

UC Irvine

UC Irvine Electronic Theses and Dissertations

Title

Wounded Language/Time: History, the Novel, and the Filipino-American Relation

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/20c466kz>

Author

Ku, Ryanson

Publication Date

2017

Copyright Information

This work is made available under the terms of a Creative Commons Attribution License, available at <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>

Peer reviewed|Thesis/dissertation

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA,
IRVINE

Wounded Language/Time:
History, the Novel, and the Filipino-American Relation

DISSERTATION

submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in Comparative Literature

by

Ryanson Alessandro Ku

Dissertation Committee:
Professor Ackbar Abbas, Chair
Professor Eyal Amiran
Professor Gabriele Schwab
Professor Sarita Echavez See

2017

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	iii
CURRICULUM VITAE	iv
ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION	v
INTRODUCTION: The Filipino-American Relation: Traumatic History and Post-Imperial Literatures	1
CHAPTER 1: Filipino Dis-Appointment and US (Anti-) Imperialism: A Traumatic Genealogy of the Filipino-American Relation	21
CHAPTER 2: The Deconstruction of Trauma in the (Non-) Experimental Novel: Imperialist Disavowal, Colonial Mentality, and Writing Autoimmunity	64
CHAPTER 3: The Sublimation of Trauma in the New/Native Novel: The Failure, Liberation, and Survival of the Culture/Nation	111
NOTES	154
BIBLIOGRAPHY	183

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my teachers, for appreciating my strengths and showing me my weaknesses; for helping me with my work and the constraints in which I found myself; for offering me knowledge, wisdom, friendship, and the motivation and opportunity to be more than I am. Thank you, Ackbar Abbas, for showing me how to think creatively against dogma, for believing in me from the beginning and sticking by me to the end; Sarita Echavez See, for introducing me to Filipino American studies, for holding my hand in the final stages as my campaign manager and secret weapon; Eyal Amiran, for reading American fiction with me and responding in ways always empowering; Gabriele Schwab, for getting me into trauma theory and reminding me, when writing, of my reader; and Rei Terada, for teaching me object relations psychoanalysis and striving to make academia more humane. May I someday be deserving of everything you have done for me, of which what I mention here is only the most notable, and return your generosity to other students.

Thank you as well to the other teachers I met in graduate school: Greg Stone, for accepting me to a graduate program at LSU out of promise, thus starting my career in the humanities, insisting on Marx and serendipitously “mistaking” me for a Nietzschean; John Protevi, for introducing me to poststructuralism through Foucault and Deleuze; Gregory Schufreider, for teaching me, and letting me teach, German philosophy; Dina-Al-Kassim, for welcoming me to UCI and steering me away from expository toward close reading; David Theo Goldberg, for conversing with me about race and class; Christine Balance, for providing guidance on Filipino American studies; Karen Tongson, for offering helpful suggestions on queer theory and the potential extensions of my work; Joseph Salazar, for generously guiding me through, and providing texts of, Filipino fiction; and Annette Schlichter, Rodrigo Lazo, Kai Evers, Nasrin Rahimieh, François Raffoul, Patrick McGee, Carl Freedman, Irene DiMaio, and Harald Leder, for various kindnesses and stimulations. Thank you as well to the staff of my department at UCI, especially Bindya Baliga.

I would also like to acknowledge the wanderers I met and formed lifelong friendships with in graduate school: Engel Szwaja-Franken, Sarah Kessler, Crystal Hickerson, Ariel Perloff, Anil Chandiramani, Mark Pangilinan, Philip Anselmo, Jamie Rogers, Parisa Vaziri, Toru Oda, Lev Marder, James Goebel, Morgan Slade, Eddy Troy, Chris Malcolm, Aubrey Tang, Mike Atienza. Recalling names based on the order of meeting is like walking through a memory lane filled with wonder, heartbreak and joy. Hang in there and keep fighting! I am also grateful to friends outside of academia who gave me crucial support so I can stay in it: Pietrovito Moschetti, for talking to me wisely, humorously, and passionately from far away, proving that friendship does overcome distance; Daniel Coffeen, for generously reading drafts; the guys/gays I trained with at the gym, site of the sublimation of frustration that enabled me, unexpectedly later in life, to develop my body along with my mind; and the caring women and men I worked with in the service industry.

Finally, I would like to thank my family for their undying, unwavering, and unconditional love, for taking me out of the tower and teaching me to not take things too seriously, to also learn by other means, and to live a well-rounded life, a life worth living. I would not be who I am without you and your hardships and joys are mine and may we soon have less hardship and more joy.

May we all find ways to reverse the neoliberalization of the university, the world, and the mind.

CURRICULUM VITAE

Ryanson Alessandro Ku

- 2004 BS in Economics, The George Washington University
- 2006 College Composition, Louisiana State University
- 2007 Introduction to Fiction, Louisiana State University
- 2008 MA in Comparative Literature, Louisiana State University
- 2008 German Existentialism, Louisiana State University
- 2009 Nineteenth-Century Philosophy, Louisiana State University
- 2009 MA in Philosophy, Louisiana State University
- 2010 – 2016 Critical Reading and Rhetoric: *Revising the American West*,
University of California, Irvine
- 2011 – 2016 Argument and Research: *Public Education in America*, University
of California, Irvine
- 2011 MA in Comparative Literature, University of California, Irvine
- 2016 – 2017 Humanities Core: *Empire and its Ruins*, University of California,
Irvine
- 2017 Emphasis in Critical Theory, University of California, Irvine
- PhD in Comparative Literature, University of California, Irvine

FIELDS OF STUDY

Critical Theory
World Literatures after World War II
New/Asian/Filipino American Studies
Race, Class, and Sexuality Studies

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Wounded Language/Time:
History, the Novel, and the Filipino-American Relation

By

Ryanson Alessandro Ku

Doctor of Philosophy in Comparative Literature

University of California, Irvine, 2017

Professor Ackbar Abbas, Chair

Wounded Language/Time: History, the Novel, and the Filipino-American Relation

studies the traumatic intertwining of Filipino and American histories and the resurfacing of this relation in contemporary novels. In analyses of Ben Marcus's *The Flame Alphabet*, Tony Perez's *Cubao-Kalaw Kalaw-Cubao*, Edgar Calabia Samar's *Walong Diwata ng Pagkahulog*, and Gerald Vizenor's *The Heirs of Columbus*, I explore how literature functions as the working through of US-Philippines relations, which are founded on the Philippine-American War, the monumentally violent and monumentally forgotten event that led to the US colonization of the Philippines. I argue that the Filipino-American relation is traumatic, based on an overwhelming event only subsequently processed that renders relation and temporality queer. Linking Filipino American studies to trauma, race, and sexuality studies while tracing trauma theory back to psychoanalysis and deconstruction, I trace the history of this relation in way that is consistent with, while also queering, trauma. I provide a spectral and contrapuntal genealogy of the Philippine-American War that shows how history on the part of both the US and the Philippines is, symptomatic of trauma, defined by forgetting and repetition. I then follow these traumatic symptoms through the other means by which the war continues, in Filipino and American novels, creative narratives

attached to the intertwined identities and the nation, the historical form at stake in the imperial dynamic that defines the Filipino-American relation, comparison between the two traditions allowing clarification of each other and of the history that binds them. Focusing on the repetition of history through its forgetting, this screening leading to experimentation in literature through which writing doubles, thereby processing, trauma and the reclamation of new/native “failures” that deconstruct Western ontology, I show how Filipino and American novels are sublimations of history in which trauma manifests *and* is processed in another form after some delay. Providing a theoretical frame for Filipino American studies and the study of American with other literatures and of the Filipino as part of new American studies, the dissertation links the metropolitan and colonial constituents of empire through trauma to pursue humanistic inquiry into power, desire, language, identity, temporality, and justice.

INTRODUCTION

The Filipino-American Relation: Traumatic History and Post-Imperial Literatures

In 1899, expecting to take over the Philippines from Spain, the US incited a long, bloody, brutal, and bitter armed conflict with its former ally in the war against Spain. The Philippine-American War (1899-1902/13), with its monumental violence, would lead the US and Filipinos to trajectories that would define their identities, indeed shape the world, yet this event is lost in the dustbin of history, a forgotten war. A century later, the Filipino would be posited in Filipino American studies as structurally queer to the US: the outside that was forcibly incorporated and simultaneously excluded, thereby intimately betraying what happens at home, the familiar yet alien remainder that feels simultaneously past and new. The forgetting of the foundational war and the return of the telling remainder are, I argue, continuous: the latter serves as a reminder of the former, which binds the US and the Filipino to each other and to a history that repeats itself as the war continues by other means. The forgetting of an unexpected and violent event that founds a history of belated repetitions in another form points to the traumatic structure of US-Philippines relations, which is what I lay out in this dissertation in an attempt, against forgetting, to process it. This project thus entails tracing the workings of trauma and devising a method consistent with it, but with an eye toward working through rather than repeating it, a distinction that does not always hold under trauma. Defined as an overwhelming event that breaches a limit, as such fixating identity and enacting queer relations—the traumatic “bond” of the “victim” and the “perpetrator”—and temporality—the “history” of repetitions—trauma is processed belatedly and indirectly via its own symptoms, its symptoms (e.g. “identity,” “history”) going against “normal” expectations—i.e. queer—because trauma is calling to be unbound. Aiming to foreground its trauma, I reframe the *US-Philippines relations* as the *Filipino-American relation*

to highlight the national identities anchored on a traumatic “history” and intertwined into a “bond.” Aiming to process rather than repeat trauma, or to find in its repetition its processing, after elaborating how Filipino-American history is traumatic I turn to the novel, the cultural form associated with the nation, specifically to contemporary creative narratives from both the US and the Philippines and topically and temporally removed from, but bearing the symptoms of, the traumatic event, to explore how literature functions as the working through of Filipino-American history.

In this work I am pursuing the critical possibilities of, and offering a theoretical frame for, Filipino American studies, in particular its depiction of the Filipino in relation to US empire, through queer and trauma theory, which are presupposed, if unstated, by the field. In “Reflections on the Trajectory of Filipino/a American Studies” (2006), critic Rick Bonus explains that Filipino American studies grew out of Asian American studies, which itself originated from the activist cultural nationalism of the 1960s and 1970s, in response to its marginal and seemingly misplaced status in the larger field.¹ The Asian American Studies Conference in Hawaii in 1998 is considered a turning point, in which the conferral of an award to an author perpetuating stereotypical Filipino representations by the association for a second time led Filipino American scholars to adopt the position of “included, but under protest” in Asian American studies. This disciplinary genealogy is part and parcel of a larger history. “Many Filipino Americans,” Bonus writes, “resist being identified as Asian Americans [...] because they realize how ‘different’ [Filipinos] are from Asians in many ways [...] and] they know that Filipino Americans turn into a minority when included within the larger group.” In fact, “many [Filipino Americans] have stronger identifications with other groups [and as such] have chosen to be called African Americans, Native Americans [...], Chicanos/as, or most especially, Pacific

Islander Americans.” The alienation from the group with which it is lumped according to the racialized terms of identification set by the US for its minority subjects, full inclusion arousing fears not only of the rendering of oneself as minor within the minority, but the loss of one’s difference, uniqueness, i.e. identity, itself, apparently leads Filipinos to dis-identify from their given group to identify with others. There is something odd about this. While, as I show in chapter 1, history has indeed tended to separate the Philippines from Asia, its geographical proximity, do Filipino Americans truly have more in common with minority groups other than Asian Americans? The minority in the minority, the queer of the group—Asia’s “odd man out,” as the Philippines has historically been described—the Filipino, it seems, seeks relations elsewhere, with groups to which it belongs just as less, *and* as much, as with Asian Americans, as if deliberately betraying normal expectations and forming queer formations consistent with an identity disciplinarily, historically, and intimately felt as queer. My point is not that Filipino Americans do not belong with the other minority groups, as if I was essentializing the geographic location of the Philippines in Asia, but that Filipino Americans share a minority position and history in the US with all the minority groups named *and* with Asian Americans, in ways simultaneously similar and different, troubling and promising, productive of alienation and of solidarity. In fact, this dissertation goes further in positing a relation between the Filipino and the American in general, indeed between US sovereignty and the postcolonial Filipino subject, as well as differences within even the most exclusive groups. In other words, I take the queerness of identity and relationality as the starting point of my inquiry. This, I argue, is the way to stay true to the hallmark of Filipino American studies and, indeed, of the Filipino, what Bonus hails as “the disruption of the boundaries of any kind of category, be it Philippine or American studies, [Asian American studies], or even Filipino American studies.”

Despite internal differences, which may lead to highly charged conflicts, indeed racism, the commonality of Filipino Americans with the larger group under which they are classified—Asian Americans, but ultimately minorities in general, the larger category that includes the other groups with which the Filipino also resonates—presents—together with the differences, which should not be reduced—promising possibilities. The economy of alienation and solidarity that characterizes group identity, the oxymoron hinting at the fundamental artificiality and potency of all such identifications, gives rise, I argue, to the work of comparison. Describing the method he has employed in his life's work, in *Under Three Flags* (2007) Benedict Anderson writes that “it takes an effort of will to remind oneself that [the] stars [that populate the sky] are actually in perpetual, frantic motion, impelled hither and yon by the invisible power of the gravitational fields of which they are ineluctable, active parts” (1). The “effort of will” to which he refers comes naturally, I assert, in the face of alienation and solidarity, when it is palpable how identification and relation consist in so many moving parts “in perpetual, frantic motion,” leading to inquiry into the “gravitational fields” that make them possible through linkage given distance, i.e. through commonality amid difference. The “political astronomy” that “attempts to map the gravitational force” that lends common structure and shared attributes to irreducible diversity, a method aroused by the movement of the different parts and the constellations that, together, they ineluctably construct—identification and relation and their alienations and solidarities—is what Anderson calls *comparison* (2). Comparison thus sheds light not only on particular identities (the stars) and the world they make up (the constellation), but more crucially on the relations between the identities on which the world is based and the “gravitational force” that anchors, and attempts to determine, such relations. For minority subjects like Filipino Americans, the gravitational field is the US, the space in which they find themselves as

minorities. This state of things, as I lay out in chapter 1, is a result of the US past as an empire in the old, colonial sense and present as a new kind of empire. That the gravitational force that posits subjects as Americans while relegating certain of them as minorities is US empire implies that inquiry into Filipino Americans necessitates their comparison with not only other US subjects, minor and major, but ultimately with US empire itself. This is precisely what I aim to do by probing into the relation between that which renders Filipino Americans specific in the US, Filipino-ness or the “Filipino,” which originates in where, as it were, they come from in the empire, and the sovereignty that lends consistency to US empire as mimicked and/or critiqued by its other, major or minor, subjects. In the groundbreaking “Left Alone with America” (1993), critic Amy Kaplan writes, “The importance of culture has gone unrecognized in historical studies of American imperialism, the role of empire has been [...] ignored in the study of American culture” (14), and “the United States [has been absent] in the postcolonial study of culture and imperialism” (17). These mutual blind spots have since been addressed to an extent through critical interventions in area studies: the transformation of a post-World War II, Cold War discipline that serves as an official platform for American exceptionalism that, among other things, denies US status as an empire into a new, post-nationalist American studies that derives its transnational scope from the premise that the US is an empire; the supersession of Philippine studies, rooted in US colonial discourse in the Philippines that constructs and masters the object of knowledge to execute and justify its colonization, by Filipino American studies, which, reversing Orientalism in which the other is represented from the perspective and for the purpose of the Western subject positing itself as the One, serves as a platform for the colonized to speak for themselves and critique the empire that has brought them to its heart, hence their postcolonial presence in the métropole,² among other things. I seek to further these key advances by inserting

Filipino American studies into new American studies through the post- and neo-colonial position of the Filipino in US empire, the status of the Philippines as the object of US imperialism in both the old and new modes rendering the Filipino a linchpin in the constellation forged by the US, thereby key to comparative study of the empire and its various subjects and the cultures in which their relations manifest.

While the world itself is the object of US empire, which claims itself as “new,” i.e. as an exception, the opposite of (old) empire, the Philippines is one of a few countries that, after the Spanish-American War (1898), were subjected to US colonial imperialism, which, as critic Oscar V. Campomanes puts it in “On Filipinos, Filipino Americans, and US Imperialism” (2006), was “articulated with disarming candor and ritually celebrated” at the turn of the century (70), constituting what historians Alfred W. McCoy, Francisco A. Scarano and Courtney Johnson call “a fragmentary empire of island colonies” (3) “On the Tropic of Cancer” (2009). Noted in “On Degrees of Imperial Sovereignty” (2006) by colonial anthropologist Ann Laura Stoler as “the case most frequently invoked to prove US empire commensurable with its European variants” (142), the Philippines, given its position in both US colonial and new empire, unravels the continuity of US imperialism across the modal shift and between (formerly) colonized and (new) imperial subjects. The remainder of the past (explicit US colonialism) still pursued and at the same time denied, indeed pursued through its disavowal (US empire in the world), the Filipino serves as a reminder that the US is an empire. This role of the Filipino as a rem(a)inder of US empire is reminiscent of the critical position known as queer. Motivated by similar impulses that created Filipino American studies, queer theory arose out of the stabilization of identities such as *gay* and *lesbian* that accompanied the shift from AIDS activism around Stonewall in the 1970s, which emphasized affinity and unconventional relations partly

rooted in the communities of care that grew out of the AIDS crisis, to the push for gay marriage in the 1990s, which called for recognition and rights for LGBTQ subjects as equal citizens of a liberal state. The turn of the mainstream LGBTQ movement to identity and equality, in which categories such as *lesbian* and *gay* were themselves deployed as fixed, knowable, normal, in fact, normative, led to the recuperation of *queer* as precisely that which resists co-optation and its promise of harmony and success. Emphasized as sexual partly against sexual, especially deviant sexual, shame, *queer* is also claimed to have no fixed referent, to refer to the non-heteronormative in general. While the realm of intimacy and pleasure is also the realm of reproduction and perpetuation, which urges recognition of the power of sex, I argue that queerness, while anchored in sex, more generally implies, especially in its fatal relation to the order that attempts to subsume it and which it resists, the odd, deviant, and unconventional, ultimately difference itself, consistent with its theorization as the “mismatch of sex, gender, and desire.”³ Derived from its LGBTQ context in a way that generalizes its sexual content, the queer names the remainders from or the rejection of integration into the supposedly infinitely elastic social fabric composed of universal because abstract subjects, that which fails to integrate into liberalism and/or that in which liberalism(’s promise of complete integration) fails. In its fundamental inassimilability or irreconcilability, the queer serves as a reminder of particulars lost, resistances foreclosed, and lingering, in fact ongoing, battles in, ultimately the assumptions and exclusions, i.e. the underside, indeed failure, of systemic integration. The Filipino occupies precisely this queer position: incorporated as a colony, i.e. as an unequal and not a full member because deemed lacking, under the guise of “benevolent assimilation,” liberalism’s mission itself, and having rejected incorporation in a monumentally violent way, i.e. in the Philippine-American War, the Filipino is a reminder to the world of US empire and the war that has been,

and can be, fought for, and against, it. Queerness, in which consists its valence with regards to US empire, even more liberal in its disavowal of itself, is that which allows the Filipino to serve as a rallying point for solidarities—between Filipino, Asian, and other Americans, minor and major; between Filipinos and other non-US subjects; between US and non-US subjects—in the world, as I show in chapter 1, in important ways forged out of the Philippine-American War, the event that led the US to make the transition from old to new empire.

This positing of the Filipino as not only queer in relation to other US subjects—as not fitting in, thereby forming unconventional relations and unexpected solidarities—but as queering US empire itself—returning it to its origin or returning from its origin so as to shake it off at its foundation in the present, despite its change of clothes, a rem(a)inder of the war in which it almost failed and which might finally bring about its failure—is a key, if not always stated, tenet of Filipino American studies. It is apparent, for example, in the sense in the field, as articulated by Bonus above, that the Filipino deconstructs borders in general, including its own. More substantially and emphasized differently, it serves as a point of departure for major contributions to the field. Focused on globalization in *Things Fall Away* (2004), Neferti X. M. Tadiar finds “fallout experiences” (8) that “surpass[...] their utility for the present [... but which] can become seeds of the future [... precisely because they] fall by the wayside of history” (15) in the Philippines, the “peripheral story [of which ...] brings into focus the liminal makings of globalization, its endgame, and its present afterlives” (9). Focused on the colonial designation of the Philippines as “foreign [to the US] in a domestic sense,” in *The Decolonized Eye* (2009) Sarita Echavez See turns attention to how the location of the Filipino in an “uncanny and paradoxical location both inside and outside the American empire” (xvi) is symptomatic of how “US empire wants to contain its colonies and colonized peoples, yet by its very nature it cannot”

(xii), the colonial designation ultimately becoming the means by which assimilation is shown to lead not to immigrant integration, but “to the disintegration of the empire” (xv). Focused on Filipino assimilation in America, in *Suspended Apocalypse* (2010) Dylan Rodriguez condemns what he calls “Filipino American communion,” which, in its “multiculturalist patriotism and devout loyalty to white institutions” (22), is disallowed from deploying “a radical critique of the constitutive violence, dehumanization, and racist statecraft of the US nation-building project” (21) when “techniques of social liquidation (including and exceeding biological and physical extermination) condensed on the bodies of Filipinos within and across a diversity of cultural geographies (from the incipient métropole to indigenous territories)” in the formative moments of US empire such as the Philippine-American War (11). Focused on the designation of the Philippines as “unincorporated territories” and of the Filipino as “noncitizen nonalien” (double negation) and “national” (indeterminate determination) (10), in *Beyond the Nation* (2012) Martin Joseph Ponce, reconciling the two poles of current Filipino cultural studies—the reconstructive assertion of non-essentialist identity and the deconstructive examination of “the institutional and disciplinary forces that both elide and elicit the ‘Filipino’” as figure—articulates *Filipino* in terms of diaspora, “the multiple modes of address utilized in Filipino literature within a transnational context of colonialism, imperialism, and migration” (25), and queerness, the “alternative relationalities, intimacies, and solidarities forged outside of state-sanctioned heterosexuality and its ideological enforcement through familial discipline” (25). Posited as the forgotten margin, the outside also inside, the racialized subject targeted for colonial extermination, the diasporic queer, the Filipino is thus reclaimed as a rem(a)inder whose critical force is blunted by, but can still fight, the empire through its deconstruction of the established order, i.e. of globalization, immigrant integration, multicultural assimilation, and the (hetero-

)normative, selectively transnational, nation ultimately based on the US. I aim to merge the line forged by these interventions with a path pursued in new American studies in its assertion that the US is an empire to show how, like the Filipino, US empire also deconstructs, how, in fact, the US forges an empire that it can claim is not precisely through its deconstruction of boundaries (of nations; of the political, the economic, and the cultural, etc.). Drawing on predecessors in both Filipino and new American studies, I trace this mutual, though by no means the same, deconstruction of US empire and of the Filipino to the Philippine-American War through what I argue is the trauma induced by the “monumentally violent and monumentally forgotten event”⁴ on (subjects related to) both the US and the Philippines. The trauma of the Filipino-American relation rooted in the Philippine-American War, I argue, is what renders the Filipino a queer subject not only in, but *of*, the world historical structure that is US empire, the US and the Filipino both still bound to the event not yet worked through and still traumatizing.

In *Unclaimed Experience* (1996), Cathy Caruth established the modern definition of *trauma* in literary and cultural studies when she described it as induced by events that, because unexpected and overwhelming, are missed and hence processed only afterwards via repetition, the belated and indirect bringing of what had happened to consciousness. The Philippine-American War, as I elaborate in chapter 1, is one such trigger event given the unexpected and overwhelming circumstances of its taking place that exploded into its unexpected and overwhelming violence followed by its overwhelming and symptomatic forgetting and repetition. Such an event, according to Caruth, enacts a *history* that repeats what it forgets and/or forgets what it repeats, history, rather than proceeding linearly, led to a spiraling trajectory based on and bound to the event still unconscious, the screenings of which, as I call it in chapter 1, i.e. the processing of the event that, in time and form, is irreducibly removed from the event already

past, constituting (the) history (that follows, in more ways than one, the event). In other words, forgetting and repetition—screening—is the history of the event in which the event is posited as “origin” rather than product and subsequent history is that in which consists the origin’s potential, and irreducibly late and indirect—i.e. screened—processing, what is referred to in trauma theory as (the) *working through* (of trauma). Such history, Caruth notes, not only follows the pattern and/or the character set by the event, but forms and/or manifests a “bond to [the] other,” namely, the bond between the victim and perpetrator and ultimately their bond to the traumatic event. As is apparent in these descriptions, notably the employment of or allusion to terms such as *consciousness*, unconscious *repetition*, and *working through*, the theorization in Caruth and the theory that grew out of her work of trauma relies on psychoanalysis. The positing of the unconscious, the repository or platform not immediately identifiable or consciously readable that at a later time gives out unmistakable warning signs that call out to be read by other means, by Sigmund Freud lends itself, I argue, to such rearticulation as, to begin with, it assumes a traumatic structure. In articulating trauma, I draw on psychoanalysis to expand trauma theory, which derives in part from the former that already hints at it. This is most notable in my reframing of what trauma theory calls *forgetting*, which is coupled with repetition—thus alluding to the psychoanalytic notion of unconscious repetition—as *screening*, based on the psychoanalytic notion of screen memories, in which components of different memories (e.g. memories from different times) are conflated, the anomalous, i.e. alien or anachronistic, part of a particular memory serving as a screen for that which more properly belongs to it but which has been rendered unconscious.⁵ The screen in the memory, according to psychoanalysis, both hides and reveals what it screens, a projection that, because it is imposed on the original, bars access to the latter, but also, because it is imposed on the original, provides traces to what it covers over.

This, I argue, is precisely what happens in trauma: forgetting is coupled with remembering, this creating intricately woven layers—screens—attempted to be untangled and sorted out in the repetition of the event that constituted it—the reliving, viewing, perhaps editing of the screens—which is inseparable from, indeed itself a kind of, forgetting and remembering—the reviewing that calls for repair, the screening of screens, is itself the putting up, if for a different purpose, of screens. *Screening* thus complicates trauma theory’s notion of forgetting and captures its intimate relation to repetition.

In chapter 2, I lay out the multiple ways in which working through, according to Caruth and consistent with screening, is irreducibly removed from the event that induced trauma. The processing of trauma is posited as detached in time and space from its origin, i.e. as belated and indirect, because, I argue, it presupposes deconstruction, which itself, like psychoanalysis, assumes a traumatic structure. In theorizing language more in terms of writing than speech, for example, Jacques Derrida deconstructs the sign as originating in not the communicating subject (the “speaker”), the utterance’s context (the “present”), or the sign’s content (intrinsic “meaning”), but the relation between signs (“difference”) across time (“deferral”), the spatial and temporal “interval” and “trace” between elements also called *différance*. According to this deconstruction of language as communication, the sign gains value (so-called “meaning”) through the repetition (“iteration”) of the play (“dissemination”) of *différance* that is there to begin with, repetition deriving from, but never exhausting, its “origin.” That the origin is absent in the sign that, via the repetition of *différance*, i.e. via (further) difference/deferral, effects the presence/identity/meaning of the origin from a distance in a way that never fully captures it parallels the relationship between trauma and working through, which, as it were, produces signs through which *différance* is focused to produce meaning, thereby processing its trauma. The

resonance between trauma theory and deconstruction is not merely structural and, through the latter, the former, I argue, can be expanded and rendered more consistent. Prefiguring Caruth's description of trauma as unexpected, missed, grasped incompletely, incomprehensible, yet formative, Derrida describes "Différance" (1968) as "inaudible" and "inapparent," neither sensible nor intelligible, "neither a concept nor a word," yet "originary" at the same time not an origin, strictly speaking (*Margins* 5, 11, 9). *Différance*, "the movement according to which language [...] is constituted 'historically' as a weave of differences" (12), "the systematic play of differences" between elements in which exterior relation in time and space rather than intrinsic substance constitutes presence/identity/meaning (11), is all the origin there is. Deconstruction is thus ultimately directed at Western ontology, the (view of the) world or reality constituted by what Derrida calls Western metaphysics, which posits a proper origin, the One, which happens to take the form of the prototypical straight white male Western subject to which others are to be subordinated, including by colonization, and which rests on the disavowal of otherness, of *différance* at/as the origin. Paradoxically, the theorization of trauma is both deconstructive and metaphysical: on the one hand, the event puts in place a condition characterized by *différance*, i.e. trauma, yet there is the lingering notion that this event, rather than characterized by *différance* itself, is a causal origin, the One that determines everything that comes after. Caruth herself, as I show in chapter 2, does not imply that the unlocking of the event would repair all of its effects, which, in fact, she implies is not possible, trauma, once given, there for good. Yet the event nonetheless stands as the One, if inaccessible, which is perhaps what makes the prospect of working through it in Caruth almost impossible.

Tracing its theorization back to deconstruction, I "generalize" trauma to render it more consistent by positing the "originary" event as not only enacting, but also subject to, *différance*.

Thus in chapter 1, I trace a “spectral history” of the Philippine-American War to explore how its preconditions and afterlives condition it(s screening) as much as how it conditions them. Framed as *différance*, trauma implies a certain mode of, indeed its own, working through. In various texts, Derrida describes *différance* as originating what can be called screening, the irreducible interval, distance, detachment, even alienation, of which from the origin leading to something new, to difference. In “Différance,” he writes, “[It] is not, does not exist,” “is never presented as such,” yet “*différance* is [crossed out] what makes possible the presentation of being-present” (*Margins* 6). In “Plato’s Pharmacy” (1968), he writes, “*différance*, the disappearance of any originary presence, is *at once* the condition of possibility *and* the condition of impossibility of truth” (*Dissemination* 168). In *Of Grammatology* (1967), he writes, “The presentation of the other as such [... is] the dissimulation of its ‘as such’” (47). That is, *différance* is never presented in itself, and for this reason, it is only presented in and gives rise to presentation, indeed dissimulation, i.e. screening, and not of its being or presence, which it does not have, indeed disappears, but merely of its “being-present,” its truth (im)possible, or possible only in displacement and deferral, i.e. via spatial and temporal screening. In other words, it is ultimately impossible to access or read, i.e. discern the truth or make meaning out of, *différance*, which implies that truth/meaning is differently possible, i.e. through screening, in a way displaced and deferred, which, detached from the origin, implies newness: *différance* is (crossed out), thereby difference. Framed in terms of *différance*, working through—the bringing about of newness given trauma—is thus posited as the supplement of the traumatic condition of *différance* itself. This supplementary relation between trauma and working through, the positing, as it were, of trauma as inducing its own working through as one of its effects, deviates from the notion that working through definitively opposes or overcomes trauma at the same time makes possible

working through by attaching it, by definition, to trauma. More precisely, working through is posited as a special kind of screening or presentation, consisting in presenting in the present of, and/or of the present to, the origin—a present-ation, as it were—as a way of processing that which enacts their split. Working through, in other words, consists in spatiotemporal tracing, which deconstructs the gap between the origin and present, as well as the notion that either can stand by itself uninfected by the other, to lead to something new (a supplement), this process relying on, and taking further, the displacement/deferral there to begin with. As Derrida puts it in “Différance,” “always differing and deferring, [...] never as it is in the presentation of itself” (*Margins* 23), “erasure [screening ...] constitut[ing] it from the outset as a trace” (24), the origin, “the ‘early trace’ of difference,” Derrida writes, “is lost in an invisibility without return, and yet its very loss is sheltered, retained, seen, delayed [i.e. screened in another way, present-ed]. In a text. In the form of presence” (24). From this formulation, it becomes apparent that the generalization of trauma via deconstruction implies that the “origin” is fundamentally the same as the state it ostensibly conditions, both defined by *différance*. Derrida continues, “the form of presence [in which the origin returns in present-ation or further screening, which implies that the present is not the origin, which to begin with is, like the present, but a trace]” is “itself only an effect of writing,” “the present [...but] the sign of the sign, the trace of the trace” (24). That both the origin and the present are but traces, I argue, induce trauma *and* enable working through, the two doubling each other, the latter doubling the already double, the former leading to the latter because it is already double. This mutual doubling is invoked by Derrida through the term *writing*, tellingly the form of working through privileged in trauma theory, that, he argues, structures both the (after-)truth or (being-)present of presentation, i.e. working through, and the “origin,” the traumatic event. Paradoxically, then, it is the origin—*différance*/trauma, structured

by writing—that leads/returns—through present-ation/screening, i.e. writing—to its own working through. Thus rather than undoing or overcoming trauma, perhaps through the literal return to or supersession of the origin that would stop writing, working through takes as given what Derrida describes as “the irreducibility of the aftereffect” that marks “every mode of presence” (21), the irreducible otherness in Oneness, i.e. *différance*, of which trauma is, as it were, but a magnification, and which working through but repeats, but in another way, with a difference, as “new,” as I call it in chapter 3.

Tracing trauma theory back to psychoanalysis and deconstruction reveals the links between synonymous terms used in the various discourses, this comparison leading to an arguably more consistent and concrete yet still open notion of working through.⁶ That is, what in trauma theory is described as the *writing* of the event that processes its trauma is clarified through deconstruction as the *doubling* of the otherness that induces trauma that writing processes precisely through its non-presence and non-identity, its repetition of the displacement and deferral, i.e. the otherness, enacted by and which characterizes trauma, which, in a doubly double way, induces writing. This involves what in psychoanalysis is implied as *screening*, the coupling of forgetting and remembering that creates projections that simultaneously hide and reveal and which induce repetition to incite, through further forgetting and remembering, i.e. displacements, an examination or reorganization of the created screens for later, i.e. deferred, reviewing. This doubling of *trauma* and *working through*, a relation based on generic *différance*, via writing consisting in displacements and deferrals that both project screens *and* screen them in ways that repeat *and* detach from their “origin” is what I follow in this dissertation to trace the history and processing of the Filipino-American relation. I thus start with history, but end up with literature, in narratives that rewrite, as it were, the narrative of history in another form or on

another field to screen it at a later time, in fact with a significant delay, differently. This further screening is not necessarily conscious or based on representation, but rather symptomatic, manifesting signs of, even repeating, the trauma of history by other means, an attempt at working through. I focus on the novel, the literary genre intimately linked to the nation, the political, if also fictional, form at stake in colonization and the imperial dynamic that defines the Filipino-American relation. In the process, I treat trauma and working through as necessarily entailing the deconstruction of genres, of boundaries, e.g. that between the narratives of history and literature, and including that between narration (conventionally assumed as symbolic) and deconstruction (which ultimately deconstructs narration itself). That deconstruction is at the heart of trauma and working through likewise leads me, as I explain from the beginning, to attend to both sides of the Filipino-American relation, to in fact deconstruct the gap, without erasing the distinction, between the US and the Filipino, i.e. to proceed, as I describe it in chapter 1, “contrapuntally” based on the assumption that trauma, already and doubly double, is not only doubled by working through, but enacts a double effect, i.e. on the so-called victim *and* perpetrator, trauma shaping not only history and relation, but what I describe above as the binding, gravitational force. Ultimately, I aim to deconstruct the binary *victim-perpetrator*, and to some extent *colonizer-colonized*, and as such structure the chapters based on the pairing of two narratives, one Filipino and the other American, not to treat them as representatives of their “party,” as it were, but to show how both simultaneously resist and are premised on that which induces the trauma they manifest differently but in an intertwined way. The narratives I read are particularly critical in their deconstruction of the deconstruction enacted by the US in its exceptional iteration of Western ontology, later and indirect doubling by the “heirs” of the Philippine-American War queering its “origin,” US empire itself.

To trace the unfolding of the Filipino-American relation, the continuation of the war that founds it and processing of its trauma by other means, the dissertation progresses from history to literature, from trauma to working through. The Philippine-American War is a foundational event not only because it led to the US colonization of the Philippines, but given the traumatic history it enacted and formation of a relation that would bear the trace of empire and war long after colonization. In Chapter 1, I lay out the history of this war, the process in which the Filipino-American relation was constituted, in a genealogy both spectral—accounting for how the war is not only foundational, but also derived, i.e. for the aftereffects and preconditions of the event—and contrapuntal—paying attention to both sides of the relation, the colonizer and the colonized, the “victim” and “perpetrator.” Positing it as an event that explains history and as a part of history in need of explanation, I unpack the Philippine-American War in terms of the contradictions of US sovereignty and of Filipino identity that preexist the war, which enacts their post-traumatic repetition. Reading US empire history and Filipino cultural criticism with trauma and queer theory, I analyze the war as a condensation of previously separate contradictions, the encounter of the self-proclaimed universal nation of modernity (the US) with the supposedly late/last colony (the Philippines) inducing a dis(-appointing con)junction, a violent mismatch that renders history traumatic. In the process, an exceptionally American empire—US (anti-)imperialism—is forged on a world scale to repeat while disavowing what the US did in the Philippines and Filipino identity becomes attached to the failure of nationhood, what the US imposed on it to justify its colonization. These repetitions of what exploded into a war are enabled by afterward screening, which derives from structural conditions already in place prior to the war that disable access to the event and its preconditions, except in its rem(a)inders, in the resultant world and the symptoms of subjects. Demanding tracing through not only the event but

its conditions and afterlives (spectral) on the part of the US and the Philippines (contrapuntal), trauma intimates a further duplicity in inciting its own processing. Borne as a failure even by fervent nationalists, Filipino identity deconstructs the US as an empire of contradictions while American subjects avow its (anti-)imperialist structure. It is as if the US war with Filipinos for empire is still being waged, its outcome systematically maintained and simultaneously fought, if by other means, repeating trauma but also enabling working through.

As history is led to a particular trajectory, so is identity imprinted by trauma with a certain character that, rather than being fully determined, also goes against that which determines: the Filipino threatens with failure that which assigns failure as its identity as American subjects, as if bearing the failure to come, unravel it. In, as it were, continuing the war, this unfolding of trauma processes it in displaced (e.g. through identity rather than warfare) and deferred (after the event) ways, what happens after trauma conditioned by it, but also affording other possibilities. I trace this process of the working through of trauma in what is imaginative like identity and what is narrative like history—literature—by comparing developments in the novel, the genre intimately associated with the nation, in the US and the Philippines. I show how narratives topically and temporally removed, i.e. displaced and deferred, from the foundation of the Filipino-American relation in fact grapple with some aspect of its trauma. In chapter 2, I focus on US imperialist disavowal, the pursuit/disavowal of empire, and Filipino colonial mentality, the adoption of what the colonizer assigns to the colonized, mechanisms literalized in two experimental novels in the form of the writing of children to unravel Oedipus as both poisonous presupposition and the prospect of cure. In *The Flame Alphabet*, Ben Marcus presents writing/children as fatal to adults to underscore the Oedipal structure of Western sociality, the way that Oedipus is presupposed but also disavowed to be reproduced, US (anti-)imperialism the

perfection of this strategy geared toward (re)producing universal, eternal empire. In this system of reproduction, death by Oedipus is an autoimmune symptom, the disavowed surfacing as a rem(a)inder of presupposed/impending, i.e. structural, failure. In *Cubao-Kalaw Kalaw-Cubao*, Tony Perez presents writing/children as the cure to trauma insofar as it heralds Catholic salvation. Inherited from another colonial master, Catholicism in fact distracts from the causes of trauma, which include the Spanish religious institution and the Americanized economy, instead transmitting it. This, it turns out, is a strategy derived from colonial times when Filipinos appropriated religion to justify revolutions, the colonized fighting the colonizer with his poison. Thus through the autoimmunity of writing, these novels play out trauma—how the disavowing aftermath avow its traumatic origin; how traumatized mimicry is a strategy against the agent of traumatization—to unfold it as doubled by its own working through. In chapter 3, I move from consideration of plot to an examination of the reality posited in the novel that functions as a sublimation of what is narrowly referred to as reality, the outside of the novel. In narrow reality, both the Filipino and Native American, external and internal colonial subjects of US empire, failed to form nations according to the standard of Western ontology. The Filipino New and Native American novels thus create the nation in writing, in culture, by, as in Edgar Calabia Samar's *Walong Diwata ng Pagkahulog*, showing how the displacement is just as real as reality or, as in Gerald Vizenor's *The Heirs of Columbus*, assuming realities at odds with Western reality. In the process, New and native worlds are reclaimed, if only in sublimation, which, however, has the effect of deconstructing reality as it is known, even Western ontology. Premised on queer rem(a)inders that fail in or which the empire fails to integrate, these novels exist in, but look back to a time before and forward to a reality after empire to demonstrate how post-imperial literatures deconstruct the present, thereby enacting a different world.

CHAPTER 1

Filipino Dis-Appointment and US (Anti-)Imperialism: A Traumatic Genealogy of the Filipino-American Relation

The foundational event of Filipino-American history is the Philippine-American War. *Filipino-American history*, as I suggest in the introduction, refers to the historical processes that link two supposedly sovereign units, namely, the US and the Philippines. Drawing from but in contrast to geopolitical terms such as *US-Philippines relations* or the *Philippine-American War*, I render the relation at the heart of this history in terms of identities, namely, *Filipino* and *American*, to posit it in terms of the identifications to which it gives rise. In the introduction I allude to the problems that attend the study of this relation, problems rooted in the war that founds it and which, on both sides, hasn't been accounted for. Needless to say, there have been encounters between the US and the Philippines and both have histories prior to the Philippine-American War, but the latter, I argue, is foundational as it led to the US colonization of the Philippines, thereby initiating trajectories that would have not only national but world consequences by virtue precisely of the two not as sovereigns, but in relation. Significantly, the Philippine-American War, as a Filipino critic puts it, is "monumentally violent and monumentally forgotten" (See xii). This hints at how the event that serves as the basis of the Filipino-American relation is foundational in a traumatic way, trauma explaining why it hasn't been accounted for, indeed why it resists an account. That which is traumatic, I argue, necessitates a traumatic reading, i.e. an approach to trauma symptomatic of it. Instead of a direct, linear account with a straightforward frame and unidirectional narrative, I thus trace Filipino-American history contrapuntally, attentive to both sides of the relation, and spectrally, with the foundational event explained in relation to its preconditions and afterlives, i.e. treated as constitutive of a world but as itself conditioned by a prehistory.

In this chapter, I lay out a traumatic genealogy of the Filipino-American relation to account for the world historical significance of Filipino-American trauma. Beginning with contemporary Filipino rememberings of the Philippine-American War, I highlight the ways in which this foundational event is screened from history, which suggest that the Filipino-American relation is traumatic. Screening derives from structural conditions that disable access to the traumatic cause rendered traceable only through its rem(a)inders. An account attempting to do justice to trauma thus requires attention to not only a causal event, but its preconditions and afterlives. Tracing trauma through rather than in denial of its screening, the bulk of this chapter consists in an assembly of the constituent parts of traumatic Filipino-American history. In this traumatic genealogy, I posit the Philippine-American War as an event that explains history that is itself a part of history in need of explanation. Thus after detailing the war to note its overdetermination by trauma, I turn to its conditions and repetitions on the part of both the US and the Philippines to unpack it. Arguing that the war is but a condensation of the contradictions of US sovereignty, Filipino identity, and their dis(-appointing con)junction, I trace these contradictions by way of their displacements in the broader history surrounding the war. First, I show how the US screening of itself as constituted by immanent sovereignty is underpinned by inverted, liberal, economic totalitarianism, which is sedimented by the Philippine-American War that led the US to a geopolitical project consistent with its self-screening and thus structurally traumatic, namely, (anti-)imperialism, which, if differently, but repeats its Filipino history. Positing the Philippines as the perennial colony, I then show how the Filipino deconstructs regional categories (inside/outside) and the supposedly linear relation (late/last) between the conditions and legacies of trauma in a double, queer act of failure that is its constitutive symptom/strategy. This inverted resonance between the sovereign in reverse, because

(post)modern, and the late/last colony/identity outside/inside is, I argue, established in the Philippine-American War, which traumatically enacts a history that screens/repeats the Filipino as a failure and the US as the exception on the basis of ostensibly universal but in fact racial liberalism. Ultimately, the chapter lays out the traumatic screening/repetition of the history of the Filipino-American relation while hinting at the possibility of its processing, i.e. of trauma's working through.

