Colonial Management, Collaborative Dissent: English Readers in the Philippines and Camilo Osias, 1905-1933

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It is not accidental that Carlos Bulosan’s *America Is in the Heart*, a foundational text in Asian American Studies, ends with the narrator nostalgically recalling reading about Robinson Crusoe in an English primer. In all likelihood it was O. S. Reimold’s *Second Primary Language Book*, which was organized around the figure of Crusoe as an industrious shipwrecked survivor (rather than slave owner and colonizer). Almost seventy years later, when Vince, the displaced Filipino American hero of R. Zamora Linmark’s novel *Leche* (2011), goes to Manila in search of his roots, he takes a tour of Leche, a museum and sex club. At the center of Leche is an old American classroom and an English primer called *The First Philippine Reader*. That the primer, published exclusively for the colony in 1903, is preserved at the heart of a building that bears traces of various colonial histories of the Philippines, speaks to the centrality of U.S.-mandated English instruction and the importance of this colonial legacy for Filipinos and Filipino Americans. Primers and English readers were not simply means of teaching English but were part of the biopolitical management of Filipinos in which the creation of an Americanized tutelary subject was a major technology of U.S. colonial rule. These intensely ideologically saturated texts, initially authored by U.S. teachers and educators, shifted to native control by the end of the second decade of colonial rule.

This article examines the overlaps and differences between forms of nationalism articulated in readers for the Philippines compiled by
American teachers Mary Helen Fee, David Gibbs, and Orlando Scheirer Reimold before 1915 and the 1920s *The Philippine Readers* series authored by Camilo Osias, a nationalist and the first Filipino superintendent of schools. It demonstrates how Osias, despite his position within the colonial hierarchy and the colonial apparatuses through which the genre functioned, was paradoxically able to use the genre to open up a space for an anti-imperial, independence-now Filipino nationalism. The article teases out the ways in which the early readers attempted to inculcate American political, social, and economic ideals in Filipino children, and how Osias’s readers contested colonial hegemony by critiquing but also laying claim to aspects of the dominant ideology itself. Thus, although my analysis is about a specific period of U.S. colonial rule in the Philippines, the idea of using aspects of the educational apparatus to resist pacification, while functioning through hegemony, is relevant to thinking about Filipino American schooling today. This analysis might also be helpful for thinking about other systems of occupation including present-day Iraq, where textbooks were hastily rewritten after the U.S. invasion.¹

English readers in the colonial Philippines evolved as part of a benevolent colonialism. Less than a month after Admiral Dewey’s destruction of the Spanish fleet in Manila Bay in May 1898, American soldiers opened the first school, and by 1902 they were joined by over a thousand U.S. teachers. Supporters of colonization saw this pedagogical endeavor as evidence of the particularly benign and democratic nature of American rule. For Charles Burke Elliott, member of the Philippine Commission, mass education distinguished the American colony from “liberal monarchical” states such as Britain, which trained only the elite in India and Egypt, or the Spanish, who feared educating commoners.² Americans, on the other hand, as Sergio Osmena famously proclaimed about the first soldier-teachers, were teaching the masses “principles of free citizenship.”³ Key to educating the Filipinos in freedom was the use of English, a language seen as inherently conducive to liberty. As Governor Taft stated, “One of our great hopes in elevating those people is to give them a common language and that language English, because through the English language certainly, by reading its literature, by becoming aware of the history of the English race, they will breathe in the spirit of Anglo-Saxon individualism.”⁴
Yet the speed with which schools were established reflected the urgency of finding a mechanism to combat Filipino nationalism. After all, the Philippine Republic had been formed in 1899 and revolutionary attacks continued after Aguinaldo’s surrender in 1901. As General MacArthur wrote, “I know nothing … that can contribute more in behalf of pacification than the immediate institution of a comprehensive system of education…. The matter is so closely allied to the exercise of military force in these islands that in my annual report I treated the matter as a military subject.” General Smith, secretary of public instruction, concurred, arguing that schools were “a restraining influence” to prevent families from joining the insurgency “with which many of them undoubtedly sympathized.” Little wonder that Fred Atkinson, the first general superintendent of public instruction, conscious of his duty to “Americanize” the archipelago, visited the Indian boarding school at Carlisle before leaving for the Philippines and that six thousand copies of the Uniform Course of Study for Indian Schools were printed for use in Puerto Rico and the Philippines. The Americanization of Native Americans through schooling provided one model for combating Filipino insurgency. Just as important, schools could be sites for enacting what Paul Kramer terms the administration’s racialized visions of evolution and assimilation based on bifurcating Filipinos into Christian and non-Christian, the latter being the most savage. Fred Atkinson, for instance, described non-Christians—Negritos, Igorots, and Moros—as savage races and Negritos as examples of “the survival of the unfittest.”

Moreover, even Christian Filipinos were perceived as needing U.S. tutelage. The years prior to and after the Jones Act in 1916, which created the Philippine Senate composed of Filipinos, had been a time of Filipinization with natives acquiring higher positions in the government including education. Filipinos, Vicente Rafael suggests, were “drawn into a pattern of collaboration with the colonial state.” Yet five years later, the Woods-Forbes Report, commissioned by President Harding, would hold Filipinization responsible for poor public services and an incompetent judiciary, and recommend indefinite U.S. tutelage. Characterizing Filipinos in the paternalist vocabulary of colonialism as carefree island natives, “light-hearted and inclined to be improvident” and “easily swayed by their leaders,” it argued that Filipinos would pass through stages of
social evolution but until then needed “careful but friendly supervision.”
William Cameron Forbes, former governor general of the Philippines,
saw the decrease of American teachers resultant upon Filipinization as
disastrous and argued paradoxically that the Philippines would be more fit
for independence had the number of American teachers been increased.

Schools in the colony could function as biopolitical apparatuses of
pacification by teaching American political, social, and economic ideals
that implicitly promised to create Filipino citizens fit for self-government.
Because the burden of inculcating these values lay on the teaching of
English, the series of English readers introduced in public schools were
prime pedagogical vehicles for the making of future citizens, ethnographi-
cally Filipino Malay and under American tutelage. As such, these readers
functioned as important cultural sites where metropolitan power and local
realities met and collided, where colonialism could be legitimated, but also
where emergent forms of postcolonial nationalism could be articulated. At
the same time, these readers were points where technologies of colonialism
and colonies as market converged. With the introduction of the Ameri-
can school system in 1901, reading was instituted as the major subject in
the primary schools (grades 1–4), although grammar, composition, and
reading continued to be important in intermediate school (grades 5–7).
Standardization of curricula was central to colonial governance. By 1904,
the general superintendent of education had issued uniform courses of
instruction for the archipelago, except for non-Christian tribes, and by
1908, an advisory committee had been appointed to make recommenda-
tions for textbook adoption for a five-year period.

The potential for profit in this colonial market was enormous, and
publishers in the United States competed furiously to produce readers
specifically designed for the Philippines. As Frederick Starr, in his review
of Philippine school books (mostly English readers), commented, “Today
the leading textbook publishers vie with each other to have their books
introduced into the Philippine field. . . . It is a growing field; there is a
steady demand. And it will be a long time before local publishers will be
at all equal to the occasion.”

