Isang Wika ay Hindi Sapat[1]:

Filipino Literature and the Path to an Independent, "New Filipino" Identity

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[1]The Tagalog phrase, "*isang wika ay hindi sapat*" translates to "One language is not enough." With all the Tagalog in this paper, I would like to give special thanks to Annabellee Fernandez for helping with translations and accurate pronunciation. *Salamat po* (thank you) for everything that you've given me, especially the inspiration to reclaim my own Filipino identity.

My mother always tells me that I used to speak Tagalog alongside English. I called my brother "*Kuya* Brendan", and he used to call me "*Adeng* Emily[2]." I sang Tagalog songs to my relatives relaying how cute I was, attended Filipino Heritage Camps with my cousins, and thanked my elders with the respectful *Salamat Po.* When I started Montessori School and became best friends with the little blonde girl of Scandinavian heritage, I rejected Tagalog in an effort to assimilate to the rest of the class. My mom did her best to keep Tagalog as a part of my everyday language, but my time at school forced me into English and American colloquialisms instead. It was not until my junior year of high school that I began question my dedication to English and the erasure of my Filipino half.

During the spring of 2010, my yearlong AP US History course had finally reached the twentieth century. In between learning about Industrialization, Native American assimilation, and the Gilded Age, only one paragraph in our entire 1500 page textbook on American History spoke of the US occupation of the Philippines and the Philippine-American War. On the day my teacher should have lectured on America's involvement in the Philippines, he skipped over it completely. I approached him after class and asked why we were not studying the Philippines more in depth, he responded with a simple, "It's not important." As I walked out of that classroom, I reckoned with myself that perhaps he was skipping it because we would need more time for talking about World War I, the Great Depression, and World War II as well. We could not possibly dwell on a short, three-year war in the Pacific when there was so much else to cover before class ended in June. My history teacher told me it was not important, that my history and my experiences were not important. I temporarily accepted his ignorance and moved on, realizing that if I learn my history, I would have to do it on my own.

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[2] *Kuya* translates as "older brother" while *Adeng* translates as "younger sibling"

As of 2011, Filipinos are the fourth largest immigrant group in the United States, consisting of 1.8 million people. Behind Mexicans, Chinese, and Indians, Filipinos accounted for 4% of the total immigration population (Stoney & Batalova). And while the number of immigrants continues to rise, Filipinos are constantly erased from our history and consciousness, in both educational and linguistic settings. When not resorting to racist imagery of Filipinos as dog-eating savages, Westerners tend to look on Filipinos as a favorable race, or model minority, willing to assimilate to western culture, give thanks for all that the west has given us, and accept the (ironically) Protestant work ethic that is so intrinsic in the American Dream (Okamura 506-507). Browner than the obedient, quiet, and ruthlessly intelligent East Asian population, Filipinos fall between the cracks of racism and favoritism. We adapt to America in a way that other Asian countries do not because of their imposition of cultural values and military presence. But underneath that acclimation to western life lies the understanding—a revolutionary consciousness—that Filipinos fought for their liberation from the Spanish during the late 19th Century, and again from American up until the mid-20th century. Many Americans see this hard work and persistence as assimilation, while Filipinos endure hardship and oppression (both economically and structurally) as a representation of their history of revolution, subversion and endurance.

During this time of intense resistance from the colonizer, José Rizal inspired the Filipino people to continue their century long fight for liberation. The European-educated revolutionary wrote two novels, *Noli Me Tangere* and *El Filibusterismo*, which lead the natives of the archipelago to continue their fight for freedom and to his execution by firing squad. Though Rizal's life ended at age 35, his revolutionary sentiment lives on in the post-colonial narratives of Filipino-American literature. Almost one hundred years later, Jessica Hagedorn, a Filipino-

American writer, published *Dogeaters* in 1990. Her novel of civil unrest in a post-American Manila calls back to the revolutionary ideas of Rizal, sparking the questions of how we must proceed after occupation in a country so used to being used.

Both Rizal and Hagedorn make it especially clear that the identity of a Filipino is not the docile, Colonial-loving island person of which the west has been convinced. Instead, to be is Filipino is to be resilient and revolutionary, to seek a fate other than to be conquered by a colonizer or one of their own. But how does one seek this resilient and revolutionary identity outside of colonialism when a unified identity did not exist prior to the imposition of colonial rule? Incorporating the cultures that oppressed them, and the use of language and education to reclaiming and celebrate the native tongue, allows for the creation of a "New Filipino." Languages and education do not create the Filipino identity, but they are the common thread that allows the indios to create an identity on their own moving forward. Rizal's work shows that Spanish rule and religion may be the unifier, but the subversion of its language allows for the unification of the Filipino on an independent level. *Dogeaters* recalls Rizal's revolutionary sentiments on education and language, providing the global Filipino the space in which to identify as such regardless of location and context. These two texts together create a unique historiography written by Filipinos for Filipinos, allowing new generations of Filipinos around the world the space and context to create their own individual Filipino identities.

After providing a brief history of the Philippines—as a colony of Spain, including Rizal's revolutionary legacy, the subsequent occupation by America, and the establishment of the Marcos Regime—I will then examine into Rizal's works, *Noli Me Tangere* and *El Filibusterismo*, as colonial and revolutionary narratives. In Part II, I will examine Jessica Hagedorn's *Dogeaters* as both a post-colonial narrative in which Rizal's revolutionary themes

reoccur, as a representation of the Filipino in America, and as a cultural performance of Filipino identity in a global context

Before I begin, I must clarify my choice in choosing the novel over poetry, memoir, play or other forms of literature. In my search for Filipino-American literature and in the history of the Philippines, it became abundantly clear that failing to include the works of José Rizal would be a gross oversight. The mythologization of his death and the impact of his novels changed the archipelago and its inhabitants in a way that cannot be ignored. While Rizal also wrote plays, poetry, and essays, novels *Noli Me Tangere* and *El Filibusterismo* created the most lasting impact. Rizal favored the introspective nature of fiction within the long form novel, and in keeping with his original sentiments, I looked for a contemporary novel to read alongside Rizal's. *Dogeaters* by Jessica Hagedorn was the most obvious choice, as both a postmodern and post-colonial text that reflect many, if not all, of Rizal's ideas of incorporation in resistance.

Rizal and Hagedorn's novels are a resource for persons of Filipino heritage, allowing Filipinos on both the Islands and around the globe to educate themselves on the hardships and turmoil of the Filipino fight for independence and identity. Their novels allow Filipinos to fill in gaps and reclaim cultural ground that was lost in the colonization of the archipelago. They allow Filipinos to write an alternate historiography from the perspective that though the words may be fiction, they represent the truth. The historical knowledge gained from these novels provides a blueprint upon which Filipinos around the globe can begin building their identities. By looking at growth of the Filipino identity from Spanish Colonialism to Post-Marcos Philippines, Filipinos can now look forward to their identity within a global context, as education and the incorporation of new languages and cultures inform their own individual experiences.

PART I. SPANISH COLONIALISM AND RIZAL'S REVOLUTIONARY NOVELS

A Brief History of Spain in the Philippines

Though it is impossible to write a cohesive history of any nation, the history of the Philippines is important to the understanding of Rizal, Hagedorn, and the many Filipinos living around the world. The history most relevant to this study can be separated into three periods: Spanish Colonialism and revolution, American occupation, and the Marcos Regime. These distinct periods take into account neither the pre-colonial history of the archipelago nor the post-Marcos Fifth Republic, but they reflect most directly on the literature of Rizal and Hagedorn.

Spanish Colonialism

Though the Spanish would eventually become the most prominent colonizer of the archipelago that would become the Philippines, the Portuguese were the first Europeans to formally make contact with the natives of the yet to be christened nation. Ferdinand Magellan purchased and relied heavily upon his Malay slave while interacting with the *indios*, or the indigenous people of the archipelago. Despite his capture and death in 1521, Magellan played a key role in the Spanish capture of the archipelago. The ruler of Cebu, Rajah Humabon, agreed to an alliance with Spain due to his friendship with Magellan. Humabon not only acknowledged Spanish sovereignty over Cebu, but also converted to Catholicism alongside his consort and subjects. This friendship between Humabon and Magellan convinced Magellan to confront Datu Lapu-Lapu of Mactan off east of the coast of Cebu. During this excursion, Magellan attempted to convert Lapu-Lapu to Christianity as he had Humabon, but failed to convince him. Magellan was then captured and killed during a subsequent battle against Lapu-Lapu's forces.