The Screening of History

That the Philippine-American War is “monumentally violent and monumentally forgotten” points to its status as both foundational and buried, a status that can be framed in terms of expressions such as “absent cause,” “disavowed origins,” “reified conditions,” or, in common parlance, “forgotten history.” Such expressions emphasize the foundation that, in one way or another, is lost when, in fact, this phenomenon has to do with not only the source but also what lends it such status and with writing as much as erasure. With regards to Filipino-American history, I’m arguing that what is “forgotten” is not only the war but whole histories that encircle it and, ultimately, the Filipino-American relation itself. That is, what is “forgotten” is not only the event but the conjunction that explodes, as it were, into the event and the relation to which, through the event, it is turned. This “forgetting,” moreover, consists as much in forgetting as in remembering. In *Multidirectional Memory* (2009), critic Michael Rothberg writes that “displacement [...] takes place in screen memory (indeed, all memory)” (12) and “involv[es] a conflict of memories [...] and] a remapping of memory” (14). “A kind of forgetting,” he elaborates, “accompanies acts of remembrance, but this kind of forgetting is subject to recall,” the screen “serv[ing] both as a barrier [...] and as a site of projection for [...] fantasies, fears, and

desires” (13). The “forgetting” of the Philippine-American War, I argue, constitutes precisely such a screening. That is, a screen has been put on the war and, along with it, Filipino-American history and the Filipino-American relation. Arising from conflict, this screen bars and rewrites history, a function of historical intervention and psychic coping that determines what is remembered and what is forgotten in an economy that “both hides and reveals” (14). In this screening of history, what is remembered blocks and hints at what is forgotten and what is forgotten calls attention to itself through the inadequacies, inconsistencies, and vulnerabilities of what is there as it struggles to be remembered.

Contemporary attempts to remember the Filipino-American relation through the Philippine-American War demonstrate this screening in the way in which “remembering” is predicated on providing an account of “forgetting.” In the groundbreaking anthology *Vestiges of War* (2002), for example, poet Luis H. Francia writes about “the near-absence of the war in US official narratives” (xxiii) and in the Philippine national curriculum, “the question of how a young republic had sprung into existence only to see its independence quickly curtailed [...] never addressed” (xxii). Historian Renato Constantino recalls that “the rapid introduction [...] of the American public school system in the Philippines was [driven by] the conviction of the military leaders that no measure could so quickly promote the pacification of the islands as education” (178),⁷ “English [...] intended to be] the wedge that separated the Filipinos from their past and [...] educated Filipinos from the masses” (181). Historian Reynaldo C. Ileto notes how “the [...] Philippine centennial celebrations of the revolution against Spain in 1896 and the birth of the republic in 1898 show [...] how a war with the US [which, in contrast, is not commemorated] simply does not fit into the [Philippines’] historical trajectory from colonialism to independence, tradition to modernity,” “the goals of the [...] revolution [...] apparently

fulfilled through US intervention” (3).⁸ Critic Bienvenido Lumbera shows how, at the end of the colonial period, the US succeeded in reinventing its image in the Philippines through contrast with the Japanese, who for “*three years without God*” in WWII occupied [what was then a US colony] (194); through “Gen. Douglas MacArthur[‘s ...] shaping [of] ‘special relations’ between the [metropole] and the [colony]” on the eve of independence (195); and through US pop culture, especially “commercial television [that] came in 1953 [... to bring American shows] into Filipino households” (200). Clearly, these attempts to “remember” via the “vestiges of war” aim to reverse not only forgetting, but what Francia describes as “the war without bullets that goes on in [...] culture—wherever the many pseudo- or incomplete assumptions about the War, about the history of Filipinos, their context, their ambivalent and often contradictory relationship with the US [...] are accepted as self-evident truths” (xxv).

What *Vestiges of War* demonstrates is not so much the forgetting of the war as the “forgetting” as a war, a process overdetermined by conflict in which the literal War, as Francia puts it, is “excised from the rind of things.” In this war, the Philippine-American War is erased from history, passed over by the developmental narrative of modernity (that posits linear and abstract progress from bondage to freedom), and perceived in a “special” way, i.e. partially, belatedly, and through a (TV, comparative, or English) screen. This screening lends “the Philippines [...] only a shadow reality” (xxii) and renders the Filipino, in US and Philippine history, “seen, yet not-seen” (xxiv). The moment of Philippine Independence dramatizes this. The Philippines was sold by Spain to the US in the Treaty of Paris (10 December 1898) and not granted flag independence until 4 July 1946. In fact, the Philippine Republic, a US ally in the Spanish-American War (April – August 1898), had already declared independence from Spain on 12 June 1898, the Philippine-American War (1899-1902/13) declared by it to defend itself

against US colonization. Given this history, when is Philippine Independence to be remembered? Both alternatives involve screening: 12 June erases further colonization, namely, by the US as “liberator,” along with the war that resisted it; 4 July nullifies self-declaration in favor of imperial bestowal that, granted on the day of US Independence, marks the liberated while barring what else happens upon “independence,” namely, the continuation of “special relations.” It is indelibly and characteristically colonial that Independence Day exemplifies the double bind of Filipino-American remembrance in which the screening of the war comes with the screening of a whole history, including the roots of the relation, if not, indeed, the relation itself, and remembering leads to forgetting, partial remembering, and/or misremembering, i.e. back to screening. In *Freud and the Scene of Trauma* (2013), critic John Fletcher distinguishes between regressive and progressive screening: in the former, “later experiences and fantasies borrow earlier ‘innocent’ memories as screens” while in the latter, “highly charged childhood scenes are encoded within and screened off by apparently anodyne later scenes” (155-6). As my account shows, the screening of Filipino-American history is both progressive—the US education of the Filipino—and regressive—contemporary Filipino remembrance counteracting previous screening—in which remembering is screening. Pertaining, moreover, to not only a self but a relation in which movement goes not only forward or backward but also in between, the screening of Filipino-American history is indeed, as Rothberg describes it, multidirectional.

That “remembering,” like “forgetting,” is (part and parcel of) screening does not render contemporary Filipino and colonial US screening of the Philippine-American War the same. At the same time, despite their opposition in the broader “war” of history, both are immersed in the same economy of forgetting and remembering that constitutes, as it were, the screening of Filipino-American history. Filipino “remembering,” as I note with regards to *Vestiges*, is

premised on the “forgetting” induced by US screening and consists in large part in erasing past screens to pave the way for another, presumably autonomous, screening. US screening, for its part, writes over what it sets up for “forgetting,” the resulting screen, however, unable to contain, and containing traces of, what it screens. To screen is thus to both block and view, or to view through a block or to block as a way of viewing. The screen, as Rothberg describes it, functions as both barrier and projection in a field of conflict in which that which blocks limits and lends view, but in an irreducibly limited and not necessarily conscious way, with the limits constantly compromised and reinforced in what is, after all, not only an economy, but, as Francia describes it, a war. Rather than pure remembering, then, accounting for screened history calls for not the simple lifting but careful review of the screen that both hides and reveals, the screen perhaps the most present trace of the war. Akin to how “remembering” leads back to screening, perhaps the most urgent thing that the screen reveals is that there is a screen. The screen, in an important sense, is indeed self-referential, except reference to the “self” is precisely what it makes impossible, the viewing it allows attesting to the inability to view, there being no reference to the “self” except in its displacements, i.e. through the screen. At the same time, the displacements, irreducible as they are, hint at that which is screened, the two constituting what Fletcher describes as “sequences of scenes layered one upon another in the manner of a textual palimpsest, with claims to either material or psychical reality” (xiii), i.e. an economy of screens separating/linking different scenes. The incomplete, indirect, i.e. screened, access to scenes suggests that what is ultimately screened, i.e. Filipino-American history, is traumatic, the screen functioning as testament, as it were, of trauma. Fletcher suggests that the regressive screen “signal[led for Freud] the marginalization of the problem of infantile trauma” (156) whereas the “progressive screen [... is] the orphan [...] of the seduction theory [based on trauma]” (176).

While it is tempting to point to the progressive screening of the Philippine-American War and, thereby, its traumatic status, the regressive screen, as Fletcher adds, may reveal not an earlier non-traumatic memory but how the early memory functions as a source for the later fantasy (165) as its traumatic “primal scene” (166). Screening, in other words, both progressive and regressive, hints at trauma. In what follows, I use precisely the scenes presented by its regressive/progressive screens, i.e. its regressive (driven by prehistory) and progressive (accessible through aftereffects) screening, to elaborate how Filipino-American history is traumatic, beginning with its trigger event.

The Traumatic Event and its History

In what sense is Filipino-American history, as suggested by screening, traumatic? The most direct illustration of this is provided by the Philippine-American War, the event that serves as its basis. The site of a revolutionary struggle for independence since 1896, the Philippines was annexed to the US at the conclusion of the Spanish-American War (1898), which was primarily a dispute over Cuba that the US won through unexpected, overreaching military success. The annexation was laid out by the Treaty of Paris (10 December 1898), which, after initial indecision, the US signed at the cost of twenty million dollars and despite the objection of the First Philippine Republic (established on 23 January 1899), which was not represented in the negotiation. Two days prior to treaty ratification (passed in the US Congress on 6 February 1899 by 1 vote), fighting broke out between US and Philippine forces, escalating into the Second Battle of Manila followed by the Philippine Republic’s declaration of war (2 June 1899). What ensued was the long (1899-1902/13), bloody (12,000-50,000 Filipino combatant and 200,000-250,000 Filipino civilian casualties), brutal (the water cure, guerilla warfare, disease), and bitter

(“Injuns,” “niggers”) armed conflict fought asymmetrically (a would-be world power v a fledgling island nation) by former allies (“friends”), what the US called an “insurrection.”⁹ The unexpected and hesitant bringing of a colony beyond its sphere of influence under US control (for commercial but not territorial interests); the military excess that made the situation seem like a *fait accompli* (with the US unable to give the colonies back to Spain and unable to leave them alone at the mercy of other powers); the fulfillment of manifest destiny by means of a financial transaction (freedom bought/sold), the obligation to uplift not asked for but seemingly confirmed by violence; the unforeseen escalation of events (the “colony” declaring war) amidst heated but limited debates on annexation at home (both sides employing racist arguments); the length, tenacity, shiftiness and violence of the conflict unanticipated given benevolent intention or racist underestimation; and the deep injury wrought on amiable relations between former, if unknown, “friends”—these conditions that characterize the war and its context point to the formation of trauma.¹⁰ The traumatic nature of what, moreover, wasn’t recognized as a war was confirmed in 1907 when, as historian Richard Hofstadter notes in “Cuba, the Philippines, and Manifest Destiny” (1952), the Philippines was declared “the Achilles’ heel of our strategic position and should be given ‘nearly complete independence’ at the ‘earliest possible moment’” by none other than Theodore Roosevelt, the exemplar of US colonial imperialism (187).

Trauma derives its modern definition from critic Cathy Caruth, who in *Unclaimed Experience* (1996) used the term to describe unexpected, violent, or overwhelming events that, as they occur, are experienced unconsciously, inflict injury, and enact repetition.¹¹ Under traumatic conditions, an event is missed, its subsequent “forgetting” paradoxically its “first experienc[ing]” in which, only afterwards and henceforth, it is processed via repetition, a belated attempt to bring the event to consciousness, “to tell [...] of a reality or truth [...] not otherwise available.”

Defined by an economy of, perhaps an impasse between, the known and the unknown¹²—trauma consisting precisely in the experience being “not yet [...] fully known,” perhaps unknowable (“cannot fully know”)—traumatic repetition constitutes a symptomatic temporality, what Caruth calls “history.” Caruth describes history as “aris[ing] where immediate understanding may not” but also as that which repeats because unconscious, forgotten, or unknown.¹³ In other words, traumatic history is at once foundational and fixed: a history (in the sense of the about-to-happen, e.g. the shaping of character, i.e. the from-now-on) of repetitions bound to trauma (hence tied to the past, in that-which-happened-but-was-screened, its character that of the still-stuck) in which the past is, in a fundamental sense, present, perhaps the future. Enacting this blurred temporality of the bound, trauma disrupts the order that lends history linear causality. What constitutes the surprise in trauma is not, Caruth clarifies, the content of the experience, its character (its violence, its injury), or limit (confrontation with death), but, rather, the fact of “having survived, precisely, without knowing it.” “Repetition is not simply the attempt to grasp that one has almost died but, more fundamentally and enigmatically, the very attempt to claim one’s own survival.” In Caruth’s account, then, what renders traumatic is not the event itself, but its survival or, further, its claiming—claiming and survival hanging on trauma. On the one hand, trauma is induced not by the event, but by its survival (which leads to its claiming as trauma); on the other, the event would have to be “already” traumatic for it to be “survived” (this survival unknowing, its claiming retrospective). In other words, trauma is (consciously) constituted afterwards—in its survival, its claiming—as the trauma it (unconsciously) already is in its happening. This takes place through repetition, which unfolds a “history” based on the event that not only sets a pattern or shapes character, but produces subjective and relational bonds, such as the notorious bond

between the victim and the perpetrator, fundamentally, a “bond to [the] other,” i.e. to trauma itself.¹⁴

Given the symptomatic history that trauma enacts and in which it consists (the event, its survival, its claiming ...), tracing the trauma of the Philippine-American War necessitates attention to not only the war and its context (details about which I mention above), but, indeed, Filipino-American history. This is because what constitutes trauma is not just the immediate violence of the war, the unexpected circumstances of its unfolding, or, despite willful and resistant action, its fate beyond the control of the combatants and contrary to their proclaimed ideals. Even as trauma already is in its happening, as Caruth explains, it is constituted only afterwards when, due to injury, it is screened and repeated, screening/repetition (trauma’s subsequent “forgetting” its “first experienc[ing]”) enacting a history bound to, in this case, the Filipino-American relation. Accounting for the trauma of the war thus requires an account of not only its specificity and immediate context, but its history, including repetitions that hint at and induce trauma and screenings that limit and lend access to the “primal scene.” In fact, because of screening, the event is traceable mostly through its outcome and remainders, notably the world put in place and subjective symptoms, repetitions of the trauma, as it were, that constitute its afterlife. The effect of screening, repetitions lend access to the event in deferred and displaced ways and as such themselves constitute a kind of screening. That trauma consists in not only its event but its screening/repetition perhaps renders the screening of trauma irreducible. As I note in my comparison of Filipino remembering and US education above, this does not mean that all screening is the same or that screening necessarily forecloses access to trauma. In fact, as I show below with regards to Filipino-American history, screening derives from not only the event, but the state of things that serve as its precondition. This, I argue, implies that screening provides a

trace to not only the event, but its conditions, screening, if belatedly and indirectly, pointing the way toward a traumatic genealogy of “history.” It is thus precisely through screening that I trace trauma in order to account for the Philippine-American War through Filipino-American history or, what amounts to the same thing, Filipino-American history as traumatically grounded in the Philippine-American War. As such, I turn to the prehistory (the state of things prefiguring what’s to come) and afterlife (the products, legacies, and shadows of that which is screened) of the event (the “primal scene”) on the part of the colonizer and the colonized to provide an account of trauma through its regressive/progressive screening/repetition of a history of a relation, i.e. the traumatic bond between US sovereignty and Filipino identity.

The Sovereign in Reverse

In what ways have the US and the Philippines been screened, from where do these screenings derive, and how was it that their conjunction led to the event that is the Philippine-American War, which would reinforce these screenings? Following its self-understanding, in *Empire* (2000) theorists Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri define the US in terms of the contradiction between its Constitution and imperialism rooted in its immanent sovereignty. “US sovereignty,” Hardt and Negri write, “arises [...] as the [direct] result of the productive synergies [*potentia*] of the multitude” (164). Consisting in powers derived from anti-colonial struggle (161-2) and thereby self-constituting, self-regulating, and arranged in a network, the US, Hardt and Negri claim, is exempt from the crisis of modernity, i.e. the “uninterrupted conflict between the immanent, constructive, creative forces [*potentia*] and the transcendent power [*potestas*] aimed at restoring order” (76). Precisely because of “the conflictive and plural nature of the multitude itself,” however, US sovereignty “yields” to “an experience of finitude” (165). To

displace the internal limits it itself induces, the US turns outside, its immanence leading it to imperial expansion. Consistently, the expansion that results is an open project: it is inclusive (165-6), it bears the banner of liberty (169), it extends network rather than transcendent power (175), and it is internationalist (177), even if tending to be centralized (181). Concretely, the US uses its “privileged position in the new global constitution of imperial authority” after World War II, especially after the Cold War (182), to impose its sovereignty on the world, but it does so immanently, through the ideology of development aimed at the “tendential realization of the world market” (282-4), i.e. global incorporation into the capitalist mode of production (286). Whereas the crisis of modernity finds temporary resolution in nation-state representation (mediated *potestas*), immanent expansion, Hardt and Negri argue, indicates “a new and more complete compatibility between sovereignty and capital” (331), capital “operat[ing] on the plane of *immanence*” (326-7) and forging capitalist/imperial/postmodern sovereignty. Rather than the negation and exclusion of modern imperialism, consistent with capital, *empire*’s imperative consists in juridical inclusion, cultural differentiation, and pragmatic and mobile management (198-200).

Hardt and Negri’s account exempts US sovereignty from modern dialectics (the process in which *potentia* and *potestas* are sublated into mediated *potestas*), yet explains its actual contradictions—Native American dispossession, black slavery, and Theodore Roosevelt’s civilizing colonialism—as “negative foundation[s]” of (170) or imperfect solutions superseded by something “more utopian,” i.e. immanent US sovereignty itself (175).¹⁵ Similarly, the depiction of the world order characterized by imperial sovereignty seems too American and not American enough: on the one hand, the postmodernity of capitalist sovereignty is immanent in the sense put forth by the US Constitution; on the other, the more that capitalist sovereignty is

emphasized, the less visible the US becomes. Empire, in other words, is Americanized at the price of obscuring US role in the world through capital. This screening of the US is due to Hardt and Negri's stress on logical compatibility rather than economic and military power.¹⁶ By positing the US and the world as mirror images of each other in which their immanence is already given and naturally compatible, the US is depicted as destined to define the world order by sheer logic rather than concrete intervention. This dialectical sublation of the contradictions of that which is supposed to be exempt from dialectics and the teleological positing of the world as already like that which imposes its order form part and parcel of the screening of what is realized after the event as inevitable, if not already accomplished. This rendering of the posttraumatic as antediluvian warrants, I argue, Hardt and Negri's claim that US sovereignty is imperial rather than imperialist. What is this if not a variant of the claim that, as some empire historians put it, "the United States had avoided Europe's class conflicts, authoritarian governments, and empires to become 'an example of liberty for others to emulate'" (McCoy et al. "Tropic" 8), if reiterated by way of postmodernity as the *telos* of modern dialectics? In fact, the postmodern screening of US sovereignty belongs to a long and old tradition of American exceptionalism previously articulated, e.g. in William Henry Seward's declaration that "the story of American [national] development [is] the most important secular event in the history of the human race,"¹⁷ through the identification of the US with (secular) modernity, the *telos* of a time prior.

In the final chapters of *Politics and Vision* (2004), philosopher Sheldon S. Wolin articulates the economic and military underpinnings of this self-screening by positing US immanent sovereignty as inverted totalitarianism and the world after WWII as ordered by Superpower. Consistent with postmodern narratives of history, Wolin designates the US after the Cold War as sole superpower "transcend[ing] the modern conception of the state as confined to

its boundaries” (559) while undergoing the “corporate reorganization” of government (561). Indicative of “political economy’s drive for totality [as] manifested in the primacy of economy and its representation as the ‘real’ constitution of society” (564), this conjunction between the corporatization of the state and its violation of borders leads to “uncollapsed capitalism,” which subordinates “politics, popular culture, education, and intellectual life [...] to economic mandates and imperatives,” i.e. to the features “(e.g., private ownership of production and investment) essential to capitalism” (566). The rise of “Superpower,” in other words, is predicated on the process in which “the economic rules all domains of existence, while governance is concentrated upon stabilizing functions and political containment at home and abroad” (566). Since it has “no formal Constitution,” the “drive towards totality” is at once more likely and less discernible in Superpower, “draw[ing as it does] from the setting where liberalism and democracy have been established for more than two centuries” (591). In contrast to totalitarianism proper, this “inverted totalitarianism,” Wolin elaborates, “is driven by an ideology of the cost-effective rather than of a ‘master race’ (*Herrenvolk*), by the material rather than the ‘ideal’” (591). “The most revealing inversion” is the way in which “corporate power” is not “subordinated to state control” but rather “predominant in the political establishment” (593). Ultimately, democracy is “rationalized” by political economy (564), i.e. “confined to and by procedural guarantees: equal rights to vote and speak, free elections and accountable officials, regularized legislative, judicial, and administrative processes” (564-5), devoid of substantive, ameliorative requirements, e.g. (re)distributive justice.¹⁸

In thus positing it as Superpower, Wolin identifies the US as, *potentially*, a liberal totalitarianism: liberal given the origins of “uncollapsed capitalism” in liberal philosophy (that posits the conjunction of the representative state and the free market) and the ability of political

economy “to accommodate [... liberalism’s political form, i.e. representative] democracy” (564).

Wolin traces this totalizing potential of political economy in military trauma, specifically in the

US experience of fighting totalitarianism in WWII. In Wolin’s ominous words:

Nazi totalitarianism arose within and against a society widely perceived as the exemplar of certain core Western values, a leader in the arts, science, scholarship, and industrial technology. Its nightmarish evolution during the 1920s to 1945, from Weimar to Auschwitz, was eventually halted by military defeat only after horrific loss of millions of lives. However, the awesome effort mobilized by the Allied nations to conquer a totalitarian system, ‘fighting fire with fire,’ exacerbated certain tendencies in the ‘free world,’ e.g. racism, militarism, high technology coexisting with ideological/religious atavism, medical experiments on human subjects, government lying. When the ‘free world’ mutates into a globalized economy and ‘the last best hope’ of democracy is absorbed into a mega-State, the normative appears ambivalent, as free *and* menacing. (580)

Whereas Hardt and Negri derive immanent sovereignty from the US Constitution (1787) and

thereby from the anti-colonial struggle for independence also known as the American Revolution

(1765-1783), Wolin highlights its totalitarian potential, if liberal. Arguing that this *potential* is

“exacerbated” in WWII (1939-1945) by “awesome effort mobilized [...] to conquer a totalitarian

system,” Wolin suggests that victory through military warfare, i.e. “fighting fire with fire,” leads

to partial/inverted infection that, if through forces not strictly economic—“racism, militarism,

high technology [...] with ideological/religious atavism, medical experiments on human subjects,

government lying”—slowly actualizes political economy’s *potential* toward totality. This is the

way in which the US, in a traumatic sense, “conquer[s]”—ingests, adapts to, adopts, is infected

by—totalitarianism, i.e. by manifesting it in reverse, economically, in ways consistent with its

liberalism.

By highlighting inverted totalitarianism, Wolin deconstructs immanent/imperial

sovereignty primarily through domestic tendencies in the US, if exacerbated by a world war. I

would like to extend this deconstruction of US self-screening by unraveling the imperialist

manifestation of immanent sovereignty, i.e. the geopolitical actualization of US sovereignty as it carries out its project in the world. Akin to the way in which Wolin directs attention to US political economy by reframing immanent as totalizing in reverse, I argue beyond Hardt and Negri that US geopolitics, which includes political economy, should be formulated as both imperial and imperialist. Drawing from postcolonial and US empire studies, where *imperialism* refers to post-WWII modes as well as precedents in what is a long history, this clarifies the ways in which US imperialism is new and old. In these fields, *imperialism* refers broadly to the expansion of sovereignty across boundaries in ways that entail violence and encroachment. Imperialism, in other words, is a violation committed for self-aggrandizement, if blurred by this very aggrandizement in which the sovereign claims the right to define borders and set limits and thus conquers always with justification. With this general yet coherent definition, the distinctions political/economic and external/internal, and perhaps borders in general, are deconstructed. Imperialism, moreover, is rendered, if contradictorily, reconcilable with liberalism, imperialism in fact, as sources from these fields show, taking various forms and adapting to and/or adopted by other forms of power, including liberalism and capitalism. If *sovereignty* names the dominant form of political, usually state, power and *capital*, accompanied by liberalism, has in modernity become the dominant economic force, *imperialism* is attributed to them when they violate borders to claim in another realm their power “at home” in which the “internal” territory is itself a product of past imperialism/s and the project of expansion is never finished.¹⁹ Even if immanent/inverted in a postmodern world, then, *empire*, based on this broader definition and as indicated by the tautology, falls under *imperialism*.²⁰ True enough, there are substantial, warranted ways in which imperialism, unbound from coloniality, can be attributed to US sovereignty even if US imperialism derives from the *potential* of US political economy rather

than traditional geopolitics. In fact, the pairing of US (state) sovereignty and (primarily US) capital is a violation of boundaries, i.e. that of the political/economic, an inherently imperialist act that Wolin warns tends toward totalitarianism. That totalitarian *potential* derives from its inversion of political economy, which is intrinsic to its immanence, suggests that US sovereignty is imperial(ist). That is, the US is imperialist, and not only outside, but at its root.

That the US is imperialist at its root, i.e. imperial, ironically leads to its screening, as shown by the longstanding tendency to posit it in exceptionalist terms and the history of difficulty to speak of US imperialism.²¹ The fact that it's at work inside, and the way in which it is posited (democracy), discounts its expansion outside (imperial rather than imperialist, liberation rather than colonization). Further, the inverted way that it proceeds through political economy attributes agency not to the state but to capital, the immanence of which renders it even trickier to pinpoint, its blurring of boundaries (corporatization, globalization) displacing their violation. Indeed, in a way, what the US is doing is new, but there are no terms for the new but the old (sovereignty, totalitarianism, imperialism); at the same time, despite its exceptionalism (immanence, inversion), the new is, in fact, old (imperialism), if justifiably renamed (empire). That US imperialism, in its naming, in its specification, is screened betrays, I argue, a traumatic structure that derives from the consistency between its internal constitution and external imposition—its imperial imperialism—and between US sovereignty and capital—its immanent totalitarianism—in which inverted sovereignty turns the old new. Notably, US imperialism wasn't always this consistent and, hence, formally traumatic. There is, after all, a long tradition of "US nation and empire building" "articulated with disarming candor and ritually celebrated" (Campomanes "Filipinos").²² The most explicit iteration of this is Theodore Roosevelt's civilizing colonialism,²³ the undisguised agenda of which led, on the eve of Philippine

annexation, to the establishment of the American Anti-Imperialist League and the public debates on expansionism bitterly framed as imperialism.²⁴ Given such a blatant history, how did US imperialism gain, apart from what is induced by its *potential* violence and injury, the structure of trauma? The most explosive instance of this imperialism named at this perhaps most explicit moment in its history induced, I argue, trauma that precedes but is just as formative as the WWII trauma identified by Wolin. I'm referring, of course, to the trauma of the Philippine-American War, which, as I show below, led the US to return to its constitutive condition, part and parcel of its screening of the event that gives rise to a traumatic history. That is, US screening of its imperialism (due to what happened in the Philippines) leads it to a geopolitical strategy consistent with its Constitution (anti-imperialism) and a world (postmodernity) ordered according to the repetition of itself (globalization as the imposition of US immanence on the world) and of trauma (this imposition constituting further and recurrent instances of that which is screened, i.e. US imperialism). This Filipino-American history that emerges from the Philippine-American War, I argue, renders US imperialism traumatic in a formal way, i.e. in its very naming, prior to its concrete violence and injury.

Fittingly, it is Filipino cultural critics and US empire historians who trace the genealogy of this history. Rooting US exceptionalism in its identification with modernity, the secular, and nature (which originally denoted detachment from European tradition), i.e. in its location “at the *beginning*, *outside*, and at the *end* of ‘universal’ History” (134) in “1898 and the Nature of the New Empire” (1999), Oscar V. Campomanes points out in “On Filipinos, Filipino Americans, and US Imperialism” (2006) that the US possesses a “genetic imperiousness” and “the power to hail imperial citizens.”²⁵ After all, how can one dissociate from the modern—the “empire of liberty,” as Thomas Jefferson put it—in the modern world? Ironically, precisely this

“exceptionalism” subjects US imperialism to “endemic ambivalence” (“1898” 139) and necessitates imperial “consent” (135). This, Campomanes argues, was “secured” “over the Philippines and the US experience of a ‘disenchanted’ because brutal war of colonial conquest there, immediately after 1898” (135). Above I describe the many aspects of the Philippine-American War that induce or are condensed in trauma and which give rise to a history of screening/repetition. On the part of the US, this history consists in a shift in US imperialism away from its explicit form, i.e. away from that which explodes in the Philippine-American War. Campomanes describes this shift in terms of a political/economic alignment (“1898” 136) that creates an “‘imperial presidency’ (from McKinley and Roosevelt through Taft and Wilson) [...] exercis[ing] effective feats of political will in ‘foreign relations’” (135) and the “fiction” that the US is “not [...] building [...] a new [...] empire, [but is] only [...] a nation self-appointed or destined to serve as the global gendarme and political/economic exemplar” (“Filipinos”) that, as Woodrow Wilson put it to enter WWI, makes the world “safe for democracy.”²⁶ Likewise, in “On the Tropic of Cancer” (2009), historians Alfred W. McCoy, Francisco A. Scarano, and Courtney Johnson describe this shift in terms of “a new form of global power that separates military defense from economic investments” (19), “a hybridized, subcontracting form of overseas rule” and “a decentered yet integrated foreign policy network” (26). McCoy et al. point out that this new imperialism is not unique to the US, but that the US practiced it exceptionally.²⁷ Drawing from William Appleman Williams’s “oxymoronic description [of] imperial anticolonialism / anticolonial imperialism” and William J. Pomeroy’s “anti-imperialism of [yesterday] is the neocolonialism of today,” Campomanes asserts that this exceptionally US imperialism, even when colonial, is not only anti-colonial, but anti-imperialist (“Filipinos”). Citing the struggle for the “free world,” the “proxy wars [...], the counterinsurgency campaigns

throughout the decolonizing world, the CIA coups and interventions in many regions,” the “inaugural imperial [colonial] crusades [of 1898],” and “the popular and long-running conceit of the American Revolution as the first anti-imperial or anticolonial struggle” (77), Campomanes argues that the “righteous rhetoric” against (old, authoritarian, colonial) power and for freedom (via representation and to trade)—i.e. liberalism—is the “venal practice” new to US imperialism (“1898” 139).²⁸

The point is not that US imperialism is couched as anti-imperialism, but that anti-imperialism is US imperialism. While its Constitution, as Hardt and Negri argue, set the immanent structure of its sovereignty, and while “fighting fire with fire” in WWII, as Wolin explains, activated its totalitarian tendencies by inverted infection, the Philippine-American War, as Campomanes suggests, constituted imperialist (form) anti-imperialism (substance) or anti-imperialist (means) imperialism (goal), i.e. rendered anti-imperialism the practice, but also purpose, of US imperialism. The strategy by which US imperialism proceeds, anti-imperialism is simultaneously its program, what anti-imperialism aims to bring about (destruction of and liberation from the old) what leads to subjection to (new) US imperialism (of free markets, of liberal democracies subordinated to the Washington consensus, etc.). Whereas the logic of exception—a common feature, as historians point out, of empires²⁹—renders it unexceptional, anti-imperialism renders US imperialism exceptional, explaining, in anthropologist Ann Laura Stoler’s terms, US “master[y of] this art of governance” (140).³⁰ An intermediate trauma (between revolution and world war), the Filipino history of the US thus led to the alignment of constitutive conditions—immanent sovereignty (political constitution), inverted totalitarianism (economic power), and (anti-)imperialism (geopolitical strategy/program)—that lends the US consistency and a traumatic structure, a traumatic war ironically turning it into Superpower.³¹

This is what Caruth calls “history, the “from-now-on” that begins the condition of being “still-stuck” to what had been missed (because unexpected), what remains ungrasped (because overwhelming), what has not been processed (instead, screened), and/or what cannot be conscious (instead, repeats). This history establishes a pattern (a character, a “future,” the “new”) that defines the US and the world it creates, i.e. the world imperialistically repeated after its image through a new imperialism that, in fact, is a return to US liberal, anti-imperialist Constitution (the “old,” the “past” turned into presence). Because the return is to the pre-traumatic, the post-traumatic symptomatically turns out to be that which is supposed to be screened—imperialism—a repetition of what induced the trauma in the first place. That is, what is avoided—imperialism having become impossible—is repeated in doing its opposite—(anti-)imperialism. Caruth explains that “the survival of trauma is not the fortunate passage beyond a violent event, a passage that is accidentally interrupted by reminders of it, but rather the endless inherent necessity of repetition, which ultimately may lead to destruction.”³² The repetition at work in the trauma of US (anti-)imperialism, I argue, is the repetition that tends toward destruction rather than processing or overcoming that, Caruth warns, is “retraumatizing.” Anti-imperialism, in other words, is the traumatic repetition of imperialism: (anti-)imperialism.

The Late/Last Colony/Identity Outside/Inside

Curiously, the traumatic consistency of US immanent sovereignty / inverted totalitarianism / (anti-)imperialism is augured by the event that would engender it. In the Philippine-American War, American soldiers called Filipinos “Injuns” and “niggers” as if they couldn’t articulate what the US was doing in the Tropics while betraying it at the heart of US sovereignty. What the US was doing “over there,” in other words, had a firm basis “at home,” a

bitterly racialized history, in fact, contrary to its self-proclaimed definition yet, somehow, consistent (as a “negative foundation,” as Hardt and Negri put it). How did the Philippines come to occupy this function of the “over there” that betrays what is “at home”? More precisely, why did an event formative to the US happen on the other side of the globe in an island colony that, moreover, was not its only one? Singled out as the case of US imperialism that most closely resembles European colonialism, the Philippines is often said to be the anomaly that the US needs to screen to maintain its consistency. In fact, as soldiers intimate, US colonial imperialism in the Philippines and its aftermath reveal US consistency. The case of the Philippines is indeed unique in US history; this uniqueness, however, has to do with not only the form that US imperialism took there, but with the “history” it enacts. Prior to US annexation a colony of Spain for more than three hundred years (1521-1898), the Philippines, especially at the twilight of Spanish colonialism, was held (on to) in a special way. In *Under Three Flags* (2007), Benedict Anderson suggests that the Philippines was ultimately a friar colony, the last stronghold of the Spanish religious orders amidst modernization in Europe (86). In “Reading Imperial Transitions” (2009), historian Josep M. Fradera likewise notes that as Puerto Rico and Cuba were progressively inserted into a “general political framework,” in the Philippines “a true nineteenth-century colonial society would be created, that is, a society excluded from the metropolitan liberal framework” (47). Even as Puerto Rico (1873) and Cuba (1882) gained representation in the Spanish *Cortes* and while “Spanish Cuba became one of the wealthiest sugar economies in the world,” the Philippines remained “an almost marginal colony in terms of the greater empire, [...] vital [*only*] for the defensive strategy of the whole,” “ensur[ing] an effective defense of the imperial *rear guard*” (42) (my emphasis). Indicatively, it was only after the Seven Years War (1754-1763), when the Philippines was briefly captured by the British, that Spain undertook a

more effective colonization of its interior and developed the tobacco monopoly for more thorough economic exploitation. The colonization of the Philippines was thus not firmly established until before the Atlantic Revolutions (1770s-1820s, inspired by the American Revolution [1765-1783]), when Spain would lose most of its colonies.

Under Spanish control, then, the Philippines had the distinction of being late, a status attributed by Anderson to the friars, whose clout in the Philippines was unheard of in other colonies and, indeed, the metropole; and by Fradera to the designation of the islands' inhabitants as nonwhite and, thereby, as in need of traditional colonial rule (61). This Filipino belatedness contingent on geography and imperial policies hampered by the constant swinging of the Spanish parliament between metropole conservatives and liberals made the Philippines seem suitable for US taking, and in a colonial way—these conditions ironically leading to the Philippine-American War, and hence to the trauma of US (anti-)imperialism. True enough, Spanish treatment of what must have seemed like the last colony continued under the US. Not the only territory the US “annexed” after the Spanish-American War (1898), the Philippines was the only one to wage a war against it.³³ This, I argue, is due to the unique prospect it faced, despite having declared itself a Republic, of traditional colonization, precisely because of its distinction as late. That is, its belatedness caused the Philippines to be treated, as in its past with Spain, as a formal colony, which, in turn, incited what the US referred to as an anticolonial “insurrection.” This term for the Philippine-American War intimates how the Philippines was screened as already a part of the US because late at the same time that the Philippines, the last (a colony rather than a state), will never be a part of the US. In any case, this “insurrection” against the US is clearly a continuation of the Philippine Revolution against Spain, both outcomes of the status of the Philippines as late/last. This status intimates the relation of the Philippines not only to the colonies liberated by

the Atlantic Revolutions, but also to a fellow remaining colony. Anderson notes that independence movement leaders in the Philippines concluded that the conditions for revolution were ripe partly because Spain had committed the majority of its soldiers to the insurrection in Cuba (166). Unable to let go of prized Cuba (no latecomer politically and economically), which had to be fiercely defended (even at great military cost), and unwilling to give to the Philippines (the perennial latecomer) what Puerto Rico and Cuba already had, Spain precipitated the Philippine Revolution (1896-1897/8). Similarly, quickly granting formal independence to Cuba (recognized as no latecomer; the Cuban War of Independence from Spain, after all, was its third war for liberation) and holding on to the Philippines as a traditional colonial state (the US colonial state was in many ways a continuation of what Spain had set up late), the US embroiled itself in the Philippine-American War (1899-1902/13).

The observation that the Philippines plays an uncanny, intermediate role between east and west is by now commonplace. Anderson, for example, notes that whereas the Cuban War of Independence (1895-1898) is the last nationalist anticolonial revolution in the Americas, the Philippine Revolution (1896-1898), almost simultaneously, is the first in Asia. The Philippines is thus screened as fulfilling a world historical function as a pivotal relay of revolution. I argue that this world historical function is constituted out of temporal disjunction (in which geography plays a role, but is not the only factor), what, following critic Ackbar Abbas, I call *dis-appointment*.³⁴ The conditions in the Philippines leading up to and under US colonization, as I explain above, constitutes it as a temporal anomaly: it is belated in its political and economic “development”; anachronistic as the last stronghold of the old (religious, racist power) that, in a vicious circle, causes it to be treated as old (a traditional colony); and/or untimely, i.e. not in sync, notably with other colonies gaining independence, territories becoming states, colonies

remaining colonies ... Ironically, this perennial colony that seemed a promising site for imperialism, indeed the object that would fulfill the promise of a fledgling imperialism, led the self-proclaimed nation of modernity not to the actualization of its imperial(ist) project, but to disappointment. That is, the encounter expected to fulfill the imperial promise of US sovereignty on the contrary induced a temporal mis-match, an in-felicitous link, the missing of an appointment that, to begin with, is impossible to make because the parties involved live different temporalities. Rather than the imperial(ist) fulfillment of the US, its dis(-appointing con)junction with the Philippines led to misunderstanding (assistance in revolution, as it turns out, is not invitation for colonization), contradiction (with the US practicing a mimetic and explicit colonial imperialism inconsistent with its Constitution, the Philippines fighting a war of revolution yet again), traumatic violence (the Philippine-American War, unforeseen even as it should have been expected, overwhelming even as it shouldn't have been), ultimately the disappointment of US imperial(ist) destiny (things don't go as planned, after all, even when they seem predestined, manifest—not this time, anyway). In this dis(-appointing con)junction in which the anachronistic colony and the universal empire traumatized each other, history, as Caruth describes it, is disrupted, rendered untimely³⁵: the nation outside history is led to return to its origins; the late/last colony advances the history of (anti-)imperialism and (post)modernity.³⁶ The disappointment of the encounter enacting a history out of joint, the trauma that is the Filipino-American relation thereby forges Superpower, (what the empire of liberty did in) the late colony traumatically triggering the last (of the old and birth of the new) empire.³⁷ What followed was a history of screenings/repetitions that is Filipino-American history.

In *The Decolonized Eye* (2009), critic Sarita Echavez See hints at this position of the Filipino as dis-appointing when she posits the Filipino as between/both late/last and

inside/outside. Through figures such as the “house/boy,” the domestic servant “intimately bound up with the family but always on the verge of expulsion” (117), See clarifies the designation of the Philippines upon US colonization as “foreign in a domestic sense” in the context of the contemporary Filipino American cultural moment in the US, which she describes as “a remainder from the past that nonetheless reads as new and alien” (xxxix). In this way, See broaches the spatial (inside/outside) and temporal (late/last) dimensions of the queer subject position (neither and both) in order to describe the Filipino. Primarily but not only in queer theory, *queer* (sexually and otherwise) invokes the remainders (the late) or the rejection (the last) of integration (inside/outside) into the elastic, faithfully reasonable social order of abstract subjects (the universal). While *liberalism* names the conjunction of the free market (capitalism) and free rights warranted by the representative state (democracy), a system that co-opts even *gay* and *lesbian* through their stabilization, the anomaly that the system attempts to, but cannot, assimilate, or assimilates at the price of its negation, is named *queer*. By definition, any system tending toward coherence and completion, e.g. through representation and normativity, would fail to include that which is impossible to incorporate or domesticate. This queerness beyond the norm, the Other that traumatically breaks down representation, is, I argue, failure itself. That is, the queer marks that which fails (to integrate) in the (complete) system and is hence excluded by it (the late/outside), which, thereby, unravels the system as itself failing (incomplete, after all), the rem(a)inder threatening the failure of the system (the last/inside). True enough, See writes how, “structurally queer in relation to the household in which he labors [and the power that colonizes],” the Filipino/houseboy/colonized keeps a “special relationship [with the master]” and “intimate dealings with the employer-family[-empire that] so easily can be seen as a threat to [it]” (116). If the Filipino is queer in the sense of its belatedness that justified US exclusion of it

from supposedly universal liberal rights and the US offer of “benevolent assimilation,” “tutelage,” i.e. colonization, this queerness exploded in the Philippine-American War, the Filipino defiance of US integration.

While the Filipino dis-appointment of US sovereignty traumatically induced the failure of colonial imperialism, however, this resulted not in imperial destruction, but in an untimely return to US Constitution that forged an imperialism more masterful, Superpower. That failure in the system (the late/outside) has enacted not its failure (inside, through the last) but a retraumatizing history of screenings/repetitions suggests, I argue, that the queer Filipino work of dis-appointing US (anti-)imperialism persists. To trace this persistence that may yet act on the system constituted by and faithful to trauma, the screening of *Filipino*, in particular in relation to trauma, has to be interrogated. Part and parcel of the nonlinear history enacted by trauma, identity gains “new” character or direction “after” the event. This implies that identity preexists trauma as one of its conditions (traumatically, it has to already be there to be constituted) at the same time that it is a traumatic legacy (consisting in screening/repetition). This double temporal relation to trauma suggests that identity is retraumatizing, consisting in a sedimentation of symptoms that repeat the event (“still-stuck,” late), and liberating, with the symptoms functioning as rem(a)inders that may lead to another unfolding of history (the last that ushers the “from-now-on”), or, in the least, the processing of trauma (in part via a return to its conditions). The symptoms of the colonizer, as I discuss above, manifest chiefly in (anti-)imperialism, i.e. in the repetition in the world of US hegemonic identity, which, however, as I show in later chapters, is not exhaustive of all colonizer symptoms even as it tries to marginalize and disavow other US identifications. The symptoms of the colonized are likewise sedimented in multiple ways; its position in the traumatic relation, however, posits hegemonic Filipino identity itself, in addition

to its explicitly queer variants, as queer in relation to US sovereignty. The ways in which the queerness of the Filipino in US history is both retraumatizing and liberating—this queerness the basis of the persistence of the Filipino dis-appointment of US (anti)-imperialism—are discernible by way of a traumatic reading of the screening of Filipino identity. This is what I lay out in the rest of this chapter.

In “One Hundred Years of Producing and Reproducing the Filipino” (1998), critic E. San Juan, Jr. dissects the well-established discourse by which Filipino failings, i.e. the failure of the Filipino to fully Americanize (and thereby to be worthy of liberal rights and self-determination), were rooted in Filipino “culture.” Against this essentialist screening that amounts to justifying colonization, I propose a traumatic reading that, based on the definition of identity above, traces what *Filipino* signifies through historical conditions, both material (e.g. the Philippine-American War) and symbolic (the various screenings, appropriations, and deployments of *Filipino* as well as the affects that arise from material realities, e.g. injury and desire, and responses also material, e.g. culture).³⁸ The historicity of this genealogical approach disallows indigenous authenticity and hollow hybridity as it traces screenings by both the self and others and roots identity in concrete conditions. By following the traumatic frame, I am on some level treating the Filipino as abstract as if all subjects traumatized differently exhibit the mechanisms described as “traumatic.” This is a major criticism of trauma theory. In “Trauma Theory and its Discontents” (2012), critic Michelle Balaev points out that trauma has traditionally been interpreted as unspeakable or unrepresentable when, in fact, there is no final definition of trauma. The assumption of its radical unknowability and timelessness leads, Balaev argues, to the fallacy that trauma necessarily induces dissociation (of the self, of knowledge) and repetition, both of which are treated as pathological symptoms. In an attempt to sever the essentialist link between trauma

(of which there are various types) and dissociation (which may be caused by other factors and is not trauma's only outcome), Balaev notes that both trauma and its effects are "mediated by cultural values and narrative forms" (18) and that disruption more aptly describes what trauma does. My elaboration of traumatic history in both temporal (the late/last) and spatial (outside/inside) terms shows that dissociation (the splitting of the conscious and the unconscious, often construed with spatial metaphors) and disruption (which implies the temporal disjunct I describe above in terms of history, including the repetitions induced by dissociation) are not mutually exclusive, but, in fact, intimately linked, the distinction space/time one of the things blurred by trauma (and imperialism). Nonetheless, Balaev's "pluralist" critique serves a reminder of the concrete conditions bracketed off by an abstract paradigm. Aware of trauma's pluralistic actualizations but guided by the assumption that different experiences can be abstracted for an analysis of common mechanisms, I argue that traumatic reading is warranted provided that its limits are recognized (e.g. it will not explain everything about everyone hailed as *Filipino*) and the historical specificity of its subject is kept in mind, including in explaining the abstract mechanism (after all, Filipino-American trauma and its "abstract" mechanisms derive from concrete history). This negotiation between the abstract and the concrete is also at work in my analysis of Filipino condition and identity that generalizes while drawing from the specific, including sexual, context of *queer*.

