ISSN 1656-152X

KRITIKA KULTURA

a refereed electronic journal
of literary / cultural and language studies

No. 6, November 2005

www.ateneo.edu/kritikakultura
Indexed in Scopus, EBSCO, and MLA International Bibliography

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES
ATENEO DE MANILA UNIVERSITY
Quezon City, Philippines

KRITIKA
KULTURA

ISSN 1656-152X
www.ateneo.edu/kritikakultura

Kritika Kultura is an internationally refereed journal acknowledged by a host of Asian and Asian American Studies libraries and scholars network, and indexed in the Directory of Open Access Journals, Scopus, EBSCO, and the MLA International Bibliography.

Published twice a year (February and August)
Open Access

AIMS, FOCUS, AND SCOPE

Kritika Kultura is an international peer-reviewed electronic journal of language and literary/cultural studies which addresses issues relevant to the 21st century, including language, literature and cultural policy, cultural politics of representation, the political economy of language, literature and culture, pedagogy, language teaching and learning, critical citizenship, the production of cultural texts, audience reception, systems of representation, effects of texts on concrete readers and audiences, the history and dynamics of canon formation, gender and sexuality, ethnicity, diaspora, nationalism and nationhood, national liberation movements, identity politics, feminism, women's liberation movements, and postcolonialism.

Kritika Kultura is interested in publishing a broad and international range of critical, scholarly articles on language, literary and cultural studies that appeal to academic researchers in government and private agencies and educational institutions, as well as members of the public who are concerned with exploring and examining contemporary issues in the complex nexus interconnecting language, literature, culture, and society.

Kritika Kultura seeks to promote innovative scholarship that challenges traditional canons and established perspectives and enhance work that bridges disciplinary research around the issues enumerated above, especially in the promising lines of work in Philippine, Asian, Southeast Asian, and Filipino-American studies.

INFORMATION FOR AUTHORS

Please visit www.ateneo.edu/kritikakultura.

PUBLISHER

Department of English, School of Humanities
Ateneo de Manila University
Loyola Heights, Quezon City, Philippines1108
Tel. Nos. +63 (2) 426-6001 loc. 5310 or 5311
Telefax: +63 (2) 426-6120
Email: kritikakultura@admu.edu.ph

KRITIKA
KULTURA

ISSN 1656-152X
www.ateneo.edu/kritikakultura

KRITIKA
KULTURA

ISSN 1656-152X
www.ateneo.edu/kritikakultura

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TWO APPROACHES TO THE POSITIONING OF TRANSLATIONS: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF ITAMAR EVEN-ZOHAR'S POLYSYSTEM STUDIES *AND GIDEON TOURY'S* DESCRIPTIVE TRANSLATION STUDIES AND BEYOND

Harry Aveling
Department of Asian Studies
La Trobe University, Melbourne, Australia
h.aveling@latrobe.edu.au

Abstract
This paper aims to analyze the work of two contemporary scholars of Translation theory, Itamar Even-Zohar and Gideon Toury. Their studies arise out of Russian Formalism and their common location at the University of Tel Aviv. Even-Zohar's Polysystem theory attempts to position texts and their translations within "literary polysystems." On the other hand, Gideon Toury extends Even-Zohar's discussion by a more detailed consideration of the role of "norms" in the translation process. This article suggests that Toury's ideas have been more readily accepted by the academic community because of the way they fit other dimensions of contemporary thought. Although this paper does not consider the application of these theories, it suggests that these theories could be valuable in the study of Southeast Asian literature and the relationships between local literatures in different languages.

Keywords
Indonesian literature, literary polysystems, translation theory, Russian Formalism

About the Author
Harry Aveling is from the Department of Asian Studies at La Trobe University, Melbourne, Australia, and is also Adjunct Professor of Southeast Asian Literature at Ohio University. He has translated extensively Malay and Indonesian Literature, and is the editor of the bilingual anthology *Secrets Need Words: Indonesian Poetry 1966-1998* (Ohio UP, Athens 2001), which was shortlisted for the 2003 NSW Premier's Translation Prize. He holds the degrees of Doctor of Philosophy in Malay Studies from the National University of Singapore, and Doctor of Creative Arts in Writing from the University of Technology, Sydney.

Author's Note
An earlier version of this paper has been published as "A Comparative Study of Itamar Even-Zohar's *Polysystem Studies* and Gideon Toury's *Descriptive Translation Studies and Beyond*" in *CELT: A Journal of Culture, English Language Teaching & Literature,* January 2005.

INTRODUCTION

Translation Studies emerged as an autonomous academic discipline during the early 1970s (Even-Zohar 1).[a] Among the important work undertaken at this time was that of Itamar Even-Zohar and Gideon Toury, both of the Department of Poetics and Comparative Literature at Tel Aviv University, Israel (Weissbrod 1-2).

The aim of the department was not to study one or even a number of literary traditions, but poetics itself, "literature as literature," through descriptive research within

the framework of a set of theoretical assumptions. Even-Zohar and Toury, too, sought to provide theoretical frameworks for the study of literary texts and their translations, which relied as far as possible on the study of relationships within and between texts.

This paper focuses on the two theoretical approaches to translation which have arisen from their work in Tel Aviv. The first approach is Polysystem Theory, developed by Itamar Even-Zohar. The second is Descriptive Translation Studies, developed by Gideon Toury.

Even-Zohar was born in Tel Aviv in 1939, and completed his doctoral thesis *An Introduction to the Theory of Literary Translation* at Tel Aviv University in 1972. Sales Salvador describes this work as "the matrix" of [his] polysystem theory. Even-Zohar's major papers were published as an *Introduction to Polysystem Studies* in 1990 (Schlesinger).[b]

The slightly younger Gideon Toury completed his doctorate in 1976, with Even-Zohar as his "ally and guide." Toury's work develops out of "the translation component of Even-Zohar's model" and can be divided into two phases (Gentzler 123-4). The first, from 1972-6, was empirical and involved an extensive study of the cultural conditions governing the translation of foreign language novels into Hebrew from 1930 to 1945. This work used the polysystem theory framework.[c] The second period extended from 1975-1980 and led to a series of papers published in 1980 as *In Search of a Theory of Translation*. These papers began to go beyond Even-Zohar's basic model and Toury revised some of this work in a more theoretical way in *Descriptive Translation Studies and Beyond*, published in 1995.[d] Both scholars are now leading members of the Unit for Culture Research at Tel Aviv University.[e]

RUSSIAN FORMALISM AND PRAGUE STRUCTURALISM

The work of the Department of Poetics and Comparative Literature, founded in 1966, relied heavily on the work of the Russian Formalists of the 1920s and their successors the Prague structuralists. It is necessary, therefore, to gain a brief overview of this critical school before going on to outline the ideas of Even-Zohar and Toury. Because the ideas of these two scholars, and those of their predecessors, do not have wide circulation among literary scholars, I have chosen to use direct quotations wherever possible in what follows.

Russian Formalism can be said to have begun with Victor Shlovskij's pamphlet *The Resurrection of the Word*[f] and to have come to a premature end with his politically motivated recantation in January 1930. The movement was centered around two student groups, the Moscow Linguistic Circle (founded in 1915) and the *Opojaz* (Obscestvo izucenija poeticesckogo jazyka, Society for the Study of Poetic Language) group in Saint Petersburg (founded in1916) (Jefferon 16).

Frederic Jameson has suggested that the Formalists "did not have a single position, a single literary doctrine; yet their work was a collective one, and possesses a unity of development in time" (47). Their major concern was with "the investigation of the specific properties of literary material … the properties that distinguish such material from material of any other kind" (Ejxenbaum 7). This statement indicates that they were interested both in the formal characteristics of literariness (*literaturnost*) and the differences between literary texts and other orders of writing.

They attributed literariness to the use of particular literary devices. Shklovskij wrote: "Poetic speech is *formed speech,*" shaped by formal devices such as rhyme and rhythm, which "act on ordinary words to renew our perception of them, and of their sound texture in particular" (qtd. in Jefferson 20). The purpose of artistic devices, or literary properties, is, firstly, to shape language and, secondly, to "defamiliarise" or "make strange" (*ostranie*) "those things that have become habitual or automatic" (Erlich 76). Shklovskij interestingly suggests that: "A dance is a walk which is felt; even more accurately, it is a walk which is constructed to be felt" (qtd. in Jefferson and Robey 19) – it is walking formalised and made different from our normal means of progress, in order to convey particular feelings.

These devices represent formal aspects of the text. Literary devices sooner or later become conventional and dull and give way to other new, and again unfamiliar, conventions and devices. The history of literariness is history of the ebb and flow of disjunctions based on the inevitable automatization of current literary devices and their replacement by other devices. Some of these techniques will be spontaneous; others will enter the canon from foreign literatures, or come from marginal and popular genres (Erlich 34, 260).[g]

Language was central to Formalist definitions of literature. Their successors, the Prague Linguistic Circle, reformulated Formalist literary theories within a purely linguistic framework. (The Circle was founded in 1926 by Roman Jakobson, first chairman of the Moscow Linguistic Circle who later moved to Czechoslovakia.) This framework was derived from, or at least very similar to, the ideas of Ferdinand de Saussure. In his *Course in General Linguistics*, first published in 1916, de Saussure argued that "languages are *systems*, constituted by *signs* that are *arbitrary* and *differential*" (qtd. in Jefferson and Robey 43). The Prague School's emphasis on structures, as an alternative way of defining de Saussure's concept of relationships, led to its being described as "structuralist." They argued that, like language, the poetic work too is a "'functional structure' … the different elements of which cannot be understood except in their connections with the whole" (qtd. in Jefferson and Robey 44).

The Prague school applied these ideas of "structure" and "function" to all forms of communication, including literature. In an address delivered in America in 1958 but based on categories propounded by Mukarovsky twenty years earlier, Jakobson suggested that any message can have six different functions that correspond to six factors present in any act of communication: an addresser, an addressee, a context, a code, a means of contact, and the message itself. Thus:

> The focus on the *addresser*, for instance a speaker or an author, constitutes the *emotive* function, that of expressing the addresser's attitudes or feelings; the focus on the *addressee* or receiver, the *conative* function, that of influencing the feelings or attitudes of the addressee; the focus on the *context*, the real, external situation in which the message occurs, the *referential* function; the focus on the *code*, as when the message elucidates a point of grammar, the *metalingual* function; the focus on the means of *contact*, as in the case, say, of expressions inserted by one party into a telephone conversation simply in order to reassure the other party that they are both still on the line, the *phatic* function; the focus on the *message* itself, the poetic *function.* (qtd. in Robey 44-5)

While all functions may be present within any act of communication, one will normally be dominant.[h] This function will stand out beyond all the other functions in some obvious manner and will thus "foreground" or "actualize" the text as a whole (Robey 45). Sometimes the message may be the most important thing about a text. At other times, the personality of the artist dominates everything else. On still other occasions, the means of expression may be the main feature of interest and the major distinguishing characteristic of the text.

For Translation Studies, Russian Formalism offers, above all, a way of thinking about the facts of literature, not as single details in themselves but as they exist in relationship to other facts (Jameson 13). It is the dynamic relationship which counts most in fully describing literature. Both Even-Zohar and Toury argued in terms of systems and active relationships between the various functions of the literary text. This is the basis of their significant contribution to Translation Studies.

POLYSYSTEM THEORY (ITAMAR EVEN-ZOHAR)

Even-Zohar has stated that "[p]olysystem theory was suggested in my works in

1969 and 1970, subsequently reformulated in a number of my later studies and (I hope) improved, then shared, advanced, enlarged, and experimented with by a number of scholars in various countries" (1). Its foundations had been "solidly laid" by the Russian Formalism of the 1920s (as he notes on page 1 of his *Introduction to Polysystem Studies*),[i] especially by its later transformation "from an a-historical, clearly textocentric, approach to one where above-the-text occurrences are considered to be the *main* factor, and *change* is considered a built-in feature of 'the system' rather than 'an external force'" (Even-Zohar 33). As we have just seen, for Formalism, change within a literary tradition comes from the use of new and unfamiliar devices within a text and not from external sociological or other forces.

The main ideas of Polysystem Theory can be reduced to a small set of propositions. These can be logically set out as follows, using Even-Zohar's own words as far as possible in an attempt to capture the flavor of his writing:

1. The term "literary" refers to "any kind of textually manifested (or manifestable) semiotic repertoire fully and visibly institutionalised in society" (61). Literature is both autonomous, self-regulated, and also heteronomous, in as far as it is conditioned by other systems (30).
2. A "system" is "the network of relations that can be hypothesized for a certain set of assumed observables."[j]
3. A "literary system" is "the assumed set of observables supposed to be governed by a network of relations (i.e., for which systemic relations can be hypothesized), and which in view of the hypothesized nature of these relations we propose to call 'literary'" (27). Alternatively it is "[t]he network of relations that is hypothesized to obtain between a number of activities called 'literary' and consequently these activities themselves observed via that network" (28). As a consequence, Even-Zohar suggests that "[t]he literary system does not 'exist' outside the relations contended to operate for/in it" (28).
4. Following Jakobson (above), Even Zohar argues that the factors involved within the literary (poly)system are:
    a. The *producer* (addresser, the writer), who makes texts, as both a "conditioning" and a "conditioned" force (35).
    b. The *consumer* (addressee, reader or listener), who "consumes" the text, but also engages in a wider range of activities relating to literature as

part of "the public" (36-7).

c. The *institution* (context), which "governs the norms prevailing in this activity … remunerates and reprimands producers and agents… determines who, and which products will be remembered by a community for a longer period of time." The institution includes critics, publishing houses, periodicals, clubs, groups of writers, government bodies, educational institutions, the mass media, and more (37). Because of this diversity, it is clear that the literary institution is "not unified" (38).

d. The *repertoire* (code), which is "the aggregate of rules and materials which govern both the making and the use of any given product" (39). Repertoires are structured on at least three levels (40-1). In traditional linguistic terms, the repertoire is "a combination of 'grammar' and 'lexicon' of a given 'language'" (39). The "literary repertoire" is "the aggregate of rules and items with which a specific text is produced, and understood." The literary repertoire may also include "the shared knowledge necessary for producing (and understanding) various other products of the literary system," such as the roles of "writer," "reader," "literary agent," etc. (40).

e. The *market* (contact, channel), which is "the aggregate of factors involved with the selling and buying of literary products and with the promotion of types of consumption" (38). And, finally:

f. The *product* (message), which is "any performed (or performable) set of signs, i.e., including a given 'behavior'" (43).

5. A "polysystem" is "a multiple system, a system of various systems which intersect with each other and partly overlap, using concurrently different options, yet functioning as one structured whole, whose members are interdependent" (11). Polysystems are "dynamic" and heterogeneous (12). They are "not equal, but hierarchized" (14): "It is the victory of one stratum over another which constitutes change on the diachronic axis" (14). At the center of each particular system is "the most prestigious canonized repertoire" (17). Change commonly comes from "the periphery" to the center, within systems and sometimes across systems (14).

6. Literary systems are always in contact with other literary systems—Even-Zohar's ponderous words are: "Literatures are never in non-interference"

> (59). Sometimes this interference is direct: "a source literature is available to, and accessed by, agents of the target literature without intermediaries." At other times it is indirect: "interference is intermediated through some channel such as translation" (57).

Translated literature plays a particular role within the literary polysystem, but always on terms set by the receiving literature—not those of the source literature itself (46)—and prestige and dominance are important elements in this process (59). The home co-systems of the target literature also determine "the way they adopt specific norms, behaviors and policies – in short, their use of the literary repertoire" (46). It is important to note two implications of this. The first is that "an appropriated repertoire does not necessarily maintain source literature functions" (59); instead it meets the functions determined by the needs of the receiving literary system. It is also the case that any translation will create a different text from the source text: one that is "simplified, regularized, [and] schematized" (59).

Translated texts may have various positions in the literary polysystem. They may sometimes even become central and "the most active system within it" (46). This happens when a polysystem is still being established; when the literature is peripheral within a group of co-related literatures, or weak, or both; and when there are "turning points, crises or literary vacuums within the literature (47-8). Translated texts may also be "peripheral," in which case their function is largely conservative (49). Peter Bush, for example, notes that only three per cent of what is published in English is translated work, and most of that is done for academic purposes (1). It is also possible that, because "translated literature is itself stratified … one section of translated literature may assume a central position, [while] another may remain quite peripheral" (Even-Zohar 49).

Even-Zohar is pleased to note that his major hypotheses "have won some support among a relatively large group of students of translation" (74). They have also been considered to be compatible with certain contemporary sociological approaches to literature.[k]

Nevertheless, not all scholars are impressed. Anthony Pym, for example, suspects that "much of translation history can advance quite well without using the word 'system' at all" (117). He finds that the systems postulated are ultimately vague; they rely on "leaps of faith"; they "suppress a humanized, subjective systematicity"; and that, while system theories in general aim to be "scientific," they are "not very good … at formulating causal hypotheses" (116-124) or, equally important, in putting forward ethical propositions.

Edwin Gentzler, while acknowledging "the advances" made by Even-Zohar, also notes four "minor problems" with Polysystem theory. These are: a "tendency to propose universals based on very little evidence"; an "uncritical adoption of the Formalist framework" and some of its concepts (including "literariness" and definitions of "primary" and "secondary" literatures) which "underlie, yet seem inappropriate to … [his] complex model of cultural systems"; "the problem of locating the referent"; and, finally, "Even-Zohar's own methodology and discourse," with its assumed scientific objectivity and assumptions of total completeness (120-3). These problems (which are actually quite large problems) suggest the need for further conceptualisation of Even-Zohar's premises. They do not necessarily negate the premises, but certainly call for caution in their application.

DESCRIPTIVE TRANSLATION STUDIES (GIDEON TOURY)

Polysystem theories provide a fruitful framework for thinking about the field of literature and the place of translated texts within and between literatures. In going beyond his mentor's work, Toury's program of Description Translation Studies provides a more defined, and perhaps less problematical, methodology for comparative work in Translation Studies.

In *Descriptive Translation Studies and Beyond,* Toury argues that Translation Studies is a science, which through empirical research, aims "to describe particular phenomena in the world of our experience and to establish general principles by means of which they can be explained and predicted"(9). In accordance with ideas proposed by James Holmes, Toury divides Translation Studies into two major branches, "Pure" and "Applied." He then sub-divides the "Pure" into two further sub-branches: "Theoretical" and "Descriptive" Translation Studies. Descriptive Translation Studies (henceforth DTS) is then further divided into three different research foci: function-oriented, process-oriented and product-oriented (9-10).

These three foci delimit separate legitimate fields of study, giving rise to individual studies which are "local activities, pertinent to a certain corpus, problem, historical period, or the like … [but they are also interdependent, as] … function, process and product can and do determine each other" (11). Toury suggests that the proposed role of a translation in a new literary system will determine the linguistic manner in which it is translated and hence the final new text.[1]

Finally he argues that Descriptive Studies should also be informed by, and contribute to, Theoretical Studies, in particular by a concern to establish "coherent *laws*

which would state the inherent relations between all the variables found to be relevant to translation" (16).

Contrary to much of Applied Translation Studies, which is prescriptively oriented towards the linguistic surface of source texts, Toury (more than Even-Zohar) sees translations as "facts of the culture which receive them. The concomitant assumption is that whatever their function and identity, they are constituted within that same culture and reflect its own constellation" (24) – and not that of the original source culture. Nevertheless, because they are translations, they will not match the receiving culture's literary expectations exactly. Rather, they will also tend to "*deviate*" from the target culture's sanctioned patterns. Such deviations will not only be considered "*justifiable*," or even "*acceptable*" but they will be seen as being "actually *preferable* to complete normality" (29). Toury summarizes these assumptions this way: "translations are facts of target cultures; on occasion facts of special status, sometimes even constituting identifiable (sub)systems of their own, but of the target culture in any event" (29).

Toury maintains that such a formulation needs to be contextualized to be fully useful in a research project about translated texts (29). Any such project will imply three postulates: first, that there is a source-text, "in another culture/language, which has both chronological and logical priority over it … which is presumed to have served as a departure point and basis for the latter" (33-4)[m]; second, an assumption about transfer from the source-text, involving "knowledge about products, on the one hand, and about (cross-linguistic and cross-cultural) processes, on the other" (34); and third, an assumption that there are "accountable relationships" (35) which tie the translation to the source-text.

DTS begins with the target-text, assuming it to be a translation of a particular source-text, then maps "the assumed translation onto the assumed counterpart, in an attempt to determine the (unidirectional, irreversible) relationships which obtain between the paired texts. It then seeks to understand "the concept of translation underlying the text as a whole." This may further lead to other speculations, including "a confrontation of the competing models and norms of the target and source texts and systems, which were responsible for the establishment of the individual replacing and replaced segments, along with the relationships shown to obtain between them" (37). In time, the fuller exploration of particular literary relationships will extend beyond one translation or pair of texts to, for example, the work of a particular translator, a school of translators, a period, a particular text-type, specific text-linguistic phenomena, etc. (38).

The goal of the target-oriented approach is the establishment of "translational norms" (53). In general, norms are formulations of the general values and ideas of society,

about right and wrong, suitable and unsuitable, and their translation into "performance instructions" for particular situations, specifying what behavior is permitted, what forbidden, and what sits somewhere in between. Norms are the product of socialization – they are learned. Because they are used to evaluate behavior, they carry rewards and punishments (54-5).

Within translation, there are always two sets of norms: that of the source text, "which determines the translation's *adequacy* as compared to the source text … [and that of the target culture, which]…determines its acceptability" to the new audience (56-7). The "initial norm" facing the translator is whether to subject oneself to the source of target culture norms or not (56-7).

Following this choice, Toury suggests there are two larger groups of norms with which the translator must deal. The first are "preliminary norms" relating to the choice of text to be translated and the directness of translation. The second are "operational norms" which direct the decisions being made during the work of translation. These include "matricial norms" governing the existence of target-language material, its distribution and manipulations of segmentation, as well as "textual-linguistic norms" which "govern the selection of material to formulate the target text in, or replace the original textual and linguistic material with." Textual-linguistic norms may be general, applying to translation as such, or particular, applying to "a particular text-type and/or mode of translation only" (59). Significantly, norms "determine the (type and extent of) equivalence manifested by actual translations" (61).

The translation scholar's task, then, is to reconstruct the norms which have governed particular translations. Norms can, firstly, be reconstructed on the basis of the texts themselves. In certain circumstances, they may also be deduced from extra-textual sources such as prescriptive theories of translation current at the time; statements by translators, editors, publishers, publishers and other relevant individuals; critical discussions of translated works; the activities of individuals and groups of translators, etc. Toury suggests that textual norms are more to be trusted than are extra-textual pronouncements (65). Finally, it is important to note that although norms are socio-culturally specific, they are also unstable and often subject to change (62). And, of course, they are not always followed absolutely, as different translators bring their own understandings and experience to the work at hand (67-9).

Toury's theories move in a narrower and more carefully defined area than Even-Zohar's. (Interestingly, the words "polysystem," and even "system," are not listed in the index to *Descriptive Translation Studies*.) Although similarly committed to a positivist

scientific methodology, Toury's work is more accessible and more rigorously textual. Despite some scholar's dissatisfaction with Toury's work (Gentzler [130], for example suggests that it contains a number of theoretical contradictions),[n] Toury's work has been widely used in Translation Studies.

A major reason for this widespread use may be the large number of articulations which are possible between Toury's ideas and those of contemporary thought. Toury's papers have been published in the context of manipulation theory[o] and the wider study of "translation and norms."[p] His rejection of "one-to-one notions of correspondence as well as the possibility of literary/linguistic equivalence (unless by accident)" (Gentzler 131) matches the continuing dominance of de Saussure's thought characteristic of post-structuralism. His denial of the common idea of an unambiguous original message carrying a fixed meaning has strong resonances with Reader Response theories, and, in Translation Studies, with Skopos theory.[q] Finally, his location of both the original and translated texts within "the semiotic web of intersecting cultural systems" (Gentzler 131) responds to the turn to Cultural Studies which has been such a strong feature of Translation Studies, and the "new humanities" in general, at the close of the twentieth century.[r] To put it simply, Toury himself matches the norms of the wider academic culture in a way that Even-Zohar's dogmatic scientism does not. This does not mean, of course, that Even-Zohar is wrong, but it is nevertheless true that readers do have to work harder to make his work useful.

CONCLUSION

Toury suggests that a theory provide a particular set of "questions," a number of "possible methods for dealing with an objects of study with an eye to those questions," and some of sense of "the kind of answers which would count as admissible" (23). Both he and Even-Zohar have played major roles in reshaping Translation Studies into a more rigorous and descriptive discipline, related not only to language studies but also to the major trends in European thought from Russian Formalism through to postmodernism.

Edwin Gentzler has argued that this theoretical work, done in Israel, reflected the complex relationships of multiple cultures and languages which are characteristic of the region. As he dramatically states "[i]n the fragile diplomatic and political situation in the Middle East … Russian culture does meet Anglo-American; Moslem meets Jewish; social and historical forces from the past influence the present; multilingualism is more prevalent than monolingualism; exiles are as common as "local" nationals. To understand one's past, one's identity, an understanding of translation in and of itself is crucial; translation

ceases to be an elite intellectual "game," a footnote to literary scholarship, but becomes fundamental to the lives and livelihood of everyone in the entire region (and maybe the world)" (107).

The situation in Southeast Asia in general, and the Philippines in particular, carries a similar urgency. Both Even-Zohar's and Toury's studies have related to Russian, Hebrew, Yiddish and the emergence of a native Hebrew culture in Palestine. More recently, Even-Zohar has studied *The Role of Literature in the Making of the Nations of Europe*. I believe that these theories could fruitfully be applied to the study of translated texts in Southeast Asia as a whole, to literatures in particular nations in Southeast Asia, and the relationships between particular local literatures in different languages. Certainly they offer a framework for more rigorous thinking in the area of comparative literature. It is my hope that future articles will contribute to this project.

Allow me to conclude here by providing a short example of how the theories described above might be used in the discussion of one translated text from Southeast Asia. For convenience, I will refer to my own book *Secrets Need Words: Indonesian Poetry 1966-1998*,[s] a bilingual anthology of English translations of Indonesian poems written during the Suharto era.[t]

The 115 poems included in *Secrets Need Words* (hereafter SNW) belong to the Indonesian literary polysystem. Estimates of how many languages are found in Indonesia vary from a low 69 to a high 578 (McGlynn 72). The Indonesian literary polysystem includes works written in the national language "Indonesian," *Bahasa Indonesia*, by authors normally residing within the borders of the Republic of Indonesia, published after 1920. Although the system is dispersed across the archipelago, its centre of prestige rests in the national capital, Jakarta. The Indonesian literary system stands in opposition to the various "regional" literary systems: the Javanese literary system, written in Javanese (from Central and Eastern Java); Balinese literary system, in Balinese (from Bali); Minangkabau literary system (from Central and Western Sumatra), and so on. It also stands in opposition to other literary systems using the same language (but called *Bahasa Melayu*, Malay) to be found in Malaysia, Brunei and Singapore.

1. The producers of the original Indonesian poems comprise twenty-three poets, only two of whom are women. SNW distinguishes between two "generations" of Indonesian poets. The "Generation of 1966," who were born during the 1940s, experienced the transition to Independence provided by the Revolution of 1945-1949, began writing in the highly nationalist context

of late Sukarnoism (which they largely rejected), and assumed their place at the centre of the polysystem after 1966, with the accession of Suharto to the positions of Acting President in 1966, then President in 1968. A second group, which I call the "Post Indonesian Generation" were born during the 1960s, educated in Indonesian, resided in the provinces, assumed that religion was an important part of their self-definition, and experienced the various pressures placed on the expression of free speech after 1973. The Post Indonesian generation began publishing their works after 1980 and thereafter shared with the centre of the literary system with their seniors, who remained active and influential.

2. The consumers of this poetry consisted of a highly educated literary public, fluent in Indonesian and trained in the norms of "modern" literature. Although these readers were spread across the archipelago, their numbers were small – perhaps as few as 3000 persons in all (of a population now in excess of 220 million people).

3. The various institutions which governed this activity consisted of the few literary magazines (Horison, founded in 1966, and Budaya Jaya, which ceased publication in the late 1970s); the Jakarta Arts Council and its cultural centre, Taman Ismail Marzuki; and later other arts centers and literary groups in the provinces. Some of this literature was taught at university level in Departments of Indonesian Language and Literature; some (a small part) was taught at the high school level. The major critics were associated with Indonesian, and sometimes overseas, universities.

4. The repertoire emphasized the free verse expression of personal emotion through a variety of thematic concerns. Poetry, on the one hand, supported the individuality that the regime sought to cultivate but, on the other, tried in subtle ways to ignore the state's increasingly strong call for publicly recognizable obedience and conformity to traditional gender roles. The change in the devices marking literariness in the 1980s were sparked by the religious trends which were characterized as a mystical Sufism. The new aesthetic ideologies (concrete poetry, surrealism and feminist protest) remained subject to the earlier individualism and the avoidance of any public

explicit criticism of the regime. With the final fall of the President in May 1998, the earlier ideology of poetic protest briefly reasserted itself in "Sastra Reformasi," the Literature of Reformation.

5. The market was governed by a few major publishers and increasingly a range of small private publishers; as well as the national and regional newspapers published in Indonesian which carried literary supplements on a weekly basis.

6. The product potentially consisted of all of the poems published in Indonesia over the thirty-two years of Suharto's rule.

Secrets Need Words is a small selection of the poems published over this period, chosen between 1996 and 1999. The poems were selected and translated by a single individual, an academic scholar of Indonesian literature working in an Australian university. The readers were expected to be other scholars of Indonesian Studies, and hopefully readers of poetry in English (translation) in general. The institutions governing the activity were the universities, scholars of Indonesian, and the critics of translation ("the translation police") in particular.

The repertoire included a number of elements. The first of these were the criteria for selection: authors must have published at least one book of poems; the poems had to be considered important by Indonesian critics; the poems had to be capable of being turned into English. The second was my desire that the translations should read as poems in English.[u] The third were the principles of free verse translation, reflective of the original poems but also of the most common form for English literary translation since Ezra Pound. And the fourth were the criteria relating to the various ways in which a literary anthology might be composed: monolingual or bilingual; representative of Indonesian writing or directed towards the tastes of the target audience; with or without commentary; arranged by a sequence of discrete authors, themes, historical period, etc.[v]

The market consisted of people willing to buy (and able to afford) a book published by an American university press. The product was not only the poems and their translations, but also the cover and illustrations, the preliminary introduction, the various introductions preceding each of the eight chapters in the book, the footnotes, the table of contents and the list of poems, and the notes on the authors. Each of these would be worthy of comment.

Even-Zohar would be interested in the place occupied by poetry in Indonesia and by the place of the translated poetry in SNW as part of the wider American literary polysystem. Based on my observation, translations of Southeast Asian literature tend to be of most interest to other Southeast Asian nations, and sometimes to the source nation itself. My translations of Malay literature into English, for example, have been read and criticized mostly by readers from [in] Malaysia itself. The fit into various other english (with a small "e," following the classic *The Empire Writes Back*) polysystems besides those of the dominant Anglo-American English speaking cultures is worth studying further. (How are English translations of Malay and Indonesian, and other Southeast Asian literatures, read and placed in the Philippines, for example?)

Toury would not be interested in studying either source or target polysystems. Instead, he would take the contextualization of SNW within the target culture much further than I have done above. The interest in norms would need to consider the choice of texts – why some poems were selected but also how others have been ignored on the grounds that they might be considered clichéd, sentimental, overstated or banal in English. In SNW, one would need to consider and compare the choice of lexicon, syntax, tone, meter, rhythm, poetic form, and emotional content. The study of text-linguistic norms would also relate to nature of free verse in English literary systems, and the dominance of free verse models in translation. It would consider how those used in SNW relate to other poetry in English, as well as to the specific models which have influenced my own practice, Donald Allen's *The New American Poetry* and A. K. Ramanujan's *The Interior Landscape.* The fuller study would consider the ideology behind SNW, which might be considered as a liberal-humanist concern for personal freedoms and the role of literature in challenging dominant political forces, and relate this to other translated and original literature in English. (Many works from "the Third World" chosen for translation into English have strong political overtones of protest against authoritarian regimes or the sufferings caused by patriarchy.) Finally, there might be a comparison of the norms governing SNW with those in other volumes of translation of Indonesian poetry, e.g. Burton Raffel's *Anthology of Modern Indonesian Poetry;* John McGlynn and Ulrich Kratz' *Waling Westward in the Morning;* and *Di Serambi: A Bilingual Anthology of Modern Indonesian Poetry*, edited and translated by Iem Brown and Joan Davis. And even, perhaps, with English translations of Indonesian prose – the works of Pramoedya Ananta Toer, for instance.

