeast Asia as an epistemic formation, tracing "new methodological and epistemological configurations" regarding the region as "postcolonial imaginary and neoimperial geography"[182] provoked by "recent critical moves. . .toward interdisciplinarity and transnationality as necessary to the study of historical formations and their ongoing renewal, of U.S. empire."[183] Similar to emerging scholarship that turns away from vested interests in representation towards "the particular resonances of secret wars, refugee archives of feeling, and the recursive traces of both,"[184] Rattana's work enacts another "worlding" at the juncture of Asian American and Asian Studies. The various "why's" articulated by survivors in Rattana's "Bomb Ponds" film, the persistent refusal to erase U.S. presence in Cambodia in their testimonials, and Rattana's comments regarding the necessity of shifting frames in the process of producing his work—"it was like all my heroes became my enemy" he tells me, and "I feel like I'm trapped in the history but I must continue…"[185]—intervene in static paradigms regarding Southeast Asia and Cambodia as region. Bringing the national into the international and vice versa, Mi Muk from Ratanakiri province gestures to "the evidence that cannot be denied" in Rattana's film. "These bomb ponds made by Americans have killed my relatives… this belongs to the Americans," he says; "this is the evidence and the foundation of my sadness."

Figure 5. *Kompong Thom, Sambor Prey Kuk* (2009).
Digital C-Print. 91 x 111 cm. Edition of 5 + AP. Photograph by Vandy Rattana

Following a feeling, the affective pull of the ghost, Rattana's "Bomb Ponds" captures the recursiveness of imperialist violence while turning away from a trafficking in spectacle. His series of photographs—both haunting and serene—brings the past quietly but also profoundly into the present, "seizing" the past in the present before it can be wiped free. Using a photographic method that is meant to capture the perspective of someone passing by such bombing landscapes many years after war, Rattana's "Bomb Ponds" paradoxically reflects both elements of remembrance and forgetting that constitute the dialectics of memory and history-making. His series of photographs and documentary film thus, emote a kind of everydayness in parallel to its haunting temporality; Rattana's exhibit prevents a separation of foreground and background, enveloping the historical event/site of bombing into its contemporary and post-war context.

In doing so, Rattana's installation has the potential to function as a different kind of archival evidence, as a record that extends beyond bureaucratic enumeration and homogenization, drawing our attention to the effects and experiences of U.S. violence in Cambodia. Rattana's archives—his body of work in these various documentary mediums—has the potential to support accountability and transparency, doing so less in the juridical sense and more so in terms of social and public accountability, reckoning with silent histories through multidimensional stagings of documentation that refuse official forms of forgetting. Responding to the bureaucratic power of archival records—a power that naturalizes the violence of colonialism and imperialism via administrative documentation—Rattana turns to the visual and auditory, to the affective, for this archive of violence. Through his body of on-going work, Rattana continues to gesture towards remembering, illustrating the potentialities of alternative forms of memory work to explicate and manifest the wounds of imperialism.

And as work that highlights one particular junction of "Asian/American" and "war" for Cambodian/Americans as well as others in the diaspora, "Bomb Ponds" stands in stark contrast to the continuing and shifting forms of Cold War logics Jodi Kim articulates, which form one protracted afterlife[186] of the Cambodian Holocaust. This popular deployment of Cambodia in the afterlife of the genocide manifests as both narrative as well as spectacle in U.S. remembrances and functions to foreground notions of American exceptionalism as well as distance from histories of violence in Cambodia. Following Kim's discussion of Asian American cultural production that troubles the dominant Manichaean logics pervading narrations of the historical past and present, Rattana's "Bomb Ponds" intervenes into, as Kim puts it, the hegemonic "epistemological valence that continues to generate 'new' knowledge or translations after the end

of [the genocide's] historical life or eventness."[187] Doing so persistently gestures towards the transnational dimension of historical violence in Southeast Asia.

Taking Vandy Rattana's body of work as a "site of knowledge,"[188] we see the ways in which archives are not simply positioned "in the past," but might function at the junction of past, present, and future. Rattana's work resonates with Cassie Finlay's contentions regarding recordkeeping as a political act. Although DC-Cam recognizes recordkeeping as an essential process as well, the embeddedness of Rattana's work in the everyday more closely aligns with Finlay's discussions of the purpose of "living archives" to more adequately address issues of transparency and abuse as they happen.[189] Although the form and content of such recordkeeping differ quite significantly—with Findlay addressing the destabilizing role of WikiLeaks—both Rattana and Findlay respectively address the harmful effects of a model of difference and distance, addressing the ways in which political control is exerted through the archive and through access to records. Here, I am especially drawn to Emiko Hastings' discussion of the historical narrative of "mistake," which came to be reinterpreted as a result of archival research into the records of Japanese American internment. In contrast to initial historical narratives that positioned U.S. internment of Japanese Americans as "mistake," Hastings utilizes the evidentiary value of the archive to hold accountable the U.S. government: "Internment of innocent civilians had not been an 'honest mistake' but a deliberate choice to violate the rights of American citizens."[190]

As a form of witnessing, Rattana's art-documentary installation functions as commentary on the deployment of the exception and the non-event. As one representation of non-spectacular violence, "Bomb Ponds" reflects the continuity and shifting forms of imperialist violence and its remembrance and forgetting in Cambodia. In doing so, Vandy Rattana's "Bomb Ponds"

functions to disarticulate the power of this particular protracted afterlife of the Cambodian Holocaust and subsequently functions to rearticulate those logics that would naturalize U.S. empire.

"Living Archives": Reflections on an Accounting for the Present

In late September 2015, I was fortunate enough to be part of a small group—myself, three of my friends, and two of his colleagues—to accompany Vandy Rattana on a trip back to Leach Leu village, Mimot district, in what is now Tbong Khmum province.[191] It had been six years since Rattana had first traveled there to photograph the district's rubber fields and first stumbled upon the craters that would eventually inspire his "Bomb Ponds" exhibit. In Leach Leu, our group first met up with the village chief at his home, where we were invited to have lunch. After lunch, we traveled by minivan with the chief to view several rubber and cassava plantations in Mimot district.

Walking through—consequently, also the title of Rattana's 2009 rubber plantation exhibit—the places where the photographic images that I had seen numerous times was a surreal experience: seeing up close, being with, standing in the bomb craters, looking down into the hole dug deep in the middle of one crater by local people searching for scrap metal. Peering down into that hole, I was reminded of scenes from Rithy Panh's 2011 film *Shiiku, the Catch*, this space, dug deep, reminiscent of the initial makeshift prison for a Black American solider whose plane had been shot down, that hole-in-the-ground prison guarded by rural children caught between the violences of U.S. imperialism and the militarism of Khmer Rouge and Lon Nol regimes. The hole at the bottom of that crater in Tbong Khmum was dug deep, so deep, I

imagined at the time that, if I fell in, it would have been difficult to get myself back out—as my good friend Leak commented.

Figure 6. Rubber trees in formation, Memot District,
Tbong Khmum Province (2015).
Photograph by Linda Chhath

As we walked the landscape, Rattana marveled at how much had changed in just six years, with the presence of craters becoming less and less visible as the region became more and more developed, beginning to be filled in to build new houses and to be used for agricultural industry; the craters he filmed in rice fields in 2009, Rattana mused, most likely no longer existed. For the most part, it was too expensive to completely fill in the craters, and landowners had local farmers plant rubber trees and cassava in the craters themselves, the rubber trees never

breaking formation—crater or no crater, the trees were planted in linear fashion. But the banana trees sprouted in no such linear formation, some perhaps purposefully planted, but a good number of them growing in the craters of their own accord. When I pointed them out, Leak told me about an old Cambodian folk tale associated with the banana tree that Leak's mother once recounted, explaining how banana trees are meant to be a sign of haunting. Leak's words gave me pause. . .haunting, I thought at the time. . .how very, very apt.

Figure 7. Stone plaque, Memot District, Tbong Khmum Province (2015).
Photograph by Linda Chhath

After the rubber and cassava fields, we traveled with the chief to nearby Muong village, one of the first "errors" of the Indochina war that the Americans had mistakenly bombed in 1964 and, again, in 1970. In Muong, we spoke with an elderly woman who led us to one bomb crater

and then another, craters not used in mass agricultural production, but rather by local folks for small subsistence gardens. We met up with an elderly man who spoke about the bombings and the loss of his family, about the mistaken bombing of his village in 1964, and about the bombings that were not acknowledged as a "mistake" in 1970. We visited the stone plaque in the village, ridden with bullet holes and lettering beginning to rub off, the plaque representing Sihanouk's commemoration of the 1964 bombing and American apology for this "error."

The folks we met that day told stories, told us that the bombings were *not supposed to be* of places inhabited by people, but that they always were. The stories people chose to tell us reminded me of other stories I had heard over lunch, dinner, meetings with folks in Cambodia, spontaneous stories that emerged—oftentimes in no linear fashion—belying the silences of History. These stories from Cambodians of multiple generations, including my own—the relating of stories from friends and family about the U.S. bombing campaigns, about airplanes seemingly bombing fully inhabited villages with intent, purposefully targeting people's makeshift bomb shelters, about the terror of planes circling overhead all the time—contradict any notion that the violence of U.S. empire was just an exception, a justifiable mistake.

Figure 8. Bomb Crater at Lumphat, former capital of Ratanakiri Province (2016).
Photograph by Heang Chhun[192]

In the wake of Nelson Mandela's passing, Mandela's archivist Verne Harris articulates the dangers of a static utilization of archives and the co-optation of historical narratives; a parallel can be (cautiously) drawn between various "coffee-table book narratives" of Mandela's life and dominant narratives regarding the Cambodian Holocaust. Harris asks: who is served by dominant representations of Mandela's legacy, and what historical narratives are erased by archival spotlighting (a privileging of some archival materials over others, and ultimately a privileging of dominant historical narratives that serve power at the expense of marginalized narratives and peoples); how is ongoing structural violence obscured by our whitewashing of the past?

> "Public representations of Mandela's life and legacy are overwhelmingly sycophantic, exploitative, or unduly intimidated by Nelson Mandela the living person…. The publishing space we name 'Mandela' is an industry, arguably supporting a saturated market dominated by the coffee-table book reproducing the same basic narrative and the same well-known images…. In terms of legacy, I would argue, the most pressing need is to find a means of turning memory into a resource for building a future in which social justice and cohesion are prioritised. The challenge is not one of preserving legacy as a catalyst for reviving the dream of a 'rainbow nation'. Rather, it is one of making and remaking legacy as a potent energy in the work of renewal. It is one of dealing with the past—both the long past of colonialism and apartheid, and the short past of the 'New South Africa'—as a means to reimagine the future."[193]

"The same basic narrative" and the "same well-known images" of Nelson Mandela, especially in the wake of his passing, overwhelming traffic in neoliberal tropes of exceptionalism and multiculturalism, highlighting Mandela's role in a "post-apartheid world" that obscures the glaring and unjust structural inequalities that continue to condition life in South Africa today.

Contrary to early notions of archives as neutral mediums of memory and history-making, Harris positions archives creation and the archivist profession as always already embedded in relationships of power. Drawing from the deconstructionist turn as well as postcolonial theory, Harris conceptualizes the work of archives as a form of justice. In positioning archives and their

construction as justice however, Harris does not conceive of archival creation as endpoint. Rather, Harris argues for a trenchant memory-work that recognizes that such a justice happens in process—archives and their legacies are not necessarily meant to be persevered but are meant to be continually made and re-made—calling for a framework of archives and justice that recognizes "a justice which must always be coming."[194]

Harris conceives of the work of archives as simultaneous acknowledgement of as well as reckoning with pasts of colonialism and structures of racial violence, as the work of accountability for subsequent ongoing violence. In this, Harris' work dovetails with Jodi Kim's *Ends of Empire*. Through her book, Kim uses archives to document and chart the continuities of colonial and imperialist logics as she also uses archives to account for their various mutations. Through the use of archives and cultural production, Kim gestures towards "a justice which must always be coming," ending her text with a discussion of the manifestations of such binary logics in the present as well as alternatives to such logics.

The remembrances addressed in this chapter, the various living archives, landscape histories, and perilous public memories, disarticulate discrete narratives of "tragedy" that construct an inevitability regarding genocidal violence in Cambodia. They disarticulate narratives of "tragedy" that refuse a full accounting of the historical power of international actors. Such remembrances perform the work of Walter Benjamin's "historical materialist" writing of history, one that Yoneyama describes as "tak[ing] into account that… omitted from [universal history's] inventory of happenings," a "reclaim[ing of] missed opportunities and unfulfilled promises in history… unrealized events that might have led to a different present."[195] Through making legible the unequal, racialized rubrics of morality and value that undergirded the (hot) Cold War in Southeast Asia, these remembrances liberate "'the oppressed past' from a

history [of empire]… made to appear as if it unfolds through time naturally and automatically."[196]

Like my father's contradictory narrative and Rattana's treatment of the transnational dimension of Cambodia's histories of violence, unofficial sites of memory re-write a binary narrative that obscures international complicity in the events of the Cambodian Holocaust. These examples highlight so-called minor histories in ways that recognize the duplicity of the deployment of the exception and the mistake, deployments that function as smokescreens for U.S. empire's deliberate disregard for life. In doing so, these alternative registers of memory disrupt imperialist logics, underscoring the potential of unofficial archival forms—"living" archives—to do the recursive work of accounting for the historical violences of the past, as they also account for the violences of militarism and empire in the present.

CHAPTER TWO Living Archives and Spatial Histories: Landscape Ethnography and an Accounting for the Present[197]

> "**When I woke up**," my father reminds me. "This was the road. In these rivers were bodies. Body parts. Like so much debris. **When I woke up** the body parts were strewn across the street like the rubble from my home was strewn everywhere in front of me. **When I woke up**."
>
> "I think it was about here," my father points to a building. "**I think this was where I was sleeping.**"

In January 2017, my father and I travel to Prey Veng province in Cambodia, to the river town of Neak Loeung. It had been about five years since my sister and I had conducted a follow-up interview with our father, over seven years since we first began conducting oral history interviews with our family. Years after my father survived the "mistaken" bombing of Neak Loeung on August 6, 1973, we return to the river town.

Sitting five to a row in the modified van serving as makeshift taxi, we drive across the new bridge linking Kandal province to Neak Loeung. Constructed with support from the Japanese government, the Tsubasa Bridge—known colloquially as the Neak Loeung Bridge—is the longest bridge over the Mekong in Cambodia,[198] and coincidentally, also the impetus for my father's excitement regarding this return trip. After we find lodging for our stay, we walk alongside the riverbank. Mid-stroll, my father begins to speak; his words reminiscent of those spoken years earlier, the words that guided me to Cambodia in the first place. *"When I woke up," my father reminds me….*

> Yes, usually in the war, all the. . .time, they not [one] hundred percent right on the target. People make mistake so, sometime American can. . .make mistake too. . .one time. . .I have experience myself. That they bomb. . .on the town of Neak Loeung. . . .They drop bomb on the town of Neak Loeung that kill two hundred people. And I see by my eye, **when I wake up**, even my wall, that the place I sleep, it broke over me. And. . .see

> outside to the street, I see a lot of arm, leg, they fly to the tree, something like that. Yeah, that a lot of people was killed, that one mistake like that, that I meet with myself.

Neak Loeung's absence in my father's initial interview—followed by the story's appearance in his follow-up interview—reflects the dialectical relationship between what is remembered and what is forgotten in the processes of memory-making and in the translation of memory work into the production of History.[199] My father's story of Neak Loeung, initially produced through direct questioning and years later, evoked by the act of walking through—the setting, the landscape—also reflects the limits of a declarative model of disclosure, a witnessing that might map trauma and violence as discrete events onto a linear timeline. The invocation of the memory of the bombing and its aftermath illustrates how place itself might come to document histories of violence, informing the stories we come to tell. In the space where place meets narrative, the register of the mundane calls forth the possibility of an accounting for the present, the production of stories always already becoming in relation to and enacting the power of recognition for lives lived otherwise.

The repetition of the act of awakening in its past tense in January 2017, parallels the repetition of the act of awakening in its present tense previously in November 2011.

When I woke up…

when I woke up…

when I woke up…

When I wake up….

My father's words seem to float in the air above us as we walk the main road alongside the river, as he narrates his process of coming into consciousness, to wake as from a sleep—as he "awoke to find"[200] large-scale destruction. The saliency of this state of coming into and moving through the violent event during the act of remembrance signals the multiple enactments of 'wake' enumerated in Christina Sharpe's *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being.* As Sharpe contends,

“Racism, the engine that drives the ship of state’s national and imperial projects… cuts through all of our lives and deaths inside and outside the nation, in the wake of its purposeful flow. *Wake: the track left on the water’s surface by a ship… a region of disturbed flow.*”[201]

In addition to its state as possibility, as liminal and latent—*Wake; the state of wakefulness; consciousness*[202]—my father’s admission registers the precarity of lives lived in the wake of U.S. imperialism past and present, lives vulnerable to the U.S. state’s logic of racial disposability, a disposability registered singularly as well as spatially. The repetition of the temporal dimension of coming into (consciousness) in his remembrance parallels the repetition of the phrase “awoke to (signs/ find)” in Anida Yoeu Ali’s “1700% Project: Mistaken for Muslim.” In its initial iteration as narrative-based poem and then as spoken word and art performance piece, “1700%” simultaneously intervenes into racialized framings of “terrorist,” while tracing the historical continuities and interconnections of U.S. violence domestically and abroad.

> “Awoke to signs, ‘TERRORISTS’
> sprayed in red paint across their family’s driveway, ‘TERRORIST
> ON BOARD’ written on their white car…
>
> Awoke to find
> a South Asian American, Sikh,
> chased by a group of four men yelling ‘TERRORIST.’
> Sikh mistaken for Muslim…
>
> A vehicle of white males,
> followed and harassed a 21 yr old female. Attackers
> yelled, ‘Go back to your own country!’
> The attackers’ car pinned her against another vehicle. Then
> they backed up and ran over her again. Kimberly—
> a 21 year old. Back up.
> A 21 year old full blood Creek—Back up.
> Full blood Creek Native American mistaken for Muslim.”[203]

Yoeu Ali's parallel repetition of "awoke to" while "back[ing] up" gestures towards the temporal dimensions of racialized and gendered violence in the United States. The multiple iterations of violence take on linguistic as well as visual forms—the camera cutting from faces of men, women, and children "mistaken for Muslim;" to scenes of Yoeu Ali dug up from a grave wearing the orange robe of Buddhist monk and prison jumpsuit, carried on a stretcher, staring back at the camera while upside down, traveling backwards as the camera follows her forwards, reciting "awoke to find;" amid scenes of a figure located in white space, covered in white paint—ash—contorting as Yoeu Ali relentlessly narrates until the figure ultimately transitions into the graceful movement of an Apsara dancer. The figure gestures towards the fallout of long-running war and militarism—from the nuclear devastation of Hiroshima and Nagasaki to the U.S. carpet bombings of Cambodia.

Yoeu Ali engages with time in this performance piece, pushing against discrete models of violent events. "Awaking to find" destruction reiterates the precarity of lives conditioned by logics of racial disposability, while the provocation to "back up," arrests the audience—demands the audience take a moment, a step (back)—in order to situate violence within its larger sociohistorical and geopolitical context. The continuities of history in the ongoing violences of settler colonialism, imperialism, militarism, and war embed themselves into the everyday not as spectacular event, but in these everyday moments of terror. Yoeu Ali's project makes visible the very material consequences of discursive violence—naming the innumerable losses unaccounted for—while also returning the gaze, pivoting the designation "terrorist" back onto, "Racism, the engine that drives the [U.S.] ship of state's national and imperial projects."[204] Yoeu Ali does so while resisting the desire to present a narrative of tragedy or humanitarian crisis, liberal modes of

recognition, ending instead with the grace of the Apsara form as well as the dedication, "Because we refuse to end in violence."

This closing dedication conjures yet another of Sharpe's formulations of "wake": "*Wake: grief, celebration, memory, and those among the living who, through ritual, mourn the*[] *passing* [of the dead] *and celebrate their life in particular the watching of relatives and friends beside the body of the dead person from death to burial.*"[205] This form of wake as mourning dovetails with the inquiry critical refugee studies takes up in Yen Le Espiritu's *Body Counts*: "The nonrecognition of Vietnamese losses raises the question: what makes for a grievable life? As Judith Butler asks, how does mourning take place for those who never 'were,' who 'fit no dominant frame for the human,' and whose lives do not count as lives?"[206] Within such a framework that disciplines populations into what Alexander Weheliye conceives of as "full humans," "not-quite-humans" and "nonhumans,"[207] the wake intervenes—allowing us to grieve, to mourn, and to remember, not as an endpoint, but as an ongoing accounting for the dead as well as the living. Following the intervention of the wake and Christina Sharpe's call:

> "It is my particular hope that the praxis of the wake and wake work, the theory and performance of the wake and wake work, as modes of attending to Black life and Black suffering, are imagined and performed here with enough specificity to attend to the direness of the multiple and overlapping presents that we face; it is also my hope that the praxis of the wake and wake work might have enough capaciousness to travel and do work that I have not here been able to imagine or anticipate…"[208]

—this chapter explores how the register of the mundane accessed through the relationships between memory, story, and landscape might reconfigure new ways of knowing and being. Understanding wake work as "a mode of inhabiting *and* rupturing [slavery's afterlives] with our known lived and un/imaginable lives,"[209] this chapter engages a "pedagogy of the moment" in order to materialize how lives are made and understood in the wake of war. Positioning subjects within the moving present of history vis-à-vis shifting forms of remembrance tethered to time,

space and place, this chapter works to outline a different model of redress and reparation. In the space where place meets narrative lies the potential to rethink our notions of documentation and accountability, pushing against zero-sum models of commemoration that might foreclose our ability to recognize otherwise, to imagine a different entry into the category of human experience.

