Model Filipino Student Subjects:
The Colonial Education Haunting of Filipino Students and Migrant Teachers in the U.S.

By

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Abstract:

This dissertation examines how past U.S. colonial education in the Philippines impacts the ways in which Filipino bodies are commodified and racialized under contemporary education and training systems in both the Philippines and the United States. This research project utilizes participatory action research and in-depth interviews with over 50 Filipino trafficking survivors who were employed as educators in the United States and over 50 Filipino American college students and alumni. I connect the experience of both sets of respondents to the early 1900's U.S. imperialist education project in the Philippines, which produced a racialized subjectivity I coined as the "Model Filipino Student Subject." The "Model Filipino Student Subject," undergoes a conditioning process that pushes Filipinos towards a culture of submissiveness, obedience, labor, and self-sacrifice towards a collective colonial identity shaping how they teach and how they learn. I analyze the history of U.S. Colonial education in the Philippines as, to borrow the term from Avery Gordon, a haunting the Filipino body through the following: 1) Tracing the roots of the "Model Filipino Student Subject" back to early 1900s Philippines' colonial education system and its racialized production of reliable and malleable Filipino colonial subjects which laid the foreground towards a now established global labor export system, 2) Drawing connections between U.S. colonial schooling and recent cases of trafficked Filipino migrant teachers as a consequence of this racial capitalist haunting under the "Model Filipino Student Subjectivity", and 3) Analyzing how this legacy of colonial education impacts the current conditions of Filipino undergraduate students and campus organizations as racialized bodies of labor within the same institution that helped establish western colonial education in the Philippines: The University of California. My project defines and applies the "Model Filipino Student Subject" haunting through three research locations: the formation of the "Model Filipino Student Subject" within

the early 1900's U.S. colonial education system in the Philippines, the haunting's application to Filipino migrant teacher training and conditioning in the 2010's, and the haunting's impact on Filipino American college student cycles of labor and burnout in the 2020's. I close out my project by uplifting the patterns of resistance and healing both Filipino migrant teachers and Filipino American college students engage through their shared experiences, rejecting the "Model Filipino Student Subjectivity," and envisioning a future of collective liberation as an active exorcism of this colonial haunting.

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The Multigenerational Legacy of Colonial Education in the Philippines: The "Model Filipino Student Subject"

"There is such a pride with being a teacher, especially from the Philippines. To be brought to the [United] States and to be tossed aside to fend for ourselves being trafficked…. What have I been training for all of these years? What is the worth of my education and expertise when I arrive here and I feel used and lost? I committed over two decades to this profession just to be paid almost nothing here in the U.S. I am tired, my body is used up."

- "Del", Washington, D.C.
  Anti-Trafficking Campaign Rally 2013

In 2013, over 50 Filipino migrant teachers joined Del in publicly speaking out as Filipino survivors of labor trafficking. Trafficked by Isidro Rodriguez and his illegal Filipino labor recruitment agency Great Provider Service Exporters Inc. between 2009 to 2014, the migrant teachers were promised high salary jobs as K-12 teachers in the North Carolina and Washington D.C. public school systems.[1] Upon arriving in the United States, however, the positions the labor recruitment company guaranteed did not exist. Instead, the teachers were met with debt bondage,

[1] Migrante International. "Convicted Trafficker Isidro Rodriguez Sighted in Spain: Arrest and Extradite Rodriguez Now, Victims Urge PH Gov't." Migrante International, April 30, 2019. https://migranteinternational.org/convicted-trafficker-isidro-rodriguez-sighted-in-spain-arrest-and-extradite-rodriguez-now-victims-urge-ph-govt/.

uncertain immigration status, and abuse. Trapped in an elaborate labor trafficking ring, many teachers lost hope and assumed they would be indebted to the labor recruitment company for years to come and stuck in their limbo status as invisibilized trafficking victims.

North of 65 years old and a veteran teacher of over 20 years, "Del's" quote above encompasses her reflective thoughts regarding her long journey from veteran educator in the Philippines to her current status as a trafficked teacher in the United States. These words represent a shared feeling many other trafficked teachers felt, one of betrayal and fatigue as a Filipino educator within the United States and greater diaspora. Many of the Filipino teachers affected by this string of labor trafficking share this feeling of being used and their labor extracted by the U.S. education system. "Del" adds, "What are we? Just cheap labor for the country, and when we are of no use, we are thrown away." Unfortunately, many of the migrant teachers before and after Del follow a trend of serving short term, stop gap solutions for low resource, teacher deficient inner city school districts. Many of these school districts believe their only options for the teacher retention issue are either rotating substitutes, often inexperienced Teach for America corps, or cheap, reliable Filipino migrant teachers.[2] Del's complaints regarding their treatment are a sign of the general short term use of Filipino migrant teachers and migrant labor at large, viewed as a band aid quick fix in terms of labor shortages and tight budget constraints. This pattern of Filipinos as racialized and commodified educational labor also connects to a different generation through Filipino American students on college campuses.

A similar feeling of overwork and burnout is seen during my interview with over 55 California Filipino undergraduate students who took on leadership roles in their respective

[2] Bartlett, Lora. Migrant Teachers: How American Schools Import Labor. Cambridge, MA and London, England: Harvard University Press, 2013. https://doi.org/10.4159/harvard.9780674726345.

university's Filipino American community organizations between 2012 and 2024. Rising UC Davis senior "Jolene" states:

> "I felt a pressure to protect my community. I felt a pressure to do as much programming and events, and to do even more in order to leave my mark, my legacy in the community**….** But each year our orgs just keep putting on more programming, we keep doing too much until it **all crashes down, and we always are left burnt out."**

Jolene's statement is indicative of a rising issue within Filipino American student organizations around burn out, a topic explored in a forthcoming dissertation by Reuben Deleon at UCLA. My work adds to this initial exploration, examining how Filipino college student burn out, as well as Filipino teacher migrant labor, is grounded within a legacy of colonial education in the Philippines dating back to the early 1900's. This legacy is built upon the everlasting impact of U.S. colonial education in the Philippines and its formation of what I coin the "Model Filipino Student/Subject," a process of racialization that continues to impact Filipino students and educators across generations and in the diaspora. My main research questions follow: How do we trace the genealogy and impacts of the assimilationist logics organizing the US education system in its past iterations as a colonial tool and its transformation as a neoliberal tool? What are the impacts of these assimilationist/neoliberal logics on the Filipino labor diaspora in relation to Filipino migrant teachers and Filipino?" The "Model Filipino Student Subject" haunting is one built off of benevolent assimilation and evolves across generations into a unique assimilationist

logic that shapes the experiences of Filipino migrant teachers and Filipino American college students alike.

This U.S. colonial education legacy and subsequent "Model Filipino Student/Subject" haunts[3] Filipinos as students and educators. Many institutions were born out of this legacy, including Philippines and U.S. universities and contemporary Filipino migrant training programs. Many of these institutions are complicit in or directly shape the extraction and commodification of Filipino labor towards continued empire building. In tow, the United States seeks cheap, reliable teachers who align with the "Model Filipino Student Subject." This racialization serves as a reason why global markets have viewed overseas Filipino workers as the premiere source of migrant labor.[4][5][6] This logic is relevant both in the present case of Filipino migrant teachers as well as in the early 1900's Philippines' first batches of western educated Filipino teachers, whom the U.S. hoped to spread western ideology, the empire's visions, and tenets of white supremacy within their communities. The U.S. backed colonial education system aimed to indoctrinate Filipinos into colonial subjects who uplift the system of capitalism through their role as hyper productive, subservient, and selfless workers, ultimately becoming the "Model Filipino Student Subject." This *haunting*[7] transcends generations and locations. It is rooted in the westernized U.S. colonial education in early 1900's Philippines under the tutelage of superintendent to the Philippine islands David Barrows. Ironically, Barrows later served as

[3]Gordon, Avery. Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination. University of Minnesota Press, 2011.
[4] Rodriguez, Robyn Magalit. Migrants for Export: How the Philippine State Brokers Labor to the World. University of Minnesota Press, 2010.
[5] Guevarra, Anna Romina. 2010. Marketing Dreams, Manufacturing Heroes: The Transnational Labor Brokering of Filipino Workers. Piscataway: Rutgers University Press.
[6] Parreñas, Rhacel Salazar . Servants of Globalization : Women, Migration and Domestic Work. Stanford, Calif. :Stanford University Press, 2001.
[7] As described in the following paragraph, I borrow Avery Gordon's definition of haunting as a past history and trauma of a people or individual continuing to mold their contemporary conditions, typically masked and hidden.

University of California President after serving as a core architect of the Philippines colonial education system. His very system and influence continue to haunt Filipinos in the Philippines through their education and overseas employment training processes, including the migrant teachers in my study. His education system's colonial logic also haunts current Filipino American students in the United States, including those attending the University of California system. Born out of the U.S.-Philippines colonial project, the "Model Filipino Student Subject" haunting has transcended generations and diaspora to continue its impact on Filipino bodies with education.

The use of haunting in my project refers to Avery Gordon's pivotal work *Ghostly Matters* regarding the past as haunting social forces that continue to shape and impact contemporary conditions. Gordon describes her definition of haunting:

> "Haunting is not the same as being exploited, traumatized, or oppressed, although it usually involves these experiences or is produced by them. What's distinctive about haunting is that it is an animated state in which a repressed or unresolved social violence is making itself known, sometimes is very directly, sometimes obliquely. I use the term haunting to describe those singular yet repetitive instances when home becomes unfamiliar,...when what's been in your blind spot comes into view. Haunting raises specters, and it alters the experience of being in time, the way we separate the past, the present, and the future. These specters or

ghosts appear when the trouble they represent and symptomize is no longer being contained or repressed or blocked from view."[8]

This application is not to ignore the systems of oppression Filipinos face or the exploitation inherent in forced migrant labor and trafficking. The use of Gordon's haunting invites us to dig deeper in connection to interconnected and shared trauma and exploitation, identifying the repressed and the unresolved, the nuanced unfamiliarity of home, and the arrival of what has been lurking right behind your eye's purview. In my project's case, the haunting is the legacy of U.S. colonialism, specifically the U.S.-Philippines colonial education project. As Gordon states, a haunting is without its specters and ghosts, signals of violation and tension. The "Model Filipino Student Subjectivity" haunts migrant teachers through its own specter and ghost: the educational systems that train and indoctrinate the Filipino to serve as hyper productive, selfless migrant workers ready to overwork themselves and sacrifice their own wellness and safety to produce labor for the empire under the premise of being a good citizen, a new national hero[9], and support their families in the homeland. For Filipino American college students, this specter comes in the form of overwork and burnout caused by the pressure to perform as a good campus citizen and Filipino community member. The students buy into a constant cycle of imposter syndrome, labor, and burnout, a cycle and product of a "Model Filipino Student Subject" haunting. These connections across the "Model Filipino Student Subject" haunting showcases the constant harm, power structure, and commodification of

[8]Gordon, Avery. Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997. xvi.
[9]Rodriguez, Robyn Magalit. Migrants for Export: How the Philippine State Brokers Labor to the World. University of Minnesota Press, 2010. 75.

Filipino labor for the ongoing U.S. colonial education legacy to this day. These ghosts and specters suspend both migrant teacher and college student outside of time, drawing connections between Filipino colonial education, the OFW conditioning of migrant teachers, and the cycle of burnout that Filipino American students face in predominantly white institutions. Gordon describes these specters and ghosts as demanding attention of the haunted ones, in my case studies what is demanded of the migrant teacher and student is their labor, their mind/mental health, and overall wellness.

My main intervention identifies this "Model Filipino Student Subject" haunting across generations, drawing its roots back to U.S. colonial education in the Philippines to how Filipino bodies are commodified and racialized under a racial capitalist system of education and training both in the Philippines and the U.S. This haunting is exemplified through the use of Filipino labor within the contemporary realms of U.S. education. This intervention is built upon the understanding that U.S. colonial labor systems have catalyzed a continuous multigenerational haunting of the Filipino through transformed iterations of the "Model Filipino Student Subject." For migrant teachers this is perpetuated through the training workshops they received to be docile, obedient hard workers. For college students it's through the narratives forced upon them that depict a model Filipino student on campus is one who overexerts themselves not simply on academics, but by laboring for their community's campus presence through produced programming on and off campus. I arrived at this notion through the field of Critical Filipino Studies which decenters the West and recenters the history of the Philippines and diaspora through a decolonial and anti-imperialist lens, further unpacking how colonial education systems were built and operated in the Philippines to reproduce Filipino colonial subjects. Through Critical University Studies, a field which explores how higher education influences society's

engagement with culture, politics, and labor, I gain an understanding of how U.S. education weaponizes similar power dynamics and logics to force students into their own performance of model student citizenship. These two fields provided me with the language to visualize the connection of the Philippines labor export system and U.S. neoliberal university logics commodifying Filipino bodies, building towards the "Model Filipino Student Subject" haunting. This haunting places two groups usually not in conversation in the same room: Filipino migrant teachers and Filipino-American college students.

Defining the "Model Filipino Student Subject"

Defining & Applying the "Model Filipino Student Subject"

Model Filipino Student Subject Characteristic	Filipino Migrant Teachers	Filipino College Students
Obedient & Subservient	Trained to not raise questions regarding lack of work or payment	Internal student org culture that rewards "put head down and work" mentality as status quo
Hyperproductive "Body of Labor"	Believe one's value is based on their ability to work and teach abroad	Overworking to compensate for imposter syndrome; creating more org programs
Chasing Colonial Citizenship through Assimilation	Work in the U.S. in to obtain a pathway to acceptance and potential citizenship	Work prove one's self to the campus and receive acknowledgement as a campus citizen
Self Sacrifice for Good of Community/State	Sacrificing time with family to support their family back in the homeland	Sacrificing mental health and wellness for their student org and campus involvement

[Table 1.1] The characteristics of the "Model Filipino Student Subject" and an application of each towards both Filipino migrant teachers and Filipino American college students.

Through my archival research and in-depth interviews conducted with both Filipino migrant teachers and Filipino American college students, I have come to a definition of the "Model Filipino Student Subject" that encompasses rooted characteristics from U.S. colonial education in the early 1900's. The "Model Filipino Student Subject" is a concept racially constructed under U.S. colonial education in the Philippines and characterized by the following traits:

1) **Obedient & Subservient**: Demonstrates unquestioning compliance and deference to authority figures. For the Filipino migrant teachers, this is experienced through their overseas foreign worker training sessions and the conditioning workshops that their trafficker Isidro Rodriguez has required of them prior to moving forward with their application to work abroad. The Filipino college students experience this through the campus and student organizational culture embedding an image of the model campus citizen and student as one who follows the status quo of their organization's history and high expectations of producing events and programming.

2) **Hyper Productive Body of Labor**: Moving through the world believing that one's value is anchored to their ability to work and labor for their institution. The migrant teachers, like most Filipino migrant workers, are racialized and gendered as efficient, cheap, and reliable bodies of labor, many teachers believing this as part of their inherent identities.[10] The students experience this through the type of culture embedded within their respective student organizations, an

[10] Guevarra, Anna Romina. 2010. Marketing Dreams, Manufacturing Heroes: The Transnational Labor Brokering of Filipino Workers. Piscataway: Rutgers University Press.

expectation to take on the same level of programming and events from previous years. Anything less would be viewed as a failure.

3) **Chasing Colonial Citizenship through Assimilation**: Strives for acceptance and validation within a framework influenced by colonial ideals, seeking alignment with Western standards. Both teacher and student case studies have shared a tension in how their self-value is tied to their ability to labor in their respective environment. The majority of the migrant teachers identified a pathway to U.S. citizenship and reunification with their families as a core factor in deciding to work abroad. In addition, there is an underlying tension the teachers describe in their desire to be recognized as great educators and accepted by western standards of teaching. Many of the students interviewed overwork themselves and embrace the "hustle culture"[11] of college to overcompensate the fear instilled by imposter syndrome. There is also an inherent drive for students to be acknowledged by their peers, organizations, and campus.

4) **Self-Sacrifice for the Community/State**: Willingly sacrifices personal needs and desires to contribute to the well-being and progress of the broader community and nation. Many Filipino migrant workers embody the spirit of "Bagong Bayani" or new national hero, embracing a sentiment of self-sacrifice in terms of labor and physical time with family in the Philippines to work abroad to send remittances back to the Philippines. This sacrifice proves their heroism not only in supporting their families, but by also representing the Philippines across the diaspora and

[11] Nicolas, Isabelle. "Hustle Culture is Killing Us!" The College VOICE, February 22, 2023. https://www.mcccvoice.org/hustle-culture/.

providing a boost to the Philippine economy.[12] The students, on the other hand, embody a culture of self-sacrifice by romanticizing the need to produce programming through their student-led organizations as a way to represent the Filipino community and ensure their organization's legacies continue in the future. This pressure to uphold their Filipino organization's legacy and livelihood is passed down through generations of student staff/core members, many of whom have sacrificed parts of their academic health, physical health, and even mental health for their respective campus organizations.

These characteristics transformed into applications that have shaped the experiences and trajectory of Filipino migrant teachers and college students across U.S. educational institutions. The chart above demonstrates these characteristics, historical origins, and example applications to both the migrant teachers and college students in my study.

"I feel if I don't do this work, no one will. Back then I didn't mind sacrificing some of my energy, time, and even grades if it meant the org continues." These words from "Jolene" demonstrate the shared experience of sacrificing one's wellness and academics for the greater good of their respective Filipino American college community. This sense of duty and self-sacrifice for the community named in the above quote and many more student interviews, serves as a recurring haunting for Filipinos, educators and students alike, by the hands of U.S. colonial education. This is apparent through the reappearance of the Overseas Filipino Worker (hereafter OFWs) martyrdom narrative --which gets applied to both migrant teachers like Del and to

[12] Rodriguez, Robyn Magalit. Migrants for Export: How the Philippine State Brokers Labor to the World. University of Minnesota Press, 2010. 77.

Filipino undergraduate students like Jolene-- of sacrificing for the greater good of the family, the community, and the country.[13]

Though varying in their lived experiences between educators and students, there is an important connection here regarding the positionality and experiences of Filipinos in the U.S. education system. This experience, grounded in the historical social construction of Filipinos as racialized bodies of labor, points towards patterns of overwork and martyrdom that are raised in both educators' and students' narratives. Critical University Studies scholar Jodi Melamed defines neoliberal multiculturalism in the context of global racial formation as, "…the devaluing of the native culture and bringing in multiple cultures into a community/country....a market ideology turned social philosophy….an ethic of multiculturalism to be the spirit of neoliberalism and, conversely, posits neoliberal restructuring across the globe to be the key to a postracist world of freedom and opportunity."[14] Melamed traces the transformation of white supremacist racism post-World War II into a "formally anti-racist" capitalist society fueled by romanticized ideals of neoliberal multiculturalism.[15] These patterns of overwork and martyrdom are built through the rise of neoliberal multiculturalism that is critiqued and identified by Melamed and within Critical University Studies. My project expands upon Melamed's and others' genealogical tracings of these systems by identifying and contemporizing the long standing impact of U.S.-Philippines colonial education on Filipinos within this neoliberal multiculturalist education realm. These genealogies of colonial education are seen through the training and conditioning

[13] Rodriguez, Robyn Magalit. Migrants for Export: How the Philippine State Brokers Labor to the World. NED - New edition ed., University of Minnesota Press, 2010.
[14] Melamed, J. (2011). INTRODUCTION: Producing Discourses of Certainty with Official Antiracisms. In Represent and Destroy: Rationalizing Violence in the New Racial Capitalism (pp. 1-50). University of Minnesota Press. Retrieved June 14, 2021 (41-42)
[15] Ibid, 48.

migrant workers, including my case study of migrant teachers, face before they are authorized to work abroad. This is a system embedded with the Philippines' labor export system that guarantees overseas Filipino workers are indoctrinated with characteristics related to the "Model Filipino Student Subject": obedient, submissive, committed to their labor, and willing to sacrifice for the betterment of their country, and therefore their families.[16]

Just as the trafficked teachers felt taken advantage of for their labor, Filipino students have raised concerns over their amount of labor within and for the university in recruiting, maintaining, and supporting their community on campus. This is where my work's additional intervention lies in documenting the transformation of emotions that both Filipino migrant teachers and college students experience through their "Model Filipino Student Subject" haunting, as well as their response and resistance to said haunting. While the migrant teachers' trafficking cases result from a combination of an exploited migrant labor export system and mass labor recruitment fraud, it is also important to identify the feelings the teachers share through this journey. This includes their motivations to apply, their training and conditioning experiences, and their eventual arrival to the United States without their promised teaching positions. I examine how the Filipino American college students are integrated into their campus' neoliberal multicultural logics, forced into a cycle of labor, fatigue, and burnout. Most of the students place this labor into ethnic centric student organizations that aim to uplift their culture, their community's recruitment and retention, and create a sense of belonging through expressing their Filipino identities. Ironically, this leads to a cycle of overwork and burn out that allows their respective campuses to reap the rewards of the students' labor and image, continuing the neoliberal multicultural performance of a diverse college campus. Their campus continues to

[16] Meerman, Marije, and First Run/Icarus Films. 2001. Chain of Love. Brooklyn, N.Y.: First Run/Icarus Films.

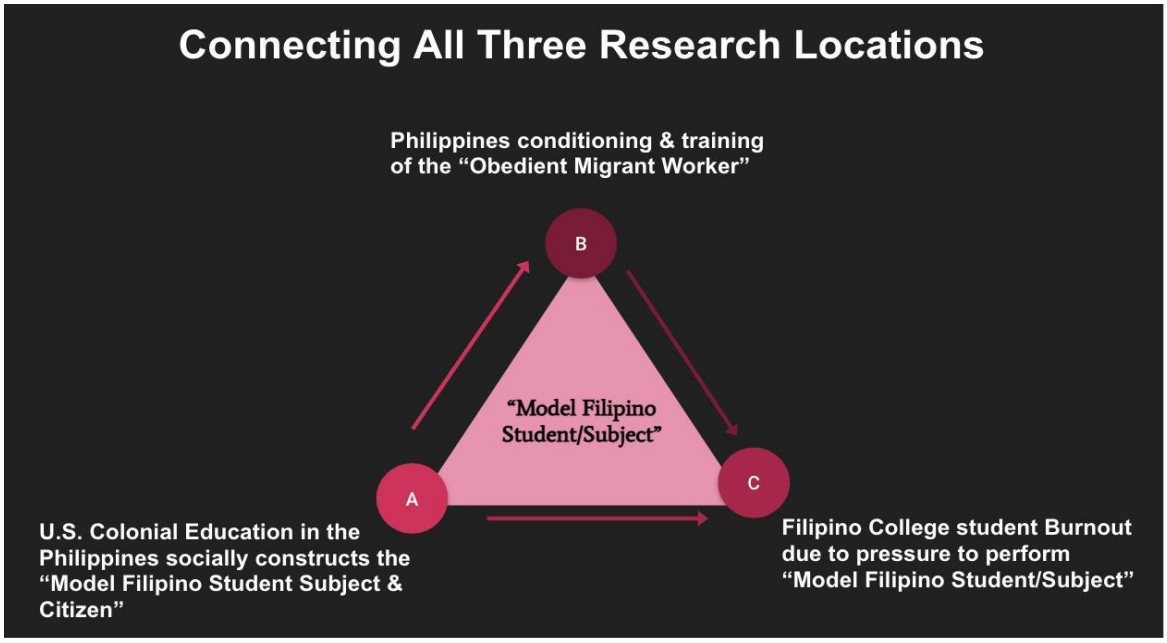
exploit the college students' labor as the cycle of recruitment and burnout continues. I look into the patterns and themes of emotions the teachers and students navigate as they come face to face with their "Model Filipino Student Subject" haunting and respond in their respective avenues of healing and resistance.

Through this project, I explore these themes of fatigue, overwork, and self-sacrifice for Filipinos within the American education systems that are a product of the "Model Filipino Student Subject" haunting. These patterns are indicative of the history of Filipino bodies commodified, trained, and educated to serve as OFWs, as bodies of labor under the U.S. Empire. This is a space examined by many scholars including Rick Bonus, Tracy Buenavista, Dina Maramba, and Xavier Hernandez amongst others. Bonus and Maramba articulate the unique complexities that Filipino American student experiences encompass due to "colonial pasts and presents" in tension with a myriad of factors from the model minority myth to Filipino diaspora and migration patterns.[17] I situate my work within these complexities Maramba and Bonus have described, particularly the way in which the model minority comes in tension with the colonial hauntings of Filipino college students. Buenavista's work has contributed heavily to this field and nexus by identifying the ways Filipino college student marginalization has been invisibilized, highlighting student experiences such as mental health struggles, campus "push out rates," and overall poor retention levels.[18] Hernandez explores the ways Filipino students have navigated universities, particularly their systems of oppression, racialization, privilege, and

[17] Maramba, Dina C., and Rick Bonus, eds. The "Other" Students: Filipino Americans, Education, and Power. Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing, 2013.
[18] Buenavista, Tracy Lachica. "Issues Affecting U.S. Filipino Student Access to Postsecondary Education: A Critical Race Theory Perspective." Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk (JESPAR) 15, no. 1-2 (2010): 114-126.

power that are masked through neoliberal rhetoric of surface level diversity and inclusion.[19] I further these conversations through identifying the further standing haunting and impact of U.S. Colonial Education in the Philippines, critiquing this legacy of a "Model Filipino Student Subject" in colonial Philippines and its impact on Filipino student and educator wellness. I examine these patterns by centering the nexus of Critical University Studies and Critical Filipino Studies, which I will discuss more at the end of this chapter as my project's theoretical intervention and contribution.

Methodology



[Figure 1.1] A visual representation of my research locations regarding the "Model Filipino Student/Subject's": Its roots within U.S. colonial education in the Philippines, Its application to Filipino Migrant Labor through my migrant teacher case study, and its shaping of Filipino college students' experiences with burn out and labor for the university.

[19] Hernandez, Xavier J. "Filipino American College Students at the Margins of Neoliberalism." Policy Futures in Education 14, no. 3 (2016): 327-344. https://doi.org/10.1177/1478210316631870.

Centering on Joseph Maxwell's explanation of triangulation and the importance of executing multiple methods to obtain a variety of data, I have chosen three methodological branches to support my project.[20] Maxwell's focus on a systemic rather than linear approach to qualitative research inspired my approach to engage three unique core places of research. One method focuses on the analysis of primary resources and archives pertaining to the University of California's historic use of education as a tool for colonialism in the Philippines. This initial historical approach provides my research with a grounding base of knowledge regarding how Filipinos were perceived, racialized, and educated in the early 1900's colonial Philippines. The second centers ethnographic qualitative one on one interviews with Filipino teachers and survivors of labor trafficking. These individual interviews provided a safe and secure space for survivors to speak their truth and share their respective experiences. The last methodological approach is a culturally relevant type of informal group talk story interview, known as kuwentuhan, where the community members, both the Filipino college students and migrant teachers, involved dictate the flow and direction of the discussion.[21] I conduct my kuwentuhan process through guided question prompts carried out through an informal talk story process. Coined by scholar activist Valerie Francisco-Menchavez, kuwentuhan group talk story centers relationship building in a way that expands across all "linear and divergent and rambling and rational ways possible."[22] Francisco-Menchavez often likens kuwentuhan to a Filipino kitchen dining table experience, where rivers of storytelling and gossip flow across the table, across generations. Kuwentuhan serves as a key method in my work as it provides me with an

[20] Maxwell, Joseph A. Qualitative Research Design: An Interactive Approach. 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2005.
[21] Francisco-Menchavez, Valerie. "Kuwentuhan as a Method." Last modified September 10, 2021. https://valeriefm.com/2021/09/10/kuwentuhan-as-a-method/.
[22] Ibid.

opportunity to observe how migrant teachers and college students in my study interact and respond to one another's offerings. Slight looks and affirming finger snaps and zoom emoji responses have provided so much insight into what statements resonate and which experiences are shared amongst the community. Each of these methodological approaches shape and interact with one another, shaping the narratives and analysis throughout this project. I also engage in participatory action research[23] through my time as both a community organizer among the Filipino migrant teachers and as an educator/organizer through the Bulosan Center for Filipino Studies at UC Davis, a space in which I collaborated and built community with Filipino college students across California's four year institutions of public higher education.

My research centers on in-depth interviews with 50 trafficking survivors between 2013 and 2020 and over 55 Filipino college students and alumni between 2013 and 2023. In my research, I employ community engaged research and participatory action research as it centers on empowering participants to actively engage in the research process, fostering a collaborative environment where their experiences and insights are integral to the study.[24] Community-engaged research is a research method that prioritizes collaboration, fostering trusted relationships, and continued partnerships with the communities impacted by the research, honoring them as equal partners throughout the research process.[25] This approach is particularly suited for addressing complex social issues, such as the extraction of labor and burn out, as it values my participants' lived experiences and promotes collective process for problem-solving

[23] Cornish, F., Breton, N., Moreno-Tabarez, U. et al. Participatory action research. Nat Rev Methods Primers 3, 34 (2023). https://doi.org/10.1038/s43586-023-00214-1
[24] Ibid.
[25] The American Cultures Center at UC Berkeley. "The American Cultures Engaged Scholarship (ACES) Program." YouTube video, 6:41. Posted July 22, 2016. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w600AWeoA5o.

and storytelling. I conducted ethnographic qualitative research through "talk story/kuwentuhan" group interviews, a method that is ingrained within Filipino cultural practices of storytelling through personal narratives situated within a more informal communal setting.[26] This kuwentuhan talk story method not only facilitated a deeper understanding of their experiences, but also built trust and rapport among participants and myself.

The research participants were recruited through my participation as a community organizer and educator in various community organizations, social networks, and educational institutions, ensuring a diverse and representative sample. I spent over five years organizing alongside the GABRIELA D.C. migrant teachers I interviewed, beginning in 2013. Many of the Filipino college students I interviewed were recruited through various student organization networks linked to my work at the Bulosan Center for Filipino Studies at UC Davis. The participatory and community centered nature of this research allows for a dynamic and reflexive process, where findings are continuously co-constructed with participants, ultimately aiming to generate practical solutions and empower the communities involved.

I interviewed 51 Filipino migrant teachers starting in 2013, all of which identified as female and ranged between the ages 25-75. These statistics reflect the gendered field of education and teaching in the Philippines, particularly in its inherent sense of care work. All of the interviewed teachers are of course college educated, some with teaching backgrounds ranging from 5 years to more than 40 years of experience. The teachers originate from various parts of the Philippines, from main cities like Manila to the farmland provinces, though they all

[26] Francisco-Menchavez, Valerie. "Centering Stories of Filipino Caregivers: Kuwentuhan as Method and Praxis for Migrants Collective Power." Imagining America. Accessed June 14, 2024. https://imaginingamerica.org/what-we-do/storytelling/stories-of-change/centering-stories-of-filipino-caregivers-kuwentuhan-as-method-and-praxis-for-migrants-collective-power/.

needed to have a pathway to travel to Manila to attend Isidro Rodriguez' recruitment agency training workshops. The teachers' socioeconomic class status also ranged from low income to upper income and college educated.

I interviewed 55 Filipino college students attending University of California and California State University 4-year institutions. I conducted Filipino college student interviews between 2012 through 2023. 60% of the students interviewed identified themselves as women, 25% identified as men, and 15% identified as nonbinary and/or genderfluid. The students' socioeconomic status ranged between low income and first-generation college students to upper-middle class 2nd or 3rd generation college students. About 95% of the students confirmed holding at least one paid job outside of their student organization responsibilities. The students come from various cities, with 90% of them from California cities. All the interviewees were involved in at least one Filipino student organization, with 60% of the interviewees confirming they are involved in multiple student organizations on campus.

The History & Community in the Research: Whose Stories are (Not) Being Told

My work, especially my historically centered chapter two, also draws on archival research and analysis of first-hand accounts from the early 1900's establishment of a U.S. westernized education system in the Philippines. For instance, I examine letters and documents written by David Barrows, then anthropologist, University of California President, and serving as general superintendent of schools in the Philippine Islands from 1903 to 1910. I also engage written testimonies from the first American teachers, known as Thomasites, to venture to the Philippines to teach. Through these documents of the time, I trace a genealogy of the "Model Filipino Student/Subject", a racialization framework that commodifies Filipinos as bodies of

labor within the realm of western education and empire. David Barrows' writings and opinions of the Filipino serve as a core grounding of this racialization framework I describe. Barrows has been identified as one of the pivotal leaders in the U.S.-Philippines colonial project while holding highly racist views of Filipinos, Black folks, and indigenous communities and upholding white supremacist beliefs. Barrows serves a central figure not only in his racialization of the Filipino, but also through the system of Westernized colonial and white supremacist education that was established in the Philippines. His legacy within Filipino racialization haunts our communities as of recently, with his name just being struck out of the very building that houses Ethnic Studies and Asian American Studies at UC Berkeley.[27]

My study engages the intentions of the U.S.-Philippines colonial project to serve U.S. needs for "cheap, obedient labor" under the pretense of "benevolent assimilation", a term coined from U.S. President McKinley's proclamation regarding the Philippines "...to win the confidence, respect, and affection of the inhabitants of the Philippines by assuring them in every possible way that full measure of individual rights and liberties,...proving to them that the mission of the United States is one of benevolent assimilation substituting the mild sway of justice and right for arbitrary rule."[28] The concept of "benevolent assimilation", this promise of humanization and equal rights for the Filipino who upholds Westernized ideals, is central to my work as it engages what I later describe as a constant chase for a type of western affirmation, citizenry, and belonging. This is showcased by both the lengths Filipino migrant teachers take to obtain U.S. teaching positions and contemporary Filipino students struggling to produce cultural

[27] Elassar, Alaa. "UC Berkeley Removes Names of Racist Figures from Two of Its Buildings." CNN, November 19, 2020. https://www.cnn.com/2020/11/19/us/uc-berkeley-buildings-remove-racist-names-trnd/index.html.
[28] McFerson, Hazel M. Mixed Blessing: the Impact of the American Colonial Experience on Politics and Society in the Philippines. University of the Philippines Press, 2011.

and academic programming in efforts to remain visible and acknowledged by the University. The Filipino migrant export system and the U.S. university are both institutions many attribute to U.S. colonialism. The student and the teacher are both promised full autonomy and affirmed existence in the context of U.S. education if they follow the guidelines and rules provided by the power structure involved. Furthermore, my project connects across how Filipino students in college campuses and Filipino trafficked teachers engage labor under the U.S. education system as part of their identity, as part of a struggle with the long history of U.S. colonial education in the Philippines. In doing so, I argue that this legacy continues to haunt both Filipino teachers and students, but both groups also take action to resist and heal from this legacy of colonialism.

Through this project I connect this socialization of the Filipino worker as the product of the history of colonial "Benevolent Assimilation" to the plights of contemporary migrant Filipino teachers and trafficking survivors face within U.S. school districts. I connect the type of communal guilt and martyrdom defined under Barrows' Superintendent of the Philippines' education system regime at the turn of the 20th century with the stories of current Filipino college students as well as our case of migrant teachers and their training and conditioning practice. Many of these current students were mobilized to sacrifice their mental and emotional health in order for them to put on campus events, believing that, in the words of one anonymous student, their "…sacrifice is for the betterment and sustainability of our Filipino American community on campus." This genealogy of the Filipino body of labor in U.S. education holds so many complex layers across time and place, between generations and nations. This project aims to describe this ever-transforming narrative of the Filipino body in U.S. education, this "Model Filipino Student/Subject," by drawing on the history of U.S. education within the Philippines.

To situate my overall project, I look at the two connected groups impacted by this colonial education haunting. The main problem at the university level being how Filipino student organizations' labor is commodified by campuses, leading to over programming and legacy fatigue[29] within the university system. On the migrant teacher end, I trace how established westernized education in the Philippines prioritized the production of malleable labor overseas.[30] An example of this can be seen in migrant teacher recruitment efforts at prominent teacher education programs such as Philippines Normal University, leading to the conditions in which migrant teachers racialized as cheap and quick solutions to teacher shortages at U.S. urban schooling districts and furthermore the consequential exploitation of trafficked migrant teachers.

This research draws on my personal experiences and reflections as a first-generation college student at UC Berkeley born to Filipino migrant workers with a history of family in the education field. I first noticed this phenomenon from my own experience being part of a Filipino student organization on my campus, running into the pressures of having to prove oneself as a member of the organization and campus by producing as many events and programming as possible while buying into a culture of martyrdom. Buying into this process leads th detriment of students' physical, mental, academic, and emotional health. Through meeting and speaking with Filipino students across different campuses, I was surprised to see the shared experiences of student organizational labor, over programming, and imposter syndrome come up through early interviews. I specifically identified this trend within Filipino college student spaces. These

[29] Legacy Fatigue refers to a concept in understanding the pressures of Filipino student organization leaders to produce a certain quantity and quality of events and programming equivalent to their predecessors who last held those positions. We frame this in a way that looks at student leadership performance as tied to capitalist perspectives on what "productivity and success" look like, defined by the neoliberal university that subjects and extracts this student labor.