Gideon Toury entitled his closing remarks to the Seminar at Aston University in February 1998, as follows: "Some of us are finally talking to each other. Would it mark the beginning of a true dialogue?" He described the discussion which had taken place at the

seminar, and led to the volume *Translation and Norms*, as a "promising first step towards a much desired dialogue to be sure, but not yet a real dialogue." What seemed important to him for that dialogue to truly begin was "the ability – and the willingness – to take a step backwards and find out what everybody's assumptions and goals really are and how exactly different goals breed different theoretical and methodological stances" (qtd. in Schaffner 133). The principles of study suggested by Even-Zohar and Toury himself, provide a systematic framework for understanding the multiple ways of dialogue between various cultures and the translation of literary texts.

A few off-hand comments on how the poems "read as though they had been written in English," or are ugly and deformed transgressions of English poetic aesthetics, or misrepresent the original language by the omission of this word and that punctuation mark, are not, it should now be clear, how one should deal with translated texts at all.

NOTES

a. See the essay by James Holmes, "The Name and Nature of Translation Studies," written in 1972 but most recently republished in Lawrence Venuti, ed. *The Translation Studies Reader*. 2nd edition. London: Routledge, 2000.

b. Itamar Even-Zohar. "Introduction to *Polysystem Studies." Poetics Today* 11.1 (1990): 1. This journal includes 19 articles by Even-Zohar, published between 1974 and 1990, and "replaces" his earlier *Papers in Historical Poetics* (1978).

c. Translation Norms and Literary Translation into Hebrew, 1930-45 (in Hebrew). (Tel Aviv: Porter Institute for Poetics and Semiotics, 1977). Gentzler describes the work on pages 124-5.

d. Further references to this book will be carried within my main text. Gentzler agrees with Theo Herman's critical comments on the lack of innovation in the new book and its lack of engagement with competing ideas and views. See Herman's *Translation in Systems* (Manchester: St. Jerome, 1999).

e. See the website <http://www.tau.ac.il/tarbut/index.html> for a description of the work of the Unit of CultureResearch, Tel Aviv University.

f. A translation of this essay can be found in S. Bann and J. Bowlt, eds. *Russian Formalism*. Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1973.

g. See also the discussion by Tony Bennett. *Formalism and Marxism*. London: Methuen, 1979.

h. Peter Steiner defines "the dominant" as "a skeletal, form-giving element in a static hierarchy of holistic correlations" (105). See *Russian Formalism*. Ithaca, New York: Cornell UP, 1984. See also Jakobson's essay "The Dominant" in *Readings in Russian Poetics*, 82-7.

i. Interestingly, Russian literature held the position of major prestige in "the Hebrew literary polysystem" between the two wars (Even-Zohar 49), and continued to do so long afterwards (Even-Zohar 83).

j. In his essay "On Literary Evolution", Tynjanov (1927) defines "the system" as "a complex whole, characterized by interrelatedness and dynamic tension between individual components, and held together by the underlying unity of the aesthetic function": See Erlich, *Russian Formalism*, 199.

k. See M. V. Dimic and M. K. Garstin. "The Polysystem Theory: A Brief Introduction, with Bibliography." *Problems of Literary Reception*. E. D. Blodgett and A.G. Purdue, eds. Alberta: University of Alberta, 1988. Available online at <http://www.tau.ac.il/~itamarez/ps/dimic_ps.htm>.

l. The relations may also be read in the opposite order, but as functions – "the value assigned to an item belonging in a certain system by virtue of the network of relations it enters into" (12, n.6) – have "at least *logical* priority over their surface realization," the reversal of roles is "no longer viable: Since translating is a teleological activity by its very nature, its systemic position, and that of its future products, should be taken as forming constraints of the highest order."

m. This is not always the case: some texts – in Classical Malay Literature, for example – claim to be translations from Javanese, although no source texts in fact exist. Robson discusses this practice in the Introduction *Hikayat Andaken Penurat*, Bibliotheca Indonesica 2, Nijhoff, The Hague, 1969.

n. See also Theo Hermans. *Translation in Systems.* 76-7.

o. "A Rationale for Descriptive Translation Studies" first appeared in Theo Hermans, ed. *The Manipulation of Literature: Studies in Literary Translation*. London: Croom-Helm, 1985.

p. See "A Handful of Paragraphs on 'Translation' and 'Norms'" in Christina Schaffner, ed. *Translation and Norms*. (Clevedon, 1998). 10-32.

q. See Christiane Nord. *Translation as a Purposeful Activity: Functionalist Approaches Explained*. Manchester: St Jerome, 1997.

r. See Lawrence Venuti. *The Translation Studies Reader*. London: Routledge, 2000.

s. See Harry Aveling. *Secrets Need Words*. Athens: Ohio UP, 2001.

t. A more extensive consideration of this volume, using a different conceptual framework, can be found in my "Finding Words for Secrets: Reflections on the Translation of Indonesian Poetry." *Centre of Southeast Asian Studies Working Papers Series*, No. 116. Clayton: Monash Asia Institute, 2002.

u. Michael Bullock makes an interesting distinction between "a poem written in English" and "an English poem," in his Foreward to Surjeet Kalsey's *Glimpses of Twentieth Century Punjabi Poetry.* Delhi: Ajanta, 1992.

v. See Helga Essman. "Weltliterature Between Two Covers: Forms and Functions of German Translation Anthologies." *Translating Literature, Translating Cultures.* Kurt Mueller-Vollmer and Michael Irmscher, eds. Stanford: Stanford UP, 1998.

WORKS CITED

Aveling, Harry, ed. *Secrets Need Words: Indonesian Poetry 1966-1998.* Athens, OH: Ohio UP, 2001.

---. "Finding Words for Secrets: Reflections on the Translation of Indonesian Poetry." *Centre of Southeast Asian Studies Working Papers Series* 116. Clayton: Monash Asia Institute, 2002.

Baker, Mona, ed. *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies.* London: Routledge, 1998.

Bann, Stephen, and J. E. Bowlt, eds. *Russian Formalism.* Edinburgh: Scottish Academic P, 1973.

Bassnet, Susan, and Andre Lefevere, eds. *Translation, History and Culture.* London: Pinter 1990.

Bennett, Tony. *Formalism and Marxism.* London: Methuen, 1979.

Bush, Peter, and Kristen Malmkjaer, eds. *Rimbaud's Rainbow: Literary Translation in Higher Education.* Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 1998.

Dimic, Milan V., and Marguerite K. Garstin. "The Polysystem Theory: A Brief Introduction, with Bibliography." *Problems of Literary Reception.* Ed. E. D. Blodget and A. G. Purdue. University of Alberta <http://www.tau.ac.il/itamarez/ps/dimic_ps.htm>.

Eichenbaum, Boris. "The Theory of the Formal Method." *Readings in Russian Poetics.* Eds. Ladislav Matejka and Krystyna Pomorska. Cambridge: MIT, 1971.

Erlich, Victor. *Russian Formalism, History-Doctrine.* The Hague: Mouton, 1969.

Even-Zohar, Itamar. "Polysystems Studies." *Poetics Today* 11 (1990): 9-26 <http://www.tau.ac.il/itamarez/papers/fac-dep.htm>.

Gentzler, Edwin. "Contemporary Translation Theories." *Multilingual Matters.* 2nd ed. Clevedon, 2001.

Hermans, Theo, ed. *The Manipulation of Literature: Studies in Literary Translation.* London: Croom Helm, 1985.

---. *Translation in Systems: Descriptive and System-Oriented Approaches Explained.* Manchester: St. Jerome, 1999.

Holmes, James. *The Name and Nature of Translation Studies.* Amsterdam: Rodopi: 1988.

Jameson, Fredric. *The Prison-House of Language: A Critical Account of Structuralism and Russian Formalism.* NJ: Princeton UP, 1972.

Jefferson, Ann, and David Robey, eds. *Modern Literary Theory: A Comparative Introduction.* London: Batsford, 1982.

Lefevere, Andre. *Translation, Rewriting, and the Manipulation of Literary Fame.* London: Routledge, 1992.

---. "Beyond the Process: Literary Translation in Literature and Literary Theory." *Translation Spectrum.* Ed. M. Gaddis Rose. Albany: State U of NY P, 1981. 52-9.

Lemon, Lee T., and Marion J. Reis, eds. *Russian Formalist Criticism: Four Essays.* Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 1965.

Matjka, Ladilav, and Krystyna Pomorska, eds. *Readings in Russian Poetics.* Cambridge: MIT, 1971.

Munday, Jeremy. *Introducing Translation Studies: Theories and Applications.* London: Routledge, 2001.

Nord, Christiane. *Translation as a Purposeful Activity: Functionalist Approaches Explained.* Manchester: St. Jerome, 1997.

Pym, Anthony. *Method in Translation History.* Manchester: St. Jerome, 1998.

Sales Salvador, Dora. "In Conversation with Itamar Even-Zohar About Literary and Cultural Theory." *CLC Web Library of Research and Information.* Sept. 2002 <http://clcwebjournal.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb02-3/sales(even-zohar)02.html>.

Schaffner, Christina. "Translation and Norms, Multilingual Matters." *Current Issues in Language and Society* 5 (1999).

Schlesinger, Miriam. "My Way to Translation Studies." *Across Languages and Cultures* 1 (2000): 275-86.

Selden, Raman, ed. *From Formalism to Post-Structuralism.* Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1995.

Steiner, Peter. *Russian Formalism: A Metapoetics.* Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1984.

Toury, Gideon. *Descriptive Translation Studies and Beyond.* Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 1995.

Weissbrod, Rachel. "Translation Research in the Framework of the Tel Aviv School of Poetics and Semiotics." *Meta* XLIII (1998): 1-12. <www.erudit.org/revue/meta/1998/v43/n1/004592ar.html>.

Venuti, Lawrence, ed. *The Translator's Invisibility.* London: Routledge, 1999.

---. *The Translation Studies Reader.* London: Routledge, 2000.

THE DAY THE DANCERS STAYED: EXPRESSIVE FORMS OF CULTURE IN THE UNITED STATES

Theodore S. Gonzalves
American Studies
University of Hawaii at Manoa
theo@hawaii.edu

Abstract
How have performances developed by Filipino Americans over the twentieth century conveyed important lessons about culture, nation, and community? In other words, what do Filipino American cultural performances have to say about the formation of "national identity" and "community"?

I select three contexts to highlight these changes: the postindustrialization of the US economy; the reaction to race, taxes and education in the Bakke vs. UC Board of Regents decision; and the political realignment of the Reagan democrats. We see the continued immigration of Filipino so-called "professional" families to the United States. Their children seek senses of themselves amidst attacks on ethnic studies, affirmative action, and the presence of immigrants in California. And here the Pilipino Cultural Night (PCN) as a performance genre emerges. For the thousands of young Filipino Americans who have taken to the stage or for those who felt more comfortable in the wings, participating in these shows has been some of the only history lessons available about the Philippine revolution of 1896, the literary politics of Carlos Bulosan, the struggle of Ilocano and Visayan farm workers in Hawaii, the back-breaking labor in Salinas, Delano, Spokane, or Chicago.

They also turn their attention to the Philippines and to the outer diaspora, learning of the plight of overseas workers like Flor Contemplacion and the devastation of the archipelago's natural resources. At the end of the twentieth century, performing a play or choreographing dances offers not only the possibility of entertainment, but also the chance to tell stories about the past, to call a community into being, to convey youthful insecurities, or to raise oblique and ambivalent critiques of the America they provisionally call home.

Cultural performances such as the PCN assume the burden of providing a "performative transcript" of who Filipino Americans are. With the dominant historical record so heavily biased toward professionals' and elites' accounts of the past, ordinary folks have often turned to the field of culture to symbolically enact what would not be possible elsewhere. But ordinary folks are not the only ones to recognize the power and dynamism of the terrain of culture. We already know that the powerful remind the rest of us of who they are, what they supposedly do, and why they deserve such an elevation station. In that alternative to the dominant historiography, we find oblique and sometimes parallel responses to the existing and oftentimes unquestioned written record.

Keywords
cultural performances, Filipino American Studies, Filipino diaspora, national identity and communities

About the Author
Theo Gonzalves is Assistant Professor of American Studies at the University of Hawaii at Manoa. He completed his PhD in Comparative Culture at the University of California at Irvine and has taught courses in American, ethnic, and cultural studies. His work has been published in leading academic journals such as *Critical Mass, Amerasia* and the *Journal of Asian American Studies*. He has also served as Musical Director for the experimental theater troupe, Tongue in A mood, and was an advisory board member to Bindlestiff Studio, a Filipino American performing arts venue located in San Francisco. In 2005, Gonzalves was granted a US Senior Fulbright Scholar award to complete work on a manuscript on Filipino American performing arts.

Editor's Note
This paper also appears in *Filipino Americans: Transformations and Identities*. Ed. Maria P. P. Root. Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2000. 163-82.

The foreign folk dance troupes that keep visiting the US seem set on convincing their American audiences that life back home is just one big, happy, handsome hop. Russian, Indian, African, and Israeli companies have all been over in the last two years and now a troupe of Filipinos is on a cross-country tour showing that the simple life moves with a joyous lilt on their islands. The troupe is stocked with 20 lovely girls—all of them unmarried, all in their late teens, most of them less than five feet tall. All are given to flirtatious smiling while on stage. The men are lively and graceful. Their dances blend the islands' Muslim and Spanish cultures with a lot of high-spirited Indo-Malayan doings. After a fast tour through primitive war, funeral and victory rites, the girls and their male partners concentrate on harem ceremonials, fire dances and a harvest festival celebrating the riches of the rice crop. Before each show they gather to pray that the performance will go well. If it does go well—and it delighted viewers in New York—they end the show singing love songs to the audience.

—*Life Magazine* (1959)

Of all our arts, the dance has gone fastest and closest to achieving a native identity; our music, painting, and literature still have a hybrid look."

—Nick Joaquin (qtd. in UNESCO)

Any study of the colonial world should take into consideration the phenomena of the dance and of possession…. The circle of the dance is a permissive circle: it protects and permits."

—Frantz Fanon

Only in dance
is there union
Only in dance
Do spirit, soul, and self
Unite
That is why we like it

—"The Ballad of Billy Rivera," Juan Gomez-Quiñones

CULTURE IS FOR-GETTING AND FOR-GIVING

In the past generation, something remarkable has been happening on stages on college campuses. We could talk of surfaces, of the theatricality of the event itself, of the visceral reactions generated when experiencing the show in a large dark room, seated patiently among others. Think of those times, and of those surfaces. Thousands of college-age students have taken the stage and have developed a sophisticated cultural form known as the Pilipino Cultural Night.

Think in terms of condensation or pressure points, in terms of the ways in which families are held together, or ways in which memories are kept alive. For the veterans of the event, think of the first time you saw the show. What was it like? What do you remember of the show? The costumes? Your friends and family members? Who was next to you? How have the shows changed? Think of the distances friends and relatives have had to traverse in order to get to the shows. How hard it was to find parking, to find the gig itself, to find tickets, to find a good seat. To find something to drink during the intermission.

Think, also, of making associations across these categories (including, but certainly not limited to): constitution, entertainment, performance, democracy, narration, nationalism, culture, editing, authenticity, articulation. Ultimately, these shows mark the immediate past of Filipino Americans in the United States. What, exactly, is it? Is it an art form, a political movement, a political statement, a form of entertainment? Why are so many direly interested in it? What are some of the consequences? Do some students actually suffer in their academic work? Are Filipinos really the best dancers from Asia? Are Filipinos Asians?

To develop a cultural history of the PCN is to launch a line of inquiry that cuts across many disciplines: American history, Southeast Asian studies, performances studies, cultural studies, ethnic and Asian American studies, American studies, sociology, anthropology. Some of the other disciplines which would have relevance here would be political science, and political economy. The questions that the show raises for me are numerous. In a rather clumsy way, we could simply start by asking, *How does culture work? How does it change? Who is involved? What is being said? What are the investments and consequences?* The idea of culture at work is highlighted here. The PCN affords us a chance to examine a facet of culture—to found theoretical discussions, and intellectual spaces for the kinds of cultural practices that many young folks have chosen to undertake. Getting close to the PCN allows us a chance to ask some questions about what we do with our time, to attempt to piece together larger stories of ourselves in the United States—about the time and place around us, about some of the consequences for what is edited as Filipino and

Filipino American culture. Some other dimensions of these discussions also will include aspects of the debate about subjectivities, and the writing of histories. By subjectivities, I mean discourses which are two-fold. In one instance, we have an opportunity to examine how we come to shape meanings, bend stories or narrations, assume stances, poses, and styles—and thus effect a type of active subjectivity. A serious aspect of the study has to deal with the notion of the PCN as a straightjacket—not only as something which has been instrumental in the enabling of Filipino American identities in the United States, but also that which constricts. These critical reflections suggest how the PCN raises questions about how culture, politics, and history are related for this young immigrant community: how the stories we tell about ourselves are often managed, disciplined, monopolized, horded, dictated, maybe even railroaded.

Concerning the writing of history, the PCN affords us the chance to bear witness to the narration of a community's history as it takes place with some regularity on stages every year. Certain versions of Filipino and Filipino American histories are being authored, passed around, passed down, and (mis)handled each year. To inquire into the writing of history (and here, I'm using the term *writing* rather loosely) is to examine how histories are being generated, sustained, maintained, and circulated. One of the amazing aspect of this dimension of history-writing is that such intervention takes place amid thousands of learned academic writings which have constructed images, paradigms and notions about Filipinos and Filipino Americans as lazy natives, little brown brothers, fawning tutees of American democracy, and so on.

Secondly, the historical narration of the PCN takes place largely without the community's benefit of institutions that sustain memory as well as individuals who would determine the shapes of such lines of inquiry. Institutions like the Japanese American National Museum or the Chinese Museum of the Americas are quite a ways off for the Filipino community in the United States. As for faculty, we'd be hard-pressed in the present moment to name more than a handful of full-time, fully-tenured professors who focus specifically on the Filipino or Filipino-American experience (we need not concern ourselves with better "token" counts). The number is practically non-existent for those who hold critical positions such as department chairs, administrators, development officers, or even as advisors in graduate programs.

Would such a change in personnel and infrastructure really make that much of a difference in our communities? This has yet to be studied in great detail. What is certain for now at least, is that the PCN is one of the most dynamic history lessons that thousands of Filipino and Filipino-American youth have chosen to shoulder during their college careers

since the 1980s. Lastly, as I write this, the PCN is intriguing because it comes at a time in American history precisely when historically-challenged voices in the culture (even folks in our own community) are attempting to take American history back.[1] Studies on the PCN are part of that larger labor to recover parts of ourselves: Foucault (1980) suggested a labor of heeding "insurrectionist knowledges," Yuji Ichioka (1974) turns our attentions to "buried pasts."

STEPPING INTO IT

This essay grew out of some experiences I've had in planning PCNs in Northern California. Of course, one of the primary aims of a serious study of the PCN would be to return to the earlier shows—to show continuities as well as breaks in themes and concerns over the years.

Let us turn initially to reasons why it is important to study the PCN.

First, the show is a mass form of a Filipino American centered event which provides another way to methodologically develop an aspect of Asian American and ethnic studies scholarship—to explore how expressive forms are vital areas of shared life experiences. Secondly, attention to the show allows us to embrace some political dimensions of the world around us: the show is both a symptom and a response to the climate of mass mobilizations of college students during the Reagan/Duekmeijian era, an era of Asian and Pacific/Islander Student Union (APSU) chapters on college campuses attempting to hold on to the gains wrought by a previous generation of Asian American youth through ethnic studies curricula as well as minority student services.

But first, I'd like to go back to one of my first eye-openers concerning these shows. Actually, it was not even one of the PCNs itself, but a Christmas show, San Francisco State University's Pilipino American Collegiate Endeavor's (PACE) "I'm Dreaming of a Brown Pasko."[2] After having taken in that show, I threw myself into the planning for next spring's show. It was a bit of a leap for me; up until then, my performing credits were largely musical, accompanying singers or other soloists in some jazz combo or lounge act format. This was different: I read for one of the skit parts—that year, the director insisted on calling it a "play." In truth, the script amounted to much more than a skit. This year's theme for the play was the founding of PACE in 1967. We got a heavy dose of history there, rehearsing in folks' garages, classrooms, student union conference areas. Our script-writer researched PACE's founding and San Francisco State's strike in the late 1960s. We were stepping into a history of not only the group that would later be PACE, but Filipina/os' participation

in the Third World Liberation Front's historic genesis of the 1968 strike which put ethnic studies on the map. Paris had its barricades of students, philosophers and workers: we had San Francisco State College. I came to learn as well some of the positive contributions that groups like PACE make to the academic and social life of Filipino Americans on campuses, a place that has the potential to build leadership and organizational skills, to develop valuable cross-cultural friendships, and a place to learn to be part of something larger than one's self.

Working on that show encouraged me to continue working with the (PACE) organization.

I decided to run as internship coordinator. That stint later offered a useful model for managing an intersection between the student organization, the Asian American Studies department, and local, on-and off-campus projects. My goal that year was to make explicit the linkages between communities, classrooms, and the organizational mission. One of the directives was to support the educational life of Filipina/os on that campus. Without a doubt, many people were more interested in the social aspects of gathering together; I was interested in that as well. But there was nothing from preventing us from framing the need for social activity within a larger understanding. At the time, young students started working on issues that affected many of our lives, such as violence, substance abuse, and the health threat of AIDS, among others. For Filipina/os to get together at all meant to get together under those conditions of death, dying, and survival. That is the level of importance I assigned to the work of PACE during those years. Those concerns were also tempered by dropout rates, shaky academic performances, and the rising costs of higher education in the state of California.

What I found as we turned our attention to the planning of the PCN in 1993 was the beginning of what would eventually develop into a criticism of the shows. Because of their commitment to the shows, students were taking incompletes in the Spring semesters from their courses. This was the opening to other criticisms; namely, how the show was becoming counterproductive to the success of Filipina/os on campus. A small group of members on the coordinating committee began to question the organization's role in promoting the value of education for Filipina/o youth. During this time as well, tuition was being driven up throughout California's institutions of higher education. While major campuses of the University of California garnered much television and print media attention, it was the California State University system (of which San Francisco State is a part) that was especially hard hit. Many students did not return; and, this only heightened the commitments of many around the organization to reassess the value of what we were doing with our time and energies.

When the summer came, planning for the upcoming year's PCN began to take shape. We met wherever we could: living rooms, porches, and coffee joints for the committee meetings. This was when we first began to raise questions about this process. At first, criticisms were unfocused, framed hastily around a cost-benefit analysis: for the time, energy, and money invested, we were not getting much return. My indices for success meant active recruitment, retention, and graduation of Filipina/o students at San Francisco State. If our group could not keep track of that larger goal, then everything else had to be re-worked. Those first debates were contentious and concerned just about every aspect of the production. As debates unfolded, it became clear that many of us had much more to say about the specifics of the show as well as about the more general statements surrounding notions of "culture" for Filipina/o Americans in the United States.

The terrain of the debate soon centered on the show's format. The question of "the one night" performance drew major criticisms. Why was "culture" represented on one night? For many, the format seemed too constraining, as if what we could say about ourselves could be summarized neatly in three or four hours (if you were lucky) on a stage. Larger questions quickly surfaced: What was meant by "culture"? When we began to ask this question, we took on a larger set of problems. Questions of representation and ideology were now being addressed. Why did we choose these symbols—these dances, music, costumes, formats? What was at stake in the theatrical narrations used to organize the show; i.e., the play's plot lines? What did the show say about our selves?

What was clear at this stage was that many of us in the organization were simply not asking these questions. For the most part, our coordinating body was busy preparing next year's show, albeit mechanically. This dimension of the production of "culture" was evident: we expected another PCN, we did not plan it. The show disciplined us; it told us more about the meanings of "Filipino"-ness rather than how the younger generation actively engaged in their experiences understood the term. It was "culture"—or, our varied, yet consolidated notions of it—that acted upon us, rather than us interacting with each other. By the end of the debates, I felt even more distant from the notion of PCN, even the term, "culture." It did not take much at that point to propose that we abandon the whole affair.

Two sides emerged on either side of the question. A small group attempted to raise the issue of re-formatting and re-programming, adopting an approach which placed the show within the group's larger commitments to students. However, the majority was frustrated by the change that was proposed. It certainly was not as bad as it could have been. PCN lore will recall how, on many campuses, friendships were lost and groups

devolved into competing and, at times, unworkable factions. In our own group, changes to the show, were met with a lot of skepticism. What both sides faced in common was how to negotiate an immediate future—this was new ground, and we were learning how to walk again. By including these anecdotal comments on the situation at campuses like San Francisco State's cultural night, I am suggesting that criticisms about cultural practices can and should come from the very things which take up our time.

On with the Show…

PRODUCING CULTURE

Because the PCN is vulnerable to the charge of essentialism, which presents a static, singular conception of Filipinos in America, I have proposed an alternative format to the PCN, one deploying a strategic essentialism which aims to present one view of Filipinos of America. As such, this distinction and movement from "Filipinos in America" to "Filipinos of America" highlights a political moment, when students—who have engaged the strategically essentialist format—take hold of the means of cultural production; that is, "the political production of culture" (Spivak). Additionally, my intention in making this distinction is to provide a contingent rhetorical device for denoting a de-centered notion of "America" (that is, de-centered from Europe as its sole author), and for highlighting the development of culture from within the specific site of America, the rooting of expressive forms.

The case study used as an alternative to the traditional PCN model suggests a return to the political question of such activity. These meditations are based on analyses of nine PCNs, spanning a period from 1986 to 1996. All the shows analyzed were directed and executed by Filipino American student organizations at four-year colleges in northern and southern California. The shows are: University of California, Berkeley (UCB), Pilipino American Alliance (PAA), 1986; San Francisco State University (SFSU), Pilipino American Collegiate Endeavor (PACE), 1986; SFSU PACE, 1988; Santa Clara University, Barkada,[3] 1992; SFSU PACE 1992; SFSU PACE 1993; UC Los Angeles (UCLA), Samahang Pilipino,[4] 1994; UC Irvine (UCI), Kababayan,[5] 1995-6.

LIFE'S ESSENTIALS

Before proceeding directly to the PCN, I take up a definitional matter by asking, *what is essentialism?* Although there exists no strict definition to the term itself (if there were such

a thing, it would be "essentialist"), E. San Juan takes it to be "a fixed, ontological essence or a unitary, transcendental category predicated on the epistemological reasoning supplied by anthropology, biology, and other physical sciences" (7). For Diana Fuss, essentialism is "commonly understood as a belief in the real, true essence of things, the invariable and fixed properties which define the "whatness" of a given entity" (xi). What both definitions are pointing to is this lack of flexibility, the foreclosure of multiple, even contingent meanings concerning the "whatness" of culture which is my concern. Similarly, the PCN categorizes what we know, or should know, about Filipino and Filipino American culture.

The PCN is not mandated from above, nor legislated by institutions, governmental bodies. It is of Filipinos: that is, produced by us. However, I want to stress here, the shows tells us less about ourselves, how we practice, see, do, and live—rather, it is the show which performs us as evidenced by the planning of the event, which takes place nearly one year in advance with the gathering of a committee of students. The committee chair delegates one task per person—costume acquisition/design, venue rental, choreography, script-writing, program design, set design, rehearsal coordination, bookkeeping, marketing and ticket sales, music rehearsal coordination, deciding where the alumni will be seated in the audience, and so on. Culture—as a dynamic, lived set of experiences, as a catalogue of pains, appetites, anticipations, and joys—is bracketed. Rather, "culture," as the committee's center of attention, is commodified, staged, packaged, and, most importantly through the PCN, implied. The committee is a witness not to a dialogue on what culture is (or could be), but to the division of its labor.

In coming to terms with the essentialist logic of the PCN, I examine what serves as a static definition of Filipino and Filipino American culture. In defining what is, the PCN also defines what is not Filipino culture. Here is where the PCN falters as a durable vehicle for a dynamic discourse on culture, participation, and as a venue for creativity.

"I LEFT MY HEART ON IFUGAO MOUNTAIN": THE PCN TODAY

The PCN is a sophisticated expressive form. Part of the complicated nature derives from its ability to narrate histories in creative ways. I begin this next discussion with a simultaneous reference to sentimentalized "returns": the first refers to Al Robles's short story, "Looking for Ifugao Mountain," and next, the popular US American jazz standard, "I Left My Heart in San Francisco." Robles is considered the "dean" of the "Flip" poets (as they called themselves), a cohort of Filipina/o American writers primarily located in the San Francisco Bay Area who were instrumental in developing needed community arts

and cultural expression (Syquia; Peñaranda et al; Campomanes). His poetry speaks from another generation of youth who, during the 1960s and 1970s, wrestled with questions of power, resources, and the definition of the Filipina/o experience in America. *Looking for Ifugao Mountain* (Robles) is a children's story which begins with an urban Filipino kid sitting in San Francisco's Portsmouth Square. He is spirited away on a journey to the Philippines, searching for a mythic figure that lives on Ifugao mountain. Along the way, he is beset by obstacles and warnings: the mountain is dangerous, go back. He presses on; as he nears the mountain, he is told by a guide that he will not find what he searches for on the mountain, but in the knowledge of the *manongs*[6] who sit with him at Portsmouth Square. He returns to San Francisco, and begins listening.

The show cannot be considered without an understanding of the Filipino American student organizations which direct and execute this annual activity. Since the influx of Filipino students at college campuses in the 1980s, the PCN has become the central organizing activity for many student groups. During Spring academic terms, officers for the upcoming academic years are elected by the organizational membership; and usually, certain positions are reserved exclusively for coordinating PCN logistics. Beginning in the Fall, students are delegated various tasks—set design, costume-making, catering, dancing, music, and so forth—toward the final production. Many hours of rehearsal time and planning are sacrificed by several (hundred, in some cases) students.

Additionally, funding for the show is a long-term task. Although private donations and community sponsorships are encouraged and (at times) secured, the show's funding emanates from special accounts within the campus' funding structure. Particular sources may be sought in student government grants, from student activities offices, the office of the university president, and so forth. Also, the amounts granted for such shows have wildly varied: from a student organization's budget at a small campus, $300, to nearly $20,000 for one evening's worth of entertainment. Justifying such expenditures involves detailed records kept by the organization for any aspects of production concerns: securing a venue (the bigger the better), buying new costumes (last year's simply won't do), paying professional choreographers, catering receptions, mounting publicity and outreach campaigns, and so forth. I point to these two elements—namely, time and money—to underscore the fact that the PCN is a serious enterprise. The students organizing the show do not take their obligations lightly, and nor should we, the audience, receive the production in a similar fashion.

Turning from pre-production to the production itself, I notice five (although not exhaustive) consistent elements in the show's format and program, i.e., indispensable

characteristics in the essentialist logic of the PCN. These include: the opening of the show with both the Philippine and US American national anthems, the use of Tagalog in the programs, the marking of bodies through Philippine costumes, the standard (required) inventory of Philippine dance styles, and the narrative within the show as a vehicle for historicizing the Filipino American experience.

The traditional PCN opens with the Philippine and US American national anthems. Written by A.C. Montenegro, the *Pambansang Awit* ("Philippine national anthem") is written in a standard march style, reminiscent of European and US American band musics. The lyrics speak to strong nationalistic strains which are commensurate with imagery found in Francis Scott Key's Star Spangled Banner. At some productions, the choir deftly merges the tunes in a continuous medley. The effect here is of continuity—between two nations singing of prideful traditions of liberty, battle, and democratic "friendship."

Second, Tagalog occupies a central role in these productions. The following partial list bears out the importance of framing the shows around what has become a nationalized dialect: SFSU PACE 1986, "Fiesta Sa Ating Bayan" (Celebration at Our Town); SCU Barkada 1992, "Pagsasama Sa Pamamagitan Ng Cultura" (Unity Through Culture); UCLA Samahang Pilipino 1994, "Ang Nawalang Kayamanan" (The Lost Treasure). Also, many of the shows feature a translation of the entire production, rendered in English and Tagalog. The issue of language here is central to the project of the PCN, in that as the Filipino community in the United States quickly develops into the largest Asian American ethnic group, the retention of language becomes a symbol of cultural unity, a reminder that Filipino culture has roots elsewhere and in other tongues besides English. More significantly, though, this use of Tagalog reflects the demographic shift from the dominance of Ilocano immigration in the pre-World War II era to the Tagalog-dominated post-1965 immigration. The net political effects locate the specificity of Filipino culture by laying claim to an indigenous language, and, therefore, to pre-European influences.

As members of the indigenous psychology movement in the Philippines point out, the deployment of indigenous languages as a trans-national cultural expression has a tremendous impact for the theorization of "citizenship"—that is, those concepts specifying who belongs, and who does not (Enriquez). Indeed, as Enriquez asserts, if Tagalog or Pilipino is one of the languages spoken by Americans (it is one of the top ten), then it too, becomes an American language. Those, however, who would recognize Tagalog as the only language of the Philippines and as the dialect most often spoken by Filipinos in the United States need be mindful of the homogenization of the culture's linguistic plurality, of which Tagalog is only one (albeit a major) part.