Similar to the way in which the US colonization of the Philippines derives from the Spanish past of the latter, the US representation of the Filipino as a failure can be traced back to the constitution of *Filipino* itself. In the canonical critical text, "Filipino American Literature" (1997), N. V. M. Gonzales and Oscar Campomanes note not only how the identity of the Filipino is a failure, but that failure is the identity of the Filipino. Quoting novelist Nick Joaquin's remark

(1988) that “the identity of a Filipino today is of a person asking what *is* his identity,” Campomanes explains that “the question of national identity [...] haunts the category of Filipino American writing with singular persistence” (74). Gonzales cites colonial reasons for this: under Spanish rule, Filipino talent had to be hidden and found recourse only in “fragments from Europe reassembled for local use” (65); under US rule, Filipino writing in English was judged simultaneously more advanced than the vernacular and, compared to American writing, “inchoate” (66-7). Thus “while the Filipino is [racially] Asian, substantially Malay, in fact,” s/he has become “imagination *engagé*” only “through successive [Western] colonizations” (71).³⁹ This Filipino identity crisis—not quite Western, unaware of its Asianness—is reflected in Filipino (American) writing. Connecting Filipino American writing to Filipino writing in English, the two “coterminously formed by the US colonization of the Philippines” (81), to which I would add the Filipino novel (including Tagalog), which was developed in the same period, Campomanes explains that the dispersed nationality and nomadism that result from the long Filipino history of territorial dispossessions, multiple colonizations, and relegation to migrancy (74-6) has marked Filipino (American) writing as incoherent (83). Filipino (American) writing, he elaborates, is given over to perennial displacement and intractable identity crisis (82); tends toward “an economic poetics [rather] than an extended prose practice” (84); and fails to measure up to Western forms and to First Filipino Jose Rizal’s transformation of exile into nationality (82). The work of culture part and parcel of the work of nationhood, the Filipino, according to “Filipino American Literature” itself, is defined by failure: the failure(s) to be Western, to be Asian, to be American, to be Filipino.⁴⁰ Ironically, then, in attempting to posit the character of Filipino (American) writing or Filipino character through Filipino (American) writing—in Filipino writing under the Spanish, in Filipino writing in English, in Filipino

American writing, in Filipino writing in Tagalog (not to mention dialects and media relegated to the margins of nationhood)—what Gonzales and Campomanes find is that which is hidden, incoherent, in between thus in crisis, undetermined because overdetermined, inauthentic, non-national, i.e. that which, despite Joaquin’s emphasis on *is*, deconstructs its own status as an identity.

This “failure” of Filipino identity derives from the ironic process of Filipino colonial constitution in stark contrast to US self-constitution. The “Philippines” did not exist as a polity until Spanish colonization, the colonizer, in more than an ideological sense, constituting the colonized and, moreover, colonizing it late while failing to include certain regions. Likewise, *Filipino*, after Philip II, was appropriated in the period leading up to the Revolution from its initial referent (the Spanish born in the colony, i.e. *Creole*, for which there is no Filipino word) by elite *mestizos* educated in Europe as the basis of a national identity out of, yet bound to, the colonial context from which it seeks liberation. This colonial constitution lends *Filipino* a queer character: it is bound to failure—the identity forged to liberate is that which chains it—this failure (the late) its identity—this is the only identity it has, it was constituted as this identity—this failure (the last), in turn, a strategy, if counterintuitive but not necessarily self-defeating, against the colonial condition (inside) that relegates it as a failure (outside). In other words, the incoherence of *Filipino* is both a symptom and a response. True enough, Campomanes notes how, in contrast to its earlier “paradoxical propensity [for] mimicry” (75), Filipino (American) writing resists the narrative of Americanization to (re)imagine the diasporic, exilic, and postcolonial (77) in an attempt to imaginatively “repossess” the homeland to “reverse the [...] historical condition of identity crises” (85).⁴¹ Similarly, Gonzales notes Filipino (American) writing’s emphasis on the homeland rather than the promised land (63) in “the movement from a

possibly Edenic past to a continually fallen state in the present” (68). While evincing the impulse to imaginatively “repossess” the homeland/past so as to “reverse the [...] historical condition [that defines the present],” *Filipino* paradoxically highlights the past/homeland as necessarily leading to “a continually fallen [...] present.” To the extent that it broaches the homeland/past, then, *Filipino* does so not for a nostalgic return, but as the condition from it derives but to which it cannot return. In fact, the origin itself is deconstructed as it is invoked as “possibly Edenic,” i.e. as *not* Edenic, the origin posited as not that different from the present. Rather than an actual return to origin, then, the queer imperative of *Filipino* is to culturally repossess its conditions so as to produce something different, i.e. the diasporic, exilic, and postcolonial. This, I argue, is the queer way that, precisely in its failure (to repossess the origin, to live up to the nation), *Filipino* might process the trauma of its constitution to unfold history differently.

Filipino thus deconstructs the regional categories (west/east, i.e. inside/outside) by which it is defined and the linear relation (late/last) between conditions and legacies that precede/follow its historical traumas in what appears to be a double act of failure (spatial/temporal) that is its constitutive symptom and strategic response. That it deconstructs not only identity by failing it but also the origin as like the state of things conditioned by it implies that trauma (and not just a particular trauma, e.g. of Spanish or US colonization) is the condition of Filipino identity. This is not to argue that (post-)traumatic existence is uniquely Filipino, but to raise the question of how this seemingly generic state of trauma is given concrete shape by the contingencies of Filipino history marked by events that, in concentrating or magnifying trauma, in making trauma explode into an event, as it were, constitute history as traumatic but also open up queer paths for unfolding history in ways that do not merely repeat trauma. Beyond its constitution, the Philippine-American War is one of these signal events that continue the process of constituting

Filipino by leading it to a particular trajectory. This is what historian Paul A. Kramer traces in *The Blood of Government* (2006), demonstrating in the process the way in which, just as writing (culture) is the writing of identity (nation), history is a history of racialized identities. US racial ideology, Kramer explains, is premised on the claim that English-speaking Teutons possess the “blood of government” (2) tasked with spreading Anglo-Saxonism (in which the American needs guidance from the English [11]) to places like the Philippines, where Malay blood had suffered from savagery, Orientalization, and Hispanicization. In fact, prior to US arrival, the Philippines was subject to a colonial racial order defined by rigid stratification based on territorial nativity, blood mixture, and religious civilization that placed the peninsular Spanish on top and the native-born *indio* at the bottom (39).⁴² In the Philippine Revolution (1896-1897/8), this order led *ilustrado* propagandists (mixed) and nationalist revolutionaries (native) to appropriate *Filipino* (in the middle of the hierarchy) as an “autonomous collective identity” (75) that “cut across Spanish colonial racial lines and territorialized membership in a national polity” (85).⁴³ The mixed-blood, educated, elite *ilustrado* class cultivated Filipino identity by inserting themselves into Western modernity through bourgeois self-stylization and masculinity,⁴⁴ a project ridiculed by the Spanish, for whom Filipinos were small, hairless children who lacked virility; naked, agile monkeys; indolent laborers; and/or superstitious thinkers, i.e. beholden to the failures of an anthropoid ancestry that warranted colonial rule (47-66).

This colonial racial order, its nationalist appropriation, and the arrest of Western-inspired Filipino national identity continued under US rule. This is paradoxical. After all, in its appropriation by *mestizo*, *ilustrado* men who imagined themselves embodying it, *Filipino* amounted to an anti-racial identity resonant with US universalist identification with modernity. In fact, this but extends the resonance already there in the naming of the “Philippines” and of

“America” under similar colonial circumstances. In other words, the conditions of Filipino identity are not unique. On the contrary, there is Filipino-American resonance, US sovereignty and the Philippine Revolution both appealing to the universalist and anti-colonial ideals of modernity and liberalism. In what, then, does the difference consist by which the Filipino becomes screened as failure and the US the exception? The Philippine-American War, I argue, repeated the traumatic history of the racial, indeed racist, processes by which *Filipino* is constituted, thereby inverting rather than actualizing Filipino-American resonance. After the Spanish-American War (1898), “US soldiers occupying Manila,” Kramer writes, “were, in some cases, prepared to see Filipinos as their rough equals” (28). When the Philippine-American War (1899-1902/13) broke out, however, Filipinos were racialized as enemies. In contrast to Filipino desire to emulate American conduct (94), Americans described Filipinos as tribal, hence unworthy of independence and incapable of national self-rule (122-4), and called *Injuns* or *niggers* before soldiers finally came up with *gu-gu*, which may be the linguistic origin of *gook* (124-8) or a mispronunciation of *gago*, the Tagalog term for *fool*.⁴⁵ Imagery of disappointing Filipino appearance masking impressive ability was employed to justify the double US response of awarding limited recognition to while harboring cold suspicion of the Filipino (104-6). Ultimately, discourse pervaded about how every Filipino was an *insurrecto* “from hide to heart” (114, 138), which, by attributing insurgency as a racial character, implied exterminist sentiments and led to exterminist warfare (138-51). For their part, Filipinos challenged American masculinity, thereby arousing the hatred of US soldiers, and expressed reservations about US racial history with regards to *niggers* and *Injuns*, the very appellations used on them (102-4).

The inverted Filipino-American resonance betrayed by the continuity between the US official view of Filipinos as subjects who must/can be colonized and soldiers hailing them as

Injuns and *niggers*—both predicated on the Philippine-American War—became sedimented after the war. Kramer explains that the explicit, indeed exterminist, racism of wartime transmuted into the elastic and inclusionary racism of the colonial period (161), when the US designated the Philippines an “unincorporated territory” and Filipinos “US nationals” and Philippine citizens (165) to withhold independent statehood and/or US citizenship from the “foreign in a domestic sense.” Under US rule, racial dynamics in the Philippines, Kramer notes, were complicated by “dual mandates” in which a civilian US authority presided over the “insular” government, which was being resisted by both the postwar Filipino resistance and the US military still pacifying it (173-4).⁴⁶ Eventually, a “highly qualified equality” became operative based on the narrative in which recognition of the Filipino depended on American assessment indefinitely deferred. Recognition (of national independence? of the equal status of the colonial subject?) was contingent on “tutelary assimilation,” which figured doubly: as father, the military enforced discipline through violence; as elder brother, the civilian government emphasized schooling. In this liberal regime in which the Filipino was screened as America’s inverse—included but, like *Injuns/niggers*, subjected, a subject only to the extent that it is American, which it is not—the two heads of US colonial rule in the Philippines were, if differently, beholden to problematic, indeed racist, metaphors of family and evolution in which through the white, the black becomes brown.⁴⁷ Yet other mandates and further differential racial treatment were produced when, seeing its power increasingly devolve to the civilian authority, the US military later shifted its attention to non-Catholic regions (the same parts not reached by Spanish colonization).⁴⁸ Ultimately, Filipino “deficiencies”—the political agility of the elites; the ignorance, superstition, passivity, laziness, and intense emotionality of the masses; the savagery (weakness, violence) of non-Catholics—were rewritten and made compatible with the narrative of Americanization (191-

203). In a double move, Filipino capacity was employed (in its supposed subservience to authority) and denigrated (in its lack of rationality) as a sign of Filipino development under American tutelage (223-5). While this period tended toward the American assimilation of the Filipino, there lingered an American fear of Filipino incorporation in the US polity (207-8) as indicated e.g. by California signs (1920s-30s) that read “Positively No Filipinos Allowed.” This colonial history would in time be the basis of the exclusionary racism that characterized Filipino-American relations after flag independence (1946), part of the US response to Asian immigration at large. Yet again, this regime would turn into something more “inclusive” after LBJ’s Immigration and Nationality Act (1965), which ushered what would come to be known as “model-minority imperialism” in which, consistently, the Filipino did not fit.⁴⁹ The inverse that could potentially but would not actually be American, the Filipino, rather than unfolding history differently, thus remained to the end “foreign [to the US] in a domestic sense.”

Why did the trauma of the Philippine-American War effect/enact a relation of inversion between the US and the Filipino? In what sense does the encounter between the sovereign in reverse—the state constituted by immanent sovereignty tending toward economic totalitarianism and expanding through (anti-)imperialism—and the late/last colony outside/inside—the disappointing promise, the foreign in a domestic sense, the failure in the system that threatens the system’s failure—logically lead to an inverted resonance between the two? I argue that Filipino-American trauma enacts a history of inversion because it is rooted in the contradiction of the same. The return of the US to its Constitution after the Philippine-American War was, after all, simultaneous with its colonization of the Philippines. The return of the self-proclaimed nation of modernity to its liberal foundations came, in other words, with its arrest of the Philippine Revolution and, thereby, of Filipino national identity, which, like the so-called “empire of

liberty,” was premised on liberalism. The colonization of the Philippines is thus the dark underside of US Superpower. The inverse makes the latter possible through a traumatic event, i.e. the Philippine-American War, that was perpetrated by the US despite the modern, liberal, anti-colonial ideals that led Filipinos to initiate it in order to uphold their Republic based on the same principles as the US.⁵⁰ The war that traumatically establishes the inverted relation between the US and the Filipino then screens/repeats Filipino (post-)traumatic existence rather than processing it, thereby enacting the history of screening of the Filipino as a failure. In other words, the inverted parallel between US imperial sovereignty and Filipino national failure is a product of the Philippine-American War’s establishment of the Filipino-American relation on the basis of a screened/repeated difference between the US and the Filipino despite their resonant appeals to liberalism. This implies a contradiction of liberalism, which, in fact, derives from features essential to its two actualizations: the US Constitution’s screening out of race (“We the people”) and the constitution of *Filipino* on the basis of territory. In effect, the US constitutional exclusion of race was literalized in the Philippines where US sovereignty can be extended but whose racialized inhabitants cannot be recognized (as national, as US citizens).⁵¹ In need of commonality other than race on which to ground identity given its incoherence, Filipino constitution depended on territorial autonomy and integrity, of which it was deprived by US colonization. The racial disavowal and imperial implication of modern, supposedly universal liberalism⁵² thus underpin the structural and seemingly perennial trauma of the Filipino-American relation and, indeed, of the Filipino. Indicatively, through the Philippine-American War, liberalism turned Filipino independence into Filipino racial failure that could be rectified only under US sovereignty, i.e. through the (anti-)imperialist universalization of differential, white liberalism.

Contagious Working Through

In tracing the consistency of the colonial constitution and postcolonial racialization of the Filipino, I treat the traumatic event as itself a repetition, thereby generalizing Caruth's notion of retraumatization as the event is posited as *retraumatizing* rather than primarily traumatizing. I'm suggesting, in other words, that repetition consists in not only the screening of trauma afterwards, but its "initiation" in an event, which but repeats the trauma "already there." That the primal is also a repetition does not imply that the processing of trauma is necessarily thwarted by a perennially traumatic "history" in which the future that may be (the new?) is endlessly arrested into a "from-now-on" (the last) "still-stuck" (late). On the contrary, precisely because the traumatic event is also a repetition, repetition may, unconsciously (through screening) and consciously (through the tracing of screening), process trauma. Tracing the Philippine-American War, even as and precisely because it constitutes trauma that is but derivative, is thus an opportunity to process not only Filipino-American trauma, but the trauma of Filipino identity. The focal point of this process, as I suggest above, is Filipino identification, which not only deconstructs spatial (inside/outside) and temporal (late/last) relations, but also points to the condition that lends it this traumatic, thereby queer, character, i.e. the contradiction of liberalism. By positing it as traumatized/ing and as thus holding a queer potential, I do not mean to reduce the Filipino as traumatic or imply that it always functions as a queer rem(a)inder. I am, however, trying to derive what's useful from trauma theory and queer critique to trace the Filipino-American relation in order to elaborate an organic, untimely response to US (anti-)imperialism.⁵³ In her critique of trauma theory (2012), Balaev notes that abstraction (from cultural context) and pathologization (the treatment of disruption as dissociation in need of cure) are rendered

contradictory by the thesis of contagion that “isolate[s traumatic experience] in the brain, [but posits it as] still carr[ying] the potential to infect another pure and integrated subject through the act of narration or [...] common ancestry or ethnic origins” (12). Against this tendency (through the thesis of contagion) to interpret concrete cases from varied contexts as the (pathological) result of an (abstract) foundational given that remains culturally inaccessible, Balaev warns of “posttraumatic culture,” the generalization of the post-traumatic condition. In *Writing History, Writing Trauma* (2001), historian Dominick LaCapra more ambivalently warns that “the overall conflation of history or culture with trauma, as well as the near fixation on [...] acting out post-traumatic symptoms [i.e. repetition], have the effect of obscuring crucial historical distinctions [...] that, while inducing empathy] may [...] block processes that counteract trauma [...] i.e.] its working through.”⁵⁴

Ultimately, these critiques of trauma theory rest on the rejection of contagion that, in their depiction, warrants trauma’s abstract universalization. Abstraction, I argue, need not result in and may indeed enable a critique of universalization, as I show through the Filipino’s relation to liberalism. Contagion is likewise ambivalent. While rightly arguing against the hasty generalization of the post-traumatic by insisting on cultural context, Balaev nonetheless misses the other side of trauma’s “pathology,” i.e. its deconstruction of spatial/temporal distinctions (that render *retraumatization* not only traumatizing but a kind of processing) and weight on the present (the pertinence, but not generalization, of the post- condition). Similarly, while noting how “those traumatized by extreme events, as well as those empathizing with them, may resist working through because of what might almost be termed a fidelity to trauma, a feeling that one must somehow keep faith with it,” LaCapra does not consider how this very fidelity may deconstructively lead to a break, i.e. how trauma both blocks and induces processing. In contrast,

elaborating on intergenerational transmission and transhistorical trauma in *Haunting Legacies* (2010), critic Gabriele Schwab extends trauma from victim to perpetrator to both warn of “wound culture” and assert contagion’s political potential. “In the long term,” Schwab writes, “torture destroys not only the victim but also the perpetrator, [...] attack[ing] not only the victim’s but also the perpetrator’s hold on life” (39). The double-sided effects of trauma, moreover, do not manifest immediately but play out through “transgenerational haunting” based on the unconscious transmission of memory and its delayed processing, including to succeeding generations. This structural (inside/outside: between victim/perpetrator) and historical (late/last: across generations) contagion enacted by trauma warrants my contrapuntal and spectral genealogy of the Filipino-American relation. “Attachment to injury is,” however, “problematic, especially in a ‘wound culture’ oversaturated with stories and studies of trauma” in which “an identitarian definition of cultural belonging [ties] identity to victimization” and “trauma [becomes] the foundation of identity” (19). Cognizant of contagion’s exaggeration that may only induce apathy, even disassociation (19), Schwab nonetheless insists that “people have no choice but to be responsive to and take responsibility for the history they inherit, no matter on which side of the divide they were born” (26). She goes so far to suggest, in fact, that for the perpetrator, “the shock of recognizing the atrocities committed by one’s own people may prepare the ground for potential alliances with the victims” (27).⁵⁵ Precisely through structural, transgenerational contagion, then, Schwab unravels the doubleness of trauma—affecting both victim and perpetrator, crossing from past to present/future—contagion both hindering and paving the way for trauma’s processing.

In this chapter I lay out the ways in which contagion (between the Filipino and the US, from colonial to postcolonial) screens/repeats traumatic history while alluding to the possibility

of processing trauma, of unfolding history differently—what is also known as *working through*. How might contagion enable the working through of trauma? What would it accomplish? What form might it take, and what forms has it taken, in “history”? What does it mean to work through the Filipino-American relation, for both the “victim” and the “perpetrator,” more precisely, the colonized and the (anti-)imperialist, universal modernity and the racialized untimely, liberalism and the queer? In tackling this question, it is important to remember that highlighting the traumatic character of *Filipino* that, with its essential failure and multiple constitution, problematizes the liberal premise of modern identity/sovereignty does not amount to positing the Filipino as exceptional, if in reverse. The problematization of *Filipino* is at work in all identities and problematization does not automatically leads to liberation from sovereignty.⁵⁶ In fact, problematization is how US (anti-)imperialism proceeds. Ironically, however, the US problematization/liberalization of empire seems to reach its limit in the problematic Filipino: the Philippine-American War betrays the US, against its self-definition, as colonialist, if anti-imperialist, thereby leading it to (anti-)imperialism; despite American tutelage, the Filipino is depicted as a racial other (in the war and the colonial period) and a danger to the body politic (in the period of immigrant exclusion); the Filipino fails to be American (politically, culturally, economically), Filipino (according to the model of US nationhood), and a model minority (along with other Asians in the multicultural US landscape) ... In other words, if the US is founded on the liberal synthesis of immanent sovereignty / economic totalitarianism / (anti-)imperialism, the traumatic Filipino, consistent with its initial, mocked articulation by anti-racial nationalist revolutionaries against colonialism, may be its queer undoing. Is this queer Filipino-American relation—in which the Philippines is repeatedly colonized, the Filipino repeatedly constituted, as the dark, failing double that points to the failure of Western liberalism embodied in US

sovereignty—the working through of trauma? Could such retraumatizations lead to something new, something different, i.e. the undermining of US sovereignty, the undoing of liberalism? Or is undoing—the queer rem(a)inder that fails in the system, which may, in turn, cause the system to fail—the threat forestalled or which may be evaded by working through? This is the question I turn to in the following chapters by addressing the different ways in which this queer relation unfolds, starting in the next chapter with an elaboration of “working through.”

CHAPTER 2

The Deconstruction of Trauma in the (Non-)Experimental Novel: Imperialist Disavowal, Colonial Mentality, and Writing Autoimmunity

In laying out Filipino-American history in the first chapter, I show how it consists in screenings/repetitions of the constitution of the Filipino-American relation that enact a history of the same. Might this traumatic history lead to something other than what is put in place, Filipino-American history that does not but sediment its traumatic constitution? In highlighting a temporality in which subsequent “forgetting” is “first experienc[ing]” in which the “from-now-on” is “still-stuck,” trauma theory suggests that precisely its history of screening/repetition constitutes trauma’s processing. In this line of thought, the process of grasping and knowing the event is belated because it was unprecedented (no tools were ready) and indirect because it is overwhelming (no weapons are sufficient), which is why, paradoxically, working through it proceeds through screening/repetition, trauma’s own symptomatic mechanisms. That trauma’s symptoms manifest in various forms attached to identity led me to posit the traumatically intertwining history between the Philippines and the US as the *Filipino-American* relation. As history is led to a particular trajectory, so is identity imprinted by trauma with a character that, like all symptoms, is both conditioned by and indicative of, thereby potentially counteracting, its cause. As I show in chapter 1, for example, Filipino identity, designated by the US as a failure to justify the colonization of the Philippines, ends up, as failure, deconstructing the US as an empire, what the US disavows, and pursues, in (anti-)imperialism. Just as Filipino identity functions as queer in relation to US sovereignty, the rem(a)inder of that which relegates, American identity is assigned to subjects also queer to US sovereignty that may unravel it from “within.” In other words, identity, both Filipino and American, hegemonic and subversive, serves as a ground for the unfolding of the Filipino-American relation in which trauma is

repeated *and* possibly processed in displaced (in forms other than how trauma was induced) and deferred (after delays) ways. Starting in this chapter, I trace this deconstructive process by which trauma is worked through by turning to what is imaginative like identity and what is narrative like history, namely literature, specifically the novel, the national genre. I compare Filipino and American writing topically and temporally removed from the traumatic constitution, but grappling with some aspect, of the Filipino-American relation.

I start by highlighting certain aspects of the relation from the genealogy I provide in the previous chapter. Specifically, I focus on US imperialist disavowal, the pursuit of empire precisely through its disavowal, which takes the form of the generalization, i.e. of repetition through screening, of the colonial project, and Filipino colonial mentality, the colonized subject's mimicry of the designation, institutions, and worldview, i.e. ontology, of the colonizer. Linked by and like mimicry, the two mechanisms unravel themselves as double as they both repeat trauma and hint at its processing. To theorize this doubleness, I review the way that, as I lay out in the introduction, trauma presupposes deconstruction, and the debate about what counts as working through, which I show ultimately offers two forms of processing based on repetition. While there is indeed a distinction between the way that deconstructive transmission repeats trauma's deconstruction over time to enact difference and symbolic narrativization's pausing of deconstruction via a representation that detaches from trauma, the two, I argue, are ways of negotiating the doubleness that defines trauma, the way that it is structurally the same as working through, and hence the mutual implication of repetition and processing, of the traumatic symptom and its cure. This doubleness (trauma / working through) that is itself double (repetition/processing) has been theorized by Derrida in terms of writing, which, both as poison and as remedy, is rendered synonymous in Western ontology with the otherness that defies the

One, the preeminent value and ultimate goal. Fittingly, writing is the privileged form of working through in trauma theory, its autoimmunity, i.e. the way that it not only functions as both cure and poison, but becomes one through the other and is the other despite claiming to be the one, precisely how the repetition of trauma enacts its processing and how working through is the repetition of trauma, if with difference or detachment. To illustrate this, I turn to narratives that explicitly distinguish themselves from history and emphasize the role of language in the narration, i.e. to the experimental novel. I pair a work from the US and from the Philippines that highlight the traumatic symptoms I elaborate in this chapter and which trace the autoimmunity of writing in opposite ways: positing writing as poison, *The Flame Alphabet* inverts Western ontology to, unlike (anti-)imperialism, avow rather than employ the disavowal that makes the One possible, avowal leading to representation that suspends poison; presenting as cure what is a colonial inheritance, in fact a cause of the problem, *Cubao-Kalaw Kalaw-Cubao* transmits poison to cure the trauma it caused. In finding the symbolic narrativization of deconstruction in one novel and deconstructive transmission in the other, I do not mean to imply that a certain literary tradition is linked to a particular form of working through. Not meant to be representative of the traditions in which they belong, the traumatizing/healing writings I trace in this chapter are rather meant to be but the beginning of the consideration of what literature does given trauma. I read the two novels using different methods consistent with the form of working through they enact: close reading to discern the nuances of symbolic narrativization in Marcus and the tracing of literal elements to follow deconstructive transmission in Perez.

Traumatic Symptoms: Disavowal, Mimicry, Coloniality

In chapter 1 I trace the origin of the Filipino-American relation to the Philippine-American War, the traumatic event of the constitution of a link between the US and the Philippines that enacts a history that draws from certain currents that precede it to make history go in the same direction, but in a new way, a way bound to the trauma induced by the war. For its part, US post-traumatic history took shape in (anti-)imperialism in which a program against colonialism is the way that a world is forged in which free markets and liberal democracies replace colonies and tyrannies as the cornerstones of imperialism. To develop this new mode of the old, the US returned to its liberal Constitution that founds, and limits, its sovereignty based on republicanism, the division of power, and checks and balances. Derived from anti-colonial struggle (the American Revolution), this “immanent sovereignty” was returned to in order to not so much curb colonialism as thwart the anti-colonial struggle to which colonialism inevitably gives rise, the kind of resistance that, in its most explicit colony at the point in its history when it was formally entering the field of empires, the US experienced as a traumatic war (the Philippine-American War). Based on US sovereignty, the new imperialism without colonialism draws from a tendency that paradoxically accompanies US liberal Constitution, i.e. imperial expansion, the other side of US anti-colonialism (evident in how the US, in fighting colonialism, was already and is simultaneously positing itself as an empire). The disjointed temporality manifest in the way that (anti-)imperialism is a repetition of what the US was doing that led to, but in a mode that screens, the Philippine-American War, is a traumatic symptom: in returning to its Constitution to prevent the traumatic event, the US in fact keeps doing what incites, and may thus return it, to the latter. This is characteristic of post-traumatic history, which consists in consistent repetitions of the event that induced the trauma, if in other modes, except that rather

than serving as an opportunity to process trauma in a way that was not possible in its induction—what is known as *working through*—the US employs traumatic temporality precisely to prevent coming to terms with the traumatic event and keep doing what led to it. In *Difference and Disavowal* (2000), psychoanalyst Alan Bass recovers the Freudian term *disavowal* to refer to the phenomenon in which a reality is first registered and then repudiated through an oscillation between mutually contradictory and seemingly real fantasies, thereby defending against rather than processing traumatic reality (29-42). In its doubleness—imperialism without not only its costs, but without, having moved on from, imperialism—(anti-)imperialism consists in mutually contradictory fantasies—the fantasy that imperialism is not being done and that imperialism is being done, but ...—that repudiates that to which imperialism leads, what has been traumatically registered in the Philippine-American War. Through this pursuit of empire through its disavowal, the US defends against rather than processing its Filipino history and generalizes its colonial adventure in the Philippines by replicating itself in the world.

Resonantly, the Philippines—founded as a republic for the *Filipino*, an anti-racial identity that, like US sovereignty, portends universalization grounded in an anti-colonial Constitution—was colonized by the US on the basis of the claim that, by itself, it would never be a republic. This claim is part and parcel of a well-established colonial discourse that identified “culture” as the cause of Filipino failure to Americanize and nationalize, and thus to be worthy of independence and liberal rights. This racialized exclusion from liberalism of what is founded on its ideals can be traced back to a previous colonization (by the Spanish), justified on the same basis and prior to which *Filipino* is inconceivable (the term appropriated by Filipino revolutionaries was derived from the Spanish King), and is reclaimed by postwar nationalists in their definition of *Filipino* after Philippine flag independence from the US in terms of the

failure(s) to be Western, to be Asian, to be American, and to be Filipino. Like US sovereignty, then, Filipino identity is caught in a disjointed temporality in which it reverts to its colonial meaning (defined by an other for the other), which undermines its subsequent anti-colonial appropriation (in the Philippine Revolution against Spain, continued in the Philippine-American War) that was supposed to counteract colonial interpellation (through Filipino self-definition in the context of the liberal creation of their own republic), colonial designation adopted after colonization as one's own. In "Of Mimicry and Man" (1994), theorist Homi K. Bhabha defines *mimicry* as "disavowal" through representation, specifically representation of the colonial subject rooted in "the desire for a reformed, recognizable Other, *as a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite*" (*Location* 122) that produces "authorized versions of otherness" (126), i.e. representation that effaces the difference of the colonized subject. The US represents the Filipino not so much as almost American, but not quite, but rather as not American, thus colonized to, through mimicry, be made almost American, which it will never be, i.e. but never quite, hence its justified and perennial colonization.⁵⁷ Rather than denying Filipino difference, the US registers and then employs it to, in Bass's sense, disavow its colonization of the Philippines (it is not colonization because they need it *and* it is colonization, but for their own good), the basis of (anti-)imperialism, the pursuit of empire precisely through its opposite. Given its history of multiple colonizations, after flag independence the Filipino, for its part, adopted its colonial representation as in itself, i.e. without colonization, a failure, i.e. as not only not American, but not national, hence undeserving and incapable of self-determination. Post-traumatically, it is as if the Filipino is performing mimicry on itself. This adoption of mimicry by the colonized after the fact is known in the Philippines as *colonial mentality*, what in *The Decolonized Eye* (2009) critic Sarita Echavez See describes as the uncritical acceptance, indeed

internalization, of the colonial idiom (xxxiv). In *White Love and Other Events in Filipino History* (2000), historian Vicente L. Rafael notes that “the history of Filipino nationalism shows it to be inhabited and strangely enabled by the very forces it has sought to distinguish and expel from itself. Seeking to repossess and expropriate colonialism’s legacies, nationalism also finds itself possessed by its spectral returns” (13).⁵⁸ A post-traumatic symptom, colonial mentality shows that coloniality does not merely possess post-colonial nationalism, but that coloniality is actively repossessed, i.e. possessed again after it was already replaced, by forms supposedly nationalist, including *Filipino* itself.

Mimicry’s “authorized versions of otherness,” i.e. screened representations of the colonized, are, Bhabha elaborates, “figures of a doubling” that “‘appropriate’ the Other as it visualizes power” and “is also the sign of the inappropriate [... that] poses an immanent threat to both ‘normalized’ knowledges and disciplinary powers” through its “alienat[ion of] the modality and normality of those dominant discourses” (122-3, 126). This doubling is rooted in the fact that mimicry is “a form of resemblance that [...] display[s presence, e.g. that of the colonized, but only] in part, metonymically,” through the colonial screen, the partial but adjacent, i.e. metonymic, representations—screenings, as I call them in the previous chapter—inducing “the [...] strategic production of conflictual, fantastic [...] ‘identity effects,’” plural because partial, the differences among which undermine order (128-9). In effect, Bhabha’s claim is that the colonial order is reinforced and threatened by its own screened representations due to the irreducibility of the difference they aim to efface and “the repetitious slippage of difference and desire” (129). Operating from the other side, colonial mentality, i.e. mimicry on the part of the colonized, is also subject to doubling. Continuing the strategy by which the Spanish designation of native inhabitants as racially inferior is transformed into the appropriation of a Spanish name

as anti-racial (something that does not even have a race), *Filipino* repossesses its US representation as the failure of national identity and ends up deconstructing spatial categories—it is neither western nor Asian; not a part and a part of the US; the nation that is the model democracy in Asia based on the US and at the same time not even a nation, a basket case of US-style democratic nationhood—and temporal order—its failure/deconstruction is rooted in its subjection to US imperialism in both the colonial (it was a formal US colony) and (anti-)imperial (e.g. through structural adjustment) modes. The remainder—the unsuccessfully colonized, including in its continued failure after colonization—that serves as a reminder of the continuity of, and which remains as a challenge to, US (anti-)imperialism, *Filipino* thus doubles its colonial designation by acting as queer: that which fails (to integrate) in the (complete) system and is hence excluded by it, which, thereby, unravels the system as itself failing (incomplete, after all), the rem(a)inder threatening the failure of the system.⁵⁹ The queer doubling of colonial mentality, like the identity effects of mimicry, is premised on difference: whereas mimicry disseminates difference in its effacement, in repossessing it colonial mentality returns it to that which causes it to be possessed, both deconstructing the colonial order through its own products. That coloniality is still being reinforced and undermined by its products after colonization intimates, I argue, the further unfolding of the traumatic event that is its condition, in this case the Philippine-American War. Could these continuations of trauma process it and thereby lead to history other than the cycle of screening/repetition that but sediment trauma, or are they but the continuation of the war, if by other means, that induce further or re-traumatization? Or are both perhaps at work, trauma and its working through proceeding through screening/repetition, doubles of each other? And is working through also at work for the colonizer, perhaps through mimicry's infection of

disavowal? Below, I show how all these processes are at work in the mode of working through privileged in trauma theory, i.e. writing.

Working Through: Deconstructive Transmission, Symbolic Narrativization, Duplicitous Redoubling

Induced by violence that breaches a limit (as in unprecedented or overwhelming events) and causes psychic dissociation (evident in unconscious symptoms) and temporal disruption (manifest in the bound history that follows), trauma is counteracted in trauma theory by its processing, the reparation of dissociation and disruption through repetition, but in a screened way (“forgetting”), of (what leads to) the breach (in yet again its “first experiencing”). This processing of trauma is called *working through*, which is necessarily belated and indirect, trauma already having been induced in a way for which there is no preparation and thus comprehensible only later when it is no longer possible to intervene directly in the event. In the introductory chapter, I show how the definition of trauma and its implied working through presupposes deconstruction, which posits the two as doubles: working through as the displaced/deferred tracing of the traumatic origin, which is itself a trace, the processing of trauma a doubling, the writing of writing, since the “event” also lacks presence/meaning that would allow intervention in its “happening,” the “origin” in fact the event of the lack of presence/meaning, and thus also (an effect of) writing. With writing posited at the origin, which is thereby rendered impossible (writing, not an origin, as the “origin”), displacement/deferral—*différance*—at the origin precisely what induces trauma (what constitutes the “origin” as a traumatic event), repetition, i.e. the writing of writing, the supplement even further displaced/deferred, makes possible, with (the very) detachment from the origin (that renders traumatic), a new relation to *différance*/trauma.

Structuring both working through and the traumatic event, writing deconstructs, is in fact the deconstruction of, space/time (in its rendering of presence/meaning/identity as a trace of relational difference in time, thus impossible in itself and irreducibly involving other spaces and times, i.e. traumatic) that is both what induces and processes trauma. In other words, the “origin”—trauma, structured as writing—is posited as what—via the writing of writing (the double/supplement)—induces its own working through. Doubly, working through repeats the “origin”—writing—through spatiotemporal tracing, i.e. by bridging the gap between the event and its processing, which is premised on the deconstruction of the present, indeed of presence, of time—as the present traces, thus returning, to its origin and/or the latter haunts, manifesting its presence in, the present—and by deconstructing the event as ultimately lacking in meaning and as thus giving rise to a different kind of meaning, not the meaning of the origin itself but meaning that, displaced/deferred from what is already displaced/deferred, is in its very *différance* a processing of the originary *différance* that induces trauma—the writing of writing. In other words, working through is the repetition of trauma in a screened way, screening leading to the repetition of trauma in a displaced/deferred way (as in the re-traumatizations of US imperialist disavowal and Filipino colonial mentality) in which, through doubling, it is supplemented with the new (this latter part not having happened yet in Filipino-American history as I show in chapter 1, but unfolding, as I demonstrate below, in American and Filipino experimental fiction).

The two-part doubling of writing, its repetition of the cause that manifests a bond (i.e. to *différance*, the lack of origin, as the “origin”) and enacts the new (*différance*, i.e. the same, but in a different way), is the basis, I argue, of the articulation in trauma theory of working through as *writing*.⁶⁰ Its double doubleness, however, leads to disagreements as to what writing means and, more broadly, to criticisms of trauma theory. In the last chapter of *Trauma: A Genealogy* (2000),

historian Ruth Leys criticizes Cathy Caruth's definition of trauma as "undistorted, material, and [...] *literal* registration" (266), which reduces the Freudian notion of *Nachträglichkeit*, deferred action or afterward processing, a defining feature of trauma, to incubation.⁶¹ Removed from the symbolic and thus from cognition and representation, trauma is posited as pure materiality returning literally via repetition (in flashbacks and nightmares rather than dreams) (266). Defined in terms of "temporal unlocatability," trauma at the same time "involve[s] a linear determinism, or direct action, of the past on the present," if with some "delay interven[ing] between the initial infection and the subsequent appearance of the symptoms" (271). "Deferral [...] is] stripped of the idea of the retroactive conferral of meaning [...] and reduced [...] to [...] literal if belated repetition" in which "blankness [rather than meaning, if repressed ...] preserves the event in its literality" (270-1).⁶² In other words, Caruth's deconstruction of meaning through the literalization of trauma fixes trauma as past material that acts out in the present that cannot be acted on or related to differently—this, Leys implies, requires symbolic meaning—thereby foreclosing working through. Leys roots Caruth's move in which she deconstructs meaning through trauma rather than deconstructing (i.e. working through) trauma in the attempt to avoid the contradiction that beset psychiatry as early as World War I in its treatment of shell shock (a traumatic symptom) via hypnosis. Despite its understanding of traumatic repetition as an all-too-close present reality rather than the distant remembrance of the past⁶³—hypnosis conceived as the "repetition of the emotional experience" (94) "in the mode of an intensely animated, present-tense miming [without ...] self-observation and self-representation" (100)—psychiatry "remained committed to the view that what 'disciplined' or cured patients was that they could be made to distance themselves from their traumatic [...] experiences by representing (re-presenting) them to themselves as other to themselves in the form of recollected, 'repressed' or

‘dissociated’ experiences”—hypnosis (as cure to trauma) “interpreted not as a ‘reproduction’ of the traumatic scene in the mode of a ‘blind’ emotional acting in the *present* but as a narrative in full consciousness of that lived experience as *past*” (100).⁶⁴ To avoid this contradiction between repetition as mimetic emotion and as representational memory, Caruth, in Leys’s reading, exaggerates trauma’s literality. In the process, “remember[ing] and narrat[ing] the past in a [representational, i.e. symbolic] procedure that bears some resemblance to the analytic process of ‘working through,’” the descendant of hypnosis, is replaced by “a mode of responding to trauma that ensures the transmission of the [...] gap in meaning that constitutes history as inherently traumatic” (269).

Caruth posits post-traumatic transmission in a reading of the father’s dream of his child burning in the last chapter of *Unclaimed Experience* (1996). Simultaneous with its actual happening, the dream, Caruth explains, is symptomatic of the father’s “[inability] to witness the child’s dying,” the missing of experience constituting the father’s survival, the dream the only way “to see the child’s living vulnerability as it dies.” The parts of this narrative—the content of the event (the burning of one’s child), its missing (the decisive moment), the inability to witness (seeing only in the dream), and the condition of survival (the missing of the event)—traumatic in themselves, once condensed, constitute trauma. Trauma then spreads to the task assigned “after” the event, what Caruth calls *witnessing*, presumably the beginning of working through. The seeing founded on the inability to see, i.e. the seeing but only in the dream, paradoxically signals the imperative “to see the child burning” “from the outside, to leave the child in the dream so as to awaken elsewhere.” Ostensibly, this second seeing refers to seeing the actual event (“outside,” “elsewhere”); in fact, it is actual only (the dream simultaneous with the actual) to the extent to which what has already been missed may be seen. Like the dream, then, seeing the “actual”—

like *différance* as “origin”—is not. Less a present actuality than what may be, what at the same time is already past, witnessing, Caruth clarifies, is contingent on the imperative for the father to awaken and “tell *what it means not to see.*”⁶⁵ That is, witnessing, the second seeing, is conditioned by what the witness has to do—writing—regarding what couldn’t be done—(what is only) writing. It thus involves detachment in time (deferral) and form (displacement): it is aimed at accessing not the event itself (it is too late) in the eternal present (which does not exist), but this event in another form (in its “telling” rather than seeing, i.e. in the writing of writing) and another time (the time of the imperative, which is conditioned by what has already happened at the same time yet to be determined by what one will do). With direct communication of content (what should have been seen) impossible under trauma, telling of the experience consists in telling its impossibility, its trauma, i.e. “*what it means not to see.*” “The only way truly to hear,” Caruth elaborates, “is now [after trauma] by listening not as a living father listens to a living child, but as the one who receives the very gap between the other’s death and his own life, the one who, in awakening, does not see but enacts the impact of the very difference between death and life.” In other words, what is to be told “now,” after trauma, in the time of the imperative, is but the traumatic gap, relation to *différance*.

The imperative to witness is traumatic, yet, doubly, in its transmission of trauma, difference is induced. The traumatic gap enacts the impossibility of directness (“seeing”) and the inevitability of relation (“listening”/“telling”), i.e. the traumatic (im)possibility of relation, what Caruth alludes to earlier in the book as the traumatic bond and in the final chapter as the “impossible responsibility of consciousness in its own originating relation to others.” “The very gap between the other’s death and [one’s] own life”—the traumatic gap—“the difference between death and life”—relation to *différance*—is, according to Caruth, repeated in its telling

by “the one who [...] tells, [the witness, who him/herself] does not see,” the telling traumatic like that of which it is supposed to tell. This telling of the traumatic gap (a manifestation of the traumatic bond), i.e. the contagious repetition of trauma in language—the writing of writing—“enact[s an] impact.” It induces “newness [...] in the fact that the words are no longer mastered or possessed by the one who says them—by the child who has died and for whom it is eternally too late to speak, or by the father [...], the self that was asleep”—but play out instead based on traumatic screening, on displacement and deferral, i.e. on trauma/*différance*. “The words,” Caruth continues, “are *passed on* as an act that does not precisely awaken the self but, rather, *passes the awakening on to others*.” In the entrance, as it were, of the traumatic bond into traumatic history (of screening/repetition), the personal (missing of) experience is transformed, in a “now” too late / still to come, into a collective imperative—at once an inherited trauma and a historical obligation—passed on in pursuit of an awakening determined (by trauma) yet undetermined (never final), hence repetitive. Intersubjective and transgenerational—indeed impersonal, trans-subjective—this imperative is not originated and/or fulfilled by a subject but transmitted historically (in traumatic history), constituting relations to others founded on trauma (in the extension of the traumatic bond).⁶⁶ Rather than content, it is the process itself that is repetitively transmitted to another time, transmission consisting in “speaking”/“telling” but involving language not of the hearer or speaker, not a message conveyed but a gap received, not an awakening but, circularly, its transmission. That is, the process is but the repetition of *différance*/trauma in space (traumatic bond) and time (traumatic history) through (deconstructive) writing.⁶⁷ “Through th[is] act of survival,” Caruth concludes, “the repeated failure to have seen in time—in itself a pure repetition compulsion, a repeated nightmare—can be transformed into the imperative of a speaking that awakens others.” Ultimately, the writing of

trauma, the transmission of the traumatic bond in traumatic history, thus implies a prospect that may be called *historical awakening* that, through repetition (it “*passes the awakening on to others*”) in space (in a collective) and time (after delay), enacts displaced and deferred (it “does not precisely awaken the self”) difference that promises a destination (it is “transformed into the imperative [...] that awakens others”). Detached, contagious, aporetic, yet implying, indeed promising, the newness of the traumatic bond/history, historical awakening, the exaggeration and historicization of deconstructive writing, is not considered by Leys as working through. While acknowledging that “narration risks betraying the truth of the trauma [...] as [...] incomprehensible” (269), Leys insists that deconstructive transmission “within the gap or aporia produced by words that do not simply refer to [...] trauma [...] but performatively convey it as something that cannot be grasped or represented” (288) constitutes another exaggeration by which the response is reduced to the same as the cause and trauma, via contagion, is generalized, if with screening (i.e. in a way displaced/deferred), rather than processed.

