UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO

Making History from U.S. Colonial Amnesia: Filipino American and U.S. Puerto Rican Poetic Genealogies

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

Requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy

in

Ethnic Studies

by

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2007

The Dissertation of Faye Christine Caronan is approved and it is acceptable in quality and form for publication on microfilm:

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University of California, San Diego

2007

Dedication

Para kay Ina. Hinahanap kita sa mga dulo ng kaysaysayan.

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Acknowledgements

Having lived most of my life in the suburbs, I spent little time in a city before this project. I thank the Filipino American poets who introduced me to a Los Angeles I never saw from the far edge of L.A. County and the New York Puerto Rican poets who taught me to navigate the NYC arts and poetry scene. In particular, I'd like to thank Alan Aquino, Alison de la Cruz, Nicole Delgado, Mariposa, Dorian Merina, Cheryl Samson, Ray Ramirez, and Rick Villar for their generosity and warm welcome.

This dissertation is a labor of love made possible by the generosity of the UCSD San Diego Fellowship, the Jerri-Ann and Gary Jacobs Fellowship, the Brython P. Davis Scholarship, multiple Social Science Dean's Travel Grants, and multiple Ethnic Studies department travel grants. UCSD Ethnic Studies provided me with the best possible intellectual home. It was my great privilege to work with a distinguished, supportive, and enthusiastic dissertation supervisory committee: Yen Le Espiritu, Lisa Lowe, Lisa Sun-Hee Park, Jody Blanco, and Ana Celia Zentella. Yen Le Espiritu is an incredible mentor whose dedication to her students can never be overstated. I thank her for her professional and personal guidance, and for always making time to meet me even after I moved from San Diego. Lisa Lowe's faith in my work allows her to see the unintended connections I make and push me to develop these connections into stronger and more compelling arguments. For this and her encouragement, I am most appreciative. Thanks to Lisa Sun-Hee Park for helping me with methodological confusion, for her candid advice, and for her careful comments on my chapter drafts. I thank Jody Blanco for always listening sympathetically to my concerns about academic life and offering his honest opinions. I am grateful to Ana Celia Zentella's help familiarizing me with Puerto Rican Studies and

especially for her help making contacts with the New York Puerto Rican poetry community. Outside of my committee, I would like to thank Vince Rafael for taking an active interest in my work, for his comments and the wealth of citations he provides.

God has blessed me with a wealth of friends. Thanks to Linda Adler, Patty Carcamo, Walter Chen, Chris Henninger, Edmelynne Hutter, Michael Kennedy, Mariana Niell, Mimi Ong, Gina Opinaldo, JoAnna Poblete-Cross, Dean Saranillio, Mary Panelo Schwedler, Angie Shen, Theresa Cenidoza-Suarez, Nishant Shukla, Brian Tong, Andrew Wone, Maria Valenzuela, and Nancy Zhang who have always supported my work simply because it was mine. Much love to Tim Cheng who opened up his home to me, allowing me to finish the dissertation in San Diego and to enjoy my remaining time as a student. I am grateful for Margaret Fajardo's always dependable friendship. Special thanks to Cecilia Rivas, whose companionship as I finished the dissertation prevented me from ever feeling isolated. I thank May Fu and Lisa Cacho for always being available when I need career advice. To my beloved cohort, Thuy Vo Dang, Tere Ceseña, Theofanis Verinakis, Ashley Lucas, and Monika Gosin, thank you for sharing with me every joyous and stressful moment of my graduate career.

My family is my bedrock. Their lives inspire my research and remind me everyday of the importance of this work. Bella & Benny Caronan and Tara & Taylor Lepale are the light of my life. Their smiles and laughter are the best stress relief. Felicity and Dulce, the felines in my family, always ensured I took much needed writing breaks. Maraming salamat po, Mommy and Daddy, for the privilege of dreaming beyond practicality. Thanks and lots of love to Dennis Caronan, my big brother, for always keeping my best interests at heart. I am grateful to Cathy Lepale, my sister and best

girlfriend, for her wisdom, her always attentive ear, and the comfort that only our sisterhood brings.

Finally, my most heartfelt thanks go to David Chen, my husband and my home. His steadfast faith in me nourishes my idealism and keeps me going. Thank you again and again for your unconditional support and unfailing love.

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

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United States national narratives deploy a selective memory in order to construct the U.S. as a benevolent global power and enable its political and economic interests abroad. In the case of the Philippines and Puerto Rico, the U.S. relied on U.S. styled education systems established during the colonial period, to function as "technologies of forgetting" and suppress memories that counter the narrative of U.S. imperial benevolence. This dissertation explores how Los Angeles Filipino American and New York Puerto Rican performance poets remember U.S. imperialism in the Philippines and

Puerto Rico in the face of institutionalized efforts and social pressure that encourage systematic forgetting. These performance poets educate their communities about forgotten and current histories of U.S. imperialism to organize for social change but these histories are not institutionally recognized.

My analysis relies on Foucauldian conceptualizations of the power of institutionalizing knowledge and the disqualified or subjugated knowledges that institutionalizing processes such as language policies, public education and assimilationist paradigms produce. Despite the U.S. nation state's resources for reproducing institutionalized histories, neither resistance to the narrative of U.S. colonial benevolence nor the histories this narrative omits can be completely eradicated. Instead, the reproduction of these subjugated knowledges takes place in alternative spaces and through alternative pedagogical practices. Examining the spaces and transnational practices that enable Los Angeles Filipino American and New York Puerto Rican performance poets to construct and reproduce historical narratives challenging institutionalized U.S. history, I argue that these performance poets trace a genealogy of global power that engages the politics of remembering U.S. imperialism to enable social change. Put simply, these poets reconstruct the past to imagine and work towards a different future. *Making History from U.S. Colonial Amnesia* acknowledges both how Filipino American and U.S. Puerto Rican performance poets make history by intervening in a politics of remembering U.S. imperialism and make history by actively participating in local and transnational social movements.

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I. Introduction

"Generations of Filipinos who learned their Philippine history in American colonial schools did not see the [Philippine – American] War as the U.S. suppression of their cherished revolutionary and nationalist dreams. Instead it was more of a misguided, even stupid, rejection of a gift of further enlightenment."[1]

La violencia era la gran ausente del discurso histórico [en Puerto Rico]. En la memoria política funcionaba un nuevo calendario y una armonía que negaban la historia. Se omitía, tanto en el discurso histórico oficial como en los cursos universitarios, cualquier referencia importante a la violencia de nuestra historia, la española o norteamericana, la violencia conquistadora, la violencia de la esclavitud, la del aparato militar que dominaba la isla, y la violencia de una emigración masiva fomentada en conivencia con intereses metropolitanos.[2]

My first visit to the Filipino American library in Los Angeles was for the launch party of the LA Enkanto CD, a compilation of Los Angeles Filipino American spoken word. Artwork by local Filipino artists decorated the walls while hip hop music played. People mingled, eating the pansit and adobo served in the back room. In the library, poets performed to a packed crowd. I stood in the doorway unable to get in. Fortunately, the crowd remained silent as the poets performed their work. It amazed me how they could poetically articulate histories about the Philippines and Filipino Americans that I had to travel thousands of miles from Los Angeles to learn in isolation. The poetry performed that night was similar politically, rhythmically, and stylistically with poetry collections from the Nuyorican Poets Cafe, using a hip hop sensibility to discuss the effects of U.S. imperialism and racism in Filipino American and U.S. Puerto Rican lives. These poets discuss the often unspoken physical and psychic violence of conquest and colonialism,

[1] Ileto 2002:4.
[2] Díaz-Quiñones 1993:27. "Violence was the great absence in [Puerto Rican] historical discourse. In political memory there was a new calendar and harmony that functions to negate history. It omits, in official historical discourses as well as in university courses, any important reference to the violence of our history, Spanish or North American: the violence of conquest, the violence of slavery, the violence of the military apparatus that dominated the island, the violence of a massive emigration fomented by conniving metropolitan interests." My translation.

constructing histories of U.S. imperial violence and self-interest, challenging deep-seated mythologies about U.S. colonial benevolence.

Central to the U.S. nation-state's identity are its anti-colonial roots. The viability of this national mythology requires either careful rhetorical reframing or the erasure of all U.S. foreign interventions. Constructing institutionalized narratives of U.S. history requires both the strategic remembering and forgetting of past events to create a U.S. national identity and legitimize the authority of the U.S. nation-state.[3] This selective memory at times obscures the colonial relationships the U.S. shares with the Philippines and Puerto Rico and at other times reveals them.

How the U.S. remembers the Philippines, Puerto Rico and other instances of U.S. imperialism depend on the current manifestation of U.S. Empire. During WWII, as France lost control of Vietnam, the United States State Department's Subcommittee on Territorial Problems perceived France as a failed colonial power for leaving Vietnam politically undeveloped. As a counterexample paving the way for the U.S.' military intervention in Vietnam, the subcommittee presented the United States' 'successful' development of the Philippines into an independent democracy.[4] In October 2003, half a year after the U.S. invasion of Iraq, President Bush visited the Philippines and stated, "America is proud of its part in the great story of the Filipino people" in order to take credit for the U.S.' role in helping establish "Asia's oldest democracy."[5] At a time of increasing violence in Iraq and domestic criticism of Bush's premature declarations of victory, he invoked the memory of the colonial Philippines as an exemplar of U.S.

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[3] Hobsbawm 1983.
[4] Bradley 2000.
[5] Reynolds 2003; *The New York Times* were more critical in their reporting of the event, calling attention to the decades long U.S. occupation of the Philippines, see Sanger 2003.

civilizing and democracy building efforts and as an example of the possible fruits of a U.S. occupation of Iraq. These examples illustrate that the memory of U.S. colonialism in the Philippines becomes useful in times when U.S. imperialism takes the overt form of prolonged military intervention and occupation.

As a U.S. Commonwealth, Puerto Rico cannot serve the same narrative function as the Philippines. Instead, the ambiguity of Puerto Rico's U.S. commonwealth status makes Puerto Rico a perfect example for U.S. "stealth imperialism."[6] Puerto Rico's commonwealth government and their independent Olympic teams provides Puerto Rico the semblance of political sovereignty, belying Puerto Rico's economic dependence on the U.S. U.S. imperialism takes a covert form when the U.S. exerts its international influence through economic aid to third world countries with the contingency that these countries accept security assistance in the form of military training. During the cold war while the U.S. actively disavowed its history and practice of U.S. imperialism, Puerto Rico was a "symbolic showcase" for the U.S, serving as a model for the success of U.S. developmentalist policies for the third world.[7] The showcasing of Puerto Rico took advantage of its ambiguous status to encourage independent Latin American countries to accept U.S.' conditional economic aid. Thus, Puerto Rico serves as a model for the building of a covert U.S. empire, one without official colonies.

Narratives of history depend on the agenda of the narrator. While the U.S. nation state constructs a narrative of U.S. colonial benevolence to enable its political and economic interests abroad, Filipino American and U.S. Puerto Rican performance poets

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[6] Johnson 2000 coined this phrase to encompass all covert imperial processes.
[7] Grosfoguel 2003.

desire to educate their communities about forgotten histories of U.S. imperialism to organize for social change. However, these different histories are told from unequal positions of power. Filipino American and U.S. Puerto Rican performance poets do not have the resources that the U.S. nation state has at its disposal to legitimate and disseminate their histories. This dissertation explores how Filipino American and U.S. Puerto Rican performance poets remember U.S. imperialism in the Philippines and Puerto Rico given institutionalized efforts, such as public education, language policies, and assimilation paradigms, and social pressure that encourage systematic forgetting. My analysis relies on Foucauldian conceptualizations of the power of institutionalizing knowledge and the disqualified or subjugated knowledges that institutionalizing processes produce.[8] Despite the U.S. nation state's resources for reproducing institutionalized histories, neither resistance to the narrative of U.S. colonial benevolence nor the histories this narrative omits can be completely eradicated. Instead, the reproduction of these subjugated knowledges takes place in alternative spaces and through alternative pedagogical practices.[9] Examining the spaces and practices that enable Filipino American and U.S. Puerto Rican performance poets to construct and reproduce historical narratives challenging institutionalized U.S. history, I argue that these performance poets trace a genealogy of global power that engages the politics of remembering U.S. imperialism to enable social change.[10]

Analyzing how U.S. raised Filipinos and Puerto Ricans come to understand Philippine and Puerto Rican history reveals how U.S. (neo)colonialism further

[8] Foucault [1997] 2003.
[9] Gramsci 1971; Foucault [1997] 2003.
[10] Foucault [1997] 2003.

complicates the politics of memory. For Filipino Americans and U.S. Puerto Ricans, U.S. modeled institutions in the Philippines and Puerto Rico already reproduce U.S. ideologies and histories that adhere to those produced in the U.S. Filipinos and Puerto Ricans raised in the U.S. likely have parents, even grandparents, who are products of these U.S. colonial institutions facilitating the continued selective forgetting of Philippine and Puerto Rican history. Taking into consideration the power of U.S. colonial institutions allows us to understand how Philippine and Puerto Rican subjugated knowledges are marginalized not only in the U.S. but also in the home islands. Given these widespread and enduring technologies of forgetting, watching Filipino American and U.S. Puerto Ricans perform poems articulating a history of colonial oppression is a powerful testament to U.S. ideological resistance. By focusing specifically on politically explicit Filipino American and U.S. Puerto Rican performance poets this project contributes to an understanding of how colonialism effects the reproduction of historical narratives.

Remembering the Philippine – Puerto Rican Colonial Connection

Elsewhere I have argued that given the common colonial history that the Philippines and Puerto Rico share, examining the situated knowledges[11] of Filipinos and Puerto Ricans as (neo)colonial subjects who are differentially included in U.S. history and as im/migrants in the U.S. provides an understanding of the uneven processes of U.S. imperialism.[12] Such work foregrounds connections between U.S. imperialism in the Pacific Rim and in the Caribbean that disciplinary boundaries between geographically based disciplines like Asian Studies and Latin American Studies obscure. Obscuring the

[11] Harraway 1988.
[12] Caronan 2003.

common colonial histories of the Philippines and Puerto Rico helps maintain the myth of the U.S. Empire as exceptional by enabling the selective remembering of the Philippines and Puerto Rico as U.S. colonies at distinct historical moments. Remembering the history of U.S. imperialism in the Philippines and Puerto Rico together reveals the different forms that U.S. imperialism takes. Thus, in doing such comparative work, the different colonial policies implemented by the U.S. in both islands are as telling as the similarities of their general colonial histories.

After centuries of Spanish colonial rule, the Philippines and Puerto Rico were among the first possessions to become part of an overseas U.S. empire in 1898 according to the terms of the Treaty of Paris ending the Spanish-American War. In the Philippines and Puerto Rico, as in all of the United States' new island possessions, the U.S. established political and government institutions modeled after its own. Although the U.S. had similar colonial intentions for Puerto Rico and the Philippines shortly after acquiring these two territories, the U.S. began to differentiate their colonial projects in both Puerto Rico and the Philippines. In "The Chains of Empire: State Building and 'Political Education' in Puerto Rico and the Philippines," Julian Go argues that United States domestic groups pressured congress to implement different economic policies in Puerto Rico and the Philippines.[13] Sugar beet farmers, tobacco farmers, and anti-imperialists all called for high tariffs on goods imported from Puerto Rico and the Philippines. Their concerns were countered with United States capitalists' calls for free trade with the United States' new colonies. United States capitalists were much more adamant about securing free trade with Puerto Rico because of its proximity to the United States and the

[13] Go 2003.

limited resistance the United States military met there. As a result, tariffs on Puerto Rican goods were reduced substantially despite U.S. farmers' concerns, whereas tariffs on Philippine goods were not. Over time, the different economic treatment accorded to Puerto Rico and the Philippines led to more restrictive colonial policies for Puerto Rico than for the Philippines.[14] In the early 20th century, U.S. congress also differentiated between Puerto Ricans and Filipinos on the issue of citizenship. The 1916 Jones Act made Filipinos wards of the U.S. and specified that the Philippines would be granted Philippines when the U.S. deemed Filipinos politically capable of self-governance. The 1917 Jones-Shafroth Act granted U.S. citizenship to Puerto Ricans with no specified plans for political independence in the future, insinuating Puerto Rico's incorporation into the U.S. Deciding that the Philippines be only a temporary colony while laying the foundation to maintain Puerto Rico as a prolonged colony resulted not only from the U.S.' different economic interests for the two colonies and the large cost of maintaining the Philippines as a colony due to the large distance, but also from the different ways that Puerto Ricans and Filipinos were racialized. Congressional debates over whether or not to grant Puerto Ricans U.S. citizenship emphasized Puerto Ricans' Spanish roots, characterizing them as civilized and nearly white, and thus capable of assimilating into the U.S. On the other hand, Congressional debates racialized Filipinos as either Asians or Black, characterizing them as a heterogeneous people consisting of many uncivilized tribes who could not be assimilated.[15] Thus, economic concerns and racial anxieties put the Philippines on a path towards political independence in 1946. The economic

[14] Ibid.
[15] Cabranes 1979.

feasibility of maintaining an island colony in the Caribbean and their perceived European ancestry were deciding factors in retaining control of Puerto Rico as a U.S. commonwealth.

These different colonial paths resulted in different patterns of im/migration[16] to the U.S. for Puerto Ricans and Filipinos. In the early 20th century, Filipino and Puerto Rican migrant laborers were recruited to the U.S. and Hawaii alongside other immigrants from Asian and Latin America. However, the 1934 Tydings McDuffie act initiated a ten year commonwealth period for the Philippines in preparation for independence and resulted in the reclassification of Filipinos from U.S. nationals to aliens, making Filipinos subject to the 1924 Immigration Act excluding immigration from Asia.[17] Some Filipino men managed to become U.S. citizens and enter the U.S. after the Philippines became independent through the 1947 Philippine U.S. Military Bases Agreement. This agreement allowed the U.S. military to recruit a maximum of 2,000 Filipinos a year. It was not until the late 1960s that large numbers of Filipinos began immigrating to the U.S. after the 1965 Immigration Act. Many of the immigrants came as professionals and then petitioned for their families to join them in the U.S.[18]

On the other hand, as U.S. citizens, there are no restrictions preventing Puerto Ricans from migrating to the U.S. even prior to 1965. Large numbers of Puerto Ricans migrated to the United States when Puerto Rican Governor Luís Muñoz Marín implemented Operation Bootstrap in the 1950s. Operation Bootstrap was designed to urbanize Puerto Rico in order to attract U.S. corporations to open factories on the island

[16] Following Buff 2001, I use the term im/migration to signify both domestic and international migration.
[17] Daniels 2004.
[18] Espiritu 2003.

and resulted in the further integration of Puerto Rico in the U.S. economy through the industrialization of the island.[19] The industrialization of Puerto Rico displaced many farmers whose livelihoods centered on agriculture. These displaced workers moved from the rural areas to the cities and those who still could not find employment migrated to the U.S., settling mainly in New York and Chicago. Then and now, Puerto Rican migrants to the U.S. tend to fill the need for low wage workers in urban areas in the U.S. Northeast and Chicago.

Although both the Philippines and Puerto Rico share a common colonial history, the U.S. colonial legislature specific to both islands indicate the different economic considerations and racial anxieties over incorporating Puerto Rico and the Philippines into the U.S. The differential processes of U.S. imperialism granted the Philippines and Puerto Rico different forms of political sovereignty that resulted in different patterns of im/migration. Taken together, comparative studies of the Philippines and Puerto Rico's different experiences of U.S. colonialism, like this one, insist that covert and stealth forms of imperialism be remembered simultaneously to challenge the strategic narrative deployment of either one as the need arises to justify U.S. imperialism.

Introducing the Poets

The performance poets in this study are products of the colonial histories I outlined. The U.S. Puerto Rican performance poets and Filipino American poets I interviewed belong to different generational cohorts, reflecting the different im/migration patterns of Puerto Ricans and Filipinos to the U.S. Of the performance poets I interviewed, most do not belong to the immigrant generation. The Filipino American

[19] Benson-Arias 1997; Baver 1993.

performance poets are children of immigrants who entered the U.S. after the 1965 Immigration Act and belong either to the 1.5 or 2nd generation. Due to the 1965 Immigration Acts' preferential quotas for high skilled workers, most of these poets grew up in middle class, suburban, households, but a few grew up in low income neighborhoods in the city of Los Angeles proper. The U.S. Puerto Rican poets are either part of the 2nd or 3rd generation, descended from Puerto Ricans who migrated to the U.S. in the 1950s as a result of Operation Bootstrap. Most of the New York Puerto Rican performance poets grew up in low income neighborhoods in Spanish Harlem or the South Bronx where most working class Puerto Rican migrants made their homes.

Despite their varying class positions, most of the Filipino American and U.S. Puerto Rican performance poets I interviewed obtained college degrees or had attended some college. A majority of these poets work either primarily as teachers, as writers or other cultural artists, or community activists. They teach at the university, in elementary schools, in after school arts programs, and in English as a Second Language courses. Those focusing on writing are not only poets, but also playwrights, short story writers, print and electronic journalists. Others pursue careers as filmmakers, solo performance artists, as part of rock and hip hop performance groups, or as visual artists. They work in local community arts organizations and those advocating for social change. Some of these jobs are stable, others are not. Some of them live from paycheck to paycheck. At one of my interviews, I arranged to meet the interviewee at a doughnut shop near his home. He wanted me to call upon my arrival, which I did, only to find that his cell phone had been disconnected. When we finally met, he apologized, telling me that the gentrification and subsequent rising rents in his neighborhood made it difficult for him to pay his bills on

time. The incongruence of their college education to the hand to mouth existence some of these poets live may suggest the declining value of a college degree, especially in the humanities. However, most of these poets see the work that they do in the community, for their art, and for social change as necessary, measuring their success not in financial currency, but in the social contributions they believe they make.

These poets ethnically identify as Filipino American or Nuyorican, or a variation of either of these identities. My conversations with 2nd generation and 1.5 generation Filipino American performance poets indicate that the second generation's Filipino American identity forms largely during their college years, after Filipino American youth gain a certain amount of independence from their parents. In the home, they were encouraged to assimilate to U.S. culture and thus looked outside the home to reclaim an identity and history they felt deprived of. These poets' identity formation in college was instrumental in their decisions to become involved in performance poetry and community organizations, confirming Yen Le Espiritu's assertions that second generation Filipino Americans create their own distinct cultures in the U.S. that critique their place in U.S. society rather than moving from an essentialized Filipino identity towards a monolithic American identity.[20] The U.S. Puerto Rican performance poets I interviewed identified as Boricua, Nuyorican, or Puerto Rican. Boricua is the term given to the indigenous populations of Puerto Rico prior to Christopher Columbus' landing. Nuyorican is a term combining New York and Puerto Rican used to claim the particular history of Puerto Ricans in New York and the simultaneous sense of belonging and marginality they feel in

[20] Espiritu 2002.

both New York and Puerto Rico.[21] Their refusal to identify with the U.S. or as hyphenated Americans illustrates their insistence that the term "Puerto Rican American" is redundant because they are U.S. citizens and Puerto Rico is part of the U.S.[22]

All of the poets I interviewed had visited the Philippines or Puerto Rico. Most of the Filipino American performance poets had only been to the Philippines a couple of times and many visited for the first time as young adults. Witnessing the poverty of the Philippines often acts as an additional catalyst for the poets' involvement in U.S. organizations advocating for social change in the Philippines. On the other hand, some of the U.S. Puerto Rican performance poets I interviewed visited Puerto Rico on a regular, sometimes annual, basis. The circular migration between New York City and Puerto Rico facilitates the formation of a transnational Puerto Rican identity and enables New York Puerto Rican performance poets to participate in transnational cultural and activist circuits. My last chapter focuses particularly on how immigration laws, or lack thereof, effect the activist manifestations of Filipino Americans and U.S. Puerto Ricans' long distance nationalism, and how im/migration laws. Examining the experiences and motivations of activist Filipino American and U.S. Puerto Rican performance poets who chase dreams of social change instead of the American Dream of upward mobility, who have not been ideologically assimilated by U.S. institutions reveals the importance of a

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[21] Algarín 1994:5 provides a definition: **Nuyorican** (nü yor 'ē kan) (New York + Puerto Rican) 1. Originally Puerto Rican epithet for those of Puerto Rican heritage born in New York: their Spanish was different (Spanglish), their way of dress and look were different. They were a stateless people (like most U.S. poets) until the Cafe became their homeland. 2. After Algarín and Piñero, a proud poet speaking New York Puerto Rican. 3. A denizen of the Nuyorican Poets Cafe. 4. New York's riches.

[22] I use the term U.S. Puerto Rican in this dissertation in recognition of the poets' refusal of the "Puerto Rican American" label. By U.S. Puerto Rican I mean a Puerto Rican living in the U.S.

local politics of memory in the reproduction of subjugated knowledges of colonialism in the Philippines and Puerto Rico.

The Politics of Memory

If the reproduction of institutionalized histories in the Philippines, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. selectively omit memories of U.S. imperialism's violence, what circumstances allow these memories to resurface among U.S. born Filipino and Puerto Rican youth? Recent literature on the politics of memory moves beyond the construction of memory and history as opposing processes and moves beyond the distinction between private, cultural, and public memory. This literature suggests that history, public memory, and private memories are all intertwined, mutually influencing one another's construction. In *Tangled Memories*, Sturken argues that "cultural memory is a field of negotiation through which different stories vie for a place in history."[23] Sturken differentiates cultural memory from personal memory and "official" history, but argues that all three types of memory interact with one another. Within the realm of cultural memory, differing personal memories compete for validation by the dominant historical narrative. Thus, at times cultural memory can be oppositional while at other times cultural memory functions to legitimate the dominant historical narrative. Conceptualizing cultural memory as a negotiation that determines the historical narrative underscores that history is constructed and is not simply an objective recall of events. Likewise we should be similarly wary of personal memory because, like history, personal memory is not an unproblematic recall of events. Lisa Yoneyama warns against conceptualizing history and memory as binary opposites where personal memories are seen as subjective but

[23] Sturken 1997:1.

authentic knowledge and history is seen as objective, institutional knowledge.[24] Personal memories are often influenced by history and cultural memory. Thus, memory and history are not mutually exclusive. Rather, memory is complicitous with history. Yoneyama states that "knowledge about the past, whether in the form of History or Memory, is always enmeshed in the exercise of power and is always accompanied by elements of repression."[25]

In their introduction to *The Politics of War Memory and Commemoration*, T.G. Ashplant et al also recognize a relationship between memory and history.[26] They define a "politics of memory" as the struggle between different groups for recognition of their own memories within the cultural narratives that structure their lives. In equating a politics of memory with struggle, Ashplant *et al*, like Yoneyama, emphasize the role of power in the construction of memory and history. That is, the recognition or incorporation of memories in institutionalized histories depends on access to power. Sturken and Ashplant et al focus their analyses on commemoration efforts and how these sites script past wars and other historic traumas in the name of nationalism. Jenny Edkins takes the critique of commemorative sites a step further and argues that the act of incorporating a traumatic event such as a war into a linear narrative of history depoliticizes the trauma by endowing it with a singular meaning. The reproduction of moments of trauma at these commemorative sites then renders all those who experience the reenactment as witnesses of this chosen retelling. In this way, commemorative sites and events create a single shared national memory of an event predicated on the forgetting of incongruent memories.

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[24] Yoneyama 1999.
[25] Ibid: 27.
[26] Ashplant et al 2000.

Only memories that support a linear narrative of national progress can be represented at national commemorative sites, national museums, and other public spaces endowed with the authority to narrate the nation's history.

Filipino American and U.S. Puerto Rican performance poetry that critique U.S. imperialism and U.S. democracy finds no place at the Smithsonian in Washington D.C. There is no memorial to the Spanish-Filipino-Cuban-American War whose narrative Filipino Americans and U.S. Puerto Ricans can challenge. Instead, Filipino American and U.S. Puerto Rican performance poets construct their own narratives of U.S. colonialism in the Philippines and Puerto Rico at the local level where they have access to community resources and spaces to reproduce their own narratives of history. They engage in a politics of remembering U.S. imperialism at the local level where they have the power to make a difference in the communities where they want to make a difference.

Producing (Post)Colonial Memories

Sturken, Yoneyama, and Ashplant et al all demonstrate that the production of memory takes place in a myriad of locations: in school, in the home, in public spaces, in popular culture. This dissertation examines the multiple locations that produce memories about the Philippines and Puerto Rico for U.S. raised Filipino and Puerto Rican performance poets and the locations where they participate in the production of memories about Filipinos and Puerto Ricans in the homeland and in the diaspora. Studying how these different sites of memory narrate history point to the ways that memory and history interact, how memory and institutionalized histories coincide, how institutionalized histories can re-inscribe memories in its own narrative, and how memories challenge institutionalized histories. In particular, how U.S. raised Filipinos and Puerto Ricans

understand Philippine, Puerto Rican, and U.S. history reveal the reach of U.S. technologies of forgetting and the work that local communities do to effectively challenge institutionalized U.S. histories.

Raised in the U.S., U.S. Puerto Ricans are thousands of miles removed from the colonial space, and Filipino Americans are thousands of miles and generations removed from colonial time and space. Like them, their parents and often their grandparents lived under a government modeled after the U.S., were familiar with U.S. culture, and were taught U.S. history by a school system established by the U.S. Had the U.S. been completely successful in controlling the historical narrative through the reproduction of its institutionalized history in schools, popular culture, and government ideology, U.S. raised Filipino and Puerto Rican youth would not be able to articulate a critique of this history.[27] In her work on the co-opting of trauma by linear historical narratives, Jenny Edkins argues trauma can only be communicated within a community that shares a language recognizing that trauma. She elaborates that

> [a]buse by the state, the fatherland, like abuse by the father within the family, cannot be spoken in language, since language comes from and belongs to the family and the community...For language to work, at a particular time and in a particular context, it is necessary for there to be a linguistic community that shares or is subject to something that will temporarily fix meanings. There has to be some provisional agreement, accepted ideology or central authority that will halt the fluidity of terms and make language meaningful.[28]

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[27] Many scholars have refuted the claim that the colonized were passive victims of colonial states, illustrating how the colonized were complicit in their own colonization, how the colonized selectively incorporated the ideologies of the colonized while still maintaining their own, and how resistance was encoded within culture. Some notable examples include Ileto [1979] 1998; Rafael [1993] 1996; Guha 1997. I also consider works that reconstruct Native American history during European colonization and U.S. expansion as falling within postcolonial studies although they might not be recognized as such. See White [1991] 1999; Dennis 1993; Galloway 1995.

[28] Edkins 2003:7.

The competing narratives of history reproduced within Filipino and Puerto Rican communities in the U.S. exist because there is a community that recognizes and is invested in articulating the violence of U.S. imperialism. More often than not, it is within these communities that Filipino Americans and U.S. Puerto Ricans encounter histories of the Philippines and Puerto Rico that contradict institutionalized histories. Thus, regardless of if the parents or grandparents of Filipino Americans and U.S. Puerto Ricans accepted the institutionalized narratives of Philippine and Puerto Rican history, local communities produce memories of U.S. imperialism and offers a vocabulary and space with which to critique it.

Struggles over how to represent an event in a public space occur because such sites produce memories; they function as technologies of memory.[29] Discussing technologies of memory highlight that memories are not only passed on in story telling from one generation to another. Ashplant et al explicitly contribute to the theorization of the transmission of memory from one generation to the next. Transmitting memory is generally thought of solely as a personal process that takes place within families. However, Ashplant et al argue that the transmission of memory also takes place publicly through cultural narratives. They argue that the direct memory of war veterans is not automatically passed to their children. Commemorative sites and events validate war veterans' memory and can thus convey the importance of preserving this memory to subsequent generations. Such public validation is not always necessary. When direct memories are privately passed to the subsequent generation and these memories are not validated by the nation or dominant historical narrative, the subsequent generation may

[29] Sturken 1997.

attempt to make the memory public. However, the first and second generation's memories are not always congruent. At times, the public transmission of memory through cultural productions allows the second generation to remember precisely what the first generation chooses to forget, or not pass along. At other times, the second generation may refuse to reproduce the first generation's memories. Ashplant et al note a difference in how the generation of survivors and the second generation express their memories. The second generation expresses its memory in imaginative ways, such as through cultural production, because they do not have access to direct memories. Recognizing the transmission of memory as a public process allows for those in the subsequent generation who are not directly related to a survivor of a historical trauma to bear witness. Memories need not be inherited for one to authenticate their position as witness. Marianne Hirsch argues that some stories and images are so powerful that they come to constitute memories for the second generation.[30] She defines such memories as postmemory.

These multiple ways of remembering can account for the production of (post)colonial memories of U.S. imperialism in the face of colonial technologies of forgetting. As Asplant et al suggest, Filipino American and U.S. Puerto Rican performance poets may choose to articulate memories of U.S. imperialism in the cultural realm because they are postmemories, not ones that they can directly access. However, I believe their choice to be more deliberate. They choose to express themselves through culture because it is often the only space where they are given the authority to speak and also because they believe that culture allows them to reach their ideal audience- Filipinos, Puerto Ricans, and other people of color.

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[30] Hirsh 1999.

Why Performance Poetry?