Third, the Filipinos presented on stage are culturally marked through "indigenized" costume. I say "indigenized" rather than "indigenous" to point out that there is a question as to the authenticity of the presentations—do they really wear those costumes in the Philippines (Gaerlan)? To say that something is indigenized is to point to an active and complicated process of editing. This is the process where a vision of Philippine life is manufactured, where the immediate origins may be located within the Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos's management of cultural images through major exponents: the Cultural Center of the Philippines, and the national dance troupes which played to world acclaim since the 1950s. Those highly successful dance presentations have translated as a model for younger PCN organizers, eager to demonstrate the authenticity of Philippine cultural symbols. In the current period of PCNs, every aspect of physicality is rendered in its Philippine equivalent: headdresses, fingernails, clothing, weaponry, sashes, and so forth. Additionally, indigenized music is coupled with costuming to stage what Barbara Gaerlan notes as the "orientalizing" of Filipino culture (6). Careful observers like Gaerlan and Edward Said point out how this process of "orientalizing" is part of a larger historical process of robbing people of their history, of making them objects of study rather than participants in a discussion, of ensuring that the "Oriental" is "exotic," "alluring", and "mysterious"—a perspective which is supposedly rational, Western, and "progressive."

Fourth, and crucial to the show, is the standard inventory of dances arranged in suites. Four suites of indigenized Philippine dance dominate the programs. Particular dances chosen for each suite vary at the discretion of program coordinators; however, the suites remain strikingly consistent throughout this examination. They include: the Spanish (or "Maria Clara"), the tribal or mountain, the Muslim, and the barrio or rural suites. A major addition by Filipino American students is the squeezing in of a "modern" routine which lets loose a contemporary choreographed sequence. The routine is "modern" not as in the European understanding of modern (jazz, for example) dance, but in contrast to the indigenized forms—actually more reminiscent of the Janet Jackson armies of hip hop street dance.

The effect here is to draw attention to the rich and eclectic inventory of dances emanating from the Philippines. This inventory throughout the late 1980s and early 1990s has remained static as it has also de-historicized the groups which are being (re) presented through the dances. Often, historical periods shift unevenly in the presentation of the program and are depicted often with little attention to chronology. Also, regions are (re)presented contiguously, without reference to linguistic, religious, or other forms of localized difference.

Fifth, the shows employ a narrative aiming to connect the various dance sequences for the purpose of historicizing the Filipino American experience. Often, characters in a skit or play are presented at the beginning of the show in need of historical help: they do not know their history. In a familiar turn of the quest motif, the characters meet guides—elders, spirits, parent-figures—who "transport" them to the Philippines. During their journey, the characters come in contact with a host of sounds and visions in the form of the dance suites. By the end of the evening, the characters reach an epiphanic state of cultural awareness and pride which they take back with them to the US This motif—of the quest, and the "reverse exile"—is the most familiar one deployed throughout the shows. Literary critic Oscar Campomanes (1992) refers to this process as an exilic motif, used by Philippine-born and Filipina/o American writers turn their attention to the Philippines. Yet, for many of the young folk who put on the show, we have to consider the problematic of American-born Filipina/os who do not "go back" to a place where they have never been. For our young characters, "something" is missing, that which is re-placed by an "imagined return" to the Philippines where the "crisis" of Filipino American identity is "solved." The tacit assertion being made here is that the Philippines is a sturdy repository of "knowledge," a repository of authentic representations of Philippine life which can be accessed and brought back. The exercising of the reverse exile motif refuses to acknowledge the fact of cultural change, indeterminacy, and reconstruction at work in both the Philippines and in the US.

Thus, the traditional PCN possesses elements which demonstrate that Filipinos do have a culture, that they are visible, despite the persistent, institutional erasure from US American "official" history. Although the intent of the show varies according to the organizing group (perhaps to demonstrate the cultural significance of the Filipino in America) the effects of the shows leave viewers with a static notion of "culture." In this sense, the political aspects of subversion, defiant cultural assertion, and a vibrant re-articulation of the racial order are left behind, in favor of increased technical mastery of performance and concomitant symptoms of spectacle and extravagance a lá Cecil B. DeMille. The show has become predictable, repetitious, and increasingly problematic in justifying its expenditure of thousands of dollars for one evening's worth of *entertainment.* Consider when we are being "entertained," that is, occupied or being kept busy. For months at a time, students tax themselves, their studies, and their parents in preparation for the show. The audience is held in thrall for an evening. In the matter of a few hours, it is over. Indeed, we have come a long way from a "dime a dance." Throughout the early part of the twentieth century, dancing in taxi dances temporarily satisfied needs for companionship and the sting of loneliness, while depleting their hard earned depressed

wages (Cressey; Vedder; Catapusan). These histories allow us an opportunity to link aspects of popular culture with the social conditions of Filipina/o American communities in the United States.

STRANGERS FROM A DIFFERENT (STRATEGICALLY ESSENTIALIST) SHORE

Not all shows are alike. And, by applying more critical energies to this expressive form of cultural production, a "strategically essentialist" approach suggests some possibilities for a re-situating of the "political" dimension of these cultural productions. By "strategic essentialism," I mean the application of Lisa Lowe's "model for the ongoing construction of ethnic identity … [which Lowe views as] … the making and practice of Asian American culture as nomadic, unsettled, taking place in the travel between cultural sites and in the multi-vocality of heterogeneous and conflicting positions" (39). What this offers for those of us who are observing the show is a way of understanding culture as being changeable, actively built up from our discussion and labor. This is quite a distance away from the static confines of the present PCN model, where "culture" is replicated through familiar Philippine dance suites from the year before, and where Filipino culture is presented as a seamless tapestry of sounds and visions which are internally consistent. Borrowing from Spivak, Lowe highlights the "strategic use of a positive essentialism in a scrupulously visible political interest" (39). Oftentimes, "culture" is something which belongs to the past—the best of what has gone before, and that which continues unchanged today.

I highlight "political interest" here because the terms of the shows are framed by fundamental questions: Why put on the show? Who is listening? What is being said? Lowe's model is further textured by Elaine H. Kim's claim that Asian American identities are "fluid and migratory" (4) in addition to Radhakrishnan's view of "contingent" identities (211), which challenge the program of the traditional PCN model. Both Kim and Radhakrishnan point to a view of culture then which is open to the possibilities of change and editing. Culture, more specifically, cultural practices, are not simply items in a box to preserve, to be shown with reverence, or to be stored in its pristine state. Rather, the PCN offers students a chance to think of "culture" as a messy process, loaded with contradictory meaning, subject to human error as well as collective realization for what cultural historian George Lipsitz has referred to as the "social struggle for the good life."

I offer as a case and as a response to the above challenges, an alternative program:

SFSU Pilipino American Collegiate Endeavor's 1993 production of "Cultural Evidence." Note also that the discussion of this show is not meant to be definitive, merely suggestive. The format of Cultural Evidence differed sharply from the traditional PCN model. Lasting over three days, the series of shows attempted to spend less than the previous years' one-night galas. The overall emphasis of Cultural Evidence was to provide a "venue" for the creativity of its members and its surrounding community (Belale 2).

Throughout the three-day event, Cultural Evidence aimed to showcase original work and alternative expressive forms of Filipino Americans. The first evening was devoted to film and spoken word/musical improvisation. The film screening featured works written, directed, and produced by Filipino Americans. The "Spoken Word" event featured poetry and prose written by students and former members. A musical (jazz) dialogue was also offered. Some of the evening's works were also presented at the National Asian American & Telecommunication Association's 1993 International Film Showcase as well as the Asian American Jazz Festival.

The second evening presented the "Hip Hop Experience." Again, emphasis was lent to artists actively performing within the reach of the campus. This approach featured all aspects of hip hop culture, of which Filipino Americans continue to be a major creative force. The range of forms included scratching/mixing, dance, rap, and graffiti styles. The unexpectedly large attendance of the event drew Filipino American hip hop artists from throughout the Bay Area: Q-Bert, Bubala Tribe, Urban Soul, Lani Luv, to name a few. Not merely a miming of African American style, Filipino American hip hop demonstrates how younger segments of the community are accessing, struggling, and coming to terms with the most vital cultural forms of late twentieth century America. It is not surprising that we find Filipino Americans engaged in hip hop. Filipinos have taken part in aesthetically innovative moments in American culture. Consider the zoot-suiters and be-boppers of another generation; Filipino American hip hoppers of today not only participate in, but rearticulate the form through a distinctive and improvisatory soulful style.

The third night saw a return to the traditional model, albeit with many alterations. This finale was the venue for what remained of the large-audience traditional model; although, indigenous dance from the Philippines was not the centerpiece of the show. With only the mountain and tribal suites representing indigenous dance forms, the finale featured a pastiche of sounds and visions not found in the traditional PCN model. A series of pieces written, directed, and performed by students covered much ground in experimentally theatrical forms: a reading of a poem featured in a Filipino American literary journal; a meditation on *Pinay*[7] adolescence and personal maturation; a lengthy

epic-documentary of Filipino history, with the narrator-(Lapu Lapu)-as-prophet; a play raising the problem of inter-diasporic conflict; and a dialogue set to the rhythm of two *Pinoys* talking about how Filipinos created jazz. With the attention to the dance forms displaced, Cultural Evidence organizers left open the problematic of their editorial decision to highlight certain suites. Left out of the program were the barrio suites (which features the show-stopping *tinikling*[8] and the Muslim suites' *singkil*[9] (one of the most dazzlingly over-produced numbers in many repertoires).

This eclectic, sometimes unfocused, and largely uneven finale lacked the presentational unity or clarity of other PCNs. However, the effect of Cultural Evidence accomplished much in taking to task larger theoretical and political concerns with definitions and expressions of "culture," and with the articulation of what Lowe referred to as "multiplevocality." In strategizing with essentialisms rather than receiving them uncritically, Cultural Evidence organizers set the static inventory of dances aside (note that the dances were not wholly jettisoned), and opened the creative spaces for its members to actively engage in a conversation over what they felt was important, over how they viewed their "culture." They highlighted the process of identity as an unfolding set of contradictions and possibilities, rather than the fixed structure of identity to be (re) presented. Thus, as Filipinos of America, participants of Cultural Evidence reached deep into the Philippine tradition while stretching wide the range of constructive sources for engaging the US American terrain through film, improvisational music, poetry, and so forth. From shore to shore, the nomads press on.

CODA: DANCING MATTERS

This critical review of the PCN has had two aims: to reveal not only multiple meanings of Filipina/o American cultural production as it unfolds on the stage, but to cast an eye to the creativity of Filipina/o American expressive forms in general, which have been sorely neglected by the traditional PCN model. Cultural Evidence organizers did not edit any more than their previous cohorts. Instead, the major contribution of those organizers was their recognition that they were editing in the first place.

The stakes involve not simply fighting over what to include in or dismiss from the show. The PCN affords an opportunity to found discussions on what we do with our time and our labor, to question how we carry ourselves, to pose questions whose answers may not seem readily available. The PCN may be a venue opened for the experimentation with contingency, transgression, testimony, and even entertainment. In another sense

of the term, "entertainment" calls on reception, the welcoming and harboring, as in to "entertain an idea." For Filipino Americans seeking such "entertainment," the PCN could do more than simply keep one busy; rather, it can set aside some time for laughter, tragedy, surprise, and wonder—to entertain our selves.

NOTES

1 *Pasko* is Filipino for "Christmas."

2 See Buchanan's 1992 Republican National Convention Speech.

3 *Barkad*a means friends.

4 *Samahang Pilipino* means "Filipino Organization."

5 *Kabayan* is "countryman."

6 *Manong* is used to refer to a Filipino man with deference and respect.

7 *Pinay* is colloquial for "Filipina."

8 *Tinikling* is the Filipino national dance which involves dancers skillfully maneuvering between large bamboo poles.

9 *Singkil* is a traditional Filipino dance that recounts the epic legend of the Darangan of the Maranao people of Mindanao. Dancers maneuver through crisscrossed bamboo poles.

WORKS CITED

Belale, Debra. *Cultural Evidence Program.* San Francisco: n.p., 1993.

Buchanan, Patrick. Address. Republican National Convention. Houston, Texas. 17 Aug. 1992.

Campomanes, Oscar. "Filipinos in the United States and Their Literature of Exile." *Reading the Literature of Asian America.* Eds. Shirley Geok-lin and A. Ling. PA: Temple UP, 1992. 49-78.

Catapusan, Benico. "Leisure Time Problems of Filipino Immigrants." *Sociology and Social Research* 24 (1940): 541-9.

Coliccion. Ichioka Y. *A Buried Past.* Berkeley: U of California P, 1974.

Cressey, Paul G. *The Taxi Dance Hall: A Sociological Study in Commercialized Recreation and City Life.* Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1932.

Enriquez, Virgilio G. *From Colonial to Liberation Psychology: The Philippine Experience.* Quezon City, Philippines: U of the Philippines P, 1992.

Fanon, Frantz. *The Wretched of the Earth.* NY: Grove P, 1965.

Foucault, Michel. *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews & Other Writings, 1972-1977.* NY: Pantheon, 1980.

Fuss, Dianna. *Essentially Speaking: Feminism, Nature & Difference.* NY: Routledge, 1989.

Gaerlan, Barbara. "In the Court of the Sultan: Filipino American Students Encounter Orientalism and Nationalism in Philippine Dance." Comparative and International Education Society Meeting. San Diego, California. 24 March 1994.

Gomez-Quiñones, Juan. *5th and Grande Vista: Poems, 1960-1973.* NY, 1974.

Kim, Elaine. "Beyond Railroads and Internment: Comments on the Past and Future of Asian American Studies." *Association for Asian American Studies Newsletter* 4 Oct. 1993: 3-7.

Lowe, Lisa. "Heterogeneity, Hybridity, Multiplicity: Marking Asian American Differences." *Diaspora* 1 (1991): 24-44.

Peñaranda, Oscar, Serafin Syquia, and Sam Tagatac. "An Introduction to Filipino-American Literature." *Aiiieeeee! An Anthology of Asian American Writers.* Eds. Frank Chin, Jeffrey Paul Chan, Shawn Wong, and Lawson Inada. NY: Anchor, 1975. 37-54.

"Philippine Dancers Delight the US" *Life Magazine.* 9 November 1959: 47-50.

Radhakrishnan, R. "Ethnic Identity and Post-Structuralist Difference." *Cultural Critique* 6 (1987): 199-220.

Robles, Al. *Looking for Ifugao Mountain—Paghahanap sa Bundok ng Ifugao.* Trans. Alfredo Cariagma. San Francisco: Children's Book, 1977.

Said, Edward. *Orientalism.* NY: Vintage,1978.

San Juan, Jr., Epifanio. *Racial Formations/Critical Transformations: Articulations of Power in Ethnic and Racial Studies in the United States.* NJ: Humanities, 1992.

Spivak, Gayatri. Lecture. Center for Ideas and Society Lecture, University of California at Riverside. 5 Apr. 1994.

Syquia, Serafin. ed. *Flips: A Filipino-American Anthology.* CA: San Francisco State U, 1974.

UNESCO. *Cultural Policy in the Philippines: A Study Prepared under the Auspices of the UNESCO National Commission of the Philippines.* Paris: UNESCO, 1973.

Vedder, Clyde B. "An Analysis of the Taxi-Dance Hall as a Social Institution." Diss. U of Southern California, 1974.

DANCING INTO OBLIVION: THE PILIPINO CULTURAL NIGHT AND THE NARRATION OF CONTEMPORARY FILIPINA/O AMERICA

Theodore S. Gonzalves
American Studies
University of Hawaii at Manoa
theo@hawaii.edu

Abstract

How have performances developed by Filipino Americans over the twentieth century conveyed important lessons about culture, nation, and community? In other words, what do Filipino American cultural performances have to say about the formation of "national identity" and "community"?

I select three contexts to highlight these changes: the postindustrialization of the US economy; the reaction to race, taxes and education in the Bakke vs. UC Board of Regents decision; and the political realignment of the Reagan democrats. We see the continued immigration of Filipino so-called "professional" families to the United States. Their children seek senses of themselves amidst attacks on ethnic studies, affirmative action, and the presence of immigrants in California. And here the Pilipino Cultural Night (PCN) as a performance genre emerges. For the thousands of young Filipino Americans who have taken to the stage or for those who felt more comfortable in the wings, participating in these shows has been some of the only history lessons available about the Philippine revolution of 1896, the literary politics of Carlos Bulosan, the struggle of Ilocano and Visayan farm workers in Hawaii, the back-breaking labor in Salinas, Delano, Spokane, or Chicago.

They also turn their attention to the Philippines and to the outer diaspora, learning of the plight of overseas workers like Flor Contemplacion and the devastation of the archipelago's natural resources. At the end of the twentieth century, performing a play or choreographing dances offers not only the possibility of entertainment, but also the chance to tell stories about the past, to call a community into being, to convey youthful insecurities, or to raise oblique and ambivalent critiques of the America they provisionally call home.

Cultural performances such as the PCN assume the burden of providing a "performative transcript" of who Filipino Americans are. With the dominant historical record so heavily biased toward professionals' and elites' accounts of the past, ordinary folks have often turned to the field of culture to symbolically enact what would not be possible elsewhere. But ordinary folks are not the only ones to recognize the power and dynamism of the terrain of culture. We already know that the powerful remind the rest of us of who they are, what they supposedly do, and why they deserve such an elevation station. In that alternative to the dominant historiography, we find oblique and sometimes parallel responses to the existing and oftentimes unquestioned written record.

Keywords

cultural performances, Filipino American Studies, Filipino diaspora, national identity and communities

About the Author

Theo Gonzalves is Assistant Professor of American Studies at the University of Hawaii at Manoa. He completed his PhD in Comparative Culture at the University of California at Irvine and has taught courses in American, ethnic, and cultural studies. His work has been published in leading academic journals such as *Critical Mass, Amerasia* and the *Journal of Asian American Studies*. He has also served as Musical Director for the experimental theater troupe, Tongue in A mood, and was an advisory board member to Bindlestiff Studio, a Filipino American performing arts venue located in San Francisco. In 2005, Gonzalves was granted a US Senior Fulbright Scholar award to complete work on a manuscript on Filipino American performing arts.

Are Filipino Americans becoming more visible? To combat the collective Filipino identity crisis, some Filipino Americans are fighting for visibility by promoting cultural awareness and ethnic pride. For example, the mostly Filipino Kababayan Club of the University of California at Irvine (UCI) recently staged a play that showcased Filipino cuisine, music, dance, and customs, and portrayed a Filipina American discovering her cultural heritage. Due to the Kababayan Club's efforts to increase awareness about Filipino culture on campus, a course on Filipino Americans is now offered regularly at UCI.[1]

—Cao and Novas (177)

Umuwi na tayo
Umuwi na tayo hey hey hey
Uwi na tayo dahil
Wala ng sense
Ang aking mundo[2]

—Eraserheads

MINNEAPOLIS IS BETWEEN SEASIDE AND SEATTLE

If Joe Bataan and Ermena Vinluan spoke to the aspirations and changing worldview of young folks coming of age during the late 1960s, then an even younger cohort would find their artistic anchors in radically different places. Bataan and Vinluan represent ways in which Filipina/o artists in the United States carried messages of criticism and solidarity. Forged out of mass-based social movements and the age of decolonization and national liberation, the arts of radical theater and popular music did more than entertain. For folks like myself, born a generation after those movements, coming of age in the early 1980s meant having to respond to different political, social and aesthetic contexts. If we may interpret the works of Bataan and Vinluan as creative corollaries to the tenor of the late 1960s and early 1970s, then the music and career of Reagan-era artists can reveal much about how folks in the 1980s expressed their anxiety over sexuality, gender, race and identity.

Many of us could relate to musician and performer Prince in a number of different ways. I was first attracted to the music. So many of the bands in the 1980s seemed to lack an original sound. Synthesizers and electronic drum machines were just beginning to

change the sound of music in the early days of hip hop on the East coast. But Prince's work pushed the technical limitations of the gear he was using (like the programmable Linn drum machine or the early Oberheim synthesizers)—forcing R&B and funk bands to begin to rely on more than the standard instrumentation and confines found in a rhythm section and lead instruments. His sound was the funkiest, oddest music we had heard, fusing the muscular energy of rock and new wave with the showmanship and virtuosity of James Brown, Little Richard, Stevie Wonder, Jimi Hendrix, and Sly Stone.

The second reason for the attraction had more to do with how parts of his personal story resonated with ours. Growing up on California's Monterey Peninsula for many of us meant being relatively isolated. Tourists are drawn to the area's sea otters, fisherman's wharf, John Steinbeck's Cannery Row, the Monterey Bay Aquarium, or the sleepy artist colony in Carmel. Just below the postcard surface was our own buzzing music culture shaped by house parties, bootlegged cassettes and mix tapes of our favorite tunes, underground radio programming, and eventually, MTV. Disco was losing popularity in the early 1980s (though some would say not fast enough), and hip hop had not yet become a household term. At school, we kept our distance from the rockers, the smokers, and the punks by telling them (oftentimes showing them with bass-heavy car stereo systems) that we listened to soul music. That covered a lot of stylistic ground, what industry types would technically refer to as R&B, or later, urban music.

One outpost for our music was found at an unlikely place. Robert Louis Stevenson College Preparatory School (RLS) seemed to those of us at Seaside High School—one of the two public high schools on the Monterey Peninsula—to be the epitome of white privilege. Few of us at Seaside had friends that went or graduated from there. And while RLS' students prepared for college, the majority of my classmates turned to enlisted-rank careers in the Air Force or jobs in the towns nearby. To this day, I don't know exactly where RLS is.

During the week, RLS' radio station (a high school with its own radio station!) played what my friends and I did not like—hard rock. Sometimes, we would call it punk music, even after that style had passed and few seemed to be playing it. Whatever it was, we thought it loud and noisy. Even the DJs seemed bored, sometimes leaving a lot of dead air between the tunes. The only saving grace took place on Sunday—actually, the whole day was referred to as "Super Soul Sunday, 91.1 KSPB." One of our own Seaside classmates landed a Sunday spot featuring soul music—spinning a wide mix of artists and bands including Cameo, Lakeside, Mtume, Evelyn "Champagne" King, Patrice Rushen, Afrika Bambaataa and the Soulsonic Force, Malcolm McClaren's "Duck Rock," Grandmaster Flash and Melly Melle, and, of course, Prince.

After jazz music, hip hop would become the nation's most popular musical contribution to the world, and eventually the soundtrack to late capital's marketing of popular culture. Few of us knew any better at the time, but whatever it was that pop music was supposed to be was changing, and Prince's music represented for many of us the best of what we were hearing, and more importantly, one really exciting way for us to see ourselves in different ways.

Part of my affinity for Prince was how, in the midst of his own hometown of Minneapolis, he and his partners were able to craft a unique sound. That style and attitude was independent of New York, Los Angeles, or any of the other major centers of American music. In interviews, Prince recalls how both black and white radio was boring. What would become the "Minneapolis sound" influenced countless other bands and singers. While MTV segregated its audiences, at one point refusing to play Rick James' million-selling singles solely because he was black, Prince toured all throughout the mid-west with a multiracial mix of band-mates. And before Madonna, Boy George of Culture Club, and Dee Snyder of Twisted Sister foregrounded challenging ways to musically experience sexuality and androgyny during the Reagan era, Prince shocked audiences and critics to take notice of his salacious lyrics, dance moves, and even his costuming. He wore bikini underwear, militaristic trench coats, lace gloves, and high-heeled boots. The idea of staking out one's own stylistic and creative turf continues to speak volumes to me now about how culture, style, and expression gets over—not simply what is received, but how it gets generated, under what circumstances, and with and for whom. For those of us at Seaside, Prince's music and style was a license to revel in pomp while accessing his interpretation of American musical history.[3]

Around the same time, another group of Filipina/o Americans, located in Seattle, had also developed an interest in Prince. It would not be until a few years later that I would make contact with the founders of the Filipino American National Historical Society (FANHS). Its founders had deep roots in the Seattle area for several generations, their histories also extending to other major sites like Stockton, California. FANHS has become the largest community-based resource for the preservation, collection and dissemination of the histories of Filipina/os in the United States. When I had first heard about the group, I called their offices to get more information and learn more about their work. A few days later I opened a packet in the mail that contained, among other things, a list of "outed" Filipina/o Americans. It was long: a list of names of celebrities, politicians, and other persons of renown from several generations. I recognized the names of movie stars, athletes, and musicians: Lou Diamond Philips, Tamlyn Tomita, and Tia Carrera. But I was amazed to see Prince's name listed there as well.

Between Seaside, California and Seattle, Washington (and this is not to say this distance is exhaustive) is an underexplained identification and fascination with what it means to be Filipina/o American. I am still not clear on why "outing" Filipina/os would be important. Maybe it satisfies our curiosities and insecurities about those who could or should claim to be part of our communities. Or maybe the list speaks to the need to explain the recognition of a familiar name, the preferences for certain foods, or the silences about one's ethnic heritage. And perhaps there is also a premium placed on the need to identify with celebrities as provisional leaders when those working in the electoral arenas continue to ignore immigrant communities or provide lame excuses for why participation is so lacking.[4] In any event, it seems "outing" those on a list serves a particular function—to generate common knowledge and sense around who is supposed to be included in one's community. In other words, Cordova's list is in part, an explicit statement about who may constitute Filipina/o America. In terms of the list, it offers interested readers the opportunity to link one's anonymous and disconnected self to those who enjoy the status and elevated station of the celebrity.[5]

Whatever the case for his inclusion on the list, the music and career of Prince is an appropriate starting point for framing how members of immigrant and long-standing communities would construct collective senses of themselves in the 1980s. I find it no accident that an artist like Prince, whose racial and sexual identity has always been ambiguous (if not troubling), would also become popular during the Reagan era. It is as if the aesthetic that he crafted, reaching deep into African American music cultures, while hailing from mid-Western, working-class and multiracial communities, would serve as a metaphor for how racial minorities would think through that period of hyperliberalism and nostalgia. I do not mean to simply say that Prince was an "answer" to Ronald Reagan's administration per se. Rather, talking about what resonates with his music and style is an appropriate way to begin thinking about how the field of culture and cultural production are sites where we'll find Filipina/o Americans negotiating what identities are possible in the absence of a social movement.[6]

For a generation of younger Filipina/o Americans coming of age in the 1980s, this artist's career and history serves as an apt metaphor for grappling with complicated expressive forms of culture like the Pilipino Cultural Night. Just as the members of this generation would have little memory or engagement with the mass-based movements of the 1960s and 1970s, so would Prince's music emerge after the zenith of the larger civil rights and Black Power moments. And while the art forms that Filipina/o Americans would generate with the PCN rely on a recombination of cultural performance traditions hailing

from the Philippines, so too would Prince's musical styles eclectically resonate with so many traditions of African American music and performance cultures—the blues, gospel, funk, doo-wop, and soul. Most importantly, Filipina/o Americans took time and effort to say something of importance as they saw it on stage, but would be taken to task for falling short of making coherent and sustained critiques of American life. So too would Prince be criticized. The overwhelming critical reaction from music writers would be to focus attention on the scandalous and salacious aspects of his showmanship. Critics emphasized the orgiastic spectacle of the music, thereby obscuring whatever stronger more complicated claims were made against the culture's racial and sexual fears.[7]

In this chapter, I focus my attention on how college-aged Filipina/o Americans of the Reagan Era to the present developed a unique performance genre—the Pilipino Cultural Night. I examine an early and influential show as a detailed case study. I also move beyond one campus production and track what has become a genre performed by thousands of students over the past twenty years. Certainly there are other performances taking place in Hawai'i, the Pacific Northwest, Canada, the Midwest, the East Coast, and elsewhere. But the contribution of California's campuses is simply a manageable part of a much larger story about the negotiation of the nationalist imaginary of America's immigrant communities.

The performative narration of Filipina/o America through the PCN stands in stark contrast to the work of artists like Joe Bataan and playwright Ermena M. Vinluan. Bataan was clearly a commercial musical success. My aim in presenting his career along with Vinluan was to call attention to the importance of the deep community base from which their works emerged. It might be tempting to think that Bataan merely helped to create a new market for Latin music. My goal has been to focus on Filipina/o American performers as producers of cultures; not merely as artists with interesting or curious notions, but organic intellectuals who, at times, help to generate new ways of thinking about what we often take for granted. While the 1960s and 1970s represent a moment in American culture where public space was widened and influenced by those on the left, the 1980s represents the rightward response, and crucially the narrowing of space where racial minorities experimented with and pledged cross-cultural support for international struggles. Also while both the cultural nationalist and cultural reactionist periods share critiques of prior generations, the former turns to the building of social movements whereas the latter is often characterized for its rootlessly narcissistic creative output. The Cultural Nights share the fact that they were created from the social ground up—expressions of popular and not professional forms of entertainment and socialization. But the Cultural Nights

more significantly draw upon the foundational work of Jorge Bocobo and Francisca Reyes Aquino, while also adapting the popularity of the Bayanihan's presentations.

"EVERY TIME I HEAR THE WORD 'CULTURE,' I REACH FOR MY REVOLVER" (CHARLETON HESTON)

In the years after World War II, many Americans could bear witness to an era of rising expectations. From 1945 to 1973, the United States was paying its workers some of the highest wages among the industrial nations, allowing folks to take seriously the possibility of fulfilling the suburban dream. Millions would take advantage of massive investments in public schooling. The number of students pursuing higher education more than quintupled: from a little over two million in 1947 to more than thirteen million in 1988. The proportion of women students jumped from 29% to 54%; and by 1988, almost 20% of all college students were racial and ethnic minorities (Appleby et al. 1).

Those rising expectations would be challenged by two events: the advent of mass-based social movements in the late 1960s—a cohort coming of age, unable to reconcile the First World's strategic and economic ascendancy during the 1960s with continued racial injustices at home and struggles for national liberation by the world's African, Asian, and Latin American majorities—and the world economic crisis of the mid-1970s.

Over a twenty-year period beginning in 1973, the incomes of production workers would fall from $12.06 an hour in 1979 to $11.25 an hour in 1989, to only $10.83 in 1993. The greatest losses occurred in families with children under 18, also, where the head of the household was younger than 30. For young Latina/o families with children, the decline during these years was 27.9%; for young African American families, the drop was a devastating 48.3%. By the time Reagan and Bush completed their terms in office, we witness a massive national redistribution of wealth upward. The top 1% of households would control 16.4% of all incomes, and 48% of the total financial wealth of the country. The bottom 95% would take 27.7% of the nation's total financial wealth (Marable 193-198).

What buttressed the changes was a resurgence of conservative nationalisms which re-coded race, class, and gender in the United States. In this period we re-visit themes of America's social contradictions: between its economic logic, which accentuated class differences in the form of union-busting, supply-side economic policies, and corporate bailouts; and the state's logic in de-emphasizing cultural differences, as seen in the neo-nationalist rhetorics of Margaret Thatcher's "A New Britain" and Ronald Reagan's promise of "It's Morning Again in America."[8] The former logic survives on a mantra of paying

attention only to the increasing of the profit margin. We would miss the mark, though, if we also failed to realize that the civil religion of capitalism has sown into it the antagonism between classes, between workers and owners. The latter logic thrives on smoothing away difference, favoring the construction of nationalism free from balkanization.

If the student strikes of 1968 represented the left-ward shift of American political culture—its emphasis on anti-establishmentarian and progressive thought and praxis—then the 1970s and 1980s represented its conservative reaction. The year 1978 marks a watershed in California politics, a harbinger for political discourse in succeeding years, especially in how the politics of redistributive justice would continue to be challenged. Around the issues of taxes and education, working-class white men and middle-class white homeowner activists would press the notion that social investment had gone awry, that the nation should check the concessions made to recent immigrants and racial minorities. The 1978 passage of Proposition 13, a popular California state initiative, limited the raising of property taxes, spurred similar "tax revolts" in several states. More significantly, the initiative was a popular referendum on how state revenue was being allocated in the rapidly "third worlding" of California's inner cities and suburbs.[9] In the same year, the decision handed in the Bakke vs. University of California decision forced attention on the plight of the working-class white male, claiming to be the victim of reverse discrimination.[10] Both issues reflected growing anxieties of white working- and middle-class Californians, fueling the perception that state investment had swung too far to the left, that the folks to be held accountable for declining wages and opportunities were people of color. But recounting the politics of racial division among the working- and middle-classes should also take into account how such discourses not only resonated with but were managed from above.[11]

Conservative intellectuals seeking to rebuild coalitions on the right trumpeted the latest version of American exceptionalism.[12] The war on poverty had shifted into a war against poor folks, as social services and investment were drained from inner cities and ethnic enclaves. One of the pernicious subtexts of the assimilation paradigm has been the notion that a group's unassimilability into mainstream American life can be explained pathologically. Poor folks were poor, the recycled logic went, because of a "culture of poverty" (Leacock).

