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Imperialist Realism: Colonial Ways of Seeing and the Artifice of Empire

DISSERTATION

submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements

for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in English

by

Juan Carlos Fermin

Dissertation Committee:

Distinguished Professor Rajagopalan Radhakrishnan, Chair

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2025

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---. “In ‘Keeping’ with Ornamentalism: Asiatic Femininity in *On Such a Full Sea.*” “Carceral Bodies” panel. Transnational Equivalences and Inequalities: A Speculative Futures Virtual Symposium. Delivered virtually over Zoom. Oct. 2020. Presentation.

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---. "Imperial Phantasms in the Philippines: From Comedias/Komedyas to Vaudeville/Bodabil." "Cultural Circulations" panel. Worldbuilding Through Global Asias: An Interdisciplinary Conference. University of California, Irvine. Irvine, CA. Feb. 2025. Presentation.

---. "Reconciling Family and Queerness in Queer Southeast Asian Refugee Narratives" panel. Worldbuilding Through Global Asias: An Interdisciplinary Conference. University of California, Irvine. Irvine, CA. Feb. 2025. Moderator and respondent.

---. "'Graphic' Narratives: How Sequential Art Bears Witness to the Violence of History in Art Spiegelman's *Maus* and Joe Sacco's *Palestine*." Comic Arts Conference: The Academic Conference at Comic-Con International (WonderCon). Anaheim, CA. Mar. 2025. Presentation.

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Imperialist Realism: The Artifice of Empire and Colonial Ways of Seeing

by

Juan Carlos Fermin

Doctor of Philosophy in English

University of California, Irvine, 2025

Distinguished Professor Rajagopalan Radhakrishan, Chair

The essential contention of Mark Fisher's 2009 text, *Capitalist Realism,* is that the end of the world is easier to imagine than the end of capitalism. In this dissertation, I will be making a case for empire's end being just as unimaginable. That is, empire as a form of governance—of organizing society and difference therein—is a seemingly inescapable way of seeing and navigating the world, even for those who are casualties of imperialism. I call this form of sight and navigation, as both the conditioning and inheritance of colonizer and colonized alike, "imperialist realism": the tacit acceptance of empire as an enterprise. Rudyard Kipling's 1899 poem "The White Man's Burden," exemplifies an endorsement of empire, as it calls for the United States to occupy and 'civilize' the Philippines, even while meditating on the 'human cost' of deploying American troops.

This dissertation will primarily focus on consciously egalitarian and anti-racist texts that nonetheless neglect to question imperial ideology—or, at the very least, fail to question it *enough* because of each text's rhetorical context. Starting with European imperial mores that shaped early modern Philippine cultural production, my study travels to the 19th, 20th, and 21st centuries. Throughout, I examine key Philippine and Filipino American texts that replicate and repudiate

imperial ideology in varied measures. I focus on the Philippines because of its historical subjection to the inter-imperial designs of Spain, the U.S., and Japan. While there is abundant scholarship on the legacies of Spanish and American imperialism on the Philippines, it is also worth acknowledging that the Japanese occupation of the Philippines (1942-1945)—however brief—contained moments of intense imperial violence that replicated the brutal logics of Western empire. Though far from unique as an inter-imperial palimpsest, the Philippines' production of 'canonical' contributions to Asian and Asian American Literature—from the likes of Nick Joaquin to Carlos Bulosan—remains a productive staging ground for throwing *imperialist realism* into relief.

INTRODUCTION

The Artifice of Empire

The essential contention of Mark Fisher's 2009 text, *Capitalist Realism,* is that the end of the world is easier to imagine than the end of capitalism. In this dissertation, I will be making a case for empire's end being just as unimaginable. That is, empire as a form of governance—of organizing society and difference therein—is a seemingly inescapable way of seeing and navigating the world, especially for those who are casualties of imperialism. I call this form of sight and navigation, as both the conditioning and inheritance of colonizer and colonized alike, "imperialist realism": the tacit acceptance of empire as an enterprise. Rudyard Kipling's 1899 poem "The White Man's Burden," exemplifies an endorsement of empire, as it calls for the United States to occupy and 'civilize' the Philippines, even while meditating on the 'human cost' of deploying American troops. There is an appeal, in Kipling's poem, to risk sacrificing American soldiers' humanity—indeed, their "burden"—through the inherent dangers of imperial conquest and travel, all to uplift and civilize Filipinos.

This dissertation will primarily focus on consciously egalitarian and anti-racist texts that nonetheless neglect to question imperial ideology—or, at the very least, fail to question it *enough* because of each text's rhetorical context. Starting with European imperial mores that shaped early modern Philippine cultural production, my study travels to the 19th, 20th, and 21st centuries. Throughout, I examine key Philippine and Filipino American literature that replicate and repudiate imperial ideology in varied measures. I focus on the Philippines because of its historical subjection to the inter-imperial designs of Spain, the U.S., and Japan. While there is abundant scholarship on the legacies of Spanish and American imperialism in the Philippines, it

is also worth acknowledging that the Japanese occupation of the Philippines (1942-1945)—however brief—contained moments of intense imperial violence, such as the suffering of Filipino and American prisoners of war during the 1942 Bataan Death March. *Imperialist realism* manifests in non-Western nations that replicate the brutal logics of Western empire. Though far from unique as an inter-imperial palimpsest, the Philippines' production of 'canonical' contributions to Asian and Asian American Literature—from the likes of Nick Joaquin to Carlos Bulosan—remains a productive staging ground for throwing *imperialist realism* into relief.

What draws me to the Philippines, for that matter, is its literary history punctuated with resistance, political negotiations, and revolution. Throughout this dissertation, I thus discern the conditions of possibility for demystifying and refuting the siren song of empire. Because of my own background as a Filipino American immigrant, I have devoted my publications, presentations, and dissertation to dissecting the legacy of Spanish and American imperial mores that survive as the ideological inheritance of prominent Philippine authors, such as Jose Rizal (1861-1896) and Carlos Bulosan (1913-1956). I juxtapose their literary contributions and legacies with the interventions of modern authors such as Jessica Hagedorn (1945-) and Gina Apostol (1963-), whose writings challenge imperial political fictions that continue to enchant Philippine cultural production. Ultimately, I seek to expose and dismantle the staying power of imperial ideology with the lexicon I develop herein.

My study takes inspiration from several key sources: Frantz Fanon's profile of the colonized intellectual as outlined in *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961); Edward Said's analysis of how the West has come to define and thus 'know' the Oriental in *Orientalism* (1978); Mary Louise Pratt's description of empire's interlocutory expansion through travel literature in

Imperial Eyes (1992); and Frank Wilderson's structural description of anti-Blackness in *Afropessimism* (2020). This is not an exhaustive list of influences, nor a mere genuflection to my critical forebears. Rather, I hope to contextualize the stakes of my dissertation's key interventions.

In Chapter 1, "'Phantasmagorias of Europe': Early Modern Race and Empire," I establish the primacy of the early modern period as a way of thinking about contemporary Philippine cultural production, aesthetics, and governance. The early modern period thus becomes both a backdrop and heuristic for engagement with imperial ideology throughout the remaining chapters. I focus on early modern Spain's designs for Manila, the capital of the Philippines, as the 'Rome of the East.' I juxtapose this with the nascent imperial gaze of England, who would become one of the foremost proponents of the 'Spanish Black Legend'—a propaganda campaign suggesting that Spain was unique in its barbaric colonial practices, all to sublimate the iniquities of rival empires from Europe. By displacing the realities of imperialism like this, nations such as England could produce an idealized form of empire liberated from its own contradictions. There is, in the process, a 'platonic ideal' that Spain failed to meet. To bridge this phenomenon to the Philippines, I turn to Vicente Rafael's coinage of a "phantasmagoric Europe" in his 2005 book, *The Promise of the Foreign.* Rafael's contribution helps frame my analysis of the Philippines' reception to early modern European ideas and their dissemination through *comedias:* vernacular plays that presented decontextualized European narrative and aesthetic conventions that enchanted Philippine audiences. Indigenized as *komedyas,* the Filipinx reception of this practice helps me articulate a feature of *imperialist realism:* the cathectic attachment to imperial ideology through cultural, political, and aesthetic hallmarks.

Chapter 2, "Towards the Tropical Gothic: Literatures of the Global South, Into Modernity," examines the legacy of the National Hero of the Philippines, Jose Rizal (1861-1896), whose novels—*Noli Me Tangere* (1887) and *El Filibusterismo* (1891)—sublimate empire despite their consciously egalitarian and anti-colonial content. In my analysis, I critique the formation of a Philippine masculinist historical subject—the *ilustrado*—embodied and exemplified across Rizal's writings. While *imperialist realism* is the phenomenon these texts exhibit, what I call the "imperial gaze" is the way that the cosmopolitan citizen-subject—be they colonizer or colonized—is conditioned to covet power and privilege in a rhetorical situation saturated by the ideological work of *imperialist realism.* To accept an empire's way of retelling history, to use the master's epistemic and rhetorical tools to tell one's own story, is to view the world through an *imperial gaze.* This way of seeing encompasses the adoption of imperial perspectives on narrative and teleological expectations, shaping the trajectories of these texts' plots. As I will illustrate, Rizal does this by ultimately conveying the moral superiority of other European empires to that of Spain, for his protagonist, the wealthy mestizo Juan Crisostomo Ibarra, is only enlightened to Spain's barbarism through a cosmopolitan education across Europe.

Chapter 3 is titled "America Is In The Heart (of Darkness): Continuities of Violence in 20th and 21st Century Filipino American Literature." In Chapters 1 and 2, my dissertation moves linearly from the early modern to the modern period, but Chapter 3 marks the beginning of a lateral, geographical split. Here, I examine Filipino *American* literature before discussing *Philippine* literature in Chapter 4. This compartmentalization is not to suggest an uncritical delineation between Filipinx matters in the Philippines and Filipinx matters in the United States. On the contrary, I hold the interests and anxieties of both to be intertwined. The diasporic conditions that territorialize the Filipinx American as such are irrefutable—speaking as one

myself—so I only maintain a split to do justice to the qualitative and experiential differences between the Philippine citizen and the Filipinx immigrant that each branch of literature explores. Regarding the Filipinx immigrant, Carlos Bulosan's 1943 novel, *America Is In the Heart,* becomes a pivotal example of *imperialist realism* and its phantasmagoric qualities. As a divergence from the *ilustrado,* the migrant Filipino laborer appears as another Philippine masculinist historical subject. Bulosan's surrogate protagonist, Allos, has an intellectual awakening through his engagement with U.S. labor struggles and proletarian literature. Despite this, anti-Blackness and misogyny saturate the American imaginary and *reality* that Bulosan depicts. While formal realism is mimetic in its strivings to represent reality, I am using *imperialist realism* to articulate how such strivings can be illusory. There is, for instance, an illusory quality to Bulosan's ideological longings for America, such that the novel produces a "phantasmagoric America" that allows it to elide its epistemic blind spots. I contextualize Bulosan's rhetorical situation with the practice of human zoos, such as the Igorot Exhibit in the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair. World's fairs and human zoos, for that matter, possess an anti-Black pedigree. Furthermore, Bulosan exhibits a lionization of white women that echoes Fanon's analysis in "The Man of Color and the White Woman," a chapter from *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952). In combination with the novel's disinterest in the suffering of impoverished women of color during the Great Depression, I scrutinize this gendered dimension of Bulosan's racial imaginary as a symptom of *imperialist realism.*

I then turn to Elaine Castillo's 2018 novel, *America Is Not the Heart,* for a comparative analysis that unflinchingly confronts Bulosan's legacy, warts and all. Castillo's novel contains a departure from the tetherings of Bulosan's *masculinist* telos. Filipina protagonist Hero de Vera's own immigration story, under the backdrop of her past militantly resisting the Marcos Regime

(1965-1986), is not so much a rebuttal as it is an expansion of Bulosan's core themes. It is here that I begin exploring the possibilities of an "anti-imperial gaze," or a way of questioning imperial mores by exposing the banality of life in both the imperial periphery (e.g. the Philippines) and the imperial core (e.g. the U.S.). Specifically, imperial ideology tends to aggrandize an empire's culture and history, but moments throughout Castillo's novel suggest an active disinterest in—and even boredom by—the legacy of U.S. empire. Importantly, I delve into what I call *continuities of violence* shared by different racial groups and casualties of imperialism. Per my analysis in Chapter 3, a continuity links Filipinos and Black Americans in such contact zones as the American Occupation. With this term, I address technologies of empire—such as travel writing, colonial photography, and human zoos—that subject different racial forms to violence and *evolve* because of their travels.

For example, Dipesh Chakrabarty's description of "sanitary regimes" in his 2002 book, *Habitations of Modernity,* analyzes Western empires' rhetorical justifications for teaching natives 'cleanliness.' Britain's imposition of force to 'civilize' Indians for the ostensible purpose of medical advancement would evolve into America's own towards Filipinos. Similarly, the concentration camp form, as described by Achille Mbembe in *Necropolitics* (2009), sees a precedent established by American colonialism in the Philippines before its sophistication by the Third Reich to terrorize Jewish people and other minorities across Europe. In the context of the American Occupation, Luis Francia's 2013 *History of the Philippines* reveals how the slur "nigger" was used by American soldiers to denigrate Filipinos as an anti-Black remnant at the same time it was used to abuse and ostracize Black American soldiers in the same environments (144). Furthermore, Francia describes how the slur "gook," infamously used to denigrate Korean and Vietnamese people, originates from American soldiers mishearing the Tagalog word "gago,"

meaning “crazy” or “stupid” (150). Lastly, Thomas Alva Edison’s studio produced pro-American propaganda to promote the occupation, but featured African Americans acting as Filipinos, “since Filipinos were routinely thought of as blacks. Inevitably, the reenactments ended with the white U.S. soldiers triumphant” (163).

These examples reveal how the imperial gaze manifests orally, visually, and linguistically because of the way imperialist realism *travels* from one context to another. Given what I have established about the Spanish Black Legend, it finds an echo in the 1989 “March of the Flag” campaign speech of U.S. Senator Alfred Beveridge. Giving this speech in Boston, Beveridge asked, “Would not the people of the Philippines prefer the just, humane, civilizing government of this Republic [America] to the savage, bloody rule of pillage and extortion [Spain] from which we have rescued them?” (Francia 150). Amidst the rivalries of empires such as early modern England and Spain, as well as Spain and the United States prior to the 1898 Treaty of Paris (which saw the Global North’s disregard for Philippines’ newly won independence by Spain’s ‘ceding’ it to the U.S.), empire constantly labors to conceal its own contradictions and expands its arsenal of practical and rhetorical strategies—even if it must sully the names of other empires to do so. In resistance to this tendency is what I call the *anti-imperial gaze:* a dissenting attitude among specific texts that throws empire’s various artifices into relief.

While the *anti-imperial gaze* of a given text does not always cancel out its own capitulation to imperial mores, I examine the *potential* of this gaze in Chapter 4, “Apocalypse Now and Later: The Anti-Imperial Gaze in 20th and 21st Century Philippine Literature.” Here, I examine the political negotiations embedded in the writings of Nick Joaquin, who published his first story in 1947, four years after Bulosan’s novel. This further represents my lateral approach to modernity, as I engage with the literary production of Filipino America (Bulosan) and the

Philippines proper (Joaquin) at the turn of the 20th century. Notably, Joaquin consistently invests agency in an insurgent historical subject among indigenous and mestiza Filipina women. Thus, Joaquin demonstrates a more ambivalent relationship with the Western tradition than Rizal and Bulosan, as he is eager to critique the colonial and patriarchal biases that flourished under Spanish and American rule. Despite popular criticisms of Joaquin as an author who idealizes the Spanish period when critiquing American imperialism, I argue that Joaquin's focus on Spain is more of a *fascination* than *lionization*. As I illustrate, it is through Joaquin's stories set in Spain that he stages critiques motivated by an *anti-imperial gaze.* However, a certain Philippine cosmopolitanism also reigns throughout Joaquin's work, especially in his 1950 play, *A Portrait of the Artist as Filipino.* I revisit Rafael's coinage of a "phantasmagoric Europe" when engaging with Joaquin's writings, which offer ways of understanding the presidencies of Ferdinand Marcos (1965-1986) and Rodrigo Duterte (2016-2022). Given the recent election of Bongbong Marcos (2022-present), son of the former dictator, the Philippine state contains its own expressions of *imperialist realism* through the political, aesthetic, and narrative commitments of its leaders. The Manila Film Center incident, helmed by Imelda Marcos, is illustrative of the violence required to maintain the artifice of empire. The artifice here is literal, as Imelda envisioned her film center to be modeled after Greece's Parthenon. However, on November 17, 1981, 169 workers were crushed beneath its structures during a rushed and problematic construction process. The artifice of imperial ideology thus cannot be separated from the violence that sustains it.

My analysis of Joaquin is joined by a comparative analysis of Jessica Hagedorn's 2003 novel *Dream Jungle* and Gina Apostol's 2018 novel *Insurrecto.* These novels focus on Filipina protagonists who contend with the historical wreckage of U.S. militarism and its gendered

consequences on not just the Philippines, but also on Southeast Asia writ large. In *Dream Jungle,* Americans attempt to film a Vietnam War story in the Philippines, leading Filipina American journalist Paz Marlowe to interrogate the film project's ideological contradictions. The novel's true protagonist, Rizalina Cayabyab, is an insider looking out where Paz is an outsider looking in. Namely, as a crew member whose poverty has exposed her to the worst of the Philippines' class hierarchy, Rizalina exhibits an *anti-imperial gaze* that differs from Paz's, given their different relationships to the social realities of the Philippines. *Insurrecto,* meanwhile, stages a dialectical relationship between American filmmaker Chiara and Filipina writer Magsalin, as the two disagree on how Philippine history must be retold. Specifically, the novel revolves around the 1901 Balangiga massacre, an act of rebellion in which Filipino insurgents murdered 54 U.S. infantrymen in Samar. Notably, this incident led to the U.S. military's genocidal retaliation against Filipinos in Samar, with General Jacob H. Smith notoriously telling his forces, "I want no prisoners. I wish you to kill and burn; the more you kill and burn, the better it will please me … The interior of Samar must be made a howling wilderness" (*The New York Times* 1902). In unearthing these histories neglected by imperial ideology and historiography, both novels center the primacy of a feminist Philippine historical consciousness that does not flinch from the rough edges of postcolonial grief and memory. As a result, my analysis of Hagedorn and Castillo's texts help me articulate the *anti-imperial gaze* I introduce in the preceding chapter.

For my purposes, the *anti-imperial gaze* is not so much a liberation from the *imperial gaze*, but a more deliberate and self-aware engagement with the latter's impositions and limitations, deconstructing imperial ideology from within. While Rizal, Bulosan, and Joaquin have complex portrayals of their colonial social realities, I locate insurgent potential in Castillo, Apostol, and Hagedorn's novels to more consciously articulate and deconstruct *imperialist*

realism as a product of Spanish and American empires. Aided by interventions in Postcolonial Studies, Asian American Studies, Critical Race Theory, Critical Refugee Studies, and Critical Black Studies, my study of *imperialist realism* finds relevance in contexts beyond Philippine and Filipino American historical experience—this dissertation represents only the beginning of what this framework can offer. In adjacent scholarship to my own, Adria Imada's *An Archive of Skin, An Archive of Kin* (2022) reveals how imagery of Native Hawaiian leprosy patients was circulated as popular novelties across the continental U.S.; Thuy Linh Nguyen-Tu's *Experiments in Skin* (2021) exposes the link between anti-Black carceral technologies and Agent Orange's usage in the Vietnam War; *Departures: An Introduction to Critical Refugee Studies* (2022) explains the naturalization of refugees' unsettlement that secures the sovereignty and hegemony of the Global North. These interventions all speak to the persistence of an *imperial gaze* that demands an *anti-imperial gaze* in turn. This dissertation thus introduces a framework that can speak on imperial ideology across contexts. My ultimate contention is to say that realism—or the impression of reality shaped by cultural production—is an act of seduction. What is "real" in *imperialist realism* is not a truthful glimpse into the relations of power in a colonial situation, but rather an impression of authenticity that allows certain political fictions to escape scrutiny.

Imperialist realism is therefore a framework capacious enough to accommodate this vastness without sacrificing the specificity of a given colonial situation. But because of my study's focus on the Philippines, I express a deliberate and considered commitment to "capaciousness" as a theoretical approach without fetishizing it as an intellectual virtue. I am not interested in broadness for broadness's sake, but in developing a theoretical framework whose scope is proportionate to the task at hand: how do we understand and challenge a dominant way of *seeing the world?* How do we expose the artifice of *imperialist realism?*

CHAPTER 1

"Phantasmagorias of Europe": Early Modern Race and Empire

"Intramuros! The old Manila. The original Manila. The Noble and Ever Loyal City . . . To the early conquistadores she was a new Tyre and Sidon; to the early missionaries *she was a new Rome.* Within these walls was gathered the wealth of the Orient—silk from China; spices from Java; gold and ivory and precious stones from India. And within these walls the Champions of Christ assembled to conquer the Orient for the Cross. Through these old streets once crowded a marvelous multitude—viceroys and archbishops; mystics and merchants; pagan sorcerers and Christian martyrs; nuns and harlots and elegant marquesas; English pirates, Chinese mandarins, Portuguese traitors, Dutch spies, Moro sultans, and Yankee clipper captains. For three centuries this medieval town was a *Babylon* in its commerce and a *New Jerusalem* in its faith . . ."

–Nick Joaquin, "The Portrait of the Artist As Filipino" (1950), emphasis mine.

The "Rome of the East": Early Modern Manila and the Spanish Black Legend

The early modern period strikes me as a compelling and essential place to embark on my analysis of the imperial gaze writ large. This chapter represents the beginning of my larger attempt to explain the shifting contexts that characterize the imperial gaze as *kaleidoscopic,* such that the arrangement of colors constantly shifts, without offering any true insight into whom the kaleidoscope points towards. The early modern period, for that matter, heralded a fascination with new technologies that necessitated the augmentation, distortion, and alteration of vision to achieve specific ends. For instance, the telescope was first patented in the Netherlands in 1608, but among "literature of white magic, so popular in the sixteenth century, there are several tantalizing references to devices that would allow one to see one's enemies or count coins from a

great distance. But these allusions were cast in obscure language and were accompanied by fantastic claims; the telescope, when it came, was a very humble and simple device" (Van Helden). Furthermore, the invention of eyeglasses was the subject of false information propagated by "Francesco Redi (1626-97), chief physician at the court of the Grand Duke of Tuscany and a renowned scholar with a 'perverse pleasure in perpetrating literary frauds'" (Ilardi 14). Specifically, Redi misattributed the invention of the spectacles to a Florentine inventor from the 13th century to elevate Florence's image. Vision, as an affordance of various technologies, carried with it mystical qualities that *enchanted* the early modern imagination. Yet in considering how racial forms and their corresponding hierarchies flourish under a given imperial gaze, we understand that these are fictive constructions, but they follow a similar logic of enchantment in their impression and distortion of reality. Consider the practices Edward Said examines in his 1978 study *Orientalism.* "The Orient," Said says, "is an integral part of European *material* civilization and culture. Orientalism expresses and represents that part culturally and even ideologically as a mode of discourse with supporting institutions, vocabulary, scholarship, imagery, doctrines, even colonial bureaucracies and colonial style" (2). The panoply of discursive constructions of racial forms made manifest both politically and intellectually are as crucial to Said's study as they are to my impending examination of racial and imperial ideology in the early modern period. What interests me foremost is how such constructions not only *travel* with imperial expansion but also *collide.* How does Blackness, for example, help clarify the existence of non-Black colonized subjects in the minds of imperial voyagers? Even if we can accept that early modern racial forms were more malleable and less fixed than their contemporary counterparts, what grammars of suffering and regimes of violence were maintained to instill racial hierarchies, nonetheless?

From statesmen to playwrights in early modern Europe, there existed among their ideological, rhetorical, and political maneuvers a vested interest in consolidating a particular vision of the world, be it Spanish or English. In the case of the Philippines, for example, there was a notable cultural tradition passed to colonized subjects by the Spanish in the form of *comedias,* vernacular plays that shaped the Philippine imaginary and enchanted generations of audiences with what Vicente Rafael calls a "Phantasmagoric Europe." The imperial gaze was not only produced through regimes of violence, but also through genres of pleasure—or, more specifically, of enchantment. From this, I glean the beginnings of a cosmopolitan European inheritance taken up by the Philippine colonial bourgeoise—cosmopolitan mestizos known as *ilustrados*—who sought to define the quintessential Filipino (the next chapter will examine this tendency). Before that, Europe has been shown—even when abstracted into a generic, folkloric fantasy landscape—to enchant the imaginations of Filipinos during and after the Spanish period. For example, according to Doreen Fernandez:

> In 1673, recounts the historian Wenceslao Retana, the Muslim leader Cachil Corralat was wreaking havoc in Mindanao, and Spanish Governor General Sebatian Hurtado de Corcuera personally led an expedition against him. To celebrate his victory, Corcuera was given a hero's welcome, with bells, hymns, masses, and triumphal arches. Some boys let out of school early took to reenacting the battle, playing at Moros and Cristianos. The game acquired such energy that some boys were wounded. Both incidents—the victory and the game—inspired the Jesuit Father Hieronimo Perez to write a play, *Gran comedia de la toma del Pueblo de Corralat y conquista del Cerro,* the first comedia staged in Manila.

> This was, one must note, a play in Spanish about a real-life event. The komedya as it later developed only echoed the form, but not the language or the substance, since it was always in a vernacular language, and about Moors and Christians not in the Philippines, but in imagined European kingdoms. These settings, characters, and stories were derived directly from European metrical romances which were brought in by Spanish soldiers. When adapted and translated, they became the *awit* and *corrido* which proliferated through the Philippines, making tales of *Principe Amante, Bernardo Carpio, Siete Infantes de Lara, Doce Pares de Francia,* and many other such historical and fictional characters so familiar throughout the islands that they were considered part of the native tradition of literature. Eventually some of the verse narratives were staged, and became the komedya. (60-61)

I quote Fernandez at length for her illustration of Filipinos' reception of comedias, in so far as this reflects a phenomenon of enchantment that would permeate the islands. The affective response of children play-acting a historical conflict, only for both situations to inspire Manila's first comedia, reveals an affective affiliation—in turn—with the narrative content of the stories and histories in Filipinos' midst. Spanish cultural production, introduced and normalized through colonialism, saturated the popular Philippine imagination with a robust blend of European folkloric elements, traditions, and conventions. In other words, the symbolic field of Philippine cultural production was eventually delimited by European fantasy aesthetics. While an enduring global fascination with European aesthetics and narrative tropes is nothing shocking (think of Disney's popularity and the ubiquity of the fantasy genre), I am driven to understand this phenomenon in the Philippine context as symptomatic of a Spanish ideological tradition that metastasized in the early modern period. Throughout this chapter, I will not only examine the

haunting of a Phantasmagoric Europe upon the colonial Philippines, but also the specter of the Spanish Black Legend upon the legacy of Spanish empire. This consensus between rival European nations that Spain was uniquely barbaric was no show of collective egalitarian will, of course, but instead a collective attempt to sublimate *empire* as a global enterprise. If Laura Doyle's term *inter-imperiality* "emphasizes that for more than two millennia a range of transhemispheric interactions has generated both the problems and creative visions of the global world," and thus engages with the "long collective legacy of these visions" (5), my dissertation is also my contribution to disentangling and exposing the logics of these interactions. That includes confronting the longer-term consequences of inter-imperial dynamics, such as in the rhetorical construction of Jose Rizal's *Noli Me Tangere,* where the cosmopolitan mestizo protagonist is enlightened to Spain's crimes by a cosmopolitan education across Europe—a la the Spanish Black Legend of old. What emerges, even in Rizal's conscious critiques of empire, is a way of saying empire can be done 'better' in the right hands. There remains a commitment, even in the writings of colonized intellectuals such as Rizal, to the prolongation of empire's interlocutory life—that is, the survival of empire in the ideological formation, world-making, and self-conceptualizing of a given subject, without ever calling to question the *enterprise* of empire.

Empire's salvaging, both in the cultural production of the Western tradition and the Global South, is what I mean by "imperialist realism." Orientalism—per Said—refers to the academic and discursive taxonomization of a given empires' colonial subjects, and the "modern/colonial world"—per Mignolo—refers to "concepts and conceptual fields that totalize A reality" and must be "de-naturalize[d]" (459). Each theorist attends to the ubiquity of a given imperial vision of the world, from Said's studies of British and French imperial culture to Mignolo's analysis of "the historical and dominant frame of knowledge in the modern/colonial

world from the sixteenth to the first half of the eighteenth century" (459-460). Likewise, through *imperialist realism,* I attend to these relations of power as far as these dominant attitudes are taken up by colonizer and colonized alike. "Taxonomization," per Said, and "totaliz[ation]," per Mignolo, represent their respective objects of critique as they engage with the political fictions of empire and colonialism. To describe my own object of critique, I discern is a distinct attitude of *inheritance* that naturalizes and sublimates empire in the process, leading empire—as a project—to fall away from view, even in egalitarian critiques of specific imperial practices. Sometimes, as in the Spanish Black Legend, this is also a strategy among imperial rivals. The Spanish Black Legend in particular set a precedent for future sublimations of empire as an enterprise, and thus the survival of imperial ideology as such.

In his study *The Promise of the Foreign: Nationalism and the Technics of Translation in the Spanish Philippines,* Vicente Rafael titles a pivotal section "Phantasmagorias of Europe." In it, Rafael examines the rise of the comedias during the Spanish era of the Philippines. For my purposes, it is not so much any one comedia text that is to be the object of study, but rather the conception and reception of comedias writ large. In many ways, their appearance in the Philippine zeitgeist was the legacy of early modern European motifs, aesthetics, and narrative traditions, and thus an early incarnation of the imperial gaze that Filipinos closer to—and during—modernity would come to covet or reject. Just as English plays in the early modern period advanced an English vision of the world, even in settings ranging from ancient Greece (*The Masque of Blackness)* to early modern Venice and Cyprus (*Othello),* comedias advanced a Spanish vision of the world in the Philippines. In Gordon Sumner's study of Spanish early modern cultural production, he characterizes this vision as "*Pax Christiana*," which "becomes synonymous with a new [Spanish] golden age." (160). I will later return to an examination of

Pax Christiana more specifically, but for now it suffices to address comedias' rise among Filipinos in the 1600s and 1700s, and how the genre eventually transcended Spanish culture to proffer a more homogenous *European* vision of the world. Initially, comedias were speculated to have been "introduced by Spanish friars in the early seventeenth century," with a "Spanish-language comedia featuring Christians battling Muslims … performed in Manila in 1637 to celebrate Governor General Corcuera's victory against Sultan Kudarat of Magindanao two years earlier" (Rafael 105). Maguindanao (as it is more commonly spelled) is to this day a Muslim-majority province in the Philippines. Beyond the context Rafael gives, Nicanor Tiongson explains that even earlier, "the very first comedia" to arrive in the Philippines was "written by the Jesuit Vincent Puche in romance and Latin," and "presented by the students of the Jesuits in the cathedral of Cebu on the occasion of the visit of Bishop Pedro de Agurto in 1598" (16). "In the seventeenth century," Tiongson continues:

> … when Spain was trying to establish its foothold in the different islands, the comedia de santo was used to Christianize the natives, as in the play *Martirio de Santa Barbara,* which was presented in 1609 by the Boholanos in their own language. It is said that when the native audience saw Santa Barbara ascending to heaven and her persecutors burning in hell, they promptly threw their anito images and amulets into a bonfire for fear they would also suffer the fires of hell. (16)

Here, Tiongson provides an account of the ideological work performed by comedias. *Pax Christiana* arrives on Philippine shores in this project to "Christianize the natives," with comedias captivating Filipino imaginations with reifications of Christian lore. To be an audience observing the comedia is to be presented with the Spanish imperial gaze, interpreting and internalizing a way of seeing the world that has naturalized Spanish cultural ideals. The

enchantment, here, amounts to the destruction of "anito images and amulets," or effigies of indigenous Philippine spirits. The impression of reality via a Christian cosmology, presented to Filipinos as such, was so potent that it compelled them to destroy rivaling religious items.

Though his study focuses more on the 19th century Philippines, John D. Blanco's *Frontier Constitutions* foregrounds his analysis with insights about comedias setting precedents in Spanish and Philippine cultural production. "Largely inspired or borrowed from medieval epics revived in the Spanish Golden Age," Blanco explains, "these fantastic tales of chivalry often depicted the wars and love affairs between Christians and Moors. Their theatrical counterpart, the *kumedya* (from Sp., *comedia*), was staged as early as the seventeenth century and serves as the most popular form of entertainment during town fiestas and special occasions" (55). If the arrival of comedias led to their naturalization among Filipino audiences, the subsequent popularity of the kumedya*,* as a more localized and theatrical form, demonstrates the normalization of the practice. Also spelled komedya*,* the form is what Tiongson calls "the oldest genre of formal theatre in the Philippines," often specifically "a play in verse in three or more parts, with a convention of marches, stylized movements and delivery of verses, and choreographed battles." Furthermore, komedyas often featured "the lives of saints … or, more commonly, the strife between Christians and Moors, set in European and Middle Eastern kingdoms in the middle ages" (15). This is not to say that vernacular plays are inherently mouthpieces for imperial ideology, but that Spanish comedias and Philippine komedyas—as forms of cultural production—behave as technologies of empire that advanced *Pax Christiana* onto the early modern Philippine imaginary. Colonialism, a symptom of imperialism, manifests through these examples as ideological enchantment: the reshaping of the cultural terrain and symbolic field that saturated Philippine civil life.

Comedias also represented a struggle to contain the contested political realities of the early modern Philippines. Namely, the Philippine antagonisms cemented between the Christian and Islamic worlds during the Spanish period were echoed by the comedias that Rafael, Tiongson, and Blanco describe. At the time, the genre thus carried out a Spanish vision of the world that would cast Muslims as the enemy, while also consolidating the authority of the Spanish Catholic Church. This constitutes the fashioning of an imperial gaze that the comedia labored to share with its audience, giving them a chance to indulge in the riches that accompany such a position: ontological, epistemic, and cultural superiority to an ostensible other. Comedias, as forms of Spanish imperial cultural production, no doubt contributed to the drama of colonial antagonisms in the Philippines later dissected by Jose Rizal's *Noli Me Tangere* (1887). More broadly, the cultural and textual insistence on colonial culture and imperial ideology's superiority to that of the colonized subject's becomes a problem Frantz Fanon contends with in *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961). But the reason Rafael's insights on "Phantasmagorias of Europe" are so compelling to me is because of what it says about a more homogenized configuration of imperial ideology, abstracted from the specificity of Spanish empire and any contemporary thereof. Notably, Rafael, Tiongson, and Blanco all draw from the Philippine historiography of Wenceslao Retana, a 19th-20th century scholar on the Philippines whose 1909 study, *Noticias histórico-bibliográficas de el teatro en Filipinas desde sus orígines hasta 1898* ("Historical-bibliographical news of theater in the Philippines from its origins to 1898"), influenced subsequent scholarship on the early modern Philippines. Retana, Rafael says, "stumbles onto something curious about comedias that other scholars have echoed in his wake: there is not a single reference to the Philippines, to Filipinos, Chinese, Spanish, or to local Muslims in the entire range of vernacular dramas" (106). Rafael cites Renata's description of

later iterations of comedias that have foregone any pretext of historical or political resonance, at least on the surface. The absenting of even *Spanish* references and motifs suggests a loss of interest in "the social realities of their time … appear[ing] spurred by a 'migratory enthusiasm' to escape their social context" (107). Escapism, here, seems to void the comedia genre from any attachment to historical and political exigencies, seeing as "they invoke a past that is utterly fanciful and geographies that are wholly imaginary. 'Princes, dukes, counts… extraordinary adventures, incredible tragedies, all of them lavish… and *all of them outside of the Philippines,*' Retana notes of the comedias" (107). Perhaps this shift from Spanish colonial propaganda to Philippine audiences' escapism represents a rejection of the imperial gaze that comedias once embodied so overtly. However, I argue that this seeming depoliticization of the comedia's *Spanish-ness* in favor of a more quant and fanciful *European-ness* is in fact symptomatic of the imperial gaze's *habituation.* This all leads me to Rafael's greater point about comedias, as they "conjured a phantasmagoric 'Europe.'" (107). As Rafael elaborates:

> Social types such as Christians and Muslims were decontextualized into alien figures speaking local languages about the most distant locations . . . . "Europe" in the vernacular dramas thus came across as a collection of appearances and signs that were lifted from their putative origins and grafted onto native bodies and speech. To Spanish observers, such a process created absurd juxtapositions of the foreign and the local that rendered comedias barely comprehensible. Vernacular dramas estranged "Europe" from itself, splintering it from any unitary concept as a distinct place with its own history. (107)

Interestingly, native Philippine audiences' internalization of the foreign through comedias made Europe seemingly more comprehensible, whereas Spanish audiences found comedias "barely" so. At the same time, Filipinos' internalization consisted solely of an uncanny and self-

"estranged" Europe. This, to Rafael, is what he finds so *phantasmagoric* about it. It is here that the imperial gaze's naturalization among colonized subjects manages to lose legibility to the Spanish, as if naturalization changes the way this gaze *sees.* This abstracted, more *phantasmagoric* Europe made little sense to Spanish audiences of comedias but sufficed for Filipinos as a way of understanding Europe. This is not so much a reverse Orientalism, but a way in which a Spanish vision of the world became appropriated by Filipinos in its Europeanized homogenization. This appropriation also does not change the fact that the interlocutory life of empire, through the lionization of European tropes, motifs, and cultural elements within comedias, was sustained by their very consumption. Hybridity, both racial and cultural, is layered in the contradictory *repudiation* and *replication* of imperial ideology that Filipinos exemplify through their reception of comedias.

At this juncture, it is important to survey the comedia form in and of itself. Frederick de Armas attributes the "Star-Crossed Golden Age" of Spanish comedias to "the tension between the artistic and political situations" of Spain from "1580 to 1680." Specifically, "the *comedia* gained prominence at a time when the Spanish empire was beginning to decline. Playwrights such as Calderón de la Barca and Lope de Vega mirror both the dream of empire and threat of its fall through the use of mythology," among other devices of the Western tradition (*Star-Crossed* 7). Importantly, the Spanish period of the Philippines took place from 1565 to 1898. The ostensible decadence of the Spanish empire, no doubt compounded by the Spanish Black Legend, did not deter the eventual dissemination of the comedia form to the Philippines, as well as the passing down of Spanish imperial ideology therein. The investment Spain expressed in a Spanish vision of the world, projected through key locations such as Manila—the Philippines' capital city to this day—is something I will explore further in this chapter. The attitude is

presaged, for that matter, by the tendency among comedias to venerate Astraea, the Greek goddess of justice, as a herald for imperial prosperity and expansion. "In her imperial and religious garb," de Armas explains, "Astraea is utilized during" the aforementioned "Golden Age" as "a laudatory vehicle by authors who wish to portray the Catholic kings, Charles V, Philip II, and even Philip IV as a *dominus mundi* who brings about world order and peace" (*The Return of Astrea* 58). Elizabeth I, for that matter, was also represented through the invocation of Astraea in the 16th century, with plays such as John Marston's *Histrio-Mastix* (~1589) offering imagery of "Elizabeth-Astraea as the empress of the world, guardian of religion, patroness of peace, restorer of virtue" (Yates 60). Yet "others such as Fray Luis de León and Miguel de Cervantes," author of *Don Quixote,* "move away from the imperial goddess and prefer to view the golden age over which she presides as being actualized" (*The Return of Astrea* 58). Importantly, the Philippines itself was named after Philip II of Spain, the archipelago no doubt construed as enfolded into the *dominus mundi* de Armas describes. Appeals to the Western tradition, such as the personification of empire through the goddess Astraea, merits its own analysis as an early modern form of classical reception, but it escapes the scope of this dissertation.

That said, the broader ideological stakes of Astraea's importance in early modern Spanish cultural production have left an indelible impact on the Philippines' very own, with *Pax Christiana* leaving a palimpsestic trace that leads to the Philippine present. Namely, in Gordon Sumner's reception of de Armas's scholarship, he adds, "Astraea is thematically associated with the *pax Christiana,* and in this function, she represents the return of a new golden age" (150). Sumner devotes much of his own analysis to *Santa Casilda,* a 17th-century comedia by Lope de Vega, wherein the titular character is written in homage to the general idea of Astraea. In the

play, Casilda begins as a "fragile Moorish princess" who "describes herself as a maid of fifteen years who suffers an unknown malady … After a dream points the way to Christianity, Casilda's existential crisis is resolved," and she performs "an 'imperial' gesture in which she vows to free [her kingdom's] Christian slaves" (154). Throughout the rest of the play, Casilda's assumption of authority—and the increasing credibility of her leadership as a monarch—is concomitant with her conversion to Christianity. Like John Fletcher's 1641 *The Island Princess*—an English play whose narrative closure is found in the conversion of Muslim Indonesians to Christianity—*Santa Casilda* reproduces the imperial gaze of de Vega's rhetorical context. Specifically:

> An important facet of *Santa Casilda* that broadens the sphere of the mythical Astraea's influence upon the saint is that of Casilda's imperial role. Since Casilda is a princess who ultimately becomes the queen of Toledo, she represents the state and its political power. That she converts to Christianity is a harbinger of the Christian empire, or the *pax Christiana,* which is to flower in Spain centuries later. (159)

Casilda's initial Moorishness, in this case, is antithetical to the legitimacy of her eventual imperial authority—something she assumes in a manner inextricable from her Christian faith. The play is uninterested in the opposite possibility—of her embracing her Moorishness—as that would be antithetical to the projection of Christian empire that the play depicts. *Santa Casilda* stands as a prevailing example of the ideological commitments of the comedia form more broadly, which often served as a mouthpiece for the prerogatives of the Spanish empire. "*Santa Casilda,* like other *comedias de santos,* is both a record and a statement about Spains' empire" (160). Just as there is a Roman vision of the world often referred to as *Pax Romana,* as well as a British one referred to as *Pax Brittania,* Spain arrives here with *Pax Christiana* as its own vision

of the world. It is *Pax Christiana* that subtends the many narrative arcs of not only comedias in the Spanish context, but also of the *komedyas* in the Philippine context.

In Doreen Fernández's study of theater in Philippine culture, she first examines comedias as cultural exports from Spain to the Philippines. Specifically, "during much of the colonial period, Spanish culture was introduced through Nuevo España (Mexico), from where the Philippines was ruled by Spain through the Ministro de Ultramar. Soldiers of Adelantado Miguel Lopez de Legazpi," a conquistador who embarked on a late 16th-century expedition to the Philippines, "are believed to have been the ones who brought over from Mexico the metrical romances of chivalry and the lives of saints and martyrs," à la the aforementioned *comedias de santos,* "which were popular in their day and," once "indigenized," "became the native *awit* and *corrido*" (5). Notably, *awit* is traditionally understood as *sing* in Tagalog, while *korido*—the more Tagalog iteration of *corrido*—refers to narrative poetry. Even if the Spanish colonialist project in the Philippines still succeeded in many ways, the romantic qualities of the comedia form labored to mystify the practical and logistical tolls of that eventual 'success.' Komedyas appeared once comedias were "indigenized by reinterpretation, reorientation, and reshaping into modes and manners recognizably Philippine" (176), eventually coming "to be performed in every part of the islands—except the Muslim areas—in almost every vernacular, at almost every fiesta, where it was the principal attraction. … It eventually came to be written not only by the town or barrio folk poet, but by such polished poets as Huseng Sisiw and Francisco Baltazar. It certainly was the major entertainment form for at least half of the Spanish era" (10). We see, even in the indigenization from comedia to komedya, the exclusion of "Muslim areas," such that komedyas nonetheless partook in the social reproduction of age-old religious antagonisms. In fact, the komedya "was also certainly a form that propagated a formula of fantasy and escape,

with its kingdoms of Persia and Albanya, Turquia and Francia, its princes and princesses the likes of which the Philippine landscape would never see, whose problems only involved the unraveling of entangled loves, and never such pressing local problems as colonization, poverty, and exploitation." "Although the komedya was at least nominally a secular drama," Fernandez continues, "it was loaded with religious and colonial messages that, when absorbed by the enchanted and unsuspecting audience, eventually redounded to the benefit of the Spanish conqueror" (10). The Philippine imaginary was therefore shaped by imperial ideology in the production of a distinctly (yet nonspecifically) European ego-ideal: a romantic teleology of "fantasy and escape" that effaces the Philippines' "local problems" of colonial domination.

The phenomenon of comedias' transition into komedyas, then, can be read as the dissemination of Spanish imperial ideology into the Philippines, even if taken up by local cultural idioms and aesthetic priorities. Nonetheless, the genre and form of komedyas are indeed symptomatic of early modern Spain's political, religious, and teleological priorities. In her description of "the most famous comedia of all," Fernández refers to "the one in 1637 celebrating an actual victory of Cristianos over Moros. All this time, while Christianization proceeded apace in certain areas, Muslim Filipinos continued to resist the Spaniards, who sent expeditions to conquer them: forces, headed by Spanish officers but manned by Filipino soldiers" (6-7). Comedias, then, arrived as a way of heralding *Pax Christiana*'s expansion into the Philippines. The Spanish vision of the world that would put "Cristianos over Moros," or Christians over Moors, is reproduced by both the clarion call for such violence *within* comedias, as well as the imperial violence said comedias celebrated and inspired. Interestingly, the aforementioned Christian "forces were frequently defeated, a fact carefully deemphasized in the records available to most Filipinos" (7). Altogether, comedias labored to impute *Pax Christiana*

onto the Philippine context, but the lived reality of such labor remained fraught with ideological contradictions and physical dangers. The ostensible superiority of Spanish empire was called into question by the "carefully deemphasized" defeats that more frequently populated the events comedias celebrated.

"The komedya" even earned a unique appellation of "moro-moro" because, as Fernández explains,

> … it has traditionally dealt with Moro-Christian conflicts. These have not been the actual conflicts in Mindanao, but imagined wars in Arabia, Persia, Francia, Albanya. In most komedyas throughout Luzon and the Visayas (Islamic Mindanao of course has no komedya), the Moros are arrogant villains who are defeated by the Christians who have God on their side. Love between Moor and Christian must end in conversion and then marriage. This has made scholars believe that the komedya was encouraged by the Spaniards as part of the campaign for Christianity and against the Muslims in Mindanao, against whom Filipino Christian soldiers were led into battle by Spanish officers. (Footnote 6, 176)

The broader genre conventions no doubt echo *Santa Casilda's* example among Spanish comedias. The narrative closure achieved by Christian conversion, alongside the necessitated abjection of Moorishness, reveal the extension of *Pax Christiana*'s interlocutory life well into the Philippine context. "Imagined wars" in abstracted caricatures of Orientalized landscapes reveal komedyas' commitments to rendering a "phantasmagoric Europe" to which such places are contrasted. Fernández echoes this assessment in her own explication of the ontological and teleological commitments of komedyas:

> The referential world of Christian kings and Moro sultans, of court and battleground, may have originally been introduced in the process of Spanish colonization, but it has now become the realm of Philippine fantasy, where princesses are always beautiful and elegant, and princes always brave and handsome; where kings command regally and queens intercede mercifully; where people make love and make war, but all reassuringly ends in marriage and in conversion to Christianity, and thus in happiness and tranquility. This is how life should be, and how all stories should end. (177)

Over time, "Philippine fantasy" achieved a greater primacy than Spanish influence—and for that matter, a more explicitly Spanish *Pax Christiana*—that would abstract the once-specific context of Christians versus Moors. Even as "conversion to Christianity" remained synonymous with narrative closure, komedyas experienced a decontextualization from the finer details of Spanish imperial ideology, even as the form unwittingly reproduces it. The *phantasmagoric Europe* in question, which is something of a spiritual descendant of *Pax Christiana,* is also its ghost. For just as komedyas in the Philippines would outlive comedias from Spain (and komedyas' tropes and conventions continue in various forms through Philippine theatrical productions to this day), the *phantasmagoric Europe* that Rafael speaks of would outlive *Pax Christiana* in the Philippine context. The Philippine Revolution and American Occupation of the Philippines, as two instances of Spanish 'defeat,' perished the possibility of *Pax Christiana,* but did not eradicate a *phantasmagoric Europe* from the Philippine imaginary.

The loss of Spanish authority over the effects of such cultural production—let alone the loss of Spaniards' ability to understand it—does not lessen the effects of their early influence (their bringing comedias to the Philippines at all). Even "the komedya tradition in the Philippines," for that matter, "is in rapid decline. Except for a few rural municipalities," explains

Raul Pertierra, “it is presently rarely performed and the skills for its presentation, especially among village people, are gravely threatened” (207). The komedya form was first jeopardized by “the introduction of *sarsuelas,* a more modern theatre form,” then “recently by the advent of television and Tagalog movies … It can now only be preserved mainly as an instance of ‘traditional and museological culture,’ whose skills are consciously cultivated for the benefit of an informed and reflectively appreciative audience” (207). Furthermore, “the sarswela, with its music and dances and party scenes, appealed to the music-loving Filipino (one notices the same ingredients appearing in present-day movies), especially since the stories were neither about imagined Moros and Cristianos nor about Biblical characters but about men and women recognizable and even identifiable with oneself” (Fernandez 16). The sarsuelas thus signaled a sea change towards modernity in Philippine cultural production, as far as it represented a departure from antiquary conventions, characters, and settings.

That being said, I am arguing less for shining a light on the underappreciated legacy of komedyas, and more for their importance as steppingstones in the calcification of imperial ideology across the Philippines. Even if they represent a decontextualization of Spanish *Pax Christiana,* they nonetheless extend a European vision of the world in their generic renderings of “characters from diverse historical periods, with little attempt to observe historic or geographic boundaries” (Pertierra 205). This may seem like an eschewing of imperial impositions via the lack of interest in said boundaries, but it instead represents a prevailing fascination with *the idea of Europe.* Spanish empire’s specificity may fall away, but the interlocutory life of empire is preserved by this vagueness to the point of fantasy. This, for that matter, is precisely what Rafael addresses by coining a *phantasmagoric Europe.* And personally, I continue to see this *phantasmagoric Europe* all across the Philippines, and often in the most unexpected places.

While navigating Quezon City, Metro Manila in the summer of 2019, I could not help but notice an ornate medieval castle that was actually the exterior of a confectionery called Chocolate Lover. While traveling to the Tagaytay province, I spotted a store front decorated with garden gnomes, as well as a bed and breakfast, spa, and wedding destination named Sonya's Garden that was filled to the brim with fairy tale décor. It was as if I had stepped through a portal to a fanciful storybook world, replete with lush greenery, quaint European architecture, and the nagging sensation of fairies or gnomes waiting around the corner. The experience reminded me of my childhood in the Philippines, when I dreamed of visiting a famous theme park in Laguna, Philippines. This place, the Enchanted Kingdom, did not have any adjoining brands with a chokehold over generations of audiences, like Disney or Universal. What it did have, however, was a homogenized assemblage of European folkloric and fairy tale imagery, not unlike the fanciful European-ness of the comedias. Its mascot, Eldar the Wizard, lacks connected film, television, and franchise appearances like Mickey Mouse, but his portrayal communicates a sense of paternalistic safety to be found in the Enchanted Kingdom. Markedly, Eldar always sports an unbothered smile, confidently waving his wand while inviting all to the park. The Enchanted Kingdom even has a slogan, "The Magic Stays With You," that—in its own way—suggests a haunting (even if, for impressionable children such as myself back then, it was a welcome haunting). The slogan, while benign enough in its conscious intent, remains emblematic of the staying power of the *phantasmagoric Europe* Rafael describes. In such places as the Enchanted Kingdom, Sonya's Garden, and Chocolate Lover, a fanciful, homogenized European-ness remains a fixture in the Philippine imaginary, long after the shelf life of the Spanish comedia form.

The staying power of the *phantasmagoric Europe* brings to mind Arjun Appadurai's theorization of global disjunctures, namely "between economy, culture and politics" that permeate the "disorganized capitalism" of the modern world (296). Appadurai introduces readers to the term "ethnoscape," which refers to "the landscape of persons who constitute the shifting world in which live: tourists, immigrants, refugees, exiles, guestworkers and other moving groups and persons" which "constitute an essential feature of the world, and appear to affect the politics of and between nations to a hitherto unprecedent degree" (297). The "mediascape" refers to "the distribution of the electronic capabilities to produce and disseminate information," but also "to the images of the world created by these media … What is most important about these mediascapes is that they provide … large and complex repertoires of images, narratives, and 'ethnoscapes' to viewers throughout the world, in which the world of commodities and the world of 'news' and politics are profoundly mixed" (299). Appadurai's terminology helps situate the predominance of the *phantasmagoric Europe* in the Philippine imaginary, both as the afterlife of early modern Spanish cultural production and as the internalization of global mediascapes inhabited by Disney and other international media companies. In a discourse that escapes the scope of this chapter, Western fantasy has been criticized for perpetuating/reproducing Orientalizing tropes in many of its most influential titles, such as J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* (1954). Racial essentialisms informing the coding of fantasy races such as orcs, dwarves, and elves, for example, is the subject of much debate. Thus, while there is an argument to be made for the Western fantasy genre's symptomatic demonstrations of a *phantasmagoric Europe*, I am currently speaking more on the *phantasmagoric Europe*'s interlocutory life in non-Western cultural production's *reception to the West.* That understanding includes seemingly

random fairy tale aesthetics in modern Philippine cityscapes and towns, as well as fantasy narrative conventions found in early modern Philippine vernacular plays.

