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# Connecting Home and the Diaspora through Hip Hop: Responding to Deep Foundation's "Children of the Sun" in Conceptualizing the Filipino Identity

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The study brings Deep Foundation's song "Children of the Sun" to Filipino students enrolled in Philippine Literature (2nd semester, SY 2014-2015) in Silliman University to examine how the Filipino Americans' constructions of home and identity are received from those within the nation's borders. Students responded to the song by watching the video and reading the song lyrics. In analyzing the listeners' perception of the song and their reflection about Filipino identity, the paper drew from theories about nationalism, postcolonial identity, the "in-between space," and diaspora. To set the background, the paper also discusses the role of Hip Hop among Filipino Americans in asserting their Filipino identity. The study reveals the following perceptions of the respondents about the song: 1) the overall message is to proclaim that the artists are Filipinos, 2) the artists view the Philippines as having a long history of struggle for independence, and 3) the respondents connect themselves to the country by identifying with heroes, popular culture icons, Filipino qualities and physical attributes as well as pointing out the problem of colonial mentality. Most respondents also agree with the song in taking pride of one's country and identity as well as recognize the problem of colonial mentality. The study found that both Filipinos and Filipino Americans celebrate and critically assess their identity. With these results, the study seeks to encourage more exploration on how to connect the diaspora and home—Filipino Americans and Filipinos—both in the fields of research and the Philippine literature classroom.

**Keywords:** national identity, diaspora, reception study

## INTRODUCTION

Diaspora studies have become so popular that terms like “hybridity” and “ambivalence” have become “chic and fashionable” in scholarly venues (San Juan 2000, 230). These conversations, however, only mirror the reality of migration for many people across the globe, whose experiences challenge national narratives of identity. In the Philippines, a recent publication *Migration and Revolution: Philippine Nationhood and Class Relations in a Globalized Age* by Filomeno Aguilar (2014) detailed how the mass movement of Filipinos to different countries not only the US has affected the nation and has revolutionized its foreign policy, economy, and culture (2-8). For his part, San Juan (231) based his scholarly work on the Filipino diaspora from a Marxist perspective, examining how the Philippines is linked to the US and other countries through colonialism and imperialism. In the field of research, Mendoza (2008) critically translated the indigenous theoretical movements (Sikolohiyang Pilipino, Pilipinolohiya, and Pantayong Pananaw) in her groundbreaking book *Between Homeland and the Diaspora* to provide framework for connecting both Filipino and Filipino American experiences. These publications have significantly provided the bigger picture, analyzing the political, economic, and cultural intersections of the Diaspora and Home.

As suggested in their abstracts, the studies of <sup>[1]</sup>Nelia Balgoa and <sup>[2]</sup>Karen Llagas are examples of specific research on how diasporic literary texts position themselves with the home country. In contrast, the study aims to take a more concrete path in connecting the diaspora and the nation not through literary analysis of texts but rather through the examination of student responses. The study aims to see how Filipinos from within the borders of the nation respond to the Filipino American’s expression of their Filipino identity, locating the responses of Filipino students as the site where the Filipino identity ceases to become an abstraction but a real, dynamic concept as mediated by the respondents. With this, not only does the study contribute to the knowledge of diaspora and identity studies, but also to the practical aspect of exploring the

1 Nelia Balgoa’s “Characterizing Philippine Migration Literature: Interrogating the ‘Filipinoness’ of the Themes of Exile, Home and Alienation” was one of the papers presented in the National Conference on Research in English Language and Literature at Misamis University on August 6-8, 2014.

2 Karen Llagas’ “Aswang Update: Notes on the Use of Philippine Folklore in Diasporic Poetry and Short Fiction to Liberate and/or Further Exoticize the Filipino” was one of the papers presented in An International Symposium in conjunction with the 40th Anniversary of the Center for Philippine Studies at the University of Hawai’i at Mānoa (UHM) on April 9-10, 2015.

concept of Filipino identity in the Philippine literature classroom and also in a general sense of connecting the narratives of Filipinos and Filipino Americans.

To find out the students' perceptions of the song "Children of the Sun" and their reflections about the Filipino identity, the study posed these specific research questions:

1. What are the students' perceptions of the song?
  - a. What do the students perceive as the message of the artists in the song?
  - b. For the students, how do the artists construct the idea of the Philippines as their home?
  - c. For the students, how do the artists connect themselves to home?
  
2. What are the students' reflections about their Filipino identity?
  - a. How do the students compare their own constructions of the Philippines as their homeland with the artists' ideas of the Philippines as their home? Is it similar or different?
  - b. How does the song affirm or change their idea of being Filipino?

Because the main focus of this research is the student responses, the study does not carry out an extensive reading of the song "Children of the Sun" textually or musically. In the same manner, the research does not delve into the biography of the songwriters in Deep Foundation; however, it contextualizes the song by citing the importance of Hip Hop expressions such as rap music among Filipino Americans. In this study, to refer to the song "Children of the Sun," both the terms <sup>[3]</sup>"Hip Hop" and "rap song" are used.

The students represent Filipinos from Home (the Philippines) and Deep Foundation as the songwriters from the Diaspora. Although these two groups are shaped by a myriad of factors (age, gender, religion, social standing, etc.), the study intends to connect the narratives of the Diaspora (who claim to be Filipinos) with the respondents (students who analyze the song as Filipinos) and investigate what emerges from this interaction.

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3 Although Hip Hop is associated with rap music, according to the Hip Hop icon Afrika Bambaataa on daveyd.com, Hip Hop culture encompasses not only rap music but also graffiti, breakdance, djaying, and fashion.

However, a caveat is in place: I present this study not so much as to propose an all-encompassing theory of the nation and the diaspora but as to describe a construct of the Filipino that emerges from the particular moment of student responding toward the song. Thus, the study generally aims to find out how the concepts of home and identity from the diasporic margins are received by those from the nation-state. The responses then become the site of interaction of Filipinos and Filipino Americans which will in the future pave the way for more studies about the Filipino identity and enrich such application in literary pedagogy.

## **RELATED LITERATURE AND STUDIES**

### **Nation: Imagined Community, In-between spaces, and Postcolonial Experience**

The study which probes the notion of Filipino identity, a very complicated concept in itself, has to explore the idea of how nations came to be. Benedict Anderson (1991, 12) defined nationalism as “imagined communities” and departed from Gellner who claimed that nationalism is merely an ‘invention.’ For Anderson it is not about authenticity or falsity, but as to how communities—whether small or big—imagine themselves. The nation, although an abstraction, presents an image of unity among individuals, who, even when they do not see each other or will never meet, feel an affinity, “a deep, horizontal comradeship (16)” with each other. This imagined community perceives itself as limited because the nation has boundaries which separate itself from other nations but at the same time the nation desires to be free and sovereign (16). As an imagined community, the Filipino nation is thus held together by an image of communion and solidarity. Since the nation is “a cultural artifact” cultural roots are necessary in analyzing national identity (Anderson, 16).