Reagan's 1980 presidential victory was the result of a political realignment. The Democrats' coalition had fallen apart—they had lost the loyalty of the white male industrial worker. That winning conservative coalition was held together in no small part to the way in which racial differences spoke to and across his various constituencies—to those on the

far right (Christian fundamentalists), and white conservative Democrats. The union of these disparate groups was purchased with racial coding (Edsall and Edsall198-214).

Reagan bandied about phrases like "welfare queen," conjuring indelible images of women cashing in their food stamps and welfare checks while cruising around town in Cadillacs. His successor, George Herbert Walker Bush, warned voters during his first presidential bid with the image of Willie Horton, a black convicted criminal, scaring people into thinking that his then-rival, Massachusetts Governor Michael Dukakis, would let others loose on the population. Both media strategies so brazenly demonstrated how the leading conservatives of the day vilified racial and ethnic minorities. The subtext here is that the Democrats' social and economic policies was actually responsible for poverty and criminality, and that they could not discipline the welfare cheats or criminals they helped to create or depend upon. The conservative tactics of racial coding proved it could be more pliable if its adherents followed the more successful strategy of employing a selective libertarianism. Rather than exclusively drawing attention to the racial bodies themselves, conservatives launched attacks on what they characterized as a bloated liberal welfare state. One example: California Governor Pete Wilson worked hard to win the loyalty of staunch anti-immigrant supporters by blaming "misguided immigration policies" for the state's economic sluggishness, poorly-conceived systems of preferential treatments, welfare systems which created dependency, and bilingual education programs which impeded assimilation.[13]

"[T]he triumph of Reaganism represented a cruel and paradoxical conclusion to part of the rebellious impulse of the late 1960s (Marable 198). Part of the paradox to which political scientist and historian Manning Marable refers is the fact that several intellectuals and leaders in the African American community, many of whom, like Eldridge Cleaver, had placed some of their best hopes in the conservative nationalism that Reagan offered. Counted among Reagan's supporters were activists like Southern Christian Leadership Council member Hosea Williams and aide to the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., Ralph Abernathy. They would blame the continued economic slide of non-white communities on the Carter administration's failings (Marable 199-200).

These political rearrangements would also signal larger developments along the cultural divide— that the organizing and aesthetic strategies developed by racial minorities would continue to be successfully discredited, and that in its place, a reinvigoration of the premium placed on ethnic universalism. The corresponding cultural logic of the day—the cultural nationalism from above—would be reissued as "multiculturalism," a token acknowledgment of difference and a re-validation of the ethnic paradigm. During

this period, Filipina/o American performing arts and cultural production underwent a disidentification with previous attempts and promises of cross-cultural linkage—echoing the difficulty of sustaining broad-based political coalitions across racial minorities in California. What survived in the midst of the government's programs of austerity (Deukmeijian and Wilson at the state level; and Reagan, Bush, Clinton at the federal level) were turns toward ethnic and cultural essentialism, the persistence of cultural forms of expression marked by their efficiency in communicating heroic, unified, and essentialized histories. The narrowing of the public space for the arts in general would also mean that cultural performers would work through leaner times. With funders investing in works, projects or artists that could be expected to turn a profit, experimental and marginal works found it difficult to grab popular attention (unless fetishingly sensationalized).

A number of developments take hold in the 1980s that are worth noting. Demographically, Filipina/o American families would continue to slowly make their way out from the central cities and into more spacious suburbs, while many of the more recent immigrant families would build communities without direct familial reference to earlier generations' working-class experiences.[14] Funding for ethnic studies courses would fall under politically charged scrutiny. University administrations would tighten requirements for hiring, restricting positions to candidates with training from research institutions, excluding community activists, artists, and other specialists without "proper" credentials. And with the influx of Filipina/o immigrants to the United States, college-age children of the post-1965 generation would try to find themselves on college campuses with the help hundreds of student organizations. Student service funding would become the primary financial means on campus for developing relevant and meaningful "cultural programming." In this scenario of diminishing and shifting resources (especially away from hard-won battles for semi-autonomous ethnic studies curricula and structures, and toward the more socially acceptable activities promulgated in student-services offices), college students constructed the first shows, out of the remnants of a waning Filipina/o American student movement and a hunger to stage their histories on their own terms.[15]

They would reconfigure what role culture would play in a time after the advent of the mass-based social movements. They would start with the context of a public culture which was shrinking for racial minorities. This was especially so given the contrast to the prior generation's use of the discourses of cultural nationalisms to fuel art-making. In the previous chapter I discussed how the vocabulary and discourse of cultural nationalism was interpreted and put to creative use by artists like Ermena Vinluan and Joe Bataan—how their work became performative transcripts that talked about shared legacies of

colonization, while producing inspiring and complicated criticisms of their parents' aesthetic and political sensibilities. By the 1980s however, those hard-won lessons of cross-cultural political and creative work would give way to the privileging of ethnically-exclusive forms of cultural production.

SETTING THE STAGE: KAYSAYSAYAN NG LAHI, 1983[16]

In this section I provide detail on an early and influential cultural night—(University of California, Los Angeles) Samahang Pilipino's "Kasaysayan ng Lahi"[17] (1983). Part of the problem of researching this type of mass form is in determining definitive origins for the show. Mass forms like the PCN do not lend themselves to sticking to neat genealogies. For example, I found many early script writers and dancers referring to shows produced in the mid- to late-1970s. They would talk about large crowds, long rehearsals, the elements of the shows such as dances, music, and audience participation. It was tempting to allow each of the interviewed performers to take credit for coming up with the idea of the PCN. But what was more challenging was to find a way to discard a linear approach to rendering these histories or to assign credit to any one performer or campus. Rather, I think mass forms like the PCN force us to consider the largest ethnographic canvasses possible, to seek out not merely the logical succession of events, but to identify moments in time where individual actions, statements, objects or performances resonate with a context in need of interpretation. They may not intend to self-consciously speak to the signs of the times, but the PCN genre poses for us invitations to interpret the work of culture under the shadow of late capital. Before the show began, an opening act started the show.[18]

THE WARM-UP AND THE EMCEE

Gary Bautista was billed as a "popular Pilipino singer/entertainer" on the evening's program. He donned the uniform of a lounge lizard—a white, shawl-collared white tuxedo jacket, black slacks, white shirt, with a pink-colored matching bowtie and cummerbund set. He began with a note-for-note rendition of American jazz and pop singer Al Jarreau's "We're in This Love Together." His moves were Vegas-like—smooth and polished—reminiscent of a bygone era caricatured by everyone from Steve Allen to Bill Murray. When he turned from stage right to left and back again, he tossed out the microphone with a wide flourish while holding onto the cord, as if to give him even more room on an already bare stage. It is clear he had studied these cabaret-like moves for years.

His accent gave away his Tagalog-speaking roots. Bautista dubbed himself "The Man with a Thousand and One Voices," claiming to be able to perform 168 celebrity impressions. He got his start he claimed, by copying the voices of his teachers and fellow classmates. "It's all muscle-control, really." He delivered impersonations of Louis Armstrong, Dean Martin, Filipina/o singers Carmen Rosales and Rogelio de la Rosa. Bautista interviewed himself as both Ted Koppel and Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos. In Koppel's voice, he asked if Marcos will ever give up power. "Never," Bautista says as the late dictator. Still in character, Bautista/Marcos delivered a welcome, sending the audience into laughing fits. It also eerily echoed that slurring swagger and folksiness of John Wayne. "Long live your Philippine roots," Bautista as Marcos said. The American president Ronald Reagan also surfaced—this time, chatting with wife Nancy about how a boy has stopped to look at a painting of George Washington hanging in the White House. "Did you know that was our first president—George Washington?" Reagan/Bautista answered as "Tattoo," the character played by the diminutive Herve Villaichez, on the television series, "Fantasy Island." He delivered his lines on his knees: "The plane! The plane!"

Time for another song. Bautista called for his "maestro"—a friend operating a tape player behind the curtain on stage. He launched into a sentimental Filipino ballad, "Kailangan Kita" ("I Need You"). During the instrumental break toward the end of the tune, he wondered aloud to the audience how others would have finished the song. Marcos surfaced again, followed by Paul Williams (Bautista is on his knees), and then Bautista finished off the tune in his own voice.

The next routine involved the impersonator's rapid-fire delivery of a one-man children's style show. Here, Popeye the Sailor, Cookie Monster, and Kermit the Frog made appearances. Time once again for another ballad: this time, Bautista sang as Julio Iglesias. Ballads afforded Bautista a chance to demonstrate vocal control and intensity. There's also the sheer sentimentality and romanticism of the form which conveys a sense of gravity—offsetting the comedy bits.

Bautista returned to a comedy routine with another slate of characters (starting with a pixie of a character wearing extra-large sunglasses and an exaggerated bowtie) before he launched into "The Rainbow Connection" sung in rapid-fire succession of characters: Johnny Mathis, Jose Feliciano, Elvis Presley. Toward the end of this tune, more characters from the early part of the act jumped in, completing each other's musical phrases—Reagan, Popeye, Mathis, Kermit … and Bautista himself, although it is not all that apparent that it was him at first.

The closing number was James Ingrams' pleading ballad, "Just Once." Bautista jumped down into the first rows of the audience to pull a woman from the audience for a serenade. During the break between verses, Bautista asked her what she was studying. He wished her good luck, and jumped back on stage in time to hit the next verse.

Bautista was faithful to the original. In the audience you can hear some chuckling—they seemed to notice how close Bautista's sound was to the voice on the record. But certain turns of phrases, and on occasion, his struggling with some high notes reminded folks in the audience just how much distance there was from the source. When in character or while singing, you could hear no trace of his Tagalog accent. It was only when speaking directly to his audience that his native accent was revealed—and we were once again reminded that the songs and the comedy routines are translations of celebrity. (This is similar to the effect of listening to Jim Neighbors' operatic singing style being disconfirmed by his spoken southern twang.)

Bautista's act belonged to another time, to another generation—to my parents' generation—when audiences cherished song stylists and the art of impressions on weekly variety shows. The charm of his act was not in his ability to sing any one particular song with a great amount of accuracy. The appeal of his performance lies in his ability to help place the audience in several different places. We are reminded of where we were when we first enjoyed the tunes or heard the voices. It's because he can remove voices from their original contexts and force us to consider where or how we last left them. What were we wearing? Who were we with and what were we doing?[19]

Following Bautista's performance was the emcee for the evening, Dom Magwili. This was really a departure from Bautista's act. In presence, tone and demeanor, they couldn't have been more unlike. Magwili's accent was "American" —Californian, really. He wore a dark, double-breasted suit. His eyeglasses lent him a certain intellectual propriety over the evening's proceedings. He got a few laughs with the line: "Gary Bautista did everything I was going to do." Magwili opened the show with his rendition of the "Pinoy Blues." In introducing the tune, he explained that "the Blues does not have to be a sad thing. The blues can be happy too." Accompanying himself on the harmonica, he soon had the audience keeping a steady and rousing backbeat.

I get up in the morning
I wake up my son
He says, daddy, what's happening?
I say let's go for a run

and on the road
I ask him what he want to be
and Jesus *mariajosep*
He want to be like me
A *Pinoy*[20]
P-I-N-O-Y
I said a *Pinoy*
P-I-N-O-Y

I like my *pancit*
Over hot rice
I like my *lumpia*
With beer and ice
and when I want to gamble
To Vegas I fly
I always go first class
'cause I always go in style
I am a *Pinoy*
P-I-N-O-Y
I am a *Pinoy*
P-I-N-O-Y

You ask me this question
What's my responsibility
To be American and *Pinoy*
To my community
Well you know that question?
Got to make me stop
'cause all I know, brother, is don't mess up, 'cause
You are a *Pinoy*
P-I-N-O-Y
I said a *Pinoy*
P-I-N-O-Y

Magwili's blues was instructive. In an interview, he explained that his tune served

as an answer to Bautista's slick song-styling, a self-conscious attempt to root the evening's performance in an explicitly Filipina/o American context. The troubadour accompanying himself on a harmonica spoke more to the histories of pre-World War II men and women who worked in agriculture and service trades than did the disembodied stylings of random celebrity. Magwili's tune indirectly drew the audience's attention back to the utility of cultural performance not for its own sake, but for its ability to create a resonance between the immediate audience and the narratives of pre-WWII laboring communities. While Bautista's impersonations were polished facsimiles of popular song, Magwili's tune suggested deep linkages to the gutbucket immigrant blues that writers like Bienvenido Santos attempted to document in short story—the song of the student, the migrant, the worker, looking for the America they had been promised in the Philippines.[21]

THE SHOW

"Kasaysayan ng Lahi" featured live and recorded music accompanying the dancing and play. Two forms of live musics were presented: one in the form of a *rondalla* ensemble (stringed instruments playing Philippine folk tunes), and percussionists highlighting non-Spanish-derived musical and dance forms (e.g. *kulintang*).

The first suite began with a courting dance (two dancers, male female). They were both garbed in folkloric wear representative of particular regions. As the dance concluded, the dancers hitch-stepped off stage while a solo flute played. Drums and gongs rolled lightly at first, and then into a thunderous crescendo. From this, a steady rhythm was established for the next dance, this one featuring six men. The percussive music droned on heavily. The men exited, while six women took their place in the next part of this suite. The next dances were narrated. Magwili commented on the southern Philippine Muslim populations—pointing out how their costumes, music and dances presented "a different culture from the other groups" in the central and northern Philippines. The emphasis in this narration was on the ability of the southern Filipina/o to resist Spanish religious conversion and political domination. Here the *singkil* dance was a spectacularly imperial and mythic showcase. All of the folkloric elements were on display; and the dancers carried it off full of attitude and stoic bravado.

The dance was mesmerizing—the slow and at times rubato (out-of-time) chanting, contrasting the dirge-like pace of the percussion of the opening sequence. The male pole bearers created an arch through which women dancers with scarves bearing gilded fans moved slowly toward the front part of the stage. The chant shifted to a lilting melody, carried by the slowly measured ostinato of the drum and *kulintan*g.

As the women left the stage, the men repositioned themselves into two quadrilles. They lowered poles toward each other into crosses. A single drumbeat issued the command for the pole-bearers to snap into a crouched position. They waited silently as the princess and her attendant made their way through the quadrilles, stepping lightly, pausing, and then moving once again. As the myth of the dance goes, both step through a forest of felled trees. The princess followed an attendant carrying a parasol.

With a stamp of her heel, the princess issued the command to begin the slow clapping of the poles. Her movement was shadowed by the attendant. A strike of the *kulintang* signaled the clappers to change rhythmic pattern. Both princess and attendant moved through one set of clappers, while another movement cue called out the rest of the princess' entourage to begin its ensemble movement through the quadrilles at a faster tempo. Her entourage exited as a prince made his entrance. Bearing a shield and sword, he stepped lightly through the clapping poles, banging his sword against his shield. The accelerated clapping signaled an earthquake shaking the forest. The prince guided the princess and attendant to safety.

This dance is part of a larger so-called Muslim suite. More than any other in the repertoire of the PCN genre, this suite emphasizes a militaristic view of southern Philippine culture (part of a reference to a history of anti-Western resistance), and a gendered code of protection. The prince tames the unstable and wild for the safe passage of his princess. This popular dance serves to reinforce the narrative of masculine protection of the docile and demure yet sensually beguiling female presence. The dance narrates privilege amidst the exotic and percussive reality that is imagined about life in the southern Philippines, about its reputed danger. Ultimately, it also part of the young Filipina/o American's projection of its nascent anti-imperial critique. The Muslim suite represents more than an ethno-regional group's folkloric performance. It also represents that part of an identity to which the young folks aspire.[22]

The narration moved forward to the era of Spanish colonization of the archipelago beginning in the sixteenth century (between 1521 and 1898). The narrator emphasized the brutality of colonization rather than the liberal benevolence of discovery, countering the privileging of European authority. The narration pointed to the presence of a culture already at work in the archipelago. The text, though, provided a weak counter to the what was next presented on stage—a suite of dances demonstrating strong Spanish and European influences on performance and folk forms.[23]

A very clear example of this influence is in the conversion of natives to Catholicism. The narrator points to the strong presence of religion for the lowland Filipina/os

represented in this particular suite of dances. This was represented on stage by a priest leading a small delegation in a candlelit prayer processional. The folk forms do more than demonstrate the assimilation of New World choreography and performative rules. The PCN organizers also found normative gendered codes as well in courtship dances such as the *cariñosa* and *la jota*. According to the narration, these dances display the "secretive, demure, traditional Filipina…" (Taylor and Villegas).

Three couples slowly entered from stage left. The women were outfitted in long flowing gowns reminiscent of Spain's influence—butterfly sleeves, hair tied into buns, and flittering fans to hide shy faces. The women approached their male dance partners, also wearing *barong tagalog*, usually an untucked and semi-transparent long-sleeved shirt traditionally made of piña cloth. They dance in three-quarter time to the *rondalla* ensemble.

Once again, the narration made explicit the contradictory nature of the presentations. As if to counter the heavy colonial debt registered in this suite of dances, the narrator pointed out that not only do the Christianized Filipina/os of the central regions have "grace, style and musicality," they "also have fierce tempers." He pointed out that Filipina/os could take credit for the invention of phrases taken for granted in the American vernacular such as "running amok." The American invention of larger gauge weapons such as the Colt .45 pistol was due to the intransigence of the Filipina/o on the battlefield. The text attempted to balance the message that natives could so easily assimilate European cultural forms against the strain of resistance to colonial elite culture. The narration continued with histories not embedded in the dance—unfair taxation of lands by the Spanish, the nascent nationalism fermenting in the late nineteenth century, and the sporadic revolts against civil authorities all throughout the archipelago.

Following that was a series of monologues featuring what has emerged as some of the leading figures in the national imagination of the Philippines. The monologues took the form of a museum in which the statues talk back to the audience. The first was Andres Bonifacio, credited for launching a secret, anti-colonial organization, popularly known as the Katipunan. Bonifacio's heroic rhetoric captured the temper of the modern political sensibility—repeating concepts such as freedom, equality, fraternity. His was the voice of the uncompromising nationalist hero—a masculinism which identified the proper role of the young nationalist male as protector of the motherland: "My fellow Filipinos, the hour has come to shed our blood."

Next was Apolinario Mabini offering a more personal testimony: "They [the Americans] have raped our women, and stolen our lands." The character was blocked simply with the actor sitting in a chair, center-stage, amplifying his intellectual stature by

deemphasizing his physicality. Mabini, portrayed here in poor health, has been reputed as one of the intellectual architects of the late nineteenth century illustrado movement. He was followed by Melchora Aquino. She thundered on the failed revolution to unite Filipina/os. She addressed the audience as Katipuneros, imploring them to "defend the rights of the Filipino people" and "the preservation of the Philippine heritage."

The quartet of heroes was rounded out with a monologue by propagandist José Rizal. "We know how to die for our duty and principles." After his stirring speech on the escalation of violence in the Philippines as the Spanish struggled to hold on to the colony, the character walked to center stage. The sound of gunshots was heard; he slumped forward in his final step. Rizal's death here summed up the narration of a decidedly nationalist version of Philippine history, one emphasizing anti-colonial critique, martyrdom, and the cultural adaptation of folk forms. Up to this point in the show, the organizers seemed to have summed up as well their reckoning with the Filipina/o's entrance to modernity itself.[24]

The narration emphasized how the category of modern history is not simply about the one-sided conquering of natives, but also about the resistance to and adaptation of the modern West, using modernity's terms in the quartet to explain the ways in which exemplary patriots expressed an unambiguous politics. In the next section, the narration shifted from its heroic proportions—histories centered on leading figures—to the lyrically personal.[25]

The lowland scenes continued with the Christian celebrations of Christmas and Easter celebrations, idyllic depictions of barrio life during the fiesta. The jaunty dances, *maglalatik, sakuting, pandanggo*, and *tinikling* were all prominently featured. The dancing set the stage for a young couple's courting scene.

> Carmen: "Do you really love me? Really really love me?"
> Rogelio: "Do you have a green card?" [He is leaving for America.] "When I come back, I'll build you a big BIG nipa hut."
> Carmen: "How long are you going to be away?"

As they hold each other closer to share a goodbye kiss, the scene was broken with comic relief of Carmen's ate. The crowd laughed and sighed familiarly. Loud crashes were heard next; the stage goes dark. The narrator interrupted the blackness by announcing the coming of the Philippine-American war. The war disrupted not only the idyllic dancing but also the nascent romance of Carmen and Rogelio, stand-ins for the union of the nation

itself. American President McKinley's speech is recited: "We could not turn them over…" For Filipina/o American audiences, McKinley's lament—about claiming no other option possible other than the "benevolent" Christianizing and democratization through arms—is probably the most recognizable text summarizing jingoistic ambition in the archipelago.[26]

The narration then juxtaposed the notion of making dreams happen (how immigrants rhapsodized about streets "paved with gold") against the harsh labor conditions found in pre-World War II Hawai'i and on the mainland. The context of this early twentieth century history serves another crucial aspect in the show's work. It establishes for the PCN organizers the material link between the United States and the Philippines. The PCN organizers draw loosely on Philippine histories under Spanish colonial rule to reckon with some interesting juxtapositions wrought by modernity. When referring to the Spanish-influenced dance suites, dancers and choreographers laud the Filipina/o's ability to assimilate cultural forms. But the choreo-history would also elide the oppression of colonial rule, and the dispersed acts of resistance throughout the archipelago during the same period. In turning to the early decades of American colonial rule, the PCN organizers make sense out the United States' colonization of the Philippines by viewing Filipina/os as part of a cheaply paid pool of reserve labor. In this regard, the narrations tend to rely less on celebrations of cultural assimilability and more literally toward the subordinated status of Filipina/os as workers caught in the streams of a global economy.

Little detail is paid to the inter-war years in the next stage movement. The next material moves from a narration of the Philippine-American War to the importation of agricultural labor to Hawai'i and the north American West Coast. The action on the stage at this point consisted of depicting stooped laborers of the West Coast. Where they once dreamed of going to school in the United States, learning skills to raise their economic lot with hopes of returning the Philippines, the narrator claimed "the land of opportunity turned out to be paved with hard labor," and the insult of anti-miscegenation laws.

The PCN organizers' main reference for this era is the personal history of Carlos Bulosan, the rich tapestry of personas and circumstances drafted in his now canonical *America is in the Heart*. The work has had at least two distinctively different audiences. With its initial release in 1943, Bulosan's *America* was lauded by mainstream reviewers as a paean to the liberal orthodox of American assimilation, testimony to the nation's guiding and durable myth of personal achievement over adversity. However, with its re-release in 1973 by the University of Washington Press, a new cohort of readers would draw inspiration—activists and academics seeking narratives to a usable and heroic Asian American literary history. For the editors of the landmark literary anthology *The Aiiieeeee!!!* and for several

others teaching in the early years of the revisionist disciplines, Bulosan's text did more than vindicate American culture at mid-century: it spoke eloquently to young people's growing identification with international radicalism and a nascent cultural nationalism.[27]

For PCN organizers in the 1980s, Bulosan's *America* was one of the few available texts that provided a moving portrait of Filipina/o American life. Its rhapsodic moments complemented the melancholic eloquence and unimpeachable credentials of a Popular Front-era writer. Back on stage, many PCN organizers would draw on Bulosan's text. The narration also illustrates more tableaus on stage, such as the building of Agbayani Village—low-cost residences for several aging Mexican and Filipina/o farm workers in central California.

The post-World War II era—where Bulosan's narrative ends—becomes more difficult to narrate on stage for the students. The organizers of the show did not have the luxury of being able to rely on many historical works. For these stories, students relied on the recovered histories from their parent's generation. These young folks are now only one generation removed from the characters they portray on stage. In this case, they narrate the coming of the second wave of Filipina/o immigrants to the United States, largely arriving in the 1940s—many as returning soldiers or their wives (Vallangca; Pido).

This is illustrated in a farce—a scene where young Filipinos are recruited into the US Navy, not permitted to rise above the rank of stewards. Here they point to the absurdity of the recruitment process, the culture clash of "naive natives" shouted down by humorless naval officers. Three young recruits meet Captain "Guapo" (Tagalog for cute, good-looking, referring to a male) and his Filipino aide. Downstage left, sitting at a table, the captain and his aide, are seated.

CAPTAIN: NEXT! (Baduys push & shove each other to go first, acting scared. Pedro is finally forced to go first, cowardly approaching the desk.)
CAPTAIN: (tough) What's your name?
NARIO: My name is Pedro Isidro Prodigalidad Espiritu Santo Salagubang Batumbakal, Ser … But you can call me Boyet. (Starts to take a few steps back)
CAPTAIN: Come back here boy!
NARIO: (Turns to audience) See, he knows my name already! (Walks back to table)
CAPTAIN: Have you ever had any serious illnesses?
NARIO: (Acts confused, doesn't understand English) Ah, no espeaking English… (turns to AIDE) Ano yung sinabe niya? *(What did he say?)*
AIDE: Nagkaron ka na nung malalang sakit? *(Have you ever had any serious illness?)*

NARIO: Nung maliit ako yung kuya ko ay nagka bulutong pero hinde ako nahawa. Yung ate ko naman nagka beke pero hinde nahawa. Yung nanay ko naman namatay sa jabetis pero hinde pa ako patay. Malusog ako. *(When I was young, my brother got chicken pox but I didn't catch it. My sister got mumps but I didn't get it. My mother died of diabetes but I'm not yet dead. I'm healthy.)* (Flex muscle)

CAPTAIN: (Turn to AIDE) What did he say?

AIDE: He said "no."

CAPTAIN: (Confused with the first answer then asks) Where do you live, boy?

NARIO: Bukawi, Ser.

CAPTAIN: (Turn to AIDE) What did he say?

AIDE: He was born on Kapis, but when he was five they moved to Tondo. When he turned twelve they moved to the Babuyan Islands. But now he lives in Bukawi.

CAPTAIN: He said all that, huh?

AIDE: Yes, Ser.

CAPTAIN: Congratulations! (Shake NARIO's hand) You're in the Navy.

NARIO: (Acts excited) Oh thank you, thank you, thank you. (Starts to kiss CAPTAIN's hand. Turn to other baduys and start to show off. Other two get excited and try to beat each other to be first. MANUEL finally goes first.)

CAPTAIN: What's your name, and quit eyeballin' me, boy!

MANUEL: My name is Manuel Ebanquel, Ser.

CAPTAIN: Spell EBANQUEL, boy.

MANUEL: "EBANQUEL": "E" as in Ibon [Tagalog for bird], "B" as in Bibby Ruth, "A" as in "you're Adorable" (Pinches the CAPTAIN's cheek)…

CAPTAIN: Don't you pinch me again, boy!

MANUEL: Yes, Ser. "N" as in Envelope, "Q" as in Cuba, "U" as in Europe, "E" as in another Ibon, and "L" as in Elephant.

CAPTAIN: "Ebanquel"—are you sure that's you real name, boy?

MANUEL: (Hurt by the question, MANUEL starts walking away, hand on forehead, shaking head)

CAPTAIN: Come back here, boy. Are you sure that's your real name?

MANUEL: (Walks back, angry, almost crying) Of course Ebanquel is my real name. What do you take me for… granted? (Snubs CAPTAIN. JUAN butts in, very cocky, thinks he is better than the others)

JUAN: Do not paying attention to him, Ser. He is stupid. (Turn to MANUEL, ridiculing him) You are so estupid. You do not eben know how to spell your name!
CAPTAIN: What's your name, boy?
JUAN: My name is Juan Desoto.
CAPTAIN: Spell DESOTO, boy!
JUAN: "Desoto": "D" as in Desoto, "E" as in Esoto, "S" as in Soto, "O" as in Oto, "T" as in To, "O" as in O—"Desoto!"
CAPTAIN: Congratulations! (Shakes their hands) You are now all in the navy!

The script allowed the audience to share the recruits' laughter, to poke fun at authority, recalling for so many families, how the lives of their fathers, uncles, brothers and cousins were during service. We also do not have to understand any of the native Philippine dialects to take in the humor of the scene. The humor deflected whole careers submitted to humiliation and pain, while parodying the absurdity of determining qualifications for jobs with no hope of promotion. For several years Filipinos were only allowed to serve as stewards in the United States Navy. The skit originated in San Diego: many of the group's leaders came from navy families. Their fathers and uncles related stories of being passed over for promotions and other benefits leaving them oftentimes only with everyday forms of resistance—indirect verbal jabs, jokes, and innuendo. What is funnier than the over-the-top accents is how the characters switch languages playfully, sometimes leaving their would-be bosses in the dark. This play is extended with a dance routine choreographed to the Village People's "In the Navy." One of the dancers swabs the deck and wildly swings the mop to turn directions, nearly taking off the head of the dancing captain, also a part of the dance routine. Several audience members are pulled from their seats to join on stage.[28]

From that playful sequence, the narrator returned to describe the "third wave"—professionals and family members coming after the watershed immigration law reform of 1965 who are saddled with underemployment. A few figures are poised on stage, not interacting with each other, but miming their professional tasks—a medical doctor, a business person, a lawyer, a sales clerk, a housekeeper.

The usage of the term *third wave* refers to the emergence of a relatively new demographic cohort of Filipina/o migration. Conceived primarily to liberalize the United States' international image as a beacon of democracy against its Cold War rivals, the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act was initially designed to handle the large influx of European migration. Legislators and social scientists alike did not expect migrants from

Latin America and Asia to take up the offer in the large numbers in which they did. The Act abolished the existing system of fixed quotas per country. The 1965 reform allowed for 20,000 per country with upper limits set per hemisphere. The Act would also be key for another set of reasons. The act would help to set a pattern that gave rise to the growing class differences and heterogeneity of Asian American communities. The sociological literature reveals the emergence of essentially two Asian-Americas—the first composed primarily of relatives petitioned by persons of Asian descent. The newer immigrants, especially those from the Philippines, having had fewer ties to the generation of laborers and students emigrating in the early part of the century. Able to secure migration status largely by fulfilling the United States' labor shortages, these newer immigrants of the third wave were those who possessed technical skills needed by various sectors. Thus, it is not a coincidence to witness the presence of Filipina/os in the medical arts and other technological fields.[29]

The tendency in the existing Filipina/o American historiography is to uncritically laud the post1965 generation for its relatively stable and upwardly mobile class status. This has the effect of vindicating a liberal view of history, privileging individuated access to material wealth without broaching topics like addressing more equitable forms of the redistribution of wealth and certainly without a thoroughgoing critique of capital. Those who celebrate the third wave's achievements draw on the colloquial telos of rags-to-riches in narrating Filipina/o American history, coddling bourgeois aspiration while turning away from civic and community accountability. Where once upon a time there were colonial subjects, insurrectionists, underpaid and disadvantaged students and laborers, now there are teachers, doctors, engineers and other so-called "professionals" to testify to the hard-won (and individuated) victory of achieving the American dream. The logic cherished in so many historical and performative narratives pats the author on the back, reminding the "meritorious" individual that they do not need preferential treatment or "handouts." The authors of this kind of logic reward the post-1965 immigrant for her apolitical presence. And oftentimes it is a history which seems to conclude in the present: with awards on Broadway, with elected office, or corporate sponsorship.[30]

As I said, that is the tendency—both in the popular culture (within which the PCN operates) and historiographically as well. However, the 1983 show complicated that tendency a bit. In this section of the show, the narration turned intensely personal, as the students projected some of their own family stories onto the stage—including lost promotions, job discrimination, and frustration in the midst of a nation's booming economy.

They did not broach the history of the later 1960s, when that rising material wealth and continued promise of prosperity exploded from criticism by the new social movements. Instead, the narration closed with the character of Rogelio. He is now much older, reciting a letter to his love, Carmen, back home in the Philippines. He never made enough to return, not on years of unsecured wages as a farm worker in California. He writes from the retirement home built by young activists, lamenting the fact that he would see his last days in the United States and not in the country of his birth. "Maybe I won't ever be a rich man. But there is one thing I am proud of: I am Pilipino." It is bittersweet, but hardly a resolution for the character.

Eventually, that generation of older Filipina/o workers who came to the United States and Hawai'i before World War II would die away. I experienced this firsthand while researching my master's thesis at San Francisco State University in 1992-1993. I had interviewed about forty veterans of the Philippine and United States armies who had served during World War II. A sense of urgency fell on the project almost immediately, as one of the veterans, himself an historian for the Filipino Infantry, had passed. So many others would follow. Each year, the Infantry would host a reunion dinner at the San Francisco Army Presidio—an event where families and retired soldiers could reminisce and share stories with younger folks. Their numbers diminished each year, with family members outnumbering the surviving older men. This passing of these earlier generations is also true of farm workers and city laborers who came to the US before WWII. The *manongs* and *manangs* [31] of San Francisco's International Hotel, Seattle's International District, Stockton's Manilatown and Los Angeles' Temple area would pass on, marking an end to long-standing neighborhoods, and adding gravity to the work of oral historians and concerned students.