Though Catholicism would eventually become the most prominent religion in the Philippines, Islam's presence in the archipelago predated Christianity by at least a century and a half. By the end of the 14th century, Muslim missionaries from Malaysia and Indonesia had reached southern islands. Two large Sultanates were established in Sulu in the 15th century, and by the early 16th century, Maguindinao also established a sultanate. Due to the spread of Islam through these large communities, intra-settlement alliances were able to form, thus creating the beginning of a civil state throughout the archipelago. These alliances also distinguished Muslim from non-Muslim communities in the Philippines and were essential in the resistance of colonizing southern Mindanao by the Spanish. If it were not for the Spanish, the archipelago that became the Philippines would have moved towards an Islamic state.

There were four post-Magellan expeditions to the archipelago from 1525 to 1565, the last two being the most successful. During the Ruy López de Villalobos expedition in 1542-1543, a colony was created in Mindanao and the archipelago was christened *Las Islas Filipinas* after Felipe II, son of Charles I. Miguel López de Legazpi headed the final and most successful expedition to the Philippines in 1565. This expedition created European settlements in Cebu and established a trade route back to Mexico. Initially landing in Cebu, Legazpi dispatched two of his lieutenant commanders to Manila on the island of Luzon to search for resources. Several months of warfare between the Spanish commanders and the Islamic natives of the south, the three Rajah's of Luzon handed Manila over to the Spaniards. On June 24, 1571, Legazpi declared Manila the seat of the Spanish Colony due to its strategic location and rich natural resources. After an attack on in 1574 by Limahong and the Chinese left the city of Manila in shambles, it was decided that a wall would be constructed around the city to protect the Spanish interested and colonial power. The city inside of these walls would be called *Intramuros*, holding many

churches, educational institutions run by different religious orders, the *Ayuntamiento de Manila* (City Hall), and the Manila Cathedral.

Andrés de Urdaneta y Cerain, Augustinian friar and Spanish circumnavigator, piloted Legazpi's fleet between Mexico and Cebu and created the infamous Galleon trade route. This trade route also established the first wave of Filipino immigration to the North American, from which the Manila men of Louisiana came. Urdaneta and six other Augustinians began the widespread Christianization of the Philippines. During this time, the Viceroyalty of Mexico under the Spanish King ruled the Philippines. The archipelago's Captain General and Governor were the King's representatives on the islands, and enforced the *Patronato Real*, the crown policy that set rules for the Catholic Church in the colonies. The *Patronato Real* effectively joined together the church and state, making their presence in the Philippines co-dependent. Due to this union, the spreading of Christianity and converting *indios* became the primary justification for Spanish presence. The evangelical work of the church was under supervision of the king, but the reigning monarch held the power to veto papal bills and closely supervised ecclesiastics.

During this period of evangelical Christianization, *encomiendas* became the system under which *indios* lived. The *encomienda* system worked by charging a number of *indios* living in an area to an *encomendero* (usually a Spanish conqueror, always granted by Spanish crown) who was in charge of teaching Christianity and Castilian to the *indios*, as well as organizing the work force of the *indios*. The *encomenderos* acted as petty kings to the *indios*, who were subject to Spanish rule, and could collect tribute taxes and unpaid labor, or *corvée*. The tribute collected by the *encomenderos* paid for their living expenses, as well as further missions. Unfortunately, *encomenderos* commonly abused this power by over-collecting tribute, forcing unpaid labor, as

well as seizing land from native *barangays*, which was the system of neighborhoods in which *indios* lived before colonization. These *barangays* were absorbed into the *encomienda* system by resettlement, or *réduccion*. The resettlement of *barangays* into larger towns called *Poblacíons* and their outer *barrios* centered around the plaza which had the Church, *municipio* (town hall), and *escuela* (school). By centering the *poblacíon* on these buildings, it forced the *indios* to center their own lives on the Catholic and colonial education. It is interesting to note that though the Catholic education was at the center of the *indios* lives, the Society of Jesus was expelled from the Philippines in May of 1768 by Royal Decree for the fear that they were educating the *indios* too radically and empowering them to think outside of the colonial framework. The Jesuits were allowed back to the Philippines in 1859, at which time they established the oldest Jesuit university in the Philippines, Pamantasang Ateneo de Manila.

As Jesuit Historian Horatio de la Costa once wrote, "Spanish colonial Philippines can be viewed as either a civilizing church or a missionary state." During this time, the highest position any wealthy *indio* could have is the *gobernadorcillo*, or the little governor of the *encomendero*. The *encomienda* system was legally abolished in 1720, but was maintained locally up until the mid-19th century.

It might seem as though Spanish rule would have equal weight to evangelism in the Philippines. Through integration of *barangays* into *encomiendas*, it may seem as though the *encomendero* might be the most prevalent figure in *indios* lives; instead, the friars held the most power on the ground. Most friars worked double duty in their *encomienda*, as they provided both spiritual guidance and material administration. *Indios* were required to donate both goods and money to the friars are part of their penance, thus the equating of the spiritual to the monetary was often a cause of exploitation. Friars were also able to own land, which encomenderos could

not, so the chain of power shifted more towards the religions. Early most missionaries to the Philippines were qualified and committed to meeting spiritual goals, but the possibility of fortune caused a drop in the standards of those sent to the colonies. Similarly, geographical distance from each other and from Spanish rule caused enough isolation so that constant monitoring of a friar's actions was almost impossible. Therefore, the ability for a friar to favor civic duties and the possibility of wealth of spiritual duties was an oft-made compromise. Regardless, the Catholic evangelism worked and the church became the dominant institution in the country, leaving the Friar as the prominent figure in the community. More often than not, the friar or the priest, by the time of *encomienda* abolishment, was the only Spaniard amongst the *barangay* population.

Due to the presence of Islam in the southern Philippines, Spanish colonial control was almost never completely established throughout the entire archipelago. Islam was not overruled in Mindanao until the last two decades of the 18th century, as anti-colonial uprisings began occurring in the northern islands of the Philippines. The intra-settlement alliances proved useful in the Muslim resistance to both Christianity and the Spanish because they were already organized and determined to keep out colonial rule. Thins, alongside distractions from the Dutch, Portuguese, and British, deterred the Spanish from completely dominating the Muslim population. Unfortunately, both Spanish colonial and Evangelical forces eventually overruled Islam in the colonies, almost putting to rest the oldest monotheistic religion in the Philippines.

By the 19th century, the provincial hierarchy of power in the colonies was made up of estate-owning friars, *principalia* (*indios* that could own land and could be promoted to *gobernadorcillo*), and the local populace of tenant farmers and agricultural laborers. With the church valued as the most important institution in the Philippines, it was easy for friars and

priests to enforce pacification as Catholic teaching, thus keeping the power with the Spanish. It encouraged *indios* to leave their aggression aside and not to question Spanish colonial authority. Despite pacification as a commonly enforced ideal, there were still regular clashes between clashes between the civil colonial sphere and the religious sphere. Even if colonial rule was to create a "missionary state", the purpose of the colony was to make money, and getting the most profit from the Philippines fueled the battle between the Catholic Church and the Spanish ruling government.[3]

This dissent between the Catholic Church and Spanish rule became clear during an event that would begin the spark a revolution. During the 1872 Cavite mutiny, native military personnel of Fort San Felipe rose up to capture the Fort and killed eleven Spanish officers. The military personnel believed that the other soldiers in Manila would join their effort, but what was believed to be a signal of support was actually fireworks for in celebration of the patron Saint of Sampaloc, Our Lady of Loreto. When word of the mutiny reached Manila, Spanish forces reclaimed the fort and the revolutionaries surrendered. The colonial government and the Spanish Friars used this act of revolution to implicate three Filipino priests, Mariano Gómez, José Burgos, and Jacinto Zamora, known as the Gomburza (a portmanteau of their last names). Gomburza were all accused of sedition against the colonial state, were tried and sentenced to execution by garrote on February 16, 1872. Their execution occurred on Luneta field, or *Bagumbaya* in Tagalog, where José Rizal himself would be executed 24 years later. Their bodies were buried in Pacò cemetery in an unmarked grave, as was practice with burying enemies of the state. Finally, a decree was made which banned Filipinos from being appointed as parish priests.

[3] For more on Spanish Colonial and Ecclesiastic establishment, see Francia 49-98

The Philippine Revolution broke out in 1896 after the discovery of the anti-colonial organization *Katiputan*, spearheaded by Emilio Aguinaldo. The group then split into two sections: the Magdiwang with Mariano Álverez as their leader, and Magdalo with Aguinaldo. Aguinaldo and his followers were then exiled to Hong Kong when he signed the Pact of Biak-na-Bato with the Spanish Colonial Government. By 1898, armed conflicts arose in every province in the colony, causing deep unrest throughout the Philippines.

