

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO

Banal Spectacles:
On the Production of the 'Filipino' Subject
through Performance and Display

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for the degree Master of Arts

in

Ethnic Studies

by

Thea Quiray Tagle

Committee in charge:

Professor Denise Ferreira da Silva, Chair
Professor Rosemary Marangoly George
Professor Sara Clarke Kaplan

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Chair

University of California, San Diego

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DEDICATION

Para sa mga kababayan ko,
maraming salamat sa inyong lahat
sa inyong pagtuturo ng pinakamahalagang aral
sa aking buhay:

Makibaka! Huwag Matakot!

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ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

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Professor Denise Ferreira da Silva, Chair

My thesis makes a critical intervention into both scholarship and activism that privileges a heteronormative Filipino/American subject at the center of its political and ethical claims. Using the historical cases of the Iwahig and Bilibid prisons, the Culion Leper Colony, the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair, and the contemporary YouTube videos of Filipino dancing prisoners, I explore the ways that *all* Filipino subjects have been produced as queer or non-heteronormative through the technique of *banal spectacles* of

performance and display by both the colonial and the contemporary neoliberal regimes. This history, I believe, has been disavowed by leftist Filipino/American scholars and activists, who instead focus their human rights appeals on explicitly heterosexual, feminized ‘victims’—the trafficked women, the mail-order bride, and the self-sacrificing overseas migrant worker—to the exclusion of any and all others.

I argue that due to their reliance on heteronormative notions of the family and the nation in their political discourse, liberal and radical political activists and scholars are stymied in their ability to imagine a Philippine nation-state that is not economically and politically dependent on the United States and on global institutions such as the World Bank and the IMF. Rather than claim the heteronormative Filipino/American subject as the only one deserving of rights and recognition, how can we as committed scholars and activists develop a radical queered politics of liberation for all?

INTRODUCTION

The 'primitive' body as object reaffirms the cultural supremacy and authority of the viewing subject, the one who is free to come and go (while the native stays fixed in place and time), the one who sees, interprets, and records. The native is the show; the civilized observer the privileged spectator. We, those viewers who look through the eyes of the explorer are (like the explorer) positioned safely outside the frame, free to define, theorize their (never our) societies. The 'encounters' with the native create us as audience just as much as the violence of definition creates them, the primitives.... Domination depends on maintaining a unidirectional gaze and stages the lack of reciprocity and mutual understanding inherent in discovery.

—Diana Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire*

This is what America has been longing for: a *Jailhouse Rock* which they only saw in Elvis Presley.

—Byron F. Garcia, Special Security Consultant for the Cebu Provincial Rehabilitation and Detention Center, the Philippines

On July 17, 2007, a man using the handle 'byronfgarcia' uploaded a short, four minute-long video onto the popular video file-sharing website, YouTube. Within a week, his clip, dubbed the "Philippine Prison Thriller Video," had been viewed over 1.9 million times, gained the attention of the international media, and had even broken a world record. The question that begs to be asked is: what was so exceptional about the "Philippine Prison Thriller Video" that garnered this frenzy of popular attention, and why is it significant?

The novelty of the video was simply this: featured in the video were over 1,000 orange-clad inmates from the Cebu Provincial Rehabilitation and Detention Center (or the CPDRC) in the Philippines, dancing in perfect synchronization to a recording of Michael Jackson's 1982 hit song, "Thriller." Beyond the technical feat of choreographing

the large number of dancers, the performers' identities as incarcerated subjects also served as an intriguing draw: a recurring comment by average viewers and the press noted surprise at this fact as well as favorable comparisons of this 'happy' spectacle to the violence occurring within Abu Ghraib, Guantanamo Bay, and other notorious carceral spaces. Responses to the video from YouTube viewers ranged from amusement ("That is sooooo freaking fabulous. That is a reallly reallly cool prison want to go there") to approval ("I think this is a great performance...looks professional. Nice to see them doing something other than sitting around") to flippant ("I think I shall go to Cebu and kill some people to dance"); yet very rarely do they elicit concern from the casual viewer or even from those of us who are actively involved with fighting for women's and human rights in the Philippines.¹

Moreover, the ambiguous gender and sexual identity of the main 'female' character of the performance, played by a *bakla* male prisoner named Wiendjiel Resane, also elicited a mix of ire and confusion from spectators, most evidenced in the running commentary on the YouTube page where the video is hosted.² These factors, together, contributed to the initial surge of interest in this video and the continued popularity of the subsequent videotaped dance performances to other American, European, and Asian pop songs. As of May 2009, there were thirty-five performances on byronfgarcia's YouTube page, with new videos being produced and disseminated on a near-monthly basis, making this phenomenon enduring rather than ephemeral.

¹ Pseud. comments on "Thriller (original upload)", YouTube.com video clip, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hMnk7lh9M3o> (accessed October 1, 2007).

² The definitive markers of the *bakla* as a social category have been contested in both everyday life and scholarly writing, and will be briefly reviewed later in this introduction. For the purposes of this thesis, I deploy Martin Manalansan's characterization of *bakla* subjectivity as "interstitial and epicene," in contrast to the more conventional understanding of *bakla* identity based on "effeminate mannerism, feminine physical characteristics... and cross-dressing" (2003a, 25).

Unbeknownst to most casual viewers, who sent the “Philippine Prison Thriller” video virally to each other through email and websites such as MySpace and Friendster, YouTube user ‘byronfgarcia’ is none other than Byron F. Garcia, Special Security Consultant to the CPDRC. As inventor of these performances and as warden of the prison, Garcia initially was less interested in creating a mass media sensation and more concerned with one goal: managing and controlling his unruly charges, and disseminating the videos to other Philippine wardens who wished to replicate his successful program of using choreographed dance in lieu of hard labor and exercise as disciplinary measures.

Despite the conditions under which the incarcerated are forced to perform— oftentimes upwards of 6 hours a day—the CPDRC videos have escaped the critical attention of progressive and radical Filipino and Filipino/American³ activist organizations, human rights NGOs, or even prison abolitionists, who instead focus on populations more ‘obviously’ brutalized and victimized. In the case of Filipino/American

³ A note on terms: it is with an understanding of the ongoing ramifications of the American colonial conquest of the Philippines circa 1899-1946 through the diasporic migrations of Filipinos to America that I deploy the term “Filipino/American” to describe the people of Philippine descent in the United States, rather than the more commonly-used marker “Filipino American.” This terminology follows the logic David Palumbo-Liu offers for “Asian/American”: as “it once implies both inclusion and exclusion, ‘Asian/American’ marks *both* the distinction between ‘Asian’ and ‘American’ *and* a dynamic, unsettled, and inclusive movement between them” (1999, 1). To use the signifier of “Filipino/American” is to purposefully interrogate and disidentify with the assimilative multiculturalist rhetoric of American democracy, which would have Filipino/Americans be “Filipino Americans” or “Filipino-Americans.” “Filipino/American” is used also to allow for a wider range of diasporic subject positions than offered by the assimilative “Filipino American” and the perpetually othered “Filipino-American,” to include permutations of lived experience such as: wo/men born in the Philippines and living in the United States; wo/men of Filipino descent born outside the Philippines who have immigrated to the U.S.; U.S.-born Filipinos who have returned to the Philippines; and also Filipinos born and raised in the Philippines who perform in Americanized cultural productions in the Philippines. My invocation of the term Filipino/American is an attempt to call attention to the violence of empire and diaspora otherwise hidden in U.S. national rhetoric, and in doing so, I enact a utopian desire for all to know this, in the hopes that they will change their terms of relation upon their recognition of this fact.

anti-imperialist and feminist activists, for example, much of the political organizing between 2007 and 2009 was around the “Subic Bay Rape Case,” also known as the “Nicole case,” which has been connected to the abuses of the Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA) between the United States and Philippine governments. In choosing their battles, activists, scholars, and others concerned with human rights in the Philippines have failed to advocate for the CPDRC inmates, or against the Philippine prison system in general; noting this, I was moved to ask: *How* do organizers make their decisions about which Filipino/American lives are worth ‘saving’ from the evils of US imperialism, from sexual violence, and from the Philippine government?

The questions above are the ones I first asked when beginning this thesis, which was to be an exploration of self-identified queer Filipina/American feminists who were both cultural workers and community organizers in well-established US-Philippines anti-imperialist solidarity networks. I was interested in locating the moments of convergence and divergence between these women and their organizations—how did the organizations, for example, decide which cases and issues to formulate campaigns around, and which did they deem unnecessary or as outside their purview, particularly when sexual orientation factored into the specifics of the case? As a member of one such organization, and concerned with the centralization of a victimized Filipina subjectivity in the campaigns and discourses forwarded by the organization, I wanted to make an appeal for the necessity of incorporating the study of sexuality into any political analysis that was based on feminist and anti-imperialist principles. The central questions I continue to address around this initial concern are the following: What are the ‘proper objects’ of study for an ethnic studies project on Filipino/Americans; for a radical Filipino/American anti-imperialist politics; for a queer of color analysis? What would such

a study, a politics, a life practice look like—what would it be comprised of; what questions would be asked; what sites would be analyzed?

In the course of my research, I came across the YouTube videos produced by the CPDRC, and found them to be a prime site through which to begin what Kandice Chuh has called “imagining otherwise”—a practice of reconceptualizing US-Philippines history, politics, and the uses of culture to forward an anti-imperialist Filipino/American political praxis that does not rely on discourses of recognition or inclusion to make its ethical claims (Chuh 2003, 9). Though the main site of study shifted, the animating questions behind my analysis remain the same—ultimately, I am concerned with the state of contemporary Filipino/American social justice organizing, and want to make a critical intervention into both scholarship and activism that privilege the heteronormative Filipino/a subject as the proper subject of rights and dignity which must be restored through the recognition of the state.⁴ Such logic, I argue, centralizes a rights-bearing Filipino/a subject whose very condition of possibility rests on its production through violent disciplinary projects, often perpetuated by the same state to which such organizations make their appeals. These claims for recognition “unwittingly increase the power of the state and its various regulatory discourses at the expense of political freedom,” ultimately undermining the project of Filipino/a liberation that these claims attempt to achieve (Brown 1995, 17).

⁴ Lauren Berlant defines *heteronormativity* as “both white middle-class and 'respectable' working-class aspirations to national universality... as a site of consent that secures the intelligibility of a particular image of a universalist national culture, the franchise is to citizenship what heteronormativity is to social membership. They are particular means to an end that register as neutral, as taken for granted” (Berlant 2002, 155). Though she limits her definition of heteronormativity to the context of the United States, I argue that, as the Philippines was a colony of the US and subject to its disciplinary regimes, Filipino heteronormativity can also be understood as aspirations to US national universality.

Focusing on the function that the figure of the *bakla* at the center of the “Philippine Prison Thriller” video plays in these “fantasy-productions” of Philippine sovereignty, I argue that these videos are neither exceptional nor banal; rather, I understand them as *banal spectacles* which are the latest iteration in a long genealogy of American colonial display, documentation, and management of Philippine racial and sexual difference.⁵ As I analyze in chapter four of this thesis, *banal spectacles* are public performances of seemingly mundane activities, intended to efface and normalize the brutal conditions that give rise to these performances in the first instance. And as I argue throughout this thesis, these *banal spectacles*, imposed first by the US colonial regime and today by the ‘sovereign’ Philippine government, have functioned to code Filipino racial difference-as-queer sexual deviance to help achieve sometimes contradictory political and economic ends.

Though I focus particularly on the Philippine state’s production of Wiendjiel Resane as a neoliberal gay subject in the CPDRC videos, I am ultimately interested in exploring the ways that *all* Filipino subjects have been historically produced as queer or non-heteronormative subjects, and understanding how the category of ‘abnormality’ came to unify disparate ethnic, classed, and racial groups into a homogenous “Filipino” population. This queerness, I believe, has been disavowed in the contemporary claims of the Filipino/a citizen as a heteronormative subject, claims that have been made by the Philippine government *and* by Filipino/American scholars and activists; both groups, I contend, have investments in maintaining heteropatriarchy, albeit with very different

⁵ Neferti Tadiar writes: “‘Fantasy-production’ denotes the imaginary of a regime of accumulation and representation of universal value, under the sway of which capitalist nations organize themselves individually and collectively in the ‘system’ of the Free World”; in her text, *fantasy-productions* are, specifically, the performances of symbolic and subjective ideals of the Philippine nation, its rulers and the ruled (2004, 6-17). I will engage with Tadiar’s concept of fantasy-production in the following chapters of this thesis.

ends in mind. In their reliance on heteronormative notions of the family and the nation, I argue that liberal and radical political activists and scholars are stymied in their ability to imagine a Philippine nation-state that is not economically and politically dependent on the United States and on global institutions such as the World Bank and the IMF. My work here is not another attempt at finding a ‘solution’ to the problem of Philippine sovereignty and Filipino/a sexual and labor exploitation. Rather, I hope that by illuminating the underlying assumptions of others—whether those of the Philippine state or of Filipino/American activists and scholars—that I can make the case for a different analytical *and* political approach. Rather than ‘fix’ the Filipino/American subject at the center of our anti-imperialist work, how can we shift our point of view, to base our work on a *subjectless discourse*, one that has liberationist potential not just for the ‘proper’ Filipino/American subjects, but for us all?

Whither the Filipino/American Subject?

In attempting to understand who the ‘proper subjects’ of Filipino/American anti-imperialist politics were, I was drawn to the examine field of Filipino American Studies, as it is an intellectual project in which particular histories, subjectivities, and issues of Filipino America are privileged rather than obfuscated or ignored, as they are in the dominant academic discourse. Filipino American Studies as an intellectual and political project developed out of the field of Asian American Studies—a field of study that emerged partly through the demands of the Asian American movement for academic curriculum inclusive of the histories of struggle of Asian immigrant groups in the United

States⁶ —and was also heavily influenced by the writings of Filipino nationalist scholars and activists in both the US and Philippines in the late 1960s and 1970s.⁷ In these two interrelated fields of scholarship, happening on both sides of the Pacific, there was much theorizing about the Filipino/American condition, specifically about the genesis of Filipino/American identity and subjectivity. As it now stands, many central texts in Filipino American Studies take up the question of the so-called Filipino ‘identity crisis,’ which has been the dominant discourse about Filipino people’s ‘colonial mentality,’ social disorganization, factionalism, and feelings of cultural and racial inferiority propagated in mainstream scholarship and taken as commonsense knowledge (Revilla 1997, 99).

Writing against the dominant American scholarship about the Philippines that perpetuated US exceptionalist discourse—such as the military histories by Glenn May and Peter Stanley⁸ —Filipino American Studies scholars forged new models of understanding Filipino identity, culture, and history that were explicitly anti-racist and anti-imperialist, with the hopes of inciting to action a new generation of Filipino/American

⁶ Hirabayashi and Alquizola list seven points of unity underlying the Asian American Studies movement, some of which are: promoting the analysis and critique of the ‘power-knowledge’ matrix formulated and imposed by the academy; critiquing, rejecting, and seeking to dismantle its assimilationist and Eurocentric premises and biases; and promoting self-determination over cultural resources, representations, and decision-making (2001, 176-77). Another key goal was to “promote the exploration of alternative, phenomenologically grounded ways to construct ethnic-specific as well as pan-Asian American ‘subjects,’” demonstrating Asian American Studies scholars’ concern with formulating an oppositional identity against white American supremacy, a concern that remains pressing today (Hirabayashi and Alquizola 2001, 177).

⁷ For seminal accounts written by Filipino nationalist historians, see Teodor A. Agoncillo and Milagros C. Guerrero, *History of the Filipino People* (Quezon City, Philippines: R.P. Garcia Publishing Co., 1970); and Renato Constantino, *A History of the Philippines: From the Spanish Colonization to the Second World War* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1975).

⁸ For example, see the text *Reappraising the Empire*, in which Peter Stanley wrote that “it is a hubristic illusion for Americans to imagine that in the colonial era they liberalized, modernized, or for that matter, exploited the Philippines in any large, systemic, or lasting way” (1984, 2).

activists committed to fighting for Philippine political, cultural, and economic sovereignty.⁹ In this brief yet interested reading of Filipino American Studies scholarship, to borrow from Gayatri Spivak, I want to begin thinking through the following question How has Filipino American Studies constructed the proper subject of Filipino America, and how has the centralization of this proper subject limited our anti-imperialist political imaginations?

The history of Filipinos in America, or at least the story told by scholars working in Filipino American studies, is one marked by multiple colonizations, diaspora and exile. Oscar Campomanes quotes E. San Juan, Jr. when he writes that the defining characteristic of Filipino/American identity is often an unrecognizable “fusion of migration and exile: the scattering of a people, not yet a fully matured nation, to the ends of the earth, across the planet’ under the coercive durations of colonial moments” (Gonzalez and Campomanes 1997, 76). Like other Asian American communities, Filipino/Americans have been marked as “perpetual foreigners,” always left out of the promises of white liberal democracy by virtue of their second-class racial status.¹⁰ Yet, unlike other Asian immigrant groups to the United States

Filipinos are distinguished... because their country of origin was the object of violent colonization and subjugation by U.S. monopoly capital and the state.... Without fully comprehending this moment of violence and the internalization of dependency... Filipinos would not be able to claim

⁹ For examples of contemporary revisionist histories produced by Filipino American Studies scholars and sympathetic non-Filipino historians, see Sharon Delmendo, *The Star-Entangled Banner* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2004); Reynaldo C. Ileto, “Outlines of a Nonlinear Emplotment of Philippine History” (in *The Politics of Culture in the Shadow of Capital*, eds. Lowe and Lloyd, 98-131. Durham: Duke University Press, 1997); and Paul Kramer, *The Blood of Government* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2006).

¹⁰ As Yen Le Espiritu writes, this designation of Filipino/Americans as the “foreigner-within” works to resolve the contradictions between the United States’ promise of equal rights and its actual practice of exclusion, as it attributes “failed” integration to Filipinos’ unwillingness to assimilate into the dominant national culture (2003, 211).

their own specific historical trajectory here as a dialectic heteroglotic formation—one based on the continuing struggle of Filipinos for national independence and socialist democracy in the Philippines, and the other based on the exploitation and oppression of Filipino recruits, exiles, immigrants, and adventurers. (San Juan 1998, 158)

Because of the United States' colonial relationship to the Philippines, Filipino American Studies scholars have gone so far as to claim that the identity of "Filipino American" is a redundancy. As Oscar Campomanes says: "To be Filipino is already, whether you move to the United State or remain where you are, to be American. The term 'Filipino American,' in spite of its anchorage in a history of U.S. identity politics, can be a signifier just as descriptive of the modern and U.S. colonial period formation of Filipinos as it is of an emergent and self-empowering political subject in U.S. multiculturalism" (Tiongson 2006, 42). Filipino/American identity thus has been theorized by Filipino American Studies scholars as both falling within *and* exceeding the discursive borders of either Asian American or postcolonial subjectivity, precisely because of this fraught history between the Philippines and the United States.¹¹

Furthermore, Filipino/Americans have troubled the dominant American paradigms of race and ethnicity by virtue of being the children of exiles from a country colonized first by the Spanish and then by the United States. The Philippines, as Rick Bonus reminds us, is too a "multiethnic and multiracial nation" in which dominant ethno-racial groups have been institutionally privileged over indigenous groups and religious

¹¹ Campomanes writes of Filipino/American literature: "Why does this body of [Filipino American] texts resist *either* singular incorporations into a nation-based model that privileges the American mythography of immigration, *or* a transnational paradigm that excludes the United States from its articulations of the colonial and decolonizing moments? This categorical indeterminacy is understood as itself a function and feature of the historical dilemmas and identity formations of U.S. Filipinos" (Gonzalez and Campomanes 1997, 74). Though speaking specifically about literary texts, I believe Campomanes' questions can be broadened to help us consider the troubled and troubling place of Filipino/Americans in the racial landscape of the United States.

minorities (Bonus 2000, 27). It was in their the exile to the United States that people from the Philippines moved away from identifying themselves through claims to tribe, village, province, or region to a “deterritorialized privileging of ‘Filipino’ identity” (Gonzalez and Campomanes 1997, 85). Given these caveats, what, then, *is* “Filipino” identity in the diaspora—if not an essential racial category or ethnic identity, is the Filipino/American condition then define through the experiences of being an always-dislocated subject far from home?

Yen Le Espiritu would argue that this sense of being dislocated from the homeland has led to Filipino/Americans producing new formations of “home” and identity in the United States; her book *Home Bound* documents Filipino/Americans’ constructions of “literal or symbolic ties to the homeland as a form of resistance to places and practices in a home country that are patently ‘not home’” (2003, 13). Many Filipino/Americans, she argues, have internalized cultural definitions of “Filipino-ness” which they represent through imagined shared traits such as folk songs and language (Espiritu 2003, 214). Other Filipino/Americans have attempted to reinforce cultural superiority by making their daughters shoulder the burden of keeping the culture ‘pure’ through the management of their sexuality (Espiritu 2003, 168). Through these examples, Espiritu shows that the process of consolidating Filipino/American diasporic identity coalesces through “corporealities, affectivities, and... multiple and contingent temporalities, as much as it is a memory of place, networks (of travel, communication, and informational exchange), the myth of the imminent return to the origin, and the progressive telos of origin to diaspora” (Puar 2007, 171). In Espiritu’s analysis, Filipino/American identity and ideas of “home” are constructed not simply as nostalgic forms, but as a means of resistance to US racism, the lack of educational and financial

opportunities open to people of Philippine descent, and the racialized sexualization of Filipina and Filipina/American women. For Espiritu, Filipino/American identity is intricately bound to constructions of the home (as in the domestic sphere) and the homeland (the Philippines).

Another line of Filipino American Studies scholarship focuses on the historical trajectory of Filipinos to the United States, constructing a lineage from the first Filipino exiles to contemporary Filipino/American movements and communities around the nation. Lisa Lowe writes that one of the main goals of Filipino American Studies is to document and analyze “the legacy of U.S. colonization in the Philippines, the *manong* as a U.S. immigrant labor force¹²... or the many social spaces of political activism and organizing by Filipino immigrants in the United States” as means of resistance to the dominant American discourses about the Philippines and Filipinos (Lowe 2006, xvii). To generalize broadly, this scholarship has focused on historically contextualizing Filipino exile and migration to the United States in the early 20th century, particularly of the Filipino bachelor societies and labor unions on the West Coast of the US, largely arguing that the migration patterns and formations of these homosocial male kinship networks were driven largely by the needs of US capital. From this chronology, the scholarship then connects the experiences of the first wave of Filipino migrants with those of the second generation of Filipino/Americans, most of whom arrived in the era following the passage of the seminal 1965 Immigration and Naturalization Act.

¹² This point, of the *manongs* as an immigrant formation, has been disputed. Oscar Campomanes argues that we should not see the movement of *manongs* and *pensionados* to the US as immigration, as “it was the borders of the US that moved and not the people alone” (Tiongson 2006, 40-41). While I think this is an important critique, it is beyond the purview of this thesis to address this point in more depth.

In Filipino American Studies, historical scholarship on the first wave of Filipino immigration to the United States from the 1920s through World War II tends to focus on several key subject formations: immigrant, bachelor, farm worker, union organizer, Communist. The life and work of author Carlos Bulosan, in particular, seems to exemplify an entire generation of Filipino immigrant experiences during the first half-century of US colonial involvement in the Philippines, and his published works, particularly his semi-autobiography *America is in the Heart* (one of the “core literary works of Filipino American Studies”), have been lauded as seminal texts for understanding the “Filipino American condition,” not just of his time, but transhistorically, into the present.¹³ In naming *America is in the Heart* as the “collective biography” of the Filipino/American experience in the United States, then, Filipino/American activists and scholars model their identities as having a direct linkage to Bulosan’s, creating a genealogy across time and space despite the possibility that there may be no “real” familial connection to either Bulosan or the *manongs* (Campomanes and Gernes 1998, 23). In linking oneself to Bulosan, one can situate herself in the history of Filipino/American struggle through the decades, even if she may be a second-generation

¹³ Bulosan has been praised as the “narrator of the Manong generation’s story” (Bacho 1997, 4) and the “principal representative of [Filipino American] literature” (Bonus 2000, 189n34); and has been listed by Caroline Hau as one of the major “critically acclaimed Filipino writers who are often anthologized and taken up in literature classes” (Hau 2000, 10). As of 2006, there was a Carlos Bulosan Memorial Exhibit in Seattle’s International District; the Carlos Bulosan Theater in Toronto, Canada, a community-based professional theater company run by Filipino Canadians; a rumored plan of the National Press Club in Manila to set up a Carlos Bulosan Foundation Prize; and a Carlos Bulosan Heritage Center recently inaugurated in New York City; not to mention the many symposiums held and scholarly journals dedicated to his life and works (San Juan 2006).

daughter of post-1965 professional immigrants from the Philippines, with no Communist, *manong*, or working class Filipino/Americans in the family line.¹⁴

Finally, a third strand of Filipino American Studies scholarship about Filipino/American identity focuses on contemporary resistance movements to US empire, undertaken by self-identified Filipino/American youth. In contemporary Filipino American Studies scholarship, anti-assimilationist narratives of resistance to US empire have taken several forms including but not limited to: critical historiography on the formation of militant Filipino/American organizations such as the Katipunan ng mga Demokratikong Pilipino (the Union of Democratic Filipinos or the KDP) in the 1980s and the League of Filipino Students (LFS) in the 1990s¹⁵; cultural critique of Filipino/American youth resistance through popular cultural forms such as hip-hop music¹⁶; and writing on the praxis of psychological decolonization that draws from the work of Frantz Fanon, Paulo Freire, Amilcar Cabral and other decolonial theorists, in addition to Carlos Bulosan.¹⁷

¹⁴ For a short list of articles and books that use Bulosan's fiction and non-fiction as primary evidence for historical and literary analyses of the Filipino/American condition, see Nerissa S. Balce, "Filipino Bodies, Lynching, and the Language of Empire" and Ruby C. Tapia, "Just Ten Years Removed from a Bolo and Breech-cloth" in *Positively No Filipinos Allowed* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2006); Kandice Chuh, *Imagine Otherwise* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003); Caroline Hau, *Necessary Fictions* (Manila: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2000); Allan Punzalan Isaac, *American Tropics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006); and E. San Juan, Jr., *From Exile to Diaspora* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1998).

¹⁵ See Helen Toribio, "We Are Revolution" in *Amerasia Journal* (1998) and "Dare to Struggle: The KDP and Filipino American Politics" in *Legacy to Liberation* (San Francisco: AK Press, 2000); and Robyn Rodriguez and Nerissa Balce, "American Insecurity and Radical Filipino Community Politics," *Peace Review* (2004).

¹⁶ See Marie-Therese C. Sulit, "Through Our Pinay Writings" in *Pinay Power* (New York: Routledge, 2005); Antonio T. Tiongson, *Filipino Youth Cultural Politics and DJ Culture* (dissertation, UCSD, 2006); and Michael Viola, "Filipino American Hip-Hop and Class Consciousness: Renewing the Spirit of Carlos Bulosan" in *Monthly Review Zine* (April 2006).

¹⁷ See Emilie Gaborne Dearing, "The Family Tree: Discovering Oneself," in *Filipino Americans: Transformation and Identity* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1997); S. Lily Mendoza, *Between the Homeland and the Diaspora* (Manila: University of Santo Tomas Press, 2006); and Leny M.

This third line of scholarship, given its topic, has been much more closely tied to the anti-imperialist political praxis of Filipino/American youth movements, who construct their identities in the following ways.

The Filipino/American youth involved with anti-imperialist organizations imagine themselves as transnational in their political ideology, as they link the Filipino social condition in the Philippines and the United States to the endurance of US imperialism; furthermore, they pride themselves for working in solidarity with Marxist anti-imperialist organizations based in the Philippines such as BAYAN and Karapatan (Rodriguez and Balce 2004, 139). They imagine themselves as part of a political genealogy rooted not only in the US-based anti- Vietnam War, Black Power and Asian American movements of the 1960s, but also in the legacies of the anti-Marcos movement within the Philippines from the 1970s-1980s and in the 1930s militant labor unions which Bulosan was involved with (Rodriguez and Balce 2004, 139). In both the scholarship about this activism *and* in the discourse used by activists themselves, there has been a flurry of activity to state one's own position as an 'organic intellectual,' to be writing of Filipino/American resistance to imperialism and militarism, and to name oneself as Bulosan and the *manongs'* contemporary kin—these have become the fetishized markers of Filipino/American racial identity and anti-imperialist political praxis in the contemporary moment.¹⁸

Strobel, *Coming Full Circle: The Process of Decolonization Among Post-1965 Filipino Americans* (Quezon City, Philippines: Giraffe Books, 2001).

¹⁸ I recognize here that my generalization of Filipino/American anti-imperialist activism is vague and open to debate. When I speak of contemporary anti-imperialist discourse and practices, I am drawing from my own experience as a former community organizer and educator with GABRIELA Network, a transnational US-Philippine women's mass solidarity organization with ties to Gabriela Philippines. Along with GABRIELA Network, there are other US-based solidarity organizations such as those under the umbrella of BAYAN USA (Gabriela-USA, the League of Filipino Students,

By way of example of this construction of diasporic, anti-imperialist Filipino/American youth identity, the “Artist’s Statement” on the website of Marlon Unas Esguerra, Filipino/American educator and spoken-word artist, shares a quintessential narrative of coming to political consciousness, one that is repeated in various iterations by Filipino/American activists and Filipino American Studies scholars:

For many Filipino Americans who do not deny their ‘Filipinoness,’ there is that defining moment that makes them more than just a writer, more than just a purveyor of Asian American literature, more than just a spectator. *There is that moment in college when you pick up Carlos Bulosan and read, ‘I know in my heart I live in exile in America.’* Someone hands you a thin book with a picture of Bienvenido Santos on the cover (who looks like your Lolo) and you say to yourself skeptically, ‘Scent of Apples? Yeah, whatever.’ You come upon Hagedorn, Roska [sic], and Constantino as easily or randomly or magically as you do a Tribe Called Quest, De La Soul, or The Last Poets. Or better yet, you hit that first open mic... There is that moment when you realize that this is all connected. That the six degrees of separation among Filipinos is really just two degrees. That in the end you do have a story to tell that is worth telling.¹⁹

In this last quote, the accumulated knowledge about the Filipino/American condition is consolidated: the proper subject of Filipino American studies is diasporic, rooted in a history of Spanish and American colonization of the Philippines, and is an active agent working against racism in the United States and continuing US imperialism in the Philippines. And while the Filipino American Studies scholarship that focuses on this proper Filipino/American subject remains necessary, given that we are not yet living

Habi Arts), KMB, and Ugnayan that have similar ideological orientations and political investments. Generally, they affiliate themselves with the national democratic movement of the Philippines; are anti-imperialist; and are to varying degrees identified as feminist and/or Marxist (specifically a school of Marxism called MLMZ—Marxist Leninist Mao Zedongism—developed by the Communist Party of the Philippines). There is a dearth of scholarship on contemporary Filipino/American social movements, so new scholarship on this topic would be a necessary and welcome addition to the field.

¹⁹ Marlon U. Esguerra, “The Poetry of Rebulosyun,” Yellowfist, http://www.yellowfist.com/marlon_artiststate.htm, (accessed February 25, 2009). Emphasis added.

in a post-racial state and that the Philippines and its people have not yet achieved full psychological, political, social, or economic liberation, what kinds of subjectivities are foreclosed when a fetishized form of Filipino/American identity and activism becomes the privileged means by which to critique the workings of US empire? Even as Filipino American Studies activists and scholars claim that Filipinos are the “forgotten and forgetful” subjects within both mainstream academic *and* progressive Filipino American Studies discourses, I believe that their attempts to redress the invisibility of the postcolonial Filipino/American subject inevitably institutionalize their own terms of legibility (Campomanes 1995).

My concern with the existing Filipino American Studies scholarship is that, although written with liberationist, anti-racist and anti-imperialist aims in mind, much of it, perhaps unwittingly, forecloses the possibility of *bakla* and other non-gender conforming and non-heterosexual subjects, as well as populations deemed ‘unrehabilitated’ (such as the incarcerated). As the most obvious example, in the existing narratives of Filipino/American families, such as in the work of Yen Le Espiritu, Rick Bonus, and Leny Strobel, all of the domestic formations are of a heterosexual and/or nuclear family in which “traditional” gendered divisions of affective and domestic labor are maintained. And while there is a proliferation of scholarship on the homosocial *manong* communities, this kind of domestic formation has been relegated to a relic of the past, supplanted by the heterosexual couplings and domestic arrangements in a post-1965, post-*Loving vs. Virginia* American landscape.

Additionally, in centralizing a mobile subject, located in the United States, who is portrayed as an active agent, Filipino American Studies has left less space open to look at the production of other(ed) Filipino/American subjects, such as those who remain in

what Allan Isaac has called “The American Tropics,” that is, in the space of the Philippines where “Filipino American formation and American national identity have been shaped by the American vision of and activity among U.S. custodial populations at home and abroad” (Isaac 2006, 5). Also erased are those subjects who can not, will not, or do not perform an anti-imperialist politics that registers clearly as the ‘activism’ documented in the scholarship or spoken of in the community discourse; such acts of resistance remain unintelligible at best and at worst, their actions are deemed as counter-revolutionary and their mindset judged as guided by false consciousness, in need of being rehabilitated by the enlightened and properly politicized Filipino/American activist.

By not seriously addressing the processes through which Filipino/American subjectivity is produced in conjunction with, or in opposition to, these other(ed) Filipino subjects, the existing Filipino American Studies scholarship has made it difficult for me to answer my initial questions about the stakes of Filipina/American anti-imperialist organizing. I set out to understand *why* Filipina/American feminist anti-imperialists were inattentive to the *banal spectacle* of the CPDRC “Thriller” video, and why instead they focused their attention on victimized Filipina women as their proper subjects. In looking to Filipino American Studies scholarship written about Filipino/American subjectivity, I found another set of oversights that also overlooked the circumstances facing ‘homebound’ Filipinos in the contemporary moment, particularly those of non-heteronormative Filipino and Filipino/American subjects. Thinking through the mutual exclusions of the scholarship and the activism, I began to understand that these two configurations potentially share another common investment: an investment in uplifting heteronormativity as the natural condition of Filipino and Filipino/American subjects, for the purposes of achieving particular pedagogical and/or political goals. As such, I have

turned to other bodies of scholarship in order to make my argument for the need to center an analysis of sexuality both in Filipino American Studies scholarship and in Filipina/American feminist anti-imperialist politics. This body of work will be reviewed in the following chapter, in order to clear the ground for the work to come.

Ultimately, I am writing this thesis to propose a different model for 'doing' Filipino American Studies *and* Filipina/American feminist anti-imperialist activism. My goal is to reconceptualize 'our' relationship to the Philippines and United States, to 'other' Filipinos, and ultimately, to ourselves. This re-orientation, I argue, is an ethical imperative, not just for those of us who self-identify as queer, or who are criminalized, or who refuse to become the victimized Filipina subject; as I hope to show in the following chapters, we are *all* implicated in the incarceration, the queering, the victimization of subjects, as much as we are also produced as those very subjects ourselves. In changing our intersubjective interrelations, I believe we can transform our lives, our futures, and our worlds.

Note on Methods

This project is circular in some sense, as it is not a story told in teleological, developmental time. I begin with a contemporary moment of feminist political activism in the United States; then move to the early 20th century, following disciplinary projects in the United States and its newest colonial possession, the Philippines; returning, finally, to a contemporary moment of *banal spectacle* originating in the Philippines but disseminated throughout the world via the wonders of technology. This jumping through time and space may seem to be schizophrenic or without logical order, but as I want to

show, the present is also experienced as an accumulation of things past, and what is considered past and ‘dead’ is really not gone at all, but resurrected in new form. As Avery Gordon notes, “to write a history of the present requires grappling with the form ideological interpellation takes—‘we have *already* understood’—and with the difficulty of imagining beyond the limits of what is already *understandable*” (1997, 195). In trying to disentangle ourselves from our heteronormative strivings, I believe we need to go back to the past in order for us to imagine a new future.