Rogelio was a projection of the student's reckoning with the historical memory of men and women like the aging laborers and former students they would come to know—folks who were passing away. The long and hard work of mounting the PCN, and finding a way to narrate Filipina/o American and Philippine history on stage would continue, almost as a direct response to being removed from those earlier communities.

THE SHOW MUST GO ON: DEFINING THE PCN GENRE

What followed the 1983 UCLA show is important in understanding the development of a performance genre. While there were certainly several other presentations that predated the 1983 show—ones utilizing variety-style formats, such as revues, declamations,

dances, short plays and other mixed media installations—the shows which came up during the mid- to late-1980s served as the true proving grounds for the strengthening of the form of the PCN. How was this achieved? How did the diffused cultural productions of a seemingly heterogeneous group of Philippine- and US-born Filipina/os become standardized, replicated, and ultimately, predictable?

In this next section, I point to several theatrical and folkloric devices and features which have become staples for the PCNs on numerous college and university campuses (although the activity is not exclusive of the province of college-level) for the past twenty years. I identify what has become the basic structure of the PCN and detail its constitutive relationships. I rely on two sets of primary sources for my analysis: oral histories of and interviews with performers and their consultants (conducted by myself as well as those deposited at several campuses), and attendance at PCNs from 1989 to 1999. In the case of my research on the campuses of San Francisco State University (1993) and the University of California, Irvine (1996), I engaged in participant-observation. While the above may have a judiciously qualitative and scientific ring to it, my version of participant-observation research also meant doing some acting, writing, composing, and piano-playing (not to mention the lugging around of lots of equipment).

To understand how the PCN has become so terribly durable over the past twenty years, we have to begin with the important role played by the campus' Filipina/o American student organization. Without the campus organization, there is no PCN. In many cases, the PCN is the most significant activity for the group. Many groups have been around for more than twenty-five years. San Francisco State University's Pilipino American Collegiate Endeavor (PACE) was founded in 1967, the University of California, Berkeley's Pilipino American Alliance (PAA) in 1969, and the University of California at Los Angeles' Samahang Pilipino in 1972 (Quinsaat 158).[32]

During the Spring, officers for the following academic terms are elected by the organization's membership. Certain positions are reserved exclusively for coordinating PCN logistics. Some organizations prefer to have a "cultural (the de facto PCN) coordinator" sit on the group's executive board. Others prefer to have such positions not directly on the board itself, but having to report to a person with a more broad mandate, sometimes titled as a "political and community coordinator," or "special events coordinator." In either case, those vying for the elected or appointed positions realize their work will be exclusively devoted to the planning of a very large event.

Beginning in the Fall, students are delegated various production tasks—set designing, costume-making, prop-making, catering, dancing, music, and so on. Many

hours of rehearsal time and planning are sacrificed by several students. For the most part, each organization's leadership relies on what it recognizes as its core members—those unelected and highly motivated individuals who volunteer time, labor, and some out-of-pocket funds—some, for several months ahead of the show's run. The numbers begin to swell as the production nears. This is true for rehearsals requiring large numbers, such as the dance suites, where it would be typical to see more students in the few weeks before a show's run.

I had mentioned that some members shoulder some out-of-pocket expenses, usually in the form of handbill, poster, or program printing and reproduction. But, funding for the show is also a long-term and sometimes complicated issue. Students have tapped special student government programming grants from student activities offices (on most campuses, under the direction of the Dean of Students), or the office of the university president. The amounts granted for such shows have wildly varied: from a student organization's budget at a small campus laying out $300, to nearly $20,000 for one evening's worth of entertainment. The group's finance officer tracks all the major expenses: securing a venue ("the bigger the better"); buying new costumes ("last year's simply will not do"); and paying for choreographers, caterers, and printers.[33]

The production of PCNs since the 1980s also reflects the larger changes in immigration from the Philippines and changes within post-1965 Filipina/o American families. The decade of the 1980s saw large numbers of Filipina/os immigrating to the United States. The population jumped 126% between 1970 and 1980 (Reimers 116). When Filipina/os settled in the United States in this period, they would develop a pattern that would be identified as "dual-chain migration," revealing the community's cleavage along class lines. On the one hand, working-class families would petition for relatives with similar life chances— educational attainment, job skills, and so forth. Many of these families had known the migratory life of labor camps or the urban experience of single-resident occupancy hotels. Some would find their second- and third-generations moving out of the central cities of Los Angeles or San Francisco, to the outlying areas or districts—to Daly City, San Leandro, or Carson. On the other hand, another cohort of what has been described as professional and technical workers—especially those working in the medical arts or information technology fields—would find that their migration to the United States would be facilitated by the 1965 reforms of immigration laws. Another Filipina/o America would begin to settle outside of the traditional urban cores, built on the middle-class expectations of dentists, nurse practitioners, insurance brokers, real estate agents, software engineers and attorneys. They would make their homes in places like Milpitas, Hercules,

Pinole, Carson, and in the suburbs of Chicago, Houston, and Jersey City.[34]

Not only were Filipina/os coming the United States, but the children of the generation of post1965 immigrants were also coming of age, attending colleges and universities in large numbers as well. At the University of California, the number of undergraduate degrees conferred to Filipina/os had more than quadrupled between 1982 and 1992. Most of these young folks would be spending their time in chemistry and engineering labs, or social science lecture halls or life science facilities ("Corporate Student System Report"; "CPEC Report").

The PCN's growth is the result of this population coming of age, and, in the course of learning from each others' shows, developing friendly rivalries among the campuses. One student leader of Santa Clara University's Barkada (the campus student organization devoted to Filipina/o American culture), pointed out that they considered the University of California at Berkeley to be the campus to emulate. Even though SCU's Barkada had only been putting shows on for half the time that Berkeley's Pilipino American Alliance had been, organizers looked to the area's largest campus as the standard which defined the genre. In terms of comparing one's PCN work to similarly-sized liberal arts colleges, you would think SCU students would choose campuses like St. Mary's College in Moraga (only 50 miles away), or the University of San Francisco (another Jesuit college, just 45 miles north). What made more sense was that SCU Barkada looked to U.C. Berkeley to set the performative standard, and that they saw the PCN not simply as forum for the expression of campus rivalry, but as a site for creating more elaborate forms. In other words, the students remind us how important it is to take ownership over emerging aesthetic and performance standards where few existed for Filipina/o Americans in mainstream public culture. Students from Berkeley and UCLA would travel by van and car to watch each other's PCNs. Master calendars were needed to help plan around each campuses shows, in an attempt to avoid scheduling PCNs on the same night or nights as others (Payomo; Alves).

NATIVE ELEMENTS

What has emerged from these elements—the efforts of student organizations, the influx of college-aged Filipina/os and Filipina/o Americans throughout the 1980s and 1990s, and the encouragement of friendly inter-campus rivalries and support—is what choreographer Joel Jacinto has referred to as the "Pilipino Cultural Night genre" (PCN genre). Jacinto and his partner Ave Jacinto are co-founders of their own folkloric

performing arts troupe in Los Angeles, California. Both have been active in folk dancing since their student days at UCLA and have returned often as consultants (Jacinto and Jacinto).

Jacinto points out that the PCN genre, unique to the United States and developed by Filipina/o Americans, should be understood as a performance in the modern, Western sense of separating audiences from performers. Modern performance assumes a passive, inert audience, while the performer remains detached, usually accentuated with defined play spaces on stages, rostrums, in plazas, and so forth. The PCN genre is to be contrasted from the more organically and highly ritualized exchange out of which folkloric forms are based. In the ritualized settings of folk forms, dances and songs are not done for others so much as they are done with others. Whereas modern audiences are required to sit patiently and silently until the performance has finished, the ritual context stresses participation, call-and-response (Asian Pacific American Roundtable).

To build on Jacinto's understanding of what the PCN genre is, I add the following. The PCN genre is an ensemble of performances consisting of two halves. The first half consists of the use of Filipina/o folkloric forms: song, dance, music, and costuming. Here the organizers have unwittingly drawn from two competing schools of thought regarding folk forms and performance. On the one hand, PCN organizers rely on folk forms invented by Francisca Reyes Aquino to authenticate their understanding of Filipina/o culture. That is, the folk forms help to ground the students' experimentation with fashioning identities—more broadly speaking, crafting a sense of transnationalism from within the context of the United States. They are becoming, through the shows, different kinds of Americans as well as Filipina/os. On the other hand, the folk forms also draw from the highly stylized rendition of the Philippine dance theater work popularized since the late 1950s (paradigmatically through the Bayanihan Philippine Dance Company, or simply, "the Bayanihan", the Filipinescas Dance Society, and several others). Bayanihan choreographers such as Lucrecia Urtula were taken to task by traditionalist standard-bearer Francisca Reyes Aquino for speeding up tempos, liberalizing costuming protocol, even performing dances and songs out of context or sequence. In other words Aquino and the traditionalists would later criticize post-war stylization. Dance theater is not folkdance, Aquino would claim, and therefore does not have a claim on authenticity. This tension between these two streams remains blurred if not altogether ignored in the PCN genre (Okamura 18).

The second half of the genre consists of a theatrical narration—a play or a skit[35] The shows employ a narrative portraying vital concerns from a distinctively Filipina/o American view. At their worst, as I have said, some plays have merely been clumsy vehicles

for moving the dance suites along. But when the narrations have been more carefully conceived and written, they have done more. (Again, a lot of this depends on the ambitions of those tasked to write and edit scripts.) It is in the theatrical narrations that the PCN is more fully defined as a genre—one not originated nor performed in the Philippines, and later adapted to American needs, but rooted in and reflective of Filipina/o American young folks' concerns, anxieties and aspirations. While the language of the folkloric aims for the epic—aspiring to the telling of the grandest tales, the inheritance of a nationalist patrimony, the language of the PCN's play is that of the lyrical—personalized and intimate testimony of undertheorized (or inadequately theorized) Filipina/o American subjectivities.[36]

The PCN's theatrical narrations are an important part of the genre. They allow organizers and performers to communicate beyond the nationalist vocabularies established in the choreography of Aquino and the Bayanihan. While the performers assume the roles of royalty, ritualized animals, and even gods in the folkloric suites, they quite literally re-embody themselves in their theatrical narrations. These mini-plays allow organizers to explicitly raise topics of direct concern to their experiences in the United States. These would include poking fun at their parents' reticence concerning family histories, the latent homophobia found in their peer groups, anti-gang exhortations, organizing around the support for affirmative action and equal opportunity programs, celebrating the Pinoy boxers of the 1930s, re-telling the stories of Flor Contemplacion, Benigno Aquino, Ferdinand Marcos, or the fates of mail order brides and the citizenship fight waged by World War II-era Philippine veterans; the struggle for Filipina/o American and ethnic studies on college campuses, and young people's challenges to their parent's traditional views on a whole host of issues (especially marriage and courting), and the prevalence of (and silence around) domestic violence. Of course, none of the topics raised in any of the shows amount to systematic analyses or expositions. Entertainment rarely makes for hard-hitting cultural commentary. Rather, the shows, and in particular the theatrical narrations, represent imminent and incomplete arguments for how memories are preserved by this generation.[37]

Perhaps the most widely used PCN genre devices is the reverse telos. What is being reversed in several productions is the liberal expectation—the very durable paradigm of assimilation itself. The PCN genre is an unwitting imminent critique of the assimilation paradigm, an oblique and complicated answer to, as much as it is a symptom of, the possible ways we would talk about the state of ethnic relations in the United States. That way of talking ethnicity, paradigmatically through the work of Park's Chicago School, is fundamentally a story or a proposition for how conflict among ethnic groups is resolved.

The assimilationists advance what has been recycled in popular discourse as the "Melting Pot" (also—significantly—the title of a play written by Israel Zangwill in 1909, viewed by then president Theodore Roosevelt, and influential for dramatizing how recent immigrants could cast off memory, language, and their insistence on intra-ethnic marriage to realize a "New World Symphony").

What Park would grapple with, first as a newspaper reporter and later as an influential sociologist, was how Chicago's racially segregated residents—how the multilingual, multiethnic, and multireligious urban setting of his city—could live together. The assimilationist's premium has been built on the liberal expectation that immigrants would sever their allegiance to the Old World to conform to the New (Omi and Winant 14-23).[38] How would this be reversed in the PCN genre?

The protagonists are presented at the beginning of the show in need of historical help: they do not know their history or "culture." This is the source of some amount of consternation and humor on their part. In a familiar turn of the quest motif, the characters meet guides—elders, spirits, parent-figures—who "transport" them to the Philippines. During their journey, the characters come in contact with a host of sounds and visions in the form of the dance suites. They marvel at what they have missed or taken for granted for so long, unexplained by their parents, or written as out of bounds in any of their school books. They have gone native, having gone to the source itself (the Philippines). The bird dances, the courtship waltzes, the warrior chants—all confirm for the characters to what they should refer when thinking of the Filipina/o. No text contains what they seek. All previous texts have been ruled invalid. They rely on the visceral engagement with bodies for their authentication—costumed, armored, dancing, playing.

By the end of the show, the characters reach an epiphanic state of cultural awareness and pride that they take back with them to the US This motif—of the quest, a "reverse exile"—is the most familiar one deployed throughout the shows. For our young characters, "something" is missing, that which is re-placed by an imagined return to the Philippines where the "crisis" of Filipina/o American identity is "solved."[39] The tacit assertion being made here is that the Philippines—as represented in its folkloric repertoire—is a sturdy repository of knowledge, a warehouse of unchanging, static, and therefore authentic representations of Philippine life which can be accessed and brought back. The exercising of the reverse exit motif refuses to acknowledge the fact of cultural change, indeterminacy, and reconstruction at work in both the Philippines and in the United States.[40]

Why this may be referred to as a reverse telos has everything to do with how the American academy has tenaciously clung to the premium of assimilation as the paradigm

for ethnic relations. Assimilationists advance the liberal expectation that succeeding generations would inter-marry with other ethnic and racial groups. They'd move out of cloistered ghettoes; they'd change eating patterns, change patterns of dress, speech, and diet; they would attain higher levels of educations by breaking admissions barriers. And while such designations were merely taken for extrinsic manifestations of cultural change, the premium of assimilation would be best manifested in a cohort's move toward out-marriage and one's primary associations.[41]

The telos of American assimilation would argue that the children of immigrants would no longer dream of the mother- or father-land as their parents did. Rather than having less significance for succeeding generations, the role of culture looms larger for the PCN performers. These moves could be seen as resonating with the more politically-toothed and socially-charged articulations of Afrocentrism or Chicana/o nationalism. Calls for communities to laud "mother Africa" or "Aztlan" as homelands and to claim the lineage of kings and queens registers an implicit critique of American culture. I am not arguing that PCNs are explicit or theoretically sophisticated ideological constructions. But it is not much of a leap to see that the existential reference to the Philippines is also at its root a nascent critique of what has been available for Filipina/os to make sense of themselves in the United States. The attention (obsession, even) to homelands for US-based racial and ethnic minorities "outside" of the nation suggests how the dominant national narrative is more deferred than realized. The PCN genre has allowed students to viscerally engage historical figures and struggles, to actually become historical figures they most likely did not learn about in textbooks, or even from their parents, making obscured or distorted pasts come alive with their own characterizations and stylizations. To become Filipina/o-Americans for many organizers and performers of the PCN genre means having to narrate buried pasts between the Philippines and the United States on stage using some of the most durable folk forms available.

What is also reversed is the reticence of Filipina/o parents concerning personal histories. Part of the problem of narrating these more recent histories is not only due to the paucity of available written work, but in how parents have communicated the lessons of the past. In another essay, I explored this familial reticence, which, when viewed from another angle, represents a generational silence, on the part of the post-1965-era Filipina/o parents. Because of the shame and fact of discrimination, many Filipina/o parents would see no need to pass along their homeland languages and personal histories. As many so colloquially ask, "Why learn Tagalog or Ilokano in the US? You're in America—they speak English here… You'll only get an accent…" It would go much deeper than that. Many

Filipina/o parents would remain silent on the value of teaching Philippine history to their children.[38] In so many shows, students take the opportunity to play out these frustrations. Most of the time, playing the role of one's parents on stage makes for some easy laughs. Oftentimes though, the humor reveals a keen insecurity on the part of the students, a resentment even, directed toward elders for not having communicated more cultural knowledge.

Ultimately, what the PCN genre teaches us is that cultural productions are also crucial sites for re-interpreting and sometimes critiquing the commanding logics of American assimilation whether issued by the academy or discussed around the dinner table. And because the premium is not placed on historical accuracy so much as it has been placed on theatrical impact and community-building among its performers and organizers, the genre has been subject to a range of criticism. Namely, critics have argued that the PCN genre reinforces static constructions of Filipina/o-American "identities." The critics argue that the origins of the folk forms need to be more concretely historicized. Some point to the orientalizing function of the Muslim dance suites in several PCNs, particularly how students have undertheorized their importation of folkloric forms from the southern Philippines, opening themselves to the charge of being sloppy interpreters of Filipina/o culture (Gaerlan 275). Several others take PCN organizers to task for simply regurgitating familiar plot lines from previous years or from other campuses, offering contrived resolutions to weighty topics, or even relying mechanistically on social realism as the prevailing aesthetic of the presentations. In other words, the criticism hones in on the point that the entire show has become an epic—a grand and bloated re-statement of Filipina/o-American "culture" (Gonzalves 163-82; Vergara).

I was guilty of making those criticisms as well. I joined a small but growing chorus in the early 1990s that became increasingly dissatisfied with the shows for a number of reasons. Certainly one set of responses had at its root a kind of postmodern skepticism toward what the show had become, kind of like a grand narrative itself. For many of us, the PCN genre was that narrative which no longer seemed convincing. We could sit through any number of performances—from San Francisco, to Davis, to Santa Clara, to Los Angeles, and La Jolla—and couldn't help but think we had seen only variations of the same show time and again. Like the art critics in a more rarefied scene from a generation before us, we muttered about how there seemed to be nothing inventive, compelling, moving, or even fun in the work. I found myself more comfortable with a sense of detachment from the form of the genre, wishing it could be more playful, more experimental, even more political.

My critical stance could be partly explained by my work as a performer on PCNs as well. At one end of the range of experiences, I found the kind of fellowship that the student organizers had promised. On the other, we also saw trouble coming as the rising tuition rates drove so many of our classmates off campus. A lot of folks had the goal of making their way back to campus, if only they could save up enough money from their part- and sometimes, full-time jobs. Placed in this context the cultural performances seemed more like massive vanity projects, and less like a genuine organizing tool for helping classmates finish their schooling. That was the gravity attached to our performances; and that is where the criticism for the cultural nights emerged—out of those strange conversations about why we really needed and wanted to put on the shows.

Part of the reason for my critical reaction came out of working on PCNs as a performer and musician. It was easy to be consumed with hectic rehearsal schedules and other meetings. And certainly one of the benefits on working on productions such as these is to take in the great sense of fellowship that the work provides. But enjoying the hard work meant also placing the experience of working on the show with others into larger contexts. I and some classmates had developed strong criticisms of the show's forms. For some of us, this meant having to think in terms of social movements—to think that art and culture should, in their broadest and noblest senses, serve the political sensibility and spirit of the day. But some of my assumptions were wrong: my problem was in relying on static notions on how histories are told, not paying enough attention to how the examination of culture oftentimes confounds traditional forms of storytelling if not the academicized narration of histories. I have had to revise my evaluation of the genre, to realize that the PCN genre is not only evidence of the absence of mass-based movements, but more importantly a register for how Filipina/o American memories are sustained within the middle-class aspirations of their parents and only sometimes against the common sense of the day.[42]

I have attempted to demonstrate in this chapter how a young generation of Filipina/o Americans negotiate the stories they perform as they come of age in the last years of the twentieth century. With nearly a century separating them from the brutal violence that announced America's presence in Southeast Asia (the battle of Manila Bay, the Philippine-American War), the students, themselves also a generation removed from the mass-based social movements of the 1960s and 1970s, perform histories they have not read, narrate their insecurities about cultural awareness, and take for granted the authenticity of folk forms.

NOTES

1 Cao and Novas fail to mention that the presence of Asian American studies classes at the University of California, Irvine has been due largely to the efforts and sacrifice of hundreds of students, faculty, staff, parents and community members. They, like most folks struggling to make ethnic studies a reality on campuses throughout the country, know that it's easier said than done.

2 Let's go home
Let's go home hey hey hey
Let's go home because
My world no longer
Makes sense

3 See White 9093, 11-13, 52-54; Nilsen; Vincent 267-285. See also the following interesting analyses: Walser 79-90; Danielsen 275-92; and McClary 152-7. I'm also thankful to Professors Dwight Hopkins, Carolyn Mitchell, and Rutherford S. Gonzalves for our discussions about the role that sexuality has played in Black music's toggling of the secular and the sacred—Prince fans all.

4 During the 1992 election season, two Filipina/o American elected officials mounted a voter registration campaign to register a few thousand new voters from the Filipina/o American community living in the San Francisco Bay Area. To explain why their efforts yielded only a paltry amount, the politicians blamed low participation on the weather—"El Niño" was at fault. Sad to say that this is what passes for so-called "leadership" in the Filipina/o American "community."

5 The list also challenges the notion that Filipina/o Americans often do not belong to many ethnic and racial communities, including at times Asian American ones. I thank Dorothy Fujita Rony for suggesting this line of discussion.

6 See Loza; Mattern; Aparicio; Austerlitz; Floyd Jr.; Glasser; Lipsitz *Dangerous Crossroads*; Rose; Manuel; and Caruncho.

7 Music journalist Ricky Vincent places Prince's music in an appropriate context: "What separated Prince from other artists of the 1980s was his ability to create grand visions, entire worlds of erotic indulgence and freedom. He explored with authority the range of bizarre and carnal emotions that most of us keep hidden…. The "sexually obsessed" generation that bought every record from Prince in the 1980s has today been forced to deal with the end of the sexual revolution and the mortal risks of AIDS" (278- 9).

8 See Krieger; Hall *The Hard Road*; and Rogin.

9 Edsall and Edsall are on target in their analysis of how the consensus over race, rights and taxes was organized in the late 1970s: The tax revolt, in tandem with sustained partisan conflict over racial policies—and over social/moral issues ranging from gun control to school prayer to abortion—catalyzed the mobilization of a conservative presidential majority. California became the testing ground for this new conservatism—California with its soaring property taxes, especially in the Los Angeles area (which already faced a school busing order); with its Democratic legislature and its Democratic governor both unwilling to use revenue surpluses to provide tax relief; and with its easy access to the ballot for almost any group seeking a statewide referendum… The tax revolt was a major turning point in American politics. It provided new muscle and new logic to the formation of a conservative coalition opposed to the liberal welfare state. The division of the electorate along lines of taxpayers versus tax recipients dovetailed with racial divisions: blacks (along with the growing Hispanic population) were disproportionately the beneficiaries of government-led efforts to redistribute rights and status, and the black middle and working classes were far more dependent on government programs and jobs than their white counterparts. Race melded into a conservative-driven agenda that sought to polarize the public against the private sector. The tax revolt provided conservatism with a powerful internal coherence, shaping an anti-government ethic, and firmly establishing new grounds for the disaffection of white working- and middle-class voters from their traditional Democratic roots" (130).

10 "In this case as in many others, guesses about the perceptions and expectations of whites supersede the constitutional rights and empirical realities of blacks and other minorities. It certainly stands in sharp contrast to the 1973 Rodriguez decision, which minimized the importance of education as a federally guaranteed right when the case involved Mexican American children. In Bakke, white expectations and perceptions of being hindered in their pursuit of the educational opportunities they desired were considered worthy of federal protection" (Lipsitz *The Possessive Investment* 37).

11 See Schrag; Omi and Winant 113-136; Goldfield 296-317; and Ehrenreich. Also see Regents of the University of California v. Bakke, 438 US 265 (1978). For an analysis of how the Bakke decision was debated within and around Asian American communities, see Takagi 109-39. Legal scholar Derrick A. Bell's analysis of the Bakke decision is on target: "Working-class and upwardly striving middle-class whites perceive correctly that the share of educational opportunities available to their children are limited. That share, they believe, is threatened by programs designed to help minorities. Their belief is strengthened by the conviction that blacks are not supposed to get ahead of whites, and by the realization that poor whites are powerless to alter the plain advantages in educational opportunity available to the upper classes" (457).

12 It is also important to note that the conservative nationalism of this era was not solely the province of Republican administrations. In a report to the Trilateral commission, European, American, and Japanese intellectuals and government officials, meditated on the ungovernability of Western democracies. Among those assembled for this effort were advisors to the Kennedy and Carter administrations. Not quite ten years after the strikes of 1968, and the mounting of mass-based movements, this document draws our attention to how some of the men who sat next to or either had the ear of power bemoaned the signs of the times. They point to growing pessimism and a lack of democratic faith among the citizens of the First World. For authors of the document, and for several others who were associated with the Trilateral Commission's work, the collapse of Western democracies was to be blamed on the "hippies" and the "campus radicals." Crozier puts it this way: "At the present time, a significant challenge comes from the intellectuals and related groups who assert their disgust with the corruption, materialism, and inefficiency of democracy and with the subservience of democratic government to "monopoly capitalism." The development of an "adversary culture" among intellectuals has affected students, scholars, and the media…. In some measure, the advanced industrial societies have spawned a stratum of value-oriented intellectuals who often devote themselves to the derogation of leadership, the challenging of authority, and the unmasking and delegitimation of established institutions, their behavior contrasting with that of the also increasing numbers of technocratic and policy-oriented intellectuals. In an age of widespread secondary school and university education, the pervasiveness of the mass media, professional employees, this development constitutes a challenge to democratic government which is, potentially at least, as serious as those posed in the past by the aristocratic cliques, fascist movements, and communist parties" (6-7).

13 On the "Mississippification" of California, see Lipsitz *The Possessive Investment* 211-33.

14 See Majors. See also discussions of the state of art-making from visual and performance disciplines in Villa. Villa conceived of a series of dialogues with leading critics, artists, and scholars over the multicultural education in previously elite art institutions, the possibility of art-making under shrinking national budgets, and more. On Filipina/o American immigration in the post-1965 period, see Liu et al. 487-514 and Liu, 673-705.

15 See Hu-DeHart 50-55 and Hirabayashi and Alquizola 351-64.

16 Of the approximately 1,000 attendees, the majority of respondents to an evaluation questionnaire heard about the event by word of mouth. The majority of respondents were also students either at UCLA or other campuses, had prior interest in such performances, and were between the ages of 18 and 21 (Samahang Pilipino PCN).

17 "History of a Race"

18 I appreciate the approach to cultural research undertaken by scholars like Limon. I find helpful Rosaura Sanchez' handling of discrete texts as part of "macro-textual" commentaries. There's a way in which specific cultural studies remain locked formalistically onto the objects themselves. Sanchez' work avoids that. I agree with Lowe and Lloyd's take on how culture is not simply a static field, but is activated and mobilized for specific purposes: "[C]ulture becomes politically important where a cultural formation comes into contradiction with an economic or political logic that tries to refunction it for exploitation or domination" (24).

19 On "imperso-nation," see Chakravarty. Countering the notion that impersonators seek the spotlight, Chang points out how such performers seek the comfort and anonymity of shadows: "Critics love auteurs, not interpreters. You and the karaoke crowd, as Kraftwerk once coldly called them, are velvet hotel-showroom dummies. Even after the show is done, the shine that mimicry confers on you flows upward. The faceless crowds in the mountain motor lodge or the beachside bar don't want you, they want a faithful facsimile of the original" (44). Bhabha's formulation may be playfully applied as well: "colonial mimicry is the desire for a reformed, recognizable Other, as a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite. Which is to say, that the discourse of mimicry is constructed around an ambivalence; in order to be effective, mimicry must continually produce its slippage, its excess, its difference" (86).

19 Interview with Dom and Sachiko Magwili and Santos 3-20.

20 *Pinoy* is colloquial for "Filipino."

21 See Gaerlan 251-87. One of my former instructors during my undergraduate days was fond of hyping up the risk of traveling to that region: "Mindanao: It's like Dodge City down there!"

22 Dance scholarship helps us to make sense out of the narrative nature of dance, especially from artists working in communities that work through the legacies of colonization. The most useful works in this field of study combines a healthy postmodern skepticism toward anthropological authority with a refusal to get bogged down with the tedium of aesthetic formalism. These works take seriously the notion that dance can assume the burden of telling complicated stories and experimenting with challenging identities in hostile times. See Foster *Choreographing History* and *Corporealities: Dancing*; Ness *Body, Movement, Culture*, "Originality in the Postcolony", and "When Seeing is Believing"; Delgado and Muñoz; Savigliano et al.;and Browning.

23 On engendering nationalism in late nineteenth century Filipina/o politics, see Rafael 591-612. I appreciate Canclini's discussion of how Latin American "cultures" need to be understood not as unified and autonomous, but as unevenly developed (in certain areas, he would argue, overdeveloped), while thoroughly imbricated in the political and economic realities of the day.

24 This distinction between the epic and the lyrical is drawn from Harris.

25 Featured in the films *Savage Acts: Wars, Fairs and Empire* and *This Bloody Blundering Business*). Also featured in Jacobs et al.

26 See Bulosan; and Peñaranda et al.36. Scholar E. San Juan, Jr. noted how in the 1970s Bulosan's resurrected text became important to young California activists, students and artists. Denning discusses Bulosan as a Popular Front-era writer testifying through a "migrant narrative" (269-82).

27 For accounts of Filipina/os in the US Navy, see Quinsaat and Espiritu 105-15. Ordinary folks occasionally mount extraordinary challenges to power. More often than not, they rely on what James C. Scott documents as "everyday forms of resistance."

28 See Liu and Liu et al.. Although focused largely on Southern California, Ong et al. updates the theoretical work and historical documentation of Cheng and Bonacich. Both works track how Filipina/os have been part of the global flow of natural and human resources over the twentieth century.

29 A Filipina mother opposes affirmative action and affirms the myth of individuated achievement in Cruz 29. For an example of Filipina/o Americans celebrating bourgeois liberalism, see Bautista.

30 Reaching even further back, Quinsaat's edited reader on Filipina/o American history lists a broad range of student and community-based organizations working in the early part of the twentieth century, editing weekly periodicals, holding picnics, sparring with debating teams, and other activities.

31 *Manong* and *manang* are terms of respect when addressing or referring to a man or a woman, respectively.

32 Colleges and universities have in place mechanisms for funding the operation of officially-chartered student organizations. Those organizations agreeing to adhere to certain guidelines regarding programming and taste are eligible for funds provided by Deans of Students. The fund is a percentage of student body fees assessed at the beginning of each academic term.

33 On the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 see Reimers, chapter 3.

34 I refrain from referring to it as such because many performers take umbrage with the use of the term. Critics argue that this dimension of the PCN is more substantive.

35 Garcia Canclini discusses how the nationalist patrimony is inculcated in public displays—through parades, murals, museums, and processions. "The dramatization of the patrimony is the effort to simulate that there is an origin, a founding substance, in relation with which we should act today. This is the basis of authoritarian cultural policies. The world is a stage, but what must be performed is already prescribed. The practices and objects of value are found and catalogued in a fixed repertory. To be cultured implies knowing that repertory of symbolic goods and intervening correctly in the rituals that reproduce it. For that reason the notions of collection and ritual are key to deconstructing the links between culture and power…. The historical patrimony that is celebrated consists of founding events, the heroes who played the main roles in them, and the fetishized objects that evoke them. The legitimate rites are those that stage the desire for repetition and perpetuation of order" (110).

36 The imminent critique suggested in the shows could also be read as part of the larger political unconscious to which Fredric Jameson referred. I turn to Avery Gordon's poignant formulation of how intellectuals engaged at the cultural sidelines can draw inspiration for their work. "[T]o fight for an oppressed past is to make this past come alive as the lever for the work in the present: obliterating the sources and conditions that link the violence of what seems finished with the present, ending this history and setting in place a different future" (66). Avery Gordon's eloquent description of her vision of what sociological writing (as well as most other disciplines) could or should be is extremely moving. It provides an indication of what the nature of a "vindicationist historiography" could mean for academic and intellectual work in the academy. And to counter those who hold that re-writing history is a muddled series of self-inflicted guilt-trips, or the narcissistic foray into *de riguer* tribalism, Gordon's description updates the stakes that academics could be making, amending Walter Benjamin's notion of the imminent critique. Benjamin's thunderous writing reads more like a sermon than orthodox theorizing. But the effect is more powerful: he reminds us how much conjuring goes on when writing and fighting for the past. "To articulate the past historically does not mean to recognize it "the way is really was" (Ranke). It means to seize hold of a memory as it flashes up at a moment of danger. Historical materialism wishes to retain that image of the past which unexpectedly appears to man singled out by history at a moment of danger. The danger affects both the content of the tradition and its receivers. The same threat hangs over both: that of becoming a tool of the ruling classes. In every era the attempt must be made anew to wrest tradition away from a conformism that is about to overpower it. The Messiah comes not only as the redeemer, he comes as the subduer of the Antichrist. Only

that historian will have the gift of fanning the spark of hope in the past who is firmly convinced that even the dead will not be safe from the enemy if he wins. And this enemy has not ceased to be victorious." The PCN organizers do more than perform on stage—they pass along fragmented versions of who they think they are or could have been.