[30] Rodriguez, Migrants for Export.

campuses distinctly have large Filipino student populations and hold multiple Filipino community organizations.

Adding to a growing intersectional field of Critical Filipino Studies and Critical University Studies, I further examine this phenomenon of college Filipino student organization experiences and labor. Through the student data collected, I have been able to identify new cycles and patterns Filipino students face within higher education, particularly in how they view themselves as campus citizens and their labor as inherent value. I believe there is more work to be done on the conditions and experiences of migrant Filipino teachers from their initial recruitment and hiring to their challenges of community formation and belonging in the U.S. education system. Furthermore, I hope to provide a novel intervention through the intersection of these fields and produce a deeper understanding of the American educational system and Filipino experiences within this system through a transnational lens. There is an opportunity to interrogate the ways university Filipino student organizations recruit, retain, and perform emotional labor towards upholding the university's neoliberal vision of diversity and inclusion, an assumed labor placed on these to students as a process of upholding a university's performative neoliberal multiculturalism. A performance of diversity and inclusion that remains surface level and refrains from any real and deep interventions to support true long-lasting change to support historically marginalized communities. This in itself can be historicized against the history of colonialism through education within the Philippines, particularly the commodification and social construction of Filipinos as bodies of reproductive labor. Through a racial capitalist analytical lens grounded in how "racialized exploitation and capital accumulation

are mutually constitutive,"[31] I view how both Filipino students and migrant teachers share a haunting by the U.S.-Philippines colonial education. This project examines how this haunting continues to extract and commodify their labor towards the maintenance of the neoliberal university, across space, time, and generation.

Through initial early interviews with both Filipino identified undergraduate students and migrant teachers, my early findings draw direct connections between the history of U.S. imperialist education in the Philippines, continued policies of migrant labor export training in the Philippines, and the current culture of burn out[32], over work, and martyrdom found in Filipinos within education. I look towards three interventions and events to research this culture and trace its genealogy: 1) I trace connections between the initial implementation of U.S. western education system in the Philippines post Philippines-American War and the culture exhibited in Filipino students and educators in the U.S. 2) Examine a group of labor trafficked Filipino teachers in the United States and document their experiences under the Philippines' Labor Export Policy training programs. 3) Identify the rising shared dilemma of imposter syndrome, commodified labor, over programming, and student martyrdom within the Filipino American communities in the University of California system, drawing connections along these trends between both the Filipino trafficked teachers and students as an effect of this named colonial education haunting.

My work develops a deeper understanding of the American education system, the experiences of Filipino bodies as bodies of labor within these spaces and engages these findings

[31] Laster Pirtle, Whitney N. "Racial Capitalism: A Fundamental Cause of Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic Inequities in the United States." Health Education & Behavior 47, no. 4 (2020): 504-508. https://doi.org/10.1177/1090198120922942.

[32] As described in the forthcoming dissertation on Filipinos undergraduate students and burn out by UCLA Education PhD candidate Reuben Deleon

through a transnational and racial capitalist lens. Grounding my theoretical analysis in Critical Filipino Studies and Critical University Studies, I engage the legacy of colonial education in the Philippines through a process that interrogates systems currently in place and how our bodies continue to be exploited as bodies of labor for the U.S. education system. There is growing discourse within the field of Racial Capitalism that directly analyzes modes of Philippines migrant labor and immigration, including a framework developed by Michael Viola around the ways a Filipino Critical Pedagogy can help us understand our past and current conditions and struggles as Filipinos.[33] This discourse provides the language for my work to better understand how the neoliberal university perceives the Filipino student as a body of labor, how countries across the globe commodify Filipinos immigrants, including our project's teachers, as valuable bodies of labor. The Philippines colonial history and resistance Viola uplifts in his work inspires my grounding in U.S. Philippines colonial history as a base of where the "Model Filipino Student Subject" is born and transforms into the current state that impacts Filipino migrant teachers and Filipino American students alike. I add to this discourse and fill in gaps within this scholarship and the intersection of Critical University Studies and Critical Filipino Studies through this dissertation.

My project's decolonial and anti-imperialist lens is grounded in the rising field of Critical Filipino Studies and its respective scholars. In the early 2000's, a clear distinction was made between Philippine Studies and Critical Filipino Studies, taking on an unapologetic commitment to scholar activism grounded in community centered collaboration, anti-imperialist thought, and

[33] Viola, Michael. "Toward a Filipino Critical Pedagogy: Exposure Programs to the Philippines and the Politicization of Melissa Roxas." Journal of Asian American Studies 17, no. 1 (2014): 1-30. https://doi.org/10.1353/jaas.2014.0004.

decolonial methodologies. Many Filipino scholars have continued to declare a necessary shifting of Philippine Studies away from a western and U.S. centric lens and have posited Critical Filipino Studies as an approach critical of the empirical gaze and forced diaspora.[34] Critical Filipino Studies serves as a space to critique how early Filipino Studies movements have centered on the Filipino-American experience and how Filipinos are positioned within the context of imperialism, labor, and diaspora to the West. Robyn Rodriguez' piece "Toward a Critical Filipino Studies Approach" provides a clear argument regarding this major academic and political shift, lending to claims of the Filipino identity not being born out of Spanish or American colonialism, nor being grounded in the experiences of migrant labor alone.[35] This field offers me a deeper understanding about the reproduction of migrant labor in the Philippines and the overseas Filipino worker diasporic culture. This major shift serves as a tool to critique the "Model Filipino Student Subject," as well as providing a landscape for further exploration of collective liberation and healing for both Filipino migrant teachers and college students involved in this project. The field of Critical Filipino Studies also provides a grounding in anti-imperialist and decolonial knowledge making that inspired me to dig into the history of U.S. colonial education in the Philippines to establish its roots and connections to the plight of both Filipino migrant teachers and Filipino-American students today.

A premiere example of Critical Filipino Studies' critique of U.S. centrism, Faye Caronan's work demonstrates how U.S. colonialism's ushering of hegemonic western culture

[34] Critical Filipino Studies Scholars and Collective members who have shaped my grounding in the field include, but are not limited to, Robyn Rodriguez, Valerie Francisco, Michael Viola, and Joy Sales amongst others.
[35] Rodriguez, Robyn Magalit. "2. Toward a Critical Filipino Studies Approach to Philippine Migration" In Filipino Studies: Palimpsests of Nation and Diaspora edited by Martin F. Manalansan and Augusto Espiritu, 33-55. New York, USA: New York University Press, 2016. https://doi.org/10.18574/nyu/9781479829415.003.0006

enacts a dual incorporation and silencing of colonial subjects, both in regards of Filipinos and Puerto Ricans. "U.S. hegemonic culture," Caronan says, "maintains the narrative of U.S. exceptionalism by incorporating Filipino American and U.S. Puerto Rican cultures while marginalizing their critiques that underscore the contradictions between the rhetoric of U.S. exceptionalism and the practices of U.S. imperialism"[36] This described system of both subject making and silencing is ultimately carried out in the U.S. colonial education system through the cultivation of the "Model Filipino Student Subject." Caronan's work provides a deeper understanding of how the U.S. colonial education system both controls Filipinos through western ideology while also shaping the ways Filipinos view themselves as needing the support and guidance of the United States empire. Furthermore, the United States, under the premise of a selfless paternalistic guide of benevolent assimilation, wipes itself clean of any critique through the narrative of the Filipino as a "Brown Little Brother" in need of civilizing and education.[37] All of these threads Caronan offers build up the "Model Filipino Student Subject" logic and provide the language needed to understand how these patterns matriculate across Filipino generations and diverse positionalities.

Connected to the realm of Critical Filipinos Studies, I also ground my work in the contemporary study of Filipino migrant labor led by scholars such as Robyn Rodriguez (Migrant Labor for Export), Anna Romina Guevarra (Marketing Dreams, Manufacturing Heroes), and Rhacel Parrenas (Servants of Globalization). Filipino Migrant Labor Studies explores the institutions, policies, and history that has led to the Filipino Identity being entrenched with the

[36] Caronan, Faye. Legitimizing Empire : Filipino American and U.S. Puerto Rican Cultural Critique / Faye Caronan. Urbana, [Illinois] ; University of Illinois Press, 2015. 20.
[37] Ibid, 21.

migrant labor experience. Parrenas explores the concept of "…migration as a process of subject formation" in reference to how Filipino migrant workers are racialized, socialized, and recognized by the Philippines State and by the rest of the world.[38] Guevarra describes a transnationally coordinated and organized system of networks that enables the production of Filipino migrant workers. Guevarra "…identifies the state, employment agencies, workers, and the partnerships between these groups as players in the production of a racialized and gendered labor-brokering process she calls a cultural logic – one that represents the Filipino as the ideal global worker and overseas employment as an ideal opportunity for Filipinos."[39] Robyn Rodriguez provides a definition and critique of the Philippines' forced migrant labor export system, codifying the Philippines' shaping of overseas Filipino workers as a process dependent on the needs of the international market.[40] As the scholars above mention this dynamic "culture" of Filipinos internalizing one's identity to one's labor and work, I draw connections across space and generations to how Filipino students and educators take on similar internal understandings of productivity, progress, and self as bodies of labor within the U.S. education system.

A Filipino Migrant Labor Studies field through a Critical Filipino Studies lens sets the basis for my study on Filipino migrant teachers and the Filipino students who populate U.S. universities. There is a need to explore the recent cases of Filipino trafficked teachers and how their narratives fit within the grander scheme of the Philippines' migrant labor export system. Furthermore, this project connects the current experiences of Filipino Students in higher

[38] Parreñas, Rhacel Salazar. Servants of Globalization: Women, Migration and Domestic Work. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001. 33.
[39] Guevarra, Anna Romina. Marketing Dreams, Manufacturing Heroes: The Transnational Labor Brokering of Filipino Workers. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2010. 4.
[40] Rodriguez, R. (2011). Migrants for Export: How the Philippine State Brokers Labor to the World. University of Minnesota Press.

education with the complex history of U.S. educational imperialism in the Philippines and how it shaped the social construction of today's Overseas Filipino Worker. The Filipino migration scholarship and Critical Filipino scholars mentioned above provide an analysis of how migration systems produce a racialized Filipino entity. This provides a key understanding of how Filipino migrant teachers and even U.S. born Filipino college students can face similar challenges that stem from the colonial root of the "Model Filipino Student Subject." These two groups are racialized under very different circumstances and environments, but the history of U.S. colonial education connects them through the ways they both engage patterns of obedience, overwork, and seeking of recognition by the colonial state.

A fairly new field, Critical University Studies (CUS) interrogates how higher education shapes contemporary society's relationship to culture, politics, and labor. The field primarily traces higher education's trajectory towards a "neoliberal university", unpacking themes of student and educator labor, student debt, and the capitalist driven co-opting of diversity and inclusion work. Critical University Studies is defined as "...an interdisciplinary body of scholarship that interrogates structures of higher education and their entanglements with national and global institutions and political movements."[41] This understanding of the University as a corporation and business offers an improved understanding of how student bodies have been commodified in various ways, not only as cash flow through tuition, but also as potential bodies of labor for their respective campus. The field of Critical Filipino Studies similarly aims "...to interrogate and challenge histories of Western imperialisms (Spanish and U.S. imperialisms), ongoing neocolonial relations in the Philippines, and their relationship to past and present

[41] Singh, Vineeta, and Neha Vora. "Critical University Studies." Annual Review of Anthropology 52 (October 2023): 39-54. Accessed June 14, 2024. https://ssrn.com/abstract=4626626.

Filipina/o migrations through our research and teaching both within the university and beyond it."[42] My work adds to this nexus between Critical Filipino Studies and Critical University Studies, providing further data and analysis to understand the dynamics of Filipino labor within the U.S. institutions of education that perpetuate this "Model Filipino Student/Subject" racialization process. This project serves as critique of the contemporary U.S. university, in its complicit role in the colonization of the Philippines, the racialization of Filipinos, and the continued commodification of Filipino bodies in U.S. education.

My project adds to this nexus of Critical University Studies and Critical Filipino Studies. There is a need to shed light on how today's Filipino persons experience U.S. education within the context of labor, racialization, and subjectivity. Both Dina Maramba and Rick Bonus have provided initial conversations around the obstacles Filipino students face within the U.S. classroom, specifically opening the general conversation to how Filipinos deal with imposter syndrome, retention rates, and community formation.[43] I would like to further this conversation by interrogating how the neoliberal U.S. education system continues to racialize and subject Filipino bodies, whether student or educator, as bodies of labor. This occurs, of course, through the historical tracing of the "Model Filipino Student Subject." There have been numerous great scholars who examine this connection between Critical University Studies and Filipino Studies, but I add a new avenue in identifying connections between the experiences of Filipino migrant workers and Filipino-American college students. Both groups showcase unique, yet similar

[42] Critical Filipina and Filipino Studies Collective. Center for Art and Thought. Accessed June 14, 2024. https://www.centerforartandthought.org/work/contributor/critical-filipina-and-filipino-studies-collective/#:~:text=As%20an%20activist%2Dscholar%20group,their%20relationship%20to%20past%20and.

[43] Maramba, Dina, and Rick Bonus, eds. The "Other" Students: Filipino Americans, Education, and Power. Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing, 2012. 34. ISBN 978-1-62396-075-9.

patterns of overwork and burnout, sharing the genealogy and context rooted in U.S.-Philippines colonial education history.

I challenge and push Critical University Studies to think about and through histories and cycles of colonialism within US schooling/universities, particularly within the context of the Philippines and Filipino racialization. My research historicizes these cases within the context of U.S. imperialist education in the Philippines. Particularly, I look at the legacy of U.S. colonial education in shaping and racializing early Filipino students into the labor fields the U.S. empire needed (Naval ship hands, nurses during World War II, domestic workers, educators). This gap is important to examine as Filipinos have risen as the fastest growing Asian immigrant group within California and one of the largest populations within the U.S. These numbers lead to the trend of higher populations of Filipino students entering U.S. Universities and its counterpart in growing cases of Filipino educators migrating to work in U.S. school districts. These phenomena do not only fulfill a lesser-known chapter within the Filipino migrant labor narrative but offers important knowledge in how the notorious legacy of U.S. educational imperialism continues to shape and racialize Filipinos within the halls of U.S. academe.

Chapter Breakdown:

This legacy of colonial education haunts the current conditions of Filipinos within U.S. education, whether it be within the halls of public schools as migrant teachers or on university campuses as overworked Filipino students. I engage this history of the U.S. Colonial education in the Philippines as haunting the Filipino body through the following: 1) The Philippines education system post "Westernization" creating the "Model Filipino Student/Subject," a racial logic that indoctrinates an idea of the Filipino as a reliable, malleable, obedient, and western

body of labor under U.S. empire and education, 2) The connections between U.S. schooling and recent cases of trafficked Filipino migrant teachers as a consequence of this racial capitalist haunting, and 3) How this legacy of colonial education impacts the current conditions of Filipino undergraduate students and organizations as racialized bodies of labor within the same institution that helped establish western education in the Philippines: The University of California. In addition to the last objective, I engage how neoliberal multiculturalism impacts the experiences of Filipino students and teachers alike within this "Model Filipino Student/Subject" colonial racialization project. My findings establish connections between the way the "Model Filipino Student/Subject" framework is rooted in U.S. colonial education in the 1900's Philippines and further mutates and transforms to how the Filipino migrant teacher and the Filipino college student experience has been shaped by this racialization.

In chapter two, I identify how the "Filipino Model Student Subject" is formed through the history of the U.S. colonial labor system within the Philippines through the establishment of early Westernized education systems in the islands through the early 1900's. Framing my research through the works of Robyn Rodriguez, Renato Constantino, Rick Bonus, while dissecting the papers of Superintendent to the Philippines Islands schooling David Barrows, this chapter's goal is to draw connections between this history of education, racialized labor of the Filipino, and the current flows and conditions of Filipino within the context of the United States education system. This chapter aims to set forth my project in historicizing the Filipino as a body of labor, a student of labor (Post Philippines-American War, Western Education system, look into Barrows Papers,) in both the time periods and locations of early 1900's Westernized Philippines education and Filipinos within the UC system in the past decade plus. This history of U.S. colonial education in the Philippines, similar to Clyde Woods' work on the plantation bloc

and blue's bloc, reiterates and transforms itself throughout different spaces, racializing and commodifying Filipino bodies as bodies of labor in unique ways, serving as a type of colonial haunting that impacts Filipino trafficked teachers and undergraduate UC students in connected yet different manners. As Barrow's westernized education system in the Philippines transformed and racialized Filipinos in the early 1900's around identity and labor, the UC system as a neoliberal university extracts student organizational and community labor for their own empire building. Similarly, the cases of trafficked teachers are traced to the system of forced migration that has been built upon this same history of U.S. Colonial Education in the Philippines. I take time in this chapter to review and engage both Renato Constantino's The Miseducation of the Filipino and its inspiration in The Miseducation of the Negro. I further draw connections on how this history of colonial education has been built on schooling as a system of racializing and assimilation Black and Indigenous communities to the U.S. empire state, especially within the means of commodifying these communities as malleable bodies of labor. The same happens here in the 1900's U.S.-Philippines context. This chapter draws from historic texts, some interviews from current UC Filipino students and aims to further illustrate the historic relationship between the UC system in the Philippines, the Philippines in the UC (examining rising trends for Filipino American students and their campus organizations. Tracing genealogy from UC/David Barrows in Philippines, how Filipino were racialized and socialized under "Benevolent Assimilation", implementation of westernized education system in Philippines, and the birth of Labor Export system and this culture of overwork, self-sacrifice/martyrdom for the nation and family (Bagong Bayani/New Heroes). This issue/culture continues to seep into continuing flows of Filipino migrant workers and also across generations with Filipino students at the University level.

Chapter three focuses on how the "Model Filipino Student Subject" has manifested in the training and experiences of Filipino migrant teachers, their own trafficking case as a consequence of this colonial haunting. This chapter adds to the discourse of Filipino Labor Export Policies that have been established by Rodriguez, Guevarra, Parrenas, and many others, taking a look at the transformation of the Philippines education system as an exporter of malleable migrant labor in Education and drawing these connections across generations and location to view how the children of OFWs may take on similar sentiments and values of overwork and martyrdom within school and student organizations as signals of productivity. In this chapter I plan to take a deeper look into the development of the Philippine Normal University History as the Philippines' premier Educator College, one that is deemed progressive and contemporary due to its entrenched in westernized modes of education, learning, and teaching praxis (from teacher interview). Within this chapter I introduce cases of Trafficked Teachers I interviewed and connect their experiences to the culture of martyrdom and overwork also seen in Filipino students. I examine these trafficked teacher cases under a racial capitalist analytical lens, understanding the external and internal machinations of identity, labor, and work in terms of one's value and worth. What connections are drawn here across the two populations: Filipino college students and Filipino trafficked teachers? How have both been impacted by this legacy of Forced Migration Rodriguez, Guevarra et al describe? How do we see this Western romanticized ideal of citizenry/inclusion produce toxic cycles of overwork and labor for both interview populations?

In my fourth chapter I identify how the "Model Filipino Student Subject" manifests in contemporary Filipino-American college students through one on one interviews and group talk story kuwentuhan sessions, adding to Reuben Deleon's work on the patterns of Filipino

undergraduate student burn out and over programming, I examine how student pressure to perform a certain type of unstated "citizenry" within the "Pil-Community" mimics the legacy of U.S. colonial education in the Philippines that set similar systems in place to reward Filipino migrant workers, whether it be through pathways to U.S. citizenship or the promise of economic stability, whose labor were commodified under U.S. empire building. I look at pressures and definitions of what it means to be a "good community member", construed through the amount of community labor, presence, and self-sacrifice one makes for the "greater Fil-Am community." In this chapter I introduce the I.L.B. Cycle (Imposter Syndrome - Labor - Burn Out). I outline the cycle of how imposter syndrome feeds into a sense of labor and legacy fatigue, which is a pressure for students to not only get overly involved in student organizations, but to do so in a manner that competes with the amount of labor done by their predecessor. This overcompensation through labor for their respective campus organizations thus leads to overwork and over programming in order for students to prove themselves to the respective organization, community, and the university. Through the student interviews and organizational assessments, how do Filipino college students view their labor for their organizations and community as signifiers of one's success and ability to perform within the neoliberal university? How does this create its own construct of neoliberal citizenry built on the flow of Philippines Forced Migration, the chasing of "citizenship", and systems of racial capitalism?

In the concluding chapter five I look deeper into both the teachers and students' interviews, particularly around how both groups responded to their respective obstacles and pressure. How did the teachers engage their initial trafficking situation and how did they build communities of resistance and healing with one another? I examine GABRIELA D.C. and USA chapters, Migrante International Chapters in their inclusion of the Justice for Trafficked Teachers

Campaign/Teach Them a Lesson Anti-Labor Trafficking Campaigns, led by many of the trafficked teachers turned organizers themselves. I turn to the Filipino Student Organizations in their reflective kuwentuhans and individual interviews speaking about how there has been a shift in what "productivity" looks like within their organizations after years of student leader early turn over, staff position applications dropping, and harm to mental health and wellness. Many of the student organizations have turned to collaboration, a shift away from quantity and more quality of programming, and a centering of individual and collective wellness and capacities. I look at multiple case studies of Filipino student and scholar resistance: the renaming of Barrows Hall at UC Berkeley, the multiple campaigns and movements to build on Critical Filipino Studies, and the grassroots communal efforts to build agency through scholar activist Filipino research centers such as the Bulosan Center for Filipino Studies.

In this chapter I switch my focus on how both trafficked teachers and overworked Filipino students resist, heal, and combat this haunting of colonial education legacy. How do both groups of Filipino students & teachers define, enact, and continue modes of radical activism, resistance, and healing against the legacies of U.S. colonial education & racial capitalism described throughout my dissertation? I hope to bring forth further questions connecting these findings to the plight of BIPOC college students and their experiences with labor under the neoliberal university as well as BIPOC educators within an education system built on White Supremacy and Capitalist ideals.

Chapter 2

The Origin of the "Model Filipino Student/Subject"

Throughout this chapter I examine the history of the U.S. colonial education system within the Philippines through the establishment of early Westernized education systems in the islands through the early 1900's. It is this system that originated the "model Filipino Student/Subject." Framing my research across the fields of critical university studies and critical Filipino Studies, this chapter draws connections between this history of U.S. colonial education, the later consequential racialization of Filipino teachers and students, and the current flows and conditions of Filipino within the United States education system. From these connections I critically engage this notion of the Filipino as a body of educational labor, as well as a student of labor, through the definition and formation of what I call the "Model Filipino Student/Subject."

This "Model Filipino Student/Subject" framework is built from the history of U.S. colonial educational practices in the Philippines and transformed across generations through the formation of the Philippines' labor export system and the current conditions Filipino students face in U.S. institutions as bodies of labor. This framework serves as the basis on how I analyze the racialization and experiences of both Filipino case studies, Filipino migrant teachers in chapter three and Filipino American college students in chapter four, under the U.S. education field.

Roots of the "Model Filipino Student Subject"

Model Filipino Student Subject Characteristic	Roots in U.S. Colonial Education in the Philippines	Example
Obedient & Subservient	Indoctrinate Filipinos from school age into western ideologies to pacify potential Filipino rebellion	"Little Brown Brother/Sister" racialization by President Taft; Teaching of English in schools
Hyperproductive "Body of Labor"	Train Filipinos to fulfill U.S. and global economy labor needs	Thomasite Journal Entries, U.S. established nursing & teacher training
Chasing Colonial Citizenship through Assimilation	Benevolent Assimilation; U.S. education taught Filipinos of Western superiority	President McKinley's Benevolent Assimilation Speech; Pensionado Program
Self Sacrifice for Good of Community/State	Sacrificing Filipino-ness for western education to benefit the community/colonial power	Barrows: "the young men and young women of the Philippines must seek the advantages of education, not for themselves, but for the benefit of their people and their land"

[Table 2.1] Historicizing the "Model Filipino Student Subject." Defining characteristics of the "Model Filipino Student Subject" alongside its U.S. colonial education roots and example sources discussed throughout this chapter.

As mentioned in my introductory chapter, the "Model Filipino Subject" is defined as a racialization of the Filipino student/migrant worker as being obedient, reliably hyper productive, selfless, and chasing a version of colonial citizenship through assimilation. The racialization of the Filipino subject as obedient and subservient is central to U.S. colonial education's goal of pacifying Filipinos post Philippine-American War, crafting a western education system would indoctrinate Filipinos to embrace and uplift western ideology and support the U.S. empire. This westernized education system then trains the Filipino to view their role as one of productive body of labor, believing a successful and model Filipino is one who works hard and contributes to the country, therefore the U.S. empire. This continued multigenerational understanding of

one's body as a body of labor serves as a type of colonial haunting that impacts Filipino trafficked teachers and undergraduate students in connected yet unique processes. Benevolent Assimilation propelled the U.S. colonial education project in the Philippines, a belief that the United States were there to serve as paternalistic, selfless guides for the humble "Little Brown Brothers and Sisters,"[44] which in part imbued Filipinos with the belief they needed to assimilate towards westernization and chase an elusive colonial citizenship. The colonial education system also teaches the Filipino to embrace a culture of self-sacrifice (of one's time, labor, and even proximity to family) for the greater good of the community and the empire state. This lesson comes in the message of sacrificing one's "Filipino-ness" in order to achieve western education and civilizing yourself as a productive citizen of the empire.[45] Through this section, I continue to identify the "Model Filipino Students Subject's" roots and formation throughout the history of the U.S.-Philippines colonial education project.

The colonial "Model Filipino Student/Subject" haunting initiated by the American Thomasite teachers further evolved through the Pensionado program, a program that provided scholarships and opportunities for Filipino students (pensionados) to study in the United States' colleges with the expectation of Pensionados to internalize western ideology and serve as future Philippines national leaders with strong affinity towards the United States.[46] The Pensionado program helped reify this "Model Filipino Subject." [47] From the Thomasites, this process

[44] Barrows, David P. "History of the Philippines." In the digital collection The United States and Its Territories, 1870 - 1925: The Age of Imperialism. University of Michigan Library Digital Collections. Accessed June 30, 2024. https://name.umdl.umich.edu/AHZ9242.0001.001.
[45] Ibid, 12.
[46] Francisco, Adrianne Marie (Summer 2015). From Subjects to Citizens: American Colonial Education and Philippine Nation-Making, 1900-1934 (PDF) (Doctoral dissertation).
[47] United States. Government Printing Office. Congressional Serial Set. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1912. Originally from the University of California. Digitized April 20, 2011.

towards the “Model Filipino” transformation is apparent through Thomasite teacher diaries and journal entries.[48]

Renato Constantino’s The Miseducation of the Filipino and its inspiration in Carter G. Woodson’s The Miseducation of the Negro lay the foundation for how I define the “Model Filipino Student/Subject”. Woodson’s pivotal work critiques white supremacist colonial education methods utilized to culturally indoctrinate and Black students in American education to believe and see themselves as lesser than their white colleagues. He emphasizes how miseducation constructs a limited racialized reality for Black students, stating “When you control a man's thinking you do not have to worry about his actions. You do not have to tell him not to stand here or go yonder. He will find his 'proper place' and will stay in it. You do not need to send him to the back door. He will go without being told. In fact, if there is no back door, he will cut one for his special benefit. His education makes it necessary.”[49] This racialization and forced indoctrination through education can be seen in the way Filipinos have been educated under western standards: 1) English as the language of the learned, 2) Students performing a sense of obedient and malleable labor, and 3) adopting western ideologies and standards of productivity within the U.S. empire. These aspects serve as the building blocks defining the “Model Filipino Student/Subject.” It is also a fascinating and important fact that Carter G. Woodson himself served as a Thomasite teacher in the Philippines as well.

Constantino draws natural inspiration from Woodson’s work here, critiquing the colonial U.S. Philippines schooling project as a system that indoctrinated Filipinos into western ideology and served as a tool of control over generations of Filipinos. It can’t be helped to compare this

[48] Sianturi, Dinah. "Pedagogic Invasion: The Thomasites in Occupied Philippines." Kritika Kultura 0 (September 23, 2009). https://doi.org/10.3860/kk.v0i12.1196.
[49] Woodson, Carter G. The Mis-Education of the Negro. Washington, D.C.: Associated Publishers, 1933.

colonial Philippines education system to the white supremacist schooling system facilitating Black and Indigenous community assimilation.[50] This racialized labor production is not only explicit to Filipinos but can be seen in the U.S. empire commodifying various communities of color as malleable bodies of labor throughout its history. Constantino states, "Given the economic and political purposes of American occupation, education had to be consistent with these broad purposes of American colonial policy. The Filipinos had to be trained as citizens of an American colony."[51]

Constantino critiques the romanticized narrative of American benevolent assimilation and training the "poor, savage Filipino in need" to self-govern themselves. Instead, he identifies the American public education system in the Philippines as a tool of cultural imperialism that pushed Filipinos further from their identity in order to adopt an Americanized self. This Americanized self, coined by some of the time as "Little Brown Brothers"[52], is one that is forced under their White counterparts in the white supremacist paternalistic racial hierarchy. Constantino does not hold back his emphasis on education's importance towards a community's identity and sovereignty, "Education is a vital weapon of a people striving for economic emancipation, political independence, and cultural renaissance. We are such a people. Philippine education therefore must produce Filipinos who are aware of their country's problems, who understand the basic solution to these problems, and who care enough to have courage to work and sacrifice for their country's salvation."[53] In the student and migrant teacher case studies, interventions are

[50] Constantino, Renato. The Miseducation of the Filipino. Quezon City, Philippines: Foundation for Nationalist Studies, 1982.
[51] Constantino, 45.
[52] Miller, Stuart Creighton. Benevolent Assimilation: The American Conquest of the Philippines, 1899-1903. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982, p. 134.
[53] Constantino, 55.

made where both begin to identify the forced narrative upon them, ultimately unlearning and collectively challenging the "Model Filipino Student Subject" racialization.

Identifying and Historicizing the "Filipino Model Student Subject" Haunting

To identify the roots of the "Model Filipino Student Subject" haunting, I start at the infamous David Barrows' leadership in the development of westernized education in the Philippines. This process 1) racialized and socialized Filipinos under U.S. "Benevolent Assimilation", 2) established programs such as the Pensionado program that rewarded Filipinos who internalized western ideology and this new "Model Filipino Subjecthood" under Western education, and 3) shaped the conditions that later birthed the Philippines' Labor Export system and a subsequent culture of overwork, self-sacrifice, and martyrdom for the nation and family (Bagong Bayani/New Heroes).[54] This issue continues to seep into continuing flows of Filipino migrant workers and also across generations with Filipino students at the University level. Understanding this important historical context allows us to trace the U.S. colonial education haunting of both Filipino educators and college students in the United State today.

I particularly pay attention to the deep history of U.S. colonial education in the Philippines as a prerequisite for my comparative analysis between the current conditions of Filipino students and migrant teachers within the U.S. education system. The UC Berkeley Doe Library's David Barrows Papers and archive are essential to tracing this history of the United States utilizing western education as a tool of benevolent assimilation, socially constructing the OFW to be akin to what I later define as the "Model Filipino Subject". These papers and archives are primary resources documenting anthropologist and University of California professor David

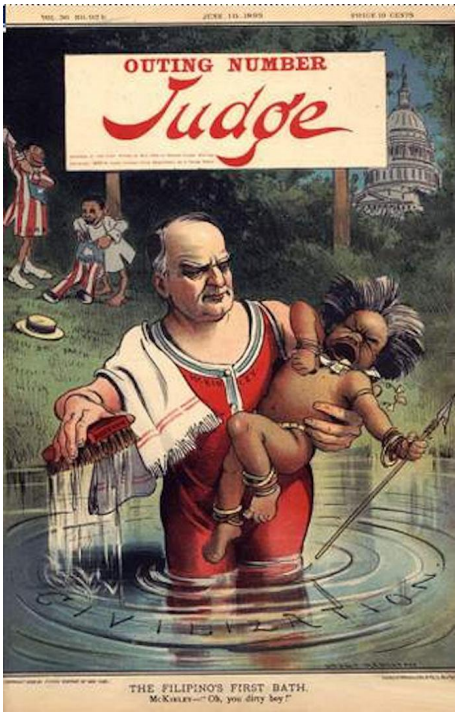
[54] Rodriguez, 47.

Barrow's travels and research within the Philippines. More importantly, the archive details his role as general superintendent of education on the island, reshaping the Philippines' education system towards a westernized curriculum. A deep dive into these texts and photographs will help ground my research project's goal in contextualizing my qualitative data against a long history of U.S. imperialist education in the Philippines.

Thinking through the framework of the "Model Filipino Student Subject" haunting, I investigate the following themes and arguments found through my findings: How has this history of U.S. colonial education crafted the "Model Filipino Student/Subject" haunting that continues to impact how Filipinos experience education? What is the genealogy/root of Filipino teacher and student labor commodified within the U.S. education system? Through my interview data I identify the contemporary labor centered experiences and trends of Filipinos in U.S. education and their connections to U.S. colonial education in the Philippines. I examine how both Filipino college students and migrant teachers feel and respond to the "Model Filipino Student Subject" haunting, particularly through their respective modes of individual and collective resistance and healing. I also examine how the "overworked, burnt out Filipino" narrative transcends generations in such a way where patterns between the experiences and feelings of trafficked Filipino teachers and multiple Filipino American college student organizations intersect and connect through the "Model Filipino Student Subject" haunting.

This chapter's close reading of David Barrow's *A History of the Philippines* provides the basis of historical connections to answer these questions. Through his text and accounts I engage the American attitudes towards Filipinos at the transitional point of U.S. colonial dominance over the Philippines while also excavating the educational cultures instilled upon early U.S. instituted westernized education in the islands. Later in this project I further expand my

questions around the root of Filipino "Benevolent Assimilation" politics and its connections to the Filipino educator/worker and student under the realm of U.S. education.[55]



[Figure 2.1] The Filipino's First Bath,

Judge magazine, June 10, 1899; Public Domain

Through this chapter I trace the genealogy and impacts of the aforementioned assimilationist logics organized under the U.S. education system through its past iterations as a colonial tool. This tool is further transformed into a neoliberal system to reproduce malleable Filipino migrant labor. History shows how the "Model Filipino Subject" is defined as obedient,

[55] Barrows, David P. "History of the Philippines." In the digital collection The United States and Its Territories, 1870 - 1925: The Age of Imperialism. University of Michigan Library Digital Collections. Accessed June 30, 2024. https://name.umdl.umich.edu/AHZ9242.0001.001.

submissive, and hardworking, including early political cartoons such as the Judge comic above, depicting the process of U.S. President McKinley cleansing and somewhat baptizing the "savage" Filipino towards western ideology and enlightenment.[56] This is the U.S. opting into the White Man's burden to educate and indoctrinate the Filipino into their empire, shaping their path to a colonial citizen, a "Model Filipino Student/Subject."

The "Model Filipino Subject" is conceived under similar colonial teaching practices used on Black students and Indian schooling in the United States as mentioned by Rolando Coloma: "I will also contend that colonial education in the Philippines was largely inflected by and patterned after the curriculum for African Americans in the U.S. South. In other words, since Filipinos were discursively configured as "Negroes," the schooling for African Americans became the prevailing racial template for the colonial pedagogy."[57] These seeds of colonial education of the Native American and Black students are passed down to the Thomasite teachers arriving in the Philippines in 1901 and later transformed under the 1975 Philippines' Labor Export Policy. The haunting of the "Model Filipino Student/Subject" starts at this point of U.S. Philippines colonial education, a century later commodifying Filipino student bodies into the global labor that has been racialized as the premiere migrant labor, even touted as the "Mercedes of migrant workers" in their respective fields.[58]

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[56] Judge magazine, June 10, 1899; Public Domain

[57] Coloma, Roland Sintos. "'Destiny Has Thrown the Negro and the Filipino Under the Tutelage of America': Race and Curriculum in the Age of Empire." Curriculum Inquiry 39, no. 4 (2009): 495-519. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-873X.2009.00454.x.

[58] Meerman, Marije, and First Run/Icarus Films, dirs. 2001. *Chain of Love*. First Run/Icarus Films.