In the two ‘contemporary’ chapters—chapters two and four—I undertake a discursive analysis of the spoken and printed words and embodied performances disseminated by Filipina/American feminist anti-imperialists and the Philippine prison authorities, respectively. I analyzed these texts as sources in their own right—therefore, I did not try to discover the ‘true’ intention behind their production by interviewing their authors; instead I analyzed the multiple messages the texts conveyed once they were circulated in the public sphere. The questions guiding my research included: *Who* are the proper subjects of the text—that is, what subjects are (re)produced by the text and represented as already coherent, knowable subjects? What sets of accumulated knowledge does the text draw from in order to make its subjects legible? And, finally, what new knowledges do the texts intend to convey about these subjects, in order to spur their audience to action or to placate them into inaction?

Chapter three—my genealogy of colonial experiments in the Philippines—serves as both an anchor and pivot to this project. In this chapter, I do not intend to present a revisionist history of “the Filipino people under US colonialism,” but rather attempt to illuminate the processes through which the Filipino subject itself was produced by several overlapping, and even contradictory, institutions of US empire. In this chapter, I

am interested in deconstructing the technologies used to discipline “Filipino” subjects; to illuminate how “benevolent assimilation” functioned by collapsing the spaces of the domestic and the carceral, and to what effect. I do not analyze discourses in this chapter as much as I do *practices*, or the biopolitical technologies designed to produce and manage queer(ed) Filipino populations. As such, the method I have found to be most helpful is a Foucauldian genealogy, which I review at the end of chapter one.

Chapter Outlines

Chapter 1 Literature Review

This chapter serves as a literature review of the theoretical tools I draw from in order to make my critique of Filipino American Studies scholarship and feminist anti-imperialist activism. I begin by engaging newer work in the field of Filipino American Studies that explicitly take up the challenge of queering Filipino/American histories of colonization, immigration, and the production of subjects. This scholarship begins my exploration into formulating a Filipino/American political praxis based on a *subjectless discourse*, a model that Kandice Chuh theorizes can act counter to a politics based on fixed notions of the Filipino/American subject.

From there, I review several works of queer of color critique, particularly ones which address labor, domesticity, and the production of homonormative queer of color subjects. Connecting this body of scholarship to women of color feminist critiques of domesticity, I find this work productive for its explicit engagement with the conditions of emergence of the subjectivities of queer people of color in contemporary neoliberal regimes.

Queer of color critique is also much indebted to the scholarship of Michel Foucault, whose theories of disciplinary power, biopolitics, and the uses of sexuality are foundational to my project. I briefly review these key concepts, along with several notable critiques of Foucault's work by gender studies scholars and queer of color theorists, to denote the ways in which I draw from, yet depart from, his work.

I conclude this chapter by clarifying Foucault's method of genealogy, which I use throughout the thesis as a radical reading and analytic practice. In laying out the goals of genealogy, I hope to make clear my own political investments in analyzing the discourses, not only of the neocolonial state, but also of the feminist activists who attempt to organize against imperialism. Rather than attempt this thesis as simply a deconstructionist project, I hope to be able to contribute to the construction of something new, another way of 'doing' anti-imperialist work and of imagining freedom.

Chapter 2

At Home in the Nation / The Nation as Home: The Limits of Filipina/American Feminist Discourse

This chapter takes up questions posed in the literature review and introduction in more depth as a means of situating the second half of the thesis. In this chapter, I critique, first, the heteropatriarchal logic undergirding the discourse of modern nation states, which I argue has served as a means of domesticating women and creating the false division between the public and the private sphere. Second, and more importantly, I then deconstruct the discourses used by the Filipina/American feminist anti-imperialist organization GABRIELA Network, in order to illuminate why and how, in order for their claims to be legible to the state, they resort to redeploying heteronormative constructions

of the Filipina woman as victim of globalization, military imperialism, sex trafficking, and prostitution.

I spend time unpacking the two major arguments made by Filipina/American organizers of the Filipina-as-domestic worker and of the Filipina-as-prostitute, to show how both instances foreclose the possibility of agency for these victimized subjects; additionally, I argue that in casting the Filipina as an ultimate victim, Filipina/Americans then also construct their own subjectivities as those-who-can-save. This analysis, I believe, is necessary to deconstruct the power dynamics between Filipina/American activists and Filipina ‘victims,’ a relationship that remains asymmetrical due to activists’ continued investments in white heteropatriarchal domesticity. I argue that Filipina/American feminist anti-imperialists need to disinvest themselves from this discourse in order to move beyond a politics of recognition towards a liberationist political praxis open to all people of Philippine descent.

Chapter 3

Domesticating the Carceral, Incarcerating the Domestic: American Disciplinary Projects in the Philippines

In the genealogy I trace in this chapter, I show how American colonial projects were not simply productive of “Filipinos” as individual subjects, but also produced an entire Filipino *population* as recognizable through its sexual deviance; what we have here is the case of disciplinary power and biopower functioning together: “the training of bodies, on one hand, and the regulation of the population on the other” (Foucault 2003, 279).

The three sites where I have chosen to focus this genealogy are the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair, the colonial prisons at Bilibid and Iwahig, and the Culion Leper Colony in the Philippines. These sites are significant in that they were key institutions of the American colonial laboratory, in which the practice of 'benevolent assimilation' would be carried out on controlled populations; they served pedagogic, rehabilitative, and disciplinary functions, and, as I argue, were all situated within the carceral continuum.

I argue that between the colonial prisons and the World's Fair, there was an inversion in terms of pedagogical goals and disciplinary logics, yet both were designed to buttress white masculine heteropatriarchal rule over the Philippines: whereas colonial prison authorities attempted to "domesticate the carceral" by bringing in families to the prison as a means of evaluating Filipino prisoners' 'rehabilitation' from deviance into domesticated normality, in the World's Fair the Filipino home is made spectacle for the purposes of educating *white American* fair-goers on the perils of failing to properly 'domesticate' oneself. Whereas the former required the reform of Filipino men into heterosexual masculinity, the latter used Filipino non-heteronormativity in order to justify the need for continued American colonial expansion into the islands.

Finally, in closing with the example of the Culion Leper Colony, I attempt to propose an alternative imaginary in which the lepers' racial and sexual degeneracy does not signal only death, but rather opens up possibilities for queer insurgency against the racial-sexual norms of the American (neo)colonial regime.

Chapter 4

Electric Dreams and the Queer Undead: Disciplining the Filipino through *Banal Spectacles*

In the last chapter, I make the case that the Philippine state's investment in these contemporary YouTube performances should be read alongside the American colonial regime's investment in producing queer(ed) Filipino populations through the prison, the leper colony, and the World's Fair. For this task, I return to Foucault one more time, to draw upon his method of *genealogy* as a reading practice through which "subjugated knowledges" can be freed.

In this chapter, I explore the necessity of taking the CPDRC videos seriously despite their camp appeal; how as texts produced in the Philippines for domestic consumption but disseminated the world over, they *critically queer* both American mainstream and leftist understandings of the prison-industrial complex by their claims that the incarceration of Filipino bodies necessitates the deployment of particular technologies of sexuality that would allow a female-identified male-bodied prisoner to be incarcerated with male-identified biological men. To do so, I will connect the genealogy from chapter three, on the colonial history of the United States in the Philippines, to this chapter's discursive analysis, being attentive to the messy slips of tongue and reel, of mis(sed)-translations and visual shots that reveal more than its directors intended.

By tracing the transformations of power and the uses to which *queerness* has been put in the Philippines, I hope to make the case for developing a revitalized Filipino/American anti-imperialist politics with a difference, as one built on a *subjectless discourse*, not on a static, knowable, heteronormative Filipino/American identity.

Some Thoughts in Conclusion

In this brief conclusion, I ask, what are the politics of seeing? What does it mean if we fail to see the *bakla*, if we do not see ourselves as bound to others? What can happen if we *do* see him: How can we imagine a new way of 'politics' that does not appeal to the heteronormative logic of the state for recognition? I return to my primary claim in this conclusion: that in moving away from our attachments to an imagined coherent, heteronormative, domestic self, our work as Filipino/American activists and scholars can become transformative, open to new affiliations and solidarities that were once unimaginable or impossible before.

CHAPTER 1

LITERATURE REVIEW

Rather than saying what we said at one time, 'let's try to re-introduce homosexuality into the general norm of social relations,' let's say the reverse—'No! Let's escape as much as possible from the type of relations that society proposes for us and try to create in the empty space where we are new relational possibilities.' By proposing a new relational right, we will see that nonhomosexual people can enrich their lives by changing their own schema of Relations.

—Michel Foucault, "The Social Triumph of the Sexual Will"

I stage my intervention into Filipino American Studies and Filipino/American political activism drawing from a variety of critical tools: the work of feminist and queer theorists within the field of Filipino American Studies itself; the emerging body of scholarship known as queer of color critique; and Michel Foucault's genealogical method and his theories of power and the biopolitical regime. Additionally, there are other scholars working in Filipino American Studies who are self-reflexive of their role in producing expertise about particular 'marginalized groups,' and who actively negotiate the problematics of representation in their work. I turned to these bodies of work to help me interrogate the centralization of particular 'proper subjects' of Filipino/American activism and scholarship, as they have all questioned the assumptions underlying the formation of academic disciplines, and have challenged the privileging of particular knowledges over others.

In reviewing this literature, I attempt to situate myself within the bodies of scholarship that I see my project being in conversation with. In this chapter, I will highlight the major questions raised or concepts developed in these fields that I draw

from and/or modify in order to develop my own argument in the following chapters. In particular, I will review various challenges made by scholars against the normalization of heteronormativity as a social formation and the centralization of heterosexual subjects and/or domesticity within feminist, anti-imperialist, and/or anti-assimilationist political organizations and affiliations.

My goal in this thesis is to, ultimately, make a case for the importance of analyzing the processes of sexualization central to both the history of US empire in the Philippines and contemporary neoliberal constructions of sexualized racial subjects. I maintain that to ignore sexuality as a modality of power limits our understanding of both domination *and* resistance, and my use of various theoretical approaches, such as queer of color critique and black feminist geography, is necessary to help me place “often ghettoized histories, geographies, and discourses in politically and epistemologically synergistic relations” (Shohat 2006, 15).

Queering Filipino/American Studies from Within

One strategy of writing against the dominant strain of Filipino American Studies scholarship has been to recenter the *bakla* or queer Filipino/American subject, noting the ways in which s/he comes into subjectivity and subsequently, the ways in which queer Filipino/American individuals and communities come to resist their exploitation under globalization and the neo-imperialist political regime in the Philippines. In recent years, there has been a proliferation of scholarship that centers questions of Filipino/American sexual subjectivity.¹ Preceding all of these works is Martin F. Manalansan’s 2003 book,

¹ Some of these works include: Kale Fajardo’s forthcoming book project, based on his dissertation, “Filipino Cross Currents: Seafaring, Masculinities and Globalization” (UC Santa Cruz,

Global Divas, the seminal account of the lives of gay and *bakla* Filipino men in the United States; as the first major published study on gay Filipino identity, it is the text that every scholar working on queer Filipino/American issues must reckon with. An anthropological study of the lives of gay Filipino men in New York, *Global Divas* documents some of the ways that queer Filipino immigrants attempt to liberate themselves “through struggles that oscillate between exuberance and pathos and between survival and loss”; it is an account of the spectacular and quotidian world-making projects of diasporic Filipino men whose very presence in New York is contingent upon the exigencies of global capital (Manalansan 2003a, xi).

Manalansan’s central claim is that *bakla* subjectivity should be understood not as a static identity, but as a “slippery condition, a performative event or series of events in self-formation”; this formulation stands in contrast to other work which foregrounds sexual object choice or transgender identity as the primary and singular defining feature of *bakla* subjectivity (2003a, 186). That is to say, *bakla* identity needs to be understood as always already embedded in social relations; *bakla* identity is not only negotiated by the subject himself, but is also signified differently in the various spaces in which *bakla* men travel. This concept of performative identities and Manalansan’s engagement with questions of travel in *Global Divas* is salient to my project, as I too am interested in the ways that Wiendjiel Resane, the *bakla* performer in the CPDRC videos, troubles the “contradictory and uneven queer spaces” produced by globalization and neo-imperialism

2004); Bobby Benedicto, “Desiring Sameness: Globalization, Agency, and the Filipino Gay Imaginary” in *Journal of Homosexuality* Vol. 55.2 (2008); Karin Aguilar San-Juan, “Going Home: Enacting Justice in Queer Asian America” in *Q&A: Queer in Asian America* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1998); and Victor Bascara, “Within Each Crack/ A Story: The Political Economy of Queering Filipino American Pasts” in *East Main Street: Asian American Popular Culture* (New York: NYU Press, 2005). As whole, this body of scholarship has attempted to negotiate the place of queer Filipino/American subjects within larger and longer histories of Philippine colonialism, migration/diaspora, and US-based movements for racial and social justice.

(Manalansan 2003a, 5). I am interested in the ways that Resane's subjectivity is experienced by viewers, not only those who witness him performing live in the space of the prison courtyard, but also those who see Resane in the virtual space where these YouTube videos circulate.

The article "In the Shadows of Stonewall: Examining Gay Transnational Politics and the Diasporic Dilemma" furthers Manalansan's exploration of the relationship between *bakla* identity, travel, and globalization, as this article critiques what he and Gayatri Gopinath have termed "the globalization of gay identity." Gopinath has warned in her own book, *Impossible Subjects*, that "the globalization of 'gay' identity replicates a colonial narrative of development and progress that judges all 'other' sexual cultures, communities, and practices against a model of white American sexual identity"; the "globalization of gay identity" is the proliferation of an assumedly transparent social category of 'gay-ness' that in actuality obfuscates the hierarchical relations between metropolitan centers and peripheries which produce those very identities (Gopinath 2005, 11). In his piece, Manalansan argues that "by privileging Western definitions of same-sex sexual practices, non-Western practices are marginalized and cast as 'pre-modern' or unliberated" (2003b, 209). According to Manalansan, gayness as a stable identity

gains meaning according to a developmental narrative that begins with an unliberated, 'prepolitical' homosexual practice and that culminates in a liberated, 'out,' politicized, 'modern,' 'gay' subjectivity... *Gay* in this instance, then, is meaningful within the context of the emergence of bourgeois civil society and the formation of the individual subject that really only occurs with capitalist and Western expansion. (Manalansan 2003b, 210-11)

Here, Manalansan illuminates the dangers of imposing the categories of 'gay' and 'lesbian' onto *bakla* and other non-heteronormative subjects in the Philippines and elsewhere in the global South, where colonization and projects of normalization have historically cast the population as non-reproductive, degenerate, and inferior to the enlightened populace in the North (a history that I will trace in chapter three). Most perniciously, celebratory discourses of gay liberation being produced by gay and lesbian groups in the global North are used over and against nations and communities in the global South; these discourses are easily co-opted by the First World neoliberal agenda, who use examples of continuing acts of homophobia against 'closeted' gay individuals in the global South as further evidence of its backwardness and pre-modernity.

As I have come to understand it, the "globalization of gay identity" is one of the processes by which the *bakla* subject in the CPDRC videos is transformed into a 'liberated' gay subject to serve the Philippine state's neoliberal strivings; Resane's presence in the videos serves as evidence of the Philippine state's ascension into western modernity, or so the logic goes. In tracing this process of transformation, I maintain that Resane's performances of his 'queer' identity in the CPDRC videos are not part of a benevolent process, but rather are witness to the "violent remapping of lives, bodies, and desires of queers of color... caused by neoliberal practices" (Manalansan 2005, 141). That is to say, my aim in deconstructing the CPDRC videos is not to valorize a globalized gay subject who actively resists the warden's control, but instead is an attempt to situate these performances within a genealogy of social control of sexualized Filipino subjects undertaken by, first, the US colonial administration in the Philippines, and, currently, by the Philippine government itself.

Heeding Manalansan's warnings, while I center the *bakla* figure in my analysis of the prison's disciplinary techniques, I attempt to avoid describing his performances or identity using a universalizing conception of queerness-as-sexual-identity; to do so would be to duplicate "an imperial gaze in relation to non-Western, non-metropolitan sexual practices and collectives" (Manalansan 2003b, 211). Moving beyond the use of the term *queer* as a marker of a modern homosexual or transgender sexual identity, I instead use *queer* as part of a political praxis of completely dismantling the heterosexual/homosexual binary and other binaries steeped in histories of power and privilege, such as North/South and native/settler. In this thesis, I understand *queer* not necessarily, or simply, as the name for sexuality-based identity categories, but as "a *critique* of the tendency to organize political or theoretical questions around sexual orientation per se" (Somerville 2007, 187). I use *queerness* in this thesis as an analytic, not as a "redefinition of what's normal," but [as] the deconstructive interrogation of the concept [of normality] itself" (Harper 1997, 24).

By centering *queerness* in this thesis, I am not attempting to 'excavate' or 'recuperate' homosexual or transgendered Filipino/American individuals and communities in the United States or the Philippines; as such, I am not replicating Manalansan's project in *Global Divas*, in which the lives of *bakla* Filipino men in the diaspora become the privileged subjects of his study. I want to shift the conversation away from *which* Filipinos constitute the proper object of Filipino American Studies and activism, towards asking how the Filipino subject itself came to be produced through colonial, imperialist, and neoliberal practices. That is to say, rather than advocating for Filipino American Studies scholars to reorient their scholarship to include or even privilege gay/lesbian/*bakla*/transgendered Filipino/American subjects over other

subjects, I assert that it is far more productive to interrogate the ways that we deploy the identity category ‘Filipino/American’ to describe our subjects of study in the first place; I push us to understand how ‘Filipino’ and ‘Filipino/American’ as particular sexualized racial and national subjectivities have been discursively produced and deployed by the Philippine state, the global North (especially the United States), and even self-identified Filipino/Americans themselves, and to what ends.

One example of a work in Filipino American Studies that attempts to destabilize the Filipino/American subject through the use of a queer analytic is Allan Punzalan Isaac’s *American Tropics*. Opening the book with a deconstruction of the Andrew Cunanan case, Isaac asks: “Is it an American story? Is it a Filipino story? Is it a Filipino American story? Is it a tragic, ‘gay’ story? Or is it all of these with traces of America’s empire?”² Analyzing the mutual exclusions of the ethnic and national media in identifying Cunanan, Isaac presents a powerful example of the “unrecognizability of the Filipino and the Philippines in larger U.S. narratives” (2006, xvi). Disavowed as gay by the Filipino American press and as Filipino by mainstream US media, the figure of Cunanan illuminates the ways in which “the channels of power and multiple *identificatory* historical and geographical sites produced by imperialism complicate the linear and singular trajectory of [Filipino] ethnic and national identity” (Isaac 2006, xxvi). Andrew Cunanan’s story is singular in its infamy, yet as Isaac illuminates, it is also paradigmatic; the Cunanan case is part of a long history of US exceptionalism, in which America’s disavowal of its imperial projects produces Filipino/American subjects who are illegible

² Andrew Cunanan, a “San Diego gay party boy,” was a “spree killer” responsible for the deaths of five people, including Italian fashion designer Gianni Versace, between April and July 1997 (Isaac 2006, xvi). He committed suicide shortly after the Versace slaying on July 15, and was found dead a week later by South Beach, Miami police in “a gleaming white houseboat” (Isaac 2006, xvi).

as either authentically Filipino or properly American, who can never be both gay *and* Filipino/American.

American Tropics begins with Andrew Cunanan, but the book is not just about him, or even about gay Filipinos at all. Beginning with the Cunanan case as both an exceptional and paradigmatic example of the Filipino diaspora's "uncanny effect on the American psyche," *American Tropics* then moves to analyze other historical moments and cultural productions, and ultimately makes the case that investigating US imperialism in the Philippines, and the subsequent arrival of Filipinos on US shores, troubles the borders—national, epistemological, disciplinary/intellectual, and subjective—between the United States and the Philippines (Isaac 2006, xxiv). The Cunanan case becomes merely one example of storytelling—the stories the US tells about itself and its supposed racial democracy; that the Filipino American community tells about its conditions of immigration and its 'good' Americanized members; that we as ethnic studies scholars tell about Filipino/Americans and the Philippines. Isaac's work is interested in disarticulating those stories, with the goal of reconstituting a Filipino/American identity mindful of "the imperial ghosts" which structure its condition of emergence (2006, 182).

My own genealogical account in chapter three, and the subsequent analysis of the *bakla* performances in the CPDRC videos in chapter four, is an attempt to reckon with the ghosts Isaac conjures; my story is about a *bakla* subject, Wiendjiel Resane, but it is also not about him at all. My analysis, like Isaac's, is actually centered on the question of *what* this queer(ed) figure can open up for understanding the production of Filipino/American subjectivity. I argue that the conditions of Resane's exploitation can illuminate the ways that all of 'us' Filipino/Americans negotiate our identities within a

system of racialized, sexualized significations that have accumulated historical force since the official period of US colonialism in the Philippines, and which have shifted and are reinvigorated in the contemporary period.

In beginning his text with a disavowed, abject subject—that of a gay Filipino “spree killer”—Isaac challenges Filipino American Studies scholars and activists to ask: what does it mean for our intellectual and political projects, not to mention our own investments in our identity, if Cunanan is one of ‘us’? Isaac’s investigation into the “American Tropics” implicates not only the mainstream narratives that deny the US imperial project, but also those of us invested in politics of Asian American and Filipino/American racial and social justice—as Isaac warns, imperial desires can also inform the “Asian American social imagination” (2006, xxvi). His text is as much a challenge to prevailing notions of ‘community’ utilized by Asian Americans that consolidate a unified set of histories and experiences while disavowing others—the history of Filipino “immigration” borne of US imperialism in the Philippines on one hand, non-normative subjects on the other (Isaac 2006, 183).

To recognize Cunanan as one of ‘us’ would require redefining Filipino/American subjectivity not as a discrete, bounded racial or national identity but as a “complex and unrecognizable” configuration produced in the intersecting histories of US empire, Philippine diaspora, and the sexualized labor exploitation of bodies on both sides of the “American Tropics” (Isaac 2006, 183). It would call for the articulation of a Filipino/American subject position that is ambivalent, allowing for multiple belongings and sites of identification and affiliations, some of which are “violent proximate possibilities” (Isaac 2006, 147). Rather than confounding the possibility of community, Isaac challenges us to rearticulate a community that exceeds both state and radical discourses

which have no place for the queer(ed) Filipino/American subject, and by extension, none of 'us.'

Isaac's text, in many ways, takes up Kandice Chuh's call for Asian American studies to be a "subjectless discourse," an argument made in her 2003 text *Imagine Otherwise: On Asian Americanist Critique*. Simply, Chuh's project pushes for conceiving of Filipino American Studies as a *subjectless discourse* rather than as a discipline that relies on the enumeration of a fixed subjectivity defined around differences of gender, race, class, and sexuality (Chuh 2003, 9-10). A Filipino American Studies that employed a *subjectless discourse* would clear a "conceptual space to prioritize difference by foregrounding the discursive constructedness of subjectivity," recognizing that "a 'subject' only becomes recognizable and can act as such by conforming to certain regulatory matrices" (Chuh 2003, 9). If the subject is always also an epistemological object, then the project of Filipino American Studies should not simply delineate racism, sexism, and/or heterosexism's impact on an *a priori* Filipino/American subject, but rather, should trace and critique the production of said subject through "the interplay of multiple systems of subjectification, including the non-equivalent technologies of race, nation, empire, and sexuality" (Chuh 2003, 13). In Chuh's formulation, displacing the accepted definition of Filipino/American as a transparent, knowable identity would allow for the use of the term as a "mediating presence that links bodies to the knowledge regimes of the U.S. nation"; 'Filipino/American' would then be the name for an analytic instead of a proper object of study (2003, 27).

Where Isaac and I draw the most from Chuh is in her deconstruction of Filipino/American identity and history in the first chapter of her text. In this chapter, Chuh argues that "Filipino American" is "a racialized category of socio-political identity... made

operational through a particular process of sexualization” (2003, 34). If the body is “a site upon which power manifests,” and is therefore simultaneously material and discursive, Chuh is interested in examining both the discourses and disciplinary practices which manage Filipino identity and racial difference through sexualization; she is not interested in fixing a static Filipino/American subject at the heart of her study (2003, 37). Deploying ‘Filipino’ as a “site of critique rather than identity,” Chuh undertakes a brief genealogy of the production of the ‘Filipino’ and ‘Filipino American’ as socio-legal categories in the early 20th century (Chuh 2003, 56). Her discussion of the sexualized disciplinary technologies applied to male Filipino migrant workers illuminates the production of Filipino and Filipino/American subjectivity as legible in its difference to white heteronormativity; furthermore, she critiques the continuing management of Filipino/American masculinity in the contemporary period, not only by the US state or immigration laws, but also by Asian American Studies scholars who lament the “emasculatation of ‘Asian America’ in popular discourse.”³

In undertaking this project, I am taking up the challenge, posed by Chuh, to work against producing a uniform subjectivity, or a proper subject of Filipino American Studies. In doing so, I will be extending her argument to account for the genealogy of

³ Chuh 2003, 35. In tracing this genealogy of the sexualized identity formation of Filipino/Americans, Chuh intervenes into the dominant Filipino Americanist studies of Carlos Bulosan’s literature; she concludes that the main character of Allos in *America is in the Heart* represents Bulosan’s vision of a “disruptive masculinity” defined specifically in difference to white heteronormativity (Chuh 2003, 37). Rather than recuperating heteronormativity for the Filipino/American subject to fight against exclusionary immigration acts, Chuh argues that Bulosan, through his portrayal of white racial brutality against Filipinos as an ‘eroticized violence,’ “prompts us to interrogate rather than strive for ownership of [the power of heteronormative masculinity]” (2003, 41). Reading Bulosan’s work in this way, Chuh makes two conclusions: 1) that contemporary radical scholarship and praxis that valorize Bulosan as a kind of heteromasculine, heroic activist fail to acknowledge his own troubling of those terms; and 2) that scholars working in Filipino American Studies, and Asian American Studies more broadly, need to be critical of their own investments in heteronormativity, investments which ultimately undermine the anti-colonial and anti-racist politics they claim to be working towards.

disciplinary techniques applied to Filipinos located in the Philippines, even prior to the first gendered wave of Filipino immigration to the United States. As Chuh and other scholars such as Yen Le Espiritu have written, Filipinos were already “tutored into familiarity with ‘America’ before having departed the Philippines” (Chuh 2003, 53). The great irony of this history is that even after being ‘properly’ tutored, Filipino migrants were punished for this acculturation when they arrived to US shores, as they were perceived as a threat to white domestic heteromascularity. I am interested in re-tracing these moments of American ‘tutelage’ in the early years of its colonization of the Philippines for precisely this reason—to illuminate the ways in which the sexual management of Filipino subjects within the borders of the Philippines set them up to perform an always already failed heterosexuality in the United States.

If “sexuality coordinates the relationship of the U.S. nation to race, gender, and class as it shapes the relationship of individuals to the nation-state,” then I hope to illuminate through this genealogy how Filipino/Americans are always the queer excess of the nation, even prior to or even without their immigration to the United States; sexually non-normative, even those remaining in the Philippines function as ‘evidence’ of the inherent deviance of the population from economic, sexual, and social (re)productivity (Chuh 2003, 35). In sum, my analysis aims to extend the borders of Chuh’s call for a *subjectless discourse*, to look at the workings of US empire in the Philippine ‘homeland,’ as well as US domestic racism towards Filipino/Americans in the diaspora.

Queer Value(s): the Nation, the Domestic, and Queer of Color Critique

While I draw from the insights of queer theory, and more specifically queer of color critique, in this thesis, I stand by the position that there is nothing inherently subversive about the queer (non-heterosexual, non-gender conforming) subject, nor do I want to romanticize queer theory as the most radical critical apparatus for undermining state power. As Jasbir Puar reminds us, the neoliberal state has already incorporated particular queer subjects into its discourse of multicultural tolerance and diversity, an apparently benevolent inclusion that is “contingent upon ever-narrowing parameters of white racial privilege, consumption capabilities gender and kinship normativity, and bodily integrity.”⁴ I am keenly aware that the popular and academic conflation of the different uses of *queer*—as a shorthand for a non-heterosexual sexual identity *and* as a deconstructive analytical practice—has contributed to the production of scholarship that prioritizes the study of sexuality as the singular modality through which subjectivization occurs. I want to make clear that I disagree with the idea that by discursively dismantling the fixity of sex and sexuality, all other forms of oppressions and inequalities would

⁴ Puar 2007, xii. This process of state incorporation and recognition produces what scholars such as Lisa Duggan (2002) call the *homonormative* queer subject, a universalized white gay male subject with class, racial, and citizenship privileges in the US domestic schema, and tied to the national and international political agendas of U.S. imperialism (Puar 2007, 9). The homonormative subject resides in a “gay globality,” a “spatial imagination founded on claims and hegemonic representations driven by the market and sustained by a networking of (urban) scenes that separately, though similarly, depend on the erasure of othered gay men” (Benedicto 2008, 319). I will address on the homonormative subject and homonormativity as a tool of US empire in more depth in the following chapters.

immediately disappear; this is just as misguided a premise as those who argue for any single-issue politics to the exclusion of all others.⁵

What I *do* find productive about queer of color critique, however, is its attempt at deconstructing the production of racialized and gendered subjectivities as they intersect with categories of sexuality. This body of work draws from the Foucauldian insight that subjects are produced through modalities of power, and that there is no such thing as an *a priori*, coherent subject to whom power is applied. Furthermore, theorists of queer of color critique advance a politics of disinvesting heteronormativity of its power to define the ‘home’ and the ‘domestic sphere,’ and point to new possibilities for kinship and affiliation not bound by blood or heteronormative strivings.

Though not the founding work of queer of color critique, Roderick Ferguson’s text *Aberrations in Black* (2004) has gained critical attention from scholars and activists alike as representative of this body of theory.⁶ In this thesis, I draw from two of Ferguson’s major interventions: his analysis of the processes by which the heteronormative subject is rendered as the transparent subject in both liberal and radical ideology, and, secondly, his critique of radical movements’ reliance on this transparent subject when making their claims to the state.

⁵ Or, in the words of Audre Lorde: “There is no such thing as a single-issue struggle because we do not live single-issue lives” (Lorde 1984, 138).

⁶ For African American scholars who have been instrumental, if not often credited, in developing queer of color critique, see Siobhan Somerville, *Queering the Color Line* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000); E. Patrick Johnson, ed. *Black Queer Studies: An Anthology* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005); and Cathy Cohen, *The Boundaries of Blackness: AIDS and the Breakdown of Black Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999). There is also a body of work in the field of Performance Studies that is central to the development of queer of color critique, particularly José E. Muñoz’s *Disidentifications: Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999).

Ferguson's main critique is of the unquestioned centrality of the transparent subject in both liberal and radical political thought. *Aberrations in Black* makes the case that it is specifically the white heteronormative subject that becomes centralized in both liberal and historical materialist ideologies, particularly during moments of crisis when developments in capitalism threaten to undermine heteropatriarchal relations in the public and private spheres (Ferguson 2004, 10). Linking together racialization and sexualization as simultaneously operating modalities of power, Ferguson argues that one of the central components of capital's proliferation is the production of surplus populations "unevenly marked by racialized nonconformity with gender and sexual norms" who can be exploited for their labor; in fact, capitalism requires subjects "who must transgress the material and ideological boundaries of community, family, and nation" in order to reproduce itself (2004, 16-17). This proliferation of nonheteronormative racial formations in the era of globalization is threatening to both liberals and Marxists/radicals/nationalists, as both groups are invested in the idea of normative white heterosexuality as the "emblem of order, nature, and universality."⁷

⁷ Ferguson 2004, 6. One of the weaknesses of Ferguson's text is that he does not define 'liberal ideology' outright; he refers at several points to Marx's uncritical appropriation of "bourgeois liberal ideology," yet fails to define it other than as a foil to historical materialism (2004, 5). Extrapolating from Ferguson's assessment of historical materialism, it would appear that major components of liberal ideology would be its grounding in empiricism; its distinction between social disorder and progress, and its production of a racialized other that "required heteropatriarchal regulation" (2004, 5-10). Ferguson does spend some time outlining Marx's investment in appropriating all of these features of liberal ideology—particularly Marx's universalization of heteropatriarchy to theorize property ownership; his centralization of an abjected subject, the prostitute, as the proof of "capital's defilement of man"; and his formulation that one of the goals of the proletarian revolution would be to "recover heteropatriarchal integrity from the ravages of industrialization" (2004, 6-10). Ferguson's analysis focuses on the figure of the racialized, sexually deviant prostitute, saying that both "bourgeois ideologues and their radical opponents took the prostitute as the sign for the gendered and sexual chaos that commodification was bound to unleash," and that "historical materialism and bourgeois ideology shared the tendency to read modern civilization as the racialized scene of heteronormative disruption" (2004, 9-10). This leads him to the conclusion that the "heteronormative subject is the goal of liberal and radical

Restoring white heteropatriarchy under the guise of universality has become the goal of both liberal and radical political projects, to the detriment of those sexualized racial subjects who do not conform to proper heteronormative identity.

Ferguson's insights in *Aberrations in Black* build on the work by black feminist scholars such as M. Jacqui Alexander, Katherine McKittrick, Saidiya Hartman, and Hortense Spillers, who have written of contemporary black kinship structures as resulting from slavery's forced separation of black families, and have analyzed the ways that contemporary discourses of the dysfunctional black family have been used to dismantle the welfare state and other social programs.⁸ Focusing on the production of African American communities as non-heteronormative, Ferguson analyzes the ways that the Moynihan Report and other sociological studies from the mid-20th century through the present assisted government institutions in managing black populations post-Reconstruction. Ferguson argues that the Moynihan Report "cast racial exclusion as fundamentally feminizing" by using black matriarchal households as evidence of African American social dysfunction; this argument is based on the assumption that the heterosexual nuclear family is the appropriate domestic and social formation (2004, 122). In suturing racial exclusion and sexual regulation together, the state was then able to institute policies such as residential segregation, justifying them as necessary to [Marxist] practices, as both seek to recoup this subject as necessary to furthering progress, civilization, and order (2004, 10).

⁸ Hortense Spillers, in "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe," actually calls for the discursive claiming of the "*monstrosity* of [the black] female with the potential to 'name' her children, an impossible subjectivity due to the ungendering of the black woman through slavery, yet one that exists in accounts such as Moynihan's by his misnaming of black matriarchal power (2003, 228-9). Spillers' call for black communities to claim the monstrous "Sapphire" is echoed/appropriated by Ferguson, who, in the opening page of *Aberrations in Black*, conjures up the figure of the black drag queen prostitute as a subject at the "intersections of formations thought to be discrete and transparent... disciplined by those within and outside African American communities, reviled by leftist-radicals, conservatives, heterosexuals, and mainstream queers alike" (Ferguson 2004, 1-2).

protecting white American heteronormative families from African American sexual perversity (Ferguson 2004, 41). Ultimately, Ferguson argues that these processes of racial and sexual management are the means by which black labor is regulated, disciplined and rationalized for capitalist expansion in the United States, from slavery through the present moment (2004, 96).