At the same time, Spain headed into conflict with the United States, sinking the USS Maine in Havana, Cuba in 1898. The United States enlisted Aguinaldo and his revolutionary government to retaliate against Spain, but by the time the US arrived in the Philippines, native Filipinos had taken control of all of Luzon, except for the *intramuros*. On June 12, 1898, Aguinaldo declared Philippine Independence, only to later be again colonized by America after a deal with Spain. During this time of unrest, many *indios* began questioning colonial rule as an institution. Perhaps the most important *indio* to create a space for colonial resistance was José Rizal.[4]

Rizal, the Mythologization of his Death, and Anti-Colonial Sentiments

On June 19th, 1861 in Calamba City, José Protasio Rizal Mercado y Alonso Realonda was born to a wealthy Filipino family. He studied with a private tutor before he was sent to Manila and attended Colegio de San Juan de Letran, located in *Intramuros*. He later attended Ateneo de Manila University, a university established by the Jesuits in 1859. Upon enrollment at Ateneo, Rizal dropped the last three names that made up his full name in an effort to disassociate from his brother, whose close friendship with Burgos from the Gomburza could negatively affect

[4] For more on the Cavite Mutiny, Indio uprising, and José Rizal, see Francia 97-133, Augenbraum "Introduction" and Augenbraum "Introduction: Rizal's Ghost"

his education. During his time studying for a degree in land surveying and assessing, he also enrolled at the University of Santo Tomas with the intention of starting a law degree. He soon switched to studying medicine at Santo Tomas due to his mother's failing eyesight, specializing in ophthalmology.

Unbeknownst to his parents, Rizal traveled to Madrid, Spain in 1882 in order to finish his study of medicine at the Universidad Centrale de Madrid. He then moved to Berlin, Germany, finishing his eye specialization under Professor Otto Becker. Rizal was also inducted into the Berlin Ethnological Society and the Berlin Anthropological Society, during which time he gave an address in German to the Anthropological Society about the linguistic nature of the Tagalog language. Rizal never failed to recognize his roots in the Philippines while in Europe, leading to his organization of anti-colonial groups in Spain and his eventual publishing of *Noli Me Tangere* in Berlin in 1887. After a shortened trip to Manila in 1888, in which his family persuaded him to leave for both his and their own safety, Rizal returned to Europe, later publishing *El Filibusterismo* in 1891.

Rizal's commitment to Tagalog and other native dialects of in the Philippines began from a young age. In his first lyric poem, "Our Mother Tongue" penned supposedly at age 8, Rizal celebrates the beauty of Tagalog and denounces those who do not love the language. He writes:

> One who doesn't love his native tongue
> Is worse than putrid fish and a beast;
> And like a truly precious thing
> It therefore deserves to be cherished. (*Rizal and the Development of National Consciousness)*

Though this poem was written at such a young age, it shows that Rizal's commitment to maintaining and celebrating Tagalog influenced his entire life. He would not allow either himself or his fellow countrymen to become the "putrid fish" and "beasts" by allowing colonialism to quash the use of such a "heaven sent" tongue. This love for both country and language directly lead to his writing of *Noli Me Tangere* and *El Filibusterismo* as a means to inspire his readers to maintain their own culture during a time of outside imposition. Despite the fact that Rizal wrote his most influential works in Spanish, his dedication to his native tongue never failed to make itself present in his work.

On December 30th, 1896, Rizal was brought before a firing squad for his execution. Filipinos comprised the squad tasked with executing Rizal, though standing behind the Filipino squad were Spanish riflemen as a precautionary measure; the Spanish gunmen would kill the Filipino squad if they refused to shoot Rizal. Before this execution occurred, Rizal asked the officer in charge of his death if he could face the fire squad but his request was denied. Rizal stood with his back facing the gunmen and, according to legend, as soon as the first gun went off, Rizal turned around so he could face his executors and land face up towards God. He was, like Gomburza, buried in an unmarked grave in Pacò cemetery. His sister later searched the cemetery while guards monitoring her, leaving RPJ on a plot of freshly turned dirt that was the most likely spot of Rizal's body.

Word of Rizal's last act of rebellion spread throughout the colony and he soon became a martyr and symbol for revolution. Though Rizal's works carried extremely revolutionary sentiments, he denounced violent revolution towards the end of his life, noting that his beloved country was not ready for the radical transformation he had once written about. In fact, he believed a violent revolution would only bring about the deaths of innocent Filipinos and

advocated for Gandhi's use of nonviolent protest instead. This did little to sway the public's image of Rizal and his death eventually became a national myth.

The discovery of his last poem, *Mi Último Adios* served to create a movement towards independence. This poem provided his final thoughts on his beloved home country, as well as reflections on his relationship with Josephine Bracken. Rizal snuck the poem to his sister the night before his execution by giving her an alcohol stove, then telling her in English that there was something hidden inside it. J. P. Braga first published it in Hong Kong a year later in 1897 under the title *Mi Último Pensamiento*, as Rizal never gave a real title to the poem. Perhaps the most important use of this poem was in 1902, six years after Rizal's death, when the US Congress was debating the Philippine Organic Act of 1902. Representative Henry Cooper quoted the poem in order to persuade Congress to pass the bill into law. Congress eventually passed the Philippine Organic Act of 1902, creating a blueprint for Philippine independence.

Ironically, the use of Rizal as a propaganda figure was an important aspect of US policy during the American Occupation. Rizal was a safe bet for Americans due to his being deceased and his prior stance on non-violence. Images of Rizal on American propaganda from the 1950s quoted, "Rizal died for <u>you</u>: BE WORTHY OF HIM" (United States Information Agency) as a way to subdue the Filipinos against American Occupation. If Filipinos accepted this propaganda and the idea of Rizal as non-violent, then the status quo of American Occupation would stay in tact. The promotion of Rizal as a "national hero" by oppressive government officials allowed the suppression of more radical figures like Aguinaldo or Bonifacio. Rizal, in turn, became the state-sanctioned when the US-sponsored commission passed Act No. 346, turning the anniversary of Rizal's death on December 30th into a "day of observance" (Almario).

The mythologization of Rizal's death created a character of the author himself that could be manipulated by either whomever occupied the Philippines or by Filipinos themselves. But aside from the public creation of Rizal the Martyr, Rizal created his own protagonist mirroring his life experiences, education, and hardships. His creation of a revolutionary subversive was Rizal's own way of controlling how the public saw him and how they would ultimately remember him. This character, Juan Crisóstomo Ibarra y Magsalin, would allow Rizal to live on in the pages of his novels and inspire subversive, anti-colonialist sentiments throughout *Las Islas Filipinas.*

José Rizal: Writer, Revolutionary, and Martyr

Filipino writer José Rizal's two novels, *Noli Me Tangere* and *El Filibusterismo*[5], are not only two books that sparked radical and anti-colonial ideas; they are also two halves of the story of a revolution. In fact, the first edition of *El Fili* lists itself as a continuation of the *Noli* on its title page ("Introduction: Rizal's Ghost" *xvi*). While the *Noli* can be considered Rizal's love-letter to his beloved Philippines, *El Fili* is a radical criticism of Spanish colonialism. The passionate lovers, naïve indios, and gratitude to Spain that are so essential to the *Noli*'s success no longer exist in *El Fili*, reflecting a change in Rizal's own ideology about the Philippines. Overwhelming governmental and ecclesiastic disapproval of the *Noli* forced Rizal to adopt a more critical, direct, and radical voice through which *El Fili* is written.

The stories are similar, two educated young men originally from San Diego, Philippines decide to start schools in an effort to teach the uneducated indios to the dismay of both the Catholic Frays in the barangays and the Spanish colonial government. The connecting character

[5] In the Philippines, the novels are so commonly read that they are commonly referred to by their nicknames "The *Noli*" for *Noli Me Tangere* and "El Fili" for *El Filibusterismo*

between the two novels is Juan Crisóstomo Ibarra y Magsalin, commonly referred to as either Ibarra, or, in *El Fili*, Simoun. Ibarra is a projection of Rizal; both are educated young men that return to their beloved homeland of the Philippines with the intentions of bringing their Spanish education to the masses and marrying their childhood sweethearts. Though neither novel is particularly autobiographical, they certainly reflect the changes in both his ideology and his life. As translator Harold Augenbraum notes in the introduction to *El Fili*:

> While the *Noli* was meant to create a portrait of the Philippines, the *Fili* is framed less by a focus on the Philippines as ancient and national entity than by the nineteenth century's growing internationalism. Between the two books, Rizal has gained a great deal of experience and has progressed from naïve *indio* […] to a new type of international, political intellectual, with the whole of world culture from which to choose his themes and images. ("Introduction: Rizal's Ghost" xiv-xv)

Ibarra begins his return to the Philippines with a more radical ideology about the intelligence of the indios and the naïve hope that an amalgamation of Spanish culture and Filipino determination could create a better indio. Yet, by the end of the *Noli* and upon Ibarra's second return to the archipelago in *El Fili*, neither Rizal nor Ibarra believe that the integration of Spanish culture into Filipino lives will have the desired effect of bettering all indios. Rather, both steadfastly believe the Spanish government and the Catholic evangelism only serve to undermine the persistence of a Filipino existence.