This chapter explores the landscapes and stories that emerged from my trips to Mondulkiri and Ratanakiri provinces in Cambodia during January 2016. What began as an ethnographic survey of landscapes quickly became an inextricably relational and dialogical project, where intersubjectivity became foundational to the processes of memory-making and knowledge production. Located in the northeastern sector of the country, these provinces share their eastern borders with Vietnam—with Ratanakiri province also sharing its northern border with Laos. As the two Cambodian provinces most directly in the path of the "Ho Chi Minh Trail," Mondulkiri and Ratanakiri provinces sustained some of the heaviest bombing in Cambodia during the U.S. Cold War in Southeast Asia. Mondulkiri and Ratanakiri provinces are also home to the largest concentration of Cambodia's ethnic minority groups, and Ratanakiri province served as home base for the Khmer Rouge during Cambodia's civil war years before the overtaking of Phnom Penh in 1975.[210]

This chapter contributes to a body of work regarding landscapes, commemoration, and histories of violence in Southeast Asia. Like Vatthana Pholsena and Oliver Tappe's edited anthology entitled *Interactions with a Violent Past*, I also seek to address "the complex aftermath of the [Second Indochina or "Vietnam"] war as manifest in the Cambodian, Lao, and Vietnamese scarred landscapes, and their inhabitants' everyday lives."[211] Thinking through the material-discursive formation of landscapes as "a political, social, and cultural process characterized by

the interaction and mutual constitution of human societies and their physical environment," I engage the possible and changing meanings of sites and sights "in interaction with the people who see and shape them, and whom in turn are affected by them."[212]

I begin with stories of absence-presence while traveling to villages in Mondulkiri province. Contrasting the narrative of "erasure" with stories regarding the mundane quality of the U.S. bombing campaigns of the 1960s and 1970s, following Anida Yoeu Ali and Neferti Tadiar, I discuss the politics of spatial terror and racial disposability as part of the day-to-day of war time. From here, I engage the nexus between logics of disposability and commemorative politics, anchoring my analysis in the experience of walking through the heavily bombed "ghost town" of Lumphat, former capital of Ratanakiri province. Lastly, I end with a discussion of an encounter, an unanticipated moment of recognition between my father and a former Khmer Rouge soldier and current amputee at Yeak Loam crater lake in Banlung, the current capital of Ratanakiri province. Thinking through the ethical politics of apology and reconciliation, I read this encounter as a moment which complicates binary models of reparation, as one moment with the potential to place subjects in their present as well as historical past, opening new possible paths through the wake.

Spatial Terror and the Mundane

K3 District, Mondulkiri Province

> In Mondulkiri province, we meet up with Than who negotiates prices with us for a trip to visit bombing sites with a guide…. He lets us know that we will be traveling to K3 district, to an area called Dai-ey. Our guide was a former solider during the war, stationed at Koh Niek. His name is Vinh. We drive to Dai-ey, to what might be a Tampoun village… where we meet his brother or [possibly] a relative [Cambodian pronouns are familial], also a former soldier…. Between conversation with my father, the guide's brother takes us to two bomb craters, the first filled with vegetation, mostly

> banana trees, the second used as a receptacle for trash. The guide's brother lets us know that there is no point in going further as all the craters have been erased. There is [a] conversation regarding the "eras[ure] of craters," a discourse I'm coming to know well in Cambodia.

Figure 9. Banana Tree in a Bomb Crater, Mondulkiri Province (2016).
Photograph by Lina Chhun

> As we take a look at the two craters in the village, the villagers speak about surveillance planes… planes that would come and take pictures, would drop napalm. One time, one of the planes bombed a covered car that was not a military vehicle, the villagers suspect that perhaps the pilot thought it was. The villagers spoke about how when that covered car was spotted, the village was bombed for days.

Rithy Panh's 2011 film *Shiiku, the Catch*[213] opens up in rural eastern Cambodia. The year is 1972, at the height of "Operation Freedom Deal." Following on the heels of "Operation Menu," "Freedom Deal" intensified and expanded the American carpet-bombing campaigns in Cambodia after the U.S.-backed Lon Nol coup of the capital, Phnom Penh, in 1970. Panh begins his film with archival footage of B52's in flight, shot and narrated by U.S. bomber pilots. Level with the bombers, the camera records the planes—likely modified "Big Belly" B52d's with

increased bomb capacity for carpet bombing campaigns—as they drop their "payloads"—up to 108 225-kilogram or 42 340-kilogram bombs[214]—onto the Cambodian landscape below. As the archival footage shifts to aerial shots of the bombs landing on jungle, in rivers, on villages and homes, the impact resulting in massive explosions and burning napalm, we hear the accompanying audio from the U.S. pilots recording the bombings: "Look at it burn;" "The army will go in this afternoon with helicopters and take a look around;" "We can see the people running everywhere;" "Look at them run;" "This is great fun." From these extended opening scenes taken directly from U.S. military archives, Panh shifts to a scene of rural life set among the pockmarked Cambodian landscape, of young children running around a field of massive bomb craters, herding water buffalo. The context of bombardment—illustrated by shots of bombers in flight, of scouting helicopters, of ground troops, and of the imprint of craters—sets the scene for Panh's story regarding a felled Black American pilot and the relationships he comes to develop with the Cambodian children who become his immediate captors.

Panh's *Shiiku* is a remake of Director Nagisa Oshima's 1961 *Shiiku*, translated as "The Catch," using Oshima's narrative regarding a Black GI captured in a Japanese farming village during WWII to explore the complex intersubjective dynamics of the U.S. Cold War in Southeast Asia, the context of the civil war years in Cambodia preceding the period of Democratic Kampuchea, or as predominantly periodized—the Vietnam War of the 1960s and 1970s. Panh's *Shiiku* centers around a young boy named Pang, orphaned when his parents are marked as traitors to the Khmer Rouge cause. The film follows Pang as he and the other boys in the village become Khmer Rouge soldiers in training, indoctrinated into the violent logics of war in order to become the "eyes and ears of Angkar."[215] The film's cinematography and pacing reiterate the mundane quality of the narrative, the story unfolding slowly after the initial archival footage, the

triangulation of events of violence in the film rendering murky the concepts of "enemy" and "atrocity." The cruelty of Khmer Rouge indoctrination exists alongside the cruelty of Lon Nol soldiers—interrogating villagers and setting fire to homes in an effort to obtain information about the felled American pilot—which exists alongside the precarity of life and living in a zone marked by aerial warfare.

Turning away from the domain of life—biopower as "that domain of life over which power has taken control"[216]—Achille Mbembe challenges us to reconsider the role of sovereignty in modern politics, a sovereignty whose "ultimate expression…resides, in a large degree, in the power and the capacity to dictate who may live and who must die."[217] Mbembe's "necropolitics" re-engages Foucault's notion of biopolitics and biopower, reconfiguring the relationships between life, death, the political, and the subject. Necropower—as a specific terror formation—is foundationally about who exercises this right to violence, the right to kill. Mbembe asks us: Is the notion of biopower a sufficient account for the contemporary ways in which the political, under the guise of war, of resistance, or of the fight against terror, makes the murder of the enemy its primary and absolute objective?"[218]

In answering this question, Mbembe draws on historical and contemporary "states of exception"—historical and contemporary examples of "death worlds, new and unique forms of social existence in which vast populations are subjected to conditions of life conferring upon them the status of living dead."[219] In these death worlds, the fictions of war and politics as "rule-governed," collapse. The doctrine of a European juridical order, of *Jus publicum*, disappears in the colonies, in the township under apartheid, and in the contemporary occupation of Palestine. In these death worlds, the "violence of the state of exception is deemed to operate in the service of 'civilization.'"[220] The separation of self from enemy is complete, and as ever-removed

technologies of mass killing proliferate, sovereignty increasingly becomes the capacity to define "who is disposable and who is not."[221]

Through the invocation of the exception, spatial terror is necropolitically deployed in service of the biopolitical project of "democracy" in Southeast Asia. Necropower co-opts the terms of "terrorism" as Neferti Tadiar posits, in the name of "anti-terrorism"—"terrorism is the rule and deployment of terror for the purposes of gaining and securing power over the living"[222]—providing "ever-greater powers to the state that can and will be used"[223] with impunity. As terror formation, necropower defines not only who is disposable, but also the what and where of disposability; as Sherene Razack argues, the tethering of racialized violence to spatialized in/justice. Through the spatialization of racial categories, "bodies in degenerate spaces lose their entitlement to personhood through a complex process in which the violence that is enacted is naturalized."[224] In the decolonizing spaces of former European colonies, spatial terror deployed through such technologies as carpet-bombing campaigns is indicative of the ways in which space and place become racialized; rather than a condition of power, violence is rewritten as endemic to space, the tethering of populations to place naturalizing the violence that happens. Narratives of the "tragedy of Cambodian history," Cambodia as a "war-torn" country defined by "auto-genocide," fix Cambodia in anterior space, a place where "violence happens." Such narratives bolster a sense of inevitability regarding violence in Cambodia, this inevitability tied to "culture," naturalizing the conditions and continuing effects of war, including landscapes primed to maim and kill far into the future.

Contrary to such narratives that render violence as endemic to Cambodia, Panh's *Shiiku* as well as the stories told by villagers in Mondulkiri and Ratanakiri provinces make visible the entangled nature of domestic and transnational histories. Although these stories describe

violence in the register of the mundane, they also denaturalize narratives of "inevitable tragedy," situating violence in its social and historical contexts. Panh's decision to use audiovisual archival footage allows us to see the juxtaposition of the range and destruction of the bombing alongside the gleeful response of U.S. bomber pilots, illustrating violence not as personal and/or cultural characteristic, but rather endemic to the language of empire. Rather than the spectacular positioning of this discursive-material violence—utilized in such "anti-war" films as Francis Ford Coppola's 1979 *Apocalypse Now*—Panh articulates, to borrow from Hannah Arendt's "the banality of evil," the very banality of racial violence.

Aerial warfare in the form of surveillance and obliteration in the service of liberal empire creates environments of continual precarity, an asphixatory regime of power that weaponizes time itself as Jasbir Puar states: "Time itself is held hostage; time is lived as fear."[225] We see this at the very beginning of Panh's film when an alarm sounds in the middle of the night, and we see children and adults run for shelter; one villager proclaims, "seems like bombing us during the day is not enough." Carpet bombing campaigns reflect more than just the sovereign right to kill; in designating disposable (in relation to indispensable) populations, aerial warfare reflects a deliberate disregard for life that surveys and contains (Communist) populations vis-à-vis a perpetual state of fear.

Explicating "the permeating relations between living and dying that complicate Michel Foucault's foundational mapping"[226] of biopolitics and Mbembe's mapping of necropolitics, Jasbir Puar "argue[s] that the Israeli state manifests an *implicit* claim to the 'right to maim' and debilitate Palestinian bodies and environments as a form of biopolitical control and as central to a scientifically authorized humanitarian economy."[227] This "right to maim" produces "neither life nor death, not even attenuated death,"[228] but a debilitation, the slow wearing down of

environments and populations, of infrastructure and people, alongside the capacitation of neoliberal racial capital in the name of rehabilitation, development and humanitarianism. Shooting to maim rather than kill is framed as humanitarian operation, eliding the devastation of militarized occupation through reduced (dead) body counts.

Through "Operation Freedom Deal," the United States simultaneously monopolizes the notion of "freedom," binding the state or ability of being without restraint to the liberal rights-bearing subject, while framing the bombing campaigns as humanitarian enterprise. The "deal" between the U.S. government and Lon Nol regime, here constructed as speaking for the whole of the Cambodian people, is framed as mutually-agreed upon contract, a transaction which sees the United States as benefactor, bestowing the "gift of freedom"[229] upon a country corrupted by the cult of the collective. Liberal war demands debilitation, a maiming not immediately visible through body counts and mortality figures, but a debilitation that bears out through the homelessness and loss of livelihood produced through the massive displacement of millions of people—more than 25 percent of the population—as an effect of carpet bombing[230] and the time-lapse quality of injury and obliteration necessitated by the continued and continuing presence of unexploded ordnance. Debilitation also bears out in the loss of infrastructure—an estimated 20 percent of property destroyed in Cambodia during the war[231]; "[t]he assault on infrastructure, Salamanca argues, is an essential, even central, component of the biopolitical regulation of a malleable humanitarian collapse, whereby 'the supporting infrastructure of ordinary life [become] both target and weapon.'"[232]

As Mimi Thi Nguyen contends, the lines between liberal war and liberal peace blur and produce a "zone of indistinction" through the gift of freedom, the production and reproduction of debt—debilitation as debt and rehabilitation as compounded debt continually generating

dividends—whereby power as productive effects the means and justification for its expansion. With estimates ranging up to 500,000 deaths and the massive number of people maimed and injured that continue to be unaccounted for during the civil war years in Cambodia and during the period of Khmer Rouge rule, "Operation Menu" and "Operation Freedom Deal" continue on in the extensive "cluster bomb problem [that] haunts the east of the country."[233] Exact numbers of those killed and maimed from unexploded bombs are difficult to track down, although MAG (Mines Advisory Group) International—a British based non-profit organization that finds and destroys landmines, cluster munitions and unexploded bombs and advocates for the banning of landmines and other anti-personnel weapons—estimates that over 64,000 people have been killed as a result of unexploded ordnance (landmines and bombs) since 1979 in Cambodia, and an average of one death or injury still occurs each week.[234] According to CMAC (Cambodian Mine Action Centre), at least thirty people have already been killed or maimed in the first three months of 2019.

Just as Patrick Wolfe positions conquest as structure rather than event,[235] liberal empire through the necropolitical deployment of exception and the right to maim, functions to structure the past, present, and future. Through Enlightenment logics of quantification and categorization, the deadly regime of Khmer Rouge rule becomes visible; the conditions of overwork, starvation, illness, and disease compounded by murder, resulting in the deaths of approximately 1.5 to 2 million Cambodians from 1975-1979. Through the logic of "collateral damage," liberal empire coincidentally elides the longue durée of "intervention" and carpet-bombing campaigns, death and injury as speculative, the temporal lapse of obliteration by UXO producing a forgetting, or in Lisa Yoneyama's terms, "the forgetting of forgetfulness."

Co/lateral damage, "unintentional" destruction adjacent to a target, collateral— "property (such as securities) pledged by a borrower to protect the interests of the lender;" "…(as for payment of a debt or performance of a contract)"[236]—damage—"loss or harm resulting from injury to person, property, or reputation"[237]—or damages—"compensation in money imposed by law for loss or injury."[238] As Neferti Tadiar articulates:

> "Collateral damage. Whether the object of hate crimes, or the target of bombs and food embargos, or niche markets for the international traffic in drugs, people of color are that collateral from the outset. As excess people, they may be used, as the women of Afghanistan and Iraq have been used, as token signs, mere symbolic means, in the contest of virile powers and patriarchal states."[239]

Collateral damage as necessarily unaccounted for harm and as the debt of war disarticulates debilitation from death,[240] as surplus populations are instrumentalized in the service of liberal war and peace. As Jasbir Puar states, "the designation 'explosive remnants of war' suggests that the war is over and that the remnants, ranging from dumdum bullets to armament toxicity to land mines, are benign, manageable, or negligible."[241] Debilitation in the form of collateral damage as unaccounted for loss and speculative loss from these "remnants of war" is capacitated by discourses that the war—the apogee of tragedy—is over in Cambodia. The visibility of "atrocity tourism" as well as mass graves within the discursive landscape regarding Cambodia functions in tandem with narratives of the absence-presence of U.S. bombing and bomb craters in a dialectical memory-making that "forgets" spatial terror, while relegating it firmly to the past.

Tonlé San, the Sesan River, Ratanakiri Province

Today my father was my all-day motodup driver, and we followed our guide to two districts in Ratanakiri. We first drive [east] to Bar Kaev [from Ban Lung, current provincial capital], where we visit an area in the forest where local people engage in gem mining. I was told by my friend Khiang that Bar Kaev was were Pol Pot's secret residence was during the civil war…. From Bar Kaev, we travel [northeast] to Andoung Meas…. We are told… that there are bomb craters in neighboring Tanang and Kah villages, Phnoung villages. Our guide himself used to work in Tanang village, helping to translate for an NGO, and he takes us there. In order to get to the villages, we [travel further east] cross[ing] the Sesan River in a ferry. When we get to Tanang, the local townspeople tell us that there are no more craters….

Figure 10. Crossing the Tonle San,
Ratanakiri Province, Cambodia (2016).
Photograph by Lina Chhun

We move onto Kah village where we are told the same thing. Although the CMAC maps I carry with me show massive amounts of bombing in these areas, there is a narrative of erasure, a search for craters that no longer exist. Some people do tell us that some craters exist, but they are closer to the border and traveling to the border would be dangerous. But for the most part, it appears that many of the craters have disappeared, cleared in order to make way for the acres of plantations we see in Ratanakiri, acres of land used for rubber and cassava plantations. I'm told that the cassava is planted in Cambodia on these large plantations, but then sold for a cheap price to Vietnam, where the cassava is turned into flour and noodles, and from there, sold back to Cambodia. It's a common narrative in Cambodia, and I wonder still about the cycle of exploitation.

Memory and the Unmarked Site

Lumphat, Ratanakiri Province

> My father and I travel from Mondulkiri province… to Ratanakiri province…. After getting settled, with the help of Bong Phal… my father and I are introduced to the guide that will take us to Lumphat…. We take… two moto-dup's out to the former provincial capital under French rule, Lumphat, which was destroyed during the U.S. bombing raids of the Cold War.
>
> …In Lumphat, my father and I encounter massive bomb craters for the first time. Attempting to put the size in perspective, I climb down one bomb crater, only to get sucked into the clay-ish mud, knee deep. It's a frightening experience and for a minute, I wonder if I can get myself out…. [T]he bomb craters in Lumphat are close together, and following what the villagers said in Dai-ey, oftentimes in pairs, denoting the way in which bombs were dropped in strings, in a line, multiple bombs clustered together….

Figure 11. Bomb Crater at Lumphat,
Former capital of Ratanakiri Province (2016).
Photograph by Heang Chhun

Situated on the Tonlé Srepok (the Srepok River)—coincidentally, the Tonlé Srepok is believed to be the fictional river depicted in the film *Apocalypse Now*—the city of Lumphat was

the former provincial capital of Ratanakiri province during the 1950s and 1960s. A casualty of the United States bombing campaigns of the '60s and '70s, in 1998, while the district of Lumphat had a population of 10,301, the city of Lumphat was now home to fewer than 800 people.[242] Although many of the buildings that once made up the administrative outpost were destroyed during the U.S. bombings, vestiges of the former provincial capital remain, and Lumphat is the site of some of the most preserved remnants of the bombings in Cambodia. A road runs through the former provincial city, and Lumphat feels both frozen and simultaneously forgotten by time. If as Oliver Tappe and Vatthana Pholsena posit, "Landscapes appear to be inbued with different layers of memory, as palimpsests that can be deciphered or selectively manipulated,"[243] what can we imagine at Lumphat? What might Lumphat say as a witness to the past and present?

Anchoring her analysis in the Vietnamese memorialization of the Khmer Rouge genocide at Choeng Ek killing fields, Thu-Huong Nguyen-Vo engages in a discussion regarding commemoration, silencing, and historical violence. Noting the ways in which such an "official" site of (spectacular) remembrance doubly functions to justify Vietnamese imperialist invasion of Cambodia as well as elide global culpability—obscuring the inextricability of the necropolitical regime of the Khmer Rouge from the sovereign power and states of exception enacted by the United States and by China—Nguyen-Vo comments on commemoration's ability to make some violences legible while making others illegible. Through this analysis, Nguyen-Vo foregrounds the power of particular forms of distancing—similar to the distancing process archival logics allow between past and present—in the reproduction of the afterlives of historical violence. Through the reproduction of Enlightenment logics with investments in discourses of

discreteness, the Cambodian Holocaust comes to be narrated and commemorated as both anomaly and anachronism.[244]

Discussing the representational histories and politics of Tuol Sleng Museum— "a renovation of the 'S-21' Khmer Rouge secret police facility" and "the largest interrogation centre of Democratic Kampuchea,"[245] Rachel Hughes posits the following questions of visitors and theorists alike: "What are the limits of the museum as a space of empathy? What of the contradiction of a museum's bureaucracy and archive being put to work to further visitors' understanding of a place when these same phenomena are central to the violence and terror of the past now represented?" Drawing upon discussion regarding Tuol Sleng's controversies as well as its effects as commemorative site, Hughes notes a distancing response in line with the framework Nguyen-Vo outlines, stating that "non-Cambodian visitors to the Museum regularly comment on the aesthetic attributes of the photographs [of the executed and tortured prisoners]—their clarity or size, their obvious physical deterioration as exhibited objects,"[246] rather than engaging with the political considerations and meanings of such traces of violence.