Power differentials prevent memories that fundamentally challenge U.S. national narratives, especially the construction of the U.S. as a benevolent imperial power, from vying for recognition in spaces that contribute to the construction of dominant national discourses. Therefore, oppositional memories of U.S. colonialism can exist only in alternative spaces. My previous work identifies Puerto Rican and Filipino novels in the United States as a site where oppositional narratives of U.S. colonialism are articulated.[31] However, novels, like films and theater productions, require access to resources. Novels require publishers and editors. Films require directors, producers, filming and editing experience or the financial capital to hire a crew. Likewise, theater productions also require producers and at times casts and costumes, and access to a performance space. Poetry does not require these same resources. Audrey Lorde argues that "the form our creativity takes is often a class issue. Of all the art forms, poetry is the most economical. It is the one that is the most secret, that requires the least physical labor, the one that can be done between shifts, in the hospital pantry, on the subway, on scraps of surplus paper."[32] Poetry is thus a creative outlet that is accessible to anyone willing to try. For those who wish to share their poetry with an audience, performing poetry at open mics offers performance space for a small fee, or for free, and a receptive audience.

Performance poetry played a role in opposing colonial rule in both Puerto Rico and the Philippines. In the second half of the 19th century, while still under Spanish colonial rule, Puerto Rican youth poets wrote and recited patriotic poems in public. This

[31] Caronan 2003.
[32] Lorde 1997:375.

tradition continued during U.S. colonial rule.[33] When the United States officially 'ended' colonial rule of Puerto Rico by granting the island commonwealth status, not independence, the newly established Puerto Rican legislature implemented the Ley de la Mordaza in 1948. This law prohibited seditious speech allowing for the incarceration for Puerto Rican poets who were part of the independence struggle.[34] Filipino poets protested U.S. colonial rule using the balagtasan, a poetic form named after famous Filipino poet Francisco Balagtas. Balagtasan is a public debate argued in metered and rhymed poetry.[35]

In the U.S., Puerto Rican and Filipino performance poets have been performing since the 1960s. The Nuyorican Poets Café opened in 1974 in New York City, founded by Miguel Algarín and Miguel Piñero. Many New York Puerto Ricans at the time lived in the Lower East Side, and the two wanted to create a space where Nuyorican poets could come together and share their creative work.[36] Originally in a storefront, the Nuyorican Poets Cafe moved to its current location on East 2nd Street (also in the lower east side) in 1982. Every Friday after the Friday Night Slam, the Cafe hosts "the open room," where both amateur and experienced poets can read their work and receive community support. San Francisco was home to a number of Filipino American poets and a burgeoning Asian American movement in the 1970s. Among them were Al Robles and Jessica Hagedorn. The Kearney Street Workshop, founded by Jim Dong, Lora Foo, and Mike Chin, provided performance space for these poets and other Asian American artists in the area.

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[33] Gray 2004.
[34] Martínez 2004.
[35] Mabanglo 2004.
[36] At the time the majority of Puerto Ricans in New York City lived in El Barrio in the Bronx and East Harlem.

The Nuyorican Poets Cafe and the Kearney Street Workshop functioned as safe spaces where people of color could speak freely, a space where memories that fundamentally challenge the U.S. historical narrative can emerge.

In the past decade, performance poetry has become increasingly popular across the nation, leading to the creation of performance spaces, open mics and the establishment of a number of performance poet groups, like the Welfare poets, a pan-Latino group based in New York City, and I Was Born with Two Tongues, a Chicago based pan-Asian group. In 2000, there were a number of Filipino American performance poetry groups: the Balagtasan Collective and LA Enkanto in Los Angeles, the Isangmahal Kollective in Seattle, and the Eighth Wonder in San Francisco. Today, these Asian American and Filipino American poetry collectives have dissolved, but some of their members went on to form hip hop poetry duos or trios: the Native Guns in San Francisco, the Blues Scholars in Seattle, and the Pacifics in Chicago.

I define performance poetry as poetry read by its author in front of an audience. The performance poets in this study performed in a variety of spaces – classrooms, bars, community centers, in plazas – and have a variety of performance styles – some memorize their work, some read, some gesture, some deploy a hip hop sensibility, some sit. The artistic freedom such spaces provides allows poets to share work on a variety of subject matter, from romantic relationships, to parents, the benefits of drinking milk, and so on. Not all poems espoused a political message, but those that did invariably espoused a radical politics. For the purposes of this project on the construction of Philippine and Puerto Rican historical narratives, I narrowed my focus to performance poetry by Filipino Americans and U.S. Puerto Ricans that represented history in their poetry.

Performance poetry is only beginning to garner scholarly attention. Most publications on spoken word are collections of poems. One exception is *The Spoken Word Revolution: Slam, Hip Hop, and the Poetry of a New Generation*.[37] In between selected poems in this book, the authors identify different influences on spoken word: beat poetry, hip hop, performance art. The Filipino American and U.S. Puerto Rican performance poets I encountered identified hip hop as their biggest influence. However, they disidentified with what is marketed today as hip hop and hip hop artists who value money rather than social change. Instead, they harkened back to hip hop artists of the 1980s and early 1990s, like Ice Cube, Big Pun, and KRS-1 who used rap to articulate a critique of racism and the oppression they faced. These poets believe in the revolutionary potential of hip hop and follow in that tradition.

Re-imagining the Past, Imagining the Future

Because they believe that hip hop and performance poetry ought to be about sharing one's hardships and social position to advocate for social change, Filipino American and U.S. Puerto Rican performance poets can be conceptualized as witnesses. In the introduction to *Against Forgetting: Twentieth-Century Poetry of Witness*, poet Carolyn Forché defines a "poetry of witness," and argues that poems can serve as evidence of historical tragedies. She narrows down who may serve as witness: the poet must have personally endured the historical tragedy she/he writes about and must be important to their nation's literature.[38] These criteria limit the types of stories that can be told by only authorizing recognized authors as witnesses, and also prevent subsequent

[37] Eleveld 2003.
[38] Forshé 1993.

generations from challenging established historical narratives. In this project I expand on this notion of a poetry of witness to include Filipino American and U.S. Puerto Rican poets who testify to the legacies of U.S. imperialism. Although they personally did not experience the official colonial period in their home islands, for them U.S. imperialism is still present and all encompassing. It accounts for their presence in the U.S. It accounts for the languages they can and cannot speak. It accounts for the U.S. military's presence on their home islands.

Witnesses do not testify simply to state facts, but they testify with the hopes that justice will prevail. The act of testifying as witnesses intervenes not in the past but attempts to intervene in the future. Likewise, Filipino American and U.S. Puerto Rican performance poets' primary goal in re-imagining the history of U.S. imperialism is not to correct a flawed past, but to re-imagine the past in order to re-imagine the future. Yoneyama discusses how Walter Benjamin reorients historical time to demonstrate how the present determines the construction of the past. The past does not naturally progress into the present rather the present selectively pieces together memories of the past to create a linear narrative of progress that seamlessly leads into the present. Yoneyama argues that "by interrupting the evolutionary continuity between the past and present, a Benjaminian dialectics of memory allows historical knowledge to remain critically germaine to present struggles for social change."[39] Filipino Americans and U.S. Puerto Ricans often perform their poetry for their activist pursuits: working towards an end to the U.S. occupation of Iraq, the independence of Puerto Rico, rights for overseas Filipino workers, equal access to resources for people of color worldwide. To work towards this

[39] Yoneyama 1999:30.

future, these performance poets re-imagine history not through the lens of their parents' home nations, but by linking the experiences of colonialism, oppression, and inequality that people of color share in common across the globe. Whereas national histories are constructed to make the nation's authority and existence seem natural and not an entity with arbitrarily determined geographic boundaries created through and enforced by violence, these poets construct a genealogy of global power in general, and U.S. global power in particular. Michel Foucault describes genealogical projects as

> a way of playing local, discontinuous, disqualified, or nonlegitimized knowledges off against unitary theoretical instance that claims to be able to filter them, organize them into a hierarchy, organize them in the name of a true body of knowledge.[40]

These poets gather the subjugated knowledges of people of color, their memories, stories, experiences that are unrecognized by institutionalized history, to trace a genealogy of imperialism and global power that silences them and attempts to forget them.

In this era of globaization, the U.S. and other global economic powers increasingly rely on trade, to establish political and economic hegemony around the globe instead of costly military occupation, with the exception of the U.S. occupation of Afghanistan and Iraq. Advocating for American Studies as a discipline to theorize beyond the U.S. national borders, George Lipsitz argues that today "workers, migrants, artists, and activists" do not "have the luxury of thinking in exclusively national terms… They have become transnational as a matter of necessity."[41] For this reason, Filipino American and U.S. Puerto Rican performance poets re-imagine the past in transnational terms and work towards a future where a transnational coalition of people of color will demand and

[40] Foucault [1997] 2003:8.
[41] Lipsitz 2001:19.

secure freedom, democracy, and economic equality, illustrating the how the past is remembered is determined by the present, and the hopes for the future that one holds in the present.

Methodology

To explore the interaction between the creation of institutionalized history by colonial technologies of memory and the local production of postcolonial memory among Filipino American and U.S. Puerto Rican performance poets, I took a qualitative cultural studies approach combining interviews with textual analysis and observations of events. I conducted 30 interviews total, 13 interviews with Filipino American performance poets, 2 interviews with parents of these poets, and 15 interviews with U.S. Puerto Rican performance poets. In these interviews, I asked the poets about their family life, where they attributed their knowledge of Filipino or Puerto Rican history, their occupations, and why they perform. I chose Los Angeles and New York City as research sites primarily because of the large Filipino American community in Southern California and the large Puerto Rican population in New York City, my previous exposure to the poetry communities there, and the continuing im/migration of Puerto Ricans to New York City and Filipinos to Los Angeles. I chose these two cities as well to juxtapose a poetry scene centralized in an urban space versus one that incorporates a city of suburbs.

I approached the community of Filipino American performance poets in Los Angeles and U.S. Puerto Rican performance poets in New York City differently because of the differences between the two communities. In Los Angeles, Filipino American performance poets often form collectives, or performance groups that collaborate together. In New York, most Puerto Rican performance poets do not form groups, but perform

independently in open mics or poetry slams, like the Nuyorican Poets Café, Bar 13, or the Ascentos open mic at the Bruckner Bar and Grill in the Bronx. One exception is the Welfare Poets, a pan-Latino spoken word group based in New York City.

In Los Angeles, I contacted poets in two Filipino American performance poetry collectives, the Balagtasan Collective and the LA Enkanto for interviews. In addition to interviews with poets, I was also able to interview the parents of two poets, but other parents were hesitant to be interviewed. When I began my interviews in 2003, these groups were not as active as when they initially began performing. At the time, the Balagtasan Collective only organized two events a year as a group, the Bus Stop, a series of performances for the Filipino American community in Eagle Rock, and the annual Poetry Slam at the Los Angeles Festival for Philippine Arts and Culture (FPAC). Today, they only organize FPAC's Poetry Slam. However, members of the Balagtasan Collective still perform individually in small groups. When possible I also attended events that featured individual member of the Balagtasan Collective or LA Enkanto. I also attended Tuesday Nights at the Cafe in Los Angeles' Little Tokyo, where one member of the Balagtasan Collective is the host, and members of both collectives regularly perform as featured artists. Tuesday Nights at the Cafe is an annual open mic series organized by local Asian American artists and happens every first and third Tuesday in the Spring and Summer.

In New York, I could not rely solely on poetry collectives to find U.S. Puerto Rican poets to interview. Instead, I went to the Center for Puerto Rican Studies at Hunter College, whose librarian used to perform poetry. He gave me contacts and put me in touch with a network of U.S. Puerto Rican performance poets. I found early on that many

U.S. Puerto Rican poets no longer frequented the Nuyorican Poets Cafe. Some, but not all, considered the space to be gentrified. Many perform at different venues, among them the Acentos open mic every second and fourth Tuesday night at the Bruckner Bar and Grill in the Bronx. Acentos is an open mic night that seeks to feature and foster poetry by Latinos and other people of color. At my first open mic at Acentos, the featured poet, unbeknownst to me, was a Filipino American poet. When possible, I attended other events that featured U.S. Puerto Rican poets in New York City. The performance poetry community in New York City is much more cohesive than in Los Angeles, consisting of multiple generations of poets. As a result, there were many more performances and open mics to attend.

I would not claim that my social position as a young Filipina American scholar gave me an insider's insight into my research sites, though because I was of a similar age as many of my interviewees and I shared with many of them the experiences of growing up with im/migrant parents and my own experience in learning Filipino and Puerto Rican history, I could find points of similarities to encourage conversation during the interviews. As someone who does not perform poetry and was previously unfamiliar with the geographies of these urban spaces, I was very much an outsider to these poetry scenes. Not belonging to the circle of Filipino American poets in Los Angeles limited my access to interviewing their parents or grandparents, part of my original research plan, and made them hesitant to discuss internal rifts in their groups, something I suspect played a role in the decline of the Balagtasan Collective. However, the Filipino American poets all immediately agreed to interviews with me, without reservations. In New York City, a few poets wanted to get to know me before they agreed to be interviewed, requiring a lengthy

email exchange, a few face to face meetings, or some phone calls before I could schedule an interview. These poets were unsure of my intentions, perhaps because I was not from New York or Puerto Rican, or perhaps because I originally used the term "spoken word poetry," a term they were suspicious of. One poet, who ultimately denied me an interview, spent an hour on the phone discussing the category "spoken word poetry" with me and how my use of the term contributed to the co-opting of his art form. At poetry events I generally observed quietly, only approaching poets at the end of the event either to schedule interviews or to chat with poets I previously interviewed.

Chapter Breakdown

This dissertation is divided into four chapters. The first chapter "Assimilation, (Mis)Education and the Selective Memory of U.S History" examines the process of forgetting history and what purposes forgetting history can serve. In particular, I look at how assimilation and public education in the Philippines, Puerto Rico, and the United States coincide to conflate colonialism in the Philippines and Puerto Rico with benevolence, thus erasing colonial violence. The second chapter, "Reconstructing (Post)Colonial History: The Search for Subjugated Knowledges" focuses on the interaction of institutionalized history and subjugated knowledges about the Philippines and Puerto Rico in different sites that teach these performance poets history: community events, university Ethnic Studies course, cultural productions, and family stories. The third chapter, "Local Genealogies of Global Power," discusses how Filipino American and U.S. Puerto Rican performance poets trace and reproduce a genealogy of global power emphasizing the similar experiences of oppression the Filipinos or Puerto Ricans share with other people of color. The genealogies they create are specific not only to

either Philippine or Puerto Rican history, but also to their locale. "'Headed for a World that's Brand New': Performance Poetry as Activist Tool," the last chapter, examines how Filipino American and U.S. Puerto Rican performance poets deploy the genealogies they trace to organize for social change. In particular, this chapter examines the local and transnational activist circuits that Filipino American and U.S. Puerto Rican performance poets participate in.

What (post)colonial histories can emerge from U.S. colonial amnesia? The role that Filipino American and U.S. Puerto Rican performance poets play in producing memories of U.S. imperialism that critique U.S. imperialism illustrates that the construction of institutionalized histories is not seamless. Although the histories in their poems and performances cannot vie for a place in institutionalized history, Filipino American and U.S. Puerto Rican poets take advantage of the resources available to them to participate in a local politics of memory that challenge institutionalized history in their own communities. In doing so, they illustrate the importance and possibilities of making history from the absences that institutionalized U.S. history create.

II. Assimilation, (Mis)Education and the Selective Memory of Institutionalized U.S. History

"The most effective means of subjugating a people is to capture their minds. Military victory does not necessarily signify conquest."[42]

"Why I never knew anything about my history or my culture? Because it's an imposed amnesia. They make us forget where we come from in the melting pot, you know. And my family...you can't pass on what you don't know yourself. So they didn't know the facts, the historical facts, or the history of Puerto Rico and they weren't able to impart that.[43]

After acquiring its empire of islands in 1898, the United States distinguished the management of their colonies from previous imperial powers by identifying their colonial rule with a policy of "benevolent assimilation."[44] The U.S. educated their colonies in the art of democratic self-rule by establishing a colonial government modeled after their own. However, in order for this assimilation to appear benevolent, the U.S. needed to secure and maintain the consent of the native populations to be ruled. To accomplish this, systems of public education were established on the new island colonies to reproduce U.S. history and U.S. ideology. These educational systems functioned as technologies of forgetting by reproducing the U.S. historical narrative of benevolence on these colonized islands. Thus, for those who migrate to the United States from a former or current U.S. colony, assimilation does not begin upon arrival to the U.S. Rather, assimilation begins in the colonial space through institutions intended to reproduce U.S. political institutions and to familiarize the colonized with U.S. history and culture.[45]

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[42] Constantino 2002:178.
[43] Fernandez 2006.
[44] Rafael 2000.
[45] Espiritu 2003 argues that immigrants come to the United States because colonialism and globalization has already familiarized immigrants with the U.S.

The Chicago School of Sociology imagined the assimilation of immigrants to the U.S. as a linear process beginning with the immigrant generation who clung to the customs and cultures of their homeland and ending with their grandchildren who would be completely cut off from their homeland and adopt U.S. customs and culture. Implicit in the assimilation paradigm is the racist assumption that immigrants of color and their children need to abandon their cultural heritage in order to become successful in the U.S. Despite numerous critiques levied at this assimilation paradigm – that it does not take into account the obstacles that racism presents, that it presupposes a complete break from the homeland, that it does not take into consideration transnational processes – the model is still influential today. Many novels and films about immigrants and their children to the U.S. that garner widespread attention may question or attempt to revise the assimilation paradigm, yet they still represent the cultural confusion and generational conflict that are key aspects of the paradigm.[46] These representations narrate the story of children of immigrants struggling to find themselves in a U.S. that often encourages and facilitates the erasure of their culture and history.

This chapter examines how colonial technologies of forgetting in the Philippines and Puerto Rico and the pressure for U.S. born Filipinos and Puerto Ricans to assimilate coincide to facilitate a selective remembering of U.S. imperialism on the islands. The children and grandchildren of Filipino and Puerto Rican im/migrants are the 3rd or 4th generation to be educated by a U.S. established system of education, making it more likely that the institutionalized history of the Philippines and Puerto Rico taught in school

[46] Ho 2000 illustrates how Asian American literature, particularly those focusing on the immigrant mother and U.S. born daughter relationship can be interpreted in ways other than the assimilationist narrative. Koshy 2005 similarly demonstrates how Asian American literature representing Asian American women and White male relationships need not be read within solely an assimilationist paradigm.

will be reinforced at home. The pressure to assimilate contributes to the erasure of memories not recognized by institutionalized histories by encouraging U.S. born Filipinos and Puerto Ricans to acculturate and become 'American.' The mutually reinforcing processes of education and assimilation enabling the effective acceptance of institutionalized U.S. history illustrate how ideological state apparatuses work in tandem to reproduce state ideology while maintaining an appearance of being unrelated processes.[47]

The first part of this chapter focuses on education, beginning with an introduction to U.S. colonial education in the Philippines and Puerto Rico, discussing how Philippine and Puerto Rican history is selectively reconstructed to either legitimate or erase U.S. colonial rule. I move onto an examination of the absence of the Philippines and Puerto Rico in the teaching of history in U.S. primary and secondary schools. The second half of this chapter focuses on how acculturation contributes to the forgetting of Philippine and Puerto Rican history. I begin by discussing attempts to assimilate Filipinos and Puerto Ricans in the homeland through the imposition of the English language, with differing success, and how the different cultural politics of the Philippines and Puerto Rico both support a narrative of U.S. colonial benevolence. I distinguish between assimilation and acculturation here, using the term assimilation to refer to institutional processes facilitating im/migrants ideological assimilation and acculturation to refer to the im/migrant practices of adapting to U.S. culture. I end with a discussion of Filipino and Puerto Rican im/migrant families' role in the acculturation of their children and

[47] Althusser 2001.

grandchildren and the varied motivations behind limiting exposure to Philippine or Puerto Rican history in the home.

Colonial (Mis)Education

After assuming control of the Philippines and Puerto Rico in 1898, the U.S. made plans to establish public school systems on these islands and on their other island possessions. The establishment of a Puerto Rican system of education began right after the U.S. took control. In his analysis of Puerto Rican social science textbooks from the early 20th century and reports of the Commissioner of Education José-Manuel Navarro argues that the U.S. established ideological hegemony over Puerto Rico by promoting U.S. culture and ideology in public schools. By teaching U.S. history, requiring students to learn and sing patriotic U.S. songs, and establishing the mandatory study of the English language in public schools Puerto Rican students became familiar with U.S. culture, specifically White, protestant, male U.S. culture.[48] Teachers from the U.S. went to Puerto Rico to teach Puerto Rican students and also to train Puerto Rican teachers to teach a U.S. curriculum in English. The Philippine-American War prevented the United States from establishing a public school system in the Philippines until 1901. At this time, the U.S. followed the same steps it took in establishing a system of education in Puerto Rico. Roughly 500 teachers were sent to the Philippines to teach Filipinos English and a basic U.S. curriculum teaching U.S. culture, ideology, and history.[49] These teachers were known as Thomasites, nicknamed after the transport they traveled on, the SS Thomas.

[48] Navarro 2002.
[49] Gamalinda 2002.

Like their Puerto Rican counterparts they were also charged with training Filipino teachers.

French theorist Ernest Renan argues that a nation's existence depends on the construction of a common glorious past that binds the nation's citizens together in the present. The construction of a shared glorious past requires the forgetting of all past events that do not conform to it.[50] In constructing histories to manage a newly acquired empire, creating an extensive shared history is not possible. To justify an empire's existence depends on the construction of a bleak past that ended upon the arrival of the colonizer, a narrative that the U.S. deployed to partly justify the Spanish-American War. Thus, the first colonial history books in Puerto Rico emphasized that Puerto Ricans welcomed the U.S. occupation of the island after it had been mismanaged by Spain. Constructing a colonial history in the Philippines was more challenging because Filipinos fought against the U.S. to retain the independence they won from Spain. In the first colonial textbooks for Philippine public schools, the Philippine revolution was rewritten so it took place between 1896 and 1898 and only against Spanish rule. Philippine resistance to U.S. rule was cast as a misguided insurrection caused by a misunderstanding. Those Filipinos who continued to fight for their independence were construed as misunderstanding that the U.S. intended only to teach Filipinos how to establish a democracy.[51] At that time, President of the Philippine Commission William Taft, along with a panel of four U.S. colonial administrators in the Philippines and four Filipinos chose a National hero of the Philippines. They declared Jose Rizal the national hero

[50] Renan 1994.
[51] Ileto 2002.

because he inspired the Philippine revolution against Spain, but he himself did not fight in the revolution and instead favored reforms. As a national hero, Rizal could symbolize peaceful reform instead of violence, and he would bring to mind the revolution against Spain, not the battle for independence from the U.S.[52] Through these efforts on the part of the U.S. colonial regime, the erasure of the violence of the Philippine-American War began.

The U.S. also imposed English as a language of instruction in the Philippines and Puerto Rico to assimilate their new colonized subjects. However, this imposition produced different results in the Philippines than in Puerto Rico. Efforts to implement English as a lingua franca in the Philippines were largely successful. English became the language of instruction in Philippine public schools and the official language of governance during the U.S. colonial period and remained one of the official languages, alongside Tagalog, after the Philippines became independent in 1946. Although the "native" official language of the Philippines has changed over the years, from Tagalog to Pilipino to Filipino, English remains to this day an official language of the Philippines.[53] In some cases, disciplinary measures were taken to ensure the use of English. Filipino American poet Alan Aquino asserts that such measures account for his father's English language fluency: "[My father] grew up in an obscure [rural] town...where if you spoke your native language you'd be fined by the teacher. You had to speak nothing but English."[54] His account suggests that the implementation of English language in

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[52] Rivera 1989.
[53] The core of Pilipino is Tagalog, but it also incorporates other Philippine dialects. The same is true for Filipino, although it allegedly incorporates more from other dialects than Pilipino did. Some argue that this incorporation in mainly symbolic, resulting in Tagalog as the de facto native official language.
[54] Aquino 2005.

instruction was widespread, not only confined to major cities. Despite the attempt to encourage universal use of English in the Philippines, English became common only among the middle and upper classes. The high dropout rate among underprivileged Filipinos, perhaps partially resulting from the imposition of English as the language of instruction, led to lower fluency in English.[55] After independence, English was not the sole language of instruction in the Philippines, but nonetheless remained a language of instruction. In addition to regular English classes in Philippine public schools today, math and sciences classes are also taught in English.[56] Filipinos regularly use English at school and at work instead of Filipino or another native dialect.[57] Currently there is a bill under debate in the Philippine House of Representatives titled "English as the Medium of Instruction Act" (H.B. 4701) that would reinstate English as the sole language of instruction if passed.[58] Filipino linguistic historian T. Ruanni F. Tupas argues that lauding the benefits of the U.S. colonial imposition of the English language on the islands helps enable the forgetting the colonial violence that accompanied the establishment of the U.S. colonial educational system.[59]

English did not gain a similar foothold in Puerto Rico. Between 1898 and 1948, Puerto Rican educators continually challenged and resisted colonial officials' attempts to implement English as a language of instruction, or even English as a mandatory subject in Puerto Rican public schools.[60] The implementation of English as the language of

[55] Asuncion-Lande 1971.
[56] Vizconde 2006.
[57] Gonzales 2004.
[58] Ager 2006.
[59] Tupas 2003.
[60] Pousada 1999.

instruction in Puerto Rico in the early 20th century resulted in an 80% dropout rate.[61] In 1948, Spanish became the official language of instruction and English was relegated to a special subject. This still remains in effect today in Puerto Rico. Attempts to make the study of English mandatory are considered a threat to Puerto Rican identity. The desire to maintain Spanish as the predominant language in Puerto Rico is tied to fervent cultural nationalism in Puerto Rico. However, Puerto Ricans' assertion of cultural nationalism is not tied to a widespread movement for political independence enabling Puerto Ricans to declare their cultural sovereignty of the U.S. without threatening U.S. control of Puerto Rico. Therefore, Puerto Ricans' resistance to the imposition of English and Filipinos' acceptance of the English language both serve U.S. interests on these islands.

The understanding of history that Filipinos and Puerto Ricans have as products of U.S. colonial and neocolonial education best illustrates the effectiveness of U.S. colonial education as a technology of forgetting in the Philippines and Puerto Rico. The few interviews I conducted with parents of Filipino American performance poets and an interview with a Puerto Rican poet who came to the United States to pursue a Master's degree provide insight into how U.S.' selective memory of Philippine and Puerto Rican history maintains an image of U.S. colonial benevolence.

Manny de la Cruz is a Filipino immigrant who arrived in the U.S. in 1969. His understanding of the Philippine-American war conforms to the construction of Philippine resistance to U.S. rule as a misunderstanding of the U.S.' benevolence:

> From what I read in our school textbooks...the Americans actually came during 1898...The father of the General Douglas Macarthur, the one that was assigned by the U.S. government to oversee the occupation of the

[61] Zentella 1997.

> Philippines way back in 1898...they recognized the revolutionary president...Emilio Aguinaldo. And he didn't want to recognize the U.S. government, so they pursued him.[62]

None of de la Cruz's language here suggests that any violence occurred when the Americans "came" to the Philippines in 1898. He sees no contradiction between having both a Philippine revolutionary president and a U.S. general in charge of overseeing the occupation of the Philippines as long as both entities "recognize" one another. Philippine sovereignty and U.S. sovereignty are not mutually exclusive. Although it is not clear what recognition entailed in this situation, de la Cruz suggests that President Aguinaldo's refusal to "recognize" the U.S. occupation of the Philippines necessitated the U.S.' pursuit of Aguinaldo and others who would not "recognize" their rule.

Conflating the Philippine-American War with a failure to recognize the U.S.' benevolent intentions in the Philippines conveniently secures Philippine consent to U.S. neocolonial hegemony. Those who oppose U.S. influence in the Philippines are regarded as repeating past mistakes. De la Cruz draws a parallel between resistance to U.S. occupation at the turn of the century with the end of WWII and the Japanese occupation of the Philippines:

> From 1898, [the U.S.] encountered resistance from patriotic Philippine civil servants, from the revolutionary president Emilio Aguinaldo...When the Spaniards were driven away by the States they thought that they'll be able to establish their nationalistic setup but...somehow I think at that time the United States wanted to really develop and reform the Philippines...I was kind of really disappointed after the Philippines was really destroyed during WWII. I was hoping that the national leaders of the Philippines will agree for them to be helped by the [United] States to have the Philippines recover from that devastation. But somehow the nationalists, like this guy Claro M. Recto, they wanted right away to be self-sufficient...I think for me that was a mistake because the reason I'm

[62] de la Cruz, M 2005.

> saying this is I was comparing this to what Douglas Macarthur did to Japan. After Japan was completely annihilated Douglas Macarthur helped them get up on their two feet. And I think that should've been the case in the Philippines.[63]

Here, de la Cruz depicts Philippine nationalism as hindering the development of the Philippines, a depiction that echoes the racist assumption behind the ideology of benevolent assimilation: People of color are incapable of establishing a democratic nation on their own and must be taught how by previously established nations, usually founded by white males. De la Cruz provides the example of President Emilio Aquinaldo's premature nationalism as misunderstanding the U.S. benevolent desire to "develop and reform" the Philippines. After WWII, the Philippines became an independent nation, in accordance with the 1934 Tydings McDuffie Act, which specified that the U.S. would grant the Philippines independence after a 10 year commonwealth period. De la Cruz believes that Philippine independence at this time was a "mistake" implying that Philippine nationalists rushed to be independent prematurely because "they wanted right away to be self-sufficient." He suggests that nationalists like Claro M. Recto who helped draft the first Philippine Constitution and actively participated in the first independent Philippine administration, were incapable of successful independence like President Emilio Aguinaldo. De la Cruz implies that the lack of economic development in the Philippines is due to the refusal of U.S. help following WWII by Philippine nationalists. Thus, the retelling of the Philippine-American War as a misunderstanding translates to Philippine nationalism as perpetually misunderstanding U.S.' desire to help the Philippines to the detriment of the Philippines. For de la Cruz, post-WWII Philippine

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[63] Ibid.

independence thus becomes a cautionary tale for never refusing U.S. "help" in the Philippines, legitimating any future U.S. neocolonial influence in the Philippines.

As a U.S. commonwealth, Puerto Rican consent to U.S. rule is not secured through constructing histories emphasizing the benevolence of U.S. help. Rather, continuing U.S. colonialism is de-emphasized through the separation of Puerto Rican cultural nationalism from Puerto Rican political nationalism, allowing Puerto Ricans to assert cultural independence despite its commonwealth status.[64] Puerto Rican identity is constructed as a mixture of indigenous Taino, African, and Spanish influences, free from the influence of U.S. culture and Puerto Rican history is constructed along these same lines. Nicole Delgado, a Puerto Rican poet who came to the U.S. to pursue a graduate degree describes that in both private and public schools in Puerto Rico, her history courses dwelled more on indigenous history and the Spanish colonial period, but afterwards

> History becomes a blur. This usually happens toward the end of the semester, so teachers are left with no time to go into the details of the processes that took place during the 20th century...They teach about the Foraker and Jones Acts, which granted us a civil government and US citizenship. Then they talk about Operation Bootstrap and the process of industrialization. And they talk about 1952, Luis Muñoz Marín, and the blessings of the Estado Libre Asociado...They do not tell us that industrialization meant the displacement and dismantling of [the] Puerto Rican agricultural base, that our basic food staples were substituted by imported goods from then on, that part of the industrialization efforts was sending people away to work overseas.[65]

By emphasizing native Puerto Rican history and the Spanish colonial period, Puerto Rican history conforms to the construction of a Puerto Rican cultural identity that is free

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[64] For more on the separation of cultural nationalism and political nationalism, see Duany 2002 especially the chapter entitled "A Postcolonial Colony?: The Rise of Cultural Nationalism in Puerto Rico During the 1950s."

[65] Delgado 2006.

of U.S. cultural influence. Scant coverage of the 20th century conveniently minimalizes U.S. colonialism in this construction of Puerto Rican history, mentioning only events that validate U.S. benevolence in the form of a civil government, citizenship, and industrialization. Delgado uses the word, "blessings" in her description of 1952, the year that Puerto Rico became a U.S. commonwealth, to emphasize that this ideal representation of then Governor Luiz Muñoz Marin and Operation Bootstrap leaves out the negative consequences commonwealth status and industrialization had for Puerto Rico.

The necessary migration of Puerto Rican displaced agricultural laborers to the U.S. was one significant consequence of Operation Bootstrap. Delgado describes how Puerto Rican migration is left unaddressed in Puerto Rican classrooms:

> I wanted to come to New York because I wanted to learn about the migration history of Puerto Rico. That kind of historical secret, not secret, but the government has done crazy things to encourage migration and they don't talk about it. So, I wanted to see it first hand. I knew there were so many things about the history of Puerto Rico that I was not being taught and it was really difficult to find information about it in the island. So that was my goal to come here.[66]

In the first half of the 20th century, some Puerto Rican migrants came to the U.S. as agricultural contract workers. However, the implementation of Operation Bootstrap in 1948 resulted in the rapid industrialization of Puerto Rico. In the switch from an agricultural to an industrial economy, unemployment rates rose. To address the problems of unemployment and overpopulation on the island the Puerto Rican government encouraged migration to the U.S., especially New York City, leading to increased Puerto Rican migration in the 1950s. The necessity of creating an independent Puerto Rican

[66] Ibid.

cultural identity also necessitated Puerto Rico to disavow its diaspora in the U.S. because these migrants' prolonged contact with the U.S. compromised their construction of cultural purity. Thus, Puerto Rico had to also disavow its role in encouraging migration to maintain its image of cultural nationalism.[67] Delgado's above quote also reveals that the effectiveness of U.S. colonial amnesia requires one to leave the colonial space to more easily access histories made inaccessible by U.S. because they do not fit into the construction of a U.S. history that emphasizes U.S. colonial benevolence.

