Preface and Acknowledgments

This book about relocations through space and time—in some situations by choice, and in others through circumstances beyond one's control—has been guided from the outset by my own circuitous journeys to, through, and between many places, as well as among the many people who made these locations truly significant to me, not only intellectually but also affectively. The way I think the locations in this book, in other words, belongs to those who made me feel these spaces more acutely, even long after “being there” was transposed into memory.

While my enthusiastic and effusive citational practices in Relocations offer certain signposts to the figures who have compelled, enriched, and enlivened this project, I would like in this preface to dispense with some of the more formal methods of mapping academic worlds; instead, I would like to acknowledge not only who has inspired me but also how they have done so. At times their presence is felt through the language I use in this book, in my experiments with an aspirational lyricism that grasps toward “the condition of music” (to invoke Walter Pater), which I hope succeeds as often as it can, considering that such reaching is bound to fail. Their presence is also conjured in the convivial, conversational tone that erupts in the clumsy afterglow of such strivings. I imagine them—imagine you—talking with me as much as through me about the scenes, histories, events, gestures, haunting melodies, and tangled theoretical coincidences that constitute the placeness of a place.

Though located in many institutions, the excursions and sometimes even dead-ends that we’ve shared together have always exceeded the institution-as-framework. For this disruption of boundaries and dispensing of formalities, I have many great teachers to thank. First and foremost, I have to acknowledge those who got me in this mess to begin with: the public school teachers of the RUSD (Riverside Unified School District), namely, Kathy Rossi and Keith Lloyd at Sierra Middle School, and Richard McNeil, Richard Zeiner, Rick Woodbury, Katie Mackey, and Robin Speer at Ramona High School. They taught me to love literature, music, performance, and writing. Little did they know what they might ultimately unleash on the world when they indulged this immigrant kid, newly arrived to the suburbs, in my earliest experiments with cultural studies (like the time I brought in a newspaper clipping of Wham!’s arrival in China as a “significant international event” for a history assignment). I share my chapter on the Inland Empire with them, along with the friends who played on those school
yards with me, smog alerts permitting: Keri Williams, Heather Lott, Joseph Spagna, Paul Jacques, Carey Thacker, Natalie Patterson, Jessica Learned, Craig Swart, Sarah Parry, and last but certainly not least, Jennifer Stoeve-Ackerman, who continues to share the school yard with me now as my colleague in this wider world of the academy.

I am also indebted to the scholars and friends who guided me through my undergraduate years at UCLA and who shared my first encounters with the sprawling city that continues to both captivate and confound my imagination: “Kvang,” Cali Linfor, Andrew Peck, Erin Coburn, John Tain, Elina Shatkin, Carolyn Clark, Janel Munguia, Kharon Hathaway, Holly Heaven, Robert N. Watson, Thomas Wortham, Joseph Bristow, Karen Wallace, and the late Paula Gunn Allen, whose fierce irreverence modeled for me what it meant not only to be a better scholar but also a better person.

During my graduate studies at the University of California, Berkeley, I was trained as a Victorianist and learned the methods of New Historicism. Though I never actually grew up to be a Victorianist by trade, I hope my mentors and teachers—Catherine Gallagher, Sharon Marcus, Celeste Langan, and Pheng Cheah—will nevertheless read within these pages a commitment not only to what they taught me, but also how they taught me to do it. I also thank Robert Kaufman and Rei Terada for encouraging me to believe in my work not despite but because of its tendency to move askew into unwieldy directions.

When I left Los Angeles and arrived in the Bay Area for grad school (in a tiny apartment on Page and Buchanan in “The City”), I have to admit I cried the whole first night. Soon enough—or maybe it took all seven years—I grew accustomed to Northern California’s more petite geographies and superior air quality. I came to appreciate L.A.’s northern adversary thanks in no small part to my coterie of friends, intellectual interlocutors, and athletic heroines at Berkeley and beyond, particularly Gia Kim, Mai-lin Cheng, Gillian Harkins, William Bishop, Thierry Nazzi, Joon Lee, Gil Hochberg, Keri Kanetsky, Mel Chen, Homay King, Catherine Zimmer, Emma Bianchi, Trane Devore, Susan Zieger, Gayatri Gopinath, Elizabeth Freeman, Amy Kautzman, Kimberly Nalder, Michael Silver, and the Cal women’s softball team (2002–2005).

Of course, my time at Berkeley—including numerous international destinations with SFO as their point of origin—was made all the richer, more complex, more adventurous, and more loving by the companionship of Katrin Pahl. I thank her for sharing her worlds and her family with me, and for continuing to be a close and treasured friend.

