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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

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POSTCOLONIAL ENGLISH LANGUAGE POLITICS TODAY: READING RAMANATHAN'S *THE ENGLISH-VERNACULAR DIVIDE*

T. Ruanni F. Tupas
National University of Singapore
elcttr@nus.edu.sg

Abstract
In this essay, I will discuss the ideological structure of current postcolonial English language politics in the world, arguing that despite the "advances" in post-Independence nationalist rhetoric in most "postcolonial" countries, the debates on language continue to rehash tired voices of pragmatism and linguistic nationalism. I further argue that what is usually "notable" in current postcolonial English language politics is the disappearance or devaluing of class as a central concept in the understanding of postcolonial language and society. I will discuss these arguments through my review of Ramanathan's *The English-Vernacular Divide: Postcolonial Language Politics and Practice*. I claim that the book's powerful arguments run against dominant perspectives on the role of English and local languages in many societies today. The book's main argument that English still divides could be a stirring response to those who maintain that English, through its hybrid, localized and "fighting back" forms, is now stripped of its colonial trappings and baggage.

Keywords
language politics, postcolonialism, postmodernism

About the Author
T. Ruanni F. Tupas is currently Lecturer at the Centre for English Language Communication of the National University of Singapore where he is also the chief editor of the Centre's peer-reviewed journal *Reflections on English Language Teaching*. He is the author of *Second language teaching* (UP Open University), editor of *(Re)making society: The politics of language, discourse and identity in the Philippines* (UP Press), and first editor of *Current perspectives on pedagogical grammar* (Singapore Association for Applied Linguistics). His current projects include invited work on pedagogical norms for *World Englishes handbook* (Routledge), bilingual education and politics of language in Singapore for a volume on *English language in education and societies across Greater China* (Multilingual Matters), and the state of language teaching research in Southeast Asia for *Language Teaching* (Cambridge UP).

Language ideological debates, for example on national languages and media of instruction whether that be in Singapore (see Pakir), Hong Kong (see Li) or the Philippines (see Sibayan & Gonzalez), tend to reduce the complexity of issues into simplistic claims: English is the language of globalization, science and technology, and social mobility; while the national languages help maintain our various national heritages and identities, English must take first priority in education and society because this is the way to move ahead. The issues of languages in society and education are very complex (see the various discussion of Ganguly; Tsui and Tollefson; Alexander, *English;* and Aquino); but anyone who is "critical" of English is deemed either blind to the unfolding marvels of globalization, or is

deemed to be against the teaching or learning of English in all its forms.

In this essay, I will discuss the ideological structure of current postcolonial English language politics in the world, arguing that despite the "advances" in post-Independence nationalist rhetoric in most "postcolonial" countries, the debates on language continue to rehash tired voices of pragmatism and linguistic nationalism (e.g., via globalism, academic postcolonial and postmodern theorizing). I further argue that what is usually "notable" in current postcolonial English language politics is the disappearance or devaluing of class, with its various uses and nuances in meaning (see King), as a central concept in the understanding of postcolonial language and society.

I will discuss these arguments through my review of a recent book on the topic of postcolonial English language politics: Ramanathan's *The English-Vernacular Divide: Postcolonial Language Politics and Practice*, which is a nuanced and grounded view of such politics in India. Its core argument is simple but powerful: *English divides*. I consider this book a brave book because it comes at a time when dominant globalization ideologies in the field of English language teaching and related fields drown out anything or anyone that professes some "critical" arguments about the role of English in society today. In particular, I believe that the book's powerful arguments run against dominant perspectives on the role of English and local languages in many societies today, but the manner by which it generates its arguments is sometimes peppered with problematic elements of postmodern and postcolonial theorizing which can be re-appropriated by some within the "usual" frame of language ideological debate: "English as divisive is a thing of the past. We now can resist through English. So, there is nothing wrong with it, especially now when we need it to globalize our respective societies." The book's main argument, as I note above, is this: English still divides, and this could be a stirring response to those who maintain that English, through its hybrid, localized and "fighting back" forms, is now stripped of its colonial trappings and baggage (see also Parakrama; Tupas, "The Politics").

POST-INDEPENDENCE LANGUAGE DEBATES: A BRIEF REVIEW

In the case of present-day South Africa, Alexander notes that "there continues to be tension between the explicit constitutionally enshrined principles of the promotion of multilingualism in South Africa, and the concurrent practical commitment to the hegemonic status of English" ("Language" 144). This tension may be understood in terms of "the middle class notion that under South African conditions the universalization of the English language was an essential precondition for the building of a modern nation

in this country" (142). There are crucial differences in the way ex-colonial states have responded to the language question or problem because of their unique sociopolitical structures – for example, Ramanathan describes the pervasiveness of caste- and class-based ideologies in India ("English"); Canagarajah gives a background to the ethnic/ultra-nationalism in Sri Lanka ("Critical"); Islamist nationalism in Malaysia is nuanced by Ganguli; Lorente highlights the commoditization of human labor in the Philippines; and Chua explains multiculturalism as statist ideology in Singapore. Such national differences need to be recognized and respected in any analysis of postcolonial English language politics. However, Alexander's formulation of such politics in the context of South Africa is essentially true in these other countries as well because, as argued by Chua in Singapore, Annamalai in India, Parakrama in Sri Lanka, Lin in Hong Kong, and Tupas ("Back") in the Philippines, English has never been "class-free" despite attempts to picture it as an equalizing language in the midst of multiple racial, ethnic, and multilingual loyalties. The earlier ideological manifestations of these issues could be partly gleaned through past dichotomous debates on language and society immediately following the "independence" of these colonized countries from the middle part of the twentieth century, for instance the work of Constantino, and Yabes in the 1970s.

At the time, anti-colonial language rhetoric reverberated in the hearts of many colonized people: the colonial languages, English especially, were the key tools of ideological subjugation and social oppression. They colonized the mind; they created westernized colonial subjects whose tastes and sensibilities betrayed their indigenous makeup. They helped create the great divide between the small national elites and the poor majority or "masses." Anti-colonial struggles, thus, went hand-in-hand with the nationalization of society, the economy, education and government (see the early work by Nkrumah; and Fanon; and a later assessment by Young), and the roles of both the colonial and indigenous languages were crucial in this march towards social and political change (Constantino; Akoha).

But, the counter-argument lost impetus, after all the nationalists also spoke through the colonial languages which they claimed oppressed the "masses." The colonized whose minds were subjugated and whose lives were exploited by colonialism were also never passive dupes who simply followed their colonial masters. Power did not come solely from the colonizer. Power was everywhere. In so many ways big and small, the colonized also resisted colonialism. In terms of language, the colonized created hybrid speech and writing, altering language standards and creating new voices. Counter-discourses were possible. Resistance through the colonial languages was possible. Language does not merely

impinge on our consciousness; we, the speakers, also leave traces of what we want to be, of our dreams and identities, in language (see the arguments of Ashcroft, Griffith, and Tiffin; Kachru; Dissanayake; Bolton & Hutton).

And so when the 1980s and 1990s came, when a confluence of global phenomena conspired to elevate the invincibility of global capitalism, as Stiglitz described it, class-based issues on language suffered a major blow. One could be nationalistic and speak English. Or, one was not anti-nationalistic if she spoke English. *English as a divisive language* once again was swept away by *English as a language of mobility and equality*. Nationalism and development could not go together, argued Andrew Gonzalez in the Philippines. Either we became pragmatic, embraced English and globalization; or we became nationalists, embraced our local languages, and became isolated from the rest of the world. Even now (in fact, increasingly so), we are asked to look at the evidence: English is everywhere. Somehow along the way, much of the historical, political, educational and sociocognitive issues raised in the 1960s and 1970s have been lost in the midst of the mad rush towards English.

This is why I consider Ramanathan's book a bold book. This is especially so since it is written by someone who is herself involved in the profession – *Teaching of English to Speakers of Other Languages* (TESOL) – that is at the forefront of the promotion of English around the world. Of course, TESOL is precisely what Pennycook (*Critical* 145) refers to as the Teaching of English to Speakers of Other*ed* Languages (TE/SOL). Many others have written similar critical treatises on the sociopolitical consequences of English language teaching and learning around the world (e.g., Phillipson, *Linguistic Imperialism*; Pennycook, *The cultural*; Holliday), but I believe that Ramanathan's book has the benefit (or potential) of responding to the theoretical and political questions posed by such earlier critical work. Therefore, my interest in writing this article about the book is not simply because it is a good book, but also because I hope to map out a theoretical outline of the book's claims in relation to historically established conversations in postcolonial English language politics. As I indicated above, my feeling is that Ramanathan's claim that English still divides will once again lose out to much more powerful voices of those who refuse to engage with more complex debates and relegate such a claim – as has been done in the past – to so-called "obsolete" nationalist politics which the claim really is not (see Bernardo; Tupas, "Back"). In some parts of the book, Ramanathan seems busy addressing potential (postmodern and postcolonial) questions about the seeming rigidity of her claim that English still divides, while interspersing them with her own answers which, if theoretically conceptualized, actually transcend past debates on English and its relation with other languages in

education and society.

Therefore, I am not simply interested in what the book is saying, but more importantly, I am interested in presenting my own reading of the book as I locate it within the theoretical and political conversations that have been going on both in academic and other social contexts in many so-called "postcolonial" societies. What I hope to accomplish in the end is to help push conceptualizations of "English" or what it stands for in contemporary societies beyond the rigidities of past positions and hopefully into fresh and more nuanced discussions.

ABOUT THE BOOK

The Major Argument

This book has six chapters, and in all but one of these the concluding paragraphs state explicitly the main argument of the book: English "divides" (chap. 1, 2 & 5); is at the heart of some "divide" (chap. 3); and is "simultaneously divisive and integrated on the postcolonial ground" (chap. 6). Of course, the author throughout the book has been especially careful with such pronouncements, tempering the argument with qualifications like "from some points of view" (13), "through particular lenses and in some parts of the world" (19), "from some lenses" (38), and "how the English-Vernacular divide is resisted" (2), but the core of the argument is the divisive nature of English language politics. Chapter one frames language politics in a "divisive postcolonial landscape." Chapter two discusses "divisive" ideologies, policies and practices, while Chapters three and four explore "divisive" pedagogical tools and pedagogical practices, respectively. Chapter five discusses the "divisive politics of tracking" while Chapter six attempts to reconcile such a divisive nature of English with postmodern and postcolonial practices of resistance, hybridization, and nativization which create "bridges" between languages and, in a broader sense, social divides.

India as the Place of Research

Ramanathan develops her argument through the vantage point of India, where English stands at the core of class-based inequalities (intertwined with caste and gender dimensions) in which its social value is best understood and located in the English-Vernacular divide. In India, students are generally educated either in English-medium (EM) or Vernacular-medium (VM) schools. While theoretically all students can choose

which types of school they want to attend, such "choice" is socially conditioned because of a number of intersecting factors, including socio-economic and familial reasons. The book demonstrates how both types of schools (EM and VM) generate two broad sets of class-based and class-indexed ideologies and practices which "slot students into invisible grooves" (38), and which create and sustain well-entrenched "gulfs" and "chasms" in Indian society. Consequently, but less substantially, the book also explores local forms of resistance which disrupt such divides and live out more fair educational and social practices.

Research Tools

The presentation of the local dynamics of the English-Vernacular divide is based on Ramanathan's study of three tertiary institutions in the city of Ahmedabad in Gujarat, India, where she spent the first twenty-three years of her middle-class life before she went on to pursue graduate work and teach in the United States. Her largely ethnographic study uses a range of "data types" including interviews with students, faculty members, classroom observations and written documents, collected during seven consecutive summer months. The three institutions whose "divergent" realities inform the analyses in the book were "a middle-class largely EM Jesuit institution" (which has recently opened up to low-caste, poor VM-educated students as part of its vision of social justice), "a low-income VM women's college," and "an EM private business college" (with few VM students admitted based on their English language proficiency) (10). Based on such divergent socio-educational experiences, the author provides us with detailed analyses of three topical strands: (1) the politics of divergent pedagogic tools, (2) the politics related to divergent pedagogic practices, and (3) the politics of tracking.

The Politics of Pedagogic Tools

The discussion of pedagogic tools focuses on differing "cultural models" in English language textbooks into which EM and VM K-12 pupils are socialized. These models also include assumptions about what it means to be literate in English. According to the author, the textbooks are indeed radically divergent in terms of their cultural models: VM textbooks focus on survival English, discrete grammar lessons, and local content only, and assume that students cannot learn on their own and that teachers are not proficient in English (thus the availability of "explanations" sections). EM textbooks, on the other hand, have a much more cosmopolitan outlook (through western-oriented reading texts) and work towards developing multiple and complex sociolinguistic/cognitive skills among

pupils, including thinking critically, exploring different voices in writing, and enhancing independent learning. These varying models, according to the author, form part of a class-based *assumptions nexus* which is actually "'assumptions that partially explain why things are the way they are" (37) or, in other words, why particular social practices inside and outside the classroom privilege the middle class and devalue other income groups. Thus, the divergent pedagogical tools to which the two groups of pupils are exposed have huge consequences for these students' educational performance such that even those few VM students who manage to find places in EM tertiary schools find it difficult to cope with (more westernized) (EM) socio-educational practices and sensibilities which devalue the Vernacular and the more localized notions of literacy and thinking.

The Politics of Pedagogic Practices

The discussion of pedagogic practices is also based on a largely contrastive inquiry into the local institutional practices at the low-income VM women's college and the upper-middle class EM business college. At the VM school, classroom practices make much use of the Vernacular, create a general sense of cultural alienation among students, and focus heavily on correct answers. The Vernacular (and Vernacular-related practices and traditions) is integrated into classroom teaching, such as the use of choral recitation like the "Kathas" in Hindu festivals during which priests relate myths to everyday realities. However, such "seamless transference of valued community practices into classroom realms" (72) is not always successful. In several classroom settings, such as the teaching of literature, while the Vernacular is much used, the content of texts is foreign and is in English, creating severe ramifications for students' well-being like cultural alienation and difficulty in state-board university examinations in English. At the EM school, on the other hand, pedagogic practices are oriented towards group work, active participation and critical inquiry, as well as the study of grammar in business contexts, thus creating a largely relevant classroom environment for students. Reflecting on these divergent pedagogic practices, bridged to some extent by teachers and students who find ways to create better opportunities for democratic teaching and learning, Ramanathan situates such practices within broader social conditions of production and consumption of power and knowledge, aligning themselves to create "(mis)matches" (86) between the socio-educational experiences of students and the expectations from them when they enter college, and making medium of instruction "only one social cog indexing very different social worlds" (87).

The Politics of Tracking Practices

Third, the discussion of tracking practices is taken mainly from the socio-educational practices of the upper-middle class Catholic EM college where the author received her BA degree in literature. According to the author, the politics of tracking – or the process by which the institution determines the kinds of curricula into which different groups of students are "slotted"– largely affirms the English-Vernacular gulf, although similar ways to bridge it have been identified as well. Consequently, in providing its VM students with special English language instruction, this institution follows state-mandated policies of streaming: VM students who have had prior English language instruction from Grades 5-12 are slotted into the A-stream, while those who have had similar instruction from Grades 5-9 only are slotted in the B-stream. In B-stream classrooms, there is extensive use of translation which helps bridge the "gulf" by drawing positively on the students' Vernacular backgrounds, but an almost exclusive focus on grammar teaching limits the possibilities of language learning. Among the A-streamers, on the other hand, there is a preference for English literature because their English proficiency is deemed better, an opportunity that is almost closed to B-streamers. Compared with their EM counterparts, however, their English is still deemed inadequate, resulting in specific tracking practices which also work towards sustaining the gulf between media of instruction: (1) some teachers emphasize their role as teachers of literature and not of language, (2) students rely heavily on study guides which are extremely oriented towards final examinations, and (3) there is "cultural dissonance" (100) between what the students know and what they ought to know from the "texts with overly western themes" (106).

THEORETICAL ISSUES

Earlier Debates

Ramanathan's book is recently published (2005) which puts it in a strategic position to address some of the core concerns and issues surrounding English language politics around the world. But a crude reading of the book (which, I will argue later, may be partly due to the book's failure to make explicit mention of its positioning vis-à-vis theoretical and political conversations in the field and other social contexts) may quite wrongly put it along the lines of the linguistic nationalisms of anti-colonial struggles of colonized countries, especially of the Third World from the middle part of the twentieth century (Tupas, "Back"). Why not, indeed? The book's main argument that class is a defining feature of

English language politics goes back largely to efforts to decolonize much of the colonized world: for example, English created the wedge between "the elite" and "the masses" in the Philippines (Constantino; see also Hau and Tinio). However, to repeat what I earlier wrote, the grand narratives of anti-colonial struggles became the targets of intense criticism from emerging postcolonial and postmodern theorizing of the 1970s, but especially of the 1980s. Colonization, it has been argued, was never a one-way process; the colonized, also fought back through various means. The colonized, in other words, were never helpless subjects of colonialism; they actively engaged with the brutalities of colonialism by resisting or circumventing it in many creative and novel ways (e.g, Guha; Bolton and Hutton). This is how the complex concepts of "resistance," "hybridity," and "nativization" (among other terms, of course) could be partly understood; they provided us with more nuanced ways of understanding colonial experiences as opposed to the simplified notion of colonized people as "the oppressed" (Bhaba). Within this framework, English has fought back against the Empire; the colonized "destroyed" English to reflect their own complex characters. Whereas English was earlier deemed as a tool for ideological subjugation, English was now an instrument of counter-consciousness and counter-discourse through which nationalism and local identities could flow (see Ashcroft, Griffith, and Tiffin; Pennycook, "English"; Kachru, and most of the essays in Kirkpatrick).

Capitalist Globalization and the Disappearance of Class

However, the great theoretical flaw of such revisionist understandings of English (think of *World Englishes, English as an International Language, English as a World Language*, much of TESOL and some language planning and policy-making studies) has been to ignore or, at best, sideline, the issues of class in the study of English (but see Tollefson; Holborow; Alexander, *English*; Parakrama; Hau and Tinio). English has ceased to become a colonial weapon of oppression; we, the ex-colonized, have taken control of the language and made it our own. Ideologically, such political posturing has found an unhealthy alliance with the almost hysterical glorification of capitalist globalization starting in the 1980s, and helped by the collapse of the Berlin Wall and the USSR. This opened the floodgates of an "open market" dogma: consequently, the English language has spread across the globe and has been embraced by almost everyone whose cultures are impinged on it. English is the undisputed language of globalization and capitalism; anyone who does not agree with it is wrong or "ideological" (see Honey; Alatis and Straehle; Li). Of course, the issues are much more complex than that but this brief discussion of the dominant framing of English as a language of freedom and mobility which valorize "resistance,"

"hybridity," and "nativization" (among other terms) should help us trace the ideological sources of recent academic and popular stances towards turning a blind eye on glaring social inequalities within which the teaching and learning of English are deeply implicated (see Rajagopalan; Bisong; Alatis and Straehle).

The Pitfalls of Postmodern (and Postcolonial) Theorizing

My fear about Ramanathan's book, therefore, stems from how it will be (re) appropriated by many people, and this is due in part to the book's failure to deal explicitly with debates surrounding anti-colonial, postcolonial and postmodern theorizing and politics. I see the book as a complex response to all such theorizing and politics, bringing back issues of class at the center of debates in TESOL, sociolinguistics of English and related fields, but acutely aware of the realities "on the ground" where ordinary people, and even institutions, resist disempowering social structures through their day-to-day practices. In fact, throughout the book Ramanathan takes pains in making sure this picture is clear to the reader without losing sight of the social gulf that English helps to create and sustain. Thus, early on she paints us a social picture of "a complex domination and an equally complex resistance" where "facets of subordination and resistance typically operate as two sides of the same coin, intertwined and wrapped as each is in the other" (3-4). Throughout the book, she refers to "gulfs and bridges" and how they are loosely connected in some ways, to the "ridges and caveats of the larger English-Vernaculars enterprise" (860), and the English-Vernacular "chasm" and "canvas" (92). Given the fact that the book is primarily about the English-Vernacular "divide," such nuances in the book seem to address (and anticipate?) particular responses to the book itself, such as those of postmodern theorizing which tends to focus more on "contact zones" and "discursive methods that capture the fluid, hybrid, overlapping nature of all learning and teaching" (119).

But, is the book really about postmodern theorizing? Interestingly, Ramanathan has an early answer as well:

> Postmodern views of cultures and peoples as being fluid and dynamic and of all identities being hybrid are most valuable, most especially because they give us a way of talking about individuals in contexts. But social stratifications of class, caste, ethnicity and gender in societies still exist and when languages – especially English and the Vernaculars in postcolonial contexts – seem to fall along those lines, then a critically and

> ethnographically oriented research has little choice but to address the chasms as well. (ix)

She continues with an equally clear statement: "the book contributes to the larger globalization and English narrative by singling out instances of divides lying latent beneath contexts of appropriation" (ix). Such statements – which do not discount the possibilities of resistance and other related practices – emphasize the centrality of social stratifications, or social structure, or social gulf, in English language politics. Likewise, such statements open up a different conceptualization of resistance and appropriation (and, for that matter, agency): it is not opposed directly to domination and social structure *per se*. Rather, practices of resistance and appropriation work *within* conditions of domination and social structure (Butler). Such practices do not necessarily become passive, reactive, or futile attempts to develop agency, but they remind us not to reify or celebrate resistance (as is the case in some theorizing) at the expense of power, inequality, hegemony, and domination (Shohat; Dirlik).