Foucault argues that the institutionalization of knowledge entails the necessary disqualification of some knowledges in order to legitimize others.[68] These knowledges are not institutionalized because they do not affirm or conform to institutionalized knowledge. In the case of Puerto Rican history that Delgado describes, a narrative of U.S. colonial benevolence and of Puerto Ricans' agreement to a beneficial, political subjugation to the U.S. was legitimized by institutionalized Puerto Rican history. The plight of poor, displaced, rural workers migrating to the U.S. does not conform to institutionalized history and thus becomes a "historical secret," or a subjugated knowledge. The illegitimacy of subjugated knowledges ensure that these knowledges remain local because they lack the institutional power to reproduce themselves beyond the local space. For this reason, Delgado needed to go to New York City to learn the history of Puerto Rican migration from Puerto Rican migrants themselves.

Frank Samson, a Filipino who immigrated to the U.S. in 1971, describes how institutionalized Philippine history emphasized U.S. colonial benevolence and rendered

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[67] Duany 2002.
[68] Foucault [1997] 2003.

U.S.' interests in retaining influence over the Philippines a subjugated knowledge. Samson's recollection of how Philippine history was taught to him in the Philippines differs little from de la Cruz's account of what he learned about Philippine history:

> The details of the history books were almost the same. The way the Americans were able to rescue, underline the word rescue, the islands from the Spanish...the way that the United States gave us independence in 1946 and also about the war between the Japanese and the Americans in which the Philippines was...occupied by the Japanese and the U.S. forces were able to liberate us, quote unquote, liberate us from the Japanese and then they gave us our independence in 1946. That's about all the history books taught us... Most of the books are dealing with the positive side of history and never the negative side.[69]

Like in de la Cruz' account of Philippine history, the historical parallel between WWII in the Philippines and the Philippine revolution against Spain both end with the U.S. helping the Philippines out of war with one of the U.S.' rival empires. Unlike de la Cruz, Samson relays this history with skepticism, as indicated by his comments to "underline the word rescue" and to put quotes around the phrase "liberate us." Samson recognizes that the history he learned in the Philippines was selective. When asked about how he learned about the "negative side" of history, he stated that he only learned about it through his own personal reading in the United States: "I read papers about...the peasant movement, the huk balahak movement during the 1950s and 60s and how the CIA helped Magsaysay, then president Magasaysay regain control of the Philippine presidency through the efforts of the CIA."[70] After citing this instance of U.S. neocolonial influence in the Philippines, Samson notes that the U.S. exerts its influence similarly globally, which he learned by reading Cornel West's evaluation of the current state of U.S.

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[69] Samson 2005.
[70] Ibid.

democracy, *Democracy Matters*, at the recommendation of his son, a Filipino American activist and academic.[71] Like Delgado, Samson could only access the subjugated knowledge of self-interested U.S. imperialism from the local Filipino community resources that his son became involved in.

Although it was only after im/migrating to the U.S. that Delgaldo and Samson accessed these subjugated knowledges about the Philippines and Puerto Rico, this does not imply that a critique of U.S. imperialism is widely circulated in the U.S. Such critiques are confined within local communities because these communities do not have access to resources or the power to widely disseminate their critiques. However, institutionalized U.S. histories that largely omit the Philippines and Puerto Rico are reproduced nation-wide by the U.S. public school system. Whereas Philippine and Puerto Rican history are recast on the islands to enable U.S. (neo)colonial hegemony, Philippine and Puerto Rican history are conspicuously absent in the teaching of U.S. history, despite the fact that they are among the islands that make up the U.S. first foray into an overseas empire. As a majority of my interviewees attest, the Philippines and Puerto Rico are mentioned briefly, if at all in primary and secondary school. U.S. Puerto Rican poet Nancy Mercado relates that "[t]he first time that I really learned or saw that there was anything offered to me about my history was when I went to college; nothing in high school, nothing in grammar school, not any history or information."[72] Most of the poets I interviewed learned about Philippine or Puerto Rican history either outside of elementary school or high school.

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[71] West 2004.
[72] Mercado 2006.

Any discussion of the Philippines and Puerto Rico affirmed United States benevolence on these islands. Nelly de la Cruz, the White American mother of Filipino American poet Alison de la Cruz, learned little of the Philippines in her public school education: "I guess I was familiar with 'I shall return,' Douglas Macarthur's' words...I heard of the Bataan death march. I knew we had a military presence there. Beyond that I really didn't know that much about the Philippines."[73] What she learned about the Philippines related only to WWII and did not reference the preceding U.S. colonial period. The history taught to her emphasized the violent excesses of the Japanese occupation of the Philippines, particularly the forced week long march of 75,000 U.S. and Filipino soldiers who were Japanese of prisoners of war to a military camp in Tarlac province, where prisoners were indiscriminately beat and killed. In the context of this violence, Douglas Macarthur's promise to return to and liberate the Philippines becomes another example of U.S. self-less benevolence. This narrative of WWII in the Philippines omits that the Philippines was still a U.S. commonwealth when it was attacked. The Japanese invasion of the Philippines began with a military air attack on Manila that took place on the same day as the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.[74] Thus, the Japanese attack on and occupation of the Philippines was primarily an attack to hinder U.S. military strength in the Pacific. In this context, U.S. efforts to liberate the Philippines during WWII signify U.S efforts to regain control of its territory and its strategic military point in Asia. Eliding the history of U.S. colonialism in the Philippines enables the battle

[73] de la Cruz, N 2005.

[74] Both the Philippines and Hawaii were U.S. territories when bombed by the Japanese in December 1941. However, Hawaii is constructed as already part of the U.S., as the attack on Pearl Harbor is seen as an attack on American soil. The Philippines, on the other hand, is constructed as not a part of the U.S. It is a land that the U.S. saves.

against the Japanese in the Philippines to become a battle for Filipino "liberation" by the generous U.S. military.

U.S. Puerto Rican poet Sandra Maria Esteves describes what little she learned about Puerto Rico in her private Catholic high school:

> Basically the history is from a European, white perspective...There was no information about third world culture or communities; about my culture, about Latino culture or Puerto Ricans or Caribbeans, other than you know the savages who were around when Columbus showed up. And they don't tell you about all the slaughtering that happened...They really don't tell you about colonialism. I mean they tell you yeah Puerto Rico's a colony of the United States but they soften it so much that you say gee, lucky for Puerto Rico that that happened. You know, that's how you, that's how you grow up thinking.[75]

Esteves describes the racism against people of color inherent in institutionalized histories that depict White Europeans or Americans as being the agents of progress on lands previously inhabited only by savages or previously mismanaged by corrupt colonizers. Equating Puerto Ricans and other Caribbean peoples with savages who are incapable of establishing their own government enables the erasure of the "slaughtering" of natives and an understanding of colonialism as beneficial and thus supports a narrative of U.S. colonial benevolence.

Here, Esteves gestures towards the lasting impact that high school history courses can have since it determines how students think as they mature. However, the reproduction of institutionalized histories of the Philippines and Puerto Rican and the ideologies that accompany this reproduction is not only accomplished through public school curriculums. Esteves also describes how public schools encourage assimilation through the marginalization of other cultures. As the rest of this chapter elaborates,

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[75] Esteves 2006.

encouraging im/migrants to the United States to assimilate aids in the reproduction of institutionalized histories by implying that success in the U.S. entails shedding their immigrant identities, languages, and histories.

Forgetting by Acculturation in the United States

The entangled relationship between education, assimilation, and the reproduction of institutionalized histories and U.S. ideology provides a sense of how ideological state apparatuses can simultaneously appear to be independent institutions but still all reproduce state ideology. Due to U.S. imperialism in the Philippines and Puerto Rico, Filipino and Puerto Rican im/migrants' assimilation to the U.S. begins in their homelands, where public schools already reproduce narratives of U.S. colonial benevolence. However, upon arrival in the United States, assimilation becomes construed as a personal choice between becoming American or remaining mired in old ways. Institutions such as public schools encourage and aid in the assimilation of (im)migrants to U.S. culture by complimenting images of "good immigrants" that work hard and shed their traditional ways to become Americans.[76] Failing to acknowledge how the prior, institutionalized assimilation in the homeland influences assimilation in the U.S. enables the coincidental forgetting of Philippine and Puerto Rican history in public schools and Filipino and Puerto Rican im/migrant homes that strengthens the narrative of U.S. colonial benevolence. In this section, I will examine how institutional and societal pressure for Filipino and Puerto Rican im/migrants to assimilate influence their decisions to acculturate and enable their children's acculturation in the U.S. Their motivations to

[76] Ong 2003 looks at how welfare as an institution that disciplines Cambodian refugees to assimilate.

acculturate are not born solely of a loyalty to the U.S. inculcated by a colonial education, rather self-interests also inform their decision to acculturate.

The assimilation paradigm is premised on racist assumptions similar to those often used to justify colonization. Both assume U.S. or European culture represent modernity and progress. Assimilation offers a path for immigrants of color to progress, to become a modern subject by relinquishing their homeland's culture and language. Maintaining the culture and language of the homeland is not only deemed unnecessary in the U.S., but sometimes construed as a detriment to attaining success in the U.S.

Although the motivations behind and the experiences of acculturation seem very similar for both Puerto Rican and Filipino im/migrants to the U.S., Puerto Rican cultural nationalism and the welcomed Americanization of the Philippines distinguishes how these two groups grapple with acculturation. I begin this section by discussing acculturation within U.S. Puerto Rican families before discussing acculturation within Filipino American families and end the section with a discussion on articulate silences and acculturation.

Puerto Rican Cultural Nationalism and Acculturation

Despite the importance that Puerto Rican cultural nationalism places on the maintenance of Puerto Rican culture and the Spanish language, this does not necessarily hinder the process of acculturation among Puerto Rican im/migrants, especially linguistic acculturation. The emphasis placed on producing fluent English speakers in U.S. public schools often results in the loss of Puerto Rican Spanish. In her study of Puerto Rican families living on the same block of El Barrio in New York City, antropolitical linguist Ana Celia Zentella found that third generation Puerto Ricans born in the U.S.

increasingly lose their fluency in Spanish despite their early exposure to Spanish in the home. The children become monolingual English speakers after entering public school.[77] Such was the experience of third generation U.S. Puerto Rican Bonafide Rojas. Rojas' mother told him that after spending three years of his childhood life in Puerto Rico he could speak "perfect Spanish until I got to elementary school and totally lost it. I've been trying to get it back ever since."[78] The U.S. school system actively contributes to the loss of home languages and the possibility of bilingualism.

In his poem, "Boricua," Jose Angel Figueroa implies that U.S. public schools criminalize Spanish by describing that schools have "a warrant for your accent."[79] To reform the "criminal" act of speaking Spanish

> Schools wanted
> to cave in your
> Puerto Rican accent
> and because you
> wanted to make it
> you had to pledge
> allegiance lefthanded
> when you had lost your soul
> during some English exam

Figueroa represents the institutionalized pressure to linguistically assimilate that schools apply to Puerto Rican Spanish speakers. On the one hand the efforts of the poem's protagonist to acculturate to the U.S. are represented as disingenuous. S/he pledges allegiance left handed instead of right handed implying that the loss of language or an accent represents an empty gesture of allegiance. Speaking an American accented English

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[77] Zentella 1997.
[78] Rojas 2006.
[79] Figueroa forthcoming; Zentella 1997 discusses how Puerto Rican Spanish and English, especially that of the lower classes, is considered to be "deformed linguistic models" that account for Puerto Rican poor performance in school. Such arguments support the myth of cultures of poverty.

in order to succeed does not translate to actual cultural acculturation. However, Figueroa then equates the loss of language as the loss of soul, arguing that regardless of the motivation, the consequences of linguistic acculturation affect more than just one's spoken language. He implies that the loss of language unknowingly leads to an irreplaceable loss of one's self. In the U.S. Puerto Rican context, equating acculturation with a loss of soul captures the emotional anxiety behind the cultural nationalist desire to maintain a Puerto Rican culture untainted by U.S. American culture.

Like Rojas, Anthony Morales is also a third generation Puerto Rican in the U.S. who was exposed to Spanish at an early age in the home but did not learn to speak the language fluently. He attributes his limited Spanish speaking ability today to Spanish classes, a trip to Spain, and the necessity of using Spanish while working in the Spanish speaking community. However, he believes that both U.S. colonialism and his public school education resulted in his inability to speak Spanish fluently. The metaphor he uses to describe his limited Spanish ability is "colonialism on my tongue."[80] Here, colonial influence is linked to English, although both English and Spanish are languages introduced to Puerto Rico by colonialism. Puerto Rican cultural nationalism constructs English as the encroaching language that continually threatens Spanish's designation as the official language of Puerto Rico, though the force of Puerto Rican cultural nationalism alone does not prevent the loss of Spanish among third generation U.S. Puerto Ricans.

[80] Morales 2006.

Morales' limited exposure to Spanish in the home was coupled with a limited exposure to Puerto Rican culture and history in the home. He knew that his grandparents were from Puerto Rico, but growing up he did not hear stories about Puerto Rico:

> I didn't get any of those idyllic stories about how beautiful things were and [exclamations of] "My God, I wish we could go back or any of that stuff." I never got that. And I think that speaks heavily to a colonial experience of wanting, or forgetting...I discovered and learned on my own in terms of studying my history...In a lot of ways the mission for my parents' generation being such a fresh and recent people here...their duty was to forget some of those things. Whereas for me, I feel like my generation being [the] second generation here, being a lot removed from my grandparents' experiences and those historical experiences makes me have to remember all the things that they forgot. And not to say that they forgot, it ain't like that, but forgot in the sense of like not actively passing that on, of...really cutting that section off, cutting that possibility off because their duty now is to make it in the United States, make it in New York City, not so much to be thinking about going back to Puerto Rico.[81]

Morales underscores the agency his parents took in deciding not to pass on Puerto Rican culture, language, or history by specifying that forgetting can entail a conscious decision. However, he also describes acculturation and seeking out success in the U.S. as a "duty," one born of U.S. colonialism's importation of the U.S.' "American Dream" of success as a reward for hard work and perseverance. Morales does not clearly specify for whom these duties are served, though im/migrants' decision to assimilate is often made in the interests of future success, both their own and their children's.

Not all (im)migrant parents believe that imparting their culture to their children will necessarily hinder their acculturation. Meagan Ortiz's parents did not find exposing her to Puerto Rican culture contradictory to her acculturation. On the one hand, Ortiz describes her parents' efforts to facilitate her acculturation:

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[81] Ibid.

> How the hell do you think I got stuck with a name like Megan Elizabeth?... It's like all their assimilationist dreams are wrapped up right there... My parents really immersed me in American culture. I was sent to private schools, and not just any private school, Montessori, you know, all super smart, independent thinker type schools. It ended up freaking backfiring on them, but whatever...They took me to the opera, ballet, you know. I went to ballet lessons. I went to classical piano lessons...I learned how to ice skate.[82]

Ortiz construes her parents' choice of non-Hispanic names for her as symbolic of their hopes that she be American. Her parents were discerning in the type of American culture they exposed her to, investing in immersing her in high culture by enrolling her in private schools, introducing her to classical music, operas, and ballet dance. Such an education was meant to acculturate her to join an elite class of Americans. At the same time, Ortiz visited Puerto Rico every year in her childhood:

> We'd go [to Puerto Rico] every Christmas and then at Christmas, you got bombarded with it. It was like super Puerto Rican time. I had to learn all the Christmas songs in Puerto Rican [Spanish], all the Aguinaldos, the parranadas, the Christmas caroling in Puerto Rico... We danced at parties and we had the big roast pig at the big party and we celebrated Three Kings day.[83]

During these visits, Ortiz participated in Puerto Rican Christmas traditions. Although Ortiz can name equivalent U.S. Christmas practices to describe some of the traditions, describing aquinaldos as Puerto Rican Christmas songs and parranadas as Puerto Rican Christmas caroling, these practices are culturally unique. Her regular participation in these festivities suggests that her parents saw nothing contradictory about occasional Puerto Rican cultural celebrations and pursuing an American identity. Thus, their decision to familiarize her American high culture was to enable her entrance into a

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[82] Ortiz 2006b.
[83] Ibid.

particular social class, not to Americanize her. Taking this into consideration, their decision to give her Anglo-Saxon names does not necessarily indicate their desire for her to be American, but for her to assume a specific social position. Im/migrants who acculturate only for practical reasons, like obtaining success, do not necessarily internalize the racist assumptions that equate American and European culture with progress. They do not im/migrate to become American, but to become successful.

Although the complete absence of Puerto Rican culture and history in Morales' home and the annual participation in Puerto Rican cultural traditions in the Ortiz home convey the diverse methods that im/migrants use to acculturate, these divergent experiences may also signify how gender affects acculturation. Both Morales and Ortiz have only one sibling. Morales has one brother and Ortiz has one sister. Scholarship on the gendered nature of nationalism argues that whereas men are encouraged to become modern subjects and help the nation progress, women are expected to reproduce the nation's culture and traditions. [84] Thus, Ortiz's regular exposure to Puerto Rican culture can also be understood as preparation for her and her sister to reproduce cultural traditions, a responsibility that would not fall on Morales and his brother. Sandra Maria Esteves' experience likewise points to how acculturation is gendered. Although she did not learn about Puerto Rico in the home, she learned about Puerto Rican gender roles:

> [T]here were other things I knew culturally from my Titi Julia, who was a very traditional Puerto Rican woman, who was you know one of those women who stayed home and cooked all day long because she had to feed four kids. And um, I used to sit in the kitchen with her, spend hours in the kitchen...I learned how to make pasteles with her and soguegitos and a lot of traditional type foods just from being in the kitchen watching her and I

[84] McClintock 2005 discusses how women are constructed as embodying national tradition. Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1994 also make this point in when they discuss the contradictions between women in the nation-state as both subjects and objects of national interest.

> was the taste tester. And she'd feed me rice and beans everyday. To this day I love rice and beans I could eat them everyday, you know. So that was a, that was a different learning, but I couldn't name it.[85]

Although her own mother worked and could not take care of her, in her Titi Julia's kitchen Esteves learned that it was nonetheless the Puerto Rican woman's responsibility to tend to the home and children. In learning to cook traditional foods, she learned her own domestic responsibilities and how to reproduce Puerto Rican culture. Puerto Rican cultural nationalism's focus on the maintenance of a pure, traditional Puerto Rican culture results in different gendered experiences of acculturation.

Exposing children to culture in the form of food does not necessarily equate to teaching history and a parent's willingness to talk about their lives or to teach their language does not necessarily translate to imparting histories of these islands to their children. Just as Puerto Rican cultural nationalism is detached from any movement for political independence on the islands, Puerto Rican culture in the diaspora can likewise be constructed as separate from Puerto Rican history and politics, thus rendering it unthreatening to U.S. control of Puerto Rico. Sandra Garcia Rivera describes how Puerto Rico was a backdrop for many of her parent's stories: "What I learned about Puerto Rico was related to them, more to my parents than about Puerto Rico, right? It was Puerto Rico through my parents living, through their lives...[and] family stories. It wasn't politics. It wasn't political."[86] Nancy Mercado, another U.S. Puerto Rican poet, describes how her parents only spoke Spanish at home, talked about family in Puerto Rico, and took her to visit Puerto Rico every year, but it was only in college that she learned the

[85] Esteves 2006.
[86] Rivera 2006.

political history of the island.[87] Though Puerto Rican cultural nationalism might not value acculturation, the division it constructs between culture and history also makes resistance to acculturation unthreatening.

Filipino Colonial Mentality and Acculturation

Some Filipino American scholars argue that the tendency among the Filipino American community to value U.S. culture at the expense of Filipino culture is symptomatic of a colonial mentality, or an internalized belief that Filipinos are inherently inferior to White Europeans or White Americans.[88] In justifying U.S. colonization of the Philippines as providing help to Filipinos incapable of independently building their own nation, Filipinos internalized their own inferiority. Through the lens of Filipino colonial mentality, the process of adopting U.S. culture and shedding Filipino culture equates with progress.

Filipino American Cheryl Samson also identifies a "colonial mentality" as one cause of her mother's hesitance to speak about the Philippines and her life there.

> My mom is actually the silent one. I hear bits and pieces of it but a huge chunk of her life I'm not aware of... I think she's really victimized by colonial mentality. She's just like, "why do you want to know so much about the Philippines? You know, we've left that behind and we're here now"... Like my mom's very "The Philippines is worse so why do we need to talk about it?" We came here for a better life so, you know. So she's very...I don't know. My mom just has crazy colonial mentality kind of like you know in a sense like in how she'd pinch my nose. And you know, I love sitting in the sun and she'd be like "you're going to get skin cancer. You're going to get dark like your dad."[89]

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[87] Mercado 2006.
[88] For ongoing research on the causes and effects of colonial mentality among Filipino Americans, see David & Okazaki 2006.
[89] Samson 2004.

Samson's mother views the im/migrant experience through assimilation's linear narrative of progress. The Philippines is placed definitively in the past as something "left behind" whereas the present and future are "here" in the U.S. The racist assumptions of progress that premised manufactured consent to colonialism creates the desire to move on and forget the past. By pinching Samson's nose to shape it similarly to a White person's nose and by encouraging Samson to stay out of the sun to remain as light skinned as possible, her mother attempts also to physically assimilate her daughter's image into that of a White American indicating her acceptance of Western beauty standards.

The widespread acceptance of the imposition of the English language as an official language in the Philippines leads Filipino immigrants to value linguistic acculturation for their children. Within the post 1965 cohort of Filipino immigrant families, most of the 2nd generation cannot speak a Filipino dialect fluently. Filipino immigrants often chose to speak only English with their children, although they still use a Filipino dialect among themselves. As a result, the children of Filipino immigrants at most can only understand their parents' dialect. Being a monolingual English speaker became conflated with U.S. patriotism beginning during WWI, when the loyalty of Germans in the U.S. came under question because of their bilingualism and efforts to maintain the German language in their communities. Thus, being American became associated with speaking English only.[90] Manny de la Cruz decided not to teach his children Tagalog or about the Philippines despite his White American wife's view to the contrary:

[90] Pavlenko 2002.

> I said you know you should be teaching Tagalog as one way for them, your kids, to connect to your roots. And plus it's really great to be bilingual. I think there's a different flavor, I guess, of life when you speak a different language. But he was reluctant to do that and I think partly because he wanted to be American.[91]

Though de la Cruz's wife supported their children to be raised bilingual, she conceptualizes bilingualism through a lens of multiculturalism. Tagalog here becomes one of many different languages to choose from. Imagining languages other than English as different "flavors of life" underscores multiculturalism's exoticization of culture and does not address the different hierarchies of languages that exist in the U.S. The association of English with being American in the U.S., along with the association of English fluency and economic privilege in the Philippines account for Manny de la Cruz's decision to "be American" and to prevent his children from being a "different flavor" of American by not teaching Tagalog.

However, a colonial mentality does not account for all the reasons that Filipino immigrant parents may want their children to acculturate linguistically and culturally. Like the Ortiz family, some Filipinos wish to acculturate not because they value acculturation, but because they want to facilitate their children's success in their new environment. Alan Aquino relates how his parents regarded exposing him to Filipino culture as detrimental only under certain circumstances:

> My parents...deliberately didn't teach me Tagalog or Filipino or tell me about history because they wanted me to fit in, you know they were minority immigrants in a white suburb of Chicago. Uh, by the time I was 6 years old and we moved to California, they offered to teach me Tagalog but by that time I already made it clear. No. I don't want to learn that.

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[91] De la Cruz, N 2005.

> That's not a part of my culture... you know, the ultimate youthful denial, I would declare to my parents I was white.[92]

Aquino's parents chose to withhold Filipino language and history to enable his successful acculturation when they lived in a predominantly white, Midwestern suburb. However, after moving to Southern California, where there is a larger population of Filipinos and other people of color, his parents thought that knowing a Philippine language would no longer cause any problems. Taking into consideration the local population in deciding whether or not to acculturate illustrates that Aquino's parents did not believe acculturation to be necessary for success generally, just necessary in certain places. Thus, it is not sufficient to equate Filipino Americans' desire to acculturate with a colonial mentality or a desire to be American. Some view acculturation as a practical necessity.

Frank Samson, Cheryl's father, did not value acculturation nor did he see it as a practical necessity for his children's success. He introduced his children to Filipino culture but did not discuss Filipino history with his children because he feared the consequences. As a professor of electrical technology at the Polytechnic University of the Philippines in the 1960s, he was arrested and imprisoned on false murder for escorting his students to protest against then-President Marcos' imposition of Martial Law. He managed to be released and escaped to the U.S. Samson feared that initiating discussions about living conditions in the Philippines might encourage his children to be activists:

> I saw nothing positive about what's happening in the Philippines. And I was apprehensive if they get too fervent in their participation on being activists for Filipino groups they might be getting involved with those activists out there whose main purpose is to sow discord and probably to overthrow the government. And I didn't want that to happen. And as far as I was thinking I wanted to prevent, to distance them from that. I don't

[92] Aquino 2005.

> want to prevent them from enjoying their cultural heritage in terms of going into dances and forums there about Filipino culture but I don't want them to get involved any deeper into really hard core activists.[93]

Samson's negative experience as an activist motivated him to insure his children's wellbeing by discouraging their politicization. He distinguishes here between culture and activism, regarding culture as benign activities that would introduce Filipino heritage without exposure to anything negative. The desire to limit his children's contact with the Philippines in this case comes out of his concern for their safety due to his traumatic experience with Philippine politics, not from his hopes for their quick Americanization.

Articulate Silences and Acculturation

Though Samson experienced political trauma in the Philippines and wished to protect his children from similar experiences, Samson did not remain silent about his wrongful incarceration in the Philippines like his wife. When Cheryl and her brother asked him about the Philippines, he told them his story about Martial Law persecution. In response to the same question, his wife would respond to Cheryl, "The Philippines is worse so why do we need to talk about it?" Although Cheryl attributed her mother's silence on the Philippines to colonial mentality, her mother's silence can also signify an unspeakable trauma.[94] Jenny Edkins argues that "[s]urvivors of political abuse in the contemporary west have something compelling to say, but it is something that is unsayable in the vocabulary of the powerful, and it is dangerous to the political

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[93] Samson 2005.

[94] The silence about life before immigration is not specific to a Filipino mentality. Park forthcoming demonstrates how Chinese Americans and Korean Americans also knew very little about their immigrant parents' immigration experiences. What they did know conformed to the American Dream narrative of upward mobility. Takezawa 1995 (especially ch. 4) and other studies on 3rd generation Japanese Americans also indicate their 2nd generation parents' refusal to speak about the trauma of internment. Thus, the parents' silence in this study cannot be explained solely by colonialism.

institutions in place."[95] The absence of a vocabulary to articulate such trauma and the absence of a community to create and acknowledge a vocabulary to articulate such trauma results in a silence that could facilitate forgetting. So though silence may be interpreted as a conscious choice to not pass on stories of the Philippines and Puerto Rico to their U.S. born children and grandchildren, some traumatic memories may remain unspeakable.

For Puerto Rican migrants to the U.S., the Ponce Massacre may be one example of an unspeakable tragedy. What began as a peaceful protest the on March 21, 1937 ended in violence. The Nationalist Party organized a march to commemorate the end of slavery in Puerto Rico and to demand the release of Puerto Rican political prisoners including the Nationalist party leader Pedro Albizu Campos. Despite securing the necessary permits, the colonial government intervened to void the permit and authorized police to fire on those participating in the march, killing 21 people and wounding another 150 people.[96] Puerto Rican poet Mariposa states that "I'm sure my grandmother knew about the Ponce massacre but something as horrible as that, that's something you want to forget. You know, some things are too painful to remember."[97] The violence used to suppress resistance to U.S. colonial rule during the Ponce Massacre disrupts the institutionalized narrative of U.S. colonial benevolence and the consensual nature of the U.S.-Puerto Rican colonial relationship, and thus remains unspeakable.

Even when the past is not rendered unspeakable, a lack of opportunities to talk about the past may still result in silence. Many Filipino and Puerto Rican im/migrants

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[95] Edkins 2003:7.
[96] For more on the Ponce Massacre, see Paralitici 2006.
[97] Fernandez 2006.

come to the United States seeking better employment opportunities than those available in their home islands. Puerto Rican migrants to the U.S. usually lack a higher education degree and occupational skills, restricting them to low-skilled jobs in urban areas.[98] For Filipino Americans, the 1965 Immigration Act allowed Filipinos lacking higher education to be reunited with family members already living in the U.S. or to enter as highly educated professionals to fill labor needs in the U.S.[99] As a result, many Filipino and Puerto Rican parents in the U.S. work long hours to support their families and do not have time to tell their children about the Philippines or Puerto Rico. U.S. Puerto Rican poet Lenina Nadal was born into an activist family that participated in the Civil Rights movement and the Puerto Rican independence movement in the 1960s and 1970s. Her grandfather helped organize the 1937 march that became the Ponce Massacre. However, for much of her childhood, her parents' busy schedules and her isolation in the suburbs kept this history from her:

> When I was around 8 years old, my parents decided to move out to Long Island because my aunt was going back to Puerto Rico and gave them the house or whatever. So I think from that point until like 17 or 18 or something I was completely not connected, you know what I mean, to knowing about a lot of issues in the Puerto Rican community and all of that because my parents were always doing work, doing work.[100]

Likewise, Filipino American poet Johneric Concordia states that his parents were too busy working to tell him about the Philippines:

> While the parents are working we're raised by our grandparents. So I was able to get an understanding, learn Tagalog, and practice my Tagalog with my grandparents. And then, I would ask questions about where we are in

[98] Ortiz 1986.
[99] Espiritu 2003.
[100] Nadal 2006.

> the Philippines. What are we dealing with? But many times your parents didn't have any time to really explain that because they're working.[101]

Concordia's exposure to the Philippines through his grandparents led him to ask his parents about the Philippines directly, but they did not have the opportunity to answer his questions. Thus, silence on the topic of Puerto Rico or the Philippines in these im/migrant families may not be about acculturation at all, but about the inability to articulate (neo)colonial trauma or the lack of free time to discuss the past.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I examined how public school systems in the Philippines, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. encourages, enables, and coincides with the acculturation of the children of Filipino and Puerto Rican im/migrants. This coincidence results in the selective remembering of Philippine and Puerto Rican history that supports the historical narrative of U.S. colonial benevolence. The interrelationship between institutionalized assimilation in public schools and acculturation in the im/migrant home demonstrates how ideological state apparatuses power is derived from their appearance of independence. The multiple motivations behind acculturation in the home illustrate that Filipino and Puerto Rican im/migrants have not necessarily internalized the racist ideology that devalues Filipino and Puerto Rican culture to encourage acculturation to a superior U.S. culture. Regardless of the motivation, the end result still enables forgetting the past. What is forgotten or rendered unspeakable can sometimes find expression elsewhere, as my next chapter explores.

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[101] Concordia 2005.

III. Reconstructing (Post)Colonial Memories: The Search for Subjugated Knowledges

The past is like the scene of a crime: if the deed itself is irrecoverable, its traces may still remain. From these traces, markers that point towards a presence, to something that has happened in this place, a (re)construction, if not a simulacrum, of the event can be pieced together. Memory work has a great deal in common with forms of inquiry which – like detective work and archaeology, say – involve working backwards – searching for clues, deciphering signs and traces, making deductions, patching together reconstructions out of fragments of evidence.[102]

Memory is a territory no parliament has claimed.
Soon bulldozers will come and our stories will bleed
through the porous edges of the remembered world.[103]

The absence of the Philippines and Puerto Rico from institutionalized narratives of U.S. history, the marginalization of Filipinos and Puerto Ricans in the U.S., and the pressure to culturally assimilate all contribute to the selective remembering of Philippine and Puerto Rican histories. The effectiveness of these technologies of forgetting renders memories that do not conform to a narrative of U.S. colonial benevolence illegitimate. These memories become what Foucault defines as subjugated knowledges: "a series of knowledges that have been disqualified as nonconceptual knowledges, as insufficiently elaborated knowledges."[104] Without being legitimized by institutionalized history, these memories are understood only as unsubstantiated personal anecdotes. Subjugated knowledges are often most visible within specific locales because limited resources prevent their widespread reproduction. Foucault emphasizes that the local character of subjugated knowledges indicates these are "autonomous, non-centralized kind[s] of theoretical production, one...whose validity is not dependent on the approval of

[102] Kuhn 2002:4.
[103] Gamalinda forthcoming 2007.
[104] Foucault [1997] 2003:7.

established regimes of thought."[105] Subjugated knowledges of U.S. colonialism in the Philippines and Puerto Rico are dispersed in multiple locations requiring Filipino Americans and U.S. Puerto Ricans to actively seek out and piece together the past from disparate spaces of learning. In other words, learning occurs where, as U.S. Puerto Rican performance poet Ray Ramirez puts it, "supposedly no learning happens."[106]

This chapter examines the disparate spaces where Filipino Americans and U.S. Puerto Ricans access subjugated knowledges about the Philippines and Puerto Rico. Their understanding of Philippine and Puerto Rican history is pieced together from family stories, the local Filipino or Puerto Rican community, from university ethnic studies courses, novels representing the Filipino American or U.S. Puerto Rican experience, and independent research. Limited institutionalized surveillance provides these sites the freedom to produce different types of historical narratives about the Philippines and Puerto Rico, but the lack of institutional support limits the spaces where their narratives can be reproduced. Despite the freedom of expression enjoyed in these sites, because memory and history are not discreet but interrelated processes the narratives that emerge from these sites can validate institutionalized history and institutionalized histories can depoliticize subjugated knowledges by incorporating them into a linear history.[107]

I will begin the chapter by considering the historical narratives that are articulated in family stories and their interrelationship to institutionalized histories. The vocabulary of institutionalized histories can either facilitate or prevent the narration of family stories.