What is at stake in this disagreement is what writing—as doubling, i.e. the writing of writing—means. Against deferral that leads not to meaning, if displaced, but to literal return or deconstructive transmission—Caruth’s witnessing/telling that leads to historical awakening—Leys posits the writing of trauma, which she implies is not excepted from representation, narration, and meaning, as the pausing of deconstruction via its symbolic narrativization. Leys elaborates this form of writing in the earlier chapter on psychiatry in WWI called “Traumatic Cures” in which she portrays Pierre Janet as not only placed “at the origin of the cathartic cure” (105), but as the figure who displaced the contradiction of hypnosis. In Leys’s account, Janet’s cathartic cure amounts not to referential recovery but to therapeutic reconstruction that requires representation beyond imitation, the conversion of “traumatic memory, which merely and

unconsciously *repeats* the past, [into] narrative memory, which *narrates the past as past*" (105).⁶⁸ Narration proves cathartic not because of "adequation to [...] experience" or "access to a primordially personal truth," but when it "conform[s] to certain requirements of temporal ordering [...] that make one] capable of developing a coherent narrative" (117). Curiously, while requiring detachment from the time/content of the traumatic event, cathartic narration nonetheless temporally conforms to it: in narrating it as past, the narration premises itself on the event as its past. Similarly, the narrativization of trauma is described as an "act of abbreviation"—as if remembering not only occurred with but is primarily an act of screening— involving assimilation and liquidation—implying that it proceeds by maintaining, if not creating, gaps, rendering it mimetic of the trauma it is supposed to represent beyond imitation (112). To begin with, the narrative accepts the gap at its heart as it is aimed not at recovering the lost reference, but at retrospectively reconstructing it, and based not on substantial correspondence but on temporal coherence. Likewise, narrativization is carried out in language because, in its "represent[ion of] an absent present," it detaches narration from "the occasioning event" (112). Again, the absence/presence of trauma is imitated by the very means supposed to detach from it: because the present was absent, it is still present; this presence can then be cured by being represented in language, i.e. in its absence, as an absent presence, but this absence of presence (in the event) is in the first place what makes the absent still present (in its symptoms). Finally, narrativization is itself deconstructed when Leys, presumably still faithful to Janet, concludes that catharsis may be brought about by an "appropriate 'adaptation' to the past, present, and future [in which] narrative self-understanding is not always essential" (118). Supposedly detaching from the traumatic event yet repeating its gap and mechanisms, indeed temporally bound to it, Janet's contradictory compromise of representation/imitation thus ends up

reproducing traumatic contagion such that what distinguishes the cure—the narrative rather than the event itself, language as the double rather than the primal—is ultimately deconstructed, “adaptation,” after all, also an act, indeed one that repeats the cause, if differently but nonetheless grounded on the same.

Clearly, Janet/Leys’s “representational” narrativization of trauma resonates with Caruth’s deconstructive transmission of the traumatic bond in traumatic history, trauma in both characterizing what cures/transmits it,⁶⁹ both consisting in writing that, even when aiming for symbolization, is irreducibly deconstructive and promising some meaning, if “literal” rather than symbolic.⁷⁰ The difference is that whereas Janet/Leys aims to pause trauma’s deconstruction for symbolic processing, Caruth exaggerates it to claim it over time as its working through. This resonance/difference is reflected in the way that Leys criticizes Caruth for her foreclosure of the narrative working through of trauma while the latter develops an extremely literal, hence contagious, “narrative,” i.e. “history.” Both Caruth and Leys, then—interestingly, the critic more than the theorist—are invested in working through, if by different means—the deconstructive, ultimately reconstructive narrativization of trauma or the historical transmission of trauma’s deconstruction—*and* in the deconstructive workings of trauma. If processing in the form of writing—whether as contagious imitation/transmission or representational narrative—is deconstructively premised on what is to be processed—working through consisting in repetition/doubling, if through a screen—how exactly does the supplement enact the new? As I discuss above regarding imperialist disavowal and colonial mentality, the repetition through a screen of traumatic symptoms so far but repeats trauma, if hinting at something else. How does this hint of difference become actualized by repetition? How does the doubleness of doubling

arise—the doubly double, repetition not only of but with a difference—doubling needing to be doubled if it is to enact working through?

Jacques Derrida traces the doubleness of the double in “Plato’s Pharmacy” (1968) in a rereading of Western philosophy’s portrayal of writing as the *pharmakon*. Derrida articulates how writing, presenting itself as cure, is represented in the Western tradition as a poison doomed to nonpresence, exteriority, and impropriety, i.e. to *différance*, the opposite of what it claims, presence/meaning/identity through representation.⁷¹ Granted value by a father who can speak and thus “has no need to write,” “*logos* [a placeholder with multiple meanings implying cure] is a son [...] that would be destroyed in his very *presence* without the present *attendance* of his father”—“the origin and power of speech, precisely of *logos* [properly borne in speech]”—without which “[*logos*] would be nothing but, in fact, writing” (*Dissemination* 76-7). “A *logos* committed to writing” is defined by the “misery” of *différance*, i.e. of the absence of its father who ensures the integrity of the representation based on fidelity to the thing/truth/origin. “This misery, “Derrida adds, “is ambiguous: [...] the desire of writing is [...] designated and denounced as [the distress of and] a desire for orphanhood [...] i.e. as] patricidal [absence and] subversion” (77). Even when recognized as cure, “writing,” Derrida clarifies, “is [deemed] no more valuable”: a painful, artificial, and alien remedy that amounts to the denial of relation with death, with the outside/Other, it “act[s] like the outside itself [...] since it has no] definable [value] of its own” (99-102) in easing “external signs, [i.e. not the cause/origin of what it ostensibly cures but merely] its *symptoms*” (110). In recapitulating the Western tradition’s relegation of writing as “the supplement of supplement” (109), as not only mere but “deceitful [...] appearance” (103), i.e. as doubly removed, hence deficient, indeed dangerous, as poison and as cure, i.e. in a double way, due to its detachment from the origin and intimacy with the other—

this done through the metaphor of Oedipus—Derrida’s aim is not to determine the meaning of the *pharmakon*. In fact, fixating writing as poison *or* cure and reducing its double remove amounts to positing Oneness,⁷² the value on which Western metaphysics is founded that leads to the privileging of presence/meaning/identity and the denigration of writing. Translation into One, Derrida explains, “destroy[s writing] by interrupting the relations interwoven among different functions of the same word in different places [and times]” (98)—spatiotemporal tracing, textuality, deconstruction—and “reduc[ing] it to one of its simple elements by interpreting it [...] in the light of the ulterior developments it itself has made possible” (99). In contrast, writing’s injury/power, i.e. poison/cure, is precisely its “ambiguity,” the doubleness of the double, which, Derrida argues, “opens up the[...] possibility [of binary oppositions that enables distinguishing something as One]” (103). In other words, double doubleness is the condition of Oneness, which, however, is posited through (the conceit of) presence/meaning/identity against double doubleness, i.e. through the disavowal of its own condition, hence the scapegoating of writing as Oedipus (130). Whereas the One is posited as the origin in Western ontology, deconstruction thus unravels double doubleness at the origin, the condition disavowed in positing the One as the origin. This loaded relationship between double doubleness and the One accounts for the different interpretations and strategic means of working through.

If trauma theory presupposes deconstruction, then working through is posited—in a dynamic Derrida calls “redoubling” (109)—as the double of trauma, which structurally is the same as working through, the supplement—the writing of writing—but the general version, in fact the condition, of (what is posited as) the “origin” of writing. The adoption of a redoubling relationship between trauma and working through accommodates various interpretations of writing, e.g. symbolic narrativization and deconstructive transmission, perhaps the opposite poles

of a spectrum. What I'm suggesting is that regardless of form, writing serves as not only the repetition but the processing of trauma when the double is itself doubled (as repetition/processing, as poison/cure). Needless to say, this process is laden with duplicity. If trauma is characterized by *différance*, for it to be worked through, must its doubling in writing turn it into something other than the writing it already is, i.e. into the One? Is this what symbolic narrativization does in pausing deconstruction via its representation? Or does writing, in doubling it, as in deconstructive transmission prior to historical awakening, generalize trauma to enable coming to terms with the fact that it is but writing? To begin with, what is really traumatic: that it is but writing, or the conceit that there could be One, which renders the fact that it is but writing—redoubling from the outset, *différance* at the origin—traumatic? This last question in particular is (im)possible to answer from both the perspective of deconstruction—given spatiotemporal tracing—and Western metaphysics—which scapegoats its own condition, reversing chronology. That these questions on which working through—not only processing, but also repetition, and vice versa: repetition/processing—hinges are undecidable is precisely, as the double of trauma, its irreducible duplicity, which makes it possible in various forms and its final outcome—the question of whether the traumatic symptom ends up as cure—impossible to determine. Judgment of writing as working through can thus only be made regarding a specific performance, which moreover is not exhausted by a particular context. In what follows, then, I turn to two performances of writing beyond history (since, as I show in chapter 1, history has not gotten to the point of the doubling of the double) in a genre also structured by narrative, which is played with (in an attempt to make the double double?) while remaining attached to the identities forged by history—i.e. to the American and the Filipino experimental novel—to trace the

deferred/displaced working through of Filipino-American trauma through the repetition/processing of its symptoms.

The Autoimmunity of Writing: Cure as Poison, Poison as Cure ... to Fixity/Infinity?

Premised on the doubleness of the double, the duplicitous transformation of the symptom into cure, and vice versa, is rooted in what Derrida calls *autoimmunity*, the constitutive openness/vulnerability of the (posited) One to (external/internal/nonpresent) otherness—to the *différance* that is its condition—that automatically activates protective strategies (the immune system) that irreducibly include attacks on the self and emulation of the “attacking” Other.⁷³ In *Rogues* (2002), Derrida illustrates autoimmunity through democracy, specifically in the way that “the *alternative to* [it, i.e. authoritarianism ...] can always be *represented* as a democratic *alternation* [i.e. as but another democratic regime taking its turn in power],” which leads to the “sovereign [...] suspen[sion ... of] democracy for its own good [...] to immunize it against [compared to its self-suspension] a much worse and very likely assault” (31-3). This “certain suicide of democracy” that lends it immunity (33) rests on democracy’s “pervertibility,” how it is entirely possible for it to “end[...] up producing exactly [its] opposite,” which incites a war to restore the democratic ideal (34-5). Autoimmunity, in other words, is the way that “more than an internal contradiction, an [u]ndecidability, that is, an internal-external, nondialectizable antinomy [...] risks paralyzing and thus calls for the event of the interruptive decision” (35). This duplicitous, decisive activation of self-defense—“protect[ion of ...] by limiting and threatening [the] self” in the face of its own paralysis (36)—is incited by “*différance*, [... the] experience of the alterity of the other” (38), more broadly, ipseity, “self-relation as being in view of the self, beginning by the self with the end of self in view,” i.e. “the power that *gives itself* its own law,”

in a word, self-determination, but with the self as an “assemblage,” composed of heterogeneous elements (11). If the self consists in different elements, i.e. with *différance* at the origin, otherness is posited at the core of the self; and if determination is of the self—as in democracy, e.g. through immanent sovereignty—it necessarily involves experience of the other, this—and by extension the notion of *self*—implying autoimmunity. Doubling self-defense, then, the necessary autoimmunity of the self, in its determination of itself, also “consists not only in harming or ruining oneself, [...] committing suicide or threatening to do so, but [...] and through this, in threatening the I or the self, the *ego* or the *autos*, ipseity itself, compromising the immunity of the *autos* itself” (45). Autoimmunity—and the self that, consisting in *différance*, implies it—thus broaches “the aporia [...] without any calculable, decidable, or foreseeable way out”: in “neutraliz[ing ...] differences [e.g. the difference of authoritarianism through measures similarly authoritarian, ... the autoimmune response both potentially] gain[s] access ... to the ...] singularity [of democracy, ultimately ipseity, selfhood itself, which consists in *différance* ...] and risks putting an end to singularity itself [i.e. to *différance* and the self it constitutes, the One it makes possible]” (52). It is in this sense that autoimmunity is a matter not of sovereignty, but of unconditionality having to do not with the possibility of “I can,” if infinitely deferred, but of the “[given] coming of the other,” i.e. of otherness, of *différance*, as unconditional condition (84).

The doubling of trauma by working through, of writing as repetition/processing—double doubleness—consists, I argue, in defensive/suicidal autoimmunity premised on the aporia of self/*différance*, of Oneness/otherness, that also characterizes trauma, which is perhaps the magnification of the unconditionality of autoimmunity, its concentration in an “event.” To illustrate this, I trace the duplicitous autoimmunity of writing in two (non-)experimental performances—one from the US and one from the Philippines—that, in opposite ways, highlight

it as the *pharmakon* of children, i.e. as Oedipus, symptomatic of and in response to structural or historical trauma about which nothing can be done except writing. Both novels are removed from the traumatic foundation of the Filipino-American relation, the Philippine-American War, in time and content, yet are structured by trauma and grappling with its origin/aftermath, their (non-)experimental performances of writing providing an opportunity to assess two particular ways that writing works as cure/poison, hence as traumatic repetition/processing. My turn from history in the previous chapter to literature in this chapter is consistent with the notion of working through, which is in fact what I'm most interested in tracing, as taking place in a form other than how trauma was induced after some delay, the novel chosen in particular because of its status as the genre intimately linked to nationhood, thus attached to the identities that I argue are preeminent rem(a)inders of trauma, and structured as a narrative, like but not as bound as history thus perhaps also more able to unbind from trauma. Generally loosening the reins of narration, experimentation is the focus of this chapter for its historical function in the contemporary conjuncture that could also be characterized as post-traumatic. Theorized in the US in the context of a status quo in which all is felt as co-opted by the dominant, including culture, the experimental emerged as a way of reframing postmodernism to note its adaptation to changed conditions, which is argued to be a political act, if and consisting in questioning the (old) notion of the political itself.⁷⁴ Granted flag independence on the onset of what I describe in chapter 1 as superpower, the regime felt domestically in the US as totally co-opting, and perennially modernizing on the heels of its former colonizers via emulation of the foreign, including in culture, in ways reconciled with "tradition," the Philippines, for its part, has a varied literary canon pulled in multiple directions, notably authenticity and the uncanny, that, due to the mixture and anachronism of forms, appears experimental.⁷⁵ In highlighting writing while

exploring different narrative strategies and other political possibilities, the experimental novel manifests traces of trauma that are its autoimmune repetition/processing, thereby the doubleness (symptom/cure) of the double (writing).

Ben Marcus, one of the most outspoken proponents of experimentation in the US, highlights the toxicity of language in *The Flame Alphabet* (2012), where the speech of children has become poison to adults, causing recoil (12), lethargy (14), allergic reaction (“red marks spread across our backs” [14]), degeneration (“we were everyday stiffening, growing sicker, paler, more exhausted” [17]), and decay (“rotting, spoiling, putrefaction” [20]) that ultimately leads to death. This language sickness is diagnosed belatedly due to the unspeakability of the cause: children, precisely Jewish children (30). Unfolding this plot while focusing on one family—on Sam, the rational, guilty father; Claire, source of unconditional, if also guilty, motherly love; and Esther, the adolescent rebelling against her parents’ “urge to control [her]” (27-8)—Marcus literalizes Oedipal conflict, which is typically familial, by positing it in language, thereby generalizing it, a move opposite to Western metaphysics’ metaphorization of writing as Oedipus, as described above. Prior to its generalization, Oedipal conflict, shown already at work, renders child, writing, and poison synonymous—a prefiguration of their literal conflation later on. Even before her speech becomes literal poison, Esther already dethrones Sam as the sovereign speaker in control of language. In a routine conversation, asked how she is, Esther erupts—“What have you learned, *Samuel*, when you’ve asked me how I am?”—to literalize and render absurd the father/language (called not as father, but by his first name), thus undermining him/it—“Doesn’t it feel better to say things to people?” “Feel better? It feels like shit. It feels entirely like the worst kind of shit.” Upholding cultural norms through language, the father—un-fathered, as it were, by his own name—is doubled—“Little did she goddamn know

[of course it feels like shit, talking to her]”—and deconstructed—“Okay, darling, I’m sorry”—by the daughter.

And thus a rhetorical marvel was engineered: I apologized to Esther, regularly, for her refusal to be queried on her well-being. I regularly failed to mount cogent justifications for any of the human practices. They turned out to be indefensible to her. In the end I was a poor spokesman for life among people. Such were the victories of language in the home. (34)

The doubling between the father and daughter through language is notable in this scene: Esther rebels against Sam because of his language (because she was asked how she was, i.e. because he spoke, and in the most conventional way) through the same language (by following his logic to its conclusion, and in like form, i.e. through a question that traces the original question, ultimately the *telos* of the father’s language), which Sam retracts through an apology substantiated by the fact that he feels the same way (“little did she goddamn know [I also did not want to speak to her, and with the father’s language; she’ll only pervert, thus subvert, it/me]”), the child’s victory then conceived as “the victories of language in the home.” That is, (the) language (of the father, via the child) deconstructs the father/language, the reproduction of language (writing) changing it, this both a defeat and a victory, reproduction/change (through the child) what language does and (through the father) disavows. This is precisely the mechanism—the son’s desire for (the death of) the father—assigned, as Derrida explains, to writing in Western ontology when, in its detached, rebellious imitation of that of which it is supposed to be but a supplement, it is relegated as poison, i.e. as Oedipus—except, to magnify its *différance*, it is feminized and racialized by Marcus. Sam/Esther as father/daughter thus dramatize not only familial or generational conflict, but the broader Oedipal structure of Western ontology in which the condition is disavowed as poison (writing/child), which nonetheless structures, indeed deconstructs, what disavows it (notably, the father himself turns out to not want to speak the

father's language: "little did she goddamn know [I'm just doing this for her, trying to have a conversation with my daughter]"). Marcus exaggerates this structure in which the child/writing threatens familial/linguistic patricide, which the father himself already does (he's only acting like a father for the daughter) and language already does (undermining its own reproduction), by turning children's speech—thus Western ontology's Oedipal structure—literally lethal. This is completed later in the novel when language in general, including of adults, becomes fatal, including to its speaker, and functions, as it were, as a child even without children, who remain immune from it: language/writing/child/poison.

Throughout the text, Marcus exhibits language in various forms: from the tensed bodily gestures and indirect signifiers at home to the codes invented by Sam (169) to the flame alphabet, the secret Hebrew language suspected by LeBov—the novel's antagonist, in many ways Sam's Gentile double who intrudes into the family in search of cure—to be the antidote to language sickness, all of which work as writing. "When we saw it, when we heard it, when we thought of it later" (11), language in the novel amounts to "trouble [...] an understatement" of the way that, as LeBov tells Sam, "aside from its *marginal utility* as a communication technology—*can we honestly say it works?*—[language is ...] an impurity. Language happens to be a toxin we are very good at producing, but not so good at absorbing" (111).⁷⁶ Language, as it were, works only insofar as it is a poison for the other/self (unspecified "we"). Despite the universality of this double failure in which success (it works only marginally) is in fact a more fatal failure (if it works, it is toxic), Marcus, I argue, ascribes it to a particular kind of language/writing. *The Flame Alphabet* is an anomaly in Marcus's experimental corpus in that, unlike other texts, it has a linear, if unconventional, plot; no re-signification of signs; and nondescript, even banal, diction, syntax, and tone. Ironically, *The Flame Alphabet* thus resembles

the conventional realism that, in the critical polemic, “Why Experimental Fiction Threatens to Destroy Publishing, Jonathan Franzen, and Life As We Know It” (2005), Marcus condemns as “giv[ing one] what he already knows [she] wants” (48). Competing with mass entertainment, this style, Marcus argues, is “worrie[d] so much that a reader will have to think and work” that it is ultimately dismissive of language (50).⁷⁷ In contrast, formal experimentation is defended as an exercise that improves linguistic skill, the poisonous new—language that demands effort, writing that labors—claimed as the realm, indeed task, of literature, in which “not just certain kinds of language” but “language itself is the difficulty” (50). Driven by “the belief that the world and its doings have yet to be fully explored” (48) and the “desire to discover meaning where we might not think to find it” (49), in fact by “desires we did not know we had” (48), “literary language,” Marcus writes, “is complex because it is seeking to accomplish something extraordinarily difficult: to engrave the elusive aspects of life’s entanglements, to represent the intensity of consciousness, to produce the sort of stories that transfix and mesmerize” (39).⁷⁸ This laboring toward the unprecedented, unexpected, and emergent presupposes writing not only as a double (difficult because seeking what is difficult), but as poison, the Oedipal desire to destroy the father, broadly the status quo—not only what is, but what has already been done—through a supplement that stirs things up—heralds the new by unmooring the old from its Oneness to rediscover its complexity. Curiously, this poison is literalized in *The Flame Alphabet* in conventional language that, according to Marcus, has nothing (new) to say, i.e. through a supplement that mimics the original. I argue that by doubling the poison of language, which is re-signified elsewhere as “experimentation,” with exhausted conventions in the text where language poison is literalized—convention/experimentation producing a (non-)experimental novel—Marcus defers Western philosophy’s judgment of writing and suggests that its fatality

rests not on its toxicity per se, but on the doubling of its poison (experimentation) with its exhaustion (convention), this doubling (not just one or the other) what constitutes Oedipus as lethal. This formal technique is exemplified by the daughter's deconstruction of the father via the father/language, juvenile rebellion the exhausted, thereby literally poisonous, double of parental authority.

In reclaiming writing/poison as the cure to exhaustion (in the critical text) *and* re-signifying it as lethal only when doubled by exhaustion (in the novel), Marcus identifies Oedipus deconstructively. This move contrasts with the overdetermined condemnation of writing as Oedipus in the Western tradition. As described above, as poison—reproduction that promises immortality but, because detached from and deforming the source, harbors intimate mortality—or as cure—remedy that amounts to denying relation with the other while acting like it, addressing merely the outside/other and not the cause—writing, in its improper doubling of the father or proper doubling of the other, undermines the turning of the other into One, the move that defines Western metaphysics. This compromise of the One is named in Western ontology as Oedipus, which is disavowed in the denigration of writing/*différance* as secondary to speech/presence/meaning/identity, i.e. to the One. It would seem that for Western ontology, what is traumatic, as it were, is the compromise of Oneness, against which the defense is disavowal of Otherness, i.e. reassertion of the One, which amounts to the repetition of the same, a symptom of trauma. This vicious circle in which defense repeats trauma is precisely how, as explained above, imperialist disavowal works, the registering of the traumatization of the US in the Philippines leading not to the abandonment of imperialism, but to the disavowal of trauma and of (anti-)imperialism, its result, as imperialism, and thus to further imperialism and trauma. In adopting Oedipus, the scapegoat of Western ontology, deconstructively, Marcus, even as he is not

explicitly writing about US imperialism, broaches it in critiquing Western ontology through (non-)experimentation. This is because (anti-)imperialism, consistent with what I describe in chapter 1 as its perfection of imperialism, turns Western ontology's traumatic disavowal of *différance* and positing of the One as the origin into the pursuit of universal and eternal empire, the ultimate One, precisely through the disavowal of imperialism and of the One, i.e. into imperialist disavowal, imperialism through its opposite, e.g. through democracy, with the world subordinated to the US but only because the US is a republic and not an empire. Inverting Western ontology—spreading *différance* in the form of a screening of it, “democracy”—through which it fulfills the Western ontological project—the ultimate One—(anti-)imperialism is implied in Marcus's deconstruction of the former, especially since Marcus's move is also an inversion. The father, in not wanting to speak because it will only lead to perversion/subversion (Sam), in wanting to reproduce the same to avoid otherness (the One; conventional language), does exactly what he is supposed to defend against: speech that leads to its undermining exaggeration (Esther), the repetition of the same, a symptom of unprocessed otherness (trauma) that in exhausted repetition turns lethal (language sickness threatening social destruction). In other words, for Marcus, the father originates Oedipus because, to begin with, he is conditioned by it—he does that of which Oedipus stands accused because he is himself derived from Oedipus. The father, in other words, is himself (a double of) Oedipus.

This deconstruction of the father/language, an inversion of Western ontology, is illustrated in the way that singles, childless couples, and queers are, like children, initially immune from the toxicity of language in the novel. While patriarchy, a pillar of Western ontology, assigns to queers the social death instinct for their “failure” to reproduce—the constitutive task of society in patriarchy the repression of destruction and perpetuation of self-

reproduction, the positing of the father as One—in the novel it is the heteronormative couple with children who bear (that which lends them) no future, death brought about by the reproduction of the One. Drawing on the queer critique of patriarchy, liberalism, and capitalism, the pillars of Western ontology conjugated by US sovereignty,⁷⁹ Marcus turns the father's rule / state legitimacy / capitalist accumulation, the foundations of US society premised on the One, from a (re)productive engine to an existential threat. Thus unlike (anti-)imperialism—which disavows itself by claiming to be its opposite, i.e. by turning the other into One through the One's claim of otherness—Marcus's inversion—in its location of language/poison at the foundation—dupliciously, like a defiant rather than docile child, avows the father as Oedipus, i.e. as the other disavowed in claiming the One, in the process avowing the Oedipus that, doubly double, is the One's condition/offspring. Both invert Western ontology's privileging of One aspect of Oedipus as the father/One and disavowal of its otherness as Oedipus, but whereas (anti-)imperialism, like Western ontology, reconciles the One and the other, if in reverse (the One through otherness rather than otherness reduced to the One), amounting in any case to the One, i.e. to disavowal of difference, Marcus retains the doubling of Oedipus—as father and as child, as One and as other—and its disavowal by the Oedipus who would be (the) One. Marcus thus not only inverts Western ontology in avowing the father as Oedipus and Oedipus at the origin, but avows the strategy at the heart of Western ontology perfected, if also in an inversion, by (anti-)imperialism. This avowal of disavowal via the doubling of what is disavowed is made possible by the doubleness of mimicry (on the part of the other) and, by infection, of disavowal (on the part of the One). As described above, mimicry is the disavowal of Otherness, this disavowal, however, unable to fully erase difference as its screenings of the other both conceal and reveal Otherness, both obey and threaten power. Subjected to mimicry and turned into a supplement of

the One/Oedipus, the other/Oedipus functions like the former but, doubly, also unravels its Otherness and, thereby, the One/Oedipus as derived from, and disavowing, it. Thus through mimicry, against its purpose (disavowal), the difference of the other is avowed along with the One's disavowal of the other.

The self-avowal of disavowal via mimicry is depicted in *The Flame Alphabet* in the way that the child/Oedipus is not only posited as secondary, but, via a strong kind of mimicry, turned to the father/Oedipus. This mimicry is performed by LeBov, founder of Forsythe, which may also have been Oliver's (72), less "a government structure [than ...] a research lab embedded within [a high school]" (150) that becomes prominent after LeBov's diagnosis of the language sickness as caused by "the toxic Jewish child" (52). Acquainting himself with Sam as Murphy, the disciple of LeBov who Sam realizes, upon announcement of LeBov's death, is LeBov himself (114)—"LeBov was alive and he was Murphy" (124)—LeBov coaxes Sam into joining Forsythe, which is pursuing the cure to language/poison and eventually becomes the last fort from the contagion (168, 178). The relation between Sam and LeBov/Murphy is characterized by lingering suspicion (150, 220) and repeated argumentative conversations. Against Sam's insistence on "kitchen lab work," the amateurish experiments he'd been doing by himself at home, LeBov tells him:

Failures have their place in our work. I've had my flirtations with failure. There is a small allure there. I commend you for seeking out failure so aggressively. But this idea people have of failing on purpose, *failing better*? Look at who says that. Just look at them. Look at them very carefully. (72)

"[Seeing] only [his] own head, mounted on a stick" (72), Sam responds with a thought he cannot articulate: "What *wasn't* failure? I wanted to know. Was there something that was working?" (72). That LeBov dismisses failure through speech while Sam, in asserting it as fact, cannot articulate it suggests the rendering synonymous of writing/failure, which is consistent with

Western ontology's disavowal of writing and Marcus's generalization of it via language's toxicity in the novel. Explicitly distinguishing himself from it—positing it as the other/Oedipus—LeBov in fact relies on language/failure, what Sam cannot but recognize and hence fails to utter. In a particularly duplicitous display of rhetorical skill, for example, LeBov kills himself—a shady public figure (63), LeBov is announced dead, but there is no funeral (109); Murphy turns out to be LeBov, caught by Sam trying to gain access to the flame alphabet (125); LeBov tells Sam Murphy is dead (198); LeBov refers to *LeBov* as a common noun, as in “a *LeBov*” (219), and implies there are “other LeBovs” (245)—in an attempt to live on. Acting as Oedipus who kills/births himself, LeBov treats symbolic/physical death/survival as doubles, as sides of reproductive immortality that he can reverse, and with it the death facilitated by language. With an understanding of what, according to Western ontology, language induces—death by Oedipus; in LeBov's terms, “failure”—LeBov exhibits *Forsythe* into *Oliver* (*Twist*)—preemptive sight of the scythe borne by children/language. This enables him to disavow, precisely by undergoing, death by Oedipus, via its very medium—language/writing. More precisely, LeBov appropriates duplicity (LeBov/Murphy, symbolic/physical, death/life), for which language is accused of death by Oedipus, to reproduce the same (LeBov, the One immortalized by copies) in an attempt to evade death by Oedipus. In other words, it is precisely language's poison, what induces failure, that through mimicry—language itself, in its duplicity, i.e. as the other/Oedipus, is turned into the One/Oedipus as it is geared, and reduced, to preserving the One, LeBov—is used to try to overcome it. In contrast, Sam's inarticulateness—his inability to respond to LeBov; the asocial, hence failing experiments—is, as LeBov says, symptomatic of the “seeking out [of] failure” and of “failing on purpose.” That is, as if in rejection of mimicry, Sam's strategy starts and ends with failure in which even “better” refers to

failure. Ironically, it is failure that LeBov seeks from Sam (not as the father of Esther, but as the recruit LeBov is trying to convert, i.e. the son). Immortalizing himself through language does not change the fact that language is threatening social death. As such, even as he appropriates language's duplicity via mimicry, LeBov still tries to find the ultimate cure to it. In this regard, he believes that the solution is the flame alphabet, a secret Hebrew language to which he thinks Sam has access. In fact, corresponding with Sam's inarticulateness, this language is unspeakable, even to a Jew—language, as it were, in flames, or language as flame. The cure identified by LeBov is thus that which fails as language, i.e. writing/failure, precisely the poison he appropriates and ultimately aims to eliminate—two ways of reducing its otherness into One—that with which, in contrast, Sam starts and ends. In disavowing it to assert the One/Oedipus, LeBov relies precisely on the other/Oedipus, which will ultimately poison even Him. In fact, disavowal, which is carried out through mimicry's reduction of duplicity, leads to toxicity, which, after all, as Marcus suggests with his (non-)experimentation, is induced when language's poison is doubled by exhaustion, as happens with the ontological reduction of otherness into One.

In disavowing the condition (the other scapegoated as Oedipus) that (through its own doubleness) he can appropriate (as One) but which ultimately structures him, LeBov dramatizes the characteristic strategy of Western ontology (bent on turning otherness into One), which induces the opposite of its goal: in its disavowal, the condition (through its literalization) activates the destruction of all, including the One. Through the imposition of mimicry on the other/Oedipus, then, mimicry avows not only the other/Oedipus, but its disavowal by the One/Oedipus. Infected by mimicry, which has an underside, disavowal, I argue, is not only avowed, but avows itself. LeBov illustrates this through his particular attempt to activate

autoimmunity as he turns language/poison itself, beyond appropriating its duplicity, into cure. Prior to his interest in Sam and the flame alphabet, LeBov already had a cure developed at Forsythe that reverses language/failure. “If *the children* harbored the poison,” he suggests to Sam, “then they no doubt contained the antidote to it as well” (73). This is a logical inference that, working at home, Sam is unable to make, attributed to LeBov by indirect narration. Despite the linguistic interdiction, LeBov, unlike Sam not “failing on purpose,” has developed a “child chemical that trigger[s] brief fits of speech and illness-free comprehension” (212). Sam observes this autoimmune cure at Forsythe when, summoned to an “assembly” walled off by glass blocking all sound (189), he is made to watch an old man, “his head draped in testicle skin,” “sp[eak] with no apparent agony,” “no doubt [...] traffick[ing] in platitudes, the most killing forms of banality,” speech nonetheless turning him into “*almost* a gentleman” (190-1). Behind him is a child pushing a “creaky IV cart” (190), “a bag of fluid [...] dangl[ing] from the little neck of the child, puckering from his skin into the tube [...] flow[ing] directly into the man,” “the child [afterwards] ha[ving] to be carried off, but first they threw a sheet over him” (192). This horrific scene narrated anti-climactically, if not for Sam’s mockery—cure the man and he’s still a man—betrays LeBov’s cure as relying on autoimmunity: it is precisely the child/poison that is partially injected as cure, this constituting an attack on and involving not only emulation, but insertion, of the other into the self in the attempt to immunize the latter against the greater assault of undiluted child/poison. Beyond ethical questions—the man is cured, who cares about the child?—Marcus, consistent with Derrida’s theorization of autoimmunity, deconstructs the notion that autoimmunity is a final solution leading to the preservation of the One. On the contrary, as Derrida explains, autoimmunity is based on originary difference and threatens suicide, i.e. the destruction of the One, which is in fact what happens in the novel as LeBov is

caused by the child/poison/cure to avow his disavowal of himself as Oedipus in the turning of himself, and thus of Oedipus, One *and* this disavowal as the possible cause of language/poison becoming literally toxic. Leaving the child “not quite a child, not quite anything” (218), the child serum likewise induces in the adult into whom it is injected what LeBov calls “Child’s Play, the side effects” (245): coughing (203), bleeding (205), sweating (213), fainting (213). Poison does lead to cure, to the intended effect, i.e. to speech, but with side effects, including, finally, unintended speech, i.e. poison/writing. Under the influence of Child’s Play, LeBov confesses to Sam:

My first? My first *what?* Mother was my first, and then Father. And after that my brother Stewart. They were my *first*. Then I went back for seconds. Because I was still *hungry*. Do you think the demon speech began out of nowhere a few months ago and swept through town all of a sudden? A little suburban catastrophe? Is that really what you think? You think I fucking work *alone*? You think there’s not a human machine the size of the world that didn’t anticipate this *transition*?” (221)

Oedipus the father, it turns out, was Oedipus the child who consumed Others—“*first*,” the family (the basic unit in Western ontology, the core of the system aimed at [re]producing the One)—to become the Father (or as one of the fathers, the LeBovs) at the center of the “human machine the size of the world,” i.e. Western ontology’s disavowal, in its pursuit of the One, of its destination: exhaustion, ultimately self-destruction. This disavowal by Oedipus who would be the father/One of its other and of the One’s destruction of itself, and everything else, anticipates and activates the literalization of language/poison—the autoimmune generalization of the child/Oedipus—“th[e] *transition*” that, in exaggerated ways indeed (the effects of language toxicity), calls for the need to deconstruct the One. Instead of listening to this autoimmune symptom, LeBov reacts defensively. Disavowing the other/Oedipus to pave the way for the father/Oedipus, the latter turns the former into a racialized scapegoat—“the toxic Jewish child”—to be targeted as the

poison from which the cure is to be derived in an ostensibly autoimmune way when in fact language toxicity is the autoimmune reaction to the disavowal at the heart of Western ontology.⁸⁰

That LeBov seems to be enacting autoimmunity when, even as he follows it to a certain point, he's ultimately blocking it, indeed causing what activates autoimmunity, is indicative of the duplicity of autoimmunity. Indirectly, he also hints at (anti-)imperialism, which, in forging the One through otherness, not only looks like but is predicated on its opposite. After all, (anti-)imperialism is part of Western ontology and thus implicated in Marcus's deconstruction of disavowal: pursuit of the One, traditional or inverted, induces destruction against which "actions" by the scapegoat are autoimmune warnings. Beyond avowal of and against disavowal, does Marcus, in his (non-)experimentation's inversion of Western ontology that contrasts with (anti-)imperialism, offer a way to work through the trauma induced/repeated by the One? Not long after the confession forced out by the child in the father, LeBov dies at the hands of or with Sam—due to Child's Play, claims LeBov; due to the attempt to gain access to the flame alphabet, according to Sam (244-6). In fact, the two causes (of death) / solutions (to language), the chemical and linguistic, are engineered by LeBov, the One in control even after death. After witnessing the ultimate outcome of his kitchen lab work—the child serum—Sam abandons it and, if hidden and hesitating—"I knew [Hebrew] was poison, too, but I didn't want this script to cause pain" (184)—experiments with different linguistic systems until he finally explores the flame alphabet as cure. He comes across a letter "orphaned from [it]" (209) that appears as "an inflatable letter vacuumed of air [...] it looked like a miniature collapsed building" (210). The "orphan" that stands in for the whole, this Oedipal letter that looks like a container emptied of its emptiness in which structure is derived from the emptying of the empty—a doubling reminiscent of "originary" *différance*—resembles an artifact found in one of the secret Jewish huts with

which LeBov is obsessed as possible source of the flame alphabet (211). The artifact is a “listener” device that, like the chemical cure, LeBov already had (221). Non-toxic because non-signifying, i.e. devoid of communicative function and thus of poison, the letter nonetheless does not provide non-toxicity or communication. In fact, in suggesting “listening” without speaking, it deconstructs language as communication. In other words, the (letter orphaned from the) flame alphabet serves as cure to the extent that it doesn’t work as language, its cure based on the curbing of poison, the opposite of autoimmunity. This paradox keeps LeBov coming back to the Jewish hut, where he dies, autoimmunity ultimately unstoppable, linguistically or chemically, by the One. Realizing that no one cares about LeBov’s death, indeed suspecting that “maybe the other LeBovs needed this one to die” (247), Sam escapes Forsythe to go to his own Jewish hut, where he continues to pursue a linguistic cure. In the final chapters of the novel after LeBov’s death, the text keeps being written while nothing happens, with Marcus communicating Sam’s thoughts—unspoken, unwritten by Sam, but still still linguistic—which should be, but are not, toxic. Caring for a non-responsive Esther, with whom he manages to reunite, while waiting for Claire, whose absence he feels responsible for, the novel ends with Sam thinking: “I will wait for them here in my hut, and when Claire and Esther return, this is what we’ll do, as a family” (289). Sam thus defers the cure to “when [they] return” in the future, which is really the past, when they could still do “this” (with no clear referent) as a “family,” which is already impossible in the present. That is, deconstructive temporality is invoked precisely to fix the family in a fixed present: “I will wait for [the future] them [as they were in the past] here [and now] in my hut [the father’s home].” This is enacted, moreover, through thought language, i.e. non-familial, in fact asocial language, language on one’s own, language of the One without Others, which, it is implied, is the only form in which language is not poison. Deconstructing presence to remain in

the past (turned into the eternal present) to stave off the inevitable future, this cure resembles Janet/Leys's narrativization of trauma. Suspending deconstruction via representation, narrativization, according to Janet/Leys, works through trauma by detaching from the cause. In a world with no future, Sam ironically attains detachment in the past and through the One. Rather than doubling the double, Sam starts/ends with failure, fixing it as One and thus freezing it, the repetition of trauma in narrative writing (in which "what we'll do" is in fact "what we used to do," which becomes "what we'll always do") neutralizing its poison.

Dramatizing what renders Western ontology traumatic (the pursuit of the One that disavows otherness, which thus becomes traumatic, and ultimately leads to destruction), *The Flame Alphabet* enacts not the autoimmune transformation of the double—of writing as the repetition of trauma—into its double—as processing—but rather its reduction to the One (by LeBov), which induces trauma, or suspension via and of deconstruction (by Sam), which ends the novel. Still, in showing disavowal avowing itself, Marcus hints at the beginnings of working through by suggesting the irreducibility of what is disavowed and its neutralization via representation. In contrast, autoimmunity is played out in Tony Perez's *Cubao-Kalaw Kalaw-Cubao* (1995), which grapples with historical trauma where *The Flame Alphabet* is premised on structural trauma. A Filipino novel that, by American standards, is explicitly experimental, *Cubao-Kalaw* but exaggerates the mixture of forms that, as I mention above, characterizes post-independence Filipino literature and is hence, by Filipino standards, not that "experimental." Whereas (anti-)imperialism is broached by Marcus only indirectly, i.e. in contrast to his own inversion of Western ontology, Perez depicts a world exhibiting the autoimmune symptoms that, as I suggest above, are given off by the scapegoat to warn the system about its (lack of a) future. If (anti-)imperialism, in the attempt to perfect Western ontology, forges One world premised on

itself as other (than Western ontology, than an empire, like the rest of the world), Perez's *Cubao-Kalaw* manifests the traumatic effects of this project by revealing otherness beyond its screening by the One, empire's underside that cannot serve as its justification. *Cubao-Kalaw* begins after a crime briefly sketched—criminal rapes kid, criminal kills kid, cop chases criminal, criminal kills cop, criminal kills self—in the prologue that tells “a short history before the novel begins” (xii).⁸¹ The central section of the book, entitled “Kid, Stabbed, Enclosed in a Chest,” centers on three characters—Ike, Cez, and Benny—related to those involved in the crime whose lives intersect without knowledge of the other's complicity. Throughout the novel, memories of the crime—precisely and respectively, of the father (the criminal), the brother (the kid), and the adoptive father (the cop)—haunt its heirs, but are always cut short, colored, and/or excused, the main characters bearing memory not personally theirs. The trans-subjective trauma structuring the novel's plot is generalized by the novel's title. *Cubao-Kalaw Kalaw-Cubao* refers to the route of the *jeepney* (the basic means of public transportation in the Philippines) that, according to the author's page, Perez used to take, the crime a representation of the milieu, the way from Cubao to Kalaw (and back again) that goes from the downtown of a working-class neighborhood to a red-light district not far from the US embassy and the five-star hotels that line Manila Bay. Consistently, the novel features poverty, crime, broken families, working children, everyday encounters of strangers, and the busy yet sprawling urban landscape that ultimately leads to the former colonial master now apparently (anti-)imperialist, bearing, like the characters, (no) past memory. What happens/happened to Ike, Cez, and Benny thus reflects the larger milieu of Cubao-Kalaw that, in turn, stands in for Philippine society, all three levels operating in post-traumatic time.