These cultural roots, for instance, explain why people who belong to the same nation lay their lives—to kill or die—for their country. Anderson (1991, 129) explained: “...nations inspire love, and often profoundly self-sacrificing love.” Anderson further identified language—most especially poetry and songs—as one very important tie that binds people of the nation to their past and to their present situation (132). The nation appears then as a powerful totalizing unit. However, Bhabha (1994, 215) challenged the

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homogenizing and essentializing power of communities or nations. In “Dissemination” (one of the essays in his book *Location of Culture*), he drew from various scholars like Fanon and Kristeva in pointing out that the nation is a dynamic, on-going process, one which is “temporal.” Fanon, for instance, stated how easily it is for subordinate people to celebrate the past—their cultural traditions and histories—or to affix and essentialize their present time. For Fanon the people dwell in the ‘zone of occult instability.’ From this, the national culture is articulated not as an idealized static form but ‘a dialectic of various temporalities’ (Fanon, as cited in Bhaba, 216).

Mentioning a work by a performance artist who resided on the Mexico/US border, Bhabha (1994, 7) illustrated how the ‘in-between space’ is a site of “intervention” when the past is recalled not only for some “aesthetic” or “social cause” but becomes “part of the necessity, not the nostalgia of the living.” Native intellectuals, according to Fanon (1963, 210), turn towards the past which has been destroyed by colonialism to give back its value and dignity, and in the process “rehabilitate” the nation and make it move forward into the future. However, glorifying the past culture as a way to exist against the West is not enough. Authentic work of art involves acknowledging that “the truths of the nation are in the first place its realities” (225). Native intellectuals who wish to engage with the people in the decolonization process must take part in the struggle, realizing that the “national culture is not a folklore, nor an abstract populism that believes it can discover the people’s true nature.... A national culture in underdeveloped countries should therefore take its place at the very heart of the struggle for freedom which these countries are carrying on” (Fanon 1963, 233).

In the chapter “The Pitfalls of National Consciousness” from *The Wretched of the Earth*, Fanon (1963) discussed the fate of newly independent nations by using postcolonial experiences of African nations as examples. For a nation to be sovereign and free from the remnants of colonization and the self-serving national bourgeoisie, the concept of the nation should be made real and accessible to the people: “To educate the masses politically is to make the totality of the nation a reality to each citizen (200).”

Critiques like these enliven the discourse of national identity because they question the political, historical, literary signs (the homogenous characteristics) that define the people as a static unit. Bhabha (1994, 1-2) further posed the question and articulation of cultural identities in the “beyond” which is marked with a sense of ambivalence and distortion but

also which leads to boundaries of other voices. Confronted with the diaspora and forced migration, the Filipino people have to confront such realities as a postcolonized nation in conceptualizing the Filipino identity.

However, in critically translating indigenous theories that developed in the Philippines to provide a way for “cross cultural engagements” of Filipino and Filipino American scholars, Mendoza (2006) posited that dwelling in the ‘in-between spaces’ and ambivalences can be detrimental in articulating a national discourse as it only perpetuates neocolonialism, particularly when these terms are “crassly appropriated.” She made this statement in her discussion of the “programmatically trilogy of *Sikolohiyang Pilipino*, *Pantayong Pananaw*, and *Pilipinolohiya*,” (15) indigenous movements that seek to reclaim psychology, history, and social sciences from dominant Western scholars and their corresponding theories that appear irrelevant and inappropriate in the Filipino context. Mendoza, who herself is familiar with negotiating the in-between space of home and the diaspora, aimed to position herself as a “critical translator” of these indigenous theories with reference to poststructuralist critique. Interestingly, Mendoza has done what Guillermo (2003) has suggested in his critique of *Pantayong Pananaw*: make the theory more accessible and inclusive. According to Guillermo, having “communication and translation protocols” in place will make dialogue and interaction with more researchers possible.

In essence, indigenization is an act of resistance, of Filipinos defining themselves, “within the Filipino’s struggle for meaning, cultural survival, and nationhood (210).” These indigenous theories required an “indigenization from within” by utilizing “the indigenous culture, as at once, the starting point, source and basis of concepts, methods and theories” (55). Using the Filipino language, proponents and advocates of these indigenous movements seek to address the Great Divide which alienates the masses from the language of the elites and the ruling class. However, these theories have also been attacked as essentializing the Filipino experience. *Pantayong Pananaw*, for instance, developed by Zeus Salazar and his colleagues, worked towards a “national discourse” that aims to promote ‘totality’ (and not a totalized identity) through “closed circuit interaction” of the “*tayo*” (exclusive to Filipinos only) who would articulate “shared understanding of the nation’s history that can give force and direction to a collective vision of the future” which is different from the ‘nation’ created by the elites and the ruling class (91-94).

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Indigenous theories offer an unequivocal stance about the nation that to others appear limiting and exclusionary. However, these are genuine and necessary responses of a people towards liberation of thought that would precede all physical and tangible liberation. It might also seem contradictory that I present these indigenous movements through Mendoza, someone who--she herself admits--dwells in the in-between space. Hybridity becomes relevant because it gives us a flexibility to articulate these "fixed" codes of identity so these indigenous theories can be made available for the diaspora. Although it is necessary to define ourselves and to identify the construct which emerges from this very definition, we could no longer rest in the static definition of the nation when our realities include migration and the diaspora. Mendoza wrote that in the Philippines, indigenous theorizing is more focused on more pressing issues rather than include the Filipino American diaspora, to which Tabios responded in her personal communication: '[Is] not the diaspora part of the Filipino history' (231). This proves that it is due time to include Filipino Americans in this quest for nationhood.