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[105] Foucault 1980:81.
[106] Ramirez 2006.
[107] Edkins 2003 argues that traumatic events are depoliticized when they are fixed into a linear history and assigned a singular meaning through memorialization practices.

I will continue by discussing the role that the university plays in reproducing Filipino and Puerto Rican history through diversity programs and through Ethnic Studies courses. Though the multiethnic contextualization of Ethnic Studies courses allows for a relational understanding of the experiences of people of color, the specificities of Filipino and Puerto Rican history are not always fully addressed by these courses, necessitating those who want to learn more to pursue independent research projects or seek out the resources of the local community. I will end the chapter with an examination of the historical narratives that the local Los Angeles Filipino community and the local New York Puerto Rican community reproduce. The narratives of the Philippines and Puerto Rico that can be shared and those that remain unspeakable depend on the vocabulary that the space, the community, and the institutions make available.

Family Stories

In her examination of the remembrance and memorializing of the nuclear bombing of Hiroshima, Lisa Yoneyama argues that personal memory must be understood as complicitous with history. History can influence personal memory and given sufficient resources personal memory can also influence history. U.S. institutionalized histories in the Philippines and Puerto Rico selectively acknowledge events that occurred during these islands' colonial periods, providing a vocabulary to narrate some historical events while leaving others unarticulated. Jenny Edkins argues that "for language to work at a particular time and in a particular context, it is necessary for there to be a linguistic community that shares or is subject to something that will temporarily fix meanings."[108] The reproduction of institutionalized histories in public schools also produces a

[108] Edkins 2003:7.

community that shares the language, or lack of, to describe and incorporate the events historically. Thus, some historical events are made easier to share and others easier to erase. In this section I will examine the interrelationship between the family stories and institutionalized histories. Though few poets claimed that their parents or grandparents taught them Philippine or Puerto Rican history in the home, many did regard their parents or grandparents to be storytellers. At times their family stories are ones for which the Philippines or Puerto Rico serve only as a backdrop, perhaps for a romantic story about how their parents met, but these family stories can also convey Philippine or Puerto Rican history. The interaction between institutionalized history and personal memory at times results in mutually affirming narratives, at other times leaves the narratives at odds with one another, and sometimes renders some memories unspeakable.

Institutionalized histories of WWII in the Philippines emphasize the brutality of the Japanese occupation, the resilience of the Filipinos and U.S. soldiers who endured the brutality, and the selfless determination of the U.S. military to help their Filipino friends.[109] Many Filipino Americans share family stories pertaining to the Japanese occupation of the Philippines during WWII that echo this narrative. The family stories of this time period that several of the Filipino American performance poets shared with me follow a similar narrative: Japanese soldiers approached their family homes. Through ingenuity, the grace of God, luck, their own determination, or a combination of these factors, their parents' and/or grandparents' lives were spared. I provide the following excerpts to illustrate these similarities:

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[109] This narrative is represented in such films as *Back to Bataan* (1945) and *The Great Raid* (2005).

Alison de la Cruz: In World War II, my grandfather was a guerilla fighter. He and his group...were hiding at my grandmother's house. The Japanese soldiers were coming down the street or whatever, so they went and hid in the backyard, in the field. The soldiers came into the house and they were in the backyard and they were I guess 10 feet away from where my lolo and his friends were and she picked up a broom and was like get out of my garden and was acting crazy. So they just kind of laughed at her and walked away...you know, if they had walked 5 more feet, everyone there would have been dead.[110]

Dorian Merina: While my grandma was pregnant with my father...she thought [my grandfather] was going to die and she would never see him again. [Japanese soldiers] took him out and they held him at gunpoint and they were almost going to kill him. Then he said, "Oh wait, wait, wait. I have to go back in and get my jacket." And so they said okay. They let him get a jacket. He went in and got a jacket, and he put on his one good military stripes. And so when he went out and they saw his military stripes, that kind of spared his life.[111]

Edren Sumagaysay: The Japanese were going from farm to farm trying to find American spies or whatever. It was pretty much to just beat down on them, the farmers...[They asked my grandfather] "Are you an American sympathizer" and my grandfather didn't want to say, he said, 'no!' [They called him a] liar. So they took him by the leg, they wrapped him with a rope and they put him upside down. They started beating him with ripe bamboo...And my grandma who was pregnant with my mother ran up to them and started begging them to not kill him. You know what I mean, and there's something about the exchange that my grandma did... But for some reason the exchange that my grandma and one of the soldiers had they let them both go.

[On my father's side]...my grandfather said to him if the...Japanese come, I want you to run into the fields and stay there until someone gets you and take your brother with you...and don't come out until someone gets him. So..the Japanese are coming and my grandpa's like, "Okay, go!" So my grandfather stayed on the farm, I guess, to distract...My dad at 7 years old took my uncle who is 4 into the fields...Anyway, after a week, one of the neighbors went to go get him. And when they came back my grandfather had like 3 missing fingers.[112]

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[110] de la Cruz 2004.
[111] Merina 2004.
[112] Sumagaysay 2005.

> Rebecca Baroma: My dad remembers that one time they were hiding from the Japanese and [my grandparents] took him in the river and they covered his mouth and he thought he was going to die.[113]

These stories represent the random violence of the Japanese occupying force in the Philippines during WWII. Although none of these narratives reference the U.S., they all conform to the institutionalized narrative of U.S. colonial benevolence in the Philippines. The representation of the brutal Japanese occupation not only enhances the savior image of the U.S. military returning to fight the Japanese, but it also contrasts Japanese occupation with the benefits of U.S.' benevolent occupation. By emphasizing the luck and persistence required to merely survive, these stories also enable a narrative of U.S. benevolence in intervening in the Japanese occupation to save the Philippines. These stories are easily circulated in part because institutionalized histories validate and provide a vocabulary with which to articulate their experiences. That these poets all share this family narrative in common emphasizes that there is a community where these stories can be recognized. U.S. popular culture also validates this history through the films *Back to Bataan* and *The Great Raid*, and through the 2002 novel written by Filipina American Tess Ulriza Holthe that all represent the narrative of Japanese colonial violence and U.S. benevolence. The overdetermined representation of WWII in the Philippines ensures its continued reproduction and circulation and fixes its meaning into a linear narrative of Philippine progression to independent nationhood and U.S. benevolence.

In the absence of discussion about U.S. imperialism in the Philippines, other family stories told to Filipino American poets conform to the construction of the U.S. as a nation of opportunity that offers political refuge to all immigrants, a narrative central to

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[113] Baroma 2004.

the U.S.' national origins.[114] Filipino Americans, and Asian Americans in general, are regarded as prime examples of immigrant success in the U.S. The Immigration Act of 1965 allowed immigration from Asia, overturning decades old legislation prohibiting it. This immigration act created immigration preferences for professionals and the family members of U.S. citizens. Thus, many Filipino immigrants after 1965 came as professionals, allowing them to enter the U.S. middle class and validate the construction of the U.S. as a land of opportunity.

Both Faith Santilla and Cheryl Samson's fathers were professors who fled to the U.S. when former Philippine President Marcos declared Martial Law. Faith Santilla's father was a history professor at the University of the Philippines who came to the United States as a political refugee[115]. Cheryl Samson's father, Frank Samson, was a Professor of electronic technology who chaperoned students at anti-Martial Law demonstrations and was fraudulently imprisoned. Cheryl relays how family connections saved his life:

> Fortunately for his situation he had like a relative that was somehow in the government so they made phone calls to call the relative and right before they were about to kill my dad they somehow got to intervene... I know there were some famous Martial Law protestors and organizers during that time and after that they were starting to petition to go to the U.S. My mom came first because my mom's sister was already out here. You know during that time they were able to petition family members. My mom came first and she petitioned my dad.[116]

This story and Santilla's both fit into the construction of the U.S. as a nation that welcomes immigrants regardless of color or belief, especially those who are persecuted elsewhere. Without contextualizing this story within the U.S.-Philippine colonial relationship, the Philippines can be understood in these stories as an unstable third world

[114] Behdad 2005 refutes this construction.
[115] Santilla 2004; Samson 2004.
[116] Samson 2004.

country whose refugees found safety in the U.S. Situating Philippine history within a history of U.S. neocolonialism reveals the continuing entangled, unequal relationship between the U.S. and its former colony. The U.S.' continuing military, economic, and political influence over the Philippines after its independence actively created the instability in the Philippines that compelled Santilla and Samson's fathers to leave.[117]

Whereas the stories of Santilla's and Samson's fathers can seemingly attest to the narrative of the United States as a welcoming new home for immigrants, the limited employment opportunities available to them upon immigrating questions the narrative of guaranteed economic success for hardworking immigrants in the U.S. Despite having advanced college degrees and experience teaching in prestigious universities in the Philippines, neither Santilla nor Samson's fathers could find employment as professors in the U.S. because their degrees were not recognized or accepted as equal caliber to U.S. degrees. Instead, like many other highly educated Filipino immigrants, they both experienced downward mobility. Some who were doctors in the Philippines settled for positions as nurses in the U.S.[118] Others, like Santilla's father, were unable to use their degrees at all. Although he had training and experience as a former history professor, he worked at the Los Angeles County Women's hospital and helped those in the local community without health insurance secure health care.[119] Samson's father went from being an electronics professor to being a practitioner, working as an electrician at the Los Alamitos military base. However, he did not passively accept his working conditions in the U.S. When his company chose to promote a younger, less experienced, White man

[117] Shalom 1981 provides a detailed account of the logistics of U.S. maintained its influence over the Philippines after granting it political independence.
[118] Espiritu 2003.
[119] Santilla 2004.

instead of him, he filed an unsuccessful discrimination case. [120] This is a rare instance of Filipino immigrants challenging the employment status quo in the U.S. Most Filipino immigrants who experience downward assimilation in the U.S. do not question their social positions because employment in the U.S. confers a higher level of status on them in the Philippines regardless of if the employment matches their level of education.[121]

Among the U.S. Puerto Rican performance poets I interviewed, there were no family stories that repeated a similar narrative of a single historical event in Puerto Rico. Two poets recalled their elders praising Luis Muñoz Marin, the first elected Puerto Rican governor who established Puerto Rico as a U.S. Commonwealth and implemented Operation Bootstrap facilitating Puerto Rican migration to the mainland and the island's industrialization.[122] Ortiz recalls that framed pictures of Muñoz Marin hung on the walls of her grandparents' home and that her grandmother told her that he had saved Puerto Rico.[123] Equating the further integration of Puerto Rico into the U.S. economy as saving Puerto Rico supports a narrative of continued Puerto Rican consent to U.S. imperialism and U.S. imperialism as benevolent. However, most poets did not relate similar stories about learning about Muñoz Marin in the home.

The family stories that the New York Puerto Rican performance poets do share in common were stories of migration and economic hardship in the U.S. As U.S. citizens, Puerto Rican migration to the U.S. is not limited by the restrictions placed on politically sovereign nations like the Philippines. Most Puerto Rican migrants in New York arrived as part of the largest wave of migration that took place after WWII during Operation

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[120] Samson 2004.
[121] Espiritu 2003.
[122] Mercado 2006; Ortiz 2006b.
[123] Ortiz 2006b.

Bootstrap. Most came as low wage laborers and endured meager living conditions. Esteves recalls that her mother worked at a quilt factory "and she stayed with that job for 45 years. And they sold the job twice and she went with the equipment, like she was part of the equipment."[124] Rojas' grandmother began working at an industrial laundromat shortly after migrating to New York City and remained until her retirement in the 1990s.[125] Nancy Mercado's parents first settled in Atlantic City, where her father worked as a migrant farm worker until he found work as a dishwasher in an Italian restaurant. He worked there for 25 years, ending his career there as a chef.[126] These employment stories of the post WWII migration cohort all emphasize worker loyalty. However, only one specifies that there was job advancement, indicating the lack of better alternative employment. The analogy comparing Esteves' mother to "part of the equipment" captures factory workers' invisibility. Her mother was not regarded as a human being, but as part of the machinery. The factory owned her labor. Such narratives illustrate the U.S. as offering job security in low wage jobs and limited opportunities for advancement.

Limited resources required some Puerto Ricans who wished to migrate to do so under difficult circumstances. Figueroa describes how during childhood visits to his grandmother in Rincon, Puerto Rico, she told him stories about his father's experience as a migrant worker to the U.S. His father left his mother in Puerto Rico to work in the U.S., but when the time came for him to return to Puerto Rico, he was forced to continue working. Years passed without his father's return and his "mother went to look for my father several times, each time she got close to him, and [when she finally] found him he

[124] Esteves 2006.
[125] Rojas 2006.
[126] Mercado 2006.

was almost dead."[127] This story debunks the construction of economic opportunities for immigrants, this story emphasizes the U.S.' need for cheap immigrant labor and the dangers that occur when lengths are taken to secure this labor.

Figueroa cites the story about his father among the stories his grandmother told him about Puerto Rico that he would not understand until later. Finding a vocabulary with which to share experiences unrecognized by institutional history and a community that could recognize and understand this experience help stories make historical sense and fit into a larger narrative. Mariposa's poem, "Marintaya" represents both the experience of poor Puerto Rican migrants who could only afford passage to the U.S. on the SS Marine Tiger, a U.S. Naval warship and the lengthy process of articulating non-institutional memories like this one:

> but I'd hear the song
> and it would remind me
> remind me
> to write the poem which I kept
> forgetting
> forgetting to write
> the poem
> I knew I must write
> before the spirit of the song
> escaped my memory
> before I'd forget
> it's melancholy song
>
> But I'd hear the song
> again and again
> haunting me
> reminding me
> of the past
> buried deep within
> the ice cold earth
> but living

[127] Jose Angel Figueroa 2006.

like the seed lives to birth itself in the spring
like the caterpillar lives in the cocoon
to one day manifest glorious butterfly wings

But it is deep pain
that I feel as Tio sings
of a cold story
deep seeded in shame
alive in the vital mind
of el viejito negrito
each chord coated in pain

Marintaya
Marintaya
Mis hermanos me llaman asi

the dark story of
the many thousands who came[128]

Her uncle's story and the song he sang stayed with Mariposa. Although she could not initially put his story to words and hence kept forgetting to write her poem, it remained with her, "haunting" her. Feminist sociologist Avery Gordon states that "[i]t takes some effort to recognize the ghost and to reconstruct the world it conjures up."[129] Though she represents her fears about the story escaping her memory before she could articulate it, she also represents the memory as a "seed [that] lives to birth itself in the spring" and the time she was unable to write his song as an "ice cold" winter. The story needed time to develop and Mariposa needed time and resources to learn how to articulate his story. When she finally remembers her Uncle's song, which she quotes in italics in her poem, the story is not only her uncle's story, but a history telling the "story of the many thousands who came." Realizing that the story is one her uncle shares in common with others enables her to finally write her poem.

[128] Mariposa 2001:40.
[129] Gordon 1997:66.

The relative absence of family stories narrating a single event in Puerto Rican history shared in common seems to suggest a lack of unifying historical events, or a lack of historical trauma, that occurred in Puerto Rico. However, this absence may reflect the separation between history and culture that Puerto Rican cultural nationalism creates, it may reflect the absence of historical events that can be easily incorporated into a narrative of U.S. benevolence, or it may indicate that institutionalized narratives do not recognize moments of historical trauma in Puerto Rico and thus provide no vocabulary for its articulation. As a U.S. possession the erasure of U.S. imperialism in Puerto Rico best contributes to a narrative of U.S. benevolence, therefore the absence of both Puerto Rico in U.S. historical narratives and the absence of an institutionalized vocabulary for Puerto Rico historical trauma are not surprising. The U.S. is invested in having these colonial traumas remain subjugated knowledges.

U.S. institutional power plays a role in determining what family stories can be recognized as part of history and what family stories are only personal anecdotes. However, patriarchal power also plays a role in determining what can and cannot be considered history. Gendered histories differentially authorize males and females to tell history. With the exception of Figueroa, the few poets who felt that their parents intentionally imparted Philippine or Puerto Rican history in the home credited their fathers with imparting that history. Santilla describes her father's influence on her understanding of Philippine history:

> Both my parents are pretty much living history books. They're pretty old. They both lived through WWII. My dad was a guerilla fighter, so he had a lot of stories. But yeah, my dad has a lot to do with me becoming interested in history and politics... In elementary school every year at least in the L.A. county school district you have to make your own books and

> then submit it... I was like 9, and my book was called Philippine heroes. It outlined different Philippine heroes from Lapu-Lapu in 1500 to Cory Aquino and he largely had to do with that. He's very philosophical, very historical.[130]

Santilla compares both her mother and father to history books because of the historical events they witnessed while living in the Philippines, but she describes only her father as a teacher of Philippine history and credits only him for her project of Philippine history and her interest in history in general. She identifies his role in WWII as a guerilla fighter as the source of many of his stories and part of his authority on Philippine history. Her silence about her mother during WWII and the stories that she may have about WWII implicitly authorizes her father's stories as part of WWII history in the Philippines while excluding her mother's. Constructing war history as the military contributions made illustrate a masculine understanding of what are considered to be war efforts, war stories, and war histories.

Rich Villar likewise recognizes his father for imparting him with a sense of Puerto Rican history although he was born to a Cuban immigrant father and Puerto Rican migrant mother. He described how he learned some of Puerto Rico's colonial history from his father's discussions of Cuban history:

> My father was educated under the Cuban system and knew all about Cuban history, so I knew all about the history of how the United States basically marched in in 1898, 1896 and colonized Cuba and Puerto Rico. I learn more about Puerto Rican history through my father than I do through my mom which is ironic. Yeah, when you learn all about that stuff you kind of learn about it all together because the U.S. is this big concept...that marched in the early part of the 1900s...I learned all that stuff from my father.[131]

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[130] Santilla 2004.
[131] Villar 2006.

In contrast to his father, Villar describes his mother as unfamiliar with Puerto Rico in historical terms because she migrated to New York at a young age and thus was subject to the pressures of assimilation in the U.S. and taught institutionalized histories of Puerto Rico. Instead, her "memories of Puerto Rico tend to be...food related... She used to tell me stories about back in the day and my grandmother used to cook a certain way."[132] Whereas his mother imparts a sense of nostalgia about Puerto Rican food to Villar, his father imparts the shared history of U.S. military intervention and occupation in the Caribbean. His mother's preference to talk about Puerto Rico in terms of culture, in this case the culturally specific ways foods are prepared, points towards the often assumed responsibility of im/migrant women to maintain their homeland's culture and tradition and more particularly to a Puerto Rican cultural nationalism that separates history from culture.[133] Women are not only encouraged but authorized, at times even expected, to reproduce culture. Associated with the domestic realm, they are often not authorized to narrate history because history is understood usually takes place outside of the home on battlefields, in government chambers, etc. Thus, the interaction of gender and memory also determines what can be considered history and what remains subjugated knowledge.

British film scholar Annette Kuhn argues that even "if the memories are one individual's, their association extend far beyond the personal. They spread into an extended network of meanings that bring together the personal with the familial, the

[132] Ibid.
[133] Billson 1995 for more on the gendered expectations and work of preserving culture among minority groups in Canada.

cultural, the economic, the social, the historical."[134] The family stories told to Filipino American and U.S. Puerto Rican performance poets touched not only on personal family histories but were in dialogue with institutionalized histories and ideology. At times family memories and institutionalized histories were mutually validating. At other times they were at odds with one another. Some memories could not be articulated when at odds with institutionalized histories because there was no vocabulary to publicly narrate the memory. Other memories remained unspoken or nor understood as history because not all people are authorized as history tellers. As Mariposa's poem shows us, some family memories cannot initially be articulated as history but can eventually be given the vocabulary and community. These can sometimes only be found outside of the home.

University Resources

During the Civil Rights Era, students of color in California and New York challenged institutional power at college campuses by demanding Ethnic Studies programs. They no longer wanted their communities to simply be the object of study but wanted to be able to shape the scholarly discourses about their experiences and history in the United States. In other words, they wanted to establish an autonomous space within the academy where their subjugated knowledges could be institutionally recognized and taught. In the San Francisco Bay Area, Black, Chicano, Native American, and Asian American students formed the Third World Liberation Front. Their strikes interrupted classes at both San Francisco State College (now University) and University of California (UC) Berkeley and resulted in the establishment of ethnic studies departments on both

[134] Kuhn 2002:6. Kuhn suggests memory work as a methodology that links personal memory with cultural memory and history. She uses photographs, many of them her family's personal photographs, to construct a history of the British working class after WWII.

campuses.[135] In New York City, Black and Puerto Rican students demanded open admissions and the establishment of Ethnic Studies at the City College (now University) of New York (CUNY). These students wanted to be represented at the college both demographically and in the curriculum. After protests closed down the CUNY campus in Harlem, their demands were met. CUNY established Puerto Rican Studies and Afrikana Studies departments and admissions were open to all students in the top half of their classes. [136]

Though institutionalization lends validity to subjugated knowledges, subjugated knowledges can also be co-opted when being incorporated into institutionalized narratives. Furthermore, Foucault warns that the insistence of establishing subjugated knowledges as an academic science results in disciplinary boundaries that serve to exclude other knowledges and authorize only those who can speak a scientific discourse.[137] The establishment of Asian American Studies, Latino/a Studies, and Ethnic Studies provided an academic space where Filipino Americans and U.S. Puerto Ricans could learn about the Philippines, Puerto Rico, and their populations in the U.S. and provided a vocabulary for them to speak about the experiences people of color share. However, the limited resources of Ethnic Studies departments and the wide scope of Asian American Studies and Latino/a Studies often resulted in the continued marginalization of the particularities of Filipino American and U.S. Puerto Rican Studies. This marginalization compelled many Filipino American and U.S. Puerto Rican poets to use the academic tools provided by Ethnic Studies courses for independent research, to

[135] Murasae 1976.
[136] Glazer 1998.
[137] Foucault [1997] 2003.

take advantage of other university resources, or as my last section will explore further, to turn to the local community to supplement their understanding of Philippine or Puerto Rican history.

Universities with the resources to establish Filipino American or Puerto Rican Studies departments, or that offered courses specifically focused on Filipinos or Puerto Ricans not only taught Filipino American and U.S. Puerto Rican students about the Philippines and Puerto Rico but also provided them a historical framework with which to contextualize and understand their experiences. Filipino American poet Cheryl Deptowicz recalls that her Filipino American Experience class at the University of California, Santa Barbara was "a real eye opener" because

> it validated a lot of our experiences, my family's experiences. It explained a lot of why we struggled so much...It's like, why are we so poor? ...Why am I the only one in college? Why is it that I'm not...that I don't have role models to say this is how you maneuver yourself through college? This is how you're going to survive. I found it very difficult. Why is it that you guys are always fighting over money? And so the Filipino American Experience class really explained some of that and then I realized what my parents were going through a lot of people were going through and that it wasn't their fault.[138]

U.S. Puerto Rican performance poet Marina Ortiz describes feeling similarly in taking courses in the Puerto Rican Studies department at Hunter College:

> It explained a lot. It cleared up a lot of personal issues, too, because you know, for many years I was very angry at my mother and my father for not being there for me, but it just put things in a more historical context of why these things happen to them and to me. And I learned more about what goes on there and the history there than anything that my family ever told me or showed me or that I saw going there, the few times that I did.[139]

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[138] Deptowicz 2005.
[139] Ortiz 2006a.

Both Deptowicz and Ortiz explain how their ethnic specific courses taught them to locate their families' experiences within a larger historical context. They discovered that their individual struggles, struggles they felt were caused by their parents' personal decisions, were not unique but could be explained by larger historical forces. Understanding how their personal histories relate to histories of the Philippines and Puerto Rico illustrates that they share their experiences in common with other Filipino Americans and U.S. Puerto Ricans. In this manner, these courses provide a vocabulary and historical framework that enables them to articulate how their social position affects their experience and alerts them to a community with whom they can share these newly articulated experiences.

In the absence of Filipino American or Puerto Rican specific courses, those who wish to learn about the Philippines or Puerto Rico turn to other Ethnic Studies courses. Disciplines designed to produce knowledge about a panethnic category at times privilege the experiences of some ethnic groups over others in an attempt to be comprehensive. Asian American Studies and Latino/a Studies departments with particularly limited resources are not able to hire scholars specializing in the particularities of each ethnic group included in their panethnic formation. Within these larger panethnic disciplines, Filipino American studies and Puerto Rican studies often remain marginalized when the influence of U.S. imperialism is not taken into consideration. Specifically, the prior privileging of the immigrant narrative and the lack of discussion about U.S. imperialism in Asian American Studies obscures understandings about Filipino Americans, as well as

the experiences of other groups from Southeast Asia.[140] Within Latina/o Studies, Puerto Rico's continuing status as a U.S. possession differentiates the study of U.S. Puerto Ricans from those of other Latino groups in regards to issues of immigration and U.S. citizenship.[141]

The marginalization of Filipino American and Puerto Rican studies within Asian American Studies, Latina/o Studies and other panethnic or geographic area studies requires those interested in a thorough understanding of Filipino American or U.S. Puerto Rican issues to pursue independent research. Aquino entered the University of California, Los Angeles' (UCLA) Asian American Studies Master's degree program in the late 1990s. He developed a research project on Filipino American Poetics[142] but

> It was tricky getting my thesis together because there really was no specialist there on Filipino American history and culture. My committee was comprised of two empathetic Chinese American professors. You know, Filipino, Filipino American history and culture was not their niche or their experience. But their experience, their niche was history and English which I was trying to tap into anyway. So they helped tremendously, but in terms of articulating Filipino American history in that environment, it was all on me.[143]

Though he did not have the support of a professor specializing in Filipino or Filipino American Studies, Aquino took advantage of the resources that the program's faculty could offer him. By learning from his mentors' experience applying historical and literary methods and theories to other Asian American groups, Aquino learned how to apply those academic tools to Filipino American issues. If the institutionalization of history determines which narratives are academically rigorous histories and which are unfounded

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[140] Koshy 1997.
[141] Flores 2000.
[142] Aquino 2000.
[143] Aquino 2005.

legends, myths, or stories, Aquino uses institutionalized tools and vocabulary to authorize his own research as academically valid work.

Puerto Rican studies dovetails with African and African American Studies because of the history of slavery in the Caribbean and the resulting population of Black and mixed race Puerto Ricans. African American Studies at times provides a disciplinary entrance to the study of Puerto Rico. As an undergraduate at Cornell University in the late 1980s, Ray Ramirez accessed Puerto Rican history through the Afrikana department at a time when Cornell had yet to establish a Latino Studies Program. The classes he took in the Afrikana Department inspired him to learn more about Puerto Rican history:

> [T]hose Afrikana courses dealt with the Caribbean and dealt with Puerto Rico. And um, and so it allowed me to just want to learn more. I remember the first class that I took that really sparked my interest was a...was a playwriting class about the 60s. And the professor was Prof. Branch, Prof. William Branch, and he was a playwright...And I was asking him what were Puerto Ricans doing at that time? And he was really focusing on the African American experience and he told me to go find out. And so I went up on that and that really, I guess, it created the need in me to start writing poetry and start exposing all the things that I was learning at that point.

In contrast to Aquino, Ramirez was not trained in academic methods but in cultural production. Thus, Ramirez's independent research resulted not in the production of research project that would contribute to an academic discourse, but poetry that contributes to a popular discourse. In their study of war commemoration and the transmission of memory, Ashplant et al argue that representations of historical events by those who are not witnesses often take a creative form.[144] Though they posit that memories reproduced by those generations removed from a historical event takes a

[144] Ashplant et al 2000.

creative form because they cannot access these memories directly, the juxtaposition of Aquino and Ramirez's research processes illustrates that the available vocabulary determines the form that the representation of history takes. In the absence of an institutionalized vocabulary to narrate history, representing history creatively allows a historical narrative to emerge unfettered by the regulations of an institutionalized academic discipline.[145] However, by producing a creative product from his academic research, Ramirez's research is not accorded the authority of academic work.

The limits of institutionalized pan-ethnic disciplines leave the specificities of Filipino American and Puerto Rican history unaddressed. However, the nature of institutionalized knowledge is to exclude some knowledges to authorize others. Filipino American and Puerto Rican studies specific courses contribute to narratives of Filipino and Puerto Rican history that remember some events at the expense of others. In particular, the uneven gendering of nationalism and history that construct women as the keepers of tradition and men as the progressive agents of modern history functions to exclude women from linear narratives of national history.[146] The institutionalization of linear narratives of Philippine and Puerto Rican history results in the erasure of Filipinas and Puertorriqueñas in university courses and programming.

As an undergraduate at the University of California Irvine, Cheryl Samson took several courses focusing specifically on Philippine and Filipino American history. Despite the breadth of courses available to her, Samson found that the courses either marginalized or did not incorporate Filipinas or Filipino Muslims in their constructions of

[145] Gordon 1997.
[146] McClintock 1995.

Philippine history. In response to Samson's critique one Professor spent a class period discussing Filipinas in Philippine resistance movements. However, she did not think he thoroughly addressed her concerns:

> He ended up talking about how there were some women throughout. There wasn't a lot of information on them. You know, he talked about Gabriela Silang and Cory Aquino, but like I made him point out that there are also people around Jose Rizal's time other than like the Maria Clara figure that you know were also subversive. So he brought up some nurses, too, during different battles. I don't feel like he really covered my topic.[147]

Samson's professor took an additive approach to address her critiques, highlighting the contributions that women made to the already established narrative of Philippine history, but not showing how reading Filipinas into Philippine history might radically alter that narrative.[148] To include the contributions of a few well known Filipina figures that fought for social change provides no indication of how they envisioned social change or if their vision of social change differed from their male counterparts. In particular, Samson takes issue with the significance accorded to Maria Clara, the main female character in Jose Rizal's *Noli Me Tangere*, often understood as embodying the ideal Filipina: chaste, modest, and subservient to patriarchal power. The inclusion of Filipinas in Philippine history in this manner does not question patriarchal power in the Philippines and in the construction of Philippine history.

In a university not all learning occurs in the classroom. University sponsored speakers, conferences, and performances all participate in the production of knowledge. Mariposa did not learn Puerto Rican history as an undergraduate at New York University,

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[147] Samson 2004.
[148] Weiler 2000 argues for and provides examples of integrative approaches to the inclusion of women in history.

but through the Latina/o Leadership Opportunity Program hosted annually in the summer at UCLA. Here she learned about the history of U.S. imperialism in Latin America in general and in particular "about Don Pedro Albizo Campos and the independence movement and the existence of Puerto Rican political prisoners. I never knew that there was such a thing. I never knew of an independence movement."[149] Events that take place at the university do not necessarily indicate institutional recognition of the narratives that emerge at these events. Cultural productions critical to institutionalized history can take place at the university because cultural events are not authorized similarly to academic events. As a student at the University of Puerto Rico, Nicole Celcilia Delgado, did not have access to courses about Puerto Ricans in the U.S. Puerto Rico's disavowal of U.S. Puerto Ricans as culturally tainted and the silence around the Puerto Rican commonwealth's role in Puerto Rican migration to the U.S. results in limited inclusion of the Puerto Rican diaspora in Puerto Rican history.[150] At a campus performance featuring Nuyorican poets, including the famous Pedro Pietri, Delgado realized that "there were many things on the island that I was not being taught."[151]

However, even cultural productions privilege some narratives and some voices at the expense of others. Curious to learn more about the Puerto Rican migrants to New York, Delgado sought anthologies of Nuyorican poetry and discovered a predominance of male poets. She observed that the first anthology of Nuyorican poems, *Nuyorican Poetry: An Anthology of Puerto Rican Words and Feelings*, featured poems by "five women writers there and they're really hard to track and I tried to find books by them and they

[149] Fernandez 2006.
[150] Duany 2002.
[151] Delgado 2006.

weren't really that published."[152] Though Delgado was able to access subjugated knowledges about Puerto Rican migrants, the marginalization of women voices enables a male dominant understanding of the history of U.S. Puerto Ricans.

The establishment of university Ethnic Studies programs in the 1960s resulted in authorizing people of color as researchers and in institutionalizing the narratives they produced about themselves. Filipino American and U.S. Puerto Rican performance poets' experiences of learning their histories at the university illustrate that institutional power works through exclusion. On the one hand, Ethnic Studies courses provide Filipino Americans and U.S. Puerto Ricans with the vocabulary and conceptual framework to understand and articulate their histories in relation to U.S. imperialism. On the other hands, the limited resources of Ethnic Studies departments, and the construction of panethnic historical narratives (Asian American, U.S. Latina/o, African American) marginalize the effects of U.S. imperialism on Filipino Americans and U.S. Puerto Ricans and even establishing Filipino American and Puerto Rican studies as academic fields of study privileges patriarchal narratives of history. In becoming academic disciplines, bodies of knowledge are disciplined to take particular narrative forms that rely on the exclusion of the unauthorized.

Learning from the Community

Existing outside of the university and other institutional sites that narrate the nation, Filipino American and U.S. Puerto Rican communities reproduce knowledge that does not depend on institutions to recognize its validity. Instead, subjugated knowledges derive their authority from refusing to conform to institutionalized knowledge and

[152] Ibid

offering that which institutionalized history renders invisible.[153] Without disciplinary restrictions subjugated knowledges can take a variety of forms, though they often assume or are relegated to the realm of culture. Avery Gordon argues that the creativity inherent in cultural productions allows different narratives to emerge than those produced by the social sciences.[154] For these reasons, local communities play a crucial role in reproducing narratives of Filipino and Puerto Rican history, especially for those who do not have the means to attend college. This is not to suggest that historical narratives produced by these communities are not in dialogue with family stories or with institutionalized histories. However, local Filipino and Puerto Rican community organizations and their cultural productions do not promote acculturation as families and schools do, focusing instead on the preservation of Filipino and Puerto Rican culture and history. This different agenda more readily enables criticism of U.S. benevolence on these former island colonies. Since subjugated knowledges can only be reproduced in alternative spaces, these subjugated knowledges must be sought out.