To elaborate on the specific disjuncture between the Philippine ethnoscape and the Western fantasy/fairy tale mediascape at play in my examples, I turn to Marina Warner's own analysis of the nursery rhyme form in her study on art, *Forms of Enchantment*. Namely:

> The nursery rhyme is a form of verse that's almost unknown in the rest of Europe, and the meanings of most have been forgotten, though the inspired sleuthing taken by folklorists … has solved some enigmas. When we discover who 'Mary Mary quite contrary' might be (Mary Queen of Scots), or which King is in the counting house counting out his money, we realize that the spell of the rhyme lies elsewhere. The classic nursery rhyme's simplicity is funny ('The cow jumped over the moon') and can raise goosebumps (those 'three blind mice'). The very ordinariness of the verse attaches it to general experience, brings it into everyone's back garden, as it were, where it flips over into the oracular. To be uncanny – *unheimlich* – there has to be trust in the idea of home – *heimlich* – in the first place – but a home that's become odd, prickly with desire. (Loc. 271)

Compellingly, Warner attributes an "uncanny" element to the popularity of nursery rhymes, in so far as they are divorced from a particular historical context yet produce a homogenized vision of *a* European world. Therein lies the disjuncture that the *phantasmagoric Europe* represents. For while the comedia obviously has different formal, aesthetic, and logistical qualities, the ideological work of the nursery rhyme becomes a useful frame of reference for describing the *uncanny* nature of the phantasmagoria proper. Another of Warner's contributions,

Phantasmagoria: Spirit Visions, Metaphors, and Media into the Twenty-First Century, returns us to the captivating logics of enchantment that permeated the early modern period:

> When the Jesuit Athanasius Kircher began making painted slides and projecting them with a 'magic lantern' in Rome in the 1640s, he pictured devils and visions that could not be seen with the eyes of the body. In tracking the idea of the mind's eye and the development of tools for broadcasting its phantasms into the exterior world," Warner reveals "how optical devices did not concentrate solely on extending the faculty of sight as an organ of sense, but developed concurrently as instruments of imagination. Media that expanded the faculties, such as microscopes and telescopes, and drawing aids such as the Claude glass and the camera lucida, made possible visions that bodily eyes could not gain unassisted, and immeasurably increased empirical observation. (14-15)

For my purposes, what is *phantasmagoric* about the *phantasmagoric Europe* in the Philippines is not just the fabrication of a Europe that has never been, but also the fabrication of an "idea of home" that differs from the Philippines proper. Though the *comedia* was obviously not an optical device like Warner's examples above, it was a form of cultural production that functioned as an "instrument of imagination," reframing Filipino audiences' perception of the world and their place in it with a similar *transcendental logic.* The Western mediascape and the Philippine ethnoscape, here, are at odds. Yet at the same time, the appeal of the *phantasmagoric Europe* to the Philippine imaginary lies in its ability to relocate the Filipino audience's "idea of home" *to Europe instead of the Philippines.* This is not to indict the Philippine imaginary for its prolongation of the *phantasmagoric Europe*, but to dissect this phenomenon as a symptom of imperial ideology made manifest during the Spanish era of the Philippines.

What, in this case, are the broader consequences of this inheritance of an "idea of home"? I thus turn to studies on Spanish imperial ideology as such, not only to examine the way it would inform comedias in the 15th and 16th centuries, but also how Spanish imperial ideology flourished and refined itself during the early modern period. How, in many instances, did it enter contestations with the imperial ideologies of other European nations, such as England? The Spanish Black Legend, for example, refers to a popular understanding of Spain as uniquely barbaric in its colonial practices, all for rival nations who espouse this mentality to sublimate their own violent conquests. This act of sublimation, I argue, contributes to a homogenized notion of Europeanness created specifically to exclude Spain. Such thinking appears even in the subject of my second chapter, Jose Rizal's 1887 novel *Noli Me Tangere,* wherein the Filipino protagonist is conditioned to believe Spain is uniquely brutal after returning from a cosmopolitan education across Europe. A generalized Europeanness—indeed, a phantasmagorical one, given its absent presence in Rizal's writings—rescues the Filipino from Spanish tyranny. But in exploring what the Filipino escapes from, what is it that the Filipino escapes *to?* To answer this, a better understanding of Spanish imperial ideology is needed to not only explain Filipinos' inheritance of an imperial gaze, but also how racial hierarchies, antagonisms, and ontologies established in the early modern period construct a necessary backdrop for how we understand imperial ideology into modernity. This is not to contest and blur the lines of any discrete periodization between the past and present, but to say that texts from the early modern period and texts today—especially where they concern the Global South—*continue to speak to each other.*

I will now throw into relief the symbolic field that Filipinos would come to inherit from a quotidian atmosphere of colonial cultural production, including the comedia form passed to them

from the Spanish. Importantly, Rafael presents the caveat that "writers and actors" of comedias "did not … merely reproduce the logic and interests of the colonial-Christian order. For the very popularity of comedias suggested," Rafael argues, "other interests at work which, while appearing to reaffirm the social and ideological boundaries set by colonial authorities, also tended to redraw these" (103). In his analysis of comedias that carried a more overtly political bent, Rafael explains the general narrative content of these plays:

> Performances of comedias drew large crowds from within as well as outside the town. Such plays were amalgamations of the various motifs, characters and geographic settings derived from European, mostly Spanish, metrical romances … Plots revolved around the forbidden love between a Christian prince or princess and his or her Moorish counterpart. Disrupting the filial relationship between royal parents and their children, such love invariably led to a series of abductions and searches, highly choreographed battle scenes, magical encounters with monsters, extended discourses on love lost and regained, vows of vengeance, and boasts of physical prowess. After stretching more than three or four hours through each of the several nights of the town fiesta, performances ended abruptly with the hurried, almost casual conversion of the Moors to Christianity and the reconciliation of the warring families. (104)

While I have discussed this antagonism through the lens of Spanish *Pax Christiana,* Rafael's passage on the antagonism between the Christian and Islamic world will is pivotal to understanding the Philippines' reception to comedias and their conventions. Though Rafael does not elaborate any further on the political content and implications of these examples, they undoubtedly reflect a Christian/Moor binarism entrenched in Spanish imperial ideology that then permeates Philippine colonial history. A chapter of Sony Bolton's 2023 study on Philippine

cosmopolitanism and its consequences, *Crip Colony,* emphasizes the epistemic and ideological violence of this binarism. "Colonial agents made meaning of the relative uncivilization of Moro [or Muslim] Filipinos vis-à-vis the successfully capacitated Filipinos that acted as their educational agents precisely through speculation on their propensity to inhabit mental states of madness, frenzy, and fury" (133). Moro "madness," per Bolton's description, carries with it an exigency for resolution in some way, such as the cathartic denouements of comedias that culminate in a Muslim character's conversion to Christianity. For the colonial agents invested in fashioning a Moro other, engagement with the Western tradition—in so far as it represented the Christian world—was tantamount to *belonging to it.* By the time of "Philippine conditional independence" that was "conferred with the US congressional Tydings-McDuffie Act (passed on March 24, 1934)," these pretensions still loomed large in the cosmopolitan Philippine imagination—a *phantasmagoric Europe* that has continued to enchant. In so doing, the Morophobia of old remained in "the madness" attributed to the Moro, a madness that "became a way to differentiate between the relative capacities among subjects under US tutelage, thus calcifying racialized nontribal versus tribal and Christian versus non-Christian differentiation for adjudicating capacity for self-government" (133). This way of thinking is the culmination of what was once the fanciful, romantic deployment of the Christian/Moor binarism through the comedias. Comedias' legacy from the early modern Philippines under Spanish rule to the 20th century Philippines under American rule reveals how this ideology has not only been passed down to Filipinos, but also been interpreted by cosmopolitan and Christian Filipinos as their inheritance. The initial lionization of a Christian world, eventually abstracted into the aesthetic tableau of medieval fantasies and fairy tales, represents a disjuncture that the interlocutory life of

empire nonetheless *survives.* Even though the specificity of Spanish empire fell from grace, empire as an enterprise continues through regimes of both violence and enchantment.

At this juncture, it is important to understand the rhetorical situation of the comedias, particularly in the way Spain's brand of early modern imperial ideology affected jurisprudence and racial/cultural politics in Manila. Specifically, "the Spanish government in Manila sought to regulate and segregate the diverse populations that were keys to their prosperity" (Crewe 57). Here, scholar Ryan Crewe addresses the fact that during the Spanish period in the Philippines, Manila served as a cultural and commercial contact zone between Eastern and Western nations. As a booming commercial center, Manila "was supposed to be an exclusively Christian city, a 'Rome of the East' destined to extend Christianity outward into Asia along the very same trade routes that converged there. Spanish sovereignty was plain: Catholicism was 'the domain into which all other social relations had to enter'" (57). Spanish imperial designs for Manila thus aspired to flatten the city's multiculturalism under the rubric of Christian doctrine, as if—like comedias—the drama of Manila's history was also something to resolve with the narrative closure of Christian conversion. One way Spain attempted to advance this vision was through *convivencia,* or "living together," that "in Manila is particularly evident in the records of the Inquisition, which was charged with policing creed and caste. The records of the Holy Office bear witness not only to official efforts to monitor and control Manila's diversity; they also reveal a remarkable degree of popular participation in both persecution and tolerance" (57). For example, "Upon hearing of transgressions that fell within the purview of the Holy Office, confessors used the leverage of absolution to force their confessants to report their crimes. Caught in the Inquisition's snares of guilt and fear, most of the crimes reported in Manila were actually self-denunciations that dealt with magical practices and the exchange of magical

knowledge across cultures" (57). In the effort to homogenize Manila, the Spanish Inquisition harshly policed a racially and culturally heterogenous community, intimidating their subjects into self-confessions of wayward occultism.

In these designs was the desire to consolidate a Spanish vision of the world—a Christianized world—with Manila heralded as the city that would embody the ubiquity of this vision. The untenability of this same vision, however, was cemented by the very multiculturalism Spain hoped to extinguish. Manila was viewed "not only as a vulnerable Christian city surrounded by multiple external spiritual threats, but also as a babel: a city whose diverse multitudes and materialism could undermine its providential purpose" (60). To elaborate, Crewe adds that "this was a city of startling hybridity … where the Virgin of Guadalupe was a neighbor of Guanyin, a bodhissatva venerated by Buddhists and adherents of Chinese folk religion. From its founding, Spanish civil authorities sought to control the city's diversity through segregation" (61). Though Crewe's examples do not explore the racialization of Filipinos at the time, they do speak to the political priorities of Spain in its governance *of* the Philippines. The caveat of framing Manila as the "Rome of the East" is this invitation of a cultural pluralism that remained at odds with any consolidation of Spain's imperial ideology both legally and structurally. Undoubtedly, Manila was positioned as a monument to the Western humanist reception of Roman empire that the Spanish construed as their inheritance. What they struggled to control, however, was what a burgeoning multicultural populace would *also* make of this inheritance.

Under these conditions, after all, there was no easy way to make manifest the Christianized imperial vision of the world that the Spanish so coveted. "As early as 1592," for example, "churchmen warned of the dangers of intermingling after curious Spanish residents were drawn to the theatre and pyrotechnics of Chinese New Year. 'They enjoyed [seeing] the

lively movements and representations' of the spectacle, wrote a sympathetic Spanish official" (61). While this goes to show that foreign cultural and religious practices were not rejected wholesale by Spanish residents of Manila, even their own curiosity towards or enjoyment of those practices were subject to stigma by Spanish leaders. Hence the manner in which "Church officials disagreed" with the Spanish official's assessment, the former having "denounced the entire festival as a pagan celebration. Accordingly, they issued an edict banning all Christian involvement in the festivities" (61). To think of Spanish governance of Manila in concert with the ubiquity of comedias, whose arrival in the Philippines Rafael attributes to the "late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries" (103), the rhetorical situation of the komedya is clear, as far as it is a form of Philippine cultural production that descends from comedias, themselves symptomatic of Spanish imperial ideology. Even if Rafael demonstrates that obeisance to Spanish imperial ideology was inconsistent among the producers of comedias/komedyas well into the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the impact of Spanish imperial ideology as such delimited the possibilities of what stories comedias could tell. "The fictionalized and formulaic recounting of 'the lives and loves of royal characters' from Moorish and Christian kingdoms of medieval Europe and Persia," rendered "in the various vernacular languages" of the Philippines, pass something of an imperial gaze to the audiences of these works (Rafael 103). That is, the imperial gaze in this context was the framework through which Filipinos were conditioned to consume comedias. Comedias, as far as they represented a fanciful, more simplified Europeanized universe, reflected the resolution of aforementioned Spanish anxieties over early modern Manila:

> In the New World and in the Philippines, Spanish authorities feared the emergence of a vast underclass, or *plebe,* composed of an undifferentiated—and therefore

> uncontrollable—mass of ethnic New Christians, poor and criminal Spaniards, and their mestizo progeny. In 1589 a Dominican friar declared that he "could not even write of the mestizos, the mixed-race people here, for in Manila there is no limit to the combinations of peoples with peoples." (Crewe 64)

To synthesize the analyses of both Rafael and Crewe, I claim that the simplified, more fanciful worlds of comedias labored to resolve the issue of "undifferentiated" and "uncontrollable" masses populating the early modern Philippines. Ironically, what the mixed Philippine populations Crewe calls "undifferentiated" in the eyes of the Spanish were in fact populations so diluted and diverse that they escaped easy categorization. The Christian and Moor binarism which once held more overt political resonances in earlier comedias then became normalized as relatively banal motifs in later iterations, reflecting a culmination of this desire to contain the Philippines' demographic pluralities.

A strategy for this containment, of course, arrived in the form of specific racializations and subsequent racial hierarchies. As Crewe explains, "the categories *indio, japona, cafre,* Ternatese, and even mestizo and mulato were both ethnic and religious because the character and *naturaleza* (disposition) of these recent converts were still heavily influenced by the religions and superstitions of their ancestors" (Crewe 65). The efforts Crewe describes were thus not an attempt to understand the plurality of Manila's denizens as such, but rather to conform them to a Spanish imperial understanding of difference predicated on the foreignness—and thus wickedness—of each group's behaviors. "Caste," as an ideological construct, "identified populations that inquisitors and accusers presumed were predisposed to foment superstition, sorcery, and heresy" (65). In a vivid example of caste in practice, Crewe describes the time "the Spanish soldier Miguel Garcia accused the Mexican mestiza woman who had performed

divination rites for him of being a woman of *mala vida* (bad living)." Garcia "associated her with a series of assumptions that mestizos were not pure in the faith. The official repression of magical practices thus overlapped with predominating racial typologies that associated descendants of non-Christians with proscribed beliefs and practices" (65). Race in early modern Manila was indeed predicated less on phenotypical traits—though they certainly still played a role—than they were on culture, religion, and (as I will explore later) blood. The Mexican mestiza woman's otherness was a symptom of her impurity, not only in faith, but in cultural background—for both, as far as they were aberrations from normative Spanish behaviors, were symptomatic of each other.

To address more specifically how these racializations affected Filipinos, Imke Rath's scholarship speaks of "the ancient Tagalog religion, where the depiction made by Spanish missionaries can hardly be contrasted with any native source" (14). Namely, "figures and beings [were] introduced as 'priests of the devil' (*Ministros del demonio*) by two Franciscan authors. By calling them such, the missionaries place[d] them within a framework of interpretation drawing on an Early Modern Catholic demonology that formed the basis of judgments made by the Spanish Inquisition" (14). This attribution of devilry to Filipinos—or whoever Spain taxonomized as such among increasingly "undifferentiated" masses—contributed to their racialization as other in the early modern Spanish context, though this attribution lacked a monopolizing fixation on racial phenotypes. Even if such thinking was present, what struck Spanish missionaries as more essential to confront was the ostensibly demonic *natures* of Filipinos. This thinking "implicitly equipped the described beings with characteristics typical of the Early Modern Catholic idea of witches" (14), at the time rendering them unfit to be the romantic, generically Europeanized protagonists of folktales and narratives introduced to the

Philippines through comedias. Rather, 'demonic' Filipinos construed here were more suitably secondary characters or antagonists in need of Christian conversion: a tool not only in service of narrative closure for comedias, but for the struggles of Spanish empire in its colonies writ large. This struggle is encapsulated by the anxieties surrounding "the 'Rome of the East' of Spanish religious imaginations," which "had to coexist with the entrepot that enriched it" (Crewe 67). Early modern Manila experienced "this constant tension and interdependence between its occult cosmopolitanism and its early modern culture of ethnoreligious exclusion. Even when the unresolved anxieties" of the Spanish "erupted into expulsions and massacres, each time this plural global society returned to its tense equilibrium, balancing everyday practices of cosmopolitanism with its delusional longings for purity" (67). I argue that comedias as Rafael describes them are emblematic of a Spanish longing for purity that is synonymous with the consolidation of Spain's imperial vision of the world. The racialization of Filipinos as demonic—and beyond that, of other cultures and racial forms as aberrations from the Christianized Spanish norm—reveal a desire all too evident in the ideological constructions that populate comedias. Spanish cultural production, as far as it sought to resolve these anxieties through comedias, passed those same anxieties and political priorities down to Filipinos, hence the hegemony of Christianity and lionization of whiteness and European aesthetics that persist in Philippine culture to this day.

So far, however, I have only spoken of a *Spanish* imperial vision of the world. What I hope to illustrate as well, however, is the plurality of the imperial gaze. As previously stated, rival European nations in the early modern period fashioned the Spanish Black Legend--the idea that the Spanish empire was uniquely barbaric in its practices – to sublimate the wrongdoings of other empires, such as England. As Irene Silverblatt explains:

> From its beginnings, England was obsessed with Spain. England had to confront Spain before it, too, could become a player in the West's new political order, and their battles were fought on both religious and secular grounds. The Inquisition – the defender of Catholicism and false arbiter of heresy – became in England's propaganda wars – or Black Legend – the emblem of Spain's moral and political degeneracy. (99)

For every encounter with a religious or cultural other that fed the Spanish's anxieties, the Spanish themselves were recipients of a distinct othering by their rivals. I do not believe this suggests that Spain ever suffered from a lower hegemonic position compared to other countries, but that this othering was a way of 'one-upping' Spain in the grander tableau of early modern imperial contests. For indeed, "even as Spain goes to great pains … racializing and othering *conversos and moriscos* – Jews and Moors who had undergone forced conversion – rival European states busily construct Spain as precisely the racial other of Europe" (Fuchs 88). To account for Spain's racial othering as such, scholar Barbara Fuchs explores "the expansion of maurophilia," or Spain's fascination with Moors, "from literary curiosity to cultural phenomenon. The prolonged attachment to Moorish culture in not just literary texts but the culture at large," including comedias, which exist beyond the scope of Fuchs' argument, "highlights the complex relation of Spanish national identity to that which it attempts to deny" (91). Moors were positioned in early modern Spain as not only a racial, cultural, and religious other, but as something in need of redemption through conversion within the narrative closures of cultural production, such as comedias. Ironically, Spain's fixation on Moorishness as both an object of fascination and an aberration to be remedied is precisely what gave rival nations the arsenal to fashion the so-called Black Legend. "Beyond the culture's psychic investment in the other," Fuchs describes a "need to examine the material investment manifested in clothing,

jousting games, and other forms that Spain adopts wholesale from al-Andalus," referring to Muslim territories in Iberia (90). "For if Spain's self-representation continually invokes Moorish culture, in both a domestic and international context, when other nations rehearse Spain's maurophilia they often transform it into an essentialized discourse of racism and xenophobia that negates Spain's place within Europe" (90-91). In essentializing Moorish culture, Spain itself was essentialized by its rivals, as if Spain had been degraded by the populations it chose to colonize. This is an obvious hypocrisy given the populations that empires such as England, France, and Belgium would subjugate, but it was nonetheless powerful and convincing in its ability to *sublimate* said subjugations.

To elaborate on how convincing the Spanish Black Legend was as a phenomenon, Fuchs meditates on the ubiquity of "anti-Spanish propaganda" in the early modern period, wherein "Spain is consistently associated with Isla, with Africa, with dark peoples. It is important to recover the essentializing 'blackness' of this cultural mythology: critics typically read it metaphorically, as a figure for Spain's cruelty and greed in the New World, yet it often refers in unambiguous terms to Spain's racial difference, its *essential* Moorishness" (94). Interestingly, Fuchs does not seem all too invested in the Black Legend's emphasis on "Spain's cruelty and greed," but I do believe downplaying these aspects creates an incomplete picture of Spanish imperial ideology. What I find generative in Fuchs' observations, nonetheless, is her acknowledgment that "this usage" of the Black Legend "in no way counters the frequent association of blackness with evil in the early modern period," even as it "pointedly conflates the metaphorical with a literal sense, in an attempt to render Spain visibly, biologically black. This effort is particularly striking for its deliberate misrepresentation of the racialization of difference within Spain" (94). I cite Fuchs' observation not to stress a particular ethical plight of Spain's,

but to illustrate how Spanish empire was rhetorically positioned as a scapegoat for the injustices concomitant with imperial extraction and expansion. This "attempt to render Spain visibly, biologically black" is not empirical work, but phantasmagoric dreamwork: a projection that escapes biological sight but saturates the early modern imagination. Associating Spanishness with Moorishness reinforces the "metaphorical" and "literal" evil attributed to Moorishness, even if it is not synonymous with a modern understanding of racial minoritization and—particularly—Blackness. For as Fuchs explains:

> Although a racism based on physical appearance did exist, and blacks were singled out for their color, Moors were not reliably identifiable in this way. The phenotypical notion of race was emphatically not the main focus for Spaniards in the sixteenth century, particularly where Moors were concerned. As the grim documents that inventory the sale and redemption of slaves during the Moorish rebellion in the Alpujarras (1569-1571) demonstrate, Moors came in all shades, from "color moreno" (tawny) or "color negra" (black) to "color blanco que tira un poco a membrillo cocho" (white tending to cooked quince) and even, frequently, "color blanca" (white). (94-95)

Fuchs' account reveals the plurality and hierarchization of Moorishness in Spanish culture, which resonates with early modern scholarship's general discourse about/theorization of the malleability of race in the period. However, this same account also reveals the structural violence and hierarchization that still took place, even when examined without a presentist reading. What Fuchs ultimately labors to say, however, is that Spain's fixation on Moors was not always tantamount to the abjection or dehumanization of the latter. That is, "sympathetic depictions of Moorish women in literary or historiographical texts occasionally portray them as blonde, Petrarchan beauties indistinguishable from their European counterparts" (95). This leads Fuchs

to conclude that, "even if outside Spain skin color is enlisted to essentialize difference, blackness emphatically does not equal Moorishness within Spain" (95). While generally, I agree with the lattermost claim that Moorishness and blackness are not one to one in early modern Spanish culture, "sympathetic depictions of Moorish women … as blonde, Petrarchan beauties" is all too emblematic of the *gaze* those depictions were fashioned for. It strikes me as perfectly possible, here, that the whitening of the Moor in early modern Spanish cultural production was a way of making the Moor's trials and tribulations more *legible* to readers and audiences. My response to Fuchs, then, is less of a "no, but" and more of a "yes, and." Because indeed:

> Spanish racial hysteria focused on covert cultural and religious practices, and on the much more ambiguous register of blood. *Limpieza de sangre* (blood purity) was defined as the absence of Jewish or Moorish forebears for a particular person or family, yet there was a widespread consensus within Spain—amply reflected in satirical texts—that it was almost impossible to determine in any authentic fashion whether anyone was free of the Semitic taint. (Fuchs 95)

Jews and Muslims were undoubtedly denigrated in early modern Spain, and the terms of that denigration differ from more contemporary traditions of antisemitism and islamophobia. "Limpieza de sangre," or blood purity, is also what David Nirenberg describes as "the idea that the reproduction of culture is embedded in the reproduction of the flesh. It is upon this logic that new boundaries would be built between Christian and 'Jew' in Spain" (82), as well as between Christian and Muslim or between Christian and 'demonic' Filipino. In his analysis of "the *Alborayque* (ca. 1455-1465)," Nirenberg describes a "treatise" that "maps moral attributes and cultural practices of the *conversos*"—or converted Jews—"onto diverse body parts of the Alborayque, the Qur'anic composite beast … that carried Muhammed to heaven" (81).

Hybridity, in the Spanish text Nirenberg highlights, is construed as a debilitating impurity that casts the *converso* as other. Whether the Alborayque represents the Islamification of Jews or the Judaization of Islam, both were construed as external to the early modern Spanish ego-ideal. Conversion, as a method of narrative closure in contemporary cultural production, was still not conceived as true assimilation into Spanish civil society. Instead, conversion served to vivify existing racial hierarchies.

Now, let us shift our gaze to the reign of the subsequent empire, the United States, for another example of ideological inheritance through the popular arts, as we trade *Pax Christiana* for *Pax Americana.* Vaudeville, while originally French, "was introduced to the Philippines by the Americans, mainly as entertainment for American troops." As the first and foremost proponent of *bodabil,* "Luis Borromeo, who returned from the U.S. in 1921," "introduced chorus girls, jazz, minstrel songs, skits, variety acts, and such showbiz names as Dimples, Toy Toy, Hanasan, and the Alabama Brothers" (Fernandez, "Philippine Theater in English" 20). Indigenized as *bodabil,* the art form "proved how limber was the Filipino entertainer, how easy it was for him or her to catch American rhythms, and how painless and effective a tool popular culture was in the Americanization of the Filipino. The songs, dances, and entertainment forms of most Filipinos until the 1960s were undeniably patterned on the American dream. American popular culture embodied, for decades, their images of beauty and excellence, of life and of self" (Fernandez, *Palabas* 319). To extend the logic of Vicente Rafael's "phantasmagoric Europe," exemplified by komedyas, bodabil exemplifies what I am calling a "phantasmagoric America" in turn, wherein the symbolic field of Philippine cultural production is profoundly shaped by the teleological and aesthetic trappings of "the American dream."

Nick Joaquin, a prolific Filipino writer who actively wrote from 1937 to 2003, will be a prominent subject in my third chapter. Relevant here, however, is his awareness of this effect and commentary on its relationship to the Philippine imaginary. In his 1961 novel *The Woman Who Had Two Navels,* a Hong Kong-based Filipino musician cynically meditates on the Americanization of Manila, where he visits:

> In the world of [Filipinos'] minds, they moved with cool expertness, rich and poor, among marble halls and ivory baths and luxurious wardrobes; through streets that were all Park Avenues, where every building was an Empire State, and every car a Rolls-Royce; where the men were all Pierpont Morgans, and all the women unaging, unfading Betty Grables. One might have to eat cold rice and squat on a pail in the outhouse and sleep on a bug-ridden floor: one sighed and pressed a scented handkerchief to one's nose and invoked the vicarious magic of one's wristwatch (just what all the Wall Street tycoons are wearing now) or of one's evening dress (just what all the New York hostesses are wearing now) against the cold rice, the rank pail, the buggy floor. . . . One smiled and floated away, insulated from all the drab horror of inadequate reality by the ultra-perfect, colossal, stupendous, technicolored magnificence of the Great American Dream. (94)

What Joaquin attends to, here, is the hallucinatory dreamwork of Americanization—which includes vaudeville—in a manner not dissimilar to the enchantments of Spanish komedyas. This mimicry, indicative of a cathectic longing for the "Great American Dream," reverberates through the historical record that Fernandez presents. In bodabil's "heyday … it was the venue by which American musical culture came painlessly, easily, and almost unnoticeably into Philippine life. The stars … were known for songs, dances, or comedy that were local versions of

American vaudeville acts. Katy de la Cruz was a torch singer a la Sophie Tucker; Canuplin confessedly copied Charlie Chaplin, but eventually developed his own pathos and humor; Bayani Casimiro started out as the Philippine Fred Astaire … The culmination of this is seen in the profusion of contests for 'The ___ (Johnny Mathis, Joni James, Elvis Presley, Perry Como, etc.) of the Philippines'" (*Palabas* 20). Through the advent of bodabil and its many practitioners, Philippine social life came to embrace a "painless" and "unnoticeable" double-consciousness of sorts, wherein which American standards of being heralded a new ego-ideal for the Filipino. Canuplin, while an example of someone who one day deviated from his inspiration, had to navigate, mediate, and eventually step outside of Charlie Chaplin's shadow. Joaquin's literary example is significant to me for that reason, highlighting the consequential incompleteness entailed by a split identity—between the social realities of the Filipino and the aspirational status of the "American." *The Woman Who Had Two Navels* concerns characters with divided selves. If the navel symbolically is the center of something, as in the Greek concept of the *omphalos*—or navel of the world—what do we make of a being with two centers?

This split represents a serious issue in a Philippine zeitgeist that continues to involve the advertisement and sale of skin-whitening creams, advertisements on Manila streets that promote "European living in the metro," and resorts that—while enjoyable to visit—wax nostalgic about the Spanish era in its aesthetic flourishes (I refer specifically to *Las Casas Filipinas de Acuzar* in Bataan). However, I would be remiss to exclude zarzuelas, or Spanish musical plays, prolific during the transition from Spanish to American dominion over the Philippines. The first Filipino zarzuela, staged in 1900, led to the advent of the *sarswela,* which, with "its music and dances and party scenes, appealed to the music-loving Filipino … especially since the stories were neither about imagined Moros and Christianos nor about Biblical characters but men and women

recognizable and even identifiable with oneself" (*Palabas* 16). Anril Pineda Tiatco and Bryan Levina Viray give an example of common imagery in sarswelas: "the use of a sun rising and filling the stage with rosy hues, a statue of the goddess of liberty coming to life and exhorting the people to conquer and die for her, and a huge eagle threatening to eat the people were all protestations against the colonial situation under the Americans. In one performance of a *drama simbolico,* the Filipino audience cheered as they discreetly noticed the Filipino flag being formed from the performers' dresses as they converge on the center stage" (90). This provoked the American government's passing of the Philippine Sedition Act, Act No. 291, on November 4, 1901, outlawing any expression of rebellion/sedition against the occupation. *Sarswelas* provided an outlet for Philippine performers to articulate an anti-imperial and decolonial nationalism through the popular arts, through such subliminal acts that—later in time—find parallels in both *komedyas* and *bodabil.*

The example of Francisco Baltazar, pen name of Francisco Balagtas, whose work *Florante at Laura* was depicted on previous slides, offers a different way of thinking about the popular of *komedyas.* "The metrical romances told of the lives, loves, and war of monarchs in kingdoms such as Turkey, Cairo, Valencia, France, Italy, and Portugal (settings as remote and alien to Filipinos as Albania), and they all promised fairy-tale endings. 'These romances provided a temporary release from the harsh realities of existence,' explains Damiana Eugenio. 'They were, the only reading matter that the masses could safely enjoy during a period of strict political and literary censorship'" by the Spanish (Jurilla 136). Balagtas in particular "was thought to have employed elements far removed from nineteenth-century Philippine society to get his poem past the strict censorship of the government and the Church. Thus his fantastic characters and settings have been regarded as symbolic, and *Florante at Laura* has come to be

read consequently as a stirring piece of patriotism—a depiction of the sufferings of the Filipino people under the oppressive Spanish colonial regime" (132). There is thus a subliminal element of *komedyas'* flourishing worth acknowledging, here, in so far as their obfuscations of Philippine social realities represented an attempt to elude Spanish censorship. This phenomenon, however, is a double-edged sword. Balagtas exemplifies the conditions of possibility for both *replication of* and *resistance to* imperial ideology, as the delimiting of the Philippine symbolic field as such also led to the inculcation of European aesthetic and narrative trappings I have described.

Bodabil, for that matter, has a similar history of subliminal resistance. "During the Japanese Occupation of the Philippines (1941-1945) … the Japanese government shut down many theatre houses in fear of inciting hatred from the audiences as in the *drama simbolico,* but allowed the staging of the *bodabil* as they were convinced that it was only meant to entertain people," not realizing that "*bodabil* performances featured anti-Japanese skits," often involving the ridicule of Japanese soldiers (Tiatco & Viray 90). The sarswelas, as the historical connective tissue between komedyas and bodabil, reveal the conditions of possibility for resistance even amidst the imbrications of cultural inter-imperialism. *Sarswelas,* as a Spanish imperial remnant, gave Filipinos the tools to stage protest theatre against the American empire. *Bodabil,* as an *American* imperial remnant, gave Filipinos similar tools to resist the Japanese empire.

In all this, I see how the language of replication—à la the komedya—as well as the language of resistance—à la the sarswela—remain subtended by the interlocutory life of empire. That is, imperial cultural production shapes and delimits not only the cathectic and teleological longings of its subjects, as expressed through komedyas and bodabil, but also the visual, narrative, and theatrical languages that the same subjects use to articulate resistance. This is not to undermine any episode of resistance as such, but to illustrate how totalizing—like air—

imperial ideology can be, saturating the symbolic field of the colonized subject. Perhaps it is not the house of the master that one must dismantle, but a stage.

CHAPTER 2

Towards the Tropical Gothic: Literatures of the Global South, Into Modernity

"Voice of the Persecuted": Interrogating the "Colonized Intellectual" in José Rizal's Oeuvre

Throughout this dissertation, one will find that I consistently turn to Frantz Fanon's 1961 treatise, *The Wretched of the Earth,* for his analysis of the psychic wounds of colonialism on the colonized subject. In applying his analysis to any colonial context beyond the confines of French Algeria, I specifically engage with his evaluation of the "colonized intellectual." Though set in the Spanish period of the Philippines, José Rizal's novels, *Noli Me Tangere* (1887) and *El Filibusterismo* (1891)*,* feature a significant example in their shared protagonist. Because of his affluent upbringing and study opportunities abroad across Europe, Juan Crisóstomo Ibarra qualifies as a Filipino iteration of the "colonized intellectual" archetype. In his establishing moment during the novel's second chapter, Ibarra "found himself alone in the center of the room" while attending party, having just returned from abroad. "The owner of the house had disappeared and there was no one to introduce him to the young ladies, many of whom were looking at him with great interest. After vacillating for a few seconds, he went toward them with a simple, natural grace" (17). Alongside the suggestion of sophistication connoted by his "simple, natural grace" in an ostensibly foreign environment, Ibarra's words further establish his persona: "If you will allow me … I hope we can leap over the rules of strict etiquette. I have not been in my home country for seven years, and now that I am back, I cannot refrain from greeting its most beautiful attribute, its women" (17). Yet "since no one dared reply," Ibarra "went toward a group of gentlemen who, upon seeing him approach, formed a semicircle." It is at this moment that Ibarra reveals something else to the Spaniards and Filipinos in this gathering:

> In Germany there is a custom: when a newcomer comes to a gathering and cannot find anyone to introduce him, he says his name and introduces himself, and they respond in kind. Allow me to do this, not in order to introduce foreign customs here, since our customs are certainly just as beautiful as theirs, but because I find myself in need of doing so. I have paid tribute to the heavens and to my homeland's women; now I would like to pay tribute to its citizens, my compatriots. Gentlemen, my name is Juan Crisóstomo Ibarra y Magsalin! (17-18)

This is how the novel chooses to introduce Ibarra to readers, characterizing his attitude and self-presentation as uniquely cultivated by his time in Europe. Alluding to a German custom is not Ibarra's way of "introduc[ing] foreign customs" that would supplant Philippine social cues, but of introducing *himself* as necessarily foreign in a way that denotes his citizenship to the world. As a consummate "colonized intellectual," Ibarra labors to exhibit an air of worldliness that—here—leaves his fellow guests speechless, the women in particular "looking with great interest" despite their ultimate reticence. Yet while this is the Ibarra readers are first presented with, Ibarra undergoes an arc across the two novels that witnesses his gradual radicalization towards—and eventual attempts to make manifest—a revolutionary politics. In the process, however, Rizal brings various ideological commitments to bear, considering his portrayal of Ibarra's doomed love interest, Maria Clara, and characterization of the impoverished 'madwoman,' Sisa. Across his depictions of womanhood and the stakes they help shape for the construction of the Philippine nation-state, Rizal's writings symptomatically reveal patriarchy's complicity in the sublimation of empire. Given the exceptionalism bestowed to Ibarra as a cosmopolitan mestizo, Rizal commits to a masculinist telos for Philippine liberation that preserves the essence of

Spain's mores—such as the gender essentialisms of colonial patriarchy—even in the lucid and powerful critique of its barbarism.

This leftward bildungsroman, in coexistence with the epistemic privileges and blind spots I will examine throughout this chapter, places Ibarra in the company of the colonized subjects Fanon addresses in *The Wretched of the Earth.* Ultimately, however, Rizal's writings subvert Fanon's expectations of what the colonized intellectual can accomplish. Namely, the precise rhetorical context of José Rizal exposes the presence of imperialist realism within the consciously egalitarian dispositions of both *Noli Me Tangere* and *El Filibusterismo.* Importantly, Fanon ruminates on the unique position that said figure occupies and the double binds of that positionality. Despite belonging to a colonized race, the colonized intellectual invariably emerges within the bourgeois sectors of a given racial underclass. The resulting privileges available to the colonized intellectual can therefore divide his loyalty: should he forsake his fellow colonized subjects and leave them to their squalor, or forsake the colonizers and challenge a status quo that benefits him? While articulating this dilemma as such, Fanon expresses little optimism for the radicalization of the colonized intellectual. Though the latter can maneuver between the spheres of colonized and colonizer, such an affordance is equally a limitation to their insurrectionary potential. For the colonized intellectual, the cost of lasting change—perhaps through the violent means that Fanon suggests—seems too great.. Even as I eventually demonstrate that Rizal was more amenable to revolutionary politics than he is often given credit for, imperialist realism still saturates and delimits the possibilities of his novels' moral universe. Between the two texts, the enterprise of empire ultimately goes unquestioned, with the iniquities of Spain representing— à la the Spanish Black legend—a barbarism unique among its European rivals.

An immanent critique of each narrative's epistemic and political limitations, however, requires a charitable examination of what Rizal's novels *labor* to achieve. Published in 1887, *Noli Me Tangere* represents an effort to repudiate the iniquities of the Spanish church, featuring an ideological tug-o-war within Rizal himself: the affordances of the colonized intellectual represented by his protagonist, Ibarra, and the desperation of the colonized lumpenproletariat represented by Ibarra's foil, Elias. Importantly, because Rizal wrote *Noli Me Tangere* in Spanish and first published it in Germany, the novel's subversiveness was bound to reach Spanish audiences as well. The novel was even "held up in customs at various borders, including the frontier between France and Spain," and its subsequent "reception in the Philippines (or lack thereof, since only samizdat copies seem to have existed) made Rizal a marked man, though no official condemnations were made" (Augenbraum xxi). The "samizdat"—and thus, clandestine—conditions of the novel's initial dissemination in the Philippines only reaffirmed the work's transgressive nature, namely in the threat it posed to the Spanish authorities who deemed Rizal "a marked man." Rizal's candid and satirical depictions of Spanish friars, for example, undoubtedly jeopardized their authority as arms of the Catholic Church. Though debate exists on whether Rizal's "political objective" for the Philippines concerned "independence, autonomy, or simply equal treatment with other Spanish provinces," the fact remains that by writing the novel, he "made the dream of Philippine independence possible, and both the friars and the civil government now, more than ever, considered Rizal a subversive" (xxi). Thus, if any friar at the time hoped to cultivate the image of a beneficent holy man (and thereby justify any abuses they dealt upon Filipinos), Rizal's characterization of Ibarra's antagonists—Father Dámaso and his coconspirators—threatened the veracity of said image. The cruel fates of Ibarra, María Clara, Elias, and other characters would only foment Filipino readers' existing

resentments against the Spanish, as Rizal's novel quickly inspired the attempts of local governments to expunge the influence of friars from their domains (xxii).

Unfortunately, the Philippine Revolution that emerged happened to do so in 1896, the same year Rizal "was tried and convicted by the Spanish as the guiding spirit of the military uprising" (Kaut 1090-1091). For writing *Noli Me Tangere* and *El Filibusterismo,* Rizal "was executed in Manila by a firing squad composed of his own countrymen" (1091). Though Rizal's life had been taken, his impact on Filipino resistance movements against the Spanish was not snuffed out in the least. If anything, such movements and the convictions of their participants calcified in response to Rizal's murder. As the "guiding spirit" of Filipino forces that rallied against the Spanish, Rizal was already a popular figure because of his literary contributions, but his martyrdom further embedded him in the national consciousness of the Philippines as a result. For indeed, well after Rizal's death, "characters and ideas in the *Noli* and the *Fili* have been drilled into several generations of college students, many of whom have returned to teach in rural schools" (1091). His novels "have been widely read, discussed, and reworked for stage productions, movies, short stories, and comic strips" (1091). As works adapted into a remarkable array of mediums, both *Noli Me Tangere* and *El Filibusterismo* have experienced protracted second lives well beyond the confines of their pages, as Rizal's work has been integrated into both compulsory education in the Philippines and various domains of the country's popular culture. Since 1957, for example, *Noli Me Tangere* has been the consistent source of opera adaptations, the last iteration of which was performed at the National Theater of the Philippines as recently as June 2019. In 2016, a graphic novel adaptation of *Noli Me Tangere* was released by Anvil Publishing with a clear aim for younger readers, the pages sporting a down-to-earth art style subtly influenced by Japanese manga. The manifold ways in which *Noli Me Tangere* has

been adapted to various mediums attest to the novel's vast cultural resonances, which remains an enduring influence on constructions of Filipino identity.

This chapter, however, is devoted to the way *imperialist realism* permeates such Philippine identity constructions, given their inheritance of Rizal's ideals as communicated by his novels. As a character established to benefit from a cosmopolitan education in Europe, Ibarra returns to the Philippines invested in enlightening its native subjects by establishing a school. Because Ibarra consciously and consistently proclaims his love of Spain until the novel's end, what is implicit in his mission and overall portrayal is Rizal's critique of Spain as an archaic form of empire that can stand to learn from its European contemporaries, who appear to be worthy benefactors of Ibarra's moral and intellectual education. This is less about the untenability of imperial ideology writ large, and more about the obsolescence of Spanish colonialism proper. Despite Rizal's excoriation of the corruption of the Spanish church, he importantly has Ibarra speak as a colonized intellectual with a vested interest in the prolongation of Spain's influence, consequently naturalizing its presence as a public and historical good for Filipinos. "Have the Filipinos forgotten," Ibarra asks Elias, "what they owe these orders? Have they forgotten the immense debt of gratitude they owe those who showed them the error of their ways and gave them faith, those who sheltered them from the tyranny of civilian power?" (Rizal 324). In Elias' rebuttal, he says, "I know that Spain in [the distant past] teemed with heroes of all kinds in religion as well as in politics, civil administration, and the military. But because their ancestors were virtuous, should we consent to be abused by their degenerate descendants? Because they gave us such a good, should we be judged guilty for wanting to impede their bringing us an evil?" (325). Elias is positioned as the more forthright revolutionary, invested in radical reforms to lessen Spanish corruption in the Philippines, whereas Ibarra is headstrong in

his apologia for the colonizing class. Their entire debate, however, is subtended by Rizal's vested interest in salvaging some notion of innate Spanish goodness, of a pristine and mythic past untarnished by the colonial present, as if the Philippines ever experienced harmony under Spanish rule. This sentiment reveals how the Spanish imperial gaze speaks *through* his prose. There remains an investment in fashioning the Spanish empire as having a primordially *good* quality that has grown decadent over time, especially in comparison to other European nations. It is precisely this investment, despite the ultimately egalitarian and anti-colonial nature of Rizal's project, that remains symptomatic of a Spanish imperial gaze. While it can be argued that Rizal is attempting to appeal to the sympathies of a Spanish readership, to insist they are not complicit in too grand a longue durée, I argue that even this amelioratory and anachronistic concession is how the *imperial gaze* survives.

But is it what Rizal was ultimately striving for? Upon closer inspection, what Rizal ultimately labors to achieve is a decisive *demystification* of "the total situation embracing both colonized and colonizer" (19), says E. San Juan Jr. in *Sisa's Vengeance: A Radical Interpretation of Jose Rizal.* "Engaged in subverting delusions/illusions," San Juan continues, "[Rizal] paid close attention to the complicities of the colonized with her subjection … Rizal sought to forge a national-popular will that would interweave European ideas and the vernacular canon, folk millenarian impulses and elite intellectual resources" (19). What Rizal attempts to do, then, is co-opt the Spanish imperial gaze by voicing the plight of the Filipinos to European civil society, endowed as he is with narrational capacity as a legible interlocutor in civil society. This does not make his marshaling of a Western *telos* less problematic, however, as it is precisely this narrational capacity—and the occasional concessions he gives to Spain when using it—that reveal the caveats of these ostensible affordances. Access to the language of the Spanish

imperial gaze may grant Rizal legibility as an interlocutor, but he is also constrained by a lexicon that insists on the primordial moral goodness of Spanish empire. Rizal is as limited by this as Bergeaud will prove to be by classical motifs, as both authors remain bound to extending the interlocutory life of empire, even as they consciously labor to challenge it. Importantly, Rizal's novel ends in tragedy, with Ibarra failing to appeal to the better natures of the Spanish friars, as he is framed for starting a peasant uprising and presumed dead in the aftermath. The facticity of colonial violence and corruption remains, despite any primordial goodness Rizal is invested in salvaging.

To reach that point, however, Ibarra first discovers that his father—a wealthy yet 'virtuous' businessman—has died in prison. Later, he finds himself caught in the machinations of Father Dámaso and other Spanish friars, all of whom seek to ruin his reputation. In fact, Ibarra eventually learns that Dámaso orchestrated his father's imprisonment and death. Rather than advocate for revolution against the system that enables such injustices, Ibarra only seeks to reform a Spanish-occupied Philippines by establishing a school to empower Filipinos. He later finds himself in argumentative dialogues with the mysterious Elías, whose enmity towards the Spanish mirrors Fanon's towards the French. Ibarra's initial lenience towards the Spanish, which allows the latter to conspire against him, speaks to a privilege he assumes as a colonized intellectual—a privilege that Elías, his more destitute countryman, lacks. Because Fanon and Rizal were brought up among the Black and Filipino bourgeoisies, respectively, striking resonances emerge from the ways their positionalities manifest in their writings. Fanon's account of the colonized intellectual offers a useful means of complicating and characterizing Ibarra's ideological metamorphosis and the epistemic hurdles Ibarra must leap before he can wholly embrace a revolutionary politics.

Thus, a salient connection between Fanon and Rizal emerges in the 49th chapter of *Noli Me Tangere,* "Voice of the Persecuted." In it, Ibarra and Elías hold a private meeting on the latter's boat. There, Elías proclaims that he is "the bearer of the yearnings of many unhappy people" (Rizal 319). He refers to the countless Filipinos who suffer under the brutality of Spanish colonial rule. As the representative speaker of the Filipino peasantry, Elías expresses a collective desire for "Radical reforms in the armed forces, in the clergy, in the administration of justice … more respect for human dignity, more security for the individual, less force on the part of the armed forces," and "fewer privileges for the body of people who abuse them with impunity" (Rizal 320). Here, Elías and the "many unhappy people" he speaks for challenge the sovereignty of the Spanish ruling class. Espousing radical reforms, Elías believes in the possibility of a paradigm shift that undoes the racialized power imbalances of the colonial state. To hold such a belief, he and his fellow Filipinos must see in themselves a "human dignity" that the Spanish do not. To challenge the military, religious, and judicial sectors that reinforce Spanish authority, Elías must already apprehend the fallibility of the colonizing class. For "radical reforms" to be conceivable, he must already understand that Spain's colonial regime is not inevitable. What he professes to Ibarra thus reveals a turn in the colonized psyche that Fanon himself has explored. Namely, the colonized subject "discovers that his life, his breathing and his heartbeats are the same as the colonist's. He discovers that the skin of a colonist is not worth more than 'the native's.' In other words, his world receives a fundamental jolt. The colonizer's revolutionary new assurance stems from this" (Fanon 10). Here, Fanon highlights a necessary condition for decolonization: the self-authentication of the colonized subject, whose standing in the world is no lesser than the colonizer's. The "fundamental jolt" that follows enables the colonized subject to envision an alternative to the status quo, as Elías does.

At this point in the text, however, Ibarra has yet to experience that same "jolt." In his response, he unintentionally reveals the severe cognitive disconnect between himself and the Filipinos he aims to uplift. "I don't know who you are," he tells Elías, "but I assume you don't come from the lower classes. You think and act differently from the others" (Rizal 320). Against Elías's claims to be speaking for "many unhappy people," Ibarra is implicitly skeptical of said people's ability to apprehend the iniquities of colonialism. He thus gives sole credit to Elías for possessing a political consciousness and fails to recognize the agential powers of his own countrymen, the less privileged colonized subjects. He even goes on to rebuff Elías's appeals further:

> "… if the current state of things has its faults, it will be even worse if it is changed. I could go to my friends in Madrid, and by paying them off I could speak to the Captain General, but that would accomplish nothing. Not even he has the power to introduce so many new things. Nor would I take such a step in that direction, since I know full well that though it's true these bodies have their faults, at this point they are necessary, what you might call a necessary evil." (Rizal 320)

Here, Ibarra brings his epistemic blind-spots as a colonized intellectual into full view. By making appeals to his connections to 'well-meaning' Spaniards in power, Ibarra expresses a willingness to work with the colonial system to inspire change. He fails to understand that his countrymen seek to uproot that very system, and that this task requires more than what the system can give. Worse yet, in dismissing the exigency of Elías's mission, Ibarra fails to understand the danger he is in. By this point in the text, he considers Dámaso an enemy. Nonetheless, he believes that under the Philippines' status quo, he can fairly and successfully seek justice for his father's death. His desire to reconcile the needs of the people with the sustainment of the colonial system

reiterates another dilemma of the colonized intellectual, "who, for his part, has adopted the abstract, universal values of the colonizer" (Fanon 9). Brought up in the Filipino bourgeoisie, Ibarra reaped the benefits of a European education. Unfortunately, this same education convinced him to internalize the paradigms of Spanish colonial rule, such as its purported necessity to the well-being of the Philippine state. Even if Ibarra can articulate the iniquities of his colonizers, as he does to Elías, he delimits his capacity for radicalism by accepting their crimes as "necessary evils." As the two go on to discuss the intricacies of Philippine colonial politics, Ibarra's conciliatory stance does not waver. By clinging to his school as his sole reformatory strategy, Ibarra forecloses himself from anticipating his own destruction at the hands of Father Dámaso.

Closer to the end of the novel, the 61st chapter, titled "Pursuit on the Lake," witnesses Ibarra and Elías's last dialogue. Before this point, the friars framed Ibarra as a conspirator in a local uprising, and he only escapes from prison with Elías's help. When he and Elías reflect on the unrelenting cruelties of the Spanish, Ibarra takes a radically different stance from before:

> "Now I see the horrible cancer gnawing at this society, rotting its flesh, almost begging for a violent extirpation. [The Spanish] opened my eyes, made me see the sores and forced me to become a criminal! And so, just what they wanted, I will be a subversive, but a true subversive. I will call together all the down-trodden people, everyone who feels a heart beating in his breast." (Rizal 400)

Ideologically, Ibarra is now closer to Elías than he ever was. Radicalized by misfortune, Ibarra no longer makes appeals to channels within the Spanish government. To foment change, he instead seeks solidarity amongst his countrymen. This recognition of his true positionality, unmediated by his intellectual status, aligns him to the colonized subjects he was once distant

from. In his criminality, Ibarra loses his bourgeois privileges, but in exchange he gains the political awareness of the Filipino peasantry. The fervor of his newfound convictions is in line with Fanon's suggestion that "in colonial countries only the peasantry is revolutionary. It has nothing to lose and everything to gain. The underprivileged and starving peasant is the exploited who very soon discovers that only violence pays" (23). Now a fugitive, Ibarra can no longer rationalize the prolonged existence of the colonial state. Like Fanon, Ibarra is amenable to the prospect of violent insurrection, and he embraces a radical politics in his promise to become "a true subversive." As that means rejecting the paradigms imposed by the colonial state, Ibarra shortly rejects his own criminality, and reframes Spanish authorities as the true criminals:

> "No, I won't be a criminal, you aren't a criminal when you fight for your country, just the opposite! For three centuries we have held out our hand to them, asked them for love, eager to call them brothers, and how do they answer us? With insults and mocking, denying us even the status of human beings. There is no God, no hope, no humanity, nothing more than the rights of power!" (Rizal 401)

Here, Ibarra articulates the ontological negation that has befallen the colonized Filipino. That is, he finally understands that the Spanish have always denied him his personhood. When he rejects "God," "hope," and "humanity" but affirms "the rights of power," Ibarra emerges from what is, according to Fanon, a crisis of the colonized intellectual. Because of his European education, Ibarra "accepted the cogency of [Western values] and there in the back of his mind stood a sentinel on duty guarding the Greco-Roman pedestal" (Fanon 11). But when he, "the colonized intellectual," "touches base with his people, this artificial sentinel is smashed to smithereens. All the Mediterranean values, the triumph of the individual, of enlightenment and Beauty turn into pale, lifeless trinkets. All those discourses appear a jumble of dead words" (Fanon 11). After

"touch[ing] base" with the Filipino peasantry through Elías, Ibarra fosters an insurrectionary resolve. This resolve leads Ibarra to forgo the logocentric ideals of the West, as they only profit the Spaniards who murdered his father and deem Ibarra a fugitive. The negative ontology prescribed onto Ibarra, the machinations of Dámaso that undermine his claims to citizenship and personhood, lead him to look beyond the trappings of colonial society. When Ibarra claims nothing matters more "than the rights of power," he finds that, as Fanon has, "Those values which seemed to ennoble the soul prove worthless because they have nothing in common with the real-life struggle in which the people are engaged" (Fanon 11).

What Rizal brings to bear here is a radicalization he hopes to instill in the Filipino reader of his time. Rizal frames Ibarra's arc as the tragic yet necessary consequence of Spanish colonial rule left unchecked. Because Ibarra is, like Rizal, a Filipino *mestizo* with a Western education, Ibarra is arguably a surrogate for the author. Thus, the character's exchanges with Elías may be a representation of Rizal's own political development. In Rizal's cultural reception, however, there is a pervasive assumption that despite the novel's effects on the 1896 Philippine Revolution, Rizal was a reformist who disavowed insurrection. To speak to the ubiquity of this idea, even the official government website for the *National Historical Commission of the Philippines* attests to Rizal's reformism. Namely, a contributor to an article on that site claims Rizal "repudiated the revolution because he thought that [for] reforms to be successful [they] should come from above" (Piedad-Pugay). This article essentially perpetuates the belief that Rizal only sought solutions to societal ills that could be mediated through the Spanish government. For such claims to have spread, I suspect Ibarra's dialogues with Elías have been forgotten or misread. After all, I understand the two's exchanges to be Rizal's negotiations with the limits of his own upper-class positionality, as well as the crystallization of his own revolutionary politics. His novel even

points, as Fanon's treatise does, to the necessity of violent revolution against colonialism. To corroborate Rizal's radicalism, scholar Floro Quibuyen offers a "critical examination of Rizal's correspondence (ca. 1887-1892)" which "provides incontrovertible evidence for a subversive Rizal" (156). In an 1887 letter to an Austrian scholar named Ferdinand Blumentritt, Rizal even expresses a Fanon-esque amenability to insurrection. He writes that "if the government drives us to it, that is to say, when there remains to us no other hope than to seek our ruin in war, when the Filipinos shall prefer to die rather than endure their miseries any longer, then I too shall advocate violent means" (qtd. in Quibuyen 158). This may not be a declaration of war, but Rizal's stance is closer to Ibarra's by the end of the novel than Ibarra's at the beginning. For Rizal, the recourse of "violent means" is predicated on the prolonged unsustainability of coexistence with the Spanish. Furthermore, Rizal declares that "It is Spain who must choose between peace and ruin" (qtd. in Quibuyen 158). By placing the onus on Spain to reckon with the threat of anticolonial violence, Rizal also imputes responsibility onto Spain for creating the conditions of that violence from the start. Here, Rizal articulates the necessity of Spain facing the consequences of its colonial past. With this understanding, a closer inspection of Rizal's politics reveals that he too believed reforms *alone* were inadequate to the task of remedying an entire history of colonial violence.