Officials in the Bureau of Education were
aware of the burden these expensive U.S.-produced books put on Filipino
families, but thought it prudent not to compete with private companies,
which, they argued, could produce better quality illustrations than the local printing office. English readers were thus not only vehicles of tutelage, but also, in themselves, highly productive for the colonial market.

My focus on English readers in the Philippines as sites of colonial power contestations draws upon the rich and growing body of scholarship on U.S. rule over the archipelago, which has placed the Philippines on the map of postcolonial studies and U.S. empire studies. Beginning with Renato Constantino’s fiery indictment of the U.S. educational system as the “miseducation” of Filipinos, critics have recognized the strategic value of schooling. Paul Kramer has noted how the colonial state in its entirety was seen as a school through metaphors of tutelage and assimilation; Julian Go has suggested that schooling was a matter of Foucauldian governance, a means of creating an “enlightened citizenry on a mass scale.” The enormity of the U.S. educational apparatus in the Philippines has also produced a few studies focusing specifically on aspects of schooling in the colony: colonial schools as a mixture of “oppressive and liberating opportunities” to Filipino children (Kimberly Alidio); education as a “key mechanism in the internal colonization of Muslim Filipinos” (Jeffrey Ayala Milligan); the use of American literature as a source of value and a means of pacification (Meg Wesling); and the creation of a hybrid nationalism of American and local influences to use colonial education for nationalist purposes (Roland Sintos Coloma). Other than a passing mention of English readers, however, most critics have paid scant attention to these formative texts. Critics of children’s literature have also only recently begun to pay attention to colonial subject making but have neglected primers and readers. The field of education has likewise just begun to consider issues of imperialism and colonialism despite Gauri Viswanathan’s classic 1989 study Masks of Conquest, which demonstrated the significance of the teaching of British literature in India.

By looking at primers and readers in the Philippines as political culture, this article contributes to the nascent area of postcolonial Asian American studies, U.S. empire studies, as well as postcolonial studies in children’s literature and education. More broadly, the examination of English readers seeks to open up questions about working through apparatuses of hegemony for both colonial and nationalist ends. Neither the project
of Americanization nor Filipino nationalism is fully worked out in these readers. Rather, these texts represent battles over the legitimation of both colonialism and nationalism through the teaching of English. I suggest that Osias’s readers demonstrate nationalism as a form of collaborative dissent, thus suggesting possibilities of contesting colonialism through hegemony itself. My idea of collaborative dissent is influenced by the pioneering work of James C. Scott, who contests both Marxist economic determinism and Gramscian ideological determinism to demonstrate how subordinate classes constantly challenge hegemony through everyday forms of resistance, or what he calls “hidden transcripts.” Such everyday resistance escapes the attention of most scholars who look only at the surface level of power situations or “public transcripts.” English readers produced by the colonized elite complicate Scott’s schema grounded in peasant-elite relations because as public artifacts they cannot be seen as hidden transcripts, yet they often carry messages that can function as “hidden” because they counter the goal of producing Americanized Filipinos. Most important, Scott argues that most struggles take place within hegemony and that hegemony itself provides the tools for its critique: “The very process of attempting to legitimate a social order by idealizing it always provides its subjects the means, the symbolic tools, the very ideas for a critique that operates entirely within the hegemony.” Thus, instead of privileging revolution, Scott gives importance to calls for reform, which he contends are the only plausible bases for revolutionary change. Scott’s version of hegemony allows us to look at English readers in the Philippines not only as vehicles of state apparatuses designed to manufacture consent, but also as texts strategically working within and using hegemony to contest it within an interactive field of metropolitan and colonial power relations.

**English Readers as Colonial Battleground**

There is perhaps no clearer condensation of the militaristic and educational aims of teaching English than William Howard Taft’s testimony to the Senate hearings before the Committee on the Philippines. Repeatedly while describing the school system, Taft refers to insurrections related to different linguistic groups, the most pernicious of which are Tagalogs: “The insurrecto leaders in Samar, in Panay, and of course in Batangas, are
all Tagalogs. . . . They carry with them the Tagalog language where they
go, though they learn other dialects, and therefore you will find in many
places persons who speak Tagalog.”31 Taft saw Tagalog as a linguistic uni-
fier and a dangerous accessory to insurrection in a country where, despite
U.S. attempts to catalog and divide people according to tribes, there was a
“homogeneity in appearance, in habits, and in many avenues of thought.”32
If Taft intimated that the teaching of English was a battle strategy, Charles
Burke Elliott, member of the U.S. Philippine Commission, was clear that
American teachers were “a second army of occupation” even as he enthused
about the institution of mass education as something that “had never been
attempted in the Orient.”33

By the late nineteenth century, schooling in the United States was
well established as the propagator of national culture and as a means
of legitimating race and class hierarchies. In her exhaustive survey of
nineteenth-century textbooks, Ruth Miller Elson notes how supporters
of public schools repeatedly assured upper classes that “a judicious edu-
cation of the poor” will not “lead them to forget their station and their
duty.”34 Likewise, the ideal American in these textbooks is white, Northern
European, Protestant, and self-made.35 Primers and readers such as the
McGuffey and Baldwin series were major vehicles for inculcating these
values. The McGuffey Readers, which started in 1836 and went through
several editions by the end of the century, taught virtue through bibli-
cal quotations, prayers, as well as explicit morals. The Baldwin Readers,
launched in 1897, eschewed biblical materials and direct moralizing but,
like the McGuffey Readers, stressed the values of thrift, hard work, and
conformity to white middle-class living. Such readers were initially used in
the Philippines, and by January 1901, two hundred thousand of Baldwin’s
primers and readers had been shipped to the islands.36

Shortly thereafter, American teachers rallied to create primers geared
to the needs of the colony.37 Like the Baldwin and McGuffey Readers,
these readers present an exceptional American nationalism, with selec-
tions emphasizing the values of industry presented through the lives of
people like Benjamin Franklin as well as lessons in American democracy,
but they also reveal the complex work of colonial management. Despite
attestations to the contrary, American teachers were not automatically
respected by students who refused to be docile subjects. Mary Helen
Fee, who taught for several years in the Philippines, noted impatiently how Filipino children were “infinitely more unruly and arrogant than children of our own race.” They disavowed her authority and spurned her opinion about the kind of English they should learn. In the readers, however, Filipino children could be presented as obedient and eager to learn from their teachers. The readers strive to domesticate the Filipino landscape and people while simultaneously naturalizing colonial difference, so that participating in American nationalism and culture appears to emanate from the people themselves. The readers demonstrate what Raymond Williams called the dynamic nature of hegemony, which exists not just passively as dominance but “has continually to be renewed, recreated, defended and modified.” Of the many readers and primers compiled by American teachers, I will focus on those by Mary Helen Fee, David Gibbs, and Orlando Scheirer Reimold, all published before Camilo Osias completed the manuscripts of *The Philippine Readers* in 1917, and will briefly address the Rizal Readers series, published after Osias had completed work on his readers. Fee taught in the Philippines longer than most teachers and also published a popular memoir, *A Woman’s Impression of the Philippines* (1910). Gibbs and Reimold both served as division superintendents of schools in the Philippines. Fee’s reader and Gibbs’s series, although published before 1910, remained in use for over twenty years and covered the first three grades.