The Philippine History Group of Los Angeles focuses specifically on reproducing Philippine history that intervenes in institutionalized histories and making these histories available to the local public. This group, and many Filipino organizations nation-wide, was particularly active during the turn of the 21st century commemorating the centennial anniversaries of Philippine independence from Spain and the Philippine – American War. By hosting a series of talks and making available on their website a collection of historical articles highlighting the U.S. preemption of Philippine independence and the

[153] Foucault [1997] 2003.
[154] Gordon 1997.

subsequent deadly war, the Philippine History Group of L.A. sought to ensure that the Philippine – American War not be forgotten. While their series of talks made a local intervention in historical narratives, their online collection of articles made their intervention available to anyone searching for information about the Philippine – American War and especially to the younger, internet savvy generation. Although she was born in the Philippines, Vanessa Vela-Lovelace grew up in a household where the Philippines was not discussed and she was unable to attend college. She first searched online when she first became curious about Filipino history in the late 1990s and found the Philippine History Group of L.A.'s collection of articles.[155] After reading the articles she attended the talks to learn more. Her previous unfamiliarity with Philippine history compelled her to print all of the websites articles because she considered them a "trove of finds, like studies that people, research people did and I never had any access. I just ate that stuff up."[156] Printing these articles ensured that Philippine history would not be inaccessible to her in the future. Through her own initiative and the efforts of the Philippine History Group of L.A., Vela-Lovelace learned about the Philippine –American War and a narrative of Philippine history that does not validate U.S. colonial benevolence like institutionalized histories do.

In the New York Puerto Rican community conferences targeting Puerto Rican youth, like the Muevéte la Boricua Youth Conference, occur on a regular basis. In contrast to the centennial commemoration efforts of the Los Angeles Filipino American community, the regularity of these events illustrate that remembering U.S. colonialism in

[155] This website can still be accessed, See Santos 1996-1999.
[156] Vela-Lovelace 2005.

Puerto Rico is not constructed as a commemoration of past events. The presence of U.S. colonialism in the presence makes not forgetting an active practice. The organizers of these conferences consist of community leaders and social change activists who focus specifically on issues pertinent to the Puerto Rican community. These conferences discuss the effects of U.S. colonialism in Puerto Rico, the Puerto Rican independence movement, and the plight of Puerto Rican political prisoners, issues that all contend with U.S. colonial benevolence or the erasure of U.S. colonialism in Puerto Rico. Attending a private Catholic high school in the Upper East Side of New York City, Meagan "La Mala" Ortiz did not encounter the history of U.S. imperialism in Puerto Rico until she attended a Muevéte la Boricua Youth Conference in the late 1990s. Though her motivation for attending the conference was to meet her boyfriend, not to learn Puerto Rican history, after attending a workshop on Puerto Rican identity led by Puerto Rican activist Richie Perez she approached him wanting to know more about Puerto Rican history.[157] Perez became Ortiz's mentor and "[r]ight away he was giving me books on Puerto Rican history and the movement and the struggle and he was talking to me."[158] To attract youth who are not interested in Puerto Rican issues or history, these conferences are packaged simultaneously as social events to reproduce Puerto Rican histories that challenge institutionalized narratives to new audiences.

Community organizations that reproduce Filipino and Puerto Rican culture also impart historical narratives of the Philippines and Puerto Rico and their diasporas. By discouraging acculturation, cultural organizations teach Filipino American and U.S.

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[157] Perez was a former young lord and community activist for social change. He also taught courses on labor issues and the Puerto Rican experience at local New York City universities, serving as the personal mentors for many New York Puerto Ricans. He passed away in 2004.
[158] Ortiz 2006b.

Puerto Rican youth to value their families' past, paving the way for them to value instead of disavow the histories of their parents' homelands. In the Los Angeles Filipino American community, the popularity of university Pilipino Culture Nights results in the multiple Filipino dance troupes in Los Angeles County that offer classes to Filipino American youth. In New York City, the established poetry community makes poetry the popular cultural form used to reproduce U.S. Puerto Rican historical narratives for the youth. These different cultural forms reproduce different historical narratives. Whereas Filipino American cultural dancing reproduces traditional dances and the Philippine histories attached to these dances, New York Puerto Rican poetry is not constrained to reproducing histories of the island and instead reproduces histories of U.S. Puerto Ricans.

In the Los Angeles Filipino American community, cultural organizations organize Filipino dance lessons and Filipino dance troupes to offer at risk youth an opportunity to spend their time after school off the streets. Through these dances, Cheryl Samson was first exposed to Philippine history. At her older brother's suggestion, Samson's parents enrolled her in Sining Ginto (Golden Arts), a Philippine dance troupe, to prevent her from further associating with high school gangs. Sining Ginto's choreographer, Tita Chona, insisted that her students learn both the dances and the history behind the dances. As a former member of the Bayanihan Philippine National Dance Company, Tita Chona herself researched the dances to ensure their authenticity.[159] For each dance Samson learned, Tita Chona used "maps to tell us okay this is the origin of the dance, these are the people that live there. She taught us chants, this is the meaning of the chant."[160]

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[159] For a critique of Bayanihan and other Philippine folk dances' claims to authenticity, see Gonzalves 2001.
[160] Samson 2004.

Philippine cultural dances are divided into several categories: tribal dances, rural dances, Muslim dances and Spanish dances. The histories these dances can tell follow a linear narrative of progress from the primitive, indigenous dances to the modern, Spanish dances. Likewise, the inclusion of the different categories of Philippine cultural dancing assumes a multicultural discourse that erases the hierarchies of power among the different groups that these dances represent. The equal visual representation accorded to the indigenous, rural, and Muslim in these dances belies their lack of political representation in the Philippines.[161] The linear Philippine historical narrative these dances reproduce also conform to U.S. institutionalized narratives that depict the U.S. as ultimately bringing progress to the Philippines after Spain's failure to do so.

Though cultural dances enable the reproduction of institutionalized Philippine and U.S. histories, participating in cultural dances often leads Filipino American youth to participate in other Filipino American community organizations that allow subjugated knowledges challenging institutionalized history to emerge. Like Samson, Johneric Concordia became involved with Philippine cultural dancing after encountering trouble outside of school. His brother intervened and enrolled Concordia in an after school program at Search to Involve Pilipino Americans (SIPA). Concordia makes a distinction between learning about Filipino culture and learning Filipino history: As he became more involved with SIPA, and later with Pro People Youth Corp, also known as Kabataang Maka-Bayan (KMB), he

> learned about what's happening in the Philippines and why it relates here and [it] really sharpened the analysis [and] we got to go beyond this culture... [I]t's quite ironic, as we search for identity, and we do PCN and

[161] Gonsalves 2001.

> we dance, the same dances that we're doing here are now being...the people that actually perform them indigenously are being wiped out, are being displaced, are being co-opted, to give up their culture.[162]

His initial involvement with cultural dancing at SIPA led Concordia to become more involved with other Filipino American community organizations, where he learned more about Philippine history and current events in the Philippines, including the struggles of Philippine indigenous minorities. Kabataang Maka-Bayan, a radical Philippine transnational organization, taught Concordia to be critical of the cultural dances he learned, giving him the framework to critique the nostalgic incorporation of indigenous culture while the Philippine state systematically destroys it, a critique often made of Western anthropology.[163] Learning Philippine culture taught Concordia institutionalized Philippine history but the interest in Philippine history that cultural dancing created enabled him to learn subjugated knowledges from the local Filipino community.

The popularity of and long established presence of performance poetry among New York Puerto Ricans makes poetry an accessible and commonly used cultural form for reproducing narratives of Puerto Rican history and solidifying a New York Puerto Rican identity. Whereas Los Angeles Filipino Americans learn a set repertoire of dances in dance troupes and through Pilipino Culture Nights, New York Puerto Ricans learn a set repertoire of poems. The formulation of set repertoires creates a cultural point of reference and historical narrative that becomes the basis for a shared identity for Filipino Americans and New York Puerto Ricans.

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[162] Concordia 2005.
[163] Rosaldo 1986.

At a March 2006 event marking the opening of an exhibit of artwork featuring Nuyorican poet Pedro Pietri at El Museo del Barrio in New York City Pietri's poetry was used to commemorate his life, but the group recitation of parts of two of his best known poems, "Puerto Rican Obituary" and "El Spanglish National Anthem" served to reproduce a shared historical narrative and to build shared community based on a shared identity.[164] "El Spanglish National Anthem" represents one Puerto Rican migrant's journey to New York City, the difficulties the migrant faces there, and the migrant's nostalgia for Puerto Rico. The poem challenges a number of key aspects in the construction of the U.S. as a land of opportunity and equality for all. Instead of finding success in the U.S., the migrant "Worked as hard as I could/ But my luck was no good."[165] Pietri emphasizes that the tales of U.S. rags to riches success are myth by stating that despite his hard work his luck never changed. Likewise, he argues that for Puerto Ricans higher education is not a guarantee of success:

> Many dropped out of school
> Others went to college
> Trying hard to get somewhere.
> In the land of da free
> Where without a degree
> You cannot collect welfare.[166]

The fate of those who drop out of school and those who go to college are equally dismal. He insinuates the opportunities for Puerto Ricans, even those with college degrees, are severely limited in representing college graduates who can only use their college degree to qualify for welfare. His cynical representation of the U.S. election process further

[164] Pietri 1973; Pietri 1993.
[165] Pietri 1993.
[166] Ibid.

solidifies his critique of how the U.S. limits the Puerto Rican migrant's possibility of success:

> We registered to vote
> Thinking that there was hope
> In elected officials.
> Pero as soon as they win
> For a moment they grin
> Then they drop all the issues.[167]

Striking at the heart of the U.S. democratic process, Pietri represents how candidates for public office pander to Puerto Ricans for support, making promises that they later break after they are elected with Puerto Rican votes. The representation of powerless Puerto Ricans living in poverty and longing to return to Puerto Rico questions institutionalized U.S. histories of im/migration. In contrast to im/migrant stories of success relayed back to those in the homeland, this narrative constructs the U.S. as the land of poverty and Puerto Rico as a land of sunshine and future happiness. However, the construction of this U.S. – Puerto Rican binary enables the erasure of U.S. colonialism, which is never explicitly represented in the poem.

Mariposa memorized "El Spanglish National Anthem" years earlier at Pietri's request and she now regularly performs the poem in his stead. By committing this poem to memory, Mariposa enables the continued performance of the poem, and the continued sharing of the poem's message, which she did at the Museo del Barrio that night. The chorus of the poem and the part which the crowd chants or sings together, is simply "I know, I know, I know" usually followed with a phrase indicating the migrant will return to Puerto Rico. That night the museum was filled with Pietri's family, friends, students

[167] Ibid.

from Boricua College, and others from the New York Puerto Rican community of all ages. Everyone knew when to chant together and in chanting that they knew, the crowd affirmed that they did indeed know the feelings, the experiences that the migrant in "El Spanglish National Anthem" faced because they were their own as well. The crowd's familiarity and memorization of key parts of the poem cements the critical narrative of Puerto Rican life in the U.S. among the New York Puerto Rican community.

Whereas cultural dancing and poetry reproduce historical narratives in their performance, literature representing the Filipino American and U.S. Puerto Rican experience challenges written institutionalized histories by offering an alternative written account.[168] These novels document the U.S.' continuing political, cultural, and social influences in the Philippines and Puerto Rico and how U.S. imperialism affects the lives of Filipinos and Puerto Ricans in the diaspora where public school history books do not. Literature allows authors to creatively represent how U.S. imperialism affects members of the Filipino American and U.S. Puerto Rican community when the evidence of such is rendered invisible by institutionalized historical narratives and ideologies.[169] Such novels constitute a community resource because they represent community histories.

Novels offer some poets both their first glimpse into the histories of their diasporas in the U.S. and their first example of Filipino American and U.S. Puerto Rican authors. Filipino American poet Alan Aquino recounts "when I read [Bulosan's] *America is in the Heart* the first time I was like 19. That was quite a revelation because here was another man who lived many decades ago and who took it upon himself to self

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[168] In my previous research, I argued that novels written by Filipino Americans and U.S. Puerto Ricans offers a critique of U.S. imperialism in the Philippines and Puerto Rico by illustrating the pervasive effects of U.S. colonialism and U.S. neocolonial hegemony on these islands. See Caronan 2003.
[169] Gordon 1997.

educate."[170] Carlos Bulosan's autobiographical novel represents the struggles of Filipino migrant workers on the West Coast and the protagonists' efforts to reconcile their hardships with American promises of equality for im/migrants. Aquino found a rare Filipino role model in Bulosan and became determined to educate himself about Filipino American history by reading more of Bulosan's literature. Having just entered college, Aquino had not yet encountered Asian American courses at California State University, Northridge and only recently discovered the Los Angeles Filipino American community. Prior to accessing these other sources of Filipino history, literature offered Aquino his only source of Filipino history leading him to "drive as far as like the midnight special bookstore at 3rd St. Promenade [in Santa Monica] because I knew that was the only place that sold Bulosan's books. I literally drove miles."[171] The necessity of driving miles to access sources of Filipino American history illustrates the scant availability of books on the topic and the individual effort required to access this history.

Piri Thomas' *Down these Mean Streets* offers U.S. Puerto Ricans a history of Puerto Ricans in the lower east side of New York City. The novel depicts the poverty, violence, and meager living conditions many Puerto Rican migrants faced in the 1960s. Many of the U.S. Puerto Rican performance poets I interviewed cited this novel as one source where they learned U.S. Puerto Rican history. For Anthony Morales, Thomas' novel changed his life when he read the book in high school:

> For the first time I read something that spoke, even if it was a little bit, about my experience, at least he was a Puerto Rican writing. And that just opened a whole new world of possibilities, a whole new world of, of opportunity to me because I felt like before my experience wasn't

[170] Aquino 2005.
[171] Ibid.

> anything. My experience wasn't worth anything because it hadn't been validated in anybody's eyes or like it wasn't out there or anything like that. But to see that somebody in the 60s wrote something about their life, heavily proclaiming the difficulty of the struggle that it is to be Puerto Rican and what that means, it just spoke to me on so many levels. It just, you know, I felt like a completely new person after I read that book. Aw, man. After that, went back to school, started to do a lot better in my classes, gained a new sense of confidence, wanted to start writing, started writing about all of my confusion[172]

The erasure of Puerto Rican history and of Puerto Ricans in the U.S. taught Morales that this history and his experience were not worth representing. In providing a history of the New York Puerto Rican experience, Thomas' *Down these Mean Streets* provided Morales and others with the vocabulary and confidence to articulate their experiences as U.S. Puerto Ricans.

Bulosan and Thomas served as examples of Filipino American and U.S. Puerto Ricans authorized to tell narratives of their diasporas in the U.S. *America is in the Heart* is part of Asian American literary canon and *Down these Mean Streets* part of the U.S. Latina/o literary canon. The canonization, or institutional incorporation, of these novels changes the framework in which these narratives are understood. Encountering these novels independently in the manner that Aquino and Morales did made these novels exceptional examples of the representation of their histories. Presented within a canon, these novels become understood as part of an additive multiculturalism. These histories become incorporated in a linear history of U.S. racism that recounts the history of past im/migrants whose struggles paved the way for equality in the present.[173]

Conclusion

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[172] Morales 2006.
[173] Palumbo-Liu 1995.

Subjugated knowledges about the Philippines and Puerto Rico threaten the linear narrative of Philippine and Puerto Rican history that U.S. institutions reproduce. Narratives of the Philippine – American War and other moments of colonial violence threaten the myth of U.S. colonial benevolence. The U.S.' continued control of Puerto Rico prevents the erasure of U.S. colonialism. The lack of opportunity and discrimination that Filipino and Puerto Rican im/migrants to the U.S. face contradicts the U.S. American dream and U.S. claims of equality. However, the lack of institutional recognition as valid historical narratives limits the reproduction of subjugated knowledges about the Philippines and Puerto Rico to non institutional spaces, diffusing their threat. This chapter examines the historical narratives made accessible to Filipino American and U.S. Puerto Rican performance poets by family stories, university ethnic studies courses, and from their local communities. These spaces and the narratives they produce are not discreet, but in constant dialogue with one another. Family stories can conform to institutionalized histories or can be recognized as part of a larger historical framework through university ethnic studies courses or local community narratives. Established as a site where people of color could reproduce and authorize subjugated knowledges about their communities, university ethnic studies courses teach students histories that are critical of U.S. institutionalized history, but their institutional incorporation can contribute to narratives of U.S. multiculturalism and the reproduction of patriarchal history. Filipino American and U.S. Puerto Rican community organizations at times validate and at other times challenge institutionalized histories. However, by valuing Filipino American and U.S. Puerto Rican culture and history, these organizations challenge the erasure that acculturation facilitates. The interaction of institutionalized

history and subjugated knowledges in these different sites illustrates the negotiations that take place in producing a historical narrative. The limited resources available for the reproduction of subjugated knowledges in contrast to those available to reproduce institutionalized histories make these negotiations fundamentally unequal and contained to specific locales.

IV. Local Genealogies of Global Power

The past is not simply there in memory, but it must be articulated to become memory.[174]

All my life I loved to learn. So I went to school and I read their books and I learned about the rulers and the conquerors of the Earth. I learned about the rich man and how he tells his story but what about my story? What about the people's story? What about, what about, can you tell me about the real story all those textbooks didn't tell me, about the hardships experienced by my grandmom and my grandpops? Why their land was stolen and they were forced to leave? Why they came to a country where they're only second class, where your skin color's a reason to hold you back? What about their stories? What about the people's story? What about, what about, can you tell me about the real story? Not a word about the injustice and certainly not a word about the heroes who selflessly fought for the rights and the welfare of their fellow man, woman children. It's justice they demand and true freedom from oppression and poverty for true equal opportunity. This is our story. This is our people's story and that's why it's on us. It's on us. It's really on us to continue this story cause its our people who are making history.[175]

In her poem "Our Story," the second epigraph above, Aquilina Soriano delineates the process of institutionalizing history, emphasizing the power differentials separating history from the subjugated knowledges that compose "the people's story." Institutionalized history tells the story of the powerful: the rulers, the conquerors, and the rich man. The people's story remains untold. Though she makes a clear distinction between the powerful and the powerless, Soriano only vaguely specifies who the powerful and powerless are. The powerful consist of rich, male rulers. The powerless consist of displaced, im/migrants of color who suffer from and fight against injustice. By not describing the powerful and powerless in the socially constructed terms of nationality, ethnicity, or race, Soriano demands for a radical reworking of history, one that recognizes that transnational coalitions of the powerful work together to create the inequality that the powerless around the world experience.

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[174] Huyssen 1995:3.
[175] Soriano 2001: my transcription.

Homi Bhabba argues that the "linear equivalence of event and idea that historicism proposes, most commonly signifies a people, a nation, or a national culture as an empirical sociological category or a holistic cultural entity."[176] Events that are incorporated into institutionalized histories are narrated as part of a national history, closing off the possibility that different interpretations of the same event could support other historical narratives.[177] Filipino American and U.S. Puerto Rican performance poets use the disparate subjugated knowledges they learned to construct a history of oppression and struggle they share with other people of color worldwide. They reconstruct history outside of a national framework to trace a genealogy of global power in their poetry. Foucault defines genealogy as a form of analysis that reactivates historically unrecognized local memories, dissenting opinions and theories to explore what was made inevident by the institutionalization of knowledge.[178] These performance poets reactivate local knowledges not only be reproducing these knowledges for diverse audiences, but by authorizing others to speak and articulate their own situated knowledges.[179] Soriano's direct address to the audience in her poem above, asking them "can you tell me the real story?" captures the authorization of other speakers to contribute to their genealogical project.

This chapter examines the construction and reproduction of a genealogy of global power by Filipino American and U.S. Puerto Rican performance poets. I begin with a textual analysis of Filipino American and U.S. Puerto Rican poetry to discuss their construction of genealogies of global power. The genealogies that Los Angeles Filipino

[176] Bhabha 1994.
[177] Duara 1995.
[178] Foucault [1997] 2003.
[179] Haraway 1988.

Americans and New York Puerto Ricans construct are similar in their attempt to incorporate the struggles of people of color worldwide, but they are not the same. The connections Los Angeles Filipino Americans and New York Puerto Ricans make differ according to their specific histories and social positions. The next section focuses on the reproduction of these genealogies in schools and in the local community. Filipino American and U.S. Puerto Rican performance poets participate in a local politics of memory by teaching others their genealogies of global power in any space available to them, sometimes creating their own poetry organizations with explicit pedagogical goals. The last part of the chapter looks at the authorization of other speakers who can contribute to their genealogies. Whereas institutionalized history excludes voices not trained in scientific discourses and rhetoric, Filipino American and U.S. Puerto Rican performance poets train and encourage other people of color to speak, thus reactivating local knowledges. The construction and reproduction of genealogies of global power make transparent and challenges institutional power that narratively excludes people of color to obscure global inequality.

Poetic Genealogies

Multicultural histories are additive histories that incorporate selected histories of people of color into a pre-existing national narrative without questioning the adequacy of that narrative framework for histories of people of color. Through this process Filipino and Puerto Rican history are uncritically incorporated into pre-existing narratives of U.S. imperialism and U.S. immigration. In reconstructing Philippine and Puerto Rican history, Filipino American and U.S. Puerto Rican performance poets abandon the additive model of multiculturalism. Instead of locating Filipino and Puerto Rican history within U.S.

national history, they locate their histories within global power hierarchies alongside other people of color. The genealogies of global power that these poets trace in reframing their histories differ according to their historic particularities and their specific social positions. I will discuss separately the genealogies of global power that Los Angeles Filipino Americans and New York Puerto Ricans trace through their situated knowledges.

Los Angeles Filipino Americans construct a genealogy of global power that centers on the relationships of power that can be discerned from Philippine colonial history and the history of Filipino im/migrants in California and the Pacific. In his poem "Conditions (an unrestricted list)" Napoleon Lustre demonstrates how unraveling the social construction of a homogenous Filipino identity reveals a history of uneven power relations in the Pacific Rim. The poem begins with a simple definition of a Filipino: "You are Filipino if your mother is Filipina, your father is Filipino, you are from Pinas, if you have one drop of Filipino blood."[180] Here, Lustre defines Filipino in terms of family, national origin and blood. However, Lustre's all inclusive definition of a Filipino as anyone who has "one drop of Filipino blood" enables him to catalog Philippine colonial history and implicate all foreign influences in the creation of the Filipino:

> You are Filipino if you are Chinese but are from the Philippines or if you are one half or one third or only one fraction and your last name is Tan, Ong or Chua and you constitute only one percent of the native population who control more than 50 percent of the national commerce...You are Filipino if you descended from the children of the Spanish friars, priests or other unholy men. You are Filipino if your mother was an American base hostess and your eyes are green or any shade lighter than black really and your last name is Murphy, Sulliven or even Brown... You are Filipino if you are part Japanese even though your father was the fruit of betrayal, less than human they called them, and your grandmother killed

[180] Lustre 2001: My transcription. "Pinas" is a short for Pilipinas, the Filipino/Tagalog term for the Philippines.

> herself after a lifetime as the local loca since the execution of her soldier invader lover.[181]

Here Lustre reads the enduring legacies of foreign political and economic influences into the production of Filipinos. His poem gives no sense of when these events occurred or whether they occurred simultaneously or at different times. In portraying colonialism in the Philippines as timeless, he insists that the consequences of all forms of imperialism on the island should be read as present tense; still residing in the blood of Filipinos. He deconstructs the use of "halu-halo," an icy Philippine dessert that translates literally into English as "mix-mix," and a metaphor celebrating the Philippine diversity. If Filipinos are understood as a "mix of everything," Lustre's poem brings to the forefront the historical circumstances that enabled this miscegenation: Chinese economic hegemony and Spanish, U.S., and Japanese colonial rule. In particular, Lustre underscores how the sexual exploitation of Filipinas was institutionalized under both Spanish and U.S. rule, through the Catholic Church and the U.S. military. Despite the inclusion of the U.S. as a colonial power in the Philippines in the poem, Lustre's differentiation between the "American base hostess" who provided sexual services for men in the U.S. military and the "local loca" who provided sexual services for men in the Japanese military points toward the influence of U.S. institutionalized history in Filipino cultural memory. Although both provided similar services, one is given a euphemistic title while the other is simply regarded as crazy. The description of the Spanish friars and priests as "unholy men" and the Japanese military as "solider invader lover" in the absence of any negative depiction of the U.S. military also enables the construction of the U.S. as a different,

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[181] Ibid.

kinder colonial ruler. So although Lustre specifically critiques the U.S. military's institutionalized sexual exploitation of Filipinas while revealing the consequences of colonial power inequalities in the Philippines, his poem also enables a reading of U.S. colonial benevolence. This representation of Filipinos as offspring born from male colonizers and Filipina colonial victims also erases the agency of Filipinos and any Philippine complicity that enabled colonialism on the islands.[182]

Lustre follows this passage with a history of Filipino im/migrants to the U.S. to represent the inequalities they faced in the imperial motherland. He recalls the experiences of Filipino migrant laborers to the United States in the early to mid 20th century to show how Filipinos are defined by their struggles as well as their exploitation:

> You are Filipino if you are part Japanese...[and] from Hawaii where your grandfather joined your grandmother against the white plantation owners. Some say that's what the wars were always about anyway. You are Filipino if you are half Mexican, half Flip, that West Coast Catholic mix like the Irish Italians back East. My friend Tony's folks are both Mexipinos, got married in Oxnard. Tony always says he has two reasons to boycott grapes.[183]

Lustre references two instances of interracial solidarity in labor disputes here. In 1920, 10,000 Japanese and Filipino sugar plantation workers went on strike on the Hawaiian island of Oahu. Mexican and Filipino grape workers went on strike in 1965 in Delano, California for better wages and working conditions. By highlighting these shared labor struggles, Lustre illustrates how Filipinos not only shared similar experiences of discrimination and limited economic opportunity but that in some instances Filipinos built coalitions across racial and ethnic lines to fight for equality. Their shared spaces and

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[182] Colonialism is often understood in sexualized terms. See McClintock 1997; Sharpe 1993; Santiago-Valles 1999; Caronan 2003.
[183] Ibid.

experiences, along with the small numbers of Filipina migrant workers, fostered interracial relationships and hybrid identities, like Mexipino. Narrating history from this perspective exposes the intersections between Filipino, Japanese, and Mexican im/migrant history do not conform to a multicultural narrative of assimilation, but emphasize the U.S. exploitation of racialized laborers. In deconstructing the diversity within the Filipino population, Lustre argues that desire and relationships occur within historically specific hierarchies of power.

In addition to tracing the physical manifestations of colonial power, Filipino Americans also demonstrate U.S. imperialism's ability to secure ideological power in the Philippines and manufacture Philippine consent and cooperation in U.S. imperialist projects. In her poem, "Solving the Sweetest Science," Rebecca Baroma represents the irony of Filipinos serving in the U.S. military in the U.S. – Vietnam War, drawing particularly from her father's life:

> before Hanoi took Ho Chi Minh
> from across the sea
> it was his tatay's stomach aching
> fantasy for his son to join
> the U.S. Navy, be a Seabee
> because his tatay's feet hurt
> since the death
> march of Bataan."[184]

Baroma references two instances of colonial wars here that are not typically represented as such, the U.S. – Vietnam War and the struggle between Japan and the U.S. over control of the Philippines during WWII. Both wars are constructed in institutionalized U.S. history as independent interventions. This history narrates that the U.S. intervened

[184] Baroma 2000: unnumbered.

to rescue Filipinos from a brutal Japanese occupation and the U.S. intervened in Vietnam to rescue the democratic South Vietnamese from the North Vietnamese communists and prevent the spread of communism in Southeast Asia. Referencing these colonial wars together implicitly highlights their connection as sites of U.S. Imperialism, however describing the Vietnam War as "before Hanoi took Ho Chi Minh" repeats the institutionalized narrative of U.S. imperialism as necessary intervention. Conforming to the institutionalized narrative here does not serve to validate that narrative but rather represents the psychological effects of U.S. imperialism. Given the reproduction of institutionalized U.S. history and U.S. ideology in the Philippines, the only available framework for understanding the U.S. –Vietnam War in the Philippines was that of U.S. colonial benevolence. Baroma signals her focus on the psychological through the image of her grandfather's "stomach aching fantasy for his son to join the US Navy." Characterizing his desire for his son to become part of the U.S. military as a "fantasy" indicates this desire is a psychological one, not merely a practical one based on the relatively generous salary and the opportunity to obtain U.S. citizenship made enlisting in the U.S. Navy an economically desirable option for Filipinos.[185] By citing her grandfather's experience of the Bataan Death March as the rationale behind his fantasy, Baroma exposes colonial inequalities that U.S. institutionalized histories create. The prisoners of war the Japanese forced on the Bataan Death March consisted of both Filipino and U.S. soliders.[186] However, the Philippines were still a U.S. commonwealth during WWII making Philippine soldiers still part of the U.S. military. After WWII ended,

[185] Espiritu 2003.
[186] Zaida 1979.

the U.S. granted the Philippines independence in 1946 and refused to recognize Philippine WWII veterans as U.S. WWII veterans denying those Philippine soldiers the benefits guaranteed to their own military.[187] Institutionalized histories and cultural representations of WWII in the Philippines depict the Philippine and U.S. military as allies, erasing U.S. imperialism in the Philippines. Within this context, Baroma's grandfather's desire for her father to join the U.S. military instead of the Philippine military points to his desire that his child be given the recognition that he never had as a Philippine solider. The learned inferiority results in the absence of a strong nationalist discourse emphasizing defense of the homeland to prevent another military occupation and further enables the discourse of U.S. colonial benevolence.

Baroma continues her critique of the reproduction of U.S. institutionalized history in the Philippines by listing the criteria that qualified her father to become part of the U.S. Navy.

> Because daddy passed some tests:
> MacArthur or McCarthy
> (he got them mixed up),
> and the stuff of History,
> no TB,
> pure blood, and no flat feet[188]

This passage represents the history of U.S. Navy recruitment in the Philippines after the U.S. granted the Philippines independence. The U.S – Philippine Military Bases Agreement of 1947 allowed the U.S. to maintain military bases in the Philippines and continue recruiting Filipinos, illustrating how the transition from U.S. commonwealth to

[187] The dwindling numbers of Filipino WWII veterans residing in the United States are still demanding equal benefits. For more on their struggles, see Gonzalves 1995.
[188] Baroma 2000: unnumbered.

independent nation did not compromise U.S. interests and influence on the islands.[189] Baroma insinuates here that U.S. military recruitment procedures chose Filipinos who were ideologically and physically fit to become U.S. military personnel and consequently U.S. citizens.[190] By depicting her father as passing tests despite not knowing the difference between MacArthur or McCarthy, she represents the ideological tests as not testing knowledge, but rather forgetfulness. What is important is that the recruits know institutionalized history and U.S. ideology, emphasized by her capitalization of the word "History" in this passage.

Baroma's representation of her father's service during the Vietnam – American War and his duties in the U.S. military simultaneously underscores how the reproduction of institutionalized histories in the Philippines manufactures Filipino consent to participate in U.S. colonial projects and criticizes the contradiction of racist U.S. colonial policies.

> he pulled outfits,
> rat-a-tat-tat and bang,
> bang, bang,
> bang!
> as if he were going back home
> to La Union...
>
> He marched, saluted, and
> restrained--the respect
> of a soldier on and (mostly) off
> duty, off guard:
>
> Houseboy?
> Where're my dag gab shoes?
> Didya shine em
> reg-you-lay-shun style?

[189] Schirmer and Shalom 1987.
[190] Shah 2001 draws links between public health, hygiene, and entitlement to U.S. citizenship.

> Sumva bitch, if I can't sees
> my giddan reeeeflekshun in em
> yer doin 50!
> and you make sure ya tell yer
> yella friends
> in that there galley
> bellow ima cravin filet mignon

Baroma argues that U.S. colonial desires in Vietnam during the Vietnam – American war were similar to U.S. colonial desires in the Philippines by comparing her father's military service in Vietnam to "going back home" to the Philippines.[191] Furthermore, the representation of a military superior calling her father "yella" illustrates how Vietnamese and Filipinos were racialized in similar terms and emphasizes how Filipinos in the U.S. military had more in common with the Vietnamese they were fighting than the U.S. soldiers they were fighting with. However, the U.S.' ideological packaging of the Vietnam – American war as a Cold War intervention prevented Filipinos from identifying with the Vietnamese, despite the demeaning treatment they suffered in the U.S. military for being Asian. Baroma represents Filipinos' toleration of the racist attitudes that restricted them to being domestic servants for U.S. military officers, cleaning officers' uniforms and preparing their desired meals.[192] Though they had no choice but to give respect to racist U.S. Naval officers, they received no respect. By raising the similarities between the Vietnamese and Filipinos and depicting the racist treatment Filipinos endured in the military as Asians, Baroma illustrates how the reproduction of U.S. ideology emphasizing equality and global benevolence prevents the interpretation of U.S.

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[191] Francisco 1973 demonstrates the parallels between the Philippine-American War and the Vietnam War.
[192] Filipinos in the U.S. Navy could only be stewards until 1973, when they were allowed to enter any specialty.

"democratizing" projects as racist colonial projects, which also prevents Filipinos from recognizing their shared circumstances with the Vietnamese, and other U.S. colonials.