Domination, Resistance and Appropriation Revisited

Ramanathan's book, in fact, has given us some examples of this theorization: "(some) teachers have not only taken note of the strings that manipulate their and their students' movements but take additional steps to resist the tugs actively *while still participating in the performance* (117, emphasis mine); "Although *the larger socio-educational system* at all three colleges—and other tertiary institutions—tends to devalue Vernaculars and their associated practices, there are clearly small but significant ways in which the English-Vernacular chasm is critically countered" (117-8). In other words, bridges may be crossed to ease up the lives of people who do so, but the gulfs upon which such bridges have been built in the first place continue to exist. To transform these gulfs, we need to create radically different social topographies, although this may be a near-impossibility considering the extreme conditions of inequality that bedevil much of the world today. What happens here is to re-read local initiatives and practices of resistance at changing social structures and conditions as positive, dynamic, and liberative without unsettling the centrality of stratifying infrastructures and without claiming that everything is fine with English and the world because of it.

The Politics of Resistance

But even if such becomes the case, we are still left with yet another related concern

regarding the conceptualization of resistance. Except for a very brief discussion of "backchat" of students as an instance of opposition (83), much of the resistance and local initiative described in the book which helps bridge the chasms between English and the Vernacular is articulated and engaged in by teachers and the tertiary institutions, in other words by those who are already in some relative position of power. Through various ways—from the use of translation in the teaching of literature to the Jesuit college's decision to increase the enrolment of VM students to help address socio-educational injustice—these teachers and institutions hope to "empower VM students by both validating their students[']" (Vernacular) backgrounds and by reconstituting ELTL in more "inclusive, ethical and democratic terms" (118). Thus, Ramanathan's questions early on in the book are particularly apt: "Who is given the opportunity to speak and how? Who is simultaneously rendered 'voice-less'? Who assumes the power to speak?" (5). Ramanathan does not really explicitly deal with these questions in the rest of the book, but the examples provided direct us towards yet another dimension of resistance (through English) which is rarely taken up in the literature. This brings to mind Alexander's ("Language" 142) assertion that the continued hegemony of English in South Africa is a middle class construction; Zhao and Liu's (121) empirically-based revelations about Singapore's language policy as pulling the country toward a linguatocratic society (see Pendly 50) where social stratification (with English as the privileged language) "is linearly marked by the symbolic power translated via linguistic differentiation"; and Azman's contention that there is a deeply-rooted mismatch between urban English language teaching/practices and rural multilingual literacies among poor Malaysian pupils. In the Philippines, Villareal's incisive view of hybridized Englishes is that they ultimately display a similarly elitist idea:

> although much scholarly discussion and literary experimentation have been done on the concepts of hybridity, the appropriation of English, and the development of our varieties of English, it is too facile to speak of equality in language and culture. Note, for instance, the concern to capture the notion of a Filipino variety of English, and the "standardization of the grammatical features of Filipino English" or Singlish, or other varieties of English. Languages are documented mainly by the educated and standards set by them. Thus, English, even when appropriated, eventually becomes exclusionary and divisive. (33-34)

In other words, going back to Ramanathan's book, it is one thing to talk about

"a complex domination and an equally complex resistance" (this seems to be a given in postmodern and postcolonial theorizing and politics) but another thing to talk about "instances of divides lying latent beneath contexts of appropriation." Both provide different conceptualizations of the relation between domination and resistance, or between divides and contexts of appropriation. The latter does not only give us a much more complex understanding of the relation between domination and resistance, but it also reminds us that resistance is socially conditioned as well. Much of the book works within this latter conceptualization, but it has not explicitly and clearly articulated it as a theoretical stance, resulting in proffering mixed signals to the reader, and may thus perhaps open up old rehearsals of language ideological debates which polarize the positions between the much maligned *English is an ideological weapon of subjugation* claim and the much celebrated *English is an instrument of resistance, empowerment and freedom* claim.

CONCLUSION

Ramanathan's book, minus its postmodernizing rhetorical slippages (which are concentrated at the start and the end of the book anyway) should be far more sophisticated than earlier positions: it avoids the ideological rigidity and essentialism of anti-colonial politics and decolonization projects of the mid-twentieth century, but it likewise addresses the abstractness of postmodern (and some postcolonial) theorizing and politics. The gulfs which English helps create are constantly resisted, but all is not well with the world with such resistance. We could only have wished that Ramanathan were clearer and more consistent with this theoretical and political positioning. Nevertheless, if we start with this assumption, then we start being "mindful of how the very profession in which we are engaged perpetuates unequal power relations between entire groups of people and what we can do as teachers in small and not-so-small ways to mitigate divisions" (87). Ramanathan's book is a refreshingly honest book which avoids past unhelpful dichotomies; it is brave enough to propose a highly delicate yet carefully-researched claim: that English *still* divides.

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POVERTY, TESOL'S NARRATIVES AND "OTHER LANGUAGES": HERMENEUTIC TENSIONS IN TEXTING-RESEARCHING PRACTICES

Vaidehi Ramanathan
Department of Linguistics
University of California, Davis
vramanathan@ucdavis.edu

Abstract
This brief response addresses concerns raised by Ruanni Tupas in his reading of my book, *The English-Vernacular Divide*. It provides some background about my study, and attempts to uncover some researching and texting tensions I experienced when writing the book. Straddling as I am different geographic spaces—India and the US—with different discourses regarding English language learning and teaching in each space, the response details how my focus on the local and everyday became a way of showing how some discourses about English (its being a democratizing force, or the language of empowerment) run the risk of turning a blind eye to issues of poverty, access and "other languages, issues that are crucial for TESOL to address."

Keywords
language politics, language teaching, postcolonialism, vernacular languages

About the author
Vaidehi Ramanathan is Professor of Linguistics at the University of California, Davis. She was Director of the ESL Program of UC Davis in 2003, and Director of the MA-TESOL Program of the University of Alabama from 1997 to 1999. She is the author of *The English-Vernacular Divide: Postcolonial Language Politics and Practice* (2005), *The Politics of TESOL Education: Writing, Knowledge, Critical Pedagogy* (2002), *Alzheimer Discourse: Some Sociolinguistic Dimensions* (1997), and many articles in refereed journals and anthologies.

Author's note
I thank Brian Morgan for reading through an earlier draft and for reminding me that I need never sound apologetic about complexities.

> The problem of consciousness in our work is thus multifaceted: it is about content (a problem of discourses), about changing such content (a problem of counter discourses), and about initiating change amidst conditions of unfreedom (a problem of structures). Fortunately, it is the recognition of the limits of our own choices and actions that can pave the way for the re-articulation of hope through remembering: English linguistic imperialism is *not yet* a thing of the past. (Tupas 20)

If theorists and academics want to engage in meaningful exchange with practitioners, they should also consider exploring a whole range of labor-related

> issues that might appear extraneous to language, but I would argue, determine the conditions in which successful language learning can take place. (Morgan 131)

When I was first contacted about responding to Ruanni Tupas's commentary of my book (*The English-Vernacular Divide*), my reactions were simultaneously ones of elation and hesitation: elation because the key issue of the book—that TESOL be more mindful of concerns such as poverty/class and other languages—had resonated strongly with another postcolonial scholar in a different part of the world; hesitation because my relatively inexplicit engagement with some of the discipline's key narratives—that Tupas wishes I had done more of—had been a deliberate rhetorical maneuver on my part, one that I had struggled with, and am ambiguous about writing now. This invitation to supplement his commentary, then, has me in a double-bind: my early impulses of sidestepping what seems to be fast becoming TESOL's dominant narratives around "English as a world language" are still strong; there are many aspects of these now dominant strains that are troublingly simplistic, and my not engaging with them very directly in the book is partially a result of my "reading" them in certain ways given the geographical spaces I straddle. But Tupas's insightful point about how my (intentional) indirect engagement with them might end up drowning the very point I am trying to make (that west-based TESOL has turned a blind eye to issues of class and other languages) has me wondering about several issues, including our individual and collective hermeneutic practices: what are we individually and collectively engaged in when we "read," "fill in," and "interpret," texts, disciplinary debates, narratives, and how do these directly impact our researching-texting practices? What have Tupas's readings enabled him to uncover about my book and in what ways do those intersect with my "readings" of the discipline's narratives about English? In what follows, after some necessary background, I attempt to uncover what in my thinking had held sway when I wrote the book, how my choices—deliberate (dis)engagements, sidestepping and intensely local focus—are strong counters to prevailing TESOL narratives.

Tupas's incisive commentary allows me to directly speak to two big intertwined issues in the field to which the book (at the time I was writing it) was partially responding. The first was that current narratives around world English/es at the time did not adequately address how the world's other non-western languages fall along lines of class and "vernacular-mediums" in many recent postcolonial spaces (Tupas, Mazrui). English emerges as a global language only in relation to the world's other languages, and it is in the tension-filled in-between spaces that changes and transformations by institutions and people float into view. It was this space where the struggles of humans along with their

efforts at untying themselves from binding structures that interested me. The narratives around English and globalization—which so crucially inform our field—seemed at the time to not cast adequate light on this. Second, I was also interested in countering TESOL's broad, universalizing strokes about language teaching by focusing on the local, including interactions with local languages in those contexts (Lin; Morgan and Ramanathan), and issues of poverty and access crucially informed these "localities." While my focus is on India and local socio-political-linguistic stratifications there, the larger points about TESOL being blind to both poverty and other languages is of relevance in the west which still remains "the center" of English.

WRESTLING WITH LOCAL COMPLEXITIES, WRESTLING WITH THEORIES

A general impetus for my long-term endeavor has been to arrive at a fuller, historicized understanding of colonialism's lasting impact in the very educational spaces that I was raised and schooled in. My entry into this project, begun ten years ago, was motivated by my wanting to arrive at a better understanding of the struggles that students schooled in the vernacular-medium (VM) go through as they encounter English in English-medium (EM) colleges. Needless to say, the endeavor proved to be a most complex one, and I realized very early on that prevailing west-based narratives around "English as democratizing" and "English and globalization" and "English as the world language" were all completely intertwined with issues of social access, poverty, and localized articulations of gender and caste. When writing the book I found that I needed to find a way of addressing these societal concerns in relation to numerous intertwined complexities in educational domains, including language policies, collective and individual histories, language ideologies, teaching practices, pedagogic tools, teaching practices, teacher orientations, institutional realities, and "other languages" to show how they all collude with each other in the most intricate of ways to shut doors on vernacular-medium (VM) students. And I had to do this without losing sight of how humans and institutions in these complex scenes counter societal pressures and language policies. While I had the choice of selecting and "massaging" my data to fit one of the pre-existing west-based narrative grooves—that may have been the simpler, less risky road to take—doing so meant being dishonest to the complexities in front of me and that I was a part of; it also meant not being able to directly highlight the crucial point about poverty and other languages that I wanted to make. My writing-texting processes had to reflect my "reading" and "interpreting" of these complex, knotted, local scenes; but they also had to indicate my "reading" and

interpreting of certain west-based narratives that I found problematic. The question was: how was I going to discursively achieve this? To which set of discourses was I to speak? Those in Gujarat? Or those in the West? (See Ramanathan's "Of Texts AND Translations AND Rhizomes" for a detailed account of tensions in translating the non-west for western reception).

Because I didn't want my book to fall into these old, overscripted, abstract arguments, I decided to make it an intensely local, situated reaction to them, and instead of just talking/debating about these positions, I wanted my researching-texting practices and the voices of the teachers, administrators, and students I have worked with to speak for themselves. My situated focus, then, is my rejoinder. Tupas's hermeneutic engagements indicate that not only has he been able to pick up on my intensely local response to these narratives—local forms of appropriation and resistance, local forms in which globalization and its surges have to be understood, local stratifications of class and caste that position teachers, students and institutions vis-à-vis language policies and each other in particular ways—but has also been able to sift out the fact that I am stepping into the globalization metanarrative by asking who is left out, why, and where on the local and west-dominated TESOL landscape they get positioned. Thus, a strong sense of remaining committed to capturing the complexities around English, other languages and poverty, coupled with sheer weariness of and concern about how the now relatively over-etched nature of the world English/es strain might colonize my rejoinders and reposition the local kept me from engaging with them more directly. Sidestepping overly direct engagement with these ("colonial") narratives, then, became the more preferable ("postcolonial") "reading." It seemed rhetorically more judicious to not engage with them extensively, but to make my issues salient by pointing towards the local, the ordinary, and the everyday.

But my relative inexplicitness seems to run the risk of seeming "mixed" and thus "inconsistent," and Tupas wonders about my postmodernist-postcolonialist theorizing. But once again, his filling-in is keen and sharp. Poststructuralist thinking is, indeed, deeply uncomfortable with binding societal categories of class, ethnicity, gender, or sexuality, and strives to splinter pre-set notions of individual agency and actions being governed by them. But, as I point out in the book and as Tupas underscores and Morgan (131) echoes, societal inequities around poverty cannot wished away, and west-based TESOL needs to be more mindful of how lack of access to materials directly impinge on language learning and teaching in a myriad of ways: teachers in poorer institutions cannot bring photocopies to class, students have to sometimes rent textbooks because they are unaffordable, and often have to take two or three buses to make it into college everyday, libraries cannot boast

subscriptions to the latest periodicals and journals and will often house textbooks for those students who cannot afford to rent them, administrators of some institutions even have to consider buying clothes for their Dalit students. It is amidst these stark, communal realities that humans and institutions defy their societal categories: Mr. P at the poor, women's college organizes buses that ferry Muslim students to their exam centers, and finds ways for them to take shelter in the college during Hindu-Muslim riots; the Jesuit institution in the same city proactively changes its policies to reach out to the poorest of Dalit students (for detailed accounts see Chapter 5 of *The English-Vernacular Divide,* which is about resistance and one institution's response to changing its policies to address stratifications of caste and class), the lecturer in charge of admissions at the elitist business college works to counter English proficiency policies that tend to disallow VM students. How was I to present my "readings" of these extremely complex intersections in ways that would be "readable" both in the west and India? What theorizing would I draw on that would do them relative justice and how could I draw on conceptualizations in ways—that they, like west-based TESOL narratives—would not "govern," "contain," and "colonize" the messes and contradictions?

These issues were (and are) hard to think around and at the time I decided that it would be prudent to combine my critical-socialist leanings (see Fraser; although "socialism" is by no means a monolithic term) with aspects of poststructuralist and postcolonial thought. While distinct, these modes of conceptualizing are sometimes posed in opposition to each other (McLaren, Fraser), but they allowed me, in my intensely situated project, to not just address complexities and paradoxes around stratifications and efforts at countering them, but to counter theoretical polarities. A focus on poverty—while running the risk of becoming a binding category—did not cancel postmodernist positions out, I found. Assuming a (somewhat Derridean) position of combining and making do with the tools at hand, rather than going along with prevailing modes of thinking, or carefully crafted blue-prints, whether they be postmodernist, Marxist, or postcolonialist—so as to create a sense of "consistency" and "unification," my aim in the book, then became to straddle them all—thereby splintering their containedness. Indeed, a major impetus of the book was to keep from having an overly strong sense of alliedness to any one theoretical position, since tensions and contradictions defy at every turn easy slotting of ourselves and our thinking-reading-interpreting endeavors into pre-existing researching-texting-theorizing-languaging-disciplinary camps. Ironically, in some ways, Tupas's sense of "mixed signals" are a compliment; the book was intended to be a mix, and it has achieved its purpose if that is what he has "read" and "interpreted."

All of this, of course, brings me to back to what I began this response with: what does it all say about our discursive practices? Our hermeneutic endeavors—our "reading," "filling in," and "interpreting" (whether it is me "reading" the Gujarat educational scenes and working to text them in ways relevant to the west or whether it is Tupas reading my text to see how they relate to west-based tropes)—impact all aspects of our researching-texting practices. It is crucial that we occasionally take stock of our intellectual comings and goings, how our positioning between geographic spaces (India and the West, Philippines and the West) and the local issues and tropes in both defy simple categorizations and spill out of ourselves and our texts and into our communities, pasts, histories and memories. For Tupas, forgetting the Philippines' colonized past is not an option; as he evocatively points out in the epigraph leading this essay, we need to move ahead with language policies and planning, both in our "home" spaces and in the west by remembering and by pulling the imperialistic past into the present, since that is a way of addressing unfreedom. For myself, speaking from another postcolonial space, teaching English (TE) in the west without actively considering the other languages (OL) is not an option, just as "reading" and speaking of "social access" and "cultural capital" as empty, theoretical containments (that do not directly address class issues) aren't either. Once we arrive at a hermeneutic plane that allows us to viscerally experience societal, linguistic, (neo)colonial, class-related, pedagogic, researching-texting strains in refreshingly knotted forms, we are awakened to rethinking prevailing disciplinary strains. Disciplinary narratives that tend to lull us into replication and reproduction need occasional tears and breaks—Kierkegaardian *Augenblicks*—that remind us to both remain honest to the full meaningfulness of local and everyday complexities. For both Tupas and myself, TESOL needs to directly confront issues of inequity not by simply promoting more English—the way it has tended to—but by complicating its position around policies by connecting histories and pasts to present pedagogical moments that take account of "OL" and issues of poverty. Indeed, can we really afford to do otherwise?

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THE CONDITION OF FILIPINO AMERICANISM: GLOBAL AMERICANA AS A RELATION OF DEATH

Dylan Rodríguez
Department of Ethnic Studies
University of California, Riverside
dylan.rodriguez@ucr.edu

Abstract
At the nexus of a prevailing Filipino-American discourse that celebrates the Filipino-American as a cooperative participant in the United States nation-building project sits an "unnamable violence" that masks the genocidal preconditions of "multiculturalist" white supremacy, to which this discourse unwittingly subscribes. The article explores the beginnings and development of this discourse, and the workings of American white supremacy in naturalizing relations of death between itself and its "others." The article ends with a reflection on how "natural" disasters like Hurricane Katrina and the eruption of Mt. Pinatubo become means of legitimizing discourses that reinforce white invulnerability vis-à-vis disposability of non-white subjects.

Keywords
American multiculturalism, Filipino-American War, Hurricane Katrina, Mt. Pinatubo

About the author
Dylan Rodríguez is a graduate of the PhD in Ethnic Studies Program of the University of California Berkeley and is currently Associate Professor of Ethnic Studies at the University of California Riverside. His work in critical race studies, on the late-modern carceral and anti-imperialist/anti-war critique has been extensively published in various refereed journals and critical anthologies. A committed social activist, Dr. Rodríguez is the author of *Forced Passages: Imprisoned Radical Intellectuals and the US Prison Regime* (U of Minnesota P, 2006).

Author's note
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INTRODUCTION: MULTICULTURALISM AND FILIPINO AMERICAN CIVIL SOCIETY

The purpose of this essay is to offer a set of theoretical and political questions that address the "Filipino American" condition primarily, but perhaps the Filipino local and global condition in a more general sense as well. I am most concerned with how the discursive modality and political analytic of "Filipino American" discourse, including its articulations of "identity," "community," "politics," and for that matter, "scholarship," is underwritten by a peculiar, and singularly disturbing allegiance to the American national

project. By way of introduction, I invoke the 1997 audacious mission statement of the National Federation of Filipino American Associations (NaFFAA), an organization that alleges to represent "the Voice" of Filipinos and Filipino Americans in the United States. A non-partisan, nonprofit national affiliation of more than five hundred Filipino-American institutions and umbrella organizations, the NaFFAA covers the continental United States, Alaska, Hawaii, Guam and the Marianas ("NaFFAA Description"). Representatives and leaders of the organization boast that they are "regularly invited to briefings at the White House and on Capitol Hill, as well as the respective state houses covered by our chapters, on issues affecting ethnic and minority communities in America." According to the NaFFAA, its "primary objectives" encompass the following:

- Promoting active participation of Filipino Americans in civic and national affairs and in all other aspects of mainstream America.
- Promoting awareness of Filipino American contributions to social, economic, cultural and political life in the United States.
- Securing social justice, equal opportunity and fair treatment of Filipino Americans through advocacy and legislative and policy initiatives at all levels of government.
- Strengthening community institutions that promote the cultural heritage of Filipinos.
- Eliminating prejudices, stereotypes and ignorance of Filipino Americans. ("NaFFAA's Objectives")

This organization gathered in 2005 as the "3rd Global Filipino Networking Convention," essentially a conference designed and facilitated by Filipino American entrepreneurs who found the Philippines to be their site of aspiration to spread the influence of US global capital. The rhetorical flourish of the convention is revealing, particularly for its conceptualization of the Philippines as a site of entrepreneurial philanthropy and patriotism.