The Birth of the "Model Filipino Student Subject"

In 1899, after the remnants of the Spanish-American War, the United States went forward in "purchasing" the Philippines from Spanish colonial rule. This transaction ultimately altered the shaping of Philippine history, culture, and future dynamics and relationship to the "West". As the peace treaty was completed around December 1989 in Paris, France, many Filipino leaders grew worried about the future of their country and people under this tentative shift.[59] Following said agreement, U.S. President McKinley enforced orders for the Philippines to unconditionally recognize American sovereignty over the islands. As David Barrows writes in his last chapter of *History of the Philippines:*

> "It was thought in the United States that a firm declaration of this kind would be accepted by the Filipinos and that they would not dare to make resistance. The intentions of the American president and nation, as subsequent events have proven, were to deal with the Filipinos with great liberality; but the president's professions were not trusted by the Filipinos, and the result of Mr. McKinley's message was to move them at once to frame an independent government and to decide on war."[60]

This post-conflict period tradeoff of "ownership" over the Philippines overshadows and invisibilizes the very real conflicts between Filipinos and the U.S. military power itself. The Philippine-American War, occurring between 1899 to 1902, has often been dismissed or

[59] Barrows, History of the Philippines.
[60] Ibid, 298.

forgotten whilst claiming the lives of over 20,000 Filipinos across the three-year conflict, almost five times the death rate of American combatants.[61] After the damage and devastation of war, the U.S. armed military slowly forced Philippine rebel leaders to surrender one by one, leading to the collective oath of allegiance to the United States. Establishing a new Philippine Commission to oversee the development of the islands under U.S. rule, Barrows notes the slow inclusion of Filipinos at local governing positions: "The government is a very liberal one, and one which gives an increasing opportunity for participation to the Filipinos. It includes what is called local self-government."[62] In order to effectively insert local Filipino leaders that aligned with the values of the new U.S. colonial rule, the United States sought a process of training and ingraining western values and skills to their new "Little Brown Brothers".[63] This process led to the formal establishment of U.S. led westernized education in the Philippines. Near the end of the Philippine-American war, U.S. military governor to the Philippines Elwell S. Otis commissioned the Department of Public Instruction to lead this new vision for the westernized Filipino subject. Amid the thousands of Filipino deaths across the Philippines American conflict, echoing between generational trauma led by two separate colonial entities, this new Westernized education system served as one of the first ghosts to haunt Filipino bodies of labor across multiple generations to this day. As Avery Gordon speaks to the haunting trauma of being a stranger in one's home, Filipinos post Philippines-American War found themselves strangers in their own ancestral homeland. Through U.S. benevolent assimilation and paternalistic imperialism, the Filipino found themselves lost within in a new education system, confused

[61] Ibid, 297.
[62] Ibid, 311.
[63] Cashman, Sean Dennis (1998). America Ascendant: From Theodore Roosevelt to FDR in the Century of American Power, 1901–1945. NYU Press. p. 126.

through the centering of English, and forced into internalizing western logics and definitions of what makes a productive U.S. colonial citizen: the malleable labor of a "Model Filipino Student/Subject."

Otis' Department of Public Instruction soon set the tone for what is expected of a Filipino national under U.S. colonial rule. The department established a vision of public education that was committed to English as a primary language of the educated, centered American history, and mandatory schooling for all Filipinos starting at 7 years of age.[64] All aspects believed to naturally catalyze a collective Filipino national identity, one that erases remnants of resistance, rebellion, and dreams of true independence from colonial rule. A vestige of U.S. President William McKinley's strategy of "Benevolent Assimilation" of which aimed to develop Philippine roads, education, and sanitation, Filipinos were forcefully transformed from the "White Man's Burden" into the aforementioned paternalistically referred "Little Brown Brother".[65] This paternalistic attitude towards the Filipino translates through how our community, specifically migrant workers, are treated and racialized up to current times.

As discussed in chapter five, a few of the interviewed migrant teachers ironically engage in some anti-black racism and sentiments through a similar paternalistic "white man's burden" framework. Working as under the table preschool daycare teachers since their (un)official teaching positions fell through, some of the teachers viewed Black students as needing their own version of "civilizing education."[66] Some teachers referred to their Black and Brown daycare students as "wild and untrainable," terminology not difficult to find when looking at how white

[64] Suri, Jeremi (27 September 2011). "Reconstruction After Empire". Liberty's Surest Guardian: American Nation-Building from the Founders to Obama. Simon and Schuster.
[65] Cashman, Sean Dennis (1998). p. 126.
[66] Direct quote from one of the trafficked teachers interviewed.

Thomasites or David Barrows himself would view the Filipino. Further in chapter five, many of these same teachers work towards recognizing the anti-blackness within this logic and, through their own internal healing and anti-racist education in GABRIELA D.C., shift away from these logics of education as a tool of white supremacy. Scholar Cynthia Tolentino names these historical assimilationist pressures outright: "…Filipino elites saw themselves through U.S. colonial constructions of them as "family" (and specifically as subordinate members, or "little Brown Brothers") rather than only as subaltern subjects."[67] The various political cartoons of its era, a few showcased within this chapter, represents the paternalistic U.S. educational attitude towards the Philippines and its expansions across generations and the greater diaspora. Having worked directly with these teachers, I recognize the tension of unknowing and defensiveness that may arise when students and staff alike challenge their capabilities to teach and perform well. This haunting of the "Model Filipino Student Subject" reappears, forcing some migrant teachers to fall back onto a hierarchical and unfortunately white supremacist understanding of teaching dynamics not dissimilar to the ways colonial white educators viewed Filipinos as the "Brown Little Brothers."

There are strong connections here to a similar tension witnessed in the aforementioned documentary "The Learning" in which a Filipina migrant teacher, Dorotea, struggles working through the classroom morning introduction ritual while her predominantly Black and Brown students giggle and awkwardly wait for their teacher to facilitate their movement towards the classroom.[68] Dorotea, frustrated by what she describes as the difficulty of disciplinary actions, is

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[67] Tolentino, Cynthia H. From Unincorporated Territory to Commonwealth Connecting Decolonization and U.S. Empire, Memory(s), identity(ies), marginality(ies) in the contemporary Western world [Online], 10 | 2013, online September 9, 2013, accessed February 12, 2023.

[68] PBS NewsHour. "'The Learning' Follows Teachers From the Philippines to Baltimore." YouTube video, 8:34. September 16, 2011. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GXz-zzEm2OM&t=3s.

seen yelling at the class stating “Whoever you are, whatever you are: I am here to help you.”[69] Though seemingly coming from a place of positive intent and hopeful connection with her students, her impromptu speech is met with more giggles and awkward looks. Dorotea, in a private interview, then speaks about her struggles with mental health due to her profession, the lack of support leading to her thoroughly prepared lesson plans rarely panning out as she hopes. Her follow up response is to continue pushing even harder, a dynamic that resonates with the “Model Filipino Student Subject’s” persistent drive to labor and work. Dorotea is then caught off guard in an interaction with a student who asked why she left her family in the Philippines and whether she would rather stay in her homeland instead of living in the United States. A tearful Dorotea smiles, covers her face with her half-graded papers, and simply states, “You are asking a difficult question.”[70] These struggles across student-teacher differences and teaching expectation dynamics are extremely important in analyzing the ways both Filipino teachers attempt to control their students under a racialized hierarchical practice. This dynamic and struggles of Filipino migrant teachers working in predominantly Black and Brown classrooms is an aspect of my research I hope to expand on in the future.

Ultimately, in efforts to further westernize their newly adopted “Little Brown Brothers and Sisters”, the U.S. colonial public schooling system centered around the integration of western cultural values, United States history, and of course the English language as core tenets of education. The hope of many, including previously referred Superintendent of Education in the Philippines, David Barrows, was that such an educational experience would foster a new Filipino nationalism intertwined with western values and U.S. politics.[71] A lot of these strategies

[69] Ibid.
[70] Ibid.
[71] Francisco Benitez (1906). *"American Education in the Philippines". The Filipino. Filipino Company. pp. 24–26.*

were driven by the previously described paternalistic and ethnocentric view of the Filipino. This "Brown , Savage Little Brother" view can be identified through various media (mis)representations of Filipinos, one example being blackface performer Frank Dumont's play *The King of the Philippine Islands*. Eileen Regullano unpacks this yellowface performance, deconstructing how the play communicates a an idea that primitive and savage Filipinos are in deep need of saving and civilizing, a tenet attributed to "…the paternalistic idea of the White Man's Burden--the need to provide a form of government for the colored people because they can't provide one for themselves."[72] Francisco Benitez' 1906 reflective essay "American Education in the Philippines" further documents how Filipinos bought into this perspective that only American education can solve their issues in the homeland, demonstrated by his critique of Spanish education as merely "…parrot-like memorizing of subjects…." and that "...good teachers were not to be had either in Spain or in the Philippines at that time. Besides, there was no incentive for the Filipinos to teach, as teaching was thought by the Spaniards to be a low profession…."[73] First, Benitez's uplifting of U.S. colonial education over Spain's system reaffirms the Filipino's internalization of American exceptionalism. Secondly, the latter half of his quote provides an opposing view of teaching to what all of the migrant teachers I interviewed had to share about how teaching is viewed as a noble, though underpaid, profession in the Philippines. The U.S. Commission on Education of the Philippines provided specific instructions for Thomasite and soldier turned teachers to identify their star Filipino pupils, the early "Model Filipino Student Subjects," in order to build a chain production of potential Filipino educators and community leaders ready to facilitate the westernization of future Filipino student cohorts.

[72] Regullano, Eileen (2014) "Filipinos Depicted in American Culture," e-Research: A Journal of Undergraduate Work: Vol. 3: No. 1, Article 6. Pp 21-22.
[73] Benitez, 25.

[Figure 2.2] School Begins by Louis Dalrymple[74]

Puck, v. 44, no. 1142, January 25, 1899, Public Domain

An Uncle Sam character serves as a strict educator for the United States' many colonies, pushing for a process of assimilation into western ideology and standards.

Barrows and his contemporaries shared this perspective and outlook seen in the above political cartoon. The white man's burden with the Philippines viewed Filipinos as both "backward" and "childlike" fueled the type of educational practices established through his leadership.[75] This, of course, differed from Barrows' affirmations over other colonial powers and communities he's observed. In particular, Barrows praises the Chinese in Manila and their "hardy" nature as settlers and colonizers adjusting to various terrain and communities. "The Chinese are without question the most remarkable colonizers in the world. They seem able to

[74] Dalrymple, Louis. "School Begins." Puck 44, no. 1142 (January 25, 1899).
[75] Barrows, 281.

thrive in any climate. They readily marry with every race. The children that follow such unions are not only numerous but healthy and intelligent."[76] Barrows and his company differentiated in the state of Filipinos and their need for a proper education in order for them to be ready for self-governance. Barrows and his contemporaries believed the Filipinos were in need of saving through their western education system and through enforced integration of American colonial life, a paternalistic and white supremacist belief accurately depicted in the 1899 Puck political cartoon above. Coincidentally, as we traced the genealogy of U.S. colonial education in the Philippines to the white supremacist schooling of Indians and Black students, we see both communities, in horrid stereotypical fashion, represented in the cartoon above as well: a Native American student is in the back of the class near the door reading a book upside down while a Black student is forced to labor in joyfully washing the classroom windows. Just outside the door peering in while holding his own mathematical tools and books is a caricature of a Chinese individual sporting a cue haircut. This is a nod to Barrows' aforementioned attitude towards Chinese as already learned and more capable of adjusting where the Filipino cannot. Again, I cannot emphasize enough the horrific racist nature of these political cartoons, but they are essential in unpacking the ways Filipino, Black, Native American, and other communities of color have been perceived and racialized at this time.

Barrows viewed the major shifts needed in U.S. led Philippines schooling as 1) access and reach, 2) the centering of English as the language of learning, and 3) the development of a new (westernized) Philippine national identity to drive self-governance and continued relations to the United States. These three shifts later lead to how Filipinos at large began to engage education as beyond a process of learning, but as a tool of civilizing and social status. Barrows'

[76] Ibid, 181-182.

perspective was directly fueled by the notorious Rudyard Kipling poem of the same subject matter, "The White Man's Burden", which illustrated the American as morally obligated in civilizing the wayward and lost Filipino. Kipling's words are taken by the public to perceive the Filipino as a "...new-caught, sullen peoples, half-devil and half-child" in need of U.S. colonial intervention and rule, in need of a civilizing process through western education.[77] This poem shaped Barrows' perspective towards American colonial efforts in the Philippines as one of "humanitarian imperialism", a paternalistic and authoritarian stance he held for many people of color across American colonial reach.

These philosophical perspectives shaped his reorganization of Philippine education and schooling, one that racialized the Filipino as an unruly subject in need of proper westernized teachings in order to survive, thrive, and serve as a respectful member of the international community. With that being said, the Filipino was still seen by the U.S. as malleable and able to be reshaped into an obedient subject under American colonialism. Thus, western education served as a process of creating, teaching, and indoctrinating Filipinos into the "Model Filipino Subject", whether it be as pensionados in the early 1900's or over half a century later in how Filipino migrant workers are trained to be quiet, obedient bodies of labor.

Having adopted the Philippines schooling system from Spanish colonial control, Barrows recycled what secondary school system was set by the Spanish, recognizing some of the progress in teaching the common Filipino. With that said, he viewed the Spanish colonial education system as fairly limited in both reach and impact, stating though it does deserve recognition, "…It was not wholly a free system, because tuition was required of all but the poorest children; nor was it an adequate system, because, even when most complete, it reached only a small

[77] Benét's Reader's Encyclopedia. 4th ed. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1996.

proportion of the children of a parish, and these very largely were of the well-to-do families."[78] As such, the commission established a ruling regarding all Filipinos of ages 6 and up to be required to attend public schooling that was free and accessible to all. This formed the basis of Barrows' vision in indoctrinating the Philippine masses to adopt these central Western values around patriotic nationalism, labor, and schooling. Barrows denied Spain's belief in education as a privilege in the Philippines, only allotted to the elite few, and instead set about expanding schooling as a necessary process of ingraining American attitudes and influence on the broader masses. Barrows and the Philippines Commission began accelerating the process of the Filipino masses assimilating into their Western ideals on race and culture, invoking the "Model Filipino Subjectivity".

Barrows viewed English as the only language to provide Filipinos a path towards civility, development, and (western) modernity. He states, "It is the language alike of business and of diplomacy. The Filipino people, so eager to participate in all the busy life of eastern Asia, so ambitious to make their influence felt and their counsels regarded, will be debarred from all this unless they master this mighty English tongue."[79] This view of course was deemed controversial by many Filipino thought leaders and community members who had already strongly opposed American colonialism. President and Leader of the Philippines resistance during the Philippines American War, Emilio Aguinaldo's words resonate with many who disavow America's savage racialization of their people:

[78] Barrows, 275.
[79] Ibid, 315.

> "You have been greatly deceived in the personality of my countrymen. You went to the Philippines under the impression that their inhabitants were ignorant savages, whom Spain had kept in subjection at the bayonet's point. The Filipinos have been described in serious American journals as akin to the hordes of the Khalifa; and the idea has prevailed that it required only some unknown American Kitchener to march triumphantly from north to south to make the military occupation complete. We have been represented by your popular press as if we were Africans or Mohawk Indians. We smile, and deplore the want of ethnological knowledge on the part of our literary friends. We are none of these. We are simply Filipinos. You know us now in part: you will know us better, I hope, by and by."[80]
>
> - Emilio Aguinaldo

Barrows' efforts to colonize through education and the centering of English went beyond the historically western inhabited parts of Manila and similar cities, extending towards what U.S. considered the "uninhabited and unknown" regions of the Philippines. This language colonization of course purposefully invisibilizes and dehumanizes the already present indigenous communities and their languages who had lived and operated within these areas for generations.[81] This continued to this day, with English still seen by Filipinos as the language of the learned and a sign of upper social standing. Past and present, English as a dominant language

[80] "Excerpt from Aguinaldo's Case Against The United States." In World History Commons. Accessed June 12, 2024. https://worldhistorycommons.org/excerpt-aguinaldos-case-against-united-states.
[81] Headland, Thomas N. "Thirty Endangered Languages in the Philippines." Work Papers of the Summer Institute of Linguistics, University of North Dakota Session 47 (2003): Article 1. https://doi.org/10.31356/silwp.vol47.01.

in Philippines education continues to pressure Filipinos to internalize the "Model Filipino Subject".

Barrows' established Philippines schooling prioritized a highly accessible education while institutionalizing English as the primary language of learning and civilization conjured the development of a new National Filipino identity. This sense of new Philippine Nationalism being one born out of and explicitly tied to American imperialism also serves as a core facet of the early "Model Filipino Student/Subject." In Barrows' last excerpts within his 1905 "A History of the Philippines", he describes his vision towards this new Filipino identity:

> "And for the Filipinos, patriotic duty means a full acceptance of government as it has now been established, as better than what has preceded, and perhaps superior to what he himself would have chosen and could have devised; a loyalty to his own people and to their interests and to the public interests, that shall, overcome the personal selfishness that has set its cruel mark on every native institution in this land; and a resolution to obey the laws, preserve the peace, and use faithfully every opportunity for the development of his own character and the betterment of the race."[82]

This last of the three schooling goals under Barrows' leadership serves as a major basis of respectability politics[83] and a socially constructed identity of campus citizenship that impacts

[82] Barrows, 321.

[83] Nuñez-Franklin, Brianna. "Democracy Limited: The Politics of Respectability (U.S. National Park Service)." National Parks Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, https://www.nps.gov/articles/democracy-limited-the-

the lived experiences of Filipino college students to this day. This framework, of course, being an evolved version of the "Model Filipino Student/Subject." Furthermore, this culture of new Filipino nationalism, identity, and pseudo colonial citizenry serves as the root of how and why there have been patterns of student labor extraction through U.S. universities and colleges. This pattern of extracted labor being central to a socially constructed college/university sense of "citizenship", performing as a good student ambassador, that many Filipino students I interviewed describe in my fourth chapter. These three aspects of mass integration through the language of education accessibility, the centrality of English as the language of the learned, and the development of a new national Filipino identity directly connect to my concept of the "Model Filipino Subject".

Teaching and Constructing the "Model Filipino Student/Subject":

Thomasites and Pensionados

Beyond the initial contact of U.S. military and colonial leadership in the Philippines, due to the shortage of educators in the archipelago, some of the first educators under American educational rule were U.S. soldiers who volunteered to establish classrooms across the Philippine.[84] This responsibility, or what I like to call "The White Teacher's Burden", was soon passed between the military personnel turned pseudo teachers to a group of American educators who arrived in the Philippines by way of U.S. military ships such as the "Sheridan" and USAT "Thomas". The latter of the two served a pivotal role in transporting over 600 American

politics-of-respectability.htm#:~:text=%E2%80%9CRespectability%20politics%E2%80%9D%20refers%20to%20the,dominant%20standards%20in%20their%20society .

[84] James H. Blount, The American Occupation of the Philippines, 1898-1912 (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1913), 149.

educators to the islands for the sole purpose of carrying out Barrows' vision for indoctrinating the Filipino masses under U.S. colonial rule. Named the Thomasites, this group of migrant teachers reached Manila, Philippines in August 1901, hailing from over 192 higher education institutions.[85] Interestingly enough, the impact of this group of teachers stood through the droves of migrating teachers who came afterwards, lending to their name being used to describe all American teachers traveling across the Pacific to teach the Filipino masses. "Thomasites" were therefore adopted as the reference for all early year U.S. colonial educators based within the Philippines.

After an initial $105,000 United States investment in this voyage of teachers, which adjusted to today's economic standards and inflation would be just below $4 million dollars, another wave of Thomasites arrived in 1902 totaling to over 1,000 U.S. based teachers operating within the new colonial Philippines education system.[86] Many Thomasites developed and followed similar attitudes towards their Filipino "students" instilled by David Barrows and his commission. They believed in their humanitarian drive to educate the Filipino, but deep within this role of compassionate teacher was an educator that has ingrained a specific racialized "White Man's Burden" view of the Filipino as lesser than and in need of "Benevolent Assimilation". Barrow's perspective of "Benevolent Assimilation" refers to a policy approach characterized by the colonization of territories with the intention of improving the conditions of the colonized

[85] Zimmerman, Jonathan (2006). *Innocents Abroad: American Teachers in the American Century*. USA: Harvard University Press.

[86] "The Thomasites: An Army Like No Other", News.Ops.gov.ph October 12, 2003 Archived May 14, 2010.

people, in this case the Filipino.[87] This term was particularly associated with American colonial policy in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, notably in the context of the Philippines.

Thomasite and writer of "The Story of the Philippines, Adeline Knapp, proves this shared attitude through her own written self-reflection:

> "Our nation has found herself confronted by a great problem dealing with a people who neither know nor understand the underlying principles of our civilization, yet who, for our mutual happiness and liberty, must be brought into accord with us ... the American genius, reasoning from its own experience in the past, seeks a solution of the problem, a bridging of the chasm, through the common schools."[88]

Through their own respective training and preparation, Thomasites brought their own methods of instilling Barrows' three major colonial education goals within their teaching pedagogies in the Philippines. In addition, their integration into the Philippines colonial education project continued to build a racialized hierarchy of White/American over the Filipino, Western values over the "Other", and a self-righteous perception of their role as a burden that must be taken in order to benefit the Philippine people and therefore the rest of the international world.[89] What Knapp describes above regarding the "bridging of the chasm, through the common schools…" exemplifies this point of where Thomasites viewed their role in the

[87] Smith, Richard. "Barrows, David Prescott (1852–1954)." In American Imperialism and the State, 1893–1921, edited by Michael H. Hunt, 136–137. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970.
[88] Knapp, Adeline. *The Story of the Philippines*. Silver, Burdett and Co., 1902.
[89] Adrianne Francisco: "From Subjects to Citizens: American Colonial Education and Philippine Nation-Making, 1900-1934)

development of the Philippine new national identity.[90] A role dictated by their belief that the backwards and lowly "Little Filipino Brother/Sister" was in need of quick assimilation into the modern world. Thomasites viewed their new colonial schooling system as the key to civilizing and enlightening the Filipino. The emphasis on bringing the Filipino into accord of western civilization by incorporating them through this rigorous education system in hopes of their transformation into the model "Modern Filipino Citizen" mirrors the ways of which the Filipino body endures pressures of performing the perfect model citizen within U.S. context.

One Thomasite, like the United States at the time of colonizing the Philippines, viewed the Filipino through a benevolent assimilation lens, hoping to "transform the savage native into modern political subjects under US tutelage."[91] Through this colonial project, the Thomasites and the United States identified education as the most powerful tool to restore peace in the Philippines amidst the Philippine-American War. Ngugi wa Thiong'o's perspective on colonialism's scheme fits the U.S.-Philippines "Model Filipino Student/Subject" history well: the United States acts towards maintenance, management, manipulation, and mobilization of an entire system of westernized education, language, literature, religion, and media in the Philippines. The Pensionado program and the Thomasites provide a pathway for the oppressor nation to maintain "...power over the transmission of a certain ideology, set of values, power over the area of consciousness."[92]

Many Thomasites, though under the preface of supporting the development of the Filipino under American colonial rule, held fairly low expectations and racialized perceptions of

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[90] Knapp, 81.
[91] Sianturi, Dinah. "Pedagogic Invasion: The Thomasites in Occupied Philippines." Kritika Kultura 0 (September 23, 2009). https://doi.org/10.3860/kk.v0i12.1196.
[92] Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, 1938-. Decolonising the Mind : the Politics of Language in African Literature. London : Portsmouth, N.H. :J. Currey ; Heinemann, 1986.

their students. The thoughts of Mary Fee, a famed Thomasite turned ethnographer, in her memoir "A woman's impressions of the Philippines" depict these feelings of western superiority. Roma-Sianturi's analysis of Fee's work unpacks an essentialist view of Filipinos naturally unable to comprehend the intricate systems and lessons of Western ideology. She writes of Fee's memoir, "Some of the significant areas she comments on are the sociopolitical developments the U.S. eagerly desired for the Filipinos but had since then failed. According to Fee, the failure is due to the Filipino race's incomprehensibility of the more complex workings of the outside world from which it had been isolated."[93] Many other Thomasites and teachers in the Philippines shared these sentiments, having trouble through language barriers, difficulty in lack of resources, and ultimately lack of training[94] for a massive group of teachers expected to travel thousands of miles overseas in order to "enlighten the Little Brown Brothers and Sisters" through their teachings.

Even with the described collective vision of U.S. colonial education in the Philippines adopted by both teachers on the ground and those in power like David Barrows, criticisms of the operation were still rampant. Fast forwarding a few decades from the schooling system's inception, in 1925 the Monroe Commission on Philippine Education was established with the purpose of analyzing Philippine education's impact and effectiveness. Teacher training was deemed "inadequate" based on the fact that around 80% of the Filipino students never reached the fourth grade.[95] Furthermore, one of Barrows' main mission in normalizing English as the national language served as one of the primary roadblocks for many students' success: "Upon leaving school, more than 99% of Filipinos will not speak English in their homes. Possibly, only

[93] Roma-Sianturi, Dinah "Pedagogic Invasion": Thomasites in Occupied Philippines; Kritika Culture, 2009, 11.
[94] Peter James Tarr "The education of the Thomasites: American School teachers in Philippine colonial society, 1901—1913" (2005)
[95] Monroe, Paul. *A Survey of the Educational System of the Philippine Islands*. Manila: Bureau of Printing. pp. 24–25

10% to 15% of the next generation will be able to use this language in their occupations. In fact, it will only be the government employees, and the professionals, who might make use of English."[96] Ironically, these major goals and shifts in colonial education were responsible for many students' struggles.

The Monroe Commission provided a process of demystifying the generally romanticized prospects of White American teachers educating the "poor, backwards" Filipino. Though these critiques served true, the underlying mission of Barrows and the American colonial schooling system still succeeded in ingraining a westernized visual of Philippine nationalism and citizenry to rise. In addition, though it was not centralized as the national language, the teaching of English in schools codified and solidified it as the language of the learned, the elite, and of progress.

The esteemed scholars on U.S. colonial Philippines, Renato and Letizia Constantino, delve into the deeper analysis around the first decade of this schooling system in the islands.

> "The educational system introduced by the Americans had to correspond and was designed to correspond to the economic and political reality of American conquest.... Our students hear of Rizal and Bonifacio but are their teachings related to our present problems or do they merely learn of anecdotes and incidents that prove interesting to the child's Imagination? We have learned to use American criteria for our problems and we look at our prehistory and our past with the eyes of a visitor."[97]

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[96] Ibid, 25.

[97] Constantino, Renato Redentor, and Letizia R Constantino. The Miseducation of the Filipino. Quezon City: Foundation for Nationalist Studies, 1982. Print.

Constantino critiques the romanticization and commodification of "national heroes" the likes of Jose Rizal and Andres Bonifacio, whilst U.S. colonial education enforces a western framing of problems presented within the Philippines. U.S. colonial education introduces and engages Philippines history as more of a distant past, almost deemed fictional and unrelated to the current conditions and issues Filipinos face. This distancing of the pre-U.S. controlled Philippines identity and history is intentional as it relates to the goal of creating a new Philippines nationalism and identity. This viewing of the Philippines and its past through the "visitor's eyes" is essential to the shifting of Philippines identity as explicitly tied to the United States. These seeds of a (neo)colonial relationship will be engaged further in both chapters three and four.

Colonial Philippines education scholar Roland Sintos' Coloma's work further unpacks the hidden intentions under U.S. colonial education that Constantino describes: 1) Establish a "…hybrid form of nationalism which brought together western and native influences to subversively employ colonial education and fight for national liberation", 2) U.S. education was utilized as a process of transforming Filipinos into a malleable, modern, and civilized colonial subject, and, as engaged with in the next session, how the teaching praxis and pedagogy in the Philippines stems from the racialized and gendered system enacted under the schooling of Black and indigenous communities within the United States.[98]

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[98] Sintos Coloma, Roland. "'Destiny Has Thrown the Negro and the Filipino under the Tutelage of America': Race and Curriculum in the Age of Empire." *Curriculum Inquiry*, vol. 39, no. 4, 2009, pp. 495–519., https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-873x.2009.00454.x.

These claims serve as central to not just Renato's work, but the historical context and roots of U.S. education's impact on the Filipino body (of labor) examined throughout this project. Coloma's work unapologetically challenges the assumption of altruistic "benevolent" American colonialism while also centering the tension around U.S. colonial education in the Philippines as a presentation of progress through subordination. It is essential to particularly engage the last of these three claims in how socially constructed racial hierarchies and gender dynamics from past education of "colonial subjects of color" not only shaped the U.S. colonial schooling in the early 1900's Philippines, but also continues to impact our communities in contemporary times.

Shadows of Colonial Schooling:

Carter G. Woodson and the Rise of the "Model Filipino Student"

Referring back to the history of colonial education in the Philippines, we must also relate these roots to many other U.S. colonial schooling projects that have impacted communities of color and our system of education through the current day. Renato Constantino's "The Miseducation of the Filipino" itself is a direct response to Americanized education in the Philippines, a work inspired by Carter G. Woodson's "The Mis-Education of the Negro." In Woodson's pivotal challenge of American Black schooling, he unapologetically critiques education as a process of indoctrinating students into a culture of Black subordination. Constantino in his book states, "The most effective means of subjugating a people is to capture their minds. Military victory does not necessarily signify conquest. As long as feelings of

resistance remain in the hearts of the vanquished, no conqueror is secure…. Education therefore, serves as a weapon in wars of colonial conquest."[99]

Schooling had conducted a practice of conditioning Black students to see themselves as lesser than and limited in their societal prospects. Woodson called for Black students and society to admonish this standard of education, demanding a breaking of the pressure to become the "good negro" under the schooling system. The following excerpt from his work describes this hegemonic system of control hidden within schooling:

> "If you can control a man's thinking you do not have to worry about his action. When you determine what a man shall think you do not have to concern yourself about what he will do. If you make a man feel that he is inferior, you do not have to compel him to accept an inferior status, for he will seek it himself. If you make a man think that he is justly an outcast, you do not have to order him to the back door. He will go without being told; and if there is no back door, his very nature will demand one."[100]

The above description can very well describe the inner machinations of U.S. colonial education within the Philippines, a system that centered control, indoctrination of Western ideals, and rooted within an American racial hierarchy. The very goals under David Barrows' regime described at the beginning of this chapter engage this very same white supremacist colonial logic. This concept of teaching inferiority that Woodson describes is simulated under the U.S.

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[99] Constantino, 2.
[100] Woodson, Carter Godwin, et al. *The Mis-Education of the Negro*. Penguin Books, 2023.

colonial education system's structuring of a new Philippine nationalism intertwined with Western ideals and under an American overseer. What is peculiar and provides an unsettled sense of tension was the fact that Woodson himself served as a Thomasite teacher and school supervisor from 1903-1907 in the Philippines, taking part in this same educational western value indoctrination Constantino would later critique.[101] Though there is some nuance in Woodson's teaching of Filipinos.

As Mark Villegas uplifts in his engagement of Woodson's "Miseducation of the Filipino", he points out that Woodson "…lauds a more aligned method of educating Filipinos, such as teaching Filipino children about the bravery of Philippine hero José Rizal rather than reciting rote lessons about the virtues of George Washington. He praises educators who "got rid of most books based on the life of American people and worked out an entirely new series dealing with the life of Filipinos."[102] This connection continues onto the history of Filipino migrant workers, specifically as U.S. Nationals, throughout the United States during the early and mid-1900's.

Filipino U.S. Nationals served as premier cheap, reliable, and malleable labor while always finding themselves both in a higher status than other workers of color and immigrants, but still never achieving full citizen rights and status. Shared attitudes of putting your head down and studying/working to get ahead were ingrained under the early U.S. run education system in the Philippines, creating a similar ideal "Filipino student/worker" echoing Woodson's critique of the "Good Negro" subject. This process of hegemonic subjugation and racialization began during

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[101] Villegas, Mark Redondo "An Untold Chapter in the Life of the Father of Black History," *Lancaster Online*, February 18, 2024, accessed [insert access date], https://lancasteronline.com/opinion/columnists/an-untold-chapter-in-the-life-of-the-father-of-black-history-column/article_7e2af616-cc0b-11ee-8320-ffaa9b87f13d.html.

[102] Ibid.

the aforementioned "benevolent assimilation of the Filipino Brown Brother/Sister" and continued through the current conditions that view Filipino migrant workers as the most populous, expansive, and "reliable" across the globe. As Sociologist Dr. Rhacel Parrenas has coined in relation to migrant caregivers, "The Filipino nanny is the Mercedes Benz amongst the international [caregivers]."[103] This tension and in-between-ness is referenced under Constantino's "Miseducation of the Filipino":

> "It can be argued that this marginalization of Pilipinos was representative of the historical legacy of invisibility created by the Philippine-U.S. relationship and thus positioned Pilipinos in the middle of the racial spectrum in education: not given full consideration as people of color but also not benefiting from the historical and current privileges enjoyed by whites."[104]

The above quote describes this ambivalent and fluid positioning of Filipinos within the Black-White binary racial hierarchy. Such a racialized positioning is not random, but intentional in the way the Filipino body is commodified as a body of labor under U.S. empire and capitalism. This Filipino body of labor serves as the core subject throughout this research project, particularly in the transfiguration from early colonial student in the Philippines to trained and obedient Migrant worker in the empire and flash forward to new generation of Filipino student "citizens" under U.S. college and university regimes. This shifting and transformation of location and positionality may differ across the time periods and scopes through my next two chapters,

[103] Meerman Marije and First Run/Icarus Films directors. Chain of Love. First Run/Icarus Films 2001.
[104] Constantino, Renato, 25

but the extraction of Filipino labor under U.S. education and the further subjugation of these bodies of labor endure.

When we think of this quote by Renato Constantino, particularly his critique of American/western education systems established in the Philippines, we naturally associate this thread back to Woodson's analysis referenced above. Both authors engage the weaponization of US/westernized education as a tool for assimilation, Woodson regarding Black school in post-antebellum United States and Constantino with the U.S.-Philippine colonial education project. Constantino recognizes these patterns of white supremacist, benevolent assimilationist pedagogy and teaching across these time periods, through its weaponization against other communities of color, particularly our Indigenous & Black brothers, sisters, and siblings throughout the history of US empire building. What adds more intrigue, and may be saved for a different avenue or research project for another time, is the fact that Carter G. Woodson himself had been sent over to work as a teacher in the Philippines. These connections across these works and realms are not just coincidental but connected through the reigns of U.S. colonial education as a tool to subjugate and racialize communities of color under the western gaze.

Structures of American Black schooling and educating the Native American provided the blueprints for which Filipino "Brown Little Brothers and Sisters" were indoctrinated and placed under a similar process of racialized subject making.[105] This colonial training, sharpened through the history and practice of subjugating Black and indigenous students under the preface of U.S. schooling, established specific pathways for the Filipino to transform from "ignorant island savage" towards a respectable subject of the U.S. empire and useful body of labor, or

[105] Adams, David Wallace. *Education for Extinction: American Indians and the Boarding School Experience, 1875-1928* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1995).

furthermore a westernized intellectual proven to lead their homeland and community. Enter the Pensionados and the rise of the model Filipino student citizen.

Legacies of Colonial Education:

From "Good Negro" and "Good Indian" to the "Model Filipino Student Subject"

Signed into law by the U.S. Congress in 1903, the Pensionado Act's purpose was to educate promising Filipinos through prestigious American universities as a way to prepare them for future leadership positions back in their home country. The government offered scholarships to Filipinos who passed a competitive examination and criteria, including falling under the ages of 15 and 21 and having no criminal record.[106] This act catalyzed the way Filipinos viewed themselves through the process of westernized education, viewing U.S. schooling as a vehicle of social mobility and upgraded status. To assimilate to the West and be educated in the U.S. served as one of the top signals of entering the Philippines' upper-class bourgeois.

Between 1903 to 1946, more than one thousand Filipinos migrated to the United States to study under the Pensionado Act. The most academically successful Filipino students had their expenses covered by the U.S. government, causing the students to be labeled as "pensionados" or "scholars".[107] The Pensionados came from diverse backgrounds and various regions across the Philippines, pursuing academic disciplines ranging across agriculture, law, engineering, business, and medicine.[108] This program inspired a greater flow of Filipinos leaving the homeland to study

[106] Francisco, Adrianne Marie (Summer 2015). From Subjects to Citizens: American Colonial Education and Philippine Nation-Making, 1900-1934 (PDF) (Doctoral dissertation). University of California, Berkeley. Retrieved 18 August 2018. United States. Congress (1912). Congressional edition. U.S. G.P.O. p. 167.
[107] Kramer, Paul A. (13 December 2006). The Blood of Government: Race, Empire, the United States, and the Philippines. Univ of North Carolina Press. p. 205. ISBN 978-0-8078-7717-3.
[108] Ibid.

abroad, offering a new way for young Filipinos to support themselves and their families in the homeland. A good number of pensionados were expected to take up leadership positions within their respective fields, a process that would further develop the referenced new Philippines nationalism and citizen identity under U.S. western rule.

