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The Subject Case: The Filipino Body and the Politics of Making Filipino America

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree
Doctor of Philosophy

in

Literature

by

Josen Masangkay Diaz

Committee in charge:

Professor Lisa Lowe, Co-Chair
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2014

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The Dissertation of Josen Masangkay Diaz is approved, and it is acceptable in quality and form for publication on microfilm and electronically:

Co-Chair

Co-Chair

University of California, San Diego

2014

DEDICATION

For my parents

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culture is the work of time, reverberates throughout my work here and will continue to do so well beyond my time in San Diego. Lisa Lowe took me on as a student when I was a third year undergraduate taking Introduction to Asian American Literature for the first time. She was the first to introduce me to Filipino American literature in the form of Jessica Hagedorn's *Dogeaters* and Ninotchka Rosca's *State of War*. She re-invigorated my love for literature with that class, guided me as a confused McNair student, mentored me as a confused doctoral student, reminded me to be confident and resolute in my arguments and to put periods in between long, unwieldy sentences, all the while serving as my unfailing advocate. She is my strongest example of a brilliant scholar, skilled teacher and facilitator, and committed mentor, and there is nobody like her.

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

The Subject Case: The Filipino Body and the Politics of Making Filipino America

by

Josen Masangkay Diaz

Doctor of Philosophy in Literature

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Professor Lisa Lowe, Co-Chair
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This dissertation traces the formation of Filipino subjectivity – the technology through which the Filipino and its labor could be better utilized by and incorporated within the global capitalist economy – as a mutual project of U.S. imperialism and Philippine authoritarianism in the late 1960s throughout the late 1980s. It explores the reconstitution of the Philippine political and economic structure under the administration of Ferdinand Marcos through and against the structural adjustment policies led by first world nations like the United States after World War II and throughout the cold war period. It argues that the U.S.-Philippine investment in a framework of rights and representation through civic reforms was integral to reinventing Filipino subjectivity

along the contours of a universal humanity that would make it more easily integrated within and accessible to the global market. Disentangling Filipino America as a mode of representational belonging, this dissertation theorizes Filipino America as an epistemological paradigm that historicizes and interrogates the Filipino itself as a discourse and as the nexus of legacies of U.S. colonialism, imperialism, militarization, authoritarian state nationalism, and cold war geopolitical alliances. Through an exploration of cultural texts by Lino Brocka, Nick Joaquin, and Kim Komenich that ruminate upon and contest the solidity of Filipino social formations under modernity, this dissertation also charts alternative historiographies of the Philippines.

Introduction:

Filipino America and the Imperial Grammar of Colonial Subjectivity

Benevolent Assimilation and the Discourse of U.S. Coloniality in the Philippines

“Benevolent assimilation” names the policy of conquest that the United States government instituted in the Philippines at the turn of the 20th century. Issued as a proclamation by president William McKinley in 1898 after the defeat of Spain at the culmination of the Spanish-American War, McKinley explained: “[I]t should be the earnest wish and paramount aim of the military administration to win the confidence respect, and affection of the inhabitants of the Philippines by assuring them in every possible way that full measure of individual rights and liberties which is the heritage of free peoples, and by proving to them that the mission of the United States is one of benevolent assimilation substituting the mild sway of justice and right for arbitrary rule.”¹ McKinley’s admonition of benevolence reflects a language of non-violence that, of course, creates a façade for the material violence of colonial conquest administered by war and military suppression. That is, the claim of benevolent assimilation is not simply underscored by the reality of the battle with Spain that made such a policy of benevolence even possible but also initiated a full-scale war with insurgent Philippine factions throughout the archipelago that resulted in countless deaths and the first protracted U.S. conflict in Asia. Once the U.S. colonial government contained these rebellious factions, the policy of benevolent assimilation was enacted through the

¹ William McKinley, “The Benevolent Assimilation Proclamation” (speech, Washington, D.C., December 21, 1898).

implementation of a colonial system that ruled over the civic life and education of the people of the Philippines. This system intended to usher the country away from the influence of centuries of Spanish colonial subservience under an old empire into the modernized era brought by the advent of U.S. empire, within which the Philippines would learn how to govern itself through the U.S. example. The supposed absence of war and destruction that McKinley names and the development of civic life in the Philippines under a democratic political order constitutes the benevolence of U.S. policy in the Philippines. The ultimate end named by assimilation provides the instruction through which the Philippines would be led into a world order of political modernity that was being actively constructed by the United States and its European counterparts.

The Philippines remained a territory of the United States until 1935 when it was granted commonwealth status under the presidential direction of Manuel Quezon during which it would undergo a period of transition from U.S. territory to independent republic under the guidance of the United States. The Tydings-McDuffie Act passed by the U.S. government in 1934 granted the Philippines its commonwealth status only under the condition that the United States would be allowed to maintain its military bases and forces in the Philippines. McKinley's imposition of benevolent assimilation thus traces the multiple historical trajectories of Philippine development into, first, a U.S. territory and then a commonwealth and independent nation. In other words, benevolent assimilation as U.S. policy illustrates the modes through which this policy was grounded in the language and practice of sovereignty in order to administer a political coming-into-being for the Philippines in the age of U.S. empire. Under the tutelage of the U.S. Congress and the U.S. military during the commonwealth period and the mandates of a

U.S.-Philippine political alliance and continued U.S. military presence after independence, this sovereignty was structured by the promise and expectation of independence, a sovereignty that was not yet there but always in the process of becoming.

Much scholarship that discusses and theorizes colonialism in the Philippines and its effects on Filipino subject formation not only in the Philippines but in the U.S. diaspora describes the extent to which U.S. coloniality enacts violence on the Filipino body and erases Filipinos from U.S. history and culture. In the formative anthology *Positively No Filipinos Allowed*, Antonio Tiongson explains that the anthology aims “to signify the ways Filipinos endure the burdens and legacies of empire past and present, which cannot be understood simply in terms of exclusion but more in terms of the coerced incorporation of Filipinos into the nation, underwritten by the violence of conquest, empire building, white supremacy, and global capital.”² Rightly so, Tiongson and others explain that Filipinos have continuously bore the burden of U.S. empire not only at the moment of conquest but precisely through Filipinos’ simultaneous exclusion from U.S. categories of belonging and inclusion into the nation-state through labor extraction and in order to buttress national and racial cohesion through racial hierarchies. Later, Tiongson references McKinley’s mandate by writing that “Filipino assimilability is predicated on the disruption and dissolution of [conventional U.S. and Asian American] disciplines as presently constituted. What is at stake, therefore, is not simply integrating Filipinos as objects of study into preexisting disciplinary paradigms but questioning the terms of their production and inscription and calling into question the coherence and

² Antonio T. Tiongson, “Introduction: Critical Considerations,” in *Positively No Filipinos Allowed*, eds. Antonio Tiongson, Ricardo Gutierrez, and Edgardo Gutierrez (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2006), 1.

constitutive basis of various fields of study.”³ Here, Tiongson references Filipino illegibility within Asian American disciplinary formations to suggest that the study of Filipinos within U.S. empire must not hinge upon Filipino inclusion into these paradigms but must be waged as an interrogation of these paradigms themselves as the work of an ongoing project of coloniality.

I draw upon Tiongson’s formative critique in order to suggest that the work of coloniality works not exclusively through material colonial violence onto the Filipino body and its forced inclusion and simultaneous exclusion from the U.S. nation state; instead, it functions simultaneously through the location of the Filipino within the language of political sovereignty and subjectivity. Benevolent assimilation names the guiding paradigm of U.S. coloniality to define the contours of Philippine nation-building as it could be facilitated into a political modernity structured by the proliferation of a worldwide democracy with imperial strings. This framework of sovereignty would shape a national consciousness in ways that predetermined the extent to which Filipinos could imagine themselves existing in the world – as either complicit with a U.S.-sponsored national platform or standing in opposition to it. Perhaps a more nuanced understanding of U.S. coloniality in the Philippines then might beg a conceptualization of the Philippines and its Filipinos as borne from modernity in ways that position their engagements with it not on a binary of complicity on one side and resistance on the other but as living with and through it in such a way that produces generative examples of the ways that Filipinos rearticulate the terms of their own subjectivities. To be clear, the aim of my critique is the very production of knowledge that has conceived of the Filipino as a

³ Ibid., 4.

necessary site of critique of U.S. colonialism. In other words, rather than only interrogate the disciplinary formations that make unintelligible Filipinoness, I find it a worthy and urgent project to challenge the very strictures and stakes of Filipino *intelligibility* that has made the Philippines and the Filipino continuously significant objects of political and discursive engagement. For even if centuries of colonialism has waged its violence onto the Philippines, it is the sophisticated nature of coloniality and the complexities and contradictions of Philippine nation-building and Filipino coming-into-being that has made possible the decipherability and coherency of the Filipino as a subject of history and a subject of critique. In yet other words: what are the stakes of *knowing* that the Filipino has been colonized, racialized, excluded, included? If the violence of a coloniality that is both anywhere and everywhere has defined the Filipino experience in the United States and set the limits of Filipino subject formation, at what cost is the Filipino then resuscitated and constantly deployed for exploration, study, and critique? Such quandaries, I hope, carve a discursive space that does not predetermine the extent to which Filipino lives might be held, considered, and conceived.

Colonial Modernity and the Production of Subjectivity

As Walter Benjamin reminds, the law does not protect society and its individuals from violence but itself constitutes violence.⁴ The official policy of benevolent assimilation that came to name the U.S. system of conquest and governance of the Philippines is illustrative of the guiding principle of U.S. colonial domination in the 20th

⁴ “[O]ne might perhaps consider the surprising possibility that the law’s interest in a monopoly of violence vis-à-vis individuals is not explained by the intention of preserving legal ends but, rather, by that of preserving the law itself.” See Walter Benjamin, Critique of Violence, “*Reflections: Essays, Aphorisms, Autobiographical Writings*,” edited by Peter Demetz (New York: Schocken Books, 2007), 280-281.

and 21st centuries, notwithstanding the most blatant forms of militarized aggression that supported the pretense of benevolence. Even as scholars of U.S. empire in the Philippines continue to refer to McKinley's declaration of benevolent assimilation with a kind of deferential yet dismissive historical fact, I begin with this policy in my own study of the Philippines and the Filipino in order to direct attention to the underlying groundwork of U.S. colonial and imperial governance that continues to reinforce the current historical and political moment well after the formal end of U.S. colonialism and imperialism in the Philippines, the granting of national independence, and the proliferation of various proclamations of a new world order under the rubric of neocolonialism, neoimperialism, and neoliberalism. In other words, rather than insist upon McKinley's articulation of benevolent assimilation as always only a declaration of official U.S. colonial policy, I insist that it might behoove one to consider the specificities of his speech. In his description of the task of the policy to "win the confidence, respect, and affection of the inhabitants of the Philippines," McKinley names a set of affective registers that pinpoints the self as the terrain upon which this policy must be waged, as the thing that needs to be captured throughout the long period of U.S. governance over the territory. As he defines the self through its consolidation within the humanistic conditions of "confidence, respect, and affection," he describes what the Filipino will *be* under U.S. colonial governance. Here, then, it is not only that the Philippines must be secured by the clamps of democratic tutelage but that the Filipino himself – the object of U.S. paternalism – must be seized and nurtured away from his subservient position under the Spanish empire. As a result, he can be made into the subject of U.S. instruction and guidance, and his resulting nationalist consciousness might better serve the eventual, emergent republic.

The process of constructing the self from the subject has long been a technology of western modernity since the Enlightenment, its logic propping the rationale of coloniality. Insofar as European thinkers defined the self through its capacity to/for reason, he was also cultivated through his ability to own and produce and thereby reproduce the contours of his own subjectivity.⁵ Scholarship on whiteness and property remind that whiteness was defined by the permission to own property and land and that black disenfranchisement was inextricably tied to ownership – both the inability to own property but, more importantly, the capacity to be owned as property. For instance, black slaves’ exclusion from the category of humanity was not simply contingent upon the incapacity to own property but distinctly dependent upon the incapacity to own one’s self and to be conceived within the terms of selfhood. In her seminal study of U.S. canonicity, Toni Morrison describes that the coherency of whiteness is contingent upon the blackness of the other.⁶ I point to Morrison here with great risk and less as a means of describing

⁵ Lisa Lowe explains, “We have not ‘lost’ the category of the universal human subject because of the failures of particular socialist states, or postmodern theory, or the ‘false consciousness’ of identity movements, but because the very definition of the human subject as the property-owning citizen of Western nation-states constitutively excluded particular subjects, bodies, and geographies from the category of the *human*. The twenty-first century’s unevenly inhabited and unevenly understood conditions of accumulation and impoverishment are the dialectical traces of liberal philosophy and political economy’s abstract promises of freedom, rational progress, and social equality. Put differently, while the abstract ideal of modernity has been the pursuit of human freedom through modernization, the processes employed in this pursuit – accelerated growth through mass production, urbanization, and colonial expansion – have themselves brought new forms of *unfreedom*: new, different forms of exploitation, violence, and inhumanity.” See Lisa Lowe, “Utopia and Modernity: Some Observations from the Border,” *Rethinking Marxism* 13, vol. 2 (2001), 10.

⁶ “As a writer reading, I came to realize the obvious: the subject of the dream is the dreamer. The fabrication of an Africanist persona is reflexive; an extraordinary meditation on the self [...] It is as if I had been looking at a fishbowl – the glide and flick of the golden scales, the green tip, the bolt of white careening back from the gills; the castles at the bottom; surrounded by pebbles and tiny, intricate fonds of green; the barely disturbed water, the flecks of waste and food, the tranquil bubbles traveling to the surface – and suddenly I saw the bowl, the structure that transparently (and invisibly) permits the ordered life it contains to exist in the larger world.” See Toni Morrison, *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992).

the formation of the racial subjectivity of blackness but more as a way to articulate the production of the self as a technology of U.S. nation-building and empire.

Thus, the force of U.S. hegemony lies not only in the production of the Filipino subject into the Filipino self, in the creation of this racial taxonomy, but also in the utilization and continued maintenance of the self as the medium of colonial conquest and imperial governance. For instance, the underlying rhetoric of the seminal critique of U.S. imperialism by Mark Twain lies in the admonition of U.S. imperial policy in the Philippines that is self-reflexive and grounded upon an investment in the integrity of the self as American rather than upon a distinctly anti-imperial conceptualization of the acquisition and maintenance of colonies as a system of capitalist production and reproduction that makes possible the political and economic supremacy of the United States.⁷ Twain's critique of U.S. imperialism here is a question of American morality, an insistence upon the solidity of the American self, bounded by its capacity to differentiate between right and wrong rather than a call for its disintegration under anti-imperialist critique. While Twain's satirical diatribe is indeed a demonization of U.S. policies of conquest, it illustrates the modes through which the perpetuation and preservation of the self around its capacity to reason, judge, and distinguish a moral right formed some of the basis of American resistance to the colonial and imperialist policies. Even if Twain's text advances a certain resistance to the acquisition of and rule over the Philippines, its use of this moral compass reasserts the coherency of the self as the basis and measure of personhood as a means of organizing humanity.

⁷ Mark Twain, "To the Person Sitting in Darkness," *North American Review*, February 1901.

In his careful study of the U.S. census of the Philippines that detailed information about the inhabitants of the Philippines between 1898 to 1903, Vicente Rafael explains that the empirical information (ranging from gender, age, occupation, and agriculture produced) collected from and about the newest colonial objects of the United States served not only as the basis of colonial policy in the Philippines but, more importantly, determined how Filipinos would be represented and could represent themselves. Rafael explains that the census “provided the grammar for classifying its objects of knowledge as subjects of a colonial order. As with the practice of enumeration, this grammar of classification was far from disinterested. Rather, it was crucial in imaging the terms of colonial society as, above all, a racial hierarchy.”⁸ The incisiveness of Rafael’s conceptualization of the census here lies in his articulation of the transformation of the colonial object into the colonial subject. Here, Rafael elucidates upon the creation of “a people” and the formation of Filipino colonial subjectivity. While Rafael is interested in the methods through which colonial subjectivity becomes the means for facilitating a racial hierarchy in the Philippines, I am most interested in the ways that this technology of subject-making actually shaped the contours of self-determination that would shape the formation and development of a growing Philippine national consciousness.

Manuel Quezon’s 1935 inaugural speech at the commencement of his presidency over the new Philippine commonwealth government describes an uncontested desire for Philippine national sovereignty. Referencing McKinley’s proclamation a few decades before, Quezon explains to a Philippine congress, “We are bringing into being a new

⁸ Vicente Rafael, *White Love and Other Events in Filipino History* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000), 32.

nation. We are seeing the fruition of our age-old striving for liberty. We are witnessing the final stage in the fulfillment of the noblest undertaking ever attempted by any nation in its dealing with a subject people [...] President McKinley's cherished hope has been fulfilled – the Filipinos look back with gratitude to the day when Destiny placed their land under the beneficent guidance of the people of the United States.”⁹ Quezon's affirmative declarations of the success of U.S. benevolence to advance and secure the Philippine nation obscures the nagging complications that underscored Philippine nationalism during the era. Quezon assumed the presidential seat amidst calls for a speedier, anti-collaborationist route to independence and criticisms against the *ilustrado* political elite's acquiescent genuflections before American demands and dogma. In an essay about Philippine statesman Claro Recto's plays, Eugenio Matibag elucidates upon these conflicts through a reading of Recto's play *Solo entre las sombras*: “The ilustrado indictment of the ‘new ways’ and relaxed morality references the explicitly anti-American and pro-independence stance that the ilustrados publicly espoused. Yet the rhetoric of moral condemnation, while it doubled as a prophetic utterance against the too-rapid modernization under the Americans, functioned in effect as an ideology [...] that misrepresented the reality of the ilustrado project of collaborative leadership.”¹⁰ Intellectuals like Renato Constantino describe this contradiction as the *ilustrado* strategy of both acquiescing to U.S. demands while diffusing the clamorings of national independence by the Philippine masses in order to secure positions of political and economic power. Even as these complications around Philippine nationalism subscribe to

⁹ Manuel Quezon, “Inaugural Address” (speech, Manila, November 13, 1935).

¹⁰ Eugenio Matibag, “Staging the Nation: Claro M. Recto's Domestic Dramas,” *Kritika Kultura* 20 (2013): 197.

the kind of political sovereignty fostered by the U.S. government, I point to it here as an example of the ways that a Filipino coming-into-being was inextricably tied to U.S. colonial ideologies of national sovereignty even as it tried to imagine something else. In other words, Quezon, Recto, and Constantino project these nationalist articulations of self-determination at the same time that they wrestle with its inability to smooth over the tensions generated by racial, class, and gender difference.

This exploration thus investigates the making of Filipino subjectivity through the mutually constitutive processes of U.S. coloniality and Philippine nation-building. Further, it points to colonial modernity as the framework within which both are subsumed and that charts the transformation of the object of colonial occupation to the subject of colonial and national governance. Here the subject-as-self finds fruition through its individualized emancipation within the nationalist and capitalist paradigms of western democracy – its capacity to own itself outside any feudal system and its participation within the representative modes of democratic republicanism. In the context of Spanish colonial rule, John Blanco writes that “[n]ative consent, far from merely existing as the base condition for expanding Spanish claims to territory and tribute, becomes an object of knowledge and colonial engineering, which aims to discover what elicits it, how to sustain it, and how to trace its ramifications for the procurement of Spain’s perpetuity in the islands.”¹¹ Blanco explains that the continuation of Spanish colonial governance – or, perhaps, more accurately, the move between the suppression of native dissent toward the native’s active participation in colonial life – depends upon the capture of native will.

¹¹ John D. Blanco, *Frontier Constitutions: Christianity and Colonial Empire in the Nineteenth-Century Philippines* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), 38.

Blanco's postulation of native will here as both the vehicle and guarantor of native participation in the maintenance of sovereign authority points to the colonial regime's investment in the humanity of the colonial subject. Building upon Blanco's articulations of native will and speaking precisely to the present moment, Neferti Tadiar postulates that "[t]o think about this longer colonial history of 'humanization' on which contemporary projects of global governmentality depend, we have to see U.S. imperialism as more than simply a historical event of political-military occupation or a form of direct or indirect domination. We have to also understand it as a project of the standardization of life forms, as a universalization of norms and their concomitant regimes of intelligibility."¹² Underlying both Blanco's theorization of native will and Tadiar's conceptualization of humanization is an articulation of Spanish colonialism and U.S. imperialism as something more than the procurement of colonial life over the threat from death by any sovereign authority. Instead, Blanco and Tadiar describe the ways that colonial and imperial power seized life in order to define what it means to live. Following this lead, this project defines colonial modernity beyond the military and political conquest of land and the denial of rights and self-governance to the people of that land. Rather, colonial modernity here names the modes by which such occupation and governance wield power through the imposition of a humanity that has long structured liberal thought. Such work to organize, standardize, and define life becomes the basis for political, economic, and social belonging that extend beyond the spatial and temporal

¹² Neferti X. M. Tadiar, *Things Fall Away: Philippine Historical Experience and the Making of Globalization* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009), 469.

resolutions of colonialism's formal end.¹³ If, then, as I suggest, subjectivity names the process of Filipino coming-into-being – the medium through which colonial regimes could measure and organize human life in the Philippines and then sanction its growth into political being under the auspices of western modernity and the mechanism through which Philippine nationalism and its Filipinos could produce and then reproduce itself in the free, capitalist world – then what are the costs of continuously rendering the Filipino intelligible? As much as this project aims to challenge the logic, discourse, and enactment of subjectivity, it also points to the undertaking of Filipino making and becoming as the discursive space through which Filipinos and other cultural producers confronted and grappled with the totalizing terms of this legibility. It is through this space that they considered and fashioned alternative ways of being and knowing beyond the capacity of human reason and its concurrent necessity to define the limits of life.

Authoritarianism, Philippine Nationalism, and the Seizure of Filipino Subjectivity in the Cold War Era

The period of authoritarianism often marks a rupture in Philippine historiography. Ferdinand Marcos ruled as president of the Republic of the Philippines from 1965 well into 1986 when he was ousted by the People Power Revolution. From 1972 to 1981, Marcos ruled by martial law. His declaration of martial law cited leftist insurgency as the

¹³ In the seminal essay “The Miseducation of the Filipino,” Renato Constantino explains that “[t]he most effective means of subjugating a people is to capture their minds. Military victory does not necessarily signify conquest.” He also writes that “[e]ducation must both be seen not as an acquisition of information but as the making of man so that he may function most effectively and usefully within his own society.” See Renato Constantino, *Vestiges of War: The Philippine-American War and the Aftermath of an Imperial Dream, 1899-1999*, edited by Angel Velasco Shaw and Luis Francia (New York: New York University Press, 2002).

propelling force behind the decree. More than mere dictatorial propaganda, Marcos's justification of martial law – his explanation that the New People's Army was waging an unprecedented war of destruction upon the Republic of the Philippines and upon the Filipino people – ahistorically presents a holistic nation that obfuscates the persistent troubles that are intrinsic to any claims of national coherency. The leftist and communist forces that Marcos cited in his declaration have their historical precedent in the Hukbalahap (Hukbon Bayan Laban sa mga Hapon) movements of the immediate post-World War II period in the Philippines. Specifically formed as an anti-Japanese faction, the Huks developed into an anti-colonial and anti-imperial collective that waged a political and ideological battle against both the U.S. and Philippine states. Marcos's defense of the republic in his declaration was, in fact, an effort to consolidate the resistive labor of the First Quarter Storm¹⁴ in order to produce a national imaginary borne from the energies of these revolts. Where the Philippines as a nation is always already an act of containment of regional, linguistic, and cultural difference, the formation of this national "order" is contingent upon the productive output of the disorder and "chaos" of the left. Widely understood as a period that saw the suppression of democratic liberalism in the Philippines, the Marcos era thus marks, for some, the suppression of Filipino self-making at the hands of the despot. Tadiar, on the other hand, has defined Philippine authoritarianism as the seizure of the energies of the masses in order to utilize it for the production of capital: "Authoritarianism can hence be understood as the assumption of the real and potential power of contradictory classes and its consolidation into the

¹⁴ The First Quarter Storm refers to the massive leftist uprisings that occurred between January and March of 1970. Marcos cited it as one of the reasons for his declaration of martial law in 1972.

overriding and absolute power of the state.” Tadiar’s definition is clear to understand authoritarianism not as the suppression of the self but, quite succinctly, as the deliberate cultivation and utilization of it.¹⁵ Following Tadiar’s instruction, I revise the popular conceptualization of authoritarianism by articulating it not as the suppression of political will but as its usurpation and translation into a language of dictatorial governance. As such, I conceive of the Marcos era not as historical aberration but as a period that underwent the grotesque and intensified rearticulation of the continuous project of Philippine national becoming. By capturing and consolidating the energies produced from decolonial nationalist movements, Marcos sought to nationalize a decolonial imaginary that fully entrenched the Philippines within the liberal paradigms of colonial modernity. In his demand that the Filipino regain its soul from the dregs of despair,¹⁶ he utilized the language of liberation from a colonial past to speak to the sensibilities of the masses even as his investment in this uplift – this recognition of Filipino humanity – aligned itself with aims to transform the Philippine economy into a multinationalist market.

I focus this project on the Marcos era of 1965 to 1986 because it offers a venue for investigating Marcos’s distortion of Philippine decolonial nationalisms in conjunction with the advent of global capitalism under the paradigms of economic restructuring mandated by the United States and other countries after World War II. In doing so, I insist that the making of Filipino subjectivity in and through these interlocking projects reveals the precision with which Marcos’s Philippine nation-building paradigm under his

¹⁵ Tadiar, *Things Fall Away*, 185.

¹⁶ Ferdinand E. Marcos, “Inaugural Address” (speech, Manila, December 30, 1965).

New Society and the colonial investments of the global market economy after World War II facilitated Philippine national becoming and its concomitant Filipino bodies into the circuits of labor, exchange, and migration mandated by the market in unprecedented ways. Here, Marcos's intent to expand the reach of Filipino legibility and recognition and the saturation of U.S. colonial technologies within the pores of the market suggest that there are other ways of envisioning the force and legacy of the Cold War. For the purposes of this project, the Cold War is neither solely an event nor historical period that illustrates the binary oppositions between the United States and the Soviet Union or a revisionist framework that seeks to change the Cold War narrative to include the Philippines. Instead, the exploration of Filipino subjectivity during the Marcos era provides an instance of the ways that the Cold War provided a stage for the proliferation of colonialism's remains. In charting both Marcos's political translation of nationalism and the expansion of the Philippine economy to house its labor export system under which Filipino bodies could systematically be sent overseas, the Cold War thus serves as an analytic that helps to make clear the colluding facets of Philippine historical experience to suggest that colonial violence lies precisely in the work of making intelligible the Filipino and her and his body to a voracious global capitalist economy.

This project acknowledges the official period of decolonization in the Philippines as the era after World War II, the granting of national independence by the U.S. Congress in 1946, and the decade that proceeded independence. The period was marked by the persistence of guerilla warfare waged by peasant insurgents throughout the Philippine countryside (the Huks, for instance, became a specific object of concern for CIA officer Edward Lansdale in the 1950s who sought to secure the stability of the republic against

communist influence). Further, anti-collaborationist thinkers such as Constantino shaped the contours of decolonial thought in the Philippines by advancing a nationalism that rejected mendicant state policies and political, economic, and social practices grounded in a colonial mentality. The Philippine state signaled its political commitment to decolonization in its participation in the Bandung Conference of 1955, which heralded a meeting between several formerly colonized nations in both Asia and Africa. I aim to create a clear distinction here between the official period of decolonization in the Philippines and throughout the demarcated “third world” – which cites the historical events described above as legitimate acts of political collaboration – and ongoing anti-colonial struggles. This official period of decolonization simultaneously signaled the advent of global development under the capitalist paradigms promoted by the United Nations and its western provocateurs. The western installation of structural development and humanitarian programs that created policies of economic and cultural development for the third world acknowledged the independence of formerly colonized nations only insofar as they could be consigned to the liberal, capitalist paradigms of the global, free-trade economy. Not necessarily attached to the Hukbalahaps and the associated Communist Party of the Philippines, anti-colonial struggles in the Philippines, contrary to the political aims and alliances of the historically demarcated decolonial movements described above, are often represented through battles for land against the oligarchic elite of the country. Such forms of anti-colonial discourse are characterized by the rejection of both the feudal economy of the political elite and the developmental framework of the global market to which the Philippine national economy is consigned. Marcos’s policies under his New Society framework was not a rejection of the decolonial discourse

advanced by the Bandung Conference, for instance, but was, instead, a translation of it into state policy in order to more fully subscribe to the mandates of global economic restructuring.¹⁷

Intrinsic to Marcos's translation and consolidation of decolonial nationalism – and the growth of his New Society – was his belief in the liberalization of the Filipino's right to selfhood. In 1974, in his *Notes on the New Society of the Philippines*, Marcos justifies his rule by martial law: “As far as it is able to, the Government will discipline and punish its own, along with the criminal elements. By accepting this limitation, we serve notice that although ours is a constitutional authoritarian regime, it is not totalitarian, for it will not encroach upon the private lives of all our citizens.” He proceeds by describing this private realm as a “space of freedom” where “the citizen may behave as he pleases in the pursuit of his private happiness: he may order or disrupt his life according to his discipline or lack of it. But once he misuses his space of freedom by forcing it into the public realm, he will risk a revolution that may well impose on him a totalitarian regime.”¹⁸ Even as Marcos marks the limits of his power by explaining that it must not breach the private space of freedom afforded to the individual of the republic, the

¹⁷ In his 1965 inaugural address, Marcos refers to the act of solidarity outlined by the Bandung Conference: “The Filipino today lives in a world that is increasingly Asian as well as African. Asia claims one-half of all humanity, and this half lives on a little over one-sixth of the earth's habitable surface. Africa's millions are also now coming to their own. Recent events have shown the willingness of our Asian friends to build a bridge to us. We can do no less than to build a strong foundation at our end. Today, as never before, we need a new orientation toward Asian: we must intensify the cultural identity with our ancient kin, and make common cause with them in our drive toward prosperity and peace. For this we shall require the understanding of ourselves and of Asia that exceeds acquaintance; we require the kind of knowledge that can only be gained through unabating scholarship on our histories, cultures, social forces and aspirations, and through more active interaction with our friends and neighbors.” Marcos's articulation of a “new orientation toward Asian” and a “cultural identity with our ancient kin” is particularly interesting and spans the reaches of my project in its immediate form. However, I point to this speech because it offers a useful way of considering the Philippines' economic development through its partnership with Asian nations.

¹⁸ Ferdinand E. Marcos, *Notes on the New Society of the Philippines* (Manila: Marcos Foundation, 1973), 100.

magnitude of his power is underscored by his ability to transform the authoritarian regime into a totalitarian one under which that private space can be instantly obliterated. The contradiction between Marcos's insistence that his presidential power must not impinge upon the life of the individual and his caution that such a limit is contingent upon the very actions of the individual within his private space is clear. And, yet, I point to Marcos's discussion of the private citizen here only as a way to explain that his conceptualization of individual freedom – and the rights that came with it – was fundamentally structured by its relationship to his authority. In other words, his pronouncement of any natural freedom of man was, in fact, the work of *making* the private citizen through its relationship to power. Most important here is the notion that this articulation of freedom, insofar as it was emerging from the proliferation of individual rights espoused by the official period of decolonization, was a method of consolidating the resistive forces harbored by the Philippine masses, a deliberately suppressive act of diffusing these energies in order to set the limits of their capacities.