Significantly, the cure that Perez offers to this condition inflicted by the colonial past and threatened to be generalized by (anti-)imperialism is that which put it in place. By the end of the novel, the characters come to terms with the traumatic past, symbolized by them opening up chests that bear mementos from the time of the crime that allude to the chest in which the kid was enclosed. Despite doubts about his sexual potency, Benny decides to ask Eileen, his longtime girlfriend, to marry him (225), and they adopt Dading, a street kid. The father he had lost in the cop is thus resurrected in Benny. Cez realizes that when he deliberately lost Charlie, his brother, on the streets, who was then raped and killed, he also lost his childhood (236). This leads him to ask Gina, a longtime friend, out on a date, a crucial step toward adulthood. These transformations in Benny and Cez were made possible by psychotherapy sessions provided by Ike, the psychology student (180), who in the process gains a realization: he loves his father, the criminal; he feared him because he loved him; he had long forgiven him but still had to forgive himself (210-1). The psychotherapy sessions presented as the immediate cure belong to a broader context that has religion as its kernel. To begin with, they are rooted in the desire to help others, which is motivated by Catholic teaching—the Industrial Psychology student is a brother of the Legion of Mary—that anchor Ike who is otherwise struggling in school. At times manifesting in other forms, religion is repeatedly and unambivalently chosen in the novel as the cure. In a “relaxation exercise” with Cez, for instance, when his own memory of the crime is triggered by Cez’s, Ike regains control through prayer (129), ritual repression thereby curtailing therapeutic outpouring and leading to the session as intended. Noticing the similarity of group “praying over” to a hypnotism session, Ike later suspects that the Holy Spirit is nothing but “autosuggestive powers,” a thought he dispels to choose faith over psychology (156-60), which then leads him to make breakthroughs with Benny and Cez. Cez, the scriptwriter who dreams of

writing horror stories because “life isn’t tearful or funny but rather bewildering—full of mystery and wonder” (11), likewise gives up on his writing after realizing that people ought to not be scared, but helped (to stand on their own, to aim for dignity) and saved (from poverty, from sin) (193). More directly, Benny stops having nightmares after experiencing the Holy Spirit through a brother at a prayer meeting (146-7) and Ike gains his epiphany about his father while listening to mass (210). In other words, what allow the characters to heal (from) their past wounds are the values, rituals, and promises of religion, notwithstanding the other forms of healing appropriated by it that at times threaten to unravel it. Religion, in fact, permeates the novel, which ends with the characters and their families meeting for the last time, their Christmas greetings turning to a song—“Peace on earth, and to those people with good hearts”—that echoes (sonically and unmistakably morally) throughout Cubao, throughout Manila, throughout the land ... (242-4). Needless to say, religion is a curious choice as cure. Beyond the way in which the solution it offers is otherworldly, at best phantastic and irreducibly deferred, religion in the novel takes the form of Catholicism. Catholicism, it must be remembered, is a postcolonial legacy in the Philippines. As the economy shaped by both family-based oligarchies (originating from Spanish and US colonial times) and recurrent tendencies to industrialize and liberalize (going back to the 1946 Treaty of General Relations with the US) is at the root of poverty (that lead to crime, broken families, working children ...), so the social values preached by the Catholic Church and its secretive, black-and-white, fire-and-brimstone culture upheld by shame privilege the traditional family—the Third World economy and close family ties hallmarks of the postcolonial nation. The crime that is the presupposition of the novel is, I argue, a constellation of the Americanizing economy (no one was available to fetch Cez and Charlie, both still children when the crime took place) and the conservative Church inherited from the Spanish (Ike’s father’s

actions constitute a return of what the family represses, the traumatic outburst of desires rendered deviant, which could have taken nonviolent forms were the man, indeed the polymorphous child in the man, not driven underground by the father; Cez left Charlie behind to free himself from, and as an expression of his resentment toward, his brotherly obligations [69]). Thus to offer religion as cure to this socioeconomic constellation is not only to leave untouched its economic context, but to reproduce its social condition.

Poison, in other words, is masking as cure, or the cure masks its past life, i.e. the poison that it was. Deconstructively, however, if it is traced back further, the postcolonial poison is unraveled to have been a revolutionary cure. Comparable to the educated elite's appropriation of *Filipino* and liberalism that I discuss in chapter 1, religious tradition, in particular *The Passion of Jesus Christ*, as historian Reynaldo Ileto shows in *Pasyon and Revolution* (1979), provided the cultural framework for mass, popular movements in the Philippines during the Spanish, revolutionary, and American periods.⁸² Thus Perez, as it were, is but tracing the autoimmunity of religion back to its revolutionary origins. Among other things, this tradition posits a deceitful surrogate (Spain, America) and/or suffering true mother (*Inang Bayan*) and the son preparing to break ties and/or promising salvation through religious war, the foreign appropriated with ease/conflict and mingling with the domestic, the son a product of both, the personal social. Consistently, Perez embodies the cure of religion in children. Ike fits religious service to his busy schedule because it is for the kids. In fact, he's taunted, "You're just happy when you're with [...] kids" (5). Benny takes Dading into his care because he couldn't bear seeing a kid out on the streets. Cez's transformation is framed in terms of him regaining his inner child. This emphasis on the welfare of children, who, the characters hope, would have a better future (thanks to them) and thus enact a better world (something these children are already able to do to the main

characters, with their seemingly miraculous effect on the adults), is rooted in the fact that they are “close to the Lord” (4). Children, in other words, are the motivation, source, and figure of religious salvation. Thus right before the song of peace echoes through the land, the final image described to the reader before the narrative ends is the Sacred Child, Jesus Christ (243). In fact, however, children are but literal instances, i.e. literalizations, of the means of not so much religious as traumatic/psychic cure. After the main part of the book that contains the narrative, appendices follow that feature the creative writing of the three main characters. Among these, Ike’s pair of plays are most straightforward: pretending to be narratives, they are in fact but conversations between two men in which, through long monologues amidst otherwise trivial conversation that hint at silence, darkness, fear, loss, tragedy, and ultimate goodness, they exchange confessions as a way to not overcome but share trauma. In contrast to the relative maturity of Ike’s writings (in English) are Cez’s repetitive poetry, perhaps poetry of repetition (with titles such as “*Tumula Ako ng Tula*,” “*May Ika and Wika*,” “*May Sali sa Salita*,” “*Ilapit mo ang Lipat*,” etc. as well as “*Cubao-Kalaw*” and “*Kalaw-Cubao*,” not to mention “*Ulit-Ulit*,” i.e. “Keeps Repeating,” literally, “Repeat-Repeat”), and Benny’s scattered writings simply labeled notes, an assortment of recipes, lists, word plays, and, most of all, jokes, perhaps the quintessential literary genre of repetition (e.g. variants of “Which part of the body ...” as in “*Aling bahagi ng katawan ang mas maliit sa pusod? [...] Puso*,” which makes linguistic but not logical sense only in Filipino), but even Ike’s dual double monologues that serve as the core of fake narratives look back at the past as though to repeat it. Affixed to the main narrative, these repetitive writings of children—the appendices are themselves repetitive, the creative work of the characters entitled in analogous fashion as *dula* (plays), *tula* (poems), and *tala* (notes)—are

implied as the characters' process work, i.e. what they had to perform in preparation for what is realized in psychotherapy.

In other words, it is through children/writing that the trauma that fathers the novel is gradually worked through by its heirs; the *pharmakon*, then, induces a shift in the main narrative in the chapters immediately preceding the final shot of the Sacred Child echoed by Catholic song. By convention, each chapter bears the name/s of the main character/s it features as its title; strikingly, the penultimate chapters are entitled "The Criminal," "The Cop," and "The Kid." As I mention above, memories of the crime pervade the novel, but are always limited, ultimately blocked. This is exemplified by the episode I also mention in which Ike hypnotizes Cez and the latter suddenly invokes the image of a chest, a kid in a chest (126), which he wants to open, which makes Ike immediately stop the hypnosis. Asked afterwards about what had happened, Ike tells Cez that they just had a "relaxation exercise" (129). In contrast to this restraining of the full relaxation of the active faculties that ultimately leads to the traumatic chest, the penultimate chapters recollect the crime in direct and personal ways. In these chapters, the memory of the character identified in the title—"The Criminal," "The Cop," and "The Kid"—is inserted in the narration that, as in earlier chapters, follows the main characters. It is unclear how the latter are able to recall the memories of their kin, but it makes all the difference. After the memories of the crime are detailed, Ike, Benny, and Cez are each shown opening up the chests that they've kept from the crime and then, through their realization of their detachment from the traumatic event as indicated by the difference between their ages at the time of the crime and at the time of recollection, taking crucial steps toward adulthood. Consistent with the repetition of children/writing, of poison/cure, but, as manifest in the age contrast, with detachment, these transformative scenes that embody working through are portrayed as the passing of the crime's

deconstruction of identity/futurity onto its heirs through the transgenerational memory of family that, it is implied, enacts (another) identity/futurity. Intersubjectivity, embodied most clearly in the psychotherapy sessions between familiar strangers who are nonetheless criminally/intimately related, is implied as also at work in this process, but it is secondary to the link emphasized as the linchpin of transmission, namely, the bonds of family. Working (through) precisely through what is supposed to be worked through, i.e. traumatically working (through), this limited form of historical awakening bears, as is to be expected, the limits of its medium/origin. True enough, *Cubao-Kalaw Kalaw-Cubao* is limited by its condition. Akin to how in their creative writings the main characters write in the language judged proper—English for Ike to evince maturity, deep Tagalog for Cez because he’s writing poetry, colloquial Filipino for Benny who’s writing as if speaking—Perez writes the main narrative in the language of postcoloniality, simultaneously using, indeed mixing, not only Tagalog and English (at times transliterated in Tagalog) but also Kapampangan and Cebuano (other Filipino languages that bear the influence of Spanish), Perez not concerned with the strictures of standard Filipino or writing the great Filipino novel because the narrative’s work is precisely to bear the multiple and deep marks of the past/trauma. Not limited to its formal elements, indeed experimental form, trauma infects the novel’s content as well. Inextricable from Catholicism, religion/children/writing is, as I mention above, embodied in the end in heterosexual couplings—save for Ike, who has just come to terms with his father and is about to go home to family (242).

In unfolding deconstructive transmission, writing in *Cubao-Kalaw Kalaw-Cubao* thus works as cure precisely because of what in Western ontology makes it inadequate—in its imitation of the other (from the perspective of the Filipino, in fact part of the One) that, to begin with, is the cause of the trauma supposed to be worked through—and not cure at all but rather

poison—in the deformation of this imitation (the mixture of the One with the Filipino). Thus beyond positing writing as the double of trauma, Perez maintains the doubleness of writing, this enabling writing to serve as both poison and cure, i.e. the duplicitous workings of autoimmunity. In a way, the autoimmunity unfolded by Perez is consistent with Derrida’s description—an other is inserted into the self—but in this case the insertion has happened in the past and is the cause of trauma rather than the means for autoimmunity. Thus to enact autoimmunity, rather than inserting it, the other is allowed to play out with the goal not of protecting the self from, but rather of enabling the self to live with it in a way that transforms both the self and the other. Consistent with how this cure/poison is articulated not as writing/children but as religion, this working (through of) trauma manifests colonial mentality—the colonized adopts what the colonizer was trying to do to it, i.e. mimicry on the part of the colonized—and, doubly, employs it to come to terms with and, in some detached and deferred identity/future, move on from coloniality. Whereas autoimmunity is blocked/frozen in *The Flame Alphabet*, there is no telling when and where this autoimmunity of *Cubao-Kalaw Kalaw-Cubao* stops, the undecidability of cure/poison, moreover, making it impossible to identify what is at work especially when they work in tandem, duplicitously. While colonial mentality works as cure as the tool of the colonizer is appropriated for purposes unintended by its owner, as poison it carries the risk, for example, that the colonized adopts the colonizer’s way of thinking about power (as the new colonizer), subjectivity (e.g. him/herself as justly colonized), etc. In short, if trauma, in an autoimmune way, is being used to cure/poison itself, then the poison may not only cure; the cure may further poison. Notably, *Cubao-Kalaw*’s articulation of cure via the Oedipal family dismisses the implied sexual failures/deviancy of all of the main characters: Benny marries Eileen despite sexual impotence (137), Cez settles with Gina despite hypersexuality (166), and

Ike devotes himself to the Holy Virgin (122) and/or prays, “*Bless me, Father, for I have sinned ...*” (198). An embodiment of the cause, the family also embodies the solution in a different, yet still limiting, way. This in turn leads to another autoimmune product, similar to but not the crime. Detached from the rest of the novel is a final appendix that follows the creative writings, “*Tularan sa Pagbuo ng Isang Handknitted Bolero,*” which ends the book. Superficially containing instructions on how to create a hand-knitted bolero, a short tailored jacket usually for women, a feminine half-jacket as it were (that does not appear anywhere else in the book), this section’s title can also be translated “Imitate to Become a Homemade Joker” or “Assembly Manual for a Self-Made Playboy” followed by a subtitle, “Voices of the Past.” Given that this section begins with a pictured image of an anonymous male model wearing a bolero as though he were in drag, I argue that it is an outburst against the Sacred Child visualized in words at the end of the main narrative. That is, before the book ends, Oedipus the queer child, after all, comes out despite the family after/outside the traumatic narrative (as an appendix, in visual form) as another past voice unaccounted for by the particular processing performed by the narrative that passes on trauma. An outburst, this revelation of Oedipus the child is not the same as the outburst that is the crime (of the father). In this final act, the repressed manifests as creative material, i.e. as the *bolero*, the jacket/joker/playboy/queer. Different from the ordinary crime, the *bolero* is an embodiment less, if also violent, of aggression, than of sublimation, which is what I turn to in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3

The Sublimation of Trauma in the New/Native Novel: The Failure, Liberation, and Survival of the Culture/Nation

Like other imperialistic ventures, the US colonization of the Philippines in 1898 came with an expert discourse, the body of knowledge that would develop into Philippine studies that, as critic E. San Juan, Jr. points out in “One Hundred Years of Producing and Reproducing the Filipino” (1998), constructs its object to justify colonization.⁸³ Relying on a “positivistic, evolutionary theory of culture” (6) that ignores history, politics, and economics (14), Philippine studies contends that “it is not US colonial subjugation but the quasifeudal ordering of Filipino society and its immutable hierarchy of values that account for the underdevelopment, corruption, and tragedies of the Philippines” (8). This “culture” both calls for and explains the failure of Americanization, the Filipino offered the prospect, but perennially proving to be unworthy, of liberal self-determination.⁸⁴ San Juan criticizes two Filipino responses to this rhetorical (justification of) colonization: the “nationalist” glorification of indigenous authenticity and the “postcolonial” embrace of decentered hybridity.⁸⁵ Instead, he calls for awareness of the conditions of possibility of knowledge and of the specificity of US imperialism in the Philippines, which he implies would lead to representations of the Filipino “articulated around the principles of national sovereignty, social justice, and equality.” In fact, rather than the assertion of the native or the postcolonial, the dominant Filipino response to previous colonization, as I lay out in chapter 1, has been the traumatic repetition of the US colonial attribution of failure to Filipino culture. As critics N. V. M. Gonzales and Oscar Campomanes show in “Filipino American Literature” (1997), Filipino identity is defined by the failures ascribed to it by its former colonizers—the failure(s) to be Western, to be Asian, to be American, to be Filipino—the failures exhibited in culture part and parcel of the failure of the Filipino to

form a nation. Rather than taking it as a justification for colonization, however, Gonzales and Campomanes reclaim Filipino failure as the deconstruction of identity itself, which, in a processing of the trauma of US colonization, deconstructs the supposed rationale for colonization—the Filipino need not be an Americanized subject or a nation for it to exist as an independent entity—and thereby the identity of the colonizer, including in its new, (anti-)imperialist mode. The reclamation of failure as the deconstruction of identity is not exactly a representation, but it may bring about the sovereignty for which San Juan aims, if by also deconstructing the “nation.”

The latest trend in fiction in the Philippines, the Filipino New Novel is a cultural manifestation of Filipino deconstruction, one that bears its paradox: the movement claims to forge the New, but in fact this consists in a return to the given, including the failure of Filipino identity, thereby not exactly inventing *the* Filipino once and for all, much less the Filipino as New, but nonetheless creating something new, thereby liberating the Filipino from Western colonization. In contrast, the Native American novel would seem to be the return to something old, the “native,” but in fact this return comes from the present and can thus only be new, an indication of the survival of the native after Western modernity. In this chapter, I read a Filipino New Novel with a Native American novel to deconstruct the distinction between the new and the native and show how the new/native deconstructs Western ontology, which, symptomatic of the trauma of colonization, is still borne by the formerly external (Filipino) and internal (Native American) subjects of US empire. I start with a close reading of the manifestos of both literary movements, which describe their features, situate them in history, and, most importantly, make the ontological claim that not only do the reality of the colonized/native manifest in fiction, but that fiction is real, thereby expanding what *reality* means, and can thus change the reality outside

the novel. I situate this ontological claim in relation to Western representation of both the Filipino and the Native American as failing to create a nation, a form itself a fiction, and theorize what relation it is positing between fiction and reality, narrowly defined, through Freud's notion of sublimation. The displacement of failure in reality that is itself real and failing, sublimation likewise expands what reality means, this enabling Edgar Calabia Samar and Gerald Vizenor, prominent figures from the two literary movements, to employ it in their novels to deconstruct the representation of the failure of their nations through its creation in the novel, i.e. in sublimation. Sublimation is at work on many levels in Samar's novel, *Walong Diwata ng Pagkahulog*, which considers in a self-reflective way how writing is a sublimation of reality. Samar, as it were, proliferates sublimation, and its failure, in the novel to realize the ontological claim that fiction is as real as reality—in large part due to its failure—in a way that tells a story inherited from Western colonization—the failure of the writer to write because of his childhood—in a Filipino way. For his part, in *The Heirs of Columbus*, Vizenor takes for granted the argument Samar is trying to make and posits native reality from the outset. This radical starting point allows Vizenor to go further than Samar in showing how native/new reality, even if only in sublimation, can penetrate and deconstruct Western ontology and the system that has traumatically imposed, and is still imposing, it on the native/colonized.

New and Native Ontologies: Form, Fiction, Reality

The hallmarks of the Filipino New Novel are laid out in a manifesto of sorts in the first issue of *Tapat*, which translates as faithful, straightforward, real, i.e. *True*, its official journal. In a list of questions compiled in response to the question, “What is New in the Filipino New Novel, Given that the Novel Itself is (Rooted in the) New?” (2011),⁸⁶ critic Adam David

speculates about the common tendencies of recent Filipino novels. Tracing it as part of the stylistic evolution begun by modernism, David describes the New Novel in terms of experimentation of a particular kind, namely the tendency to “play with the novel’s form in the very flow of the narrative [such that] the novel is as if an overly long sketch; is composed of many and various sketches; is formed by many various *subjective truths*” (206). That is, the New Novel is defined by “the breaking or shattering (*pagbasag* in Filipino) of the act of storytelling and of the actual narrative being told,” which David implies is both a “willful act / aspiration / need” (206) and a “symptom” of the present condition of reading and writing that brings “*pirapiraso*,” the fragment, to the fore (207). Pointing to double breaking (*pagbasag*)—of the act and object of telling—as its most conspicuous feature, David poses the questions raised by the invention of a new form of the novel symptomatic of its time, ultimately asking, “If narrative framework (*banghay*) derives from the need to lend order and meaning to the chaos and deluge (*gulo at gunaw*) of real life through the creative arts, what if there really (*talaga*) is no meaning in real (*totoo*) life” (208)? “Why is it important for texts to be based in real (*totoo*) life or to be saying something true (*totoo*) about real life? What is ‘real/true’” (210)?⁸⁷ These questions lead David to what he identifies (in the form of a question) as the “primary characteristic advanced by the New Novel: its mixture (*paghalu-halo*) of what is real/true (*totoo*) and what is merely fiction/creation (*katha*)” and (also in the form of a question, as if it were merely a possibility) questioning of the hierarchy between the two and of the idea of art’s basis in real life (210). This key characteristic manifests in or is accompanied by yet other mixtures—of languages (colloquial, “specialized, e.g. *gayspeak*, *textspeak*, *academese*,” “ancient Tagalog, Taglish, pure English”) (210-1), aesthetic traditions (the “*social commentary* of realism, *heightened imagination* of *speculative fiction*, *critical standards* of the *workshop process*”), and priorities

(politics, fantastic imagination, intelligence; message, entertainment, skill)—“bravely showcased” by the New Novel (212).

David compares the New Novel to speculative fiction, except that, rather than go outward and into the future, it goes “inward to examine psychological evolution or travel toward another consciousness” (213). This, he argues, makes Filipino, with its “colorful history as the language of protest, of hiding, of free expression,” more apt for its writing than English, “which has a colorful history as the most adaptable language, as a language of possession,” of ownership, colonization, and appropriation (214). Paradoxically, David suggests that the New Novel may also be returning to “folk tradition [... that has created works known for being both] dense and pleasurable, liberatory but also joyful” (214). In “Murder and Investigation” (2012), from the fourth and last issue of *Tapat*, New Novelist Edgar Calabia Samar traces the genealogy from the opposite direction, based on that from which the New Novel contrasts itself. Recognizing his “unparalleled influence in not only the formation (*pagkatha*) of the nation, but the writing of the novel” (350), Samar argues that José Rizal, symbolic leader of the Revolution against Spain and national hero, led to the “dearth of the tradition of [what he calls] the investigative novel [literally, novelistic investigation, *nobelistikong pagsisiyasat*] in the nation,”⁸⁸ the tradition associated with the likes of “Paul Auster, Roberto Bolaño, Umberto Eco or Haruki Murakami[,] but not with one Filipino novel” (351). Rizal’s *Noli me Tangere* (1887) and *El Filibusterismo* (1891), required reading in Philippine schools, are ridden with “uncertainty (*kawalang-katiyakan*) that may give birth to investigation—but this is a writing tradition that Rizal chose not to take” (353). “Despite the fact that discovery is a central impetus [...] in some [older] folk theatrical forms (*anyong-bayan na patanghal*)” (354), Rizal opted for the “revolutionary novel (literally, novelistic revolution, *nobelistikong paghihimagsik*) [...] which can be said to be defined

by] doubt, a hesitation (*pag-aalinlangan, isang pagdadalawang-isip*) about the need for novelistic investigation because it roots the nation's crime and violence [not in a suspect to be investigated, but] in the [colonial] system" (356). This in turn spawned socialist realist and popular action narratives defined by characters "taking [...] the law into [their] own hands," part and parcel of, indeed "made prevalent by, a 'philosophy of hatred and culture of resentment'" (356). In contrast to this dominant Filipino narrative mode, the investigative novel, according to Samar, confronts the "hesitation to face the need for meaning-making, an even greater problem than our inability to make meaning" (355). "If composing literature is a kind of reading, [...] thereby] a way of fighting the demon of chance," Samar asserts that "what [he] calls the revolutionary novel is a kind of drowning in the quicksand of chance" (355). "As a result of the repetitions of vengeful characters who will only fail in the end, [...] 'revolution' becomes assimilated as but a part of society, but swallowed by the system, but an exercise of the powerless" (358).⁸⁹ What was once revolutionary becomes the double, indeed "abettor (*kasapakat*), of the propagation of colonial (*mapanakop*) ideology" (358) in its crude repetition not only of Rizal, but of the system he fought, repeated systemic critique but repeating the system. This, Samar implies, betrays a "hesitation to face the need for meaning-making," only through which something other than the system, i.e. the new, can be produced.

Against the "revolutionary novel," which in fact "murders the revolution because it always ends up into There's-Really-Only-One (*Iisa-Lamang-Naman-Talaga*) despite its proliferation" (360), Samar points to a "renewed sensibility (*panibagong sensibilidad*)" rooted in the 1986 EDSA Revolution, the mass movement that overthrew US-supported dictator Ferdinand Marcos (361), and manifest in narrative focus on "private life" (362). Especially in the new millennium, Samar discerns a new surge in novels characterized, as in Rizal, by doubt and

anxiety (*pag-aalinlangan at pagkabahala*), which, unlike in Rizal, serve as preconditions of investigation (362-3). Contrasting the revolutionary tendency to “use texts for the sake of reality” from the investigative tendency to “use ‘reality (in its various levels and forms) to mold form and content,” Samar recognizes the conscious and unconscious influence of the former (358) while asserting the latter as the way forward. He declares, “All creations murder, and I wish (*ibig*) to nip off (*kitlin*) the revolution that rendered impotent the possibility of creative investigation in our novels” (363). This act of “nip[ping] of (*[pag]kitlin*)” the tradition (novelistic revolution for the Filipino) that but leads to the same, I argue, defines the New Novel, the New, i.e. the novel, obviously and paradoxically (against novelistic *revolution*) what “nip[ping] of (*[pag]kitlin*)” creates, the New Novel, as David suggests, but the expression, amidst questions about its pertinence, of the novel as a living form, i.e. as inherently new (215). This simultaneous obviousness and impossibility of the novelty of the novel is embodied/performed by the New Novel, as Samar and David both note, through its return to older traditions *and* manifestation of symptoms of its own time. Simultaneously anachronistic and timely, the New Novel in fact proceeds through mixtures: of the old and the new; of the dense and the fragmentary; of recognition and disavowal of tradition or influence (e.g. of the revolutionary novel, of colonial languages such as English); of fiction and reality. Far from a mishmash, the New Novel carries out these mixtures with a particular slant and purpose, resulting in not the combination of the speculative and psychological, but the rendering of speculative fiction psychological; not equal focus between the public and the private, but the exploration of the social through the personal; not the confusion of the real and the fictional, but the use of the real to create fiction. This presentation of hybrid content (a mixture of elements in which certain strands dominate)—the New Novel’s “reality” that, far from a mishmash, posits a particular world symptomatic of, but

not reducible to, the (outside, real) world—in fragmentary form—the artifice through which (outside) reality is molded into fiction, the latter, i.e. “reality” rather than reality, the New Novel’s primary preoccupation—is the simultaneous rendering of content and form, via double breaking (*pagbasag*), new, which, I argue, constitutes a revolution against the revolutionary tradition.

Samar implies that this New revolution consists in the overturning of the priority between the material or actual (what he calls *reality*), i.e. the outside of the novel, and the symbolic (referred to as *form and content*). The New Novel does this not to liberate the novel from reality, but to reclaim the priority of fiction in the novel—i.e. to let the novel reclaim its priority in its own realm—so as to fulfill what Samar describes as the human need to investigate and thus make meaning. This act of “meaning-making,” it is implied, happens via fiction’s transformation of reality, the latter having become too constricting in the traditional revolutionary novel and thus requiring a revolution in fiction, what the New Novel is supposed to supply in its reclamation of fiction. In that very emphasis on fiction, however, the relation between the fictional/creative (*katha*) and the real (*totoo*) is left unarticulated by Samar and only broached as a question by David. In this regard, a comparison of the Filipino New Novel with its French precursor proves illuminating.⁹⁰ Acknowledging that experimentation is always subject to tradition (17-8), Alain Robbe-Grillet argues in *For a New Novel* (1963) for “new forms for the novel” (9). The new in the French, as in the Filipino, is paradoxical, referring to forms “capable of expressing (or of creating) new relations between man and the world” (9), which the novel, “bear[ing its] own date, [... creating] no masterpieces in eternity, but only works in history,” has always done (10).⁹¹ To stay true (*tapat* in Filipino) to itself, then, the novel, Robbe-Grillet implies, must be historical, which paradoxically means that it cannot be stuck in history. Against

“systematic repetition of the forms of the past [... that] blind[s] us to our real situation in the world today [... and] keeps us [...] from constructing the world and man of tomorrow” (9), the New Novel—French and Filipino—manifests a double relation (of recognition/disavowal) to its socialist realist precursor (Honoré de Balzac for the French) to enact a “new realism” (14). In Robbe-Grillet’s formulation, this new realism breaks the “screen” (19), the “continuous fringe of culture [...] added to things [that] giv[es] them a less alien aspect” (18), a “meaning which vainly tries to reduce them to [significations],” e.g. as “the vague reflection of the hero’s vague soul” (21). This break is made possible by the medium’s conventions itself, which “help free us from our own conventions” (20-1) to disclose how “things *are there*” (19).⁹² Distinct from objectivity, “all too obviously an illusion” (18), this “passion to describe” (14) things as “*there* before being *something*” (21)⁹³ that makes possible “*freedom* of observation” (18) is, I argue, the positing not of a pure object or phenomenon separate from its theorization or subjective experience—in fact, the Filipino, and to some extent the French, New Novel is primarily subjective, or social/real via (the filter of) the personal/fictional—but, more fundamentally, of a break (*pagbasag*) from a tradition that but repeats theory and freezes subjective perception into a “screen” that, I argue, does not amount to the disavowal of theorization and perception altogether in the experience of “things.”

Going further, Robbe-Grillet implies that the New Novel’s break from historically imposed meaning is a break not only from tradition, but from reality, which is tied to the historically contingent form in which it manifests. Like his Filipino counterparts, Robbe-Grillet asserts form as having an ontological status: he insists that “the work of art, like the world, is a living form” (43), that language or form is the writer’s particular realm of intervention (41), that “[the] reality [of the work of art *and* of the world] resides in form” (43).⁹⁴ It is not only that the

novel is a form or that its reality, and not only its essence, is in its form (form not only lending the novel a particular character, but rendering it real), but that form is “living,” a reality as real as the world and in which one can intervene. In fact, Robbe-Grillet ties literary tendencies, e.g. crude repetition of what has already been said before, to the language in which it is expressed, in this case French, which, he notes, has “undergone only very slight modifications for three hundred years” (16), the form of the language determining not only expression (repetition), but content (what has already been said). Predicated on form, the novel’s content is also conflated by Robbe-Grillet to reality, supposedly the outside of the novel, the actuality distinct from fiction. Implying a separate sphere for “art and society” when he writes that each has “problems [that] cannot be solved in the same manner” (37)—part of his rejection of the novel’s relegation as the mere means “for the expression of a social, political, economic, or moral content” (38)—Robbe-Grillet’s insistence that the New Novel lets things “be merely *what they are*” (39), that in the New Novel, “things *are there*” (19), nonetheless implies a more intimate link between the novel and the real. On the one hand, these formulations, as explained above, points to the New Novel’s breaking free from historical imposition so that it can actually pay attention to things, i.e. to “reality [...] *here and now*” (39), and deal with them as the new things that they are (against their frozen images on the socialist realist screen) and in a new way, this rendering the novel true (*tapat*) both to itself (as novel) and to things, to reality. In a stronger sense, however, coupled with the ontological status of form, these formulations point to how the novel itself, and its things, i.e. its “reality”—the particular content it depicts in a particular form that may or may not correspond to outside reality—are also *there*, as real as its historical frames or objective counterparts. The reclamation of fiction as real, like other things in the world, i.e. as “reality [...] *here and now*” (39) in a concrete and not just temporal sense, is the basis, I argue, of the New

Novel's revolution. After all, if it is itself real, the New Novel's "reality"—whether the present (emphasized in the French) or the subjective (in the Filipino)—can go against what reality is supposed to be, whether as determined by past tradition or external reference. This is why, I argue, as David suggests, the New Novel questions not only the basis of art in reality, but the very distinction between the real/true (*totoo*) and the fictional/creative (*katha*). Asserting its own status as real and thus questioning reality, the New Novel, as Samar aims to do, enacts not only its fiction, its "reality," as real, but a new reality through fiction. The New Novel's revolution, in other words, consists—through its reclamation of the novel and the intricate linking of form, fiction, and reality to make meaning—ultimately in its positing of an ontology, a claim on what reality is, i.e. on what is *there*.

The enactment of new reality through fiction('s form), or of new form/fiction thus new reality, is what is likewise sought, I argue, in what Gerald Vizenor calls *postindian* or *tribal survivance* in the Native American novel. In *Manifest Manners: Narratives on Postindian Survivance* (1994), Vizenor posits survivance against manifest manners, "the racist notions and misnomers [created by Western culture according to its own values⁹⁵ and] sustained in archives and lexicons as 'authentic' representations of *indian* cultures" when "*indian* [an identification invented by, and from the perspective of, the colonizer] is an occidental misnomer that has no referent to real native cultures" (vii). "The simulation of the *indian*," Vizenor reiterates, "is the absence of real natives—the contrivance of the other [as Indian rather than native] in the course of dominance, [simulation/representation part and parcel of colonization]" (vii). Against "[the colonizer's] dominance, [colonial] tragedy, and [Indian] victimry," "survivance is an active sense of presence [simulated by the native], the continuance of native stories [that kept being told, i.e. that never ended]" (vii). Asserting the continuity of active native

existence notwithstanding colonization—that Native Americans lived and had cultures prior to and after the European conquest of the Americas—Vizenor traces survivance back to what he calls “native modernity” (ix)—implying that natives, before the Europeans arrived (before they were called “*indian*”), also went through modernity, i.e. that natives are also modern, and in their own way⁹⁶—that, he argues, is “resume[d]” by the “postindian,”⁹⁷ i.e. by natives who survived, if now bearing the mark (hence they are *postindian*) of, colonization (viii) and who can actively simulate their own (continuing) presence. While “manifest manners favor the simulations of the *indian* traditionalist, an ironic primitive with no cultural antecedence,” i.e. a noble savage (x),⁹⁸ “postindian narratives,” Vizenor elaborates, “observe natives, the chance of totemic associations, conversions, and reversions of tribal culture [this dynamism a sign of native modernity], as postmodern survivance” (viii). Asserting “a new tribal presence in the very ruins of the representations of invented Indians” (3), postindian “warriors bear the simulations of their time [rather than simulating the primitive Indian]” (4) and “oust the inventions with humor, new stories, and the simulations of survivance” (5). Turning the simulation of Native Americans into simulations performed by the self (rather than by another for the purpose of domination) in the present (in the time of modernity, indeed in postmodernity, after colonization, rather than in an invented premodern), postmodern or tribal survivance deconstructs the Indian to reclaim the native and postindian, the claim of existence before (as native) and after (as postindian) colonization “surmount[ing] the scriptures of manifest manners with new stories” (5). Thus through simulations of and by the native located in history and grounded in reality, including colonization, survivance gives rise to the new beyond colonial representation.⁹⁹

Vizenor specifies survivance through a series of oppositions between two types of simulation, defined as “the generation by models of a real without origin or reality: a hyperreal”

(9) that “threatens the difference between ‘true’ and ‘false’” (13).¹⁰⁰ Against the representation of natives as Indians that through simulation becomes “the real without a referent to an actual tribal remembrance” (8), a “fabricat[ion of] the absolute fake” (9), postindian/new survivance is grounded in the “the pleasures of silence, natural reason, the rights of consciousness, transformations of the marvelous, and the pleasures of trickster stories” (8). “The original translator of tribal encounters,” the trickster “create[s] the tribe in stories and pronounce[s] the moment of remembrance as the trace of liberation” (15) in simulations that, while also “fake,” are in keeping with, and thus remember/create, native culture.¹⁰¹ Against “the romance of the land” (10), the positing of “natural scenes with ‘no histories’ [grounded in] the absence of natural reason, [...] tribal names and stories [point to] real histories, not discoveries” (9). Against “the ‘authentic’ summaries of ethnology, and the curse of racialism and modernism in the ruins of representation [remainders of the colonizing invention of the Indian, ...] postindian simulations arise from the silence of heard stories, or the imagination of oral literature in translation, [...] to create a new tribal presence in stories” (12). Against “terminal simulations” (14)—part and parcel of “a melancholy civilization” (13) that appropriates simulation for an end, namely colonial domination—“simulations in oral stories arise from silence not inscriptions” and unfold to the point of deconstructing the difference between the true and false (13). “Postindian autobiographies,” for example, are simultaneously true and false in the simulation of “the averments of tribal descent and the assertions of crossblood identities [that run counter to Western privileging of the certain, real, and pure]” (14).¹⁰² Against “thoughts [conceived as] representations of content, or the coherent meaning of words,” shadows—“the trace that [...] leaves a presence, [...] the silence that bears a referent of tribal memories and experience, [...] the unsaid presence in names, the memories in silence, the imagination of tribal experiences”—

“tease and loosen the bonds of representation in stories” (72-3).¹⁰³ In effect, survivance simulates what Western representation disavows in the colonization of the native: silence (against subjection through discursive construction based on no real referent), natural (as opposed to instrumental) reason, native history (against the conceit that the West starts history, that prior to the Conquest, natives existed as noble savages), orality (against inscriptions that fix the native as Indian), and shadows (not captured by representation). In countering simulation (the terminal kind, limited by representation) with (native/new) simulation, survivance—simulation, as Vizenor notes, “threaten[ing] the difference between ‘true’ and ‘false’” (13)—ultimately unmoors the Western system of representation, including its deeply held realities that pass for common sense. Vizenor writes, “The postindian warriors and posers are not the new shaman healers of the unreal. [...] The turns of postindian remembrance are a rush on natural reason. [...] Wounded by the real[,] the warriors of simulations are [also concerned about] the real, [...] simulations [serving as] substitutes of the real [that are also real, ... that, in fact, incite] the rush of the real in their stories” (23).¹⁰⁴ Thus like the Filipino New Novel, the Native American novel that Vizenor seeks posits its own ontology against the Western through simulation, i.e. in fiction, to “create a new tribal presence in stories” (12). This “new” is a manifestation of not only native survival after colonization, but a change that emerges from continuation, and in not only culture/stories, but life/reality.

Sublimations of the Failure of the Nation

Samar’s wish to liberate the potential latent but buried (even if common in older native forms) in the Filipino novel, this reclamation posited as that which could create the new (beyond the repetition of colonization and revolution functioning as complementary doubles), and

Vizenor's reclamation of the native (against the 'authentic' Indian) that is both old (preceding the Conquest) and new (surviving colonization) and which creates the new (continuing presence, which involves change)—what, for the sake of brevity, I refer to as the Filipino New Novel and the Native American novel—deconstruct not only the distinction between the native and the new, but Western ontology. The latter is shaken off through the mutual implication of fiction and reality through form, the reality imposed by Western colonizing representation attempted to be replaced with realities true (*tapat*) to the object of representation (“native”), who now emerges as the (new) creative subject performing something more than representation (meaning-making; simulation). Reality, in other words, is made native/new through its intricate entanglement with fiction posited as an ontology, a way not only of depicting the world, but of claiming what is there, what reality is (in this case, something other than the reality posited by the West—frozen in its representations—in its colonization of the world). Certain questions arise from the basis of what the New/native novel seeks to accomplish, i.e. the ontological claim of fiction (as enacting) reality. The most critical of these is rooted in concern over extreme relativism, in which each individual makes up his/her own reality and acts according to it regardless of material basis and social convention. Noting only that while, as the New/native novel implies, fiction does have ontological status—reality not limited to the outside to which fiction supposedly corresponds, fiction also having materiality and actuality, and more—ontology does not necessarily amount to morality—reality not self-justified, what is there not justified just because it is there—I would rather ask why fiction's ontological status is being reclaimed. That is, why does the New/native novel draw attention to how fiction is real, to how writing fiction is a way of enacting/reclaiming (new/native) reality other than what dominates the present (the reality established by Western colonization)? I argue that the Orientalist representation of the Filipino as a failure to justify its

colonization and the manifest manners that posit Native Americans as something entirely other than what they and what Americans are—Indian—to erase, and thereby assimilate, them—two colonial self-actualizing fictions in which the colonized is designated as a failure either to keep it subjected (what fails to Americanize is to be kept aspiring, and failing, to Americanize) or erased (what does not exist is, through Americanization or fixation in the premodern, to be kept from existing)—incite directly attempts by the colonized to create their own fictions that enact/reclaim (new/native against colonial) reality. That is, the New/native novel, and its ontological claim, is a way of pursuing liberation from and survival after colonization.

The attribution of failure to the colonized, including after colonization, is based on a political form that is itself fictional, namely the nation. Conventionally defined as a people inhabiting a certain territory, organized into a state, sharing culture, and exercising sovereignty, the nation, as Benedict Anderson argues, is an imagined community molded out of certain material conditions—analogue to the fiction molded by the New Novel out of reality and the native novel's simulation of reality—that enable the perception of shared connections and the construction of a cohesive social entity.¹⁰⁵ Thus the standard to which the colonized is represented as failing to measure up—culture causes the Filipino nation to fail, indeed disables Filipinos from forming a nation; the native tribes failed to come together as a nation and were thus conquered by a superior nation—is a fiction that enacts itself as reality—Filipinos thus have to be colonized, kept in a state in which they are eternally taught, and perennially failing to learn, how to form a nation; native tribes, which never existed as a nation, would have to be erased altogether through assimilation. Against this, the Filipino New and Native American literary movements posit their own fictions in the form of a novel, the genre historically and intimately linked to the nation, to counter the attribution of national failure, which serves to justify

colonization, with the reclamation not only of fiction as reality—culture as real as the nation—but of Filipino and native “failures” as national, i.e. as symptomatic of formations also national—nations with their own culture, nations that also have culture, cultures that are also nations—and as such capable of liberating from or surviving colonization, to which, if the justification for the latter is the lack of a nation, they should not have been subjected in the first place. That the response of a counter-formation after its colonization by the hegemonic takes or appeals to the same form that was the rationale for its subjection—a colonial mimicry, as I describe in chapter 2—betrays the New/native as a post-traumatic response. The subject belatedly repeats the process of its subjection in fragments in an attempt to gradually deal with what has already happened, which the subject has not fully grasped and thus repeats, processing doubling what is to be processed. Distinguishing itself from crude repetition, which as I describe in chapter 1 only leads to re-traumatization, Samar and Vizenor claim to perform doubling that enables/reclaims the new/native, precisely what is traumatically foreclosed or buried, the prospect of detachment or difference from the agent of trauma, i.e. Western representation/colonization, rendering the New/native its working through. Repeating (certain aspects of) colonization, which has already happened (in the past), to counter it (in the present), the New/native latches onto one of its tools, fiction, which is reclaimed as enacting reality, the very function it served for the purpose of colonization, at the same time emphasized as fiction—as meaning-making, as simulation—to turn the same into something different. As such, the New/native does its work not in the nation, but in the novel, or is primarily concerned with creating not the fiction of the nation, but the nation—and not necessarily the same as the Western nation—through the novel.

The New/native working through of the trauma of colonization in another form—primarily in the novel, if also implying the nation—is consistent with my turn in chapter 2 from history to literature based on the deconstructive notion that (further) displacement (along with deferral) enables a new relation to trauma (displaced/deferred to begin with). Experimental language, as I show in chapter 2, loosens not only the reins of narration, but history, lending the possibility of the symbolic narrativization (pausing) or deconstructive transmission (passing on) of the (deconstructive) trauma of history in literature (double of the already double). The New/native novel, in transposing fiction back to the novel that is at the same time reclaimed as real, thereby also intervening in the nation, affords further exploration into the working through of historical trauma through literary doubling in its shifting of the emphasis from how experimental language doubles the double, thereby pausing or passing it on, to how the double renders what it doubles, in its displacement, new/native. In other words, beyond situating the working through of history in literature, in which experiments in language narrate or transmit history to double and thus process it, the New/native novel highlights the displacements that result from such doubling, in particular the new/native. That the New/native novel displaces not only the historical into the literary, but failure—the failure to be a (Western) nation—into creation—the creation of culture and thereby of the nation, the creation in culture of the nation, culture and the nation indeed already in existence, i.e. already there, the creation thus a reclamation, a re-creation—indicates, I argue, that it is a displacement of a special kind, i.e. a sublimation. Sublimation is defined by Freud in “Leonardo da Vinci and a Memory of His Childhood” (1910) as the process in which the Oedipal child comes to “replace [the] immediate aim [of the ‘original’ desire, from which he is forcibly separated by the father, not with other sexual objects, e.g. other women like the mother, but] by other aims which may be valued more

highly and which are not sexual” (452).¹⁰⁶ Replacing the immediate—for Leonardo, familial desire; for the experimental novel, history; for the New/native novel, reality and its relation with fiction established by tradition or representation; for the colonized, the nation; i.e. the cause of failure, which induces trauma—with something other—painting then science; literature; fiction; the novel; i.e. culture—sublimation achieves fulfillment via the loss of not only the immediate object, but the original character of desire. Shaped by it, sublimation nonetheless disavows the immediate, including its essence—turning it “not sexual”—this disavowal of not only the object, but of the kind of desire it motivates, enabling sublimation to be “valued more highly,” i.e. to detach itself from and screen its traumatic cause.¹⁰⁷ By working through trauma via the replacement of the immediate with something devoid of its urgency, its original form in which it is impossible to be had, in which desire for it only leads to failure, sublimation manages to displace failure into the accomplishment of something other motivated by, but higher than, what induces trauma.

In disavowing its origin, sublimation’s creation of something higher, it might be argued, is really the denial of failure, a complex self-deception—involving screening and detachment, the covering up of not only the original object and the nature of one’s desire for it, but, through a higher replacement, of the cover-up, i.e. a disavowal, as defined in chapter 2—about one’s real desire and traumatic disappointment, the writing of the novel, after all, not the formation of the nation. In fact, in continuing his narrative of Leonardo as exemplar of not only Oedipus, but its sublimation, Freud deconstructs the opposition between sublimation and its origin. Freud recounts a passage from Leonardo’s scientific notebooks—from his research phase that supplants his preoccupation with painting when his libidinal urge has been transformed into the will to know, which seems to have lost not only its original sexual motivation and form but the creative

urge that replaced them, science the sublimation of sublimation (i.e. of painting, which is a sublimation of sex)—in which he writes about a vulture/kite coming down to him in his cradle and “str[iking him] many times with its tail against [his] lips” (455). This, Freud argues, is Leonardo’s memory of “being suckled and being kissed by his mother” as a child (466). As it turns out, Leonardo has not lost the original desire, even in sublimation (in the scientific notes). Reminding or awakening in him the original desire, the memory, in fact, leads Leonardo to paint again, not, however, the same things he did prior to the seduction by science, but with a difference. Freud finds in Leonardo’s later paintings the smile of the mother that he had lost and, as such, is fascinated with. Far from crudely repeating something over which he has no control, the original already in the past with which he can do nothing but be helpless fascinated, Leonardo inserts the smile on his paintings of androgynous youths (the mother’s smile imposed on ostensibly male figures), this *sexual* union in *sublimation* enabling Leonardo to make the smile he is fascinated with (the smile of the mother) itself express fascination (Leonardo’s own fascination). Disavowing its origin, sublimation is nonetheless not only haunted by the origin, but indeed having another go at fulfilling the original desire, if by other means. As Freud explains, the union of smile and fascination, of the lost object of desire and the still desiring subject—i.e. the smile of fascination—is proof that the subject fascinated by the smile, the painter who recreates it in sublimation, has experienced it before (in ‘reality’) and is able to re-create, and thus re-experience, it (in painting), the sublimation another way to fulfill the original desire (471). Suggesting that sublimation is also active and sexual, if in a displaced way, like the original, Freud deconstructs the distinction between the original and the sublimation itself when he also refers to the *memory* as a *fantasy*, thereby dislodging the priority of the “original” as real and, as such, as the origin. With screening, as I describe in chapter 1, proceeding in many

directions, the sublimation can just as easily be the origin of what is thought to happen in the original scene, the sublimation and the original mutually constructing each other in a way akin to the New/native novel's simultaneous creation of fiction and reality.