This dis-identification with the visual evidence of Tuol Sleng's victims by visitors to the museum is produced through its staging. Although very little is explicitly captioned at Tuol Sleng, its commemorative narrative is there just the same as Cathy Schlund-Vials posits:

> "Indeed, if to memorialize is to participate (via the built environment) in a collective memory act focused on loss, then Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum's collected memorial to state-sanctioned violence privileges a contradictory commemorative mode concentrated *not* on those executed but on the Khmer Rouge leaders, cadres, and soldiers responsible for their victimhood."[247]

"[R]epurposed to highlight Khmer Rouge criminality"[248] after the Vietnamese invasion, occupation and the installation of the Vietnamese and Soviet-backed People's Republic of Kampuchea (PRK) in 1979—ironically (or not so ironically) founded by Khmer Rouge

defectors—Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum and Choeung Ek Center for Genocide Crimes commodifies and spectacularizes the Democratic Kampuchea period as *the* killing fields era in Cambodia. The commodified commemoration of spectacular cruelty was and is, as Schlund-Vials argues, "part and parcel of a nascent PRK nation-building effort, rendering impossible—from the beginning—a nuanced, complex mode for Cambodian commemoration."[249] This history of state-sponsored commemoration and the proliferation of its attendant atrocity narratives in the memory industry, overdetermine dominant sociohistorical and geopolitical narratives regarding violence told in and about Cambodia.

In "examin[ing] the dialectics of violence and landscape memorialization in Cambodia," James Tyner, Savina Sirik, and Samuel Henkin "conceptually link three interrelated dialectics: potential and realized violence, potential and realized memorialization, and post-conflict and post-genocide landscapes."[250] Analyzing the ways in which "[b]oth visible and nonvisible markers of Cambodia's violent past remain on the landscape,"[251] including "sites 'hidden in plain sight'—those places that are both unmarked and unremarked, and yet retain an enduring day-to-day presence,"[252] Tyner et. al account for the process through which the politics of memory produce realized and unrealized memorialized landscapes. Pivoting on the "social, spatial, and temporal relations" that define "'post-conflict' and 'post-genocide' Cambodia,"[253] memory-making is framed by the utility and resulting salience of shifting discourses that mark violences as legible and/or illegible. Through these shifting discourses of governmentality, the visual register registers sights as (re)marked and/or un(re)marked site, as remarkable and/or unremarkable site.

[A]fter visiting the bomb craters that exist on one side of the highway, we cross and view the bomb craters on the other side, the area marked by government [signs]…. Local people are told not to plant or use the land.

Figure 12. Boundary marker at Lumphat (2016).
Photograph by Lina Chhun

My father remarks that Lumphat is one of the few sites that have been preserved, but he and the guides all muse about how much longer this might be the case…. We take photographs of the craters on this side, some of the largest we have seen yet, massive. I also take photos of the old water tower, bullet-ridden, and photos of cement blocks and pieces on the ground, remnants of homes that were blown to bits….

Figure 13. Water tower at Lumphat (2016).
Photograph by Lina Chhun

What might it mean for Lumphat to exist as (re)marked or un(re)marked site? Aside from the occasional visitor like myself, or the handful of backpackers taking advantage of "ethnic homestays" which include sight-seeing at Lumphat and Tonlé Srepok as part of their trekking packages—the site instrumentalized through the advertisement of its very "abandoned," "ghost-like" character—not many people come to Lumphat. Unlike the signage of craters at sites in Laos and Vietnam, the very clear remnants of U.S. bombing go uncaptioned at Lumphat. The reasons for Lumphat's unrealized memorialization seem obvious, given the hegemony of a collective narrative of atrocity and victimhood that define the Democratic Kampuchea period and the predominant framing of modern Cambodian history. Lumphat though, retains the potential to *become* legible violence and realized memorial landscape through the dynamics of continually shifting political discourses and the utilitarian economy of memory and the memory industry.

Like the invocation and instrumentalization of Cambodia by former U.S. Presidents Barack Obama and George W. Bush, Lumphat retains its potential for realization through the possibility provided by what Lisa Yoneyoma calls the "warping" of politics, consequently a kind of "warping" of history as well. On November 19th, 2012, former President Barack Obama became the first American President to visit Cambodia. Obama and the White House made clear that the visit was only a consequence of coincidence—Cambodia hosting two regional summit meetings that the U.S. regularly attended. During Obama's visit to Cambodia, no mention of the illegal U.S. carpet bombings of Cambodia in the late 1960s and early 1970s was made, and the focus of Obama's private meetings with Prime Minister Hun Sen became the issue of Cambodia's human rights violations—namely, Hun Sen's various human rights infractions in his over three-decade long authoritarian regime in Cambodia.

In the case of Obama's visit to Cambodia, it was less the invocation of a particular narrative of "the past" than a gesture towards "current events" that served to simultaneously elide and construct the U.S.'s historical relationship with Cambodia. Obama's singular focus on Hun Sen's authoritarian regime and his consequent silence regarding U.S. involvement in Cambodia prior to the Cambodian Holocaust functioned in the continued and punctuated erasure of the latter from American political consciousness. Obama's (arguably subtle) highlighting of Hun Sen's infractions and noticeable silence regarding U.S. imperialism in Southeast Asia, reflects the process by which acts of remembering/making visible always necessitate a kind of forgetting, one component of what Schlund-Vials terms the Cambodian syndrome, "a set of amnesic politics manifest in hegemonic modes of public policy and memory."[254] Obama's noted reluctance to meet with Hun Sen further cemented this particular recursive forgetting (and further solidified notions of U.S. exceptionalism), distancing the United States from the "unsavory" and "undemocratic" character of its Southeast Asian Other.

Although indirect, this distancing of the U.S. from violent Cambodian histories by President Obama shadows former President George W. Bush's invocation of Cambodia in his August 22nd, 2007 speech addressing the U.S. "Global War on Terror."[255] In this speech, Bush evoked the specter and spectacle of the violence of the Khmer Rouge regime—"In Cambodia, the Khmer Rouge began a murderous rule in which hundreds of thousands of Cambodians died by starvation and torture and execution"[256]—in order to justify pre-emptive intervention and occupation in the Middle East, a pre-emptive strike according to Bush that could prevent "agonies…like 'boat people,' 'reeducation camps,' and 'killing fields.'"[257] In this speech, Bush deployed several narrative devices, including what Schlund-Vials calls a "selective gaze," in order to both elide U.S. complicity in the Cambodian Holocaust and to construct a palpable

distance and difference between "us" and "them." Bush's focus on the event of violence, the spectacle of violence—in some ways similar to Obama's singular focus on Hun Sen's violations and subsequent elision of U.S. violence in Southeast Asia—obscures the conditions by which such an event becomes manifest and elides the afterlives of the event that continue to resonate long after.

In the text *Cold War Ruins: Transpacific Critique of American Justice and Japanese War Crimes*, Lisa Yoneyama defines the "warping" of politics:

> "when a critique travels from one location to another, it often inadvertently results in allying with intellectual and political positions that are at odds with those it endorsed in the original contexts. The predicaments of warped politics…increasingly plague the ongoing transnational and transpacific citations, representations, and coalitions among the subaltern voices and calls for historical justice."[258]

In various speeches covered by news media such as the *Khmer Times, Cambodia Daily,* and *Phnom Penh Post* as well as his 2018 documentary *Marching Towards National Salvation*, Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen has become one of the most vocal critics of past U.S. intervention in Cambodia. In an article in *The Mekong Review*, journalist and author Sebastian Strangio notes: "More than four decades on, the history of the American bombing continues to bedevil Cambodia's relationship with the United States. Tensions flare up over the issue every few years, usually in connection with the vexed question of whether Cambodia should pay back a $274 million loan that Washington made to the pro-US republican regime of General Lon Nol."[259] In the years since the U.S.-backed Lon Nol coup, interest on the loan has accumulated to more than half a billion dollars, and Cambodia has refused to repay the loan; as "Prime Minister Hun Sen put it in a speech last year, 'It is difficult for us to tell Cambodians to accept debt [that was used] to buy bombs and bullets to kill Cambodian people.'"[260] Hun Sen has also expressed criticism for the ECCC in Cambodia, the international Khmer Rouge criminal tribunal,

oftentimes citing a similar argument to my own in the previous chapter—that the tribunal's temporal jurisdiction of 1975-1979 elides the tremendous devastation of the U.S. bombing campaigns and U.S. culpability in the events leading to the rise of the Khmer Rouge.[261]

Hun Sen's invocation of the U.S. bombing campaigns oftentimes comes on the heels of domestic and transnational criticism of his government and governmental corruption, and his warnings regarding the ECCC oftentimes take on the form of fear-mongering. Most consistently, Hun Sen—one of several former members of the Khmer Rouge now installed in high positions within the Cambodian government—has opposed further indictments of former Khmer Rouge leaders, arguing that an expanded criminal tribunal would lead to widespread chaos and eventual civil war.[262] Recognizing the "warping" of radical politics as a smokescreen for state violence in Cambodia does not preclude accounting for the "warping" of politics in the service of U.S. empire. Like Sebastian Strangio, I agree that the "reason Hun Sen returns again and again to the history of the US bombing of the 1960s and 1970s is that it is both politically effective and morally unanswerable,"[263] "the gift of democracy" from the West a colossal hypocrisy. I agree that "[f]orgiving the Cambodian debt of the early 1970s would go at least some way towards rebalancing the moral ledger,"[264] although the framing of "forgiveness" here reinscribes the U.S. as benefactor and Cambodia as receiver of benevolence. But I also believe that we must stay vigilant in our critiques—as Thu-Huong Nguyen-Vo asks us to do in regards to our mourning, cautious of how we might consume the dead—attuned to the ways in which accounting for U.S. interventionalist violence can be co-opted to shift questions of accountability. The political dynamics of transition, displacement, exploitation and racial capitalism are not only deployed by the United States in the past and present, although the U.S. is a predominant purveyor of such pervasive violence. If we proceed to account for U.S. empire

without taking into consideration the violence of Khmer Rouge logics or dynamics of civil and regional war, the malleability of historical narrative—the occupation and continuing unequal power relations in Cambodia and elsewhere—we would do what we hope to counter, reinscribe our own form of exceptionalism.

> [W]e walk to the old [government buildings]. The overgrowth is intense. After climbing over a dirt mound that had been erected around [one building], my father and I battle through hanging vines and sharp plants and enter the [ruins] of the first building. Only the infrastructure remains, stone pillars, the rest of the building [had been] largely destroyed. Overhead, what once [was] the roof had been bombed in, the floor taking the impact of the bombs, the walls blown out. The craters are smaller in the building, but they are lined up neatly and easily distinguishable….

Figure 14. Interior of bombed building at Lumphat (2016).
Photograph by Lina Chhun

> From this building, we move through the overgrowth to take a look at the next building but did not venture to go in, the sharp plants had moved in to a great extent. But I take photographs of the charred remains of the outside of the building.
>
> From Lumphat, we travel back to Ban Lung.

Figure 15. Exterior of second building at Lumphat (2016).
Photograph by Lina Chhun

The Encounter

Yeak Laom Lake, Ratanakiri Province

After Andoung Meas, we travel back to Bohkeo in the hopes of finding someone at the police station who may know the location of Pol Pot's residence in the district during the war. The police station continues to be empty, so my father asks to visit Yeak Laom Lake, Ratanakiri's famous crater lake in Ban lung, instead.

Figure 16. Sign at Yeak Loam Lake, Ratanakiri Province (2016).
Photograph by Lina Chhun

At Yeak Laom, my father begins a conversation with one of the men begging for change at the top of the stairs leading to the lake. The man has lost his legs, [he] is an amputee. We learn that this man, no older than my own father, was a Khmer Rouge soldier during the war. [H]e shows us several scars he has from various shootings. We ask him about the bombings, and he and my father speak about the war.

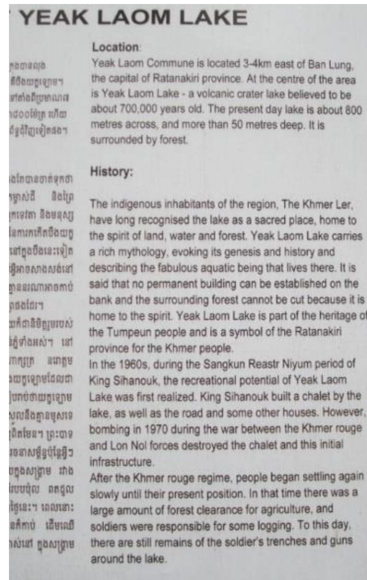

Figure 17. History of Yeak Loam Lake, Ratanakiri Province (2016).
Photograph by Lina Chhun

We learn that [the man] didn't lose his legs during the [U.S.] bombings, [which] he witnessed, but to landmines after the war was over (but not yet over), after the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia and takeover of the government. He speaks about his poverty as a former soldier and an amputee….

Figure 18. Yeak Loam Lake, Ratanakiri Province (2016).
Photograph by Lina Chhun

> There was something in that encounter, something profound…. [Something in the encounter] pushed [back] against the kinds of binary frameworks we see in [dominant narratives of commemoration regarding the genocide] …. A different notion of accountability and justice.

Rithy Panh's *Shiiku, the Catch* complicates a binary framing of victim/perpetrator within the context of the Cambodian civil war and Cambodian Holocaust. Situating this historical period within the larger geopolitical context of the Cold War in Southeast Asia, Panh utilizes archival footage to emphasize the conditions of bombardment that foreground the story he seeks to tell. Although Panh's narrative order parallels that of Nagisa Ôshima's *Shiiku* (which itself is a filmic adaptation of Kenzaburō Ōe's 1957 short story, *Shiiku*), his choice to stage his film in eastern Cambodia during the U.S.'s "Operation Freedom Deal"—a setting continually under siege during the war—expands upon the themes of war, militarism, xenophobia, (in)humanity and the universal "coming of age" story present in the film's predecessor.

While Ōe's story "captures the unreality of war as war is brought to the [Japanese] village in the unexpected arrival of an American airman,"[265] Panh's *Shiiku* explores the stark realities of a childhood overdetermined by the ubiquitous presence of war and the contradictory relational violences that underlie the tenuous kinship of sorts that develops between marginalized subjects—the children and the felled American soldier—constructed as "enemies." Against scenes emphasizing the young age of our main protagonists—such as a scene where the children play fighter pilots in an abandoned plane that had crashed—we also see the militarization of their young lives, the process through which they become Khmer Rouge soldiers. Towards the end of the film, before his escape attempt, Simon Jefferson Lewis—the felled pilot—remarks, "…I finally made contact with the so-called enemies of democracy… kids…. my government which sends a bunch of dead meat over here to bomb more dead meat."

> My father's conversation with the [former Khmer Rouge soldier], although uncomfortable [at times], was not tense. I left it up to my father [then], [as] I always do, to speak or not to speak as he chooses. The kind of relating that was done with this man, that [my father] had… done earlier, with other former soldiers… my father's words… 'we were all soldiers, what could we do but follow orders?' The former Khmer Rouge soldier's echoing of the sentiment… [This] continues to haunt me.

Figure 19. Yeak Laom Lake nearing sunset (2016).
Photograph by Lina Chhun

Simon Jefferson Lewis' words and the humanization of would-be Khmer Rouge soldiers depicted in Panh's *Shiiku* mirror the words exchanged between my father and the former Khmer Rouge soldier we encountered that day at Yeak Loam Lake. The difficulty I had and continue to have naming *that something* in the encounter is perhaps related to Thu-Huong Nguyen-Vo's question regarding mourning, commemoration, and accountability: "How shall we remember? This question entails others. How shall we remember rather than just appropriate the dead for

our own agendas, precluding what the dead can tell us?"[266] Nguyen-Vo engages an ethical framing that might offer us a way to understand *that something* in the encounter: "In allowing a full remembrance formed in complex, and even contradictory histories, perhaps we can free ourselves to consider a full range of ethical and political options…. In mourning all the dead, we must respect their radical alterity not entirely knowable to us. We must patiently interpret what will remain the indeterminancy of various histories."[267]

To turn from an instrumentalization of the dead as a form of necrocapital in our discussions of accountability, atrocity as currency— "We mourn to let the dead live on in us, speak in us, because they no longer can exist outside of us…. In some ways then, we consume the dead. Often, this interiorization of the dead allows us to use them to justify our stories about ourselves and to attack others. This is an extension of the utilitarian economy of mourning. We mourn the dead in order to accuse the living"[268]—we must necessarily think reparation beyond the binary logics of victim/perpetrator, of innocent/guilty, and of apology/forgiveness. We cannot stand in for "our dead" in the encounter, especially without interrogating our own attachments to resolution and/or reconciliation, oftentimes an attachment to liberal modes of accountability. Liberal models of morality invested in individual blame and/or interpersonal apology limit our ability to imagine a reparation that might come to care for all the dead, that might recognize the Other, and that might account for the living. Thu-Huong Nguyen-Vo states:

> "Mourning only ourselves in a radical lack of recognition for the alterity of the dead, we seem to have consumed only ourselves…. As mourners, we must be hospitable to all the dead of that war and its aftermath if we are to form our memory of that war without cannibalizing all of these histories into the single story that becomes us. If the living are who we are through the dead, then all the dead represent all our pasts—women, South Vietnamese, North Vietnamese, American, children, assorted men without guns, and all those individual names that must be enunciated without categories."[269]

Our models of reparation should follow this oftentimes messy and ethically fraught framing of memory and mourning. Moving away from the carceral logics of punishment as rehabilitation—reflected through the example of the American war machine's obliteration of infrastructure; of canals, bridges, buildings and rice fields in Southeast Asia—we might conceptualize hope not as reconciliation, but as the imagining of a world attuned to practices of care that would support life and multiple modalities of human experience, a world divested from the biocapital generated through racialized injury and harm. Pushing back against strains of thought that conceptualize racialized subjects as "beyond the grasp of the human,"[270] Alexander Weheliye shifts our understanding of the category human, asking us to imagine the potentialities of a humanity "lived by those subjects excluded from this domain."[271] Illustrating the contingency of human experience as well as the contingency by which the exception is invoked, Weheliye expands the occupation of the human—the space by which we can think of different ways of being—an expansion of recognition for racialized humanity that does not mark that humanity against liberal conceptions of reason, agency, freedom, and justice.

Situating subjects in their historical past and in the moving present makes legible a recognition that might do the work of care. In the intersubjective and dialogical context of the encounter, care might function as a form of recognition that moves beyond the liberal constitution of a self-possessed subject. Re/cognition as a continual deliberation—recalibration over multiple iterations—might do the work of recognition of whole human beings situated within social and historical matrices; Deleuze's attention to *a* life, life in the singular sense. Here, care is not a model of "apology" and "forgiveness," but rather a moment of recognition, moments of recognition with the potential to account for the shifting meanings of our experiences, for ruptures to materialize, and for the past to emerge as well as recede.

Thinking through the moment as a juncture, as a bringing together of disparate parts without immediate demand for reconciliation/merging—a junction is not a melding—we can position the moment as a collection with the potential to signal possibilities for a better world; the moment containing a capacity for world-making. As Nguyen-Vo articulates: "If we reprise all the stories about our past and not just the one-dimensional story about communist persecution, we open up choices for the future. There were many sides in that Cold War's hot war which doubled as a civil war, many fates, many triumphs and tragedies."[272] Following Nguyen-Vo's call, I end with the following questions: what might it mean to work through these moments, to come to understand these moments, the *something else* of the encounter? What possibilities for the future might we open up if we come to think accountability, redress, and reparation in terms of this desire, in terms of understanding these forms of recognition and care?

Conclusion: In the Wake

Figure 20. Installation Piece, Cascading "Bombies,"
COPE (Cooperative Orthotic and Prosthetic Enterprise) Vistor Centre,
Centre for Medical Rehabilitation (CMR), Vientiane, Laos (2016).
Photograph taken by Lina Chhun

Neak Loeung, Prey Veng Province, January 2017

I'm often told when traveling in Cambodia that ‘you don’t want to go there, there’s nothing left there.’

‘All the craters are gone. They've been erased’

‘I don’t really know’

‘I've been told this but I don't really know; it's before my time.’

War sites in Cambodia are largely erased; the Khmer word for 'erased' [is used often in response to my inquiries regarding the U.S. bombings of 1964-1973] … remnants of the war have been largely bulldozed over, filled in, slowly forgotten…

We… finish[] walking the road in front of the Mekong River in Neak Luong. Where the bombs were accidentally dropped during the civil war here. Walking past the new hospital, rebuilt in the place of the old hospital destroyed by bombs, we spot an older man leaning on his moto. 'Is this the new hospital?' my father asks. 'No, this is the old hospital they have rebuilt,' the man replies. My father and the man begin talking about the war, about the bombings. The man also lived here during the war, just up the road. Later, I ask my father the man's age, around 60, my father says.

Figure 21. The new hospital in Neak Luong,
Prey Veng Province, Cambodia (2017).
Photograph by Lina Chhun

The conversations my father starts are serendipitous. I messaged my friend Kagna a few days ago for… contacts and she [gave] me [the] number of a possible tour guide in the province, but he lives in the provincial capital proper. He [in turn] gives us the number of a Neak Luong local who tells us [that] there are no craters left.