> WE, the delegates to the 3rd Global Filipino Networking Convention …
>
> BELIEVING that those who have more in knowledge, resources and technology have the capacity to uplift the lives of less fortunate Filipinos,
>
> REALIZING the need to contribute to the growth of the Philippine economy by generating investments, revenues and jobs, AGREEING to work together to achieve

> our mission to help in the alleviation of poverty in the Philippines …
>
> DO HEREBY COMMIT OURSELVES TO:
>
> Be a strong and tenacious community instituted by nation loving generations to follow in the footsteps of our exuberant, action-driven results by dedicating ourselves to building our Nation.
>
> To insure the support of the franchise industry and to establish thousands of enterprises, and generate millions of jobs for Filipinos by direct investments by OFWs.
>
> Recognize that the Raw material is our people - their minds, their skill and their imaginations. ("Resolution of Economic Forum")

I open with the example of this particular Filipino American organization in order to suggest the following: the ambitious social dream of NaFFAA, arguably the largest and most powerful Filipino American umbrella organization in existence, hinges on a twinning of imaginary labors that in fact reflects the larger social and political imagination and desire of "Filipino American discourse" more generally. First, this discourse formulates an archetype of Filipino American *citizenship* that foregrounds the productive and cooperative role of the Filipino American to the United States nation-building project. This suggests a *transhistorical collective subject* that co-exists with—and becomes a requisite extension of—the peculiar and specific American articulation of a bourgeois and substantively white supremacist liberal democratic state.

Second, this discourse gestures toward a prototype of *Filipino American civil society*, that is, a consolidation and broadly pitched cultural *legitimation* of a civic presence that is empowered through a valorized, patriotic collective passage into the fraudulent pluralist accommodations of American governing and social structures. It is as if being empowered through, and therefore more actively participating in the structures of US state violence, white supremacy, and global economic and military dominance *is something to be desired by Filipinos.* To clarify the terms of this critical theorization: I am privileging the analytical question of whether and how the *problematics* of Filipino American discourse, across its different moments and sites of production, opportune on (and eventually flourish through) the corresponding hegemonic problematics of contemporary multiculturalist white supremacy, which provide delimited spaces of empowerment and social prestige for the racial subalterns of "classical" American apartheid (Massey and Denton), while

reproducing the institutionality of white life, white bodies, and white subjectivities as the *socially ascendant modality* of the (allegedly post-apartheid) US social formation.

Put otherwise, the sanctity and quality of white life, figurative and physical integrity of the white body, and social and moral ascendancy of the (usually transparent) white subject animate the multiculturalist "turn" in US civil society, and form the condition of historical possibility for contemporary Filipino Americanism. The larger social project of representing, communing, and culturally producing a Filipino American historical bloc, then, is *essentially* defined by a specific conjuncture in the institutional and cultural apparatuses of white supremacy, which are themselves *fortified and elaborated* by this putative Filipino American communion. I am thus concerned with the conditions under which *any* Filipino, much less a collective organization of Filipino Americans, can voice such a desire to be at one with the American nation-building project.

By way offering a concise context for the origins of this discourse: the peculiarity of the Filipino American Dream, or its articulation of an incipient Filipino American "common sense" (in the Gramscian conception of the material link between cultural formation, common sense, and hegemony), can be understood as the logical culmination of a 1990s cresting of cultural and intellectual production that centered (and in fact presumed) the abstracted figure of the Filipino American as a particular embodiment of civil resolution and incorporation. I am suggesting that the formation of the Filipino American as a public and historical subject—that is, as a *mobilized material discourse* of identity, community, and intellectuality—was *leveraged* by a promise of coherence and identification that was animated by the disciplinary and interpellating seductions of an *American* civil subjectivity. This elaboration of civic personhood both encompasses and exceeds the desires and demands of (American) "citizenship" to the extent that the Filipino American figuration is periodically constructed as the *meta*-fulfillment of an American nationalist *telos*.

Thus, an academic and popular discourse emerged with particular prominence during the 1990s. A surge of civic and nonprofit organizations, performance art, high school, college, and university student groups, print media, academic programs, and other popular cultural forms precipitated a veritable "Filipino American renaissance," meshing with an acceleration in scholarly production that increasingly located the academic "Filipino Americanist" within hegemonic sites of knowledge production and institutional formation.

I am concerned with the sets of proclamations, assumptions, and political demands (and for that matter *non-demands*) that underwrite this circulating Filipino American discourse that claims and coheres a particular social space within the "multicultural"

vicissitudes of American civil society. I am also, and not incidentally, interested in how Filipino American discourse articulates an American "civilian" ontology that is inseparable from—and profoundly productive of—a liberal (that is, formally inclusionist and pluralist) American multiculturalism that inaugurates new modalities of the American hegemonic, locally and globally. In the larger project to which this essay speaks (Rodríguez, *Suspended Apocalyse*), I initiate a more extensive critical examination of contemporary multiculturalism as a structure of dominance, state violence, and re-animated sophisticated racism and white supremacy. In my view, the innovation of hegemonic multiculturalisms is actually inseparable from systems of militarized global racial domination, from corporate globalization and the War on Terror to domestic warfare and the US and global "prison industrial complex" (Rodríguez, *Forced Passages*). Here, I wish to consider Filipino American discourse in a narrower conceptual and theoretical scope, as a particular *elaboration* of multiculturalism that is inseparable from a specific history of US-Philippine contact.

In what follows, I contend that the emergence of Filipino American discourse as a relatively coherent field of political, cultural, and intellectual identification begs the very line of critical inquiry its self-naming disavows. That is, at the nexus of the intersection and sometime conflation of the "Filipino" and the "American" sits an unnamable violence that deeply troubles the very formation of the discourse itself. The very rubric of the discourse, the very framing of this identity and community (the discursive linking of *and assumptive political coalescence between* the "Filipino" and the "American") not only obscures a historical relation of dominance, it *naturalizes an essential relation of death.*

The currency of a "Filipino American" identity, history, community, and politic is at once the reification of a deeply troubled contact point between Frantz Fanon's paradigmatic "native" and "settler," while also a rhetorical valorization of a post-conquest *rapprochement* between the US nation and its undifferentiated Philippine subjects. Fanon's durable critique of the "native intellectual" resonates the historic dislocation of post-colonial Filipino intellectuals from their collective, presumptively secure housing in the onetime colony. Disrupting contemporary pluralist and liberal multiculturalist paradigms of professional intellectualism, Fanon elaborates the conditions of domination and disruption that ruin possibility for authentic human dialogue within the historical dialectic of conquest. In Fanon's analytic, the very notion of a "Filipino American" intellectual—that which asserts itself as a coherent and *presumed* intellectual subject—collapses on the possibility of its own internal disarticulation, in this case the rupturing antagonism between the "Filipino" and the "American." Fanon resonates the current state of *cultural estrangement* in Filipino

American discourse when he writes in *The Wretched of the Earth*,

> When we consider the resources deployed to achieve the cultural alienation so typical of the colonial period, we realize that nothing was left to chance and that the final aim of colonization was to convince the indigenous population it would save them from darkness. The result was to hammer into the heads of the indigenous population that if the colonist were to leave they would regress into barbarism, degradation, and bestiality. (149)

Fanon's longer discussion of cultural estrangement in *The Wretched of the Earth* captures in shorthand an antagonistic historical tension that echoes through the field of Filipino American Studies. One side of this tension involves a creeping sense of absolute cultural and historical *loss*—the accompanying, structured legacy of the genocidal US conquest at the turn of the century. The other side of this tension is reflected in anxious assurances of authentic collective (communal, subjective, and intellectual) identity: at times essentialist, though more frequently a flexible, dynamic, and straightforwardly anti-essentialist (yet no less *insistent*) claim to Filipino American-ness that works through the logic of an existing social formation and cultural hegemony. Fanon's concern with the native intellectual is most clearly founded in his desire for a decisive departure from colonialism's lasting cultural structure: "the colonized's endeavors to rehabilitate himself [sic] and escape the sting of colonialism obey the same rules of logic" (*The Wretched of the Earth* 150).

While use of the term "Filipino American" incorporates several dimensions of civic life—citizenship, location, national allegiance, and most importantly, a fundamental (though not necessarily exclusive) *identification* with "America"—I am interested in re-articulating this term as a point of contact and departure: that is, I want to consider "Filipino American" as the signifier of an originary relation of death and killing, the ongoing inscription of a genocidal condition of possibility for the Filipina/o's sustained presence in (and proximity to) the United States. While most scholars and researchers acknowledge the mass-scale killing and sophisticated campaigns of cultural extermination and displacement waged by the US during (and after) the so-called Philippine-American War, few have explored the implications of this death and destruction as *constitutive* and *productive* elements of the Filipino-American (Philippine-United States) relation.

Here I am offering a schematic re-inscription of Filipino American discourse, as well as Filipino American and Filipino Studies through a working, critical theory of the intersections—material, ideological, historical, and political—between 1) the United States'

production of a particular relation to the Philippines and Filipinos through changing modalities of political, military, and economic domination (direct relations of force) and/or hegemony (structured consent under the threat of force), and 2) the premises of this ongoing, dynamic relation in the nexus of *genocide*.

"GENOCIDE"

Beyond references to the liquidation of Indigenous peoples in the Americas and the industrialized elimination of Jews, "homosexuals," racialized minorities, disabled people, and others under Hitler's German National Socialism, few incidents of (ethnically/racially) targeted, mass-scale physical and cultural extermination have obtained the status of authentic human holocaust. It is one of modernity's constitutive contradictions that the proliferation and evolution of technologies of killing is irrevocably tied to the varieties of social formation produced and reproduced by "modernization" itself (Bartov). In fact, the paradigmatic frontier question of *civilization or barbarism* has always and immediately required the marshalling of a vigorous popular *might*, an eager and often ritualized willingness to carry out the necessary and inevitable—if unfortunate and bloody—human sacrifice at the figurative altars of modernity (e.g. nationhood, bourgeois liberal democracy, capital).

The question of how genocide simultaneously manifests as a military and *social* logic of and for modernity is critical and overdue for producers of critical, progressive, and radical knowledges and pedagogies. How might this emergent field of research, teaching, and activism take its point of departure in a historic encounter wherein the toll in human lives—the vast majority of whom would have fallen under the categorical designation of "civilians"—was undeniably astronomical, yet is forever beyond the historical record (estimates of indigenous peoples killed during the four-year US-Philippine struggle range anywhere from *two hundred thousand to two million*)?

> An American congressman who visited the Philippines, and who preferred to remain anonymous, spoke frankly … "You never hear of any disturbances in Northern Luzon … because there isn't anybody there to rebel … The good Lord in heaven only knows the number of Filipinos that were put under ground. Our soldiers took no prisoners, they kept no records; they simply swept the country and wherever and whenever they could get hold of a Filipino they killed him." (Francisco 7)

What are the political-intellectual implications of the historic and geographic progression of American white supremacy and its genocidal logic, initiated in the territories of indigenous peoples throughout North America, sustained in the transatlantic holocaust and chattel enslavement of Africans, and momentarily culminating in the razing conquest of the newfound Philippine archipelago?

> In short, [soldiers and veterans] wanted to wage "Injun warfare." A Kansas veteran stated it more directly: "The country won't be pacified until the niggers are killed off like the Indians." Howard McFarlane agreed: It was necessary "to blow every nigger into a nigger heaven." Adapting an old frontier adage, another veteran explained that "the only good Filipino is a dead one. Take no prisoners; lead is cheaper than rice." (Miller 20)

Such declarations of commitment to racialized slaughter are supplemented by the US government's own official records (including a wealth of Congressional testimony by veterans of the Indian and Philippine wars) (US Senate), constructing a history of the Philippine-US encounter that defies conventional definitions of "war." Contesting this reification of military conflict requires a more substantive theoretical engagement with the history of genocide discourse.

The United Nation's adoption of a resolution on the "prevention and punishment" of genocide in 1948 is defined by its structuring inadequacies as a juridical measure. In fact, Polish legal scholar Raphaël Lemkin's original formulation of the document was comprehensive in scope and contained the outlines for effective enforcement of its content. His draft "specified that acts or policies aimed at 'preventing the preservation or development' of 'racial, national, linguistic, religious or political groups' should be considered genocidal, along with a range of 'preparatory' acts, including 'all forms of propaganda tending by their systematic and hateful character to provoke genocide, or tending to make it appear as a necessary, legitimate, or excusable act'" (Churchill 410). The global superpowers of the time, however, conspired to strip the document of its definitional scope and legal context. In an interesting moment of Cold War coalescence, the United States and USSR forced Lemkin out of the approval process, erased the provision regarding the wholesale destruction of "political groups," eliminated guidelines for a permanent international tribunal (instead allowing each state "to utilize its own juridical apparatus in determining whether it, its officials, or its subjects were to be considered of genocidal conduct") and deleted the full second article of Lemkin's original draft. Critically, it was

this second article that spoke to the question of *cultural genocide*:

> In the original draft, Article II had specified as genocidal the "destruction of the specific character of a persecuted 'group' by forced transfer of children, forced exile, prohibition of the use of the national language, destruction of books, documents, monuments, and objects of historical, artistic or religious value." (Churchill 411)

The elimination of this provision was central to the eventual ratification of the diluted Convention, particularly as it alleviated the United States from the burden of confronting its own history of mass-based killing and cultural destruction within its continental and trans-Pacific frontiers. The eventual jurisprudential capacity of the UN Convention is thus undermined by a drastic narrowing of definitional scope:

> Article 2. In the present Convention, genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such:
>
> (a) Killing members of the group;
> (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
> (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
> (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
> (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group. (United Nations)

In addition to excluding political groups and social-economic classes from the realm of target populations, the Convention does not distinguish between violence that intends to annihilate and generalized institutional violence inflicted on a specific group. This lack of specificity is only compounded by the fact that the resolution has had no practical effect on adjudicating the historical genocides conducted by dominant nations and governments.

While I do not wish to propose a closed definition of the term, I am interested in offering an intervention on the existing political and scholarly discourse of genocide by attempting a conceptual departure from conventional accounts of the "Philippine-American War." In this sense, Ward Churchill's "functional definition" of genocide offers a sufficient working conception:

> Although it may or may not involve killing, per se, genocide is a denial of the right of existence of entire human groups, as homicide is the denial of the right to live of individual human beings …
>
> Article II.
> In the present Convention, genocide means the destruction, entirely or in part, of any racial, ethnic, national, religious, cultural, linguistic, political, economic, gender, or other human group, however such groups may be defined by the perpetrator. (Churchill 431-2)

Churchill's revision goes on to note three primary forms of genocide: the physical, biological, and cultural. Crucial for this discussion is his elaborated notion of cultural genocide, a practice that was essential to the US conquest of the Philippines. Churchill defines this form of categorical killing, following the logic of Lemkin's original draft, as

> the destruction of the specific character of the targeted group(s) through destruction or expropriation of its means of economic perpetuation; prohibition or curtailment of its language; suppression of its religious, social or political practices; … destruction or denial of use and access to objects of sacred or sociocultural significance; forced dislocation, expulsion or dispersal of its members; forced transfer or removal of its children, or any other means. (Churchill 433)

I am especially interested in how cultural genocide has articulated through the violent progression of American white modernity through and beyond its initial contact with the Philippines. This articulation, I argue, is at the unspoken nexus of Filipino American Studies as an emergent institutional and discursive field.

The era of US mass killing and ecological devastation in the archipelago is often constructed as an *episode* in the long history of Filipino/American, Philippine/US relations. Yet, to take seriously that the genesis of these relations historically inscribes through the genocidal (Westward and trans-Pacific) movement of white modernity is to break with the conventions of historical periodization. The *violence* of this encounter with American modernity intersects as it shapes time, subjectivity, and the collective life of the social. Kleinman provides a useful schema for conceptualizing violence as an active historical force, a constitutive aspect of the social, through which institutions and infrastructures are (partially though fundamentally) shaped.

> Rather than view violence, then, simply as a set of discrete events … the perspective I am advancing seeks to unearth those entrenched processes of ordering the social world and making (or realizing) culture that themselves are forms of violence: violence that is multiple, mundane, and perhaps all the more fundamental because it is the hidden or secret violence out of which images of people are shaped, experiences of groups are coerced, and agency itself is engendered. (Kleinman 239)

Herein lies the entanglement of Filipino American discourse with the generative legacy of an epochal, genocidal contact with the United States. In seeking to constitute a historical subject that reconciles the killer with the killed, the field fabricates a peculiar and powerful "Filipino American" sentimentality—a structure of affect and historical sense that forces the essential violence of the Filipino-American relation into silence and invisibility, for the sake of a fraudulently sustained coherence: the existential necessity for an identity otherwise permanently fragmented by a structure of irreconcilability. This sentimentality cuts across institutionalized discourses and textual forms—from academic works to popular cultural forms, there is a relative consistency in form and content, a vigorous assertion of Filipino American subjectivity that insists on the primacy of (American) location and residence, a reification of (US) nationhood, and the presumptive entitlements of (an admittedly ambivalent) membership in things American.

By way of example we can meditate on the words of Alex Escalamado, one of the founders of the NaFFAA, and also the publisher of a periodical called *The Philippine News*, the most widely circulated Filipino American publication in the United States. His words offer an organic glimpse at this production of Filipino American sentimentality and the modality through which it is reproduced and amplified. Esclamado's self-published transcript of a 1997 speech at the Filipino Intercollegiate Networking Dialogue in Stony Brook, New York posits a direct appeal to notions of inherent, biological racial superiority that *directly borrows from the ideological, rhetorical, and pseudo-theocratic apparatuses of American white supremacy*:

> My friends, we have a big task to transfer to you, and that is the future. The future is yours. The community has grown. Now is the time to empower you.
>
> The world is yours.
>
> You are a superior race. You are.
>
> Why not? (Esclamado)

Such vulgar and frequently bizarre formulations of the Filipino American *telos* reflect something worse than a repression of memory—this is the eclectic, organic production of a collective lifeworld immersed in an appropriation and refraction of white supremacist, nationalist American sentimentality. It is the discursive institutionalization of a silence that is in excess of trauma or revisionist denial. Imagine the accumulation of different historical violences—and their rather perverse and disturbed reconstitution of political identifications—that must occur for such a statement as Esclamado's to *even be voiceable.*

Hegemonic Filipino American discourse inscribes a social fantasy: the disappearance of mass scale death, a decisive movement beyond an originating violence and toward an idealized metaphysical reconciliation between what Fanon would call the "native" and the "settler." This is a contrived peace overshadowed by its historical condition of possibility in genocide, and generative of an altogether different (though nonetheless profound) structure of violence. Following Kleinman's critique, the very grammar of things "Filipino American" collaborates in the social logic of a genocidal colonialism (and its descendants in underdevelopment, imperialism, and neoliberalism).

The legacy of physical extermination and cultural-ecological devastation entails far more than the formal inception of an oppressive and exploitive colonial regime: in the case of the United States' relation to the Philippines and Filipinas/os, one also finds the birth of a modernist racial pedagogy, wherein the native becomes the preeminent embodiment of Progress and its unstoppable historical ascendancy. For Fanon, colonial and neocolonial native intellectuals (the prominent subject of Fanon's political critique and anti-colonial polemic in *The Wretched of the Earth*) work in a field of cultural death, advancing the mission of white modernity through a dialectical process of "adoption" and "renouncement":

> Every colonized people—in other words, every people in whose soul an inferiority complex has been created by the death and burial of its local cultural originality—finds itself face to face with the language of the civilizing nation; that is, with the culture of the mother country. The colonized is elevated above his [sic] jungle status in proportion to his adoption of the mother country's cultural standards. He [sic] becomes whiter as he renounces his blackness, his jungle. (*Black Skin* 17-8)

Proximity to blackness and the jungle become primary signifiers of backwardness, premodernity, *the dead past*. The epochal killing of the initial contact, having allegedly and decisively ceased, is now replaced with the relative benevolence of liberal state institutions and a state-sanctioned cosmopolitan civil society, the grammar of modernity having

sustained a logic of cultural displacement. Humanistic progressivism—the lifeblood of cultural conquest—restores the supremacy of modernity's presumptive white subject in magnanimous fashion, inviting the native's selective and always partial membership.

Perhaps the nexus of what I have been calling the "Filipino-American relation" is the convergence between the physical extermination of an object native people, and colonialism's contingent production and incorporation of native intellectuals as subjects of modernity and agents of modernization. Of course, here I am suggesting that most self-identifying Filipino professional intellectuals fall squarely within the contemporary genealogy of the Fanonian "native intellectual," differently located though we may be.

"ZONES OF DEATH"

Whether the site of modernity's presumptive progress is civilization, barbarism ("the jungle," in Fanon's vivid rendition), or deeply conflicted, liminal sites of contact (in the segregated and militarized post/colonial city, for example), the *pedagogical* mission of modernity, advancing in and through the collective whiteness of colonizers and the violent displacements of their transplanted institutions, is persistent and clear. The genesis of the Filipino-American relation in the moment of conquest is, most of all, constituted by its white supremacist articulation in provincially focused US campaigns of mass slaughter and geographically organized "scorched earth" destruction of farms, villages, and local ecologies. Preceding the era of industrialized warfare and weapons of instant mass destruction, it is worth emphasizing that the US slaughter was utterly *labor intensive*, requiring extraordinary physical expenditures and strategic improvisation in the struggle to exterminate guerillas and civilians, and to exert tentative military control over the countryside. Beyond the alleged military requirements of large-scale killing in this euphemistically termed American "war" against a scandalous, treacherous, and generally criminal (hence apolitical) guerilla resistance, it was the irrepressible compulsion of modernity—its "racist culture" of deadly, manifest whiteness (Goldberg)—to fantasize (and wage) genocide for life's sake. (What kind of life? Whose lives? Life where?) The 1902 Congressional testimony of Brigadier General Robert P. Hughes is instructive here:

> *Sen. Rawlins*: … [I]n burning towns, what would you do? Would the entire town be destroyed by fire or would only offending portions of the town be burned?
> *Gen. Hughes*: I do not know that we ever had a case of burning what you would call a town in this country, but probably a *barrio* or a *sitio* …

Sen. Rawlins: What did I understand you to say would be the consequences of that?
Gen. Hughes: They usually burned the village.
Sen. Rawlins: All of the houses in the village?
Gen. Hughes: Yes; every one of them.
Sen. Rawlins: What would become of the inhabitants?
Gen. Hughes: That was their lookout.
Sen. Rawlins: If these shacks were of no consequence what was the utility of their destruction?
Gen. Hughes: The destruction was as a punishment. They permitted these people [guerillas] to come in there and conceal themselves and they gave no sign …
Sen. Rawlins: The punishment in that case would fall, not upon the men, who could go elsewhere, but mainly upon the women and little children.
Gen. Hughes: The women and children are part of the family, and where you wish to inflict a punishment you can punish the man probably worse in that way than in any other.
Sen. Rawlins: But is that within the ordinary rules of civilized warfare? Of course you could exterminate the family, which would be still worse punishment.
Gen. Hughes: These people are not civilized. (Graff 64-65)

The indigenous population of the Philippines, to resonate several aforementioned quotations from military personnel, was not simply being *compared* or *reduced* to "Indians" and "niggers" through a transplanted racial analogy readily available to the presumptively white US nationalism of statesmen, generals, commanding officers, and rank-and-file soldiers. In this state of contrived war, where the distinctively American rendition of modernity's aggressive movement through place and time entailed the production of (racialized) enemy/others, *"Indians" and "niggers" constituted categories of death.* This was the bottom line of American modernity, that its path toward the good society required the categorical death of categorical others.