Nowhere was Marcos's intent to define the limits of Filipino freedom and rights made clearer than in the new civic protections afforded to the national populace under his New Society schema. In 1974, two years after he declared martial law, Marcos instituted the Labor Code of the Philippines. The first of its kind, the code consolidated all other labor laws into a single statute that afforded protection to workers by outlining their rights, regulating employer conduct, and “insur[ing] industrial peace based on social justice.”¹⁹ The necessity of such legislation in terms of workers' rights is obvious. Yet, within the broader framework of Marcos's authoritarian governance, the labor code

¹⁹ Presidential Decree No. 442 (P.D. 442).

served to nationalize the Filipino worker for the purposes of national industry and production. It institutionalized the Overseas Employment Board and “phased out” private entities that charged for employment services intended to secure overseas labor for workers. In this way, Marcos nationalized the Overseas Filipino Worker (OFW) and subsequently made the export of Filipino labor a central facet of the national economy, a program that has only gathered more strength since the implementation of the code and has served to forcibly define the Philippine economy.²⁰

In 1965, nine years before the institutionalization of the code, Washington enacted the Hart-Cellar Act, popularly referred to as the U.S. Immigration and Nationality Act. Intended to address the intolerant racial quotas of previous U.S. immigration policies amidst the ideological mudslinging of the Cold War period, policy leaders justified the act as the liberalization of immigration to the United States that allowed professional migrants and separated family members seeking reunification to enter the country as long as they did not transgress specifically defined limitations. In particular, immigrant visas would be made available to qualified immigrants who were “members of the professions, or who because of their exceptional ability in the sciences or the arts will substantially benefit prospectively the national economy, cultural interests, or welfare of the United States,” those “who are capable of performing specified skilled or unskilled labor, not of a temporary or seasonal nature, for which a shortage of employable and willing persons exists in the United States,” and those who “because of persecution or fear of persecution on account of race, religion, or political

²⁰ Both Robyn Rodriguez and Kale Fajardo discuss the ways that the Philippine state has capitalized upon the labor of the OFW.

opinion have fled” from areas deemed dangerous, high-risk, and/or otherwise inhospitable to the freedom outlined by U.S. constitutional law.²¹ Contrary to the ways that the act was and is touted as the multiculturalist emblem of immigration reform, the act ever intended to radically change the demographic makeup of the country or the strictures of U.S. legislation to account for its “past” racial intolerance. At the signing of the bill at the historic Liberty Island in New York, Lyndon B. Johnson explained that the bill “is not a revolutionary bill. It does not affect the lives of millions. It will not reshape the structure of our daily lives, or really add importantly to either our wealth or our power.”²² As others have suggested in more pointed ways, the act sought to address communist threats not only by painting the United States as a more tolerant nation but also by generating a productive immigrant workforce based on professional technical and scientific labor. Along a similar strain, the act’s insistence to define qualified immigrants as the unmarried sons and daughters and/or spouses of citizens of the United States – adamantly disallowing “homosexuals” to enter – created a labor force grounded upon the heteronormative logics of capitalist reproduction, defining the “family” for reunification through the reproductive capacity of the nuclear family unit. I build upon these important critiques of the act by pointing to the ways that its framing as liberal immigration reform actually works to violently obscure the longstanding and ongoing circuits of migration, labor, and exchange already established by the colonial and neocolonial relationship between the United States and the Philippines.

²¹ House Resolution 2580 (H.R. 2580).

²² Lyndon B. Johnson, “Remarks at the Signing of the Immigration Bill” (speech, New York, NY, October 3, 1965).

As U.S. nationals under the colonial government, Filipinos were afforded unrestricted migration to the United States and came to provide the cheap labor in agricultural, industrial, and service sectors. Additionally, because of continued disproportionate military alliances between the two countries, Philippine military servicemen before World War I and after World War II were allowed to enter the United States despite the implementation of national quotas intended to restrict other immigration from Asia. Various exchange programs, furthermore, offered another method of entry for temporary Filipino laborers. In her seminal study of the “empire of care,” Catherine Ceniza Choy describes, at length, the ways that the Exchange Visitor Program (EVP) was initiated by the United States in a cold war effort to promote “cultural understanding” between nations.²³ Choy traces the ways that the EVP served as one historical precedent to the 1965 act. The Filipino nurses that Choy interviews describe the harsh conditions of their employment and the failed promises of working abroad in conjunction with the ways that the Philippine government, particularly under Marcos, capitalized upon the promise of foreign dollars that Filipino migrant labor would transmit into the national economy. She explains that the commodification of female Filipino nurses for export under Marcos’s labor export programs was both “a product of domestic mass production and a demand of an international marketplace” and “Marcos’s monetary aim of foreign currency accumulation through remittances from workers abroad.” Building upon her earlier assertion that Filipino nurses migrated abroad even as the healthcare system in the Philippines experienced a significant shortage of healthcare

²³ Catherine Ceniza Choy, *Empire of Care: Nursing and Migration in Filipino American History* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003).

professionals, Choy posits that “Filipino nurses abroad no longer abandoned their role in Philippine nation building but became integral to it.”²⁴ The simultaneity of the United States’ policies of labor import from politically unstable (*i.e.*, at the risk of falling victim to communism) nations and the Philippines’ policies of labor export ensured the transnational flow of capital and the assurance of the health of the global capitalist economy.

U.S. import and Philippine export of Filipino labor thus served as the backbone of the neoliberal relations between the two countries. I deploy neoliberalism here as the post-World War II economic policies outlined by Washington and its allied nations. These policies established international monetary mandates and created a system of economic rehabilitation for war-torn and newly independent nations in the form of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank (IMF-WB). The IMF-WB system functions through structural adjustment policies that dispense loans to developing and underdeveloped national economies as long as such economies adhere to the dictums attached to such loans, all of which ensured the supremacy of the U.S. dollar through its foreign circulation. For the Philippines, the IMF-WB mandated export-oriented policies such as tourism that facilitated the flow of foreign investment into the country. In her study of tourism and U.S. militarism in the Philippines, Vernadette Vicuna Gonzalez describes the modes through which the expansion of the tourist industry in the Philippines is inextricably linked to the continuation of U.S. military occupation in the

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 116.

country.²⁵ Further, as Robyn Rodriguez aptly describes, neoliberalism in the Philippines is also dependent upon the Philippine state's establishment of export processing zones that are made hospitable to multinational investment that can bypass specific national economic regulations and utilize the "docile and cheap labor force" of Filipina women. It should be clear that while some scholars hail the age of neoliberalism as a new era of capitalism, this project underscores neoliberalism in the Philippines as structured by its historical precedent. At the dawn of independence in 1946, the U.S. Congress – in collaboration with Philippine state officials of the new republic – passed the Bell Trade Act. The act implemented a preferential tariff that established U.S. control over Philippine imports and exports. Additionally, it guaranteed unlimited U.S. access to Philippine raw materials through a parity amendment. While the 1955 Langley-Laurel agreement (Rodriguez 10) granted the Philippine state more economic freedom, it remained unwavering in solidifying the uninterrupted ties between the Philippine economy and the U.S. market.²⁶ To be clear, neoliberalism in the Philippines is mutually constituted by the national policies of the Philippine state, the economic mandates of the first world and global north, and the legacies of conquest instituted by U.S. colonial and imperial regimes.

The advent of a "new" Filipino American social formation comprised of mostly professional immigrants after the passage of the U.S. immigration bill was one of its many unintended consequences. Some historians might describe this Filipino American

²⁵ Vernadette Vicuna Gonzalez, "Touring Military Masculinities: U.S.-Philippines Circuits of Sacrifice in Corregidor and Bataan," *Militarized Currents: Toward a Decolonized Future in Asia and the Pacific* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010).

²⁶ Robyn Rodriguez, *Migrants for Export: How the Philippine State Brokers Labor to the World* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010).

social formation as the latest wave of Filipino migration to the United States. Rather than consider Filipino migration in such distinct and separate historical ways, I suggest that the underlying politics of cold war visibility, rights, and representation provoked by decolonizing promises of individualist freedom and mandates of economic liberalism succeeded in structuring Filipino America as an overarching category through which other strains of labor migration might be understood. Even if the 1965 act created a paradigmatic façade of democratic liberalism, it also provided the mold through which Filipino migration could be discursively conceived; even as “Filipino America” describes a diasporic formation specifically housed in the United States, its establishment was propelled by the unfinished, incomplete, and continuous migration of temporary workers. The conceptualization of Filipino America as such delimits a certain fixity to the process of migration and labor even as such a process is definitely unfixed, multiple, inconsistent, and inconstant. Consequently, even while its construction underscores histories of U.S. colonialism and imperialism in the Philippines (we are here because you were there), it also makes coherent Filipino and immigrant subjectivities as products of U.S. empire in ways that might not always elucidate the sophisticated mechanics of colonial biopower. Put in yet another way, the 1965 act as it worked in conjunction with Marcos’s investment in labor rights serve as the biopolitical paradigm that invested in rights-based subjectivities only as a means of solidifying the continuation and intensification of transnational circuits of migration, labor, and exchange instituted by and through colonial legacies of U.S.-Philippine alliances.

This U.S. investment in a rights-based paradigm as a method of diffusing the otherwise uncontainable forces of social unrest can be illustrated by another example.

Johnson's civil rights platform sought to alleviate legacies of racial injustice in the United States through the implementation of various state reforms. Johnson's "Great Society" program not only saw the institutionalization of the U.S. Immigration and Nationality Act but also facilitated the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act and the 1965 Voting Rights Act, all of which mandated the unconstitutionality of federal practices of racial discrimination. The Civil Rights Act, in particular, directed that "[a]ll persons shall be entitled to the full and equal employment of the goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages, and accommodations of any place of public accommodation, as defined in this section, without discrimination or segregation on the ground of race, color, religion, or national origin."²⁷ Further, the Voting Rights Act ruled that "[n]o voting qualification or prerequisite to voting, or standard, practice, or procedure shall be imposed or applied by any State or political subdivision to deny or abridge the right of any citizen of the United States to vote on account of race or color."²⁸ These momentous pieces of civil rights legislation not only coincided with but were also inextricably linked to U.S. Cold War security policies intended to contain communism domestically and internationally and to ensure the proliferation of global capitalism – mandates, for instance, that justified the U.S. military invasion of Vietnam. The advent of a U.S. civil rights platform in conjunction with U.S. militarized policies of security worked in tandem to generate rights-based forms of justice through the work of consolidating the violences of war and racialization within the logics of democratic liberalism. In other words, where the granting of rights created the individual rights-bearing subject of U.S. democracy, it also

²⁷ 42 United States Code 2000d - 2000d-7 (42 U.S.C. 2000d - 2000d-7).

²⁸ Public Law 89-110 (P.L. 89-110).

suppressed racial antagonisms both in the geographic United States and outside of it that were cultivated by collectivities that emerged from legacies of U.S. colonial and imperial rule. As Chandan Reddy explains, “[B]y providing alternative contexts for the growing social antagonisms, the civil rights, feminist, and antiwar movements threatened the state’s capacity to mediate those antagonisms. The state’s attempt to produce universality through practices of subjectivity must be read, then, as its response to alternative and heterogeneous mediating contexts.”²⁹ Reddy’s conceptualization of the U.S. state project of subjectivity is especially generative for understanding the ways that that the individualization of rights promotes “the private pursuit of personal liberty and economic freedom.” Here, U.S. subjectivity becomes the very vehicle through which the labor of the racialized body can be utilized for capitalist reproduction.

Disciplinary Formations and the Task of Rendering Filipino America Unintelligible

Scholars of U.S.-Asian and Asian American studies have offered particularly lucid and incisive analytics for untangling subjectivity from the totalizing rhetoric of individualist freedom propounded by the U.S. state and its attendant democratic discourses in order to reveal the more complex web of geopolitical relations and economic investments that constitute it. Popular historical representations conceive of “Asian America” as the post-1965 racial category that came to not only describe an Asian diaspora to the United States but also U.S. citizens of Asian descent who may or may not have been part of or have emerged from that diaspora. As the result of activist struggles

²⁹ Chandan Reddy, *Freedom with Violence: Race, Sexuality, and the U.S. State* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011), 23.

against U.S. racist policies of exclusion and popular misconceptions of Asians in the United States, Asian America strategically, however problematically, worked to homogenize an otherwise heterogeneous group at the same time that it understood this homogenization as a necessary political act of collective resistance against the U.S. state and its accompanying cultural regimes. Given the critical importance of the Asia/Pacific to U.S. foreign policy especially in the 1960s throughout the 1970s, Asian America has become an important discursive nexus for conceiving of U.S. war, militarization, containment, and economic restructuring. In her foundational study of Asian and Latina immigrant women, Lisa Lowe explains that “the global restructuring of the capitalist mode of production can be understood to constitute a new social formation, one whose domain has extended beyond the nation-state to global markets and international circuits of exchange.” In her larger study, Lowe forcefully reconfigures the Asian American social formation away from the representative aims of earlier configurations of Asian American subjectivity and articulates it, instead, as the racialized and gendered modes of labor that are necessitated by “situations of uneven development, colonialist incorporation, or global restructuring and immigration.”³⁰ Moreover, in her meditation on the limits of Asian American Studies and the possibilities afforded by an Asian Americanist cultural critique, Kandice Chuh describes the importance of a “subjectless discourse” that works “to create the conceptual space to prioritize difference by foregrounding the discursive constructedness of subjectivity.”³¹ Chuh relies upon a poststructuralist and postmodernist critique of the subject in order to discuss the means

³⁰ Lisa Lowe, *Immigrant Act: On Asian American Cultural Politics* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996), 160.

³¹ Kandice Chuh, *Imagine Otherwise: On Asian Americanist Critique* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 9.

by which racialized subjectivities actually adhere to U.S. state conceptualizations of political subjectivity that promise the representation of the racialized other even if it cannot account for its difference. Thus, Chuh employs a “strategic anti-essentialism” to interrogate the coherency of Asian American subjectivity as an emblem of U.S. regimes of knowledge. Additionally, Jodi Kim has described “Asian American critique [...] as an *analytic*, which is decidedly not a reified identity category, for apprehending the specificity of American empire in Asia in the second half of the twentieth century.”³² Kim’s analytic dismantles the insistence of U.S. Cold War historiography to sustain “the bipolar Manichean rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union” that was “triangulated in Asia” as it served to extend U.S. imperialism and processes of gendered racial formation.³³

Following the lead of scholars like Lisa Yoneyama, this project is situated during the U.S. Cold War period in Asia even as its investments lie in multiple temporal and spatial trajectories. As a temporal and spatial framework, an investigation of the U.S. Cold War brings together concerns about U.S. subjectivity as it is carved from the democratic logics of rights-based representation that developed under the guise of the official U.S. Civil Rights Movement through U.S. wars of aggression justified by arguments for anti-communist containment and global security. Such questions are posited in juxtaposition to the emergence of the Philippine authoritarian state under the strongman Marcos. An exploration of the U.S. Cold War facilitates an interrogation of the post-World War II era of political, national, and economic reconstruction; it situates

³² Jodi Kim, *Ends of Empire: Asian American Critique and the Cold War* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), 10.

³³ *Ibid.*, 4.

worldwide movements for self-determination alongside the emergence of decolonial nationalisms and the accompanying translation of such nationalisms into the formation of independent nation-states. Additionally, it follows the creation of the Bretton Woods financial system for global economic development, tracing the growth of the IMF-WB system through the circulation of transnational capital throughout the third world and global south. It understands the geopolitical urgency of the Asia/Pacific as the site of “hot” wars whose legacies are drastically distorted by U.S. Cold War narratives that insist upon the ideological undercurrents of the “cold war” historical moniker. In the Philippines, the end of World War II saw the establishment of another Military Bases Agreement that allowed the continuation of the U.S.-operated Clark Air Base and Subic Bay Naval Base – an agreement that Marcos extended during his regime. As such, the U.S. Cold War serves as the very site of knowledge production through which U.S. narratives of communist and anti-communist struggle and the eventual triumph of liberal democracy can be aggressively contested by the historical impetus of increased militarization and uneven economic development.

Even as this project interrogates the legibility of Asian America as a discourse procured by the U.S. Cold War, it is adamant about the specificity of Filipino subjectivity and the concurrent social formation of Filipino America as underscoring similar-yet-different conversations about subject formation in relation to the development of the modern U.S. and Philippine states. In his postulation of “race as praxis,” Blanco writes that “colonialism does not simply reproduce an already existing difference or set of differences anchored in science and awaiting future discovery. Rather, colonial rule *creates and ramifies differences that do not preexist the historical event of conquest and*

domination, and sets in motion identities that become tied to the historical themes of fall and redemption.”³⁴ In the case of the Filipino, the solidification of minoritized subjectivity does not only become the mode through which difference is created and then acted upon but the medium through which people become co-participants and then complicit in the extraction and reproduction of their own labor. As a project of U.S. coloniality on the one hand and of Philippine national becoming on the other, the process of subject-making and the production of subjectivity names the organizing principles of humanity that not only govern the logic of nation-state formation in the decolonizing period but also define the production of life in the globalized era. I mean to explain that the Philippines as the deliberate “non-site” of cold war conflict is precisely the site of cold war power: never the arena upon which official U.S. wars of aggression and containment were waged during the official cold war period and, yet, always the ground upon which U.S. empire could legitimize itself and recover from its tasks elsewhere.³⁵

As this project challenges Filipino subjectivity as the political coming-into-being within these global paradigms under the direction of U.S. colonial regimes and authoritarian nationalist desires, it is simultaneously attendant to envisioning another form of political and discursive engagement that privileges a Filipino imagination and its ability to visualize itself beyond the totalizing logics of liberal rhetoric. As such, it considers the volatility of Filipino America as it has been and continues to be illustrated

³⁴ John D. Blanco, “Race as Praxis in the Philippines at the Turn of the Twentieth Century,” *Southeast Asian Studies* 49, no. 3 (2011): 371.

³⁵ Jessica Hagedorn’s novel *Dream Jungle* (2003) centers upon the making of Francis Ford Coppola’s film *Apocalypse Now* (1979) in the jungles of the Philippines. An American film about the Vietnam War and filmed in the Philippines, *Apocalypse Now* serves as a retelling of a war of “liberation” that obscures not only the war of aggression in Vietnam and Southeast Asia but also of the colonial conquest of the Philippines and its disavowal from U.S. national memory.

in popular (and, perhaps, unpopular) discourse. In his dictum against colonial education in the Philippines, Constantino names U.S. collaborationists in the Philippine colonial government as new “Filipino-Americans.” For Constantino, there is an inherent imperialist complicity attached to the term “Filipino-American,” and the willingness to adhere to the system of education imposed by the U.S. colonial government significantly impairs Philippines struggles for true independence. In her discussion of Filipino American art and performance, Sarita See explains that Filipino America was produced out of “minority invisibility and imperial amnesia.”³⁶ See explains further that “Filipino America” can become the powerful basis for “an altogether other kind of worldliness.”³⁷ And in his analysis of the elusiveness of the famed Filipino American fugitive Andrew Cunanan, Allan Punzalan Isaac describes the “unrecognizability of the Filipino in the American imagination.”³⁸ Indicative of both the persistence of U.S. colonial legacies to shape Filipino consciousness and the importance of the Filipino experience in the United States to conceive of U.S. nation-building, these invocations of Filipino America reflect, at once, the unwieldy and intricate constitution of Filipino America as a project of U.S. empire. I want to direct attention, however, to another iteration of Filipino America by infamous First Lady Imelda Marcos: in her dramatic rendition of “God Bless America,” the first lady replaced “America” with “the Philippines,” much to the dismay of the songwriter Irving Berlin. When Berlin tried to explain to Marcos that she should express a certain fidelity to the song’s original intentions, she chided Berlin by explaining that the

³⁶ Sarita Echavez See, *The Decolonized Eye: Filipino American Art and Performance* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), xxii-xxiii.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, xxx.

³⁸ Allan Punzalan Isaac, *American Tropics: Articulating Filipino America* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2006), xxiv.

Philippines and America are part of the same mold.³⁹ The First Lady's improvisation of the patriotic American song and the ease with which she replaced the main object of America with the Philippines articulates the Philippines as the uncanny remnant of U.S. empire. Additionally, such a revision is an aspirational framing of the Philippines within the developmental trajectory of U.S. nation-building. It outlines the contours of the post-World War II global terrain and the era of independence and postcoloniality that forces the Philippines to subscribe to the mandates of the global capitalist economy. More than that, however, I want to suggest that the First Lady's conscious misinterpretation of Berlin's song pushes the limits of critique about Filipino America. Implicit in Marcos's justification of her "incorrect" rendition is, first, any correct representation of either America or the Philippines presupposes the wholeness of either formation and, second, the ease with which they can be replaced suggests a more intricate and intimate relationship that does not prefigure the Philippines' own involvement in the formation of the Philippine nation-state. Inasmuch as Marcos's deliberate mistake sought a kind of national recognition for the Philippines along contours defined by the United States, it thus offers an important caution about the dangers of making recognizable the Philippines when recognizability serves as the very technology of modernity under which U.S. empire is subsumed.

This project, therefore, seeks not to make decipherable, recognizable, and intelligible Filipino America but, contrastingly, insists upon the urgency of its indecipherability, unrecognizability, and unintelligibility as the very strength of its force. That is, while it is indebted to scholarship about Filipino America that captures its unique

³⁹ *Imelda*, directed by Ramona Diaz (2003, CineDiaz, Incorporated, DVD).

complexity as a multifaceted and longstanding object of U.S. colonial and imperial violence, it also argues that it is less something to be contained but more an analytic that refuses the telos of subjectivity by tracing subjectivity itself as the path for organizing human life in an increasingly grotesque world. It aims to disaggregate Filipino America as the composition welded together by both colonial and imperial policies and nationalist and authoritarian mandates. In doing so, it illustrates it as the locus of multiple, unending migrations fueled by an unceasing demand for Filipino labor, security measures of containment, and authoritarian demands for foreign capital under paradigms of development. In disinvesting from such an investment in Filipino America – in untangling the imperial grammar of colonial subjectivity – this project attends to other forms of living and being that might lie outside, inside, within, through, and beyond the logics of recognition.

Chapters

I reference culture as the calculation of human intellectual capacity that functions as a method of social organization. Where the overarching rubric of culture often names the artistic capabilities of a group of people, culture has not only come to administer belonging within a national, racial, and ethnic body but has also, conversely, served as a defining principle for exclusion within this same paradigm. See has described the ways that Filipinos have often been represented as culture rather than as those who can possess culture. Such a postulation is based upon the task of colonial conquest to objectify and consume the colonized other in the Philippines in order to buttress the cultural superiority of the United States. For See and others, culture names a struggle of/for production,

between those who govern these modes of cultural objectification and consumption, and those that must inevitably be consumed within these trajectories of power. This project thus deliberately turns to culture as the arena through which the humanism purported by subjectivity can be carefully defined and redefined not only through the principles of coloniality but also by adamant oppositions to it. In other words, culture – both the possession of it and the ability to create it – serves as the terrain through which subjects are articulated, made, and allowed to be. There is a large body of scholarship that investigates the U.S. state's investment in the production of state-sponsored cultural programs that intended to develop bodies of artistic work that promoted the liberal ideologies of the United States. In 1965, for instance, the U.S. Congress passed the National Foundation on the Arts and Humanities Act, which eventually created the National Endowment for the Humanities. The Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts was also erected and developed during this period. In the Philippines, Imelda Marcos would model the Cultural Center of the Philippines against the Lincoln Center in New York City. The Marcoses – with the First Lady herself serving as cultural leader – fashioned an intricate system of cultural development that institutionalized cultural programs designed to promote the ideals of the New Society. Within this cultural framework, the Marcoses awarded national artist honors to artists of literature, film, visual arts, architecture, music, dance, and theater according to the extent to which their work adhered to the ideals of Filipinoness outlined by the dictums of the New Society.

To be sure, culture observes the dialectics between the construction of subjectivity by colonial and authoritarian regimes and the production of other modes of life-making that may not always be legible through the language of modernity. The cultural texts that

I explore in this project are sites of collaboration with and contestation of these forces.⁴⁰ The texts by Lino Brocka and Nick Joaquin are canonized within their respective cultural disciplines, and the artists themselves were recognized by the Marcos administration with national artist awards. The *San Francisco Examiner*, a major U.S. newspaper, commissioned the photographs taken by Kim Komenich. I do not insist that these texts are illustrative of any uncontested or holistic resistance against colonial and state power. On the contrary, they are the arena through which the governing institutions mandated by U.S. and Philippine regimes come face-to-face with the bodies and imaginations that are produced by and emerge from these structures. In a rearticulation of human life through an incisive attendance to its grotesque and violent usurpation, these cultural texts cultivate other modes of living within – not always outside of – civic and social life that either escape seizure and definition by the totalizing logics of subjectivity or actively wrestle with its force. Thus, these texts each employ the framework of Filipino America that I describe above in drastically different ways in order to disarticulate the logics of representation and recognition that are propelled by the overlapping modes of governance wielded by U.S. and Philippine state systems, their alliance, and the circuits of exchange between them that structure their mutual culpability. I resist the imperative to describe

⁴⁰ My conceptualization of culture draws upon Lisa Lowe's and David Lloyd's introduction to *The Politics of Culture in the Shadow of Capital*: "We are arguing for the equal importance of sites of struggle that do not privilege the nation and are not necessarily defined by class consciousness. This is not question of integrating oppositional formations such as peasant revolts, feminist struggles, antiracist or anti-imperialist movements into a politics ultimately defined by class struggle; rather, these struggles in themselves occupy significant sites of contradiction that are generated precisely by the differentiating process of advanced globalizing capitalism. We would contend, furthermore, that these oppositional formations are neither novel nor outmoded. On the contrary, the critical displacement of "modern" modes of opposition – particularly state nationalism and Western Marxism – permits us to see how feminist, antiracist, and subaltern struggles, in their continual adaptations and transformations over time, have the potential to rework the conception of politics in the era of transnational capital itself." See Lisa Lowe and David Lloyd, eds., *The Politics of Culture in the Shadow of Capital* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997), 2.

these texts as Philippine and/or Filipino American texts even as their production, publication, and circulation might bear some form of geographic and national allegiance. Instead, I insist upon reading them as texts about colonial modernity – often bearing little to no temporal and geographic loyalty – that both subsumes the Philippines and the United States and the global system of migration and exchange that mediates their relationship to each other.

The first chapter, “‘Pangako, Puro Pangako’: Cultural Development during Martial Law and the Promise of the Filipino,” explores the political and economic logics of the Marcos’s cultural development programs in conjunction with the urban development of Metro Manila. Focusing on the construction of the Cultural Center of the Philippines and Imelda Marcos’s paradigm of Truth, Beauty, and Goodness, it discusses the absorption of an anti-colonial history of Philippine revolutionary struggle by the authoritarian propagation of a universal humanity. It argues that the Marcoses’ cultivation of the “new” Filipino subject as a global subject shaped the contours of Filipino subjectivity in order to make it more readily available for labor export throughout the world. I read these authoritarian mandates through and against prominent filmmaker Lino Brocka’s 1976 film *Insiang*, which was lauded by the First Lady for its ability to illustrate the depth of Filipino complexity and received critical acclaim as the first Philippine film to be screened at the prestigious Cannes Film Festival. For Brocka, the intertwined themes of the universality of evil and the impossibility of life in the slums of Manila use the Filipino condition to challenge the modernizing rhetoric of universality. Faced with the stringent censorship mandates enforced by the Marcos-run board of motion pictures while simultaneously engaged with the struggles of the Filipino masses, Brocka’s film

both illustrates a distinctly Marcos era political investment in the “plight” of the Filipino and also employs a cinematic realism that gives visuality to the developmental paradigm of cold war capitalist investments in the third world. The incisiveness of Brocka’s film as sociopolitical critique lies in the crafted contradiction that he makes between the martial law insistence on the humanity (*i.e.*, the globality) of the Filipino and the demands propounded by neoliberal capital upon the body and labor of the Filipino.

The second chapter, “‘We Were War Surplus, Too’: Nick Joaquin and the Im/possibilities of Filipino Historical Becoming,” reads Joaquin’s 1983 mystery novel *Cave and Shadows* as a literary extension of his oft-cited adage that asks, “What is the Filipino?” Set just before Marcos’s declaration of martial law and published a few years after the end of Marcos’s presidency, the novel is both about martial law and not about it all. In other words, Joaquin uses the gravity of martial law to fashion a genealogy of Philippine history that treats it less as a historical aberration and more as a condition of post-World War II era reconstruction and ongoing questions about national development. As such, Joaquin explores martial law as it contends with and subscribes to the historical trajectory of colonial modernity. This chapter thus investigates Joaquin’s novel as it traces a nationalist investment in the formation of the Filipino subject. For Joaquin, the Filipino is the medium through which historical experience is conceptualized rather than a category of belonging that precedes coloniality. In this way, it serves as the basis for a reimagination of Philippine historiography.

The third chapter, “‘Save the Filipino Race!’; Incommensurable Images in the People Power Archive,” investigates a series of photographs taken by photographer Kim Komenich for the *San Francisco Examiner* during the 1986 People Power Revolution

that ousted Marcos from office. It also critically engages with the Bancroft Library archive at the University of California, Berkeley where the photographs are housed. This chapter insists that the photographic print collection and the archive that holds it consolidate the Filipino revolutionary subject within a liberal, democratic subjectivity that forecloses its “revolutionary” potential by defining it within the visual and discursive confines of a freedom only realizable through a democratic, capitalist telos. I turn to the photograph in this chapter as a particularly significant medium that advanced the U.S. colonial project in the Philippines at the turn of the 20th century. Turning to colonial officer, ethnographer, and photographer Dean Worcester, this chapter describes the modes through which the photographic medium and the photographic archive transformed the object of colonial conquest into the subject of colonial governance. Worcester’s collection of photographs, now housed in a special collection at the University of Michigan, illustrates the ways that the naming and categorization of the colonial object “saved” the subject for U.S. political tutelage. This chapter explains that the photograph remains an important avenue through which subjectivity is maintained through the tenets of colonial modernity. By reading the Komenich collection through the Worcester archive, this chapter explores the photograph and its archive as technology that generated the independent, self-actualizing subject that functions to diffuse anti-colonial, anti-capitalist demands for liberation.

Chapter One:

“Pangako, Puro Pangako”: Cultural Development during Martial Law and the Promise of the Filipino

In his 1973 treatise on martial law, *Notes on the New Society of the Philippines*,¹ Philippine president Ferdinand Marcos attempted to galvanize the private citizen by instructing that “[h]is indifference to his civil responsibility will, under martial law conditions, lead to the alternative that martial law intended to prevent: chaos.” In the 1976 film, *Insiang*, Philippine filmmaker Lino Brocka’s title character explains to her mother as she visits her in a prison cell after she has brutally stabbed her mother’s lover and Insiang’s rapist: “I wanted you to lose all reason. I wanted you to kill him.”² Marcos’s statement describes the logic that he used to legitimize the enforcement of martial law in the Philippines – that an authoritarian administration would be the only way to curtail the chaos and “bloody revolution” proposed by the left’s most radical political agendas. Brocka’s *Insiang*, on the other hand, seems to embody the very threat of which Marcos warned his readers: a kind of *un*-reason, a disorder, that ultimately leads to bloodshed. For Marcos, the work of creating a narrative of providential instruction, political fate, and dictatorial order was just as necessary to maintaining the stronghold over the presidency as were the elections that he blatantly rigged and the voices that he outwardly silenced. Brocka’s story is similarly outlined with the kind of overdramatics so familiar to Filipino audiences accustomed to testing out aesthetics that might adequately

¹ Marcos, *Notes on the New Society of the Philippines*, 99-100.

² *Insiang*, directed by Lino Brocka (1976: Cinemania Corporation).

illustrate the theatrics of everyday life. Presented together, it seems that Insiang responds directly to Marcos's cautionary tale rather than offer fodder upon which he could further lodge his critiques against leftist chaos. Given the fact that these two men drastically shaped and continue to permeate Philippine social and cultural life (for drastically different reasons and an understatement to be sure), it is worth pursuing where and how their visions of chaos and disorder intersect and then where and how they radically diverge.

Marcos's use of chaos above refers to the threats of communist and leftist insurgency that he warned would destroy the Philippine democratic republic so tirelessly won by past struggles. His declaration of martial law would not only protect the republic from such threats but would lead the New Society into fruition. The New Society, or Bagong Lipunan, would be the logical end result of a series of developmental reforms that would bring the country up to speed, so to speak, with the demands of global modernization and would institute a multitude of neoliberal projects and thus synchronize the Philippines with modern global time. Thus, Marcos not only articulated chaos as a threat to public life but also promoted the active refashioning of public life as a way to quell those threats. As such, everything from youth protest to the offensive sight and smell of the urban poor would be constituted as fair game for New Society reform. Taking as its central presumption that the realm of culture has often been a site of political warfare for dictatorial regimes well aware of the Gramscian dictate that the power to control the common sense is the power to control, this chapter turns to the Marcoses' (both Ferdinand and First Lady Imelda) cultural projects as ways to analyze the distinct and intimate nature of authoritarian violence in the Philippines. The First

Lady, in particular, as the Governor of Metro Manila, the Minister of Human Settlements, and the un/official Patroness of the Arts, constantly touted her “compassion” when she expressed her interest in the most personal facets of the Filipino – the soul. And, so, cultural reforms capitalized on, according to Marcos, the very stuff that Filipinos are made of – soul, goodness, heart, beauty. In centering the Filipino as the focus of reform, Marcos named what was at stake and lodged a campaign of the most insidious violence: the power to dictate how Filipinos understood themselves and of what they believed they were capable. Situating Marcos-era politics within the grand scheme of the Cold War, the development of an increasingly globalized, neoliberal, and militarized world order, and the triumph of late capitalism means understanding that the Marcoses’ seizure of culture was more than an act of political repression. It was the purposeful and incisive reimagining of Filipino subjectivity within an order that sought a more definitive articulation and presentation of the Filipino as a vehicle of third world (re)production.