That sublimation is fulfillment (of desire, or of the working through of its failure) by other means betrays it to be inherently frustrated, subject to irreducible displacements: it is not Leonardo himself who enacts the smile of fascination, but painted figures located in between the desiring subject and the desired object, the relation between whom, rather than direct, merely intimated through a representation, this relation, moreover posited as something that took place in the past, the intimation not so much a definitive declaration of what is beheld as a "secret" held about something caught sight of (471). With subject and object replaced, the relation between them already past, the representation of which not even fully representing but merely intimating, sublimation is fulfillment only to the extent that there is fulfillment in failure, which renders it more a kind of working through than the fulfillment of desire, or the achievement of fulfillment, to the extent possible, in working through, i.e. after the event of failure and given its trauma. This reclamation of a remainder out of trauma that is other than, yet bound to, it is, I argue, what motivates the Filipino New and Native American novel. In reclaiming the new/native out of the trauma of colonization, Samar and Vizenor thus have to grapple with the fact that the fulfillment of their project is a fulfillment in failure, to which they respond in opposite ways: Samar, in writing the Filipino New Novel, constantly sends out reminders that the new/novel is a failure, failure ultimately becoming the kernel of the new/novel/nation; Vizenor, to posit the native as real, reclaims trickster narratives, what has historically been deemed false, as true to create something after failure in a way true to what had failed. In the process, both

Samar and Vizenor liberate the Filipino and the native from Western ontology and assert/ensure its survival.

Doublings of Failure to Create the New / Liberate the Filipino

Samar's *Walong Diwata ng Pagkahulog* (which translates as *Eight Muses of the Fall*) (2009) is structured by repetitions of the scene in which the main character, Daniel, a writer, is about to fall into an abyss prior to being able to write his novel. Amidst these repetitions, the narrator tells Daniel's story, the inability of the writer to write making of the novel a meditation on writing the novel in which, in the second half—starting on a blank page entitled "*pahinang pahinga*," a phrase formed from two almost homophonic words that translates as "resting page" [122], after which the narrative resumes with, "I want to restart or repeat [*ulitin*] the story" [123], the point of view shifting from third to first person—the writer becomes the narrator. Nonlinear, fragmentary, psychological, and unabashedly fictional—about the writing of fiction, the novel features a second prologue in the form of an email in which the factuality of the setting, and thus the events, is put into question as well as characters that are doubles of each other, ultimately of the author: Daniel's alter egos Delka Linar, Arcangel, Ayel, Karl Kabute; his two fathers, the distant father and the close uncle; his two mothers, the lost mother and the grandmother; his love interests, the identical triplets Orange, Apple, and Peaches, and Teresa, who may or may not be one of them; his friends Glen, Erik, and Michael; and finally the writer-character who becomes the narrator-author—the novel nonetheless departs from the descriptions of the New Novel in its uniform voice, including after the point of view shift, its doublings ultimately pointing to the same. There is no experimental linguistic play derived from and doubling heteroglossia, as in Tony Perez's *Cubao-Kalaw Kalaw-Cubao* (1995), as I trace in the previous chapter; rather,

heteroglossia merely reflects the linguistic customs of the Filipino setting and the voices of different characters. Even the characters, mere doubles, collapse into each other, consistent with how ultimately the novel has only one language: Glen, Daniel's friend who questions the existence of Atisan, their hometown, and of their memories, sends him an email from an address named after Delka Linar, the friend dwarf Daniel invented in childhood, with Daniel's email address, "arc[h]angel_81" (2), alluding to name of the protagonist of the novel he aims to write that itself alludes to another one of their friends, Michael. This circuitous referentiality that ultimately points to the author climaxes at the "resting page," after which the writer becomes the narrator *and* writes in the same way, about the same thoughts—the "restart" amounting to a "repeat" rather than resolution or revelation—in the same mood defined by the dilemma of having to face the end before one even gets started—the writer-character, as it turns out, the narrator-author all along. Directing attention to not only how the novel is fictional, but how he is writing himself writing it *and* writing uniformly in deep, national Tagalog, indeed making use of folk motifs, but not hesitating to use colloquialisms, Taglish, and, rarely (only if what is referred to is already in it, e.g. Beatles lyrics), English, Samar, I argue, is writing (about writing) the Filipino novel, that national and cultural goal of old unattained since Rizal—hence its depiction as coming from a writer who cannot write—in the present—hence the addition of the new on the old that, despite the national language, disables the novel from becoming an epic. Consistent with the New Novel's thesis that only through location in its present can the novel be true, *Walong Diwata ng Pagkahulog* thus pursues the same, evasive goal through the reclamation of the old (as intimated by the use of deep Tagalog) *and* telling of its contemporary story (the writer's present pursuit of, and failure in, the old goal), the repetition of the old as contemporary creating the new, the Filipino (novel) beyond (the tradition of) colonization/revolution.

Along with the scene of the fall that opens (as prologue), ends (as epilogue), and interrupts or to which culminates the narrative, the novel is also characterized by Daniel's repeated attempts to tell or write a story, which affords Samar the opportunity to theorize the origin, and failure, of storytelling/writing. This motif starts in the very first chapter, where Daniel is attributed as the author of a story, the origin of which is at the same time put into question. Samar writes, "Daniel was in grade 2 when he first formed [*makabuo*] a story. A story he thought was quite believable. He doesn't remember anymore when he told it for the very first time or who first heard it. [*Basta*] Just that he was in second grade when it spread among them classmates that he has a dwarf as a friend" (7). Samar assigns authorship of the story—assumed to be not just a story, taken for granted as "believable," indeed asserted by Samar as, unbeknown to Daniel, "real [*totoo*]" (10)—of Delka Linar to Daniel at the same time deconstructs him as origin: he does not really remember the story's origin; he just (*basta*) knows that *it* spread "among them classmates," a group that includes him; he is attributed authorship through the word *makabuo*, which is more in the subjunctive rather than the indicative tense, technically translating as he *could form* rather than he *formed*. The uncertainty of the origin is, I argue, due to not only the unreliability of memory, but the ontological status of fiction, which deconstructs the author—if Delka Linar is real, he does not need to be authored, his telling not amounting to his creation—and the notion of writing as absolute individual creation—if the story is already real, its writing is its repetition rather than the hero's creation, "creation" but the writing of what is already there, the author limited to serving as the medium of, perhaps even created by, the spread, i.e. writing, of the story among an audience that includes its supposed source. At the same time, fiction is irreducible to reality, the mystery of its ontology what lends it power. Samar dramatizes this when Daniel, seeing his classmates lose interest, decides to reveal the name of

the dwarf: “Delka Linar,” an anagram of his name, Karl Daniel (9). As if he had said too much, betraying not only the dwarf’s identity but its function as an alter ego, thereby rendering him too real—a mask of its author—a clarification of the relation between fiction and reality, everyone is disappointed, the writer precipitating the loss of fiction’s power. Writing, in other words, is located in a middle space, what above I call “reality,” irreducible to either unreality or reality. In the process, the social and the real are posited as mutually constitutive: the reality of writing derives from its social, rather than individual, conditions of production and reception, its origin, spread, and power in the world what makes it real; the sociality of writing derives from its ontological status, its reality what renders it social, thereby attached, but undermined if reduced, to reality narrowly defined (which not only leads it to be deemed unreal, but to lose its power if it becomes too real) and the individual (who is attributed as its origin at the same time that the social origin of writing deconstructs the individual). Real because social and social because real, writing, Samar implies, originates in the social that makes it real *and* is to begin with real, hence social, *but* not just real/social.

Derived from, but irreducible to, the social/real, writing/“reality,” which is itself real/social, originates, Samar suggests, in the failure of the (individual to be) social/real. Playing with peers, Daniel, Samar writes, “also manages to forget [*nalilimot din*] about his friend, the dwarf” (9). When immersed in the social/real, the writer, it seems, forgets writing, the “reality” that replaces sociality in its failure and that disappears in its success because “reality” is just a replacement for reality, hence rooted in and bound to failure in the social/real. “But,” Samar clarifies, “that is only sometimes [*paminsan-minsan*]. More often he’s just by himself [*mag-isa*], seated on the highest *bleacher* on their *soccer field*, looking at his classmates chasing after each other while forming stories in the mind” (9). Seemingly secondary, writing is not only social, if

from afar—“looking at his classmates” is, after all, a social act that, coupled with individual detachment, is depicted as leading to the “form[ation of] stories in the mind,” writing requiring a position between the social, which deconstructs the individual, and the individual, which keeps the social at a certain distance—but given regardless, even prior to, what it supposedly replaces—the forgetting of writing, as the passive form of *nalilimot* indicates, *only* eventually happens, is indeed something fleeting over which one has no control; “more often,” i.e. by default, Daniel is writing, which, as *while* implies, has the same reality as “classmates chasing each other.” Writing is thus a replacement only in the sense that, in terms of sociality and ontology, it is like reality—this sameness what enables it to serve as replacement in the first place—which makes it not even a replacement for which there is no replacement: a sublimation. At the same time, sublimation risks the forgetting of “reality,” as Samar notes, or reality, as Freud shows, when replaced by the other. Ironically, what, despite the impression of the contrary, is not forgotten in sublimation is that which connects reality and “reality.” Motivated by failure—the failure of the individual to be social and/or the failure of the social that deconstructs individual authorship, writing, in fact the individual—writing, I argue, is indeed the failure of reality because, to begin with, reality is a failure. Against the notion that writing is merely a repetition of reality that displaces its failure, but which nonetheless does not amount to it, ontology and failure somehow disappearing in writing, Samar, I argue, puts forth a notion of failure that precedes reality and “reality,” i.e. an ontological failure that defines both. Originating in disjunction between the individual and the social/real—as individual as it is social—writing, the middle space of “reality,” itself real/social, that disappears if the disjunction is collapsed, is a repetition of reality, *including its failure*, sublimation less the overcoming than the transposition of failure on another field, i.e. of not only “classmates chasing each other,” but as it is seen by

Daniel from the “highest,” furthest vantage point in which he fails to be among them, as “stories in the mind.” Irreducible, failure, Samar implies, is what makes reality and fiction real, and thus—that both are real implies that they do not merely reflect or correspond to each other, each having their own reality—disjunct. This, I argue, intimates that in its assertion of its own reality, the New Novel broaches a reality prior to fiction’s “reality” and reality narrowly defined, an ontological status broader than reality and also lent to “reality” that explains the circular dynamic in which the social renders real and the (prior) real renders social. This prior reality, Samar suggests, is defined by failure, so for reality and “reality” to have ontological reality, they too must be defined by failure, which is transposed from reality to “reality” via sublimation.

This ontology of failure, where failure lends reality, including to “reality,” shapes the form and content of the novel. This is most apparent in Daniel’s relationships—about which stories are told amidst his (attempts at) writing—which are structured in a curious way: multiply doubled, yet nonetheless failing. Daniel, for example, is given a first love, but he is unsure who it is: Apple or Orange, two of identical triplets (38). In any case, he cannot talk to her (35-6), in fact cannot even properly describe the group of which she is a part, there being “no word in Tagalog for *triplet*” (34). When he finally decides he is in love with Orange and musters up the courage to talk to her, he backs out and tells himself it was Peaches, the third sister, that he saw (39). This tripartite structure of his love life is duplicated in his friendship with three boys, who are copies of Daniel in different ways: Glen, a fellow writer (102), the newest of his friends (25) who ends up moving to Canada to be with family (99); Erik, Daniel’s oldest friend (230) who, like him, is separated from his mother (92) and who has the most to tell Daniel, but rarely speaks (100); and Michael, the one seemingly always with him (230), the one with him to the end, the first fan of his stories (8) and the teller of the final story of the novel, the story Erik could not tell

(228). As with his relation to the triplets, Daniel's friendships are founded on unrequited love, namely Erik's love for Daniel (70)—the repetition in opposite direction of Daniel's love for Orange—which only Michael is able to talk about (231)—akin to how Apple, the first girl he met, is the basis, but not the object, of Daniel's relation to the triplets (37)—with Glen dispelling the whole thing when he questions the existence of Atisan itself, the place where the relation took place—in the same way that Daniel dispels his cowardice through Peaches. Given such an indirect structure, a relation—with Orange via Apple, with Erik via Michael—is only possible, Samar implies, through triangulation, the repetitions—the three girls, the three boys, the relation with the former a mirror image of the relation with the latter—moreover, rather than affording fulfillment, expressing the failure of sociality. Having as their content unrequited love, i.e. the failure of sociality, which is dramatized in the form of multiply doubled fragments, of impossible indirectness, i.e. of the failure of sociality, character relations in the novel manifest the New Novel's double breaking—of the means of telling (form) and of what is being told (content)—of tradition—of the direct pursuit of the beloved, broadly, of a goal, such as writing the great Filipino novel that has a direct political allusion—to tell a story in its own way, in this case, as shaped by the ontology of failure, which lends it its own kind of political pertinence. That the characters are derivatives of each other intimates that they are, in part, products of the solipsism of the author, in whose mind, after all, they exist, their fictionality exhibited rather than concealed by the New Novel. At the same time, the repetitions, I argue, allude to the ways in which different people outside the novel are copies of each other, sociality made possible by similarity among the different that is nonetheless no guarantee against the failure of sociality. Rather than removed from it, the New Novel's "reality" in fact doubles reality through the

author's sublimation of the social/real that remains true to it through the repetition of its failure, the ontology of failure linking reality in and outside the novel.

Daniel's present relations—the loves and friendships that double each other—are doubled in yet other ways, failure—the content manifested by the relations and the form by which they manifest—permeating the novel. Language, as I imply in my description of the relations, is posited as the double of sociality/reality. That is, the failure of relations is coupled with the inability—by Daniel, by Erik—to speak—to Orange, to Daniel—in a way that forges direct and fulfilling sociality. In fact, there are no words one can say, e.g. to express the tenuous distinction between Daniel's love and lust for Apple and Orange, respectively (39), or Erik's forbidden, because homosexual, love for his best friend (70). Language is neither mere cause nor mere effect of the failure of sociality/reality; rather, the failure of language and of sociality, (like that) of form and of content, (like that) of “reality” and reality—language the constant across the binary oppositions—go together, each half of the pairs possessing reality through failure, which renders real. Due to this ontology of failure that posits sublimation less as the displacement than as the repetition of failure, Samar's New Novel has the same form/content throughout that, it is implied, repeats the form/content that characterizes the novel's outside, reality narrowly defined. Tellingly, the repetition of failure as the form/content of *Walong Diwata ng Pagkahulog* contrasts with Perez's treatment in *Cubao-Kalaw Kalaw-Cubao*, in which, as I discuss in the previous chapter, relational failure is traced as a colonial inheritance that is changed through historical transmission. More like Ben Marcus's *The Flame Alphabet* (2012), as I also discuss in the previous chapter, Samar's New Novel posits failure as its constant to unravel the convergence and doubling of the social and the linguistic, which are further doubled, namely, by the Oedipal. It becomes increasingly clear in the second half of the novel, after the shift in which

Daniel becomes the narrator, that the failures of Daniel's interpersonal relations in the present are repetitions of older familial failures. Virtually having no relationship with his father, an overseas Filipino worker in Saudi Arabia (48), Daniel unmistakably has a father figure in his *Tito Tony*, his father's brother, who still calls him by his childhood name, *Ayel*, and makes up for the father's absence in part by telling stories about their ancestors who, like Daniel *and* like his father and uncle, also have no father (169). Ultimately, these stories—sublimations, as Daniel implies when he describes “his [*Tito Tony*'s] storytelling [as] the filling up of the loss or lack [*pagkawala*] [of the father]” that is not enough, but “just the same [is] also what he does [*gayon din naman ako*]” (169), the remedy for failure a failure, failure the remedy for failure—are prevarications for what Tony really wants to say: “It may be that I am your real [*talaga*] father” (178). This confession is followed by yet another family story: one day, Daniel's father, who barely talks, especially to his mother, Daniel's *Lola Bining*, brings a woman home, then leaves again (179); the woman, who “also does not like to talk” (179), is left at the family home with her fish, the only ones with whom she speaks; the woman then leaves, leaving Tony to tend to her fish; she comes back and, through the fish, she and Tony talk to each other and come to an understanding (180-1); Daniel's father returns, his mother gets pregnant, gives birth to Daniel, then disappears (182-3), “like a mermaid,” Daniel imagines, “taken back by the sea” (180). Born premature—an event, a “*repressed memor[y]*,” that Daniel portrays as painful for not only the mother, but the infant—*Ayel* didn't cry (125) despite the trauma of the beginning, as if he had inherited his ancestors' inability to speak.

Irreducibly triangulated—taking place via a second father, via stories, via fish—perhaps solipsistic—projections of the storyteller—family relations in the novel amount to the lack of relation doubled by the lack of speech that—in the identity confusion; the surrogacy; the

transferential, ultimately unrequited, love; the division between the sexes in which men are always the one who love, including other men, but ultimately women—are then repeated by later relations. Even Tony’s confession, the potential exception to the rule, is articulated not as a certainty but as merely something that “may be” that, even if meant to resolve the failure of familial sociality through the uncle’s reclamation of the paternal position notwithstanding the uncertainty, but leads to yet another displacement of what is immediately present in favor of something not there, something also doomed to fail, i.e. Daniel’s search for his mother (184). Thus the multiple doublings of form and content, of language and sociality, of the familial and interpersonal—expressions of the ontological relation between “reality” and reality—seem to ultimately unravel Oedipal failure as their kernel; once revealed, however, this leads not to resolution but to further substitution. It is not only that the desire for the father leads to the search for the mother; the latter is from the beginning and in the end doubled by Daniel’s (attempts at) writing as writing, as it turns out, is a way to search for the mother, the mother ultimately what leads Daniel to write, at the same time that, in writing, Daniel desires the literal mother, but also writing. The failure presented from the beginning and at the end of the novel, its ostensible theme, namely, the failure to write, is thus as much a kernel as Oedipal failure, the two operating as displacements of the failure of “reality” and reality, writing and the mother substitutable sublimations of the failure that the New Novel posits as ontology. Having a natural inclination for storytelling, Daniel dreams of writing a novel, and not just stories, because, Samar writes, “he just has an abstract idea of the expanse [*lawak*], and height [*tayog*], when he thinks of [the novel as opposed to stories]. Like the view when on top of the mountain, on the edge of the cliff [*bangin*]. Right [*tama*], the sublime [*dakila*]” (11). In other words, what draws Daniel to the novel form is the sublime abyss (*bangin*), which he can see only from afar, when he is separate

from it—reminiscent of the gap between the individual and the social that gives rise to writing—despite his dream of “embracing or being embraced” by it (11). That is, what Daniel wants to write is the disjunction that gives rise to writing, i.e. what he is trying to do in writing is to repeat the failure that defines his sociality/reality. Ironically, this leads him to tell stories—about his loves, his friends, his family, and other people’s stories about them—rather than writing a novel, which leads him to think that he is failing. Then at the very end of the novel, in the last repetition of the scene of the fall, as he falls, Daniel sees “the wholeness [*kabuuuan*] of the story,” “order,” and on top of the cliff, his mother beside the *tiyanak*, a supernatural creature taking the form of a monstrous infant, who pushed him into the abyss (232). As it turns out, what Daniel had been seeking in writing is the mother, the source of order, what makes the story whole, the meaning he had been trying to make, and he is himself the *tiyanak*, the monstrous infant a metaphor for the misbehaving child’s resentment at being abandoned by the mother, which is the origin of Daniel’s alter ego Karl Kabute, the boy lured into the abyss by the *tiyanak* and which translates as Mushroom Karl, i.e. Karl who has no roots. That is, Daniel pushed himself into the abyss because he wants to write just as much as he wants to see the mother, the two simultaneously fulfilled by the fall. True enough, only as he falls does Daniel think, as is told in the beginning, that he finally has a “true story [*totoong kuwento*]” to write (1) at the same time that the closure of the gap brought about by the fall, the overcoming of failure as he finally becomes one with what he wants to write, ends the novel, i.e. ends writing.

The substitutability of things in the novel proliferates failure, thereby reinforcing the ontological status of “reality” and its relation to reality. At the same time, that writing finally happens while the writer falls, in between the vantage point that affords a view of the sublime and the ground in which writing, and everything else, ends, suggests that the failure that is

repeated as the novel's overarching motif is also double, in between, as in sublimation. Deeming it a symptom of his failure to write a novel, Daniel's storytelling, in fact, is the writing of a novel, not only in the literal sense that Samar is writing a novel about Daniel failing to write a novel, but in the sense that collectively, as Daniel himself realizes in the end and represents in the figure of the mother, his stories do amount to the telling of his life, the writing of a novel, if in fragmentary form. Storytelling, it turns out, is the fulfillment of the writing of the novel rather than the other way around. That failure in *Walong Diwata ng Pagkahulog* is not passed on, as in Perez's *Cubao-Kalaw Kalaw-Cubao*, or paused, as in Marcus's *The Flame Alphabet*, but rather repeated in its fixity—rendering plot analysis, unlike for Perez and Marcus' novels, irrelevant at the same time leading to proliferation of the same, the expression of one thing, i.e. failure, in different ways and on several levels in the novel—nonetheless leads to creation, namely, a novel, after all, that, moreover, both displaces and retains, i.e. sublimates, failure, thereby not so much, like socialist realism, corresponding to outside reality, but transposing its failure to the realm of “reality” to do something to rather than reflect it, perhaps through meaning-making. In some ways, the resultant creation not only tells the same thing that is already there in reality, i.e. failure, but the same story handed down to the Filipino in part through colonization, namely, the story of Oedipal sublimation. However, Samar tells this same story not to colonize the Filipino through the imposition of Western ontology, but to tell what is taken as a Western story in a Filipino way, i.e. through Filipino motifs or motifs not uniquely Filipino but made Filipino, namely, the doubles, the abyss, the friend dwarf, who lives in a mushroom, the overseas Saudi worker, the mermaid, the *nuno*, the *tiyanak*, and so on. These motifs, moreover, are not reified, but rendered new. Most of the family stories, for example, are told in chapters entitled *nuno*, a dwarf-like creature who dwells in the wilderness of which humans are supposed to be wary, less

they disturb their natural habitat or don't respect their spectral existence (49). Through word play—*nuno* being the root word for *ninuno*, the Filipino word for forefather—Samar expands its denotation to refer to the lost Oedipal father. Similarly, the *tiyanak*, a baby that turns into a monster, a goblin-like creature who pretends to be an infant and feeds on the living, is expanded to encapsulate Daniel's Oedipal family history. Rather than colonially defining the Filipino, Samar tells a colonial story through native Filipino figures rendered new; and rather than telling a revolutionary story that only ends in failure, Samar starts with failure and repeats it to argue that the Filipino "reality" he has presented is itself real. Thereby, the renewal of Filipino culture in the novel is implied as the potential beginning of a Filipino nation liberated from colonization, the new Filipino culture/nation.

Native Reality Out of Failure

Whereas the plot of Samar's *Walong Diwata ng Pagkahulog* is the lack of a linear plot, the novel ending as the fragments that make it up start to come together, Vizenor's *The Heirs of Columbus* (1991) has a linear plot, but it is secondary to the novel's striking feature: the reality it presents. This reality is put forth from the beginning, as the premise of the book is unfurled as though obvious when in fact it questions reality as we know it. Vizenor writes:

Christopher Columbus saw a blue light in the west, but "it was such an uncertain thing," he wrote in his journal to the crown, "that I did not feel it was adequate proof of land." That light was a torch raised by the silent hand talkers, a summons to the New World. Since then, the explorer has become a trickster healer in the stories told by his tribal heirs at the headwaters of the great river. The Admiral of the Ocean Sea, confirmed in the name of the curia and the crown, was an obscure crossblood who bore the tribal signature of survivance and ascended the culture of death in the Old World. (3)

In this remarkable passage, Vizenor uses Columbus's own writing to present history from the perspective of the Native American, in the process overturning not only the dominant

understanding of the New World, but Western ontology itself. Starting with Columbus's uncertainty, which deconstructs his image as a master navigator and discoverer of a New World despite his attribution of uncertainty to the "thing" rather than the person looking, Vizenor continues the story of the landfall of the Westerner in the Americas by depicting it as a summons by the natives who already live in what is already the New World. The natives, in Vizenor's account, not only already exist in a world that would be new to any Westerner because it was something that the natives built on their own, according to their own vision and experience of the world; they not only called Columbus to be present in the New World, the Westerner's presence not a prerequisite for newness, but one of the things that keeps the native world new, modernity, as Vizenor argues above, something that native cultures have and retain through dynamic interactions with others, as Vizenor implies again in this passage in articulating Columbus's arrival in the New World as the result of a "summons," a modern legal document, by the native to an other; they called on Columbus through native means, i.e. through the silent language of the hand that appears to Columbus as but an uncertain light because it is different from the inscriptions of the "culture of death" from which he comes, what Vizenor describes above as the terminal simulations of a melancholic civilization, the representations that fix content and colonize the other. This silent language that serves as the summons that would change the world is reminiscent of the native alternative to Western representation, the shadows that Vizenor describes above in terms of "the trace that [...] leaves a presence, [...] the silence that bears a referent of tribal memories, [...] the unsaid presence in names, the memories in silence, the imagination of tribal experiences" that "loosen the bonds of representation" (*Manifest* 72-3). If the summons that calls on Columbus to land in the native world is a shadow—a history buried (the trace, the unsaid, the silent) but also imagined (i.e. not purely historical, not necessarily

[f]actual) that bears on the present (it leaves a presence, bears a referent of lost memories) of the native—it is a summons of a different kind: it is not only written in another language that Columbus cannot fully comprehend; it also has a different temporality. On the one hand, consistent with Western ontology and its linear history, the summons can be read as an invitation that actually took place in the past that had world-changing consequences on the present; more radically, however, the summons, a simulation that deconstructs reality, can be interpreted as an artifice created by Vizenor, a product of “the imagination of tribal experiences” rooted in the trace of native histories (lost in linear Western history) but nonetheless originating in the present. In other words, the history that Vizenor presents, as implied by his rendering of the summons that lends the natives agency in the foundation of the New World as a shadow, is a story being told in the present about the past—like all history, including Western history—that, consistent with native ontology, makes room for silence and the lost and posits history not as linear but as constructed out of traces of the past in the present. Thus what in Western history is a foundational event, Columbus’s discovery of the Americas, is doubly overturned: not only did the natives summoned the Westerner to the New World; this summons comes from the present, from the postindian heirs of both the natives and the Westerner named in the title of the novel, *The (Native) Heirs of Columbus*. From the outset, then, Vizenor clarifies that the story he is about to tell, the stories of the Heirs of Columbus, the natives in the novel who claim lineage from Columbus through their stories of the survival of the native after the European Conquest of the Americas, which makes them both native and Western, i.e. postindian, is the history inherited by the postindian, the history survived and is to be survived through its reclamation, i.e. through survivance, through its telling in a way simultaneously new—the native, as from the beginning,

mixing with the other—and native—Columbus’s legacy told according to the terms of native ontology.

The passage continues with “since then,” the referent of which is ambiguous—Since when? Since natives actually summoned Columbus to the New World? From the moment that the postindian reclaims the history to which s/he is born, which allows the positing of Columbus as having been summoned by the native to the New World?—as if Vizenor is invoking Western linear and native deconstructive temporality simultaneously, the mixing of which is possible in native, but not Western, ontology. Since the Westerner was summoned to, rather than discovered, the New World, or at the moment that natives reclaim their history of colonization and own Columbus as one of their ancestors, whose arrival in the New World is part of modern native history, the event that turned natives into postindians, who in the present must reclaim history through stories, “the explorer,” Vizenor writes, “has become a trickster healer.” The trickster, it must be remembered, as Vizenor explains above, is “the original translator of tribal encounters” who “create[s] the tribe in stories and pronounce[s] the moment of remembrance as the trace of liberation” (*Manifest* 15). In other words, at the moment of the native reclamation of the European Conquest, when postindians claim Columbus’ landing in the New World as induced by the summons of natives, the Westerner—and not just any Westerner, but *the* Westerner who brought on the Conquest of the native—himself becomes a native/postindian warrior of survivance. That is, if natives reclaim Columbus, Columbus himself would tell stories of postindian survivance. Needless to say, this is not literally true, and no longer possible. But it happens, Vizenor clarifies, “in the stories told by his tribal heirs.” It is a reality, in other words, posited by postindians in their stories, a fictional “reality,” which, as I argue above, is not fictional in the sense that it is not real, but real in the sense that fiction is also real. By reclaiming

Columbus through their trickster stories, the postindian trickster, in effect, posits a native Columbus that is just as real as the Western Columbus. This, I argue, does not amount to the replacement of Columbus' Western representation with a native simulation that takes no account of reality. On the contrary, in claiming that his stories are also real, the trickster grounds them on reality, in particular its aspects that have been silenced and lost, which bear a trace in the present. So while Columbus, "the Admiral of the Ocean Sea," is "confirmed in the name of the curia and the crown," i.e. named as a subject of the two quintessential symbols of Western power and ontology, he is also posited by Vizenor the postindian trickster as a "crossblood [Vizenor devotes parts of the book on Columbus' rumored Jewish heritage] who [like natives] b[ears] the tribal signature of survivance." Columbus may not literally be a native, especially if identity is defined in terms of genetics (something that Vizenor also deconstructs in his dissociation of genes from crude biology), but structurally, Vizenor notes, he is native—ironically, because he is a crossblood— which lends reality to his reclamation as native. This is on top of the fact that even as Columbus is not literally native, postindians are the product of his conquest of the Americas, which makes them, in a real if not literal sense, descended from Columbus and gives them the right to reclaim him as their own, including as native. Despite his reclamation, Columbus is not whitewashed, as it were, by Vizenor. Columbus is, for example, quoted as depicting natives as natural servants, something that, as in the explorer's inability to comprehend the native summons to the New World, Vizenor has to follow up with the clarification that "he misconstrued a tribal pose" (4). Postindians are also not depicted as descended solely from the West. Upon landing, Columbus is, in this trickster account, "touched by a hand talker, a silent tribal wanderer, who wore a golden braid in her hair and carried two wooden puppets" (4). This hand talker who bears native culture, including the tradition of trickster narratives that, holding "two wooden puppets,"

she is ready to tell, is named by Vizenor Samana, after Samana Cay, believed to be the site of Columbus' first landfall in the Americas. Through the personification of a place and the sexual and affective connotations of the word *touch*, Vizenor depicts postindians as the offspring of the Western conqueror and the native land.¹⁰⁸ The chief spokesman of these native Heirs of Columbus is Stone Columbus, whose last name lends reality to his stories—"None of these stories," Vizenor writes, "would be true if he had not inherited an unwonted surname and the signature of survivance" (5)—and whose first name links him to native ontology—Stone is the name of the brother of "Naanabozho, the [...] tribal trickster who created the earth" (5). With this double heritage, the Heirs of Columbus, the postindian tricksters, "remember [and imagine/create] the best stories about their strain and estate [their injury and inheritance], and the genetic [Western and native] signature that would heal the obvious blunders in the natural world" (4).

Notably, history is not denied in *The Heirs of Columbus*; rather, the native Heirs of Columbus take history, including the failures native peoples suffered (notably, their subjection to Western powers and the physical and cultural genocide that enables it, i.e. the failure of sovereignty and survival), as the starting point for new ways of telling that history, according to native ontology, storytelling a manifestation of the survival of the native despite the failure imposed on it by Western ontology. Trickster stories, then, are sublimations of history, displacements that do not replace history, but rather transpose it into the realm of fiction not to erase its failures but to unfold what supposedly fails, i.e. native reality. Whereas in *Walong Diwata ng Pagkahulog*, the novel serves, as it were, as a repetitive argument on how this can be done—how fiction can tell a story at the core of Western ontology according to the ontology of the colonized and how (this) fiction is (as) real (as the fictions of Western ontology)—Vizenor's

The Heirs of Columbus takes this for granted, operating as if readers would grasp it from the outset. This affords Vizenor the opportunity to present native reality more profusely than just as a set of motifs to the extent that, in two middle chapters of the book, native reality penetrates and deconstructs Western ontology. Through Transom, an unconventional shaman, “a tent shaker and a graduate student at the same time” (54), Felipa Flowers, Stone Columbus’s wife, steals the remains of Christopher Columbus from Doric Michéd, who “pretended to be tribal when his timeworn crossblood heirs served his economic and political interests [but who] otherwise [...] denied his obscure associations and tribal responsibilities [...] trade[d ...] tribal remains and ceremonial objects” (47-8). The stealing of what Felipa points out are stolen—“discover[ed],” Doric corrects her—objects (50) happens in the Conquistador Club, headquarters of “the Brotherhood of American Explorers” (46), of which Doric is a member, under circumstances that can only be described as magical: Transom performs a ritual in which “silence, and then animal noises and human voices came from [his] tent. [...] The bear roared, and other animals and loud voices came from the medicine pouches in the tent. The shouts were in other languages. Several more loud sounds shivered in the concrete, and then silence in the vault” (57). By the time the club guards get to the vault, “Transom the shaman had vanished, and so had the four pouches and the silver casket [of the remains of Columbus]” (58). The return of native remains, indeed the reclamation of Columbus, in a way that does not make sense according to the terms of Western ontology but which is treated as real—Felipa ends up with the remains—hints at not only another way of looking at the world, but another reality. This presentation of native ontology is repeated in an even more consequential way in what happens next. Felipa finds herself in court, ostensibly a Western court, but an unusual one: Doric, supposedly the plaintiff, is, in a way, the one indicted, “shamed because he had compromised the [...] museum” (64);

“there was no material evidence to establish a crime, no evidence that the pouches and bones ever existed” (64); the judge, Beatrice Lord, sympathetic to natives, announced that “the [...] hearing would depend more on imagination than material representations, [...] an] approach [that] would favor tribal consciousness [...] in a way that] would never prevail at a criminal trial” (65), that “[Felipa] was not indictable [under the standards of a Western court], so the purpose of the hearing then is to discover what a crime means in this [...] case” (66). Native reality has not only penetrated Western ontology; it is proving exempt from Western ontology, in part due to Western erasure of the native (there is no evidence that what was stolen existed in the first place), at the same time that it would never fit in the Western ontology (tribal consciousness could have a hearing, but would never prevail in a more proper Western proceeding), this liminal position allowing it to question Western categories (e.g. what a crime means). The presentation of native reality from within Western ontology climaxes toward the end of the hearing, in a laser show performed by a shaman for Judge Lord in which she finds herself in the vault where the supposed crime took place and sees Transom “turned to a bear [...]”; his simulated cheeks and bear ears were covered with more and more black hair” (87). The ontological status of this simulation is uncertain. After seeing it, however, Judge Lord, an appellation that combines the curia and the crown, serving as a bureaucrat of Western ontology, declares, “Transom is a bear. [...] Legal issues of standing in federal court could be resolved with simulations” (87). The presentation of “reality” in fiction—native/new, Native American or Filipino—may just, Vizenor suggests, akin to how the ontology of the colonized/native is changed by Western colonization, change Western ontology. In moves like this, the New/native novel makes the case for the place of the reality of the native/colonized in the system that colonizes it, if only in sublimation, which may just change its representation, the system of representation, and the system itself.

Yet Others

In analyzing contemporary novels by following their symptomatic plot—history, as it were, by other means—in the previous chapter or recreating their subaltern reality—ontology, as it were, by other means—in this chapter, I show how literature is a continuation or transposition of the history I lay out in the first chapter, pausing/transmitting its trauma, thereby, within limits, working through it, or sublimating its failure to assert what fails as just as real as the dominant, thereby positing a world other than, and in, the established order in the present. As it turns out, the afterlife of trauma works through it and cultures formed in colonization (Filipino) or already in existence prior to genocidal conquest (Native American) can liberate from and do survive trauma, even translating or penetrating what colonizes so that the latter could, as it were, be colonized or made radically alien from within. These latter moves, as I elaborate in this chapter, rely on what I have been calling *reclamation*, the mechanism by which the subjected owns the colonizer's reasons for her subjection—e.g. the failure to form a nation—as a kernel of identity that she then uses as the foundation of the creation of the self against the colonizer. The result is something not unlike what happens in traumatic transmission, as I trace in the previous chapter, except it comes about not through the passing of time, but in sublimation, involving less waiting, passing on, and deferral and more displacement and transposition.

What are the other ways in which the trauma of empire unfolds, and how do they repeat and/or combat their traumatic constitution? What if, for example, what is reclaimed is not the identity disparagingly attached to the colonized in subjection, but rather the identity of the agent who subjects, the identity of the colonizer? That is, what if what the colonized reclaims is not the identity he is told he has, but the identity the colonizer ultimately wants him to have, the identity

not his “own,” but into which, in colonization, he is being integrated? What if the colonized not only adopts, but reclaims the ontology that colonizes him as his own? Or what if what happens is not reclamation, but something else altogether? What if, for example, the colonized rejects the identity associated to her by the colonizer and instead recovers other traditions or associations, i.e. other identities, to define herself not according to racist, colonial depictions, but otherwise, i.e. in ways that re-signify, rather than reclaim, “who” she is? And in what other ways, given trauma’s deconstruction of space and time, do the traumatized traverse the before, the after, and the present; the here and now and the previously there and about to come; this world and other worlds? What other languages and times emerge as deep wounds reopen and heal? Yet other novels are calling to be read.

NOTES

¹ In Tiongson et al., ed., *Positively No Filipinos Allowed: Building Communities and Discourse* (2006), epub edition (page numbers not static and have thus been omitted).

² For a history of American studies as a field, see Donald E. Pease, “New Perspectives on US Culture and Imperialism,” the companion to Kaplan’s introductory essay in *Cultures of United States Imperialism*, ed. Kaplan and Pease (1993). An older genealogy traces the origin of American studies in Vernon Louis Parrington’s publication of *Main Currents in American Thought* (1927); postcolonial studies, on the other hand, is often said to have been inaugurated by Edward Said’s *Orientalism* (1978); earlier works in the field include those of Frantz Fanon, e.g. *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961). In the field of American history, including US diplomatic history, William Appleman William’s *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy* (1959) is considered to be the foundational text that directed attention to US imperial history, part of the Wisconsin school, if still in an Ameri-centric way. For a genealogy of American historiography on US imperialism, see McCoy et al., “On the Tropic of Cancer: Transitions and Transformations in the US Imperial State,” pp. 7-11, in McCoy and Scarano eds., *Colonial Crucible: Empire in the Making of the Modern American State* (2009). For more on revisionist historians, see Wiener, “Radical Historians and the Crisis in American History, 1959-1980” (1989). For the insulations of both Philippine and American historiography from empire, see Kramer, *The Blood of Government*, pp. 14-8. For Philippine studies, see E. San Juan, Jr., “One Hundred Years of Producing and Reproducing the Filipino” (1998), which I discuss in more depth in chapter 3. Against Philippine and other area studies, Filipino American studies, like Asian American studies, can be said to be disciplinary manifestations of the postcolonial tenet, “We are here because you were there,” part and parcel of the return of the formerly colonized to the métropole. In Victor Bascara’s *Model-Minority Imperialism* (2006). Bascara explains that, along with “we are not new here,” “we are here because you were there” “has come to be significant to Asian Americans” (xxiv). “Originally invoked by and for immigrants to England from its former colonies” (xxiv-xxv), Bascara explains that the slogan functions to reveal the untenability of “narratives of uplift and civilization, as well as progress and development (globalization) and inclusion and tolerance (multiculturalism) [... as] the disappeared history of US imperialism emerges” partly through the “dramatiz[ation of] the process by which [Asian America] and US imperialism disappeared in the first place” (xxv). This disappeared history of US imperialism “reveal[s] contradictions embedded within American culture, in the form of underdevelopment, exclusion, and intolerance” (xxv). “In its critique of multiculturalism, Asian American culture recalls the violences and structural inequalities of US imperialism. Simultaneously, in its recalling of US imperialism, Asian American culture more pointedly critiques the very multiculturalism that enabled it to be recognized in the first place” (xxv). In his genealogy of Filipino American studies cited above, Bonus claims that the formation of field out of Asian American studies came along with the shift in Filipino American focus from “immigration and settlement to [...] the larger histories of imperialism, colonization, global capitalism, racialization, and gendered labor, and their attendant contemporary manifestations.” In my research, I find Asian American scholarship to be as cognizant of empire as Filipino American studies, the past legacy and present interventions of empire, after all, something that Filipino and most Asian American subjects share. Interestingly, the shift toward empire coincides with the

shift away from the (white) ethnicity model of race in critical race studies. See Michael Omi and Howard Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States* (1986).

³ The description of queer theory as focused on “the mismatches between sex, gender, and desire” comes from Annamarie Jagose’s *Queer Theory: An Introduction* (1997). Teresa de Lauretis is credited with coining the term *queer theory* in a conference held at the University of California, Santa Cruz in 1990 and in “Queer Theory: Lesbian and Gay Sexualities” (1991) in *differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies*. My political generalization of *queer* draws in part from more recent theorizations. Describing how marriage in modernity becomes less about establishing alliances between men (kinship) or families socially foreign to each other (exogamy) as “family and descent [become reckoned more] through households, affinity, and blood” (122-3), in *The Trouble with Normal* (1999) Warner shows how, as intimated by the notion that it is “the state’s business [...] ‘to foster stable, long-term’ coupling” (112), the state comes to be understood as bound to its ability to cultivate families, hence its regulation of (intimacy through) marriage. The state hands out special status and privileges to married couples that have nothing to do with marriage—“the only kind of benefit [...] necessarily linked to marriage [being the right to get a] divorce” (120)—due to marriage’s ability to “couple with the state” (103)—in the process consummating heteronormative intimacy and its unique demand for recognition and rejecting the more generic “right to intimate association” (120)—in mutual “certification” (125). To the extent that it is extended to gays, marriage, Warner argues, is expanded to make for good gays, i.e. to “normalize the ‘behavior’ and self-understanding of queers” (111). This consists in the negation of the radicalism of *queer*, accomplished partly through the focus on identity or lifestyle, which are easily commodified, and on marriage, imposed by the state as intimacy’s essential form, covering up what Warner calls “sexual cultures” (86). Delegated as an “‘affective unit,’ a social institution meant to produce ‘emotional satisfaction and happiness’” that in turn solidifies social cohesion (27), the family, Eng similarly shows in *The Feeling of Kinship* (2010), is fertile ground not only for social reproduction, but for capitalist expansion in its incorporation, especially since the rise of neoliberalism in the late 1970s, of forms previously considered threats to the intimate. Illustrated by “the merging of an increasingly visible and mass-mediated queer consumer lifestyle [...] with [...] juridical protections for gay and lesbian rights to privacy and intimacy [...] and the legalization of same-sex marriage” (26), this capitalist expansion of the family, far from the recognition of queer “particularity and difference,” amounts to the inscription of what was formerly the starting point for alternative social formations within the state and economy (30). As well as providing yet another market for capitalism, this reinforces “the conjugal family and its Oedipal arrangements as the only legally recognizable and tenable household structure” (31) and “the state’s role as the legitimate arbiter of rights and guarantor of freedom and liberty” (28). What was queer thus becomes not only included in but promoter of the Oedipal family, an inherently heteronormative mode of intimacy; of the consumerist aestheticization of sexuality; and of the liberal discourse of choice, rights, property, the abstract public sphere, and the arbiter state. This conflation of heteronormativity, consumerist-sexuality/citizen-consumerism, and liberalism, Eng argues, is rooted in the rise of neoliberalism in the late 1970s predicated on the expansion and integration of markets, of which the queer became a horizon for a new kind of imperialism.

⁴ This formulation comes from *The Decolonized Eye*, in which Sarita Echavez See writes, “Filipino America owes its existence to the monumentally violent and monumentally forgotten

inclusion of the Philippines into the United States [...] when the Philippine American War broke out in 1899” (xi-xii).

⁵ For screen memories, see Freud, “Screen Memories” (1899), Michael Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory* (2009), and John Fletcher, *Freud and the Scene of Trauma* (2013).

⁶ The openness of this more consistent and concrete notion is illustrated in chapter 2 in my juxtaposition of two possible interpretations: Caruth’s deconstructive transmission and Ruth Leys’s symbolic narrativization.