The main purpose of the *Noli* is to exposé of the ills of colonialism and evangelism to western readers, while also painting a beautiful portrait of the land that Rizal loves and calls home. The two purposes work together to persuade the outside, European readers that the

Philippines and its indios must be allowed to thrive on their homeland without the overbearing colonial rule that had been imposed on them for almost 300 years previously. As Rizal writes in his introduction "To My Country" in the *Noli*:

> Recorded in the history of human suffering are cancers of such malignant character that even minor contact aggravates them, engendering overwhelming pain. […] Your beloved image became to me like a social cancer.
>
> Therefore, because I desire your good health, which is indeed all of ours, and because I seek better stewardship for you, I will do with you what the ancients did with their infirmed: they placed them on the steps of their temples so that each in his own way could invoke a divinity that might offer a cure. (3)

Rizal's main aim is to "faithfully, without prejudice," produce an accurate portrait of the Philippine with the hopes that an educated and peninsular audience will suggest cures for the "social cancer" that is colonialism. Rizal writes this novel as an ambassador for the Philippines to his European audience, with the hopes that his connection between the continent and the island nation will bring forth a solution to the harm that imperial greed and colonialism brought to the archipelago. Though Rizal published The *Noli* in Berlin, Germany and *El Fili* in Ghent, Belgium, both novels were originally written and published in Spanish. This raises questions as to whom Rizal believed his novel was originally intended; were these books intended for a Spanish audience to outline the evils of colonial rule in the Philippines alone, or was their publishing in Germany and Belgium meant to highlight the hypocrisy of colonialism throughout all European countries? The answers to this question of audience remain unclear, but it is certain that the language Rizal writes in is due to his Spanish education, a privilege Rizal gained because

of colonialism. Though Rizal reckons with the blending of his European education and Filipino intellect as he returns to his country, he must ultimately rely on higher education to successfully undermine an oppressive system.

Despite his use of Spanish as the overall language of the *Noli* and *El Fili*, Rizal weaves Tagalog colloquialisms throughout his works, showing that the language of the people is the most faithful way to tell the truth and beauty of the Philippines. His use of Tagalog words like *sampaguita* instead of jasmine, or *carabao* instead of water buffalo shows Rizal's dedication to his homeland and to his people. It allows him to retain his Filipino and indio identity while writing to a Spanish-speaking audience, guiding them to understand and incorporate Filipino culture into their own. The inclusion of uniquely Tagalog phrases within the *Noli* and *El Fili* creates an authenticity to Rizal's work, melding his European education and his love for the Philippines into a strong revolutionary work.

Using the knowledge gained during his European education, Rizal relies heavily on medical metaphors throughout the *Noli*, as his ophthalmological education informed his realization of the harms of colonialism. *Noli Me Tangere* translates from Latin to English as "touch me not", which is a credo formerly taught to surgical students. *A Manual of the Diseases of the Human Eye*, an opthamological sourcebook by a Berlin doctor in 1819 states that cancerous legions on the eyelids are "considered noli me tangere" (Weller 92-93), meaning that they should not be touched in any circumstance. Through the title and "To My Country", Rizal likens the Philippines to a body that has been wrecked with cancer of the eyes so it can no longer see; colonialism blinds the indios into submitting to Spanish power and religion and a cure cannot found unless sought out by outsiders. Though nineteenth surgical practices suggest that the ophthalmological cancer should not be touched, Rizal reclaims this cautionary notice for the

body of Filipinos, warning that the socially cancerous colonialism must be forced away from Filipinos. Those indios who were warned by the surgical doctrine may believe that the colonial system should not be touched so as not to cause more harm than good, but Rizal attempts to destruct this ideology with his ironic title.

Similarly, the phrase "noli me tangere" also appears in the John 20:17, when Jesus tells Mary Magdalene, "Do not hold onto me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father" when he appears to her after his death. Due to Christianity's (specifically Roman Catholicism) pervasiveness, it is likely that Rizal's title references the biblical verse as well. Here, Christ is in transition, waiting to ascend to God in Heaven. Rizal knows that the Philippines is coming upon a transition time, as more indios begin questioning Catholic evangelism and Spanish Colonial power. Similarly, this biblical reference images a new Philippines that is unique from any in its history. Rizal urges the Philippines forward by acknowledging that the unification of these islands under Spain has had its benefits, but has yet to reach its full potential. It is not a return to what was before Spain, but a Philippines that flourishes with the education and religion gained from the colonial power under its own home rule.In this sense, *Noli Me Tangere* says to the indios "do not hold onto the Philippines in its current state; the archipelago can ascend from this lowly colonial state to a greater independent place with room for enlightenment." From both medical and biblical perspectives, the title *Noli Me Tangere* is an evocative one; it forces its readers to question the mantras we think we know, to create a space for ascension, and to begin thinking in a resistive, radical, and revolutionary mindset.

Noli Me Tangere and the Case for Education

In order to start the process of thinking in such a liberating mindset, the basis of understanding must be taught to the naïve indios. At the heart of both the *Noli* and *El Fili* lies the issue of education. Both Ibarra and (later) Basilio are in the process of opening schools so the minds of the native Filipinos can be liberated as their minds have been. But to the Spanish colonial government and the Roman Catholic Church, education that deviates from the pre-set system is seen as a threat to their power. When Ibarra explains his want for education and fair recognition from Spain, he says, "I didn't grow up amid these people [indios], of whose needs I am perhaps unaware. I spent my childhood in a Jesuit school, I grew up in Europe, books formed me and I have read only those things that men have brought to light" (*Noli Me Tangere* 326-327). Because of their passion for teaching and education, both the Spanish Government and other Catholic orders hated the Jesuits. Students of the Jesuits did not memorize textbook passages as students of Dominicans and Franciscans were required (*El Filibusterismo* 102-112); rather, Jesuit students were taught to think critically in the same way Europeans were taught (*El Filibusterismo* 94). This ability to think, question, and learn was a threat to the maintenance of colonial and ecclesiastic power. Ibarra's education under the Jesuits made him the ideal candidate as the "voice for the persecuted" (319), but also forces the label of "subversive" or "*filibustero*" upon him by the government and the church. His school is viewed as an attempt to subvert the core curriculum that values Catholic doctrine and Spanish Colonial power.

Similarly, Basilio's school is seen as overreaching the ability of the indio by teaching them Castilian Spanish. Indios were discouraged from speaking Pilipino as it showed their native heritage that was looked down upon by Peninsulares, while also discouraging the indios from learning Castilian so their education could be limited and not fill their minds with subversive ideas. Comparably, the Friars discouraged the teaching of Castilian to the indios to limit their

ability to understand the Catholicism that the Frays were molding to their own use. In the *Noli*, the mass at the end of the festival is given half in Castilian and half in Tagalog (201), and though this linguistic split might be seen as providing access to Castilian, it shows that none of the Peninsulares expect the indios to understand the first half of the sermon. Even then, Father Dámaso is able to control what the indios are hearing and how they are able to interpret the scripture he preaches. As the Protestant Reformation proved in Europe, when the general public has access to the language of the Bible, its readers are able it interpret it for themselves and, in turn, see the hypocrisy of the clergy. This kind of discouragement can be seen in *El Fili* when church and government officials discuss whether to allow the Castilian school or not. An important fray, Father Camorra, explains:

> They shouldn't learn it because then they will argue with us and indios should not argue with us, they should obey and pay. They shouldn't start interpreting what the law and books say. They are tricky and argumentative. The minute they learn Castilian, they'll become enemies of God and Spain. (*El Filibusterismo* 90)

Camorra's diatribe shows both the corruption of the church and the overwhelming disapproval of education as central themes of the novels. Camorra, like the vast majority of frays in power, acknowledges the fact that indios have the capacity to learn and question the systems under which they live. Clergy resistance to education outside of Roman Catholic doctrine shows a concerted effort towards keeping the indio uneducated, forcing them to stay a part of the colonial system. If the indio remains ignorant, he will continue to "obey and pay", which only benefits Catholic Colonial rule. Any attempt to navigate out of this educational stalemate reads as an act of subversion. Though that may not be the surface goal of Ibarra in the *Noli* and Basilio in *El Fili*, it certainly is Rizal's.

