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Claims that "Luzon Indios" from the Spanish possessions of Las Islas Filipinas first landed in Morro Bay, California, in the sixteenth century and "Manilamen" settled near what is now New Orleans, Louisiana, in the eighteenth century are made to preempt or mimic the Puritan settlement of the United States. But they cannot overshadow the historical fact that Filipinos, unevenly hispanized Malays with dark brown skin, first entered the American consciousness with their colonial subjugation as a result of the Spanish-American War at the turn of the century.

After the defeat of the first Philippine Republic in the Filipino-American War of 1898–1902, this southeast Asian archipelago became a source of raw materials and reservoir of human capital. Peasants were recruited by the Hawaiian Sugar Planters Association as cheap contract labor when the Gentlemen's Agreement of 1908 cut off the Japanese supply. Feudal oppression and colonial brutality drove rural Filipinos from their homes while the lure of adventure and easy wealth blurred the hardships formerly endured by Mexican farmhands now restricted by the Immigration Act of 1924.

About 400 students (called *pensionados*) in U.S. government scholarship are often cited as the first "wave" of immigrants (1903–1924). In reality, the new rulers invested in their education so that they could return to serve as the middle stratum of loyal natives who, subordinated to landlords and compradors, would legitimize U.S. domination. From this segment would come the bureaucrat-capitalists of the Commonwealth and the postwar Republic. An ironic sequel to this initial moment of the Filipino diaspora is the influx of "brain drain" professionals (doctors, nurses, technicians) in the sixties and seventies who

now function as part of the "buffer race" displacing tensions between whites and blacks. Meanwhile, the political exiles and economic refugees during the Marcos dictatorship (1972–1978), like president Corazon Aquino, returned home to further reinforce Filipino subalternity and promote the massive export of Filipino "Overseas Contract Workers."

Over one hundred thousand "Pinoys/Pinays" and "Manongs" (affectionate terms of address) helped build the infrastructure of U.S. industrial capitalism as the major labor force in agribusiness in Hawaii and the West Coast. From 1907 to 1933, Filipino "nationals," neither citizens nor aliens, numbered 118, 436—seven out of ten percent of Hawaii plantation workers. Severely exploited and confined to squalid barracks, Filipinos joined with Japanese, Chinese, Korean, and other nationalities in a series of militant strikes in 1920 and 1924. One of these agitators, Pedro Calosa, was forced to return to the islands where he figured prominently in the Sakdal insurrection in 1935 against feudal exploitation and U.S. imperial rule.

As late as 1949, 600 workers from the independent Republic of the Philippines were imported by the sugar planters to break up strikes led by the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union. The 1990 census indicates that 168,682 Filipinos reside in Hawaii, most of them employed in the service industries (restaurants, hotels, tourist agencies, entertainment) as low-paid semi-skilled labor. The election of Benjamin Cayetano as governor of Hawaii offers a unique lesson: his success depends more on Japanese and white support than on the political mobilization of his own fractious ethnic constituency.

The theory of "migration waves" breaks down when sizeable numbers of Filipinos moved from Hawaii to California, Oregon and Washington according to the business cycle and local contingencies. Predominantly male (only one out of fourteen Filipinos were women), a majority of 30,000 Filipinos in bachelor communities circulated from farm to farm in seasonal rhythm. Others worked in the Alaskan canneries, as Pullman porters in Chicago, volunteers in the U.S. Navy, and more frequently as domestics—janitors, kitchen helpers, cooks, house cleaners, and hospital attendants. Stoop labor generally received \$2.50 a day for six days, half of what factory workers got in the late twenties. Without benevolent associations or credit cooperatives like other Asians, Filipinos participated with other groups in union organizing and other progressive, multicultural initiatives in the thirties and forties.

The Depression aggravated the racism toward Filipinos, already victimized by previous anti-"Oriental" legislation. Up to 1942, long-time residents were denied the right to own land, marry whites, or apply for welfare. Citizenship was still reserved for "white persons," as stipulated by a 1934 court ruling which upheld the 1790 naturalization law. Racist violence culminated in the 1930 riots at Exeter, Watsonville, and Stockton, California. These attacks were motivated by the belief that Filipinos lowered the standard of living while also enjoying "the society of white girls." Carlos Bulosan, the radical writer-activist, captured the saga of Filipino resistance from the thirties to the outbreak of World War II in his testimony, *America Is in the Heart*. Displacing the fixation on taxi-dance hall, bar, poolroom, and Manilatown, union organizer Philip Vera Cruz memorialized the evolution of the indeterminate sojourner to the pioneer militant of the United Farm Workers of America in the sixties.