37 See also Lal; Linder; Lyman; and Park.

38 "Reverse exile" is here bracketed to call attention to the problematic of American-born Filipinos who do not "go back" to a place where they have never been. Confer Campomanes' explication of the exilic motif in Filipino literature where he situates Filipino American literature in a "reverse telos" in Lim and Ling 51. On the significance of the quest motif, Said states: "In all the great explorers' narratives of the late Renaissance (Daniel Defert has aptly called them the collection of the world [la collecte du monde]) and those of the nineteenth-century explorers and ethnographers, not to mention Conrad's voyage up the Congo, there is the topos of the voyage south as Mary Louise Pratt has called it, referring to Gide and Camus, in which the motif of control and authority has "sounded uninterruptedly." For the native who begins to see and hear that persisting note, it sounds "the note of crisis, of banishment, banishment from the heart, banishment from home." This is how Stephen Dedalus memorably states it in the Library episode Ulysses, the decolonizing native writer—such as Joyce, the Irish writer colonized by the British—re-experiences the quest-voyage motif from which he had been banished by means of the same trope carried over from the imperial into the new culture and adopted, reused, relived" (210-1).

39 "Where would we be … without a touch of essentialism?" For Hall, paying attention to the overdetermined labor of cultural production means having to admit that there are no pure forms. "Always these forms are the product of partial synchronization, of engagement across cultural boundaries, of the confluence of more than one cultural tradition, of the negotiations of dominant and subordinate positions, of the subterranean strategies of recoding and transcoding, of critical signification, of signifying. Always these forms are impure, to some degree hybridized from a vernacular base. Thus, they must always be heard, not simply as the recovery of a lost dialogue bearing clues for the production of new musics (because there is never any going back to the old in a simple way), but as what they are—adaptations, molded to the mixed, contradictory, hybrid spaces of popular culture" ("What is This" 28). Hall redirects my attention concerning how we've had to rely on conceptions of culture which are inadequate for grappling with performance genres like the PCN. We're forced to reconsider what our disciplinary inheritances have been. On the postmodern destruction of anthropological authority and the positing of the "cultural" as an autonomous sphere, see Behar and Gordon; Clifford; and Marcus and Fischer.

40 See Gordon *Assimilation in American Life* and *Human Nature*. For critiques and revisions, see Steinberg.

41 See Gonzalves "When the Walls Speak" 31-63. Victor Merina recalls what happened when he was taunted as a young boy for his Filipina/o accent: "My parents encouraged the Filipino culture at home. The one thing we all regret now … they didn't want us to learn Tagalog [the main language of the Philippines] or a dialect from their islands, which is called Ivatan. At first they spoke both dialects at home with my sister and me. But after the incidents of language at school, they made a conscious decision not to mix the languages. So they didn't speak any Tagalog to my sister or I when we were growing up. In retrospect, we all regret that now" (45).

42 Gramsci on "common sense": "Common sense is not a single unique conception, identical in time and space. It is the 'folklore' of philosophy, and, like folklore, it takes countless different forms. Its most fundamental characteristic is that it is a conception which, even in the brain of one individual, is fragmentary, incoherent and inconsequential, in conformity with the social and cultural position of those masses whose philosophy it is. At those times in history when a homogeneous social group is brought into being, there comes into being also, in opposition to common sense, a homogeneous—in other words coherent and systematic—philosophy" (419).

WORKS CITED

Alves, Anna. Personal interview. 26 July 1997.

Aparicio, Francis R. *Listening to Salsa: Gender, Latin Popular Music, and Puerto Rican Cultures*. Hanover: U of New England P, 1997.

Appleby, Joyce, Lynn Hunt, and Margaret Jacob. *Telling the Truth about History*. NY: Norton, 1994.

Asian Pacific American Roundtable. California State U, Los Angeles. 12 Apr. 1996.

Austerlitz, Paul. *Merengue: Dominican Music and Dominican Identity*. PA: Temple UP, 1996.

Bautista, Veltisezar. *The Filipino Americans: From 1763 to the Present—Their History, Culture, and Traditions*. Farmington Hills: Bookhaus, 1998.

Behar, Ruth, and Deborah A. Gordon. *Women Writing Culture*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1995.

Bell, Derrick A. *Race, Racism and American Law*. 2nd ed. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1980.

Benjamin, Walter. *Illuminations*. NY: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1968.

Bhabha, Homi K. *The Location of Culture.* London: Routledge, 1994.

Browning, Barbara. *Samba: Resistance in Motion.* Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1995.

Bulosan, Carlos. *America is in the Heart: A Personal History*. Seattle: U of Washington P, 1973.

Campomanes, Oscar. "Filipinos in the United States and Their Literature of Exile." *Reading the Literatures of Asian America.* Ed. Shirley Geok-lin Lim and Amy Ling. PA: Temple UP, 1992. 49-78.

Canclini, Nestor Garcia. *Hybrid Cultures: Strategies for Entering and Leaving Modernity*. Trans. Christopher L. Chiappari and Silvia L. Lopez. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1995.

Cao, Lan, and Himilce Novas. *Everything You Need to Know About Asian-American History.* NY: Plume, 1996.

Caruncho, Eric S. *Punks, Poets, Poseurs: Reportage on Pinoy Rock & Roll.* Pasig City, Philippines: Anvil, 1996.

Chakravarty, Sumita S. *National Identity in Indian Popular Cinema, 1947-1987*. Austin: U of Texas P, 1993.

Chang, Jeff. "Karaoke Careers." *San Francisco Bay Guardian* 4 Oct. 2000: 44.

Cheng, Edna, and Lucie Bonacich. *Labor Immigration Under Capitalism: Asian Immigrant Workers in the United States Before World War II.* Berkeley: U of California P, 1984.

Clifford, James. *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1988.

Corporate Student System Report CSS170D. U of California: Office of the President.

CPEC Report DEG704. U of California: Office of the President.

Crozier, Michel, Samuel P. Huntington and Joji Watanuji. *The Crisis of Democracy: Report on the Governability of Democracies to the Trilateral Commission.* NY: New York UP, 1975.

Cruz, Yolanda. "A Twofer's Lament." *New Republic* 17 Oct. 1994: 29.

Danielsen, Anne. "His Name was Prince: A Study of 'Diamonds and Pearls'." *Popular Music* 16.3 (1997): 275-92.

Delgado, Celeste F., and José E. Muñoz, eds. *Everynight Life: Culture and Dance in Latin/o America*. Durham: Duke UP, 1997.

Denning, Michael. *The Cultural Front: The Laboring of American Culture in the Twentieth-Century*. London: Verso, 1996.

Edsall, Thomas Byrne, and Mary D. Edsall. *Chain Reaction: The Impact of Race, Rights, and Taxes on American Politics.* NY: Norton, 1991.

Ehrenreich, Barbara. *Fear of Falling: The Inner Life of the Middle Class*. NY: Pantheon, 1989.

Eraserheads. "Balikbayan Box." *Sticker Happy*. BMG Pilipinas, 1996.

Espiritu, Yen. *Filipino American Lives*. PA: Temple UP, 1995.

Floyd Jr., Samuel A. *The Power of Black Music: Interpreting Its History from Africa to the United States*. Cambridge: Oxford UP, 1996.

Foster, Susan Leigh. *Choreographing History*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1995.

---. ed. *Corporealities: Dancing, Knowledge, Culture and Power*. London: Routledge, 1996.

Gaerlan, Barbara S. "In the Court of the Sultan: Orientalism, Nationalism and Modernity in Philippine and Filipino American Dance." *Journal of Asian American Studies* 2.3 (1999): 251-87.

Glasser, Ruth. *My Music is My Flag: Puerto Rican Musicians and Their New York Communities, 1917-1940.* Berkeley: U of California P, 1997.

Goldfield, Michael. *The Color of Politics: Race and the Mainsprings of American Politics*. NY: New Press, 1997.

Gonzalves, Theodore S. "When the Walls Speak a Nation: Contemporary Murals and the Narration of Filipina/o America." *Journal of Asian American Studies* 1.1 (1998): 31-63.

---. "The Day the Dancers Stayed: On Pilipino Cultural Nights" *Filipino Americans: Transformation and Identity.* Ed. Maria P. P. Root. Thousand Oaks: Sage, 1997. 163-82.

Gordon, Avery. *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1997.

Gordon, Milton. *Assimilation in American Life: The Role of Race, Religion, and National Origins.* NY: Oxford UP, 1971.

---. *Human Nature, Class, and Ethnicity.* NY: Oxford UP, 1978.

Gramsci, Antonio. *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*. Ed. Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith. NY: International Publishers, 1971.

Hall, Stuart. *The Hard Road to Renewal: Thatcherism and the Crisis of the Left* . London: Verso, 1988.

---. "What is This 'Black' in Black Popular Culture?" *Black Popular Culture: A Project.* Ed. Michelle Wallace. Seattle: Bay Press, 1992. 28-9.

Harris, Max. *Dialogical Theatre: Dramatizations of Mexico and the Questions of the Other*. NY: St. Martin's Press, 1993.

Hirabayashi, Lane R., and Marilyn C. Alquizola. "Asian American Studies: Reevaluating for the 1990s." *The State of Asian America: Activism and Resistance in the 1990s*. Ed. Karin Aguilar-San Juan. Boston: South End, 1994. 351-64.

Hu-DeHart, Evelyn. "The History, Development, and Future of Ethnic Studies." *Phil Delta Kappan* 75.1 (1993): 50-5.

Jacinto, Jaime, and Ave Jacinto. *Oral History Transcript, Samahang Pilipino Archive.* U of California, University Research Library.

Jacobs, Paul, Saul Landau, and Eve Pell, eds. *To Serve the Devil.* NY: Vintage, 1971.

Krieger, Joel. *Reagan, Thatcher and the Politics of Decline*. Oxford: Polity, 1996.

Lal, Barbara B. *The Romance of Culture in an Urban Civilization: Robert E. Park on Race and Ethnic Relations*. London: Routledge, 1990.

Leacock, Eleanor B. *The Culture of Poverty: A Critique.* NY: Simon and Schuster, 1971.

Limon, José. *Dancing with the Devil: Society and Cultural Poetics in Mexican-American South Texas*. Madison: U of Wisconsin, 1994.

Linder, Rolf. *The Reportage of Urban Culture: Robert Park and the Chicago School.* NY: Cambridge UP, 1996.

Lipsitz, George. *Dangerous Crossroads: Popular Music, Postmodernism and the Poetics of Place*. London: Verso, 1994.

---. *The Possessive Investment in Whiteness: How White People Profit from Identity Politics*. PA: Temple UP, 1998.

Liu, John M. "The Contours of Asian Professional, Technical and Kindred Work Immigration." *Sociological Perspectives* 35.4 (1992): 673-705.

Liu, John M., Paul M. Ong, and Carolyn Rosenstein, "Dual Chain Migration: Post-1965 Filipino Immigration to the United States." *International Migration Review* 25.3 (1991): 487-514.

Lowe, Lisa and David Lloyd. *The Politics of Culture in the Shadow of Capital*. Durham: Duke UP, 1997.

Loza, Steven. *Barrio Rhythm: Mexican American Music in Los Angeles.* Urbana: U of Illinois, 1993.

Lyman, Stanford M. *Militarism, Imperialism, and Racial Accommodation: An Analysis and Interpretation of the Early Writings of Robert E. Park*. Fayetteville: U of Arkansas P, 1992.

Magwili, Dom and Sachiko. Personal interview. 2 Mar. 1998.

Majors, Devorah. "Cultural Equity Paper." Nathan Cummings Foundations. 26 May 1994.

Manuel, Peter. *Caribbean Currents: Caribbean Music from Rumba to Regga.* PA: Temple UP, 1995.

Marable, Manning. *Black Leadership*. NY: Columbia UP, 1998.

---. *Race, Reform and Rebellion: The Second Reconstruction in Black America, 1945-1982.* Jackson: U of Mississippi P, 1984.

Marcus, George E., and Michael M.J. Fischer. *Anthropology as Cultural Critique: An Experimental Moment in the Human Sciences.* 2nd ed. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1999.

Mattern, Mark. *Acting in Concert: Music, Community, and Political Action*. New Brunswick: Rutgers, 1998.

McClary, Susan. *Conventional Wisdom: The Content of Musical Form.* Berkeley: U of California P, 2000.

Merina, Victor. "Visiting the Homeland." *Asian Americans: Oral Histories of First to Fourth Generation Americans from China, the Philippines, Japan, India, the Pacific Islands, Vietnam and Cambodia*. Ed. Joann Lee. NY: New Press, 1991. 45-9.

Ness, Sally Ann. *Body, Movement, Culture: Kinesthetic and Visual Symbolism in a Philippine Community*. PA: U of Pennsylvania P, 1992.

---. "Originality in the Postcolony: Choreographing the Neoethnic Body of Philippine Ballet." *Cultural Anthropology* 12.1 (1997): 64-109.

---. "When Seeing is Believing: The Changing Role of Visuality in a Philippine Dance." *Anthropological Quarterly* 68.1 (1995): 1-14.

Nilsen, Per. *Dance Music Sex Romance: Prince—the First Decade*. London: Firefly, 1999.

Okamura, Jonathan. *Imagining the Filipino American Diaspora: Transnational Relations, Identities, and Communities*. NY: Garland, 1998.

Omi, Michael, and Howard Winant. *Racial Formation in the United States: From the 1960s to the 1990s*. 2nd ed. NY: Routledge, 1994.

Ong, Paul, Edna Bonacich, and Lucie Cheng, eds. *The New Asian Immigration in Los Angeles and Global Restructuring*. PA: Temple UP, 1994.

Park, Robert Ezra. *The Collected Papers of Robert Ezra Park*. Eds. Everett Cherrington et al. Glencoe: Free Press, 1950-1955.

Payomo, R. J. Personal interview. 22 Mar. 1998.

Peñaranda, Oscar, Serafin Syquia, and Sam Tagatac. "Introduction to Filipino American Literature." *Aiiieeeee!!! An Anthology of Asian-American Writers*. Eds. Frank Chin, Jeffrey Paul Chan, Shawn Wong, and Lawson Fusao. Washington: Howard UP, 1974.

Pido, Antonio. *The Pilipinos in America: Macro/micro Dimensions of Immigration and Integration*. NY: Center for Migration Studies, 1986.

Quinsaat, Jesse. "An Exercise on How to Join the Navy and Still Not See the World" *Letters in Exile: An Introductory Reader on the History of Pilipinos in America.* Ed. Jesse Quinsaat. LA: U of California, Los Angeles, Asian American Studies Center, 1976. 96-111.

Rafael, Vince. "Nationalism, Imagery, and the Filipino Intelligentsia in the Nineteenth Century." *Critical Inquiry* 16.3 (1990): 591-612.

Regents of the University of California v. Bakke, 438 US 265. 1978.

Reimers, David. *Still the Golden the Door: The Third World Comes to America.* 2nd ed. NY: Columbia UP, 1992.

Rogin, Michael. *Ronald Reagan, the Movie and Other Episodes in Political Demonology*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1987.

Rose, Tricia. *Black Noise: Rap Music and Black Culture in Contemporary America*. Hanover: UP of New England, 1994.

Said, Edward. *Culture and Imperialism.* NY: Knopf, 1993.

Samahang Pilipino PCN. "Pilipino Cultural Night, 12 November 1983." *Cultural Folder 1982-1983*. UCLA.

Sanchez, Rosaura. *Telling Identities: The Californio Testimonios.* Minneapolis: U of Minnesota, 1995.

San Juan, Jr., Epifanio. Personal interview. 1997.

Santos, Bienvenido N. "Immigration Blues." *The Scent of Apples: A Collection of Stories.* Seattle: U of Washington P, 1955. 3-20.

Savage Acts: Wars, Fairs and Empire. Dir. Penee Bender. American Social History Productions, 1995.

Savigliano, Marta. *Tango and the Political Economy of Passion*. Boulder: Westview, 1995.

Schrag, Peter. *Paradise Lost: California's Experience, America's Future.* Berkeley: U of California, 1998.

Scott, James C. *Weapons of the Weak.* New Haven: Yale UP, 1985.

Steinberg, Stephen. *Turning Back: The Retreat from Racial Justice in American Thought and Policy.* Boston: Beacon, 1995.

Takagi, Data Y. *The Retreat from Race: Asian-American Admissions and Racial Politics* New Brunswick: Rutgers UP, 1992.

Taylor, Diana, and Juan Villegas, eds. *Negotiating Performance: Gender, Sexuality, and Theatricality in Latin/o America*. Durham: Duke UP, 1994.

This Bloody Blundering Business. Dir. Penee Bender. NY: Cinema Guild, Tricontinental Film, 1975.

Vallangca, Caridad Concepcion. *The Second Wave: Pinay & Pinoy, 1945-1960*. San Francisco: Strawberry Hill, 1987.

Vergara, R. Bong. "Reevaluating the Pilipino Cultural Night." SPA-UCLA, n.d.

Villa, Carlos. *Worlds in Collision: Dialogues on Multicultural Art Issues*. San Francisco: International Scholars, 1994.

Vincent, Ricky. *Funk: The Music, the People, and the Rhythm of the One.* NY: St. Martin's Griffin, 1996.

Walser, Robert. "Prince as Queer Poststructuralist." *Popular Music and Society* 18.2 (1994): 79-90.

White, Armond. *The Resistance: Ten Years of Pop Culture That Shook the World.* Woodstock: Overlook, 1995.

Zangwill, Israel. *The Melting Pot; Drama in Four Acts*. NY: MacMillan, 1909.

RESPONSES TO "DANCING INTO OBLIVION"

Various Authors

Editor's Note

The following are invited responses to Theo Gonzalves's "Dancing into Oblivion" which was presented at the *Kritika Kultura Lecture Series*, held on 4 May 2005 at the Ateneo de Manila University, Philippines. The authors have presented these papers as well in the forum after Gonzalves's lecture.

Ricardo G. Abad
Fine Arts Program
Ateneo de Manila University, Philippines

Dr. Theo Gonzalves's presentation brings to mind some personal events related to the quest for identity among Filipino-Americans. One is an email I recently received from a friend in Berkeley, California; a second is my work with Tagalog-on-Site, an immersion group for Filipino-Americans; and third, is my recent contact with a nephew and a niece, both Filipino-Americans, in Los Angeles. These personal events shape my reactions to Dr. Gonzalves's paper.

1. A day after Kritika Kultura invited me to react to Dr. Gonzalves's presentation, I received this email from a Filipino-American friend, a married woman, who teaches at the University of California at Berkeley where, coincidentally, a Pilipino Cultural Night (PCN) had just transpired. She writes:

> We went to see (Berkeley's PCN-Pilipino Cultural Night) yesterday. It always runs long (3 hours+) so I usually can't/don't see the whole production … The audience itself is a spectacle to behold. They are made up of parents of cast members coming in from out of town and Filipino student groups from nearby campuses and Southern California have made it a tradition to attend. They get to cheer their lungs out at the mention of their school during the informal opening remarks. It's rowdy. PCN topics at Berkeley usually have a flavor of activism, this year it's the rise of the "I" Hotel … the international hotel which was demolished to make way for urban renewal in the 70s yata, evicting Filipino manong and Chinese elderly residents, which was met with days and days of protests and a hunger strike. But the play itself encapsulates the experience in the character of an elderly manong, with scenes

> in several skit forms, interwoven with dances, modern hip hop and folk dances. Past themes have been Gabriela Silang's life, immigration and hardships of their parents generation, drugs and gangs, ethnic identity. Students audition to participate, and … there are a few parents who discourage or prohibit their son/daughter to participate as it takes a lot of time out of their studies if the student is not careful. I have to remind my students in mid-semester to remember that they are students first and foremost. I find my classes are smaller on Fridays the weeks leading up to the PCN.

My friend's email message echoes many points raised by Dr. Gonzalves in his paper about the PCN – the deployment of a theatrical narration, as well as folkloric and modern dances or suites, as elements of the PCN genre; the intense involvement of the students and their families in the event; and perhaps more important, the desire of the organizers to instill in Filipino-Americans a sense of being Filipino in a foreign land.

But isn't it funny? There they are, Filipino-Americans in the United States, dislocated from the homeland, seeking ways to strengthen a Filipino identity on foreign soil, while we Filipinos here in the Philippines seeking a similar strengthening of local Filipino identity against the backdrop of media imperialism and the globalization, or better perhaps, the westernization of lifestyle. We do not have PCNs to boost our sense of being Filipino, but we have exhortations to buy Filipino products, support OPM and Filipino movies, travel around Wow Philippines, and use the Filipino language as part of an academic discourse. Even my own work in the theater entails, in large part, the appropriation of Asian or Filipino meanings in western texts, notably Shakespeare's. So while we, Filipinos, in the Philippines, seek a stronger Filipino identity given a colonial past, class inequalities, and the galloping westernization of everyday life, particularly in the cities, the Filipino-Americans seek a stronger Filipino identity given a highly pluralistic society dominated by white people of European ancestry.

Filipinos, then, whether they be in the Philippines or the United States, and maybe too in other Filipino diasporas around the world, are negotiating an identity suited to their present socio-economic and political situation. Both groups see that their self-definition is being threatened, bewail the loss or decline of those distinct cultural elements, and seek ways to restore or fortify a sense of local identity. The search for identity is thus a strategic devise to gain pride and self-esteem, a source of personal and communal empowerment.

But is it fair to say that while the Filipinos in the Philippines seek a Filipino identity to become better Filipinos, the Filipinos in the Untied States seek a Filipino identity to become better Americans – or better Filipino-Americans? Many of the Filipino-Americans

who attend the PCN are American citizens and therefore have a stake in American culture. If they make it in American culture, they make it as Americans of Filipino descent, and not as native Filipinos born and bred in the Philippines. The search for identity thus has different objectives in different places.

2. My friend adds in her e-mail: "My daughter (Asia, 16) enjoyed watching the PCN. She felt the spirit of celebration and acknowledgment of a culture that represents her home. Atin-atin lang *(Just between you and me)*, personally jaded na ako sa mga topics nila, pa-ulit ulit *(I'm jaded because the PCN topics are repetitive)*, even their comedy is the same, they do it with much fondness of course. But this is their expression, a source of pride, an extension of themselves, they find family amongst themselves … so in the end, I defer to the students. It is after all, theirs, how they define themselves. We could all learn from them."

This remark suggests a generational variation in the reception of the PCN.

My friend's remark that "personally jaded (na siya) sa mga topics (ng PCN), pa-ulit-ulit, even their comedy is the same" gives me some understanding of Dr. Gonzalves's loss of confidence at the way PCN has been shown over the years. This loss of confidence leads Dr. Gonzalves to make a critique of the PCN. While I am in general agreement with his critique, particularly his points about essentialism and the lack of critical reflection in the program numbers, we have to reconcile this critique with the apparent delight in which students and audiences receive the show. "My daughter," says my friend, "felt the spirit of celebration and acknowledgement of a culture that represents her home."

How do we reconcile these opposite receptions – one by the young, and the other by older members of the Filipino-American community? Is it fair to say that the young, though they enjoy the PCN, are being fed a kind of "false consciousness" about their Philippine roots? How have the young people, or the student organizers, responded to Dr. Gonzalves's critique of the PCN?

3. I am delighted at the launching of what Dr. Gonzalves's called "Cultural Evidences" as an alternative to the traditional PCN. May I submit for comment, however, another program that also seeks to strengthen Filipino identity. One, I think, is worthy of study and comparison.

For years now, I have been involved with a group called Tagalog on Site (TOS), an immersion program offered to Filipino-Americans to stay in the Philippines for two months during the American summer (July and August) to learn Filipino; have lecture-discussions on Philippine literature, history, culture; undertake exposure trips to farms, fishing

villages, mining communities and the like; and get opportunities to work in Filipino NGOs. I usually handle the session on Philippine cultural values, and year after year, I am amazed to find out that much of the misunderstanding between these young Filipino-Americans and their parents stem from the young person's unfamiliarity of Filipino values and the inability of the parents or elders of these young people to justify the application of Filipino values or to make adjustments to the American context. On the whole, my impression is that the TOS enriches the Filipino-Americans sense of being Filipino but leaves it largely to them to integrate this rediscovered self with American life when they return to the States. This sounds like the "reverse exile" pattern that Dr. Gonzalves talks about.

My questions are: do you think immersion programs like this should be encouraged? Or perhaps more broadly, should "reverse exile" programs be encouraged?

4. What is the reach of the PCN? Is the PCN's impact only felt in communities with a relatively large representation of Filipino-Americans? I ask this question because I know some young people who do not seem to take the issue of a Filipino identity that seriously. And I think this is partly because they live and study in a community where there are few Filipinos.

Two of my brother's children, a nephew and a niece, the boy 16 and the girl 14, were born and raised in California. They do not speak Filipino, have been in the Philippines once when they were 10 and 8 years old, and do not have habits of mind and heart and speech that we would identify as Filipino. I met them last month in California, and in my conversation with them, I sensed that they were more concerned about fitting into a pluralistic American culture, at least in their respective high schools, than they were about crafting a Filipino identity. Being connected to Filipino customs, history, literature, or music does not appear to hold much interest to them. Trying to become like their "American" classmates is, however, important.

Questions: Are they better where they are, trying to assimilate as Americans, fitting into what Dr. Gonzalves called the "multicultural paradigm" and making their Filipino-ness recede into the background, as did I would guess the actor Lou Diamond Philips and the rock star Prince? Is some kind of multiculturalism an important goal for Filipinos to achieve in mainstream America? Should Filipinos hail Ang Lee and John Woo, two Chinese film directors who have made it in the Untied States, in large part because they have been able to package their "Asian-ness" in ways that please the larger American public? Do Filipinos have to engage in a similar packaging to become more visible in pluralistic America? Does a search of a Philippine identity, stressing one's unique heritage, counteract

efforts to make it in the American mainstream? Is it better, in short, to dance into relative oblivion?

Perhaps not. Perhaps it's better to talk about many kinds of Filipinos, each group building its own repertoire of representations, its own voice, in the societies they inhabit.

* * *

J. Pilapil Jacobo
Departments of Interdisciplinary Studies and Filipino
Ateneo de Manila University, Philippines

The pleasure of Gonzalves's critical text lies in its ethnographic texture, its ability to sense in a pop cultural genre, the Pilipino Cultural Night (PCN), the various contradictions faced by ethnic identities and the milieus that transform these selves into ir/resolute agents of history. This makes the study not just a theory of performance but also a rehearsal of the discourse of performative subjectivities. For the purposes of my reaction to this engagement, allow me to articulate specific categories that Gonzalves creates in his discussion of the PCN.

The first category I would like to explore is Gonzalves's concept of the *spectacle*. When Gonzalves speaks of the folkloric aspect of a PCN performance, he refers to it as an "experimentation with fashioning identities" that inevitably produces "different kinds of Americans as well as Filipinos." The PCN is spectacular, not because of its pageantry and pomp, but more significantly, because of its ability to introduce Otherness, and elicit responses of difference and discrepancy. For Gonzalves, the folk dance points to an "elsewhere," which is by turns an amorphous fantasy and a concrete possibility: *fantastic* (read: impossible) as the scenography only emphasizes an ahistorical reckoning with an epically distant homeland; and *possible*, because the detached setting projects a "nascent anti-imperial critique," an implicit refusal of the conditions of the assimilationist present, and a portentous desire to locate another Filipino America in an "anywhere else but here." This is where we sense the rationale behind the nostalgic gestures and movements of the Filipino American folkloric dancer—one pines for a rural, local past in order to resist the totalizing influence of an urban, cosmopolitan present.

But because ethnicity, in this context, has become a repertoire of memories, acts of remembrance are dialectically challenged by acts of forgetting, the "dancing into oblivion" that Gonzalves celebrates with Bakhtinian laughter. Here Gonzalves evokes the necessity

of return after the leave-taking, to finally confront, through a realist rhythm, the materiality of assimilation. In the end, what salvages the memory is the dancer's aspiration to dream of a certain "strategic essence" and at the same time awake through his "ironic body," engaging dispersed imaginings and dislocated moorings in the unmistakable medium of the erotic. The dancer may contradict his Filipino American body with the Filipino that he embodies, but nevertheless accepts the grotesque compromise, for it is in this space where he finds ways of mobilizing his stranded modernity. Hence, the ethos of the travel the PCN enunciates, hyper-real as it may seem, transcends romantic escape and touristic foray, as it is ultimately, a pilgrimage.

The PCN pursues further the memorial motif in its tendency to dwell on issues by way of narrative, the second category I would like to focus on. But prior to the inscription of a coherent narrative is the premise on which the story is founded: that no memory in the present can attest to a Filipino American identity. Narrative in this sense exhibits an ideological critique, laying bare the past's obliviousness to the wounds of departures, arrivals, returns, and the dislocations that lay among these historical decisions—local memories that had to be surrendered in exchange for a cosmopolitan reality.

The said premise clarifies the mechanism of the narrative, "reverse telos," which for me, is the Filipino American's strategy of employment into and out of both Filipino and American histories. "Reverse telos" as a principle of narrative structure symptomatizes the difficult historical dance that the Filipino must choreograph for himself in order to extricate his identity from a crude notion of hybridity—being a mere product of cultural assimilation. The Filipino American returns to the "national epic past" in order to disprove notions about his identity, that he is no accident of history, but a legitimate consequence of its motions. Therefore the re-identification with the Filipino is an imperative in renaming the Filipino American from an "immigrant imaginary" to, in Stuart Hall's words, a "new ethnicity."

Nevertheless, I wonder how the PCN, after returning to the Filipino component of Filipino American history, deals with the underwritten part of that narrative, the American present. Does "reverse telos" enable the Filipino American to finally utter the realities of his being an American Other? What part of the presentation allows for this reflection? If the speaking does not occur within the PCN, is it accommodated by another genre? Or is it a project that has yet to be written in Filipino American ethno-history before it is performed in what Gonzalves terms as the PCN's "choreo-history"?

In the end, Gonzalves works out a forceful theory of the Pilipino Cultural Night as a genre that only triumphs because of a conspiracy between spectacle and narrative in

order to inquire into, problematize, and resolve the specter of history that mediates the contemporary Filipino American as a subject of his present. We can only hope to read more of this critical virtuosity and learn from its nuances how we in the Philippines, in the time of the "strong republic," remember our fragile selves, and dance *against* oblivion, *into* history.

* * *

Missy Maramara
Fine Arts Program
Ateneo de Manila University, Philippines

The younger generation's negotiation with culture wherein "they perform histories they have not read, narrate their insecurities about cultural awareness, and take for granted the "authenticity" of folk forms is not only happening to a Filipino youth sect that has been uprooted from its origin but to an entire generation, which includes those who have remained in the Philippines. Gonzalves's account and analysis of PCN and Cultural Evidence speaks of the Filipino American students' attempt to be rooted in the Filipino culture, not simply as receivers of a historically determined product, but as active participants of the culture. It also serves as a challenge to the Filipino youth who have not been uprooted to be more aware and actively participate in their own culture since they are "rooted" by default.

It is admirable how the Filipinos in America celebrate their Filipino heritage especially since this celebration stems from their "fascination with what it means to be Filipino," so much so that they become "producers of cultures; not merely as artists with interesting or curious notions, but organic intellectuals who help generate new ways of thinking about what we often take for granted." Through performance, the culture has been appropriated from the past into the present, and "authenticity" is naturally lost. It is however the active search for a connection that matters, for the answer to the question of authenticity or what it means to be Filipino seems perennially elusive.

To find a parallelism in our local cultural celebrations, we might examine the events in the Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP). Since Gonzalves sets the parameters of the cultural celebration using dance and theater, these will be the focal points.

First, the Philippines's CCP resident dance company is Ballet Philippines, which claims to

> stand out on the international dance stage as one of the few companies to successfully synthesize diverse dance and movement forms. From classical ballet to avant-garde choreographies, from traditional to modern dance, from martial arts to aerial movements, Ballet Philippines distills these different forms into distinctively Filipino contemporary expressions. (*Ballet Philippines*)

Ballet Philippines takes pride in "translating western technique into Filipino movement, theme, design and inspiration to produce a distinctly Filipino dance form."