The act also strengthened the Philippines and the United States relationship and colonial ties, building a system of dependency between the two nations that still lasts to this day. Underneath this surface level description was the pensionado program's core purpose to develop and train an elite class of Filipino intellectuals educated under a western ideals and American culture. This elite class would assume leadership positions back in the Philippines while uplifting the importance of strong bonds and connections back to the United States as its colonial power. The belief would be that these pensionados would become the governors, mayors, representatives, and expansive leaders of the Philippine homeland while operating in a way that privileged United States access and ideals. Just as early colonial education served as a way to train malleable Filipino bodies of labor for the American empire, pensionados trained within the belly of the beast (United States) were expected to take over self-governance of the Philippines without drastic changes to the politics and culture. Whether intentional or not, the future looming question, and concerns, of true Philippines independence from U.S. oversight would be answered through generations of western educated elite, having been schooled both in the homeland under U.S. rule and within the walls of American higher education as well.

One somewhat overlooked tension were the differences between pensionados and Filipinos based in the homeland. The privileging of some Filipinos from upper class and well-known families would naturally build class resentment within communities in the Philippines. The close connection between pensionados and the United States served as the basis for many

returning pensionados being negatively referred to as "American boys" and facing discrimination within their own "homeland."[109] Pensionados were entrusted by the U.S. with fostering a new Philippine nationalist culture. In addition, they were seen as servants of the U.S. Colonial state, some struggled with this position while others proudly embraced this subservient role. This formalized "Model Filipino Student Subject" under the Pensionado Act, a subject well versed in western ideals while abiding by the racial and class hierarchy instituted under American schooling, can be argued to serve as a similar role as the "westernized and civilized" Black and indigenous students under U.S. tutelage. Folded into the complicated layering of the Asian American model minority myth across generations of migration, this "Model Filipino Student Subject" identity is not an identity lost in U.S. colonial history of the early 1900's, but has transformed through the racialization, positionality, and treatment of Filipino bodies under American higher education to this day.

Conclusion:

The Transformation of the Filipino from Model Student Subject to Premier Migrant Labor

Early 20th century educational policies implemented under the US ruled Philippines manifested in lasting impacts influencing the Philippines's educational system today. One example is the centering of English-language education, a tenet promoted by David Barrows as a way to "Americanize" and "civilize" Filipino society. English remains a widely spoken and important language in the Philippines today, and English-language education is highly valued. Furthermore, an emphasis on Americanized education led to the further erasure of indigenous

[109] Maramba, Dina C. ; Rick Bonus (1 December 2012). The 'Other' Students: Filipino Americans, Education, and Power. IAP. p. 34. ISBN 978-1-62396-075-9.

practices and knowledge. This in turn endangers and devalues many local Philippine languages and multigenerational aspects of culture.

In addition, many Filipinos come to the US to pursue higher education, often facing the obstacles that many other international students face. These include the challenges of language barriers, cultural shifts, and financial disparities. We should, of course, honor the ways Filipinos in the US have made significant contributions to American society, achieving success across various fields of work. Nonetheless, these shared experiences and assumed narratives cannot remain romanticized under the notion of Filipino immigrant resiliency. Through the next two chapters I engage the expansion of the model "Filipino student citizen" towards both migrant teachers to the United States and current day Filipino college students.

With that being said, I want to clarify that these two unique, yet interconnected studies serve as reminders of U.S. colonial education's continued and contemporary impact on Filipinos under U.S. education. Beyond the historical connections, patterns of subjugation, and labor struggles, the following chapters also highlight the moments of resistance, decolonial thinking, and collective joy between students and trafficked teachers alike. Filipino trafficked teachers in the D.C. area organize in solidarity with Black and Latinx towards collective labor rights and holding employers accountable within their respective public-school districts and workplaces. Filipino student organizations, weary of the cycle of past students whose labor was extracted by the university, enact lessons from critical ethnic studies and multiracial coalitions to set boundaries and hold their college administration accountable to their demands for compensated labor and supported student spaces. Working both within and outside of the education institutions linked to the aforementioned U.S. colonial education project in the Philippines, both

groups engage critical methodologies while developing a shared anti-imperialist political education/knowledge to reject and dismantle this “model Filipino Student/Worker Citizen”.

As seen through the next two chapters centering the experiences of both Filipino students in U.S. higher education and education-based workers, educators, staff, this thread of assimilationist politics and racialized pressures can be rooted back to this history of Colonial Education. Early 20th century “Benevolent Assimilation” forms the framework of assimilationist politics and pressures that post-1965 and current Filipino immigrants experience today. What connections are drawn here across the two populations: Filipino college students and Filipino trafficked teachers? How have both been impacted by this legacy of Forced Migration that Rodriguez, Guevarra, and others describe? How do we see this Western romanticized ideal of citizenry/inclusion produce toxic cycles of overwork and labor for both interview populations?

Chapter 3

"Serve the students, serve the country.":

The Miseducation and Sacrifice of Trafficked Filipino Migrant Teachers in the U.S.

"It's always been back to those lessons… Be quiet, do the work, serve the students, serve the country." "Daisy", a Filipina teacher with over 25 years of experience, shared these words with me during our afternoon interview in her Washington D.C. Columbia Heights neighborhood home. "Daisy's" words relate to her past eight-year journey transitioning from a Philippines based veteran teacher to her migration in the early 2010's with the intention of teaching the United States. These words describe the training process and the collective messaging across her educator journey dictated by professors, her recruitment agency[110], and the Philippines Overseas Employment Agency that oversees all training and flow of Filipino migrant workers abroad. Unfortunately, this vision did not go as planned for the accomplished educator who held a master's degree and was en route to their doctorate before leaving the homeland.

"Daisy" was part of a cohort of teachers who were unfortunately taken advantage of by their recruitment agency, Renaissance Staffing and Support, Inc.[111], led by labor trafficker Isidro Rodriguez. "Daisy" and hundreds of other migrant teacher hopefuls were promised full time teaching positions in the United States that ultimately never existed, but the teachers were still

[110] Within this context, recruitment agencies refer to private companies in the Philippines that provide a service to train, prepare, and fast-track potential Filipino migrant workers to seek and receive overseas employment abroad. The particular recruitment agency this chapter focuses on engages in illegal recruitment and labor trafficking,
[111] Isidro Rodriguez' illegal recruitment agency has taken multiple names, including Great Provider Service Exporters, Inc amongst many other names and iterations.

able to migrate only to find themselves without jobs, forced to take under the table low paying jobs to pay their recruitment agency debts, and threatened with deportation and violence if they hinted any contact with police and American authorities for support.

The trafficking cases within my research are all tied to illegal recruiter Isidro Rodriguez and represents one example of a whole Philippines labor trafficking industry. These cases are unique in that they feed off the teacher shortage in the United States. Isidro Rodriguez and other labor traffickers prey on the vulnerability of Filipinos seeking jobs overseas. Labor trafficking altogether has grown rampant in the Philippines, with the Department of Migrants publishing regularly updated lists of illegal recruitment agencies similar to Isidro Rodriguez' Great Provider Inc.[112] It is also important to note that Washington, D.C. was not the only site where teachers were trafficked. Many of the trafficked teachers were told they would arrive and work in North Carolina, Maryland, or Virginia. When they arrived, Isidro and his paid accomplices forced the teachers to remain in Washington D.C. where they would later realize their promised teaching positions did not exist and ultimately resort to working under the table positions at local daycares. The profession of teaching became vulnerable to these practices due to its perception as noble, highly trained, and educated, leading many to believe teachers would not be susceptible to labor trafficking.

Though labor traffickers like Isidro and illegal recruitment agencies play a huge role in these cases, this chapter engages the concept of the "Model Filipino Student Subject" I coin as a core tenet of how Filipino teachers are educated, trained, and forced to internalize their racialized subjectivity to serve not only the students they teach, but also to serve their country. This chapter

[112] Pazzibugan, Dona Z. "DMW to Start Publishing Names of Illegal Recruiters." Inquirer News. Accessed June 30, 2024. https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1649463/dmw-to-start-publishing-names-of-illegal-recruiters.

unpacks themes from my one-on-one qualitative interviews and group kuwentuhan/talk story sessions with Filipino trafficked teachers like "Daisy" to better understand how such a large number of Filipino educators were taken advantage of across a span of multiple years and cohorts. While being mindful not to shift away the blame from Isidro Rodriguez and other labor traffickers, I look into how the "Model Filipino Student" subjectivity, built through histories of U.S. colonial and westernized education in the early twentieth century Philippines, serves as a vital environment and internalized narrative for labor trafficking operations to thrive and continue harming future migrant workers.

The messaging Daisy shares above finds a deeper meaning once placed in the context of U.S.-Philippines colonial history and the "Model Filipino Student Subject": one must work hard to be the best Filipino student to then become the best Filipino educator. This is a goal not only driven by the desire to serve her students, but also by the need support her family and country, thus continuing to serve the empire/state power. Daisy's reference of serving the Philippines as the country represents a history of Filipino migrant workers racialized and uplifted as secondary model ambassadors for their nation. This notion of the OFW identity intertwined with a fervent sense of Philippines nationalism has been explored by many Critical Filipino Studies and migration scholars.[113] Through this chapter I look into the specific experiences the trafficked teachers share that correlate to how they are taught and forced to internalize their own version of the "Model Filipino Subject." "Do not speak out, even if you aren't paid…Just keep your head down and work, it will be better for your family back home." These were the lessons 31 year old migrant teacher "Amber" learned through Isidro's recruitment agency training. This common

[113] Rodriguez, Robyn Magalit. Migrants for Export: How the Philippine State Brokers Labor to the World. University of Minnesota Press, 2010.

message was forced upon many of the over 300 trafficked teachers impacted by Isidro's agency: Be obedient, work hard, and don't ask questions. These terms very much relate to the "Filipino Model Student Subject" dynamic rooted in U.S. colonial education in the Philippines. Amber and many other teachers shared memories of mandatory training sessions at Isidro Rodriguez' recruitment agency. Many teachers traveled hours to arrive at the Isidro's agency facility to then be indoctrinated with these same workshops that very much mimic the racialized "Brown Little Brother/Sister" depicted in the United States' benevolent assimilation of the Philippines.[114] This is the same view represented in the various political cartoons showcased in chapter two, a paternalistic attitude towards the lowly Filipino. The teachers were trained to not speak out on any issue pertaining to how they were treated, including late pay or missing salary. The teachers were also instructed to obey all commands by their U.S. based employers as well as to follow the strict guidelines Isidro placed around isolation from the outside world and focusing on work. Over a century after the initial U.S. colonial schooling system in the Philippines, these similar lessons of internalizing the "Model Filipino Student" now haunt the teachers through their overseas migrant worker training. These narratives of passiveness, sacrifice, and obedience, shaped by US imperial and neo-colonialism, have transcended generations to haunt Filipino migrant workers, the trafficked teachers included.

Through the trafficked teachers' first-hand accounts and interviews I explore how their educational experiences, their professional teacher workshops leading up to migration, and the training sessions led by their recruitment agencies/traffickers have all built towards an ingrained culture of subservience and obedience. This internalized racial and gendered narrative that has

[114] Barrows, David P. "History of the Philippines." In the digital collection The United States and Its Territories, 1870 - 1925: The Age of Imperialism. University of Michigan Library Digital Collections. Accessed June 30, 2024. https://name.umdl.umich.edu/AHZ9242.0001.001.

been forced upon, and thankfully years later rejected by, the trafficked teachers has been a common thread across all of my interviews, one that directly shows up as a version of the "Model Filipino Student/Subject". Some shake their heads about how foolish they felt to fall into a submissive response and stay quiet about their trafficking circumstances due to fear and financial needs. Others reacted with anger, which later fueled their collective response through community organizing and resistance to the people and systems that have allowed such massive numbers of labor trafficking. These reactions imply that teachers' collectively deep-seated regret in trusting Isidro Rodriguez. Some responded through frustration, seeing the system set up that forced them to trust and depend on Isidro's company for loans and financial assistance. These multiple layers of control and dependency built a system that isolated and prevented many migrant teachers from backing away from their application process. As Amber says, "I already spent so much time and money, borrowed from so many family members to get to this point, I closed my eyes and continued with Isidro, even though I felt there was something wrong." Isidro's system of facilitating teacher debt to his company would force many teachers to push through with their migrant labor process ultimately finding themselves trafficked in the United States.

My work in this chapter contributes to the discourse on the Philippines' Labor Export Policy's human impact that has been established by Robyn Rodriguez (2011), Anna Guevarra (2010), and many other scholars. I take a deeper look into the transformation of the Philippines education system, and its sequel in overseas migrant worker trainings and workshops, as an exporter of malleable migrant labor in education. Grounded in chapter two's historical analysis of what I coin the "Model Filipino Student/Subject", I draw connections across generations and locations between the forced internalized subjectivity and racialization of trafficked Filipino

teachers to how current Filipino college students may take on similar sentiments and values of overwork, sacrifice, and martyrdom within school and student organizations as signals of productivity.

I also take a deeper look into how these migrant teacher hopefuls were trained, conditioned, and engaged with regard to their role as educators and migrant labor. I look into how this role of migrant teacher training operates within colleges and Overseas Filipino Worker (OFWs) training institutions. For the latter, I look at both formalized training processes under the Philippines Overseas Employment Agency and through private institutions such as recruitment agencies like Isidro Rodriguez' Renaissance Staffing and Support, Inc (also known as Great Provider Service Exporters, Inc.) I also engage Philippine Normal University (PNU), the Philippines' premier Educator College, a campus where many of the trafficked teachers have received their teaching degrees or training experience. Philippine Normal University is deemed progressive and contemporary due to its entrenched in westernized modes of education, learning, and teaching praxis, a characteristic that has historic roots within the U.S. colonial education in the Philippines as discussed in the previous chapter.

I introduce some of the cases of Trafficked Teachers I interviewed and connect their experiences to the "Model Filipino Student/Subject" dynamic built through the evolution of U.S. western colonial education in the 1900's Philippines and further shaped under the migrant labor export system defined and analyzed by a critical migration scholar Robyn Rodriguez[115]. I examine the cases of trafficked teachers under a racial capitalist analytical lens, understanding the external and internal machinations of identity, labor, and work in terms of one's value and

[115] Rodriguez, Robyn Magalit. *Migrants for Export: How the Philippine State Brokers Labor to the World.* University of Minnesota Press, 2010.

worth. This work connects to a similar racial capitalist analysis with current Filipino college students and their experiences with imposter syndrome fueled burn out as it relates to the "Model Filipino Student/Subject" dynamic.

The Conditioning and Exploitation of Trafficked Filipino Migrant Teachers

> "I had been promised a good life in the [United] States. I was promised more pay, better life, better ability to support my kid and family back in the Philippines, I just had to pay the recruiter [Isidro] some thousands. It was a lot of money, but I was told it was an investment for the future…. Little did I know, my future would be jobless and trafficked in this unknown area."
>
> - "Ethel", Spokane WA

In December 2013, over 50 Filipino teachers based in Washington, D.C. who shared Ethel's experiences publicly came out as victims of labor trafficking. The victims, many who were teachers for over a decade in the Philippines prior to their planned migration, were labor trafficked by Isidro Rodriguez, President of recruitment agency Renaissance Staffing and Support, Inc./Great Provider Service Exporters Inc. Philippine Recruitment Agencies are defined as any individual or organization authorized by the POEA to facilitate and guide the recruitment and placement of migrant workers for jobs overseas.[116] Isidro Rodriguez lured the teachers with promises of high salary jobs as K-12 teachers in the North Carolina and Washington D.C. public

[116] Department of Migrant Workers, Republic of the Philippines. Q & A on Revised POEA Rules 2016. Accessed June 25, 2024. https://dmw.gov.ph/archives/laws&rules/files/Q%20&%20A%20on%20Revised%20POEA%20Rules%202016.pdf.

school systems. Like Ethel, the teachers were enamored by what they now scoff at as the "American Dream" and the promise to financially sustain themselves, their families back home, and building new opportunities they were told never existed in the Philippines. Many teachers viewed the sacrifice of both money and being away abroad as an OFW teacher like Ethel: this was an investment for their family's future. This narrative of leaving home as both dual sacrifice and investment has been built from the early stages of Americanized education in the Philippines to the 1970's push for migrant workers to move abroad and support their struggling families and their country.[117] Upon arriving in the United States, however, the work opportunities Isidro guaranteed did not exist. Instead, the teachers were met with debt bondage, uncertain immigration status, and abuse. Trapped in an elaborate labor trafficking ring, many teachers lost hope and thought they would be indebted to Isidro for years to come.

This chapter focuses on these trafficked teachers who eventually escaped Isidro's labor trafficking ring and some served as founding members of the GABRIELA USA[118] Washington D.C. chapter, part of a grassroots-based alliance of Filipina rights groups in the Philippines.[119] I identify experiences and patterns from the teachers' collective experiences that translate to a renewed "Model Filipino Student Subject" haunting, from their training exercises to the ways they are racialized and silenced upon being trafficked into the United States. I further examine the GABRIELA migrant teachers' collective efforts of resistance and healing later in this work. My interviews with the teachers provide a window into how their education, teacher training, and penultimate migrant worker workshops under both Isidro's labor trafficking organization and

[117] Brice, Anne. "Why Are There So Many Filipino Nurses in the U.S.?" Berkeley News. Last modified May 28, 2019. https://news.berkeley.edu/2019/05/28/filipino-nurses-in-the-us-podcast/.
[118] *GABRIELA USA*, 2012 gabrielausa.org/about/.
[119] Gabriela D.C. is a chapter of the umbrella organization Gabriela International

even the POEA established the conditions for their trafficking. The teachers' experiences cross these various training and workshop spaces, as seen through these interviews, serve as a vehicle to indoctrinate a modern version of the "Model Filipino Student/Subject": 1) Be a subservient, obedient worker, 2) Sacrifice for the better good of the family, community, and country, and 3) Assuming one's worth is based on their ability to labor. In addition, I also unpack the GABRIELA D.C. chapter as a site of transformative healing for the trafficked teachers and their family members.[120] Using participatory action research and interviews with over 50 trafficking survivors, I connect the GABRIELA teachers' testimonies to Randall Collins' study (2001) on emotional energy within social movement building. Collins' *Social Movements and the Focus of Emotional Attention* examines how an individual's initial emotions at the face of oppression, such as fear, sorrow, pain, are transformed into what Collins defines as "emotional energy" (i.e., determination, hope, anger).[121] My project later traces this transformation within the unique experiences of Filipino trafficked teachers, analyzing the role emotions play as a catalyst for healing, community organizing, and social change. This analysis adds to the current study on emotions within social movements by observing how transformed emotional energy drives the teachers' movement for justice and systemic change.

Case Background and the Migrant Labor Condition(ing)s to Traffick Teachers:

Within this section I go over the trafficking case history, including how the teachers were initially recruited and thus trafficked to Washington, D.C. I also engage the "Model Filipino

[120] I spent three years organizing with the D.C. chapter of Gabriela USA and documenting their movement building in the greater Migrant Labor Rights movement.

[121] Collins defines emotional energy as emotion transformed and arising from consciously taking part in collective organizing. Goodwin, Jeff, et al. "Social Movements and the Focus of Emotional Attention." *Passionate Politics: Emotions and Social Movements*, University of Chicago Press, 2001, p. 28.

Student/Subject" framework as a key factor in creating the conditions for Filipino migrant teachers to be so easily trafficked, this being a combination of 1) the development of the Philippines' Migrant Labor Export system that is manufactured in a way to educator, train, and encourage Filipinos to work abroad and 2) the over romanticized narrative embedded in a Overseas Filipino Worker culture centering self-sacrifice, national pride, and obedience, a narrative reified under a Philippines education system that is in itself rooted in U.S. colonialism and western imperialist logic. I provide a historical connection between these current conditions of commodified Filipino migrant teachers and the early development of the "Model Filipino Student/Subject."

In 2009, Isidro Rodriguez used his recruitment agency to traffic Filipino teachers applying for employment abroad in the United States. Isidro has currently been nationally identified as an illegal recruiter and labor trafficker, having trafficked hundreds of migrant workers beyond the migrant teachers' case central to this project. He is currently still at large and on the run abroad, with his location currently unknown. His agency operated in Metro Manila, Philippines under multiple names, including Renaissance Staffing Support Center, Great Provider Service Exporters Inc., and World Goal Corporation.[122] Over the span of five years, Isidro trafficked over 500 teachers using false promises of lucrative teaching positions ($24/hour), free housing, and free transportation – promises that trumped the $11/hour positions most of the teachers made in the Philippines. When I asked Annemarie why she decided to apply for Isidro's agency and work abroad, she explained, "The pay Isidro showed us was too good to

[122] Locsin, Joel. "Alleged Notorious Illegal Recruiter Isidro Rodriguez Gets 11 Years." *GMA News Online*. November 25, 2014. Accessed June 5, 2024. https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/pinoyabroad/dispatch/389654/alleged-notorious-illegal-recruiter-isidro-rodriguez-gets-11-years/story/.

believe… Just a few months in the [United] States and I can pay my sister's schooling [tuition] for the coming year. Of course I want to take this opportunity to teach abroad, I would get four times more what I am paid here [in the Philippines]." Annemarie and many teachers viewed these promises as once in a lifetime and a solution to many of their family's financial struggles. Many teachers noted their low pay teaching in the Philippines, with Annemarie describing their job as "...a job built on their passion and not on the dollar." She explained there is an inherent self-sacrifice that occurs for Filipino teachers knowing their salary will seldom match the amount of labor they put into their students and schools.[123] The majority of teachers interviewed agreed that on paper Isidro's offered opportunity was easy to agree to, but all of the teachers have now regretted their decision, recognizing the false promises laid out by the recruitment agency.

Past scholarly work confirms similar motivations for why other Filipino migrant teachers decided to work in the United States. A 2007 study on Filipino migrant teachers by Hao and de Guzman identified eight unique reasons why Filipino teachers choose their profession, such as liberating and employment security and stability which relates to "Annemarie" and other trafficked teacher's motivations. A few other reasons (altruism, migratory, and idealistic) can be drawn in connection to our "Model Filipino Student/Subject" framework.[124] Another 2018 study on Filipino migrant teachers based in Native American Reservation Schools affirm these shared motivations with the trafficked teachers in this case study. In this study, Pagatpatan Aranda identified these motivations to be "...personal growth, economic improvement, and cultural

[123] Of course, this is not a Filipino teacher specific predicament, given the recent issue of American educators' low salaries compared to their expected amount of teaching and labor.

[124] Hao, Arleen B., and Allan B. de Guzman. 2007. "Why Go into Teaching? Understanding Filipino Preservice Teachers' Reasons for Entering Teacher Education." KEDI Journal of Educational Policy 4 (2): 115–35.https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=eue&AN=28452077&site=ehost-live&scope=site.

exchange while leaving behind financial struggles and bureaucratic frustrations."[125] A 2021 dissertation by Jeffrey Chua explores Texas based Filipino migrant teachers, who state their core reason for leaving their homeland: "Seeking Greener Pastures."[126] "Greener Pastures", an idiom for more abundant opportunities across the world, has appeared in almost 80% of my trafficked teacher interviews and talk story sessions. This is not surprising, as part of the "Model Filipino Student/Subject" building block of "Colonial Mentality" seeks a pathway to "American-ness and/or Whiteness" away from an internalized perception of one's own non-western culture and way of being as inferior.[127] This tenet of white supremacist "Colonial Mentality" is of course indoctrinated and forced upon Filipinos through the initial iterations of U.S. colonial education in the Philippines where western standards (i.e. English as the language of the learned) and values were championed within the classroom curriculum.

Lora Bartlett's *Migrant Teachers: How American Schools Import Labor* showcases the other side of this push and pull for Filipino teachers abroad, describing how poor teacher retention challenges low resource inner city school districts, pressuring many to seek out a cheap and reliable teacher workforce in the form of Filipino migrant teachers. Bartlett does not place the blame on the migrant teachers, but on the school districts who utilize the Filipino migrant teachers as a "cheap, stopgap option", leading to a lack of support for these newly hired migrant teachers and a usually horrific educational experience for their predominantly student of color

[125] Pagatpatan Aranda, Anna Belinda. 2023. "MIGRATION EXPERIENCES OF FILIPINO TEACHERS IN NATIVE AMERICAN RESERVATION SCHOOLS". International Journal of Arts, Sciences and Education 4 (4):11-29. https://www.mail.ijase.org/index.php/ijase/article/view/298.
[126] Chua, Jeffrey. "The Lived Experiences of Filipino Teachers Teaching in Texas: A Transcendental Phenomenological Study." Stephen F. Austin State University, 2021.
[127] David, E. J. R. 2013. *Brown Skin, White Minds : Filipino-/American Postcolonial Psychology (with Commentaries) = Kayumanggi Balat, Puti Isip*. Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing Inc.

classrooms.[128] The way the school districts in Bartlett's study view Filipino migrant teachers is similar to how the trafficked teachers in my project have been treated and viewed by the systems that initially planned to hire them. These studies across Filipino migrant teachers of various locations and generations affirm a shared set of motivations that have driven them to seek teaching opportunities abroad, but these motivations were not isolated nor naturally established, but were cultivated through the history of U.S. colonialism in the Philippines' education system, embedding a "Model Filipino Student/Subject" dynamic across students and, later on, multiple generations of migrant workers/teachers who are trained through the Philippines' Labor Export System.[129]

In order to become clients of Isidro Rodriguez' recruitment agency, applicants were required to pay excessive fees for training seminars and H1B visas[130], visas that allow overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) to work in specialty occupations in the United States.[131] On average, the teachers paid Isidro's agency $18,000-$20,000 for what he vaguely explained as "processing fees." Annemarie, and many of the teachers, still believed this high initial cost was a worthy sacrifice to secure long term financial stability for themselves and their families: "At the time, it was a lot of course, I even had to go door to door to ask our neighbors and family for donation and loan, but ultimately I felt like this sacrifice for a little time would mean long term success and good future for me, my family, and I would be able to pay back any loan very easy." Many

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[128] Bartlett, Lora. Migrant Teachers: How American Schools Import Labor. Cambridge, MA and London, England: Harvard University Press, 2013. https://doi.org/10.4159/harvard.9780674726345

[129] Rodriguez, Robyn Magalit. *Migrants for Export: How the Philippine State Brokers Labor to the World.* University of Minnesota Press, 2010.

[130] Established by the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act, H1B visas allow U.S. employers to hire foreign workers in specialty skilled occupations as long as applicants have completed at least a bachelor's degree.

[131] Department of Homeland Security. "Characteristics of H1B Specialty Occupation Workers." *USCIS*, 2012, www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/USCIS/Resources/Reports%20and%20Studies/H-1B/h1b-fy-12-characteristics.pdf+++.

teachers shared Annemarie's experience of pulling funds through family and community means, leading to sold family businesses and loans from neighbors. This also proves how the teachers' decision to leave the Philippines serves as a communal decision and an unanimously understood sacrifice needed to better many lives.

Unfortunately, most of the applicants turned trafficked teachers were unable to pay all of the recruitment agency's fees, leading to Isidro withholding their Philippine passports until payments were completed. This theme of sacrifice is not unique to these cohorts of trafficked migrant teachers, as it has haunted Filipino migrant workers across generations and fields of work. The 2002 documentary "Chain of Love " provides an in-depth analysis on how Filipino migrant nannies tend to provide care labor for their employers' families and children abroad.[132] This leads to the Filipina nannies' own children and families being cared for by other working-class Filipinas, thus establishing a system, and the film's title, a chain of love. A similar chain is formed in the trafficked teachers' case, not only of love, but a chain of multigenerational sacrifice: time, labor, and money. This common debt forced most teachers to either 1) put their application processes on hold for a few years, 2) request additional financial support from their families and friends, or 3) the most common option of receiving a high interest loan from one of Isidro Rodriguez' related loan sharks. The third option served as one of Isidro's intricate trafficking tactics to financially paralyze the teachers and force them into a subdued suspension financially dependent on their trafficker.

The fact that many teachers and their families sold their small businesses, land, ancestral homes, and took out high interest loans proves the sense of legitimacy of which Isidro's agency operated. Rookie teacher "Wanda's" family made such sacrifice stating, "What hurts after

[132] Meerman, Marije, and First Run/Icarus Films. 2001. *Chain of Love*. Brooklyn, N.Y.: First Run/Icarus Films.

realizing I was trafficked illegally wasn't just the fact I was alone in Virginia with no job, but my family had to sell their small business and little land they had to help me pay the fees for my recruiter and visa process." As the families and neighbors bought into each migrant teacher's dream to succeed abroad, many of the teachers saw their realized trafficking as failing those same families and neighbors who made their own sacrifices for this opportunity. This led some teachers to not share their trafficking situation with their family members, fearing this would cause more stress for those who had already sacrificed so much for the teachers to reach the U.S.

For the majority of the trafficked teachers, as seen in the above testimonials, their initial decision to seek teaching jobs in the U.S. was not just an independent process, it was a communal decision. It was a family and communal investment in time, money, and energy to get them to the United States to teach. Many recruitment agencies affirm and utilize the Philippines narrative of migrant workers needing to make sacrifices for their family's future as a way to secure migrant workers' buy-in and investment through paying these high processing fees. This discourse of migrant worker self-sacrifice has shown up in all of my trafficked teacher interviews, either as a core belief and motivation or as a shared language the teachers engaged during their recruitment agency training and workshops. This in itself becomes an example of how the "Model Filipino Student/Subject" operates within these illegal recruitment and trafficking cases through a sense of indebtedness to one's family and country.

Once the teachers arrived in the United States, however, the teachers' promised teaching positions were not available, forcing them to find jobs at local preschools and elder care facilities.[133] "Maxine," one of the older teachers at 68, shared, "What a humiliation, you know? I

[133] It is still unknown how Isidro was able to get the teachers through the H1B visa process without guaranteed employment. He had close ties with school administrators who would skype interview the applicants and may have potentially produced the necessary paperwork to help them obtain their H1B Visas. The teachers were under the

have taught for almost 25 years, a silver anniversary! Just to find myself stuck in D.C. with no one, told the job I was accepted for is no more…. What humiliation to just be told by Isidro and his crooks that I just need to work under the table: childcare, cleaning, whatever! I was so mad, but more I was humiliated." "Maxine's" pained expression here echoes all of the teachers' interviews and group kuwentuhan talk story sessions when describing the moment they realized they had no job and that their recruiter's made false promises. Maxine's words best describe the traumatic experience of realizing the moment you worked so hard for, that many friends and family sacrificed for you, has been a false promise. The teachers' responses ranged from anger to confusion to distraught. Upon uncovering their lack of promised positions and Isidro's trafficking scheme, a small number of teachers immediately left the U.S. to go back to the Philippines – many of whom refrained from speaking out about their experiences in fear of Isidro's physical and legal threats. Isidro would force many teachers into silence, stating that if they tell their family about their situation, he would move to sue their families or send his workers to physically harass them. Many of the teachers shared they feared harm done to their families more than harm done to themselves. A majority of the teachers remained in the U.S., hoping to make the best of their situation. "Jean," a 45 year old mother of two she had to leave behind in the Philippines, shared, "I waited so long to try and get hired in the U.S., but Isidro and his company promised a quick process and he delivered on it…. If only I knew his promise was false, I wouldn't be here stuck without family, without a job." This feeling of being isolated and stuck was a common thread across the teachers, many of which shared mental health challenges arising from feeling alone, afraid, and silenced. As Jean described, the teachers were lied to and

assumption their whole H1B process was legal and legitimate, having no idea they would arrive in the U.S. without secured teaching positions.

taken advantage of. The teachers explained how a combination of growing loan debt, the need to support their families back in the Philippines, and shame ultimately led them to accept any job opportunity they were offered.

Most teachers reverted to working low-paying jobs in daycare facilities and elderly care homes, jobs that they were neither trained nor prepared for. Ironically, as the many aforementioned studies on Filipino migrant teachers identified, the trafficked teachers' desire for "Greener Pastures" abroad and economic mobility had led them to even more drastic financial precarity while alone in a strange environment. The teachers did everything they needed to do under the POEA and Philippines guidelines in regard to being a successful migrant worker and teacher: they studied hard and received their education, they developed their teaching praxis through further training and experience, and they applied through the correct methods to obtain a teaching position abroad through additional recruitment services. "Jean" states, "I don't understand why me…. I did good in school, I follow the guidelines they told us, I applied and was told I got the job. Why did this happen when I followed the rules and was good?" Jean followed her own reading of the "Model Filipino Student Subject," haunted by its pressure to perform perfection and holding expectations of freedom, stability, and respect. There is a sense of self conflict and frustration here for Jean, who felt she had followed all the rules and worked hard, believing she should be rewarded rather than suffering. Jean and others started wondering what they did wrong. Through chasing their own learned and internalized version of the "Model Filipino Student/Subject", a process that began for them in the westernized Philippines schooling system and reaffirmed by both the POEA's and recruitment agencies' racialization of migrant workers as obedient and subservient, these teachers still found themselves trafficked and without resources, only left to themselves to receive the blame.

Philippine Normal University's Colonial Roots and the Struggles of Filipino Teachers:

It is common for the teaching profession in the Philippines to coincide with insufficient pay and limited career advancement pathways. "Jasmine", a young teacher in her late twenties, described her family's living conditions as one of the premiere catalysts for her seeking work abroad. "We didn't have much as a family, but we were at least together. As the eldest daughter I felt it was my duty to sacrifice and do what is needed to send money home, so that is when I asked my old professor at Philippine Normal University advice since the teaching jobs salary there in the Philippines cannot really support my family, he said I can go abroad to make more and send back enough for my family to live better…. That led me to Isidro's Greater Provider Inc [recruitment agency] and I was convinced of a future with financial stability and the opportunity to live in the [United] States." Many of the interviewed teachers affirm this notion Jasmine describes, but also uplift the teaching profession's benefits in job security through teachers always being in need as well as the positive change they enact in their communities.

Surprisingly, many of the teachers interviewed who had attended Philippine Normal University spoke of the frequent flyers linked to one of Isidro Rodriguez' migrant teacher recruitment agencies. Some even shared similar experiences to "Jasmine" in which their professors would strongly urge them and other teachers in training to seek Isidro's help in securing teaching positions abroad. Philippine Normal University has a peculiar history as it was born out of the Philippine Commission's Act Number 74 on January 21st, 1901. This laid out a strategy to mass train and develop cohorts of Filipino educators ready to teach a Westernized

education curriculum under U.S. colonial rule.[134] Philippine Commission President Howard Taft had appointed David Barrows as superintendent of schools, further intertwining Philippine Normal University with U.S. colonial education history and the social construction of a "Model Filipino Student/Subject" framework and culture. Fast forward a century, and PNU's 2011 Presidential Report shares their overarching campus vision for teacher education and training:

> "PNU shall be known nationally and internationally as the primary center of excellence in teacher education and educational leadership in the Philippines and in Asia. As the established producer of knowledge workers in the field of education, it shall be the primary source of high-quality teachers and education managers that can directly inspire and shape the quality of Filipino students and graduates in the country and the world."[135]

Philippine Normal University, the premier educator training campus in the nation, prides itself in not only training great educators, but also highly recruitable teachers to work abroad. This vision statement highlights this emphasis on efficiently producing Filipino educators to not only serve their country, but those around the globe. This emphasis on service and global engagement directly connects to the aforementioned "Model Filipino Student/Subject" framework as PNU's language recognizes the importance of mass producing educators for the international economy and the rising global need of educators.

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[134] Quodala, Schatzi. "'Did You Know: Philippine Normal University'." Philippine Daily Inquirer, September 3, 2013. Accessed October 3, 2014.
[135] Philippine Normal University. "Vision, Mission, Quality Policy, and Strategic Areas." Accessed June 5, 2024. https://www.pnu.edu.ph/vision-mission-quality-policy-and-strategic-areas/.

A similar education centric campus, Philippine National University boasts "...the institution's strengths and fields of expertise, leading to increased international recognition, quality improvement, and enhanced student recruitment practices."[136] This emphasis on efficiently training the next generation of scholars and educators to then just as quickly ship them abroad is an overarching theme for the teachers interviewed. "Samantha", who had just graduated from Philippine Normal University, affirms this thematic messaging, "For many of us in the teaching field at PNU, there's as much pressure to be a great teacher as there is to look out abroad for work…. I think most of my batchmates also felt the pressure to work overseas…. The campus professors pressured that path, but also the realities of low pay and struggles for teachers in the Philippines also pushed us out [to go abroad]." Several other interviewees confirmed that financial disparity and struggles forced many teachers they knew to take a chance working abroad. The competitive nature of Filipino teachers is seen not only under the university visions, but also through the interviews and studies on Filipino teachers across the board. Reyes and Valencia, two scholars from Philippine Normal University, studied the phenomenon of overachieving, hyper competitive Filipino migrant teachers. Their study was "...highlighted by [the] competitiveness level of teachers and their perceived losses and gains while teaching abroad. Teacher's competitiveness was indicated by their salaries, promotions, incentives and other benefits received due to their services to the host institutions."[137] This competitive nature of Filipino migrant teachers, studied under the premier educator's university in the nation, underlines the inherent "Model Filipino Student/Subject" nature intertwined with an internalized

[136] National University. "National University." Accessed June 5, 2024. https://national-u.edu.ph/.
[137] Reyes, C. Q., and M. Valencia. "Competitive Edge of Migrant Filipino Teachers in Selected Countries." Paper presented at the XVIII ISA World Congress of Sociology, Yokohama, Japan, July 13-19, 2014. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/268138812.

notion of the model minority myth. This pressure to be the perfect student turned teacher while representative of your homeland haunts the trafficked teachers, many believing their trafficking case is a sign of their personal failure or a consequence of sinning against the expected "Model Filipino Student/Subject" dynamic.