Ferguson then goes on to show the ways in which the discourses of the black matriarch produced by the state and the social sciences contributed to the polarization of African American politics, whereby black nationalists came to embrace heteronormative black subjects as the legitimate members of the community, disavowing the material existence or discursive possibility of the single black mother or black lesbian (Ferguson 2004, 131). *Aberrations in Black* challenges both liberal and radical politics for failing to result in true freedom for people of color, precisely because people of color following these political ideologies come to position themselves as the transparent heteronormative subjects of the liberal state's discourse in order to achieve their political goals. Ferguson warns that "because of their own normative underpinnings, oppositional forces like the black power movement fall prey to capital's new global mode" (2004, 137). That is to say, Ferguson argues that the centrality of the transparent subject to liberal political discourse has led ostensibly radical political actors (such as black nationalists or, in this thesis, Filipina/American anti-imperialist feminists) to rely on these same discourses when making their claims for recognition to the state and/or to public society; but, as universality is predicated on the abjection of sexualized racial Others, these pleas for universal recognition are ultimately destined to fail. Ferguson calls for radicals to instead "claim the nonheteronormative as the location for new and emergent identifications and social relations"—in his final assessment, Ferguson argues that it is

only after disinvesting themselves from their heteronormative strivings that these groups will truly begin to fulfill their goals of liberation (2004, 108).

In this thesis, I draw from Ferguson's two major interventions and extend them to discuss American imperial projects in the Philippines; you can say that I am pushing *queer of color critique* to extend its genealogical and geographical scope. Like Ferguson, I am ultimately interested in pressing so-called radical activists to reconfigure a liberationist politics that does not rely on the transparent heteronormative subject of the nation to center their political interventions. Departing from Ferguson, however, I do not focus my analysis on the ways that the disciplines of sociology and literature have produced particular Filipino/American subjects in the United States, as he does; rather, I trace a genealogy of the ways that anthropological discourses, combined with carceral, medical, and visual cultural technologies of power, were used during the American colonial period to produce 'Filipinos' as knowable, non-normative subjects even prior to their arrival in the United States. I also articulate some of the ways that the Filipino non-normative subject has been made (re)productive through a kind of *queer labor* for the nation and, simultaneously, how this subject's desire to perform his love for the nation opens a moment of resistance that can be seized. Finally, I would like to push queer of color critique beyond a sole engagement with the exclusion of black subjects and other communities of color from American liberal discourse, towards the inclusion of an analysis of the state's active production of sexualized racial subjects—in both the US nation and its colonies—for the purposes of consolidating white heteronormative subjectivity as unmarked universality. Expanding the space and time in which Ferguson's critique can and has been applied, I implicate American colonial projects in

the domestic management of racialized populations 'at home,' much in the vein of other works on queer domesticity recently published.

A second prominent theme in queer of color critique is the inquiry of the state's enforcement of heteronormative domesticity as a tool of racial management, which is usually followed by a discussion of the potential for non-heteronormative or queer domesticities to disrupt these racial regimes of power. Stating the importance of this kind of analysis, Nayan Shah writes that

The analysis of 'queer domesticity' emphasizes the variety of erotic ties and social affiliations that counters normative expectations. Rather than viewing the term *queer* as a synonym for homosexual identity, I use it to question the formation of exclusionary norms of respectable middle-class, heterosexual marriage. The analytical category of queer upsets the strict gender roles, the firm divisions between public and private, and the implicit presumptions of self-sufficient economies and intimacy in the respectable domestic household. (Shah 2001, 13-14)

Like *Aberrations in Black*, work on queer domesticity draws from black feminist scholarship that deconstructs the ways that sexuality and the production of the category of 'woman' has been used in projects of racial domination. If black feminist criticism is interested in "precisely the interrogation and deconstruction of [the normative conditions of womanhood] rather than the determination of who is or is not a woman in accordance with this measure," then perhaps the work on queer domesticity seeks to broaden this interrogation, to look at the ways that entire communities have been produced as racial subjects because of their supposed deviance from the norms of white heterosexual domesticity.⁹

⁹ Hartman 1997, 100. Saidiya Hartman continues by posing the question: "How can we understand the racialized engenderment of the black female captive in terms other than deficiency or lack in relation to normative conditions and instead understand this *production of gender* in the context of very different economies of power, property, kinship, race, and

Of the growing body of literature on queer domesticity, I draw most from Chandan Reddy's 1998 article "Home, Houses, Nonidentity: *Paris is Burning*," in which he begins from a founding premise of queer of color critique: that "racist practice articulates itself generally as gender and sexual regulation, and that gender and sexual differences variegate racial formations" (Reddy qtd. in Ferguson 2004, 3). From this initial insight, Reddy's work then moves to an analysis of the ways in which the categories of the 'self' and 'home' are reconfigured by queer people of color who have been violently regulated by the state; the article ends by gesturing towards the possibilities for a queer(ed) political praxis not rooted in pleas for recognition by, but in radical difference to, the state.¹⁰

Reddy begins his piece by deconstructing the dominant discourse of the 'domestic' as a private, feminized site free from political discourse and regulation, which I argue is a discourse that some Filipina/American feminist anti-imperialist organizations deploy, undermining their liberationist goals. Reddy analyzes the interplay between the state with the home and the body, to note that these convergences are productive and

sexuality?" (Hartman 1997, 100; emphasis added). The questions animating my thesis are very much engendered by my encounter with Hartman's *Scenes of Subjection*.

¹⁰ While Reddy's critique, like Ferguson's, has a broader anti-racist practice behind it (meaning it is not only limited to LGBTQI people of color, but open to *all* communities of color), Reddy asks us to be particularly attentive to the ways in which LGBTQI communities of color are produced and regulated at the intersection of discourses. Reddy sums up the importance of looking through the lens of subjects produced as queer people of color, when he writes that "Queers of color, as subjects located at the intersection of multiple hailings, thematize the ways in which the conflicting, noncorrespondent, and overlapping constitutive interpellations of race, gender, and sexuality form cultural subjects whose potential lies precisely in their 'confusion' or 'fusion' of more than one determination within a singular subject" (Reddy 1998, 367). This focus, I believe, retains the material specificities of the lives of queer people of color while opening up the possibilities for new articulations of movements and politics against the state to emerge. As such, I find it productive to keep his formulations of *queer people of color* and *queer of color critique* in mind, especially as I focus on the figure of the *bakla*, embodied in Wiendjiel Resane, in chapter four of this thesis.

regulative of ‘proper’ and ‘improper’ subjects of rights and recognition. His project ‘jumps scales’—between the scales of the body, the home, and the nation—to show how they are produced not as separate spheres but are rather co-constitutive of, and are sometimes pitted in antagonism with, each other.¹¹

In “Home, Houses, Nonidentity,” Reddy sketches an alternative genealogy that places the ‘home’ in crisis: he destabilizes understandings of ‘home’ that would have it be a safe or private space, calling our attention to the ways in which US national rhetoric around the home has been invoked over and against communities of color to maintain white capitalist heteropatriarchy. Reddy demonstrates, through tracing the development of the family wage in the turn of the century, one example of how the discursive sites of the ‘home’ and domesticity were used by the state to “resolv[e] the contradictions that the changing political nation (with the abolition of slavery, the shift to wage labor, and the political emphasis on ‘White’ citizenship), and its new economy brought forth” (1998, 359). In the first part of the piece, he examines the rhetoric of the ‘family wage’ and the ‘home’ as it was used in the turn of the 20th century to socialize subjects of the state. By only distributing the so-called ‘family wage’ to workers in the ‘organized labor’ sector—subjects that were overwhelmingly white, male, and citizens—the state devalued (both materially and rhetorically) the ‘disorganized’ or ‘informal’ labor performed by women and people of color and, in addition, established the white male-headed household as the proper family formation (1998, 361). Reddy’s intervention here disrupts the prevailing contemporary logic that imagines the domestic sphere as an idealized space, impenetrable to regulation by the state; I actually attempt a similar kind of genealogy in

¹¹ I am intrigued by the possibilities opened up by Jasbir Puar’s notion of scale: “Scale does not reflect normative ordering but is actually a modality that produces normative ordering, a grid of ascending and descending power vectors, assignments of priority, impact and force” (2007, 224).

the following chapter, as I analyze the ways in which American ‘domesticating’ projects established in the Philippines helped consolidate white American heterosexual masculinity over and against Filipino non-normative sexual and racial difference.

Reddy then connects the history of production of the family wage in the United States to a contemporary cultural production, the 1991 documentary film *Paris is Burning* about the underground drag balls in New York City and its participants. His reading of *Paris is Burning* powerfully illuminates the ways that queer communities of color have rearticulated the hegemonic symbolism of ‘home’ (as a white, heterosexual, nuclear space) by discursively *and* materially building queer ‘houses’ as alternative domestic formations. Careful not to romanticize the queer black and Latino men involved in the drag balls, Reddy instead highlights the contradictions and challenges faced by community members when representing themselves and their ‘houses’ to the viewers of the film. Reddy shows the instability of these young queer people of color’s self-identity and understandings of ‘home,’ and argues that rather than think of the ‘houses’ represented in the film as unproblematic reproductions of an idealized ‘home,’ that we instead understand the houses as created precisely out of the community members’ need for *emotional* support and *material* structures to live in due to the violence they have experienced in their original homes and in their daily public lives.¹²

In recognizing the labor that queer people of color put towards building these ‘houses,’ Reddy’s work leaves open the possibility that these practices are ones of

¹² Reddy writes: “The houses in *Paris* attest to the shifting, changing, and incoherent history of self-formation, not figuring subjects who are predicated on a linear model of development or statistically or singularly constituted, but rather imagining subjects who are always in the process of change or transformation, responding partially to changing material and corporeal conditions. Most of all, the houses of *Paris* are crucial collectivities that respond to violence and subordinations generated in the home *and* in public life, exposing nodes of affinity and identity between the two locations” (1998, 371-373).

contingent agency and resistance against the state discourses of ‘proper’ family formations.¹³ He writes:

It is these [people of color] collectivities, in alterity to forms of antagonism articulated ‘directly’ against racial subordination... that might found an alternative logic or mapping of subjectivity that can extend our movement in the fight against the State and cultural ‘structures in dominance.’ (Reddy 1998, 373)

Reddy’s analysis of the houses in *Paris is Burning* does not imagine their formation as pure resistance and acts of agency on the part of queer people of color, nor does it dismiss these acts as simply an easy escape from homophobic violence or material deprivations—the death of Venus Xtravaganza clearly demonstrates this as an impossibility. Rather, Reddy pushes us to see moments of insurgency, however brief, in the formation of new queer(ed) socialities founded on “nonheterogeneity and nonidentity” that refuse to define home through the rubric of ‘privacy.’¹⁴ It is this second intervention that I find most generative about Reddy’s project, and about the work on queer domesticity in general. It is a body of scholarship that does not simply critique the forms of sexualized racial domination; it also works to help us imagine a different way of ‘doing’ politics: as a series of acts that does not solely rely on appeals to the state for recognition, practiced by those most exploited in the era of globalization and military

¹³ Reddy draws from Stuart Hall’s concept of ‘articulation’ to discuss not only the contradictory functions of the state and social classes, but also the ways that new alliances can be built among those rendered apart by the state and society (Reddy 1998, 375n13). As such, I see Reddy’s project as invested in what Hall calls a ‘theoretically-informed political practice” that aims “to bring about or construct the articulation between social or economic forces and those forms of politics and ideologies which might lead them in practice to intervene in history in a progressive way—an articulation which has to be *constructed* through practice precisely because it is not guaranteed by how those forces are constituted in the first place” (Hall 1985, 95).

¹⁴ Reddy notes that houses are explicitly locations that “‘unify’ heterogeneous subjects by avowing and founding their cohesion on the damage produced by the demands and dictations for uniformity within a heterosexual matrix of gender and privacy” (1998, 372-3). As such, Reddy illuminates the ways in which queer subjects are *produced* through acts of state violence, rather than reinscribing queer subjects with an *a priori* identity based on essential sexual orientation and/or gender identification.

imperialism at ‘home’ and ‘abroad.’ It proposes a politics that moves us beyond the binary of ‘agents’ and ‘victims,’ aiming to broaden the range of what may be considered ‘political acts’ by redefining the realm of the political itself. As I understand it, Reddy’s work stands as an example of a work without a proper object, or as one conceived as a *subjectless discourse*. It is this kind of investigation and reorientation that I am ultimately invested in pursuing, in this thesis and in the world outside these pages.

In order to make my own intervention in this thesis, then, I draw from the above-mentioned bodies of scholarship—Filipino American Studies and queer of color critique—along with the theories proposed by Michel Foucault, whose insights on sexuality, power, and the method of genealogy form much of the backbone of this thesis.

Power, Genealogy, Sexuality: Foucauldian Insights

Perhaps it is unsurprising that I draw so heavily from the work of French social theorist Michel Foucault, as his influence has permeated all of the academic fields in which I situate my work—particularly queer theory and queer of color critique. Queer theory has taken up the Foucauldian project of analyzing the technologies of power through which the subject is *produced*—rather than understanding the subject as an *a priori* entity to which power is simply ‘applied’—and, subsequently, examines how the reevaluation of the subject can open the realm of ‘political’ action to include supposedly ‘non-political’ acts. As the epigraph to this chapter suggests, one way to reorient relations of power—to ‘queer’ them—is to challenge the fixity of the speaking subject, both the subject of transparency (“I”) and the one marked as outside (“the homosexual”); Foucault calls for a queer(ed) ethic of social relations that involves not just a resistance

to social norms, but also the discursive and material production of forms of sociality which neither maintain nor disidentify with capitalist heteropatriarchy (Halperin 1995, 80).

Beginning from Foucault's formulation of subject production, I also draw from several other Foucauldian conceptual and methodological tools in order to make my intervention. In particular, I borrow from Foucault's analysis of sexuality as a modality through which biopower is productive of populations; I also use his genealogical method as a means of interrogating and illuminating these productive processes. In this section I will briefly review these two interventions, along with scholarly critiques of Foucault that elucidate concerns with his work that I also share.

Power and the Subject

To understand Foucault's formulation of power as productive, I return to two of his seminal texts—*Discipline and Punish* and the first volume of his *History of Sexuality*—and to his lectures at the College de France collected in *Society Must Be Defended*. *Discipline and Punish* traces the development from what Foucault terms “sovereign power” to “biopower,” the latter being the form of power he explicates in his *History of Sexuality*. In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault analyzes the prison system as a site through which to understand the transformation of sovereign power (in which “the body of the condemned man became the king's property, on which the sovereign left his mark”) to what he names in this text as “disciplinary power” (in which the individual is “the property of society, the object of a collective and useful appropriation”); disciplinary

power, in this text, can be seen as the forerunner to what Foucault later terms biopower.¹⁵

Essential to Foucault's analysis in *Discipline and Punish* is the claim that disciplinary power hinges on the production of 'docile bodies' in the prison and other institutions in the carceral continuum.¹⁶ He specifies two types of docile bodies: 'useful' bodies and 'intelligible' bodies, the former being a product of submission and the latter of functioning and explanation (Foucault 1979, 136). These 'projects of docility' are distinct yet overlap at times with one another, as subjects are molded in various ways in different institutions of the carceral continuum. Key to understanding Foucault's conception of disciplinary power is its primary function of individuation, or the production of individual citizens who submit to the order of the state. By exercising the power of normalization, the prison produces 'the criminal' as a legible subject to which punishment or rehabilitation can be inflicted: "[the penitentiary technique and the delinquent] appeared together, the one extending from the other, as a technological ensemble that forms and

¹⁵ Foucault 1979, 109. On the differences between sovereign power and disciplinary power, Foucault says the following: that disciplinary power applies "primarily to bodies and what they do rather than to the land and what it produces. It was a mechanism of power that made it possible to extract time and labor, rather than commodities and wealth, from bodies...exercised through surveillance... It was a type of power that presupposed a closely meshed grid of material coercions rather than the physical existence of a sovereign, and it therefore defined a new economy of power based upon the principle that there had to be an increase both in the subjugated forces and in the force and efficacy of that which subjugated them" (Foucault 2003, 36). Foucault then goes on to say that disciplinary power cannot be described through the theory of sovereignty, as sovereignty is founded upon "the absolute expenditure of power" by the sovereign, whereas disciplinary power calculates power "with minimum expenditure and maximum efficiency" and is channeled through heterogeneous, capillary techniques (2003, 36).

¹⁶ Michael Salman, whose work on the Bilibid prison in the Philippines I review in the following chapter, interprets Foucault's notion of the carceral continuum as the following: the carceral continuum "represent[s] the circulation of disciplinary techniques throughout societal institutions and the human sciences" (Salman 1995, 115). Foucault continues: "By means of a carceral continuum, the authority that sentences infiltrates all those other authorities that supervise, transform, correct, improve...In its function, the power to punish is not essentially different from that of curing or educating" (qtd. in Salman 1995, 115).

fragments the object to which it applies its instruments” (Foucault 1979, 255). The criminal as a “describable, analyzable object” is but one of the multiple subjects that can be produced through disciplinary power, yet Foucault uses this example to make a broader argument, that it is the idea of the *individual* itself that is constituted as an “effect and object of power, as effect and object of knowledge” (1979, 190-192).

In *Discipline and Punish*, we can begin to see how Foucault understands power as productive, as power makes legible the very subjects who are to be punished, policed, and rehabilitated by institutions in the carceral continuum. For Foucault, it is not simply the ‘criminal’ who is produced as an individuated subject, but rather the individual itself: “One of the first effects of power is that it allows bodies, gestures, discourses, and desires to be identified and constituted as something individual... The individual is in fact a power-effect, and at the same time, and to the extent that he is a power-effect, the individual is a relay: power passes through the individuals it has constructed” (Foucault 2003, 29-30). To understand how power is productive of subjects, then, we need to look at the “relations of power,” beyond the direct rule of the sovereign or the state’s juridical apparatuses, to the regional forms and institutions where power becomes “capillary” and works directly on the normalization of bodies (Foucault 2003, 28).

The process through which the individual body becomes part of a functioning population is developed in Foucault’s later work *The History of Sexuality, Volume 1*. In this text, Foucault develops his analysis of *biopolitics* as a modern technology of maintaining order through the production of life and healthy populations, rather than through the production of docile individuals subject to “sovereign power,” or the right of the sovereign to “take life or let live”:

Since the classical age the West has undergone a very profound transformation of these mechanisms of power.... This death that was based on the right of the sovereign is now manifested as simply the reverse of the right of the social body to ensure, maintain or develop this life.... This formidable power of death... now presents itself as the counterpart of a power that exerts a positive influence on life, that endeavors to administer, optimize, and multiply it, subjecting it to precise controls and comprehensive regulations (Foucault 1978, 136-7).

Biopolitics operates by “regularizing” populations through scientific mechanisms on a large scale: managing birth and mortality rates, life expectancy, and environmental effects, beyond the realm of the individual body (Foucault 2003, 246). For Foucault, this biopolitical management of life fundamentally differs from sovereign power; sovereign power is solely interested in the maintenance of the individual ruler’s power through his ability to kill, and this conceptualizes power as a state-centered, top-down process. When biopower has fully permeated a population through capillary mechanisms, it becomes self-regulating: individuals manage their own health and police the integrity of the population to protect the society from those who threaten its safety, regularity, and health.

Foucault theorizes that contemporary biopolitical regimes produce populations particularly through the modalities of sex and sexuality, implemented through the disciplinary and regulatory technologies of “medicine, pedagogy, and economics,” among others (1978, 116). Foucault defines *sexuality* not as a kind of natural drive, but as a historical construct, a “great surface network in which the stimulation of bodies, the intensification of pleasures, the incitement to discourse, the formation of special knowledges, the strengthening of controls and resistances, are linked to one another in

accordance with a few major strategies of knowledge and power.”¹⁷ Sexuality, for Foucault, is significant in that it is “an especially dense transfer point for relations of power”; sexuality is an element in power relations endowed with great instrumentality, as it is “useful for the greatest number of maneuvers and [is] capable of serving as a point of support... for the most varied strategies” (1978, 103). Rather than reading the history of sexuality as one of repression, Foucault instead urges us to note the ways that discourses and practices around sexuality actually proliferated in the modern episteme: a myriad number of technologies were developed to analyze and define the differences between ‘proper’ and ‘deviant’ sexualities, and, as a result, were productive of particular populations as a means of social management. Finally, as sexuality “exists at the point where body and population meet,” it needs to be understood as both a matter of individual bodily discipline and regularized population control.¹⁸

Using both Foucault’s insights on disciplinary power (the “anatomy-politics” of the human body) and biopolitics (the regulatory control of the population), I am able to analyze the ways in which individualized ‘Filipino’ subjectivity was *produced* through multiple institutions—such as the prison, the leper colony, and the World’s Fair—in order

¹⁷ Foucault 1978, 105-6. *Sex*, meanwhile, is defined by Foucault as a “unique signifier and universal signified” that groups together in artificial unity “anatomical elements, biological functions, conducts, sensations, and pleasures” (1978, 154). As sex becomes normalized as an essential instinct, drive, or action, it sutures knowledge of human sexuality and biological sciences of reproduction, masking its very constructedness through its claim to being the name for a kind of empirical, scientifically verifiable aspect of the human condition (Foucault 1978, 154-5).

¹⁸ Foucault 2003, 251-252. The theory of degeneracy, for example, is emblematic of the dual disciplinary and biopolitical character of sexuality. When degeneracy is discovered in an individual, the protection of his/her sexual health becomes necessary, lest s/he pass on these sexually perverse characteristics onto future generations, ultimately poisoning the entire *population*. Foucault writes that the sexual management of populations occurs “at the level of the body, of the undisciplined body that the sexual debauchee brings down upon himself. A child who masturbates too much will be a lifelong invalid: disciplinary sanction at the level of the body. But at the same time, perverted sexuality has effects at the level of the population, as anyone who has been sexually debauched is assumed to have a heredity” (Foucault 2003, 252).

to create an entire population of self-regulating queer subjects. While Filipino American Studies scholarship has largely focused on the juridico-political construction of Filipinos as “little brown brothers” by US immigration policy and the annexation of Philippine territory, I am interested in furthering this analysis, to look at the ways that the Filipino population was disciplined in different colonial sites along the carceral continuum in the islands and in the United States. For it was (and is) even before their recruitment as farm workers, soldiers, mail order brides, and domestic workers that Filipinos were (and are) made legible as a queer population, available for US labor needs and sexual exploitation; the very construction of a ‘Filipino’ population was necessary in order to conceive that their bodies, and not just their land, could be (re)productive for furthering US economic and political interests. Simply, it was precisely through the production of Filipinos as a non-heteronormative racialized population that American empire justified its colonial domination of the Philippines. As I will trace in the following chapters, the production and management of sexuality was central to the consolidation of American colonial power in the Philippines and, furthermore, it set the precedent for the heteronormative political discourse that both the Philippine state and anti-imperialist activists articulate today.

Critiques of Foucauldian Schemas of Power

Though I draw heavily from Foucault’s insights on biopolitics and disciplinary power in this project, I am also aware that there is a gap in his analysis of the management of sexuality as it intersects with the production of racialized populations. As Joy James, Achille Mbembe, Ann Laura Stoler and other scholars have noted, Foucault

failed to fully account for the production of subjects under racial regimes such as colonialism and slavery; they critique Foucault for, first, overlooking the ways that colonized and enslaved populations were produced simultaneously as racially degenerate and sexually deviant, and secondly, for not addressing how white European subjectivity itself was produced through these violent projects of racial domination.¹⁹

Joy James argues that in *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault “universalizes the body of the white, propertied male,” and that in constructing this unspecified body, he “sanitize[s] state repression as he argues that manifestations of power or spectacles of violence have been extinguished” (1996, 25-28). She argues that his chronology of disciplinary power ignores the continuing state violence against black and brown bodies, from lynching in the early 20th century to police brutality against men of color that continues into the present moment. James rightly notes that in the United States, punitive and spectacular torture continued on the black body well after Foucault asserted that public executions and torture disappeared with the shift to private incarceration, and she provides ample evidence to indict Foucault’s timeline as Euro-centric and inattentive to colonialism and slavery (1996, 26).

James’s reading of Foucault, however, is limited by her sole focus on *Discipline and Punish* as representative of Foucault’s theory of power; when she notes that Foucault has failed to address sexuality, or that he conceives of power as only possessed by the state and as overwhelmingly repressive, her arguments are less

¹⁹ See Ann Laura Stoler, *Race and the Education of Desire* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995) and “A Colonial Reading of Foucault: Bourgeois Bodies and Racial Selves” in *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2002); Joy James, “Erasing the Spectacle” in *Resisting State Violence: Radicalism, Gender, and Race in U.S. Culture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996); and Achille Mbembe, “Necropolitics,” *Public Culture* 15.1 (2003): 11-40.

tenable given Foucault's three volumes of the *History of Sexuality* and his published lectures at the Collège de France, among other works (James 1996, 27). What James does offer, however, is an alternative genealogy to Foucault's, in which we can see how the state continues to violently manage racially differentiated populations through the prison regime and other (often extra-legal) acts and apparatuses; this genealogy is still needed, given the proliferation of fatal couplings of power and difference deployed over communities of color today.²⁰

Perhaps a more generative critique comes from Achille Mbembe, who challenges Foucault's conception of biopower as the exercise of sovereignty through controlling mortality and defining life and those who are allowed to live (Mbembe 2003, 12). He asks: "Is the notion of biopower sufficient to account for the contemporary ways in which the political, under the guise of war, of resistance, or of the fight against terror, makes the murder of the enemy its primary and absolute objective?" (Mbembe 2003, 12). Mbembe critiques what he calls the normative discourses of sovereignty—sovereignty as the exercise of individual autonomy and reason in the public sphere—to argue that there exists another form of sovereignty whose "central project is not the struggle for autonomy but the generalized instrumentalization of human existence and the material destruction of human bodies and populations" (Mbembe 2003, 14). For Mbembe, this *necropolitical* regime does not produce subjects in order to manage their health and life,

²⁰ I borrow from Ruth Wilson Gilmore's work on racism and state power here, as she writes: "If race has no essence, racism does. Racism is singular because, whatever its place-based particularities, its practitioners exploit and renew *fatal* power-difference couplings. Fatalities—premature deaths—are not simply an objective function of any kind of power differential. There is no difference without power, and neither power nor difference has an essential moral value. Rather, the application of *violence*—the cause of premature deaths—produces political power in a vicious cycle" (2002, 16). Gilmore later defines "racism" in *Golden Gulag* as "the state-sanctioned or extralegal production and exploitation of group-differentiated vulnerability to premature death" (2007, 28).

as in Foucault's concept of the biopolitical; rather, necropolitics produces populations that are destined to be killed.

The colonial order is precisely where we can see the necropolitical at work: in the colonies, sovereignty is based "fundamentally in the exercise of power outside the law and... 'peace' is more likely to take on the face of a 'war without end'" (Mbembe 2003, 23). The colonies operate as a state of exception, where "the sovereign right to kill is not subject to any rule" and where "colonial warfare is not subject to legal and institutional rules"; necropolitics challenges Foucault's notion that sovereign power has given way to biopower, as it precisely operates *through* the sovereign power to suspend law and kill subjects (Mbembe 2003, 25). Mbembe's formulation of necropolitics is not intended to supplant Foucault's biopower; rather, necropolitics describes a form of death-dealing displacements of life that exist simultaneously with regimes of health- and life-centered population management, and that continue into the present moment.

I am intrigued by Mbembe's notion of necropolitics and its potential to strengthen my analysis of the colonial Philippines as a space productive not only of life, but of death. Coming across Jasbir Puar's *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times*, in which she places necropolitics and biopolitics in constant tension, has therefore been quite illuminating. Like Foucault, Puar maintains that sexuality "constitutes a systemic, intrinsic, and pivotal module of power relations," and that "technologies of sex create and regulate, rather than reflect, the sexual bodies they name" (Puar 2007, 112-113). Yet, where a Foucauldian analyses of biopolitics would understand sexuality solely as a modality used to produce and optimize populations, Puar amends this formulation with Mbembe's necropower to argue that "the sexual' is

always already inscribed in necropolitical power grids implicating corporeal conquest, colonial domination, and death” (Puar 2007, 113). Puar ultimately argues that

...holding the two concepts [of necropolitics and biopower] together suggests a need to also attend to the multiple spaces of the deflection of death, whether it be in the service of the optimization of life or the mechanism by which sheer death is minimized. This bio-necro collaboration conceptually acknowledges biopower’s direct activity in death, while remaining bound to the optimization of life, and necropolitics’ nonchalance toward death even as it seeks out killing as a primary aim. (Puar 2007, 35)

Recuperating Foucault’s notion that the “first function of racism” is making “the break between what must live and what must die,” Puar argues that “racism is thus endemic to the production of populations and the shifting and fuzzy demarcations between biopolitics and necropolitics”; racialization works alongside and simultaneously with sexualization as a means of managing populations who can live, and of producing those who must die (Puar 2007, 194-5).

Puar illustrates the “bio-necro collaboration” in her reading of the state’s production of neoliberal [white] queer subjects as homonormative citizen-subjects, over and against the racialized “monster-terrorist-fag” who threatens the integrity and safety of the nation, and argues that “the distribution of intimacy is crucial to racial-sexual biopolitical management of life as well as necropolitical propagation of ‘pure’ death” (2007, 121). In this case, the ‘good’ queer subjects, or white LGBTQI people who are wed to hetero-domesticity and espouse love for the nation through military service and patriotism, buttress rather than subvert American masculinist military imperialism against the ‘bad’ queer subjects, the Muslims and other ‘terrorists’ who the state marks as subjects to be killed. Through this example and others, Puar deftly illustrates the ways in which sexuality and race are conjoined modalities of power that are productive of

populations whose lives are differently valued and are differently predisposed to death and violence.

Turning away from the idea that *queerness* is always already a subversive identity or configuration of acts, Puar challenges us by asking:

How do queers reproduce life, and *which* queers are folded into life? To *what* do they give life? Does this securitization of queers entail deferred death or dying for others, and if so, whom? (Puar 2007, 36; emphasis added)

This series of questions is at the center of her study, and is also at the heart of my project here. In centering my analysis on the performances by the *bakla* figure in the globally broadcast videos by the Cebu Provincial Detention and Rehabilitation Center, I am interested in illuminating the ways in which Resane is made to labor as an exemplary, ‘liberated’ queer subject in order to demonstrate the veracity of the Philippines’ *fantasy-production* of itself as a sovereign, modern nation. The questions that I think this analysis opens up, beyond those proposed by Puar, are the following: What is the Philippine government’s investment in Wiendjiel Resane’s cultural performances? How does Resane’s ‘joyful’ life in the prison serve as a cover for the deaths of ‘insurgent’ bodies, such as those of ‘terrorists’ and women? What do the CPDRC videos illuminate about the contemporary conditions of domination experienced by Filipino subjects, not only in the homeland but also in the diaspora? And, finally, how can reading these videos help ‘us’ become ‘free’? That is, once we disinvest ourselves from our heteronormative strivings, how can we then “create in the empty space where we are new relational possibilities”—the challenge posed by Foucault, the collective wish for real decolonization (Foucault 1994b, 60)?

In calling for Filipina/American feminist anti-imperialists to be attentive to sexuality, I have often been misinterpreted—others have assumed that I am simply asking for LGBTQI Filipino/American issues to be included into the existing political programs and paradigms deployed by these anti-imperialist organizations, rather than see my attempts to interrogate the very grounds upon which their political praxis is based. I am not interested in advocating for recognition or inclusion of LGBTQI Filipino/American individuals into the larger Filipino/American community, but rather wish to interrogate the processes through which the cohesive, normative, and intelligible Filipino/American subject and community was produced in the first place through the biopolitical technologies deployed by the American colonial regime, technologies which produced Filipinos as an inferior ‘race’ because of their deviance from white heterosexual domesticity. Ultimately, this thesis attempts to forward a new political imaginary, one built not upon claims for redressing a victimized Filipina femininity under siege—a subject that can only be saved through the interventions of Filipina/American activists who speak for these ‘victims’—but built on new grounds, beyond the heteronormative logics of the state.

Genealogy: The Anti-Scientific Method

To illuminate how Filipino/American subjects negotiate the conditions of their production as unfailingly ‘criminal’ and ‘queer’ subjects, a genealogy of the Filipino/American conditions of emergence must first be traced. More than just a re-visitation of the history of the victors (for History is fundamentally the story of the victorious’ conquest over the subjugated), genealogy is the tool through which

“subjugated knowledges” that have been “buried or masked in functional coherences or formal systematizations” can be uncovered (Foucault 2003, 7). The genealogical method couples “scholarly erudition and local memories, which allows us to constitute a historical knowledge of struggles and make use of that knowledge in contemporary tactics” (Foucault 2003, 8). It is an “anti-science” that works as an insurrection against the “centralizing power-effects that are bound up with the institutionalization and workings of any scientific discourse organized in a society such as ours” (Foucault 2003, 8).

Michel Foucault describes his genealogical method (modified from Nietzsche’s) as an “analysis which accounts for the constitution of the subject within a historical framework” (Foucault 1984, 59). Departing from a chronological documentation of ‘facts’ and ‘truth,’ understood as the hallmarks of proper historical and social scientific accounts, genealogy rather critiques the enterprise of writing history as one that sediments power in the service of a false notion of ‘truth’: genealogy’s task is to “expose a body totally imprinted by history and the process of history’s destruction of the body” (Foucault 1994a, 376).

In this thesis, rather than taking the ‘Filipino’ as an already-proscribed subject and document his experience under American colonialism, I am interested instead in uncovering the *process* by which the ‘Filipino’ subject came to be produced as such, and will be exploring the reasons why maintaining Filipino racial and sexual deviance was a critical component of constituting white American racial and sexual purity as identity. In this vein, my research here is less interested in documenting omissions of LGBTQI Filipino/Americans from historical accounts (a descriptive and additive, rather than critical and paradigm-shifting, task), but rather attempts to outline the various confluence of discourses that served to constitute the Filipino/American subject as always-already

queer (ie non-heteronormative, not transparent) in its very emergence as a legible subject.

In the following chapter, I will begin to put this literature to work in an analysis of the dominant discourses about Filipina heterosexual victimhood that are also deployed by Filipina/American anti-imperialist activists. How, and why, has this proper Filipina subject emerged, and how have both the Philippine state and Filipina/American activists succeeded in domesticating her in the name of securing her 'freedom'?

CHAPTER 2

AT HOME IN THE NATION / THE NATION AS HOME: THE LIMITS OF FILIPINA/AMERICAN FEMINIST DISCOURSE

When [President Corazon] Aquino called Filipino overseas contract workers ‘the new heroes’ [*mga bagong bayani*] of the nation, she was only performing a logical move within the symbolic field of fantasy-production. The hero is the inversion of the slave. The slave becomes the object of sacrifice—the martyr—enabling the heroization of the nation... The nation as subject performs its ‘heroism’ by making the domestic body, the repository of the Philippines’ continuing enslavement, the object of its ‘saving’ actions as well as its own sacrifice. This, then, is the state’s strategic solution to the state’s ‘gender trouble’... Against the threat of its ‘feminization’ as a porous nation, the Philippines re-asserts its sovereign state agency by externalizing its crisis in the image of enslaved bodies, the regulation of which expresses the nation-state’s renewed (masculinist) self-possession and self-control.

—Neferti Tadiar, *Fantasy-Production*

Who make up the *body politic* of the Philippines? As Lauren Berlant writes, “‘body politic’ suggests an indefinite mass... Embedded in its various parts are signs suggesting that these divisions and hierarchies of values emerge naturally from the beast’s flesh....The body politic persists *without a body*. It is abstract and impersonal, a zone of humanity without humans” (Berlant 2002, 144). The Philippine state, in attempting to materialize the body politic of the nation, deploys discourses of the *nation as home* and fashions the domestic as emblematic of the nation; as I will illuminate in chapter three, these discourses were first deployed by the American colonial regime to manage and police the borders of their nation and its possessions, and the Philippine state also found productive use for this fiction post-‘independence.’ In this chapter, I

argue that by reinvesting in the originary fiction of the heterosexual domestic unit as the cornerstone of the nation, the attempts by Filipina/American feminist anti-imperialists to materialize the abstracted Filipino *body politic* and to make legible political appeals to the state have resulted in the production of fixed, heteronormative proper subjects of the nation, located in both the homeland and the diaspora.