To articulate a national discourse which includes those of the diaspora might not be welcomed by others who have a straightforward idea of the nation. Some of these Filipino Americans do not speak the Filipino language. They are not born here or raised in the country. It is fitting thus to mention Roxas-Tope (1998, 208) who argued that although the construction of an essential and totalized identity may seem necessary for a nation's stability, "cultural purity is a delusion" (208). In her book *Unframing Nationalism*, the author analyzed postcolonial texts from Southeast Asian countries Malaysia, the Philippines, and Singapore, and identified how migration and diasporic movements challenge this desire for national homogeneity. For instance, analyzing postcolonial texts written in English, the author claimed that "English has been and can be a language of nationalism." (81) In fact, people inhabit English by modifying it according to their own localized experience (36). Indeed, the area of language is one that can arouse deep sentiments. Insistence of using Filipino (or Tagalog as in the case of the indigenous movements) to craft a national discourse alienate participants who do not speak Filipino. This is the consequence of using specific parameters in defining the nation. With the assumption that no identity is complete, national identity or nationalism then is a process or a construct borne out of difference and contradictions (Roxas-Tope, 1998, 217).

This study, which connects Home and nation as a site to probe the

shared Filipino identity, acknowledges the necessity of hybridity. Although at once discomforting and uncertain, this point of “ambivalence” can lead to answer the question, posed by Stuart Hall, ‘what we have become.’ (225)

## **Diaspora and Home**

Stuart Hall (1991, 223-225) presented two frameworks of conceptualizing cultural identity in analyzing the formation of identity from the diasporic margins. First is the perception of cultural identity fixed on ‘oneness’ grounded on stable, fixed “cultural codes.” Hall expounded that this is the essence of Caribbean or black experience that the diaspora will have to rediscover through representations in films. The second framework is more “unsettling” and dynamic because it connotes “constant transformation,” which examines the question ‘what we have become’ rather than ‘what we really are.’ According to Hall, the second definition of identity suggests that identity is “not a fixed essence,” thus it demystifies the point of origin as a physical place where a return is possible (231-232).

For the Filipino diasporic subjects, according to E. San Juan Jr. (2000), the point of return is postponed until there is economic security and until “there is a Filipino nation they can identify with.” Critically assessing the colonial and imperial relationship between the Philippines and the U.S.A., San Juan declared that the Filipino nation is not a national autonomy. Because of this, the diasporic subjects desires to return to “a village, town, or kinship network” instead of a nation and associates the homeland with childhood memories, histories, traditions, customs, popular culture icons, among others. However, San Juan emphasized that the future of Filipinos in the age of “global capitalism” lies in the struggle for autonomy in the Philippines. Thus, we can see how San Juan espoused a need for collaboration of Filipinos from the U.S and the Philippines towards freedom in the homeland. Recognizing political-economic roots of the Filipino diaspora, San Juan underscored the necessity of the political sovereignty of the homeland as a space where the diaspora can finally return to (236-237).

In Chapter 5 of *Migration and Revolution*, Aguilar (2014) problematized the concept of transnation, the connection between migrants (both in the US and Southeast Asian countries) and their homeland, the Philippines (174). In this chapter, Aguilar further delved into the concept of transnationalism among second generation Filipino Americans in the

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U.S. Recovering their identities as Filipinos through education has become a process of ‘decolonization’ for some Filipino Americans who have moved to the US with their families as young children; learning about their parents’ national identity and claiming to be Filipinos have brought them a sense of “healing” from the “wounds of dislocation” (Strobel as cited by Aguilar 185). This second generation has increasingly identified themselves as Filipinos or Filipino Americans even when they barely or do not speak any Filipino language and know little about the Philippines (Espiritu and Wolf as cited by Aguilar, 191), often expressing their national identity through popular images of Filipino food or cultural symbols. From this, Aguilar described the position of transnationalism by second-generation Filipino Americans as having “consciously cultivate[d] an ethnic identity in order to fit into the multicultural United States. The crafting of difference is in pursuit of sameness.” For Aguilar, ‘decolonization’ is not a mere attempt to liberate the Philippines or to belong to it but “...quite instrumentally, it involves finding the postcolonial country in one’s heart in order to claim some legitimate space in the country where one’s parents have settled (192).”

Although Aguilar critically examined this desire of second-generation Filipino Americans to claim inclusion to the homeland, he did not dismiss them entirely: “They are extensions of the nation who must be welcomed but must also be inspected.” In fact, this transnationalism becomes springboard to interrogate the Filipino identity as he further posed the questions which also reverberate in this paper: “Who is the Filipino? “What does Filipinoness mean?” (198). This transnationalism embodied by Filipino Americans as way to connect to the homeland and/or find a place in the multicultural US present the challenge of setting the goal for a “deterioralized but incorporative nation.” And yet, this enduring question of national identity indicates that as far as the parental homeland is concerned the nation exists above any “discursive transnation.”

### **Hip hop as Political/Personal Expression: Resistance vs Assimilation**

In the United States, Hip Hop has become a platform for Filipino Americans to assert their political and personal experiences. Although Hip Hop evolved from the African American diasporic communities in New York, Jeff Chang wrote in the foreword to *Empire of Funk: Hip Hop and Representation*

in *Filipina/o America* (2014) that Hip Hop "...has always been open to the presence of multiculturalism and polyculturalism" (xiii). Through a compilation of personal accounts and stories, rap songs/poetry, photography, conversations and dialogue, and essays, the book celebrates, chronicles, and critically analyzes the role of Filipino Americans in Hip Hop as well as the role of Hip Hop in the experiences of Filipino Americans.

Bischoff (2014, 250) affirmed the relevance of Hip Hop as "a tool to inspire Filipino American ethnic identity development, a deeper sense of critical consciousness, and ultimately resistance..." These Hip Hop artists, based on Bischoff's interview, are politically aware of the economic and cultural pressures of assimilating and desiring to be included to the dominant American culture. However, they use their knowledge about the historical and political struggles of Filipinos in their resistance against assimilation.

To understand such pressures of assimilation vis-à-vis resistance, it is important to cite David and Okazaki's argument towards a more rigorous assessment of quantifying Colonial Mentality to address the psychological problems of Filipino Americans (2014, 2). Citing various scholarly work on the psychological effects of colonization including Fanon's four phases of colonization, which begins with forced entry by a foreign group and ends with institutionalization of oppression in the colonized country, alongside a brief primer on Philippine history, the authors revealed how CM has made Filipino Americans inferior about their selves, bodies, and culture as well as discriminate "less Americanized Filipinos" and "tolerate oppression" (8). For instance, colonial mentality has also resulted to a divide among Filipino Americans, with more Americanized Filipino Americans discriminating against those who are more Filipinos in their behavior and language tagging them as "FOBs" or fresh-off-the-boats (10).