Figure 22. Along the Mekong River,
Neak Luong, Prey Veng Province (2017).
Photograph by Lina Chhun

…[A]s we look for a place to have lunch, a storm breaks open. We duck into a riverfront restaurant to escape the rain and have lunch. After we pay and get ready to leave, my father strikes up a conversation with an older man, one almost his age. The man begins talking about craters that are not yet filled in. He tells us that Banam is what the city used to be called, what my father remembers it as. But the locals know it by a different name. And before Banam, there is another village called Stung Sloat [calm river, kind river], where bombs were also dropped nearby, perhaps 10 to 15 minutes away. The man helps arrange a motodup to take my father and I there.

Figure 23. (Bomb) Ponds at Stung Sloat, Prey Veng Province (2017).
Photograph by Lina Chhun

There is no rancor, or so the story goes. No rancor against the Americans in Cambodia. But there is something in our motodup's voice when he speaks about the bombings. He is in his 40s or so [and] would not likely have his own memories. But he is a resident of Neak Luong and his parents remember.

Figure 24. Blue marker marking UXO, Stung Sloat, Prey Veng (2017).
Photograph by Lina Chhun

He takes us to a spot by the side of the road. On one side, the craters have been filled in by earth but…on the other side…. bomb craters creating something like a makeshift pond…. The pond too deep to be filled in yet. There are two blue markers marking the site, cautionary markers. There could still be unexploded ordinance.

Figure 25. Close up, blue marker marking UXO,
Stung Sloat, Prey Veng (2017).
Photograph by Lina Chhun

As Christina Sharpe asks us to consider: how do you commemorate that which is ongoing?[273] How do we mourn for that which is ongoing? In the afterlife of war and wholesale loss and the continuing violences structured by neoliberal racial capital, the frame of commemoration is inadequate to account for the embeddedness of living alongside violent histories and violent possibilities, life and living in the wake. If "it is imperative to conceive of violence and place—the violence of place and the place of violence—as a dialectic, for as Springer [states], 'No longer confined to its material expression as an isolated 'event' or localized 'thing,' violence can more appropriately be understood as an unfolding process'(2011, 91),"[274] how might we account for the speculative violence of the blue marker in passing? The violence of this place, hidden in plain sight—ceding and receding with the rains and the seasons—and the place of this violence, a spatial registering of a past that exceeds demarcated time. Water teems as M. Jacqui Alexander articulates, and "the dead do not like to be forgotten."[275] In Cambodia, for over three decades and far into the future, water teems; in lakes, rivers, and tributaries, water teems with the potential to remind us of this and other eruptions, this and other crossings.

…. I'm sitting here in a hammock writing this note. Sitting here in a hammock next to the Mekong River nearing sunset in Neak Luong. Just down the street, folks prepare for a wedding. It's wedding season in Cambodia.

Over 40 years ago, a B-52 bomber dropped its load mistakenly over where I sit right now [writing] this note. There is likely unexploded ordinance in the river just in front of me. Unexploded ordinance littering the river bed. Out of sight….

Figure 26. The Mekong river nearing sunset in Neak Loeung (2017).
Photograph by Lina Chhun

CHAPTER THREE Walking with the Ghost: On Affective Archives and the Work of Care

Ever since I can remember, I remember learning to translate for my mother.

Not just translating the English language to Khmer and from Khmer back to English, but translations of her medical diagnoses, or more often than not, the meanings of non-diagnosis.

In and out of medical appointments, long hours in waiting rooms because my mother did not have health insurance… ever since I can remember, I remember my mother being in pain.

I have grown up intimately aware of the specter of genocide. And although we were never privy to long, oral histories regarding the Cambodian Holocaust[276] growing up, my siblings and I walked with the ghosts of the genocide in our day-to-day interactions with our mother and her reoccurring psychosomatic trauma. We often fell in line with the frustrated Western doctors that attempted to convince my mother that her pain was not real. We often left these medical appointments angry and uncertain, wondering what more we could have done to banish these ghosts from the past.

Thirty years later, in my own small way, I understand my mother's pain. And thirty years later, I also understand that there was little we could have done as children to take away such entrenched haunting. Looking back however, at these experiences with the psychosomatic, I wonder how else I might read my mother's pain, still reoccurring over thirty years later.

Centering an analysis of the multiple meanings of crossing, this chapter explores the relational affects and effects of historical violence and trauma as they travel across time and space. Anchoring the central metaphor of her *Pedagogies of Crossing* in "the enforced Atlantic Crossing of the millions of Africans that serviced…the consolidation of British, French, Spanish, and Dutch empires,"[277] M. Jacqui Alexander invites us to consider how the Crossing "might

instruct us in the urgent task of configuring new ways of being and knowing… mov[ing] away from living alterity premised in difference to living intersubjectivity premised in relationality and solidarity."[278] In the same way that grief made the Crossing, war, famine, and collective violence also cross oceans, exceeding our assumed limits. The forms these crossings take, their various movements through space and time function as "an archive of empire's twenty-first-century counterpart, of oppositions to it, of the knowledges and ideologies it summons, and of the ghosts that haunt it."[279] Drawing upon Alexander's invitation to query pedagogies of crossings and enforced transit, I ask: what might recursive instances of psychic-corporeal pain teach us about racialized and gendered experiences of trauma?

In this chapter, I re-read such affective registers as psychosomatic symptoms and hauntings as legitimate archives of violence—opening up these lived spaces to alternative meaning beyond previous positionings as inauthentic, illegitimate, or pathological. In doing so, I propose to contribute to the construction of what Lisa Marie Cacho[280] (following Ann Cvetkovich[281]) refers to as an "archive of feeling," an archive of the particular and the ephemeral, which encompasses the performances of mourning that represent the value of the always already racially devalued. In reading these as affective archives, I seek to begin to make meaning of the seemingly unintelligible—listening to the fragments and storied afterlives of violence rife in spaces of seeming silence and unspoken narrative.

In this same register, I read the psychosomatic and hauntings as memory, as a kind of embodied, affective re-memory, recursive and corporeal re-memory that accompanies the visuality of memory flashbacks and attempted coherence of memory narratives. My privileging of the clinically-pathologized registers of the psychosomatic and hauntings as forms of "re-memory" is animated by Toni Morrison's notion of "rememory,"[282] referring not necessarily to

memory itself but to the representation of memory—reconstituted memory—a memory-making oftentimes manifested in the form of traces or incomplete images. "Re-memory" allows both process and production to be simultaneously legible, illustrating how memory itself becomes partially constituted (and re-constituted) by the act of remembering.

Taking a descriptive approach to interpretation—an attempt to trace the contours of this re-memory without first taking its content for granted—I apply Anne Stoler's feminist "ethnography of the archive,"[283] engaging in an ethnography of memory that moves beyond trauma as injury. Such an ethnography emphasizes the sociohistorical and intersubjective context in which the memory of violence registers, accumulates, lies latent and returns, is produced, and is reproduced. This ethnography of memory allows us to think the phenomenon of re-memory as one lesson of the crossing, a materializing of what Alexander describes as intersubjectivity premised in relationality—memory as textual, contextual, and always already activated in relation to.

Becoming attuned to the potentialities of the psychosomatic and other devalued sites, I propose one anticolonial feminist intervention into a story of violence, silence, and trauma that has become too increasingly defined by models of disease. Taking seriously Eve Tuck's challenge to move beyond "damage-centered research,"[284] I hope to think such sites in a reparative sense. Tuck posits a "desire-based framework" as an antidote to damage-centered research: "An antidote stops and counteracts the effects of a poison, and the poison I am referring to here… [are] the frameworks that position [Native communities, urban committees, or other disenfranchised] communities as damaged."[285] The dominance of a "tragedy" model regarding Cambodian history has continually positioned Cambodian Holocaust survivors as abject, in positions of vulnerability that render them perpetually traumatized. Thinking

experiences of genocide and empire beyond tragedy—emphasizing complex personhood and the necessity of survivance—an anticolonial approach reimagines desire, critiquing absolute and overdetermined framings while still honoring lived, felt, and oftentimes contradictory experiences of historical violence. In the way the crossing functions as pedagogy for understanding an intersubjective and relational experience of the world, a desire-based framework shifts our focus so that we might become attuned to a different world, a different life/time, an imagining and materializing of reparation not as "repair"— "to fix"—but reparation in the sense of making "amends," of "mending"—and thus, of care.

Privileging such care, I center the ethical, gendered dimensions of manifestations of silence, bringing care to how silences are read and how embodiment is understood. Drawing from feminist theorists such as Saidiya Hartman and Audra Simpson, I critique injunctions to speak only one's pain, querying instead, the moments when pain is unspoken or when the painful telling functions as an injunction to pause. Understanding the multiple modalities in which violence registers—the multiple forms in which epistemic, relational, and psychic violences might register—I depathologize the persistence of silence in survivor narratives, recognizing that the limits of language might not necessarily mark the limits of commensurability. Taking a feminist approach to knowledge production, I seek to study silence and violence in the oral histories of my mother and father in such a way that might simultaneously recognize what Veena Das and Audra Simpson refer to as the potential violence of visibility and "voice"—the violence of speech subject to masculinist standards of 'objective truth' that undergirds much disciplinary and Western academic work—in parallel with the necessity of materializing silences that might trace the continuities of structures of violence.

Moving beyond potentially pathologizing models— beyond PTSD and "conspiracies of silence"—I hope to recognize and reflect on the myriad forms that stories take, realizing as Jolie Chea writes, "that stories do not always come in the form of words."[286] Such a realization demands a deeper kind of listening, a "using of all my senses: seeing for myself, hearing what was being said, [a] trusting [of] what I was feeling."[287] Revisiting 'deviant' instances and phenomena in my mother and father's oral histories—those moments foregrounded by psychosomatic symptoms, by silence, by occasions of crossing that could be labeled as 'false memory'—I re-read such instances as instances of rupture and seeming contradiction that might tell us something more about the experience and conditions of racialized violence and historical trauma.

I begin with a discussion regarding embodiment and the psychosomatic, employing feminist framings of the archive and engagements with silence to more closely reckon with the possible meanings of my mother's lifelong psychosomatic symptoms. Returning to my initial reflections which open this chapter, "Archives of Feeling and Force" revisits passages from my mother's oral history regarding illness, and attempts to engage the significance of recursive and corporeal registerings, seeking a dimension of understanding for what the body might tell us when free from the confines of diagnosis. From here—following Veena Das' ethnography of violence and its resulting fragmented and storied afterlives[288]—I turn to a discussion of other forms affective splinters might take when enfolded into the everyday, analyzing one "break" in my mother's narrative indicative of two instances of haunting. Reading my mother's invocation of the ghost in two forms, "Violence and the Everyday" reckons with the simultaneously otherworldly and ordinary ways in which the violence of the past comes to take hold in the moving present of daily life. Lastly, reckoning with the contradictions of memory and haunting

posed by a blurring of boundaries between my mother's and father's narratives, "Cross Hauntings and Temporalities" addresses the relational effects of trauma as it travels, destabilizing assumptions of contained interiority as well as liberal, agentic notions of the bounded self. Expounding on M. Jacqui Alexander's notion of palimpsestic time, I engage with the affective and ordinary registers of hauntings and temporalities to trouble those expected narratives informed by Western, colonial logics and epistemologies. In querying the demand for coherency and linearity in identity narratives, I seek to participate in the destabilization of a "hierarchy of narratives" that privileges static, bounded, and individual "victim narratives" or "narratives of suffering" over interlocking and complicated subjectivities of violence and trauma. Altogether, this paper seeks an engagement with multiple elements and forms of crossing—horizontal and vertical crossings—those across time and space, across the Pacific Ocean and back; layered, cyclical, palimpsestic crossings—crossings "never undertaken all at once, and never once and for all."[289]

Archives of Feeling and Force: Reading the Rumblings of Silence

In psychology, psychosomatic manifestations are often read as pathology; blockage; inauthentic symptomatology. Psychosomatic pain is read as falsehood, as the mind fooling the body into believing that there is something there—some physical trauma causing physical pain—when in actuality, no such organic basis exists for this belief…
The pain is not real. It's just in your head.

Women that experience the protracted afterlives of trauma through the psychosomatic[290] *are often marked as malingerers, consciously or unconsciously complicit in the 'untruths' we tell about our bodies.*

As I write these words, my own ugly, accumulated truths swarm and clash in the recesses of my mind—write themselves onto my body, psychosomatically. I strain to hear the hauntings of affect and history through the violent murmurs of the unspoken, against the pangs of visceral anxiety creeping into my arms and flooding across my chest… I feel paralyzed.

I wrote the above passage seven years ago—during a moment that felt like desperation—a last-ditch effort to articulate an analysis I had often felt but struggled to put into words. At the time, I found myself firmly anchored in the realm of the affective—unable to translate what Raymond Williams[291] might call the structure of feeling that was the intimate, personal, moving, escaping, present-ness of my psychosomatic experience… into the communicable social form that is language and expressed emotion.[292] I wrote as a reaction, a tentative engagement that attempted to experiment with affect as both force and form, one speculative use of voice.

At the time I wrote because I could do little else, using my bodily sensations as a tether with which to begin to address my longstanding critique of clinical frameworks regarding trauma and embodiment. I wrote these sensations onto paper; the beginnings of an attempt to feel my way into alternative paradigms regarding injury and harm, a reckoning with the residual weight of the past. This passage was my first attempt in what will likely be a lifelong, recursive effort to come to a more ethical, reflexive understanding of the nonlinear and oftentimes fragmented experiences of trauma I've encountered in my daily life and in the oral histories I began to collect nearly a decade ago.

Trauma as Deviance

In the wake of the genocide, psychology in the United States has largely conceptualized the Cambodian experience as one dominated by the trauma model of posttraumatic stress disorder.[293] The vast majority of research in psychology regarding Cambodian experiences is through the lens of PTSD, for example documenting high rates of PTSD and comorbidity of psychiatric disorders in refugee populations in the U.S.;[294] identifying different risk factors associated with PTSD in refugee populations;[295] discussing manifestations of PTSD

symptomatology and desire for revenge among Cambodians living in Cambodia;[296] evaluating associations between psychiatric symptoms and impaired social functioning of survivors in Cambodia;[297] and assessing the cross-cultural relevance of a PTSD diagnosis in a Cambodian population,[298] among many, many other studies.

Although the development of a PTSD diagnosis in the U.S. stemmed from an attempt to shift the causal focus of a set of psychological symptoms from the individual to the individual's external environment,[299] a pre-occupation with the PTSD diagnosis—as Paula J. Caplan argues—oftentimes functions to pathologize normal reactions to social contexts of trauma.[300] Furthermore, a tendency to see trauma reactions as individualized problems has led to an increasing privatization of trauma at the expense of an interrogation of its sources, such as imperialism, war, and other forms of (geo)political violence.[301] Moreover, the focus on trauma reactions as individual mental illness has led to increasingly subjectifying approaches to understanding healing in the afterlife of violence, to a demand for the construction of identity narratives that might make trauma visible as a deviance that can be extracted.

Within the discipline of clinical psychology, this emphasis on the individualized and closed interiority of psychic trauma is compounded by literature invested in the notion of a "culture" or "conspiracy of silence." This "conspiracy of silence," largely extrapolated from the non-disclosure of survivors during interviews and/or trauma therapy, is based on an understanding that survivors believe that history and trauma are not to be asked about or discussed.[302] This "culture of silence" is also associated with the presence of intergenerational silence between survivors and their children.[303] Feminist psychologists such as Judith Herman conceptualize "secrecy and silence [as] the perpetrator's first line of defense,"[304] and only the antithesis of silence as prerequisite for healing within individuals.

In many ways thus, the silence of Cambodian survivors has been met with discourses of pathology from clinical disciplines. Silence around trauma has been conceptualized in these disciplines as 'cultural non-compliance,' as barriers to 'healing.' Survivors who choose not to break their silences in Western ways are marked as 'tradition-bound' in a 'culture of passivity,' invariably at odds with Western modernity. Cambodian women especially, who refuse to break their silence in forms aligned with the catharsis model of psychotherapy, yet still experience protracted trauma through the psychosomatic, are firmly marked as belonging to what Anne McClintock calls "anachronistic space"—backwards and irrational in their inability to grasp the immateriality of their pain.

In conjunction with the trope of panoptical time, "of the image of global history consumed—at a glance—in a single spectacle from a point of privileged invisibility,"[305] the invention of anachronistic space functioned as colonial logic justifying the violence of empire-building. McClintock describes this invention thus: "According to this trope, colonized people… do not inhabit history proper but exist in a permanently anterior time… as anachronistic humans, atavistic, irrational, bereft of human agency—the living embodiment of the archaic 'primitive.'"[306] This anachronistic space provides the counterpoint to the panoptical time of modernity, encompassing those figures, those 'unassimilatable' shadows that swarm the boundaries of the "here and now" but firmly belong to the sphere of the "then and there." Anachronistic space teems with the pathologized, the uncivilized, and the racialized tradition-bound Others of Western modernity. Within the anachronistic space of ethnic enclaves and communities in the United States, clinical discourses of 'non-compliance' are complimented by the biomedical establishment's reading of Cambodian refugees as 'diseased bodies'—the invention of a field called Southeast Asian mental health "that, through the systematic naming

and ordering of refugee illnesses, has sought to discipline the behavior, beliefs, and grief of Cambodian patients according to the self-evident truths of biomedicine."[307]

As many feminist and critical theorists of color have long recognized however, silences do not necessarily mean absence and especially for racially-marked Others oftentimes relegated to the margins of History, resistance can take on many forms—including as Aihwa Ong articulates, the hailing of the medical gaze by subjects of regulation themselves.[308] Silences are sites ripe with potential meaning. The contradictions of experience in the afterlife of historical violence—the silences, the crossings, the grief and forms of mourning—materialize the ways in which memory and narrative might simultaneously reproduce as well as disrupt taken for granted knowledge.

Shifting from an understanding of the psychosomatic as pathology to reading the psychosomatic as an archive of memory, I draw from Stoler's attention to "history in a minor key" in her ethnography of the colonial archive. Stoler writes: "Minor history, as I use it here marks a differential political temper and a critical space. It attends to structures of feeling and force that in 'major' history might be otherwise displaced."[309] Attending to minor histories, to those histories oftentimes outside the official registers of 'major' history allows us to listen closely to the "unwritten," to what could perhaps be misconstrued as absence. Listening to the psychosomatic as archive allows us to attend to the complexities, the depths, and the hauntings of trauma that are lost in clinical diagnoses of pathology. Revisiting my opening reflections regarding my lifelong experiences translating my mother's embodied symptoms, I listen for the sediment, the sentiment, the anxiety, and the affective potential of this perhaps minor history.

Rather than recuperating new histories, counter-histories, or reading against the grain, listening to the psychosomatic as an archive of memory means listening closely to the fragments

already there. What might this mean—my mother's trauma reoccurring in bodily form, for over three decades? What might psychosomatic manifestations have to say about the ways in which my mother registered the violence of genocide? And how might the psychosomatic function as a kind of affective remnant, remainders and reminders of un-reconciled/irreconcilable historical trauma?

Narratives of Illness and Injury

Revisiting my mother's oral history interview years after it was conducted, years after I began to reflect on the possible meanings of the psychosomatic register, I attempted to listen more closely to those affective traces that quietly but consistently reappeared over and again for the duration of her audio recording. As I listened in retrospect, I was struck by the continual and significant presence of illness: illness permeating her stories regarding the genocide; illness compounding forced labor and hunger; illness maligned and read as falsehood. Although my mother describes how she and others around her contract malaria and fever, she tells my sister and me: "They said you weren't really sick and they made you go back to work." She follows up, musing that, "When you're sick, you're so hungry because there was no food to eat," but "if they caught you [looking for food], they would say you weren't really sick."

Hunger, exhaustion, and illness provide the backdrop to my mother's stories of violence during the Cambodian Holocaust, to her relating of experiences with fear and death. The lack of acknowledgement of bodily pain and suffering compounded by the lack of access to (Western) medicine as well as familial forms of care during the time of the genocide, inform the ways in which my mother comes to make meaning of illness as well as wellness. Such experiences condition her approaches to care; experiences of pain and sickness in the afterlife of the genocide

taking on another valence, perhaps a different kind of urgency, an exercising of access—however limited—to sanctioned and authoritative forms of care. Similar to the ways in which Ong describes how some Cambodian patients "hail the medical gaze," a seeking out of professional care to alleviate pain could very well function to reaffirm the value of *a* life—Deleuze's notion of life in its singular form[310]—a complex personhood often denied to survivors of violence.

In addition to references to illness, narratives of infection also interweave into my mother's stories regarding family—she recounts both one brother and her father falling victim to infection. In measured tones, my mother describes the process by which her father fell sick during the genocide and determinedly cut out the infection himself. During the years of the genocide however, my mother's father continued to fall sick, and he eventually passed in indignity—from illness that turned my often hot-tempered and rigid grandfather meek, incapacitated, and eventually alienated from his body.