Categorical death suggests a leap beyond the realm of the biological, a modality of non-existence that begs for more than corpses and mass graves, a process of mass killing that demands extraordinary endings, outside the realms of physical destruction waged by the US military's turn-of-the-century "dum dum" bullets and slaughter strategies. Filipinos embodied the continuity of conquest *en masse*, a Pacific native population that both occupied and exceeded the discourses of "Indians" and "niggers" (Balce) while sharing the essential distinction of living for extermination and selective, coercive assimilation into a

white (American) modernity—the very crystallization of categorical life.

> [A]s early as April 1899, General Shafter gave grisly portent to the future conduct of the war: "It may be necessary to kill half the Filipinos in order that the remaining half of the population may be advanced to a higher plane of life than their present semi-barbarous state affords." (Francisco 4)

The notion of a "zone of death" constitutes an appropriate allegory for the relation that provides theoretical and structural coherence for Filipino American discourse amidst its anxious discourses of membership, entitlement, and belonging.

By way of addressing and working through the problems of Filipino American discourse, I will conclude by meditating on a more specific and contemporary historical and political geography of state-formed racial violence and consider what it yields in the way of possibilities for a more authentically critical, and politically radical conception of identity, community, and antiracist/anti-imperialist work that truly violates the borders that have been imposed on Filipinos in multiple ways. I wish to reflect on the social logic of the massive forces of destruction that popular and state discourses have simplistically termed "natural disaster," and begin to address the social formation that such destruction constitutes under the dominance of a white supremacist global order. I will begin by considering the significance of Hurricane Katrina, which devastated the US Gulf Coast in 2005, and continue by thinking about Katrina's linkages to the explosion of Mt. Pinatubo in 1991.

"NATURAL DISASTER," WHITE LIFE, AND FILIPINO RACIALITY

Hurricane Katrina continues to be invoked as an exceptional episode in US history—as something already framed *in the past tense.* However, the living time of Hurricane Katrina, which I understand here as an *ongoing* material history of rigorously organized, state-facilitated, and militarized white racial dominion, presents an acute opportunity to express and firmly restate the logic of dominance that encompasses our collective existence.

Hurricane Katrina has abruptly displaced the "multicultural" pretensions of the American post-civil rights national and global formation, and reinserted the *sanctity* of white existence, white bodies, and white life as the central condition of the nation's coherence. Katrina thus speaks to the essential structuring techniques of white life as a system of dominance: the time of Katrina articulates a global indictment of white life,

framed by the possibility for a political and existential identification with the context and substance of a critical common sense of Black and Third World death.

While accountings of indigenous, Latino/a, Asian, and poor white suffering at the hands of Katrina continue to be written, we ought to be clear that the fundamental economic, cultural, and state/military logic governing the discrete geographic and human drowning of a post-segregation, though effectively apartheid New Orleans is animated by the sturdy symbiosis between Black disposability and American nation-building. Hurricane Katrina re-enshrines the specificity of American white supremacy—and specifically mass-based Black bodily and geographic liquidation—*as an epochal articulation of democracy, state-building, and nationalist well-being.* Katrina, in other words, was/is good for (white) America.

The time of Katrina indicates the fundamental *irrevocability* of white life as a unilateral declaration of war: it is a life-or-death struggle to ascertain the collective white body's ascendancy over the mundane conditions of Black suffering, and constitutes a dynamic structuring of domination over the form, duration, and condition of "life" itself. Black death and displacement, ordained through the ritualized negligence and organized dysfunctioning of the American state during and after the anticipated destruction of Katrina—a hurricane that, it cannot be overemphasized, was meteorologically well-predicted—can and must be understood as the organized and enforced condition of contemporary liberal multiculturalism, the most current and recent innovation of white supremacy that feeds and fosters a desire to, in plain words, live as (we imagine) white people do (including the eclectic consumption of ethnic and racial "diversity"). When located alongside coterminous structures of white supremacist, nationalist, and democratically articulated antiblack violence—e.g. racially militarized policing and the post-1970s prison industrial complex—Hurricane Katrina is well within the historical conventions of American white civil society itself, amplifying and restoring the sanctity of white bodily integrity (and multicultural aspirations toward the same) through state-sanctioned, and popularly consumed productions of Black bodily disintegration. Katrina, in its presentation of Black social liquidation as a *naturalized* state of emergency for an allegedly isolated population of Black people, gratifies the multiculturalist desire to flee the condition of "Blackness" toward the imagined sanctum of white life.

Katrina especially amplifies how the historical production of a white supremacist racial existence has been continuously fortified through an institutionalized immunity of white bodies from categorical (that is, racial) fragility—white bodies are generally alienated from and systemically *unfamiliar with* forms of collective, unexpected bodily violence and premature death. In this sense, the relation of "disaster" to white life is that

of a *socially reproductive* technology: the social, political, and physical liquidation of the white world's durable racial antagonist(s) reproduces the transparent universality—the very "normalcy"—of white civil existence and bodily integrity, and provides a material opportunity for white life to quite literally *transcend death.*

A reflection on political and philosophical positioning is appropriate here. I arrive at this reflection on Hurricane Katrina through a *Pinoy* genealogy, as someone born and raised in the US while sustaining lifelong affective, extended familial, and imaginary connections to another place. For reasons I am not sure I can fully understand or explain, Katrina resonates with me in ways that render sympathy and mourning as inappropriate, even offensive reactions to what has happened and continues to happen. In my guts, I do not feel as if Hurricane Katrina was/is a "tragedy," and I find myself viscerally objecting to its being characterized as such. While there are unnumbered tragedies—personal and political—composing the mosaic of this historical moment, Katrina strikes me as something closer to a planned atrocity, and the spectacle of its becoming sits with me as a scene of white popular enjoyment,[1] wherein the purging/drowning of Black people provided an opportunity for white Americana to revel in its entitlement to remain relatively indifferent to this nearby theater of breathtaking devastation. This structure of witnessing and orchestration, perhaps, is what most disorients my autobiographical sensibilities.

The 1991 explosion of Mt. Pinatubo in the Philippines (the second largest volcanic eruption in the twentieth century), which is arguably best known for having effectively (if only temporarily) incapacitated the massive Clark and Subic Bay US military bases, is prominent in Filipino/a diasporic consciousness and historical memory. While the context, geography, and sociopolitical impact of the Pinatubo eruption do not conveniently parallel or sustain easy comparison with the atrocity in the Gulf Coast, the volcano's explosion undoubtedly contributed to the atmospheric and environmental conditions of possibility for Hurricane Katrina. The ash, gas, and toxins distributed by the volcano were so significant that they effectively reduced the overall temperature of the earth by 1.5 degrees Celsius, altered global wind circulation, and destroyed a significant portion of the planet's ozone layer (Rantucci; Bautista; Castro; Davis; Asian Development Bank). Beyond this mind-numbing environmental consequence, and the 800 dead, 200,000 displaced by the eruption and subsequent lahars, Mt. Pinatubo is perhaps most significant to the Filipino/a diaspora for its signification of instant mortality and involuntary, unexpected "evacuation" at the hands of God (or, if you like, diasporic susceptibility to an inaccessible transcendental agency).

Unexpected displacement and premature death are absolutely unremarkable to Filipinos, above and beyond exposure to the worst of naturalized environmental disaster

(although I will not rehearse the socioeconomic, health, or mortality data here). Members of the Filipino diaspora, across class and regional distinctions, can almost universally state that they are immediately connected to the fallout from environmental hazard/disaster, assassination, acute government repression, or US military occupation/mobilization. Mt. Pinatubo's devastation, however, also reveals that this diasporic connectedness is neither seamless nor unmarked by its own reinscriptions of localized productions of racialized hierarchy and dominance. Rarely invoked in remembrances, commemorations, and (re) narrations of the eruption is the fact that (to quote one author) "hardest hit among the casualties were the Negritos who were not immunized from diseases and even shunned the treatment of doctors" (Castro 2).

The national/racial positioning of the Negrito peoples reflect the Spanish colonial and Euroamerican anthropological etymology of their naming, and the Negrito ethnoracial categorization serves as a convenient categorical incorporation of a much broader collection of indigenous Philippine groups, including the Aetas who inhabited the immediate region of Mt. Pinatubo. The colonial, anthropological, and contemporary Philippine national/racial imaginary conceptualizes the Negritos through a version of "epidermalized"[2] blackness that articulates with notions of an aboriginal (and quaint) Philippine "tribal" premodern. As historically racialized, and conventionally racially pathologized subjects, Aetas self-consciously sustain a rupturing of universalizing notions of Philippine nationalist, diasporic, "racial," and (pan)ethnic identity, condensing in the vernacular delineation between indigenous/Aetas/Negritos and "straight hair"/lowlander Filipinos. Victor Villa and Elvie Devillena, two Aetas who survived the eruption, thus consider the delineation of (racial) difference as they reflect on the moment of disaster:

> I believe that Aytas and straight-hairs have certain similarities in thinking and certain differences in behavior. Aytas are just as intelligent as straight-hairs; the only difference is our lack of education. We eat differently, we dress differently. Straight-hairs like wearing shoes and fancy clothes, while Aytas are comfortable with *bahags* (loin cloth).
> The lowlanders look down on Aytas. They even sneer at us as if we were direct descendants of monkeys. (Villa 263)

> [W]hen people see that you are short, they already know you are an Ayta. They can tell you are Ita by your skin, height, or speech pattern…. No matter how you look, if you are an Ayta, it will always show. People have called me "Ayta, Ayta, Ayta.

> Kinky hair, kinky hair, kinky hair." They say that with so much derision. Sometimes we are called *beluga* because we have dark skin. People from Manila think that Zambales is filled with wild, savage Ayta people. (Devillena 288)

The Aeta/Negrito condition in this moment of Philippine national crisis compels a rereading of Mt. Pinatubo's eruption and a reconsideration of how this moment might alter our understanding of the larger genealogy of Filipino familiarity with disaster (etc.) *especially in relation to the naturalized global linkages between "blackness" (Negritoness), social liquidation, racial subjection, and historical obsolescence (aboriginalness).*

A central political and theoretical problem defining the global and historical structure of Filipino intimacy with death and terror is its relative alienation from a common sense of white supremacy that *sees, analyzes, and viscerally experiences* mortal Filipino suffering as the logical global and historical condition of white (American) life. It is white civil existence and its analogues (including elitist versions of Philippine cosmopolitanism and Filipino identity) that create and circulate the "racial" and aboriginal existence of the Negrito people and their global cohorts, and install them as the durable centers of gravity for precisely the forms of civil, social, and biological death rendered so immediately visible in the US through the racial apocalypse of Hurricane Katrina. Such a racial common sense is precisely what Black Americans have involuntarily obtained, and rigorously, commonly theorized, over the last several centuries of US national formation.

This critical Black common sense—the notion, consistently sustained as a Fanonist "historical truth,"[3] that Black peoples' intimacy with death and terror is the *fundamental purpose of white civil existence, and, perhaps, global white life itself*—is (again) being stunningly vindicated as plans are made to "reconstruct" New Orleans in the image of a gentrified white metropolis (Davis; Jackson; Younge; Enzi). The time of Katrina thus amplifies the necessity for a political articulation of white supremacy that is "radical" in the most historically contextualized sense of the term. We can understand the planning of Katrina in its geographic and political specificity as antiblack state violence and orchestrated, "natural" population control, while also situating it in relation to the global material structuring, and material genealogy, of white Americana as a perpetual state of warfare that is fundamentally *racial* in its historical architecture, social vision, and militarized ordering of human disposability. I am suggesting that the significance of Black death and displacement in the living aftermath of Katrina is reflected in the creative possibility for Black common sense to resonate with, and provide substantial political-theoretical premises for, other (neo)colonized, underdeveloped, and racially pathologized peoples'

self-conceptualizations and global political identifications in relation to things like (US and US-proctored) state violence, "natural" disaster, poverty, disease, and bodily disintegration. Perhaps most importantly, this suggests the global rather than narrowly "national" or even "regional" significance of US-based antiblack violence as a modality of white supremacist social ordering: it is to consider naturalized American antiblackness as a material foundation on which other circuits of global dominance—including neocolonialism, nationalism, "globalization" and "empire"—rely for matrices of warmaking, racial subjection, and hierarchized material and ideological structures of human mortality.

Thus, Mt. Pinatubo's eruption did not merely contribute to the global climatic condition for Katrina, it also marked the deep connection between apparently disparate "natural" occurrences which, in turn, surfaced as linked formations of global white supremacy and racism, which Ruth Wilson Gilmore conceptualizes as "the state sanctioned and/or extra-legal production and exploitation of group-differentiated vulnerabilities to premature death" (Gilmore 261). Aeta testimonials in the aftermath of the Pinatubo eruption suggest a firsthand, organic accounting of the Philippine state that more clearly renders its relation to the American white supremacist/racist state. There persist among the Aeta traces of precisely the critical common sense that 1) formulates a fundamental *dis*identification with the social and political logic of the Philippine national/racial formation, and 2) invokes latent possibilities for a rearticulation of cosmology, history, and identity that can think alongside the critical Black common sense of the Katrina moment.

What if we understood the death and destruction of Mt. Pinatubo's eruption, and the genealogy of Filipino suffering and disaster itself, as mutually and materially *articulating with* Black death and displacement before, during, and beyond the time of Katrina? I am asking for a different paradigm of *identification*—encompassing the realms of spirituality, cosmology, (racial) identity, cultural imagination, and political dreaming/fantasizing—that precedes (and hopefully generates) a different kind of praxis, across the localized sites of US white supremacy.

I am also openly wondering if this partly autobiographical reflection is really an allegory for a particular political desire to instigate and participate in a radically collective global communion of people who are capable of mustering the voice to (at least) accuse the white world of conspiring and reveling in the death of others. It is in the act of making such an accusation that we might see the genesis of political labors that push and break the limits of rationalistic, formulaic, and pragmatist agendas challenging American hegemony and neoliberal capital. Of course, such an accumulation of identification and bonding, alongside others, could well contribute to the end of white life as we know it.

Finally disaster, conceived in the presence of white supremacy, definitively and conclusively means the end of any viable, much less rational possibility for the future of white liberal humanism. Something that many survivors of European and Euroamerican colonialism, slavery, and genocide share in common is a durable belief in the existence of evil, a basic conception that its force of possibility is always lurking in the overlapping spiritual and material worlds, and a powerful (though often understated) conviction that evil inhabits and possesses the white world, its way of life, and its relationality to "others." Liberal white humanism, which constantly circulates and rearticulates notions of a shared universal "human" character while morbidly militarizing against manifest human threats to the integrity of the coercively universalized white body, cannot authentically survive the moment of Katrina. In fact, white humanism can only survive at all if it is capable of (again) reconstructing its apparatus of meaning to accommodate the materialization of white evil in the face of Black New Orleans. Perhaps, then, another question we might visit is, What does Katrina tell us of evil? What happens if we look up and evil is armed absence and militarized neglect, intentional and institutional without a doubt, but materialized through the white world's persistent festival of health, happiness, and physical integrity in the face of such incredible suffering?

NOTES

1 While hers is a discussion of white enjoyment of mundane and unspectacular moments of Black subordination and antiblack violence under the dominance of racial chattel slavery, the fundamental insight of Saidiya V. Hartman's work *Scenes of Subjection* is wholly germane here: central to the affective, juridical, and psychic structures of slavery (and white supremacist dominion over the Black body) is the essential and multi-valenced *availability* of Black suffering for the consumption and use of white subjects. (Hartman)

2 Frantz Fanon's well-known meditation on "The Fact of Blackness" best articulates the notion of race as a formation of power that condenses at the sight of the racialized body, more specifically the overdetermined site of the epidermis. In one famous passage from this essay, he reflects on his experience with a white child on a public train, whose exclamation "Look, a Negro!" instantly invoked the alienation of the Black body/subject from human history, displaced by a racist "historicity" of blackness:

> Then, assailed at various points, the corporeal schema crumbled, its place taken by a racial epidermal schema. In the train it was no longer a question of being aware of my body in the third person but in a triple person. In the train I was given not one but two, three places. I had already stopped being amused. It was not that I was finding febrile coordinates in the world. I existed triply: I occupied space. I moved toward the other … and the evanescent other, hostile but not opaque, transparent, not there, disappeared. Nausea…. (Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* 112, all ellipses in the original)

3 Fanon writes of racist colonial domination that it is a constitution of "history" itself:

> The colonist makes history and he knows it. And because he refers constantly to the history of his metropolis, he plainly indicates that here he is the extension of this metropolis. The history he writes is therefore not the history of the country he is despoiling, but the history of his own nation's looting, raping, and starving to death. The immobility to which the colonized subject is condemned can be challenged only if he decides to put an end to the history of colonization and the history of despoliation in order to bring to life the history of the nation, the history of decolonization. (*The Wretched of the Earth* 15)

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THREE ON *BALIKBAYANG MAHAL: PASSAGES FROM EXILE* BY E. SAN JUAN, JR.

Editor's Note

E. San Juan, Jr. is one of the few public intellectuals among Filipinos abroad who have devoted considerable time and energy to the scholarly investigation of the current situation, history, and direction of Filipino migrants in the global diaspora. In numerous books, among them *From Exile to Diaspora* (1998), *The Philippine Temptation* (1996), *After Postcolonialism* (2000), *Filipinos Everywhere* (2006), and *US Imperialism and Revolution in the Philippines* (2007), San Juan has analyzed the predicament and crisis of about three to four million Filipinos in the US in the context of the US colonial/neocolonial subjugation of the homeland. After finishing his doctorate at Harvard University and teaching at the University of the Philippines, San Juan accepted an offer of a senior position at the University of Connecticut in 1967. He was involved in the anti-martial law movement from 1972 to 1986 and has taught in various colleges in the US as well as in Italy, Belgium, Taiwan, and other countries. He has an international reputation as an expert in postcolonial and cultural studies, semiotics, comparative ethnic/racial relations, and historical-materialist critique. Early this year he will be handling a literary theory course at the University of the Philippines, Diliman, and will launch his new book, *Balikbayang Sinta: An E. San Juan Reader*, soon to be released by the Ateneo de Manila University Press.

THE PLANET AS HOMELAND

Charlie Samuya Veric
American Studies, Yale University
charlie.veric@yale.edu

Abstract
The review essay outlines the relationship between the planet and homeland as sites of unfreedom and freedom for Filipinos everywhere. Using E. San Juan's new collection of poems, the review essay argues that the logic of translation is crucial to understanding the connection between the planet and homeland. To understand this connection is to imagine the future of Filipinos who share the fate of slaves, refugees, detainees, and immigrants across the planet.

Keywords
Balikbayang Mahal, E. San Juan, Jr., homeland, planet, translation, exile

About the Author
Charlie Samuya Veric, PhD Candidate and member of the Working Group on Globalization and Culture, deals with critical issues in American literature, postcolonial studies, and cultural theory. The editor of *Anticipating Filipinas* and coeditor of *Suri at Sipat*, he had been educated at the University of the Philippines and Ateneo de Manila before joining the program in American studies at Yale University. Some of his works have been published in *American Quarterly*, *Common Knowledge*, *Kritika Kultura*, *Rethinking History*, and *Socialism and Democracy*, among others. He is currently writing his dissertation, "Everyday Events: Face, Aesthetics, Modernity," which examines the symbolic and material uses of face in culture at large.

A book of translations, *Balikbayang Mahal* or *Beloved Returnee* is about making history in unexpected places. Take, for instance, the following cases. The names of the dead haunt the poet-exile as dusk descends on Punta Spartivento—Juvy Magsino, Benjaline Hernandez, Eden Marcellana, Rafael Bangit, Alyce Claver. It is springtime in Den Haag and the memories of political detainees in Muntinlupa rise from the roof of the Christus Triumfator. The poet-exile remembers the Moslem insurgency in Mindanao in the land of the Pequot Indians as night falls. Here, the poet-exile finds himself in unexpected places where he comes to grips with the gathering forces of history. Everywhere he goes in the world, his country follows. To the poet-exile of *Balikbayang Mahal*, then, the vertigo of bilocation is an old reality.