The Myth of the Nation as Home

The idea of the *nation as home* is meant to conjure up images of care, kinship, and safety from harm; it is a key fiction in the liberal Western narratives of the nation. In Filipino nationalist and post-colonial rhetoric, too, “the sign of the domestic functions as a rallying cry to unity and a promise of security” (Manzo 1996, 220). Like the private home, the nation is supposed to shelter its ‘children’; like the home, the nation protects its citizens from outside harm. In deploying this rhetoric of the family and the domestic, the Philippine state illuminates its own investments in maintaining heteropatriarchy as a tool with which to manage its subjects in both the public and private spheres.¹ M. Jacqui Alexander calls this a process of “heteropatriarchal recolonization,” in which citizens are socialized into heterosexuality—rather than into self-determination—in order for the postcolonial state to achieve economic gains (Alexander 2005, 27).

¹ I draw on Kamala Kempadoo’s definition of *heteropatriarchy* in this thesis as the combination of heterosexism and patriarchy that “signals a distinction and a relatedness between the ways in which sexuality and gender are socially, legally, and politically organized. It is the combination that marginalizes and criminalizes gendered subjects who transgress established sexual boundaries. Heteropatriarchy is... a structuring principle [that] privileges men’s experiences, definitions, and perceptions of sexuality, whereby not only are appreciations of female (hetero)sexuality obscured, but homoeroticism and same-gender sexual relations are denied legitimacy. In this structure, coupled with a discourse of hypersexuality, lesbians, gays, transgenders, prostitutes, and other ‘sexual deviants’ are cast... as outlaws and noncitizens” (Kempadoo 2004, 9).

In conjuring the heteronormative nuclear family and the image of home, the modern nation-state is able to justify its policing of borders and its management of subjects. If homes are “always already permeable from the outside,” then it becomes the duty of the state to police those who would destroy the sanctity of the home writ large: the terrorist, the illegal immigrant, the prostitute, the queer (Sagar 1998, 171). In this first instance, the nation-as-home myth functions as an exclusionary mechanism: it casts out those who do not contribute to the (re)productivity of the state, in the name of protecting its proper inhabitants.

Secondly, the imagining of the nation as a home sutures together the affective with the spatial: in dominant discourse, the national family is bound together by love and kinship, nestled within the space of the home. This rhetoric of love, Elizabeth Povinelli writes, “secures the self-evident good of social institutions, social distributions of life and death, and social responsibilities for these institutions and distributions” (Povinelli 2006, 17). That is, the distribution of the state’s ‘love’—or the material and legal benefits it can guarantee—is premised upon the subject’s reciprocal performances of love for the nation. The citizen-subject is required to conform to the state’s restrictions as a measure of this ‘love,’ even as the state’s benefits exclude non-heteronormative citizens who do not (re)produce in the service of the state’s economic and political goals.

The home of the nation is premised on securing heteronormativity through “a spatial array of concatenating entities: property, citizenship, privacy, and intimacy” (Puar 2007, 146). As Chandra Mohanty notes, states are responsible for setting up “gender regimes” that manage not only the responsibilities and roles accorded to gendered subjects in the home, but also the rights and recognitions that citizens can receive from the state:

The state delimits the boundaries of personal/domestic violence, protects property, criminalizes ‘deviant’ and ‘stigmatized’ sexuality, embodies masculinized hierarchies (e.g. the gendered bureaucracy of state personnel), structures collective violence in the police force, prisons, and wars, and sometimes allows or even invites the counter mobilization of power.... Besides instituting this particular gender regime, the state also regulates gender and sexual relations by instituting policies pertaining to the family, population, labor force and labor management, housing, sexual behavior and expression, provision of child care and education, taxation and income redistribution, and the creation and use of military forces. (Mohanty 2003, 64-5)

In other words, the state does more than simply formalize existing gendered distinctions—it actually produces those gendered differentiations through the force of law and its recognition of particular juridico-political subjects who conform to its rule, both in their ‘private’ sexual lives or their ‘public’ participation in the work force. In the Philippines, for example, heterosexual women who would threaten the heteropatriarchal nuclear family are regulated by the state through the criminalization of divorce, birth control, or abortion, under the charge that legalizing such practices would “destroy the sanctity of marriage, disintegrate the close-knit Filipino family and bring about all sorts of moral decay.”² Similarly, non-reproductive sexual or moral dissidents who are understood as entirely outside of the heterosexual ‘home’ are also not recognized by the state—for example, while homosexuality is not criminalized in the Philippines, neither are anti-gay hate crimes or discrimination against LGBTQ individuals in the workplace or in state institutions.³

In positing an analogical relationship between the ‘home’ and the ‘nation,’ the

² qtd. in Tess Raposas, “Marriage & Domestic Violence: A Fatal Combination in the Philippines, Where Divorce is Illegal,” *The Women’s International Perspective*, January 18, 2008, <http://www.alternet.org/reproductivejustice/74044> (accessed May 27, 2009).

³ The Anti-Discrimination Bill (House Bill 956) was filed and sponsored by Akbayan partylist representative Risa Hontiveros-Baraquel in 2007, but its passage has been stalled in the Philippine Senate since March 2008.

dominant discourse of nation as home reinforces the spatial and discursive difference between the two concepts in an attempt to reinforce the liberal fiction that “the private for women is theorized as the space outside of and untouched by (much-needed) state intervention, while the public is hailed ‘as a space of recourse and as a zone lying outside an easily and singularly recognized ‘home’” (Puar 2007, 124). Simply, the dominant discourse of the nation as home works to actively disavow the state’s production of these gender regimes; state-sanctioned violence against men, women and children in the ‘private sphere’ of the home and exploitation of women’s labor in the ‘public sphere’ are especially effaced. Yet it is crucial to understand that the discursive and material constructions of the spaces of ‘home’ and ‘nation’ are mutually implicated in the state’s management of power through the production of sexual difference. Chandan Reddy urges us to remember that home is a “social location whose *material* reproduction and maintenance require the forms of social division and organization (the racial formation of domestic labor, the gendered division of labor, and the colonial difference of the wage scale) instantiated by the modern... state and its public culture” (1998, 356). In other words, we need to understand the relationship of ‘home’ to ‘nation’ not as a metaphorical relationship, but as a spatial and material relationship—how, in fact, the nation and the home are mutually constitutive and reinforcing sites.

Despite this brief deconstruction of the rhetoric of nation as home, a question still lingers: “Does heterosexualization occupy a civilizing nexus in the neocolonial state's imperative of distancing itself from tradition in order to be counted as modern, that is, ‘civilized,’ and accorded the ‘benefits’ of modernity?” (Alexander 2005, 193). That is, I wonder if the heteropatriarchal discourses utilized by the Philippine state have a

fundamentally different character than that deployed by nations in the global North, particularly in the United States, and if so, *why*?

Chandan Reddy writes that ‘home’ has functioned as a discursive site that “fulfilled the demand of the modern political nation for a stable and developmental narrative of progress” (1998, 362). As I will trace in my genealogy in the following chapter, the Philippines was cast as inherently barbaric, pre-modern, illiberal and in need of tutelage by the United States primarily through the production of the Philippine nation and its people as improperly domestic; economically and sexually non-reproductive; and in complete contrast to the rational and (re)productive order of the United States. This history of American colonial rule over the Philippines, I believe, contributes much to the investments that both the contemporary Philippine state *and* anti-imperialists have in policing morality and in normalizing Filipino heterosexual domesticity as the racial/cultural standard for behavior. Jacqui Alexander is again instructive, when she writes:

While both tradition and morality are made to function in heterosexual garb, they have different symbolic meanings for neo-imperial and neocolonial state managers. While the former believe themselves always already equipped as the originary heirs to civilization and its accompanying heterosexual mandates, the latter can make no such claim.... Neocolonial state managers... are forced to comport with a heterosexual morality that seems somehow devoid of sex—but only in certain domains. (Alexander 2005, 206-7)

While I am not trying to rationalize the enforcement of heteronormative legislation, nor the proliferation of homophobic discourses or other attempts at sexual policing, I do believe Alexander’s point is essential to understanding the Philippines as a state negotiating its inheritances from the Spanish and American colonial regimes. It is my hope that by illuminating this linkage between the contemporary Philippine state and its

prior colonial administrations I can open the possibility for a counter-discourse to emerge; when we come to understand the very construction of the heterosexual nuclear family as part and parcel of American imperial designs on the Philippines, we can then begin to imagine another kind of Filipino/American anti-imperialist politics that rejects not only economic exploitation, but sexual colonization as well.

To concretize the Philippine state's investment in maintaining heteropatriarchy, I now turn to an analysis of the Filipina woman-as-martyr, a trope which the state has deployed for its own economic and political benefit. In this chapter, I am interested in analyzing not only processes through which Filipino labor is feminized, but rather the ways that Filipino/American Studies scholars and activists then advocate for the feminized Filipina victims of US imperialism. In both the rhetoric of the state and of anti-imperialist activists and scholars, how is the Filipina woman produced as a heteronormative subject, and towards what ends?

'Victims' of Neo-Imperialism: Filipina Women

To begin this section, I would like to return to the excerpt from Neferti Tadiar's *Fantasy-Production* that opened this chapter. In this passage, Tadiar deconstructs the ways in which the political and economic strategies of the Philippine state rely on the production of the feminized subjects, whose labor furthers the Philippines' place within the geopolitical world order (2004, 21). Tadiar, like other feminist Filipina/American scholars (myself included), starts from the premise that women are

... the last abundant resource of the nation—they are like the surplus products they themselves sell for subsistence, now sold themselves by their own feminized nation. Free-floating, they are 'excess liquidity' that is 'mopped up' in 'stream-lining operations' at the injunction of 'international

capital', their mobility not regulated by their sex (more accurately, their sexual function, which is, their penetrability) and their passport. Sexuality and nationality thus become become deterritorialized indicators of vulnerability to exploitation, as well as instruments of such exploitation. (Tadiar 2004, 56)

This body of scholarship attempts to disarticulate state discourses that naturalize Filipina women's worth as directly related to her (re)productive domestic labor in the service of the family and of the nation, and argues that "forms and dynamics of subjectivity produced and operating through contemporary international politics and economics" emerge "precisely out of the dominant cultures of imperialism."⁴ Tadiar's passage in the opening of this chapter deconstructs the fantasy of the domestic as a site free from power relations and discourse, to show how the feminized Filipina body laboring within the domestic sphere is produced as essential for the needs of both the Philippines and US states—the domestic is always in the public sphere, and vice versa.⁵

Filipina migrants' entrance into the field of domestic labor emerges out of their structural location as "racialized women, low-wage workers, highly educated women from the Philippines, and members of the secondary tier of the transnational workforce in global restructuring" (Parreñas 2001, 31). If America functions as a masculinized

⁴ Tadiar 2004, 12. Rhacel Salazar Parreñas, whose book *Servants of Globalization: Women, Migration, and Domestic Work* will be reviewed later in this chapter, writes: "The contemporary outmigration of Filipinas and their entrance into domestic work is a product of globalization; it is patterned under the role of the Philippines as an export-based economy in globalization; and it is embedded in the specific historical phase of global restructuring" (Parreñas 2001, 11). Other texts in this field follow from this premise, such as Catherine Ceniza Choy's 2003 book *Empire of Care: Nursing and Migration in Filipino American History*.

⁵ As Nayan Shah illustrates in his historical study of US health regimes in San Francisco's Chinatown, "there was a clear limit to which persons could deploy the 'privacy' of social relations of domesticity to shield themselves from state intrusion into sexual activities and social affinities" (2001, 84). That is to say, the policing of the 'private' domestic sphere by the state has been a regular occurrence in communities of color, and, in fact, this state policing of the private has been *productive* of racial categories such as African American/black, Chinese, and Filipino, to name a few.

superpower, then in the Philippines' feminized national space, the biological females who labor within that space (and particularly within domestic spaces) are those most vulnerable to exploitation, for they are produced as *beings for others*, a "captive body that is often 'invaded' or violated."⁶ Instead of assuming that more women migrants leave the Philippines because they are more 'naturally suited' for domestic labor than men, we need to understand that the Philippine state produces Filipina women as feminized subjects who are durable and suited for the demands of domestic labor in First World nations such as the United States.⁷ That is to say, it is in the contemporary processes of recruitment, migration and dislocation that the Filipina domestic worker becomes constituted as such; she is not an *a priori* domestic(ated) subject prior to the needs of globalized capital (Parreñas 2001, 30-33).

As Tadiar delineates, one of the means by which Filipina women are produced as subjects is through state discourses of the domestic worker-as-hero, a heterosexual mother providing for her family and the nation. In one sense, this discourse is deployed by the state in an attempt to manage the crisis of the proliferation of non-heteronormative family formations that emerges with the mass out-migration of women; in re-narrating Filipina migrant workers as 'heroes' for the family and nation, the state

⁶ Tadiar 2004, 121. Of the feminization of the Philippine national body, Tadiar writes: "The nation-state becomes the influence with which ruling classes produce and contain the feminine sexuality that it has displaced onto its labor. The excessive and fluid sexuality attributed to women as well as to colonial bodies is housed and contained in a feminized national body that hence becomes the jurisdiction of a masculine nation state" (2004, 95).

⁷ Tadiar argues that the organizing codes (such as 'sovereignty,' 'security,' and 'development') which constitute the fantasy-production of the Philippine state as a democratic nation and participant in the New World Order are informed by the logics of gender, race, and sexuality—systems of signification that organize social relations of power and production, not only on the level of individuals but also on the level of large collectivities, such as nations (2004, 11). As such, the relationship Tadiar posits between the material and the ideological/symbolic orders is one of dialectic tension: Gender, race, and sexuality are productive of state power, and simultaneously, power is productive of raced/gendered/sexualized subjects.

attempts to ease collective anxiety of those who have benefited from 'traditional' heterosexual arrangements—men in the home, specifically (Tadiar 2004, 130). By rewriting the feminized domestic worker as the heterosexual hero of the nation, the Philippine state attempts to manage its economic crisis through the mass exportation and exploitation of its women workers even as it disavows responsibility for the necessity for their very entry into the migrant work force.

Tadiar's text implicates the Philippine government's complicity with the exploitation of Filipina women's labor; she notes that the Philippine government names the violence against domestic workers by their foreign (male) employers the primary risk facing domestic workers to disavow its own accountability in creating the political-economic conditions which make migration an attractive possibility for Filipina women in the first place. With the cause of harm to women externalized to a foreign source, the Philippine government then manages and re-asserts its own sovereignty by calling for stronger legal 'protection' for its overseas domestic workers; this discursive move effectively effaces the state's participation in recruiting, training, and sending Filipina domestic workers abroad for its own financial gain, and shifts the burden of responsibility from the state to individual accountability.⁸ In this way—by exploiting Filipina women's labor even while casting them as 'heroes' of the nation—the masculinist and fraternal ideals underlying post-colonial Philippine state-building policies and processes are

⁸ It is also the logic of disavowal that allows Philippine government representatives to claim without irony that the Philippines "is one of the leading countries in the effort to eliminate the trafficking of women and children," and express outrage at an American actor's joke about Filipina mail-order brides on *The Late Show with Dave Letterman*, even as the Philippine government itself has failed to fully comply with the Trafficking Victims Protection Act's minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking. Mike Joseph Ubalde, "Consulate lectures Baldwin on Pinay mail-order brides," *GMA News Online*, May 20, 2009, <http://www.gmanews.tv/story/162154/consulate-lectures-baldwin-on-pinay-mail-order-brides> (accessed May 25, 2009).

applied upon the bodies of Filipino women, who come to bear the “inordinate burden... for their nation’s role in the world” (Tadiar 2004, 19).

In response to the discourse and practices of the Philippine state, Filipina/American feminist anti-imperialist organizations have organized in protest, but in doing so, many have resorted to the language of victimization, casting Filipina overseas workers and other exploited Filipina women, such as prostituted and trafficked women, as entirely bereft of agency. Defining Filipina women as the unique victims of neo-imperialism, in contrast to ‘privileged’ women in the First World, these organizations have fallen into a trap Caren Kaplan warns us about: “In an effort to deconstruct hegemonic, global universals, quite often theorists of 'difference' have reinstated hegemonies.”⁹ Even as they attempt to work for social justice and radical change, organizations such as GABRIELA Network and FiRE reinscribe Filipina subjectivity as intelligible only through victimization and injury, enacting a discursive and political move that allows US-based Filipina/American activists, in their position as First World saviors, to become the agents who can rescue and rehabilitate the pathologized, Third World

⁹ Kaplan 1994, 148. I draw on Jacqui Alexander’s definition of *neo-imperialism* as, first, “the descriptive term for a form of globalization whose internal character reproduces a set of colonial relations with regard to indigenous peoples, immigrant people, people of color... within the geographic borders of the United States as well as a set of related external colonial arrangements with territories and nations such as the Philippines”; and secondly, as the constitution of a “new empire, accelerated militarization, and war on the part of the United States” (Alexander 2005, 233-34). In terms of US relations with the Philippines, several of Alexander’s examples of military neo-imperialism are present in the Philippine case: the “manufacture of an outside enemy to rationalize military intervention and secure the annexation of the land” and the “creation and maintenance of a permanent war economy... through the militarization of the police... [and] the massive expansion of a punishment economy at whose center is the prison industrial complex” (Alexander 2005, 234). In this thesis, I use the term *neo-imperialism* to denote both military intervention into and economic globalization in the Philippines, and the term *imperialism* to specifically denote US militarism in the Philippines. The feminist anti-imperialist activists I cite here, however, deploy the terms “neo-imperialism” and “imperialism” interchangeably; Filipina/American “anti-imperialism” as a political ideology is based on opposing US neo-imperialism in all its facets, particularly as it manifests in the Philippines.

victims of neo-imperialism. In a way, it is ironic that this reinscription of Filipina women as victims is coming from Filipino/Americans, as the discourse of victimization they draw upon “guarantee(s) agency to some while at the same time turning others into a spectacle,” a critique originally leveled by women of color feminists against white feminists’ universalizing discourse.¹⁰ In the following section, I will examine the ways in which these organizations build their political arguments by relying on a logic of heteronormativity that is shared by the state, a tactic that arrests the possibility of radical decolonial political praxis. Furthermore, I will analyze how the work of Filipino American Studies scholars is appropriated by organizers to buttress the construction of the Filipina woman as heterosexual and absolutely victimized by the forces of economic globalization and US militarism—the two major components of US neo-imperialism in the Philippines—in order to make a case for the abandonment of this rubric of intelligibility for both activists and scholars interested in pursuing projects of social justice for the people of the Philippines and around the world.

Pathologizing Filipina Women: A ‘Radical’ Feminist Technique?

In feminist anti-imperialist organizations such as GABRIELA Network and FiRE (Filipinas for Rights and Empowerment), the sexual and labor exploitation of Filipina women in all its facets—from the mail-order bride industry, to sex trafficking, to domestic

¹⁰ Alarcon, Kaplan, and Moallem 1999, 7.

Gayatri Spivak’s seminal text “Can the Subaltern Speak?” takes up this very question of the ‘agency’ of subaltern women given the discourses and technologies of imperialism that produce them as legible subjects. She writes of the contradictions and ambivalences of the British banning *sati* in India, and reminds us that “imperialism’s image as the establisher of the good society is marked by the espousal of woman as *object* of protection from her own kind” (1988, 299).

work, to the rape of “Nicole” by six US Marines—is fought against by Filipina/American women living in the ‘belly of the beast,’ the United States. The strategies and tactics undertaken by these organizations are multifaceted, and are comprised of educational sessions, protests and boycotts, artistic performances and literary productions, and international solidarity affairs which bring Filipina/Americans and other US citizens to the Philippines for immersion in local community struggles. I have written of the impetus and efficacy of such tactics elsewhere, but the most salient point about these organizations I would like to make is the following: Though they claim to be attentive to the power imbalances between themselves (as women of color located in the First World) and the women in the Philippines, transnational feminist anti-imperialist organizations such as GABRIELA Network have unhesitatingly taken on the role of global spokeswomen of the struggles of Filipina women in the homeland and diaspora.¹¹

Structurally, in their continued adherence to the Marxist Leninist Mao Zedongist (MLMZ) ideology propagated by both the Communist Party of the Philippines as well as other US-based radical Filipino/American organizations, the leadership of feminist organizations such as GABRIELA Network have fashioned themselves as a vanguard class, one with a political duty to speak on behalf of the oppressed, particularly the heterosexual, victimized Filipina woman, a subject totally at the mercy of violence committed against her. This victimized Filipina subject is under assault both from within the home and from external forces that seek to exploit her labor: multinational

¹¹ Thea Quiray Tagle, “Bridging the Pacific: Transnational Advocacy Networks between Activists in the Philippines and the United States” (undergraduate thesis, Barnard College, 2004). In addition, for a brief history of the Philippine women’s movement that gave rise to these Filipina/American anti-imperialist organizations see Lilia Quindoza Santiago, “Rebirthing *Babay*: The Women’s Movement in the Philippines,” in *The Challenges of Local Feminisms: Women’s Movements in Global Perspectives*, ed. Amrita Basu (Boulder: Westview Press, 1995), 110-128.

corporations, the international sex trade, the medical industry, and individuals seeking cheap and flexible labor, among others.

A series of quotes from a recent GABRIELA Network press release, announcing the launch of a new initiative for training Filipina domestic workers on their rights in the United States, is revealing of this political viewpoint. It begins with three brief vignettes, designed to capture the reader's attention and to reiterate the need for domestic workers to learn about their rights through this training program:

When Norma's quadriplegic employer asked her to use her hands instead of a washcloth to soap and wash certain parts of his body, she was unsure whether this was par for the course or something else altogether. When Marina's employer demanded massages, she wondered if this was part of domestic work in the US. Anna, on the other hand, didn't quite know how to respond to her employer's predilection for showing her porn websites.¹²

It then moves to a description of the training program, with statements from organizers to buttress its claims:

"It is a landmark and collaborative project created by im/migrants and second generation Filipina-Americans," said Catherine Mercedes Judge, coordinator of the GABNet NY/NJ chapter. "*When it comes to gender rights, violence against women and gender discrimination, we are not so different from our mothers, aunts, even grandmothers. We have a shared experience on this issue.*"

... Olivia Quinto, GABNet National Education Director, will lead the first session. "From the first batch of participants, we will select those with the potential to be peer counselors" she said. "They will receive further training from Dr. Annalisa Enrile, who is an associate clinical professor of the School of Social Work at the University of Southern California." Ms. Quinto explained that this was to ensure that the domestic workers were empowered to deal with issues of gender rights themselves. "It is an expression of respect on our part that we consider them perfectly capable

¹² GABRIELA Network, "Gender Rights Training For Domestic Workers Opens," GABRIELA Network New York/New Jersey blog, entry posted March 6, 2009, <http://gabnetnynj.blogspot.com/2009/03/gender-rights-training-for-domestic.html> (accessed March 20, 2009).

of tackling such issues *once they are in receipt of knowledge and training.*"¹³

Several discursive moves are made within this press release: first, there is a direct identification made between second-generation Filipina/American knowledge and experience with those of their symbolic 'mothers,' the Filipina domestic workers and prior generations of Filipina immigrants; secondly, Filipina/American activists are those in "possession" of knowledge, and it is only upon "receipt" of this training from specialists that Filipina migrant domestic workers can *become* empowered. The very act of attending the training is not understood by the organization as evidence of domestic workers' agency, as "empowerment" can only be *given to* the workers *by* the activists, particularly from those activists with professional backgrounds and educational degrees verifying their specialized knowledge. The very inability of "Norma," "Marina," or "Anna" to discern whether their treatment by their male employers was "par for the course or something else altogether" serves as testimony to their need for proper re-education by the trained activists.

What are the political logics that undergird this stark imbalance of power between US-based Filipina/Americans and their exploited Filipina 'mothers'? In order to speak from a position of moral and political authority, these organizations deploy the "chain of care" paradigm as well as the metaphor of the rape of the Philippines by the United States, political discourses which centralize domestic workers, prostitutes, and trafficked Filipina women as emblematic victims of this process. These discourses have entered the realm of Filipino/American common sense through their elaboration and deployment in the published work of several prominent Filipino American Studies scholars; I hope to

¹³ Ibid., emphasis added.

uncover the uncomfortable, and perhaps unintentional, symbiosis of activist and scholarly commitments in perpetuating these logics. As I will argue in the following sections, both of these circulating discourses produce Filipina women as heterosexual domestic(ated) subjects, and as necessarily so in order to have these ‘victims’ be intellegible in the national and global sphere. I hope to illuminate that, in their continued deployment of the heterosexual victimized woman—the figure that has been so often “mobilized in the ‘service’ of the nation [and is the] ground on which discourses of morality and nationalism are written”—Filipino/American activists and scholars remain limited in their potential to imagine a different future in which the Philippines is sovereign, no longer exploited by the First World’s demand for flexible bodies and expendable lives (Mohanty 2003, 133).

Chaining Women to/through Love: The Chain of Care Paradigm

In her text *Servants of Globalization*, Filipino American Studies scholar Rhacel Parreñas describes the international division of feminized domestic labor as the “international transfer of caretaking” in which Filipina women “perform the reproductive labor of more privileged women in industrialized countries as they relegate their reproductive labor to poorer women left in the Philippines” (2001, 78). She delineates the ways that women remain responsible for domestic (ie reproductive) labor in both the sending and receiving countries, and articulates how the ‘liberation’ of women from the home in the First World is contingent upon the gendered exploitation of women in the Third World and lower-class women (usually women of color) from the First World who take on their domestic duties (2001, 78). At its core, the “chain of care” paradigm draws

from the critiques of women of color feminists, who have urged white Western feminists to note the contradiction between their promoting a feminist rhetoric of women's liberation from housework and entry into the workforce even as they hire poor women of color to perform those domestic labors for them (hooks 2000, 62). While the "chain of care" paradigm is attentive to the ways in which privilege is distributed unequally to women based on the modalities of race, nationality/ethnicity, and class, it is not without problems. Namely, this framework simultaneously naturalizes heteronormative family roles even as it attempts to complicate the processes of migration by understanding it as a form of gender subjectivization.

Martin Manalansan, in his article "Queering the Chain of Care Paradigm," argues that the "chain of care" paradigm found in works like *Servants of Globalization* naturalizes a static formula that reads as follows: "domestic = family = heterosexual women = care and love" (2008). He writes that the chain of care framework posits that

the global domestic labor market siphons off affective energies of the world as Third World women fracture households and leave families motherless and wifeless. Therefore, this 'chain' is forged primarily through affective links constituted by biologically reproducing women of the First and Third Worlds and the displacement of their affective and physical labor from their biological families. The glue that keeps this chain together in a linear fashion is the heterosexualized bodies of both First and Third World women while the fuel for the global dispersal of migratory domestic labor is normative maternal love. Therefore, the chain of care framework foregrounds the pathos of dislocated biological motherhood. (Manalansan 2008)

Almost a perfect illustration of Manalansan's critique, Parreñas' study, even as it deconstructs gender and familial relations, still normalizes the heterosexual couple and the heteronormative Filipino family as one gravely affected by Filipina women's outmigration. Parreñas' vignettes of different migrant women's experiences revolve around their relationships to their husbands, children, and parents: they are all wracked

with pain at the separation from their loved ones and only remain at these exploitative occupations of feelings of maternal duty. Parreñas uses psychological rather than structural explanations for the fracturing of Filipino families, as she charges that it is the absence of mothers, as the reproducers of family life, which “fuels the emotional stress of transnational families” (2001, 144). Though Parreñas’ study makes great headways in illuminating the issues facing migrant women, the ‘broken’ households and women that she profiles are all transparently heterosexual and articulated through the frame of biological motherhood; as such, the subjectivities and experiences of non-maternal/queer/lesbian/single Filipino women *and* men are effaced.

Beyond fixing the subjects of global domestic labor as heterosexually reproductive mothers, the chain of care paradigm used by Parreñas naturalizes the link between biological female sex and socially constructed, gendered emotions like ‘love’ and ‘care.’ As such, it unwittingly re-articulates gendered norms (woman as maternal, as martyr for the nation and the heteronormative family) which are quickly taken up by activists who then reproduce the discourse of the long-suffering Filipina migrant that labors only for her husband and family:

On this year’s International Workers’ Day GABNet of the Mariposa Alliance calls on all women to reaffirm their commitment to women’s liberation. March against imperialism and women’s exploitation; march for workers and immigrant rights!

GABNet honors all women — migrant, transnational and citizens — *for the nobility of their sacrifice to enable their families, communities and nations to survive.* At this time when the financial system’s collapse reveals how greed and selfishness are rewarded the most, women continue to be expected to be selfless and generous, to the extent of suspending their own lives to become workhorses for nations ravaged by imperialism.

... Women in developing countries across the world have long been the engine of development and growth, taking risks and working impossibly hard to provide for their families.¹⁴

When speaking on behalf of these victimized Filipinas, Filipina/American anti-imperialist feminists cast them as loving daughters, wives, and mothers who only want the best for their families—as if this were the only point of identification through which others can understand the severity of their situation. To say that Filipina migrants are sexually and economically exploited is not compelling enough; the pathos of failed reproductive heterosexuality experienced by these victims must be constantly highlighted and reinforced in order to gain sympathy from the state and from a dominant American public that would not otherwise identify with these racialized women's plight.

Manalansan ends his critique of the chain of care paradigm by asking: “What happens to this linear arrangement of affect and travel when reproduction is not the pivot for the mobilization of gender labor migration? What happens if we de-center biological motherhood and its naturalized linkage to ‘caring’?” (2008). Pushing his questions further, I ask: Would this decentering render Filipina subjects illegible to the state? Would they not receive sympathy from others if they were not properly heterosexual, victimized women?

¹⁴ GABRIELA Network, “May Day Statement of the GABNet/Mariposa-Alliance: Demand Immigration Reform; Act to Dismantle Imperialism,” GABRIELA Network LA blog, entry posted April 22, 2009, <http://gabnetla.wordpress.com/2009/04/22/may-day-statement-of-the-gabnetma-al/> (accessed May 20, 2009).

Rape of the Nation, Rape of the Filipina

Even more powerful and pervasive than the political discourse around the figure of the Filipina domestic worker have been the campaigns around prostituted and trafficked Filipina women. These campaigns have are powerful in that they are framed as working not simply to secure individual rights and freedoms for victimized women who have been trafficked and raped, but are for the salvation of an entire ‘prostituted’ nation. Katherine Manzo writes that “anti-imperialist or neocolonial struggles typically deploy metaphors of rape when speaking of the national past; theirs is a female nation or ‘motherland’ that was once penetrated unwillingly by outside forces” (1996, 54). In the case of Filipina/American feminist anti-imperialist organizations, the metaphor of national rape has been repeatedly invoked in statements against the sexual exploitation of individual women; it is the dominant discourse used in their campaigns for the liberation of Filipina women, and by extension, for the Philippines as a sovereign nation.

For example, at the conclusion of the “Subic rape trial,” in which six US Marines were accused of raping a Filipina woman (alias “Nicole”) while in the Philippines for Balikatan¹⁵ “training exercises,” GABRIELA issued a press release that stated:

¹⁵ Balikatan—which translates to “Shoulder to Shoulder” — is the name for the annual ‘exercises’ that bring US troops into the Philippines to ‘train’ the Filipino military. Leftist, feminist, and militant Filipino and Filipino/American activists rightly note that the Balikatan exercises began in 1991, immediately after the last official US military bases in the Philippines were closed, and they have charged the US government for instituting these exercises as a means of undermining Philippine national sovereignty; assisting with the torture and disappearances of anti-government activists; and maintaining a US military foothold in Southeast Asia. Its purposes have been described by the American military as ranging from “ensuring the [Philippine] militaries’ readiness... in the event of a natural disaster” to “support[ing] the Republic of the Philippines against external aggression.” Capt. Ken Ola, “Annual Balikatan 2009 exercise begins in the Philippines,” United States Army, April 24, 2009, <http://www.army.mil/-news/2009/04/24/20160-annual-balikatan-2009-exercise-begins-in-the-philippines/index.html> (accessed May 20, 2009).

This remains a fight for all the Filipino women and children violated by US troops. This is a fight of the Filipino women to secure the justice it has won on the Subic rape case against the imperialist US' *continuing attempt to ravage* these gains. It is now the Filipino people's fight for sovereignty versus the VFA that serves the interest of the US government.¹⁶

The GABRIELA organizers located both in the United States and the Philippines built their campaign around stirring public awareness and outrage against the very presence of these US troops in the Philippines, which is allowed by a joint Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA) between the United States and the Philippine governments.¹⁷

Throughout the course of the Subic rape trial, the organizers continually deployed the gendered metaphor of rape to emphasize the submission of the Philippines to American military, economic, and political interests. As Neferti Tadiar writes, this language about the 'whoredom' of the Philippines works as a "further debasement of an already debased, feminized nation... raped and ravaged by foreign powers" and serves as a powerful rhetorical frame" (2004, 128). In this "fantasy of heteronormative relations" between the US and the Philippines, "the Philippines serves the US as a feminine ideal, servicing its power the way Philippine prostitutes service US military men, symbols of US national (masculine) strength... Hence, America in turn becomes the Philippines' masculine ideal" (Tadiar 2004, 47). In presenting the feminized national body of the Philippines as the prostituted woman, violated and made unsafe by the masculine militarism of the United States, Filipina/American feminist organizers speak back to the rhetoric of "humanitarian assistance" perpetuated by the American government in

¹⁶ GABRIELA, "Gabriela Storms US Embassy Protests Obama- Arroyo Collusion on Subic Rape Case Manipulation to Safeguard VFA," March 25, 2009. Emphasis added.

¹⁷ The two documents comprising the Republic of the Philippines- United States Visiting Forces Agreement were ratified by the Philippine Senate on March 27, 1999. The full text of the RP-US Visiting Forces Agreement can be found online at the Chan Robles Law Library at <http://www.chanrobles.com/visitingforcesagreement1.htm>

continuing the Balikatan exercises and upholding the Visiting Forces Agreement.¹⁸ This battle for Philippine sovereignty is cast in gendered terms as the fight between “death-dealing male militarism versus life-nurturing women,” women who have to be penetrated in order to survive.¹⁹

If the nation is home, the metaphor of the national body as a prostituted woman links the sexual exploitation of individual Filipina women to the institutionalized forces of US imperialism in the Philippines, which range from the continuation of US military exercises in the Philippines to the restructuring of the Philippine economy as export-oriented in order to provide cheap female laborers to the United States. Expanding the definitions of rape and prostitution is a key component of Filipina/American anti-imperialist rhetoric; their goal is to link all facets of what they identify as American imperialist intervention in the Philippines with the sexual exploitation of Filipina women, subjects who are produced as the central icons of the movement.

¹⁸ Both the US and Philippine governments, and the anti-imperialist activists fighting against them, have an investment in claiming the protection of women and children. In a recent U.S. Air Force press release, for example, the American military presence was apparently “greeted with joy” by the women and children of Angeles City, the former location the US-controlled Clark Air Base and a major center of military prostitution in the Philippines today. The press release goes on to say: “Before, the people in the village just read about Balikatan. Now, the people are seeing it for themselves and they are happy,” Mr. Manialung said. ‘Just look at the kid's faces. They are elated. You can see the joy’.” US Army, “Airmen Spread Goodwill during Balikatan 2009”, US Army website, April 29, 2009, <http://www.af.mil/news/story.asp?id=123146849> (accessed May 20, 2009).