A striking difference between the Baldwin Readers and readers used in the Philippines is how the former appeal to a bourgeois sense of culture, refinement, and class, while the latter, although occasionally picturing upper-class Filipinos, largely focus on farming, weaving, and carpentry, and represent children as rustic and casual. Such representations were congruent with major educational policies. Despite a few early debates between educators who favored the Hampton and Tuskegee models of industrial education and those who favored an academic curriculum, Filipinos were seen as low in the cultural hierarchy, and by 1904 industrial education was touted as key. David Barrows, the second director of education, who began by envisioning an educated Jeffersonian yeoman, turned to emphasizing industrial education and in a glowing introduction to Reimold’s *Industrial Studies and Exercises* (1910) explained why
“native arts and industries were chosen as subjects of study in primary schools.” By the end of Frank White’s term in 1913, the focus of schools was to “prepare Filipinos for productive labor.”

Thus, readers for the Philippines present a different pedagogical subject than the Baldwin and McGuffey Readers. The latter readers used illustrations to present to children a white, middle-class, leisured Victorian lifestyle as normative. There are ornate pictures of women in hats and long dresses contemplating a country landscape and children sitting in rooms decorated with furniture, curtains, and artwork. The illustrations in the readers for the Philippines, on the other hand, depict characters in the countryside, not contemplating nature but laboring. David Gibbs’s readers present women in the market, boys carrying water in buckets, women washing clothes at the river. And, as befits a colony being integrated into the economic needs of the metropole, there are illustrations and questions about the harvesting of sugarcane and the making of sugar (see Figure 1). Reimold’s *Composition Leaflets on Philippine Activities*, also part of the Philippine Education series, most explicitly interpellate Filipinos as manual laborers through separate leaflets such as “The Carpenter,” “The Blacksmith,” “The Shoemaker,” “Weaving,” “Sugar-Cane,” and “Hemp,” each of which begins with an illustration of workers.

Mary Helen Fee’s reader also includes illustrations of Filipinos in the countryside, with most characters casually dressed and barefooted, nature’s children. The contrast between the cultivated child of the Baldwin First-Year Reader and the natural child of Fee’s *First Year Book* (1907) is evident in the frontispiece of Fee’s reader and the cover of the Baldwin Reader (see Figures 2 and 3). In Fee’s book a Filipino infant, clad in a simple dress, sits barefooted, books strewn carelessly around her, her index finger used for reading. In the Baldwin Reader, an older girl with curled hair, lace shirt, and boots sits on a carpet, absorbed in a book while another book lies neatly beside her. The girl is not too different from the attentive reader, book resting on ornate cushions, on the cover of *McGuffey’s First Eclectic Reader*. The instructions to the teacher in the Baldwin Reader privilege reading as a path to culture and developing an aesthetic sense: “thought has been given to the cultivation of a love for the pure, the beautiful and the good . . . towards the contemplation of things lovely and inspiring and
Figure 1. David Gibbs, *Lessons in English* (New York: American Book Company, 1905).

away from objects that are, at their best, merely gross and commonplace. The preface to Fee’s book, on the other hand, emphasizes everyday situations in children’s lives, lessons based on “attractive children, clean and
Figure 2. School Reading by Grades (New York: American Book Company, 1897).

Figure 3. Mary Helen Fee. The First Year Book (New York: World Book Company, 1907).
wholesome in mind and body." Filipino students were fully aware of the politics of colonial representation and resisted being interpellated as less civilized or of a lower class than their American counterparts. In her memoir Fee recollects how one of her former students, on seeing Fee’s primer, was “enraged because the Filipino boys and girls in my book were sometimes barefooted, sometimes clad in chinelas . . . The children in the American readers wore natty jackets and hats and high-heeled shoes . . . and she wanted the Filipino children to look the same.” Fee’s impatience with the girl’s desire for embourgeoisement fails to recognize that texts for the Philippines carried immense ideological weight. They not only taught English but also were seen as texts representing Filipinos.

Fee’s and Gibbs’s attempts to domesticate an unfamiliar landscape and people and to suggest the naturalness of English as part of Filipino life are most evident in their illustrations. Yet these efforts often appear strained. David Gibbs’s *Lessons in English* (1905) advertises itself through its cover like a tourist book inviting Filipinos to venture on a leisured trip through the archipelago. As the Filipinos travel their country by boat, they learn English and presumably attain the leisured status of the men and women in the boat. However, some of the picture studies represent unwilling subjects oddly caught in a refusal of the anthropological gaze, confounding and eluding the colonial scheme of compulsory visibility even as they hold up items presumably for the market (see Figure 4). But the hegemonic order is more viscerally reinforced through the parading of colonial insignia, particularly flags. Such a display of icons of colonialism needs to be seen in relation to both the production of nationalism in U.S. readers and nationalist flag politics in the Philippines. Noah Webster’s *American Spelling Book* (1787) was devoted to teaching students the merits of the American system of government. By 1835, a third of Cobb’s *North American Reader* was overtly nationalistic. The Baldwin and McGuffey Readers of the late nineteenth century, however, created the myth of a unified nation by focusing on middle-class white characters and including morality tales about the rewards of industry, honesty, and noblesse oblige; patriotic history lessons and the use of flags were rare. By 1913, *The Beacon Reader* had just one patriotic selection, Edward Everett Hale’s “Salute the Flag.”
English readers for the Philippines go counter to this trend of overt depoliticization, thus suggesting the need for affirmations of the colonial order in the face of continuing demonstrations of Filipino nationalism. 

Figure 4. David Gibbs. Lessons in English (New York: American Book Company, 1905).
Flag politics were important to this display of nationalism. In 1907, after Nacionalista supporters paraded the streets of Manila with the Katipunan flag and one marcher trampled the American flag in the dirt, the governor general issued an order for the confiscation of all goods bearing the Katipunan flag. Little wonder, then, that American flags were abundantly displayed all over Manila, not only on naval vessels but also atop “shops, warehouses, private homes, and church pulpits.” As Paul Kramer suggests, “The U.S. flag became central to the marking of the outer boundary of U.S. sovereignty precisely because its triumph was disputed.”