These observations lead Quibuyen to differentiate Rizal from his contemporaries who actually possessed assimilationist politics—those more deserving of the 'reformist' label. Rizal's stands, for example, stands in contrast to that of another Filipino intellectual from his time named Marcelo H. Del Pilar:

> ... what differentiated Rizal's group from Del Pilar's is latter's conviction that the sole obstacle to reform was the friars, i.e., the root of the problem was friar obscurantism. The

> policy of Del Pilar's group, thus, was to work for the expulsion of the friars. With the friars out of the way, or at least exposed and neutralized through a vigorous media campaign in Spain (called the Propaganda Movement), the reformists believed that they would then be able to lobby the Spanish government for democratic reforms. The key plank in this strategy is assimilation. (Quibuyen 159-160)

Here, Quibuyen highlights a fundamental misunderstanding within the goals of Del Pilar's faction: their belief that the iniquities of Philippine society began and ended with the friars. Even if the Spanish Catholic Church and the Spanish government were separate entities, both acted in tandem to colonize the Philippines. When *Noli Me Tangere's* dissemination inspired "the *gobernadorcillos* of Manila (the appointed head of the city's wards) [to present] the Civil Governor with a petition demanding the expulsion of the friars of the Philippines," the Spanish government "responded by declaring the petition subversive and arresting the petitioners, twenty-eight of whom were promptly jailed" (Quibuyen 161). Making appeals to the secular domains of Spanish authority did not correct the iniquities within its religious ones, but gave the Spanish cause to brand dissenting Filipinos 'subversives.' The petitioners hoped that the Spanish government could stage an intervention against the friars, but failed to understand that for Spain, church and state were coconspirators in colonialism. Del Pilar's faction was guilty of the same misconception, having expressed a willingness to engage with the institutions of the Spanish government to stir reformative changes. There may have been a time when Rizal himself was amenable to a position like Del Pilar's, but Ibarra's radicalization in *Noli Me Tangere* ultimately suggests otherwise. In his earlier conversation with Elías, Ibarra initially expresses a similar willingness to engage with the Spanish government, despite him considering the status quo a "necessary evil" (Rizal 320). For Ibarra, reforms would require taking advantage of his

connections as a wealthy *mestizo*, rather than petitioning the government outright, but he nonetheless forms his beliefs through a similar logic to Del Pilar's. Both exercise a charitability towards the Spanish government, believing their reformatory efforts will be rewarded if they act through the proper channels. While Del Pilar and Rizal share an investment in reform, what separates them is Rizal's willingness to go further if necessary. Quibuyen even claims that "Rizal had considered the peaceful campaign of reforms as one tactic within the broad, long-term strategy of separatism" (159). This distinction serves Quibuyen's larger suggestion that for Rizal, reform and revolution are not mutually exclusive, despite Rizal ultimately striving for revolution in his political endeavors. In the writings of Galicano Apacible, a member of Rizal's separatist faction, Apacible remarks that the group's notion of reform "was good propaganda in the Philippines so that our countrymen would realize that all our petitions and peaceful campaign to obtain freedom had reached their limit and had been futile" (qtd. in Quibuyen 159). Here, Quibuyen reveals that Rizal was effectively a reformist in name only, seeking reforms as part of a greater strategy—a diversity of tactics—for political consciousness-raising in the Philippines. Thus, to even call Rizal a reformist would be to offer an incomplete account of his politics. In truth, Rizal and his fellow subversives ultimately aimed to illustrate the pointlessness of peaceful reforms against the violence of colonialism.

Rizal's annotations to *Events in the Philippine Isles,* a history by 17th-century colonial official Antonio de Morga, reveal even more of his antipathy towards Spanish influence. In these annotations, Rizal claims that "the people of the Philippines had a flourishing culture before the coming of the Spaniards," that "the Filipinos were decimated, demoralized, and ruined by Spanish colonialism," and that "the present state in the Philippines was not in all ways and necessarily superior to their past" (Quibuyen 176). Here, Rizal resists the popular myths about

colonized subjects that proliferate in a colonial state; myths that ennoble the colonizer's role in 'domesticating' their native subordinates. Under Spanish colonialism, after all, indigenous Filipinos were effectively *tabulae rasae* They were not only a racial underclass, but an ontological one, whose possibilities were delimited by the colonizer. Because of these annotations, Rizal's work eventually "became the basis for recruitment to the Katipunan," an 1892 revolutionary society against Spanish colonialism (Quibuyen 176). If Rizal's politics were solely reformatory, his writings would not have appealed to the sensibilities of a revolutionary faction. Even if it could be argued that the Katipunan repurposed Rizal's words towards more revolutionary ends, the forthcoming evidence suggests they did not dilute them. The Katipunan actually mandated three questions for potential recruits, all of which were directly inspired by Rizal's claims above: "1) What was the condition of the Philippines before the coming of the Spaniards? 2) What was the effect of Spanish colonization? 3) Wherein lies the future of the Philippines?" (Quibuyen 176). The Katipunan saw the appeal of envisioning a society wholly removed of Spain's influence. Unlike the revolution that the Katipunan sought, reformist strategies would have been insufficient towards affecting such a change. The Katipunan therefore saw nothing in Rizal's theses that needed further radicalization. Additionally, their attentiveness to Rizal's writings helped impose a colonial consciousness of sorts onto aspiring revolutionaries, demanding that they interrogate their historical moment. By turning to Rizal's work, the Katipunan compellingly beseeched others to ask how their country's colonial past created the conditions for their present discontent.

With this understanding, it remains important to remember that Rizal himself—like Ibarra—was what Fanon would consider a colonized intellectual. Rizal's cultural and literary legacy was in fact helped by his belonging to the *ilustrado* class. Importantly, Rizal's

significance helped cement the *ilustrado* as a privileged status, despite the racial and class inequalities some *ilustrados* may have experienced in Philippine society. Paramount across all *ilustrados* was an intellectualism devoted to the critique of Spanish colonial relations in the archipelago. Yet while the *ilustrado* identity has some flexibility regarding race and class, it is noticeably inflexible in terms of gender. As Renee Hudson explains, Rizal and his *ilustrado* contemporaries were bound together by a rubric of homosociality:

> Crucial to Rizal's conception of Filipino ethnicity were the homosocial societies that informed his *ilustrado* (educated elite) homosociality. These societies were central to the plot of the Philippine Revolution and his guerrilla conversion narratives in *Noli* and *Fili.* As Raquel Reyes reminds us, Rizal formed a number of homosocial societies before he organized Los Indios Bravos, a society inspired by a Wild West show he observed at the 1889 Paris Exposition. (334)

In canvassing relevant scholarship, Hudson describes the relevance of Rizal's positionality to the narrative content of his novels. Ibarra and Elías's dialectic, after all, remain symptomatic of one internal to Rizal, even if evidence shows the prospects of reform and revolution to be a false dichotomy (in terms, at least, of each being a means to an end). Importantly, "such all-male societies relied on male comradeship and the exclusion of women, a feature that defines Rizal's guerrilla conversion narrative. As Reyes observes, the *ilustrados* bonded over their conquest of European women, which is in sharp contrast to the entirely different standards to which they held Filipinas, who were supposed to be icons of virtue" (335). These observations animate Hudson's own close reading of women in Rizal's novels, but what is key here is the masculinist *telos* that Rizal was complicit in, despite his conscious egalitarian intent. This strikes me as a more compelling critique of Rizal's politics –and of a masculinist tendency I will also critique in

Carlos Bulosan and Nick Joaquin's writings – than the charge of his consummate reformism. Furthermore, "In naming his organization, Rizal drew a structural connection between Native Americans in the United States and *indios* in the Philippines, a connection that Sharon Delmendo reads as a subversive undercutting of the racial slur, *indio*" (334). In Rizal's interest in building bridges with other colonized peoples across the ocean, he expresses a capacity for structural connections and juxtapositions that he does not extend towards colonized women.

This leads me to dissect Rizal's depictions of Philippine womanhood. Maria Clara, Ibarra's doomed love interest, popularly "embodies the desired image of a Filipina of the Spanish colonial period—beautiful, prim and proper, religious, virginal, cultured, submissive, and, most of all, with a blood that is more European than native" (202). Rizal does not uncritically put Maria Clara on a pedestal, however, but consciously employs these Filipina essentialisms to demarcate the prevailing values of his rhetorical situation. This is not to exonerate Rizal, of course, from his own investment in such essentialisms. As Fleurdeliz Altez-Albela theorizes, Maria Clara embodies "the native culture which embraced Christianity in all its dimensions. This culture is best paired with the Ibarra culture, which is described by [Ricardo] Pascual as the Filipino culture developed in Europe. The engagement of Maria and Ibarra speaks of how an amalgamation of these two cultures may direct a very promising development of the Philippine society" (203). Along these lines, Rizal seems to invest in a synthesis of the Philippines' pre-colonial roots with European cosmopolitanism, even as Spain's influence remains a blight on Philippine society. Maria Clara, as far as she embodies the synthesis Albela describes, likewise embodies *imperialist realism* in *Noli Me Tangere.* In particular, Rizal's symbolic investments in Maria Clara expose how *patriarchy helps to sublimate empire.* The narrative, of course, culminates in tragedy, with not only Ibarra's failure and Elias's death, but

also Maria Clara's suicide "in the nunnery. This tragedy reflects Maria's earlier and most failed choice," having sided "with the two most unworthy men in the novel: Padre Damaso as the seducer and Capitan Tiago as the cringing and submissive colonial" (204). Thus, "contrary to the popular Filipino regard of Maria Clara as the model of an ideal Filipina, her character is intended to portray a melancholic transition of an idealized womanhood from paragon to parody. She is meant to portray virtues gone astray, either by abuse or petty shortcomings" (204). While the symbolic importance of Maria Clara's characterization is clear in Altez-Albela's analysis, it is also clear that Rizal puts a lot of pressure on Maria Clara—and thus, the essentialized Filipina—to side with the right *men* during a colonial conflict, even if she is set up to fail. Though Ibarra also fails to reform Spanish-Philippine society at the end of the *Noli,* he at least has the agency to have *tried*. Maria Clara's fate, with her retirement to a nunnery, remains a direct consequence of the novel's male agents and their conflict—the ideological quarrel of Filipino versus Spaniard. While this depiction does not make Rizal particularly sexist compared to his contemporaries, nor to the patriarchal paradigms of his period, the fact remains that *Noli Me Tangere* privileges the *ilustrado* positionality to advance a *masculinist* egalitarian *telos* for the Philippines.

The portrayal of Sisa, another significant female character in the *Noli,* further cements this notion: the conventions of colonial patriarchy—as first embodied by Maria Clara—remain intact in Rizal's critique of colonialism *writ large.* "Mainstream interpretation acknowledges [Sisa] as the icon of the *loca-loca,* the insane. In *Noli,* Rizal describes her as a native woman living in a hut outside the town, married to a drunkard and gambler, and the mother of Crispin and Basilio, the two sacristans who are accused of stealing the cura's money. The loss of these two boys drove their mother to insanity" (Altez-Albela 206). The exposition Altez-Albela provides here is necessary to address where Sisa differs from Maria Clara, the former a poor

"native" where the latter is a well-off *mestiza.* Both, however, suffer under the Philippine colonial context, with each presenting different symptoms of the same social cancer. Rhetorically speaking, Rizal's characterization of Sisa exposes the iniquities of Spanish control that are, both literally and figuratively, *maddening.* "Among all the female characters in the *Noli,*" Altez-Albela explains, "it is Sisa who is most (if not the only one) depicted as a mother. And with Rizal's eloquent description of this woman who is beautiful but made uncomely by later sorrow and suffering, this iconic figure of oppression and insanity also symbolizes the motherland—the Philippines and the typical Filipino, submissive to all miseries yet very protective of one's honor" (207). This appraisal of what Rizal labors to achieve through Sisa exposes how much pressure he places on the character. Filipina womanhood, once more, stands as a symbolic sacrifice to express some tragedy of the Philippine condition. This is consistent in Rizal's own interactions with Filipinas as a political and colonized constituency. "In his letter to the women of Malolos," Altez-Albela observes, "Rizal laments about the backwardness of Asia which is due to the ignorance of women and their treatment of slaves. He compared such marginalized conditions with those in Europe and America where there are women who are so free and well-educated and endowed with lucid intellect and a strong will" (208-209). Though this thinking is not unique to Rizal, he nonetheless construes women as emblematic of their nation's virtues and vices. Philippine society can only advance, to eventually surpass its Spanish 'betters,' by following the moral and intellectual precedents set by "Europe and America" more broadly.

What is implicit in his literary depictions and explicit in his epistolary investments, then, is Rizal's own articulation of *imperialist realism* through a paternalistic didacticism towards Filipinas. Furthermore, "in his letter to Trinidad on 11 March 1886," Rizal "admonished [his] sister to read and read, and adorn herself with knowledge which is very important for women. He

described German women as serious, studious, diligent, and highly cultured; they are not afraid of men, are more concerned with substance than with appearances, and do not quarrel. This little comparison was actually meant to admonish Trining," Rizal's sister, "to seriously consider studying" (210). In Trining's potential, Rizal invests not only his hopes for her moral and intellectual edification, but also the moral and intellectual edification of the Philippine nation by proxy. Even as his literature is consciously egalitarian in so far as it critiques Spanish colonial tyranny and meditates on the efficacy of reform versus revolution, Rizal's depictions of Maria Clara and Sisa only scratch the surface of his broader, more complex relationship with Philippine womanhood. As it stands, he does a disservice to the colonized Filipina condition by failing to extend his egalitarian imagination to their historical experience. Filipina women, indigenous and mestiza, remain emblematic of an imperative that Rizal invests in womanhood proper, as if women's virtues and vices ultimately dictate those of the Philippine nation. This does not so much position Filipina women as agents of the same Philippine *telos* wherein Rizal imagines Ibarra. Rather than be positioned as historical actors, women in Rizal's moral universe serve as models of nationhood to *act upon* and *act on behalf of,* leaving Rizal with only a masculinist conception of Philippine historical movement.

As a literary and historical figure, Rizal himself has been mystified by his popular and scholarly reception. I suspect *Noli Me Tangere*'s American release had a hand in such confusion. When Anna Testa-de Ocampo researched the novel's arrival to the United States, she focuses on the ideological underpinnings of its first two English translations: *An Eagle Flight* (1900) and *Friars and Filipinos* (1902). Specifically, Ocampo remarks that "Politics intruded" in these translations; "the omissions and additions recreated a novel suited to the American reader who wanted to gain information about the new colony" (495). Filtered through an American point of

view, these translations unsurprisingly sanitize Rizal's politics and the exigency of his project. For example, the translator's introduction to *An Eagle Flight* claims that "no malice informed Rizal's writing, only the need to reveal the truth of the country's welfare ... Rizal was presented as an innocent and noble soul who wrote and sacrificed everything, even his death, for his country" (Ocampo 507). The introduction itself goes on to call Rizal a "poet, artist, philologue, novelist, [and] above all patriot" (qtd. in Ocampo 507). Although Rizal strove to impart a Philippine nationalism against Spanish colonial rule, the unidentified translator overemphasizes this aspect to the point of conflating it with patriotism—or an unconditional love for one's country. In *An Eagle Flight,* the Filipino struggle of Rizal's time becomes a vehicle for stirring patriotic sentiments in American readers, inspiring them to make sacrifices for their country as noble as Rizal's. The translation also boasts glaring omissions of "the portions with political discussions" (Ocampo 509). Ocampo does not list all the passages that were omitted, but they likely include the dialogues between Ibarra and Elías. Instead, the focus became "the heroism of those who had dedicated their lives and died for the country" (Ocampo 509). Although Ibarra declares to Elías that "you aren't a criminal when you fight for your country," he speaks from the context of a colonized nation's struggle with a colonizing power, and the imperative to correct this power imbalance through violent means (Rizal 401). By reducing this idea to the mere sentiment of sacrificing oneself for one's country, *An Eagle Flight* turns *Noli Me Tangere* into a more palatable text for American audiences, their hands washed of any complicity in the imperial projects that constitute the history of the United States.

Just as *An Eagle Flight* generalizes the politics of Rizal's novel into a sacrificial, patriotic struggle, *Friars and Filipinos,* translated by Frank Ernest Gannett, features a similarly insidious objective:

> The emphasis in this translation was on the problem of the friars in the country, rather than on the struggle of the Filipinos against Spanish oppression. Rather than seeing the novel as a means of revealing the excesses of the Spaniards, Gannett presented the novel simply as an expression of a fight against the excesses of the friars and not the Spanish authorities in general. (Ocampo 512)

Like the previous translation, Gannet's does little justice to Rizal's historical moment. Gannett also commits the same mistake of Del Pilar's group—reducing the entire problem of Spanish colonialism in the Philippines to the culpability of the friars—albeit for different reasons. By downplaying Spain's involvement and attributing all blame to the friars (despite them reinforcing Spain's authority), Gannett implicitly exonerates Spain from blame. Gannett's rhetorical strategy becomes unsurprising considering he was "secretary to [Jacob Gould] Schurman, head of the First Philippine Commission," and "was sent to the Philippines to formulate recommendations to the US government as to the proper approach to take on its new colony" (Ocampo 509). In light of this information, Gannett had sufficient motivation to exculpate any other imperialist projects, such as the United States'—as if the problems these empires created could always be attributable to a separate antagonist. As such, Gannett's alterations make appeals to American nationalism that continue what *An Eagle Flight* began. As American readers' first introduction to *Noli Me Tangere*, these translations may have shaped the eventual perceptions of Rizal and his politics. These perceptions would gain currency among Filipino audiences, as well, given their subjection by American forces not long after ousting the Spanish. Had this not been the case, Rizal's supposed reformism would have been treated as fact, nor become the subject of criticism by Filipino government organizations like the *National Historical Commission of the Philippines.*

Because *Noli Me Tangere*'s American translations were subject to alterations at the hands of American government officials, the United States' own occupation of the Philippines had a hand in Rizal's retroactive deradicalization. In blunting Rizal's critiques of Spain, after all, American translators blunted the potential to critique *America* with a similar anti-imperial logic. Just as Rafael's "phantasmagoric Europe" animates Rizal's preservation of Spanish imperial mores in his actual writings, so too does it animate translators' shared investment in a slightly more sanitized, egalitarian Spain than Filipinos remember. Reforming Rizal was, in a sense, a way of *reforming Spain* to forestall any reckoning with U.S. imperial hegemony. Reception of this nature was not limited to *Noli Me Tangere* itself*,* however, extending furthermore to the phenomenon of Rizal himself. Quibuyen points to another letter Rizal wrote to Blumentritt, a correspondence that has been widely misread to prove Rizal's reformism:

> A peaceful struggle shall always be a dream, for Spain will never learn the lesson of her South American colonies. Spain cannot learn what England and the United States have learned. But, under the present circumstances, we do not want separation from Spain. All that we ask is greater attention, better education, better government [officials], one or two representatives [in parliament], and greater security for persons and our properties. Spain could always win the appreciation of Filipinos if she were only reasonable. But, *quos vult perdere Jupiter, prius dementat!* (qtd. in Quibuyen 157).

According to Quibuyen, Renato Constantino, a Filipino historian, and Ruth Roland, an American author, "misquoted Rizal's January 1887 letter ... cunningly omitting the first sentence—'A peaceful struggle will always be a dream, for Spain will never learn'—and the crucial word 'But' ... in—'But, under the present circumstances we do not want separation'—to prove that Rizal was an assimilationist" (157). The omission of the first sentence erases Rizal's resignation to the

ultimate uncooperativeness of the Spanish government, who would sooner protect the 'good name' of the Spanish friars and arrest dissident Filipinos before ever admitting to their tyranny. Rizal's resignation here undeniably gives rise to a revolutionary attitude that transcends any "peaceful struggle," but its omission makes charges of Rizal's reformism even easier. The removal of "But" also turns Rizal's contradiction into an affirmative declaration: instead of desiring not to separate from Spain *despite* its excesses, Rizal's altered words suggest an unconditional desire to remain with Spain. These alterations make a reformist reading of Rizal's politics more feasible, but not more truthful. To this, Quibuyen leaves no room for doubt:

> Roland had also omitted the very important Latin line—*quos vult perdere Jupiter, prius dementat* [whom Jupiter would destroy, He first makes mad] which emphasizes Rizal's misgivings about Spain coming to a reasonable settlement with the Filipino reformists. Such reasonableness, of course, is madness because it will lead to an unintended consequence: revolution. But maybe, as Rizal fears, that is Jupiter's way of destroying the Spanish colonial empire—first by making her insane, i.e., impervious to the reasonable demands of the reformists. (Quibuyen 157).

The omission Quibuyen highlights here erases a strategy of Rizal's that I explored previously: his partaking in reformism only to illustrate its futility against Spanish tyranny. This attitude, which separated Rizal from the staunchly reformist Del Pilar, loses visibility because of Constantino and Roland's omissions. While I worry that speculating on Constantino's motivations may go beyond the scope of this paper, Quibuyen offers a charitable view of the historian's work by suggesting Constantino "unwittingly obscured" "the revolutionary tradition of the late nineteenth century nationalist movement," which included evidence of Rizal's radicalism (155). Roland, on the other hand, was an American author—and this positionality

renders her complicit to the project that began with *An Eagle Flight* and Gannett's *Friars and Filipinos*: the sanitization of Rizal's politics. Quibuyen affirms that "Rizal ... had completely lost faith in the colonial government and had given up hope on the campaign for reforms—a far cry from the Rizal image that both the American colonizers and Constantino had constructed and propagated" (155). What emerges, then, is not a reformist portrait of Rizal that undermines his influence on the Philippine Revolution, but an understanding of a historical figure whose subversiveness was erased in the service of various agendas.

From this perspective, it would be untenable to suggest that Rizal was anything short of revolutionary. Rizal's letters and annotations, alongside his dialectical characterization of Ibarra, point to a political positionality closer to Fanon's. Both reckon with the physical, epistemic, and ontological violence that shaped their respective colonial situations, and both see the necessity of retaliatory violence as a remedy. Because of this, I suggest that a crucial difference lies in the mediums through which they voice their reckonings. Whereas Fanon's work—being a political treatise—directly relays his philosophy, Rizal's work—being a novel—makes it vulnerable to uncharitable interpretations of his politics. Likewise, the didactic nature of Fanon's work would have made it more difficult to reshape for nationalist imperatives, whereas the political elements of Rizal's narrative can be more easily excised. Even his correspondences have been subject to manipulation to obscure Rizal's more explicit displays of a revolutionary politics. On its own, however, *Noli Me Tangere* still reveals Rizal's epistemic shortcomings, regardless of his ultimate radicalism. To read Ibarra as an analogue for Rizal, for that matter, is not a necessary imposition of *Noli Me Tangere*. The unenviable position to which Ibarra is subjected makes him both a figure to relate to—in the sense of a colonized Filipino's suppression—and a figure to distance oneself from—in the sense of a desire to escape that colonial system. Ibarra is also a decidedly

well-off *mestizo* who did not initially understand or support anticolonial imperatives. Thus, a protagonist like Ibarra less transparently relays the text's politics than the protagonist/narrator of Fanon. Even if he is radicalized throughout the novel, Ibarra must lose everything before he considers joining the struggle of lower-class Filipinos. By focalizing his decolonizing politics through Ibarra's perspective, Rizal invites differing interpretations where Fanon does not. Fanon, after all, engages primarily with the colonized subject more so than the colonized intellectual. If Rizal were more explicit about his attendance to a similar cause—perhaps by focusing more on Elías—his words would be more difficult to misinterpret and manipulate, and his detractors would recognize Rizal for what he was: a voice of the persecuted.

Noli Me Tangere's sequel, *El Filibusterismo,* reveals yet more about Rizal's relationship with the Spanish imperial gaze in his characterization of Simoun, Ibarra's new persona as he infiltrates the upper echelons of Philippine civil society and plots to bomb said elites at an important party. Because Ibarra was thought to have been dead for thirteen years prior to *El Filibusterismo's* present, Simoun is an enigmatic figure to Spanish and Filipino characters alike. "The jeweler Simoun," Rizal describes, "was taken for an English indio, Portuguese, American, mulatto, the Brown Cardinal, the Black Eminence, 'the captain-general's spirit,' as many people called him" (50). As he goes about his revenge plot, the Ibarra-turned-Simoun does not present as Filipino but as an ethnically ambiguous, well-traveled subject worthy of various epithets. Simoun seems to embody a congealment of racial forms, a literalization of the plurality among casualties of colonialism and empire, precisely because he is so difficult to pin down. It is in his ambiguity that Simoun perfectly personifies the *kaleidoscopic* imperial gaze, as perception of his race is wholly contingent on the cultural context of the beholder. He is an embodiment of how racial forms shift and hierarchize under imperial violence, and thus it is compelling that Rizal

fashions this character as a conspirator for empire's downfall. "At first," explains Adam Lifshey, "Simoun appears to be an American oppressor of *indios,* of the 'redskins.' Don Custodio," a Filipino bureaucrat, "perceives him as a wildly procolonial figure entirely willing to sacrifice local laborers. That makes it strange for him to jeer at Simon as an American mulatto, a person of mixed white black parentage and as such a member of a group suffering sustained repression in the United States in the historical era of the *Fili.* 'Redskins' and mulattoes would have shared subaltern status in the Americas, albeit in different ways" (1440). Indeed, Simoun is perceived as both complicit in and the victim of violence under empire, representing yet more the contradictions animated by a *kaleidoscopic* imperial gaze. Ibarra's disguise as such, beyond any conscious intent of character as written by Rizal, personifies a global continuity of violence enabled by contemporary technologies of empire. Interestingly, Simoun's aforementioned "American associations" and corresponding racial congealment do not "correspond directly to the imagining of a Philippine national identity. The Philippines as a national project appear to be alienated from themselves … through the novel's array of mixed allusions and evocations, into the colonial and anti colonial dynamics that have marked the Western Hemisphere since Columbus" (1441). Self-alienation—where to be Filipino is almost to invoke an empty signifier—is embodied by the racial congealment of Simoun. He not only suggests a crisis of Philippine identity under Spanish colonialism, but its erasure under empire as a *global enterprise.* At the same time that Simoun's characterization positions the Filipino amidst a hierarchy of other races sharing "subaltern status," the particularity of the Filipino is mystified by the Spanish imperial gaze that was consolidated at the end of the *Noli,* when Ibarra decidedly 'lost' and Damaso 'won.' The *Fili* then illustrations how the completion of the Spanish colonial project culminates in an identity crisis for the Filipino, who cannot help but appeal to tropes in

Europe and the Americas for some fleeting sense of ontological stability, given how unstable Simoun's racial signifiers are.

Although the way Rizal writes Simoun awakens conditions of possibility for a consummate critique of imperial ideology across nations, imperialist realism in the *Fili* manages to sublimate aspects of the Philippine status quo that Simoun/Ibarra sets out to undermine. Ultimately, Simoun fails as another character sabotages his bomb plot. Near the novel's end, Simoun poisons himself; on his deathbed, he confides his convictions to a Filipino priest, Father Florentino. Simoun insists that Spanish tyranny must be destroyed through insurgent plots, but Florentino objects that "as long as our country is not ready, as long as they enter the fight under false pretenses or are pushed into it, without a clear consciousness of what must be done, even the wisest attempts will fail and better that they fail because why give a groom a wife who doesn't live adequately, for whom he is not ready to die?" (326). At this, Simoun dies without giving a response. It is as if his own obsolescence as a historical agent of Philippine nationalism is secured by Florentino's remarks and the silence that follows. Florentino arrives, here, as a way for Rizal to place the ethical imperative on *Filipinos,* collectively, to improve colonial society. While this is agreeable enough in and of itself, I cannot help but notice its mediation by the Spanish imperial gaze that would constrain Filipino agency to the moral universe of the Spanish Church's paradigms. By appealing to the *potential* goodness of the Filipino population, what Rizal fashions is in direct contrast to the *primordial* goodness of Spanish empire. *El Filibusterismo* still frames narrative and historical redemption for the embattled Filipino, despite Simoun's failure. The burden to change simply does not rest, by Rizal's rendering, on the shoulders of the Spanish, but on the shoulders of Filipinos. Though Rizal consciously repudiates Spanish empire in his work, the climax of the *Fili* further demonstrates how the Spanish imperial

gaze speaks through his prose, cementing the *imperialist realism* that delimits his masculinist and cosmopolitan Philippine telos.

Rizal's acceptance of the immutability of empire, much like the relative radicalism of his politics to that of his contemporaries, reveals itself in his writings beyond the *Noli* and *Fili.* Sony Bolton's 2023 study, *Crip Colony,* happens to examine how "the question of Filipino Indigeneity and mestizaje are not articulated in a political vacuum separate from other racial formations" (58). In Rizal's case, *El Filibusterismo* represents a more conscious engagement with his positionality as a citizen of the world, hence Simoun's more generalized embodiment of a colonized subject per his racial ambiguity. Rizal himself, however, reveals yet more about how he contextualized his writings' cosmopolitan Philippine telos in a broader picture of global affairs. Specifically, Rizal's 1889 sociopolitical study, *The Philippines a Century Hence,* "is notable for its predictive, even prophetic observations on US imperial power at the turn of the twentieth century in addition to its biting criticism of Spanish colonialism" (35). Bolton appraises its merits as "a welcome and necessary addition to the archive of Filipinx Americanist criticism of US imperialism as a 'benevolent' reform of the hapless native … Less than a decade prior to the presidential announcement of this colonial 'friendship,' Rizal is particularly concerned with growing US interest in foreign conquest and is keenly aware that US eyes are set on the Pacific region" (35). In this sense, Rizal exhibits a "prophetic" egalitarian consciousness that throws into relief the social realities and historical tendencies of Western imperialism. Despite this, Bolton later addresses a remark of Rizal's from the book itself:

> If the Philippines acquires its independence after tenacious and heroic battles, you can rest assured that neither England, Germany, France, nor Holland, will risk recovering what Spain will not have been able to keep. Africa, within a few years, will completely

> absorb the attention of the Europeans, and *there is neither a European nation nor a sensible one that would relinquish the defenseless unexploited virgin territories of the Black continent for a handful of war-torn and destitute islands.* England already has several colonies in the Orient and won't open itself up to a loss of control; it won't sacrifice its empire in India for the poor Philippine Archipelago. (Rizal 41, qtd. in Bolton 58, emphasis mine)

While Rizal does not seem enthusiastic about the relegation of Africa to the reinvigorated frontier of Western imperialism, he nonetheless uses this situation to convey the conditions of possibility for Philippine independence. The masculinist, cosmopolitan, mestizo positionality Rizal has developed throughout his oeuvre cannot come into being, influencing the historical trajectory of the Philippines towards independence, without pointing to Africa as a viable alternative for the designs of Western imperialism. The postcolonial imagination of Rizal, no doubt delimited by the European cosmopolitan that shaped both him and his character Ibarra, betrays a foundational anti-Blackness symptomatic once more of *imperialist realism.* The enterprise of empire is not the object of Rizal's critique, here, as he leaves Africa to be a pragmatic scapegoat for the liberation of the Philippines. There is a convenience that Africa provides, rhetorically, that will find echoes in a future Philippine author's own engagement with Blackness in the American imaginary: Carlos Bulosan, one of the subjects of Chapter 3. "Need the Filipinx critic not concern himself with Africa?" Bolton asks. "While Rizal's text is filled with stupendous insights on the ways that Spanish colonialism greatly inhibited freethinking, sovereignty, and progress … it appears that national freedom is a prospect that is mortgaged on the unfreedom of others" (59). It is precisely in this sense that Rizal exhibits *imperialist realism* yet again, in a manner that illustrates the ultimate investments of his egalitarian teleological

consciousness. The enterprise of empire is held as immutable, but because Rizal holds this immutability as concomitant with the inevitability of an anti-Black social order, his writings also reveal how anti-Blackness—as a *symptom* of imperial ideology—allows colonized subjects to equip themselves, however provisionally, with the epistemic and ontological affordances of one who views the world through an *imperial gaze.*

CHAPTER 3

America Is In The Heart (of Darkness): Continuities of Violence in 20th and 21st Century Filipino American Literature

"The conquest of the earth, which mostly means the taking it away from those who have a different complexion or slightly flatter noses than ourselves, is not a pretty thing when you look into it too much. What redeems it is *the idea only.*"

–Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness* (1899), emphasis mine.

"We Are America!": Carlos Bulosan's Multicultural Vision and the Challenge of Afropessimism[1]

Lauded as an antiracist text, Carlos Bulosan's 1943 novel *America Is In the Heart* is regarded to be a milestone in Filipino American literature for its insightful depiction of migrant Filipino struggles across the United States throughout the Great Depression. However, key moments of Filipino American racialization throughout the novel betray a Philippine humanism informed by American imperial ideology and subtended by a foundational anti-Blackness. Even though American neocolonialism precipitated the Philippine diaspora, Bulosan's text invites a reflection on anti-Blackness in Philippine historical experience, in this case a permeation of *imperialist realism* that naturalizes an anti-Black racial order and the conception of a messianic

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Filipino subject. Grounded in historical examples such as the hosting of an Igorot Exhibit at the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair and the racial congealment of African Americans and Filipinos to disparage both during the American Occupation, this section explores how Bulosan's novel emerges in a specific rhetorical context where Philippine historical experience cannot help but be contaminated by American imperial ideology. While it is crucial to investigate a foundational anti-Blackness in white and non-Black populations, a more urgent endeavor lies in understanding how imperial ideology plays a key role in shaping how minoritized groups internalize specific racial hierarchies, particularly through symbolic shorthands (such as dark skin) and illustrative moments (such as the World's Fair). Thus, the central intervention of this paper is to take Bulosan's novel as a comparative and historical case study for anti-Blackness in Philippine historical experience and the way it behaves as a symptom of US militarism and empire. Whereas generally, on an unconscious level, the positive affirmation of white Americans' citizenship in civil society is predicated on anti-Blackness—and this is a common Afropessimist argument—Filipino responses to their own racialization under American neocolonialism represent a *negative* affirmation: counterhegemonic to American ideology, even as it remains predicated on anti-Blackness as well. This reveals how a migrant Filipino subject such as Bulosan is conditioned to covet the possession of an American *imperial gaze,* which includes the ability to fetishize Blackness in such forms as the 'magical Negro' archetype. Consider how Bulosan's novel, as art, shares "something in common with enchantment," per Theodor Adorno and Max Horrkheimer's *Dialectic of Enlightenment.* "[Art] posits its own, self-enclosed area, which is withdrawn from the context of profane existence, and in which special laws apply. Just as in the ceremony the magician first of all marked out the limits of the area where the sacred powers were to come into play, so every work of art describes its own circumferences which

closes it off from actuality" (Loc. 461). While Bulosan constructs a *truthfulness* about the Filipino American migrant experience, it is nonetheless shaped by the prerogatives of American imperial ideology that he has internalized and inherited—ideology that helps dictate "circumferences which closes it off from actuality" by reinforcing an American racial hierarchy that Filipino Americans were both subject to and complicit in. Bulosan's novel, when read with the historical insights of scholars on the American Occupation and the theoretical insights of postcolonial and Afropessimist thinkers, demonstrates how a consciously egalitarian text can remain constrained by the moral universe of American empire. Despite taking on a firm stance against white supremacy, Bulosan's novel does not envision the conditions of possibility for calling American ideology to question. At the expense of the African American and the Filipino American, who each suffer in profoundly different ways across these examples, the fetishization of the American Dream and mystification of US militarism haunt Bulosan's aspirational prose. Where common ground between each group is tenable, then, is in a historical reckoning with the mechanisms of US imperial ideology that ordain an anti-Black hierarchization of race.

A pivotal moment in the formation of Filipino racialization exposes these stakes, during an event celebrating US imperial conquest: the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair in Missouri. The ontological profile imputed onto the Filipino under American neocolonialism, here, differs substantially from the ontological profile imputed onto the Black person, per Afropessimism's description of anti-Blackness. The documentary *Savage Acts: Wars, Fairs, and Empire 1898-1904* explains that, upon the conclusion of the Philippine-American War, "the [US] government brings twelve-hundred Filipinos to the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair. The thirty-five acre 'Philippine Reservation' celebrates America's colonial possessions" (27:39-27:51). A white American visitor says, "I went up to the Philippine village today, and saw the wild, barbaric

Igorots who eat dogs, and are so vicious that they are fenced in. They thirst for blood, and are the lowest type of civilization I saw" (28:02-28:17). The Philippine Reservation emerges to cement America's hegemonic status over the Philippines, validating the former's colonial projects by reinforcing Filipinos' apparent need to be colonized. Because the Igorots are presented as "wild, barbaric," and "vicious," the World's Fair rationalizes the interventions of the US, mystifying the scale of colonial violence—over 200,000 Filipino deaths in the Philippine-American War—that created this power imbalance. The Philippine Reservation presages the 1961 book by Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth,* in which he understands this relational dynamic as a Manichean dualism between the colonizer and the colonized: an ostensible distinction between civility and barbarism that justifies colonial conquest. "Sometimes," Fanon claims, "this Manicheanism reaches its logical conclusion and dehumanizes the colonized subject" (7), as is the case with the Igorots in *Savage Acts*. "In plain talk, he is reduced to the state of an animal. And consequently, when the colonist speaks of the colonized he uses zoological terms . . . In his endeavors at description and finding the right word, the colonist refers constantly to the bestiary. The European," and by extension, the American, "seldom has a problem with figures of speech" (7). The "zoological terms" imputed onto the Igorot—and thus, the Filipino—demands the existence of a subject to which "zoological terms" do not apply: the colonizing class. Importantly, Fanon does not limit this othering of the colonized subject to Black populations, but also addresses its application to other races when he indicts the words of European colonizers: "General de Gaulle speaks of 'yellow multitudes,' and Monsieur Mauriac of the black, brown, and yellow hordes that will soon invade our shores" (8). For its white American audience, the Philippine Reservation conveys a threat that must be domesticated, a creaturely *Other* beholden to the Manicheanism Fanon describes. This mentality allows Americans to construe themselves

not only as civilized, but as those with the God-given efficacy *to* civilize. "The Philippine exhibition," remarks a government official, "presents the race narrative of odd peoples who mark time while the world advances, and of savages, made by American methods, into civilized workers" (28:18-28:32). There is, on the one hand, a repudiation of Filipinos as "the lowest type of civilization"; and on the other hand, the hope that Filipinos can be civilized further. Despite the Filipino abjection on display, Filipinos do not seem to be foreclosed from a narrative arc—that is, from the possibility of equilibrium through historical movement. "Another way of earmarking the points on the narrative arc," Frank Wilderson explains, "would be: Equilibrium to disequilibrium to equilibrium (restored, renewed, and/or reimagined)" (199). For the postcolonial subject, the first period of equilibrium precedes the colonization of indigenous land, disequilibrium is the colonial period, and restored equilibrium arrives in the form of decolonization. For the savage Filipino—synecdochally represented by the Igorot—Americans sought to *introduce* equilibrium to Filipinos' own ostensible barbarism, or primordial disequilibrium, well beforehand. Upon colonial contact in this context, two *teloses* are thus locked in conflict: the Filipino narrative of anticolonial historical redemption versus the American narrative of domesticating a less 'civilized' race.

The possibility of equilibrium, whether from the understanding of the postcolonial subject or for the purposes of American domestication, was not lost on Filipino interlocutors regarding the World's Fair. The words of Philippine commissioner Vicente Nepomuceno, relayed in *Savage Acts,* express that "The Philippine Reservation in no way portrays the life of the Philippine people . . . The impression has gone abroad that we are barbarians, that we eat dog and all that sort of thing, and no matter how long we stay here, we cannot convince the public to the contrary" (28:30-29:02). Although Nepomuceno rightly lamented Filipino denigration on the

world stage, he also framed the Igorots as an aberration from an essentialized notion of a 'true' Filipino. Nepomuceno spared no sympathy and solidarity for the Igorots and their supposed barbarism, suggesting that they remained deserving of paternalistic American domestication. Thus, as Nepomuceno saw it, Filipinos who were *not* Igorots already secured a state of civilization—equilibrium by their own means or from cooperation with American forces—that deserved recognition from "the public." Nepomuceno's colleagues, as Paul Kramer explains, made similar complaints. "Eager to promote their civilization and 'fitness' for self-rule," says Kramer, "Filipino politicians criticized connections made by American officials and anthropologists between Filipino elites, non-Christians, and America's racial minorities at the 1904 St. Louis Expo" (235). If Nepomuceno and his contemporaries articulated some Filipino *telos*, the "lowest type" of Filipinos remained excluded from that arc. Igorots effectively "fall away," as Neferti Tadiar says, "from global capitalist and nation-state narratives of development as well as from social movement narratives of liberation" (5). Igorots were thus excluded from the "global capitalist" narrative concomitant with American neocolonialism and the "nation-state narratives of development" advocated by Filipino officials like Nepomuceno. Both narratives also effaced any "social movement narratives of liberation" attributable to the Igorots, who instead entered the picture as ornaments pliable to the prerogatives of white Americans and 'higher' types of Filipinos. In this context, Igorots served as the locus for abjection, and this abjection seemed to scaffold the ontological surety of their observers. American fair goers' status as 'civilized' human beings was ensured by the 'lesser' humanity of the Igorots.

While this understanding only reaffirms Igorots' positions as colonized subjects per Fanon's insights, it is crucial to insist that ontologically, Igorots retain their affordance of a narrative arc, even if their ostensible 'betters' seek to steer their historical movement. As "the

lowest type" of human, Igorots are still regarded as *human,* albeit of a 'lesser' kind (*Savage Acts* 28:02-28:17). This resonates with a difference Wilderson highlights between Fanon's preoccupation with the ontological profile imposed upon his Blackness by white Europeans in *Black Skin, White Masks* versus Fanon's preoccupation with the ontological profile imposed upon a multiracial colonized subject in *The Wretched of the Earth* (*AP* 240). The latter, Wilderson finds, is less amenable to Afropessimism's premises than the former. One Fanon exists for the more coalitional and multiracial consciousness-raising of a postcolonial struggle (*Wretched*), whereas the other Fanon exists for the negative exceptionalism of Blackness in an anti-Black world (*Black Skin*). Thus, says Wilderson, "this difference" between the core theoretical dispositions of Fanon's texts "should be thrown into relief in order to understand how the Black, the Slave, suffers in ways that cannot be reconciled with the suffering of oppressed Humans, such as the postcolonial subject" (240). Specifically, Wilderson explains an "irreconcilable difference" between the suffering of the non-Black native and the Black slave. "The vulnerability of the native is open," Wilderson explains, "but not absolute: materially speaking, she carves out zones of respite by putting the settler 'out of the picture,' whether back to the European zone or into the sea. There is no analogy between the native's guarantee of restoration" as such, "and the Slave's guarantee of restoration predicated on her need to put the Human out of the picture" (240-241). Despite the Igorots' abjection in the World's Fair, they remain efficacious albeit *degraded* members of civil society. White Americans' investment in turning them into "civilized workers" is likewise an investment in that efficacy, such that Igorots' eventual participation in civil society is not so much *ostensible* (like it would be for the socially dead Black person) as it is *genuine.* Narrative closure—however fraught before its realization— still awaits the Igorot subject, who is not beholden to "historical stillness." Though

Igorots' capacity to "put the settler out of the picture" is not in sight within the context of the 1904 World's Fair, their "restoration" is easier to envision than that of the Black slave. The equilibrium that 'cosmopolitan' Filipinos strive for—namely by demonstrating their capacity for self-government on the world stage—renders them postcolonial subjects with a "guarantee of restoration." Neither Igorots nor the Filipino politicians are foreclosed from the "zones of respite" Wilderson describes, so both cannot experience the same social death imputed onto Blackness. This affordance allows Filipinos writ large to indulge in their own anti-Blackness, whether they intend to or not. The protracted effects of American neocolonialism—including the Philippine diaspora—thus vivifies a *structural antagonism* between Filipinos and Black people. "Non-Black people of color (White civil society's junior partners) have something to salvage," Wilderson claims, "whereas Blacks have nothing to lose," such that "Asians and Blacks are structural antagonists *even when they are joined together in coalition fighting for civil and human rights"* (176-177).

Though it is not the goal of this essay to dispute its every merit as an antiracist text, *America Is In the Heart* engages with Blackness in a manner symptomatic of said antagonism. Bulosan's novel centers on the struggles of Allos, a Filipino American immigrant who survives countless incidents of anti-Filipino racism in his journey through 1930's America. Amidst encounters with police brutality, union busters sabotaging Filipinos' solidarity with other labor groups, and seeing his own brothers driven to crime, Allos attempts to reconcile his suffering with the promise of the American Dream. Spending a considerable duration of the novel infirm from illness, Allos develops a proclivity for reading and aspires to become a writer who can immortalize his loved ones through their stories. Eventually, Allos advances a utopic vision of solidarity amongst races: an ideal America he never disavows. Bulosan speaks through the

character of Macario—one of Allos's brothers—to help catalyze Allos's intellectual maturity in what Vince Schleitwiler calls "arguably the book's most famous passage" (102):

> America is also the nameless foreigner, the homeless refugee, the hungry boy begging for a job and the Black body dangling on a tree. America is the illiterate immigrant who is ashamed that the world of books and intellectual opportunities is closed to him. We are all that nameless foreigner, that homeless refugee, that hungry boy, that illiterate immigrant, and that lynched Black body. All of us, from the first Adams to the last Filipino, native born or alien, educated or illiterate—*We are America!* (Bulosan 189)

On the surface, Macario's speech extolls the virtues of Bulosan's text, galvanizing America's 'have-nots' to suggest they are as quintessentially American as society's 'haves.' Though all mentioned are excluded from normative conceptions of being 'American,' Macario expresses hope for solidarity that blossoms among the vulnerable populations he invokes. Charitably speaking, the power of Macario's speech lies in his deployment of *analogy,* of establishing common ground among the oppressed. Bulosan uses this moment to depict the formation of a minoritized egalitarian community consciousness that the book no doubt labors to impart. However, the provisional benefits of such solidarity are not under dispute here. The hallmarks of *analogy* seem to stand as a basis for coalition, but such thinking remains susceptible to an Afropessimist critique worth considering. Even in the passage above, the gratuitous violence that created the "lynched Black body" finds no analogy in the struggles of the "*nameless* foreigner" or the "homeless refugee." "Slavery" as an ontological imputation of anti-Blackness "is a relational dynamic—not an event and certainly not a place in space like the South; just as colonialism is a relational dynamic . . . And these two relations are secured by radically different structures of violence" (Wilderson 41). Colonialism as a "relational dynamic" catalyzed the

Philippine diaspora that drives both the real Bulosan and his character, Allos, to seek opportunities in the US. However, the power imbalance between the US and the Philippines cannot resemble the vulnerability of Blackness to gratuitous violence that calcified during the Transatlantic Slave Trade. No comparison is tenable between the possibility of narrative closure for the postcolonial, diasporic Filipino (that Macario clearly avails for Filipinos in his speech) and the lack thereof for the natally alienated, socially dead Black slave (which Macario neglects to distinguish within his own analogizing). The philosophical content of Afropessimism's claims, here, can coexist with the immanence of coalitional situations such as Allos and Macario's. These delineations of suffering between two minoritized groups, the Filipino and African American, are not to say their historical exigencies under US empire can never be aligned. Rather, Afropessimism's place in this conversation is as a check on the anti-Blackness that Filipino Americans exhibit as *symptoms* of U.S. imperial ideology.

Wilderson's 2010 book *Red, White & Black: Cinema and the Structure of US Antagonisms* precisely delineates the two grammars of suffering at hand. As far as Macario's speech entails Bulosan's commitment to a Filipino migrant humanism, Wilderson's words apply:

> The Marxist, postcolonial, ecological, and feminist narratives of loss followed by restoration and redemption are predicated on exploitation and alienation as the twin constitutive elements of an essential grammar of suffering . . . . The Slave needs freedom not from the wage relation, nor sexism, homophobia, and patriarchy, nor freedom in the form of land restoration . . . The Slave needs freedom from the Human race, freedom from the world. The Slave requires gratuitous freedom . . . But what does the Slave's desire for gratuitous freedom mean for the Human's desire for contingent freedom? (141)

Macario's speech does not willfully and maliciously exclude the "lynched Black body," nor is this attitude evident in Bulosan's authorial intent. Rather, Bulosan's writings reveal that even in his egalitarian vision for the improvement of American civil society, his own language as a diasporic Filipino subject is delimited by the "contingent freedom" Wilderson describes. Bulosan cannot dream beyond the "[narrative] of loss followed by restoration and redemption," goals applicable to the oppressed subjects Macario describes, save for the "lynched Black body." Said body is far too "lynched," far too *dead,* to have a "[story] which they have the capacity to tell." Rather, in their lynching, the Black body is silenced—foreclosed from this capacity to enunciate narrative, and thus sequestered to a state of "historical stillness." The call for "gratuitous freedom" that Wilderson describes, a call to escape a notion of "the world" that is fundamentally anti-Black, cannot be accommodated by Macario's speech, which is instead fashioned for redemption *within* the world. Wilderson goes on to explain that "the ethics of [the postcolonial subaltern]," such as that of Allos and Macario, "are predicated on a coherent semiotics of loss, for example, territorial integrity, political self-determination, economic independence, and religious freedom. This loss, whether spatial (as in land) or temporal (as in language or kinship structure) stages a drama between two Human communities" (160). Though Wilderson specifically addresses the ontological profile of the Native American "Savage," his explanation remains applicable to the Filipino "postcolonial sulbaltern" in so far as "this drama is not an antagonism" (160). The imaginaries of Macario's speech and white American civil society coalesce in the promise of an American Dream that all groups—haves and have-nots—can attain. The rhetorical content of Macario's speech legitimizes this notion of redemption for oppressed subjects, although his language cannot escape the figuration of Black social death. The listing of the "lynched Black body" in the mystifying claim that begins with "We are all. . ." (Bulosan 189)

is an unconscious attempt to mediate what Wilderson calls a "common anxiety" between oppressed Humans and their oppressors (Wilderson 160). Rather than confront the "threat of incoherence" posed by the lynched Black body, Macario's speech labors to subsume it into an ensemble of coherent beings experiencing exploitation and alienation instead of accumulation and fungibility, or "the condition of being owned and traded" (Wilderson 14). Analogy, here, mystifies the specificity of Black suffering and social death that are explained by a separate grammar of suffering from the Filipino's.

In Schleitwiler's book, *Strange Fruit of the Black Pacific,* he explores Bulosan's commitment to the American Dream made evident in Macario's words. Schleitwiler examines precisely where the imaginaries of the diasporic Filipino and of American civil society "stage a drama between two Human communities," as Wilderson put it (160). Macario's speech, Schleitwiler claims, "plac[es] the Filipino migrant at the end of a series of iconic figures, culminating with the Founding Fathers. No plea for inclusion, this is a revolutionary gesture, rhetorically seizing the capacity to speak for the nation" (102). Despite appraising the merits of Macario's speech, Schleitwiler addresses the self-described exceptionalism of Macario—both as a Filipino migrant and as a speaker "for the nation." "Embodying the conditions of colonized Native Americans, uneducated immigrants, the displaced poor, and black lynching victims," Schleitwiler continues, "the Filipino is not one American among equals, but the messianic redeemer of a national history it reveals to be the story of world revolution" (102-103). This call for solidarity beckons the "join[ing] together in coalition fighting for civil and human rights" that Wilderson speaks of (177). Solidarity, for Macario, comes in the form of all oppressed groups claiming sovereignty within the tapestry of American history. Thus, America is as much *theirs* as it is *their oppressors'.* However, the "messianic" Filipino is privileged as the harbinger of this

solidarity, and thus of "world revolution" (Schleitwiler 103). Though Bulosan enumerates anti-Filipino discrimination and violence that is true to the history his narrative represents, centering the Filipino in this way effaces the struggles of the other groups that the Filipino "redeems." Of these groups, the "black lynching victims" are most at risk of "falling away"—as Neferti Tadiar would put it—from this messianic narrative arc, being socially dead and thus foreclosed from redemption despite what Macario's speech promises. The reason this is the case can be found in Schleitwiler's reading of Bulosan's novel, articulating the *migrant Filipino* humanism Bulosan constructs. The coherence of such a humanism remains scaffolded from the incoherence of Blackness. Even as Macario advocates for "black lynching victims," Bulosan works within the category of 'Human' to disprove Filipinos' lesser humanity, and the stability of this category remains predicated on the existence of a group excluded from 'Humanity.' Whereas Macario's speech advances a "Humanist assumptive logic" to unite marginalized groups, Afropessimism "labors as a corrective" to that logic, providing what Wilderson calls "a theoretical apparatus that allows Black people to *not* have to be burdened by the ruse of analogy—because analogy *mystifies,* rather than clarifies, Black suffering. Analogy mystifies Black peoples' relationship to other people of color" (*Afropessimism* 41). What Macario's speech mystifies is any anti-Blackness found not only in the Filipino American community of his time, but also in his novel's representation of the Filipino American—and more broadly, the Filipino—as a "messianic" historical subject (Schleitwiler 102). Macario's speech, despite the "revolutionary" quality Schleitwiler describes, rests on the ruse of analogy to make its ethical appeals.

The messianic Filipino, as an interlocutor in the 'American Dream' narrative Bulosan weaves, speaks *over* Blackness in a manner that mystifies the specificity of Black suffering. For instance, later in the novel, Allos bids farewell to Macario, who has enlisted in the US army.

They shake hands, compelling Allos to narrate, "I could feel the roughness of his toil-worn hand; the toughness of his palm revealed more of himself than his words. I was ashamed of my little soft hand in his" (323). Macario then gives Allos ten cents, saying, "Don't forget to give this to the Negro bootblack across from my hotel." (323). After Allos meets Larkin, the "Negro bootblack" in question, they share a glass of beer at a bar, and upon shaking hands Allos notices that Larkin's "was like [Macario's]—tough, large, toil-scarred" (324). Larkin then claims: "I know I'll meet [Macario] again somewhere, because I got my dime without asking him. But if I don't see him again, I'll remember him every time I see the face of an American dime" (324). As their interaction ends with a casual farewell, it is innocuous enough on the surface. There is even something to be said about the congealment of Macario's memory with that of the American dime, as if what is Filipino and what is American is not so irreconcilable by the novel's end. Between Macario's "toil-worn" and Larkin's "toil-scarred" hands, Allos expresses shame for his "little soft hand," emblematic of his infirmity throughout the novel, as well as his literary proclivities that he develops during that time—all to distinguish him from the able-bodied capacity for labor that gives Macario and Larkin's hands their respective "toughness." Understanding this makes Allos feel guilty for Macario's proletarian disaffection, a condition guaranteed to persist for Macario as he joins the army. Macario proceeding where Allos cannot follow compels Allos to declare that "I knew it was the end of our lives in America. I knew it was the end of our family. If I met him again, I would not be the same. He would not be the same, either" (323). Schleitwiler claims that Allos's words—emblematic of a survivor's guilt under Depression-era American capitalism—is assuaged by "Larkin's handshake," which "emends [Allos]'s declaration of the end of his family." Furthermore, "[Allos'] shame is released because Larkin chooses to accept the dime not as payment of a debt, but as a gift, marking his

own entry into the fraternal diaspora of soldiers, and promising the family's reunion within the nation's embrace, via the circulation of its common currency" (112). A form of narrative closure becomes legible for the likes of Allos, whose "gift" from Larkin seems to grant him entry into "the nation's embrace." The conditions of possibility for redemption—in what entails the reunification of Allos' split family, as well as greater recognition and acceptance in American society—seems presaged by the bond Allos forms with Larkin.