This rhetoric is in stark contrast to the claims made by feminist anti-imperialist organizers such as those from GABRIELA, who argue “Bicol region is not a whorehouse for these US soldiers. We will not let these foreigner-soldiers rob us of our dignity, we will continue to express our basic rights as women, and as patriotic Filipinos;” they charge that “prostituted women are being delivered as treats for US troops... in hotels where they are staying,” especially in areas where Balikatan exercises are occurring (GABRIELA Alaby, “Bicol is Not A Whorehouse for US Troops,” Ban Balikatan blog, entry posted April 20, 2009. <http://banbalikatan.wordpress.com/2009/04/20/outraged-bicolana>, (accessed May 20, 2009).

¹⁹ GABRIELA Network, “Enrile, Rosca Join Vagina Monologues at the Kennedy Center,” GABRIELA Network, March 29, 2009, <http://www.gabnet.org/statements.php?page=47> (accessed March 29, 2009).

In GABRIELA Network's Purple Rose Campaign against the prostitution of Filipina women, the definition of *prostitution* has been expanded as an umbrella term encompassing "casual, brothel, escort agency, and military prostitution, sex tourism, mail-order brides, and selling and trafficking in women" (Hesford 2005, 150). By coupling a wide range of practices, from the rape of a Filipina woman by American troops on Philippine soil to the sexual servitude of Filipina mail-order brides living in the United States, organizers are able to invoke a "convergence of violating images: the image of the destroyed, drained destitute laboring body of the nation... the images of the violated, sullied domestic body, and the image of the shattered and scattered national body abroad" (Tadiar 2004, 127). The nation is doubly feminized as "the unhealable wound," its violated subjects the Filipina victim (Probyn 1997, 115). In suturing the violated woman to the nation, each legal victory for an individual prostituted or raped woman can be reinscribed by the movement into a victory for Philippine sovereignty on a national scale; conversely, every loss becomes example of the Philippine nation's continued subservience to the United States and other geopolitical interests.²⁰

Though Filipina/American feminist anti-imperialists' centralization of the prostituted Filipina woman as emblematic of the Philippine state under US imperialism is a powerful and compelling rhetorical tool for bringing human rights violations to a national and international audience, in doing so, these organizations and activists reiterate the logic of heteropatriarchy undergirding the Philippine government's policies.

²⁰ A recent article in *Bulatlat*, the Philippines' foremost leftist publication, rhetorically asks: "How many more Vanessas and Nicoles would fall prey to the lechery and violence of US troops participating in military exercises in the country? How many more Filipino women would the government offer to its US masters?" As more rape accusations by Filipina women against US troops come to light, the public rhetoric of speaking in the name of these women has also increased. Benjie Oliveros, "The VFA-Balikatan Mess," *Bulatlat*, May 16, 2009, <http://www.bulatlat.com/main/2009/05/16/the-vfa-balikatan-mess> (accessed May 20, 2009).

In the first place, while such an expansive definition of “prostitution” allows for these organizations to make a broad systemic critique of women’s oppression under globalization and imperialism, it also conflates different conditions of women’s entry into sex work, casting prostituted Filipina women as entirely without individual autonomy to resist and as uniformly ‘debased’ women:

Women the world over have suffered exponentially under imperialist globalization, which exacerbates the patriarchal view that they are a disposable segment of the national population.... Women are transformed into cheap labor and sex commodity, as witness in the export processing zones of the world and in the global sex trade. As if this injury is not sufficient, imperialist culture insults women by pandering the idea that women have value only in terms of how their sexuality can become a source of cash and profit. Women are being asked to ignore the history of prostitution as originating in slavery. *Truly, imperialism exacerbates patriarchal values, disguising the objectification of women as ‘choice’ and ‘agency.’*²¹

In the rhetoric of these organizations, “choice” belongs to privileged First World women and to imperialist Western regimes, not to the women of the Philippines; to recognize Filipina women as agents, according to this rhetoric, would be to fall prey to imperialist discourse.

I argue that this reinforcement of the binary between choice and constraint, between First World and Third, perpetuates a silencing of the subaltern that such

²¹ GABRIELA Network, “May Day Statement of the GABNet/Mariposa-Alliance: Demand Immigration Reform; Act to Dismantle Imperialism,” GABRIELA Network LA blog, entry posted April 22, 2009, <http://gabnetla.wordpress.com/2009/04/22/may-day-statement-of-the-gabnetma-al/> (accessed May 20, 2009). Emphasis added.

In likening prostituted Filipina women to slaves, the activists’ make an interesting historical connection and conflation; as Saidiya Hartman notes, the “actual or attempted rape of an enslaved woman was an offense neither recognized nor legislated by law” (Hartman 1999, 111). The enslaved black woman exists “outside of the gendered universe” and the “captive female does not possess gender as much as she is possessed by gender... by way of a particular investment in and use of the body,” an argument also made by Hortense Spillers (Hartman 1999, 136 and 1997, 100). In the case of Filipina woman, they have been produced by colonial and neo-imperialist US discourses as hypersexualized subjects, and given the differences in the conditions of production of the Filipina subject, they do not occupy the same gendered subjectivity as black women do.

transnational feminist organizations claim to be working against (Hesford 2005, 151). That is to say, in portraying Filipina women as only the dislocated subjects of power, Filipina/American anti-imperialist discourse does not allow for the possibility that Filipina women can “recuperate and resist” this oppressive power, even conditionally.²² Even as prostituted Filipina women and Filipina domestic workers are ultimately constrained by their social positions, and do not necessarily ‘succeed’ in changing the structural and institutional forces that exploit them, to marginalize their acts of resistance as non-political is to foreclose the possibility of challenging the realm of the political itself, a necessary discursive reorientation for a truly radical politics to be built.²³

Second, in deploying the language of morality in order to incite public outrage against the sexualization of Filipina women, these activists inadvertently reinvest themselves in heteropatriarchal definitions of what constitutes ‘proper’ sex acts. In April 2009, a sex tape between a 23-year-old Filipina actress and her then-consensual

²² Parreñas 2001, 253. In *Servants of Globalization*, Rhacel Parreñas takes up the “bind of agency,” a concept explored in depth by Judith Butler. Key to Butler’s argument is the idea that agency is simultaneously “a resistance that is *really* a recuperation of power and a “recuperation that is *really* a resistance” (Butler 1997, 13). Parreñas notes that this is because agency is conditioned and therefore limited by the social processes in which it takes place (Parreñas 2001, 34). Agency thought about this way calls attention to the fact that not all attempts at resistance bring about positive or structural changes; it does, however, leave open the possibility for the subject to “eclipse the conditions of its own emergence,” and for the subject’s daily actions to “exceed the forces of its constitution” (Butler qtd. in Parreñas 2001, 35). These strategies and performances, though contradictory and always partially successful, illuminate the ways in which Filipinas, as acting subjects, can resist the dislocations “engendered by her positioning in the social processes of migration and global restructuring,” and are, in Foucault’s terms, “immediate struggles” these women deploy in everyday practices (Parreñas 2001, 251). These always-contingent performances of agency, then, are what I argue is foreclosed in Filipina/American anti-imperialists’ construction of the Filipina woman as victim.

²³ To quote Saidiya Hartman: “The historical and social limits of the political must be recognized in order to evaluate the articulation of needs and the forwarding of claims in domains relegated to the privatized or nonpolitical. If the public sphere is reserved for the white bourgeois subject and public/private divide replicates that between the political and the nonpolitical, then the agency of the enslaved, whose relation to the state is mediated by way of another’s rights, is invariably relegated to the nonpolitical side of this divide.... In effect, those subjects removed from the public sphere are formally outside the space of politics” (2001, 65).

partner, a 29-year-old Filipino doctor, was made public. This public “sex scandal” was taken up by Filipino feminist anti-imperialist organizations that likened this act to the proliferation of child pornography made in the Philippines, saying:

The recent scandal over the proliferation of sex video in the internet and other cyber forms involving celebrity actress Katrina Halili and Dr. Hayden Kho is no surprise.... The issue of proliferation of sex videos has been a problem for years, and in fact not only celebrities became victims of these scandals, but much worse, even minors are being victimized *by these immoral act[s]*.²⁴

Equating this “sex scandal” to the production of child pornography, the organization then deemed *all* videotaped sex as immoral, collapsing all differences between coerced pornography and consensual filmed sex not meant for public consumption. Their call to criminalize all videotaped sex due to its inherently immoral nature “acts to regulate consent... Morality acts to penalize women who consent to intercourse with anyone except their husbands, to suppress the sexual agency of women (particularly prostitutes and lesbians), girls, and gay men who stand outside conjugal marriage. Ultimately, conjugal heterosexuality establishes, polices, and guards the moral” (Alexander 2005, 212). This specific public incident is not exceptional to the particular case in point, as a blanket anti-pornography stance has been held by organizations such as GABRIELA Network since their inception.²⁵

²⁴ SALINLAHI Alliance for Children’s Concerns, “Not Just Katrina H.: Malacanang Challenged to Defend Faceless, Nameless Women and Children Victims of Sex Scandals,” SALINLAHI Alliance blog, entry posted May 22, 2009, <http://www.salinlahiphilippines.org/news/mediareleases/not-just-katrina-h-malacanang-challenged-defend-faceless-nameless-women-and-child> (accessed May 25, 2009). Emphasis added.

²⁵ The debates between western feminists about pornography, or the “Feminist Sex Wars,” have been widely documented elsewhere. For clarification, it is important to note that the standpoint taken by GABRIELA Network has been closet to the views held by Dorchen Leidholdt and Janice G. Raymond, both with the Coalition Against Trafficking in Women (CATW); the two organizations have a longstanding relationship of solidarity.

By policing morality, advocates' arguments to protect women from pornography are made legible to the state, whose representatives have also wrung their hands over the "undermining [of] decency and good values in Philippine society"²⁶ even as they have failed to implement basic domestic violence law and other protections against sexual violence.²⁷ Yet activists' appeals to the state to protect women from 'immoral acts' is an inherent double sword: while it may be effective in cases such as the Halili-Kho 'sex scandal,' this moralizing discourse actually contradicts the discourse used by the organization in the Subic rape case and rape cases against the state. In the Subic rape case, for example, GABRIELA Network needed to argue *against* the state's moralizing logic, which placed the blame squarely on the shoulders of the 'fallen' woman for tempting the 'honorable' American servicemen charged with the crime.²⁸

The moralizing discourse used by GABRIELA Network, while politically necessary in some cases, clearly does not offer benefits in the long term for the women that these organizations claim to be speaking for. Morality, in the service of the state, structures what is legal and illegal, and functions simultaneously as a mechanism to establish inequity—in relying on appeals to morality, Filipina/American activists risk

²⁶ Philippine Senator Manny Villar, quoted in "Senate prodded to pass bills vs. sex videos on Web," *Philippine Headline News*, May 25, 2009, <http://www.newsflash.org/2004/02/hl/hl108595.htm> (accessed May 25, 2009).

²⁷ "Philippines: Law fails to stem domestic violence," IRIN Report, UN Office for the Coordination of Human Affairs, November 26, 2008, <http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=81668> (accessed May 20, 2009).

²⁸ In the Subic rape case, just attempting to bring this case to court was met with obstacles—"Nicole" was classified as a "bar girl" and "prostitute" who engaged in consensual sex with her attackers by the defense and right-leaning media before and throughout the trial. Prosecutors had to insist on Nicole's 'good morals' in order for them to make her case. More recently, the burden of proof has fallen on another young woman, "Vanessa," to produce evidence that she was raped by a US serviceman. Benjie Oliveros, "The VFA-Balikatan Mess," *Bulatlat*, May 16, 2009, <http://www.bulatlat.com/main/2009/05/16/the-vfa-balikatan-mess> (accessed May 20, 2009).

closing off rights and recognition for other victimized subjects who are deemed as immoral by the state, and therefore, beyond protection.²⁹ As Jasbir Puar warns, while the concern about heterosexual rape attends, importantly, to violence against women, it also “forcefully masks triangulated desire, whereby the fear—and fantasy—of the penetrated male is displaced onto the safer figure of the raped female” (Puar 2007, 47). As such, the humanitarian gaze is deflected away from other, “less tolerable” figures and subsequent lines of affinity, such as the “penetrated (raped?) male and the woman-desiring female” (Puar 2007, 49). In wanting to bring justice to “Nicole,” Katrina, and other women in the Philippines, activists have, perhaps unwittingly, closed off the possibility for other exploited men, women, and children to receive the justice that they, too, deserve.

Third, in their analysis of the exploitation of Filipina women through the sex trade, Filipina/American anti-imperialist feminists have normalized the ideal of heteropatriarchal gender relations in the home. In doing so, they have, perhaps inadvertently, relied on discourse most often deployed by those trying to rationalize domestic violence as the *victim's*, and not the perpetrator's, fault. In the GABRIELA Network's Purple Rose Campaign, the global sex trade is described as

... the nodal point where class, race and gender oppression come together, to create the worst possible exploitation. Its large-scale use of Filipinas comes from an aberrant cultural development, artificially induced by global forces, which compel the transfer of the family's economic survival *from a traditionally male responsibility*. This transfer impacts not only women but men as well, infantilizing them by making them dependent. *This, in turn, exacerbates gender tension.*³⁰

²⁹ Alexander 2005, 209. This is my main argument in chapter four of this thesis, and will be taken up in more detail there.

³⁰ GABRIELA Network, “The Purple Rose Campaign against trafficking of Filipina women and children,” <http://www.gabnet.org/campaigns/purplerose/prc4.html> (accessed February 7, 2009). Emphasis added.

The emphasis here on the “traditional” Filipino household, and the assumption inherent to it—that the natural domestic arrangement is a heterosexual one—is a prime example of discourse in which “only conjugal heterosexual love has been granted the sanction of human nature” (Alexander 2005, 216). This heteronormative rendering of the domestic reinscribes gender roles as natural and traditional, and leaves masculinity unchallenged (Moallem 1999, 329). In the discourse repeated by GABRIELA Network, it is because women leave home that they “exacerbate gender tension,” or in other words, facilitate spousal abuse—if not for that “aberrant cultural development,” men would not be “infantilized,” and the home would, by extension, be peaceful and free from violence. Following this logic, it is assumed that once the women return “home” to the Philippines, the status quo will return and men will no longer feel dependent, as they will resume their place as head of the “traditional” household.

What attempts to be an ostensibly radical critique of the sex trade then, I argue, actually works by appealing to a masculinist anxiety “about the destruction of the socio-cultural fabric on which prevailing structures of gender and kinship, particularly those upholding dominant relations of production, depend” (Tadiar 2004, 130). Moreover, this rhetoric creates an exceptional status by which sexual exploitation of Filipina women can only happen ‘out there,’ on the global scale, and not within the space of the individual home in the Philippines. Rather than speaking against state power to protect women from harm, the discourse used by these Filipina/American activists ironically reinforces the language, used by many western nation-states, that distinguishes marital rape as

less severe than other forms of rape, or dismisses it as not a form of rape at all (Alexander 2005, 211).

In stating that the Filipino family's economic survival has "traditionally" been the male responsibility, this discourse also devalues the worth of women's labor within the home—as if their domestic labor (within their own home, and not another's) did not contribute to the family's "economic survival." In devaluing women's work this way, the activists recapitulate the state's "dominant constructions of servile femininity that is perennially willing and able to serve" without the need for state subsidies for their 'traditional' family duties (Alexander 2005, 231). It, again, is a masculinist discourse that does not interrogate the conditions of the sexual division of labor—heteronormative domestic arrangements are justified as "traditional" rather than understood as socially constructed and maintained for their role in the (re)production of capital.³¹

Finally, I claim that Filipina/American activists' tactic of appealing to the Philippine and American governments for 'justice' ultimately upholds the validity of the state to function in its punitive role. In the Philippines, Atty. Clara Padilla, a women's rights lawyer affiliated with Gabriela, argued that

The actors in our judicial system are the ones who owe rape victims the justice they seek. If there is proper prosecution, investigation, and the perpetrators are convicted and punished, *then that is justice*.³²

³¹ The appeal to 'tradition' is yet another contradiction for GABRIELA Network and other such feminist anti-imperialist organizations. Considering the Marxist-Leninist-Mao-Zedongist orientation of GABRIELA Network, it is surprising that the large body of Marxist theorization on patriarchy and the sexual division of labor does not more explicitly inform the ideological framework of its Purple Rose Campaign. See: Frederick Engels' "The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State" and Clara Zetkin's "Lenin on the Women's Question," both of which can be found online at <http://www.marxists.org/archive/>.

³² EnGendRights, Inc. "It is the Country that Owes Vanessa," Clara Rita Padilla's blog, entry posted May 20, 2009, <http://clararitapadilla.blogspot.com/2009/05/it-is-country-that-owes-vanessa.html> (accessed May 25, 2009). Emphasis added.

In the United States, GABRIELA Network lobbied for the federal International Marriage Brokers Regulation Act (IMBRA) of 2005, and, in New York, celebrated the victory of the passage of the nation's strongest anti-trafficking in persons legislation to date.³³ In appealing to the very state that has sanctioned, and in many cases, produced the conditions of Filipina women's sexual exploitation, these organizers have "imbued the state with the aura of sovereignty it needs if it is to plausibly claim to be an instrument of reconciliation and harmony" (Markell 2003, 27). That is to say, the founding premise of feminist anti-imperialist politics is contradicted in this move: their calls for the state to strengthen its carceral system validate the state's sovereignty to regulate life and death, to continue the very practices which organizers have deemed as inhumane, exploitative, and in the service of neo-imperialist interests.³⁴ They would be better served by remembering Wendy Brown's warning: that a politics that looks to the law and the state to redress social injustices may "unwittingly increase the power of the state and its various regulatory discourses at the expense of political freedom" (Brown 1995, 17).

In calling for stronger penal measures, Filipina/American activists continually justify the existence and expansion of a global prison industrial complex in which modalities of social formation are crystallized; their calls sanction the formation of racially and sexually abjected populations to whom punishment and death can be applied with

³³ GABRIELA Network, "GABRIELA Network Celebrates NY State Anti-Trafficking Bill Victory, Urges Vigilance in Implementation and Action for an Even More Comprehensive Law that Includes Bride Trafficking," GABRIELA Network, June 10, 2007, <http://www.gabnet.org/statements.php?page=25> (accessed March 17, 2009).

³⁴ Dylan Rodriguez writes: "the multiple technologies of power inaugurated and spun outward by the prison regime enables the material practice of state power, inscribing its self-narrated dominion, authority, and (moral) legitimacy to coerce: the ascendancy and authority of the state must be enacted, ritualized through the prison regime—and massively performed on target bodies—to become 'real'" (Rodriguez 2006a, 145).

impunity (Rodriguez 2006b, 11). As prison abolitionist scholars such as Ruth Wilson Gilmore, Angela Davis, Joy James, and Dylan Rodriguez have written, the expansion of the prison system in the United States is a technology of racial management with its origins in chattel slavery and the convict-lease system begun during Reconstruction.³⁵ Those most impacted by harsher prison sentences in the United States, for example, would not be the (white) American troops who rape Filipina women, but rather the black men who have already been targeted by the state; in the Philippines, further imprisonment of 'degenerate,' and non-(re)productive populations would be sanctioned.³⁶

Moreover, in calling for the strengthening of the prison industrial complex in the United States, GABRIELA Network activists have forgotten that the prison industrial complex has wide-ranging effects outside the borders of the nation and is never simply a 'domestic' issue; rather, it is intimately connected to American imperialist campaigns and on the punishment of 'foreign' bodies marked as insurgent around the globe.³⁷

Historically, the development of penal technologies in both the United States and Philippines have roots in the American colonial project in the Philippines and its

³⁵ Joy James writes: "Superfluous or expendable bodies, institutional inequalities, and racism as components of discipline and punishment in the United States mean that the carceral is customized to fit racialized body politics and that race is a marker for criminality and repression" (James 1996, 34-5).

³⁶ As Angela Davis notes: "Whether brutal punishment within penal settings is inflicted on white, Latino/Latina, Asian, Native, or African American men or women, the typical prisoner- and the target of this brutality- is generally considered to be a black man. The gross violations of prisoners' civil and human rights, in this sense, is very much connected with the generalized equation of 'criminal' or 'prisoner' within a black male body" (Davis 2001, 42).

³⁷ Rodriguez 2006b, 11. As I argue in chapter four of this thesis, the contemporary growth of the Philippine prison system coincides with the Philippine military's extra-judicial killings and disappearances of Muslim and Communist "rebels," and is supported directly by American troops as part of the United States' global "War on Terror."

disciplining of ‘insurgent’ bodies. As such, the contemporary Philippine prison system is “part of a genealogy of incarceration and punishment... inseparable from the contingent and multiples histories of carceral violence that have focused on the racialized body as the focal point of juridical innovation, punitive technological invention, and pleasure making” (Rodriguez 2006b,18). For feminist anti-imperialist activists to call for the consolidation of the United States and Philippine government’s punitive powers, then, works at cross-purposes with its liberationist goals; even with such a “justice” system in place as they advocate for, freedom would not be available to all Filipino/as, but only for those deemed as worthy by the state.

With the prison in mind, I continue to the next chapter, in which I trace the genealogy of the carceral in the Philippines during the period of formal American colonialism to illuminate the ways in which *queerness* was mapped onto the Filipino body as its condition of racial intelligibility. Rather than disavow this history, as Filipina/American activists have attempted to do by embracing the heterosexual female victim as their proper subject, I wonder if revisiting this history can help us imagine a new decolonial future in which *all* of us, not just the pathologized ‘victims’ of globalization, can be free.

CHAPTER 3

DOMESTICATING THE CARCERAL, INCARCERATING THE DOMESTIC:

AMERICAN DISCIPLINARY PROJECTS IN THE PHILIPPINES

Before race and sexuality can be regulated, the subject must be disciplined to inhabit that race and sexuality. The immanent play of discourse around bodies and their circulations, invaginations, and refigurations must be appropriated violently or surreptitiously in such a way that a play without an essential meaning is given direction. In other words, race and sexuality need to become meaningful, vital, foci of social life.

—Elizabeth A. Povinelli, *The Empire of Love: Toward a Theory of Intimacy, Genealogy, and Carnality*

In writing this genealogy, I have wrestled with the question: what would be the right place to ‘begin’ this narrative? While I could write a history of the Philippines starting from the most obvious point, by tracing the imposition of Catholic racial hierarchies and gender binaries on the native inhabitants of the islands by the Spanish *conquistadors*, I begin my narrative instead with the US colonization of the Philippines in 1898, for it is this moment that new classifications of sexuality “emerged at the same time that the United States was aggressively constructing and policing the boundary between ‘black’ and ‘white’ bodies” within the borders of America and outwards, in its newly-acquired territories (Somerville 2000, 3). While Spanish colonists had already drawn racial and sexual distinctions between different classes of “Filipinos,” it was during the late 19th century and early 20th century that the new and modified categorizations that prevail until the present day were constituted not by the Spanish, but by American imperial discourses. In this way, the US colonial administration of the islands

inaugurated the modern and modernizing era in the Philippine islands—setting in motion the processes of globalization and military imperialism from which its people continue to struggle to free themselves from today.

The history of and discourses about the American colonization of the Philippine Islands in 1898 has been well documented elsewhere; what I am interested in tracing here are the disciplinary practices that produced the Filipino subject as sexually and socially nonheteronormative, practices which were simultaneously (re)productive of a white American heteromasculine subjectivity. My genealogy in this chapter focuses on the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair and two penal colonies and a leper colony located in the Philippines that, together, illustrate the practices and deployments of American heteromasculine governmentality over the Philippine population—that is to say, these three sites are significant as they illuminate the ways in which “Filipinos” were summarily categorized, classified, and defined by the American colonial regime as a racialized population *through* their degenerate non-heteronormativity.

In this chapter, I am interested in looking beyond the state discourses about Filipino populations, such as the infamous speeches by William McKinley on America's “little brown brothers,” to focus on the disciplinary technologies through which the US policy of ‘benevolent assimilation’ was practiced on the ground. Katherine McKittrick's work on black women's geographies has prompted me to explore that ways that racism and sexism are “not simply bodily or identity based,” but have also been deployed as “spatial acts” that shaped the experiences and knowledges available to both the American colonizer and the colonized populations of the Philippines (McKittrick 2006, xviii). She writes:

To transform the uninhabitable into the inhabitable, and make this transformation profitable, the land must become a site of racial-sexual regulation, a geography that maps 'a normal way of life' through measuring different degrees of inhabitability. This geographic transformation, then, does not fully erase the category of 'uninhabitable,' but rather re-presents it through spatial processes as a sign of social difference. This is expressed through uneven geographies: spatial arrangements that map and measure populations according to 'normal,' a 'normal way of life,' or the normally inhabitable. (McKittrick 2006, 131)

Following McKittrick, I move away from solely analyzing colonial discourses towards an analytic inclusive of the *spatial practices* of the (re)organization of land and (dis)placement of bodies that were co-constitutive of Filipino and American subjectivity during the period of official US colonialism in the Philippines.¹ As I briefly discussed in the last chapter, the nation has often been read through the discourse of nation-as-home, and this carried over into the spatial practices of the American colonial administration over the Philippines. Significantly, during the late 19th and early 20th century, the queering of Filipino racial subjectivity occurred even prior to the establishment of the first American penal, medical, or cultural institutions on the islands: the land itself was described as a *queer* geography, inhospitable to fostering proper health and hygiene—two of the major markers of the proper home.

The Philippines was described by the first American anthropological expeditions as a “fertile, torrid zone,” with a climate guilty of producing “de-moralizing effects” on its

¹ McKittrick illuminates the importance of critical geography as an analytic framework to understanding the relationship between space and power; she writes that “the production of space is caught up in, but does not guarantee, long-standing geographic frameworks that materially and philosophically arrange the planet according to a seemingly stable, white, heterosexual, classed vantage point. If prevailing geographic distributions and interactions are racially, sexually, and economically hierarchical, these hierarchies are naturalized by repetitively spatializing 'difference'.... Practices of domination, sustained by a unitary vantage point, naturalize both identity and place, repetitively spatializing where non-dominant groups 'naturally' belong” (McKittrick 2006, xv).

inhabitants (Anderson 2006a, 77, 82). There was fear around the possibility of white Americans developing “tropical inertia” if they spent too long in the islands, and this condition of ‘weakness’ was seen as a particularly emasculating, and therefore threatening, condition for the American men (Anderson 2006a, 139). White women were warned to take precautions against becoming anemic on account of the climate; given their ‘weaker sex,’ this potential for further degeneration was seen as a liability for the white family, which required a strong woman to head the household (Anderson 2006a, 139). To protect white American colonial administrators on the islands from this pernicious Philippine geography, “health authorities targeted toilet practices, food handling, dietary customs, housing design; they rebuilt the markets, using more hygienic concrete, and suppressed the unsanitary fiestas; they assumed the power to examine Filipinos as random and to disinfect, fumigate, and medicate at will” (Anderson 2006a, 99). If this queer place was so dangerous for the American colonists, what then of its native peoples; were they, too, seen as having succumbed to the “tropical inertia” of the islands?

Territorializing the Philippines meant claiming not just the land, but also its people, for the possession of the United States. And, like the landscape and climate, so too were the people of the Philippines produced as *queer* subjects:

Geographically in the most crude sense, the body is territorialized—it is publically and financially claimed, owned, and controlled by an outsider. Territorialization marks and names the scale of the body, turning ideas that justify bondage into corporeal evidence of racial difference. Once the racial-sexual body is territorialized, it is marked as decipherable and knowable—as subordinate, inhuman, rape-able, deviant, procreative, placeless. (McKittrick 2006, 45)

Just as the land was figured as non-reproductive, so too were Filipino bodies racialized as medically defective: Victor Heiser, the Commissioner of Health in the Philippines

during this time, described the Filipino population as “dirty, unsanitary, diseased... a nation of invalids, incubators of leprosy, unhygienic” (Espiritu 2003, 52). Their domestic structures were marked as disorganized, and even their waste was sexualized as “promiscuous defecation” (Anderson 2006a, 197). Anthropology, philology and scientific medical discourse combined to naturalize the racial hierarchy and political dominance of Americans over the Filipinos; the four elements of expansion, historical confrontation, sympathy, and classification on which the specific intellectual and institutional structures of Orientalism depended were established during these years (Said 1994, 120).

While the full range of colonial disciplinary technologies deployed in the Philippines is too large to cover in this genealogy, I am most interested in analyzing those practices which brought together the spaces of the domestic and the carceral, as these were designed to discipline Filipino racial difference by ‘reforming’ their inherent sexual deviance towards proper heteronormative domesticity. The prisons at Bilibid and Iwahig and the 1904 World’s Fair serve as two primary examples of the interrelated processes that I call “incarcerating the domestic” and “domesticating the carceral.” These processes are significant, I argue, because they produced not only the Filipino as a legible subject, but also consolidated white American heteronormative subjectivity in the same moment.

Domesticating the Carceral:

The Curious Case of the Iwahig Penal Colony and Bilibid Prison

Bilibid Prison and the Iwahig Penal Colony: together, these two carceral institutions constituted what I identify as the hetero-disciplinary arm of the American

colonial regime in the Philippines from the late 19th century through the mid-20th century. From its violent incorporation as a territory of the United States in 1898, the Philippines and its population were labeled as ‘backward,’ in need of rehabilitation, modernization, and education in order to operate as a sovereign nation. The expansion of the penal institutions in Bilibid and Iwahig rested upon the belief that American rule over the islands would “transform [the Filipinos] from the weak and feeble race we have found them into the strong, healthy and enduring people that they may yet become” (Heiser qtd. in Anderson 2006a, 1). These two institutions were key sites of American “benevolent assimilation” over the Philippines and its people, as has already been noted in several texts written post-Philippine ‘independence.’²

Despite the proliferation of academic texts on American colonialism in the Philippines, a gap in the scholarship remains: there has been little sustained analyses of the particular disciplinary practices that carceral sites deployed to ‘correct’ the apparent failure of Filipino heterodomesticity. This oversight in the scholarship is unfortunate, I believe that tracing this prevailing component of American hetero-racist dominance over communities of color at home and abroad during this time period is essential if we are to understand the carceral continuum still at work today. As previously stated, the particular disciplinary tactic at work at Iwahig and Bilibid was one of “domesticating the carceral”; together with the “incarceration of the domestic” at the 1904 St. Louis World’s Fair that I

² For more detailed historical accounts, see Warwick Anderson, *Colonial Pathologies: American Tropical Medicine, Race, and Hygiene in the Philippines* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006); Paul Kramer, *The Blood of Government* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2006); and Michael Salman, “Nothing Without Labor’: Penology, Discipline, and Independence in the Philippines Under United States Colonial rule, 1898-1914,” in *Discrepant Histories: Translocal Essays on Filipino Cultures*, ed. Vicente L. Rafael (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1995), 113-129.

analyze in the following section, American imperial heteropatriarchy over the Philippines and its population was justified and secured.

I contend that the American penal regime in the Philippines deployed a disciplinary strategy of “domesticating the carceral” not simply as a tactic to pacify Filipino subjects, which is the argument maintained by most critical anti-imperialist scholars and activists today. Rather, I argue that the practices conducted in American penal institutions in the Philippines during this time period contributed greatly to fundamentally worked to constitute the entire population of the archipelago as inherently nonheteronormative; improperly domestic; and incapable of social, political and economic (re)production. Borrowing from Dylan Rodriguez’s work on prisons in the United States, I argue that the imprisonment of ‘criminals’ during the American colonial period in the Philippines functioned less as a “discrete institutional formation than [as] a *modality of social formation*” (Rodriguez 2006b, 21, emphasis mine). That is to say, the collapsing of various tribal, kinship, and ethno-linguistic groups into a cohesive, intelligible “Filipino” national population, first done by Spanish conquistadors in the 16th century, was further managed and defined under the American carceral regime of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The result was the production of the Filipino population as sexually and socially degenerate, and I argue Filipino-as-subject is unintelligible in the American imagination without such signifying markers. To elaborate this point, in the following sections I will explore the question: *What were the contours of the carceral continuum operating in the Philippines under American colonial rule, and in particular, how was the domestic deployed as a tool of population management and moral reform at the Bilibid Prison and Iwahig Penal Colony?*

As scholars such as Michael Salman have noted, the criminalized Filipinos within the walls of Bilibid and Iwahig were the subjects of colonial experiments in reforming failed hygiene, morality, and family relations in controlled environments under constant surveillance. Even as individual Filipinos ‘succeeded’ in performing their rehabilitation, the continued presence of incarcerated Filipinos in these places demonstrated the ongoing necessity of American intervention in the Philippines; it was imagined that without discipline and reform the Filipinos as a national population would “steadily and rapidly deteriorate” into barbarism (Worcester 1930, 684). Though the specific disciplinary technologies applied to prisoners varied between Bilibid and Iwahig, together, these two institutions are indicative of the extent of the carceral continuum in operation in the colonial Philippines.

Introducing “Industry”: Divisions of Labor in Bilibid Prison

Of all of the Philippine prisons, the Bilibid Prison in Manila was, at one time, considered the worst. As Michael Salman notes, Bilibid

... was the hub of the colonial penal system. Constructed in 1865 by the Spanish regime, Bilibid’s buildings were spokes emanating from a central observation tower. By 1904 Bilibid averaged a daily count of 4,400 inmates, 1,000 more than in its official capacity. The overcrowded conditions were hellish. Morbidity and mortality soared due to unsanitary conditions and epidemics. 265 prisoners died in fiscal year 1904, and 375 died in 1905. (Salman 1995, 116)

By all colonial accounts, Bilibid was home to the most dangerous and uncivilized sectors of the Philippine population, with a riot at the prison in December 1904 demonstrating the rioting prisoners’ intractability (Salman 1995, 117). At the same time, however, the

riot demonstrated the possibility of prisoners' reform, as the Director of Prisons exulted that "some 3000 sentenced prisoners who are interested in working seven and a half hours each day quietly looked on and made not the slightest demonstration" (qtd. in Salman 1995, 117). The American goal upon their acquisition of Bilibid from its former Spanish administrators was for the total reform of prisoners' morality, hygiene, and work habits; subsequently, the prison's work and disciplining structure was remodeled as a labor camp to better facilitate the achievement of these goals.

By the last decades of official American rule over the islands, Bilibid had apparently taken a turn for the better; by 1931, American penologist John Lewis Gillian was able to laud Bilibid Prison as a better model for carceral institutions worldwide, saying:

You have followed me around the world in this adventure of penological discovery... You have watched the Filipino, released only thirty years ago from the lazy despotism of Spain, and then experiencing the impress of vigorous, impetuous United States, sure of itself and its culture, intolerant of the cultures of the head-hunter and the Spanishized Filipino, attempt a striking experiment in colonizing his erring brothers, in preparation for full freedom. (Gillian 1931, 293)

What prompted this reversal in the discourse around the rehabilitative effects of the Bilibid Prison from the Spanish to the American colonial period? First, perhaps, a major part of Bilibid's apparent success was due to the transformation of the Philippine penal system into a 'progressive-stage system,' where Bilibid came to serve as a feeder for the Iwahig Penal Colony (Gillian 1931, 301). Simply, a system of rewards was meted out to first-time and well-behaved prisoners, one of which was transfer into the 'more humane' Iwahig Penal Colony. Secondly, the introduction of "industry"; the provision for exercise, entertainment, and other recreation; and the possibility of reunification with families in

Iwahig all served to 'domesticate' Bilibid as a microcosm for a properly functioning Filipino society (Gillian 1931, 62). By the breaking up of prisoners' time according to modern Western work-day and domestic leisure-time schedules, penologists and prison authorities imagined that the prisoners too could begin to function 'normally' in a modern society that was also structured around these spatio-temporal norms.