Not surprisingly, the symbolic economy of the flag finds its way in English readers, reflecting the fact that patriotic drills with a surplus of American flags were common in public schools in the Philippines even in the 1920s. While Fee, Gibbs, and Reimold organize many reading lessons around the lives of Filipino children, the symbolic economy of the flag circulates in all. In Fee’s *First Year Book*, the innocuous teaching of basic arithmetic is done through flags; as the children learn subtraction, two flags fall while the victorious U.S. flag is left standing. Another illustration represents the normalization of the Philippines as U.S. territory by depicting a cluster of happy Filipino children playing in front of the schoolyard, being watched over by a Filipino teacher with the American flag flying in the distance, a motif followed in Gibbs’s *Revised Insular Primer*, where the flag and schoolhouse, emblems of colonial authority, are shown to beckon Filipino students. Perhaps the most stark iconography of the flag, reinforcing James Scott’s argument that domination needs lavish display, is evident in Gibbs’s primer where the U.S. flag is presented as the Ur-flag, defining what a flag means (the U.S. flag is both “a flag” and “the flag”). This clearly excludes any other flag that might question loyalty to the nation. Directions to teachers encourage them to ask students what they see and to teach them the colors of the flag (see Figure 5). That these readers come close to sheer colonial propaganda does not make them less valuable as cultural registers; rather, they demonstrate the imbrication of the tutelary apparatus in the larger politics of the colony, and the need of teachers to stave insurrectionary ideas by demonstrating the authority of U.S. insignia, while attempting to naturalize them as part of children’s everyday learning.
While it was important for early American educators to represent Filipino children learning about and milling around the U.S. flag, it was equally imperative for the racialized colonial order to represent these objects of eventual self-government as Malay. Negritos, Igorots, and Moros—all people designated as non-Christian, separately administered and denied degrees of autonomy given Christian Malays—are virtually
absent from all readers. When they are occasionally represented, they pose a pedagogical challenge. The most vexed display of the legitimation of colonial tutelage is the grammar exercise in Gibbs’s *Lessons in English* titled “The Moro Girl.” The Moros were a particularly abrasive tutelary problem because they posed the threat of Islam and resisted colonial (as well as Filipino neocolonial) rule long after other insurrections had largely subsided. Often analogized to resistant Native Americans, they marked the limits of integration through tutelage. Gibbs’s grammar lesson is really a lesson about good and bad colonial subjects. A photograph of a traditionally attired Moro girl looking directly into the camera accompanies an interpellation of her as the Other who needs to remain apart from the rest of the colony. The grammar exercise accompanying the photograph asking students to fill in “do” or “does” in the blanks represents the girl only through negation:

1. This is a picture of a Moro girl.
2. We do not know her name.
6. She does not go to my school.
7. She [verb?] . . . not know how to read or write.
8. She [verb?] . . . not live on the island of Luzon.

The Moro girl is unnamed, untutored, and Other, the ignorant savage denied the benefits of colonial tutelage. While the flag and the schoolhouse, the emblems of colonial authority, could be integrated into Filipino life, Moros challenged the legitimacy of U.S. rule. Gibbs addresses this challenge by creating a binary division between good, pacified U.S.-educated schoolchildren and the intransigent Moro, who, instead of being a thorn in the side of the colonial order, is simply not one of “Us.” Similar interpellations of Negritos as savages living in the jungle are evident in Gibbs’s “Arwa, the Negrito Boy” and a picture study of a black boy. Such technologies of racial inscription circulated in the colonial archive. Gibbs’s photograph of the Moro girl reappears in Henry S. Townsend’s *Primary Geography* (1917), a textbook written for the Philippines, one in which Moros along with Negritos are described as backward in civilization.

By 1909 Gibbs had established a repertoire of topics designed to inculcate in the youth an admiration for American institutions and American democracy while also learning about Spanish colonialism and Filipino
heroism. Writing exercises for children include answering questions about biographies of George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, and Christopher Columbus, the story of John Smith and Pocahontas, the discovery of the Philippine Islands by Magellan, and also a biography of Rizal, a Philippine national hero executed by the Spanish.\footnote{The Baldwin Readers also included extracts from George Washington’s farewell address or Daniel Webster’s “Duties of an American Citizen,” but the framing of the selections differ.} As Meg Wesling suggests, while the latter are framed to inspire patriotism, the former suggest the moral superiority of colonial national heroes.\footnote{As Meg Wesling suggests, while the latter are framed to inspire patriotism, the former suggest the moral superiority of colonial national heroes.}

In addition, the readers in the Philippines teach through the glorification of fictional heroes of colonialism and by emphasizing rules of civilized living. Both Reimold’s and Newsom’s readers, for instance, teach through cycles of Robinson Crusoe stories that emphasize Crusoe’s industry, inventiveness, and perseverance.\footnote{Reimold’s reader also includes a lesson on Crusoe’s saving of Friday and the latter’s abject gratitude as he places Crusoe’s foot upon his head and offers to be his servant. In Gibbs’s third-year reader, the attempt to purify the native, which, to paraphrase M.\footnote{The teaching of English here intersects with governance through colonial hygiene, a management of the filthy Filipino child whose unsanitary body escapes the control of, and needs to be controlled by, the American teacher who hysterically fears contamination.} Y. Douglas, is an attempt to impose system on an inherently untidy (here untidy colonial) experience, shrieks through: “You must be clean. Every day you should bathe in clean, cool water. . . . You must keep your mouth, your teeth, and your ears always clean. You must have clean hands when you eat, if you cannot always have them clean. Clean, clean, clean—have everything clean,—your body, clothes, bed, house, water, and food.”\footnote{The teaching of English here intersects with governance through colonial hygiene, a management of the filthy Filipino child whose unsanitary body escapes the control of, and needs to be controlled by, the American teacher who hysterically fears contamination.} The teaching of English here intersects with governance through colonial hygiene, a management of the filthy Filipino child whose unsanitary body escapes the control of, and needs to be controlled by, the American teacher who hysterically fears contamination.\footnote{The teaching of English here intersects with governance through colonial hygiene, a management of the filthy Filipino child whose unsanitary body escapes the control of, and needs to be controlled by, the American teacher who hysterically fears contamination.}}

\textbf{Nationalism in Camilo Osias’s \textit{The Philippine Readers}}

If early English readers were important sites for legitimizing colonial authority, can a postcolonial nationalism be articulated through the same disciplinary technologies? N’gugi wa Thiong’o would have answered with a resounding no; colonial apparatuses such as English departments, he famously argued in “On the Abolition of the English Department,” needed to be abolished.\footnote{Renato Constantino would have argued that...} Renato Constantino would have argued that...
such technologies could produce only miseducated Filipino Americans. Subaltern studies scholar Partha Chatterjee has suggested that postcolonial nationalism germinates in a private sphere, inaccessible to colonial authorities—the sphere of the family, or, in writing, the sphere of the vernacular.73 However, to look only for a postcolonial nationalism outside of English and state apparatuses is to conceive of both as monolithic, and to miss possibilities of different kinds of resistances.