This newfound horizon "is made possible not by Larkin's own struggle against racism, his defiant decision to enlist in a military that denied him equal rights . . . but by the exchange of fraternal embraces from Macario to Larkin and back, via [Allos]" (112). Despite Macario's speech and its inclusion of "black lynching victims" earlier in the novel, it is America's "common currency"—the dime—that connects Allos to Larkin fraternally. Schleitwiler finds that such a connection is not indebted to "Larkin's own struggle against racism" (112), for "Blackness," Wilderson claims, "is predicated on modalities of accumulation and fungibility, not exploitation and alienation" (*Red, White & Black* 59). Allos only understands Larkin as a fellow victim of exploitation and alienation, conditions experienced by degraded humans such as proletarians and postcolonial subjects. However, these conditions are not *all* that are experienced by those civil society deems non-human. Black slaves, excluded from the 'Human' family, uniquely experience "accumulation and fungibility." Larkin is thus not solely a degraded participant of civil society, like Allos, but also its *implement*. Despite this, Bulosan is not *willfully* foreclosing any such insights into Larkin's position. Rather, Bulosan's rhetorical context does not provide the impetus to meditate on the differences between these two irreconcilable grammars of suffering. The suffering of the Filipino American migrant can be explained by postcolonialism, which avails the possibility of redemption in civil society for the

likes of Allos. The suffering of the African American can be explained by Afropessimism, which insists that the relational dynamic of slavery persists for the likes of Larkin, foreclosing any possibility of his redemption by humanist terms. Allos's lack of engagement with Larkin's own racialized existence—all despite Macario's calls for solidarity among marginalized groups earlier in the novel—reflects an epistemic deficiency in Bulosan's rhetorical situation. Macario's invocation of a messianic Filipino subject represents Bulosan's indictment of American civil society, if only for oppressed groups to improve and better assimilate into it. Such are the upper limits of Bulosan's vision, never quite suggesting that American civil society is foundationally unethical. Unwittingly, Bulosan's investment in the primacy of the Filipino as a messianic historical subject effaces the particularities of Black suffering that he has an opportunity to address through Larkin. Instead, Larkin's presence is used to resolve Allos's *own* racialized anguish: the forces of immigration and impoverishment that catalyzes his separation from Macario, as well as the general exploitation and alienation of the migrant Filipino laborer. Larkin's thoughts before his departure even insinuate this resolution, as the Filipino foreignness of Macario and the American domesticity of the dime—in Larkin's mind—become one.

This discrepancy of access to coherent narrative closure between the Filipino and African American leads me to a salient yet incendiary tenet of Afropessimism, that of the ontological foreclosure of Blackness from any entitlement to a "narrative arc." In his 2020 memoir *Afropessimism,* Frank Wilderson explains that "the narrative arc of the slave who is *Black* . . . is *not an arc at all,* but a flat line, what Hortense Spillers calls 'historical stillness': a flat line that moves from disequilibrium, to a moment in the narrative of faux-equilibrium, to disequilibrium restored and/or rearticulated" (102). According to Wilderson, Black people are paradigmatically bound to this state of "disequilibrium," otherwise known as "social death," which leaves them

beholden to the constituent elements of slavery: gratuitous violence, natal alienation, and general dishonor. Blackness as a locus for abjection becomes the scaffolding for white and non-Black people of color's ontological surety—their own capacity for equilibrium—affording them the entitlement to a narrative arc. Unlike Black people, white people and non-Black people of color are paradigmatically at liberty to construe themselves as historical subjects who can experience equilibrium, disequilibrium, and then—perhaps—equilibrium restored. This disparity of coherence is salient in Bulosan's mentions of the "lynched Black body" and characterization of Larkin. Each represents what Jared Sexton calls a "talking away from slavery." By that, he "[does] not mean simply staying silent on the issue. Talking away can and usually does involve repeated allusions, invocations, references, and so on, but all in the service of dramatizing/illuminating some other ethical dilemma" (100). Blackness appears in Bulosan's novel as a way of "dramatizing/illuminating" the ethical dilemma of the Filipino as a messianic historical subject, leaving little room to examine Blackness on its own terms.

Beyond analogizing Black and Filipino suffering in Macario's speech and Allos's interactions with Larkin, Bulosan unwittingly treats Black suffering as scaffolding for the recognition and redemption of the diasporic Filipino. This understanding compels Schleitwiler to claim that Larkin "is a manifestation of one of the oldest and most pernicious stereotypes in the long history of US paternalism, or white love, who in the popular culture of liberal multiculturalism is often called a *magic Negro*" (112). Larkin's final dialogue, where to him Macario and the American dime evoke one other, insinuates Larkin's simple role as messenger for the novel's assimilationist thesis. Therefore Schleitwiler considers Larkin an example of "a hollow construct of moral purity, abstracted from historical or social context and cut loose from any generic expectations of psychological plausibility," such that Larkin's "interiority, if there is

any, is hopelessly lost behind the Veil—his job is to bestow the benediction of Blackness upon the protagonist, in brief and idealized embrace" (112-113). In Schleitwiler's excoriating account of the way Bulosan writes Larkin, said depiction jeopardizes the tenability of Macario's analogizing proclamation that "We are America!" Without attention given to Larkin's own narrative arc—as if he is deprived of one or does not require one to begin with—he serves instead as a steppingstone for the catharsis, or narrative closure, that Allos seeks upon separating from Macario. Larkin's "bestow[al]" of "the benediction of Blackness" permits Allos to come to terms with his own suffering, though the novel conveys no expectation for Larkin to receive a similar due diligence. Equilibrium—for Allos—remains possible, while disequilibrium—for Larkin—continues to be all that awaits him. Though Bulosan does not explore such disequilibrium, including how it would manifest in Larkin's "own struggle against racism," Larkin and his disequilibrium fade into obscurity as unceremoniously as he was introduced. Bulosan unwittingly conceives of Larkin as an ontological void, portrayed without the coherence that Schleitwiler asks for, save for what Allos receives from Larkin's "benediction." Though the episode seems innocuous in the sense that Larkin is not the victim of any violence or discrimination, the novel's shortcomings in representing Larkin's structural position reveal its own parasitic relationship to Blackness. As a coalition text, Bulosan's novel "work[s] *from* a position of coherence (such as the worker)"—or in this case, the Filipino worker—"on *behalf* of a position of incoherence of the Black: radical politics morphed into extensions of the master's prerogative" (Wilderson, *Afropessimism* 250). Because of this, Macario's speech reflects a tendency within "social formations on the Left," which "remain blind to the contradictions of coalitions between Humans and Slaves. They remain coalitions operating within the logic of civil society and function less as revolutionary promises than as crowding-out scenarios of Black

antagonisms" (250). Bulosan's writings cannot escape "the logic of civil society" that Wilderson describes, and thus Allos and Larkin remain structural antagonists despite their bond. The structural antagonism is not reinforced by their conscious interactions, but by what the novel chooses to prioritize about each character, such that Allos being Filipino is fetishized as messianic, and Larkin being Black reduces him to a disciple of such messianism. Though the novel rightly conveys migrant Filipino suffering, the way Macario expresses sympathy for "Black lynching victims" necessitates an adequate reckoning with Black suffering that the novel neglects to deliver. For all that Bulosan achieves in composing an anti-racist text, its emancipatory power remains delimited by a liberal humanist logic that Afropessimist insights throw into relief. This need not be seen as a contradiction to any egalitarian vision of solidarity between African and Filipino Americans, nor as a total foreclosure from analogy outright. Rather, this all forms a uniquely nuanced *call* for such solidarity: a call that demands a thorough confrontation with habits of thought imposed by US empire, habits that even its minoritized subjects are complicit in.

Alongside the novel's essentializing of Blackness, an essentialized notion of the messianic Filipino becomes evident through Allos' reflections on his own positionality. Unwittingly, this means Bulosan also places himself in similar company to Nepomuceno regarding the latter's attitude towards Igorots. As Schleitwiler observes in his reading of Bulosan's novel, Allos spends a period of his early life "in the resort town of Baguio, trying to earn enough money for passage to the United States. Homeless and jobless due to his lack of English-speaking skills, he gets the first lesson in his colonial sexual education from 'an American lady tourist,' who pays him to undress and be photographed" (67). To do so, Allos makes himself "'conspicuously ugly' whenever he sees 'a white person with a camera,' though

he realizes the tourists prefer taking pictures of 'Igorots' rather than 'Christian Filipinos like [himself]'" (67). Igorots, as items for the cultural consumption of American tourists, are not subjects with whom Allos seeks solidarity. Rather, the likeness of Igorots proves a stepping-stone for Allos's own survival, despite the pride he possesses as a "Christian Filipino" that differs from his relatively 'backwards' counterparts. This understanding leads Schleitwiler to observe the way that, "Throughout Bulosan's corpus, characters explicitly or implicitly identified with the author frequently masquerade as Igorots, in scenes recalling blackface or 'playing Indian' in metropolitan US culture . . . these identifications position the writer as the benevolent representative of nonwhite populations placed beneath him in a social hierarchy" (108). Allos does not reflect on Americans' fascination with Igorots to take umbrage with the latter's othering, but to participate in it by distancing himself as a "Christian Filipino," catering to the American imperial gaze at hand. Though Bulosan justly communicates truths of diasporic Philippine historical experience, Allos—like Nepomuceno—is invested in being recognized as a citizen of the Western world, unmoored from the savagery attributed to other Filipinos such as the Igorots. This portrait of the migrant Filipino as a historical subject thus forecloses any consideration for the Igorot, who remains excluded from this essentialized conception of the Filipino. The fact that Allos making himself "conspicuously ugly" resembles a form of "blackface" is no coincidence, as the ostensible backwardness of the Igorot is only proximate to the ostensible backwardness of the 'Negro'—and it is the Igorot's proximity to Blackness that warrants their denigration. In historian Luis Francia's own account of the 1904 World's Fair, he notes that Igorots were among "approximately 1,100 Filipinos, of different ethnic groups [who] were brought over, presumably to educate the public but in reality served as freakish entertainment." For that matter, "more than 400 Philippine scouts and officers were on hand, to

watch over their fellow Filipinos as well as to embody the new social order—the triumph of light over darkness—that American colonial rule supposedly had brought to the islands" (163). Even if Igorots are beholden to a narrative arc ontologically, their darker skin and 'savagery' relative to Filipinos such as Allos, Nepomuceno, and the 400 Philippine scouts render Igorots *proxy* loci for abjection, stand-ins where Blackness is otherwise absent. Igorots' resemblance to the alleged *non*-humanity of Blackness situates them among the "nonwhite populations placed beneath [Allos] in a social hierarchy" (Schleitwiler 108). Whereas Allos and Nepomuceno's ontological investments rely on the *relative* incoherence of the Igorot, all involved bear a coherence predicated on the *entire* incoherence of Blackness. The World's Fair stood as a monument to the American notion of "the triumph of light over darkness" (Francia 163), representing an investment in paternalistically bestowing the Igorot with eventual coherence, albeit one wholly dictated by American imperial mediation.

This dynamic is only reinforced by white Americans' reception to Blackness during the American occupation of the Philippines. "Between 1899 and 1902," Nicholas Molnar claims, "Many white soldiers and civilians referred to both the Filipinos and blacks as 'niggers.' The islands were seen by some American politicians as a dumping ground for blacks," many of whom were deployed there as military servicemen, and the Philippines became "the solution to the 'Negro Problem' in the southern United States" (16). In his book *A History of the Philippines: From Indios Bravos to Filipinos,* Francia notes that "On February 4, 1899, two American soldiers, Willy Grayson and Orville Miller of the Nebraska Volunteers, shot and killed two Filipino soldiers . . . After the infantrymen had killed them, Grayson shouted to his comrades-in-arms, 'Line up, fellas. The niggers are in here all through these yards!'" (145). Furthermore, "Thomas Alva Edison's studio made six newsreels about scenes from the

[Philippine-American War]," having "African-Americans [stand] in for Filipino soldiers, since Filipinos were routinely thought of as blacks. Inevitably, the reenactments ended with the white US soldiers triumphant" (163). These instances reveal a sustained effort in the white American imaginary to congeal what it means to be Black and Filipino, but not as an effort—like Bulosan's—to *analogize in solidarity.* There is nothing like the congealment of what is Filipino and what is American, as expressed by Larkin's invocation of the dime. The congealment of what is Filipino and what is Black excludes both from American civil society. Blackness remains held as a locus of abjection in the white American imaginary, as here it is used as a means of comparison with which to signify the Filipino's degradation.

The white American imaginary that Bulosan relays in his prose can be traced to an ideological tradition that metastasized during the Spanish Era, contributing to a continuity observable in the American Occupation later in time. While it has been important to diagnose the anti-Blackness to be found among various historical subjects, the formation of the Filipino *as* a historical subject deserves further reflection for its bearing on cultural production such as *America Is In the Heart*. Through this view, the rhetorical situation that the likes of Carlos Bulosan and Vicente Nepomuceno inherited becomes clearer, as it led to the hierarchies of race that they both internalized. Bulosan displayed this in his valorization of the messianic Filipino that continues to be evident in his novel, Nepomuceno in his denigration of the indigenous Igorot at the World's Fair. Any anti-Blackness that can be understood from each case is symptomatic of imperial ideology that flourished under the Philippines' domination by both Spain and the US, through which the white cosmopolitan citizen-subject became the Filipino's ego ideal. Francia's study addresses a salient moment of Filipino racialization under Spain via the example of Father José Burgos. Burgos is remembered as "one of the most vocal and influential champions of the

Filipino secular clergy" who were nonetheless dominated by the Spanish (107). "Tireless in his advocacy of Filipinizing the parishes and in defense of his fellow Filipino priests," Burgos penned an essay that earned the ire of the Spanish friars (107). Burgos "described the friars as 'the sand in the cog wheels of the country's civilization' who 'endeavor to keep the poor natives in a state of ignorance and boorishness'—the better to maintain both their influence and affluence" (108). Eventually, alongside two other Filipino friars, Burgos was publicly executed in 1872. Critically, Burgos' essay makes rhetorical appeals to the Western humanist elements of Spanish colonial ideology. Though he rightfully critiques the efforts of the friars to "keep the poor natives in a state of ignorance," which upheld the 'Manichean world' of colonialism once described by Fanon, Burgos maintains his own investment in the modernization of Philippine civilization. Despite his critique of colonialism in practice, the rhetorical force of his critique and his own success in colonial society reveal a commitment to colonialism *in theory.* The "theory," in this instance, lies in what is obtained from a classical education and thus inherited from the very same Western humanism that permeates Spanish imperial ideology. It is not that empire itself is wrong, but that the Spanish friars here are *doing empire* wrong. Symptomatic in Burgos' observation that "poor natives" are being "[kept]" in their 'backwards' state is the presumption that Filipinos' state of nature is to *be* so backwards. He ascribes, unconsciously, a narrative of progression into modernity—the very same kind generated by colonial violence and control—that the Spanish friars seemingly interrupt. Symptomatically, Burgos appeals to imperial ideology (the notion of the savage Filipino) despite denigrating imperial agents (the cruel Spanish friars) in the same breath. Though Bulosan and Nepomuceno inherit the conscious egalitarian will of Burgos in their respective pursuits of progress for the Filipino world-subject,

they also inherit the biases of a Filipino world-subject whose sense of 'world' entails a cosmopolitan assimilation into empire and the white imaginary.

As contestations under Spanish rule have proven, this assimilation was no seamless process and became even less so once the US had designs for the Philippines. The integrity of the Filipino world-subject proved untenable when the racial forms of the Black and the Filipino were congealed for the prerogatives of US militarism. Alongside the example of American soldiers Grayson and Miller calling Filipinos "niggers" (Francia 144), "US forces" expressed their "contempt" for Filipinos by describing them as "'barbarians' and 'savages,' reflecting the prejudices and xenophobia of the larger American society, one that routinely portrayed Chinese and Japanese immigrants as a 'Yellow Peril'" (146). In fact, "the US soldiers fashioned an epithet just for the Filipino: 'Gugu'—from *gago,* the Tagalog word for 'stupid'—which more than half a century later would morph into 'gook' to accommodate the Koreans and the Vietnamese" (146). This may seem at odds with a different historical claim by Francis Whitebird of the *Lakota Country Times,* who suggests that the slur "gugu" came "came from the bark of a local tree that women used when they shampooed their hair." Francia and Whitebird are in alignment, however, over the shared suggestion that "gugu" "eventually morphed into the more all-purpose word Asians, 'gooks'" (Whitebird). These historical permutations only speak to the plurality of US imperial ideology, as these traditions calcified amidst the racialization of the Filipino as an imperial subject: the unfortunate linkage between the established paranoia towards Chinese and Japanese populations and the subsequent slurs towards Koreans and Vietnamese people. What is on display here is practically the inverse of the messianism Bulosan attributes to the Filipino American, as the Filipino's exceptionalism lies instead in their congealment of degraded racial forms. In the eyes of the US soldier, the Filipino is not an egalitarian culmination

of progress, but a backwards culmination of *primitiveness:* a threat in need of domestication. It is thus worth noting that "many of the US officers were veterans of the genocidal campaigns against Native American nations, and in the Filipino enemy they discerned unmistakable likenesses. And so did Roosevelt: on the campaign trail for the vice-presidency of the United States, he likened [Filipino] rebels to the Apaches and the Comanches" (146). Nothing here is like the utopian analogizing of oppressed struggles that Afropessimists critique. Instead, Filipinos occupy a nexus of readily available pejoratives—from cruel epithets to clinical classifications—that position them as targets of American empire. Any awareness of this tradition, of course, hardly diminishes Bulosan's commitment to a more idealized vision of America that embraces racial difference, as if the iniquities of an imperial present can be transcended by doubling down on humanist ideals (the way Burgos does in his own time, against Spain).

Blackness never haunted the periphery of such interactions, however, appearing instead at their forefront. Scot Ngozi-Brown observes that "the fates of African-Americans and Filipinos were bound by their common disenfranchisement. Neither was regarded to be capable of full political participation and self determination" (Ngozi-Brown 44). Black US soldiers in the Philippines "confronted racial antagonism on a daily basis," enduring "constant verbal abuse, and sometimes violent attacks, from their white colleagues and officers" (44-45). Black soldiers' capacities as agents of empire could not transcend the fact of their being black, as the dynamics of an anti-Black paradigm persisted into the context of imperial domination at the time. While Afropessimist thought would construe the Black person and the Filipino as structural antagonists, the racial congealment of both in the eyes of US soldiers who would call either "niggers" has led to the mutual recognition of Black and Filipino struggles: a pragmatic solidarity whose history

manages to coexist with Afropessimism's ontological commitments. After all, certain "officials within the American military and political establishment took note of the ease with which Black soldiers and Filipinos interacted in the 'pacified' regions occupied by the US Army. Some even regarded contact between the Filipinos and African American soldiers as a security threat" for the distrust Americans held towards both (50). Anti-Blackness, in this example, makes the threatening otherness of the Filipino more legible to US officials, such that neither are spared from the US's disdain and paranoia. This is not my own attempt to uncritically analogize Black and Filipino suffering, but to say that the way anti-Blackness *works* is clarified by the way imperial ideology causes the two racial forms to overlap. This is as much a double bind for Filipinos as it is for their Black counterparts, conditioned as Filipinos are by Spain and America to lionize whiteness as ego ideal. "The African-American soldier's decision to remain in the Philippines," Ngozi-Brown explains, "was the result of a complex and sometimes paradoxical relationship with Filipinos. On one hand, they bonded because both were victimized by the racism that white American colonialism exported" (51). This did not change "the high socio-economic status the Black soldiers maintained among Filipinos, which was often based on the extent to which they remained linked to white American colonial institutions" (51). The power imbalance generated by conditions of imperial conquest may account for the disdain some Filipinos would later hold towards African Americans, in manners different from their resentment towards white Americans. The details mentioned by Ngozi-Brown stand out to me as conditions of possibility in the formation of the Filipino self-concept that is—contradictorily—predicated on solidarity with Black people for their shared victimhood, while also predicated on an ostensible superiority to Blackness in some affective pursuit of Filipinos' white ego ideal and the imperial gaze it affords.

Indeed, rather than always resent white Americans who profess and reinforce US imperial ideology, Filipinos have also revealed their own anti-Blackness in implicitly accepting Blackness to be a locus of abjection as well. Blackness as such is a third-term mediator—a concept on which oppressor and oppressed agree for the sake of guaranteeing mutual coherence—with which Filipinos learned to petition for recognition and redemption in civil society. For example, "a Filipino objecting to the wedding" of a Black man and Filipina woman in the Philippines claimed that "such weddings tend to darken the race which is dark enough already" (Molnar 17). In all historical instances noted by Nicholas Molnar, Luis Francia, and Scot Ngozi-Brown, darkness and Blackness serve as metaphors for abjection. As previously stated, white Americans analogized Filipinos and Black people not for the egalitarian purposes found in Bulosan's text, but instead for the metaphor that Blackness provides to necessitate their conquest of the Philippines. The stigmatization of Blackness would lead some Filipinos to fret black/Filipinx miscegenation due to what the Filipino in Molnar's example called the "darken[ing]" of "the race which is dark enough already": a sentiment motivated by the white imaginary to distance Filipinos from the abjection entailed by Blackness (17). "Between 1899 and 1999," for that matter, "Filipinos learned to call Blacks 'niggers'" despite being called the same thing by white Americans (Ontal 130). Furthermore, "the social engineering of US colonialism—a mandatory schooling system which excluded Black histories, and featured derogatory portrayals of African-Americans in Hollywood films—had altered the racial psyche of Filipinos" (130). Even now, "Bleaching creams and skin whiteners continue to be top-selling items in present-day Manila and other cities" (130). Francia thus notes the following imperative of US colonialism's "social engineering" that would culminate in the fetishization of whiteness among Filipinos. Reflecting on the Second Philippine Commission of 1901, Francia describes

how “military men and US civilian teachers” known as the Thomasites trained Filipino teachers to perpetuate the “indoctrinat[ion] [of] the school-boys and -girls of the islands in American ways and thus help heal the wounds of war by refashioning brown folk into the image of the colonizer.” Thus, “it wouldn’t be too long before Filipino kids started to dream of snow, yearn for apples, and idolize fair-skinned Hollywood stars” (165). Naturally, this “identification” with the white American imaginary that consists of “snow,” “apples,” and fair skin entails a *dis*-identification with Blackness. The government-led imposition of what is now often called “colonial mentality” bears with it the germinating of anti-Blackness in colonized Filipino subjects, conditioned instead to idolize whiteness as an ontological pole star with which to measure an idealized existence. Anti-Blackness as such, propagated by white Americans and internalized by Filipinos both during and after the American occupation, disputes any “false equivalence between anti-Blackness and every salient form of domination, past and present,” including American neocolonialism in the Philippines (Sexton 102). What Rene Ontal calls the “social engineering of US colonialism” explains anti-Blackness within Filipinos (130), such as the umbrage that Filipinos took with black/Filipinx miscegenation (Molnar 17). Importantly, Molnar’s anecdote of a Filipino’s objection to a Black and Filipino wedding takes place in the period between 1899 and 1902. The Second Philippine Commission, meanwhile, was launched in 1901. The presence within Filipinos of the attitude Molnar describes reveals a disparaging of Blackness in the Philippines that appears to have been harnessed and crystalized by the efforts of the American Occupation. The United States’ conquest of the Philippines not only calcified Filipinos’ internalization of the white imaginary, but also engineered the embrace of an anti-Blackness to go with it, scaffolded by prejudices Filipinos have inherited from two empires. While Afro-Filipino coalitions should not be dismissed as untenable because of this history, nor

should historical and contemporary examples thereof, participants in these alliances must understand the irreconcilable structural antagonism between the Black and the Filipino: an antagonism that must be confronted, despite all its ontological horror, before genuine solidarity can materialize. Even if the ontological premises of Afropessimism cannot be truly reconciled with the practical exigencies of Afro-Filipino solidarity, the framework helps verbalize a necessary awakening to undo the "social engineering of US colonialism" Ontal describes (130).

Afropessimism remains useful for such an endeavor by characterizing the irreconcilable antagonism between Black people and Filipinos. In explaining where the commitments of Afropessimist and humanist frameworks differ, Jared Sexton says, "the whole range of egalitarian movements against capitalism, colonialism, heteropatriarchy, speciesism, and the like," is nonetheless "subtended by the material and symbolic antagonism produced by slavery. The slave, in other words, is the anoriginal figure of difference in the articulation of the human being, the pivot or hinge or fulcrum of its machinations" (98-99). For Marxism, there remains the promise of proletarian revolution; for postcolonialism, decolonial revolution; for feminism, gender revolution—and the constituents of each strive *justly* for such ends in sites of contestation legible to their oppressors, such as the working day, land sovereignty, and the gender wage gap, respectively. Though neither Wilderson nor Sexton diminish the importance of these struggles, said struggles' overall coherence is only made possible by unconsciously holding the Black 'Slave' as the "anoriginal figure of difference." These "egalitarian movements"—theoretical frameworks operating under humanist logics—are thus vulnerable to the metatheoretical critique of Afropessimism, which locates Blackness as a position excluded from humanist considerations. Thus, in Macario's "We are America!" speech, the accommodation of "the lynched Black body" within a tapestry of marginalized positionalities remains compromised by an anti-Blackness that

Bulosan cannot escape, given the historical scope of its ubiquity. This is not to say that the novel's call for solidarity is disingenuous or nefarious (it is certainly preferable to the malignant intentions of dedicated racists). Rather, *America Is In the Heart*—for all its merits—remains inadequate to the task of addressing the structural antagonism between Black people and Filipinos, let alone Black people and the rest of 'Humankind.'

Bulosan's novel can only address the *contingent*—as opposed to *paradigmatic*—suffering of the migrant Filipino worker, whose exploitation and alienation as a postcolonial and proletarian subject are captured by Macario's speech. Though his speech addresses the violated Black body, the latter is not fully incorporated into the tapestry Macario conjures, lacking the agency and urgency of oppressed groups described to be alive in struggle. Although Bulosan's cumulative effort is justified, his approach is fraught by rhetorical circumstance as such. As R. Radhakrishnan explains, "the figurality of allegory is important precisely because it attempts to protect history from its perilous contingency . . . The allegorical concern is that history should not be allowed to repeat itself as a brutal narrative of facts. The wheel should not have to be invented over and over again" (62). Although Macario's speech privileges the Filipino as a messianic historical subject, the analogizing of struggles under the banner of "We are America!" is an attempt to protect history from its perilous contingency." By speaking for other marginalized groups and demanding the recognition of the Filipino, Macario demands—by extension—the recognition of these other groups as constituents of American civil society. In Macario's speech, there is both a practical and pragmatic desire to prevent "history" from "repeat[ing] itself as a brutal narrative of facts" (Radhakrishnan 62), starting from "the first Indian that offered peace in Manhattan to the last Filipino pea pickers" (Bulosan 188-189). Macario might essentialize and pedestalize the Filipino in his speech, but he also *locates* the

Filipino within a continuity of oppressed groups that remain beholden to "the wheel" that is "invented over and over again": the wheel of discriminatory violence, of coercive domination, and of social hierarchies (Radhakrishnan 62). Because Macario's words fail to grasp the paradigmatic features of Black suffering that separate it from the contingent suffering of dispossessed white and non-Black people, he instead expresses an investment—however indirectly—in Blackness's capacity to escape the "perilous contingency" of history. By presuming Blackness to be bound momentarily to this "perilous contingency," instead of excluded from it entirely, Bulosan—through Macario's speech—labors to imbue Blackness with the trappings of a humanist logic, or the possibility of narrative closure, however ephemerally. This is not to exculpate Bulosan from the anti-Blackness that remains embedded in his writings, but to suggest that the "figurality of allegory" is observable in Macario's speech. While analogy *mystifies,* what does it attempt to *clarify* nonetheless? Can the effort be praiseworthy, even as it remains vulnerable to the metatheoretical critiques of Afropessimism?

Despite what Afropessimism characterizes as the limitations of humanist assumptive logics—such as those found in postcolonialism, Marxism, feminism, and the like—these egalitarian frameworks find use as *provisional humanisms*: 'humanisms' because they are concerned with 'Human' subjects to whom the world invests narrational and teleological capacity, but 'provisional' because of their continued susceptibility to the metatheoretical critiques of Afropessimism. In discussing humanist assumptive logics in this way, it is still possible—even when using them—to elucidate *yet more* of their shortcomings, including the way a commitment to Western humanism fails postcolonial subjects or turns them against each other (such as the disdain cosmopolitan Filipinos have for Igorots in the World's Fair). It is worth noting, however, that Afropessimism has the very specific purpose of locating a

foundational anti-Blackness, such that it cannot answer every concern of, say, postcolonialism. And just as examples of Philippine literary production such as *America Is In the Heart* remain inadequate to the task of reckoning with Philippine anti-Blackness, Afropessimism remains inadequate to the task of unpacking the complexities of colonial domination that precipitate the Philippine diaspora. Neither are the other's goals. However, because anti-Blackness continues to be of immense concern on the global level, Bulosan's example as an object of critique can lead to a deeper understanding of both Filipino exploitation and alienation, as well as of Filipino anti-Blackness, with neither issue undermining the other's legitimacy. Illustrating these dilemmas is also not as simple as holding Blackness to be the locus for abjection to the Filipino subject—serving as a sort of paradigmatic 'given' so long as Afropessimist scholarship is involved. Rather, the idea that non-Black people of color, such as Filipinos, are "junior partners" to white people in an anti-Black paradigm demands further theoretical scrutiny (Wilderson, *Afropessimism* 94). Given the longstanding global hegemony of US militarism, it is paramount to consider how imperial ideology—pragmatically or otherwise—determines and hierarchizes difference for the sake of its shifting prerogatives. The desires such attitudes prescribe, specifically upon colonized subjects such as the Filipino, reveal themselves in what cosmopolitan Filipinos such as Vicente Nepomuceno covet: a seat at the table, so to speak, as legible citizen-subjects within the cosmopolitan fold of empire, even if they must denigrate their less 'civilized' countrymen to do so. With migrant Filipinos as just one example of non-Black "junior partners" amidst the global consensus of anti-Blackness, the seminal writing of Carlos Bulosan stands as a *counter-hegemonic* manifestation of anti-Blackness in the diasporic Philippine context. Expanding the applicability of Afropessimism's premises, meanwhile, is also

an attempt to discern its boundaries. Through doing so, an immanent critique of *imperialist realism* becomes legible, perceptible in this vicious entanglement of racial forms.

"People Remember the Mestizas": An Americanized Philippines and Filipino America Demystified in Elaine Castillo's *America Is Not The Heart*

Elaine Castillo's 2018 novel *America Is Not The Heart* serves as both a rebuttal to and expansion of the thematic concerns of Bulosan's text from my previous chapter. Whereas Bulosan's protagonist—Allos—is in flight throughout much of *America Is In The Heart,* Castillo's protagonist—Hero de Vera—immigrates to and spends most of her time in Milpitas, California. Though Allos's struggles draw heavily from the social realities of absentee landlordism in the Philippines and Great Depression labor struggles in the U.S., Hero's narrative attends to contemporary Filipino American experiences (particularly of undocumented Filipinx immigrants) and the violent legacy of Ferdinand Marcos's dictatorship. Hero, herself a member of the affluent and cosmopolitan de Vera family, found her political awakening as part of the New People's Army (NPA), militantly resisting the Marcos regime. Due to her own familial and class attachments, Hero's insurgency alienates her from her parents and thus serves as just one example of Castillo's critical reflexiveness over a 'proper' Philippine historical subject. While I have critiqued the migrant Philippine humanism found in Bulosan's characterization of Allos, such that imperial dynamics of anti-Blackness and Americanism persist in the egalitarian content of *America Is In the Heart,* Castillo's characterization of Hero represents a nuanced self-awareness made possible by Bulosan's attempts. Without suggesting that the mere inclusion of womanhood presents more epistemic and ethical horizons for an analysis of imperial ideology, I argue that Castillo's contribution—precisely for its consciously feminist resistance to the masculinist tendencies of the insurgent subjectivity that Bulosan invests in Allos—*actively labors to demystify* the very same imperial gaze that often captivates the Philippine revolutionary

imagination. If Bulosan's text is prototypical for a Filipino American voice that grapples with the domestic and diasporic social realities of the migrant Filipinx, Castillo's dares to direct a more candid gaze at the conditions of Philippine modernity. Without the cathectic and libidinal attachments to American-ness and whiteness so often found in Allos's story, Hero's perspective presents the conditions of possibility for the formulation of an *anti-imperial gaze.* This is not something that allows one to succeed at completely divesting oneself of imperial ideology, but rather, equips them with the grammar to both *demystify* and *devalorize* the historical and interlocutory pretensions of empire.

Before a proper analysis of Hero's narrative, however, it is worth noting a striking narrative decision Castillo makes at the beginning of the novel. Whereas Bulosan's *America Is In the Heart* is told in the first person, with Allos narrating the story's events, Castillo's "Prologue, or Gali-La!" is told in the second person*,* inserting the reader not into the perspective of Hero, but that of her aunt, Paz. Importantly, "Gali-La" is Pangasinense for "let's go," and the title alone foretells a major distinction between Allos and Hero's worlds. Whereas Allos is ethnically Tagalog, Paz is Pangasinense (from Pangasinan) and Hero is Ilocano. Given Allos's own awareness of a Philippine social hierarchy from which Tagalogs benefit the most, as he distinguishes "Christian Filipinos like [himself]" from Igorots (Bulosan 67), the mere titling of "Gali-La!" already sets the stage for a Philippine immigration narrative that decenters Tagalog Filipinos from their hegemony. Importantly, Paz herself is not analyzed significantly in the little scholarship that currently exists on *America Is Not The Heart.* As Paz's narrative addresses the overarching thematic and political investments of the novel, let my analysis of the prologue be a prologue to my analysis of the larger narrative.

The prologue recounts Paz's upbringing and education in the Philippines. Throughout, even ostensibly prosaic observations about Philippine social life during and after the American Occupation reveal plenty. In describing the ubiquity of the barrelman, a popular souvenir from the Philippines, Paz speaks of "the little [figure] of a naked man wearing only a barrel, whose titi [or phallus] pops out when you lower the barrel. It's only in Baguio that you hear that the figure appeared after the Americans had built their military settlement in Baguio, the only American hill station in Asia, displacing the Ibaloi living there. You never look at that little wooden titi the same way again" (Castillo 6). The barrelman, as a staple of the American imperial gaze upon the Philippines, becomes an orientalized and essentialized trinket that stands *for* the Philippines in the eyes of the American soldier and tourist. That one cannot "look at that little wooden titi," or penis, "the same way again," is no coincidence either. The touristic gaze's fixation on the Philippine phallus is inextricable from the military displacement of the Ibaloi people. In this instance, the practice of the barrelman's circulation is in keeping with colonial discourses' association of indigenous and minoritized populations with deviant sexualities and practices. The barrelman's tongue-in-cheek portrayal of sexual aggression through the reveal of a large and erect phallus echoes ancient Greek depictions of mythical satyrs, whose own phallic portrayals connote savagery and unchecked libidos in the Western imagination. A descendant of this tradition, the barrelman—which can be dismissed as a harmless gag on the surface—is indeed emblematic of the Philippines' transformation into what Jodi Kim calls a "settler garrison," or a military outpost for the extension of America's interlocutory and geopolitical prerogatives. "What is at stake" in Kim's analysis "is not a simple 'recovery' of an invisibilized history into visibility but an interrogation of the ongoing dynamics of US militarist settler imperialism whose sleight of hand is what [Crystal] Baik incisively calls a 'beautifying practice,' one that

alchemically transfigures violence into beneficent nonviolence and … death into the necessary precondition for life" (66). The barrelman, fleetingly mentioned though it may be, is more than a tongue-in-cheek trinket: it is an effigy of the Philippine condition. The barrelman's popularity is an indictment of the touristic and militaristic American gaze that mystifies the displacement of Ibaloi Filipinos that have brought said barrelman into circulation. It is itself symptomatic of the "beautifying practice" that "alchemically transfigures violence into beneficent nonviolence," as the humorous novelty of the barrelman emerges in an act of substitution over the dispossession of the Ibaloi. The barrelman, as a byproduct of and tool for the dehumanization of the Ibaloi, makes their subsequent dispossession and erasure easier. This same humorous novelty also naturalizes the practice of American settler garrisons in the Philippines, enchanting the Philippine imaginary yet more with the fantasy of American "beneficent nonviolence." Think, for example, of the colonial violence that undergirds the ostensibly innocent (that is, historically innocent) caricatures in Disneyland's *Enchanted Tiki Room.* From the exoticizing assemblage of decontextualized Pacific Islander cultural imagery to the prominence of José—the sleepy Mexican macaw with a white voice actor—these depictions share the same continuity of violence as the barrelman, in so far as their fanciful quaintness actively mystifies the conditions of colonial violence and imperial ideology that undergird their very production. In Arthur Soto-Vásquez's analysis of imperial ideology in Disneyland attractions, he turns to the work of Craig Svonkin, whose 2011 essay on Disneyland waxes poetic about the Tiki Room. Specifically, Svonkin demonstrates how, "like many suburban Americans in the 1960s, Svonkin was enthralled with an amalgamated representation of Polynesian and Hawaiian culture known as Tiki culture. For him, the Enchanted Tiki Room at Disneyland provided an exotic but ultimately safe and comfortable way to experience Tiki culture" (Soto-Vásquez 602). Like the logic of the

Tiki Room's touristic gaze upon Polynesian and Hawaiian culture, the barrelman grants "exotic but ultimately safe and comfortable" access to ostensible Philippine culture for American eyes. Castillo's theorization of Philippine historical experience, however, expands beyond Paz's brief meditation on the barrelman souvenir.

Jodi Kim's analysis throughout *Settler Garrison* remains pivotal to understanding and contextualizing Paz's background. She importantly delves into the burgeoning "transpacific masculinist compact" of American occupational practices worldwide, including but not limited to the Philippines (67). Specifically, Kim speaks of a "military-sexual complex" that "creates ever-renewed cycles of what is effectively a form of debt bondage for camptown sex workers, many of whom are now trafficked from the Philippines and Southeast Asia" (67). While sex work is not explicitly mentioned in Paz's recollections, her narrative addresses a burgeoning military-sexual complex in which Filipina women are being actively encouraged to develop libidinal attachments to American military men. In the second-person narration, the voice addressing Paz declares that "You can only enter the recreation camp [of Camp John Hay] if you're a guest of a U.S. citizen, but one of your new girlfriends happens to be dating an American soldier and she's generous enough to invite all of you to camp, so in the end it's like you're all dating the soldier: you get to see the golf courses, the country clubs, the rich Filipinos getting married" (Castillo 6). It is no coincidence that the extraction of the landscape inherent in the creation of golf courses and country clubs is addressed alongside the idea of these Filipinas "all dating the soldier." Here, Castillo willfully and provocatively evokes colonial cliches about gendered metaphors for indigenous land to generate her critique of America's simultaneous amassing of land and of women. Even if sex work that would flourish in America's "military-sexual complex" is not explicitly addressed in this passage, colonial patriarchy at the core of these dynamics

metastasizes in the Filipinas' cathectic attachment to and dependence on the American soldier. Perhaps, to Paz, it is a connection formed out of convenience, but the resulting access to colonial amenities is an affordance particular to the unfolding colonial situation.

At the same time, Paz's second-person reflections lead the reader to insights on her experience with Philippine decolonial and radical traditions. In *Things Fall Away: Philippine Historical Experience and the Makings of Globalization,* Neferti Tadiar devotes much of her analysis to intervening against masculinist theorizations of Philippine labor and masculinist notions of Philippine teleology. Castillo's characterization of Paz moves in lockstep with Tadiar's ethos, as Paz meditates on the legacy of Diego Silang:

> … the eighteenth-century revolutionary who, with the help of British forces who wanted their own piece of the Philippines, staged a revolt against Spanish colonial rule. Everyone says Diego Silang's an Ilocano, that as a revolutionary he wanted to form an Ilocano nation. Even your future Ilocano husband will remember Diego Silang as an Ilocano, will remember that the revolutionary as a young boy lived and worked in Vigan, his own hometown. But you know a different story: you know that Diego Silang was born in Pangasinan, just like you. His mother was Ilocana, but his father was Pangasinense. You feel somewhat petty for thinking that it matters, but—it matters. It matters to you. (7)

Critically, these thoughts also capture the greater ethos of Castillo's novel: its devotion to "a different story" from, say, Bulosan's. Pol, Paz's husband and Hero's uncle, is the "future Ilocano husband" in question, who claims Diego Silang's revolutionary contributions as a part of his own Ilocano heritage. While this is important in and of itself, Diego Silang's underemphasized Pangasinense heritage is something that "matters to [Paz]." Her marginality as a Filipina that puts her and others in a coercive dynamic with an American soldier is incomplete without

consideration for her marginality in relation to her Ilocano husband as someone from Pangasinan. The insinuation of an Ilocano hegemony in Philippine memory (at least over Pangasinenses and not Tagalogs), such that "everyone says Diego Silang's an Ilocano," is mediated by Paz's emphasis on Silang's Ilocano *and* Pangasinense heritage. It is mediated furthermore by how, after acknowledging Silang's betrayal by the British and his subsequent assassination, the narration explains:

> Leadership of the revolt falls to Diego's wife and fellow insurgent, María Josefa Gabriela, an Ilocana with a Spanish dad and uncertain maternage—a native maid in a colonial household, maybe Igorata or Tinguian. Either way, your lessons told you that Gabriela was a beautiful bolo-wielding mestiza. The mestiza part means they'll definitely make a movie out of her life one day: *people remember the mestizas.* That you're light-skinned enough to pass for mestiza doesn't slip your mind; frankly, you're hanging on to it as a crucial talisman of your survival. (7, emphasis mine)

While a surplus of examples in literature exist to demonstrate this, the above passage is a crucial illustration of R. Radhakrishnan's commitment to the idea that "literature has always done the work of theory, or to be more precise, the work of theoretical and critical thinking, albeit on a different generic register" (443). In Castillo's case, her usage of Paz's voice intervenes on prevailing Philippine humanisms by throwing into relief the more readily accessible *legibility of the mestiza,* symptomatic as well of colorism in the Philippines. Not only is the cynical notion of "people remember[ing] the mestizas" true to the social realities of 20th and 21st century Philippines, but Philippine cultural production also remains fixated on the mestiza as a substitute for the concerns of the darker-skinned and/or indigenous Filipina. *Nita Negrita,* for example, is a 2011 *teleserye* (or soap opera) starring the light-skinned mestiza actress Barbie Forteza, who

dons blackface to portray a significantly darker-skinned protagonist. Mestiza-ness, in this example, grants more legibility to the protagonist even when in blackface, as if the donning of darker skin remains more legible than to physically possess it. This is also emblematic of anti-Blackness in the Philippine imaginary, but I must return to Paz's emphasis of her own skin being light enough to "pass for mestiza." Such is her rhetorical situation that her sense of her own legibility, her own ability to function as a historical and political subject, is contingent on her proximity to mestiza-ness, however much 'faked' by passing. These dynamics Paz finds herself in are all symptomatic of an imperialist realism that saturates Philippine cultural production and historical memory, and it is clear to me that Castillo consciously engages with and satirizes this phenomenon. She leaves the reader with the contradictions found in these caveats concerning the mestiza's hegemonic status managing to coexist with a historical imperative for there to be a *Filipina* figure that can take on the same mythic registers as Burgos, Bonifacio, and Rizal. It seems as if a Filipina figure can only join the pantheon of the Philippine revolutionary imagination if she is a "beautiful bolo-wielding mestiza."

In her reflection on the mestiza privileges Gabriela enjoys, even in death, Paz unearths a racialized alienation domestic to Philippine history and culture. This understanding intertwines with her own class precarity, given what her thoughts demonstrate when the second-person voice declares:

> … the first thing that makes you foreign to a place is to be born poor in it; you don't need to immigrate to America to feel what you already felt when you were ten, looking up at the rickety concrete roof above your head and knowing that one more bad typhoon would bring it down to crush your bones and the bones of all your siblings sleeping next to you; or selling fruit by the side of the road to people who made sure to never really look at you, made sure

not to touch your hands when they put the money in it. You've been foreign all your life.

When you finally leave, all you're hoping for is a more bearable kind of foreignness. (18)

In this passage is a sense of domestic foreignness calcified by class precarity, as Paz's poverty marks both vulnerability and difference. She is not protected from the quotidian violence of dangerous living conditions, the capriciousness of the elements, and the condescension of higher-class strangers. Foreignness, here, upsets the paradigms of the immigration narrative typified by Bulosan, with foreignness being found even in one's homeland. Though Bulosan devotes significant time in the early chapters of his novel to the exploitations of absentee landlordism that would put Allos's father in debt and compel him and his brothers to immigrate to the U.S., there is no explicit rumination on a fundamental—almost ontological—class divide that Paz feels deep in her bones. A new migrant Philippine telos is born here in Castillo's pages, amidst the death of older visions like Bulosan's, which promise assimilation into American society. However, Paz's reflections are burdened by a distinct cynicism that no doubt confronts the social realities of poverty with less of a teleological attachment than Bulosan's commitment to a better America: there is only, in Paz's telos, the resigned hope for something *tolerable.*

Like Allos's story, Paz's immigration to the U.S. leads to revealing interactions with Black Americans. A more explicit continuity is formed, in fact, between Allos's generation of Filipinos and Paz's in the resulting meditations:

> You and a group of other Filipino nurses are hired to work at the Nashville General Hospital under the care of Meharry Medical College, which you learn is one of the preeminent historically Black medical schools in America. All your life, you've been dreaming of America, singing its lyrics and combing its style into your hair. But now the prospect of meeting actual, real-life Americans makes you apprehensive; you remember

> some of the crueler stories you heard back home, from the older generation who'd work in the sugarcane or asparagus fields on the West Coast and returned broken-bodied and bitter, or never came back at all. (19)

Whereas Allos discovers the cruelties of (mostly white) American citizens for himself throughout *America Is In the Heart,* Paz is apprehensive from already knowing of these cruelties. While a structural antagonism between Black and Filipino Americans is already abound by the time of Paz's rhetorical situation (as explored in my analysis of Bulosan's own context), their American-ness more than their Blackness seems to be the source of Paz's trepidation here. It is undone by the decided hospitality of the Black Americans in question, as "most of the doctors and managers in the hospital are from upper-middle class Black families, and early in your visit, you and the rest of the Filipino nurses are invited to the house of one of Meharry's bigwigs, Dr. Garnett, the Director of the Division of Neurology." Notably, "Doctor Garnett and his wife, Louise, [are] both mestizong-itim" (19). "Mestizong-itim" is Tagalog for a Black mestizo, and thus a biracial Black person. While Paz does not go into detail about how pleasant or unpleasant these interactions become, perhaps no news is good news. The second-person voice seems reassured not just by the hospitality of these Black Americans, but by the biracial heritage of both Doctor Garnett and Louise. This is no coincidence given the self-described mestiza-passing that Paz benefits from, and in fact reinforces the privileged status of such an existence. The reality of the situation, for that matter, poses a contrast between Paz's imaginary America—rife with white cruelty—versus the 'real' America—rich, momentarily, with Black kindness. I do not believe this is an evocation of the 'magical Negro' trope embodied by Larkin, whose quick appearance and disappearance helps Allos resolve his melancholia over his separation from his brothers. Crucially, Louise tells Paz that "It must be hard to be so far from home … Your parents must miss you terribly" (19). At

this, the narration reflects on the fact that nobody—not even Paz's parents—misses her. Nobody, that is, except Paz's boyfriend Pol, though he only "might miss [her]" and "hasn't said it that way" (20). This is all to say that the Filipina Paz's interactions with the Black Louise do not lead to insights that offer narrative and emotional closure (which the "magical Negro" often provides) but rather bring her attention to narrative and emotional *fissures,* such as the lack of an adequate support network from her homeland. While these scenes do not construct an active vision of Afro-Filipino solidarity, Castillo writes such interactions to *demystify* the romantic qualities of American immigration that persist near the end of Bulosan's narrative despite the horrors Allos faces.

Paz further reflects on the expectations and imaginations of the very same family that does not miss her. "Your family thinks you're living in a giant house, not an apartment, and they don't know how far Milpitas is from San Francisco, the glamorous red-bridged seaside city they picture in their heads. Since arriving in California you haven't been to the beach once" (24). In his study, *The Promise of the Foreign,* Vicente Rafael describes how early modern Spanish cultural production, and particularly vernacular plays known as *comedias,* "conjured a phantasmagoric 'Europe'" among Filipinos through decontextualized European narrative tropes and aesthetics (107). If said Phantasmagoric Europe haunted and continues to haunt the Philippine imaginary, so too does a Phantasmagoric *America* loaded with the utopic expectations of migratory dreams realized. The abstraction Milpitas occupies in its mystified geography, the hyperbolized beauty of San Francisco, and the association of California with beaches attest to the constructed fiction of a United States that promises upward mobility and unqualified prosperity. Never mind, of course, the realities faced by Paz and Pol, who eventually joins her in Milpitas, only to face downward mobility when left with only the opportunity to become a security guard

(whereas in the Philippines, he was once a doctor). Just as critically, Paz reflects on the ideological and phantasmagoric American inheritance of her newborn child, Roni:

> She'll grow up knowing that the only reason she's alive is because she was born in America—though she doesn't seem to love America any more or less for that reason. Then again, she doesn't have to love it. She's of it … As for loving America or not loving America, those aren't your problems, either. Your word for love is survival. Everything else is a story that isn't about you. (30)

In what closes off Paz's prologue, readers are presented with the explicit demystification of the Phantasmagoric America I just described. Whether or not to love America, here, throws into relief whether this is a problem worth having in the first place. Indeed, why does one have to decide whether they love America? What conditions a person to treat 'love' as some kind of ethical obligation, other than the mythologization of America that maintains its historical innocence and corresponding devotion to the upward mobility of all groups? There is an implicit rebuttal, here, to Allos's final words. "It came to me," Allos narrates, "that no man—no one at all—could destroy my faith in America again." This notion is "something that grew out of our desire to know America, and to become a part of her great tradition, and to contribute something toward her final fulfillment. I knew that no man could destroy my faith in America that had sprung from all our hopes and aspirations, *ever*" (Bulosan 327-328). There is a desire, here, to make *something* of all the pain Allos has experienced, as if some teleological catharsis and narrative closure awaits him so long as he holds fast in his commitment to the American Dream. For Paz, however, as she thinks of her daughter's relationship with the *idea* of America, there is no such yearning for an ideological return on investment. There is instead the mere facticity of America, divorced from any dream that imbues the nation with a mythic, messianic, and

redemptive quality. It is precisely at this moment, where Paz's prologue is about to end and Hero's narrative is about to begin, that Castillo most explicitly constructs an *anti-imperial gaze.* Even if one's prose acknowledges, deals with, and perhaps even reproduces imperial ideology, an *anti-imperial gaze* is present wherever registers of self-reflexivity, irony, and facticity are present. There is only, in Paz's mind, a 'mere' America that Roni will inherit. If *imperialist realism* concerns a construction of reality motivated by imperial prerogatives, the *anti-imperial gaze* helps expose the artifice behind that construction. And sometimes, as in *America Is Not The Heart,* the exposure of said artifice can be as simple as saying America 'is what it is.' Or more accurately, in Paz's words, "she doesn't have to love it. She's of it" (30).

The narrative pivots to the perspective of the main protagonist, Geronima "Hero" de Vera, Pol's niece and thus Paz's by marriage. Like Pol, Hero is of Ilocano descent, and though she does not enjoy the privileges of Tagalogs' hegemony, she and Pol benefit from a cosmopolitan existence as members of an extended family—the de Vera clan—with ties to Philippine dictator Ferdinand Marcos. While Paz's immigration to the U.S. details the precarity of legal immigration to the U.S., Hero's own immigration is rendered fraught by its illegal status, rendering her vulnerable to deportation. Roni, also short for Geronima, is Paz's aforementioned daughter who—as a child throughout the story's events—contends with her own struggles as a second-generation Filipina American in Milpitas. To understand the adult Hero requires understanding the child Roni and vice versa, as after Paz, the two Geronimas crucially embody the tableau of Philippine historical experience that Castillo's narrative labors to construct. Hero and Roni's struggles, especially in juxtaposition to Allos's, illustrate *America Is Not the Heart*'s ultimate intervention: a project of demystification regarding the very same American Dream

that—as far as there is a *Phantasmagoric America* as well—continues to enchant the Philippine imaginary.

Importantly, much of *America Is Not The Heart* is filtered through Hero's perspective in the third person. She, Roni, and Paz—as characters—operate on a continuum of juxtapositions that expose the pluralities of Filipinx immigrant experiences. Despite experiencing downward mobility upon moving to the U.S. like her Tito Pol, Hero shares her uncle's past of a privileged existence in Vigan, Ilocos Sur. As part of the affluent De Vera family, Hero enjoyed a cosmopolitan upbringing that sheltered her from the social realities of the Philippines until her political awakening during the Marcos regime. Beyond observable class divides in her past, such as her relatives bringing in servants from remote provinces, Hero has contended with racial ones as an Ilocano—both for the hegemonic currency her background affords her over, say, Pangasinenses, and how that still places her beneath Tagalogs. Colorism likewise runs deep among her relatives, as her memories expose her family's deeply entrenched resentment of their own darker skin. There is a conscious choice Castillo exercises here in choosing a cosmopolitan protagonist with an even more cosmopolitan uncle. José Rizal's depiction of the European-educated Juan Crisóstomo Ibarra, protagonist of *Noli Me Tangere*, exhibits a self-consciousness of his subject position that ultimately capitulates to imperial paradigms, just as Bulosan's depiction of Allos's political awakening leads him towards a similar genuflection to the naturalized goodness of America. Castillo's presentation of Hero's heritage, however, labors to expose the contradictions of a Philippine cosmopolitanism that flourished well before Marcos's rise to power. The attitudes in question reveal the De Vera family's cathectic attachment to a Phantasmagoric Europe, an attachment Hero herself leaves behind in her own encounters with the realities of immigration obscured by a Phantasmagoric America. Though Castillo's rendition

risks reproducing the dynamics of *imperialist realism* in the tableau of life she depicts at Vigan—especially amidst the relations of power over which the De Veras reign—her writings represent a critical step forward from the groundwork of Bulosan's project. This is not to say that Castillo's contribution lives entirely in Bulosan's shadow, of course, but that in the spirit of the novel's naming, it is crucial to fully examine how Castillo engages with Bulosan's legacy, especially regarding the class and racial framings of her characters. I bring attention to this for the simple fact that there is a dearth of scholarship on *America Is Not The Heart*, although the publications that do exist succeed at their respective goals. Caroliena Cabada's queer ecofeminist analysis of Hero's 'found family' in the New People's Army, whose resistance to the Marcos regime is pivotal to Hero's emotional and political edification (Cabada 2), and Mark Tabunan's theorizations of how the novel "goes beyond essentialist contours of immigrant experience such as heteronormative nationalism and nostalgia for lost origins" (Tabunan 672), are both invaluable contributions. However, I have yet to see scholarship address the colonial and class dynamics of Philippine modernity that Hero must unlearn.