The first time Ibarra is educated about the ills of colonialism, it mirrors the way in which Rizal intends to teach his readers about how Spain has poisoned his country. In a similar way to Rizal's own reckoning with his love for the Philippines and his gratefulness at a European education, the old Philosopher (though viewed by Peninsulares and Frays as crazy) forces Ibarra to reimagine his own ideas about the benevolence of Spain and the pacification of Indios by way of poor education. After Ibarra claims that the Indios have no qualms with Spanish rule, the Philosopher responds, "The people don't complain because they have no voice, they don't act because they are lethargic, and you say they don't suffer: you haven't seen how their hearts bleed. But one day you'll see and hear…" (*Noli Me Tangere* 166). The Philosopher points out the indios complacency in the colonial system due to a lack of efficacy. The Spanish and Catholic colonial rule forced the indios into silence and exhaustion by overworking them to pay religious dues and by under educating them, leading to a lack of any idea to how they can effect change. Though Ibarra saw this silence as quiet acceptance, it is any thing but. When the Philosopher notes that Ibarra will "see and hear" someday, it is an acknowledgment that someone will eventually enlighten and educate the indios so that the naysayers will finally understand. The Philosopher ultimately gives the possibility of voice and efficacy to the indios whose silence will not save them. By gaining a voice, the indios bear the potential for change. Ibarra's desire to open an school and teach the indios shows that though he is ignorant of it how, he will eventually teach these indios how to have the voice that he cannot hear.

In the course of this conversation, the Philosopher places the onerous task of educating the indios onto Ibarra, knowing that Ibarra must first come to terms with his own feelings about Spain's negative influence on the Philippines. Ibarra's confusion leads to his understanding that

not everything can be positive under colonial rule, yet something new and good can come from this occupation. Ibarra says to the Philosopher:

> Is it such that my love of country is incompatible with my love of Spain? It is necessary to prostrate myself in order to be a good Christian? To prostitute myself in order to make my project a success? I love my country, the Philippines, because I owe it my life and my happiness, and everyone should love his country. I love Spain, the country of my forefathers, because in spite of everything, the Philippines owes it her happiness and her future, and will owe them to her. (*Noli Me Tangere* 168)

Ibarra's observation that the Philippines owes its future to Spain is not wrong, but misguided in his ignorance. It assumes that the Philippines is overall country happy with its occupation by Spain, despite the amount of suffering and corruption caused by imperial greed. Here, Ibarra begins imagining the future of the Philippines in a similar way that Rizal does; they imagine that there will be a Philippines after Spain and that it will be better off, yet must still reckon with the positive cultural changes that imperialism brought. As Ibarra leaves the Philosopher's chambers, his understanding of Spain's negative impact on the Philippines begins a major shift to the side of his own people. This signifies the beginning of Ibarra's ongoing education in anti-colonialism, an education that requires constant attention and pushing.

While the Philosopher provides the initial lesson in colonial evils, Elias, a mysterious revolutionary, becomes Ibarra's most important ally and educator. Though he prides himself on his European knowledge (in a similar way to Rizal), Elias's knowledge of colonial oppression serves to educate Ibarra in the most persuasive way because he trusts Elias, even if he fights back

against accepting the truth. When Ibarra cites that Spain serves a useful purpose to the Philippines, Elias responds:

> Our customs, our mode of being, which they are always invoking when they want to deny us our rights, they forget completely when there is something they want to impose on us. And tell me señor, why haven't other nations adopted this institution, since by their proximity to Spain they might have more in common than the Philippines? (*Noli Me Tangere* 323)

Elias's attempt to convince Ibarra that not all Spanish institutions have a useful place in the Philippines serves as a reminder that Filipino culture, while fractured before unification by Spain, is continually used as a tool of oppression that the indios must reclaim. Ibarra's reaction, a "lowered head, as if he were thinking this over" (393), shows that Elias is not speaking in abstract theories, but in applicable instances that hinder the survival of Filipino culture, language, and expression. In order to be a future for the Philippines, the culture of those Filipinos must be retained. In order to retain this culture, the educators (namely, Ibarra) must be able to wade through the political upheaval to promote a culture of education and celebration in Filipino practices apart from Spanish, or any, colonial rule.

The final step of Ibarra's education in understanding the negative impacts of colonial rule comes from a false accusation of subversion. Both government officials and Friars, already suspicious of Ibarra's intentions to educate, implicate him as the mastermind of a revolt in San Diego, leaving Ibarra to flee the Philippines to escape capture and execution. In one of his last conversations with Elias, Ibarra finally renounces his overwhelming love for Spain and recognizes that he must fight to help the Philippines reach his ideal. He goes on this passionate monologue:

> And so, just what they wanted, I will be a subversive, but a true subversive. I will call together all the downtrodden people, everyone who feels a heart beating in his breast, those who sent you to me…No, I won't be a criminal, you aren't a criminal when you fight for your country, just the opposite! For three centuries we have held out our hand to them, asked them for love, eager to call them brothers, and how do they answer us? With insults, mocking, denying us even the status of human beings. There is no God, no hope, no humanity, nothing more than the rights of power. (*Noli Me Tangere* 400-401)

Ibarra's understanding of the "social cancer" of colonialism does not set in until his own life is threatened. His education is complete in the sense that he finally claims the Philippines as his ultimate country; Spain no longer clouds his judgment when considering his role in educating indios. Not only does Ibarra renounce Spain, but he also renounces the God and Catholicism that formerly barred him from being a "voice of the persecuted" (319).

Ibarra now sees his responsibility as subverting the colonial and Catholic rule by whatever means possible. Ibarra's means are not subtle either, as he says he will, "call these people ignorant, I'll force them to see their own misery, and they won't think about brotherhood, only wolves that devour one another, and I'll tell them to rise up against oppression and protest the eternal right of man to conquer his freedom!" (*Noli Me Tangere* 402). Ibarra's soft approach, to "preserve the Philippines" (325) in the hopes that the colonial government will fix itself, no longer exists. Instead, he takes a violent approach to the education he intends to give to his indio students, with force, protest, and conquer. Though this education is forceful, Ibarra's passion for the emergence of a new Philippines becomes clearer with a plan for action. Ibarra intends to force his students to defy the stereotypical lethargy that the Peninsulares attribute to indios, and

instead educate them to have a voice and use it in political protest. The government announces later that the civil guardsmen have killed Ibarra during pursuit, and the threat of subversion has apparently been quelled. The ideal and pacifist Ibarra dies, but is replaced with a volatile and revolutionary figurehead.

The ending of the *Noli* signifies a radical ideological shift for both Ibarra and Rizal. As Ibarra's world is shattered and he must go into hiding, Rizal's sheds his stance of "not asking for abolition, [but] seeking the reforms that new circumstances and new needs demand" (*Noli Me Tangere* 325) and takes on a new, more violent and active stance on liberation. In the transition from the *Noli* to *El Fili*, Rizal looses his adoring view of the Philippines and long-winded side plots, replacing them with direct action and radical politics for abolition of the Spanish colonial government. Ibarra is no longer in love with his bride-to-be, Maria, and the Philippines simply becomes a backdrop for revolutionary action.

El Filibusterismo: The Student becomes the Revolutionary Teacher

The innocence and inexperience of the *Noli* closes with Ibarra leaving the Philippines and re-emerging thirteen years later in the beginning of *El Fili* as Simoun, a wealthy and abrasive jeweler attempting to sell his collection and subvert colonial affairs from the inside. Within the first chapter of *El Fili*, Simoun's plans and views anger and cause disagreement between government officials, Frays, and other esteemed dignitaries. During a discussion on how to deal with various indio uprisings, Simoun's actions and ideas leave this unfavorable impression: "It was obvious that this Simoun was either very full of himself or had no idea how to properly behave. To call Don Custodio historically ignorant would infuriate him. And so it was" (*El Filibusterismo* 8). Ibarra is gone, replaced with the purposefully subversive Simoun. After

spending thirteen years on the run, Simoun no longer tries to hide himself or his actions, making everything he does obvious and clear to those who understand his intentions. Though the romantic notions of Ibarra are gone, his forceful last impression from the *Noli* carries over to *El Fili* when Don Custodio angrily states that Simoun's plans require them to "Mandate! Force people!" (9). Unafraid to use the force he hesitated on implementing before, Simoun picks up right where he intended to thirteen years prior, reclaiming cultural ground as a means of protest.