The genealogy of global power that Los Angeles Filipino Americans trace through a history of Filipino colonization reflects their location in Southern California and their racialization as Asians. Lustre's and Baroma's poems illustrate the similar histories of oppression that Filipinos share with other large Asian populations in California, specifically Japanese and Vietnamese. Lustre also illuminates the shared history that Filipinos and Mexicans share as im/migrant laborers in California. Sharing a space with Japanese Americans, Vietnamese Americans, and Mexican Americans in Los Angeles facilitates the recognition of shared histories and similar global forces that led them to the same place. Likewise, the genealogy of global power that New York Puerto Ricans trace reflects their location and their racialization. Puerto Ricans' racialization as Black and the history of slavery in Puerto Rico lead New York Puerto Ricans to identify with African Americans. They also readily recognize the histories and experiences they share with other im/migrants from the Caribbean and from Latin America. However, their present reality of U.S. occupation leads them to draw similarities with others who live under military occupation.

In his poem, "One Man's Fight for Love," Bonafide Rojas implicitly connects Puerto Rican history to numerous histories of oppressed people world wide. He claims authority to narrate history as a poet:

> When I cradle the title poet
> I will be the voice of them
> I will speak of the survivors of Hiroshima
> the cancer babies of Vieques
> echoes of Diallo...

workers in California grapevines, Uvas no
priests of Latin American Liberation Theology

I will feed my esophogus
with the cries of the homeless
the screams of Chiapas
a reverb or Sandino
speeches of Che
ahimsa of Gandhi...

my voice will shatter every misogynistic
statement ever spoken
a roaring Assata
a yelling Goldman
a shouting Lolita

I'll be the last breath of Anthony Baez
the last scream of Albizu
the final proclamation of Malik Shabazz
the last screams of Jimi's guitar
before he meets you on the other side

For when I cradle the title poet
I will know the truth
speak Armenian to tell you of our genocide
scat like Langston
Howl like Ginsberg
Love like Neruda
5 in the afternoon, Garcia Lorca said[193]

Rojas' poem is dense with allusions to historic oppression and atrocities, resistance movements and their leaders, and radical writers. He only directly references Puerto Rican history three times and does not distinguish these histories from the others, mentioning "the cancer babies of Vieques" whose sickness is linked to U.S. military testing of the Puerto Rican island, "the last breath of Anthony Baez," a Puerto Rican man who was choked to death by policemen in the Bronx and "the final proclamation of Albizu," a leader of the Puerto Rican independence movement in the first half of the 20th

[193] Rojas 2004:1-2.

century. By not differentiating the Puerto Rican history he references, Rojas refuses to recognize different national histories. Instead, he locates the experiences of Puerto Ricans within a larger history of global power that oppresses people of color world wide, a point made most clear in his claiming of the Armenian genocide as "our genocide." However, his authority to articulate these other histories derives from the history and experiences of Puerto Rico. Though he does not identify himself as Puerto Rican in the written text of the poem, he performs the poem as a New York Puerto Rican male. In her study of cultural memory and performances in the Americas, Diana Taylor argues that "it is impossible to think about cultural memory and identity as disembodied. The bodies participating in the transmission of knowledge and memory are themselves a product of certain taxonomic, disciplinary, and mnemonic systems."[194] His tanned complexion and full bodied curly hair (often worn as an Afro) racialize him generally as Latino or a light skinned African American, but in New York City and other cities with large Puerto Rican populations, he is readily read as a U.S. Puerto Rican. As a Puerto Rican, he can relate to "survivors of Hiroshima" and Paleestinian children because of the history of U.S. bomb testing in Vieques. He can articulate the police brutality that killed Diallo because police brutality also led to Anthony Baez's death. He understands Sandino's resistance against the U.S. military presence in Nicaragua in the late 1920s and Gandhi's resistance to British rule because of Albizu's fight for Puerto Rican independence. As a New York Puerto Rican poet, he knows what it means to articulate resistance in creative writing and locates himself within a poetic tradition of resistance that includes the African American, Jewish, Russian, and Latin American poets he cites. The genealogy he traces and locates

[194] Taylor 2003:86.

himself is primarily a male one. Most of the individuals he names are males, with the exception of one stanza, where he references three feminists: Assata Shakur, an exiled activist and victim of police brutality, Emma Goldman, a birth control pioneer, and Lolita Lebrón, a Puerto Rican independence activist who took part in an attack on the U.S. House of Representatives, where she unfurled a flag and shouted "Viva El Puerto Rico Libre!" Although these women participate in a myriad of struggles, Rojas limits the scope of their resistance by defining it in relation to fighting misogyny here. He uses an additive model of including women's resistance in his genealogy here, not fully incorporating their contributions.

Whereas Rojas contributes to the construction of a genealogy of global power by narrating a larger history of oppression and resistance that Puerto Ricans belong to, Shaggy Flores focuses specifically on the history of colonialism in Puerto Rico in his poem "Oye lo Boricua" and what this history reveals about the processes of global power. He represents the construction of Puerto Rico that elides its history of colonialism and paints Puerto Rico as

> Dreams
> of coconut trees
> sugar cane
> warm Caribbean playas and
> Cold Piña Coladas!...
>
> Men, machos playing
> Casanova with women dancing
> to the Salsa beat...
>
> But this dream,
> not reality!
> A perverted

Yanqui fantasy[195]

The Yanqui fantasy imagines Puerto Rico as an anonymous, tropical island getaway, promising year-round warm weather and relaxation and imagines Puerto Ricans as carefree reproducers of traditional culture. Describing Puerto Rico's beaches as playas highlights Puerto Rico and pairing "Caribbean Playas" with the catchy, capitalized phrase "Cold Piña Coladas" underscores the commodification of Puerto Rico as a tourist destination.[196] Flores insists this idyllic imagining of Puerto Rico is not realistic, but an image constructed to mask the Puerto Rico's history of violent occupation and displacement. In contrast he tells a story of

> Ancient ancestors
> Tainos and others
> living Utopia.
> Coulmbus, the butcher
> nearly peed in his pants
> at the sight of the new
> Latin indigenous
> Cornucopia.
> Slaughter the natives
> Rape the women
> All for gold...
> African slaves
> brought in bondage
> and chains[197]

Flores' representation of the violence of conquest, the decimation of the Tainos and forced immigration of African slaves to fulfill the European colonizer's greed for gold undermines the institutionalized narrative of Puerto Rican culture as a harmonious

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[195] Flores 2001:1.
[196] Puerto Rico is packaged as a convenient Caribbean destination for both business and vacation travelers. No passports are needed. Money need not be exchanged. Low cost carriers such as jetblue offer frequent, affordable flights from the Northeast U.S. to the Caribbean for returning migrants and for those seeking a respite from the cold winter. Caronan 2006 demonstrates how Puerto Rico is constructed in tourist guides.
[197] Flores 2000: 2-3.

blending of European, African, and Taino traditions. The construction of authentic Puerto Rican culture identifies indigenous Taino culture, African culture, and European culture as the three roots of Puerto Rican culture.[198] Flores likewise contends with institutionalized history by characterizing Columbus, who institutionalized history credits with discovering the Americas, as a "butcher." Here, the cornucopia, a symbol associated with the U.S. Thanksgiving holiday commemorating the peaceful cooperation between the pilgrims and the indigenous population, depicts excessive Spanish greed. Flores refuses narratives of Puerto Rican history that attribute the decimation of the Taino population to disease and argues that Spanish violence against the natives was intentional by representing their deaths as the result of "slaughter."

Flores challenges U.S.' narratives of colonial benevolence that distinguish U.S. imperialism from European imperialisms by seamlessly transitioning between his representations of Spanish and U.S. colonialism in Puerto Rico:

> Independence
> fought for
> But never won!
> How can a Grito
> a shout for Lares
> stand against the power of a gun?
> Colony
> our official status,
> this economic non-power
> a Joke!
>
> Businessmen, Capitalists
> sitting in tax-free offices
> as they blow Cuban cigar smoke![199]

[198] Duany 2002 illustrates how this narrative is represented in museum exhibits of cultural artifacts and how the narrative is deployed in Puerto Rican politics.
[199] Flores 2001:3-4.

Here, he references "El Grito de Lares," an unsuccessful Puerto Rican revolt against Spain for independence in 1868.[200] Institutionalized histories of Puerto Rico recognize this event as the only time Puerto Ricans fought for independence, not recognizing other resistance against U.S. colonialism. Flores challenges institutionalized histories contention that "El Grito de Lares" failed due to disorganization, suggesting that the resistance could not successfully fight against superior military technology. In the next line Flores jumps from the 19th to the 20th century to challenge how institutionalized histories obscure U.S. imperialism in Puerto Rico. He makes transparent the colonial relationship that Puerto Rico's designation as a U.S. commonwealth obscures by insisting that Puerto Rico's official status is a colony. Referencing U.S. incentives for businesses to relocate to Puerto Rico reveals the U.S.' economic interests in retaining control of the island.[201] He counters narratives produced by institutionalized histories about Puerto Rico about Spanish and U.S. imperialism without directly naming Spain and the U.S. as colonizers. In doing so, he illustrates how Puerto Ricans are subjugated regardless of who the colonizer is. Like Lustre, Flores writes this poem about Puerto Rican history in the present tense, insisting that colonialism is present tense despite their designated political status.

To emphasize that Puerto Rico has continually fought for independence and challenge institutionalized history's claim that Puerto Rico became a U.S. colony and U.S.

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[200] Jiménez de Wagenheim 1985 gives a detailed account of the social conditions and Spanish colonial policies that resulted in El Grito de Lares.

[201] The Puerto Rican Industrial Development Company website advertises the economical advantages to do business in Puerto Rico, not only offering information about tax and business incentives, but also by marketing the labor force in Puerto Rico to be educated, but less expensive than the labor force on the U.S. mainland. See http://www.pridco.com

commonwealth consensually, Flores calls to mind Puerto Ricans and their allies who resisted U.S. rule:[202]

Heroes' list
    runs like
Forgotten dream
Do you know
    what their efforts
what their lives
    really mean?

Yuri Kochiyama
Antonio Maceo
The people of Vieques
Dr. Ramon Emeterio Betances
Jose De Matta Tereforte
Don Pedro Albizu Campos
Mariana Bracetti
Lola Rodriquez de Tío
Eugenio María de Hostos
Lolita Lebron
Rafael Cancel Miranda
The Young Lords
Los Macheteros
F.A.L.N

He challenges the audience to remember those rendered forgotten by institutionalized narratives of U.S. colonial benevolence. The names are centered and italicized in a list reminiscent of names on a memorial. Flores does not explain what contributions these people made for Puerto Rico, requiring the audience to actively seek out Puerto Rican history should they want to know.

Flores also represents the experiences of Puerto Ricans in the U.S. to illustrate Puerto Rican migrants' inability to escape the colonial power structure that subordinates them at home. Through this representation he argues that global power structures do not

[202] Santiago-Valles 1999 shows how political cartoons representing Puerto Rico as a young female and the U.S. as her suitor in political cartoons reproduced the narrative of Puerto Rico's consensus to U.S. colonialism.

adhere to national boundaries but rather separates an exploited working class from the privileged. He tells a narrative of Puerto Rican migrants

> Seeking streets
> paved of gold and a new start
> Finds you
> Broken dreams
> futility
> and Broken hearts.
>
> Subjected
> to racist Amerikan
> Stereotypes and
> Inferiority complexes...
> Moms and dads
> Perservering
> from Slum to Slum.
> Puerto Ricans, Not
> Welfare slaves
> Remembering
> that Jibaros
> were never bums![203]

He emphasizes the false promise inherent in the construction of the U.S. as a land of im/migrant opportunity by emphasizing the word "Broken" through repetition and capitalization and by representing the experience of Puerto Rican migrants surviving poor living conditions. He attributes negative stereotypes about Puerto Rican migrants to racism challenging the narrative of Puerto Ricans as lazy dependents of welfare. Replacing the "c" in American with a "k" to reference white supremacist groups like the Ku Klux Klan, Flores underscores the virile nature of the racism that Puerto Ricans face due to their racialization as Black in the U.S. Flores counters the stereotype of Puerto Ricans as welfare dependents with the stereotype of the quintessential Puerto Rican icon, the jíbaro, the hardworking fieldworkers of the Puerto Rican countryside. Contrasting the

[203] Flores 2001:2.

two stereotypes of Puerto Ricans as a lazy and opportunistic drain on U.S. government resources and as industrious agricultural workers emphasizes that these images are constructed for different purposes. The former justifies racist social hierarchies in the U.S., whereas the latter contributes to the nostalgic construction of an untouched Puerto Rican countryside and Puerto Rican culture packaged both for businesses relocating and tourists to Puerto Rico and for the easy disavowal of any negative effects of U.S. imperialism on the island. In this poem, Flores challenges assumptions about Puerto Rican history constructed by institutionalized history and reveals the extent of the narrative power at the U.S.' disposal to produce knowledge about Puerto Rico to secure its own interests.

New York Puerto Rican performance poets contend with institutionalized histories not only by reconstructing Puerto Rican history, but by locating Puerto Rican history within a genealogy of global power that connects the history and experiences of Puerto Ricans to other Caribbean im/migrants, U.S. Latina/os, African Americans, and Jews. This genealogy reflects their racialization in the U.S. and the communities of color they share space with in New York City, just as the communities of color in Los Angeles and the racialization of Filipino Americans as Asian American affects the genealogy that Los Angeles Filipino American performance poets trace. Though the genealogies these poets trace challenge institutionalized histories narratively, the poets also challenge institutionalized histories through the reproduction of these genealogies in the classroom and in their local communities.

Reproducing Genealogies

The importance of forgetting to colonial projects signals the importance of remembering for decolonizing projects. Los Angeles Filipino American and New York Puerto Rican performance poets foster the remembering of events and people forgotten by institutionalized history by teaching within and without classrooms. In doing so, they engage institutionalized history in a politics of memory regarding U.S. imperialism at the local level, where they have access to community resources and can teach Philippine and Puerto Rican history to the communities they care about.

Literature on the politics of memory suggests that struggles over how events are represented in national museums and memorials illustrate how memories vie for a place in national history in public spaces.[204] By focusing on sites, like the National Mall in Washington D.C., that are endowed with the institutional authority to narrate U.S. history, this literature does not take into consideration local politics of memory. Participating in the politics of memory at the national level requires access to economic and/or political resources whereas participating in the politics of memory at the local level in alternative spaces does not require significant resources. Los Angeles Filipino American and New York Puerto Rican performance poets work within the institutions available to them to reproduce the genealogies they trace both in their classrooms and in the community to reach as wide an audience as possible.

Within the Classroom

The effectiveness of public education in manufacturing consent to U.S.' colonization of the Philippines and Puerto Rico indicates the power of public education in disseminating ideas. Thus, public schools and universities are one site where Filipino

[204] Sturken 1997; Yoneyama 1999; Ashplant et al 2000.

American and Puerto Rican performance poets participate in a politics of memory. Their ability to make interventions in scholarship at the university was made possible by the establishment of Ethnic Studies in the late 1960s during the Civil Rights Era. The rigidity of public school curriculum at the primary and secondary school level make interventions possible only at charter schools that can independently create their own curriculum. Filipino American and U.S. Puerto Rican performance poets take every opportunity available to them to teach their histories because they realize that the erasure of Philippine and Puerto Rican history and the marginalization of Filipino and Puerto Rican Studies means that making Philippine and Puerto Rican history visible already intervenes in the reproduction of institutionalized history. They do not teach Philippine and Puerto Rican history in isolation. Rather, they construct a genealogy of global power by teaching Philippine and Puerto Rican history in relation to the histories of other people of color and insist on making these histories relevant to their students' lives and enable them to make informed decisions towards social change.

Alan Aquino's experience of the inaccessibility of Filipino history and the lack of Filipino American studies specialists in his Asian American Studies department led him to become a professor offering courses in the Filipino American Experience and Asian American History at California State University, Northridge (CSUN) to make Filipino and Filipino American history available, particularly to Filipino American students. He is particularly invested in teaching about the Philippine – American War, not only because of the erasure of this war in institutionalized U.S. histories but because he finds "it is all the more troubling that many Filipino Americans are unaware of the war and its potential

influence upon their lives."[205] Aquino does not only want his Filipino American students to learn about Philippine history, but to realize the relevancy of this history in the present, just as Lustre's poem insisted on understanding colonialism as present tense, not simply in the past. To foster discussion on the present day legacies of the Philippine – American war, Aquino screens *Memories of a Forgotten War*, an experimental documentary of the Philippine-American war framed through the coupling and divorce of the filmmaker's U.S. soldier father and Filipina mother and asks his students to consider the positive and negative consequences of the war, and of U.S. colonialism in general.[206] Ideally, this activity leads his students to consider the long term consequences of the Philippine – American War in their lives and in turn, apply what they learn about U.S. colonialism in the Philippines to their understanding of the U.S.' War on Terrorism in the Middle East and its possible consequences. To encourage other Ethnic Studies and Asian American Studies professors to facilitate similar discussions in their classrooms Aquino contributed this lesson plan to an edited anthology on planning Asian American Studies courses, illustrating his commitment to the teaching of the Philippine – American War and U.S. colonialism.

Whereas Aquino's exercise connects Philippine history to the present, other performance poets reproduce their genealogy of global power connecting Philippine history to the histories of other people of color to give their students the tools to theorize groups relationally. Aquino's former CSUN colleague, Rebecca Baroma taught Developmental Writing and Introduction to Asian American Studies, and occasional

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[205] Aquino 2006:153.
[206] *Memories of a Forgotten War* (2001).

literature classes. Regardless of what course she taught, she sought to foster critical thinking skills:

> I took a critical thinking approach, instead of...this is when the Chinese came, then the Filipinos came...I took readings that talked about social issues, everything from race, class, gender, sexuality as an Asian American. And we just kind of talked about those things...When I taught a fiction class, I would make the discussion more about...it wasn't really literary. It was more...postcolonial thinking. I brought in some Said, Edward Said, some theory, E. San Juan.[207]

Baroma refuses to organize her Introduction to Asian American Studies classes through linear histories or by teaching the experiences of different ethnic groups separately, choosing instead to look at different Asian American groups relationally through the social constructions of race, class, gender, and sexuality. She specifically teaches her students the specificities of Philippine history by exposing her students to scholarship by E. San Juan Jr., who writes prolifically about the widespread effects of U.S. colonialism on Filipinos, and introduces her students to orientalism and postcolonial theory to enable them to apply these theories to novels by different ethnic and racial groups. These theoretical tools allow her students to understand the shared histories and experiences of people of color and how these are shaped by colonial institutions and racism.

Like Baroma, U.S. Puerto Rican Nancy Mercado specifically teaches Puerto Rican history and culture but does so in relation to the histories and cultures of other people of color. Her English literature class syllabi include novels by U.S. Puerto Ricans, other U.S. Latina/os, and African Americans, including Nicholassa Mohr and Abraham Rodriquez, Helena Viramontes, and Toni Morrison. However, she believes that she makes a stronger impact within communities of color by teaching outside of traditional

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[207] Baroma 2004.

disciplines and now teaches full time at Boricua College, a college established in 1974 to address the high attrition rate of Puerto Rican and other Latino students in New York City through nontraditional curriculum. One of Boricua College's core classes is Affective Development, a class limited to 12 students. Students in the course discuss issues that they feel are relevant to their lives and instructors facilitate the discussion. In her Affective Development class, Mercado helps her students "to understand where their position is in society, what this means for their personal growth and for the growth of society at large, what can they do."[208] She gives her students, who are predominantly students of color, the discursive and theoretical tools to understand the social, economic, and political conditions that affect their lives so that they can have a firm grasp of

> the greater society and country and the world and the issues that are going on in the greater scheme of things and how that affects them personally because what's going on in Iraq does affect us personally, what's going on in Israel or Palestine does affect us personally, in Williamsburg, Brooklyn.[209]

Linking her students' own lives and conditions to the U.S.' war in Iraq and the Israel-Palestine Conflict enables Mercado to frame issues of colonialism and make these events relevant to her students. By illustrating the students' interconnectedness to international events Mercado emphasizes that students have the agency to make a difference in these situations. She encourages them to take action by discussing "what can they do."

Teaching at the college level gives instructors the freedom to develop their own courses and choose which texts to use and how, thus making it easier to make curricular interventions to include histories of Filipinos, Puerto Ricans, and other people of color.

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[208] Mercado 2006.
[209] Ibid.

The standardized textbooks and curriculum for public elementary schools and high schools make it more difficult to include these histories in public primary and secondary school curriculums. Introducing younger students to alternate histories becomes possible only at charter schools that are allowed to develop their own curriculum or more often through creative arts courses both during and outside of class. One example of a public elementary school that can independently determine its curriculum is El Puente Academy for Peace and Justice in Brooklyn. The academy was established in 1993 as part of New York City's Board of Educations' New Visions for Public Schools initiative. Part of a larger organization that works towards social justice through community involvement, the school's curriculum centers on issues of human rights and social justice. Like their counterparts at Boricua College, faculty members at El Puente are called facilitators. Anthony Morales is one of El Puente's humanities facilitators. Instead of teaching a traditional humanities curriculum that emphasizes classical and modern European thinkers, he introduces his students to the shared histories and experiences of Puerto Ricans, Latinos, and African Americans in the U.S. through their writing. He teaches his students about the New York Puerto Rican experience by requiring them to read Nuyorican poetry. By reading Sandra Cisnero's *House on Mango Street*, his students learn about Chicanas living in the Southwest and they learn about the African American experience in the industrial North in the middle of the 20th century from August Wilson's *Fences*.[210] He ties these experiences all together through the theme of racism that runs through all of them and in the process, teaches his students about the U.S. racial power hierarchy.

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[210] Morales 2006.

These poets' dedication to teaching Philippine and Puerto Rican history drives them to include discussions of history in courses that do not necessarily entail the teaching of history. In his adult English as a Second Language (ESL) class at South Bay Adult School in Redondo Beach, Filipino American performance poet Dorian Merina discusses Spanish colonial history. In particular, he teaches his students about the Spanish galleon trade route between Manila and Acapulco and the supply stops the galleons made in what is now Long Beach. By imparting this history, Merina challenges institutional histories centered on the experiences of White European immigrants and thus marginalize his students, mostly Spanish speaking immigrants from Latin America. Merina believes that stories of Mexicans and Filipinos in Los Angeles predating U.S. westward expansion, such as those of the Galleon trade, show his students that "their culture has been here for longer than the present culture" and affirms that they belong in Los Angeles and in the U.S.[211] Demonstrating the Spanish colonial connection between Mexicans and Filipinos also emphasizes their shared history of colonial oppression, revealing their centuries long, continuous subordination within a genealogy of global power.

As classroom teachers, Los Angeles Filipino American and New York Puerto Rican performance poets teach Philippine and Puerto Rican history in relation to histories of other people of color, providing their students with the tools to understand the genealogies of global power the construct in their poetry. The syllabi they create reflect the genealogies they produce based on their locale and racialization. Philippine history and Filipino American experiences are understood in relation to the history and experiences of other Asian Americans and Mexican Americans. New York Puerto Rican

[211] Merina 2004.

performance poets locate Puerto Rican history within a history of other U.S. Latinos and African Americans. Despite the institutional intervention that these poets can make in a classroom, the audiences that performance poets can reach in classrooms are limited to those who have the resources to attend colleges offering Ethnic Studies courses, since they can rarely make such interventions in other public school classrooms.

Without Classrooms

Los Angeles Filipino American and New York Puerto Rican performance poets realize the pedagogical value of performing their poetry. Teaching in the community through their performances allows these poets complete freedom in constructing their performative syllabi because the public spaces in which they perform are informal and spontaneous. The lack of restraints contrasts with the disciplinary and institutional restraints poets must meet in teaching in classroom settings.[212] In her study of African American poetry communities, Maisha Fischer argues that poetry communities "created [their] own institutions for holding forums and exchanging ideas; cafes have been transformed into literary saloons and bookstores into educational centers."[213] Theatre scholar Jill Dolan suggests that performance poetry is pedagogical because it "demonstrate[s] how to be active citizens to audiences who might not regularly see themselves as agents in their own lives, let alone in their political systems...[and] invite[s] citizen-spectators into a critical conversation about politics and oppression."[214] Los Angeles Filipino American and New York Puerto Rican performance communities

[212] Habermas 1987 idealizes the public sphere as a site free from institutional regulation enabling the realization of true democratic practices. Fraser 1992 critiques Habermas' theorization of the public sphere by illustrating how the state regulates the public sphere and suggests the formation of separate public forums for different subaltern groups.
[213] Fischer 2004:292.
[214] Dolan 2005: 91-92.

likewise form their own poetic communities, spaces, and collaboratives with an explicit emphasis on teaching. U.S. Puerto Rican José Angel Figueroa likens poets to Cuban orators who read literature to factory workers as they worked "because they couldn't afford to go to school."[215] Teaching through their performance poetry allows these poets to more effectively reproduce their genealogies of global power within their local communities of color. Taking into consideration how the public space of a city determines the reproduction of social relations in that space, I will discuss the New York Puerto Rican and Los Angeles Filipino American poetry communities separately here.[216]

The New York Puerto Rican poetry community has a history spanning three decades. Established in 1974, the Nuyorican Poets Cafe provides a space for poetry, music, and theater for U.S. Puerto Ricans and other people of color. The hybrid identity, Nuyorican, combining New York and Puerto Rican, underscores importance that New York City plays in the experiences and histories of New York Puerto Ricans. Such an identity allows New York Puerto Ricans to lay claim to New York City but differentiate their experience from other New Yorkers. Today, as in the beginning, the Nuyorican Poets Cafe offers a space where poets can articulate histories excluded from institutional history. On any given late Friday night, one can hear about the distortions of the U.S. media, the effects of colonialism on Africa, the oppression of Middle Eastern women, and economic imperialism. However, the Nuyorican Poets Cafe is not the only space available to New York Puerto Rican performance poets. The active poetry scene in New York City offers a multitude of spaces and weekly open mic opportunities for these poets

[215] Figueroa 2006.
[216] Lefebvre 1991.

to perform: the Bowery Poetry Club, Carlito's Cafe in East Harlem, Bar 13 near NYU, Ascentos in the South Bronx, and Bronx Bohemia at El Maestro Community Center. The gentrification of the Lower East Side and the increasing gentrification of Spanish Harlem resulted in the establishment of Ascentos and Bronx Bohemia open mic events in the South Bronx to ensure continued access to communities of color, particularly Latinos, to poetry spaces where they live. Their commitment to ensuring accessibility to communities of color underscores their commitment to making Puerto Rican history and the genealogies they locate this history in easily available to people of color.

In New York City, establishing permanent poetry spaces for the reproduction of Puerto Rican history makes the most sense given the accessibility of and underprivileged people of color's dependence on public transportation. The established poetry scene also allows the sustainability of such spaces through small cover charges and the sale of food and drinks at sponsoring restaurants. Thus most New York Puerto Ricans performance poets put their efforts towards establishing poetry spaces where they and other poets can teach through performance. One exception to this trend are New York Puerto Ricans Ray Ramirez and Hector Lavoe, who established the Welfare Poets, a pan Latino poetry collective with an explicit pedagogical mission to teach Puerto Rican history. However, their collective was not established in New York City, but Ithaca, a small college town in upstate New York. They founded the Welfare Poets in 1990, while they were students at Cornell University. Both Ramirez and Lavoe were members of Simba Wachanga, a campus support group for men of color, and contributed their poems to the organization's newsletter. The newsletter began to circulate at other college campuses in New York state and students of color at Union College in Albany impressed with Ramirez and Lavoe's

writing asked them to perform on their campus. Through this performance, they realized the pedagogical potential of poetry for reproducing the Puerto Rican history they were learning in their own independent research. Soon after, they formed the Welfare Poets as a poetry collective with an explicit pedagogical mission. [217]

Today the Welfare Poets is a group of Latino activists, educators, and artists based in New York City. Their mission is to "bring information and inspiration to those facing oppression and to those fighting for liberation" by teaching workshops, grassroots activism, and through musical performances that combine hip hop with Latin beats and rhythms.[218] Not only do they offer creative writing workshops for elementary and high school students, but they also offer workshops on the poetry of resistance and community organizing. In keeping with their mission statement, the Welfare Poets always schedule performances in African American and Latino communities. When the group is invited to perform at the University of Illinois, Chicago, they make the time to perform also for the Puerto Rican community. When they perform in Los Angeles they perform also in Compton and East Los Angeles. By doing so, Ramirez hopes that their art can make "positive change and [be] accessible to the community, to the people that we work with."[219]

Establishing poetry collectives instead of permanent poetry spaces allows poets to travel to reach diverse audiences. This pedagogical strategy is most effective if the poets' desired audiences/students are dispersed. Ramirez and Lavoe's decision to form a poetry collective, instead of establishing a permanent poetry space in Ithaca, N.Y., reflects their

[217] Ramirez 2006.
[218] Welfare Poets 2007.
[219] Ramirez 2006.

desire to reach scattered Puerto Rican, African American, and Latino communities. Similarly, the suburban sprawl of Los Angeles, and the multiple Filipino American communities spread across the Greater Los Angeles area makes the establishment of poetry collectives instead of permanent poetry spaces more effective for reaching as many of their target audiences/students as possible. Filipino American poetry collectives travel between different Filipino American community spaces, university events, museum exhibitions, open mics and organize annual events to teach through their performances.

Los Angeles based Balagtasan Collective, a Filipino American performance poetry group has a mission similar to the Welfare Poets: "Cultivating community and art for social justice." However, whereas the Welfare Poets membership is panethnic, the Balagtasan Collective's members are of Filipino ancestry, to emphasize the specificities of Philippine history. Balagtasan's Collective's founding members, Faith Santilla, Kiwi, and Terry Valen were all poets who were also part of the League of Filipino Students (LFS), the largest youth and student political organization in the Philippines with chapters both inside and outside of the Philippines. LFS advocates for social change in the Philippines, for example, nationalization of industries in the Philippines and rights for the indigenous minorities in the Philippines that are faced with open pit mining on their land and logging by foreign companies. As both artists and members of LFS, Santilla, Valen, and Kiwi were often asked to perform at local political events. However, they questioned their effectiveness when performing solely at political events to audiences already sympathetic to their message. They felt that performing at these events were tantamount

to "preaching to the choir."[220] They also questioned whether the rhetoric used to speak about social change by organizations like LFS was accessible to those outside of the university.

To address their concerns about effectiveness and accessibility, Santilla, Kiwi, and Valen formed the Balagtasan Collective in November 1998. Through their performance poetry they discuss the issues brought up by LFS and issues of local significance but use different rhetoric to reach the local Filipino community and other local communities of color. Thus, the Balagtasan Collective has an explicit pedagogical goal: to open up for discussion issues like U.S. imperialism to other community members outside of the university. As artists, they realized art was a medium that people could understand and thus decided to use performance poetry to teach the community about U.S. imperialism in the Philippines. One of the Balagtasan Collective's annual events, the "Bus Stop," was designed to educate Filipino high school students. Thus, they chose to hold the event in Echo Park, a Los Angeles neighborhood with a large Filipino population.

LA Enkanto Kollective, another Filipino American poetry collective that includes some members of the Balagtasan Collective, formed specifically to produce a spoken word CD in December 2001. The CD is entitled "In Our Blood: Filipina/o American Poetry and Spoken Word From Los Angeles." Inspired by CDs produced in Filipino American poetry communities in Seattle and San Francisco, their goal was to articulate the Los Angeles experience from a Filipino American perspective.[221] In doing so, they claim their stories as part of an unrecognized history of Los Angeles. In their CD and in

[220] Santilla 2004.
[221] Merina 2004.

their collective's name, Los Angeles Filipino American history is framed as haunting mainstream constructions of Los Angeles. They chose to include the term "enkanto" in their name because it means "spirit" in Tagalog, but also because it sounds similar to the word "song" in Tagalog (kanta) and Spanish (canción). Thus, for them, their name translates to Los Angeles Spirit or Los Angeles Song.[222] The opening track of the CD features multiple voices repeatedly naming different suburbs and neighborhoods of Los Angeles with large Filipino populations. The voices begin softly at first with each location articulated clearly and independently. The voices become louder and the utterances of place names overlap, before fading into a chant of the phrase, "song of Los Angeles." The increasing, overlapping voices produce a haunting effect, suggesting the presence of a large population of Filipino Americans marginalized at the edges of Los Angeles. As the voices switch from naming a specific suburb or neighborhood to chanting "song of Los Angeles" the poets lay claim to Los Angeles and to their place within Los Angeles history.[223] Through the distribution of the CD and several performances in the years following the release, the LA Enkanto Kollective reproduce the specificities of a Los Angeles Filipino American experience that challenge mainstream constructions of Los Angeles that marginalize their presence and history.

New York Puerto Rican and Los Angeles Filipino American performance poets reproduce the genealogies that they produce both inside and outside of the classroom in order to teach as many people as possible Puerto Rican, Philippine history and the genealogies that they locate these histories in. Working both within institutions and

[222] Soriano 2004.
[223] La Enkanto 2001.

creating their own poetry institutions in their local communities, these performance poets demonstrate their dedication to ensuring access to the histories that they themselves had trouble accessing and to challenging institutionalized history in a local politics of memory.

Authorizing Other Speakers

Foucault identifies the "activation of local knowledges" as one important component of a genealogical project.[224] The emphasis that New York Puerto Rican and Los Angeles Filipino Americans place on the local in defining their identities and the significant role that the local plays in their construction of genealogies of global power illustrate their investment in articulating a history specific to their own local experiences and in intervening in the politics of memory at the local level. However, the goal of a genealogical project is not to replace one historical narrative with another, but rather to produce an "insurrection of knowledges" by authorizing everyone to speak regardless of their social position.[225] The established poetry scene and the institutionalization of poetry programs in public schools facilitate the production of new generations of poets. On the other hand, cuts to funding for arts programs under California Governor Schwarzenegger and the short history of Los Angeles Filipino American poets prevented the production of a cohesive new generation of Filipino American poets.