When the Cambodian Holocaust—what my mother and others refer to as "the Pol Pot era"—began in 1975, my mother was between eleven and twelve years of age. When the Vietnamese invaded Cambodia on December 25, 1978 and installed a regime in Phnom Penh on January 8, 1979, my mother was close to sixteen years of age. Although notions of childhood are historically and socially constructed—varying across cultures—my mother lived what could widely be considered the typical years of transition from childhood to adulthood, separated from her parents. Under extreme conditions, she did not have regular access or close proximity to members of her family in her assigned labor camp. In Cambodia, as in many other places, periods of illness and care for illness are most often associated with the family. Periods of illness and care for illness are also associated with community networks consisting of extended family

members and established kinship ties. What might happen to one's relationship to illness then, when such ties are forcibly dissolved—as they were under the Khmer Rouge regime?

Writing about historical trauma within the Cambodian diaspora, Khatharya Um describes how "[i]n its travel across space and time, memory takes on different forms, manifesting traces of transgenerational haunting in the silence that continues to envelop the Cambodian family. Silence becomes an analytic site for culturally informed reflection and theorizing about despair and resistance, reconciliation and healing."[311] Psychosomatic symptoms may very well be one trace of haunting that envelopes the Cambodian family—my own as well as countless others; this register of historical trauma representing a type of crossing in the contemporary moment. Given the context of illness during the genocide—the misrecognition of bodily suffering—as the body itself moves through space and time, so too do memory and grief. If, as Thu-Huong Nguyen-Vo posits, "refugees occupy the position of self-mourners because no one else mourns us,"[312] my mother's recursive bodily experience can be read as one register of mourning, a mourning we do "to remember our own trauma and history."[313]

Yet just as "hailing the medical gaze" produces the possibility of ambivalence, towards diagnosis and non-diagnosis, as Alexander posits: "Breathing grief for a lifetime can be toxic."[314] The double meaning here—of breathing grief for the duration of one's life and/or grieving for a lifetime that could have been—captures the contradiction and ambivalence of such self-mourning. Although my mother and her sisters experience commonality through shared bodily symptoms, embodiment reflecting the continuity of violence in the U.S. in the form of poverty and racism in their lives, signaling through illness that regardless of model minority tropes, all is *not* well; the infinite grief that crosses space and time and endless mourning of/for impossible

futures also creates disjunctures, moments of disunity where a focus on the injury seemingly becomes the only avenue for recognition.

Memory work that takes on such a frame, which pivots around the notion of injury—such that the injury comes to define an entire community of people, becoming the basis for common memory and collective and individual identity—assumes a point of origin, an event positioned in the past that must be recovered, recuperated, and/or rectified. Similar to the ways in which James Young addresses the paradoxical process by which monuments, and memorials more broadly, might produce the forgetting they purport to counter,[315] this placing of the "original event," the "original injury" in the past, obscures the sociopolitical conditions of historical violence. Additionally, an investment in models of injury also draws upon notions of the exception, a model of visibility that positions violence and death as exceptional rather than as an intimate part of life for racialized populations around the world.

The limits of such a model of recognition illustrate the limits of models of intergenerational transmission of trauma as injury. Although intergenerational trauma allows us to think some form of historical continuity in regards to violence, stopping at transmission as inheritance reinforces both generational boundaries and assumes unidirectional flow. Accepting this model of memory, injury, and identity obscures the continually contextual and intersubjective dimensions of memory work, and as Eve Tuck articulates, disallows an interrogation of differential desires.

If, as Young articulates, "the motives of memory are never pure,"[316] the proliferations of models of trauma as injury as well as liberal humanitarian discourses committed to healing via disclosure—the recuperation of voice—signal a desire to maintain a strict binary of abjection and agency in the contexts of racialized war and peace. Alexander Weheliye explains: "As modes of

analyzing and imagining the practices of the oppressed in the face of extreme violence… resistance and agency assume full, self-present, and coherent subjects working against something or someone…. Why are formations of the oppressed deemed liberatory only if they resist hegemony and/or exhibit the full agency of the oppressed?”[317]

In the absence of alternative models of presence and care, memory work in the afterlife of historical violence in Cambodia is oftentimes overdetermined by the conflation of desire for recognition *as* injury and desire for agency *as* resistance. And although a focus on the injury may produce some forms of care, such a focus just as often provokes a turning away. If grieving for a lifetime can be toxic, how might we read embodiment and psychosomatic pain without pathologizing or valorizing? How do we account for the messiness of life and living in contexts of historical violence, of large-scale human loss? As Weheliye posits: “What deformations of freedom become possible in the absence of resistance and agency?”[318]

Pushing against the limits of traditional memory work, psychosomatic symptoms might reflect the ambivalence that occurs when memory “fails,” or speaks truth to power while also yet reflecting it, protecting while harming, makes visible while also obscuring. As ambivalent memory work, the psychosomatic functions much in the same way as Kathleen Stewart’s notion of “ordinary affects,” “the varied, surging capacities to affect and to be affected that give everyday life the quality of a continual motion of relations, scenes, contingencies, and emergencies. They’re things that happen.”[319]

In attending to the psychosomatic as ordinary affect, we step outside a framework which views the psychosomatic solely as a marker of identity. The psychosomatic in this sense—as iteration and reiteration—a bodily working through—intervenes into monolithic discourses regarding how Cambodian refugee subjects come to mediate and understand their own

experiences in the afterlife of violence. Reading the psychosomatic beyond binary terms and shifting into the realm of potentiality, we read such affective registers as ways of knowing, relating, and being in the world—new shades perhaps of knowing, relating and being in the world. Viewing the psychosomatic as analytical as well as lived site—which affects as it is affected—allows us to begin to understand the ways in which such affective spaces hold the potential to enable as well as disable meanings and action in the everyday.

Violence and the Everyday: The Meanings of Ordinary Affect

> "And then they killed him…. And they weren't afraid of ghosts….. And then they killed him under the tree…. And then they continued to sleep under the tree… they weren't afraid of ghosts…."
>
> "They make all the people afraid… Like me, I was shaking….
> …In my mind, it looks like a man in front of me, I cannot see. It looks like a man, I see…."

As we end the first part of our interview with our mother, my older sister and I watch as our mother closes her eyes and begins to detail the vision she sees in her mind. After telling us about the public execution she witnessed during the Cambodian Holocaust, my mother suddenly tells us that she sees the specter of the executed man, in her mind's eye. We watch as she becomes haunted by this memory of the past, the ghost of the man appearing in her present.

As witnesses to our mother's haunting, my sister and I become acutely attuned to the currency of the past in our lives. We are reminded that colonial notions of demarcated time as well as philosophical theories of transcendental violence, do little to explain the lived realities of our experiences. For my mother, such notions cannot capture the experience of this fragmented apparition—the ghost of this executed man—walking into her consciousness over three decades after her witnessing of his murder. Rather, my mother's haunting can only be understood

through the register of affect and the singularity of experience. We can only make meaning of such hauntings through an understanding of the ways in which the violence of the past comes to take hold in the moving present of the everyday.

In *Life and Words*, Veena Das explores the ways in which the violence of world-shattering events comes to fold itself into the fabric of everyday life. Das explores the ways in which the events of the Partition of India in 1947 and the massacre of Sikhs following the assassination of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in 1984, come to "attach [themselves] with [their] tentacles into everyday life and fold [themselves] into the recesses of the ordinary."[320] In her ethnography of the violence of these two events as well as their resulting fragmented and storied afterlives, Veena Das turns her attention not only to the possibilities of phenomena, but also to the singularity of lives. This attention to the singular moves beyond a focus on the particular—particularity as exceptionalism, or as Weheliye notes in regards to Black feminist epistemologies, the tendency to relegate to "ethnographic locality," to the margins—articulating instead a singularity which assumes complexity. Life understood through a focus on complex subjectivity (and intersubjectivity) counters models of possessive individualism; rather than an understanding of personhood defined by intrinsic value, experience is understood as positioned in relation to.

Such an attunement to relationality gestures towards both the distinct and quotidian dimensions of trauma in the afterlife of historical violence, belying the clear demarcations between the dead and the living in Western binary models of rationalization. Trauma and an understanding of one's connection as the living to the dead can take on many forms, but is almost always relational within a Cambodian cosmology defined by the syncretic relationship between Theravada Buddhism and the animism which came before. This Buddhist practice

assumes a cycle of life and death, where reincarnation is determined by merit and merit in turn, is significantly affected by how we treat the dead.

The syncretic practice of Buddhism in everyday life in Cambodia displaces zero-sum understandings of our relationships to the dead, and ghost—or ghostly—stories function as memory work, whereby the work of spirits reinforce the ways in which "the dead do not like to be forgotten."[321] Within everyday practice, the ghost story itself is not meant to be spectacular—for instance, the presence of banana trees in Cambodia signaling a possible haunting. Rather, the presence of animism as folded into everyday beliefs contends that ghosts and our stories of them play an integral role in the moving present of daily life. Understanding these dimensions of violence and trauma—the pull of ghosts and invisible things, resonances both otherworldly and ordinary—gestures towards alternative means of responding to trauma. If we re-focus our attention from the spectacularity of historical violence to the various forms its splintered afterlives take—to the tentacles Das draws us to—we move away from transcendental models that function to distance. Learning to query historical violence's effects in the ordinary and everyday requires an attunement to the how, the minutia, to the relational dynamics of living and dying. The crossings in the stories that are told reflect the ways in which trauma not only travels but takes on localized forms, informed by situated context and conditions.

They Weren't Afraid of Ghosts

"And then they killed him…. And they weren't afraid of ghosts….. And then they killed him under the tree…. And then they continued to sleep under the tree… they weren't afraid of ghosts…."

Revisiting my mother's oral history, I do my best to practice a deeper listening. For much of her interview, my mother chose to speak about her family. She speaks about separation:

> “I saw that but when mom in the Pol Pot… in… stay long they have me enter a team like a team, like go far from work, work far from the parents. Sometime one year, sometime like six months, seven months, sometimes over a year, we never go back home to visit the parents. Some parents pass away, they don’t care about, you know, like a parent, your parent…”

She continues on: “Sometime I miss home, miss like ah the parents, we gonna cry, cannot come and then go to work, look like a slave… [softly] yeah…” From this soft “yeah,” and this story about missing her parents as a child, my mother transitions to her story about witnessing a murder. She recounts:

> “One day they ah shoot like ah the people… the… they say like they run and grab them and then they say like ah he like enemy, like a solider, like ah like ah they work ah.. he work from like ah the b—[makes a noise] before like ah like L-Lon Nol soldier and then they catch like a soldier, like a Pol Pot soldier, Khmer Rouge soldier, and then they run to.. catch them and then they kill them.”

After she explains how the Khmer Rouge soldiers tie the man to the back of a horse and drag him through the rice fields for all to witness, my mother explains how the man was made to dig his own grave. Upon digging his own grave, the Khmer Rouge soldiers killed the man. My mother switches from English to Khmer, “And they’re not afraid of ghosts…”

Without my sister and I directly posing a question to her about witnessing, my mother transitions from speaking about her sadness in missing her family, from expressing her fear during their separation when she was only twelve years old, to this narrative of witnessing murder. In this moment of transition, this traveling of affect—of fear and sadness—my mother invokes the ghost of the murdered man in her past, emphasizing the significance and desecration of his burial. The emphasis on the repeated phrase—*and they’re not afraid of ghosts*—signals my mother’s understanding of the importance of ghosts, the Khmer Rouge soldiers’ profane treatment of the dead emphasized as at odds with the sacred place of the dead in Cambodian cultural practice.

In my Mind, It Looks Like a Man in Front of Me

Later on in my mother's narrative, the ghost is once again invoked, transplanted into the present as a spectral haunting.

"They make all the people afraid… Like me, I was shaking….

…In my mind, it looks like a man in front of me, I cannot see. It looks like a man, I see…."

In their article situating the proliferation of life narratives in the last decades of the twentieth century within the field of human rights, Schaffer and Smith discuss the global transformations that have resulted in contemporary and "multiple forms of remembrance of and witnessing to abuse."[322] In their discussion of such life writing, Schaffer and Smith address how the "literature of trauma in the West… has become the dominant paradigm for understanding the processes of victimization, remembering, witnessing, and recovery,"[323] "sustain[ing] the contemporary practice of trauma therapy specific to the West."[324] Drawing our attention to the historical contingencies that have produced contemporary narratives of "displacement, suffering, and trauma" in the afterlife of the Cold War, the authors review an emerging set of literature contesting "the universal applicability of [this] model, with its emphasis on the closed interiority of trauma," a model that "universalizes diverse and multiple structures of feelings, eliding gender, racial, and ethnic differences…. [thus] render[ing] individual suffering and psychic interiority the ground of trauma, making it difficult to register the cultural transmission of stories and their imbrication in institutional and political structures and practices."[325] Such traditional models ignore non-Western approaches to the sacred and profane, to understandings of violence, suffering, and trauma embedded in cultural frames of relationality.

In Toni Morrison's *Beloved*, Morrison resurrects the history of slavery's incommensurable violences through the spectral figure of Beloved; Beloved, as the spirit of a

crawling-already baby murdered by a mother, Sethe, faced with impossible choices and Beloved, the collective haunting of sixty million and more—the innumerable number of lives lost during the transatlantic Crossing of the Middle Passage. In the novel, in the immediate afterlife of slavery, memory is oftentimes dissociated from its individual origins. For Sethe, rememory is like a picture, an image in one's mind that exerts its own force, coming and going, something she had forgotten she knew. The material quality of my mother's memory, a phantom in her mind, is something she's simultaneously unable and able to see. The ghost is invoked by this point in her life narrative—by the emotion of familial loss—and what results is a shift in narrative, a shift in form. Similar to the ways in which Sethe's experience of rememory signals the contradictory dimensions of remembering after historical violence, my mother's words gesture towards the need for care when resurrecting memories that might do harm.

In a shift in focus to the particularity of lived experiences of violence, Veena Das draws us to the significance of attention to the concepts of voice and the everyday in our discussions of violence. Das references Stanley Cavell:

> "Thus Cavell's account of voice is not that of speech or utterance but as that which might animate words, give them life…. Cavell sees the banishing of the human voice in the register of the philosophical as a suspicion of all that is ordinary, as the fantasy of some kind of purified medium outside of language that was available to us."[326]

Das' differentiation of voice from speech—and particularly voice from the "frozen-slide quality" of narratives and stories regarding the events of violence—is one framework from which to view my mother's haunting. In many ways, my mother's story of this execution becomes a kind of narrative—perhaps, I would argue, not "frozen" in time—but a kind of relational speech, a story meant to be shared in the construction of a collective memory of the genocidal event. My mother's narrative and its subsequent crossing over into my father's narrative of the Cambodian Holocaust, illustrate both Das' distinction between voice and speech as well as her discussion of

"the possibility that words might become untethered from their origin."[327] This subsequent crossing over also illustrates the intersubjective dimensions of memory, similar to the ways in which the appearances of Paul D and Beloved in the flesh in Morrison's novel, resurrect the ghosts and Sethe's memories of the violences and indignities of Sweet Home.

What comes to designate my mother's relating of experience as voice—"as that which might animate life"—is the break that occurs during the interview process. In the process of giving this narrative, my mother experiences a break; that break *is* the affective experience of this haunting. In the haunting that follows on the heels of this story of execution, my mother's narrative is simultaneously punctuated as well as interrupted; it is almost as if the latent, teeming, subcutaneous realm of the affective, the excess—what Brian Massumi might call that which escapes—erupts at this moment, explicitly into the everyday. Veena Das might say that at this moment, rather than a narration of experience, my mother comes to *show* the violence of the genocide, not only through her words but through a relating outward of her sensory and corporeal experience.[328] Through such a showing, my mother tells us to proceed with care, the showing here serving as an injunction to pause.

An Injunction to Pause

It is at this point in her oral history interview that my sister and I turn off the tape recorder. Up till that point, until we conducted oral history interviews, my sister and I had never heard this story from our mother. Her hesitation, the closing of her eyes, and the vision she sees in her mind, remind us of the necessity of considering the ethical dimensions of collecting such experiential narratives of violence. As Audra Simpson posits, "[r]ather than stops, or impediments to knowing… limits may be expansive in what they do not tell us…. In listening

and shutting off the tape recorder, in situating each subject within their own shifting historical context of the present, these refusals speak volumes, because they tell us when to stop."[329] Here, feminist ethnography necessitates reflexivity around the choices we make as ethnographers and autoethnographers; implicitly or explicitly, collecting such narratives may always contain an element of extraction. For those of us embedded within the communities we "study," the tension between extraction and the possible harm of things left unspoken remains a constant presence to be attuned to.

Only through attention to the affective, ordinary, and singular could we begin to make meaning of these kinds of experiences. In the closing of this discussion regarding my mother's haunting and representations of the violence of the genocide, I am again drawn to Veena Das' discussion of "the attention Deleuze asks us to pay to what might be *a* life."[330] Rather than the moment of individualization, Deleuze shifts our attention to the moment of singularization. In this moment, *a* life, in its singular, particular form, is valued. Life and its limits, including the boundaries of the subject, are valued irrespective of "the subjectivity and objectivity of what happens."[331] Individuals and experiences of violence thus, come to be read in these terms; divorced from the demands of heroic identity narratives, we may begin to see and understand experiences of violence and their everyday manifestations and permutations in all their complex, contradictory, human singularities. Divorced from the demand for such a teleology of meaning, we may begin to construct more profound understandings of those instances of rupture and crossing that defy the integrity of bounded space and time.

Cross Hauntings and Temporalities: Confluences of Affect, Memory, and Experience

> "I see one time the military men kill one people that is… the soldier from the republic regime, they just tie you…put you on the ground and then they pick…the string, connect with their body, and they ride a horse…. You get dragged over the stone, the mud, everything…."
>
> "I just heard but I never see it. But your mom see by her eye… that they kill one soldier by tie along the horse and drag him till he died… by her own eye…."

The above are two passages from interviews with my father, the first from his open-ended initial interview and the second from his follow-up interview. In his initial interview, in his detailing of his experiences during the Cambodian Holocaust, my father recounts this experience of witnessing: of watching a man murdered in a public execution. In his follow-up interview years later however, when my sister and I ask directly about witnessing, our father discloses that it was in actuality *my mother's* witnessing that he had described earlier. In the discipline of psychology, this narrative from my father could be dismissed as false memory. Due to the seeming contradiction in my father's story—this particular crossing over of narrative—the veracity of my father's experiential trauma would most likely come into question; within the confines of disciplinary paradigms, my father could no longer be trusted to tell the truths of genocidal experience.

In the Introduction to her *Ends of Empire*, Jodi Kim situates her use of Asian American as an analytic rather than a reified identity category.[332] In doing so, she builds on the work of scholars who critique essentialist approaches that seek an absolute truth, instead centering a methodology of "generative narratology" that might tell us something we have yet to know. How else then, might we read this instance of narration from my father? Rather than viewing my father's narrative as false memory, what else is produced in this space of narrative crossing?

My father's recounting of my mother's witnessing speaks strongly to the phenomenon of memory crossings and the construction of collective memory in the wake of historical trauma. As Khatharya Um notes, "[Pol Pot] stories are often shared spontaneously and in ways that reaffirm the feeling of community, of people bound by experiences that cannot truly be shared by outsiders;"[333] such a sharing of stories counters a body of literature regarding genocide survivors invested in a 'conspiracy of silence.' The spontaneity and reciprocity of such stories draw our attention once again to the contextual and intersubjective dimensions of memory-making.

Cross-Hauntings and Memory Crossings

An example of relational memory-making and testimony appears in my field notes while traveling with my mother and father in Southeast Asia:

> Got back into Phnom Penh from Chiang Mai late yesterday evening. More stories in transit. This time while waiting to de-board upon arrival in Phnom Penh. My father strikes up a conversation with two older women speaking Khmer; somehow the conversation makes its way back to Pol Pot time and family. Somehow the conversation always makes its way back to Pol Pot time and family.
>
> I'm thinking about this now…. It's not just stories about the genocide that emerge, but stories about the genocide in relation…. Loss always tied to familial loss. Experiences of desperation, starvation, fear… always tied to shared familial experience. Reunion then, also taking on added significance.

For diasporic Cambodian subjects like my father, there is an element of reunion that happens when discovering others with the same national origins, the speaking of Khmer in transit signaling recognition within a linguistic structure of familiarity—pronouns in the Cambodian language designated by terms of kinship. My father's story speaks to the permeability of trauma narratives, to the ability of shared trauma to destabilize the borders of the self—much in the

same way as Veena Das theorizes world-annihilating violence that exceeds the boundaries of what is known—leading to what could be called cross-hauntings of violence.

In these cross-hauntings or memory crossings, the multiple afterlives of historical violence and trauma proliferate. If we remember that trauma is a break—a fracture—then we can visualize how this fracture splinters into its own afterlives, such that an event never exists as a static moment in time, but rather as protracted moments that fold outward across time. Re-memory in this context takes on its own presence, takes on a force beyond the initial iteration of remembrance.

Revisiting and reading more carefully the affective dimensions of my father's initial oral history and follow-up interview, I am drawn to numerous passages that speak to the protracted afterlives of the Cambodian Holocaust, to the contradictions in his narrative that might hint at the structures and relations of knowledge produced by historical violence and trauma. When my sister asks, "Did you see, see them kill people?" My father responds:

> "Yeah, they kill a lot of people, like they know that you are a military or something like that or a doctor something like that, they kill you…. they just come and said that uh, the Old Command need you, and they bring you and they kill you [a little laughter on the last word]."