Filipino Americans, thus, grapple with these issues among themselves, negotiating the need to find a place within their host country and connect with each other in the diaspora based on their ethnic identity. However, the narratives of Hip Hop artists in *Empire of Funk* (2014) show how Hip Hop becomes a tool for "decolonization" where Filipino Americans proclaim their Filipino identity. In this paper, Hip Hop—through "Children of the Sun"—is used as a space where Filipino students learn about the stories of Filipino Americans as well as reflect about their own identities as Filipinos.

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## Reader's Response as "in-between space"

This study locates the site of the "in-between space" not only in the song "Children of the Sun" but also in the interaction of the respondents and the song. In crediting both the readers and the text as the site of meaning, Iser (1972), for instance, wrote that the text comes to life when it is realized by the reader. The "convergence of text and reader" (279) is brought about by the experience of the reader being "entangled" in the text, formulating expectations, asking questions, and making decisions in the reading process to make sense of the text to form "new experiences" (295). To further describe the experience of a reader in identifying with a character, Iser (1972) cited Poulet who described the individual's thought process in reading a text. However, Iser wished to develop Poulet's stance differently in saying that while the individual articulates the thoughts of the characters in the literary text, the real self does not completely disappear. Thus, the reading process constitutes an interaction of the "alien 'me'" and the "real, virtual 'me,'" with the real reader adjusting itself to the 'alien' aspect of himself/herself which articulates the thoughts of another character. This process yields a discovery of the "unformulated" in the text and about ourselves. Although not a literary text in the sense of the word that Iser was using, i.e., story, novel, play, etc., the rap song in this study is a collection of personal narratives that is rendered into rhythm. With this, the readers from the nation have to accommodate the artists' thoughts which would then shape their 'real selves' as they make realizations about themselves as Filipinos vis-à-vis the artists in the diaspora.

## METHOD

The study centers on the song "Children of the Sun" by the New York-based rap group Deep Foundation. The song is part of their debut album "The First Draft" released in 2008. The song "Children of the Sun" was uploaded on YouTube by one of the group's members ILL Poe in 2009. Although Deep Foundation today is comprised of three main members CeeJay, ILL Poe, and Mugshot, they were joined by rappers/emcees Hydroponikz, Nomi, Koba, Proseed, Kiwi, and Incite for "Children of the Sun." All of these artists have lived in the US for "majority of their lives" (Cee Jay, personal communication).

I chose the song for three main reasons. I came across the song when it was introduced in English 846 AK (a class offered by the Kababayan Learning Community<sup>[4]</sup>) to springboard the discussion on cultural identity. Also, out of all the songs covered in the said class, "Children of the Sun" primarily and boldly asserts the message of Filipino identity, with the opening lines spelling out "F-I- L-I-P-I-N-O". Thirdly, the songs show an explicit attempt to connect to the Philippines, having lines from Heber Bartolome's "Tayo'y Mga Pinoy" interspersed throughout the song and showing a clip of the said artist singing in the video. For these reasons, I wanted to bring the song from an English class in America of mostly Filipino American students to my own classroom of Filipino students in the Philippines.

The research respondents come from two Literature 21 (Literatures of the Philippines) sections in the second semester of School Year 2014-2015. These students, who come from different colleges (Business, Medical Technology, Education, Agriculture, etc.), are at least in their second year level in college. Their age ranged from 18 to 30. The song is discussed in class with generally aims to involve students in a critical and thorough examination of Philippine writings. Other themes include the self, relationships, society, gender, and transcendence. It was announced in class that they would listen to a rap song as a supplement or a spin-off activity to our discussion of the story *Flip Gothic* by Cecille Manguerra Brainard which explores the interaction of home and the diaspora in the search for identity when a young Filipino American girl born and raised in the US was sent to the Philippines. There had been no prior reference to political issues regarding migration; only those topics relevant to the text, such as cultural identity in the case of *Flip Gothic*, are part of the class discussion. Before participating in the activity, the students were informed that their answers would be used in a research project that I am undertaking and that they would be informed through our Facebook page if and when the paper would be published.

On the day of the activity, the questions were written on the board and read out aloud in class in case there were any clarifications:

1. What do the artists tell the listeners about who they are?
2. How do the artists construct the idea of the Philippines as their homeland?

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4 Kababayan Learning Community is a "transfer and support group" which focuses on Filipino and Filipino American cultural experience at Skyline College in San Bruno, California. As a Fulbright Foreign Language Teaching Assistant from August 2013-April 2014, I was assigned at KLC to assist in their programs.

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3. In the song, how do the artists connect themselves to the Philippines?
4. How is your perception of the Philippines as your home different from or similar to the artists' idea of home?
5. How does listening to the song (and reading the lyrics) change or affirm your perception of being Filipino?

The study situates the song as the Diaspora and the students as those from Home or the Philippines. The first three questions fall under the students' perception of the message of the song: who the artists are and how these artists construct the Philippines and connect themselves to the country. The last two questions address the students' reflections on the song as they compare their own ideas of home and the Filipino identity with those in the song.

To gather the data for the study, the students then watched the music video "Children of the Sun" from YouTube and read the lyrics of the song while writing their answers on a piece of paper. A copy of the song lyrics from English 846 class at Skyline College was used for the activity, but this time it was annotated and a glossary was provided to define important terms in the song which did not have enough context for students to grasp their meaning. After one hour, the papers were collected. A brief discussion followed with a few students sharing their responses to class. Synthesizing the discussion, I then reiterated the purpose of the activity: to discover further what the Filipino identity means to these Filipino American hip hop artists and how they as Filipino students respond to these messages.

The study is both quantitative and qualitative. Firstly, the study read the responses of the students and identified those that clearly addressed the question. From these responses, the most repeated phrases in their answers are counted. Furthermore, the study draws from the students' responses, quoting from them, to further trace how the students perceive song and how the song has made them reflect about their own concept of the Filipino identity.

## ANALYSIS

### *Perceiving the message, connections, and constructions*

#### **"F-I-L-I-P-I-N-O"**

Out of the 65 respondents in the study, 57 of them answered that the artists' message of the song is to claim that they are Filipinos. Forty-six (46) out of the 57 further specified that the artists are "proud" to be Filipinos and quoted lines from the songs that display their pride toward the Filipino heritage. For instance, 39 respondents use subordinating conjunctions such as "although," "despite," "even if," "but," "no matter" to express that although the artists are not born in the Philippines and are raised in a different country, they proclaim that they are still Filipinos. The line 'I hardly speak Visayan, my Tagalog's even worse/ But I represent the island like I'm down to die for turf' is quoted by 14 respondents to further explain their point that even though the artists don't speak any Filipino language identify as Filipinos. Furthermore, respondents also cited that although these artists are far away from the country, they trace their "roots" to the Philippines. Fifteen respondents also quoted the line 'My swagger be New York, but my blood was brewed in QC to explain that although they are from America they do not forget their homeland. Quoting these two lines from the song, the students acknowledge the diasporic background of the artists—that they are not fluent in any Filipino language and are born/raised outside the country, "not full blooded" or "American citizens" (Respondent 22).