Of all the reforms made to Bilibid by the American authorities, the creation of an Industrial Division was one of the most highly praised and 'successful' projects. According to Manuel A. Alzate, the assistant director of the Bureau of Prisons in the Philippines in 1931, the Industrial Division was "operated primarily to provide instructive employment for deserving inmates and to teach every earnest convict a trade with which to earn an honest livelihood after his release" (qtd. in Gillian 1931, 39). The most 'advanced' classes of male inmates (designated as classes "A" and "B") were given training in mechanical trades and furniture building—electrical, auto and motorcycle repair, blacksmithing, upholstery, and the like; these trades also provided necessary materials that were sold to the 'outside' at a profit for the prison (Gillian 1931, 40). Those men classed in the lower "F" and "G" divisions, however, were given feminized tasks such as sewing, tailoring, and laundering, tasks which John Lewis Gillian openly mocked:

Fancy the derision visited upon an inmate who comes back to his mountain home and who in reply to the question of his neighbors as to what kind of work he did in prison replies that he did the washing! What a blush of shame will mantle his swarthy face as the first astonished breath-holding is followed by a loud cry in unison, 'What? Women's Work!'. . . . A Westerner wonders why this is not a part of Department H. (Gillian 1931, 42)

Department H referred to by Gillian was, unsurprisingly, the Women's Division of the prison, where the female prisoners were taught "domestic economies" such as weaving, embroidery, lace-making, and crocheting (1931, 42). These low men's divisions and Division H were deemed by Gillian as "the least promising from the standpoint of industrial training," indicating the devaluation of feminized labor as a viable means of sustainable, modernized (aka Westernized) economies, a devaluation that continues through the present moment (1931, 42).

It becomes clear upon reading these assessments of Bilibid Prison that its success in reforming prisoners was predicated upon transforming the Filipino from what the Philippine Commission first found upon their arrival—"that the educated Filipinos as a rule held honest manual labor in contempt"—to members of a society where even its most 'unruly' inhabitants were productive industrial workers (Worcester 1930, 403). As Dean Worcester, member of the Philippine Commission and later Secretary to the Interior of the colonial government wrote glowingly of Bilibid's prisoners: "They readily secure employment, as the men discharged from this institution have in many cases earned well-deserved reputations for honesty and industry... So satisfactory are the results that I have formed the habit of calling the institution my 'university'" (Worcester 1930, 422). Too 'immature' and 'uncivilized' to control their violent impulses or learn an industrial trade, it was only through their training at Bilibid that the incarcerated could ever attain the skills necessary to function in a rapidly modernizing US-run Philippine economy.³

³ Michael Salman cites the warden of Bilibid, who exulted that 90% of Bilibid's prisoners who "had neither advantages nor opportunities to lift themselves above a more or less clouded mentality that allowed them no consciousness of possessing a mind of their own... are built up physically and mentally by the treatment they receive among reformatory lines.... [Upon release] they become good, industrious, law abiding citizens, and in many instances are pointed to with pride

Foucault has written of the period of the ‘great confinement’ in Europe that confinement’s repressive function was combined with labor in order to contribute to the outside society’s economic stability, and furthermore, that incarceration worked as an “ethical exercise and moral guarantee” for the improvement of men and society (1965, 59). Likewise, I would argue that Bilibid was designed to function in similar ways: while it was first economically productive as a labor camp, it was also centrally and necessarily designed to be productive of a rehabilitated, ethical Filipino subject. While this second function contributing to the prisoners’ rehabilitation—that of forming proper heterodomic households, complete with spouse and children—was stated as a goal of the Bilibid prison, this “ethical exercise” was only attempted in the Iwahig Penal Colony, as it was in Iwahig that home was *literally* brought into the prison for the purposes of moral reform. But why was achieving this second goal even important at all to American penal authorities? To rely on Foucault again, if marriage is “linked to the maintenance and transformation of social status” and ultimately “involved the individual’s entire social character along with its ties,” then what better marker to determine a prisoner’s moral fitness for release into the general population but his performance of heterodomesticity under the surveillance of carceral authorities at facilities such as Iwahig Penal Colony?⁴

by their neighbors *as men who can and do work like Americans*” (qtd. in Salman 1995, 125; emphasis added).

⁴ Foucault 1999, 269.

I draw from Rosemary George’s introduction to the edited collection *Burning Down the House: Recycling Domesticity* for my definition of “the domestic” as “impl[ying] *spatial arrangements* in which certain practices of reproduction (children as well as certain modes of production) are situated. As a primary site at which modernity is manufactured and made manifest, the domestic serves as a *regulative norm* that refigures conceptions of the family from a largely temporal organization of kinship into a spatially manifest entity. The domestic with all its material and metaphysical accoutrements bridges the distances between seemingly public issues

“A Prison That Makes Men Free”:

Performing Heterodomesticity in the Iwahig Penal Colony

Iwahig Penal Colony was opened in 1904 by the American colonial administration, and was located on the island of Palawan on the western edge of the Philippines. Unlike Bilibid, which functioned as a traditional prison with its strict surveillance and discipline, Iwahig was designed to be a “self-governing republic of prisoners without guards, producing commodities, and staffed by only one or two colonial supervisors” (Salman 1995, 119). Modeled after the George Junior Republic, a reformatory school for ‘delinquent’ children in upstate New York, Iwahig’s model of ‘self-government’ was ostensibly designed counter to the tactics of “fear and force” used in most ‘typical’ prisons (Salman 1995, 120). Lyman Beecher Stowe, a prison reformer associated with the George Junior Republic and a grandson of Harriet Beecher Stowe, “lauded Iwahig as proof that [George] Junior Republic methods would succeed among adults” (Salman 1995, 121). Much as the George Junior Republic’s targeted population was children, so too were the ‘benevolent’ disciplinary measures at Iwahig deployed as a paternalistic model over ‘child-like’ Filipino prisoners; its model was based on practices of colonial benevolence structurally similar to the Native American schools within the continental United States (Salman 1995, 121).

Unlike Bilibid Prison, where industrial vocations were forcibly imposed upon the incarcerated, Iwahig was designed as an “agricultural penal colony” intended for first-

and the private concerns of families” (George 1998, 3; emphasis added). I find George’s formulation of the *domestic* to productive for its attentiveness to the operations of the domestic (both discursively and materially) across time and space and between scales. I also find productive the connection George makes between the concept of “domesticity” with racist state and imperial projects over and against communities of color in the United States and abroad (1998, 4-5).

time offenders who had proven good enough conduct and industry at Bilibid to be transferred to Iwahig (Gillian 1931, 57). The system at Iwahig also greatly differed from Bilibid

... such that [the Filipino prisoners] gradually become owners of houses, land and agricultural implements and may in the end have their families with them *so they are well settled for life* when their sentences expire, if they take advantage of the opportunities given them. (Worchester 1930, 422; emphasis added)

Instructing prisoners in ‘modern’ agricultural methods was prioritized at Iwahig over training them in industrialized forms of labor such as at Bilibid, with the goal being that prisoners, upon their release, would “settle down here *with their families* and take up a piece of land” (Gillian 1931, 56; emphasis added). Furthermore, the integration of heterodomestic familial structures into Iwahig, even more so than the emphasis on agricultural training, defined and differentiated the disciplinary technology of the Iwahig penal colony from others carceral institutions in the Philippines. The presence of wives and children living at Iwahig was instituted both as a moral and *economic* incentive for criminalized men to perform well, for

Economically each man is on his own feet. *He must make his own living for himself and his family.* His standard of living, as on the outside, depends upon his own efforts... After the first six months they must make their own living. What that living shall be depends upon their own efforts. The results show that these experiments in training men for the *ordinary relationship of life* in a free society are very much worthwhile. We wonder that it has taken us a hundred years to learn it and that the discovery has been made in lands like the Philippines. (Gillian 1931, 308; emphasis added)

Gillian’s assessment of Iwahig rests upon several assumptions—that it is only with the presence of heterodomestic familial structures (wives, children) that the men will perform to their fullest productive capacity; that ‘ordinary relationships’ can be imparted

to and formed by Filipinos within the extraordinary and isolated social space of the prison, even more effectively than on the 'outside'; and that proper domestic performance (however that was gauged) indicated the full rehabilitation and the ability of prisoners to function in 'normal' Philippine society. Gillian's findings are not unique; on the contrary, official American penal authorities in the Philippines corroborated his findings with statements of their own.

I find the following set of statements, again made by Gillian and by American prison reformer Lyman Beecher Stowe, to be particularly troubling and revelatory in their assumptions and assertions about the necessity of importing wives and children of prisoners for the completion of Iwahig's rehabilitation program:

In only two countries in the world are the social ties of a man with his family kept intact, in the Philippines and in India. In the Philippines this is a special privilege for about 90 men out of the 2000 in the colony in Iwahig. They are permitted to take their families with them and to live there with them in *normal social relationships*. (Gillian 1931, 307; emphasis added)

Though the success of the colony as a maker of dollars is still to be demonstrated, the experiment of giving adult Filipinos, guilty of the worst crimes, *a chance to develop the best that is in them under conditions approximating those under which they must live when released* has proved a complete success. (Stowe qtd. in Salman 1995, 12; emphasis added)

I am most interested here in the deployment of the phrase "normal social relationships" as it is used to describe a highly unnatural (or "queered") social structure of women and children living within a penal colony, as it points me towards a series of other provocative questions: If criminalized men's incarceration was justified as isolating them from 'free' Philippine society to neutralize their threat, how is it assumed that they will not pose a danger to those within their most immediate and intimate family circle? Given the

perceived threat of incarcerated Filipino men, are women and children therefore understood to be exempt from danger, or is it that they are dismissed as expendable test subjects within the carceral economy—the markers by which prison authorities can gauge the ‘success’ of their domesticating experiments?

Given the paucity of documentation available to a US-based graduate student such as myself on the discourses used to normalize the family reunification projects conducted at Iwahig, many of these questions must necessarily go unanswered. I pose them, however, to point towards new directions for future research on this site. Leaving these questions aside for the moment, I will now briefly address what I think can be my contribution to the research, which is a meditation on the following question: what do Gillian and other colonial penologists find ‘normal’ about a nuclear heterodomestic family structure being constituted within Iwahig’s walls, given that Philippine populations were categorized as ‘abnormal’ precisely *because of* their non-heteronormative kinship structures (matrilineal, large extended families, etc.)?

Michael Salman has conjectured that “if Iwahig was ‘a prison that makes men free’ among a people supposedly ‘unfit’ for independence, then should not the entire population be incarcerated to make them free?” (1995, 122). I believe the logic of the carceral continuum in the Philippines that Salman identifies is precisely the rationale by which Gillian and others could conceive of Iwahig as fostering the formation of ‘normal social relationships’—for they knew that the circular logic of discipline and rehabilitation would perpetuate a system of incarceration and colonization over the population of the Philippines with no end in sight. That is to say, what penal authorities dubbed as ‘normal,’ therefore, was not so much the nuclear family structure created in Iwahig but

the perpetual state of incarceration of the Filipino people, maintained in part through practices of domesticating the carceral.

Simply, the logic was as follows: if the un-incarcerated populations of the Philippines could not form proper heterodomestic family units or become industrial workers, then those populations who were most malleable due to their spatial and social confinement (such as the prisoners of Iwahig) would be the instigators for a nation-wide heteronormative social and economic transformation; however, if the nuclear family's condition of possibility was its location in the penal colony, the continued incarceration of Filipinos would remain necessary, as it was only in such confined situations that such tutelage would 'hold.'

The testaments of colonial penologists themselves most clearly illuminate the heteropatriarchal logic of the American carceral continuum in the Philippines that I have traced above; the following quotes make clear that the prisoner's transformation into the Philippines' "best settlers" was predicated upon them becoming industrious "as most of our citizens are not" through programs such as Bilibid's work program or Iwahig's family reunification and agricultural projects (Gillian 1931, 56):

[Prisoners] usually leave the jail better men than when they entered it, and thereafter, instead of being a menace to law and order, assist in their enforcement and maintenance. (Worcester 1930, 461)

Men by nature are much the same everywhere, but how they act is determined largely by the culture under which they find themselves. Peculation is not held in quite such bad odor among the Filipinos as among us. The rift between classes is greater. The ideals of democratic equality between man and man are newer there. Sex morals, thanks to hundreds of years of dominance of the white race there and to the mixture of different culture patterns, are not as puritanical as ours. Consequently graft, abuse of prisoners, and immorality have freer scope in the mores of the people. Now, impose on these people an American regime, and these conditions come to the surface with astonishing frequency. (Gillian 1931, 64; emphasis added)

By way of conclusion, I hope that my brief genealogy of the practices of domesticating the carceral at the Bilibid and Iwahig Penal Colonies has laid the ground upon which I can now make the following charge: I believe that in importing the domestic into the carceral space of the Iwahig Penal Colony, American colonial authorities were working towards the exportation of the carceral into the domestic—that is, they were aiming for the dissemination of the industry and heterodomesticity so prized within the prison into the ‘free’ populations of the Philippines through the bodies of ‘reformed’ prisoners. Rather than operating as a means of isolating violent or aberrant individuals from a normal Philippine society, the prison functioned to normalize individuals who would go on to rehabilitate an entire Philippine national population that was produced as nonheteronormative, savage, and was, as such, understood to be profoundly *queer*.

In the next section of this genealogy, I will follow a moment of American heteromasculinist self-imagining through the disciplining of *queer/ed* Filipino bodies by a practice of “incarcerating the domestic” at the 1904 St. Louis World’s Fair. Operating concurrently with the establishment and maintenance of the penal colonies in the Philippines, the 1904 World’s Fair brought the colonial project in the Philippines home, so to speak, with the importation of over 1,100 people from the Philippine islands to St. Louis, Missouri. In this space, Filipino sexual and social *queerness* was juxtaposed with American progress and heterodomesticity to further justify the project of benevolent assimilation of the islands. If the penal colonies at Iwahig and Bilibid were key sites of normalizing Filipinos into American-style heteronormativity, then I argue that the World’s Fair was a site of consolidating white Americans’ possession of *their own* fragile

heteronormative masculinity, a masculinity that was constantly under threat by the possibility of foreign ‘invasion’ and ‘penetration.’

Incarcerating the Domestic:

The Philippine Reservation at the 1904 St. Louis World’s Fair

As other scholars have examined in depth, visual documentation depicting the Filipino as primitive and degenerate was an integral strategy employed by the Taft and McKinley administrations to justify the American colonial project in the Philippines.⁵ Images, ranging from popular illustrations to scientific and ethnological photographs provided the ‘proof’ of Filipino degeneration, their bodies “becom(ing) the bearer of the kind of knowledge which discourse produces and the object through which power is relayed” (Hall 1997, 55). At the same time, these images worked to strengthen American citizens’ imagination of themselves as racially superior, heteronormative, and properly domestic—all qualities of an advanced civilization fit to rule over those on lower rungs of progress and modernity.

While the existing scholarship on photographic representations of the 1904 St. Louis World’s Fair has provided a valuable archaeology of the cultural discourses that sustained political and economic control over the Philippines in the years between 1898 and 1946, my project departs from this work in that it is, if anything, a genealogy of the

⁵ See: Elizabeth M. Holt, *Colonizing Filipinas: Nineteenth Century Representations of the Philippines in Western Historiography* (Manila: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2002); Vicente Rafael, *White Love and Other Events in Filipino History* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2000); Benito M. Vergara, *Displaying Filipinos: Photography and Colonialism in Early Twentieth-Century Philippines* (Quezon City, Phils: University of the Philippines Press, 1995); and Laura Wexler, *Tender Violence: Domestic Visions in the Age of U.S. Imperialism* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2000).

practices deployed over and against the populations incarcerated in the Fair's "Philippine Reservation." Though I do not deny the importance of scholarship that has examined the pedagogical and disciplinary functions played by photographs taken of the inhabitants of the Philippine Reservation, I find there to be a need of deeper analysis of the ways that sexual disciplining was used to consolidate white American heteromale identity in difference to Filipino sexual and social degeneracy through the spatial arrangements of 'Filipino' peoples living in *queer* domestic structures.

The question I am most interested in exploring here is: *How was empire mapped onto the Filipino body and displayed for American fair-goers in St. Louis as a means of consolidating white American domestic (and domesticated) identity?* Mary Pat Brady writes that "crucial to the understanding of the production of space is its bodily instantiation" (Brady 2002, 9). Taking her claim seriously, I am interested in tracing a genealogy of performances of domestic activities by 'primitive' tribes in the Philippine Reservation at the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair and the ways in which these practices contributed to forming not only Filipino racial identity as inherently 'queer,' but more importantly, to consolidating white Americans' understandings of themselves as *impenetrable* to the threat of sexual and social deviancy posed by the incorporation of their 'little brown brothers' into the American social body.

The Philippine Reservation was the largest of many zoologically-styled exhibits of 'foreign peoples' at the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair, covering over 47 acres and containing over 1,100 inhabitants. The layout of the Reservation spatially mapped the chain of Filipino progress from the 'most primitive' Negritos, who were written of as the "Missing Link" and placed at the 'pole of barbarity,' to the Visayan households, with their women in Hispanicized hair and dress, placed closest to the 'pole of civilization.' In its

restaging of Philippine culture and society through the construction of 'authentic' households of different Filipino peoples, the St. Louis World's Fair promised its audience an experience that was, as Sharon Delmendo has noted, "better than a trip through the Philippine Islands" (2005, 52-53). Rather than hazard a trans-Pacific voyage to the Philippines, now Americans could see the entire colony and its people instantly without ever leaving the United States.

The Philippine Reservation at the World's Fair allowed the 'average' American a kind of "magical access to and *visual* command over the world's most exotic locales and peoples," and served to buttress and justify the political-economic control the United States government was beginning to exert over its new Pacific territory (Griffiths 2002, 77; emphasis added). Visual and discursive mastery to accompany territorial control of a distant nation: these were the contours of the discursive and material geographies of the Philippine Reservation at the St. Louis World's Fair. As such, the Philippine Reservation served as a spatio-temporal proxy of the Philippine nation, where the failed performances of domestic practices by its 'inhabitants' (the Filipino peoples unwillingly brought in to populate the villages) were staged to demonstrate the impossibility of Philippine national sovereignty. This dilemma, however, could possibly be remedied and contained only with the aid of white American heteromale authorities such as Dean Worcester and the average white American male, who could protect his household from this un-domestic (and undomesticated) threat.

The material geography of the World's Fair attempted to construct "the space of the [Filipino] subject" for US imperialism writ large (Kirby qtd in McKittrick 2006, 2). In other words, the early 20th century American colonial adventure in the Philippines was "spatially propped up by racial-sexual codes, particularly bodily codes, such as

phenotype and sex” and displayed in the specific spatio-temporal site of the World’s Fair (McKittrick 2006, 3). Mis-classified racially and as ‘tribes’ by the census undertaken by the US-appointed Secretary of the Interior Dean Worcester several years prior, an arbitrary selection of 1,100 peoples of supposedly representative Filipino ‘types’ were ‘found’ in expeditions sent by the Philippine Exposition Board and sent to St. Louis (Fermin 2004, 44-47). Yet, as Katherine McKittrick reminds us to note, it was not only through phenotyping that these Filipino ‘tribes’ were racially classified by American scientists and government employees, but also through classification and biopolitical regulation of their domestic practices. It was precisely these improper performances of gender and sexuality in the domestic sphere by Filipino ‘savages’ that delimited Filipino racial difference from proper white American heteromascularity.

The naturalized domestic spaces comprising each ‘native village’ in the Philippine Reservation made spectacle out of seemingly mundane domestic activities, and such performances were replayed daily for white American spectators’ amusement and edification. Jose D. Fermin noted that “each village had its own theater where the natives entertained the fairgoers with their own culture, consisting mostly of songs, dances, and other tribal ceremonies. When not performing, they pretended to live just as they did at home, doing household chores, blacksmithing, weaving, and other arts and crafts” (2004, 128). While much can be said of the ceremonial rites such as music and dance that the tribes performed, I argue that it was in the supposedly ‘banal’ or mundane domestic rituals of cooking/eating, clothing, and parenting where the performances of gender and sexuality became the most spectacular, for the inhabitants’ deviation from ‘normal’ modes of American heterodomesticity was that most played upon by fair authorities for the titillation of its audience members.

The Igorots' most spectacular performance, for example, was their apparently carnivorous lust for dog meat. As one fairgoer proclaimed: "I went to the Philippine village today and saw the wild, barbaric Igorot, who eats dogs, and are so vicious they are fenced in and guarded by a special constabulary. They are the lowest type of civilization I ever saw and thirst for blood" (qtd. in Fermin 2004, 3). Though dog-eating was a not a customary part of the Igorot diet, daily rations of dog meat were provided to them by fair authorities in order to continue this performance. In the Negrito village, much emphasis was placed on re-enacting marriage ceremonies; many photos were taken of young Negrito women and their nude children; and Negrito men's physicality in bow-and-arrow hunting was a prized spectacle, especially when it was young Negrito boys who participated. In contrast to the 'barbaric' Igorot, the Negrito were described alternately as child-like and as monkey-like, as evidenced by their 'friendliness' towards the visitors and their 'simplistic' domestic habits (Fermin 2004, 91). In likening the Filipino tribal peoples to savages, children or monkeys by the 'evidence' of their failed domesticity, World's Fair authorities and fair-goers alike corroborated the colonial discourse that "evolutionary regressive savages were incapable of self-government and therefore required government by their more evolved, white brethren" (Delmendo 2005, 73).

With these narratives in mind, I argue that the phrase 'incarcerating the domestic' aptly describes the process by which Filipino racial-sexual difference was managed at the World's Fair, and speaks to the ways that American colonial power "jumps scale" from the body to the home to the nation (Smith 1992, 60). Thinking through 'incarcerating the domestic' gets to the heart of the questions: if the domestic has been discursively coded as an essentially private, feminized space, what happens when the

domestic habits of Filipino ‘tribes’ are placed on display for a white American public’s consumption? Who benefits from such an arrangement-- not only the temporary spatial arrangement of the Philippine Reservation at the World’s Fair, but the permanent state of American economic and political control over the Philippines?

First, a key component of ‘incarcerating the domestic’ was the spatio-temporal regulation of the Filipino body and ‘native’ families by the Philippine Reservation. That is to say, the space of the Philippine Reservation incarcerated Filipino bodies both materially and metaphorically: Fair authorities physically trapped the inhabitants within their artificial ‘villages’ and prohibited their free movement within or outside of the fairgrounds. Neil Smith has written, “both castle and prison house, the home is socially if not always physically walled, and access out as well as in is controlled in various ways”; his words take on a heightened political import when we consider that the constructed ‘homes’ in the Philippine Reservation literally imprisoned their inhabitants (Smith 1992, 69).

Simultaneously, the Philippine Reservation itself (and the many photographs taken of it) temporally and discursively ‘froze’ its inhabitants, representing them as anachronistic holdovers from a pre-modern time that the West has progressed beyond, a move that effaced the possibility of Filipinos being contemporaneous subjects shaping their own futures and realities. Filipinos inhabited (and continue to inhabit) a space, not only within the World’s Fair but in the Philippines itself, that is what Anne McClintock calls “anachronistic space”: Filipino space/time is “prehistoric, atavistic, and irrational, inherently out of place in the historical time of modernity,” where “geographical distance across *space* is figured as historical distance across *time*” (McClintock 1995, 40). As a spatio-temporal proxy for the Philippines, the Philippine Reservation in St. Louis

functioned as a multi-scalar space where domestic American progress and civilization was discursively and geographically juxtaposed with 'foreign' Philippine anachronistic time. De-naturalizing the space of the World's Fair here, then, is my attempt to de-naturalize contemporary discourses of American exceptionalism that would maintain the US as innocent of violent colonial practices over its 'Little Brown Brothers,' the Filipinos.

Protection for the white family from degenerate Filipino domesticity and the rehabilitation of the captive Filipino in his being viewed by proper American families: these two themes pervaded American colonial discourses around the necessity of the Philippine Reservation at the 1904 World's Fair. 'Incarcerating the domestic' as a practice points to the discursive and material symbiosis between the spaces of the domestic and the carceral, or, how rehabilitation *for* the incarcerated Filipino family coexists with narratives of protecting the white American family *from* the incarcerated racial-sexual deviant, a role that could only be played by the properly heteromasculine white American man.

Of these two themes, the function the Fair played for consolidating white American heteromascularity was of primary importance. Amie Parry has written of white imperial domesticity that "as the home becomes a metaphor for the nation, [the] primitive space [of the colony] seems to hover threateningly at the margins of the nation, and the consequential need to protect the White woman and the domestic sphere adds a heroic dimension to imperialist conquests" (1998, 77). In their carceral display of the Philippine villages, the scientific, governmental, and cultural authorities of the World's Fair planning committee sought to 'bring home' the colonized in order to minimize dissent to American imperial adventures abroad; it was believed that by directly viewing the 'criminal' tattoos, the 'lascivious' bare breasts, and the 'brutal' dog eating iconic of Filipino disordered

domesticity, everyday white Americans would experience the threat of contamination and degeneracy posed to themselves unless 'benevolent assimilation' and rehabilitation of these 'savages' was enforced in the Philippines by the United States (Vergara 1995, 55). As I hope to make clear, however, this threat to the white American male was foreclosed by the containment of Filipinos safely within the confines of their 'prisons' within the villages of the Philippine Reservation, and within the national border of the Philippines.

The Fair's educational function was made explicit by its own creators, lest there be any doubt as to the purposes of the Philippine Reservation: the state departments of Anthropology and Physical Culture, for example, held "Anthropology Days" to scientifically measure the capabilities of the natives against the 'white man' (Fermin 2004, 162). Craniometry and other anthropometric examinations were conducted on over 25,000 of the 'native peoples' at the Fair; ethnology courses were held at the Fair using the incarcerated natives as case studies; and educational guidebooks to Philippine indigenous "types" were published using photographs taken at the Fair (Fermin 2004, 155-163).

Significantly, the educational function of the World's Fair was intended not only for its American audience, but was extended to educate those being exhibited as well. As William Howard Taft said in his endorsement of the Philippine Reservation: "Filipino participation would be a very great influence in completing pacification and in bringing Filipinos to improve their condition" (qtd. in Delmendo 2005, 51-52). The popular press capitalized on narratives of Filipino edification in their broadsheets: the *Portland Oregonian* newspaper reported that "the Filipinos themselves learned from the St. Louis experience that they were not ready for self government" (qtd. in Rydell 1984, 178). How

they were supposed to learn these ‘facts’ is not clear—perhaps it was believed that by being in contact with more civilized people, that the various Filipino natives would understand their position as inhabitants of anachronistic space, and submit to colonial rehabilitation and guidance until capable of inhabiting Western modernity for themselves. In any case, the incarceration of Filipinos in the Philippine Reservation, as the spatio-temporally compressed proxy of the entire Philippine nation, performed the need for Filipino benevolent assimilation by intellectually, economically, and politically advanced white American heterosexual men, a colonial project with ramifications that continue through the contemporary moment.

Imagining the Philippines, Queerly: Political (Im)Possibilities after Empire

As I have mapped above, Filipino populations were deemed ‘queer’ through a confluence of anthropological, cultural, and penal discourses which, along with political and economic arguments for US empire, were meant to justify the colonial project of American capitalist heteropatriarchy over brown bodies in both the Philippines and the United States. It has and can be argued that the Philippines economic and political dependence on the United States, which ‘officially’ ended in 1946, continues through the present moment, with the subsequent waves of gendered migration of Filipinos to the US revealing the extent to which the construction of Filipinos as a *queer* population still resonates today.⁶

⁶ Currently, the Philippines has one of the highest government debt burdens in the world, with 70% of its debt as a percentage of GDP. To put it another way, yearly *interest* payments consume 33% of the nation’s revenue, while the debt itself continues to rise (“RP Unlikely to get credit rating upgrade soon—Credit Suisse,” *Inquirer.net*, April 14, 2006. http://business.inquirer.net/money/topstories/view_article.php?article_id=36301. Accessed July

There has already been a proliferation of histories written by critical Filipino and Filipino American scholars, such as Vicente Rafael and Rhacel Parreñas, which address the US invasion of the Philippines, the bachelor societies of the 1920s, and the current state of Filipino politics and society.⁷ My interest in reviewing the existing archival material, despite other scholars' existing work on the topic of US-Philippine relations, is to point out the continuing inattention to the ways in which people of Filipino descent, both in the Philippines and in the United States, were racialized from the beginning of American colonialism in the islands through practices designed to reform their inherent sexual deviancy. I produced this genealogy to get to a point at which I could better discuss the contemporary moment whereupon a *bakla* subject incarcerated in a prison in the Philippines becomes an oddity worthy of entertainment and not serious consideration; I wanted to begin to understand *why* there has been no moral outrage against this prison or, more broadly, against the government of the Philippines for

27, 2007). It is no surprise that the Philippine diaspora has taken on a gendered and sexualized character given the foundational US-produced discourse about its people, internalized and enforced by the Philippine puppet presidents who have controlled the direction of development policy based on the needs of the US: since 1974, Philippine development policy has institutionalized as one of the main revenue policies is its labor export policy, that has changed the immigrating labor force from the primarily male labor needed for agricultural work and military service to a feminized labor force (R. Rodriguez 2005, 5). The Philippines is the largest supplier of health professionals to the United States, sending nearly 25,000 predominantly female nurses between 1966 and 1985, and another 10,000 between 1989 and 1991 (Espiritu 2003, 145). Domestic workers, many who are in the country on illegally extended visitor visas, are one of the largest contributors of overseas remittances to the Philippines: in 2006, documented remittances totaled \$11.8 billion, and are projected to rise to \$13 billion in 2007 ("RP Unlikely to get credit rating upgrade soon—Credit Suisse," *Inquirer.net*, April 14, 2006. http://business.inquirer.net/money/topstories/view_article.php?article_id=36301. Accessed July 27, 2007).

⁷ See Vicente Rafael, *White Love and Other Events in Filipino History* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2000); and Rhacel Salazar Parreñas, "'White Trash' Meets the 'Little Brown Monkeys': The Taxi Dance Hall as a Site of Interracial and Gender Alliances between White Working Class Women and Filipino Immigrant Men in the 1920s and 30s," *Amerasia Journal* 24.2 (1998): 115-134.

sanctioning such humiliating practices as having their prisoners dance to American pop songs for a global audience of millions.

Queer of color critique and black feminist theories of space, among other theorists working in fields such as Ethnic Studies and Filipino American Studies, have called for the need to produce alternative genealogies of the production of racial subjects that take into account the ways that gender, sexuality, and space are implicated in these processes; this chapter has been my attempt at such an analysis, looking specifically at the ways that the management of domestic practices was productive of Filipino nonheteronormativity as evidence of racial difference against white American heteromascularity, figured as the transparent subject. I have spent this time tracing the discursive and material geographies of US empire in the Philippines in the Bilibid Prison, Iwahig Penal Colony, and at the St. Louis World's Fair not in an attempt to represent the 'true' history between the United States and the Philippines; rather, this genealogy is but a starting point towards developing a revitalized anti-imperialist Filipino politic that does not rely on claims of Filipino heteronormativity.

That is to say, I hope that by delineating the ways that American colonial powers used the 'fact' of Filipino sexual and domestic degeneracy and deviancy to further its projects, I have made a case for the perniciousness of claiming a Filipino national sovereignty based in assimilative strivings towards white American heteronormativity. Every moment of supposed 'inclusion' into Western modernity gained by certain Filipinos simply means the continued production of subjects outside this border who must be violently incarcerated and policed, the subjects Jasbir Puar has identified as "the monster-terrorist-fag" (2002, 139). As actors working for social justice, it is high time to seriously re-evaluate: what kind of world is it that we want to reconstruct?

Before continuing on to the next chapter, in which I discuss a contemporary moment of possible queer/ed resistance to a state of domination, I wanted to present another genealogy, one that points to queer possibility within the physical and discursive geography of the Philippines. Whereas Iwahig, Bilibid, and the St. Louis World's Fair showed the extent to which Americans 'succeeded' in normativizing Filipino populations, I believe that the case of the Culion Leper Colony illustrates that despite their attempts, the American colonial project produced its own moments of queer failure; that is to say, Culion presents a historical moment of *insurgent queerness* that does not conform to American heterodomestic scripts, a monad that can be harnessed by the prisoners of the Cebu Provincial Detention and Rehabilitation Center today. Reading *queerly*, I want to think of Culion as more than simply a space of total domination, in order to highlight the ways in which colonial discourses and practices were uneven, contradictory, and contributed to their own undoing.

Warwick Anderson's 2006 book *Colonial Pathologies* and his article "States of Hygiene" in the edited collection *Haunted By Empire* have traced the development of the Culion Leper Colony in the remote Calamianes island chain of the Philippines in the early 1900s under the supervision of American colonial Medical Director, Victor G. Heiser. Operating until the 1930s, the leper colony at Culion was meant, like the penal institutions at Iwahig and Bilibid, to function not only as a carceral space but also as one inherently modernizing and rehabilitative. Unlike at Iwahig and Bilibid, however, those confined at Culion had no real chance at returning to life in the general Philippine society given their terminal health condition; this fundamental difference in the makeup of the incarcerated population, I will argue, necessitated the deployment of disciplinary strategies that were often in contradiction to other colonial projects of incarceration.

In his work, Anderson examines how, at Culion, blood ties were replaced by forms of 'affective kinship,' specifically the ways the leper treatment was a dual process of the "making of intimacy *with* the colonial state and the making of intimacy *for* the colonial state" (2006a,161). As he shows, citizenship at Culion was predicated on the "displacement, erasure, and transcendence of native embodiment in private and domestic life" (Anderson 2006a, 178):

For Heiser and other medical officers, the most intimate activities of the body and the most intimate of human interactions were open to view and available for refashioning. The trajectory from 'savage' (or leper) to citizen thus implied a reconfiguring of intimacies with one's own body and the bodies of others—a remaking of the private. It entailed at the same time a realignment of affect away from traditional family bonds and toward state abstractions like progress, modernity, and civilization. (Anderson 2006a, 178)

What this meant, simply, was that those people who were medicalized as lepers were forcibly removed from family members who were not leprous, and in Culion were encouraged to form affective bonds, not with other individuals, but to the ideals of the colonial state. Unlike at Iwahig, where the reunification and management of heteronormative nuclear family structures was designed to gauge the criminals' proper rehabilitation into the ideals of citizenship, at Culion, Filipino sexual citizenship was fashioned as essentially nonheteronormative and individualistic, a kind of *queer/ed love for the nation*. The discourses of individualized civic duty underlying the medicalizing and social management practices deployed at Culion show the ambiguity and contradictory nature of American colonialism; the contradiction of these discourses, I argue, lead to their own undoing.

The first discernible difference in the protocols used by American health authorities to manage the population at Culion was the radical individualization of lepers

into distinct case files, versus the collectivized population management protocols employed in the penal colonies and at the World's Fair. The treatment of lepers at Culion was not simply the practice of exclusion and marginalization, as Foucault has noted and dismissed as an obsolete practice having assumed that leprosy was no longer a problem anywhere if it was no longer a problem in Europe (Foucault 1999, 43). Rather, in the case of Culion at least, there was a move to individualize treatment to a specific body in the hopes of creating a kind of model citizen, one whose body may not be able to physically leave the leper colony, but whose docile *mentality* may prove exportable to the general Philippine society. Warwick Anderson notes that in Culion "each person had become a distinct case; each has acquired a standardized individuality in the medical record. And in each of these cases, the future has been structured as a prognosis" (Anderson 2006a, 168).

A key part of this practice of individualization was the move to "deregionalize and abstract Filipino lepers as separate national subjects" (Anderson 2006b, 98). Medical officers actively suppressed in both the medical treatments and in social gatherings any kinds of cultural, religious, or tribal groupings of lepers into Visayans, Negritos, et. al, a practice in stark contrast to the creation of ethnic 'villages' comprised of pseudo-domestic structures that served as the form of population management and ethnographic display at the St. Louis World's Fair. The logic of communalized heterodomesticity could *not* underlie the disciplinary practices at Culion, for the very fact of the lepers' permanent removal from their communities of origin disallowed the option of heteronormative sexual and social reproduction. The individual patient was thus oriented elsewhere, towards a love for the colonial nation and its administrators and away from nostalgia for 'home.'