⁷ Consistent with this conviction that “the Filipino had to be educated as a good colonial,” Constantino notes that “although the government services were Filipinized, although the Filipinos were being prepared for self-government, the department of education was never entrusted to any Filipino” (179).

⁸ “Linear history,” Ileo adds, “is interrupted by the ‘duality’ of much of Filipino behavior [in the] war [collaborator or revolutionary?], [...] eas[ing] its forgetting” (11).

⁹ In *The Blood of Government: Race, Empire, the United States, and the Philippines* (2006), historian Paul A. Kramer writes: “Over 4,000 US troops and an estimated 50,000 Filipino troops were dead. Approximately 75 percent of US deaths had been from noncombatant causes [...]. But US sovereignty was purchased mostly in the lives of Filipinos, especially through losses to epidemics. While Americans had feared tropical ‘degeneration,’ American troops had brought with them numerous diseases uncommon in the islands [...]. The destruction of villages led to their abandonment by Filipinos and dislocation into harsh, remote mountain environments; the burning of rice stores and the killing of livestock produced malnutrition on a vast scale that, in turn, provided almost ideal conditions of vulnerability to disease. The policy of ‘attraction’ and close interactions between American troops and Filipinos in garrisoned towns, used as evidence of benevolence, also provided efficient vectors of disease transfer. Even more perfect, however, was ‘reconcentration,’ which brought together malnutrition, overcrowding, unsanitary conditions, and social dislocation in a formula for mass disease and mortality. The specific loss of human life, while staggering in scale, is still unknown: Glenn May finds a disturbing ‘150,000 missing Filipinos’ in the Batangas region alone. According to Ken De Bevoise, ‘reconcentrated’ Batangas may have had the highest mortality rate not only in the Philippines but in the world at that moment. The estimate of 250,000 Filipino war deaths appears conservative” (157).

¹⁰ Regarding the Spanish-American War, Hofstadter points out in “Cuba, the Philippines, and Manifest Destiny” (1952) that “the so-called ‘capture’ of Manila [...] was actually carried out in co-operation with the Spaniards, who were allowed to make a token resistance, and in exclusion of the Filipino patriots under Aguinaldo” (166). Noting that “the American public [...] never dreamed that the war would lead to the taking of the Philippines, of whose existence it was hardly aware. Starting a war for a high-minded and altruistic purpose and then transmuted it into a war for annexation was unimaginable” (161), Hofstadter nonetheless stresses the sense of inevitability, indeed destiny, in the US taking of the Philippines after the war with Spain: “The acts that first involved their country with the fate of the Philippines were willed and carried out by others and were made objects of public discussion and decision only *after* the most important commitments had been made. The public will was not freely exercised upon the question, and for the citizens at large, who were in the presence of forces they could not understand or control, the rhetoric of Destiny may have been a way of softening and ennobling the *fait accompli* with which they were presented. But what of the men whose wills were really effective in the matter?”

If we examine their case, we find that the manufacturers of inevitability believed deeply in their own product. [...] What was involved was not an attempt to sell an idea to the public but a mode of communication in which the insiders felt thoroughly at home” (177-8). Similarly, in *Race over Empire* (2004), historian Eric T. Love quotes President William McKinley as saying upon acquisition of the Philippines, “[T]hey came to us as a gift from the gods. [...] I did not know what to do with them” (166). This was part of “an ambivalence toward and lack of basic knowledge about the Pacific that was detectable throughout the nation” (162). As McKinley contemplated what to do, Henry Cabot Lodge, then senator, wrote to him saying that ‘the United States freed them so ‘Americans alone should decide their fate’” (172). Love describes the Spanish-American War as “end[ing] when representatives of the United States and Spain signed a peace protocol on 12 August [1898]. Hours later in the Philippines, American forces overwhelmed the Spanish garrison in Manila” (174). Love notes that, in contrast to the other Spanish colonies at stake after the war, “the Philippines involved a more difficult and unprecedented set of decisions [for the US]; their disposition did not involve the Monroe Doctrine or defending the nation’s shoreline” (175). “The treaty ending the war with Spain was [not] signed [until] 10 December 1898” (178). “In it, Spain surrendered the entire Philippine archipelago to the United States in exchange for twenty million dollars” (179). For a more detailed account of the Philippine-American War, see Miller, *Benevolent Assimilation: The American Conquest of the Philippines, 1899-1903* (1984). Miller’s framing of the US colonization of the Philippines as “benevolent assimilation” is part and parcel of what Love critiques as overly simplistic in historiographies of US imperialism. For attempts by Philippine revolutionaries to seek support from the US and other western powers against Spain, see Anderson, *Under Three Flags* (2007). For a more comprehensive account of the history of US-Philippines relations, see Kramer, *The Blood of Government: Race, Empire, the United States, and the Philippines* (2006). Interestingly, all of these historical texts discuss US imperialism in its relation to race.

¹¹ Caruth writes, “In its most general definition, trauma describes an overwhelming experience of sudden or catastrophic events in which the response to the event occurs in often delayed, uncontrolled repetitive appearance of hallucinations and other intrusive phenomena” (24). In a later iteration, Caruth writes, “In its general definition, trauma is described as the response to an unexpected or overwhelming violent event or events that are not fully grasped as they occur, but return later in repeated flashbacks, nightmares, and other repetitive phenomena. Traumatic experience, beyond the psychological dimension of suffering it involves, suggests a certain paradox: that the most direct seeing of a violent event may occur as an absolute inability to know it; that immediacy, paradoxically, may take the form of belatedness” (137). Epub edition.

¹² Caruth writes, “This truth, in its delayed appearance and its belated address, cannot be linked only to what is known, but also to what remains unknown in our very actions and our language” (14).

¹³ Caruth writes, “The historical power of the trauma is not just that the experience is repeated after its forgetting [which emphasizes the commencing of a history of repetitions, as it were, even a history of the same], but that it is only in and through its inherent forgetting that it is first experienced at all [which emphasizes the historical character of the repetition, the way that it is bound to that first experience precisely because the latter is forgotten and without which it wouldn’t be the experience that it is, i.e. a traumatic experience]” (33).

¹⁴ “History,” Caruth writes, “like trauma, is never simply one’s own, [...] history is precisely the way we are implicated in each other’s traumas” (42).

¹⁵ In Hardt and Negri’s account, the contradictions of US sovereignty take two forms: the underside (“hid[ing] ingeniously”), i.e. the willful ignorance of the existence of Native Americans and the colonial inheritance of slavery (169-72); and what can be referred to as the anachronism or the aberration, i.e. Theodore Roosevelt’s colonial divergence from Woodrow Wilson’s internationalist vision (175). The contradictions, in other words, are referred to as the underside of “utopia” or as an alternative solution inconsistent with utopia or not as “utopian” (169, 175).

¹⁶ Hardt and Negri write, “There are many reasons for the United States’ privileged position in the new global constitution of imperial authority. It can be explained in part by the continuity of the United States’ role (particularly its military role) from the central figure in the struggle against the USSR to the central figure in the newly unified world order. From the perspective of constitutional history we are tracing here, however, we can see that the United States is privileged in a more important way by the imperial tendency of its own Constitution” (182).

¹⁷ Quoted in Campomanes “Filipinos” 73. William Henry Seward is, of course, Abraham Lincoln’s Secretary of State.

¹⁸ Even as his account largely concurs with postmodern narratives of the post-WWII order, Wolin argues that postmodernism is unable to confront the nature of Superpower. See p. 566 and pp. 581-6. Wolin defines *corporate reorganization* as the way in which “functions, branches, and personnel were eliminated as preliminary to the adoption of a more corporate ethos” (561), adding that “at the same time, military expenditures steadily increased with the aim of producing a more flexible, technologically sophisticated military force capable of defeating enemies who relied on guerilla strategies rather than massive confrontations” (561). “It is not only that the state and the corporation have become partners; in the process, each has begun to mimic functions historically identified with the other” (588). Precisely because of this, “the dynamics of Superpower are far stronger than those of earlier empires because it is conjoined with the dynamics of globalizing capitalism” (591). Wolin derives the term *uncollapsed capitalism* from Marx, who theorized the collapse of capitalism as a prelude to communism. Inverting Marx, as it were, Wolin argues that uncollapsed capitalism is a hybrid of capitalism, the essential features of which he notes above, and communism, which Wolin associates with “subordinat[ion] to economic mandates and imperatives” (566). I remove the reference to Marx in the quoted passage in order to make a distinction between Marx’s theorization of communism and what Wolin is mainly referring to, i.e. economism or economic determinism. Wolin characterizes this regime of uncollapsed capitalism through its hallmarks: “the economy of opposition is best represented by the circularity in the conception of a ‘market-place for competing ideas’” (575); “the ‘new economy’ needed only temporary workers and Superpower needed only occasional citizens” (576); “‘governability’ became the precondition of government and was rhetorized as ‘law and order’” (577); and “libertarianism served as the fantasy of right-wing liberalism” (577). Likewise, Wolin describes *inverted totalitarianism* in great detail, which can be summed up by the way in which it is depoliticizing rather than mobilizing, arousing futility rather than power, resting on fear and suspicion rather than collective effort (592). “While Nazi ideology, epitomized in the demand for *Lebensraum*, was the driving force behind the quest for empire (*Reich*), inverted totalitarianism is powered by the ever-expanding power made available by the

integration of science and technology into the economy of capitalism” (593). Wolin elaborates on the contradiction between capitalism and democracy when he writes that “in its structure, ideology and human relationships, capitalism was producing human beings unfitted for democratic citizenship: self-interested, exploitative, competitive, striving for inequalities, fearful of downward mobility. One’s neighbor was either a rival or a useful object. As the world of capital became steadily more enveloping and the claims of the political more anachronistic, capital became the standard of the ‘real,’ the ‘true world.’ By that measure democracy—as the carrier of the common good whose promotion required a strong element of egalitarianism, cooperation, and disinterestedness—appeared as untrue, falsified by reality” (597).

¹⁹ Dictionaries locate the first modern use of the term *imperialism* in the nineteenth century (as early as 1826, if not 1800), with the adjectival form, *imperial*, located even earlier (1325), both deriving from the Latin *imperium*, the noun form of *imperare*, which means to command, to rule, or to conquer, as in the expression *divide et impera*, anachronistically attributed to Philip of Macedon. Consistent with this genealogy, imperialism has conventionally denoted the extension or consolidation of rule and authority across established borders, usually over another entity deemed foreign (such as another state or a colony), which thereon becomes dependent or subjugated, as a means of increasing power. By now, dictionaries recognize that imperialism can involve direct territorial acquisition or indirect control, political and/or economic control, military force and/or diplomacy. Similarly, in *Empire* (2000), Hardt and Negri argue that imperialism is a function or tendency of capitalism due to capital’s basis in the accumulation of new value, i.e. value that is not already a part of it. To the Marxist scholarship on which their argument is based, Hardt and Negri add that the modern boundaries of old imperialism, with colonial powers operating in their own spheres, made such imperialism untenable, leading to its supersession by a new imperialism more compatible with capital, what they call *empire* proper (see ch. 3.1). In empire scholarship, historian Alfred McCoy, in the introduction to *Endless Empire* (2012), defines “colonial empire as a form of global governance in which a dominant power exercises control over other peoples through direct territorial rule (e.g. colonies, mandates, or protectorates) involving military domination, economic exploitation, and cultural conditioning,” adding that this can transform into *informal empire*, “a relationship in which a national ... imperial elite ... exercises a dominant influence over ... the subjected elite in another nation ... with none of the formal structures of empire” (6). This is preceded by the articulation in “On the Tropic of Cancer” (2009) by McCoy et al. of empire as “a form of global governance in which a dominant power exercises control over the destiny of others through direct territorial rule (e.g., colonies) or indirect influence (e.g., military, economic, or cultural leverage” (4). In “On Degrees of Imperial Sovereignty” (2006), colonial anthropologist Ann Laura Stoler rearticulates empire as “imperial formations, macropolities whose technologies of rule thrive on the production of exceptions and their uneven and changing proliferation” (128). Stoler insists that “imperial formations have never been ‘steady states’ [... in the sense of] securely bounded [...] firmly entrenched, [...] regular [or] well regulated, [...] but are rather] macropolities in constant formation” (135-6). Stoler also notes that “colonial empires have long coexisted with metropolitan republics and in dynamic synergy with them” (133), with “claims to universalism [being] founding principles of imperial inequalities” (135). Far from being “intent only to clarify borders, establish “order,” and reduce the zones of ambiguity” (139), empires are, in fact, invested in “geopolitical [and other] ambiguities” (139). This is indicated by the way in which

“all [imperial contexts] are founded on graduated variations and degrees of sovereignty and disenfranchisement—on multiplex criteria for inclusions and sliding scales of basic rights” (139). Stoler’s characterization is substantiated by revisionist histories of American foreign policy. Josep M. Fradera’s “Reading Imperial Transitions” (2009), for instance, points out that what is truly exceptional in empires is the colony, which is excluded or treated differently as the realm of exception in which liberal rights do not apply. Fradera explains the reason behind this: “Unlike the situation during the ancien régime, the liberal states could not create inequality other than as an exceptional regime” (46). As such, liberal imperial regimes were characterized by “differing rights in a single political zone” (47); “dual mandates and indirect rule giv[ing] credibility to the creation [...] of special regimes and situations”; the “reproduc[tion of] mechanisms of social and political heterogeneity” (48); “divergent social relations, a culture of differentiation within the general republican framework, and supporting [...] jurisprudence” (50). Fradera also argues that US nation-building amounts to internal colonialism that, as in external imperialism, posits the US as having the right of possession in contrast to other subjects unqualified for liberal rights. Through the logic of exception in the regime of liberal rights, the US legitimated the unequal incorporation of essentially colonial subjects into the nation as part of its project of imperialist nationhood. Thomas McCormick, in “From Old Empire to New” (2009), continues this line of thought in arguing that the grounds for imperialism predicated on colonial exception—whether “internal” or “external”—had been laid in “the American Revolution itself, which was not only a war against empire but a war for empire” (64). More theoretically, Fradera writes that “the Republic of Washington and Jefferson was very conspicuously imperial in the double sense of not accepting any tutelage from the preceding powers and in its desire to incorporate adjacent territories without recognizing the hypothetical rights of their owners, whether native peoples of the French and Spanish empires and their successors” (39).

²⁰ The terms *imperialism* and *empire* refer to one and the same thing: one is the practice, the other is the sovereign or site; similarly, *imperial* refers to the realm, *imperialist(ic)* describes the act. That is, no change in the mode or form of power is captured by the semantic distinction. I agree, however, with Hardt and Negri’s claim that the geopolitical form I’m identifying as American differs from modern imperialism and harks back to the ancient imperial model of Rome, but add that both fall under imperialism.

²¹ This difficulty is documented in scholarly history. In the field of American history, including US diplomatic history, it was not until William Appleman William’s *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy* (1959) that US imperial history started to be recognized in a field focused on US foreign relations. Even then, revisionist historians were subject to marginalization and attack in the Cold War era, during which consensus historians revived the doctrine of American exceptionalism. Amy Kaplan notes that before *Cultures of United States Imperialism* (first published in 1993), empire was missing in the study of American culture just as the United States was absent in the postcolonial study of imperialism. Anthropologist Ann Laura Stoler notes that as late as 2004, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld is quoted, if conflatedly, as saying that “We don’t do empire.” For a genealogy of American historiography on US imperialism, see McCoy et al., “On the Tropic of Cancer: Transitions and Transformations in the US Imperial State,” pp. 7-11, in McCoy and Scarano eds., *Colonial Crucible: Empire in the Making of the Modern American State* (2009). For more on revisionist historians, see Wiener, “Radical Historians and the Crisis in American History, 1959-1980” (1989). For the insulations

of both Philippine and American historiography from empire, see Kramer, *The Blood of Government: Race, Empire, the United States, and the Philippines* (2006), pp. 14-8. For the absence of empire in the study of American culture, see Kaplan, ““Left Alone with America,”” one of the introductory essays in *Cultures of United States Imperialism* (1993) eds. Kaplan and Pease. For more recent disavowals of US empire, see Stoler, “On Degrees of Imperial Sovereignty” (2006).

²² Epub edition.

²³ In “Cuba, the Philippines, and Manifest Destiny” (1952), historian Richard Hofstadter writes that “during the 1870’s and 1880’s the American public had been notably quiescent about foreign relations. There had been expansionist statesmen, but they had been blocked by popular apathy, and our statecraft had been restrained. [...] The history of the 1890’s is the history of public agitation over expansionist issues and of quarrels with other nations” (150-1). Regarding the Spanish-American War in particular, “Americans seemed to want not merely the freedom of Cuba but a war for the freedom of Cuba. [...] The civic frustrations of the era created also a restless aggressiveness, a desire to be assured that the power and vitality of the nation were not waning” (158). Hofstadter notes the discrepancy in public thinking regarding the war and actual colonization: “The big-business-conservative-Republican-McKinley element, which was overwhelmingly hostile to this romantic and sentimental war, quickly became interested in the imperialism that grew out of it. The popular Populist-Democratic-Bryanite element, which had been so keen for the war, became the stronghold—although by no means resolute or unbroken—of opposition to the fruits of war. This much, however, must be said of both the populace and the business community: if the matter had been left either to public clamor or to business interests, there would have been no American entrance into the Philippines in 1898” (163). There is, however, a prominent group of “politicians, intellectuals, and publicists” seemingly bent on imperialism from the beginning: “Senator Henry Cabot Lodge, Theodore Roosevelt, John Hay, Senator Albert J. Beveridge, Whitelaw Reid, editor of the *New York Tribune*, Albert Shaw, editor of the *American Review of Reviews*, Walter Hines Page, editor of the *Atlantic Monthly*, and Henry and Brooks Adams” (163). Most of these personalities relied on the “navalist theories” of Alfred Thayer Mahan (164). The ostensible motivations and/or rationalizations for imperialism include “the potential markets of the East, the White Man’s Burden, the struggle for existence, ‘racial’ destiny, American traditions of expansion, the dangers of a general war if the Philippines were left open to a European scramble, the almost parental duty of assuming responsibility for the allegedly childlike Filipinos, the incapacity of the Filipinos for self-government” (172).

²⁴ See Welch ed., *Imperialists vs. Anti-Imperialists: The Debate over Expansionism in the 1890s* (1972). For the broader context, see Hofstadter, “Cuba, the Philippines, and Manifest Destiny” (1952) and Bouvier ed., *Whose America?: The War of 1898 and the Battles to Define the Nation* (2001). For the uncertainty and contradiction of the views statesmen expressed on the problematic case of the Philippines, see Love, *Race over Empire: Racism and US Imperialism, 1865-1900* (2004), ch. 5.

²⁵ Campomanes derives the claim of the US as posited in nature in the frontier thesis laid out by Frederick Jackson Turner in “The Significance of the Frontier in American History” (1893), later incorporated into *The Frontier in American History* (1921). The claim of the US as modernity itself comes from the declaration by William Henry Seward, Abraham Lincoln’s Secretary of

State, that “the story of American [national] development [is] the most important secular event in the history of the human race.” The term “genetic imperiousness,” Campomanes points out, comes from a “long tradition of outsider commentary” on US empire (“Filipinos”).

²⁶ Campomanes notes that US imperialism’s political/economic alignment reveals how one dominant stream of US anti-imperialism “(Carnegie, Schurz, Bryan and others)” coincided with “the dominant position of American business interests [... i.e.] that ‘formal empire’ was unnecessary for the United States to become a mighty power or the mightiest power in the century to come” (“1898” 137). McCormick makes a similar, perhaps more nuanced argument when he suggests that “the ‘Great Debate’ between imperialists and anti-imperialists was actually a triangular battle of wills, power, and ideas ultimately won by a third group one might dub imperial pragmatists” (70). In *Model-Minority Imperialism* (2006), Victor Bascara traces a similar epistemic shift in the 1890s. In Bascara’s account, “the United States as empire became an idea that failed to outlive the decades surrounding the turn of the century” (19). This is because the American colonization of the Philippines in 1898 marked a turning point in which the United States became an empire in the old, direct, territorial sense at the same time that it saw the emergence of a “newly global economy” that would allow it to evade being designated as such (13). Bascara suggests that the US perceptively attempted to dominate this newly global economy not through direct colonization, but by slowly replacing the gold standard and “unifying the modern world” under a single currency (14). The gold standard would, of course, not be abandoned by the US until 1933 and the US dollar would not achieve its status as international exchange standard until Bretton Woods (1944), so there are two world wars and the Great Depression that Bascara needs to account for if the 1890s are to be marked as pivotal. What did happen around the 1890s was the pegging of the Philippine peso to the US dollar with the passage of the Philippines Coinage Act of 1903 in the United States Congress. This is one of the first times in which this was ever done, at a time when the Philippines was under American colonial rule. What can be more precisely said, then, is that the colonization of the Philippines was pivotal to US imperial history as it both instantiated US imperialism in the old, European sense and provided the US with initial ground on which to strategize and experiment with tactics aimed at dominating the emerging world order, what, after WWII, would turn the United States into a dominant world power as a new kind of empire. Bascara does provide useful characterizations when he describes the new mode empire invented by the US as relying on the logic of money. Bascara explains that US imperialism is given over to abstraction and representation (15-6) and proceeds through the subjectivation of others as domesticated minorities (either as model, illegal, or criminal) and of subjects as citizen-consumers, its keywords being multiculturalism and globalization rather than colonization (5-13). The idea of the US experimenting in the Philippines is a view also adopted by the historians of *Colonial Crucible* (2009). In “On the Tropic of Cancer,” for example, McCoy et al. show how akin to the way in which “Europe used its colonies as ‘laboratories of modernity’ for ‘experiments in social engineering’” (5), “unprecedented challenges” in the colonies (with the “alien tropical terrain,” not to mention the inhabitants) led to unprecedented control, “stretch[ing] the capacities of [US] statecraft to the breaking point, providing both the need and the opportunity for new state forms and capabilities” (6). “Free from the gaze of far-off Washington, the more ambitious colonial officials and their private-sector partners conducted bold social experiments, which would have been difficult within domestic constraints, that later migrated homeward to contribute to a more

activist [or interventionist] federal government [and coercive social control] across a broad spectrum of administration” (7). Ultimately, McCoy et al. argue that colonial imperialism, in effect, set the precedent for the national security state (26)

²⁷ McCoy et al. write that in 1898, “American imperialists inherit[ed] a series of late Spanish imperial states that were in the midst of [...] liberal renovation,” the innovations of which the US colonial state adopted (12). More broadly, “the British and American empires shared, in varying degrees, direct colonial rule and indirect controls, altruism and self-interest, and plans for retention and self-rule, but the US was distinctive in the speed with which it distilled altruism, self-rule, and indirect empire into a supple global system” (25), leading to “the formation of an agile, transnational imperial state for more effective global governance” (3). McCoy et al. name “a model census, modern Benthamite prisons, centralized police, and empowered executives” as some of the innovations the US adopted in its colonies (12). They also argue that its new imperialism explains how “for most of the imperial age Washington generally avoided the pitfalls of conquest and operated globally through episodic military incursions and economic influence” (5). “This novel hegemonic strategy had many advantages for the newly imperial United States. It defused the power keg of international resentment sparked by formal colonial rule; it established the United States as a powerful global broker in the resolution of international disputes; it provided a powerful veneer of international legitimacy to the hemispheric claims of the Monroe doctrine; it effectively rebranded continuous US military interventions in the circum-Caribbean as efforts to safeguard the sovereignty of vulnerable nations; and, finally, it co-opted foreign elites in advancing American interests. To manage this hegemonic system, the United States avoided the verticality of other imperial administrations in favor of a decentered yet integrated foreign policy network known in the late twentieth century as the ‘national security state’ and originating in Elihu Root’s tireless efforts to manage America’s empire of islands” (26)

²⁸ Campomanes is referring to Williams’ *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy* (1959) and Pomeroy’s *American Neo-Colonialism: Its Emergence in the Philippines and Asia* (1970). In developing his own position, Campomanes argues that both the reductionist economic approach (“the automatic association of US imperial and national ‘growth’ with the so-called inherent expansionism of US capitalist development”) and the denial of American exceptionalism (“an always operative incredulity in the face of the ‘special’ US imperial and national claim to novelty”) make US imperialism difficult to recognize (“1898” 136). On the one hand, capital is put at the forefront at the expense of US sovereignty; on the other, the particular nature of US imperialism is missed, thereby disabling its recognition altogether. In contrast, Campomanes argues “that economic factors and explanations [...] in the study of US imperialism have to be seen as a matter of (and answerable to) an open-ended and highly contingent politics” (137). This would, in turn, refute two problematic axioms—the placement of US imperialism only after WWII; rooting imperialism as exclusively a function of capitalism—which, Campomanes points out, “were partly the result [...] of how 1898 and its legacies [...] had been and remain effectively reduced by US nationalist historiography and textbook wisdom to the status of historical anomalies” (138). To Campomanes’s list of the instances of US imperialism, I would add that warring with the two largest empires of the modern world—the British during the Revolution and in 1812 to sever itself from empire, the Spanish in the Spanish-American War to challenge an old empire—as well as, as a set of colonies (in its prehistory as a

nation-state, as it were), fighting in the French-Indian War (1754-1763) to witness the first time that a modern empire lost considerable colonial possessions (all but one of France's north American possessions)—reinforces this credibility of the US as anti-imperialist. McCormick provides a more comprehensive and thorough history of US imperialism in "From Old Empire to New" (2009). McCormick, however, puts the various forms and episodes of US imperialism together—formal, semiformal, informal; revolutionary, continental, overseas, diplomatic, free trade, internationalist, globalized, back again—to argue that, while anti-imperialist, they amount to strategic geopolitics. That is, each episode and form of (anti-)imperialism, no matter how subtle, in fact, precisely through its subtlety, is part of the learned, flexible, and adaptive way by which the US secures hegemony in the world (first in its "own" territory, then in a sphere, the hemisphere, the world ...). The paradox of its righteous rhetoric and venal practice, Campomanes adds, is "the protean source of US global power itself, and the shifting force of its peculiar shapes" (139). For a more comprehensive history of the post-WWII "anti-imperialist" acts of the US, see Arnold A. Offner's "Liberation or Dominance?: The Ideology of US National Security Policy" in *The Long War* (2007), a history of the National Security State edited by Andrew J. Bacevich.

²⁹ After finding precedents to US imperialism, Josep M. Fradera, in "Reading Imperial Transitions" (2009), points out that what is truly exceptional in empires—the Spanish as well as the Portuguese, the British, the French, the US—is the colony, which is excluded or treated differently as the realm of exception in which liberal rights (put in place with the "discovery of modernity," to put it in Hardt and Negri's terms) do not apply. Empire's exceptionalism, in other words, is really colonial exceptionality from political assimilation and universal rights, "exception [being] the rule for imperial development" (48). "Unlike the situation during the ancien régime, the liberal states could not create inequality other than as an exceptional regime" (46). As such, liberal imperial regimes were characterized by "differing rights in a single political zone" (47); "dual mandates and indirect rule giv[ing] credibility to the creation [...] of special regimes and situations"; the "reproduc[tion of] mechanisms of social and political heterogeneity" (48); "divergent social relations, a culture of differentiation within the general republican framework, and supporting [...] jurisprudence" (50). As is apparent in Fradera's descriptions, the logic of exception is often posited in its relation to liberalism, conveying the sense that liberalism constitutes an exception that justifies imperialism or disallows it to be named as such. In "On Degrees of Imperial Sovereignty" (2006), Stoler takes this idea apart. Stoler notes that whenever the US is compared to colonial, usually Northern European empires, characterizations of the US "depend on a caricature of what empire once was and what it looks like today, one whose 'grace notes' are now 'free markets, human rights, and democracy'" (133). "To posit that the impulses that guide this form of imperial rule in a postimperial age are confusing because they are "contradictory" rehearses both a fictive model of colonialisms and a misconceived one. Civic liberties and entitlements like those lauded in the making of republican France were forged through the extension of empire. Racism was written into the very definition of republican liberties in the United States as well as France, and the "color of liberty" was decidedly white, not North African, not Vietnamese, and, in Haiti, creole but not black. That "America's empire is not like those of times past, built on conquest and the white man's burden" is both true and false. Appeals to moral uplift, compassionate charity, appreciation of cultural diversity, and protection of "brown women and children" against "brown men," were based on

imperial systems of knowledge production enabled by and enabling of coercive practices. These were woven into the very weft of empire—how control over and seizure of markets, land, and labor were justified, worked through, and worked out” (133-4). “Treating humanitarianism as the ruse, the mask, or ‘the packaging’ of empire, as do some of empire’s critics, misses a fundamental point. [...] Compassionate imperialism and the distributions of pity it produced and condoned did not constitute objections to empire. Nor were these just false advertising for what were inherently exploitative projects. Social hierarchies were bolstered by sympathy for empire’s downtrodden subjects. Sympathy conferred distance, required inequalities of position and possibility, and was basic to the founding and funding of imperial enterprises—these were core features of empire that the elaboration of such sentiments helped to create” (134). For more on the scholarly debate as to whether the US is an empire, see McCoy et al., “On the Tropic of Cancer,” pp. 26-32.

³⁰ It is perhaps in this way that, in contrast to Hardt and Negri’s assessment, the US turns out to be the perfection of the modern compromise of *potestas* with *potentia*, keeping in mind, of course, as Hardt and Negri argue, that the US has done this not by being a traditional sovereign, but in the mode of imperial sovereignty—with what the historians describe as a hybridized rule of territorial colonization, military intervention, and/or economic investments; a decentered foreign policy network and/or national security state; adaptive mutations of formal, semiformal, and informal empire; global hegemony—in relation to capitalist sovereignty. Stoler provocatively suggests that imperialism (especially “exceptionalist” imperialism, I would add) is (becoming) totalitarian due to the blurring of boundaries between inside and outside (143). Stoler locates this blurring in the context of decolonization at the same time that, somewhat inconsistently, in her broadening of the definition of imperialism she seems to reject the kind of periodization offered by Hardt and Negri.

³¹ The contrast between the traumas is perhaps informative: in WWII, the US won in a way universally acclaimed, but ended up adopting the enemy’s ways; in the Philippine-American War, the US also won, but in a disenchanting way, leading to the invention of something “new,” i.e. adaptation, after and to screen failure. Arguably, the Constitution is also a result of trauma, i.e. the straining of relations between metropole and colony that led to the American Revolution. In this instance, what was produced was something ideally the opposite of what caused the trauma, i.e. liberalism against the monarchy, germs of which were already present (e.g. the parliament) in the metropole that would eventually adopt its colony’s “new” ways.

³² Reading Freud, Caruth warns of a danger inherent in repetition (even as it works through trauma): “For consciousness then, the act of survival, as the experience of trauma, is the repeated confrontation with the necessity and impossibility of grasping the threat to one’s own life. It is because the mind cannot confront the possibility of its death directly that survival becomes for the human being, paradoxically, an endless testimony to the impossibility of living. From this perspective, the survival of trauma is not the fortunate passage beyond a violent event, a passage that is accidentally interrupted by reminders of it, but rather the endless inherent necessity of repetition, which ultimately may lead to destruction. [...] Indeed, these examples suggest that the shape of individual lives, the history of the traumatized individual, is nothing other than the determined repetition of the event of destruction” (96). “As modern neurobiologists point out, the repetition of the traumatic experience in the flashback can itself be retraumatizing; if not life-threatening, it is at least threatening to the chemical structure of the brain and can ultimately lead

to deterioration” (96). This line of thought “would seem only to recognize the reality of the destructive force that the violence of history imposes on the human psyche, the formation of history as the endless repetition of previous violence” (97).

³³ After the Spanish-American War, the US acquired what McCoy, Scarano, and Johnson call “a fragmentary empire of island colonies” (3) “On the Tropic of Cancer”, the different components of which suffered different fates. Cuba was designated a “protectorate,” given independence relatively quickly, and subjected to neocolonial, rather than colonial, control. Puerto Rico and Guam remain organized and unincorporated territories of the US, whereas Wake Island is an unorganized, unincorporated territory. Hawaii, annexed shortly before the war, subsequently became a US state. American Samoa has the same status as Puerto Rico and Guam. The Philippines, after the Philippine-American War, was designated an unincorporated territory governed by a civilian colonial authority, with lingering US military presence, until flag independence (1946).

³⁴ In two articles on the cinema of Wong Kar Wai, “The Erotics of Disappointment” (1997) and “Cinema, the City, and the Cinematic” (2003), critic Ackbar Abbas writes of disappointment not so much as a matter of individuals failing expectations as the structural mismatch between expectation and actuality, often playing out temporally, hence the term, *dis-appointment*. This, I argue, is synonymous with notions of non-rapport, non-correspondence, in-felicity, and/or mismatch derived from the psychoanalytic notion of “lack,” but not necessarily negative.

³⁵ In *Untimely Meditations* (1873-6), Friedrich Nietzsche describes the untimely as “acting counter to our time and thereby acting on our time and, let us hope, for the benefit of a time to come” (60).

³⁶ It must be noted that this is not to claim that the Philippine-American War makes the Philippines exceptional. After all, it wasn’t that there was no such threat of insurrection in Cuba (in fact, this threat is what the US preempted by granting it independence). Similarly, such insurrection took place in other forms in the other colonies and neo-colonies, notably the Mexican Revolution and the Cuban Revolution. See McCormick, “From Old Empire to New.” My claim is more specifically about the resemblance of the US colonization of the Philippines to European colonial imperialism and the significance of the Philippines in the fundamental turn in US imperialism in 1898.

³⁷ This untimeliness of the Filipino-American relation, I argue, continues to manifest in a double way, the Filipino simultaneously belated (late) and advanced (last) in relation to the US. In 2008, for example, when the Philippines was on the verge of another “revolution” aiming to unseat Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, herself put in power by a “people’s power revolution” but increasingly felt as an authoritarian president, there was talk in the papers (e.g. by columnist Conrado de Quiros) about how, in contrast, the possible election of Barack Obama ushers change in the United States. Yet again, progress in America was held up as local conditions mire the former colony in hopeless impossibility (the mass protests would fail to unseat the authoritarian, democratically-elected Philippine president), the imperial power serving as the model aspired to but never really emulated because catching up proves always late. There is, however, another way to look at the relation. Rather than pointing out all the ways in which the Philippines could be more like the mother country, isn’t it more insightful to note how the former shows where America is headed, the late colony in fact having adopted American ways, if perversely, and more quickly? After all, attempts in the US to privatize social services and undermine public

regulation have as their consequence what are already perennial conditions in the Philippines, notably tax evasion, corruption, and, as a result, the absence of social nets and glaring inequality. The resurgence of American evangelism likewise has as its counterpart (with its social consequences more advanced) the pervasiveness of Catholicism in the Philippines, arguably (something that nationalist leaders have already diagnosed at the turn of the last century) what keeps Philippine society static and backward, causing all kinds of social and psychological ills. The same dynamic, I argue, is at work in the Trump/Duterte analogies of 2016: Duterte exemplifies the authoritarian, anti-democratic, yet “democratically elected” forces taking root in many places around the world as a reaction to US neoliberalism that, in the person of Trump, threatens to “come home” to the heart of empire.

³⁸ This rooting of identity in trauma, symptomatology, and conditioned positionality contrasts my approach from what is known as *strategic essentialism*. In *Post-Colonial Studies: The Key Concepts*, Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin read the work of Gayatri Spivak to define *strategic essentialism*. As Ashcroft et al. define it, “essentialism is the assumption that groups, categories or classes of objects have one or several defining features exclusive to all members of that category” (73). In response to her earlier work on “Can the Subaltern Speak?” (1985) in which she was interpreted as asserting the “inability of the subaltern voice to be accessed or given agency,” in the interview “Criticism, Feminism and the Institution” (1984-5), Spivak “spoke of the need to embrace a strategic essentialism, [...] acknowledg[ing] the usefulness of essentialist formulations in many struggles for liberation from the effects of colonial and neo-colonial oppression” (74). Ashcroft et al. quote Spivak’s remark: “I think it’s absolutely on target ... to stand against the discourses of essentialism, ... [but] *strategically* we cannot” (75). This reframing occurs in the larger context of the conflict between postcolonial critique and decolonizing practice. Influenced by poststructuralist theories of language and subjectivity, postcolonial theory has tended to critique essentialism and the individual (posited as Enlightenment concepts) in order to “expose the falsity of [the colonial] mode of representing the colonial subject as an other to the Self of the dominant culture” (74). In contrast, “the basis of the National Liberation Movements of the 1960s and 1970s was a recognition of the need to recover or develop a local identity and a sense of distinction damaged by imperial and colonizing discourses” (74). Strategic essentialism seems to me to imply that essence, no matter how oppressive, is unfixed and can thus be used or applied consciously and strategically for a political purpose other than the original for which it has been deployed. There is something of this happening in what I allude to as the identity working in response to trauma; however, my traumatic framing of identity avoids the perhaps naively optimistic view that political strategy can just be deployed without due and, indeed, painfully mindful and seemingly never complete processing of everything else that identity comes with, whether it be essence or trauma. Moreover, since trauma involves not only legacies, traces, and/or symptoms—which perhaps coalesces in what is called *identity*—but also conditions (the found or given state of things I began with), the traumatic framing of identity avoids the classic but false choice between the economic base and the ideological superstructure since conditions include all elements—both material *and* symbolic or ideological—i.e. including the germs and/or previous modulations of an identity, that determine or, as it were, condition, a given situation or state of things/identity.

³⁹ Like Anderson, Gonzales cites the common perception that “[the Filipino] stands at the remarkable junction between East and West, at the place where the twain would never meet”

(64-5). To illustrate this in a way that culturally extends what Anderson has done geopolitically, Gonzales notes how, occupying the Philippines during WWII (1942-1945), “the ideologues of what might have been an Asian hegemony [i.e. the Japanese found] it [...] incomprehensible that a people so scantily informed about their Asian-ness [i.e. Filipinos] could be so stubbornly loyal to the United States” (67).

⁴⁰ This failure of Filipino culture/nationhood, Campomanes writes, consigns intellectuals to “lyrically bewail [the epic] failure” to forge a nation and is supposedly most dramatically indicated by the failure frequently rehearsed by “Filipino cultural nationalists” of “any Filipino writer anywhere to produce ‘the great Filipino novel’” (84). Campomanes relates this failure to the invisibility of Filipino writing, including those written in English, including by Filipino Americans, in the US publishing scene (80) as well as the designation of the Filipino in America as the unrepresentable Asian American (77), the exception to the model minority, even as Filipinos become the largest Asian American population in the US.

⁴¹ This warrants Campomanes’s proposal to draw on “some of the more ‘anomalous’ but indicative texts of the US Filipino ‘tradition’” (83) to revise Filipino cultural/national failure as, in fact, a uniquely Filipino “nomadology, archipelagic poetics, and aesthetics of economy” (84) true to the Filipino experience of the “(im)possibility” of identity (91).

⁴² US racial ideology, Kramer explains, starts from the premise that English-speaking Teutons possess the “blood of government” (2) and are tasked with spreading Anglo-Saxonism (in which, interestingly, the American needs guidance from the English [11]) to places like the Philippines, where Malay blood had suffered from savagery, Orientalization, and Hispanicization

⁴³ Representative of this anti-racial quality of Filipino as an identification is the sentiment expressed by Apolinario Mabini in his 1898 *Decalogue*: “The country is not only the province, nor the pueblo, much less it is even the place where one has been born; it is formed by all the provinces, all the pueblos, and all the places in which a Filipino may have been born, whatever the beliefs he may profess or the dialect he may speak” (cited in Kramer, 78-9).

⁴⁴ Kramer points out that this Filipino insertion into Western modernity was predicated on hopes of assimilation, of the possibility of maturing to civilization or reversing the colonial hierarchy, and/or of a rekindling of the original Spanish-Filipino blood compact that implied unity, equality, and mutuality.

⁴⁵ Kramer clarifies that while domestic racial formations seem to have been exported to the colony, these formations were transformed in the colonial setting (128). Later on, Kramer argues more strongly that racialization in the Philippines is a colonial racial formation rather than the export of domestic racial formations (194-5).

⁴⁶ Kramer emphasizes the difference of the civilian authority, which was put in charge of the colonial government after the war, from the military, given the racist attitudes soldiers had developed during the war. Gendered as female, civilian authority rested on expertise and knowledge as opposed to military force, and civilian bureaucrats generally came from and occupied a higher social class than the US military (178-9). Tutelary assimilation being its goal (164), the civilian government relied on the collaboration of Filipino elites (171-3) and the work of Thomasite teachers from the US (168-70), who imbued, among other things, the English language to Filipino subjects (203-4). Indicatively, these civilians willingly employed Fiesta politics with Filipino elites while the military excluded Filipinos from social life (175, 185-88). Kramer also notes the significance in the assimilative colonial government of the civil service

system, which provided both US and Philippine citizens the opportunity for entrance to government; this system, however, was ridden with graft and corruption, intimating how this much stereotyped characteristic is not essentially Filipino, but was, it can be argued, emulated from Americans (166-8).

⁴⁷ Regarding the metaphor of evolution, Kramer writes: “US colonialists drew on earlier wave-migration theories in casting Philippine history on the whole as a series of racial invasions by progressively more civilized elements; Spanish colonial history, for all its depravities, was recast as a steady, gradual retreat of savagery in the wake of a more progressive Christianity. Within the imagined present and future of US colonial history, Filipinos as individuals would progress still further in evolutionary time. The specific axes of movement varied: they would ‘evolve’ from ignorant peasants to English-speaking students; from filthy urban denizens to sanitary subjects; from recalcitrant to disciplined laborers. Philippine society would also evolve as a whole: from the tribal chaos and fragmentation that was said to have characterized pre-Hispanic and Spanish colonial time, to the emergence—far in the future—of a nation characterized by ‘homogeneity,’ forged by transportation and communications infrastructure and by English as a common language. Not all inhabitants of the Philippines were placed on the same evolutionary track: while evolution was said to characterize US colonial time, Christians and non-Christians were progressing not only at different rates but in different directions. Evolutionary colonial progress, in fact, might widen rather than diminish difference among the islands’ inhabitants” (200-1). Regarding wave-migration theories, Kramer points to the work of Dean C. Worcester, which drew on the work of Ferdinand Blumentritt, the Austrian ethnographer and friend of Jose Rizal, leader of the Propaganda movement. Kramer writes that according to Worcester, “The Philippine population consisted of ‘three sharply distinct races,’ the Negrito, the Indonesian, and the Malayan. Early migrations by the Negritos, a group ‘near the bottom of the human series,’ had been displaced by invasions of Indonesians and Malayans with superior racial construction and civilization. Out of these three races had sprung ‘numerous tribes, which often differ very greatly in language, manners, customs, and laws, as well as in degree of civilization.’ Worcester’s migration theory, unlike that of the Propaganda movement, did not emphasize an exceptional ‘third wave’ predisposed to assimilation and civilization but rather the chaos, multiplicity, and backwardness produced when successive migration waves crashed on Philippine shores” (122).

⁴⁸ Kramer notes how in the Mountain Province, Americans were depicted as referees or saviors of non-Christians from deceptive civilized Catholics; consequently, the military was able to train highland military there loyal to America. On the other hand, the Moro Province, where the Philippine-American War lasted until 1913, was turned into a military colony separated from insular politics. This region in the far south barely colonized by the Spanish was depicted as inhabited by a martial race that would only respect US military authority. In a bid to perpetuate exclusive US control there, it was encouraged to be “autonomous” (215-20).

⁴⁹ See Bascara, *Model-Minority Imperialism* (2006).

⁵⁰ True enough, Filipino nationalist leaders thought seeking help from the US in the revolution against Spain made sense, given the precedent of the American Revolution. Compare US and Philippine Constitutions. While I argue that it makes sense to frame the Philippine-American War as a crime (from which trauma emerges), it has to be recognized that it is difficult to assign the roles “perpetrator” and “victim” simplistically to one side or the other. The atrocities of the war

were, in fact, mostly carried out by the US (as such it is the “perpetrator”); however, this is in direct response to guerilla tactics by Filipino rebels. At the same time, it is the Philippine Republic that declared the war; as such, it was the one that technically “initiated” the war. However, this declaration was in response to the anticipated US annexation of the Philippines, undoubtedly the first violation. Nonetheless, portraying Filipinos as the “victim” may distract from the effects of the war to the US, which, as I argue above, are indeed consequential. While using the traumatic frame, then, it is useful to keep open its categories while importantly clarifying the differences between and the responsibilities of the two parties.

⁵¹ Even as I emphasize the role of race not so much as cause as one of the tools or perhaps the medium by which Filipino constitution was arrested and then directed by the US, I do not mean to imply a causal relation with racism and imperialism. In *Race over Empire* (2004), Eric T. Love shows the tensions between the two, the ways, even, in which they historically undermined each other in the public debate on US imperialism, including in the Philippines.