As I explain throughout Relocations, one’s arrival in or return to the suburbs is more often than not thought to herald the end of creativity. This was far from my experience, especially when I returned to Southern California as a President’s
Postdoctoral Fellow in Literature at the University of California, San Diego, and as a Residential Fellow at the Humanities Research Institute at the University of California, Irvine. Though this project began in the waning years of my graduate studies at Berkeley, Relocations truly blossomed during this interstitial time, in these supposedly interstitial suburban environments. My sincerest gratitude goes to Judith Halberstam and John D. Blanco for serving as my postdoctoral mentors at UCSD, and to Judith and David Theo Goldberg for inviting me to join the “Queer Locations” working group at the University of California Humanities Research Institute from January to June 2004, in the fine company of Alicia Arrizón, Tom Boellstorff, Roderick A. Ferguson, Glen Mimura, Chandan Reddy, and Jennifer Terry. As a result of living and working in Irvine, I also had the opportunity to meet scholars at UCI (or based in “the’Vine”) whose work continues to inspire me, and whose friendship—intellectual and otherwise—has only affirmed my belief that strange and beautiful things can flourish in the suburbs, namely, Vicky Johnson, Lucas Hilderbrand, Lauren Steimer, Kelly Wolf, Adria Imada, Bliss Cua Lim, and Laura Kang.

In many respects, the University of Southern California is an ideal place for me and for this project to have landed. Not only has the university been kind enough to fund my research and writing with an Achievement in the Humanities and Social Sciences Grant, as well as a Provost’s Visions and Voices Grant (which brought the work of Butch Lalis de Panochtitlan and Hector Silva to campus), but the intellectual community at USC has fueled my research and thinking in ways that are unquantifiable. Special thanks are owed first and foremost to David Román and Judith Halberstam for their guidance during my earliest years at USC. The Department of English, the Program in Gender Studies, and the Department of American Studies and Ethnicity have provided warm and inviting homes for my scholarship, and I would like to thank the respective chairs of these departments, Margaret Russett, Lisa Bitel, and John Carlos Rowe. I am also grateful to Sarah Banet-Weiser for asking me to join the “BrandSpace” working group, which she leads at the Norman Lear Center at the Annenberg School for Communication, and to Josh Kun for inviting me to share the music behind my scholarship at the Popular Music Project, also at the Lear Center. I am honored and thrilled to call both of them dear friends as well as colleagues. Tania Modleski, David Lloyd, and Tara McPherson have shepherded me through the final stages of this project, and I am deeply grateful to them for knowing how to ease my spirits, even as they pushed me to cross the t’s and dot the i’s when I neared the finish line.

The sheer number of excellent friends and colleagues I have at USC precludes me from naming them all here, but given this project’s propensity for sprawling out, I will at the very least make an effort to name those who have read, commented on, or inspired this project in one way or another: Kara Keeling, Janelle
Wong, Dana Johnson, Rebecca Lemon, Akira Mizuta Lippit, Ellen Seiter, Aniko Imre, Bruce Smith, Richard Meyer, William Handley, Alice Gambrell, Emily Anderson, Dorinne Kondo, Henry Jenkins, Michelle Gordon, Shana Redmond, Macarena Gomez-Barris, Maria Elena Martinez, and Sarah Gualtieri. My many exceptional graduate students at USC have also coaxed this work into new directions, and I would like to acknowledge them here, especially those who enlivened my seminars on “Queer Provincialisms and Suburban Sociabilities,” “Queer of Color Critique,” “Feeling Theory,” and “Relocating Empire.” My research assistant, Alex Wescott, not only performed the perfunctory task of gathering the materials I asked for, but also brought me supplementary ephemera “just in case.” These materials especially enhanced my chapter “Behind the Orange Curtain,” and for that I am eternally grateful. Thanks also to Krista Miranda in Performance Studies at NYU for her research assistance during the final stages of formatting and securing permissions for this manuscript.

The irony that this book was finally submitted far away from Southern California during my only time in residence in New York City—and to NYU Press to boot—is not lost on me. Though New York takes a well-deserved hit in several of my chapters, particularly “Relocating Queer Critique,” I have to admit that the place and its people do have their charms. To my fearless editor at NYU Press, Eric Zinner, for his generous and careful reading of my manuscript: thank you for getting me as well as my work. Thanks also to Ciara McLaughlin at NYU Press for shepherding the manuscript through its final stages of production in what felt like a New York minute.