The African American thinker W. E. B. Dubois has a similar concept; he calls it double-consciousness. The double-consciousness that an African American confronts for being not quite American and not quite Negro is the same enabling predicament that the poet-exile faces. That is, the poet-exile is of a particular country, but not fully from it

because he lives elsewhere. For this poet-exile as it is for African Americans, both of them children of diaspora, the doubleness of location is the doubleness of consciousness. The implicit argument in this proposition suggests the intimate dialectic between place and consciousness; the historicity of consciousness informs the materiality of place. Perhaps no other process captures this logic more than translation itself. The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines the term as the removal or conveyance from one person, place, or condition to another. And as the Latin origins of the term suggest, translation is transportation. To translate, in other words, is to transport. In *Balikbayang Mahal* the poet-exile transports the self from place to place and, accordingly, achieves the parallel transformation of consciousness. Thinking of America in Mindanao is, for this reason, not the same as thinking of Mindanao in America; the place shapes the production of consciousness.

For the poet-exile of *Balikbayang Mahal*, those two thoughts are complementary despite being dissimilar. For instance, he has suggested in his criticism that the aspiration of the Filipino around the world cannot be separated from the people's aspirations in the Philippines. As the essay included in the collection states: "Despite local differences and multiple languages, the submerged rallying cry of all Filipinos abroad, of all Filipinos overseas, is 'Tomorrow, see you in Manila!'" (125) Here, one sees the importance of the return to the homeland. This return, however, is yet to come. This future return, rather than arrival itself, is more important to the poet-exile. But those who insist on being in the homeland are wont to denigrate the idea of future return. The poet-exile must work against this denigration; he must insist that the longing to return, however suspended, fulfills a function. For him, this insistence is the self-fulfilling labor of the negative. The longing to return, even as a promise to be broken, is no less powerful. In fact, this longing is empowering for it expands the domain of the possible. Take, for instance, the poem in which one sees the poet-exile standing on a wharf in the Italian lakeside town of Bellagio called Punta Spartivento. There the poet-exile thinks of the insurgency in his distant homeland and says: "Everyone will meet here at the Punta Spartivento of the revolution" (68). The revolution in the homeland is transported to a different place with a different history; consequently, a new sense of place and history is imagined.

This leads us to the other meaning of translation. The *OED* states that translation also means transference as in movement of translation in physics, the transference of a body, or form of energy, from one point of space to another. The poet-exile accordingly translates the law of revolution into the law of physics; politics is made to recognize the workings of the material universe. If the poet-exile cannot be in Manila today, let him imagine the revolution wherever he may be. It is only fitting that this poet-exile takes

the Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci as his "only mentor in the labyrinth of the garden of communism" (40). For in the language of Gramsci, place occupies an important role. It is prudent, then, to distinguish between war of position and war of maneuver. And clearly, the poet-exile takes the former in hopes of realizing the latter. Tomorrow, see you in Manila!

Thus, translation widens the terrain for the war of position. By transforming the revolution in the homeland into a consciousness that is recognizable anywhere in the planet, the book unifies the vernacular and international. As a book of translations, then, *Balikbayang Mahal* expands the domain of struggle and, consequently, makes the political work of translation visible. The majority of the poems in the collection were written in Filipino, but their translation into English, Russian, German, Italian, and French underscores the planetary dimension of the struggle in the homeland. Translated and transformed, the vernacular becomes the international. In "Nine Love Songs and One Intervening Poem of Jealousy," for instance, the poet-exile refers to the socialist thinker Rosa Luxemburg and Russian revolutionary Alexandra Kollontai in the same breath as the anti-colonial Tagalog poet Huseng Batute. This is the voice, at once particular and worldly, that informs the poems in the collection. Reading them, one understands the idiosyncrasies of making a planetary history and the possibilities for creating a common future for all. This understanding begins with knowing that no experience is ever separate. As the poet-exile writes: "Why divide two aspirations meant to be one / Like the twofold experience of fornication and breath breaking / World shall learn the dream of their oneness" (83).

If the poet-exile has chosen to engage in a planetary war of position, what, then, are the conditions of this engagement? In the same essay in the collection, a chronology is given. From the mythical "Manillamen" who fled the Spanish galleons and resided in the bayous of Louisiana in the late eighteenth century, to the native intelligentsia in Europe who challenged the colonial authorities in the late nineteenth century, to the *pensionados* in American universities and laborers in Hawaii sugar plantations in the early twentieth century, to the domestics, caregivers, entertainers, and professionals around the planet today, the Filipino as a subject shares the history of slaves, refugees, detainees, and immigrants. These are the constituencies in motion that the poet-exile is addressing on behalf of Filipinos everywhere. This marks an important break in the Filipino literary tradition. From Francisco Balagtas, to José Rízal, to Amado V. Hernandez, to Bienvenido Lumbera, the homeland has been imagined as a bounded territory. In the work of the poet-exile, a new conception of homeland is heralded. The poet-exile may be dreaming of returning to Manila, but the place is not a final destination for him. Instead, it is a portal to

other places where homeland is without boundaries; it is not an essential place, but a set of affinities that Filipinos everywhere and other people with similar fates can embrace. This is the planet as homeland. And the poet-exile of *Balikbayang Mahal* is, in the best sense of the word, the translator of ten million Filipinos in Amsterdam, London, Tokyo, Dubai, Rome, Hong Kong, Montreal, Sydney, and New York. His name is E. San Juan, Jr.

ANATOMY OF EXILE

Tamara Powell
Louisiana Tech University
tamaram@latech.edu

Abstract
This review essay provides an overview of the poetry and essays in E. San Juan, Jr.'s *Balikbayang Mahal: Passages from Exile.* Close attention is paid to "Mask of the Poet," "Spring in Den Haag, Nederland, 25 March 2007," "Vicissitudes of the Love and Death of Vladimir Mayakovsky," and "Sa Loob at Labas Ng Bayan Kon Sawi: Emergency Signals from a Filipino Exile." The book as a whole combines the postmodern idea of the lack of authentic, monadic self with the ancient idea that everything is connected.

Keywords
Balikbayang Mahal, E. San Juan, Jr., exile, Futurists, Mayakovsky, Permanent People's Tribunal, St. Malo

About the Author:
Tamara Powell is associate professor of English at Louisiana Tech University, Louisiana, USA. She received her degrees from the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, and Bowling Green State University. She is credited with introducing multicultural courses in the curriculum and enhancing the technical writing offerings of her academy.

E. San Juan, Jr.'s latest work is not a polysyllabic, hard-hitting work of critical analysis like those he is best known for. Instead, it is a poetry-filled work entitled *Balikbayang Mahal/Passages from Exile.* This work is a collection of old and new poems and also includes a long essay on exile and diaspora entitled "Sa Loob at Labas ng Bayan Kong Sawi: Emergency Signals from a Filipino Exile." One of the most striking features of the work is the bevy of languages represented. The poems appear in their original forms in either Filipino or English. A few poems also appear with French and Chinese translations accompanying them, and there are poems in Spanish and Italian. Most of the 35 poems are accompanied by a translation into at least one other language. Some poems, like "Mask of the Poet," appear in English and Filipino with German and Russian translations.

The most consistent features of San Juan's poems are his use of free verse and his gift of allusion. The poetry reminds one of T. S. Eliot in its deluge of allusions and its use of multiple languages. The author's sweeping knowledge of geography, history, politics, religion, and literature blossoms in poetry. Most of San Juan's work, including his poetry, is political and looks outward upon the world. For example, the poem "Spring in Den Haag, Nederland, 25 March 2007" commemorates the Permanent People's Tribunal's verdict of ""Guilty!' for the US-Arroyo regime" (11). The poem also mockingly contrasts the

peacefulness of the Dutch city of The Hague with the "murders and abuses" (11) still found in the Philippines despite the findings of the Permanent People's Tribunal, the subtle point being that the sense of satisfaction the speaker receives from the verdict does not translate into action in his homeland—the verdict does not stop the suffering half a world away. The poem ends with hope: through continued and renewed struggle, justice will be found: "Your lips breaking apart the chains binding the morning's / sunburst—" (12). The Arroyo regime will be defeated, and peace will prevail.

The most enjoyable poem by far is "Vicissitudes of the Love and Death of Vladimir Mayakovsky." In line with the "Slap in the Face of Public Taste" demanded by the Russian Futurist Manifesto written by David Burliuk, Alexander Kruchenykh, Vladimir Mayakovsky, and Victor Khlevnikov on December 15, 1913, the poem uses as many combinations of "arbitrary and derivative words" (Burliuk) as can be imagined. Filled with examples "of the principles that the Futurists worshiped—technology, speed, efficiency, and noise" (Cundy 349) and allusions to Mayakovsky's life and works, the poem races past Mayakovsky's death and projects the Futurist ideas into the future. In the poem, San Juan also creates varied images of Mayakovsky's body joining with a machine, in imitation of Mayakovsky's fascination with the machines: "Among the Russian Futurists, [Mayakovsky] was the closest to the Constructivists and Italian Futurists … he consistently brought machines to life" (Klanderud 41). Mayakovsky was fascinated with the idea of things coming to life and people joining with machines, and this poem celebrates Mayakovsky in just such a way, as his "submarine catacombs" shoot "neon x-rays," and his "eyes … are embalmed gas jets / tied to the radiator of [his] solar plexus" (San Juan 56). The poetic homage to Mayakovsky zips by on the page filled with "ZOOM" and "SOS" in Futurist style.

The final work in the book is "Sa Loob at Labas Ng Bayan Kon Sawi: Emergency Signals from a Filipino Exile." This essay pulls together journal segments "written in the mid-1990s" (San Juan 124) on the meaning of the word "exile." San Juan begins with a brief history of the reality of exile in recent Filipino history. Examples from the Filipino diaspora are linked to history, definitions, and theoretical discussions to examine from many angles what exile means to Filipinos. The essay pauses at one point to demand, "We Filipinos need a cartography and a geopolitical project for the masses in diaspora, not for the elite in exile" (139). But the word exile is slippery. An example of one of the many facets of the word begins with the "Filipino swamp settlers of St. Malo" (140) in Louisiana. This settlement existed from 1825 to 1915, when it was finally wiped out by a hurricane. San Juan then reports that the Burtanog sisters, descendents of the St. Malo residents, were recently

interviewed by filmmaker Renee Tajima. They do not consider themselves exiles or in diaspora, but rather Southern white women of Louisiana. Exile is a complex word, and San Juan's essay analyzes it thoroughly through history, politics, personal experience, poetry, and theory.

"In time of emergency," he writes, "Trotsky's strategic stance of waiting-in-exile proves to be the time of pregnancy, of gestation and the emergence of new things." He continues, "Apart from being a symptom of defeat, exile then can also serve as a weapon of resistance" (147). San Juan is never without hope, and his conclusion reflects that tendency on the part of the author: "The aboriginal Indians … express for us also what I think can be the only ultimate resolution for human exile and diaspora for Filipinos as well as for other peoples: 'We and the earth, our mother, are of one mind" (151). This essay addresses aspects of many types of exile and many diasporas, but it begins and ends with the complexities and consequences of what it means to be a Filipino far from home.

Although most of the work is heavily political and looks outward upon the world, "Mask of the Poet" is one of the few poems in this collection that looks inward. It combines the postmodern idea of the lack of authentic, monadic self with the ancient idea that everything is connected. The voice of the poem is the poetic inspiration itself, "keeping vigil alone in the whole world" (27). San Juan as poet and theorist seems to be inspired to constantly keep vigil, as his video interventions prove (for examples see http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ESqkf5G4y8s and http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O1bCgpVA6DM), providing emergency signals, new insights into and commentary on cultural studies. San Juan is always an eloquent and forceful writer, and his poems are no exception. This latest work is his most artistically creative yet, and adds significantly to his already weighty collection of writings.

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ALWAYS MOVING TOWARD JUSTICE

John Streamas
Department of Comparative Ethnic Studies
Washington State University
streamas@wsu.edu

Abstract
This review-essay discovers in the poems of E. San Juan, Jr. an evolving and passionate engagement with exile and hope. To be an exile, especially a Filipino exile, is not to be a tourist, idly consuming and colonizing, but to absorb languages and histories that console and inspire. Drawn from the lessons of decades of exile, the poems and the concluding essay confront injustice—the ways, for instance, in which oppressors colonize even time and space—and also envision a future when revolution replaces rootlessness, when migrants come home.

Keywords
Balikbayang Mahal, E. San Juan, Jr., exile, history, hope, space, revolution, time

About the Author
John Streamas is assistant professor in the Department of Comparative Ethnic Studies, Washington State University. He has won grants from the American Civil Liberties Public Education Funds, the American Studies Association's Wise-Susman Prize, and Bowling Green State University's Distinguished Dissertation Award. His book *Japanese Americans and Cultures of Effacement* will soon be published by the University of Illinois Press. Streamas is distinguished for his substantial publication of stunning essays, poetry and fiction in various reviews and journals nationwide.

Fairly commonly these days, poets end their volumes with a short prose section, usually footnotes or glosses on the poems. Likewise, except for a short epilogue-poem at the very end, the closing section of the new book *Balikbayang Mahal: Passages from Exile*, by E. San Juan, Jr., is a work of prose. But it is not brief, nor is it made of footnotes or clarifications of the poems. It is a 31-page essay, part scholarly, part autobiographical, and all enjoining, on the state of exile. And what it urges us to do, by way of analyzing the history of the colonizing of the Philippines, is work for the revolution that alone can save the world's targeted and vulnerable peoples from occupation or exile. "Revolution," writes San Juan, "is the way out through the stagnant repetition of suffering and deprivation" (150). At stake is of course a homeland, from which millions tearfully depart to find jobs or to save their lives. The Philippines' main export is, after all, a labor force of ten million people working, without legal protections, mostly in the service industries of rich nations. Their employers call these workers not exiles but recruits, and colonization has created a home economy that offers no alternatives but to leave. Intellectuals and activists who oppose this economy are also driven out, and San Juan counts himself among the exiles,

disguised as an "itinerant and peripatetic student without credentials or references, sojourning in places where new experiences may occur" (126).

In this sense the essay, meandering as it does from space to time, from the autobiographical to the historical, extends the ambitions of the poems. To underscore this theme of exile even further, most of the poems appear in two or more languages, English and Tagalog and sometimes Chinese, Russian, Italian, or German. (For helpful translations from Tagalog, the reviewer wishes to thank Rei Lagman.) This is no celebration of institutional diversity or of a melting pot but is rather a mapping of the poet's migrations, what he calls "a succession of detours and displacements" (126). And yet the poems refuse to become travel literature, as they insist more on the history of home than on the consumption of destinations. Still, they are no less concerned with time than with space. In "The Tarantula," for example, the venom of the beast's blood is unleashed from its "millennial" spines; and in "Balikbayan Beloved" we hear that "everything is late," including "the hours of an infant's deliverance and funeral dirges" (22). The titles of two recent poems announce their own times and places as the Netherlands in 2007 and Willimantic, Connecticut in 2005. And yet both poems invoke the homeland, with bitter recognition of the atrocities of the "US-Arroyo regime" in the first and the question "But why does the Abu Sayyaf sneak into the mind?" in the second (37). Timekeeping in the Philippines, according to Ian Bartky's new history of the globalization of time measurements, split along colonial lines. For more than two centuries Manila and the Catholic Philippines observed American time, while southern islands kept Asian time, usually a full day's difference. In "the milieu of transition," writes San Juan, "may be the site where space is transcended by time" (128-9).

A note of reassurance is in order. Recent forays into anti-Bush politics in US popular culture—examples include an album by Neil Young and a movie by Robert Redford—have been scolded for focusing so intently on their message that they lose their art and their heart. Yet readers will discover in San Juan's poems a snarky humor, a vibrant sensuousness, and a rich embrace of literary history. Mayakovsky appears in several poems, not only for his manifestos but also for his passions. Near the end of the wild poem "Vicissitudes of the Love and Death of Vladimir Mayakovsky" come lines that recall Hopkins and Whitman and Mayakovsky himself: "Dice of electrons run amok in your brain's reservoir / Vladimir / and uproot oases until the panting deer / Christ-Self's surrogate / is devoured by gnomes and ourang-outangs / from the extreme unction of your epic verses" (56). These lines splay across the page, tracing a path as seemingly haphazard as many migrations. In "The Forked Fountain in the Nest of Your Eyelash" the poet

immerses himself in a sensual world of silt and cobwebs, incense and kisses, claws and vulture's teeth, but in the end it is only an illusion of love that is "embraced / by the guerilla astutely spying" (46). And "The Sweetheart of Ludwig von Wittgenstein" teases with a "sulphur-black dinosaur" rising from lava caves and arguing "against / the equations of your love" (42). What soon becomes clear is that, for San Juan as for Mayakovsky, passions suffuse alike the material and the political.

But, even at their cleverest and most teasing, these passions are also entwined in the sorrows of exile. Perhaps the most lyrical poem is "The Way Things Are," made of five quatrains with images of birds hovering in old buildings; yet even here "We wait for a miracle / With daggers to console / Us," and a metaphor for circling birds—of angel droppings that "May nourish the exchange / We are possessed of and by"—suggests a vision to console "Every animal that dies" (97). The poems begin on a lyric called "Voyages," with a first sentence that extracts a weird majesty from rootlessness ("To exile I ride on the bountiful surf") and end on a lyric called "Hail and Farewell," with a closing quatrain that might be merely clever if it were not also acutely aware of the risks of rootlessness: "But Mayakovsky is our kin— / We also reek / Of incense / And formalin" (7, 121).

In the introduction to his new book of essays *In the Wake of Terror: Class, Race, Nation, Ethnicity in the Postmodern World*, San Juan praises activists who testify in tribunals for justice, self-determination, and human rights. They recall, he says, eighteenth-century revolutionaries in France and the United States and twentieth-century revolutionaries in Russia, Vietnam, Cuba, and China. And, more important, they still inspire oppressed peoples everywhere. This is not a false or empty hope. It is fed by history and solidarity, and it persists and grows. The poems in *Balikbayang Mahal* are about the sorrows of migration and exile, to be sure, but they are also about the hope of connections.

KOLUM KRITIKA

SNEAKING INTO THE PHILIPPINES, ALONG THE RIVERS OF BABYLON: AN INTERVENTION INTO THE LANGUAGE QUESTION

E. San Juan, Jr.
Philippine Cultural Studies Center, USA
philcsc@sbcglobal.net

Abstract
The following are remarks made on 12 March 2008 at the launching of *Balikbayang Sinta: An E. San Juan Reader* published by Ateneo de Manila UP. Here the author puts forward seven theses through which the contentious "language question" may be reexamined, especially as it touches on issues of national solidarity.

Keywords
English language, Filipino language, national language

About the Author
E. San Juan Jr. is a cultural critic and a renowned scholar in the fields of Filipino and Asian American studies. He has published widely on cultural politics in the Philippines, Marxist theory, Filipino and Filipino-American literature, and postcolonial theory. He has been a Fellow of the Center for the Humanities and Visiting Professor of English at Wesleyan University , and Director of the Philippines Cultural Studies Center . He was also the chair of the Department of Comparative American Cultures at Washington State University, and Professor of Ethnic Studies at Bowling Green State University, Ohio. He received the 1999 Centennial Award for Literature from the Philippines Cultural Center. He is the author of *Beyond Postcolonial Theory* (St. Martin's, 2000), *From Exile to Diaspora* (Westview, 1998), and *After Post-colonialism* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2000). Recently, he was Fulbright professor of American Studies at the Katholeike Universiteit Leuven, Belgium, visiting professor of literature at National Tsing Hua University in Taiwan, and fellow of the Rockefeller Foundation Study Center at Bellagio, Italy. He is currently visiting professor of English and Comparative Literature at the University of the Philippines, Diliman.

I'm Miss American Dream since I was 17
Don't matter if I step on the scene or sneak away to the Philippines
They still goin' put pictures of my derriere in the magazine
You want a piece of me? You want a piece of me?

\- *BRITNEY SPEARS, "Piece of Me"*

By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept when we remembered Zion …
How shall we sing the Lord's song in a foreign tongue?

\- *PSALM 137, The Bible*

It is also a misfortune to understand various languages because thus one has more occasions to hear stupidities and nonsense.

- *JOSE RIZAL, "Travel Diary, 4 July 1889"*

In this current situation of portentous upheaval in the Philippines, any discussion of the "language question," like the "woman question," is bound to be incendiary and contentious. The issue of language is always explosive, a crux of symptoms afflicting the body politic. It is like a fuse or trigger that ignites a whole bundle of inflammable issues, scandalously questioning the existence of God in front of an audience of believers. Or the immortality of souls among the faithful. Perhaps my saying outright that I am a partisan for a national language, Filipino, may outrage the postmodernists and cosmopolites among you—how can you say such a thing when you are speaking in English? Or, as Senator Diokno once said, "English of a sort." How dare I infuriate the loyal speakers of Cebuano, Ilocano, Pampagueno, Ilonggo, Taglish, Filipino English, and a hundred or more languages used in these seven thousand islands. One gives up: it can't be helped. Or we can help lift the ideological smog and draw more lucidly the lines of demarcation in the battleground of ideas and social practices.