In 1917, Camilo Osias completed the manuscripts of seven volumes of The Philippine Readers for grades 1 to 7, the first textbooks to be published by a Filipino author. Osias’s readers, published in 1920, met with almost immediate success, and copies of books 5 to 7 were distributed to be used as supplementary reading.74 By 1923, the Philippine Textbook Board chose books 2 to 7 as the official primary textbooks in public schools for the next five years,75 after which they continued to be taught and reprinted until the 1950s. To appraise the ideological function of these readers, it is important to understand the peculiar trajectory of Osias’s career as he operated firmly within the rubrics of the American educational apparatus set up for colonial governance and simultaneously advocated for nationalism and independence from American rule, using colonial hegemony to argue against it. Osias was well schooled in revolutionary pedagogy as a child, having learned the principles of the Katipunan from his uncle and translated them from Tagalog to Ilokano to advance the revolution, a cause he supported when the U.S. occupational forces entered the country.76 He continued his education, however, as did most poor and middle-class Filipinos, under the auspices of the U.S. troops and later the American school system. Chosen as a pensionado, Osias received his diploma from Western Illinois State Normal School and his education degree from Columbia before returning to the Philippines to teach and become the first Filipino division superintendent of schools in 1915.77 Yet, as member of the Nacionalista Party, which advocated immediate independence, Osias engaged actively in politics, and was part of the First Philippine Independence Mission to the United States in 1919. Elected as senator for the Second Senatorial District in 1926, he continued with his position as senator-at-large in 1947, president of the Senate in the 1950s, and president pro tempore of the Senate in the 1960s.
Roland Sintos Coloma refers to Osias’s navigation between the forces of assimilation and separatism and creating a “third space of possibility” as a “disidentifying nationalism” (borrowed from Jose Esteban Munoz, who proposes “disidentification” as different from identification or counteridentification). “To become a revolutionary educator,” Coloma suggests, “Osias had to first learn, then distance himself from, and finally use the knowledge acquired.” Although Coloma usefully eschews binaries in analyzing Osias’s thinking, he sets up a temporal schema that is at odds with Osias’s own writings and certainly with *The Philippine Readers*. I suggest, instead, that Osias never distanced himself from the key aspects of American tutelary hegemony: a belief in the exceptional nature of American freedom, the civilizing force of education, and differences in the intellectual capabilities of races. Like other nationalist leaders such as Kwame Nkrumah and Jomo Kenyatta, Osias used his education in the metropole to further champion independence, yet he fulfilled a key purpose of the *pensionado* scheme—to become an ambassador for “American values.” As he recalled in his autobiography, “I deepened my devotion to the cause of independence as a student in freedom-loving America with its Declaration of Independence and its galaxy of patriots who fought for freedom’s cause. I made it my avocation to read about revolutionary movements and constitutional governments.” These sentences exemplify Osias’s collaborative dissent as he operates firmly within the hegemony of an American exceptionalism that promoted the fantasy of the United States as a haven for freedom despite Jim Crow at home and colonialism abroad. Hegemony itself, in the form of writings of revolutionary leaders, provided him with the tools of critique and supported his demand for immediate independence.

Unlike other *pensionado* elites such as Victor Buencamino, who recognized the racism directed at both African Americans and Asian Americans in the United States, and recalled being called “chinks” and “monkeys” while students, Osias, who needed American patronage, resolutely downplayed questions of racism, and reported only that he had had “no unpleasant experiences” during his three-year stay in the Midwest. Little wonder that Osias’s recollections about attending an American high school reflect an admiration and a desire for the class mobility represented by the teachers, as well as an identification with the cleanliness and hygiene
represented by them. Osias writes, “I liked to see them [teachers] come to school everyday in clothes clean and well pressed and shoes well-polished. I admired them and my ambition was to be a high school teacher.” At the same time, Osias was clear about the importance of a native language and the effects of colonialism on education. Writing in 1940, a few years after the implementation of the Independence Act, Osias proposed a new philosophy for Filipinos—the pluralized philosophy that could be illustrated only through his native Ilocano.

For the young Osias, there was no contradiction between lavishing praise of American teachers, who came as part of the colonial mission of lifting Filipinos out of ignorance, and demanding stridently the complete independence of the Philippines. In an oratorical competition in 1908, Osias declared, “Believing that our salvation lay in popular education, America sent hundreds of her leading educators to our shores. Grand and praiseworthy have been the achievements of those who came to our relief.” But in the same speech, he denounced the premise of McKinley’s “unfit for self-government” logic of colonial rule by challenging assumptions about native ignorance and American knowledge: “Those who doubt our capacity for independence . . . forget that capacity for self-government is not only an attainment but also an inherent quality of a people.”

Yet Osias’s nationalism, like that of the United States he admired, was premised on Eurocentric racial hierarchies, even as he criticized the colonial use of the term “Non-Christian Tribes” as inimical to national unity. Indeed, as postcolonial theorists such as Partha Chatterjee and Homi Bhabha have argued, the quest for a unified modern nationalism cannot help but be based on race and class exclusions. Calling on the American public to support the independence of the Philippines, the young Osias appealed to the civilizing power of the English language and the rhetoric of uplift: “Ten years ago, practically none could speak the English language. In less than a decade of intimate relationship with the American people, twenty percent of the inhabitants speak the new language. What an achievement. It is not with the savage Igorotte nor the heathen Negrito that you have to do, but with the enlightened and Christian Malay.” Deploying the very racial typologies of Christian and non-Christian used by the colonial administration, Osias turns them to his
own ends, arguing that the majority Malay population, which has received the benefits of the English language and has, in fact, been enlightened, deserves independence. An older Osias continued to look at Negritos as primitives, suited to a schooling only in health and athletic activities, and to Mangyans as “simple creatures of nature” who needed instruction on “Soap, Soup, [and] Salvation.”

If the colonization of the Philippines was justified as a temporary measure to educate a citizenry for eventual self-government, Osias was simply arguing for self-government now. If colonial administrators touted America as a beacon of freedom and democracy, Osias concurred with their assumptions. He critiqued the colonization of the Philippines not as a demonstration of the imperial nature of American nationalism nor as similar to its treatment of minorities within the United States, but rather as a transgression of American ideals. “The policy of colonization,” Osias argued, “is contrary to the American instinct. It is a violation of the spirit of the Declaration of Independence.” In these instances, Osias’s nationalist rhetoric works as James Scott argued, through hegemony—accepting and using the hegemonic rhetoric of exceptional American democracy to critique the nation for not following its own ideals.

Osias’s readers, the first compiled by a Filipino that contained biographies and historical accounts among other genres, did not question the intentions of American occupation, the virtues of the founding fathers, or Western narratives of exploration and discovery. As the readers progress, they increasingly include stories of the voyages of Magellan and Columbus, and biographies of George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and Abraham Lincoln. Six of the seven readers end with instructive biographies of Rizal or writings by Rizal. A cursory glance at the table of contents of these readers might not suggest much difference from the readers produced by earlier American educators. After all, as critics have pointed out, a reformist rather than revolutionary Rizal had been promoted as a national hero by colonial administrators. Public schools had also begun to commemorate the anniversary of Rizal’s execution before Osias’s readers. However, the difference between the Rizal of Osias’s readers and the Rizal of American readers is in the framing, particularly evident in the Rizal Readers compiled by a majority of American educa-
tors. In the Rizal Readers, Rizal, the educator, is often used to normalize the colonial school through illustrations that depict him teaching rows of neatly dressed Filipino children, and biographies that compare him to heroes of American nationalism. Questions in the Rizal Readers about Rizal’s exile in Dapitan refer to his love for his sister, while those in Osias’s readers ask students to think about Rizal’s courage and willpower in withstanding Spanish colonialism. Similar differences can be seen in the representation of American heroes. While Gibbs’s books on grammar and composition—*Elementary English Grammar and Composition* (1909) and *Advanced English Grammar and Composition* (1908) for instance—include several selections on Washington, venerating him as industrious, a great general, the first president, and a leader in the Revolutionary War, Osias includes him only in book 7 and focuses on Washington’s role as soldier for Governor Dinwiddie against the French. Washington appears as a significant leader in the Revolutionary War and then very briefly as first president. By accentuating Washington prior to the formation of the United States as nation and placing him alongside Philippine nationalist heroes such as the revolutionary Bonifacio, Mabini, who never accepted U.S. rule, and Rizal, Osias encourages students to think about the beginnings of nationalism in both nations. Washington becomes a revolutionary hero to be emulated in present-day Philippines. Thus, although Osias’s politics were reformist and negotiation-minded, in his readers he was able to work within the hegemonic narrative of exceptional American heroes to articulate a nascent revolutionary appeal that he personally eschewed in his strategic dealings with the colonial administration.