Simoun's first takes on Basilio, who appeared first as a minor character in a side plot in the *Noli* as a poor indio, abused by the hands of the Friars in their local church. Thirteen years on, Basilio has been educated as a lawyer and is drawn to teaching other underprivileged indios Castilian so they too can get an education. During their first conversation after his return, Simoun acts as Elias to Basilio's Ibarra, educating Basilio in recognizing how Spain suppresses Filipino culture and education to keep the indios at pacified. Simoun approaches Basilio with this request:

> I need you to help me, I need you to use your influence with the young people to fight against these foolhardy desires for Hispanization, assimilation, for equal rights. That's just a road to becoming a bad copy. The people of this country need to aspire to higher things! […] What you need to do is take advantage of their preoccupations and accomplish what you want. You don't want to assimilate to Spain? Well, congratulations! So develop your own character, create the foundation for the Philippine nation! You don't want to give them false hope? Well, congratulations! Don't put your hopes in them, put your hopes in yourselves and get to work. (*El Filibusterismo* 55)

Simoun's speech shows that the ultimate goal is not to harken back to the days of the pre-colonial archipelago, but the creation of a new Filipino identity with higher aspirations, realistic hopes, and real characterization as an independent people. By asking Basilio to influence the young people through teaching, Simoun (and, in turn, Rizal) establishes that the best method through which to fight assimilation is education and perpetuation of Filipino culture. Though his ideology is strikingly less lenient, the idea that a new Philippine nation can exist in the future with the young people as the basis persists.

In order to create this foundation for a new Philippines, there must be a cultural retention and communal understanding. This communal understanding comes not from learning a new language, but from continued speaking of the native tongue. Despite Basilio's plan to open a school in which indios learned Castilian, Simoun pushes for education in a native tongue, primarily in Tagalog. Simoun scolds Basilio, saying, "One or the other of you forgets that when a people holds onto its language, it holds onto a semblance of freedom, like a man who holds onto his independence when he retains his own way of thinking. Language is the thought of a people" (*El Filibusterismo* 54). For the indios under colonial rule for almost three hundred years, the only freedom they can keep is the common language they all speak. While Simoun acknowledges that knowing Spanish—Castilian Spanish even more so—affords the indios much possibility and privilege, abandoning the native tongue means abandoning oneself and one's country. Simoun needs Basilio in order to create the basis for the new Philippine nation, and if the rising indios prefer speaking Spanish and Castilian, what purpose is there in fighting to create this new, independent nation? The essential need for indios with national pride explains Simoun's militancy and extremism. Without the common language, we waive hope for the new Philippines; Simoun would rather die (and does) than abandon the fight for a new nation.

Despite Simoun's passion and dedication for both reaching the younger indios and seeking revenge for those that wronged him, he recognizes Basilio's hesitancy as he once felt it himself. This understanding only makes his proposition stronger, knowing that eventually the colonial system will work in his favor by undermining Basilio himself. Simoun persists with Basilio, knowing how both the system and the emotional hesitancy works:

> I once thought like you, and you know what happened. The people who caused your troubles are watching you night and day. They figure you're waiting for an opportune moment. They interpret your intellectual curiosity, your love of your studies and even your passivity as a burning desire for revenge. The first day they can they'll get rid of you as they did with me. They're not going to let you grow. They're afraid of you. (*El Filibusterismo* 58)

By putting himself in Basilio's place and showing what comes of attempting to satisfy intellectual curiosity, Simoun shows that the only place in which Basilio can thrive is in the fight for revolution. He implies that Basilio's intellect will grow within the fight because he is teaching the indios the basis of their new nation, rather than quashing his intellect by labeling him a subversive and not allowing him to teach at all. Regardless of whichever offer Basilio chooses, his intellect frightens the colonial government and will label him a *filibustero*; Simoun presents the option of joining the subversive fight as the better of two dangerous options.

This choice that Simoun presents to Basilio is one that Rizal forces his reader to make as well: do you stand by and let colonial rule suppress the culture of a people, or do you join in and attempt to empower resistance to the colonizers? Beyond that, do Filipinos conform to the western influences posed by both Spain and America, or do they attempt to preserve and prolong their culture and language in resistance to where the social upheaval and unrest takes them? Both

Noli Me Tangere and *El Filibusterismo* choose the latter, as did the Filipino people by revolting and eventually gaining independence from Spain. America's attempt at an Insular Government greatly echoed that of Spanish colonial rule, as did the choice Filipinos were forced to make in terms of assimilation or revolution. Instead of submitting to ultimate colonial submission, Filipinos chose to resist on behalf of their future, to create a New Filipino culture defined by and for new generations of Filipinos.

PART II. *DOGEATERS* AND THE NEW, GLOBAL FILIPINOS

During the heat of the anti-Spanish colonial uprising, Spain was also involved in a war with America. The Spanish-American war lasted all but three months, two weeks, and four days, but created a fifty-year empire for American colonialism in the Philippines. During the battle of Manila, from 25 July to 15 August of 1898, the United States captured Manila from Spanish rule. Despite the collusion between the US and Spain with Aguinaldo's help, Filipino forces were no longer allowed. The 1898 Treaty of Paris ended the Spanish-American war, with Spain surrendering the Philippines to America for the cost of $20 million. President William McKinley then tried to imply Manifest Destiny to rule, Christianize, and educated the Philippines, despite the fact that Spain had already done so (McKinley 71).

Less than a year later, the Philippine-American war broke out in 1899 and lasted until 1902. Though the US military presence severely outranked that of the Philippines with firepower and open combat, Filipino soldiers excelled in Guerilla warfare. During this time, the US used scorched earth campaigns to level entire villages and wipe out facets of Filipino culture. Some Filipinos were forced into American-enforced concentration camps, while Filipino revolutionaries tortured some US soldiers. The Philippine-American War ended on July 4th,

1902, after an insular government was put in place by the United States as an effort to help the Philippines transition to their own independent government. During this time, the Roman-Catholic church was disestablished as the State Church and English was introduced as the primary language of the Philippines, succinctly ending the imposition of Spanish ecclesiastic and linguistic rule. This era of insular government, called the Tagalog Republic, lasted from 1902 until 1945 when the Japanese occupied the Philippines as an attack against the US in the Pacific Theater of World War II.[6]

After the Japanese surrender in 1945, the Treaty of Manila (1946) granted Philippine Independence from the United States, although many US military bases continued to be occupied. From 1946 until 1965, the Philippines went through five short administrations during reconstruction up until the election of Ferdinand Marcos in 1965. Marcos' early presidency was pockmarked by scandal, including the accusation of misappropriating public funds for personal use. During this time of political upheaval and social injustice, the Marcos' continued to live a lavish lifestyle, much of which can be seen in Imelda Marcos' extravagant collection of over 3,000 pairs of shoes. Suspicious of Marcos' actions, Senator Beiningo "Ninoy"Acquino, Jr. accused Marcos of militarizing the police and creating a Garrison state.

After his 1969 re-election, Marcos became more militant and irrational in his governing. Due to the student movement in Manila threatening communism during the Cold War Era, and hesitancy with Liberal Party resulting in a bombing at the Miranda Plaza, and a months worth of planned bombings in Manila and Quezon City, Marcos declared Martial Law from 1972 until 1981. During this time, Marcos dissolved congress and assumed ultimate power, essentially starting a dictatorship. Though Martial Law brought about prosperous change, such as decreasing

[6] For a more detailed history on the American occupation of the Philippines, see Francia 135-186 and Karnow's *In Our Image*

crime and a decrease of communist ideology within the first few years, the police soon became militant and many egregious crimes occurred. This created much strife and civil unrest throughout the archipelago. The time of unrest, uncertainty, and intense violence throughout the Philippines continued beyond Marcos' declaration of Martial Law. The catalyst that eventually brought about a new political era in the Philippines was the assassination of Senator Acquino, Jr. outside of the Manila International Airport on June 21, 1983[7].

During this time, anyone choosing to openly oppose the Marcos Regime was labeled a leftist subversive trying to undermine the political power and economic prosperity of Martial law. Splintered into many political groups and ideologies, the identity of Filipinos was more splintered than ever before. It is upon this unstable ground that *Dogeaters* takes place, allowing modern Filipinos understand the unrest and danger in trying to navigate a new Filipino identity during such political and social upheaval.

Dogeaters and the Filipino in Turmoil

Jessica Hagedorn's Filipino-American novel, *Dogeaters*, mirrors the fragmented identity of Filipinos during the time of political turmoil from the late-1950s onwards. Each chapter, narrated by a different Filipino living in Manila, shows the disparate nature of this new Filipino identity reflected in the *Noli* and *El Fili*. During a time of social and political unrest, Hagedorn's Filipinos are forced to reconsider what they believe to be core identity signifiers, ultimately showing that the fragmentations allow for continual ascension towards a New Filipino landscape. *Dogeaters* not only replicates the social confusion in post-American Manila, but also allows Filipino-Americans a space to grapple with the two different cultures that compose their identity.