To privilege culture as a site of analysis, as others have so concisely articulated,³ is to acknowledge and honor the creativity and range with which authoritarian power was/is contested. For it would be wholly inaccurate to argue that the various modes of resistance waged against martial law and the Marcoses emerged only as responses to that power. Rather, Marcos rule was characterized by a systematic monitoring, eradication, and usurping of those very creative energies.⁴ Philippine cinema, in particular, with its longstanding history of adaptation to the struggles of the time, felt the heavy hand of dictatorial censorship but also developed into one of the richest avenues of critique

³ Lowe/Lloyd, *The Politics of Culture in the Shadow of Capital*.

⁴ Tadiar, *Things Fall Away*, 185.

against the regime. The era, often referred to with nostalgia, produced several of the most acclaimed filmmakers and artists. The young director Lino Brocka embodies the seemingly contradictory sentiments provoked by Marcos-era cinematic culture. While Brocka is largely understood as one of the Marcoses' most stringent critics, posing numerous critiques of the failures of the Marcos administration to enact effective and lasting change within the deplorable circumstances that structured Filipino lives, Brocka's films were widely praised in the Philippines throughout martial law and, much to the First Lady's approval, garnered international acclaim when Cannes selected *Insiang* as part of its film festival. Recognition by cinematic experts aside, Brocka offers with *Insiang* a reading of authoritarian violence that acknowledges the depth of its cultural reforms. When Insiang explains to her mother, "I wanted you to lose all reason. I wanted you to kill him," Brocka presents a multifaceted critique. Placed in juxtaposition to Marcos's insistence that the private citizen protect the republic against bloodshed at the hands of leftist insurgents, Insiang's confession becomes a deliberate call-to-arms against the president, himself the provocateur of bloodshed, and a deliberate attack against his instruction against chaos with a demand for chaos itself. And, yet, Insiang's statement, in her clear articulation of losing – in fact, ridding one's self of – reason, suggests a dissolution of her mother's person, of the rational self, of the very stuff that makes her *be*.

Given the unyielding terrain upon which Brocka found himself as a filmmaker during martial law, the incisiveness of Brocka's critique of authoritarian violence in *Insiang* lies not simply in a clamorous vote of no-confidence against the president wrapped in a blanket of artistic subtlety. It is, rather, the deployment of an analytic that

tears loose the potentiality of chaos to deconstruct the suffocating rigidity of the neoliberal freedom that the Marcoses authorized in their insistence on a Filipino subjectivity and one that illustrates what might be possible when that chaos has been loosened. Here, Brocka utilizes tropes of ugliness, deceit, revenge, and utter madness to direct an audience toward ideas of collective struggle against racialized, gendered, and sexualized violence wielded by authoritarian, patriarchal power. In other words, as the Marcoses sought to define the Filipino as that which exists outside and in spite of chaos, Brocka attempted to disrupt the coherency of this subjectivity by making the case for a Filipino social formation bred and cultivated by chaos itself. Insofar as the Marcos regime instituted measures that set the stage for the current unfolding of Philippine political and social life and the Filipino in general, the necessity to continue to problematize Filipino subjectivity has only been aggravated with time and therefore remains a pressing concern in the present moment, when one must continue to be vigilant against the types of tempting neoliberal reforms that value representation as solutions to social inequalities and uncertainties more than the refashioning of the very questions themselves. To continue to interrogate the solidity of the Filipino is to acknowledge that the marker signifies more than an identity formed around a common set of struggles but must, instead, direct us toward the contestation of the social conditions that have borne those struggles. To trace the development of the Filipino during the Cold War is to imagine that the set of circumstances that surrounded the rise of global capital and neoliberalism on the one hand and decolonization on the other is to also continue to reconfigure what counts as resistive practices and alternative modalities against these

totalizing forces. And to question these modes of resistance is to believe that another set of them might be possible.

In this chapter, I interrogate the Marcoses' cultural reform and urban renewal projects in Metro Manila to argue that the couple justified such projects through a reclamation of the Filipino spirit and soul from the dregs of its colonial past. The Marcoses' usurpation of the Filipino spirit and their continuous work to define the contours of Filipinoness within a global arena in the name of development was ultimately a means of garnering international recognition and acclaim from the capital investment that it promised. Lino Brocka's 1976 film *Insiang*, with its focus on the development of morality and rationality, offers a lucid critique of these modernizing frameworks and their fixation with order.

New Filipinism and the Emergence of the New Society

Ferdinand Marcos was certainly well aware of the political and ideological strength of the seemingly ubiquitous third world struggles for self-determination occurring all over the globe. His declaration of martial law in 1972 and pursuit of New Society reforms sought not only to contain the fervor of these movements but also to maintain the Philippines' commitment to neoliberal restructuring. Neoliberalism here refers to Marcos's establishment of a crony capitalist state that remained wed to the perpetuation of global trade and foreign investment, the promotion of multinational strongholds over national industries, the advancement of privatization as an economic principle, and a sturdy loyalty to the dictates of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund. This economic system resulted in the construction of the Philippines'

export economy and specialization in the extraction and deployment of labor primarily from the bodies of young, poor Filipinas. While neoliberalism refers to an economic order that favors the rise of global capitalism, it also includes the simultaneous expansion of militarized governance. In the Philippines, Marcos approved the renewal of U.S. military bases in the country and sanctioned the deployment of Philippine troops to Vietnam in support of US military efforts against the spread of communism.⁵ Entirely instrumental to the proper functioning of the neoliberal system, however, is the cultivation of the liberal self, that is, the individualized laborer tailored to (re)produce capital on behalf of the state. The liberal self is founded upon ideas of free movement and self-reliance but is nonetheless bound to/by the demands of the global market.

Ferdinand Marcos's heralding of the so-called New Society that would be realized upon the enactment of dictatorial reforms under martial law was certainly not an unfamiliar concept to the Filipino people. Even in 1969 in an address to the national Congress, Marcos described a vision of a New Filipinism that would radically transform the nation. This New Filipinism would ultimately depend upon the cultivation of the New Filipino. Here, Marcos strategically referenced the Philippine national hero Jose Rizal in

⁵ In "Bodies, Letters, and Catalogs: Filipinas in Transnational Space," Rolando Tolentino explains: "Neocolonialism, the postindependence condition(s) arising from the shift from colonialism to postcolonialism in the era of late capitalism is translated through multinationalism, militarism, and transnationalism. While multinationalism and transnationalism present seemingly divergent patterns of economic development and capital movement, for the purposes of this chapter 'multinationalism' refers to the operations occurring in the national spaces, while 'transnationalism' refers to those occurring in the international spaces. However, the areas differentiating the two processes inevitably collapse in practice. Both are examples of attempts to master and command space as a means of controlling class struggle. Among the tactics employed by multinationalism and transnationalism are geographical mobility and decentralization, deindustrialization and industrialization, and capital investment and flight." Tolentino's definition of multinationalism and transnationalism is central to my understanding of neoliberalism. However, I use neoliberalism specifically here to highlight the Philippine state's fixation on the necessity of the liberal, free self to the proper functioning of these political, economic, and social systems. See Rolando Tolentino, "Bodies, Letters, and Catalogs: Filipinas in Transnational Space," *Transnational Asia Pacific: Gender, Culture, and the Public Sphere*, edited by Shirley Geok-Lin Lim, Larry E. Smith, and Wimal Dissanayake (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999), 46.

an attempt to thread a long-standing history of nationalist struggle to his own role as executive leader. This attempt to suture his own life and legacy of struggle with the Philippines' history of rebellion would become a Marcos staple, a deeply deliberate political move that both Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos would foster in order to cultivate a narrative of themselves as divinely destined to lead the Filipino people into a new world order. Marcos explained to the congress that "when there seemed little hope of Philippine freedom and progress, Jose Rizal saw that a new Philippines was inevitable. But to hasten that day, he prescribed a positive break for indolence, to acquire a new spirit for work and a new Filipino consciousness."⁶ Marcos thus threads Rizal's conceptualization of an emerging national consciousness near the turn of the 20th century to his own visions of the redevelopment of a modern Philippines. Striking and ironic in this statement is Marcos's indirect call for a "break with the past" and his simultaneous reference to a revered and familiar past in Rizal in order to legitimize this break. Herein lies a Benjaminian conception of Marcos's own legacy: a continual drive toward modern progress with a constant disavowal of the so-called past and, yet, the inevitable re-emergence of, negotiation, and reckoning with that past in everyday life.⁷ He explains that "[i]n the 1890's Rizal saw the rise of 'new men' and 'a new social order' within a century. In 1968, the New Filipino and the New Filipinism came into being."⁸ Marcos

⁶ Ferdinand Marcos, *New Filipinism: The Turning Point: State of the Nation Message to the Congress of the Philippines, 27 January 1969* (Manila: Office of the President of the Philippines, Public Information Office, 1969), 2.

⁷ Albeit a retrospective musing on the Marcos regime, Neferti Tadiar describes this negotiation between the past and the present as such: "The history that now seems to be vanishing before us is the history of the disappeared – the lives and life energies taken, expropriated, and expunged for the accumulation of wealth and the aggrandizement of power that rules in the name of the nation. It is the history of the disappearing – the taking, the expropriating, and the expunging – but also of the living, of the activity of living, on which all human value and power depend." See Tadiar, *Things Fall Away*, 143.

⁸ Marcos, *New Filipinism*, 3.

theorizes his presidency as the inevitable realization of Rizal's vision of what the Filipino could be. While one might easily dismiss this as political prophesizing as rhetorical strategy, it must be noted that such postulations are situated within a culture that places such heavy emphasis on happenstance, on the divine, on the alignment of the political stars. Consequently, it is certainly worth considering the thread that Marcos is sewing here. If it were Rizal's job to imagine the Filipino into consciousness, perhaps, it would be Marcos's task to realize it into being.

It would not be until well into the 1970s that Marcos would absorb this New Filipinism into what would eventually turn into the New Society. The logics of his vision and platform would essentially remain committed to leading the Philippines into the realm of modernization and progress, a task supposedly unprecedented in the history of the relatively young nation. While Marcos promised several policy reforms in the field of infrastructure, trade, and foreign relations, much of what would be "new" about the Philippines would be based on the reinvigoration of the Filipino spirit. And while one might be able to describe many, if not all, third world nationalist movements in such a way, it remains particularly curious in the case of the Philippines how much modern change would be dependent upon the spiritual transformation of the people of the nation. In that 1969 speech to the congress, Marcos instructs that "[t]his transformation is essentially spiritual" and that "[i]t is a prophecy come true."⁹ As Reynaldo Ileto explains in his formative work on the role of the *pasyon* narrative in advancing and conceptualizing Philippine popular movements, the importance of spiritual and divine light has been indelibly important to the legacy of Philippine struggles for independence

⁹ Ibid., 2.

from colonial Spain and the United States. In theorizing an awit (or “metrical romance”) written by Eulogio Julian de Tandiana about the war with Spain, Iletto describes de Tandiana’s metaphorical deployment of a storm through the notion of *gulo* or chaos:

The final appearance of the storm/chaos theme is in the treatment of the Apocalypse. Gulo is a sign of the second coming of Christ. As the pasyon describes it, the earth and even the heavens will turn into gulo. The sun will darken, the sky turn bloodred. Stars will flicker and fall to the ground. Wild animals will swarm into the towns. Huge tidal waves will inundate the land, and terrible sounds like that of armies clashing will be heard [...] Other aspects of the gulo will be the appearance of traitors and anti-Christ. Those who oppose the anti-Christ will suffer martyrdom. But this gulo is also a sign of the coming of the Kingdom. Forty days will pass in which men will be given a chance to change their loób and share in the coming victory. Storm and chaos thus provide the context in which men come together in Christ.¹⁰

With vivid imagery, Iletto describes the extent to which the masses envisaged the revolution as a new order that would emerge with the second coming of Christ. Marcos’s usurpation of these revolutionary tropes in his presidential speech aimed to find continuity between his leadership and the dawn of a new political and social era that would be attuned to the revolutionary spirit supposedly inherent to the Filipino. Based on his own brand of historical materialism, Marcos’s conception of *gulo* not only condemned a chaos provoked by leftist insurgents who threatened the solidity of the republic but also conceptualized his administration as enacting a messianic project that would recuperate and revitalize the Filipino spirit from the prison of its despondent past.

A year after his declaration of martial law in 1972, Marcos published *Notes on the New Society of the Philippines*, a text, compared to his speech to the congress, no less

¹⁰ Reynaldo Clemeña Iletto, *Pasyon and Revolution: Popular Movements in the Philippines, 1840-1910* (Quezon City, Manila: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1997), 138.

defined by dictatorial optimism but certainly more forthright about the various “threats” to that optimism. In this account, Marcos references the Filipino spirit but does so in ways that are explicit about the dangers that surround it. Marcos goes into detail about his decision to declare martial law, citing the precarity of the republic amidst the persistence of leftist and communist forces throughout the Philippines, and the task of martial law to pave the way toward the New Society. He writes:

Moral realism requires this ideological basis: the consciousness of the poor permeates them with a profound sense of being oppressed, and not simply because the rich oppress them brazenly but because it is *poverty itself* that oppresses them. To be poor is to be *without*, and therefore, to *be an outsider* in the vibrant and meaningful political, economic, and social life of modern human community. Above all, being poor is being invisible; violence makes them visible [...] Of what good is democracy if it is not for the poor?¹¹

Marcos explains that the insurgent forces that actively prohibit the realization and success of the New Society are waging an unsatisfactory rebellion from below that would simply transfer power from a group of elites to another group of elites. In contrast, the rebellion that Marcos proposes would require the temporary enactment of martial law in order to realize the eventual full-scale transfer from the elites to the masses. In the passage, Marcos theorizes the plight of the poor as a way to explain just *how* this new rebellion might be staged. He posits that the plight of the poor is characterized not simply by the oppressive forces of the rich but by the nature of poverty itself: their depleted consciousness. While not an outright summoning of the Filipino spirit, Marcos’s invocation of the consciousness of the poor suggests that their interiority – their very comprehension of self – must be the focal point of a transformative politics. He states that

¹¹ Marcos, *Notes on the New Society of the Philippines*, 71.

the plight of the poor is defined by their forcible exclusion from the “vibrant and meaningful political, economic, and social life of modern human community.” Marcos thus explains that his own rebellion would necessitate the work of bringing the poor masses into the “modern human community.” Consequently, the New Society would transform the modern human community to realize the needs of the poor masses. Marcos hereby articulates the task of his presidency: creating modern humans out of the poor Filipino masses.

Ileto’s theorizations of the *pasyon* and spiritual divinity are guided not by any one quest toward self-transformation or modern progress but are outlined by a resistive struggle against colonial modernity itself. In contrast, Marcos’s theorizations of the Filipino spirit – illustrated by both his “New Filipinism” and *Notes on the New Society of the Philippines* – are grounded in the teleological project of cultivating a sense of self that fits precisely within a modern human community founded by a neocolonial and neoliberal world order structured by global capital. Marcos’s postulations are deliberately and carefully crafted *mis-readings* of these legacies of Filipino anticolonial resistance. It would be too dismissive to relegate these theorizations as political propaganda espoused by a power-hungry dictator (although they certainly are). Marcos’s work of aligning himself with a type of decolonial rhetoric was part and parcel of the ongoing quandary of Philippine nationalism. Entrenched during the Cold War period characterized by the unsettledness of decolonizing movements around the world, a widespread fear of leftist and communist insurgency, and the continuous growth and reconfiguration of capitalism as a way to mediate such uncertainties, what might it mean for a Philippine nationalism to develop within this set of global configurations? I do not intend – not by any means – to

sift through Marcos's political visions in search of something newly redeeming or damning. Instead, I attempt to hone in on the nuances posed by these visions in order to speak to the intricacies of what it meant to be Filipino during such a time, for such a question has never been a certainty but has always been a problem. Indeed, at the end of Marcos's speech to the Congress, he explains that "[t]he experience of the past three years, combining a number of small and big breakthroughs in our national life, shows that the central factor for our progress is still the Filipino; that the Filipino transformed means a nation transformed; that the limit of what we can achieve for ourselves are fundamentally a matter of character – a moral and spiritual limitation."¹² In many ways, the promise of the Filipino has been the guiding principle behind resistive – and, perhaps, even revolutionary – movements against colonial and authoritarian violence. One must only consider that at the verge of the 1986 People Power Movement and the ousting of the Marcoses that Ninoy Aquino's sentiment that the "Filipino is worth dying for" became a kind of rallying call that organized the ideological structure of the movement itself and, yet, remained uncertain and malleable at the inception of the new administration. What are the differences behind Marcos's invocation of the Filipino in this case and Aquino's own imagining? Perhaps for both, the understanding of the Filipino was not a harkening back to a conceptualization of a common past but a continuous reconstruction of a long sought-after self-understanding that would serve as a tool with which to build a modern Philippines. Perhaps, the very development, cultivation, articulation, and realization of the Filipino provides the necessary epistemological gateway through which to study both the extent of Marcos violence and

¹² Marcos, *New Filipinism*, 116.

the precision of the constructions of racialized, gendered, and sexualized subjectivities throughout the Cold War.

The Cultural Center of the Philippines and the “City of Man”

The conjugal dictatorship of Ferdinand and First Lady Imelda Marcos (as it has come to be affectionately termed) would work adamantly to institutionalize culture not simply as one of a long list of reforms but as a guiding principle that would provide the foundation beneath the list itself. The realm of culture, in other words, became the avenue through which the Marcoses could purposefully affect and effect the public sense by providing both ideological and material instructions for the citizens of the soon-to-be New Society. The couple was said to have suffered from a serious malady known as the edifice complex, a fixation with erecting numerous physical structures to memorialize the legacy of the Marcos regime.¹³ In what is often referred to as one of the Marcoses’ most ostentatious displays of power and wealth, Marcos, by a 1966 presidential proclamation, ordered the “reclamation” of the Manila Bay as the site of the First Lady’s “City of Man” project, which sought to develop numerous national arts and culture centers around the artistic achievements of the Filipino people.¹⁴ The reclamation of Manila Bay proposed to expand Manila’s land area from “barely 15 square miles to 264 square miles.”¹⁵ The obscene magnitude of such a project lies in the Marcoses’ ability to create something where there was nothing before. The Marcoses’ ability to “reclaim” land from the sea illustrates the sort of mastery over otherwise unwieldy elements that they cultivated as

¹³ Gerald Lico, *Edifice Complex: Power, Myth, and Marcos State Architecture* (Quezon City, Manila: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2003).

¹⁴ Presidential Proclamation No. 20 (P.D. No. 20).

¹⁵ Lico, *Edifice Complex*, 84.

part of their public persona. But, perhaps more than that, it articulates the necessity to establish order over the disorder of Manila – not only the land that constituted it but also the inassimilable elements that characterized it. An important part of creating the City of Man, for instance, was the beautification of the unseemly sights, smells, and sounds of Manila’s urban poor. One solution to the unsightliness of these rather ghastly aspects of Manila was the construction of the grandiose Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP) complex, which included the establishment of the Theater of Performing Arts (1969), Folk Arts Theater (1974), Manila Film Center, Philippine Plaza Hotel, and the Philippine Center for International Trade and Expositions (PHILCITE) (1976).¹⁶ The Annual Meeting of the IMF-World Bank took place at PHILCITE in its inauguration year, signaling Marcos’s commitment to international trade and business. The CCP complex stood (and continues to stand) as a stark contrast to the desolation of Manila’s poorest slums and a lasting legacy of the magnitude of the Marcos regime and its cultural projects.

Imelda Marcos explained that the CCP would become the “sanctuary of the Filipino soul,” a place where Filipinos could not only take pride in their artistic achievements but also realize a more definitive sense of their own selves. In her remarks at the formal dedication of the CCP in 1969, she expressed the following sentiments:

We are young and struggling to understand ourselves, trying to construct the nobler meaning of our race. Our greatest strength lies in being truly what we are: by nature and by grace, one people; by fortune and by fate, Filipinos. Yet so long as we know not ourselves, we face the dangers that face the very young – a lack of soul, a vagueness of values. It is the purpose of the Center to

¹⁶ Ibid., 99.

enrich the minds and spirit of our people and to foster among other people a true understanding of the Filipino self.¹⁷

Surely, Marcos's declaration that the "greatest strength lies in being truly what we are [...] Filipinos" is an attempt to garner nationalist support around the presidency; yet, such an argument misses the intricacy of her statement. Marcos, at once, conjures both the solidity of an inherent identity provided "by nature and grace" and the instability and uncertainty of that identity. As such, she points to both the work that needs to be done and the very thing that is at stake in that work – namely, the realization of the Filipino itself. The statement is simultaneously instructive and cautionary. While it is unclear as to what dangers are posed by the "lack of soul" and "vagueness of values" by this statement alone, the CCP was geared to become the bastion of Philippine modernization, and, so, one might infer that Marcos's articulation of danger lies in the risk of remaining tethered to the dregs of a pre-modern past. However, the past that Marcos invokes here is a "new" past, a solicitous identification of particular elements of a pre-established historical narrative as a way to reconfigure a more appropriate past to which to return. In other words, while Marcos encouraged an investigation into and appreciation for a shared past, only certain elements of it would be acceptable. The *bahay kubo* or nipa hut would be paired with classical Greek architecture in the construction of the CCP complex,¹⁸ and the *kulintang* would be incorporated with other instruments from world music in the *katutubo*-styled curriculum offered by the Marcoses' Philippine High School for the

¹⁷ Imelda Romualdez Marcos, "Sanctuary of the Filipino Soul," *The Compassionate Society and Other Selected Speeches* (National Media Production Center, 1976).

¹⁸ Lico, *Edifice Complex: Power, Myth, and Marcos State Architecture*, 74.

Arts.¹⁹ Marcos's conceptualization of a Philippine past grounded in this type of Philippine "indigeneity" provided an ahistorical conceptualization of the past without the dirty work of grappling with its ongoing presence within neocolonial rule. More than the act of rewriting a more easily digestible history, this articulation of history cleared the ground for the cultivation of Filipinoness untied to the traumas of the past and more readily capable of seizing the fruits of a neoliberal future. Marcos's instruction to "know ourselves" reads as a search for origins that is itself a troubling endeavor.²⁰ It seeks to establish national cohesion by ignoring the systematic differentiation of those who cannot be subsumed within that national imaginary based on gender, class, sex, and religion. More perplexing for the purpose of this study, it forecloses the interrogation of the Filipino itself as a ceaseless project of subject-making. While it would not be until Marcos's ousting and Corzaon Aquino's presidential administration that Filipino overseas contract labor would gain momentum, it would be this careful crafting of the Filipino self by the Marcoses that would lay the foundation for the present-day conditions of the Filipino laborer: caught between advancing the tenacious will of the Filipino to pursue more lucrative economic opportunities abroad and the concurrent necessity of these "national heroes" to keep the nation's economy afloat.²¹

In 1973, Ferdinand Marcos, in his treatise on martial law, explained that he would make it his central concern to introduce the poor masses to the "modern human community." That same year, Imelda Marcos, in a speech delivered at the

¹⁹ Pearlie Rose S. Baluyut, *Institutions and Icons of Patronage: Arts and Culture in the Philippines during the Marcos Years, 1965-1986* (Manila: University of Santo Tomas Publishing House), 54, 60.

²⁰ See Michel Foucault's theorization of the concept of origins as presuming truth in "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History."

²¹ See Robyn Rodriguez's *Migrants for Export*.

groundbreaking of the National Arts Center on Mount Makiling, argued that “beyond our national identity is our profound human identity.”²² In the way that the president articulated the problem plaguing the poor of the Philippines as one of global participation, the First Lady, too, presented the need for the Filipino to be translatable to a worldwide community. As a result, Marcos spearheaded cultural programs that shaped Philippine arts and culture in ways that would express the intrinsic humanity of the Filipino. Historically, the Filipino’s inclusion into the category of the human has been a contested one, and Marcos’s insistence on humanity as a guiding theme of her cultural projects brings the issue from the dusty shelves of the anthropological eugenics of early U.S. colonialism into an understanding of its relevance in the making of the modern world. It would be this “proof” or display of the Filipino’s humanity that would garner the financial support of foreign investment. After geopolitical negotiations between the Marcoses and U.S. president Lyndon B. Johnson, for instance, Johnson allocated \$3.5 million of the Philippine War Damage Special Fund for Education to the construction of the CCP.²³ Moreover, the Rockefeller Foundation awarded multiple scholarships to the CCP to train its future curatorial and library directors.²⁴ Still further, in an attempt to bring the Philippines into an international conversation, Marcos instituted the International Artist Award to be conferred to non-Philippine artists who positively contributed to the development of Philippine arts and culture. The first award was given to U.S. pianist Van Cliburn, the First Lady’s favorite pianist and eventual advisor in all

²² Imelda Romualdez Marcos, “Our Own Parnassus,” *The Compassionate Society and Other Selected Speeches*.

²³ Lico, *Edifice Complex*, 90. This also came amidst negotiations between the two presidents that also resulted in Marcos’s agreement to send Philippine troops to Vietnam. See James Patterson’s *America’s Boy*.

²⁴ Baluyut, *Institutions and Icons of Patronage*, 16.

matters related to arts and culture. Marcos described Cliburn as such: “The truly great artist is great-souled. This is Van Cliburn. There is no human joy, no human pain that is alien to him: he will suffer with a pair of wounded hands and give comfort of his gifted own.”²⁵ Marcos defines humanity here as the great soul that is able to empathize with the joy and suffering of others. In defining the limits and extent of Cliburn’s humanity, she positions herself as an effective judge of what constitutes humanity and presents the Philippines’ capability of participating in a culture of international affability and exchange.

Imelda Marcos bestowed onto the CCP the motto “Katotohanan, Kagandahan, Kabaitan” or Truth, Beauty, and Goodness, a philosophy that she borrowed from ancient Greek ideals and would use throughout her political career. According to Marcos, these ideals were intrinsic to human beings, and building the CCP upon this moral foundation would further entrench the CCP within the humanist sphere that Marcos adamantly believed would be the entryway into the Philippines’ participation within the larger global community. *Katotohanan* (truth) suggested a commitment to the nation’s past as a way to gain knowledge of its origins in order to facilitate the progressive development of the self. *Kagandahan* (beauty) described the idea that the purity of the human spirit was inherently connected to its outward expression through an aesthetics of modernization. *Kabaitan* (goodness) articulated a fixation with compassion and reciprocity as motivating forces behind national policy. In her 1975 address to the 30th session of the United Nations General Assembly, Marcos explained that the “new world economic order”

²⁵ Imelda Romualdez Marcos, “Tribute to a Great Artist,” *The Compassionate Society and Other Selected Speeches*.

called for structural reforms that could only be undertaken with the necessary support from respective national citizenries, “Our appeal therefore must be directed to peoples, to their sense of what is right and fair, including those of an economic nature, cannot be reduced to mere material terms. The solutions to the world’s economic problems must have a moral basis.”²⁶ Marcos’s philosophy of truth, beauty, and goodness, illustrated through her cultural projects, expressed a “return” to the human and self as the basis for economic reform. It was a universalizing philosophy that transformed the very core of the Filipino – her/his basic sense of morality and sense of self – into currency that could be circulated within the global market.

With the three Ks of *katotohanan*, *kagandahan*, and *kabaitan*, Imelda Marcos created an elaborate veneer of modernization and progress that told the story of a utopian City of Man built on the Manila Bay by the sheer will of the Filipino people. Throughout the martial law period and well until the end of the Marcos regime itself, the idea of truth, beauty, and goodness as interlocking parts developed into an outright and carefully crafted theoretical framework with which the first couple imagined and deployed authoritarian power over the Philippines – a nation so deeply immersed within the neocolonial dictums of foreign investment and militarized governance and so intimately haunted by a genealogy of radical contestation and resistance. Truth, beauty, and goodness spoke to a third world desire for recognition as an active participant in the shaping of whatever new world order came next, and it expressed aspirations for something different, something else, something other than what always came. However,

²⁶ Imelda Romualdez Marcos, “Toward a New World Society.” *The Compassionate Society and Other Selected Speeches*.

truth, beauty, and goodness envisioned the Filipino as the sum and realization of these aspirations rather than a consideration of them as the definitive limits of subjectivity in the new world order. Truth, beauty, and goodness permitted the Marcoses' radical departure from the trauma of Philippine history. It allowed its foreclosure in what would be an egregious usurpation of the heroes of these past traumas without an exploration of how their palimpsestic presence spoke to the present moment. Truth, beauty, and goodness became a way of justifying "Imeldific" reforms because they, at the very least, placed something where nothing existed before and spoke directly to neoliberal requests for economic output. Katotohanan, Kagandahan, Kabaitan are illustrated in the CCP logo, which depicts three Ks written in *baybayin* script. The *baybayin* "ka" is reiterated three times and connected in a circle to represent the unity of truth, beauty, and goodness. The logo references the early flag(s) of the Katipunan revolutionary society, which illustrates three Ks on a red backdrop. The logo articulates the Marcoses conception of modernity through the fusion of a recognizable Philippine narrative (Katipunan society) and the modern, humanizing Ks of truth, beauty, and goodness. This expression of modernity, however, usurps and reclaims Philippine historical struggle in the name of progress. The logo does not necessarily celebrate the "traditional" more than it obfuscates an anticolonial framework in the advancement of a liberal humanism geared for the global economy.

Ileto's readings of the *pasyon* within Katipunan anticolonial thought are imperative here. Ileto describes a Katipunan manifesto as such: "Bonifacio speaks to the 'light of truth' (*liwanag ng katotohanan*) that will rise [...] This liwanag, then, reveals an image of the possibilities of existence that will be realized in the redemptive process, an

image of a condition that was lost when the Tagalogs succumbed to the sweet words of Spain [...] This liwanag, concluded Bonifacio, is the Katipunan.”²⁷ Whereas Imelda Marcos described *katotohanan* (truth) as an intrinsic quality that is always already present in the Filipino, the Katipunan conceptualization of *katotohanan* is emergent, on the verge, and not yet realized but latent in its imagination of an anticolonial future that can only be realized through collective struggle against the “sweet words of Spain.” The Marcoses’ usurpation of the history of the Katipunan was not only a diffusion of this emergent energy but a deliberate containment and then pronouncement of what it might be capable of enacting within the prescribed tenets of progressive reform.

Philippine Film under Marcos and the Rise of Lino Brocka

Film became an important avenue through which to advance the three Ks of the Marcoses’ cultural reforms. Film critic Bienvenido Lumbera describes the period of 1960 to 1975 as the period of “rampant commercialism and artistic decline.” Lumbera attributes this to the rise of independent film companies that capitalized on the “audience-drawing trend[s] of the time,” often allowing the *bakya*, or the unsophisticated, uncultured audience mentality, to dictate the direction of filmmaking. In the early 1960s, the nation’s youth, stirred by an emergent national consciousness, began to turn to local films in an effort to better connect themselves to the struggles of the masses. A renewed interest in *bomba*, or pornographic, films reflected this film audience’s rebellion against socially accepted conventions.²⁸ Marcos’s declaration of martial law in 1972 would place

²⁷ Ileta, *Pasyon and Revolution*.