Secondly, the CCP's resident theater company is *Tanghalang Pilipino*, which aims to bring Philippine Theater to the pinnacle of artistry by developing artists to produce original Filipino plays:

> By staging plays from the repertoire of Philippine past and plays in translation from other countries TP hopes to bring to the experience of both artists and audience the best of Philippine and global theater tradition. It looks forward to educating and awakening the cultural consciousness of the Filipino audiences through its regular performances and other related activities like workshops, symposia and interactions. (*Tanghalang Pilipino*)

Both resident dance and theater companies of the CCP make use of the Filipino heritage passed down to them even as they assimilate Western practices. The focus here is not on the loss of culture through assimilation but the Filipinos' mastery of the crafts of dance and theater. It reinforces Gonzalves's claim that "modern history is not simply about the one-sided conquering of natives, but also about the resistance to and adaptation of the modern West" and by the drawing on such influences the way the PCN organizers drew on the Philippine histories they were exposed to, we are able to "reckon with some interesting juxtapositions wrought by modernity." What is celebrated in the CCP, the PCN, and Cultural Evidence is the greatness of the Filipino.

However, the tendency of the PCN, which audiences here in the Philippines is just as guilty of, is to "laud the Filipino's ability to assimilate cultural forms and miss out on the oppression of colonial rule … the narrations tend to rely less on celebrations of cultural assimilability and more literally toward the subordinated status of Filipinos as workers caught in the streams of a global economy."

On a smaller scale closer to home, the cultural scene at the Ateneo has similarly been lauded by the *Philippine Star* when it featured the 145th year of the Ateneo: At the college

level, through a wide variety of courses and co-curricular activities, faculty and students work together in understanding and enriching Philippine culture while engaging in analytical and creative discourse on the major ideas and methods of the global intellectual heritage" (Bernas 3). It also commends two respected thespians, Ricky Abad and Salvador Bernal, for the Ateneo theater's ability to adapt foreign texts, indigenizing them so that the plays might have a more powerful effect on the Filipino audience.

Working with Abad, the Artistic Director of Ateneo's resident theater group, and National Artist Bernal is greatly empowering in terms of widening one's exposure to culture, and performing in their productions is an honor. But not all performers, much less audiences, share as much eagerness for celebrating and witnessing culture and identity as they do for mounting or viewing a production; they are not as concerned about culture as they are about savoring the moment of performing or watching a performance. There are times when Tanghalang Ateneo is tempted to stage a production regardless of its relevance and content. Most productions have audiences composed of reluctant Ateneo students who sit through the play for three hours only because they have a reaction paper to submit to their English teachers.

The struggle to define or, at the very least, take part in the Filipino culture is apparently more pressing for the Filipinos in America. This is perhaps because they are not on Philippine soil and identity becomes a great issue as the generations move farther and farther away from their heritage. This pressure is made evident in the "outing" of accomplished Filipinos in America, which is done in order to "generate common knowledge and sense around who is supposed to be included in one's "community"—an explicit statement about who may constitute Filipino America."

Thus, although Filipinos and Filipino Americans are both faced with the question, "What is or who is Filipino?" the question becomes more important to the Filipinos thousands of miles away when their old heritage fades and death becomes the sole receiver of the memory of a culture and the younger generation begins to asks "Who am I?" On the other hand, here where the climate never changes, the Filipino youth seem oblivious to the effects of the worldwide cultural assimilation on their identity. It is as if colonial mentality has taken another guise more than a decade since the American bases left and will continue to persist.

Shouldn't we then demarcate what constitutes Filipino, while our *kababayans* ("countrymen") demarcate what constitutes Filipino-American? Why are our Filipino youth here in the Philippines apathetic to culture – here where it should be held in highest regard – while Filipino students in America, most of whom were born there, strive so hard to win it back or define it for themselves?

WORKS CITED

Bernas S. J., Joaquin. "A View from the Hill at 145." *Philippine Star*. 10 Dec. 2004: P1-P4.

Philippines. Cultural Center of the Philippines. *Ballet Philippines*. Oct. 2005. 5 Nov. 2005. <http://www.culturalcenter.gov.ph/res-balletphils.htm>.

---. *Tanghalang Pilipino*. Oct. 2005. 5 Nov. 2005. <http://www.culturalcenter.gov.ph/res-TP.htm>.

* * *

Mayel Panganiban
Department of English
Ateneo de Manila University, Philippines

Gonzalves problematizes, among other issues, the representation of an authentic Philippine cultural form as a necessary reminder of identity. The writer acknowledges that PCN, at some point in its existence, may have been essentialist in its operations, presuming that there is a distinct, sterilized national culture and identity, unchanged by the passage of history. I agree with the paper's statements about culture and identity as fluid and unfolding. I take interest in both issues since they parallel local debates as to what actually constitutes Philippine national culture.

Most Filipinos here and abroad have overvalued folk dancing as the quintessential indigenous dance form. This, ultimately, finds expression in various ways from the collective to the individual – in *Linggo ng Wika* (" Language Week") festivities of schools where administrators insist that their students should dance the *tinikling* or pandanggo sa ilaw every year; in Dick Gordon's "Wow! Philippines," purportedly a showcase of the country's best, where paid performers do a variation of the *tinikling* and *pandanggo sa ilaw*; in a college teacher's testy remark that ballet is "anti-Filipino." These practices and sentiments suggest a narrow and static notion of "Philippine culture," conflating culture with artifact reproduction – they derive their motivation from lazy habits and a mistaken sense of "nation-ness" or nationalism, which is almost always "imagined." As such, folk dancing, especially as produced in such contexts, has over time become far removed from the complexities of experience and the knowledge that has produced them; it has become more spectacle than performance, forfeiting its transformative energies.

Consequently, this development in the production and reception of folk dances, its loss of power to engage its audience in performance, influence how such forms are

appreciated abroad. As the main exponent of folk and ethnic dances, the Bayanihan Dance Troupe serves as a case in point. The Bayanihan thrives by catering mostly to an international audience, inspiring, as their souvenir program proudly claims, "other countries to exploit their own folk material for international presentation … without sacrificing authenticity." This plug invites scrutiny as it proposes a definition of culture in its claims of authenticity. Culture, as discussed by Homi Bhabha in "The Commitment to Theory," is negotiated in a "Third Space" where hybridity operates (18-28). Instead of falling back on the categories of "Self" and "Other," Bhabha posits that cultural identities are dialogically constructed, and cultural meaning itself is the process that results from the "translations" and "transmutations" of indigenous traditions in foreign contexts. Such an understanding of culture, I think, is more receptive to the passage of history and to the dynamic cultural interaction/exchange that occurred between colonizer and colonized. Dr. Gonzalves cites an example of this concept at work – the American expression "running amok" appropriates from native Filipino vocabulary. This notion of culture perhaps, to return to my initial point, renders assertions of authenticity ineffectual and unnecessary.

Given this frame, is it likely that the Bayanihan's performances here and/or abroad as well as the general attempts of the government to showcase slices of Philippine culture pander to Orientalist fantasies and fetishes? Although the Bayanihan endeavors to showcase an authentic panorama of ethnic and folk dances, their constant reproduction of the same might reinforce the belief that such cultural forms are representative of an "essential Philippine culture," which is by now a simplistic and deluded category. From what I've seen of its shows and its reviews, the Bayanihan sometimes resorts to romanticizing what it represents such as the countryside and rural life, very much like an Amorsolo genre painting. Does this qualify as "strategic essentialism"? Bhabha's analysis informs us that cultures and identities are never unified or binary (Self and Other) and this I hope, will come to guide our understanding of both terms.

WORK CITED

Bhabha, Homi. *The Location of Culture.* NY: Routledge, 1994.

TWO-PART INVENTION: A RESPONSE

Theodore S. Gonzalves
American Studies
University of Hawaii at Manoa
theo@hawaii.edu

Editor's Note
This piece is a written response to the responses the author received when he delivered his lecture "Dancing into Oblivion" at the *Kritika Kultura Lecture Series* on 4 May 2005 at the Ateneo de Manila University, Philippines. Both the lecture and the responses are printed in this issue of *Kritika Kultura*.

MEDITATION: LEONARD SHELBY

Leonard Shelby is convinced he can find those responsible for the murder and rape of his wife. He doesn't have a problem finding clues. They're all around him. He collects scraps in large folders, carries them in his car, under his arm, from scene to scene. Shelby carries no weapon. Instead, he's buried under a mountain of what he considers to be evidence: medical, police, and psychiatric reports, notes to himself, and photos. His biggest problem in trying to solve such a complex case is that he has no short-term memory.

Adapted from a story by Jonathan Nolan and directed by Christopher Nolan, *Memento* is more than a murder mystery that curiously unfolds for the viewers in a reverse chronology. Shelby's crisis reminds us that identities are ultimately about what gets remembered – not always handed down lovingly or reliably – but the active assembling and discarding of all the shards we often take for granted, the things that connect us from one scene to the next.

Those twinned expressions of distance and panic in Leonard Shelby's face seem understandable. He's reminded of his wife's bloodied body, her own distant and cold visage. It's all in the clues, he reminds himself. He mutters everything in short spurts. Because of his "accident," Shelby relies on an instant camera for quick reference. He dashes off captions underneath the images before they're fully developed. He crams them into his pocket where he's collected a stack of the photos. But while the camera and the notepads are always within reach – the Polaroid dangles from a strap off his shoulder, reams of notes sardined under his arm – he commits the most important information to his body. He is a canvas of tattoos; he becomes a walking text. Shelby's body is his most reliable tablet for his memory.

He suspects the people he's meeting are using him. Knowing that he'll soon forget the conversation he's having in a few minutes, he sends notes to his future self. Shelby anchors himself and his investigation to documents: his collection of Polaroid photos, his wad of notes, and his tattooed body. The texts found in the first two are not just commentaries but commands, functions, and prompts for action. They're performative in nature. "Don't trust her." Both the photos and hard copies are part of the detective's trade, methodical documentation. There's nothing special here; it's simply clinical.

The use of the body, though, is desperate. It is documentation's last resort; not ceremonial or ritualistic, but drastic. Shelby's reliance on his body expresses an expectation, perhaps something short of a hope – that he will not "lose" himself, his physical person. It is an expectation or hope that his body can continue to be a repository for information even though he knows his memory will fail him. There is a similar logic deployed in the PCN – an investment in the bodily disciplining of histories, cultures, identities and memories. Shelby's bodily commitment mirrors that of the PCN performers – taking to the stage as if history could not be committed anywhere else, to no place beyond that evening. It is as if each generation has to perform the long arc of sanctioned history in one night or it will not be performed at all.[1]

CONVERSATION: SUMMERTIME IN QUEZON CITY

I welcome *Kritika Kultura's* offer to feature some of my work on the PCNs and I especially appreciate the commentary by each of the respondents who participated in the forum.

Maramara sees parallel functions enacted by the PCN organizers and Philippine-based institutions such as the Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP), especially in how resident companies such as Ballet Philippines and *Tanghalang Pilipino* (dance and theater, respectively) represent themselves to the public. She finds in their self-advertisements a peculiar ambition and function – to articulate and disseminate the nation's patrimony. Perhaps Mexican sociologist and philosopher Nestor Garcia Canclini knew what former first lady Imelda Marcos was up to when she spearheaded the building of the CCP:

The dramatization of the patrimony is the effort to simulate that there is an origin, a founding substance, in relation with which we should act today. This is the basis of authoritarian cultural policies. The world is a stage, but what must be performed is already prescribed. The practices and objects of value are found and catalogued in a fixed repertory. To be cultured implies knowing that repertory of symbolic goods

and intervening correctly in the rituals that reproduce it. For that reason the notions of collection and ritual are key to deconstructing the links between culture and power (Canclini 110).

While the PCNs and CCP productions seem to tackle similar concerns, namely, the celebration of "founding events, the heroes who played the main roles in them, and the fetishized objects that evoke them," there is a significant difference. PCNs continue to be produced in a thoroughly decentralized and dispersed network of college and university campuses (occasionally mounted by high school students as well). Funding for the events is accomplished through a mix of campus- and community-based sources. On the other hand, works mounted at the CCP bears the imprimatur of the national government; the CCP was inaugurated in a series of executive orders beginning in 1969 (Canclini 110).

Panganiban identifies the overvaluation of certain kinds of expressive forms, specifically, modernized folkloric forms in the Philippines, as "the quintessential indigenous dance form." She develops an especially critical estimation that "culture" is often conflated with the production of artifacts. I could not agree more with her assessment.

Like Maramara, Panganiban takes to task agents of national cultural production such as the Bayanihan Philippine Dance Company for authoring – or, more to her point – reproducing static notions of culture. At the end of her piece, she asks if that process of romanticizing culture is inescapable, whereby once active, dynamic and precious activities seem to be consigned to the idyllic or the pastoral. But in addition to tracking the cultural logics of late-capital – either corporate- or government-sanctioned – we should also stay attuned to work that speaks out to us as deep listeners and co-authors of other versions of the world that struggle to remain relevant, on-time and irresistible. It's not a coincidence that some of today's forum participants in their own work pay attention to the rebel, the dissident, to those who refuse to remain locked into the schemes of marketeers, bottom-liners and one-nighters.

Both Abad and Jacobo pay attention to my use of the phrase "reverse exile." I credit Oscar Campomanes's use of the term in his 1992 essay on Filipino American literature, originally included in an important anthology of Asian American literary criticism. A "reverse exile" calls into question the telos of assimilation that has driven social science theories of cultural change and adaptation in the United States since the beginning of the twentieth century. That discourse is premised on what had been seen as the inevitable march from contact, conflict, and accommodation, to assimilation (Omi and Winant 14-23). Both Abad and Jacobo pick up on the notion that these processes, which at one time

seemed inescapable or universalizable across racial groups, are in fact, in need of more complicated theorizing – that the children of immigrants, sojourners, and others have developed compelling and complicated ways of thinking about their commitments to where they have called "home." More importantly, observers like Jacobo hone in on the potential for the PCN to frustrate expectations about cultural assimilability.

Abad reflects on his own conversations with his US-born niece and nephew, living in California. He senses in them an absence in what he describes as the "habits of mind and heart and speech that we would identify as Filipino." Because of their lack of access to elaborate productions mounted by large numbers of those in their peer group, he asks: "Are they better where they are, trying to assimilate as Americans?" Let's hope not.

Let's hope his Filipino American nephew and niece learn enough chords to know what Ani DiFranco means when she says, "I have a personal interest in the intersection of culture, capitalism and media, because I am often standing at that crossroads with my guitar" (Franken and DiFranco).

NOTE

1 My use of the plural form is a conscious one. The PCN demands the individuation of experience, to make singular sense of the past for the performer, for her student organization, her campus, and so on. It is another example of how nationalisms almost always casually rely on the singular rather than the plural. Said rails on about this:

> I think the one thing that I find, I guess, the most – I wouldn't say repellent, but I would say antagonistic – for me is identity. The notion of a *single* identity. And so multiple identity, the polyphony of many voices playing off against each other, without, as I say, the need to reconcile them, just to hold them together, is what my work is all about. More than one culture, more than one awareness, both in its negative and its positive modes. It's basic instinct. (99)

WORKS CITED

Campomanes, Oscar. "Filipinos in the United States and Their Literature of Exile." *Reading the Literatures of Asian America.* Ed. Shirley Geok-lin Lim and Amy Ling. PA: Temple UP, 1992. 49-78.

Canclini, Nestor Garcia. *Hybrid Cultures: Strategies for Entering and Leaving Modernity*. Trans. Christopher L. Chiappari and Silvia L. Lopez. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1995.

DiFranco, Ani. "Take This Media … Please!" *The Nation.* 7 Jan. 2002. 8 Nov. 2005 <http://www.thenation.com/doc/20020107/replies/2>.

Omi, Michael, and Howard Winant. *Racial Formation in the United States: From the 1960s to the 1990s*. 2nd ed. NY: Routledge, 1994.

Said, Edward. *Power, Politics and Culture.* NY: Vintage.

FEMINISM ACROSS OUR GENERATIONS

Delia D. Aguilar
Washington State University and Bowling Green State University
deliadag@hotmail.com

Karin Aguilar-San Juan
American Studies Department
Macalester College, St. Paul, Minnesota

Keywords
feminism, Filipina American Studies, women's studies

About the Authors
Delia D. Aguilar is Associate Professor of Women's Studies and Comparative American Cultures at Washington State University and Bowling Green State University. She is the author of *Filipino Housewives Speak*, *The Feminist Challenge*, and *Toward a Nationalist Feminism*, all published in the Philippines. She has written numerous articles on Filipino women, feminist theory, and women and development that have appeared in *Feminist Review*, *Women's Studies International Forum*, *Race & Class*, and *Monthly Review*, among others. She now teaches women's studies courses at the University of Connecticut.

Karin Aguilar-San Juan was an editor for *Dollars & Sense* magazine, a progressive monthly for non-economists, and a former member of the South End Press publishing collective. Since 1999, Karin has been a tenure-track faculty member in the American Studies Department of Macalester College in St. Paul, Minnesota. Her courses focus on racism and racial inequality, urban sociology, and Asian American Studies.

PREFACE

We are a Filipino mother and Filipino-American daughter whose perspectives on feminism—as a theory and as a political practice—have been formed over years of study, discussion, debate, and struggle in the Philippines and in the United States. In this piece, we offer our reflections as food for thought. We offer them because, despite the inevitably personal markings of the experiences we recount, they are in reality reflections of specific historical moments and of ongoing sociopolitical changes to which others, Filipino or not, might in some ways relate. We believe that our individual stories are ultimately all tied up with a broader and more enduring collective narrative about gender, race, colonialism, and national liberation.

Who are we? Delia was a professor of Women's Studies and Comparative American Cultures at Washington State University and at Bowling Green State University in Ohio. She now teaches women's studies courses at the University of Connecticut. She has written

several books published in the Philippines: *The Feminist Challenge* (1988), *Filipino Housewives Speak* (1991), and *Toward a Nationalist Feminism* (1998). Her most recent book, an anthology titled *Women and Globalization* (co-edited with Anne Lacsamana), addresses her latest concerns (2004). She was born in Capiz in 1938 and has lived in the United States since 1961. Karin, the older of Delia's two children, was born in Boston, Massachusetts in 1962. Karin is a former editor for *Dollars & Sense* magazine, a progressive monthly for non-economists, and a former member of the South End Press publishing collective. Ten years ago, she edited and introduced an anthology, *The State of Asian America: Activism and Resistance in the 1990s.* Since 1999, Karin has been a tenure-track faculty member in the American Studies Department at Macalester College in St. Paul, Minnesota. Her courses focus on racism and racial inequality, urban sociology, and Asian American Studies. She likes to refer to living in Minnesota as being "stranded in the Great White North."

In place of a co-authored formal essay on feminism, we decided to engage in a "dialogue" where we would draw out each other's ideas by responding to a set of questions that we could answer in writing and exchange over e-mail. Our first question, "How did you become a feminist?" led naturally to the second set of questions: Did/does feminism help to frame your politics? Or does/did your politics frame your engagement with feminism/feminists? The third and last question, "What do you see as the concerns of young Filipino-American women today, and how would you address them?" came as an effort to connect our thoughts about the past to the present, and to establish some generational links in our own experiences that we hope would interest not only Filipinos and Filipino Americans, but also those whose feminism has an international reach.

QUESTION 1: HOW DID YOU BECOME A FEMINIST?

Karin Aguilar-San Juan: I feel that the "how" in this question must first bring in the "when," and then the "why," and finally the "with what consequences." I would say that I became a feminist *in utero*. How could I not with a powerhouse for a mother? But that answer would as easily implicate my mother—who will speak for herself here—as it would take me off the hook, as if biology could provide any kind of answer to this ultimately political topic.

If I was not a feminist by birth, at least I was born a girl into a world that does not see girls as having the same potential as boys. Maybe that was not always true in my family, but it was true in school, with my friends, and in the town that I grew up in. I was encouraged to read and write and practice spelling, not to play soccer or basketball

as I would often have preferred. Sometimes I cannot separate the moments in which I was treated "as a girl" from the moments I was treated "as not American." In fact, being racialized—treated like a foreigner because of my physical appearance and assumed cultural traits—during childhood is a much more vivid memory for me than being gendered. So actually, I do separate out the gender and the racial process as I look back on my past. Perhaps that is also because I probably fit into many of the expectations of girlhood, much more than I fit into the expectations for being "an American."

My mother taught me to fight for my rights. I began practicing these lessons in the backyard. I remember wrestling little Bobby Tate to the ground for borrowing my bicycles without my permission, stealing it really. I think Mom watched from the kitchen window. She might have cheered me on. Later, I had to confront the white boys (always boys) in high school who would taunt me with racial slurs. Armed at home with nasty rejoinders by my mother, I would walk up to these pathetic individuals and say, "Do you know that in my country we EAT white monkeys like you?" I don't remember any response from them—just mild shock. Sometimes I would have to confront my high school teachers for their narrowness of mind, particularly regarding the politics of the time. I learned to use polite language, and references to ideas and books in my comments. It was the late 1970s, and there was plenty to debate in the classroom: the justness of the war in Vietnam, police brutality against anti-war protestors, whether radical activism is an American tradition, the role of labor unions in improving society. Then, of course my favorite topic: the role of the US government in propping up the Marcos dictatorship in the Philippines. I gave my teachers all of my mind in those years, and I could only do so because I thought I deserved to be heard. I think that made me a feminist of some kind, at least in the eyes of those I harassed.

In college I began to take on feminism as a political cause. I remember writing an essay for the newsletter of the Women's Center on Raya Dunayevskaya and her idea of humanism. Early on, then, I wrote about social change as a feminist, from a feminist perspective. Instinctively I knew that the Women's Center was providing one of the only venues I would ever have for developing and articulating my views about the world. Feminism became one place, one theoretical platform, from which to interpret and criticize the world. I remember in a seminar on Marx and Social Theory, my classmates and I had a mutiny when our professor declared that feminists had nothing to say about Marxism or social theory. After that session, we took over and taught the class to ourselves. I worked hard on a paper about Juliet Mitchell, one of the first Marxist Feminists I encountered, as if I were planning to convince our professor about the relevance of feminist theory. It was

good for me, but I don't think he ever changed his view about feminists.

When I came out as a lesbian in my last year of college, "feminism" finally made sense to me as a theory and as a way of life. It just felt like all the pieces fit together and I got a clue about who I was and who I might become. Looking back, I would say that feminists made a place for me to take control of my own future; without an idea of personal independence (which is a very loaded, biased, and historically constructed idea), I could not have pushed on to new things. As far as I was concerned, feminism allowed me to deal with my inner world on my own terms. In a way, feminism allowed me to move "past" gender, to disregard people's expectations of me as a young woman who should eventually marry a man and produce his children and live in his, and their, shadows.

In the end, I was not as interested in feminism as I was in other social issues or causes. My main issues back then were Central America and the Philippines. I was mostly interested in fighting US multinationals and their death grip on the Third World. Of course, the people who cared what I thought were usually feminists, or people who were influenced and informed by feminism. You know, I don't think I made much of an impact on big, old, white corporate men or women. When I began to work as an educator and organizer in Boston in the mid-1980s, I did so in an environment that accepted and encouraged women to be strong people in their own right. So that had to involve feminism in some way. As a young lesbian, I also had to find my way in a local movement that did not always know what to do with me. Within a week of moving to Boston, I had a semi-traumatic encounter with the hard-core leftists in Chinatown who told me I would have to "subordinate my cause" (meaning "homosexuality") to the cause of socialism. They actually used those words, too. It was semi-traumatic because I had the same attitude towards them that I had towards the boys who taunted me in high school. I was just enraged and annoyed at their stupidity. I could not believe people could be so idiotic as to draw such simple lines in the sand, and believe in them heart and soul.

My eleven years as an activist in Boston are in many ways foundational to my thinking now about feminism. I don't attend to being a feminist. I mean, I don't label myself that way, nor do I spend much energy in feminist organizations. I gave $25 to Planned Parenthood and I walked miles and miles to help find a cure for breast cancer, and that is what many people—especially rich, white, suburban housewives mean by "feminism." But those gestures are simple, not profound or radical. I did those things because they don't hurt anyone and maybe they help a tiny little bit. But I think I do other things with much more gusto, attention, and belief. I attend to other ways of creating political and social change in the world.

When I think about whether or not I am a feminist, I remember what Sonia Shah wrote in her introduction to *Dragon Ladies: Asian American Feminists Breathe Fire.* She said that Asian American women have to deal with Asian American issues because no other feminists will do that for them. It's not like we can expect white or black women to take up our Asian issues. In the same way, I think I cannot pretend I don't care about feminism, because there is hardly any other venue in which my work and my vision—and more generally, the fate of women like me—will be entertained as worthwhile. If I were to walk away from feminism as a cause, I think I could not expect to be treated seriously by non-feminists, or anti-feminists, or homophobes, or racists. In the end, I am forced to embrace feminism and to make feminism matter to me, because the world is otherwise not going to have a place for someone who thinks, and acts, like I do.

Delia D. Aguilar: This question would have been easier to answer ten or fifteen years ago. It isn't that I would have had a different response then. It's simply that feminism means so many different things now, partly as a result of the success of the women's movement of the 60s and 70s. Now institutionalized and integrated into the mainstream, feminism has become domesticated, losing its critical edge. So it just isn't possible for me to speak with the same excitement or urgency. But perhaps I can talk about this later.

I came to feminism, I suppose, the way that many others during my time did--through political struggles of a broader nature. I was politically awakened, to use the jargon of liberation movements of that period, by events transpiring in the homeland. The declaration of martial rule by Ferdinand Marcos was met with fierce opposition by large masses of people, many of whom were placed on the wanted list of the regime and forced to join the revolutionary underground. In the United States, a group of young Filipino progressives who had fled the repression began to organize in support of that anti-imperialist, national democratic movement, urging attention to the US government's complicity in giving military and economic aid to the dictatorship. It was through participation in this movement that I came to grips with what leftist circles called "the woman question." Put more plainly, it was in the process of organizing—at rallies, picket lines, house meetings and, more crucially, in closed meetings where the "political line" was set forth and discussed—that I was struck by the incongruity of it all. Here we were, talking about fighting for a more humane society, one in which class differences would eventually be eliminated and where women would gain equality with men. Yet I saw that the way we were conducting ourselves contrasted sharply with these stated goals. Without question, men consistently took leadership positions in the most important activities (those requiring

the use of the mind), while women were relegated to traditional support roles.

I think it is important to emphasize that my awareness of women's subordination by no means came automatically. I happened at this time to be attending meetings on my campus of a group called the Women's Radical Union. We read socialist literature, discussed the Marxist analysis of capitalism, and talked about the emancipation of women. While many of the women in this group were graduate students who were acutely sensitive to macho behavior among their male peers and professors, their feminism was tempered by their socialism. In this way they differed markedly from liberal or radical feminists whose feminism was confrontational and direct, but narrowly confined to gender relations. The latter never had any appeal for me because, of course, I was deeply conscious of my "Third World" status. It was also at this time that I first began to teach women's studies, courses in marriage and family, and gender roles socialization. Because textbooks on these topics broached from a women's perspective were not to see print until several years later, in the beginning years of my teaching I used pamphlets from the New England Free Press and other underground publications, all of which stressed the overthrow of patriarchy as well as capitalism. Interestingly enough, despite these activities, I did not refer to myself as a "feminist." "Feminism" in revolutionary Third World struggles was then anathema. It was considered bourgeois, individualist, and divisive. I understood well that MAKIBAKA, the revolutionary underground women's organization founded in 1970, stood for the liberation of women, not feminism.

Feminist though I was not, I was determined to engage "the woman question" among my revolutionary comrades because, by this point, the limitations of the national democratic platform's stance on women had become apparent to me. The fights I had were angry, fierce, and heated, and these were not confined to men. I questioned what I saw then as the productivist orientation of the movement and its instrumental reckoning of women's participation in it. I wanted conventional gender relations addressed and changed. I was told in not so many words that women in the Philippines were already liberated because they controlled the purse strings in the family, and because they were respected members of society, and because they were strong. Weren't women guerrilla fighters proof of this? That's what I received in response to my mailed queries to the Philippines--underground photos of red women fighters! And aren't women, by merely joining the movement, already beginning to cast off old norms that require them to stay home? I remember addressing an audience of mostly women in the Philippines in the early 80s, where one very articulate woman stood up and told me exactly that, using this very language. (A mere two years later, she was to become an outspoken feminist and head of a women's

NGO.) Those were extremely frustrating times for me, so frustrating that I decided to turn to academic work to find empirical support for my stand. I set to work on an examination of the gender division of household labor in the Philippines, an issue I considered vital to my argument, by conducting interviews with women across class (women who were mothers) and letting them speak for themselves. I decided to write about this as I could not find a receptive ear and felt that our debates had reached an impasse.

At about this time, I was invited to join an ongoing Marxist/feminist study group that had been in existence since the early 70s. My involvement here also proved to be another significant source of tension. For if I was waging a battle against sexism among my Filipino comrades, with these women I would be raising doubts about their specific version of Marxism, or of Marxist/feminism. Within this group, however, I found support in the few women of color who had been invited to join along with me. They, too, were active in national liberation solidarity struggles and had reservations about these Marxist/feminist women identical to mine. What was "Marxist" about these women when their vocabulary was circumscribed by patriarchal issues and the politics of gender? Holding our own separate meetings, we women of color explored the ways in which we could effectively bring our anti-imperialist concerns to the main group. We were particularly taken aback and appalled by the reaction of one white woman after we had given individual presentations on national liberation in Puerto Rico and the Philippines. Turning to the other white women, she casually dismissed our very presence by asking, "Should we support national liberation struggles that are patriarchal?" I would say that the tensions I encountered in this and other arenas of conflict were often quite unsettling, but they were useful in goading me to study Marxist feminism on my own.

In the meantime, feminist stirrings could be discerned at the margins of the national democratic movement back home. In groping for answers to my questions, I was put in touch with a group of women in the Philippines who, themselves no longer satisfied with the old line on women, were starting to hold forums about organizing an autonomous women's movement. Many of them had earned their place in the movement as cultural workers; several had undergone incarceration as political prisoners. I am certain that it was their immersion in the movement that gave them the confidence to express dissent without feeling vulnerable to the facile charge of "divisiveness." I still recall the excitement of those small gatherings. While these activists called upon me to provide the theoretical frame within which their discomfiture as women could be articulated, the now gendered stories which they shared with me gave me the foundation, in practice, upon which to base my critique. I was also much encouraged and energized in knowing that there were

several such aggrupations of women, not just the one I was meeting with. Not long after this, Ninoy Aquino was assassinated. The event drew the ire of the middle class who took to the streets as it had not before. The ensuing opening up of what is now referred to as a "democratic space" led to the mobilization of a wide variety of "sectors" comprising Philippine society. Shortly afterward, a semi-autonomous women's movement developed and flourished, easily becoming the most vibrant of the sectoral organizations. GABRIELA was founded and, with its establishment, women came out in the open declaring themselves "feminists." It must be remarked that when they did, they made sure to explain that they were appropriating the term for themselves and imbuing it with their own nationalist content. It was not until this moment that I, too, could give myself this label.

QUESTION 2: DID/DOES FEMINISM HELP TO FRAME YOUR POLITICS? OR, DOES/DID YOUR POLITICS FRAME YOUR ENGAGEMENT WITH FEMINISM/FEMINISTS?

Delia: Although it may seem circuitous, I think that I can best answer this question by continuing my narrative. In the late 80s, 1987 to be exact, we (Karin's father, brother, and myself) spent the year in the Philippines. That was a very, very stimulating period. Politics was in the air, and the atmosphere was, quite simply, electric. The women's movement, a feminist one now, was the most alive and visible among the progressive associations. I set up a small study group of women who met weekly to read and study feminism. It was very different from any group I had participated in the United States. For one thing, these women had a wealth of experience in revolutionary activity, and so every little paragraph that we read (representing theory) was incessantly interrupted by a discussion of multiple examples of lived realities (representing practice). For another, many of our weekly meetings had to be shelved because there were urgent actions constantly taking place, some of them on behalf of a person or persons arrested or tortured, while others entailed joining massive demonstrations. But now that the democratic space allowed travel and an easy flow of ideas from the West, I perceived an understanding of race and racism to be an important subject for us Filipino feminists to grapple with. That was not a topic that was readily grasped in our study group. But it bothered me no end that US feminists would come and lecture to Filipino women about how, for example, we should "not keep blaming colonialism for [our] problems as women." The message: move on, already; you just don't know it, but it's your men who are the problem. It also bothered me that Filipino feminists could mindlessly quote something that, say, Betty Friedan wrote and apply that directly

to our situation as Filipino women. As a result, I found myself waging a wholly new educational struggle. I began reading feminist theory in a different way--and now feminist presses and feminist theory-making in the US were burgeoning--and I started thinking and writing about how feminist theoretical production in the industrial West could adversely affect Third World women's movements.