"Samantha" doubled down on this shared tension, "There is an assumption, you can only have a good life as a teacher if you already have money in the family or if you work abroad…. We are taught that if we follow our trainings, don't cause trouble for any others, our silence and hard work is rewarded. We will live a happy teacher life! But what now, even after I do everything as asked and perform everything perfectly, what now?" This frustrated quote from "Samantha" encapsulates the shared struggle many teachers have with their predicament. They all felt they followed the rules expected to become a successful Filipino migrant teacher: they paid their dues, literally in the financial sense and in the experiential teaching field, but they still found themselves trafficked and struggling. This becomes a critical moment for many of the trafficked teachers who came face to face with the "Model Filipino Student/Subject" narrative they have been fed through their educational and teaching journey.

Veteran teacher "Rochelle" proclaims through tears in our kuwentuhan circle interview, "It's bullshit what we go through just to survive…. We played the good student, the great teachers, the sacrificial lamb for this field, for our country, but now we are left to die, struggling to understand what to do to help ourselves. It has been silence from our recruiter, who turned out to be our trafficker. Even more silence from the Philippines who lie about protecting their workers abroad…. We are all fed up." Many other teachers, pushed to tears, agreed with her frustration and comforted "Rochelle" during her moment of cathartic vulnerability. They all felt they followed the guidelines of a model citizen, perfect student, and/or ideal educator abroad.

Many teachers began sharing about the lengths they went to obtain required and optional workshops, “Ethel” herself having to take 3 different jeepneys two and a half hours one way from her small town just to complete a one hour training telling her to “be obedient and quiet abroad… do not stir trouble for your employer.” The integration of the “Model Filipino Student/Subject” culture has been seen in their educational journey, in the country’s colonial history, and now in their hired recruitment agency’s requirements.

To add to “Rochelle’s” frustration above, Philippines public school teachers typically receive salaries that are insufficient to meet the cost of living, compelling many to seek additional sources of income, driving them to either burn out juggling multiple jobs or seeking higher paying opportunities overseas. This economic strain is compounded by the lack of professional growth and advancement within the educational system, as promotions are infrequent and based on stringent and often opaque criteria. These constraints in the profession are seen in St. Louis University scholar Faith Balajo’s research (2020) on Louisian educators’ first few years teaching abroad, describing the goals “Filipino teachers [had to] capitalize on the globalization process to perceive a bigger picture of their professional roles….” [138] Consequently, many Filipino teachers find themselves trapped in a cycle of low pay and minimal career progression, leading them to look for better opportunities abroad, some tapping into recruitment agencies promising quick and efficient pathways to high paying teaching positions overseas.

[138] Balajo, Faith Moriah. "Globalization and the Lived Experiences of Louisian Migrant Teachers." Saint Louis University, 2020. Accessed June 2, 2024. https://www.academia.edu/79372107/Globalization_and_the_Lived_Experiences_of_Louisian_Migrant_Teachers.

Migrant Labor Export:

The Perfect Conditions to Traffick the "Model Filipino Student Subject"

As mentioned throughout this project, as a response to financial struggles across the nation, the Philippines institutionalized a migrant labor export system in the 1970's amidst national turmoil and underemployment.[139] This system, established by dictator President Ferdinand Marcos' 1974 Labor Export Policy as an attempt to quell national unrest and financial woes, facilitated a system to condition, train, and push Filipinos at large towards overseas employment and global needs.[140] Instead of championing domestic job growth while improving national working conditions, the Philippines equated the pathway towards migrant labor as the premier access to generational success and wealth. Marcos aimed for this new migrant labor force to build a new source of foreign remittances in hopes of supporting the failing Philippines peso. This of course led to a country perpetually dependent on foreign jobs and while continually ignoring the need for domestic support for its national unemployment and underemployment rates.[141] This strategy deeply influenced the country's labor market and the regular outflow of Filipino migrant workers across the diaspora to this day. This sets up the penultimate environment for migrant workers, such as our interviewed teachers, to not only be pushed towards an overseas worker pathway, but to also be trafficked within this well formulated production of migrant workers.

The pursuit of overseas teaching jobs, driven by the lack of viable domestic opportunities, exposes Filipino teachers to the risk of labor trafficking. Many educators,

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[139] Rodriguez, Migrants for Export.

[140] Guevarra, Anna Romina. 2010. Marketing Dreams, Manufacturing Heroes: The Transnational Labor Brokering of Filipino Workers. Piscataway: Rutgers University Press.

[141] Parreñas, Rhacel Salazar . Servants of Globalization : Women, Migration and Domestic Work. Stanford, Calif. :Stanford University Press, 2001.

desperate for better pay and professional growth, fall victim to exploitative recruiters and employers abroad. They face harsh working conditions, contractual violations, and various forms of abuse.[142] This grim reality underscores the need for systemic changes both within the Philippines' educational sector and its broader migrant labor export policies. Ensuring fair wages and career growth for teachers domestically could reduce their vulnerability to labor trafficking and promote a more sustainable development path for the country. The interconnected struggles between low pay, limited upward mobility, and a systemic force towards overseas employment have created a troubling situation for Filipino teachers. Changing away from this dependency abroad requires a multifaceted approach, including educational reforms and a rethinking of the country's labor export strategy. By improving worker conditions, the Philippines can better protect its educators from exploitation and build a more robust and self-sufficient economy away from this "Model Filipino Student/Subject" formation.

Unfortunately, lack of real systemic change as well as a continued affirmation of the "Model Filipino Student/Subject" racialization furthers along trafficking patterns with the D.C. teachers' cases serving as one example. Sadly, these types of labor trafficking cases are growing more rampant in the Philippines. Scholar activist Dr. Robyn Rodriguez provides further language and deeper understanding of how the Philippines' Labor Export Policy began this nonstop system of migrant labor production. A major source of these issues, including the rise of labor trafficking, is due to what Rodriguez defines as "forced labor migration."[143] In "Migrants for Export: How the Philippine State Brokers Labor to the World," Rodriguez examines how the

[142] Gonzales, Nicole. "'Our Number One Export Is People': Gabriela USA Aims to End Human Trafficking." NBC News, October 26, 2016. https://www.nbcnews.com/news/asian-america/our-number-one-export-people-gabriela-usa-aims-end-human-n667286.
[143] Rodriguez, Robyn Magalit. Migrants for Export: How the Philippine State Brokers Labor to the World. University of Minnesota Press, 2010.

Philippine government transformed itself into a "labor brokerage state," a system in which the government actively recruits its citizens to work as Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) in foreign nations to serve global market needs while simultaneously benefiting from the remittances sent back by their citizens. [144] With an estimated 2.2 million OFWs working abroad bringing in a record high $2.56 billion in remittances[145], the Philippine economy has grown dependent on these high levels of remittances. [146]

To continually increase OFW remittance revenue, the Philippines established the Philippines Overseas Employment Agency (POEA), a government agency that established a quick and efficient training process to mass-produce and export thousands of OFWs each year.[147] This system of forced migration is the root of the recent influx of skilled Filipino labor trafficking cases in America, including the teachers' trafficking cases. This system of labor brokerage makes it ripe for illegal recruiters, such as Isidro Rodriguez, to exploit Filipinos who are desperate to find well-paying jobs abroad.

The Intersection of Trafficking Narratives and Emotional Energy

Lisa Lowe's "Work, Immigration, and Gender" chapter in *Immigrant Acts* (2007) examines the role of migrant labor testimonies as "…compelling not only for the facts it relates, but also for… chart[ing] a movement from being an aggrieved seamstress to forging a collective

[144] Remittances are any sum of money being sent by a migrant worker to their families or dependents abroad.
[145] From 2016 reports.
[146] Philippine Statistics Authority BERSALES, LISA GRACE S. "Total Number of OFWs Estimated at 2.2 Million." *Philippine Statistics Authority*, 27 Apr. 2017, psa.gov.ph/content/total-number-ofws-estimated-22-million-results-2016-survey-overseas-filipinos.
[147] Ibid.

campaign for back pay."[148] Lowe illustrates how Chinese seamstress testimonials not only mapped out their individual and collective progression onto social movement building, but also delivers a unique connection between the seamstresses and social relations. The GABRIELA D.C. trafficked teacher testimonies serve a similar role. These narratives document the teachers' paths from trafficking survivors to community organizers. They also provide a unique insight into the emotions brought forth by trafficking and how these emotions are transformed through their individual and collective healing and organizing.

I frame my research within Randall Collins' study on emotional energy within social movements. Collins identifies two ways emotion is transmuted within social movements: 1) the amplification of initial emotions such as fear, anger, and outrage and 2) transforming initial emotions into new emotional energy, a development shaped by identifying with a collective movement or group (i.e., solidarity, determination).[149] I frame the migrant teachers and college students' emotions as both a consequence of the "Model Filipino Student Subject" haunting and as a catalyst of their future resistance against this haunting. What is unique is how amplified and transformed emotions become the driving force within their paths for healing and organizing.

[148] Lowe, Lisa. "Work, Immigration, Gender." *Immigrant Acts: on Asian American Cultural Politics*, Duke University Press, 2007, p. 155.

[149] Goodwin, Jeff, et al. "Social Movements and the Focus of Emotional Attention." *Passionate Politics: Emotions and Social Movements*, University of Chicago Press, 2001, p. 29.

"Hiya" and Deskilling

> "The worst part of the trauma is the shame, the *hiya*. You will always have that feeling following you around. You always want to protect yourself from shame, not just yourself, but your family…"
>
> - Ethel, Spokane WA

Ethel identifies another unique experience shared amongst all of the survivors of trafficking: "hiya," a Tagalog word for "shame." While Ethel has identified many significant issues she has experienced as a trafficking victim, she, along with many of the other teachers, focus on "hiya" as the most traumatic initial emotions. "Hiya" is what Collins would identify as the initial emotion most teachers experience as victims of human trafficking. Following Collins' concept of emotional energy, "hiya" undergoes a process of transmutation. The teachers' collective realization of being trafficked further amplifies feelings of "hiya" and anxiety. Future rituals (i.e., rallies, story sharing) transform these feelings into anger and motivation, fueling their movement's momentum.

The teachers describe "hiya" as a shame that not only affects them individually, but one that also extends to their families in the Philippines. This familial focus is important when analyzing the teachers' narratives of trauma, healing, and empowerment. As Ethel refers to in the quote above, there is a significant duty to protect their families from the "hiya" of their trafficking situation, even as they experience suffering at the hands of Isidro. This need to prevent familial shame becomes a major reason why so many teachers remained in the United States. In addition to protecting their families from "hiya," many of the teachers identified both economic pressure and legal reasons as contributing factors to their emotional and mental

trauma. In the following sections, I analyze the emotions fueled by these economic and legal factors.

Anti-Slavery International defines debt bondage as instances "…when a person is forced to work to pay off a debt. They are tricked into working for little or no pay, with no control over their debt."[150] In the trafficked teachers' case, a majority of the survivors took out high-interest loans from two sources: 1) Isidro's recruitment agency and 2) legitimate Philippine independent loan agencies. The teachers perceived these loans as small sacrifices in a larger process that would reward their families with stronger economic stability and new professional opportunities.

Knowing that many teachers did not have the resources to pay all of their recruitment agency fees, Isidro established connections with a loan shark company to offer loans to teachers struggling to complete their payments for the OFW application process. This pattern of loan debt and repayment is not isolated to the trafficked teachers, but becomes an understood pattern for most Filipino migrant worker hopefuls. The teachers I interviewed affirmed the migrant worker pattern of debt unpacked by Berg: you sacrifice and invest savings or family resources to get you to your destination abroad with the understanding your heightening social and financial capabilities will provide a quick process to pay these debts back.[151] Even after uncovering that the work opportunities Isidro promised were not real, the teachers were forced to pay their loan debt. If the teachers did not comply, Isidro threatened the teachers with deportation back to the Philippines to place pressure on the teachers to continue paying their debt.

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[150]Anti-Slavery International "What Is Bonded Labour?" *Anti-Slavery International*, www.antislavery.org/slavery-today/debt-bondage/.

[151] Berg, Angeles Taleon. "The Experiences of Four Filipino Teachers in Obtaining Teaching Positions in Arizona: A Narrative Inquiry." Order No. 13881422, Northern Arizona University, 2019. https://www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/experiences-four-filipino-teachers-obtaining/docview/2244404843/se-2.

When the teachers escaped from Isidro, they were able to free themselves from the debt connected to his recruitment agency. However, many were still left with private loan debt from the independent loan agencies in the Philippines. With the pressure of debt affecting their families, the survivors' amplified "hiya" steered many away from returning to the Philippines.

> "I already invested my money to pay for the process and I couldn't get a refund if I pulled out, so I asked my father if it's okay to sell his tricycle cab business to complete the fee payment and finish my process."
>
> - Ethel, Spokane WA

Ethel's family invested most of their savings and sold their family taxi tricycle business in order to complete her recruitment process. Described as a large family with stretched resources, this decision placed a huge burden on Ethel to succeed for her family. As survivors of trafficking, this familial sacrifice caused teachers like Pia[152] to remain in the U.S. in hopes of finding a decent paying job to pay off her debts while continuing to support her family back in the Philippines.

> "Every day I couldn't sleep, thinking about the loans and the loan sharks. I want

[152] This teacher requested a pseudonym.

> to go back home, but I also don't know how else I can continue paying for these loans. If I cannot work, I cannot sustain my life here or the life of the people who already sacrificed to get me here. I felt trapped…but I cannot go back or else what did I do this for?"
>
> - Pia, San Francisco, CA

Pia's quote illustrates the dilemma most of the teachers referenced in their interviews. The emotion of feeling trapped and ashamed of failure forced many of the teachers to stay and try to improve their futile prospects in the United States. Pia, like many of the teachers after realizing the severity of their situation, felt frozen out of intimidation. They refused to move, react, or speak out in fear of the potential consequences their actions may bring. Isidro threatened some with heightened loan interest rates and further legal ramifications. He threatened others with deportation. Many teachers even stated Isidro threatened to physically harm their families in the Philippines if the teachers reached out to share their trafficked situation to authorities or those back in the homeland. These moments of fear and realization served as a catalyst for most of the migrant teachers to slowly unlearn the "Model Filipino Student Subjectivity" forced upon them through Isidro's workshops and training. Ethel continued on this thread of isolation and shame:

> "…It was quite embarrassing because you are college educated and here you are working at a daycare. You start to lose your dignity, your self- esteem, yours*elf*."
>
> - Ethel, Spokane WA

The teachers' case study provides a deeper understanding of how the "Model Filipino Student Subject" doesn't simply provide the environment for potential labor trafficking, but it

also impacts the migrant teachers through emotional trauma and harm. The emotional toll of adhering under the "Model Filipino Student Subject" racialization has forced many of the teachers to remain silent while suffering and to accept the consequences of their trafficking event. Having taught elementary students for over five years before arriving in the U.S., Ethel describes her experience with the deskilling[153] process and underemployment[154] many of the other teachers faced. Ethel transitioned from being a respected teacher in the Philippines to working at daycare positions that paid her significantly less than the salary she received in the Philippines. Like many other teachers, Ethel felt embarrassed for not utilizing the skills she had learned through her years of education and professional training. Having to settle for lower skilled positions after having invested so much training and time into teaching, the survivors felt they had lost their dignity and identity through the deskilling process, bringing forth amplified feelings of desolation and helplessness.

The specific process of deskilling the teachers experienced makes this trafficking case extremely unique – especially since the victims come from the high-skilled teaching field, unlike the majority of labor trafficking cases involving factory and agricultural workers. All of Isidro's trafficking victims received degrees from four-year universities and some even earned their master's degrees in teaching and education. This includes Rio, a teacher with over 21 years of teaching experience in the Philippines.

[153] Deskilling: migrant workers receiving positions lower than their educational level or experience. (Philippine Institute for Development Studies)
[154] Underemployment: not having enough paid work or not doing work that makes full use of their skills and abilities.

> "I am a retired master teacher in the Philippines… When we arrived in the U.S., after 2 days, we learned that our positions were gone. I was crying then because I exchanged my good master teaching job in the Philippines for changing diapers and cleaning bathrooms in the daycare."
>
> - Rio, Washington, D.C.

Deskilling proved to be an emotionally traumatic experience for the survivors. Many felt their professional demotion, evident through their low wages, as a signifier of their failure as OFWs and diminished worth as human beings.

Chasing Justice and Citizenship

When the teachers first applied to Isidro's recruitment agency, they were told that they were entering the U.S. through the legal H1B visa process, a visa required for foreign work within high skilled specialty occupations such as teaching. Many teachers confirmed the legitimacy of Isidro's recruitment agency through the POEA's[155] website where they saw the agency had received its POEA operating license. Though the teachers received their H1B visas, their employment was later secretly nullified upon arrival to the U.S. As the teachers' H1B visas began to expire in the U.S., they began to fall out of legal status, consequently trapping many of them in immigration status limbo. Isidro strategically planned each teacher's U.S. departure date to coincide closely to their visa's expiration. This ensured that the teachers would fall out of legal status shortly after arriving and enabled him to exercise another form of control over them: the fear of deportation and criminalization. The interviewees shared fear and anxiety over their

[155] Philippines Overseas Employment Agency.

legal status, many uncertain about their future and their legal rights as trafficked persons. From fearing deportation to protecting their families from shame, these factors caused the teachers further trauma.

Some of the teachers did not know the repercussions of being undocumented in the United States until experiencing it at the hands of authorities. Ethel described her experience crying near the border of Canada after police officers asked her to provide her legal documents: "I was so scared, I kept calling my husband and did not know what to do. I hid in the bathroom until they knocked and asked me to come out." Ethel was held at a police station until she revealed her trafficking experience to the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officers. After sharing her situation, Ethel was surprised that no additional steps were taken to help her. Many teachers hid themselves from any unnecessary attention in fear of criminalization, forming an environment one teacher described as "paralyzing." Roo, a single mother and teacher based in Washington, D.C., shared why she took so long to alert the authorities of her situation.

> "Isidro told us 'You don't talk to anyone else, you don't talk to your relatives, anybody. I will deport you and disgrace your family'. Because we were ignorant of the law, we did not know where to go."
>
> - Roo, Washington, D.C.

The fear of deportation and criminalization forced many teachers, including Roo, to remain silent and refrain from seeking legal support. These initial emotions of fear paralyzed many teachers from seeking help.

For those who did seek legal assistance, they were met with either disbelief or a lengthy bureaucratic process. Rio, a teacher based in Washington, D.C., immediately cut off all contact with Isidro and called the Washington D.C. Police Department to report her trafficking case. Instead of support, she was met with stacks of paperwork and an option to submit a restraining order. When the teachers reported their cases to the Philippines Embassy in Washington, D.C., there was little to no follow-up from their staff. The Philippine Embassy responded to their requests by informing them that due to the sheer volume of illegal recruitment and trafficking affecting OFWs at large, they could not provide immediate assistance. The teachers collectively decided to organize and pursue their justice themselves.

Conclusion

The GABRIELA D.C. trafficked teacher cases present an ample opportunity to view the intersection of community organizing as both healing from and anti-imperialist mobilization against the historically rooted haunting that is the "Model Filipino Student/Subject". This collaborative community-based project has provided further understanding in the experiences of labor trafficking survivors, specifically in the distinctive cases of highly skilled workers and how they reject not only the perfectionist and colonially linked "Model Filipino Subjectivity", but also actively organizing against the system of forced migrant labor system born out of U.S. imperialist roots as well. Additionally, this project highlights the unique types of trauma and healing processes found in the teachers' narratives.

Through this conceptualization of the "Model Filipino Student/Subject," we have identified the key moments and consequences in which the Filipino migrant teachers are forced to internalize a racialized perception of themselves and their role within the U.S. empire and

greater global economy. This racialized perception also serves a key role in silencing and invisibilizing the true conditions many of these migrant teachers face. These same conditions, from the individual self-sacrifice for the greater community and country to the system of migrant labor export that fast tracks OFWs abroad, create the environment for these same migrant teachers to be taken advantage of through methods of labor trafficking.

With that being said, it is important to recognize that this project focuses on a very specific population of trafficked teachers and additional research is needed to holistically comprehend the labor trafficking experience. Future research may be done on the U.S. and Philippines' governments' response (or lack thereof) to cases of labor trafficking. Another intriguing point of question revolves around the experiences of the trafficked teachers' partners and children. It would be noteworthy to analyze the migration reunification experience from the perspectives of the children and partners of the labor trafficking survivors. In a future project I plan to further document and analyze the GABRIELA D.C. teachers' responses to the blatant xenophobia, racism, and misogyny brought forth by systems of neocolonial migration policies, neoliberal paternalism, and racial capitalism brought forth by the United States' neoconservative welfare state.

The trafficked teachers' stories do not end here. In my concluding chapter 5, I examine how the D.C. trafficked teachers' fight for justice continues, with many teachers still awaiting their Trafficking Visas and family reunification. Through their transformation from trafficking victims to survivors to revolutionary leaders for social and international change, the GABRIELA D.C. teachers have responded to their collective trauma through unique methods of healing. Along this path, the trafficked teachers have established themselves as premier contemporary voices and leaders in the current Filipino Migrant Labor Rights Movement. Their collective

journey and individual narratives provide a prime example of how community-organizing transforms into effective decolonial praxis of healing. Through storytelling, grassroots organizing, and a decolonial third world feminist approach, GABRIELA D.C. proves to be a revolutionary space for political action, communal healing, and advocacy.

Chapter 4

Filipino Student Experiences & The I.L.B. Cycle:

Imposter Syndrome, Labor, & Burnout

> "I felt so much admiration for my [student organization's] predecessor, I wanted to make them proud. I felt a pressure to do as much programming and events as they did, and to do even more in order to leave my legacy in the space…. But what happens is this process of doing too much repeats, and new staffers want to continue building more and more programming than those before them. It's like Jenga, one year the tower of programming will be too high and it all crashes down…. A lot of this comes from the need to prove ourselves, we feel we don't deserve to be here or hold this space, these positions. We overcompensate and overdo it and burn out."
>
> "Jolene"

"Jolene", a rising UC Davis Senior at the time of this kuwentuhan group interview, describes a sentiment shared by many of 55 Filipina/o/x college students I interviewed across California's 4 year public institutions. Jolene's circumstances and the patterns of overwork she discussed describe what I later name as the I.L.B. Cycle: A process where Imposter Syndrome drives students to overwork through labor for their university and campus organizations which ultimately leads to burn out. Jolene served on multiple student organization boards including Filipino centric spaces. Her quote here relates to the pressure to perform and lead programming

in these spaces as both 1) an homage to past student leaders in those community spaces and 2) as an answer to the underlying feeling of imposter syndrome that haunts her and many other students. During this kuwentuhan, where I asked students and recent college alumni to reflect on their own experiences of overwork and burn out, Jolene and the circle identify their connected experiences as one of a never ending cycle that includes the initial fear of being identified by the university and Filipino community as an imposter, their response in joining and taking on leadership roles as a way to prove themselves to the university's perception and even to each other, and the penultimate experience of burning out into resentment. Many of those in this kuwentuhan, including Jolene, agree that they falter into feeding into this cycle by identifying, mentoring, and recruiting the next generation of Filipino students to take on their roles in the following academic year.

This chapter is anchored by this set of Filipino undergraduate kuwentuhan talk story interviews, examining patterns of burn out through student pressure to perform a certain type of unstated campus citizenry within the "Pil-Community." Later in the chapter, I make the argument that these cycles of Filipino student burn out and overwork mimics the legacy of U.S. colonial education in the Philippines that set similar systems in place to reward Filipino migrant workers. Whether it be through pathways to U.S. citizenship or the promise of economic stability, these rewards and goals ultimately bore the commodification of Filipino bodies and labor under U.S. empire building. I look at pressures and definitions of what it means to be a good community member, constructed through the amount of community labor, presence, and self-sacrifice one makes for the greater Fil-Am community.

I coin this system of racialized labor and cycle of burnout as the I.L.B. Cycle (Imposter Syndrome - Legacy Fatigue - Burn Out). I placed the I.L.B. Cycle within the context of the

aforementioned U.S.-Philippines colonial education through instances of a "Model Filipino Student Subject" haunting of contemporary Filipino college students. Through the students' narratives, I trace the cycle and flow of how imposter syndrome feeds into a sense of legacy fatigue, which is a pressure for students to not only get overly involved in student organizations, but to do so in a manner that competes with the amount of labor done by their predecessor. Legacy fatigue thus leads to overwork and over programming in order for students to prove themselves to the respective organization, community, and the university. Through the student interviews and organizational assessments, I examine these questions: how do Filipino college students view their labor for their organizations and community as signifiers of one's success and ability to perform within the neoliberal university? How does this I.L.B. Cycle and "Model Filipino Student Subject" haunting create its own construct of neoliberal citizenry built on the chasing of citizenship, systems of racial capitalism, and the neoliberal multiculturalist university?

Across related literature in critical race theory and racial capitalism, I embark on a journey to explore the intricate dynamics of neoliberal multiculturalism and its implications for Filipino students within the California university system. Grounded in the rich tradition of Filipino American Education scholarship, I delve into the complexities of race, capitalism, and education, aiming to provide a comprehensive analysis of the challenges and resilience exhibited by Filipino college students. Furthermore, I trace connections between the current conditions of Filipino college students, specifically the ways their labor is extracted by university and institutions of higher education, with the legacies of United States colonial education in the Philippines, an imperialist project that historically racialized Filipinos as bodies of labor.

Filipino students constitute a significant yet often overlooked demographic within the landscape of higher education in California. Their experiences, shaped by historical, socio-political, and economic forces, offer valuable insights into the intersections of identity, power, and privilege within the neoliberal university context. As I navigate through their narratives, as captured through my over 50 interviews with Filipino college students between 2017 to 2022, we are confronted with the complexities of racialized hierarchies, cultural assimilation, and the commodification of diversity.

Through this project, I offer a nuanced exploration of the intersection between identity, power, and education. Through the busy walkways and lecture halls of California's prestigious college campuses, Filipino American students navigate a complex environment shaped by neoliberal multiculturalism, a framework that commodifies diversity while perpetuating systems of inequality.[156] At the heart of my inquiry lies a goal to understand the lived experiences of Filipino students within the context of higher education. Drawing upon the rich tapestry of Critical Filipino Studies and Critical University Studies, I seek to unravel the intricate dynamics of race, histories of colonial education, and student labor, shedding light on the challenges and resilience demonstrated through Filipino students navigating the neoliberal university system.

Grounded in critical frameworks such as Critical Race Theory (CRT) and Critical University Studies, this chapter transcends surface-level analyses and delves deep into the structural and ideological underpinnings that shape the educational landscape. By centering the voices and experiences of Filipino students I interviewed in both one on one sessions and in talk story kuwentuhan group interviews, I challenge dominant narratives, disrupt oppressive systems,

[156] 1. Kymlicka W. Neoliberal Multiculturalism? In: Hall PA, Lamont M, eds. Social Resilience in the Neoliberal Era. Cambridge University Press; 2013:99-126.

and advocate for more inclusive and equitable educational practices. I also utilize this data to trace the dynamics and shared narratives described in my I.L.B. Cycle.

As I engage these moments across this chapter, it is essential to acknowledge the historical and socio-political contexts that inform Filipino student experiences. From the legacies of colonialism and imperialism to the ongoing struggles for racial and social justice, Filipino students carry with them a unique set of challenges and opportunities within the California university system. For instance, a vast majority of the students I interviewed shared experiences of holding multiple part time jobs to meet basic needs while studying and at the same time being very involved in multiple student organizations. These patterns of students taking on multiple roles on and off campus is a large part of what I will later describe as the Imposter Syndrome-Labor-Burn Out (I.L.B.) Cycle model. By critically engaging with these contexts, I hope to illuminate pathways towards greater understanding, solidarity, and collective action.

Through the framework of the I.L.B cycle, this chapter examines the ways in which neoliberal multiculturalism operates within California universities, exploring its impact on Filipino students' tensions with identities, experiences of belonging, and access to resources. I specifically focus on how multiple California university systems have taken advantage of Filipino student labor in the realms of student organizing, recruitment and retention, and other realms of student work. These patterns are not necessarily new or exclusive to Filipino students, but the history of U.S. colonial education's racialized training of Filipinos as the "Model Filipino Student", the framework I coined in chapter 1, serves as a core root of these patterns of student labor and burn out. Through a combination of theoretical analysis and ethnographic interview accounts, I paint a comprehensive picture of the complex realities faced by Filipino students,

while also recognizing their resistance, agency, and capacity for transformative change in the university.

Intersecting Frameworks:

Critical Filipino Studies, Critical Race Theory, & Critical University Studies

In this section, I embark on an exploration that intertwines Critical Race Theory (CRT), Critical University Studies, and Critical Filipino Studies scholarship. By synthesizing insights from these diverse fields and frameworks, I aim to illuminate the complex web of power relations, racial dynamics, and educational practices that shape the experiences of Filipino students within California universities.

Critical Race Theory serves as a powerful analytical tool to dissect the dynamics of race, power, and education. Rooted in a history of legal scholarship, CRT has expanded in engaging broader social and educational discourse, offering a framework for interrogating systemic racism and structural inequities. Within the realm of higher education, CRT enables us to uncover the ways in which racial hierarchies are reproduced and contested, both institutionally and individually. I do this through my interviews with Filipino college students, providing these talk-story sessions as a mode of counter-narrative, a premiere tenet of Critical Race Theory methodologies. "CRT advocates for counter-storytelling, which involves centering the voices and experiences of marginalized groups to challenge dominant narratives of power and privilege."[157] The students, in their vulnerable sharing, are actively engaging in a process of counter narrative and resistance to the neoliberal university system Ferguson described in the

[157] Solórzano, D. G., & Yosso, T. J. (2002). Critical Race Methodology: Counter-Storytelling as an Analytical Framework for Education Research. Qualitative Inquiry, 8(1), 23-44. https://doi.org/10.1177/107780040200800103

previous section. I chose talk story kuwentuhan group sessions as a methodology in hopes of providing a more democratic and open space of sharing across students. I noticed this practice allowed students to share freely while also being open to receive in group affirmations, confirming their words resonate with other students in the kuwentuhan talk story circle. This method of counter storytelling actively moves away from the hierarchical, top down norm of one on one interviews, providing a safe space for greater connection and collective narrative building.

CRT centers the historically marginalized, centering their voices and experiences through a lens that analyzes the structural barriers and institutional racism challenging educational equity. Regarding CRT's intersectional lens, Kimberle Crenshaw states: "CRT calls for an intersectional analysis that considers how race intersects with other social categories to produce unique forms of oppression and resistance."[158] I integrate this through the analysis of student's intersectional positionalities as Filipinos, first generation college students, class identity, and relation to their respective university. Tracy Buenavista and many other scholars push this further by utilizing Critical Race Theory as a tool to decipher the complexities of Asian American collegiate experiences. Buenavista et al use how "...CRT challenges educational discourse that often is ahistorical and perpetuates the model minority paradigm."[159] My project engages this defining attribute of CRT by contextualizing the lived experiences of Filipino college students with a critical analysis of U.S.-Philippines colonial education history. In a similar way, my work uses CRT and other fields as a lens to untether the misconceptions of Filipino narratives as both

[158] Crenshaw, K. (1991). Mapping the margins: Intersectionality, identity politics, and violence against women of color. Stanford Law Review, 43(6), 1241-1299.
[159] Buenavista, Tracy Lachica, Uma M. Jayakumar, and Kimberly Misa-Escalante. "Contextualizing Asian American Education through Critical Race Theory: An Example of U.S. Pilipino College Student Experiences." New Directions for Institutional Research, no. 142 (Summer 2009): 69-81.

migrant workers, educators, and college students. E San Juan, through a different but very applicable route, uses CRT as a tool to unpack Filipinos under a gendered and neocolonized subjugation.[160] San Juan analyzes the experiences of Filipina domestic workers to prove CRT's ability to engage globalized systems of racism through a Marxist definition of class. Both of these examples of intersecting Critical Filipino Studies and CRT provide a foundation to navigate both the student and migrant teacher experience. Critical Race Theory thus offers a useful framework to analyze the contemporary struggles of Filipino American College students while engaging the history of how Filipinos have been racialized as migrant bodies of labor and pressured to perform as the "Model Filipino Student Subject".

Critical University Studies emerges as an important field that dissects higher education's neoliberal transformation. Shaped by critical theory and cultural studies, this framework critiques the university's narratives and systems of meritocracy and marketization. This critique unveils how campus neoliberal logics perpetuate historic and renewed waves of student exploitation and inequality. "Critical University Studies interrogates the neoliberalization of higher education, exposing how universities have become sites of exploitation where students, particularly those from marginalized communities, are subjected to intensified labor demands."[161] Critical University Studies provides us with the language and analysis to engage how and why Filipino American students have a particularly unique experience with burn out in the university. Partnering this field with the budding discourse of Critical Filipino Studies grounds my project's theoretical lens.

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[160] San Juan Jr., Epifanio. "From Race to Class Struggle: Re-Problematizing Critical Race Theory." Michigan Journal of Race & Law 11, no. 1 (2005): 75-103.
[161] Giroux, H. A. (2014). Neoliberalism's war on higher education. Haymarket Books.

For instance, Bonus and Maramba's work The 'Other' Students looks at education as a process of identity formation for Filipino students that is not detached from the histories of U.S. colonial education in the Philippines. They choose not to leave the 'othered' Filipinos as a way to mark difference and oppression, but to push towards a signaling of resistance. They engage "Filipino American "others" as an alternative site of resistance for traversing the histories and contemporary realities of race and power in American education. "Even though the category of "other" may signal position of exclusion,... we do not intend to merely mark minority status and argue against its ability to disempower.... Instead, we aim to understand "others" as a site of difference,... to harness the generative powers and potentials of alternative voices, perspectives, experiences, and visions that can be brought to any and all discussions and practices regarding education."[162] I follow suit in my work, with my shift in the concluding chapter five centering both Filipino student and migrant teacher resistance to the aforementioned "Model Filipino Student Subject." I agree with Bonus and Maramba, that the othering of Filipinos within the educational context, both of past and present, is not simply a process of victimhood and harm, but also of active resistance to processes of racial subjugations. Within the neoliberal university, diversity and inclusion often serve as rhetorical devices that mask deeper structures of power and privilege. Bonus and Maramba's engagement of Critical University Studies and Asian American Studies pushes me to think through some critical questions: Since American public education was introduced in colonial Philippines, viewing Filipinos as unenlightened savages whose civilized salvation depended on its very subjugation through western education, what degrees of such constitution endure today through the usage of schooling as a disciplinary apparatus? How

[162] Maramba, Dina; Rick Bonus (1 December 2012). The 'Other' Students: Filipino Americans, Education, and Power. IAP. p. 34. ISBN 978-1-62396-075-9.

are histories of Philippines colonization also part of uneven American national formation, with contradictions and inconsistencies. How can "culture" be imagined as contested, dynamic, and open-ended processes, whose horizon of articulation may not be limited only to the nation form?