By colonial and class dynamics, I refer to the nexus of colonial mentality, patriarchy, and class hierarchy—or altogether what I would call imperial ideology—that runs rampant in the De Vera household before Hero's parents eventually disown her. "When," long before her time at the NPA, "Hero decided to go to University of Santo Tomas to become a surgeon like Tito Pol, he'd been the first person she'd told, and the only one who was openly pleased by the news. Her parents, on the other hand, had mixed feelings. Concepcion was unequivocally against the idea, found the profession unbecoming of a woman, not least of all a De Vera woman" (55). Concepcion, Hero's mother, exhibits patriarchal pretensions she can afford to possess because of her existing wealth and status. Living up to the standards of an ideal "De Vera woman" is only

the beginning of a litany of pressures and expectations that come with the De Vera name. As the narrative focalization briefly inhabits Concepcion's perspective, it calls "choosing the punishing hours of the surgeon's life, entering into its traditionally, and appropriately, masculine world—absurd" (55). The third person voice satirizes this view only a sentence later, as "Most of the De Veras of their generation were coercing at least one of their children to take up law, if only to prepare to fight the future of land reform, the inevitable battle all the older families would eventually have to wage to keep the land they told each other was their *birthright*" (55, emphasis mine). On the one hand, Hero must contend with the essentialism of a "masculine world" to which "the surgeon's life" is exclusive; on the other, she must contend with a family tree that considers the expropriated land of the agrarian poor to be her ostensible "birthright." This is a notion the novel explores later, when—in a flashback to Hero's time at the NPA—the narrative offers some insight into the life of Hero's close friend, Teresa. Her background, in contrast to Hero's, is mired in misfortune because of the very same class dynamics from which the De Veras benefit:

> Teresa's father was a journalist; disappeared first. Her mother was a lawyer representing a farmer's union in the Sierra Madre; gone a few months later. By that time, Teresa had graduated from college, had been working in Manila as a journalist herself. When she understood that she wasn't ever going to recover her parents' bodies, she stopped writing and resumed contact with a group of ex-Huk rebels who'd known her mother, two of whom had been her godparents. It was out of anti-Japanese Hukbahalap rebellion that many peasants, not necessarily Huks themselves, but sympathizers, informally began the process of land reform. They'd toiled on the same land for generations without any hope of owning it, but the rebellion empowered them. In the tumult of war, many were able to

> seize property and depose tyrannical landlords, beginning one of the first distributions of wealth in the nation's history. Some of the landowners had already run away to Manila long before the Huks and peasants arrived on the scene, collaborating with Japanese occupiers in exchange for safety and lifestyle upkeep—when the war was over, there would be time enough to return and wrest back their birthrights. (114)

The hardships of Teresa's family and their connections to the Huk rebellion pose a sharp contrast to the comforts of Hero's family and their connections to the Marcos regime. Castillo, here, invokes the Philippines' political contestations over land reform, both because of Spanish and American colonialism, as well as of the country's steepening class disparities under global capitalism. Empire, as an enterprise, circumscribes the terms of this conflict between peasants who seek land reform and landowners who seek "their birthrights." The plight of the former has led to the coinage of the Philippines as a "captive land." In James Putzel's study on the subject, he attributes this term to "a speech by peasant leader Jaime Tadeo," who described how "the state in the Philippines can be seen as a 'captive' of the interests, or more specifically, of the clans which dominate political life" (xx). Tadeo's struggle is Teresa's inheritance, given the sacrifices she and her parents make to confront Philippine relations of power. The question of the Philippines as a captive land prevails in Hero's past, even if she herself is not invested in a particular "birthright." What matters is that Castillo, like Bulosan, attends to this history of land reform as an important backdrop for her protagonists. In the case of Bulosan, the misfortunes of Allos's father serve as an indictment of the Philippines' social realities as an outsider—poor, landless, etc.—looking in. Meanwhile, the pretensions of Hero's extended family perform the same function *from the inside looking out.*

It is important to further contextualize Hero's background, for in it lies more of the novel's transnational bent. The juxtaposition with Teresa's past, as well as the conflict of the NPA and the Marcos regime, form a tableau of Philippine politics over which the U.S. casts a particular shadow. "US thinking about counterinsurgency," argues Putzel, "has dominated policy-makers' response to persistent rural protest, while US biases against redistributive reform – partly promoted in terms of fighting 'worldwide communism' – have coincided with those of the elite" (xxi). Historian Luis Francia corroborates this in his examination of the way "absentee landlordism" only grew, even after the Huk rebellion's galvanization of the Philippine peasantry (200). "In conformity with the 1898 Treaty of Paris," Francia continues, "the U.S. government had agreed to buy the huge landed estates of the Spanish friars. And it did, in 1903, with funds raised through the sale of Philippine government bonds." But because the "400,000 acres" represented could not be afforded by "landless peasants," "a majority were forced to sell their small plots to wealthy landowners" who "chose to continue living in towns and cities, delegating the task of managing their lands to their managers, an arrangement that often led to abuse and more importantly to the breakdown of traditional landlord-tenant relations. Inevitably, the gap between these two social classes grew wider" (200-201). I have acknowledged, despite my criticism of the biases that present themselves in Bulosan's *America In the Heart,* his rightful attendance to class disparities in the Philippines and the U.S. Critically, Bulosan's depiction of these class relations is worthy of juxtaposition with how Castillo renders Hero and Teresa's dichotomous backgrounds. Per Allos's narration of the time before his migration to the U.S., he recounts how in his childhood:

> Each year the landlords demanded a larger share, until it became impossible for the peasants to live . . . . It was at this time that my father's land was taken away from him …

> He sold our animals and came to … Lingayen to fight in the provincial court for the restoration of our farm . . . . After three weeks my father returned, defeated and broken in spirit. He had walked to the capital of Pangasinan carrying his sack of provisions and when he arrived there had had great difficulty in locating the proper court in which to present his case. When he found the court he could not locate the right people. He went from one clerk to another and from one room to another, pleading in his dialect and cursing his illiteracy. (60)

Bulosan, here, sets up one of many repetitions with a difference throughout *America Is In The Heart.* The plight of Allos's father, who suffers from the consequences of a land held captive by Philippine elites, foreshadows the plight of Allos himself, whose class and racial precarity put him on the run across the U.S. for most of the novel's narrative. In Allos's ultimate commitment to the realization of an idealized America, the social realities of the Philippines for Filipino peasants prove crucial to making legible the social realities of the U.S. for Filipino *migrants.* I do not say this to suggest Bulosan merely instrumentalizes domestic issues of the Philippine state to clarify a 'messianic' migrant Filipino thesis, but to describe his sincere attempt to resolve the fraught position of a Filipino American citizen-subject under constant jeopardy via racial and political violence. On the other hand, Castillo exhumes the same past for her own narrative's critique of Hero's heritage, throwing into relief the harms entailed by a Philippine cosmopolitanism that its constituents may fetishize.

For example, Castillo does not spare colorism—another symptom of imperial ideology and intervention—from her novel's analysis. Specifically, "Hero's famously beautiful tsinay grandmother, her namesake, the original Geronima de Vera, née Chua, was the descendant of upper-middle-class sangley mestizos, their ancestors Hokkien-speaking merchants who'd made

their wealth in the Philippines during the colonial period" (56). "Tsinay" informally refers to a Filipina woman with Chinese ancestry, with "sangley" more broadly referring to any Chinese Filipino mestizo/a. "They'd remained, intermarried, became that curious new thing," the narration continues: "the Filipino. Famously beautiful meant she was white-white-white, practically lavender, or at least she appeared so in the retrato of her that hung in the De Vera home" (56). This portrait, so to speak, of a racial elitism in the De Vera family is compounded by a class ascent "during the [Spanish] colonial period." There is a fetishization of the mestizo/a condition as a marker of class privilege, here, that Castillo brings to bear in her tongue-in-cheek language. She provides further insight into the De Vera family's pretensions, for that matter, by eventually clarifying what "white-white-white" entails, for mixed Chinese ancestry alone does not cut it. Specifically:

> The De Veras descended from a tangle of *Spanish landowners*, Hokkien merchants, and, most thickly and undeniably, native Ilocanos. Prospective brides always weighed the appealing wealth of De Vera men against their less appealing darkness. Despite all the Tabac and three-piece suits, they couldn't shake or spend away that unmistakable, mutinous look of the indio. It was a look that reproduced itself defiantly throughout the generations, no matter how many button-nosed and auburn-haired mestizas were ushered into the family. (60, emphasis mine)

Here, too, are the detrimental consequences of such elitism on the psyches of men in the De Vera family. The "mutinous look of the indio" constantly jeopardizes their cosmopolitan pretensions, the "darkness" of their skin betraying the illusion of the "white-white-white"-ness they so covet in themselves. While Hero does not exhibit this mentality herself, I have shown how even Paz has been conditioned to lionize her own passing as mestiza. While the problematics of colorism

in the Philippines are rampant in other forms of the country's cultural production, Castillo's novel engages with colorism as a symptom of imperial ideology that manifests in the racial cathexes of the De Vera men, the feminine standards of beauty of the De Vera women, and their collective sense of superiority to the agrarian poor who threaten their "birthright." Even the benign behaviors of Pol, the male relative Hero admires the most throughout her childhood, show the extent of this cosmopolitism among the De Veras. Namely, "once inside the house, Hero recognized Pol's taste everywhere: the paintings of cockfighters and pastoral mothers holding children, a print of an Amorsolo and probably an original Paco Gorospe, heavy molave chairs, a burnay jar from Vigan, abel table runners, a wall packed with books" (59). Notably, Fernando Amorsolo and Paco Gorospe are Filipino painters and molave chairs are made from trees indigenous to the Philippines, but it is the amassing of materials both cultural and natural that mark Pol as a cosmopolitan citizen-subject. In the De Vera family's accumulation of cultural accoutrements and financial capital, concomitant with their lionization of mestiza/o features, they remain enchanted by the Phantasmagoric Europe no doubt popularized by the "Spanish landowners" and their contemporaries from whom the De Veras descended. It is not so much the contents of Pol's collection, which includes art and materials from across the Philippines, but Pol's impulse to show his worldliness, wealth, and intellect through a decorated study that reflects a kind of European aesthetic.

The Phantasmagoric Europe as such, however, does not protect Pol from losing these possessions and his access to similar aesthetic choices. This loss takes place when he experiences the downward mobility common in Filipino American immigration that transition him from being a surgeon in the Philippines to a security guard in the U.S. Despite the known traumas of immigration within and beyond the Filipino diaspora, I do think mobility as such—*even*

downward—is something the novel articulates to be a 'good' problem to have, especially as a problem that arises from a place of privilege. Nowhere is this clearer than in the narrative's examination of Lulay, one of Hero's past maids:

> Lulay had worked for the De Vera family all her life, as the personal maid of [Hero's father] Hamin and Pol's mother, the original Geronima de Vera … when Hero was born, Lulay came to live with them. Lulay only spoke Tagalog to Hero, but neither Tagalog nor Ilocano had been her first languages—what language was her first, Hero never knew. Lulay didn't talk about it. Lulay had age-washed tattoos on her upper arms and chest that Hero only vaguely remembered seeing when she was a child. (102)

There is, on the one hand, a sympathetic curiosity towards Lulay in Hero's recollections of her. On the other hand, there is also a confrontation with Lulay's own illegibility as a decided *non*-cosmopolitan Filipina, whose "age-washed tattoos" are cultural signifiers of Philippine indigeneity inscrutable to the eyes of a young Hero. The ambiguity of Lulay's origins monopolize Hero's memories of her, down to uncertainty over "what language was [Lulay's] first" (102). There is no certainty, for that matter, that Tagalog and Ilocano are even the only two possibilities. Though Lulay falls out of focus for the rest of the novel, I believe she is significant for exposing the upper limits of who qualifies to be a cosmopolitan Filipinx citizen-subject. Lulay's existence exposes Hero's epistemic limitations, no doubt overdetermined by her family's lack of interest in anything to do with the Philippine peasantry other than contestations over "birthright," and helps Castillo depict the harm the De Veras have brought upon poorer Filipinos. "Lulay was from the north of Luzon, that much Hero knew, which meant she was practically a local, and thus an artifact from a rapidly disappearing era of De Vera servitude" (102). Lulay's disappearance from relevance, then, becomes just as illustrative as her original relevance. The

fact of her obsolescence, after all, explains how "the newer generation [of De Veras] had begun looking farther afield when it came to their help. Hero's younger cousins were raised and driven around by people from Negros, Samar, Davao, Sulu. Hiring servants from farther-flung provinces made it more difficult for a rebellious or disgruntled or newly-in-love maid or driver to run away, back to the safety of their friends and family. As far away as possible from a comfort zone: that was the best state for a servant. The younger De Veras enjoyed their modernity" (102). "Modernity," in this case, being undoubtedly synonymous with my usage of "cosmopolitan," is loaded with all such harms the word entails. Specifically, the pretenses and affordances of modernity—of the consolidation of wealth, authority, and familial ties the De Veras enjoy—are entailed by the isolation from friends and family that De Vera servants after Lulay must suffer from. These calculations sustain the De Veras' notions of their own superiority, including and especially their disownment of Hero once she achieves her political awakening among the NPA.

Despite the insight these passages give not only to Lulay but to the general conditions of servants from the lower rungs of the Philippines' social hierarchy, there is something confessional in Castillo's description of their condition. For although Hero herself experiences downward mobility and is subjected to a precarious existence as an undocumented immigrant in Milipitas, she—like Pol—nonetheless had the privilege to immigrate in the first place. The lives of Lulay and her successors, the subsequent De Vera servants, become geographically transfixed and utterly stationary in their isolation from their provincial homes. In *America Is Not The Heart,* there is almost a voyeurism of Lulay's general plight while the story criticizes the De Vera family's privilege. It is reminiscent of the critical reception to *My Family's Slave*, an article featured in *The Atlantic* in 2017 which simultaneously attends to profound class disparities in the Philippine diaspora while also appropriating the voice of its oppressed main subject. As Cheche

Moral recounts it, the article reflects on the life of a woman Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Alex Tizon "called his family's slave for 56 years. The Philippine-born Tizon refers to Eudocia Tomas Pulido, known to him as Lola, the woman gifted to his mother as her personal slave, and who devotedly raised him and his four siblings as his parents struggled to fulfill the American dream." Moral further recounts that while "there were those who praised Tizon … Others were outraged and railed at the writer for being complicit to his parents' sins … His essay romanticized slavery, others said, and it did nothing to absolve him of his family's sins against this woman whose life they stole." While slavery to the degree depicted in Tizon's confession does not appear in Castillo's novel, the relationship between Hero and Lulay illustrates that even precarious Filipinx immigrants are culpable in the entrenched inequalities of Philippine modernity. Neither the De Vera family, nor Tizon's parents, face a reckoning for the harm they caused, but Lulay's presence is Castillo's way of unsettling any easy essentialism that may come with immigrant narratives, such as the ostensible homogenization of Filipinxs who immigrate. Castillo's narrative challenges this notion, as there is no true flattening of racial, gendered, and class disparities from the 'homeland.' Complicity in the hegemonies of one's homeland *follows immigrants wherever they go.* This is why, as Linda Pierce writes:

> Being mestiza means struggling between physical and metaphysical cultural borders … You personify the colonizer at the same time that you are colonized; you participate in the colonization of yourself; and, as Filipino Studies critic Vicente Rafael points out … you "invoke the legacy of the ilustrados" grounded in elitist structures of Spanish colonialism … Your enviable status derives from privilege and marks you as complicit in hegemonic structures of racial and economic oppression. Your light skin serves as a daily reminder of

> your privilege and accountability, of your complicated status as "woman of color," your responsibilities as scholar and activist. (33)

In Pierce's summation of the structural position of the Filipina mestiza, the stakes of Castillo's intervention are on full display. By choosing to make Hero the protagonist, to set her class background as an important context for her eventual political awakening and a sobering reminder of the inequities that persist even *as* an oppressed migrant, Castillo critically grapples with the "legacy of the ilustrados" Rafael describes. Among *America Is Not The Heart*'s many theoretical valences, it precisely the inclusion of Lulay and the sustained examination of the De Vera family that contributes to the novel's *anti-imperial gaze.* There is an attempt in Castillo's writings to demystify the conditions of Philippine cosmopolitan teleology by exposing the pretensions that sustain them for what they are: fictions predicated on inequalities that originated in Spanish colonialism and continued thanks to American colonialism. My exegesis as such contributes to Mark Tabunan's claim that "both Castillo and Hero do not simply reproduce forms of power, whether nationalist, imperialist, or feminist. In the language of biopolitics, they are not an empty vehicle for a smooth, continuous transmission of power. Rather, they are sites of deterritorializations and reterritorializations that go beyond received conventions. Castillo's and Hero's productions and negotiations of power serve as the conditions of possibility for resistance" (681). Said conditions happen to include what I am calling the *anti-imperial gaze,* in so far as the process of "reterritorializations" experienced by Hero demystify the legacies of the Spanish and American empires. There is, in the quotidian framing of Hero's life in Milpitas, a lack of the aggrandizement and romanticization that is found in Allos's journey during the Great Depression. Resistance, in Castillo's novel, is better attained by turning away from the pretensions not only of Allos's intellectual awakening, but also from the ready-to-hand

cosmopolitanism and cultural capital of what it means to be a member of the De Vera family—something that even Pol, among its least hostile and elitist members, benefits from. The narrative of immigration Hero embodies does not represent a seamless transition into an oppressed subject à la the "deterritorialization" of the migrant, but rather—and more importantly—a fraught transition burdened with the hegemonies of the migrant's past that join their "reterritorialization" elsewhere. If Bulosan's novel does not offer an adequate analysis of Allos's own complicity in relations of power both in the Philippines and the U.S., Castillo's novel eagerly offers an analysis of Hero's.

Despite her fraught relationship with her parents, after all, Hero's privileged class status protects her from prolonged suffering as a prisoner of the Marcos regime. This is an affordance many of the less fortunate insurgents do not possess, and it provides the conditions of possibility for Hero's own immigrant narrative:

> After it had been confirmed that the prisoner who spoke Ilocano and said she was only a country doctor was, indeed, a De Vera daughter, and therefore closely related to a family friend and relative through marriage of Marcos, she'd been immediately released from the camp, two years after she'd been taken. Amends were made to the De Vera family for the oversight. The year Hero left for California, Hamin won a landslide election as mayor of Bantay, close enough to Vigan that he and Concepcion wouldn't even have to move—though of course they did. New beginnings. Hero had never seen the house in Bantay; Soly said that it wasn't much larger than the De Vera house, but more modern. Tita Soly never said who'd paid for the surgery, plus the hefty bonus for the doctor's discretion on the side, but in Soly's silence Hero thought she could snuff out the trace of her parents. (93)

The terms of Hero's rescue and recovery begin and end with the affordances of her De Vera heritage, down to its connections "through [a relative's] marriage of Marcos" (93). Kinship with the 'upper echelons' of Philippine society enable the conditions of Hero's diasporic movement, even as she comes to learn—in a cynical recollection of subsequent events—that the Marcos regime's 'reparations' only benefit her parents, Hamin and Concepcion, in ways both political and financial: the "new beginnings" entailed by a "landslide election," the "more modern" luxury home to coexist with its older counterpart, and the clandestineness surrounding Hero's surgery for her broken hands. Although Hero is subsequently disowned because of her political leanings, the conditions of possibility for both her parents' manufactured prosperity and her ability to immigrate cannot be divorced from a connection to the Marcos regime. In fact, the De Vera family's wealth and connections to the Marcos regime enabled the conditions of possibility for Hero's recovery. However, this does not mean the narrative is satisfied with leaving Hero in some sort of ontological paralysis. "The part [of the novel titled] 'Milpitas,'" Tabunan explains, "closes with some comments on a book which Pol has given to Hero. It is *The Phenomenology of Perception* by French philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty. Pol tells her to read the part about phantom limbs. And even after dropping from medical school, the thoughts of Merleau-Ponty still lingered" (678). Specifically, Tabunan refers to the moment when Hero recalls her own resignation to the fact that she "wasn't going to be a surgeon, after all—at least not one that needed French philosophy. That was what she told herself, but there were lines she still thought about years later, in the room she shared with Teresa and the others, lying on a buri mat on the floor, still smelling faintly of the sampalok leaves used to bleach the straw. The part about phantom limbs. The part about sexuality. The part about no one being saved; the part about no one being totally lost" (Castillo 94). To Tabunan, "the intertext here intimates and foreshadows

the overriding point of the novel. Hero is more than just an object, tossed hither and tither by the uncertainty of the NPA movement and the harrowing experiences of exile. Her body, in Merleau-Ponty's thoughts, is 'a set of possibilities for action in given environments'" (678). In other words, just as the privileges of Hero's background help Castillo stage a critique of uneven access to immigration amidst Philippine social hierarchies, Hero embodies "a set of possibilities for action" thanks to a political awakening both *despite* and *because of* her privilege. It is Pol, her cosmopolitan uncle, who offers her the liberating insights of Merleau-Ponty. And while books as such are not completely useful to Hero, they are also not completely useless, as her remembrances show. They are important, but not essential, to a political awakening that follow her well into her exile from the Philippines. While Hero does not experience a state of formal exile, her disownment from her family and departure from the Philippines represent a cultural and political deracination significantly akin to it. Hero's intellectual growth is also still a far cry from the ways literary and philosophical texts became so crucial to Allos's political awakening, as he invests a great liberatory capacity in the power of books in *America Is In The Heart*—a fact no doubt compounded by his infirmity throughout the novel. There is something critical, nonetheless, about reading as a mark of privilege that nonetheless enables political, ideological, and geographic mobility. Castillo leans hard on the contradictions that reading represents to expose the contradictions of Hero's own historical experience. As both a symptom of power and an embodied critique of it, Hero's bildungsroman models a sort of *sympathetic complicity* that helps Castillo interrogate the conventions of immigrant narratives through a logic of exile.

Furthermore, interventions in Asian American Studies call attention to the complicity of Asian American immigrants—including Filipinos—in the projects of American settler-colonialism in the continental U.S. and Hawaii. Even though these topics are not explored

heavily in *America Is Not The Heart,* the novel commits to the principle of calling attention to the *complicity* immigrants experience even as they themselves are vulnerable to structural power. Castillo's portrayal of Hero is so generative because of the self-consciousness that permeates Hero's post-immigration interactions: her awareness of her complicity in particular relations of power, even as immigration renders her beholden to new ones. While Bulosan's Allos is also quite self-conscious of his status as a Filipino immigrant endangered by white society, Hero is conscious of the privileges she lacks *and* possesses. One of the closest examples to a sincere meditation on Allos's own privilege appears when he recounts how he and his brother Macario "jumped into a waiting bus, and two Negro laborers followed us. We did not drop any money in the slot; the Negroes took the blame. I felt ashamed. But it was another lesson: the persecuted were always the first victims of misunderstanding" (Bulosan 137). In this moment, Allos certainly laments the plight of the Black Americans that face repercussions for his and Macario's actions (the choice of not paying no doubt compounded and made reasonable by their own dire financial straits). That said, this instance of Black suffering only proves illustrative of a grander insight about "the persecuted," in broad strokes, without further meditation on Allos's feeling "ashamed." There is both the lamentation of Black Americans' condition and, implicitly, the relief that Allos himself *is not one,* articulating the very same American social hierarchy I have thrown into relief earlier in this chapter. Hero, on the other hand, dedicates more of her reflections to her own positionality. Upon witnessing an interaction between Roni and Melba, a Filipina family friend in Paz's age group, Melba speaks to Roni in Pangasinan, expecting Hero to follow the conversation under the assumption she herself is Pangasinense. Because of this, Hero "had the feeling her ignorance [of the Pangasinan language] would come off as superiority to Paz, and she wanted to avoid the obvious: that she had no exposure to these types of things

because she was from a different class, that she remembered friends of hers in college making jokes about probinsyanas and their hexes" (Castillo 68). The narration expresses Hero's own critical consciousness of her positionality that, while insinuated in Allos's case, is fleshed out and thrown into relief for what it is: specific class pretensions from social hierarchies that Hero benefitted from in the Philippines. Importantly, she is shown not to have internalized this hierarchy, due in great part to her political awakening as part of the NPA. As Tabunan claims, "once aloof and indifferent to her new life [in the NPA] because of her bourgeois upbringing in Vigan, Hero has learned to be a good companion, a 'kadwa' (companion) to the rebels … Mary Grace Concepcion calls this transformation from a wealthy upbringing to that of a Martial Law rebel as 'the bourgeois 'I' [that] withers away'" (678). While Allos never benefitted from a bourgeois upbringing, citizenship in the U.S. presents him with affordances over other racial groups—such as Black Americans—that he takes for granted. Hero, as a result of the "bourgeois 'I' wither[ing] away," feels a greater impetus to examine her own positionality unclouded by the affordances of the American citizen-subject. She is not as concerned as Allos about the project of assimilation for the betterment of the U.S.'s national telos, focused instead on a candid awareness of her own complicity in the Philippines' relations of power. This is why Andreea Mîrț observes some critical distinctions between Hero and Paz:

> Even though [Hero and Paz] share Filipino origins and the experience of emigration, their relationship maintains a certain distance from the beginning: in the Philippines, they belonged to different social classes (which explains why their native languages are different), and they are from different generations. Moreover, they emigrated for different reasons: Paz ends up living in Milpitas … as a result of the American dream of economic empowerment, while Hero comes here after being tortured for two years for being part of

> [the NPA]. The trauma of coming from a poor family and of being part of a revolutionary group is never shared between the two women. For both, America is a new beginning and a place of reconciliation with their past. The Filipino community of Milpitas offers them this possibility, but even here the mapping of their native country depends on their social and economic class. (116)

Mîrț clarifies the important experiential differences of Hero and Paz to stress an important way of understanding the Philippine (as well as any) diaspora: that no migratory experience is the same. While such an observation is now so prosaic as to be platitudinal, it remains critical *not* to homogenize Filipinx historical experience and flatten the domestic social hierarches (and thus, the hegemonies and antagonisms) that follow and dictate the terms of a given Filipinx's immigration process. Castillo's portrayal once again intervenes on the popular beats of an immigrant narrative, as well as the 'messianic' subjecthood Bulosan invests in Allos, by demystifying *the immigrant* as a historical subject. Hero's experiences are not loaded with providential importance and the anticipation of a nation's awakening—instead they are sobering meditations on the quotidian and often unspectacular realities of immigrant life.

Mîrț's distinctions also illustrate why, more than merely juxtaposing the two Geronimas of the novel, it is important to prioritize Castillo's triangulation of Hero, Roni, and Paz. While I have shown some of the ideological and historical contours of Hero and Paz's relationship, Castillo continues to invite juxtapositions between Hero and Roni. One illustrative moment appears in one of Hero's first proper interactions with whiteness in America. In attempting to pick up Roni from school, Hero is introduced to Mrs. Waverly, Roni's teacher, who explains that "Roni's in detention right now. She'll be out in an hour. She may be suspended for the rest of the week. Will Roni's parents be home this evening? I'll need to speak with them personally" (82).

At this, “Hero found English words slow to come, prickly and heavy on her tongue. She tried her best. Detention? For an hour? What did she do?” (82). Here, the narrative presents the extent of Hero’s fraught assimilation, with English—like Pangasinan—being unfamiliar territory to her. Yet while her Pangasinan is nonexistent, Hero merely struggles to keep pace with Waverly’s English. At the crossroads between the hegemony she benefitted from in the Philippines and the hegemony she is subjected to in the U.S., Hero experiences a cultural barrier that connects to and separates her from Paz all at once. Then there is Waverly herself, whose “brown hair she’d blow-dried then hairsprayed into a wavy bob,” was “falling just at her chin. It made her look like one of the soap opera stars Hero sometimes saw in the afternoon, but much less successfully. She smelled strongly of perfume, something not all dissimilar to something Hero remembered the De Vera women wearing, like No. 5 but with the volume turned up to a screech, creating a three-foot radius around the woman’s body, a force field of scent. Hero took a step back in self-defense” (82). Importantly, Hero recoils at the sensory evidence—the perfume—indicative of Waverly’s own cosmopolitan pretensions. Yet unlike the De Vera women who fashion Euro-American whiteness as their ego ideal, Waverly is herself *actually white.* Though she “less successfully” replicates the self-stylings of “soap opera stars,” Waverly is presented as an intimidating figure to Hero. She is, in fact, something of a cultural gatekeeper. This is not a role that Waverly consciously assumes, but rather the way she is structurally positioned as a teacher who must keep Roni in check. The corralling of an unruly and undisciplined Filipina child seems to leave Waverly at her wit’s end, as she is desperate for contact with Roni’s parents. The reason, then, I call Waverly a “gatekeeper” is because of the bias that is revealed to undergird her interactions with Filipino children in Milpitas. Roni’s classmate Charmaine later explains that Roni was not responsible for the fight that got her in trouble, but rather that Roni had “just gotten caught up in

it, because the boys were teasing her" (85). "Charmaine," a friend and classmate of Roni's, "was a light-skinned, church-going Filipina, top of the class, whose parents regularly donated to the school, and who often helped the teachers clap the chalkboard erasers after class. In short, Charmaine was one of Mrs. Waverly more civilized wards" (85). Because Charmaine performs the model minority success frame more readily accessible to her, a "light-skinned, church-going Filipina," than the darker-skinned Roni, her testimony is better taken seriously by adult authority figures. In ways befitting a cosmopolitan transnational immigrant subject, Charmaine is more easily *legible* to white American society than Roni. But in drawing this distinction between the two characters—a distinction made by the imperial gaze that manifests in quotidian American public schooling—Castillo calls attention the *artifice* of that gaze. Namely, "Roni told Hero later that Charmaine had in fact been one of the most savage fighters, and when one of the shortest boys in the class had his jaw locked around Roni's hand, teeth starting to break the flesh, the taller Charmaine had come up from behind to pick him up by his torso and toss him to the ground like a ragdoll" (85). Charmaine's ostensible legibility to Waverly, then, is in fact *illegibility* in its own right, insofar as the perception of Charmaine as a "civilized ward" is an illusion. The narrative thus calls attention to Waverly's own imperial gaze that dictates her judgment and hierarchization of the Filipino children under her authority.

The ease in which Roni is slotted into an "uncivilized" category is something Waverly shares with Roni's Filipino classmates. While picking Roni up from school, "Hero had to drag [Roni], gnashing and biting, while a boy at the bottom of the pile [of quarreling students] shouted, IGOROTA IGOROTA IGOROOOOTAAAAAAA. The boy was as dark as Roni. The girl squirmed in Hero's arms all the way back to the car" (41). The behavior of the Filipino boy who "was as dark as Roni" is undoubtedly symptomatic of colonial mentality, in so far as

Filipinos from the De Veras to Paz have internalized white supremacy to the point of fetishizing lighter skin. This is why the boy uses "Igorata" as an insult, for the Philippine demographic of Igorots have historically been disparaged for their darker skin. Though the narration does not dwell on the boy's hypocrisy of bullying Roni over the darker skin they both share, it does not need to. What suffices, here, is to illustrate how the lionizing in question is *learned and internalized* at a young age, as a mentality that not only survives the process of immigration but is also passed down to subsequent generations of immigrants. It is unclear if the boy Roni fights is an immigrant from the Philippines or born in the U.S., but white supremacy and colorism as symptoms of imperial ideology in the Philippine imaginary have a tangible effect on his and Roni's childhoods. As Roni struggles to fit the mold of Western colonial essentialisms, such as that of the proper *mestiza,* she also struggles to fit the mold of the proper *Filipino*. When Roni says "I don't like adobo" and that "I'll make pizza," Hero jokingly asks "Who doesn't like adobo? … Pilipina ka ba?" (43). By that, Hero asks "are you even Filipina?" in Tagalog. Despite Hero's question being meant in jest, Roni "turned her head, face hard and foreign. It looked like she'd heard that question before, been teased and asked to prove herself in just this way before. I am Filipina. I just don't like adobo. I like other things more" (43). Just as Hero occupies a crossroads because of her bourgeois upbringing and the precarity she experiences as an undocumented immigrant, Roni occupies her own crossroads as an American-born Filipina deracinated from the culture of her immigrant parents. Roni, in fact, understands Pangasinense and Tagalog well enough, causing Hero to at times doubt herself. Hero, for instance, was "still unsure of whether to use English or Tagalog when talking to Paz. Paz had a habit of speaking to Roni in a mixture of English, Tagalog, and Pangasinan. It felt like Roni didn't really know the difference between Tagalog and Pangasinan, and moved between the two interchangeably as if

they were one language. Nobody had told her otherwise" (49). Although Roni exhibits an ease of navigation among Tagalog and Pangasinan, that does not seem to come from a conscious and cultural awareness of their differences. What seems like cultural competency here, especially to Hero and her struggles to keep up with Paz and Roni's conversations, is evidence of a cultural deracination that divides Roni from Paz's generation. Because Roni, only a child, deals with skepticism cast upon her 'authenticity' as a Filipina, her characterization indicts any easy or seamless celebrations of hybridity among immigrants. Roni is more culturally mobile than Hero in the environments they both navigate, yet this mobility is only made possible by her departure from a stable Filipina essentialism that other Filipinos can read.

Roni thus exposes, in a manner unique from Hero and Paz, the perils and affordances of *immigrant hybridity,* especially to both Western and Filipino eyes. Unfit for the success frame that Charmaine performs with greater ease, and challenged about her own 'Filipina'-ness among other Filipino Americans, Roni is constantly confronted with—and reminded of—boxes she cannot fit in. It is through Roni's example that I cite R. Radhakrishnan's critical ensemble of questions on hybridity in the context of diaspora:

> What is the diaspora if not the denaturalization of "home" by the concept of "location"? Caught up in a constitutive "between-ness," the diaspora imagines home in opposition to discourses of ontological authenticity and domestic propriety. It is precisely to the extent that home is not natural that the diaspora is able to perform and inaugurate its representations of home as radical and incorrigible "lack." It is only by insisting on the integrity of its locational and phenomenological immanence that the diaspora can dwell in the "hyphen" vigilantly without succumbing either to the mystique of origins or the seductions of "the here and now" as temporalized by mainstream discourses of

> assimilation. The creative production of diasporic hybridity has to take the form of a delicate double-session: deny coordination and adjudication as such in the name of a perennial "homelessness" and at the same engage in the polemical politics of representation. Characterized by a symptomatic "double consciousness," diasporic hybridity has to both "enjoy itself as symptom" (Zizek) and simultaneously transform the body politic where it resides as "symptom." (4)

While Radhakrishnan's words apply to Hero and Paz's experiences as well, Roni embodies a "denaturalization" of "home" so saliently because of her birth in the U.S. Her "ontological authenticity" as a Filipina is thus called into question, as the narrative demonstrates. The "mystique of origins," as far as lionizing a particular Philippine essentialism is concerned, as well as "the seductions of 'the here and now'" that inspire Allos to seize the day, are not present in Roni's struggles and motivations. As Paz's prologue puts it, Roni "doesn't have to love [America]. She's of it" (Castillo 30). In keeping with the "delicate double-session" Radhakrishnan calls for, Castillo does not give Roni, or Hero, or Paz, a "perennial 'homelessness'" to lament, but rather a "politics of representation" that is indeed "polemical," given all the unease these characters experience in Filipino American society and American society more broadly. *America Is Not The Heart* is in fact an exercise in a "double consciousness" that manages to "enjoy itself as symptom," in so far as it revels in the contradictions of Hero, Roni, and Paz's differing experiences, backgrounds, and positionalities. Their illegibility to each other that nonetheless connects them, as well as their illegibility to mainstream American society (personified by the likes of Waverly), reveal the novel's attempt to "transform the body politic where [double consciousness] resides as symptom" (Radhakrishnan 4). Castillo's candid attempt to throw this Filipinx American double consciousness into relief is

the *demystifying act* I alluded to earlier, as it is in portraying the uneven and contradictory contours of Filipinx immigrant historical experience that an *anti-imperial gaze* is perceptible.

The *anti-imperial gaze* in Castillo's novel emerges most saliently in its opposing construction of a *Phantasmagoric America.* By that, I refer to the libidinal and cathectic projection of a 'platonic ideal' U.S., whose history, culture, and aesthetics become an ideological pole star for domestic and diasporic Filipinos. There is, in one of Hero's recollections, the positioning of her cosmopolitan Filipino relatives and peers as vying for this ideal in their repudiation of 'antiquated' indigenous practices and beliefs. "The people Hero grew up around generally ridiculed faith healing, loathed the camphoraceous smell of Efficascent oil, used by all the worst quacks, that would remain on a yaya's hands whenever she came back from a visit to her country family. Hero remembered even Pol speaking as a physician, frustrated at the prospect of the people, mostly poor, being preyed on and deluded" (68). While Pol's concerns come from a moral objection to the ubiquity of faith healing among poorer Filipinos, the more elitist disdain for faith healing among Hero's relatives suggests a broader investment in the affordances of modernity—a modernity brought about by Westernization and colonialism. These pretensions remain in keeping with the aspirational behaviors that Hero observed in the De Vera family. Their overemphasis on the Philippine poor, however, elides the contradictory reception of faith healing among members of the Global North. Namely, "even Americans and Europeans came in droves to visit faith healers. The ones with the most international fame tended to be the men who called themselves psychic surgeons, who claimed to remove imaginary toxins and parasites from the bodies of their patients. White people always thought they were full of toxins, so you could make a lot of money just by claiming to be able to remove them" (68). In these passages, Hero not only satirizes the desperation for Western approval implicit in her family's pretensions of

superiority to indigenous Philippine culture, but also critiques the exploitation of Philippine culture as a touristic commodity to be consumed by the thrill-seeking tendencies of Westerners who—whether out of historical amnesia, hypocrisy, or both—suspend their disbelief towards 'primitive' cultural practices that Spanish and American colonialism have each attempted to stamp out. Dipesh Chakrabarty's study, *Habitations of Modernity,* contains an analysis of what he calls the "sanitary regime" that the U.S. imposed onto the Philippines during the American Occupation. Here, 'modernity' emerges as a product of the U.S.'s civilizing mission towards an ostensibly unclean and diseased indigenous population lacking the proper medical knowledge to take care of themselves. Bulosan's novel also echoes these discourses in his depiction of Allos's youth, from the period in which he "made [him]self conspicuously ugly" by imitating Igorots with brownface and thus "hoping to earn ten centavos" from the patronage of white tourists (67). However, "what interested the tourists the most were the naked Igorot women and their children. Sometimes they took pictures of the old men with G-strings" (67). Allos's lamentations of the touristic gaze that does not accommodate him for being too "Christian" a Filipino are followed by his encounter with Miss Mary Strandon, a white woman who briefly takes care of Allos and "give[s him] a bar of soap" to wash off "the charcoal marks on [his] face" (68). On the one hand, Allos attempts to mold himself into the conventions of the Euro-American imperial gaze—as far as it is concomitant with tourism in the Philippines—by taking on 'indigenous' features. On the other hand, Allos's failure to make money this way leads him to Mary Strandon, who does not repudiate him for his motivations, but for the mere fact of his uncleanliness. The touristic discourses that led to the popularity of the barrel-man, for example, and the discourses of cleanliness and modernity as described by Chakrabarty, are intertwined in both Bulosan and Castillo's examples. Yet whereas Allos does not stop to question his own pretensions as a

"Christian Filipino" essentially adorning brownface to copy Igorots, Hero throws into relief the pretensions of the De Vera family for their disdain towards indigenous Philippine practices. The double standard therein lies in the coexisting fascination with and commodification of these practices by Euro-American tourists, the very same representatives of the Western tradition that the De Veras have fashioned as ego-ideal. This insight is why a more focused and evident *anti-imperial gaze* is present in Castillo's novel when compared to Bulosan's.

Subsequent passages of *America Is Not The Heart* further illustrate this commitment, contextualizing the discourses of cleanliness and modernity Hero alludes to and that Chakrabarty describes. "There were stories Teresa told the cadres," for example, "about the early days of American health in the Philippines" (69). Specifically:

> Paul Freer, the first dean of the Philippine Medical School, met with W. Cameron Forbes, the governor-general of the Philippines in 1913, to show Forbes one of the newer medical schools in the colony. Freer showed Forbes what the governor-general later described in his journals as a rather gruesome dissection, then declared to Forbes that the first hundred autopsies on Filipino bodies … had proven beyond a shadow of a doubt that the natives were inherently unhealthy, prone to all manner of plagues, cankers, and skin disorders. This frailty meant they were constitutionally underequipped for physical labor. Worse, there was a danger they would spread their infirmity to whites. (69)

In keeping with what Chakrabarty has already exposited concerning the U.S.'s sanitary regime in the Philippines, these historical findings in Hero's recollections present the ways imperialists actively labored to corroborate the legitimacy of a sanitary regime in the first place. The ontological profile of the Filipino unfit for self-government, let alone management of their own health, calcified in such interactions as Freer and Forbes'. While Hero's narrative focalization

snidely remarks that "white people always thought they were full of toxins" (68), this concern among white tourists arrives after a forgotten history of the "danger" Filipinos once ostensibly posed by "spread[ing] their infirmity to whites" (69). Hero's reflections turn to the example of "Emily Bronson Conger, a nurse from Ohio who'd spent time in the Philippines, Hawaii, and Japan" and "wrote woefully that she wanted to dip them into some cleaning cauldron" (69). This joins the testimony of "Edith Moses, the wife of Bernard Moses, then-secretary of public instruction and member of President Taft's Second Philippine Commission," who also "used to hose off her servants with disinfectants, during the cholera wave of 1902. The trained baboons and monkeylike coolies needed to be house-trained, she said of the young boys who polished with burlap the narra wood floors of her home on the shores of Manila Bay" (69). The irony, here, lies in the final sentence's allusion to the crucial role the young Filipinos play in maintaining Moses's status by doing all the housekeeping. The affluence and comforts she enjoys as an occupier "on the shores of Manila Bay" are only made possible by the labor of the same "coolies" she deems in desperate need of house-training. Conger and Moses's perspectives reveal the ubiquity of this intense desire to 'clean' Filipinos, as if the seemingly endless imperative to do so justifies their subordinated positions. There is perhaps an attempt to naturalize the affluence that the likes of Moses enjoy, as if the cleaning of the Filipino is a moral and beneficent imperative that elides the violence that created the colonial situation in the Philippines.

Importantly, discourses of cleanliness and infection were at a fever pitch, so to speak, "during the [Philippine-American War]," when both "imperialists and anti-imperialists rejected the prospect of brown Filipinx hordes entering the United States and racially infecting the nation. Many Americans characterized Filipinx resisters as ladrones (thieves), and colonial health

policies judged ‘the Filipino . . . as a dangerous and promiscuously contaminated racial type and the major threat to white health” (Marasigan 78). Here, Cynthia Marasigan calls attention to ways that people both for and against U.S. imperial protocols aligned in their mutual disdain for Filipinx populations as inherently unclean and unhealthy. It is here that I must clarify that in saying Castillo exercises an *anti-imperial gaze* throughout her novel, I am not evoking the legacy of the American Anti-Imperialist League. As Luis Francia observes, “opposition” to the American Occupation of the Philippines “was not solely based on altruism. Many League members were in fact imperialists but believed the U.S. could expand without the usual strong-arm tactics of the older empires … There were those who opposed annexation for fear that Anglo-Saxon blood would be contaminated” (Francia 162). Thus, such anti-imperialists rejected imperialism on racist grounds, Filipinos being deeming unworthy of conquest for posing a risk to the U.S. metropole’s body politic. As the League contained more committed anti-racists like Mark Twain, though, there was no complete consensus among its ranks regarding the disparagement of Filipinos specifically. Furthermore, American “Nativists endorsed the 1934 Tydings McDuffie Act not because they believed Filipinxs worthy of self-government, but because it changed Filipinxs’ status from ‘nationals’ to ‘aliens’ for immigration purposes and restricted their entry into the United States to fifty persons per year” (Marasigan 78). While American anti-imperialists rejected imperialism in practice, the motivations thereof are nonetheless symptomatic of *imperial ideology.* They share, with the aforementioned “nativists,” a passion for the superiority of white American society over that of colonized subjects from the Global South. Imperial ideology subtends this domestic squabble over imperial practices between imperialist and anti-imperialist Westerners, as ideology indeed encompasses more than just the execution of colonial and imperial regimes of violence. More importantly, ideology

enables the ethnogenesis and maintenance of certain racial forms *through* violence. In the observations Castillo makes throughout the novel, focalized through the perspective of Hero, an *anti-imperial gaze* comes into focus that owes nothing to the legacy of the American Anti-Imperialist League, or other historical groups which ostensibly share the same "anti-imperialist" stance, but whose rejection of imperial *practices* did not constitute a rejection of imperial *ideology* writ large.

Speaking of imperial ideology that Castillo's novel tackles with an *anti-imperial gaze,* Hero's reflections subsequently draw attention to the legacy of "Victor G. Heiser, a Pennsylvania doctor who … became the Philippine Director of Health in 1902," and "declared that his project was to wash up the Orient. It was Heiser who came up with the condition called philippinitis. According to him, symptoms included mental and physical torpor, forgetfulness, irritability, lack of ambition, aversion to any form of exercise. Heiser had a mental and physical breakdown in 1908, and placed the blame on his dealings with Filipinos, the Herculean effort of converting them into people" (70). Philippinitis, here, stands as a significant manifestation of American imperial ideology in medical discourses weaponized to justify the colonial pacification of the Filipino. As symptoms of proximity to Filipinos, while also serving as symptoms of Filipinos' *mere existence,* the effects of philippinitis give a name to the ensemble of assumptions American subjects held about the ostensible uncleanliness and disease-ridden natures of Filipinos—assumptions acknowledged by Bulosan's text and satirized more explicitly by Castillo's. In her study, *The American Imperial Pastoral,* Rebecca McKenna elaborates on the rhetorical situation of "philippinitis" as a concept, which "had equivalents across colonial South Asia, among them 'Burmah head' and 'Punjab head.' More generically, the ailment was known as 'tropical neurasthenia,' a south-of-the-equator version of the distressed condition that William James had

popularized as 'Americanitis' perhaps also somewhat facetiously" (Loc. 530). McKenna unearths how medical discourses and sanitary regimes occupy the same continuity of violence, with the former culminating in the latter and providing a ready-to-hand language of dehumanization through the ostensible beneficence of a medical gaze—whether that gaze is applied to the Philippines, South Asia, or elsewhere. "American medical officer Dr. Louis Fales," for that matter, "wrote on the non fatal but troubling ailment in 1907. 50 percent of American women and 30 percent of men who visited the Philippines, he reported, 'were struck by neurasthenia to such an extent that they are in a state of semi-invalidism'" (McKenna Loc. 530). This led Fales to "[caution] that the offspring 'of neurasthenic parents … will inherit an organism lacking in nerve force […] with little resemblance to the mother stock, small, puny, weak-minded in fact a degenerate race would soon cease to exist if new stock did not continually come from the homeland" (Loc. 530-543). Beneath the veneer of the beneficence I described, Fales shows American imperialism's hand: an investment in the obsolescence of the Philippine people, whose inherent inferiority demands improvement through the arrival of "new stock" from the U.S.

Of course, this call for the supplanting of a "degenerate race" was accompanied by genocidal protocols such as the razing of Samar. Interestingly, Castillo's novel approaches this topic as something Hero has to learn about from Teresa, and "not a schoolteacher," as "in Vigan [during Hero's youth] they'd learned about things like the capitals of all the American states, Colorado mountain ranges," but not "about the genocides that had expunged a sixth of the population from Luzon alone, six hundred thousand souls" (126). It is here that we see Castillo stage a confrontation between the anti-imperial gaze and the Phantasmagoric America, the latter being the subject of Hero's school curricula. Throughout her upbringing, Hero was presented with an America in the abstract that held a place as 'her' history, as if the more precise histories

of the Philippines, including and especially the consequences of U.S. imperialism, were better left in the margins (if at all) of Hero's education. The epistemic priorities of Americanized schooling in the Philippines lead to what is indeed a phantasmagoric construction of the U.S., whose very formation in the minds of young Filipinos help mystify the conditions of their education. The fact it takes an extended friendship with Teresa, forged through a militant struggle against the Marcos regime, for Hero to learn about American-led genocides in the Philippines reveals the extent of the epistemic violence that sweeps Philippine modernity. While Hero herself is sheltered by a cosmopolitan existence and benefited from a more privileged education than most, the epistemic stakes at hand are no less dire—especially when her recollection reveals that "The total number killed in the archipelago, including the genocides on Samar, was generally accepted to be around one and a half million. I want no prisoners, Teresa said to the cadres, quoting General Jacob Smith, who'd presided over the genocides in Samar. I want you to kill and burn; the more you kill and burn the better you will please me." (126). The mere act of remembering, here, a remembrance made by possible by what Hero learned from Teresa, is constitutive of the anti-imperial gaze. This is a gaze not only committed to demystifying the pretensions and aspirations conditioned into colonized subjects by imperial ideology, but also to the *remembrance* of social and historical realities that colonial and imperial historiographies labor to erase or sweep under the rug. That includes the legacy of General Jacob Smith, whose genocidal prerogatives must be remembered as an 'unmasking' of the U.S.'s true attitude towards the Philippine archipelago. "Let no livelihood be salvaged from the earth," after all, for "that was the official policy" (126). Moreover:

> Smith's fellow general, J. Franklin Bell, carried out a similar campaign in Batangas; according to his own calculations, over six hundred thousand Filipinos were killed within

> three years. Hero didn't know of any official Filipino calculations. Another word for what the Americans were doing, coined by a Republican congressman, was pacification. Bell bragged that he'd found the secret of pacification: They never rebel in Luzon, because there isn't anybody there to rebel. President McKinley was more succinct; he called it extermination. Hero didn't learn any of those words at school. What she did remember from her time in school was a painting by El Greco, the Greek Spaniard who produced portraits of saints and messiahs and royals. (126)

It is no coincidence that here, in Castillo's rendering of Hero's education, there is a concomitance between America's genocidal foreign policy and the substitution of that knowledge with Spain's contributions to the Western tradition. As a descendant of the Phantasmagoric Europe described by Vicente Rafael, the Phantasmagoric America *masks the violence of its own creation* by appealing to the cultural achievements of the Western tradition, including that of past colonial superpowers such as Spain. This is why Castillo chooses to mention El Greco among other Spanish cultural curricula, as the focus on these topics diverts attention away from the likes of Smith, Bell, and McKinley. The Western tradition, be it from a European or American perspective, constantly labors to preserve itself with the pretext of cultural achievement, even as the levels of such achievement are guaranteed by the colonial extraction and expropriation of the Global South. Hero's schooling, in the tunnel vision it exercises by focusing on Spanish culture to divert attention away from U.S. militarism, presents how the imperial gaze *operates*—shifting, like a kaleidoscope, to fix its vision on one reality only to mask another. Hero is conditioned into a sense of *imperialist realism* by accepting the past ubiquity of Spanish empire and culture, while also being made oblivious to the realities of American rule that allowed for the "pacification" of Filipinos after the Spanish left.

Castillo's novel continues to dialogue with Bulosan's through the contrast of Hero's and Allos' sexuality. This is important for how the Phantasmagoric Europe *and* America haunt the libidinal attachments of each character, though Hero engages with these attachments more critically than Allos ever does. Allos, for example, develops cathectic bonds with white American women several times throughout *America Is In The Heart.* Among them, most predominantly, is the character named Marian. After tucking her into bed at one point during the novel, Allos narrates that "it was like a fairy tale. Here I was with a white woman who had completely surrendered herself to me. *'The human heart is bigger than the world,'* I said to myself" (Bulosan 215). "It was like a fairy tale" indeed, as Marian herself personifies the Phantasmagoric Europe in the eyes of Allos. Over two decades later, Frantz Fanon would describe this cathectic attachment to white womanhood among colonized men (and specifically, in his case, Black men) in *Black Skin, White Masks.* "By loving me," Fanon says, "[the white woman] proves to me that I am worthy of a white love. I am loved like a white man … I espouse white culture, white beauty, white whiteness" (48). Fanon throws into relief the libidinal logic that drives Allos's pedestalization of Marian as a transcendent figure of beauty. "When I looked at her," Allos recalls, "I was startled by her beauty. She seemed an entirely new person. She was wearing a dark suit: there was a red hat in her left hand and a pair of white gloves in the other. She was tall and straight and lovely. She was the song of my dark hour" (Bulosan 216). Not only does Marian represent a cure for the maladies of Allos's alienation and disaffection as a migrant laborer in the Great Depression U.S., but she also represents a form of social upward mobility for Allos, who finds it "unbelievable that [he] could sit with a *white* girl in a famous place" (216), such as where they go on their fateful date, or what Marian calls a "*capitalist* dinner" (215). While Allos devotes significant libidinal energy to Marian as a figure, it is also not *sexual,* given the distance

he exercises by merely tucking her into bed the night before, and nothing more. She appears to him, in her moment of repose, as like an image from a fairy tale, a more modern instance of the Phantasmagoric Europe that enchants Allos into his chaste admiration of Marian. Access to white society, though her, is what fills him with greater affective fervor than the prospect of sex, as if Allos is committed to viewing her with a certain purity. Bulosan himself seems to call that mentality into question once Marian must suddenly see a doctor. In following up on Marian's condition, Allos learns from her doctor that she has died from "Syphilis … But it was more than that. Complications. She gave up without a struggle" (217). "Suddenly," Allos "walked down the darkened street" (217), now without "the song of [his] dark hour" (216). It is important to note here that throughout their time together, Marian periodically leaves Allos's company for reasons she neglects to disclose. Before the evening of their "capitalist dinner," Marian tells Allos that "Now you can go to university," subsequently "tossing a roll of money on the bed." "Nearly three hundred dollars," she says, "All for you—from Marian" (215). Crucially, this is where the difference between Bulosan the writer and Allos the character is unmistakable. Allos, in his fetishization of Marian's whiteness as synonymous with some form of purity, never speculates about where she gets her money. Her death by syphilis, a sexually transmitted disease, is Bulosan's way of insinuating that Marian was a sex worker, made so by the impoverishment and desperation ubiquitous in Great Depression America. Allos's blindness to this social reality reveals the way it has been masked by the Phantasmagoric Europe he invests in his "fairy tale" construction of Marian. The Phantasmagoric America that descends from its European counterpart, for that matter, manifests in Allos's glee at his integration into white society—however briefly—*through* Marian. These fantasies, these enchantments, necessarily mask the true Marian, whose reality goes unexplored after the incident of her death. Bulosan thus only

skims the surface of the libidinal investments he seeks to undermine through Marian's example, with the act of demystification through an *anti-imperial gaze* never quite coming to fruition.