[7] For more on the Marcos Regime in the Philippines, see Francia 219-255

Similar to W.E.B. DuBois's theory of double consciousness ("Of Our Spiritual Strivings") in which the African-American must, "merge his double self into a better and truer self. In this merging he wishes neither of the older selves to be lost," Filipino-Americans must also come to terms with living in a land that once colonized their own, being neither uniquely Filipino nor American, and moving forward from this point. *Dogeaters* incorporates this idea of continually looking forward while incorporating the past as a means for creating a Filipino identity that can exist outside of the archipelago itself by allowing different narrators an imaginative space in which their identity can be explored.

Dogeaters also serves as a fictional reflection on the political and social turmoil of the Marcos Regime. Though Hagedorn never uses real names, it is obvious that her characters are fictionalized versions of Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos, Beningo "Ninoy" Acquino, Jr., and even Hagedorn herself. It is not a retelling of Filipino history, but a means of remembering that time and recreating that world. Hagedorn says, "I wasn't trying to write the absolute 'real deal' story of the Philippines. I was only writing about a certain time frame and also about a certain group of people in a city, you know," (Bonetti & Hagedorn). *Dogeaters* may not the real story of the post-American Philippines, but it allows for the reader to find themselves in the turmoil and write themselves into the history.

The first, and perhaps most important, narrator in *Dogeaters* is Rio Gonzaga, a young, upper-class girl with a strong sense of social awareness about how her family views their Filipino identities in Manila. Her descriptions of her mother and father show a dichotomous relationship between the Philippines and their identities. Rio recalls her parents' difference in views:

> He believes in dual citizenships, dual passports, as many allegiances to as many countries as possible at any one given time. My father is a cautious man, and refers to himself as a "guest" in his own country. My mother, who carries American papers because of her father, feels more viscerally connected to the Philippines than he ever could. She used to argue with him. "I don't understand, Freddie. You were born here. I was born here, so were our children. You are definitely a Filipino. A mestizo, yes—but definite a Filipino." (Hagedorn 7-8)

Rio's understanding of her parents' citizenship and heritage creates a multifaceted understanding of Filipino identity. Her eventual immigration to America makes visible the fluidity between the binary of guest and native in the Philippines, but initially, Filipino identity comes down to an idea of authenticity based upon where one was born. While Filipino identity is firmly placed on the Gonzaga family, both parents deal are tentativeness in their identification with an 'original' culture. Rio's father, though arguably the most inherently connected with the Philippines feels alienation from the culture as a whole, pointing to a mélange of nationalities rather than one solid identifier. On the other hand, Rio's mestiza mother would rather identify as Filipina before anything else, signifying that one identifier can encapsulate a whole mélange of identities. Rio, rather than leaning towards one parent's side or the other, is tasked with figuring out how she will identify moving forward. Having been born in the Philippines, then eventually immigrating to American, Rio must take into account her heritage and feelings of her parents in order to figure out her own, new identity as a Filipino.

This struggle to create a new Filipino resonates throughout Rio's narrative as she tries to figure herself out in the midst of the social upheaval mirroring the anti-Marcos sentiment. Like Simoun and Basilio in *El Fili*, Rio must deal with the respectability politics in play when others

switch between the more respected, colonial languages of Castilian Spanish and English. During a visit from her *abuelita*, Rio must reckon with how each specific tongue is used. "My *abuelita* seldom speaks, and then almost always in the lisping Castilian Spanish Uncle Cristobal has to translate for us: this time she has spoken in English, and it sounds bizarre to us," (Hagedorn 91). Rio's *Abuelita,* who is just as Filipino as her *Lola* by heritage (93)[8], refuses to speak Tagalog or be referred too by any term that would relate her to the Philippines, and ultimately rejects a Filipino identity for the more favorable Spanish identity. Even though *Abuelita* ends up speaking English as well, her choice of language is steeped in the respectability politics of choosing a western tongue. The holdover of Spanish identification by *Abuelita* signifies the outdated practices of her generation. Her visit occurs in the late-1950s; therefore, *Abuelita* is still under the impression that Spanish is the most valued identifier, while Rio and her friends find more value in American culture as a supplement for their Filipino identity. Rio's confusion with her *Abuelita*'s identity choices shows that a general shift in the post-American 1950s, that a new identity path forms while one dies out; the course of the Filipino no longer rests with the *abuelitas* and *lolas*, it is instead with the youth of the nation.

The fractured Filipino identity is not only a problem for schoolgirls like Rio, but also for government officials and agencies. In the chapter "Sleeping Beauty," a third-person narrator reports the views of Senator Avila, a politician and ardent human rights activist. Opposition to colonialism of the mind and identity fuel Avila's Rizal-like opinions, stating that:

> The latest national survey reports that eighty dialects and languages are spoken; we are a fragmented nation of loyal believers, divided by blood feuds and controlled by the Church. Holy wars are fought in combat zones of our awesome

[8] *Abuelita* is the Spanish word for 'Granny', while *Lola* is the Tagalog 'grandmother'.

> archipelago. Senator Avila declares that our torrid green world is threatened by its legacy of colonialism and the desire for revenge. (Hagedorn 100)

Like Rio's own reckoning with the various portions of her family's own Filipino identity, Avila recognizes that the fractured nature of the island nation and the hardships placed upon it by continual colonial oppression, and struggles to create something from it. Avila takes the factual evidence of a splintered Philippine nation and unifies it by showing the danger in seeking ultimate revenge for what colonialism did to them. For Avila, seeking revenge unifies a people on unstable ground because it seeks to nullify the past rather than move forward and beyond it. The formation of a cultural identity cannot be rooted in revenge because the soul of a people cannot be rooted in the annihilation of another. Identity built upon revenge is bound to be unsatisfying for a people because there is nothing substantial to fall back upon when revenge is either won, or more likely, or lost. Unlike Rizal's Simoun, whose quest for revenge ultimately fails and ends with his death, Avila mirrors the sentiments of Rizal himself, showing how futile attempts at revenge amount to almost nothing in the end but death and disappointment.

In the event of failure for complete independence, as with the Spain passing colonial power to America, the Filipino's preoccupation with annihilation is no longer with the other, but with themselves. Instead of fighting to create and maintain an identity, Avila suggests that constant oppression by colonial powers pacifies the Filipino. In this pacification, the will of the Filipinos lessens so much that they begin accepting assimilation as fate. Avila's essays on the Philippines show the downfalls of assimilation by failing to resist culturally:

> "We Pinoys suffer collectively from a cultural inferiority complex. We are doomed by our need for assimilation into the West and our own curious fatalism…" "Fatalism is fatal," begins another influential essay. He describes us

> as a complex nation of cynics, descendants of warring tribes which were baptized and colonized by Spaniards and Americans, as a nation betrayed and then united only by our hunger for glamour and our Hollywood dreams. (Hagedorn 101)

Avila's writings appear pessimistic because the resistance to colonial oppression seems all but lost amongst Filipinos. But his questioning this fatalistic approach to western assimilation by Filipinos inspires his readers to begin seeking something else. Avila's writings appear during a post-American, Filipino dictatorship (greatly alluded to as that of the Marcos Regime), showing that although America's colonialism is no longer a direct threat to the Philippines, the absorption of western culture threatens the efficacy of any Filipino identity, new or old. Avila's writings exist to call out this supremacy of western practices, showing that the fatal flaw in allowing the Americanization of the Philippines is the annihilation of Filipino culture, as it exists.

Hagedorn purposefully includes Avila as the mirror to many the assassinations of assumed subversives during Marcos's Regime. Hagedorn includes Avila's act of writing these influential essays to show that life in the Philippines does not need to focus on glorifying the glamour of Hollywood and first-world luxury in an attempt to bury colonial oppression. Instead, he knows Filipinos have their own unique cultural practices that deserve as much celebration as ones in the west. Avila recognizes what cultural practices are important to maintaining both Filipino culture, and in turn, Filipino identity, and making publically making that ideology known. He is quoted as publically saying, "Food is the center of our ritual celebrations, our baptisms, weddings, funerals. You can't describe a real *Pinoy* without listing what's most important to him—food, music, dancing, and love—most probably in that order," (Hagedorn 154). The ability to celebrate and perform cultural activities is its own form of colonial resistance because it no longer allows imperialism to be seen as fate; instead, it uplifts Filipino culture

alongside that of the west and creates the space for a new Filipino identity to flourish. Avila does not only point out the shortcomings of Filipinos, but instead acknowledges that the ability to maintain a culture and identity is still a part of the Philippines. His writings, sayings, and opinions reflect the splintered nature of the Philippines and of Filipino culture itself. He reckons with its weaknesses but attempts to move forward by recognizing cultural strengths. His hope for lifting the Philippines out of its current state of oppression labels Avila as a subversive leftist and a threat to the dictatorship, ultimately costing him his life. Senator Avila's assassination by the dictatorial government serves as a warning for the Filipinos inspired by his message; the turmoil will continue and your life will be at risk if you attempt to define yourself outside of the identifiers we set for you. Avila appears in *Dogeaters* for only about half of the novel, serving to show that any attempt to convince Filipinos to celebrate themselves will end quickly and without mourning. This act of oppression, steeped in respectability politics, goes not only for the general Filipino population, but goes all the way to the top.