Osias’s declaration of cultural independence is also evident in the prefatory materials to the readers, where he affirms the difference of his materials from others through appeals to authenticity. While the readers compiled by American educators such as Gibbs, Fee, and Reimold had also made bids to culture by mentioning their sincere attempts to include materials from Filipino daily life, Osias claimed a cultural insiderism and intimacy with the students’ experiences not possible for his American counterparts. Indeed, the prefatory materials speak as much to his American colleagues in the Philippines as they do to Filipino teachers. In the preface to the revised edition of book 2, for example, Osias writes, “Both the author and the illustrator, Mr. Fernando Amorsolo, being Filipinos,
depict not only what they have heard and seen, but in many instances what they themselves have actually experienced.  The ability to include what one has seen and heard by living in the Philippines does not match the experiential potential of “being Filipinos,” a state available only to the native. Similarly in the preface to book 3, Osias validates his inclusion of Filipino folk tales in the volume by claiming a special familiarity with them: “Several of the native folk tales and legends in this volume were told to the writer in childhood by his mother and are generally known in the Islands.”

This idea of cultural transmission, which assumes fixity and desire to reclaim lost origins, has rightly been critiqued by scholars like Stuart Hall for disregarding movement and change. Osias’s statements about compiling folktales preserved from the past in order to transmit Filipino culture do assume cultural purity, but it is vital to read these statements in the context of increasing calls for independence and the colonial administrators’ insistence on the continued needs for tutelage. Osias’s readers boldly placed Filipino folktales alongside Grimm’s tales and were notable in the sheer number of folktales they included, surpassed only by Harriot Ely Fansler and Isidoro Panlasigui’s three-volume Philippine National Literature Series, used only as supplementary texts for grades 2 to 4. As Damiana L. Eugenio writes, “Many of us first encountered Philippine folk tales such as ‘Why the Sky is High’ and ‘The Legend of the First Bananas’ in this [Osias’s] series.”

Of course Osias well knew and acknowledged that what was being constructed as Filipino culture was the result of a collaboration between colonial and native scholars and educators. Given the establishment of the U.S. school system for almost a generation, a clear demarcation between native and colonial influences would have been difficult. In book 1, for instance, Osias acknowledges the assistance of U.S. anthropologist H. Otley Beyer and “other Oriental scholars” in collecting material. In the revised edition of book 2, Osias acknowledged American teachers Muzetta Williams, Hertha Cornish, and Bertha Shanks Chaney. Yet, Osias wanted to emphasize that The Philippine Readers were different from earlier ones. The contents of The Philippine Readers were evaluated by a qualified cadre of Filipino educators from all regions of the Philippines (except Mindanao), and the list of over thirty evaluators, with their regions
identified, appears in almost all the readers. Osias’s claim of native access to cultural purity thus needs to be seen as a strategic purity, required for articulating a unified nationalism that necessarily depends upon a mythic culture rooted in nativism.

In volumes 5 through 7, where Osias substituted the preface with a more direct “Talk with the Pupil” and used the occasion to include exhortations to good citizenship, Osias makes clear that this citizenship is a postcolonial Filipino one. Within the bounds of an American educational structure, yet chafing at the paternalist practices of American educators, Osias inculcated a nationalism that incorporated American culture within a Filipino schema. Thus in the address in book 6, Osias implicitly suggests that in presenting lives of heroes who exemplify diligence, Magellan and Lincoln in fact prefigure Rizal. Osias writes, “People who work hard succeed best, and the men who succeed, like Lincoln and Magellan, often do so only because they never cease trying. . . . At the close of the book you will study the hymn in which Rizal tells us of the dignity of labor.” In book 7, he stridently urges students to use their readings to further national pride and become commendable citizens. Osias writes, “I know you admire men and women who were brave and unselfish and patriotic. . . . A knowledge of the lives and deeds of such men and women will make you stand a little straighter. . . . You will learn of great characters of all times and countries, and of our own heroes, Bonifacio, Mabini, and Rizal.” The address ends by instructing students to take the selections in the volume as lessons that will enable them to become “good and useful Filipino citize[n].” The provocative question the address poses is that of citizenship. If the purpose of the hagiographic selections is to inculcate “patriotism,” what is the patria that the students should have loyalty toward? If the patria is the Philippines, how can the students become useful Filipino citizens in 1932, long before the Philippines became an independent nation and three years before it became a commonwealth? The talk with the pupil here declares an independence that questions the slow process of Filipinization under the shadow of colonial rule. And yet Osias is careful to reassure his readers that his brand of Filipino nationalism is not revolutionary. The national heroes celebrated in the volume are all “heroic in peace,” men of peace rather than the sword.
For Osias, the political necessity of immediate independence was clear; simultaneously, as the first Filipino superintendent of schools, a title he proudly displayed in all the readers, working within and being a beneficiary of the most elaborate systems of colonial management while arguing for Filipino control of it, he was a vexed part of a complex system. *The Philippine Readers*, while continuing the task of teaching English, had also become vehicles of Filipino cultural expression. Unlike Gibbs, Fee, Reimold, and Newsom, who used American illustrators for their books, Osias chose Pablo Amorsolo, a painter committed to representing idealized Filipino landscapes and whose famous painting, *Rice Planting* (1922), had begun to appear on calendars and tourist brochures. Clearly, Osias had selected an illustrator whose works could be used to sell the Philippines as a tropical tourist destination, but Amorsolo was also a symbol of a Filipino who could rival his American peers in reputation, his works having been exhibited in Belgium and New York. Osias’s use of Amorsolo, prominently credited on the title page of all the readers, speaks of Osias’s abilities to use the tools of colonial management not to illustrate the schooling of Filipinos in American culture but to demonstrate pride in Filipino art and culture.

We have seen how in the earlier readers insignia of colonial authority, such as flags, were used in ostensibly innocuous pedagogical acts such as learning arithmetic. In 1923 the Rizal Readers were adopted as primary texts for the first grade and supplementary texts for grades 2 to 7. These readers largely eschewed overtly political subject matter or displays of flags, but other than the obligatory section on Rizal had virtually no Filipino content. Osias, however, continued to use flags as pedagogical objects, but instead of being emblems of American hegemony they represented the vexed state of Filipino nationalism—at once permitted, yet withheld. The text of the very first of the readers begins with an illustration of an ordered peaceful Filipino landscape. The palm tree, signifying the tropics, stands tall over the countryside, with its vistas of farmed land and neat rows of nipa-thatched homes. In the distance are signs of religious and secular order—the church and the schoolhouse with a flag. The flag, too small to be discerned, stands at the edge of the landscape, visible yet ambiguous. Close to the end of the reader, however, Osias invites students to participate in Filipino nationalism by depicting a schoolboy saluting the Filipino flag, thus suggesting that the indeterminate flag of the first page is that of the
Philippines (see Figure 6). In 1919, the Philippine legislature had adopted the Filipino flag as the official one, but as befitting a colony the U.S. and Filipino flags flew alongside each other. Osias was undoubtedly aware of the seditious nature of his representation, preferring to bury it until the end of the book and surrounding it with text referring only to the red, white, and blue of the flag, not the gold sun or three golden stars. Yet the call to nationalism through the red, white, and blue of the Filipino flag suggests a revolt against colonial nationalism. Book 1 possibly challenged colonial policy, for it remained the only one of *The Philippine Readers* not to be an official textbook for 1923 to 1928, when Osias’s readers were first adopted.