²⁸ Bienvenido Lumbera, “Problems in Philippine Film History.” *Readings in Philippine Cinema* (Manila: Experimental Cinema of the Philippines, 1983), 74-79.

stringent mandates on the film industry according to the dictates of the New Society. Nearly a week after Marcos declared martial law with Proclamation 1081, he issued Letter of Instruction No. 13, which ordered the Board of Censors for Motion Pictures (BCMP)²⁹ to enact a set of regulations intended to direct the content of Philippine cinema.³⁰ The attachment of Letter of Instruction No. 13³¹ to Proclamation 1081 is noteworthy in that it illustrates Marcos's expansion of authoritarian violence beyond the limiting of political participation in civic life toward the regulation of the ideas that could and could not be consumed. Here, Marcos expresses a clear acknowledgement of the necessity of culture to shape the masses. In a speech delivered to the Filipino Academy for Motion Arts and Sciences (FAMAS), Imelda Marcos explained that the mission of the film "is to project the authentic image of the Filipino, to transmute into living art his genuine longings and aspirations, his joys – and even his sufferings."³² The First Lady explains that the purpose of cinema is to express the truth of what it means to be Filipino, and, yet, the president's mandate that cinema be contained within the "letter and spirit of Proclamation No. 1081" articulates the truth of Filipino subjectivity as that which is named and constructed by the demands of the New Society. In that same FAMAS speech,

²⁹ The Board of Censors for Motion Pictures (BCMP) was established before Marcos's presidency and played a significant role in the 1950s, during the time of the Hukbalahap insurgency [Lumbera 1983].

³⁰ Talitha Espiritu, *Revisiting the Marcos Regime: Dictatorship, the Media, and the Cultural Politics of Development* (Ph.D. diss., New York University, 2007).

³¹ Letter of Instruction No. 13 ordered the BCMP to ban (1) Films which tend to incite subversion, insurrection or rebellion against the State; (2) Films which tend to undermine the faith and confidence of the people in their government and/or their duly constituted authorities; (3) Films which glorify criminals or condone crimes; (4) Films which serve no other purpose but to satisfy the market for violence and pornography; (5) Films which offend any race or religion; (6) Films which tend to abet the traffic in and use of prohibited drugs; (7) Films contrary to law, public order, morals, good customs, established policies, lawful orders, decrees or edicts; any and all films which in the judgment of the Board are similarly objectionable and contrary to the letter and spirit of Proclamation No. 1081.

³² Imelda Romualdez Marcos, "Film as Art," *The Compassionate Society and Other Selected Speeches*, 59.

Marcos explains that “[f]ilm-making is not just an art, it is also a business.”³³ The authenticity of the Filipino as distinct from and yet inevitably part of the universal struggle of humanity became an economic endeavor for the Marcoses. Cinema under the Marcoses would no longer be confined to the particularities of the *bakya* sensibility but would garner an international audience whose returns would speak to the Marcoses’ global aspirations.

Lino Brocka would eventually emerge during the martial law period as one of the Philippines’ most talented young filmmakers, re-invigorating Philippine cinema with his supposed “return” to artistry and casual disregard of the trends of the mass market. While Brocka would ultimately become a vocal critic of the Marcos regime, both his films and his role as an artist were well-received during the strictly regulated Marcos era. This remains a quandary of the period – how films that posed seemingly incisive critiques of the government thrived despite these critiques. Some critics pointedly urge that the regulations of the BCMP made it so that critiques of the presidency were lodged in more subtle ways, that the skill of filmmaking during this period was evident in the creative ways with which filmmakers could illustrate the current state of affairs while also meeting the demands of the BCMP. Perhaps, part of this question could be answered by Brocka’s own understanding of his approach to filmmaking. In an article that he penned for a 1974 issue of the *Manila Review*, Brocka discusses the “problem” of the *bakya*, a Filipino cinematic taste that craved the “kiss-kiss, bang-bang, zoom-zoom, boo-hoo, song-and-dance flickers” of highly commercialized cinema. Brocka explains the task of the filmmaker:

³³ Ibid., 58.

One must therefore first build his own audience: by gathering experience that is not alien to the majority of Filipinos at a particular time; by compressing and systematizing this experience for them; and by giving back this now crystallized experience to them in films they would enjoy and be moved by and take as their own. It is a slow but continuous process, and one's work gets better and becomes more challenging each time. Somerset Maugham has said that one should have minor works on which to build one's major works. And the sincere Filipino film-maker should get over his hang-up about making the Great Filipino Film; he should, instead, think seriously about developing the Great Filipino Audience.³⁴

With this statement, Brocka takes up the very narrative that the Marcoses espoused with their declaration of the New Society. The Marcoses sought to regulate and define the Filipino according to the demands of the global market, by synchronizing, as Tadiar aptly suggests, the Philippines with modern time and space. Brocka does not call for a deconstruction of the Filipino per se but a deliberate refashioning of the Filipino based on real time and space. He places importance on “gathering experiences” that are not “alien” but of a “particular time,” situated in the historicity of “the majority of Filipinos.” He attempts to create a cinematic language fashioned out of these particularities, one that the audience can use to “enjoy,” “be moved by,” and “take as their own.” He also describes the act of filmmaking itself as a process based on a “protracted struggle.”³⁵ The shift from creating the “Great Filipino Film” to the “Great Filipino Audience” is instructive here, for it points less to the duality between the two ends but to the importance of the in-between space. Brocka removes the very narrative – the Great Filipino Film – upon which artists are fixated and takes with it the acclaim attributed to the artist herself or himself. Instead, he focuses on the trajectory with which a collective body is created and points to the

³⁴ Lino Brocka, “Philippine Movies: Some Problems & Prospects,” *Readings in Philippine Cinema*, 261.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 260.

reconfiguration and reorganization of the masses. If, for Marcos, the Filipino needed to better comprehend its noble past in order to assume its proper place in the realm of a worldwide humanity, then Brocka insists upon wresting this Filipino from Marcos in order to better situate it within the realities of its present conditions. Thus, the incisiveness with which Brocka organizes his critique of the Marcos regime lies not in any obliteration of the regime itself but in the enactment of his own *mis*-reading of the dictates of the New Society.

***Insiang* and the Devolvement of Humanity**

Brocka's 1976 film *Insiang* was heralded as one of the best films of the period.³⁶ The film narrates the story of the beautiful and chaste Insiang as she navigates the difficulties of life in Tondo, one of Metro Manila's poorest slums and home to Smokey Mountain, Manila's waste dump. Insiang lives with her mother, Tonya, and her father's relatives. Her father has abandoned the family for another woman, and Tonya continuously mistreats her daughter and in-laws because they remind her of her husband's infidelity. Tonya resents her in-laws' inability to pay their own way and eventually evicts them from her home after a nephew angers a neighboring storeowner. Once the in-laws move away, Tonya brings her lover, Dado, into her home. Dado is a local gangster and has a reputation for sleaze and crime. Insiang fascinates him, but she constantly refuses his sexual advances. Insiang, meanwhile, attempts to maintain her relationship with her boyfriend, Bebot, who is becoming increasingly agitated with Insiang's refusal to have sex with him. Insiang explains to Bebot that she cannot meet

³⁶ Lumbera, "Problems in Philippine Film History," *Readings in Philippine Cinema*.

him for their dates because of Tonya's strict surveillance over her behavior. At the climax of the film, Dado rapes Insiang but manages to convince Tonya that the rape was Insiang's fault because he is "only a man" and that Insiang repeatedly teases him with her body. Insiang turns to Bebot for help, asking him to take her away from her abusive home and marry her. Bebot promises to take her away from Tondo and marry her only before bringing her to a motel, sleeping with her, and then abandoning her before morning. Distraught by these multiple violences, Insiang plots a plan of revenge against all those who have wronged her as she begins to trek back to her mother's home. She first manipulates Dado into thinking that she has fallen in love with him and then her mother into believing that Dado never loved her and plans to leave her. In a fit of maniacal rage, Tonya stabs Dado to death. The final scene of the film shows Tonya locked in a prison. Insiang confesses her plot of revenge to her mother and then leaves. Tonya peers out of her jail cell and watches Insiang walk away.

The film forebodingly opens in a slaughterhouse and uses swine to weave an introduction that is both curious and disturbing. In the first scene, Dado and his fellow workers systematically butcher pigs. These shots are taken from various parts of the slaughterhouse and are rapid in their depiction of the process by which live pigs enter the factory, are boiled, skinned, and prepared for eventual consumption. There is no dialogue; only the shrieks of the pigs permeate this first scene. The butchering of the swine itself is made to be shocking: their squeals are deafening, and the process itself is grotesque – blood is spilled on the floors, and the veteran butchers barely flinch. The film quickly turns to Tonya as she sells food and barter with customers in the *palengke* or marketplace. Likewise, the only audible sounds here are those of the busy but

incomprehensible chatter of the marketplace. The juxtaposition of these two scenes illustrates the procession by which food is prepared and then sold in assembly-line fashion, and, yet, the disconnection between the pigs, butchers, and marketgoers is almost indistinguishable. As if by accident, these introductions are interrupted by almost-still shots of Tondo, filled literally to the brim with urban waste. Aside from music that plays in the background, these slow shots of Tondo do not contain the same “noise” of the previous scenes. The people of Tondo, much like swine, rummage for scraps; their faces are unnamed and haggard. The slaughterhouse and *palengke* scenes, in their noisy disarray, seem awkwardly sutured to the quiet introduction of Tondo’s landscape. The first instance of dialogue does not occur until Insiang returns home after her long trek from her laundering job. Insiang leads the camera to the crowded home that she shares with Tonya and several of her relatives. As the camera showcases the family’s cramped quarters, a lone pig eats scraps of food while one of Insiang’s youngest relatives bathes next to its quarters. Placed side-by-side, the naked child and the pig illustrate the depths of the family’s poverty, indistinguishable from the squalor in which the animals find comfort. By bookending this introduction to the main characters of the film with the life and death of these animals, Brocka illustrates the living conditions of Manila’s urban poor – simultaneously removed from the category of humanity just as Manila’s elite carefully strives to define that humanity as homogenous and all-encompassing.

While some argue that *Insiang* does not constitute a “political” critique aside from its location in Tondo,³⁷ it is Brocka’s treatment of this locale that both constitutes its very

³⁷ Lumbera, *Readings in Philippine Cinema*.

politics and thereby reconfigures the political. In 1974, by presidential decree,³⁸ Marcos created the Tondo Foreshore Development Authority to oversee the development of an urban renewal program in Tondo. Again, in 1975, with Presidential Decree No. 814,³⁹ the president prescribed a land tenure system known as the Tondo Foreshore and Dagat-Dagatan Urban Development Project (TFDD). Funded by the World Bank, the project aimed to decrease poverty and create better living conditions for residents by developing a system of community involvement that granted to local *barangay*⁴⁰ officials jurisdiction over the administration of land. As expected, control fell to wealthy urbanites who best complied with the president's prescribed goals for redevelopment.⁴¹ Marcos's call for community uplift through the betterment of living conditions became entirely inaccessible to the majority of Tondo's residents, who were forcibly displaced from their homes. This transience is illustrated quite lucidly in Brocka's treatment of displacement in *Insiang*. The characters are often positioned within the same frame, denoting the claustrophobic conditions of their lives. Insiang's relatives are evicted by Tonya at the beginning of the film, which allows Dado to move in with Tonya and Insiang. Insiang later attempts to run away from home with Bebot but is forced to return home after he abandons her. The characters move but do so in restricted frames and spaces. This movement is characterized by a desire and necessity to leave but also an inability to do so – reminiscent of Marcos's urban development programs and the ways that they deliberately restricted mobility.

³⁸ Presidential Decree No. 570 (P.D. No. 570).

³⁹ Presidential Decree No. 814 (P.D. No. 814).

⁴⁰ The term refers to small, governing bodies relegated to specific provinces. The *barangay* system was a main unit of governance under the Marcos administration.

⁴¹ Mary Racelis, "Community Empowerment, People's Organizations, and the Urban Poor: Struggling for Shelter, Infrastructure, Services, and Dignity in the Philippines."

The TFDD project and the 1977 reclamation of Manila Bay⁴² have often been described as part of the Marcoses' beautification projects, as Imelda Marcos's transformation of Metro Manila into the "City of Man," and as the work of ridding the city of its most unsightly and ghastly parts. Both reforms purported a narrative of uplift that was, in fact, based primarily upon systematic efforts to remove the urban poor from the land. For TFDD, the restructuring of deciding power from the Marcos administration to the community in the form of *barangay* officials was an attempt to appease community organizers who were worried about the displacement of residents. It offered a semblance of self-determination for this community that was made meaningless within the larger scheme of urban development. These two projects suggested that the livelihood of the Filipino, her or his ability to thrive, would be at the center of development efforts. The opening of Brocka's film takes great pains to illustrate the specificity of the Tondo landscape. This illustration becomes somewhat of a fractured narrative that depicts the dissonance between the Marcoses' narrative of uplift and its eventual unfolding. For Brocka, the deliberate lack of dialogue in the opening scenes speaks quite precisely to the unspeakable conditions of urban poverty in the Philippines, that is, to the deliberate silencing of the community at the same time that it is given representative power over how it will unfold. And, still, the quick and jolting noise that foregrounds the silence speaks to the inassimilable facets of the urban poor for which the Marcoses' projects could not account. The establishment of the Zone One Tondo Organization (ZOTO), for instance, would struggle tirelessly to inform residents of impending development sanctions by the Development Authority and to halt demolition efforts, serving as a

⁴² Presidential Decree No. 1085 (P.D. No. 1085).

continuous reminder to the Marcoses of the tenacity of resistance efforts against their reform projects.⁴³

Brocka's decision to use Tondo as the setting of the film instead of the originally intended Pasay was a calculated one.⁴⁴ In a review of the film, Philippine film critic Noel Vera writes, "The slums of Pasay, where O'Hara had originally set the film, are full of prostitutes, bargirls, transvestites, what-have-you; girls, even girls as beautiful as Koronel, are a dime a dozen there. Brocka set the film in Tondo's slums and nearby Smoky Mountain because he wanted the visual impact of Koronel's beauty against Tondo's spectacular squalor."⁴⁵ Herself plucked by Brocka from the slums of Angeles City in Pampanga, the teenage Hilda Koronel, who played Insiang, quickly rose to cinematic stardom after Brocka featured her in several of his films. Koronel's "beauty" became Brocka's muse, and Vera's insistence upon and Brocka's attention to this distinct beauty is less an acknowledgement of any naturalized claim to virtue but a deliberate reconstitution of an aesthetic sense based on the interrogation of the very conditions that made squalor possible. The first half of *Insiang* focuses on the dissonance between Insiang and Tondo itself. At the start of the film, Insiang emerges a lone figure from the silent desperation of Tondo's dirt streets, sun shining onto her lone body as she walks with a tired yet resolute firmness that contrasts the languid stoicism of her counterparts. Her income as a launderer provides the livelihood for her family, and she serves as an intermediary between her father's relatives, whom her mother has reluctantly housed, and

⁴³ See Mary Racelis and Janess J. Ann Ellao's article "Trining Herrera and Her Memories of the Urban Poor Struggle Under Martial Law." *Bulatlat.com*.

⁴⁴ The film is an adaptation of Mario O'Hara's play *Insiang*, which was set in Pasay.

⁴⁵ Noel Vera. *Pinoy Exchange*. (March 8, 2002).

<http://www.pinoyexchange.com/forums/showthread.php?t=35321&page=2>.

her mother. The audience is, once again, alerted to Insiang's distinguished character as the camera catches Dado's penetrating eyes from the rearview mirror of his vehicle, lustfully fixated on her as she walks past him. Dado eventually rapes Insiang, and she subsequently attempts to escape Tondo with Bebot, who ultimately abandons her in a motel. Insiang is thus marked by her capacity to enact physical, affective, and sexual labor as a way of ensuring the ordered hierarchy of the film. The rape is the violent penetration of Insiang's body and the forcible extraction of her labor, all of which incite her desire to escape these conditions yet ultimately reveal the very inescapability of their circuitous nature.

In a 1969 speech to the Philippine Women's University upon its conferral of an honorary degree to the First Lady, Imelda Marcos described the basis upon which the "new Filipina" will be cultivated: "It is [...] love that will most characterize and direct her activities in the world outside. She will be primarily concerned with the areas of basic human needs [...] to be what God intended her to be – a help to all who need sympathy, tenderness, compassion, and love. This is why God made her."⁴⁶ This would be a modern Filipina womanhood that did not abandon ideas of women's equality so characteristic of liberal philosophy but one that took seriously a new responsibility of compassion for humanity. As Tadiar explains, "This widespread freeing up of females from their supposed traditional social ground and the consequent commodification of their individuated bodily beings comprised precisely the general 'prostitution' of Filipinas accomplished through the modernization schemes initiated by the Marcos regime."⁴⁷

⁴⁶ Imelda Romualdez Marcos, "The New Filipina," *The Compassionate Society and Other Selected Speeches*.

⁴⁷ Tadiar, *Things Fall Away*, 69.

Prostitution, according to Tadiar, denotes the nation's subcontracting of female bodies in order to sustain the operation of its export industries.⁴⁸ Vera's statement about the multitude of "girls" available for work in Pasay points precisely to the veracity of Tadiar's postulations here, both arguing that the "availability" of women signals not merely the coincidence of their number or presence but, rather, the force with which Marcos's many projects of modernization and development fell onto the bodies of poor, laboring women. Imelda Marcos reportedly once said, "I do not just give: I give until it is beautifully given."⁴⁹ Marcos valued beauty as an indicator of her humanist care for others and as a quality that would outline her cultural projects. Her conception of beauty was defined by a set of aesthetic standards dictated by excess and all things that remained palatable to modern sensibilities of cleanliness and order. Creating Insiang as both the bearer of care and sexualized violence, Brocka makes painstakingly clear his visualization of Koronel's distinct beauty as a canvas that makes lucid the intimacy and complexity of Filipina subjectivity. His treatment of Insiang dismantles beauty as a veneer through which violence masquerades itself. This violence is defined by the restrictive and claustrophobic conditions imposed onto women by a Marcos regime that used urban development projects as a vehicle of patriarchal guardianship.

What remains perplexing in *Insiang*, however, is not that Insiang remains *apart* from Tondo but that she eventually becomes a distinct *part of* it. The precision of Brocka's critique here, in other words, lies in the failure of the self to truly cohere – the radical devolvement of the characters into what appears to be a downward spiral of

⁴⁸ Ibid., 29.

⁴⁹ Hamilton-Patterson, *America's Boy*, 251.

immorality. After Insiang is raped by Dado, betrayed by Tonya, and abandoned by Bebot, she transforms into an almost unrecognizable version of herself, offering little dialogue and no sense of desire to live. She seems to have resigned herself to a life of loneliness and misery. As it turns out, she has employed a plan for revenge against her abusers. She cultivates a way to make Dado believe that she has fallen in love with him, motivates him to beat Bebot senseless, and forces her mother to believe that Dado will eventually leave her for Insiang. Dado eventually resolves himself to Insiang and confesses to her, "I am in love with you." This confession of dependence by Dado to Insiang sparks within her a glimmer of motivation, a spark, that signals not only that her plan of revenge is working but that she may gain some kind of access to something that she actually *wants*. Dado's concession of his "I" here is important, for it illustrates his culpability within the general interweaving of this bizarre narrative. This concession makes certain that all of the characters fall in a fantastic display of collective devolvement. In the final act of bloodshed, Tonya stabs Dado to death, Dado falls helplessly to the floor as he writhes in pain, and Insiang remains emotionless as she watches her plan reach its height. For Brocka, this is not Insiang's redemption. While audiences and critics alike may empathize with Insiang (she is the title character after all, and the audience watches the narrative through her vision), it remains unclear as to which of the characters' motivations is more redeemable than the other. Brocka does not tell the tale of an insurmountable human maliciousness. The focus, rather, is on the conditions that make any semblance of any intrinsic human quality, so touted by Imelda Marcos, virtually incomprehensible. The independent, self-determined entity that the Marcoses postulated would be the cornerstone of their developmental reforms is veritably deconstructed here

by Brocka's insistence on the mutuality of experience propagated by urban poverty in the midst of global modernization. In other words, not only are Insiang, Tonya, and Dado intimately connected to their neighbors who do not have the privilege of entering the visual frame of this cinematic triangulation, but their very lives are connected to and shaped by the demands of modernization that have dictated these very interactions.

Both Insiang and Tonya devolve into a madness that is less a response to betrayal and violence as it is a resurgence of energies lost and stolen by violence itself. Near the beginning of the film, Insiang's cousin Edong explains that he can no longer stomach living amidst such depraved conditions and that he is often tempted to commit terrible acts of violence. Insiang urges him to restrain himself and hold onto his goodness a little bit longer. It is, in fact, Insiang who cannot restrain herself. By the end of the film, it is the loss of her recognizable self at the hands of her abusers that facilitates the creative re-imagining and transformation of her social conditions – namely, the vengeful murder of her rapist and the incarceration of her abusive mother. Insiang thus employs a reordering of power and paradoxically retains the inextricable connection with both Dado and Tonya. The film was originally intended to end as soon as Tonya stabbed Dado to death; however, the BCMP ordered that Brocka alter the ending in order to offer a familial resolution between Insiang and Tonya. While Brocka did offer a meeting between the mother and daughter at the end of the film, it remains inconclusive. There is no humanistic reconciliation here: even as Tonya and Insiang recognize their familial ties at the end of the film, they approach each other with a kind of unrecognizability that is provoked by the heinousness of the violence that structures their lives. The language of humanity is rendered indecipherable here – not only for making sense of this violence but

also for imagining an accountability that would lead to an effective solution for punishment. Herein lies the precision of Brocka's critique to be able to disarticulate the Marcoses' cultural paradigm and its concomitant developmental trajectory. Rather than contain the chaos through the contours of modernization and development, as Marcos had instructed, Brocka renders the chaos palpable, as the very composition of Philippine experience.

Chapter Two:

“We Were War Surplus, Too”: Nick Joaquin and the Im/possibilities of Filipino Historical Becoming

“The identity of a Filipino today is of a person asking what is his identity.”

–Nick Joaquin, *Culture and History*¹

Nick Joaquin (who also wrote under the penname Quijano de Manila) wrote much of his work as permutations of that most pressing predicament above, that the identity of the Filipino is actually of a person asking what *is* his identity. Until his death in 2004, Joaquin was both a prolific writer of fiction – with two novels canonized in Philippine literature² – and a Philippine historian, the two occupations informed by and never veering too far away from each other. In 1976, Joaquin was conferred the prestigious title of National Artist of the Philippines for his contributions to Philippine literature,³ thereby distinguishing himself during the tumultuous martial law years as an artist who could promote the cultural development of the nation.⁴ Joaquin’s work is especially illuminating and generative for the precision with which it expresses a certain

¹ Nick Joaquin, *Culture and History: Occasional Notes on the Process of Philippine Becoming* (Manila: Solar Publication Corporation, 1988).

² *The Woman Who Had Two Navels* was published in 1961 and *Cave and Shadows* in 1983.

³ It should be noted that Joaquin only accepted the award in exchange for the release of political prisoner and writer Jose “Pete” Lacaba. Tadiar explains, “When martial law was declared, [Lacaba] went underground. Imprisoned by Marcos in 1974 for his partisan journalism and subversive activities, he was pardoned when his former editor, Nick Joaquin, a renowned writer who was named National Artist by the regime, asked Marcos to release Lacaba in exchange for his acceptance of the award.” See Tadiar, *Things Fall Away*, 188.

⁴ Marcos established the National Artist of the Philippines award by Proclamation 1001 in 1972. In the previous chapter, I discuss the ways that such cultural development projects were fundamental to Marcos’s establishment of his New Society.

ambivalence around what it means to be Filipino during the post-World War II period when such a quandary was supposed to have already been solved by a post-independence nationalist resolve. In *Culture and History*, his formative account of Philippine historiography, Joaquin insists: “Before 1521 we could have been anything and everything *not* Filipino; after 1565 we can be nothing *but* Filipino.” He proceeds to argue that “the difference between Spanish advent and the American [is] that the technical revolution provoked by the first produced the Filipino, while the cultural upheaval provoked by the second merely helped us to become more aware of this Filipino-ness.”⁵ By illustrating the Filipino in these ways, Joaquin describes the process of Filipino becoming. In the way that the inception of the Filipino names the emergence of colonial Spain in the Philippines, it actually traces the materialization of a collective consciousness fashioned precisely from the necessity to delineate national, class, and racial difference in civic life. The creation of the Filipino names the ingenuity of the advent of a unified political and social body in spite of multifarious regional and linguistic divides. The comprehensibility of Filipino-ness under the U.S. colonial regime, in contrast, facilitated the realization of the Filipino through a language of self-determination crafted by an already established nationalist imaginary. Already solidified as a collective force, Filipino here describes the locus of potential that was birthed by the promise of an eventual but not yet realized independence. In other words, the precision of Joaquin’s episteme lies in the notion that the Filipino both determines the historicity of the Philippine experience under variegated colonial regimes. More significantly, it also captures a picture of Philippine historical becoming that allowed people to imagine

⁵ Joaquin, *Culture and History*, 14.

modes of self-articulation and living that existed beyond/in spite of the prevailing boundaries that defined what was possible under these various colonial orders.

In her exploration of Filipino identity in the novels of Philippine writers NVM Gonzalez, Amado Hernandez, Nick Joaquin, and F. Sionil Jose, cultural critic Mina Roces explains that these writers' quest for uncovering the nature of Filipino identity is, in fact, a postcolonial endeavor to assert a *national* identity in the aftermath of independence.⁶ Roces writes that "the quest for identity was in reality the Filipino's attempt to come to terms with his colonial past. [The Filipino] was lost because of the historical circumstances of a long colonial rule. There was a consensus that colonial rule had negative effects on Filipino identity formation."⁷ Roces frames (true) Filipino identity here as existing before Spanish and U.S. colonial rule. Such an argument conceives of identity as a *telos* under modernity, as unproblematically lost and needing to be recovered. While such a study seems a necessary way to account for the particularities of colonial history in the Philippines in relation to the development of Philippine writing in English, I point to it here as an example of the limitations of Philippine historiography to attend to the ways that colonial, imperial, and nationalist epistemologies have predetermined the very ways that Philippine history can be conceptualized and articulated. For me, Roces's configuration of Filipino identity is striking in its deliberate irresoluteness. What if these writers are never able to come to terms with a colonial past precisely because the past is never actually the past? Put another, perhaps less trite, way: if, in a scholarly urge to recover the loss supposedly expressed by these writers, one

⁶ Mina Roces, "Filipino Identity in Fiction, 1945-1972," *Modern Asian Studies* 28, no. 2 (1994): 279-315.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 280.

actually forecloses upon the idea that such irrecoverable loss is precisely that which can untangle identity as the locus of something more than only the signifier of a people trying to find themselves in spite of its colonial history. The very notion of a loss is dangerous, for identity as a marker of subjectivity should not be recuperated. Instead, the imperative of its irresolution as described by Roces above lies in its ability to generate a discursive aperture that showcases the battle between the continuing impositions of historical modernity inherited by colonial legacies, mandates made by nationalist theorems struggling to redefine a Philippine republic in the aftermath of World War II, and attempts to imagine Filipinoness beyond the rhetoric of decolonial nationalist configurations of representation within a new global order that was attempting to blur national boundaries. Roces's configuration of the Filipino-as-lost as a problem of historical circumstance explains that the making and unmaking of the Filipino is, in fact, a question of history. Here, the task is not to historically excavate the Filipino but to allow the Filipino to illuminate something about history.

Although Roces argues that Joaquin's formulation of Filipino identity "does not opt for a renunciation of the colonial past" but advocates, instead, for its reconciliation, the adage above from *Culture and History* suggests something quite different from Roces's postulation. While Roces conceives of Joaquin's articulation of Filipino identity as a kind of compromise between a colonial past and a national future, I understand Joaquin's treatment of identity as something more of a rumination upon the complexity of Filipino self-determination within the limitations of historical modernity and, thereby, a dismantling of identity itself as a catalogue of history – not its pre-historical truth or post-historical result. Where the invocation of personhood might invoke the "who"

reserved for the subject of history, Joaquin's theorization of the Filipino makes an unconventional jump from the question of "who" is the Filipino" to "*what* is the Filipino." In this transition, Joaquin disinherits the Filipino from this subjectivity – often understood as the origin and *telos* of history⁸ – and instead constructs it as the vessel of Philippine historical experience that not only bears the interests, tensions, and conflicts attached to legacies of colonialism, war, and independence but also organizes the weight of historicity as it narrates modernity. In Renato Constantino's discussion of "Filipino" as a complex and contested category of belonging during Spanish colonial rule, he writes that "[t]he term Filipino started as an elitist concept with racial connotations. 'Filipinos' was used to designate the *creoles* or the Spaniards born in the Philippines, in contrast to the *peninsulares* or those who were born in the Iberian peninsula" and that "[t]he original 'Filipino' was therefore both a colonial and anti-colonial. He was a purveyor of Catholicism and at the same time anti-clerical. He was for the progress of the Philippines because it meant the progress of his class. Yet this same class position did not allow him in the beginning to toy with ideas of independence because this might mean the elimination of his group as a participant in the ruling process."⁹ Constantino's description of the Filipino here positions it as a mode of Spanish colonial organization that marked national, class, and racial difference insofar as it served the aims of colonial governance in the archipelago even as it traced it the beginnings of a fraught yet imperative national consciousness. Even Constantino's discussion of the conflict attached to the term Filipino as a marker of social belonging – which he wrote as a forerunner to a biography of the

⁸ See Dipesh Chakrabarty's *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*.

⁹ Renato Constantino, *The Making of a Filipino: A Story of Philippine Colonial Politics* (Quezon City, Manila: Malaya Books, 1969), 5.

statesman Claro Recto – suggests that the era for untangling the Filipino from any ahistorical conceptualizations of it is far from over. In a more recent discussion of Filipino subjectivity, Neferti Tadiar explains the specificity of the *Filipina* during the current period of globalization by reversing the question of “What is she?” to “She is what?” in order to highlight the ways that *Filipina* subjectivity is a being-for-others wherein the bodies and industrial and sexual labor of the *Filipina* is made to satiate an unceasing demand for capital within the neoliberal economy.¹⁰

Both Constantino and Tadiar offer ways of materializing Filipino subjectivity as modes of class, racial, national, gender, and sexual difference. And, yet, they both speak to and with Joaquin here in their articulations of Filipino subjectivity as illuminating the production of difference rather than uncovering the ways that difference itself is manifested through historical time. Constantino’s understanding of the Filipino as a pre-national technology of colonial organization, on the one hand, and decolonial insurgency, on the other, and Tadiar’s theorization of the *Filipina* national as a project of the transnational economy is, together, more than a discussion of the Filipino during two different historical periods. Instead, it is a conceptualization of the continuity and intricacy of colonial governance as it colludes with the development, redevelopment, and devolvement of the third world nation-state in the era of imperialism and globalization. It is an examination of Philippine historical experience, as Tadiar might suggest, as it contends with colonial modernity. Joaquin’s quandary “what is the Filipino” provides a

¹⁰ Neferti X. M. Tadiar, “‘Filipinas ‘Living in a Time of War,’” *Pinay Power*, edited by Melinda L. de Jesus (New York: Routledge, 2005).

generative historical framework with which to thread Constantino's and Tadiar's postulations in conversation with each other.