By situating Filipino student experiences within the context of Critical University Studies, I uncover the ways in which neoliberal ideologies shape educational practices and policies, leading to these patterns of burn out. This field in itself provides us with the connections between the establishment of the neoliberal university and the cycle of student extracted labor and burnout. “The commodification of education under neoliberalism transforms students into consumers and universities into corporations, perpetuating a culture of hyper-competition and individualized responsibility that exacerbates student stress and burnout.”[163] We see this description in Mariko’s above talk story excerpt and many other student testimonials. The pressure to compete and prove oneself as productive under the neoliberal university’s eye remains a part of the I.L.B. cycle I define later in this chapter. This sense of overwork and burnout is touched on by other Critical University Studies scholars like Bousquet, who states: “The corporatization of higher education not only intensifies student labor but also erases collective forms of resistance, rendering students isolated and atomized in their struggles against systemic injustices."[164] From the co-opting of diversity discourse to the student labor exploitation, higher education neoliberalism continues to shape the lived experiences and struggles faced by students and faculty alike. Through a critical analysis of the neoliberal university, I uplift the Filipinos students’ narratives as a pathway to expose the systems of oppression and modes of student resistance within higher education. My work contributes to this

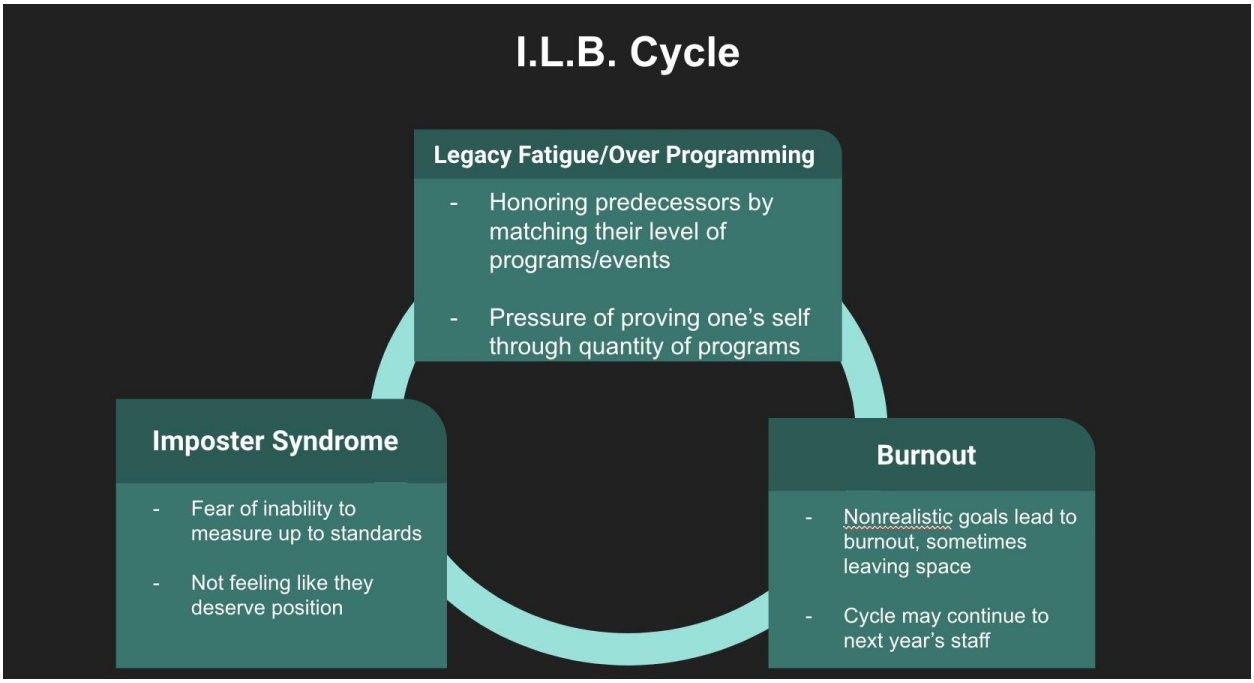
[163] READINGS, BILL. *The University in Ruins*. Harvard University Press, 1996. https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv1cbn3kn.
[164] Bousquet, M. (2008). How the University Works: Higher Education and the Low-Wage Nation. NYU Press.

legacy and lineage of a Critical Filipino Studies and University Studies nexus by providing interdisciplinary, community centered, and participatory case studies around the phenomenon of Filipino students overwork and burnout across California university campuses. Through an exploration of key texts and empirical studies, I contextualize the broader social, historical, and political forces that shape educational outcomes for Filipino students. By foregrounding Filipino perspectives, I seek to challenge dominant narratives and advocate for more inclusive and equitable educational practices.

This weaving of Critical Race Theory, Critical University Studies, and Critical Filipino Studies provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the experiences of Filipino students in California universities and an environment for better understanding the Imposter Syndrome – Labor – Burn Out (I.L.B.) Cycle I defined through my interviews and group talk story sessions. Through interrogating the intersections of race, power, and education, I shed light on the complex dynamics that shape educational equity and access for marginalized communities. Moving forward, I draw upon these intersecting frameworks to inform our analysis of Filipino student experiences and advocate for transformative change within higher education.

Defining the I.L.B. Cycle:

Connecting Filipino American Student Burnout to Legacies of U.S. Colonial Education



[Figure 4.1] I.L.B. Cycle Chart. A flow chart representing the Imposter Syndrome -> Labor/Over programming -> Burnout Cycle seen in my interviews with Filipino College Students.

Cycle Part 1: Imposter Syndrome, Colonial Legacy, and Identity Struggles

"I don't know, sometimes I feel like I came in not ready and even graduated never feeling I was good enough…. Not just academics, but, like, my joining the Filipino orgs. I still had fun, but like I think about how I had more memories of resentment towards these orgs for not feeling good enough…. Did I never belong?"

- "Myles", UCLA Graduated Senior

The imposter syndrome phenomenon among Filipino students, as demonstrated by Myles' quote, can be traced back to the historical context of U.S. colonial rule in the Philippines, which has left lasting effects on identity and self-perception. Myles speaks to a case of imposter syndrome beyond the pressures of academic achievement and inclusive of fitting into the expected productivity of Filipino student organizations, a contemporary "Model Filipino Student Subjectivity" organized under collegiate student organization culture. I do recognize imposter syndrome is not solely impacting Filipino students, but is a phenomenon that has shaped the experiences of young people across generations and identities. Imposter syndrome is a universal experience for many, shaped by racial capitalist systems in play, but particularly in Filipino American students I have found a unique engagement of imposter syndrome that has formed a cycle of over work and burn out I am describing. Myles' quote above identifies this student struggle with imposter syndrome lending to a haunting emotion of not feeling ready or good enough for the institution. This, of course, isn't too different from the ways the migrant teachers and Filipino migrant workers in general seek affirmation from employers, a representation of those in power within the U.S. Philippines colonial project. Myle's last words here also point to the tension of belonging that so many Filipino college students pinpoint as a factor in their respective patterns of burnout and labor. Similarly, the colonial educational system imposed by the United States aimed to civilize and Americanize Filipinos, creating a dichotomy between Western ideals and Filipino identity, the good versus the bad. Adopted into systems of colonial education, Filipinos of early colonial time sought out ways to assimilate in hopes of financial security and elevated status among the colonial elites. This colonial legacy is also perpetuated as seen in my chapter two section on the Filipino pensionados who left the Philippines on scholarship to receive an American education at top universities. This exemplifies the United

States' process of benevolent assimilation of the Philippines into western ideology and logics when it came to education.

This chasing of Western ideology and education, the goal to become the "Model Filipino Student Subject", is cyclical across Filipino generations, and even expands beyond the homeland throughout the Philippines-U.S. diaspora. With the sense of "chasing" this ideal self comes the burden of imposter syndrome that has been present in the majority of my interviews with Filipino college students. The National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the National Library of Medicine define Imposter Syndrome as "... a behavioral health phenomenon described as self-doubt of intellect, skills, or accomplishments among high-achieving individuals. These individuals cannot internalize their success and subsequently experience pervasive feelings of self-doubt, anxiety, depression, and/or apprehension of being exposed as a fraud in their work, despite verifiable and objective evidence of their successfulness."[165]

American colonization of the Philippines implemented a westernized educational system designed to "civilize" and assimilate the Filipino, readying them to shift towards American values and perspectives. This colonial educational policy sought to instill Western ideals and values, often at the expense of Filipino cultural identity. Historian Renato Constantino (1970) describes the American educational system in the Philippines as a "miseducation," which prioritized the teaching of English and American history while de-emphasizing Filipino culture and history.[166] In addition, Stanley Karnow's book *In Our Image: America's Empire in the Philippines* affirms Constantino's analysis by showcasing the various ways these historic

[165] Huecker MR, Shreffler J, McKeny PT, et al. Imposter Phenomenon. [Updated 2023 July 31]. In: StatPearls [Internet]. Treasure Island (FL): StatPearls Publishing; 2024 Jan-. Available from: https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK585058/

[166] Constantino, Renato, and Letizia R. Constantino. The Miseducation of the Filipino. Foundation for Nationalist Studies, 1987.

American colonial education practices have continued impacts on the Filipino: "The United States continued to practice forms of economic and political imperialism in the years ahead,...."[167] This system contributed to feelings of inadequacy and self-doubt transformed over time and continues to have an impact among Filipino American students, who may internalize the notion that they must continually prove their worth in predominantly white academic institutions. Interviews with students reveal a pervasive sense of imposter syndrome, where they question their belonging and capabilities, often feeling like they need to overcompensate to be deemed legitimate members of the academic community. This legacy has profound implications for Filipino American students, who may feel a sense of cultural inferiority and inadequacy.

The imposition of the American educational system created a dichotomy between Western ideals and Filipino identity. The curriculum and pedagogical approaches valorized Western knowledge and marginalized indigenous Filipino knowledge systems. This created a cultural dissonance that has been passed down through generations, contributing to feelings of imposter syndrome among Filipino American students. 80% of the college student interviewees had identified their family's expectations as a top factor in why they push themselves to work academically while also taking on multiple leadership roles on campus. For many of the students like UCLA senior "Ilya," this pressure to perform for their family started before college. He says, "I already knew my family sacrificed so much to bring us here, they left what they knew, their family in the homeland for me and my siblings to do better…. It's not their fault, but all through my time at UCLA I felt that heaviness over my head, that if I don't do well in grades I fail them and their sacrifices were wasted. They did remind me that my opportunity at UCLA is rare and that I have to make the most of it, stand out to succeed. I also knew that to get a good job or even

[167] Karnow, Stanley. In Our Image: America's Empire in the Philippines. New York: Ballantine Books, 1989.

think of grad school I had to be involved in the community too, so I pushed myself to join my three clubs, but I regret burning out. My family feels bad, I feel bad, it's just a lose-lose situation." This lose-lose situation added to the family centered sense of sacrifice and persistence is common across the many campuses and interviews I experienced. What is most intriguing is the dual sense of sacrifice: the family sacrifices for the child to get a rare educational opportunity in the U.S., while the child sacrifices in order to fulfill the family's expectations to do better financially, academically, and professionally. This theme of dual sacrifice seems to be internalized and taught through these generations, the need to make good on your family's sacrifices or to give back. Many in the Filipino community named this feeling of needing to repay debts and other's sacrifices as utang na loob, a culturally relevant acknowledgement of reciprocity and "debt of gratitude."[168] The way past colonial subjects were taught to chase western ideals, assimilation, and whiteness, has transformed into a system in which students chase affirmation and institutional recognition. These students often find themselves navigating a complex interplay of identities, struggling to reconcile their Filipino heritage with the Western ideals prevalent in American educational institutions.

In the context of higher education, Filipino American students I interviewed shared an acute sense of not belonging. The internalization of colonial ideologies can manifest as self-doubt and a persistent belief that they are not as capable or deserving as their peers. Psychologist Kevin Nadal et. al notes that imposter syndrome, which is defined here as "the notion that they are not intelligent or adequate enough, despite evidence that confirms their success or worth," is

[168] Pe-Pua, Rogelia; Protacio-Marcelino, Elizabeth A. (2000). "Sikolohiyang Pilipino (Filipino psychology): A legacy of Virgilio G. Enriquez". Asian Journal of Social Psychology. 3 (1): 49–71. doi:10.1111/1467-839X.00054. ISSN 1467-839X.

pervasive in most communities of color, especially within higher education.[169] Uniquely among Filipino Americans and Asian Americans it is often exacerbated by the model minority stereotype, which pressures them to excel academically and professionally while simultaneously questioning their own achievements.[170]

Though it may seem like a stretch of a connection, we see the seeds of colonial education's shaping of the Filipino's unique experience of the model minority myth and "Model Filipino Subject" through the example of Filipino Pensionados and Illustrados.[171] This pattern continues within the ways some of the Filipino migrant teachers I interviewed have perceived what it means to be a "good Filipino, a good Filipino teacher", one that self-sacrifices their own wellness and health, their financial stability in order to serve not only their students but to best represent their country: this romanticized imagery of Filipino migrant workers as the "New National Hero/Bagong Bayani" is one solidified across different Philippines national leaders and Presidents from Arroyo-Macapagal (2010) to Rodrigo Duterte (2022) to both versions of Marcos presidencies.[172] Many students, like CSU East Bay second year "Diana" explain this mix of "model minority" pressure with guilt of imposter syndrome:

> "I know this sounds hella stupid, but I feel like I gotta be perfect in all these spaces. I don't mean academic perfect, but like perfect in the orgs we're in. Like I

[169] Nadal, Kevin Leo Yabut, Rukiya King, D. R. Gina Sissoko, Nadia Floyd and DeCarlos Hines. "The legacies of systemic and internalized oppression: Experiences of microaggressions, imposter phenomenon, and stereotype threat on historically marginalized groups." New Ideas in Psychology 63 (2021): 100895.
[170] Nadal, Kevin L. Filipino American Psychology: A Handbook of Theory, Research, and Clinical Practice. John Wiley & Sons, 2011.
[171] As mentioned in chapter two.
[172] Rodriguez, Robyn Magalit. Migrants for Export: How the Philippine State Brokers Labor to the World. University of Minnesota Press, 2010.

> feel shame for not making this org's event or that fundraiser, I feel like a failure or a bad Filipino…. I know that's stupid, but it's real, man. I cannot make all of these events or run all of these events, but a lot of times it feels worse than failing a class."
>
> - "Diana"

To combat these feelings of inadequacy, Filipino American students often engage in overcompensation and perfectionism. This overcompensation is a coping mechanism to demonstrate their worth and secure their place within the university. However, this drive for perfection is not merely a personal endeavor but also a response to the societal and institutional pressures that valorize high achievement while neglecting the unique challenges faced by students of color and first generation college students. This shared perspective is of course connected to the breath and pressure under the assumed model minority myth that plagues many Asian and Asian American studies. Feelings like Diana's highlights that Filipino American students often feel the need to work harder to prove their competence, leading to excessive involvement in academic and extracurricular activities.

What has been even more worrisome has been the repetition of these cycles of labor and burn out that have been policed and internalized within different student organizations themselves. "One time I was told I was a bad intern cuz I had to skip a meeting for a study sesh," UC Berkeley second year Pedro shared, "Ever since then, I felt like a black sheep in the fil-am space… Like I don't belong cuz I don't go to all these events, cuz I'm not as 'down for the Fil-Am space'." Pedro's sentiments are one mixed of both fear and guilt built through a system of self-discipline, regulation, and shaming of Filipino students who don't overcommit to this

"Model Filipino Student" ideal of a community member on campus. This is defined as someone who interns or joins a staff of an organization, someone who attends and supports all of the Filipino American org events and spaces. As Pedro also states, "To be a good Fil-Am here [on campus] is to make your whole life and identity about this work." I notice the word work here as the signifier of what makes a successful and productive Fil-Am campus member, what makes the contemporary "Model Filipino Student" within the college campus context. It is not enough to simply perform the bare minimum. To be recognized as a productive Filipino American student on many of these campuses is to be extra involved, to be visible in both presence and in labor. This overcommitment is a double-edged sword: while it can provide a sense of accomplishment and temporary relief from imposter syndrome, it also places immense stress on students, setting the stage for burnout.

The university environment can further exacerbate imposter syndrome through microaggressions and institutionalized forms of racism. These microaggressions, which include assumptions about a student's capabilities based on their ethnicity as well as the invalidation of students of colors' voices and perspectives, can undermine their confidence and reinforce feelings of being an outsider. Sue et al. (2007) describe microaggressions as "brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities" that communicate hostile or negative racial slights.[173] For Filipino American students, these experiences remind them of their perceived otherness and the colonial legacy haunts them, casting doubt on their proven worth within academic spaces.

Filipino American students interviewed have shared their experience in navigating across

[173] Sue, Derald Wing, Christina M. Capodilupo, Gina C. Torino, Jennifer M. Bucceri, Aisha M.B. Holder, Kevin L. Nadal, and Marta Esquilin. "Racial Microaggressions in Everyday Life: Implications for Clinical Practice." American Psychologist 62, no. 4 (2007): 271-286. https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.62.4.271.

intersecting identities, including race, ethnicity, and immigrant status. This intersectionality can intensify feelings of imposter syndrome. This struggle to find a sense of belonging operates within both their Filipino community and the broader academic community. The concept of "colonial mentality," as discussed by E.J.R. David and Sumie Okazaki, highlights how the internalized oppression from colonial history impacts the self-perception and mental health of Filipino Americans.[174] This mentality can lead to self-doubt and a diminished sense of self-worth, further fueling imposter syndrome. EJR David draws connections between this pressure to perform and the history of colonialism on generations of Filipino bodies and minds. This tension of colonial mentality adds to what Nadal, Sue, and many other author's identified patterns of imposter syndrome and racial microaggressions particularly within Filipino Americans. To David, many Filipino Americans and migrant workers work to push away remnants of "Filipino-ness" which becomes seen as lower-class, lesser than, and third world, all evolved signaling of the 1900's U.S. colonial education and benevolent assimilation logics.[175]

The historical context of U.S. colonial rule in the Philippines and the subsequent legacy of the colonial educational system play a critical role in shaping the experiences of imposter syndrome among Filipino American students. The internalization of colonial ideologies, combined with contemporary societal and institutional pressures, creates a complex landscape where feelings of inadequacy and self-doubt are pervasive. Addressing imposter syndrome requires a nuanced understanding of the "Model Filipino Student Subject's" historical and cultural dynamics, as well as targeted support that recognizes and validates the unique challenges

[174] David, E. J. R., and Sumie Okazaki. "Colonial Mentality: A Review and Recommendation for Filipino American Psychology." Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology 12, no. 1 (2006): 1-16.
[175] David, E.J.R. Brown Skin, White Minds: Filipino-/American Postcolonial Psychology (with Commentaries). Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing, 2013.

Filipino American students face. Only then can our communities work to dismantle the enduring effects of colonial education's haunting, creating a more inclusive and affirming educational environment.

Cycle Part 2: Labor: Overwork as a Response to Imposter Syndrome

To counteract feelings of imposter syndrome, Filipino American students often engage in excessive labor, both academic and extracurricular. The patterns of overcommitment and overwork present in the student testimonials moves beyond personal endeavor to demonstrate one's worth. These patterns of overwork and burnout are a response to the pervasive pressures tied to the "Model Filipino Student Subject": pressures to perform, obey, and seek acknowledgement by the university institution. As mentioned earlier, the concept of "utang na loob" (debt of gratitude) deeply ingrained in Filipino culture, emphasizes a sense of obligation to repay the sacrifices made by parents and ancestors.[176] This cultural value, combined with the pressures of imposter syndrome, drives students to overwork in an attempt to honor their family's sacrifices and prove their own worth.

Filipino American students often find themselves at the forefront of student organizations, leading initiatives, and advocating for social and racial justice. While these roles provide visibility and a sense of purpose, they also come with significant demands and expectations. The labor involved in organizing events, mentoring peers, and engaging in advocacy work is substantial and often goes unacknowledged by the university administration. First year SJSU student Mikey shared in a group interview that he entered campus choosing to

[176] Pe-Pua, Rogelia; Protacio-Marcelino, Elizabeth A. (2000). "Sikolohiyang Pilipino (Filipino psychology): A legacy of Virgilio G. Enriquez". Asian Journal of Social Psychology. 3 (1): 49–71. doi:10.1111/1467-839X.00054. ISSN 1467-839X.

join four student organizations while working two part time jobs. He states, “Part of this was excitement to be out of high school and in college, but also, like, meeting the older students and how much they do, I felt the pressure to match that. Like, if they can do it, why can’t I?... That way I can just prove to everyone and myself that I belong.” This student labor, fueled by a response to prove oneself against imposter syndrome, is a form of institutional commodification, where the contributions of these students are instrumentalized to enhance the university's reputation and attract a diverse student body. Mikey speaks on this process of commodification, “Coming into SJSU I see the pull to join all these student orgs, you see it through social media and even campus announcements celebrating the students who are high achievers within and outside of the classroom. It pushes a need and desire to be acknowledged…. Especially being first gen (college student), I felt the need to be seen and be active on campus, but maybe that’s what the campus wants, they want a show pony and a workhorse out of us students.” This show and work horse comparison is extremely interesting, seeing the ways that Filipino students interviewed not only described the pressure to take on multiple campus and Filipino college community roles, but also the desire to be seen by their campus and acknowledged for being a model student, a haunting of that very same “Model Filipino Student Subject” described throughout this project.

The overcommitment to academic and extracurricular activities takes a significant emotional and physical toll on Filipino American students. The constant pressure to excel and the relentless demands of their roles can lead to chronic stress, anxiety, and burnout. Research by Grier-Reed and Wilson (2016) on minority student experiences highlights the high levels of stress and burnout that result from juggling academic responsibilities with extensive involvement

in student organizations.[177] This stress is compounded by the lack of institutional support and recognition, which leaves students feeling undervalued and overburdened. This is then on top of the pressure for students to build and create their own programming to sustain their Filipino organizations and safe spaces, as Second Year UC Irvine student Patricia states here:

> "Going off what they said, it's a weird thing cuz I see these [Filipino] orgs as a safe space, but also if I don't do enough for them [the organizations], then I start feeling that guilt. Not just cuz I feel them [other students] judging me, but like I know the stories of these spaces not existing and if I don't put the work in to be involved then in my head I feel like I'm letting previous generations down."
>
> - "Patricia"

Student organizations, while providing a crucial space for community building and support, also become sites of intense labor. Filipino American student leaders often take on multiple roles, from organizing cultural events to providing mentorship and advocacy. These roles, while fulfilling, require significant time and energy. The work done by these student leaders is essential for fostering a sense of belonging and cultural pride among Filipino American students, yet it is rarely recognized or adequately supported by the university administration.

[177] Grier-Reed, Tabitha and Robert Wilson. "The African American Student Network." Journal of Black Psychology 42 (2016): 374 - 386.

Dear campus community,

As we enter Filipino American History Month (FAHM), we celebrate and recognize the vibrant and diverse Filipino* community at UC Berkeley. Our campus is home to 3.4% of undergraduate and 1.5% of graduate students who proudly identify as Filipino, along with 3.9% of our dedicated staff members and 0.4% of our ladder faculty and Lecturers with Security of Employment (LSOE).

We are thrilled to celebrate the first anniversary of the Filipinx Faculty & Staff Association, a vital group dedicated to community-building and advocating for social justice through a decolonized framework. We encourage you to check out their new logo and faculty and staff profiles on Instagram at @filipinxfsa_berkeley. The Pilipinx American Alumni Chapter (PAAC), active since 1987, continues to be a vibrant community, and we encourage you to engage with them on Instagram at @calpilipinxalumni for events and resources.

[Figure 4.2] UC Berkeley Filipino American History Month Email. This email was sent from UC Berkeley to all current students and alumni on October 2nd, 2023 celebrating Filipino community representation and success on campus, uplifting the work of various student organizations, the Pilipinx American Alumni Chapter, and Filipino demographic on campus.

The commodification of this labor becomes evident when universities use the achievements and contributions of these students in promotional materials and diversity reports. The image above from a UC Berkeley campus wide email honoring Filipino American History Month by affirming the UC Berkeley Filipino student and faculty members and their respective accomplishments serves as an example of this commodification of Filipino student and

organizational labor. The irony lies in the mass email celebrating the 3.4% campus Filipino population while the UC Berkeley student interviews and kuwentuhan group talk stories have shown the pattern of Filipino student burn out and unwellness. The students' hard work is showcased as evidence of the university's commitment to diversity, yet the resources and support needed to sustain these efforts are often lacking.

This dynamic creates a cycle of exploitation where the labor of Filipino American students is continually demanded but not sufficiently acknowledged or rewarded. UC Berkeley third year Sophia speaks to this in their one on one interview with me:

> "After four years, I'm pissed that I've seen so many of us close to graduate put all of our labor into these organizations and spaces, and not get compensated or even acknowledged. We do the work of recruitment and just as importantly, retention of Filipino and other students of color, of first gen folks. The resentment from graduating folks tends to be misplaced towards the orgs, but really, the University doesn't do s*** to help us. There's all this burn out and infighting, but I wish we all saw sooner than later it's the university benefiting from us working to the bone."

This overcommitment is a coping mechanism to demonstrate their value and secure their place within the university. However, this labor is not just self-imposed but also exploited by the institution. Universities often commodify the labor of Filipino American students, particularly their involvement in student organizations and diversity initiatives. Ferguson (2012) argues that universities capitalize on the labor of minority students to promote an image of inclusivity and

multiculturalism, all while exploiting their work without adequate compensation or recognition. The Filipino American student labor is instrumentalized to promote the university's image of inclusivity and neoliberal performance of multiculturalism, which Will Kymlicka describes as "...the belief that ethnic identities and attachments can be assets to market actors and hence that they can legitimately be supported by the neoliberal state. And this is precisely what many neoliberals have come to believe."[178] In terms of Filipino student labor, neoliberal multiculturalism, students of color labor and imagery is weaponized to invisibilize and dismiss the lack of support and real harm done to these very students. The campus romanticizes and overcompensates their lack of support for historically marginalized students by parading the few they deem as models to the community. This holds a similar logic as our "Model Filipino Student Subject" framework.

Ultimately, this student labor is rarely acknowledged or adequately compensated, unless beneficial to the campus' own goals and perception. The students' labor and contributions towards their campus community are often taken for granted. This often leads to a cycle of exploitation where student labor is continuously demanded with no compensation of their time, energy, and work. The overcommitment to leadership roles has also negatively impacted the Filipino American student academic performance and holistic wellness. Studies prove that excessive involvement in campus organizations and activities can lead to academic underperformance and mental health issues, including as anxiety and depression.[179] Filipino American students, driven by a desire to combat imposter syndrome and fulfill expectations to

[178] Kymlicka, Will. "Neoliberal Multiculturalism?" Chapter. In Social Resilience in the Neoliberal Era, edited by Peter A. Hall and Michèle Lamont, 99–126. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013.
[179] Pope, Denise Clark. Doing School: How We Are Creating a Generation of Stressed Out, Materialistic, and Miseducated Students. Yale University Press, 2010.

serve as a “Model Filipino Student Subject”, may find themselves overwhelmed by the dual demands of academic excellence and community involvement.

The labor of Filipino American students is a critical yet often overlooked aspect of their university experience. Driven by imposter syndrome and cultural obligations, these students engage in extensive labor that is regularly taken advantage of by their respective university campus. This Filipino student labor serves as another example commodity under the neoliberal multiculturalist university campus. This dynamic both perpetuates feelings of inadequacy while also contributing to the cycle of student burnout. Addressing this issue requires an intentional approach that uplifts and values the Filipino American student labor and contributions to their campus. This includes providing adequate support and resources and shifting away from the exploitative practices of commodifying student labor. Combating these systemic issues lends itself to a more equitable and supportive environment can be built for all students.

Cycle Part 3: Burnout

The relentless pressure to combat imposter syndrome through overwork inevitably leads to burnout among Filipino American students. The students’ overextension to academic and organizational leadership roles places them on a trajectory toward exhaustion and complete burnout. Christina Maslach and Michael Leiter (2016) define burnout as a state of emotional, mental, and physical exhaustion caused by prolonged and excessive stress.[180] Through my interviews, Filipino American college students described themselves overwhelmed by the dual demands of academic excellence and performing as the model Filipino student representative for

[180] Maslach, Christina, and Michael P. Leiter. "Understanding the Burnout Experience: Recent Research and Its Implications for Psychiatry." World Psychiatry: Official Journal of the World Psychiatric Association (WPA) 15, no. 2 (2016): 103–111. https://doi.org/10.1002/wps.20311.

their community organizations. This creates a dual demand of students to prove one's worth as both an academic citizen to the university and as a super involved Filipino student representative. Burnout manifests not only as physical and mental exhaustion but also as a profound disillusionment with the university system that capitalizes on their labor. The final stage of the ILB Cycle involves these students recruiting the next generation of leaders before they succumb to burnout, ensuring the perpetuation of the cycle. This handover process serves as both a student coping mechanism and a survival technique. Interviewees described this process as somewhat of a ritual for burnout students to transfer their responsibilities to "bushy tailed, excited" new staff members, who will soon face the same cycle of burnout and disillusionment as their predecessors. Furthermore, higher education's naturally competitive nature builds feelings of imposter syndrome, pushing more and more students to work harder, leaving themselves depleted of their mental and emotional reserves.[181] The lack of accessible mental health services within their campus[182] often leaves these students without the critical resources to deal with their stress, leading to an increased possibility of burnout.

The physical health consequences of burnout are also significant. Chronic stress and overwork can lead to various health issues, such as headaches, insomnia, and weakened immune function (Kahill, 1988). Sacramento State 3rd year "David" speaks to this pressure to persevere and be resilient, the narrative I have forewarned as a racialized representation of the Filipino, whether migrant worker or student, within these systems of oppression and burn out. In

[181] Bound, John, Brad Hershbein, and Bridget Terry Long. "Playing the Admissions Game: Student Reactions to Increasing College Competition." Journal of Economic Perspectives 23, no. 4 (2009): 119-146. https://doi.org/10.1257/jep.23.4.119.

[182] Miller, Claudia Boyd-Barrett. "Mental Health Care Absent for Many at California Community Colleges." California Health Report, July 30, 2018. https://www.calhealthreport.org/2018/07/30/mental-health-care-absent-many-california-community-colleges/.

kuwentuhan, “David” actually asks the other interviewees, “Does anyone else feel a pressure to just push through though? Like we all talked about feeling burnt out and doing too much for our orgs and community, but I can’t help but feel guilty if I let back, let go cuz I then think of my Mom who hella works or my grandparents who are elderly now…. I get it though, I barely sleep and am not feeling good health wise, but my initial response is to just push through.” David’s vulnerability and honesty struck a chord with many of the other talk story attendees as a sea of reactions ranged from virtual zoom “snaps” in agreement to nervous laughter having felt David said the quiet part loud”. For Filipino American students, the physical toll of burnout is often overlooked, as the cultural value of "*tiis*" (endurance) encourages them to persevere despite physical discomfort. This cultural emphasis on enduring hardship can prevent students from seeking help and addressing their health concerns, further exacerbating the effects of burnout. The involvement in student organizations, while providing a sense of community and purpose, also contributes to burnout. The responsibilities many interviewees named within leadership roles, included event organizing, budget management, and mentoring their peers, all of which require significant time and emotional energy. These roles, though fulfilling, add to the students’ already overwhelming level of expectations, a level set by the “Model Filipino Student Subject” haunting.

Additionally, the expectation students place on themselves and each other to serve as cultural ambassadors and advocates for diversity adds another layer of responsibility. Third year CSU East Bay student Jazz adds, “Yeah, I feel I came in with an expectation to join the Filipino club and make that my whole life (other zoom attendees visibly laugh and snap their fingers in agreement.).... But honestly, I also started expecting that of the students coming in, cuz we also want to get more Filipinos in our org to show how successful and present we are. But, like, we’re

also burning out while doing that work, right?" Filipino American students feel a responsibility and pressure to educate their peers and faculty about their culture and advocate for the needs of their community. Through this advocacy and labor is crucial for fostering a more inclusive campus environment, placing the responsibility solely on students is unfair and a detriment to their collective health and wellness.

The institutional failure to adequately support Filipino American students plays a critical role in the burnout cycle. Universities often lack sufficient resources and support systems to address the unique challenges faced by these students. They further hinder students of color through the commodification of their labor, where campuses showcase their model students of color and historically marginalized communities under a neoliberal multiculturalist performance of diversity and inclusion. What many of these students sought was recognition, but what they have shared in their interviews is the deep need for further campus support through greater mental health access, more affordable campus costs, and a shift in the narrative of what makes an involved and successful student on campus. This lack of support leaves students feeling undervalued and overworked. This dynamic creates a sense of disillusionment and frustration with the university system, which appears to exploit their contributions without providing the necessary resources to sustain their well-being. In a study by Lewis et al. (2004), historically marginalized students shared a feeling of isolation and lack of support by their institutions, leading to higher levels of stress and burnout.[183] The lack of culturally competent counseling services, mentorship programs, and academic support exacerbates these feelings of isolation and

[183] Lewis, Jioni A., Ruby Mendenhall, Sonia A. Harwood, and Margaret B. Huntt. "Coping with Gendered Racial Microaggressions among Black Women College Students." Journal of African American Studies 17, no. 1 (2013): 51-73.

contributes to the overall sense of burnout.

Perpetuating the Cycle:

Recruiting the Next Generation of Burnt Out "Filipino Model Students"

The final stage of the ILB Cycle involves burnt-out students recruiting the next generation of leaders before they succumb to burnout. This cycle of recruitment and organizational sustainability is both a coping mechanism and a survival strategy for individual students and their respective campus spaces. This cycle of recruitment allows burnt out students to pass on their responsibilities and take a step back from their roles, often romanticizing the roles they are hoping to escape. Graduating UC Berkeley senior "Aliza" names this, "Yeah, I think for us in organizations, we were hella relieved to survive and get out. (laughter from other zoom participants is heard)... Like we all were ready to be out, but the last thing is to get the next up. To be honest, talking through burn out and stuff, I feel guilty now, I don't think I was honest about the role's heavy labor and its impact on my mental health…. But honestly I had to go, so I just found who I can to take this role on. Filipino students of the past fought for these spaces, we can't let them down." The unique piece of this kuwentuhan quote is the tension in Aliza's voice around the deep need to escape her student organization, while also feeling guilty to leave without finding a replacement, sometimes through a watering down of student leader expectations and the realities of workload. The history of past Filipino students fighting for these campus spaces adds to this pressure for student leaders transitioning out to identify and quickly recruit their replacement. This relates back to the tenets of "utang na loob" and a feeling of needing to pay it back. This process also perpetuates the cycle of overwork and burnout, as the new recruits soon find themselves facing the same pressures and challenges.

The expectation to "give back" and mentor younger students is deeply rooted in Filipino culture, which values community support and intergenerational assistance. While this tradition is essential for maintaining a sense of community and continuity, it also places additional burdens on already overwhelmed students. The cycle of recruiting and mentoring, without addressing the systemic issues that contribute to burnout, ensures that the ILB Cycle continues unabated.

> "We really move far away from, "How do you prevent burn out," especially in this work. We moved more towards, "How do we minimize it." I've seen that conversation a lot more recently in a sense that this work that we do ...is inherently burn out central."
>
> "Maggie"

As "Maggie" shared in the interview excerpt above, burnout among many current Filipino American college students is perceived as an inevitable outcome of the combined pressures of imposter syndrome and overwork. Burn out is understood as a natural part of the collegiate experience, especially those who plan to be involved in community organizations and leadership, which in itself is seen as an essential step to "succeed" in higher education and beyond. The pressure to perform these roles also falls upon the inherent expectation to "uplift and sacrifice for the Filipino community", recognizing the struggles of holding and maintaining these race ethnocentric spaces.

The dual demands of academic excellence and extensive involvement in student organizations create a trajectory toward physical and emotional exhaustion. Institutional failures, including the lack of adequate support and the commodification of student labor, exacerbate this

issue. Addressing burnout requires a comprehensive approach that acknowledges the unique challenges faced by Filipino American students, provides robust support systems, and addresses the exploitative practices within universities. Only by tackling these systemic issues can our community hope to break the ILB Cycle and foster a healthier, more supportive environment for Filipino American students.

Neoliberal Multiculturalism through a Filipino American Lens

To better understand the neoliberal multiculturalist system Filipino students experience on campus, I asked a simple question to better understand the communal dynamics and student organizational culture they entered and experienced: "Describe the Filipino student org(s) on your campus. How do they function/work?" I received various responses, but an underlying thread across the different UC and CSU campuses I interviewed was the fact that these spaces and organizations were like its own universe and society outside of the college campus. There were unwritten rules, historic modes of organizational culture and vocabulary, and inner politics that played into a student's quest to be affirmed as a productive member of the Filipino student community, a version of the chased "Model Filipino Student" identity.

I worked with groups of Filipino college students and recent alumni across several University of California (UC) and California State University (CSU) campuses, including UC Berkeley, UCLA, SJSU, CSU East Bay, SFSU, UC Irvine, UC Riverside, UC Merced, CSU Sacramento, UC Santa Cruz, and UC San Diego. The majority of these campuses housed at least one Filipino centric student led organization, with many holding multiple Filipino organizations. UC Berkeley graduating senior "Neil" speaks to the intricate Filipino multi-organization, multigenerational ecosystem:

> "Well, the Fil-Am started with PAA [Pilipinx Academic Alliance], previously known as Filipino Student Associate [FSA] when founded in 1969 during the Civil Rights movement. From there you started seeing the numbers of both pinoy students and programming grow. More students meant way different needs and interests. This led to splitting off of new orgs: some preprofessional organizations like PASAE [Pilipinx Association of Scientists, Architects, and Engineers] for science and engineering, P4 [Partnership for Pre-Professional Pilipinxs] for Pre-Law and Business, and PAHC [Pilipino Association for Health Careers] for pre-health folks…. Yeah then there's PASS [Pilipinx Academic Student Services] that centers on recruitment and retention work as a response to Prop 209 and the end of affirmative action, and then {m}aganda magazine for literary arts and performance folks…. Yeah it's a lot, but kinda cool to think about the mini community within the campus community."