Though the lepers were not forced to perform proper heterodomesticity (as were their compatriots in Iwahig) or their fictionalized tribal identities (as was the case in St. Louis), they were certainly expected to perform their civic minded-ness and belonging to the colonial regime in other spectacular ways. Warwick Anderson again observes that

The tiresome emphasis on performance animated social life and medical protocols throughout the colony: lepers at Culion were regularly on stage in therapeutic and civic dramas. The diseased body was repeatedly exposed to public view, as if to justify the disciplinary apparatus of the colony... And if medicine had to be seen to be done, so too did citizenship: treatments of the body and of social life all required enactment. (Anderson 2006a, 171)

As at the World's Fair, the lepers at Culion were coerced into performing for the benefit of American audiences, but in this case, a band of lepers was assembled to play American music for visiting colonial officials as evidence of their reformation into proper citizens of the colony (the national Philippine colony as well as the local leper colony). American medical officers such as Heiser stressed that "civic performance became more important than blood ties, hygiene more sufficient than kinship," with the leper band symbolically performing their integration into the values and modes of Philippine colonial society (Anderson 2006b, 97).

Considering for a moment the grotesque sight of individuals in various stages of bodily degeneration, playing for an audience of voyeuristic medical and governmental officials, the idea that these performances were meant to demonstrate 'success' and 'rehabilitation' becomes almost comical. The irony of these performances, and of Culion's rehabilitative mission, is clear: even as they performed their civic virtue on stage, the literal impossibility of the lepers' re-integration into Philippine society meant that every 'successful' band performance was ultimately a civic failure, for unlike the reformed criminals of Iwahig or Bilibid, the lepers at Culion could never be assimilated

back into the 'free' or 'well' population to transmit their colonized ethics and appreciation of America. That is to say: to contain the disease, Americans also had to prevent the lepers from infecting the general population with their *civic health*. The ludicrous nature of the leper band, then, pushes me to ask: What meanings did these performances intentionally or accidentally convey, if rehabilitation was never a viable option? Did the performances demonstrate the lepers' 'success' as much as they assuaged American authorities' fear of total failure, not just in Culion but in the entire Philippine territory?

Records of failure line the archive of Culion, which finally shut its doors in the 1930s, just when penologists like John Lewis Gillian began to sing the praises of the Philippine prisons. Unalterably other, a decaying mass of tissues and bone, the leper's self-annihilating body refused to be healed by medical experiments; as such, the leper's failure to 'get well' led to the failure of Culion administrators to instill a regime of self-sufficiency, discipline and work that marked the success of the American penal colonies in the islands. Victor Heiser lamented that the "contractions of the limbs, destruction of the tissue, losses of fingers and toes... and general debility' meant that only a few lepers performed sufficient manual labor to supply food for themselves" (qtd. in Anderson 2006a, 172). Yet, it was not that that the lepers failed to be economically productive that signaled the ultimate failure of the experiments at Culion, for this was to be expected given their health. No, the real failure was elsewhere: for the lepers refused to accept their proscribed fate, not as populations destined to die of disease, but as individuals who lived for the nation alone.

Despite all the administrators' measures, the lepers failed to perform the proper affect, and the *queer/ed love for the nation* these individualized 'civic bodies' were supposed to cultivate never took hold. Not only did the lepers' bodies withhold

themselves from labor, but their hearts also refused to forget what had been violently taken away in the name of health and rehabilitation:

Clearly, hygiene, industry and chaulmoogra oil never worked quite well enough to make amends for the sundering of old affective ties and relationships. Lepers at Culion continued to feel nostalgia, resentment, and regret; they pined for home, especially when they could not go back (Anderson 2006b, 102).

Beyond holding on to love for those outside Culion, the lepers also withheld their affections from Victor Heiser, who, curiously, “longed for the personal affection of lepers” (Anderson 2006b, 102). Heiser wrote in his journals that “there is much sadness... that as yet I do not live in the heart of the people... I wonder if I will ever be understood and if the lepers will sometime look upon me as their friend” (qtd. in Anderson 2006b, 97). Until the end of his charge, Heiser strove to win the affections of his patients, but this bond remained out of his control, and his desire for reciprocated connection to and understanding of the Other was never fulfilled.

In lieu of a writing an overdetermined ‘conclusion’ to this genealogy, I want to think through this final refusal by the lepers to (per)form affective kinship with their captors, and pose a question: Does this refusal to love point to a possible moment of queer/ed resistance within a state of total domination that, according to Foucault, would preclude the possibility for relations of power to exist at all?

Allan Isaac’s work on the “mimetic mandate” of Filipino colonial subjects points to the possibility of an insurgence through failed repetition:

The mimetic mandate creates symbolic infractions on two fronts. First, Filipinos as colonial subjects were being forced to mimic a fantastical projection of the American subject. They must accede to the *signs* of America—in speech, clothes, mannerisms, and cultural consumption. Second, mimesis, as with all desire, falters. Despite the mimetic discipline imposed on colonized subjects, assimilation could not but fail... Applied to

the colonial setting, assimilation fails because symbolic systems fail; that is, words, images, and discourses always already produce their own excess in the symbolic order, creating ghosts. (Isaac 2006, 11)

Perhaps it is this failure of mimicry, embodied in the figure of unmoored, un-domestic(ated) leper with no ties to a family, local community, occupation, or state; with seemingly only the option of death before him; and who continually refuses to bond with a 'benevolent' captor even when there is no one else who cares, that opens a door to "imagine otherwise." This *insurgently queer* figure of the leper gestures, I think, towards a rearticulated Filipino subject and a revitalized politics of Philippine sovereignty that is not dependent on the figure of the heterodomic citizen-subject to make its moral and ethical claims. Kandice Chuh writes that "to imagine otherwise is not about imagining as the other, but rather, is about imagining the other differently. It is, to borrow from Gayatri Spivak, "to *recognize* agency in others, not simply to comprehend otherness" (Chuh 2003, 9). What if we, too, imagine a different kind of Filipino subject whose condition of possibility is its refusal to perform heterodomesticity or moral rehabilitation as a measure of success, or begin to think of resistance in ways besides an immediate, total economic and political revolution so valorized in radical anti-imperialist discourse?

In the following chapter, I will take this argument farther, to think about another *insurgently queer* subject: Wiendjiel Resane, the *bakla* performer at the center of the videos produced at the Cebu Provincial Detention and Rehabilitation Center in the Philippines. Moving into the contemporary moment, how do his always-failed performances of love for the nation produce their own excesses, excesses that the carceral continuum cannot but fail to contain?

CHAPTER 4

ELECTRIC DREAMS AND THE QUEER UNDEAD: DISCIPLINING THE FILIPINO THROUGH *BANAL SPECTACLES*

One could argue that what is exceptional is not the actual violence itself, but the interplay of technologies, circuits, and networks that enable the digital capture and circulation of these acts.... Thus these images not only represent these acts, and allude to the procedural vectors of ever expansive audiences, but also reproduce and multiply the power dynamics that made these acts possible in the first place.

—Jasbir Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times*

This chapter is the last of my thesis, where I hope to fully engage the primary question framing the rest of the work done thus far: How does *queering* the genealogy of US empire and racial formations by analyzing contemporary cultural productions and activist politics challenge assumptions about the mutual exclusivity of knowledge production in the academy, the dissemination of culture, and the workings of activist politics? The goal and stakes of this analysis are simple: in the contemporary moment, as the violence increases daily against leftist political organizers and civilians in the Philippines by US-backed and Philippine government-sponsored paramilitary groups, the pressure for effective anti-imperialist organizing and solidarity actions by Filipino migrants and Filipino/Americans living in the proverbial ‘belly of the beast’ also increases. As a longtime organizer, I know that we all must wrestle with the contradictions of living in an advanced capitalist country most often the source of economic and political oppression of those we work in solidarity with and for. My analysis of the “Prison Thriller” videos is the culmination of my attempts to work

through the problematic of solidarity, albeit in a circular way—even as I do not directly address the following questions until much later, they are the ones which animate my analysis in this chapter: What constitutes ‘political action,’ who and what are those subjects privileged as sites of study, and in whose name do we claim to be speaking for as First World activists and academics?

The Beat Goes On: Repetition, Reanimation... and Resistance?

I opened the thesis with these statistics, but it bears repeating: it has been over two years since a video of over 1,000 male Filipino prisoners dancing to Michael Jackson’s 1983 hit “Thriller” was released by Byron F. Garcia, warden and Special Security Consultant of the Cebu Provincial Detention and Rehabilitation Center (CPDRC), on the popular video-sharing website, YouTube. The “Philippine Prison Thriller Video,” as it has been come to be known, was released on July 17, 2007; within a week, it had been viewed over 1.9 million times and had established a novel world record for the “most inmates dancing” in synchronization.¹

A brief internet sensation capturing the attention of international news outlets as varied as CNN, Al Jazeera, and Comedy Central’s *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart*, along with the admiration of audiences around the globe, this video is just one of millions populating YouTube and other copycat websites like it. In the last two years, the video’s popularity has reached massive proportions, moving far beyond its humble origins as a

¹ See: “Dancing Jailbirds Become YouTube Hit,” ABC News Australia, July 28, 2007 <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2007/07/28/1990955.htm> (accessed September 11, 2007); and “Most inmates dancing- World record set by Philippines prisoners,” World Records Academy, July 28, 2007, http://www.worldrecordsacademy.org/mass/most_inmates_dancing_world_record_set_by_Philippines_prisoners_70669.htm (accessed September 12, 2007).

training video created by Garcia for other Philippine wardens to witness the benefits of his “innovative” disciplinary technique. It has gone from simply being re-circulated through personal email exchanges, to now being the subject of a *Washington Post*-awarded tableau made of the popular Easter candy, Peeps, and countless other spoofs.² And though not empirically validated, I believe that the popularity of these videos plays at least a small role in the resurgence of Michael Jackson’s original “Thriller” track in American pop culture, such as in commercials for GEICO car insurance.³ Certainly the most well known, the “Thriller” video is hardly singular: its popularity simply served as a catalyst for the continued development of choreographed dance as a means of carceral discipline. As of May 2009, Garcia had uploaded thirty-five performances on to YouTube; the prison is now open to the public for once-monthly live performances of the latest dance routines; and the warden is taking requests from international audiences for future performances and generally building up an international fan base of loyal, virtual spectators.

What the Cebu Provincial Rehabilitation and Detention Center’s warden, Byron F. Garcia, would like the viewing public to believe is that these videos simply depict joyfully banal performances by formerly hardened criminals, and that their wide circulation through the internet not only serves as positive reinforcement for the prisoners but also

² On March 21, 2008, *The Washington Post* announced the winners for its second annual “Sunday Source Peeps Diorama Contest,” in which readers of the paper submitted photos of the popular Easter marshmallow candies positioned in various scenarios. “Thrilla in Manila” was a finalist in the contest for its depiction of “Peeps in orange [prison] jumpsuits crooking their arms like Jacko and the zombies did a quarter-century ago.” Julia Ewan, “Peeps Show II,” *The Washington Post*, March 21, 2008, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/gallery/2008/03/21/GA2008032101983.html?hpid=artslot> (accessed March 27, 2008).

³ It is important to note that this thesis was completed before the death of Michael Jackson on June 25, 2009. I did not account for the resurgence of interest in Jackson’s music postmortem when making my initial claims. Future research on these videos, however, should be attentive to any changes in the choreography and performances of the CPDRC inmates—both in its production and reception—since the singer’s death.

works to build ties of international solidarity and affection between the Philippines and other nations. "Viewers are asking for more," Garcia says, "We may be worlds apart, worlds may separate us, but we still can be connected through electric dreams."⁴ In this chapter, I am interested in exploring Garcia's 'electric dreams' and its fantastic borders—who are the 'we' that Garcia invokes, and who and what constitutes its 'outside'? How can we begin to map the discursive terrain upon which such dreams travel—just *whose* dreams are they and whose interests do they serve?

I posit from the outset that the CPDRC videos, or Garcia's 'electric dreams,' operate as what Neferti Tadiar deems *fantasy-productions*, a kind of cultural labor that "fuel(s) and further(s) the logic of the dominant global order" (Tadiar 2004, 7). Tadiar writes that fantasy-production

Denotes the imaginary of a regime of accumulation and representation of universal value, under the sway of which capitalist nations organize themselves individually and collectively in the 'system' of the Free World... The dreams of Filipinos, rulers and ruled, cannot be understood apart from the global material imaginary, this dominant field of reality, on which they play out. To cast these dreams as expressions of autonomous, self-contained Filipino subjects (whether they aspire to or resist world power) is to ignore the global order of dreamwork in which the international media system, the source of many of our interpretative representations of the world, plays a constitutive and paradigmatic role. (Tadiar 2004, 6)

As fantasy-productions, the CPDRC videos—which are produced, filmed and disseminated by agents of the Philippine state—attempt to project the Philippines' equal participation in globalized neoliberal cultural and political economies to an imagined global audience. In addition, these videos serve the desires and fulfill the fantasies of the west: as spectacles, the CPDRC videos work together to form what Ann McClintock

⁴ "Cebu dancing inmates perform 'Thriller' in YouTube hit videos," *GMA News.tv*, August 10, 2007, <http://www.gmanews.tv/story/55389/Cebu-dancing-inmates-perform-Thriller-in-YouTube-hit-videos> (accessed September 11, 2007).

calls an “archive of nostalgia,” a way for western audiences to console themselves by presenting the happy side of prison life for Third World people and people of color, in stark contrast to the spectacles of abuse associated with US-run prisons in Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo Bay (McClintock 1995, 130). The electric dreams are for everyone: for white supremacists, visions of savage brown people being disciplined and enjoying their ‘natural state’ of incarceration; for liberals, a belief that there *can* be a humane form of rehabilitating one’s body and soul; and for the blissfully ignorant, just another bit of entertainment that can be consumed between checking emails on their work computers.

Deconstructing these fantasy-productions by deploying a kind of queer of color critique, I am interested in the ways in that ‘deviant’ sexuality has been re-presented in the CPDRC videos. How does queerness work in the videos, not to delimit Filipino racial difference as has been in the case in prior moments, but as a signifier of something quite different: the existence of a globalized gay subject, emblematic of modernity and the full attainment of neoliberal individual identity? I am interested in the ways that the presence of a *bakla* man named Wiendjiel Resane performing within the videos, and in the prison more generally, renders banal the disciplining of ‘proper’ men and women within the CPDRC, and, simultaneously, how his performances work as a justification for the expansion of the prison industrial complex in the Philippines. At the same time, I want to consider that ways that Resane’s performances (both scripted and really ‘lived’) can *also* be seen as destabilizing gestures, allowing for a kind of subversive or disidentificatory agency for the liminal subject. That is to say, I am interested in the possibilities of looking at these YouTube videos *queerly*, to unravel how this “performance can exceed the social conditions of its production and thus exceed any particular ideological closure associated with its site of emergence,” in order to imagine another way of conceiving of

not only the 'Filipino' subject but also our own attempts at "resistance" (Feldman 1991, 15).

A Technology of Discipline and Pleasure: the *Banal Spectacles* of the CPDRC

From the literature on colonial prisons to the abolitionist scholarship of Angela Davis, Julia Sudbury, Dylan Rodriguez, and Ruth Gilmore, the prison has been described as an absolutely brutal space of punishment that "shares with colonialism an explicit extra-societal legitimation of force and an implicit structural encouragement to even greater levels of brutality—all rationalized in discourses of justice, the protection of society against danger, and a mission to reform and rehabilitate" (Salman 1995, 114). As a space of social death, the prison operates as a state of exception, a location where the extra-legal application of power disciplines improper subjects who fail to conform to the imagined community of the nation-state. Given this wide body of critique, how can we understand a penal space like the CPDRC? Can we simply dismiss the YouTube videos of the CPDRC inmates if the images we see are banal instead of brutal? Is the contemporary situation any less an exercise of disciplinary power if hard labor and torture has been replaced by synchronized dance?

I argue that the literature on prisons which focus on brutality, while necessary and applicable to the particular cases they describe, must be augmented if we are to begin unpacking the work done when the *banal spectacles* of prisoners' performances are filmed and distributed over the internet. For it is through the display (spectacle) of seemingly unexceptional (banal) dance performances that fantasy-productions of Philippine liberalism and prisoners' enjoyment are circulated to the Philippine domestic

and international mass media, the global YouTube audience, and in and through the prisoners themselves. Understanding this disciplinary technique becomes the necessary task, as it is but the latest technology through which sexualized racial subjects are produced; even more importantly, unpacking the logic of this mechanism may very well just be the first step towards dismantling its effectiveness.

In this chapter, I will illustrate how the popular liberal discourse that claims the CPDRC performances are humane is made possible through the technology of *banal spectacle*, which allows the physical discomfort and pain experienced by the prisoners to be covered over with seemingly enjoyable, albeit forced, performances of popular song and dance. Why do I call these videos *banal spectacles*? The term seems oxymoronic at best, and threatens to make light of the videos at worst. I find the juxtaposition of these terms productive, however, in that these spectacular performances are intended to normalize, or make banal, prison life at the CPDRC so that viewers no longer think to question the incarceration of these populations as a violation of human rights or due process. The YouTube videos display the prison as an unexceptional space—one in which day-to-day reform and rehabilitation occurs—even as the CPDRC is lauded as an exceptionally productive, well-ordered, and pleasurable locale. Likewise, the incarcerated populations forced to dance in the videos are paraded as regularly reformed ‘civilized’ men, even as their status as ‘prisoners’ continues to be the hook that first catches viewers’ interest. These contradictions of normal and abnormal, exceptional and mundane are necessary for these *banal spectacles* to function, and are the conditions of possibility for those incarcerated at the CPDRC to be made intelligible as subjects in the first place.

My concept of the productive powers of *banal spectacles* is informed in large part by Saidiya Hartman's work in *Scenes of Subjection*, in particular her analysis of the "dissimulation of suffering through spectacle" (1997, 22). In this work, Hartman extends Laura Mulvey's analysis of the gaze beyond the medium of the cinema, to consider how racialized sexualized bodies function as the object of the gaze in other performative practices.⁵ Hartman deconstructs slave performances as the means through which slave owners displayed their power and property, with the master's gaze over his slaves "serv[ing] as a reminder that the diversion [of entertainment] could not be extricated from discipline or domination"; in doing so, she implicates the master's gaze as a "form of surveillance and a way of policing the slave population" (1997, 46). Key to Hartman's analytic are the sites she writes about, or what she terms the "scenes of subjection": they are not literary or historical representations of savage beatings or lynchings, but are rather the "terror of the mundane and quotidian" perpetrated "under the rubric of pleasure, paternalism, and property" (1997, 4). These coerced spectacles "all turn upon the simulation of agency and the excesses of black enjoyment... The constitution of blackness as an abject and degraded condition and the fascination of the other's enjoyment went hand in hand" (1997, 22). In other words, the performances of the coffle and of minstrelsy work as *banal spectacles* over and against the racialized sexualized bodies they display, and even more importantly, *produce*.

⁵ In her seminal text on the power of the spectator's gaze over the woman represented in film, Laura Mulvey writes: "It is the place of the look that defines cinema... Going far beyond highlighting a woman's to-be-looked-at-ness, cinema builds the way [the woman] is to be looked at into the spectacle itself. Playing on the tension between the film as controlling the dimension of time (editing, narrative) and... space (changes in direction, editing), cinematic coding creates a gaze, a world, and an object, thereby producing an illusion cut into the measure of desire" (Mulvey 1999, 843).

Like Hartman, I am interested in seemingly banal performances within these Philippine prisons, long overlooked by scholars and activists who privilege sites of extreme and hypervisible bodily violence—such as Guantanamo, Abu Ghraib, or even the California penal system—and analyze these moments as instances of what Ruth Gilmore has called “clean torture” against criminalized populations. More than naming them simply disciplinary mechanisms, however, I also understand these YouTube videos as productive apparatuses. For it is not simply that ‘criminals’ are shown dancing in these videos; the very idea of the naturalness of these people being understood as criminals, and by extension the understanding of ourselves as ‘free’ individuals who can view these videos at our leisure, needs to be analyzed as well, for

Power does not exist over and against the subject, or perhaps better said, it does not exist *only* in an exterior relation. The subject is itself constituted through the embodiment of certain norms that establish in advance and with considerable social force what will and will not be a recognizable subject. (Butler 2000, 33-34)

If the spectacle is “not an image but a series of social relations mediated by images... [tying] individuals into an economy of looks and looking,” then the subjectivities of both the spectator and the object of the gaze are constructed by the “Philippine Prison Thriller Video” (Taylor 2003, 13-14). In analyzing these videos, I want to understand how the technology of *banal spectacle* not only displays subjects for audiences of millions, but is *productive* of those very subjects it purports to document (the ‘prisoners’) and those subjects who are its intended audience: those of us who watch these videos with fascination, horror, or even pleasure. Furthermore, I want to question: who and what does this constitutive process ultimately serve or benefit?

Essentially, I locate the CPDRC videos as but the most spectacular example of the application of state biopower on those Filipino subjects produced as criminal and

queer. These videos are an attempt not simply to discipline criminals, but work to discursively produce the criminalized subject as one in need of reform. I also argue that these performances function as tutorials and warnings in the guise of mindless entertainment which discipline both the incarcerated and the viewers of these videos around the world: the videos show the effectiveness of the CPDRC's techniques in producing docile, socially (re)productive citizen-subjects out of impossibly queer and criminal inmates, and reinforce to 'free' viewers the consequences of failing to appropriately perform their own freedom. This technology of discipline and pleasure is but the latest used in the Philippine carceral continuum, and in the following sections I will trace the different subjectivities these videos produce by their production and continued circulation today, not just within the prison but in the 'free' world outside: that of the warden, and by extension, the identity of the State; the *bakla* subject, Wiendjiel Resane; and us, those who watch those videos from wherever we are located, whenever we may be.

Smooth Criminals: Byron F. Garcia and the Philippine State

Writing of the Abu Ghraib photographs, Jasbir Puar charges that the images "did indeed 'go away,'" refuting Susan Sontag's assessment of these pictures: Puar notes that after the initial outrage over the brutality depicted, there was no lasting or sustained condemnation of the conditions that produced such atrocities in the first place (Puar 2007, 110). What can we say about the CPDRC videos, then, which are much less 'brutal' in their disciplining—are they even comprehended by viewers as depicting disciplinary measures at all? How can we even begin to make sense of these videos

when there are other more spectacular—more obvious even—visual images of pain that arrest us?

Stuart Hall has written of a “complex structure of dominance produced and sustained through the articulation of linked but distinctive moments” of “production, circulation, distribution, consumption, and reproduction” (Hall 1999, 508). Like Puar, Hall is attentive to the circulation and redistribution of capillary power in society; like Hall, I am interested in the complex structure of dominance that makes these videos so successful. In exploring the various channels of production and the circulation of discourses about the CPDRC films, I am perhaps being too obvious in beginning this analysis with a discussion of its warden, Byron F. Garcia. Although the interpretations of the videos and the meanings imputed to them are produced by the audience, so much so that it can be difficult to speak of only one ‘author’ of these texts, I am still interested in unraveling the narratives spun by Garcia which have permeated the production and circulation of these videos with his projections of meaning and desire. If the state is an “instrument of rationalization” that attempts to create the conditions “in which a certain way of life is ‘possible,’” Garcia’s framing of the videos sets the conditions of possibility for a utopian Filipino state, free of violence and full of self-actualizing liberal subjects; additionally, these videos also produce the persona of Garcia himself, as the apparently jovial, benevolent overseer of hardened criminals (Gramsci 2005, 247). This circular process of Garcia producing the videos for the state’s fantasy-productions, and the videos then being productive of Garcia’s subjectivity as a proxy for the state, is worth discussing before we move on to the apparent ‘subjects’ of the videos—the prisoners themselves.

In contrast to the rhetoric of penal experiments in the colonial Philippines which I traced in the prior chapter, the warden of the CPDRC, Byron Garcia, hails his prison as both revolutionary and modern, as it allows prisoners to express their individual creativity and free will even as it functions to reform even the most hardened criminals into docile citizens. Garcia says he hopes his prison is “the happiest in the world,” and when asked why he chose the song “Thriller” for the prisoners’ performance, says with an affected sincerity that “I chose that song because I wanted something to thrill the world.”⁶ For a former police chief and relative newcomer to administering a prison with a reputation in need of bolstering, Garcia projects himself as more interested in instilling pleasure, rather than pain, to the prison’s population. In interviews with the press, it is clear that Garcia fashions himself as a liberator, one that *gives* others their freedom through ‘humane’ rehabilitation measures, not as one who manages those in a state of total unfreedom. His narrative of benevolent discipline is the one most taken up by the public and by the press, enough so that the CPDRC becomes a laughable counterpoint to a carceral space like Guantanamo Bay, rather than recognized as another penal location where violence is possible.⁷

The most blatant example of Garcia’s self-fashioning is documented in, unsurprisingly, one of his self-produced videos for the CPDRC, entitled “Music is the

⁶ Lee Ferran, “Boogie Behind Bars: Inmates Dance the Day Away,” *ABC News*, August 14, 2007, <http://abcnews.go.com/print?id=3415920> (accessed December 12, 2007).

⁷ In the January 22, 2009 episode of *The Daily Show*, a popular American news-comedy show hosted by Jon Stewart, a segment entitled “Obama Closing Gitmo” was aired. Near the end of this skit, Jon Stewart posed the following thoughts on the announcement that the Obama administration was moving to close the detention center at Guantanamo Bay: “The question of what to do with those dangerous prisoners [at Guantanamo] will be a problem for the Obama administration. Options include sending them to prisons in the United States, shipping them to our allies abroad, or... and I’m just throwing this out there [eyebrow raise]... synchronized dance squad?” A clip of the CPDRC prisoners is briefly shown, to wild laughter from the audience, and Jon Stewart closes the skit with the punch line: “[the] Philippines has seen no trouble since.”

Language of the Universe,” which was released in September 2007.⁸ Functioning ostensibly as a trailer for upcoming CPDRC performances to be released on YouTube, this video is the only one of its kind in both form and content. Rather than displaying a single performance, as is the standard format of the other CPDRC videos, this video is a heavily edited collage of several performances by inmates, and begins with a scene culled from the 1994 American film, *The Shawshank Redemption*.

“Music is the Language of the Universe” opens with a scene from *The Shawshank Redemption* in which the prisoner Andy Dufresne (played by Tim Robbins) has broken into the warden’s office to play opera music through the loudspeakers for all the inmates in the yard to hear; the entire scene is narrated by “Red” (Morgan Freeman). Near the end of the scene, Red says: “And for the briefest of moments, every last man in Shawshank felt free. It pissed the warden off something awful.” The image of an angry warden (Bob Gunton) looking through a window at the prisoners is the last before the scene abruptly shifts to a montage of the CPDRC prisoners’ new dance routines; the music from the prisoners’ performances is replaced here by an overdubbed opera piece similar to that played by Dufresne for the prisoners at Shawshank. At the end of the montage, a black screen fades in, premiering the new logo and tagline Garcia has incorporated into subsequent videos: it is a modified version of the well-known Nike ‘swoosh’ with its motto “Just Do It” replaced by “Just Doin’ Time.”⁹ The four-and-a-half minute long video ends with a promise of new videos “Coming Soon!”

⁸ Byron F. Garcia, “Music is the Language of the Universe,” YouTube.com video file, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9-6F2SLAZfA> (accessed November 20, 2007).

⁹ I am interested in pursuing further this concept of “just” doing time, and the ways in which this completely banal statement attempts to render the violence that occurs inside the prisons as ordinary and unexceptional. The synchronized dance performances of over 1,000 prisoners is framed by Garcia as undeserving of attention, even as these performances continue to be

The comments made by viewers on the YouTube page hosting the video clip suggests that the audience understands the video as proof that the inmates, through their *self-initiated* dance performances, have subverted dominant stereotypes of prisoners (as inherently violent) and of the prison system (as necessarily violent in its disciplinary techniques). Considering that Garcia, not the prisoners, edited the video and chose this particular clip from *The Shawshank Redemption* to introduce the performances, I understand this video less a statement about the CPDRC prisoners' subversion than a move by Garcia to fashion *himself* as a radically subversive prison warden. In interviews with the press, it is clear that Garcia sees himself as a liberating warden, one that *gives* others their freedom in the prison through a 'humane' form of rehabilitation. Garcia fashions his prison as well-ordered and violence-free; the CPDRC is a space free from rape, brutality, and disorder thanks to his benevolent stewardship. Through global media technologies, not only does Garcia have a cache of music from around the world to choose from to 'teach' his unruly children, but he is also able to broadcast these synchronized re-creations to a global audience, earning him credibility and goodwill for his humanitarian approach to the process.

Yet even as Garcia puts a positive spin on his narrative, intimations of violence and coercion lay just beneath the surface. When asked about the effect of the music on inmates' morale, Garcia responds, laughing: "The inmates relate to me. I relate to them, you know? We have a good relationship now. *Whatever I tell them to do, they do.*"¹⁰ In

produced for global audiences. These videos normalize the disciplinary routine even as they record them as something worth remembering, preserving for later recall. Clearly, there is more to these inmates' cultural labor than "just" doing time.

¹⁰ Tracie Hunte, "Prisoners Dance: Celebration or Human Rights Violation?" *ABC News*, August 14, 2007, <http://abcnews.go.com/icaught/Story?id=3478161&page=1> (accessed November 20, 2007). Emphasis added.

this brief statement, the very relationship of the postcolonial Philippine state to its unruly charges is revealed: having learned the art of “benevolent assimilation” from their colonial masters, the contemporary Philippine government has taken on the task of disciplining its citizens through extra-judicial punishment coupled with juridical ‘kindness.’ As the mimic *par excellence*, Garcia is but one conduit for the postcolony’s biopolitical regime, his prison experiment a spectacular example of the everyday acts undertaken by the Philippine government, and furthermore, by the United States towards the Philippines.

Though the Philippines claims economic and political sovereignty as a modern nation, it functions as a military base of operations for the United States’ global “War on Terror,” with the VFA and Balikatan exercises allowing a de facto permanent American military presence, even without the formal re-institutionalization of American military bases.¹¹ Operating ostensibly within the realm of benevolent humanitarian assistance for the people of the Philippines, together the Philippine Armed Forces and US military have staged extra-judicial killings and disappearances of organizers and civilians—hiding the brutality beneath the official state discourse of assistance, aid, and securing safety. In this permanent state of exception, the Philippine government has expanded its surveillance techniques and penal institutions over not just incarcerated persons but over the ‘free’ population of the Philippines.¹² The existence of “good” queer subjects such as

¹¹ Information on the Visiting Forces Agreement and Balikatan exercises can be found in chapter two of this thesis.

¹² I draw from Giorgio Agamben’s definition of the *state of exception* as the “dominant paradigm of government in contemporary politics” in which the suspension of the rule of law becomes the rule (2005, 2). Agamben writes that “the state of exception is not a special kind of law (like the law of war); rather, insofar as it is a suspension of the juridical order itself, it defines law’s threshold or limit concept” (2005, 4). Jasbir Puar writes that the state of exception is a “paradoxical abnegation

Resane, repentant, desiring of his incarceration, and on his way to becoming a proper citizen of the nation upon his release, is promoted and actively produced by the state. Resane is made to live, and labor out of love for the nation, so that “bad” queer others (the Filipino activists, “Communist rebels,” and “Muslim terrorists”) can be killed.¹³ In the YouTube videos, we are watching more than just a dance; the very “bio-necro collaboration” of the Philippine neocolonial regime is performed before our very eyes.

Dangerous: The Queer(ed) Laboring Subject

At the literal and discursive center of these productions stands Wiendjiel Resane, the figure through which this disciplinary apparatus is both made and unmade. Wiendjiel Resane has been alternately described by the press as a gay man, a transvestite, a *bakla*, and a cross-dresser; in one videotaped interview with Resane, he self-identified as a ‘she-male.’ Leaving aside for the moment the debates around the ‘proper’ naming of Resane’s gender identity and sexual orientation, I find it necessary to inquire—what does it mean for a female-presenting biological male to be incarcerated with male-identified prisoners, and more importantly, for Resane to play the *female* lead in all of the CPDRC performances? How does Resane’s presence in the videos project the fantasy-

of the legal by the legal. It also antagonizes bodies; that is to say, it disaggregates and taxonomizes. States of exception make bodies legible or illegible, accorded the value of life or castaway as ‘human waste’” (2007, 142).

¹³ What makes the terrorist “queer” is its non-compliance to the norms of nation and citizenship which are “implicit in the privilege of heteronormativity” (Puar 2007, 221). Jasbir Puar’s *Terrorist Assemblages* makes a more sustained critique of the terrorist/suicide-bomber as a *queer assemblage* that I can only summarize here.

production of Garcia's 'electric dreams'?¹⁴ In this section, I will deconstruct some of the ways that the carceral space and the videotaped *banal spectacles* within this space are productive of the populations within its walls, and will illuminate the ends that the videos attempt to achieve. Along with Dylan Rodriguez, I argue that prison is a material *and* discursive domain that produces the conditions of possibility for the incarcerated subject to be made legible and put "to work":

The prison regime, in the process of exerting control over the symbolic, constructs a discourse of respectability and 'authority' through the mediating material of the prisoner: The abstracted/projected figure and living embodiment of the captive compose an immediately accessible terrain for state occupation and symbolic 'appropriation,' perhaps the most profound example of the prisoner's fungibility. (Rodriguez 2006c, 45)

Furthermore, even as Resane's performances are seen as merely cultural and nonproductive, the CPRDC videos' circulation in the public sphere influence structures, relationships, and the movement of resources; the videos are productive not just of the subject of the prisoner, but of the visual and material economies in which these videos circulate (Joseph 2002, 41).

In the previous chapter, I traced the production of the Filipino subject during the official period of U.S. colonialism in the Philippines through three major disciplinary institutions: the carceral, the medical, and the popular. In all three realms, official government and anthropological texts written about Filipino racial difference were augmented and strengthened by visual documentation and live performances of improper domesticity, sexuality, and sociality. As I tried to show, reforming the Filipinos'

¹⁴ Following Allan Isaac's analysis of Andrew Cunanan, which I discussed in the literature review of this thesis, I want to be clear that this chapter is not a story about Resane in particular, but that I use the figure of Resane as the lens through which to understand operations of carceral power as productive of the sexualized racial subject.

improper sexuality was necessary for the justification of America's colonization of the Philippines in the form of 'benevolent assimilation.' I argued that, together, these disciplinary technologies were productive not only of Filipino sexual deviancy as a marker of racial difference and inherent barbarity, but also were productive of white American (hetero)sexual citizenship as emblematic of the appropriate subject of modernity. From this history, then, how then do we arrive to the contemporary moment, where the presence of Wiendjiel Resane in the CPDRC videos conveys not barbarity or degeneracy, but the ascension to modernity and the proper rehabilitation of criminal subjects?

With the increasing decentralization of discursive, political and economic power from the state and its dissemination to privatized entities such as the mass media and corporations, the proper modern subject now *appears* to be one of variability rather than stability. Sexual identities have become demarcated through consumption rather than acts in this neoliberal fantasy—one supposedly can 'opt-in' to a queer lifestyle through partying in global gay hotspots like Cape Town and Sydney and watching gay-themed television shows such as *Queer as Folk* and *The L Word*. In these sanitized queer utopias, devoid of complications of race, class, gender, and nation, it is imagined that the free market and privatization of personal life has brought about the ultimate freedom of sexual expression, equally accessible to consumers across the world. Lisa Duggan has called this neoliberal fantasy the *new homonormativity*—a “politics that does not contest dominant heteronormative assumptions and institutions but upholds and sustains them while promising the possibility of a demobilized gay constituency and a privatized, depoliticized gay culture anchored in domesticity and consumption” (2002, 179).