According to Benedict Anderson (1991, 132), cultural artifacts bind the nation together, and one such powerful element is language. In responding to "Children of the Sun," the students listen to artists who do not speak any Filipino language but are deeply connected to the Philippines. This lend evidence to Roxas-Tope's (1998) arguments that language can be a medium of nationalist ideals, and in such case English, which is spoken by Filipino Americans who do not know any Filipino language. Although the country is geographically distant from the artists, they are willing to represent it and even die for the country. Even though the artists speak a different language and are away from the country they identified as home, most students were able to recognize that the message of the song was to proclaim they are Filipinos and they belong to the nation.

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## “Warriors”

Students also responded to the song by finding out how the artists construct the Philippines as their homeland. Thirty five (35) respondents identified that the artists perceive the country to have had a long history of struggle—“endless and countless fights” (Respondent 16), “different hardships” (Respondent 59), “a lot of suffering” (Respondent 11) — against different colonizers to attain freedom and independence. Respondents pointed that the song highlights our ancestors, heroes, and various historical figures that “[defended] the homeland” (Respondent 23). Respondent 39 explained that “the artists... [visualized] their homeland as the land of the warrior”; Respondent 9 said that the artists view it as a “brave nation.” Similarly, Respondent 53 emphasized that the artists saw the Philippines as “home of warriors, great ancestors,” because although the country is “colonized” it still “stands firmly.” Moreover, 14 respondents mentioned that the artists connect themselves to the Philippines by studying about the country’s history. Respondents 8, 50, 53, and 55 mentioned that studying history and “sharing what they have learned about history” (Respondent 49) provide a link for the artists to the country. They also quoted the lines from the song: ‘I study People Power and what it really means,’ and “Read Amado Guerrero’s book about the Philippines.’ Respondent 30 also mentioned that the artists are “bringing back history” as a source of “inspiration” and pride.

Bhabha (1994, 7) has mentioned how going back to the past can serve as means for “intervention” as it not only connotes a sense of “nostalgia” but “necessity.” We see from these responses that students identified how history is important for these the Filipino American artists from beyond the nation’s border because it is a source of pride and connection to the homeland. As noted by Bischoff (2014, 250), even though Filipino Hip Hop artists are pressured to assimilate into the dominant White culture, they are still motivated to learn more about “Filipino cultural symbols, language, and lineage.” Furthermore, they use their knowledge of history not only to merely remember the past but also to provide a framework for resisting oppressive forces and proclaiming their Filipino identity.

Twenty-four (24) respondents cited that being proud as Filipinos and taking pride of the culture, popular personalities, heroes, and the Filipino’s hardworking attitude is a way for the artists to connect to the country. Six respondents (22, 28, 7, 29, 42, and 59) also took note that the artists

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identified with Filipino attributes. This observation is exemplified in the following statements: "The artists connect themselves to the Philippines as having the same strong Filipino Spirit that our ancestors had...They have the will power like our Bayani, leaders, professionals who strive to do their best not to be easily discriminated" (Respondent 28). Six Respondents also answered that the artists connected themselves to the Philippines with their appearance as having "brown, sun-kissed skin" (Respondent 25) and "flat nose" (Respondent 18). Respondent 22 explained further: "We all should not dream about becoming white because being brown is who we are and we should be proud of it."

Five respondents (52, 12, 55, 32, and 63) pointed out that the artists were able to connect to the homeland by citing the problem on colonial mentality. Respondent 32 explained: "I think the artists were able to connect themselves by relating to the natives of the country. Saying that they too experienced the insecure culture mentality..." Respondent 55 also mentioned the role of the artists in raising the Filipino people's critical consciousness about their culture: "They connect themselves unveiling the naked truths of our country. They remind the citizens that we are slowly erasing our culture. They help the Filipinos open their eyes to see [what is] happening in our country." According to David and Okazaki (2006) colonial mentality—the feeling of inferiority to the dominant White culture—poses negative effects to the Filipino American psyche. Because these artists have experienced this "insecure culture mentality" (according to one respondent), they can connect with Filipinos in the Philippines and remind them about the reality and truth of colonial mentality.

It is noteworthy to point out that some students recognize the artists' role in bringing the truth about colonial mentality. Respondent 55, for instance, acknowledged the artists' role in "unveiling truths" in the country. Respondent 16, for instance, saw the artists themselves as freedom fighters: "The artists introduced themselves as fighters or warriors...Although they have not been able to live in the Philippines for many years, their eagerness to promote freedom in the Philippines is felt...." In the "in-between-space" (Bhabha, 1994) of listening and responding to the song "Children of the Sun"—a platform for Filipino Americans to assert their identities as Filipinos and reconnect themselves to the country they identify as a place where they belong—listeners are reminded of the colonial past and the postcolonial reality of the country.

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## Reflecting about the Filipino Identity

### *Glorious Past, Brown Pride vs White Dreams, Whitening Soap*

Seventeen (17) respondents reflected that their perceptions about the Philippines is similar to the artists because like them, they are also proud to be Filipinos. These respondents agreed with the song that the sacrifice of our heroes and the hardworking qualities of Filipinos are a source of pride. In a rather impassioned explanation, Respondent 33 remarked: "I will still be proud of being a Filipino. Even if the western people would insult my culture and my color I would rather [bear] their insults than change my true self and erase my culture. I am proud that the blood of heroes runs into my veins." In listening to the song, students agreed with the artists in taking pride of the country.

Anderson (1991, 129) posited that nationalism inspires "self-sacrificing love." We can see how the artists from beyond the diaspora who have expressed this song in the context of Hip Hop artists asserting their identities in resisting assimilation (Bischoff, 2014) inspire love of country among the respondents. Interestingly, these respondents also have placed themselves in the songwriters' shoes in holding firm to their identity vis-à-vis "insults" against their culture and features.