Postcolonial critics have waged formative attacks against history as the handmaiden of modernity. Such analyses elaborate upon the ways that modernity is realized through the telling and retelling of history and the imagining of a historical past to which to turn. This imagining unfolds through a humanist tradition of scientific reason and western logic cultivated by an enlightenment fixation with the pursuit of truth and progress. Some critics explore the ways that the propagation of such ideals throughout western Europe justified for respective nation-states their colonial and imperial conquest of lands and peoples deemed barbarous, savage, and in desperate need of the order such modern conventions would afford. This conceptualization of historical time does not intend to simply narrate the progression of such ideals and events throughout history, of course. Rather, it dismantles history as the very framework through which modernity can be realized. History under/as modernity – in its designation of (linear) time as the primary mode of organization – conceives of humanity as its propagator. Only through humanity can history be conceived, and only through history can humanity be realized. In Dipesh Chakrabarty's articulation of the ways that history privileges the nation-state as the most desirable form of political community under modernity,¹¹ he also centers the bourgeois individual at the center of such community. Where the subject exists at the center of the nation-state formation, the subject then becomes central to the unfolding of history under/as modernity. Put in other words, history is – over and over again – made

¹¹ Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 41.

legitimate through the coherency of the subject. In his discussion of the linearity of Philippine historiography, Reynaldo Ileto discusses the ways that *ilustrado* conceptualizations of Philippine history began with the “Fall” or the break from the “dark age” of Spanish colonialism toward a Philippine national consciousness.¹² Ileto writes that “[t]he first native students of Philippine history – Jose Rizal, Gregorio Sanciango, Isabelo de los Reyes, Ramon Paterno, and Trinidad Pardo de Tavera – saw their generation as the first to be guided by Reason rather than Superstition. As a way of liberating themselves from their colonial consciousness, they studied the ancient alphabets, literature, religion, and other aspects of pre-Hispanic society, and posited a time in the past when the Philippine archipelago was a flourishing civilization that, however, succumbed to the proffered benefits of alliance with the Spanish *conquistadores*.” Implicit in Ileto’s critique of linear historiography here and discussed by Constantino and others is the notion that the formation of Philippine national consciousness was dependent upon the emergence of the *ilustrado* as a bourgeois subject. What is most significant in Ileto’s critique here is not that the formative seeds of the nation-state were planted by the *ilustrados* but that the *ilustrado* both imagined himself and was imagined to be part of a modern world. As Ileto reveals, the *ilustrado* is located, situated, and recognized as a subject of modernity where the subject becomes thus susceptible to historical consequence. I do not intend to insist that colonial violence

¹² Ileto’s discussion, from his essay “Outlines of a Nonlinear Emplotment of Philippine History,” draws from the historical textbooks of Teodoro Agoncillo, which traces Philippine history from a pre-colonial era to the emergence of Philippine nationalism during the U.S. colonial period. Ileto discusses the ways that this historiography unfolds along a series of binaries that trace the emergence of the Philippine nation-state out of darkness. Agoncillo’s and formulation of Philippine history draws heavily upon the *pasyon* narrative, which follow the story of Christ’s redemption. Ileto discusses this at length in *Pasyon and Revolution* and other works. See Reynato Ileto, *The Politics of Culture in the Shadow of Capital*, edited by Lisa Lowe and David Lloyd (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997), 101.

cannot occur without such a designation. Instead, I explain that the formation of Filipino subjectivity – at a critical moment when the dissolution of the Spanish empire occurred in conjunction with the rise of U.S. imperialism – directs critical attention to the immense reach of modernity and its violent capability to usurp experience into history and to adamantly set the contours of historical and political recognizability.

The strength of Marcos's dictatorial power hinged upon the constitutional and historical legitimization of his rule. In other words, Marcos capitalized upon Philippine history as the avenue through which he would justify his political takeover of the Philippine government and then direct nation-building projects that proposed the political, economic, and cultural uplift of the Philippines. Marcos's revisionist narratives focused on excavating a "true" Filipino from the dregs of the Philippines' long colonial history. In *Tadhana: The History of the Filipino People*, Marcos points to the pre-colonial *indio* as the bearer of a rich, complex political and cultural life before the conquest of Spain and the *ilustrado* as a revolutionary intellectual that cultivated nationalist collectivities well before the implementation of U.S. colonial governance in the archipelago. In two notorious paintings commissioned by the First Couple, Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos are portrayed as "Malakas at Maganda," the first Filipino man and woman at the foundation of a Philippine creation mythology grounded upon heteropatriarchal reproductivity. Marcos's conceptualization of the origins of the Filipino people here nationalized an imagined past in order to identify a holistic Filipino subject that existed in distinction from its colonial histories. In establishing the historical positionality of the Filipino here, Marcos identifies the Filipino as the proper subject of history, as always already a subject of modernity. Where Spanish, U.S., and Japanese

regimes stunted the political and cultural development of the *indio*, Marcos's articulation and cultivation of the Filipino in these narrative revisions instilled within Filipino subjectivity the promises of historical positionality and weight that are afforded by the comprehensibility of an imagined pre-colonial subject. Throughout the Marcos era, Filipino subjectivity served as the place where authoritarian power could usurp the Filipino from the abyss of its checkered past. Where colonial developmental discourse was grounded in the progression of the Filipino under western logics of subordination and/or assimilation, Marcos insisted that the Filipino as the modern human subject was already there.

Joaquin might describe this temporal model as "Filipino time" – that is, "a quality lingering over from the 'timelessness' of our culture, and as a dogged resistance against the advent of the foreign tyrant clock, and as a sign of the effort it cost to readjust from clockless to clocked time." He explains that the difficulty of the notion that "[Filipinos] were unchanged by the clock" is "grossly simplistic."¹³ Joaquin refers to a nationalist conception of time that refuses the linear historicism of colonial bureaucratic governance in the colony and paternalistic commonwealth policies outlined by benevolent tutelage only for its western impositions over a pre-colonial culture that was made to suffer the imposition of a mode of time that was unnatural to it. Yet, as Joaquin seems to suggest, the simplicity of such an arrangement continues to rely upon a Benjaminian conception of empty, homogenous time that is not antithetical to colonial modernity but aligned with it. This timelessness of Filipino culture to which Joaquin refers conceives of an additive history – unable to delineate the intimacies of collusions of peoples through trade and war

¹³ Nick Joaquin, *Culture and History*, 8.

and work and to account for peoples, communities, cultures, and lives that are insoluble within modern time. Additionally, the timelessness of Filipino culture envisions a past to which the Filipino can no longer return. Such an idea, as Joaquin explains, forecloses the very possibility of comprehending the ways that Filipino culture in its hybridity generates its own possibilities of becoming in each historical iteration. Marcos's translation and utilization of historical time, on the one hand, and Filipino time, as Joaquin describes it, created what I describe as a regressive temporality. Pushing the timelessness of Filipino culture to its logical end, Marcos's vision of time "went back" to the past in order to re-enact its political development under the New Society. In other words, Marcos intended to go back so that he might justifiably and forcefully push forward in this re-creation of what it means to be Filipino. These postulations of the Filipino presence in historical time, the task of locating the Filipino in history – by nationalist theoretical platforms, by Joaquin, by Marcos – thus becomes the critical site of contestation and possibility that uncovers the political investments of groups vying for control over the proper direction of the nation. It also generates a discursive method for conceiving of ways out, so to speak, of the deterministic paradigms of self-actualization always already provided for the Filipino imagination.

Joaquin's novels, including the preeminent *The Woman Who Had Two Navels* (1961), according to Cristina Pantoja Hidalgo, narrate "the search for a national identity." She describes *Cave and Shadows* as "structured like a mystery thriller [...] drawing on a rich store of myth and legend but locating the action in the thick of contemporary events

and using a middle-class intellectual as protagonist.”¹⁴ It follows pseudo-detective Jack Henson through the streets of Manila in August of 1972 as he attempts to solve the mystery of the death of the young Helen “Nenita” Coogan. Coogan, the daughter of Jack’s former wife, Alfreda, who was found dead in a cave along the Pasig River referred to as the Barrio Bato. The cave is at the center of a heated struggle between Christian and neo-pagan activists over the rights to its use. The novel thus traces Jack’s work to find Nenita’s murderer as he also wrestles with national Philippine politics and his own tumultuous memories of his youth in Manila. This chapter is an investigation of Filipino identity in *Cave and Shadows* as the avenue for Joaquin’s historiographic exploration of Spanish and U.S. coloniality, the rise and development of Philippine nationalism, the political direction of the Philippine nation state in the aftermath of World War II and then into the martial law period, and the proliferation of Philippine culture throughout these political and historical trajectories. It argues that Joaquin’s treatment of Filipino identity in addition to his re-imagination of time and space treats subjectivity as the basis for a historiography that challenges historicism itself as a mode of colonial governance and the impetus for nationalist paradigms of self-determination. In doing so, he articulates the ways that history, at once, usurps the Filipino consciousness within the regulatory confines of modernized definitions of selfhood yet also provides another imaginary through which this consciousness might be re-evaluated and redeployed.

This chapter points to Marcos’s utilization of a regressive temporality as a method of reconstructing Philippine historiography in order to position the Filipino as a pre-

¹⁴ Cristina Pantoja Hidalgo, “The Philippine Novel in English into the Twenty-first Century,” *World Literature Today* 74, no. 2 (2000): 333-336.

existing subject of modern time, cohering with claims of the Filipino's inclusion within a universal humanity. Here, Nick Joaquin's 1983 novel *Cave and Shadows*, a text that uses the uniqueness of martial law and Marcos authoritarianism and its attendant nationalism, rethinks Philippine historiography away from Filipino subjectivity and any false notion of a "true Filipinoness." For Joaquin, recuperating the Filipino subject is far less important than articulating the ways that colonialism and nationalism have established the limits of Filipino subjectivity in the modern era.

The Manila Summer and Narrative and Bodily Decomposition

Published in 1983 – two years after the end of martial law and three years before Marcos's dramatic ousting by the People Power Movement – the novel is set during the month before Marcos's declaration of martial law in 1972. Where September of 1972 heralded the nation's emergence into martial law, the month of August refers to the political and social climate of the country before the commencement of the authoritarian state. Marcos would ultimately cite the growing social unrest that culminated in violent protests against his administration – popularly referred to as the First Quarter Storm – as the impetus behind his decision to declare martial law over the country. The novel's initial descriptions of the intensity of the Manila heat attests to the urgency of this political and historical moment when established rules are broken, when tensions explode, and when previously separated factions come head-to-head in eruptive ways. For those of us who have had the mis/fortune of enduring the tropical heat of the Philippines' urban metropolis, Joaquin's elaborations of it may come as familiarly disconcerting. It is suffocating and passionate, and it generates an atmosphere of

confusion and turmoil. In the beginning pages of the novel, Jack is reintroduced to Manila after a long absence in Davao, and it is less than comfortable. In the first lines of the novel, Jack finds “himself in a swoon” where he feels “his body droop and start steaming [...] the favor warm against his clothes [settle] back as dew on the skin and [...] spilled soup from groin and armpit.”¹⁵ The narrator explains that Jack “had been brought upon on an awful image of August [...] a month red with fire and red with blood, the month of amok, when tempers are cracked or crazed.”¹⁶ The effects of August here are specifically enacted onto and upon Jack’s body. Jack is no longer himself but caught – if only momentarily – in a spell. Not only does his body literally shift form as it stoops, but it also becomes dehydrated of nourishment as it steams and spills. The heat facilitates Jack’s disembodiment, the transformation of his whole body into various disfigurements. Additionally, August propels normally calm dispositions into fits of insanity.

As Jack’s body falters under the intense heat, the narration continues to illustrate August with a promise of movement, disruption, and danger:

With the rains come a change of mood and a difference in hotness. If you felt broiled in March, you feel boiled in August. The seething month has nothing of the stillness, the candor, of summer. Its heat waves are in constant stir, building up to a fit. Danger looms if the air is unclear, like a smoke. This thickens and darkens until, overheated, it explodes – into a thunderstorm, a cloudburst, a typhoon. But the storm neither clears nor cools the air. It only feels muggier afterwards; and from the ground steams a miasma: the *singaw ng Yupa*, or earthsmell, that’s mustiest after an August flash flood. The alternation between heat wave and hurricane accounts for the myth of August as a violent month, the myth now recalled by Jack Henson, on this August morning of 1972, as moving aimlessly he found himself on Rizal Avenue.¹⁷

¹⁵ Joaquin, *Cave and Shadows*, 1.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 2.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 2.

The typhoon conjured here foreshadows the climactic events of the novel, namely, the storm that results in the death of Andre Manzano and the subsequent suicide of his father, politician and activist leader Alex Manzano. This also narrates, however, a certain destabilization in which something once known to be true can no longer retain its “candor” in the face of the disarming heat. Insofar as the other summer months might be characterized by a particular “stillness,” such a description of August proffers a break from a certain normality and becomes a way to highlight the alarming specificity of the present moment in which Jack finds himself. The adamancy instilled by the directive pronoun “this” coupled with the morning dawn and the date “1972” on “this August morning of 1972” directs attention to the eruption posed by the First Quarter Storm and the declaration of martial law. As a genealogical reconsideration of these events, the invocation of heat becomes something of a rumination upon the historical weight and implications of the martial law era and its provocations. While Joaquin’s presentation of heat unfolds along a linear trajectory where the intensity of the heat is only depicted through Jack’s bodily discomforts and then eventually develops into the promise of a typhoon, the narration explains that the “storm neither clears nor cools the air” but that the climate “only feels muggier afterwards.” Rather than pursue any developmental illustration of the storm to its logical end, the confusion of the storm never actually dissipates but remains definitively unclear. As an explosion that never settles, this is a reconceptualization of historical time through a literary disinvestment in its progressive, developmental unfolding. Instead, time is suspended so that the August of 1972 can be considered not as absorbed by historical occurrence but lying in contestation to the schema of history. Here, historical time as a technology of modernity is rendered

inadequate for grappling with the gravity of martial law within the larger framework of Philippine history.

The latter part of the passage finds that the confusion of the heat has paved the way for Jack's recollections of the past as he struggles to "return" to himself while he wanders "aimlessly" along Rizal Avenue. The narration, tuning into Jack's consciousness, describes that "[e]ven as a child he had guessed that behind the superstition lay weather: the quality of violence that distinguished August heat from that of the summer months. Foreigners might smile to hear that in a year-long torridity Filipinos could still find a season to call summer."¹⁸ As Jack is tormented by the heat as it enacts itself onto his body, he simultaneously recalls his childhood. In other words, in this opening sequence, there is a formative conflict between the heat as it usurps Jack within its spell and Jack's own struggle to remember in spite of it. As Jack grapples with these forces, he finds himself along Rizal Avenue, in "downtown Manila, on an alley off Carriedo [...] A double stream of jeepneys curving round the corner of Plaza Goiti filled the avenue as far as the eye could see, from old Cine Ideal to the Odeon Theater at the Azcarraga crossing."¹⁹ In 1972, the Old Manila that consisted of a downtown that housed the Plaza Goiti, the Cine Ideal, and the Odeon Theater had already been virtually razed during the Battle of Manila where world powers staged its fight for control of the Pacific during World War II. As Jack traverses this city of the 1940s in 1972, he allows his memories of the prewar era to guide his present efforts to navigate this familiar-yet-different city. This is not the dissolution of Old Manila but, instead, its persistent

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

irreconcilability in the face of development so that it must lie in stark existence with New Manila rather than become absorbed within the totalizing progression of history. In his exploration of the “city” in Philippine writing, E. San Juan, Jr. offers a lucid reading of Jose Rizal’s *El Filibusterismo* (1891) to showcase the ways that Rizal’s treatment of Manila exposes the “truth of social domination.” He explains that “by offering infinite possibilities of chance encounters, coincidences, fortuitous and accidental happenings, Manila generates the conditions for the individual subject disappearing and merging with the interplay of collective forces, social classes, in order to trace the path of his/her personal destiny.”²⁰ For San Juan, Manila is precisely the place of encounter – not simply between the colonizer and the colonized but, more importantly, for a collective body unified by “nostalgic utopian longings.” Most compelling about San Juan’s claim here is that the devolvement of the individual subject into the “interplay of collective forces [and] social classes” becomes the productive force that is used to expose the violences of the colonial order. In other words, it is the specific labor of Simoun in the *Fili* to “[fabricate] revelations behind the scene” that sacrifices the promises afforded to individual subjectivity under the colonial order by forcing it to disintegrate through the creation of something altogether different from the conditions of living shaped by civic life under colonial domination. Similarly, Jack’s simultaneous familiarity and dissonance with Manila provides the narrative space with which Joaquin uncovers the palimpsestic remains of a war waged in the Philippines. The narration describes, “He thought of the salvaged khaki and fatigues that himself young had been belted into, in the later 1940s:

²⁰ E. San Juan, Jr., “Encircle the Cities by the Countryside: The City in Philippine Writing,” *Journal of South Asian Literature* 25, no. 1 (Winter, Spring 1990): 198.

the kids, then, we were war surplus too, like the jeepneys. Olive drab painted over with rainbows was our world of leftovers.”²¹ Jack, here, attempts to make sense of the modernization of the Philippines’ capital city while its landmarks wane under the elusiveness of his memory. Yet, Jack’s memories of his postwar childhood serve as the bulk of his consciousness while his physical self navigates the present-day geography of modern-day Manila well after its reconstruction. In this way, Jack’s self is always constituted by this multifarious array of historical occurrence. Joaquin’s mastery of the English language here – his seamless comparison of the children raised in war to the jeepneys that stayed after war’s end – illustrate the transformation of the dregs of war, its surplus objects, into the very framework of modern humanity. Joaquin makes reference to the jeepneys that were “olive drab painted over with rainbows” as he definitively outlines the “world” of Jack’s generation – a generation of kids that were “belted into” the fatigues of war so that they would be made from war. Joaquin traces the ways that war surplus sets the contours of Filipino subjectivity so that it is made to bear the reconstitutions of power that are delineated after war’s official end.

The advent of national independence from the United States in 1946 in the aftermath of World War II facilitated for nationalists a new set of questions regarding the proper political development of the country. One nationalist strain, in particular, concerned itself with identifying its development with an Asian consciousness that adamantly rejected the continuing U.S. presence in the Philippines even after 1946. Most notably, the continuation of U.S. military bases in the country illustrated the most blatant disregard of Philippine national sovereignty, showcasing the imperialist desires intrinsic

²¹ Joaquin, *Cave and Shadows*, 3.

to the construction of the young Philippine republic. Joaquin articulates the perplexity of postwar Filipino subjectivity through Jack's meanderings and recollections. Here, Jack-as-Filipino protagonist reflects the ways that the Filipino as a nationalist paradigm grappled with the quandary of transition from commonwealth to nation, from territory to republic. The complications of Jack's remembering and the confusion of the urban space where he finds himself illustrates a struggle to assert a uniquely nationalist platform amidst the suffocations of a continuing imperial presence. Again, more than allowing Jack to represent a particular nationalist political strain, Joaquin traces the process of Filipino becoming as a distinct and continual interplay between these articulations of independence and the necessity to acknowledge the means through which coloniality underscores the very coherency of Filipino being. While Jack can only comprehend himself through the language of war, his memory grapples through and against this totality by forcing him to comprehend the hybridity of his constitution. This is not Jack's return to a past that is impossible to ascertain, as Joaquin might instruct. It is a conceptualization of Jack that is parallel with the multiplicity of the jeepney's configuration: a sense of being Filipino that stands in spite of and against the logics of war's totalizing devastation.

Jack's bodily disintegration under the heat and his simultaneous reconstruction of his self through it – that is, the frustrating work to recollect and remember himself in the face of his own irreducibility – is the vehicle through which Philippine history is posited and entangled by Joaquin as his work grapples with it as modernity's technology of subjectivity. In other words, the complexity of Filipino subjectivity is prefigured in the character of Jack. As a mystery novel in which Jack serves as its primary investigator, the

entire unfolding of the mystery itself depends upon Jack's own cognition and reconstruction of the events that led to the various crimes. The mystery narrative seeks a certain recovery of truth that depends primarily upon the detective's own conceptualization of that truth. Insofar as Jack regains his own composure in the thick of the Manila heat, makes sense of his childhood relationships in the midst of present circumstances, and discovers the mystery of Nenita's death through larger questions of postcolonial identity, he transforms various fragmentations into a whole that is manifested, by novel's end, in the realization of a more reconciled self. Chakrabarty has described the novel as a genre that serves to express the modern self. For Joaquin's novel – a type of postcolonial mystery novel, to be sure – Jack is the modern self through which history must unfold.²²

²² I owe much of this reading of Joaquin's novel as a genealogy of martial law upon Foucault's theorizations of historiography. Insofar as the work of history is to narrate a past that can justify the present and portend a future, such a narrative depends upon the temporal logics of modern time and assumes both a proper place of return and the assurance of a future. For the postcolonial – a misnomer inasmuch as the "post" refers not to a completed process but a different one – what is the past if not always already the present? And how can the future not be constructed through terms already designated by colonial power? This compartmentalization of time portends a precolonial time to which the present has little access and points toward an overdetermined future, all of which obfuscate colonial systems of organization that remain in place well beyond the reach of modern temporal designations. The postcolonial is always already engaged in the act of becoming, a process for which history cannot always account. Not a counterhistory, then, but a reconceptualization of historical occurrence, a genealogy attempts to reveal the overlapping mechanisms of power and domination at work in the formation of such narratives. In "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," Foucault offers a reading of Nietzsche's *Genealogy of Morals* that defines genealogy as that which refuses the origin, follows the path of descent, and maps an effective history onto the body. Foucault writes that a genealogy "does not oppose itself to history as the lofty and profound gaze of the philosopher might compare to the molelike perspective of the scholar; on the contrary it rejects the metahistorical deployment of ideal significations and indefinite teleologies. It opposes itself to the search for 'origins.'" A genealogy, as Foucault explains, is not a counterhistory; it does not reject attempts to record a narrative. It is, however, critical of the aims that history assumes in its ongoing quest for meaning, the result of an obsession with the "origin," which "makes possible a field of knowledge whose function is to recover it, but always in a false recognition due to the excesses of its own speech." For Foucault, the presence of the origin promises a truth that can never stand on its own but is only made possible through the creation of a discourse. Moreover, the origin is a moment of divinity that locates man within the realm of the gods, in his most perfect state, and signals a sovereignty to which he must return. The origin "comes before the body, before the world and time." Foucault responds to this critique of the origin with a call for examining the *Herkunft* or the descent. Rather than highlight the battles, victories, losses, and passage of specific "events," the descent follows "passing events in their proper dispersion" and identifies "the

Christianity and the Beatas

During a visit to the home of his old friends, Alex and Chedeng Manzano, Jack listens to the Manzano elder – the old-politician-turned-Christian-fanatic – Don Andong Manzano reminisce about his own politicization: “I began to see what a number of colonies we really were – a Chinese colony in trade, a Spanish colony in culture, a Washington colony in politics, a Hollywood colony in fashion, an English colony in language, a Roman colony in religion – and so forth. Even Bombay and Tokyo and Arabia had in some way colonized us.”²³ Don Andong continues to outline the “paradoxes of politics” as he first details his work as a campaigner for Manuel Quezon’s independence bill, which earned him a senatorial seat under Quezon’s administration during the U.S. Commonwealth period in the 1930s, describes his vocal opposition of the Japanese invading military in Davao, which caused political and physical danger for him during the Japanese occupation of World War II, elucidates upon the American praise that he garnered as a non-collaborator after the liberation of Manila, and finally explains his work to denounce U.S. efforts to grant to itself military and parity rights after Philippine independence. Don Andong asserts, “I can say that I never won – as the neo-

accidents, the minute deviations – or conversely, the complete reversals – the errors, the false appraisals, and the faulty calculations that gave birth to those things that continue to exist and have value for us; it is to discover that truth or being does not lie at the root of what we know and what we are, but the exteriority of accidents.” In contrast to the origin, which assumes a pre-established meaning before the enactment of that meaning, the path of descent urges that meaning is made in the accidents and errors of interaction, within the “hazardous play of dominations.” These meanings are the *Entstehung* or emergences that are created in the interstices of these “confrontations.” While history places emphasis on the placefulness of a significant occurrence or event, genealogy seeks the placelessness [“non-place”] of these accidents. Foucault argues that the body reveals an “effective history” enacted by genealogy, for the body “is molded by a great many distinct regimes; it is broken down by the rhythms of work, rest, and holidays; it is poisoned by food or values, through eating habits or moral laws; it constructs resistances.” Power enacts meaning onto the body by transforming the body into the self. See Michel “Nietzsche, Genealogy, History,” *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*, edited by D. F. Bouchard (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977), 77-87.

²³ Joaquin, *Cave and Shadows*, 66.

colonial candidate; and was never defeated – as the anti-imperialist candidate, whether the issue was the Americans behind Magsaysay or the Americans in Vietnam. I know I could have been President – I was approached – but I preferred, alas, to be right.”²⁴ Referencing Don Andong’s most recent conversion to Christianity, Jack teases him and describes his politicization as his first “road to Damascus.” As a Saul-turned-Paul, Don Andong’s revelation of his political life encapsulates his formation as a Filipino national subject. Through parallel structure, he initially elaborates upon his realization that the Filipino is a ceaseless array of colonialisms. The composition of this narration describes the Filipino less as a victim of multiple colonizations but, rather, as constituted through an ongoing process of colonizing. Also borne from the “paradoxes of politics,” however, this subject is fashioned out of emerging nationalisms both defined through and against the U.S. imperialist state and simultaneously shaped by anti-colonial and anti-imperialist dissent. Positioned and then repositioned according to the demands of collaborative and competitive state powers, the Filipino subject is the vehicle of nationalist and imperialist desire, on the one hand, and the breeding ground for a resistive consciousness on the other. In other words, the Filipino is not that which has always been but that which is always already *becoming*.

Don Andong’s conversion to Christianity provides Jack with preliminary information about the death of Nenita Coogan and the religious debates that surround it. As the central mystery of the novel, its slow unfolding facilitates debates about the tenacity of colonialism, methods of decolonization, and the proper form of nationalism. Jack learns that Nenita joined a religious movement based upon the life and work of La

²⁴ Ibid., 67.

Hermana Beata, a faith-healer of myth and legend of the 17th century Philippines who spent a significant portion of her life living alone in the Lakan Bato (or the Barrio Bato where Nenita's dead body was found). The novel reveals that, according to the earliest accounts of the Hermana's life written by the Dominican friar Iago del Santo Rosario, Hermana was a devout Christian woman who only left her cave after a divine providence called upon her to feed and heal the poor and sick of Manila. Consequently, she became a significant figure for the Christian faithful of the Philippines: "That she has today been recovered for history is due to the altered regard for a past disdained as colonial and benighted but now prized for its vigorous folk culture: the ikons and shrines, the cults and fiestas, the custom and ceremony of what may no more be scorned as folk Catholicism."²⁵ Canonized as the "first native saint of the Philippines,"²⁶ Hermana and the eventual rediscovery of the Lakan Bato in 1970 embodied for the church and its followers the sanctity of Christianity in the Philippines and justified the advancement of new paradigms that revolved specifically around the pioneering presence of the Hermana. In the mid-1960s, a journalist explained that the Hermana and the Beatas, the circle of women who devoted themselves to prayer and active service in the name of God and with whom the Hermana worked most closely, constituted the "first Women's Lib Movement in the Philippines."²⁷ When the same journalist later pronounced that the Hermana was not, in fact, lauded by the church but forced out of her cave for being a pagan, s/he sparked a series of bitter battles between the church and the neo-pagan groups of the

²⁵ Ibid., 107.

²⁶ Ibid., 109.

²⁷ Ibid., 107.

Philippines, each of whom adamantly defended their claims to the Hermana and to their rights to worship at the cave.

With these narratives, Joaquin details his fascination with the emergence of the Beatas as a religious movement in the 17th and 18th centuries. In *Culture and History*, Joaquin describes the Beatas as having emerged from the Dominican and Franciscan orders of the Spanish colonial regime but also as often working in opposition to its authority. Through an interweaving of myth, hearsay, gossip, and archival research, Joaquin explains in *Culture and History* that the origin of the beatas is attributed to the rise of the Hermana Sebastiana de Santa Maria, a poor *india* who “heralded a mystical movement that was to run a hundred years and to leave an enduring legacy: the first native religious communities.”²⁸ Hermana Sebastiana served as an intermediary for Dominican friars who had yet to establish a partnership with the laypeople under colonial rule. Working in conjunction with the religious order of the colonial government, she would, at once, remain outside the “cloister” of the clergy but remain devoted to promoting religious doctrine amongst the native people. Joaquin continues to chart the religious conversions of Antonia Ezguerra and Francisca Fuentes, two young widows from Manila who became hermits in the name of their unwavering devotion to God. The three women established a “little beaterio” that served as a “coming together of the Philippine races. Antonia Ezguerra was a creole, Francisca Fuentes probably a mestiza, the Hermana Sebastiana an India; and they were later joined by another older widow who had long been living as a recluse, Juana de la Trinidad. Another member of this primitive community was a native woman named Lorenza, who seems to have been Antonia’s

²⁸ Joaquin, *Culture and History*, 101.

maidservant but who was raised to the status of hermana.”²⁹ As a community of beatas that worked amongst the poor and tended to the sick, these women were recognized by the religious order yet struggled to “be recognized as a formal community and to found a house where women not content with ordinary devotion could test their competence for heroic sanctity.”³⁰ In spite of this serious opposition from Dominican authorities, they eventually saw the establishment of the “Beaterio de Santa Catalina, the first Philippine religious community.”³¹ Joaquin follows the progression of the community, elucidating upon the emergence of other prominent beatas and their respective conflicts with various religious officials. Joaquin’s intent to trace the formation of the first Philippine religious community also outlines the politics of racialized, gendered, and classed subjectivities during the 17th and 18th century under the Spanish crown. While it is significant that such a community brought together *indio*, Spanish, Chinese, and Japanese noble and working class women under a common movement,³² it is much more momentous to consider that its struggle for official recognition from the colonial state and then inability to become fully usurped within such forms of recognizability illustrates the extent of its possibility as a mode of anti-colonial justice. That is, even as the “dilemma of [the] native beati was that, even if they had wanted to, they could not have been regular religious – members, say of the Dominican or the Franciscan Order – because the policy then was not to admit

²⁹ Ibid., 107.

³⁰ Ibid., 108.

³¹ Ibid., 109.

³² Joaquin writes that by 1748 under Mother Ignacia, the beatas “were educating 45 girls – native, Spanish, and mestiza – and the number swelled the following year to 30 native girls, 20 Spanish girls, and four Negro women [...] A pioneer labor of the beaterio was the conducting of retreats for women, retreats that drew native women from all over the city and neighboring towns as well as Spanish ladies and mestizas, sometimes as many as ‘200 Spanish women and from 50 to 80 mestizas.’ All of these women of diverse races gathered as one, lived in community during the eight days of each retreat, and together performed the spiritual exercises within the beaterio, ‘to the great benefit not only of themselves but of the communities they came from.’ Racial integration started in the beaterios.” See Joaquin, *Culture and History*, 121.

natives to the regular religious orders”³³ the beatas were “an underground movement, as may be gathered by the attacks on it by its enemies in Church and State, enemies who, with reason, distrusted it, like everything novel, as bizarre, irregular, unconventional, freakish, nonconformist, anomalous, abnormal, and illegal [...] Even its early friends [...] seem to have feared it, since they fought it, because they couldn’t quite place it; and the more light-minded of the public were ready to believe anything of these queer creatures who were neither fish nor fowl, not of the cloister and yet not of the world.”³⁴

Produced out of an insistence upon “human solidarity” based upon a trope of suffering under inhumane conditions and the need to “nourish each other beyond the grave”³⁵ – neither a belief in the Darwinian separation of the fittest nor a propagation of a universal humanity to which everyone equally belongs – the beatas advanced a social framework that labored to alleviate the patriarchal mandates of the Spanish religious order. Even though the archbishop of Manila in 1771 demanded that the beaterio remove “vows of chastity, obedience and poverty” from its mandates, all of which adamantly opposed the reproductive aims of the colonial government, they “more or less ignored both king and archbishop and continued receiving girls who, after undergoing a two-year novitiate during which they were taught to read, write and sew, were allowed to make temporary vows, for a seven-year period, at the end of which they could make a perpetual profession as members of the beaterio.”³⁶ Joaquin’s conceptualizations of the beatas as originating from an individual woman of a particular social caste and then challenging this individuality through collective acts of resistance illuminate the mode through which

³³ Ibid., 116.

³⁴ Ibid., 122.

³⁵ Ibid., 118.

³⁶ Ibid., 121.

individualized subjectivity sanctioned colonial state power. Joaquin's illustration of the transference of history between the *Hermana Sebastiana* to the various *beatas* who came after her maps the modes through which colonial and state power and its accompanying resistances shaped and shifted throughout the 17th and 18th centuries. Joaquin explains that the *beatas* "have proved to be so adaptable to every shift of history because they were based on audacity and experiment."³⁷ Such adaptability, as Joaquin reveals, emerges as a refusal of the rigid subjectivity proffered by the colonial state – insofar as the *beatas* refused their nationalities and worldly possessions, seeking community amongst themselves – and functions, instead, through a collective labor enacted in devotion to God and community.