Neil's description and history of the Filipino American community at UC Berkeley provides one example of the growth, expansion, and uniquely specific ecosystem that has formed the Cal Filipino community. These same organizations at UC Berkeley, now numbered at ten total Fil-Am orgs since this interview, have such a connectivity that they formed a Pilipino Community Board and organizing body, with a whole website distinguishing the histories and goals of each of the ten student run organizations.[184] In this same kuwentuhan group talk story session with "Neil", many students agreed with his assessment and one, first year "Sky" spoke

[184] Pilipinx Community at Cal. "Pilipinx Community at Cal." Accessed May 25, 2024. https://calpilcommunity.org/.

on the overwhelming pressures to be involved in all of the above: “What’s wild is I came into campus and the first thing I experienced was being recruited to all of these orgs. Everything is super nice, but I can’t lie and say I wasn’t overwhelmed. I saw how happy and joyful everyone seemed during the orientation events and I drank the kool aid, joining like 3 orgs and now serving as a board member next year.” The Fil-Am Community at UC Berkeley is just one example of a well-oiled machine and system of recruiting new Filipino students, indoctrinating a culture of work, labor, and burn out, and establishing a system of further recruitment of the next generation of student leaders in their spaces.

I want to make it clear that the onus and blame should not be placed on the students or the student organizations listed, but more so on the campuses hosting these spaces and the lack of institutional support the Fil-Am spaces receive which ultimately forces Filipino students to take on leadership and community organizing roles that read more like a fulltime 9-5 position. To be completely transparent, I myself am an alumnus of this same Fil-Am ecosystem, serving one multiple student boards, specifically within the context of high school outreach coordinator in PASS recruitment and retention services as well as internal affairs and intern director for {m}aganda magazine. I appreciated my time in these spaces, but my own battle with burn out and internal resentment over a decade ago in these spaces has served as an initial catalyst in my interest in the “Filipino Model Student” and consequential I.L.B. cycle of imposter syndrome, labor, and burn out. Again, I emphasize the experiences and jaded outcomes of my time in the Filipino American community at UC Berkeley should not be blamed on the students or the organizations, but on the context, and lack of institutional support, within the university of which I felt pressured to perform the “Filipino Model Student”, overcompensating for my anxiety over imposter syndrome through overcommitment and overworking myself.

To grasp the nuances of neoliberal multiculturalism, I turn to the seminal work of Roderick Ferguson' *We Demand: The University and Student Protests* (2017), which offers invaluable insights into the cultural logic underpinning racial capitalism. Through Ferguson's critiques of assimilationist narratives and model minority myths, I lay the groundwork for understanding how neoliberal multiculturalism intersects with the Filipino American experience within higher education.[185] Ferguson provides a framework through which I examine the ways the "Model Filipino Student Subject" haunting of multiculturalism operates as a neoliberal project, commodifying Filipino college student labor while perpetuating systems of inequality. The neoliberal university, as Ferguson argues, serves as a site that reproduces hegemonic ideologies and campus hierarchies. This ultimately leads to the co-opting of diversity and inclusion to serve the university's interests of capital and maintaining existing structures of power.[186] He states, "The university, as an institution, operates within and reproduces the logics of racial capitalism, commodifying diversity and inclusion to serve the interests of capital."[187] Here, diversity and inclusion are not emancipatory ideals but rather co-opted tools that serve the interests of capital and reinforce existing power structures.

UC San Diego freshman "Charles" experiences demonstrate these racial capitalist logics and the commodification of student labor: "I mean, I was hella caught off guard when I met so many [upperclassmen] who worked like three or four jobs, or were part of all these orgs…. I don't know though, I guess coming into UCSD it felt like this was the expectation and norm to be busy, or else you ain't good enough. But, like I also see all these others hella tired and jaded

[185] Ferguson, Roderick A. *We Demand: The University and Student Protests*. 1st ed. University of California Press, 2017. http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/j.ctv1xxt2q.
[186] Ibid, 69.
[187] Ibid, 72.

leaving the space." This expectation level of labor and consequential burn out that "Charles" alludes to is an example of the I.L.B. cycle's consequences and harm on students, a consequence driven by Ferguson's analysis of Universities as spaces of commodified student labor through the mirage of diversity and inclusion.

Within this context, Filipino American students find themselves navigating a terrain where their identities are both celebrated and commodified, often leading to complex negotiations and chasing of belonging in the university. My "I" in the I.L.B. cycle represents "Imposter Syndrome", an extremely relevant and common denominator in my interview with Filipino American college students. Imposter syndrome in itself led many of the students I interviewed to chase a sense of belonging through a process of proving oneself within the confines of the university. This chase is not dissimilar to the ways U.S Colonial education in the Philippines created a sense of colonial mentality to let go of "Filipino-ness" in order to chase whiteness, assimilation, and affirmation under the colonial power.[188]

Third year UC Irvine student "Chelle" speaks on this chase, "I feel this need to prove oneself starts even before we get to campus. Like, the whole process to apply and get in is a race right? Like we're asking to be seen and affirmed that we're good enough." Noted here, is a wave of virtual "snaps of approval" and emoji hearts and claps in agreement by the 12 other kuwentuhan attendees as "Chelle" continues, "I feel this whole process of chasing approval into college just transforms into us seeking approval by the university and even each other in these orgs [organizations]. We don't solve imposter syndrome, it just transforms after each accomplishment." "Chelle" demonstrates a deep understanding of how imposter syndrome isn't

[188] David, E. J. R., and Sumie Okazaki. "Colonial Mentality: A Review and Recommendation for Filipino American Psychology." Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology 12, no. 1 (2006): 1-16.

just a particular experience for Filipino students, but the way Filipino students engage and respond is one that I take note through this chapter: a response to prove oneself through more work for the community and campus, overcompensating through multiple modes of overinvolvement. Though experienced even before joining campus, Imposter Syndrome serves as the initial hook to get students overinvolved and tapping into this I.L.B. Cycle.

This process of proving oneself commonly centers layers of student labor in an effort to achieve the university's definition of being a "productive student". This pattern of shared imposter syndrome and the chase of acknowledgement for one's labor can also be drawn to the example of the "Model Filipino student/subject" I define within both chapters 2 and 3. Campus systems of merit based affirmation, from scholarships to annual awards (including Filipino community facilitated awards like "most successful Fil-Am" or "Most Valuable Intern") have reified the combination of imposter syndrome and the model minority myth/"Model Filipino Student" that perpetuates students' desire to chase these awards as being recognized, affirmed by the university. This system of seeking affirmation by the systems in power rhymes with chapter three's migrant teachers seeking recognition and praise from their employers, their country (via the Bagong Bayani/New Hero discourse), and even from their own trafficker. This is a historic hegemonic practice as well: U.S. colonial education in the Philippines embraced the elite students of their time, typically from already wealthy families, honoring these Filipino students with scholarships to study abroad in the U.S. as pensionados. The Pensionado System itself served as a blueprint for mass educating and producing future Philippines based national leaders and elite who would mimic and sway the Philippines towards Western ideologies and American cultural identities.

Ferguson explains that neoliberal multiculturalism operates as a form of cultural hegemony, shaping not only institutional practices but also individual subjectivities.[189] Within the neoliberal university, Filipino American students are subjected to a range of pressures and expectations that reflect broader societal norms and values. Their experiences of racialization, marginalization, and resistance are deeply intertwined with the dynamics of neoliberal capitalism, highlighting the interconnectedness of race, class, and power within the educational landscape. 4th year UC Irvine Student "Mariko" describes these sets of pressures to perform as the "Model Filipino Student Subject":

> "I don't know how else to describe it…. But I felt, ever since my first year, this need to prove I am worth admission. That I wasn't a mistake on this campus. And seeing all the older Filipino students involved on campus, I saw that as the sign of being a good representative of our community. So, I joined three orgs and tried to serve on two separate boards, but I just got tired and spiraled…. I guess it's a weird voice in my head saying I need to do all this work to prove my worth… it's extra hard when there aren't a lot of students who look like me or talk like me, and the only [Filipino] ones who do are taking on all of these campus leadership roles. I don't know who to blame."

"Mariko's" sentiments here are not new or isolated. As she shared these words in our online group kuwentuhan talk story circle on Filipino student burn out, many of the other attendees nodded in agreement, sharing online "100" and "thumbs up" emojis through her

[189] Ibid, 75.

sharing. Her story was one that many students I interviewed shared and related to: the environment they entered in higher education being one of which they felt a need to prove their worth through their labor within and for the university, for their Filipino community. This environment is one that Ferguson illustrates and critiques as a product of the neoliberal university: "Neoliberal multiculturalism perpetuates systems of inequality by co-opting diversity and inclusion initiatives, maintaining existing power structures under the guise of progressiveness."[190] What "Mariko" is describing here during their time at UC Irvine, is the system of inequality uplifted by the university's co-opting of a neoliberal multiculturalist diversity and inclusion definition of what makes a productive student. Specifically, this system perpetuates the "Model Filipino Student" built across generations and histories of Americanized colonial education in the Philippines and its impact on Filipino Americans today. This system further defines the "Model Filipino Student" in these respective universities as one who is involved in multiple student organizations, especially as student leaders, one who succeeds not just in academic performance, but also in their labor to maintain, recruit, and strengthen their Filipino and overall campus community.

Unpacking the "Model Filipino Student/Subject" through Ferguson's work allows a bettering understanding of the tensions the Filipino college student faces around striving to be the model minority student in order to defeat one's imposter syndrome, in order to assimilate into the university's standards of a model student and campus citizen. By following this sense of pressure, the university maintains a sense of control and power over its students. This especially translates to students hailing from historically marginalized communities, whether it be first generation students or students of color. This especially impacts Filipino American Students,

[190] Ibid, 84.

whose lineages and ancestors have felt this similar impact under histories of American colonial education and for Filipino migrant workers through their own respective racialized training as "Model Filipino Student Subjects" under the Migrant Labor Export System. Ferguson states, "Assimilationist narratives and model minority myths are used to uphold the status quo, obscuring the systemic barriers faced by marginalized communities within higher education."[191]

This environment that Mariko describes is not just a generational dynamic, but an environment built upon the university's intentional co-opting of diversity as 1) a marketing tool to recruit students and furthermore and 2) a tool of forced assimilation to keep students striving for acceptance through their labor for and within the university. Through Ferguson's lens and critique of university neoliberalist multiculturalism, I shed light on the ways in which Filipino American students resist, reimagine, and reclaim their identities and agency within the neoliberal university system.

Burnout as a Colonial Education Haunting Legacy

As discussed earlier in this chapter, Filipino students' experiences of burnout are not isolated incidents but symptomatic of larger systemic issues rooted in colonial legacies and exacerbated by neoliberal university structures. Through an examination of personal narratives and critical analysis, I unpack the ways in which burnout reflects the tension between academic performance and mental health in the lives of Filipino students. To understand the prevalence of burnout among Filipino students, I must first examine the historical legacies of colonialism and labor exploitation that continue to shape educational experiences today. From the Spanish colonization of the Philippines to the recruitment of Filipino laborers in the United States,

[191] Ibid, 98.

Filipino communities have long been subjected to systems of oppression that prioritize productivity and economic exploitation over human well-being.

These colonial legacies manifest in the educational sphere through the perpetuation of academic pressure and the normalization of overwork. The expectation for Filipino students to excel academically mirrors broader societal expectations of success and upward mobility, often at the expense of mental health and holistic well-being. UC Berkeley Filipino Alumni "Edgar" shared the following anecdote of a mentee turned student organization leader who dealt with extreme levels of stress and burn out which impacted their mental health: "One of my interns applied for staff, they didn't get it, and they took this news hard…. [They] Saw the other person being celebrated, and the intern was about to commit suicide by jumping off of a building…. Luckily we were able to intervene with campus police…. It scares me how many potential students may not recognize their capacity level, leading to burnout and even worse situations."

The pressure to excel academically often comes at the cost of my mental well-being, leading to feelings of burnout and exhaustion. Thus the I.L.B. cycle continues to drain generations of students, even when others attempt to intervene like "Edgar" above. The university continues to benefit from this cycle of student labor as a response to seeking affirmation and recognition of being enough, as a process of undoing the impact of "imposter syndrome" more largely the legacy and impact of what I earlier named as the "Model Filipino Student" identity formed through generations of U.S. colonial education in the Philippines and through the Philippines' Labor Export System.

In addition to historical legacies, burnout among Filipino students is exacerbated by neoliberal university structures that prioritize competition and market-driven values over student well-being. As universities increasingly operate as businesses, students are treated as consumers

whose success is measured by metrics of productivity and performance. This commodification of education commodifies the labor of students, contributing to feelings of burnout and exhaustion. As soon to be graduating students have shared through interviews, the uncertainty of employment after college reaffirms feelings of insecurity and anxiety. Many of the students state they face additional pressures to support not only themselves, but their families financially. Within this context, burnout is not an isolated individual struggle, but also a systemic issue that impacts whole family units and communities. The commodification of education has transformed students into consumers, placing undue pressure on them to perform the "Model Filipino Student Subject" logic and succeed at all costs, even to the detriment of their mental health. The Filipino student burnout experience cannot be separated from other intersecting systems of oppression, including race, gender, class, and immigration status. For example, Filipina women face unique gendered expectations from their families and community, while undocumented Filipino students may confront additional barriers in regard to mental health support and campus funding. Centering intersectionality[192] in our analysis of burnout constructs a stronger understanding of the complexities of Filipino student experiences, allowing for more effective advocacy for more inclusive and equitable mental health practices within higher education. Burnout among Filipino college students is rooted in the colonial "Model Filipino Student Subject" haunting and strengthened by neoliberal university structures.

[192] Crenshaw, Kimberle. "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color." Stanford Law Review 43, no. 6 (1991): 1241–99. https://doi.org/10.2307/1229039.

Isolation, Labor, and the Legacy of Colonial Education

> "Y'all know what's hella funny though? These orgs, these campuses are supposed to be all bout community, yeah? Why we all here talking about feeling so alone though?... How can I be part of like three or five orgs, spaces and still feel hella isolated?"
>
> - "Ginger", Recent UC Irvine Graduate

Ginger's questions above raise the ironic conundrum many of the Filipino college students I interviewed shared: "even when we're part of so many student organizations, a campus that champions community and diversity; why do we feel so alone?" Isolation and Burn Out here coexist as consequences of the I.L.B. Cycle and campus' commodification of Filipino student labor. Education and Mental Health centered scholars have traced how college students experiencing overwhelming stress from overwork can lead to substantial mental health issues, including anxiety, depression, and feelings of isolation.[193] These problems often go unnoticed until they become critical, as seen in my "Burn Out" section of this chapter. The theme of isolation emerges as a central motif in Filipino student experiences, intertwined with the legacies of colonial education and the socialization of labor. Through an exploration of historical and transnational contexts, I clarify the ways in which Filipino students navigate feelings of marginalization and alienation within the university setting. "Joy", a second year at SJSU

[193] Kadison, Richard, and Theresa Foy DiGeronimo. College of the Overwhelmed: The Campus Mental Health Crisis and What to Do About It. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2004.

mentions the back and forth between chasing affirmation she is good enough and burning out from overworking in these student organizations: "I came into campus scared I won't fit in, so I do what I was told by others and joined the Fil-Am [organization] and other spaces…. I tried to chase this feeling of being wanted and accepted, but I ended up feeling tired and over it. Then when I take a break, rest from these spaces I feel FOMO[194] and even more isolated, then I'm back and end up overworking myself again, burning out like others have shared."

The roots of isolation among Filipino students can first be examined through the historical legacies of colonial education in the Philippines. With the integration of western education and values, Filipinos under colonial rule began to embrace self-sustenance and succeeding through one's own labor. To use a related common phrase, Filipinos began to embrace the idea of "pulling yourself up by your bootstraps." Spanning over three centuries of Spanish and American colonization, the Philippine educational system was shaped by imperial agendas aimed at social control and cultural assimilation. Under Spanish rule, education was primarily reserved for the elite, perpetuating social stratification and reinforcing colonial hierarchies. The introduction of westernized education in the early 1900's Philippines further strengthened notions of cultural inferiority and white supremacist racialized hierarchies, as Filipinos were indoctrinated to chase Western ideals of progress and modernity, to perform the "Model Filipino Student Subject." The "Model Filipino Student Subject" continues to haunt and impact current Filipino student experiences, manifesting in feelings of isolation and imposter syndrome. For some Filipino students interviewed, the experience of migration and transnational identities adds to the feelings of isolation within higher education. As children of immigrants or immigrants themselves, Filipino students must navigate complicated webs of cultural adaptation

[194] FOMO: Feeling of Missing Out

and displacement, shifting between multiple worlds and balancing conflicting expectations and definitions of success. Eurocentric curriculum further marginalizes Filipino student identities, invisibilizing their histories and respective narratives. The lack of Filipino representation and experiences within educational spaces reinforces patterns of invisibility and marginalization of communities of color. This further perpetuates cycles of cultural erasure and exclusion. In addition to cultural isolation, Filipino students often grapple with economic precarity and the pressures of labor within the neoliberal university.[195] The commodification of education under neoliberalism exacerbates economic disparities, as students from marginalized backgrounds struggle to access resources and support services essential for academic success.

Many Filipino students come from working-class backgrounds, facing financial constraints and familial obligations that necessitate balancing academic pursuits with part-time work or caregiving responsibilities. 4th year UC Berkeley student "Jackie" serves as an example of the need to "overwork": "I hate that sometimes I feel guilty burning out, but to be real y'all, I need to work all these jobs. It's like, I feel people don't get that I'm my family's main support…. I don't want to work 3 jobs, but I need to. Then it's like, if I don't also join these [Filipino] orgs, then like, am I also a bad community member? Will the Filipino community fail to exist if I or no one else puts on this work [and programming]? I'm tired yall!" "Jackie" speaks to a shared tension many of the UC Berkeley students on the call affirmed: needing to work for themselves and families while also knowing the inherent responsibility of just being Filipino on campus, of needing to ensure the history of Filipino organizations and events/programming continues. As "Jackie" says near the end, if not I, then who will keep the organizations running? This pattern

[195] Hernandez, Xavier J. "Filipino American College Students at the Margins of Neoliberalism." Policy Futures in Education 14, no. 3 (2016): 327-344. https://doi.org/10.1177/1478210316631870.

leaves students like “Jackie” feeling isolated and sometimes helpless. Within the I.L.B. Cycle, many begin feeling a sense of resentment to their Filipino community and organizations, seeking a way to leave through recruiting someone else to take on these roles. The neoliberal university prioritizes profit over people, commodifying both student and educator labor while disregarding their well-being and capacities. Within this context, Filipino students are forced to navigate intersecting systems of oppression, confronting not only racialized barriers but also economic obstacles that hinder their educational attainment.

Despite the challenges of isolation, labor, and the legacy of colonial education, Filipino students demonstrate remarkable resilience and resistance within the university setting. Drawing on community networks and collective solidarity, Filipino student organizations serve as sites of resistance and cultural affirmation, providing spaces for students to celebrate their heritage and advocate for institutional change. A 3rd year at CSU East Bay, “Jasmine” states that, “...though I am tired, I also don’t really regret the long nights working for PCN [Pilipino Cultural Night] or all the meetings… I kinda wish it was more balanced and less stressful, but I also know how important these org spaces are.” Through grassroots organizing and activism, Filipino students challenge dominant narratives of assimilation and model minority mythologies, asserting their right to self-determination and educational equity. With that being said, we must be mindful of the over romanticized narratives of resilience that plagues not just Filipino students but the history of Filipino peoples. Though Filipino students and their organizations have risen beyond many challenges including lack of campus support to smaller campus populations, these sites hold tension in the ways these victories are commonly built upon the overworked and labored students’ backs, leading to these same students experiencing burn out.

Moreover, the rise of ethnic studies and decolonial pedagogies within academia offers hope for transformative change, as scholars and educators work to center marginalized voices and narratives within educational curricula. By critically engaging with the legacies of colonialism and neoliberalism, Filipino students and scholars contribute to broader movements for social justice and educational reform, envisioning a future where all students can thrive and flourish within the university. Through my interviews I observed the themes of isolation, labor, and the legacy of colonial education within the experiences of Filipino students in California universities. By contextualizing these experiences within historical, transnational, and structural frameworks, I explain the complex dynamics that shape educational equity and access for marginalized communities. Moving forward, I draw upon these insights to inform our analysis and advocacy efforts, working towards a more inclusive and equitable higher education system for all.

Conclusion:

The Chase for Model Campus Citizenship and Belonging

The notion of "citizenry" within California universities reveals the complex negotiation between Filipino students and the neoliberal logic of the institution. By contextualizing their experiences within broader historical frameworks and critiquing hegemonic systems, we illuminate the ways in which Filipino students challenge and reimagine notions of belonging within the university space. Within the neoliberal university, to be a model student, a “Model Filipino Student Subject” is to be tethered to one’s own productivity and labor value. Filipino students shared that they often felt pressured to perform citizenship in ways that align with dominant narratives of success and upward mobility, narratives grounded in western ideology

and the “Model Filipino Student Subject.” Higher education's neoliberal agenda perpetuates the myth of meritocracy, forcing students to prove a sense of campus citizenship in order to be seen and treated as worthy, a system which privileges certain groups over others.[196] Working-class and first generation Filipino college students tend to face additional barriers to accessing resources and opportunities within their university, adding more challenges to finding one’s sense of belonging on campus. The commodification of campus citizenship, a pressure to perform as a model student, within the university reinforces hierarchies of power and privilege, marginalizing those who were once never recognized by higher education as a suitable campus subject.

Despite these challenges, Filipino students actively resist and reimagine new worlds of belonging within higher education. Through organizing, activism, and centering mental health capacities, the students honor their right to exist and thrive within their own terms, challenging the university's neoliberal pressures and the “Model Filipino Student” haunting.[197] “Victoria”, a recent graduate from San Jose State University begging to reimagine where resources can be reattributed and healing processes can help provide a healthier holistic experience to Filipino college students and other students of color:

> “There’s two different places for change. From the outside, institutions can further support spaces like ours through funding, additional mental health services, and advising from full time professionals. There is also a lot to be done internally, as individuals, we must reflect and be realistic about our goals and our

[196] Ladson-Billings, G., & Tate, W. F. (1995). Toward a critical race theory of education. Teachers College Record, 97(1), 47-68.
[197] Giroux, H. A. (2014). Neoliberalism's war on higher education. Haymarket Books.

> capacity. As a staff, we can turn towards more collaboration with other organizations, share the labor and resources…. Fully reflecting on if specific programming is necessary or needed, reflect on if the community needs or wants this."
>
> - "Victoria"

Victoria's critique provides great points of potential improvement when it comes to breaking the described I.L.B. Cycle. She prioritizes the intervention and additional support from the campus through mental health service accessibility and additional staff support. She also identifies the deep need of student organizations to challenge past definitions of success and productivity, actively challenging this "Model Filipino Student Subject" haunting. Victoria alludes to a communal recentering on capacity and collaboration, a statement many other students affirmed through their virtual nods and chat box agreement responses. The Filipino student community's struggle for recognition and justice within the university are part of a larger movement to decolonize education and create spaces that honor our histories and cultures. Through this chapter I reviewed the complexities of university citizenship and belonging among Filipino students in California universities. By examining the intersections of history, neoliberalism, and resistance, there is clarity in the tensions Filipino students negotiate around their identities, value, and labor. There is a pressure for these students to assert their presence within the university space by following the tenets of the "Model Filipino Student Subject," sacrificing one's wellness through one's labor in an effort to be recognized as productive under the neoliberal university. Moving forward, it is imperative that our students' voices and

experiences are from and center in conversations about citizenship and work towards creating more inclusive and equitable academic environments for all.

My analysis reveals that the fight for these Filipino students' recognition of labor by the university is not merely a demand for neoliberal representation, but a call for a fundamental change within these educational systems, challenging how students of color are treated and commodified for their labor. Filipino students' efforts to decolonize education, as I unpack in my final chapter, challenge the deeply ingrained colonial mindsets that continue to influence curricula, definitions of student organizational productivity, and higher education institutional policies. Their activism seeks to dismantle these oppressive structures and replace them with practices that genuinely prioritize student wellness and mental health. By advocating for a dynamic shift away from the model student discourse, these students are revolutionizing the ways their respective student organizations and their communities define productivity.

These intersections of history and neoliberalism present unique challenges and opportunities for Filipino students. The historical context of U.S. colonial education in the Philippines has left a legacy of teaching and cultural practices that continue to ingrain Filipino identities bound to the model minority myth and the little brown brother/sister narrative.[198] Meanwhile, universities' neoliberal agenda tends to prioritize profit over people, exacerbating issues of students being overworked and pushed towards a never ending cycle of labor and burnout in efforts to appease the university's definition of productivity, of university citizenship. However, Filipino students are not passive victims to this system. These students actively resist and navigate these systems of oppression and labor through various forms of advocacy and

[198] Miller, Stuart Creighton. Benevolent Assimilation: The American Conquest of the Philippines, 1899-1903. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1982, 134.

revolutionizing the ways their communal organizations function. By decentering hyper productivity and regrounding themselves in revolutionary rest and praxis of collaboration, Filipino college student organizations are reclaiming their agency and redefining their core values.

In the following chapter I will showcase how resistance takes various forms within the Filipino college student community. Formalized student organizations, though examined in this chapter for exhibiting the patterns of the Imposter Syndrome-Labor-Burn Out Cycle, also play a crucial role in creating interventions against this cycle. To be clear, my case in this chapter is not to blame the students or their organizations for the I.L.B. cycle depicted. These organizations provide support networks and foster a sense of belonging separate from the number of events and campus programs produced. These groups represent incubators for student leadership and activism, instilling students with the skills and confidence needed to challenge systemic injustices.

This process of negotiating identities within the university context involves a continuous balancing act between assimilation and resistance. Filipino students navigate their dual identities as both Filipino and members of the academic community, often encountering tensions between these roles and situated within the "Model Filipino Student/Subject" narrative. As seen in various student interview excerpts, the pressure to conform to dominant cultural norms can be overwhelming, especially when these norms define your existence as connected to your ability to labor for the university. The Filipino college students I interviewed not only challenge this definition of productivity, but build new visions for how their organizations can operate in the future, breaking away from the "Model Filipino Student Subject" haunting. By reaffirming their boundaries while prioritizing opportunities for collaboration instead of overprogramming,

Filipino students demonstrate that it is possible for their organizations and individual selves to thrive without sacrificing one's mental health and wellness.

In conclusion, the experiences of Filipino students in California universities illuminate broader issues of citizenship, belonging, and resistance within neoliberal educational institutions. It is important to also examine how these same students interviewed have built interventions away from the "Model Filipino Student/Subject," actively breaking the I.L.B. cycle through communal and individual internal healing. It is through both individual and collective healing that the Filipino students visualize more liberatory futures freeing themselves from cycles that prey on their labor, time, and burn out. From these localized interventions, the students plant the seeds of their own liberation from the "Model Filipino Student Subject," an exorcism of this historical colonial haunting.

Chapter 5

An Exorcism of Colonial Education Haunting:

Towards a Future of Resistance & Healing

The culmination of my research traces my concept of the "Model Filipino Student/Subject" through the intertwined histories of U.S. imperialist education in the Philippines, migrant labor policies, and the resultant culture of burnout and martyrdom of Filipino communities within the United States educational context. Through extensive interviews with Filipino-identified undergraduate students and trafficked migrant teachers, the genealogical tracing of this phenomena highlights a persistent colonial legacy and haunting that shape the Filipino community's contemporary experiences of labor, identity, and resistance. I answer the question that I posed at the beginning of this dissertation of whether past colonial education legacies impact Filipinos in the present day with a resounding yes, engaging both the racialization of Filipino migrant workers and Filipino American college students within the U.S. educational contexts.

I identified the longevity of U.S. colonial legacies through the experiences of Filipino migrant teachers trafficked under the migrant labor export system, a product of said U.S. colonial education. I tether this haunting of colonial education to the ways Filipino American students are ingrained in a cycle of overcompensating student labor to combat imposter syndrome only to be left burnt out. Through this concluding chapter, rather than situating the Filipino students and migrant teachers as helpful victims of the "Model Filipino Student Subjectivity," however, I highlight the transformation of their trauma, pain, sacrifice, and burn out into active resistance and rejection of the "Model Filipino Student Subject." Both groups demonstrate through

community organizing and internal unlearning of capitalistic colonial mentality values their own process of individual and collective healing.

Filipino students and migrant educators in the U.S. grapple with these enduring impacts of a colonial education system initially imposed during the post-Philippines-American War era. As discussed in chapters three and four, my individual and group interview data reveal the looming and haunting complex of the racialized "Model Filipino Student/Subject." Filipina UC Berkeley senior "Carla" says, "From my first interaction with my campus and the Filipino community, I felt this pressure to do it all, to be perfect. A perfect student, a perfect community member being part of everything, a perfect representation of a good Filipina. But I'm left tired after four years here." Through both education and professional training, these Filipino students and migrant teachers are taught to embrace a racialized way of being that includes submissiveness, self-sacrifice, and an emphasis of one's ability to labor and overwork as a sign of one's worth. This "Model Filipino Student/Subject" system, anchored in control and assimilation, has left a lasting imprint on the Filipino psyche. This sentiment has appeared across migrant teachers from various cohorts and ages, as well as students across different years of entry into their respective Filipino campus and Filipino student community. The "Model Filipino Student/Subject" system serves as a cycle that perpetuates feelings of inadequacy and feeds into individuals' imposter syndrome. However, resistance emerges in various forms as both Filipino trafficked teachers and the college students challenge these legacies of colonial education and conditioning.

Resisting the "Model Filipino Student Subject"

Subject	Filipino Migrant Teachers	Filipino College Students
System of Control	Recruitment Agency, Forced Labor Migration	Institution of Higher Education, I.L.B. Cycle
"Model Filipino Student Subject" Haunting	Model Migrant Teacher Narrative	Model Filipino Student & Community Representative
Resistance & Healing	Organize for migrant worker protections and hold recruiters & Philippines accountable.	Create better systems of support, breaking cultural cycles of overwork, shift to collaboration

[Table 5.1] Table of Teacher and Student Modes of Resistance. This Chart depicts the various systems of power, examples of "Model Filipino Student Subjectivity," and the ways both case study groups resist and heal from them.

As I have summed up how the "Model Filipino Student Subject" haunting applies to both Filipino migrant teachers and Filipino American college students, I also explore the modes of resistance that appeared through my research and interviews with both Filipino trafficked teachers and with overworked Filipino American college students. The chart above [Table 5.1] showcases not just the way the "Model Filipino Student/Subject" is named under both the student and teacher case studies, but more importantly how both groups resist this process of racialized subjugation. In the following sections I examine how both case studies engage various moments of resistance and healing, both at the individual and communal collective level. These range from legal processes in the trafficked teachers' case to internalizing values shifts in the students, to both groups engaging in political campaigns and community organizing. For the

Filipino teachers and students, their narratives do not end with colonial education's haunting, but are grounded in a process of exorcizing the haunting through their own actions and collective liberation.

Lesson Plans of Resistance: From Victims to Survivors, Teachers to Organizers

The labor-trafficked Filipino teachers' experiences in the U.S. further elucidate the struggle against the Philippines' Labor Export Policy and its training programs, both grounded within the "Model Filipino Student Subject" racialization I historicized in chapter 2. The teachers in this study found themselves in exploitative conditions, mirroring historical patterns of U.S. colonial labor exploitation with many migrant communities and communities of color. Yet, the teachers' collective resistance against these systems of forced migration and subjugation lend to their challenging the system that has historically oppressed their community.

Organizing efforts by trafficked teacher led GABRIELA D.C. have ushered in significant advocacy movements for migrant labor rights and greater visibility for the impact of labor trafficking. By sharing their stories and collaborating with other labor unions and immigrant rights organizations, these trafficking survivors highlight the systemic injustices they face, pushing for reforms that protect migrant workers and promote fair treatment across the diaspora. Their resistance and activism are critical in dismantling the structures that have perpetuated cycles of exploitation.

One notable example of such resistance is the formation of support networks and advocacy groups specifically for migrant teachers. These groups provide legal assistance, counseling services, and platforms for collective bargaining. They also engage in public

awareness campaigns speaking to local and national press[199], working to uplift the plight of trafficked migrant teachers, thereby exerting pressure on both the Philippine and U.S. governments to enact protective legislation and fair labor practices. Moreover, these teachers have taken their resistance a step further by forming and taking leadership roles in the aforementioned GABRIELA D.C. organization[200], demanding justice not only for their own trafficking predicament, but for all overworked and unprotected migrant workers across the diaspora. Operating on anti-imperialist and worker-centered principles, the GABRIELA D.C. teachers recognized that their struggle is part of a larger global issue rooted in historical and ongoing exploitation, pushing the matter towards resistance through coalition building and collective healing.

In the 2010's, one by one, the teachers began to escape from their trafficker Isidro Rodriguez. Having saved up enough to find housing on their own, they left the housing he set up for them.[201] Although they had escaped Isidro's control, the teachers knew they needed to take action in search for their individual and collective justice. In December of 2013, the trafficked teachers who remained in the Washington, D.C. area organized together to form the Washington, D.C. chapter of GABRIELA USA, an international grassroots anti-imperialist Filipina women's rights organization. A group that began with eight teachers and a few passionate D.C.-based migrant rights organizers spent their weekends traveling door-to-door meeting with other trafficking survivors and sharing their testimonies. By 2014, GABRIELA D.C. grew their group

[199] Gonzales, Nicole. "'Our Number One Export Is People': Gabriela USA Aims to End Human Trafficking." NBC News, October 26, 2016. https://www.nbcnews.com/news/asian-america/our-number-one-export-people-gabriela-usa-aims-end-human-n667286.
[200] Gabriela USA. "Home." Accessed June 15, 2024. https://www.gabrielausa.org/.
[201] When the teachers arrived in the U.S., most of them were placed in a one-bedroom apartment that housed up to 10 teachers.

to 50 teachers. Now at 120 members, GABRIELA D.C.'s storytelling was the most effective way to increase membership. A direct example of Collins' collective emotional energy, storytelling allowed survivors to connect on a deeper level and provide a space for individuals to transform their emotions of fear and humiliation into productive emotional energy such as motivation and urgency.

A key aspect of GABRIELA D.C. has been their focus on activism as a pathway for healing. I have experienced this first-hand after spending over three years as an ally to the GABRIELA D.C. chapter. In this section, I identify how these transformed emotions (anger, urgency, inspiration) developed into different healing methods for the teachers. From their protests outside of the Philippine Embassy to their reunification with their families, I document the events and tactics that mark the GABRIELA D.C. teachers' three year transformative healing journey. The teachers best dealt with financial stress through collectively building their economic resources. Forming a unified space in GABRIELA D.C. allowed many teachers to connect with one another and share the sense of urgency to find economic stability. With the D.C. area being an extremely expensive area to live in, the teachers felt a slight sense of relief finding housemates and roommates who understand their unique experiences as Filipino survivors of trafficking. Since many teachers formed housing enclaves, they also began informally meeting and building stronger relationships through casual potlucks. These regular meetings restored a sense of normalcy, transforming previous feelings of isolation into unity and motivation to continue building their movement. The teachers would identify obstacles they commonly faced and share resources to improve their situations. These meetings allowed teachers to share information regarding which daycare facilities treat their employees the best and even allowed some teachers to help others switch over to their daycare facilities.

> "Roo[202] is the one who really encouraged me to join [GABRIELA D.C.], but also I feel so comfortable sharing with her all of these feelings… She even helped me find my new job at the daycare, now I don't have to work so many jobs just to survive."
>
> - Naomi, Washington, D.C.

Naomi, a mother of three who worked multiple labor-intensive jobs in California before returning to D.C., found a less stressful work schedule by connecting with Roo, another teacher and the 2015 chairwoman for GABRIELA D.C. In addition to the professional support, the quote above also demonstrates the emotional support the teachers offered one another. Naomi found a safe space to share her feelings and build a sense of community, a stark difference from the isolation she experienced during her first year in the United States. The teachers stated they never shared their feelings regarding their trauma and isolation outside of their immediate family until they joined GABRIELA D.C. Alicia from California described her storytelling experience as "…a healing process, a way for me to heal from my past struggles and experiences as a trafficking survivor…. I hope that if I share my story, that maybe others [trafficked teachers] will come out of the shadows with their own experiences and know they are not alone." And they did. Through various community based events and college speaking engagements, the GABRIELA D.C. teachers were able to not only educate the public about the realities of who can be trafficked, but also actively recruited other trafficked teachers still "in the shadows" and afraid to

[202] Pseudonym used.

speak out. The number of GABRIELA D.C. teacher membership grew exponentially from 11 across the years due to the trafficking survivors' courage to tell their story wherever they can.