This is why Hero's own sexuality becomes crucial to understanding what an *anti-imperial gaze* offers to the Filipinx American condition. Specifically, Hero's less romantic and idealistic relationship with her own bisexuality is distinct from the hetero-masculinist leanings of Allos and disrupts the racialized and gendered longings of Allos himself. Absent in Hero's example are the libidinal attachments of the Phantasmagoric Europe *and* America, otherwise evident in Allos's desire for American assimilation via Marian and her "white whiteness" (Fanon 40). As Hero's narrative focalization reveals, "She stopped having relationships entirely after Francisco," her former boyfriend, "and stuck to sex" (93). Already, there is a certain distance Hero exercises, not from disillusionment (which would imply disappointment or dissatisfaction), but demystification. There is no pretext, in Hero's mind, for sex to be anything more than what it is. The matter-of-factness of sex, here, is a far cry from the distance Allos exercises to treat his object of desire—Marian—as *sacred.* In contrast, there is Hero's discovery of her own sexuality:

> She had sex with a girl for the first time at college, in the [University of Santo Tomas] dorms, a law student who had a fiancé. But he was studying abroad in America, and the girl was having doubts. It wasn't cheating if it was a girl, went the law student's logic. Hero liked eating the girl's pussy—and would have liked having hers eaten in return, but the girl never offered—but that alone wasn't the answer she'd been looking for. If anything, it made her realize she wasn't looking for an answer; that sex hadn't been a question at all, but a sentence, lone and complete. (93)

Hero's matter-of-fact recollection of her own sexual exploration demystifies the nature of sex itself, extricating it from the ideological and ethical attachments so often applied to any kind of

sexual activity. This is not to say that Hero practices a form of ethical superiority for holding this attitude, only that this is an attitude unmoored from ideological investments and longings like that of Allos. Hero's detachment is not due to some failing in regard to sex, but to the recognition of sex itself as something "lone and complete." And while Allos's relationship with Marian comes with the hopes for acceptance into white society, Hero's relationship with Rosalyn—another Filipina American she meets in Milpitas—is threatened by a fear of rejection by the Filipino American community they both inhabit. "Although in Hero and Rosalyn's America," explains Hope Sabanpan-Yu, "gay men and women go out on dates and even get married, in the suburb of Milipitas, the situation is completely different. Rosalyn herself cannot come out as gay. Milpitas, like the Philippines itself, is at once a tight-knit community governed by traditions and a crossroads of conflicting cultures" (Sabanpan-Yu 189). While Bulosan's depiction of Allos and Marian no doubt reflects the deviant sexuality ascribed to Filipino men during the Great Depression, Allos can potentially benefit from existing hegemonies in ways Hero cannot. Her queerness and the precarity it generates in Filipino American spaces further demystifies the libidinal attachments of an American imperial gaze that Allos has internalized and demonstrated throughout Bulosan's novel.

Castillo's novel, on the other hand, intervenes against what Neferti Tadiar calls the "masculinist depiction of migrant life" not only in "Bulosan's oeuvre," but also in the popular historiographies of the Philippines that Tadiar addresses in her study, *Things Fall Away.* She speaks, for instance, of the masculinist tendencies that sweep Philippine "revolutionary literature," within which the hope and strength of the masses are "embodied and, as such, gendered" (271). While Bulosan and Castillo's novels are not *solely* revolutionary literature, they certainly carry revolutionary themes, given Allos's participation in farmers' strikes and labor

movements, as well as Hero's participation in the New People's Army and general resistance to the Marcos regime. Both have political awakenings which resonate with a Philippine historical consciousness that, as Tadiar argues, is gendered:

> While the nation is a feminized symbol serving as the point from which the revolutionary forces imagine themselves as a unified historical subject, the land is a feminized object which, as experientially shared by the revolutionary forces in the process of struggle, becomes a significant structure of collective sexual identification. This shared feminized object is the means by which the collective body of these forces becomes an acting subject; it also functions as the object of desiring action on which this fused revolutionary subject enacts its particular masculinity. Land and woman are places of tilling and insemination, defining the revolutionary action that is performed on them as heteromasculine" (271).

This passage encapsulates one of Tadiar's many interventions in her book, which locates an insurgent historical consciousness in departures *from* the masculinist mode of history and teleology all too ubiquitous in revolutionary Philippine narratives. There is, for instance, the masculinist tenor of Bulosan's novel, staking much of its narrative tension on the libidinal attachments and longings of the male and increasingly cosmopolitan Allos. His political awakening represents a bildungsroman of sorts into a migrant Filipino masculinity that is in keeping with one of Vincent Schleitwiler's claims about the novel: "the Filipino is not one American among equals, but the messianic redeemer of a national history it reveals to be the story of world revolution" (102-103). There is a providential quality to Allos's journey that aligns with the "desiring action" and "heteromasculine" nature of revolutionary prerogatives in Tadiar's critique. This is why, "in contrast to the masculinist depiction of migrant life in

Bulosan's oeuvre, the centering of a lesbian protagonist in *America Is Not the Heart* is a conscious move to pull homosexuals into the narrative of the nation" (Tabunan 681). Though Tabunan does not discuss the difficulties Hero must navigate as thoroughly as Sabanpan-Yu, he attends to the importance of Castillo depicting these difficulties at all. Tabunan explains that "queering diasporic consciousness is one way through which the novel, in going beyond national heteronormativity, has widened the space for the articulation of varied voices in the interstice of the homeland Philippines and host America" (681).

While I have devoted some of this exegesis of Castillo's novel to a critique of Bulosan's epistemic limitations, it is precisely these limitations that generated the conditions of possibility for Castillo's intervention. In "Life Tools," a publication Castillo wrote for *The Nation,* she ruminates on the influence of Bulosan's complicated legacy on her writings. "One of those acts of witnessing—of inheritance," says Castillo, "is to make sure that *America Is in the Heart* is not the only book we read about Filipinx communities and that if it is the first, it will not be the last: that we read more books about the Filipinx diaspora that are written not only by and about hetero men; that we seek out and uplift books by and about the kind of women who appear in *America Is in the Heart …* that we read and teach books about queer Filipinx characters." Most importantly, in regard to Bulosan, Castillo "know[s] well that I'm one of Bulosan's many children; it's a fact I cherish with my whole heart. I also know that to be part of a family also often means having to fight—*and that fighting with your family is sometimes a way of fighting for them"* (emphasis mine). In other words, Castillo's critique of Bulosan's legacy is her best way of honoring it. Likewise, my own examination of Bulosan's epistemic shortcomings and ideological attachments represent my own effort to "fight with my family" as "a way of fighting for them." *America Is Not The Heart* stands as an important and essential piece to be read

alongside *America Is In The Heart,* as both in their totality depict a dialectic of imperial inheritances manifested from Spanish and American empire. On the one hand, Bulosan's novel depicts a less critical embrace of the American imaginary and its hallmarks, including the inherited anti-Blackness described in my previous essay. On the other hand, Castillo's presents a more conscious and self-satirizing engagement with these attachments, aware of their origins in the transition from the Phantasmagoric Europe to the Phantasmagoric America that would come to enchant diasporic Filipinos. Reading Bulosan and Castillo in this critical juxtaposition makes perceptible an *anti-imperial gaze* that demystifies the cathectic longings that colonized subjects are mystified to construe as their inheritance, including and especially the worship of "white beauty and white whiteness" described by Fanon. Without suggesting that the *anti-imperial gaze* alone can undo the cultural paradigms of a world steeped in *imperialist realism,* I do believe Castillo poses the beginnings of a grammar that can expose the artifice of the reality—the imperialist vision of the world—that *imperialist realism* constantly labors to construct and sublimate.

CHAPTER 4

Apocalypse Now and Later: The Anti-Imperial Gaze in 20th and 21st Century Philippine Literature

In the meantime, as more and more resources are channeled into this *widening gyre of crisis,* in grave efforts to keep things together and hold on to familiar and determinate paths of becoming, more and more things fall away from the privileged and ever narrower worlds that remain. Refurbished as well as unreconstructed nationalisms and transnationalisms, battles for state power and civil liberties, identity-based claims to political and economic enfranchisement, liberal-democratic ideals of civil society—such are the familiar trajectories of world-historical agency in these times, trajectories from which all other manner of human and parahuman lives, pasts, presents, and futures, cultural imaginations, and virtual realities are jettisoned. These things fall away, and their barely apprehended importance to our worlds is lost to us, who seek different holds on our immanent futures.

–Neferti Tadiar, *Things Fall Away: Philippine Historical Experience and the Makings of Globalization* (2009), emphasis mine.

What Emerges From a "Ruined World": The Dueling Philippine Humanisms of Nick Joaquin[2]

Where Bulosan's novel captures a particular 20th century Filipino American experience, Nick Joaquin's writings largely echo concerns from the 20th century Philippines proper. Active from 1937 to 2003, Joaquin's oeuvre meditates on the shadows of Spanish and American

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imperialism on Philippine society, bringing to bear the multifarious layers of psychic fragmentation (for the colonized Filipinx) and physical ruination (for the colonized Philippine cityscape) that comprise the archipelago's postcolonial context. Across Joaquin's writings, a clear sense emerges that the U.S.'s interventions on Philippine language and culture have thrown Filipinx identity-formation into a crisis. Generally, Joaquin appears to lionize the Spanish colonial period as the American occupation has proven untenable for insurrectionary action. Prior to my articulation of imperialist realism throughout this dissertation, many have in fact accused Joaquin of exactly that: the retroactive sublimation of Spanish empire to castigate an Americanized present. For instance, it could be argued that, in the play *A Portrait of the Artist as Filipino,* Joaquin is speaking through the character of Don Perico—a friend of the titular portrait's artist, Don Lorenzo—who laments what has been lost between his generation and the next: an appreciation for the Classical tradition, culturally disseminated onto Filipinxs by the Spanish. More broadly, in Joaquin's work, the United States' influence on the Philippines is more often an object of critique than Spain's. This can motivate the critique of Joaquin that would claim he harkens back to the Spanish system that imposed a colonial caste hierarchy, from which mestizos like Joaquin benefitted. Mestizos, or Filipinos of mixed descent with foreign ancestry, had greater access to a European education (much like Fanon's example of 'the colonized intellectual' in *The Wretched of the Earth*), such that the *Ilustrado* movement of male Filipino intellectuals could eventually campaign for reforms of Spain's dominion over the Philippines. In contrast, American neocolonialism largely imposed the structural homogenization of Filipinxs, such that mestizos lost the relative privilege they held under the Spanish. Joaquin is thus "known locally for his nostalgic take on the Hispanic aspect of Philippine culture" (Arong 114). Writing from 1955, scholar Lourdes Pablo applauds Joaquin for his supposed "awareness

of the value of [Filipinxs'] Spanish past, the past which with its precious Christian heritage, Joaquin adopts as a standard of comparison to uphold the morally confused and spiritually barren modern world" (Pablo 189). From popular and academic reception to Joaquin's works, there is a clear belief that he is invested in romanticizing the Spanish past, a sentiment no doubt emblematic of a Philippine *imperialist realism*. However, even if imperialist realism saturates Joaquin's oeuvre to some extent, the precise extent is what I am examining here. Certain moments in Joaquin's works insinuate a greater ambivalence towards the Spanish period than characters like Perico might initially suggest, such that Perico's valorization of European values must be called into question. Perhaps there is another reason for Joaquin's revisiting the Spanish colonial past, then. Perhaps Joaquin searches for the conditions of possibility for *revolution*—something foreclosed under American imperialism—precisely because the revolution of Perico, the revolution of the *ilustrados,* never properly ended.

In the short stories "Doña Jerónima" and "Summer Solstice," Joaquin continues his search while also displaying an investment in counterhegemonic subjectivities that exceed the masculinist cosmopolitanism of Perico. Joaquin's evocations of both indigeneity and femininity respond to such shortcomings. Taken altogether, these stories feature Joaquin's negotiations with humanisms that make different claims about who qualifies as a proper Philippine historical and revolutionary subject. At the risk of reproducing colonial and patriarchal paradigms—and indeed reproducing imperialist realism as such—Joaquin consciously highlights indigeneity and femininity as alternative and insurgent humanisms to Perico's. "Indigeneity" here is not the espousal of an essentialized, 'pure-blooded' Filipino condition, but the elevation of the natural landscape—as well as precolonial folklore, practices, and traditions—to counter Spanish colonial hegemony. The patriarchal structures concomitant with the latter provoke Joaquin's emphasis on

"femininity," elevating the subjectivity of the Filipina woman that is not only effaced by Spanish colonial patriarchy, but by the predominantly male and mestizo *ilustrados*.

Because Joaquin was awarded recognition as National Artist of the Philippines in 1976 for his literary contributions, it becomes crucial to unpack the implications of Joaquin's depictions—the acclaim that his canonicity commands warrants an examination of his works and what, ideologically, they reproduce. However, I am not interested in undermining Joaquin's achievements; rather, I seek to *understand* how Joaquin's search for the conditions of possibility for revolution, while delimited by a mestizo episteme, labors to *transcend* such limitations. Where Joaquin challenges a cosmopolitan mestizo/mestiza worldview in *A Portrait of the Artist as Filipino,* I will demonstrate how his project continues in "Doña Jerónima" and "Summer Solstice," where he construes indigeneity and femininity as markers for new radical subjectivities. Joaquin's articulations here represent an opportunity to stage an immanent critique not only of his own imperialist realism, but that of Philippine historical experience more broadly.

As seen in the anxieties of Perico, there is a particular humanism at stake in Joaquin's play, *A Portrait of the Artist as Filipino.* The play's main characters, Paula and Candida Marasigan, live with their infirm elderly father, Don Lorenzo, in Intramuros. Before the beginning of the play, Lorenzo has painted for them the titular portrait: a depiction of Aeneas with his father, Anchises, on his back as they flee a besieged Troy. Crucially, Bitoy Camacho, a family friend of the Marasigans, observes that "[their] father has painted himself both as Aeneas and as Anchises" (303). The image is thus considerably evocative to many characters in the play, itself beholden to their anguished responses. One reaction comes from Perico, who first laments:

> My generation spoke European, the present generation speaks American. Who among the young writers now can read my poems? My poems may as well be written in Babylonian!

> And who among the writers of my time can say that his poems have generated new poets? No one—no, not even poor Pepe Rizal! The fathers of the young poets of today are from across the sea. They are not our sons; they are foreigners to us, and we do not exist for them. (366-367)

As someone who chose a career in politics over a career in art (with Lorenzo having chosen the opposite), Perico mourns his forsaken potential as a poet, but attributes the demise of his aspirations to circumstances beyond his control. Specifically, Perico attends to an artistic crisis symptomatic of a generational split between those who "spoke European" and those who "speak American"—a split catalyzed by the American occupation of the Philippines, despite the latter declaring independence from Spain. By claiming that "the young poets of today … are not our sons; they are foreigners to us," Perico disavows neocolonial American influences on Philippine art, language, and culture. He also condemns the consummation of those influences by the arrival of the "American mestizos," a "population of children of mixed parentage" catalyzed by the "social interaction between 'bachelor colonials,' American males dressed in military and civilian garb, and Filipinas" (Molnar 3). Perico's critiques of contemporary art reflect his rejection of the American neocolonial regime, but he does not seem to consider the raced and gendered power imbalances that occurred between American men and Filipina women during this period.

Though such an observation might sound like a digression, the fact it appears so illuminates certain assumptions about Philippine nationalism embedded in Perico's claims. For despite belonging to a mestizo class formed during the Spanish colonial period, Perico repudiates this cultural split with American mestizos to advance his own essentialized view of Filipinx identity—a nationalism untainted by American influence. Regarding the painting, Perico says:

> Look at your father up there. He has realized the tragedy of his generation. He, too, has been unable to sing. He, too, finds himself stranded in a foreign land. He, too, must carry himself to his own grave because there is no succeeding generation to carry him forward. His art will die with him. It is written in a dead language, it is written in Babylonian … And we all end alike—all of us old men from the last century—we all end the same. The rich and the poor, the failures and the successes, those who moved forward and those who stayed behind—our fate is the same! All, all of us must carry our down dead selves to the common grave … We have begotten no sons; we are a lost generation! (Joaquin 367)

With the understanding that Aeneas and Anchises are analogues for a younger and older Lorenzo, Perico insists upon a generational cessation that has occurred under the American occupation. Whatever poetic sensibilities the two men shared, they have failed to legibly pass on those values to future Philippine artists, thus securing their own obsolescence. Hence, Perico believes Lorenzo must indeed "carry himself to his own grave," despite Lorenzo having three daughters and a son. Strangely, Perico does not take Candida, Paula, Manolo, and Pepang—the grown Marasigan children—to be adequate inheritors of whatever tradition he shared with their father. While none of the Marasigans have carried a similar passion for art into their own adulthoods—even showing disdain for the composition of the titular portrait—Perico refuses to entertain the possibility of them reawakening to new sensibilities or pursuits. During the twilight of the Spanish period, Perico and Lorenzo cultivated a sense of radical agency that was coterminous with their artistic endeavors, an agency Perico solely attributes to his generation. Somehow, this agency has not been transmitted to the younger Marasigans. Even as he makes these pronouncements to Candida's face, Perico is not prompted to question his own convictions.

While the Marasigan children did not grow up to share identical values to their father, Perico maintains an essentialized view of the artistic revolutionary subject that necessarily excludes a second generation—almost as if the outcome of the Marasigans' upbringings would have made no difference. For whether he knows this or not, Perico performs this foreclosure out of an investment in a revolution that has not come to pass but instead remains painfully unresolved. Thus, Perico laments the unfinished revolutionary moment of the *ilustrados*:

> Oh, they talk a lot of solemn nonsense now about the Revolution—we were not solemn! The spirit of those days was one of boyish fun, of boyish mischief! Just imagine us—with our top hats and swagger sticks and mustachios—and imagine the secret meetings in the dead of the night; the skull on the table; the dreadful oaths; the whispers and flickering candlelight; and the signing of our names in our own blood! Oh, we were all hopeless romantics! And the Revolution was a wild melodrama in the style of Galdos! And I drank it all up—all the color and the excitement and the romance! I was a poet then; the world existed only that I might put it to music. (367-368)

According to Perico, what has not survived into the present moment is this persona of the cosmopolitan Filipino: male, educated in Europe, brought up in the Classical tradition, and fervent with the romantic promises of revolution. Perico appeals to a masculinist, Westernized conception of Philippine nationalism—an image of *the* Filipino revolutionary—by taking this conception to be irretrievable, as if the only key to transcending the colonial moment has been lost. Reflecting nostalgically on his youth, Perico proclaims what has been lost in the generational divide:

> Oh, I am amused when I hear these young critics accusing your father of escaping into the dead world of the past! And I pity these young critics! When we were their age, our

> minds were not so parochial … We had Homer and Virgil in our bones … It was as natural for Pepe Rizal to give his novel a Latin title as for Juan Luna to paint gladiators. Oh, you should have heard us—with our Latin tags and our classical allusions and our scholastic terminology—[.] (358-359)

For Perico, the conditions of the American occupation have made this archetype of the cosmopolitan Philippine revolutionary impossible to recreate, and his retirement from poetry and into politics represents his surrender to this neocolonial paradigm shift. The transition from Spanish to American colonial repression stifled the revolutionary fervor of Perico's contemporaries, snuffing out the continuance of that fervor into future generations. However, we cannot presume that Perico serves as a mouthpiece for Joaquin's own perspective on the Spanish period, such that Perico's lamentations are also Joaquin's. In fact, Paula's actions later in the play—directly in relation to the fate of the portrait—call Perico's pronouncements about revolutionary agency into question. Specifically, she destroys Lorenzo's painting, and invites Candida to claim equal responsibility for the act (418). To Candida, Paula says, "We are free again! We are together again—you and I and father … Don't you see, Candida? This is the sign he has been waiting for—ever since he gave us that picture, ever since he offered us our release—the sign that we had found our faith again, that we had found our courage again!" (419). Through its own destruction, this portrait—conceived as the locus for Lorenzo's artistic achievements, his daughters' salvation, and the trappings of a poetic age that Perico mourns—becomes a source of artistic freedom.

The play even insinuates the revolutionary potential of Lorenzo's children through their access to the Ilustrado tradition, which foregrounds Candida and Paula's eventual defiance of it once they destroy the painting. As the Marasigan siblings converse with Perico, Pepang reflects

on a time when they were very young, playing games of pretend with their father as they emulated the Greek Olympians. “When [Lorenzo] played Jupiter,” Pepang says, “you could almost see the lightnings round his head … You forgot that it was all only a game—you really felt yourself on Mount Olympus” (360). In the play, Pepang and Manolo serve as foils to Candida and Paula—the former pair of siblings having grown frustrated with paying for their ancestral home in Intramuros, while Lorenzo, Candida, and Paula struggle to support themselves. This frustration compounds Pepang and Manolo’s disillusionment with the artistic sensibilities of their father, yet Pepang’s reflections on the painting inspire her to conjure the tableau from her past: a scene of her family indulging in Classical imagery that was primarily the domain of Perico and his Ilustrado contemporaries. Later, Paula—who is “*smiling dreamily at*” the portrait—even confesses that “I’ve always wanted to go to Europe. Spain and France and Italy … I’ve always wanted to go to all those places where my father lived when he was a young man” (392). However, despite these brief moments of wistfulness for the idealistic lifestyle of their father, Pepang and Manolo hold a cynical exchange over the maintenance of their ancestral home, and the stagnation afflicting their sisters’ prolonged stay there. “They are happy enough here,” Manolo says, “they have their own way of life.” “What way of life?” Pepang replies, “Hiding from the world in this old house; turning over the family albums; chattering over childhood memories; worshipping at father’s feet … Is *that* your idea of life, Manolo?” (356). Hypocritically, Pepang then proceeds to “chatter over childhood memories” in Perico’s presence, reflecting fondly on the same memories that she mocks Candida and Paula for cherishing.

Taken together, Pepang’s declarations insinuate an ambivalence towards her father’s legacy: a longing for the Classical ideals and hopes he instilled upon his children at an early age, and a disillusionment as those same ideals and hopes remain unrealized. Hence Bitoy Camacho

narrates the play saying, “I told myself that Lorenzo and my father had taught me nothing but lies. My childhood was a lie; the nineteen-twenties were a lie; beauty and faith and honor and innocence were all just lies” (348-349). In the titular portrait, the Classical grandeur evoked by the *Aeneid* coexists with the escape from ruination it necessarily depicts. Aeneas and Anchises serve as twin specters of the promises made by Lorenzo and his contemporaries: promises of “beauty and faith and honor and innocence” left unrealized. For Paula and Candida, their ownership of the painting burdens them with the unresolved hopes of their father. John D. Blanco corroborates this:

> For the two sisters who possess the painting as their sole patrimony, the portrait confers the weight of guilt upon the siblings for having accommodated to a disenchanted world after their father had fought for the sake of a noble ideal. That ideal, of course, was the dream of national independence at the turn of the century—a dream that became waylaid into forty years of colonial dependency on the US, followed by a nominal recognition of Philippine independence in the midst of poverty, devastation, and corruption engineered by inequality. (19)

Oddly enough, the sisters’ “guilt … for having accommodated to a disenchanted world” also afflicts Perico, whose abandonment of poetry for politics catalyzes his mourning over Lorenzo’s lost “noble ideal.” Even as he and the Marasigans share guilt over their disenchantment with those ideals, Perico does not consider them the inheritors of Lorenzo’s revolutionary ideals—not even Manolo, who, despite being male, seems excluded for being ‘Americanized’ per the generational divide Perico laments. This all reinforces my position that Perico advances a masculinist, cosmopolitan, and Eurocentric idea of the revolutionary subject.

In Paula and Candida's destruction of the painting—that which embodies Lorenzo and Perico's past investments in the Classics—the sisters simultaneously refute those same investments. This rejection eerily resembles a critical moment in Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* that I must once again cite:

> In its narcissistic monologue the colonialist bourgeoisie, by way of its academics, had implanted in the minds of the colonized that the essential values—meaning Western values—remain eternal despite all errors attributable to man. The colonized intellectual accepted the cogency of these ideas and there in the back of his mind stood a sentinel on duty guarding the Greco-Roman pedestal. But during the struggle for liberation, when the colonized intellectual touches base again with his people, this artificial sentinel is smashed to smithereens. All the Mediterranean values, the triumph of the individual, of enlightenment and Beauty turn into pale, lifeless trinkets. All those discourses appear a jumble of dead words. (11)

Here, as in the rest of his book, Fanon offers a generalized portrait of the "colonized intellectual," a more privileged variation of a colonized subject—neither of whom are exclusive to Black colonized populations. Though Paula and Candida are not "colonized intellectuals" in the same vein as Lorenzo, they nonetheless manage to "smash" the "artificial sentinel" of Western, Greco-Roman values "to smithereens"—quite literally, in fact, through the destruction of the titular portrait. If the sisters' interpretation of Lorenzo's intentions is correct, that the painting was meant to be destroyed and thus liberate them, then Lorenzo has intuited the upper limits of the ideals he once shared with Perico. Because Perico's interpretation of the painting is questionable, the play itself does not mourn the Westernized *ilustrado* idealism he once valorized. Perico sees in the painting a model of radical agency that the play considers obsolete,

as it is far too predicated on the affordances of a masculinist, colonial humanism. This humanism has set the criteria for who can be considered a revolutionary Philippine subject—thus excluding Paula and Candida's generation—and the destruction of the portrait heralds the destruction of this tradition. Thus, Paula proclaims, "I *am* free!" (417). To unpack what Paula and Candida's newfound freedom entails, Blanco argues:

> Only [the painting's] "mortification" can prepare the conditions for Lorenzo's "resurrection" from the obscurity of his room, insofar as profane experience sets in motion Candida and Paula's discovery and exercise of their character, their *filibusterismo* or will-to-subversion (*"contra mundum!"*). Far from capitulation to the paternal legacy or patrimony, the daughters destroy it; and in that destruction they attune themselves to the experience of that impulse *throughout the whole of Philippine history,* including even that of the revolutionary father. (29)

In the liberatory gesture of destroying the painting, Candida and Paula lay claim to a tradition that they were implicitly barred from, whether for the generational divide Perico laments or for the mere fact of their being women. Because the painting's destruction "attune[s] [them] to the experience of that impulse *throughout the whole of Philippine history,*" Candida and Paula reveal that they have always belonged to the revolutionary tradition that Perico now mourns: a tradition that—through their survival—they keep alive, and—through their iconoclastic act—they *transcend*. The sisters' own revolutionary agency, initially stunted by disillusionment in their father's art and his inability to prosper under the American occupation, is recovered by severing themselves from the weight of Lorenzo's "paternal legacy." His gift to his daughters is not so much the painting itself, but the revolutionary act entailed by its eventual destruction—an act that Perico cannot foresee, given his attempt to "have the painting donated to a new Philippine

government, anxious to ground its legitimacy in cultural relics as well as political calculation" (Blanco 18-19). In failing to recognize Candida and Paula's efficacy, Perico forecloses *himself* to recovering that same revolutionary energy.

This causes Perico to overlook Paula and Candida's radical agential capacities—that which they eventually employ by destroying the painting. In advancing this idea, however, Perico fails to notice a striking absence in the painting: something that, with his own Classical training, he should have caught. Earlier, I quoted Perico's claim that Lorenzo "has realized the tragedy of his generation … He, too, must carry himself to his own grave because there is no succeeding generation to carry him forward. His art will die with him" (Joaquin 367). Though Bitoy establishes early on that Lorenzo seems to be both Aeneas and Anchises, I wonder why Perico, a character who claims that he and his fellow *ilustrados* "had Homer and Virgil in [their] bones" (359), is not curious about the glaring absence of *Ascanius:* the young son of Aeneas who joins the flight from Troy and represents a future generation after the present (Aeneas) and the past (Anchises). It is possible that, by excluding Ascanius, Lorenzo himself has disregarded any investment in a future generation. However, I have established that the painting does not necessarily represent the tragic resignation that Perico assigns to it. But because Perico's idea of a revolutionary subject is directly tied to a supposed knowledge of the Classics, perhaps the absence of Ascanius *insinuates the obsolescence of all the portrait represents*—including the Western humanism that Perico imputes onto it. By physically destroying the painting, Paula and Candida reject the need for the Western, masculinist values it embodies. Just as Ascanius exists outside the painting's boundaries, *so do they.*

From what I have established, Perico no longer serves as a conceivable surrogate for Joaquin's views—not when the play actively works to contradict Perico's humanist investments.

Once again writing in 1955, Lourdes Pablo makes the questionable claim that "The essential elements in the [the play's] conflict are obviously the sincere idealism and the high integrity of a past whose vivifying feature is its Faith … and the opportunistic materialism and moral indifference, not to say downright laxity of the modern age of the atheist and the agnostic" (202). This reading would certainly hold if Perico's lamentations are taken at face value. As I have demonstrated, however, the play's generational divide cannot be so easily dichotomized that the newer generation is also more decadent. In destroying the portrait, Paula and Candida begin to forge the conditions of possibility for a future unencumbered by the Spanish past, "the color and the excitement and the romance" of Perico's youth" (Joaquin 367-368). Pablo's argument has likely contributed to current notions of "Joaquin's alleged nostalgia," but scholar Marie Arong suggests that Joaquin's attitude "has always been more than just a recuperation of the Hispanic past. In his attempt 'to bring in the [Hispanic] perspective,' Joaquin not only manages to problematize the notion of an 'authentic Filipino,' but he also questions the excessive nostalgia for the very Hispanic past he was trying to recover" (Arong 118). Joaquin seeks horizons for Philippine subjectivity by diving into the wreck of the Spanish period, but like Arong, I am skeptical that he uncritically genuflects to its trappings. If Joaquin indulges in any form of *imperialist realism,* it is no-doubt a self-conscious approach, critical of the historical biases he has inherited.

Importantly, Joaquin grapples with his own inheritance of the "Phantasmagoric Europe" coined by Rafael and explored in my first chapter. It is no coincidence that a phantasmagoric Europe laid the groundwork for the Philippine state's ego-ideal as Joaquin understood it: a masculinist cosmopolitan citizen subject, a la Perico, believing himself to possess as much claim to the Western tradition as his American and European peers. This attitude acts as a palliative for

the calamities of neoliberal governmentality that keep the Philippines in a state of perpetual crisis. Despite their respective veneers of patriarchal authority, notable Philippine presidents Ferdinand Marcos and Rodrigo Duterte embodied anxieties about the country's relationship to the Western tradition—an anxiety shared by the Marasigan household and their high society peers. Marcos espoused *disiplina*—or discipline—among Philippine citizens to construct a subservient and productive citizen-subject in a manner then enforced by martial law. Duterte, while also invested in the disciplining of the people, devoted his presidency to a "war on drugs" that sought to exterminate ostensible hordes of the undisciplined. As Rafael describes in his study on Duterte, *The Sovereign Trickster*, human rights to Duterte "are abstract impositions by the West that infringe on the sovereignty of nations," such that Duterte retorted with a simple "Fuck you" when condemned by the UN for "the killing of journalists" (57). "In Duterte's regime," Rafael explains, "the distinction between civilization and barbarism tends to be obscured. There is only the shameless display of brutality and loud pride in ignorance in order to instill a government of fear." However, "Under Marcos, [First Lady] Imelda sought to 'beautify' the country and aestheticize the dictatorship" with cultural projects that lionized the Spanish colonial era (23). In a speech celebrating the opening of the Manila Film Center, Imelda claimed that "It shall be our Parthenon built in a time of hardship, a spring-source of people's living conviction on the oneness of our heritage … that our works in stone and story … may remain, for all time, a testament to the goodness, the truth, and the beauty of a historic race" (14-15). Imelda no doubt appeals to the Western tradition by inaugurating a "Parthenon" to the heritage of the Philippines. Blood, however, was spilled on this altar to the Western Tradition. "In an effort to complete the construction of the center in time for the festival's opening," writes Josen Diaz, "a floor of the center collapsed and buried hundreds of workers alive within the rubble.

Rather than pause construction, the First Lady ordered that the crew continue to build atop the workers' bodies" (74). Despite Marcos and Duterte's differences, both were self-conscious of the Philippines' inheritance of the Western tradition. Neither they nor their colleagues flinched from bloodshed in pursuit of their respective goals. Though Marcos and Duterte's relationships with the hegemony of the Global North differed, both weaponized imperial ideology that calcified during the Spanish Era and the American Occupation of the Philippines. Appeals to the *enterprise* of empire persisted in Marcos and Duterte's respective sycophancies to the U.S. and China, as well as within the masculinist nation-building (or nation-*breaking*) projects of their presidencies.

In terms of what the fall of Marcos and the rise of Duterte reveal, Eva-Lotta Hedman and John Sidel characterize the ebbs and flows of Philippine regime changes as "a cycle of recurring crisis and temporary 'resolution' stemming from deep-rooted tensions in the underlying structures of Philippine democracy that have yet to be resolved" (29). Citing this, Robyn Rodriguez characterizes said "underlying structures" as "sets of class and political relations ultimately rooted in colonialism that continue to persist despite regime change from dictatorship to democracy" (14). This was the transition from Marcos to Cory Aquino, or what Rafael describes as "the end of authoritarian rule to the restoration of elite democracy" (15). For despite the egalitarian tenor of the People Power Movement that ousted Marcos, "the post-martial law oligarchy turned to civilian volunteers, organized and sponsored by the police and the military into anti-communist vigilantes," effectively forming "death squads" that staged the eventual *modus operandi* for Duterte's rule (Rafael 15-16). This is all to say that even and especially beyond Marcos and Duterte's regimes, the perpetuity of Philippine crisis lies in the country's positioning as an ostensible beneficiary of Western intervention. Marcos and Duterte's legacies

demonstrate how the Philippines remains haunted by the long shadows of this history, as it is the cosmopolitan citizen-subject of Western liberal humanism that both presidencies—despite their differing methods and mentalities—labored to make out of the Philippine population.

Joaquin, then, shows skepticism of the cosmopolitan Philippines' political designs, leaving behind posthumously a way of engaging with Duterte's former presidency and now, Bong Bong Marcos's. But to return to the text, Joaquin does not seem satisfied with investing radical agency *entirely* in the hands of Paula and Candida. The sisters do have an emancipatory moment by destroying the painting, and even radically subvert the Philippine humanism of Perico and Lorenzo's past. However, I must ask if they have simply reorganized the terms of that humanism, such that Filipina mestizas can now be the bearers of radical agency. It is worth noting, after all, that even as the Marasigans struggle financially during the play, they nonetheless benefited from the pleasures of high society for a considerable time. As Bitoy testifies in his narration:

> I grew up during the hard, hard nineteen-thirties, when everybody seemed to have become poor and shabby and disillusioned and ill-tempered. I drifted from one job to another … Sometimes I felt I had never been clean, never been happy; my childhood seemed incredible—something that had happened to someone else. When I was working at the piers, I often passed this way late at night. I would see the windows of the Marasigan house all lighted up, and I would hear them up there, talking and laughing—Lorenzo, Candida, Paula, and their little shabby old folk … I would stand out here in the street—tired and dirty and hungry and sleepy … But I never felt any desire to go up there again; I despised all those people. (Joaquin 348)

Though Bitoy is not outwardly resentful towards the Marasigans when they interact, his narration attends to a disparity in privilege said family enjoys that he does not. The play centers the hardships of the Marasigans, but Joaquin takes the time to reveal Bitoy's animosity towards them. If not for Bitoy's interlocution, the play would imply that the capacity to challenge and subvert notions of Philippine revolutionary agency is solely the domain of the mestizo class. But even as the play goes out of its way to question Perico's commitment to a masculinist revolutionary agency, Bitoy's complaints from an underprivileged class position address the mestizo/mestiza category under which both humanisms—Perico's and the Marasigan sisters'—are subsumed. However, Joaquin does not explore the 'lower' end of the Spanish-imposed mestizo hierarchy and Philippine indigeneity in *Portrait* as much as in the short stories "Doña Jerónima" and "Summer Solstice."

While offering a more direct engagement with indigeneity, the short story "Doña Jerónima" also supports Arong's claim that Joaquin "questions the excessive nostalgia" for the Spanish period. As I will illustrate, the story exhibits a clear tension between an investment in transcendent ideals (the Christian faith) and in worldly immanence (Jerónima's pagan-ness). Even though "Doña Jerónima" is set in the colonial past, Joaquin does not labor to glorify it. Instead, the circumstances of its ending generate a distinct ambivalence. First, the story concerns a Spanish Archbishop of Manila who spends a year marooned on an island before being recovered by a passing ship. During his isolation, the Archbishop is heavily preoccupied with "the urge to find a 'stillness'—this 'stillness' that he only discovered once he was removed from the modern world and plunged into the natural, pre-Catholic world—though what this stillness is or what it represents he fails to grasp, knowing only that it is within him" (Delos Reyes and Selman 487). He seems to escape the mystery of this "stillness" upon returning to civil society,

to whom “the marvel of his sojourn on the island had grown into legend in the retelling, and he himself had become such a figure of miracle” (Joaquin 132), prized by the Philippine masses for the fortitude he seems to have gained from his faith. Despite this, the Archbishop, while marooned, had actually “pondered upon himself and had seen what a vanity, what a fraud his life had been. Youthful ambition had probed where lay advancement and had picked the Church as the quickest avenue to the high places of the world; and he had entered religion craving not piety but power” (132). From this description, Joaquin holds the Spanish period as an object of critique, and not simply a reliable point of return. The Archbishop, for that matter, turns out to have abandoned a Filipina lover in his quest for power: the titular Doña Jerónima herself. Jerónima appears to him as a ghostly figure, “veiled whitely,” who has not aged since the day he abandoned her: a haunting apparition beholden to her very own “stillness” that the Archbishop cannot flee from as he did the island (137). Jerónima then demands that the Archbishop honor his past vow to her—a vow he had forsaken for his later vow to the Church (137). When the Archbishop eventually does take responsibility for leaving her, Jerónima feels a sudden remorse for terrorizing him (148). Though first he suggests her “placement in a house of holy women,” he agrees to her counterproposal of seeking solitude in a cave by the Pasig river to pray in the tradition of Christian asceticism (149). Through this act, Jerónima establishes herself as a devout Christian. Despite this, she becomes ostracized by the local community because they nonetheless perceive her as something external to the values of the Church: a threatening symbol of pre-colonial paganism. Though these two characters ultimately reconcile and achieve a sort of apotheosis into the natural landscape, Joaquin’s capacity to imbue a radical agency in Jerónima reveals an effort to think beyond his subject position as a mestizo. Jerónima’s narrative represents Joaquin’s dual investment in indigeneity and femininity as harbingers for radical

change. Though in tethering Jerónima to the landscape, Joaquin risks recreating colonial logics—and thus, imperialist realism—by encoding femininity onto indigenous land, rendering it a domain to be tilled and cultivated by more masculinist imperatives. In searching for the conditions of possibility for revolution, however, this might strike Joaquin as a necessary risk: a problem of representation that Jerónima must move *through* to achieve some form of emancipation on the other side.

Jerónima establishes her connection to indigenous land by mentioning her affinity for Philippine fauna—specifically, bats—and it is by evoking this connection that she reminds the Archbishop of their past. Of bats, she says:

> The lovers of the woodland, my lord, know it is time to part when the great bats rumble overhead. The bats there are the friends of lovers, announcing the approach of night no less than its end, and hiding with their wings the trysts on the riverbank. The lovers lie all night in each other's arms until the bats warn of the daylight. How many lovers have cursed and blessed them! Such horrid huge creatures, Black and vile. But O they were love's angels to me, and the canopy of love, as many a time said I to my lover when the wings rumbled. (139)

Although she first describes bats as "horrid huge creatures" who are "Black and vile," Jerónima's subsequent assertion that bats are "the canopy of love" suggests she is only speaking from the perspective of onlookers who misunderstand bats' true importance, which overshadows the misconception that bats are cursed. For her to claim that "the bats warn of the daylight," Jerónima has an awareness of bats' behavioral patterns and usefulness to human activity. Between the "lovers of the woodland" and the "great bats" who "rumble overhead," there is a distinct symbiosis inapplicable to the villagers who later persecute Jerónima. This symbiosis,

made visible to those like Jerónima who are attuned to the natural landscape, remains utterly mystifying to villagers historically inundated with the teachings of Spanish Catholicism. Though the Archbishop was once a victim of a similar mystification, his disillusionment with the Church while on the island precedes a further—and very literal—disillusionment catalyzed by his interactions with Jerónima. For as the Archbishop grows remorseful for once abandoning Jerónima, he realizes that his hermitage is another hollow pretension, another mystification:

> And peering into the hut, where he had spent so many hours of contemplation, he felt no nostalgia for his time there but rather a deep embarrassment, knowing that the contemplative had been no less an absurdity than the popular holy man—one more masquerade, one more disguise. The fleer from illusion was himself an illusion; and this hut but one more shell to be shed, like desert isle or cloister or hose and doublet. (144)

Notably, the Archbishop only comes to understand this upon reuniting with Jerónima. Just as he was once marooned on a deserted island—and thus having had no choice but to expose himself to nature—his proximity to Jerónima is, by extension, a renewed proximity to nature. In both occasions, he achieves a form of demystification that crystallizes in his mind upon realizing that the "fleer from illusion was himself an illusion." Just as being a "popular holy man" entailed an investment in transcendent beliefs that shunned the world's immanence, the Archbishop's hermitage by the Pasig River entails a similar flight—a literal, as opposed to ideological, seclusion—and he finally recognizes it as such. Compelled by Jerónima's reappearance in his life to contemplate the natural landscape, the Archbishop turns to a symbol she already evokes, that of bats:

> Unable to bear the sight of the cell that now seemed a prison, he went out to the grove, and down to the edge of the river, the benevolent river, the brown river that had played

> with him in childhood and proffered the first love of youth. The water was a mere gleam of ripple to the wind in the dark of the moon. The night was as Black as bats' land upriver; and he thought how wise the bats were to shun daylight and choose darkness, when the world drops its mask and lies unguarded, in the innocence of sleep. But he had prayed for light, which disguises, and not for darkness, which unclothes, revealing secrets in lovers' bed or dreamer's cry. Only the bats saw the world naked. (Joaquin 145)

His contemplation of the Pasig River and its importance in his youth reveal what has been lost in his rise to power as an Archbishop. By committing himself to the Catholic Church, the Archbishop has by extension committed himself to a Western colonialist project, and in so doing has severed himself from a connection to the natural Philippine landscape. Granted, he is Spanish, and thus only ostensibly possesses that claim before forsaking it for organized religion. But for him to intuit that "Only the bats saw the world naked," he understands that no bat is a "fleer from illusion" like himself. Rather, despite their limited vision, bats' eyes are already unclouded by ideology, free of the hegemonic forces of Spanish colonialism that circumscribe the Archbishop's rise to power. It is no coincidence, then, that for the Archbishop, both his time on the island and his time with Jerónima have trivialized any pretext of such power. Rather than valorize the Spanish period, Joaquin challenges its trappings by evoking a severe contrast between the Church as the encroachment of a foreign imperial power and the indigenous landscape as a site of ideological and existential liberation.

The tension between the Spanish Church and Philippine paganism is reinforced by Jerónima's decision to become a chthonic being, retreating to a cave to "dwell there, as penitent, as an anchorite, to expiate [her] sins and to grope [her] way to heaven" (149). However, despite

taking on an ascetic Christian practice, the effects of Jerónima's actions appear pagan to the villagers:

> When she took up abode in the cave, wondrous things happened to the villages nearby. The river that had been niggard now gave fish in abundance; rain fell in its season and fell prodigally; field and orchard flowed with fruit; cattle fattened and multiplied; barren women suddenly quickened. But the villagers, instead of exulting, shook with superstitious dread and murmured how all this was too good to be true, and therefore could not be good, since what but evil could spring from the illusions of witchcraft? In no one's memory existed a time when bats haunted this region, but now a swarm of them flocked round the cave of the woman on the riverbank; they came at her call; she had been spied talking to them and fondling the Black beasts; and the villagers whispered that the woman herself turned into a bat at night and roamed the countryside, sucking the blood of sleepers. Therefore was her cave shunned by the villagers, and stoned by children; and she dared set no foot outside her grove on the riverbank. (150)

Noteworthy here is the villagers' rejection of Jerónima's authentic asceticism, whereas the Archbishop's inauthentic asceticism during his marooning elevated his status against his will. And whereas no one witnessed the Archbishop's sojourn, many witness Jerónima's. Both instances reinforce the hegemony of the Catholic Church and the resulting attitudes of colonized Filipinos, however. The Archbishop's isolation is interpreted as a testament to the powers of religious asceticism, and Jerónima's as a testament to the ungodly wickedness of anything beyond the Church's parameters—even though Jerónima is not practicing any witchcraft. By remarking that "In no one's memory existed a time when bats haunted this region," Joaquin's narration makes a call to the Philippines' pre-colonial period, to a time when the creaturely,

immanent phenomena of the landscape was not mystified to the local populace by the mechanisms of Spanish colonialism. Jerónima stands, then, as a symbol contradicting—if not outright resisting—the protracted reach of Western ideology that descended upon the Philippines under Spanish rule. Just as Paula and Candida reject Perico's commitment to a cosmopolitan Western humanism in *Portrait*, Jerónima's embrace of the landscape rejects the transcendent ideals of Christianity. Lily Tope attends to this rejection by delineating Jerónima's presence from that of the Church:

> Mistress of the body and soul of the colonized, the Church is a daunting rival. The religious caverns in the Cathedral where the Archbishop received supplicants is a far cry from the cave across the river. Here, proofs of colonial conquest of souls can be readily observed. Doña Jerónima dares to enter the caverns, seeking justice but defeated by a power stronger than woman's love. This powerlessness is caused by the historical inevitability of colonialism. (Tope 146)

In maintaining a youthful appearance since the Archbishop abandoned her a lifetime ago, Jerónima exhibits an agelessness that is not so much an affordance as it is a punishment. For as a condition of her aforementioned "powerlessness," Jerónima has been beholden to a historical stasis catalyzed by the Archbishop's past betrayal. Her very own stasis echoes the stillness that once arrested the Archbishop's attention during his time on the island. He no longer preoccupies himself with the pursuit of this "stillness" once Jerónima reenters his life, for it is Jerónima who arrives as its substitute, being the representative and victim of her own "stillness." Just as Jerónima is subject to this "stillness" upon being abandoned for the Church, Joaquin insinuates that the precolonial Philippines is not so much vanished or unobtainable as it is bound to a

historical stasis of its own. The precolonial waits, like Jerónima, for some form of revitalization, inhibited though it may be by "the historical inevitability of colonialism."

Joaquin labors to demonstrate, however, that this "revitalization" is no easy task. In their study on the matter, "The Female Monster: The Pre-Catholic Manifestation as a Response to Modern Anxiety in Selected Stories by Nick Joaquin," Tyra Delos Reyes and Xavier Selman meditate on the gravity of Jerónima's revitalization. Her retirement to the cave, her turn to penitent asceticism, represents her "acceptance of the Catholic faith" as "her ultimate sacrifice: She sacrifices her youth, her beauty, and her timelessness, at the request of the Archbishop himself. In the conflict of interests between the Archbishop and Jerónima, it is the latter who concedes at her own expense" (488-489). Against Delos Reyes and Selman's reading here, I contend that Jerónima's "timelessness"—her "stillness"—remains its own punishment. However, I agree with their attempt to illustrate a power imbalance that persists between Jerónima and the Archbishop—that more is demanded from Jerónima than from the Archbishop before the story's resolution. I wonder if, instead of this being Joaquin's inattentiveness to a gendered power imbalance he might struggle to equitably represent, the shaky resolution to this "conflict of interests" is Joaquin's representation of a *colonial* power imbalance. The Archbishop, after all, had no control over the reception to his return from the island, just as Jerónima cannot expect the villagers to accept her seemingly abject otherness. The reactions of the other characters have been circumscribed by colonialist values that permeate their cultural climate. Both characters thus remain beholden to the colonial paradigm, the Archbishop benefitting from his structural position as a clergyman—even when he does not want to—and Jerónima suffering for her position as the ostensibly pagan outsider. This dynamic motivates Delos Reyes and Selman to claim that "it is [Jerónima's] adopted faith of Catholicism atop this character who represented the

pre-Catholic that has made her monstrous, as when she and the Archbishop die, both are reborn and live on, as young and beautiful lovers who live in place of the pre-Catholic, pagan nymph of the cave" (489). Her surrender to Catholicism—and thus, to the larger colonial project under which it falls—somehow only makes Jerónima more alien to the surrounding populace. In her unwitting hybridity between Catholicism and paganism, she threatens the binarism separating the precolonial and colonial periods, and it is perhaps this destabilizing potential that is more "monstrous" than the way the villagers perceive her. Jerónima's observance of Catholic rites might suggest Joaquin's own ambivalence towards any insurgent ground offered by Jerónima's hybridity, even as the story—through the Archbishop's disillusionment—actively critiques the religious pretensions of the Spanish period.

Furthermore, the story ends with an anecdote about the cave that Jerónima sequesters herself in, which was, "in pagan times … the abode of a nymph who was gay and kind." Later, "When Cross and Conquistador came, the nymph departed forlorn. Her cave fell silent … No more did the cave gleam with lights at night there or twinkle with music and revelry—until Doña Jerónima appeared" (Joaquin 156). The nymph, who Doña Jerónima replaces, never returns. As a figure of the precolonial past once unmediated by "Cross and Conquistador," the original nymph *cannot* return—the world from which she fled has no place for her. And to evoke the nymph's particular Philippine paganism, Joaquin refers to her as a *diwata* (a nature spirit) only once. The choice to continue referring to the diwata solely as a 'nymph' does not strike me as the narration's surrender to the Western paradigms that Jerónima must assimilate to, but as a way of highlighting the difficulty of existing under said paradigms. The colonial world of "Doña Jerónima" has a place for the eponymous character, but only because Jerónima's coalescence of paganism and Christianity allows her to live in disguise. She becomes integrated into folklore

which coexists with, rather than contradicts, the popular tenets of Christianity which continue to sweep the Philippines. Thus, Joaquin invests an insurgent potential in Jerónima as this hybrid being, who must navigate and pragmatically accept the vicissitudes of the Philippines' precolonial past and colonial present. It is worth noting, however, that Jerónima is never *explicitly* stated to be indigenous, and the title of "Doña" even insinuates her mestiza status. But instead of suggesting that Jerónima merely *evokes* indigeneity, I suggest Joaquin is propounding how unstable the distinction between the precolonial and the colonial truly is. To what indigenous heritage, Joaquin seems to ask, can even a mestiza subject search for the conditions of possibility for change? Perhaps Jerónima's apotheosis into the Pasig River is not so much the appropriation of Filipinx indigenous struggles (as one might critique Joaquin of doing), but the rejection of a Western humanism that would occlude her from recognizing her own indigeneity. The nymph likewise represents an untenable distinction between pagan and Classical (and thus, Western) traditions by belonging to them both—for in sharing the name of a species from Greek mythology, the 'nymph' simultaneously dwells in the pre-Catholic Philippine past and the Western canon.

Another short story, "Summer Solstice," which entertains the same "nascent pre-Catholic spirit … witnessed only through the female" (Delos Reyes and Selman 476), brings to bear the same colonial tensions as "Doña Jerónima." Just as "Doña Jerónima" borrows from the Classical tradition through the use of the nymph, "Summer Solstice" does so by evoking Euripides' play *The Bacchae* through its depiction of the libidinal excess of a pagan celebration. Set in the 1850's Philippines, "Summer Solstice" witnesses a patriarchal power imbalance between the wife and husband, Doña Lupeng and Don Paeng. Paeng regularly imposes his will on Lupeng, berating her and issuing threats of violence, until both witness the libidinal excesses of the pagan

Tadtarin festival. The experience catalyzes Lupeng's eventual rebellion against Paeng, who is forced into submission by his wife's metamorphosis into a more domineering figure. Similarly, in *The Bacchae,* King Pentheus of Thebes is outraged at the droves of women in his city who have been driven by Dionysus' influence to engage in a chaotic festival of their own. In both stories, there is a drive to domesticate 'recalcitrant' women, whether it is Paeng attempting to steer Lupeng away from the Tadtarin festival or Pentheus attempting to punish the women worshipping Dionysus. These male characters struggle to contain the women they cannot immediately control, women who deviate from the normative values of their respective setting. In *The Bacchae,* Pentheus succumbs to a Dionysian madness of his own before getting mutilated by Dionysus' female worshippers. In "Summer Solstice," Paeng gets brutalized—but not murdered—by the female venerators of the Tadtarin" (Joaquin 49-50). He survives to instead succumb to the Dionysian impulses of the Tadtarin festival by acquiescing to his wife's newfound sense of authority (52). Lupeng's triumph over her husband is plainly counterhegemonic against the colonial and patriarchal paradigms Paeng represents. But in conveying the otherness of the Tadtarin as such, how does Joaquin invest radical agency in their indigeneity and femininity? From the start, these female participants of the Tadtarin festival and their real-life precedents cannot be sublimated into "literary articulations in the period after the Second World War of a unitary sovereign nationalist subject as the proper historical agent of anti-imperialist movement" (Tadiar 5). Perhaps noting this, Joaquin strives to represent these women in his own "literary articulation," even though their actions are not translatable to "universal forms of subjectivity and agency, which are meaningful within the dominant field of politics" (5). Thus, Joaquin's stories represent a search for nonhegemonic modes of subjectivity and temporality. "Doña Jerónima" stands as one product of that search, and "Summer Solstice"

appears as another attempt to unearth a new subjectivity from within the Spanish period. The resonances between "Summer Solstice" and *The Bacchae* not only indicate Joaquin's familiarity with the Classics, but also a tension between Philippine indigenous superstition and Western canonicity on which "Summer Solstice" meditates.