Aside from celebrating Filipino qualities and history, the respondents also agreed that colonial mentality is a problem in the country. Interestingly, 17 respondents mentioned the problem of colonial mentality or of desiring to be "white," "Americans," or "westernized"; they also reflected about their personal experiences in wishing to be "white" or have "foreign blood." Furthermore, two respondents reflected about the effects of colonization on Filipinos. Respondent 7 stated that "...[al]though the colonizing powers have left, [its] people still have the mentality of those colonizing powers and cannot embrace fully our culture now that we are free to." Respondent 16 critically assessed the vestiges of the colonial power and their effect towards Filipinos' national consciousness:

I couldn't see Philippines as free and independent. Like what they perceive, I still think that we are wrapped around the neck by the Americans because of how strong they influence us through the way we talk and our way of living. We have not shaped ourselves as Filipinos

and haven't embraced yet what it means being a Filipino, physically and emotionally.

San Juan (2000) argued that the Philippines is not autonomous, hence Filipinos should be united in this quest for national liberation. The artists of the song "Children of the Sun" were aware of the struggle for independence in the home country. Listening to the song, respondents acknowledged that "colonial mentality" prevents Filipinos from embracing "what it means to be Filipino." What does it mean to be Filipino? For some respondents, being Filipino means possessing physical attributes such as having brown skin and a flat nose. With these responses, the song seems to rely on the first framework of identity—according to Hall (1991)—which emphasizes on "cultural codes" such as skin color, focusing on answering the question 'what we really are.' This would lead to the danger of essentializing the Filipino as having brown skin. However, "this essence" somehow provides a framework for providing a critique against colonial mentality and a springboard to celebrate one's identity vis-à-vis the dominant western culture.

Interestingly, there were only two respondents who disagreed with the artists' portrayal of the Philippines. Respondent 2 felt that the artists are "adoring the idea of 'Philippines' too well" and that they portray it "as the best country with the greatest history." Even though some respondents took pride with the hardworking nature of Filipinos proclaimed in the song, Respondent 45 observed that most of the Filipinos are unemployed even though they are "hardworking." These responses, albeit only a few, suggest that the songwriters' image of the Philippines is very idealistic. Subscribing to these ideas or symbols about the Filipino identity is important for Filipino Americans as they forged an identity in a multicultural society like the United States (Aguilar, 2014). Thus, there is a danger for romanticizing and valorizing the Philippines among the diaspora as they try to negotiate their identities. The interaction of the song and respondents proves the rich space to challenge preconceived ideas about the nation, from the standpoint of those inside and outside the country.

### **Pride vs. Inferiority**

Ten respondents revealed that the song affirmed their idea that being Filipino is something to be proud of. As for respondent 28, the song affirmed her

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idea of Filipino because a “true Filipino always looks back from where he or she came from and never forget that fact...Being a true Filipino is also being proud of who they are and where they come from.” To which she quoted lines from the song, ‘I take pride in the country where I came from... but never fear, just ‘cause I’m livin’ here, The pride for my people will never disappear.’ Respondent 22 felt glad that “even the Filipino-Americans see or view the Filipinos the same way as I do.” Respondent 18 wrote that the song affirmed her idea of being a Filipino because “it is all about being proud” and “not all about being a ‘perfect’ Filipino, as in, speaking the mother tongue, following old traditions, etc.” Meanwhile 8 respondents felt that the song affirmed their idea that Filipinos are slowly losing their culture because of colonial mentality. Respondent 41, for example, wrote that the song affirmed “[his] idea that some of us [are ashamed] of our real identity and shows our colonial mentality. Respondent 2 agreed that “our notion of physical beauty must be changed” and went on to say “I will join them [the artists] as they disagree to what has been imposed.” Four respondents talked about how the song changed their idea of being Filipino. Respondent 4 admitted that the song “changes [him] from just being [apathetic] or ‘baliwala’ to be proud of being Filipino.” Respondent 15 echoed this point when she wrote:

“The...song really has a big impact to me because I was not really that proud of being a Filipino but when I’ve read the lyrics, knowing that the writers are not purely Filipinos but when I’ve read the lyrics, it is so shameful...Some of them aren’t even living here but they [are] able to show how proud they are [even if] a little portion of their blood is Filipino. I am also thankful because they were able to make this song and was able to change my perception of the Philippines.”

## Eye-Opener

Eighteen respondents, on the other hand, talked about the song’s effect on them, mentioning that the song made them realize the importance of love the country (even more) or to be proud in being Filipino. Respondent 8 also reflected about colonial mentality and skin color: “I’ve always wanted to have white skin but this song reminds me to take pride of my skin color because it represents my country and my culture.... I always thought that the more white you are, the more beautiful you are, but no. This song reminds

us to change that mindset of ours.” Respondent 7 wrote that she has always wanted to go out of the country but listening to the song, she has not only realized why one should take pride in being Filipino; she was resolved to stop trying to get away and remove myself from the culture that I have grown up with.” Respondent 24 also compared herself to the artists who were very “patriotic,” unlike her who “has always wanted to go out of the country and could barely sing the national anthem “Lupang Hinirang.” She felt “ashamed,” but described the artists as “passionate which made them so inspiring for those people like [her] who almost forgot the essence of [her] nationality.” The song was an “eye-opener” for her to be proud of her identity as Filipino “because there are still Filipinos out there away from the country who really wanted to be here in the Philippines but they can’t, so they’re making so much effort to at least connect with the country through a song.”

The respondents analyzed their attitude towards their country and the Filipino identity by comparing it with those in the song. Responding to the message of the diaspora who are from beyond the center (Bhabha, 1994), students felt that pride of one’s country is what matters and not about being a ‘pure’ or ‘perfect’ Filipino. The song challenged the essential characteristics that define the nation (speaking the native language, following cultural traditions, etc.) The song moved them to admit how colonial mentality made them feel inferior, and to take pride in one’s identity as Filipino.

## CONCLUSION

### **Pinoy Pride: Personal Connection to the Nation**

Whether done so to conform to the multicultural U.S. (Aguilar, 2014), the song was nonetheless an indictment against colonial mentality and a declaration of Filipino pride. Listening to the song and reading the lyrics, respondents inhabited the thoughts and narratives of the songwriters while they reflected about their own Filipino identity. According to Iser (1979), this process leads to a discovery about the text and oneself. Listening to the song and reading the lyrics enabled respondents to relate an abstract concept such as nationalism into their own lives. For instance, responding to the artists who narrated their story from the diaspora and claimed to be Filipinos, students felt that language and geography do not define who we really are as Filipinos. What matters most, for instance, is one’s pride towards

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his or her culture and heritage. But what have we become then as Filipinos? It appears that Pinoy Pride has become a marker of identity, and it emerged in this study as a concept that hinted toward defining ‘who the Filipino is.’