I follow up, "So, they took you to where, to kill you?" To which my father responds:

> "Mostly in the pagoda or something like that…. Because Cambodian believe on Buddhist and they uh worship the pagoda, they don't, they don't do any bad in the pagoda, but the Communist it's uh, opposite. They always want something that we said good, they want to be that place to be very bad. To look bad, so they put a prison in the pa—in the pagoda like a temple, they put a, uh, uh, uh, uh jail place and sometimes they just hit you with the rifle or hit you with the, with the stick or something like that, kill you. And then they dig uh one hole, big hole like that and put twenty or thirty body and cover it."

When I ask, "how did you know uh [the following in Khmer] that they did it like that?" My father responds:

> "Oh, I not uh experience to, by see by myself, but some uh of my friend because in that time some was designed to work like uh transportation, something like that, uh we have like a cow, a cart, carry something, carry like wood or carry food from one place to one place and some of my friend they uh heard the people uh yelling and they, they go and they see it, the, the, the people was uh in killing that time, but they have to hide very carefully and very, they scare and then they have to ru—uh take the cart cow back very quietly. And they scare and they told me and… very bad thing."

Throughout his interviews, contradictions riddle my father's articulations of witnessing, a blurring of first-order and second-order witnessing based upon the communal sharing of fear and the communal sharing of stories. Trauma and experiences of violence continually move beyond the borders of the self in my father's remembrances in the afterlife and shared stories come to resonate as shared experiences. Such shared understandings of life under absolute rule may make more sense when considering Cambodia as a society in which the self is not understood in isolated terms. In the Khmer language, the self is almost always understood in relation. Although some might call this system of relation a hierarchical one, this system can also be understood as a familial system—interconnected in ways that contradict individualized explanations for historical violence and its continuing traumas.

Palimpsestic Time and Affective Investments

In *Pedagogies of Crossing*, M. Jacqui Alexander disarticulates binary conceptualizations of historical violence. In this text, Alexander's project is largely to explicate those logics and symbolics that function to "collapse distance into difference."[334] As she details, implicit within such structures of logic and the symbolic is:

> "a conception of time that is, paradoxically, constrictively linear and resolutely hierarchical…. This paradox of linearity and hierarchy within time demarcated as tradition, ostensibly distanced from and subordinated to time demarcated as modernity, is rendered in a way that produces… distance and difference"[335].

Alexander describes how a capitalist, Western notion of time as both linear and hierarchical constructs spaces of modernity as well as spaces of barbarism. In its linearity, this notion of time constructs a kind of "timeline"—a teleology of progress from 'uncivilized/undeveloped /underdeveloped' to 'civilized/developed/advanced.' In this timeline, the 'forward march of modernity' is privileged over the 'backwardness of tradition,' literally a space inhabited in the past. The conceptualization of modernity as innately forward-looking reifies the notion of spaces of modernity as naturally transcendent of time and spaces of tradition and barbarism as static, always and eternally bound to their positionalities in space-time. This conceptualization of distance across time subsequently translates to difference across space as Alexander describes the process by which spaces marked as 'traditional' come to be positioned in 'another time,' separate and subaltern to 'our' time of modernity: "The West is presumably 'here and now,' while the Third World is 'then and there,' apparently exclusive of the 'here and now.'"[336]

Current assessments of Cambodian/American memory fail to accommodate for the fissures that erupt when one engages a fully reflexive analysis because they fail to interrogate attachments— "deep psychic registers of investment"[337]—to binary models of silence and disclosure. This model tethers freedom to a self-possessed speaking subject and reproduces a heteronormative social order which positions silence in anterior time and disclosure within the 'here and now.' Models invested in 'breaking silences' or 'broken silences' conceive of trauma as contained—enclosed—until the act of disclosure reveals what-has-not-yet-been-said, transforming what was initially positioned as abject into the liberal humanist subject of Western modernity, a subject who might now imagine a future.

But what happens when trauma travels, when it destabilizes the boundaries of the self, when memory is shared and the demarcations between silence and disclosure become less and

less clear? What happens when distance cannot be collapsed into difference and difference into distance—the difference positioned as incommensurable—illustrating why the limits of what-can-be-said should not be mistaken for the limits of commensurability?

In response to normative temporalities that mark the 'modern' from the 'premodern,' Alexander intervenes with the notion of "palimpsestic time," writing:

> "The central idea is that of the palimpsest—a parchment that has been inscribed two or three times, the previous text having been imperfectly erased and remaining therefore still partly visible…. The idea of the 'new' structured through the 'old' scrambled, palimpsestic character of time, both jettisons the truncated distance of linear time and dislodges the impulse for incommensurability, which the ideology of distance creates."[338]

This conceptualization of palimpsestic time destabilizes both the horizontal and vertical character of colonial, Western time. Alexander's palimpsestic time—a queering of normative time, a re-scrambling of the "'here and now' and the 'then and there' to a 'here and there' and a 'then and now'"[339]—allows us to make meaning of those experiences that trouble linear time's investment in demarcated borders between past, present, and future. The queer temporality of palimpsestic time reveals the cyclical and recursive relationship of silence and disclosure, whereby the circulation and recycling of stories produces different forms of knowledge and knowing—each iteration of experience containing something old and something new, informed by the context in which retelling takes place.

Reunion: Stories in Transit

> Several days ago, my family and I rented a 12-seater van and for the first time since they left Cambodia, my father's remaining brothers and sisters visited the graves of my grandmother and the unmarked grounds where my grandfather and two eldest aunts died during the genocide. I felt so… blessed to have been present for this; although there was an almost constant trading of stories from Pol Pot time, there was just so much… joy… in that car.... These were stories of death, murder, starvation, violence, and desperation… but told with such a zeal for life and…joy, laughter… the sharing of experience… I've been thinking about these kinds of stories lately, stories in transit…

Figure 27. On the road to Battambang (2016).
Photograph by Lina Chhun

In December 2016, I describe the first family reunion to occur on my father's side in over thirty years during my second visit to Cambodia. Leaving Phnom Penh in the middle of the night or early morning—depending on whether or not one chose to go to sleep before the 2:30am wake-up call—my father's family, my mother, and I travel by minivan the five and a half hours to Battambang. In Battambang, we visit the pagoda grounds where my grandmother's body is buried, and my father and his siblings make merit, pay their respects to their parents. From here, we travel back to Phnom Penh, stopping by two pagodas on the way home, making merit for the dead through donations to each temple. As we travel from Phnom Penh to Battambang and

make merit on the way back, family members begin to tell stories, stories which produce more stories, stories which come to produce a kind of shared affect in that minivan.

Within the context of the above example of commemoration in transit, reunion signifies bearing witness to joy as well as loss, to what remains as well as what has come to pass. The familial weaving of stories in-relation produces more stories, more experiences in-relation that are shared, yet still retain their particularity. The temporal dimension of the memories that surface illustrates how iterations might produce different stories or rather, new dimensions of the same story.

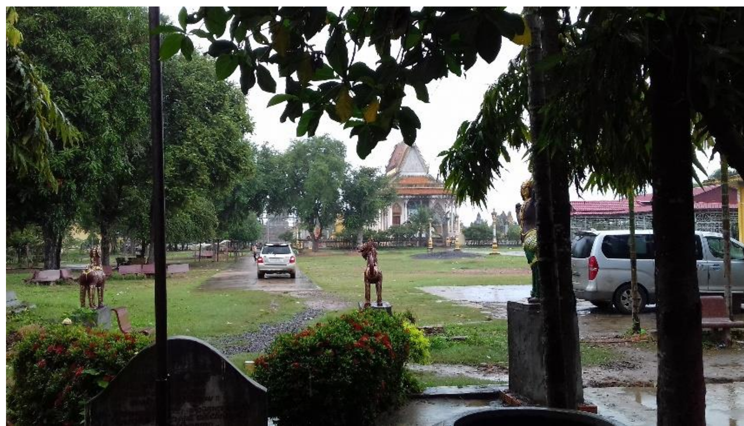

Figure 28. Pagoda grounds on the way back to Phnom Penh (2016).
Photograph by Lina Chhun

During her initial oral history interview, my mother had moments of hesitation while telling her story—throughout the initial interview much more soft-spoken than her speech in daily life. But when traveling together in Cambodia with family, my mother returns to her experience of witnessing murder. The point at which my sister and I stop the tape during her oral history interview takes on a different valence when told in transit, in reunion years later. There is no hesitation, no back-and-forth language switching, and post-reunion, my mother now often tells this story when familial conversations inevitably turn back to Pol Pot time.

Figure 29. Pagoda on the way back to Phnom Penh (2016).
Photograph by Lina Chhun

What happened in the van on the road to Battambang that day, can be read as moments of transgenerational crossing, my mother, father, aunts and uncles speaking to each other but also speaking to me, a communion I am fortunate to have been a part of. Recognizing the intersubjective quality of the retelling destabilizes the vertical and unidirectional assumptions of transmission, my presence as a second-order witness itself changing the telling. This second-order witnessing can never stand in as substitute for firsthand experience of violence, just as those who survived can never stand in for the dead. Yet understanding the differential meanings produced in these moments of crossing offers us more understanding for the ways in which historical violence might register. What are the desires enumerated by different registers of violence-trauma and what are the desires—if we engage in a reflexive interrogation —we attempt to fulfill through the use of memory to commemorate?

Figure 30. Former grounds of one aunt's labor camp during the genocide (2016).
Photograph taken by Lina Chhun

Palimpsestic time allows us to attend and give value to those "washed out" archival grains of a past that cannot be fully erased, and the palimpsest functions as a metaphor for the crossing of memories. Crossings illustrate how memories can be written upon each other, each iteration producing something old as well as something new. Timely stories erupt from a scrambling of time and place, the phenomenon of return leading to different iterations—different dimensions and shades of the 'same' story; the stories told 'here' are not necessarily the stories told 'there,' yet 'here' and 'there' remain inescapably intertwined. Hauntings and the crossings of psychosomatic manifestations can be read as forms of palimpsestic memory, affective archives of experience encompassing past, present, and future.

In the turn away from "truth," we might find the potential to articulate the contradictions and complexities of subjectivity within and in the afterlife of immense violence. Moving away from a preoccupation with authenticity, the story—it's circulation and return—contains the possibility to capture the affective and intersubjective realm of experience. Hauntings are perhaps the eruptions of unresolved/irreconcilable historical violence, of trauma, the recursive

and singular manifestations of past in the present, those specters that walk among us and demand recognition, a reckoning, a "something to be done."[340] Hauntings might represent both the loss of bodily integrity experienced during contexts of violence as well as the imperative to recognize bodily harm in the present. Such hauntings may call forth a mourning for what never was, a mourning which functions as a registering of what may have been and could still be, a language that names violence without seeming to stand in for.

Tethering an understanding of healing to an everyday which recognizes the viability of the ghost—in its multiplicity of forms—we can begin to think about the "something to be done;" this "something to be done" a moving and/or growing not necessarily encompassed by progress narratives. Sometimes the something to be done is simply (or not so simply) moving and working through life in ways that recognize the ghost. In doing this work and attending/ tending to our past and present—recognizing the damage as well as care that we produce—we might come to learn to walk with the ghost and to imagine a different future divested from harm.

CONCLUSION: The Koh Tree

No matter which way you go
No matter which way you stay
You're out of my mind, out of my mind…

I was walking with a ghost
I said please, please don't insist

I was walking with a ghost
I said please, please don't insist

Tegan and Sara, "Walking with a Ghost"[341]

"Sometimes there were moments when I went to someplace else. My mind transported to someplace else, hovering right outside my body….

I often think about what it means to inhabit one's own body, to occupy time…

I wonder if trauma will always feel as it does. As if someone is stealing the present from me. That loss of control when my body is transplanted back there, back to how it felt before. Back to a different time when my body did not feel like my own."

From "Meditations on Occupying Our Present," in *the Feminist Wire*[342]

When I first began thinking through the contours of bodily registers of trauma seven years ago, the lyrics from the Tegan and Sara song "Walking with a Ghost," were a continual presence. In winter 2012, I used these lyrics as a springboard in which to process the transmission of historical trauma because they were quite literally playing in my head on repeat as I somaticized my own anxieties and attempted to write against the loud—incredibly loud—ding of my own psychosomatic, affective register.

Shortly after the 2016 Presidential Election, I wrote a piece for *The Feminist Wire*. In this piece, I attempted to grapple with the intimate interconnections between the personal, the

political, and the pedagogical, putting into words the relationships between historical violence, generational transmission, embodied registers, and living in the present—feeling my way[343] into alternative conceptualizations of reparation and care.

Walking with a Ghost was also playing in my head when I began to narrate the story of my mother's current psychosomatic manifestations, her continuing doctors' appointments and empty medical diagnoses today, even after her engagement in a 'breaking of silence'…

> *About a week ago, my mother had called me to tell me that she was lonely… and she had also called to tell me that she was fasting, fasting for forty-eight hours for x-rays she was going to have done. She had discovered some new pain… a pain that necessitated a bodily cause. I steeled myself against the tightening in my chest, against the exacerbation I have always felt growing up with the psychosomatic in my life. I fought against all those ugly narratives that pathologized my mother's experience, and I did my best—my difficult best—to listen.*

Perhaps, I thought later, there *was* a kind of corporal cause for my mother's physical pain, a different kind of bodily injury, a wounding that had imprinted itself in my mother's psychic register many years ago. After all, as I've been told in a personal correspondence, witnessing *is* a type of violence, a kind of human rights violation.[344] Perhaps there is an element of physicality to witnessing death I thought, as there is undoubtedly such an element in resisting impending starvation. The kind of sense the trauma of the psychosomatic makes, the kind of meaning that could be understood from this un-reconciled/irreconcilable trauma, must be inextricably tied to these kinds of corporeal experiences.

Even so, even with the effort to begin to listen more closely to the space of "inbetweenness" that is the psychosomatic, I wrote fairly despairingly many years ago:

> This is a trauma that cannot be reconciled with liberatory narratives of broken silence and empowerment. With a teleology of healing similar to that of Western notions of linear time, where the barbarism of silence is met with the liberation of speech, culminating in the freedom from pain… This year, my mother gave her story, her oral narrative of survival and trauma during the Cambodian [Holocaust]. I have interwoven my own broken silence into the narratives of my father, my mother, my grandmother…

> …laying bare my own possible identity narrative of 'original injury,' of past intimate partner sexual and psychological violence… And yet, as is evident in my conversation with her last week, my mother still manifests her pain through these psychic-corporeal channels.
>
> As do I.

I ended on this similar, perhaps despairing note…

> Perhaps for now… it may be enough to simply learn to read and value fragmented re-memory in all its forms, learning to piece together possible decolonial meanings out of the echoes of the devalued. Perhaps for now… dare I say it?... it is enough to just keep walking with the ghost.

In the afterlife of my musings from seven years ago, I would like to revisit the lyrics of this Tegan and Sara song as well as some of my concluding words. Instead of creating a counter-narrative to my possibly despondent series of conclusions, I would like to sit my words down with a few reflections concerning feminist methodologies, ethics, work on violence, and the everyday. In this engagement, I hope to change not necessarily the content of these past conclusions, but the valence with which I imbued them with force and meaning.

Walking with the Ghost

This time around, as I sit with the lyrics to this song, not only do I hear the ghosts of the past embodied in the psychosomatic anxieties of the present, I hear Veena Das' feminist approach to questions of violence and experience. *I was walking with a ghost… I said please, please don't insist…* Das writes about her experience with one of her respondents:

> "What I found compelling in my relations with Manjit was her recognition that her violation was of an order that the whole principle of life stood violated and that to put it back into words could not be done except with extreme hesitation. Hence the boundaries she had created between saying and showing could not be crossed by careless invitations to conversation such as: Tell me what happened."[345]

Contrary to dominant models in which speech becomes empowerment, Das reminds us about the place of feminist ethics in work on violence. She shows us, so beautifully, how words and the "putting back into words" may actually do their own violence, rather than contribute to healing. The order, the structure and logic, of the violation unravels the ontological dimensions of life itself as sacred—as bounded—and the careless appeal to speech mines the injury without concern for the entirety of *a* life, a life that might signal a different entry into the category human.

Such careless invitations to speech cannot capture the oftentimes ephemeral and reoccurring—the yearning, and a reaching, for a kind of wellness that's always becoming or as Cherrie Moraga posits, trauma as points of transformation which signal the possibility of a future that has not yet come to pass. Toni Morrison in turn, asks us to consider the meanings and potentialities of resurrecting the ghost—*It was not a story to pass on…. It was not a story to pass on…. This is not a story to pass on*[346]—the difficulties of resurrecting the past, pulling what lies latent into being. The story was not meant to be told, but neither can we pass on the telling. The histories of lives lived—and their attendant violences—should not be passed on, should not be inherited, but neither can we simply move on by.

What then, might walking with the ghost look like?

On Harmful Attachments

Sara Ahmed articulates the cultural politics of emotion:

> "[O]ur response to 'wound fetishism' should not be to forget the wounds that mark the place of historical injury…. Rather, our task would be to learn to remember how embodied subjects come to be wounded in the first place, which requires that we learn to read that pain…. The task would not only be to read and interpret pain as over determined, but also to do the work of translation, whereby pain is moved into a public domain, and in moving, is transformed. In order to move away from attachments that are

> hurtful, we must act on them, an action which requires, at the same time, that we do not ontologise women's pain as the automatic ground of politics."[347]

Walking with the ghost requires action, *is* action, a refusal to inhabit the space-time of injury while still yet acknowledging its presence. In the moving of pain into a public domain, where the moving is the transformation, the work of translation gestures towards how embodied subjects come to be wounded in the first place. Bodily and psychic pain is translated, such that pain's sociocultural and geopolitical conditions become legible, the embodied subject positioned within a moving history.

Within this context, moving away from attachments that are hurtful is a moving away beyond the "stuck-ness" of the injury—a "stuck-ness" that becomes a pulling backwards, the moment moving through, a stealing of the present. *I often think about what it means to inhabit one's own body, to occupy time…. I wonder if trauma will always feel as it does. As if someone is stealing the present from me.* Walking with the ghost is to take seriously the phenomenon of pain without petrifying the pain—a valorization of pain itself or the interpellation of women's pain as the grounds for power relations—while still acting on attachments to harm in the moving present. Acting on attachments that are harmful requires an attunement to the day to day, the everyday, to practices that might take up the task of redeeming life.

On Reparation

In her engagement with methodology and ethics, Veena Das offers up the realm of the ordinary and the everyday as an alternative framework in which to engage notions of redress. Rather than a search for a transcendental sense of recovery as healing, Das attunes us to the ways in which "victims and survivors affirm the possibility of life" by "descent into the everyday."[348] She writes:

> "Manjit… taught me that to redeem life from the violations to which she had been subjected was an act of lifelong engagement with poisonous knowledge; in digesting this poison in the acts of attending to the ordinary, she had been able to teach me how to respect the boundaries between saying and showing."[349]

This redeeming of life through the act of attending to the ordinary reminds us of the ways in which healing from violence almost necessarily happens in process, just as the afterlives of violence embed themselves into the processes of the everyday. In this movement to redeem life, affective registers especially—in their ability to create movement, feeling, the sense of being touched—construct possibilities for practices of redress.

For over a decade, in my moments of writing, I have felt something like a re-memory; a force outside myself; a feeling I remember; traces of memories; the writing itself both a dissociation and a communion, not isolated but intersubjective—with some imagined reader, some imagined audience in mind. I have been walking with the ghost for quite some time, writing itself becoming part of a lifelong engagement with poisonous knowledge, toxic grief. I began this oral history project almost a decade ago, holding in tension feelings of discomfort with individualizing frameworks and the injunction to speak my own pain, with the necessity of working through historical trauma and systemic violence.

Although catharsis has been nowhere to be found, I have learned to be more accepting of the back and forth of affective registers, taking seriously the realm of feeling, where walking with the ghost is an incomplete working through; redress as the act of "stealing back time" or rather, learning to steal back time. Walking with the ghost becomes occupying the spaces and places of complexity, contradiction, messiness, the messiness of lived and *living* experience. Through a continual back and forth, my mother has taught me much about illness and wellness, and perhaps just as much about desire, a yearning for wellness that might be translated into a lifelong digestion of grief—to redeem the possibility of life, this digestion of grief moving away

from 'original injury' and moving into a recognition of the moment. Redress becomes a continual return through an attending to the ordinary in both its meanings, attention to the ordinary as well as care for the everyday. We then might find reparation in the form of care, in the in-between spaces that capture the confluences of time; those blurrings of boundaries that help us move towards something we might call whole.

The Kapok Tree

In my father's initial oral history interview, when my sister asked: "Did they [the Khmer Rouge] say anything to threaten you?" My father responded, "They just said…work. You work hard then…your life is longer. If you don't obey the organization, your life is short…. They say…if you want to live, plant the *koh* tree." The word *koh* in Khmer has a double meaning; it is both the word for the kapok tree as well as the Khmer word for "mute." My father's reference to "planting the *koh* tree" reflects similar documented expressions of the value of silence from 1975 to 1979 in Cambodia.[350] If Cambodians wanted to escape suspicion and stay alive during Democratic Kampuchea, they had to obey *Angkar* ("organization") and remain silent about the harsh difficulties and violent realities of life under the regime—they quickly learned to "plant the *koh* tree."