In 2014, as more victims continued to join their ranks, the trafficking survivor-led GABRIELA D.C. established "Teach Them a Lesson: A Campaign for Justice for Trafficked Teachers" to raise awareness about their case and the larger issues of trafficking and migrant labor rights in the Philippines. The campaign has proven successful in educating the public, creating a safe community space for trafficking survivors, and placing pressure on the Philippine government to act on the teachers' unified call for justice. This campaign, which received support from other GABRIELA chapters around the globe, became the center of the teachers' healing and empowerment. This reached what Randall Collins identifies as success in social movements: "the ritualized sharing of instigating or initiating emotions which brought individuals to the collective gathering in the first place (outrage, anger, fear, etc.) gives rise to distinctively collective emotions, the feelings of solidarity…."[203] Many of these success moments were propelled by the teachers' transformation of energy into productive organizing, capacity building, and furthering their movement work.

The teachers united to transform their previous fears, isolation, and grief into motivation and drive to create change in their individual and collective worlds. They planned and facilitated workshops at D.C.-based community centers, international conferences on trafficking, and neighboring universities, including Georgetown University and George Washington University. The teachers formed presentations that not only shared their personal experiences with labor trafficking, but also made the connections between their trafficking case, forced labor migration,

[203] Goodwin, Jeff, et al. "Social Movements and the Focus of Emotional Attention." *Passionate Politics: Emotions and Social Movements*, University of Chicago Press, 2001 p. 29.

and U.S. imperialism in the Philippines. The teachers also organized protests outside of the Philippines Embassy in Washington, D.C. to voice their frustration over the lack of support from the Philippine government. Through these protests, the teachers actively challenged the longstanding system of forced labor migration in the Philippines.

Alicia, now teaching in the San Francisco Bay Area, had the opportunity to voice her critique with then Philippine Ambassador to the United States, Jose L. Cuisia Jr. Alicia articulated the struggles many trafficked teachers shared under the current system of forced migration and called out the Philippine government for their lack of support and inaction.[204]

> "I was on the news, talking to Ambassador Cuisia. He told us we can go back to the Philippines and be recommended as a master teacher. I said 'That's not what I want, even if I work 20 hours back home, I cannot pay off these debts and loans.'… It's really the Philippines government's fault for licensing this agency."
>
> - Alicia, San Francisco, CA

Alicia's meeting with Ambassador Cuisia marked a milestone for the teachers' anti-trafficking campaign as it brought international media attention to the teachers' call for justice. It also marked an important step for the teachers' collective journey from survivors to grassroots activists in the Filipino migrant labor rights movement.

On April 30, 2015, the teachers' organizing efforts resulted in the Philippine Department of Justice passing a resolution finding Isidro Rodriguez guilty of large-scale illegal recruitment.

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[204] Conclara, Rommel. "Allegedly Trafficked Teachers Call for Arrest of Pinoy Recruiter." *Balitang America*, 19 May 2014, balitangamerica.tv/allegedly-trafficked-teachers-call-for-arrest-of-pinoy-recruiter/.

The Philippine government identified over 500 survivors of trafficking.[205] In addition, earlier in November of 2014, a Manila regional court also found Isidro Rodriguez guilty on trafficking charges, sentencing him to 11 years in prison. These outcomes are the direct result of the teachers' activist work to seek justice against their trafficker. Unfortunately, Isidro Rodriguez' whereabouts are still unknown and an international call for his arrest has been in effect for the past two years. Once he received word of his arrest warrant, he was rumored to have escaped the Philippines. There is no definite trace of his current location or status.

One of the most impactful changes the GABRIELA teachers have accomplished has been their collective success to obtain Trafficking Visas (T-Visas), specialty visas provided for victims of trafficking that allow them to live and legally work in the United States. T-Visas also provide a path for survivors to bring their immediate family members to the United States.[206] In 2016, up to 50 teachers received their T-Visas and have reunited with their families. My singular most cherished and powerful memories during my time with the teachers was during their 2015 holiday community gathering. Around eight teachers announced their successful T-Visa and reunification process, each being showered with hugs, celebratory yells, and tears of joy. Naomi was one of the lucky teachers to have brought her whole family to the United States. Even with reunification, seeing them for the first time in four years of separation reminded her of the pain and suffering she experienced.

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[205] "Fact Sheet of Human Trafficking Case of Teachers to Washington, DC, USA." Migrante International *Scribd*. N.p., n.d. Web. 19 June 2015, www.scribd.com/document/192240752/Fact-Sheet-of-Human-Trafficking-Case-of-Teachers-to-Washington-DC-USA.

[206] USCIS. "Victims of Human Trafficking: T Nonimmigrant Status." *USCIS*, 3 Oct. 2011, www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/victims-human-trafficking-other-crimes/victims-human-trafficking-t-nonimmigrant-status.

> "We are privileged to get our family here, but you know something? I could not recognize them anymore, not even my baby son. I left my boy when he was 8 years old, and now it's been almost 4 years and I can't recognize him. But thank god we're all here together now."
>
> - Naomi, Washington, D.C.

Even through the painful process, the teachers identified the family reunification and T-Visa success as their greatest victory during their time as migrant labor activists. Such victories instilled a new sense of hope that fueled their healing and empowerment journey. These collective victories served as a loud statement to the Philippine government, showcasing the collective power the teachers held as a unified group.

Transformative Organizing, Transformative Healing

The teachers confronted their feelings of "hiya," familial guilt, and isolation through recruiting and building a community of anti-imperialist organizers, reunifying with their families, and establishing GABRIELA D.C. as a new space to grow as professionals and as migrant labor activists. Many teachers could not believe how they transformed. Through sharing their stories and experiences, the teachers not only educate and raise awareness about trafficking and migrant labor issues, but they also created a safe space for other trafficking survivors to heal and build community as sisters of GABRIELA.

GABRIELA D.C. as a political organizing space is evidently unique in multiple ways. GABRIELA not only serves the community through political education and provision of legal

advice, but they also actively engage the teachers to assume leadership positions within the organization. The teachers lead the organizing, planning, and execution of campaigns and events reflecting the needs of their members, other OFWs, and the most pertinent issues in the Philippines. As the current GABRIELA D.C. Chairwoman and trafficking victim, Roo shares her experience leading and building a movement from the ground up.

> "Being a member of GABRIELA D.C., allowed me to meet different organizations with similar goals of serving and protecting our communities…. I've seen that sharing my story to other communities has helped other survivors come out. And it really helps me heal from all the pain, all the hardship that I've been through."
>
> - Roo, Washington, D.C.

Roo shares how her testimonials have served multiple purposes. By educating the public, she raises more awareness about the Philippines' failing system of forced labor migration. By sharing her story to other communities, she potentially inspires other survivors to come out and join their ranks of GABRIELA D.C. The teachers' actions, whether it be sharing their stories, attending a protest, or helping others through the T-Visa process, serve both as political acts and healing acts of resistance.

GABRIELA D.C.'s transformative work culminated in earning the D.C. Mayor's Community Service Award at the 2016 Asian American & Pacific Islander (AAPI) Heritage

Month Celebration.[207] Washington D.C. Mayor Muriel Bowser honored GABRIELA D.C. for successfully accomplishing what many nonprofits fail to do, bridging the gap between service provider and recipient, between campaign organizer/activists and those for which the campaign is aimed to serve. The GABRIELA D.C. teachers' efforts to raise awareness, prevent trafficking, and build community were eventually recognized through receiving this public declaration and affirmation.[208] This award served as a testament of the group's growth and determination to fight against heightened labor trafficking and against the "Model Filipino Student Subject" haunting. This award serves a true testament to their revolutionary journey, from isolated survivors to unified organizers honored by the highest-ranking D.C. official. The teachers of GABRIELA D.C. have inserted themselves into the rich history of Filipino labor organizing in the United States, adding a unique chapter that incorporates third world feminist grassroots organizing as a revolutionary pathway for healing, activism, and empowerment.

Filipino College Students Breaking the I.L.B. Cycle

Filipino students at the University of California and California State University systems, actively engage in community-building activities that challenge the commodification of their labor and the over-programming that burdens them. Third year "Nikki" from UCLA speaks to this shift where she shares, "We had an important core retreat meeting before we started our staff positions this year where we looked at the past years of how our org operated and named what

[207] Melegrito, Jon. "GABRIELA DC Receives Mayor's Community Service Award." *Manila Mail US*, 1 May 2016, www.manilamail.us/?p=2411.

[208] Migrante Washington D.C. "Congratulations Again to the Sisters of GABRIELA Washington, D.C. for Receiving the Mayor Community Service Award Last Night at the 2016 Asian American & Pacific Islander Heritage Month Celebration." Facebook video, May 3, 2016. https://fb.watch/tcLWBTOWca/.

we wanted to change. Most people shared they didn't want people to burn out like previous years…. This led to an important conversation about changing the ways we view success in our student spaces."

These conversations create spaces of solidarity and affirmation, countering the isolation and pressure to conform to a system that pushes a narrative of overwork and labor as a proof of one's participation and value. Many other students interviewed confirmed that their respective student organizations made similar interventions. Through these student-led organizations and advocacy groups, Filipino students reclaim their identity, promoting mental health awareness and fostering environments that celebrate their mental wellness rather than harming it through burnout. In challenging the dominant romanticized narrative of Filipino resilience, students confront the systemic injustices that underlie it, including the commodification of their labor and the erasure of migrant experiences. By centering rest as a radical act and advocating for holistic well-being, we strive to decolonize mental health discourse and uplift the voices of Filipino students. The prevailing narrative of Filipino resilience often obscures the structural barriers and systemic injustices faced by Filipino students within academia. This over-romanticizing student narrative of individual perseverance and overcoming adversity is set up to overshadow the structural inequalities perpetuating educational inequity and historic marginalization. The neoliberal university fetishizes student resilience as a tool to reinforce harmful stereotypes of the "model minority" and place undue pressure on Filipino students to excel as their "Model Filipino Student Subjects."

To dismiss this "Model Filipino Student Subject" haunting it is imperative to critically interrogate the overuse of this resilient student narrative. Centering students of color and their genuine experiences, both the struggles and the successes, disrupts the hegemonic discourse of

resilience, illuminating the intersecting systems of power that shape these students' capacities and expectations at the university level. UC Davis senior "Veronique" rejected resilience as the answer, "Screw resilience, we want better systems, compensation, we want to not feel the pressure to do too much and prove ourselves to the campus. It shouldn't be on our shoulders to recruit and keep our representation up. If anything, at least pay us and recognize the labor our spaces have been putting in for decades." This forced narrative of resilience, a specter of the "Model Filipino Student Subject" haunting, often invisibilizes the systemic injustices Filipino students face.

To challenge the "Model Filipino Student Subject" haunting is to actively decolonize the system and individual perspectives to how to succeed in higher education. To decolonize this perspective and way of being is to exorcize this "Model Filipino Student" haunting. Decolonizing the concept of success is to recognize that rest is a radical act of resistance. Many campus cultures valorize student productivity and hustle culture. Prioritizing rest challenges this dominant narrative of success and uplifts self-care as a political act to resist higher education oppressive systems. Several of the students I interviewed shared that although they struggle with multiple responsibilities and economic pressures, they felt that centering rest has felt like a reclaiming of one's agency. This reclaiming goes against the "Model Filipino Student Subject" haunting that often demands the Filipino student to labor continuously in an effort to prove one's worth and belonging. Prioritizing rest is a political act, doing so disrupts the neoliberal university's capitalist logic of productivity and serves as an intervention against the "Model Filipino Student Subjectivity." Through collective efforts to destigmatize rest and promote holistic well-being, they can create more compassionate and inclusive academic environments that prioritize the needs and experiences of marginalized communities. In decolonizing mental

health discourse, one challenges the Eurocentric frameworks and instead taps into various non-Western ways of knowing and healing. Addressing the additional structural factors of mental health challenges, such as racism and economic inequality, our communities can work towards a more just and inclusive higher education environment that supports all students to thrive. UCLA third year "Jessika" engages this idea of rest as resistance and revolution:

> "What's wild is how not doing anything on a Thursday around here is so rare. The campus has taught us and our orgs that being busy is productive, being productive means we are of worth to the campus and world…. Let's all say not to that, let's not romanticize being burnt out and tired. Let's celebrate resting the way we celebrate putting on a conference or facilitating an event, right?"

To "Jessika" and other students interviewed, rest is not only a form of self-care but also a political act of resistance against oppressive systems that devalue our humanity and well-being. Decolonizing mental health discourse requires centering the experiences of Filipino students and challenging Eurocentric frameworks that pathologize non-Western ways of knowing and being. The students know their generations are ready to make this shift and to do away with the romanticization of being busy, the affirmation of those who self-sacrifice to burn out for their organizations, and therefore sacrifice their mental health and wellness for the university campus. This pattern mirrors the notion of self-sacrifice that the Philippines government highlights in their ideal, and usually overworked and underpaid, Migrant Filipino Workers, which in turn derives from the teachings of U.S. colonial educators in the Philippines' early westernized education system.

Through this work, I have explored the importance of resisting hyper romanticized resilience narratives built upon the "model Filipino student" dynamic and decolonizing mental health discourse in academia. My project's documentation of the Filipino college student experience offers valuable insights into the complexities of these students' racialized, neoliberal educational journeys. The students highlight moments of reprieve from the pressures to perform as a model Filipino student. These moments involve centering community building, practicing holistic well-being, and transformative pedagogies towards a radical higher education system that empowers students to challenge and transform the status quo. One recurring theme from my exploration of the Filipino student experience has been the importance of community building and solidarity in navigating college across and beyond their Filipino kinship. The students identified a sense of power in forming student organizations and affinity groups. The students began expanding on this collective power through organized protests and advocacy campaigns both within and outside of the Filipino community. Solidarity with Black, Latino/Chicano, Indigenous, and other Asian student communities served as a pivotal point of momentum that helped shift away from accepting the university's pressures to perform the "good student role" that demands you to simply put your head down and continue working.

Nurturing and strengthening these bonds of solidarity is vital. Of course, movements for students to connect, organize, and mobilize together around issues of shared concern is not new, as it is the history of how Ethnic Studies was born out of the Third World Liberation Front.[209] This lesson still holds true and essential in the students' current academic conditions. By centering community building in our pedagogical approaches, we can cultivate a sense of

[209] Shiekh, Irum, Jennie Luna, Richard Aoki, Carlos Muñoz, Laura Elisa Pérez, L. Ling-chi Wang, Robert M Berdahl, et al., dirs. 1999. On Strike! Ethnic Studies, 1969-1999. Center for Asian American Media.

belonging and empowerment among Filipino students, fostering resilience and resistance in the face of systemic injustice. Fourth year "Gracie" from UC Merced shares valuable intervention and vision for future Filipino college students experiencing the pressure to perform the "Model Filipino Student", "Building solidarity among Filipino students has been instrumental in our efforts to challenge racism and advocate for our rights within our campus….. How do we affirm Filipino student spaces without placing a burden of care labor on them? How do we break this link of Filipinos as bodies of labor for the university, for U.S. empire?" These questions provide a solid framework for many upcoming Filipino student leaders to reflect on and ground their movement to challenge past conceptions of what makes an organization and therefore a Filipino student productive and successful.

My analysis and the students' voices call for a reimagined pedagogy and curriculum that centers transformative learning experiences and student empowerment. Students demand an educational experience that fosters their critical engagement with issues of social justice and equity. Ethnic Studies offers this. Drawing from the fields of Critical Race Theory, Critical University Studies, and Critical Filipino Studies, the students demand learning experiences that challenge dominant Eurocentric narratives, uplift historically marginalized voices such as Filipino American history, and foster community engaged scholarship outside of the institution. Through integrating community-based learning, uplifting community centered experiential education, and implementing culturally relevant pedagogy into our curriculum, higher education transforms into a space for students to explore their identities, histories, and aspirations while also fostering agency and activism. These transformative changes offer an opportunity to not only educate students, but also inspire them to serve their communities as agents of change, challenging systemic oppression and working towards collective liberation. Filipino college

students have shared in their interviews that identifying these patterns of burnout is the first step for their community's collective liberation on campus. Students and alumni have initiated dialogue around how to challenge and do away with the neoliberal university's traditional notions of productivity within their student organizations, pushing back against the pressures to conform to the "Model Filipino Student/Subject" racialization. This subjugation emphasizes relentless labor under meritocracy, over-involvement in extracurricular activities, and a culture of self-sacrifice, ultimately leading to a cycle of burnout. The students are now ready to redefine what productivity looks like in their organizations and at the individual level by prioritizing one's capacity, mental health, and retention as central to their community's identity and activism.

Less Programming, More Intentional Collaboration

One significant shift in Filipino student organizations as seen in my interviews was the shift towards less programming and more intentional collaboration, an active stance against the "Model Filipino Student Subjectivity". Recognizing the detrimental effects of over-programming, Filipino student groups are deliberately reducing the number of events and initiatives they undertake. CSU East Bay alumni "Morty" confirms this: "Our organization held a retreat before the school year, and one thing our core staff did was trace the rise in events between each of the last five years…. We were laughing nervously at how our organization went from having 4 core annual programs in 2013 to over 25 different programs and events in 2018…. What is even more ridiculous is the fact that the staff size got smaller!" This backwards irony of more programming with less core student staff provides additional proof of how the "Model Filipino Student Subject" racialization has forced many Filipino students to buy into the

language of self-sacrifice for the greater good, breaking collective boundaries and capacities in order to continue down a dangerous and unsustainable path of increasing program quantity.

These moments of stressful realization serve as communal interventions for Filipino student organizations to learn from past predecessors' mistakes and patterns of overprogramming, a tenet of the aforementioned I.L.B. Cycle I defined previously. Many other student interviewees from separate campuses share common moments of intervention within their respective organizations. With these types of interventions, the students begin focusing on quality over quantity of programming, ensuring that each program is meaningful and impactful. Doing so also provides preventative measures of burnout within the organizations.

This change allows for deeper connections and more thoughtful engagement among members and the greater community. "Morty" adds, "That moment was hella awkward and painful, but it for real was needed, because after that we were able to start healing. Not just as individuals, but as an organization too. We wanted to heal those past patterns of burn out and over working. We wanted less numbers [of events/programming] and, if anything, just do more collaborations with other orgs." From organizational self-reflection grows interventions and resistance to the "Model Filipino Student Subject" narrative, which leads to more creative ways to continue their organization's work and growth through the means of collaboration.

By collaborating with other student organizations, both within and outside the Filipino community, these groups can pool resources, share responsibilities, and create more substantial, interdisciplinary initiatives. This approach not only prevents individuals from potential burnout, but also fosters a sense of solidarity and mutual support across different communities. Collaborative efforts can also lead to more diverse and inclusive programming, addressing a wider range of issues and interests. For instance, joint events with mental health organizations,

cultural centers, and academic departments can provide holistic support to students, addressing both their academic and personal needs.

“Retention as a Radical, Rest as Revolutionary”

In direct opposition to the "Model Filipino Student/Subject" ideal, Filipino student organizations are increasingly centering wellness and mental health in their activities. This shift acknowledges the critical importance of maintaining mental and emotional well-being as foundational to student success and community resilience. Initiatives such as wellness workshops, peer support groups, and mindfulness sessions are becoming integral parts of these organizations' programming. These college based student organizations have even started collaborations outside of campus, connecting with mental health resources and organizations to provide a well-rounded sense of wellness for student core staff and the communities that they serve.

The San Francisco based Filipino Mental Health Initiative (FMHI) has served as an example of this outside resource and collaboration. Working with San Francisco State University Filipino student organizations and local high schools, FMHI helped usher in the annual Filipino Student Wellbeing Conference, which entered its third iteration on April 27th, 2024.[210] This conference provided opportunities for open communal discussion centering Filipino student mental health challenges while offering student organizations a chance to reflect and make major shifts to their own organizational culture and student staff expectations. This conference served as a space to identify the toxic traits built through a “Model Filipino Student Subject” culture and

[210] Filipino Mental Health Initiative of San Francisco. "Filipino Student Wellness Collaborative." Accessed June 15, 2024. https://www.fmhi-sf.org/fswc.html.

healing through the dismantling of these practices and patterns of burn out. These activities and workshops provided students across K-12 and college with various tools and strategies to manage stress, cope with anxiety, and maintain a healthy work-life balance. By normalizing discussions about mental health and destigmatizing seeking help, these students and their organizations began fostering a more supportive, wellness centric environment where their community of students can thrive.

Moreover, the emphasis on wellness extends to creating spaces for rest and rejuvenation, acts that can be deemed revolutionary in their own right. This can include designated quiet areas for relaxation, scheduling breaks during meetings and events, and promoting self-care practices. By valuing and encouraging rest, these organizations are resisting the toxic culture of overwork and burnout that has long plagued academic environments.

Retention of Filipino students in higher education is not merely an administrative concern, but a political act of resistance. By prioritizing retention in their space and campus, Filipino student organizations are actively challenging the systemic barriers and "Model Filipino Student" racialization processes that have forced many of their peers to burn out or even drop out from college. During an online zoom kuwentuhan talk story circle, 2023 UC Berkeley second year student "Summer" reflects on words her student organization predecessor left her: "I remember when the past student who held my coordinator role trained me, it was less of a super formal process and more of an open conversation…. The most important thing they reminded me was 'Retention is political, it is radical. Not just in our work in recruiting and retaining our community's numbers on campus, but also in retention efforts in our org, our mental health and wellness has always been under attack through these expectations to be perfect. So rest is revolutionary.' That stuck with me and made me want to remind my org that it doesn't matter

how many events we do. Those numbers don't matter if our mental health and our bodies aren't present and well." This motto "Summer" shared of "retention is radical, rest is revolutionary" served as a key theme in the communal interview circle, with many other students from various campuses and organizations smiling knowingly. Another student, SJSU 4th year "Jerry" affirmed these words, "Yes! I love that and I wish I had received those words before I took on three different student core positions on campus…. Like what are we even doing this work for, for the community? Like why do it, if we, the community, are drained and not able to show up mentally, emotionally, or physically? Man, even just hearing other students outside our campus name this helps me feel a thousand times better that I'm not alone." I noticed a buzz grow within the zoom call of 10 interviewees, a mix of understanding and relief as students from different campuses found common ground in the pattern of labor they had experienced.

There's power and even a sense of healing when these students were vulnerable about their burnout, a sense of being seen and acknowledged for their endless cycle of labor and struggle. There is a shared language of retention that many of the interviewees allude to, if not state forthright. Many students listed various efforts their respective Filipino student community spaces had implemented to improve retention including mentorship programs, low labor mental health centered programming, and community-building activities. Mentorship programs, such as UC Berkeley's Pilipino American Alliance's (PAA) "Kuya Ate Ading" program[211] actively pairs new students with similar upperclassmen who can provide guidance, support, and a sense of belonging. Flyers like the one below from the Fall of 2023 demonstrate how well structured this process of mentorship pairing has become within the PAA Filipino community. As seen in the

[211] As of 2023, this program has been renamed Kapatid-Ading Mentorship Program, moving away from the gendered, and sometimes stereotypically hierarchical, Kuya and Ate language.

first flyer, not only is there a thorough application process for both potential Kapatids/Kuya/Ate mentors and the Adings/little sibling mentees, but there is a whole process to recruit, train, and organize the committee that works to establish the mentorship program pairings. The second flyer, also SpongeBob themed, alludes to the well-oiled process and intricate semesterly flow of the KAA mentorship program, specifically the fact that a whole event's sole purpose is to simply allow interested applicants to better understand how the pairing process functions.

[Figure 5.1] 2023 UC Berkeley PAA Flyers. These flyers from UC Berkeley's Pilipino American Alliance's (PAA) "Kuya Ate Ading" (KAA) program via their Facebook page within Spring 2023, demonstrating the multilayered processes for Filipino college student programming, including the KAA mentorship program.[212]

[212] Pilipinx Academic Student Services at UC Berkeley. Facebook page. Accessed June 15, 2024. https://www.facebook.com/UCBerkeleyPAA.

These systems of mentorship, though taking their own level of labor and emotional labor, create a large web of support and communal care that goes beyond the few student core staff tasked with running their organization. This example portrays the growth and responsiveness of said student leaders to their community's needs. Through programs like KAA, the Filipino students are centering both mental health wellness and tapping into the community to collaborate in creating spaces of care, rejecting the isolationist and lonely martyrdom ingrained in the "Model Filipino Student Subject" narrative.

By focusing on retention and mental health at large, these organizations are making a powerful statement about the importance of sustaining and nurturing their community. These activities reaffirm the value of each student's presence and contributions, countering the alienation and imposter syndrome that many Filipino students experience. The students are asserting that the success of Filipino students on their campus is a collective responsibility and a key component of their broader struggle for equity and justice in higher education.

The reimagining of productivity within Filipino student organizations represents a critical resistance to the racialized expectations of the "Model Filipino Student/Subject." This resistance is rooted in rejecting the notion that worth and success are solely measured by relentless achievement and self-sacrifice. Instead, Filipino students are advocating for a more holistic and humane approach that values well-being, collaboration, and community. By doing so, the student leaders are challenging the structural forces that perpetuate racialized stereotypes of overwork. Instead, they demand an educational environment that recognizes and supports their full humanity. This shift is not only about changing organizational practices but also about transforming the broader cultural and institutional landscapes in which their own organizations operate, including physical campus locations.

Decolonization is an Act:

Collective Action and The Renaming of Barrows Hall

During the U.S. colonial period in the Philippines, David Barrows served as one of the major architects in the white supremacist racialization and subjugation of Filipinos. UC Berkeley's Barrows Hall, named after former UC Berkeley president and key figure in the American colonial administration in the Philippines David Prescott Barrows, became a focal point for Filipino student activism. Barrows' involvement in the Philippines colonial project serves as a stark reminder of the University of California's complicity in building the "Model Filipino Student Subject" and the overall racialized western indoctrination of Filipinos. In response, a multiethnic group of Filipino, Black, and other students of color called attention to the history of Barrows Hall. Their demands for campus change, their push towards a decolonization of their public space, resonated across the campus and nationwide.

Ironically the UC Berkeley building that housed Ethnic Studies, Asian American Studies, African American Studies, and Chicano/a/x Studies bore his name.[213] Fortunately, a coalition led by Filipino, Black, indigenous, and other students of colors and allies formed to demand UC Berkeley strike David Barrows' name from the building. They were successful. This campaign to rename UC Berkeley's Barrows Hall stands as a powerful testament to the collective resistance of this coalition of students, a stand against the haunting legacies of colonial education and white supremacy. This coalition's effort reflects a broader movement within academia to confront and dismantle historical legacies of oppression embedded in the very names of our institutions.

[213] Chesler, Caroline. "UC Berkeley's LeConte and Barrows Halls Lose Their Names." Berkeley News, November 18, 2020. https://news.berkeley.edu/2020/11/18/uc-berkeleys-leconte-and-barrows-halls-lose-their-names/.

The rename Barrows Hall campaign gained significant momentum state and nationwide through organized protests, student-led communal teach outs, and raising awareness to faculty, staff, and the associated student body regarding Barrows' problematic legacy. The coalition's proposal to rename the hall even inspired Barrows' descendants to agree that their grandfather was a malicious and racist individual whose name should not mark any institutions of higher learning. Grandson John Cunningham shared a testament in solidarity with the students, "We were raised to be proud of who (Barrows) was, but this (proposal) unveiled some stuff for us that needed to be looked at. We want to stand on the right side of history, because he was part of a system of oppression that stood on the wrong side of history. It's a matter of doing right by others."[214] This acknowledgment from the Barrows family played a crucial role in legitimizing the coalition's demands and demonstrated a broader societal shift towards confronting uncomfortable historical truths. These efforts were informed by critical race theory and decolonial framework, similar tools utilized throughout this project, which emphasized the importance of addressing historical harm towards processes of collective healing. As noted in the official proposal submitted to the Building Name Review Committee, the renaming was not merely symbolic but a necessary step in recognizing and rectifying the university's colonial past.[215]

The decision by UC Berkeley to remove Barrows' name, in addition to LeConte Hall, was announced on November 18, 2020. This represented a significant student-led victory, marking an

[214] University of California, Berkeley. "Family Reckoning: 25 Descendants of David Barrows Support Hall's Unnaming." Berkeley News, November 18, 2020. https://news.berkeley.edu/2020/11/18/family-reckoning-25-descendants-of-david-barrows-support-halls-unnaming/.
[215] Zdanowicz, Christina. "UC Berkeley to Remove Names of Founders Who Expressed Racist Views from Two of Its Buildings." CNN, November 19, 2020. https://www.cnn.com/2020/11/19/us/uc-berkeley-buildings-remove-racist-names-trnd/index.html.

overdue break away from Barrows' legacy of colonialism. The university's statement highlights the massive effect the student coalition had on administration, leading to a collective victory. The students challenged the status quo, the Filipino students specifically denied the pressure to fall in line as a "Model Filipino Student Subject," instead opting to stand firm demanding an exorcism of Barrows' name and colonial legacy. This coalition and movements proved that solidarity and collective action can lead to institutional change. It demonstrates the power of marginalized communities to reshape narratives and demand justice. As Filipino, Black, and other students of color continue to confront and resist historical and contemporary forms of oppression, their efforts at UC Berkeley serve as a model for similar movements across the country. UC Berkeley senior Joy described the efforts to make this collective victory a reality, "It felt so different from what the [Filipino student] community usually does. I know there are many in the Filipino American community that may not even know this happened, but for those who showed up, educated themselves, and stood up against celebrations of colonialism, we felt a renewed sense of collective healing and liberation. We resisted just going with the flow, we stood up for our ancestors and people!" Joy's words highlight the renaming of Barrows Hall as a significant step towards decolonizing education and addressing systemic racism within academic institutions. This victory underscores the importance of acknowledging and rectifying historical injustices as part of the decolonization and healing. This communal act of resistance, rooted in a grassroots multiethnic student coalition's solidarity and persistence, epitomizes the transformative potential of collective action in the ongoing fight against legacies of colonialism including the "Model Filipino Student Subject" haunting.

In conclusion, the Filipino college students' various modes of resistance provides our community with hope. They reimagine their own respective definitions of productivity in a

profound act of defiance against the pressures to conform to damaging racialized expectations. These reflections and acts are a staunch rejection to the "Model Filipino Student Subject," providing avenues of multigenerational healing from its consequences such as the Imposter Syndrome-Labor-Burnout Cycle. By centering retention, collaboration, and rest, these students are creating a new paradigm and culture of student activism that prioritizes holistic success and community resilience beyond the neoliberalism perception of student martyrdom.[216] This approach not only benefits Filipino students but also serves as an intervention tool for broader efforts to create more wellness centered and supportive educational student community environments.

Toward a Future of Collective Resistance

The convergence of experiences between Filipino students and trafficked teachers underscores a broader connected movement of resistance against the historical and ongoing effects of colonialism and labor commodification. This collective struggle emphasizes the need for a transnational and racial capitalist lens to fully understand and address these interconnected issues, both being the consequence of the "Model Filipino Student Subject" narrative. In recognizing the shared dilemma of imposter syndrome, commodified labor, and student and migrant teacher martyrdom, my research advocates for a more equitable and inclusive educational system that refrains from racializing and further commodifying Filipinos as solely bodies of labor.

[216] Buenavista, Tracy Lachica, Uma M. Jayakumar, and Kimberly Misa-Escalante. "Contextualizing Asian American Education through Critical Race Theory: An Example of U.S. Pilipino College Student Experiences." New Directions for Institutional Research 2009, no. 142 (2009): 69-81. https://doi.org/10.1002/ir.297.

Educational institutions must commit to structural changes that include supporting and compensating student labor and providing robust mental health resources for student staff. Rare, but important victories have been witnessed in this arena, particularly in the UC Berkeley recruitment and retention organization Pilipino Academic Student Services (PASS), where the student staff were once expected to run weekly recruitment and retention programming unpaid. This was my reality when I served as high school outreach coordinator and additionally as overnight host SHADOW program coordinator in 2011-2012. This level of expected labor and lack of financial compensation led to many years of multiple staff quitting and even back to back years of PASS staff unable to recruit and hire an executive director. Luckily, more recent PASS staff have made the collective decision to compensate their labor, leading to a more secure longevity and sense of wellness amongst the recent core staff.[217] Such measures can significantly alleviate the pressures faced by Filipino students, fostering environments where they can thrive without compromising their well-being or need to take on additional modes of paid labor.

The transformation and interventions suggested regarding student burn out should not solely land on the shoulders of the students. To be clear, this study is not a call for students to stop leading student organization programs or work. The responsibility should land on the campuses and the state regarding potential interventions to break the I.L.B cycle and future burn out. Some of these interventions can build on current opportunities such as academic credit for student organization leadership roles. Many of the UCs have begun offering academic credit for involvement in these Filipino student organizations. These changes must be led and center shifts within educational institutions and even in the State. More funding for student mental health and

[217] Pilipinx Academic Student Services at UC Berkeley. "Home." Accessed June 15, 2024. https://pass.studentorg.berkeley.edu/.

accessibility for these resources are extremely important as well. In addition, the work to represent, educate and uplift Filipino American history and culture also cannot be solely placed on the students. If it hasn't already happened on their campus, colleges and universities should hire Filipino faculty and staff who have the skillset and background to offer Filipino American Studies courses or help facilitate events and programming related to Filipino student recruitment and retention. Typically, campuses receive free labor from students of color that tend to uplift the neoliberal multiculturalist campus project.[218] The labor to uphold the community's history and culture must be a collective and collaborative responsibility, especially since many college campuses have historically profited from Filipino and other students of color labor.

The resistance of Filipino trafficked teachers through the formation of the GABRIELA D.C. organization represents a similarly powerful act of self-advocacy. Their existence and evolution from trafficking victims to survivors to self-identified anti-imperialist migrant labor activists serves as a premiere example of defiance against global labor exploitation. This collective act also serves as a rejection of the "Model Filipino Student Subject's" training to be subservient, obedient, and quiet migrant teachers abroad. By centering their struggle within an anti-imperialist and worker-centered framework, the GABRIELA teachers further challenge the systemic labor export system and global forces that perpetuate their exploitation. Whether it is through their quarterly protests at the Washington, D.C. Philippines consulate or through their communal summer picnics to strengthen community ties, the GABRIELA D.C. teachers provide an important blueprint for how rest and resistance are complementary and necessary for both to exist.

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[218] Chatterjee, Piya, and Sunaina Maira, eds. The Imperial University: Academic Repression and Scholarly Dissent. Minneapolis, MN, 2014; online edn, Minnesota Scholarship Online, 24 Aug. 2015. https://doi.org/10.5749/minnesota/9780816680894.001.0001. Accessed June 29, 2024.

Ultimately, my project highlights the persistent spirit of Filipino individuals who resist and reclaim their agency from the "Model Filipino Student Subject", away from U.S. colonial education's consequential oppressive systems in place. By tracing and connecting the genealogies of Filipino migrant teachers and college students' struggles and successes in the United States, I contribute to a deeper understanding of the American education system and the experiences of Filipino bodies as labor within these spaces. There is a calling for further research on the experiences of Filipino American faculty and staff in universities and how their labor has been commodified and haunted by the "Model Filipino Student Subjectivity." There is additional room for research regarding the educational racialized pedagogical connections between U.S. Black schooling projects as critiqued by Carter G. Woodson[219] and W.E.B. Dubois[220], the institutionalization of Indian schooling[221], and the aforementioned U.S. colonial schooling system in the early 1900's Philippines. I would also like to further explore the connections between Black, Latino, and Filipino college student organizations, their experiences with burnout, and further ways these student groups have combated the pressures of the neoliberal multiculturalist university. Through continued research and activism, our communities can envision a future where the legacies of colonial education and labor exploitation are dismantled, paving the way for a more just and compassionate society.

This vision requires a commitment to ongoing education, advocacy, and policy reform. It necessitates a collective effort to challenge and transform the structures that perpetuate inequality and exploitation. By centering the voices and experiences of Filipino communities of the past

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[219] Woodson, Carter G. The Mis-Education of the Negro. Washington, D.C.: Associated Publishers, 1933.
[220] Du Bois, W. E. B., and Herbert Aptheker. The Education of Black People: Ten Critiques, 1906-1960. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1975.
[221] Adams, David Wallace, author. Education for Extinction : American Indians and the Boarding School Experience, 1875-1928. Lawrence, Kan. :University Press of Kansas, 1995.

and present, we can create a world grounded in collective liberation that ensures no Filipino migrant teachers, and migrant workers in general, do not need to fear the possibility of being trafficked or harmed. A liberatory world where students do not lead into a racialized trope of overworking for the university and coming out of their campus jaded and burnt out. This vision of freedom and liberation is possible. Both the GABRIELA D.C. teachers and the Filipino college students interviewed through this project have provided the blueprints, testing, and vision to build towards this hopeful future. They were once haunted by the legacies of colonial education in the Philippines, but through a grounded sense of resistance, rest, and love, have come to exercise that very ghost of colonialism that has haunted Filipinos for generations. In conclusion, the resistance demonstrated by both Filipino students and trafficked teachers is a testament to their enduring hope and capacity for revolutionary, sustainable change. Across varying generations and positionalities, both Filipino students and migrant teachers have provided our communities lesson plans towards liberation.

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