Similar to the ways that Constantino has sought to destabilize the Filipino as both a method of colonial organization around axes of race and class and a means of national coherence, Joaquin, too, treats the *beatas* as emblematic of a dynamic and complex Filipinoness that was fashioned from colonial policy and practice and formed through resistive decolonial and anti-colonial struggle. Joaquin insists, however, that religious movements offer an incisive medium through which such concerns around Filipinoness might be addressed and processed in useful ways. Toward the end of the novel, a deadly typhoon has climactically resulted in the death of the young Andre Manzano and interrupts – if only momentarily – the youth movement that has been brewing in Manila around rights to the Barrio Bato cave. In the section that begins immediately after the reader bears witness to the "boy [who] lay naked near the sill of the inner cave," Joaquin outlines a legendary story of the first archbishop of Manila sent by the Spanish crown to

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 122.

govern the godless people of the islands. As the story goes, the archbishop first arrives in Acapulco – the headquarters, so to speak, of the Spanish colonial government in the Americas – to the bewildering cautionary words of three witches who warn him of his ill fate in the archipelago. When he finally arrives in the Philippines, he meets a native priestess who leads him away from the singular god of Christian doctrine and toward the worship of multiple gods, as “[h]e had been trained to think of religion as urbanity but, watching the priestess worship, could not but feel how right it was that she should look as wanton and sinister as the rite itself, as the jungle itself.” As lovers, the two joined forces to wage battle against the Spanish colonial governor and his army so that “[b]y mid-August the Archbishop and the Princess had advanced downriver and established their headquarters in the cave of the hill called Lakan Bato, almost within sight of the city.”³⁸ Garnering support from other rebels in Manila, they created a formative resistive front against the governor’s army. Separating from the archbishop to rally the rebels in other parts of the country, they separated, and the archbishop was eventually attacked, seized, and killed at the hands of the governor. After being buried under the auspices of a royal Spanish funeral fit for religious authority with no mention of his denunciation and betrayal of the crown, his body was eventually exhumed because his grave attracted a flood of daily visitors devoted to the idea that he was not dead but only sleeping as he awaited the continuation of the struggle. In 1896, nearly two centuries after his supposed death, anti-colonial resistance leader Andres Bonifacio led peasant forces against the colonial regimes of Spain and the United States. Joaquin traces Bonifacio’s outline against the archbishop’s contours, for the “mountain folk [...] were sure of having seen in

³⁸ Joaquin, *Cave and Shadows*, 221.

[Bonifacio] and his wife the insurgent pair of legend, prelate and priestess, who might seem to fall and die but had only vanished from sight and would be returning again when the time came.”³⁹ Bonifacio and the archbishop, here, follow a single strain of anti-colonial resistance, connected through the struggles against colonial power revealed in otherwise disparate histories. Where Bonifacio might be usurped as a leading figure of a revisionist, nationalist history of the plight of the Filipino, Joaquin’s conceptualizations of Bonifacio here as another – if not the very same – iteration of Spanish-*indio* collaborative resistance conceives of Filipino national identity as not only emerging from the consolidation of racialized subjectivities under the specificities of Spanish authority in the Philippines but also under the violence of an unceasing colonial conquest.

What might it reveal that Joaquin “resuscitates” such figures of the religious movements under the Spanish colonial regime of the 17th and 18th centuries in the Philippines in 1972 on the eve of Marcos’s declaration of martial law? That La Hermana Beata settled in solitude in the cave where the archbishop and the priestess met and consummated a relationship committed to anti-colonial rebellion? That Andre Manzano fell victim to the typhoon at the edge of the same Lakan Bato? Nowhere are these questions made more explicit than in the interweaving inextricability of the characters La Hermana Beata of centuries past and Nenita Coogan of the 1970s, whose parallel and intersecting stories become Joaquin’s way of mapping concerns about the nature of subjectivity under coloniality and the nationalist recuperations of identity under a distinctly authoritarian order on the same temporal and spatial plane. Insofar as Joaquin’s concerns over religious authenticity embodied by the beatas of Joaquin’s historical

³⁹ Ibid., 226.

postulations and La Beata Hermana of his literary conjectures become methods of grappling with the complexity of Filipinoness as a medium of multiple modes of power, the emergence (perhaps, reemergence?) of Nenita in life and death destabilize Filipinoness in the 1970s as part and parcel of these same concerns about power and resistance. This is ultimately a quandary about the nature of official Philippine nationalism under decolonizing frameworks in the 1970s as grounded in colonial discourse. During the 17th and 18th centuries, Hermana inhabits a Philippines that has yet to conceive of Filipinoness as an overarching category of national belonging. In 1972, well into the post-independence period, the solidity of Philippine nationalism remains a largely unfettered concern. The difficulty with which Nenita finds place in the middle-class social circles where she lives and plays signifies Joaquin's insistence that national identity must continue to be questioned in the urgency of martial law and national development.

In the novel, the Barrio Bato is rediscovered in 1971, spearheading the explosive conflict between Christian and neo-pagan activists in Manila. At the novel's conclusion, Jack discovers that the mayor of the "suburban town" of Manila (and Jack's old friend), Pocholo Gaitman, is responsible for orchestrating the crime and mystery of Nenita's death. Pocholo explains to Jack:

Here were today's missionaries working to convert what Philippine tribes are still pagan – and where was the nationalist outcry against this corrupting of what remains of the true Filipino? Where the patriot protest against this cultural tampering with Filipinos who don't have to be de-colonized? I felt the nationalists weren't being consistent. Reviling the friars of the past for having converted us – wasn't that a futile exercise when the consistent thing to do would be to attack, to try to stop, the work of conversion still going on today, among us, among our pagans?

And here were these cults, in Pangasinan and the Mountain Provinces, that were trying to revive paganism in the Philippines. Was there a nationalist peep in defense of these neo-pagans? No, they were disdained as witch-doctors and hick miracle men. On the one hand Philippine paganism was being extolled as true Filipinism. On the other hand it was being scorned as mere superstition.⁴⁰

Pocholo details the inconsistency of nationalist ideology in the Philippines, its concerted dismissal of colonial practice and simultaneous refusal to acknowledge its own enactment of similar practices in the name of nationalism. Pocholo's tirade comes as a response to Jack's discovery of his orchestration of the mystery, and it calls into question the nationalist – and, perhaps, decolonial – outcry for a return to a “true Filipino.” In fact, “true Filipinism” also names a presidential address that Marcos gave to the Philippine Congress in which he lectured, at length, about his plans for the improvement of Philippine infrastructure, the reconstruction of the country's education system, the redevelopment of the national economy, and the recuperation of the morale of the Filipino spirit. Marcos's articulation of the worthiness of the Filipino relies upon a regressive temporality that conceives of Filipinoness as having emerged from the wholeness of the native *indio*, an idea that was rooted in Marcos's conception that the *indio* can rightfully claim its position within any universal humanity. Pocholo's articulation of the Filipino, here, however, does not seek to recuperate it from history; instead, it details the methods by which the Filipino is made by history's progressive and developmental aims and disregard for the intricate and complex vyings for power and life that are often saturated within such overarching historical strains. This conception of the Filipino consequently contests Marcos's claims of true Filipinism as it reveals its

⁴⁰ Ibid., 252.

complicity with the project of history guided by colonial modernity. The danger of any claim to true Filipinism, as Pocholo describes above, is that it denounces colonial practice in the name of national sovereignty even as it remains tethered to the methods of governance that wage war and violence upon those not fit for inclusion into the national community; or, as Pocholo explains to Jack: “Look, Christianity used the sword, the whip, the gun, the fraud and the lie to establish itself in this country – and we’re prepared to be just as ruthless in defeating it and reestablishing ourselves again in our own land.”⁴¹

In the passage above, Pocholo describes the violence of Philippine nationalism in its invocation of the true Filipino, detailing the inconsistencies of claiming a “true Filipino” in the “undisturbed” communities of the Philippine tribes of the Pangasinan and Mountain provinces and yet continuing the work of converting these tribes to Christianity. Pocholo equates this nationalism with the work of religious conversion during the time of Spanish colonialism and the “friars of the past.” Here, Pocholo describes the true Filipino as the hotbed of these ongoing and simultaneous conflicts between the force of nationalism to denounce its colonial past and the work of national identity to impose another form of violence. Here, then, Pocholo articulates Filipino subjectivity as borne from such processes of continuous making and unmaking. In describing the ways that Christianity utilized the sword, the whip, the gun, the fraud, and the lie, Pocholo articulates violence as wielded just as much by the physical force of war and bodily suppression as the implementation of the force of ideology. Insofar as Pocholo traces this trajectory between the imposition of colonial violence under the religious order and the implementation of nationalist ideology, it is this articulation of Filipinoness that

⁴¹ Ibid., 258.

imposes modes of colonial violence in the present day of nationalism in the 1970s. True Filipinism as official state policy under Marcos thus names the formation of Filipino subjectivity as the crux of state violence.

The Falsity of True Filipinoness

To return to Chakrabarty's earlier assertion that the novel form functions to express the modern self, Joaquin's novel provides an apt albeit curious example. As the novel's protagonist and private detective, the unfolding of the mystery depends upon Jack's conceptualization and untangling of it. Put crudely, it is only through Jack's terms that the mystery can be conceived, for it is Jack's consciousness that defines the contours of its knowability. Yet, the solidity of Jack's subjectivity as the novel's principle investigator and the center through which the narrative unfolds lies in deliberate antagonism to the irresolution of the mystery of Nenita's death so that Jack's coherency as a Filipino subject must simultaneously grapple with these contestations to Filipino subjectivity. While the novel follows Jack as he attempts to solve the mystery of Nenita's death, the narrative does not result in a truer understanding of the problem but, instead, follows the disintegration of Filipinoness as a mode of identification. When Jack visits Ginoong Ina, the present-day leader of the neo-pagan movement in the Philippines, to seek answers about Nenita's death, she explains to him, "Mr. Henson, Nenita Coogan was a mixed-up kid because she didn't understand why people professed to be what they weren't and concealed what they really were. She went through the Christians, hippies,

activists, and got no answer. Then she came to us and began to understand why.”⁴² Here, Ginoong Ina describes the ways that Nenita’s disjuncture within her social circles – her incomprehensibility as a true Filipina because of her American national identity and her whiteness – made her particularly adept at interrogating the nature of Filipino identity. In another instance, Chedeng explains to Jack the reason that Nenita’s parents sent her away from the United States to live in the Philippines: “[T]hey realized that moving to a new place only gave Nenita a new world to explore and expose. That’s when they decided to send her over here. I suppose they thought she couldn’t, so to put it, uncover a native here where we are all natives. Were they ever wrong.”⁴³ Nenita’s perplexing truth-seeking project – which ultimately functions not to uncover any defining truth but to fabricate a set of unwieldy stories – illustrates the falsity of any one single identity. Put simply, Nenita’s friends and acquaintances are an array of multiple experiences. More interestingly, however, her fascination with uncovering the “native” and then coming to the strange realization that no native exists in the place where all people are presumed to be native points to the puzzling quandary of Filipinoness to adequately embody any singular subjectivity but, instead, to encompass a continuously shifting array of meaning-making processes. Emerging from a desire to belong within various Philippine social circles coupled with a simultaneous rejection from these social circles, Nenita’s inquisitiveness about the prerequisites for belonging forms, in many ways, a critical apparatus with which to dismantle the coherency of Filipino identity in the novel.

⁴² Ibid., 146.

⁴³ Ibid., 57.

According to Ginoong Ina, Nenita's death was not simply a death but a transference of spirit and power between the pagan goddess and Nenita, "[T]he goddess came into me as in the fullness of time she enters all her priestesses. Before, I had to go into a trance to make contact, but now the goddess dwells in me. So she entered that woman of the 17th century whom they knew as La Hermana Beata. And so she entered Nenita Coogan in the hour of her death."⁴⁴ Here, the "loss" of Nenita in the present produces a connection between multiple historical trajectories in order "to undo four hundred years of history."⁴⁵ Ginoong Ina explains that "irreverence towards nature is fast making the country unlivable. The mountains are deforested, the soil languishes, river and sea stink, the very air is poisoned." Turning to Jack, she chides, "Private conscientiousness like yours [...] will not save us. What's needed is the old heathen pieties made communal again."⁴⁶ In describing her own religious practice, Ginoong Ina aligns this irreverence toward nature with nationalism as a religion⁴⁷ and thus explains that the developmental modes of Philippine national politics are making the country unlivable. Her call for a "communal" practice that "must return to the cults of the anitos," which lies in antithesis to Jack's "private conscientiousness," is a critical disinvestment in individualized subjectivity and its belief in the advancement of Filipino identity as a political instrument with which to address the life conditions of the country's people. For Ginoong Ina, the dismantling of historical time – the work of undoing four hundred years of history – reveals the violence of progress under modernized development. Insofar as historical time affords a kind of privacy to individualized, nationalist subjectivity,

⁴⁴ Ibid., 147.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 149.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 147-148.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 149.

Ginoong Ina's rejection of this subjectivity creates a temporal and spatial framework that conceives of the ways that a nationalist investment in subject-making limits the extent to which the intricacies and intimacies of Philippine social life can be understood within a broader historical context. Insofar as Ginoong Ina explains to Jack that "[i]f we have to put on so many false faces it's because our basic face is itself false,"⁴⁸ she generates an alternative historical imaginary that both rejects the originary truth of nationalist subjectivity and also paves the way for a genealogical exploration of the ways that this subjectivity is molded and made as/through different regimes of conflict and power. Here, then, Jack's conversation with Ginoong Ina, rather than offer a more comprehensive illustration of who/what Nenita is/was and the mystery that shrouds her death, instead, leads to a series of questions aimed at deconstructing the solidity of Filipino subjectivity. The mystery of Nenita's death illustrates Joaquin's disinvestment in the coherency of Filipino nationalist subjectivity as a medium of decolonial politics and practice propagated through nationalist paradigms advanced not only by Marcos state policies but also by anti-state resistance mandates.

Returning, again, to the importance of the novel form, each of Jack's attempts to make sense of the mystery of Nenita's death and of his own life is an iteration of his own weight and solidity as a fully realized subject. And with each of these discoveries is the revelation that there is no such thing as the recovery of any true Filipino. Herein lies a continuous interplay between claims for the coherency, cohesion, and wholeness of Filipino subjectivity and the persistent acts to undercut them. By novel's end, Andre Manzano has died from injuries he suffered during the catastrophic typhoon. His father,

⁴⁸ Ibid., 146.

Alex, has committed suicide. The eldest Manzano, Don Andong, leaves the Manzano house to enter a monastery after losing both son and grandson. Chedeng flees to New York, Pocholo retreats underground after revealing to Jack his complicity in Nenita's mysterious death, and Monica refuses Jack after he attempts to persuade her to leave with him to Davao. Even as the legibility of Jack's character remains intact by the end of the novel, there is a certain disjuncture in the unfolding of historical time – the irresolution between the past symbolized by Jack's relationship to/with these characters and Jack's own present state – that complicates Jack's comprehensibility and validity as a fully developed protagonist and, more importantly, as a modern Filipino subject. Where these minor characters find themselves embodying only a residual presence by the end of the narrative, Jack is unable to recuperate his young self of the 1950s with his current self in 1972 – even though, as he explains to Monica, he badly “want[s] somebody from my world here in my new one down there”⁴⁹ – so that this nagging split must be given adequate narrative attention and place within the novel. Here, then, the logical conclusion typically afforded to the mystery novel is left in shambles, unable to cohere amidst the persistence of Filipino historical irreconcilability. As Jack finds himself struggling to recover all that he might have lost during this trip to Manila, to hold onto the markers and monuments that symbolize what he understands to be true, he desires in Monica a way to suture the disparate parts of his life: “Going, going, gone. As the taxi carried him down the driveway he felt himself being carried away from all the monuments of the past. But *why* should they be past and *why* should he be carried away if he chose not to be?”⁵⁰ As

⁴⁹ Ibid., 270.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 271.

Jack weaves in and out of these existentialist thoughts, the final lines of the novel explain:

Señora Mónica sent her apologies but she could not see Señor Jack. She wished him a happy voyage and hoped they might meet again in the future.

Alone to his taxi descended Jack Henson, leaving the great house called La Alejandría for the last time, resigned to a final departure from the past. Maybe being prized as a monument was not Monica's trip?

That night he flew back to Davao, a lonely man.⁵¹

Monica's persistent and demanding absence is an act of refusal against her potential absorption within Jack's narrative and his aggressive desire to achieve a more holistic sense of self in which the longing of his past might be reconciled with the loneliness of his present. Monica's resistance against being won as Jack's monument and also "seeing" and thereby acquiescing to his desires tears at the immobility of Filipino subjectivity advanced by Jack's protagonist sensibilities. The monument here refers to the old stone statues that adorn the periphery of the Manzano home – previously longstanding but destroyed during the typhoon – and Monica's refusal to be set in stone and inscribed within such progressive enactments of time. The fate of the monument thus illustrates a rejection of the totalizing aims of subject-making under the historical paradigms of colonial modernity and authoritarian myth-making. In this passage, Monica reconstructs time according to another temporality. In expending an affective labor of hope – that she and Jack might one day meet again in the future – Monica fashions an alternative time-space nexus that is not predetermined by Jack's own conceptualization of the past as it functions in accordance with the continuous making of his own self. This is a processual

⁵¹ Ibid., 272.

articulation of subjectivity that is not marked by the logics of colonial organization but, rather, paves the way for an altogether different type of life-making that rejects the developmental framework of modern time.

Joaquin's novel conceives of a Philippine historiography that centers Filipino subjectivity as the crux of the complex and intricate interweavings of colonial, imperial, national, and authoritarian power. To imagine Filipino subjectivity in this way – as the telos of multiple strata of power and governance – is to pay close attention to the ways that history bears its weight through the production of the modern self. This production is a project that masterfully spans the temporal and spatial confines of official wars, declarations, events, and heroes. Joaquin utilizes Michael Jackson's hit 1972 song "Ben" throughout the novel as a way to reveal the specificity and urgency of 1972. The song also creates a historical genealogy that attests to the magnitude of historical experience rather than submit to the limited promises of Filipino subjectivity within an otherwise universal history. When Jack interviews Bong, one of Nenita's peers, at the Café Rajah Soliman – an homage to the Muslim leader of the land of Maynila before Spanish conquest – he asks Bong about the song that currently plays at the café, the one that he heard when he first arrived to Manila:

“Oh, *that*. Noise of the hour. Song called *Ben*. About a rat. Didn't you see the movie? All you hear now is that tune. When I hear it in the future I'll remember 1972.”

At the boy's idle remark, Jack felt his body repeat its tremor in the cave. August, 1972. What if the griffin folk at the long table were costumed unknowingly for some future memory of a today to be looked back at as the eve of something? Today was, yes, an *impending*: it's the feeling I got when I arrived in the city and it comes with that tune.⁵²

⁵² Ibid., 38.

Bong describes, at once, the ubiquity of this “song of the hour” and its permanence as a definitive marker of the year 1972. It was this specificity that sent tremors throughout Jack’s body. At Bong’s explanation of the song, Jack marks the precision of August 1972 as an “impending,” as something not yet known but whose urgency is undeniable. As a novel that looks retrospectively at the declaration of martial law, this impending points to the imperative historicity of martial law within the larger schema of Philippine history. That others might look back upon it “as the eve of something” underscores Joaquin’s own exploration of the eve of martial law as provoking an interrogation of the authenticity of the Filipino as it converges with questions of nationalism and decolonization. As Jack describes here and as evidenced throughout the novel, “Ben” serves as the soundtrack to Jack’s traversals throughout Manila. It also becomes the medium through which Jack transports to different temporal frames. Toward the novel’s denouement, Jack hears the song again: “Listening to it, he heard another boy’s voice lifted in song. His own? Alex’s? Pocholo’s? The sound in his hear was older than the hit tune it was hearing: boyhood itself was singing in pious innocence [...] But the boy in the jukebox was singing: ‘*Ben, the two of us will look no more...*’ The other voice, the boy’s voice from the past, faded away and Jack sat abruptly sobered, another boy speaking in his ear.”⁵³ The song’s pronouncements of boyhood manifest themselves through Jack’s own thoughts of his youth with Alex and Pocholo so that it becomes unclear who is actually singing and whether the voice in Jack’s head is that of the singer’s, his own, or somebody else’s altogether. Here, the song becomes enmeshed with Jack’s memories so that each of the

⁵³ Ibid., 260-261.

singular subjectivities of the singer, Jack, Alex, and Pocholo devolves into a collective entity. As the lyrics of the song explain, “I used to say ‘I’ and ‘me’ / Now it’s ‘us,’ now it’s ‘we.’” Here, Joaquin facilitates the individual into a collective articulation of historical experience, illustrating a departure from the singular form of Filipino subjectivity toward an investment in the multiplicity of historical experience to adequately account for the complexity of Filipino lives under modernity. In other words, it is not only that the individualization of the “I” is made to feed the collective energies of the “we” but also that attention to the subject-making process makes possible an exploration of the intersecting modes of colonial and authoritarian power to structure the lives of people. As Jack leaves to return to the Manzano home for the last time, he demands to listen to the song another time. And “to the keening of the boy’s voice he rode away on a taxi into a glare of sunrise that now and then darkened, as though something monstrous had passed. Jack had a moment’s picture of the fallen angel whom the universe cannot contain moving with back bent under the sky, darkening it with his wings.”⁵⁴ A biblical reference to the fallen angel of god that the “universe cannot contain,” Joaquin’s use of “Ben” generates an altogether otherworldly quality to Jack’s experiences. The song allows Jack to envision – if only for a moment – a certain fall from grace. While this is reminiscent of a “Fall” that structures the *ilustrado* conceptualization of a break from the pre-history of Spanish colonialism and the commencement of a Philippine national history, there is something much more sinister about Joaquin’s illustration of this rupture insofar as it pinpoints a kind of fissure from the realm of modernized subjectivity. More reminiscent of Benjamin’s angel of history – whose face

⁵⁴ Ibid., 262.

is turned toward the debris of the past while its back is turned against progress even as it is being swept away by it – this figure, as it moves with and through the song, conjures a darkening and a storm only before generating a new space with which to imagine Philippine historical experience.

As I have described, modern historical time is grounded upon a linear, developmental paradigm that traces the progression of humanity. Usurping this temporal framework, Marcos aimed to reconfigure Philippine history through a regressive temporality that sought to both prove the origins of Filipino humanity and also legitimize his rule as fated in history. I want to be clear here, however, that each of these conceptualizations of historical time unfolds along a similar temporal strain. In each iteration – whether it purports the humanistic origins of the Filipino or the evolution of universal man – it is liberal humanism grounded in the universality of the subject that guides the unfolding of historical time. What Joaquin's novel offers is a persistent interrogation of the Filipino subject not as original truth but as method of power. The concision of Joaquin's postulations about colonialism lies not in his articulation of its lasting effects on the Philippine sociopolitical landscape or the continuity of any colonial mentality but in the very decipherability of human life. In other words, Joaquin describes, in many ways, that the tenacity of colonialism lies in its power to define who/what counts as human and how life itself can be measured and organized. The authoritarian state under Marcos secured its power through the capitalization of this humanity for the progression of the Philippine republic on the global stage. The urgency with which Joaquin treats the period before martial law as "the eve of something," his notion of an impending, is generative for directing critical attention to an era that saw the geopolitical

demarcations and reorderings spurred by the World War II victories of the Allied Powers. These manifestations of political power became the basis for a restructuring of the international arena in such a way that resulted in the economic systems that facilitated the growth of global capitalism on an unprecedented scale. It also reconceptualized the third world subject in ways that made this subject more sophisticatedly incorporated into these neoliberal systems of governance. For the Philippines, the insidious and lasting power of martial law lies not only in the evidence of the brute force Marcos used to suppress individual liberties but – perhaps contrastingly – in Marcos’s work to aggressively nationalize Filipino subjectivity to conspire with the globalizing aims of a post-World War II global order.

Untangling Marcos Policy through Joaquin’s Historiography

In using Joaquin’s novel as theoretical guide, I consider briefly a specific example of Marcos’s usurpation of Filipino subjectivity in order to advance specific state policies. In 1975, Marcos created the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women (NCRFW) as an advisory board (with the first lady, of course, as chairperson) for the president regarding all matters pertaining to the “integration of women as full and equal partners with men.” The commission was responsible for conducting studies and lobbying for legislative measures that supported the equal treatment and advancement of women and for serving as an information center for all issues concerning women. More importantly, however, it was a direct product of the United Nations’ declaration of 1975 as International Women’s Year and 1976-1985 as the Decade for Women. The first World Conference on Women, held in 1975, moreover, drafted the Convention on the

Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), which was eventually ratified in 1979. While the CEDAW intended to solidify a decree against the discrimination of women and to enact a formal agreement to advance all women around the world through their integration into all aspects of political, economic, and social life, it also served to construct an international norm around a particular definition of equality. This definition frames injustice only through the framework of subjectivity – that women must be elevated to the status of men in order to facilitate global progress – rather than through an interrogation of the very paradigm of liberal humanity that constructs and maintains such divides even as it purports to overlook them. The framework of equality conceives of the subject as a given rather than as always constituted and being made through the colonial and state power. In other words, framing political and social progress through the paradigm of rights gives people permission to participate in political, social, and civic life but fails to disrupt the very organizational order that emerges from capitalist and neoliberal systems of governance. The establishment of the NCRFW in the Philippines, in its alignment with U.N. goals, sought to bring the Philippines up to speed, so to speak, with modern global time. As scholars like Rhacel Parreñas, Neferti Tadiar, Robyn Rodriguez and others have incisively argued, however, the integration of Filipinas into the global economy was, in fact, facilitated through the violent extraction of labor from women's bodies. The proliferation of multinational corporations around the globe, and particularly in the third world, not only mandated an increased demand for cheap labor but also necessitated the kind of physical dexterity that women's bodies were said to provide and which would ultimately ensure the efficiency of that production. Moreover, the strengthening of U.S. military presence in the

Philippines through the continuation of its military bases fostered a sexual economy that did not simply demand women's sexual labor but institutionalized it as instrumental to the wellbeing of the national economy. While the establishment of International Women's Year and other similar practices of visibility and representation under the paradigm of equality sought to protect women through the political mandate of justice through rights, the continuous violence wrought upon women through the extraction of their labor was not merely intensified but made more sophisticated by framing women's subjectivity through the logics of equality.

Joaquin's genealogical reimagining of Philippine history is useful for considering these methods of subject-making under Marcos authoritarianism as interlocking with the colonial logics of conquest and production that made the Philippines integral to the proper functioning of the global capitalist economy in which the U.S. empire played a leading role. In other words, while Marcos's investment in the rights of women – that is, in the reconstitution of Filipina subjectivity through rights-based justice – is noteworthy and necessary on its own, divorcing it from the larger schema of globality and modernization especially under the United Nations' human rights regime is to fail to understand the force of subjectivity to advance the goals of the global at the expense of the lives of third world and decolonizing peoples. In Joaquin's novel, the persistence of the goddess and her various earthly manifestations interrogate subjectivity as a medium for the patriarchal aims of colonial governance. As Joaquin reimagines time and space and allows these various pagan deities and figures to disrupt the solidity of Jack's consciousness, he illustrates the ways that the coherency of subjectivity occludes the embodied violences enacted upon the lives of Filipinas. But more importantly, this

contestation of subjectivity showcases the modes through which subjectivity itself became an all-encompassing category with which to organize a sophisticated system of labor extraction and production that would continue well beyond the end of Marcos's administration.

Chapter Three:

“Save the Filipino Race!”: Incommensurable Images in the People Power Photographic Archive

There is a provocative image of the 1986 People Power Revolution¹ in the Philippines that sits in cold storage at the Bancroft Library at the University of California, Berkeley that is not unlike many of the photographs that surfaced in the aftermath of the revolution [Figure 3.1]. It displays many of the symbols that have now come to serve as a synecdoche of the people’s uprising against Marcos’s dictatorial regime. The immensity of the crowd is elucidated, for instance, by both the frame’s perspective from within the center of the tumult and the inability to capture the entire crowd without incising from the image some of the faces and bodies of several of its participants – who have quite literally overfilled the capabilities of the frame. Many of the faces of the crowd reveal expressions of excitement as their owners anticipate the emergence of a new political order under a new administration. The crowd, with their mouths agape, appears to be chanting in unison: most of the people have their arms raised in the air, and many of them are holding the figure of the “L” with their thumbs and forefingers. The “L” signifies Laban, the political party that represented Corazon Aquino in her bid for the presidency. The Tagalog word “laban” translates into “fight,” and the crowd’s gesture here is illustrative of its political support for Aquino at the same time that it articulates its dissent against Marcos. A cross reveals itself in the background of the image, illustrating the

¹ I use the terms “People Power Revolution,” “EDSA Revolution,” and “Philippine revolution” interchangeably to denote the people’s uprising that occurred in Manila in February 1986.

important role that the Catholic Church played in seeing the revolution into fruition. At the center of the image and forebodingly emerging from the crowd is a makeshift sign fashioned from a white t-shirt that hangs on a stick. The sign reads: SAVE THE FILIPINO RACE!



Figure 1: Save the Filipino Race! [Courtesy of the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley; 861240-L-4]

There is something indelibly striking – haunting, perhaps – about this image and its ability to simultaneously connote absence and presence. The image undergoes a gradient through which the details of the faces and bodies of the people of the crowd are blurred in the background, come to focus in the center, and are blurred again in the foreground. In the foreground, then, the faces become difficult to distinguish so that the certainty of the idiosyncrasies of the participants is usurped by the impetus of the crowd. Further, while the words imprinted onto the t-shirt are evocative in themselves, there is a

certain curiosity in the t-shirt itself as the chosen canvas upon which the words are written. On the one hand, the t-shirt suggests that the revolution itself moves with a sort of elusiveness – that is, one must improvise as one moves alongside and along with the revolution and that a t-shirt must serve as the messenger where other mediums might not be available. But there is also a certain eeriness to the emptiness of the t-shirt, in the notion that where something should exist, there is nothing instead. If, in fact, the Filipino race must be saved, does the emptiness illustrate the potential consequences of a failure to save it – the pronouncement of the possible death of the Filipino race? Or might the nothingness suggest that the Filipino race is not yet but can become?

The image contains a set of competing narratives. It clings to many of the symbols – the L, the pro-Cory visors, the cross – that have come to define the revolution as the jockeying for power between the strongman Marcos and the humble and devout housewife Aquino. This popular narrative begins with the assassination of Benigno “Ninoy” Aquino purportedly by Marcos’s henchmen and continues to describe the defiance expressed by former Marcos loyalists (especially Juan Ponce Enrile and Fidel Ramos), longtime Marcos opponents turned rogue, and the Filipino people who decided – once and for all – that enough was enough. Within this narrative, the rise of Cory has come to represent the vengeful run for office by a widower still mourning the brutal assassination of her husband, and the critical mass of Filipinos who gathered along Epifanio de los Santos Avenue (popularly referred to as EDSA) indicates the ways that Filipinos from various cities, towns, provinces, social circles, and classes joined in unison

to express their defiance against Malacañang's strongman.² Yet, the details of the photograph – the inconsistent gradations of the image in addition to the persistence of the t-shirt to maintain the focal point of the image – offers a reconsideration of the stakes of the revolution beyond a battle between political factions and their different-yet-similar ideologies precisely through the photographic image's ability to capture and elucidate upon the complexity and intimacy of the revolution. Where the imperative instruction to save the Filipino race asserts itself at the center of an image that so distinctly articulates the dominant narratives of the revolution, the saving of the Filipino race is not simply the byproduct of a revolution only intended to topple a dictator and install a democratic republic. On the contrary, it provides a visual cartography for articulating the Filipino race itself as the paradigm through which the revolution might be historically and discursively reimagined. Indeed, while the revolution did succeed in deposing the dictator, it is often conceptualized as a failed revolution or, in more optimistic terms, as an unfinished one. While its illustration as such serves to interrogate current modes of Philippine governance that continue to be plagued by rampant corruption and ruled by an

² In his detailed account of the Philippine political economy under Marcos, Felipe B. Miranda summarizes the popular narrative of the revolution: "In February of 1986, after a series of public protest actions following the most expensive and corrupt national elections in Philippine history, most of the forces which opposed Marcos' [*sic*] authoritarian rule coalesced and succeeded in dramatically deposing the dictator. The triggering incident was the mutiny by his minister of defense and the military's vice-chief of staff, initially supported by a small group of military reformists who contemplated imminent arrests by military forces loyal to Marcos [...] The mutiny caught the restive public's imagination, and when its leaders pledged their support to Corazon Aquino, popularly regarded as the cheated victor of the 1986 snap presidential elections, Filipinos by the millions peacefully protected the mutinous military. In a uniquely nonviolent confrontation, they neutralized the Marcos military loyalists and eventually inspired the greater number of military men to turn against him. In the now historical four fearful days of February, largely unorganized but spontaneously reacting millions of Filipinos forced Marcos and his henchmen to flee the country [...] The protest call was '*Sobra na, Tama na, Palitan na!*' – 'Enough is enough there must be a change!' After two decades of Marcos rule, Filipinos had had enough of political repression, economic deprivation, and national psychological humiliation. 'People's power,' through a process of popular catalysis which up to now defies academic explanation, ousted Marcos." See National Research Council of the Philippines, *Symposium on Nuclear Energy, January 26, 1979, Philippine International Convention Center, Manila, Philippines* (Manila: National Research Council of the Philippines, 1981), 115.

oligarchic elite that preceded Marcos and only became stronger in his aftermath, this kind of rhetoric also fails to consider the narrative of revolution itself as already flawed. Framing the revolution in both popular discourse and in historical studies as both seeking a new governmental administration and then having failed to do so not only obfuscates the important ways that the Filipino masses exerted their revolutionary labor in generative ways and the means through which these energies were dispersed in the revolution's wake but also ignores the force with which narrations of the revolution themselves propound a kind of historicist violence that adamantly sets boundaries around the extent of Filipino possibility.