Figure 31. Kapok tree at Ta Prohm Temple, Angkor, Siem Reap Province, Cambodia.
Photographed by Victor Yezhov, Provided by Liny Chhun

The dialectical relationship of silence and historical trauma that exemplifies the messiness of experience and the complexity of survival, aptly parallels the nature of perhaps the most well-known of kapok trees in Cambodia—those at the temple complex of Ta Prohm in Siem Reap. At Ta Prohm—popular with tourists for both its 'melding of nature and culture' as well as its reputation as backdrop for Angelina Jolie's 2001 *Tomb Raider*—massive kapok trees entwine their roots, their trunks, and their branches with the various walls and stones of the temple, simultaneously supporting as well as destroying the temple complex's structure.

Figure 32. Close-up of kapok tree at Ta Prohm Temple.
Photograph by Lina Chhun

I do not purport to know the exact reasons why tourists from around the world come in such great numbers to Ta Prohm—but having visited myself, I have witnessed the beauty in such very "destruction" of the complex, a destruction perhaps closer to a transmutation than an endpoint; another iteration rather, in the lifecycle of this place. The iteration is undoubtedly one dimension of what makes the place so profound, the transmutation in which Ta Prohm encompasses something new but also indefinitely old. The kapok trees at Ta Prohm live, they grow, they scaffold, they (eventually) die and perhaps grow again, but in their intimate entanglements with the stones and walls of the place, they have come to inextricably and continually co-constitute the world that is the temple complex.

There cannot be a return to an origin, a restoring of Ta Prohm to "what it was." Caring for the temple requires caring for the kapok trees, and extraction can literally mean devastation. When I began the oral history project with my family in 2009, I conceptualized the project as one of "uprooting the *koh* tree," of dispelling silences within my family and those within the Cambodian American community at large. In the years since, through writing and rewriting, thinking and rethinking, and an invaluable number of conversations,[351] I have come to understand the violence of that initial framing.

Uproot; verb: 1. to pull out by or as if by the roots. 2. To remove violently or tear away from a native place or environment. 3. To destroy or eradicate as if by pulling out roots. 4. To displace, as from a home or country; tear away, as from customs or a way of life.[352]

Planting the *koh* tree for a lifetime may be like breathing grief for a lifetime—toxic, poisonous—but the violence of uprooting the *koh* tree may also result in irrevocable damage, and my initial investment in such an attachment a misrecognition of the contradictory effects-affects of silence in relation to historical trauma. I have begun to think of silences like the branches and roots of the kapok tree, supporting yet slowly degrading; psychosomatic illness becoming like the branches and roots of the tree as well. Forcing survivors to speak according to notions of progressive time, or the injunction to confront their psychic-corporeal pain outside of time—outside the context of historical violence—can mean further harm, further injury. Yet if breathing grief for a lifetime is toxic, how can we reimagine reparation as a process of detoxification? How do we devise a way of living with, rather than in, this grief?

In Christina Sharpe's *In the Wake*, Sharpe "think[s] the metaphor of the wake in the entirety of its meanings (the keeping watch with the dead, the path of a ship, a consequence of something, in the line of flight and/or sight, awakening, and consciousness)… join[ing] the wake

with work in order… to imagine new ways to live in the wake of slavery, in slavery's afterlives, to survive (and more) the afterlife of property."[353] Sharpe asserts:

> "I want to think 'the wake' as a problem of and for thought. I want to think 'care' as a problem for thought. I want to think care in the wake as a problem for thinking and of for Black non/being in the world. Put another way, *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being* is a work that insists and performs that thinking needs care… and that thinking and care need to stay in the wake."[354]

Sharpe's formulation of "wake work" as the work of care—and care like wake conceived of capaciously—offers a framing of reparation that considers the realm of feeling, of affective registers. Reading care in the forms of "amends," of mending, we might imagine "wake work" as the putting up of scaffolds—as they have done at Ta Prohm—not to extract, not to remove the kapok trees, but to support. These scaffolds reinforce the integrity of the complex, such that the trees no longer provide the sole source of support for the temple structures. Reparation is not a displacement, not a removal or an extraction, but a building with, a wading through—the making of one path through the wake.

For my mother, such care requires deep listening, honoring her lived and living experiences while still yet attending to the necessity of acting on attachments that are harmful. Although the affective register of the psychosomatic has and continues to, embed itself into my mother's as well as my own every day, other affective registers of love—the work of joy—remind us that we are still here, living every day, working through and existing alongside the afterlives of violence. In ordinary affect's potentiality to create such turns and spaces of interconnectivity, I sense the possibility for an on-going reparation, a process by which fragments of violence become simultaneously enfolded into and yet also, remedied by engagement with life and the everyday.

Figure 33. Wide-Shot, Ta Prohm Temple, Angkor, Siem Reap Province.
Photographed by Victor Yezhov, Provided by Liny Chhun

Notes

[1] Excerpt from: Lina Chhun, "Meditations on Occupying Our Present: Why I Continue to Turn to Intersectional Feminism in This Moment, PARTS ONE-THREE," *The Feminist Wire*, March 2, 6, 9, 2017, www.thefeministwire.com/2017/03/meditations-one/.
[2] Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* (New York: The New Press, 2010, 2012), 2.
[3] Mimi Thi Nguyen, *The Gift of Freedom: War, Debt, and Other Refugee Passages* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2012).
[4] Neferti Tadiar, "The War to Be Human / Becoming Human in a Time of War," (public address, INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence symposium, "Race, Gender, and the War," University of California-Santa Cruz, CA, November 6, 2001). Reprinted in: *Color of Violence: the Incite! Anthology*, ed. Incite! Women of Color Against Violence (Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 2006).
[5] Alexander G. Weheliye, *Habeas Viscus: Racializing Assemblages, Biopolitics, and Black Feminist Theories of the Human* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014), 72.
[6] Tadiar, "Human in War."
[7] Chhun, "Occupying Our Present."
[8] Christina Sharpe, *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016), 19.
[9] Chhun, "Occupying Our Present."
[10] Nguyên-Vo Thu-Huong, "Forking Paths: How Shall We Mourn the Dead?" *Amerasia Journal* 31, no. 2 (2005): 157-175.
[11] Sharpe, *In the Wake*, 18.
[12] This image was originally published in *Amerasia Journal* as the front image preceding my article; photoshop work by Mary Uyematsu Kao: Lina Chhun, "'Sometime American Can…Make Mistake Too…' Contested Memory, Documentary Registers, and Cambodian/American Histories of Violence." *Amerasia Journal* 42, no. 2 (2016): 160-188.
[13] Here and throughout the dissertation, my usage of "Cambodian/American" reflects Laura Kang's usage of "Asian/American" in her 2002 text *Compositional Subjects*. The slash in "Cambodian/American" denotes an "and," overlapping but not assimilating into, reflecting Kang's critique of homogenizing, static, and hegemonic identitarian paradigms conjured by prior uses of "Asian American (women)" and "Asian-American." I also mean to juxtapose "Cambodian" and "American" through my use of "Cambodian/American," visually illustrating the entanglement of these histories.
[14] William Shawcross, *The Quality of Mercy: Cambodia, Holocaust and Modern Conscience* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1985).
There has been considerable debate regarding whether or not the Democratic Kampuchea era in Cambodia should or should not be considered a "genocide," given the understanding that "Pol Pot time" consisted of "Khmer killing Khmer." In response, some scholars have opted to use the term "auto-genocide." Uneasy about the implications of "self-inflicted tragedy" and the encapsulation of the time of Khmer Rouge rule as discrete, I've chosen to use the term "holocaust" when referring to the period of Khmer Rouge rule from 1975-1979, the Cambodian Holocaust, here and throughout the dissertation to emphasize large-scale loss—devastation and destruction.
[15] Ben Kiernan, *The Pol Pot Regime: Race, Power, and Genocide in Cambodia under the Khmer Rouge, 1975-1979* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996).
[16] Ben Kiernan, "The Cambodian Crisis, 1990-1992: The UN plan, the Khmer Rouge, and the State of Cambodia," *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars*, 24, no. 6 (1992), 3-23.
[17] Taylor Owen and Ben Kiernan, "Bombs Over Cambodia," *The Walrus* (October 2006): 67.
[18] Ben Kiernan, *How Pol Pot Came to Power: Colonialism, Nationalism, and Communism in Cambodia* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2004); William Shawcross, *Sideshow: Kissinger, Nixon, and the Destruction of Cambodia* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1979).
[19] Ben Kiernan, *The Pol Pot Regime.*
[20] David P Chandler, "The Tragedy of Cambodian History." *Public Affairs* 52, no. 3 (1979): 410.
[21] *Ibid.,* 412.

[22] *Ibid.*
[23] In using the terms "colonizer" and "colonized," I recognize that such sharp demarcations are not indicative of the very complicated processes by which subjects become constituted in colonial contexts. Here, I use these terms as short-hand for what colonizing logics do, for those occupying the empire's center as well those who occupy its margins.
[24] David P. Chandler, "Tragedy of Cambodian History," 416.
[25] David P. Chandler, "The Tragedy of Cambodian History Revisited," *SAIS Review* 14, no. 2 (1994): 80.
[26] I admit I had something of a visceral reaction to Chandler's usage of "clownish" to describe various Cambodian leaders (i.e. Sihanouk, Pol Pot, and Lon Nol—for whose coup he does not address U.S. involvement). Although of course, these leaders—to varying extents—were flawed and respectively responsible for horrific atrocities, I wonder if such terminology would be used to describe European or U.S. leaders. In fact, in his initial article, Chandler berates Sihanouk for "seem[ing] to believe[]—from time to time at least—the mythology about himself to the point of confusing himself with Cambodia, and of thinking that he could *outwit* a power like Nixon's United States" (414).
[27] Chandler, "Tragedy Cambodian History Revisited," 82.
[28] *Ibid.,*
[29] *Ibid.,* 83.
[30] *Ibid.,* 82.
[31] *Ibid.,* 87.
[32] *Ibid.,* 88.
[33] *Ibid.,* 89.
[34] James Tyner, Savina Sirik, and Samuel Henkin, "Violence and the Dialectics of Landscape: Memorialization in Cambodia," *Geographical Review* 104, no. 3 (2014): 290.
[35] Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995), 24-25.
[36] *Ibid.,* 2.
[37] *Ibid.,* 23.
[38] *Ibid.,* 25.
[39] *Ibid.*
[40] *Ibid.,* 26.
[41] *Ibid.,* 27.
[42] Lisa Yoneyama, "On the Unredressability of U.S. War Crimes: Vietnam and Japan," *Amerasia Journal* 31, no. 2(2005): 140-144.
[43] Trouillot, *Silencing the Past,* 82.
[44] *Ibid.,* 87.
[45] W. E. B. Du Bois. *Black Reconstruction in America: 1860-1880* (New York: The Free Press, 1935), 713.
[46] *Ibid.,* 57.
[47] Trouillot, 99.
[48] Trouillot, 95.
[49] *Ibid.,* 97-98.
[50] *Ibid.,* 148.
[51] *Ibid.,* 149.
[52] Khatharya Um, "Exiled Memory: History, Identity, and Remembering in Southeast Asia and Southeast Asian Diaspora," *Positions* 20, no. 3 (2012): 831-850.
[53] Cathy J. Schlund-Vials, "Cambodian American Memory Work: Justice and the 'Cambodian Syndrome'," *Positions* 20, no. 3 (2012): 805-830.
[54] Here, my usage of "always already" is embedded in a genealogy of post-structuralist thinking with an origin in Jacques Derrida's work. Following Derrida's (1967) *On Grammatology* and his notion of "trace," "always already" means to reference the absent-presence of the contingent, the reciprocal determination of signified and signifier. "Always already" responds to static notions of the eternal, a process that pairs the fixed temporality of "always" with an "already" signifying some moment of coming into being. In the context with which I use the phrase here, "always already" recognizes that at the point in which memory becomes constituted, it has already been mediated.
[55] See for examples: Schlund-Vials, "Cambodian American Memory Work"; Marita Sturken. *Tangled Memories:*

The Vietnam War, the AIDS Epidemic, and the Politics of Remembering (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1997); Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*; Lisa Yoneyama, *Hiroshima Traces: Time, Space, and the Dialectics of Memory* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1999).
[56] Fiona I.B. Ngô, Mimi Thi Nguyen, and Mariam B. Lam, "Southeast Asian American Studies Special Issue: Guest Editors' Introduction," *Positions* 20, no. 3 (2012): 671-684.
[57] Ngô, Nguyen, and Lam, "Guest Editors' Introduction," 673.
[58] Schlund-Vials, "Cambodian American Memory Work."
[59] James E. Young, *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993).
[60] Schlund-Vials, "Cambodian American Memory Work," 808.
[61] Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin, "EMPIRE," in *POST-COLONIAL STUDIES: The Key Concepts*. Second edition, (New York, NY: Routledge Press, 2007).
[62] Neferti X. M. Tadiar, "Empire," *Social Text 100* 27, no. 3 (2009): 112-122.
[63] Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri. *Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001).
[64] Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, "EMPIRE."
[65] Denise Ferreira Da Silva, "A Tale of Two Cities: Saigon, Fallujah, and the Ethical Boundaries of Empire," *Amerasia Journal* 31, no. 2 (2005): 121-134.
[66] *Ibid.,* 122.
[67] Tadiar, "Empire," 114.
[68] *Ibid.,* 116.
[69] *Ibid.,* 116-117.
[70] Khatharya Um, "The 'Vietnam War': What's in a Name?" *Amerasia Journal* 31, no. 2 (2005): 134-139.
[71] *Ibid.,* 136.
[72] *Ibid.,* 136.
[73] Sturken, *Tangled Memories*.
[74] Yoneyama, "On the Unredressability of U.S. War Crimes."
[75] *Ibid.,* 142.
[76] De Silva, "A Tale of Two Cities."
[77] *Ibid.,* 122
[78] *Ibid.,* 123
[79] *Ibid.,* 133
[80] Jodi Kim, *Ends of Empire: Asian American Critique and the Cold War* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), 10.
[81] *Ibid.,* 14.
[82] *Ibid.,* 4.
[83] *Ibid.,* 7.
[84] *Ibid.,* 20.
[85] *Ibid.,* 34.
[86] *Ibid.,* 4.
[87] *Ibid.,* 3-4.
[88] Audre Lorde, "Age, Race, Class, and Sex: Women Redefining Difference," in *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches*, (Freedom, CA: Crossing Press, 1980, 1984), 114-123.
[89] I recognize the potential pitfalls of using "Western" as a designation without engaging in definitional work. Here, and throughout, I use "West" and "Western" not to denote a monolithic entity or space-place, but rather, following Michel-Rolph Trouillot's discussion regarding how Europe became the West, my usage of "Western" reflects a particular epistemological formation, a shift in logics and what Trouillot calls a "new symbolic order" (1995, 74) that began to gain hegemonic power in the sixteenth century.
[90] Patricia Hill Collins, "The Construction of Black Feminist Thought," in *Words of Fire: An Anthology of African-American Feminist Thought*, ed. Beverly Guy-Sheftall. (New York: The New Press, 1995), 338-358.
[91] See for feminist discussions of sexual violence: Catharine A. MacKinnon. *Towards a Feminist Theory of the State.* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989); Judith Herman. *Trauma and Recovery*. (New York: Basic Books, 1992). For an engagement with silence in the field of queer studies: Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick. *Epistemology of the Closet. (*Berkeley & Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 1990).
[92] bell hooks. *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center*. (Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 1984, 2000).

[93] Angela Y. Davis *Women, Race, and Class.* (New York: Random House, Inc., 1981, 1983).
[94] Hortense J Spillers, "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe: An American Grammar Book," *Diacritics* 170, no. 2 (1987): 64-81.
[95] *Ibid.,* 68.
[96] Saidiya Hartman, "Seduction and the Ruses of Power," *Callaloo* 19 no. 2 (1996): 537-560.
[97] Kimberlé Crenshaw, "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color," in *Feminist Frontiers: Ninth Edition*, ed. Verta Taylor, Nancy Whittier, and Leila J. Rupp. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1991, 2012), 414-424.
[98] *Ibid.,* 416.
[99] *Ibid.,* 421.
[100] Ange-Marie Hancock, "Trayvon Martin, Intersectionality, and the Politics of Disgust," *Theory & Event* 15, no. 3 (2012).
[101] Maxine Baca Zinn and Bonnie Thorton Dill, "Theorizing Difference from Multiracial Feminism," *Feminist Studies* 22, no. 2 (1996): 321-331.
[102] Hill Collins, "Black Feminist Thought."
[103] Veena Das, *Life and Words: Violence and the Descent into the Ordinary* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2007).
[104] Audra Simpson, "On Ethnographic Refusal: Indigeneity, 'Voice' and Colonial Citizenship," *Junctures* 9 (2007): 67-80.
[105] Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (New York: Routledge, Inc., 1995).
[106] *Ibid.,* 23.
[107] *Ibid.*
[108] *Ibid.,* 36.
[109] *Ibid.,* 40.
[110] Saidiya Hartman, "Venus in Two Acts," *Small Axe* 12, no. 2 (2008): 1-14.
[111] Laura Hyun Yi Kang, *Compositional Subjects: Enfiguring Asian/American Women* (United States of America: Duke University Press, 2002).
[112] Here, I would like to thank Sa Whitley for an invaluable conversation and the invocation to think more deeply about the utility of "spectacle" and "visibility." Such a provocation allowed me to more profoundly flush out my contentions and ethical framework.
[113] Das, *Life and Words.*
[114] Jacques Derrida, "Poetics and Politics of Witnessing." In *Sovereignties in Question: The Poetics of Paul Celan*, ed. Thomas Dutoit and Outi Pasanen. (New York: Fordham University Press, 2005): 65-96.
[115] Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" in *Colonial Discourse and Postcolonial Theory: A Reader,* ed. Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman. (New York: Colombia University Press, 1988, 1994): 66-111.
[116] Avery Gordon, *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008).
[117] Derrida, "Poetics and Politics of Witnessing," 75.
[118] Carolyn Ellis and Arthur P. Bochner, "Autoethnography, Personal Narrative, Reflexivity: Researcher as Subject," in *Handbook of Qualitative Research 2nd edition,* ed. Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S Lincoln (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2000): 733-768.
[119] *Ibid.,* 739.
[120] Leon Anderson, "Analytic Autoethnography," *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography,* 35, no. 4 (2006): 373-395.
[121] *Ibid.*, 375.
[122] Anselm Strauss and Juliet Corbin, *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc., 1998).
[123] Bophana Audiovisual Center, bophana.org/.
[124] Eve Tuck, "Suspending Damage: A Letter to Communities," *Harvard Educational Review* 79, no. 3 (2009): 409-427.
[125] Viet Thanh Nguyen, "Speak of the Dead, Speak of Viet Nam: The Ethics and Aesthetics of Minority Discourse," *CR: The New Centennial Review* 6 (2006): 7-37.
[126] *Ibid.,* 12.
[127] Ann L. Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense* (New Jersey:

Princeton University Press, 2009).
[128] Michelle Erai, "Criminal Sittings—Rape in the Colony, New Zealand, 1862." *Journal of Historical Sociology* 24, no. 2 (2011): 186-208.
[129] Martin F Manalansan IV, "Messing up sex: The promises and possibilities of queer of color critique," *Sexualities* 21, no. 8 (2018): 1287-1290.
[130] From [DC-Cam Document Record No. D26825] "Accidental Raid in Cambodia," *Dagens Nyheter*, August 7, 1973. Other examples include: [D26835] "New Mistake Said to Kill 8: Toll in Bombing Error is Raised to 189 Dead," *International Herald Tribune*, August 8, 1973; [D26871] Lewis Anthony, "Stopping…With a Whimper," *International Herald Tribune*, August 14, 1973.
[131] For examples of discussions of Neak Loeung in regards to elided Western culpability for historical violence in Cambodia, see: John Pilger, "Kingdom's empty dock," *The Phnom Penh Post*, February 23, 2009; Sydney Schanberg, "Cambodia," *Crimes of War*, http://www.crimesofwar.org/a-z-guide/cambodia/.
[132] Owen and Kiernan, "Bombs Over Cambodia," 66.
[133] This phrase, "bomb them back to the Stone Age," is usually associated with General Curtis LeMay, whose 1968 memoir included the phrase in reference to the tactic of absolute destruction of infrastructure—factories, harbors, bridges—in North Vietnam. For more discussion regarding the origins and proliferation of this phrase, see: Nick Cullather, "'Back to the Stone Age': Origins of a Cliché," *The Asia-Pacific Journal* 4, no.10 (October 2006): 1-3.
[134] Lisa Yoneyama, *Hiroshima Traces,* 32.
[135] Jodi Kim, *Ends of Empire.*
[136] Yoneyama, *Hiroshima Traces,* 4.
[137] *Ibid.*
[138] *Ibid.,* 30.
[139] *Ibid.,* 31.
[140] *Ibid.,* 32.
[141] *Ibid.,* 2-3.
[142] See for example: Bruce Lockhart, "The Fate of Neutralism in Cambodia and Laos," in *Cold War Southeast Asia*, ed. Malcolm H. Murfett (Singapore: Marshall Cavendish International, 2012), 195-223; David P. Chandler, *The Tragedy of Cambodian History: Politics, War, and Revolution since 1945* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993); David P. Chandler, A *History of Cambodia: Fourth Edition* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press. 2007).
[143] See: Ben Kiernan, *How Pol Pot Came to Power;* Kenton Clymer, *Troubled Relations: The United States and Cambodia Since 1870* (DeKalb, Illinois: Northern Illinois University Press, 2007); Owen and Kiernan.
[144] William Shawcross, *Sideshow: Kissinger, Nixon, and the Destruction of Cambodia* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1979).
[145] Kim, *Ends of Empire*, 4.
[146] *Ibid.*, 3-4.
[147] *Ibid.*, 11.
[148] Keith L. Camacho, *Cultures of Commemoration: The Politics of War, Memory, and History in the Mariana Islands* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2011).
[149] *Ibid.,* 2.
[150] Cathy J. Schlund-Vials, *War, Genocide, Justice: Cambodian American Memory Work* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012): 13.
[151] Bryan Thao Worra, "The Last War Poem," *in Bamboo Among the Oaks: Contemporary Writing By Hmong Americans*, ed. Mai Neng Moua (Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2002).
[152] Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1995, 1996), 17.
[153] http://www.d.dccam.org/; italics in original.
[154] I must explicate my own complicity in these processes, my dissertation project largely dependent on the archives available at DC-Cam; indeed, many of the sources cited in this paper are taken from DC-Cam's physical archives in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. International newspaper accounts of Neak Loeung and other U.S. "bombing errors" found within DC-Cam's archives, for example, illustrate the breadth of material available at the center that extends beyond the discrete framework of the tribunal much of DC-Cam's public face pushes. This paper is not meant to be a critique of memory centers like DC-Cam, but rather an engagement with the potentialities and limitations of having and using such documentary spaces—especially those engaged in juridical proceedings.