After Avila's assassination, the First Lady (a caricature of Imelda Marcos) gives an interview to a foreign journalist. Her use of English shows that even those in power set the example of assimilation as a tool of oppression. The journalist understands that the continual life of the wellbeing of Filipino citizens is at stake during this post-assassination interview. The hunger of Filipinos in poverty, the misuse of government funds for the First Family's own luxury, and the gruesome deaths of many Filipinos by the Regime (Hagedorn 222) are consistency covered up to the global media. He sees the use of English by the First Lady as a distraction from the real issues:

> [The journalist] decides he will leave her sentences unedited when the interview is over. Her convoluted thinking intrigues him, her appropriations of American

> English. She is fond of words like "coterminous," which he will later have to look up in an unabridged dictionary. But he is aware that her romance with Western culture is not what is at stake. He fights the cynicism that threatens to engulf him whenever she speaks. He knows he must see the interview through to the end. (Hagedorn 221)

On the surface, the First Lady's determination to use English looks like an effort to prove to outsiders that the Philippines can and will adapt during a time of political turmoil. Her deliberate wordiness comes off as a distracting display of her competence in western language and culture, but shows political competency. Her language is a means to an end, to hide the guilt of the dictatorial government behind assimilation to western culture. By assimilating and ultimately pleasing western, foreign media, the First Lady is able to continue suppression the creation of a new Filipino landscape and identity. Her phony mourning, by labeling herself the victim in this tragedy (Hagedorn 223) and intricate distraction and thinking makes it clear that there is only place for pacified, non-thinking Filipinos on the islands. The journalist's cynicism is right: if he asks the right questions he may be able to unearth the oppression greater than that of just Avila's murder. Yet, he knows that this interview is not the right place for investigative journalism. This disapproval for Avila's ideology for a forward thinking new Filipino makes it clear that perhaps the only place this kind of identity can be created is outside of the island nation and on new soil.

At the close of the novel, Rio moves to America with her mother to avoid more political turmoil, but her continual longing for the Philippines shows that the only way forward is by considering the past. She reflects on her time in Manila and is haunted by the dream of what her life has become by embracing her Filipina identity in the country that once colonized her own:

> In my recurring dream, my brother and I inhabit the translucent bodies of nocturnal moths with curved, fragile wings. We are pale green, with luminous celadon eyes, fantastic and beautiful. In dream after dream, we are drawn to the same silent tableau: a mysterious light glowing from the window of a deserted, ramshackle house. The house is sometimes perched on a rocky abyss, or on a dangerous cliff overlooking a turbulent sea. The meaning is simple and clear, I think. Raul and I embrace our destiny, we fly in circles, we swoop and dive in effortless arcs against a barren sky, we flap and beat our wings in our futile attempts to reach what surely must be heaven. (Hagedorn 247).

Rio's dream is emblematic of the Filipino immigrant experience. The deserted house in her dreams is the Philippines, once beautiful but abandoned for its own good. Though the moths that represent the Filipino feel continually drawn to this house, they never land but continue their ascension, similar to Rizal's sentiments. Though there is doubt that they will ever get there, Rio imagines a heaven-like landscape in which this new Filipino identity can occur, even if that place is not the Philippines. Rio continually dreams of the moths as a way of dealing with the double consciousness of living on American soil after years of colonial oppression, ultimately understanding that the incorporation of America into her identity allows the wings of the moth to keep flapping. The Philippines and America are inextricably tied, not because of the former colonial investments, but to empower the Filipino-Americans that bridge the identity gap.

The last chapter titled *Kundiman*[9] is a bastardized version of the Lord's Prayer to the mother country, describing the struggle in loving a fragmented place with a fragmented identity. Rio comes to term with her Filipino-American immigrant identity in the same way the *Kundiman*

[9] A *Kundiman* is a Filipino love song or ballad; Rizal wrote many *kundimans* before his death

comes to term with loving and hating the place that bore it. Without a specific narrator, the *Kundiman* conveys how all languages, identities, and even Filipinos must reckon with their politically problematic homeland. "*I would curse you in Waray, Ilocano, Tagalog, Spanish, English, Portuguese, and Mandarin; I would curse you but I choose to love you instead. Amor, amas, amatis, amant, give us this day our daily bread*," (Hagedorn 250). This *Kundiman* lyric shows the linguistic history of immigration and colonialism that left the Philippines in a difficult situation. It is able to look back on all that has happened to the Philippines, knowing Filipinos should rebuke their homeland, but instead loves it as deeply as a mother provider. While the love is hesitant, the lyric flows with the possibility to add more to it, like the incorporation of all these languages and conjugations into this identity of experience. Each language (and country that implemented it) reflects a part of a new whole, one that allows each unique lived experience to incorporate itself in the new Filipino identity. Hagedorn closes her novel with this multifaceted identity, inextricably tied with love, rage, and the possibility for new growth. The *Kundiman* refuses to forget the past from which the Philippines struggled to emerge. "*Forgive us our sins but not theirs. […] Now and forever, world without end. Now and forever,"* (Hagedorn 251). The novel ends with this litany, continually looking forward in a global context based. The *Kundiman* asks for forgiveness for the Philippines that caused Rizal's death, but celebrates the eventual independence that would not be possible without his legacy.

Dogeaters creates a space for the new, unique Filipino identity in the twentieth-century immigrant experience. Like the Philippine nation in transition, so are the identities of many immigrants and first-generation Filipinos in America, reckoning with the possibility of growth and acceptance within an inherently multicultural identity. The post-colonial, post-modern structure also speaks to the back-and-forth nature of Filipino identity in a new land on new

terms. Filipino-Americans must reckon with their fractured identities in the same way the reader must piece together the novels plot. Hagedorn once described the Philippines as having a "crazy-quilt atmosphere" and "hybrid ambiance that occurs twenty-four hours a day" (Bonetti & Hagedorn), and though we may never change what already exists in that muti-paneled of the Filipino-American's identity, we can continue adding new squares of fabric to the whole, allowing the pattern of identity to continue changing by our own hand.

CONCLUSION: The Eventual Destination

My mother once told me that at her Catholic, Filipino boarding school, she was tasked with memorizing many of José Rizal's tenets. The one that stuck with her throughout the turmoil of the Marcos Regime, her subsequent immigration to America, and teaching her children about their Filipino heritage was this: "*Ang hindi marunong lumingon sa pinangalingan ay hindi makakarating sa paroroonan.*" This translates to, "He who does not know how to look back from where he came will never reach his destination." The formation of any Filipino identity is tasked with weaving together the fragmented history of oppression, assimilation, and integration with the possibility of a new education and celebration of a global Filipino culture. By reading the *Noli, El Fili* and *Dogeaters*, Filipinos around the world are able to educate themselves, to look back from where he or she came, and move forward to their eventual destination. Rizal's ultimate goal was to teach Filipinos how to create their own unique identity by becoming an independent island nation. Though Rizal never had chance to see what a post-Spanish colonial Philippines looked like, Hagedorn's *Dogeaters* allows Rizal's efforts to continue. Her post-colonial novel addresses the corruption of the Marcos Regime, while also showing that anti-

oppression subversives continued the fight for an independent "New Filipino" culture and identity.

The 2010 U.S. Census found that mixed-race populations grew faster than single-race populations, an increase of 32% in the span of a decade, compared to a 9.2% increase for single-races (United States Census Bureau). For those of Filipino heritage, a struggle to figure out how they identify has been persistent throughout the country's complicated history. With Rizal and Hagedorn, we ultimately find that Filipino culture is ready to accept and incorporate the history and heritage of all Filipino peoples, regardless of where they are born and how much of their race can be traced to the Philippines. Instead of denying those with a mélange of races incorporated in them a singular identity, the Philippines welcomes them with open arms. Both Rizal and Hagedorn allow new generations of Filipinos around the globe to discover their own identities within the pages of their novels. *Noli Me Tangere*, *El Filibusterismo*, and *Dogeaters* exist as celebrations and historical reminders of a rich Filipino culture that began over half of a millennium ago. These celebrations are what allow Filipinos to continue thriving and finding their identities in whatever place they call their own.

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