One suspects that this is almost unavoidable, in a society where to raise the need for one national language, say "Filipino" (as mandated by the Constitution) is certain to arouse immediate opposition. Or, if not immediately, it is deferred and sublimated into other pretexts for debate and argumentation. Fortunately, we have not reached the point of armed skirmishes and violent confrontations for the sake of our mother/father tongue, as in India and other countries. My partisanship for Filipino (not Tagalog) is bound to inflame Cebuanos, Bicolanos, Ilocanos, and so on, including Filipino speakers-writers of English, or Filipino English. We probably try to defuse any brewing conflict quickly by using the colonizer's tongue, or compromise babel-wise. My view is that only a continuing historical analysis can help explain the present contradictory conjuncture, and disclose the options it offers us. Only engagement in the current political struggles can resolve the linguistic aporia/antinomy and clarify the import and consequence of the controversy over the national language, over the fate of Filipino and English in our society.

One would expect that this issue would have been resolved a long time ago. But, given the dire condition of the Philippine political economy in this epoch of globalized terrorism of the US hegemon, a plight that is the product of more than a century of colonial/neocolonial domination, all the controversies surrounding this proposal of a national language since the time of the Philippine Commonwealth when Manuel L.

Quezon convened the Institute of National Language under Jaime de Veyra, have risen again like ravenous ghouls. I believe this specter can never be properly laid to rest until we have acquired genuine sovereignty, until national self-determination has been fully exercised, and the Filipino people—three thousand everyday, more than a million every year—will no longer be leaving in droves as Overseas Contract Workers, the whole nation becoming a global subaltern to the transnational corporations, to the World Bank-World Trade Organization, the International Monetary Fund, and the predatory finance capital of the global North. If we cannot help being interpellated by the sirens of the global market and transformed into exchangeable warm bodies, we can at least interrogate the conditions of our subordination—if only as a gesture of resistance by a nascent, irrepressible agency.

In the hope of avoiding such a situation, which is almost ineluctable, I would like to offer the following seven theses that may initiate a new approach to the question, if not offer heuristic points of departure for reflection. In contrast to the dominant neoliberal philosophically idealist-metaphysical approach, I apply a historical materialist one whose method is not only historicizing and dialectical—not merely deploying the "Aufhebung" of Hegel within an eclectic, neo-Weberian framework (as Fernando Zialcita does in his provocative book *Authentic Though Not Exotic: Essays on Filipino Identity*)—but also, as Marx said, standing it on its head in the complex and changing social relations of production within concrete historical settings. The materialist dialectic offers a method of analysis and elucidation of the context in which questions about a national language can be clarified and the nuances of its practical implications elaborated.

Thesis 1: Language is not a self-sufficient entity or phenomenon in itself but a component of the social forms of consciousness of any given social formation. Marx considered language a productive force, conceived as "practical consciousness," as he elaborates in the *Grundrisse*: "Language itself is just as much the product of a community, as in another aspect it is the existence of the community—it is, as it were, the communal being speaking for itself" (qtd. in Rossi-Landi 170). As such, it can only be properly addressed within the historical specificity of a given mode of production and attendant social-political formation. It has no history of its own but is a constituent part and constitutive of the ideological terrain on which the struggle of classes and historic blocs are fought, always in an uneven and combined mode of development. It forms part of the conflicted evolution of the integral state, as Gramsci conceived it as the combination of political society and civil society. The issue of language is located right at the heart of the construction of this integral state. Hence not only its synchronic but also diachronic

dimensions should be dialectically comprehended in grasping its worth and contribution to the liberation and fulfillment of the human potential.

Thesis 2: The function and nature of language then cannot be adequately discussed in a neutral and positivistic-empiricist way, given its insertion into conflicted relations of production, at least since the emergence of class-divided societies in history. Ferruccio Rossi-Landi explains the imbrication of language in social-historical praxis: "The typically social operation of speaking can only be performed by a historically determined individual or group; it must be performed in a given language, that is, within a determined structure which is always itself, to some extent, both an ideological product and an ideological instrument already; lastly, the audience is determined as well" by the historical-social situation (169). Language use, in short, the process of communication, cannot escape the necessity of sociopolitical overdetermination.

In the Philippines, the status and function of various languages—Spanish, English, and the numerous vernaculars or regional languages—cannot be assayed without inscribing them in the history of colonial and neocolonial domination of the peoples in these islands. In this regard, the terms "national-popular" and "nation-people"—as Gramsci employed them in a historical-materialist discourse—should be used in referring to Filipinos in the process of expressing themselves (albeit in a contradiction-filled way) as diverse communities, interpellating other nationalities, and conducting dialogue with themselves and other conversers.

It is necessary to assert the fundamental premise of the "national-popular," the nation as constituted by the working masses (in our country, workers and peasants), not the patricians. Otherwise, the nation (in the archive of Western-oriented or Eurocentric history) is usually identified with the elite, the propertied classes, the national bourgeoisie, or the comprador bourgeoisie and its allies, the bureaucrats and feudal landlords and their retinue of gangsters, private armies, paramilitary thugs, etc. Actually, today, we inhabit a neocolony dominated by a comprador-bureaucratic bloc of the propertied classes allied with and supported in manifold ways by the US hegemon and its regional accomplices.

The recent unilateral policy pronouncement of the de facto Philippine president Arroyo that English should be re-instated as the official medium of instruction in all schools can only be read as a total subservience to the ideology of English as a global language free from all imperialist intent. Obviously this is propagated by free-market ideologues inside and outside government, even though a bill has recently been proposed in the Congress to institute the mother tongue as the medium of instruction up to grade

six of the elementary school. (One needs to interject here that this idea of using the mother tongue in the first years of education is not new; it was first planned and tested in the Sta. Barbara, Panay, experiment conducted by Dr. Jose V. Aguilar in the late forties and fifties. But this finding has been buried and forgotten by the neocolonialist policies of all administrations since 1946.) As Peter Ives pointed out in his book *Language and Hegemony in Gramsci*, issues of language policy in organizing schools and testing curriculum need to be connected to "political questions of democracy, growing inequalities in wealth and neo-imperialism" (164), since the daily acts of speaking and writing—in effect, the dynamic field of social communication—involves the struggle for hegemony in the realm of civil society, state institutions, and practices of everyday life.

Thesis 3: The Filipino nation is an unfinished and continuing project, an unfinished work, constantly being re-invented but not under conditions of its own making. Becoming Filipinos is a process of decolonization and radical democratization of the social formation, a sequence of collective choices. This is almost a cliché among the progressive forces with a nationalist orientation. It bears repeating that Filipino sovereignty is a dynamic totality whose premises are political independence and economic self-sufficiency. We have not yet achieved those premises.

Given the current alignment of nation-states in the world-system under US hegemony, whose hegemony is unstable, precarious, sustained by manifold antagonisms, and perpetually challenged by other regional blocs, becoming Filipino is an ever-renewing trajectory of creation and re-creation, a process overdetermined by legacies of the past and unpredictable incidences of the present and the future. Within this configuration, an evolving, emergent Filipino language may be conceived as both a medium and substantive element in fashioning this sequence of becoming-Filipino, a sequence grasped not as a cultural essence but a network of dynamic political affiliations and commitments. It is also an aesthetic modality of counterhegemonic, anti-imperialist expression.

Thesis 4: Only within the project of achieving genuine, substantive national independence and egalitarian democracy can we argue for the need for one national language as an effective means of unifying the masses of peasants, workers and middle strata and allowing them integral participation in a hegemonic process. Note that this is not just a question of cultural identity within the larger agenda of a reformist-individualist politics of identity/recognition.

Without changing the unequal and unjust property/power relations, a distinctive

Filipino culture incorporating all the diverse elements that have entered everyday lives of the masses can not be defined and allowed to flourish. Without the prosperous development of the material resources and political instrumentalities, a Filipino cultural identity can only be an artificial, hybrid fabrication of the elite—an excrescence of global consumerism, a symptom of the power of transnationalized commodity-fetishism that, right now, dominates the popular consciousness via the mass media, in particular television, films, music, food and fashion styles, packaged lifestyles that permeate the everyday practices of ordinary Filipinos across class, ethnicities, age and localities.

The consumerist *habitus* (to use Pierre Bourdieu's concept) acquired from decades of colonial education and indoctrination has almost entirely conquered and occupied the psyche of every Filipino, except for those consciously aware of it and collectively resisting it. With the rise of globalization, it has been a fashionable if tendentious practice among the floating litterateurs, mostly resident in colleges and universities, to advocate the maintenance of the status quo; that is, English as the prestigious language, Taglish as the media lingua franca, and Filipino and the other languages as utilitarian devices for specific tasks. But soon we find that this imitated pluralistic/multiculturalist stand only functions as the effective ploy of neoliberal finance capital. This seemingly pragmatist, accomodationist stance ultimately serves neocolonial goals: the Filipino as presumptive world-citizen functioning as compensation for the lack of effective national sovereignty. Its obverse is regional/ethnic separatism. The culturalist or civilizationalist program, often linked to NGOs and deceptive philanthropic schemes, skips the required dialectical mediation and posits an abstract universality, though disguised in a self-satisfied particularism now in vogue among postcolonial deconstructionists eulogizing the importance of place, locality, indigeneity, organic roots, etc.

We discover in time that this trend serves as a useful adjunct for enhancing the fetishistic magic, aura and seductive lure of commodities—from brand-name luxury goods to the whole world of images, sounds, theoretical discourses, and multimedia confections manufactured by the transnational culture industry and marketed as symbolic capital for the pettybourgeoisie of the periphery and other subalternized sectors within the metropole.

Thesis 5: Spanish and English are global languages needed for communication and participation in world affairs. They are recognized as richly developed languages of aesthetic and intellectual power useful for certain purposes—English particularly in the scientific and technical fields. But they have a political history and resonance for "third world peoples" who have suffered from their uses. Its sedimented patterns of thought and

action cannot so easily be ignored or elided. The discursive genres of law, business, liturgy, pedagogy, and so on, in English and their institutionalized instrumentalities cannot be judged on their own terms without understanding the political role they played, and continue to play, as effective instruments in the colonial domination of the various peoples in the Philippines and their total subordination to the political-cultural hegemony of the Spanish empire, and then of the American empire from 1899 to 1946, and of US neocolonial control after formal independence in 1946. Everyone knows that while Rizal used Spanish to reach an enlightened Spanish public and an *ilustrado*-influenced audience, the masses who participated in the Malolos Republic and the war against the Americans used Tagalog, and other vernaculars, in fighting for cultural autonomy and national independence. Historically the national and democratic project of the Philippine revolution—still unfinished and continuing—provides the only viable perspective within which we can explore the need for a national language as a means of uniting and mobilizing the people for this project.

Thesis 6: The use and promotion of a national language does not imply the neglect, elimination, or inferiorization of other regional languages spoken and used by diverse communities involved in the national-democratic struggle. In fact, it implies their preservation and cultivation. But that is contingent on the attainment of genuine national sovereignty and the emancipation of the masses, their integration into active participation in governance. Their inferiorization is tied to the oppression of their users/speakers by virtue of class, nationality, religion, ethinicity, locality, and so on. (My friends in Panay who use Kinaray-a, Ilonggo or Akenaon should not fear being dominated by a Manila-centric hegemony as long as they address crucial political questions of social justice and sovereignty in a manner that commands directive force, displacing the question of form with the substantive totality of communication across ethnic and local differences to forge a flexible but principled united front for national democracy and socialist liberation.)

Meanwhile, in the course of the national-liberation struggle, all languages should and are being used for mobilization, political education, and cultural self-affirmation. Simultaneously, the dissemination and development of one national language becomes a political and economic-cultural necessity for unifying the diverse communities under a common political program—which does not imply a monolithic ideological unity—in front of the monstrous power of finance-capital using English as an instrument of subordination and neocolonial aggression.

In this regard, I would argue that the unity and collective pride attendant on the

use of one national language provides the groundwork and fundamental requisite for the promotion and development of other ethnic/regional languages within the national polity. This is a psychological-ideological imperative that cannot be deferred. A dialectical approach should be applied to the historically contentious relations between a dominant vernaculat (Tagalog) and its subalternized counterparts (Cebuano, Ilocano, Hiligaynon, etc.) in order to transcend historically sedimented prejudices and promote creative dialogue and intertextuality among all the languages spoken in the Philippines.

Thesis 7: Hegemony, the moral and intellectual leadership of the Filipino working masses, the scaffold within which an authentic Filipino identity can grow, assumes the rise of organic Filipino intellectuals who will use and develop Filipino as the evolving national language. Again, this does not mean suppressing other regional languages. Nor does it mean prohibiting the use and teaching of English or other international languages (Spanish, French, Chinese, etc.). It simply means the establishment of a required platform, basis or foundation, without which the productive forces of the people within this particular geopolitical boundary can be harnessed, refined, and released in order to, first, benefit the physical and spiritual health of Filipinos, repair and recover the damage inflicted by centuries of colonial oppression and exploitation, and thus be able to contribute to the cultural heritage of humankind. That is why mandating the continued teaching of English equally with Filipino, with the mother language as auxiliary, at the secondary level, betokens a schizophrenic if not treacherous and treasonous policy of the ruling class beholden to US and transnational corporate interests.

Without an independent national physiognomy, Filipinos have nothing distinctive to share with other nations and peoples. Without national self-determination and a historically defined identity, there is no way Filipinos can contribute their distinctive share in global culture. In fact, it is impossible to be a global citizen unless you have fully grown and matured as an effective democratic participant in the making of a prosperous, egalitarian nation-people in a historically specific territory defined by a concretely differentiated sequence of events not replicated elsewhere.

Historical examples are often misleading, but sometimes elucidatory. It may be irrelevant and even Eurocentric to invoke the examples of Italy and Germany as nations that experienced unified mobilization through the affirmation of national-popular languages, Italy vis-à-vis the Papal ascendancy, and Germany vis-à-vis Latin/Roman Catholic hegemony. In any case, again, the social and historical function and character of language cannot be adequately grasped without situating them in the complex dynamics

of the conflict of social classes in history since the break-up of the communal tribes in the hunting-gathering stage, since the rise of private property in the means of production, and the intricate dialectics of culture and collective psyche in the political economy of any social formation. In short, language is not just a permanently undecidable chain of signifiers, always deconstructing itself and falling into abysmal meaninglessness, a vertigo of nonsense and silly absurdities quite appropriate, of course, for pettybourgeois careerists, dilettantes, and hirelings of the oligarchs. Rather, language is a social convention and a site of struggle, the signifier conceived as "an arena of class struggle" to use Mikhail Bakhtin's synthesizing phrase (123).

To conclude these reflections with an open-ended marker: I believe that only from this historical materialist perspective, and within the parameters of the political project of attaining genuine autonomy as a nation-people, can the discussion of a Filipino national language be intelligible and productive. But, again, such a discussion finds its value and validity as part of the total engagement of the people for justice, authentic national independence, and all-sided emancipation from the nightmares of the past and the terrorist fascism of the present.

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GAY LANGUAGE: DEFYING THE STRUCTURAL LIMITS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN THE PHILIPPINES

Norberto V. Casabal
Lyceum of Subic Bay, Philippines
nvcasabal@yahoo.com

Abstract
Gay language has achieved a higher degree of acceptance in recent years in the Philippines. Both gays and non-gays can be heard uttering gay expressions. But the main role of gayspeak for gay people in the Philippines is to function as an "armor" to shield themselves from the chasm and the social stigma caused by gender differences. From a linguistic point of view, this paper not only describes the nature of this gay language and how expressions are coined; it also looks at how code mixing (gayspeak + English language) is made possible. This paper also examines how this code-mixing creatively violates the grammatical structure of the use of the English language in the Philippines.

Keywords
code-mixing, gayspeak, gender difference, Philippine English, street-talk

About the author
Norberto V. Casabal is Head for Academic Affairs of Lyceum of Subic Bay. He is currently pursuing his MA in English Language and Literature Teaching at the Ateneo de Manila University.

INTRODUCTION

Binabae and *bakla* are familiar words in Filipino street-talk. But what about *badaf, baklush,* and *baklers?* These are a little confusing for the average Filipino speaker, while the expressions *Bading Garci, pa-mihn, pa-girl, X-men,* will lose most expert speakers of the Filipino language. These are terms which are heard "only in the Philippines"; as the local TV advertisement says, "*Walang ganyan sa* States" ("You don't have that in the States").

In the Philippines, where sexual orientation has become a moral, political and social issue of acceptability, homosexuals have become victims of condemnation—in school, at the workplace, in church, or elsewhere. These places therefore have become daily battle grounds for them, and to win this bloodless battle they have developed a most potent weapon that will shield them from flying missiles of verbal incantation and poetic malady (such as *multong bakla* and *salot sa lipunan*) fired by people with strong patriarchal orientations. The new, vibrant, potent weapon of marginalized gays is language—

creatively crafted like a magical spell that colors their tongue and weaves their protection. It is a language that only the homosexuals can understand. "Gayspeak" or gay language in the Philippines is a form of verbal sublimation of gay people against the domineering power of patriarchy. Yet the positive response of the people outside the gay community to gayspeak has ironically rewarded the homosexuals, giving them the chance to penetrate mainstream culture and to be socially accepted in it.

Binabae, bakla, badaf, baklush, baklers, Bading Garci, pa-mihn, pa-girl, X-men—all these expressions actually have only one meaning: *bakla* or gay. Gay language is, as Remoto puts it, "forever advent, forever beginning, forever new." Over the years, more and more words have been added to the semantic lists of gayspeak in the Philippines; gay words are "continuously updated" (Remoto) while some words "eventually die and lose their value" (Baytan 261). In spite of this, gayspeak enjoys "freedom from the rules and dictates of the society" (Suguitan 1). A better way of describing this creative language is the way Remoto puts it: "full of slippage and cracks—a language at once sophisticated and vulgar, serious and light, timely and timeless."

To further understand gayspeak as an emerging language in the Philippines, there are three descriptive questions about gaypeak that I would like to pose in this paper: How do gay men coin terms and how do these terms become part of gayspeak in the Philippines? How does gayspeak make use of the language of mainstream society while maintaining its function of making the discourse of the gay community inaccessible to the wider community? How does gayspeak creatively violate the grammatical structure of English language while ensuring discourse communication among its members?

RELATED LITERATURE

There are a few notable researches conducted about gay language in the Philippines, and most of them, if not all, either try to explicitly identify the reasons why gay subculture uses gay language, or explain how gay expressions are coined, merged, combined, and clipped together to make it distinctly and uniquely "gay" in nature. Ronald Baytan in his paper "Language, Sex, and Insults: Notes on Garcia and Remoto's *The Gay Dict"* enumerates some reasons for the gay community's use of the language. He purports that most people recognize that gay people use gayspeak as a type of code: to enable them to hide things from others and to speak freely when around straight people. To substantiate this claim, Baytan gives the example of a casual conversation between two gay men about another straight man. In contemporary gayspeak, one gay might say *"Dakota ang Notra*

Damos niya" to mean that the straight man is "well endowed." Gayspeak, then, disguises the meaning so that it is not understood by the straight man being talked about. In addition, Baytan believes that gayspeak is used to "tame pejorative words" (261). The word *bakla* for example "has been used to denote an undesirable sexual identity that is neither male nor female, the so-called third sex" (264-5). This negative usage of *bakla,* for instance, is so loud that it denotes disgust and blemishes a family's reputation. Gayspeak has then taken the word *bakla* and associated it with other words, notes Baytan, either by playing with the sounds or by coining words like *badaf, baklush, baklers,* etc., to make it sound euphemistic and less injurious.

The Filipino gay community began coining words that can be associated with the original word, either by its literal meaning or denotation, or by using other shades of meaning or connotation. Gayspeak also includes the collocation of words through their phonological resonance and resemblance. To further the example, the word *bakla* may have its denotative meaning as *binabae* (a clipped word for *binata* [young lad] + *babae* [woman]), while other new words associated with *bakla* are words that are "part[s] of the mainstream language … metaphorically used" (Suguitan 3) to connote meanings beyond normal usage. Gays may also play with words until they become neutralized, gradually transformed and socially accepted as gay expressions, such as *Bading Garci, pa-mihn, pa-girl, X-men,* and a lot more. But these are only terms to cover-up the possible psychological harm that the use of *bakla* may cause.

Baytan then concludes that the gradual development of gayspeak in the Philippines through the years is a form of "a defense mechanism to counteract, at least, the verbal violence they are subjected to" (271). Baytan's point is that gayspeak is a language that performs its function as an "armor" shielding gay people from the isolation and the social stigma brought about by gender differences.

Other related studies outside the Philippines, like that of Owens and Rofens, conclude that "Queer youth [in their country] often experience heterosexism and homophobia in the forms of neglect, isolation and abuse" (qtd. in Blackburn 90). And in this same study, Blackburn purports that Black queer youth in the Attic used gaybonics to recognize and be recognized by those within their predominantly Black, queer youth community, but the flipside of this is that they also used it to avoid being understood by those outside of the community. (91)

Another study about queer adolescent identities conducted by Raymond maintains that the ''mores, languages, codes, and signifiers'' or discourse of a queer adolescent subculture ''reflects a kind of knowledge that may be inaccessible to others''

(qtd. in Blackburn 116). Blackburn continues that making gaybonic "inaccessible to their oppressors" provides its speakers with "pleasures of subverting homophobia and other forms of oppression including ageism and racism in particular" (91). In the case of gayspeak in the Philippines, Red asserts that its use is a form of resistance to patriarchy and homophobia, and encourages the freedom of self-expression among gays (41). All these statements resonate with Remoto's that gayspeak is a "common tongue," a "code" and a "sword" and a "language" that links gay people in their own discourse even while it drifts away from the common understanding of the "straight world."