At poetry events in New York City, New York Puerto Rican performance poets teach by doing. Regularly occurring poetry events in New York City consists of, in varying order, one or more featured poets, an open mic, and often a poetry slam. This

[224] Foucault [1997] 2003.
[225] Ibid.

format enables New York Puerto Rican performance poets to not only teach through the content of their poems, but also to teach others how to become poets. As featured poets or participants in poetry slams, New York Puerto Rican performance poets demonstrate how to use poetry to articulate subjugated knowledges and one's own experiences. The open mics following the featured poets' performances allow the audience to practice their own poetry and become part of the poetry community.[226] At some open mics, poets are not only encouraged to keep performing, but are given comments on how to improve. At one sparsely attended Ascentos open mic night on a snowy Valentine's evening, the seven poets gathered around a table instead of the performance space. Everyone with a poem read one and received feedback. Thus, open mics do not only offer the opportunity for performance poets to perform, but to teach others to perform and thus authorize other speakers.

Fostering a new generation of poets also occurs through established poetry organizations that work in conjunction with the New York City public school system. The Teachers & Writers Collaborative and Urban Word NYC are two popular organizations among several that provide New York Public schools with poets to teach either individual workshops, or serve as a poet or writer in residence teaching a series of 10 – 15 workshops. The older of the two organizations, the Teachers & Writers Collaborative was founded in 1967 on the belief that professional writers would be best qualified to introduce elementary and high school students to creative writing. Established in 1999 in partnership with the Teachers & Writers Collaborative, Urban Word NYC believes that

[226] There is a ritual for welcoming new poets to the stage at the Nuyorican Poets Cafe's open room every Friday night. The audience is prompted to simultaneously yell "virgin" to acknowledge the poet's first time at the Nuyorican.

"teenagers can and must speak for themselves."[227] In addition to providing creative workshops for schools, both organizations also have their own spaces in New York City where they host their own writing related events and programs. Many of the New York performance poets I interviewed worked or had worked for these types of organizations before and do so with the specific goal of producing and authorizing a new generation of poets.

Bonafide Rojas represents the difficult, but rewarding experience of teaching poetry to students that "society has deemed derelicts and hoodlums" for Urban Word NYC in his poem, "At the Head of the Class."[228] The poem's narrator identifies with these students, stating

> I am them eight years ahead
> with poetry being the left turn I made at 17
> I tell them that road is approaching
> all they have to do it take that road
> and run down it so fast that their past
> will never catch up to them[229]

By identifying the narrator with the students, Rojas implies that these so-called "derelicts and hoodlums" can have a future different than the one the current course of their lives presents. In this way, the narrator serves as a witness for the students, one who testifies that there are other possibilities in life if the students choose to escape their present circumstances. Rojas posits that writing poetry can be that life altering choice for these students. Although his rhetoric here echoes the rhetoric of the American Dream and that of personal responsibility, Rojas does not necessarily argue that these students are

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[227] For more on Urban Word NYC, see their website, http://www.urbanwordnyc.org
[228] Rojas n.d.
[229] Ibid.

responsible for their own circumstances. Instead, Rojas argues that the act of writing poetry is an empowering act. Further in the poem, the narrator urges the students to

> tell them who you are
> tell them they're wrong for labeling you
> tell them fuck you for giving up on them
> tell them your life may not be worth shit now
> but tomorrow gives you hope
> so you won't take your life today or the next day
> tell them you will be here forever[230]

Here, Rojas explicitly departs from the rhetoric of personal responsibility. Whereas the rhetoric of personal responsibility emphasizes uplift through action and hard work, the narrator does not encourage the students to reform themselves and make a decent living. Rather, the narrator urges the students to break their silence, to speak back to "them," a society that abandons underprivileged urban youth. Rojas argues that students such as these are entitled to and should claim space by having the narrator encourage the students to "tell them you will be here forever." Finally, by representing a teacher committed to empowering underprivileged students, Rojas illustrates the importance of providing teachers to underprivileged students who not only understand their circumstances but who can also keep the faith in students that society deems worthless. This poem encapsulates the importance of teaching for New York Puerto Rican performance poets.

Part of what drives New York Puerto Rican performance poets to mentor a new generation of poets is to ensure the continuity of a poetic tradition that was passed on to them. By teaching his students creative writing, Anthony Morales fulfills a promise he made to his mentor, Willie Perdomo, who told him that

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[230] Ibid.

> [t]he most important thing for us to do is we have to pass this on because truthfully it's not ours. I mean, this poetry, these words, I mean yeah, we can do it, but how much better for us to pass that love and the knowledge and the consciousness and the ability on to other people, on to kids who really need it, really need it, especially in this world where they're trying to be silenced, so much, every single day, every single day, every single moment.[231]

Morales considers it his responsibility to teach his students to articulate their own experiences and subjugated knowledges. In the face of institutions and a society that attempts to silence students of color, Morales gives them the tools, opportunity, and encouragement necessary to authorize them as speakers who have stories that are worth sharing.

However, building students' self-confidence so they feel entitled to speak and claim space can be difficult especially for those who cannot speak U.S. English fluently. Campaigns for English only laws serve to demonize other languages, particularly Spanish.[232] Ana Celia Zentella argues that in particular "dialects like lower working class Puerto Rican English and Spanish" are considered to be "deformed linguistic models that frustrate children's acquisition and make logical thinking impossible."[233] English fluency becomes conflated with one's intelligence. When Puerto Rican performance poet Jesus Papoleto Melendez leads writing workshops in New York City, he pays particular attention to the grammar errors that his students make. Melendez explains that the grammar errors made by his bilingual Latino students follow a particular logic because they think in Spanish and write in English:

> 'Think' is tink...and 'just' is always spelled youst. You youst sit down. And see, I can see it...She never puts 'I' in front of am...[she writes] 'am

[231] Morales 2006.
[232] Macedo 1990.
[233] Zentella, 1997:268.

> studying', as opposed to... 'I am studying'...Every time she means 'and', she spells it a-n...because she pronounces it 'an', and not 'and'...With the Latino kids I try to solve it for them because I tell them... you don't have to think that you're dumb. You're not. You're trying to deal with another language that isn't yours. You never mastered it and once you get a handle on it, you'll be able to express yourself in that language. [234]

Melendez shows his students that their grammar mistakes make sense for those who are fluent in Spanish and have yet to master the logic of the English language. In doing so, he demonstrates to his students that their grammar errors are not a reflection of their intelligence or their personal self-worth. Taking the time to understand his students' errors enables Melendez to build his students' self confidence so that they feel authorized to write and express themselves.

The Los Angeles Filipino American poetry community's roots are not as deep as that of the New York Puerto Rican poetry community. This coupled with the lack of established poetry spaces and the lack of poetry teaching organizations account for the lack of widespread efforts among Los Angeles Filipino Americans to reproduce and authorize a generation of new poets. Governor Schwarzenegger's continual reductions to arts funding led many Los Angeles grassroots activist poetry spaces to close and the discontinuation of annual poetry festivals featuring the work of local activist poet.[235] Though new poetry venues do open, the lack of continuous space prevents the establishment of a regular poetry scene that consists of regular participants. Few regular open mics that Filipino American performance poets frequent remain. One example of such an open mic is "Tuesday Nights at the Cafe," an open mic that is held every 1st and 3rd Tuesday in the Spring and Summer. The event just recently moved from its original

[234] Melendez 2006.
[235] Ebojo 2005.

space in Little Tokyo to the Lost Souls Cafe, a new space opened by young Filipino American activist entrepreneurs. Similar in format to New York City poetry events, "Tuesday Nights at the Cafe" consists of featured performers and an open mic, though it is not strictly a poetry event, but a showcase for a variety of Asian American cultural productions. In this sense, "Tuesday Nights at the Cafe" does offer Filipino American performance poets the opportunity to teach poetry by performing, but the opportunities to do so are limited since this is only one event that does not regularly occur during the year.

Likewise, the absence of programs like the Teachers & Writers Collective and Urban Word NYC in Los Angeles limit opportunities for Filipino American performance poets to teach poetry to students in public schools and produce new poets. Some of these poets teach the arts to elementary and high school students at the Association for the Advancement of Filipino American Arts and Culture's (Fil-Am Arts) after school program, Eskwela Kultura, but as a single program in a single location, this does not have the widespread reach that the New York City based organizations have.

Lastly, some Filipino American performance poets have become cynical of poetry's pedagogical potential due to the commodification of spoken word and the popularity of slam poetry. Alfie Ebojo contrasts the spaces that Los Angeles Filipino American performance poets once frequented to slam poetry venues to underscore how slam poetry does not value the sharing of histories:

> Because the whole reason why [performance poetry] was so beautiful was the fact that you had people of different nationalities, background, ages coming together, at least this is what I felt when I went, coming together to tell their stories and no matter what they said or what they, you know, believed, agreed with it or not, there was always like this love... I was really turned off in the world of slam poetry...when it comes

> to a point where you start being arrogant to other people, putting down other people, you know, in the name of art, that turns me off big time.[236]

The increasing predominance of slam poetry venues that encourage competition instead of collaboration does not foster the formation of safe community spaces for sharing one's ideas through poetry or the authorization of other speakers. Thus, though Los Angeles Filipino American performance poets construct a genealogy of global power in their poetry and reproduce this genealogy by teaching in classrooms and teaching through performances, their genealogical project does not systematically produce new poets due to the short history of the Los Angeles Filipino American poetry community and the lack of resources for teaching poetry.

Conclusion

This chapter detailed the genealogical projects that Los Angeles Filipino American and New York Puerto Rican performance poets are engaged in. These poets construct a genealogy of global power in their poetry, one that is specific to their racialization as Asian American, African American, or Latino and to the populations of color in Los Angeles and New York City. In order to reproduce these genealogies, these poets teach audiences/students in and out of the classroom Philippine history, Puerto Rican history, and the genealogies in which they locate these histories. The well established New York City poetry community allows New York Puerto Rican performance poets to mentor new generations of poets and authorize them to contribute to their genealogy of global power. Similar poetry resources are not available in Los Angeles resulting in no systematic process of training new generations of Filipino

[236] Ibid

American poets to contribute to their genealogy of global power. However, as the poem that I began this chapter with illustrates, Los Angeles Filipino American performance poets do authorize audiences to speak in their performances by directly addressing and asking questions of the audience.

Through the genealogies they construct and reproduce Los Angeles Filipino American and New York Puerto Rican performance poets participate in a local politics of memory about U.S. imperialism in particular, and global power in general. As many of the poems and interview excerpts in this chapter illustrate, Filipino American and U.S. Puerto Rican performance poets relate teaching these genealogies with enabling their communities to think critically and work towards social change. This indicates that the emphasis they place on pedagogy is not for the sake of correcting the past, but for creating a different future, the focus of my next chapter.

V. "Headed for a World that's Brand New": Performance Poetry as Activist Tool

Historical memory is an active, creative force, not just a receptacle for storing the dead weight of times gone by[237]

In the pores of immigrant tongues
lie secrets that unlock
dreams to be free and unequal[238]

Filipino American and U.S. Puerto Rican performance poets contest institutional history and construct genealogies of global power not to correct history by rewriting the past, but to work towards changing the current course of history. Their re-imagining of the past to imagine a different future confirms Walter Benjamin's conceptualization of future-oriented interrogations of the past.[239] He argues that "to articulate the past historically does not mean to recognize it 'the way it was.' It means to seize hold of a memory as it flashes up at a moment of danger."[240] These poets articulate a history of Philippine and Puerto Rican colonial violence in a moment of violent colonial occupations in the Middle East. They articulate the shared oppression of people of color globally in a moment where globalization results in the increased labor exploitation of people of color worldwide. They articulate these histories in the hope that doing so will spur their communities to action and fulfill the dreams of liberation generations of activists and colonial resistance movements bequeathed to them. To this end, many Filipino American and U.S. Puerto Rican performance poets actively participate in activist community organizations that build interracial community coalitions, address issues affecting their local communities, and address issues affecting their homelands.

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[237] Flores 2000: 49.
[238] Rojas 2004: 76.
[239] Yoneyama 1999 discusses in detail Benjamin's contributions to historiography in the introduction
[240] Arendt 1968: 255.

They employ performance poetry as a tool for social change not only in their own local communities in Los Angeles and New York City, but also in the Philippines and Puerto Rico, and elsewhere.

Studies on the formation and popularization of hip hop illustrate how Puerto Ricans in New York participate in a Black Atlantic culture, one that follows the historical routes of the slave trade and the current routes of migration from former colonies to former imperial metropoles.[241] Likewise, Filipinos in Los Angeles can be located within an Asian Pacific Culture, one that follows U.S. imperial and economic expansion across the pacific and that traces the migrations that followed such expansion.[242] These transnational cultures can be understood as a result of and as a response to global power inequalities. However, the diasporic intimacy of cultures and the shared experiences of displacement and oppression in the Black Atlantic and Asian Pacific do not supercede the particular concerns of New York Puerto Ricans and Los Angeles Filipinos in performance poets' activist organizing. As these poets blur the distinction between national, racial, and ethnic lines in their genealogy of world power, their local and transnational organizing naturally go hand in hand. This chapter will examine how Filipino American and U.S. Puerto Rican performance poets work to make history through their activism. Through their activist pursuits, these poets put into practice the interventions their poetry makes: Their poetry emphasizes shared histories and experiences of people of color so they try to build panethnic and interracial coalitions. Their poetry insists on the ongoing nature of

[241] Lipsitz 1994; Roach 1996; Gilroy 1993.
[242] Eperjesi 2005; Wilson 2000 calls this space the American Pacific.

U.S. colonialism in the Philippines and Puerto Rico so they actively participate in organizations and events that work towards ending the legacies of U.S. colonialism.

In *Methodologies of the Oppressed*, cultural theorist Chela Sandoval charts the different forms that minority movements in the U.S. assumed in the past and argues that the most effective social movements are ones that deploy a differential form of consciousness. That is, "a consciousness that perceives itself at the center of myriad possibilities all cross-working," one that produces strategically shifting subjectivities.[243] Lisa Lowe similarly argues that a coalitional politics based on the specificities of ethnicity is more productive than a cultural politics based on a homogenous construction of panethnic identity in her analysis of Asian American writers.[244] The ability to shift subjectivities allows social movements to build temporary coalitions with other movements as necessary to adapt to the shifting processes of hegemony.[245] New York Puerto Rican and Los Angeles Filipino American performance poet activists enact differential forms of consciousness to build coalitions with other people of color based on their shared experiences of oppression by global power inequalities. In their local communities they perform poetry that emphasizes the histories and experiences they share with the people of color residing locally to build interracial coalitions and work towards social change together. They also perform and participate in events that ideologically and sometimes physically bridge the divide between their populations in the U.S. and their home islands. At all times, these poets use their experiences and

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[243] Sandoval 2000:31.
[244] Lowe 1996.
[245] Yoneyama 1999 describes how third generation Koreans in Japan formed coalitions with people of different backgrounds to advocate for antidiscrimination, and the construction of Japanese citizenship and civil rights independent of nationality.

understanding of Puerto Rico or the Philippines as a lens to understand and connect to other anti-imperialist struggles and to the struggles of other people of color in the U.S. Since New York Puerto Rican and Los Angeles Filipino American performance poets construct genealogies of global power that reflect their location and racialization, these also determine the types of coalitions that New York Puerto Rican and Los Angeles Filipino American activist performance poets. To adequately understand the particularities of these two activist art scenes, I will discuss the regional and transnational circuits that New York Puerto Rican and Los Angeles Filipino performance poets participate in separately, beginning first with New York.

Building Transnational Coalitions and Collaborations

From May 3 – 5, 2002, over a hundred Puerto Rican, U.S. Puerto Ricans and other artists against the U.S. military bomb testing gathered in Vieques to participate in "Viequethon 2002: Poetry and Concert for Peace." The international group of artists joined the local community in protesting and demanding an end to U.S. military bomb testing on the Puerto Rican island of Vieques. The event was organized by two New York Puerto Ricans: poet Pedro Pietri and photographer Adal Maldonado. In addition to poetry readings and performances, they also held seminars, told stories and read poetry to children at a local public school.[246] The Viequethon ended with a ceremony at the Justice and Peace Camp, a permanent residence for protestors located just outside of the U.S. Navy's Camp Garcia, where the test bombing took place.

The Viequethon took place during a period of heightened conflict against the U.S. military in Vieques. The April 1999 death of a Vieques resident during bomb testing led

[246] Associated Press 2002.

to increased pressure for the removal of the U.S. Navy from the island. Despite former President Clinton's agreement to put an end to U.S. military testing in Vieques by 2003, President George W. Bush deemed more testing necessary after the September 11, 2001 attacks on New York City and Washington D.C. The Viequethon was an organized response protesting the renewed bomb testing, regardless of the use of unarmed test dummies, and demanding the promised U.S. Navy 2003 withdrawal from Vieques. As a result of the persistence of activists and events like the Viequethon the U.S. military closed their Vieques bases in May 2003.

The ability of New York Puerto Ricans to organize and participate in an event in Vieques points to the collaborations that take place between Puerto Rican activists in New York and those in Puerto Rico. Puerto Rico's U.S. commonwealth status and the proximity of Puerto Rico to New York City facilitates the communication and physical collaborations between Puerto Ricans in New York and on the island. These circumstances allow for a circular flow of ideas and people.

In 1999, City University of New York (CUNY) students organized a strike against tuition increases and the end of open admissions. Lenina Nadal describes how students from Puerto Rico with experience organizing workers in Puerto Rico came to New York to help the CUNY students' organizing efforts. During the 1998 general strike, these students helped organize hundreds of thousands of Puerto Rican workers go on strike against the privitization of the Puerto Rican Telephone Company.[247] They used their organizing experience to help CUNY student enlist the support of the local Healthcare Workers Union (SEIU 1199) and the transit workers union. The relationships established

[247] Gonzales 1998.

during the CUNY strike led to more activist collaborations between CUNY students and University of Puerto Rico (UPR) students. After the CUNY strike, Nadal returned the favor by participating in student activist struggles at the UPR while visiting the island, helping students organize for smaller class sizes and more parking spaces.[248] Such collaborations and sustained relationships of students of the same generation in Puerto Rico and the U.S. confirm Georges E. Fouron and Nina Glick Schiller's assertion that transnational social fields simultaneously shape the identities of immigrants and their children in the U.S. as well as their counterparts in the homeland.[249] These particular transnational practices that Nadal describes are remarkable because they provide examples of a circular "long distance nationalism." Fouron and Glick Schiller define "long distance nationalism" as "ideas about belonging that link people living in various geographic locations and motivate or justify their taking action in relationship to an ancestral territory and its government."[250] The transnational activist coalitions between CUNY and UPR not only show U.S. Puerto Ricans taking action in their home islands, but Puerto Ricans taking action to aid Puerto Ricans in the diaspora.

Activist art coalitions among Puerto Ricans in New York and Puerto Rico, like the one that organized the Viequethon, mark a shift away from the Puerto Rican cultural rejection of U.S. Puerto Ricans, especially Nuyoricans.[251] Whereas static notions of Puerto Rican culture are used to differentiate culturally authentic Puerto Ricans on the island from Puerto Ricans migrants tainted by U.S. culture, popular culture connects Puerto Rico to its diasporic population in New York City. Mariposa credits the efforts of

[248] Nadal 2006.
[249] Fouron and Glick Schiller 2001.
[250] Ibid:61.
[251] See Duany 2002.

earlier generations of poets like Pedro Pietri and Nuyorican Poets Cafe founder Miguel Algarín for easing the island/disapora divide. Performances in Puerto Rico by Pietri, Algarín, Jesus Papoleto Melendez, and others from the founding generation of Nuyorican poets introduced Puerto Ricans on the island to the Nuyorican experience and paved the way for later generations of Nuyorican poets to also perform there.[252] In the summer of 2005, Puerto Rican cultural studies scholar Juan Flores brought a group of young Puerto Rican poets from New York City, and one from Mt. Holyoke, Massachusetts to perform at the University of Puerto Rico in Mayaguez. The event was more than just a series of performances; it was also a cultural exchange among U.S. Puerto Ricans and those from the island. These cultural exchanges do not only take place in Puerto Rico, but also in New York City. Jose Angel Figueroa sees himself and other organizers of cultural exchanges as cultural diplomats because of the transnational cooperation and understanding that the sharing of poetry facilitates.[253] Anthony Morales states that such cultural exchanges allow for a mutual recognition between Puerto Ricans on the island and those in the diaspora that they are "ultimately the same people."[254]

Popular culture's potential for conveying important issues lies in the pleasure of its consumption. However, some cultural forms facilitate the reciprocal communication of information more efficiently than others. The participatory nature of the organized cultural exchanges between Nuyorican, Puerto Rican, and other poets enables the sharing of ideas because it involves active communication. Mariposa contrasts the communicative properties of performance poetry with that of salsa, another cultural form

[252] Fernandez 2006; Nadal 2006.
[253] Figueroa 2006.
[254] Morales 2006.

that is popular among Puerto Ricans both on the island and in the U.S.: "Salsa is great and a lot of things can be communicated in music, but the themes that salsa covers is mostly about love, not so much politics like back in the 70s with Rubin Glades and Hector Lavoe."[255] Though salsa once served as a vehicle for expressing political resistance, Mariposa argues that salsa has now been co-opted. In contrast, New York Puerto Ricans have been performing poetry to communicate issues affecting the local community since the 1960s. Figueroa conceptualizes performance poetry as a weapon used in any public space available, including schools, hospitals, and prisons. In the 1960s, New York Puerto Ricans used this weapon to fight for an end to the U.S. war in Vietnam, the establishment of Ethnic Studies, Women's Studies, and Puerto Rican Studies, and higher education opportunity initiatives aimed at underprivileged youth.[256]

By performing in Puerto Rico and through cultural exchanges with Puerto Rican poets, New York Puerto Rican performance poets convey how the experiences of Puerto Ricans on the island and in the diaspora are linked, contending with the notion that New York Puerto Ricans are culturally different and removed from the Puerto Rican island experience. At the Viequethon, the Welfare Poets built such bridges by performing poetry connecting the struggles in Vieques against the U.S. military presence and bomb testing in Vieques to the New York Puerto Rican experience.[257] One poem they performed, entitled, "Drop the Bomb," represents the consequences of military test bombing for the environment and health of the local residents. Ray Ramirez, who wrote and performs this poem, begins the poem by stating his intentions: "I'm going to drop the bomb about

[255] Fernandez 2006.
[256] Figueroa 2006.
[257] Ramirez 2006.

Vieques how the Navy harms Viequenses. Simple living is cancerous. The U.S. government is a scientist dumping toxic pollutants on this island."[258] The phrase "drop the bomb" is a double entendre that signifies the slang definition of imparting important, often unexpected, knowledge, but also likens his performance of the poem to a weapon in the fight for an end of U.S. military bomb testing. Later in the poem, Ramirez argues that Vieques is only one site where the United States attacks Puerto Ricans by likening the South Bronx to Vieques: "Vieques is likes Hunts Point. Our children are wheezing, most are Puerto Rican, Dominicans, Africanos, poor people in the ghetto. Wherever we're from, you know we're having problems from the police, the army, the navy, the marines."[259] Harlem and the South Bronx, home to a large population of underprivileged Latinos and African Americans, houses multiple bus depot stations and waste transfer stations. The high rates of asthma among residents of Harlem and the South Bronx are the highest in the U.S. and often attributed to these stations and air pollution caused by automobile traffic crossing the bridge between Harlem and the South Bronx. The highest concentration of asthma cases in this area are in Hunt's Point, a South Bronx neighborhood that is predominantly Puerto Rican.[260] By juxtaposing the cancer rates in Vieques to the asthma rates in Hunt's Point, Ramirez illustrates how Puerto Ricans, whether in Puerto Rico or in New York City, fall victim to environmental racism. Furthermore, in grouping the police with branches of the U.S. military, Ramirez argues that poor Puerto Ricans and other people of color reside under conditions similar to a military occupation regardless of where they live. The shared conditions of occupation

[258] Welfare Poets 2005: my transcription.
[259] Ibid.
[260] Ramirez 2006.

are underscored at the end of the poem, when Ramirez exclaims that "The Navy, they've got to go from Vieques and the barrio."[261] Performing this poem for residents of Vieques not only debunks perceptions of life in the United States as better than that in Puerto Rico, but also illustrates that Puerto Ricans in the U.S. also struggle under conditions similar to those who remain in Puerto Rico because they must both contend with U.S. racism.

New York Puerto Rican performance poet activists use the experiences of Puerto Ricans to build coalitions based on the shared plights of people of color in the U.S. This strategy is effective because the U.S. often tests policies on the Puerto Rican population before implementing the policies in communities of color in the U.S., as they did with the sterilization of Puerto Rican women and women of color in New York City, and produces racial ideologies in Puerto Rico, like the culture of poverty thesis and the myth of the underclass, before applying these to people of color in the U.S.[262] New York Puerto Rican performance poets' equation of life in New York City barrios with a military occupation encompasses police brutality against people of color in the U.S. and their disproportionate imprisonment. Framed in this manner, the interactions between police and people of color in the U.S. relates to the experiences of Puerto Rican political prisoners. For these reasons, New York Puerto Ricans are actively involved in interracial coalitions against police brutality. One example of these efforts was the poets' involvement in organizing the large rally on 5th Avenue after the acquittal of the four NYPD officers who shot to death an unarmed Amadou Diallou.[263] In the past two years the Welfare Poets have focused on prisoners' issues and on ending the death penalty,

[261] Ramirez 2005.
[262] Briggs 2002.
[263] Ortiz 2006b; Rashburn 2000.

which led them to perform at a rally on behalf of four African American men on death row in Texas. One of these men has since been executed. They also began filming a documentary on these four men and the Texas prison system, particularly Texas death row.[264] Their latest CD, released February 2007, "Cruel and Unusual Punishment" reflects these efforts, with songs dedicated to the executed Texas prisoner.

The Welfare Poets' organizing does not happen solely at their performances, or at workshops that they hold. They upload their poetry on both their own website and on the popular myspace online community to reach an audience of listeners beyond those who attend their performances, provide links to more information about the campaigns they work on, and also offer easy ways for visitors on their website to contribute to their causes.[265] On the myspace website dedicated to their "Cruel and Unusual Punishment" CD, there are updates on different prisoners' cases and a form letter for visitors to send to the Governor of Texas on behalf of a death row inmate.[266] The Welfare Poets maximize the resources offered by online communities like myspace, such as free websites. These websites and the transnational collaborations that New York Puerto Rican performance poets participate in illustrate Appadurai's assertion that the complexity of global culture necessitates a conceptualization other than central and peripheral cultures within a nation. The Welfare Poets' websites are part of a mediascape that electronically disseminates images and ideas to a potentially global audience, linking the struggles of people of color in the U.S. to those in the third world.

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[264] Ramirez 2006.
[265] Welfare Poets 2007a; Ramirez 2007.
[266] Welfare Poets 2007b.

Performance poetry is a useful activist tool because regardless of how a poem is written on the page, the poem can be modified during a performance to more effectively reach the audience. In the previous chapter, I analyzed Shaggy Flores' "Oye Lo Boricua." At the end of the text version of the poem published in his collection of poems, Flores provides a centered, italicized list of activists who have worked to improve the lives of Puerto Ricans on the island and in the diaspora. In other versions of this poem, he adds more names to the list, including African American figures like The Black Panthers, Malcolm X, Latino revolutionaries like Che Guevara, Chicano figures like Cesar Chavez, and even Filipino American labor activist Phillip de la Cruz. In the printed version, the line following this list reads "And all the Puerto Rican political prisoners that kept it real." When he adds names to this list, he also changes the following line to "And all the Puerto Rican, Black, Latino, Diaspora political prisoners that kept it real." On the stage, the poem can be strategically edited as necessary to tailor the poem to the audience or to the event at which the poet is performing. By including other people of color and other third world revolutionaries in a poem that focuses on the history of Puerto Ricans, Flores connects Puerto Rican experience to the experiences of other Latinos and African Americans for the audience and encourages interracial coalition building. The explicit inclusion of Latinos and African Americans reflects the population of color in the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic region of the U.S., where Flores does most of his performance, activist, and academic work. However, the emphasis of the shared experiences of Puerto Ricans with other Latinos and African Americans also underscores how Puerto Ricans are understood or racialized as Latino, Black, or both.

Through their poetry, New York Puerto Rican performance poets trace a genealogy of global power that depends on the oppression of people of color world wide. They advocate for radical political revolution to correct the inequalities that global capital creates. In advocating for radical political reform, like socialist revolutions, to address issues affecting impoverished people of color, the Welfare poets also participate in an ideoscape challenging U.S. ideology.[267] Although many New York Puerto Rican performance poets do physically participate in activist endeavors, organizing and attending rallies, passing out fliers, attending meetings, some challenge U.S. ideology only on the rhetorical and ideological level. That is, their activist efforts are focused at the ideoscape, questioning the U.S.' definitions and practice of democracy and of equality. They then re-imagine how democracy and racial equality would operate in their communities and lives if put into practice.

Those who actively participate in the physical work of organizing, like the Welfare Poets, hope that the interracial coalitions they foster by rewriting history from the perspectives of the oppressed people of color worldwide contribute to the creation of an interracial movement that will overthrow the current capitalist system. The Welfare Poets make this agenda apparent in their poem "Drop the Bomb," which I discussed above. In the poem, Ramirez states "It's War. Which side you be joining?" The particularities of this poem imply that the two sides are Vieques and the U.S. military, however as I argued before, the conflict between Vieques and the U.S. is used as a lens to understand the plight of other people of color. Ramirez divides the world into global haves and have-nots in this poem, citing capitalism as responsible for this divide: "That

[267] Appadurai 1990.

side that soon be losing...capitalists with blood on their hands for invading sovereign lands."[268] Ramirez insinuates that the capitalist side will lose the war if those who the system oppresses choose to take action, giving the efforts of Vieques residents as an example: "Viequenses are choosing. They're choosing life over death, dignity over disrespect, freedom over dependence. These are times of hope and chance, people doing the world dance."[269] By transitioning from the particular situation in Vieques to referring generally to people on the global level, the poem posits grassroots activist efforts, like those that worked towards the U.S. Navy's removal from Vieques, can be effective "war" strategies against capitalism. In this manner, his poem offer hope to the oppressed.

However, not all New York Puerto Rican performance poets participate in activist organizations or organize in the traditional sense. These poets' challenge to U.S. imperialism and racism in particular and global power in general remains within the rhetorical, ideological realm. Anthony Morales identifies himself as an activist though he does not participate in rallies or activist events or belong to any activist organizations:

> I'm down for any and every liberation movement that's just trying to get free, any people's that's trying to get free. Be it the labor movement, or a race or ethnic movement, or anything like that. And in terms of activism, I mean I feel like every single day I'm teaching, you know what I'm saying. I'm a 9th to 10th grade teacher at Puente Academy for Peace and Justice, which has a curriculum centered around human rights and social justice. So on that level, every single day I'm teaching these 80 kids...I'm just trying to make the world a better place one person at a time, that's me changing the world, that's the revolution right there, you know what I'm saying? So on that tip, you know, hey, I give it up to all my brothers and sisters who are out there marching in the rallies, protesting, demonstrating...And trust me, I'm there in spirit, but in a lot of ways I'm not. My protest and the way that I'm active and the way I'm trying to contribute to the revolution is in a different way.[270]

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[268] Ramirez 2005.
[269] Ibid.
[270] Morales 2006.

Morales equates his teaching as a form of activism that contributes to libratory movements as effectively as rallies and protesting do. He emphasizes his daily commitment to "changing the world" takes the form of teaching human rights and social justice. By talking about his long term individual work within the institution of education, Morales conceptualizes the revolution that he is part of as a "war of position." Gramsci defines a war of position as a sustained ideological battle that must confront hegemony's manifestations in different institutions.[271]

The desire to "contribute to the revolution in a different way" may reflect a cynicism about the effectiveness of traditional methods of political organizing and a reimagining of what revolution might be. Bonafide Rojas describes his disillusionment with politically charged poetry that define revolution as violent: "Organizing is cool, but when it gets to real political activism...you get tired of the rhetoric and you get real jaded fast, really fast. But I mean, if it's not all rhetoric, are you ready to pick up a gun? I mean that's the line you've got to cross or we can do it all nonviolent and get beat up."[272] Here, Rojas defines "real" political activism as violent, either one participates in violence or is subject to violence to explain his hesitance to participate. However, framing revolution as an ideological battle, one that can be waged on a daily basis through education as Morales suggests, captures the potential of performance poetry as an ideological weapon. Taking the Welfare Poets' metaphor of poetry as a bomb a step further suggests that one main battleground against global power is an ideological terrain and winning on an

[271] Gramsci 1971.
[272] Rojas 2006.

ideological terrain does not require physical violence, but can lead to activism based on interracial, transnational solidarity around shared experiences of oppression.

Imagined Transnational Activism

In contrast to the circular cultural and activist exchanges between Puerto Ricans in New York and in Puerto Rico, such exchanges between Filipinos and Filipino Americans are less feasible. As Philippine citizens, Filipinos cannot come to the U.S. without a visa. The large number of Filipinos desiring to immigrate to the U.S. results in a prolonged wait for U.S. visas. Obtaining a tourist visa is especially difficult for young Filipinos who are assumed likely to become undocumented immigrants. These conditions make the circulation of activists and artists less possible. Filipino Americans can travel to and from the Philippines as they please, but the expense of a round-trip ticket and the length of the trans-pacific flight to the Philippines limit the number of trips that Filipino Americans in Los Angeles can make.