“Pinoy pride” seemed to mediate between the questions: “Who we really are?” and “What have we become?” Used in popular culture and mass media, Pinoy Pride indicates Filipino triumphalism and exceptionalism. One blog article specifically noted how Pinoy Pride is used to counter feelings of inadequacy and shame for Filipinos to remind themselves that they are exceptional, superior, or “world-class” (Diokno, 2008). In this research, Pinoy Pride however has become a unifying force for Filipinos—both from the Diaspora and the nation—to identify with each other. Confronted with colonial mentality and inferiority, respondents agreed with the songwriters that Filipino identity is worthy of pride. For instance, this is shown in how both the artists and the respondents identify physical attributes such as having “flat nose” and “brown skin” as something that should be celebrated as essential Filipino characteristic in response to the pressures of becoming “white.” Thus although the framing of such identity is narrow and limiting, these views reveal how both Filipinos and Filipino Americans are united in their struggle against colonial mentality and towards decolonization.

As teacher and researcher, I have to admit that it is quite heartwarming to discover that my students embraced these Hip Hop artists into the nation, see beyond their differences, acknowledge that they share the same home and realize that the sense of pride for one’s nation is what makes a Filipino. Some students even perceive these artists as “warriors” or “freedom fighters” who have revealed the truths about their own colonial mentality and inferiority. Although I would have wanted the respondents to do a more incisive comparison between their own ideas of the Philippines and the artists, only two respondents identified that the songwriters tend to present an idealized version of the country. However, even as they agreed with the artists, these respondents sincerely engaged with the song by bringing their own thoughts and experiences. They admitted their own sense of inferiority as Filipinos or their desire to get away from the country.

Where do we go from here? The challenge is to make nationalism, according to Fanon (1963), a personally relevant experience. National identity and diaspora may be complex concepts, but it should not deter anyone to grapple with these ideas and explore their hold and influence on our lives. For one thing, the literature classroom can be a place to tirelessly

ask the persistent questions about the Filipino identity and to experience the answers on a concrete, personal level. With such personal and critical approach, the nation will become less of an abstraction but as an identity which students share with Filipinos both in the country and in the diaspora. This sense of camaraderie, it is hoped, will lead to thought and action which will be more mindful with the progress and welfare of the 'imagined community.' Most of all, I look forward to the conceptualization of more studies that would bring the diaspora and the nation together to give "life and dynamic power" (Fanon, 1963, 204) to national consciousness.

## FOOTNOTES

- 1 **Deep Foundation**, consisting of 3 emcees representing Queens and New Jersey, remains a benchmark in socially relevant hip hop. With lyrics based on their lives and personal experiences, Ceejay, ILL Poe and MUG Shot have given voice to an under-represented Filipino American demographic, and seek to imbue their compatriots, both young and old, with a renewed sense of cultural pride. Deep Foundation has brought its boom-bap era influenced hip hop to domestic and international audiences since 2002. With the release of their debut album, "The First Draft," and groundbreaking music videos for "Children of the Sun" and "Sleep," Deep Foundation has captured the hearts and imagination of fans worldwide. In addition to their musical success, the media has also taken note of their drive and originality, having the Myx Channel, PBS, The Filipino Channel, Spike TV and HBO. They have released a brand new EP entitled "Deep Foundation & Hydroponikz present Generation ILL" which is available now on iTunes and CD Baby. From
- 2 **Bulol**, or "Ifugao rice god," is a carved human figurine into which a certain class of anito is said to incorporate itself when worshipped. from
- 3 **Koba** is the name of a popular fugitive in Georgia and fictional hero of Georgian author Kazbek in "Nunu." Both these personas are known to fight for the rights of the people. Stalin also used the nickname in his early years. (from [https:// www.marxists.org/glossary/people /s/t.htm](https://www.marxists.org/glossary/people/s/t.htm))
- 4 **Kaliph Pulaka** also known as Lapu-Lapu who is a Muslim chieftain according to the Sulu oral tradition. (from <http://www.affordablecebu.com>)
- 5 **Elorde, Pancho Villa** are famous Filipino boxers
- 6 **kampilan** or sword used by various ethnic groups in the Philippines (from Wikipedia)
- 7 **veteranos** or war veterans
- 8 **Ka Bel** or Crispin Beltran (1993-2008) was a Filipino politician and labor leader.

Celebrated as the “Grand Old Man of Philippine Labor,” he represented Anakpawis and Bayan Muna as senator. (from Wikipedia)

- 9 **Michelle Malkin** is an American conservative journalist of Filipino descent. She is a blogger, political commentator, and author who has appeared on Fox News. (from Wikipedia)
- 10 **Dilla** is the stage name of James Dewitt Yancey, an American record producer and rapper who emerged from the mid-1990s underground hip hop scene in Detroit, Michigan. (from Wikipedia)

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**APPENDIX**

(Copy of the song lyrics and footnotes distributed in class)

**“Children of the Sun” (REMIX)**

Deep Foundation1

<https://youtu.be/Kj1nGRyyoBE>***Hydroponikz:***

I’m an F-I-L-I-P-I-N-O

F-I-L-I-P-I-N-P

F-I-L-I, Yeah, I am Dro, no intro, P-I-N-O you don’t know?

Yeah, I’m comin’ from the motherland, hot like P.I. summer, man

- 5 Harder than the palo of my mother’s hand, understand?  
My swagger be New York, but my blood was brewed in QC.  
So, chill with the brutal abuse of views we choose to believe,  
Children of the Sun, you better rock it if you  
Proud of who you are, or it’s red on top of the blue.
- 10 Sylin’ on the Island, the story of a warrior,  
From the trouble to the struggle, and from Rizal to Gloria,  
We bringin’ you a sequel ‘till our treatment is equal,  
This is for my People, People, my People!  
We tryin’ to be some citizens, it’s better for our kids, but then.
- 15 We gotta teach ‘em sense, our ancestors weren’t just businessmen  
Live with Uncle Sam, he sees I got my Mother’s eyes,  
But I’m proud of who I am: Son of the Sun up in the sky.