Contrary to the findings of researches about gay language in either the local or international context, that gayspeak is a language of the "marginalized sector" (Suguitan 2005) and a form of "defense mechanism" (Baytan 2002) against patriarchal and homophobic society, what seems to be interesting about gayspeak in the Philippines today is that it is undergoing a shift in terms of acceptability—*what seemed to be an exclusive language for a gay subculture is now becoming a dialect of the larger society.* Thus, to borrow from Remoto the idea of "wholeness," this paper will argue that gayspeak is now a sign that the homosexual subculture "is not shattered but even made whole by the assertion of this powerful discourse." Regardless of gender, gayspeak in the Philippines is now a language appealing to a wider audience and it has penetrated many other forms of media that serve not only as conduits but also as progenitors of this language. This is evident in how both gays and non-gays have become accustomed to gayspeak and how both have been playing with it as part of their daily vocabulary.

We hear radio commentators, for instance, with a "macho-sounding" voice speaking a bit of gayspeak to add color and style to their way of commenting, usually in a satirical tone. On the other hand, print media like broadsheets, tabloids, and student publications print articles that mix gayspeak with Filipino and/or English because of its appeal to the readers.

Television, being the most influential among all forms media, contributes to the proliferation of gayspeak among televiewers. The expressions *charing, churva, kembot, chukchak chenes, chort, etchuse,* and *chenelin chuba* are no longer exclusive to gays, but have become public expressions. The "faggotification of television gave homosexuals a good chance at re-penetrating the mainstream culture" (Red 42). Referring to Giovanni Calvo's *Word for the Day* in the phenomenal daily show *Katok Mga Misis,* Red remarks how television "features a showcase of the gay language" and how "the countless other showbiz talk shows in almost all TV channels are teeming with the racy, wild and witty gay lingo" (42).

Even mobile phones nowadays provide a medium for gayspeak text messages, reaching a wider audience. Just recently, I received text messages translating some Filipino folk songs into gayspeak. The famous folk song "Bahay Kubo" and other children folk songs have been translated this way:

Bahay Kubo

Original Version	**Gayspeak Version**
Bahay kubo, kahit munti	Valer kuberch, kahit jutay.
Ang halaman duon,	Ang julamantrax denchi,
Ay sari-sari	ay anek-anek.
Singkamas, at talong, sigarilyas	Nyongkamas at nutring, nyogarilyas at
at mani	kipay.
Sitaw, bataw, patani	Nyipay, nyotaw, jutani.
Kundol, patola, upo't kalabasa	Kundol, jotola, jupot jolabastrax
At saka meron pa	at mega join-join pa
Labanos, mustasa	Jobanos, nyustasa,
Sibuyas, kamatis, bawang at luya	nyubuyak, nyomatis, nyowang at luyax
Sa paligid-ligid	and around the keme
ay puno ng linga	ay fulnes ng linga.

Ako ay may Lobo

Original Version	**Gayspeak Version**
Ako ay may lobo	Aketch ai may lobing
Lumipad sa langit	Flylalou sa heaven
Di ko na nakita	Witchels ko na nasightness
Pumutok na pala	Jumutok lang pala
Sayang lang ang pera,	Sayang lang ang anda
Pinambili ng lobo	Pinang buysung ng lobing
Sa pagkain sana,	Kung lafangertz sana
Nabusog pa ako.	Nabusog pa aketch

Langit Lupa

Original Version	**Gayspeak Version**
Lanigt, lupa, impiyerno	Langit, lupa, infairness
Im-im-impiyerno,	In, in, infairness
Saksak puso, tulo and dugo	chugi heartness, flowing ang dugesh
Patay, buhay, dalhin sa ospital	Chugi, alayv, dis-a-pir na u jan

Penpen de Sarapen

Original Version	**Gayspeak Version**
Penpen de sarapen,	Penpen de chuvarloo
De kutsilyo, de almasen	De kemerloo, de eklavoo
How, how de carabao, de bantuten,	Hao, hao de chenelyn, de big uten
Sipit namimilipit, gintong pilak	Sifit dapat iipit, goldness filak
Namumulaklak sa tabi ng dagat	chumuchorva sa tabi ng chenes!
Sayang pula, tatlong pera	Shoyang fula, talong na pula
Sayang puti, tatlong salapi	Shoyang fute, talong na mapute
Boom boom kalaboom,	Chuk chak chenes namo ek ek
manggang hinog	

Tagu-Taguan

Original Version	**Gayspeak Version**
Tagu-taguan maliwanag ang buwan,	Shogu-shoguan ningning galore ang buwan
Pagbilang kong sampu nakatago kayo	Pagcounting ng krompu nakashogu na na kayez
Isa, dala, tatlo, apat, lima,	Jisa, krolawa, shotlo, kyopat, jima
anim, pito, walo, siyam, sampu	Kyonim, nyitoert, walochi, syamert, krompu

This may be a fancy translation, and others would consider this a linguistic act that taints our language and cultural heritage. However, this translation also shows how creative gay language is as a flourishing language and how it also performs a social function bringing gays and non-gays together, in some ways.

The Internet has accorded gayspeakers access to the most current words coined or added to gayspeak lexis, with accompanying explanations. If one would "google" gayspeak in the Philippines, a lot of blogs and bloggers would "come out." These blogs are creatively designed as venues for a more entertaining discussion on gayspeak. These bloggers are gatekeepers and progenitors of gayspeak; they maintain the sanctity of their own craft while allowing other gays and non-gays to access and pose questions, as well as contribute to the development of this language.

Regardless of the political or personal functions gayspeak may serve the gay community, gay language in the Philippines is characterized and bound by "time, culture, and class" (Baytan 261). Expressions from decades ago have either changed or have been developed by the present generation of gays. They have coined new words, classified and categorized them, making these words more relevant to the present context. This rapid development in lexicon indicates that gayspeak cannot really be considered a language yet (perhaps a dialect?), because words are coined and die hastily, causing lack of consistency. Gayspeak, then, appears to be more of a "fashion" or a "fad" that easily changes over a period of time. Yet, this may also be considered a unique characteristic of gayspeak. It takes into account the present "context of the situation" (Halliday 31). For example, we presently have a TV series titled *Takeshi Castle.* Gays use this TV series title to mean *uwi na sa bahay* ("go home"). When used in a sentence, a gay person may say, *"Takeshi Castle na aketch,"* which means *"Uuwi na ako"* or "I am going home."

Another characteristic of gayspeak is that it is also bound by a certain culture. Red narrates his exposure and experience with gay language and its variations from year to year and from area to area. He found out that gayspeak in suburban areas like Antipolo differs from that spoken in Metro Manila (42-3). Although there are standard gay expressions in the general gay population, there are also regional variations. But despite these variations, gays from various regions can still communicate with each other using gayspeak.

Gayspeak also varies according to its speakers. Social class determines the allusion attached to a gay expression. Educated gays have a greater tendency to speak in gay lingo that reflects their academic background, "giving a literary, sophisticated quality to gay language" (Remoto). On the other hand, gays in the lower class strata have gay lexicons

that are mostly determined by phonological resonance, or sometimes influenced by their jobs. For example, the expression *wish ko day* is a parloric gay expression that means "wishing for a tip" after a service has been rendered to a customer. In addition, one's profession or field specialization also contributes to how gay language develops and varies. Examples of proper names that are used in gayspeak are Purita Kalaw Ledesma, Lucrecia Kasilag, Fayatollah Kumenis, Truman Kapote. These names have been metaphorically used by gay academicians, while gays belonging to lower strata have their own counterparts that mean the same, like Purita Sanchez, Aling Lucring, etc.

When one begins to analyze gay language from a sociolinguistic perspective, it can be observed that gay language is highly vocal. Communicative discourse is keenly maintained by listening to and analyzing the phonological component of a proper name borrowed from mainstream culture. Gays will then attach or associate a new meaning to this name, either in English or in Filipino, but usually retaining some of its meaning in the language of mainstream culture. Consider Tom Jones, an internationally acclaimed singer; in gay language the name is given a new meaning by emphasizing the first syllable, "Tom," which sounds like *gu-tom* in Filipino ("hungry"). That becomes the meaning of the name in gay language. So, one may say, "Let's *lafang* (eat) because I am *Tom Jones* (hungry)." Therefore, the intricacy of this language is seen in how it defies the structure of the English language where the uses of function words are interchanged, such as when a noun is used as an adjective.

Aside from the fact that gayspeak is characterized by constant progress, changing everyday, it also has no established spelling or grammar system which makes it difficult to codify. Haughen in "Language Standardization" argues that "speech is basic in language learning" (346) and spoken language requires the person to respond with immediacy as needed by the environment. However, the function of "oral confrontation … in a complex, literate society is overlaid and supplemented by the role of writing." Hence, "codification" and "elaboration" (Haughen 348) are two challenges that may be posed to the gay language.

THE PRESENT STUDY

The positive response of non-gay speakers towards gayspeak has influenced and permitted it to reach its present position in Philippine society. Joshua Fishman argues that the sociology of language explains not only the behavior of society towards language and language behavior, but also seeks to determine the symbolic value of the language varieties

of their speakers (28). The symbolic value of gayspeak among gays may either be, as Red puts it, a form of resistance to "patriarchy and homophobia" (41), or as Baytan puts it, a form of "a defense mechanism to counteract, at least, the verbal violence they are subjected to" (271). But with the increasing number of speakers of gay language (gay people and non-gays), our society has become a conduit allowing gayspeak to grow and develop not as an organism, but as a reflection of our diverse culture and social relations (Cameron 66).

Aside from the usual gayspeak terms, the present generation of gays is fond of using the names of famous local and international personalities. They use the physical attributes of famous people, the media roles they have portrayed, or their personal characteristics or situations in the coining of new words. What I intend to illustrate in this paper is how words, names, and expressions are given meaning in gayspeak based on their phonetics. Then, I will categorize these words, expressions, and names following Baytan's schema, and then following the grammatical structure of the English language. The data used in this paper have been collected through survey questionnaires and interviews, from blog sites mainly designed for gayspeak fora, and from various articles published in newspapers. To illustrate:

Noun	**Phonetics of words** *Either in English or in Filipino*	**Meaning attached to the word**	**Classification**
Purita Kalaw Ledesma	Pur (first syllable)	Poor	personality or behavior
Yayo Aguila	Ya (close to *hiya*)	Shy	emotional or psychological state
Chaka Khan	Chaka (meaning *panget*)	Ugly	personality or behavior

For example, "Once upon a time, there was a *Purita Kalaw Ledesma* and *Yayo Aguila* boyband named *Chaka Khan*" (Yason Banal J8+). In this sentence, *Purita Kalaw Ledesma* is a proper noun that connotes a different meaning. It is used not as a subject but as an adjective meaning "poor." *Yayo Aguila* is another proper noun used as an adjective, meaning "shy." "Boyband," a common noun, is used to mean fat kid, describing the subject of the sentence, *Chaka Khan*, which also suggests that the person is "ugly." All these nouns fall under personality in the classification given by Baytan. The "meaning potentials" (Halliday 32) is in the first two syllables or so of a name, term, or expression, that sounds similar to its Filipino or English term.

To study the gathered corpus side by side, I will initially explore the corpus based on their etymology and their "pre-vocalic sounds." I will then identify the meaning associated with these words, expressions, and names. Then, using Baytan's (2002)

classification, these words, expressions, and names will be classified according to the following categories:

Classification	Description
Body	parts of the body
Sex and sexual activity	any sexual activity related to or describing sex or any sexual act
Identity	an all-encompassing term for ideas related to identity
Places	places where gays hang-out, congregate, or live
Terms of address and endearment	ways of calling other people, usually a homosexual friend
Natural activities	words that describe the natural, physiological functions of the body
Personality or behavior	words that describe characteristics or traits
Emotional or psychological state	words used to express emotions or psychological states
Violence or oppression	strong words that describe physical or psychological abuse experienced by gays

To analyze these words, expressions, and names according to the grammatical structure of the English language and how meanings have been attached to them, these words, expressions, will be categorized according to the following:

Grammatical Structure	Description
Proper noun used as verb	proper nouns whose meanings attached to them basically induce actions, therefore used as verbs
Common noun used as verb	common nouns whose meanings attached to them basically induce actions, therefore used as verbs
Proper noun used as adjective	Proper nouns whose meanings attached to them basically describe the subject of the sentence, therefore functioning as adjectives
Common noun used as adjective	common nouns whose meanings attached to them basically describe the subject of the sentence, therefore functioning as adjectives
Proper noun used as common noun	proper nouns whose function in the sentence is not a proper noun, but a common noun
Proper noun used as proper noun but with different meaning	proper nouns used as proper nouns, but the meaning is not literal; meaning is provided by the speaker/writer
Common noun used as common noun but with different meaning	common nouns used as common nouns, but the meaning is not literal; meaning is provided by the speaker/writer
Nouns used as other function words	nouns that function either as expressions, fillers, language markers, etc.

Towards the end of the data, I will demonstrate how these words, names, and expressions are used in sentences as part of a discourse community. I will also explain how these words, names, and expressions intentionally but creatively violate the grammatical rules of English language in the Philippines.

THE DATA

A. PROPER NOUNS REFERING TO NAMES OF PERSONS

Names/Expressions	**Phonetics of words** ***Either in English or in Filipino***	**Meaning attached to the word**	**Classification**
Purita Kalaw Ledesma Purita Kashiwara Pureta Malaviga Purita Zobel Purita Sanchez	Pur—first syllable sounds like *mahirap* or poor	poor	Personality or behavior
Yayo Aguila	Ya—first syllable sounds like *hiya* or shy	shy	Emotional or psychological state
Chaka Khan Chenelyn Jennilyn Mercado Menchu Manchaca Chuckie Dreyfusses	Chaka, Chuckie means *panget* or ugly	ugly, posh but unattractive	Personality or behavior
Anita Linda Aida	Aida—AIDS	AIDS	Personality or behavior
Chanda Romero	Chan—*tiyan* or tummy	tummy	Personality or behavior
Lilet	Lilet—*maliit* or little	little boy	Personality or behavior
Mahalia Jackson Maharlika	Mahal—*mahal* or expensive	expensive	Personality or behavior
Rusty Lopez	Rust—rush	faster	Personality or behavior
Bebang Mayta Aleli Madrigal	*alalay* or maid	poor maid	Identity
Cathy Dennis Cathy Santillan Kate Gomez Cathy Mora Ella Fitzgerald Katrina Halili	Cathy—*kati* or *Makati*	promiscuous, horny	Emotional or psychological state
Anda Andalucia Anju Anjo Yllana	Anda—*datung* or money	money	

Kuya Germs	Germs—germs	brother who is unkempt and dirty	Personality or behavior
Tom Jones Tommy Lee Jones Tommy Hilfiger	Tom—*gutom* or hungry	hungry	Emotional or psychological state
Camilla Parker Bowles		evil stepmother	Personality or behavior
Churchill		wealthy and elegant	Personality or behavior
Lucrecia Kasilag Lucring	Lucrecia—*loka, luka-luka* or crazy	crazy	Personality or behavior
Lupita Kashiwara	Lupita–*lupit, malupit* or cruel	cruel	Personality or behavior
Stevie Wonder		to turn a blind eye	Emotional or psychological state
Bing Loyzaga	Bing—*bingi* or deaf	deaf	Personality or behavior
Chiquito	Chiquito—*maliit* or small	petite	Personality or behavior
Fayatollah Kumenis	Fayat—*payat* or skinny	skinny	Personality or behavior
Mother Lily		alcoholic mother	Personality or behavior
Ruffa		to drink or take in excess	Natural activities
Leticia Ramos Shahani	Shahani—shabu	shabu	
Julie Andrews Julie Yap Daza Jolina Magdangal	Julie—*huli* or caught	to catch, to get caught	Violence or oppression
Evil Knievel	Evil—evil	wicked sibling	Personality or behavior
Rita Gomez Rita Avila Rita Magdalena	Rita –*irita* or irritated	to get irritated	Emotional or psychological state
Wig Tismans	Wig—wig	wig	
Snooky Serna (in *Blusang Itim*)	an ugly person who becomes beautiful once she wears the *blusang itim* or "black blouse"	ugly duckling turned into a swan with the help of major styling	Personality or behavior
Mariah Carey Morayta	Mariah—*mura* or cheap, inexpensive	cheap	Personality or behavior
Girlie Rodis	Girl—girl	girl	Personality or behavior
Crayola Khomeini	Crayola—cry	to cry	Natural activities
Robina Gokongwei-Pe	Go—go	to want to go but can't	Emotional or psychological state
Wanda Louwallien	Wanda—wand	magic wand	
Hans Montenegro	Hans—hands	sullied hands	Personality or behavior
Magic Johnson	Magic—magic	incantation	Personality or behavior
Diamanda Galas	Diamanda—diamonds	fake diamonds	Personality or behavior
Jesus Christ Superstar		fashion resurrection or make-over	Personality or behavior

Rosa Rosal		carriage or car	
Pocahontas Janjalani	Jan—*indiyan* or failed to show up	person who didn't show up or shows up late	Personality or behavior
Julanis (Alanis) Morrisette Reyna Elena	Julan—*ulan,* rain Reyna—rain	to rain	
Diether Ocampo	Diether—bitter	bitter	Emotional or psychological state
Joana Parases	Joa—*jowa* (in gayspeak means "partner")	spouse	Terms for address and endearment
Sinead O'Connor		incomparable	Personality or behavior
Eva Kalaw	Eva K—*ebak* (Filipino slang for "feces")	feces	
Luz Valdez Lucila Lalu Luz Clarita	Luz—loser	loser	Personality or behavior
Truman Kapote Trulili Trulala	Tru—true	true	Personality or behavior
Rica Peralejo Nina Ricci Richie Lee	Rica, Ricci—rich	rich	Personality or behavior
Noel Coward		no, too shy	Emotional or psychological state
Sharon Cuneta Zsazsa Padilla	Sha—*sha*, yes	yes	
Oprah Winfrey OPM	Oprah—second syllable sounds like *pra* or *pramis*	promise	
Cookie Chua Cookie Monster Nora Daza	Cookie—cook	cook	Natural activities
Cleopatra		applauded	Emotional or psychological state
Toning	Toning—tonight	midnight	
Carmen Patena	Carmen—car Patena—*patay* or dilapidated	malfunctioning and dilapidated car	
Lucita Soriano	Luci—lose Sor—sorry	to lose something or someone and feel sorry for it	Emotional or psychological state
Emana Gushungs		slutty but religious men	Personality or behavior
Piolo Pascual and his leading ladies		just dating	Emotional or psychological state

Sheryl Cruz Sharmaine Arnaiz	Sher or Shar—share	to share	Natural activities
Simeon Cynthia	Sim or Cyn—*Sino siya?*	Who is he/she?	Personality or behavior
Winnie Monsod Winnie d Pooh Winnie Castillo Winona Rider	Winnie—win	Winner	Personality or behavior
Samantha Lopez	Samantha—*mapagsamatala* or abusive	abusive	Personality or behavior

B. OTHER PROPER NOUNS (television shows, brands, etc.)

Names/Expressions	**Phonetics of words** ***Either in English or in Filipino***	**Meaning attached to the word**	**Classification**
Aglipay	Agli—ugly Pay—*Pinay* or Filipina	ugly Pinay	Identity
G.I. Joe	cartoon series in the 80s	gentleman idiot American lover	Identity
Twin Towers Pre-9/11	two skyscrapers in the US	very healthy twins	Identity
Kelvinator Kelvina	refrigerator brand	as big as a refrigerator	Personality or behavior
Anaconda Ana	Ahas—*ahas* or snake	traitor	Personality or behavior
Ativan Gang	a gang that gives you pills then robs you	poison	Violence or oppression
Siete Pecados	seven deadly sins	gossip mongerer	Personality or behavior
Fra Lippo Lippi		slave	Identity
Dakota Harrison Plaza Dax Martin	a mall in Manila	well-endowed	Identity
P.B.A.	Philippine Basketball Association	party, ball, alumni homecoming	Places
Continental Fusion		big fuss	Identity
San Fernando, Pampanga	capital city of Pampanga	shoes	Places
Miss Nigeria	description for a dark-skinned woman	dark-skinned	Identity

Pagoda Cold Wave Lotion	Brand of a hair product; Pagoda—*pagod* or tired	tired	Personality or behavior
N.P.A	New People's Army, "always in hiding"	to leave	
Thunder Cat Wrangler Jaguar	Thunder—*tanda* or *matanda,* old	old person	Identity
Twelve Apostles		twelve o'clock	
Pearl Harbor Bombing		real pearls	
Fita biscuits	Fita—feet	big feet	Personality or behavior
Granada de Espana	Granada—*grabe na ito* or exaggerated	grand entourage-entrance	Personality or behavior
Reyna Elena	Reyna—rain	to rain	
Rent-a-Car	associated with *pagbebenta ng aliw*	prostitutes	Personality or behavior
Pamenthols	Pamenthols—*pa-men*	gays acting straight	Emotional or psychological state
Duty Free Bags	Duty—*jutay* (gayspeak for "small")	small penis	Sex and sexual activity
X-men	In gayspeak means a formerly straight man who has come out in public as gay	formerly straight men	Emotional or psychological state
Backstreet Boys		cute guys at the back	Identity
Discorama	a place where gays usually hang-out	dance	Places
Megamall Cinema	mall theater	balcony	Places
Cheese Whiz	Cheese—*tsismis* or rumor	Rumor	
OB Montessori		Precisely	
Wella Shampoo	Wella—well	"Oh, well."	
Lucky Home Partner		live-in partner	Places
Triumph Bra	Triumph	winner	Personality or behavior
Fun Chum	Fun	great time with friend or lover	
Walker Briefs	Walker—walk	to travel in tattered and filthy clothing	Personality or behavior