The cultural exchanges that can occur between Filipinos in Los Angeles and Filipinos in the Philippines depend largely on Filipino American travel to the Philippines. Filipino American performance poets must perform in the Philippines to introduce their work to Filipinos. To introduce Philippine performance poetry to Filipino Americans, poets returning from the Philippines must either recount their experiences or bring back examples of Philippine performance poetry to share. This is precisely what Filipino American performance poet and chair of Kabataang Maka-Bayan (KmB) USA, aka Pro-People Youth, Johneric Concordia did. He spent four months in the Philippines in 2004 to experience first hand the conditions that people living in Mindanao face as a result of joint U.S.-Philippine military operations there. While he was there, he performed a poem

entitled, “Do You Want to Know?” The poem debunks the American Dream often packaged for Filipinos who long to immigrate to the U.S. Johneric begins his poem by asking the audience, “Do you want to know what’s happening in my town?” In his answer, he paints an image of misunderstanding, distrust, and violence in an inner city:

> This kid was shot with a glock by another kid who would not appreciate the statement the other kid wouldn't talk. The bullet lodged in his heart and bloodless died on the spot. No second chance to advance for a future. All that it got: sixteen buried and wasted, lifer incarcerated. The concrete conditions we live in rarely debated. Up in congress, I guess our life is worthless, feel no justice, peace, solace.[273]

Whereas Filipinos in the Philippines often hear stories about higher wages and economic success from their Filipino American counterparts, Concordia represents the life that low skilled immigrants and their families face in the U.S. The desire to secure a better future for their children often motivates Filipinos to immigrate to the U.S. By representing two youngsters whose futures are cut short by violence, Concordia argues that the U.S. does not always offer a better future for immigrant children. Likewise, he insinuates that the conditions that foster such violence is unlikely to change because the U.S. lawmakers do not value their lives. The image he paints for Philippine audiences contrasts starkly to immigrant success stories that reproduce the U.S. as a land of opportunity for anyone.

To complete the Philippine – Filipino American cultural exchange, Concordia wrote a second verse to this poem representing the struggles of the indigenous minority in the Southern Philippines. Upon returning to the United States, he embarked on a twelve city U.S. tour to perform the new version of “Do You Want to Know?” and report back on what he observed during his time in the Philippines. His intended to perform his

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[273] Concordia 2005.

poem for Filipino American audiences, so he chose to perform at major U.S. and Canadian cities with large Filipino populations. The second verse of his poem begins with the question, “Do you want to know what’s happening back home?” To respond to this question, Concordia represents how one man’s family was murdered by the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP):

> Here's the story of one father. His child ripped from the womb. The mother died pretty soon, an example to anyone who would dare to assume, challenge AFP goons will bring about your own doom. They'll destroy all you love and keep whatever they can, too. Mother, daughter were buried. The rotten smells carried, found by the husband. They were just recently married. It's a nightmare he swears he can never wake from, so he hikes up the hills with a pack and a gun.[274]

By representing the circumstances that compel Filipinos to join guerilla resistance movements in the mountains, Concordia illustrates that guerilla fighters have legitimate reasons for opposing the Philippine government. This representation challenges the construction of guerilla resistance in Mindanao as terrorists by the Philippine and U.S. governments and the international media.

KmB USA is one among several USA based activist groups with ties to Philippine radical activist groups. Bearing the same name as the decades old youth organization of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP), KmB USA was established in Los Angeles in 1999. KmB USA, its Philippine counterpart Kabataang Makabayan (KM), and NDFP all advocate for the disempowered peasants and working class in the U.S., the Philippines, and globally. The Balagtasan Collective founding members were all part of the League of Filipino Students, a transnational organization working towards similar goals as KmB USA. BAYAN-USA, the international chapter of Bagong Alyansang

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[274] Ibid.

Makabayan (BAYAN-Philippines) is an alliance of progressive Filipino groups across the nation devoted to disseminating information about the national democratic movement in the Philippines and serves as a campaign center for Filipino American anti-imperialism efforts. Also, in the greater Los Angeles area there are two Gabriela Network chapters, a Philippine-U.S. women's solidarity organization that focuses on issues that Filipinas face worldwide. In particular, they are dedicated to securing rights and protection for Filipina domestic workers and also participate in anti-U.S. imperialism campaigns like the other transnational organizations. Just as New York Puerto Rican performance poets participated in an ideoscape that challenged U.S. definitions of democracy and freedom, these organizations likewise re-imagine what democracy should look like in the Philippines. U.S. institutionalized history often regards the Philippines as the oldest democracy in Asia.[275] KmB, BAYAN USA, Gabriela, and other radical Philippine and Filipino American organizations challenge this assertion by focusing on the plight of low wage Filipino workers in the Philippines and in the diaspora to underscore that the Philippine government does not represent or adequately provide for all of its people. In this manner, they question the Philippines' characterization as a democracy.

U.S. born Filipino American poet activists' understanding of the plight of Philippine workers is often framed by these activist organizations, community events, and university classrooms and is not based on their own experiences. Concordia's trip to the Philippines is a rare, but increasingly occurring, example of second generation Filipino American activist travel to the Philippines. Organizations like KmB and BAYAN USA sponsor exposure trips to allow Filipino Americans to travel to the Philippines to

[275] Reynolds 2003; Sanger 2003.

witness the conditions that underprivileged Filipinos live in.[276] Although all of the Filipino American performance poets I interviewed had traveled to the Philippines, a majority of these went on vacation, or to visit their family members, not to perform or participate in activist events. Among my interviewees, only one poet, Dorian Merina, had performed in the Philippines. He and one other poet, Wendell Pascual, met with Philippine performance poets and brought back with them CD compilations of their poetry.[277] Pascual broadcasts tracks from Philippine performance poetry CD on his public radio show, Aziatic Arts, which features Asian Pacific Island music, community events, and news. The show is broadcast from 3am-6am on Saturday morning, targeting youth out late on Friday nights, but the broadcasts can also be accessed online for those who miss the original broadcasts.[278] For the most part, these compilations of Philippine performance poetry do not circulate. Thus, in contrast to the New York Puerto Rican experience, Philippine – Filipino American cultural exchange occurred unevenly with only occasional Filipino Americans performing in the Philippines and Philippine performance poetry only being exchanged as commodities not for the sake of building activist coalitions.

Other activist performance poets' organizing work consisted of participating in U.S. based rallies and campaigns put together by KmB, BAYAN USA, the League of Filipino Students, or the Gabriela Network. In her study of second generation Filipino Americans Diane Wolf found that these Filipino American youth experience an emotional

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[276] Conversation with activist scholar Eugene Gambol.
[277] The Philippine performance poetry Merina and Pascual shared with me diverged from Filipino American performance poetry in the lack of any political content and its focus on sampling of other recordings. I am not sure if these CDs are representative of performance poetry in the Philippines or even in Manila.
[278] Pascual 2004.

transnationalism based not on their own experiences in the Philippines but on an imagined sense of the Philippines provided for them by their parents and their parents' transnational practices.[279] I would add to Wolf's argument that U.S. born Filipino Americans' imagining of the Philippines culls from community and university resources as well. The concerns that this emotional transnationalism creates for Los Angeles Filipino American performance poets compel them to work towards social change in the Philippines by joining transnational activist organizations. Unlike New York Puerto Ricans, Los Angeles Filipino American performance poets participate in an imagined transnationalism because their activist organizing occurs mostly, if not completely, in the U.S. For the most part, they can only imagine the benefits that their U.S. based actions can make in the Philippines. Transnational activist organizations provide an additional emotional link to the Philippines but these links do not necessarily involve the physical collaborations of all Filipino American activists with Filipinos.

Filipino American activists have actively organized against the overt manifestations of U.S. imperialism following the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on September 11, 2001. In addition to military operations and occupations in the Middle East, the U.S. military declared the Southern island of Mindanao another site in its War on Terror and launched Operation Enduring Freedom – Philippines. In January 2002, the U.S. sent U.S. troops, mostly Special Forces, to advise and conduct joint training exercises with the Philippine military, over a year before the U.S. invasion and military occupation of Iraq in March 2003. President Bush used institutionalized narratives of U.S. colonial success in the Philippines as a metaphor for the future of Iraq

[279] Wolf 2002.

under U.S. occupation. Filipino Americans activist groups, like BAYAN USA, deploy the same metaphor, but use the metaphor to envision how the U.S. occupation of Iraq will lead to the continual U.S. neocolonial subjugation of Iraq. Thus, both President Bush and Filipino American activists use different versions of Philippine history to foretell Iraqi future. In doing so, they both underscore the constructed nature of historical narratives. Lisa Yoneyama argues that by narrating history as prophecy the "the remembered event is dislodged from the past and transfigures into a future happening in a fictive timespace."[280] While Bush projects a constructed history of U.S. colonial benevolence into the future, Filipino American activists wish to ensure that their history is not repeated. Thus, Filipino activist groups in Los Angeles and nationwide have mobilized against U.S. imperialism in the Middle East, but also military activity in Mindanao and the suppression of dissension in the Philippines in an attempt to imagine U.S. imperialism as finally past tense.

Like their New York Puerto Rican counterparts, Los Angeles Filipino American activist performance poets use electronic resources to reach audiences beyond their local communities, to advertise and distribute their poetry, and to disseminate information about rallies and other activist events. As the Balagtasan and LA Enkanto collectives are no longer active groups they do not have active websites. However, individual poets often have websites featuring their new projects, their political organizations, and/or projects by other progressive Filipino American performance poets. Kiwi, one of the Balagtasan Collective's founders, is now part of a progressive hip hop group, Native Guns. He releases albums with Native Guns and individually and maintains individual

[280] Yoneyama 1999:212.

myspace websites for both endeavors to advertise his work. Concordia uploads digital video files of the Native Guns performing onto youtube to share with a wide audience under the alias farmerjohneric. Thus, they too contribute to a technoscape by taking advantage of available electronic resources for their activist work and to share their poetry. Recent activist performances are largely advertised online via electronic listservs, or mailing lists. Some of these listservs are electronic membership lists for activist organizations, but activist events are also regularly posted on the AziatikArtsLA listserv, a listserv for Asian American arts and political events in Los Angeles.

In their anti-U.S. imperialism organizing, Los Angeles Filipino American performance poets relate the history of and current situation in the Philippines to their own experiences in the U.S. as well as to the history of and current situations of other third world countries. Balagtasan Collective's Faith Santilla performed at a January 2005 event for the non-profit organization Strategic Actions for a Just Economy. Dedicated to economic justice and popular education, the event raised money and awareness for the low-income tenants of the Morrison Hotel Residents in downtown Los Angeles. At the time, the Morrison Hotel was in danger of being closed down for the creation of a new development. The event drew a young crowd that consisted of local artists invited to perform, academics from local universities, local activists, Morrison Hotel tenants, and some hip hop enthusiasts there to see KRS-One (Knowledge Reigns Supreme Over Nearly Everyone), an influential, progressive MC. The program began with guest speakers who spoke about the Morrison Hotel dilemma and the plight of people of color in cities and ended with a series of featured performers, including Santilla.

During the evening, a Native American woman spoke of her experiences as one of Morrison Hotel's residents. She spoke of what little respect she received as a low income person and appealed to the crowd at the event to help prevent the closure of her home. At that event, Faith performed a piece called "Mirror Images," which she dedicated to that woman. This poem illustrates the continuity between 1898 and present United States foreign policy to emphasize women's shared experiences of struggle and the need for solidarity:

> So now where are the warriors that we once were? Where is Gabriela who fought alongside Diego? Where is Malinche? All of whom drove out the Spaniards while Uncle Sam was on his way to hand you NAFTA and to me APEC cuz both president Estrada and Zedillo have American dog collars around their necks trained to sit, heel and stay.[281]

Here she references resistance to Spanish colonialism in the Philippines and Mexico. Gabriela Silang is the wife of Diego Silang who led a revolt against the Spanish in 1792. After Diego's assassination, Gabriela took control of the revolt and was later captured and executed. She also references Malinche, a female figure often blamed for the downfall of the Aztecs, but who has recently been reclaimed by feminists as a revolutionary figure. She represents how women like Gabriela and Malinche fought to free themselves from Spanish control to encourage women of color to resist United States control together. By linking the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the Asian Pacific Economic Cooperation forum (APEC), Santilla demonstrates how both Mexico and the Philippines are influenced by U.S. neocolonialism. Both NAFTA and APEC promote open trade that ultimately exploits third world labor to the benefit of United States corporations. Santilla emphasizes how economic trade agreements

[281] Faith Santilla 2001:my transcription.

reproduce global power inequalities by representing former Mexican President Ernesto Zedillo Ponce de Leon and former Philippine President Joseph Estrada, whose governments agreed to these trade agreements, as the U.S. trained, domestic pets. Santilla provides concrete examples of how the United States maintains its economic control of both Mexico and the Philippines. In this example, Faith links colonial struggles to contemporary neocolonial struggles. By dedicating her performance to the Native American woman she also highlights shared struggles of people of color in Los Angeles. She invokes the history of resistance to colonial violence to empower people of color today.

As an organizing tool used in Los Angeles, "Mirror Images" strategically compares the past and present experiences of the Philippines and Mexico to target the large Filipino and Mexican populations there. In 2002, Santilla performed "Mirror Images" alongside the other women of the Balagtasan Collective at the annual Mujeres de Maiz live art show commemorating International Women's Day. Mujeres de Maiz is a Los Angeles based organization of Chicana and Latina artists. The set performed by the women of the Balagtasan Collective began with a projected screen reading "Makibaka! Luche!" These are the command forms for struggle in Tagalog and Spanish, respectively, already setting the stage for translating their struggles as one they share. The first screen is replaced by a projection of a woman and a map of the Philippines. Alison de la Cruz performs a poem allegorizing the Philippines as 7,000 daughters of the sea and sky, making clear to the audience the specific social positions from which they speak. Santilla's performance of "Mirror Images" follows De La Cruz's performance, making explicit the histories they, as Filipinas, share with the members of Mujeres de Maiz, and

with the largely Chicano/Latino audience. In addition to Santilla's performance of mirror images, the other women of the Balagtasan Collective read poems representing WWII in the Philippines, Filipinas as a global labor force, and the Filipina American experience. The performance ends with all of the women singing "Bayan Ko," a patriotic Filipino song in front of a screen projecting the words "International Women's Day." After establishing their common histories and experiences, the women of the Balagtasan Collective share their specific histories and struggles to teach and find other people of color who will join and support their activist pursuits.

Filipino American performance poets also participate in Asian American activist events. In November 2005, mETHODOLOGY, "a monthly jam of community, consciousness, and culture" in L.A.'s Chinatown featured Balagtasan Collective founder, and Native Gun member Kiwi. This particular mETHODOLOGY served as a fundraiser for an L.A. delegation to protest at the December 2005 World Trade Organization (WTO) Conference in Hong Kong.[282] mETHODOLOGY takes place at Chow Fun, a Chinatown restaurant that is transformed into a late night dance and lounge space one Saturday every month. On this particular night, Kiwi's performance attracted a large crowd consisting mostly of young Asian Americans. Once he took the stage, everyone packed the dance floor and faced him, transforming the dance space into a mini concert space. His high energy set kept the audience dancing and waving their arms in the air when he did. One poem he performed that night, entitled "Work It," dealt specifically with the labor conditions that globalization creates for workers in the third world, one issue that the L.A.

[282] Chang 2005.

delegation wished to highlight by protesting at the WTI conference. The poem links exploited labor conditions in Africa, Latin America, and Asia:

> I keep my wrists ice cold with the shiny stone fresh picked by some workers in Sierra Leone, or some Filipino kids that have their futures postponed, 12 years old looking like they could be one of my own, that made my phat kicks on my cellular phone, or the way the cap fitted on top of my dome, blood stain right beneath where the stitches were sewn, hidden from the crowd when I'm reading my poem... What Guatemalan family picked them coffee beans, broke their back for my broccoli and artichoke[283]

He references the diamond miners in Sierra Leone, Filipino factory workers, and Guatemalan farmers who are all exploited to produce commodities for a typical U.S. American lifestyle. In doing so, he argues that the average U.S. American's complicity in creating the poor working conditions these workers suffer from. At the end of his performance, he encouraged people to take action by buying t-shirts in support of the L.A. delegation and to learn more about the WTO and other ways they could contribute to the protests from the delegation's information desk. Santilla's and Kiwi's choice of events to perform at and the poems they choose illustrate their efforts to build Asian panethnic and interracial coalitions that reflect Los Angeles' population of color.

The activist coalitions and events that Los Angeles Filipino American performance poets participate in take place mostly in the local area. The limited visas available to Filipino citizens to travel to the U.S. and the expense and length of a round trip flight between Los Angeles and Manila restrict the formation of physical transnational activist coalitions and poetry exchanges between Filipino Americans and Filipinos in the Philippines. Instead, Los Angeles Filipino Americans performance poets

[283] Native Guns 2006: my transcription.

participate in transnational activist organizations that host events in the U.S. for the benefit of the Philippines. They also build coalitions with other people of color in Los Angeles by performing poems that reveal their shared histories and shared struggles that they face in the present.

Conclusion

Towards the end of both verses of "Do You Want to Know?" Johneric Concordia states, "So I ask of you, you can ask me, too. In what direction we're headed for a world that's brand new?"[284] In this question he encourages the audience to become actively involved in finding solutions to problems facing people of color in the U.S. and peasants in the Philippines. Ray Ramirez also asks his audience to take action by stating, "It's war. Which side you joining?" in his poem, "Drop the Bomb." Directly addressing or questioning the audience in their performances is a tactic New York Puerto Rican and Los Angeles Filipino American performance poets often use to organize their communities. They impart knowledge about ongoing struggles and specify what actions can be taken to aid in these struggles to convince people to join in their local and transnational struggles. In this chapter I traced the practiced and imagined transnational as well as the regional activist circuits that New York Puerto Rican and Los Angeles Filipino Americans performance poets participate in. By building diasporic, transnational, and interracial coalitions, these poets attempt to practice what their poetry advocates. Their poetry reconstructs a genealogy of global power that has resulted in shared histories of oppression for people of color world wide. Through their performances at activist events and their activist organizing, New York Puerto Rican and Los Angeles Filipino American

[284] Concordia 2005: my transcription.

poets work with other people of color to represent their histories to imagine a future without the inequalities that imperialism and globalization cause.

VI. Conclusion: Marketing Performance Poets

In February 2007, a Volkswagen television advertisement featuring a dark skinned Asian American performance poet began circulation. The poet performs outdoors in a cafe's patio in a city at night. His rhythm, seriousness, and intensity as he reads his poem conforms to the performative styling usually associated with hip hop poetry, slam poetry, or spoken word. He performs to a multiracial, seated audience. Some in the audience drink coffee as they nod in agreement to the poet's statements:

> Conflict boils over like an angry sludge
> Politicians lie to us like they've got a grudge
> We're in a decaying spiral of fevered ferocity...[285]

Here the poet is interrupted. A white male in a white Volkswagen sedan honks his horn and shouts "Three V-dubs for under $17,000. Woo hoo!" as he speeds by on the wide and deserted avenue. The poet pauses. A smile forms on his face. He resumes speaking, but is no longer reading his poem. Speaking slower, he states, "hope springs." The scene abruptly ends, cutting to another scene focused on the three cars, all painted white, referenced by the screaming motorist.

Unlike the poems produced by the performance poets in this dissertation, the poem read by the poet in this advertisement has no substantive critique. The phrase "politicians lie to us like they've got a grudge," indicates to the viewer that this poet is dissatisfied with politics, but the poet articulates no good reason why. In the next scene, the advertisement represents how the poet's unhappiness has nothing to do with the shortcomings of politicians. His unhappiness with the political system can be erased with the mere mention of the affordability of a German import car. In doing so, the

[285] Volkswagen Automobile Company 2007.

advertisement conflates the critiques that performance poets of color level at structures of inequality with personal hopelessness, personal problems that can be remedied by consumption. This particular advertisement was one in a series of Volkswagen advertisements for these three car models that emphasized hope. One other advertisement in this series represented a white male about to commit suicide by jumping off a billboard who changes his mind upon learning about the price of the three Volkswagen cars. Equating the performance poet critical of the political system with a suicidal man underscores the representation of the performance poet as irrationally hopeless.

In her study on Hispanic marketing in the U.S., Arlene Dávila argues that "ethnic marketing...responds to and reflects the fears and anxieties of mainstream U.S. society about its 'others,' thus reiterating the demands for an idealized, good, all-American citizenship in their constructed commercial images and discourses."[286] In representing an Asian American performance poet verbalizing critiques, however inarticulate, of the U.S. government, this advertisement echoes fears of the "yellow peril," that represents disloyal, "unpatriotic" Asian Americans as betraying the U.S.[287] Thus, this advertisement functions as a disciplinary mechanism for both performance poets of color, in general, and Asian Americans, in particular, providing a model of what not to be and a model for reformation. A performance poet can become a good, patriotic citizen through consumption.[288]

This dissertation illustrates how Los Angeles Filipino American and U.S. Puerto Rican performance poets participate in local politics of memory as community educators

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[286] Dávila 2001:218.
[287] Ong 1999.
[288] Park 2005 discusses the link between consumption and citizenship and argues that second generation Asian Americans assert their social citizenship through conspicuous consumption.

challenging institutionalized U.S. history within and without classrooms. They use poetry to teach the genealogies of global power they trace, genealogies that connect their own histories and experiences with those of other people of color. They teach because they believe that imparting knowledge gives the disempowered power to work towards a different future at the local and global level. The Volkswagen television advertisement dismisses the interventions that these performance poets make, suggesting that performance poets' critiques are inarticulate and unfounded and that the poets themselves are irrationally angry. In other words, this advertisement suggests that nothing valuable can be learned from performance poetry, invalidating the work that they do.

When I began this project, I identified performance poetry as an emergent form of Filipino American and U.S. Puerto Rican culture, providing a space for the articulation of new meanings and the creation of new kinds of relationships.[289] The performance poets in this study did articulate historical narratives that are new for many people and they used these narratives to built interracial and transnational coalitions. In this sense, Filipino American and U.S. Puerto Rican performance poetry can be considered emergent. However, performance poetry is not emergent in the sense of being new for U.S. Puerto Ricans. New York Puerto Ricans have been critiquing U.S. imperialism and articulating their experiences as migrants in the U.S. since the 1970s. In the early to middle 1990s, a hip hop influenced performance poetry referred to as spoken word emerged among Asian American communities across the nation, resulting in the creation of the two Filipino American poetry collectives I studied in this dissertation, the Balagtasan Collective and the LA Enkanto Kollective.

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[289] Williams 1977.

Emergent cultural forms are always in danger of being co-opted to reproduce dominant ideologies. The Volkswagen advertisement, and other advertisements using performance poets, including McDonalds and Sprite television advertisements, are examples of the cooptation of spoken word and slam poetry. These are attempts by mainstream culture to make use of the popularity of spoken word. In the process, these commercials also define what spoken word is for an audience unfamiliar with the cultural form. Let me make clear that I am differentiating between performance poetry in general and spoken word/slam poetry here. Poetry produced at the Nuyorican Poets Cafe in the 1970s and 1980s was not called spoken word. And though some of the poets I interviewed categorized themselves at one time as spoken word artists, they did so at a time when spoken word was a cultural form used specifically for community building and activism.

As educators, these Filipino American and U.S. Puerto Rican performance poets realize that a variety of pedagogical tools are needed when teaching. The same pedagogical tools may not remain effective year after year. As activists who strategically plan their performances depending on the specific event or their audience, they realize that effective organizing requires constant re-evaluation of what works and what no longer works. The constant maintenance of cultural hegemony requires the incorporation and depoliticization of resistant cultural forms.[290] Challenging cultural hegemony, then, likewise requires constant repositioning and a constant search for emergent cultural forms and alternative spaces. I touched on some examples of these poets' adaptation to the cooptation of spoken word. The gentrification of the Lower East Side led some New York

[290] Gramsci 1971.

Puerto Rican performance poets to establish open mics in the South Bronx. Some Filipino American performance poets decided to devote their activist efforts to community organizing. Here, I will talk more at length about how U.S. Puerto Rican and Filipino American performance poets have responded to the commodification of spoken word, in particular, and hip hop, in general.

Resisting Commodification

One of the main differences between the New York Puerto Rican and Los Angeles Filipino American performance poetry communities was the emphasis on cultivating new generations of poets and the community organizations that make this possible. This difference largely accounts for the long history and the continued longevity of the performance poet community in New York City. I posit that the establishment of poetry as a cultural form of resistance among New York Puerto Ricans explains in part why New York Puerto Rican activist poetry continues to thrive, whereas most Los Angeles Filipino American activist poets have moved on to other activist and/or artistic endeavors, or just moved on in their lives.

I first interpreted the resistance I met against the term ‘spoken word’ in New York City to be indicative of a general disillusionment caused by its commodification. Some members of the Balagtasan Collective and LA Enkanto Kollective had previously expressed to me their growing dissatisfaction with spoken word as an art form, so I assumed New York Puerto Rican performance poets’ resistance to the term indicated a similar dissatisfaction. However, this could not explain fully why New York Puerto Ricans continued to perform poetry as a pedagogical and activist tool. In retrospect, I see that their resistance to the term ‘spoken word’ was not caused by spoken word’s

commodification. They had resisted the 'spoken word' label to categorize their work from the beginning. English professor and Puerto Rican poet Tony Medina argues in his introduction to the poetry anthology, *Bum Rush the Page*, "Serious poets who also happen to perform well on stage are constantly being called spoken-word artists and are not taken seriously as writers. Poets (especially those of color) who use the word (use language) to effect change are therefore ghettoized by those in the academy and those at the gates as solely (or "simply") oral, urban, or street poets."[291] Recognizing how the categorization as spoken word limits their poetry's potential and invalidates their poetic critiques, many U.S. Puerto Rican performance poets like Medina rejected the term all together. Thus, the commodification of spoken word did not make them disillusioned with poetry as a tool for social change because they did not consider their work to be spoken word.

Many members of the Balagtasan Collective and LA Enkanto Kollective did identify their performance poetry as spoken word. The subtitle of LA Enkanto's CD, "Filipino American Spoken Word from Los Angeles," clearly marks them as spoken word artists. As spoken word became commodified, many of these Filipino American performance poets turned their activist and artist energy elsewhere. Alan Aquino describes how spoken word became less meaningful and more of a cliché because of "this idea that as long as you can mimic and copy the stereotypical cadence of a spoken word artist, you can grab anything and turn it into a spoken word piece."[292] Defining spoken word as a style of performing poetry or as a specific genre shifted the emphasis from the

[291] Medina and Reyes Rivera 2001:XIX.
[292] Aquino 2005.

substance of the poems to the performative style, negating the pedagogical purpose of performance for poets like the Balagtasan Collective. As a result, some members, of these collectives, like Vanessa Vela-Lovelace, administrative director of the Association for the Advancement of Filipino Arts and Culture, are now full time community organizers. Others, like Alison de la Cruz, put together their own one wo/man shows. Some pursue careers as teachers, like Alan Aquino who teaches at the university and collaborates with a colleague on performance pieces. For Los Angeles Filipino American activists, spoken word was primarily a vehicle for communicating genealogies of global power for social change that they utilized while it was still effective. In that sense, these poetry collectives resisted commodification by finding other cultural forms that had yet to be co-opted or putting their energies into different types of activist work.

However, the commodification of spoken word does not fully explain why poetry did not remain an effective pedagogical and activist tool for Los Angeles Filipino Americans. Filipino American raptivist (rap activists) duos and trios have emerged in other big cities: San Francisco, Seattle, and Chicago. Unlike these cities, Los Angeles does not have a centralized urban space or a public transportation system for people to efficiently access community performance spaces. Aquino remarks how logistically difficult it was to organize the LA Enkanto Kollective and produce their CD "because we'd be coming from all these different places."[293] Likewise, without organizations like the Teachers and Writers Collective and Urban Word offering income to poets to mentor another generation of poets, Filipino American performance poets did not have access to the same types of resources as their New York Puerto Rican counterparts. Faith Santilla

[293] Ibid.

admits that the Balagtasan Collective had younger members that they wanted to mentor as artist activists, but that they did not have the organizational resources to successfully do so.[294] Therefore, performing poetry was no longer an effective pedagogical and activist tool in Los Angeles because of the commodification of spoken word, the lack of stable performance spaces due to cuts to arts funding, the logistic difficulty of meeting with poetry collectives and accessing performance spaces, and the absence of established poetry resources in Los Angeles.

Raptivism and a Growing Gender Divide

The disappearance of Filipino American poetry collectives is not a Los Angeles specific phenomenon, as I mentioned in my introduction. Eighth Wonder in San Francisco and Isangmahal Kollective in Seattle are no longer active. Neither is the pan-Asian Chicago based collective I Was Born with Two Tongues. However, in Seattle, San Francisco, and Chicago, there are now popular raptivist duos or trios. All are male. They have their own websites and myspace pages promoting their performance tours, providing audio and video samples of their work and offering links where myspace virtual visitors can purchase their physical CDs or purchase digital files of their tracks. Many male U.S. Puerto Rican performance poets have also adopted more of a rap sensibility in the performance of their poems. They, too, have personal websites and myspace pages featuring audio samples of their poetry and video footage of their performances. Through these websites, they market their CDs, poetry anthologies, and upcoming performances. On these websites raptivist poems are commodities for sale

[294] Santilla 2004.

causing capitalist entrepreneurship and radical politics to collide and allowing their internet audiences to participate in the movement through consumption.

Although many of the Filipina American performance poets I interviewed also had their own myspace pages, none had audio or video samples of their poetry or other creative performances. None of them had links where CDs could be purchased.[295] Like their Filipina American counterparts, New York Puerto Rican female activist poets do not have their own CDs like the Welfare Poets do nor do any of them have myspace pages or personal webpages advertising their work, though their poetry is often featured on New York based poetry websites or Puerto Rican cultural websites.[296] This is not to suggest that New York Puerto Rican female performance poets are technologically illiterate or unsavvy. Of these poets, one created and maintains the "virtual boricua" website, a page dedicated to arts and issues of Puerto Ricans everywhere and another regularly writes both in a personal blog and contributes professionally to a Latino community blog. In her study of the origins of hip hop and rap, Trisha Rose notes that despite women's roles in the emergence of hip hop, they have been left out of music production due in large part to the male dominance of studio space. Men can also more easily access resources to produce hip hop albums because hip hop in general is generally understood as masculine. Hip hop recording companies, especially smaller ones are hesitant to take a risk producing female artists. [297] Perhaps this can account for both the absence of CDs by U.S. Puerto Rican and Filipino American female performance poets and the absence of their

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[295] One Filipina American performance poet had a link to a website selling t-shirts featuring her graphic designs, not on the front page, but in a blog entry on her myspace page.
[296] Some female Puerto Rican performance poets made popular by Def Poetry Jam, who are not explicitly activists, have their own CDs.
[297] Rose 1994.

professionally produced music tracks to upload onto myspace pages. As a result, it is much easier to access performances and poetry by U.S. Puerto Rican and Filipino American men. To find performances and poetry by U.S. Puerto Rican and Filipino American women requires more local knowledge, access to local libraries, fliers and emails about local events.

It is not clear how the gendered divides of the production of hip hop music will effect how New York Puerto Rican and Los Angeles Filipino Americans organize for social change in Puerto Rico, the Philippines, and the U.S. However, the gendered divide can affect the conceptualization of anti-U.S. imperialist activism, relying on gendered metaphors of imperialism as rape or the threat of imperialism as a threat to the woman as nation. For example, in Johneric Concordia's poem which I analyzed in chapter four, "Do You Want to Know?" he represents a situation where a man lost both wife and daughter, relying on a gendered narrative to appeal to Filipino Americans to protect the nation's women by actively participating or supporting transnational activist organizations. Such metaphors imagine women only as victims to be saved, not as actors. Thus, as a technology of memory, performance poetry allows the expression of anyone's experience, anyone's history. However, access to recording technology can determine how wide one's audience might be. Such technologies still limit the telling of the different gendered experiences of colonialism and can possibly limit the libratory possibilities of anti-colonial social movements for women.

Decolonizing History

The Filipino Americans and U.S. Puerto Ricans in this study use performance poetry to teach communities of color their own narratives of history, narratives that

challenge colonial histories reproduced by U.S. educational institutions and other sites that produce official U.S. histories. The critiques of U.S. imperialism and global power they articulate limit the spaces where they can perform. However, they are not concerned with intervening in a national politics of memory. They are concerned in intervening in the narratives that shape the lives and futures of their local communities and the transnational communities they locate themselves in. To facilitate the reproduction of the genealogies of global power they articulate, these poets will exploit any resource available to them: the internet, the classroom, community resources, and other cultural forms. However, available resources are often limited. Raptivists make their work available as media commodities to reach a wider audience, but also to fund their activist work, their tours, and the production of more CDs. They go to these lengths to narrate a history that incorporates subjugated knowledges of the Philippines and Puerto Rico in an attempt to decolonize history, to write and enable the writing of histories that do not conform to a linear narrative of colonial progress enabled by benevolent imperialisms. In constructing genealogies of global power, they strive to create decolonizing histories: histories created outside of colonial institutions and free from disciplinary restrictions, histories that will inspire people of color to join in their decolonizing struggles. They are not the needlessly hopeless people that the Volkswagen commercial constructs them to be. In performing and organizing, these activist poets demonstrate their hope for a "world that's brand new."[298]

[298] Concordia 2005:my transcription.

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