Capitalizing on this homonormative discourse, the warden and the international press laud Resane's performance and presence in the videos as proof of the liberal nature of the prison. Ignoring the reality that even in the global North, anti-gay and anti-transgender violence remains pervasive, Garcia has scripted Resane's gender non-conformity and the apparent acceptance of her identity by the 'real' male prisoners and by Garcia himself as the emblematic attainment of Philippine modernity and progress. The CPDRC videos, working as microcosm of Philippine society as a whole, place the prisoners in the teleology of modern development; they are shown to have evolved from savage, hardened criminals into dancing, enlightened modern men who accept the queer sexualities and fluid gender identities of their fellow prisoners. Is it any wonder that, with so many visual images of the brutal, the inhumane, the unconscionably violent acts perpetuated on brown and queer prisoners in the United States, in Abu Ghraib, in Guantanamo, a video of dancing prisoners with a happy *bakla* at the center of it all, seems a progressive, humane, and dare we say, welcome alternative?

If *queerness* as a homonormative project has been evacuated of material histories of violence, death, and discipline, and has been imputed with postmodern notions of freedom from restriction and self-fulfillment (attained through consumption), then I argue the apparent state acceptance and display of gender non-conforming and/or queer subjects in the CPDRC is to make the claim for a Philippine modernity alongside western modernity. To not only welcome queer prisoners but to prominently feature Resane is, for the CPDRC specifically and for the Philippine penal state in particular, a means of signifying as *more queer*, *more benevolent*, and therefore *more modern* than the United States, an (un)intentional projection of Philippine desire to compete on not just on equal footing with, but in a superior position to, its former colonial master.

Garcia's 'electric dreams,' then, are the Philippine national dreams—of no longer lagging behind the U.S. in politics, economy, and culture; and of being equal to or even to surpassing its former colonial master, with new innovations like the banal disciplinary techniques of the CPDRC as but one example of the nation's progress. A *homonormative* queer subject, as Resane functions as in these videos, is deployed by the warden not to dismantle the Philippine state apparatus, but to strengthen it against the incursions of other global players and those who would speak out against the state's record of human rights violations.

If homonormativity, in Martin Manalansan's words, "rhetorically remaps and recodes freedom and liberation in terms of privacy, domesticity, and consumption," it is precisely through the figure of Wiendjiel Resane that one can begin uncovering the violence of the Philippine state against brown, queer, and female populations in the very carceral space that has set them 'free' (Manalansan 2005, 142). In the following sections, I will focus on the terms of homonormative neoliberal identity identified by Manalansan—privacy, domesticity, and consumption— in order to argue that, through Resane's failed performances as a female subject, we can see the Philippine's fantasy-productions as always ambivalent and at the threshold of being unraveled at the any moment.

Privacy

The very foundation of homonormativity as neoliberal identity—the freedom to practice non-heterosexual or gender non-conforming lifestyles in private with no intervention from the state—comes undone when we consider the conditions under

which Resane performs as female. Resane's 'personal choice' to embody the feminine is as an individual incarcerated and forced to perform publicly in Garcia's choreographed routines. The ultimate irony of the discourses around the developmental and liberalizing force of the disciplinary regime of the CPRDRC is that actual freedom of movement, of action, and of privacy is severely restricted, if not impossible, within this carceral space. The narrative of individualist self-actualization achieved by prisoners that is spun by Garcia fails in its incongruence from the regimented social relations necessary to maintain an orderly penal institution. That is to say, the prison is productive of populations understood as 'criminals' who are in need of punishment and exclusion from general society; to argue that your population is 'free' works in direct contradiction to that principle.

Interviews with prisoners most clearly belie the panoptic power of surveillance exercised at the CPDRC. As Wiendjiel Resane states: "at the start we thought it was just exercise, we thought it was part of our rehabilitation. We didn't know that Mr. Byron [Garcia] put it on the internet and that it became so popular."¹⁵ The consent of the prisoners was not needed in order for Garcia to release the videos, and the prisoners did not know they were being broadcast over the internet until after they began to be interviewed by media outlets about their new-found celebrity. While the discussion of willing participation and coercion shifts now that the prisoners *know* their performances are being watched, the prisoners' lack of consent at the beginning of this process still reveals the imbalance of power between authorities such as Garcia and their charges. Garcia's position as warden grants him the authority to disseminate images, bypassing privacy protocols usually observed when screening documentary/performance footage.

¹⁵ Journeyman Pictures, "Jailhouse Rock-Philippines," YouTube.com video file, 15:11, <http://youtube.com/watch?v=wAjlY7X0Yc> (accessed December 10, 2007).

The prisoners' bodies are not their own to display—Garcia is in control of their time and actions, and determines how their performances are recorded and distributed. Their individual pain *or* enjoyment is irrelevant to the performance, as they have become a docile population that performs as a whole.

How is 'freedom' measured in the economy of the prison? In Resane's case as for many others incarcerated in the Philippine prison system, the *writ of habeas corpus* is not applied—they have not been convicted of any crime, and even their trial dates have not been set. Some, like Resane, have spent years in the prison with no opportunity for release in sight. Given this situation, can one speak of 'true' freedom to live a gender non-conforming life when that same individual is not 'free' to have a speedy trial, go through due process, and ultimately return to his community? Even if they are able to dance their way through their time in prison, is their situation any more just than the unwarranted detentions and disappearances of Filipinos who dare to speak out against the state's violence? The state attempts to defer such questions through its staging of these taped performances; freedom here becomes recoded as the choice to perform gender, rather than as a choice between movement outside the prison and constraint within. In making the spectacle banal, freedom is presented as having been achieved within the prison, foreclosing the possibility that freedom means leaving the stage entirely.

Domesticity

If achieving a kind of homonormative domesticity is a sign of neoliberal identity, the CPDRC videos need to be understood not as the exception to the rule, but as a key

example of how proper domesticity is ultimately secured through the disciplining of the *bakla* subject. In the history of prisons in the Philippines, assessing the rehabilitation of criminalized men was partially premised on the successful formation of heterosexual nuclear households. We can see this in the history of the institutionalization of American penal colonies in the Philippines—remember that one of the rewards for Filipinos prior to their release into the general population at the Iwahig Penal Colony was to reunite the men with their ‘wives and children’ and allowing them to live in domestic units within the colony. Maintaining head-of-household status was therefore an incentive for those wishing to escape from prison life, at least in the case of Iwahig. But with sex-segregated prisons becoming the norm in the global North, the presence of ‘innocent’ wives and children living within prison walls is no longer a tenable strategy as Filipino prisons were ‘modernized.’ Given this limitation on the types of rehabilitative domesticity able to be applied to male prisoners, Garcia has deployed Resane’s performances precisely for his *failure* to pass as properly female, in order to reinforce and reinscript dominant ideologies of hetero-masculinity on the male prisoners within the CPDRC.

The two revised clips made of Michael Jackson’s “Thriller” video are the most graphic example of the violent scripting of proper prison masculinity onto Resane, that is to say, a masculinity ultimately submissive to the dictates of the state and which ultimately buttresses heteropatriarchal rule. Visually, the themes of the videos themselves evoke images of militarism and sexual violence that, given the performers’ status as inmates at a high-risk level penal institution, are loaded with excess meaning.¹⁶

¹⁶ As the popularity of the YouTube videos grew, Garcia began to take email requests from viewers as to what songs they would like to see the incarcerated perform to. The first ‘viewer requested’ performance was the self-titled song by African American rapper Soulja Boy, which is notable for its differences in genre as well as for what it reveals about the globality of the prison-industrial complex itself. Unlike the first rash of videos, which were primarily rock and disco

There is dissidence between the portrayal of prisoners' happiness in media stories and interviews with Garcia, with the content in the actual videos themselves; the most apparent example is in the very video that catapulted Garcia and the CPDRC inmates to fame.

At the climax of the first CPDRC "Thriller" video is the 'attack' sequence, whereupon the female figure (played by Resane) is set upon by a group of male zombies, who encircle her en masse and pull at her hair and clothes and she lays on the floor, writing and screaming before the screen fades to black.¹⁷ This is a rewrite of the original Michael Jackson music video, evidenced not only in its abridged dance sequences but also in the story line itself. In Michael Jackson's original music video for "Thriller," there is only the hint of violence: just as the 'zombies' begin to close in on the female lead (Ola Ray) and a zombie-fied Michael Jackson is just about to reach out to grab her, the scene changes, showing her waking up, startled, as a non-zombie Michael wakes her up from her dream. In the CPDRC version, the formerly-implied violence is now graphically depicted on-screen, a startling mirroring of the actual sexual violence done to *bakla* and straight male prisoners by other inmates, by the guards, and possibly even by that ever-voyeuristic warden, Byron Garcia.

tracks, this was the first rap song the prisoners performed to. Watching this performance, I was struck by the seeming incongruity between the Filipino men dancing to this song, from a genre strongly associated with the African American community, a community that has been targeted by the American prison-industrial complex. Though outside the purview of this thesis, I wonder what the possibilities would be for a comparative critique between the incarceration rates of black men with Filipino men. I also wonder about the possibilities of cross-national solidarities between prison abolitionists in the United States with developing a prison abolitionist movement in the Philippines.

¹⁷ Byron F. Garcia, "Thriller (original upload)," YouTube.com video clip, 4:01, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hMnk7lh9M3o> (accessed September 20, 2007).

A revised and re-visioned second video titled “Thriller 2” documents a shift in voyeuristic tactics and the disciplining of Resane’s gender performances.¹⁸ Whereas the first CPDRC “Thriller” video went through the entire narrative sequence of the original Michael Jackson music video, ending with the attack sequence, this second video begins with the attack on the female character. While the first video faded to black so we did not see the repercussions of Resane’s violation, in this version, there is an extended period where we see Resane writhing on the floor as male inmates grab at her. There are multiple levels of voyeurism being depicted: we watch a video of video and still cameras encircling the dancers/inmates who encircle Resane during the attack. The climax of the video begins when the attack ends: Resane, playing the female lead, is chased, cornered, and attacked by the male ‘zombies,’ until s/he emerges as the zombie-fied *male* character, the role played by Michael Jackson in the 1983 original. Face painted white, headband torn off to reveal his receding hairline and bald spot, Resane joins the rest of the zombies/prisoners and no longer is a solo actor deviating from the rest- the *bakla* subject heralded as example of the successful neoliberal prison has been tamed, and he is no longer a deviant subject who can ‘infect’ the other men with his queerness but rather has ‘caught’ masculinity just like the others. At the end of the performance, the cameras pan to the live audience sitting in the bleachers, where Governor Gwen Garcia and her brother, warden Byron F. Garcia, are clapping in enjoyment along with other invited guests. Byron Garcia goes on to read over a microphone a text message

¹⁸ Byron F. Garcia, “Thriller 2: The Continuation,” YouTube.com video clip, <http://youtube.com/watch?v=6meBUjMulr0> (accessed September 20, 2007). This second video version of “Thriller” is no longer available online, as Garcia has removed it from YouTube.

supposedly sent to his cell phone: “Fantastic! Magnificent! The whole world salutes them... it’s one for the Guinness Book of World Records. Sender: Michael Jackson.”¹⁹

In this video, the non-reproductive *queer* is ultimately sacrificed for the greater good of rehabilitating criminalized men towards a proper masculinity that is both submissive to the state and dominant over the feminine, whether that feminine be the biological female or the ‘improper’ female as embodied by Resane.²⁰ In having Resane become a zombie that dances in sync with the others, he assumes the role played by Michael Jackson in the original “Thriller” music videos. And lest there be any confusion that his ‘transformation’ is not merely one from the living to the dead, but from *bakla*/woman to male, Garcia explicitly names Resane as a ‘true’ male in the description provided for this video on YouTube: “The ‘Girl’ finally breaks his silence! His name is ‘Wengel’ and he's gonna dance Michael's routine!”²¹

In these particular YouTube videos, the limits of state ‘benevolence’ and ‘tolerance’ for the *bakla* subject are illuminated. The state produces the *queer* subject, embodied in Wiendjiel Resane, only so far as they can then discipline him—in the final moment before his ‘transformation,’ Resane is recast as a tragic, balding *bakla*, whose insurgence requires violent policing by hyper-masculine prisoners serving as the

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ It is Martin Manalansan who duly warns: “The market is constructed to be the filter of gay freedom and progress so much so that dominant discourses in the gay community disregard how this kind of freedom is predicated on the abjection of other groups of people” (Manalansan 2005, 143). Here I am referring to the effacement of biological female prisoners in the space through Resane’s assumption of the lead female role in the CPDRC videos. Given that we understand prisons to be sex-segregated spaces, the presence of biological females within the prison would lead to more outrage about human rights abuses and improper management of the prison than Resane, who is ultimately regarded as a man attempting to pass as female.

²¹ Byron F. Garcia, “Thriller 2: The Continuation,” YouTube.com video clip, <http://youtube.com/watch?v=6meBUjMulr0> (accessed September 20, 2007).

physical proxy for the state. This subtly, though forcefully, undercuts the celebratory discourses espoused by Garcia and the international press of Resane as the liberated *queer* subject.

If Resane represents in these discourses the embodiment of the ‘free’ gay prisoner, he also exposes its limits. When the specter of the proliferation of improperly masculine identities and gay sex looms too large by Resane’s hypervisibility, given his featured role in these performances, Garcia ensures that Resane himself demonstrates his essential transformation back into a ‘regular’ male prisoner. Resane joins the zombies at the end of this sequence, becomes properly masculine, and, not to mention, becomes just as ‘dead.’²² Like the other prisoners/zombies in the video, Resane has joined the ranks of the socially dead who must be reformed and can only become integrated into ‘civilized’ Filipino society upon properly performing the love of God, the love of family, and the love of home as necessary preconditions for their release.²³ In his

²² In *Prekarious Life*, Judith Butler asks: “What, then, is the relation between violence and those lives considered as ‘unreal’? Does violence take place on the condition of that unreality?... If violence is gone against those who are unreal, then, from the perspective of violence, it fails to injure or negate those lives since those lives are already negated. But they have a strange way of remaining animated and so must be negated against (and again). They cannot be mourned because they are always already lost, or rather, never ‘were,’ and they must be killed, since they seem to live on, stubbornly, in this state of deadness” (2004, 33). As the undead, the zombies/prisoners in the CPDRC are beyond mourning and as such, cannot be grieved by activists who do not recognize them as ever having lived. One of my goals in this thesis is to resurrect the dead: not just the spectacular undead, like Resane, but those other zombies whose lives have been produced only to be killed again, and again, both symbolically and literally, by the state.

²³ In the “CPDRC Concepts 2” promotional video, made by Garcia as a kind of advertisement for his revolutionary disciplinary techniques, the ultimate culmination of rehabilitation is shown: confessional re-entry ceremonies, where the ‘reformed’ prisoner expresses his remorse for his crimes and pleads to God and his local community to forgive and accept him. Garcia or another prison employee facilitates this process; in the video, Garcia addresses a crowd of weeping women saying, “Your son pleads forgiveness...let us all forgive him and accept him as a good resident” (Byron F. Garcia, “CPDRC Concepts 2,” YouTube.com video clip, 7:32, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EEJa61439KU>, accessed September 12, 2007). In addressing the community as the “mothers” to this wayward son, both religious and nationalist tropes are

performance as the undead, Resane illuminates the prevalence of heteropatriarchy; even in new guises, such as homonormativity, it lives on, proliferates, (re)produces itself in ever differentiating bodies, waiting to be consumed.

Consumption

Even as Resane's sexuality is coded as non-reproductive, his performances need to be understood as a form of *productive* labor for the nation. Resane, as an incarcerated subject, placed in the prison as a 'delinquent' for his inability to contribute to the economic work force, pays back his debt to the state through these performances, which circulate in the visual economy of consumption. Resane's performances are productive even as they ostensibly operate outside the market; they are productive of "relationships, identities, and communities," all of which have an impact on economic production and consumption (Joseph 2002, 40).

Some of the material effects that can, and already have, resulted from his performances include: the continuation and even expansion of the prison-industrial complex in the Philippines (more prisons, more choreographers, more video cameras, more prisoners); the solidifying of relationships between governmental and penal authorities within the country, and between the Philippines and other locales; and the shifting of government resources towards incarceration rather than education, housing, or other social programs. The performances even work to attract customers to the market stalls where clothing and accessories, made by female prisoners of the CPDRC as part of their rehabilitation program, are sold.

drawn upon, binding the community together through affective performances of communally shared heteronormative domesticity.

It is clear that Resane is produced by the state as a discursive commodity that has exchange value in the national and global market. To consider him as such is to recognize that “the strategic production of specific but diverse bodies as capital requires the complicity of discourses not normally named *production*” (Joseph 2002, 40). Janet Jakobsen writes that the realm of values (religion, culture, domination in the form of ‘family values’ and domesticity) enters—at the site of the body—the supposedly value-free realm of value, the economic (qtd. in Joseph 2002, 40). Following Jakobsen, I argue that the discourses and technologies productive of Resane as both a neoliberal queer subject *and* an abject *bakla* prisoner rely on the logic of heteropatriarchy; once produced as a legible subject, Resane can then perform his labor through these videos, which upon their circulation are then productive of a host of material and symbolic accumulations that the Philippine state benefits from.

In this way, supposedly unquantifiable, affective heteropatriarchal values applied to incarcerated subjects produce real economic value for the state, rendering Resane’s labor as necessary and as exploited as the sexual and domestic labor done by those victimized Filipina subjects whose remittances to the Philippines have held aloft the failing economy of the Philippine state. Filipina/American feminist anti-imperialist activists, among others, have missed this connection between prisoners such as Resane with the privileged objects of their campaigns, the sexually victimized Filipina woman. How might their anti-imperialist political praxis benefit from expanding the frame, so to speak, to consider Resane as one of their ‘sisters’?

Don't Stop 'Til You Get Enough: Consuming the *Bakla* Subject

If neoliberal subjectivity is attained through consumption, Resane's status as the *object* to be consumed prevents him from embodying the fantasy of a globalized/neoliberal gay subject. In making Resane as the object of consumption by both the other zombies/prisoners in the "Philippine Prison Thriller" video and of the virtual audience who enjoys watching these *banal spectacles*, these videos are productive not only of the subjectivities of the warden and the prisoner, but also that of the consumer—it is through *our* consumption of these banal spectacles through deterritorialized sites such as YouTube that we enter into the discourse as an idealized western spectator. It is my contention that whether or not we begin as a white Western spectator of the video, in pleurably watching these 'happy prisoners' dance we come to inhabit, however briefly, that colonizing subjectivity. To repeat the opening epigraph of this thesis, Diana Taylor, in *The Archive and the Repertoire*, writes of this self-constitution beautifully:

The 'primitive' body as object reaffirms the cultural supremacy and authority of the viewing subject, the one who is free to come and go (while the native stays fixed in place and time), the one who sees, interprets, and records. The native is the show; the civilized observer the privileged spectator. We, those viewers who look through the eyes of the explorer are (like the explorer) positioned safely outside the frame, free to define, theorize their (never our) societies. The 'encounters' with the native create us as audience just as much as the violence of definition creates them, the primitives... Domination depends on maintaining a unidirectional gaze and stages the lack of reciprocity and mutual understanding inherent in discovery. (Taylor 2003, 64)

Byron F. Garcia's words are telling of the videos' intended audience and nostalgic goals: "This is what America has been longing for—a *Jailhouse Rock* which

they only saw in Elvis Presley.”²⁴ These videos are part of a contemporary ‘archive of nostalgia’; just as the “perceived simplicity of Igorot life” displayed at the St. Louis World’s Fair “made some fairgoers long for a less complicated way of living,” an imaginary state given the almost 500 years of Philippine colonization by the Spanish and the forced removal of Native Americans from their lands in the United States, the YouTube videos also recall an idealized period in American history (Rydell 1984, 172). The past referred to by Garcia is an explicitly virtual reality—one of happy prisoners (played by Elvis instead of an African American man) getting along and dancing together—that occludes the violence of racism and homophobia so rampant in the ‘real world.’ Garcia certainly has not missed the pedagogical and productive value of these videos, and we would be remiss to overlook this value as the videos’ central reason for existence.

If “performing the act of possession makes the claim” over subjugated bodies, and “the witnessing and writing down legitimizes it,” then the discursive disciplining of the CPDRC prisoners reaches its apex when YouTube viewers type comments on the videos’ web pages (Taylor 2003, 62). It is precisely through a *banal* moment of internet activity—writing a comment on a website—that a real discursive violence is materialized, as Garcia and the camera’s authority of being the author of the text is displaced by the interpretive role of the viewer. As those with the ability to label Resane as a ‘fake girl’ or ‘tranny,’ or the prisoners as ‘better off than Americans,’ we inhabit that privileged space to see, interpret and record the actions of the CPDRC incarcerated that Taylor warns is at the root of domination. By enjoying this “cultural form of amnesiac representation,” we as viewers are made *consumers* of the banal spectacle rather than *witnesses* to a

²⁴ Journeyman Pictures, “Jailhouse Rock-Philippines,” YouTube.com video clip, 1:33, <http://youtube.com/watch?v=wAjlY7X0Yc> (accessed December 10, 2007).

violation of human rights; in our forgetting of the history of violence against people of color at home and abroad, we are “turn[ed] into imperial subjects” who are as implicated in the continuing violation of the incarcerated at the CPDRC as is Garcia (Rogin 1993, 507).

Saidiya Hartman writes of the minstrel show that “by encouraging entertainment, the master class sought to cultivate hegemony, harness pleasure as a productive force, and regulate the modes of permitted expression”; in this contemporary moment, the CPDRC videos re-create and re-enforce a “master class” of spectators whose entertainment diffuses the threat of outcry against the Philippine prison’s practices as inhumane (Hartman 1997, 44). In our *pleasure* at watching the disciplining of Resane on camera, we as viewers come to occupy that subjectivity of the master class, even if our advantage and privileged structural location is ephemeral, lasting only as long as it takes to type our comments on the webpage, or to forward the video through email to pass along the joke.

Thus is the fantasy-production of the Philippine state-as-neoliberal finally undermined; for in this relationship between First World-consumer and Third World-video-object the asymmetrical economic and political relationship between the United States and Philippines is replicated on a virtual/cultural scale. Even as Garcia deploys Resane as a neoliberal queer subject (who is then disciplined into a ‘zombie’), spectators in the United States can only read Resane as an abject *bakla* figure. The disciplining of Resane into the (un)dead is, in some ways, already redundant; as I traced in the previous chapter, if *all* Filipinos have been produced as non-normative and in need of disciplining, what is one more? The failure for us located in the United States to witness the CPDRC videos as a form of surveillance, brutal discipline, and violence against

people in the Philippines is not exceptional, but is, rather, expected— the disavowal of this contemporary cultural production as having its genesis in US colonial projects is a far preferable response to outrage, as the risk of implicating ourselves in the production of these videos is too great. Even to those who identify themselves as Filipina/American feminist anti-imperialists, I ask—what would it mean to acknowledge these videos? Would we find ourselves implicated, in our calls for more incarceration, more ‘justice’ through the expansion of the prison system in the Philippines and United States? Would these videos remind us that our quests for justice for victimized Filipina women inevitably bring about the incarceration of others, whose freedom is simply an afterthought to our more noble campaigns?

In the final summation, these videos reveal less about the reality of *bakla* performers in the prison; the motivations of the warden to continue disseminating these videos; or the ways in which queerness as a marker of racial difference is deployed. Rather, these videos reveal much more about where we as its spectators draw the line. Do we justify the CPDRC as a ‘better’ prison system, much preferable to the torture occurring at Abu Ghraib and elsewhere? Or do we try to shed light on some of the issues, and build a queer feminist anti-imperialist politics of solidarity with those Filipinos ‘inside’ the carceral continuum, that is, *all* of the people in the Philippines? How do we conceive of resistance to this regime at all—even if the CPDRC were to close tomorrow, would these videos or the conditions bringing about their emergence simply go away?

Wanna Be Starting Something: Desiring Freedom, Radicalizing Love

I began this chapter by situating the CPDRC videos as what Neferti Tadiar has called *fantasy-productions*; that is, as the projection of the Philippine state's desires onto the global stage. As a fantasy-production of the state, the CPDRC videos produce and deploy the figure of Wiendjiel Resane as a globalized gay subject, one who enjoys his incarceration yet is symbolically, and violently, reinscribed back into heteronormative 'undead' masculinity. Delineating the uses for which Resane has been made to labor, I have tried to illuminate these *banal spectacles* for what they are: as texts that circulate in the symbolic economy, to achieve the economic and political gains of the Philippine neo-colony, and as mirrors, deflecting attention away from the extra-judicial killings of 'bad queer' subjects (those "Communists" and "terrorists") who do not perform love for the nation as Resane does.

Reading the videos by centering Resane, I have tried to show how Resane, despite being the abjected *bakla* subject, is far from nonreproductive: his productivity for the state is measured not through whether or not he can reproduce children but on the "capacities [he] can and cannot regenerate and what kinds of assemblages they compel, repel, spur, deflate" (Puar 2007, 211). If 'capacity' is understood "the ability to thrive within and propagate the biopolitics of life by projecting potential as futurity, one indication of which is performed through the very submission to these technologies of surveillance that generate these data," Resane appears to perform at full capacity, demonstrating his love of these 'rehabilitative' performances, and demonstrating the need to continue, and even expand, the prison system in the Philippines to enable more performances (and queer bodies) to proliferate (Puar 2007, 200). Yet, in measuring

Resane's 'enjoyment,' is there any way to understand his performances as *exceeding* capacity; can we think about his desire to perform as more than just an expression of his complete submission to state domination?

Allan Feldman argues that "a performance can exceed the social conditions of its production and thus exceed any particular ideological closure associated with its site of emergence. Multiple and antagonistic counterdiscourses and acts can be attached to the same performance, thereby transforming its semantic efficacy" (Feldman 1991, 15). Of the repetition of performances of subjectivity, Jasbir Puar writes that "the repetition is key; it enables not only the repetition of the familiar and time-worn but also the becoming of something open to the future, the repetition with a difference" (Puar 2007, 192). With their considerations in mind, I want to challenge us to consider the queer potential of a performance like Resane's.

Every day, Resane is made to perform, and every day he does as he is told in order to survive. In every performance of "Thriller," Resane is disciplined into 'proper' masculinity, and every time he always begins with the same girlish swagger, long hair, and high heels: the insurgent *bakla* who does not reform of his own volition, but who is made to transform by being attacked by the undead. It is a scripted performance to be sure, but in its very repetition in its live performance, and in its continued circulation on the internet, can these performances signal more than simple domination? Is it possible that when Resane says he "loves" to perform, he is *not* saying that he loves to be disciplined into proper masculinity, but that he loves the fact that, despite these disciplinary attempts, he remains the same? That he enjoys performing his 'rehabilitation' even as he refuses to change a thing about his appearances or his behaviors outside of the frame? Perhaps these banal spectacles do not document

Resane's submission to the state, after all, but are merely that: *performances of submission* that do not result in any 'rehabilitation' or love for anything beyond dancing, and living, for another day.

If "optimizing the body entails oscillation between the subject of rehabilitation, an already cohered subject that can and must be represented, and populations of regeneration, forward-looking, regenerative bodies that appear to have the capacity for capacity," Resane's possible refusal of rehabilitation, and his love for this refusal, have the potential to exceed the capacity of the biopolitical regime of the Philippine state to control him, and signal a moment of failed (re)productivity—a moment of *insurgent queerness* that speaks against the fantasies of the nation, a state that believes it has ultimate ability to produce the subjectivity of another (Puar 2007, 200). This moment is perhaps a monad, the "revolutionary chance in the fight for the oppressed past," that flashes up only for an instant and is too quickly co-opted by the state (Benjamin 1968, 263). The question that now remains, however, is—what is to be done about this (imagined, potential) moment of insurgency, for as quickly as I have identified it, it is gone, or perhaps was never there at all?

To circle back to the work of Neferti Tadiar which opened this chapter, I believe that *Fantasy-Production* offers another way to consider Resane's insurgent "love," and the capacity of that love to change the way we "do" anti-imperialist politics. When writing of migrant women's dreams of freedom from the patriarchal home, Tadiar notes that their dreams are powerful and quickly co-opted by the state and by multinational corporations, who exploit Filipinas as a feminized labor force. It is in the brief moment "beyond and before their objectification and alienation, however, that the people who live these passions exercise an immense historical potential"; as in the People Power revolution,

Filipina women's un-coopted dreams are expression of the heretical power of *sampalataya*, the faith in exercising one's creative capacity to make history (Tadiar 2004, 246). Tadiar calls this a moment a heretical "fantasy of love," and posits it as one that can be harnessed in current and future moments of action against US imperialism and globalization (2004, 216). Tadiar suggests, finally, that the fantasies of desiring others can be 'followed' by those of us so-called 'activists,' not by mimicking their actions (for there are no 'direct political action' available that can be copied), but by producing new "practices of imagination... by defying the orthodox truths of fantasy-production" (Tadiar 2004, 266).

Borrowing from Tadiar, what I am posing, then, is for Filipina/American feminist anti-imperialists to build a political praxis that does not seek to save the 'proper subject'—the victimized, heteronormative Filipina women—but instead 'follows' Resane's example of a love based on refusal: a refusal to be 'rehabilitated' into heteronormative domesticity, a refusal to become legible to the nation by speaking in its heteropatriarchal language, a refusal to be merely the subject-effect of state power. To 'follow' Resane is not to make him specifically or the *bakla* more generally the privileged subject of politics, but rather it is to move towards a different kind of 'freedom dream' not based on the calls for the state to 'show us love,' but on us looking for love elsewhere. It is this kind of political imagination, one based on a *subjectless discourse* attentive to ways that *all* of us Filipinos and Filipino/Americans are produced through the modalities of sexualized racialization, rather than a selective inclusion of those subjects and subjectivities we claim as our own, that will help us develop ways to fight for liberation that were impossible, unthinkable before. If I may be so bold to propose: in disinvesting ourselves

from our proper objects, we may finally be able to transform our lives, our futures, and our worlds.

SOME THOUGHTS IN CONCLUSION

Let's face it. We're undone by each other. And if we're not, we're missing something.

—Judith Butler, *Precarious Life*

In the last chapter, I questioned the most visible response to the CPDRC videos, challenging the pleasure experienced by those who found these *banal spectacles* amusing rather than brutal. But even more urgent a task than calling out the laughter is to analyze the implications of *failing to see* these videos at all—the refusal to click the link; the closing of the file quickly and forgetting, if one does watch. This second response of willful forgetting, I believe, is pernicious because it is even more common than the first. I know this because most often, when talking about these videos to others, scholars and activists alike, they register no recollection of these videos, or, if they have watched them, do not understand why I would bother myself with such a site. I have been asked why I would care about criminals when good women are dying, being sexually victimized or exploited by globalization; why, if I'm feminist, am I focusing on men; why do I bother with videos and 'culture' when there are more important, material, issues to address. They have *failed to see* the videos or the subjects produced and trapped within the frame, they have failed to imagine that 'freedom' for these abjected others would mean freedom for *all* of us produced as Filipino/American subjects, as we are implicated along with them.

Filipino/American scholars and activists have called themselves the “forgotten and forgetful subjects,” and have rightfully noted the ways in which American

exceptionalist discourse has disavowed the United States' colonization of the Philippines or marked it as an aberration in an otherwise democratic history (Campomanes 1995). There has been much scholarship and activism behind bringing this history to light, in order to make others see Filipino/Americans as the products of multiple colonial histories, US domestic anti-Asian racism and legal sanction, and an accumulation of other effects that mark the 'Filipino American condition.' They have worked to make the state recognize its role in producing the Filipino/American conditions of emergence; they have worked to make the public see. But they have not changed the terms upon which this recognition is conferred, and in maintaining allegiance to heteronormative values, they have foreclosed the possibility of us not just being seen, but of being free.

What 'we' have collectively failed to see for ourselves is that Filipino/American subjectivity—that exilic, diasporic, dislocated state of being that is written about by Filipino American Studies scholars and activists—is not tied simply to the past of colonization, and is based on more than a web of kinship to the *manongs* that arrived in the United States before us; it is intricately bound to, and continually produced by, the Philippines' neocolonial present in all its facets. Systems of surveillance, biopolitical management of populations, and death befall not just the privileged objects of Filipino/American activism and scholarship—not just the prostituted woman, exploited migrant worker, or union organizer who has been disappeared. In our activism, when appealing to the state to save only these 'good' subjects—when calling for the reunification of migrant women to their husbands and children or for "Nicole" to have justice by increasing the state's penal power—to the exclusion of others, we have licensed the state to continue its disciplining of populations who *can* die with impunity, who can be the 'bad' subjects not worthy of saving, not worthy of our grief; Subjects who

we *fail to see*. In failing to see them, we fail to see ourselves as also historically produced out of these queer technologies and continually re-produced by an ever-expanding web of surveillance; by techniques of sexual management that reinscribe our racial difference; and by a proliferation of technologies that leave us, and other communities of color, predisposed to death.

Foucault writes that in the contemporary moment, power is heterogeneous and its sites are multiple: “it is a new body, a multiple body, a body with so many heads that, while they might not be infinite in number, cannot necessarily be counted” (Foucault 2003, 245). Challenging proliferating biopolitical regimes, then, requires more than simply protesting against the laws of the state, or petitioning the legislature for recognition; it requires entirely different approaches to political action which, like biopower itself, are contingent, capillary, and dispersed. This is what Foucault gestures towards when he calls for a “new relational right”: in order to speak back to power, as it were, we need to be attentive to the ways in which we emerge as subject-effects of power, and of the multiple sites through which this subjectivization occurs. We need to see that even as we are subject-effects of power, we too are also productive of it. The question is—in what sites and what subjects do we choose to put our energy towards?

As I have been arguing throughout this thesis, I believe that we need to move beyond appeals for inclusion into or recognition by the existing social order, but rather should work to challenge the very values upon which our intersubjective relations are based. To do so, I have pressed for a transformation of the ‘proper subject’ of Filipina/American activism and Filipino American Studies scholarship from one based on an essential, coherent, heteronormative subject to a position based on a *subjectless discourse*. We need to move beyond a politics of recognition to the state—as the state

has proven itself as invested in heteropatriarchy and as requiring the production of kill-able lives in order to remain sovereign (or at least to create a *fantasy-production* of itself as sovereign). We need to develop a politics of reckoning.

Avery Gordon says that “reckoning is about knowing what kind of effort is required to change ourselves and the conditions that make us who we are, that set limits on what is acceptable and unacceptable, on what is possible and impossible” (Gordon 1997, 202). What would a Filipino/American politics of reckoning look like? I do not have a mapped out design, but I do think this: a Filipino/American politics of reckoning would acknowledge the past’s continuing presence, and start from the ground that the “Filipino” and “Filipino/American” are not essential cultural or racial beings, but are subjectivities always becoming, the products of continuing disciplinary technologies who also exceed discipline’s designs. A politics of reckoning would focus not on gaining recognition for privileged subjects to the exclusion of undomesticated others; rather, it would open the possibility for new affiliations of kinship not bound by blood, the confines of heterosexual domesticity, or hierarchical relations of service or debt. Finally, it would be a politics that exceeds “politics” as usual—open to multiple, contingent acts of affective and performative resistance that are harnessed not just by the privileged ‘saviors’ or ‘agents’ of the ‘oppressed,’ but by all those produced by these disciplinary regimes. I dare to hope: What new possibilities are open to us, once we have reckoned, and once we have seen?

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