When we returned to the United States, the growing dominance of the "cultural turn" was becoming evident in the academy. Having just arrived from the Philippines where, despite a lively women's organization, the progressive movement as a whole had retained its economist character, I welcomed this trend as an antidote. Postmodernism seemed to give room for conversations around race and gender in addition to class in its insistence on recognizing "difference." I initially experienced this trend as freeing, both from the restrictions of a rigid class-bound perspective embraced by national liberation, and from the racism and narrowness of middle-class, white feminism. By this time, too, the neo-conservatism inaugurated by the Reagan/Bush administration had taken hold and progressive organizations in the US had all but disappeared. What was left of organizing became local and specific, having lost any overarching or unifying frame. In fact, thinking back, I realize that it was as early as 1982 that feminists in the US started asking one another, where's the women's movement? Connected as I was to the struggle in the Philippines, I wasn't troubled by this, knowing fully well that it was very much alive in the Philippines and in other Third World countries.

Today feminism is confined to the academy in the United States. There has not been a women's movement to speak of for some time, although its absence is something feminists themselves seem fearful of examining seriously. Progressive politics in the academy has been enacted mainly in the discursive, cultural terrain, with a profound disconnect from the real world, even when it employs "left" rhetoric. Its language is elitist, its jargon incomprehensible except to initiates, and its progressive claims highly questionable. To be expected of a Third World neocolonial formation, the academy in the Philippines has not been free of this influence. But as always, rapid changes in the global political economy—more specifically, the devastation and immiseration that neo-liberalism has brought about—have spawned a worldwide anti-globalization movement that is now difficult to ignore. The "Battle of Seattle" of 1999 and the numerous international gatherings in its wake signal a new, altogether different type of movement. In contrast to academics, feminists included, whose unspoken mantra has been Margaret Thatcher's TINA (There Is No Alternative), anti-globalization activists speak of a new world that is possible. Perhaps some among them imagine a "new world" in which capitalism might be humanized, but

one hopes that others will come to envision a totally different society. This has to happen, because following the terror of 9/11, the Bush administration's "war on terror," and the invasion of Iraq, it is an understatement to assert that we live in perilous times.

Of course, I continue my interest in Filipino women and in political struggle. The unprecedented diaspora of Filipino migrant workers is currently a topic that is being researched by feminists in the United States. This is all very good, but only if these studies do not fail to critique the predations of globalized capitalism. Unfortunately, so far little is happening along these lines. For this reason, feminist politics as it exists right now is hardly relevant to me. You might say that my tenure as a "feminist" has been very short lived.

Karin: I think for me, because of when and how I grew up, feminism and politics were all the same thing. I mean that "feminism" was one small, mostly unspoken part of what I understood as "politics." It was all just woven together into one cloth: the idea that girls/women are human, and the idea that all humans deserve to live in a just and fair society. As I remember my childhood, feminism hardly ever needed to be spoken out loud. I was the oldest child, and I do not remember being treated differently from my younger brother. I saw my mother as her own person, not a shadow of my father as was the case for some of my friends' parents. Politics writ large shaped my memories of school, and growing up as a political person included discussions with my parents, homework assignments, and arguments with my teachers about the evils of capitalism, colonialism, and US imperialism.

From the kitchen table, I could see a poster my parents had taped to the dark wood paneling. It was a black mask on an orange background that read: "*Kung hindi ngayon, kailan pa*?" (If not now, then when?) I always interpreted that to mean that one day there would be a people's revolution and on that day, the people would be free. It was a hopeful message, but also a call to action and political consciousness—a warning about the dangers that would come if one did *not* act or become aware.

From when I was in fifth grade in 1972 until 1984 when I graduated from college, the main issue—really the defining issue—that shaped my political life was the US-Marcos dictatorship in the Philippines. This was the issue that shaped my parents' vexed relationship to their homeland, and so therefore it also shaped my sense of connection to a place and a history beyond my parents. Looking back I know this is so because at my 10th high school reunion in 1990, a white American woman whom I liked but barely knew greeted me with a fist in the air. "*Makibaka!*" she shouted, flashing me a big grin. She was referring, of course, to the revolutionary slogan of the anti-imperialist movement that

I taught all my classmates (and everyone in the entire school, evidently) and also wore plastered in orange letters on my favorite brown sweatshirt for our class picture that year. I stood in the middle of the front row, so the slogan is plainly visible to this day to anyone who still has the picture!

I don't think I ever thought of myself as anything other than "Filipino" until after college in the mid- to late 1980s. Feminism was an assumed category; it could be so for me because my parents did not place any obvious expectations upon me to fulfill my "womanly" role as someone else's wife, and I was never instructed to marry a doctor, lawyer, or some such professional *man*. Instead, I was very clearly expected to become that person *myself.* In addition, I also received the message that my professional independence should be the highest—maybe *only* goal—above and beyond any kind of personal or family relationship. I wonder if other women of my generation got a similarly strong message from their 70s activist parents.

And the role models I had for being a politically engaged Filipino person were not only, maybe hardly ever, men. For example, I remember Sister Caridad and Father Gigi, crazy-acting radical clergy who gave themselves wholeheartedly to fighting martial law in the Philippines. I remember my parents' friends who were hippie artists or writers or students or teachers. I remember that hardly anyone my parents knew and liked got married in a traditional ceremony, and certainly none of the women went so far as to change their last names. In contrast to these activist friends, "regular" (white, mainstream, heterosexual) people in town such as the town doctor and dentist had "all-American" families with wives who didn't even have their own first names and children who were allowed to go out on dates and drive the family car.

Feminism became an identifiable political agenda unto itself for me in college. Having professional, academic parents boosted me into an elite world in which I was able to find myself and define myself in personal, social, and political terms. As it turns out, many of my female peers were raised in horribly patriarchal families where ancestral lineage mattered because generations of accumulated wealth was passed down through men. Many of my smartest women friends were never expected to do much more than graduate with a shiny degree from our fancy college, only to find a man of the same, or better, social status. They were rebelling against the weight of all of that, something I didn't know anything about. My best friend in college came from a similar background as me, with a powerful, highly educated mother and clearly articulated expectation that she be her own person. We got along because of an assumed belief in our own capabilities as human—which, since we are women, could be called "feminism."

Today I would say that feminism gives me political voice. I mean that without feminism as an agenda that demands attention for marginalized groups, my views and my ideas would never be included in any political forum. But at the same time, feminism does not necessarily guide me in determining the terms of my political engagement. Now as a person with job stability in academia, I look for ways to build and support movements for social justice. I am less interested in feminism as a theory—say, coming out of women's studies—than I am in feminism as form of engagement among theorists and practitioners of social change. I was never very attracted to Women's Studies, or to the professionalization of feminism in academia. At the same time, as a person now seeking tenure at a liberal arts college, I am very grateful to the feminists in academia who included me in their circles even before I had earned the "proper" credentials because they recognized my writings and organizing work as contributions to their field.

While feminism and feminists have helped me to find myself, I think I would have to say that as a political agenda for broad-based structural change, feminism has never appealed to me. And, as feminists have moved into academia and turned common-sense ideas about women and gender oppression into high theory, I have been even less compelled to keep up with what is going on there. Similarly, I have not followed developments in LGBTQ (lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgendered/queer) studies, or queer studies, because I have not found them interesting, or engaged, with the realities that I understand deeply and care about. In some ways, that has been my loss, as I have been unable to participate in sophisticated ways in conversations happening across academia. Recently, a queer Latino scholar visited our campus and I was invited to join an informal conversation with him over dinner. Considered a "rising star" in his field, this person is immersed in academic culture, its norms and its values are embedded in his every gesture, and yet he is also committed to theorizing for social change. I admired his dedication to his work; I even got excited about some of the ideas he proposed about "queer" as a stance of political rebellion, for instance. But I do admit that the job of high theorizing does not appeal to me much—which is what most of the feminists and queers around me are doing these days, when they are not going shopping.

So if feminism does not shape my politics, what does? I think I have created my own framework for social justice out of an eclectic, and perhaps somewhat strange, collection of life and work experiences. In this, of course, I demonstrate my many privileges: my view of what is wrong in the world—and how it should be changed—is not based in a position of stark oppression or economic subordination, and I do not keep an organic connection to a neighborhood or a social group or a political party or a nation. In this, I suppose I am very

"American," very individualist, middle-class, and just plain petit-bourgeois. This is my background, and I don't think I can or need to do anything to change it. On the other hand, one of the points of these essays is to suggest that our views about feminism have been shaped by the particular contexts in which we developed into politically conscious adults. I have been exposed throughout my life to a variety of people and struggles from which I have learned that human suffering is not natural or inevitable, and that many changes are both possible and necessary.

Now as a person who is paid to teach and write about that world—even though I am deeply ambivalent about being ensconced in an ivory tower and being stranded, as I often tell people, in the Great White North—I would say that you cannot claim to "know" anything if you do not understand who you are and where you came from. That may not be a question of feminism, but it is definitely a question of community.

QUESTION 3: WHAT DO YOU SEE AS THE CONCERNS OF YOUNG FILIPINO-AMERICAN WOMEN TODAY, AND HOW WOULD YOU ADDRESS THEM?

Karin: I see this question as a gesture toward the issues I'd like young Filipino-American women to think about and understand more fully. Maybe I'll break this question down into two parts. The first part is about my relationship to young Filipino-American women today. I ask myself: Do you even know what are the concerns of young Fil-Am women today? How do you know? What, if any, do you think are your obligations to them? And the second part is about feminism as it relates to young Filipino-American women. I ask: Does the feminism that mattered to you as you were growing up still matter to young women today? In other words, how has the world changed for Filipino-American women since the 1970s and 80s when you were "young"?

OK. So for the first question, I will have to frankly assess my relationship to young Filipino-American women—indeed, to young women of any nationality, race, or ethnicity—as sociological rather than direct, as a theoretical matter of shared experience, mostly imagined, not based on everyday occurrences. Sometimes, I think this is sad; it is a tribute to my assimilation both as a hyphenated American and as a second-generation academic. I have moved away from anything that looks like "roots." But I think it is important to be honest, to reflect and acknowledge my "flotation" position in this regard because there is always someone out there who wants me to "represent" a category I may not fully understand or relate to. I think we all know too well what it means to be

tokenized, and sometimes I have no choice but to play the role I have been given by dominant society. In being frank and transparent, I hope I raise some questions about what it means to be "authentic."

The easiest way for me to find out something about Filipino-American women, given my estranged and alienated relationship to almost any kind of Filipino-American group, is to "google" them. But what do I discover by typing in "Filipina women" into an internet search? Same thing you'll find. Lots and lots of sites for sex and marriage: single women seeking foreign men, pen pals, pornography featuring "cherry blossoms," and mail-order brides. Sick to my stomach, I scroll down hoping to find something more empowering, political, community-oriented, or, at the very least, just plain angry. The first informational site I see is a 1995 article about Filipino women campaigning against sex tourism in Australia. The second: a scientific article about breast cancer among Filipino-American women. The third: a United Nations document about trafficking of Filipino women to Japan. So far, not uplifting.

A few more pages of scrolling and I find the Filipino Women's Network based in the Philippines and learn about a conference to discuss, among other things, the Filipino-American community in 2013. Another site reminds me of the anthology of writings by Filipino and Filipino-American women—but these are not young people or youth. Eventually I find newfilipina.com and *Botika Babae* (www.babaegear.com) where I learn about Urduja, a legendary tribal warrior princess. Of course, it is not long before I find the site for FAWN, an organization dedicated to Filipino-American women that is based in Minnesota—so close to me that it is in the same zip code! (I am friendly with at least one member of FAWN; I don't have any principled reason for being out of touch with them.) Several hours later, I discover myself bleary-eyed from web surfing, having visited everything from a Filipino youth group to Jim Zwick's on-line anti-imperialist history lesson and bookstore.

There are other ways that I have a sense of what is going on for my younger counterparts. I teach Asian American Studies, and I have met Filipino-American students on many campuses and in many different communities. A few years ago, I was asked to deliver the keynote address for an organization representing Filipino-Americans in the Midwest. I got a feeling then, for some of the things young Filipino-American women care about. Recently through my action/research projects, I have gotten to know teenage activists of color in Detroit and the Twin Cities. They are not Filipinos, and some of them are boys, but they are all youth who are becoming politically aware and engaged in social movement building. Through them I am learning about the world through young eyes and

getting in touch with a new generation of leaders for social change.

What do I think I know about today's Fil-Am women? I know that some things have not changed since I was younger. They are bombarded with contradictory messages about their beauty and desirability (from the perspective of white European men), their exotic culture (eminently saleable in the form of jewelry, clothing, and music but somehow not distinct enough to merit recognition in mainstream US venues), their history of resistance to colonization in the Philippines, their struggle for survival as migrant workers throughout the Filipino diaspora. Certain things have definitely changed for the better since I was young: professional narratives about our history and current-day experience as Filipino Americans are more comprehensive and complex than they were thirty years ago. I believe this is largely the result of decades of grassroots activism among students and faculty who demanded that education at public universities serve the needs of the surrounding communities. Out of these struggles for Ethnic Studies and Filipino-American Studies in particular have emerged a population of Filipino-Americans scholars and teachers who help us all to articulate our own sociological condition.

Although these past few years seem to promise troubled times in the future, the possibilities for radical social change are all very exciting. This is not to downplay the very horrible conditions that face many young Filipino and Filipino- American women, particularly the domestic workers in the US, Canada, and around the globe who are so far from home and family, trapped in lives of virtual slavery. Their voices—among others—are what remind me that oppression is real, that for many people "being a Filipino woman" is not an imaginary state of existence but a completely real and tangible state of struggle for survival and connection to home and family.

I see great hope not so much in my ability, or my mother's, to make these conceptual connections between our lived realities and the collective history of the Filipino people. After all, the point is not simply to liberate ourselves as individuals, to feel good about where we have been and who we have become. I would say that Mom and I have done a lot of "cognitive liberation" for ourselves. Besides, if all I expected from feminism was my own personal freedom, I might as well have become a right-wing Christian fundamentalist. At least then I would feel more victorious at this particular historical moment—a moment I believe must soon pass.

I see hope, instead, in the possibility that the younger generation, Filipino-American women included, will create a new synthesis of radical thought and action that draws constructive lessons from the 1960s, 70s, 80s, and onward. Perhaps in the 21st century, "Pinay feminism" will have a role in these changes.

So what can be done to improve the condition of Filipino-American women? EDUCATE! ORGANIZE! The same work that must be done to free all humanity from the deadening cycles of mass consumption: the food that we eat is deadly, the news that we read is censored, the taxes that we pay go to fund war, the schools that our children attend teach them compliance, the homes that we live in tie us into life-time contracts of debt … All of this we justify by striving toward an "American Dream" of fitting in, of being accepted, of having "equal access" (to consumer goods and services), of preserving our cultural icons (in their most innocuous forms). These are not issues that only Filipino-American women face, of course, but they are ultimately the issues that we ALL face.

Delia: I would like to begin by saying that I came to the United States at age 22, more or less already a fully-formed adult. My sense of myself as a Filipino was firm; there was nothing about it to be either doubted or confirmed. Consequently, in bringing up my children, all I could teach them was what I knew, which was how to be a Filipino in the United States. It was much later when they had developed their own separate selves that I gleaned from them what it meant to have this other identity, "Filipino-American." Now I cannot say how my insistence on "Filipino-ness" inoculated them against the warping effects of US consumerist culture (which was my hope), or whether this insistence constrained their development in ways I did not wish. In any event, one always is relieved when things turn out just fine in the end in spite of one's worst failings. And when your offspring surpass and exceed your wildest dreams and expectations, what can you do except bless your stars?

Having admitted my shortcomings thus, let me now try to answer the question. I suspect that Filipino-American youth are forced to confront their identity as "other" by the racism that they encounter. From what I've observed, those whose parents are immigrants may not find much help because many immigrant Filipinos tend to negate or deny their racialized experiences, attributing these, instead, to their own insufficient enculturation or their individual failures. Filipino-American women may experience racialization not as outright derogation of their person, but in terms of being exoticized. On the other hand, for better or for ill, there are now many more Filipinos in the United States than thirty years ago, and we live in closer proximity to one other and in large enough numbers to establish a distinct community. It is possible now to produce movies about Filipino-American life, for example, and to have an audience for these. As a result, racism and the alienation it gives rise to may be mitigated by living in the presence of an organized community.

I think that there are two general topics that young Filipino-Americans should

educate themselves about, whether or not they ever visit the Philippines with their parents. They should study the history of the United States and learn about what's called internal colonies. In doing so they will be able to locate themselves alongside other racialized "minorities" whose labor in cities and in farms has been appropriated to build this country and to create wealth that they have no access to. Today no one--certainly not Filipinos--can afford to remain ignorant about the nature of the society we live in. They should study the history of the Philippines, in particular that written by Renato Constantino, and learn about how our history is tightly bound up with that of the United States. It is through educating themselves about these matters that they can begin to comprehend the current diaspora of Filipinos, over 70 percent of whom are women, to over 162 different countries—as mail-order brides, overseas contract workers, and entertainers. Whether they like it or not, it is this diaspora that sustains the public perception of Filipino women as patient, docile, well-equipped to please men, and all those other qualities that "liberated" white women are presumed to have forsworn. They need to understand why the country of their parents has been declared as "the second front of the war against terrorism" and what ramifications this has for them.

If there is an opportunity to visit the Philippines, young Filipino Americans should seize it, less to frolic in megamalls and to be impressed by the luxurious accommodations offered by local tourist spots, than to learn how the majority of Filipinos actually live and how they organize for change. For instance, I have sent three students (alas, they were not Filipinos) to study in the intensive women's studies "intercultural program" of St. Scholastica's College. Although it is commonplace to say that students' lives get turned around by practically any study-abroad stint, I can say that this experience is singular. Another student (a Latina, this time) attended the Philippine Studies summer program and she, too, underwent a profound political transformation. I think what these young people acquired from their visits is a kind of awareness that has been out of fashion in this country for a while now. Egyptian feminist Nawal El Saadawi expressed this about feminists in her country today: "They are unaware of the connection between the liberation of women on the one hand and of the economy and country on the other. Many consider only patriarchy as their enemy and ignore corporate capitalism." This lack of political awareness has led to a return to essentialism, notwithstanding postmodern endeavors to eradicate it, as witness the popularity on campuses worldwide of Eve Ensler's V-Day. In the Philippines, the ban on *The Vagina Monologues* at Ateneo University was met with vigorous protests by both faculty and students, all in the name of artistic freedom and freedom of expression. No one thought to question the patently upper-middle-class, "made-in-USA" stamp of the play,

nor its condescending gaze on Third-World female populations it is determined to "save." No one even thought to consider the ramifications of the landing in Southern Philippines at that very same time of US Navy Seals and Green Berets, and to connect these concurrent events.

If I speak with what might appear like a curious presumption that Filipino-American youth could actually have an interest in these weighty issues, it is because I've been at conferences set up by young people (yes, Filipino Americans) where these have been the main themes. A couple of decades back, there were too few young Filipino Americans in universities to make such conferences possible. Moreover, a decade ago the political quiescence of US society as a whole lent itself easily only to cultural events accentuated by *adobo*, *pancit*, and *tinikling*-type offerings in a bid for "ethnics" to simultaneously assimilate and to celebrate their "diversity." But events are fast transpiring--the recent summary deportations of Filipinos, among them--that force a recognition of a radically different geopolitics. That young Filipino Americans are holding conferences of the kind that I attended is very encouraging. I have no doubt that gatherings like this will soon become more widespread. Also full of promise is the fact that, unlike in the 70s, Filipino Americans now have become a fairly visible contingent in mass mobilizations like anti-war and anti-globalization rallies. All of these are hopeful signs of a coming to political cognizance of a new generation of Filipino Americans.

WORKS CONSULTED

Aguilar, Delia D., and Anne Lacsamana, eds. *Women and Globalization*. NY: Humanity, 2004.

---. "Questionable Claims: Colonialism Redux, Feminist Style." *Race and Class* 5.1 (1998):1-12.

---. "The Limits of Postmodernism: A Critique from the Periphery." *Nature, Society, & Thought* 8.3 (1995): 255-73.

---. "Third World Revolution and First World Feminism: Toward a Dialogue." *Promissory Notes: Women in the Transition to Socialism*. Ed. Sonia Kruks, Rayna Rapp, and Marilyn Young. NY: Monthly Review Press, 1989. 338-44.

Aguilar-San Juan, Karin. *Staying Vietnamese: Community and Place in Orange County and Boston.* PA: Temple UP, forthcoming.

---. "Fields of Dreams: Place, Race and Memory in Boston's Vietnamese American Community." Vietnamese America. Spec. issue of *Amerasia*. 29.1 (2003): 80-96.

---. "Gazing/Colonial: Looking at the Vietnamese American Community in Orange County and Boston." *Hitting Critical Mass: A Journal of Asian American Culture* 5.1 (1998): 89-106.

---. "Going Home: Enacting Justice in Queer Asian America." *Queer in Asian America.* Ed. Alice Y. Hom and David L. Eng. PA: Temple UP, 1998. 25-40.

El Saadawi, Nawal. "Egypt's Leading Feminist Unveils Her Thoughts." Interview with Ahmed Nassef. 25 Feb. 2004 <http://www.womensnews.org/article.cfm/dyn/aid/1726/context/ourdailylives>.

Shah, Sonia, ed. *Dragon Ladies: Asian American Women Breathe Fire*. Boston: South End, 1998.

KOLUM KRITIKA

RESPONSE TO "FEMINISM ACROSS OUR GENERATIONS"

Charlie Veric
Department of English
Ateneo de Manila University, Philippines
charlie.veric@yale.edu

About the Author
Charlie Veric is a faculty member of the Department of English of the Ateneo de Manila University. A poet and a critic, he is on study leave to pursue his doctoral studies at Yale University.

"Feminism across our Generations" is an engaging piece that allows us to understand the formation of two women as "feminists." In place of a formal essay, the piece is offered as a dialogue where the authors "would draw out each other's ideas" on feminism and, presumably, its discontents. Here the personal inexorably becomes political. I assume this is the underpinning reason for the article's format. This kind of engagement has its power. Unfortunately, it also has a weakness that can undermine the wisdom it hopes to convey.

First of all, the article is difficult to place given, on the one hand, its form and, on the other, its scope. The article, for example, collects the two authors' responses to a set of general questions the authors themselves have fashioned. The readers, however, may ask: Why, specifically, these two authors' responses? For whom do they speak and for what specific purpose? What specifically do the readers stand to gain from the authors' personal and, avowedly, political reflections?

Such an unnecessary confusion can be solved, perhaps, by providing a fuller and more nuanced preface that will explain to the readers the "theoretical" logic of the reflections. (I am aware the authors expressly avoid the theoretical. I use the term here to mean clarification.)

There is a need, in other words, to historicize, that is, contextualize the place and importance of the authors. In what particular way, for instance, do the meditations serve to illuminate what the authors call "the specific historical moments and ongoing sociopolitical changes"? In what particular way do their individual stories relate to what they say is

a "broader and more enduring collective narrative about gender, race, colonialism, and national liberation?"

I imagine an extended introduction will also serve to remedy the great leaps that the article makes as it moves from one point to another--from feminist formation, for instance, to contemporary Filipino-American women and their concerns.

The problem with the article is, therefore, its admission that it stands in for a formal co-authored essay, one academic task that the authors roundly criticize (more on this later). Their discomfort, no doubt, has merits. But given the nature of the journal which is academic, and one which has an academic audience, it is necessary for the article to rationalize its format.

Thus the choice to have an informal format, neither an essay nor an interview, must account for what it sacrifices. It is easy, for example, to ask for coherence from an essay than it is from an interview. The coherence that is demanded here has to do, fundamentally, with the fact that the authors assume that their readers can readily grasp their allusions and concerns. For example, who is the personality described as a "very articulate woman"? Why is she silenced by not being named? What is the political and historical significance of the struggle in the Philippines to the diasporic community of Filipino-American women? Do the experiences of women in Filipino political movements mirror those of Filipino-American women? These issues, among others, are admittedly taken up, albeit unevenly in the manuscript. A reader, however, not steeped in the history of the political communities they speak to can get lost, easily.

Thus, only a fuller introduction discussing these matters can serve to contextualize and historicize what the authors claim are their reflections.

More specifically, I would very much like to hear why one of the authors feels that feminism no longer gives "the same excitement or urgency." Feminism, she laments, has deteriorated into an academic chic. But a feminist who sees the depredation of academic domestication must offer instead a spirited analysis rather than a swift dismissal of the issue. Moreover, I find disturbing the author's suggestion that the "Battle of Seattle" is an alternative to the academic nature of current feminist movement. Does the author recommend anarchism in place of scrutiny? Commentators have suggested, for instance, that the violence that ensued in Seattle in 1990 has hijacked other forms of challenging globalization. If at all, the "Battle of Seattle" is just one of the many ways of addressing the ills of globalization. The author must clarify this lest readers accuse her, simplistically, of anti-intellectualism; for the great irony is that a work that severely criticizes academic domestication submits itself to see print in an invariably academic publication.

A supplementary question, therefore, must be added; one that deals with an academic species that feels troubled by academic practice but finds, nonetheless, comfort in the same place. The logic and possibility of this tendency must be explored and the authors are in the best position to start such an investigation.

KOLUM KRITIKA

A RESPONSE

Delia D. Aguilar
Washington State University and Bowling Green State University
deliadag@hotmail.com

About the Author
Delia D. Aguilar is Associate Professor of Women's Studies and Comparative American Cultures at Washington State University and Bowling Green State University. She is the author of *Filipino Housewives Speak*, *The Feminist Challenge*, and *Toward a Nationalist Feminism*, all published in the Philippines. She has written numerous articles on Filipino women, feminist theory, and women and development that have appeared in *Feminist Review*, *Women's Studies International Forum*, *Race & Class*, and *Monthly Review*, among others. She now teaches women's studies courses at the University of Connecticut.

Dear Editors:

I should tell you at the outset that our piece, exactly as it was submitted to you, was printed in March by Routledge in an anthology titled *Pinay Power: Theorizing the Filipina/American Experience* edited by Melinda de Jesus. It also appeared on Znet online at almost the same time. However, I wanted it published and circulated in the Philippines, hoping that it might help generate a discussion of the early women's liberation movement heralded by MAKIBAKA, the events that led to the first stirrings of feminism and the conflicts involved therein, and where it stands today. If nothing else, your reader's comments confirmed the need for such a historical recounting.

It's too bad that your reader completely missed the theoretical underpinnings of our exchange. Above all else, our "dialogue" shows how the changes in our thinking as well as the differences in our feminist stances as mother and daughter have been a reaction to, and a reflection of, the shifts in the politics of the times. This shift has been profound: from the belief in revolution that impelled the people's movements of the 60s and 70s to the reformism and accomodationism that progressives have succumbed to as a result of the structural changes and neoconservative politics that began in the 80s. The theory that recognizes these shifts in thinking is called historical materialism.

A little familiarity with feminism might also have helped the reader understand

that early on, way before the affectations of the postmodern turn, feminists urged attention to the work of ordinary women and the formally untutored (the "informal") as a way of bridging the gap between various forms of hierarchy inflected by gender, class, race, sexuality, etc. Such efforts, of course, can best be comprehended when placed alongside the so-called "separate spheres" and the valorization of women's reproductive labor in the private sphere, the chief project of Marxist feminist theoreticians. All this took place when there was a women's movement in the West (now referred to as the North). Today there is no women's movement in industrialized countries; instead, feminism is confined to the academy. This is the simple reason why I do not feel "the same excitement or urgency" as in the past. Barbara Epstein, writing in *Monthly Review* of May 2001, was the first to acknowledge this, but it is now widely, if mostly still only tacitly, admitted. Knowledge of this history would have preempted the kinds of questions your reader raised regarding tensions within the academy, preoccupation with matters of "format," and concerns about whether or not our submission was appropriate for your academic journal. (Here a rudimentary understanding of the primary function of higher education in late capitalism, particularly in a corporatized academy, wouldn't have hurt.) If I read your mission statement correctly, I thought that you were, in fact, interested in having the academy serve social ends. If not, I apologize for the misreading.

The other issues raised are similarly a consequence of lack of information or misinformation on the part of your reader; for example, why the "very articulate woman" was unnamed. Her identity and my presumed "silencing" of her are totally beside the point. The issue is the strongly held notion by revolutionaries at the time—ask any feminist of that period—that there was no need for feminism or an autonomous women's movement because mere involvement in the national democratic struggle in itself already liberated women. If this woman became head of a *feminist* NGO a mere two years after she uttered this position, wasn't she proving the position false?

The "Battle of Seattle" anarchist? Now I'm afraid this one is just plainly wrong. While a small group of anarchists was clearly involved and predictably became the focus of US mainstream media coverage, a wide variety of forces including labor, environment, church, etc. took active part in its mobilization. There are a great many progressive journal articles and books that the reviewer might want to read to be more informed on the subject. Michael Denning, for one, underscores the anti-systemic character of the Battle of Seattle to distinguish it from previous movements. And what I was suggesting, given that feminism is academically confined, is that women who call themselves feminists should go out in the streets and join protests against globalization, against the war in Iraq, against US

intervention in various parts of the world if feminism is to be of relevance to the majority in the world today.

Your reader was right on target in writing that someone "not steeped in the history of the political communities they speak to might get lost." With a little less presumption and more humility, the reader might have seen her reflection in this statement, possibly yielding to someone with a bit more theoretical and political savvy who could have engaged the substance of our piece.

As you might guess, I am disinclined to revise our essay for KK. But for whatever it is worth—and I trust you understand that nothing personal is intended here—I truly hope that this letter opens a conversation about some of the above issues among your staff.

Sincerely,
Delia D. Aguilar

LITERARY SECTION

POEMS

Naya Valdellon
Ateneo de Manila University, Philippines

About the Author

Yavana "Naya" S. Valdellon graduated from the Ateneo de Manila University in 2002 with a BFA in Creative Writing and a Dean's Award for the Arts. She has received fellowships from the University of the Philippines and Dumaguete National Writers' Workshops, and won the Maningning Miclat Award for Poetry in 2003 and first place in the Carlos Palanca Awards for poetry in English in 2004.

ENCOUNTER

Between car lanes, the woman—
an apparition in polka dots
that have greeted better New Years—

waves at vehicles, as if to unfreeze
their wheels. The stoplight's
steady eye watches, unmoved,

removed from the traffic of daily drama
enacted on the road. Her hands shake
profanities at passersby and drivers,

who may or may not deserve them.
They pretend not to look as she hooks
thumbs into the garter of her shorts

and crouches down for relief.
No smugness leaks from her face,
just a puddle staining the asphalt

yellow beneath her, refusing erasure.
When she stands, the static of rain falling
dares anyone to applaud.

TAXI MUSIC

It's become a habit, this backseat
sinking, a refrain on cue like swiping out
late. Outside, the highway plays
its nightly chords, other ways to wheel

you home. Taxi rides are grace notes
on clocked weekdays, luxuries you pocket
at overtime's end. Save that sometimes,
your ears pay an unexpected price:

Mellow Touch past midnight, its jingle
older than these streets. *You are the minstrel*
all over again, plucking at memory's
strings. A dashboard tiger, hardly sinister,

bobs its head to some alto's crooning.
No *hi-ho*s from the windshield's dwarvish
seven, audience to the driver's off-key
mumbling. On-air strumming turns

streetlights, shanties—even the whole city
and moon notated on a sheet of sky—
into instruments, percussive to your
melodious pain. How suburban, the way

sadness is rerouted, recycled like sighs
from chests to airwaves, pitched
as lullabyes for wakeful clichés tuned in
to this station tonight. Too taxing,

to remember who it is you're missing.
A woman belts out someone else's ache
and somewhere, a girl in a house

you just passed, cries herself to sleep

to this same song. No one is beyond
sappiness. Tomorrow, you will work
despite your bass heart's drumming.
Upholstery muffles your solo humming.

SECONDHAND

It was never a question of worth,
Love, of whether we deserve
each other or not. But the change
jangling in our pockets seems
to convince you otherwise.
So let's take a roundabout route,

another swerve. Session Road
is teeming with tourists on the prowl
this summer. We are unashamed
to dress like them, in shades
and sweaters layers too eager.

What we remember of Baguio slopes
on the cliché—your hazy memories
on horseback, my adolescent pining
for strawberry-tasting lips.
Over a decade since the seismic
story, this city has turned into

a secondhand wonderland, a haven
for hagglers. If there's one thing
we both agree on, it's getting
the best deal. So we steal our way
into *ukay-ukay* stalls, rummaging
for the real, for brands that strike us.

Who cares if they belonged to those
now dead, or were sent overseas to bring
others relief? Aren't we also fond
of books on sale, though dog-eared
and thumbprinted? If you think that

was a cheap analogy, here's one
that will make you sneeze in disgust:

we all have histories. Even this city
resists symmetry, having survived
catastrophes. With me, you will
get more than you bargained for—
sleeves a little worn, buttons missing—

but with this package comes a chance
for joy. It was always a matter
of choice, Love, yours. So be careful
what you discard and what you
pay for; you already know regret
sticks to the skin, much like the smell
of another country's mothballs.