Opposition Party		an occasion with a lot of expected problems	Emotional or psychological state
Optimus Prime	Leader of the cartoon TV series *The Transformers*	to get transformed	Natural activities
Malaybalay, Bukidnon Malaysia at Pakistan Malaysia India Japan	Malay—*malay ko* or not sure	not sure	Emotional or Psychological state
Touchtone Pictures	Touchstone—touch	to touch	Natural activities
Indiana Jones	Indiana—*indiyan* or did not show up	did not show up	Personality or behavior
Washington DC	Washington—*wala*	none or nothing	
Mahogany	Mahogany—*mabaho* or stinks	foul smell	Personality or behavior
UP Oblation	The famous statue of a naked man in the University of the Philippines	Naked	Personality or behavior
Chabelita	Chabelita—chubby	Chubby	Personality or behavior
Uranus	Uranus—anus	Anus	Sex and sexual activity
Fillet o' Fish	Fillet—feel	feel, like or type	Emotional or psychological state
Statue of Liberty Liberty Condensada	Liberty—*libre* or free	Free	

C. COMMON NOUNS (either clipped, coined, or originally developed)

Common Names/ Expressions	**Phonetics of words** ***Either in English or in Filipino***	**Meaning attached to the word**	**Classification**
boyband	Boy—*baboy* or pig	fat kid	Personality or behavior
junk shop		drug addict	Personality or behavior
jowabelles	Jowa (in gayspeak means "partner")	lover	Personality or behavior
bionic woman	Bionic—*bayo* or *magbayo*, slang for "to masturbate"	major	Natural activities
neurosurgeon	Neuro—connotes suddenly becoming intelligent	astonishing surprise	Emotional or psychological state
backstroke	Backstroke—backstab	to backstab or criticize behind someone's back	Personality or behavior
success stories	Success—an ugly girl or boy whose partner is a rich foreigner	poor people who have married rich	Identity
quality control	Quality—good physical qualities	high beauty standards	Identity

Poofs		gay person in need of a reality check	Emotional or psychological state
48 years	gay expression which means "a long period of time"	after a long time	
antibiotic	Anti—*antipatika* or bitch	Bitch	Personality or behavior
jongoloid	Jongoloid—mongoloid which connotes "moron"	Stupid	Personality or behavior
otoko		gay expression characterizing a man's masculinity	Identity
constru	a man or woman who looks like a construction worker	construction worker	Personality or behavior
variables	Varia—*barya* or coins	Coins	
rendez-vous	Ren—run	to run away	Natural activities
one pokels		gay monetary expression for "one peso," usually used when asking how much one has paid their "otoko" or "studio contestant"	
one hammer		gay monetary expression for "one hundred pesos"	
one kiaw		gay monetary expression for "one thousand pesos"	
studio contestant		an overnight sex partner	Identity
monthly finalist		frequent sex partner	Identity
grand finalist		frequent sex encounters that gradually develop into an intimate relationship	Identity
lucky home partner		partners living together in one roof	Identity
lucky text partner		a call boy who performs his sexual duty through text messaging or phone call	Identity

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

A. PROPER NOUNS USED AS VERBS

Proper Nouns	**Meanings**
Stevie Wonder	to turn a blind eye
Ruffa	to drink in excess
Julie Andrews	to catch, to get caught
Rita Gomez	to get irritated
Crayola Khomeini	to cry
Robina Gokongwei-Pe	to want to go but can't
Cleopatra	to applaud
Lucita Soriano	to lose someone/something
Piolo Pascual and his leading ladies	just dating

Here are sample sentences where these proper nouns are used as verbs.

1 Oh no. How I wish I could *Robina Gokongwei-Pe* to the Party.

2. …fully aware that she likes to *Ruffa* her alcohol…

3. Fortunately, some *Siete Pecados* informed Chaka Khan of Chenelyn's deadly plan and *Enter the Dragon* in time to *Julie Andrews* the *Evil Knievel*.

4. …couldn't do anything else but to sit down and *Crayola Kohmeini…*

In the first sentence above, *Robina Gokongwei-Pe* is used as a verb, preceded by a modal "could." In the second sentence, *Ruffa* is used as a verb and is preceded by the infinitive "to." Similarly in the third sentence, the infinitive "to" precedes *Julie Andrews*. In the last sentence, *Crayola Kohmeini* is used to mean "cry," a verb.

OTHER PROPER NOUNS USED AS VERBS

Proper Nouns	**Meanings**
N.P.A	to leave
Wishful Thinking by China Crisis	to dream in a time of despair
Optimus Prime	to get transformed
Reyna Elena	to rain
Walker Briefs	to travel in tattered and filthy clothing

In the following sentences, other proper nouns (names of places, brands, television shows, etc.) are used as verbs.

1. …couldn't do anything else but to sit down and *Crayola Kohmeini* when his brother *N.P.A.*

2. To Chaka's amazement, his shabby outfit *Optimus Prime* into a golden barong tagalong…

In the first sentence, *N.P.A.* is used to mean that the brother has left. In the second sentence, *Optimus Prime* is used to mean "to transform."

B. COMMON NOUNS USED AS VERBS

Common Noun	**Meaning**
backstroke	backstab, to criticize someone behind their back

In this sentence, a common noun has been used as a verb: "They all wanted to *backstroke* Chaka Khan, most especially Chenelyn."

C. PROPER NOUNS USED AS ADJECTIVES

Proper Nouns	**Meanings**
Purita Kalaw Ledesma	poor
Yayo Aguila	shy
Chaka Khan	ugly
Mahalia Jackson	expensive
Chenelyn	ugly
Cathy Dennis	promiscuous
Menchu Manchaca	posh but unattractive
Kuya Germs	brother who is unkempt and dirty
Tom Jones	hungry
Camilla Parker Bowles	evil stepmother
Churchill	wealthy and elegant
Lucrecia Kasilag	crazy
Lupita Kashiwara	cruel
Chiquito	petite
Fayatollah Kumenis	skinny
Mother Lily	alcoholic mother
Evil Knievel	wicked sibling
Snooky Serna in Blusang Itim	ugly duckling turned swan with the help of major styling
Murriah Carey	cheap
Hans Montenegro	sullied hands
Chuckie Dreyfusses	ugly and effeminate boy
Sinead O'Connor	incomparable
Luz Valdez	loser
Eva Kalaw	shit
Truman Kapote	true
Ella Fitzgerald	horny
Noel Coward	no, too shy
Toning	midnight
Carmen Pateña	malfunctioning and dilapidated car
Emana Gushungs	slutty but religious men

Here are sample sentences where proper nouns are used as adjectives:

1. Once upon a time, there was a *Purita Kalaw Ledesma* and *Yayo Aguila* boyband named *Chaka Khan.*

2. "Raising two boys was *Mahalia Jackson*."

3. She may be all *Cathy Dennis, Kelvinator, and Menchu Menchaca,* but she can definitely givenchy a better life even at least to your *Kuya Germs*.

4. …and despite his deceptively jongoloid, *Chiquito and Payatola Kumenis* demeanor, he was actually a red-blooded antibiotic and anaconda…

In the first sentence, the proper nouns *Purita Kalaw Ledesma, Yayo Aguila and Chaka Khan* are used to describe the subject, Chaka Khan. These names mean "poor," "shy," and "ugly," respectively. In the second sentence, *Mahalia Jackson* describes the gerund "raising" as expensive. In the third sentence, *Cathy Dennis, Kelvinator, and Menchu Menchaka* are used to describe the antecedent "she" as the subject of the sentence. And lastly, the names *Chiquito and Payatola Kumenis* are also names whose meanings describe the subject: *Chiquito* means "petite" while *Payatola Kumenis* means "skinny."

OTHER PROPER NOUNS USED AS ADJECTIVES

Proper Nouns	**Meanings**
Aglipay	ugly Pinay
P.B.A.	Party, Ball, Alumni Homecoming
Miss Nigeria	Dark
Pagoda Cold Wave Lotion	tired
Dakota Harrison Plaza	well-endowed
Continental Fusion	big fuss
Kelvinator	as big as a large refrigerator
Duty Free Bags	small penis
X-men	formerly straight men
Twin Towers Pre-9/11	very healthy twins
Fun Chum	great time with friend or lover

In the following sentences, some proper nouns are used as adjectives:

1. He was a son of an *Aglipay*…

2. But he was having so much *Fun Chum* that he forgot it was almost toning…

3. Chenelyn came out of the closet like a Snooky Serna in Blusang Itim and did not look a tad Marriah Carey, *Miss Nigeria* or Girlie Rodis.

In the first sentence, *Aglipay* is used to mean a Filipino mother who is ugly. It is a clipped word for "ugly + Pinay." In the second sentence, *Fun Chum* is used to mean "a great time." In the last sentence, *Miss Nigeria* is used to describe the subject's dark complexion.

D. COMMON NOUNS USED AS ADJECTIVES

Common Nouns	**Meanings**
success stories	poor people who have married rich
quality control	high beauty standards
neurosurgeon	astonishing surprise
48 years	after a long time
antibiotic	bitch
jongoloid	stupid
bionic woman	major

In the following sample sentences, common nouns are used as adjectives:

1. …and despite his deceptively *jongoloid,* Chiquito and Payatola Kumenis demeanor, he was actually a red-blooded, *antibiotic* and anaconda…

2. No one could Sinnead O'Connor to Chaka Khan's *quality control* – everyone was Luz Valdez, from the performance artists to *success stories*.

3. There he asked the *bionic woman* question:

In the first sentence, *jongoloid* and *antibiotic* are both used as descriptive words.

E. PROPER NOUNS USED AS COMMON NOUNS

Proper Nouns	**Meanings**
Chanda Romero	tummy
Lilet	little boy
Bebang Mayta	maid
Leticia Ramos Shahani	shabu
Wig Tismans	wig
Girlie Rodis	girl
Wanda Louwallien	magic wand
Magic Johnson	incantation
Diamanda Galas	fake diamonds
Jesus Christ Superstar	fashion resurrection or make-over
Rosa Rosal	carriage/car
Pocahontas	person who doesn't come or shows up late
Joana Parases	spouse
Anaconda	traitor
Ativan Gang	poison
Siete Pecados	gossipmongorer
Fra Lippo Lippi	slave
San Fernando, Pampanga	shoes
Thunder Cat	old person
Twelve Apostles	twelve o'clock
Pearl Harbor Bombing	real pearls
Fita biscuits in can	big feet
Wrangler	elderly
Granada de Espana	grand entourage-entrance
Ren-a-Cars	prostitutes
Pamenthols	gays acting straight
Backstreet Boys	cute guys in the back
Discorama	dance

Megamall Cinema	balcony
Cheese Whiz	rumor
Lucky Home Partner	live-in partner
Triumph Bra	winner
Opposition Party	an occasion with a lot of expected problems

In the following sentences, proper nouns function as common nouns:

1. …whose G.I. Joe died of Anita Linda and left her all alone with a bulging *Chanda Romero.*

2. Chaka Khan was so happy to have finally found true love and felt like a *Triumph Bra.*
3. …ironing his suit and polishing his *San Fernando, Pampanga.*

4. There is *Cheese Whiz* going around that you're Ella Fitzgerald.

In the first sentence, *Chanda Romero*, a proper noun, functions as a common noun in the sentence to mean "tummy." In the second sentence, *Triumph Bra* is used to mean "winner." In the third sentence, *San Fernando, Pampanga* is used to mean "shoes," and lastly, *Cheese Whiz* is used as a common noun to mean "rumor."

F. PROPER NOUNS USED AS PROPER NOUNS BUT WITH DIFFERENT MEANINGS

Proper Nouns	**Meanings**
Anita Linda	AIDS
G.I. Joe	Gentleman Idiot American Lover

The sentence below uses Proper Nouns and the writer gave these words a Proper meaning also, but very far from their literal meanings:

1. He was the son of an Aglipay whose *G.I. Joe* died of *Anita Linda* and left her all alone with a bulging Chanda Romero.

G.I. Joe and *Anita Linda* are both proper nouns used here to mean entirely different things from their literal meaning.

G. COMMON NOUNS USED AS COMMON NOUNS BUT WITH DIFFERENT MEANINGS

Common Nouns	**Meanings**
boyband	fat kid
junk shop	drug addict
jowabelles	lover

In the following sentences, common nouns also function as common nouns but the meaning is very far from their literal meanings:

1. This was the same Churchill woman who constantly abused and berated his mother until the poor woman became a *junk shop* and went Lucrecia Kasilag.

2. Once upon a time, there was a Purita Kalaw Ledesma and Yayo Aguila *boyband* named Chaka Khan.

3. "So do you have a jowabelles?"

In the first sentence, *junk shop* is a common noun used as a common noun, but the meaning is not literal. In the second sentence, *boyband* functions also as a common noun, but means something different from its original meaning. Lastly, *jowabelles* is used to mean "lover."

H. NOUNS USED AS OTHER FUNCTION WORDS

Sharon Cuneta	yes
Oprah Winfrey	promise
Zsa Zsa Padilla	yes, yes, stop bugging me now or I'll hit
you	

OB Montessori	precisely
Wella Shampoo	oh well
Noel Coward	no

In the following sentences, proper nouns are used as expressions to either negate or affirm statements:

1. *Wella Shampoo*, can I be your Lucky Home Partner then?
2. "*Sharon Cuneta.*"
3. *"Oprah Winfrey?"*
4. *"Zsa Zsa Padilla!"*
5. "What do you mean *OB Montessori*?"

In the situations above, all proper nouns function as expressions to affirm or negate statements. Some are used as expressions also.

CONCLUSION

From a linguistic point of view, gay language in the Philippines defies the rules of standard English grammar in the way that content words such as nouns, adjectives, and verbs are interchanged. This causes an alteration in the meaning of the sentences. Added to this defiance is the inconsistency in spelling which becomes an issue of codification and elaboration, since there are no rules yet that determine the standards of this language.

Red argues that gayspeak "defies international boundaries" (42). The data presented here is a representation of this gay language that "defies international boundaries." The names are mostly a mixture of local and international personalities clipped and playfully put together to create entirely different meanings. Communicative discourse and the fluidity of conversation between and among gay people using gayspeak is highly vocal—mainly based on utterances of the users and their ability to adequately grasp the idea. The meaning they attribute to each word is mostly determined by the sound produced by the first two syllables of the expression. In some cases, words, names and expressions are given a meaning that is entirely different from how mainstream culture uses the words, names, and expressions; as Suguitan says, gayspeak words are "metaphorically used." And this exactly characterizes gay language and the gay community in the Philippines—uniquely and creatively intricate, a language spoken by gay people who are not afraid to try new

things that will even challenge social convention.

But to conclude that the intention of gay language is to violate or challenge the conventions of the English language is too presumptuous. It would be safer to say that this code-mixing (gayspeak + English language) is rather an act of creativity. To borrow from Remoto, gayspeak is for gays "a way of fictioning their integration into society" and to sublimate social condemnation into social acceptability. As a language, gayspeak also allows the wider Philippine community to exploit and decipher the inner value of this language and what it accords for the gay community. It is exactly this social function of language that intrigues sociolinguists.

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LITERARY SECTION

POEMS

D. M. Reyes
Ateneo de Manila University, Philippines
dmreyes@ ateneo.edu

About the author

D. M. Reyes is leisurely at work on his second book of poems as well as a first collection of short fiction. Through a travel grant from The Nippon Foundation, he has lived and taught briefly in Indonesia and Thailand, preparing a multi-volume dictionary of cultural symbols across Southeast Asia. His most recent stint was in Bangkok, through a research grant from the Asian Scholarship Foundation, to survey the iconographic history of its city museums.

TO THE WEDDING

Summer's round moon blazed.
Upon Loón's limestone steps
we made our descent.

Here and there Clovis paused,
thumping the bricks
handed by his namesakes,
centuries before.

We crossed the causeway's edge,
the calm sea waited,
the dark rains having given in.

If the sky were a span of tulle,
the stars would be its beads of gold.
It's sheer prose to append
how an exiled poet
took out his harmonica,
to play some wistful bars
of Springsteen.

A boat, and then another,
passed us by,
their destination
distant as the dawn.
The women wore their veils
and the young men held on
to their guitars,
their tubs of oysters
and gathered flowers.

We never saw their faces,
just heard the squeal of pigs

and squawk of chickens,
the frisky old mothers
forbidding to light the lamp,
for the night gleamed,
and the moon must watch
over their ship of fools,
because they were roving,
rowing to the wedding.

Who recalls the anxious groom,
the radiant, homesick bride
who ached for them?
Many moons have shone
since. Yet their heaping haul
seemed light enough, their gliding
bark had gracious room
to take yet one more blessing.

See how the world stills for a feast,
hoists its brave, unblinking moon.
And the stars claim
a grief, calm the sore
heart's howling. Faraway,
their island gleams,
love's golden weight,
unsinking, round
as the ages yearning—
first, last, and always
a ring.

SUNDAY MORNING

It's Sunday morning,
the neighbor mechanic whistles
the radio's steady dose
of old heartbreak.
I go back to sleep
and you're there!

"See you at the train station,"
you say and, as if winking,
"Come pray with me today."

Which stop
I forgot to ask you.
I've slid the blue phone
back to its pouch
when it all makes sense:
"I'm a Catholic
and you're the Buddha's
whimsical child."

Dreams unreel, yielding
enigmatic hills and walkways
but where have we
been sentenced to meet?
In Ruam Rudee
where my countrymen
gather at mid-morning
on Sundays, singing
their imported hymns
or at the Golden Palace
where, past the cheerful sentinels,
you once sneaked in a stranger
to scale with lifted eyes

the Emerald Buddha's
polished tiers.

There's the sutra read
elsewhere that I must follow:
"Rend his heart without pity
if the Buddha waits where the road turns.
You are the Buddha; know that he who walks
at large is but your heart's trick and dream."
And now, let me tell you
how it ends:

Way down the road,
I've been unable to stab you
because the rain fell and we rushed to a temple
to hear an old monk declare:

Shamed at this one race,
I'd have to head for the next life—
ten thousand years to be heartless
and, with a gleaming dagger,
to go for your heart,
renouncing all that I love.

WALKWAYS, DRENCHED

It's rain that pours here,
upon these walkways on the hill.
And for all that gushes away—
leaves, rubbish, pens dropped
from the rush or balled-up
contrivances all shredding now,
the drench simply flows
downhill.

Wherever I turn,
it's the dart and slap
of that monsoon stalker,
this woosh of ruthless spill,
confounding the feet
that are not grave enough
to quash the destinies of water.
And the heart,
owning up to the distances
that it must cross again,
rules the feet,
out of rude persistence,
to slosh through the ripples.

I could turn up wet
at the door, demanding
to see the school engineer:
it's his call to dam this flow elsewhere
and really, away from my hurry,
or timely musings—between Milton
and me, wet and without dignity
in this untimely shower.

Water had flown all day today,
and the storm beat the trees
north and south,
and the sky gave in
with all its clear, certain grace,
water spilling to where the hill
had sloped away,
heeding what pulls
it there at the foothills,

giving itself over to the thirst
of something
that will drink it in
and keep it,
full and gathered

leaving me all washed
yet seething
in my unseasonable
anger.

DEAR MR. THOMPSON

The house is as you left it,
holding up to your return,
any day after Easter.

The mouse house
still makes everyone smile
with its stairs, little quarters,
and passageways.
A sweaty backpacker says:
"Let it be a moonless April,
just light the gas lamp,
and friends would come betting
after your frazzled rodents."

The painted oracles still hang
by the southern window:
Good fortune will come
if you open six doors
yet also the monk's
calm warning:
"Be still in the house's heart
as the palm trees grow
and befriend the darkness
of the sixty first year."

I've picked out the rainforest,
Mr. Thompson:
Lord Jim's jungle
of jade-green vines and ferns,
as well as its hungry pythons
and royal Bengal tigers,
yet only because
a grove had whistled there

and deep within, you found
a house more beautiful
than Soi Kasemsan's,
its paintings and stone gods
more ancient—
no missing walls or seams now
that you have to turn insideout
or piece together.

But some things I would
like to ask, if you were here:
What did the klong sing
when the slow boats stopped
and your gate opened
to friends calling in?
Which temple did the headless Buddha
whisper as he preached in your dream?
And what were my love's eyes like
when he first stepped here as a child?

Niched in frames of rough
silk, your deities, bird
women, and rice mothers
watch over—beautiful loot
of your restless sightings—
until you strolled off one day,
throwing the teak doors
wide open.

On the pond, red
and white lotuses spring
from the wild garden
and the fountain rings
out its breathless trickle.
The wide-eyed gods

of Ayutthaya
watch over the Thais
as they boil rice on their clay stoves
or use oils and essences
to soothe each other.

With things lovely, and matchless,
and tender, Jim—
you tell me to be fearless,
to step out of this house,
and to turn away.