But even in the rest of the readers, in which the Filipino flag never flies alone, Osias uses flags to question colonial authority by deliberately misaligning text and image while strategically following colonial policy visually. In book 5, for instance, students stand erect in a stiff posture, hats tucked under their arms, giving a proper salute as the U.S. and Filipino flags fly in the breeze atop a single flagpole. However, the text instructing students about respecting the flag refers to it in the singular, and is preceded and followed by tributes to heroes of Filipino nationalism.104 In
book 5, Osias also opens a biography of Mabini with the announcement that Mabini, who almost until the end of his life refused allegiance to the United States, has been officially honored by the Philippine legislature in 1917–18. The biography is followed by Edward Everett Hale’s “Saluting the Flag,” Osias’s “The Good Filipino Citizen’s Patriotic Pledge,” and a translation of the Philippine Hymn. All the selections, including Osias’s Pledge (which includes the sentence “I want my country to be free and independent”), might have been within the limits of a permissible Filipino nationalism. Indeed, the idea of an eventually independent Philippines was an integral component of the rhetoric of occupation from the outset, and the paradoxical inclusion of Filipino nationalism within a schooling in Americanism became a strategy of the colonial management. In the 1920s, schools routinely started with the “Star-Spangled Banner” and the Philippine National Anthem. However, in the context of the Woods-Forbes report that recommended delaying independence and Osias’s refusal to accept that logic, the sentence also speaks to an anticolonial nationalism.

As late as the 1960s, Renato Constantino decried the colonial mentality of educational leaders like Osias who were taught by the soldier-teachers of the American invasion army. “In exchange for a smattering of English,” writes Constantino, “we yielded our souls.” Filipino linguist Sibayan recalls learning English in school in the 1920s: “The punishment for speaking the local language was to carry stones from the river to build a fence around the schoolyard.” In the very teaching of English, Osias’s readers were part of the machinery of colonial rule. But as we have seen, the readers also carried hidden transcripts gesturing beyond the rules of colonial management. Osias’s series begin with a volume thoroughly immersed in rural Filipino life—making pinipig, stories about the carabao, fishing, and a story about Rizal’s school days. But Osias also defamiliarizes English in order to familiarize it for the student. The opening page uses two everyday Tagalog words that are important in moving the story forward. Pinipig (rice stamped flat), which teaches by cooking instructions, begins with Juan telling his mother he likes pinipig, to which his mother responds, “First we must have a bundle of palay” (unhusked rice). Spanish words like carretela, banca, and bolo are also interspersed in the reader. And in a story about linguistic alienation, cultural survival, change, and deterritorialization, students are taught a Tagalog word central to the narrative. “The
First Clay Pot” is the story of a girl who foolishly attempts to cook rice and fish in bamboo tubes, which burn and leave the family hungry. When she hears a bird singing “Pu-tik,” she turns to her grandfather, “‘Putik is clay,’ said her grandfather. ‘He is trying to say clay.’” When the girl comprehends the bird’s message, she builds a clay pot and cooks. Linguistic loss, so innocuously presented here, is dramatized through a story that turns learning English into the learning of a Tagalog word. Tagalog, the language of nature and the language the grandfather understands, is thoroughly naturalized; putik is a word the girl should know, but doesn’t. Simultaneously, the story suggests that the language of survival is English, because only when the word is translated does it change from unintelligible to useful. But the teaching of the story also introduces a defamiliarization of English because the narrative hinges on a Tagalog word being understood, an objective clearly articulated in a comprehension question at the end of the story: “Does putik mean ‘clay’?”

At the same time, Osias’s readers are not necessarily at odds with the colonial state. Selections such as Arsenio Luz’s “My Early Experiences with Americans” (book 7), in which Luz describes how fears of U.S. soldiers turn into trust and friendship as the soldiers play with children, hand out proverbial candy, and open schools, function as alibis to occupation. Instructions to students preceding Luz’s essay explain the U.S. colonial presence in terms of cultural influence, similar to that of British influence on the United States. The nationalism that Osias incorporated in the readers was carefully positioned so as not to function as a criticism of U.S. colonial policy but rather one that could be imagined in a revolutionary manner despite U.S. colonial rule. Thus, in the last two books, selections from Western classics, such as those by Cervantes, Shakespeare, Charles Lamb, and Tennyson, along with a host of selections from American writers like Edward Everett Hale, Phillips Brooks, Bayard Taylor, Washington Irving, and Nathaniel Hawthorne, prevail. But the celebration of secular heroes includes not simply Columbus and George Washington, but also Rizal, Bonifacio, and Mabini. Book 7 celebrates Bonifacio thus: “Now that the greatest Philippine revolution, of which he was the father, has passed into history, now that the story of the Katipunan, of which he was the founder, can be studied without prejudice, we can pay him the honor
that is due ever patriot and hero, and hail him as the father of Philippine
democracy.”113 The same sketch explains Bonifacio’s conviction of the
necessity for armed struggle and the formation of the Katipunan, and ends
with Bonifacio’s Decalogue of the Katipunan. Osias’s commemoration of
Bonifacio is not singular. In 1929, the state had sanctioned funds for a
monument for Bonifacio. However, as Reynaldo Ileto argues, the Bonifacio
invoked by Quezon was not the figure who signified armed insurrection
but the poor Bonifacio “who succeeded through hard work, who composed
the Decalogue of the Katipunan which called for the fulfillment of obliga-
tions and love among brethren.”114 In The Philippine Readers, Bonifacio is
both seditious and an exemplary citizen invoking duties, but his seditious
activities, while not critiqued, are a history to be remembered, while his
statement of duties are precepts to be followed.

Analyzing textbooks written for Filipino children by Americans in
the first few years of U.S. rule, Susan K. Harris writes that these books
“transform Americans’ own desire for a unified American culture into a
prescription for nation building in other countries.”115 Osias’s textbooks
also posit a unified nation, unfractured by class or race, and based on
virtues of thrift, ingenuity, and industry. They invoke the hard work and
education of American and Philippine secular heroes, and urge all Filipi-
nos to aspire to middle-class comfort.116 Even though Osias attempted to
provincialize America (to use Dipesh Chakrabarty’s provocative concept)
by articulating in The Filipino Way of Life a Filipino ontology, a pluralized
philosophy coterminous with, yet different from a Western modernity, his
conception of modernity was racialized.117 He saw Filipinos as essentially
Christian, belonging to the great brown race of Malays, and Tagalog as
central to a distinctively Filipino culture,118 all of which are reflected in
The Philippine Readers. While Gibbs’s readers included racist depictions
of Moros and Negritos, Osias’s readers, like the ones authored by other
American teachers, simply excluded non-Christians and non-Malays. The
defamiliarization of English via Tagalog in “The First Clay Pot” recognizes
the nation-building efforts of contemporary Tagalog writers, but also rests
upon an assumed hegemony of Tagalog, which belies the existence of
Osias’s own native Ilokano, as well as languages such as Cebuano and Bikol.
Toward a Reformist Postcolonial Nationalism