⁵² In *The Racial State* (2002), race theorist David Theo Goldberg examines “not just the way the state is implicated in reproducing more or less local conditions of racist exclusion, but how the *modern* [liberal nation-]state has always conceived of itself as racially configured. The modern state, in short, is nothing less than a racial state. It is a state or set of conditions that assumes varied racially conceived character in different sociospecific milieus” This racial character is one of the things that liberalism disavows in its constitution of an abstract state.

⁵³ My approach throughout is guided by the principles of two critical traditions: the Marxist tenet that “the key categories for grasping the present order also point beyond it,” predicated on the Gramscian organic position, and the Nietzschean description of untimely regard as “acting counter to our time and thereby acting on our time and, let us hope, for the benefit of a time to come.”

⁵⁴ Epub edition.

⁵⁵ Like identitarian attachment to victimization, however, Schwab warns that while “unprocessed toxic knowledge” might lead to its unwitting repetition, recognition of one’s inherited role as perpetrator may serve to sensitize descendants to other forms of violence (28).

⁵⁶ Care should be taken not to regard problematization as unique to the Filipino. While Campomanes may be right that Filipino American writing is different from other immigrant writings, I would argue that this difference is not essentially “Filipino” or even “immigrant”; it is, rather, contingent on the positionality of a particular text. This is why it is necessary to make the point that the Philippines is not alone in its history, as indicated, for example, by the histories of fellow colonials I hint at above. Similarly, that an identity problematizes does not mean that it is necessarily liberatory. This is revealed by certain tendencies within *Filipino* itself, which, like other identities, is characterized by discursive struggles, both “internal” and “external.”

⁵⁷ Historian Vicente L. Rafael reconstructs this racialized colonial mechanism through the argument of benevolent assimilation, which he reframes as “White Love” (1993). He writes, “Given th[e] putative absence of a Filipino nation, the US presence in the archipelago could not be construed as usurping another people’s sovereignty. Intervention was understood, in official accounts, as an altruistic act motivated by America[n] concern for the natives’ welfare on the part of the United States” (*White Love* 20). “Neither exploitative nor enslaving, colonization entailed the cultivation of ‘the felicity and perfection of the Philippine people’ through the ‘uninterrupted devotion’ to those ‘noble ideals which constitute the higher civilization of

mankind.’ Because colonization is about civilizing love and the love of civilization, it must be absolutely distinct from the disruptive criminality of conquest” (21). “White love holds out the promise of fathering, as it were, a ‘civilized people’ capable in time of asserting its own character. But it also demands the indefinite submission to a program of discipline and reformation requiring the constant supervision of a sovereign master” (23).

⁵⁸ In *The Promise of the Foreign* (2005), Rafael illustrates the same mechanism even more explicitly. He writes, “Speaking thirty-nine years after the collapse of Spanish rule and the onset of United States colonial occupation, [Philippine Commonwealth President Manuel L.] Quezon (who had himself fought briefly in the revolution of 1896 [against Spain]) stressed Filipino indebtedness to Spain. The ‘religion and education’ the latter provided ‘had not only enabled us to assimilate another civilization such as brought about by the united States of America, but also prevented the basic and distinctive elements of our personality from being carried away by strange currents, thus bringing us to the triumph of our aspiration to be an independent nation’” (1).

⁵⁹ Rafael illustrates this doubling of colonial mentality in terms of *The Promise of the Foreign*. He writes, “It is tempting to regard the call [by the Philippine Commonwealth President Manuel L. Quezon for the Filipino to forgive Spain] as a recipe for officially administered amnesia and it undoubtedly was meant to have this effect. But to pardon those who have not asked for it is also to display magnanimity. [...] The servant [accepts his role and] appropriates from the master something that the latter had not intended to give: the power to absorb that which is foreign while inoculating itself from its deracinating effects [...] an unintended gift [that allows him to ...] recognize[e] his debts [...] and] overlook the Spanish inability to owe up to its ‘mistakes’ and ‘crimes.’ By this act of forgiveness, Filipinos thereby reinforce their difference from the former master. [...] Filipinos thereby reciprocate the unintended gift of Spain, this time augmented by a constant remembering. Headed toward the ‘triumph of our aspiration to be an independent nation,’ Filipinos acknowledge the ineluctably foreign origins of the nation, converting this foreignness from a sign of shame into a signal of impending sovereignty [which is precisely the argument of US benevolent assimilation]. Put differently, they regard colonialism as that which brings with it the promise of the foreign. This promise is felt as the coming of a power with which to absorb and domesticate the otherness [colonialism itself?] that lies at the foundation of the nation” (4).

⁶⁰ For critic Gabriele Schwab, for example, in giving an account of *Haunting Legacies* (2010), “writing helps” (6). In articulating her own story as part of the writing of “histories of violence,” Schwab elaborates on what happens to the subject amidst historical awakening, subjective experience making up but one part of what for Caruth is an impersonal, always already deferred process of working through. Despite Schwab’s qualification that “it is not enough” (6), however, she insists that “the often delayed urge toward a recovery of memory and representation, not in a literal sense but in the sense of the creative and integrative writing of trauma that comes with working through an event, [in which] the delay in [...] memory work may [...] take [...] generations,” is “transformational” (25-6). Writing, if transgenerationally, “break[s] through silences and trauma’s attack on language to reintegrate conflicted histories into a communal and political space” (32). “Psychic integration [is thus ...] concomitant [with] reparation of the symbolic” (33). Schwab clarifies that the writing she has in mind is not narrative fetishism, which deploys narrative “designed to expunge the traces of the trauma,” but something that

performs the “work of mourning” (10). She singles out literature in particular as performing this task. “Literature,” she writes, “uses writing—and by extension reading—as a ‘transformational object’ that facilitates the creative reworking, integration, and healing of trauma” (33). Similarly, in *Writing History, Writing Trauma* (2001), historian Dominick LaCapra, after deconstructing the historiographic distinction between the documentary and the performative (related to the distinction between referential recovery and therapeutic reconstruction) (20-2, 31-2; epub) and between the temporality of history/narrative and the temporality of the discourse (analogous to Janet’s distinction between traumatic and narrative memory) (43), argues that “working through is an articulatory practice” (45). LaCapra, however, has a more modest estimation of what working through can accomplish: it leads not to “transcend[ence] toward a state of closure or full ego identity” but, rather, to the possibility that one “may counteract the force of acting out and the repetition compulsion” (45), what he implies is the double of working through. While noting that signification may constitute not only working through but also acting out (the double that, at its best, working through can counteract), due to a concern about confused contagion—a tendency of deconstruction in its blurring of “not only the binary opposition but any distinction” (52)—LaCapra implies that the deconstructive play between acting out and working through requires limitation if signification is to be directed toward the latter. More precisely, LaCapra, reminiscent of Janet, characterizes working through as a movement, if in language, from the traumatic toward the discursive (45). For LaCapra, however, the distinction (supposedly deconstructed) is between history/narrative and discourse. As such, he designates history/narrative as traumatic (“deprived of present and future”), of which it is the function of signification, through discourse “adapted to the temporality of the speaker,” to work through (43).

⁶¹ Leys explains that this exaggeration of the literality of the traumatic event is derived not from Derrida but from literary critic Paul de Man’s theory of the materiality of the signifier and rooted in a partial reading of Freud that rejects castration trauma (associated with “repression, unconsciousness, and symbolization”) in favor of accident trauma (linked to “temporal delay, repetition, and literal return”) (270). In “Derridabase” in *Jacques Derrida* (1991), Geoffrey Bennington also rejects the materiality of the signifier, a thesis he attributes to *Tel Quel*. Bennington argues that the signifier is not simply “an ‘acoustic image,’ as Saussure had it” (30), that “the signified is just a signifier put in a certain position by other signifiers, [...] the signifier is not material [...] and] there is no signifier” (31). “It is the same sign in spite of all [material] variations,” Bennington notes, and this must “impl[y] that what insures that sameness through the repetitions must indeed be an ideal-ity” (32). Through such slanted and not always clear argumentation, Bennington asserts “the privilege of the [ideal] signifier” (33), a privilege, he quickly adds, “destroy[ed] immediately [...] since] the signifier ‘signifier’ only signifies in its differential relation with (the signifier) ‘signified’” (34). In her criticism, Leys also points to the parallelism of Caruth’s theory with the scientifically dubious neurobiology of Bessel van der Kolk.

⁶² As such, trauma is thought to reach the subject “through the urgency [rather than the content] of an address” precisely through the breakdown of “the referential function of words” (268). “Language,” it is implied, “is capable of bearing witness only by a *failure* of witnessing or representation,” rendering it contagious rather than subjective (268).

⁶³ The consensus of the time—which held that memory requires representation, hence specular distance, and emotion is immediate, existent only in its experiencing (94-7)—rested on a presumed gap between emotion and memory, indeed the notion of the unrepresentability (because consciousness) of affect. Leys notes that Freud, in his essay on the unconscious (1915), contrasted the “unconscious idea or representation” from “*affect itself* [which] manifests the drive directly” (97) and, in the 1920s, “simultaneously conceived affect as that which is always and only experienced *in* consciousness and as that which absolutely *resists* coming into consciousness” (99).

⁶⁴ Leys notes that Freud would ultimately abandon hypnosis, interpreting “the failure of memory in the cathartic cure—that is, the failure of memory defined as self-narration and self-representation—[...] as an expression of the patient’s *resistance* to recollection and narration” (104). This would lead him to “unconscious desire and repressed representations” (104) and the talking cure.

⁶⁵ Paradoxically, the virtuality of seeing in dream works in the opposite way as what is virtually seen in the dream is actually happening.

⁶⁶ Caruth elaborates in *Unclaimed Experience* (1996) that “history, like trauma, is never simply one’s own, [...] history is precisely the way we are implicated in each other’s traumas” (42).

⁶⁷ It is, in Caruth’s words, “an encounter with the real that must take place each time anew in the accident of where the words happen to fall.”

⁶⁸ Leys notes that this is crudely translated as the process of “put[ting] the story into words” (105), an approach that, Leys points out, misses the full complexity of Janet’s approach. After all, Janet also practiced the seemingly opposite technique of “tak[ing the patient] back by suggestion to [the traumatic scene]” (106) to then perform an “*excision of her imputed or reconstructed trauma*” (107). In this case, it is forgetting rather than recovery that constitutes the cure. With regards to this process of excision, Leys mentions psychiatrist Judith Herman, who, influenced by Janet and perhaps wary of charges of false memory, argues that “this image of catharsis, of exorcism, is also an implicit fantasy in many traumatized people who seek treatment. [...] Psychotherapy, however, does not get rid of trauma. The goal of recounting the trauma story is integration, not exorcism. In the process of reconstruction, the trauma does undergo a transformation, but only in the sense of becoming more present and more real. The fundamental premise of the psychotherapeutic work is a belief in the restorative power of truth-telling” (108-9).

⁶⁹ In Janet, due to its irreducible gaps and delay, the reconstructed narrative cannot possibly convey or contain the original meaning; thus his use of the term “representation,” evoking most of all the detachment of the narrative from the origin to which it is bound, signifies precisely the deconstruction of self-present meaning, only through which the narrative can have “meaning” through its displacement of substantial content for temporal order. In Caruth, historical awakening is an impersonal, trans-subjective “narration” of “meaning” only if these terms are impossibly expanded—the passing on of something asymbolic—such that they no longer bear resemblance to their conventional meaning even as they perform the same function; that is, the same function has been transposed into a different structure or the structure has been unraveled as one that originates but which is not an origin, i.e. deconstructed.

⁷⁰ Indicatively, even as she disavows representation, narration, and meaning to emphasize trauma’s materiality, Caruth formulates the historical transmission of the traumatic gap as the

process of “*telling* what it means not to see,” the limit, I argue, of her exaggeration of literality that unravels deconstructive writing as related to, indeed for Derrida the condition of, narrative representation. Historical awakening is implied, in fact, through the uncharacteristic transformation of the “passing [on of] awakening on to others” to “the imperative of a speaking that awakens others,” i.e. from the linguistic to the subjective, if irreducibly secondary and indefinite. Like temporal ordering, historical awakening may be an attempt at and a form of representation, if of the unrepresentable, its displaced/deferred writing a form of narration, if both absolutely removed from (hence unable to attribute meaning) and bound to (hence repetitive) the origin, the gap it relays a kind of meaning, if hollow or aporetic, the process not personal, conscious, or immediate, but nonetheless tracing presence, deconstructive writing making representation, narration, meaning, and presence possible, but also, not to be forgotten, impossible, writing not only directed to or productive of the symbolic. After all, that lack of meaning breaks down representation and that the approach/awaiting toward/of signification is irreducibly asymptotic—an infelicity/dis-appointment—incite rather than foreclose writing, which produces something of a different order: perhaps a narrative that, imitating the gaps of trauma, reconstructs representational meaning—a presentation that fixes present-ation—or the repetition of the traumatic gap—presentation/present-ation—that in an indefinite future/form enacts the new predicated on the gap aimed at by representation.

⁷¹ Derrida writes that writing, according to the Western tradition, “makes one stray from one’s general, natural, habitual paths” (*Dissemination* 70); consists in “repeating without knowing” (74) because based on “rumor, [...] hearsay [...], fable” (74); “works in an occult, ambiguous manner open to empiricism and chance [because] governed by the ways of magic and not the laws of necessity [...] thus bearing] dead and rigid knowledge [...] foreign to living knowledge and dialectics” (73); and “[fails to] conform to the necessities of the situation at hand [...] due to an inability to] feign[...] to adapt at the moment it is actually achieving maximum persuasiveness and control,” putting “*structure* and *constitution* [...] in question” (79). On this last point, Derrida is pointing out the zoological metaphor used in comparisons between writing and speech. He writes: “In describing *logos* as a *zōon*, Plato is following certain rhetors and sophists before him who, as a contrast to the cadaverous rigidity of writing, had held up the living spoken word, which infallibly conforms to the necessities of the situation at hand, to the expectations and demands of the interlocutors present, and which sniffs out the spots where it ought to produce itself, feigning to bend and adapt at the moment it is actually achieving maximum persuasiveness and control. *Logos*, a living, animate creature, is thus also an organism that has been engendered. An *organism*: a differentiated body *proper*, with a center and extremities, joints, a head, and feet. In order to be ‘proper,’ a written discourse *ought* to submit to the laws of life as a living discourse does. Logographical necessity [...] ought to be analogous to biological, or rather zoological, necessity. Otherwise, obviously, it would have neither head nor tail. Both *structure* and *constitution* are in question in the risk run by *logos* of losing through writing both its tail and its head” (79).

⁷² In *The Tain of the Mirror* (1986), philosopher Rodolphe Gasché describes Oneness as the positing of “thought itself [...] in terms of] thinking not only of something specific but of *one* determined thing, of a thing in its Oneness, [...] the thing in its essential unity” (99-100).

⁷³ Autoimmunity is the premise that critic Martin Hägglund develops in depth in *Radical Atheism* (2008), where he writes, “An identity or community can never escape the machinery of

exclusion, can never fail to engender ghosts, since it must demarcate itself against a past that cannot be encompassed and a future that cannot be anticipated. Inversely, it will always be threatened by what it cannot integrate in itself—haunted by the negated, the neglected, and the unforeseeable” (82). See Hägglund’s concrete elaboration of the autoimmunity of the democratic principles of freedom and equality starting p. 172.

⁷⁴ In *The Politics of Postmodernism* (1989), Linda Hutcheon questions the basis of the links that Jameson associates with political subjectivity by exploring the implications of historiographic metafiction on representation and hermeneutics. Through the notion of parody impossibly separated from its historical referent (what Jameson calls pastiche; what Maltby explores as the ironic exploitation of past styles), she argues that the links are still present, if changed, implying a new kind of politics. In particular, Hutcheon highlights the way in which ironic postmodernism incites problematization and demystification rather than rupture. Similarly, in *Dissident Postmodernists* (1991), Paul Maltby highlights the ways in which dissident postmodernism shows language struggling against its attenuation or the loss of critical distance as reflective of its context. In *On Endings: American Postmodern Fiction and the Cold War* (2011), Daniel Grausam is likewise concerned with the ways that postmodernist realism devises representational models adequate to the age. This is something that critics of experimental fiction have also been doing in the form of the questioning the old politics to hint at the new. In *Novel Arguments* (1995), Richard Walsh emphasizes innovative fiction’s depiction of the “metaphorical realization of the fiction behind history.” In *The Metafictional Muse* (1982), Larry McCaffery questions the pretense of metaphor to depict reality based on coherence and referentiality. In *Narrative Innovation and Cultural Rewriting in the Cold War Era and After* (2001), Marcel Cornis-Pope envisions multifarious alternatives to totalizing double binds. More broadly, in *Imaginary Ethnographies: Literature, Culture, Subjectivity* (2012), Gabriele Schwab theorizes literature as an experimental system that, “via the detour of the psychic life of language,” brings about a transformational contact to facilitate the emergence of new forms of being. These critics are, in some way or other, responding to Fredric Jameson’s diagnostic dissection of postmodernism as the logic of the dominant in “*Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*” (1984). I elaborate and focus on postmodernism in chapter 4.

⁷⁵ The “canon” of Philippine fiction after the 1946 flag independence from the US is drawn from three main components seemingly in opposition. Filipino fiction in English has an uncanny relation to national literature given its complicities (elitist detachment from the masses, relegation of Philippine literature to the backwaters) and capacities (connection to Anglophone, global public; displacement of Tagalog, itself provincial, as representative of Filipino) (Ponce). Filipino American fiction occupies a place in between, written in English, seemingly detached from the homeland and contaminated with the foreign. In fact, however, Filipino fiction *in English* contains the foreign, and Filipino American writers often write about and occupy both foreign and national spaces and, when in the foreign, reject immigrant assimilationist narratives (Gonzales and Campomanes). Filipino fiction in Tagalog aspires for authentic expression, especially “over the past three decades that serious attention has been given to such vital constituents of the national tradition as [...] folk, popular and so-called regional literatures” (Ponce), at the cost of anachronism. Yet other Tagalog writers, however, render Filipino contemporary, usually through Tagalog’s uncanny synthesis with English. The way that language works in these seemingly separate traditions makes it apparent that, in fact, they are

part of each other. In both its authenticating and unsettling modes, Filipino fiction in Tagalog accomplishes the same thing as Filipino fiction in English. That is, Filipino fiction, even when not being explicitly experimental, “call[s] attention to the matter of language in a variety of ways,” rooted from the sense that language—English or Tagalog—is not quite right, not enough, and the desire to master it anyway (Brion). This practice of “‘dissembl[ing]’ (act as if one is playing by the rules decreed by the colonial language) in order to disassemble” (Ponce), the twisting of failure to make it one’s own, or at least do what can be done with it, lends Filipino fiction an experimental character. This, I argue, can be most perceptively seen by joining Filipino American fiction and Filipino fiction in English, both “coterminously formed by the U.S. colonization of the Philippines” (Campomanes), with Filipino fiction in Tagalog, fiction itself being a product of American colonization. Notably, Filipino experimental fiction carry with it the weight of the social, moralistic or nationalistic didacticism, socialist realism being the preceding and overall preeminent Filipino literary mode. See J. Neil C. Garcia, ed., *The Likhaan Book of Philippine Criticism, 1992-1997* (2000), Martin Joseph Ponce, *Beyond the Nation* (2012), and N. V. M. Gonzales and Oscar V. Campomanes, “Filipino-American Literature” (1997).

⁷⁶ There are other theories of language presented in the novel, e.g. Jewish secrecy on p. 44. Also see the only direct reference to the “flame alphabet” on p. 64. Sam himself holds a view very similar to LeBov’s, expressed in statements, sometimes used against LeBov, such as, “We make the language in our own image and the language repulses us” (245).

⁷⁷ Marcus characterizes realism in terms of “conventional narrative language” and “characters in recognizable setting” (41) and attributes its appeal to “its ordered, pictorial approach to consciousness, its vivid choreography of settings and selves,” and its reliance on “exhausted assumptions of psychology” (42). Even as *The Flame Alphabet* approximates this genre by using its language, there is a difference in that the language consciously directs attention to itself.

⁷⁸ The parallel established between language and its work, ultimately the rendering of reality, beyond conventional realism, not there (yet), leads Marcus to an exaggerated notion of literary creation as “show[ing ...] unprecedented worlds of feeling and thought” (39). Marcus cites William Gaddis and Gertrude Stein in this regard, both of whom are dismissed by Jonathan Franzen, who for Marcus is the prime representative of conventional realism. Regarding Gaddis, Marcus writes, “While it might indeed be pleasurable to get what we knew we wanted [...], it is arguably sublime when a text creates in us desires we did not know we had, and then enlarges those desires without seeming desperate to please us. In fact, it’s prose that actually doesn’t worry about us, and I don’t find that ungracious, because novel writing is not diplomacy. It’s a hunger for something unknown, the belief that the world and its doings have yet to be fully explored.” (48). “What’s not being measured by readability tests, or by Franzen—what cannot be measured—is the logic and continuity between sentences, the overall coherence of the text—variables that are obviously far more subjective” (48). Regarding Stein, Marcus writes, “What interests me about this kind of writing is its desire to discover meaning where we might not think to find it, as if it’s burning entirely new synaptical pathways, and this is a very different pleasure that the kind I might get from narrative realism. It’s a poetic aim that believes in the possibilities of language to create ghostly frames of sense, or to prove to me that rational sense might be equally unstable, and I can get a literary visceral thrill when I read it, because I happen to actually enjoy language” (49). “Although Stein’s individual sentences do not require excessive

deciphering, the connections she attempts between them are far more challenging, mysterious, and wide-ranging than the transitions Franzen uses in his narrative realist mode, which generally builds linearly on what has gone before, subscribes to cinematic verisimilitude, and, when its not narrating, slaps mortar onto an already stable fictional world” (49).

⁷⁹ The patriarchal depiction of the queer as the figuration of the death drive is elaborated most forcefully, and then reclaimed, by Lee Edelman in *No Future* (2004). Liberalism and capitalism are elaborated as further pillars of Western ontology, and thus targets of queer critique, by Michael Warner in *The Trouble with Normal* (1999) and David L. Eng in *The Feeling of Kinship* (2010).

⁸⁰ After confessing his role in the onset of the contagion, “in distress, [crying, LeBov is escorted away] by faceless, hose-w[ie]lding technicians,” one of whom, in determined toxicity, he manages to afflict, making him fall on the floor (222).

⁸¹ All translations from the novel (written mainly in Tagalog) are mine.

⁸² Traditionally, Jose Rizal is taken to be the representative of the educated elites and Andres Bonifacio of the revolutionary masses. See also Iletto, *Filipinos and Their Revolution* (1998), especially “Bernardo Carpio: *Awit* and Revolution.”

⁸³ San Juan points to “a massive tradition of US colonial discourse purporting to supply the veracious, objectively ‘scientific’ knowledge of the Filipino” (9), which had the effect of rendering invisible “[past and present] US imperialist hegemony in the Philippines” (6). This body of knowledge inaugurated by Dean C. Worcester, University of Michigan zoologist turned colonial administrator, was inherited by Filipinologists in the field of Philippine studies composed by such figures as James A. LeRoy, W. Cameron Forbes, Joseph Hayden, George Taylor, Jean Grossholtz, Frank Lynch, George Guthrie, John Carroll, Mary Hollnsteiner, Chester Hunt, and, most recently, Stanley Karnow.

⁸⁴ San Juan elaborates that the procedure of Philippine studies is to take “the culture of one sector, the dominant landlord-merchant class, [...] as the normative consensus model for understanding the whole formation” (11). “Notions like *hiya*, *utang na loob*, and *pakikisama* or ‘smooth interpersonal relations’” are then structurally deployed as “the approved operational paradigm for explaining any event or relationship” (11). To further downplay US role, emphasis is put on Filipino-American “reciprocal obligations” or Filipino elite collaboration (12-3). At other times, it implies that “the brutal conquest of the Philippines has been more than atoned for by the benefits given to the losers”(8). Ultimately, this approach, by highlighting equal and manipulative Filipinos over US responsibility, reverses agency and then “subordinates agency to structural constraints dictated by systemic inertia” by substituting culture, which gains the status of “fate,” for concrete and historical factors of political economy (15). Philippine studies thus repeats the US colonialist doxa that “the effort to Americanize the Filipinos partly succeeded in terms of introducing the forms of institutions like electoral democracy, mass public education, and so forth; but it completely failed in altering traditional “Filipino” values, in particular those sanctioning the patron-client tributary relationship and its effects. (Except perhaps in the case of Filipina women in which the Victorian ethos of domesticity enforced by the capitalist division of labor herded women back from the public sphere to housekeeping.) [...] The Philippines [...] is] a realm of irrational passion, chaos, internal disorder, corruption, and inefficiency to which only the “disciplinary technology” of counterinsurgency (if the surveillance of legal apparatuses for

securing consent fails) can be the appropriate remedy. Lacking agency, the “uncivilized” Filipinos [...] cannot enjoy full, positive sovereignty” (16).

⁸⁵ San Juan writes: “The nativist glorification of traditional pieties, archaic customs, and tributary rituals, often labelled by well-intentioned educators as ”Filipino values.” These values are then privileged to be what distinguishes the organic community of the rural countryside, a locus of affection refigured as the authentic homeland counterposed to the alienating, diabolic, and strife-torn postindustrial cities. This type of ”nationalism” is understandable but scarcely defensible. Of late that essentialism has given way to the cult of the hybrid and aleatory, the indeterminate and in-between-in short, the decentered subject. In this disaggregated milieu, should we Filipinos then make a virtue of the neocolonial predicament, celebrating our fractured identities and disintegrated histories as our avant-garde sublime? Disavowing the perils of essentialism and the proverbial ”grand narratives,” we sometimes succumb to the sirens of anomie and *jouissance* in our endeavor to affirm our dignity, our autochthonous tradition, our right to self-determination. There is something intriguing in the characteristic gesture of ”postcolonized” intellectuals embracing their schizoid fate as a virtue, at best a springboard for future nomadic quests. On the other hand, the transnational corporate system invariably proves clever enough to utilize this posture of sophistication to promote self-commodifying ventures and the reifying aura of spectacles” (20). “Symptomatic of over four hundred years of oppression and resistance, this valorization of the fissured and sedimented identity of the “Filipino”-of any survivor of imperial ”tutelage,” for that matter- may be read as the trademark of intellectuals uprooted from the popular-democratic struggles of the working masses whose aspiration for freedom and dignity demand the prior satisfaction of basic needs as a fundamental human right. In the era of flexible capitalism, we Filipinos as participants in a process of nation-alitarian reconstruction seem to be still lingering at the threshold of modernity. We are still inventing allegories of the birth of Pilipinas, a process of collective imagining and praxis, a project begun at the time when a local tribal chief killed Magellan (shortly after his “discovery” of the islands in 1521) but later on aborted by Admiral Dewey’s incursion into Manila Bay. Complex historical reality always defies ”postcolonial” wish-fulfillments” (32n).

⁸⁶ This essay is written in Tagalog; I quote and paraphrase it in my own translations. Italicized English words are in English in the original.

⁸⁷ On the way to these questions, David also asks, “Should writing be [symptomatic of the present, hence] easy” (207)? If the space of writing becomes smaller because of the fragmentary nature of the narrative, would it give the same satisfaction as narratives of old (207)? “How does fragmentary storytelling run” and “how is [it] to be read” (208)? “What type of image is formed by the continuing breaking of the narrative” (207)? How is this different from a “whole and ordered frame/work (*banghay*)” (208)? “Is it important that art be always *life-affirming*” (209)? “If the narrative is fragmentary or formed from stolen texts, can it not form an ordered frame? [Or ...] does it form something more” (209)?

⁸⁸ Samar differentiates the investigative from the detective novel, a sub-genre: “It’s possible to see the detective novel (*kathang detektib*) as an investigation into the movement and motive of violence in a nation and the investigative novel as the move (*paghahatid*) from understanding violence to capturing the intricacy of the experience of the nation” (356-7).

⁸⁹ Samar continues, “What is left is the simulacra of a hero who is repetitively disappointed—because he does not run out of enemies—whose only accomplishment is [the simulation of] sentimental feeling and romantic collision against society’s walls” (359).

⁹⁰ Interestingly, despite manifesting similar impulses five decades prior, the French New Novel is not named as an influence by Samar, who claims Filipino *and* international precursors (363).

⁹¹ Robbe-Grillet simultaneously argues that past norms not only measure, but construct, the present (17-8) and that the novel “has always been new” (10).

⁹² Robbe-Grillet elaborates on what he means by “things *are there*,”—which, stronger than my claim, he posits as a matter of existence rather than presentation—when he writes that the new realism presents “objects and gestures [as] establishing themselves” “by their *presence* [...] over whatever explanatory theory that may try to enclose them in a system of references” (21). Thus, “we have the mounting sense that nothing else is *true*. Though they may conceal a mystery, or betray it, these elements which make a mockery of systems have only one serious, obvious quality, which is to *be there*” (23).

⁹³ The French New Novel, according to Robbe-Grillet, emphasizes not “words of a visceral, analogical or incantatory character [...] but rather] the visual or descriptive adjective, the word that contents itself with measuring, locating, limiting, defining” (24).

⁹⁴ The pertinent passages in which Robbe-Grillet makes these points run as follows: “Instead of being of a political nature, commitment is, for the writer, the full awareness of the present problems of his own language, the conviction of their extreme importance, the desire to solve them from within. Here, for him, is the only chance of remaining an artist and, doubtless too, by means of an obscure and remote consequence, of some day serving something—perhaps even the Revolution” (41). “The existence of a work of art, its weight, are not at the mercy of interpretative grids which may or may not coincide with its contours. The work of art, like the world, is a living form: it *is*, it has no need of justification. The zebra is real, to deny it would not be reasonable, though its stripes are doubtless meaningless. The same is true of a symphony, a painting, a novel: it is in their form that their reality resides” (43).

⁹⁵ Vizenor names some of these Western values when he writes, “Manifest manners court the destinies of monotheism, cultural determinism, objectivism, and the structural conceits of [the binary between] savagism and civilization” (vii). Vizenor derives the term *manifest manners* to the American notion of “Manifest Destiny, [which, he writes, would] cause the deaths of millions of tribal people from massacres, diseases, and the loneliness of reservations. Entire cultures have been terminated in the course of nationalism. These histories are now the simulations of dominance, and the causes of the conditions that have become manifest manners in literature. [...] The simulations of manifest manners are the continuance of the surveillance and domination of the tribes in literature” (4). Vizenor insists that “tribal realities are superseded by [Western/manifest] simulations of the unreal, and tribal wisdom is weakened by those imitations, however sincere” (8).

⁹⁶ Vizenor posits “native modernity” to counter depictions of the Native American as primitive, part and parcel of the Western construction/representation, in Vizenor’s terms, contrivance, of the noble savage. He writes, “Postindians and natives come together in the stories of human motion, the ontic significance of cultural conversions, presence, and modernity. Natives are the storiers of actual motion and, at the same time, the visionaries of transmotion, the motion of creation, imagic memories, and totemic associations; ontic, or real existence, and a phenomenal

existence of the senses. Decidedly, the stories of human motion and the virtual conversions of animals and humans are native modernity. Natives have always been on the move, by chance, necessity, barter, reciprocal sustenance, and by trade over extensive routes; the actual motion is a natural right, and the tribal stories of transmotion are a continuous sense of visionary sovereignty” (ix). Native modernity counters the process in which “the once bankable simulations of the savage as an impediment to developmental civilization, the simulations that audiences would consume in Western literature and motion pictures, [only] protracted the extermination of tribal cultures” (6).

⁹⁷ Vizenor writes somewhat contradictorily that “the Indian was an occidental invention that became a bankable simulation; the word has no referent in tribal languages or cultures. The postindian is the absence of [that Western] invention, and the end of representation in literature; the closure of that evasive melancholy of dominance” (11).

⁹⁸ Vizenor roots the simulation of the native as a primitive Indian, a version of the noble savage, in the critique of modernity that defines it in terms of the separation of humanity from nature in which “natives were the curious, colonial prey of [the] pastorly return to the cruces of premodernism [... notably,] primitive transcendence” (viii).

⁹⁹ “The theater of tribal consciousness,” Vizenor writes, serves as “the recreation of the real [i.e. the self-simulation of what already, and still, exists, ... that rectifies] the absence of the real in the [Western colonial] simulations of dominance” (5). “Postindians absolve the [colonizing Western] simulations with stories [the native’s simulations] of cultural conversions and native modernity” (x).

¹⁰⁰ Vizenor approvingly quotes philosopher Jean Baudrillard’s definition from *Simulacra and Simulation* (1981). He also cites Baudrillard’s *Fatal Strategies* (1983) to elaborate that through simulation, “we invent the real in the hope of seeing it unfold as a great ruse” (26).

¹⁰¹ More fully, Vizenor’s descriptions note how, acknowledging and fighting colonization, the trickster, the embodiment of “reason and mediation in stories, the original translator of tribal encounters” (15), draws on “doubt,” “wonder, chance, [and] coincidence” (14) and employs “performance and human silence [as] strategies of survivance” (16) to “create the tribe in stories, and pronounce the moment of remembrance as the trace of liberation” (15). Vizenor differentiates what a trickster does from the treatment of creative culture as representation or documentation: “Native American Indian imagination and the pleasures of language games are disheartened in the manifest manners of documentation and the imposition of cultural representation; tribal testimonies are unheard, and tricksters, the wild ironies of survivance, transformation, natural reason, and liberation in stories, are marooned as obscure moral simulations in translation” (76). “The trickster is androgynous, a comic healer and liberator in literature; the *whole figuration* that ties the unconscious to social experience. The trickster sign is communal, an erotic shimmer in oral traditions; the narrative voices are *holotopes* in a discourse” (89).

¹⁰² Vizenor elaborates on the melancholy of Western culture by quoting Baudrillard from *Simulacra and Simulation* (1981): “When the real is no longer what it used to be, nostalgia assumes its full meaning. [...] There is a proliferation of myths or origin and signs of reality; of second-hand truth, objectivity and authenticity” (25).

¹⁰³ Vizenor posits shadows by pointing to language games, a notion drawn from philosopher Jean-François Lyotard that directs attention to how truth/reality is determined based on and

specific to fields of language (e.g. the discourse of the expert as opposed to the philosopher) operating according to their own rules. For the sake of brevity, I abridge Vizenor's descriptions of shadows in the main text. More fully, they read: "The classical notion that thoughts were representations of content, or the coherent meaning of words, is not the same as the nature of shadows in tribal names and stories. Shadows tease and loosen the bonds of representation in stories. The meaning of words are determined by the nature of language games" (72). "The trickster is a language game, a counter causal liberation of the mind, not salvation or the measure of representation and [colonially] invented cultural values" (77). "The trace is a nickname that leaves a presence in literature. The shadows are the silence in heard stories, the silence that bears a referent of tribal memories and experience. The shadow words are active memories, and the memories of heard stories. The shadows are intransitive, an animate action in the silence of stories. [...] Shadows are animate entities. The shadow is the unsaid presence in names, the memories in silence, and the imagination of tribal experiences" (72-3). The postindian/trickster/poser's trade is in shadows, which are "neither the absence of entities nor the burden of conceptual references, [but] the prenarrative silence that inherits the words; [...] the motions that mean the silence, but not the presence or absence of entities" "that sense of intransitive motion to the referent" (64), the broader context of a word that includes its associations other than the specific thing to which it refers, shadows both obscuring and mediating remembrance (65-6). "We are shadows, silence, stones, stories, never that simulation of light in the distance. Trickster stones and postindian stories are my shadows, the natural traces of liberation and survivance in the ruins of representation" (64). "Shadow words are the hermeneutics of survivance. The postindian is an ironist who worries about names, manners, and stories. The shadows in trickster stories would overturn the terminal vernacular of manifest manners, and the final vocabularies of dominance" (68). "The histories are texts in the literature of dominance, and the shadows of the heard emerge from the *différance* and traces of the texts" (70).

¹⁰⁴ For clarification, I modify this quote. The original reads, "The postindian warriors and posers are not the new shaman healers of the unreal. Simulations and the absence of the real are curative by chance; likewise, to hover over the traces of the presence in literature is not an ecstatic vision. The turns of postindian remembrance are a rush on natural reason. Some simulations are survivance, but postindian warriors are wounded by the real. The warriors of simulations are worried more by the real than other enemies of reference. Simulations are substitutes of the real, and those who pose with the absence of the real must fear the rush of the real in their stories" (23).

¹⁰⁵ One conventional definition of the *nation* comes from *Black's Law Dictionary*, which defines it as "a people, or aggregation of men, existing in the form of an organized jural society, usually inhabiting a distinct portion of the earth, speaking the same language, using the same customs, possessing historic continuity, and distinguished from other like groups by their racial origin and characteristics, and generally, but not necessarily, living under the same government and sovereignty" (4th edition). For more on imagined communities, see Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (1983).

¹⁰⁶ Page numbers from *The Freud Reader* edited by Peter Gay.

¹⁰⁷ Sublimation, Freud argues, explains Leonardo's behavior (notably the lack of sexual activity), his becoming a painter, and the kind of painter he became (e.g. the inability to finish). This

sublimation of the familial (love for the mother) through culture (painting), moreover, is later itself sublimated in Leonardo's scientific investigations, in which Leonardo lost sight of the immediate altogether. Arguing that Leonardo's investigations are but an extension of the child's sexual researches, i.e. are really a question about the lost mother—except that Leonardo's investigations, obviously, are explicitly not about that—Freud claims that, by the time of his science phase, Leonardo is asking questions that have forgotten the original question. That is, in his sublimation of the sublimation (science), Leonardo was not even trying to fulfill the sexual or, for that matter, its (first) sublimation (painting).

¹⁰⁸ Regarding Samana, Stone Columbus says, “She was a natural healer, a tribal hand talker, blessed with silence, and she discovered the incredible truth that the great explorer was tribal and he carried our stories in his blood” (4). A few passages earlier, Vizenor writes that Christopher Columbus “misconstrued a tribal pose and later traced his soul to the stories in their [native] blood” (4).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Abbas, Ackbar. "Cinema, the City, and the Cinematic." *Global Cities: Cinema, Architecture, and Urbanism in a Digital Age*, edited by Linda Krause and Patrice Petro, Rutgers University Press, 2003.
- . "The Erotics of Disappointment." *Wong Kar Wai*, Dis Voir, 1997.
- Anderson, Benedict R. O'G. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Revised edition, Verso, 2016.
- . *Under Three Flags: Anarchism and the Anti-Colonial Imagination*. Verso, 2007.
- Balaev, Michelle. "Trauma Theory and Its Discontents: The Potentials of Pluralism." *The Nature of Trauma in American Novels*, 2012.
- Bass, Alan. *Difference and Disavowal: The Trauma of Eros*. Stanford University Press, 2000.
- Bhabha, Homi K. *The Location of Culture*. Routledge, 2004.
- Bonus, Rick. "Reflections on the Trajectory of Filipino/a American Studies." *Positively No Filipinos Allowed: Building Communities and Discourse*, edited by Tiongson et al., Temple University Press, 2006.
- Campomanes, Oscar. "On Filipinos, Filipino Americans, and U.S. Imperialism." *Positively No Filipinos Allowed: Building Communities and Discourse*, edited by Tiongson et al., Temple University Press, 2006.
- . "1898 and the Nature of the New Empire." *Radical History Review*, Winter 1999, pp. 130–46.
- Caruth, Cathy. *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History*. Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996.

David, Adam. "The Youth and Beauty Brigade Guide to Reading and Writing the Next Filipino Novel AKA Kung Ang Root Word Ng Salitang 'Nobela' Ay Ang Latin Ng Salitang 'Bago,' Ano Ang Bago Sa Bagong Nobelang Filipino?" *Tapat: Journal Ng Bagong Nobelang Filipino*, vol. 1, no. 1, 2011, pp. 204–16.

Derrida, Jacques. *Dissemination*. Translated by Barbara Johnson, University of Chicago Press, 1993.

---. *Margins of Philosophy*. University of Chicago Press, 1997.

---. *Of Grammatology*. Corrected ed, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998.

---. *Rogues: Two Essays on Reason*. Stanford University Press, 2005.

Eng, David L. *The Feeling of Kinship: Queer Liberalism and the Racialization of Intimacy*. Duke University Press, 2010.

Fletcher, John. *Freud and the Scene of Trauma*. First edition, Fordham University Press, 2013.

Fradera, Josep M. "Reading Imperial Transitions: Spanish Contraction, British Expansion, and American Irruption." *The Colonial Crucible: Empire in the Making of the Modern American State*, edited by McCoy et al., University of Wisconsin Press, 2009, pp. 34–62.

Freud, Sigmund, and Peter Gay. *The Freud Reader*. Norton paperback ed, W.W. Norton, 1995.

Gonzales, N. V. M., and Oscar V. Campomanes. "Filipino American Literature." *An Interethnic Companion to Asian American Literature*, edited by King-Kok Cheung, Press Syndicate of the University of Cambridge, 1997, pp. 62–124.

Hardt, Michael, and Antonio Negri. *Empire*. Harvard University Press, 2000.

Hofstadter, Richard. *The Paranoid Style in American Politics, and Other Essays*. Vintage Books, 2008.

- Ileto, Reynaldo Clemenã. *Pasyon and Revolution: Popular Movements in the Philippines, 1840 - 1910*. 4. pr, Ateneo de Manila Univ. Press, 1997.
- Kaplan, Amy. "‘Left Alone with America’: The Absence of Empire in the Study of American Culture." *Cultures of United States Imperialism*, edited by Amy Kaplan and Donald E. Pease, Duke University Press, 1993.
- Kramer, Paul A. *The Blood of Government: Race, Empire, the United States, & the Philippines*. University of North Carolina Press, 2006.
- LaCapra, Dominick. *Writing History, Writing Trauma*. Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014.
- Leys, Ruth. *Trauma: A Genealogy*. University of Chicago Press, 2000.
- Marcus, Ben. *The Flame Alphabet*. Vintage Books, 2012.
- McCoy, Alfred W. et al., editors. *Endless Empire: Spain’s Retreat, Europe’s Eclipse, America’s Decline*. University of Wisconsin Press, 2012.
- McCoy, Alfred W. et al. "On the Tropic of Cancer: Transitions and Transformations in the U.S. Imperial State." *The Colonial Crucible: Empire in the Making of the Modern American State*, edited by Alfred W. McCoy and Francisco A. Scarano, University of Wisconsin Press, 2009, pp. 3–33.
- McCoy, Alfred W., Francisco A. Scarano, editors. *The Colonial Crucible: Empire in the Making of the Modern American State*. University of Wisconsin Press, 2009.
- Perez, Tony. *Cubao-Kalaw, Kalaw-Cubao: Mga Premyadong Katha*. Limited ed, Cacho Pub. House, 1995.
- Ponce, Martin Joseph. *Beyond the Nation: Diasporic Filipino Literature and Queer Reading*. New York University Press, 2012.

- Rafael, Vicente L. *White Love: And Other Events in Filipino History*. Duke University Press, 2000.
- Robbe-Grillet, Alain. *For a New Novel: Essays on Fiction*. Northwestern University Press, 1989.
- Rodriguez, Dylan. *Suspended Apocalypse: White Supremacy, Genocide, and the Filipino Condition*. University of Minnesota Press, 2010.
- Rothberg, Michael. *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization*. Stanford University Press, 2009.
- Samar, Edgar Calabia. "Pagpaslang at Paghihimagsik: Si Elias at Ang (Im)Posibleng Nobelistikong Pagsisiyasat." *Tapat: Journal Ng Bagong Nobelang Filipino*, vol. 2, no. 1, 2012, pp. 349–66.
- . *Walong Diwata Ng Pagkahulog*. Anvil, 2009.
- San Juan, E. Jr. "One Hundred Years of Producing and Reproducing the Filipino." *Amerasia Journal*, vol. 24, no. 2, 1998.
- Schwab, Gabriele. *Haunting Legacies: Violent Histories and Transgenerational Trauma*. Columbia University Press, 2010.
- See, Sarita Echavez. *The Decolonized Eye: Filipino American Art and Performance*. University of Minnesota Press, 2009.
- Shaw, Angel Velasco, Francia, Luis H., editors. *Vestiges of War: The Philippine-American War and the Aftermath of an Imperial Dream, 1899-1999*. New York University Press, 2002.
- Stoler, Ann Laura. "On Degrees of Imperial Sovereignty." *Public Culture*, vol. 18, no. 1, 2006, pp. 125–46.

Tadiar, Neferti Xina M. *Things Fall Away: Philippine Historical Experience and the Makings of Globalization*. Duke University Press, 2009.

Tiongson, Antonio T., et al., editors. *Positively No Filipinos Allowed: Building Communities and Discourse*. Temple University Press, 2006.

Vizenor, Gerald Robert. *Manifest Manners: Narratives on Postindian Survivance*. 1. Bison Books print, Univ. of Nebraska Press, 2010.

---. *The Heirs of Columbus*. Quality Paperback Book Club [u.a.], 1996.

Wolin, Sheldon S. *Politics and Vision: Continuity and Innovation in Western Political Thought*. Princeton Classics edition, Expanded edition, Princeton University Press, 2016.