Using John Blanco's theorization of "race as praxis" as conceptual guide, I consider the evocation of "race" here not as anthropological or ethnographic marker nor as socially constructed category meant to buttress whiteness as it has come to define discourses of racialization in the United States. Instead, as Blanco suggests, it describes a particular claim to knowledge that served as the basis for enacting and contesting colonial practice: "race as a form of praxis" names "participation and agency in a field of laws, decrees, discourses, institutions, and contingencies (both natural and human) that create or unmake colonial hegemony."³ As such, the claim to "save the Filipino race" is the masses' refusal of current racial discourse and its subsequent attempt to produce its own knowledge. Put another way, it conjures the history of race-making in the Philippines as the site of contestation upon which the revolution must be waged and suggests that the usurpation and consolidation of the Filipino – the medium through which the authoritarian state, U.S. imperial and geopolitical interests, and global capitalism might

³ John D. Blanco, "Race as Praxis in the Philippines at the Turn of the Twentieth Century," 361.

govern the Philippines – are the stakes of the revolution. To take seriously the masses' claim here that there can be and are other revolutionary goals beyond the removal of Marcos from office is to consider the extent to which the masses challenged its own understanding of itself in the face of possibilities for self-determination afforded by the revolution. Additionally, such a provocation generates other paradigms for conceptualizing the revolution.

This chapter explores the photographic images of the People Power Revolution against the archival grain that frames the revolution as a struggle against Marcos's oppressive regime in ways that prefigure liberal freedom as the sole consequence of revolutionary politics. It insists that archival dissonance – between the archive's narrative trajectory and its incapacity to fully account for the magnitude of its collection – and the discordant visuality of the images' illustration of bodily intimacy facilitates a reconsideration of the revolution that interrogates the totalizing narratives purported by the archive. In particular, such narratives uphold dominant conceptualizations of the revolution as a struggle against authoritarianism and for democracy, against communism and for a deliberate anti-communist paradigm. As such, they then conceive of revolutionary outcome only along the lines of a liberal freedom that necessitates an individualist emancipation that ultimately performs a neoliberal disciplinary function outside of the "event" of the revolution. In the archive's deliberate utilization of binary oppositions between the actors and ideologies that comprise popular understandings of the revolution, it obtrudes the work of the masses to, quite literally, *make* the revolution. Conversely, this chapter also pays attention to the incommensurability of moments of visual disjuncture and bodily intimacy that persist beyond the archive's narrative strains.

Consequently, these strains illustrate modalities of anti-imperial and anti-capitalist dissent that span the temporality and spatiality of the revolution and thereby suggest more extensive ways to theorize violence that not only render U.S. imperialism complicit with Philippine authoritarianism but also conceive of U.S. and Philippine state investment in the revolution as the work of extending the reach of neoliberalism.⁴ As a retrospective exploration of the revolution – almost 30 years after its unfolding – this chapter therefore considers the revolution through and beyond its visual articulations in order to extract Filipino possibility in the present.

This chapter explores the Bancroft Library and Kim Komenich photographic archive of the People Power Revolution that ousted Marcos as it purports a narrative of democratic liberalism and freedom as the primary goals of Philippine revolution. It describes the ways that both the archive and its photographs frame the objects of the revolution as the subjects of the post-Marcos democratic era of the Philippines in such a way that forecloses the possibility of that revolution to enact any other critiques beyond pointing to bifurcated, dualistic illustrations of power. It also reads a women's march against nuclear power as the directive force of the revolution, as it offers modes of critique that focus on the biopolitical, capitalist technologies of power that thread Marcos's rule to broader, transnational circuits of exchange.

⁴ I draw specifically from scholars like Shelley Streeby whose work in *Radical Sensations* envisions the ways that visual culture becomes an important means of illustrating the tensions between existing modalities of power and their concurrent uses to reimagine and dismantle that power.

The Komenich Series and the Colonial Archive

Since 2010, the Bancroft Library has housed a *San Francisco Examiner* photographic print collection that holds hundreds of thousands of photographs and photonegatives. The collection spans nearly a century – from 1910 to the early 2000s – and covers a wide range of topics, all of which intend to “provide an interesting visual narrative of history from a journalistic perspective.”⁵ The collection includes a series entitled “Kim Komenich negatives in the *San Francisco Examiner* archive.” Before my visit to the library, the archivists presented to me a description of the series, which includes a brief summary of its contents and then a few sentences that describe the materials included in each of the bin of images that constitute the series. Apart from directly naming Komenich – a former staff photographer and editor for the *Examiner* and a current assistant professor of media at San Jose State University⁶ as the series’ photographer – the single-line description does little to describe the actual content of the series. A more detailed bullet-point summary, however, explains that it contains photonegatives that document the “Philippine revolution [of] 1986” from August 8, 1984 to November 24, 1986.⁷ During this more than two-year period, Komenich and his crew traveled to the Philippines to document the growing resistance movement(s) that was developing in opposition to Marcos and which ultimately resulted in his removal from office. The archival summary of the series also lists the “problems” that accompanied the archiving of the material: some photonegatives with no days, others with no dates, still

⁵ The University of California, Berkeley, *San Francisco Examiner* Photograph Archive Project, *The Bancroft Library*, accessed April 13, 2014, <http://bancroft.berkeley.edu/info/sfexaminer/about.html>, par. 5.

⁶ San Jose State University, “People at SJSU: Kim Komenich,” accessed April 13, 2014, <http://www.sjsu.edu/people/kim.komenich/>.

⁷ The Bancroft Library at the University of California, Berkeley, “Kim Komenich negatives in the *San Francisco Examiner* archive” (BANC PIC 2006.029—NEG), 2013.

others with conflicting dates, and each of them with only limited captions. A note from Komenich himself explains that “[t]he events of Feb. 22-25 [the four days of the revolution] happened around the clock. There was very little sleep and I processed, transmitted and filed the negatives to the best of my ability.” Almost as consolation, the summary then directs researchers to a digital archive located at “revolutionrevisited.com/remember.” The website reveals a project orchestrated by Komenich and the Ayala Museum in Makati, Metro Manila in 2011 to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the People Power Revolution. The project “revisits” the people in Komenich’s 1980s photographs by depicting them in the present day. In its construction of a “before and after” montage of the Philippine revolution, the 2011 project tracks the progress, if any, of the Filipino people a few decades after the revolution’s end. In addition to garnering the attention of the Ayala Museum and of current Philippine president Benigno “Noynoy” Aquino (shown on the website happily attending the project’s opening at the Ayala Museum),⁸ Komenich won the Pulitzer Prize in Spot News Photography in 1987 for his coverage of the “fall of Ferdinand Marcos.”⁹

The Komenich series in the Bancroft collection is the culmination of archival efforts to organize thousands of photonegatives from Komenich’s two-year onsite expedition through and within the comprehensive paradigm of the “Philippine revolution 1986” even as it documents events that lie outside the revolution’s conventional historical

⁸ Aquino is the current president of the Republic of the Philippines and the son of Ninoy Aquino, who was allegedly assassinated by Marcos and his cronies. Aquino’s presence here at the museum adds validity to the “before and after” montage that the exhibit creates. Aquino, here, both fuels a narrative of democratic progress represented by his mother during People Power and showcases the cyclical, repetitive nature of a Philippine oligarchic politics.

⁹ Columbia University, “The Pulitzer Prizes: Spot News Photography,” accessed April 13, 2014, <http://www.pulitzer.org/bycat/Spot-News-Photography>.

framework: Mayday events, youth training sessions held by the New People's Army, and various religious services, for instance. That is to explain that the series documents an array of different occurrences that exist beyond the four days that often constitute the revolution. Beyond convenience, what are the implications of not only conceiving of the prints as a collection but also of organizing its "disarray" as such? Put simply, its categorization consolidates the problems of organization in a way that obfuscates the multifarious characteristics of the collection itself. This is significant, of course, for it denies a certain complexity to the revolution. Yet, my interest here lies more in the broader context of the library's articulation of the *Examiner* collection as one that spans nearly a century and boasts "a visual narrative of history from a journalistic perspective." In this way, the Komenich series not only denies the complexity of the revolution but, most notably, does so in order to saturate it within the historical trajectory of the 20th century. What is the significance of this visual illustration of the 20th century as opposed to its non-visual counterparts? And how is this visibility imperative to a conceptualization of Philippine historical experience?

Several scholars have already revealed the formative role of the photograph in making possible U.S. colonial governance in the Philippines at the turn of the century. Some describe the modes through which early photographic archives categorized, consolidated, and organized the United States' new colonial objects – a notably heterogeneous populace of which the United States knew very little. Others describe the methods by which photographic prints made accessible these colonial objects for a public audience at home. Elizabeth Mary Holt writes that "[t]hrough a visual medium, the deployment of the power of photography and colonial discourse not only disseminated

‘information’ about America’s colony overseas but created an environment which facilitated the acceptance of American colonial practices throughout the United States. And in the process Filipinos and their homeland were not only constituted as objects of the Americans but as subject peoples in a subjected land.”¹⁰ The University of Michigan houses the United States’ largest archive of materials from the U.S. colonial period in the Philippines.¹¹ Dean Conant Worcester, a professor of zoology and museum curator at the university, started the collection as part of his role as the Secretary of Interior for the U.S. colonial government in the Philippines from 1899 to 1913.¹² As a biologist and zoologist, Worcester was particularly interested in the anthropological study and documentation of the natural landscape of the new colony, including its native people. Worcester’s study captured thousands of photographic images of these people and intended to provide the visual evidence of the natives’ physical and mental inferiority and incapacity and therefore morally legitimize the United States’ conquest of the islands. Such justification functioned through the premise of “benevolent assimilation,” which I have described as the provocation of benevolence to obscure the aggravated forms of U.S. state-sanctioned militarized violence in the Philippines and to invest in technologies of self-making that served to assimilate the native into personhood. In this way, Worcester’s collection of images provided the evidence necessary to more adequately equip the colonial government with the information it needed to better comprehend its objects so that it might create the most effective program for assimilation. Many of Worcester’s

¹⁰ Elizabeth Mary Holt, *Colonizing Filipinas* (Quezon City, Manila: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2002), 101.

¹¹ The University of Michigan, “Philippine Collection,” accessed April 13, 2014, <http://www.lib.umich.edu/philippine-collection>.

¹² The University of Michigan, “Dean Conant Worcester - Biography,” accessed April 13, 2014, <http://webapps.lsa.umich.edu/umma/exhibits/Worcester%202012/biography.html>.

photographs are visual profiles of individual natives, and his captions identify them by gender along with their regional and tribal affiliation. These categorical markers then allowed Worcester to classify these men and women as appropriately *Igorote* or *negrito*. What remains striking here about Worcester's anthropological project of colonial subject-making, however, is the method of relationality that he used to investigate these newly acquired objects of conquest. In several of the images, Worcester stands alongside the native, highlighting the stark contrast elucidated by various markers of physical difference between Worcester and the natives. More than only pointing to the native's physical inferiority, the images create a visual paradigm against which the native can be assessed and to which the colonized is made to aspire. Photographs and postcards from the 1904 World's Fair in Saint Louis – which served to literally bring home these colonial acquisitions – perform a similar function. In a widely-circulated image captured by American photographer Jessie Tarbox Beals at the world's fair, a white American woman named Mrs. Wilkins teaches an *Igorotte* boy the cakewalk.¹³ This image has been used to illustrate the racial anthropologies of the world's fair, the domesticating of the colonized other by American women and their nascent feminist paradigms, and the colonial foundations of Filipino mimicry. However, it also visualizes the making of the Filipino colonial subject against the proper subjectivity of the U.S. person.

If, in fact, the commencement of the 20th century saw the rise of U.S. empire – with its acquisition of the Philippines, Cuba, Puerto Rico, Guam, and Hawaii – what are the implications of the Bancroft Library's claim that its *Examiner* collection captures a

¹³ Jessie Tarbox Beals, "Mrs. Wilkins teaching an Igorrote boy the cakewalk at the 1904 World's Fair," photograph, 1904.

century's worth of photographic history, that is, the visual history of the 20th century? The *Examiner* collection portrays the seemingly banal aspects of life in the United States during the 20th century, the "usual topics of crime, natural disasters, sports, and politics [...] a record of civic life, scientific and technological breakthroughs, and the activities of early and mid-20th century society women among many other things." Rather than trace the historical development of the photographic image at the turn of the century throughout its development, it seems a more useful task to read Worcester's anthropological images and the *Examiner* archive against and through each other. That is, insofar as Worcester's photographs elucidate the visual contours of U.S. coloniality at the turn of the century and the *Examiner* archive images the banality of social and civic life throughout that century, it follows that the task of capturing, categorizing, and organizing the colonized, the work of domesticating and familiarizing it, is critical to conceiving of the banality of the 20th century as precisely grounded upon the colonial regimes of U.S. empire. In other words, the ordinariness of such "usual topics" must be placed in critical conjunction with the violence of colonial conquest. Doing so underscores the existence of the *Examiner* archive as it colludes with the historicity of the Philippines in relation to U.S. empire. Such a collusion then illuminates the way that the status quo of everyday life is maintained by the colonial state of emergency.

Even then, there must remain a clear distinction between Worcester's photographs and Komenich's images. In her discussion of ethnographic film, visual studies scholar Fatimah Tobing Rony writes, "If the nineteenth century is the century of history [...] the twentieth century is characterized by the accessibility, circulation, and popularization of mechanically reproduced images. If the nineteenth century was obsessed with the past,

the twentieth century is, in the words of Walter Benjamin, characterized by ‘the desire ... to bring things ‘closer’ spatially and humanly ... overcoming the uniqueness of every reality by accepting the reproduction.’”¹⁴ Rony’s insight is crucial here for articulating Worcester’s collection as visualizing a vertical relationality through which Worcester’s commanding presence in his own photographs can exhibit the dominance of U.S. subjectivity. Worcester’s power here justifies the historicity of U.S. subjectivity – that is, his own position as a subject of history. This type of photographic methodology, as Rony suggests, is markedly different from the kind deployed by Komenich’s images. Komenich’s photographs function to bring things closer both spatially and *humanly* and thus construct a relational interconnectedness based upon a horizontal conceptualization of humanity – upon the closeness of Komenich to his own subjects and the mutuality of their universal existences as they coincide with the existences of the photographs’ audience. This is not to argue that the conception of a universal humanity preceded Worcester but, rather, that a conversation between Worcester and Komenich enables the elucidation of a photographic turn away from anthropological accumulation and toward sensationalist depictions of a common humanism, which illustrates the specific historicity of the late 20th century and its investment in humanity as method for facilitating the migration of capital.

¹⁴ Fatimah Tobing Rony, *The Third Eye: Race, Cinema, and Ethnographic Spectacle* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996), 9.

The Bataan Nuclear Power Plant and Reconsiderations of Marcos Authoritarianism

The Komenich series' claim that it offers a visual representation of the "Philippine revolution 1986" is a noteworthy quandary. The categorization as such delimits a certain fixity to the temporal and spatial contours of the revolution. Considering the fact that the series is actually comprised of a number of different moments and situations that spanned Komenich's two-year experience in the Philippines, this section reads four photographs against the grain of the revolution's archival strain. The bodily intimacies captured by these photographs - the inextricability of the marchers, for instance – reflect the incommensurable energies of the masses and their ability to challenge the visuality of the photographic frame. Where the photograph seeks a deliberate momentousness, containment, familiarity, and resolution, the objects of the photograph resist this usurpation of their subjectivities precisely by facilitating its absorption within and for a collective struggle. In doing so, they articulate violence not simply as the binary opposition between Marcos's authoritarian state and the promise of a truer democratic republic but as the power to capitalize upon the very livability of their lives, which far extends the reach of authoritarianism alone.

The series includes several images from two marches against nuclear power in the Philippines. One of these two groups of images depicts "anti-nuclear protestors, all women, march[ing] from Plaza Miranda to Mendiola Gate where they confront riot police."¹⁵ The Bancroft Library categorized this all-women's march through the designation "1984-09-13." Apart from the signs that the marchers hold, there is no

¹⁵ The other set of images depicts labor groups marching against nuclear proliferation in the Philippines (Bancroft Library: 3177; 1984-09-02; 827015).

additional information about the march other than the short description provided by the archival summary, which explains that it began at Plaza Miranda and ended at Mendiola Gate. The Plaza Miranda is a square located in the center of Quiapo, the old capital and commercial hub of Manila, and right outside the Quiapo Church, which houses the famous statue of the Black Nazarene. The plaza is the site of the 1971 bombing of a Liberal Party event. The bombing was later attributed to the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) and was eventually used by Marcos to further justify his declaration of martial law. The Mendiola Gate, on the other hand, is the barricade that designates and protects the president's home at Malacañang Palace. As a march of "all women" that moves from Plaza Miranda to Mendiola Gate, it traces an alternative historiography of violence whose alterity is based upon a critique of the modalities of power that are waged onto the bodies of women. Deliberately not beginning with the Marcos state to construct a list of violations that emerged from the dictatorship, it follows, instead, a non-linear trajectory that repositions Marcos rule as part and parcel of a more intricate web of transnational and multinational regimes of power that are captured and shaped by the U.S. Cold War rhetoric of security and containment. Both reimagining and reinvoking, then, the supposed work of the CPP thirteen years earlier to disrupt Philippine governance, the marchers generate a form of public unrest that must come into fruition along different terms that cannot be co-opted by the rhetoric of security and democracy propagated by U.S. and Philippine state discourse.

The marchers' protest of nuclear power decenters the authoritarian state as the primary mode of violence during the period – a narrative successfully propagated by popular historical narratives of the People Power Movement – and reconceptualizes

power in the Philippines as the biopolitical modes through which cold war paradigms of modernization and development function through multinational investment and transnational capital and the utilization of Philippine life for the reproduction of this capital. Marcos initiated a nuclear power program in 1973 with the proposal of the construction of the Bataan Nuclear Power Plant (BNPP). With the declaration of Presidential Decree No. 606 (P.D. 606), Marcos transferred the Philippine Atomic Energy Commission, charged with the facilitation of the nuclear power program in the Philippines, from the jurisdiction of the National Science Development Board to the Office of the President. As a result, the proliferation of nuclear power in the Philippines became a matter of national development. Although the construction of the plant was eventually completed near the end of Marcos's reign, it never went into operation.¹⁶ The Symposium on Nuclear Energy was held at the Philippine International Center on January 26, 1979 and brought together a team of research experts to discuss their findings on the costs and benefits of nuclear power in the country. The symposium boasted a list of speakers from various universities and organizations, including chemistry professor Carlito R. Barril. Barril offered a presentation that discussed the "economics of nuclear power and its implications for a developing country" where he explained that the implementation of a nuclear power program was particularly dangerous for a developing country like the Philippines. In an especially charged point, he posits that "the electricity generated by nuclear plants will benefit more, not the rural folks who need help, but the

¹⁶ Currently touted by the tourist bureau of the Philippines as the "first and only" nuclear power plant in the Philippines, it generates some tourist revenue from curious tourists to Bataan.

urban rich, the multinational corporations and the suppliers of electrical appliances.”¹⁷ Barril is adamant here that the pursuit of the “hard energy” path will facilitate a dependence upon foreign technology that will necessitate foreign experience – hampering the nation’s export of its natural resources, a decrease in the domestic labor needed to prepare these resources, and a consequential aggravation of the country’s already dire unemployment rates.

However hypothetical – and maybe even hyperbolic – Barril’s theorization of nuclear proliferation in the Philippines may be, he reminds his audience that nuclear power is a distinctly foreign technology and thereby brings with it a set of distinct stipulations. It is not a surprise that multinational corporations and other forms of foreign investment proliferated under Marcos’s careful watch,¹⁸ and Barril’s caution here reveals an inextricable relationship between technological modernization and the trajectory of the global economy. After a series of corrupt dealings, Marcos contracted the Westinghouse corporation to build the plant in Bataan. Based in the United States, Westinghouse successfully erected the plant in the Philippines and then eventually constructed more plants throughout the Asia/Pacific. The advent of Westinghouse illustrates Marcos’s commitment to welcome multinational investment into the country and to saturate foreign

¹⁷ National Research Council of the Philippines, *Symposium on Nuclear Energy, January 26, 1979, Philippine International Convention Center, Manila, Philippines* (Manila: National Research Council of the Philippines, 1981), 50.

¹⁸ “During the late 1960s and early 1970s, small, but articulate and growing, groups of Filipinos took issue with the prevailing view and pointed to the openness of the Philippine economy as a reason for, rather than a solution to, the country’s existing state of underdevelopment. The declaration of martial law in September 1972 brought this debate to a halt, as Marcos repressed the nationalists and welcomed foreign investment. In turn, Marcos received whole-hearted support from the foreign business community. As *Business International* authoritatively reported, ‘the overwhelming consensus of the foreign business community in the Philippines was that martial rule under President Marcos was the best thing that ever happened to the country’” See Daniel B. Schirmer and Stephen Rosskamm Shalom, eds., *The Philippines Reader: A History, Colonialism, Neocolonialism, Dictatorship, and Resistance* (Cambridge: South End Press, 1987), 231.

capital within the national economy. More importantly, however, this investment served to change the face of labor – the very structure of work – in the Philippines. Under such conditions, rural economies faltered as a result of increased migration to urban centers; women’s bodies were over-utilized by corporations seeking the dexterity and cheapness of their labor; and temporary contract work found its place within the rapidly changing national economy. Moreover, Barril’s assertion that the “rural folks” would suffer the most from the implementation of a nuclear power program posits that the poorest segments of the Philippine population would undergo the most devastating material effects of nuclear proliferation. At the symposium, Celso Roque from the National Environmental Protection Council of the Philippines discussed some of the radioactive dangers associated with nuclear power.¹⁹ He explained that “geothermal pollution” is the most immediate danger of the plant. According to Roque, “the most serious impact [...] of the nuclear power plant in Bataan has already happened” in the form of “the tremendous amount of erosion that has been going on in the area because of the construction of the nuclear plant.”²⁰ For Barril and Roque, then, the question of nuclear power is always already a problem of land. For the rural poor whose lives depend upon the land, this usurpation of land in the name of development, modernization, and investment structures their lives according to the persistent demands of global capital.

The cautions that Barril and Roque – however limited – are important for contextualizing the concerns that spurred the march from Plaza Miranda to Mendiola Gate. In its attempts to weigh the potential costs and benefits of the nuclear power

¹⁹ National Research Council of the Philippines, *Symposium on Nuclear Energy*, 38.

²⁰ *Ibid*, 39.

program in the Philippines, the symposium focused on evaluating its economic costs, the ecological damage it may produce, and the “radioactive waste [that] are [the] by-products in the various activities of nuclear energy utilization.”²¹ While such cost-benefit analyses are useful, they also subscribe to discourses of development that do little to destabilize the logics of modernization that facilitated the very need for alternative sources of energy in the first place. For instance, the state’s investment in the urbanization of Metro Manila funnels capital into the country’s wealthiest cities and away from the rural countryside, facilitating the depletion of capital from the area – what Tadiar might describe as “an eruption of the contradictions of the nation’s, and correspondingly, Manila’s development.”²² The conversation sparked at the symposium focuses on the necessity to evaluate alternative energy sources as the world’s oil supply decreases. However, such a dualistic concern does little to articulate the ways that the bodies of the rural poor – particularly those of third world women – must bear the unequal burdens of modernization. On the other hand, the marchers’ protest visually describes the biopolitical regimes of power through which bodies are made to be disposable at the same time that they are imagined as the benefactors of such a project. Tadiar explains that the “urban poor [...] help to sustain the very same economy in behalf of which they are marginalized” and that “[t]hey work for the organization but are not part of it [...] It is on this informal economy that multinational corporations increasingly depend to keep labour costs low and to underwrite the reproduction of its consumers.”²³

²¹ Ibid., 9.

²² Neferti Tadiar, *Fantasy Production: Sexual Economies and Other Philippine Consequences for the New World Order* (Aberdeen: Hong Kong University Press, 2004), 81.

²³ Ibid., 83.

Thus, following the lead of Tadiar and others, to insist that it is important to consider the construction of the nuclear power plant upon the land is to investigate the historical and geopolitical specificities of Bataan, for it elucidates the intricacy with which post-World War II fixations with U.S. geopolitical security (read: the solidification of global capitalism) coincided with the technological and economic modernization of the Philippines and the usurpation of Philippine lives. The Bataan of the 1970s and 1980s – then as it does now – served as a site of post-World War II national trauma. As the site of a devastating defeat for both Philippine and U.S. troops at the hands of the Japanese imperial army during the war (famously known as the Bataan Death March), Bataan offers for the U.S. and Philippine states a conduit through which to remember and memorialize the death and destruction of a war waged by enemies against democracy and heroically won by the protectors of global freedom. It also offers a space for commemorating the special “friendship” and alliance between the Philippines and the United States. Vernadette Vicuña Gonzalez has discussed the ways that the opening of tourism in Bataan activates narratives of sacrifice, suffering, and brotherhood around war in ways that obscure legacies of colonial militarized violence in the Philippines.²⁴ Gonzalez’s exploration of Bataan analyzes the means through which the Philippine tourist industry reinscribes this colonial violence in its production of capital from the Bataan tours. More interestingly to me, however, is the way that Gonzalez’s work locates Bataan as a place of struggle between the neoliberal aims to modernize the Philippines through the acquisition of foreign capital and the tenacity with which Bataan stubbornly continues to signify the violence of war and destruction and the continuation of U.S.

²⁴ Gonzalez, “Touring Military Masculinities,” 66.

military presence in the Philippines. Gonzalez writes that “[t]he military, particularly the continued U.S. presence, serves as a guarantor for potential investors” and thus traces the marked shift between the end of the Military Bases Agreement in 1991 and the subsequent closure of U.S. naval bases in Olongapo and Angeles and the recruitment of former soldiers as tourists to these bases, to Corregidor, and to Bataan as a means of securing “potential investors.” This Bataan solidifies the U.S. colonial project in the Philippines as one bounded by mutual U.S.-Philippine military and political interests. It also activates and continues to advance a “shared” project of continuous reconstruction in the realization of a new global order based upon the pronouncements of the superiority of democracy and capitalism.

The construction of a nuclear power plant not only in Bataan but *on* Bataan is particularly fruitful for conceiving of the plant along analytical terms that disentangle the colluding interests of Philippine economic development, U.S. imperialism, global modernization, and modernized historicism from the overarching schema of a Marcos dictatorship. In other words, the nuclear power plant must not be considered in isolation as only the materialization of Marcos’s dictatorial whims but as something much more intricate and expansive. Put another way: in the ways that U.S. Cold War narratives might describe the race for arms and the proliferation of nuclear technology as the basis for the ideological and geopolitical struggle between the United States and the Soviet Union, the nuclear power plant in the Philippines helps to elucidate Marcos’s practices of technological advancement as an attempt to situate the Philippines within the temporal and spatial paradigm of cold war modernity, that is, a kind of *modus operandi* of modernization under the developmental guidance offered by global capitalism. The plant

– as the site of commemoration and profit, trauma and capital – was an authoritarian and imperialist attempt to reclaim Bataan from the debilitating tenets of postwar defeat. The plant’s dysfunction – its failure to come into eventual operation – mirrors its inability to find visual completeness and coherence in the People Power archive. Living beneath the radar of the Komenich series’ overrepresentation of “Philippine revolution,” the images of the marchers illustrate an alternative conceptualization of authoritarian violence that constructs a revolutionary praxis based not upon the realization of a predetermined telos of democratic freedom but, instead, upon a disarticulation of nuclear proliferation as the nexus of multiple regimes of biopower.

Bodily Intimacy in Four Photographs

As a protest against the construction of the nuclear power plant, the “all women’s” march articulates Philippine economic development and cold war modernization as part and parcel of Marcos authoritarianism. In directing attention to the ways that the proliferation of nuclear power in the Philippines will have detrimental effects upon the bodies of poor Philippine women, these marchers outline a state economy that makes possible the very construction of a nuclear power plant and one that relies specifically upon a gendered and sexualized division of labor to better facilitate the entrance of multinational investment and transnational capital into the country. Several scholars have already described at length the ways that multinational corporations demand the bodies and labor of Philippine women in order to keep the costs of production low and the potential for profit high. In her comprehensive historical overview of the Philippines’ “labor brokerage state,” Robyn Rodriguez explains that

“[t]he Philippine state [...] enticed capital investment in Export Processing Zones (EPZs) with the labor of Filipina women, who were represented as an especially docile and cheap labor force.”²⁵ Additionally, Rolando Tolentino writes that “[t]he body is integrated into the circuits of multinationalism and transnationalism, generating a political economy marked by a highly sexualized division of labor” and that “[t]hird-world governments are only too eager to provide this habitat, which, as in most of the Third World, is imbued with the feminization of poverty: women bear the burden of the impact of changes in transnational circuits”²⁶ Tolentino’s insight here not only describes the specificities of the Philippine political economy as it functions through the demands of the global market but also explains that the “female body” is the terrain upon which these economies must function. Further in a special issue of *positions* comprised of essays that theorize “cinema and sexuality in the post-Marcos, post-Brocka Philippines,” Tolentino expands these articulations of the gendered and sexualized division of labor in the political economy of the Philippines. He describes it as a “vaginal economy” in which the “female sex [is] the primary instrument of national development and is characterized by the massive deployment of overseas contract workers [...] the greater sexualization of female domestic labor [...] the feminization of male labor [...] and the double- or triple-feminization of female labor.”²⁷

The marchers thus provide a framework for conceptualizing both the extent and intricacy of this political economy as it capitalizes upon female bodies and their labor.

Tracing the emergence of racial hierarchies from the contradiction between universal

²⁵ Rodriguez, *Migrants for Export*, 13.

²⁶ Tolentino, “Bodies, Letters, Catalogs: Filipinas in Transnational Space,” 46.

²⁷ Rolando Tolentino, “Vaginal Economy: Cinema and Sexuality in the Post-Marcos, Post-Brocka Philippines,” *positions* 19.2 (Fall 2011), 229-30.

humanism and the colonial state's need to manage the work and labor of the colonized, Lisa Lowe "interpret[s] the multivalence of *intimacy* [...] to identify the genealogy of the process through which the 'intimacies of four continents' was rationalized and sublated by a notion of 'intimacy' that defined the liberal individual's freedom."²⁸ Here, Lowe's charting of a world division of labor between Africa, Asia, and the Americas that was necessitated by the modern colonial state challenges the universality of liberal humanism and its concurrent claims of privacy. Following Lowe's lead, I insist that "intimacy" names both an interrogation of the seemingly private space of the body as it is usurped by the public circulation of capital. Additionally, in her analysis of Marxist leftist and feminist discourses that level interrogations of the "international capitalist world-system by highlighting the affective and "immaterial labor" reproduced by the gendered and sexualized divisions of labor, Tadiar asserts that other frameworks must be waged to conceive of the international economy in terms other than those that reinscribes subjectivities of exchange that fall victim to the paradigmatic stipulations of capitalist production and accumulation.²⁹ Considering Lowe's conceptualizations of intimacy in relation to Tadiar's articulations of the unproductivity of "waste" generates a method for considering the marchers as contesting the very schema through which capitalism functions. More importantly, it offers modalities of/for life-making that are grounded in a kind of socialization that stalls the progression of capitalist (re)production. In other words, as Lowe and Tadiar instruct, the individualized subjectivity of the Filipina – as it

²⁸ Lisa Lowe, "The Intimacies of Four Continents," *Haunted by Empire* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007), 204.