Immigration was virtually halted by the Philippine Independence Act of 1934. Enormous Filipino sacrifices in Bataan and Corregidor fighting with their American comrades had a positive effect on public opinion. In 1942, Filipinos became eligible for naturalization. Thousands volunteered for military service. Due to unequal power relations between the two countries, however, about 70,000 veterans of World War II are still awaiting full benefits. The liberation of the Philippines from Japanese Occupation (1942-) restored the unjust social structure on top of the incalculable physical and spiritual damage wrought by the war. Neocolonial "Americanization" plus a continuation of "free trade" and privileges for a minority elite intensified the impoverishment of the peasantry, women, pettybourgeois entrepreneurs, government employees, and urban workers, hence the push to search for jobs in the United States and elsewhere.

From 1946 to 1965, 35,700 Filipinos entered as immigrants. Most of these families, residing in the big cities of Hawaii, California, Washington, New York and Chicago, earned their livelihood from industrial occupations and blue collar work. The post-1965 contingent of Filipinos decisively altered the character of the Filipino community: 85 percent were high school graduates, most were professionals and highly skilled personnel who fitted the demands of the U.S. economy. But because of race-biased licensing and hiring practices, they found themselves underemployed or marginalized. Family reunification fostered by new legislation contributed to the leap from a total of 343,000 in 1970 to more than a million in the early 90s. Today Filipinos number

nearly three million, with over 70,000 coming every year—the largest of the Asian Pacific Islander category.

The Filipino American community at present occupies a peculiar position in the socioeconomic landscape. Although highly educated, with professional, military or technical backgrounds, fluent in English and nestled in large relatively stable families (average households include 5.4 persons of which two at least are employed), Filipinos in general earn less than whites and all other Asian groups, except the Vietnamese. With women workers in the majority, Filipinos are invisible or absent in the prestigious managerial positions. Erroneously considered part of the mythical “model minority,” they are denied benefits under Affirmative Action and “equal opportunity” state laws. Labor market segmentation, cultural assimilation under U.S. neocolonial hegemony, and persistent institutional racism explain the inferior status of Filipinos.

Owing to the rise of anti-imperialist mass movements in the Philippines since the sixties and the recent outburst of nationalist insurgency, the Filipino community has undergone profound changes. While the “politics of identity” born in the Civil Rights struggles finds resonance among the informed middle sector, Filipino Americans as a whole tend to identify with mainstream society. Despite antagonisms arising from linguistic and regional diversity, Filipino youth are wrestling with the limitations of patriarchal authority, family togetherness, kinship, and filial piety. They are beginning to problematize and explore their commonality with other racialized communities (African Americans, Latinos, American Indians, Arab Americans, and others).

A reciprocal interaction between ethnic consciousness and historical determination characterizes the subjectivity or social behavior of Filipino Americans. Generalizations can only be haphazardly ventured here. While intermarriage continues, particularly worsened by the “mail-order bride” business, and while ethnic enclaves are being eroded amid residential segregation, Filipinos—both U.S. born and “foreign born”—are acquiring a more sophisticated sense of themselves as a historically specific nationality. In the last two decades, Filipino American intellectuals have begun to articulate a unique dissident sensibility based not on nostalgia, nativism, or ethnocentrism but on the long durable revolutionary tradition of the Filipino masses and the emancipatory projects of grassroots movements in the Philippines where their parents and relatives came from.

Claims that Filipino uniqueness springs from a cooperative family structure and egalitarian gender relation need to be questioned on the face of internal class conflicts, sexism, individualist competition, and color prejudice. It is impossible to divorce Filipinos from the problems of the larger class-divided society and from the effects of the global power conflicts configuring U.S.-Philippine relations. What needs more critical inquiry is not the supposed easy adaptation or integration of Filipinos in U.S. society, but the received consensus that Filipinos remain unassimilable if not recalcitrant elements. That is, they are not quite "oriental" nor hispanic. At best they appear as hybrid diasporic subjects (more than seven million of seventy million Filipinos are now scattered around the planet) with suspect loyalties. Filipinos, however, cannot be called the fashionable "transnationals" because of racialized, ascribed markers (physical appearance, accent, peculiar non-white folkways) that are needed to sustain and reproduce Eurocentric white supremacy. Ultimately, Filipino agency in the era of global capitalism depends not only on the vicissitudes of social transformation in the U.S. but, more crucially, on the fate of the struggle for autonomy and popular-democratic sovereignty in the homeland.

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