My deepest gratitude is also owed to José Esteban Muñoz and Ann Pellegrini, not only for pursuing Relocations for the Sexual Cultures series, but also for being instrumental in bringing me to NYU’s Department of Performance Studies at the Tisch School of the Arts for a visiting professorship in spring 2010. Because of this opportunity, I had the pleasure of spending time with some amazing minds and spirits in the city, namely, John Andrews, Jasbir Puar, Deb Schwartz, Karen Shimakawa, Nao Bustamante, Ricardo Montez, Alina Troyano, Ela Troyano, Dr. Virginia Chang, Lisa Duggan, Tavia Nyong’o, Barbara Browning, Camille Robbins, Yael Kropsky, Ellis Avery, Sharon Marcus, Karen Jaime, Taylor Black, Peggy Lee, Sonjia Hyon, Logan Jardine, Jeanne Vaccaro, Vincenzo Amato, Alexandra Vazquez, and Lynne Chan. I thank you all for the hospitality, conviviality, jazz hands, warmth, and song that made this Angeleno love New York despite my skepticism. Because of you, I no longer simply transpose “Empire State of Mind” into the key of I.E.

As much as these acknowledgments and the chapters that follow might seem to insist on the fact that collegialities, friendships, and intimacies are inextricably bound up with particular coordinates, I am also irrefutably attached to the
affective potential of dispersal. And the sprawl of my broader intellectual and affective communities reaches out to many elsewhere and affinities that radiate across space and time. It is in the spirit of the remote intimacies I write about in Relocations that I send my affections and appreciation to Sarita See, Scott Her- ring, Shane Vogel, Kandice Chuh, Daphne Brooks, David Eng, Patricia White, Heather Sias, George Haggerty, Alex Espinoza, Kyle Behen, Ricky T. Rodriguez, Martin Manalansan, Michelle Erai, Marcia Ochoa, Christina Hanhardt, Ricardo Ortiz, Rembert Hueser, Verena Mund, Genevieve Love, Eric Weisbard, Ann Powers, and R. Zamora Linmark.

To my sisters of elsewhere who have shared the music of everywhere, past, present, and future with me, Christine Bacareza Balance and Alexandra Vazquez: I always read, write, think, and sing along with you, with your irrepressible spirits at my side.

As you will come to read, Relocations begins and ends with home—with the places from which we emerge, as well as those to which we unwittingly find ourselves moved, and moved by. Home began as Manila, which continues to be the place that haunts my daily movements to, through, and between the many elsewhere that have mapped my life’s journeys. To my family here and there—to the Moraleses, Katindigs, and Tongsons—and to the dear friends always here or there, especially Joy Escobar and Bliss Cua Lim: thank you for everything, but most of all for reacquainting me with the home from which my first relocation estranged me. To my grandmother, Linda Katindig, for coming here, even when you had everything there: thank you for first revealing the mysteries of writing to me when you sat for hours at a time in front of the typewriter at 7 General Capinpin Street, spinning radio melodramas as I twirled deliriously on the lazy Susan in front of you. To my parents, James Dykes and Elizabeth “Maria” Kat- indig-Dykes, for taking me on the road with you as you made music, instilling in me a contradictory desire for going and for settling: yours is the music that will forever score my movements, and I am grateful for everything you have ever given me, especially your unconditional love.

For much of my adult life, home has been Southern California, and my daily commutes on its concrete arteries have only affirmed to me that “home” exists in plural, among the many spiritual companions I have found across the region’s seemingly nebulous landscapes. Home is with Jennifer Terry, Surina Khan, Rosie, and their tambourine of death in Long Beach. With Jennifer Doyle at the cliff’s edge, and with the ladies of Lucile Avenue, Genevieve Yue and Emily Perez. With the Balance-Gabisans, Anjali Arondekar, and Lucy Mae San Pablo Burns in the LF. With the Mod-Loves in WeHo, Gabriela Martinez in HP, and Hector Silva and Napoleon Lustre in Pomona. With JK, LK, CBB, and KK at “da club.” With Deanna Erdmann in Little Armenia, and Deanna Maclellan and Emma Gaze in
the SFV. With the Ahns and the Cutlers in the Valley and on the Westside. With Heather Lukes and Molly McGarry on the twilight-dappled terraces of Easterly and Sanborn. With Mari Garcia, Claudia Rodriguez, and Raquel Gutierrez, wherever you may take me, up, down, around, and straight to the heart of a “lesser Los Angeles.” With Holstein—affectionately known as “The Stein”—my compassionate, companion species born on the streets of L.A., who has inhabited every one of my homes, shared every love, and warmed every desk from my undergrad honors thesis to this book.

Home, everywhere, elsewhere, and nowhere will always be with Patty Ahn. No one I know shares a deeper and more abiding love of this landscape than you—from the Red Lobster to the Smog Cutter. And it is with you in my heart and at my side that this journey has been all the more worthwhile.