***Nomi:***

I hardly speak Visayan, my Tagalog’s even worse

But I represent the island like I’m down to die for turf

- 20 A history of violence when the Spanish went on search  
For natural resource, they thought the earth was theirs  
Ancestors deserve credit for this verse  
‘Cause their freedom fightin’ spirit still observes what occurs  
Even in America we think we got it made
- 25 Seen a woman leave her family, just be a maid  
I think about history and how we’ve been betrayed  
In a capitalist system, you’ll always be enslaved  
I study People Power and what it really means  
Read Amado Guerrero’s book about the Philippines

- 30 Still got colonized with whitening cream  
 U.S. military presence in the jungles that are green  
 Foreign companies stealing gold from the earth  
 This is the new mind of people; call it rebirth

***Koba:***

- Rise like Bulol<sup>2</sup>, high like Apo
- 35 Rise from below, o-o, bayan ko  
 From the undertow I go and see a million eyes hopin'  
 The real dragon flies out when the prison doors are open  
 Our roots deep in, in poverty and,  
 My Lola's tears fall and water this tree
- 40 Pinatubo of our perils leaves a crater in my soul  
 But insurrection in my heart is set and ready to explode  
 Let the flood waters go, lay siege to the palace see,  
 Change without struggle is an empty fallacy  
 Guerilla, emcee, my mic, my gun, verbal
- 45 Clip emptied, the time has come  
 DF my kasamas, yes the battlelines are drawn  
 Between the lines of the page we storm, singin' our song  
 Koba<sup>3</sup> movin' mountains 'til the people's war is won  
 It's comin' back around again, children of the sun

***Heber Bartolome:***

- 50 *Tayo'y mga Pinoy*  
*Tayo'y Hindi Kano*  
*Wag kang mahihiya*  
*Kon ang ilong mo ay, pango*

***M.U.G SHOT:***

- With a longing to embody the soul of my Filipinos
- 55 The love of my native people, sweeter than chicken tocino  
 Kaliph Pulaka<sup>4</sup> the hero, death of Ninoy Aquino  
 Marcos's reign, was mo' bleak, word to Cuttino (sino?)  
 Who among us are proud of what we've inherited  
 Not tryin' to be American, but the spirit of heritage
- 60 We used to be warriors, Spanish destroyed the evidence  
 Gave us the Santo Niño, and Jesus as our eminence  
 Now, the skin is browned by the sun on our banner  
 Same skin we deny, tryin' not to get tanner

Doesn't matter to the youth I try to touch with this song  
 65 The boys that grow to be men, but can't be tuck their barong  
 Girls that grow to be women, dream of glitter and gold  
 Men dream of giving 'em things for the things they would hold  
 'Cause every stroke of my words paints the story I've told  
 Give me the spear, and the jungle, and the glory of old

***Proseed:***

70 I take pride in the country where I came from  
 Represented by three stars with an eight-point sun  
 Known for hard workers, you can compare to none  
 Where a smile and a nod's part of our native tongue  
 We are nurses, doctors and engineers,  
 75 Workin' hard for the dollars with sweat and tears  
 But never fear, just 'cause I'm livin' here,  
 The pride for my people will never disappear

***ILL POE:***

I'm Elorde, Pancho Villa<sup>5</sup>, Pacquiao packed in one  
 Pack power in both hands, I pack a punch  
 80 Packin' power in my verse, so I impact with words  
 Plus they know my skin is tough much like pachyderm  
 People Power Revolution, put your deuces up for peace  
 Pump your fist up in the air, brown and proud, and to the beat (to the beat)  
 Pilipinos be as proud as you can be  
 85 Make sure our predecessors are proud of you and me  
 From Datu Lapu of the Sultan of Sulu  
 Killed Magellan with *kampilan*<sup>6</sup> and spears, yeah, it was brutal  
 Dr. Jose Rizal and La Liga Filipina  
 "El Filibusterismo" speaks of freedom for the people  
 90 Emilio Aguinaldo, Bonifacio and his sword  
 Regardless of the source for the cause we stood and fought  
 Remember our history, be proud who we've become  
 AS this song will tell the tales of the children of the sun

*Tayo'y mga Pinoy*95 *Tayo'y Hindi Kano**Wag kang mahihiya**Kon ang ilong mo ay, pango*

**Kiwi:**

- From the shores of Cebu, the hills of Cordi's  
 From World War II, the 1940s  
 100 The veteranos,<sup>7</sup> the fight to reclaim  
 The colonized mind, the remnants of Spain  
 It's the hand of a peasant, the sword of a datu  
 That moment when you say you gotta do what you got to  
 Well, we gotta take it back for the masa  
 105 *Para sa mga kaibigan at mga kasama*  
*Sa Pilipinas, 'di bali kung walang pera*  
*Sobrang kawawa, maraming mga problema*  
 I do it for Gabriella, the spirit of Ka Bel<sup>8</sup>  
 We celebrate our people but all is not well  
 110 Ain't hard to tell, look where we've been  
 They're feeding us with poison to whiten up our skin  
 They're pushing Fox news, that Michelle Malkin<sup>9</sup>  
 I'm lookin' at the screen like, "She ain't my kin..."

**Encite:**

- Land of the morning, child of the sun infinite  
 115 Who spit it? The kid with the sun and start fitted  
 No gimmicks, it's Filipino specific  
 So listen up! Ears open and mouth shut (fucker)  
 These are the people that I'm reaching toward,  
 The same people that I'm motherfucking speaking for  
 120 Speaking of speaking—I can't with my native tongue  
 But with my people, man, you know I'm not the only one  
 Pops was a merchang marine,  
 Who saw the world beyond the shores of the Philippines  
 Met my mother in the U.S. surprisingly  
 125 I got the blood of a nomad inside of me  
 It inspires me of what I aspire to be  
 They speak their stories violently  
 I pass it on to my son and I'm hoping  
 Bumping him Dillia<sup>10</sup> while teaching him close open

**CeeJay:**

- 130 They only show light-skinned people on the TV screen  
 That's why so many wish that their skin was that white in their dreams  
 WE avoid the sun and even use lightening cream

- Insecurely taking this obsession to the extreme  
 This is the mentality that I knew as a child
- 135 The ideal, light-skin, pointed-nose profile  
 I'd rather bare the comments people say to insult 'ya  
 Than poison my skin and erase my culture  
 If two percent of the Filipinos are mestizo  
 Then TV and movie stars don't represent the people
- 140 Our notion of beauty needs to be changed  
 The Spanish are gone, but mindset still remains  
 White people conquered our country and change our religion  
 Gave us their systems, imposed their way of living  
 To them we were inferior, join me an disagree
- 145 I am brown, I am proud, Filipino, this is we

*Tayo'y mga Pinoy*  
*Tayo'y Hindi Kano*  
*Wag kang mahihiya*  
*Kon ang ilong mo ay, pango*

- 150 *Bakit kaya tayo ay ganito*  
*Bakit nanggagaya, meron naman tayo*

- Tayo'y mga Pinoy*  
*Tayo'y Hindi Kano*  
*Wag kang mahihiya*
- 155 *Kon ang ilong mo ay, pango*