To elaborate, it is worth juxtaposing the two festivals that take place in "Summer Solstice"—that of the Tadtarin, populated by women, and that of St. John, populated by men. In his depiction of the two festivals, Joaquin describes the motivations for each. The Tadtarin festival mocks colonial religious domination, whereas the festival St. John *espouses* it. Joaquin begins this juxtaposition with a description of the Tadtarin festival as follows:

> … up the street came the prancing, screaming, writhing women, their eyes wild, Black shawls flying around their shoulders, and their long hair streaming and covered with leaves and flowers. But the Tadtarin, a small old woman with white hair, walked with calm dignity in the midst of the female tumult, a wand in one hand, a bunch of seedlings in the other. Behind her, a group of girls bore aloft a little Black image of the Baptist—a crude, primitive, grotesque image, its big-eyed head too big for its puny naked torso, bobbing and swaying above the hysterical female horde … (Joaquin 48)

The "Baptist" in question is indeed St. John, his likeness mocked by the chaotic procession of women. "For a moment," Delos Reyes and Selman observe, "it is not the pre-Catholic that appears grotesque but the very image of St. John, reassigning all uncanny associations (primitive, grotesque) to the Baptist" Just as the Archbishop in "Doña Jerónima" is disillusioned with the Church, his lack of faith trivializing any commitment to organized religion, the Tadtarin festival actively trivializes the venerated St. John. For the Archbishop, such trivializing empowers him to join Jerónima as they become a legend on the Pasig River, whereas for the Tadtarin's adherents,

such trivializing ennobles their own indigeneity and femininity by contrast. “Summer Solstice,” however, witnesses a clearer attempt by Joaquin to repudiate the Spanish colonial period, questioning its religious foundations in his representation of the St. John procession:

> Up the road, stirring a cloud of dust, and gaily bedrenched by the crowds gathered along the wayside, a concourse of young men clad only in soggy trousers were carrying aloft an image of the Precursor. Their teeth flashed white in their laughing faces and their hot bodies glowed crimson as they pranced past, shrouded in fiery dust, singing and shouting and waving their arms: the St. John riding swiftly above the sea of dark heads and glittering in the noon sun—a fine, blonde, heroic St. John: very male, very arrogant: the Lord of Summer indeed; the Lord of Light and Heat—erect and goldly virile above the prone and female earth […] (Joaquin 41)

Unlike the Tadtarin festival, this spectacle exudes a distinct regality and orderliness befitting the center of its celebrations. The likeness of St. John appears “shrouded in fiery dust” and “glittering in the noon sun”—undoubtedly more Apollonian in presentation than the Dionysian Tadtarin festival. This dichotomy reinforces the otherness of the latter from what is considered normative under Spanish rule. The festival of St. John is in fact symptomatic of said rule, of the heralding of whiteness as ideal that Western imperial projects impose on their colonized subjects. “The Church in the colonies,” Fanon says, “is a white man’s Church, a foreigner’s Church. It does not call the colonized to the ways of God, but to the ways of the white man, to the ways of the master, the ways of the oppressor” (7). Thus, beneath the veneer of a transcendent ideal personified by the “fine, blond, heroic” (and therefore white) St. John is a history of domination over colonized Filipinxs, who populate “the sea of dark heads” under which the white figure stands. In his attempt to critique the colonialist logic on display, however, Joaquin’s description

of St. John as "erect and goldly virile above the prone and female earth" seems at risk of reproducing a gendered colonialist discourse that feminizes indigenous land. "Land and woman are places of tilling and insemination," Neferti Tadiar explains of this mentality, which "defin[es] the revolutionary action that is performed on them as heteromasculine" (272). Although Joaquin's writings do not contain literal "revolutionary action," such as guerilla tactics against oppressive regimes, his own search for radical agency—by evoking both the indigenous and the feminine—is indeed his form of "revolutionary action." In his attempt to construe "Land and woman" as the grounds for liberation, Joaquin only speaks of a "heteromasculine" enterprise through a narration that is focalized on a perspective endeared to the St. John procession. Joaquin's language does not insinuate his own belief in the association between "Land and woman," but behaves descriptively to represent an attitude he critiques: the same attitude that would venerate St. John over the Tadtarin. Thus, as Joaquin searches for traces of radical agency in these indigenous and feminine representations, he filters "Land and woman" through the heteromasculine logic of the Spanish Church (present through St. John) and the colonized Filipinx (present through the St. John procession and Paeng) to illustrate this logic's untenability. The logic that necessitates the binarism of Apollonian man and Dionysian woman, venerator of St. John and venerator of the Tadtarin, is vulnerable to a critique personified by Lupeng and her rebellion.

However, to complicate the matter of representation in "Summer Solstice," Lupeng is drawn to the indigeneity represented by the Tadtarin festival, but as a mestiza, she, like Jerónima, is not indigenous *per se.* Nonetheless, Lupeng the mestiza embraces indigenous Philippine superstition through the spirit of the Tadtarin, albeit differently from her indigenous

servant Amada, who serves as Lupeng's foil. In the beginning of the story, Amada is shown to be overcome with a Dionysian euphoria of her own:

> [Amada's] sweat-beaded brows contracted, as if in an effort to understand. Then her face relaxed, her mouth sagged open humorously and, rolling over on her back and spreading out her big soft arms and legs, she began noiselessly quaking with laughter—the mute mirth jerking in her throat; the moist pile of her flesh quivering like brown jelly. Saliva dribbled from the corners of her mouth. (Joaquin 40)

Entoy, Amada's husband, thus explains, "The spirit is in her. She is the Tadtarin. She must do as she pleases. Otherwise, the grain would not grow, the trees would bear no fruit, the rivers would give no fish, and the animals would die" (40). It is through this framing of Entoy's concern and respect for the material repercussions of interrupting Amada's trance that Joaquin asserts, not the religious, but the *political* primacy of the Tadtarin festival over St. John's. How, after all, is the conflict between the adherents of the Tadtarin and the adherents of St. John circumscribed by a conflict of colonial and patriarchal domination? Lupeng's ultimate participation in the Tadtarin festivities undermines Paeng's patriarchal authority, which is itself more at home in the colonial masculinism of the St. John's procession. In contrast, Entoy—who is notably another man, but not a mestizo like Paeng—shows greater reverence for Tadtarin practices. Such a distinction motivates Delos Reyes and Selman's critical contrasts between the way each couple responds to the events of the story. "Whereas Amada's [episode] is always seen as grotesque and comical, Lupeng's is noticeably more intimate, erupting not into hysteria, but a familiar eroticism that produces in her modern husband" an emasculating anxiety (Delos Reyes and Selman 485). It is precisely this "emasculating anxiety" that drives Paeng into further rage against his wife, Lupeng. Entoy, however, is resigned to his subordinated position, finding himself without reason

to doubt the effect the Tadtarin spirit has on his wife, Amada. Because there is a sustained conflict between the more cosmopolitan couple, Lupeng and Paeng, Delos Reyes and Selman maintain that "it must be realized that the two couples do not belong to the same class and must then not share the same superstitions. Clearly Lupeng and Paeng are the more modern couple, affirming their positions after having exhibited distaste for and a certain fear against the pre-Catholic" (486). Necessarily, then, Amada and Lupeng's respective exposures to the Tadtarin fundamentally differ, and it is the difference in these exposures—as well as the dispositions of their respective husbands—that determine the women's treatment. For Amada, Entoy already displays subservience to her in her entranced state. By contrast, Lupeng must insist upon Paeng's subservience and compel him to say, "in his dead voice: 'That I adore you. That I adore you. That I worship you. That the air you breathe and the ground you tread is holy to me. That I am your dog, your slave." To that, she says, "*Then come, crawl on the floor, and kiss my feet!"* (Joaquin 52). Paeng subsequently obeys his wife's commands, consummating Lupeng's transformation and liberation under the Tadtarin's influence. Given Joaquin's deliberate juxtaposition of the Tadtarin and St. John procession, this concluding moment witnesses the futility and obsolescence of the Western ideals heralded by St. John. The masculinism of the latter is more agreeable to Paeng's sensibilities before his surrender, but it fails to protect him from the overpowering influence of the Tadtarin, channeled as it is through Lupeng's body and disposition. Thus, like "Doña Jerónima," "Summer Solstice" not only features Joaquin's investment in evocations of pre-Catholic paganism, but also his investment in their capacity to destabilize the Spanish colonial paradigm, even as it must coexist within it.

Despite these affordances, I believe there is no easy approach to a state of prior plenitude to the Spanish period, let alone an approach that is *not* contaminated by a Spanish colonial

influence. But given the evident ambitiousness of his representations, Joaquin seems aware of the difficulty of his task. As another point of comparison between "Summer Solstice" and "Doña Jerónima," Joaquin's sustained critique of Spanish colonialism concludes with Jerónima's integration into local folklore. After Jerónima problematizes the colonial order embodied by the Archbishop's authority, her legend survives within the status quo where the nymph—her doubly pagan predecessor—could not. However, Jerónima also serves as a *successor* to the nymph, representing the *survival* of Philippine paganism as opposed to a compromised assimilation to Western Christian norms. The nymph herself represented the survival of a paganism that was sublimated into the Western tradition as Greco-Roman myth, after all. Likewise, Lupeng's transformation offers both a disruption of and pragmatic integration into the colonial status quo:

> But what has initially appeared as mere insistence for the modern might actually be reflective of a looming desire for the pre-Catholic, a sentiment supposedly so alien and divergent in such characters that this ripple in their ideologies end up projections of disgust and hate. This is embodied by Lupeng's transformation, arguably the most powerful one despite the lack of semblance to the monster that has appeared in Amada and the women in the festival, precisely because it has appeared in the combined form of the pre-Catholic and the modern. (Delos Reyes and Selman 486)

Lupeng does not externalize her transformation in a frenzied outburst like Amada and the festivalgoers. Instead, her transformation reveals itself in her taking an authoritative tone towards her husband and compelling him to obey. By gaining access to the libidinal influence of the Tadtarin, Lupeng filters her metamorphosis through what are supposedly her modern, more cosmopolitan sensibilities. Whereas Amada's transformation compels Entoy's obedience through fear of agricultural deprivation, Lupeng's transformation compels Paeng's obedience through

reason: the understanding that her positions cannot be refuted, and that Paeng indulges in his own kind of madness by rejecting her and her truth. "How I behaved tonight is what I am," she says, speaking of the Tadtarin festival. "If you call that lewd, then I was always a lewd woman and a whipping will not change me—though you whipped me till I died." "I want this madness to die in you," Paeng replies, but Lupeng answers with yet more reasons that his protests against her nature are futile, and that ultimately his efforts to punish her are equally pointless" (Joaquin 50). Even as the couple's dynamic experiences a radical shift, Lupeng's transformation into "the combined form of the pre-Catholic and the modern" suggest that Paeng only embraces the pre-Catholic in a diluted form—not the pre-Catholic in the excess displayed by Amada, but the pre-Catholic mediated by the vestiges of Lupeng's modernity, her mestiza-ness. For Joaquin, this mediation does not arrive as a compromise, but as an espousal of the *hybridity* that Lupeng thus represents. Her difference from Amada is not a flaw of "Summer Solstice," but a *feature.* The colonial and patriarchal paradigms which characterize Lupeng and Paeng's relationship are destabilized by Lupeng's liberation through the Tadtarin festival, which hints at how unstable Joaquin finds colonial cultural production to be. Within its foundations are the seeds of its own deconstruction, such that Amada's indigeneity reasserts itself and survives in new forms, including Lupeng's hybridity.

Because of the ways Joaquin explores indigeneity and femininity in "Doña Jerónima" and "Summer Solstice," it is worth considering again the ideological features of *Portrait.* For even if Perico's pronouncements about Ilustrado values are to be regarded with suspicion in *Portrait,* Paula and Candida's liberatory act of destroying the painting bears a radicalism delimited by their positionalities as mestizas. Atop the ashes of one humanism—Lorenzo's, Perico's, and the *ilustrados*'—rises Paula and Candida's. And while Joaquin presents the Marasigan sisters' new

humanism as one that transcends the previous generation's, his portrayal of the lower-class Bitoy's resentment reveals how neither humanism transcends the broader category they both occupy: that of the cosmopolitan mestizo/mestiza. This is not to say that alone, the Marasigan sisters *not* being mestiza would make *Portrait* more compelling, or that Bitoy being the protagonist would give *Portrait* some well-needed class consciousness. Rather, Joaquin wills *Portrait* to be circumscribed by cosmopolitan mestizo/mestiza concerns, such that the limitations of those concerns are thrown into relief. He searches for radical agency in *Portrait* all so he can say its representations are not radical *enough,* ill-equipped to transcend the feminist humanism that Paula and Candida gesture towards. Hence Joaquin's more direct engagements with Philippine indigeneity in "Doña Jerónima" and "Summer Solstice," which show his investment in the radical agency to be found in both indigeneity and femininity as alternative humanisms to the masculinist cosmopolitanism of *Portrait*'s Perico. In "Doña Jerónima," the precolonial past and the colonial present achieve a sort of synthesis in the legend Doña Jerónima becomes, but only to ensure the pragmatic *survival* of the precolonial. She replaces the pagan nymph, whose existence in the cave by the Pasig River is made untenable by Spanish colonialism, but serves as the nymph's *successor* who inherits her indigenous resonances. Similarly, while Lupeng liberates herself from the patriarchal clutches of her husband in "Summer Solstice," her transformation entails a pragmatic synthesis between Dionysian paganism (the Tadtarin) and Apollonian modernity (St. John), if only to ensure the survival of the former. In all this, Joaquin commits to such representations of indigeneity and femininity because the masculinist project of colonialism entails *its own* brand of violent excess: one that the trappings of colonialism labor to efface. By surveying Joaquin's explorations of and propositions for who can be considered a Philippine historical subject, I have sought to illustrate the complexities of representation that

inevitably emerge in his work. In engaging with the Spanish period, Joaquin's search for the conditions of possibility for revolution—precisely by his scrutiny of underrepresented, nonnormative subjectivities that suffer from colonial effacement—is bound to be difficult. After all, Joaquin's representations risk being read as inconsistent or beholden to contradictions, a Philippine imperialist realism being what delimits the history from which he derives these stories. Thus, Philippine historical experience *itself* remains fraught with contradiction. But as Vicente Rafael says of Joaquin's work, "We, whoever we are, receive his stories told from a ruined world, hearing and perhaps sharing them as we would the shards of our own lives" (xxxiv). I have merely interpreted the shards of Joaquin's representations, discerning their boundaries to attain a fuller grasp of their shape—and they only shine brighter for it, as they illuminate the fractures of the Philippines' postcolonial moment.

Joaquin's legacy, like Bulosan's, is critical for understanding the interventions to come from future authors such as Castillo and, in the next chapter, Jessica Hagedorn and Gina Apostol. Despite exhibiting a clear interest in the Spanish past, Joaquin allows his writings—on the level of formal and narrative content—to partake in the mystification of being *enchanted* by it, if only to dissect how such mystification works. The impact of the Spanish past on Philippine cultural production, as a vestige one is compelled to cling onto under the thrall of American empire is something Joaquin knowingly immerses himself in so as to challenge and deconstruct the teleological temptations of colonial nostalgia. Across his texts, he does not put on the imperial gaze to see through it, but to see *through* it—as in, expose its artifices despite any cosmopolitan biases he clings onto in the process. Hagedorn and Apostol, like Castillo, carry on the work of demystifying the imperial gaze through a decided *anti-imperial gaze,* which I will explore further in the next subchapter.

Dream Jungle and *Insurrecto*: The Tunnel Vision of Imperial Memory

Jessica Hagedorn's 2003 novel *Dream Jungle* and Gina Apostol's 2018 novel *Insurrecto* follow Nick Joaquin's oeuvre as novels that contend with the historical wreckage of U.S. militarism and its gendered consequences on the Philippines. Importantly, however, Hagedorn and Apostol respectively invest in the primacy of a feminist Philippine historical consciousness without the same epistemic and contextual limitations of Joaquin's perspective. Both invest greatly in the American imagination's reception of Southeast Asia more broadly, as both address the Philippines as a site for American cultural production about—and *the reproduction of*—the Vietnam War. In *Dream Jungle,* Americans attempt to film a Vietnam War story in the Philippines: a production whose sensationalism mirrors the manufactured discovery of a lost Filipino tribe years prior. Connecting the two events is the perspective of protagonist Rizalina Cayabyab, a Filipina woman whose transference from domestic labor to sex work allows her to perceive the artifice of surrounding events. Likewise, in the latter half of the novel, Filipina American journalist Paz Marlowe visits the Philippines to interrogate the film production's ideological contradictions. Meanwhile, *Insurrecto* stages a dialectic between Filipina writer Magsalin and American filmmaker Chiara as they follow the footsteps of the latter's father, Ludo Brasi, who once filmed a Vietnam War story in the Philippines. During their journey, the two women disagree on how Philippine history—and particularly, the 1901 Balangiga massacre—must be remembered and retold. Both Hagedorn and Apostol exhume the legacy of Francis Ford Coppola's 1979 war film, *Apocalypse Now,* whose critical depiction of the Vietnam War is subtended by the production's own complicity in the exploitation of Southeast Asia (including and especially the Philippines). As Vietnam is physically absent from *Apocalypse Now,* so too does it appear phantasmagorically in the two novels, belonging to an essentialized 'Southeast

Asia' popularized by the Western culture industry. In unearthing a history obscured by imperial ideology, both novels do not flinch from the rough edges of postcolonial grief and memory. This contributes to my postulation of an *anti-imperial gaze* found in my analysis of *America Is Not the Heart.* The *anti-imperial gaze* is not so much a liberation from the imperial gaze I have described, but a more deliberate and self-aware engagement with its impositions and limitations.

Hero epitomizes this mentality in Castillo's novel, and her closest equivalent in Hagedorn's *Dream Jungle* is Rizalina Cayabyab: a darker-skinned Filipina who grew up in poverty in the 1970s Philippines and was subjected to physical and sexual abuse by her father. *Dream Jungle* introduces Rizalina's life as follows:

> Born into a life of shit, but nevertheless voted best number one elementary student in all of Sultan Ramayyah. Champion speller, speed reader, and secret keeper. Okeydokey fluent in English, as you can tell by now. Loves the word 'nevertheless.' Named after our beloved national hero, poet and novelist Dr. José Rizal. Voted 'class comedian' in grade four. Voted 'girl most likely to succeed' in grade five. Voted 'most likely of anyone' to graduate from school, until that piece-of-shit boat was blown around by winds and toppled into the raging sea. (Hagedorn 1)

An important distinction between Rizalina and Hero, then, is the former's class precarity and the latter's class privilege. Despite being "born into a life of shit," of deep poverty and physical and sexual abuse (20), Rizalina applied herself in school as a means of escape from her turbulent home life. The central tragedy in this passage, bemoaned by Rizalina's first-person narration, is her aptitude for academics that is upended by a boating accident: one that culminates in the deaths of her abusive father and her brothers. When her father dies, Rizalina is recruited as a household servant for Zamora López de Legazpi, an eccentric Filipino mestizo with obscene

wealth whose ostensible discovery of the "Taobo," a lost Filipino tribe, propels the events of the novel. Zamora's narrative, in fact, is based on the real-life hoax of the Tasaday tribe engineered by the entrepreneur Manuel Elizalde and the Marcos regime in 1971. Regarding Rizalina's namesake, Hsiu-chuan Lee observes that "It is not coincidental for Hagedorn to name Rizalina after the Philippine 'national hero, poet and novelist' José Rizal. Although Rizalina (i.e., 'little Rizal') falls short of becoming a national hero, poet, or novelist, through a series of self-dislocation she drives the novel's plot forward and compels the formation of a Philippine community that is continually evolving, self-differentiating, and dispersing" (59). Lee describes how Hagedorn positions Rizalina as a catalyst for change throughout the novel, as Rizalina indeed comes to affect most of the cast in various ways, no matter how disparate in context they seem. Her gaze, like Hero's, proves to demystify the cosmopolitan and imperial pretensions that propel the events around her.

The novel contains two major groups of characters—the first consists of high-society socialites, lower-class servants, and Taobo tribe members that orbit around Zamora. The second group includes the production crew of a Vietnam War film called *Napalm Sunset*. Notably, Rizalina is one of the few who overlaps between the two groups, having first worked as a servant of Zamora before joining the set of *Napalm Sunset.* Another who navigates both groups of characters is Paz Marlowe, a journalist investigating both the phenomenon of Zamora's discovery of the Taobo and the development of *Napalm Sunset.* Lee posits, however, that Rizalina's relevance to the two groups of characters is not Hagedorn's way of imbuing her with historical or teleological significance. This is not to say that Rizalina is by any means *insignificant,* but rather that she represents a deliberating turning away from the pretext of historical or teleological significance as a worthwhile pursuit. Hence Lee's claim:

> In the second part of *Dream Jungle,* Rizalina re-emerges, in 1977, as an enticing stripper named Jinx in a bar called Love Connection. There she encounters the American movie star Vincent Moody, reclaims her identity as Rizalina, and joins the local labour force for the production of *Napalm Sunset* before relocating to Santa Monica, California. The novel does not provide any clear ending point or a teleological summing-up of Rizalina's life story. Instead, it leaves her story within a whirlwind of ongoing incidents and characters, bringing the reader to comprehend the significance of Rizalina in terms not of who she is or what she has become, but of the more or less chaotic social flows, interpersonal connections, and power shifts that sprawl around her. (59)

Through Rizalina, then, Hagedorn introduces a feminist historical conscious that refuses to move in lockstep with the teleological attachments of Juan Cristostomo Ibarra and Allos. The "more or less chaotic social flows" and "power shifts" that transpire in Rizalina's wake presents another manifestation of the *anti-imperial gaze,* as the absence of a "clear ending point or a teleological summing-up of Rizalina's life story" demystifies her need for a personal telos. While education is viewed as a form of narrative progression because it offers upward mobility, this notion is reduced to an escapist fiction when Rizalina's family suffers the boating accident. Despite how such thinking has been fetishized among the aspirational elements of Rizal and Bulosan's texts and then subverted in Joaquin's, it is utterly done away with in Hagedorn's account of Rizalina's childhood. When Rizalina bitterly remarks that "that piece-of-shit boat was blown around by winds and toppled into the raging sea," it refers not only to the boat, but also to Rizalina herself. From the Marcos regime (Marcos appears as an unnamed 'president' who conspires with Zamora) to the tumultuous production of *Apocalypse Now* (*Napalm Sunset's* real-world analogue) to the Taobo's evocation of the real-life Tasaday hoax, Hagedorn's novel gives

Rizalina a "raging sea" of her own: the cacophony of Philippine modernity. Namely, in *Dream Jungle,* the Philippines becomes a palimpsest for political fictions whose nature exposes, on the one hand, the protracted legacy of Spanish empire, with the hoax of a primordial Philippine tribe to 'discover' and civilize, and on the other, the constant encroachment of American empire, with the reproduction of the Vietnam War on Philippine soil.

It is important, then, to look back on the specific conditions of this cacophony that Rizalina was born into. "My *nanay's nanay,* my Lola Isay, worked as a servant all her life," Rizalina says. "She keeled over dead while washing her master's dirty underwear. And my great-grandmother was a *yaya* who cared for rich people's children. And so on and so on. Washerwomen, *yayas,* cooks, housecleaners, gardeners who toiled in Manila or Cebu, big cities far enough away that they hardly ever saw their own families or children. Just like my mother, they sent home every peso and centavo they earned for the education and betterment of … Ha. You see how far that got any of us" (15). A far cry from the cosmopolitan comforts enjoyed by the Marasigans of Joaquin and De Veras of Castillo, Rizalina facetiously describes a lineage of feminized labor and servitude, which resulted in her grandmother—her Lola Isay—dropping dead. What connects the lineage, for Rizalina, is a continuity of indignities ostensibly assuaged by the hopes of "education and betterment" for subsequent descendants. "You see how far that got any of us," Rizalina says, because the teleological commitment does not hold for lower-class Filipinas in the 20th century. Unlike Allos, who escapes impoverishment—albeit narrowly—by finding a marginally better life in the U.S., Rizalina initially portrays herself as condemned to this existence. Her eventual service to Zamora is only a change of scenery rather than a true reprieve from her class precarity. When Rizalina meets Zamora, Hagedorn has her reflect further on the fate her lineage is 'condemned' to:

> [Mama] worked as a head cook for Mister Boss Señor Zamora Lopéz de Legazpi's family in Manila. Mister Señor was rich—the son of an even richer man. He treated my *nanay* better than most rich people treated their servants. He never beat her, paid her on time, and he gave her his children's cast-off clothes and expensive toys with missing parts to pass on to her own children. This my mother mistook for genuine kindness. She was, like her mother—my Lola Isay—and Maxima, Apolinaria, and Concepción—all the women who came before my mother and grandmother—doomed to gratitude. (17)

In a grammar of disillusionment, this passage illustrates Rizalina's ability to view her heritage through *an anti-imperial gaze.* Attuned to the class antagonisms that reigned, even in the absence of any direct hostility from Zamora, Rizalina articulates an *economy of gratitude* that puts her mother and her ancestors in a kind of *moral debt.* In keeping with the iconoclasm to teleology that Lee attributes to Rizalina, however, Rizalina not only runs away from Zamora's estate, but ultimately refuses to return the affections—and thus refuses a commitment to—the American actor Vincent Moody. The prospect of falling in love is another common teleological feature, like education, that Rizalina becomes demystified towards. Her own immigration to California does not represent a radical assumption of freedom on Rizalina's part, but a sufficient departure from the colonial and patriarchal impositions so violently ubiquitous in her Philippine cacophony. Importantly, Rizalina's experience as a Filipina American immigrant goes unexplored, so the matter of her struggle for freedom remains unsettled. The novel exercises an active disinterest, like Rizalina's anti-imperial gaze, in narrative and ideological closure.

To better characterize the anti-imperial gaze Rizalina possesses, I turn to Harrod Suarez's study on *Dream Jungle,* which posits the conditions of possibility made available to Rizalina through her "intersubjective posthumanist affiliation with a tiger" (75). More broadly, animal

imagery and symbolism set up contrasts between colonizer and colonized, the would-be imperial subject that is Zamora versus those subjected to empire like Rizalina. Before Rizalina flees Zamora's estate, the latter "lectures at length about *Witches' Sabbath (The Great He-Goat),* a Goya painting. He explains, 'In that painting a giant goat sits with these peasants around a campfire. The great beast seems to be telling them a story. The peasants listen to him in terror and awe. Except for this one young girl. She's the only one who doesn't seem impressed or scared of him' (48)." To Suarez, "The moment foreshadows [Riza]Lina's ability to transform her lessons in ways that serve her than fulfill their original telos. [Zamora Lopéz de] Legazpi appears to identify with the goat in the painting that captivates almost everyone with its power and force. However, he is less concerned with exploring that identification than he is with intimating that [Rizalina] may be the lone source of resistance to him" (79). I will later explore in greater detail the extent to which Zamora captivates Philippine and global audiences with the hoax of the Taobo tribe, but it currently suffices to say he is well-accustomed to commanding the attention of people from all walks of life. His identification with the demonic goat, both self-satirizing and self-aggrandizing, serves to convey the threat Rizalina (or Lina, in Suarez's usage) poses to his sphere of influence. The fact it is only an "intimation," as Suarez puts it, is key—Rizalina does not actually possess the means, either politically or by force, to undo Zamora's projects. The fact remains, however, that he *knows* she is neither mystified nor enchanted by his machinations, and that alone is cause for anxiety. Rizalina's mere presence and comportment seems sufficient to expose the instability of the colonist's position—a role that Zamora is desperate to occupy. Furthermore, it is important to call attention to another figure that Suarez emphasizes among Rizalina's encounters later in the novel. "One of the most sensational events in the films (both *Apocalypse Now* and *Napalm Sunset*) is the arrival of a tiger whose name in the novel is 'Shiva,

after the Hindu god of destruction.' It appears in one scene as two GIs disappear into the jungle. The tiger draws the attention of everyone" (81). This is not dissimilar to the magnetic quality of the goat Zamora identifies with, as its "sensational" qualities magnify the exotic appeal of the Philippines as a site for discovery (e.g. of the Taobo people) and creation (e.g. of *Napalm Sunset*). However, "what is a thrill and a threat for others is an opportunity for Lina. Shiva encourages Lina to go to the United States … which [her Filipina colleague] Aling Belén had already suggested but which proved to be insufficient motivation for Lina, hence the need for Shiva's confirmation" (81). Something about the image of the tiger, held captive by the filmmaking production of *Napalm Sunset,* appeals to Rizalina, who is similarly held captive by the prevailing colonial and patriarchal norms she has struggled against all for her life—from the impositions of her abusive father to the manias of the capricious Zamora. Shiva's disarming presence, the threat the tiger poses to its observers despite its importance to the *artifice* of the film, mirrors the disarming presence of *Rizalina* to Zamora.

While she is not a physical threat, Rizalina's disenchantment poses an *ideological* threat to Zamora's machinations and the ultimate aims of *Napalm Sunset,* which is why her commitments to both enterprises waver. Rizalina's disenchantment helps her discover that "neither migration nor subjectivity is as linear or teleological as has been claimed within the immigration narratives of globalization and diasporic nationalism" (90). This is why, "in the last glimpse readers have of Lina, she meets Sonny Limahan, formerly one of Legazpi's bodyguards, at an art gallery in Los Angeles" (90). They had arranged to meet there beforehand, on the pretext of catching up (Hagedorn 310). When they meet, Lina "stands before a painting, reminiscent of the work of Manuel Ocampo, 'of a gaunt Jesus carrying a massive wooden cross. Near Christ were a crowing rooster and a pile of skulls'" (Suarez 90). Although Suarez does not

analyze the imagery in itself here, the "crowing rooster" is the creature that signals Peter's denials of Jesus before his crucifixion. Jesus, "gaunt" and burdened by "a massive wooden cross," perhaps represents the Philippines—a nation overburdened with the ideological and teleological investments of American imperialism, investments whose casualties are manifest in "a pile of skulls." The rooster, as far as it joins Goya's goat and *Napalm Sunset's* tiger in clarifying Rizalina's conditions of possibility, is a signal of her *own* denial of "Jesus" as much as it is Peter's. Specifically, she rejects "one last attempt to [be recruited] into nationalist motherhood" (90). Limahan tells Rizalina that her mother is unwell, insinuating a need for her to return to the Philippines, where she also left a child in the care of another older woman (Hagedorn 311). He also asks her, "Do you have enough money? Everything okay?" as of if to gauge whether she is surviving well enough in America (312). To Limahan's credit, he "wished that there was some way he could have assured her that she was safe from his meddling. He would not chase after her; he was too tired" (312). Though his presence suggests a call for Rizalina to return to the world of the late Zamora's servants, Limahan is not actually committed to seeing it through, leaving the decision fully—yet ambivalently—to Rizalina. He seems content to stand as a reminder of that world, to remind Rizalina of the world she has left behind.

At the same time, Limahan struggles to understand the person Rizalina has become—she is not the young woman he once knew at Zamora's estate. During their time at the gallery, and "after [Rizalina] tells [Limahan] the artist [of the Ocampo-like painting] is Filipino, he scoffs at it, but the scene helps us understand Lina's illegible and transgressive subjectivity. Limahan represents the last vestiges of the intensely repressive nationalism of the Marcos regime in the 1970s, and his attempt to reclaim Lina just after Legazpi has died seems to mark one last attempt" towards said recruitment (90). She is implicitly made to feel indebted to providing

reproductive labor for the good of the Philippine nation-state, in keeping with the domestic housework she once provided for Zamora's estate. Limahan, here, seems devoted to the nation's teleological realignment after the fall of the Marcoses, even if he makes no active effort to pursue Rizalina. In her rejection of this prospect, Rizalina is thus as inscrutable to Limahan as the rooster in the painting he scoffs at:

> He asks if she has what she needs; she tells him she is working. "She was mysterious about the job; *she refused to tell him* exactly where she lived. 'I stay near the beach,' was all she said. 'I am happy now. I want to stay happy,' (312, emphasis added)." That is all she permits Sonny to know before she leaves him without looking back … Lina's strategies are unverifiable; she refuses to fill in the empirical details of her happiness, to justify them to Limahan (or, for that matter, readers). (90)

To Suarez's contribution, I offer the complimentary lens of the anti-imperial gaze that allows Rizalina to exceed the teleological boundaries of the Philippine nation-state. Through her own appreciation of the rooster's symbolism of *denial,* Rizalina reads in the painting what Limahan—as a former crony of Marcos and of Zamora—cannot, despite his conscious sympathy towards her when they part. Rizalina exhibits a *denial* of the hegemonic authority Marcos and Zamora represent, despite the ostensible importance of their demands. What Rizalina denies, then, is acknowledging the burden of the cross, of the call to sacrifice herself for the redemption of the Philippine nation. Her *anti-imperial gaze* does not undermine or undo the harm caused by their political projects, but it affords her personal agency after throwing those projects—and their artifice—into relief.

Rizalina's inscrutability to Limahan in the moment Suarez analyzes is likewise her disavowal of Zamora, of Marcos, and of the *Dream Jungle* they both have fabricated. I thus turn

to Hagedorn's portrayal of Zamora and his feverish obeisance to imperial ideology in the Philippines, as his role proves so critical in illustrating who does the 'dreaming' in *Dream Jungle*. More importantly, an analysis of Zamora helps describe exactly what Rizalina disavows by the novel's end. As Shu-ching Chen puts it, "A mestizo from one of the richest and privileged families of the country, Zamora can be seen as one of the social elites that constitute the bourgeois national subjects. Yet, like Fanon's bourgeois national subjects whose projects of 'claiming the nation' are inevitably compromised by their connection with the West, Zamora attempts to search for the 'origin' of the nation through an anthropological expedition that paradoxically replicates the territorial imagination and the spatial logic of imperialism" (7). As a Fanonian colonized intellectual, Zamora's cosmopolitanism guides his journey into the 'Heart of Darkness' within the Philippines, wherein he seemingly discovers a lost indigenous tribe. His preceding encounter with the jungle they reside in, however, awakens more than just the conditions of possibility for the people's discovery. Perhaps more important than the 'discovery' itself is the libidinally charged *self-discovery* Zamora experiences upon visiting the jungle. When "Zamora collapsed on the muddy jungle floor," he "flung out his arms in joyful surrender. *All that green.* Humid, pulsating, unforgiving, alive with predators and scavengers. Zamora heard the triumphant screech of a monkey-eating eagle, imagined it pouncing on a startled tarsier. A yellow python uncoiling—swallowing an unsuspecting cloud rat, then a furious, screaming wild pig" (9). Here, Zamora finds cathartic joy in observing the totality of nature, not only in the abundance of Philippine flora but in the "unforgiving" circle of life to which the Philippine fauna is subjected. The dynamics of "predators" towards their prey and "scavengers" towards their carrion become inspiring spectacles to which Zamora submits his "joyous surrender." Like Conrad's Kurtz, Zamora fetishizes the Philippine jungle and experiences a transcendence he

seemingly cannot find in urban living. Even as "Leeches dropped off jade vines in a sinister shower of welcome, slithering into Zamora's ear canals and the corners of his eyes," Zamora only "blinked in wonder as they fattened and gorged on his blood … Voracious green of dampness and rot. Green that lulled but also excited, green of exhaustion and thorns. Enchanted green of Lorca the poet. Ominous green of Mindanao rain forest. Zamora would gladly die here alone" (9). It is critical to emphasize, here, Zamora's arrival to the jungle as a cosmopolitan Filipino mestizo. In his embrace of the jungle's 'lawlessness' and fury, he performs the embrace of his putative Philippine 'origins.' "Surrender" to the jungle, here, is likewise an embrace of a certain Philippine *teleology.* "Drawing on the Tasaday discovery," writes Lee, "Hagedorn demonstrates little interest in contriving a myth of Filipino nativism or tracing the national origin of the Philippines," for it is precisely this origin that Zamora fetishizes in his encounter with the jungle (57). "Far more significant than looking for a pure Philippine identity is to allow—to play out, alongside the Tasaday debate—the rhizomic branching of Filipino/as, most of them disprivileged and marginalized like the Tasaday" (57). The discovery of the Taobo, as the culmination of Zamora's journey into the jungle, is indeed "a fictional version of the alleged 'discovery' of the Tasaday by Manuel Elizalde, Jr. in 1971—the so-called anthropological finding of the century, which turned out to be a hoax" (Chen 6). The very nature of the Tasaday phenomenon as a hoax is a literal instance of the *artifice* of empire, in which the "discoveries" of the real-world Tasaday and the fictional Taobo reveal how certain imperial fictions are actively and violently constructed. As an architect of such constructions, Zamora supplicates himself to the violence he observes in the jungle, the predations and scavenging he soon partakes in by exploiting those he calls the Taobo people.

Whereas Zamora's exposure to the jungle is among his first appearances in *Dream Jungle,* it is important to consider his posthumous perspective later in the novel, where he speaks of events after his death from an abstract and unknown place. "Ta-o-bo," Zamora muses. "An abrupt name that didn't quite do them justice. Perhaps I misheard what Duan," his indigenous guide in the jungle, "originally said to me. 'They call themselves *Tao, po.*' Human beings" (123). By "*Tao, po,*" Duan literally tells him "People, sir," in Tagalog. "Nevertheless," Zamora "wrote it down. *Taobo.* Leaked the information, however dubious, to anthropologists and the press. *Did you say 'Stone Age,' sir? Paleolithic?* Yes, yes! That's exactly what I said! …. The publicity, the absurd headlines in Manila that screamed: EX-PLAYBOY SAVES OUR CAVEMEN!" (123). In this moment of a linguistic misunderstanding born from negligence, so too is the myth of the Taobo conceived. The fiction Zamora spins into existence, here, only conforms to existing tropes and aspirations surrounding the discovery of a stable Philippine origin—some inaugural moment of Philippine teleology that gives narrative significance and cohesion to the identities of the Philippine nation and its people. That, at least, is the dream Zamora caters to by disingenuously circulating the news as fact. Given Hagedorn's awareness of the real-world stakes surrounding the Tasaday people, Lee claims that, "More essentially, the Tasaday as a 'pure' Filipino indigenous group 'untouched by all foreign influences' was utilized as 'a rallying point for cultural supernationalists,'" with "Marcos and Imelda" being "known for their fascination with anthropology and tribal Filipinos: they were 'obsessed with the search for a common Filipino identity, a link with an ur-Filipino'" (Lee 52). Zamora shares a similar fervor for this pursuit of the "ur-Filipino," finding it in his fabrication of the Taobo tribe. And though "the president" goes unnamed throughout *Dream Jungle,* he is clearly meant to be Ferdinand Marcos, whose own collusion with Elizalde mirrors that of "the president" with Zamora. Where the latter popularize

the Taobo myth in *Dream Jungle,* the former popularized the Tasaday myth in real life. This reflects Lee's observation that, "Since its beginning, the Tasaday event has been more than an anthropological inquiry into a tribal minority. At stake was the complicity between the Marcos administration, the United States government, and the global media. First, the discovery of the primitive tribe, and the ensuing Philippine governmental policy to protect the tribespeople, effectively bolstered the 'human face' of the Marcos administration and distracted international attentions from the martial law declared in 1972" (52). The ostensible beneficence involved in the discovery and protection of a lost people not only serves as a performance of cosmopolitan morality, but also as a means of sublimating the iniquities of the Philippine state. Though Zamora and his real-world analogue Elizalde share such motivations with Marcos, Hagedorn characterizes him with a critical distinction of attitude. "[Zamora] confessed," Rizalina narrates, "to being afraid of the president and the first lady, who were his friends" (Hagedorn 37). Zamora's ties to the unnamed Marcoses, while critical to the success of the Taobo hoax, are fraught, for:

> "They want what I have," [Zamora] said.
>
> "And what is that, sir?" I dared to ask him.
>
> "My history," the Spaniard answered, grinning. (37)

Hagedorn writes Zamora to invest heavily in his mestizo identity, which privileges him with a European cosmopolitanism that stands at odds with his Filipino blood. It creates, for Zamora, a complex that compels his fetishization of the 'ur-Filipino' Taobo and his transcendent embrace of the jungle.

This is what makes Zamora "not as much an all-powerful neo-colonialist as a belated imperialist, whose father 'once owned and controlled the profitable silver and copper mines' in

the Philippines. Being Mestizo," Zamora is in fact "racially inferior to his 'Teutonic goddess' wife," Ilse. "The chapter 'Her Last Night' delivers a vivid image of Zamora's crumbling empire after his wife leaves him" over his choleric personality (Lee 60). In his posthumous reflections, Zamora even muses about his mestizo blood and the dissolution of his marriage, ruined perhaps by the consequences of his simultaneous commitment to the Western tradition. Specifically, I refer to its standards of beauty as embodied by his wife, Ilse, as well as himself—if Zamora's gloating of his "history" is any indication (Hagedorn 37). The dueling commitments in fact frame the contradictory emotional and historical experience of mestizos more and less privileged than Zamora, who has an imperialist "history" to cherish and a point of origin—the "ur-Filipino"—to cathectically pursue. "Did I love money," asks the dead Zamora, "did I love anyone or anything? *I loved the jungle.* I lay dreaming on the jungle floor—dreaming of my pious mother and sisters, determined martyrs from the day they were born. I had lived up to their expectations as only son and brother, fulfilled some of my destiny, married and impregnated a woman more golden and unattainable than my mother or sisters could ever be" (122). Here, Zamora alludes to the 'incompleteness' of his mestizo heritage, made clear by the juxtaposition between his raced "mothers and sisters" and Ilse, described as "golden and unattainable" for her lionized whiteness. "Ilse," Zamora goes on to say, "Ilse of heaven" (122). Ruminating on Ilse's supposed perfection—no doubt the same white whiteness Fanon has described in *Black Skin, White Masks*—Zamora then asks, "And what of my mixed blood, what of it? Basque, Negrense, a dash of North American Irish from my mother, Mary. Curdled, diseased, robust, and volatile, my blood runs hot and cold like a faucet. Does it explain anything?" (122). For Zamora, his mestizo identity is not an answer, but a perpetual question. In it lies an ambiguity compounded by his "Negrense" ancestry, as the Negrenses are a Filipino ethnic group. Zamora's identity

exhibits an ambiguity whose closure is never found in the hedonistic excesses he enjoys thanks to his wealth, nor in the historical pretensions he indulgences in because of his heritage. Rather, when "stripped of his imperialist ostentation and extravagance, Zamora is an individual" in the jungle (Lee 60). "The power relation between the imperial and the local is reversed: it is not the Philippines that are under the shadows of the empire but Zamora, who is captured by the shadows of Mount Taobo—his body dislocated, incorporated by the Philippine landscape. Intriguingly, Zamora does not feel threatened; what he feels instead is 'oddly liberating'" (Lee 60). Zamora's fetishization of the jungle as a primordial landscape, not just for the ur-Filipino but for *Zamora himself,* seems to be his one point of salvation from the ethnic and cultural hybridity that causes him so much anguish. In the novel's prolonged emphasis on the perspectives of Rizalina and Zamora, however, the story makes clear how much of a privilege it is for Zamora to feel this anguish—at least in the way *he* feels it—in the first place. Where Rizalina confronts her unstable ethnic, economic, and gendered identity through an *anti-imperial gaze* that demystifies the colonial and imperial fictions that surround her, Zamora's reflections on his identity only further propel him into the very same fictions he fabricates. Even in knowing of and participating in the artifice he feeds the Marcos regime, the Philippine populace, and the world stage, Zamora proves to be a conspiratorial agent of *imperialist realism,* knowingly contriving the naturalization of imperial ideology in the Philippines through his manufacturing of the Taobo hoax.

The circumstances of such artifice illustrate plenty, as well, about the sway of *imperialist realism* over Philippine modernity. Nothing cements this more than Zamora's relationship with Bodabil, a young boy from the Taobo tribe who Zamora brings to his estate to 'civilize.' As a curiosity to Zamora's peers and servants alike, Bodabil comes to personify the "ur-Filipino"

ostensibly untouched by Western civilization. Before Rizalina properly meets Bodabil, Sputnik—another servant—introduces him by the nickname she gives him, "Bomba." "Bomba's the jungle boy, *gaga!*" Sputnik tells Rizalina. "That's not his name, but that's what I call him. He's a silly savage. Can't read or write. Can't talk anything you or I can understand. He's the boss's pet" (Hagedorn 32). Through Bodabil, Zamora performs the "contradictory effort to claim the nation while repeating the imperialist project of domestication" (Chen 10). In his quest to find some essential, transcendent quality of Filipino-ness in the form of a lost indigenous tribe, Zamora relies on an existing narrative, aesthetic, and political lexicon of imperial ideology with which to apprehend—and make sense of—Bodabil. Even though the Taobo tribe's novelty proves to be a hoax, Zamora's affective investment in 'domesticating' Bodabil reveals another investment in the lie itself. There is something about the sheer fantasy of a lost tribe that Zamora desperately endeavors to make a reality, as if the ensuing propaganda campaign is as dedicated to fooling the world as it is to fooling *himself.* The fictive kinship tie Zamora establishes with Bodabil, for that matter, only vivifies the fantasy of domestication their interactions represent. When Sputnik maintains that "No one but the boss is supposed to visit him," Rizalina asks, "What about Señora Ilse?" Tellingly, Sputnik responds, "Bomba thinks she's a bad spirit. Because of that white skin, that hair, and those eyes. He screams every time he sees her, so she stays away." And even though Rizalina points out "the master's skin is white," Sputnik assures her that "The boy loves [Zamora]. Calls him something like 'Father.' Stupid, *di ba?*" (32). "Stupid, right?" Sputnik says in Taglish, or Tagalog and English mixed together in conversation. As a domestic helper and servant, Sputnik is disillusioned to the ostensibly novel relationships transpiring in Zamora's household. The contradiction Sputnik attends to, between Bodabil's fear of Ilse for her white skin and forgiveness of Zamora for his—given his title of "Father"—only

highlights how impressionable Bodabil is to Zamora's machinations. Importantly, Chen observes that "Along with the description of Zamora's discovery of the Stone Age tribe, Hagedorn juxtaposes excerpts from Antoino Pigafetta's account of Magellan's expedition to the Philippines in 1521. The framing implies that Zamora's 'new discovery' is nothing new, but a repetition of an established pattern of behavior, a mimicking of the first moment of colonial encounter" (10). For as much as Zamora labors to imbue a historical exceptionalism to his surrogacy of Bodabil, Hagedorn's presentation of the narrative actively contradicts this, linking it instead to an existing *continuity of violence* that connects colonial interactions. The appeal that Zamora taps into, and indeed the appeal that he and "the president" prey upon to enchant the global masses, is that of "the jungle … inscribed by the uncanniness of two temporalities: the fascination with the ahistorical timeless imaginary of the nation, and the imperialist symbolic order that gives rise to the homogenous linear national pedagogy" (10). The "imperialist symbolic order," here, is Zamora's inheritance from Magellan, what Chen calls a "repetition" indeed, for what Zamora truly claims—through the Taobo—is not some lost essential quality of the Filipino. Rather, he claims a constructed essential quality of the *imperialist.*

What undoubtedly contributes to the "imperialist symbolic order" Chen describes is Zamora's naming of Bodabil as such. Historically, Arwin Tan says, "*Bodabil* (the Filipinised version of American vaudeville) reigned as the most prolific public entertainment form in the Philippine Islands during the 1920s," falling out of fashion during World War II (83). "The word," according to Doreen Fernandez's essay "Philippine Theater in English," "comes from *vaudeville*":

> … the first visible theatrical influence from America. Although a French form, it had been adapted in the United States as a show made up of assorted entertainments ….

> While it reigned … *bodabil* spawned musical trends and musicians, performance genres and performers … They also proved how limber was the Filipino entertainer, how easy it was for him or her to catch American rhythms, and how painless and effective a tool popular culture was in the Americanization of the Filipino. The songs, dances, and entertainment forms of most Filipinos until the 1960s were undeniably patterned on the American dream. American popular culture embodied, for decades, their images of beauty and excellence, of life and of self" (318-319).

Previously in my dissertation, I addressed how a "phantasmagoric Europe" came to enchant the Philippine masses during Spanish colonization, particularly in the form of *comedias:* vernacular plays that would eventually become indigenized as *komedyas* among Filipinos. Philippine cultural production witnessed another such shift from *vaudeville* to *bodabil,* specifically as a product of American colonization that cemented American-ness as a new ego-ideal. Enchantment, in a new way, brought about a "phantasmagoric America," a platonic ideal that Filipinos labored to capture in their reception of vaudeville. Where Philippine cosmopolitanism took on a distinctly European flavor among the likes of Spanish-era *ilustrados*, Tan's study reveals how "the burgeoning middle class of the late nineteenth century expanded to include Western (mostly American)-educated Filipinos who were eventually employed in the colonial bureaucracies of the American Insular Government. This new social group appropriated 'a cosmopolitan orientation and a modern consumer lifestyle' that reflected their taste for what was American" (84). Qualities such as "wearing flannel scarves, silk shirts, and wide bell-bottoms, speaking in slang, dancing the Charleston, watching vaudeville, and attending the carnival, among other things," "reflected modernity and progress. As Filipino historian Resil Mojares argues, 'contact with America nourished an appetite for urbanity and cosmopolitanism'" (84). It

is in this way that a phantasmagoric America cast its shadow over the Philippine zeitgeist, shaping the symbolic field of Philippine cultural production. "Americanization" along these lines entailed both the literal performance of vaudeville repertoires and the figurative performance of American cultural citizenship that came with it. While Bobadil himself is not being Americanized per se, he is being *made legible* to Western eyes through the spectacle he embodies as Zambora's chosen Taobo tribesman. What is so *vaudevillian* about Bodabil is the act he is made to perform, regardless of how well he grasps his own situation, as a surrogative native ostensibly being civilized by Zamora's paternalism. The physical extraction of Bodabil's removal from his home, as well as the cultural extraction involved in the ostensible insights he represents about a Philippine state of nature, are indeed the products of Zamora's artifice. Said artifice, however, does similar ideological work to the artifice of *bodabil.* Where exposure to vaudeville "nourished an appetite for urbanity and cosmopolitanism," Zamora's exposure *of Bodabil* provides this very same nourishment to a contemporary Philippine audience. Rather than nourish an appetite that has yet to be sated, however, Bodabil reassures Zamora and like-minded Filipinos of an "urbanity and cosmopolitanism" they already possess.

The libidinal benefits of Zamora's artifice explain why Hagedorn devotes attention not only to Zamora's conscious motivations for discovering the Taobo, but also his reveling in the *outcome* of the experience. Fritz Magbantay, the nephew of "the president"—and later, a dangerous antagonist to Rizalina—observes early interactions between his uncle and Zamora in the chapter, "In the Palace: Fritz, 1972." In so doing, Fritz observes:

> I could almost hear my uncle [the president]'s brilliant, calculating mind clicking away—turning nothing into something, good into bad, loss into profit … Surely there would be some way to turn this "discovery" of Zamora's into a public-relations coup …. [The

president's] beady eyes glittered with excitement. Ideas flowed out of him. "We'll establish a special foundation, if necessary. You could be chairman. We'll call it the President's Indigenous Minority People's Foundation. PIMPF, for short." (59)

Fritz enters the narrative as a fictional relative of Marcos, and his observations only echo the real-life collusion of the Marcos family and Manuel Elizalde to fabricate the Tasaday legend. Zamora, regardless of his authenticity, presents an opportunity for the president to mount a "public-relations coup" that can deflect attention from the iniquities of the Philippine state. Regardless of any disdain the president may hold towards Zamora, a disdain no doubt tempered by his mental calculations for "turning nothing into something … loss into profit," Zamora's ego is elevated by the presidential approval of his enterprise. The novel presents the effects of this in Rizalina's thoughts on Zamora's celebrity. "There were those, like [her] mother, who believed that Mister Zamora was more important than the president. 'Look at how the foreigners keep showing up, barging in on the boss, and demanding to be taken to see those forest people.' …. Mister Zamora obliged everyone at first, especially if the visitors were from Europe or America. He basked in the glow of their attention and flattery" (38). In an interview conducted by Michael Collins, Hagedorn herself confirmed that Zamora is a deliberate parallel to Manuel Elizalde. In fact, Elizalde "was a very close friend of my first cousin, an older cousin who's now long dead. They grew up together. So I used to see Elizalde around. He had a reputation already, back then, for being a wild-and-crazy guy, a playboy, but he was also a man who went to Harvard. He had a brain; he had everything" (1226). However, "He also had a special affliction … the affliction of wanting to save the world: wanting to be a benevolent savior. He had a little bit of a Messiah complex, wanting to be useful in the world, wanting to show that he was eager to work with the poor. And his family said, 'Enough already. What are you doing, running around giving

medicines to the tribal people?'" (1226). This is all to say that the essential quality of the imperialist, this idea of someone who can master unknown lands and tame its denizens once lost in time—precisely because they have been left behind by the march of civilizational progress—is a quality that Zamora, like Elizalde, covets for himself. Hagedorn writes Zamora to be emotionally complex and contradictory, to perhaps even possess the good intentions that ostensibly motivated Elizalde to want "to save the world," but it is a position of beneficence synonymous with the affordances of colonial paternalism. Between an 'authentic' Zamora and his artificial persona, the line is blurred—Zamora himself nearly as vaudevillian an act as that which he has forced Bodabil to perform. Even if Zamora's motivations can be interpreted in good faith, there is no shying away from the hegemonic position he occupies as a "belated imperialist" (Lee 60) invested in "nourish[ing]" his own "appetite for urbanity and cosmopolitanism" (Tan 84).

There is also no shying away from the fabrications necessary to sustain Zamora's status as a "belated imperialist". Certain discrepancies already emerge in one of Zamora's early encounters with Bodabil, wherein he has brought a crew of professionals with him to observe the child. Amado Cabrera, an anthropologist character, reacts to the following interaction:

> Bodabil followed Zamora around, shyly touching and hugging him, calling Zamora *Amo Data,* or Spirit Father …. *Amo* = Taobo for 'father.' *Ama* = Tagalog for 'father.' …. "Anyone with half a brain can recognize the similarities of those people's language with Tagalog," Cabrera said. But how was that possible? …. Cabrera was a skeptic. Nevertheless, he was thrilled to be invited to this hush-hush expedition, the third one since Duan and Zamora's initial trip. It would be good for Cabrera's fledgling career as an anthropologist, no matter what" (Hagedorn, *Dream Jungle* 52).

Even if he does not directly condemn the hoax as such in these early moments, Cabrera silences his own skepticism towards the mere possibility. The linguistic coincidence between "those people's language with Tagalog," while worthy of further scrutiny, does not outweigh the excitement surrounding "this hush-hush expedition." Career advancement, on one level, drives Cabrera to complicity. *Imperialist realism,* on another level, compels him to buy into the lie, to suspend his disbelief even if the lie contradicts his original objections. Years later, once Zamora has died, Cabrera remains resolute when describing to Paz Marlowe the 'mythical' status Zamora took on. "Don't misunderstand me—Zamora was also loved by the people. I don't mean the people of Manila or the urban *masa.* I mean the *indígenos*—the tribes up in the mountains no one in Manila gives a damn about. They worshipped him. I saw with my own eyes" (172). There is an insistence here, despite Cabrera's original skepticism, that what Zamora did—regardless of its veracity—was ultimately for the good of the Taobo. Regardless of the execution and the outcome of Zamora's enterprise, his colonial beneficence compensates for any self-serving machinations involving—for example— the president. Others, of course, call into question the narrative Cabrera so emphatically buys into. Pepito Ponce de Leon, an artist interviewed by Paz, responds bitterly about these events in the following exchange:

> "You think any of it's true, Pepito?"
>
> Pepito shrugged. "Who knows. Vampire *aswangs* are probably nothing more than giant fruit bats."
>
> Paz giggled. "No. I mean the stuff about the Stone Age tribe. Zamora's discovery."
>
> Pepito was indignant. "*Puwede ba!* My family's been coming here for years. How come we never knew that such a tribe existed?" (225)

Paz, a journalist not as imbricated in these events as Rizalina, approaches the phenomenon of Zamora and the Taobo from the outside looking in. Her position as a journalist also places her, epistemically, in a less fraught position, as she is not beholden to the same class power imbalances as Rizalina. That said, her challenge lies in piecing together the testimonies of those who experienced Zamora's phenomenon during his life, such as Cabrera and Pepito. Importantly, Pepito's unsensational relationship with the jungle the Taobo inhabit, such that his "family's been coming here for years," challenges the exceptionalism both Zamora and Cabrera attributed to the place. There is an unlikelihood, in Pepito's mind, for he and his family to have "never [known] that such a tribe existed" despite all the time and proximity involved. If Cabrera represents someone clinging to the dream Zamora has concocted, Pepito insists instead upon waking up.