²⁹ Neferti X. M. Tadiar, "If Not Mere Metaphor ... Sexual Economies Reconsidered," *The Scholar and Feminist Online* 7, no. 3 (Summer 2009), accessed April 13, 2014, http://sfonline.barnard.edu/sexecon/tadiar_01.htm.

is buttressed by a paradigm of liberal humanism that is always attached to migratory, transnational capital – is always already dependent upon the utilization of her body and labor for the production of capital and for exchange within a capitalist market. As such, intimacy, insofar as it points to a certain modality of unproductivity, coheres as an analytic through which these marchers can wrestle with such relations in ways that reconstitute and redirect their labor not for the perpetuation of this framework of exchange but, rather, for the regeneration of the masses as a collective barricade against capital's ubiquitous movement.

In *Imprisoned in a Luminous Glare: Photography and the African American Freedom Struggle*, Leigh Raiford theorizes the ways that black racialized subjectivity is constituted by the photograph. Citing Martin Luther King, Jr.'s assertion that the photographs of the black civil rights struggle “imprisoned in a luminous glare” the brutalized black individual, Raiford explains that to be imprisoned in a luminous glare is to “[suggest] the tensions between captivity and fugitivity, the contradictions inherent in attempting to fix that which by its nature is mobile and mercurial. It calls attention to how mass media attempts to capture mass movements, photography tries to name and regulate ‘race,’ and history works to tame memory. The photograph in particular imposes a unitary vision and helps fix the meaning of that which it records. It provides the illusion of seeing an event in its entirety as it truly happened.”³⁰ As a regulatory paradigm, the photograph excises the unmanageable facets of blackness and makes real racialized subjectivity in order to fix in place a set of definitive markers for producing and

³⁰ Leigh Raiford, *Imprisoned in a Luminous Glare: Photography and the African American Freedom Struggle* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 4.

comprehending difference. Promising truth, the photograph argues that the marker of felicity is that which can be seen. Raiford posits three avenues that elucidate the tensions and possibilities that photography affords for conceptualizing the black freedom struggle: the unmaking of an identity created for black people in racist depictions that claimed truths about black essence, a liberatory tool of black self-representation, and a space through which leaders, scholars, and activists chose to remember and recount the histories of the movement for freedom. While Raiford's work is deliberate in its illumination of black racial subjectivity in the United States as it was constituted by a struggle for liberation, it is useful here for envisioning a methodological framework with which to consider the role of photography and mass media to stabilize state-imposed subjectivities and then to contest them in order to imagine other methods of self-actualization. At the same time, I remain mindful of the ways that Raiford's critique is grounded in both a genealogy of black radical thought and the materiality of violence enacted precisely onto black bodies. Raiford writes that "[f]or racialized groups especially, bearing on their shoulders the burden of representation, photography can simultaneously establish intimacy with its subject and articulate distance. As self-crafted, though always negotiated and forming a dialectic with dominant cultural depictions, these images are neither the thingly Other nor the thing itself, but reside in the interstices."³¹ This illumination of the photograph as revealing an interstices between intimacy and distance advances a way of reading the photograph as a medium for capturing the selves of its objects. Yet, it also suggests that intimacy offers a method for reasserting these

³¹ Ibid., 15.

selves through a self-crafting that can be achieved by and within the inherent dialectical tensions of the image.

My analysis of the images of the marchers is inspired by Raiford's postulations and focuses on four photographs that are reproduced from the original collection onto the Revolution Revisited website. In each of these photographs, the marchers are linked arm-in-arm. They each appear to be restricted to a section of the street as they protect something – perhaps another group of marchers, perhaps themselves – against riot police. In two of these images – Photograph 1 and Photograph 2 [Figures 3.2 and 3.3] – the same section of a single street is depicted from different photographic perspectives. Placed side-by-side, they reveal the constricted conditions of the protest space. In both of these images, the camera focuses upon the masked faces of two different women. While the other marchers in each of the frames turn away from the camera, these women stare directly into it. Photograph 1 offers a ground-level perspective of the march. In this image, two arms are linked in the foreground, several marchers stand in the background, and a lone woman stares into the camera from the center of the frame as she holds onto the arms of the other marchers. This woman stands distinctly apart from the crowd insofar as she is the only one of a few women whose face is covered, and her floral-printed blouse sharply contrasts the solid colors worn by the other women around her. She is framed on all sides by the linked arms of the other marchers, and she is the only woman who stares directly into the camera. The perspective of Photograph 2 is directly above ground level. The only woman who looks directly into the camera tilts her head slightly upward to meet its gaze. The women in the frame form a triangulated barricade, and they, too, are linked in arms as they watch the rest of the march unfold. Both images

are charged engagements between the single woman who stares intently into the camera and the photographer who attempts to capture her image. There is a simultaneous individuality and anonymity evoked by this relationship: on the one hand, the camera isolates each woman as the only woman whose face is covered and the only one whose eyes meet the camera's gaze. Yet, as the camera attempts to apprehend the individuality of this woman, the woman is simultaneously saturated within the crowd of linked arms



Figure 2: Women March Floral [Courtesy of the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley; 827031-D-13a]

and marchers. In other words, even as each woman is singled out by the camera's gaze, she always already belongs to the figure of the masses. As the camera pursues her subjectivity, each woman refuses the individualizing logics of this gaze both through her mask and her deliberate resignation to the collective protest. Tadiar explains:

As a dominant theme and paradigmatic plot of revolutionary literature, revolutionary mobilization depends, however, on a

transformative structure of feeling and sentiment which, prior to the moment of consciousness and call to armed struggle – indeed, as a condition of both – enables the dissolution of the self and its difference from the other. Such dissolution takes the form of an unbinding of the self from a closed, finished reality and the opening up, often by death and profound loss, of a boundless realm of actions and events that surpass the finitudes of given social, human forms (though not finitude altogether). This transformative action event is often expressed as a thunderous storm of passion composed of grief and rage, a liberative force overflowing and breaking down the enclosing walls of social oppression.

Tadiar's conceptualization of revolutionary literature is useful here for considering the ways that the force of mass dissent must subsume the individualities of these women in order to fuel that resistance against social oppression. While Tadiar's postulation is specific to literature, it is nonetheless useful for considering the limitations of "social, human forms" as they are both conceived by the visual medium of the photographic image and expressed by other discourses of liberation. The photograph's ability to capture a single instance of life consolidates that life within the confines of the frame so that the reproduction of that life is only possible within the terms designated by the visual image. In other words, as the photograph attempts to construct the object of its gaze as the subject of its image, this subjectivity must depend upon the terms of the photographic reproduction. This is the predetermination of life, the death of possibility facilitated by the visual capture and reproduction of a moment along terms designated by the photograph. As Tadiar suggests, this death makes possible other forms of life, and the women's insistent conjunction to each other makes possible the continuation of the collective beyond the dictates of the photographic image. In the first photograph, the masked woman in the center clasps her fingers around the forearm of her neighbor. The strength of her grip is accentuated by the defined musculature of her arm. In the second

photograph, the masked woman at the bottom of the triangulated barricade is clasped by arms that are inextricably intertwined in an embrace that blurs the ownership of their limbs. As the women link arms, they enact bodily intimacies that depend upon the specificity of their touch to generate a mass that can protect itself from the violence of riot police. The persistence of the collective to refuse the personalization of their subjectivities revokes the photograph's attempts to bring closer and familiarize the women for an unknown audience.



Figure 3: Women March Triangle [Courtesy of the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley; 827031-D-19]

The force of the masses emerges with vigor in a third photograph [Figure 3.4]. In this photograph, the camera catches several women in mid-march. There is a large crowd of onlookers behind them, and the perspective appears to be from within a makeshift circle of marchers. Like the women in the first and second photographs, the marchers

grasp each other; unlike those in the first two photographs, these marchers cover their faces with skeleton masks. By wearing and performing death, these marchers describe



Figure 4: Women March Masks [Courtesy of the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley; 827031-D-7]

death as the result of the proliferation of nuclear power in the Philippines. In doing so, they conceptualize death as both the result of state, imperial, and neoliberal violence – in other words, their lives have become unlivable in the face of this violence – and as a medium through which they might imagine other articulations of life. Tadiar describes a politics of life and death grounded in a Philippine cultural and revolutionary logic that conceives of death as a sacrifice made on behalf of a greater cause proposed by the masses’ collective struggle. This is helpful for understanding that the marchers’ articulation of death moves beyond the logics of normative conceptualizations of life in which death names the total end of life.³² In this case, death is the “renewal” of life that has been lost in the face of state violence. In advancing death as the force accumulated

³² Tadiar, *Things Fall Away*, 364-366.

from the obliteration of their lives, the marchers contest the ways that capitalist calculations of life are fashioned deliberately for the use of state development.

In a fourth image [Figure 3.5], a young child marches while holding a sign that reads: “Inay! Bakit Ako Pinapatay? [Mother! Why are they killing me?].”³³ Here, the child galvanizes the potential of death in order to articulate the consequences of the proliferation of nuclear power and to secure support from onlookers in a campaign against the construction of the nuclear power plant. Posed as a question, however, it establishes the contours of a different discursive critique that deliberately describes state violence as the ability to “make live.” Furthermore, the question allows the march itself to become the answer to the inquiry. Inasmuch as the child invokes the “mother” as the bearer of knowledge, the task of knowledge production shifts from the state and its co-conspirators to the marchers. In such ways, the marchers’ articulation of state violence affords them the opportunity to construct a discourse with which they might succinctly and adequately respond to the child’s inquiry. Rather than create sympathy for the mother-child relationship and thus reinscribe the heteronormative logics of familial kinship, the idea that the child is being slowly killed disrupts the workings of reproductive labor. That is, the child – always at the threshold of life and death – bears little potential for continuing these reproductive processes and the labor that they promise. Here, death functions to stop the trajectory of capital as it moves in and through the bodies and lives of these marchers.

³³ 15A, 5063, BANC PIC 2006.29 – NEG (1984-09-13).



Figure 5: Women March Child [Courtesy of the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley; 827031-G-15A]

These illustrations of struggle against the proliferation of nuclear power in the Philippines dislodge the force of the People Power photographic archive to advance a story of a singular, homogenous authoritarian power structure in order to direct critical attention to the proliferation of multinational corporations, the urbanization of city spaces and the further depletion of rural towns, and the gendered and sexualized division of labor that constitute the Philippine economy – processes that span the temporal and spatial boundaries of Marcos rule. The photographic images offer lucid ways of articulating the marchers' protest as a contestation of normative subjectivities fostered by a kind of imperialist liberalism invested in the free circulation of multinational and transnational capital. Insofar as the archive and its photographs promote the life of a

particular kind of subject that can be reproduced for a global audience at the expense of the eradication of other life forms that are incommunicable by the camera's frame, the images rearticulate violence as the insidious form of life-making propagated by a liberatory paradigm of individualist emancipation that purposefully impedes the continuation of collective struggle. As a struggle of and for the body, the marchers challenge holistic and overarching conceptualizations of violence that frame power as battles between opposing governmental regimes. On the contrary, this attention to the body generates an important critique of the modes through which Marcos's authoritarianism capitalized upon longstanding, imperialist structures and worldwide investments in economic restructuring. As these images illustrate a struggle enacted on the bodily level, they also showcase the modalities through which a nation is not only made to suffer the consequences of corruption but are made to live in order to make that power possible. As their bodies are used, so these marchers use their bodies in order to construct a revolutionary praxis.

The Revolution Revisited Digital Archive

The Revolution Revisited project – which digitized 500 of Komenich's photographic prints of the revolution – was launched in 2011, one year after the commencement of the *Examiner* project at the Bancroft Library. While Revolution Revisited also includes a book and film project, its 2011 iteration functions as a digital archive that makes more widely available Komenich's photographs. Komenich deliberately chose these images from his collection to be displayed on the Revolution Revisited website in order to solicit assistance from the public regarding the whereabouts

of the people represented in the images. While the 500 images portray a variety of people and events, most of them are illustrations of the four days of the revolution. In this way, the project extracts the Komenich series' most unwieldy, incoherent parts in order to more adamantly frame the photographs within a more comprehensive and coherent narrative of a movement that saw as its primary goal the struggle against a dictatorship and for democracy. Such a narrative is strengthened by the individual stories of the previously anonymous people documented in the photographs and highlighted in the Revolution Revisited project. In other words, the project seeks to name the otherwise nameless faces of the photographs. In the "Then & Now" section of the project website, thirteen profiles document the before-and-after stories of several people – from the notorious First Lady to Sister Delia Regidor, formerly part of a brigade of nuns who met the Marcos military along EDSA, to Lenlen Bрева, a cemetery worker during the time of the revolution. In the case of Juanito Enriquez, a former rice worker in 1986 and town leader in 2011, the advent of democracy in the Philippines under Marcos's successor Aquino paved the way for his own political development into a town officer.

In consolidating the revolution in this way – as a set of actors and their personal stories – the project frames the revolution only along the mandates of representability, that which can be seen and measured according to the tenets of individual freedom. This is a limited conceptualization of revolutionary possibility, to be sure, for it fails to comprehend the intricate workings of state power under the strictures of the global market economy that facilitated the revolution, persist after it, and that work to structure the very limits of resistance. In an interview with Komenich made available on the project website, Komenich explains his motivation for the project: "I found the people

[...] whose stories really resonated with me, the people I made sort of a connection with and [...] it was wonderful. I'm able to hand these pictures off and [...] it's not [...] about, you know, that's brilliant journalism! [It's] about, 'There I am!'" Here, Komenich describes the ways that his project was founded upon a politics of representation and recognition, the brilliant realization of the "I" of the self. In another interview, he explains that the project emerged from a necessity to transform the immediacy of the news – the newness of the news – into history. Both descriptions of the project seek to transform the unfamiliarity of a distinctly Philippine revolution into a framework of relationality. Here, Komenich's project transforms the object of the revolution into the subject of the photograph and then the subject of history. The individuals' ability to find themselves within history thus seeks to consolidate them not only within a paradigm of liberal emancipation – through which the "I" is only recognizable within the logics of representational subjectivity and universal humanity – but also within a historical paradigm of progress advanced by the proliferation of worldwide democracy.

In one set of photographs displayed on the project website, an image reveals a young child in skin-and-bones, depleted of nourishment and dying of starvation. The caption reads: "Young Joel Abong was among the hardest hit of the children in Negros Occidental where the economy suffered under Marcos cronies. His father, a fisherman, could not make enough money to feed Joel and his six siblings. Joel died a few weeks after the photo was taken. Life hasn't changed much for Rodolfo and Concepcion Abong, pictured in their home in a squatter area in Bacolod City." An accompanying photograph depicts the child's mother and father in 2011, sitting in front of their shanty with their heads faced sorrowfully downward. In an accompanying video, the father explains to the

camera (and to the translator) that his family did not see the photograph of their son until after he had died and that the photograph that they eventually did see was already published in a magazine when they discovered it. The project only frames the child through his victimization at the hands of Marcos's crony capitalism. While the child's death is attributed to state-sanctioned violence and the continuation of his parents' poverty to an unceasing cycle of inefficiency and corruption in the Philippines, his subjectivity is still made legible by the project's ability to see, capture, and name him. The reproduction of his image in a magazine usurps his life through the continuous reproduction of his subjectivity, and his death can only be comprehended by the extinguishment of his life. What is possible when one seeks not to make sense of his death through the measurement of his life but, rather, reimagines his death through the project's insistence to make legible his life within the demarcated boundaries of democratic freedom? What kinds of discursive and revolutionary possibilities might one glean from his death in the face of these forms of life?

Put another way, if the project's aim is to trace, identify, and name the anonymous faces of the revolution and to chart the ways that their lives have progressed in the aftermath of the revolution, how might the child's anguish, death, and absence and his parents' grief and trauma contest the discursive terrain of a subjectivity structured by the representative strain of liberal emancipation? In one instance of the video, the child's mother presents her back to the camera as she grasps tightly the photo of her dead child. She lifts herself from the floor of the steps, enters the dark room of her house, disappears from the camera's view, and utters a few final cries of grief and a few words that remain incomprehensible. Only then does the father explain that he did not see the photograph of

his son until after his death and that the photograph was found in the pages of a magazine. The success of the project is contingent upon the acquisition of knowledge about the participants of the revolution. As such, the seizure of these participants thus serves as the vehicle through which the revolution can be comprehended and assessed. The Abongs' resistance to the visuality of the project reframes Philippine life through utterances and expressions that cannot be deciphered by the project's insistence to construct subjectivities that can be seen and reproduced. The Abongs exemplify what Tadiar might call the "devalued times of experience and subjectivity [which are] productive times. They are what fall away from the proper political or economic subjects that are assumed or expected to emerge from the new conditions of the global economy, even as they are vital forces and supports for the making of such material conditions."³⁴ As expressions of grief and rage, these utterances reject the totality of legibility in order to nourish a more far-reaching revolutionary milieu, one that "foreground[s] the creative living labor of emergent, disenfranchised peoples in the making of the contemporary world, and their unrecognized potentials for forging more open futures." In other words, these pronouncements seem less interested in describing the failures of the revolution than in pointing to the incapacity for popular narratives to comprehend revolutionary possibility that lie beyond the framework of visibility and representation.

At the 25th anniversary of People Power in 2011, Filipino novelist Jose Dalisay explained of the revolution: "[F]reedom is more difficult and complex than dealing with a dictatorship."³⁵ Dalisay's assertion here is more telling than it seems, for it refers to the

³⁴ Tadiar, "If Not Mere Metaphor ... Sexual Economies Reconsidered," par. 38.

³⁵ Kate McGeown, "People Power at 25: Long Road to Philippine Democracy," *BBC News*, accessed April 13, 2014, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-pacific-12567320>, par. 24.

difficulties that befell the nation in the “post-EDSA” era, the extent to which the revolution is popularly conceived as an “unfinished” revolution, and the weight of the term “freedom” as it conceptualizes a more complex array of historical occurrence. The first comes as no surprise, of course, for the removal of the dictator did not dismantle the existing regimes that worked in tandem with Marcos to shape Philippine political, economic, and social life. While the end of Marcos certainly led to the closure of U.S. military bases in the Philippines, for instance, it also facilitated the emergence of new programs such as *Balikatan* military training endeavors and the solidification of the Visiting Forces Agreement that heralded a new era of U.S.-Philippine military alliances. While Marcos took measures to institutionalize the nation’s labor export program, it grew and flourished under Aquino’s regime. The necessity to wrestle with freedom as a political and discursive paradigm is thus especially urgent in light of such realities, for a freedom from authoritarianism does not prefigure the multifarious ways through which the Philippines functions in and through a collusion between colonial and imperial legacies, nationalist configurations, and neoliberal structures. The claim, then, that the revolution is an unfinished one is therefore not without its clout. And, yet, what I have tried to illustrate is that the very historical, discursive, and visual strictures of revolution are the basis for contention, for the articulation of revolution against governmental structures limits the extent to which revolution can be imagined as the very basis for conceptualizing life and resistance. Revolution’s promise of an anticipated future based on what the Philippines should be structures the Filipino through a future temporality of a time not yet arrived and describes Filipino possibility only through what must be and not upon what it is. The People Power photographic archive helps to illustrate and interrogate

the limits of visual representation, of what can be seen, in order to make possible other ways of existing, other ways of believing. The bodily intimacies elucidated by the photographs in the archive both allow for a reconsideration of violence away from the limiting binary of oppositional power structures and toward a conceptualization of colluding and intersecting regimes that might not always be seen but always materialize in real ways – in limiting the extent to how people can live. But, more importantly, by tracing the ways that Filipinos have already and are currently enacting revolution, one might disentangle life from these limited paradigms of living.

Epilogue:

“If I Was Not There” and Other Considerations

With this project, I have traced the modalities through which Philippine authoritarian power and U.S. imperial regimes have used Filipino subjectivity as a technology for advancing the neoliberal demands of the global capitalist economy that has structured the 20th and 21st centuries. Filipino subjectivity – which names the medium through which Filipinos were conceived in the world and with which they understood their own positions as such – became the ideological and political juncture at which the Philippine state under Marcos and the U.S. Cold War government could solidify its alliance. Such a conjunction would allow both to work to restructure the Philippine political and economic landscape to best contain the threat of communism and other forms of leftist insurgency in order to advance the aims of global capitalism. Thus, the “problem” of the Filipino – insofar as it has come to describe a social body, a category of belonging, a colonial experience, and a nationalist formation – is the nexus through which post-World War II dilemmas could be adequately resolved through their saturation within a new world order defined by the proficiency of transnational capital. As such, Filipino subjectivity describes the historical, political, and discursive project of legibility through which the Philippines was conceived within modernity.

This project is situated during the Marcos era not only because it spans more than 20 years of Philippine history but also because, more than anything else, it offers a provocative means of illustrating Marcos’s commitments to the global politics and paradigms of the period. As I have described, Marcos commanded power not always

through the suppression of political will but through the seizure and retranslation of this political will according to the logics of cold war era geopolitics and neoliberal strictures. Thus, whether through an egalitarian participation touted by U.S. democratic republicanism or the usurpation of political will under Philippine authoritarianism, Filipino subjectivity offers a way to conceptualize the conjunctures between Philippine authoritarian governance and U.S. imperialist legacies.

Each of the chapters has investigated a particular instance through which Filipino subjectivity became the site of contestation between political leaders, governmental regimes, and other forms of suppressive power on the one hand and cultural producers and Filipinos themselves as they came face-to-face with these entities on the other. The first chapter explored the Marcoses' cultural reforms in such a way that pinpointed culture not simply as the arena of dialectical exchange and opposition – always standing in critical antagonism to the realm of the political that is subsumed by governmental power. Marcos seized culture as the domain for Filipino self-actualization and consequently spearheaded cultural reforms that advanced a certain kind of Filipinoness that could lie alongside a universal humanity touted by decolonial revisionist frameworks of development around the globe. Lino Brocka's cinematic realist critique thus dismantles these visions of humanity as mediums of modernization that propagate the dire living conditions of the country's poorest populations. Brocka's vision of this *un*-humanity, exemplified by his characters' devolvement into webs of immorality and irrationality, renders the Marcoses' visions of humanity incapable of accounting for the lives of Manila's urban poor. In the second chapter, I centered Nick Joaquin's historical postulations as a way to claim that the era of martial law provided him with an important

literary paradigm for disarticulating the dominant historiographic approaches to Philippine experience. As Joaquin dismantles the notion of the “true Filipino” in his novel, he explores the Filipino’s condition of becoming as the basis for another Philippine historiography that does not always submit to the temptations of historical modernity. In the third chapter, I investigated the ways that the photographic archive’s narrativization of the People Power revolution shaped the movement within the paradigmatic framework of democratic liberation. I explained that such a formation forecloses the extent to which the masses could imagine a radical departure from the visions of emancipation promised by both the dictatorship and democratic republicanism.

In each of these chapters, I described the ways that these cultural producers and movements offer sophisticated and intricate articulations of the political and social contexts out of which they emerge. While each of these cultural forms is interested, in some way, in the question of the Filipino reality during the Marcos period, the precision of the text emerges in its configuration of the ways that life itself has been conceived by the politics of the era. For Brocka, what kinds of possibilities emerge for Insiang in the totalizing despair of the Tondo slums? For Joaquin, how does the historical configuration of Philippine experience already define the limits of an anticipated future? And for the marchers in the Komenich archive, what are the possibilities for protest and revolt within the framework of a predetermined revolutionary outcome? In each of these chapters, cultural producers imagine forms of life-making that may not always be outright admonishments or revolts against the state but, instead, function as ways to interrogate and disrupt the totalizing claims of subjectivity that became the operative modes of cold war modernity.

In earlier work, I asked what it might mean to *lose* Filipino America, referring to the work of conceptualizing Filipino America as a U.S. Cold War and Marcos-propagated social formation and thus challenging any discursive claims to its coherence. In this project, I have revised the question slightly to consider the stakes of rendering Filipino America continuously legible – whether as a coherent social formation, institutionalized body of work, or set of common experiences. In the introduction, I suggested that considering Filipino America as an analytic, a method of critique and engagement that refuses its own coherency at the same time that it accepts the discursive directions it might offer, provides a generative way of untangling the grammar of subjectivity in order to point to alternative possibilities of imagining life under such totalizing conditions. In doing so, I have drawn upon the already rich body of scholarship that constitutes U.S.-Philippines studies to explain that the force of any Filipino American configuration lies precisely in its illegibility, dissonance, and difficulty, in the rather uncertain divide between where America ends and where Filipino begins.

By way of conclusion, I point to the case of Shirley Tan, who in 2009 garnered national attention for her deportation plight – a case that troubled me then and continues to perplex me now. In June 2009, Tan was surprised at her home in Pacifica, California, by the arrival of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officials who handed to her a 2002 deportation notice and then arrested her with the intent to deport her for overstaying her visa. Tan, who was and is in a same-sex union with her longtime partner Jay Mercado, was quickly usurped by civil rights and LGBT activists as an exemplar case of the need for gay marriage rights and immigration reform to include the specific plight of LGBT couples. Along a similar yet different vein, Filipino activist groups in the

United States have used Tan's case to call attention to the long-standing legacies of U.S. imperialism and militarization in the Philippines that have come to shape the diasporic Filipino experience in the United States. A 2009 statement released by BAYAN-USA states:

The Tan-Mercado family's threat of deportation exposes the viciousness of US 'homeland security' policies that work to justify a domestic form of US-led, US taxpayer-funded military attacks on the people of Iraq, Afghanistan, Palestine, the Philippines and all around the world. It further reveals the unequal relations between the US and the Philippines in light of the Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA) that allows US military personnel to enter the Philippines without a visa and commit crimes with impunity. Meanwhile, hardworking Filipinas like Shirley Tan, who has committed no crime and is a productive member of society, is being deported from the US.¹

The statement's overarching argument here is that Philippine migration to the United States has been curtailed in order to justify post-9/11 security measures that only serve to strengthen U.S. military might. I point to Tan's case – and the various ways that her case has been utilized by liberal reform and leftist organizations – in order to illustrate Tan's problematic illegibility and legibility. First, Tan is rendered illegible within the framework of U.S. national belonging even while the historical legacy of her Philippine nationality is underscored by a system of labor exchange that has always rendered Filipinos differently included within the contours of U.S. nationhood. However, Tan's illegality is also somehow rendered illegible within the paradigmatic articulations of criminality already institutionalized by ICE and its rhetoric of security. Tan explains in her testimony before the U.S. Senate Committee on the Judiciary: “They were looking for

¹ BAYAN-USA, “Filipinos call for LGBTIQ rights in immigration reform: No deportation for Shirley Tan, no separation of families,” accessed April 13, 2014, <http://bayanusa.org/filipinos-call-for-lgbtiq-rights-in-immigration-reform-no-deportation-for-shirley-tan-no-separation-of-families/>, par. 4.

a ‘Mexican girl,’ and, having nothing to hear, Jay did not think twice about allowing them into our home when they asked permission to search it. It turned out they were really looking for me.” In this case, Tan’s readability is contingent upon her legibility as a “Mexican girl.” This misrecognition points precisely to the racialized framework of illegality that pinpoints “Mexicans” crossing the U.S.-Mexico border as subjects of state surveillance. Yet, it also illustrates the ways that such bodies are made to be exchangeable within the larger schema of labor extraction that has sustained the broader framework of immigration and transmigrant labor in the United States. And, yet, I wonder whether Tan’s legibility within the discourse of reform and rights and even the more critical decolonial discourses outlined by anti-imperialist frameworks also perform the dangerous function of reinscribing Tan within narratives of emancipation that are based precisely upon state investments in individualized subjectivity. Put in other words, if Tan’s illegibility is the extent of the violence that she experiences, does her legibility then resolve such violence? If the injustice that Tan experiences manifests in her removal from the nation, what kinds of justice might be achieved with her inclusion into it? The danger of such emancipatory paradigms, of course, rests in the notion that such forms of liberation always come at the expense of another’s incarceration, as the statement from BAYAN explains. And yet what remains most disturbing is the notion that this form of emancipation – the capacity to be saturated within the nation, the ability to own one’s self and contribute most to the wellbeing of that national formation – becomes the schematic mode of self-determination that delegitimizes other forms of political, economic, and social living and being.

It would be irresponsible to insist that Tan should not be allowed to remain in the country and live her life with her family based upon the ruminations that I present above. I only suggest that Tan's case might actually point to other ways to imagine critique, resistance, and, perhaps, life, beyond the discursive frameworks that I described. In her testimony to the senate committee, Tan recounts her love story with her partner, Jay, and her reason for migrating to the United States: "When I returned to the Philippines, I learned that the man who had, ten years before, brutally murdered my mother and sister, and almost killed me as well, was released from prison. I feared for my safety and I knew I was in danger and understood that in order to live, I had to leave the Philippines. Without anywhere else to go, I decided to go to Jay where I would be safe." Implicit in Tan's statement here is that the Philippines that she left – which in 1985 or 1986 was still ruled by Marcos governance – was incapable of offering to her the safety and wellbeing that she needed. However, Tan describes the multiple violences that she was also forced to undergo at the hands of ICE officials. She explains: "Before I knew it, I was handcuffed and taken away, like a criminal, as Jay's frail mother watched in hysterics. I was put into a van with two men in yellow jump suits and chains and searched like a criminal, in a way I have only seen on television and in movies." Tan's illustration of violence is multifaceted: not simply a description of the various threats to her safety that she experienced in the Philippines or her treatment "like a criminal" in the United States but, most especially, in the failure of her expectations in the face of reality, the notion that the fantasy "only seen on television and in movies" actually came to structure her life. Insofar as Tan's conceptualization of herself is propounded by her testimonial proclamation of an "I" rooted in universalized, humanist notions of love, family, and

home, this self is both produced from and maintained by these forms of state and social violence. Not only does Tan's configuration of her being begin with the Philippines' incapacity to protect her body and self through its inability to provide the home that she seeks, but also that which Tan has used to reconstitute this self in the United States – her new family and home – is forcibly reconfigured in the midst of state violence. In such ways, Tan's testimony propagates a kind of humanist sentimentality if only to underscore the types of violence that make such a humanity possible. By juxtaposing such descriptions of her "model" life with these instances of violence, her testimony explains that the coherence and possibility of such a life is always rendered precarious under such conditions.

In the middle of her testimony, Tan asks three hypothetical questions that are supposed to mirror the ways that ICE officials disrupted her home life also deploy a compelling narrative disruption. She asks: "How would Jay work and take care of the kids if I was not there? Who would continue to take care of Jay's ailing mother, the mother I had come to love, if I was not there? Who would be there for my family if I was not there?" Here, Tan reasserts her subjectivity by describing for the committee a process of self-questioning that she underwent as she realized her impending deportation from the United States. Yet, I find this moment of Tan's testimony to be the most provocative articulation of the precarity of subjectivity as it functions as a technology of the U.S. and Philippine states. Each of Tan's questions points to the domestic and affective labor that she performs in order to keep, maintain, and sustain her home. If, in fact, the home defines her life in the United States, it is precisely this labor that constitutes her lifelihood. The sentence structure that Tan employs with these questions relies precisely upon the

hypothetical and defines her subjectivity in relation to her reproductive labor. Placed in reverse order and posed as a declarative statement, it might read: “If I was not there, nobody would continue to care for Jay’s ailing mother, the mother I had come to love.” Herein lies the danger of belonging within the United States, that the possession of an individualized freedom is always contingent upon modalities of labor and exchange. Yet, I suggest that herein also exists room for imagining something different. Posed another way, one might ask, if the “I” were not there, what other things might be possible? Tadiar insists that these possibilities lie in the “devalued modes of experience [that are] the socio-cultural resources of people struggling practically to imagine themselves out of their present conditions of life” and which “foreground the creative living labor of emergent, disenfranchised peoples in the making of the contemporary world, and their unrecognized potentials for forging more open futures.”² For Tan, at least, the dissolution of her self in the face of state violence facilitates the emergence of a movement intended to “not only benefit [her] but the thousands of people who are also in the same situation.”

If one were to take to task the “self” in any articulation of self-determination and ask quite deliberately what that self means, how it has come to be constituted, who has laid claim to it, and at whose expense that claim was made, then one might not be so adamant about continuously resuscitating it in the formation of any alternative epistemologies. So, then, if one were to let it go for a moment in order to begin to conceive of other modes of illustrating experience and struggle, violence and hope and life, then she might arrive at altogether different visions of being that do not subscribe to such investments. It seems an arduous task – but certainly a project worth pursuing.

² Neferti Tadiar, “If Not Mere Metaphor ... Sexual Economies Reconsidered,” par. 38.

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