[155] http://www.d.dccam.org/Projects/Magazines/Magazine_Searching.ht.
[156] Sopheak Vichea Tieng, "Chantrea Village Fell Into the Devastation of War," *Searching for the Truth—Documentation Center of Cambodia (DC-Cam)* Issue 03 (March 2000): 8-10
[157] Sopheak Vichea Tieng, "Chantrea Village Fell Into the Devastation of War," *Searching for the Truth—Documentation Center of Cambodia (DC-Cam)* Issue 04 (April 2000): 14-16
[158] Elizabeth van Schaack, "Temporal Jurisdiction '1970-1979' to be Solved," *Searching for the Truth*—Documentation Center of Cambodia (DC-Cam) Issue 05 (May 2000): 36.
[159] *Ibid.*
[160] *Ibid.,* 36-37.
[161] *Ibid.,* 37.
[162] *Ibid.*
[163] *Ibid.*
[164] Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*.
[165] See: David P. Chandler, "The Tragedy of Cambodian History,"; David P. Chandler, "The Tragedy of Cambodian History Revisited,"; Chandler, *Tragedy of Cambodian History.*
[166] I offer this analysis not to propagate my own feat of in/visibility (although such a result may be inevitable). My project is not to highlight the violence of U.S. forgetting at the expense of a forgetting of the violences enacted by Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen over nearly thirty years; rather, my project is to destabilize the colonial and Cold War logics that produce the predominance of zero-sum frameworks, in the "first place."
[167] Kiernan, *How Pol Pot Came to Power*.
[168] http://www.guggenheim.org/video/vandy-rattanas-bomb-ponds-photographs-and-video
[169] http://vandyrattana.com/
[170] Terry Cook, "What is Past is Prologue: A History of Archival Ideas Since 1898, and the Future Paradigm Shift," *Archivaria* 43 (Spring 1997): 17-63.
[171] Richard J. Cox, "The Documentation Strategy and Archival Appraisal Principles: A Different Perspective," *Archivaria* 38 (Fall 1994): 11-36.
[172] Ann Cvetkovich, *An Archive of Feelings: Trauma, Sexuality, and Lesbian Public Cultures* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2003).
[173] Kenneth Foote, "To Remember and Forget: Archives, Memory, and Culture," *American Archivist* 53, no. 3 (Summer 1990): 378-392.
[174] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yc3tXVOMQnU
[175] Das, *Life and Words.*
[176] Yoneyama, *Hiroshima Traces,* 5.
[177] Vandy Rattana in discussion with the author, July 13, 2015.
[178] Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain.*
[179] Kenneth Foote, "To Remember and Forget: Archives, Memory, and Culture," *American Archivist* 53, no. 3 (Summer 1990): 378-392.
[180] Vandy Rattana in discussion with the author, July 13, 2015.
[181] Ngô, Nguyen, and Lam, "Guest Editors' Introduction."
[182] *Ibid.,* 672.
[183] *Ibid.,* 673.
[184] *Ibid.*
[185] Vandy Rattana in discussion with the author, July 13, 2015.
[186] Kim.
[187] *Ibid.,* 156.
[188] Emily Monks-Leeson, "Archives on the Internet: Representing Contexts and Provenance from Repository to Website," *The American Archivist* 74 (2011): 40.
[189] Cassie Findlay, "People, Records and Power: What Archives Can Learn from WikiLeaks" (presentation, International Congress on Archives, Brisbane, Australia, August 2012).
[190] *Ibid.,* 41.
[191] Tbong Khmum province was formed on December 31, 2013 when Kampong Cham was split into two by a royal decree signed by King Sihamoni on the recommendation of Prime Minister Hun Sen; Phorn Bopha and Alex Willemyns, "Government Creates New CPP-Majority Province," *The Cambodia* Daily, January 10, 2014.
[192] Although this photograph is part of my personal collection, my father was the one who took this picture, as I am

in it. In the version of this chapter that appeared as an article in *Amerasia Journal*, "Photograph provided by Lina Chhun" had been published as "Photograph by Lina Chhun."
[193] Verne Harris, "Jacques Derrida Meets Nelson Mandela: Archival Ethics at the Endgame," *Archival Science: International Journal on Recorded Information* 11, no. 1-2 (2011): 113-124.
[194] *Ibid.,* 115.
[195] Yoneyama, *Hiroshima Traces,* 29.
[196] *Ibid.*
[197] Fieldnotes were originally written quickly, usually in between trips or at the end of the day; because of this, there was inconsistent use of tense. Some notes were in past tense and some in present; for the sake of clarity and to emphasize the necessity of thinking the past in the present and future, all fieldnotes adapt present tense in this chapter.
[198] Vida Taing, "A river spanned," *The Phnom Penh Post*, December 27, 2014.
[199] For in-depth discussion regarding my father's interview and the dialectics of memory and history-making, see chapter one.
[200] Anida Yoeu Ali, "The 1700% Project: Mistaken for Muslim," conceived, written, and performed by Anida Yoeu Ali, directed by Masahiro Sugano (2010, Chicago, 2010), video.
[201] Sharpe, 3.
[202] *Ibid.,* 4.
[203] Yoeu Ali, "The 1700% Project: Mistaken for Muslim."
[204] Sharpe, 3.
[205] *Ibid.,* 11.
[206] Yen Le Espiritu, *Body Counts: The Vietnam War and Militarized Refuge(es)* (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2014), 19.
[207] Weheliye, *Habeas Viscus.*
[208] Sharpe, 22.
[209] *Ibid.,* 18.
[210] Ben Kiernan, *How Pol Pot Came to Power.*
[211] Oliver Tappe and Vatthana Pholsena, "Introduction: The 'American War,' Post-Conflict Landscapes, and Violent Memories," in *Interactions with a Violent Past: Reading Post-Conflict Landscapes in Cambodia, Laos, and* Vietnam, eds. Oliver Tappe and Vatthana Pholsena (Singapore: National University of Singapore Press, 2013, 2014), 1.
[212] *Ibid.,* 6.
[213] *Shiiku, the Catch*, directed by Rithy Panh (2011; Cambodia: Catherine Dussart (CDP Production) and Bophana Production, 2011), DVD.
[214] Owen and Kiernan.
[215] Henri Locard, *Pol Pot's Little Red Book: The Sayings of Angkar* (Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books, 2005).
[216] Achille Mbembe, "Necropolitics," *Public Culture* 15, no. 1 (2003): 12.
[217] *Ibid.,* 11.
[218] *Ibid.,* 12.
[219] *Ibid.,* 40.
[220] *Ibid.,* 24.
[221] *Ibid.,* 27.
[222] Tadiar, "Human in War," 93.
[223] *Ibid.*
[224] Sherene H. Razack, "Gendered Racial Violence and Spatialized Justice: The Murder of Panela George," *Canadian Journal of Law and Society* 15, no. 2 (2000): 129.
[225] Jasbir Puar, *The Right to Maim: Debility, Capacity, Disability* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2017), 136.
[226] *Ibid.,* 139.
[227] *Ibid.*
[228] *Ibid.*
[229] Nguyen, *Gift of Freedom.*
[230] Shawcross, *Sideshow.*
[231] *Ibid.*

[232] Puar, *The Right to Maim,* 134.
[233] Mines Advisory Group (MAG) International, https://www.maginternational.org/about-mag/.
[234] *Ibid.*
[235] Patrick Wolfe, "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native," *Journal of Genocide Research* 8, no. 4 (2006).
[236] "collateral," Merriam-Webster.com, 2019, https://www.merriam-webster.com.
[237] "damage," Merriam-Webster.com, 2019, https://www.merriam-webster.com.
[238] "damages," Merriam-Webster.com, 2019, https://www.merriam-webster.com.
[239] Tadiar, "Human in War," 95-96.
[240] Puar, 142-143
[241] *Ibid.,* 143.
[242] "Final Population Totals, Rotanak Kiri Province, 1998," Cambodia National Institute of Statistics. Accessed via Wikipedia.org, 2019, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lumphat_District.
[243] Tappe and Pholsena, "Introduction," 10.
[244] Nguyen-Vo Thu-Huong, "Iterant Remains: The Ethics and Poetics of Mediating the Necropolitical in Cambodia and Vietnam," (presentation, Gendered Memories of War and Political Violence, Istanbul, May 22-23, 2012).
[245] Rachel Hughes, "Nationalism and memory at the Tuol Sleng Museum of Genocide Crimes, Phnom Penh, Cambodia," in *Contested Pasts: The Politics of Memory*, eds. Katharine Hodgkin and Susannah Radstone (New York: Routledge, 2012), 175.
[246] *Ibid.,* 184.
[247] Schlund-Vials, *War, Genocide, Justice*, 43.
[248] *Ibid.,* 49.
[249] *Ibid.*
[250] Tyner, Sirik, and Henkin, "Memorialization in Cambodia," 280.
[251] *Ibid.,* 277.
[252] *Ibid.*
[253] *Ibid.,* 280.
[254] Schlund, Vials, "Cambodian American Memory Work," 814.
[255] *Ibid.*
[256] *Ibid.,* 811.
[257] *Ibid.,* 814.
[258] Lisa Yoneyama, *Cold War Ruins: Transpacific Critique of American Justice and Japanese War Crimes* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016), 39.
[259] Sebastian Strangio, "The Past Isn't Past," *Mekong Review* 8 (2017).
[260] *Ibid.*
[261] Donald W. Beachler, "The Quest for Justice in Cambodia: Power, Politics, and the Khmer Rouge Tribunal," *Genocide Studies and Prevention: An International Journal* 8, no. 2 (2014): 67-80.
[262] *Ibid.;* See also: Kuch Naren, "Hun Sen Warns Of Civil War If ECCC Goes Beyond 'Limit,'" *The Cambodia Daily*, February 27, 2015; Seth Mydans, "11 Years, $300 Million and 3 Convictions. Was the Khmer Rouge Tribunal Worth It?," *The New York Times*, April 10, 2017.
[263] Strangio, "The Past Isn't Past."
[264] *Ibid.*
[265] "*The Catch* - Themes and Meanings," *Comprehensive Guide to Short Stories, Critical Edition,* ed. Charles E. May, eNotes.com, Inc. 2004, accessed June 1, 2019, http://www.enotes.com/topics/catch/themes#themes-themes-and-meanings.
[266] Thu-Huong, "Forking Paths," 159.
[267] *Ibid.,* 171-172.
[268] *Ibid.,* 170.
[269] *Ibid.,* 171.
[270] Weheliye, 322.
[271] *Ibid.,* 321.
[272] Nguyen-Vo, "Forking Paths," 171.
[273] Sharpe, 20.
[274] Tryner, Sirik, and Henkin, 279.

[275] M. J. Alexander, *Pedagogies of Crossing: Meditations on Feminism, Sexual Politics, Memory, and the Sacred*. (Durham and London: Duke University Press).
[276] There has been considerable debate regarding whether or not the Democratic Kampuchea era in Cambodia should or should not be considered a "genocide," given the understanding that "Pol Pot time" consisted of "Khmer killing Khmer." In response, some scholars have opted to use the term "auto-genocide." Uneasy about the implications of "self-inflicted tragedy" and the encapsulation of the time of Khmer Rouge rule as discrete, I've chosen to use the term "holocaust" when referring to the period of Democratic Kampuchea, the Cambodian Holocaust, to emphasize large-scale loss—devastation and destruction.
[277] Alexander, *Pedagogies of Crossing*, 2.
[278] *Ibid.,* 8.
[279] *Ibid.,* 2.
[280] Lisa M. Cacho, "Racialized Hauntings of the Devalued Dead," in *Strange Affinities: The Gender and Sexual Politics of Comparative Racialization*, ed. Grace K. Hong and Roderick A. Ferguson. (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2011), 34.
[281] Cvetkovich, *An Archive of Feelings.*
[282] Toni Morrison, *Beloved* (New York: Random House, Inc., 1987).
[283] Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain.*
[284] Eve Tuck, "Suspending Damage: A Letter to Communities," *Harvard Educational Review* 79, no. 3 (2009): 409-427.
[285] *Ibid.,* 416.
[286] Jolie Chea, "Refugee Acts: Articulating Silences Through Critical Remembering and Re-Membering," *Amerasia Journal* 35, no.1 (2009): 20-43.
[287] *Ibid.,* 23.
[288] Das.
[289] Alexander, *Pedagogies of Crossing,* 290.
[290] A Note Regarding Analytics and Identity Categories:
Although my use of "we women" above can be read as problematic, I intend my usage to reflect an analytics rather than a re-inscription of identity categories. I quote from Jodi Kim's (2010) Ends of Empire to ground this methodology: "I take my inspiration from scholars such as Grace Kyungwon Hong, who has powerfully articulated 'women of color feminism' and 'racialized immigrant women's culture' not as identity categories but as analytics for tracking and describing American modernity" (10).

Here, in my usage of "women that experience the protracted afterlives of trauma," I refer to the particularity of an analytics of psychosomatic trauma and affective re/memory cross-generationally among Southeast Asian and Southeast Asian American women. I am cognizant of the necessity of grounding the particularity of such an analytics while being aware of the dangers of co-optation and reification in any usage of the universal "women."
[291] Raymond Williams, "Chapter 9: Structures of Feeling," in *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1977).
[292] I take for inspiration here an in-class discussion regarding affect and its manifestations. This statement is a partial personal reflection on Purnima Mankekar's invocation to think about what happens to affect in its translation into language.
[293] For examples, see: Daniel F. Becker, Stevan M. Weine, Dolores Vojvoda and Thomas H. McGlashan, "Case Series: PTSD Symptoms in Adolescent Survivors of 'Ethnic Cleansing,' Results from a 1-year Follow-up Study," *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry* 38, no. 6 (June 1999): 775-781; Robert G. Blair, "Risk Factors Associated with PTSD and Major Depression Among Cambodian Refugees in Utah," *Health & Social Work* 25, no. 1 (February 2000): 23-30; J. David Kinzie, R.H. Fredrickson, Rath Ben, Jenelle Fleck and William Karls, "Posttraumatic Stress Disorder among Survivors of Cambodian Concentration Camps," *The American Journal of Psychiatry* 141, no. 5 (May 1984): 645-650.
[294] Eve Bernstein Carlson and Rhonda Rosser-Hogan, "Mental Health Status of Cambodian Refugees Ten Years after Leaving their Homes," *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry* 63, no. 2 (April 1993): 223-231;
Grant N. Marshall, Terry L. Schell, Marc N. Elliott, S. Megan Berthold, and Chi-Ah Chun, "Mental health of Cambodian Refugees 2 decades after resettlement in the United States," *Journal of the American Medical Association* 294, no. 5 (August 2005): 571-579.
[295] Blair, "Risk Factors PTSD."

[296] Nigel P. Field and Sotheara Chhim, "Desire for revenge and attitudes toward the Khmer Rouge tribunal among Cambodians," *Journal of Loss & Trauma* 13, no. 4 (July 2007): 352-372.
[297] Vincent Dubois, René Tonglet, Philippe Hoyois, Ka Sunbaunat, Jean-Paul Roussau and Edvard Hauff, "Household Survey of Psychiatric Morbidity in Cambodia, *International Journal of Social Psychiatry* 50, no. 2 (2004): 174-185.
[298] Kinzie et al., "Posttraumatic Stress Disorder."
[299] Gilbert Reyes, Jon D. Elhai, and Julian D. Ford, eds. *The Encyclopedia of Psychological Trauma* (Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, 2008).
[300] Paula J. Caplan, "Ambiguity, Powerlessness, and the Psychologizing of Trauma. How Backlash Affects the Context of Working with Trauma" *Journal of Psychological Trauma* 5, no. 1 (2006): 5-24.
[301] Y-Dang Troeung, "Witnessing Cambodia's Disappeared," *University of Toronto Quarterly* 82, no. 2 (March 2013): 150-167.
[302] Yael Danieli, "Introduction: History and Conceptual Foundations," Yael Danieli, ed., *International Handbook of Multigenerational Legacies of Trauma* (New York: Plenum Press, 1998): 1-17.
[303] Ramsay Liem, "Silencing Historical Trauma: The Politics and Psychology of Memory and Voice," *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology* 13, no. 2 (May 2007): 153-174.
[304] Judith Herman. *Trauma and Recovery*. (New York: Basic Books, 1992), 8.
[305] McClintock, *Imperial Leather.*
[306] *Ibid.*, 30.
[307] *Ibid.,* 93
[308] Aihwa Ong, *Buddha is Hiding: Refugees, Citizenship, the New America* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2003).
[309] Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain*, 7.
[310] As cited in Veena Das, 91.
[311] Khatharya Um, *From the Land of Shadows: War, Revolution, and the Making of the Cambodian Diaspora* (New York: NYU Press, 2015), 6.
[312] Nguyên-Vo Thu-Huong, "Forking Paths: How Shall We Mourn the Dead?" *Amerasia Journal* 31, no. 2 (2005): 157-175.
[313] *Ibid.*
[314] Alexander, *Pedagogies of Crossing,* 1.
[315] James E. Young, *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993).
[316] *Ibid., 2.*
[317] Weheliye, 1.
[318] *Ibid.*
[319] Kathleen Stewart, *Ordinary Affects* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2007), 1-2.
[320] Das, 1.
[321] Alexander, *Pedagogies of Crossing*.
[322] Kay Schaffer and Sidonie Smith, "Conjunctions: Life Narratives in the Field of Human Rights," *Biography - An Interdisciplinary Quarterly* 27, no. 1 (December 2004): 1-24.
[323] *Ibid.,* 9.
[324] *Ibid.,* 7.
[325] *Ibid.,* 10.
[326] *Ibid.*, 6.
[327] *Ibid.*, 8.
[328] *Ibid.*, 10.
[329] Simpson, "On Ethnographic Refusal," 78.
[330] Das, 91.
[331] *Ibid.*, 92.
[332] Kim, 10.
[333] Um, *From the Land of Shadows,* 199-200.
[334] Alexander, *Pedagogies of Crossing,* 189.
[335] *Ibid.*, 189-190.
[336] *Ibid.,* 190.

[337] Sara Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (New York: Routledge, 2004).
[338] Alexander, *Pedagogies of Crossing,* 190.
[339] *Ibid.*
[340] Gordon, *Ghostly Matters,* xvi.
[341] Tegan and Sara, "Walking with a Ghost," 2004, *So Jealous,* Sire Records.
[342] Chhun, "Occupying Our Present."
[343] Ahmed, *Cultural Politics of Emotion.*
[344] Mishuana Goeman (Professor of Gender Studies at UCLA) in discussion with the author, March 21, 2012.
[345] Das, 92.
[346] Morrison, 323-324.
[347] Ahmed, 173-174.
[348] Das, 221.
[349] *Ibid.*, 210.
[350] Locard, *Pol Pot's Little Red Book.*
[351] I owe many thanks to Ellen Broidy and my winter 2012 doctoral roundtable peers: Amanda Apgar, Loron Bartlett, Fred Ariel Hernandez, Jessica Martinez, Esha Momeni, and Preeti Sharma for their critical feedback on the initial oral history project; I especially appreciate Ariel Hernandez's injunction to think more deeply about the meanings of "uprooting," leading to a re-conceptualization of the project.
[352] "uproot," Dictionary.com, 2019, https://www.dictionary.com.
[353] Sharpe, 17-18.
[354] *Ibid.,* 5.

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