This is why the novel begins with the following description of Zamora and the world he not only walks into but creates from thin air and presents to the Philippine masses: "He had walked into a dream. Someone else's dream—perhaps Duan's—but now stolen and claimed by Zamora. The landscape of that dream—vast, ominous, shimmering blues and greens—was simply part of the loot" (5). "Loot" indeed has a colonial connotation to it, as if even the mythical qualities of the jungle are things Zamora has extracted and taken from the indigenous Philippines. To claim the dream, a dream the narration speculates as belonging to "Duan," the local guide, grounds the nature of this theft in very real consequences: the expropriation of the time, labor, and resources of local populations, among them Duan himself, to be left behind as steppingstones in Zamora's rise to infamy. This is indeed an infamy that precedes him, considering the moment Paz notices Zamora alone in the back of a church, earlier in the novel. "I immediately recognized Zamora López de Legazpi," she narrates, presumably notifying Pepito

of Zamora's presence, for he says, "They say his great-great-great-great-great-great-grandfather is buried right here in this church." "'Conquistador of conquistadors,' [Paz] murmured" (151). Even as Zamora's mestizo identity is a source of anguish for him, much as it is for the De Vera family in Castillo's *America Is In the Heart,* it is also a source of prestige that seems to intimidate those who merely know *of* him. Given the lengths Zamora takes to collude with the president and popularize the myth of the Taobo, his prestige is something he is aware of and exploits to the fullest. In truth, such a thing does not contradict, but rather *complements,* his self-concept as a colonial benefactor. "I think the bad thing," Hagedorn reflects in an interview with Michael Collins, "the sneaky thing Elizalde did was to imply that [the Tasaday] were Stone Age people. That was an easy thing for the anthropologists to focus on as being easily proven untrue. . . . . And then to cover it up, Elizalde kept adding to his mythology" ("Interview," 1228). Elizalde's example is why Hagedorn writes Zamora with such a manic capriciousness, being as desperate to believe his own fabrications as he is to convince others of them. If Rizalina's matter-of-fact observations and general disillusionment equips her with an anti-imperial gaze, Zamora is the curator and artificer of a Philippine imperial gaze *par excellence.* Namely, this is a gaze that capitulates to the paradigms of Spanish and American colonial conquests, empowering Zamora with the ontological and epistemic affordances of the "belated imperialist" (Lee 60) that can rescue his more 'indigenous' countrymen from being forgotten by history. And yet, Hagedorn maintains that "these guys, the Tasaday, don't even know what 'stone-age' is … and would never have claimed to be living in it. Elizalde let that myth spin out of control. He was enjoying the celebrity of it … But the tribespeople were just doing what they do. They kept looking at me and saying, 'They say we are not real.' ("Interview," 1228). Critically, the tribespeople's statement that "They say we are not real" is utterly illustrative of the stakes for

imperialist realism, in so far as it concerns a version of reality that imperialists constantly labor to construct and naturalize. The Tasaday that are not real, in this instance, are not the flesh-and-blood Tasaday themselves, but the *fictive* and *phantasmagoric* Tasaday concocted by Elizalde and the Marcoses. The Tasaday whose reality is being disputed here is the version of the Tasaday that has been contrived into existence by the Philippine state's own performance of *imperialist realism.* The ontological profile of the Tasaday, as pre-human and lost in time, is the embattled ground over which Elizalde and his anthropologist skeptics quarrel. It is the same embattled ground over which Zamora desperately makes the lie seem *true.* As far as *imperialist realism* concerns the fabrication of *a* reality—what is "real" to the colonist and the imperialist—Zamora is in equal parts aware of and mystified by his own artifice.

All this, of course, does not begin and end with Zamora's interventions. "Dreaming the Philippines as America's jungle," claims Vernadette Gonzalez, "encompasses multiple acts of domination, erasure, and imagination"—more than just Zamora's—"reworking the nightmare of imperial brutality and theft into a fantasy of benevolence and assimilation. This alchemical property of dreamwork extends to the primary subject of colonial possession in Hagedorn's novel—the Filipino native as savage and primitive" (145). Zamora dedicates his resources to said dreamwork, vivifying an ensemble of colonial ideas surrounding the Philippines that are then preyed upon in a separate—yet concomitant—context. *Dream Jungle,* after all, is not solely about Zamora's 'discovery' of the Taobo people, but also about the fraught production of a Vietnam War film, *Napalm Sunset,* that takes after the real-world example of *Apocalypse Now.* "For Hagedorn," Gonzalez explains, "the violent trauma of military slaughter in the Philippines (even as it resurfaces in the re-enactment of Philippines-as-Vietnam) is transformed through the work of dreaming: the bloodstained oil of occupation becomes a racialized territory of

discovery" (145). To this, I add that "Philippines-as-Vietnam," symptomatic of a constructed fungibility among Southeast Asian landscapes and cultures, is an important function of the dreamwork Gonzalez describes. The work of the imperialist to consolidate power includes the consolidation of those subjected to that power through *abstraction.* For the purposes of *Napalm Sunset,* the *concept* of Vietnam suffices even when circumstances necessitate filming depictions of the Vietnam War in the Philippines. "Discovery," here, does not connote an empirical relationship with the lived environments and locales that shape the film's production, but rather, an *imperial* one. Vincent Moody, the American movie star who falls in love with Rizalina, is introduced to the narrative discussing *Napalm Sunset* with a colleague, Sandy, before the production starts. Moody tells her "I wanna go early … Get the lay of the land." "You're nuts," Sandy replies, to which Moody asks, "Am I in the wrong place? Aren't you the purveyor of obscure, sexy, and somewhat sinister destinations?" (Hagedorn 129). Although Moody is among the more benign Westerners in this story, despite his doomed attachment to Rizalina, he nonetheless rehearses the discursive ubiquity of the Philippines' exoticization—its position as the site of both dreams and nightmares (Gonzalez 145). It is a matter of asking, "the dreams and nightmares of *whom?*" And in Hagedorn's case, Zamora and Moody have this in common: privileged access to the *dreamwork* of the Philippines, as filtered through the lens of *imperialist realism.* It is with this access that Moody declares the Philippines "obscure, sexy, and somewhat sinister"—a place as tempting as it is dangerous. His own position as a *participant* in imperialist cultural production, the filming of *Napalm Sunset,* primes him to view the Philippines as an exotic and thrilling *set-piece* more than a real place. What Moody conjures in his exchange with Sandy, then, is very much the colonial *artifice* of the Philippines more than the Philippines proper. He draws, however unwittingly—and thus, all too casually—from the ensemble of

colonial tropes and ideas that Zamora has, even if Zamora goes to greater lengths to enthrall the masses with the Taobo hoax.

The farcical nature of the Taobo hoax is echoed by the pretenses that guide the production of *Napalm Sunset.* Though his neuroses are not explored to the same degree as Zamora's, the eccentric director Tony Pierce is shown to be a confusing and intimidating presence on set, even among other westerners. "The first day of shooting," for example, "Tony Pierce asked everyone to make a circle, hold hands, and improvise some kind of hipster prayer. The Filipino crew members stood on the periphery, unsure of what to do. The ritual felt silly and insincere—an embarrassment to Moody. He stood between Franco Broussard, the director of photography, and Caleb Brook, the production designer. Both men looked just as embarrassed as Moody did" (174). In this tableau, Pierce exposes a certain pettiness that manifests in the artifice of imperial cultural production, as much of the grandeur of the film project seems—for lack of a better word—'phony.' There is a corniness in the ritual Pierce initiates that his fellow westerners are "embarrassed" by. Echoed by the confusion of the "Filipino crew members," the ridiculousness of Pierce's tableau is also Zamora's project in microcosm. The Taobo hoax, dedicated to enthralling Western and Filipino audiences, only confuses and alienates others upon closer inspection, hence Zamora's tense alliance with the president, Cabrera's conscription into the plot for personal gain, and Pepito's skepticism towards the entire suggestion of a Stone Age tribe in a land familiar to his family for generations. The linguistic confusion that generated the name "Taobo," as Zamora admits to having misheard the Tagalog "Tao, po" (or "people, sir"), parallels the confusion Pierce instills in his crew. In the "hipster prayer" in question, Pierce declares, "May the gods bless this movie, which is gonna be a great fucking movie, you better believe it guys. . . . It took blood, sweat, guts, tears, and my own goddamn money to move this

fucking mountain and get all the way here … but we finally made it and *we're doing a helluva job* ... yeah!" (174). Humorously enough, "Pierce raised a fist in a Black Panther style salute. The Americans and Europeans dressed in fashionable jungle gear cheered and saluted back" (174). By patting himself on the back, essentially, with his performance of a "Black Panther style salute," there is a pretext of egalitarianism Pierce associates with *Napalm Sunset,* as if the film sets out to expose some kind of historical truth—rather than obscure it further. It is telling that the applause only comes from "Americans and Europeans dressed in fashionable jungle gear," them being the most equipped to construct the artifice of 'Vietnam.' The necessity of a ritual in the first place suggests the necessity of being *invited*—or in the Filipinos and embarrassed Westerners' cases, *conscripted*—into the *dreamwork* that animates *Napalm Sunset.* Pierce, without being a direct conspirator to Zamora and the president's Taobo hoax, joins the same imperial tapestry they helped weave. *Napalm Sunset* and the Taobo hoax, as two instantiations of the same continuity violence, illustrate how "rendering the Philippines as a dream jungle is not just an exercise of imaginative power, but also a territorialization of America in the Pacific—the Philippines as possession, contact zone, war theater, film set, and playground—a territorialization in which Hagedorn herself must participate" (Gonzalez 169). To close on *Dream Jungle,* I turn to Gonzalez's insights here for her way of describing the combined machinations of Zamora, the president, and Pierce as more than "just an exercise of imaginative power, but also a territorialization of America in the Pacific." The mystification of the Taobo as a prehistoric tribe recovered from their historical stasis does not help the Philippines ascend on the world stage so much as reinforce American imperial prerogatives of domestication and recruitment into a grander telos. Zamora may act, like Elizalde, with the desire to "save the world," but the question then becomes: *which* world? The world of the Taobo, whoever they

truly are, is not the world that the cosmopolitan Americans and Filipinos have *dreamt* for them. This is why "the novel functions as a 'guidebook' to the Philippines as dream jungle, even as it simultaneously attempts to unpack the web of colonial fictions and representations that sustain the unequal terrains of U.S.-Philippine relations" (169). *Dream Jungle* is indeed a "guidebook," but mostly for the illusory terrain of American imperial ideology that violently and farcically manifests in contexts both quotidian and spectacular. Gonzalez calls it a "web of colonial fictions," as the novel's events manage to connect matters as seemingly disparate as Rizalina and her relationship with reproductive labor to the tiger's necessity to *Napalm Sunset.* The novel's desire to "unpack" this "web" animates the *anti-imperial gaze* manifest throughout, focalized most prominently from Rizalina's perspective.

Gina Apostol's 2018 novel, *Insurrecto,* also deals with the colonial fabrications that ultimately undergird another fictionalized iteration of "Philippines-as-Vietnam" (Gonzalez 145). Engaging with the legacy of *Apocalypse Now* rather differently than *Dream Jungle,* Apostol's novel dedicates more of its critical attention to the erasure of certain histories such as that of the 1901 Balangiga massacre. For context, I turn to Luis Francia's study on Philippine history, where he exposits on the event:

> Balangiga was a coastal town in the southern part of [Samar, an island in the Visayas region], where seventy-four U.S. troops were garrisoned. The troops routinely abused the townspeople, often forcing them into open-air holding pens even in rainy weather. This prompted clandestine plans for retaliation. On the morning of September 28, 1901, as the men were sitting down to breakfast, Filipino guerrillas, some of them disguised as women, burst into the mess hall and, armed mainly with bolos, attacked. Both commanding officers were boloed to death, forty-six more were killed, and twenty-two

> seriously wounded. Only four escaped. Retaliation was swift and brutal. General [Jacob] Smith declared his intention to turn the province into a "howling wilderness," telling his men, "I want no prisoners. I wish you to kill and burn; the more you kill and burn, the more you will please me." (154)

It is precisely this moment in the Philippine-American War that *Insurrecto* addresses, albeit less in devotion to the event itself than in the fraught attempts to remember, recover, and recapture its magnitude. Like *Dream Jungle, Insurrecto* guides the reader through a variety of perspectives—of characters from both during and after the massacre—though solely from the third person (*Dream Jungle* juggles both first and third person narrations). What distinguishes it from *Dream Jungle,* furthermore, are its narrative ruptures, where differing accounts compete for recognition of their putative authenticity. In greatest tension are the voices of the novel's two protagonists, the Filipina American writer Magsalin and the American filmmaker Chiara, who each disagree on how to retell this chapter of the Philippine past. They first meet in Quezon City, initially discussing the work of Chiara's father, Ludo Brasi, who directed a Vietnam War film not unlike *Apocalypse Now* and *Napalm Sunset.* "Chiara affirms she is the daughter of the director of *The Unintended,*" the narrative explains. To that, "Magsalin confesses she saw the film several times in her teens" (Apostol 23). Most illustrative is the resulting insight on Magsalin's past:

> At one point, memorably, she recalls watching it frame by frame in a muggy class along Katipunan Avenue, for a course called Locations/Dislocations, about the phantasmal voids in Vietnam War movies shot in equally blighted areas that are not Vietnam. The disturbing web of contorted allusions, hidden historiographical anxiety, political ironies, and astounding art direction resident in a single frame, for instance, of a fissured bridge in the Philippines, in real life dynamited by the Japanese in 1943 and still unrepaired in

> 1976, and rebuilt specifically and reexploded spectacularly in the film's faux-napalm scene against a mystic pristine river actually already polluted by local dynamite fishers—the movie, for whatever reason, kept putting Magsalin to sleep. (23)

In this, Magsalin seems to understand and be critical of the artifice behind Vietnam War movies that rely on "equally blighted areas that are not Vietnam" to convey a fictive Vietnam within the prism of imperial ideology: a location that can only be signified by the "phantasmal voids" of other casualties to U.S. militarism, such as the Philippines. The unflattering description of the "muggy class" that once led Magsalin to these insights, alongside the movie's tendency to "[put] Magsalin to sleep" throughout her youth, suggests a similar lack of sensationalism—and thus, demystification—towards imperial paradigms observable in *Dream Jungle's* Rizalina and *America Is Not The Heart's* Hero. Magsalin, in her salient awareness of the "disturbing web of contorted allusions, hidden historiographical anxiety," and "political ironies," possesses an *anti-imperial gaze* that trivializes of any pretext of grandeur associated with Vietnam War movies.

Chiara, on the other hand, is possessed by the desire to recapture a different historical tragedy through a similar pretext of grandeur: that of the 1901 Balangiga massacre. This is why she insists to Magsalin that "I need to get to Samar" (23). The novel then explores how, before meeting up with Magsalin, Chiara seeks inspiration for her own film project by "typ[ing] in the name of her father's most celebrated film, *The Unintended,* and the year production began, 1975 …. She has never done this before—looked up her father online …. Her childhood was in analog …. For a long time, in her teens, she had made an effort to forget …. But Chiara has pleasant memories of the times she spent with her father in the tropics" (31). Whereas Magasalin recalls her experiences with *The Unintended* "memorably" (23) despite the boredom that watching it caused her, Chira expresses "an effort to forget" her childhood, including things related to *The*

Unintended. In this there is already a contrast between the two's relationships with memory, as Magsalin seems more invested in contemplating the grotesqueries of the Philippine past than Chiara. What Chiara manages to remember, however, includes "being crowned Miss Philippines" at age four, "in games with tiny beauty-contest-obsessed girls who in excessive gestures of companionship always made her, the white girl, win, and getting lice in her hair from goats owned by a visiting tribe of mountain people" (31). She recalls how "her mother, usually all nerves, a Ukrainian Jew brought up on stories of pogroms," was cured of her anxieties by "the desperate indignities of living in a perpetually fallen state, among lives she shares and witnesses and attends to with a perplexed gaze"—the Philippines being world that "has lent her peace, a converse calm, that she has not regained since …. Perhaps this explains Chiara's sense at times that a vulnerable world could be an oasis" (31). Where Magsalin views Philippine history as decidedly unspectacular—with the regularity of militaristic imperial violence being so rote as to instill boredom in her engagement with *The Unintended*—Chiara's "sense" "that a vulnerable world could be an oasis" speaks to a privilege she possesses as someone divorced from that history, even if it is a history that Ludo Brasi—her father—was complicit in through his production of *The Unintended.* Ludo's film, however, is "now more or less forgotten, though at one point it was thought *The Unintended* would challenge the genius of Francis Ford Coppola's *Apocalypse Now*" (19). Whereas *Napalm Sunset* is a fictional substitute for *Apocalypse Now* in *Dream Jungle*, *The Unintended* is designed to rival *Apocalypse Now* which exists in the diegesis of *Insurrecto.* The filmic artifice of *The Unintended* mirrors Chiara's conceptual and phenomenological engagement with the Philippines. Just as her father's movie is a colonial mediation—and thus a construct—of a fictive 'Vietnam' over Philippine set pieces, Chiara's mindset towards the Philippines hinges upon a similar fictive logic. Whereas Magsalin is driven

to sleep by the banality of imperialism's legacy on the Philippines, as if such history is so quotidian in the way it saturates Filipinx social life, Chiara views this same "vulnerable world" as an "oasis." The fantasy a Western audience can escape to in the form of Vietnam War cinema, like *The Unintended* and *Apocalypse Now,* is the *life* Chiara escapes to just by being in the Philippines. The mere construction of the fantasy—as in *Napalm Sunset*'s preoccupation with its tiger on set—gives life to this escape, and thus the distinct sensationalism and exoticism often ascribed to the Philippines.

Another connection between *Dream Jungle* and *Insurrecto* lies in the similarity between Rizalina and Magsalin's positions as protagonists. Unlike Rizalina, Magsalin is not shown to have grown up in poverty, but the two—as products of the authors—happen to honor the same legacy. According to Theodore Gonzalves, Apostol's naming of Magsalin is as deliberate as Hagedorn's of Rizalina. "Push back from the immediate frame of Apostol's novel," Gonzalves says, "and we find that the name 'Magsalin' has fascinating valences. Magsalin can refer to the act of copying or translating. So, we find the name amplifying the character's role … Consider that the full name of a main protagonist in José Rizal's 1887 novel, *Noli Me Tangere,* is Juan Crisostomo Ibarra y Magsalin" (315). While I have critiqued at length Ibarra (and thus, Rizal's) own susceptibility to *imperialist realism* at the twilight of Spanish colonialism in the Philippines, Magsalin and Rizalina—as characters—seem to inherit and build upon Ibarra's legacy. His egalitarian will, something resolute even after his disillusionment between *Noli Me Tangere* and *El Filibusterismo* (where he conspires towards terrorism under a new identity, Simoun), carries on in the respective journeys of Magsalin and Rizalina. Despite their differing circumstances, they share a willingness to confront the social realities of the Philippines, exercising a critical eye—and thus, an anti-imperial gaze—towards surrounding events. Rizalina's own gaze

destabilizes the political fictions of the Marcos regime, including the Philippine state's desire to put her in a box as a feminized citizen-subject. Magsalin, on the other hand, contends with the political fictions and social realities of Rodrigo Duterte's presidency from 2016-2022. Because of this, *Insurrecto* invests as heavily in the iniquities of the contemporary as it does the iniquities of the past. In his examination of this aspect of the novel, David Siglos gives the following context on Duterte:

> Part of Duterte's charm which connects him to the masses is his bluntness, vulgarity, and unpretension. He does not often speak English when addressing the people, and when he does, he carries a heavy Bisaya accent. And so, despite coming from an affluent political family, the masses see him as relatable. In other words, Duterte, along with his modes of violence, performs and is *walang arte,* and as such rehearses the connection between violence and play insofar as violence does not precede play but is its synonym. (15)

Walang arte is Tagalog for lacking pretension, gravitas, or over-the-top behavior. Siglos uses this term to describe a social and historical analytic utilized by Filipinos to critically engage with their colonial inheritances from Spain and the U.S. but provides Duterte's example as an illustration for its co-optations by the machinations of the Philippine state. *Walang arte,* as a self-styling, can be weaponized to galvanize the masses into supporting state violence on the draconian levels of Duterte's presidency. In its own way, *walang arte* can serve as a dark mirror of the anti-imperial gaze, in so far as it rejects the pretensions of cosmopolitan aesthetics and teleologies. Whereas the anti-imperial gaze Magsalin possesses demystifies both the U.S. and Philippine states, Duterte's approach to *walang arte* mystifies the violence of his own politicking. In Apostol's own awareness of this, *Insurrecto* leads Magsalin and Chiara to "Region VIII, in which the province of Samar is a part." Region VIII "gets particular attention

for their police department's strict execution of the anti-drug program, hence Magsalin's uncles' worry for the two women's plan of road travel to Samar. The uncles' advice against road travel in the novel implicates, through play, Duterte's murderous drug war" (15-16). Regardless of Magsalin's insights and Chiara's privileges, both remain at risk of becoming casualties to "Duterte's murderous drug war." The recovery of history, here, is thus a perilous enterprise for the two women, regardless of their class status. Even if Magsalin is frustrated with Chiara's own pretensions as the daughter of Ludo Brasi, both equally discover that the attempt to remember the events of the Balangiga massacre is dangerous in its own right.

Insurrecto as a whole is not solely concerned with Magsalin and Chiara's journey into Samar, however. The narrative doubles upon itself as Magsalin and Chiara invent dueling scripts whose respective protagonists operate as their surrogates for remembering and reimagining the events of the Balangiga Massacre—creative exercises the two cannot resist as a writer and director, respectively. Magsalin fashions "her own version of the heroine Casiana Nacionales," the titular and historical *Insurrecto* who participated in the surprise attack on U.S. military personnel that became the Balangiga Massacre. "Caz," as Magsalin renames her, "will be a schoolteacher in Giporlos, Samar, or maybe Oras, Bicol, or better still, a doubling site—Sorsogon, Sorsogon, or Bulacan, Bulacan. She is a slight, brown woman the color of her rocking chair—a butaka of soft fruitwood that cracks in dry weather" (114). Critically, Magsalin's imagination prioritizes the fact Caz is a "slight, brown woman," implicitly decentering the primacy of the male Filipino mestizo (e.g. the 'ilustrados' that 'led the charge' against colonial Spain). The teleological priorities not only of the Philippine state but also Philippine radical historiography, which has itself exhibited a masculinity tendency among the likes of Rizal and Bulosan, lose purchase in the midst of Magsalin's conception of Caz. Magsalin's ostensible

indecisiveness towards Caz's location, which quickly becomes deliberate in her selection of a "doubling site," proves not to be indecision after all. The "doubling" of Caz's place, let alone the inability to pin her down to one location, gives her a certain representational elasticity among Filipinas across various regions. The resistance to empirical certainty avails a certain way that Caz can stand for many Filipinas who 'fall away' from the dominant historical frames of Philippine resistance narratives. This is why, just as Magsalin and Chiara stand as foils to each other, a foil for Caz arrives in the form of Cassandra Chase, the protagonist of Chiara's script. "The photographer at the heart of the script is a woman, of course," for which—as she imagines the casting—Magsalin assures herself "there are enough white people to go around. The infamous photographer of the Philippine-American war abandons a restrictive, Henry James-type *Washington Square* existence to become bold witness of the turn of her century. She is a beauty with a touching look that her otherwise embarrassingly pampered life fails to obscure. Her name, whether classical allusion, cinematic alias, or personal cryptogram, is still forthcoming—Calliope, or Camille, or Cassandra" (83). Cassandra, a character nascent at this moment in Chiara's script, is as much a result of doubling as Caz (shortening her name to "Cass" makes a parallel to *Caz* even more obvious). But just as Magsalin's imagination prioritizes the "slight, brown" appearance of Caz, Chiara's script emphasizes the "beauty with a touching look" belonging to Cassandra. Her appearance satisfies a paradigm of Western beauty as such, while her name follows the Western tradition on another level, the "classical allusion," via potential names like "Calliope" and her finalized name, "Cassandra." While Calliope is a Muse, or a Greek deity of the arts, and one specifically tailored towards poetry, Cassandra is more fittingly a mortal priestess whose prophecies fall on deaf ears. The Greek Cassandra's essential tragedy mirrors that of Cassandra Chase, whose coverage of the grotesqueries of the Philippine-

American War will itself go unheeded by U.S. empire. It is through the framings of Magsalin versus Chiara and Caz versus Cassandra that *Insurrecto* presents competing historiographies that attempt to cover the same palimpsestic sequence of events. Cassandra, as a creation of Chiara's, represents an attempt to make the Philippine-American war legible to Western audiences who can ostensibly only relate to a white protagonist. Caz, on the other hand, intervenes against this perceived necessity and that of the normative placement of the Filipino mestizo as historical protagonist in such crises.

Cassandra and Caz themselves do not collide as much as Magsalin and Chiara do. Their coexistence in the same narrative helps *Insurrecto* convey its ultimate critique of American imperial ideology and its dedication to silencing the past. After the Balangiga massacre transpires, "Cassandra Chase slept so peacefully in the hut on the edge of Giporlos that when survivors of the uprising come upon her in her rented hut near the home of the vanished rosary bead rebel, that insurrecto—Casiana Nacionales—of course the Americans arrest the photographer …. Her deep sleep alone is complicit, they say" (243). While as a Westerner, Cassandra undoubtedly benefits from privileges Caz does not enjoy, she is vulnerable to American military violence here as Chiara is to the state violence of Duterte's Philippines. In such moments, even imperial citizen-subjects can themselves be made to be casualties of empire if they defy its paradigms. Cassandra only doubles down on this in her "prepared testament," a "rant" that "the senators in the congressional hearing" could "only skim"

> We told them we would free them from Spain. We lied. We took the islands for ourselves. We commit the crimes we say we abhor. We outdid the savagery for which we claim a just war. We reconcentrated the villages. We penned them up like cattle. We jailed their men for no reason they can fathom. We gave their people the water cure. We

> burned their crops. We burned their villages. We burned their pigs. We burned their children. O what a tangled web we weave—this damned plait of abaca rope we have braided ourselves—this war, this benevolent assimilation, this Manila hempen hell. When first we practice to deceive—we deceive ourselves first—can't you see? Have you not read Mark Twain? (243-244)

For context, Cassandra likely alludes to Mark Twain's 1900 poem, "The Battle Hymn of the Republic, Updated," which excoriates America's conquest of the Philippines where poems like Rudyard Kipling's 1899 "The White Man's Burden" celebrate it. Twain's poem starts as follows: "Mine eyes have seen the orgy of the launching of the Sword; / He is searching out the hoardings where the stranger's wealth is stored; / He hath loosed his fateful lightnings, and with woe and death has scored; His lust is marching on" (1-4). As a satire of the "Battle Hymn of the Republic," an 1861 song by Julia Ward Howe, Twain retrofits the patriotic melody into a sobering analysis of U.S. imperial foreign policy. The celebration of war as the just cause of emancipation, in Howe's song, becomes the celebration of war as a means of exploitation and dispossession for national interests. Importantly, Howe's rendition contains such lyrics as "In the beauty of the lilies Christ was born across the sea / With a glory in His bosom that transfigures you and me; / As he died to make men holy, let us die to make men free, / While God is marching on" (Howe). As an abolitionist during the American Civil War, Howe's lyrics represent a call for the freedom of enslaved Black Americans, making religious appeals to this end. The mission described here is thus to liberate instead of conquer, as if to "die to make men free" is what is quintessentially American in all this. By 'updating' it, Twain argues something else: that the quintessential American mission—the 'White Man's Burden,' so to speak—is to "[search] out the hoardings where the stranger's wealth is stored." It is this same distinction

between American mythmaking and American empire that Cassandra articulates in her defense of Casiana, having been apprehended on the latter's behalf. The dueling poetic testimonies of Twain and Howe join the dueling perspectives of Magsalin and Chiara, Cassandra and Caz/Casiana, to illustrate the contradictory palimpsest that the Philippines has become as a site of American imperial conquest. *Insurrecto* is thus uninterested in seeking out an 'essential' or 'primordial' Philippines in all this, a la Zamora. Instead, Apostol's novel throws into relief the historical and cultural narratives that compete not only for dominance, but also for *remembrance.*

While Apostol's novel does not strive to recapture a primordial Philippine essence, it is nonetheless interested in exploring what Siglos calls a "Filipino search for identity" (13). It is not so much that the novel is preoccupied with said search, but that it is preoccupied *with its characters' preoccupations* with it. "Exemplified by Ibarra and Rizal, and Caz and Magsalin," Siglos explains, "it seems that the Filipino search for identity hinges upon the history of their name's displacement. Thus, Apostol's performance in the novel of an almost endless form of doubling and citationality (between Caz and Magsalin, Magsalin and Chiara, their opposing scripts, their scripts' opposing protagonists, between American and the Philippines[…])" (13). This doubling is also demonstrated by Caz and Cassandra, Twain and Howe, each pairing contributing to the accumulation of "opposing scripts." The Philippines is not a stable referent, but one under a constant tug-of-war between the competing prerogatives of various historical beholders. While the Magsalin-Chiara and Caz-Cassandra duos achieve levels of solidarity despite their differences, their differences are still crucial to understanding *Insurrecto*'s narrative priorities. Namely, Apostol "understands the 'persistently uneven, and always contingent, power relations' within imperialism and in the act of translation," with *Insurrecto* thus demonstrating "the ways in which, when seen through the Filipino lens, narrative meaning inevitably breaks"

(13). Translation, as represented by Magsalin's namesake of multitudinous meanings and "valences" (Gonzalves 315), is more of *Insurrecto*'s ultimate goal than seeking some essential or historical 'truth' about Filipinxs. Rather, the text seems to ask, how are Filipinxs subjects of and *subjected to* translation, whether for legibility to themselves or legibility to a given empire? "As Chiara writes in her script," states Nerissa Balce, "Americans 'manufactured how to see the world.' So rather than accepting the imperialist 'propaganda' one sees in a stereocard, the work of Filipinx studies is to push against the sanitized, easily digestible stories of US-Philippine relations, or happy celebratory narratives of Filipinx immigrant communities in the United States. Filipinx studies scholars, recalling the meaning of Magsalin's name, are tasked with translating the past to the present" (52). Critically, Apostol herself writes the afterword for the book in which Balce's article, "Empire as the Rule of War and Fascism," is compiled: *Filipinx American Studies: Reckoning, Reclamation, Transformation* (2022). As both a literary and theoretical intervention that sets a standard for "Filipinx studies scholars," *Insurrecto* reminds readers to be critical of visual, linguistic, and historical translations manifest in cultural production. The "imperialist 'propaganda" "in a stereocard" that Balce speaks of is itself an act of translation, a manner of making the Philippines more legible for Western consumption, but Balce is also saying that the modern Filipinx—scholar or otherwise—can take greater command of translation *as an analytic tool.* Hence *Insurrecto*'s importance as a text that "translat[es] the past to the present," as much a commentary on the American Occupation as it is on the Duterte-era Philippines. How a literary or academic text can make Philippine topics more 'legible' demands such questions as "legible in what way?" and "legible for whom?"—questions that, in imperial cultural production, held answers so self-evident as to not be asked. It is in this complacency, in the belief of the primacy of the cosmopolitan imperial subject, that there is a

perceived need for figures like Cassandra Chase and an ostensible lack of necessity for figures like Casiana Nacionales.

Siglos provides an analysis of such tensions surrounding matters of legibility and translation. "Through the work of a Filipino literary critic," Siglos explains, "Chiara then learns of the possible international link between the 1968 Vietnam massacre and the Balangiga, Samar massacre of 1901 in her father's film. This becomes an inspiration for her script about the Balangiga massacre, which would be narrated from the point of view of a white American woman [Cassandra] who 'is a stand-in for the generic consumer being enticed to know the story'—to which Magsalin asks, 'does she need to be so—*white*?'" (11). Magsalin's attentiveness to the legacy of Casiana, and thus her conception of Caz, stems from her dissatisfaction with Cassandra Chase being the sole protagonist of Chiara's script. Again, Cassandra's importance insinuates a desire to make the Philippine-American war legible "for the generic consumer," as if it is only through this means that the story gains credibility and validity. While Chiara obviously does not do this maliciously, in fact seemingly hopeful that doing so will broaden this history's reach, it ultimately speaks to the aforementioned problem of legibility and the hierarchies this dilemma assigns. Whose history matters more, who deserves to *tell* that history, and *in what way* must one tell it? Yet while *Insurrecto* is not eager to name a quintessential Philippine condition beneath all these translations, Siglos points out that "Magsalin is also uneasy about the use of Elvis's song as 'the soundtrack for the Philippine-American War,' parallel to the white woman's voice, making it seem as though there is something quintessentially and authentically (white) American about Elvis" (12). While *Insurrecto* is not eager to name a quintessential Philippine condition beneath all these translations, 'Elvis essentialism' as such helps Magsalin conclude that Chiara's "script lacks

imagination. It does not consider the possibility of Elvis's songs being in fact *made* in the Philippines—or at least equally possessed by different people from different places—how Elvis might have taken on a completely different and unrecognizable life in the Philippines. Magsalin after all grew up thinking that songs like 'Are You Lonesome Tonight' by Elvis Presley 'were absolutely Filipino…an annoying Kundiman if she ever heard one'" (12). As a Filipino American who, throughout his childhood, was often asked by relatives to sing "Are You Lonesome Tonight" in many a karaoke night, I can personally attest to the phenomenon Magsalin describes. Beyond that, Magsalin's problem with Chiara's usage of Elvis comes down to Chiara's lack of appreciation for the way Elvis *has been translated into* a Filipino novelty *for* Filipinos. Using Elvis's music to ease an assumed American audience into understanding the Philippine-American War implies a link between Elvis and Americans, but also a separation of Elvis *from Filipinos.* In this way, *Insurrecto* produces yet another doubling: the American Elvis and the Filipino Elvis, worlds apart from each other not only physically, but also culturally. Elvis the man may be empirically and symbolically American, but Elvis the figure takes on a different life in the Philippines.

Other idiosyncrasies appear in *Insurrecto* that both exemplify Siglos' *walang arte* framework and reveal certain contradictions of Philippine historical experience: precisely what Filipinx subjects make of their American cultural inheritance, including the Elvis alchemically made 'Filipino.' "Exemplified in moments when Filipinos during conversations would burst into American song lyrics" in the novel, Siglos argues:

> …the Filipino lack of fluency is not a matter of incompetence or inadequacy but a *style of speaking.* It is a style of finishing or continuing a thought that, due to its citational and repetitive nature, rejects any claim of fluency or mastery. Filipino non-coherence is *not*

about not knowing enough but about knowing, or having to consume too much, so that the excess of thoughts, ideas and languages that reveals itself in the Filipino style is a representation of one's navigation through an overflow of information. The particular use of American song lyrics, for example, highlights imposed American cultural hegemony. As an American neo/colony, American consumer and media culture—through the professionalization of advertisement—were forced into the throats of Filipinos, the new consumers of American products, thereby embedding them into the Filipino psyche. (18)

"Filipino non-coherence" becomes a useful way of framing *Insurrecto*'s intervention on various historiographies. The "overflow of information" Siglos describes is also an apt description of the accumulating and competing perspectives that populate the novel, turning the Philippines into a palimpsest of meanings and representations both *dual* and *dueling.* While this helps create "Filipino non-coherence" that serves Filipinx subjects dealing with "imposed American cultural hegemony," the novel also presents the intentional collapsing of meaning as another strategy that serves Filipinx interests. "While in the Philippines with her father filming *The Unintended,*" Siglos explains:

> … the young Chiara learns the Philippine national anthem from a Filipino teacher "before [she] learns [her] own country's pledge of allegiance." She sings the song thus: "*Bayang magiling, perlas ng sinungaling.*" Immediately, Magsalin … chuckle[s] upon hearing the words … "*Magiling*" and "*sinungaling*," Magsalin points out, should in fact have been "*magiliw*" and "*silanganan*." *Magiliw* comes from the word which means love while *silanganan* means that where the sun rises, the east, or the orient. The phrase in English should have been "Oh country I love…Pearl of the Orient." Instead, Chiara was taught

> *magiling* which is to grind and *sinungaling* which means liar or lies. Magsalin translates the mistaken phrase as "*Obscene country, Land of lies.*" (21)

Though presented as a frivolous anecdote, Chiara's childhood confusion reflects the abundance of knowledge or "overflow of information" about America, while also showing an absence of the same for the Philippines. This hierarchy of cultural knowledge, of what is publicly knowable and accessible, left a young Chiara with an ignorance of Tagalog that her teachers exploited. Under American neocolonialism, the same would not be said if their roles were reversed—there would not have been a distinct ignorance of American culture or language among Filipinos that could have been exploited for a joke. "However," Siglos adds, "the miseducation of Chiara might be more than just a joke. The Filipino descendants of the Thomasites—Filipinos who were expected to master American education and English, and eventually replace the American teachers—after all turned out to be disloyal, or incapable of being loyal even if they wanted to" (21). "The Filipino teachers of Chiara … not only [show] their disloyalty to their American education but also to Filipino nationalism; it is unclear, after all, whether '*Obscene country, Land of lies*' refers to the U.S. or the Philippines, or both. Such lack of loyalty might be precisely how the Filipino language sustains itself" (22). The U.S. and the Philippines, in the moment Siglos highlights, become the subjects of yet another doubling in *Insurrecto,* both equally susceptible to the ostensible malapropism of "*Obscene country, Land of lies.*" Despite the ambiguity of the referent, both can be true. Just as Magsalin and Chiara nonetheless relay a distinct historical *truthfulness* in their respective spins on the same events (with Magsalin's being less normative than Chiara's), the gaps between the U.S. and the Philippines are bridged by their shared iniquitousness. Given the genocidal foreign policy of the U.S. over the Philippines, plus the fascistic avarice of the Philippine state for every Marcos and Duterte it produces, *Insurrecto*

easily implicates both through the prank of Chiara's teachers. The joke treats Philippine modernity—including the class disparities addressed across Bulosan, Castillo, and Hagedorn's novels e.g. absentee landlordism—as a protracted symptom of Spanish and American empire conferring power to Philippine elites. In the same vein, Duterte's Philippines has been made the staging ground for Magsalin and Chiara's perilous remembrance of the Balangiga massacre, wherein the mere attempt to recover history is made dangerous.

The palimpsestic Philippines as such happens to explain Siglos' emphasis on the discussion of Elvis' music in *Insurrecto,* in so far as the Filipinx attachment to Elvis exemplifies the aforementioned "Filipino non-coherence." Namely, the way Filipino non-coherence "does not necessarily reject the desire for the original and authentic, but it understands the (Filipino) distance from/impossibility of the perceived original thus making imitation of a worthy substitute. It describes Filipino modernity as a particular kind of colonial carnivalesque that at every turn defies any linear, rationalist, and developmentalist formation—but sometimes also, just for the fun of it, *arte-arte lang*" (25). "Arte," which is Tagalog for being overly dramatic, is often emphasized conversationally as "arte-arte." The "lang" that follows adds further meaning, suggesting the defiance Siglos describes is "only" arte-arte, or "only" an overdramatized performance—just as one would say, "Oh, you're just being dramatic" in regular English conversation. There is a self-aware and sometimes self-deprecating facetiousness in describing one's actions as *arte-arte lang,* and Siglos uses this to characterize the rhetorical contours of *Insurrecto*'s narrative priorities. Its many doublings that produce competing testimonies, agendas, and historiographies over a palimpsestic Philippines very much fits the bill of a "colonial carnivalesque," defying the classical and imperial need for a "linear, rationalist, and developmentalist"—that is, *coherent*—narrative structure. Apostol is not devoted to imbuing

Philippine modernity with a complete telos that can reconcile the contradictions of the postcolonial Philippines, but rather to exposing the historical wounds that generated those contradictions, no matter how messy. *Insurrecto* is not so much an analysis of the Philippine condition as such, but instead an analysis of how Filipinos (like Magsalin) and non-Filipinos (like Chiara) *have different ideas for what they want the Philippines to be.* The palimpsestic Philippines over which the novel's many narratives collide is, in fact, an unstable referent. A Phantasmagoric Philippines, if you will, that Magsalin fashions from her mythologizing of Caz (as the heroic Filipina insurrecto), and Chiara from her mythologizing of Cassandra (as the heroic American interventionist). Apostol's novel presents their differing worldviews towards the past and present quite critically, but without being overly critical of either.

Insurrecto in its entirety is thus devoted to Siglos' concept of "Filipino non-coherence." By that, I refer to Siglos's description of the way it "does not hierarchize, favoring English over Filipino, or vice versa, but merely makes room for multiple parts to simultaneously function while never losing sight of American imperial and racial subjugation and its centralizing, developmentalist logic" (23). The same can be said of *Insurrecto* for its constant juxtaposition of dualities, whether between the Philippines and the U.S., Magsalin and Chiara, Caz and Cassandra, the American Occupation and the Duterte presidency. While Cassandra's narrative and historical importance 'falls away' in the minds of Magsalin and Chiara, her cosmopolitan positioning seems essential to move *through* to get to Caz's ultimate significance in comparison. Likewise, despite her own privileges and affectations, Chiara proves an important foil to Magsalin, and to the novel's meditations on the *legibility* of a minoritized Philippine historiography. Whether Chiara is fictional or not is immaterial to this point, in so far as she remains an interlocutory foil through whom Magsalin develops historical and ideological clarity.

As Chiara says, “Maybe it is enough to know it, the past … Maybe change lies outside the story” (Apostol 252). This moment serves as an invitation, for both Magsalin and the reader, to disengage from the political fictions that stand as the ideological residues of empire—whether that be the sustainment of the cosmopolitan imperial citizen-subject or the recovery of an essential ‘ur-Filipino.’ *Dream Jungle,* after all, has also presented the pitfalls of committing cathectically to such fictions, such as in Hagedorn’s characterization of Zamora and his obsession with the Taobo tribe. The disengagement Apostol calls for, then, is an exercise of the *anti-imperial gaze*: the recognition and demystification of such fictions, to the point that—like in Magsalin’s youth—they put you to sleep.

Dream Jungle and *Insurrecto* each present a historical reckoning with the Philippines, with one commenting on the era of Marcos and the other on the era of Duterte. Both novels labor to juxtapose the iniquities of the colonial past with those of the postcolonial present. *Dream Jungle* utilizes a conquistador’s account of Magellan’s ‘discovery’ of the Philippines to frame the sources of inspiration for Zamora’s role as “belated imperialist” (Lee 60). In *Insurrecto,* Magsalin and Chiara endeavor to restore to the historical record the memories of the Balangiga massacre that took place during the Philippine-American War. Notably, each novel refers to periods of ‘colonial contact’ that Spain and the U.S. respectively make with the Philippines—moments that inaugurate the dramatic events of each narrative, as well as the colonial campaigns and imperial impositions that followed. To juxtapose the rhetorical contours of both novels, then, is to continue examining the Philippines as a site of inter-imperial collaboration and contestation, excoriating Western empire and its ravaging of the historical experience of Filipinx colonized subjects. Observable—to a benign extent—in the naïve beneficence of *Insurrecto*’s Chiara, and—to a harmful extent—in the self-aggrandizing paternalism of *Dream Jungle’s* Zamora, are

two examples of colonizer types who succumb to the epistemic and ontological trappings of the imperial gaze. Magsalin and Rizalina, by contrast, stand in opposition to their respective counterparts, in so far as they view the same events unclouded by the temptations of imperial ideology. This does not free them from other cathectic and libidinal attachments, of course, such as the energy Magsalin still invests in the character of Cassandra Clare, or Rizalina's failed romance with the actor Vincent Moody. Again, to possess the *anti-imperial gaze* is not to fully extricate oneself from societal paradigms and relations of power, but rather to help see through their accompanying mystifications. In the novels' differing approaches, *Dream Jungle* and *Insurrecto* have this insight in common: that to obtain an anti-imperial gaze, let alone sustain it, is a difficult and treacherous path in a world whose culture industry, political fictions, and historiographies capitulate to empire.

CODA

Imperial Phantasms

As I established in Chapter 1, the early modern period serves as a backdrop and heuristic for my dissertation's analysis of imperial ideology into the present day. In examining racial hierarchies that developed during this time, I explored Spanish discourses that equated race with one's religion and blood (for which Jews and Moors/Muslims were denigrated), and I connected the antagonisms between the Christian and Islamic worlds to conflicts in the colonial Philippines. The "Phantasmagoric Europe" coined by Vicente Rafael became pivotal to my engagement with this period, especially where it concerns vernacular plays brought to the Philippines by Spain. These works invariably constructed a fanciful, fictionalized medieval Europe. I thus dissected the way Spanish culture and aesthetics delimited the symbolic field that Filipinos internalized as their inheritance. This led me to demonstrate how a Phantasmagoric Europe still haunts and enchants the Philippine imaginary as this quotidian manifestation of the Western tradition. While the goal of my dissertation is to describe how texts inherit the ideological arsenal of the imperialist, even despite consciously rejecting it, my foray into the early modern period tracks the development of this arsenal to then examine its ramifications for the Philippine colonial and postcolonial contexts.

Moving on to Chapter 2, the first context I examined as such is the 19th-century Philippines, specifically the rhetorical context of Philippine author Jose Rizal and his two novels, *Noli Me Tangere* (1887) and *El Filibusterismo* (1891). The wealthy mestizo protagonist, Juan Crisostomo Ibarra, gains awareness of the iniquities of Spanish colonialism, but only through his own cosmopolitan education across Europe. Ibarra thus critiques the Spanish as doing empire 'wrong' compared to its European rivals. Empire circumscribes Ibarra's political awakening,

echoing the Spanish Black Legend of the early modern period. Because of Rizal's characterization of Ibarra, *Noli Me Tangere* remains delimited by the imperial paradigms of the Spanish period of the Philippines, even as Rizal labors to challenge the colonial status quo. Further, I illustrated how the novel's sequel, *El Filibusterismo,* concludes with an attempt to preserve said status quo, as if the Philippine people are innately ill-equipped for a 'proper' revolution. Taking cues from Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961)*,* I presented Rizal's oeuvre as a Philippine example of how empire preserves itself in the minds of colonized intellectuals. Regardless, Rizal's *Noli Me Tangere* helped trigger a paradigm shift in the Philippines by contributing to the ignition of the Philippine Revolution. I diagnosed imperial ideology discursively ubiquitous in Rizal's rhetorical situation—an *imperialist realism* that fetishizes the Western tradition and overdetermines the conditions of possibility for historical redemption he envisions.

In Chapter 3, my analysis of Carlos Bulosan's *America Is In the Heart* threw into relief the ideological commitments and implications of lionizing yet another Philippine masculinist historical subject: the migrant Filipino laborer. Allos' brother, Macario, gives an iconic speech that envisions a multicultural America which, despite describing various minoritized groups as alive in struggle, commits to imagery of the lynched Black American as an essential representation of Blackness in the U.S. This scene reveals the unconscious anti-Blackness of an otherwise egalitarian and anti-racist text, emblematic of *imperialist realism* that naturalizes an anti-Black racial hierarchy, even in the minds of the colonized. I thus underscored the *continuity of violence* that links Filipinos and Black people in such periods as the American Occupation of the Philippines. I further examined Bulosan's rhetorical context by analyzing the practice of human zoos, including the Igorot Exhibit in the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair, bearing in mind

their anti-Black pedigree. *America Is In the Heart* also exhibits a distain for and disinterest in poor women of color yet fetishizes white womanhood in the form of Allos's chaste longing for Marian. Allos has thus internalized a racial *and* gendered American hierarchy. This motivated my subsequent analysis of Elaine Castillo's *America Is Not the Heart,* which departs from the attachments of Bulosan's masculinist *telos.* Queer Filipina protagonist Hero de Vera, as I illustrated, expands upon Bulosan's core themes, exposing Allos's epistemic limitations through the incomplete picture he paints of Filipinx migrant life. This all culminates in my postulation of an *anti-imperial gaze:* the capacity to see through imperial political fictions, such as the mystification of Allos—or any other subject—to the American Dream.

I further developed this idea of the *anti-imperial gaze* in Chapter 4, where I turned to the Philippine national context in the 20th and 21st centuries. While analyzing the writings of Nick Joaquin from 1947-1972, I challenged the popular understanding that Joaquin lionizes the Spanish past to critique the American present, arguing instead that Joaquin only pragmatically exhumes the Spanish past for the conditions of possibility for revolution that the American Occupation foreclosed. In a postcolonial feminist analysis, I explored how Joaquin looks to Filipina womanhood and indigeneity for insurgent perspectives from these same periods. I then examined contemporary Philippine literary production through the specific cases of Jessica Hagedorn's *Dream Jungle* and Gina Apostol's *Insurrecto.* As I explained in this chapter, the first half of *Dream Jungle* concerns a hoax surrounding the 'discovery' of a primordial Philippine tribe; the latter half shows Americans struggling to film a Vietnam War story in the Philippines, not unlike the real-life troubled production of Francis Ford Coppola's *Apocalypse Now.* In *Insurrecto,* Filipina writer Magsalin and American filmmaker Chiara disagree on how the Balangiga massacre must be remembered and retold, all while confronting the social realities of

the Duterte presidency. I described these histories as neglected by imperial ideology, necessitating each novel's intervention as models for a feminist Philippine historical consciousness that embraces the rough edges of postcolonial grief and memory. Because *Dream Jungle* and *Insurrecto* exhume the legacies of Ferdinand Marcos and Rodrigo Duterte respectively, all while dealing with the ideological wreckage of American imperialism, these novels expand upon the collective project of Nick Joaquin's oeuvre: using the colonial past to make sense of a postcolonial present in the Philippines.

Altogether, this dissertation represents both where I have been and where I am going. Future connections I want to develop include a more a sustained study of the early modern Philippines proper and Spanish/European influences on its cultural production. In future studies, I want to say more than I have in the first chapter about *comedias/komedyas* and *bodabil/vaudeville*'s genealogical connection through empire, especially when both forms have enchanted the Philippine masses in their respective peaks of popularity. With this, I can further flesh out Vicente Rafael's coinage of the "Phantasmagoric Europe," after which I can develop my own coinage of the "Phantasmagoric America" in turn. Beyond the Philippine context, there is certainly plenty to be said about how these concepts apply elsewhere throughout the Global South, especially other parts of Southeast Asia that have yet to receive the same critical attention as the Philippines. Cambodia, Laos, and Indonesia come to mind as long overdue for reckonings with imperial ideology and history in their respective colonial situations. I hope to contribute my scholarship and collaborate with mentors, peers, and students on issues of the Global South both within and beyond Southeast Asia. I will dedicate my academic career to facilitating opportunities for scholarly collaboration along these lines.

From the foundation laid by this dissertation, I also foresee further study of the Philippines and Philippine diaspora, especially beyond the literary scope I have chosen. After all, there is an abundance of contemporary Philippine literature worthy of analysis through *imperialist realism,* whether they exhibit the *imperial gaze,* the *anti-imperial gaze,* or both. Miguel Syjuco's *Ilustrado* (2008), Lysley Tenorio's *Monstress* (2012), and Mia Alvar's *In the Country* (2015) each address the fraught and disparate contours of the postcolonial Philippines in unique ways, straying from and dealing with the literary legacies of the canonical Philippine writers I have analyzed in this dissertation. *Ilustrado,* which centers on the death of an enigmatic figure in the Philippine literary scene, hews closely to the inscrutable intrigue of Argentine author Jorge Luis Borges and the vulgar mystique of Chilean author Roberto Bolaño while offering incisive commentary on the modern Philippines. *Monstress* and *In the Country,* both short story anthologies, candidly examine the realities of Philippine diasporic life across a range of genres, themes, and settings. These examples all push the boundaries of my study's scope to the point of warranting further examination in a separate text.

I am equally eager to engage with multimodal mediums, such as the graphic novel, that is experiencing a rising tide of interest within and beyond the Philippines. *Komiks* from Arnold Arre's *The Mythology Class* (1999) to Budjette Tan's *Trese* (2005-present) stand out as narratives worthy of critical engagement in terms of both form and content, especially along the lines of my *imperialist realism* framework. *Trese,* which received an animated series adaptation on Netflix in 2021, is emblematic of the popular attention Philippine cultural production has started to gain internationally. For example, the Bowers Museum in Santa Ana, California, recently hosted an exhibition simply titled *Asian Comics* (March 9 to September 8, 2024). It displayed a massive collection of comics art from across Asia, including Philippine *komiks,*

indicating a greater interest in taking graphic narratives seriously as an art form. The *komiks* on display, such as a 1994 issue of *Maligno,* were often gothic and pulpy, yet vividly stylized. Many of these works highlight Philippine superstition thematically and aesthetically as sources of conflict—not unlike Nick Joaquin's many short stories—to captivate readers' imaginations.

This is all to say that *imperialist realism* as a framework, as well as the Global South, Southeast Asia, and the Philippines as objects of analysis, each contain vast conditions of possibility for further study with the conceptual tools I have developed throughout this dissertation. My modest hope for *imperialist realism* is to inspire new exegeses and theorizations within and beyond the contexts I have discussed. It is rewarding, in its own way, not to view this dissertation as 'complete,' but rather as 'productively incomplete' for the possibilities it raises more than the conclusions it makes. Likewise, the work to be done with *imperialist realism* in general is 'productively incomplete': there is more that can be said about imperial ideology in Southeast Asian cultural production, about anti-Blackness in the historical experiences of non-Black colonized subjects, and about imperial ideology's manifestations in non-literary and multimodal forms. Between my engagement with Rafael's "phantasmagoric Europe," as well as my coinage of *imperialist realism,* the *imperial gaze,* and the *anti-imperial gaze,* I have developed a critical lexicon with which to embark on these projects, paving the way for future scholastic and pedagogical interventions in Postcolonial Studies, Philippine/Filipinx American Studies, Global South studies, Critical Refugee Studies, Critical Black Studies, and Asian American Studies. To echo my introduction, we must continue to understand and challenge imperial ideology as far as it dominates our ways of *seeing the world.* It remains critical to me, in all ways personal, political, and intellectual, to expose the artifice of *imperialist realism* in the world today and the world to come.

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