After 1920, when there were only 325 American teachers left in the Philippines, schools functioned as part of the colonial state under the direction of Filipinos, many themselves products of American schooling. The school system was part of a machinery of colonial management, and tutelage continued to be used as a metaphor for the colonial state, particularly in arguing the case for delaying independence in the wake of the Woods-Forbes report. Louis Althusser famously argued that in the twentieth century the school had replaced the church as the dominant ideological state apparatus (or ISA), producing subjects with the ideologies appropriate to their functions in class society.119 As the above discussion has made clear, colonial officials were thoroughly aware of the benefits of ruling through the school. However, Althusser’s analysis not only forecloses relations of colonialism that cannot be reduced to class relations alone but also pays short shrift to the variety and heterogeneity of the actual functioning of organs of the state. As suggested by recent education theorists, schools can be sites of both domination and resistance, of working within as well as challenging hegemony.120 Even if one argues that schools ultimately support a dominant ideology, they might do so in very different ways and with different consequences for the future. So, for instance, while textbooks in the United States and the Philippines might have reproduced a discourse of exceptional American freedom, there were significant differences between how this exceptionalism was channeled in textbooks written for children in the United States, those written for Filipinos by American educators, and those written by Filipinos. One cannot simply dismiss the praise that contemporary reviewers of Osias’s readers, such as Frederick Starr, bestowed on them for drawing their contents from Philippine sources, or recent critics who speculate that Philippine classroom started including Filipino writers in part due to these readers.121 The Filipino nationalism propagated in The Philippine Readers functions within the hegemonic colonial idea of tutelage, but questions ideas of gradualism and extended tutelage. The reformism suggested in the readers necessarily demands collaboration with colonial ideas of benevolent assimilation through the learning of English and the values of industry, but also gestures toward a dissent (often derived from examples in U.S. history) that should not
be dismissed. What Osias’s readers resist is the rule of colonial difference which delayed self-rule for a population seen as yet unfit, not the normalizing mission of the colonial state to produce productive citizens for a unified state. And as long as Osias was part of the colonial machinery in which textbooks were prime profit makers for U.S. publishing houses, the nationalism of *The Philippine Readers* was, in a sense, co-opted for colonial benefit.

In an age when outright colonialism of the Philippines variety has virtually ended, but various forms of formal and informal U.S. occupation continue, the question of pacification through tutelage, and resistance, is relevant both within the nation and abroad. The opening of schools and universities, under the aegis of education for democracy, the slogan of the post–World War II occupation of Japan, is now touted as a benefit of the invasions of both Afghanistan and Iraq. Textbooks for children remain important adjuncts to military operations. In the early 1980s, the University of Nebraska–Omaha, through a fifty-one-million-dollar grant from USAID, produced textbooks for Afghan children designed to instigate resistance to Soviet occupation with primers featuring illustrations of guns, bullets, and soldiers. After 2002, George W. Bush affirmed the production of textbooks for Afghanistan with “respect for human dignity” instead of the earlier indoctrination. Education for human rights imperialism replaced the Cold War mission of education for resisting communism. Similarly, when Creative Associates International, Inc. won a no-bid contract for educational reform in Iraq, it was under the banner of “democracy promotion.” Given the continual use of education as a form of soft power indispensable to the maintenance of different forms of U.S. hegemony, analyses of the most sustained educational apparatus in the Philippines, and the resistances to it from within, remain integral to the task of critiquing empire today.

**Notes**

3. Remark made by Osmena, the first leader of the Philippine legislature, quoted in Roger M. Thompson, *Filipino English and Taglish* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2003), 18.
13. Ibid., 683.

24. Roland Sintos Coloma, “Empire and Education: Filipino Schooling under United States Rule, 1900–1910” (PhD diss., Ohio State University, 2004), 85–112. Coloma’s dissertation also deals with the pacification sought by American education and the raced and gendered hierarchies of the educational system.


27. See Funie Hsu, “Colonial Lessons: Racial Politics of Comparison and the Development of American Education Policy in the Philippines,” in The “Other” Students: Filipino Americans, Education and Power, ed. Rick Bonus and Dina Maramba (Charlotte, N.C.: Information Age, 2013). The centrality of empire to Asian American literary and cultural production has been the object of only two books, Victor Bascara’s Model-Minority Imperialism (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006) and Jodi Kim’s Ends of Empire (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010). However, neither of these books focuses on U.S. tutelage abroad.


29. Ibid., 338.

30. Ibid., 317–18.

31. Statement of Governor Taft, February 1, 1902, in “Hearings before the Committee on the Philippines,” 49.

32. Ibid., 50.

33. Elliott, Philippines, 228–29, 224.

34. Elson, Guardians of Tradition, 313. Elson cites a number of textbooks that use the same passage.

35. Ibid., 340.

36. Wesling, Empire’s Proxy, 90.
37. Here I disagree with critics who have dismissed any difference between the Baldwin primers and readers, and the readers compiled by American schoolteachers. Meg Wesling, for instance, points to the cosmetic nature of the changes made to American readers by simply substituting “Jack” and “Mary” with “Juan” and “Maria” (ibid., 91).

38. Mary Helen A Woman’s Impression of the Philippines (New York: Bibliobazaar, 2006; orig pub.1910), 62.

39. Ibid., 64–66.


41. Meg Wesling argues that despite Fred Atkinson’s (the first general superintendent of public instruction) admiration for Tuskegee, literary selections dominated readers beyond the primary levels (Wesling, Empire’s Proxy, 84–93).


44. See also “Making Sugar,” in Sidney C. Newsom and Levona Payne Newsom, Third Reader (Boston: Ginn, 1904), 44–45.

45. Reimold’s Composition Leaflets on Philippine Activities were all published by the World Book Company in 1905.


49. Fee, Woman’s Impression, 67.

50. Rafael, White Love, 76, 78, discusses the ways in which colonial photographs both confirm and confound imperialism.

51. Nila Banton Smith, American Reading Instruction (1934; repr., International Reading Association, Newark, DE, 2002), 35, 50.


53. Banton, American Reading Instruction, 50.


55. Ibid., 329.


60. Dean Worcester described Negritos, for instance, as “incapable of any considerable progress” and “close to the bottom of the human series.” See his *The Philippines Past and Present* (1914; repr., New York: Macmillan, 1930), 423.


66. See James Baldwin, *School Reading by Grades: Seventh Year* (New York: American Book Company, 1897). The McGuffey readers included some of the same selections such as Daniel Webster’s “Supposed Speech of John Adams” (*Fifth Reader*), and parts of Longfellow’s “Evangel” (*Sixth Reader*). McGuffey tended to use overtly moralistic tales such as “The Honest Boy and the Thief” (*Eclectic Second Reader*).


76. Coloma, “Empire and Education,” 93.

77. Ibid., 103.


79. Coloma considers Osias’s career in broad strokes and doesn’t offer analyses of his works or *The Philippine Readers*.


83. Ibid., 70.


86. Ibid., 145–46.


89. Osias, “Aspiration,” 143.


92. Wesling, *Empire’s Proxy*, 94


105. Ibid., 276.


108. Ibid., 4.

109. Thompson, *Filipino English and Taglish*, 23


111. Ibid., 89.


113. Ibid., 68.


